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## THE GREAT MOUND

IN the sixth millennium before Christ a migrating horde swept from the east over India, Persia and Mesopotamia. Many more waves of invasion were to break over the hills and valleys of these lands; it is not even likely that this was the first. But we still know so little about the early movements of man in Mesopotamia that we cannot say whether any race was there to receive this horde, for wherever their remains have been found they lie at the bottom of all other identifiable human remains.

Their most typical product was their earthenware vessels, for cooking and other household purposes, painted with distinctive geometric designs. This pottery has already been found in test pits and trial trenches at such sites as Tell Kukuteni in Baluchistan, at Susa and Tepe Hissar in Persia, at Tell Halaf and Nineveh in northern Mesopotamia, and at al-Ubaid near Ur in Babylonia; but with it has come to light nothing of the culture, no associated objects, only broken sherds of the vessels themselves.

In spite of the vast territory these peoples once controlled, literally nothing has been known about them—nothing about their racial type, their language, their arts and crafts, nothing except that they painted their pottery. For lack of any better description they may be called the "painted pottery peoples." Yet in the history of mankind no race now presents at once so potentially important a position together with so deep a mystery. It will call for the intense archaeological endeavors of many scholars for the next generation.

The most sensible first step is the systematic one: to select some one city of this race and excavate it soberly and quietly. If written tablets are not found we must be content to watch for the muter testimonies of such sombre finds as potsherds and bone pins and obsidian razors and the battered stubs of mud walls. When by these means we have reconstructed the culture of this people, in some of its tangible aspects, at one city, we may turn to survey from a new and higher observation



post the other unclassified primitive vestiges which tend to be associated with these remote peoples.

In 1927 Dr. E. A. Speiser, exploring the mounds clustered in the upper Tigris valley, paid particular attention to the "great mound," Tepe Gawra. It had been observed by previous travelers but its significance had not been suspected. Later that year Dr. Speiser was able to run a successful and enlightening trial trench with funds supplied by the American School of Oriental Research in Baghdad. Of twenty cities neatly stratified on the tell, the lowest nine showed painted pottery as their typical find.

Without this pottery the excavation of Tepe Gawra would have been reserved for a future generation. To the University Museum, however, the prospect and the privilege of realizing not one but nine cities of the painted pottery peoples was irresistible; and in the friendly rivalry between institutions competing for the honor of leading the journey back to man's origin, the approaching completion of our work at Ur suggested the choice of a still more ancient site. An alliance was struck with the American School in Baghdad, and with Dr. Speiser as field director, assisted by Mr. Bache, work was begun at Tepe Gawra, level one, in 1930; this in face of the depression and the expensive and potentially thankless task of clearing away the overlying debris of eleven later strata in order to clear the mound for the real work. Later, when levels six and eight yielded their extraordinary cultures, adding new chapters to history, and level nine gave up the burial chambers with rich finds of gold and electrum reported in February by the press of the entire world, the importance of Tepe Gawra's succeeding civilizations received due recognition.

None the less, level twelve remained the real goal of the excavators for eight years. By exploring thoroughly the city of this level, and then earlier levels in turn right down to level twenty which may go back to 5500 B. C., the story of the architecture and of the arts and crafts of this ancient tribe will be unrolled and, if luck favors, some account of their religious worship. How complete this history may be depends on the future fortune of the excavators.

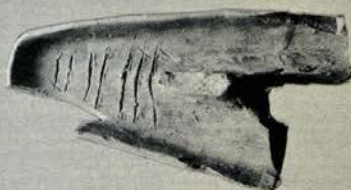
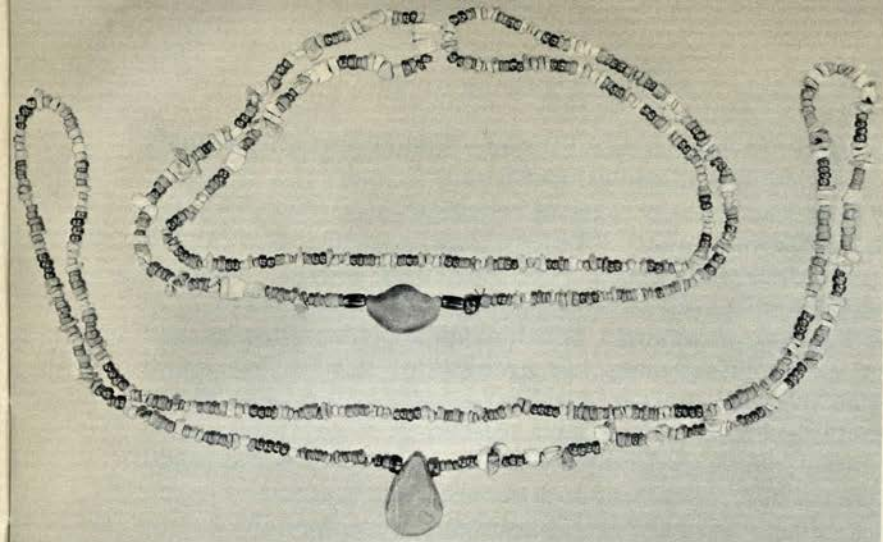
Level twelve was partially uncovered during the 1934-5 season recently closed, and the first news of the architecture of the painted pottery peoples is here given. Press reports, stating that part of level thirteen was laid bare and giving a name to the town, are erroneous; but the statement that level twelve goes back to about 4000 B. C. has



PLATE II

THE TEPE GAWRA  
EXPEDITION

Beads of turquoise and  
carnelian, with carnelian  
pendants: probably of the  
period of Level IX



TEPE GAWRA

A Burial Jar of Painted  
Ware, from Level XI;  
Seals from various Levels;  
Clay Model of a Boat from  
Level XII; A General View  
of Excavations in Level XI





the approval of Dr. Speiser and Mr. Bache. This city was 3000 years old 3000 years ago when Homer sang of Troy.

Over the area was a heavy layer of ashes and charred refuse; the city had been destroyed by fire. When this had been cleared away the forms of the building walls began to appear; they were of *libn*, mud brick, the typical material of Mesopotamia; yet Tepe Gawra is in sight of the Kurdish mountains. If the painted pottery peoples had originated in a mountain country with architecture in stone, we would have expected them to use the more familiar material; or else by the period of level twelve they had lived so long in Mesopotamia as to adopt the customs demanded by the country. In any case, the architecture surpassed that of the three succeeding periods at Tepe Gawra. One large building was so extensive that it may have been the palace of a chief. Of the many rooms the largest measured about thirty-seven by seventeen feet; its walls were coated with fine white plaster to conceal their humble material; this is the earliest use of wall plaster yet recorded, but not the earliest evidence of plutocratic selfconsciousness for in the caves of Southern France palaeolithic man and woman tinted their skins.

The mastery of the secret of burning lime for mortar and stucco was one step forward. The walls of this same White Room contain another: they were carefully oriented to the cardinal points of the compass, showing that the architect was able to command the services of an able astronomer or, more likely, was himself a learned man with some knowledge of the stars. Remembering the later accomplishments of Babylonian observers we need not be surprised at this early interest in the heavenly bodies.

It is unlikely that this building was a temple. The numerous vessels of pottery and stone found in it indicate that it was used as a dwelling by many people. In the corner of one room was a small oven. In this was a cooking pot, its lid, still in place. It contained the bones of the meat which was being cooked for dinner when the unknown enemy charged the walls and ended a civilization. Many years later the deserted mound was smoothed off by the conquerors or their descendants, who built the next city, level eleven, disclosed by recent excavations and reported in the last issue of the *Bulletin*.

In spite of the progressive architecture, there are constant reminders that we are dealing with an older city than modern science has known. For instance, metals have been left far behind; gold was found in level



nine, but its possessors were not acquainted with the processes of smelting and refining and working metals, but obtained them from metal-working tribes in the mountains. In what mountains? When we find out we will have taken a tremendous new step forward.

Such peoples, who have the use of imported metals without the knowledge of how to work them, are called "chalcolithic," a word which means "copper-stone" and signifies the transition from one stage of civilization to another; but level twelve was a true neolithic culture, totally unacquainted with metal tools. Instead they used implements and weapons made of stone, bone and wood; yet ten years ago leading authorities believed that no neolithic culture would be found in Mesopotamia.

The tools of these materials so far found show that the principal manufactures of "Gawra 12" were weaving, leather working, basketry and pottery. Commercial transactions in these products and in such other valuables as the rare blue lapis lazuli were carried on by barter; money was unknown and there was no other medium of exchange. It was nearly 3500 years later that Croesus minted the first coins.

How such goods were transported presents an interesting problem. Camels were not available. We used to believe that the Hittites or the Hyksos or other ill-defined invaders owed their sudden military supremacy to their possession of fleet, powerful cavalry not enjoyed by their opponents; but we have since learned that horses were known at a remote period in Babylonia. It seems likely that donkeys had been domesticated much earlier. But one new find at Tepe Gawra, not later than level twelve and perhaps even belonging to level thirteen, indicates the principal traffic; it is a clay model of a boat and tells us of water-borne commerce on the Tigris and its tributaries.

The study of the religions of primitive races begins with the study of their burial customs. Respect for the departed had not progressed, at Tepe Gawra in 4000 B. C., to the point where surviving relatives build large underground burial vaults, such as those of level nine already mentioned, to receive the wooden coffins of their lamented dead; but several large jars, painted in monochrome like other typical specimens of level twelve, have been discovered to contain the bones of infants. The bodies were not cremated but simply placed in jars and interred. How adults were buried remains to be learned; perhaps they were carried to a cemetery in the plain below the mound.

We do not know and we are likely never to know anything certain



about the language of the painted pottery peoples. They were probably not acquainted with writing; it was a thousand years before the first groping pictographs were made at Ur, and the inhabitants of level twelve of Tepe Gawra, at least, left no written documents. We will never know even their name for the city.

In the course of further research we must eventually discover the region of the earth's surface whence came the people who built the first primitive settlement known only as Tepe Gawra twenty. Then we may be able to follow the wanderings and eventual fortunes of their relatives who migrated to other fields; and so we may come to know their racial and linguistic stocks. From other analogies it seems likely that they were associated with the Mongoloid or Circassian peoples; all conclusions along this line will contribute toward a solution of the still vexing problem of the origin of the Sumerians and their disputed relationship with the painted pottery peoples. Just so do we hope some day to learn the identity of the strange invaders who wiped out level twelve in turn and supplanted it with another culture.

Level twelve has produced none of the flat seals which are common in later strata at most Mesopotamian sites, but of such seals two impressions came to light, made on wet clay which was then baked into a record beyond time's power to destroy.

If we compare them with seal impressions found in level eleven they are disappointing; among the latter is one which seems to show the earliest brewery (two men stirring the contents of a vat with long poles) and a number show ably carved naturalistic sheep and other animals.

These seals were used to consecrate, that is, identify property. Their designs were, in effect, monograms of their owners. From inconspicuous finds important deductions can often be made. If individuals had property, the Tepe Gawrans were not communistic nor, at the other political extreme, did all the property belong to one ruling noble. Again, if an enemy destroyed the town to take its fields, we may guess that six thousand years ago mankind had already felt the pinch of hunger.

The presence of even primitive seals is very encouraging; frequently they carry religious scenes of these people, or record incidents in the phantom lives of their mythological heroes. By these means it is often possible to follow the thin thread of racial tradition where the absence of written records leaves no other clue.

No matter what vast gaps remain when Tepe Gawra has been dug



and we have learned all the history its twenty cities contain, we know already that the same essential story of humanity will come out. The first find made in level thirteen, at the edge of the mound where an impetuous Kurdish workman sank his pick below the floors of twelve, was a slender little vase. It once held the kohl with which some far-away beauty darkened her eyelids against her lover's visit.

J. J.

## ATTIC VASES FROM MEMORIAL HALL

THE loan that is described in the following article represents more than a merely satisfactory acquisition to the University Museum's collections. It signifies more fundamentally, we believe, a conscientious effort on the part of those interested in the general art collections of Philadelphia to effect a logical disposition of the various categories of objects. In exchange for this loan of classical pottery the Museum deposited with the Pennsylvania Museum of Art certain Islamic objects which were agreed to pertain to the scope of its collections rather than ours and to be more useful under their control. On the other hand, the extraordinary wealth of classical pottery in Philadelphia is by this exchange of loans first adequately brought together in one place for the benefit alike of connoisseur, scholar and student.

AN exchange has been effected with the Pennsylvania Museum of Art whereby the University Museum has received as a permanent loan a collection of Greek and Roman vases and terracottas which has for years been housed in Memorial Hall, some few of them exhibited in the gallery of ceramics on the first floor, the greater number, however, stored in the basement.

The nucleus of this collection was due to the generosity of Wm. S. Vaux, who in 1882 bequeathed to Memorial Hall some seventy vases and lamps. This group was increased in 1888 by a gift of Italic vases, and again in 1891 by a gift from Mrs. John L. Harrison of Greek vases and figurines. In 1899 Dr. Francis W. Lewis added some eighty pieces, of which one is the chef d'oeuvre of the collection and others are of great interest. The last and largest gift was made in 1903 by Dr. R. H. Lamborn, who gave a varied collection of vases, lamps, and terracotta figurines. An adequate account of all this material is naturally beyond the compass of these pages, but a description of the more important Attic vases may be of interest both to scholars and to laymen.

First in date is the dainty "little master" cup of Plate IV, from the