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Title: The beginnings of ancient Kurdistan (c. 2500-1500 BC) : a historical and cultural synthesis

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Summary

In this work the early history of Kurdistan is studied, the territories of which are nowadays located in north and northeastern Iraq, southeastern Turkey, north and northeastern Syria and northwestern Iran. The study of this region was chosen because of the absence of a comprehensive study of its history and culture in those early periods, and because it often formed a uniform political and cultural area in the past. It was more realistic to study the region as a whole than study it as separate parts belonging to the other larger cultural areas of Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. The modern name Kurdistan was chosen as it best fits the studied regions, although it is not an official name applied to the entire region.

The study focuses on the early states which emerged in ancient Kurdistan, the peoples who founded it, the ethnic changes that took place and the later appearance of socio-political units larger than early states. A large number of written materials have been consulted and cited in addition to archaeological data, either as supplementary evidence or as primary source material when inscriptions are absent. One of these documents is an important royal inscription of the king of one of these early states, which for the first time is published and edited in this thesis.

After an introduction that comprises a short geographical description of the region, the study begins with a study of the history of the region in the periods before 2500 BC, i.e. before the age of written history. It has been shown that ancient Kurdistan was an important cultural area in prehistory, where the first cultures developed from the Neolithic village communities and many basic cultural inventions originated there. Most importantly, the region formed one cultural area during the Halaf, Ubaid, Uruk and Ninevite V cultures. These were prototypes of the later cultures and socio-political formations which appeared in the region in the historic periods and which covered at some times the majority of the region. They are studied in some detail.

Chapter Two touches upon the ancient peoples of the region, their ethnic affinities, languages, attestations in the written sources and the roles they played. Afterwards the history of the region up to the end of the Old Akkadian period is studied. Since some parts of the region under study had not yet come in contact with the Mesopotamians and were outside the orbit covered by written material, the last part of the chapter tries to fill this gap from the archaeological material available.

The third chapter is devoted to the Gutian rule in Mesopotamia. The problematic list of Gutian rulers in the south, the political organization of the Gutians and whether the Gutian period was really so dark as the Mesopotamian sources claim. It has been suggested that the Gutians had a great king of kings, who ruled over the whole Gutian lands in addition to their colonies that once included the land of Akkad and (part of) Sumer. So the list of the Gutian rulers recorded in the Sumerian King List was actually a list of the Gutian governors who ruled the south on behalf of the great Gutian king. King Erridu-pizir, wrongly identified by some with the "king without name" of the Sumerian King List, was one of these great kings, not a governor of the south. The last part of the chapter is an update edition of the inscriptions of this king followed by a historical study of his deeds in the light of these inscriptions.

In Chapter Four the coming of the Hurrians to the region is studied. The first appearance of Hurrian groups based on Hurrian personal names is traced from the written sources. After this, the history of the region in this period is studied, the age of the Hurrian expansion, which mainly coincides with the Ur III period. It has been noticed that the Hurrian lands can be divided into two parts. The one, in the east Tigris region, was subject to severe warlike actions by the kings of Ur. The other, to the west of the Tigris and northern Syria, had peaceful relations with Ur, sometimes supported by marriages of political convenience. The reason for

this difference was the fact that the Hurrians of the Transtigris, especially those of the Sirwan-Diyāla basin, were close to the domains of the Ur III Empire, and any move southwards was a real threat to the existence of that empire.

Simurru, the important Transtigridian early state, dominates Chapter Five. Its oldest attestations up to the times dealt with by the study, its history, population, role in the history, and the inscriptions of its king Iddi(n)-Sîn are all studied in detail. It is here that the new royal inscription known as Haladiny is presented, its context, comments and a general historical study based on the inscriptions of this king. The site of Rabana is also studied, together with photographs and drawings made by the author and tentatively attributed to the temple of Nišba, the patron of Simurru. The temple of Nišba was built by this king and is mentioned in the Haladiny inscription. Finally two cylinder seals of Simurru and the location of Simurru are studied.

Chapter Six is the history of the region in the light of the Shemshāra archives and some Mari letters. The complex pattern of political relations and the ethnic texture of the region have been explained from evidence in the letters and an attempt to synchronize the chronology of the letters and related episodes is made. Some ideas about the Turukkeans have been discussed and alternatives for some controversial ones are suggested.

Another significant subject, the Turukkean revolt and its consequences on the fate of the kingdom of Šamšī-Adad I, is discussed in Chapter Seven. The related topics included here are: the rise of Zaziya, king of the Turukkeans, and his efforts to bring to an end the kingdom of Šamšī-Adad and of his son Išme-Dagan; expanding the kingdom of the Turukkeans to the west of the Tigris and the Habur region to join the other Hurrians there; and the formation of a widespread Hurrian kingdom in the whole Upper Mesopotamia. It has been shown how the control of the east Tigris plains was essential in the weakening and downfall of the Assyrian kingdom and, at the same time, essential in the strengthening of the Turukkean kingdom. With the appearance of Babylon as the most powerful kingdom in Mesopotamia under its king Hammurabi, the Hurrian kingdom of the Turukkū was at its peak and controlled the regions from the Urmia Lake in the east until the Habur and beyond in the west and to the regions of Kirkuk as far as Tikrit in the south. It has also been shown that the Hurrian expansion continued even in the period that followed the fall of the Assyrian kingdom, where the texts record Hurrian personal names associated with places that were formerly Amorite.

The last chapter, the eighth, is dedicated to an anthropological approach of the material discussed in the earlier chapters. The terms chiefdom and early state and the criteria of calling a given socio-political formation a state are evaluated. Then these criteria have been applied to the formations which appeared in ancient Kurdistan, especially those of Uruk and Ninevite V Cultures. It seems that the formation of the Ninevite V Culture can be described as chiefdoms, but developed into early states after the middle of the third millennium BC. Yet the geographical conditions imposed some differences in the socio-political structures that appeared there. Three types are identified: the small scattered polities, the one-unit polity, and a nomadic polity. Two state models from Kurdistan in the Middle Ages are summarily outlined for comparison with the older models. This shows that it was not impossible for widespread kingdoms to emerge despite the rugged terrain that can restrict communications and nucleation of population in large urban centres. At the same time, it is suggested that these geographical conditions influenced not only the political situation but also the mentality of its populations, as reflected in Hurrian personal names and the style, wording and formulation of the letters they exchanged. Finally, the rise to power of the Indo-Aryan groups in the Mittani kingdom is mentioned. How a small group could climb to the highest positions within another larger ethnic group is shown from a later similar model, the dynasty of the Ayyubids among the Arab majority.

The dissertation is closed with conclusions and bibliography.