



Review

Author(s): Nigel Goring-Morris

Review by: Nigel Goring-Morris

Source: *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (Jul., 1998), pp. 624-625

Published by: Archaeological Institute of America

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/506411>

Accessed: 19-06-2016 12:58 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

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.



Archaeological Institute of America is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *American Journal of Archaeology*

ments of winged bulls with finely formed bodies and surface patterning.

In pursuing the significance of intercultural mixes such as one finds on the "provincial style" seals, it might be useful to focus attention on the roughly contemporary Urartian glyptic. In this corpus one finds a wide range of shapes and materials, including a variety of stamp seal types and stone stamp cylinders with metal loop handles. Many examples are engraved with complex scenes adapting Neo-Assyrian royal and ritual iconography—images of authority and power—possibly also instances of "emulation to absorb status."

The support for the many stimulating interpretations in this volume rests in the catalogue, which is exemplary in its clarity, comprehensive lists of parallels, and illustrations. The author has provided us with an extremely well written and usable volume, which utilizes very carefully delineated stylistic differences in an attempt to elucidate historical and social phenomena.

JOAN ARUZ

DEPARTMENT OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
1000 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10028-0198

ASWAD ET GHORAIFÉ: SITES NÉOLITHIQUES EN DAMASCÈNE, SYRIE, AUX IX^{ème} ET VIII^{ème} MILLÉNAIRES AVANT L'ÈRE CHRÉTIENNE, by *Henri de Contenson*. (*BAHBeyrouth* 137.) Pp. 392, pls. 16, figs. 115, plans 92, tables 15. Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, Beirut 1995. ISBN 2-7053-0673-0.

LES PREMIERS VILLAGEOIS DE MÉSOPOTAMIE: DU VILLAGE À LA VILLE, by *Jean-Louis Huot*. Pp. 223, figs. 76, plans 42, maps 6. Armand Colin, Paris 1994. ISBN 2-200-21493-6.

The publication of a final excavation report is always welcome, and H. de Contenson and his collaborators should be congratulated for the detailed presentation of their findings at Aswad and Ghoraifé. This monograph summarizes the results of limited probes at two large Aceramic Neolithic (Pre-Pottery Neolithic) tells strategically located in the Damascus Basin, which thus provide a physical connection between the southern and northern Levant. Given the sizes of both sites (each some 5 ha in extent and 2.5–6.0 m thick), the scale of the excavations could, at best, give only a minute sample of their contents (totaling just 32 m² in two separate areas at Aswad and 16 m² in four test pits at Ghoraifé). This of course raises serious questions as to how representative the results are at each site. Indeed, as the numerous plans and sections indicate, no comprehensible architectural remains were documented. Nevertheless, Aswad is of particular significance in that it is the only site in the south-central Levant that displays continuity from the PPNA to the PPNB, while Ghoraifé can be assigned to later in the PPNB sequence.

The volume is divided into two main sections describing the sites individually. Following chapters outlining the research and stratigraphy of each site, specialist reports are presented of the various categories of finds. They include detailed typological analyses of the chipped stone tool assemblages (M.-C. Cauvin), as well as ground and polished stone tools (H. de Contenson), ornamental items (C. Maréchal), bone industries (D. Stordeur), clay figurines (H. de Contenson), human remains (J. Clère), microwear analysis of chipped stone tools (P. Anderson), charred wood remains (M. Dupeyron and H. de Contenson), and a preliminary note on the faunal remains (P. Ducos). For some reason these are not always presented in the same order. A brief chapter of conclusions follows, including a summary in English. The illustrations are comprehensive.

The material culture as a whole, and particularly the stylistic traits of the lithic assemblages, indicate that both Aswad and Ghoraifé fit more comfortably within the south Levantine PPNA and PPNB regional spheres than in that of the Euphrates tradition. Recovery techniques in the excavations, conducted between 1971 and 1974 perhaps according to norms then common, suffer from methodological deficiencies that are inevitably reflected in some of the studies. This long interval between excavation and final publication is, of course, a problem with many site reports. In this case, it rendered technological analysis of the chipped stone assemblage impossible, since the débitage, debris, and seemingly most of the less standardized tools and cores were discarded. In particular, the Aswad assemblage could have been used to address the question of the innovation or introduction of the naviform technology, while recent research in the southern Levant has demonstrated that the more standardized technologies and tools from naviform blank production are often not quantitatively predominant.

The omission of a detailed report in the volume on the seed remains is surprising and unfortunate, for it is in this field of research that the contribution of Aswad is especially critical. Although the results were previously published by W. Van Zeist and J.A.H. Bakker-Heeres (*Paléorient* 5 [1979] 161–69; *Paleohistoria* 24 [1982] 162–256), researchers in the past decade have questioned the domestic as opposed to cultivated status of cereals during the PPNA in the southern and central Levant (M.E. Kislev, in P.C. Anderson ed., *Préhistoire de l'agriculture* [Paris 1992] 87–93). The brief summary table of the plant remains in chapter 9 (by Dupeyron and de Contenson) in no manner addresses this important issue. Recent advances in the study of both botanical and faunal remains indicate that the processes involved in domestication were far more complex than previously thought, and required detailed and meticulous analyses. Even inclusion of the original reports would have at least rounded out the volume.

Yet, notwithstanding the deficiencies and omissions described above, the contents of this volume provide a vital and timely geographical and chronological bridge between the southern and northern Levant, on the one hand, and the PPNA and the PPNB, on the other, at a time of major changes in human lifeways.

J.-L. Huot's *Les premiers villageois de Mésopotamie* is a useful and comprehensive volume summarizing the current

state of research on the later prehistory of Mesopotamia. In a concise and general manner, the author presents the background developments preceding the rise of the classic city-states of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers toward the end of the fourth millennium B.C. A brief introduction surveys advances in the calibration of radiocarbon dating, and provides a note on the geography of the region. The body of the book is divided into six chapters: the first is a brief overview of the history of research (largely static over the past decade, due to extraneous geopolitical factors), while chapters 2–6 are arranged in chronological order, from the earliest sedentary settlements in the region, through small agricultural communities with ceramics and sometimes seemingly central granaries and other storage facilities, to pre-urban settlements, and finally to the earliest city-states. Succinct summaries of the architectural remains from the major excavated sites are presented, together with the available data concerning subsistence. Relatively little emphasis is placed upon chipped stone tools, ceramics, or other categories of small finds. Similarly, there is little description of mortuary practices or religion.

The author notes that the earliest well-documented evidence for sedentism derives from the Levant, though this probably reflects the current state of research. Given the title of the book, the description of Natufian settlements representing “villages” rather than “hamlets” is somewhat surprising. There is, however, a summary of recent research from northern Mesopotamia, between the Khabur and Tigris Rivers, at important early Aceramic Neolithic sites such as Qermez Dere, Nemrik, M'lefaat, Magzalia, and Umm Dabaghiya, which parallel PPNA and B developments further to the west and south. Indeed, though showing distinctive local traits, many of these sites display evidence for some manner of connection with the Levantine sphere. The supposedly defensive rampart at Magzalia level 13 seems destined to join that of Jericho: the former appears to be nothing more than a compound or enclosure wall. As the author notes, even the more imposing plan of Tell es-Sawwan dating to about 6000 B.C. is problematic.

Huot emphasizes the geomorphological processes of alluvial aggradation operating throughout Lower Mesopotamia during the Holocene, which have undoubtedly masked the earliest stages of expansion into this ecological setting sometime during the seventh millennium B.C. Analogous problems, of course, occur somewhat later in the Nile Delta, thwarting investigation of broadly parallel developments in socioeconomic complexity.

From a technical viewpoint a few criticisms should be noted that detract from the overall presentation. Though the text is accompanied by numerous plans and illustrations, these are not numbered. The plans are commonly taken directly from reports; some have been overly reduced and many lack scales. The two site distribution maps are poorly drawn. While a condensed bibliography is presented covering general topics (with a heavy Francophone bias) and site reports at the back of the volume, the body of the text lacks bibliographic citations. This is notwithstanding detailed discussions of various topics by various researchers to whom little or no reference is made. Nevertheless, this is a readable and lively account of the current state of research on the prelude to the appearance of the

city-state in Mesopotamia, and essential reading for those interested in the archaeological data pertaining to these processes.

NIGEL GORING-MORRIS

DEPARTMENT OF PREHISTORY
INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
HEBREW UNIVERSITY
JERUSALEM 91905
ISRAEL
GORING@HUM.HUJI.AC.IL

GORDION EXCAVATIONS (1950–1973), FINAL REPORTS II: THE LESSER PHRYGIAN TUMULI, Pt. 1: THE INHUMATIONS, by *Ellen L. Kohler*. (University Museum Monograph 88.) Pp. xxxvi + 262, pls. 85, figs. 72, tables 9. The University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia 1995. \$70. ISBN 0-934718-39-3.

This volume is another landmark in the growing University of Pennsylvania Museum series of final reports on the Gordion excavations conducted by Rodney S. Young from 1950 until his tragic death in 1974. Ellen L. Kohler deserves our deep gratitude for devoting many years of intense effort and devotion to the preparation of both this volume and that of its forthcoming sister (*Gordion II.2: The Cremations*). The first of the series, R.S. Young's *Gordion I: Three Great Early Tumuli* (Philadelphia 1981), established a format and style for the series that, sensibly, has been adhered to with expansion to accommodate a wider variety of materials, and the coherent treatment of horse trap-pings and vehicular remains.

Fifteen excavated tumuli containing wooden chambers and inhumations, 11 on the Northeast Ridge and four on the South Ridge, are described together with their contents in parts 1 and 2 respectively. These burial mounds are all firmly in the Phrygian Tradition, which perhaps began no earlier than the eighth century at Gordion. In the book under review, the date suggested for the earliest excavated, Tumulus W, is 750–740 B.C. O.W. Muscarella (*BASOR* 299–300 [1995] 91–101) has recently made the stimulating suggestion that the introduction of tumulus burial at Gordion could be associated with the introduction of kingship. It is noteworthy that a tradition of royal tumulus burial, but with stone chamber and dromos rather than the doorless wooden chamber of Phrygia, also began at Lydian Sardis in the eighth century. The ultimate origin of the tradition, not discussed by Kohler, appears to have been beyond the borders of Anatolia.

Methods of excavation and recording prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s were deficient by the standards normally (but, alas, not universally) applied today. Kohler has worked assiduously to transform the daybooks and other, often inadequate, records into a clear and straightforward account supplemented by informed discussion and valuable insights. In the preparation Kohler has been helped by the recollections of many of those who took part in the