ACCOUNTING FOR LIVESTOCK: PRINCIPLES OF PALATIAL ADMINISTRATION IN SEALAND I BABYLONIA

By Odette Boivin

The Sealand I dynasty ruled in southern Mesopotamia in the latter part of the Old Babylonian and at the beginning of the Middle Babylonian period. Unprovenanced archival documents dating to the middle years of this dynasty were published by Dalley in 2009. Most of these documents pertain to the palatial administration of resources. The present article aims at establishing a number of accounting principles and practices that were in place at a Sealand I palace. The administration of animal husbandry is examined in depth and its underlying principles of resource management are presented; these suggest that this palace functioned as an extended household providing resources for its own needs and for a number of temples.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND ALEXANDER IN THE EXCERPTA LATINA BARBARI

By Benjamin Garstad

The late antique Christian chronicle preserved as the Excerpta Latina Barbari contains a brief, but extraordinary notice on the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar; many of its unusual details can be understood in the contexts of traditional stories about Nebuchadnezzar and the interests of the work itself.
The best clue to the meaning of the passage on Nebuchadnezzar is the Excerpta’s closely parallel passage on Alexander the Great. In the Excerpta Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander reflect one another and in a sense compete with one another. Many of the odd details of the notice on Nebuchadnezzar can be explained as directing the reader toward this parallelism. The parallelism itself seems to serve two purposes. First, to provide symmetry to the Excerpta’s idiosyncratic account of world history in which Alexander liberates the world conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. And second, to show Nebuchadnezzar subtly outdoing Alexander, so that Alexander’s encounter with the God of the Jews, as it is found in the Excerpta, can be provided with an implicit interpretation and characterization.

IRAQ (2016) 78 25–48 Doi:10.1017/irq.2015.8

SELEUCID-PARTHIAN FIGURINES FROM BABYLON IN THE NIPPUR COLLECTION: IMPLICATIONS OF MISATTRIBUTION AND RE-EVALUATING THE CORPUS

By Stephanie M. Langin-Hooper

This article formally documents an important correction to the provenance attribution of three reclining female figurines from Babylon that reside in the Nippur collection at the University of Pennsylvania Museum and were published with that corpus. Few scholars have noticed the misattribution of these figurines, and the problem has not been formally documented for scholarship. Through historiographical analysis of the late nineteenth century Nippur Expeditions and early twentieth century cataloguing and publication of the Nippur corpus, this article reconstructs how and why these three reclining figurines have been continually misassociated with Nippur, and traces the continued impact of this confusion on scholarship’s understanding of the Nippur figurine tradition.

Most critically, the publication of these three figurines as Nippur objects lent credence to the testimony of an antiquities dealer who sold an additional eight reclining figurines “from Nippur” to the Harvard Semitic Museum; these figurines continue to be regarded as Nippur objects. This article casts doubt upon that provenance. The figurine tradition of Seleucid-Parthian Nippur is reevaluated in light of the absence of securely-provenanced reclining female figurines at that site. An art historical evaluation of these figurines is undertaken, which links these figurines to the general use of hybrid Greek-Babylonian imagery in Seleucid-Parthian figurines, and connects the specific motif of the reclining figure to Greek banqueting imagery. It is proposed that the Nippur community’s lack of interest in reclining female figurines can be correlated with a disinterest in pan-Hellenistic ceramic tablewares; together, these lacunae indicate Nippur’s non-participation in negotiated Greek-Babylonian banqueting practices. These differences in cross-cultural interaction between
Nippur and the neighboring Babylonian communities have not been fully recognized nor explored, due to scholarship’s misunderstanding of the use of reclining female figurines at that site. It is this confusion that this article attempts to resolve.

IRAQ (2016) 78 49–77 Doi:10.1017/irq.2016.3

IMAGES OF KINGS OF ADIABENE: NUMISMATIC AND SCULPTURAL EVIDENCE

By Michał Marciaik and Robert S. Wójcikowski

This paper offers the first ever discussion of all extant images of Abdissar, Monobazos I and ‘tlw (Attalos), Kings of Adiabene. In analysing the numismatic and sculptural data, a few conclusions on the historical context are suggested. First, it is argued that stylistic features of the coinage of Abdissar suggest a date in the first half of the second century B.C.E., and this dating bears upon the question of the historical origin of the Kingdom of Adiabene. Adiabene originated as one of many “post Seleucid” states which arose in the Near East when the Seleucid kingdom started to crumble, before the advent of the Parthians. This suggestion is also corroborated by stylistic features of the coinage which accentuate the divine investiture of royal power in Abdissar. It is also held that the Batas-Herir monument depicts King Abdissar. Second, the images on the coin of Monobazos I clearly reflect the time of Adiabene’s economic prosperity and political rise to significance among Parthian “lesser kings” in the first half of the first century C.E. Third, the reign of King ‘tlw (Attalos) remains largely obscure, but the placement of his sculpture in Hatra clearly shows good political relations and close cultural ties between the kingdoms of Adiabene and Hatra in the first half of the third century C.E. Additionally, the authors argue that the images of Oriental kings on the coins of Septimius Severus do not represent any particular Oriental rulers (of Edessa, Adiabene or Hatra), but are merely stereotypical images of what the Romans considered to be typical Oriental royal outfits.

IRAQ (2016) 78 79–101 Doi:10.1017/irq.2016.8

REVISITING TELL BEGUM: A PREHISTORIC SITE IN THE SHAHRIZOR PLAIN, IRAQI KURDISTAN

By Olivier Nieuwenhuyse, Takahiro Oda, Akemi Kaneda, Simone Mühl, Kamal Rasheed and Mark Altaweel
Tell Begum was previously explored by Iraqi archaeologists in the 1960s when excavations revealed a multi-period site. Among the key finds were Halaf period remains that are relatively rare in the region of the Shahrizor plain and included polychrome ceramics suggesting a local variation of the Halaf culture. Recent investigations and excavations in 2011 and 2013 revealed a 5 hectare site inhabited during the Halaf, Ubaid, Late Chalcolithic, and medieval periods. The Halaf site may have had an area of about 3 hectares, making it a relatively large settlement for that period, although its full extent is unclear. Offsite work revealed the area to have been well watered in the past, with likely neighbouring regions of woodland and abundant shrubs. The heavy sedimentation in the region has partially obscured archaeological remains, including possibly Tell Begum’s lower mound. The site, nevertheless, shows continuity of settlement, indicating relative stability in settlement over long timespans.

IRAQ (2016) 78 103–135 Doi:10.1017/irq.2016.7

This paper examines the architectural renderings of the round city of Baghdad built by the Abbasid caliph Abu Ja’far al-Mansur as visualized by archaeologists and historians. Although nothing of the historic city has survived, descriptions by Arab and Persian authors have provided a guide to its appearance. From an architectural perspective, the work of Ernst Herzfeld and K.A.C. Creswell may be considered the most significant. A study of the details of their architectural drawings reveals inconsistencies with the written descriptions. Reconstructions by other scholars are also examined with special reference to the work of Jacob Lassner. The focus is on the first faṣīl (intervallum) and raḥba (entrance courtyard), the maṣ‘ad (gangway) to the audience halls, the taqād (arcades) and finally the caliph’s palace and the congregational mosque, to suggest a revised reconstruction of al-Mansur’s Baghdad.

IRAQ (2016) 78 137–157 Doi:10.1017/irq.2016.9
FURTHER EVIDENCE FOR A “LATE ASSYRIAN DRY PHASE” IN THE NEAR EAST DURING THE MID-TO-LATE SEVENTH CENTURY B.C.?

By Adam W. Schneider and Selim F. Adali

In a recent paper published in the journal Climatic Change, we put forward the hypothesis that drought and overpopulation played an important, if indirect, role in shaping the sudden decline of the Assyrian Empire during the mid-to-late seventh century B.C. This argument was partly predicated on five paleoclimatic proxy records for conditions in different parts of the northern Near East during the first millennium B.C., each of which indicates that relatively arid conditions affected much of the region during the seventh century B.C., especially during its middle decades. Here, we revisit the textual and paleoclimatic proxy evidence for a period of drought in more depth to examine whether this evidence does in fact support the climatic component of our hypothesis. In this paper, we show that the available proxy evidence supports the notion that there was some kind of regional climatic perturbation that affected much of the Near East during the latter half of the seventh century B.C., which caused conditions in many parts of the region to become more arid. The strongest signal for this short-term episode of aridification, which we have termed the “Late Assyrian Dry Phase,” is observed at approximately 650–600 B.C. These proxies thus corroborate and provide the background for the Neo-Assyrian textual evidence for drought during the mid-seventh century B.C.

IRAQ (2016) 78 159–174 Doi:10.1017/irq.2016.5

THE FINAL STAGE OF NINEVITE 5 POTTERY: MORPHOLOGICAL TYPES, TECHNOLOGY AND DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS FROM TELL ARBID (NORTH-EAST SYRIA)

By Anna Smogorzewska

In this study, we follow the investigation of the period of gradual change that occurred after the middle of the seventh century B.C. at Tell Arbîd, North-East Syria, initiated by A. Fuchs in 1998. After a review of the previous research on Tell Arbîd, we focus on the final stages of the Ninevite 5 pottery and its relationship to other ceramic assemblages in the region. We rely on the available published and unpublished materials from Tell Arbîd and adjacent sites, and we pay particular attention to the analytical results of the analytical research of Tell Arbîd, which have been extensively published.

In this study, we follow the investigation of the period of gradual change that occurred after the middle of the seventh century B.C. at Tell Arbîd, North-East Syria, initiated by A. Fuchs in 1998. After a review of the previous research on Tell Arbîd, we focus on the final stages of the Ninevite 5 pottery and its relationship to other ceramic assemblages in the region. We rely on the available published and unpublished materials from Tell Arbîd and adjacent sites, and we pay particular attention to the analytical results of the analytical research of Tell Arbîd, which have been extensively published.
This paper presents major trends in pottery development in the final Ninevite 5 period, which corresponds to the final EJZ 2 period in the Syrian Jezirah. This discussion is based primarily on a pottery assemblage from Tell Arbid, a site in north-east Syria. The pottery was recovered from a dwelling quarter (Area D), where both final Ninevite 5 (final EJZ 2) and post-Ninevite 5 (EZJ 3) occupation were recognized. Excavations at Tell Arbid have provided new data regarding the late Ninevite 5 pottery repertoire and its internal development. Morphological types of vessels and their technology are discussed at length. Major traits of the final Ninevite 5 pottery are recognized and defined, including pottery "index fossils" as well as some less distinct pottery types. Chronological variability of pottery types has also been traced, special attention being given to continuity and changes in pottery production between final Ninevite 5 and post-Ninevite 5 (EZJ 3) periods. A trend toward standardization visible in the final Ninevite 5 pottery development is related to political and economic factors in the Syrian Jezirah at this time.

IRAQ (2016) 78 175–214 Doi:10.1017/irq.2016.1

THE FADED SPLENDOUR OF LAGASHITE PRINCESSES: A RESTORED STATUETTE FROM TELLO AND THE DEPICTION OF COURT WOMEN IN THE NEO-SUMERIAN KINGDOM OF LAGASH

By Ariane Thomas

A statuette of a woman dating from the Second Dynasty of Lagash features exceptional gold, silver and copper bracelets that have been recently restored and analysed. The statue is remarkable for its refined dress, to date known only from a small number of female figures, almost all linked to the court of Lagash's Second Dynasty. Examination of the statuette and comparable pieces has revealed possible traces of polychromy, although these vestiges are particularly difficult to identify with any certainty. This paper presents these results within the larger corpus of female depictions from the Second Dynasty of Lagash, together with other very similar examples, to better understand the meaning of the specific costume they wear and the possible identity of the women wearing it.

IRAQ (2016) 78 215–239 Doi:10.1017/irq.2016.4
ON WOLVES AND KINGS. TWO TABLETS WITH AKKADIAN WISDOM TEXTS FROM THE SECOND MILLENNIUM B.C.

By Michael P. Streck and Nathan Wasserman

In this paper two Akkadian wisdom texts are edited and discussed. BM 13928 is an unpublished Old Babylonian list of proverbial sayings and admonitions concerning a wolf and a king. CBS 14235 is a Middle Babylonian tablet which describes the royal life and contrasts it to the behavior of wild animals. The two texts add to the growing corpus of Akkadian wisdom literature of the second millennium B.C. and offer a new angle to our understanding of royal ideology of the period.


GURGA CHIYA AND TEPE MARANI: NEW EXCAVATIONS IN THE SHAHRIZOR PLAIN, IRAQI KURDISTAN

By David Wengrow, Robert Carter, Gareth Brereton, Mary Shepperson, Sami Jamil Hamarashi, Saber Ahmed Saber, Andrew Bevan, Dorian Fuller, Helen Himmelman, Hanna Sosnowska and Luna Gonzalez Carretero

Gurga Chiya and Tepe Marani are small, adjacent mounds located close to the town of Halabja in the southern part of the Shahrizor Plain, one of the most fertile regions of Iraqi Kurdistan. Survey and excavation at these
previously unexplored sites is beginning to produce evidence for human settlement spanning the sixth to the fourth millennia, c. 5600–3300 cal. B.C. In Mesopotamian chronology this corresponds to the Late Neolithic through to Chalcolithic periods; the Halaf, Ubaid, and Uruk phases of conventional culture history. In Iraqi Kurdistan, documentation of these periods—which witnessed many important transformations in prehistoric village life—is currently very thin. Here we offer a preliminary report on the emerging results from the Shahrizor Plain, with a particular focus on the description of material culture (ceramic and lithic assemblages), in order to establish a benchmark for further research. We also provide a detailed report on botanical remains and accompanying radiocarbon dates, which allow us to place this new evidence in a wider comparative framework. A further, brief account is given of Late Bronze Age material culture from the upper layers at Gurga Chiya. We conclude with observations on the significance of the Shahrizor Plain for wider research into the later prehistory of the Middle East, and the importance of preserving and investigating its archaeological record.

IRAQ (2016) 78 253–284 Doi:10.1017/irq.2016.6