



The Parthian fortresses of Nisa, Turkmenistan : nomination of the ancient parthian sites of Nisa for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage list by the Government of Turkmenistan

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The Parthian fortresses of

Nisa

Turkmenistan



December 2005

GOVERNMENT OF TURKMENISTAN

NOMINATION OF THE ANCIENT PARTHIAN SITES OF NISA
FOR INCLUSION ON THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST BY THE



Cover Photograph : aerial view of Old Nisa in 2003, V. Sarkisian, Photographer, Ashgabat

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Acronyms

DPM: National Department for the protection, study and restoration of the historical and cultural monuments of Turkmenistan

NSHCP: Nisa State Historical and Cultural Park

Glossary of Turkmen names used in the file

Hakim: Mayor (of Bagyr) or Governor (of the Akhal Vilayet)

Hakimlik: Mayor's office or Governor's office (administrative structure headed by the Hakim)

Vilayet: province; Turkmenistan is divided in 5 vilayets

Etrap: Region into the Vilayet

Other names for this site:

The fortresses of Nisa are referred to in the literature and on the internet under various names and spellings:

- New Nisa
- Nisa
- Nisaia of Isidorus
- Nisâya
- Nisayeh
- Nissa
- Nusay
- Old Nisa
- Täze Nusay
- Köne Nusay
- Kune Nusay
- Parthaunisa
- fortress of Mithradates
- Mithradatkirt
- Mikhradatkirt
- Mithradatkert
- Mithradatkirt
- Mithradatokert
- Mithridatokert
- Mitradatkert
- Alexandropolis



Ruins of a round hall at Old Nisa, with the fortified wall and the Kopet Dag Mountains in the background

1

Identification of the Property



a. Country

Turkmenistan



Map 1, Nisa in Central Asia © encarta

b. State, Province or Region

Akhal Vilayet
(one of the 5 Turkmen provinces)
Etrap of Rukhabad (region)
Bagyr settlement (town)

Nisa is situated 12 km to the south-west of Ashgabat (actual capital of Turkmenistan)

c. Name of Property

The Parthian fortresses of Nisa

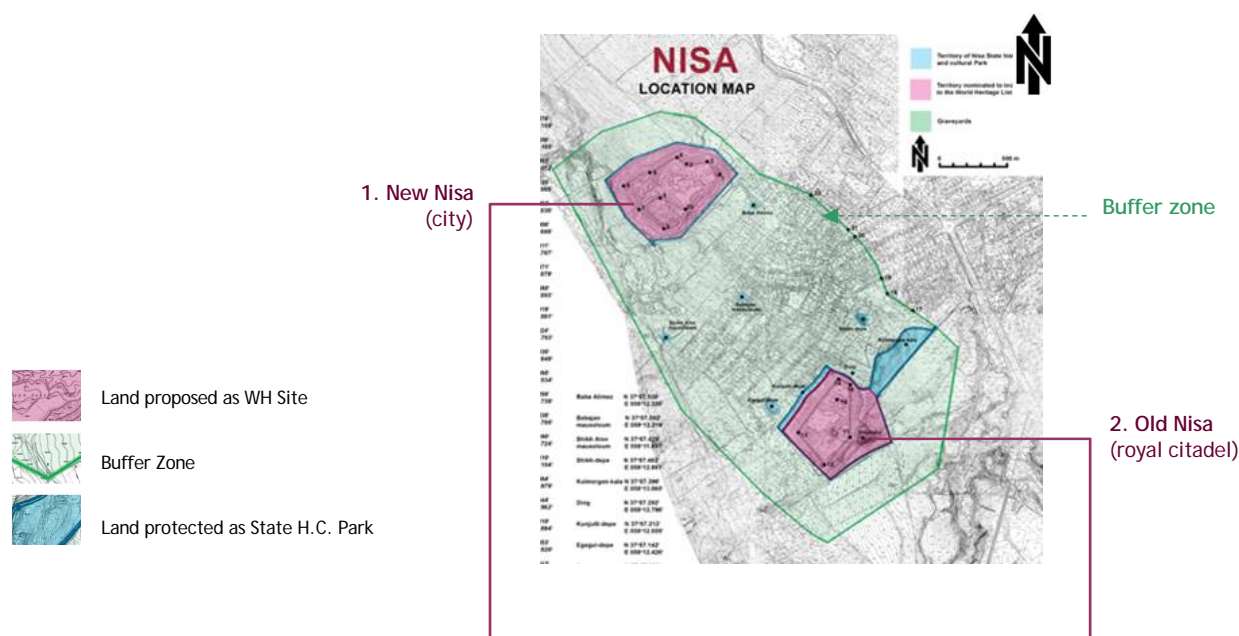


Map 2, Ashgabat and Nisa © encarta

d. Serial nomination table

This site is proposed as a serial nomination. It comprises two centres :

New Nisa on the western side and Old Nisa on the Eastern side. Both are fortresses located at the foot of the Kopet Dag mountains. They are historically associated.



Site element N°	1	2
Name	New Nisa	Old Nisa
Brief description	The place known as “New Nisa” is the location of the ancient city where the Parthian population lived.	The site known as “Old Nisa” is the location of the Royal citadel where the Kings were staying and where the main archaeological findings have been made.
Location	Bagyr settlement Etrap of Rukhabad Akhal Velayat 12 km to the south-west of Ashgabat (capital of Turkmenistan) The two proposed properties are found in the same location, 1500 meters apart	
Coordinates of centre point	N 37°57'59" E 58°11'55"	N 37°57'05" E 58°12'43"
	More coordinates are given on the map N°3, showing the precise boundaries of the 2 properties and the buffer zone	
Area of core zone	42,671 ha	35,234 ha
Total area of core zones	77,905 ha	
Area of Buffer zone	400,3 ha	
Total area of NSHCP	94,920 ha	
Reference maps	(see list of maps on page 10, chapter 1e)	

e. Maps and plans, showing the boundaries of the properties and buffer zone

e1. Maps and plans showing the boundaries of the properties and buffer zone

<i>reference</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
Map 3	boundaries of the two sections proposed for nomination and buffer zone also showing the boundaries of the state historical and cultural park	11
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e2. Other maps and plans included in this nomination file

<i>reference</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
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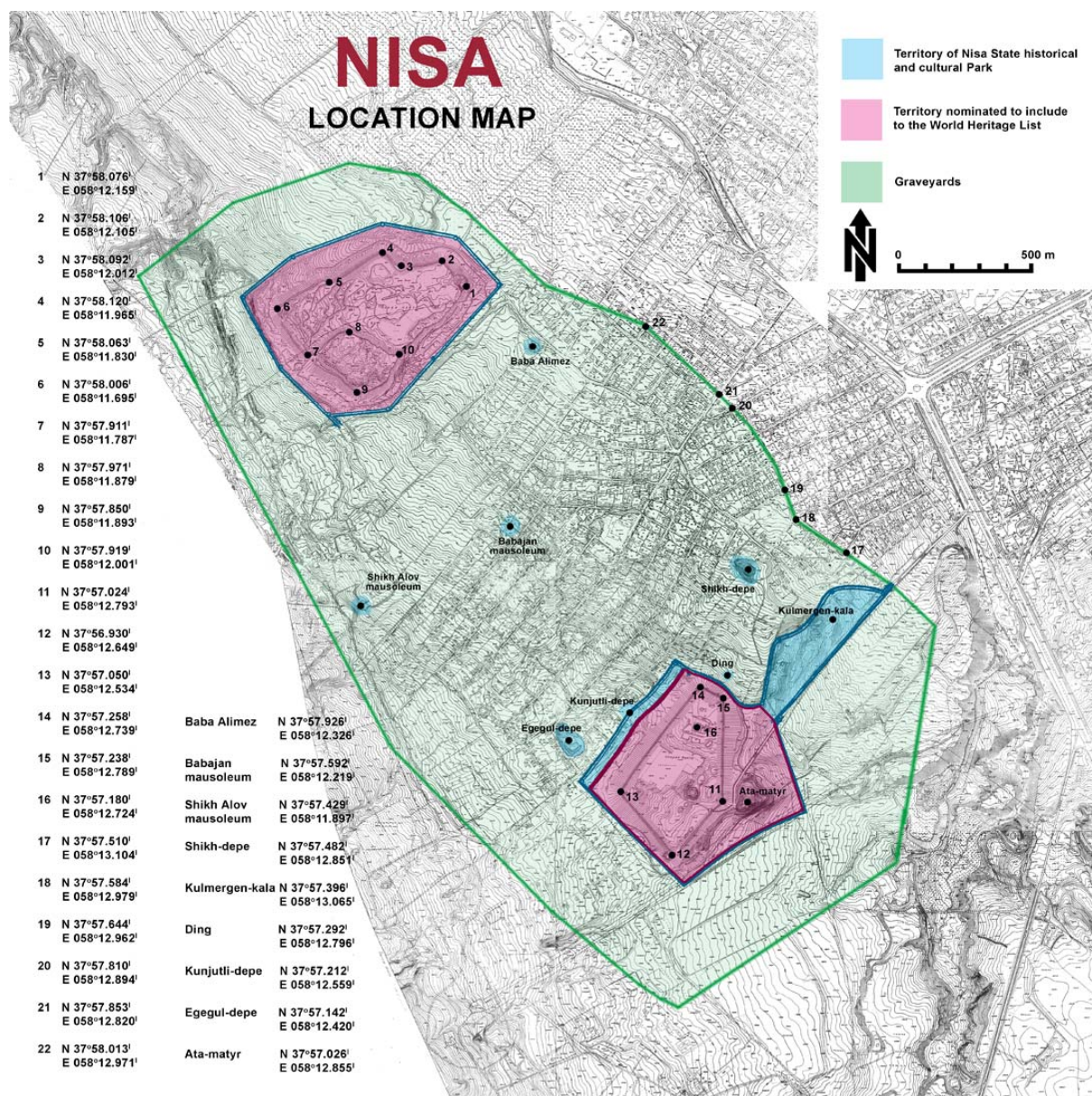
f. Area of nominated property (ha.) and proposed buffer zone (ha.)

As mentioned in the serial nomination table, the total area of the 2 proposed properties is 77,905 ha.

The area of the land demarcated as the buffer zone for the proposed properties is 400,300 ha.

The area of the land demarcated as the State historical and Cultural Park is 94,920 ha.

Map 3, boundaries of the two sections proposed for nomination, buffer zone and limits of the State Historical and Cultural Park



Map 5, Aerial view of the 2 fortresses and surrounding landscape

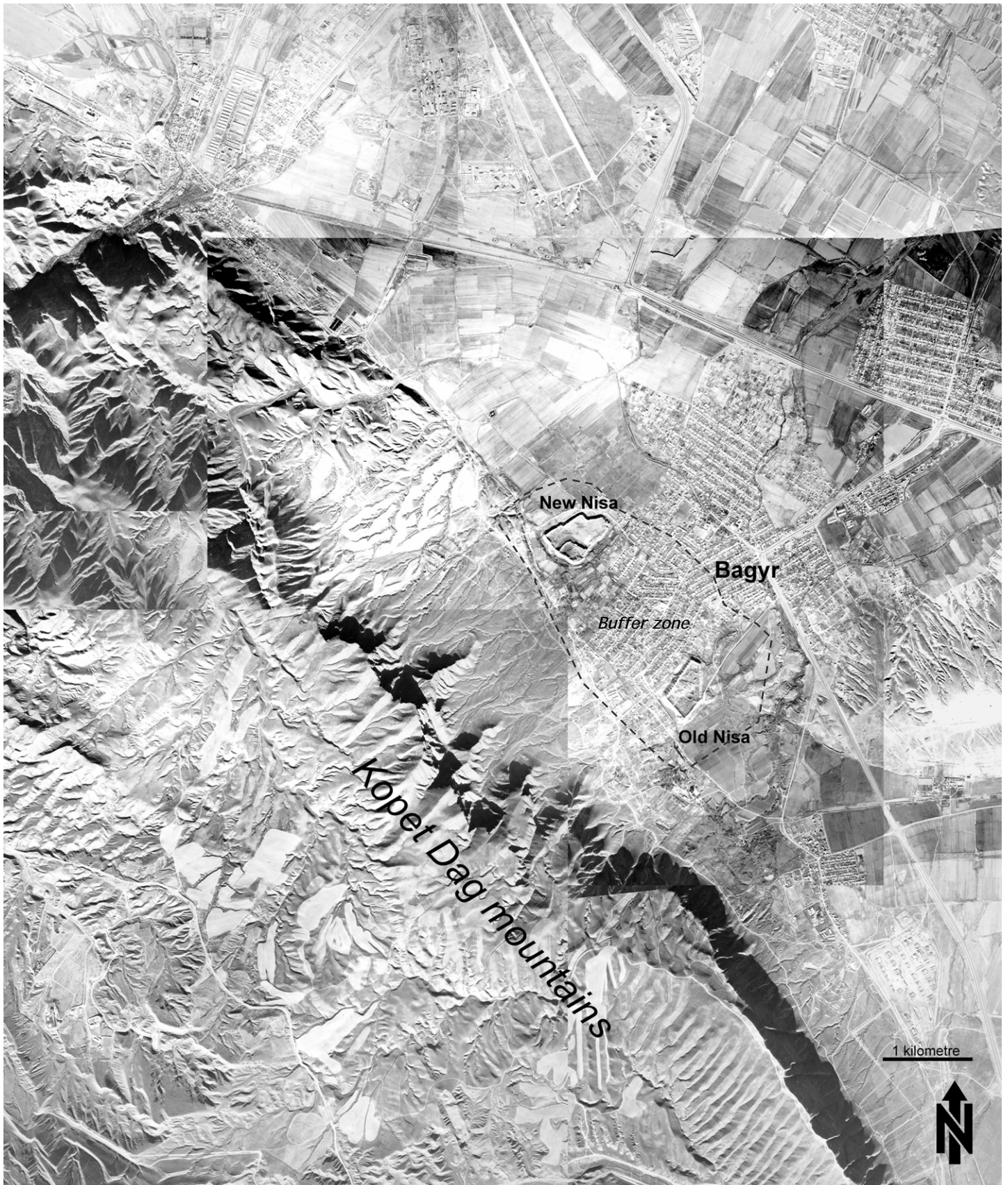


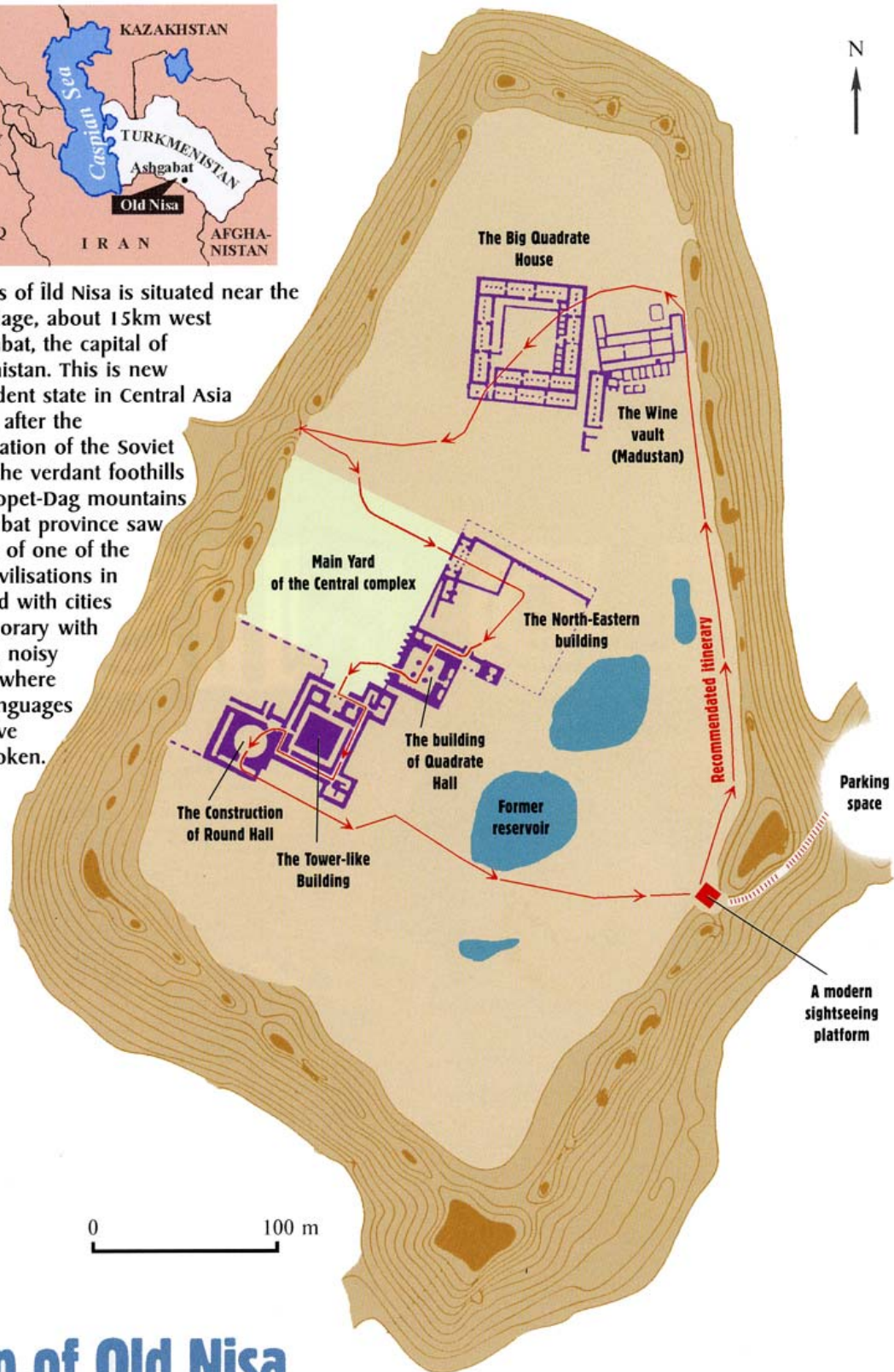


Fig. 1 – Nisa Vecchia: rilievo topografico generale.

Map 7, Map describing the site components at Old Nisa

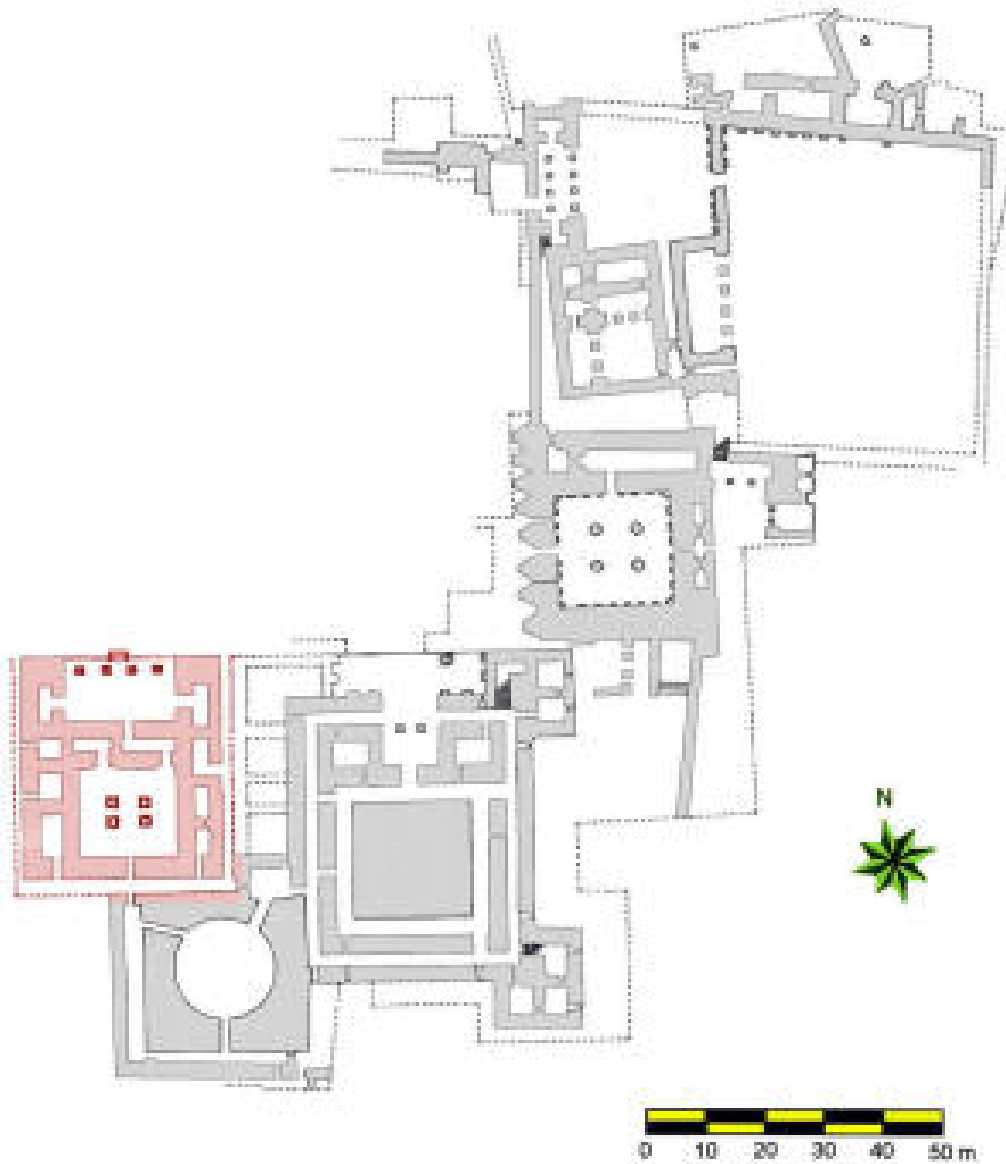


The ruins of Old Nisa is situated near the Bagir village, about 15km west of Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan. This is new independent state in Central Asia founded after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The verdant foothills of the Kopet-Dag mountains in Ashgabat province saw the birth of one of the oldest civilisations in the world with cities contemporary with Babylon, noisy bazaars where many languages must have been spoken.

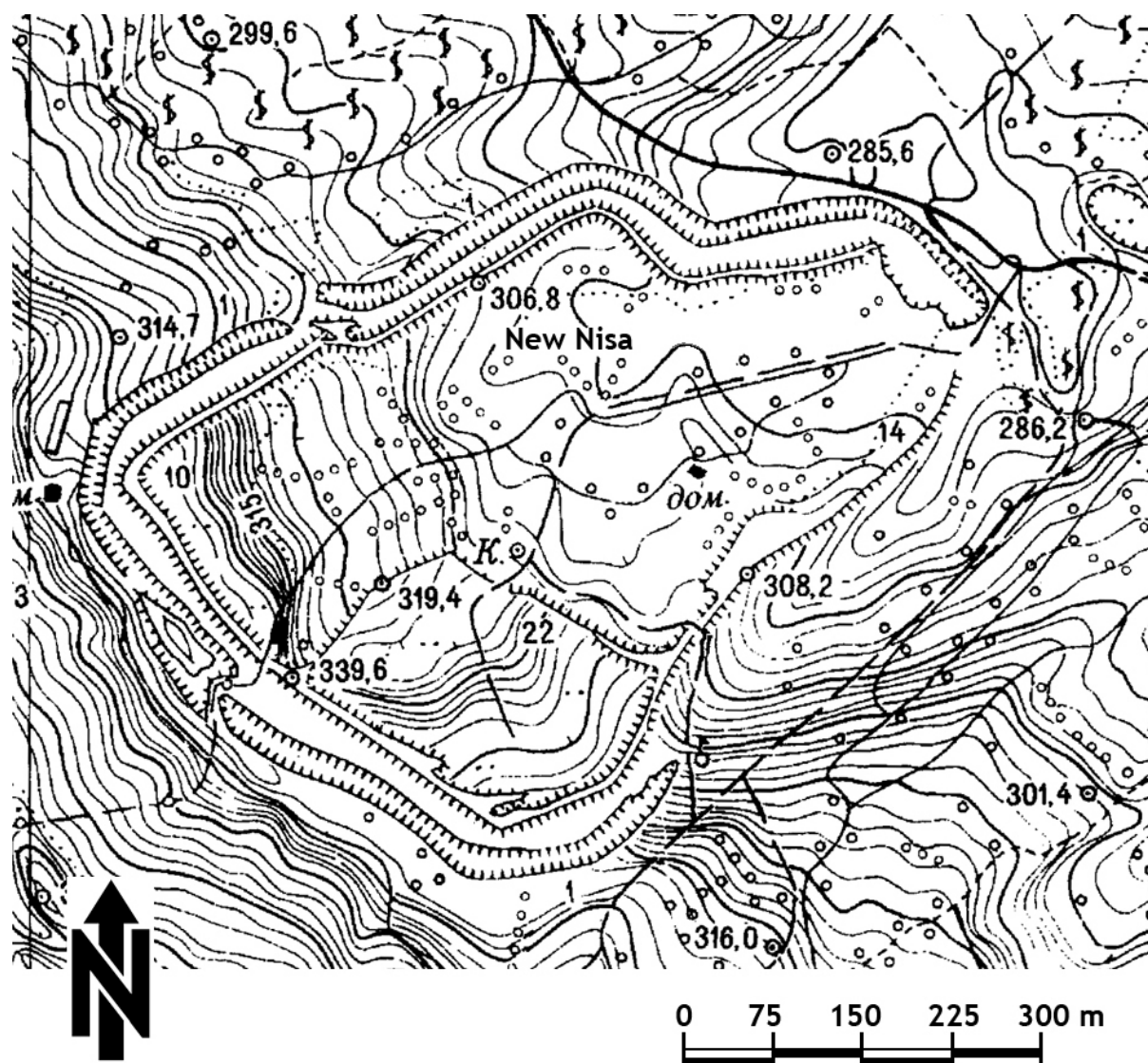


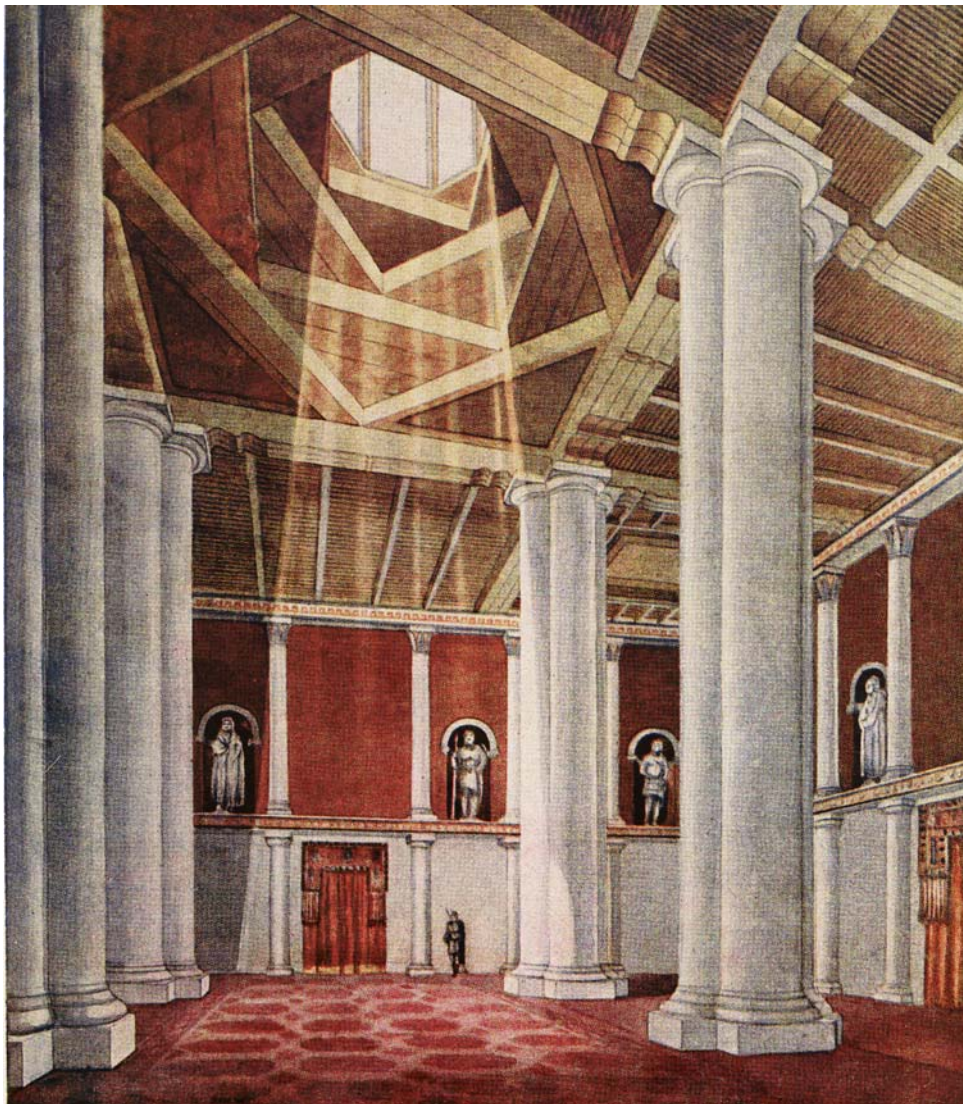
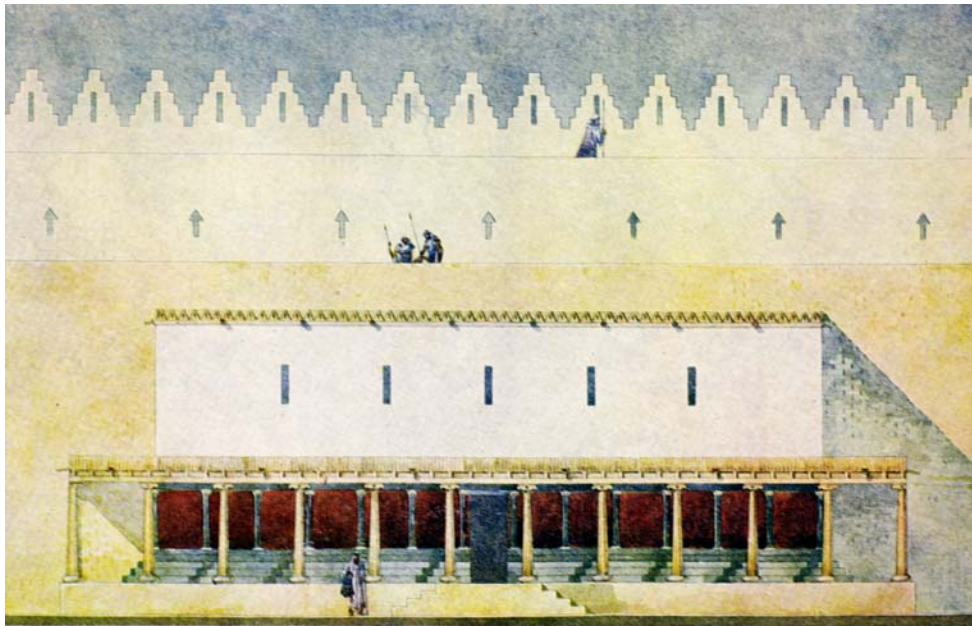
Map of Old Nisa

*Map 8, Plan of the Central Complex in Old Nisa
(in red, the most recent excavation) Drawing by Claudio Fossati*



Map 9, Topographic map of New Nisa
(Passport form date 2001 - Map drawn by YuTAKE expedition)





Graphic reconstitution of the columned hall by V.N. Pilipko

2

Description



a. Description of the Property

Archaeological excavations held since 1930 in Nisa have revealed richly decorated architectures, featuring remains representative of domestic, state and religious functions. From these remains, 2 portions of land are proposed for nomination:

- One is the Royal citadel, today known as "Old Nisa". This is where most of the archaeological activities have taken place.
- The second one is the site of the ancient town, where the majority of the population lived, designated today as "New Nisa".



Excavations by Pugachenkova in 1955

Old Nisa

Old Nisa is a 14-hectare tell surrounded by a high defensive earth rampart with more than 40 rectangular towers. Its contours take the shape of an irregular pentagon with the corners flanked by powerful bastions.

The entire site was built on a natural hill, the top of which had been levelled up and flattened with layers of earth (pakhsa). The number and location of the gates have not been precisely determined yet. The most probable location of the main and, perhaps the only entrance, was at the centre of the western part of the surrounding wall.

Inside the fortress, the buildings are distributed into two architectural complexes: the Northern and the Central one.

The **Northern complex** includes the so-called Big Square building in which rooms with different functions have been identified: the royal treasury, the wine vault in the northern part, and auxiliary premises in the south-eastern parts. This is the place where many famous art works of Old Nisa were discovered (Rodogoune marble statue, Goddess of Nisa marble statue, ivory rithons, fragments of royal thrones, and 2700 ostrakons of ceramic vessels representing the archives of Parthian house-keeping documents, Etc.)

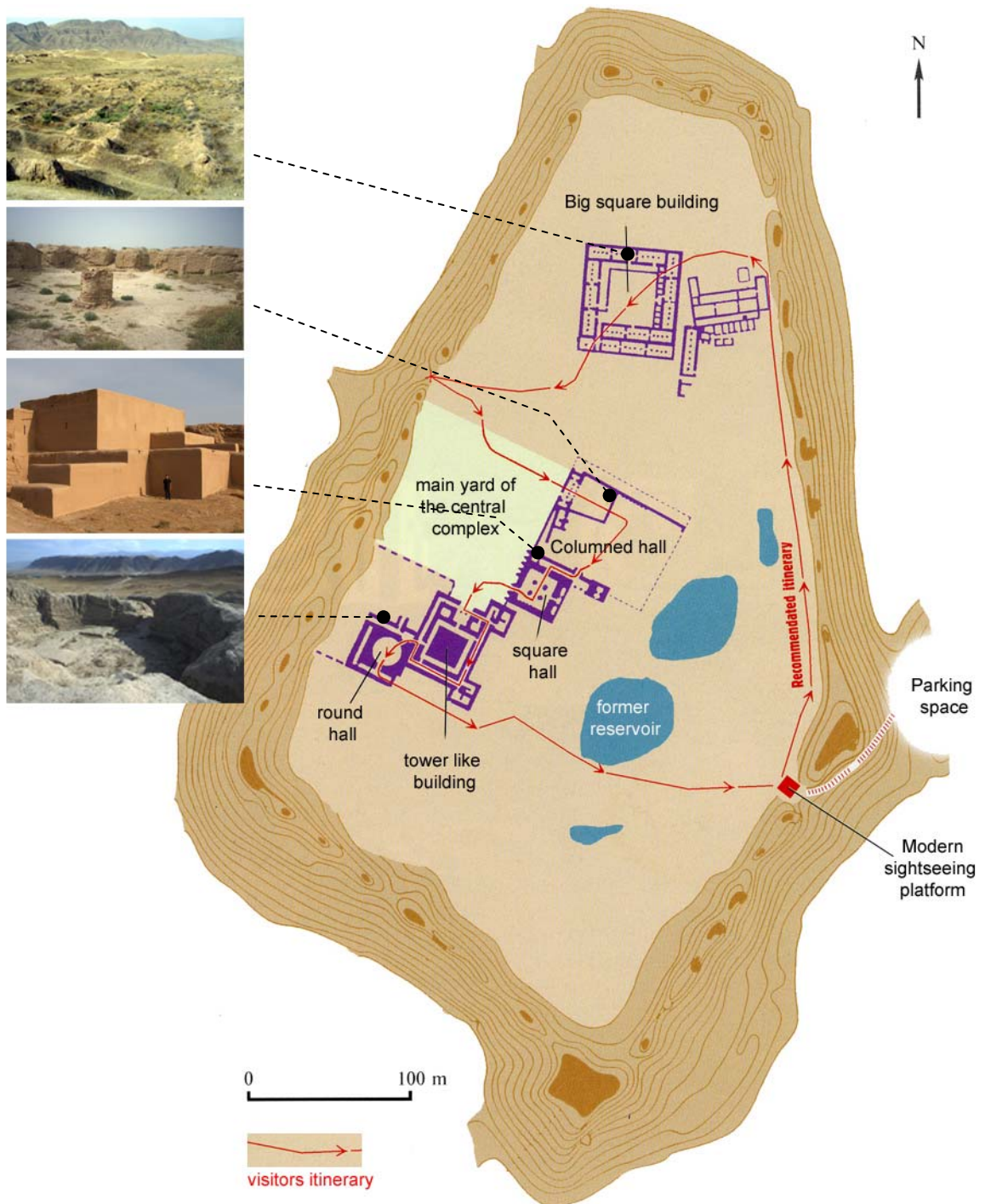
The **Central complex**. Four interrelated buildings had been distinguished here. These were:

- The "building with the Square Hall",
- The "building with the Round Hall",
- The "tower-like building"
- The "North-Eastern building".

Today, as a result of recent archaeological researches (Italian expedition: 1990 - today), another building called the "Columned hall" must be added to the list.

In between those two groups of buildings, connecting paved streets as well as two water pools have been discovered. Some auxiliary constructions have also been revealed, also located along the eastern and southern sides of the fortress.

Concerning the function of Old Nisa, archaeological researches have proved that Old Nisa was a Royal residence and not an ordinary settlement: *"Old Nisa, one of the first arsacid royal residences, but the only one excavated, appears today as a monumental ceremonial centre, devoted to the glory and the memory of the dynasty : a celebration space where traces of daily life are extremely rare"* (Lippolis, dossier archéologie N°271, March 2002)



Description of the most relevant architectural findings:

The Building with the Square Hall is the most studied building of the Central Complex and the most important one with an area of about 1000 m² (29x36 m). The walls in some sections are 4 to 5 m thick. The entire space is divided into sub-square halls measuring up to 400 m². The building was rebuilt, many times, with certain periods characterized by highly decorated features. The main façade for example was once decorated with eight orifices. The walls were decorated with semi-columns featuring large ceramic statues placed on the top of at least two of them. Four columns made of rounded fired bricks stood at an approximate height of 20 m, supporting the roof.

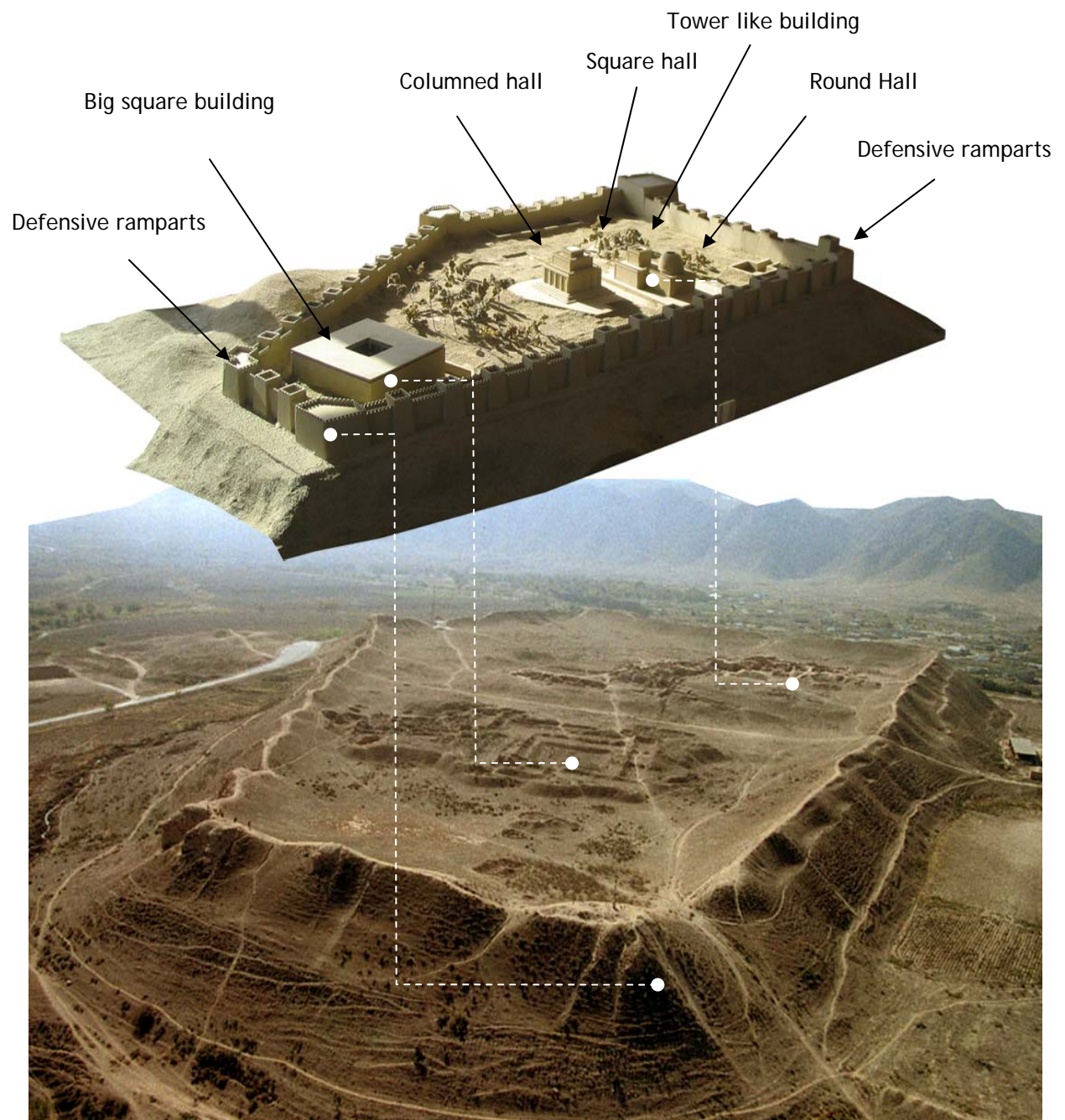
Besides this main hall, the building included a few auxiliary chambers. Among them, corridors with floors and the bases of the walls covered with a special red coating, as well as several rooms painted in white were discovered.

The North-Eastern Building is located at the north-east of the Square Hall Building. It is composed of remains of two decorated yards and several rooms probably having domestic uses. This building is sometimes considered as a palace for the Arsacid dynasty.

The Tower-like Building. This is a massive square pedestal (about 20 x 20 m) encircled by two rows of dark corridors, poorly lightened by narrow windows. The upper parts of the construction are remarkably conserved with traces of a rich architectural decor and wall paintings featuring battle scenes. The south-eastern and north-eastern corners of the Tower-like Building take the shape of jutting out towers. One of these towers has recently been reconstructed and a small museum of Parthian paintings and architectural decors has been opened inside.

The Building with Round Hall. This is a square building with a massive central round hall inside, measuring 17 meters in diameter, and plastered with white ghanch (local alabaster-variety of gypsum). A round gallery decorated with semi-columns built with bricks surrounds this hall. Ceramic statues were placed all over. The cult-related function of this building is clearly recognizable. However its specific role as a temple, a mausoleum or a heron has not been established yet.

The Columned hall: the inner part of this monumental building consists of a great rectangular hall with four columns in the centre. Eight rooms, of different sizes, connect the hall to the northern, western and eastern sides. The specific function of the building has not been established yet, although its ceremonial character seems quite clear, and this includes the adjacent buildings as well.



Old Nisa, model and aerial photograph

New Nisa

The fortress of "new Nisa" rises 1.5 km to the north west of Old Nisa. The tell is surrounded by powerful walls, up to 9 m high on all sides, with two entrances, one from Bagyr settlement, the other from the north-west. Its area is approximately of 25 hectares.



Several periods of occupation can be distinguished on the hill: the latest remains date back from the Mesolithic period, but it is certainly during the Parthian period that the city was more properly divided into the two parts which remain clearly visible today: the upper one (ark) and a lower one (Shakhristan).

The general layout of the hill and the traces of buildings are representative of a densely populated town. The Parthian structures have been identified by the Russian expedition as "remains of the fortress", "burial houses", or as "store-houses".

Unlike Old Nisa, life continued for many centuries after the fall of the Arsacid Empire in this fortress. The development of the town lasted throughout the Middle Ages, with a decline during the third and fourth centuries. Then, Old Nisa was annexed by the Arabian Caliphate in 651 and later knew a period of great prosperity from the IX to the XII centuries.

Finally, Nisa, as well as other important towns of Central Asia experienced common difficult periods: siege and demolition by the Mongols.

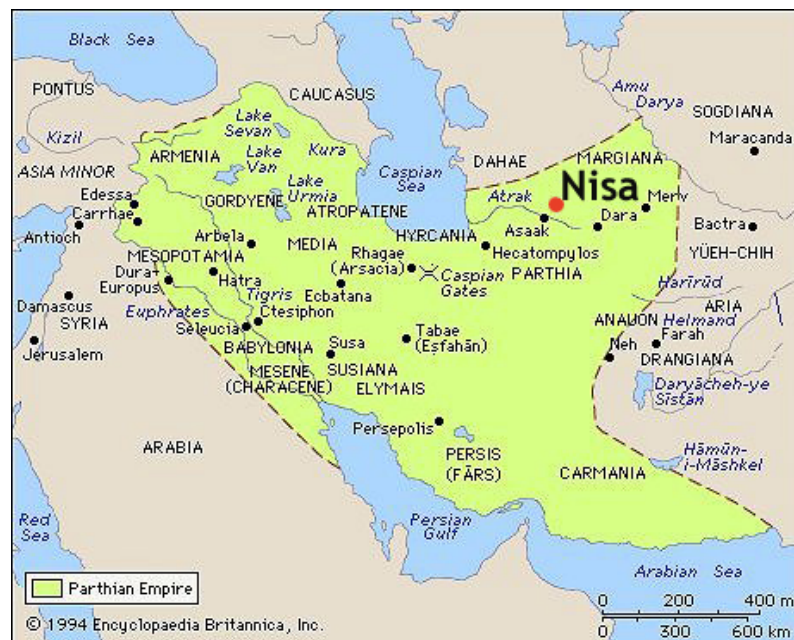


b. History and Development

The Parthian Empire

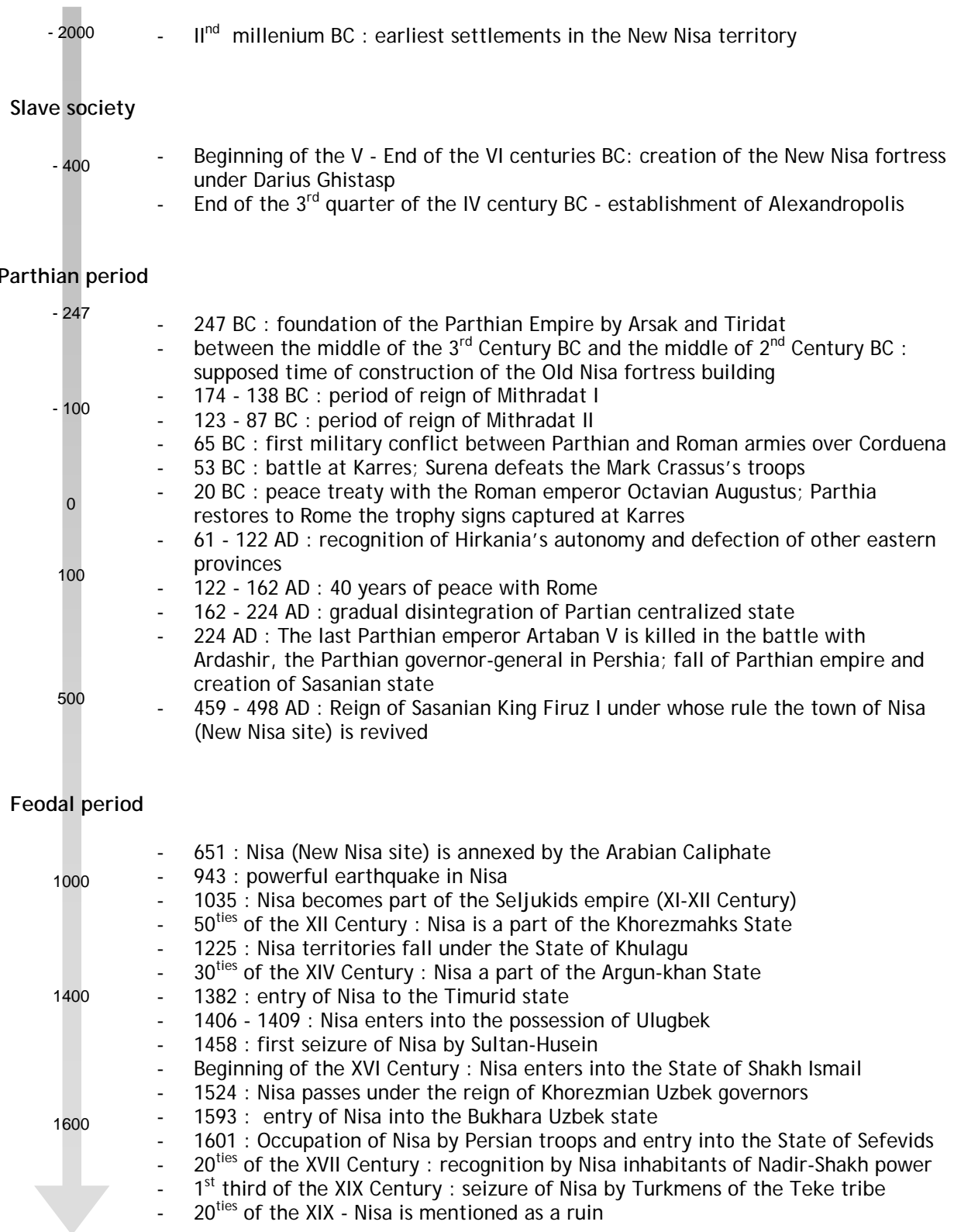
"The Parthian Empire is a fascinating period of Persian history closely connected to Greece and Rome. Ruling from 247 B.C. to A.D. 228 in ancient Persia, the Parthians defeated Alexander the Great's successors, the Seleucids, conquered most of the Middle East and southwest Asia, controlled the Silk Road and built Parthia into an Eastern superpower. The Parthian empire revived the greatness of the Achaemenid Empire and counterbalanced Rome's hegemony in the West. Parthia at one time occupied areas now located in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Israel."

<http://www.parthia.com>



Map 10 : the Parthian empire at its greatest extent
(© Encyclopædia Britannica)

Chronology of Nisa history



Traces of human activity dating back to the IV-II millennia BC, show that long before the beginning of the Parthian empire, the area of Nisa was already colonized by sedentary populations. It is even supposed that in the first millennium BC a large settlement already existed here.

However, Nisa went through a major development in the middle of the third century BC, when impressive buildings were built by the Parthians, who decided to erect here a royal residence, probably the first of the Parthian dynasty.

The name of the site, Mithradatkert, as well as chronological indication relating its foundation are known thanks to an inscription written on one of the 2700 administrative ceramics (ostraca) found at Nisa. Mithradatkert means "the fortress of Mithridat", referring certainly to the king Mithradat I (174-138 BC).

In addition, some ancient sources (Isidorus of Kharax), mention the city of Parthaunisa, as an administrative and economic centre for the Arsacid dynasty.

From their royal residence (Old Nisa) and the adjacent city (New Nisa), the Arsacid dynasty engaged huge conquests over a very large territory stretching from the Indus to the Euphrates. Nisa became a major city located in a strategic place, at the crossroad of many cultures: Iran, Greece, Central Asia.

At the local level, the centuries BC saw the golden age of the fortresses with the early development stages of its monumental buildings (Old Nisa) and the expansion of its economy. This period seems to have continued for a long time, until the first centuries AD.

But in 224 AD the Parthian kingdom fell. Ardashir, the Parthian governor-general in Persia at the origin of the Sassanid dynasty, stopped the Parthian expansion and conquered their cities and territories. Destructions and decrease of life in Nisa led to its partial abandonment, even if Nisa continued, to a certain extent, to be an important center until the Islamic period (XII^e-XIV^e century).

More detailed information can be found in the articles inserted in appendix 10. Information on the site history and on Parthian history in general can also be found on the following web sites:

- <http://www.parthia.com/nisa>
- <http://www.livius.org/pan-paz/parthia/parthia01.html>
- http://www.parthia.com/map_extent.htm

The Rulers of the Parthian empire

Before Christ	247 BC	Arsak is proclaimed King of the independant Parthia
	248 - 211	Tiridat
	211 - 191	Artaban I st
	171 - 138	Mithradat I st
	123 - 88	Mithradat II nd
	70 - 57	Phraates III
After Christ	10 - 38	Artaban III
	51 - 78	Vologese I st
	191 - 208	Vologese V
	226 AD	Ardashir I st , end of the Arsakid Dynasty

Coin of Arsak I



Early Parthian silver drachma. Perhaps with head of **Mithradates I**
He is clean shaven in the Hellenistic fashion



Parthian coin with **Mithradates II** on recto. The verso shows Arsaces, the deified Parthian father



Volagases IV



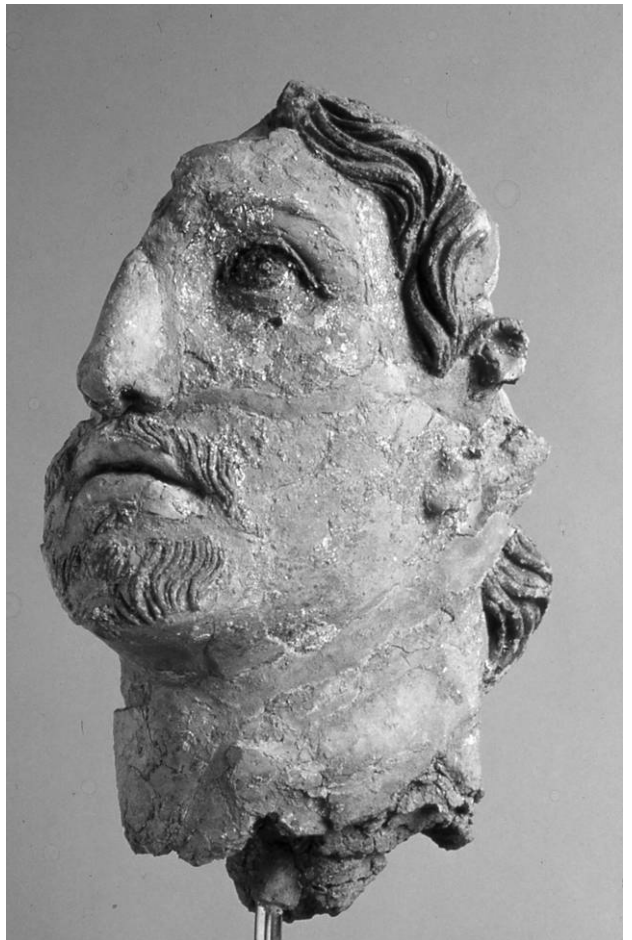
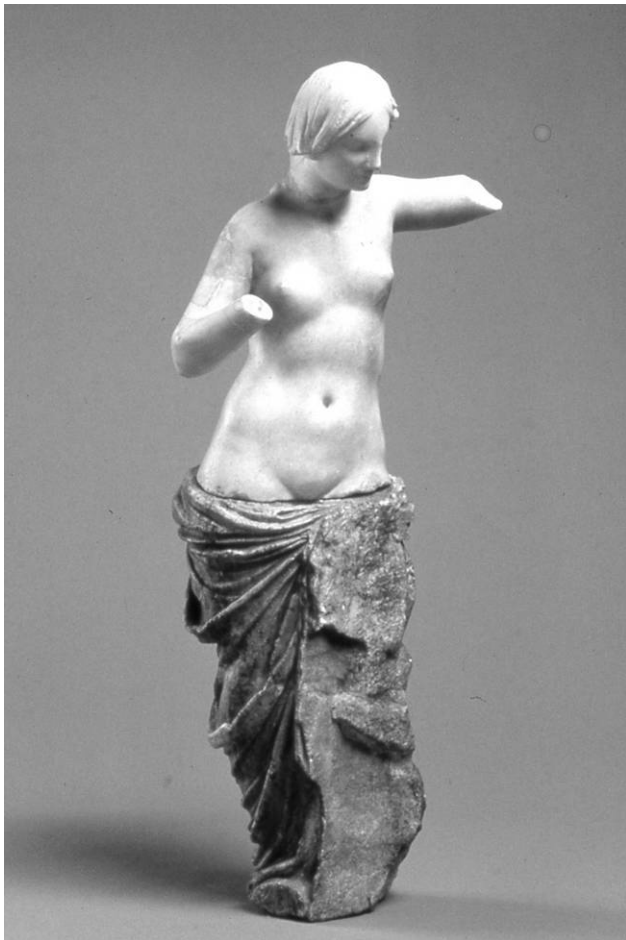
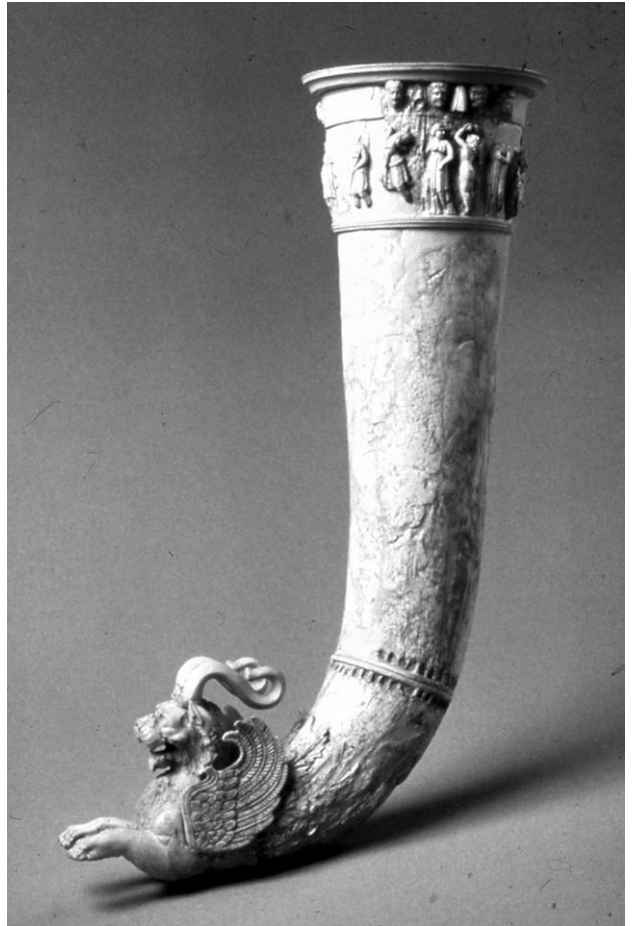
Coin of Ardashir I



Chronology of research and conservation activities in Nisa

After 18 Centuries of inactivity, Old Nisa has been rediscovered and is now a mark of pride in Turkmenistan.

1813	First statement in the press about possible identification of Nisa located on the foothills of the Kopet-Dag mountains with Parthaunisa (see: Kinnier J.M. A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire. London, 1813).
1853	Repetition of the statement above in the Russian press by the lieutenant-colonel I.F.Blaramberg.
1882	Russian general A.V.Komarov reported about Nisa sites at session of Caucasian society for history and archaeology. Establishment of a fact of ancient settling of the Nisa sites.
1888	Definition of date of the Baghir sites (see: Komarov A.V. Transcaspien region in archaeological respect // Turkestanskiye vedomosti, N 24.
1903	Support of the supposition of possible localization of of Parthaunisa in the Bagir settlement.
1913	Prof.V.V.Bartold mentioned about Nisa past it his work on irrigation history of Turkmenistan
1915	Transcaspien circle of archaeology- and history-lovers published the List of the interesting in historical respect monuments of the Transcaspien region, where New Nisa was mentioned
1923	The Nisa sites were inscribed on the first Soviet List of the most important historical and archaeological objects and registered by the State
1930 to 1936	First planned excavation works at both sites of Nisa carried out by the expedition of TURKMENKULT (Scientific Research Institute for Turkmenistan Culture) under supervision of A.S.Bashkirov and with participation of A.A.Marushchenko. These works marked the beginning of long archaeological researches of these objects.
1936	Investigations of the TURKMENKULT (A.A.Marushchenko). This period is marked by documentary verification of the fact that the ancient site of Old Nisa is dated to the Arsacid period, and by the discovery of monumental architectural buildings as well.
1946 to 1967 and 1975	Investigations of YuTAKE (South-Turkmenistan Archaeological Complex Expedition). This period includes large-scale excavations, followed by many important discoveries (ostraca, rhytons, sculpture) and full archaeological examination of the Big Square House.
1980	NSCHP - Legal protective measures
1991	Study of the main constructions in the Central Complex (Old Nisa). These studies were implemented by the Parthian Expedition (headed by V.N.Pilipko) under the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of TSSR, Joint Expedition of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of USSR, Turkmen and Moscow State Universities under the direction of G.A.Koshelenko, and Joint Expedition of Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of USSR and YuTAKE under the general supervision of V.M.Masson.
1992-2005	Continued excavations of the North-Eastern Building and Tower Building have been carried out by the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences headed by V.N.Pilipko.
1990 to 2005	Italian expedition, University of Turin, Archaeological and excavation centre for mid-Orient and Asia of Turin. Under the direction of professor A.Invernizzi until 2001 and then Carlo Lippolis. Archaeological Researches and Excavation on the Round Hall and so-called "Columned Temple" (to the north of the Round Hall).
1992	Italian group headed by A.Invernizzi completed topographical survey of the Old Nisa site
2001	First conservation interventions
2003	Building of a small site museum Conservation by Turkmen professionals
2004	List of the 100 most endangered site Conservation by Turkmen professionals
2005	Installation of a laboratory for soil analysis Conservation by Turkmen professionals



3

Justification for Inscription



a. Criteria under which inscription is proposed

ii.

Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;

Nisa is situated at the crossroad of important commercial and strategic axes.

The architectural features, the decorations and the objects found in Old Nisa reflect the complex interpenetration of cultures on this land (Greek and roman influence).

The visible remains at old and new Nisa testify of monumental architectures developed by a civilisation open to the rich cultural exchanges of the time and in the area.

The archaeological researches carried out at Nisa since the 1930's reveal the important events which have taken place here, and prove how strongly Nisa influenced the history and the culture of central Asia.

The Parthian empire is known as a brilliant rival of Rome, as it prevented the expansion of the Roman empire to the East.

iii.

Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;

The Parthian empire disappeared in 224 A.D, when Artaban V, the last of the Parthian Kings was defeated and killed, and Old Nisa is an exceptional testimony to this lost civilisation.

Nisa is the land where the Parthian kings started their conquests and turned small Parthia into a huge empire of the ancient world that stretched from the Indus to the Euphrates.

Craftsmen merged the best features of ancient local traditions and the influences of Hellenism and Roman art. The archaeological remains and the decorative patterns testify of this lost culture.

Nisa is not the unique testimony, but it is a major symbol of this civilisation which has disappeared

v.

Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

The remodelling of two hills to create artificial levelled platforms, the construction of the two citadels with their massive defensive walls, required the displacement and transportation of huge quantities of soils.

Both fortresses are located at the foot of Kopet Dag mountains, on the fertile plain which extends from the mountains in the south to the Karakum desert in the north. The town is separated from the royal citadel, and the two hills can be seen from one another.

In this desert region, Nisa is an example of good land organisation at the foot of the mountain, where water could be channelled to produce food for the region.

b. Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

A rich history...

Old Nisa is one of the major monuments in Turkmenistan, and has considerably enriched the scientific knowledge on one of the greatest world's civilizations - the Parthian empire (middle of the 3rd Century B.C. to 224 A.D). Nisa is the land where the Parthian kings started their conquests and turned small Parthia into a huge empire that stretched from the Indus to the Euphrates. Nisa was founded as a capital of this empire, a brilliant rival of Rome for supremacy in the Near East. (In 53 BC, the Parthians managed to bring a crushing defeat upon the Romans in the battle of Karres, a small village in Northern Mesopotamia. Thousands of Roman soldiers were sent to settle in the remote Margiana, in the valley of the Murgab river.)

Crossroad of cultures...

The architecture of Parthian Nisa is comparable to other complexes of the same period, with square buildings surrounded by corridors, courtyard buildings, and a round hall. However, a detailed study of the remains reveals specific combinations of architectural styles, with the wide use of Hellenistic elements, such as the ancient Greek order system, and the inclusion of classic sculptural compositions into the architecture. The royal fortress-city of Old Nisa comprised palaces, temples and tombs.

Objects found in Old Nisa also depict the exposure of this empire to other oriental and western cultures. The antique art of Turkmenistan, which reached a high degree of sophistication during the period of existence of the Parthian empire, reveals the complex interpenetration of the different world cultures on this land. Turkmenistan, with its famous Silk Roads, is often referred to as "the crossroads of history". This art merged the best features of ancient local traditions and influences of Hellenism with Roman art.

A unique site where the Parthian remains appear clearly...

With its tell surrounded by high defensive earthen ramparts, and its impressive palace complex, the ancient Parthian city of Old Nisa is one of Turkmenistan's most significant cultural sites. Old Nisa is a unique archaeological site of Parthian period where there are few phases of anterior / posterior occupation disturbing the global comprehension of the site. The visitors can easily appreciate the layout and the architecture of this Parthian citadel without being confused by other wall remains belonging to other periods.

In addition, the two impressive historical hills enclosed by defensive ramparts are still visible independently, and the antique cultural landscape marked by the massive piedmont of the Kopet-dag has not changed fundamentally since the Parthian period.

c. Comparative analysis (including state of conservation of similar properties)

Many remains from the Parthian period have been discovered, scattered on the vast territory of the ancient empire. Among those, some are very famous and to some extent, quite comparable to Nisa such as Hatra & Ashur in Iraq, or Dura-Europos in Syria.



Iraq: Hatra & Ashur (on the WH list)

The ruins of ancient Hatra lie 105 kilometres southwest of the city of Mosul, in Iraq. Most structures are built in limestone and gypsum, and are a mixture of Assyrian, Hellenistic, Parthian and Roman styles.



Dura-Europos, Eastern Syria

Dura-Europos was founded around 300 BC by Macedonian Greeks of the Seleucid empire, and was absorbed in the first century BC into the Arsacid Parthian empire. This ancient city was finally abandoned in the third century AD.

Since the 1930's, thanks to exceptional results from archaeological research in Old Nisa, our knowledge of the architecture, art and culture of the Parthian Empire received a fundamental contribution. These results started revealing the greatness and complexity of the Arsacid cultural traditions in particular within the land of Parthia (which today corresponds to Turkmenistan), the cradle of a new powerful empire that lasted for about five centuries. Old Nisa, named Mithradatkert by its founder Mithridate I (171-132 BC), reveals the early developmental stages of the Arsacid Empire. As compared to the other arsacid sites, Nisa-Mithradatkert is a genuine Parthian foundation: Ashur is, in fact, an ancient Assyrian foundation, Dura was founded by Seleucus, general of Alexander the Great, and Hatra, even if Parthian in its main architectural and art features, was an arab city. Ctesiphon, the main arsacid capital in Mesopotamia mentioned by classical historians, is still not known definitely. In any case all these cities, in the west part of the empire (Mesopotamia) were not the first royal places of the Parthian empire, for the earliest capital and residence of the Arsacids was of course in Parthia: Old Nisa is the only one royal arsacid foundation until now scientifically and systematically (even if still partially) investigated and documented. Here we know a complex of buildings, all of royal foundations, dated a little later than the earliest years of the Arsacid state's formation.

What therefore makes Old Nisa so interesting and unique is that it was built at dawn of Parthian culture and destroyed when Parthia left the political arena.

What also reveals the importance of Old Nisa is its ancient function: in spite of its powerful defence-walls and topographical strong position, Old Nisa was not just a fortress or a fortified residence but a monumental ceremonial centre for glorifying the Arsacid dynasty. It was a sacred city of Parthian kings. The exceptional variety of architectural features (in plan and in

decoration) testifies the coexistence of different cultural traditions, as for example the royal cult of Seleucids (Greco-Macedonians) together with other typically Iranian or autonomous cultural forms.

Setting and size

The Parthian empire stretched on a vast region, and has left many archaeological remains similar to the fortresses of Nisa. We still lack precise archaeological evidences from other Parthian sites in Central Asia, but new research conducted with aerial photo and satellite images show the existence of an organized network of fortified sites in the southern part of Turkmenistan (from the Caspian Sea to the Murgab valley) along that main road known, some century later, as the Silk Road. Many sites which have been investigated by preliminary surveys on the ground belong to the Parthian period. The Murgab region in particular was densely inhabited in Parthian period, and other example of fortresses have been identified, such as Chilburj and Durnali in Margiana, or Apavarktika in Apavartikena. They are definitely inferior to Nisa in terms of size (Chilburj is 250 x 200 m), but some of them have several towers and a platform, such as in Old Nisa.



Example of another Parthian site in Turkmenistan, on the roadside near Kaahka (east of Ashgabat). Explorers name this site Ragau or Apavarktika. Its present name is Kene-Kaahka. This region is mentioned by ancient historians as Apavartikena. The Parthian household documents found in Nisa noted, that some products including grapes and especially wine was delivered from Apavartikena to Nisa. The town is very small in size as compared to Nisa, and the remains of the ramparts are much lower (6 meters instead of 25).

Many Parthian sites show similar structures, characterized by a high man-made platform strengthened by fortified curtain wall with projecting towers: structures are almost all built of mud bricks. None of them can compete with Nisa, neither in terms of setting, nor in terms of size and finds, and, above all, Nisa is the best known and documented site also inside the curtain walls. For example, Merv must have been an important knot of traffic and a crossroad in Parthian time, still after the Hellenistic period, but unfortunately Parthian levels of Merv have never been punctually investigated on the entire area of the settlement. Considering the general lack of extensive excavations in these regions, above all for the late

periods, Nisa represents one of the main sites of Parthia (we can add of the entire Parthian empire): its royal foundation is reflected by the architecture and the art of the two citadels: New and Old Nisa.

Old Nisa, set in the hearth of the native land of the Parthians, has mostly adopted traditional building methods and lay-out principles under the rule of the local dynasty. Architects were also guided by local town-planning canons when they established the Old Nisa fortress. In opposition to the Hellenic Ay-Khanum town (Afghanistan), which was organically integrated in the environment without modifying the natural topography, Old Nisa was elevated on an artificial platform. This platform was obtained after flattening a natural hill which was also cut into an irregular pentagon shape, clearly highlighted by powerful defence walls. This tradition was typical of the native building culture in existence many centuries before the Greek conquest. Some striking examples of high man-made platforms are found in Yaz Depe in Margiana, or in the ancient Bactrian constructions of Kuchuk Depe and Tillya Depe.

But Unlike these monuments, Old Nisa demonstrates the further evolution of this building technique. If the mentioned examples and also later constructions of Margiana (castles such as Naghim-Kala and Kyz-Kala) show the construction of isolated buildings or small advanced posts on artificial platforms, then Old Nisa site gives the example of erection on high platform of an entire city with all its inner infrastructures: edifices, squares, gardens, water-pools, engineering systems, etc.

Architecture

When looking closer at the architecture, some elements revealed in Nisa can be compared to other similar features. This can easily be explained by the fact that Parthia was influenced by many other cultures. But the result is different from other architectures found in Mesopotamia (monuments of Khatra, Ashur and Babylon in present Irak) or Seistan (Kuhi-Hoja). Structurally speaking first, we can note that the buildings in Khatra and Ashur were roofed by an evolved composition of spacious vaulted iwans. In Nisa, a different building system using ceiling beams was used to cover large spaces.

Some layout principles are also inherited from the local building culture. One example is the colonnade surrounding the courtyard of the Square House. Such a spatial organization (a courtyard encircled by columns along the perimeter) will last in Parthian architecture till the early centuries AD. Columned porticoes encircle courtyards in the palaces of Ashur and Nippur and appear also in the decor of sanctuaries and necropolis of Dura-Europos. Scientists who have explored these architectures consider with reason that this is not the result of Greek influence, but rather the evolution of eastern construction principles (see: M.Rostovtzeff, *Dura-Europos and its Art*, Oxford, 1938, p.42; G.A.Pugachenkova, *Iskusstvo Turkmenistana* {Art of Turkmenistan}, Moscow, 1967). The Square House of Old Nisa confirms this, and the cradle of this construction system should be sought in the second

millennium BC in the territory of Turkmenistan. This structure has nothing in common with the lay-out of the Greek temples as observed on the other Parthian cities.

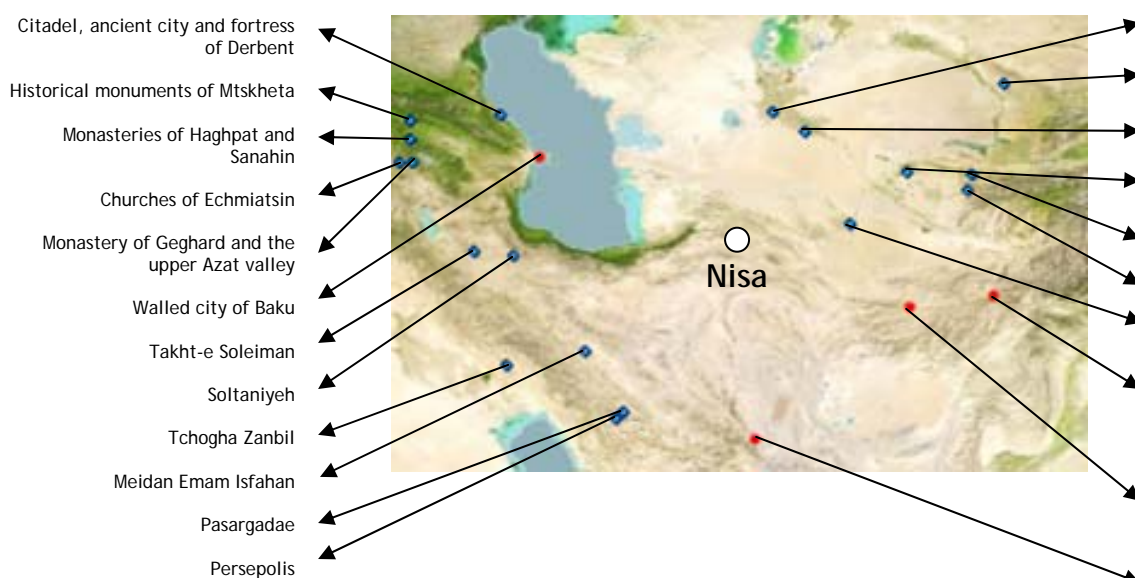
Materials and ornaments

To embellish the monumental volumes, high relief images placed on orthostatic slabs were widely used in Dura Europos, but in Nisa, the same types of rooms are rather decorated with painted sculptures made of burnt clay. Nisa is also made of earth in its different forms (mud and fired bricks, terracotta), while other materials such as dressed stones can be found in Khatra.

To conclude, we can say that many antique cities of the Central Asian region founded after Greek-Macedonian expansion bear obvious traces of Hellenic culture. This is particularly noticeable in the Parthian monuments, where the Greek-Roman factor is brought to the forefront. The Parthian towns situated closer to the boundary of the Roman empire have undergone more influence of the building culture from Ancient Rome.

Thus, in its architecture, Old Nisa, unlike the western Parthian cities where the Greek-Roman elements dominate, is an achieved symbiosis of western (European) and eastern cultures. The volumes and lay-out of Nisa buildings is of rooted local origin, while the decoration elements (bases of columns, capitals, metopes, friezes, style of the sculptural and pictorial images, etc...) are Greek in essence.

Map 11. Historic sites already on the World Heritage List in the region (in September 2005)



d. Integrity and/or Authenticity

Architecture

The site was abandoned 18 Centuries ago, and what remains from this 2000 years old Palace and its impressive ramparts is a tell surrounded by a high shapeless earth wall. The two tells do not faithfully represent the flourishing Parthian Capital with its hill forts, but still, they are authentic ruins which have not been altered by any sort of human interaction. They have only been naturally eroded by the weather.

Landscape

However, the authenticity remains in terms of landscape, as the visitor can appreciate the huge size of the two remaining tells, and also the positioning of this Capital at the foot of the Kopet-Dag mountains.

The land has also remained deserted until today, since the population established a new settlement in Bagyr.

In addition, the two impressive historical hills enclosed by defensive ramparts remain visible from one another what gives a very evocative vision of the importance of the city in the ancient time

Archaeology

The findings of the first archaeological excavations, left unprotected for decades, have suffered from erosion. It has only been a few years since measures have been taken to conserve the remains as soon as they are dug, with some promising results.

At Old Nisa, it is considered that half of the site is still untouched, and is therefore protected by the tell. In New Nisa, the archaeological campaigns were reduced to punctual small scale trenches and most of the archaeological resources are remaining underground, naturally sheltered from any environmental and human threats.

Conservation

The site has not been altered by severe restoration campaigns as it often occurred in the region. Some obvious additions have been made in order to better channel the visitors, such as a concrete platform at the entrance, and a path made of concrete slabs. These additions do not harm the archaeological remains, and are quite useful, but they are too conspicuous, and disfigure the site. On the other hand, they can easily be removed and replaced by more discreet systems, which could blend more sensitively with the landscape.

Another critique to recent conservation activities is the addition of burnt bricks on the ancient brick columns. This partial reconstruction was only meant to reinforce the remaining original base, exposed to the rains and frost, and to discourage the visitors who wanted to climb on them. The result is technically efficient, but visually intrusive, because the new bricks are yellowish, while the original ones are red. This can also easily be arranged with the application of a simple earth slurry on the new bricks. The added layers can also be dismantled if needed.



The conservation team at work in October 2005 on the ruins of the columned hall at Old Nisa

4

State of Conservation & Factors affecting the Property



a. Present state of conservation

The site was abandoned almost 18 Centuries ago, and is therefore in a ruined state. However, the visitor can still appreciate the size of the high defensive earthen ramparts, and clearly read the layout and the architecture of this Parthian citadel without being confused by additions from other periods. In an archaeological perspective, the site is well preserved.

The site has not only been weakened by the passage of time, but also from insufficiently planned studies. Recent international excavations have unfortunately accelerated the decay of the remaining architectural features (see chronology of archaeological research in chapter 2b). Although it is legally compulsory for all archaeological teams to conserve any site they dig in Turkmenistan, they often do not consider conservation as a priority, or simply do not provide time for it during their short field campaigns.

On their side, the Turkmen authorities do not have the necessary financial means to undertake all the necessary post-excavation conservation works.

But the situation is gradually changing. Remedial work has begun, under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, which has appointed qualified staff on site and a small annual operating budget. The Italian archaeological team of Turin is also trying to fulfil its obligations in terms of conservation, and is providing some funding (app. 1000 US\$/year) to the DPM to undertake conservation works.

In addition, the UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office and CRATerre-ENSAG have provided training and an equipped laboratory in 2005 to test all the soils used for conservation activities (brick moulding, mortars and plasters).

In 2002, the American Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation granted US\$ 9.400 to implement a project for conservation and reconstruction of Nisa wall-paintings, and organization of the site museum on Nisa art.

But important efforts are still required to set-up an efficient preventive maintenance scheme that will ensure the survival of the recently excavated parts of the site. Funds are missing, and the necessary equipment is still lacking.

However, the nomination process has given the opportunity to discuss these issues with the concerned parties, mainly with the two archaeological teams operating on the site. They are fully conscious of the threat, and they are ready to participate more in the conservation effort, and adhere to the international rules and standards in terms of conservation. This

nomination process has also placed the DPM in a better position to defend their position, and oblige all stakeholders to work under the guidance of a common Management Plan. The main goal of the management plan is to reach better balance between archaeology and conservation, to avoid the complete destruction of the site.



b. Factors affecting the property

The main factor affecting the property is the humidity, which gradually erodes all the exposed parts. The ramparts are less affected than the recently exposed archaeological remains, which are very fragile. The following are the major threats to this site (in order of priority).

- Archaeological excavations without conservation
- Lack of financial resources
- Inadequate planning
- Rain
- Development pressure
- Seismic activities

b1. Archaeological excavations without conservation

The archaeological study of Old Nisa began in 1930 and continued until now. But, despite more than 70-years of study, Old Nisa has not received the required protection measures. If all these archaeological studies have allowed deepening the knowledge on Parthian art and architecture, they have caused great damages to previously buried structures which had resisted for more than 2000 years. Every year, new rooms, chambers, courtyards, etc.. are excavated and left open without protection. This still continues today. So far, the director of the DPM estimates that approximately 40 % of the structures have been dug out at Old Nisa.

All the architectural elements which have been revealed are extremely fragile, and erode very quickly once exposed to the direct rain. In addition, each new hole left by an archaeological expedition traps water during the humid months of winter and increases the speed of the erosion processes.

The chaotic topography of the excavated area is a major cause of deterioration as proper drainage of rain waters is actually impossible.



Photo by Jérôme Gaslain (<http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Archaeology/Ashkanian/nisa2000.htm>)

The conservation of archaeological sites is a new concept, which was not considered before. Archaeologists have also been alone for many years, and it was/and is still not their priority to conserve "their" sites, because they do not master the required technical knowledge, have limited financial resources and often have no time left to conserve after their campaigns. Today, the DPM, which comprises several conservation-architects fights for conservation to be seriously taken into consideration by archaeological expeditions. But they are hardly respected, and lack equipment and financial support to implement urgent conservation measures. This nomination process tends to change the views of the archaeologists, who gradually realise the urgency to conserve the sites.

b2. Lack of financial resources

Conservation activities are limited, and the site is poorly equipped, due the lack of funds. The international assistance programmes (Turin University, US Ambassador's Fund, UNESCO Tehran) have slightly improved the situation, but conservation can not rely on international assistance only, and new sources of funds at the local level should be found.

b3. Inadequate planning

Scientific research has been constant on this site for more than 70 years, but planning has always been lacking, to ensure that the main problems are addressed in priority. Excavating the site to reveal the structures and find new objects has always been the only priority. But the situation is gradually changing, and conservation activities are gradually developing. The park staff, with the assistance of the DPM staff in Ashgabat has already done conservation works. But still, these works have not addressed some of the most urgent remedial works that are necessary to prevent fast deterioration. Drainage problems for example should be addressed in priority, to avoid the absorption of water in all the open chambers. The management plan is addressing those issues.

b4. Environmental pressure

The unpredictable weather (rain and wind erosion) is an important factor affecting the constructions of Old Nisa. This is shown by the eroded surfaces and gullies in the walls, which are all made of earth. The erosion is also occurring because none of the excavated structures are protected by a shelter. Sacrificial layers of earth and straw are regularly applied as a preventive conservation measure on the structures. This is done in spring and autumn, especially after continuous rains.

Winter is the most destructive period, because the frost increases the negative impact of humidity: The crystallization of water leads to the mechanical destruction of the wall surfaces. Experimental measures have been tested, such as the covering of ancient walls with a brick capping (either adobe or burnt bricks), but they are not really discreet, and it will take another few years to assess their efficiency.

Precise data on the climate are provided in the appendixes. It is interesting to note for instance that if the rains are limited to 300 mm/year on average, 30 mm can fall in one day only. The temperatures can also vary a lot, with yearly extremes ranging from -13°C to +44°C.

b5. Seismic activities

The site is located in an active seismic zone. (Ashgabat was completely destroyed in 1948). In case of a violent earthquake, only the excavated areas would be damaged, but the earthen ramparts would not be affected.

The force of moderate seismic activity for the zone, where the sites are located, is 9/12ths. This should be taken into account when preparing the projects of partial restoration and museum presentation. However, the small height of preserved walls (no more than 5 m), their considerable thickness (2-3 m), plasticity of building materials and mortar do not allow to number seismic impact among the dangerous factors threatening the property.

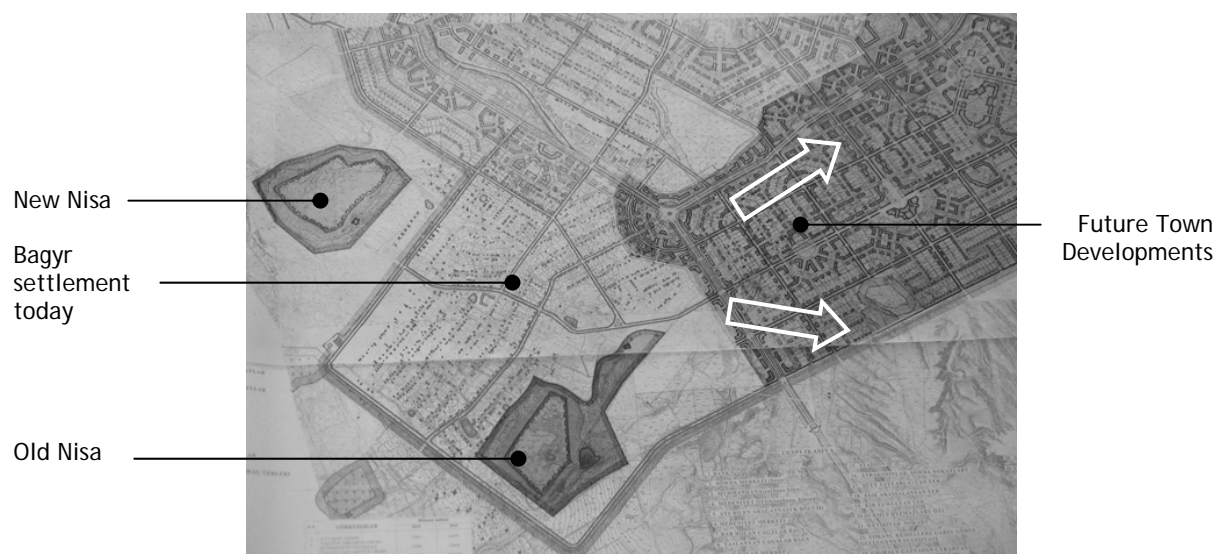
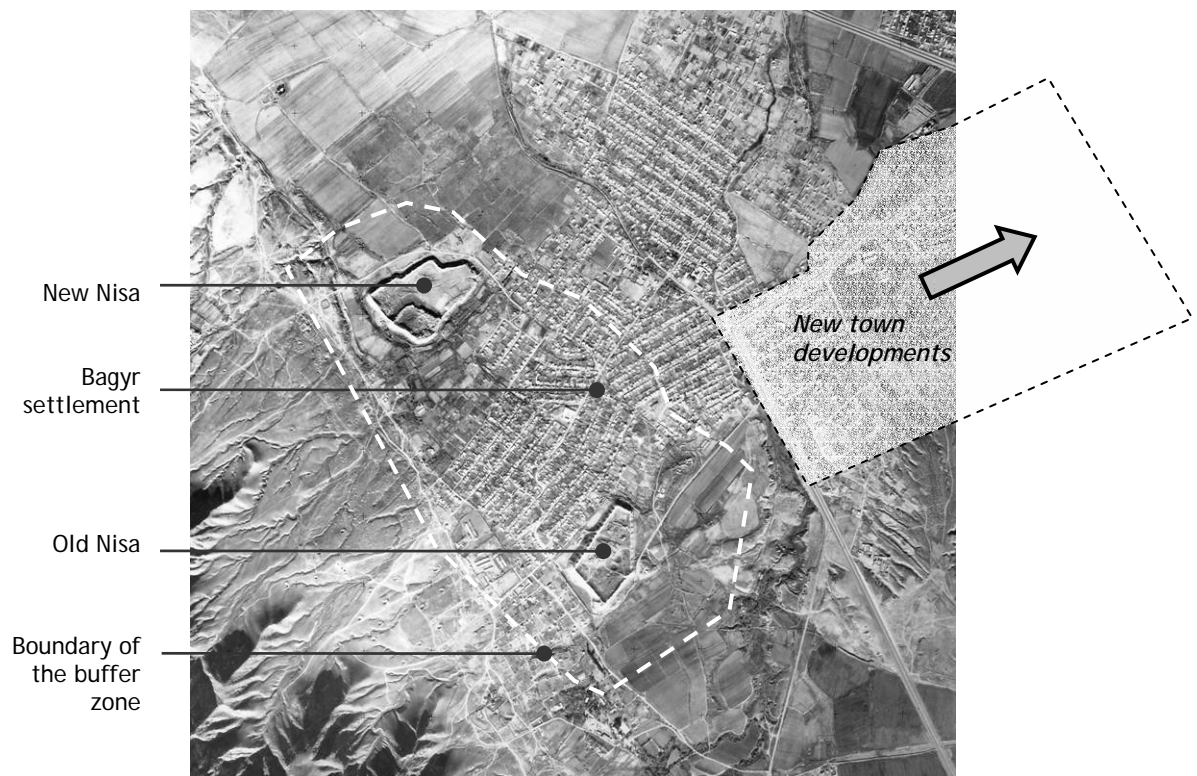
b6. Development Pressures (e.g., encroachment, adaptation, agriculture, mining)

The two fortresses are still preserved from encroachment, despite the real proximity of the town of Bagyr, which is surrounding them. The site is first of all protected by the topography of the land, since the steep slopes of the ramparts make it very difficult to encroach on them.

Secondly, the town is also legally protected, and building new houses within the limits of the NSHCP is forbidden.

Finally, the town development plans (see chapter 5d) show clearly that Bagyr will expand on the eastern side, towards Ashgabat, and not around the ramparts. The two fortresses are part of the town development plan, which include the future creation of municipal and tourist infrastructures related to the two fortresses (roads, big dwelling and administrative buildings, hotel complex, restaurant, museum etc.). This will be done with due respect to the Law of Turkmenistan "About protection of the historical and cultural monuments" which guarantees the preservation of monuments and provides limitations for the use of the buffer zone. Building new houses inside the buffer zone is not allowed, and it is planned to gradually reduce the density of buildings around the nominated territories.

Nevertheless, the proximity of Ashgabat to these fragile archaeological sites is evidently a factor of risk. Therefore, inscription of the sites on the World Heritage List will strengthen their status and provide extra protection to guarantee their preservation.



Map 11, Bagyr Town development plan

b7. Visitor/tourism pressures

Visitors represent a negative factor when they are not monitored by the guides. The excursion routes are not well defined, and many disorganised groups of visitors tend to climb on the fragile wall remains, which represent nice spots for admiring the landscape. A concrete platform was created at the entrance, to allow the visitors to observe the ruins from above, but it is not sufficient. More will have to be done to better channel the flow of visitors in well defined paths.

b8. Number of inhabitants within the property and the buffer zone

On the territory of the “Nisa” Park, and therefore, within the nominated territories, there are no houses, administrative buildings or industrial plants. It is only within the buffer zone that houses can be found. They are part of the Bagyr settlement, which has 9.332 inhabitants. The exact number of people living in the buffer zone is unknown, but it does not exceed 2000 inhabitants. It is necessary to note that the General Development Plan for the Bagyr settlement does not integrate new buildings in the buffer zone.

The relation between the Nisa conservation team and the population living in the buffer zone is in most cases satisfactory. A regular monitoring is however necessary to prevent the development of illegal refuse dumps within the buffer zone. The Park staffs sometimes have to clear out the littered territory themselves. Other threats from the neighbouring community include school children jumping over the walls or throwing stones, and unauthorized grazing of cattle. After repeated arrests and penalizing of breakers, these violations became sporadic.

Estimated population located within (in October 2005) :	
- the Area of nominated property	0
- the Buffer zone	Part of the 9332 inhabitants of Bagyr Approximately 2000 (estimation)

5

Protection and Management of the Property



a. Ownership

The Turkmenistan Ministry of Culture and TV and Radio Broadcasting (core zones) and
The Hakimlik (region council) of Rukhabad etrab for the buffer zone.

b. Protective designation

The site is gazetted as one of the 1300 historical and cultural monuments of Turkmenistan.
In addition, Nisa is one of the 8 “State Historical and Cultural Parks” which have been
created to protect the most significant sites in Turkmenistan.

The SHCP “Nisa” was originally established by the Council of Ministers of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic decree dated 3^d March 1980, reference N 111. The precise limits of the SHCP “Nisa” are given in the Policy for the State Historical and Cultural Park “Nisa” dated 1980 and Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic N 202 dated 4th May 1982.

The Policy (see appendixes for full text) states for example that it is forbidden on the territory of the Park :

- to implement any sort of economic activity;
- to build new constructions;
- to use cultural assets for household needs;
- to lay cables, pipelines and electric or other lines which are not necessary for the requirements of the Park;
- to allow dwelling of private individuals, including park staff;
- to guide tourists and carry out archaeological excavation, and all other scientific and educational activities by non authorized persons, organizations, or enterprises, without permission of the DPM and Park administrations.

In addition to this policy, a special Resolution of Executive Committee of the Ashgabat Regional Council of the People’s Deputies N 1/61 dated 25th January 1989 describes the buffer zones which intensify control on the lands directly surrounding the protected sites (see translation of this text in appendixes). The implementation of these laws is ensured by park staff posted on site, and by regional authorities (police, chiefs of daykhan birleshiks).

c. Means of implementing protective measures.

The major measures adopted by the government to protect, conserve and present the site are:

- Appointment of staff (21 permanent staff ensure the protection and the basic maintenance of the site)
- Provision of facilities and equipment to carry out conservation works
- The park is also equipped with a basic shed for the production of bricks and stacking of materials, and with a basic office block.

In case of breaches of the above laws (see chapter 5b), the park administration is eligible to liaise with the competent authorities for their immediate punishment. The Park staff, a highly protected monument, has the right to issue fines for the breach of policy and rules of use of the historic and cultural monuments.

d. Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located

The site is part of the Bagyr town development plan. According to this plan, the town will develop on its eastern side, towards Ashgabat, and not around the ramparts. The two fortresses are therefore politically protected. The Bagyr development plan also suggests developing specific equipments in relation with the 2 fortresses, such as tourist facilities and access roads. (see map in chapter 4.b7 on development pressures)

e. Property management plan or other management system

Management is exercised at two levels, at the site level (SHCP-“Nisa” office, Bagir-Ashgabat), and at the national level (DPM, Ashgabat).

The park Director is preparing an action plan on a yearly basis, which is then submitted to the DPM in Ashgabat for approval. But these yearly plans are not sufficient to reach long term objectives. There was no broad management plan with long term views specifically prepared for this site when the nomination dossier was prepared, and this was considered as a threat for Nisa. A new plan was therefore set up for 2006-2010, to ensure a better balance between the implemented activities (i.e. archaeology/conservation), and merge all existing documents and strategies concerning this site. Details concerning this plan can be found in appendix 1.

The following objectives have been agreed upon for this 5-year plan. They are to:

(Protection)

- Protect the Park land and control site uses
- Control visitors

(Conservation and management)

- Improve the management system
- Improve the performances of the technical staff and conserve the excavated sections
- Slow down the deterioration processes

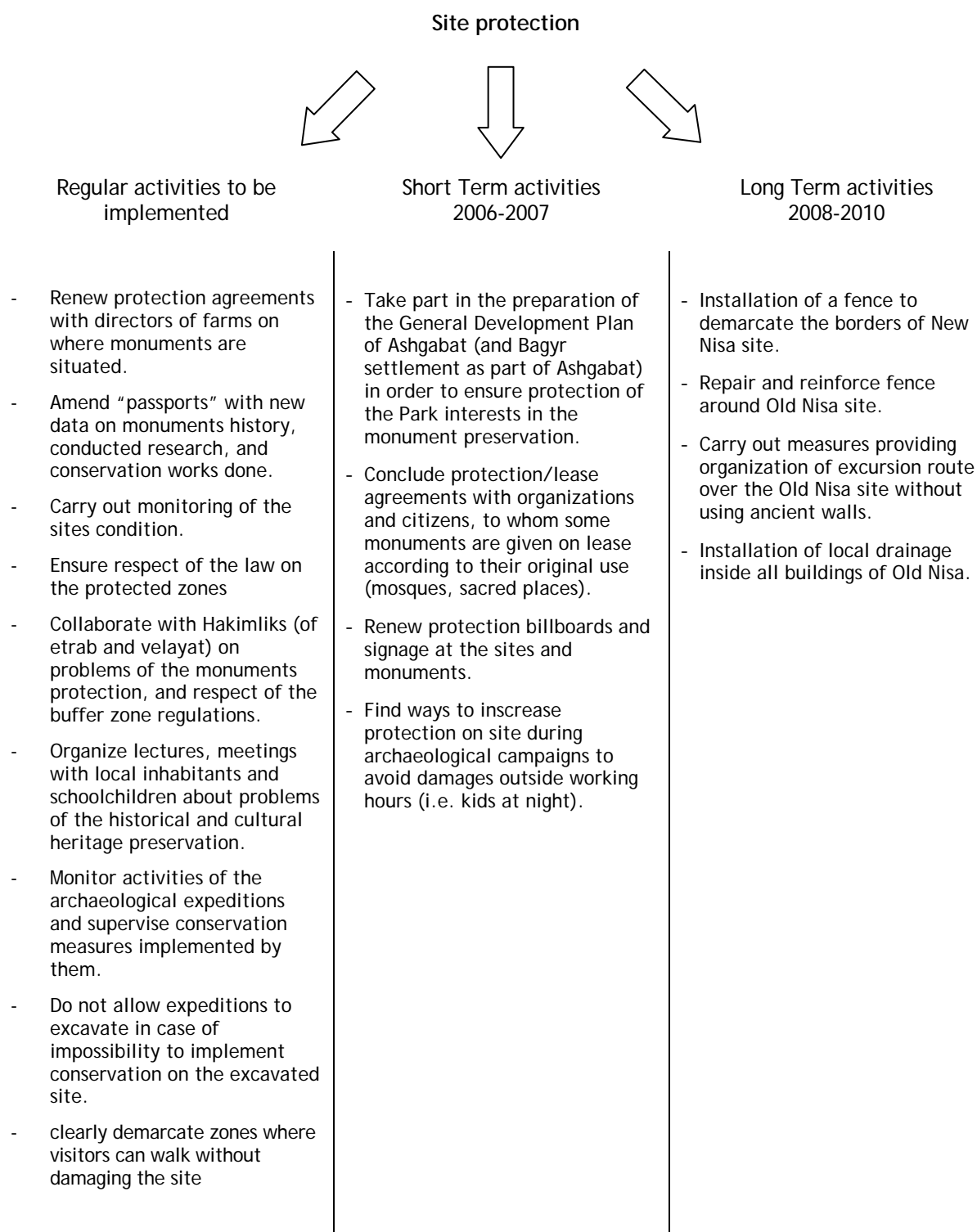
(Promotion and education)

- Promote Turkmen history and culture, including archaeological and architectural monuments of Nisa
- Contribute to archaeological research on the monuments
- Store, conserve and exhibit finds and scientific collections from the Park's territory

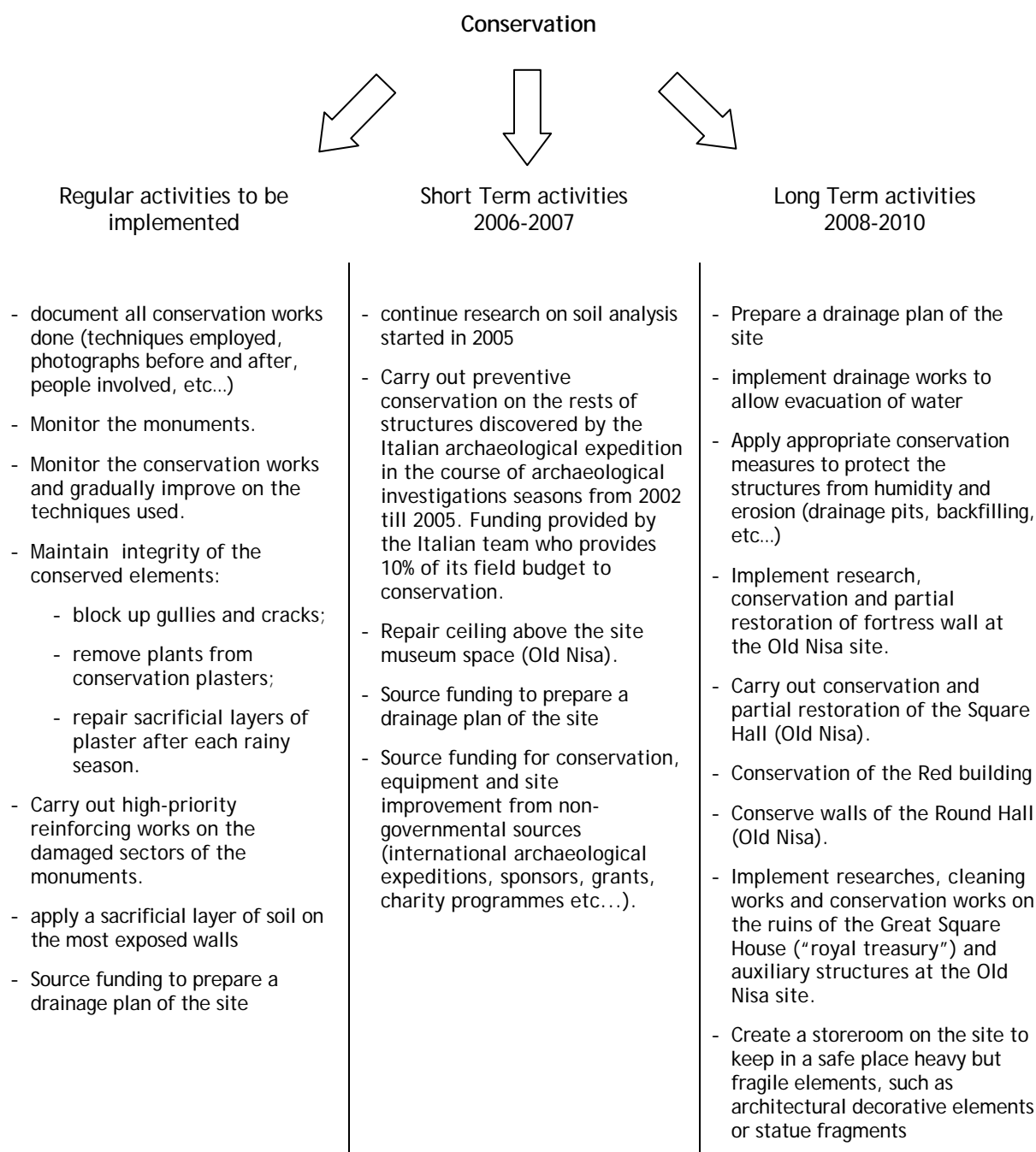
This management plan should serve as a tool to ensure:

- partnership and optimal contribution by all parties in reaching the objectives of the plan
- the coherency of all activities developed at the site
- the best use of the available resources
- proper understanding of the factors threatening the site by all stakeholders, and more particularly by the local community, the visitors and the archaeological teams
- continuity in the management in case of changes in management.

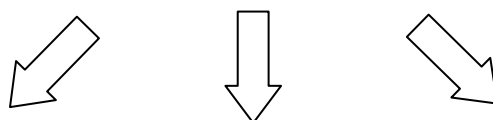
Activities planned for 2006-2010



Activities planned for 2006-2010



Objective 3: Promotion and education



Regular activities to be implemented

- Publish guides, brochures, booklets and other scientific popular literature.
- Give lectures on monuments for secondary schools and organizations.
- Prepare materials on monuments for press and TV broadcast.
- Organize educational lectures on the Park territory.

Short Term activities
2006-2007

- Develop a new tourist route over the Old Nisa site (offering a greater variety of paths for visitors after 2005 archaeological season) and to other monuments and sites of the Park.
- Prepare a television programme on the results of the works of the Italian archaeological expedition. (unless parts which have been backfilled)
- Take part in the work of expedition of the Dr. Pilipko V.N. concerning restoration of valuable historical finds to prepare exhibits at the National Museum of Turkmenistan.
- Seek funding to reprint best booklets and leaflets on Nisa, and prepare new documentations to be sold to visitors as a mean to raise funding for the site conservation

Long Term activities
2008-2010

- Seek authorization and prepare cost estimates to build museum and administrative complex for the "Nisa" Park.
- Edit and publish 2 brochures and 1 booklet on the Nisa monuments.
- Reissue best booklets and leaflets concerning the sites and monuments of "Nisa" Park published in previous years.
- Prepare, together with the Committee on sport and tourism of Turkmenistan, publicity billboards on the Park's monuments which will be erected in cities and velayat centres of Turkmenistan.
- Create a Web page on the Nisa sites.
- Organise a photographic exhibition (maybe at the National Museum) to present the result of past year research in Old Nisa

f. Sources and levels of finance

A minimal conservation budget is allocated yearly to the site for its conservation. This allows hiring external workers, buying materials (mainly earth, straw and water) and paying for workmanship.

Budgets allocated between 2003 and 2006

2003	2004	2005	2006
45 Million Manats 2250 US Dollars	150 Million Manats 7500 US Dollars	200 Million Manats 10000 US Dollars	300 Million Manats 15000 US Dollars

The excavations campaigns are sponsored by the foreign archaeologists (Russian and Italian), who spend most of their financial means for archaeological excavations. However, the Italian team conducted by Carlo Lippolis is allocating some funds to implement preventive conservation measures on the newly excavated sites (approx. 1000 US\$/month).

The American Embassy in Ashgabat has also contributed 7500 US Dollars to undertake conservation activities and install the site museum in 2003 - 2004.

The visitors also represent a source of funding, especially foreign visitors. The Park management has the right to generate and use incomes or collect fees from those using elements of the site, in press releases, radio announcements, television programmes, movies and advertisements.

The funds raised from entrance fees over the past four years are given in the table below:

Year	Amount receive from local visitors	Amount received from foreign visitors	Total amount
2002	2.387.000	12.000.000	14.387.000
2003	250.000	16.928.200	17.178.200
2004	10.890.955	68.052.000	78.942.155
2005 (9 months)	6.375.026	61.861.600	68.236.626
Total for 4 incomplete years	19.902.181 manats 686 €	158.841.800 manats 5477 €	178.743.981 manats 6163 €

Cost of the entrance tickets:

	with guide	without guide
for children	2000 manat	1000 manat
for students	4000 manat	2000 manat
for adults	8000 manat	4000 manat
for foreigners	42400 manat (2 US\$)	21200 manat (1 US\$)

photographing and video shooting is charged 10600 manat per person

g. Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques

The experts in conservation for this site are the Turkmen conservators based in Ashgabat. Dr Mukhammed Mamedov, Head of the DPM, and Igor Zubanov, conservator, provide all the expertise in terms of conservation and management. The Park staff is also well trained for the production of bricks and the preparation of materials for conservation, and for supervising conservation works.

CRATerre-ENSAG has undertaken a short training in 2005 on soil analysis, to help the Park staff in the selection of good quality soils for conservation. This activity was financed by the UNESCO Tehran cluster office.



Images of the training on soil analysis held in 2005. The new laboratory and skills provided should lead to the selection of better quality soils and the implementation of more durable conservation works.

h. Visitor facilities and statistics

Only Old Nisa is accessible to the public. A reception office is located at the entrance of the site and there is space for visitors to park their car at the foot of the Fortress. From the parking space, visitors are guided by a path marked out with concrete slabs, which are a bit unsightly, but make the site much more accessible when it rains. This path leads to the excavated palace complex and to the site museum.

Year	Number of local visitors	Number of foreign visitors	Total
2002	1693	1132	2825
2003	181	1597	1778
2004	1867	1958	3825
2005 (9 months)	892	1627	2519
Total for 4 incomplete years	4 633	6 314	10 947



Group of school children visiting Old Nisa in June 2005

i. Policies and programmes related to the presentation and promotion of the property

Old Nisa site Museum

At the end of 2002, the American Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation awarded USD 9.400 to carry out excavation, inventory and restoration of the remains of Old Nisa murals. Under this Project, called "Restoration of Parthian wall-paintings in the tower-building of Old Nisa", some parts of the Tower Building were restored (a sector of by-pass corridor and entrance columned portico) and a small museum of Parthian art inside two rooms of the Eastern Minor Tower was set up. The museum was launched at the beginning of the year 2004. The total area of the museum is about 47 m². It occupies the space of two internal rooms of the Tower Building. In the first room (reconstructed) there are exhibition show-cases with samples of Nisa murals, architectural decor, original mud and fired bricks, and also few reconstruction of Nisa frescoes. There is also 7 well illustrated exhibition panels with captions in Turkmen and English. In the second one (original) the ancient Parthian interior with elements of original plaster and with details of Parthian furniture can be found. The museum is accessible from 8⁰⁰ till 20⁰⁰ (in summer) and from 9⁰⁰ till 18⁰⁰.

Path and platform

Visitors are guided on site by a path made of thin concrete slabs laid on the ground. They can also admire the ruins from the top of a concrete platform erected at the entrance to the site.

Guide

A site guide is permanent appointed on site.

Documentation

Good coloured flyers had been prepared in the past, in Russian and English version, but they are now sold out at the moment.



Stairs bringing visitors from the parking area to the top of the ramparts



Concrete observation platform built for the visitors



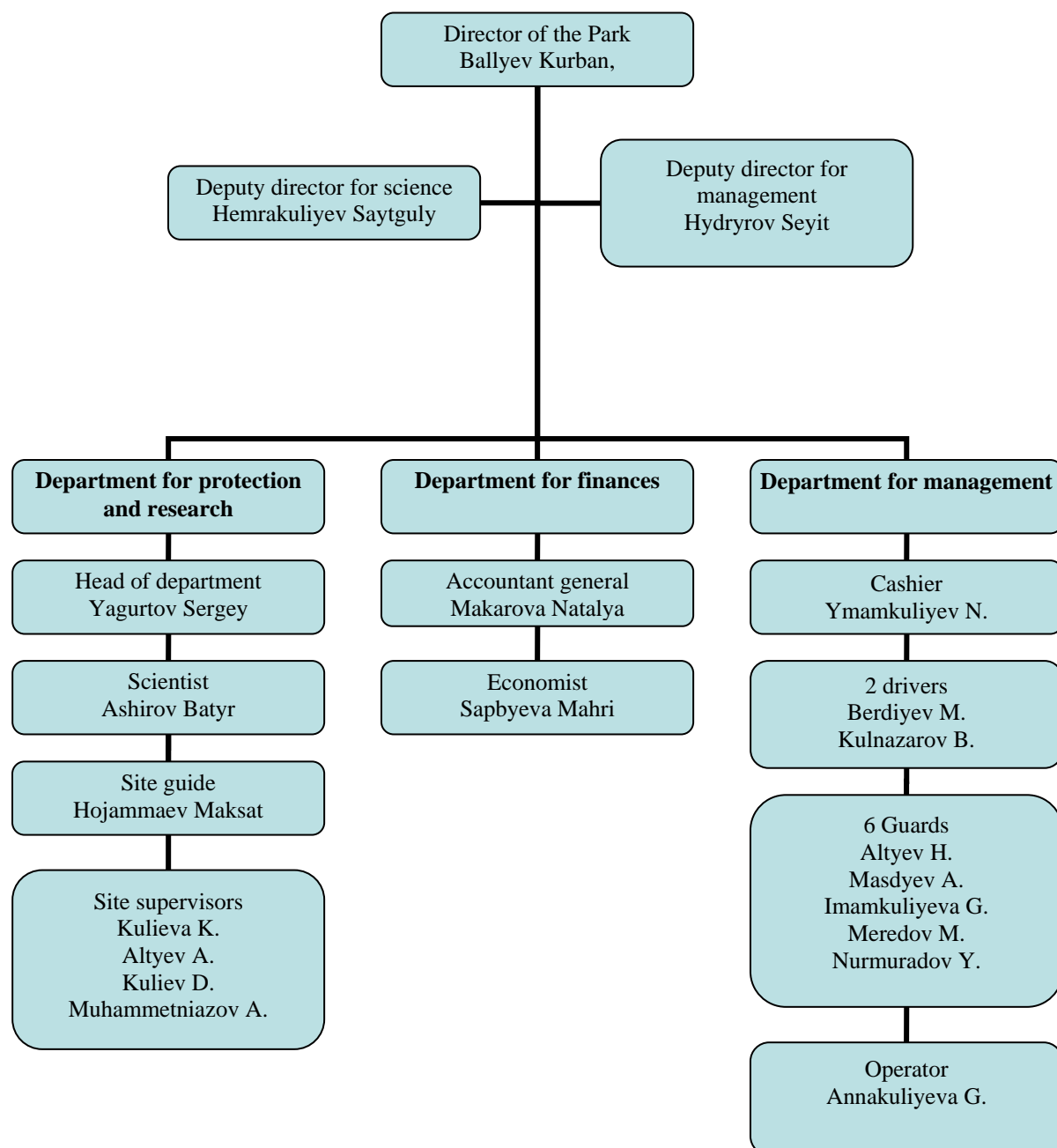
Information panel located under the concrete platform



Concrete slabs marking the path to be followed by visitors

j. Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance)

In 2005, the Park had 21 permanent staff, including the security guards, but excluding the additional workers who are employed when conservation works are implemented. The diagram below provides the names and position of each of them.



SHCP - Nisa staff diagram (in 2005)

6

Monitoring

a. Key indicators for measuring state of conservation

Indicator	Periodicity	Location of Records
% of the site surface excavated by archaeologists	every year	Old and New Nisa
% of the excavated areas conserved	Every year before winter	Old Nisa
Number of collapsed walls	every year	Old Nisa
Erosion of the sacrificial layers applied	every year after the winter	All the conserved areas
Traces of stagnant water in the dug holes	once a year in rainy periods	In all the excavated areas
Quantity of grass growing	twice a year in rainy periods	In all the excavated areas

b. Administrative arrangements for monitoring property

The DPM, under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, is controlling all activities taking place in Nisa. The director of the park, Kurban Ballyev, has to seek permission from the DPM to implement works, and nothing can be done without their approval. The same applies to all archaeological missions, which are not allowed to dig without the permission of the DPM. The site being close to Ashgabat, all actions are generally executed on this site in the presence of a DPM representative. Monitoring is therefore constant, since the site can quickly be reached from Ashgabat.

In addition to this constant presence of the National Director and his colleagues heading the various Departments in Ashgabat, the site is also systematically monitored, and an official form called "passport" is regularly filled, to describe the state of conservation of the site.

The result of the regular site monitoring is the “PASPORT” form. This form, filled by hand and written in Turkmen language, describes the site at a given time, and provides details on all the significant changes occurring. Each Turkmen site of the Inventory has its specific PASPORT form.

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7

Documentation

a. Photographs, slides, image inventory and authorization table












The proposed photographs can be found in the CD-rom at the end of this nomination dossier (in the appendices). All photographs are in jpeg format. Only four of them are slides. Copies of these four slides have also been provided with the nomination file.
















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Id. No		Caption	Date of Photo (mo/yr)	Photographer	Copyright owner
1		Old Nisa: The earthen defensive ramparts and the Kopet Dak mountains in the background, seen from the ruins of Old Nisa.	October 2005	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG
2		Old Nisa: Remains of the palace complex, with the defensive ramparts and the Kopet Dag mountains in the background.	December 2000	Thierry Joffroy	CRATerre-ENSAG
3		Old Nisa: Remains of the round hall.	December 2000	Thierry Joffroy	CRATerre-ENSAG
4		Old Nisa: The defensive rampart seen from the inside of the Old Nisa fortress, with the remains of a tower.	December 2000	Thierry Joffroy	CRATerre-ENSAG
5		Old Nisa: The partially restored square hall.	September 2004	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG
6		Old Nisa: The partially restored square hall.	September 2004	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG
7		Old Nisa: archaeological remains of the southern complex.	September 2004	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG
8		Old Nisa: archaeological expedition, conducted by Italian archaeologist Carlo Lippolis, working on the southern complex.	June 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
9		Old Nisa: archaeological remains of the southern complex.	September 2004	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG
10		Old Nisa: archaeological remains of the southern complex. The exposed walls have been partially reconstructed and sacrificial mud layers have been applied onto the original walls.	October 2005	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG
11		Old Nisa: Conservation team in action, adding a few mud brick layers on top of the original walls around the columned hall.	October 2005	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG

12		Old Nisa: excavated corridor in the southern complex. The original walls are protected with a sacrificial layer of mud plaster.	October 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
13		Old Nisa: remains of one of the original brick columns in the columned hall.	December 2000	Thierry Joffroy	CRATerre-ENSAG
14		Old Nisa: Decorated stone plinth revealed in 2004 in the southern complex	September 2004	Igor Zubanov	Ministry of Culture, Ashgabat
15		Old Nisa: remains of the northern complex, severely eroded by the rains	October 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
16		Old Nisa: view from the top of the ramparts. The row of trees at the bottom indicate the limits of the buffer zone	June 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
17		Old Nisa: view from the top of the western rampart, with Bagyr settlement in the background. The limits of the protected area is marked with a fence.	June 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
18		Old Nisa seen from Bagyr, with the Kopet Dag mountains in the background.	June 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
19		Site interpretation: Information panel at the entrance to Old Nisa fortress	September 2004	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG
20		Site interpretation: Entrance to the State historical Park "Old Nisa", with the ticket office on the right	October 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
21		Site interpretation: school children with a guide in the columned hall of Old Nisa	October 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
22		Site interpretation: school children in the heart of Old Nisa fortress.	October 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
23		Stairs built on the western side of Old Nisa fortress, to climb the ramparts.	October 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
24		Visitor's trail marked with concrete slabs, to avoid uncontrolled climbing on the ruins.	Septembre 2004	Sébastien Moriset	CRATerre-ENSAG
25		Remains of new Nisa	June 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG
26		New Nisa (in the background) seen from Old Nisa	June 2005	David Gandreau	CRATerre-ENSAG

b. Texts relating to protective designation, copies of property management plans or documented management systems and extracts of other plans relevant to the property

The following texts can be found in the appendixes:

Appendix 1. 2006-2010 Management plan

Appendixes 2 to 6: Legal Texts relating to protective designation

c. Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property

As for any of the 1300 gazetted monuments of Turkmenistan, the monuments of Nisa are registered on an official inventory form called "*Pasport*", which contains basic information such as its location, use, history, value, state of conservation, protective by-laws, etc... These forms are regularly up-dated, and also serve as monitoring sheets.

The *Pasport* forms for Nisa are kept in 2 places:

- 1 copy at the Department for the Inventory, registration and monitoring of Monuments in Ashgabat, where all *pasport* forms are centralized
- 1 copy with the Director of the Department of Monuments, Ministry of Culture, Ashgabat
- 1 copy with the Director in charge of the Nisa Park.

d. Address where inventory, records and archives are held

Archives and records are held in Nisa, at the Nisa State Historical and Cultural Park office. Copies of these archives are available in Ashgabat too.

Addresses:

State Historical and Cultural Park, Nisa
Turkmenistan
744035 Ashgabat
Etrab of Azatlyk
11th mkr, Gundogar street 1
Phone: (993-12) 43 16 28 or 43 27 83

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8

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The complete list of people involved in the preparation of this file can be found on page 4.

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744000 Ashgabat
Phone: (993-12) 35 53 67 Fax: 51 13 13
Email: anturk@ast.ucsd.edu

d. Official Web address

There is no official web site for Nisa. The most interesting Web links are the following:

- http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/people/pep_kult/140705_eng.htm
- <http://www.parthia.com/nisa>
- http://www.archeogate.it/vicino_oriente/article.php?id=321&offset=2 (in Italian)

9

Signature on behalf of the State Party



 04.11.05

Dr. Mukhammed Mamedov

Head of the National Department for the protection, Study and restoration
of the historical and Cultural monuments, Ministry of Culture and TV and
Radio Broadcasting of Turkmenistan



 04.11.05

Dr. Kuvandyk Poladov
Secretary-General Turkmenistan
National Commission for UNESCO

10

Appendixes

Appendix 1.

2006 – 2010 Management plan

a. Introduction

The following management plan was prepared at the occasion of this nomination process. This is not a completely new plan. As it is explained in chapter 5e, management policies and plans do exist for the site, and yearly renewed action plans are also prepared by the Park director. This following plan summarizes the existing management documents in use, written either in Turkmen or Russian language. This management plan was prepared by Mukhammed Mamedov and Igor Zubanov, DPM, and Kurban Ballyev, Director of the NSHCP, and Sébastien Moriset, CRATerre-ENSAG (for UNESCO). This plan also takes into account the Bagyr town development plans. Comments and corrections on this plan were also provided by several experts at CRATerre-ENSAG, but also by the archaeologist Carlo Lippolis, who is conducting the Italian expedition from the University of Turin.

This management plan should serve as a tool to ensure:

- partnership and optimal contribution by all parties in reaching the objectives of the plan
- the coherency of all activities developed at the site
- the best use of the available resources
- proper understanding of the factors threatening the site by all stakeholders, and more particularly by the local community, the visitors and the archaeological teams
- continuity in the management in case of changes in management.

The following objectives have been agreed upon for this 5-year plan. They are to:

(Protection)

- Protect the Park land and control site uses
- Control visitors

(Conservation and management)

- Improve the management system
- Improve the performances of the technical staff and conserve the excavated sections
- Slow down the deterioration processes

(Promotion and education)

- Promote Turkmen history and culture, including archaeological and architectural monuments of Nisa
- Contribute to archaeological research on the monuments
- Store, conserve and exhibit finds and scientific collections from the Park's territory

b. SWOT Analysis

b1. STRENGTHS

Conservation and protection

- The park staff is able to handle conservation works
- The conservators based in Ashgabat can supervise all works implemented
- Materials and labour are rather cheap
- all regional monuments registered and territory protected as a State Park
- regulations for protection of monuments in place
- archaeologists now obliged by contract to carry out conservation work. For the teams who do not have an expert in conservation, they are asked to contribute financially to the conservation works by securing part of their general campaign budget for conservation
- existing skills (brick production and wall repairs)
- A laboratory has been set up in 2005 to improve on the quality of materials used

Human resources

- The site is controlled by a permanent team
- salaries of the personnel paid from the state budget

Publicity and information

- Close to Ashgabat, visitors can easily come
- The site is well known
- Several web pages provide information on Nisa
- The Italian archaeological team of Turin is updating information regularly
- Artefacts and information on Nisa available in the National Museum in Ashgabat
- A site museum and guides on site
- excursions to Nisa for school pupils
- flyers available and Nisa regularly shown in local and national newspapers and TV

Finances

- tourist excursions bring in (limited) funds
- appropriate building materials easily accessible.
- possibility to carry out substantial conservation works with minimal expenditure (materials and labour are cheap)

b2. WEAKNESSES

Conservation and protection

- The park staff can not cope with the load of conservation works to be done
- Materials used are not always suitable
- Site elements exposed after excavation are fragile
- The conservation experts are very few in Turkmenistan, and they also have to look after the other sites
- Post excavation conservation is not always implemented
- Water infiltrating inside the structures
- Some archaeologists do not respect the contracts they sign

Human and technical resources

- staff require more training on management and conservation
- Poor office facilities : The office block is too small to accommodate all researchers working in Nisa
- Lack of tools and working equipment
- No computers to store information

Publicity and information

- lack of publications for the general public
- not enough booklets, information guides and popular literature
- lack of tourist facilities such as eating places, toilets and lavatories, souvenir shops near the park or within the territory
- Site not enlisted on WHList

Finances

- insufficient funding both for large scale conservation works and for regular maintenance
- minor income from tourists, as the cost of ticket for citizens of Turkmenistan is minimal and foreign tourists who pay more are very few.
- The money issued by the government for restoration can not be utilized due to complex administrative clearing mechanism.

Miscellaneous

- The concrete platform and the concrete walkway are visually intrusive

b3. OPPORTUNITIES

Conservation and protection

- More than half of the site is still untouched, and is therefore protected by the tell
- What has been revealed has suffered from erosion, but has not been altered by inappropriate restoration campaigns
- exchange of experience in conservation under way between specialists from this country and elsewhere
- Experience gained over the past 5 years in Merv can also serve in Nisa
- possibility to backfill past excavations
- support from the World Heritage Centre
- The town development authorities have not planned any development near the two sites
- everybody agrees on the need for conservation, to develop and implement new methods & technologies of conservation

Human and technical resources

- Foreign experts generally visit the site and give advice when they are in Ashgabat, even if they do not work in Nisa
- People trained in Merv can help their colleagues in Nisa

Publicity and information

- The site has not yet revealed all its secrets, many parts have remained untouched
- Many scientific writings are available on Nisa in many different languages

Finances

- Opportunity to obtain funding from sponsors (Archaeological expeditions, American Embassy, UNESCO)

b4. THREATS

Conservation and protection

- encroachment on the park land at the edges
- climate change (threat of the rain, snow, wind, drought and frosts)
- Significant portions of site excavated without conservation
- Collapse of excavated structures
- earthquakes

Human and technical resources

- No improvement

Finances

- No financial assistance provided for this site

c. Key issues

The Key issues to be addressed at Nisa in the near future are:

c1. To ensure a better planning of all activities

Lack of planning has led to the situation that can be witnessed today: ruins exposed after archaeological excavations are fast eroding (i.e. Old Nisa Northern complex), and the Park staff can not cope with the amount of exposed structures to be conserved. The various stakeholders, including foreign actors working on this site should coordinate their efforts to work towards the same goals.

c2. To set-up an efficient conservation team on site

The qualified experts are in Ashgabat, and they are responsible for all the monuments in Turkmenistan. It is therefore difficult to count on them. The Park staffs have some skills already, but these skills need to be reinforced, and more equipment provided to ensure that regular preventive maintenance is done. The Park staff is working in extremely difficult condition, with very poor facilities and nearly no equipment, neither for conservation works, nor for documenting activities. This makes it very difficult to work, and to be respected by the surrounding community. With better facilities, some vehicles and adequate equipment, this site would be much better controlled and managed.

Conservation works should also be better prepared, with more discussions held between conservators and archaeologists before implementing activities.

c3. To drain the site

The topography of the site, with all the dug holes makes all conservation efforts ineffective. A study should be conducted to elaborate an efficient drainage system, to reduce the humidity on site.

C4. To continue archaeological research, but with increased post-excavation conservation

The northern complex is a perfect example of what should be avoided in the future. The objects found there have revealed a vast sum of information, but the exposed ruins have melted away. Archaeological research should continue, to increase our knowledge of the site, but archaeological plans should integrate "post-excavation" conservation and where needed, interpretation plans. This means that time and funding should be secured right from the beginning of new excavation works. Conservation should not start after several seasons of excavations, because it is then too late to intervene.

Efforts to present the site and the results of scientific research including artefacts should continue.

d. Management objective

A more extensive list of objectives can be found in the General regulations of the park (see appendix 4), but the following objectives have been agreed upon for the next 5 years:

(Protection)

- Protect the Park land and control site uses
- Control visitors

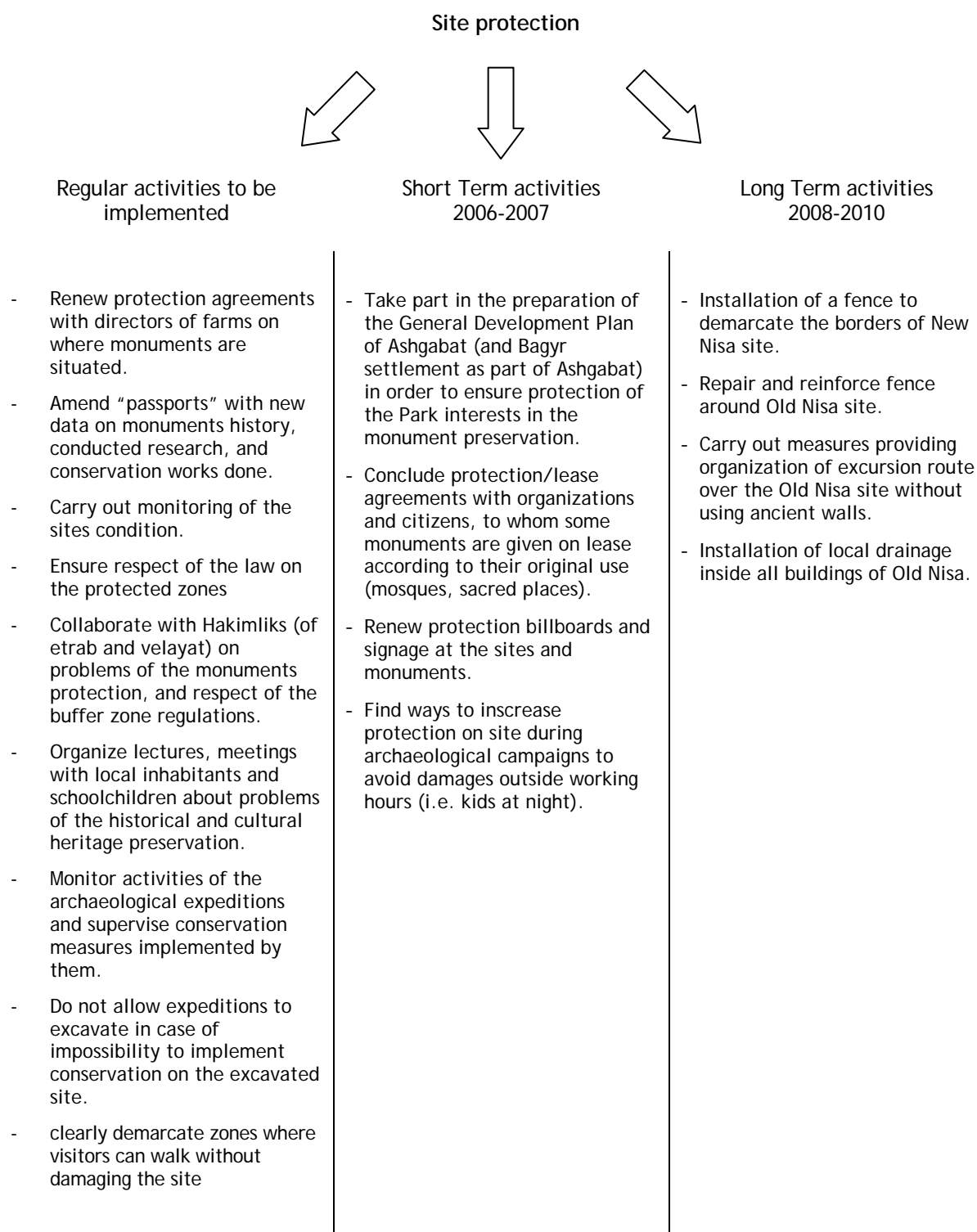
(Conservation and management)

- Improve the management system
- Improve the performances of the technical staff and conserve the excavated sections
- Slow down the deterioration processes
- Better control and prepare conservation works

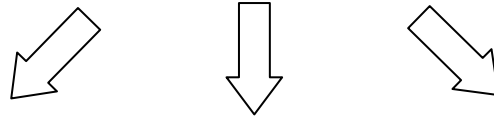
(Promotion and education)

- Promote Turkmen history and culture, including archaeological and architectural monuments of Nisa
- Contribute to archaeological research on the monuments
- Store, conserve and exhibit finds and scientific collections from the Park's territory

e. 2006-2010 General Action Plan



Conservation



Regular activities to be implemented

- document all conservation works done (techniques employed, photographs before and after, people involved, etc...)
- Monitor the monuments.
- Monitor the conservation works and gradually improve on the techniques used.
- Maintain integrity of the conserved elements:
 - block up gullies and cracks;
 - remove plants from conservation plasters;
 - repair sacrificial layers of plaster after each rainy season.
- Carry out high-priority reinforcing works on the damaged sectors of the monuments.
- apply a sacrificial layer of soil on the most exposed walls
- Source funding to prepare a drainage plan of the site

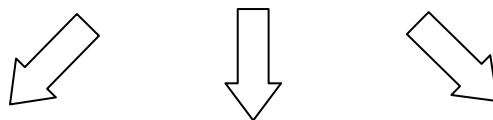
Short Term activities 2006-2007

- continue research on soil analysis started in 2005
- Carry out preventive conservation on the rests of structures discovered by the Italian archaeological expedition in the course of archaeological investigations seasons from 2002 till 2005. Funding provided by the Italian team who provides 10% of its field budget to conservation.
- Repair ceiling above the site museum space (Old Nisa).
- Source funding to prepare a drainage plan of the site
- Source funding for conservation, equipment and site improvement from non-governmental sources (international archaeological expeditions, sponsors, grants, charity programmes etc...).

Long Term activities 2008-2010

- Prepare a drainage plan of the site
- implement drainage works to allow evacuation of water
- Apply appropriate conservation measures to protect the structures from humidity and erosion (drainage pits, backfilling, etc...)
- Implement research, conservation and partial restoration of fortress wall at the Old Nisa site.
- Carry out conservation and partial restoration of the Square Hall (Old Nisa).
- Conservation of the Red building
- Conserve walls of the Round Hall (Old Nisa).
- Implement researches, cleaning works and conservation works on the ruins of the Great Square House ("royal treasury") and auxiliary structures at the Old Nisa site.
- Create a storeroom on the site to keep in a safe place heavy but fragile elements, such as architectural decorative elements or statue fragments

Objective 3: Promotion and education



Regular activities to be implemented

- Publish guides, brochures, booklets and other scientific popular literature.
- Give lectures on monuments for secondary schools and organizations.
- Prepare materials on monuments for press and TV broadcast.
- Organize educational lectures on the Park territory.

Short Term activities 2006-2007

- Develop a new tourist route over the Old Nisa site (offering a greater variety of paths for visitors after 2005 archaeological season) and to other monuments and sites of the Park.
- Prepare a television programme on the results of the works of the Italian archaeological expedition. (unless parts which have been backfilled)
- Take part in the work of expedition of the Dr. Pilipko V.N. concerning restoration of valuable historical finds to prepare exhibits at the National Museum of Turkmenistan.
- Seek funding to reprint best booklets and leaflets on Nisa, and prepare new documentations to be sold to visitors as a mean to raise funding for the site conservation

Long Term activities 2008-2010

- Seek authorization and prepare cost estimates to build museum and administrative complex for the "Nisa" Park.
- Edit and publish 2 brochures and 1 booklet on the Nisa monuments.
- Reissue best booklets and leaflets concerning the sites and monuments of "Nisa" Park published in previous years.
- Prepare, together with the Committee on sport and tourism of Turkmenistan, publicity billboards on the Park's monuments which will be erected in cities and velayat centres of Turkmenistan.
- Create a Web page on the Nisa sites.
- Organise a photographic exhibition (maybe at the National Museum) to present the result of past year research in Old Nisa

Action plan 2006

Annual Action Plan for "Nisa" Park, year 2006

APPROVED BY:

National Department of Turkmenistan
for Protection, Research and Restoration
of the Historical and Cultural Monuments

PART I: WORKS

NN	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION BY
1.	Carry out routine repairs of temporary administrative building of the Park.	Annually	Director, Dep. Director for management, collaborators
2.	Conduct further improvement of the soil laboratory set up in 2005.	1 st quarter	Administration
3.	Organize light pavilions to sell refreshing beverages for visitors.	In course of the year	Administration
4.	Organize for all collaborators Rukhnama working hours on Mondays	Weekly	Director, collaborators
5.	Conclude agreements with scientific research and restoration institutions on joint archaeological investigations, conservation and restoration works at the Park's monuments.	In course of the year	Director
6.	Render required assistance to the newly created organization - Special Scientific/Restoration and Production Workshop (SSRPW).	In course of the year	Director
7.	Continuation of work on identification, study and "passportization" in order to register new monuments; Insert new data in monuments "passports" including in the Rukhabad etrap and near the Baba-Durmaz railway station.	1-2 nd quarters	Dep. Director for science, scientists, site supervisors
8.	Implement monitoring of the sites and monuments, and also protected zones and zones of limited building.	In course of the year	Site supervisors and scientists
9.	Work with population in order to explain effective legislation of Turkmenistan concerning protection of the historical and cultural monuments by means of lectures and meetings, and introduce population to the conservation works done on monuments.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists, site supervisors, guides
10.	Control economic activities within zone of protected natural landscape and buffer zone; Appeal to organizations, farms and population to involve the Park administration in all kinds of activities constituting a threat for monuments.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists, site supervisors
11.	Conclude protection/lease agreements with organizations and citizens, to whom some immovable monuments are given on lease, with due respect for their original use (the Namazga mosque, mausoleum of Abu-Ali Dakkak, Gyz-owliya, Anau mosque).	In course of the year	Director
12.	Systematize the recording system of found materials; control availability of reports from	I-IV quarter	Scientists

	the expeditions carried out.		
13.	Register materials received as a result of archaeological works of local and joint expeditions; ensure delivery to the "Nisa" museum of archaeological materials from past expeditions.	I-IV quarter	Dep. Director for science, scientists
14.	Continue selection of varied archaeological finds from Old Nisa to exhibit in the site museum opened inside the Minor East Tower at the Old Nisa site.	I-IV quarter	Scientists
15.	Draw up a detailed scheme of archaeological researches at the Old and New Nisa sites (indicating excavation place, year, list of finds obtained during each mission, and museum where they are preserved now).	I-IV quarter	Dep. Director for science, scientists
16.	Further development of the scientific themes: 1)"History of archaeological researches of Old Nisa and conservation and restoration works"; 2)"History of the Anau mosque researching"	In course of the year	1)Yagurtov S.N. (scientist) 2)Ashirov B. (scientist)
17.	Control archaeological excavations in the Park and take part immediately in their works.	II-IV quarter	Scientists, technical staff
18.	Control implementation of conservation measures after archaeological excavations and removing spoil heaps from site territory.	II-IV quarter	Administration
19.	Continue archaeological excavation and researches (with conservation and restoration) of the "Great Square House" (royal treasury) at Old Nisa.	II-IV quarter	Scientists, technical staff
20.	Implement conservation works (replacing old whitewash with clay and straw coating) on the walls of the by-pass corridor leading to the museum	II-IV quarter	Scientists, technical staff
21.	Implement conservation works (clay and straw plastering) on the adobe walls in the excavation of the Russian Academy of Science (Dr. Pilipko).	II-IV quarter	Scientists, technical staff
22.	Conduct conservation of the walls in the by-pass corridor excavated by the Italian archaeological mission.	II-IV quarter	Scientists, technical staff
23.	Complete repairs on the roof of the site museum opened inside the Minor East Tower.	I-II quarter	Scientists, technical staff
24.	Continue laboratory analysis in order to come out with practical recommendations for future conservation and restoration measures at the Old Nisa site.	In course of the year	Scientists, technical staff
25.	Gather legends and stories about monuments situated on the Park's territory.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists
26.	Conclude agreements on excursion service with tourist agencies, institutions, museums and schools of Turkmenistan.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists
27.	Organize excursions to Old Nisa and Anau mosque for the governmental delegations, and for all tourists and visitors of the "Nisa" Park.	In course of the year	Guide, scientists
28.	Provide information to young guides from Turkmenistan's tourist companies and foreign tour-leaders.	In course of the year	Scientists, guide
29.	Prepare summarized texts and signs for existing and new excursion routes.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists

30.	Organize lectures among schoolchildren, students and local population about problems of history, culture of Parthia, and history of researching Old Nisa, Anau mosque and other monuments.	In course of the year	Scientists, guide
31.	Give an interview to press, radio and TV broadcasting on the actual problems of cultural heritage of Turkmenistan and monuments' protection.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists
32.	Continue working out the new excursion itineraries: a) New Nisa; b) Namazga mosque and c) Dul-Dul's prints.	In course of the year	Scientists, guide
33.	Supplement and systematize scientific library; Prepare catalogue of scientific publications on history, archaeology, conservation and restoration of the monuments belonging to the Park.	In course of the year	Scientists
34.	Continue work on creation and systematization of the Park scientific archives: a) collect archival material in the Central State Archives of Turkmenistan, academic archives and libraries; b) systematization of archaeological missions reports; c) development of scientific themes in the shape of papers or historical references on various problems of the Park.	In course of the year	Scientists

PART II: STAFF TRAINING

NN	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION BY
1.	Organize theoretical seminars and consultations for Park's scientists on the problems of archaeology, conservation and restoration of monuments.	Constantly	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists
2.	Organize missions of the Park's scientists to the other parks of Turkmenistan for expertise exchange	In course of the year	Administration
3.	Organize missions to the National Museum of Turkmenistan for expertise exchange and scientific consultations.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists
4.	Training of guides.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists
5.	Involving the Park scientific collaborators in seminars and conferences conducted by different scientific institutions on problems of history, conservation and restoration of monuments.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists, guide

Previous action plans : 2005

Annual Action Plan for "Nisa" Park, year 2005

APPROVED BY:
National Department of Turkmenistan
for Protection, Research and Restoration
of the Historical and Cultural Monuments

PART I: WORKS

NN	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION BY
1.	Carry out routine repairs of wagons, temporary administrative building, library, counting room, archive store, ticket-office, archway etc.	Annually	Director, Dep. Director for economical management, collaborators
2.	Organize laboratory in one of rooms of the temporary administrative building.	I quarter	Administration
3.	Organize pavilions to sell refreshing beverages for visitors.	In course of the year	Administration
4.	Organize for all collaborators Rukhnama working hours on Mondays	Weekly	Director, collaborators
5.	Conclude agreements with scientific research institutions about joint archaeological investigations and conservation and restoration works at the Park's monuments.	In course of the year	Director
6.	Continuation of work on finding, study and passportization in order to register new monuments; supplement with new data of passports for the monuments discovered recently a) in the Bagyr settlement; b) near the Baba-Durmaz railway station.	I-II quarters	Dep. Director for science, scientists, inspectors
7.	Implement inspecting visiting-rounds, observation of protected zones and zones of limited building.	In course of the year	Inspectors and scientists
8.	Do work among population in order to explain effective legislation of Turkmenistan concerning protection of the historical and cultural monuments by means of lectures and meetings, and introduce population to the work on safeguarding monuments.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists, inspectors, guides
9.	Control economic activities within zone of protected natural landscape; demand of organizations, farms and population to agree strictly all kinds of works constituting any danger for monuments.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists, inspectors
10.	Systematization of fund materials; control availability of reports of the expeditions carried and carrying out excavation on the "Nisa" Park territory.	I-IV quarter	Scientists
11.	Register materials received as a result of archaeological works of local and joint expeditions; control delivering to the "Nisa" museum funds lists of archaeological materials of these expeditions.	I-IV quarter	Dep. Director for science, scientists
12.	Select archaeological finds from Old Nisa for a new small museum opened inside the Minor East Tower at the Old Nisa site.	I-IV quarter	Scientists
13.	Draw up a detailed scheme of archaeological researches at the Old and New Nisa sites	II-IV quarter	Dep. Director for science, scientists

	(indicating excavation place, year, list of finds obtained during each mission, and museum where they are preserved now) and new monuments near the Baba-Durmaz railway station.		
14.	Further development of the scientific themes: 1)"History of archaeological researches of Old Nisa and conservation and restoration works"; 2)"History of the Anau mosque researching"	In course of the year	1)Yagurtov S.N. (scientist) 2)Ashirov B. (scientist)
15.	Control archaeological excavations in the Park and take part immediately in their works.	II-IV quarter	Scientists, technical staff

Previous action plans : 2004

Annual Action Plan for "Nisa" Park, year 2004

APPROVED BY:
National Department of Turkmenistan
for Protection, Research and Restoration
of the Historical and Cultural Monuments

PART I: WORKS

NN	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION BY
1.	Carry out routine repairs of wagons, temporary administrative building, library, counting room, archive store, ticket-office, archway etc.	Annually	Director, Dep. Director for economical management, collaborators
2.	Erect a small structure at the Old Nisa site in order to establish favourable conditions for security staff	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for economical management, collaborators
3.	Organize for all collaborators Rukhnama working hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays	Weekly	Director, collaborators
4.	Conclude agreements with scientific research institutions about joint archaeological investigations and conservation and restoration works at the Park's monuments.	In course of the year	Director
5.	Continuation of work on finding, study and "pasportization" in order to register new monuments; supplement with new data of "pasports" for the monuments discovered recently a) in the Bagir settlement; b) near the Baba-Durmaz railway station (ex-territory of Kaka erab).	I-II quarters	Dep. Director for science, scientists, inspectors
6.	Prepare the schedule of visiting-rounds of all monuments and sites on the territory of "Nisa" Park.	In course of the year	Scientists, other collaborators
7.	Implement inspecting visiting-rounds, observation of protected zones and zones of limited building.	In course of the year	Inspectors and scientists
8.	Do work among population in order to explain effective legislation of Turkmenistan concerning protection of the historical and cultural monuments by means of lectures and meetings, and introduce population to the work on safeguarding monuments.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists, inspectors, guides
9.	Control economic activities within zone of protected natural landscape; demand of organizations, farms and population to agree strictly all kinds of works constituting any danger for monuments.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists, inspectors
10.	Verify availability and accuracy of the passports and protection agreements for all monuments.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists
11.	Conduct systematization of fund materials; control availability of reports of the expeditions carried and carrying out excavation on the "Nisa" Park territory.	I-IV quarter	Scientists

12.	Register materials received as a result of archaeological works of local and joint expeditions; control delivering to the "Nisa" museum funds lists of archaeological materials of these expeditions.	II-IV quarter	Dep. Director for science, scientists
13.	Select archaeological finds from Old Nisa for travelling exhibitions and new small museum which will create inside the Minor East Tower at the Old Nisa site.	II-IV quarter	Scientists
14.	Draw up a detailed scheme of archaeological researches at the Old and New Nisa sites (indicating excavation place, year, list of finds obtained during each mission, and museum where they are preserved now) and new monuments near the Baba-Durmaz railway station.	II-IV quarter	Dep. Director for science, scientists
15.	Elaboration of the following scientific themes: 1)"History of archaeological researches of Old Nisa and conservation and restoration works"; 2)"History of the Anau mosque researching"	In course of the year	1)Yagurtov S.N. (scientist) 2)Ashirov B. (scientist)
16.	Control archaeological excavations in the Park and take part immediately in their works.	II-IV quarter	Scientists, technical staff
17.	Continue archaeological excavation and researches (with conservation and restoration) of the "Great Square House" (royal treasure) at Old Nisa.	II-IV quarter	Scientists, technical staff
18.	Control implementing conservation measures after archaeological excavations and removing ground from site territory.	II-IV quarter	Administration
19.	Collecting legends and stories about monuments situated on the Park's territory.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists
20.	Conclude agreements on excursion and lecture services with tourist agencies, institutions and works of Turkmenistan.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists
21.	Organize excursions for all tourists and visitors of the "Nisa" Park.	In course of the year	Guide, scientists
22.	Organize lectures among schoolchildren, students and local population about problems of history, conservation and restoration of the "Nisa" Park's monuments.	In course of the year	Scientists
23.	Give an interview to press, radio and TV broadcasting on problems of cultural heritage of Turkmenistan and monuments' protection.	In course of the year	Dep. Director for science, scientists
24.	Work out the following new excursion itineraries: a) New Nisa; b) Anau mosque.	In course of the year	Scientists, guide
25.	Supplement and systematize scientific library; catalogization of scientific publications concerning problems of history, archaeology, conservation and restoration of the monuments belonging to the Park.	In course of the year	Scientists
26.	Create and systematize scientific archives of Park: a)Collection archival material in the Central State Archives of Turkmenistan, academic archives and libraries; b)systematization of archaeological missions reports; c)development of scientific themes in the shape of papers or historical references on various problems of the Park.	In course of the year	Scientists

PART II: STAFF TRAINING

NN	DESCRIPTION OF WORK	TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION BY
1.	Organize theoretical seminars and consultations for Park's scientists on the problems of archaeology, conservation and restoration of monuments.	Constantly	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists
2.	Organize missions of the Park's scientists to the other parks of Turkmenistan for expertise exchange	In course of the year	Administration
3.	Organize missions to the National Museum of Turkmenistan for expertise exchange and scientific consultations.	In course of the year	Director, Dep. Director for science, scientists

Appendix 2.

General Policy for the SHCP-Nisa

I General statements

1. Legal basis

The State Historical and cultural park "Nisa" (SHCP-"Nisa") was created on the basis of Cabinet of Ministers of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic decree dated 3rd March 1980, reference N III, and is a preserved national monument of historical and spiritual value.

2. The main objectives of the SHCP-"Nisa" are to:

- preserve archaeological and architectural monuments, and control all archaeological excavation and other researches on the Park
- protect the Park's zone and zone of limited building
- improvement and, in case of necessary, conservation or restoration of excavated archaeological and architectural objects by forces of the Park or other appropriate organizations
- promote the Park's monuments and sites
- encourage people to learn the history and culture of Turkmenistan

For the above mentioned objectives, the office of the SHCP-"Nisa":

- a. Collects and preserves elements of movable and immovable heritage, which are primary sources for a scientific knowledge about the development of our society.
- b. Creates exhibitions, both permanent and travelling exhibitions.
- c. Works on spreading a scientific knowledge about the history of the area, cultural heritage of Turkmenistan, by providing tour guidance, giving lectures, publishing articles in the newspapers, broadcasting on the radio and television, and any other actions.
- d. Conducts both independent and joint scientific researches with the institute of history of the cabinet of ministers of Turkmenistan and other organizations research, in the field of archaeology, architecture, arts, history and ethnography.
- e. SHCP-"Nisa" is subordinate to the DPM.

3. The SHCP-"Nisa" has a right of legal entity. It possesses a round stamp, with its own name, and a triangular stamp of fixed pattern, as well as a budget and current account.

4. The SHCP-"Nisa" has the right to generate incomes or collect fees from those using movable or immovable elements of the site, in press releases, radio announcements, television programmes, movies and advertisements.

5. Closure or re-organization of the SHCP-"Nisa" may only be done by decree of the President of Turkmenistan.

Management guidelines

6. All immovable monuments or items included in the SHCP-"Nisa", such as buildings, structures, and associated territories, as well as memorial sites are in the national inventory. The Park is responsible for their preservation, and use as the local body of protection of monuments in accordance with the law of Turkmenistan "About protection of monuments of History and Culture" and instruction "About the order of state monitoring and registration, maintenance, usage and restoration of immovable historical and cultural monuments". In the asset register of the SHCP-"Nisa", there are: territories with approved limits, as well as all buildings and structures regardless of their purpose and use at the date of creation of the Park.

Industrial, agricultural, and other enterprises, institutions, organizations, and citizens are responsible for damage to monuments and breach against this policy of the Park, in accordance with legislation of Turkmenistan.

The state park as a protected monument has the right to issue fines for the breach of policy and rules of usage of historic and cultural monuments.

7. On the territory of the Park, it is forbidden

- a. to implement any sort of economic activity;
- b. to build new constructions;
- c. to use cultural assets for household needs;
- d. to lay cables, pipelines and electric or other lines which are not necessary for the requirements of the Park;
- e. to allow dwelling of private individuals, including park staff;
- f. to guide tourists and carry out archaeological excavation, and all other scientific and educational activities by non authorized persons, organizations, or enterprises, without permission of the DPM and Park administrations.

In case of discovery of the above breaches of law, the park administration is eligible to liaise with the competent authorities for their immediate punishment.

8. All restoration, reconstruction and reinforcement works on the SHCP-“Nisa” monuments will be conducted under the project designs and cost estimates approved by the DPM.

Scientific and educational Work

9. The SHCP-“Nisa”, on the basis of the historical and cultural monuments, is conducting wide scientific and educational work.

10. The basic forms of scientific and educational work of the SHCP-“Nisa” are:

- Providing favourable and effective conditions to conduct archaeological and other investigations on the Park monuments;
- Provide developing various scientific topics on the basis of reports on archaeological and other researches, carried out on the “Nisa” Park territory, and scientific literature;
- Provide guidance on the conservation of the historical and cultural monuments, exhibitions and storage of heritage items;
- Sale of guide books, booklets, leaflets on the monuments, and postcards with explanatory texts, etc...
- Broadcasting on the radio, television, and publishing articles in periodical press;
- Historical and political education for the youth by means of lectures in the schools and other institutions of Turkmenistan.

11. The SHCP-“Nisa” has the following rights:

- Provide all visitors with various possible services;
- Develop enterprises in the approved order within the SHCP-“Nisa”, possessing rights of legal entity and subordinate to the director of the SHCP-“Nisa”. Their activity must strictly meet the purposes and tasks of the current policy, directed to production and sale of various souvenirs to the visitors of site;
- Create a farm (outside the park) for the benefit of the staff.

12. The SHCP-“Nisa” is organising services for visitors in the most convenient time for them, taking into account local conditions, and amount of tourists. The SHCP-“Nisa” must be open to visitors and tourists on the week-end and holidays.

Monitoring, protecting and restoration of immovable items

13. In cooperation with the DPM, the SHCP-“Nisa” is monitoring monuments and memorial places located within the park limits, is gathering data, discovering new monuments, issuing proposals for their protection under the agreed order, and undertaking measures for their preservation.

14. The SHCP-"Nisa" is the client of all restoration works, and is responsible for the presentation and use of the monuments within its territory.
15. The SHCP-"Nisa" concludes agreements with the project design organisations for development of design and cost estimates, documentation on the objects to be restored, agrees on the documentation with the DPM. The SHCP-"Nisa" together with the DPM supervise all activities of these organisations.
16. The SHCP-"Nisa" concludes agreements with contracted organisations for restoration, conservation and other works, conducts formal acceptance of the complete works from the contracted organisations.
17. The SHCP-"Nisa" supervises development in the project documentation, survey works, which could interfere with the protection policy and the territory of the Park and its protected zones. The Park requests for agreement a project document and a detailed design proposal for planning projects.

Organisational structure, reporting system, economic activity

18. The park is headed by the Director who is responsible for all its activities, stocks, properties, and financial resources. The director approves necessary policies on the divisions of the park, job description and work schedules.
19. The Director of the SHCP-"Nisa" is appointed by the Minister of Culture and TV and Radio Broadcasting of Turkmenistan, on recommendations of the DPM. The rest of the staff is appointed by the Director. The Park staff possesses job identification cards.
20. The SHCP-"Nisa" has the following structural elements:
 - Director office
 - Department for protection and research of the monuments
 - Finances department
 - Management department
21. The SHCP-"Nisa" administration has a scientific committee consisting of volunteers and acting as a deliberative and consulting body consisting of:
 - Director (Chairman)
 - Representatives of scientific institutions
 - Representatives of public organizations
 - Architect

Note: Membership and decisions taken by the scientific committee require approval by DPM.
22. Annually, the park submits to the DPM the following reporting documentation: general accounting report, and summary report on all organisational, technical and scientific activities. Account's reports are signed by director and the Chief accountant. Summary reports are signed by director.
23. The resources of the SHCP-"Nisa" consists of:
 - a. Annual budget
 - b. Special resources acquired from entry fees, for guide service, from selling posters, calendars, booklets, guidebooks, etc... from sponsored assistance, from the other types of economic activities.
24. Cost estimates using the budget are approved by the Minister of Culture and TV and Radion Broadcasting of Turkmenistan. The park Director allocates credits from the budget and from special resources. Persons responsible for material values are appointed by the park Director.
25. The SHCP-"Nisa" has the right to organize free-lance guides on the self-finances basis, production and sales of souvenirs, replicas, etc..., provide visitors with various types of services.

Appendix 3.
State Act indicating boundaries of Park



**ЕРДЕН ПЕЙДАЛАНМАК
ХУКУГЫ БАРАДАКЫ
ДЭВЛЕТ
АКТЫ**

**ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ
АКТ
НА ПРАВО ПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ
ЗЕМЛЕЙ**

Б № 000923

Ер СССР-де диңе дөвлетинң эчилигинде дуряр ве диңе пейдаланмак үчин берилйәр. Ере дөвлет эчилиги хукугыны гос-вни я-да яшырын формада бозян херекетлер гадаган эдилйәр.

Колхозларынң эелейән ери мөхлетсиз, яғны өмүрлик пейдаланмак үчин олара беркидилйәр.

Ерден пейдаланыжылар өзлерине берлен ер участкаларыны ниетленилиши ялы пейдаланмага хаклыдырлар ве борчлудырлар.

Ерден пейдаланыжылар өзлерине берлен ер участкаларыны рационал пейдаланмага, өзлериниң участоғында ерден пейдаланыжы гоңшуларынң бәхбитлерини бозян херекетлери этмезлиге борчлудырлар.

*ССР Союзының ве союз республикаларынң
Ер хакындакы канунларының эсасларындан*

Земля в СССР состоит в исключительной собственности государства и предоставляется только в пользование. Действия, в прямой или скрытой форме нарушающие право государственной собственности на землю, запрещаются.

Земля, занимаемая колхозами, закрепляется за ними в бессрочное пользование, то есть навечно.

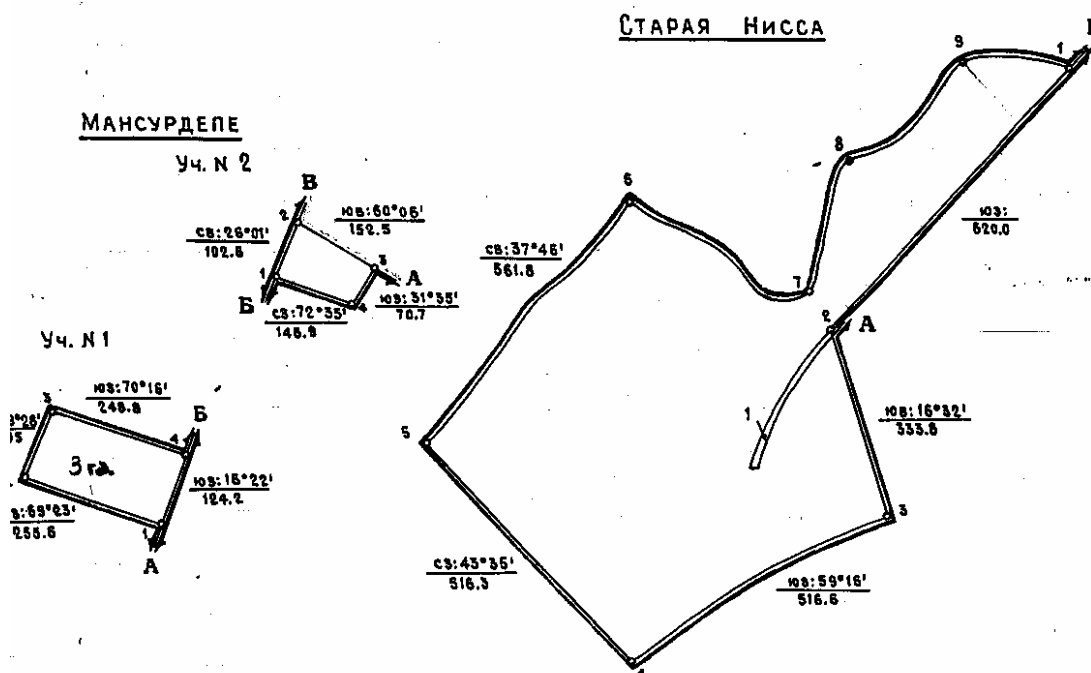
Землепользователи имеют право и обязаны пользоваться земельными участками в тех целях, для которых они им предоставлены.

Землепользователи обязаны рационально использовать предоставленные им земельные участки, не совершать на своем участке действий, нарушающих интересы соседних землепользователей.

*Из Основ земельного законодательства
Союза ССР и союзных республик*

Н
Н

СТАРАЯ НИССА



А-дан Б ченли Калинин адындакы мивечилик совхозының ерлери билен
от А до Б с землями плодосовхоза имени Калинина
Б-ден А ченли №3 ёл эксплуатацион участогының ерлери билен
от Б до А с землями Дорожно-эксплуатационного участка №3
Б-ден В ченли №3 ёл эксплуатацион участогының ерлери билен
от Б до В с землями Дорожно-эксплуатационного участка №3
В-ден А ченли „Мир“ колхозының ерлери билен
от В до Г с землями колхоза „Мир“

Баш (старший) инженер-ер гурлашыкчы
Главный (старший) инженер-землеустроитель

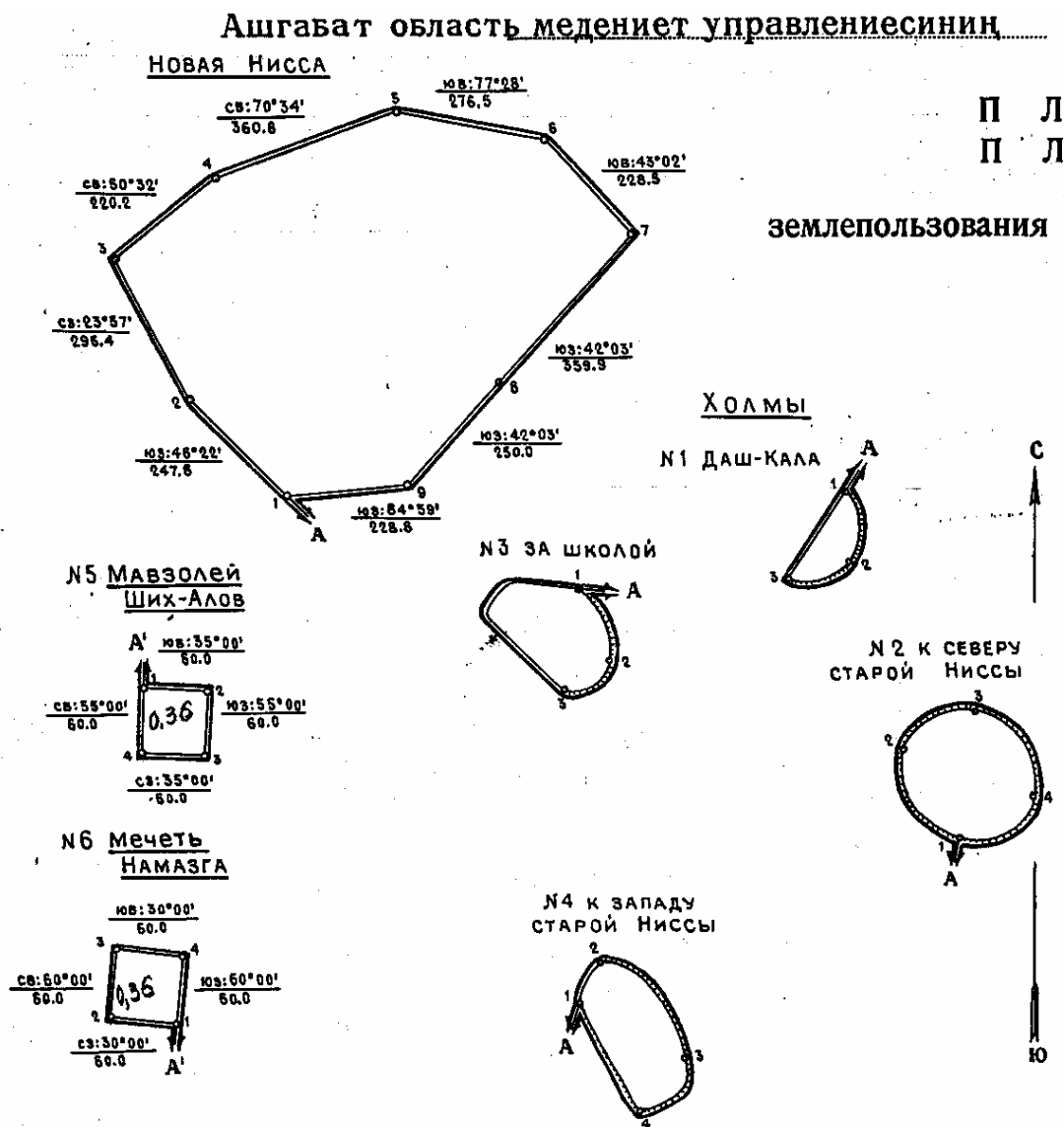
Ахчабадского р-на уезд. Т. Дровос

первый из
получил:

L. Effner

New Nisa

Extract of the 1992 State Act (N°923) showing the Boundaries of New Nisa, as part of the State historical and Cultural Park.



А-дан А ченли Калинин адындакы мивечилин совхозың ерлери билен
от А до Ас землями плодосовхоза имени Калинина
А'-дан А' ченли Калинин адындакы мивечилин совхозың узан мөхлетдейин
пейдаланян ерлери билен
от А' до А'с землями долгосрочного пользования плодосовхоза
имени Калинина

Новая и Старая Ниссы, Мансурдепе: - Масштаб 1:10000
Холмы № 1, 2, 3, 4, Мавзолей Ших-Алов и Мечеть Намазга - Масштаб 1:5000

Appendix 4.

General regulations concerning the State Historical and Cultural Park of Nisa

General provisions

1. The sites of Nisa are one of the monuments of primary importance in Turkmenistan. They comprise varied information of different stages of the most ancient history of Turkmenistan. Excavation conducted here led to the discoveries of universal importance. The sites of Nisa have become a place of mass visit by soviet and foreign tourists, they serve successfully for propaganda of high cultural achievements of the Turkmen people.

Taking into account the great historical value of the Nisa monuments, the necessity in their more effective protection, to activate scientific research, restoration and use of excavated objects, the Council of Ministers of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic has declared the Nisa sites the State Historical/Cultural Preserve (Park) by its decree N 111 dated 3^d March 1980.

2. The State Historical/Cultural Park (SHCP) of the Nisa sites are the public storehouse for historical and archaeological monuments, and the cultural and educational institution which is subordinate directly to the Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan.

The SHCP acts as a legal entity within the limits of its rights and obligations. It possesses a round stamp and a triangular stamp of fixed pattern.

3. The SHCP activity is in the close contact with the Turkmenistan Academy of Sciences carrying out scientific research works; with the regional executive committee of Ashgabat city, executive committees of local Councils of the Peoples' Deputies, and the special scientific/restoration production workshop carrying out conservation and restoration of excavated objects.

4. The park's boundaries. Territory of the park includes 2 zones with different status. Preserved (Core) zone comprises Old Nisa site with adjoining territory. Preserved (Core) zone is excluded completely from public land using. Within the limits of preserved (core) zone any kinds of economical activity are forbidden, visit of these areas is regulated by the Park's administration.

Zone of limited use comprises the territory of so-called Upper Bagyr situated between New and Old Nisa sites and is established within following boundaries:

- a) 700 m to the south-east of the Old Nisa fortress walls;
- b) 500 m to south of the Old Nisa fortress walls;
- c) 500 m to the south-west of fortress walls of the Old and New Nisa sites;
- d) 400 m to the north and north-west of the New Nisa fortress walls;
- e) 200 m to the east of the New Nisa fortress walls and onwards to the south-east as far as eastern protected boundary of the Old Nisa site.

Within this zone, any earthwork, building works and other kinds of activity which may lead to the damage of ancient cultural layers, are limited and may be carry out upon authorization of Park administration only. Some individual sectors of the zone of limited use can be also announced preserved after appropriate scientific researching.

Territories allotted for the park administrative and household structures are also included into the Park's boundaries.

The total area of the Park is 94,92 ha within the boundaries approved by the Resolution of Executive Committee of the Ashgabat Regional Council of the People's Deputies.

5. All structures located on the Park territory are on its balance and used for its needs.

To lease buildings, rooms and lands plots belonging to the Park is forbidden.

6. Activity of the Park is directed by the Park Scientific Council consisting of representatives of the Academy of sciences of Turkmenistan, Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan, Republican voluntary society for the protection of the historical and cultural monuments, and by other interested organizations.

Objectives and Activity of the Park

The main objectives of the State Historical and Cultural Park of Nisa site are to:

1. protect the preserved zone and use correctly the zone of limited use.
2. actively contribute to archaeological researching the Nisa monuments.
3. preserve, improve and, in case of necessary, conserve or restore excavated archaeological and architectural objects by forces of the Park or other appropriate organizations
4. coordinate activity of the organizations engaged in research, improvement, conservation and restoration of the Park's monuments.
5. store and exhibit finds and scientific collections from the Park's territory.
6. control using the Nisa monuments as excursion objects.
7. encourage people to learn the history and culture of Turkmenistan.
8. propagandize and popularize archaeological and architectural monuments and historical knowledge.

Organizational structure

The State Historical and Cultural Park of Nisa sites has the following structural elements:

- a) Administrative/management group,
- b) Archaeological funds group,
- c) Group for scientific/educational work

Park's resources

1. The funds to keep the Park's staff and to provide its activity are allocated by the Ministry of culture of Turkmenistan.
2. Scientific researching the monuments is financed by the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan.
3. Appropriations for conservation and restoration of excavated archaeological and architectural objects are assigned by the Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan.
4. The resources coming from excursion services, the Republican voluntary society for the protection of the historical and cultural monuments, and other sources are directed also for improvement, conservation, restoration and research.

Appendix 5.

Extracts of the law of Turkmenistan

Law of Turkmenistan Protection of Historical and Cultural Monuments of Turkmenistan

Chapter V. Provision for the preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments

Article 17

Enterprises, Organizations, Institutions as well as Citizens that possess historical monuments in Turkmenistan, are responsible for their preservation, and must follow requirements of the current Law. The rules of protection, utilization and conservation of historical and cultural monuments, established by the Government of Turkmenistan, provide accessibility for inspection, scientific research and cultural purposes.

Article 18

Exploratory works on lands covered with natural and historical monument, state historical and cultural parks and other historical and cultural objects, can only be done upon the permission of the Government of Turkmenistan. Appropriation of these lands for economic use is not allowed.

Collective farms, state farms, other enterprises, institutions and organizations, which have historical and cultural monuments on their lands, assume obligation to implement the monuments protection policy.

All kinds of activity, jeopardizing preservation of monuments, is forbidden on the territories of historical and cultural monuments. Supervision over observance of the established policy of protection of monuments, is entrusted to Executive Committees of local Deputies and organizations, and other monument protecting bodies.

Article 19

Preservation of immovable monuments and their environment is provided by determination of protected zones, zones of controlled construction development and zone of protected natural landscape with pre-determined policy of utilization, which is established by the Government of Turkmenistan. Owners of land plots, situated within protected zones, are responsible for observation of policy for utilization of these zones.

Protected zones, zones of controlled construction development and zones of protected natural landscape of the historical and cultural monuments are established by executive committees of local, regional and municipal Councils of Deputies representing competent authorities for state protection of historical and cultural monuments.

Zones of immovable monuments protection are determined based upon preliminary analysis of condition of a monument and compiling necessary historical reference documents and should be a mandatory constituent of all regional development plans, general planning projects and other detailed development projects applying to urban centres and populated areas.

Zones of historical and cultural monuments protection, irrespective of sizes and density of population, are considered while developing the general layout, detailed layout projects and construction development in populated areas, and are subjected to mandatory approval by competent state authorities for protection of monuments.

Excavation, construction and other works and economical activity are not allowed within these zones without permission of competent state authorities for protection of monuments. If the traffic on the roads adjacent to the historical and cultural monuments and running through their protected zones jeopardize the existence of monuments, the traffic on such roads is restricted or prohibited according to the resolution of executive committee of a relevant local Council of Deputies.

Article 20

The objects of environment related to historical and cultural monuments are protected and used by state authorities for protection of monuments jointly with authorities for protection of monuments and other interested bodies.

Article 21

The complexes of unique historical and cultural monuments, which present a special scientific, historical, artistic or other cultural value, are declared as a historical and cultural park by the decrees of the Government of Turkmenistan. Protection of them is provided by separate regulations approved by the Government of Turkmenistan.

Article 22

Organizations dealing with explosive, construction and assembling, renovation, road maintenance or other operations and activities in the protected zone of immovable monuments must obtain approval from the relevant authorities for monuments protection for performing such operations and activities. The mentioned activities are funded on the account of organizations performing these operations. It is not allowed to perform operations and activities that damage the monuments and do not meet requirements of its preservation.

In case archaeological layers or objects of scientific, historical, artistic and other cultural value are found by Enterprises, Organizations and Institutions while performing their operations, they must inform the state authority for protection of monuments and stop the operations.

Article 23

The organizations and persons carrying out the archaeological exploration must provide the safety of discovered values, register the archaeological finds and hand over to the museum, library or archives of Turkmenistan and, for the newly discovered objects, inform the relevant authorities for state protection of monuments for taking immediate actions to protect them and stop the works.

Persons convicted of breaching the regulations of the current Law are deprived of their rights to carry out archaeological exploration on the territory of Turkmenistan and those responsible for these acts must, according to the Law, return the archaeological find to where it belongs or pay the re-imbursement if the latter is impossible.

Article 24

The historical and cultural monuments, which are used disaccording to their significance and character, and those threatened with demolition or damage, can be confiscated from enterprise, organization or undertaking in accordance with procedure established by special authorities for protection of monuments, and transferred over other organizations, and also individuals to posses, temporary use or custody within territory of Turkmenistan.

Owners, users and guards of monuments are responsible for their safety unless specified in a special agreement with the owner.

If a person does not provide the safety of the owned historical and cultural monument, or refuses to follow the recommendations of the authorities for state protection of monuments and prevents from scheduled inspection, the person will be given a written warning from the monument protection authorities. Improper custody continued after a given notice will lead to the deprivation of ownership with payment of compensation and transfer over to state ownership.

If the monument is lost or stolen the holder or the owner must notify the police and local authorities for protection of monuments.

Article 25

Demolition of immovable historical and cultural monuments is forbidden. Moving and changes to immovable historical and cultural monuments can be allowed only with the special permit of the Government of Turkmenistan for each particular case.

The organization given such a permit while removing or making changes to the monument must comply with the terms specified in the Article 14 of the current Law.

Article 26

State authorities for protection of monuments must inspect the condition of monuments regularly for making arrangements for repair works, conservation and restoration. The projects of restoration, conservation and repairs of historical and cultural monuments are to be approved by the State authorities for protection of monuments.

Basic methods applying to monuments include protection against destruction (prevention), conservation, restoration and preservation of environmental and historical structures, in complex immovable monuments as well.

Repairs and restoration of monuments are carried out by specialized state, cooperative and joint (mixed) ownership organizations, interim groups or individual restoration experts, with governmental approval from state authorities for protection of monuments on complexity of works to carry out.

Appendix 6.

Prescript of the Council of the Ministers of TSSR

PRESRIPT (extracts)

OF THE COUNCIL OF THE MINISTERS OF TSSR

4.05.1982

N 202

**About giving land to the
Ashgabat Regional Administration for culture**

The Council of the Ministers of TSSR orders to:

1. Withdrew for the public deeds the land 94,92 ha in total area: a) from the land of perpetual use of the state farm named in honour of Kalinin in the Ashgabat region -94,2 ha (fallow land - 15,9 ha and pastures - 78,3 ha) and; b) from the land of long-term use - 0,72 ha (pastures).
2. Give the withdrawn land to the Ashgabat Regional Administration for culture for the State Historical and Cultural Park in perpetual use.

Appendix 7.

Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Ashgabat Regional Council of People's Deputies

RESOLUTION

Dated 25.01.1989

N 1/61

About approval of the plan of the territories adjoining to the Bagir settlement

In order to regulate using territory of the historical and cultural monuments of the "Nisa" Museum/Reserve, the Executive Committee of the Ashgabat Regional Council of the Peoples' Deputies decided to:

1. Approve the plan of the territories adjoining to the Bagir settlement (herein enclosed).
2. Permit the "Nisa" Museum/Preserve directorate formalizing an order to draw up designing estimates for allotting the land plot amenably to the proposed plan of the territorial zone determination.

The 1-st Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee

D.S.Kurbanov

Secretary
A.H.Annamamedova

Appendix 8. Climate data for Nisa

Average monthly air temperature (°C)

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
2002	5.0	6.6	11.8	14.7	20.3	27.9	30.6	29.6	24.0	19.0	10.8	-1.3
2003	3.8	5.2	7.6	13.5	19.7	25.5	30.1	29.0	22.9	18.0	9.4	4.9
2004	5,5	9,0	10,9	13,8	22,4	28,1	28,9	28,6	23,0	14,9	11,4	3,1
2005	3.2	2.4	11.4	16.3	23.0	28.7	31.3					

Absolute maximum air temperature (°C)

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
2002	24.0	25.4	30.9	30.4	37.4	41.5	44.1	43.0	36.2	37.1	28.4	19.3
2003	23.7	24.0	22.7	34.7	35.0	40.3	41.1	40.1	39.9	34.6	27.9	24.1
2004	19.0	31.0	34.7	33.0	35.5	40.0	39.2	41.5	37.2	34.4	26.7	16.6
2006	13.2	23.0	26.4	35.5	37.6	42.1	43.5					

Absolute minimum air temperature (°C)

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
2002	-10.1	-4.6	-2.3	5.5	8.5	14.5	13.6	12.8	10.3	4.9	-0.7	-12.6
2003	-7.0	-4.9	-6.4	0.6	1.6	7.6	17.5	13.1	5.1	4.6	-1.5	-9.8
2004	-4.7	2.6	-0.7	3.5	7.4	12.9	15.2	15.6	8.5	2.7	-2.1	-4.1
2005	-4.5	-7.6	-4.4	-0.8	10.0	15.6	20.1					

Monthly rainfall amount (mm)

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
2002	38.8	11.9	40.6	85.1	35.2	2.4	7.2	2.2	0	1.7	48.5	32.4
2003	25.0	50.0	61.0	96.0	61.0	9.0	0	12.5	0	2.8	23.5	24.0
2004	43.0	2.8	48.9	78.0	24.4	0	8.0	0.9	0	20.0	33.0	30.0
2005	22.7	20.4	72.0	19.2	16.3	8.1	2.3					

Maximum rainfall amount per day (mm)

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
2002	22.3	3.3	20.3	22.4	15.1	1.7	7.2	2.2	0	1.7	33.9	12.3
2003	8.8	10.8	12.3	30.9	21.8	3.8	0.0	12.0	0	2.4	10.8	13.1
2004	29.6	0.8	20.2	27.8	16.2	0.0	3.7	0.9	0	8.8	11.9	15.5
2005	4.6	6.0	25.8	7.9	5.0	4.1	1.5					

Appendix 9.

Photographic analysis of the site evolution

All photos at the bottom taken in 2005 by Igor Zubanov and David Gandreau



One of the towers of the ramparts



The square hall



The columned hall



The columned hall



The columned hall



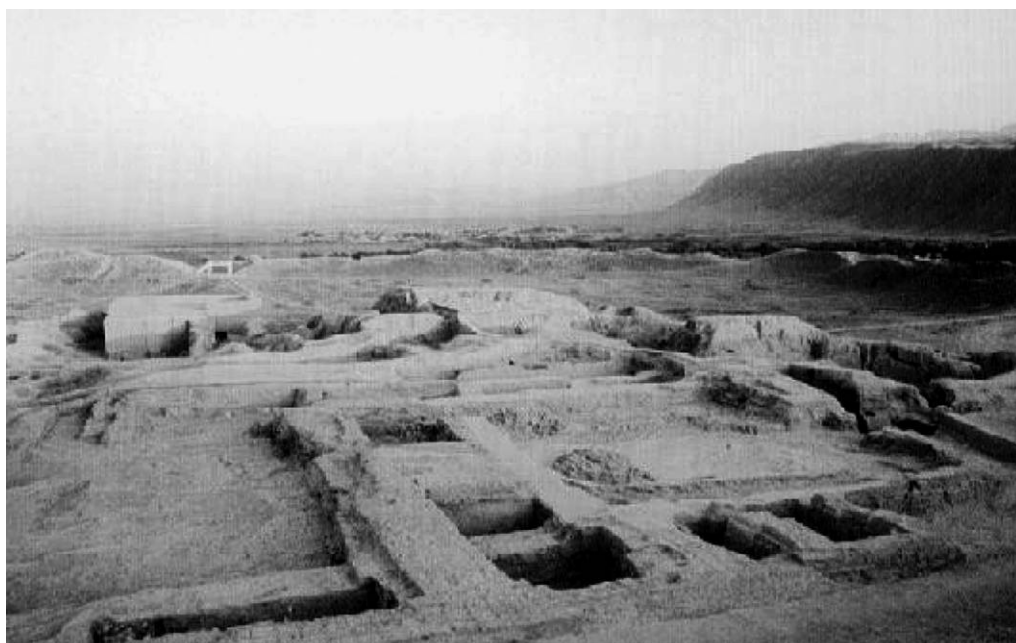
The columned hall





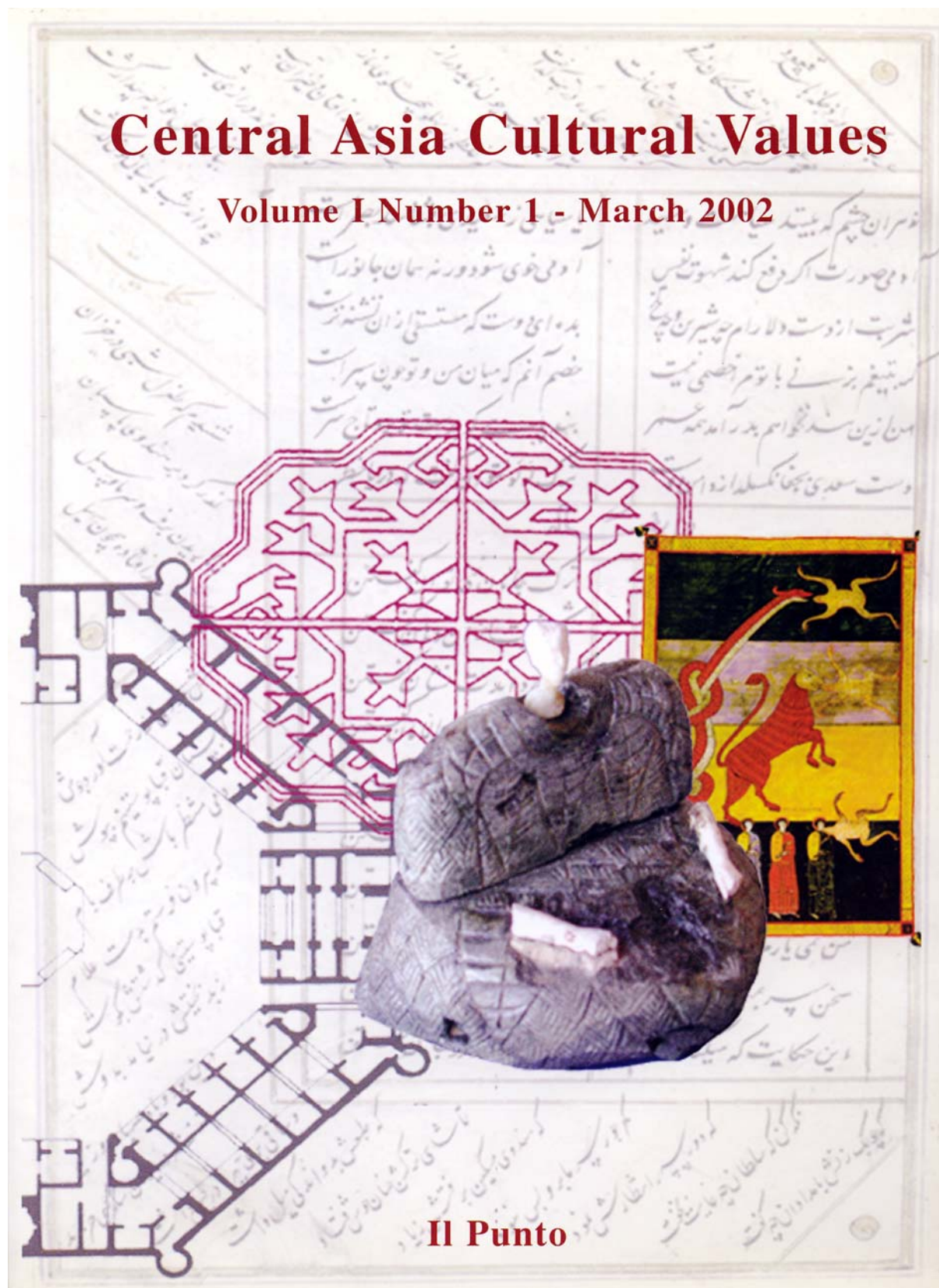








Appendix 10.
Selected articles on Nisa



NORTH-WESTERN FAÇADE OF THE BUILDING WITH A SQUARE HALL IN OLD NISA

Mukhammed Mamedov

Chairman of the National Department for protection,
research and restoration of historical monuments, Ashgabat

КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ЦЕННОСТИ, 1996

For tens of years the building with a square hall of the Southern architectural complex of Old Nisa settlement has been attracting a keen interest of researchers. For the first time this structure was discovered and investigated in 1930 by the archaeological expedition guided by Alexander Maruschenko. In 1946-1949 excavations at the site were continued by *YuTAKE* under the general guidance of M.E.Masson, and G.Pugachenkova was engaged in study of structures and analysis of architecture. Archaeological study of this site was finished in 1979-1991 by the Parthian expedition of the Institute of History of Turkmenistan Academy of Sciences headed by Victor Pilipko.

The problem of re-creation of the lost appearance of the building with a square hall has been reverberated in the fundamental works of G. Pugachenkova.¹ The reconstruction having been implemented by her was considered incontrovertible for a long time arising no peculiar doubts. However, as a result of new archaeological investigations V.Pilipko has proposed his own version of reconstruction which specifies the proportional correlation of two tiers of the square hall and some working out of details in mounting capitals and walls' finishing, as well as possible variants of illumination.

Meanwhile, the reconstruction versions concern only the interior of the building with the square hall, i.e. the hall itself. And what about its exterior, how did façades of this interesting site look like? Unfortunately, either because of incomplete disclosure of exterior walls, or because of not garish architectural material in comparison with the richest architectonics of the interior, the façades didn't attract particular interest of researchers or they were mentioned in passing. In this paper we shall try to fill in the gap and, based on the data available, endeavour to put forward an assumption concerning the appearance of the north-western façade of the building with a square hall after stepped piers were added.

At present out of the nature of the building material (adobe brick), "blades" of many disclosed piers have eroded and today it is actually impossible to read the entire drawing of decoration of the north-

western façade at the site itself. Therefore, let's make use of the published plans of V.Pilipko as an initial data where he had quite minutely expounded a long history of archaeological investigations of this structure and illustrated the text with sketches having been implemented by A.A.Maruschenko's expedition and *YuTAKE*. True, some dissonance in the published plans hamper coming to a monosemantic conclusion concerning the original appearance of the façade piers. In particular, according to B.A.Litvinsky and E.A.Davidovich² a wall blade of the pier V, framing the North-Western entrance, descends down the entrance, thus creating one more step, in total they are five (*Fig.1*), but under the V.Pilipko's plan steps of this pier begin directly in the door-way and in total they are four (*Fig. 2*). And the number of steps of piers III and IV, framing a central entrance, is different in all plans. V. Pilipko underscores that as cogs of protuberances undergo destruction easily, the sections having been investigated before by Maruschenko and *YuTAKE* have not been completely disclosed.³ Then, why are there so many variants in the plan? Besides, discrepancies both in the amount of cogs and in the forms of piers themselves are seen in the plans of one and the same author.⁴

Almost utterly excavated pier I provokes uncertainty as in contradistinction to other piers six cogs are available there. Perhaps, their amount and consequently the form of the piers themselves were changed in the process of multiple repairs in the course of which the broken cogs were simply plastered. The results of Pilipko's excavations proves the aforesaid, he has mentioned that a "destruction started as long ago as in the Parthian epoch (on the same pier I traces of restoration of the broken cogs are available) and continued in the Middle Age".⁵ Still, preferring Pilipko's slightly amended plan, based on the recent investigations, and taking into consideration that the plan embraces the whole view of design of the north-western façade, we shall scrutinise a brief description of the stepped piers. They were eight in total, being arranged approximately at equal intervals, excluding piers III and IV, framing the central entrance of the building. Such a layout was dictated by dimen-

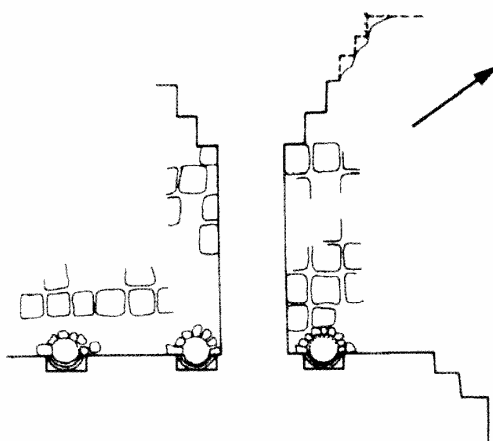


Fig. 1. Nisa. Northeast pass of a square hall. Fragment of plan by B.Litvinsky and E.Davidovich

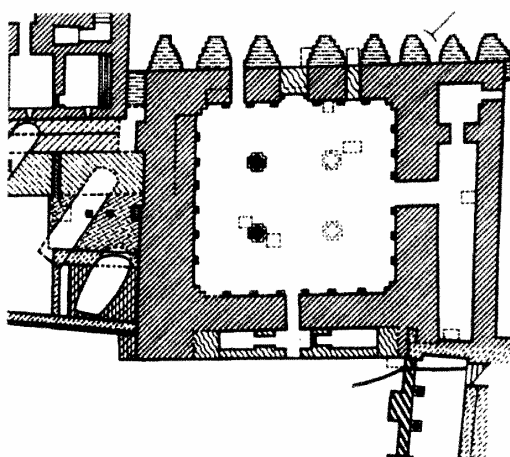


Fig. 2. Nisa. Square hall. Plan by V.Pilipko

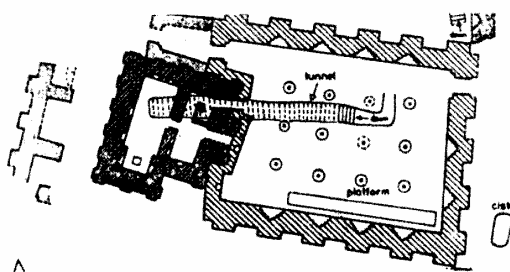


Fig. 3. Tepe Nush-i Jan, fragment of plan

sions of the door-ways themselves. Negligible deviations in the distances between other piers can be explained by reiterative repair overcoating of the piers during a long period of their existence.⁶

To support the steps of pier VIII a rectangular projection was added in the corner of the north-eastern façade. Adobe square bricks of large dimensions were used as building materials for piers' erection. Their surface was covered by clay plaster and whitened by alabaster. No structural bracing is available between the piers and the wall of the hall. Taking into account a poor state of the exposed piers' remains not permitting to reconstruct their original appearance with a documentary accuracy, we shall address to the method of comparative analysis of analogous mounting of walls on other memorials and examine genesis of development of similar architectural elements on the earlier sites.

Utilization of rectangular projections having rhythmically partitioned the walls has been well-known since ancient time, for example Dashly-3 "palace" in Baktria⁷, Tepe Nuch-i Jan in Iran⁸ or Margian memorials Gonur-1 and Adji-Kui⁹. Arrangement of stepped bays in the architecture of the ancient Eastern world has also deep roots. For example, the walls of interior of one of the buildings of Midyi temple complex Tepe Nuch-i Jan (Iran) are partitioned by the stepped deep bays rhythmically arranged. (Fig. 3) Such bays being called "blind windows" in scientific works were revealed in interiors of the "palace" in Gonur-depe in Margiana and Dashly-3 ("palace" premises 50, "temple" premises 3) in Baktria¹⁰.

Framing of door-ways by the stepped piers which have probably been crowned by "perspective" arches is observed in the architecture of Mesopotamian sepulchre in Ure.¹¹ Similar design of entrance was used in zikkurat Tell Al-Rhimian in the North of Iraq. Walls of another site of this ancient settlement - "palace" - are framed by stepped piers rhythmically arranged that amazingly remind the design of the north-western façade of the object considered in Old Nisa (Fig. 4). Besides, the corners of the façade of the "palace" in Ure are also crowned by terraces¹². What is it? Whether it is a casual concurrence or an aspiration of the Parthian architect to keep maximum to ancient architectural traditions of corners' mounting.

The latter is more probable if only take into consideration how assiduously the last steps of the north-eastern corner pier were adjusted, to attain the goal a projection was specially added to the north-eastern façade of the building (as V.N. Pilipko supposes it was done for convenient arrangement of the last cog). Besides, similar finalization of the

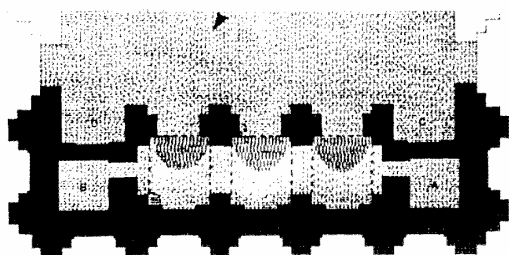
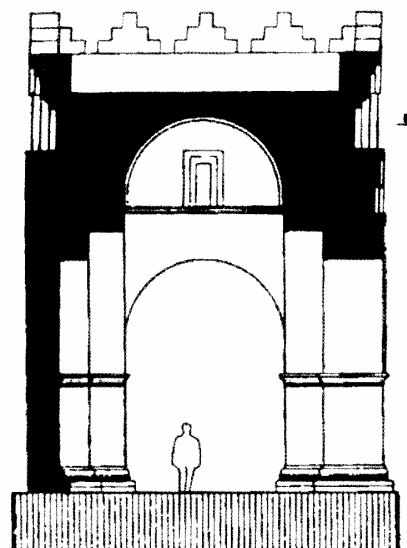
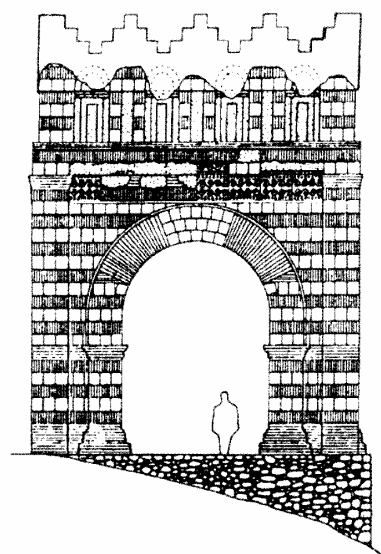


Fig.4. Ur. Palace Sin-Iddinam. Fragment of plan

Fig.5. Kala-i Zohac. Kiosk.

- 1 - façade;
- 2 - section;
- 3 - plan at a level of the top step niches



corner is known in the tower-shaped structure of Altyn-depe prototown in the South of Turkmenistan where façade is partitioned by the stepped piers and the south-eastern corner has the stepped finalization as well.¹³

Tradition of walls' decoration with the stepped bays, bearing a certain religious meaning already in the Bronze age and being stipulated by the ancient tribes' outlook, has been maintained in Akhemenid period (exterior walls of the palace complex in Persepol)¹⁴ and has soundly entered the architecture of the Hellenistic East. A memorial of Seleucid period-temple Unu-Antum in Uruk-can be an ocular demonstration of the aforesaid, there one can trace the division of façade planes into shallow bays and, what is very important, door-ways are framed by archs stretching in perspective.¹⁵

All façades of the "Temple on struts" in the Baktrian ancient settlement Ai-Khanum are decorated by "perspective" bays rhythmically arranged.¹⁶ Analogous bays, but in miniature, are depicted on the cog-merlon being found in another Baktrian antique ancient settlement Surh-Kotale,¹⁷ which witness their popularity and spreading in the antique architecture of the Middle East.

Analogous bays decorate the walls of interior of the so-called "Hall of dancing masks" in Toprak-kala palace in Khorezm¹⁸. The exterior walls of central massive of the palace also have stepped struts in the plan. As we think, proposals for reconstruction of the façades of the object are unconvincing. Perhaps, here archy stepped bays interchanging with shallow bays of less dimensions were still available similar to the decoration of the upper part of the stall in Kalai-Zokhak.¹⁹ By the way, among the preserved Parthian monuments the object in

Kalai-Zokhak provokes peculiar interest (*Fig. 5*) In the plan the stall itself represents a square with large archways on three sides, the fourth side has a deep archy bay of the same dimensions. In perimeter the upper exterior part of the stall is decorated by alternating stepped bays and bays of less dimensions. The upper part of perspectively decreasing bays had archy contours.

Thus, a brief examination of separate monuments has manifested that architectural remains with stepped piers, being disclosed on the north-western façade of the building with a square hall in Old Nisa, have resulted from the progress of ancient Eastern architectural traditions. Consequently, one cannot assert that they were erected as usual buttresses during capital repairs. Such version is refuted by the thickness of the walls themselves in the given section (more than 3 m), requiring no supplementary strengthening.

On the contrary, rhythmical arrangement of the stepped piers and laconic finalization of the façade's corners obviously underline their plastic and decorative nature. At the same time, they probably contained certain religious traits which might be not directly connected with religious ceremonies of that time, but preserved only as survivals in Parthian architecture as a volumetric-planning element of ancient Eastern religious architecture. Consequently, this method might be perfectly utilized to impart more solemn appearance to the main façade of the building.

It would not be out of place to remind that the considered piers were erected at that period of time when anti-Hellenistic policy had been pursuing in Parthia. Everything that had ties with the Greek culture was consigned to oblivion, attempts were made to revive local traditions. National reaction has affected all spheres of life including construction as well,²⁰ which is testified by appearance of four-bladed columns in the square hall and considered stepped piers on the north-western façade, the tradition of which erection, as we have made certain, has deep local roots.

Having conducted architectural and structural analysis of the remains of the north-western wall with the stepped piers added to it which have been fixed in the process of archaeological excavations, one can suggest the following possible versions of reconstruction of the façade:

the f i r s t - piers were lifted on the whole height of the building and looked like decorative turrets rhythmically partitioning the façade plane.

the s e c o n d - the stepped piers reached approximately 6 m and bore a flat wooden penthouse forming an original *ivan* (the version proposed by

V.Pilipko). However, the arrangement of such ordinary penthouse, and what is more, on the main façade leading to the central square of the site of ancient settlement, would greatly deprive of individuality such an outstanding structure from the architectural point of view. Taking into account the rich architectural treatment of the interior, we can suppose with good reason that adequate solution of the exterior was available too.

the t h i r d - the piers were interconnected or projected ones with gradual lap of bricks, having formed U-shaped prospectively decreasing bays (by G.Pugachenkova)²¹ or the piers were connected by the overthrown arches.²² The first is not justified from the point of view of structure, as lateral dimensions of steps are too large (some steps are about a metre length).²³ The version with arches thrown over between the piers remains, to be more exactly, they were small vaults of "segments". Similar vault-shaped constructions have been known since ancient time and were widely spread during the Parthian epoch. In particular, in Old Nisa complex corridors of the tower-shaped structure are overlapped by vaults "segments". Here, semi-circular arch over the doorway has preserved either.

So, the considered stepped piers were probably interconnected by the overthrown semi-circular vaulted arches (the construction is known in the Parthian memorial Shakhri-Kumis), forming "perspective" archy bays where, perhaps, clay sculptures were mounted. True, archaeological studies have not ascertained the existence of sculptures yet, but such a technique was widely spread in the antique architecture. These bays could be used as ordinary decorative ivans either. Taking into consideration that distances between the piers framing the central doorway are wider than the distances between other piers, one can suppose that the height of this archy bay was higher than the others.

So, main (central) entrance higher than the lateral ones was singled out thus underlining its magnificence. This method is quite typical to the Parthian epoch, being known owing to Parthian monuments in Mesopotamia ("temple with ivans" in Khatra, a palace in Ashur).²⁴ Perhaps, a skewback of the first wall vault, started from the upper level of the doorway. A passage from the vertical wall of the pier to the vault was emphasized by a decorative alabaster projection which fragments were disclosed during the excavations. Such protuberances are typical to the architecture of Old Nisa - skewbacks overlapping the corridors of tower-shaped temple are stressed by the shelves projecting and sometimes

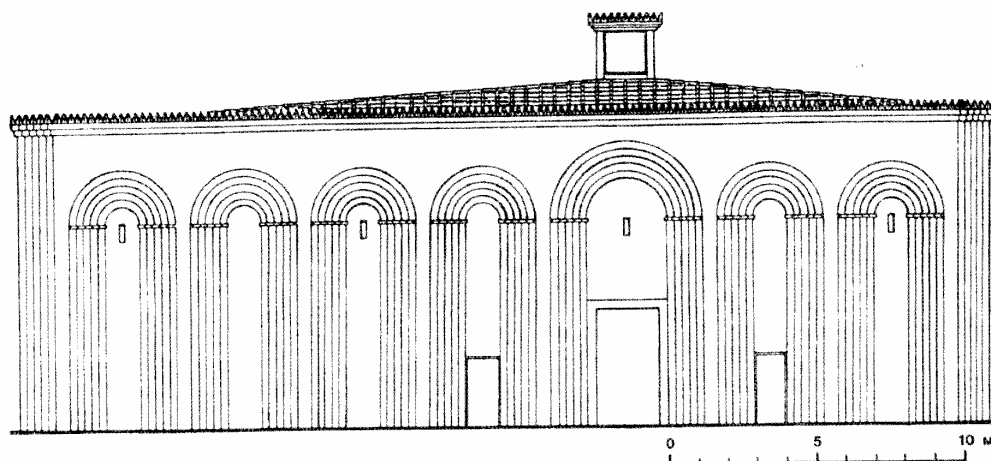


Fig.6. Nisa. Building with a square hall. Reconstruction of a northwest façade



Fig.7. Kaphyr-Kala. Niche of an outside wall with embrasure. Drawing by S.Khmelnitsky.

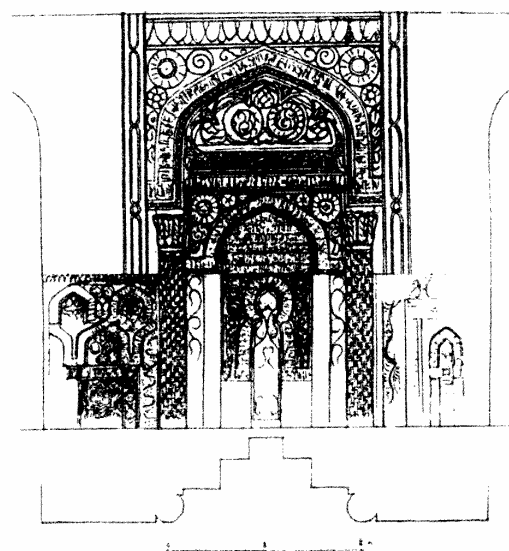


Fig.8. Dakhistan. Shir-Kabir mosque. Mikhrah's niche. Drawing by A.Pribytkova

receding from the surface.²⁵ The cornice of the building was decorated by the stepped terracotta tiles - merlons, a plenty of which were found in the site of ancient settlement. The roof was covered with tile which fragments were also exposed during excavations.

The proposed version of reconstruction of the façade of the building with a square hall in Old Nisa (Fig.6), undoubtedly, is not incontrovertible and, naturally, can stimulate a discussion, as the preserved material is very scanty. It is only one of possible versions. But the decision itself of the façade in the form of prospectively decreasing arch bays, rhythmically partitioning the plane of the wall, which traces back into extreme antiquity and still maintains in the medieval architecture (its area is not restricted only by the Middle East) is quite admissible. This architectural tradition was widely spread in the early medieval period (memorials of Firuzabad of Sasanid period in Iran or exterior walls of Kafyr-Kala complex in Tajikistan, Fig.7).

Not so deep bays but the principle itself is observed

on the façades of Abu-Said mausoleum in Meana and Abul-Fazl mausoleum in Serakhs, in the upper sections of the façade of Rabat-i-Malik caravanse-rai and Arab-Ata mausoleum. The doorways of many medieval structures have three-stage perspective decrease of planes. A mikhrab bay of Shir-Kabir mosque in Dekhistan (Fig. 8) deserves a peculiar attention, its arrangement strongly resembles multi-stage bays of ancient Eastern temple architecture. What is it? Whether it is an ordinary architectural and constructive decision expecting an artistic effect, or it is a tribute to centuries-old traditions.

We think that this method bearing a certain meaning in antiquity had originated from proto-Zoroastrian construction culture and for millenniums, having been comprehended, maintained in survivals of the Middle East architecture until the late Middle Age side by side with such architectural-planning elements as by-pass corridors of Zoroastrian temples, which were consequently changed into the by-pass galleries of the medieval monuments.

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В. Н. Пилипко

Старая Ниса

Основные итоги
археологического изучения
в советский период



«НАУКА»

Summary

This work is intended to give a brief account of main results of research, conducted in the ancient site of Old Nisa during Soviet period (1930–1991). According to this task, a major part of the book deals with so called “Chronicle of archaeological investigations”, which gives us an insight into the process of accumulation of knowledge about Old Nisa. The findings of field explorations, along with publications of that period are presented in the chronicle. On the basis of above mentioned information, the evolution of fortress designation as a whole and its separate buildings in particular is followed. The text is accompanied by illustrations, most of which are related to the period of excavations and have never been published.

The history of archaeological study of Nisa comes under three periods. The first period: investigations of Turkmenian Scientific Institute under the direction of A.A. Marushchenko in 1930–1936. This period is marked by documentary verification of the fact that the ancient site of Old Nisa is dated to the Arsacid period, and by the discovery of monumental architectural buildings as well. The second period: investigations of JuTAKE in 1946–1967. This period includes large-scale excavations, followed by many important discoveries (*ostraca*, *rhytons*, *sculpture*) and full archaeological examination of the Big Square House. The third period: 1980s. It is marked by studies of several expeditions into further research of the Central Complex. During these studies excavations of the Building with Square Hall were practically completed and active research of other structures in the Central Complex was still in progress. New interesting materials were obtained plus subject wall painting was discovered.

The second part of the work includes a series of brief essays dedicated to individual architectural objects, categories of finds and problems. This section begins with a small chapter, called “General information about the site of ancient settlement”. Consideration is being given to the opportunity of the settlement’s opening up in previous historical periods (pre-Arsacid) and general topographical account of the site of ancient settlement, as well as fortification description is given here. With a reference to early opening up of Old Nisian hill, it was concluded that layers of pre-Arsacid period on the settlement are still a question, but materials of preceding periods can be found in small quantities. The finds of stone tools and ceramics dating back to the Namazga I period, the Bronze Age and the Achaemenid period (Fig. 97, 98) are also known.

Under topographical features of the site it was noted that micro-relief of the structure reflects for the most part its construction in the Arsacid period. The remains of fortification structure can easily be followed. Historical literature gives a discrepant account about number of towers in inner wall of the site (from 43 to 50), but, according to the author, there

were 47 of them (Fig. 1). There are different reports of number and position of the gate. The main may be the only gate was most likely in the middle of the north-western wall of the fortress.

Inside the fortress walls in micro-relief the foundation ditches of ancient reservoirs and two largest architectural complexes are clearly recognizable. One of them, “Northern”, is situated correspondingly in the north part of the site. The second was referred to as a “Southern” in early publications, but on the basis of its topographical position (Fig. 1, 110) it should be better named “Central”.

The third chapter generalizes information about the layout of the buildings. These buildings form the Northern Complex: the Big Square House, the Northern Wine-Depository and the South-Eastern Subsidiary Block (Fig. 111, 126). General information of the Big Square House layout is presented and the sequence of its reconstruction has been surfaced. The first stage: the erection of initial unit with twelve depository rooms (Fig. 115). The second stage: the appearance of extra line of the same rooms in the south side. The third stage: the erection of additional small chambers along east side of the court-yard. The fourth stage: the construction of corridor-like premises along western and northern sides of the courtyard (Fig. 113).

The sequence of construction of separate elements, which form the North Wine-Depository is also specified. The most general information is given of the South-Eastern Subsidiary Block, because the excavations of this structure are far away from the completion.

The fourth chapter describes in general terms the construction of the Central Complex, which includes four architectural objects grouped around one big courtyard (the Main Courtyard of Central Complex). All these buildings face the courtyard. It means that all objects of the Central Complex made up the single structure united both by architectural plan and common sacral idea. The degree of exploration of the buildings, which are part of the Central Complex, is different. The Building with Square Hall was totally examined and the layout of ground floor in the Tower Building was completely revealed. The general plan of the North-Eastern Building was reconstructed in great part (the excavations of this structure are far away from the completion). As for the Building with Round Hall, only the southern quarter, which includes the Round Hall and close-fitting rooms, was relatively investigated. No information concerning both the layout and the sequence of the construction of this structure is available.

The fifth chapter gives general information about architecture. Building materials and technical devices are under consideration. Unusual for local architecture materials, such as burnt brick, stone, gypsum as a linking grout for laying,

limits of the first period lie in the middle of the 3rd century BC (the period of the Parthian Kingdom rise) and 150 BC – the date of the earliest ostraca from Nisa. That points to the fact that the fortress acted properly in that period. Although, it provides no way to make more precise the period when the fortress was build. It is possible that the fortress was under construction and acted as a royal residence at first. The remains of several monumental buildings were revealed in the ancient settlement. These buildings had come before the period when the Central Complex was build.

The construction of the Central Complex took place in the 2nd century BC, but it is impossible to make clear the date of its origin in the limits of this period. The Central Complex was under major repairs in the 1st century BC (one of the possible reasons might be the destructive earthquake). The Central Complex might cease to operate in the second half of the 1st century AD. It is confirmed by the lack of pottery dating from the 2nd–3rd centuries AD in its limits and by finds of gypsum balls with coin's impressions dating back to the 1st century AD.

The period when the Big Square House was erected has not been determined yet and it remains to be seen whether it is the first period when Nisa was under construction or the second one (there is a good reason to believe, that the Big Square House was build in synchronism with the other buildings of the Central Complex). The formation of items stored in it indicates that the Big Square House acted energetically in the 2nd–1st centuries BC. The items dating from more recent periods were not revealed.

On the hypothesis that ostraca, which were revealed under excavations of the North Wine-Depository do not bear a direct relationship to it, but they have to do with level adding, which was used during its construction, the origin of this building needs to be dated from the end of the 1st century BC to the beginning of the 1st century AD, as the most recent ostrakon dates from 13 BC.

The third period goes back to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD. It was a period of devastation. The buildings of the Central Complex lied idle and the Treasury was probably devastated. The North Wine-Depository did not act, but the site might be under protection. The remains of small modest buildings with materials of the 2nd–3rd centuries AD came to light in the south part of the ancient settlement. Hence, the activity of Nisian main buildings was terminated long before the Sassanian conquest. One of the possible reasons of that might be another destructive earthquake, after which it was decided not to restore the complex.

The question about practical use of Old Nisian complex still remains a mystery, and this part of the book gives much attention to the criticism of the traditional and thought to be proved by many researchs views of Old Nisa as an object matched Parthian royal residence and at the same time the burial place of the Parthian kings, and notions about performance of the cult for the repose of the Parthian kings' souls according to Zoroastrian rituals.

It is the author's opinion, that all these assumptions are not to be supposed well-proved, furthermore, they seem to be questionable. This work elaborates upon a subject that the fortress was originally constructed and used as a royal residence (the first period of activity). Then, its function changed

drastically. The main place in the fortress was occupied by a group of cult buildings (the Central Complex), related to the worship of the Arsacid dynasty both individually and in combination (dynastic cult). On the speculative level it was proposed that the builder of the fortress was Mithradates I, and after his death it was transformed into memorial complex related to his worship. It is not inconceivable that Old Nisa was the burial place of Mithradates I.

Opinion is disputed on the fact that the first Arsacids, or to be more precise the rulers of 2nd–1st centuries BC, professed zoroastrism. According to the author, this fact was not confirmed by the Arsacids' political declarations on coins, the lack of Nisia structure, which might be identified as a "Temple of Fire" (such definitions of the Tower and Square Hall Buildings seen to be doubtful) and by secondary role of zoroastrian priesthood in the administration of the Nisian Complex. It is more likely, that the basis of the Arsacids' dynastic cult was borrowed from the Seleucids and Greco-Bactrian kings both in ideological ground of this phenomenon and in the ritual itself. This supposition is supported by the clearly defined hellenistic look of the design of Nisian buildings.

Problems arise upon determination of the function of some Nisian buildings. These problems are due to an extended period of buildings' desolation (the equipment for the buildings' activity is practically absent) and incomplete excavations. Only the North Wine-Depository can be determined with certainty. It is really the store of wine filled with clay barrels. The Big Square House can also be determined as the Treasury with confidence. The author prefers to call it temple, but not royal treasury.

Difficulties emerge when determining the buildings of the Central Complex, however, the author leaves room for the determination of main elements of ceremonies occurred in Old Nisa, based upon architectural features of the Central Complex. It was the main ritual center of the site that is now called Old Nisa. All the other buildings (the Treasury, storehouses) were intended for providing the successful activity of this center. During some special days the fortress transformed into the place of pilgrimage. The visitors came inside through the "Western gates", which were close to the entrance to the Main Courtyard of the Central Complex. This vast area became the place of people's concentration. It is likely that main supplications and ritual actions took place here. Only the chosen ones were admitted to enter the sacred building (the Building with the Round Hall, the Tower Building, the Building with the Square Hall). It is hard to tell about the function of sacred buildings, but the most important was probably the Tower Building. It occupied the central position, the big front portico overlooked the courtyard, and this building was the only two-storey structure. A good consensus exists among the researchers as to the Tower Building's function. It was a temple, the Temple of Fire, called in this manner by some researchers. The work makes a conservative correlation between this structure and the buildings, like the Maussoleion at Halikarnassos, the Nereid monument, the near eastern two-storey funeral buildings, the Peripteral mausoleum of Ai Khanum, all combining functions of funeral structure and temple.

Even though the supposition as to the possible location of the secret burial chamber in the depth of central core will

and methods (wide application of arched structures, wooden frames, tiled roofs, the use of terracotta in ornamental decoration, wall painting and clay monumental sculpture) found use in the architecture of Old Nisa. The special section is devoted to the questions of planning. It is suggested that the general project of fortress construction was in existence both during early and late stages of its operation.

The final part of the chapter is concerned with a question about the place of Nisian monuments in a row of local traditional architecture. There is not enough relevant information concerning this, but, however, it was concluded that Nisian monuments differ from structures of local traditional architecture, and it is reasonable to suppose that invited architects, brought up on Hellenistic traditions, but not local architects played a leading part in construction of Nisian monuments. The influence, or more precisely the presence of Hellenistic culture has severe effect on ornamental decoration of Nisian buildings.

The sixth chapter gives general information of Nisian finds. Most attention is concentrated on sculpture, wall painting, *rhytons*, *ostraca* with Parthian inscriptions and pottery. Clay sculpture, which is an integral part of main architectural buildings, came to light in Nisa. Sculpture of this kind was the decoration of the Square Hall, the Round Hall and some of the upper rooms in the Tower Building. Such big (more than 2 m.) statues were made of painted clay by the experienced sculptors under Greek canons. Suchlike sculpture wasn't properly interpreted. The majority of the statues most likely represented Patrons of the Arsacid dynasty. The formal test specified that some of the statues represent men in Greek full uniform dresses, male figures in Iranian costumes and female figures in Greek-styled dresses. The period when sculpture was created is about the 2nd–1st centuries BC.

The second category of sculpture is presented by small gypsum makes with a height of 1m. These makes are difficult to describe due to bad safety (Fig. 185). Sculpture of this kind may be defined as votive only by convention.

The third category is presented by marble sculpture, which was kept in the Big Square House. The best samples of suchlike sculpture are well-known owing to available publications (M.E. Masson, G.A. Pugachenkova, 1957).

Wall painting was presented in two buildings of the Central Complex, namely, in the Building with Square Hall and the Tower Building. There is no sign of painting's fragments on the walls, because painting is located high above the floors, that is, on wall sections, which are lost by now. Only fragments of plastering with painting survived. These fragments fell onto the floor in ancient times already or they were carried out as a building refuse when buildings were under repair. Only ornamental motifs of the painting are displayed in the Building with Square Hall (Fig. 191), but the decoration of the upper rooms of the Tower Building includes also subject painting (Fig. 196, Table VI). According to stratigraphical observations, the subject paintings date back to the early period of the Tower Building's existence (the 2nd century BC).

All found coins are related to the Big Square House, that is to say, they fall into the category of treasure. Only about 40 coins were revealed. They were mainly coins of the 2nd–3rd centuries BC and of foreign origin (Seleucid, Greco-Bactrian, Sogdian, Pontic). Parthian coins are presented by only three

samples: early Arsacid coin with a personage in *cirbasia*, tetradrachm of the Mithradates I, issued in 139/8 BC and drachma of Sinatruces.

In addition to original coins, the impressions of coins were revealed on gypsum "balls" (Fig. 201). The impressions were made by coins of the Mithradatcertnian minting dating back to the 1st century AD.

The *rhytons* are the most famous finds from Nisa and only general information about them is given in this work. Much attention is paid to the circumstances of *rhytons*' discovery and to the presence of their fragments not only in room 8, but also in other storerooms of the Big Square House. Attention is also focussed on the presence of the metal *rhytons*' fragments in the "Treasury".

As for *ostraca*, much attention is also centered on archaeological circumstances of their revealing. The researches hold to the viewpoint that *ostraca* from level adding of the rooms, situated in the North Wine-Depository, do not bear a direct relationship to its activity, but they are related to another Wine-Depository, which was build earlier. During the construction works, they were taken to the North Wine-Depository together with soil, which was used as a level adding. Information is also given about the detection of *ostraca* within the Central Complex.

The dating possibilities for the pottery from the lowland strip of Kopetdag are rather limited. Only in some cases, on the basis of pottery the archaeological layers may be dated with a precision of the century. However, the excavations brought to light several pottery complexes, which, in the following active exploitation of this problem, would help to make clear the date of individual periods associated with activity of Nisa. The dated complex most closely comes from the hole in the North Wine-Depository, where a lot of pottery fragments were found, along with *ostraca* dating back to the 1st century BC (Fig. 213). The second significant pottery complex comes from rubbish dumps of the Central Complex (Fig. 217–220). The fact, that it was dated to the 1st century BC, is rather solid. One further set of ceramics comes from adding dating back to the period when the Central Complex was under construction. This complex contains small amount of ceramics at present. Hopefully, the continuation of excavations and a rise in dating possibilities of local ceramics will make it possible to define the period when the Central Complex was build.

The special part of the book is devoted to the analysis of archaeological finds in the Big Square House. This part deals with the formation of the finds and their distribution throughout the individual rooms. On the basis of the analysis, it was concluded that items were delivered to be stored in small lots and they were mainly of foreign origin. In what follows they were probably transferred from room to room repeatedly. The storerooms for items of the same category in the Big Square House were probably absent. A widely accepted opinion of the "Treasury" after the fall of the Parthian Kingdom is not supported. It is more likely, that the Big Square House was devastated by the "owners" after the Central Complex had abolished all its activity.

The seventh chapter examines the problems of dating and interpretation of Old Nisa. Three main periods in the history of the ancient settlement may be clearly marked. The

not be confirmed, there is some evidence for such comparison. The constructions of all above-mentioned structures bear similarities: the high massive blind plinth and the plinth-based rooms, and colonnades.

The Building with a Round Hall and the Building with a Square Hall next to the Tower Building are related to the sacred buildings, but they probably occupied a dependent place to the Tower Building. It is difficult to say about their function, but the choice might be most likely made between the Temple of the Patrons and the ancestors' sanctuary.

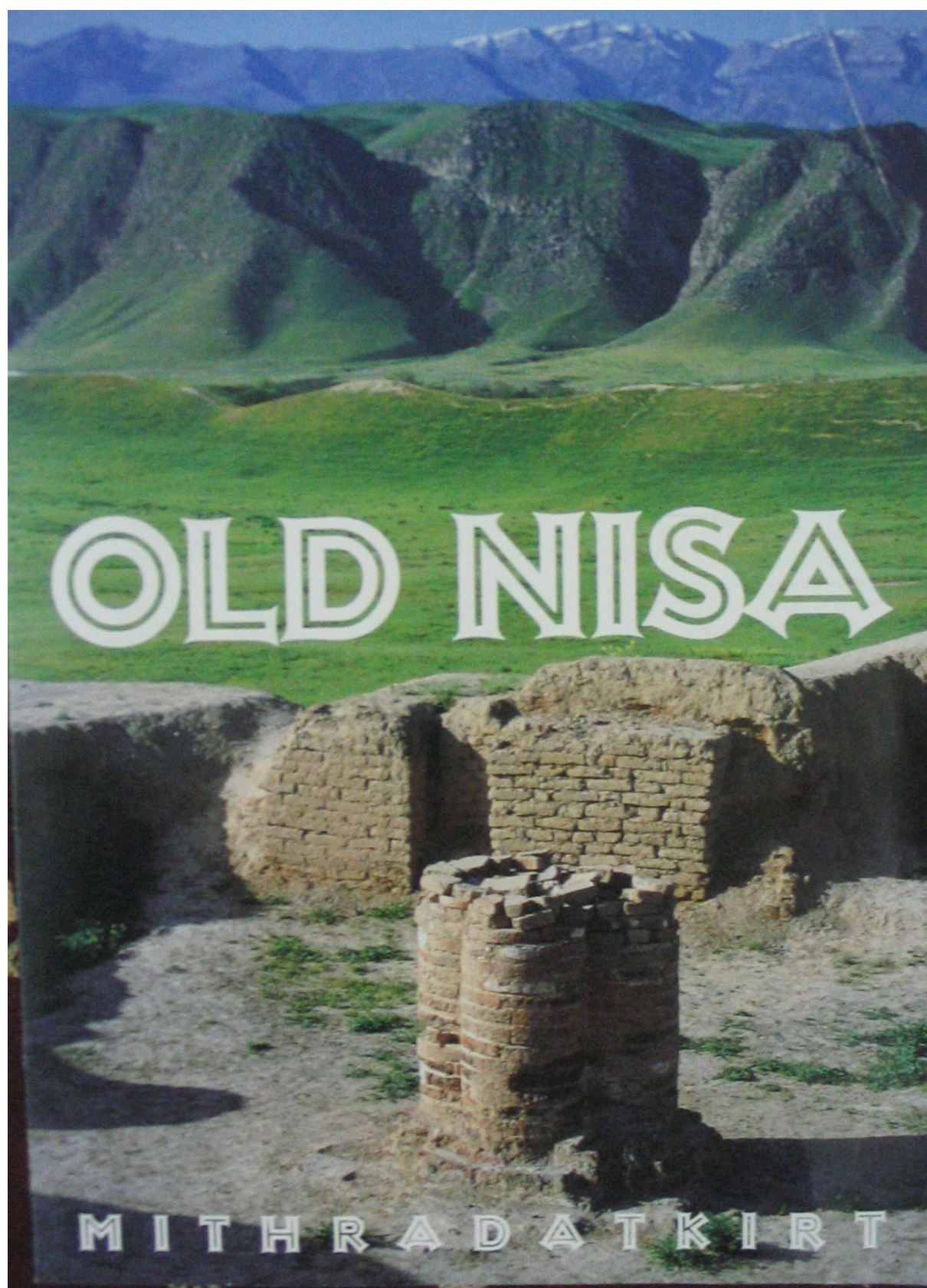
The fourth structure in central line of buildings – the North Eastern Building is usually described as a "Palace", but in its limits there are no any rooms, which might be considered as a royal chamber (true, the excavations have not been finished yet). Two vast festive-decorated courtyards were of great importance in the "Palace" (Fig. 129). On this basis, it has been proposed that the North Eastern Building acted as a public refectory and the ritual banquets, which were of pri-

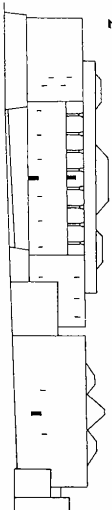
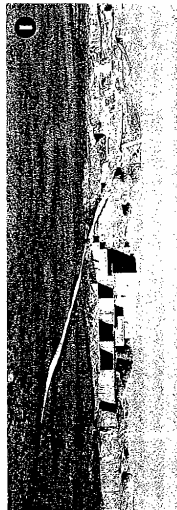
mary importance in the public life of the Ancient East, might be held in the courtyards.

The third part of the work represents the various appendixes (the dictionary of code names, the list of quoted literature, the list of illustrations, the list of abbreviations), which help the reader to use the book or add the main text. In particular, this part contains an annotated index of publications concerned with archaeological investigations in Nisa (Appendix 2), the full text of "Information report" by A.A. Marushchenko about Nisian investigations in 1930–1935 (Appendix 4) and short information about Nisian researchers (Appendix 6).

A great number of illustrations is an integral part of this work. Interesting archive graphic materials are widely used. Furthermore, there are a lot of analytic summary plans of buildings and tables of finds made by the author.

Translated by Igor Tsyganov



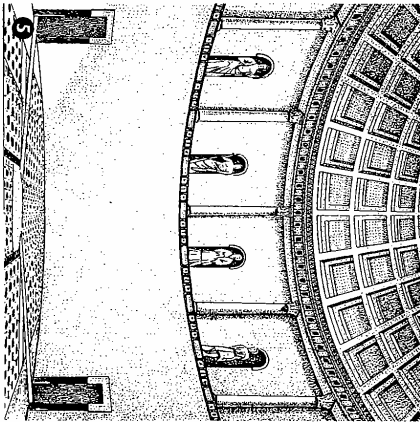


Old Nisa is located on the territory that constitutes core of the Parthian State. It was the land where the Parthian kings has started their conquests and turned small Parthia into a huge empire of the ancient world that stretched from Indus to Euphrates.

Before the beginning of the excavations the site of Old Nisa had not been specifically distinguished for anything among the other multiple monuments of southern Turkmenistan. But the first trial excavations, conducted there, showed that Old Nisa had not been an ordinary fortress destined for military control over the neighbouring territory. It turned out to be a concentration of big luxurious buildings. Together with Parthian masters, the architects and artists of Greek school, the expertise of which had been greatly appreciated in the Middle East and Central Asia, had performed its construction. From the richest arsenal of Greek art they had used those ideas, methods and images which met ideological beliefs and artistic tastes of their customers. As a result of united attempts of Parthian and Hellenic masters, new, unprecedented constructions that belonged to so-called Hellenistic civilization, had been created.



1. General layout of the site
2. Sight of Tower-like building and Quadrate Hall building from a modern sightseeing platform. Reconstruction after V.N. Piliplko.
3. Round Hall.
4. Portico of Mithradates I.
5. Reconstruction of Round Hall (after G.A. Pugachenkova).



Excavations of the site had started in 1930 and are conducted up to now with breaks. They are still far from completion, but already made discoveries are of great significance for understanding of Parthian history and culture. The progress of the excavations revealed a few large architectural constructions. Determination of the period of their building, study of the their construction and analysis of finds, associated with their operation, helps to get information about different side of life of Parthians - level of development of social relations, beliefs, artistic tastes.

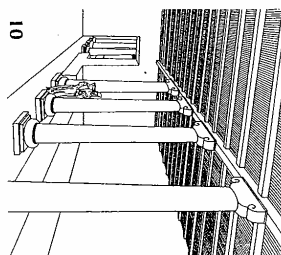
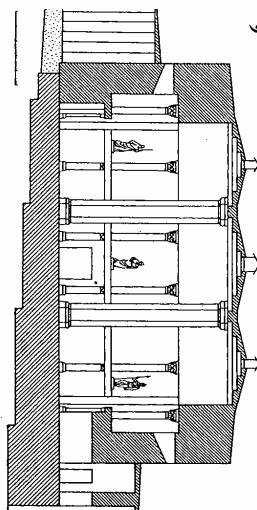
Yet there is not accurate data of the period of construction. Archaeological information facts of early Parthian history let us place this event in between the middle of 3 century BC and the middle of 2 century BC. Some researchers, on the ground of the ancient name of the fortress (Mithradat - fortress of Mithradates), which they had learnt from documents found on the site, consider it possible to attribute its creation to Mithradates I (171-138 BC), one of prominent figure of Parthian history. However it can be excluded that the fortress was founded earlier and then renamed after Mithradates I. The earliest document found in wine-vault is date from 150 BC, that is by that time not only the walls existed but the fortress had had a functioning wine-storage inside.

The main constructions are concentrated in the central part of the fortress. Excavations of this complex have not been completed, a lot more remains to be misty and scientists dispute about the destination of its construction, but on the present stage of research its main component is already known. The western wall had been adjoined by vast yard, which had been faced with facades of four

main constructions of the complex. Its south-western part had been occupied by The building of Round Hall, adjacent in the east with Tower-like building. The western side ended with The building of Quadrate Hall and a construction that conventionally was called North-Eastern Construction.

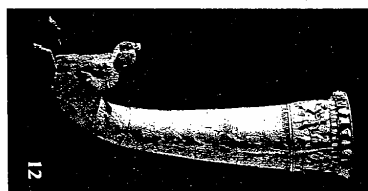
The Construction of Round Hall is one of the least studied. There were almost no excavations before. The southern part of the construction was partly cleared. Among the excavated rooms a round hall of 17 meters in diameter is distinguished. Besides the original shape and large size, it attracts attention with its decoration. During excavation it was established that its walls up to all the remained height (4-5m) had been covered with whitewash. But inside the room there were discovered pieces of columns made of bricks, terracotta decorative tiles and fragments of ceramic statues. All these were located on height of the second raw and truly enough reconstructed on the picture after G.A. Pugachenkova. Cult destination of this building evokes no doubt of researchers, however its specific role - temple, mausoleum or heron has not been established yet. We have nothing but hope that this will be determined after the completion of the excavations.

The neighbouring Tower-like building had definitely been the central construction of the complex. Even now being badly ruined it strikes with its monumentality. From the east, due to levelling platform it looks like three-row construction rising up to 15-17 m. The southern and eastern corners of the construction ended with powerful towers. Two porticoes, with columns made of bricks, had decorated entrance of the building. Through them one could enter two gloomy bypass corridors of the



9. Reconstruction of Quadrate Hall Building (after V.A. Rylkov).
10. Reconstruction of storage room of Big Quadrate House.
11. Detail of pythion (frieze), ivory.
12. Pythion, ivory.
13. Statue of Goddess in marble.

these concept is debatable, as there was not discovered any rooms, which could be regarded as royal chambers. In the northern domestic complex, the Big Quadrate House, was completely studied. That was a quadrate construction 60x60 m. Twenty, similar in layout, chambers form its perimeter. The centre of the edifice is occupied with vast yard, initially encircled with columnar portico. The building is distinguished for reticence, as the only way to enter it was through a hidden door in the southern wall. Along the long walls of chambers wide shelves made of adobe bricks and destined for storing of various articles, were installed. Possibly the gifts, presented to Mithradates' temples or to royal treasury had been stored there. When a room was filled, the keepers sealed the room with brickwork. Finally no room in the chambers remained. From the south the building was adjoined by additional chambers, later the architects started to build inside the inner garden. Instead of columnar portico they built a corridor-like compartment and small isolated cellars. This huge building, heaped to the top with various material and artistic values, was carefully guarded. However, as the complex was abandoned, the treasury emptied.



On its ruins archaeologists has managed to find only poor remnants of formerly kept values, but even those remains were splendid. First of all it is worth mentioning pythions of ivory, sculpture of Greek make, articles of artistic ceramics. Eastward of the treasury, a comparatively modest edifice of wine vault, **madustan** in Parthian, was excavated. It consisted of big vast rooms crammed with rows of ceramic barrels (khums), in which Parthians used to keep the wine provided by the local vineyards. Provision of wine and its further consumption had been strictly counted. The first note of the kind had been made on available material – pieces of broken crockery, mainly, of the same khums. During the excavations of madustan there were found more than 2.5 thousand of such pieces with notes, so-called ostraks. They contain rich material for study of economics, history and culture. As it was already mentioned, due to those ostraks archaeologists found out Parthian name of Old Nisa as well as those of 40 other settlements and its outskirts, learnt a lot about administrative system of Parthian state, religious beliefs and calendar of Parthians.

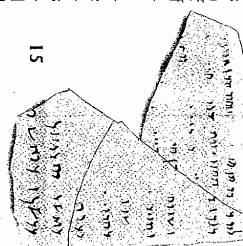
Researchers, which excavate Old Nisa, as well as curious people, who visit the site, inevitably question the general destination of this complex. It is very difficult to answer it for sure, since the excavations are far from completion, archaeologists have studied approximately one fifth of the territory of the site. There are three ideas.

The first one is as follows: Old Nisa is a necropolis of Parthian kings. This opinion is based on identification of Old Nisa with ancient city of Parthianusa, where, in accordance with Isidore of Charax statement, sepulchres of Parthian king were located. Yet nothing of the kind has been found. That makes this suggestion very vulnerable.

The second definition is that Old Nisa is a royal residence.

The third, which the author of the present booklet finds most appropriate, states that Old Nisa is dynastic cult centre, destined for propaganda of idea of divine origin of ruling dynasty (it is known that Parthian kings considered themselves to be brothers of Sun and Moon). The later excavations will finally answer this question. It is quite possible that all three versions will turn out to be true. The fortress could have been initially built as a royal residence; later on some Parthian king (for instance Mithradates, as the fortress had been named after him in antiquity) might have been buried there. And after that it had been turned into a memorial centre.

These are general information about explored monuments of Old Nisa – Mithradatkirt and those that are being explored at the moment. These explorations allowed us to learn a lot about some achievements of Parthians, one of the most ancient peoples, that inhabited Southern Turkmenistan, which contributed to development of world culture.





ground floor and narrow, chink-like windows could hardly enlighten them. The centre of the construction had been occupied with huge (about 20×20×7 m.) monolithic pedestal of adobe bricks. On the top of it there were the main temple chambers. Due to the fact almost nothing remained we can not judge how they looked like. However the architects used murals and ceramic sculptures.

The building of Quadrate Hall has been studied almost completely. It had been powerful, repeatedly rebuilt construction about 29×36 m. its facade had been decorated in the last period with eight orifices. The walls in some section were 4-5 m

thick. The best part of the volume of the construction had been occupied with vast quadrate hall with floor of 400 m². The lower row of its walls had been decorated with semi-columns and two big ceramic statues stood on the upper one. Besides the hall, the building included a few auxiliary chambers. Among them Red Corridor, floor and lower part of which had been covered with special red coating, was distinguished.

Some researchers determine the Building with Quadrate Hall as an edifice destined for ceremonial receptions. Most likely it had had cult destination. However to which gods or heroes it was dedicated had not been established yet. Partly it might be explained by the fact that researches did not find many articles that associated with the its operation period, and ceramic sculpture, which formerly had decorated The Quadrate Hall, is badly damaged. This sculpture was magnificent. Huge, more than 2 meters high, statues had been performed with accuracy and sense of realism. Its artistic advantages can be revealed in the example of well-remained helmet-covered head. The statues depicted both men and women and the most probable they de-

6. Head with helmet. Clay sculpture.

7. Metope with a lion's head.

8. Fragment of murals with head of a woman or a young man.



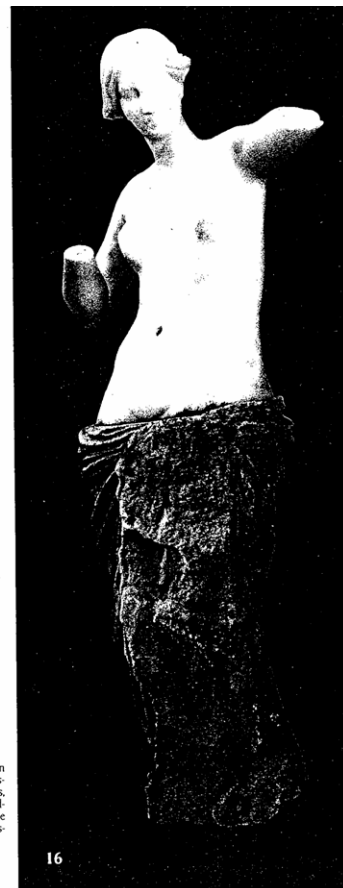
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L'ancienne Nisa

La forteresse de Mithridate

Par Carlo LIPPOLIS



Tête en argile stucquée et peinte de guerrier, provenant de la Salle Carrée de la citadelle. Cliché C. Lippolis.

LE site archéologique de Nisa, situé à 17 km à l'ouest d'Ashgabat, la capitale du Turkménistan, se compose de deux centres voisins : à l'ouest, la ville dite "nouvelle Nisa", et à l'est, la citadelle royale appelée "ancienne Nisa".

La citadelle s'élève au pied des monts du Kopet Dag, et contrôle la plaine fertile qui s'étend entre les montagnes au sud et le désert du Karakoum au nord. L'ancien nom du site, Mithradatkert – "forteresse de Mithridate" (probablement Mithridate I) –, ainsi qu'une indication chronologique évoquant sa fondation (première moitié du II^e siècle avant J.-C.), nous sont connus grâce à l'un des 2 700 tessons écrits (*ostraca*) découverts à Nisa. Ces *ostraca* font, pour la plupart, référence à l'administration des vignobles royaux de la région.

Depuis 1990, la mission archéologique italo-turkmène, dirigée par le professeur A. Invernizzi de l'Université de Turin, effectue des recherches à l'ancienne Nisa (Turkménistan), afin de compléter et intégrer les résultats exceptionnels obtenus par les chercheurs soviétiques à partir des années 30. Aujourd'hui, nous disposons d'un relevé topographique complet de la citadelle et de nouvelles données importantes pour notre connaissance de l'architecture officielle et de l'art de la cour arsacide.



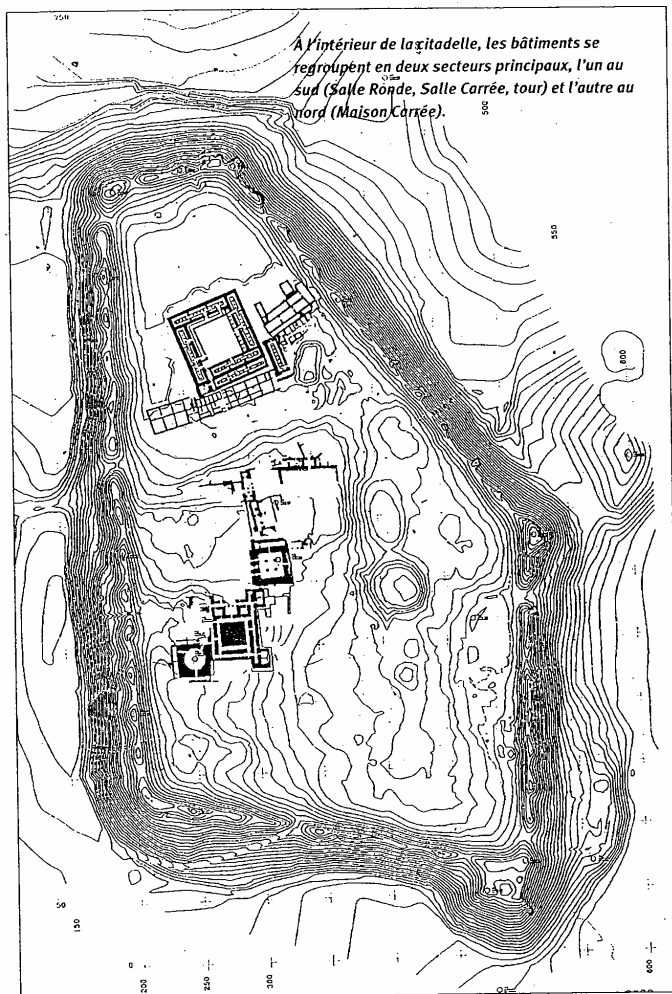
La Salle Ronde. Les nombreux trous de poteaux retrouvés dans le sol le plus ancien sont la trace d'un système d'échafaudages de bois disposé pour la construction de la voûte et des murs de la salle.

Une imposante ligne de remparts, renforcés de tours en briques crues (comme le reste de l'architecture de la citadelle), délimitait un espace approximativement triangulaire.

Le complexe méridional des bâtiments est le centre monumental de la forteresse, constitué de trois édifices de grandes dimensions dont la fonction,

encore difficile à préciser, devait évidemment revêtir un caractère officiel ou cérémoniel.

À l'extrémité sud-ouest de la citadelle se trouve la Salle Ronde, qui a été étudiée durant ces dernières années par la mission turinoise. Les fouilles des précédentes missions soviétiques (JuTAKE) n'avaient pas été achevées, et



A l'intérieur de la citadelle, les bâtiments se regroupent en deux secteurs principaux, l'un au sud (Salle Ronde, Salle Carrée, tour) et l'autre au nord (Maison Carrée).



L'entrée nord-ouest de la Salle Ronde. Pendant la deuxième phase d'occupation, son extrémité ouest a été murée et la pièce a changé de destination avec l'installation d'un bassin rituel d'argile et de plâtre.

L'APPORT DES RECHERCHES ARCHÉOLOGIQUES

Un des résultats les plus significatifs des fouilles de la mission turinoise est d'avoir éclairci la relation architecturale et fonctionnelle de la salle centrale circulaire avec les couloirs et les espaces externes, surtout dans les secteurs septentrionaux et occidentaux. Les données recueillies nous amènent à reconsidérer la destination et le rôle fonctionnel des espaces internes et externes du complexe.

De plus, l'élaboration d'un nouveau plan du bâtiment a révélé que le passage nord-ouest de la salle a connu un développement différent de ce qu'indiquent les relevés de l'expédition soviétique (JuTAKE). Cette salle ne communiquait pas avec le couloir septentrional du complexe, mais avec un espace vraisemblablement ouvert à l'ouest, espace qui a été fermé dans une deuxième phase de construction.

Ces résultats attirent l'attention sur la zone nord avoisinant la Salle Ronde.

il fallait éclaircir le plan et la structure architecturale plutôt complexes de ce bâtiment. Il s'agit d'une vaste salle circulaire de briques crues (de 17 m de diamètre), inscrite dans un bâtiment quadrangulaire. La maçonnerie interne est architecturalement indépendante de la maçonnerie externe, mais ces deux constructions ont été probablement menées en même temps. Cette indépendance devait garantir une meilleure organisation du chantier, et permettre une certaine rapidité dans le travail en assurant une relative souplesse dans la construction. Par ce type de plan, inspiré

de conceptions typiquement orientales, la salle ronde se dissocie des schémas de l'architecture classique. C'est aussi ce que montre un autre aspect mis en évidence par les recherches italiennes : la couverture de la salle ronde était constituée d'une vaste voûte parabolique posée directement sur le sol.

L'atmosphère de monumentalité grandiose de cette salle pourrait convenir à un lieu consacré à des cérémonies de type religieux. La succession stratigraphique semble révéler deux phases principales d'existence, à partir du milieu du II^e siècle avant J.-C.

Asie centrale

Ils ont mis en évidence le fait que cette zone, inexplorée auparavant, renferme un complexe monumental plus ancien en connexion avec la Salle Ronde, mais indépendant. Le plan du bâtiment parthe semble s'organiser en un ample espace central, entouré d'un système de couloirs et de salles. Les fouilles n'ont, pour le moment, fait apparaître que le sommet de quelques murs du complexe (conservé sur une hauteur probable d'environ 5 m).

Une partie de ces murs plus anciens est couverte par d'autres structures mises à nu pendant la campagne de fouilles 2000 et supposées correspondre à une grande cour avec trois *iwān* d'époque tardive : ces constructions indiquent que l'ancienne Nisa était un centre d'une certaine importance, même à l'époque islamique (XII^e-XIV^e siècles). Il nous faudra donc attendre l'achèvement des fouilles des états les plus récents pour connaître avec exactitude les caractéristiques du complexe d'époque parthe au nord de la Salle Ronde.

Un autre résultat significatif, lors des recherches italo-turkmènes, est la découverte de fragments de sculptures, gisant sur le sol et en mauvais état de conservation, qui constituaient les éléments d'une décoration originale. Ce sont les restes de statues en argile crue qui dépassaient 2 m de hauteur. Ces statues, qui représentaient des figures vêtues de tuniques et de manteaux, ont

été réalisées par superposition de plusieurs couches d'argile de qualité différente : plus on s'éloigne du cœur de la statue, plus l'argile est fine et pure. En plus de l'effet des plis compliqués qui créaient de forts contrastes de clair-obscur, la peinture conférait une grande vivacité aux figures : dans plusieurs cas, cette peinture de couleurs blanche, bleue, rouge, rose et noire est encore visible. Les fragments de décoration des sculptures en argile, bien que souvent limités à de futiles parties de la figure originale, sont un témoignage précieux de la présence à la cour des souverains parthes d'un atelier de sculpteurs d'un très haut niveau, et de formation grecque. Étant donnée la fragilité du matériau employé, il est difficile de croire que ces statues aient été modelées ailleurs qu'à Nisa, puis transportée sur le site.

Au nord-est, se trouvait un autre édifice imposant relié à la Salle Ronde par un système de couloirs périmétraux : une tour entourée de longs couloirs, et une plate-forme massive carrée de 20 m de côté, et dont il ne reste aujourd'hui que les substructions. Au sommet de la construction devait se trouver un édifice réservé à des célébrations. C'est en effet probablement de cet édifice que proviennent des fragments d'un grand cycle de peintures représentant des scènes de bataille entre guerriers vêtus à l'iranienne. Ce sujet avait évidemment une

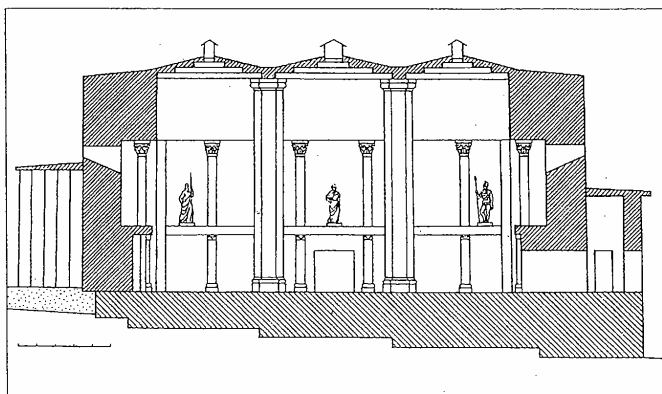


signification cérémonielle d'un grand intérêt, et se référait à un contexte mythologique ou à un événement historique d'une importance particulière pour la dynastie arsacide.

Au nord-est se situe la Salle Carrée. L'espace central de l'édifice était occupé par une splendide salle de 20 m de côté, richement décorée. Au centre, quatre colonnes supportaient le poids d'une couverture en bois. Des modifications ont été apportées à la décoration interne et à la façade de l'édifice, au cours de diverses phases architecturales. De ce bâtiment proviennent les plus beaux exemplaires de sculptures d'argile que nous possédions.

Sur le plan artistique, la fusion d'éléments de tradition iranienne (tels que le plan carré de la tour et de la Salle Carrée) avec des formes hellénistiques, surtout présente dans l'appareil décoratif, semble évidente. Il ne s'agit pas d'une simple juxtaposition de traditions et d'éléments culturels différents, mais d'une adoption libre et consciente, d'une interprétation nouvelle de schémas et d'éléments, où les apports de la tradition hellénistique ont le plus souvent une signification formelle, vidés de leur fonction structurelle originale.

Reconstitution (selon V. N. Pilipko) de l'intérieur de la Salle Carrée.





L'INTERPRÉTATION DES STRUCTURES PRINCIPALES

S'il est indiscutable que le rôle des trois constructions était de première importance, il est encore aujourd'hui difficile d'établir leur usage exact. Pour la Salle Ronde, considérée par les fouilleurs soviétiques comme un mausolée ou un temple, on a récemment suggéré qu'il puisse s'agir d'un *héron* de Mithradate I lui-même.

Pour ce qui concerne la Salle Carrée, on peut l'interpréter soit comme une salle des audiences, soit comme un temple ou, plus vraisemblablement, une salle cérémonielle liée au culte des ancêtres, comme semblent le suggérer les fragments de statues découverts.

De la tour, qui n'a jamais été complètement fouillée, on possède peu d'éléments. Toutefois, les données dont nous disposons peuvent aussi nous renvoyer à un contexte cérémoniel.

Quelle que soit la destination réelle des édifices du complexe méridional, il apparaît évident qu'ils sont liés à un dénominateur commun : la célébration de la famille royale arsacide et de ses origines.

En se déplaçant à l'extrémité nord de la citadelle, on trouve un complexe septentrional qui comprenait un grand édifice de 60 m de côté : la Maison

Carrée. Quelques annexes y ont été ajoutées postérieurement (I^{er} siècle après J.-C.) sur les côtés sud et est, pour satisfaire à des exigences probablement administratives. L'édifice consistait en une vaste cour carrée délimitée par des portiques à colonnes de bois sur des bases de pierre. À l'arrière des portiques, se trouvaient des salles, au nombre de trois pour chaque côté de la cour, à l'intérieur desquelles des banquettes en argile étaient adossées aux parois. Le rôle que l'édifice avait à l'origine reste discuté. Il s'agissait peut-être d'un bâtiment destiné à des banquets officiels, comme semblent l'indiquer les banquettes présentes dans chaque salle. Mais cette fonction a probablement été modifiée avec de nouvelles transformations. Des annexes ont été ajoutées et les portes des salles internes ont été murées. La Maison Carrée devint alors un magasin où était déposé le trésor royal. C'est en effet de ce complexe que proviennent les témoignages les plus prestigieux et significatifs de l'art somptuaire arsacide : les rhytons en ivoire, qui constituent sans aucun doute la découverte la plus spectaculaire et la plus importante (plus de 40 pièces) des fouilles soviétiques, les statues de marbre et les objets de métal.

Toutes ces découvertes exceptionnelles provenant de l'ancienne Nisa révèlent l'adoption d'éléments locaux

Page précédente. Rhyton retrouvé dans la Maison Carrée. Richement décorées d'une frise à relief sous le bord et d'une figure en ronde-bosse à l'extrémité inférieure, ces hautes cornes à boire représentent un courant artistique de très haut niveau de l'Asie "hellénisée".

Ci-contre. Tête de Satyre avec Dionysos provenant de la Maison Carrée. Les sculptures de marbre sont de vrais chefs-d'œuvre. Leur iconographie et leur style s'insèrent parfaitement dans le milieu artistique hellénistique.

qui se greffent sur un répertoire formel hellénistique.

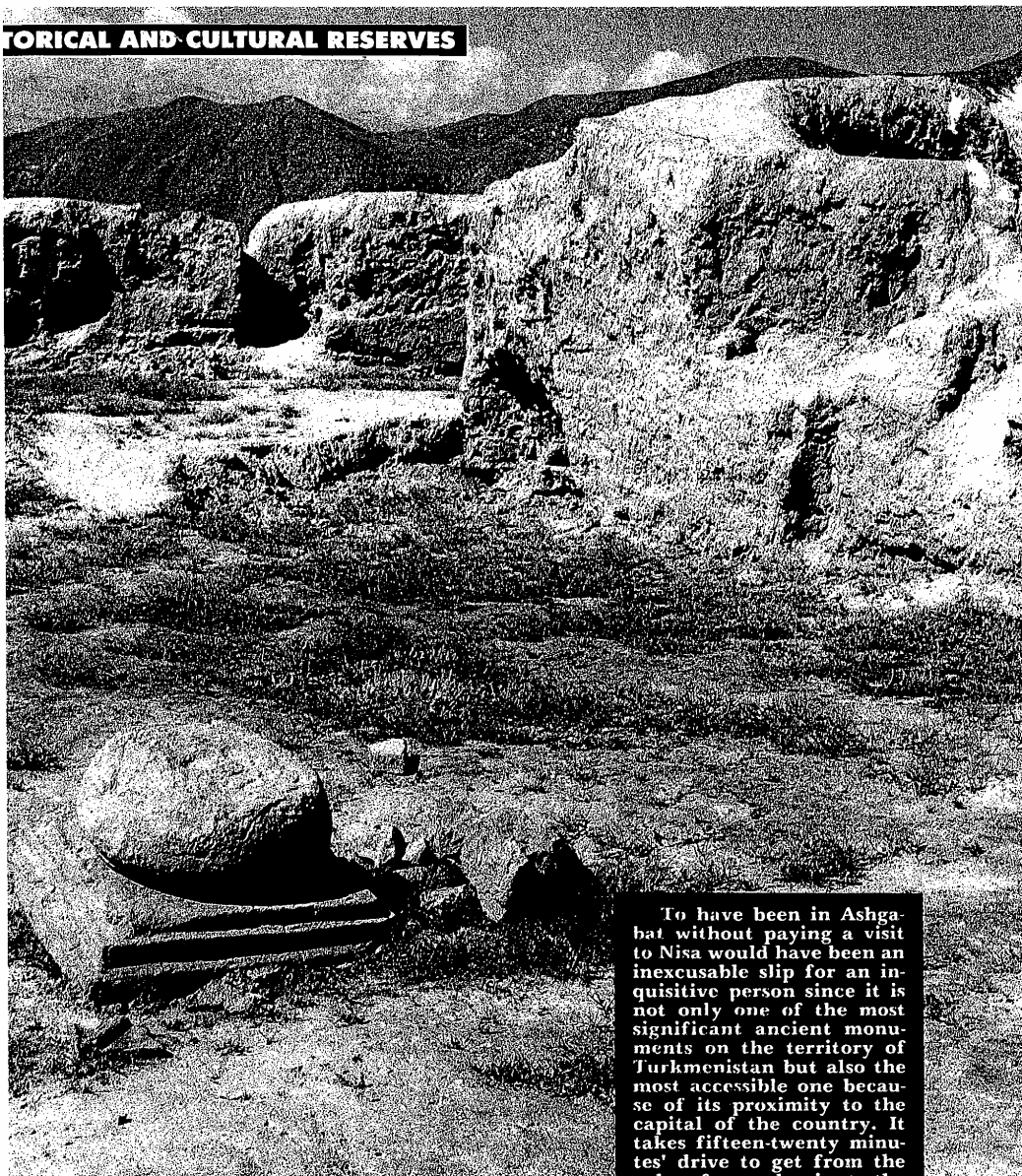
Les fouilles de la forteresse royale de Mithradate ont conduit à une imposante récolte de matériel et d'informations qui jettent une lumière de plus en plus nette sur ce carrefour de cultures que devait être l'ancienne Mithradatkert, entre le II^e siècle avant J.-C. et l'écroulement de la dynastie parthe. La cour arsacide fut le lieu d'une interaction créative de cultures différentes (iranienne, grecque, centre-asiatique) mais étroitement liées. L'ancienne Nisa, une des premières résidences royales arsacides, mais la seule à avoir été fouillée, nous apparaît aujourd'hui comme un centre cérémoniel monumental consacré à la gloire et à la mémoire de la dynastie : un lieu de célébration où les traces de la vie quotidienne sont extrêmement rares alors que tout, depuis l'architecture jusqu'aux pièces mises au jour, s'exprime dans un langage propre à la cour arsacide, imprégné de religiosité et de solennité. ■

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Tous les clichés appartiennent à la mission italo-turkmène.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESERVES



To have been in Ashgabat without paying a visit to Nisa would have been an inexcusable slip for an inquisitive person since it is not only one of the most significant ancient monuments on the territory of Turkmenistan but also the most accessible one because of its proximity to the capital of the country. It takes fifteen-twenty minutes' drive to get from the urban fuss and noise to the absolute silence of long ago ruined city separated from the alive world by the high ridge of shapeless walls of the fortress. Its mellow soil muffles any sounds, the vegetation there is extremely poor and shows green very shortly after the spring rains. And despite the fact that from the top of the two archaeological sites of Nisa an absolutely unique landscape reveals itself, this place is being visited in winter and summer not to admire the nature.

NISA

24 slan MURADOV

A TRIP to Nisa is an aspiration to touch history, to feel its thrilling breath. Deliberately or not but this is nearly always an attempt to surmount the time, to forget for a while and reject everyday worries in order to realize one's own belonging to human kind the roots of which are hidden in the earth. Time has no mercy on anything that had been made by the human race, but even having disappeared from the surface of the earth, the traces of the long-past generations are deposited in the shape of beddings of epochs following each other. Archaeologists carefully layer after layer reaching the earliest, primordial cultures the remains of which lie on subsoil - a sterile, untouched by a man's work stratum of soil.

The name Nisa came to us from the depth of millenaries and its meaning had been already forgotten in the Middle Ages. Meanwhile it was mentioned in cuneiform texts of II millennia BC left by the early civilizations of Iran, as well as in Avesta - the sacred book of Zoroastrians. There were written about the area of Nisayeh through which Iranian tribes moved to the south-west, about its green pastures whereon the famous in the whole Ancient East horses were bred. Running ahead we point out that nowadays it is the ruins of Nisa in proximity to which the biggest base for breeding of the famous Akhal-Tekke racers in Turkmenistan. This place is often visited by tourist and those who have a luck to stay there during the season of races, can spend a Sunday in the hippodrome of Ashgabat and watch a spectacle that may infect almost everyone with fervour of competition.

Though, let us return to Nisa. It is situated in the out skirts of Bagyr village (to the west from Ashgabat) and consists of two impressive archaeological sites called in Turkmen Kenenusaï (Old Nisa) and Tazenusaï (new Nisa) separated from each other for a distance of one and half kilometres. The Whole area between them had been occupied formerly by a medieval town and today its territory is in captivity of crops and houses of Bagyr's inhabitants. Both archaeological sites are towering with their steep mounds by a small river, almost at the foothills of one of the spurs of Kopet Dag mountains. A fertile valley stretches from the natural eminencies on which they had been founded, up to the skyline. This is the lands of Bagyr and the fecund fields of other settlements, and further, in the hazy distance, the desert of Karakum begins. Nowadays, from the high ridge of the former fortress walls of Nisa, one can observe the Ashgabat International Airport and the stacks of Bezmeyn Cement Producing Plant, but these are not the nearest signs of modern life in the vicinity. It is a few hundred metres away from the eastern wall of Old Nisa where in 1997 a length of broad motorway which is to connect Iranian town of Mashad with the port of Turkmenbashi. It turns out that Nisa, which many centuries ago served as one of the main transit centres on the Silk Road, joins the international trade again but now symbolically.

EXCURSUS TO HISTORY

In IV century BC Akhame-nid Empire had been ruined with the strikes of Alexander's troops. During the period of Seleukids - the successors of Alexander, three independent states established: Bactria, Khorezm and Parthia. These countries were developing through pace along eventful historical way which had been covered in the work of the authors of antiquity. Among them Parthia that existed for about 600 years (from III century BC till III century AD) succeeded best and became a formidable opponent of Rome Empire at the beginning of I century AD. That was a huge empire that in the period of its zenith stretched from Mediterranean to north-western

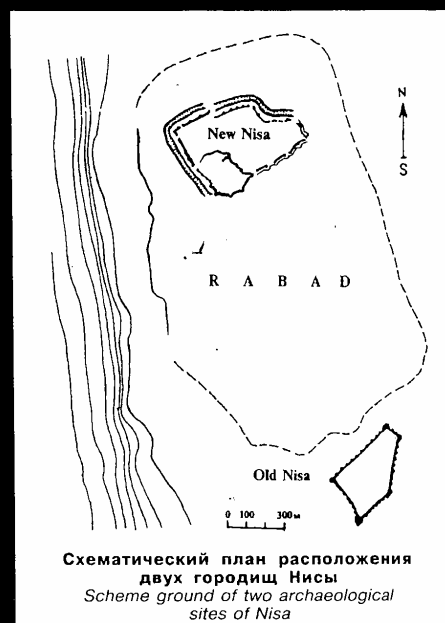
Its cradle, the first centre was Parthau - the historic area of dwelling of Parthians, which is divided into two parts by the ridge of Kopet Dag. It roughly corresponds the territory of modern Akhal region in Turkmenistan and the northern areas of Iranian province Khorasan.

It was that area where in 217 BC the tribe of Aparns (or Parns) having become a big union of nomads, which inhabited Karakum desert, headed by their chief Arsak seized Parthau (Northern Parthia), Andragor - the Greek governor-general of that Seleukid satrapy was killed. Arsak announced himself to be the king of independent Parthia. Then he occupied Hirkania (area situated near the south-eastern coast of Caspian Sea), later on the first capital of the Parthian kingdom - Hekatompi (the archaeological site Shahri Kumis near the town of Damgan in Iran) sprung up.

Approximately at the same time there was founded the town of Parthau as administrative and economic centre of domain of the dynasty of Arsakids in the land of their forbears. That was why they had established there the burial-vault of their first kings. Due to the written documents, found during excavations in Old Nisa, the exact name of that fortress has been established: Mitridatkert. It allows to attribute its foundation to king Mitridat I, who ruled in 171-138 BC, though, possibly, it might have been renamed in his honour. At all events that outstanding statesman which had turned Parthia into a world power, as well as Mitridat II (ruled in 123-87 BC) was sure to develop Mitridatkert. What did that royal town look like?

SANCTUARY OF ARSAKIDS

Mitridatkert (Old Nisa) was built outside the main town (New Nisa) on a natural hill, the top of which had been flattened and its contour took the shape



Схематический план расположения двух городищ Нисы
Scheme ground of two archaeological sites of Nisa

of irregular pentagon. The fortress walls that stood on that powerful platform, had 10 metres' thickness at the foot. Initially they had been possibly 20 metres high. Along the perimeter there were set about 40 rectangular towers and one unsailable bastion. Inside the fortress (its territory amounted to 14 hectares approximately) there were two big architectural complexes: The Northern and The Southern ones. The first one has been completely ruined whereas the second one is the main sight of all Nisa. At least three interrelated things can be distinguished.

There is no doubt that the incompletely studied Tower-like building, that represents a massive square pedestal encircled by two rows of corridors, should be recognized as the main one. The upper part of the construction is unknown but destroyed section reached formerly the height of 15 metres at the minimum and had rich architectural decor. The south-eastern and north-eastern corners of the Tower-like building had been erected in the shape of far jutting out towers. One of them has been reconstructed and now tourists can imagine better the character of the strict Parthian architecture. However, the decorations of the interior and facades of the Nisian sanctuaries can only be guessed, as yet there have been found only scanty fragments of big ceramic statues with the remnants of painting and murals that supposedly contained battle scenes.

The entrance to the Tower-like building was on the northern facade and built in the form portico, which stuck out to the central square. The building with Quadrate Hall also was facing the square with its main facade. Its roof was 20 metres long and had been supported

**Фрагмент
глиняной статуи,
украшавшей один
из храмов Старой Нисы**
*Fragment of ceramic statue
which formerly decorated one
of the temples of Old Nisa*

by four columns constructed with rounded baked bricks.

As well as the whole Southern Complex, that chamber had been ruined about 1500 years ago as a result of an earthquake and today, only two bases of former columns and the remnants of wall up to the height of two-three metres have remained. Meanwhile that was almost the most luxuriant room of the temple complex, decorated with statues of deified Parthian kings and heroes. Finally, the south-western corner of the Tower-like building is adjoined by the edifice with Round Hall of 17 metres in diameter. It has been studied by Italian archaeologists from Turin University for several years.

The northern architectural complex of Old Nisa consisted of a big square house which was surrounded by various house-hold buildings, in particular winestores, filled with khums - huge ceramic jars which contained wine. By the way, the modern viticultural plantations constitute the best part of the fields around Nisa. Many door-ways in the Quadrangle Hall were thoroughly bricked up and the rooms behind them were turned into royal treasury. It was there, where in 1948 archaeologists, excavating these chambers, discovered a solid collection of now-famous rhithons - huge

vessels in the shape of horns, made out of ivory and skilfully decorated with sculptural reliefs. Today these true masterpieces of Parthian art belong to the National Museum of Turkmenistan.

The monuments of Parthian culture are connected with the archaeological site Mansur-depe located four kilometres to the north from New Nisa. The two excavated on it erections are supposed to have had a temple purport but this opinion is debatable. "The Main Temple" of Mansur-depe was rather large building for its time, and as well as in Old Nisa, it has remained intact only the lower parts of the thick adobe walls which are decorated in some places with remnants of ornamental painting.

SEARCHES, DOUBTS AND PROBLEMS

In fact, Nisa was discovered in 1930, when an archaeologist from Ashgabat, Alexander Marushenko started there systematic excavations. It was his expedition that managed to date the monument to Arsakids' period, to reveal the temples of Mitridatkert. In 1946 The South-Turkmenistanian Complex Archaeological Expedition (YuTAKE) was created to be headed by academician Michael Masson. The results of its twenty-

years' work in Nisa are a range of outstanding discoveries, sometimes sensational ones.

The excavations conducted by YuTAKE discovered all of the now-known edifices in Old Nisa and New Nisa, reconstructed the history of northern Parthia. A deeper research of some edifices of Old Nisa from 1979 till the present day has been conducted by the Doctor of Historical Sciences Victor Pilipko. His explanation of the functional purpose of Mitridatkert is as follows: "That was either royal residence which sheltered the Arsakids' court during its visit to that part of the vast Parthia, or a special cult centre which glorified the ruling dynasty and for that reason enjoying its gracious attention. The last supposition seems to me to be more acceptable since the best part of the architectural erections of Old Nisa had been taken by temples, not palaces.

Only one hundred years ago neither inhabitant of Bagyr nor scientists were knowledgeable of Parthian Nisa. The last ones merely supposed that in the vicinity of this settlement there could have been probable location of that Nisa which had been mentioned in the works of Greek geographer Isidor of Kharak: "...Then Parthienia ... with a valley in it and the town of Parthaunisa and 6 skho-in (skho-in is considered to be equal to 5.5 km - R.M.) away from it there are royal burial sites. Hellins call it Nisa". Despite that fact that in antiquity Nisa was the name of several settlements of the Hellenized East, modern historians doubt that Isidor of Kharak's Nisa in Bagyr are one and the same place. That is because of the main, the most convincing argument - the royal graves. The question is whether archaeologists will find them?

In the past summer V. Pilipko kept researches of the ruins of the most enigmatic edifice in Nisa - Tower-like building being almost alone. He elaborated a program of the further works in this erection up to 2000. If they are accomplished, the landslides will be removed and the inner chambers of the ground floor will be cleared from blockages. Victor Pilipko says that these measures will establish conditions for partial restoration of the monument that is to prevent it from gradual destruction and will turn the ruins into an eye-catching expository site. Tourists will have an opportunity not only to observe the building from outside but also to walk along its entirely reconstructed, domed corridors of the inner ring.

NEW NISA

Unlike Mitridatkert where remains of Parthian epoch were not covered with the later cultural deposits, the life of New Nisa continued for many centuries after the fall of Arsakids' state in 224 AD. Frankly speaking, there was a break in it that lasted more than two centuries which was more likely to be caused by negative attitude to Parthaunisa of the new rulers of the East - the Sasanids which hated everything that had been associated with

Arsakids' cults. The town fell into decay and became deserted. It was only in the second half of V century, when, judging from the medieval written sources, it was revived by king Firuz of Sasanids which appreciated it at its advantageous location. In 651 Nisa was annexed by the Arabian Caliphate. Since that time of its history a long and to great degree dramatic epoch closely connected to Islam's establishment and spread began.

In IX-X centuries the town had all the indications of prosperity that was proved by travellers and geographers of that time. One of them, al-Makdisi, wrote: "Nisa is a big town, healthy and beautiful, with abundance of water and other vital conditions. Trees of the town interlace each other, their fruits are fine. The main mosque is graceful, bread is pure, the market with merchant rows is rich in lots of valuable and rare things. They have a single language and low prices, they have literature and genealogy, courage and inaccessibility for the enemies". Rapid growth of the town took place in XI-XII centuries when it belonged to the state of Seljuks. The development continued later in vassalage of Khorezmshakhs, until in 1220 Nisa, as well as the other big towns of Central Asia experienced common catastrophe: siege and demolition by Mongols.

After the Mongol's invasion, Nisa comparatively quickly revived, but all the following ages shared the destiny of all the Northern Khorasan, that was to be arena of intestine wars, and changing hands of various despots and conquerors beginning with Tamerlan (XIV c.) up to Nadirshakh (XVIII). In the twenties of XIX only, Turkmen Tekke settled down there but at that time the town had already become degraded and ruined. It was the very time when at the ancient wall of Nisa the settlement of Bagyr was founded.

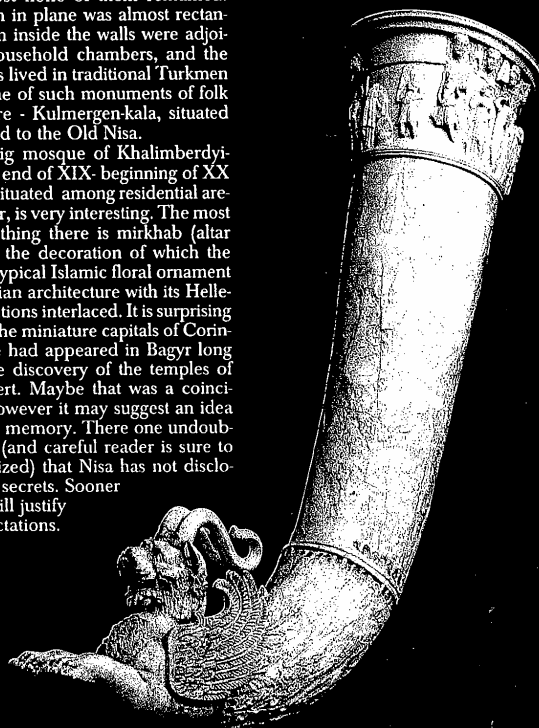
SIGHTS OF BAGYR

Unfortunately no visible indications of medieval history of Nisa has remained but there are a few monuments which still are honoured by local inhabitants. They are connected to religious beliefs of Turkmens and are located on the territory of ancient graveyards. First of all, it is Shikh-Alou - the mausoleum of the local sheikh Abu Ali Dakkak that live there in X century. It is an edifice in the shape of oktagon, roofed with dome. It has been distorted greatly by the modern restoration and now does not resembles much its initial view. Mosque-namazga (musalla) has suffered worse from the inexpert restoration. Namazga is the name of a specific mosque usually built in the outskirts that serve for assemblies of town-dwellers twice a year, on the days the main Muslim holidays. The namazga of Nisa had been built probably in the end of XIII-beginning of XIV century and represented a domed chamber open to outside, and two adjoining room on each side.

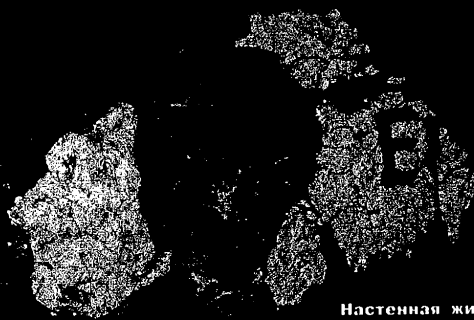
An absolutely different type of erections around the archaeological sites of Nisa is represented remnants of rather

small adobe fortresses, called in Turkmen kala. In XIX century the main type of contry estate in Bagyr however nowadays almost none of them remained. Their form in plane was almost rectangular; from inside the walls were adjoined by household chambers, and the inhabitants lived in traditional Turkmen yurtas. One of such monuments of folk architecture - Kulmergen-kala, situated by the road to the Old Nisa.

The big mosque of Khalimberdy-Ishan (the end of XIX-beginning of XX century), situated among residential areas of Bagyr, is very interesting. The most attractive thing there is mirkhab (altar niche), in the decoration of which the motifs of typical Islamic floral ornament and Parthian architecture with its Hellenistic traditions interlaced. It is surprising that with the miniature capitals of Corinthian type had appeared in Bagyr long before the discovery of the temples of Mitridatkert. Maybe that was a coincidence. However it may suggest an idea of genetic memory. There one undoubted thing (and careful reader is sure to have realized) that Nisa has not disclosed all its secrets. Sooner or later will justify our expectations.



Ритон, вырезанный из слоновьего бивня - один из самых совершенных в коллекции произведений парфянского искусства Нисы
Rhithon, cut out of ivory - one of the most perfect in the collection of masterpieces of Parthian Art found in Nisa



Настенная живопись в храмах старой Нисы свидетельствует о глубокой связи парфянской культуры с искусством Древней Греции.
Murals in the temples of Old Nisa prove deep relations of Parthian culture with art of Ancient Greece



Sites of Old and New Nisa are situated not far from Ashkhabad at the foot of the Kopetdagh mountains. They are the residues of the main town of the ancient Parthian province called Nisa. The latter was the ancestral residence of the Parthian dynasty of the Arshakids. Old Nisa is a powerful tsarist fortress called Mithridokert, after its founder Mithridat I, and New Nisa is the antique town property; the suburb with country estates and gardens connected one town with the other.

As a result of excavations undertaken by the Soviet archaeologists two large architectural complexes have been discovered in Old Nisa—Southern and Northern. The Southern one included the palace and temple groups of buildings. The palace group of buildings consisted of numerous chambers, large square audience-hall, guard-rooms, closed yards with column porticoes. The religious group included the Round temple and the Tower temple surrounded with the system of arched corridors.

The major structure of the Northern complex is the „Square House“ the treasure-house of the tsarist relics. Close to the complex numerous, economic storehouses were located. When excavating „The Square House“, robbed out in ancient times, numerous specimens of the ancient culture have been found—fragments of the beautiful marble statues, horn-like vessels (ivory rhytons decorated with skillful fretwork), residues of the tsar throne, armament, utensils—phials, amphoras, imported glass and etc. In the next wine depositories, so called „khumkhany“, records of the economic archives have been found—about two and a half thousand of rocks with inscriptions in Parthian in Arameian script. The ruin of the Arshakids dynasty caused the ruin of Old Nisa.

In New Nisa the residues of the Parthian buildings have been discovered as well—those of the fortress, of burial houses and store-houses. The development of the town lasts during the Middle Ages. In the IX—XII centuries Nisa becomes one of the large, rich, well-built towns called „The Granary of Khorasan“ for an abundance of cereal crops. Streets of the town were lined with beautiful houses buried in verdure. Nisa was famous for its cotton and silk fabrics. Findings of glazed pottery, glass, bronze articles testify to the high level of work-manship.

The Mongolian invasion inflicted heavy losses on Nisa: in the process of the invasion 70000 men were killed. Only from the end of the XIII century, and in the XIV—XV centuries especially, new construction works were carried on, delicate vessels were manufactured resembling white-blue china. Then, as the feuds progressed, the town falls into decay and in the XVIII century stopped its existence. Of Middle Ages architectural relics in Nisa one can see only ruins of mosque-namazga, the carved grave-stone of al—Djalila, 1417, and several mazars of the later period.

At the Soviet period the ancient sites of the town of Nisa were declared the territory of historico-cultural value. Long-term archaeological excavations undertaken there resulted in numerous finds and discoveries of the treasures of ancient and material culture.

Text by G. Pugachenkova

Victor Pilipko. Staraya Nisa. Moscow, 2001.

Summary

This work is intended to give a brief account of main results of research, conducted in the ancient site of Old Nisa during Soviet period (1930–1991). According to this task, a major part of the book deals with so called “Chronicle of archaeological investigations”, which gives us an insight into the process of accumulation of knowledge about Old Nisa. The findings of field explorations, along with publications of that period are presented in the chronicle. On the basis of above mentioned information, the evolution of fortress designation as a whole and its separate buildings in particular is followed. The text is accompanied by illustrations, most of which are related to the period of excavations and have never been published.

The history of archaeological study of Nisa comes under three periods. The first period: investigations of Turkmenian Scientific Institute under the direction of A.A. Marushchenko in 1930–1936. This period is marked by documentary verification of the fact that the ancient site of Old Nisa is dated to the Arsacid period, and by the discovery of monumental architectural buildings as well. The second period: investigations of JuTAKE in 1946–1967. This period includes large-scale excavations, followed by many important discoveries (*ostraca, rhytons, sculpture*) and full archaeological examination of the Big Square House. The third period: 1980s. It is marked by studies of several expeditions into further research of the Central Complex. During these studies excavations of the Building with Square Hall were practically completed and active research of other structures in the Central Complex was still in progress. New interesting materials were obtained plus subject wall painting was discovered.

The second part of the work includes a series of brief essays dedicated to individual architectural objects, categories of finds and problems. This section begins with a small chapter, called “General information about the site of ancient settlement”. Consideration is being given to the opportunity of the settlement’s opening up in previous historical periods (pre-Arsacid) and general topographical account of the site of ancient settlement, as well as fortification description is given here. With a reference to early opening up of Old Nisian hill, it was concluded that layers of pre-Arsacid period on the settlement are still a question, but materials of preceding periods can be found in small quantities. The finds of stone tools and ceramics dating back to the Namazga I period, the Bronze Age and the Achaemenid period (Fig. 97, 98) are also known.

Under topographical features of the site it was noted that micro-relief of the structure reflects for the most part its construction in the Arsacid period. The remains of fortification structure can easily be followed. Historical literature gives a discrepant account about number of towers in inner wall of the site (from 43 to 50), but, according to the author, there

were 47 of them (Fig. 1). There are different reports of number and position of the gate. The main may be the only gate was most likely in the middle of the north-western wall of the fortress.

Inside the fortress walls in micro-relief the foundation ditches of ancient reservoirs and two largest architectural complexes are clearly recognizable. One of them, “Northern”, is situated correspondingly in the north part of the site. The second was referred to as a “Southern” in early publications, but on the basis of its topographical position (Fig. 1, 110) it should be better named “Central”.

The third chapter generalizes information about the layout of the buildings. These buildings form the Northern Complex: the Big Square House, the Northern Wine-Depository and the South-Eastern Subsidiary Block (Fig. 111, 126). General information of the Big Square House layout is presented and the sequence of its reconstruction has been surfaced. The first stage: the erection of initial unit with twelve depository rooms (Fig. 115). The second stage: the appearance of extra line of the same rooms in the south side. The third stage: the erection of additional small chambers along east side of the court-yard. The fourth stage: the construction of corridor-like premises along western and northern sides of the courtyard (Fig. 113).

The sequence of construction of separate elements, which form the North Wine-Depository is also specified. The most general information is given of the South-Eastern Subsidiary Block, because the excavations of this structure are far away from the completion.

The fourth chapter describes in general terms the construction of the Central Complex, which includes four architectural objects grouped around one big courtyard (the Main Courtyard of Central Complex). All these buildings face the courtyard. It means that all objects of the Central Complex made up the single structure united both by architectural plan and common sacral idea. The degree of exploration of the buildings, which are part of the Central Complex, is different. The Building with Square Hall was totally examined and the layout of ground floor in the Tower Building was completely revealed. The general plan of the North-Eastern Building was reconstructed in great part (the excavations of this structure are far away from the completion). As for the Building with Round Hall, only the southern quarter, which includes the Round Hall and close-fitting rooms, was relatively investigated. No information concerning both the layout and the sequence of the construction of this structure is available.

The fifth chapter gives general information about architecture. Building materials and technical devices are under consideration. Unusual for local architecture materials, such as burnt brick, stone, gypsum as a linking grout for laying

and methods (wide application of arched structures, wooden frames, tiled roofs, the use of terracotta in ornamental decoration, wall painting and clay monumental sculpture) found use in the architecture of Old Nisa. The special section is devoted to the questions of planning. It is suggested that the general project of fortress construction was in existence both during early and late stages of its operation.

The final part of the chapter is concerned with a question about the place of Nisian monuments in a row of local traditional architecture. There is not enough relevant information concerning this, but, however, it was concluded that Nisian monuments differ from structures of local traditional architecture, and it is reasonable to suppose that invited architects, brought up on Hellenistic traditions, but not local architects played a leading part in construction of Nisian monuments. The influence, or more precisely the presence of Hellenistic culture has severe effect on ornamental decoration of Nisian buildings.

The sixth chapter gives general information of Nisian finds. Most attention is concentrated on sculpture, wall painting, *rhytons*, *ostraca* with Parthian inscriptions and pottery. Clay sculpture, which is an integral part of main architectural buildings, came to light in Nisa. Sculpture of this kind was the decoration of the Square Hall, the Round Hall and some of the upper rooms in the Tower Building. Such big (more than 2 m.) statues were made of painted clay by the experienced sculptors under Greek canons. Suchlike sculpture wasn't properly interpreted. The majority of the statues most likely represented Patrons of the Arsacid dynasty. The formal test specified that some of the statues represent men in Greek full uniform dresses, male figures in Iranian costumes and female figures in Greek-styled dresses. The period when sculpture was created is about the 2nd–1st centuries BC.

The second category of sculpture is presented by small gypsum makes with a height of 1m. These makes are difficult to describe due to bad safety (Fig. 185). Sculpture of this kind may be defined as votive only by convention.

The third category is presented by marble sculpture, which was kept in the Big Square House. The best samples of suchlike sculpture are well-known owing to available publications (M.E. Masson, G.A. Pugachenkova, 1957).

Wall painting was presented in two buildings of the Central Complex, namely, in the Building with Square Hall and the Tower Building. There is no sign of painting's fragments on the walls, because painting is located high above the floors, that is, on wall sections, which are lost by now. Only fragments of plastering with painting survived. These fragments fell onto the floor in ancient times already or they were carried out as a building refuse when buildings were under repair. Only ornamental motifs of the painting are displayed in the Building with Square Hall (Fig. 191), but the decoration of the upper rooms of the Tower Building includes also subject painting (Fig. 196, Table VI). According to stratigraphical observations, the subject paintings date back to the early period of the Tower Building's existence (the 2nd century BC).

All found coins are related to the Big Square House, that is to say, they fall into the category of treasure. Only about 40 coins were revealed. They were mainly coins of the 2nd–3rd centuries BC and of foreign origin (Seleucid, Greco-Bactrian, Sogdian, Pontic). Parthian coins are presented by only three

samples: early Arsacid coin with a personage in *cirbasia*, tetradrachm of the Mithradates I, issued in 139/8 BC and drachma of Sinatruces.

In addition to original coins, the impressions of coins were revealed on gypsum "balls" (Fig. 201). The impressions were made by coins of the Mithradatcertnian minting dating back to the 1st century AD.

The rhytons are the most famous finds from Nisa and only general information about them is given in this work. Much attention is paid to the circumstances of rhytons' discovery and to the presence of their fragments not only in room 8, but also in other storerooms of the Big Square House. Attention is also focussed on the presence of the metal rhytons' fragments in the "Treasury".

As for ostraca, much attention is also centered on archaeological circumstances of their revealing. The researches hold to the viewpoint that ostraca from level adding of the rooms, situated in the North Wine-Depository, do not bear a direct relationship to its activity, but they are related to another Wine-Depository, which was built earlier. During the construction works, they were taken to the North Wine-Depository together with soil, which was used as a level adding. Information is also given about the detection of ostraca within the Central Complex.

The dating possibilities for the pottery from the lowland strip of Kopetdag are rather limited. Only in some cases, on the basis of pottery the archaeological layers may be dated with a precision of the century. However, the excavations brought to light several pottery complexes, which, in the following active exploitation of this problem, would help to make clear the date of individual periods associated with activity of Nisa. The dated complex most closely comes from the hole in the North Wine-Depository, where a lot of pottery fragments were found, along with ostraca dating back to the 1st century BC (Fig. 213). The second significant pottery complex comes from rubbish dumps of the Central Complex (Fig. 217–220). The fact, that it was dated to the 1st century BC, is rather solid. One further set of ceramics comes from adding dating back to the period when the Central Complex was under construction. This complex contains small amount of ceramics at present. Hopefully, the continuation of excavations and a rise in dating possibilities of local ceramics will make it possible to define the period when the Central Complex was built.

The special part of the book is devoted to the analysis of archaeological finds in the Big Square House. This part deals with the formation of the finds and their distribution throughout the individual rooms. On the basis of the analysis, it was concluded that items were delivered to be stored in small lots and they were mainly of foreign origin. In what follows they were probably transferred from room to room repeatedly. The storerooms for items of the same category in the Big Square House were probably absent. A widely accepted opinion of the "Treasury" after the fall of the Parthian Kingdom is not supported. It is more likely, that the Big Square House was devastated by the "owners" after the Central Complex had abolished all its activity.

The seventh chapter examines the problems of dating and interpretation of Old Nisa. Three main periods in the history of the ancient settlement may be clearly marked. The

limits of the first period lie in the middle of the 3rd century BC (the period of the Parthian Kingdom rise) and 150 BC – the date of the earliest ostraca from Nisa. That points to the fact that the fortress acted properly in that period. Although, it provides no way to make more precise the period when the fortress was built. It is possible that the fortress was under construction and acted as a royal residence at first. The remains of several monumental buildings were revealed in the ancient settlement. These buildings had come before the period when the Central Complex was built.

The construction of the Central Complex took place in the 2nd century BC, but it is impossible to make clear the date of its origin in the limits of this period. The Central Complex was under major repairs in the 1st century BC (one of the possible reasons might be the destructive earthquake). The Central Complex might cease to operate in the second half of the 1st century AD. It is confirmed by the lack of pottery dating from the 2nd–3rd centuries AD in its limits and by finds of gypsum balls with coin's impressions dating back to the 1st century AD.

The period when the Big Square House was erected has not been determined yet and it remains to be seen whether it is the first period when Nisa was under construction or the second one (there is a good reason to believe, that the Big Square House was built in synchronism with the other buildings of the Central Complex). The formation of items stored in it indicates that the Big Square House acted energetically in the 2nd–1st centuries BC. The items dating from more recent periods were not revealed.

On the hypothesis that ostraca, which were revealed under excavations of the North Wine-Depository do not bear a direct relationship to it, but they have to do with level adding, which was used during its construction, the origin of this building needs to be dated from the end of the 1st century BC to the beginning of the 1st century AD, as the most recent ostrakon dates from 13 BC.

The third period goes back to the 2nd–3rd centuries AD. It was a period of devastation. The buildings of the Central Complex lied idle and the Treasury was probably devastated. The North Wine-Depository did not act, but the site might be under protection. The remains of small modest buildings with materials of the 2nd–3rd centuries AD came to light in the south part of the ancient settlement. Hence, the activity of Nisian main buildings was terminated long before the Sassanian conquest. One of the possible reasons of that might be another destructive earthquake, after which it was decided not to restore the complex.

The question about practical use of Old Nisian complex still remains a mystery, and this part of the book gives much attention to the criticism of the traditional and thought to be proved by many researchs views of Old Nisa as an object matched Parthian royal residence and at the same time the burial place of the Parthian kings, and notions about performance of the cult for the repose of the Parthian kings' souls according to Zoroastrian rituals.

It is the author's opinion, that all these assumptions are not to be supposed well-proved, furthermore, they seem to be questionable. This work elaborates upon a subject that the fortress was originally constructed and used as a royal residence (the first period of activity). Then, its function changed

drastically. The main place in the fortress was occupied by a group of cult buildings (the Central Complex), related to the worship of the Arsacid dynasty both individually and in combination (dynastic cult). On the speculative level it was proposed that the builder of the fortress was Mithradates I, and after his death it was transformed into memorial complex related to his worship. It is not inconceivable that Old Nisa was the burial place of Mithradates I.

Opinion is disputed on the fact that the first Arsacids, or to be more precise the rules of 2nd–1st centuries BC, professed zoroastrism. According to the author, this fact was not confirmed by the Arsacids' political declarations on coins, the lack of Nisia structure, which might be identified as a "Temple of Fire" (such definitions of the Tower and Square Hall Buildings seen to be doubtful) and by secondary role of zoroastrian priesthood in the administration of the Nisian Complex. It is more likely, that the basis of the Arsacids' dynastic cult was borrowed from the Seleucids and Greco-Bactrian kings both in ideological ground of this phenomenon and in the ritual itself. This supposition is supported by the clearly defined hellenistic look of the design of Nisian buildings.

Problems arise upon determination of the function of some Nisian buildings. These problems are due to an extended period of buildings' desolation (the equipment for the buildings' activity is practically absent) and incomplete excavations. Only the North Wine-Depository can be determined with certainty. It is really the store of wine filled with clay barrels. The Big Square House can also be determined as the Treasury with confidence. The author prefers to call it temple, but not royal treasury.

Difficulties emerge when determining the buildings of the Central Complex, however, the author leaves room for the determination of main elements of ceremonies occurred in Old Nisa, based upon architectural features of the Central Complex. It was the main ritual center of the site that is now called Old Nisa. All the other buildings (the Treasury, storehouses) were intended for providing the successful activity of this center. During some special days the fortress transformed into the place of pilgrimage. The visitors came inside through the "Western gates", which were close to the entrance to the Main Courtyard of the Central Complex. This vast area became the place of people's concentration. It is likely that main supplications and ritual actions took place here. Only the chosen ones were admitted to enter the sacred building (the Building with the Round Hall, the Tower Building, the Building with the Square Hall). It is hard to tell about the function of sacred buildings, but the most important was probably the Tower Building. It occupied the central position, the big front portico overlooked the courtyard, and this building was the only two-storey structure. A good consensus exists among the researchers as to the Tower Building's function. It was a temple, the Temple of Fire, called in this manner by some researchers. The work makes a conservative correlation between this structure and the buildings, like the Maussoleion at Halikarnassos, the Nereid monument, the near eastern two-storey funeral buildings, the Peripteral mausoleum of Ai Khanum, all combining functions of funeral structure and temple.

Even though the supposition as to the possible location of the secret burial chamber in the depth of central core will

not be confirmed, there is some evidence for such comparison. The constructions of all above-mentioned structures bear similarities: the high massive blind plinth and the plinth-based rooms, and colonnades.

The Building with a Round Hall and the Building with a Square Hall next to the Tower Building are related to the sacred buildings, but they probably occupied a dependent place to the Tower Building. It is difficult to say about their function, but the choice might be most likely made between the Temple of the Patrons and the ancestors' sanctuary.

The fourth structure in central line of buildings – the North Eastern Building is usually described as a "Palace", but in its limits there are no any rooms, which might be considered as a royal chamber (true, the excavations have not been finished yet). Two vast festive-decorated courtyards were of great importance in the "Palace" (Fig. 129). On this basis, it has been proposed that the North Eastern Building acted as a public refectory and the ritual banquets, which were of pri-

mary importance in the public life of the Ancient East, might be held in the courtyards.

The third part of the work represents the various appendixes (the dictionary of code names, the list of quoted literature, the list of illustrations, the list of abbreviations), which help the reader to use the book or add the main text. In particular, this part contains an annotated index of publications concerned with archaeological investigations in Nisa (Appendix 2), the full text of "Information report" by A.A. Marushchenko about Nisian investigations in 1930–1935 (Appendix 4) and short information about Nisian researchers (Appendix 6).

A great number of illustrations is an integral part of this work. Interesting archive graphic materials are widely used. Furthermore, there are a lot of analytic summary plans of buildings and tables of finds made by the author.

Translated by Igor Tsyganov

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PARTHICA

INCONTRI DI CULTURE NEL MONDO ANTICO

6 · 2004

ESTRATTO



PISA · ROMA

ISTITUTI EDITORIALI E POLIGRAFICI INTERNAZIONALI

MMV

ANTONIO INVERNIZZI
THOUGHTS ON PARTHIAN NISA

OUR knowledge of the architecture, art and culture of the Parthian Empire received a fundamental contribution from the results of the excavations carried out in the citadel of Old Nisa, which is situated near the village of Bagir at approximately 18 km from Ashgabat, today the capital of Turkmenistan. Research in the citadel, which lies at the foot of the Kopet Dag, the mountains chain separating the Iranian plateau from the Turkmenian plain and the desert of Kara Qum, was fruitful not only thanks to the extension of ruins investigated, but because of the exceptional quality, abundance and variety of findings. These results started revealing the greatness and complexity of a cultural tradition, that of Arsacid Iran, to which the scholarly world did not always pay the attention it deserves.

However, in spite of the exceptional results of archaeological research, which was started here already in the 30's of the 20th century by A. A. Maruščenko, was resumed on a large scale after the second world war by the JUTAKE (The Complex Archaeological Expedition of South Turkmenistan) and is still in progress,¹ the questions to which the new evidence did not yet give an exhaustive answer are still numerous. This must be ascribed not only to the intrinsic features and the obvious incompleteness of the structures and objects brought to the light, but especially to the fact that most excavations go back to already remote years and never became the object of systematic reports, adequate to the importance of the site and findings.²

Quite the contrary, one might consider the unanswered questions to be of no less quantity and importance, than the questions to which the excavations provided new useful evidence. It might therefore be of some utility to see what the situation is about our knowledge at least on some of the main general problems concerning Nisa, and how the Nisean evidence has completed or can integrate our knowledge of the culture of the Arsacid Empire, in particular of Parthia, the empire's cradle, especially in the 3C centuries. These, indeed, are the centuries that saw the foundation of the citadel of Old Nisa and the early developmental stages of its monumental buildings, though the golden age of the citadel, especially on the economic level, seems to have continued for a long time, until the first AD centuries.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF NISA

While we may refer the reader to KOŠELENKO 1977 and KOŠELENKO, PILIPKO 1985 for a general introduction into Nisa's findings, and to PILIPKO 2001 for the history of archaeological investigation on the site, we may point out a few questions still demanding careful research, and begin with

1. After the large-scale JUTAKE's excavations, field research was recently resumed in Old Nisa by various archaeological expeditions: from Leningrad (dir. V. M. Masson), Moscow (dir. G. A. Košelenko), Ashgabat (dir. V. N. Pilipko) and Turin (dir. A. Invernizzi).

2. The papers left by Maruščenko, who seems to have opened soundings almost everywhere in Old Nisa, are still insufficiently studied. Even the most recent publication by Pilipko (2001) does not meet entirely our expectations (LIPPOLIS 2003). However, especially inadequate are the preliminary reports and news of the most extensive and successful excavations, those carried out by the JUTAKE, for only short and occasional information was generally published in the series of the *Trudy JUTAKE* as far as the excavations are concerned (the Square House and adjacent buildings; the monumental buildings of the southern complex), while nothing at all was published about V. M. Masson's more recent research in the area of the 'Palace'. By contrast, of the new

research undertaken by V. N. Pilipko in the Square Hall, which was achieved with very important results for the stratigraphy and chronology of the whole compound, a report was recently published (PILIPKO 1996), a fundamental report, though once more not completely exhaustive as one would wish, in particular as far as the documentation on the monumental clay sculptures is concerned (cf. LIPPOLIS 2001, BOLLATI forthcoming). The report by G. A. Košelenko and his collaborators on their investigation in the building with the Round Hall is now printed (2002). Of the research carried out by the Italian expedition in the Round Hall, several preliminary reports appeared (INVERNIZZI, KOŠELENKO 1990; GABUTTI 1996; MOLLO 1996; INVERNIZZI 1996, 1998a, 1998b; LIPPOLIS 2002). As for the incredibly rich findings, the JUTAKE only reserved a monograph to the ivory rhytons (MASSON, PUGAČENKOVA 1956 and 1959, 1982), while a thorough study of the small metal sculptures from the Square House is now available (INVERNIZZI 1999).

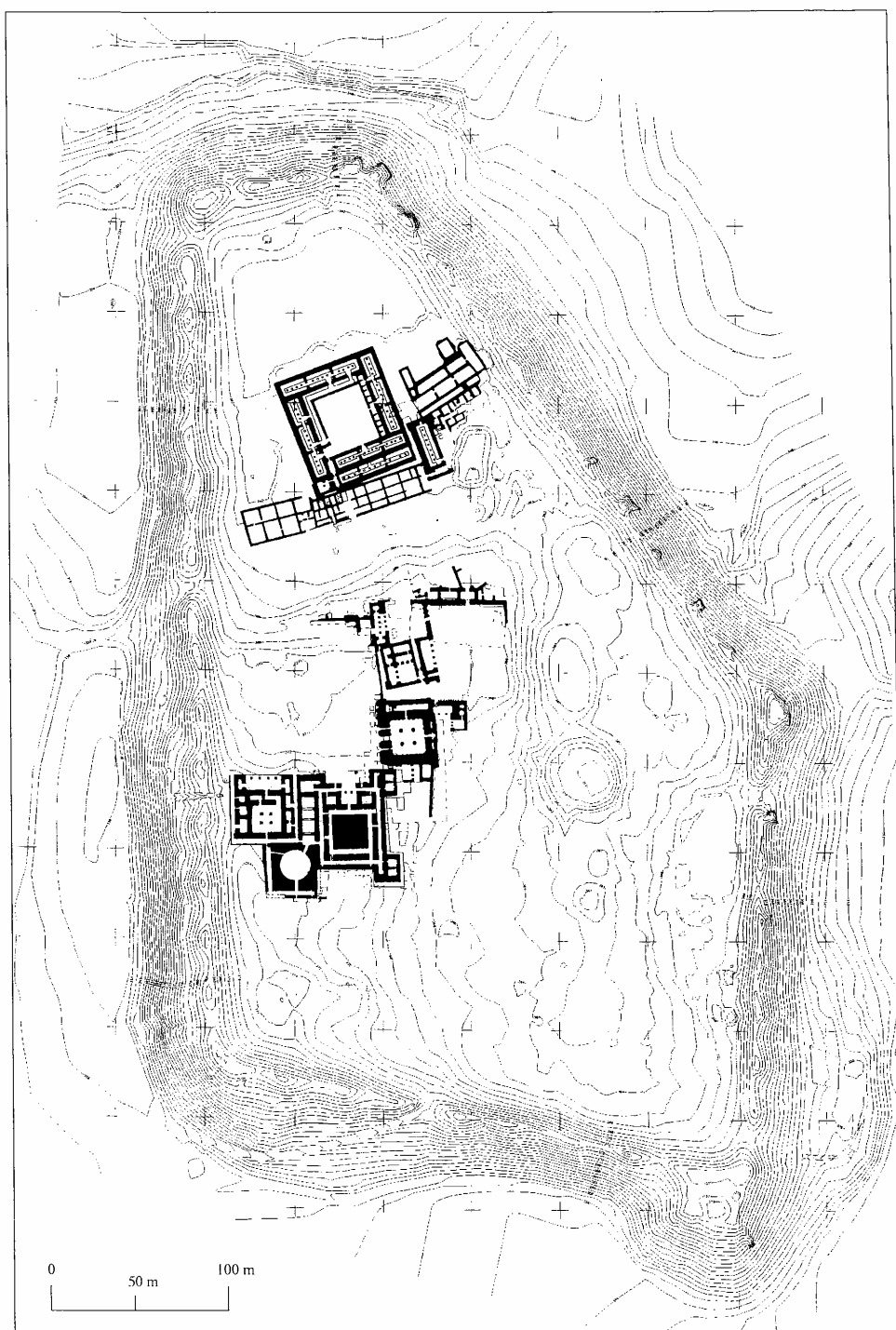


FIG. 1. Old Nisa, plan of the excavations.

the problem of the identification of the site, which consists of two distinct archaeological areas, New Nisa and Old Nisa, separated by the modern village of Bagir. As is known, of Old Nisa, the royal citadel of the Arsacids, we have learned the ancient official name, Mtrdtkrt, Mithradatkert, Mithradates' fortress. This indeed was the name read on the undated ostrakon no. 1693, which was brought to the light during the JUTAKE's excavations in the northern building complex (D'JAKONOV, LIVŠIČ 1960, 22-23, 111). Another ostrakon, which is particularly important because it is dated to 57 BC (D'JAKONOV, LIVŠIČ 1960, 93, ostrakon no. 681 = DIAKONOFF, LIVSHITS 1977, 47, ostrakon no. 478), offers a confirmation, for it mentions the scribe «Frahenaq, who is from Mithradatkert».

By contrast, the name Mithradatkert was not handed down to us by literary tradition. Written documents mention instead the urban centre of Nisa. This centre was located in the archaeological area of Bagir well before the beginning of the excavations there, already at the beginnings of the 19th century, when J. M. Kinneir (1813; 1827, 263-264) based his proposal on the continuity of the toponym. Though different opinions existed, modern archaeological research in the 20th century added concrete evidence in favour of the identification of the two groups of ruins of which the site consists (New and Old Nisa), and which are both well visible and attractive on the ground because of their impressive ramparts, with the city of Nisa and its royal citadel respectively. In the course of field research, however, no further epigraphic evidence came to confirm the relation of the Mithradatkert mentioned on the ostrakons with Nisa, the toponym which is known from the classical authors. Nisa, in particular, is mentioned as one of the halting places of the Parthian itinerary that Isidorus of Charax wrote, probably between the end of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD. Disregarding less probable alternative readings (cf. PILIPKO 1989, 24, note 12), the text generally accepted sounds: «Beyond [Astauena] is Parthyena, 25 schoeni; within which is a valley, and the city of Parthaunisa (Παρθαύνισα) after 6 schoeni; there are royal tombs. But the Greeks call it Nisaea (Νίσαια)» (SCHOFF 1914, 9).

The evidence available on the location and identification of Nisa was collected and discussed by V. N. Pilipko (1989), who stressed the facts that are certain and the points that are obscure in our documentation: from the uncertainties rising in the reconstruction of Isidorus' Central Asian itinerary, when one attempts to follow it on the ground, to the problematical aspects of the comparison between the literary sources, the epigraphic data and the archaeological evidence. The scholar cautiously invites to prudence in his conclusions, in particular as far as the location of Nisa is concerned, and stresses that the identification of the Bagir's Nisa with Isidorus' Parthaunisa/Nisaia could not be considered demonstrated until the acquisition of the only definite proof, that is until the discovery of the graves of the Parthian kings that Isidorus places explicitly at Nisa.

Among the various elements considered by Pilipko in his careful analysis, the numismatic evidence particularly recommends itself to our attention, and especially the existence of two series of coins struck by different mints, the monograms of which (NI or, *in extenso*, NISAIA and MQT) are commonly interpreted, following Sellwood (1976, 13-14), as Nisa and Mithradatkert, also as New Nisa and Old Nisa respectively. We naturally can agree with Pilipko on the oddity of the presence of two mints in the same metropolitan area and especially on the fact that the explanation put forward by Sellwood, that «the state finances at Nisa were manipulated from the citadel, while local commercial needs were met from a mint in the town proper» does not seem very convincing, upon consideration of two facts: the scarce differentiation of the two series of coins, and the predominance of coins minted at Mithradatkert on those minted at Nisa among the coins found so far in the piedmont areas of the Kopet Dag (PILIPKO 1987, 122-123).

However, we know too little on the general organisation of Arsacid coinage, which was certainly complex and was also characterised by a further «mint attached to the court on its progress about the empire» (SELLWOOD 1976, 14), so that we are not in the position of solve all our doubts and perplexities, in the case of coinage as of other aspects of the administrative structure of the Arsacid Empire. On the other side, findings of Arsacid coins in excavations are too rare and scanty to gain a really demonstrative value. And research in the Nisean region and more generally in this border area between Turkmenistan and Iran have been too limited and occasional (PILIPKO 1972, 1975; VENCO RICCIARDI 1981); while of the destiny of the coins that were found in the Square House among the remaining precious materials and of which mention is often made in the excavations

news of the *Trudy JUTAKE* especially in reference to non-Arsacid coins, no information is presently available in Ashgabat either in the Academy of Sciences or in the National Historical Museum.

To Pilipko's observations we may add that a closer insight in the epigraphic evidence offered by the ostrakons could be useful. In the specific case of ostrakon no. 1693, the name Mithradatkert is followed by the noun «BYRT». Since the toponym Mtrdtkrt, «Mithradates' fortress», must be referred specifically to Old Nisa, which is the place where the administrative practices object of the registration on the sherd are performed, the addition of the Aramaic appellative «BYRT» = fortress might not be judged fortuitous. The extremely concise text might perhaps arouse the impression that the appellative, which confirms the defensive aspect revealed by the name itself, might not be redundant, but be added to the toponym Mtrdtkrt by the scribe for the sake of topographical precision, specifying that the Mtrdtkrt fortress (Old Nisa) and not the city (New Nisa) is involved. Such a care might probably be not out of place in a similar registration of book-keeping nature fulfilled at Old Nisa/Mtrdtkrt, though, actually, the scribe of ostrakon no. 681 felt himself free from a similar care. However, the arameogram «BYRT» added by the scribe of ostrakon no. 1693 could be simply a determinative added to the Parthian official name of the citadel. The name of the city might well be different, namely be Parthaunisa/Nisaia, and this one possibly be the original name of the site, predating Arsacid rule.

Another fact onto which V. N. Pilipko has attracted attention is the apparent contrast between Isidorus' text and the geographical situation of the archaeological area of Bagir, which lies on open ground, while Isidorus speaks of a valley (αὐλὸν) and the city of Parthaunisa/Nisaia, so that a strictly literal reading of the Greek text could lead one to define the heart of Parthia as a region basically characterised by the presence of a valley and to place the city in the valley itself. However, the sense of Isidorus' very condensed text could perhaps be understood in different ways. The noun αὐλὸν, that certainly refers to something narrow (in geography, normally a valley or a gorge), could point to the feature of corridor-passageway, a definition perhaps acceptable on the geographical level for the actually rather narrow strip of inhabited cultivable land along the piedmont of the Kopet Dag, where the borders are not marked by the two lines of mountains of a valley, but by a mountains chain on the one side and the flat desert of Kara Qum on the other, into which the piedmont flows with no solution of continuity. The sense of Isidorus' phrase could also be the following: Beyond Astauena is Parthyena; this region is characterised by a valley – of course not one of the lesser valleys of the Kopet Dag, but obviously a major valley, the one which is a main way of access from the Iranian plateau, perhaps that in which, still today, a main road descends from the plateau, in agreement with the most likely direction of Isidorus' itinerary –, the valley that one must pass through to reach the city of Parthyena, Parthaunisa or Nisaia.

This data, which may be the object of further discussion, can be matched with the distance of 6 schoeni separating Parthaunisa from Gathar, and roughly equivalent to that between Bagir and Anau, the site on the identification of which with Gathar there seems to be general agreement (PILIPKO 1989, 21, 24). If the Nisa of Isidorus is not located at Bagir, it must be searched for along the difficult mountain road leading up to the pass, after which one descends on the plateau and reaches today's Quchan. The road and the entire mountainous border region between Iran and Turkmenistan are virtually unexplored from the archaeological point of view; however, this road must always have been one of the main means of access to the plateau from the plains north of the Kopet Dag, and a survey of it could bring substantial evidence to focalize several problems of the historical topography of North-Eastern Iran. The survey carried out in the upper Atrek valley immediately to the west of Quchan has proved that this region of the Iranian plateau and the northern piedmont of the Kopet Dag had continuous and very close relations since prehistory, and in particular in the Parthian period (VENCO RICCIARDI 1981).

The denomination of the Quchan region in Medieval times, «Ustuv/Asatava», clearly points to the name «Astauene» (PILIPKO 1989, 23), the region which Isidorus places between Hyrcania and Parthyena, and in which the city of Asaac is mentioned, where Arsaces was proclaimed king and where a perpetual fire was burning. On the location of Astauene there is no agreement (PILIPKO 1989, 23-24, *contra* Košelenko 1970 and HŁOPIN 1983); however, if Astauene must be searched for somewhere in the upper Atrek valley, as the toponomastic continuity seems to suggest, Asaac might be the city on the plateau correspondent to lowland's Nisa which, in a general consideration

of the geography of the area, could be taken for the main terminal of the road descending from the plateau.

A concrete fact at any rate rises from the whole of our evidence, the location of a city named Nisa at modern Bagir, which is proved beyond any reasonable doubt by the continuity of the toponym in medieval and modern times and by Islamic sources. On the other side, for the Middle Ages in particular, alternative urban settlements are unknown in the area. Of course the toponym «Nisa» is common in Iran (STURM 1936; MASSON 1949, 16-17; GERSHEVITCH 1972) and is met frequently also in Greek toponomastics, mythical (Dionysos' Indian Nysa) or historical (the numerous cities with this name in the Mediterranean Basin). Perhaps the relative indefiniteness of the name, indeed, might explain the specification 'Parthau-' for Parthian Nisa. Although one would at first be inclined to ascribe this care for a more detailed description in the toponym to Greek rather than Iranian mind, Parthau-nisa seems to be the local, Parthian name of the city, for Isidorus expressly opposes it to the shorter name of Nisaia, which is employed by the Greeks. The importance of Greek culture in Hellenized Asia may perhaps lie at the base of the name contraction in the passage from Antiquity to the Middle Ages with the loss of the regional specification.

In conclusion, without new findings, the evaluation of the evidence available today, with all its uncertainties, does not prove but does not seem to raise serious obstacles against the identification of the Parthau-nisa/Nisaia of Isidorus with Nisa, and specifically with New Nisa, in the eastern suburbs of which Mithradates I founded the *birtha* of Mithradatkert, or Old Nisa.

THE FUNCTION OF OLD NISA

A second main problem which has aroused much discussion, though limited to the former Soviet milieu, since the early excavations is the interpretation of the citadel of Old Nisa, of its function, beyond the objective fact that it is a compound strongly defended by mud brick ramparts, as its name and appellative already denounce. The name Mithradatkert, Mithradates' stronghold, of which ostrakon no. 1693 explicitly states the character of fortified citadel, actually describes only an exterior feature of it, that is its fortified aspect, which is very clear also on the ground. This feature is confirmed by the considerable number of weapons, offensive like the arrow points, or defensive like the armours, reported among the objects stored in the Square House. However, of these numerous findings only a silver parade axe and the remains of a large parade shield can today be located in the Historical Museum of Ashgabat, and these are both dignity symbols rather than weapons destined to be used in war (INVERNIZZI 1999, 117-138).

Of the greatest importance in view of understanding the function of the citadel are the architectural features of the ensemble and the individual buildings. The founder's intention of providing an adequate defence is amply shown by the remains of the ramparts still visible on the ground. The possible presence of structures still buried along the ramparts destined to guard and defence services would be an obvious functional integration of the protective system. However, no one of the constructions excavated within the defensive line of the ramparts shows the slightest care for military functionality. Quite the contrary, in the evidence brought to the light stand out as the main cares of the buildings the desire of expressing the features of a really royal monumentality and exalting the needs of an official nature on the one side, and on the other the necessity of satisfying the requirements of a complex administration and a particularly flourishing economy. It is clear that the ramparts are an obvious feature required by the necessity of protecting the wealth gathered in the citadel as well as the cultural values embodied by the individual buildings in the compound, but the overall layout as we know it does apparently not fall within plans of specifically military and strategic nature.

However, Mithradates' aim was not that of building a royal palace, of establishing one of the centres or the main centre for the exercise of political power and administrative management of the empire. The buildings protected by the citadel's ramparts were not intended to be the Arsacids' court, although their function was certainly diversified as was that of the quarters of a royal palace, and were intended to perform official and service, perhaps also residential duties. The special value that the citadel had for Arsacid kingship was immediately postulated since the time of the early excavations by A. A. Maruščenko, although the excavator did not devise an interpretative theory

in details to be published. Clearly influenced by Isidorus' news of the presence of royal graves at Nisa, he interpreted the Square Hall as a mausoleum (cf. PILIPKO 1989, 21), while later also M. E. Masson and G. A. Pugačenkova (1959, 232-233; 1982, 137-138) followed a similar track in their proposal of connecting the Square House and its wealthy contents with the graves and funerary furnishings of the Arsacid kings.

The exceptional variety of the results of the JUTAKE excavations aroused ample discussions in the Soviet scientific world, namely as far as the general interpretation of the citadel and its main monumental buildings is concerned. The interpretative fluctuations are obviously all connected with Arsacid kingship – which is an undisputed fact – and generally more or less directly influenced by Isidorus' news of the presence of royal graves at Nisa. The certitude about the absence of remains of burials of kings always ruled out a funerary interpretation in a strict sense, but there have been several interpretative nuances. A systematic discussion of the different opinions would be of considerable interest, for their development is strictly connected with the development of field research. But such a survey exceeds the limits of these notes, and we may limit ourselves in observing that the suggestions expressed – only sketched or better defined – never found their way into a printed proposal of some amplitude, and that they mainly were notes and impressions deprived of the character of exhaustive treatment of the subject.

Therefore, the absence of systematic excavations reports was matched with a corresponding absence of elaborate general theories on the meaning and function of Old Nisa, comprehensive of a treatment of the whole evidence available. This situation made fluctuation of opinions easier in the successive writings of the individual scholars. However, it must also be stressed that the search for precision of the somehow sacral orientation of all these interpretative impressions and the possibility of expanding constructive discussions met with serious objective obstacles in the virtual absence of information not only on the funerary customs of the Arsacid kings – only we know about the existence of royal graves –, but about their religious conceptions and sacred ceremonies, in spite of the fact that Parthian graves were brought to the light by excavations at New Nisa itself.

However, these fundamental findings, too, do not escape the general situation of incertitude that characterises so many aspects of the JUTAKE's activities in Nisa, and reveal, in particular, a disagreement between the excavators on the excavations data themselves (see KRAŠENINNIKOVA 1978, *contra* PUGAČENKOVA 1953; 1958, 60-69; cf. GRENET 1984, 89-91). Of special interest remains in any case the fact that these New Nisa graves gather around a monumental building for which either a cultual destination (Pugačenkova), or the function as a mausoleum (Krašeninnikova) was proposed. Though in the incompleteness of evidence, which is made worse by the sparingly documentation of drawings and illustrations common in Soviet archaeological publications, in the interpretative uncertainties of this ensemble we meet again the two poles, sacral and funerary, within which the interpretations of the Old Nisa buildings move.

Here too, Isidorus' news of the presence of royal graves in Nisa is once more invoked. In fact, it is sure that the graves excavated at New Nisa contained rich furnishings, although unfortunately only minimal bits remained of them; however, bits so significant as to allow the excavators a reasonable assignment of these burials to members of the high Parthian aristocracy. The hypothesis that these graves, indeed, are the famous graves of the Arsacid kings mentioned by Isidorus (GRENET 1984, 92) certainly sounds very attractive; however, it is not based on any sound evidence offered by the excavations, and could not recommend itself to a serious attention. These chambers of modest dimensions and, apparently, simple and severe architectural lines, which came to crowd and partly conceal the earlier monumental mausoleum (or cultual building) could hardly constitute a Nisean *Shah-i zinda* destined to «attract immediately the attention of the visitor entering the city from the east gate».

It would nevertheless be of no utility to discuss how we could imagine today the aspect of the Parthian royal graves; we only may stress the fact that, if these graves are mentioned in an extremely concise itinerary, they represented a major distinctive feature useful for a geographical identification along the road, though it does not ensue from this that they were housed in architectural structures of some impressiveness and wealth. Imposing and rich at a high degree, by contrast, are the buildings excavated at Old Nisa, which certainly – we may affirm it for sure

– are not graves. But, as we said, interpretations in some way connected with the graves were put forward since the beginnings, and the most likely solution actually seems to be that of mausoleums, or better memorials, that is of buildings connected with the funerary cult of the possibly deified kings. Also in this case information is almost absent in our sources, apart from epithets such as ΘΕΟΣ and ΘΕΟΠΙΛΑΤΟΡ on the legends of some Arsacid coins; but the care for the celebration of a dynastic cult at Old Nisa under the influence of the Seleucids' kingship ideology, starting from a time following that of the empire construction by Mithradates I, is extremely likely in view of Mithradates' and his successors' intense participation in Hellenistic culture and especially Hellenistic means of expressions of royal ideology, as it is clearly shown by archaeological evidence; all the more so because the Hellenistic royal cult is deeply influenced by Oriental thought. The difficulty is to define how this cult was conceived and performed in Old Nisa, this difficulty being sharpened by the lack of excavations reports.

Now, the merit of having defined in a coherent way an interpretative proposal, though limited to the building with the Round Hall, is due to G. A. Košelenko (1977, 57-64), who is also entitled the merit of the intuition that this building was the mausoleum of Mithradates I, the founder of Old Nisa/Mithradatkert. The hypothesis, based on the interpretation of the building as the expression of the union of two funerary architectural traditions, one Central Asian and one Greek, was criticised (BERNARD 1979, 123-124; GRENET 1984, 66) with arguments that have some weight only in relation with some aspects, and are made heavier only by scarcity of evidence. Actually, one may disagree with part of the observations of architectural content put forward by Košelenko, but not be surprised if the result of so different influences is more or less far-removed from the possible models, especially in details such as, for example, the number of passageways giving access to the room. We shall willingly acknowledge the exercise at a maximum level of the creative freedom and inventive originality in the work of the Nisean architects, and concede that the Arsacid kings did not mechanically blend foreign patterns but created *ex novo*, taking ideas from older and contemporary traditions, a coherent ensemble of new rules, fulfilling their specific, new needs for kingship celebration. The models may especially have exercised their influence at the level of stimulation rather than of direct transmission of formal patterns.

A detailed analysis of the argumentation supporting or contrasting the architectural influences suggested by Košelenko cannot be made here (cf. LAPŠIN 1999), but the recent finding in the Round Hall of fragments of the head of a monumental clay statue brings sound, objective evidence in favour of Košelenko's interpretation of the Round Hall as the heroon of Mithradates I, of course when the identification of the personage as a portrait of the great sovereign is accepted (INVERNIZZI 2001a, 2001b, 2002). The Round Hall seems to advance right claims to be a Greek-style heroon, indeed: Greek-style in its function of course, certainly not in its architectural layout and shape. In the apparent absence of local forerunners, Greek influence must actually be searched for in the spirit, in the inner sense of the monument, in raising the need of disposing of a building specially intended to perform the function of a heroon, certainly not in the material accomplishment of its layout and construction.

If also the remaining monumental constructions of the southern compound and the Square House itself in the northern compound – which may originally have been erected as the place of celebration of special meetings and banquets (INVERNIZZI 2000) – rose in connection with the wish of celebrating the sovereigns, though in different ways, the citadel of Nisa may well have been a grandiose Royal Foundation consecrated to the dynastic cult of the Arsacids and, precisely for this reason, provided with numerous and rich land holdings, as the temple institutions of the ancient Orient were used to be. In Central Asia, it would antedate of several centuries other grandiose, equally new accomplishments of similar needs such as the Kanishka temple at Surkh Kotal. The institution in charge of the royal cult of the Arsacids may well have attained great wealth and maintained a considerable economical power not only on a local scale but in the whole empire, which might explain Sellwood's opinion referred to above on the manipulation of the 'state finances' from the citadel of Nisa.

Of some aspects of the administration of the Royal Foundation's estates – especially vineyards – we are informed through the great number of ostrakons found in Nisa, and it is worth reminding in this connection that at an early stage in the process of reading and interpreting these documents,

the very hypothesis of a tight relationship was put forward between individual estates, which sometimes have royal names, and the cult of the kings of these names. This hypothesis was subsequently renounced (D'JAKONOV, LIVŠIĆ 1960, 21); however, in the light of the whole of archaeological evidence available today, we might renounce only the too precise terms in which it was initially expressed, and imagine that the incomes from the estates administered from Old Nisa may effectively have helped maintaining the royal cult and connected rites, and that part of the products of these estates could even have been added to the provisions reserved to these ceremonies.

That the royal cult of the Seleucids, which was the probable source of inspiration, was not only a matter of the fact known, but also practised in the Iranian regions of the empire is proved by written documents: suffice it to mention the inscription of Susa/Seleucia on the Eulaeus concerning the cult of three queens (Laodice the wife of Antiochus III, Laodice the wife of Seleucus IV and Laodice his daughter) at the times of Seleucus IV (CUMONT 1928, 81-84). That the Arsacids, when reached the imperial dignity, may have felt the necessity of adopting parallel though autonomous cultual forms and ceremonies, in the specific manners suited to their royal ideology, would not surprise at all. Of course in this hypothesis, too, there is a great number of obscure points in the interpretation of the individual buildings, which show so different one from the other; but new evidence might result in important clarification.

CHRONOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

The last aspect on which these notes intend to attract attention is chronology. The citadel was certainly founded according to a precise project, but this can have been carried out over a long span of time and have undergone variations in progress of time. The masonry technique frequently employed in Nisa is characterised by an additive principle: the walls are often leaning one to the other and not built together, interlacing the brick layers. However, while it is clear from an overall consideration of the general plan of the citadel that the buildings, namely in the southern ensemble, are not all contemporary, the chronological relations between the different structures cannot be inferred solely from the constructional practice. A thorough examination of the masonry of the buildings excavated by the JUTAKE might nevertheless produce important evidence for the relative chronology of the individual structures, in particular in the case of the Tower, where the excavations were the object of only very concise information.

Totally open remains by contrast the problem of the absolute chronology of the successive architectural phases. The complexity of the building constructional phases is now amply demonstrated by recently renewed research in the Square Hall (PILIPKO 1996, cf. LIPPOLIS 2001), which is especially welcome, not lastly because the results of the field operations and the subsequent deductions by the excavator are for the first time supported by consistent illustrative materials. These results prove the existence of different constructional phases, since the building with the Square Hall was erected on the remains of an earlier one.³

Recent research, when concerning layers not touched by previous excavations, also revealed that Old Nisa had a lively life which included intense activities in different fields. Not only can we know from the dates of the ostrakons that the administration of the citadel was flourishing until the AD centuries, but the monumental buildings themselves preserve a number of signs of damages, restoration and maintenance works.

So far, research did not bring to the light evidence connected with the end of the citadel. Therefore, several questions – when and how the citadel came to an end – await precise answers. However, research in still untouched layers, even in already excavated buildings such as the Round Hall (GABUTTI 1996, MOLLO 1996), produced ample evidence that the citadel was not destroyed but abandoned, in the final days of the Arsacid Empire. Evidence is especially rich for the process of decay and the occasional frequentation by squatters characterising this process. Given the nature

3. This evidence does not only affect the problem of the chronology of the whole compound, but also that of its destination. In this connection, the appellative «birtha» of the ostrakon no. 1693 invites to inquire whether the citadel was

conceived as a memorial from the beginning, or whether 'Mithradates fortress' acquired this role only later, perhaps already with Mithradates' immediate successors.

of the traces left by these squatters – especially fire places and remains of food – it is not easy to suggest though approximate dates for these ephemeral occupations. But there is no doubt that the entire process of decay and filling of the monumental rooms was a long term one, and may be counted not in years but in centuries, judging from the frequency of levels with signs of occupation alternating with layers of filling and rubble.

The last excavation campaigns carried out at Nisa (LIPPOLIS 2002), also produced rich information on the presence of considerable architectural phases later than the Parthian age. Though the archaeological literature on Nisa is basically focused on the Parthian remains, already the JUTAKE's short preliminary reports revealed the existence of much more recent structures, of medieval times. These belonged to a substantial building with regular layout that the excavator dated to the 12th-13th centuries AD (ERŠOV 1949, 129, fig. 10). A comparison of old and new evidence arouses the impression that the buildings of the Parthian citadel were abandoned at the end of the Parthian period at the time of the Sasanian conquest of Central Asia or later. With the new lords, a continuation of ceremonies connected with the Arsacid dynastic cult or maintenance works in the buildings that served for those performances were certainly out of question.

The masonry of the walls started to deteriorate slowly, after the normal maintenance works ceased and the roof damages favoured water infiltration and early collapses; the rooms started to fill, but the walls stood still strong for a long time, offering shelter to occasional or regular squatters. The succession of collapses and occupational levels observed in the rooms excavated down to the original floor in the building to the north of the Round Hall easily allows reaching the Middle Ages. The top of several walls of this building was still traceable on the surface, and several stumps were rising above the filling level of the rooms, when the construction of a building of a considerable architectural price was decided, in all likelihood in medieval times as it was said, although it is hard at this moment to establish a precise chronological connection with the 12th-13th centuries building excavated by the JUTAKE. Therefore, Old Nisa saw an extensive and considerable re-occupation in the Middle Ages.

The excavations carried out here by C. Lippolis and still in progress started bringing to the light the remains of this building, characterised by the use of bricks and a mural technique different from that of the Parthian age. These walls partly re-use earlier Parthian masonry, which invites to think that the layout of the medieval building was at least in part dependent on that of the still buried Parthian building. However, the later construction certainly shows individual features and formal pretensions suggesting a not merely utilitarian destination, but at least partly representative functions at a high social level (LIPPOLIS 2004). Though not situated on the summit of the ruins, the site was undoubtedly perfectly fit to be selected for the construction of a building in a dominant position within the lines of the ruined but still imposing ramparts of the old Arsacid citadel.

The excavations in this section reveal important evidence not only on the medieval building, the layout of which is already clear, but on the substantial Parthian building that preceded it, for the walls of the latter are fairly well preserved, while the sounding trenches dug in the course of earlier excavations did not penetrate deeply and disturb the layers filling the Parthian rooms. This Parthian building is certainly an integral part of the southern monumental ensemble, which definitely appears to consist of structures of a type totally different one from another. Learning what is possible from its remains thanks to modern techniques of excavation is fundamental also for our general understanding of the citadel of Nisa, of its layout and function, for every new local datum has reflections on the interpretation of those already known which, as we have often stated, are in reality known only partially.

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