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**New stratigraphic contexts for the study of the late pottery of Palmyra**

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A new research project started in Palmyra in 2007 with the creation of an Italian-Syrian joint mission (PAL.M.A.I.S.) formed by the Università degli Studi of Milan and by the General Directorate of the Antiquities and Museums of Damascus.

The aim of the project is the study of an area never investigated systematically so far, the SW Quarter, whose extent (114.000 m<sup>2</sup>) is defined by the Agora, the Diocletian's Wall, the Transverse Colonnade Street and the Great Colonnade.

The quarter's halfway position, between the Hellenistic city to the S and the Roman Imperial age quarter to the N, seems crucial to understand the Palmyra's urban development during the different historical periods.

A new stratigraphic excavation began in 2008 in the most monumental structure of the quarter, the so called Peristyle Building, near the southern tract of the Diocletian's Wall. So far four rooms, belonging to a late restoration, have been discovered in the western side of the building.

The first results of the analysis of some layers dated to the VIth -VIIth centuries A.D. are here presented.

In those contexts the large amount of late coarse ware, a class little known in Palmyra, but with some comparisons in the contemporary settlements of the NE Syria, is a feature of particular interest: the link to well defined stratigraphic contexts finally offers some essential chronological data for the study of the late pottery of Palmyra and opens new perspectives in the analysis of its production, circulation and consumption.