

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. I, Part I: Prolegomena and Prehistory* by E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd and N. G. L. Hammond

Review by: Giorgio Buccellati

Source: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Apr., 1973), pp. 245-248

Published by: Cambridge University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/162249>

Accessed: 03-02-2021 08:30 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Cambridge University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *International Journal of Middle East Studies*

an idea which seems to contradict all the work that has been done on Egypt, for instance, on the theory of the emergence of a 'new class'. Or, to take one last example, Norman Bentwich's contribution on 'Zionism' perpetuates the now discredited myth that it was Weizmann (with some help from Herbert Samuel) who alone persuaded the British government to sponsor the claims of the Zionists for a national home in Palestine.

In conclusion, and on the assumption that the main users of the book are to be students and general readers, two other general criticisms might also be made. First, the choice of books 'for further reading' placed at the end of each chapter seems eccentric to say the least and often omits a number of the most important and influential works in each field. Secondly, the book is particularly weak on the general history of the Middle East. This is unfortunate for if the area does have a unity this depends largely on the fact that the various communities which it contains, have, to some extent, shared a similar historical experience over the past thousand or so years.

ROGER OWEN

*St Antony's College,
Oxford University*

E. S. EDWARDS, C. J. GADD and N. G. L. HAMMOND (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 1, part 1: *Prolegomena and Prehistory*, third edition (Cambridge, at the University Press, 1971). Pp. xxii + 758. £8.

The third edition of *The Cambridge Ancient History* began to appear in 1962, in the form of paperbound fascicles, each one containing a chapter or occasionally parts of one or more chapters. Some eight years later, the first volume has now been published, under the general title *Prolegomena and Prehistory*. It is an imposing work, with truly outstanding features: comprehensiveness of scope, both in the text and the bibliography (the latter alone includes 50 pages), competence of the contributors and above all the quality of the exposition. It is unquestionably, and will remain for some time to come, the standard handbook for the ancient history of the Near East and of the Aegean down to the first millennium B.C. The present is the first of four volumes which together will replace what in the second edition was included in only two volumes – an indication of how much our knowledge has increased in the last decades. The geographical limitations are those of the great literate traditions of the ancient, Western world: thus 'Cambridge ancient history' means prehistory and history of the Near East, Greece and Rome, excluding other cultures which were contemporary in time and even contiguous in place, such as the Neolithic and the Bronze Ages in Central and Southeastern Europe. The restriction is justified, I believe, but the title remains misleading, and should have called at least for a longer prefatory statement than is given in this volume.

As normally to be expected in handbooks of this type, the orientation is toward the factual rather than the interpretive – and 'factual' here means that the emphasis is mostly on events, with little interest paid to institutions. It is an unfortunate limitation, but one for which the blame must rest on the field as a whole rather than on the contributors of the present volume: the tradition is more antiquarian in spirit than truly historical, allowing, as it does, philological and archaeological argumentation to become an end in itself. Professional historians, such as many among the readers of this *Journal*, will be particularly sensitive to this negative aspect of the work; also, they will miss the discussion of certain institutional aspects which might otherwise interest them because of the inherent element of historical continuity (e.g. the shaping of geo-political regions, the socio-political organization of nomads or semi-nomads, the establishment of

centralized public administration in the urban centers). This, however, is not to say that portions of the book may not have direct bearing on the immediate interests of modern historians – it will suffice to refer in this connection to the chapters⁵ on physical conditions (in spite of the emphasis being on prehistoric times) and on language families.

As indicated at the beginning, this volume joins together various fascicles which had all appeared previously over a span of six years from 1962 to 1968. The correlation between fascicles and chapters is as follows (with abbreviated titles):

- | | |
|------|---|
| Ch. | Fasc. |
| | I = 61 (1968): Linton and Moseley, <i>The Geological Ages</i> |
| | II = 33 (1965): Butzer, <i>Physical Conditions</i> |
| | III = 30 (1965): Garrod and Clark, <i>Primitive Man</i> |
| | IV = 54 (1966): Albright and Lambdin, <i>The Evidence of Language</i> |
| | V = 50 (1966): Hughes and Brothwell, <i>The Earliest Populations</i> |
| | VI = 4 (1962): Hayes, Rowton and Stubbings, <i>Chronology</i> |
| | VII = 59 (1967): Mellaart, <i>The Earliest Settlements</i> |
| | 20 (1964): Mellaart, <i>Anatolia Before C. 4000</i> |
| VIII | = 58/1–2 (1967): Mallowan, <i>The Development of Cities</i> |
| IXa | = 38 (1965): Baumgartel, <i>Predynastic Egypt</i> |
| | b = 47 (1966): De Vaux, <i>Palestine, Neolithic and Chalcolithic</i> |
| | c = 43 (1966): Catling, <i>Cyprus, Neolithic and Chalcolithic</i> |
| | X = 36 (1965): Weinberg, <i>The Stone Age in the Aegean</i> |

The table of contents, interesting in itself as an indication of the wealth of materials included in the book, has been introduced here for the precise purpose of serving as a concordance between the fascicles of the intermediary publication and the chapters of the final version published as a single volume. It is, in my judgement, a serious fault of the editors that such a concordance should have been omitted in the book itself, and that nowhere else in the volume should the real dates of the chapters be given. To subsume every thing under the essentially false date of 1970, which appears on the frontispiece of the volume, can be quite damaging for the earliest contributions, and in effect penalizes those authors who had completed their assignment speedily.

A case in point, out of many that could be adduced, is that the Tartaria tablets are never mentioned in the volume. The first publication of these tablets goes back to 1962 (N. Vlăssă, 'Chronology of the Neolithic in Transylvania in the Light of the Tărtăria Settlement's Stratigraphy', *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai*, Series Historia, Cluj 1962, fasc. 2, pp. 23–30, 1 fig., in Rumanian with French and Russian summaries, then published in English in *Dacia: Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne*, NS 7, Bucarest 1963, pp. 485–94, 11 figs.), while several other studies appeared in the following years. Because of the importance of these finds, and because of the unresolved controversy concerning their dating and relationship to early Sumerian tablets, a bibliography may be useful here: A. Falkenstein, 'Zu den Tontafeln aus Tărtăria', *Germania*, vol. 43 (Berlin, 1965), pp. 269–73, 1 fig.; VI. Milojčić, 'Die Tontafeln von Tărtăria (Siebenbürgen) und die absolute Chronologie des mitteleuropäischen Neolithikums', *Germania*, vol. 43 (Berlin, 1965), pp. 261–68, 2 figs.; V. Popovitch, 'Une civilisation égéo-orientale sur le moyen Danube', *Revue archéologique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1965), pp. 1–56, 29 figs.; J. Harmatta, 'Neolithic Writing in Central Europe? A Preliminary Report', *Antik Tranulmányok*, vol. 13 (Budapest, 1966), pp. 235–36 (in Hungarian; German summary in *Orientalia*, NS, vol. 37 (Rome, 1968), p. 18*); I. J. Gelb, Communication in *Nestor*, vol. 112 (Madison, Wis., Institute for the Research

in the Humanities, The University of Wisconsin, 1967), p. 488; M. S. F. Hood, 'The Tărtăria Tablets', *Antiquity*, 41/162 (Gloucester, 1967), pp. 99–113, 16 figs., pl. XVI; J. Makkay, 'Die in Tartaria (Alsótatárlaka) gefundenen pictographischen Tafeln und die jüngere Steinzeit Südosteuropas', *Különnyomat a Móra Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve 1966–1967 Évi Kötetéből* (Szeged, 1967), pp. 21–24, 3 figs.; H. Quitta, 'Radiocarbon-daten und die Chronologie des mittelund südosteuropäischen Neolithikums', *Ausgrabungen und Funde*, vol. 12 (Berlin, 1967), pp. 115–25; K. R. Veenhof, 'Kleitabellen uit Tărtăria (Siebenbürgen)', *Phoenix*, vol. 13/1 (Leiden, 1967), pp. 35–38, fig. 13; J. Makkay, 'The Tărtăria Tablets', *Orientalia*, NS, vol. 37 (Rome, 1968), pp. 272–89, pls. XLIV–XLV; E. Neustupný, 'The Tartaria Tablets: a Chronological Issue', *Antiquity*, 42/165 (Gloucester, 1968), pp. 32–35; M. S. F. Hood, 'The Tartaria Tablets', *Scientific American* 218/3 (1968), pp. 30–37; J. Makkay 'The Tablets of Tărtăria (Alsótatárlak)', *Magyar Tudomány*, vol. 77 (1970), pp. 63–69, 4 figs. (in Hungarian); J. Makkay, 'The Finds of Tărtăria', *Élet és tudomány*, vol. 15 (1970), pp. 110–14, 5 figs. (in Hungarian). Obviously, none of these publications could have been utilized in 1962 when Rowton's chapter on chronology first appeared, and even the early ones could conceivably have escaped Mallowan's attention in his chapter on the development of cities (1967): but to see them omitted in a book labelled '1970' is inexcusable. The ideal would of course have been to allow for a revision of the fascicles before their publication in book form, or for the introduction of comprehensive addenda (the preface to the volume, p. xxi, states that contributors were invited 'to make such changes in the texts as were necessary to bring them up to date'; but in the sections I have checked I failed to see any changes except for very minor ones). Short of a revision, the very least that editors could have done was to give the real date for each chapter – a suggestion which I hope they will consider for the next three new volumes which are to follow in the series. The importance of such editorial considerations is all the more apparent for a book of this sort which is to serve for years to come as a standard handbook, and which will (wrongly) be assumed to present the state of the discipline as of 1970.

Bibliographical references in the footnotes do not include the author's name or the title of the publication, but rather a numerical code which refers back to the bibliography. This format, used already in the fascicle publication and criticized then for its inconvenience, becomes even more impractical now that the bibliography is pushed all the way to the back of the volume. But things are made even worse by the peculiar decision to use the *title* of the chapter at the top of the pages in the textual section, and instead the *number* of the chapter at the top of the pages in the bibliography. Thus to look up a footnote reference becomes a three-way operation: from the text to the bottom of the page, from there to the table of contents (in order to determine the number of the chapter), and from there to the bibliography. Once again I would register a plea with the editors, hoping that in the future they may consider breaking with the tradition of comparable editions of the Cambridge University Press, and simply add the *number* of the chapter on top of the pages of the textual section, and/or the *title* of the chapter on top of the pages in the bibliography. Hopefully editors and publishers will realize how unmanageable the system has become now that the bibliography has grown into dozens of pages.

Yet another practical consideration which one wishes had been taken into account by the editors was to give the page number of the original fascicle next to the new page number of the volume. Since pagination is practically identical, but for a few very minor changes, double numeration would have made it much easier to use those references to the *Cambridge Ancient History* which have already appeared in the literature

since the original publication of the fascicles. Let us hope that the libraries will not dispose of the intermediary, fascicle edition, otherwise cross-references will be just about impossible.

The various practical sins of the editors are almost redeemed by the only real improvement which we have in the new cloth edition, namely the introduction of an extensive general index, for a total of eighty pages: needless to say, this makes consultation of the work much easier, especially in view of the fact that multiple authorship makes inevitably for a certain unevenness in the overall presentation. If I am not wrong, all the fascicles containing the material of volume II have already been published, so that one may hope for a speedy continuation of the publication in volume form.

GIORGIO BUCCELLATI

*University of California,
Los Angeles*

The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain, Collected from Oral Tradition by Colonel Sir LEWIS PELLY, rev. with explanatory notes by ARTHUR N. WOLLASTON. (Originally published London: Wm. H. Allen and Co., 1879. Republished 1970, Gregg International Publishers, Westmead, England.)

It cannot be denied that the present book, now in its ninety-third year, is still indispensable. To be precise, it is unique. Consequently one should be grateful to the publishers for making it accessible once more. Somehow, though, one cannot suppress a measure of embarrassment that a literary phenomenon as characteristic for Iran as the 'miracle play' (usually translated as 'passion play'), despite its generally recognized and frequently restated importance, has not yet received a treatment which would at least supplement Sir Lewis Pelly's remarkable, pioneering effort. It was precisely eleven years ago that Rossi and Bombaci published a catalog of the Cerulli collection of the *ta'ziyât*, consisting of no fewer than 1055 manuscripts assembled by Cerulli during his four years (1950-54) as ambassador to Iran. Unfortunately nobody seems to have felt moved to make use systematically of the new plays Cerulli obtained, nor has even more recent scholarship in the field resulted in enriching the 'public domain' of Persian religious theater. Hence, recourse to Sir Lewis's book is likely to fortify the erroneous concept of a genre rigidly fixed in its tradition, when actually a number of plays performed during the last decades reflect in their choice of episodic personages contemporary moods and events.

The reprint, as in many cases the paperback, indispensable instrument of research and instruction though it is, tends to consecrate the state of knowledge obtaining at the time the works in question were first issued, and besides makes publication of more up-to-date presentations commercially somewhat more risky. The dilemma cannot be resolved in a general fashion. In the case of the *ta'ziya* one can only hope that those more directly concerned with this genre, which seems to be both alive and waning, will feel stimulated to offer a history of the *ta'ziya* as well as translations of more recent plays.

G. E. VON GRUNEBaum

University of California, Los Angeles