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Bianchi, Alice: *Comparative Studies on the Pottery of Sector AK of the Royal Building in Tell Mozan/Urkeš (Syria)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012 (Studien zur Urbanisierung Nordmesopotamiens D 2). XXX + 720 pp., 351 ill., 25 tables, 170 plates. ISBN 978-3-447-06749-2. 174,00 €.

The important site of Tell Mozan (ancient Urkeš) in the Khabur region of North-eastern Syria has been excavated since 1984 by Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati on behalf of the International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies. During the 1998-2001 seasons, the American expedition was joined by a team of the Deutsche-Orient-Gesellschaft under the direction of Peter Pfälzner. The reviewed volume, which appears in the "Supplementa" sub-series of the series "Studien zur Urbanisierung Nordmesopotamiens", which hosts the results of the German excavations at the site, represents one of the products of this fruitful cooperation: it is a revised version of Alice Bianchi's (a former member of Buccellati's expedition) PhD dissertation, which was discussed at Tübingen University in 2008 under Pfälzner's supervision. In her analysis of the ceramic material from the American excavations in area AK, the author could thus not only take profit of the still unpublished comparative material from the German excavations at Mozan, but also develop a continuous exchange of ideas with the members of the other team, which resulted into a careful consideration of methodological issues which are often overlooked in similar studies.

For many reasons, this volume is a must for any scholar interested in the archaeology of 3rd millennium Upper Mesopotamia. First of all, it represents the first analytical presentation of a late 3rd millennium BC stratified ceramic corpus from the Khabur region. It therefore fills an important gap in the relative chronology of the area, which even in the most recent published synthesis (see M. Lebeau (ed.) *Associated Regional Chronologies for the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean. Jezirah* [ARCANE 1], Turnhout 2011) remained rather vague, due to the dearth of well published available material. Secondly, it offers an example of careful and rigorous analysis of a large corpus of data, and provides a clear, well-structured and up-to-date synthesis of the topic, of which all future publications (including the forthcoming volume of the same series, by C. Schmidt, devoted to the German excavations in area C2 at the same site) will undoubtedly take much profit. Finally, it is very carefully produced, excellently illustrated, almost free from mistakes and, considering that it consists of more than 700 pages and that it contains a number of colour plates, not excessively expensive.

Following a short introduction, chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 5-15) offer a very useful summary of archaeological research at Tell Mozan/Urkeš, which includes a comparative stratigraphic table of the different excavated sectors, and a synthetic description of the contexts in which the analysed pottery was unearthed: phases 2 to 4 in sector AK of the Royal Palace. The following chapters contain a complete description of the ceramics (a total of 8473 diagnostic items out of 11300 – corresponding to ca 50% of the total unearthed material –, which were processed by the author during two field seasons in 1998 and 1999), preceded by a short explanation (chapter 4: pp. 17-23) of the on-field processing procedures and codification system. Chapter 5 (pp. 25-28) defines the main "wares"; chapter 6 (pp. 29-65) offers an illustrated catalogue of shapes and decorations types, and chapter 7 (pp. 67-161) analyses with the help of

frequency diagrams, and comments upon, the quantitative distribution of these both relative to each other and within the different phases and sub-phases. Resulting diachronic trends are briefly summarised in the concluding paragraph (pp. 148-161) of the latter chapter.

This section is richly illustrated by good-quality drawings and lists of attributes of 885 entire vessels and sherds (plates 1-80), and by colour photos of ware samples and selected items (plates I-VII). If the former correspond to a standard practice in recent pottery publications, the latter represent a still not so common, but extremely welcome addition, since they help the reader in visualising wares colour and appearance, and thus make comparison with material from other excavations easier. In the same way, the rich choice of graphically illustrated sherds makes the range of variability of each morphological type explicit, and allows the reader to proceed to direct comparison with items from other excavations. Difficulties arising from ambiguous verbal descriptions and different classification criteria used at different sites (as the author is well aware, pottery typologies used by excavation teams are often highly idiosyncratic, and the system in use at Mozan represents no exception to this) are thus minimised, or at least limited.

This section of the work is of course rather repetitive, and parts of it may even appear unnecessary or redundant (one may for instance wonder whether "pie graphs" illustrating ware frequency for types represented by very few items are really necessary, and do not generate misleading impressions instead), but it has the merit to provide an objective and quantified description of the available evidence. In fact, one has to consider that, like all similar presentations of previously unpublished material, this section is not meant to be read in its entirety by the average reader, but rather to be consulted as a source of data for comparative purposes. Thus, some apparently unnecessary repetitions (e.g. the duplication, in different plates, of the same illustrations) actually simplify the task of the scholar looking for specific information within the volume.

The second part of the book (chapters 8 to 10) is devoted to the analysis of comparative evidence from area C2 at Mozan (chapter 9, pp. 167-190) and from other selected North Mesopotamian sites (chapter 10, pp. 191-257). All parallels are accompanied by description tables (appendix 3, pp. 616-720) and plates in which they are illustrated side by side with the Mozan type to which they are compared (plates 81-180), thus allowing the reader to immediately verify the degree of similarity, and sparing him/her the task to refer to the original publications. Most comparanda derive from new excavations, and have only recently been published; Alice Bianchi's work therefore represents their first systematic collection. If one considers that excavations in Syria have been presently stopped, so that few significant additions to this corpus are likely to be unearthed in the next future, one can presume that this will remain the standard presentation of late 3rd millennium ceramic material from the region for several years to come. One can only regret, in this respect, that evidence from Tell Arbid and Tell Hamoukar, which have yielded very important late 3rd millennium material, could not be included in the discussion (see p. 191, fn. 316); a less sporadic attention to the Euphrates valley, where these phases are also quite well attested, would have also been welcomed, as the author herself recognises (*ibid.*, fn. 317). The present reviewer found especially interesting from the point of

view of methodology, in this section of the volume, the paragraphs devoted to evaluating the compatibility between the systems of pottery analysis in use at the different sites, a problem which is rarely explicitly discussed in publications. In particular, the attempt at correlating "ware" definitions (see table 11), although not always totally sharable in its conclusions (in particular, the proposed correspondences between "Metallic", "Stone" and "Grey" wares are not always convincing) definitely represents a step in the right direction.

The results of the comparative analysis are presented in the last chapter (pp. 259-309). This offers a synthetic view of the regional distribution, during the Early Jezirah IV (Akkadian) and V (Ur III) periods of the main wares, decorations and morphologies, accompanied by useful distribution maps for the most significant shape types, and it attempts to define, on the basis of the ceramic evidence, the changing patterns of interactions between Tell Mozan/Urkeš and the surrounding regions. The author's conclusions are well grounded, accurate, and fully acceptable in their general lines. It must however be pointed out that Alice Bianchi's dissertation was discussed in 2008; although the volume's bibliography has been updated since then, and includes more recent contributions, it was probably too late for the author to refer to the EJZ periodisation proposed in the meanwhile by the ARCANE project (Lebeau (ed.), cit.). This is somehow unfortunate, not only because the use of similar, competing periodisations may ingenerate confusion in the non-specialist readers, but also because the new ARCANE periodisation, with its subdivision of the EJZ 4 period into three sub-phases (a, b, and c, corresponding to the "early Akkadian", "late Akkadian" and respectively "post-Akkadian" periods) would have provided a more fine-grained chronological framework for evaluating Mozan's stratigraphic sequence and its relation with that of the neighbouring sites, thus allowing for a better distinction, in particular, of those differences in ceramic assemblages, which are due to slight chronological differences, from those which depend on geographical variability. On the other hand, data contained in Bianchi's volume would have allowed a more precise definition of the EJZ 5 period in the ARCANE volume.

It will be a task for future scholarship to harmonise the results of these two important contributions in detail; as a small progress toward this goal, and as a help to the interested reader, we would like to conclude this review by proposing a tentative synchronisation table of the Mozan stratigraphical sequence, as presented by Bianchi, with the ARCANE periodisation.

Mozan Area AA	Jezirah (EJ periodisation)	Jezirah (EJZ periodisation)	Southern Mesopotamia
1	EJ IIIb	EJZ 3b	Early Dynastic 3b
	↓	EJZ 4a	Early Akkadian
2	EJ IV	EJZ 4b	Late Akkadian
3a		EJZ 4c	Post-Akkadian
3b			
4a	EJ V	EJZ 5	Ur III
4b	OJ I	↓	Isin-Larsa

Elena Rova (Venice)

Charvát, Petr & Maříková Vlčková, Petra (eds.): *Who Was King? Who Was Not King? The Rulers and the Ruled in the Ancient Near East*. Prague: Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2010. XV + 160 pp. ISBN 978-80-87365-37-3. 20,00 €.

This monograph presents a dozen articles based on talks given at a conference in Prague in April 2010. Despite its small format, the tome packs quite a punch. A model table of contents presents the contributors and the articles, with an abstract for each article, adding to the usefulness of the volume. The headings of the introductory sections are in English, German and French, like the individual contributions; and the abstracts are consistently written in the language of the article itself. Each article provides its own bibliography. The following represents a few remarks on selected topics touched upon in the volume.

In the opening section, the editors raise a number of questions related to the study and understanding of Near Eastern state formations, with special focus on the exercise of power and on holders of the top political office. The choice of title for the conference and the publication, borrowed from a terse question in the Sumerian King List, is therefore most apt.

Tracing ideas of power and powerlessness in early historical Mesopotamia, G.J. Selz contrasts aspects of curse formulae and proverbs. He cautiously suggests that interesting parallels to the Mesopotamian opinion on the exercise of power exist in the Chinese philosophical conception of the Mandate of Heaven, with its roots in the early 1st millennium BCE. Indeed, the parallel is not far-fetched. Selz demonstrates an undertone of ambivalence vis-à-vis the palace, the king, and the temples in the proverbs. Leadership in general was considered beneficial to mankind, but power needed to be exercised with moderation and those in power had to comply with a general code of conduct dictated by cognitive, social and natural factors. Selz favours the designation “monistic” over “holistic” to characterize this system (p. 3 with footnote 9; p. 6).