

The continuance of painted pottery in Northern Mesopotamia

Author(s): E. A. Speiser

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dahinter liegende Wand mit ihren Vorsprüngen wurden von Tiglatpileser III. mit Ziegeln verkleidet, die an der einen Schmalseite emailliert waren und deren Inschrift diesen Bauteil eben als *kigallu* erweist (MDOG 25, S. 18). Dabei ergibt sich aus Stellen wie I R 44, 83 (Meissner-Rost, *Bauinschriften Sanheribs*, S. 52), IV R 13, 11 f. und schliesslich auch Streck, VAB VII, S. 32, Z. 121, dass die Emaildekoration kein wesentlicher Bestandteil des *kigallu* war.

(Fortsetzung folgt)

Kleine Mitteilungen.

The continuance of painted pottery in Northern Mesopotamia.

By E. A. Speiser (Philadelphia).

The purpose of the present note is twofold: (a) to set right a misunderstanding, and (b) to call attention to a fact that is not generally recognized.

In *Syria* XII, pp. 299 ff., René Dussaud discusses "La céramique peinte assyrienne." His comments are based primarily on my report concerning the excavations at Tell Billa, which appeared in *BASOR* 41 (February, 1931), pp. 19 ff. This report gives special prominence to the discovery of a late type of painted pottery, a type that is markedly different from the decorated prehistoric ware. The pottery in question was stated to have been found 'under the remains of the Ashurnasirpal period'. It is this statement that seems to have misled the learned Conservateur of the Louvre, since he concludes from it that the ceramic family under discussion immediately precedes the time of Ashurnasirpal and is, therefore, to be regarded as Assyrian.

M. Dussaud has apparently overlooked the fact that a site may be abandoned for centuries, and that hundreds of years may elapse before another group of people decides to reoccupy the deserted mound. This is precisely what happened at Tell Billa. The two upper strata are of Assyrian origin¹; they followed closely one upon the other. However, there is a considerable gap in time between the second and the third stratum. This conclusion is established beyond the possibility of dispute when the pottery from the third level at Billa has been compared with the ceramic finds from Nuzi. The painted ware from both sites is

¹ In the NW corner of Tell Billa there are also post-Assyrian layers. But the mound as a whole was not reoccupied after the end of the Assyrian Empire.

obviously and definitely related. Now the Nuzi pottery occurs in the same strata as the well-known Nuzi tablets, the date of which is approximately 1500 B. C.² Since the people of Nuzi were Hurrians, it inevitably follows that the contemporary and related ware from Billa must also be Hurrian, and that its date must be placed in the middle of the second millennium B. C. These deductions were indicated in my original report (l. c., p. 20), but they somehow failed to get the attention of M. Dussaud.

There are many additional arguments against the suggestion of my critic that Billa III should be dated in the ninth century B. C. To be sure, M. Dussaud did not know at the time of his writing the subsequent reports from that interesting site³. In addition to the pottery there have been found in the same stratum numerous terra-cotta figurines, which leave us in no doubt as to their Hurrian origin. And lastly, we have a fine collection of Hurrian cylinder seals, one of which bears a typically Hurrian inscription. A fuller discussion of this subject must be reserved for a later publication.

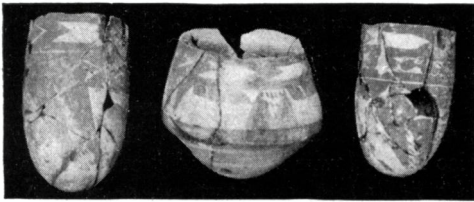
When M. Dussaud calls attention to the interesting pot from Djighan⁴, a site 25 km. NE from Khorsabad, he merely furnishes additional evidence that the entire district had at the time a uniform civilization⁵. He is also right in adducing parallels from as far west as Cyprus. He erred however, in dating the Mesopotamian re-

² Cf. my note on *The letter of Saushshatar and the date of the Kirkuk tablets*: *JAOS*, 1929, pp. 269 ff.

³ *BASOR* nos. 42—46.

⁴ *L. c.*, p. 300.

⁵ I am criticized by M. Dussaud for stating in my original report (*BASOR* no. 41) that this civilization was not known previously. Perhaps I was not explicit enough. What I meant was that this pottery was not generally known as Hurrian. I was aware of the parallels from the Nineveh district and, of course, of the specimens from Nuzi.



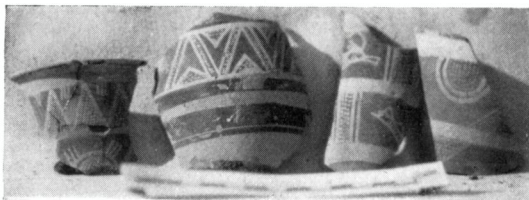
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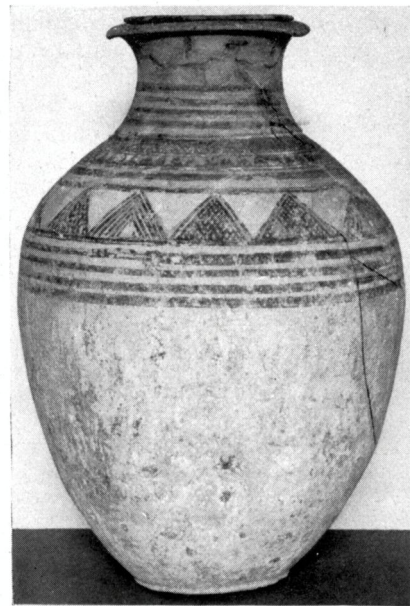
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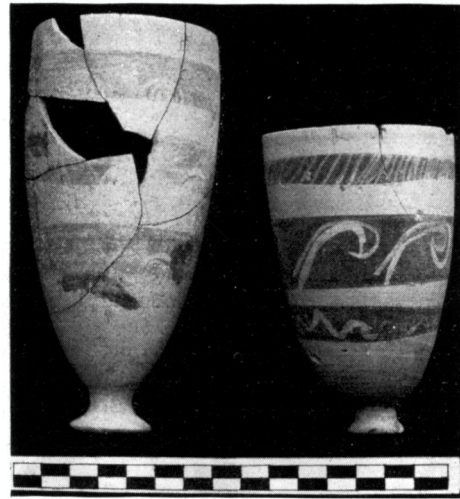
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mains, thus being driven to attribute them to the Assyrians, instead of identifying them directly with the Hurrians, whose influence upon early Assyria is well known from historical data.

That painted pottery was not unknown to the Assyrians themselves cannot be denied. Andrae's *Painted Ceramics from Ashur* presented a number of admirable specimens. Nor are the Assyrian strata from Billa entirely devoid of similarly decorated ware. In deposits from the time of Tiglath Pileser I several pots were discovered, which showed a red-band decoration on and under the rim. But the pointed bases were typically Assyrian, and the chronological proximity of the objects coupled with the topographical identity of the sites combine to support the view that we are dealing here with palpable Hurrian influence.

We have thus seen that painted pottery was not confined in Northern Mesopotamia to prehistoric times, but that it recurs in a special variety in the second millennium, and that it survives down to the Assyrian period. The only break in painted decoration is found, it would seem, in the third millennium. In reality, however, there is here no gap in continuity. Painted ware from the third millennium has been found both at Tell Billa and at Tepe Gawra. Drawing upon both mounds it is possible to establish a virtually uninterrupted sequence of painted pottery types from neolithic down to Achaemenian times⁶. I need hardly add that sequence does not necessarily imply relationship. In point of fact no such interrelationship can be proved on the basis of the available evidence; off hand it may even be considered as unlikely. Only new material can help to settle this question one way or the other.

In conclusion, I wish to present several illustrations spanning roughly the period from the beginning of the fourth down to middle of the second millennium. For the very earliest specimens from Gawra the reader must be referred for the time being to an earlier publication on the subject⁷. Fig. 1 shows three monochrome pots from Gawra X. The paint is black upon a buff surface and the ware is unusually fine. In view of the fact that Gawra VI is contemporaneous with the Royal Tombs at Ur, the tenth stratum cannot be later than the turn from the fifth to the fourth millennium⁸. The best we can

⁶) Tell Billa has not furnished any examples of the Parthian period.

⁷) Cf. *Preliminary excavations at Tepe Gawra*: AASOR VIII, pp. 17 ff.

⁸) It may be of interest to state in this connection that Gawra VIII consisted of three distinct substrata.

do is to place the period at 4000 B. C. To the same stratum belongs the large jar (440 by 540 mm.) shown in fig. 2. The lovely chalice (69 by 80 mm.) belongs to Gawra VII (fig. 3). This ware is abundantly represented in Billa VII⁹ and also in the lower layers at Nineveh. Whether it is a strictly local development, or whether, as seems more likely, we are confronted here with an importation, say, from the north or northeast, I am at present unable to establish. The large funerary pot (310 by 430 mm.) was found in Billa IV (fig. 4). The paint is bistre upon a buff surface, and the date is approximately the second quarter of the third millennium. Figs 5, 6, and 7, bring us down finally to the middle of the second millennium. They represent the Hurrian ware with which our discussion began.

I have refrained from showing all the intermediate stages in order not to anticipate unduly the forthcoming publication of the pottery from both mounds, which will present the material in full. Enough has been shown, however, to make it plain that in Northern Mesopotamia there was no break in the occurrence of painted pottery down to Persian times.

Eine neue chetitische Skulptur in Mittel-Anatolien.

Von Gerhart Bartsch (Hannover).

Auf einer 1930 ausgeführten Reise in Mittel-Anatolien fand ich eine chetitische Skulptur, die meines Wissens bisher unbekannt war. Der Fundort liegt rund 50 km westlich von Kirşehir¹ bei dem kleinen Dorf Dokuz am Kızıllırmak (Abb. 1). Gleich östlich des Dorfes ist aus der die Talauem 15—20 m überragenden Fläche der Hauptterrasse durch zwei trockene Tälchen ein Hügel herausgearbeitet worden. Auf der Konglomeratbank, die die Oberfläche der Terrasse bildet (der dunkle Streifen auf Abb. 2), erhebt sich ein kleiner, zahlreiche Keramik-Scherben zeigender Hüyük. Während die zur Talauem steil abfallende Südseite des Hügels ohne Kunstbauten ist, ragt auf der flachen Nordseite am Hang des westlichen Tälchens der Rest einer aus behauenen Quadern gefügten Mauer aus dem Boden heraus.

⁹) Billa VII is the lowest layer on the site. Under Gawra X there are probably another ten strata, all of which contain painted pottery. I hesitate to say how far back the lowest stratum of Gawra might carry us.

¹) Alle Ortsnamen in offizieller türkischer Schreibweise.