Funerary monuments with attached chapels from the northern Sahara

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Abstract
The 'chapel tumulus' is a type of north Saharan funerary monument that incorporates an internal sanctuary separate from the burial itself. The distribution and development of the various forms of chapel tumuli are described. Their furnishings indicate that they were built by the Getules, horsemen and nomadic pastoralists, over the period of a millennium from the fifth century BC to the fifth century AD. The deceased could be approached through the chapel in order to obtain premonitory dreams, a form of divination that is still a Berber and especially a Tuareg custom.

Résumé
Un type particulier de monuments funéraires du Nord du Sahara a été nommé 'tumulus à chapelle' en raison d'un aménagement architectural qui permet de pénétrer à l'intérieur sans cependant atteindre la sépulture. La répartition et les variations typologiques de ces monuments sont brièvement exposées. Ils ont été construits dans un territoire occupé par les Getules au cours d'un millénaire qui va du 5e siècle BC au 5e siècle AD. En s'approchant du défunt par la chapelle, il était possible de s'endormir auprès de lui et d'obtenir des songes prémonitoires. Ces pratiques d'incubation ont encore cours chez les Berbères, surtout chez les Touaregs.

Amongst the innumerable protohistoric funerary monuments of the southern Maghreb and the Sahara, there is a type, the chapel tumulus (tumulus à chapelle), that is particularly deserving of attention since it is both highly characteristic in form and occurs over a well-defined area (Fig. 1). Rarely described and even more rarely excavated or the subject of serious studies, monuments of this type were first noted by Battistini (1936–37) in the Négrine region of Algeria. An example from El Mreití in Mauritania was excavated and published by Chapelle and Monod in 1937. Some twenty years later, Meunié and Allain (1956) described others at Taouz in the Tafilalet region of Morocco. None of the authors cited above considered attempting to establish the typological relationships between the monuments they were describing and those that had been reported from other parts of...
northern Africa, and it was not until 1959 that this class of monuments was defined and given a generic name (Camps 1959).

Further chapel tumuli were subsequently noted and in some cases excavations were undertaken, those of Grébenart (1961–62) at Ferkane in the Négrine region being published in detail. Others remain unpublished; these include the extensive digs undertaken by Commandant Lihoreau in 1966–67 at Djorf Torba, near Colomb-Béchar, and earlier ones at the same site carried out by Captain Villalonga in 1948–49. In an unpublished thesis, Colonel Denis (1970) noted several monuments of the same type at Guélta Mustapha, Tamreikat, Tiguermast el Khadra and Guélta Zemmour in the western Sahara. Prior to Colonel Denis’s work, Margat and Camus (1958–59) published on the monuments at Bouïa in the Tafilalet and several authors made sporadic mention of such mounds occurring from Gaseiba Adam in Rio de Oro (Santa Ollala 1944: Plates 223, 224) to sites north of the Khatt Atoui in Mauritania (Spruytte and Cuaz 1956), including those reported by du Puygaudeau and Senones (1947) at Bir Oum Garn. The bibliography pertaining to these monuments is thus quite succinct and does not adequately reflect the interest raised by these structures both culturally and architecturally.

What purpose did these structures serve? The monuments were erected following various designs, some being circular and others of rectangular form (Fig. 2). However, whatever the