

pl. 31: 14, 16) and allow us to date this vessel to the period between the end of the Early Bronze and beginning of the Middle Bronze Age.

The second vessel, found outside the ruins of Palmyra is preserved in much better shape. It is a squat globular jug ca 21 cm high and measuring at the rim 12 cm in diameter (Pl. I.2). Broad neck is passing into similarly wide rim ending with a flat ruff. Bulging body passes into a flat bottom. On the upper part of the jug's body there is a decoration painted in black. Geometric motif is composed of alternating groups of vertically or horizontally running bands. Such form and decoration suggest that the vessel belongs to so-called "multiple-brush painted ware" group (Braidwood & Braidwood 1960, pl. 30: 7) which is well known from the end of the Early Bronze period and the beginning of the Middle Bronze I from the Levantine coast zone, mostly from Palestine (similar jugs were found in Megiddo within the strata dated to the end of EB as well as from other Palestinian sites of MB I date; cf. Amiran 1970, pp. 78, 81-82) but also from Hama where they were discovered in period "J" layers (Fugman 1958, figs. 74, 85, 93). In the case of both vessels just described it is impossible to decide if they were manufactured in Tadmor itself or rather were imported.

From the du Mesnil sounding comes also another very interesting find made of clay. It is a fragment of a rectangular plaquette which also can be undoubtedly attributed to the Bronze Age period. It represents a very rare example of art from the pre-classical times.

The terracotta plaquette found below the Bel temple is only partially preserved. The discovered fragment is 5.2 cm high and 6.7 cm long and represents the lower part (nearly, a half) of the original plaque (Pl. II.1). The scene decorating the plaquette is composed of two standing figures executed in shallow relief rather sculpted than moulded. The quality of work is rather poor with rough and schematic rendering of figures. Of the two figures the left one represents in profile an animal standing on its hind legs and turned to the right towards the second figure. The silhouette, tail and form of hoofs suggest that it is a bull or, as the upper part of the body is missing, possibly a bull-man (Barrelet 1968, pl. LXXXI: 817). More difficult to identify and interpret is the second figure. At first glance it looks like an armed man wearing long trousers of the Parthian type, but more detailed analysis show that it is a tailed creature with claws instead of feet. It seems that in fact this creature is a sort of a bird-like monster which were so numerous in the Mesopotamian *bestiarium* (Barrelet 1968, pl. LXXXI: 815). In spite of the upper parts being missing I think that this object belongs to the large series of Syrian terracotta plaques with mythological combat representations. In this case we have two mythological creatures fighting each other. The influence of Mesopotamian iconography is here evident. As for the dating of this plaque the Isin-Larsa or Old Babylonian periods seem to me most probable (Black, Green 1992: 48, fig. 40. Legrain 1930, pl. XXXIX: 206).

In 1993 during my second visit to Palmyra when I was looking for more parallels for the finds from the Bel temple sounding, Mr. As'ad showed me some objects considered as pre-classical and found in the gardens in an unclear context. Two of them seemed to be of special interest.

First of them is a fragment of an animal figurine made of baked clay. The horned head was formed by hand of a light-beige clay mixed with numerous sand intrusions. The figurine's surface was carefully smoothed. The terracotta head is ca 3 cm high and 2.1 cm wide with flattened mouth and long horns (4.2 cm) obliquely bent backwards (Pl. II.2). The horns are also slightly flattened and sharply pointed. Judging from the shape of the horns and of the head itself it is most probably a representation of a gazelle belonging to the large group of animal terracottas so well known from the Mesopotamian art (Legrain 1930, pl. LV: 291; LVI: 299). Within this group among such animals as goats, rams, dogs, donkeys or lions