

11
13
14

LATE PREHISTORIC POTTERY AT THE TELL'AFAR -- SINJAR REGION

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I. Telul Eth-Thalathat is a complex of three principle mounds sixty kilometers west of Mosul to the left of the main Mosul-Sinjar road. The uppermost strata of Tell II yielded, among other artifacts, pottery of the Uruk period proper, while its lower levels contained material of both 'Ubaid and pre-'Ubaid cultures¹. Uruk wares came mainly from levels I-VI in trench IX.² The surface of the bulk of the Uruk pottery was greenish-brown or yellowish-brown on the exterior; red-slipped specimens were exceptionally popular.³

Vessel shapes represented in level II are open bowls and spouted and double-mouthed jars.⁴ Lugged jars with globular bodies occurred in both levels II and III.⁵ A single sherd found in association with Ninevite V pottery in the upper levels (probably in level II) at Tell V during the fourth season, has an important bearing on the distribution and relationships of the various types of painted pottery which follow that of the Uruk period. This is a fragment of a large jar (Sumer XXVIII, 1972, pl. I, opposite page 8) painted in a reddish colour on a buff surface, with a

(1) Namio Egami: "The Excavation of Tell II," 1958, Vol. I, pp. III-IV. During the autumn of 1956 and Spring of 1957 two seasons of work were conducted by the Tokyo University Iraq-Iran Expedition. A third season was carried out in the Spring of 1964; a fourth season was conducted during the autumn of 1965 and continued until the end of January 1966. Excavations at Tell V during the fourth season produced, just below the surface (levels II and III), material of the

Uruk period, mixed at the top with that of Ninevite V.

(2) Trench IX and its extension in square N.Q, Tell II, revealed twelve levels (I-XII, numbering from the top); cf. *ibid.* p. 5, pl. XIX, I; and Fig. 50. Levels VIIb-XII, however, are attributed to the 'Ubaid period of which their pottery is characteristic, see *ibid.* p. 6.

(3) *Ibid.* p. 7; Fig. 50.

(4) *Ibid.* Fig. 50, Nos. 2-4, 9, 5, 8, 6-7.

(5) *Ibid.* Fig. 50, No. 1.

design consisting of stylized OX-like animals with birds perched on their backs. In shape it is reminiscent of the large Jamdat Nasr Polychrome jars, but in technique and style it is remarkably like the scharlet ware from the Diyala region. The actual paint colour is darker, but is much closer to the scarlet colour employed in the Diyala than to the plum red pigment used by Jamdat Nasr potters.

II. Levels II-III (in area AB) and IV (in trench C) at Grai Resh yielded pottery characteristic of the Uruk period,⁶ the bulk of the Uruk pottery was derived from the burnt house (level II).⁷ The complete Uruk repertoire was present at Grai Resh.

Uruk grey ware was straw-tempered, usually grey-slipped and roughly burnished on one or both sides of the vessels. The burnishing often took the shape of a pattern; as a rule a pebble appears to have been used as the burnishing tools.⁸ Two types of vessels are represented in the grey ware: a deep spherical bowl with either a moulded rim, or with a slight carination below the rim;⁹ and squat hole-mouthed pots, a type often used for infant burials. These usually had thin walls and small raised rims.¹⁰ A number of varieties of these occurred.

Uruk red ware at Grai Resh also was straw-tempered with a grey or greish core and a pink slip.¹¹ Peculiar to this ware are shallow bowls with curved bodies and tiny everted rims.¹² Champagne Chalices

of rather crude fabric were a predominant feature of the pink ware.¹³

Uruk buff plain ware was found in a variety of shapes to which a cream slip was often applied. Shallow or deep bowls with rounded bottoms, chalices, tall narrow-mouthed jars, and small squat pots were found. A new form of spout, considered characteristic of this site as it appeared so frequently, was made by thrusting a finger through the wall of the jar, thus making the edge of the hole into a lip.¹⁴ Bevelled rim votive bowls are a characteristic feature of this site. Eye Idols like those from Tepe Gawra, Qalning Agha and Brak also occurred.¹⁵

III. Tell Gurdi is a low but an extensive settlement, situated at the northern foot of Jabal Sinjar, five hundred metres to the south-west of the village of Grai Zerkah. On receiving news of illegal digging by neighbouring villagers, the writer (as then inspector of antiquities in Mosul province) visited the site in February, 1960. A pit three metres deep had been cut at the centre of the mound revealing in section several layers of floors and ash. Among the potsherds from the pit were several fragments of the crude bevelled rim votive bowls. Also found were a few grey and buff ware Uruk sherds, and an Uruk handle.

IV. Field survey work of the Iraqi Directorate General of Antiquities in this region showed some 77 sites in the Tell Afar-Sinjar districts yielding, among

(6) At one point the trench was carried down to virgin soil. Six building levels (IV-IX) were encountered, the other three (I-III, upper levels) having been detected in area AB, cf. Iraq VII, 1940, p. 13. On the basis of the pottery Professor Lloyd attributed level I (the uppermost) to Nineveh IV, to a phase which may well be, at least in part, contemporary with the Jamdat Nasr period in the south; cf. *ibid.* p. 18. Levels II-IV were attributed to the Uruk period proper, while IV-V (which yielded features reminiscent of both 'Ubaid and Uruk) were considered a transitional

stage. Levels VI-IX are Northern 'Ubaid; cf. *ibid.* p. 15.

(7) *Ibid.* p. 18.

(8) *Ibid.* p. 18; it was either hand-made or built on a very slow wheel.

(9) *Ibid.* p. 18; pl. III; Fig. 7, No. 4.

(10) *Ibid.* p. 18; pl. III; Fig. 7, No. 9.

(11) It was believed, rightly, to be a local peculiarity, cf. *ibid.* p. 18.

(12) *Ibid.* pl. III; Fig. 7, No. 7.

(13) *Ibid.* p. 18; pl. III, Fig. 7, No. 6.

(14) *Ibid.* p. 18; pl. III, Fig. 7, No. 2.

(15) *Ibid.* pl. III, Fig. 7, No. 1.

other early and late surface material, pottery of both Uruk and Ninevite V types.¹⁶

The Tell'Afar Occurrences:

1. Tell Ahmad Agha Saghir.
2. Khirbet 'Alawi.
3. Tell Ahmad Agha Kabir.
4. Tell Mushi
5. Tell Telmuss.
6. Bablutt Tepe.
7. Tell Rimah Saghir.
8. Julagh Tepe.
9. Tell Fattuma.
10. Fahsi Jabash.
11. Tell eth-Thiab.
12. Tell 'Abdan et-Tahtani.
13. Tell Jamal.
14. Tell 'Awad.
15. Tell Shebh.
16. Tell es-Shur.
17. Bir 'Ajm.
18. Khirbet Kisber.
19. Khirbet Yabsa.
20. Tell es-Samir.
21. Tell Bir 'Akla.
22. Tell Qariat el-Butha.
23. Tell Dubub Tuzngi.
24. Tell es-Sharai.
25. Khirbet Abdul Haddi.
26. Tell Mattr el-Kabir.
27. Tell 'Ibra es-Saghir.
28. Tell Zuraiqi.
29. Ali ku-Tuzighi.
30. Khirbet Kulaib.
31. Kharaieb el-Qussiya.
32. Khirbet Balluziya.
33. Khirbet Lazaka.
34. Tell Dhahir.
35. Khirbet Khalass.
36. Tell es-Salami.
37. Tell Abu Manhum.

38. Telul el-Imjereniyat.
39. Kharaieb el-Tweem.
40. Telul Abu Ekkdur.
41. Khirbet Hara.
42. Khirbet es-Sahaji.
43. Khirbet 'Abid and Thulnun.
44. Khirbet Abu Shekha.
45. Kharaieb and Telul el-Muhalabiya.
46. Tell Tiniya.
47. Tell Abu Kathira.
48. Khirbet et-Tair.
49. Tell Um Ihjah.
50. Kharaieb el-'Urs.
51. Tell Abu Jad'aam.
52. Tell B'aarur.
53. Kharaieb el-Hutta.
54. Kharaieb el-Howaitt.
55. Khirbet Fathi.
56. Tell Rikrak.
57. Dem Tepe.

The Sinjar Occurrences:

1. Tell Tabriz.
2. Khirbet Resh.
3. Tell Kirshen.
4. Tell Abu Ghazala.
5. Tell 'Ukaidy.
6. Tell Abu Sanam.
7. Um Ihjarah.
8. Grai Resh Kujjuk.
9. Tell Saqqi.
10. Gharet Wahshi.
11. Qantr Qubba.
12. Tell Khazir.
13. Tell Darra.
14. Khirbet Kuhbel.
15. Khirbet Imjahla.
16. Tell Khalil.
17. Tell Abu Rasain.
18. Tell Soofi.
19. Youz Tepe.
20. Tell er-Russ.

(16) For further survey work done in the same region by Professor Seton Lloyd see *Iraq*, V, 1938, pp. 124-142; also see *Iraq* VII, 1940, p. 21.