Vito Messina. "I rilievi rupestri d'Elimaide"

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- 1 The author is since many years the co-director of the Iranian-Italian archaeological Expedition in Khuzistan, south-west Iran. The region was the seat of the kingdom of Elymais, a Parthian vassal state ruled by a local dynasty. In this paper, the author presents the most important rock reliefs of the region including the most discussed one, that of Hung-e Azhdar, which was the subject of a recent investigation by the Expeditions' staff aimed at determining more accurately its date. The scenes depicted in the reliefs are interpreted as kings and dignitaries performing sacrifices, fighting enemies and attending to all duties and rituals required by their rank and by court life. Most of the reliefs are dated to the 2nd or early 3rd century AD when Elymais was ruled by a pro-Parthian dynasty. Most of the scenes are carved on hardly accessible boulders. This fact in connection with the discovery of buildings' structures nearby has led the author to think that the reliefs were part of larger complexes hosting ritual ceremonies and in the case of Tang-e Sarvak, where the scenes are scattered along with a sort of itinerary, also ritual processions.

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