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In copertina: Lesena in mattone cotto con decorazione intagliata dagli scavi italiani del palazzo ghaznavide (XI-XII sec.) di Ghazni, Afghanistan (deposito del Museo Nazionale di Kabul, n. inv. 05.2.0646; foto E. Monti, 2006)

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MATTIA RACCIDI

Models of Covered Wagons from Tell Mozan/Urkes

1. Introduction

The main subject of the present article is the study of four fragments of terracotta models of covered vehicles from Tell Mozan.

Tell Mozan, the ancient city of Urkes, like Tell Brak/Nagar and Tell Leilan/Šehna, represents one of the most important 3rd millennium BC sites in the so called ‘Khabur Triangle’, a region corresponding to modern Northeastern Syria. The site is located close to the modern Turkish border only a few kilometres away from the Tur Abdin Mountains. The three main features of the site are the huge stone temple terrace, the royal palace, and the so-called ‘âbi’, an underground structure close to the palace used to summon the spirits of the Netherworld. These structures characterized the site as the most important 3rd millennium BC Hurrian religious centre (Buccellati, Kelly-Buccellati 1998).

Models of wheeled vehicles are one of the most common categories of the Ancient Near Eastern terracotta objects. Six different types are recognized based on their morphological features, including: number of wheels, body morphology, position and shape of the axles, and specific features such as shape of the frontal shield, decoration, clay fabric and colour (Raccidi 2012a: 673-78). The six types are:

- I. Two-wheeled platform body
- II. Two-wheeled box body
- III. Two-wheeled platform body with footboard
- IV. Four-wheeled platform body
- V. Four-wheeled box body
- VI. Four-wheeled covered vehicle.

The article is focused on the study of four fragments of four-wheeled covered vehicles, corresponding to type VI of the previous typology. Models of this type are common in Northern Mesopotamia and Southern Anatolia. They are found at sites like Tell Arbid, Tell Bi‘a, Tell Brak, Tell Selenkahiye,

Tepe Gawra, and Terqa. These models have a rectangular body and flat base, rarely slightly curved. In most cases they have four wheels; however, two-wheeled models are also represented.

The main feature of these models is the U-shaped superstructure, closed in the back and open in the front, usually decorated with incised lines forming geometric patterns. The main patterns include zigzag, herringbone, and most commonly grid, singularly represented or arranged in groups to cover the entire surface or part of it. A less common model sub-type shows body and coverage seamlessly fused together, so that the model takes the form of a vase.

The first stage of investigation consists in a morphological analysis of the fragments, focusing on their specific features, followed by a comparison to models of covered vehicles from other Syrian and Northern Mesopotamian sites (Tell Arbid; Tell Brak; Tell Selenkahiye; Tell Bi'a; Tepe Gawra; Hama; Tell Ashara). The second stage is dedicated to investigating the five main issues linked to actual covered vehicles, through the analysis of different evidences (*i.e.* bronze models, glyptic representations, written sources, and full-size vehicles):

- 1) What were their form and their full size?
- 2) Why are they widespread only in Syria and Anatolia?
- 3) What was their function?
- 4) Were they used for some specific cult practices or for long-distance travels?
- 5) Were they related to a specific ethnic group?

2. *The Fragments from Tell Mozan/Urkesh*

2.1 J3q901.1

Unit J3
 Feature /
 Stratum Surface
 Phase /
 Measure Height: 5.3 cm
 Length: 4.9 cm
 Width: 4.1 cm

Description

Complete but damaged model of covered vehicle. The lower part with the axles is missing and the model shows a basically squared shape. The upper and lower surfaces are not parallel: the upper one tends upward from the rear of the model to the front, therefore the back face is smaller than the frontal one. The opening on the frontal surface is quite small; traction equipment – such as a hole for the draught pole or pierced lugs through which a rope was passed in order to tow the model – are not preserved. The bottom of the model is uncharacteristically concave; this means that the axles (unfortunately not

preserved) were not of the canonical cylindrical shape: they were formed by the lower extension of the sides of the model.

The decoration is located on the sides and on the back of the model coverage. On the sides, two pairs of incised vertical lines cross two pairs of incised horizontal lines forming a sort of grid. This pattern, which in its many versions is very common for the superstructure of these models, may evoke the raw materials (hides or woven reeds) employed for the full-size wagons coverage. The same pattern found on the sides appears on the back: two incised lines follow the shape of the bottom and they are intersected at the ends by two pairs of incised vertical lines. The top of the back surface is too damaged to show any trace of decoration.

The model is hand-made and well fired. The pale yellow fabric (2.5Y 8/4) is rather coarse with mineral and vegetal inclusions.

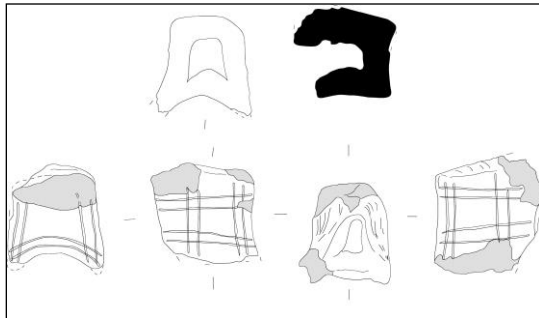


Fig. 1 – Drawings of J3q901.1.

2.2 J02q616-p1

Unit J2
 Feature f244
 Stratum /
 Phase Ph1
 Measure Height: 8 cm
 Length: 6.2 cm
 Width: 6.4 cm

Description

Fragment of the model coverage. Half of the frontal face with part of the coverage is preserved: most of the right side and much less of the left side. The lower and rear part of the model, with bottom and axles, are completely absent. The shape of the fragment is the same as the previous, but it is more pointed at the top. The opening, on the frontal face, is only half preserved and uncharacteristically narrow and pointed. Since the bottom is not preserved, no traces of traction equipment are visible; nevertheless, the four holes on the frontal surface could confirm that the model was pulled by at least four strings.

The decoration is more elaborate than in the previous fragment: it is decorated both on the frontal surface and on the cover. On the frontal face, the pattern is composed by incised lines arranged in herringbone motif among the four holes. It evokes the transversal boards fixed to the frontal face of the wagon in order to protect the charioteer body. The decoration on the cover is divided into several bands by incised lines: two bands of incised lines arranged in a grid pattern run along the top of the cover; below them, two oblique lines, one on each side, produce two fields decorated with slanted incised lines; another band with grid pattern is represented underneath, but it is visible only on the best preserved part of the model.

The model is hand-made and well fired. The pale yellow fabric (2.5Y 7.4) is rather coarse with more vegetal than mineral inclusions.

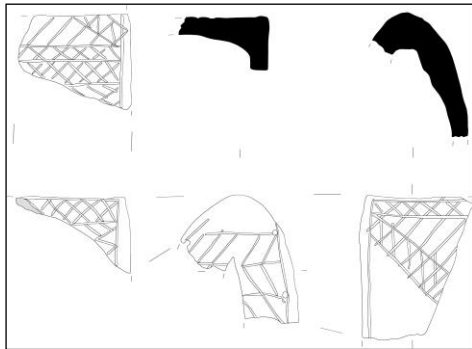


Fig. 2 – Drawings of J02q616-P1.

2.3 J02q608-p13

Unit J2
 Feature f235
 Stratum /
 Phase Ph1
 Measure Height: 6.2 cm
 Length: 9.2 cm
 Width: 11.6 cm

Description

Fragment of the model coverage. The upper part is preserved but damaged, with only a portion of the left side and part of the back face. The frontal face and the bottom of the model are completely missing. The U-shape coverage is basically rounded and it is heavily damaged on the upper surface, especially near the back face.

The decoration is located only on the back and on the left faces of the fragment. Although the decoration on the back face is quite damaged, two vertical incised lines are still visible, one in the middle of the face and the oth-

er close to the left side. The fields created by these lines are filled with groups of parallel incised lines with oblique pattern. The same pattern is repeated on the left side of the fragment, where it is less preserved.

The model is wheel made and finished by hand, well fired. The pale yellow fabric (2.5Y 8/3) is rather coarse with mineral and vegetal inclusions.

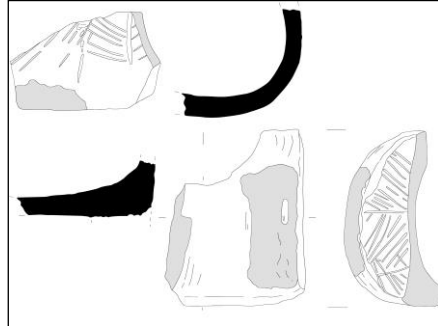


Fig. 3 – Drawings of J02q608-P13.

2.4 A10.46

Unit A10
 Feature /
 Stratum /
 Phase /
 Measure Height: 13.2 cm
 Length: 9.1 cm
 Width: 12.8 cm

Description

Fragment of back face with part of coverage. The back face is preserved in its entirety and the cover is partially preserved. The frontal face and the bottom of the model are missing. This fragment, in contrast to the previous one, belongs to the second sub-type of models of covered vehicles. These models have body and coverage seamlessly fused together, so that the model takes the form of a vase. The back surface is basically circular-shaped and shows a considerable fracture toward the centre of the face. A rectangular-shaped appendage, horizontally arranged, is visible under the fracture; it may evoke the footboard of the full-size vehicles.¹

The decoration is on the back face and on the coverage. In the first case, two vertical incised lines, located at the extremities of the footboard, create three fields. The external ones are filled with parallel incised lines, arranged in

¹ The footboard is a trapezoidal extension at the rear of the full-size vehicles and it is used to accommodate a second passenger on board (as shown on the Standard of Ur). It is common on the models of type II, III, IV, and V, much less common on models of covered vehicles (type VI).

an oblique pattern, while the central field is undecorated, except for an oblique line with two notches in the upper part. A decorative band is visible on the coverage: two sets of parallel incised lines frame a wavy incised line. This decoration is barely visible on the surface of the cover.

The model is wheel-made and finished by hand, well fired. The very pale brown fabric (10YR 8/4) is rather coarse with more vegetal than mineral inclusions.

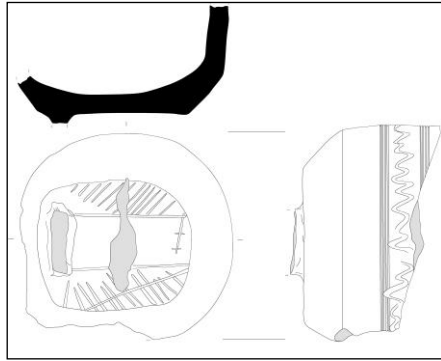


Fig. 4 – Drawings of A10.46.

2.5. Parallels

Models of covered wagons are divided into two sub-types: the most common sub-type is characterised by a rectangular body and a flat base, rarely slightly curved, and a U-shaped cover, while the other sub-type shows body and coverage seamlessly fused together, so that the model takes the form of a vase. In most cases, the axles, circular in section, are located under the body; in some cases, they do not form a continuous cylinder between the left and the right side of the model inasmuch they are separated. The front axle is usually located under the frontal part of the model, rarely slightly moved forward, whereas the rear axle is always positioned at the back end of the model.

The most common clay colours for this type of models are pale yellow and light brown, with a prevalence of the latter. Decoration is very common; it is usually located on the coverage of the model and, in some cases, on the front and rear faces.

First examples of this type of wheeled vehicle models date back to the first half of the 3rd millennium BC, although the most part of them date from the mid-3rd millennium BC to the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC.

Models of covered vehicles come from Northern Mesopotamia and Southern Anatolia:

1) Tell Arbid (Bielinski 2004: 344, fig. 11; Raccidi 2012*b*: fig. 6). The complete terracotta model from Tell Arbid belongs to the first sub-type. It has cylindrical axles and three pierced lugs on the front, probably used as pulling

system. The cover is decorated with a band of incised lines with grid motif.

2) Tell Brak/Nagar (D. Oates, J. Oates, McDonald 2001: 591, nos. 23-26). Only the base with axles remains of the models (nos. 23, 24): they belong to the most common sub-type of covered vehicle models. Numbers 25 and 26 belong instead to the second sub-type, the first being complete and the second being a fragment.

3) Tell Selenkahiye (Liebowitz 1988: 58, pl. 32, no. 1). Only the base with the axles is preserved and it is similar to models 23-24 from Tell Brak/Nagar.

4) Tell Bi'a/Tuttul (Strommenger, Kohlmeyer 1998: pls. 162, nos. 1-7; Bollweg 1999: 131, fig. 129). Two morphologically very similar frit-ware models come from Tell Bi'a. Both specimens belong to the most common sub-type, and only one shows a moulded decoration on the coverage. The decoration is divided into three bands: the highest is filled with a grid pattern, the median with an animal frieze, and the lowest with a herringbone pattern. A third model is only half preserved and looks morphologically very similar to the model from Tell Ashara/Terqa.

5) Tepe Gawra (Speiser 1935: 75, pl. XVIc). Tepe Gawra model is morphologically very similar to the specimens from Tell Bi'a/Tuttul. It has a decoration on the cover, composed of incised lines arranged in a grid pattern.

6) Hama (Fugman 1958: 72, fig. 93, no. 3A343). Only the base, with the frontal axle and part of the sides are preserved of the Hama model. It is decorated with incised lines arranged in a zigzag pattern.

7) Tell Ashara/Terqa (Rouault, Masetti-Rouault 1993: 333, no. 292). The model from Tell Ashara belongs to the first sub-type; two axles integrated into the body is its specific feature. Remains of red paint are visible on the cover.

A further eight models, which were not found in controlled excavations (Bollweg 1999: 132-34, figs. 128, 130-136), come from Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia. Four models (131, 132, 134, 135) have rounded bottoms, like our fragment J3q901.1, and they are decorated essentially with incised lines arranged in herringbone pattern. Three models (128, 130, 136) are morphologically similar to the Terqa specimen, two of which are decorated with herringbone pattern and one with zigzag pattern. The last model is similar to those from Tell Bi'a and Tepe Gawra, and it is decorated with grid motif.

The Tell Mozan specimens are too small to make an accurate typological comparison, however some remarkable points have been noted:

1) J3q901.1 is the best preserved model and shows a basically squared superstructure. Clear comparisons were not detected for this kind of model, however a close parallel to J3q901.1 has been noted in glyptic representations (see below).

2) J02q616-p1 belongs to the first sub-type of models of covered vehicles and its morphology and decoration are comparable to those of Tepe Gawra example.

3) J02q608-p13 is too damaged for a morphological comparison, however its decoration evokes the Hama model.

4) A10.46 belongs to the second sub-type of covered vehicle models. This fragment is the only one to have a precise comparison in the models from Tell Brak (nos. 25-26, see below).

3. *The Covered Vehicles Evidences*

As summarized above, many questions arise concerning this category of vehicles:

- 1) What were their form and their full size?
- 2) Why are they widespread only in Syria and Anatolia?
- 3) What was their function?
- 4) Were they used for some specific cult practice or for long-distance travel?
- 5) Were they related to a specific ethnic group?

Many scholars have dealt with the problem of the function and diffusion of Ancient Near Eastern covered wagons (Littaeur, Crouwel 1974; Strommenger 1990; Moorey 2001; Nadali 2009) reaching two different interpretations: Strommenger and Moorey suggest an interpretation of the wagons as long-distance vehicles used for travel between Southern Anatolia and Syrian steppe, whereas Nadali views them as battering rams pulled by human and used during sieges. A preliminary functional reconstruction for covered wagons will be given in the conclusion following the presentation of the documentation relating to these vehicles, divided into categories such as bronze models, glyptic, written sources, and full-size vehicles.

3.1 Bronze Models

A group of three bronze models of wagons with draught animals (bulls) was acquired in 1999 by the Şanlıurfa Museum; they probably come from the necropolis of Abamor Höyük (northwest of Suruç sub-province) and they have been dated to the late 3rd or early 2nd millennium BC (Kulakoğlu 2003: 63-77, fig. 1). One of them is a covered model showing the typical form of the first sub-type terracotta models: the back is closed by a bronze plate while the front is left open. The U-shaped cover is undecorated. The two axles and the bent draught pole are fixed under the floor. It has four disk wheels with spool-like navels and a pair of horned bulls as draught animals.

3.2 Glyptic

Six representations of covered wagon appear in glyptic, all dated to the Early Dynastic IIIb period (*ca.* 2450-2350 BC). Four come from Tell Beydar and two from Syria.²

1) The seal impression Beydar-1 (Jans, Bretschneider 1998: pl. I-Bey.1) is divided into two registers. In the upper register, four-wheeled wagons are depicted in a war scene, while in the lower a covered wagon appears in a cultic context. The vehicle is represented with four disk wheels and a domed superstructure. The pole and the reins are supported by an anthropomorphic figure emerging near a structure (probably a temple). On the superstructure of the wagon, a kind of decoration or opening is visible.

2) The seal impression Beydar-2 (*ibid.*: pl. I-Bey.2) is also divided into two registers, but the covered wagon is represented in the upper register, pulled by human in procession toward a figure on throne. The vehicle shows the same morphological features of the previous: disk wheels, domed superstructure, pole, and reins. Two half-anthropomorphic figures, perhaps two divine statues, are represented inside the wagon.

3) The seal impression Beydar-4 (*ibid.*: 179, Bey.4) presents only one register, depicting a war scene. It probably represents a procession after a battle, in which three vehicles are involved: two of them, on the left and on the right side of the scene, are four-wheeled vehicles with a square superstructure, which is decorated with two cross-shaped lines. A third vehicle features a domed superstructure like the wagons on Beydar-1 and Beydar-2.

4) The last seal impression from Tell Beydar, Beydar-7 (*ibid.*: 179, Bey.7), shows a procession scene very similar to those represented in Beydar-1. In this scene however the pole and the reins of the wagon are on a movable structure, a sort of tower with anthropomorphic figures inside. Furthermore, the wagon superstructure appears more decorated than the previous one.

5) A cylinder seal from Louvre Collection (Collon 1987: 158-59, fig. 722), which probably comes from Syria, features the same figurative pattern of Beydar-1 cylinder seal. A war scene with four-wheeled wagon is represented on the upper register, while a procession toward an enthroned figure is depicted on the lower one. The covered wagon is on the lower register, facing a structure, probably a temple. The domed superstructure of the vehicle is completely decorated with a grid pattern.

6) The seal impression from the Marcopoli Collection in Aleppo (Amiet 1961: 167, pl. 102, fig. 1353) is divided into two registers. In the lower one a cultic scene is represented: on the right side and on the upper left side a procession toward an enthroned figure in flounced robe is depicted, while on the lower left side a vehicle with squared superstructure is pulled by a human fig-

² Different interpretations for these seal impressions are given by Jans, Bretschneider (1998) and by Nadali (2009).

ure toward an architectural structure, probably a temple. The covered vehicle is decorated with cross-shaped lines.

The analysis of these six seal impressions allow to recognize two different types of covered vehicles. The first and most common type, characterized by a domed superstructure, is similar to terracotta models from Tell Mozan (J02q616-p1; J02q608-p13; A10.46). The second type, depicted on the seal impression from Aleppo and Beydar-4, is characterized by a squared superstructure with cross-shaped lines decoration, single or double, and may correspond to the Mozan fragment J3q901.1. Further similarities between the vehicle represented on the seal impression from the Marcopoli Collection and the terracotta model from Tell Mozan J3q901.1 are the absence of draught pole axles, so that the wheels seem applied through vertical supports, as represented on the seal. These vehicles were probably movable platforms used in cultic contexts, rather than real means of transport.

None of the covered vehicles are pulled by animals, except perhaps in the scene depicted on the Louvre seal. Collon (1987: 158-59) suggests that this wagon was pulled by the animal on the left of the wagon; on the contrary, Jans and Bretschneider (1998: 170) interpret the pole behind the animal not as a draught pole connected to the wagon but as a plough, so that the front of the vehicle facing the temple and the pole is leaning on its entrance.

Thus, from the analysis of the scenes represented in the six seal impressions involving covered vehicles, two main patterns have been recognized:

1) The procession toward an enthroned figure.

2) The covered wagon with the draught pole leaning on a structure (fixed or movable) and a kneeling person close to it.

These patterns were probably linked to a type of ritual typical of Northern Mesopotamia during the Early Dynastic IIIb period, which involved the employment of covered vehicles. Some of these representations have been grouped by Amiet in the category so-called 'Rituel de Haute Syrie' (Amiet 1961: 167-68).

3.3 Written Sources

Proto-cuneiform texts from Uruk show the first attestations of signs representing covered wagons which clearly derive from sledge supported by wheels or rollers.



Fig. 5 – Proto-cuneiform signs from Uruk (Green, Nissen 1987: 220, nos. 247-48).

The most common term used since the first half of the 3rd millennium BC to indicate the carts and wagons is ^{GIŠ}GIGIR/^{GIŠ}GIGIR₂ (*narkabtu*), while ^{GIŠ}MAR.GID₂.DA (*eriqu* and *šumbu*) has been used for wagon carrying load since the end of the 3rd millennium BC.

Terms for different types of wheeled vehicles are attested in texts from Ebla royal archive (Conti 1997: 23-71):

- 1) ^{GIŠ}GÍGIR -II: cart.
- 2) ^{GIŠ}GÍGIR -IV: wagon.
- 3) ^{GIŠ}GÍGIR - SUM: carrying wagon, usually four-wheeled.
- 4) ^{GIŠ}É × GÍGIR (^{GIŠ}GÍGIR - É): covered wagon.³

The number of wheels of ^{GIŠ}GÍGIR - É is not specified but it is almost surely four. Often, wool or decorated weaves employed for constructing the vehicle (probably for the cover) are mentioned.⁴ ^{GIŠ}GÍGIR - É were assigned to prominent people⁵ and pulled, when it is specified, by a pair of mules.⁶

No more information about covered wagons can be drawn from written sources, but we can deduce that these wagons represent a small separate category of wheeled-vehicles, probably used by elites.

3.4 Full-size Vehicles

No actual-size covered wagons have been found in Southern Mesopotamia or Syria. The most famous remains of a wagon come from the royal cemeteries at Ur, Kish, and Susa and are of the same type of the wagon represented on the Standard of Ur, that is four-wheeled and without cover. Also remarkable is the recent discovery of two wheels imprinted in bitumen at Mari dated to the first centuries of the 3rd millennium BC. It must be said that no remains of a wagon have been found near the wheel imprints (Butterlin, Margueron, 2006; Margueron, 2004; 2010).

The only specimen of a covered wagon sufficiently preserved has been found in the necropolis of Lchashen in Armenia (Grigoryan 2010: 87, fig. 77). The wagon (350 × 220 × 140 cm), constructed for the most part of wood, with some parts in bronze, is almost complete and dates back to the 15th century BC. The covered wagon is equipped with four massive disk wheels with protruding hubs. The body is rectangular shaped, made of wooden boards. The U-

³ ARET I: 284; ARET VII: 213; ARET XI: 75; ARET VII: 44 r. I 3; ARET VIII v. X 17'; ARET VIII: 529 r. VI 10; ARET III: 798 v. III 16'; ARET III: 809 v. I 2'; ARET IV: 5 v. V 2; ARET IV: 10 v. X 9; ARET XI: 2 r. XII 8.

⁴ ARET VIII: 541 v. X 16'; ARET IV: 5 v. V 1; ARET III: 798 v. III 15-16; ARET IV: 10 v. X 6-9; ARET VIII: 529 r. VI 10.

⁵ ARET VIII: 529 r. VI 11; ARET III: 798 v. III 17'-19'; ARET III: 809 v. I 3'-5'; ARET IV: 5 v. V 2.

⁶ ARET XI: 2 r. XII 8-9.

shaped superstructure is composed by a wooden chassis. The rear of the vehicle is closed by horizontal boards while the front is half-open and is protected by three wooden boards. The pole is not completely preserved and it is wave-shaped; the wagon was probably pulled by a pair of animals, perhaps bulls. The covered wagon from Lchashen is morphologically similar to the terracotta models and to the glyptic representations, therefore it is possible to assume with good approximation that the covered wagons of the mid-3rd millennium BC from Syria were similar to the Lchashen specimen. This fact allows to enlarge the geographic horizon in which these vehicles were widespread.

4. Conclusion

Although relatively sparse, the documentation previously discussed allows an outline of the main morphological and functional characteristics of covered wagons since the 3rd millennium BC and the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC.

First of all, three sub-types have been recognized:

1) The first and most common sub-type is characterised by a rectangular body and a flat base, rarely slightly curved, and a U-shaped coverage; this sub-type has been recognized in terracotta models, bronze models and full-size vehicles (*i.e.* Lchashen wagon).

2) The second sub-type shows body and coverage seamlessly fused together, so that the model takes the form of a vase. The models of the second sub-type, recognized only in terracotta models, look more stylized. The artisans probably wanted to reproduce the general idea of a covered wagon rather than its actual shape.

3) A third sub-type has been recognized in the seal impression Beydar-4 and the one from the Marcopoli Collection, and it is comparable to the Tell Mozan model J3q901.1. However, this type of vehicle may be considered a movable platform rather than an actual covered wagon.

The actual dimensions of these vehicles can be deduced mainly from the Lchashen wagon which is 3.5 m long, 2.2 m high and 1.4 m wide. However, the total height of the Lchashen wagon is mainly determined by the massive disk wheels and the superstructure itself appears not as high. The employment of such massive disk wheels was probably necessary for travelling through the mountainous Armenian region.

These vehicles, with massive disk wheels and a superstructure useful for protecting the travellers from the weather, were probably employed as «mobile home designed to meet the needs of pastoralists moving through the Syrian steppe» (Moorey 2001: 347). A comprehensive description of the descendants of these wagons (the Scythian wagons) is given by Hippocrates (*De Aere* 18):

the smallest of them have four wheels, the others six; they are covered with felt and arranged like houses, some have only one room, others two or three. They are impenetrable to rain, snow and wind. Some are pulled by two pairs, others by three pairs of hornless oxen ... the women live in wagons, the men accompany them on horseback, followed by their flocks.⁷

On the other hand, looking at the seal impressions Beydar-1-2-4-7 and the one from the Louvre Museum, the vehicles superstructure appears larger than the wheels; this could be related to the function of the vehicles represented in the seal impressions. In fact, as previously said, these vehicles were employed in cultic rituals, perhaps for the carriage of the divine statues in procession to the city temple. Small wheels were definitely more useful for such purpose, as they allowed greater mobility between the city streets.

Summarizing, it is probable that wheels of different sizes were assembled on covered wagons employed in different functions: massive wheels characterized covered vehicles employed for long distance travels, whereas small wheels characterized those employed in cultic contexts. A further function for this kind of vehicles has been proposed by Nadali, based on the analysis of texts from Ebla and Mari as well as on a different interpretation of the seal impression representations (Nadali 2009). According to Nadali, the scenes depicted in the seal impressions Beydar 1-4-7 and in the one from the Louvre Museum, involving covered vehicles, are representations of a siege moment during which those vehicles were employed as battering-rams.

In conclusion: covered vehicles, employed either as simple means of transport or in cultic contexts, spread over an area including Northern Mesopotamia, Southern Anatolia, and Southern Caucasus during the mid-3rd millennium BC and mid-2nd millennium BC. Such a diffusion was probably facilitated by the frequent contacts, at least since the 4th millennium BC, between the Northern-Mesopotamian and Trans-Caucasian populations. In this context, the city of Urkes represented a bridgehead between the Mesopotamian and the Trans-Caucasian worlds and probably played a leading role in the evolution and diffusion of the covered vehicles.

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⁷ Translation from Moorey (2001: 347).

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SUMMARY

Models of covered vehicles constitute a peculiar category of ancient Near Eastern terracotta, common in assemblages from the beginning of the 3rd through the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC and geographically widespread among Northern Mesopotamia, Syria and Southern Anatolia. The following article is focused on the study of four fragments of four-wheeled covered vehicles discovered in the key site of Tell Mozan ancient Urkesh, one of the most relevant 3rd millennium BC sites of Northern Mesopotamia. The first stage of investigation consists in a morphological analysis of the fragments, followed by a comparison to models of covered vehicles from other Syrian and Northern Mesopotamian sites. The second stage is dedicated to investigating the main issues linked to actual covered vehicles, through the analysis of different evidences (*i.e.* bronze models, glyptic representations, written sources, and full-size vehicles).

Keywords: Northern Mesopotamia, Tell Mozan/Urkesh, 3rd millennium BC, terracotta models, covered wagons

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