

Wine Trade of the Fourth Millennium B.C. in West Asia —a view of the distribution of commodities around Godin Tepe, Iran—

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In recent times trade studies of the Uruk to Jemdet Nasr periods in West Asia have delineated internal structures of the society and diverse developments of the economy. The term in the fourth millennium B.C. is in course of urbanization, gradually developing from previous periods. Research on the exchange or trade system during these periods, therefore, could be meaningful for understanding social complexity continuing from the Ubaid period. This article refers to several aspects of the production, circulation, and consumption of goods, especially concerning to the wine, through the fourth millennium B.C. in West Asia. There have been fortunately found significant evidence of the wine production and distribution from Godin Tepe [Badler 1996], located along the 'Khorasan Road' in the western part of Luristan region in Iran.

In this paper, firstly, I present a brief history of previous studies of local exchange and long-distance trade in the ancient West Asia. Then, I describe the archaeological evidence for the production, storage, and consumption of wine at Godin Tepe and others, and put in brief order examples possibly implying means of transport, by water and/or land, reconstructing a provisional view of the transportation and distribution of wine in the periods. Finally, I conclude that the wine trade started in the fourth millennium B.C. could provide commercial and administrative benefits in the economical and political contexts; that the wine commodities would represent aspects of social complexity towards urbanization during which the ritual network in the Ubaid period could be transformed to the trade network in the Uruk period.