

CHAPTER IX.—CONCLUSION.

The problem of the relation of Transcaspia in prehistoric times to other regions of Asia, and especially to Europe, is all the more important because the pottery of Anau and its ornamentation show throughout a non-European character. The painting of pottery begins to play a part in Europe in the younger periods of its older phases of culture. Moreover, the style of decoration of Old Anau differs entirely from the Old European systems. Indeed, with its rows of erect-standing triangles, which form the foundation of the "tent-ornamentation," it stands in direct opposition to the system of horizontal and vertical ornament, which we can follow as an Old European peculiarity through all the prehistoric epochs of Europe.

Now, if we seek in Asia parallels to the pottery of Anau, we are confronted, it is true, by wide gaps in the knowledge of the oldest culture epochs of the neighboring continent. Only in Persia, in the very old Tell of Susa, where De Morgan* has exposed several superimposed cultures, have discoveries been made which might be compared with the cultures of Transcaspia. In the deepest layers of the hill, 24.9 meters below its summit, there occurred a finely painted pottery which, according to De Morgan, was even wheel-made (De Morgan, plates xvii to xx). The layers lying above this are characterized by a coarser pottery, which is also painted (plates xxi, xxii), and which marks the decay of the older group.† We have, therefore, to regard the painting of pottery as an essential characteristic of the oldest cultures in Persia as well as in Turkestan. More than this can not be said, for the decorative motifs and the style of painting have nothing in common. No opinion can be given as regards form, because, unfortunately, in De Morgan's publication importance is given only to the decoration. However, the oldest culture groups of Susa and Anau can not be widely separated in time, for in the Tell of Susa also, artefacts of flint were of constant occurrence in the lower and lowest layers. Generally speaking, as regards the occurrence of flint, the hills of Susa and Anau show much similarity, for De Morgan found it present in all the layers and concluded (p. 191) that artefacts of silica were either used during the historical epochs in Susa or had found their way into younger layers through disturbance of the earth-masses. There is no way of determining which of these views is correct.

The prehistoric relation of Central Asia to Europe appears in an entirely different light when we examine further the elements of culture and the social peculiarities of Old Anau. Of these the first to attract our attention is the burial custom.

*Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse, I, 183.

†The succession of the layers can be seen in a smaller writing of the same author—Bulletin et Mémoires de la Société d'Anthropol. de Paris, 1902, p. 712 ff.