

## BOOK REVIEWS

E. DOUGLAS VAN BUREN: *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria*. Yale Oriental Series, *Researches*, Volume XVI, Yale University Press, 1930. Pp. LXIX and 287; Pl. LXVIII.

THE last volume of this admirable series, published by the Yale University Press, we owe to Mr. Douglas van Buren who contributes a study of Assyro-Babylonian clay figurines found in vast numbers during the excavations. The term Assyro-Babylonian should be understood here not geographically, but culturally, for the author does not limit himself to Assyria and Babylonia proper, but also includes a rich material from Susa, brought to light by the French *Délégation en Perse*, of which the lamented Jacques de Morgan was the leader and inspirer. The material gathered in the present book includes finds from most of the famous archaeological sites of Northern and Southern Mesopotamia, such as Eridu with its prehistoric finds, Kish, Surghul and El Hibba, Erech, Larsa, Shurippak, Lagash, Ur, Nippur, Sippar, Babylon, Ashur, Nineveh, and Susa, the capital of Elam.

The author did well not to attempt a chronological classification of his material. The difficulties of establishing a chronology of the terra-cotta figurines are evident, and the problems of different styles and techniques require further study. The material of the book has been grouped according to types and the subject of representation, such as female figures, goddesses, male figures, gods, divine couples, animals, religion and magic, and daily life. These clay figurines very often furnish invaluable data on the everyday life and types of ancient Mesopotamia. Many of them represent votive objects of offering, teraphims, objects illustrating popular beliefs, and images used in the rites of sympathetic magic. In many instances these clay figurines reproduce motifs well-known from the large monumental compositions of the Assyro-Babylonian sculpture. Such are the hunting scene depicting Ashurbanipal spearing a lion, winged demons holding aloft their prey in their talons, and many others. Perhaps, these figurines with miniature reproductions of famous mythical scenes were a kind of religious memento sold in temples to the devotees.

An interesting class of clay figurines is formed by the figurines representing Parthian or other Iranian nomad horsemen. The author describes a number of such figurines, some of them of a very crude workmanship. On Pl. XVII, figs. 81, 82, the author gives the reproduction of one of such riding figurines (origin unknown) which he describes (p. 63, no. 335) as a female riding figure, and dates it as belonging to the first century A. D. I believe the figure represents a nomad horseman (Iranian nomad, possibly Parthian), dressed in a short tunic fastened round the waist by a belt, baggy trousers, and loose leather boots of "Scythian" pattern.



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The figure wears not a veil, but the tightly fitting headdress of the Iranian nomads (perhaps made of a coat of mail), which is fastened under the rider's chin, and covers the upper part of his shoulders. The figure sits astride, the legs drawn backwards—a characteristic of the nomad way of riding. His horse is a typical steppe horse with a short body and a rather heavy head; with a broad and well-developed chest and a short and strong neck. The horse's mane is cut according to the steppe fashion. The horse has a bridle and a breastplate which is ornamented with oval plaques (probably made of metal).

The heraldic animal figures of Pl. XLVII, fig. 228, representing two ibexes, and of Pl. XLVIII, fig. 229, strikingly recall the analogical bronze figures from Cappadocia and the newly discovered bronze finds of Luristān in Western Persia (See the article on the Luristān bronzes, published by Arthur Upham Pope in the September, 1930 issue of the *Illustrated London News*). The problem of these heraldic figures, and its Assyro-Babylonian and Central Asian aspects merits a special study.

Mr. van Buren's book is a welcome addition to our knowledge of Mesopotamian culture.

Georges de Roerich.

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N. FETICH: *Bronzeguss und Nomadenkunst auf grund der ungarländischen Denkmäler, mit einem Anhang von L. Bartucz über die anthropologischen Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen von Mosonzentjános, Ungarn, Seminarium Kondakovianum, ΣΚΥΘΙΚΑ, 2, Prague, 1929, 4, pp. 96, XVII tables and 16 illustrations in the text.*

The Byzantological Institute "Seminarium Kondakovianum," headed by the noted archaeologist Professor A. P. Kalitinsky, has begun since 1929 to issue a series, ΣΚΥΘΙΚΑ dedicated to the study of Scythian and other antiquities left behind by the various nomad tribes of the Eurasian steppe country. The first volume of this series was contributed by Professor M. I. Rostovtzeff, the founder of this new branch of archaeological science. The second volume is due to Dr. N. Fettich, author of numerous important publications on the nomad antiquities of Hungary. The volume contains a detailed study of bronze-cast objects found in Hungarian barrows, as well as a stylistic study of their relationship to the antiquities of South Russia, Siberia, Central Asia and Mongolia. The Hungarian barrow finds are unusually rich and of a very high workmanship, showing a definite artistic style, closely related to the great nomad art of Central Asia. Most of the archaeological material comes from barrows, which are usually found to be situated in large groups or cemeteries. The author gives a list of these cemeteries, and points out the different characteristics of the several



groups of barrows. Some of the groups can be fairly well dated, others need further investigations. The author's researches have definitely demonstrated that the Hungarian bronze-cast objects were left behind by a nomad tribe of a Turkish-Mongol character, and that the constructive elements of this art had come from the great nomad lands of Central Asia. Some of the barrow groups can be definitely ascribed to a nomad race of horsemen. Others are characterized by an apparent absence of side-arms and horse-trappings. The author shows that some of the puzzling metal objects found in the barrows, are nothing but bronze plaque ornaments of saddles and bridles. In some of the graves, the horse skeleton is absent, and the author justly remarks (p. 14) that very often the saddle and bridle replaced the horse. We find similar usages in the barrows of Mongolia. The author mentions the discovery of numerous iron arrow-heads, and it would be highly interesting to draw parallels in the light of the investigations recently conducted by Dr. Paul Rau in the lower Volga region. (Cf. Paul Rau: *Die Gräber der frühen Eisenzeit im unteren Wolgagebiet. Mitteilungen des Zentralmuseums, Jahrgang 4, Heft 1, Pokrowsk, 1929*).

Most of the discovered bronze-cast objects represent belt buckles, and bronze plaques used as belt ornaments. The two fundamental motifs of this art seem to be the motif of fighting animals, and the foliate ornament, which often degenerates into a geometric composition. According to the author, the motif of fantastic animals has probably some mythological significance (p. 37). He draws attention to the striking similarity which exists between the bronze-cast plaques with human figures of the Hungarian barrows (the 2nd group of barrows) and the plaques with human figures found in the neighborhood of the village Redikor, District Čerdyn, Province of Perm in Northeastern Russia, as well as with some of the finds of the Caucasian and South Russian barrows. Similar to other branches of the great Central Asian nomad art, the art of Hungarian barrows is characterized by the tendency to avoid empty spaces in compositions, which are usually filled in with foliate or floral ornament, or with animal figures ornamentally arranged.

On page 50 the author makes the interesting statement that the bronze-casting form probably had a woodcut model, and that the various bronze-cast objects bear traces of a wood-cutting technic. This important conclusion is not confirmed by actual finds, for the author says:

*"Im Zusammenhang mit unseren Bronzegüssen muss ich noch erwähnen, dass im ganzen ungarländischen Material weder eine einzige hierhergehörige Gussform, noch ein zur Herstellung der Gussform dienendes Holzmodell gefunden wurde; auch hat man von Goldschmiedewerkstätten oder Siedlungen bisher keine Spur entdeckt"* (p. 53).

Many of the Hungarian bronze-cast objects are gilded and silvered.

In Chapter III, the author endeavors to find a place for the bronze-cast culture of the Hungarian barrows among the different provinces of the South Russian and



Central Asiatic nomad art. He justly points out that the art of the Hungarian barrows had been brought to the Hungarian plains from afar, and that among the motifs met with on the Hungarian bronze-cast objects we never find ornamental motifs current in contemporary Medieval Europe. The author finds numerous parallels in style and technic with the bronze-cast antiquities of Minussinsk in Southern Siberia, the finds of Kočkar in the Semirečye Province, and even with the recent discoveries of the Japanese archaeologists in Korea. Some of the Hungarian bronze-cast objects (*Komitat Moson*, Vol. VII, pp. 14-19) bear traces of an Iranian influence, and may have come from the Oxus region in Turkestan.

We may add that the bronze-cast buckle and belt ornaments of the Hungarian finds bear a distant resemblance to those of East Tibetan belts, and that the foliate ornament of Hungarian bronze plaques may have originated from the same source as the floral ornaments on the scabbards of Tibetan swords.

The excavations and anthropological investigations of the group of barrows at Mosonszentjános (*Komitat Moson*) have clearly shown that the barrows belong to a nomad tribe of Mongol race, and that the artistic productions of this tribe were closely akin to those of other nomad tribes of the Asiatic steppe country.

Dr. Ludwig Bartucz contributes an enlightened study of the anthropological material of the Mosonszentjános barrows. According to him, ". . . halte ich es für wahrscheinlich, dass die Leute von Mosonszentjános in ethnischer Hinsicht avarisch waren, und an ihrem Volkstume, an den Sitten ihrer Ahnen auch während ihres langen Verbleibens treu festhielten und sich von jeglicher Rassenvermischung streng abgeschlossen haben. Jedoch hat dieses avarische Ethnikum eine beträchtliche hunnische Komponente enthalten, mit welcher es sich wahrscheinlich nicht in Ungarn sondern bereits im Osten verschmolzen hat" (p. 95).

Let us hope that Dr. N. Fettich will soon give us a complete inventorium of the Hungarian finds which will, no doubt, throw a new light on the problems of the archaeology of nomad tribes.

GEORGES DE ROERICH.

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OWEN LATTIMORE: *The Desert Road to Turkestan*. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1929. Pp. XV and 373.

Mr. Lattimore followed in 1926 the little-known desert route from Kuei-hua (Kuku-khoto) through Inner Mongolia to Ku-ch'eng in Chinese Turkestan. This undoubtedly ancient caravan route, known to Chinese caravan men as *jao-lu* or the "Winding Road," has come into prominence as the result of the recent crisis of civil war in Western China and the closing of the trade route across Outer Mongolia. Mr. Lattimore's route was crossed at different times by such explorers as General Prjevalsky, Younghusband, Kozloff and Sir Aurel Stein. The "Winding Road" leaves the Kuei-hua—Sair-usu route at Pai-ling Miao; from here it strikes west-



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ward towards Murghulchin and Shandan Miao, and continues past the Etsin-gol basin in a northwesterly direction towards San-t'ang Hu and Ku-ch'eng. The author had no adequate route-maps at his disposal, nor did he conduct a route survey. Notwithstanding these drawbacks his description of the caravan route will prove useful. The total approximate length of the route from Kuei-hua to Ku-ch'eng is equal to 1587 miles, according to the author's reckoning. The author is in general well informed and his fluent knowledge of Chinese has helped him to get first-hand information from his Chinese cameleers. There are, however, some minor points which need correction, especially Mongol names of localities along the route.

On page 43 of the text, the author mentions a ruined wall near to the hamlet of Ts'a-ts'a, situated some forty miles from Pai-ling Miao. The wall runs east and west, and the author believes it to be the ancient boundary of Marco Polo's "Province of Tenduc." It is impossible to discuss this point until a thorough archaeological investigation of all the ruined cities of the Mongol epoch, found in the neighborhood of Kuei-hua, has been made. With the disappearance of the Kerait, the legend of Prester John was passed on to Prince George of the Öngüt, who was killed in Mongolia in 1298 A. D. It was he whom Marco Polo considered to be the Prester John of the legend.

In obtaining the Mongol names of the different localities along the caravan route, the author had to depend on his Chinese cameleers, hence the mis-pronunciation of Mongol names, which are here corrected as far as is possible.

The Boyeh Bogdo of the text (p. 50) should read Bañ Bogdo.

The Mongol trading center of Khara-niuto mentioned on the same page should read Khara-nutu (k), the final consonant being often dropped in the spoken language.

Morghujing on page 95 stands for Murghulchin (or -jin) "pilgrims, travellers," a fitting name for a stage on the desert route. Khara-terugen of page 101 should read Khara-terigun. Modajing of the same page stands for Modachi(n).

It is difficult to reconstruct the Mongol word that hides in the Bōrhung-wulu of the text (p. 105). The first half of the word doubtlessly contains the frequent Mongol word, *Burkhan*, Buddha, God, Saint. In Mongolia, names of localities and mountains beginning with *Burkhan* are met in thousands and the Bōrhung-wulu of the text may either represent *Burkhan-burā* "the trumpet of Buddha" (*burā* is often pronounced *pulu* or even *wulu* by Chinese) or *Burkhan-bulag*—"the spring of Buddha," or even *Burkhan-bogdo*.

*Khara-mu* and *khara-mun* of the text (p. 131) should read *kharmik* (*Nitraria Schoberi*).

Tukomen Miao should read Tukhumun Miao (p. 137).

It is hardly possible to reconstruct the true Mongol spelling of Laoyingjungwo of page 140.



Dir-su on page 141 does not mean "bad water," but represents *deresiin* (*Lasiagrostis splendens*).

P. 185. The author heard the legend of hairy wild men in the Nan Shan mountains, south of Kansu. The same legend exists all over Central Asia from the Himalayas to the Khobdo region in Western Mongolia.

P. 207. Tsevan Rapadu should read Tse-wang Rabden (1716 A. D.).

P. 232. Yunbeize should be Yum-beise.

P. 234. Lattimore is a little harsh on Russian explorers, stating that Madzi for Ma-tsung is "in fact such a classical example of the Russian way of corrupting Chinese pronunciation that, without having heard the correct pronunciation, anyone who has a slight acquaintance with the invincible Russian clumsiness over Chinese names might guess that Ma-tsung was meant."

The author forgets that the region of Ma-tsung Shan is inhabited by a scant population of renegade Torgut and Ölöt Mongols, including several Kirghiz families from the Mongolian Altai, and that the Russian explorer Ladigin (Kozloff's assistant in the Expedition of 1900-01) reproduced the Mongol pronunciation of the Chinese word which is alone understood by the inhabitants of the region. Ma-tsung in its correct pronunciation means nothing to the local Mongol, but Ikhe Ma-dzi Shan and Baga Ma-dzi Shan are familiar names to him.

Chinese Central Asia is full of such corrupt geographical names. For example, the eastern section of the Humboldt Range in Northern Tsaidam is called by the local Khoshut Mongols, Khungu-üla, which goes back to a Chinese original, Hung-ho Shan—"The Mountains of the Red River" (probably due to the sediments of red lime in the river gorges). Of course, the correct form Hung-ho Shan is not understood by the Mongols, and Khungu is the only accepted name of the range. A good route-map should always show the local pronunciation, as well as the correct name in brackets. On his way, the author visited the site of Ten-pe'i jyal-tsen baishin, known as Kung-p'o Ch'üan to the Chinese caravan men. The story of the "False Lama," as told by the author, is, no doubt, due to Chinese caravan men, and does not correspond to the actual life story of Ja Lama. The life story of the man is given by the author of the present note in his book, *Trails to Inmost Asia* (Yale University Press, 1931). Lattimore had a lucky escape, for even now the country round the castle of Ja Lama is scouted by the remnants of Ja Lama's soldiery.

P. 239. The Chinese *k'ou-k'ou* represents the Khalkha Mongol *khükhen*, and the Torgut *köken*—"girl, young woman."

P. 267. The author mentions a village of Tu-hu-lu, which he believes to represent Tokhara. I believe it is just a Chinese nick-name given to the hamlet, and has no connection with the ancient name of Tokhara.

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At the end of the volume we find a useful appendix with the names of the stages along the Kuei-hua—Ku-ch'eng road and their approximate distances.

Sayir-khayir-khan of stage 32 should read Saïn-khairkhan, Shara-khur-usu as Shara-khulusun.

The Metshin Ola of stage 73 is the Mechin (or Mejin) ùla, "The Monkey Mountain."

In his book, the author tells us much about the "Camel-lore," and the Chinese caravan man, his ways of living and occupations during the long eight months' track across the Gobi. In this respect it is one of the best books so far written.

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