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ABSTRACT

For many years, archaeological research within the Piedmont region of the Zagros Foothills in northern Iraq has been left aside in favour of the extensive surveys carried out in the vast Mesopotamian alluvial plains. This paper presents the preliminary results of the first season of the Piedmont Region Archaeological Project's (PiRAP) survey carried out in the summer of 2023 within a sector of the Zagros Foothills in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq at the border between the Dohuk and Ninawa provinces. With the purpose of filling a "gap" in the knowledge of the archaeological panorama of this region, one of the goals of the PiRAP project is to study the settlement dynamics of the Piedmont region and compare the data with those obtained by other projects for the surrounding plains. A specific methodology has been applied to achieve this goal. It was based on a stratified sampling strategy¹ and enabled the documentation of 145 archaeological sites, dating from the Early Palaeolithic to the Ottoman period (from the XIV century). The preliminary results of this work shows a palimpsest landscape filled with different types of sites. Systematic and diachronic study will allow a better understanding of the human-landscape settlement dynamics of the region in the long term.

KEYWORDS

Landscape archaeology, mountains, human settlement dynamics, Zagros Hilly Flanks, South-western Asia

CÉCILE BIGOT, *Quelle Idée et quelle Réalité de la Frontière pour les Règnes Médio-Assyrien et Médio-Babylonien?* » 15

ABSTRACT

During the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age, Mesopotamia was territorially divided between Middle Assyria in the north and the Kassite dynasty of Karduniaš in the south, driven by a continuous effort to exist as Great Kingdoms on the international scene, making the territorial definition a major issue. In this context, we propose to re-study the concept of frontier and border from an emic and an ethic point of view, in order to show that it was not an unthought-of aspect of the Mesopotamian practice and mentality during the second half of the II millennium BC. Studying the rich vocabulary and its polysemy in akkadian and sumerian, but also the occurrences in the texts (political, administrative, but also omens and hymns), we wish to show the importance of such concept, which can sometimes even be sacralised. By recalling the principles of contemporary International Law concerning the border, we also wish to demonstrate the elements of continuity in the practice up to the present day (much more flexible than often imagined), so as to counter the argument of the supposed conceptual gap with Antiquity. As an exemplification applied to the archaeological and textual datas in the territories between Assyria and Karduniash (in the Middle Euphrates Valley and the Middle Diyala region), we propose to use the concepts of border-zone, border-contact and shared territories to illustrate the extent and particular forms that the wide notion of *frontière* can take in its material evidence.

KEYWORDS

Middle Assyria, Kassite, border, international law, material culture

ROBERTO DAN - ANNARITA STEFANIA BONFANTI, *Three Fragmentary Inscribed Shields of Argišti, Son of Minua, from Karmir-blur/Teišebai URU, Kept in the History Museum of Armenia*..... » 35

ABSTRACT

The site of Karmir-blur constitutes one of the most spectacular archaeological contexts of the Armenian Highlands. The long excavations conducted here by B.B. Piotrovskij have revealed decisive aspects regarding the presence and dissolution of Urartian power in these regions and have yielded an incredible series of objects belonging to both the royal Urartian and local spheres. The aim of this paper is to present to the scientific community three fragmentary royal Urartian shields excavated at the site in 1956. Epigraphic analysis has established that they were objects commissioned by Argišti (I), son of Minua, and that they can be framed in the problematic issue of the complex relationships between Karmir-blur and Erebuni.

KEYWORDS

Metal shields, royal inscriptions, Urartu, Karmir-blur, Erebuni

JÖRG W.E. FABBINDER - CARLO LIPPOLIS - VITO MESSINA - GIACOMO PATRUCCO - VALENTINA SANTORO - ANTONIA SPANÒ, *Preliminary Report on the Campaigns 2022-2023 of the Italian Archaeological Expedition at Seleucia on the Tigris (IAES)*..... » 55

ABSTRACT

This report makes available the preliminary results of field research conducted at Tell 'Umar/Seleucia on the Tigris by the Italian Archaeological Expedition (IAES), in the months of October-November 2022 and April 2023. The IAES started activity anew after a long gap, resuming research being conducted for decades at the site since 1963. Geomatic and magneto-geophysical surveys have been conducted with the purpose of better defining the topography of the

archaeological area and acquiring new data on some features of the north part of the city. A test-trench was opened to check stratigraphy at a point very close to one of the former excavations.

KEYWORDS

Seleucia on the Tigris, image-based geomatic survey, magneto-geophysical survey, test-trench

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ABSTRACT

Water resources are crucial for stability and economic prosperity in arid or semi-arid regions like Southwest Asia and North Africa, where water is scarce, and droughts are increasingly common due to climate change, demographic pressure, and unsustainable development. Therefore, from the second half of the 20th century onwards, the damming and impounding of rivers have become widespread practices to the detriment of localised communities and archaeological resources.

Building on data and experience so far acquired by the authors, this paper assesses some of the critical research trajectories related to the impact of dam construction on the local heritage to stimulate discussions on the use of modern technologies, such as remote sensing, in pre and post-flooding assessment, the monitoring protocols for the active protection of the flooded sites and the involvement of policymakers and local communities in the decision-making processes.

KEYWORDS

Dam, cultural heritage, Southwest Asia, memoryscape, heritagescape, salvage excavations

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ABSTRACT

In autumn 2023 water in the Dokan Lake (Kurdistan Region of Iraq) subsided to levels not seen since 2015, and inspired a new archaeological survey to document sites normally flooded and inaccessible. The survey was organised and executed by the Antiquity directorates of Sulaymania and Raparin in collaboration with the Pisa Archaeological Project on the Rania Plain, and took place 19-21/12. A total of 11 sites, 4 of which were not visited by archaeologists since the 1950s, and 4 sites never recorded previously, were visited and sampled. We provide here a first report on the results and attempt to contextualise these within the wider settlement history of the Rania Plain.

KEYWORDS

Kurdistan, Rania, archaeology, survey

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a short account of “second-phase” heritage salvage “in action”, in the Dokan Dam zone in NE Iraq. Closure of the Dokan dam in 1959, which inundated a large portion of the Rania Plain, was preceded by archaeological survey and salvage excavations. Subsequently this area was long neglected due to other priorities and long-term political unrest. Since 2012 new heritage projects have been initiated on the Rania Plain, and are busy recording the impact of flooding, salvaging fast-eroding remains, contextualising displaced antiquities, and reconstructing the history of the area in all its dimensions.

KEYWORDS

Kurdistan, heritage salvage, Rania Plain, Tell Shemshara

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ABSTRACT

The Iranian plateau, characterised by its scarcity of water, has seen the development of historical settlements along river valleys and water resources, while nomadic communities have determined their migration routes based on water availability and pastures. Throughout its history, the region has implemented various water management solutions, including dams, qanats, and reservoirs, all contributing to Iran’s diverse cultural heritage, with some still in use today. Since the beginning of modern dam construction in the 1950s, Iran has emerged as one of the largest dam builders in Southwest Asia. However, this extensive dam construction has brought about adverse impacts on historical and cultural sites, landscapes, and intangible heritage. For several decades, there was no specific policy addressing the preservation of cultural heritage within dam projects. Concerns raised by cultural heritage experts eventually led to the mandatory inclusion of cultural and historical impact assessments, along with rescue operations, in the overall scope of construction projects.

Despite recent rescue archaeology efforts, they have not fully met the requirements of safeguarding cultural heritage. This paper scrutinises the existing policies related to dam construction and cultural heritage in Iran, offering

suggestions to enhance the integration of cultural heritage considerations into development and dam construction programmes.

KEYWORDS

Cultural heritage, Iran, dam construction, rescue archaeology, heritage management

AYŞE TUBA ÖKSE, Dam Projects and Archaeological Heritage in the Upper Tigris Region..... » 159

ABSTRACT

The establishment of dams occupying wide areas causes large-scale risks to the cultural heritage. Flooding destroys submerged archaeological deposits, although the excavated areas are covered with geotextile and filled with earth. Since water disintegrates archaeological contexts, these sites cannot be excavated properly anymore. Moreover, the archaeological sites in the irrigation zones are also at risk. Salvage projects concerning the archaeological heritage submerged by a total of 15 dams constructed on the Upper Tigris region began in 1990. The excavations were carried out in the reservoir area of the Batman Dam and continued in the Ilisu Dam and affected more than 300 archaeological sites. During *ca.* 20 years, 42 sites have been excavated. In 2018 began salvage excavations at the Silvan Dam-Complex consisting of eight smaller reservoirs on northern tributaries of the Tigris River. Although intensive field surveys and salvage excavations have been carried out in all these dams, the time was too short for excavating sites with deep archaeological deposits. Although an immense amount of data is provided, only *ca.* 8% of several mounds have so far been excavated. In order to put forward a feasible work-plan and adequate budget for long-term fieldwork, intensive surveys, including remote sensing and measuring the depth of deposits should be conducted already during the planning of the dam. For instance, according to intensive surveys at the construction area of the Ilisu Dam, half of the sites have been rescued by re-designing the construction, and a feasible work-plan based on depths of archaeological deposits measured from drill cores enabled sufficient work at the remaining sites. A more effective solution would be bringing alternative ways into action, instead of constructing dams.

KEYWORDS

Ilisu Dam, Ambar Dam, Silvan Dam, Batman Dam, salvage project, Upper Tigris

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ABSTRACT

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KEYWORDS

Remote sensing, change detection, R, Google Earth Engine, QGIS

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the application of a reproducible tool, already tested by the authors on Lake Mosul, for the post-flooding assessment of the heritage sites impacted by the construction of dam reservoirs. This study examines the Tishreen Dam Reservoir (Syria) on the Middle Euphrates as a case study. The dam's construction lasted from 1991 to 1999, resulting in a 60 km long artificial lake. Salvage surveys and excavations were carried out during the construction period, shedding light on the richness of the region's cultural heritage. This area has gained attention in recent years due to an unprecedented drought that revealed several archaeological sites and villages that were believed to be lost for good. Based on the results of a new set of cost-efficient tools for observing the 'emersion patterns' of archaeological sites, we present an overview of the dam construction impact and an assessment of damage timescales and extent at the various sites involved.

KEYWORDS

Remote sensing, change detection technique, Syria, Middle Euphrates, Tishreen Dam, heritagescape

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ABSTRACT

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and heritage management issues. This has fostered an environment in which heritage sites are exceptionally vulnerable to illicit human activity, from encroachments on sites to illegal excavations and looting.

KEYWORDS

Tishreen Basin, Syrian heritage, climate change, conflict, looting

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