THE LATE BRONZE AGE NECROPOLIS
OF KANGURTTUT IN SOUTH-WESTERN TAJIKISTAN
(MIDDLE OF 2ND MILLENIUM B.C.)

Abstract: From the last part of the 3rd millennium B.C. Southern Tajikistan was, together with Southern Uzbekistan and North-Western Afghanistan, part of a geographical and cultural entity that the archaeologists of Central Asia call Bactria. The civilization which developed in Bactria is characterized as “Sapalli culture” (after Sapalli Tepe, in Southern Uzbekistan). The sites so far excavated are the cemeteries of Tandyriul and Zar Kamar, the settlement and necropolis of Kangurttut, the settlements of Teguzak, Dakhana, Baraki Kurug, the cemeteries of Nurek, the site of Gelot and the necropolis of Farkhor/Parkhar, in the valley of the Kyzylsu. In the necropolis of Kangurttut, 91 graves were excavated, of which 88 were cenotaphs. The prevalence of cenotaph burial is particularly evident in the necropolis of Kangurttut and in the two cemeteries of Nurek. The settlement of Kangurttut enjoyed a relative well-being and it was possible to observe the very beginning of a social diversification. The last period of Molali and the Bustan phase saw a significant change in the economy and, moreover, a change in the beliefs and funeral practices which had led to the great increase of the cenotaphs and caused the marked reduction of personal objects in the burials. The study of this necropolis suggests a change in the Molali phase of Sapalli culture which is characteristic of Southern Tajikistan and is not documented in Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Keywords: Power, sovereignty, necropolis, grave furniture, rituals.

The aim of this paper is to present briefly the preliminary findings of research on the funerary rituals, and the possible evidence of the beginning of social differentiation as they can be seen from analysis of the grave goods of the necropolis of Kangurttut, in the upper valley of the river Vakhsh in Southern Tajikistan. Before approaching the analysis, however, it is necessary to give a rapid overview of the cultural development of Southern Tajikistan in the late 3rd and 2nd millennium B.C. and its environment.

From the end of the 3rd millennium Southern Tajikistan (fig. 1) was, together with Southern Uzbekistan and North-Western Afghanistan, part of a geographical and cultural entity that archaeologists of Central Asia call Bactria, the name of the area in the 1st millennium B.C., when it became a satrapy of the Achaemenian Empire, and later, during the Empire of Alexander the Great. From a cultural point of view Bactria was, in turn, part of the greater Namazga V-VI civilization (2500-1500 B.C.). Namazga culture originated in Southern Turkmenistan between the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age (5th -4th millennium B.C.) and developed eastwards in the late Early and Middle Bronze Ages (3rd millennium- middle of the 2nd B.C.), spreading...
through the basin of the Murghab river, in central Turkmenistan (the ancient Margiana)\(^2\), and finally through Southern Uzbekistan, Northwestern Afghanistan and Southern Tajikistan. Here Sapalli culture, a variant of Namazga, had developed, in the Namazga V-VI Periods (last centuries of the 3rd-mid 2nd millennium B.C.) (Kohl, 1981, pp. vii-xxxix).

In Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, this culture was characterized by large fortress-settlements, with massive impressing buildings and temples, whereas it resulted in apparently less monumental and simpler character in Tajikistan, where only villages and necropolises have been discovered, at least up till now. This civilization is characterized as “Sapalli culture” (after Sapalli Tepe, in Southern Uzbekistan, the earliest site discovered and one of the most important), or alternatively as Bactro-Margian Archaeological Complex (BMAC) or Oxus Civilization. It was a civilization based on agriculture, characterized by imposing fortress-settlements (such as in Namazga V-VI culture, in the Middle and Late Bronze Age), like Sapalli Tepe, Djarkutan, Molali Tepe in Uzbekistan, and Dashly 1 and 3 in the Dashly oasis in Northern Afghanistan, where a fortress and a temple have been discovered.

Sapalli culture developed rich and refined art and crafts, taking inspiration from the iconographic heritage of Mesopotamia and Iran but reinterpreting the near Eastern and Iranian prototypes, achieving an original style and an iconographic repertory of its own. This can be seen mostly in the centres of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, in the finds from the great fortress-settlements and in the necropolises. In Southern Tajikistan, as we have seen, Bactrian civilization took a different, perhaps somewhat less imposing aspect. No monumental centres like those of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan have yet been found. Until only a few years ago, moreover, the general opinion of scholars had been that Sapalli culture had reached this area only in its latest phases, Molali and Bustan (middle and second half of the 2nd millennium B.C., i.e. 1500-1350 B.C.), as the earlier Sapalli (2400-1900 B.C.), Djarkutan (1900-1500 B.C.), Kuzali (1700-1600 B.C.), were not documented.

The discovery of the sites of Farkhor, Kangurttut-2, Darnaichi, and Gelot, significantly extended the chronological span of the cultures of Southwestern Tajikistan and Northern Bactria as a whole. From research on the burial ground of Farkhor it emerges that this area

\(^2\) Namazga culture developed in Southern Turkmenistan around the 5th millennium B.C. (Period of Namazga I 4800-4000 B.C.), in the Early Chalcolithic Age and lasted till the 2nd millennium (Periods of Namazga VI (2200-1500) and Yaz I (1500-1100 B.C.), Late Bronze-Early Iron Ages.
was inhabited already in the late Eneolithic – Early Bronze Age (last part of the 4th-beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C., corresponding to late Namazga III – early Namazga IV Periods of Southern Turkmenistan). Seven excavation areas have been selected for this study and 55 burials have been found in this area, on the slopes of the hills of loess. All the burials are characterized by their shaft-catacomb or pit structure. The skeletons are in crouching positions. Ceramic vessels, bronze and silver items (knives, spatulas, pins, mirrors) were placed in the graves. Items found in the burials also included stone objects (lamps, 'rods', knobs, spindles, arrow heads) and pebbles. Almost every grave contained numerous beads and pendants made of lapis lazuli, agate, turquoise, carnelian and gold.

Since 2007, however, a new evidence of Sapalli and Djarkutan phases was found in Southern Tajikistan, at least in the extreme South, near the border with Afghanistan: the archaeologists of the Joint Italian-Russian-Tajik research project between 2007 and 2014 have unearthed in the site of Gelot, not many kilometres from the Afghan border, a number of burials, including, a particularly rich female burial dating to the Sapalli-Djarkutan phases (Vinogradova &

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3 For a description of the 'catacomb' graves see below, p. 6.
4 The project is conducted by the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale of Rome and, more recently, by the Fondazione Ing. Carlo Maurilio Lerici, the Institute for Oriental Studies of Moscow and the Institute for History, Archaeology and Ethnography of Dushanbe.
In light of these discoveries, we can consider that the first phases of the Sapalli culture are now documented, at least in the southernmost part of Southern Tajikistan (Lombardo et al., 2014; Bobomullaev et al., 2017).

Between the second quarter and the mid 2nd millennium B.C., besides the Sapalli farmers, the presence of nomadic tribes is also documented in Southern Tajikistan. These belonged to the great Andronovo culture, which originated in Siberia and spread in central Asia and even farther westwards, reaching southern Russia, the Caucasus and splitting into many groups. One of these groups found its way to the Zeravshan area and Southern Tajikistan, mainly practicing sheep breeding and metal working. There was an intense interchange between the sedentary farming people of the Sapalli culture and the nomads of Andronovo. The Andronovo groups which had settled in the Zeravshan valley acted as intermediaries in the exchange between the farming populations and the other main Andronovo groups, which had settled in the Zeravshan valley, between Pendjikent and Bukhara and in the Auminzatau mountains, near the sources of the metals, especially copper and tin: the nomads exchanged raw metal, and finished objects for the agricultural products of the farmers (Avanesova, 1991, p. 80). A new mixed nomadic-sedentary culture originated from this interaction, known as Beshkent-Vakhsh culture (from the valleys where it was first discovered, the river Vakhsh valley and the valley of Beshkent), which had some characteristics of the Andronovo and others of Sapalli culture but also some original characters of its own. Some necropolises and a few settlements ascribed to this culture are documented in Southern Tajikistan (Vinogradova, 2004, pp. 77-98).

The sites excavated so far are mostly located in the northern part of Southern Tajikistan, in the Hissar valley: the cemeteries of Tandyrul and Zar Kamar and some isolated Sapalli burials in Sassanid contexts at Tupkhona and Kara Pichok. In the upper Vaksh valley the excavated sites are the settlement and necropolis of Kangurttut, discussed below, the settlements of Teguzak, Dakhana, Baraki Kurug and the cemeteries of Nurek.

The southernmost part of Southern Tajikistan has not been widely investigated – only a few Sapalli sites have been discovered, of which I will mention here only the necropolis of Farkhor/Parkhar, in the valley of the Kyzylsu river, in the Kulyab district: the site lies under a Muslim cemetery and has therefore been excavated only partially (Götzelt et al., 1998, p. 130).
As described above, research carried out in 2007-2014 in the Gelot area led to the documentation of the presence of the early phases of Sapalli culture in the extreme South of Southern Tajikistan. Further investigations have been conducted over the years, since the excavations of Gelot, in the site of Farkhor/Parkhar, to the extreme South of Tajikistan, a few miles from the Afghan border.

The picture of the archaeology of Southern Tajikistan emerging from the above outline serves to illustrate the cultural environment of the farming sites in the Bronze Age, and particularly of the necropolis of Kangurttut in the Late Bronze Period.

5 From the evidence of the grave goods of Farkhor we can infer that its ancient people had contacts with the farmers of the south of Central Asia, from the sites of Altyn Depe, Gonur Depe in Turmenistan, Hissar IIIIC and Shahdad in Iran and from those of Afghanistan. The agricultural sites of the Bronze Age, such as the looted burial grounds of Northern Afghanistan and the sites of Farkhor, Kangurttut-2, Krugsay in Southern Tajikistan, can be considered to belong to a single culture. The population of this culture probably had interregional contacts and the trade relations of southern Tajikistan were very extensive. The object of this trade, since the 3rd millennium B.C., had been raw materials such as semiprecious stones: lapis lazuli, agate, turquoise from the mines in the Iranian Plateau, in the mountains of the Hindu Kush, in the Kyzyl Kum desert, and metals, among which copper and tin, from Kazakhstan, Southern Urals and Western Siberia. The trade routes passed through the Khorasan, the Iranian Plateau and, more to the West, through the Zagros mountains, reaching the western regions of Mesopotamia, Northern Syria, the Syrian-Palestinian area, as far as Egypt. Objects in lapis lazuli found in the sites of the Northern foothill zone of the Kopet Dağ mountains at the end of the middle Eneolithic period (end of the 5th- first three quarters of the 4th millennium B.C.), suggest the existence of an ancient trade and exchange routes during the last centuries of the 4th Millenium B.C. Research and discovery of new archaeological sites, especially settlements, in the South of Tajikistan, will allow us to outline a more complete picture of the cultural and historical development of this region in the Early and Middle Bronze Age.
The site of Kangurttut is in the upper reaches of the river Vaksh. The necropolis (fig. 3) is situated near a steep slope 220 m southwest of the settlement, 91 graves were excavated, of which 88 were cenotaphs while 4 had been destroyed (fig. 4). The graves have been interpreted as ‘cenotaphs’ according to the denomination given by the Russian archaeologists who have excavated the necropolis in the last decade of 20th century (Avanesova, 1997; Vinogradova et al., 2008; Irvani Ghadim & Tahmasebi Zave, 2018).

Only three graves revealed a skeleton in a contracted position or at least some remains of human bones. (nos. 53, 65, 74). The skeleton of the man buried in grave 53 was lying on his right side, in front of the entrance. The two other graves were fractional burials. The three skeletons belonged to the European Mediterranean type (Vinogradova & Lombardo, 2002); in some of the cenotaphs the grave goods were lying down on one side, against the wall of the burial chamber leaving a free space which may have been intended for the body of the dead person. This solution possibly represents a memory of earlier funerary rituals in which the burial was not a cenotaph but a real grave and the vessels were arranged in two groups, one at the head and the other at the feet of the body (Vinogradova, 1996, p. 176; Lombardo, 2000, p. 579). The graves were generally of the ‘catacomb’ type, consisting of an entrance (dromos), perpendicular to the burial chamber, which is an enlargement of the dromos and is oriented in the same direction as the slope (fig. 2), but simple pit burials could also be found. In some graves blocks of clay mixed with burnt charcoal, pottery fragments and stones filled the dromos (Vinogradova & Lombardo, 2002, p. 81). The prevalence of cenotaph burials is particularly evident in the necropolis of Kangurttut and in the two cemeteries of Nurek. In Sapalli culture this type of burial had been in use, in a small percentage, since the earliest phases of Sapalli and Djarkutan, at the end of the 3rd-beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C., but its frequency increased significantly in the Molali and even more in the Bustan phase. In Uzbekistan, however, despite the general increase in this type of burial, there are consistently fewer cenotaphs than actual burials. In Tajikistan, instead, although we have only the documentation of the cemeteries of Kangurttut and Nurek, the fact that cenotaphs are the prevalent form of burial in these extensive necropolises, suggests that this funerary custom gained great importance, especially in the Molali and Bustan phases. Unfortunately, we have too few elements to make assumptions about the reasons why in the Molali and Bustan phases cenotaphs became the predominant form of burial in the necropolises of Kangurttut and Nurek: further excavations will be necessary to determine whether the cenotaph was the prevalent burial form in the farming culture cemeteries of Tajikistan, but if this is indeed the case, we could have additional evidence to hypothesize the existence of a ‘Tajik aspect’ of the Sapalli culture.

Despite the fact that no skeleton was found in the graves they were actually legitimate burials with goods, in some cases quite rich, although no grave furniture of the Kangurttut necropolis can be compared to the plundered graves of Northern Afghanistan or those of the cemeteries of Djarkutan. In several cenotaphs of Kangurttut a space was left free in the arranging of the grave goods, as the body of the dead was to be laid there later on. The same feature characterizes cenotaph burials in the area of the Bactrian civilization (Avanesova, 1997; Vinogradova et al., 2008; Irvani Ghadim & Tahmasebi Zave, 2018).

In some cases, the vessels were arranged in a group near the wall of the burial chamber or in a line along one side of it, always meaning to leave a space for the corpse. In other burials the vessels were all placed in the centre of the burial chamber, without leaving any space for the skeleton. This type of burials was documented in the graveyards of Sapalli culture particularly during its last phases, Molali and Bustan, while few attestations date back to the Djarkutan phase. The cenotaphs increased their number during the Kuzali phase, at the end of the Late Bronze Age, but the significant, dramatic increase took place during the Molali phase, when the cenotaphs in the graveyards of Uzbekistan reached a higher percentage (as much as 40% at Djarkutan) (Ionesov, 1990, p. 27), although in Uzbekistan this type of burial never exceeded this percentage and remained a minority. Not many necropolises have been excavated in Southern Tajikistan, so we do not have a great amount of documentation,
nevertheless Kangurttut is one the largest graveyards in the area and is not an isolated case, since the cemeteries of Nurek also consist mostly of cenotaphs.

By contrast, in the necropolis of Tandyriul, which belongs to the early Molali phase, or possibly to the end of Kuzali, only one cenotaph has been found.

The Sapalli culture cenotaphs burials generally contained real, not symbolic, grave goods, consisting of pottery vessels and personal belongings of the deceased. The metal objects decreased in number during the Molali phase and were substituted by miniature reproductions of life size objects, a characteristic of the Molali-Bustan phases (fig. 6). This could mean a real lack of metal in the economy and, as a result, reduced use of it but this explanation is not satisfactory. Our opinion is that in the Molali phase a significant change in funerary ideology, a change that had already started in the previous Kuzali phase, reached its apogee, as indicated by the increase in the number of cenotaphs. In the Molali burials of the graveyards of Uzbekistan, however, miniature objects are often present alongside life-size items and it is probably so in the cemeteries of Nurek, although they were in such poor conditions that it is difficult to verify this hypothesis. Nevertheless, life-size ornaments and a silver vessel have been found, while in the necropolis of Kangurttut not a single life-size personal object has been discovered. Moreover, the burials with miniature metal objects were only 19, around 1/5 of the total, of these only 6 have a number of miniature objects ranging from 4 to 14, while 13 burials have fewer than 4 objects. Beside the predominant presence of cenotaphs, this feature constitutes another significant characteristic distinguishing the Kangurttut necropolis from the other graveyards documented in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

The majority of the burials contained only pottery vessels in a number from 2 to 10, while the average is from 4 to 6. Out of 91 graves, 12 contained from 1 to 3 vessels, whereas 75 had delivered from 4 to 10. Among these, the burials richest in vessels are only 14. The only other objects to be found in the necropolis were three clay human figurines, found in burial 26 (a female figurine, fig. 5) and in burial 73 (a couple of male and female statuettes).

In Sapalli culture cenotaphs the deceased is often represented with anthropomorphic clay figurines. This element, which characterized cenotaphs burials of all the necropolises in the
The Uzbek area of Sapalli culture, was detected in the only cenotaph at Tandyriul, burial 2, where a figurine of a seated bearded man was found (Vinogradova, & Lombardo, 2002, p. 75, fig. 3, n. 1), while, again, it is almost entirely absent in the necropolis of Kangurttut, where these figurines have been found only in 2 of the 91 burials.

Similarly, the other characteristic element of cenotaphs in Uzbekistan, namely the presence of the skeleton of an animal, usually a sheep or a goat, or a part of it, also probably intended to represent the dead person, is not documented at Kangurttut.

In the one cenotaph of the necropolis of Tandyriul, besides the clay figurine, the skeleton of a goat was also found. However, it must be said that Tandyriul, which is located in the upper Hissar valley, in the Surkhandarja basin, very near to the Uzbek centres of Sapalli culture, is earlier than Kangurttut and Nurek.

The necropolis of Kangurttut shows certain distinctive characteristics of its own: the prevalence of cenotaph burials, the total absence of personal life-size objects in the graves, and also the scant quantity of miniature metal reproductions, figurines and sheep or goat skeletons. All these elements point to a precise choice, rather than to a general poverty of the burials, and, possibly, to a precise belief. In the first place, the preponderance of cenotaphs must have had an influence on the furnishing of the graves, and may have been behind the lack of personal items, the scarcity of miniature reproductions and the presence of only three figurines to substitute the dead instead of a higher number corresponding to that of the burials. In a
The late Bronze Age necropolis of Kangurtut in South-Western Tajikistan (Middle of 2nd millennium B.C.)

The necropolis where the majority of graves are cenotaphs, it might have been judged that there was no point in putting life-size objects in the burials, the burials themselves being symbolic. This, however, accounts for the presence of the miniature objects but not the absence of other symbolic items representing the dead, such as the clay figurines or the goat or sheep bones. As these latter items are almost always present in the Sapalli culture cenotaphs in Uzbekistan, we could hypothesize, as suggested above, that the poverty of the burials of the necropolis of Kangurtut marks a choice rather than a mere lack of economic means. The fact that so few graves had miniature metal objects, whereas numerous others were rich in pottery vessels, is doubtless significant: the miniature metal objects were probably 'status symbols', signs of wealth, although not so expensive and necessary to everyday life as life-size prototypes. They were not, however, indispensable elements central to the funerary ritual.

As pointed out above, not all the richest burials contained miniature metal objects, indeed, the proportion of the burials with miniature metal reproductions is very small (19 out of 91) in comparison with the number of the burials which had only a considerable number of pottery vessels. Thus it appears that the pottery vessels must have been the truly important elements in the burial furniture, which could not be missing from a grave.

There are 11 pottery classes in the necropolis. The first seven are wheel made, while classes VIII-XI are handmade.

These are the pottery classes: I bowls on stem, II jars, III carinated beakers, IV cylindrical beakers, V bowls, VI pots, VII spouted pots, VIII deep round based bowls, IX globular round based pots, X small jars, XI, globular round based bottles (Vinogradova & Lombardo, 2002; Vinogradova et al., 2008).

On analyzing the composition of the grave furniture in the necropolis we can say that classes I to VI are those mostly represented in the burials, whereas classes VII to XI appear only in a few of them. The first six classes are distributed in the burials in groups of different composition. The classes which most frequently appear in the burials are V, bowls (86 burials), III, carinated beakers (73 burials), VI, pots (69 burials), and IV, cylindrical beakers (50 burials). At a considerable distance follow class II, jars (18 burials), I, bowls on stem (9 burials), IX, globular handmade pots (4 burials) and VII, spouted pots, VIII, round based bowls, X, small jars and XI, bottles (1 burial).

In particular there is a group of 3 classes – V (bowls), III (carinated beakers) and VI (pots) – that are present in the majority of the burials. These three pottery classes may be connected with the preparation and consumption of the ritual meal: the pots because they were used for cooking, the bowls for eating, the carinated beakers for drinking. The bowls must have had great importance within the basic group of classes, as in 42 burials there are 2 and in some cases even 3 of them, to the extent that if there was no other possibility to provide a second bowl in the furniture, a broken bowl of the type with stem, of which the stem had been lost, was placed in the burial. This peculiarity regards the bowls only, as class III, the carinated beaker, the other most used class, is only in some cases replaced by class IV, the cylindrical beaker, which might have had a different use, possibly for a different kind of drink.

The presence of lumps of clay mixed with charcoal in the entrance pit and in the burial chamber in the graves of Kangurtut necropolis suggests preparation of the ritual meal. Traces of the use of fire and also evidence of the custom of putting lumps of clay and charcoals in the filling of the entrance pit and in the burial chamber, have been discovered in the necropolis of Tandyrul and interpreted as leftovers from the preparation of the ritual meal (Vinogradova, 1991; Lombardo, 2000). Definite evidence of the use of fire has also been discovered in the necropolis of Bustan VI, where stone structures for the cremation of the bodies and hearths for the preparation of food, have been brought to light, together with an altar for libation and sacrifices (Avanesova, 1996), although it is to be noted that Bustan VI is prevalently a mixed nomadic-sedentary necropolis.

In Kangurtut there is no direct evidence of rituals involving the use of fire or of preparation of the ritual meal but the coals found in the lumps of clay may perhaps recall a time when preparation of the ritual meal was actually practiced in the funerary rituals. The advent of
the cenotaph burials might have conditioned the funerary custom: since there was no real inhumation, as a result, there was no ritual meal, but the memory of this was to be kept alive; hence the presence, in the majority of the burials – in those with 4 to 6 vessels and in almost all those with more than 6 vessels – of the charcoal and, above all, of the three basic classes of pottery necessary for the preparation and consumption of the meal.

With regard to the social relations which could be detected through analysis of the grave furniture, we can say that in 91 burials, only 12 had fewer than 3 vessels, of these only 1 had 1 vessel, 9 had 3 vessels; 54 had from 4 to 6 vessels and 14, from 7 to 10. Of these, 8 burials had 7 vessels, 4 burials had 8 vessels, only 2 had respectively 9 and 10. On the basis of these proportions we could say that in the necropolis of Kangurttut wealth was distributed fairly evenly, as the group with 4 to 6 vessels represents the majority while the group with 7 to 10 vessels accounts for only the 15%. We could conclude that the settlement of Kangurttut enjoyed relative well-being and, indeed, the very beginning of a social diversification appears in the 19 burials with miniature metal objects beside the pottery vessels. Of these 19 burials, the majority (13) had from 1 to 3 miniature objects, 6 from 4 to 14 and only 2 had 13 and 14. Given this picture, we might say that diversification on the basis of the grave furniture was still at an early stage. This can be said of the necropolis of Kangurttut but we know that in the earlier stage of Sapalli culture in Uzbekistan and Afghanistan this diversification was already advanced. The rich Sapalli-Djarkutan burial discovered at Gelot, in the South, as well as those of Tandryriul and Nurek, also showed a higher level of wealth than the Kangurttut graveyard and therefore social diversification can probably be more easily detected there. However, Tandryriul and Nurek belong respectively to the end of Kuzali or early Molali and to the full Molali phase, when the number of precious objects placed in the burials may have been generally more considerable. The last period of Molali and the Bustan phase possibly saw a significant change in the economy and, moreover, a change in the beliefs and funeral practices which had led to the great increase of the cenotaphs and caused the marked reduction of personal objects in the burials.

This, for the moment, is all we can say about the necropolis of Kangurttut, which raises more questions and problems than the study of its documentation helps to solve. Besides, the results of this first analysis of the Kangurttut grave furniture, cannot be extended to the whole area of Southern Tajikistan, although the cemeteries of Nurek share many characteristics with that of Kangurttut.

There is, however, one point that can be made: the study of this necropolis suggests a change in the Molali phase of Sapalli culture which is characteristic of Southern Tajikistan and is not documented in Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. In the first place, the prevalence of the cenotaph burial and secondly, not less importantly, the total absence of personal life-size objects, an aspect which is not shared by the cemeteries of Nurek, which come closest in term of finds and type of burials to the necropolis of Kangurttut. In any case, further archaeological investigation is needed to determine whether what we see in this necropolis can be considered as a characteristic of Southern Tajikistan or whether that of Kangurttut is an isolated case. In conclusion, it remains to be established whether the features of this necropolis can be referred to a Tajik aspect of Sapalli culture or whether Kangurttut is only a mysterious oddity in the area.

Bibliography


