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THE CEMETERY IN SFAX

BURIALS IN JARS¹

by Dr. A. VERCOUTRE

(From <http://gallica2.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k203623w>)

In 1886, the Department of Public Works of Sfax (Tunisia) needing earth for the new port, went to look for some to the south of the city, at the foot of the Kasbah, outside the walls. Actually, there existed some small hillocks; these hillocks, broken and cleared, would provide to archaeologist two kinds of remains.

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→ They found remainders of the lowest [*époque basse*] Roman period, ruins of buildings, wells, cisterns, fragments of marble sculptures, some small bronze medals of Constantin, Constance, Maxence, etc; a baptistry, consisting of a tank with a thick wall of bad masonry, with a staircase inside going down and seat fitted in the thickness of the wall, the basin of which the interior was entirely carpeted with white mosaic and at the bottom displayed, on field of small white cubes, a cross, with equal branches, surrounded by tufts of foliage, the cross and foliage in cubes of varied colors.

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→ But, with these remains, one met others, rather strange; there was, at a very low depth, a quantity of skeletons (the bodies having been deposited naked in the ground) often presenting interesting characteristics; the cranium of one was very thick; the cranium of another the perfect negro type (which was not the rule); several craniums showed the obvious traces of vigorous blows of sharp weapons. We collected a tibia, fractured at the upper 1/3 and consolidated as poorly as possible, which gives a disturbing idea of the surgery of the time. With these remainders were found large terra cotta earthenware jars, always broken, of which some still contained the remains human bones. Large ones were also exhumed, along with heavy tiles, true terra cotta flagstones red or yellowish, flat, square, 60 centimetres approximately each side, with a thickness of 2½ to 4 centimetres, made by hand and usually offering, on one face only, a large X, of which the branches, going diagonally from a corner of the tile to the other corner, crossed in its center, the X superficially traced in the soft clay by two or three juxtaposed

fingers of the workman. Some of these tiles were provided, along only one side, with a strong thick edge.

Some other tiles, rarer, were much smaller, some with the X, others not presenting, on the whole surface of one side, nothing but coarse parallel scratches.

The state of disorder in which the earthenware jars and the tiles were found did not allow us to study them with results; but there was a kind of enigma, interesting, that we promised ourselves to try to solve. The opportunity was not long in coming.

II

To the north of Sfax, along the sea approximately 1,200 meters from the p30 military hospital, rose some small narrow hills, between the sea and the plain.

→ Observed by Mr. Guerin, and still offering some rare remains of buildings and cisterns, fragments of glazed Roman pottery with many small medals of the time of Constantine, these hills are perhaps those on which the ancient Taparura (or Taphrura) was built. However, in the last months of 1886, the 27th battalion of infantry, garrisoned in Sfax, was instructed by its commanders to make a rapid defensive work, to be dug approximately 120 meters to the North-East of the shed belonging to the target range (located on the hill). They dug an extremely long but not very deep trench, perpendicular to the direction of the shore, and crossing, in its course, the hill and the plain. This trench still exists; on the hill it brought to light only Roman remains without value, but, in the plain it provided remains worthy of the utmost attention: we found the same earthenware jars and the same tiles as we had met, some time before, in the south of Sfax; but here, all being in situ, intact, carefully and methodically cleared, we could observe the following curious mode of burial:

Having the corpse of a child to be buried: a large earthenware jar was taken (some had to be one meter in height and more), and broken into two parts, with as few fragments as possible, the break being perpendicular to the main axis. or it was sawn, of which we saw an example; the body was then inserted, and the two parts of the earthenware jar joined, and laid horizontally on the ground, fixing it with stones to prevent it rolling; then, as much as possible, it was sealed, placing clay,

stones or shards at the places where the two pieces of the jar had left openings; the collar of the earthenware jar was closed beforehand by a cement stopper, which was consolidated with fragments of pottery placed in the cement to prevent it from running before hardening.

If the body were that of an adult, a single earthenware jar, even of a large size, was too small to contain it; in this case, one or more curved pieces of earthenware were placed between the lower and upper parts of the broken or sawn earthenware jar. The sarcophagus then consisted three or four encased parts, giving it the appearance of a whole jar, with the same precautions used to ensure the stability of the whole and also the sealing of all the openings being done, as described.

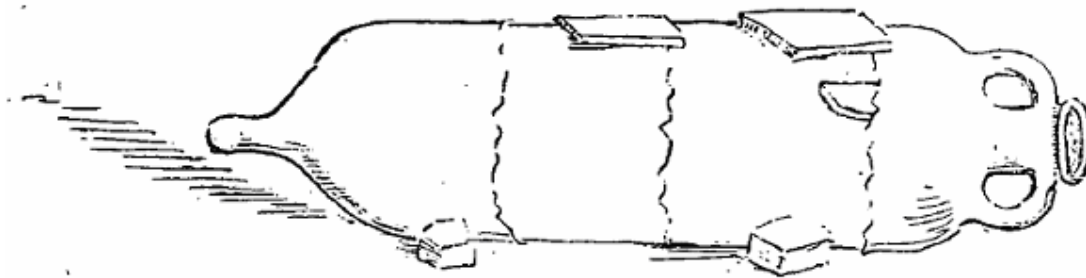


Fig. 1.

This is not all: often enough - not always - above the earthenware jar sarcophagus, a roof was laid to protect it; this roof was precisely made up of the large tiles of which we spoke, and which, placed obliquely along the walls of the earthenware jar and being supporting on them, was laid on their upper end ¹.

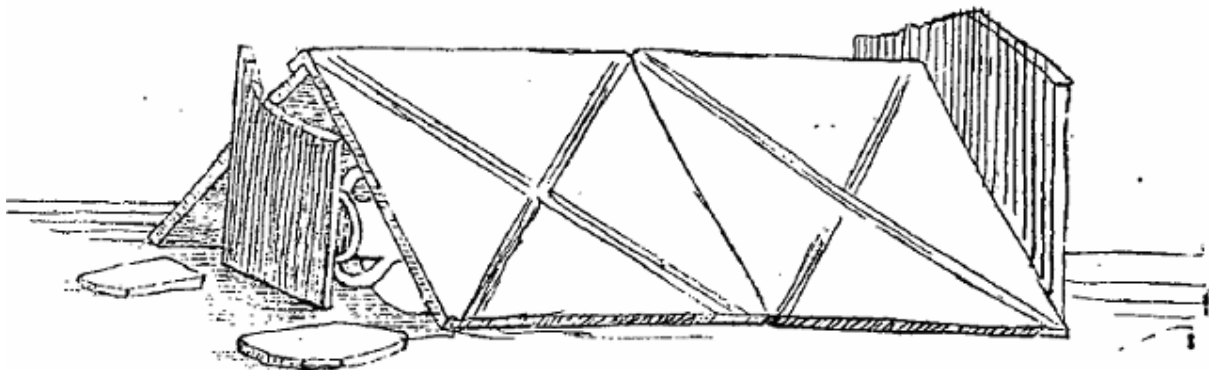


Fig. 2.

For the adults, six tiles were employed, three on each side; for the children, four only, two on each side.

The value of the edge with which some of these tiles are provided is now understood: this edge formed the edge of the roof and prevented the tile from slipping.

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But this roof necessarily left two large triangular openings at each end, one opening showing the neck, the other the bottom of the earthenware jar; also, great care was taken to close these ends of the roof by small tiles or fragments of large tiles planted vertically in the ground, while adding other fragments to it, if need be, of stones, etc, so as to ensure the perfect closing of the whole. (Fig. 2.)

Such was the general mode of burial: given the excellent state of conservation in which one meets these tombs, it appears certain to us that they were covered with earth; but the burial was by no means deep here, and all these burials, located not far from the sea, in a plain where the level hardly varied, are almost at ground level.

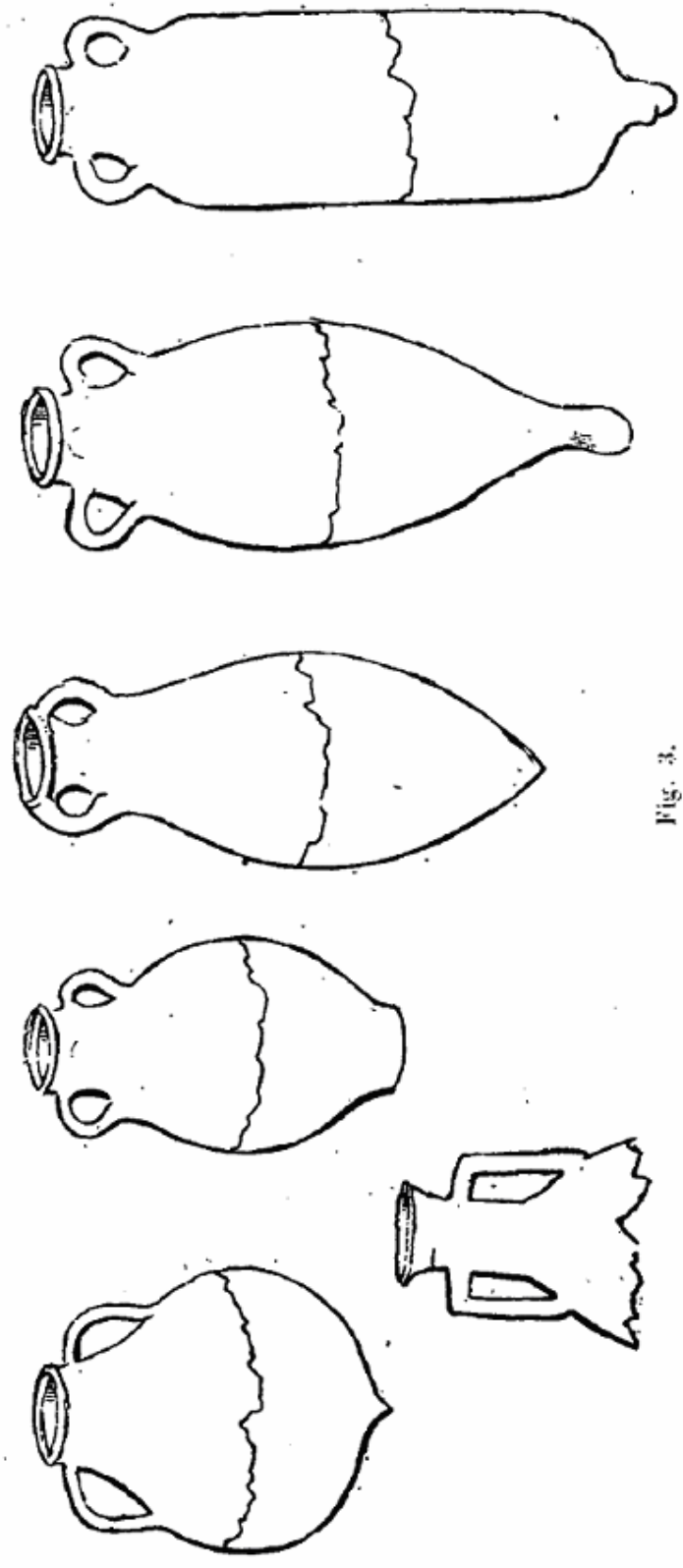


Fig. 3.

Sometimes, one retrieves exceptions to the general process: thus, it is positive that by assembling a sarcophagus from various fragments of earthenware jars the intention was always to obtain a unit giving the illusion of a whole jar, with its neck, belly and end; however, we did see, in one case only, a sarcophagus (of a small child) formed by fitting together two lower ends of earthenware jars, so that the sarcophagus had the form of a large egg with two pointed ends.

Again, we saw higher up that a certain number of bodies, in a point to the south of Sfax, had been buried naked; it is there - it is really at the same time as the preceding - an absolutely exceptional mode of burial, perhaps justified by circumstances of war.

We will not describe further the tiles employed, but we will say some words about the earthenware jars in general (fig. 3). Made 'in the round', they are of all dimensions, out of terra cotta, red or whitish, of an average grain, without glazed coating; the opening of the neck is broad, the collar is short and broad; there are two opposed, short, broad handles attached, usually semicircular; the belly, is ovoid or, usually, cylindrical; the end has either a simple point, or presents a rounded point, flattened or with a nipple or a bulge: such is the ordinary case; the flat-bottomed urns are more rare, and are then small. The earthenware jars are often a good centimetre thick. All are plain: only one presented, on its external surface, broad parallel circular scratches. None presented drawings, ornaments or other marks. All are intentionally broken and we asked why (however, all of the accidentally broken jars were used). Time made them rather friable.

The contents of the earthenware jars are as follows: often entirely full of earth, or better, of fine sand which has penetrated by infiltration (the ground being sandy), more often they retain a void. If one carefully clears this earth, one there hardly finds anything like human remains, except indistinct bone fragments, and some white phosphate powder trails: time has done its work, and the ground, impregnated with salt and salpetre, is consequently quite oxidic, destroyed everything. It is a curious thing, that in the earthenware jars of children, one often finds the bones very clean and recognizable; that seems difficult to explain, but it is

→
due only to the fact that one could ensure a perfect closing more easily for the small earthenware jars of children.

All the burials are directed from east to west, or perhaps, more exactly, from north-east to south-west; the openings of the earthenware jars face east, and the head of the corpse, lying in the earthenware jar, is opposite the side of the pointed end of jar, that is to say the west side.

The number of these burials must be considerable: in trying to uncover a space of little extent we did not count less than ten, laid out without order, but always in parallel with each other, following the orientation indicated. It appeared to us that the tombs of children were, all things considered, of a high number. The whole plain to the north of Sfax must form a vast necropolis at ground level [fleur du sol], and we are assured that the plain, to the south of the city, contains similar burials in the same way.

These tombs have not provided anything up to now: neither funerary furniture, lamps, vases, jewels, nor medals; no object. Neither in the tombs or in their surroundings did we find any items such as marked or carved stones, steles, etc. The only difference that we noticed between the tombs of the rich and those of the poor, is that the first have their covering, their tiled roof, which the others do not have. It is true that the ground that has methodically explored is rather limited.

(To be followed.)

**THE CEMETERY OF SFAX
AND
BURIALS IN JARS**
(continuation ¹)

BY DR A. VERCOUTRE
Military Doctor.

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III

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It remains for us to discover which people buried its dead in this fashion; however, this interesting question has been solved, and these burials in earthenware jars are those of Christians of Africa (Christians of Phoenician origin most probably), and they do not appear earlier than the beginning of the 4th century after Jesus Christ.

Here are the elements on which we base this statement:

Very recently, the service of public works of Sfax, continuing the embankment of the new port and having no more earth available to the south of the city, went to obtain some further north and tackled there the base of the hills about which we spoke (hills known as *Mezhanni hillocks*), in the place where they come closest to Sfax, immediately on the left of the road which goes to Sidi-Mansour, fourteen hundred steps from the military hospital.

Many remains were brought to light, which are here classified in three categories.

A. Tombs consisting of boxes or solid masses of poor masonry sometimes around a oblong narrow cavity containing a coffin in boards, but sometimes having the form of a triangular prism, and then carpeted inside with large tiles laid out on edge, cavity containing the body² laid horizontally on the back, without funerary pieces (small earthenware lamps?).

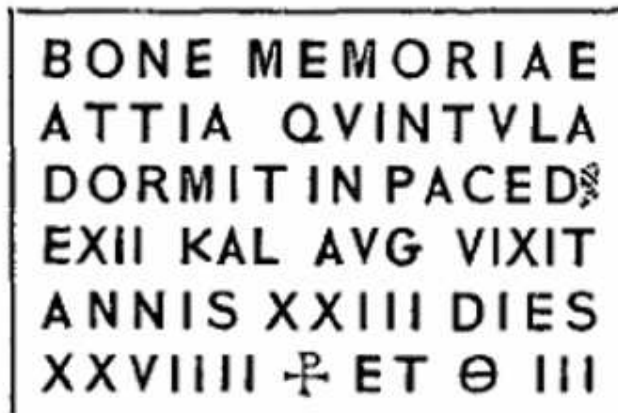
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These tombs, usually without any ornament, are very rough, and often covered by concrete cemented horizontally sometimes supporting an inscription in mosaic, sometimes in marble.

1° Inscriptions on mosaics. - Here are the epitaphs discovered until now and that we make a point of describing because they characterize the cemetery:

N° 1.



Height of the letters: 5cm by 8cm. A crack in the bottom, but one can still see two rosebuds with a partridge between them, on the left, holding one of the buds with its beak. Notice the abbreviation **O** barred for **HO(RAS)**. The last letter of the third line must be an **I**. The bars of the **A** extend on each side. The horizontal bar of the **L** is oblique at the bottom. The framing and letters are black. The text is complete.

N° 2.



Height of the letters: 7 cm by 8 cm. A crack in bottom; incomplete text. Black letters, except the letters XXXV in the 4th line and D-X-K- in the 6th, which are red. Notice the formula **DORMIBIT**. The bars of the **A** have the shape of a small **V**; **L** and **I** in the 2nd line, very close together. The last letter of the 7th line in the form of a **D** reversed (**Ⓛ**).

N° 3.

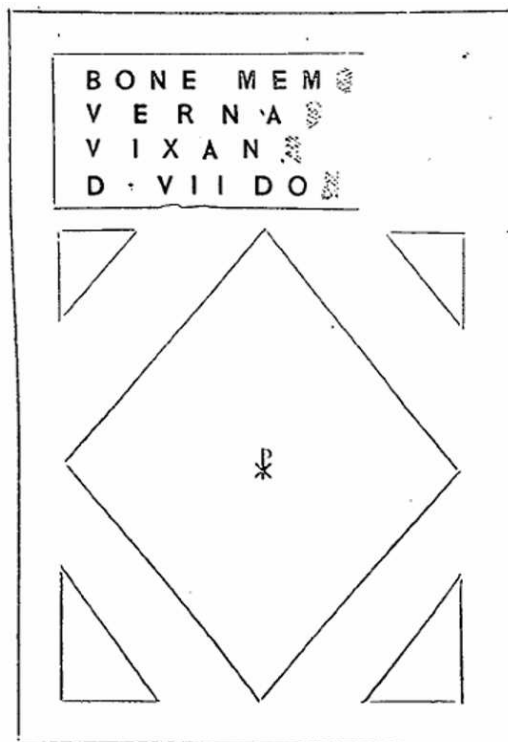
Chrisme in a wreath of foliage.



A Partridge turned to the left, standing on a basket of flowers (or fruits) that it pecks at.

Height of the letters: 6cm; black letters. Framed with three black lines. The block is broken between 6th and the 7th lines. Notice the abbreviation **O** (barred) for **HO(RAS)**. The letters are black, except those of lines 3 and 5 which are red. The chrisme is a barred **P**.

N° 4.



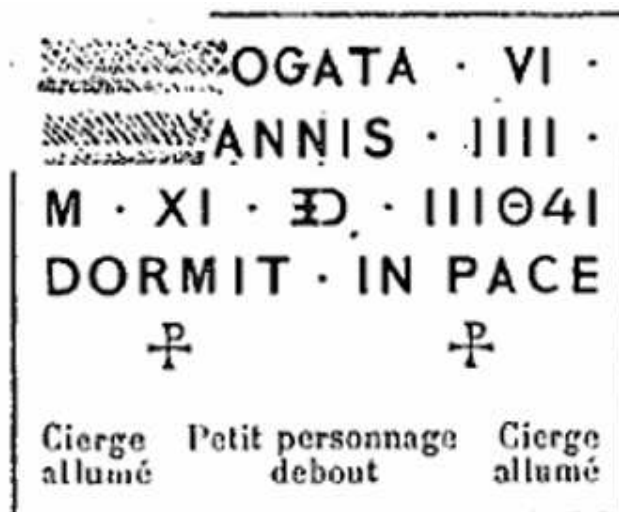
→ Height of the letters: about 7cm. Black letters; the caption is broken on the right; a rich frame made of small crosses alternating with small circles, small crosses and circles each one inscribed in a small square on a black base for the small crosses, white for the circles; a richly framed central rhombus. Length of the mosaic: approximately 2 meters.

N° 5.



Height of the letters: about 6cm. Black letters. Multicoloured framing in a Greek form; the letters **AV**, with the 2nd line, very close together. Notice **BIXIT**. Length of the mosaic: 1 meter. It comes from the same block as n°4, made in continuation from the lower end of this one, and is laid out perpendicularly to it.

N° 6.



Mosaic of 1 meter in length by 48 [cm] broad. Black framing, with a double line. Height of the letters: 4-6cm. Black letters. On the 3rd line, **M**, **D** and **O** (for (Ho)ras) barred; after this **O**, a sign resembling a 4 which we cannot explain.

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Below the inscription, a small person is drawn of 70cm high, upright, with face and arms raised, but bent, the vertically extended hands with the palms towards the face and at the level of the shoulders (in the attitude of prayer).

Beardless, tinted rose, with black eyes and eyebrows, a bare head, thick but neat black hair, only divided at the front, with oblique rows of pearls tangled in the hair, of such a kind that one would say it was wrapped in a hair net.

Dressed in a long dalmatique [Ed. religious blouse traditionally of wool from Dalmatia.] with vertical folds, red, largely squared of fine white lines (in each square, a white point is surrounded by four other white points laid out in square); the dalmatique has a double black line descending vertically on each side of the middle line, with broad arms and decorated with a black edging at the edge of the collar, the handles and the lower edge. On each wrist of the character, a bracelet. Under the robe two red shoes appear.

On each side of the character, burn two tall thick yellow candles, vertical, ringed with two or three black lines at three different heights.

Cubes of perfectly white mosaic form a nimbus around the outline of the character.

Byzantine style

N° 7. Fragment.

.. E R T V L ..
.. T A N N O S ..
.. M · X · D · I ..
... V · D O R ...

Black letters, from 7½ to 10cm high. For the first line, it is undoubtedly necessary to read **tERTVLI**anus. Notice **ANISE**. The point after the **M** in the form of a small **V**. Bar of the **A** in form of a **V**. Horizontal lines from the **T** and the **E**, wavy and oblique. The **L** has horizontal wavy bars obliquely at the bottom.

N° 8. Fragment.

...ISSIMESVNT
...ES·TVAED·M·
...A·R·M·AVRE

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Height of the letters: 5½ cm, **N** and **T** in the first line are attached; the second letter of the third line could be a **B**. the first two lines are in black letters, the third is in red letters.

N° 9. Fragment.

...VS
..AX NEC

Height of the letters: 6 cm. Red letters. The first line is not certain.

N° 10. Fragment.

...CE III
...IVNI

Height of the letters: 6 cm. The first line is in red letters, the second in black letters.

N° 11. Fragment.

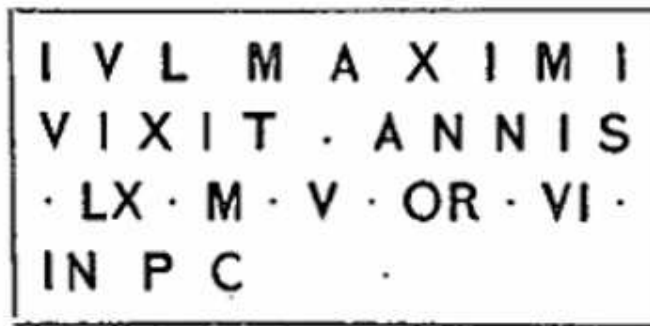
..CONS..

Black letters 6 cm high.

And some other fragments which can not be drawn.

2° Inscriptions on marble plates.

N° 12.



A Plate of white marble, 24 cm by 16 cm; with folds of draperies on the reverse, showing that the marble comes from a fragment of a statue. Very poor, not very deep, poorly engraved, with irregular letters. The text is complete. It is necessary to read the last line as **IN P(ace) C(hristi)**.

N° 13.



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A trapezoidal white marble plate, very thin, broken into eight pieces. The caption follows, below and on the right, the irregular contours of the plate. Very poor letters, very badly engraved (some fragments are missing, but the legend seems quite complete). Dimensions of the plate: 19 cm broad by 22 cm high.

3° As at other times, we found a *representation anépigraphhe* [Ed. without inscription]; thus, on a large mutilated block, we have a very fine mosaic representing the lower part of a person upright, one sees half a white dress, pleated, richly ornamented on its lower edge, with the bottom of a leg visible of which the foot has a red sock and a bluish-black leather crépide [Ed. a crépide is a plant like a dandelion, precisely *Crepis setosa*]; in front of the character (who looks to the left) and at the height of the chest and against it, is seen the plan of a small rectangular monument, oblong, with a triangular pediment; some distance below

the foot of the character, the head of a lamb grazing remains the of the blades of grass.

It is unnecessary to insist on the Christian-African character of all these remains.

B. Coffins troughs, out of soft stone, with a little convex lid, without inscription, and containing several bodies; rare.

C. Burials in earthenware jars, with or without tiled roof ¹; those "with roof" are, by far, the rarest; the tiles are laid out on each side of the jar, as we already explained, that is to say, forming on it a roof with a double slope; however, we saw a single one of these earthenware sarcophagi with a tiled roof placed horizontally above the earthenware jar. Several earthenware jars are covered in a coarse masonry.

However, after a most attentive examination, we had to recognize that these three categories of remains, these three modes of burial, in boxes, troughs and earthenware jars, are absolutely contemporary, and here is the evidence of this fact:

Firstly, all these burials are on the same level; after serious study, one cannot dispute it;

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→ Furthermore, though mixed one amongst the others, without order, all these burials are directed in the same direction, that which we indicated above (east-west), and, moreover, the corpse is constantly placed in the same direction, that is to say with the head to west;


Lastly, none the medals found around the burials is more recent than Diocletian; the great majority (small bronzes) are from the time of Constantine.

Thus there is a series of points which seems to establish the perfect contemporaneity of the burials in earthenware jars and boxes and funerary troughs; but there is more:

We succeeded in finding a jar-sarcophagus (cylindrical in form, with small semicircular handles, a broad neck and short collar) whose collar carries, on the

surfaces ranging between the handles, the following signs, traced in graffiti, with the point, in the soft clay, before baking, as follows:

On one side, a sign resembling a F cursive, 4 ½ cm high, and illustrated *f* ;

On the other, a sign which is certainly the monogram of Christ: X and P combined and written in a circle of 3 ¼ cm diameter,  . Let us add, because these marks have their importance, that above each of these signs, the finger of the workman has impressed, in the soft ground, a horizontal wavy line.

Thus, the burials in earthenware jars, contemporary with the burials in troughs or boxes, are, like the last, Christian burials, and this circumstance accounts for a certain number of facts that until now have remained obscure: thus, the plaster disc, a disc coming from Carthage, which has, said P. Delattre 1, been used to stop a vase and bearing the Christian inscription SPES IN DEO, can be properly understood only if it is admitted that this stopper closed, as we explained earlier, the opening of a sarcophagus jar. Furthermore, this same inscription, read by P. Delattre in the museum of Lateran on the collar of a large amphora, explains itself without difficulty if one wants to recognize with us that this amphora was an sarcophagus jar.

Whatever it is, it is necessary to acknowledge that these burials in earthenware jars have very special features, which excites astonishment and awake the interest, and we now will try to show that this strange mode of burial is of punic origin.

IV

We have just said that a certain number of our earthenware sarcophagi had preserved their tiled roof; however, among these tiles, one was found one which carried cursive characters.

This fragile document, broken by the pickaxe and thrown away, had been transported to the port and was going to be thrown into the sea, when an indigenous workman saw that the tile was a *hadjera mektouba*, a written stone (“*pierre écrite*”). Our colleague, Dr. P. Bazin, having purchased it, wanted to make us gift of it well.

This fragment represents a little more than a quarter of one of the large tiles which we described: out of red terra cotta, it measures 30 cm high and 42 cm at its greatest width, with a thickness of 4 cm. Whole, the tile would have been 58 cm by 60 cm on each side, as all the others, and it is in the space between two of the branches of the X, traced on one of the faces by the fingers of workman, that the inscription is found.

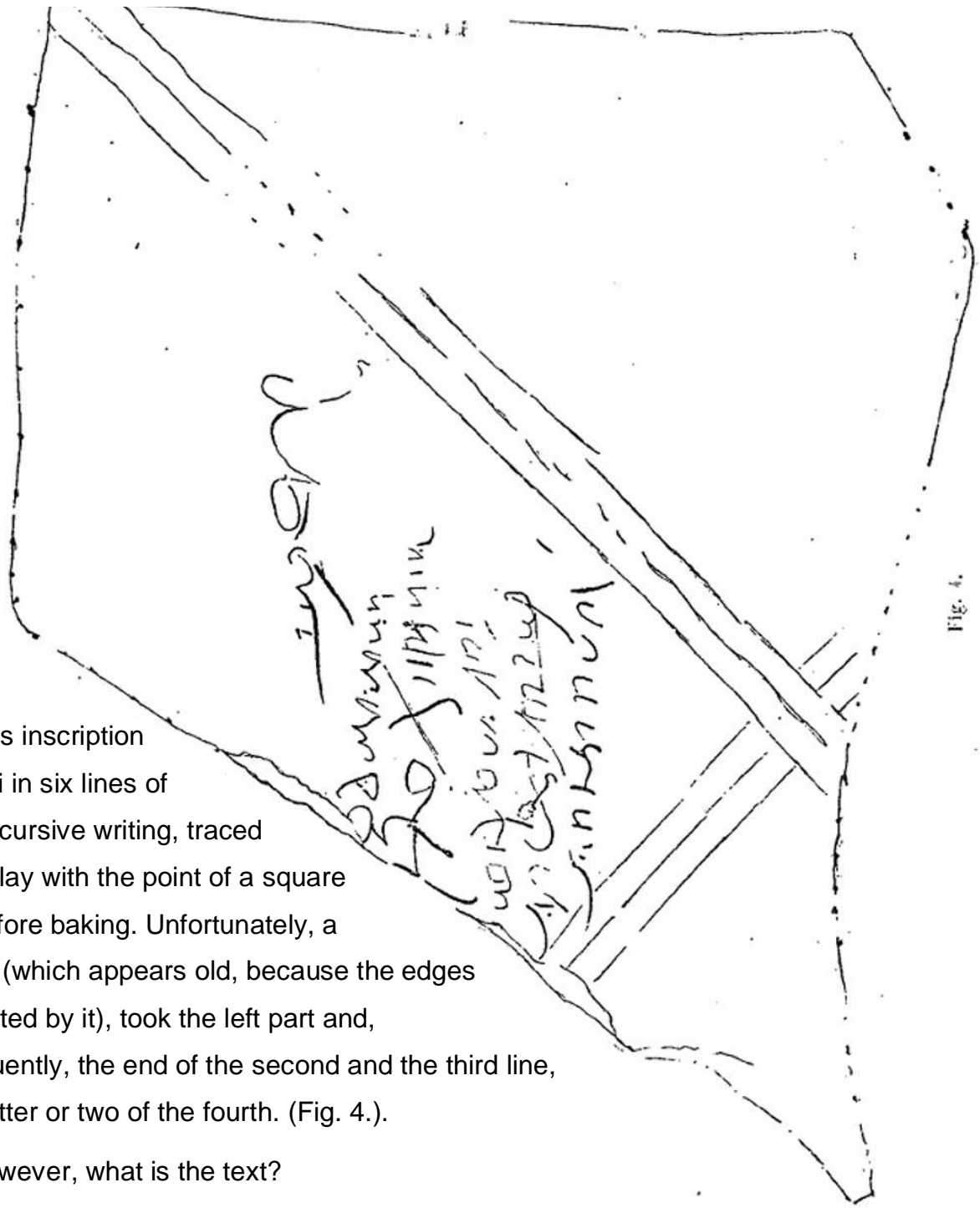


Fig. 4.

This inscription is graffiti in six lines of elegant cursive writing, traced on the clay with the point of a square style before baking. Unfortunately, a fracture (which appears old, because the edges are blunted by it), took the left part and, consequently, the end of the second and the third line, and a letter or two of the fourth. (Fig. 4.).

However, what is the text?

This is certainly neither Latin, nor Punic, and it should be recognized that, in the actual position of our epigraphic knowledge, this text is indecipherable, in spite of the clearness of the characters. From the start we had seen in this text of néo-Punic greatly distorted, so distorted that it could have happened during the 4th or 5th century AD ¹.

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→ But this opinion did not prevail, and it appears that this graffiti would be a cursive Greek text. However, if the inscription itself is not néo-Punic, the Punic character of the burial in the jar, of which this tile formed part, can, we think, still be easily shown.

Firstly, this mode of burial is certainly not Roman; what is Roman, in the cemetery of Sfax, is the burial in masonry boxes and stone troughs.

Secondly, Mr. G. Perrot ² wanted to let us know that jar-sarcophagi had been discovered in the Lower Chaldees, in the isthmus of Suez, and in Southern Gaul; however, it is known that all these countries were inhabited by Phoenicians, and the burial in earthenware jars must be their work. Mr. Teisserene de Bort found, we believe, this same mode in the area of Biskra, but nothing prevents us from recognizing that the Phoenicians occupied Biskra, just as they occupied Calama (Guelma), a city located in interior of the land, in a fully proconsular province.

Thirdly, it is impossible not to be struck by this remarkable fact, namely that the two antiques Punic tombs found so far in Carthage, one by P. Delattre ³, the other by MM. S. Reinach and Babelon ⁴, both present a roof with double slope covering the sepulchral chamber; however, cannot one admit that, over time, by the inevitable effect of decline, the funerary chamber was replaced by a simple earthenware jar and the roof of large blocks by a modest tiled roof? Undoubtedly, the aspect of the of the burial group remains identical in both cases.

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From these considerations, we conclude, it seems to result that the burial in earthenware jars is a mode of burial of punic origin, and, as with all the habits that arise from religious ideas, one that persisted during centuries (at least in Sfax), most probably preserved by those of the inhabitants who were of Phoenician origin¹; vainly they successively lost their nationality and their religion; even becoming Christian, they piously preserved, for as long a time as their language,

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their ancient mode of burial and were distinguished by this means in the cemetery community, from the Christians of Roman origin. Thus can explain, to our understanding, this interesting fact: that one observes burials in earthenware jars and tombs in masonry or stone (all of them - in spite of the significant differences in type - certainly Christian) lying side by side in the necropolis which we reveal.

Sfax, février 1887.

Note. - Since these lines were written, the work, continued in the Mezhanii hillocks, has brought to light more interesting remains; as follows:

1° A large cylindrical earthenware jar 76 cm high, with an opening measuring 7 cm across, and a collar (provided with two small almost vertical handles) measuring 17 cm high, was found, containing the bones of a child. The walls of this earthenware jar are a good centimetre thick, and the internal diameter of the belly measures approximately 19 cm. The small corpse was introduced through the lower part of the earthenware jar, whose bottom had been broken, and, consequently, missing: it was the bottom of another urn which sealed it closed. Our earthenware jar has its opening closed by a stopper still intact; formed by a white mass, levelled with the fingers, which appears to be wax, this stopper presents on its external surface the double print of a seal, the imprint on the left covering the left third of the imprint applied first, that on the right.

This imprint, sunken, measures 5 cm in diameter, and is made of two concentric circles between which runs, around the circle, an inscription in regular and rather clear letters of 1 centimetre in height; the reading is done from left to right, and we read

SEVERINVS

In the central circle, we believe we see a chrism consisting of a **P** barred.

Does the inscription give the name of the individual buried, or that of the one who performed the burial? We lean towards this last hypothesis, since there must have been individuals whose profession consisted of burying "in earthenware jars", and they undoubtedly made a point of signing their work.

2° A curious baptistry was also discovered, which has the following form:

It appears to be an irregular solid mass of coarse and thick masonry, broken obliquely at its upper part and still being approximately 2 meters at its highest (it was to be, whole, considerably higher).

However, this solid mass is hollow; its interior is a cylindrical tank 1.50 m in diameter and 90 cm high; the upper edge of this tank widens and spreads horizontally to form a circular bench, extremely narrow, open in two places and p193 surmounted by six niches.

→ The two openings, placed at opposite ends of a diameter of the tank (diameter directed about SE - NW), are two staircases, bored into the solid mass of masonry and descending as far as the bottom of the tank; 4 ½ steps of a staircase are preserved, the other which is opposite has 2 ¼ steps preserved. These staircases are remarkable by their excessive narrowness, about 35 cm wide, and the steps are each about 24 cm high; one of the staircases was used to enter, descending, into the tank; the other, to ascend to leave; but people a little large must have been very constrained in these staircases, which were narrow rectangular bowels.

Above the tank, on each side, in the spaces between the two staircases there are three niches immediately above the bench, that is to say six niches in all, where the backs of the people would fit while sitting on the circular bench with their legs in the tank.

All the interior of this baptistry has six sections, as follows: the tank, the staircases, the bench, the niches and the projections between the niches; everything is carpeted in flowers with cubes of mosaic; the bottom of the tank presents, in multicoloured cubes, a cross with equal and rectangular branches (one of the branches is aligned with the center of the staircases), the cross being surrounded by a large ring ornamented (kind of Greek) also in multicoloured cubes,

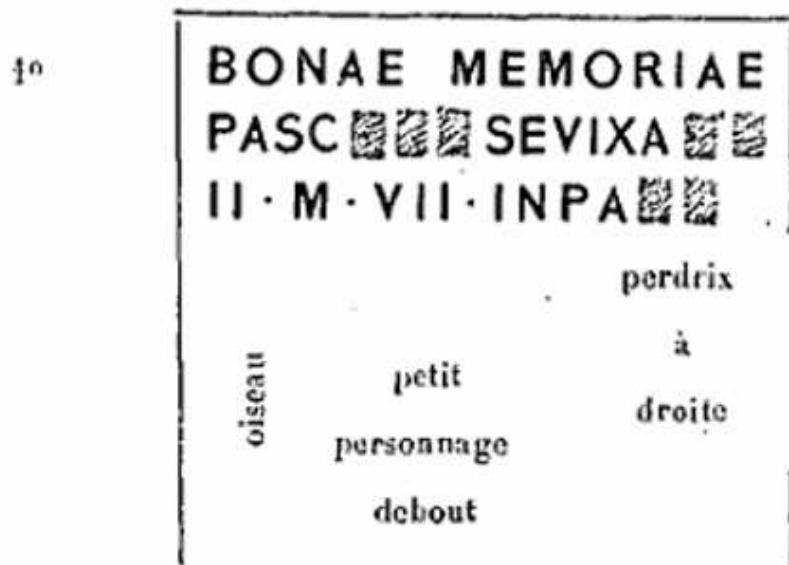
In the same mass of masonry which contains the baptistry and close to this one, are two narrow cavities, covered with mosaics, undoubtedly the remnants of small cisterns intended to supply the tank.

Certainly a Christian church must have existed at this place, around which the tombs were spread that we spoke about in chapter III. In any case, let us not allow

the assumption which would identify this as a small monument where the dead were washed.

3° Not far from there, around the tombs, some flat red terra cotta vases have been found, as well as the remains of Christian lamps and a vase out of glass (unfortunately very broken) with extremely thin walls, having the form and volume of an ostrich egg stood upright, with the upper quarter removed; this vase was held upright thanks to a circle of small nodules pressing on the ground and ensuring stability.

4° Lastly, some funerary inscriptions in mosaic have been brought to light, and of here follows a summary description;



↓ III^e SÉRIE, T. X.

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→ Red letters, from 3 cm to 9 cm high. The figure is 77 cm high; he is upright, facing, beardless, bare headed, with black eyes and hair; he is dressed in a long white *dalmatic* robe with a double black band, and in two hands holds an olive branch where a bird is perched. The shoes are red.

2°



A 2 meters long mosaic 80 cm wide. Black letters from 6 cm to 7 cm. Points in the shape of **V**. On the fifth line, **D** and **O** barred. Lines 4 and 6, which were in red letters, were destroyed in l' antiquity, but one can still distinguish, on line 6, the words **IN PACE**.

3°



This small mosaic is on the left of the first mosaic and on the same block. It is in cubes of glass, blue background, separating lines in green. White letters on the two last lines. Richly multicoloured borders.

4°

.. SHONOREM · MIGRO
... VDES · ETP 1887 ·

A fragment broken in two. Black letters from 7 ½ cm high. Points in the shape of V.

Docteur A. Vercoutre

Sfax, mars 1887.

Footnotes

p28

1. See the communication of G. Perrot, of the Institut, at the Académie des Inscriptions, 14 January, 1887.

p30

1. We collected a curious fragment of Roman lamp there, which were decorated with moulded medallions of which one, thankfully, is of Theodosius.

p31

1. We could not insist enough on this point, namely that these splendid tiles, very broad and heavy, are unique to these burials; they are met only there and they are primarily funerary. They are found usually whole, thanks to their good manufacture.

p180

1. See the *Revue* of July-August.
2. We have sent a complete skull to the Anthropology Gallery, in Paris ; an adult male, orthognathe [Ed. the jaw does not project], brachycephalous ; asymmetric parietal bone; flattened tibia.

p186

1. We have observed a tile which, on one face, in addition to an X has a triple groove drawn with the finger, and is bordered also with this triple groove.

p187

1. *Bull.*, XXI, fasc. IV from *Acad. d'Hippone*, 1885, p. 214. Cf. an urn with the stopper made of mortar, which bears the inscription MVC, published by P. Delattre in *Bull.*, etc, no. XVIII, p. xx, and no. XX, fasc. II. We believe that this urn was a sarcophagus jar. There would thus be a whole class of potter's marks which one could call funerary marks, on urns, tiles, stoppers, etc

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1. In this way a large hooked **X** ('à crochet') in the third line of our script, appears to be altered form of the neo-Punic *qof* inscriptions of Africa; also, the reversed **V**, with the point at the top, which appears in the fourth and the fifth lines of the graffiti, reproduces the neo-punic gimel, without a significant alteration, etc. See elsewhere the figure. In any case, it is certainly a text of the 4th or 5th century AD. We deposited it at the Bibliothèque Nationale.

2. See elsewhere *Hist. de l'art*, t. II.

3. *Bull. des antiq. afric.*, vol. III, Nov-Dec. 1885.

4. *Bull. archéol.*, 1886, no. I, p. 37 and fig. [We believe that the artefact is a Punic cistern; cf. Tissot, *Géographie de la province romaine*, vol. II, p. 797. — *Editor's note*]

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1. Here is the description of two Punic artefacts found in Sfax One (fig. 5) is a engraved stone, belonging to the collection of Mr. Gau, Vice-President of the municipality of Sfax. This gem is a small ovoid chalcedony, convex, on a flat engraved surface; it represents an unsaddled horse, quite good style, of detailed work, walking (to the right on the design), and lowering its head if grazing. Above (from right to left on the design) are three punic characters *tau*, *câde* and *lamad*, this last reversed by the lapidary: we read: *Thecel*.



Fig. 5.

The other (fig. 6) is a small pale red fragment of an 'turned' earthenware urn, the fragment having been found by us on the Mezhamni ridge and presenting on its external surface three neo-Punic characters in red paint, worn a little by time, and forming a caption which seems complete: these three characters (from right to left) are, for us, *Iod*, *Beth* and *Kaf*: it is thus necessary to read: *Yebak*.

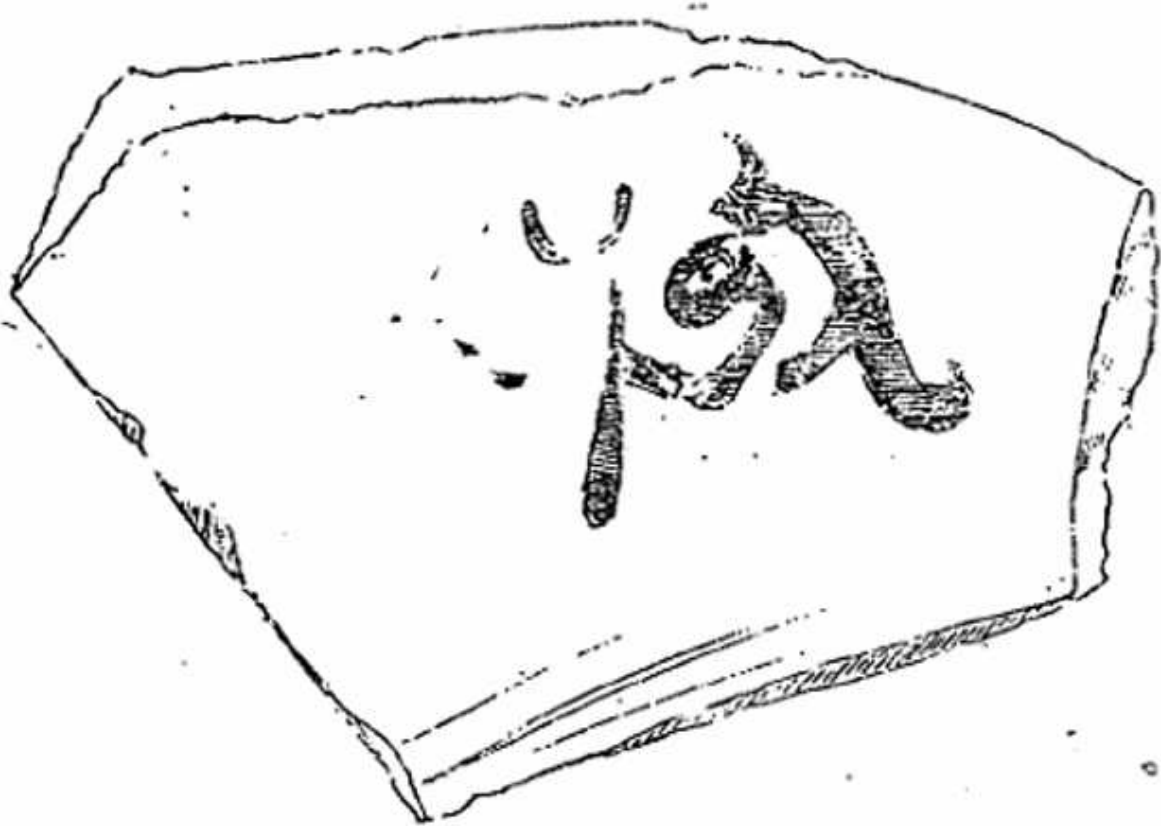


Fig. 6.