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E. Douglas van Buren: Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria. Yale Oriental Series Researches, Volume XVI, Yale University Press, 1930, pp. LXIX, 287; Pl. LXVIII.

The last volume of this admirable series published by the Yale University, is due to Mr. Douglas Van Buren who gives contributes a study of Assyro-Babylonian clay figurines found in vast numbers during the excavations. The term Assyro-Babylonian should be understood here not geographically, but culturally, for the author does not limit himself ~~with~~ to Assyria and Babylonia proper, but also includes a rich material from Susa, brought to light by the French Delegation en Perse, of which the lamented de Morgan was the leader and inspirer. The material gather in the book includes finds from most of the famous archaeological sites of Mesopotamia such as Eridu with its prehistoric finds, Kish, Surghul and El Hibba, Erech, Larsa, Shurippak, Lagash, Ur, Nippur, Sippar, and Babylon, Ashur, Nineveh, Susa.

The author did well not to attempt ~~to~~ a chronological classification of his material. The difficulties of establishing a chronology of the terra-cotta figurines are evident, and the problems of different styles and techniques require further study. The material of book has been grouped according to types and the subjects of representation, such as female figures, goddesses, male figures, gods, divine couples, animals, religion and magic and daily life.

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very often furnish data

~~These clay figurines represent~~ an invaluable ~~material~~ for study of the ancient Mesopotamian popular beliefs, magic and daily life / costumes, occupations, etc. /.

These clay-figurines very often furnish invaluable data on the every-day life and types of ancient Mesopotamia. Many of them represent votive objects of offering, teraphims, objects illustrating popular beliefs, and images used in sympathetic magic. From the crude hieratic female figures we come to the composite scenes of religious sacrifice and worship

In many instances these clay figurines reproduce motifs well-known from the large compositions of the Assyro-Babylonian sculpture. Such as the hunting scene depicting Ashurbanipal spearing a lion, winged demons holding aloft his prey in his talons, and many others. Perhaps these figurines with miniature reproductions of famous mythical scenes were ~~some~~ a kind of religious memento sold in temples to the devotees.

An interesting class of clay figurines is formed by the figurines representing Parthian or Scythian riders. The author describes a number of such figurines, some of them of a very crude workmanship. On Pl. XVII, fig. 81 & 82, the author gives the ~~photo~~ reproduction of such a riding figure, which he describes " a lady rides a horse " and dates it as belonging to the first century AD.

I believe the figure represented a nomad horseman, dressed in a short tunic fastened round the waist by a belt, ~~and~~ baggy trousers and loose leather boots of "scythian" pattern. The figure wears not a veil, but ~~a/x/~~ the tightly fitting head-dress of the Iranian nomads / perhaps made of a coat of mail /, which is fastened under the rider's chin, and covers the upper part of his shoulders. The figure sits astride, ~~the~~ his legs ~~placed~~ drawn ~~thrown~~ backwards a characteristic of the nomad way of riding. His horse is a typical steppe horse with a broad chest and short and strong neck. Short body and a rather heavy head. The horse's mane is cut according to the steppe fashion. The horse has a bridle and breast-plate which is ornamented by oval plaques.

The heraldic animal figures of Pl. XLVII, fig. 228, and ^{representing to} ibexes / Pl. XLVIII, fig. 229 bear a striking ~~resemblance~~ recall the ~~bronze~~ analogical bronze figures from Cappadocia and the newly discovered bronze finds of Luristan and Western ^{Iran} Persia. ~~U~~ Upham Pope, London Illustrated News /.

The problem of these heraldic figures ~~merits~~ ~~a~~ ~~special~~ and its Assyro-Babylonian and ~~Iran~~ Central Asian aspects merit a special study.

Mr. van Buren's book is a welcome addition to our knowledge of Mesopotamian culture.