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П. М. Кожин, М. Ф. Косарев, Н. А. Дубова

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В издание включены результаты новейших археологических раскопок и изучения музейных коллекций, анализа процессов миграции эпохи бронзы и раннего железного века, антропологические и фаунистические разработки материалов как с территории Средней Азии, так и Евразии в целом. Уделено внимание истории архитектуры, ковроделия, металлургии, а также проблемам охраны, консервации и реставрации памятников.

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Results of the recent archaeological excavations and studying of museum collections are included in the edition as well as analysis of Bronze and Early Iron Ages migrations, anthropological and faunal researches on the territory of Central Asia, and Eurasia as a whole. The attention on history of architecture, carpets making, metallurgy, and also on problems of protection, preservation and restoration of mud bricks monuments is paid.

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Ch. Kepinski-Lecomte

TURKMENISTAN AND NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA DURING THE BRONZE PERIOD

Introduction

It is a great honour for me to make a small contribution to this volume dedicated to Viktor Ivanovich Sarianidi. He is one of the most striking archaeologists that I have met during my career and it has always been a pleasure to welcome him and Nadezhda Dubova to my home when they passed through Paris. His contribution to the understanding of ancient civilizations, particularly those of Central Asia, is considerable and worthy of the greatest admiration. His

work has revealed new cultures which were far from being isolated, maintaining direct and indirect contacts with the whole of the Orient, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus Valley and formed part of a single puzzle which we are all trying to decipher in order to understand the history of ancient civilizations.

This is why, for the past several years, being a specialist of Upper Mesopotamia I have been interested in all the recent discoveries, particularly those from the site of Gonur Depe. The civilizations of Central Asia (fig. 1) are studied by eminent colleagues, who will, I hope, forgive the gaps in my knowledge, but our research still remains too compartmentalized and our understanding would benefit, I am sure, by being shared far more frequently. Parallels with eastern regions, notably with the Indus Valley and Elam, were deservedly developed long ago, while those with Upper Mesopotamia and more precisely with the big bend in the Euphrates have been studied much less. They might repay a major study, but in the meantime, I would like to present the case of some ritual practices, burial practices in particular.

Settlements during the third and second millenniums: general dynamics or trends

The stages of development of human settlements in the big bend of the Euphrates, as in the whole of Upper Mesopotamia, present some points of comparison with those of Central Asia. It is generally agreed that the development of towns started there at least in the mid third millennium, most probably earlier (*Akkermans, Schwartz, 2003, p. 233–287; Cooper, 2006; Kepinski, 2001*). Be that as it may, the second half of the third millennium was a very prosperous period. In southern Sinjar in Iraq, at Tell Khoshi or Tell Hadhail for example, and the Khabur area in Syria, at Hamoukar or Tell Leilan, the main sites covered 100 hectares, whereas those from the Euphrates valley and the area west of it such as Ebla, Tilbeshar, Tell es-Sweyhat, Tell Banat/Tell Bazi and those in Central Asia, such as Namazga or Gonur, reached 50 to 60 hectares. In Upper Mesopotamia from 2100 onwards, the majority of the cities either became smaller or was abandoned (*Tainter, 1987; Dalfes et al., 1997; Cooper, 2006, p. 257–277*). In fact, while some regions were completely deserted, such as certain valleys in the Khabur triangle, others seemed to be less affected: nevertheless, some major modifications indicating economic changes are undeniable everywhere (*Kuzucuoglu, Marro, 2007*). While in Central Asia, there could have been real movements of people from the upper valleys towards the lower valleys or the delta, in Upper Mesopotamia, the displacements towards the valleys and more humid areas remain conjectural (*Francfort, 1985; Kohl, 1995, 2007; Tosi, Karlovsky, 2003; Sarianidi, 2008*).

Some elements of comparison: composite figures and platforms

A well-known comparison between Central Asia, Northern Syria and South-east Anatolia consists of the composite seated female figure known from several sites in Turkmenistan and particularly from Gonur Tepe (*Sarianidi, 2002, p. 140–142*). Pieces of similar figures, such as heads, arms and parts of wigs have been found at Ebla (*Matthiae, 1996, p. 54, 96–97*) and on several sites in the Euphrates valley, for example Tell Bi'a at the confluence of the Euphrates and the Balikh (*Strommenger, Kohlmeyer, 2000*) and at Tell Banat nearby (*Porter, 2002; Aruz, 2003, p. 171, fig. 109d*). In Syria, these pieces date to the last quarter of the third millennium, so these attestations could therefore be slightly older than the composite figures from Gonur. These latter would thus be imitations of the statuettes similar to the two found very recently at Ebla,

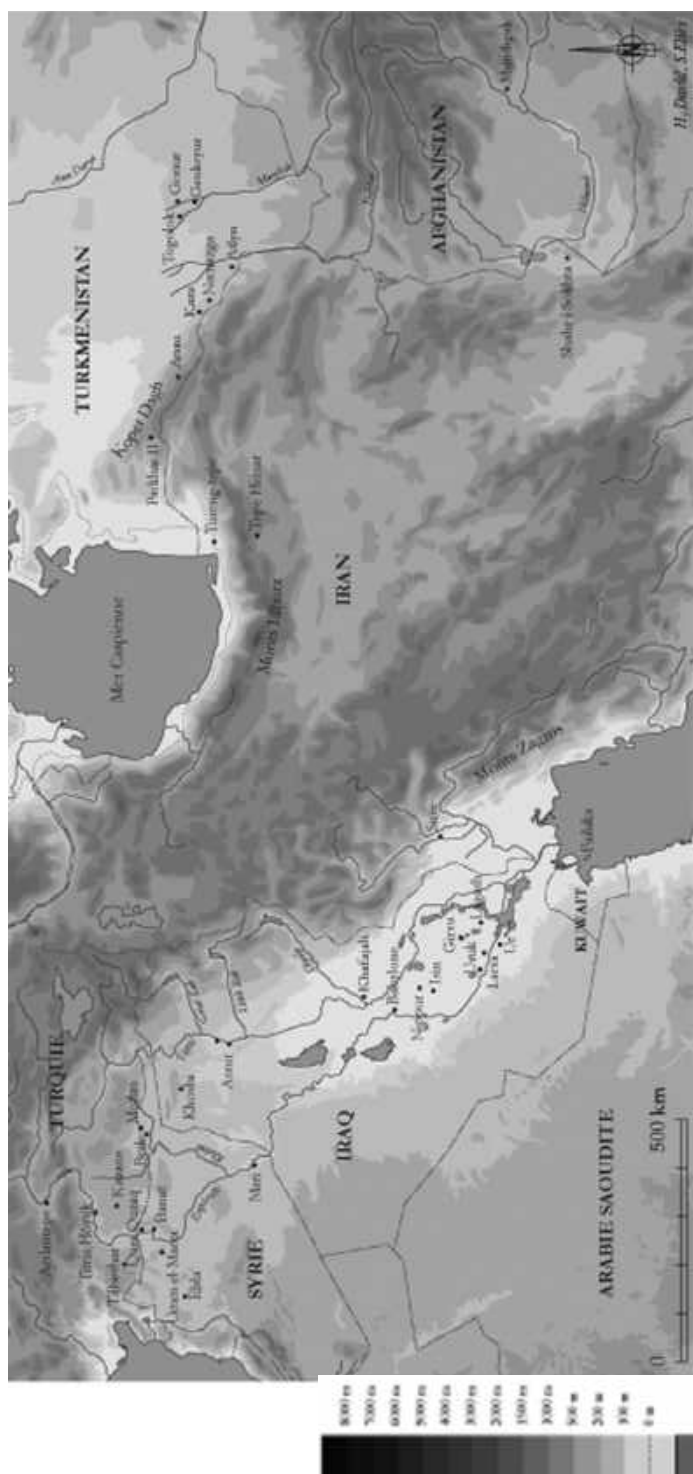


Fig. 1. Main archeological sites of Central Asia and Near East.

which date to the 24th century. The Ebla statuettes have the *kaunaküs* clothing, made of gold on one and of incised stone in the other, and different materials were used for the same parts; the head, arms and hair or wig.

Apart from the composite figures, I have often quoted the case of the platforms or terraced rows that were built on many sites during the third millennium, from the Khabur area to south-east Anatolia and all along the Euphrates valley. The oldest levels were covered by a terraced massif of mud bricks as, for example, at the site of Altyn Depe (Masson, 1988, p. 58, fig. 18). In the Khabur area, there are several examples and one of the oldest is at Tell Mozan, where it could date back to the Ninevite 5 period and to the second quarter of the third millennium B. C. The excavators, Giorgio and Marilyn Buccellati, have connected it to the Hurrites (Buccellatti, Kelly-Buccellatti, 1988, p. 59; 1999, p. 12, 13, abb. 4, 14). In the Sajur valley, at Tilbeshar, the upper town was covered by a high terrace during the first phase of the expansion of the town, around 2600 BC, at the time when the occupation extended around the citadel both to the north and south (Kepinski-Lecomte, Ergeç, 1999, p. 247). The excavation of this platform, within the limited space of a stratigraphic trench, did not expose the buildings at the top of the platform, but it did reveal a 12 m high massif that covered over the remains of the earlier occupation, like on the high terrace at Altyn Tepe. There is still a problem concerning the dating of the terrace at Altyn Tepe or the Namazga V period, and while some scholars place it during the second half of the third millennium, others think that it is much more recent and that it could date to the beginning of the second millennium. Other terraces are attested in Afghanistan, at Mundigak (Casal, 1961) and Nad-i Ali (Dales, 1977; Besenval, Francfort, 1994) for example, in Iran, at Tureng Tepe (Deshayes, 1977) and along the Euphrates, notably at Halawa B (Orthmann, 1981) and Tell es-Sweyhat (Zettler, 1997, p. 18), where they might belong to the end of the third millennium B. C.

The practice of raising buildings higher and of constructing high terraces was new to Upper Mesopotamia. It was known in Mesopotamia, but only for a single building inside the town as, for example, the oval temple at Khafajeh and that of Tell Uqair. At Tilbeshar, Tell es-Sweyhat and Altyn Tepe, the whole of the old site was covered by bricks, forming a massif. The majority of these examples are located in piedmont zones. This might have been a practice of mountain people who were remodelling the landscape to resemble their place of origin. Even if all the examples cited are not exactly contemporaneous, they accompany the main development of settlement during the third millennium. These terraces were also territorial markers, necessary to people in the process of settling down to justify their appropriation of new territories. Their visibility could be associated with that of some funerary monuments built in many places along the big bend of the Euphrates, especially in the case of the White Monument from Tell Banat (McClellan, 1998). Taken together, these constructions also show the ability to mobilise a significant workforce for these substantial communal projects.

Funerary practices

The main new element that relates to our topic is represented by specific burial practices, particularly graves of sacrificed animal occurring within an extensive burial complex situated in a central position inside a site. In the third millennium, the Euphrates valley and Central Asia are characterised by very varied burial practices from one site to another and even within one site: pit graves, cists, pithos, stone chambers, earth or rock-cut shafts, monumental stone-built shafts and chamber tombs in the Euphrates valley (Cooper, 2006, p. 202–256), and shaft graves, pit graves, cists and chamber tombs at Gonur (Sarianidi, 2008). Amongst these, tombs in the form

of houses and animal graves are rare and their exceptional character justifies the attention that should be paid to them.

The study of burial practices remains one of the major subjects of our discipline and it has passed through several stages since the transition from the diffusionist approach to that of taking the interaction between rituals and the community of the living into account (*Brown*, 1971; *Laneri*, 2007). Revealing as they are of social structures (*Binford*, 1972; *Carter*, *Parker*, 1995; *Parker*, *Pearson*, 1999), their symbolic function is equally strong (*Bourdieu*, 1982; *Hodder*, 1982). After having highlighted the importance of the information they provide on the social status of the deceased, in recent years the relationship of rituals with the world of the living that follow and perpetuate them, has been developed. Their richness at certain times, particularly in the third millennium where it is illustrated by, for example the famous royal tombs at Ur and Alaca Höyük, is universally recognised as a means of creating, reinforcing and realising an ideological discourse that emphasises the power of the leaders (*Peltenburg*, 1999).

Animal burials are found at Gonur both in the necropolis and in the royal cemetery. An extensive burial area, located to the west of North Gonur, has produced around 3000 graves of different types across 10 hectares. There are several animal burials, including one of a decapitated horse (*Sarianidi*, 2008, p. 322, fig. 182). In addition, in the royal necropolis, the skeleton of a fawn surrounded by a multitude of pots and two pearls has been found in a mausoleum (*Sarianidi*, 2008, p. 321, fig. 181). Two separate graves in another mausoleum sheltered sheep, also associated with a large amount of ceramics.

In 2002 and 2004, a team led by Glenn Schwarz and Hans Curvers excavated animal graves at the site of Umm el-Marra to the west of the big bend in the Euphrates (*Schwartz et al.*, 2006). They were part of a burial complex covering the upper town. It comprises a dozen graves which produced rich funerary materials dating to the second half of the third millennium. In the middle were two rectangular structures made of mud brick, the larger of which contained the skeletons of four equids (onagers or donkeys) and the skull of a child. The smaller structure was divided into two compartments, each containing the burial of a decapitated equid. The two skulls were found on a sill of the west wall accompanied by a spouted jar and bare clear witness to ritual practices linked to the sacrifice and burial of these animals.

The sacrifice of animals is far from unknown in Syro-Mesopotamia, but the burial of equids at Umm el-Marra in individual, constructed tombs is unique. While, according to Schwarz, equids «were the preferred animals used to pull wheeled vehicles» at Umm el-Marra, the necropolis at Gonur revealed not only animal burials of different sorts but also the remains of a chariot with four bronze-encircled wheels, 80 cm in diameter, in tomb 3200 (*Sarianidi*, 2008, p. 320, fig. 180).

Finally the tombs in the shape of houses need to be mentioned. At Gonur Depe, the excavations brought to light five of these, which were used for successive multiple inhumations (*Sarianidi*, 2008, p. 157). One example has been found at Qara Qusak, south of Carchemish (*Valdés Pereiro*, 1999, p. 120). Attributed to phases 1 and 2 of the Bronze Age, the tomb at Qara Qusak is the most ancient monumental tomb in the Syrian Euphrates valley. It is rectangular, built of red mud bricks and covered with white limestone plaster. A partition wall creates two compartments, one sheltering the skeleton of a young woman, the other that of a young child. The burial goods are rich and abundant, including ceramics, bronze pins, copper spearheads and hundreds of beads. This building is located in the vicinity of a large temple, and both are surrounded by an enclosure wall of bricks that separated from the houses.

The graves at Umm el-Marra, and many of the burials at Gonur were situated, like the burial structure at Qara Qusak, at the heart of the site, at its very centre, and sometimes in a dominating

position. Such a position further accentuated the relationship between the living and the dead, most probably punctuated with regular ritual practices (Cooper, 2006, p. 241). The complexity of burial practices is particularly strong when communities face serious social, economic and cultural transformations and they need ideological resources and new symbols (Girard, 2004; Kepinski, 2006; Schwarz, 2007). Given that the communities were of nomadic origins, one might interpret the rituals as re-enforcing a collective memory based on shared values, those of a recent past in which they wandered and lived amongst their herds.

The variety of burials types in the Euphrates valley echoes that found in the necropolis at Gonur and in both cases no doubt illustrates the complexity of human groups in full transformation, competition and emulation as well as the formation of elites. The shared values probably include memories of an idealised past (Porter, 2002), in this case that of herders, elaboration of symbols (Godelier, 2007) but also the participation in international trade, the development of which, during much of the third millennium, was to be a powerful force for the evolution of the communities involved. In support of this force a series of cultural hubs, interdependent territories and leaders were put in place.

Conclusion

The parallels between Central Asia and the big bend in the Euphrates can be explained, initially, if one remembers that the two regions are on the lapis-lazuli and the turquoise trade route. Apart from the manufactured objects found on many sites, at Ebla blocks of raw lapis-lazuli have also been found. It must also be remembered that various alloys were developed during the third millennium and both regions are situated near different ore deposits. The composite seated female figures were moved along the same routes, circulating as exchange goods or gifts.

The various examples mentioned here need to be put in context with ritual practices. It is clear that we are not talking about a single population, since other elements of the material culture clearly identify different groups. Nevertheless, as we have said, Turkmenistan underwent stages of development and settling process comparable with several other regions in the East. The peoples who settled both in the big bend of the Euphrates and in Turkmenistan were of nomadic origin. And it is precisely the complexity of certain burial practices that characterises nomads, as well as their constant search to legitimise their power over any given area and the use of territorial markers.

The importance given to animals could be related to their use in transportation but also to a recent past as herders. In any case, the two regions developed thanks to their strategic location near to certain primary resources such as semi-precious stones and minerals. To conclude, during the Bronze Age, with its population of nomadic origin, close to high ground, pastures and minerals, Turkmenistan was an indispensable link in the network of international relations that developed in quite a particular way from the middle of the third millennium until the beginning of the second.

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П. М. Кожин

НОВЫЙ ЭТАП ПЕРВОБЫТНОЙ И РАННЕИСТОРИЧЕСКОЙ АРХЕОЛОГИИ СРЕДНЕЙ АЗИИ

Виктор Иванович Сарияниди не дает возможности своим коллегам в промежутках между его юбилеями подвести итоги его непрерывному подвижническому творчеству. Вот и сейчас вместо того, чтобы подводить эти итоги, приходится говорить о новых направлениях исследований, которые сформировались в работах Сарияниди на Гонур Депе за прошедшие пять лет. Конечно, есть какие-то общие выводы, которые можно делать из этого многогранного и мощного творчества, и основной такой вывод заключается в том, что полевые исследования в степном и пустынном регионах Азии далеко не исчерпали себя. Уже само по себе открытие Гонур Депе, его своеобразной культуры, связанной разнообразными узлами родства со многими культурными проявлениями центральноазиатских и западноазиатских популяций, показывает, что изучение археологии и древней истории этих регионов находятся еще в процессе становления.

Итак, чем ознаменовались эти пять последних лет¹ в исследованиях Гонура: открытие так называемого «царского некрополя», подтверждение незыблемых связей местной

¹ Чтобы не прибегать к многократному цитированию, противоречащему выбранному для данного очерка жанру повествования, я сообщаю, что большинство приведенных здесь фактических данных восходят к многочисленным монографиям В. И. Сарияниди, а также нашли отражение в изданиях «Трудов Маргианской экспедиции» (М., Т. 1, 2004; Т. 2, 2008). Кроме того, многие данные сообщены мне лично проф. В. И. Сарияниди и д.и.н. Н. А. Дубовой, которым я приношу глубокую искреннюю благодарность.