
Guy Lecuyot. *Fouilles d'Aï Khanoum IX. L'habitat***Vitto Messina**

**Electronic version**URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/42348>

DOI: 10.4000/abstractairanica.42348

ISSN: 1961-960X

Publisher:

CNRS (UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens), Éditions de l'IFRI

Electronic reference

Vitto Messina, "Guy Lecuyot. *Fouilles d'Aï Khanoum IX. L'habitat*", *Abstracta Iranica* [Online], Volume 34-35-36 | 2017, document 59, Online since 30 July 2017, connection on 31 August 2023. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/42348> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/abstractairanica.42348>

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Guy Lecuyot. *Fouilles d'Aï Khanoum IX. L'habitat*. With contributions of P. Bernard, H.-P. Francfort, B. Lyonnet and L. Martinez Sève, Paris, de Boccard, 2013, 255 p., with figs., LIV plates. (MDAFA XXXIV)

- 1 This volume makes available for the first time all the excavation records on the dwelling quarters of Ai Khanoum, collected during fieldwork of the *Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan* (DAFA). This project was long time ago approached by Paul Bernard, former director of the DAFA, and finds in the study of G. Lecuyot (with contributions of other Authors, among whom P. Bernard himself), its final form. The excavation documents, including diaries, photos, and drawings of the different trenches there opened, have been examined accurately before starting the writing of the present report. The architectural phases, chronology, building techniques and spatial function of the 'quartier sud-ouest', 'rue principale' and extra-muros houses are addressed by G. Lecuyot, the 'quartier du temple principal' is discussed by L. Martinez Sève, the quarter of the Kinéas' Heroon by P. Bernard, and the rural houses in the plain of Ai Khanoum by H.-P. Francfort. G. Lecuyot also discusses the typology of the dwelling structures unearthed at the site, while the study of the pottery found in the 'quartier sud-ouest' is conducted by B. Lyonnet. This monumental book offers all the data available and remarkable considerations on the history and urban development of the site. The influence of different traditions are echoed in the buildings brought to light, for reminiscences of the Mesopotamian, Iranian, Bactrian and Greek backgrounds are evident in the layout and architectural decoration of houses and palaces in the city. These can be also seen, sometimes, in the building technique, which basically followed local trends in the use of mud bricks, and functional use of the spaces, often left unbuilt for displaying gardens and open-air areas. The urban development of the city is also

reconsidered on the basis of this study, particularly enlightening the importance of the reign of Eucratides I for the monumentalization of the public spaces on the basis of the comparison with the chronology newly established for the houses. The population probably increased, and the city expanded, as many indications emphasized in these pages seem to show: in this period, also important houses belonging to the city's plutocracy were built, even if it seems that they were soon modified, but there can be little doubts that the apogee of the site seems to correspond to the reign of the former sovereign. On this premise, even the abandonment of the site is reconsidered in the context of a late phase of occupation on reduced areas of the former buildings, probably of squatters: the latter buildings do not seem to show the traces of destruction that can be seen in other structures.

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