

group 5. In the older periods (A to E) group 5 certainly predominates; and the now rarer gray vessels are distinguished by a very fine incised ornamentation. In connection with this highly developed, wholly wheel-made pottery, there occur characteristic types of copper weapons and implements. Iron is wholly wanting, and may, therefore, be supposed to be unknown.

The deeper layers of this older culture of the South Kurgan, like those of the North Kurgan, have been explored only to a limited extent. The systematic establishment of the succession of layers is here impossible. On the other hand, the ceramic finds point to an intimate connection between these deeper layers and the middle ones, so that here, as in the northern kurgan, they can all be combined into one great whole. To what extent the prototypes of the development of periods A to F are to be sought in the culture equipment of the deeper strata can be better determined by the results of future exploration than by the study of the finds now in hand.

In any event culture III represents a third copper age epoch, and in comparison with the two older ones of the northern kurgan it may pass for the brilliant epoch of the copper age of Transcaspia. The systematic treatment of the special finds may confirm this statement.

A word more in regard to the origin and mode of growth of the two hills. In both of them the strata accumulated with a continuous uniform development; in each kurgan by far the greater mass belongs to the earlier culture (I in the North Kurgan and culture III, in the South Kurgan). The thickness of the strata in each amounts to 60 feet and 72 feet, respectively.* This can only be explained as being due to a relatively rapid growth of the deposits. Such a rapid development was certainly favored by the method of construction, for the clay houses resolved themselves upon their destruction into compact masses, which are indistinguishable from the natural clay soil. In addition to this, the inhabitants themselves have contributed to this rapidity of growth by continued changes in their construction. This is shown in terrace C in the South Kurgan.

The considerable height of the hill was produced not only by periodic destruction of the lower settlements, as we have seen in terrace B, but by the elevation of the settlements during each period through the continual renewal and raising of the earthen floors. We can, therefore, understand how similar finds can occur at considerable differences of level without being accompanied by changes in the character of the culture. The definite results of the observations made at the South Kurgan must also apply to the North Kurgan, and must be applicable generally, wherever the architecture is limited to unburnt bricks, without stone foundations and stone floors.

In the case of these hills, the inhabitants may, in consequence of the custom of making burials in the dwellings, have found a special reason for the continual changing and renewal of the floors. In connection with such an explanation, I can not neglect to meet two objections, or contradictory explanations. It might be suggested that the hills had been used alternately as dwelling and burial

*Counting from the base, which in each kurgan is buried about 20 feet deep in the plain.—R. P.