

CADMO

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JOURNAL FOR ANCIENT HISTORY

29



CENTRO DE HISTÓRIA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
2020



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RECENSÕES
REVIEWS

FEDERICO BUCCELLATI, TOBIAS HELMS et ALEXANDER TAMM eds. (2016), *House and Household Economies in 3rd Millennium B.C.E. Syro-Mesopotamia*. Oxford, BAR Publishing, 132 pp. ISBN 978-1-4073-1328-3 (Paperback £34.00)

The book in review is the published result of the workshop “*House and Household Economies in the 3rd Millennium B.C. Syro-Mesopotamia*” that took place in Frankfurt am Main in 2012. Although a few years later, since the book had been published in 2016, we wanted to still write a few notes about it, due to its value to the field of House and Household research.

The presentation of Caitlin Chaves looks over the spatial organization of the third millennium city of Mozan, centered on its neighborhoods that include 62 collection units. The A. mentions the importance of these methods to comprehend the extension and complexity of the urban societies, that so often accommodate outer cities. These configurations comprehend new social organizations and their connection to the inner cities and their inhabitants.

Remaining with the spatial analysis, the work about Tell Hazna I, registered the “presence of several functional zones” (p.83), associated with domestic activities, specialized storage, discarded zones and clay. With this, the A. assumed this as the first stage of a project that aims to “gather a database with all the finds from Tell Hazna I, and to integrate this database with 3D model of the settlement” (p.93).

In a different approach, we were also able to have a look at written evidences related to the Sumerian term e_2-mi , that is often translated as ‘women’s quarters’ or ‘queen’s household’. With a very clear method, the A. stressed that the term could have “been a part of each patriarchal house and was not confined exclusively to ‘palaces’” (p.18). Approaches like this are of enormous importance since they help us think outside previously conceptualized and methodological choices in a transdisciplinary research field.

As a great number of the participants were members of the Tell Chuera Project, a variety of approaches were developed about the site. Beginning with the domestic architecture and the domestic contexts of Area K at Tell Chuera (pp.115-124; pp.125-132), the authors start by discerning the chronology of the Lower Town corresponding to the local period Chuera IB and IC (ca. 2700-2450 BC) (p.117) with the building of the first structures in what corresponds to the Area W. It is important to notice that the houses of the Lower town seems to have been built “after the same principles as the upper town” (p.122), although they were smaller, which has been connected to social differences and linked to a more kin-based society. Remains the question of a possible bond between the smaller households to the bigger ones.

In contrast to the lower town are the domestic quarters of the upper town, here associated mostly to area K, with “an extensively excavated area with a continuous sequence of construction phases” (p.125) dating to almost all the Early Bronze Age (ca.3100-2240 BC). In this area was possible to find a range of installations: fireplaces, ovens, pits, benches, platforms, basins and ground floors, allowing the authors to associate the households to specific activities that not always correspond to “biological and economical developments” (p.131) but also to social organization or inhabitants, informing about the original function of the household.

Related to the pottery production (pp.1-8) the A. suggests that for Area K, during the IC period in Tell Chuera, the wares produced were both coiled and wheel-coiled by the same potters,

which leads to a necessity to review the studies that separate the wares and associate one to more specialized potters, sustaining social differences that could no longer be sustained or that at least needs to be revised. At the same time, the article also refers the possible existence of groups of potters that shared skills but lived in different sites, referring the necessity to continue to compare geo-chemical and petrographic characteristics.

Continuing with the production of glyptic (pp.27-34) the A. refers the need to revised the dating of the seals and sealings of Tell Chuera in order to “increase our knowledge of their iconographic aspects and uses in the 3rd millennium B.C. in northern Syria” (p.33). The association between seals and sealings and other iconographic materials, such as figurines is vital in a region that maintained a greater connection with Northern Mesopotamia, Southern Levant, and Anatolia.

The terracotta figurines of Tell Chuera play a major part in the interpretation of the terracotta figurines in Northern and Inner Syria in the Early Bronze Age, not only because they seem to appear in an early phase of the development of the subgroups found in the region (ca. 2600 BC – corresponding to the Tell Chuera IC) but also because almost all the iconographic groups that are going to be identified in other sites seems to also appear at Tell Chuera. The A. points two noteworthy matters: the first refers the placement of the figurines, noticing that so many times archaeologists have a tendency to described them “as not being found in situ but rather in pits, ash layers or out in the streets” (p.58), and the second one pointing the fact that most of them are found broken. Both these questions need further development, and both could help us understanding their use and role in a moment of social pressure and change.

Related to the Chipped stone (pp.62-81) the A. argues in favor of their primary ‘function as harvesting tools’ (p.78) attesting a large portion of the population working seasonally in the fields surrounding the site, situated so close to the ‘zone of uncertainty’. The A. also refers the need to understand the blades as flexible materials, that could have been “transformed into borers and scrapers at a later stage of the operational sequence” (p.79).

S. Smith writes about the Economy of Landscape in Western Jazira connecting it to three different zones, the Zone of Stable settlement, the Zone of Aridity, and the Zone of Uncertainty. “When they become large economies, powerful states in northern Mesopotamia located in the Zone of Stable Settlement needed large pasture lands on which to herd their large flocks” (p.111), turning the Zone of Uncertainty an “ideal niche” (*idem.*). The A. mentions that these economies started as household economies that were able to “take hits in bad economic years” (*idem.*) allowing states to risk more, which shaped the landscape of the 3rd millennium BC in northern Mesopotamia.

Close to Tell Chuera is the site of Kharab Sayyar, that was presented through the study of Area B (Early Bronze Age IV), where the House 2 was found and has been designated as a small temple, having a central fireplace and a limestone foundation, that “at Tell Chuera are a marker for cultic and prestigious buildings, such as temples and the palace” (p.22). Important is to observe that during this phase other domestic structures were found and that the possibility to readjust its designation as a temple is still in order, even when considering the similarities to Tell Chuera.

Today, in Social Sciences, we tend to revise so many of the concepts in use in our studies. One of them is related to the social nature of the household. Private or domestic, as well as private versus public continue to be in up-front discussions about the advent of stratified and complex societies. Juliette Mas points that “the economic system in this area (northern Mesopotamia) was

mainly based on private households” (p.100) with lesser control of the state. As pointed in the article about the Economic landscapes, understanding the front-runner role of some of these households is key to start new approaches to house and household studies in the making of the urban landscapes of the Early and also of the Middle Bronze Age.

Bearing this in mind, the presentation of Federico Buccellati works in conferring the “multi-variate role that a house plays in (every) society” (p.35). For this the A. uses ethnography to study the relations forged between people and material culture and stresses the necessity to envision different construction practices, building phases, functions, contexts, rooftops, gardens, and altars. This type of approach is crucial to appreciate different interactions and emotions that spaces and materials have naturally embedded and that in so many works are forgot.

In the end, this volume showed a variety of approaches and gave us a look into the work that has been done in the field of house and household studies. Not only it portrayed new insights but it also depicted the deficiency of information in some of the areas, enabling other researchers to have a more comprehensive understanding about the research area.

Catarina Pinto

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KATHARINA SCHMIDT (2019), *Glass and Glass Production in the Near East during the Iron Age. Evidence from objects, texts and chemical analysis*. Oxford, Archaeopress, 332 pp. ISBN 978-1-78969-154-2 (€ 55,84)

Nos últimos anos, a investigação sobre as primeiras fases da história do vidro no Próximo Oriente tem conhecido um interesse renovado, potenciado por novas escavações, novos estudos de coleções museológicas e, sobretudo, pelo desenvolvimento de métodos analíticos que transformaram por completo os discursos sobre as matérias-primas, a tecnologia de produção e as dinâmicas de circulação dos mais antigos vidros conhecidos.

Uma visão panorâmica da intensa produção académica resultante deste renovado impulso investigador revela, contudo, certas assimetrias. Particularmente significativa é a disparidade entre a investigação dedicada à primeira etapa de produção sistemática de objectos de vidro, no II milénio a.n.e. (Bronze Final), por oposição ao período sucessivo, entre os finais daquele milénio e as primeiras centúrias do seguinte (Idade do Ferro). Para exemplificar esta situação, bastaria notar que para o período mais antigo contamos hoje com sínteses globais actualizadas (esp. A. Shortland, 2012. *Lapis Lazuli from the Kiln: Glass and Glassmaking in the Late Bronze Age*. Leuven: Leuven University Press), enquanto para a etapa mais recente as principais referências continuavam até há pouco a ser obras que, apesar do seu inegável valor, datam de há já várias décadas (L. Oppenheim, R. Brill, D. Barag et A. von Saldern 1970. *Glass and glassmaking in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Corning: Corning Museum of Glass; D. Barag, 1984. *Catalogue of Western Asiatic Glass in the British Museum. Volume 1*. Londres: British Museum; P. R. S. Moorey, 1994. *Ancient Mesopotamian Materials and Industries. The Archaeological Evidence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 189-215), facto que não pode deixar de se considerar sintomático.



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OBJECTIVOS E ÂMBITO

AIMS AND SCOPE

A *Cadmo – Revista de História Antiga* publica anualmente estudos originais e ensaios relevantes de “estado da arte” em História Antiga e de culturas da Antiguidade. Além disso, tem como objectivo promover debates e discussões sobre uma ampla variedade de temas relacionados com a História Antiga, e aceita propostas relacionadas com o mundo do Próximo-Oriente Antigo (Egipto, Mesopotâmia, Pérsia, corredor Siro-Palestinense, Mundo Bíblico e e Anatólia) e com o Mundo Clássico (Grécia, Roma e Mediterrâneo Antigo, incluindo a Antiguidade Tardia). São ainda considerados estudos sobre a recepção da Antiguidade e dos seus legados, historiografia e investigações com enfoque em outras sociedades antigas (como as culturas indianas, extremo-asiáticas e mesoamericanas). A *Cadmo – Revista de História Antiga* não considera o conceito de “Antiguidade” como exclusivo da civilização ocidental, mas uma construção historiográfica essencial para a compreensão da História Global. Recensões críticas de obras recentes serão também considerados para publicação.

Cadmo – Journal for Ancient History yearly publishes original and peer-reviewed studies and findings, as well as relevant “state of the art” review essays, on Ancient History and the study of Ancient cultures. It aims to promote debate and discussion on a wide variety of subjects and welcomes contributions related to the Ancient Near-Eastern World (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Syro-Palestine area and Anatolia) and to the Classical World (Greece, Rome and the Ancient Mediterranean, including Late Antiquity). Studies on the reception of Antiquity and its cultural productions, historiography of the Ancient World, as well as submissions focusing on other Ancient societies (such as the Indian, Asian or Mesoamerican cultures) are also accepted. This journal does not consider the concept of Antiquity to be a notion restricted to western civilisation and its heritage, but an essential historiographic construct for our understanding of Global History. Reviews of recently published on the aforementioned subjects are also published.

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