Trade and Trade Roads between South Caucasus and Near East in 3rd – 2nd Millennums B.C.  
(South Caucasus, Near East, Trade Routs)  

Nino Shanshashvili (Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum),  
Goderdzi Narimanishvili (Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum),  
George Narimanishvili (Tbilisi, Tbilisi Free University)  

Trading relations between the South Caucasus and the Near East has supposedly existed since the upper paleolithic period (Kushnareva, 1974: 28). These trade relations, along with some chronological interruptions, continued as well through the neolithic and eneolithic periods. Although the foundation of regular barter relation comes from early bronze age (Mellaart, 1985: 21).  

Between the late 4th millennium and the early 3rd millennium B.C. new cultural elements appeared in the South Caucasus region in the Kura-Araxes cultural area. In our opinion, these could be explained by Mesopotamian cultural influence (Shanshashvili and Narimanishvili, 2009: 13-17).  

In this article we are not going to discuss the problem of spreading of weapons, because this issue was studied more than once (Kuftin, 1949: 71-75; Japaridze, 1969: 151-167; Kushnareva and Risin, 2001: 103-109).  

We suggest that the appearance of mud-brick buildings (Kvatskhela, Kul-Tepe II, Shengavit) and adornment of buildings with polychrome paintings (Gudabertka) in South Caucasus could be explained by Mesopotamian cultural influence.  

The tombs built by a stone plates or bricks appear in south Caucasus at the middle ages of IV millennia B.C. (Tamarisi, Koda, Kiketi, Ardasubani, Saphar-Kharaba, Gegharot, Horom). Stone or brick tombs were very rare in Anatolia and Mesopotamia (Tepe-Gawra (Lloyd, 1984: 72), Korucutepe (Loon van and Güterbrock, 1971: 17) and Arslantepe (Frangipane, 2003: 33-34). Almost in all cases, they were distinguished by rich inventories of grave goods and accordingly represented the tombs of nobles. From our point of view, the stone tombs in south the Caucasus, as well as in Anatolia, were constructed upon the Mesopotamian models.  

From the first half of the 3rd mill. B. C. some kinds of sign-symbols appeared on the ceramics of Kura-Araxes culture, which had been drowen on the dump clay before baking. In Ozni (Kuftin, 1948: fig. 15) (pl. I-1), Beshtasheni (Kuftin, 1941: fig. 116) Aradeti and Kvemo Aranisi sites as well as in the cemetery of Amiranis Gora (Chubinishvili, 1963: pl. V) (pl. I-2) ceramic pottery with pictographic signs was found. Those signs are similar to archaic scripts of the ancient civilizations: Sumerian, Proto-Elamite Proto-Indic, and Hittite-Luwian (Shanshashvili, 1999: 31-36). Evidently on the defined level of progress, Kura-Araxian society reached the stage where the need for writing appeared, but due to the unknown reasons it could not get over this phase and the sign-symbols did not transform into writing.  

In the developed phase of Kura-Araxian culture painted pottery appeared (Kvatskhela, Beshtasheni, Ozni, Avranlo, Kvemo Aranisi, Shengavit). Iconography is very poor: asymmetrical triangles, wide belts, dots and swastikas (Shanshashvili, 2007: 227-229). Similar painted pottery, but with a richer set of ornaments was spread through the Upper Euphrates
region sites dating from the Early Bronze Age II and III (Arslatepe, Korucutepe, Degirmentepe, Norshuntepe, Han Ibrahim Shah, Pulur, Tepecik, Ienikei, Imamoglu). We can suggest that the appearance of painted pottery could be connected to a certain social, economical and cultural relation within the region of Malatya.

A Few miniature architectural models were found in Kuro-Araxian sites. At this time there are only six specimens in Kvatskhela (pl. I-4), Amiranis Gora, Khizanaant Gora (pl. I-5; Kikvidze, 1972: pl. XXIV-1), Ozni and Digasheni. Their height fluctuates from 25 to 55 sm. The use of these subjects is not known yet. Similar model-incense-burners were found in Mesopotamia, in Eridu – Abu Shahrein of Ubeidian period, as well as in stratum XI of Tepe Gawra and in Khafajah of Jemdet Nasr period. (Goff, 1963: fig. 147,237, 328, 496).

The model of building was also found in Mari (2700-2500 B.C.; Parrot 1955: tab. XV-1, 2). A similar Kvatskhela model was found in the temple of Ai, near Jerusalem, and like the subjects from Khizanaant Gora was found in Gerar (Gilead, 1993: 470), in Gilat (Levy and Alon, 1993: 517) and in Givataim (Kaplan, 1993: 521). Models from Ai are dated from the middle ages of III millenniums B.C. and the ones from Gerar, Gilat and Givatim are conditionally from eneolithic period. In our opinion, the models of houses that dated from the Kura-Araxes period must be for cult use. Supposedly, these models were either subjects from the south or they were made to imitate the Syria-Mesopotamian models on the spot.

Clay objects with a flat base and two horn-like projections are characteristic to Kura-Araxes culture (Kvatskhela, Khizanaant Gora, Kulbakebi, Arich). Similar, small size objects were found in the Level XI in Tepe Gawra (Goff, 1963: fig. 562), in a temple. Horn-objects were also found in Tell-Brak (Goff, 1963: fig. 667-668). Such horn-objects as amulets in the Near East region were functioning from the Halaf period (Goff 1963: 154).

Stamp seals found in Akhali Jhinvali and Gudabertka are similar to near eastern specimens.

Mesopotamian influence is apparent in the clay anthropomorphic high relief (height 45 cm, width 31 cm) discovered at Natsargora settlement (pl. I—3) and dates from the end of the Early Bronze Age (the middle of III millenniums B.C.). The upper part of high relief is decorated with seven extensions. The middle and the highest one divide the relief in two symmetrical parts. From the central extension, on both sides of the ridge, at a lower level, there are hollows. On the left part in the hollows, obsidian plates are framed. The lower obsidian “eye” is surrounded by a relief spiral. The right side of the relief is reconstructed only partly, so the reason for the existence of right “eye” can only be guessed. The high relief is stylistically like the anthropomorphic images depicted on big clay vessels discovered in Anatolia, in layers IX-X of Pulur (Koşay, 1976: tab. 83-58, 59; tab. 85-51, 69, 70).

We can found some similarities between the Natsargora high relief and the small-size anthropomorphic sculptures of four eyed creatures discovered in Syria in the Tell-Brak “Eye temple” (Goff, 1963: fig. 657-660) as well as with the image of the anthropomorphic creature with spiral eyes depicted on the alabaster stele discovered in Mari (3rd millenniums B.C.) (Fortin, 1999: fig. 295). According to the existing data, it is very difficult to determine the function of Natsargora high relief. It is known that high relief terracotta figurines, which were placed on the wall of the house altar, existed throughout Mesopotamia from the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. Between them were god’s images, mythological, or cult scenes, also images of different demons, masks which protected the house from evil spirits. We can
suppose that the Natsargora high relief represents some kind of protecting god or patron demon. It seems that this high relief also was hanging on wall or set up on podium.

Very refined and luxury subjects appear on the archaeological sites of South Caucasus at the end of 4th millennium and at the beginning of 3rd millennium B.C. Among them, diadems from Kvatskhela and Gudaberka can be distinguished, parade weapons from Sachkhere, weapons and jewelry made from precious metal from Amiranis Gora, Gegharot, Ananauri, Bedeni, which are similar to the analogical models from Anatolia and Mesopotamia.

The appearance of these kinds of artifacts in South Caucasus instantly indicates that part of the population, which became rich trading with natural resources, formed the local elite. Although, in spite of that in the early Bronze Age this part of South Caucasian population had distinct political and cultural relations with the civilizations of Near East, they did not manage to reach the level of “town civilization”.

Kura-Araxes culture starts to become suppressed in South Caucasus during the middle ages of the 3rd millennium B.C. By this time a lot of novelty appears, like the “splendid kurgans” of “kings” and aristocrats, with plenty of luxury objects, jewelry (pl. III), pottery (pl. IV), weapons made from precious metals, textiles, and ornamented clay vessels (pl. I-6-11) as well as wooden utensils.

From the eastern side, stone-paved grand ritual-procession roads border upon the kurgans (pl. II). The length of some roads reach 600 m., with a width of 7 m (Narimanishvili, 2004a). Occasionally, the ritual procession traveled along this road to the kurgan and was carrying the deceased or the ash.

A lot of jewelry that was found in the kurgans dates back to the Middle Bronze Age. The greatest similarities between the South Caucasian, Mesopotamian and Syrian products were observed by scholars a long time ago (Kuftin, 1941: 94-98; Jafaridze, 1969: 176; Puturidze, 2005: 17-19).

In some of the early kurgans of the Trialeti culture amulets were found that are probably of Egyptian origin. The foot-shaped amulet from the XIV Trialeti kurgan deserves particular interest (pl. V-17). It is made from yellow stone with red bands and spots. This amulet finds the closest parallels with the old kingdom of Egypt and the kurgan is dated from the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. (Gogadze, 1972: 44, 95). Foot-shaped amulets were spread in this period of Old Kingdom and in the “first transitional period” i.e. in time of V-VIII dynasties (2465-2100 B.C.). In the next periods we almost do not meet them. The trialetian amulet is absolutely identical to the Egyptian one (pl. V-18), which was presented to the Metropolitan Museum by Helen Miller Gould [http://www.metmuseum.org]. Also, it very much resembles the foot-shaped pendants (pl.V-19), which come from the excavations of F. Petrie [http://www.gigitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk].

On the sites from the Early and Middle Bronze Age in South Caucasus (Tsartsis Gora, Koreti, Martkopi, Treli, Verin-Naver, Lori Berd, Chachkari, Karashamb, Kudurlu) we meet a large number of different kinds of jewelry made from sea shells (pl. V – 20-26). Some of them were determined. They belong to the type of Arcularia sp. and Conus sp. Existing of them in one complex (Verin-Naver) points out that they come from Persian Gulf, or from the southern shore of Iran (Simonyan, 1984: 130). The discovery of nacre jewelery with Cowries shells in Martkopi probably points on their origin from the Indian Ocean.
We find extensive use of shell in IV-III millenniums B.C. in Mesopotamia in both natural and highly worked forms. Pendants and beads made from various shells were discovered in the graves at Tello, Khafajah and Ur (Gensheimer, 1984: 67). T. Gensheimer supposes the occurrence of some shells in Mesopotamian sites during the Proto and Early Dynastic periods coincides with the expansion of trade networks in the Persian Gulf and these shells were without a doubt an important trade commodity. By the 3rd millennium B.C. important trade networks had been developed in the lower Indus Valley whereby whole shells were being distributed to distant inland sites (Gensheimer, 1984: 70).

The vessels made from valuable metals in the kurgans of Trialeti have close parallels with Mesopotamian and Iranian materials of the 2nd millennium B.C. Small silver cups from kurgan XV of Trialeti (pl. IV-7) have close parallels to the metallic vessels excavated in Mesopotamia, Iran and Indostan (Assur, Tell ad-Der, Tello, Tepe Giyan, Mehrgarh, Chankhu-Daro; Müller-Karpe, 1995: fig. 7-1, 6, 10, 18, 22, 23). A small silver cup with ear found in kurgan XVI (pl. IV-6) of Trialeti is similar to the small bronze vessels discovered in Qale Nisar and Tepe Guran (Müller-Karpe, 1995: fig. 9-7, 10-7). Golden goblets from Kirovakan (pl. IV-3) and VII kurgan of Trialeti (pl., IV-4) also closely parallels with materials discovered in Tell Suleima (Müller-Karpe, 1995: fig.,9-7,9).

Domestic subjects are expressed on the silver cups from Trialeti (pl. IV-8) and Karashamb (pl.,IV-10): tables, stools, vessels, are analogous to the works of art used in cult practice in Syria-Mesopotamia at the boundary of 3rd – 2nd millenniums B.C. (Narimanishvili, 2007).

It has not one marked resemblance to the large sized painted potteries found in the Trialeti kurgans and Iranian ceramics (Kuftin, 1941: 86; Çiringiroğlu, 1984: 139).

Discovery of lapis lazuli on the cemeteries of South Caucasus dated from the Middle Bronze Age points towards close contacts with Iran (Gogadze, 1972: 135; Simonyan, 2004: 126).

Productive evidence from Levant and Egypt has been confirmed at the archaeological sites of the south Caucasus from the middle ages of the 2nd millennium B.C. First of all we must discuss the so called Common style mitannian seals (Piliposyan, 1998: tab. 41, 42; Pogrebova, 2000: 145-150; Narimanishvili, 2004). In the last few years some cylinder seals at the cemetery of Saphar-Kharaba were discovered, which also belong to the mitannian Common Style glyptic. On the seals from grave №5 is expressed man in short tunic and peacked heat, who is holding a standard ending with six ray star (pl. V-7). The man is kneeling in front of a pedestal, which is decorated with two skew crosses. On the pedestal stands a horned animal (like an antelope). This seal is dated from the 15th – 14th cc. B.C. Seals of this group were basically spread in Syria and Palestine: Ras-Shamra, Byblos, Bet-Shan, Hazor and Gezer and are dated from the 16th – 13th cc. B.C. The Seal from Trialeti finds the closest parallels to Bet-Shan and Ras-Shamrash, in layers which are dated from the 15th – 14th cc. B.C. (Salje, 1990: 211). However, on the seals from Levant the man figure holds a so called bouquet-tree in his hand (Salje, 1990: tab. V-95), unlike the one of Trialeti which holds a standard ending with six ray star in his hand. Because of this detail it closely relates to the seals from Bet-Shan, Megiddo, and Jerusalem (Salje, 1990: tab. VI-101).

On the second seal which was discovered in grave № 27 there are expressed fishes in two rows (pl. V-8). The fish motive was very popular for the ancient Near Eastern glyptic. It is a
wide-spread motive also for the Common Style mitannian glyptic. The seals from Trialeti are very similar to those from Hama and Ras-Shamra (Salje, 1990: 220).

A man face-shaped scaraboid (pl. V-12) which is made from limpid blue glass, which was discovered on the cemetery of Saphar-Kharaba in grave № 6 might be a sign of some distant contacts between Egypt and Trialeti. Man face-shaped scaraboids were spread in ancient Egypt, in the late period of the middle kingdom and in the second transitive period (17-16 cc. B.C.) (Hall, 1913: 22-23). Scaraboids were also discovered in Metsamor (Khanzadyan, 2003: 100).

On the cemetery of Saphar-Kharaba, in grave № 8 were found nine stones of different kinds of geological species, form and color (pl. V – 35-37). They share a great likeness to the stones used for the “mouth opening” ritual, which were discovered in ancient Egypt. Stones from Saphar-Kharaba were discovered behind the deceased’s back in a small bag, in which, besides the stones there were flat sticks made from bone, obsidian arrowheads and narrow like lancet bronze knives. The stones discovered on the cemetery of Saphar-Kharaba might be Egyptian origin. They very much resemble the stones discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamun, which were used for “mouth opening” ritual (Hagen, 2002: 160).

From the middle ages of 2nd millennium B.C we meet frog-shaped amulets on the territory of the south Caucasus. A golden frog-shaped plate (pl. V-27) was discovered in 2nd kurgan of Lcharshen (Khanzadyan, Petrosyan and Simonyan, 2007: tab. XLI). These kinds of shaped amulets were very popular throughout the Near East. They were made from different shaped stones, from glassy paste, faience, but the golden ones were made only in Egypt (Badj, 2001: 83-85). Many frog-shaped amulets were discovered on cemeteries and temples in eastern Georgia (Pitskhelauri, 2005: 85-86) and Azerbaijan (Çəlvilov, Əbdərgərov, 2008: fig.7). Agate frog-shaped weights were found in Metsamor (tab. V-28) (Khanzadyan, 2007: tab. LXII). Goldsmiths from Mesopotamia usually used different animal form weights (Arnaud, Calvet, and Huot, 1979:27). Supposedly, figurines from the South Caucasus were also used as weights.

South Caucasian bronze plastic (pl. VI – 16-19) (Pitskhelauri, 1973: tab. XLIV-1) distinctly resembles the figurines from Syria (Frankfort 1969: 144; Edwards, 2003: tab. 48). It is not unlikely that the bronze figurines were manufactured in loco per Syrian samples, but it is also possible that they were imported from Levant to South Caucasus like Mitannian seals or ritual stones.

Relief images on the vessel (pl. VI-20,21) discovered in the temple of Meli-Gele (Pitskhelauri, 1973: tab. XLIV-2,3) are similar to the iconography of fertility goddess from Syria. We can see analogical images on the vessels from Larsa (pl. VI-23; Barrelet, 1952: fig. 8), Mari (pl. VI-22; Bunatz, Kune and al-Mahmud, 1999: 83 fig. 80), as well as on the so called Burney relief (tab. VI-24; Andre-Salvini, 2008: 22).

In spite of the large chronological difference, we have noticed multiple times the similarity between the south Caucasian bronze sculptures for chariot decoration and the Mesopotamian and Anatolian ones (Mansfeld, 2001:19-61).

Very rich material discovered on Saphar-Kharaba cemetery (eyed-beads, pin with ram head, high stern vessels) has been found with archaeological materials discovered in northern Iran, southern Turkmenia and northern Afghanistan (Narimanishvili, 2006: 102).
The spread of south Caucasian archaeological cultures of the early and middle Bronze Ages to south (pl. VII) and the imported products discovered on sites and cemeteries, as well as some cultural innovations, indicates to the strong relation between the population of this region and eastern civilizations. These facts show that exchanging goods and trading was very intensive.

The foundation of Sumerian colonies on river Euphrates and trading with Mesopotamia in 3400-3250 B.C. provoked the extension of Sumerian urban culture in the Upper Euphrates region and in Anatolia. The influence of Uruk is very clear in Malatya and Tepecik.

Archaeological data points to the existence of the contact zones between South Caucasus and near eastern civilizations. In different periods those zones were in different places. That kind of zone for Kura-Araxes culture was central Anatolia, of the Malatya (Arslantepe) region. At the end of the 4th millennium B.C. the Malatya region was an economically advanced and well organized regional centre. The source of wealth of the Arslantepe community supposedly came from metal trade. M. Frangipane believes that Kura-Araxes culture appears in the region of Malatya, in Arslantepe in the end of 4th millennium B.C. (Frangipane, 1997: 49).

The key industry of Kura-Araxian society traditionally is considered metallurgy and metalwork, so supposedly they delivered metal to Arslantepe. The latest researches brought to light, that the south Caucasian foundry workers used the Sumerian measure of weight as a standard system. Forms and ingots discovered on Kura-Araxian sites are identical to Sumerian measure of weight and amount 1 mine or 60 sikles. This fact shows that “Kura-Araxian metallurgists and traders knew very well how to use the same measures of weight which were spread in Mesopotamia (Gevorkyan, 2004: 53).

In the opinion of Kelly-Buccellati this culture had exact control on resources and trading roads throughout eastern Anatolia (Kelly-Buccellati, 1990: 121-122). At the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. this culture is characterized by the similar villages and small towns though none of them are found to be spread in area of the Syrian town culture (Kelly-Buccellati, 1990: 120). W. Orthmann suggests that it was spread into Syria – Tell-Mardikh/Ebla and Hama at the beginning of 3rd millennium B.C. (Orthmann, 1985: 64). In the opinion of R. Amiran Kura-Araxian/Karazian black burnished pottery reaches Palestine in the Early Bronze period III (in the second half of the 3rd mill. B.C. (2650 – 2350 B.C.) (Amiran, 1993: 23)

In the EB II-III periods of Palestine, a demographic explosion was connected to an economic rise, which was in a way was conditioned with the existing international transitive road, which passed along the rivers Orontes and Jordan, as well as the Mediterranean coast strip. The archaeological sites of Khirbet-Kerak culture were located exactly on the valleys of these rivers (Esse, 1991: 103, 104). It is not by exclusion that the newcomers from north controlled a distinct section of the trading road. It is remarkable, based on the facts of Ben-Tor that the part of the hoard of bronze weapon from Kfar-Monash, after making chemical analyses, is of Caucasian origin (Ben-Tor, 1992: 113).

In contrast to Palestine, Kura-Araxian black burnished pottery is very rare in North-Eastern Syria. It is possible that the Syrian towns like Tell Mozan and Tell Brak prevented the spreading of this culture in the above mentioned region. The profitable geographic statement
of these cities gave them a chance to control the trading roads to South Mesopotamia (Kelly-Buccellati, 1990: 124).

The main road from Anatolia to south passed along the rivers Khabur and Euphrates, as well as the southeastern direction, across the Khabur triangle and down to the Tigris River. It seems that the towns situated in this region were locking the routes from the Ergani mines toward Mesopotamia, which passed near the modern city of Mardin. This road in later periods was called the “Persian King Road” (Kelly-Buccellati, 1990: 118).

Kura-Araxes culture spread through inland Iran along Urmia lake toward the lowland of Kazvin (Rothman, 2005: fig. 2).

In the middle ages of 3rd millennia in South Caucasus Kura-Araxes culture was changed by Trialeti culture. The area of which it spread is smaller, but broadly coincides with the Kura Araxes culture in South Caucasus.

The concentration of Kura-Araxian and Trialeti culture sites near mines (generally near copper mines) or their situation on transit roads, as well as their high level of metallurgy industry, shows that the formation and rise of the cultures in South Caucasus in the Bronze Age was connected with the manufacturing of metals. The formation and rise of Trialeti culture (second half of 3rd millennium and beginning of 2nd millennium B.C.) was connected with metal manufacturing of bronze weapons with tin admixture and not arsenic, like in Kura-Araxian period (Jafaridze, 1992: 184), which makes the weapon lighter and more comfortable for use. It seems that the source of wealth for the Trialeti culture was trade in natural resources and first of all in new technologies. On the sites of the middle bronze age in South Caucasus, we meet different materials, which prove the relations of ancient population of South Caucasus with Mesopotamia, Syria, Iran and Mycenae. It seems that the road, which was connecting South Caucasus with Syria and Palestine in 4th – 3rd mill. B.C. still existed in this period.

In the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. important political events took place in Near East. Shamshi-Adad I (1813-1781 B.C.) that created a strong state, which locked all the roads going along Euphrates, Tigris and mountains of Zagros, and with that conduct he abolished the structures of the caravan trade throughout the whole east (Istorya Drevnego Vostoka 1988: 30). In the same period, the Hittite kingdom rose up in Asia Minor region. It had domination over a wide territory spread from Tuz Lake to Taurus passes. At about 1800 B.C. were destroyed Hattusas, Alishar and Kanis (Istorya Drevnego Vostoka, 1988: 128). In 1760 B.C. were destroyed Mari, which had a very important place in international trading (Margueron, 1999: 12).

The changing political situation had an influence on trade relations. The existence of Mesopotamian trade colonies in Anatolia (Kultepe-Kanis, Norshuntepe) was also conditioned by trade routes, which were connecting the South Caucasus with Syria. Because of the destruction of these cities, the road via Malatya lost its importance. This destruction of colonies and violation of trade routes caused the decline of South Caucasian Middle Bronze Age cultures.

In the middle ages of 2nd millennium B.C., the appearance of new elements in the South Caucasus coincides with the rising Mitannian state.
The Egyptian, Levantine and Mesopotamian import was the mirror of economical and political influence of Near East. With the mitannian cylinder seals in South Caucasus, there also appears near eastern types of daggers and swords, amulets, scarabs, bronze figurines and relief images of Syrian gods, glass beads and golden jewelry, which were spread in Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia. Also, a new technique of making pottery is formed. New types of ceramics start to spread. There also appears two-wheeled carts, in which as it seems were harnessed by horses.

In the 16th c. B.C. again a single culture was spread in the South Caucasus. The region is more consolidated, and appears to be culturally, economically and politically unified.

The appearance of big states in Asia Minor and Mesopotamia made it impossible for the restoration of international trading in its old form. That is why one of the main trade routes leading to Mesopotamia moved to the east coast of Lake Van or to the west coast of Lake Urmia (tab. VIII). After that, the route was passed the river Little Zab and crossed Arbela coming to Upper Mesopotamia (Istorya Drevnego Vostoka, 1988: 30).

As it seems, this exact road was used by the traders, who were carrying south Caucasian metal. In the following period, the Mitannian kingdom, which appeared in Khabur basin, locked the western communications to assure another road to the Iranian plateau, which was passing through the Dyala valley, and was controlled by Kassite kingdom.

From the beginning of the 13th c. B.C, after decline of Mitanni and the beginning of Assyrian military policy, a grave situation emerged in Middle East, which also concerned the South Caucasian population. On archaeological sites of the South Caucasus near eastern artifacts and copies appeared more rarely.

From the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C. the trade relations between South Caucasus and Near East supposedly were generally carried out by the roads through Van and Urmia lakes. As it seems, the trading and economical interests of the South Caucasus were also going towards the direction of the Iranian Plato (pl. IX). Materials discovered on the South Caucasian sites prove the contacts with Iran and neighbor regions. Supposedly, the relations of South Caucasus with Mesopotamia, Syria and Iran had been executed through the mediation of Mitanian kingdom.

Later after the reinforcement of the Assyrian state, a new wave of its expansion to the north begins, which was accomplished through the conquering of trading roads. More peaceful trading relations were changed by military campaigns and conquering politically.
Bibliography

Amiran, R. 1993

Andre-Salvini, B. 2008

Arnaud, D., Calvet, Y. and Huot, J.-L. 1979
Ilisu-Ibnisu, orfèvre de l'E.BABBAR de Larsa. La jarre L.76.77 et son contenu. Syria, 56,1/2:1-64

Badj, E.A. 2001
Amulety i sueveria, Moskva

Barrelet M.-T., 1952
A propos dune plaquette trouvee a Mari. Syria, 29, ¾:285-293

Ben-Tor, A. 1992
The Archaeology of Ancient Israel, London.

Bunatz, D., Kune, H. and A. al-Mahmud 1999
Atturath ah hadari liljazira assuria wa ma havlaha. dalil muthaf Deir ez Zor, Dimashk.

Çilingiroğlu, A. 1984

Dyakonov, I. M. 1990
Ludi goroda Ura, Moskva

Esse, D.L. 1991
Subsistence, Trade and Social Change in Early Bronze Age Palestine. Chicago.

Fortin, M. 1999
Syrie. Terre de civilisation. Quebec.
Frangipane, M. 1997

Frangipane, M. 2003
Splendore e misteri di una tomba. Archeologia Viva. Anno XXII. # 99: 32-34

Frankfort, H. 1969

Gensheimer, T. R. 1984

Gevorkyan, A. 2004
Drevnevostochnaya mera vesa kuro-arakskih liteychikov. Arheologia, Etnologia, Folkloristika Kafkaza: 53, Tbilisi

Gogadze, E. 1972
Периодизация и генезис курганной культуры Триалети, Тбилиси (на груз. яз.)

Gilead, I. 1993

Goff, B.L. 1963

Gogadze, E. 1972
Periodizacia i genezis kurgannoy kulturi Trialeti, Tbilisi (на груз. яз.)

Hagen, R.-M. and R. Hagen 2002
Egypt – People, Gods, Pharaohs, Köln

Hall, H.R. 1913

Hanzadyan, E. 2003
Metsamorskii odinnadzatyi kurgan i pechat zarya Kurigalzu. Arheologia, Etnologia, Folkloristika Kafkaza: 96-102, Erevan

Hagadze, Э. 1972
Периодизация и генезис курганной культуры Триалети, Тбилисы (на груз. яз.)

HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT EAST 1988
Zarodzenie drevneishikh klassovih obshestv i pervye ochagi rabovladelcheskoy zivilizatsii. II (pod red. G.M. Bongard-Levina), Moskva

История Древнего Востока 1988
Зарождение древнейших классовых обществ и первые очаги рабовладельческой цивилизации. Часть вторая. Под ред. Г.М Бонгард-Левина, Москва.

Jafaridze, O. 1969
Arheologiceskiye raskopki v Trialeti, Tbilisi (на груз. яз.)

Джапаридзе, О. 1969
Археологические раскопки в Триалети, Тбилиси (на груз. яз.)

Jafaridze, O. 1992
Arheologia Gruzii (на груз. яз.), Tbilisi
Dжапаридзе, О. 1992
Археология Грузии (на груз. яз.), Тбилиси

Jafaridze, O. 1998
К этнокультурной истории грузинских племён в III тысячелетии до н.э., Тбилиси

Джапаридзе, О.М. 1998
К этнокультурной истории грузинских племён в III тысячелетии до н.э., Тбилиси

Kaplan, J. 1993

Kelly-Buccellati, M. 1990
Trade in metals in third millenium: northeastern Syria and Eastern Anatolia. Resurrecting the past. A Joint Tribute to Adnan Bunni: 117-131

Khanzadyan, E. and Petrosyan L. and Simonyan H. 2007
Cities of the Early and Middle Bronze Age. The Gold of Ancient Armenia (III mill. BCE – 14 cent. AD): 71-77, Yerevan

Khanzadyan, E. 2007

Kikvidze Y. 1972
Раннебронзовое поселение Хизанаант гора (на груз. яз.), Тбилиси

Kuftin, B.A. 1941
Археологические раскопки в Триалети, Тбилиси

Kuftin, B.A. 1948
Археологические раскопки 1947 года в Цалкском районе, Тбилиси

Kuftin, B.A. 1949
Археологическая маршрутная экспедиция 1945 года в Юго-Осетию и Имеретию, Тбилиси

Kosay, H.Z. 1976:

Kusnareva, K.H. 1974
Обмен и торговля в Закавказье в древности. Краткие сообщения Института Археологии, 138: 27-37

Kusnareva, K.H. and M.B. Risin 2001

Levy, T.E. and Alon, D. 1993

**Lloyd, S. 1984**  
Arheologiya Mesopotamii, Moskva  
Ллойд, С. 1984  
Археология Месопотамии, Москва

**Loon van M. and Güterbock, H.G. 1971**  
Korucutepa near Elazig. Recent archaeological research in Turkey. Anatolian Studies, XXI: 17-19

**Mansfeld, G. 2001**  
Die "Königsgräber" von Alaca Höyük und Beziehungen nach Kaukasien. Archäologische mitteilungen fur Iran und Turan. band 33: 19-61

**Margueron, J-Cl. 1999**  

**Marro, C. 1997**  
La culture du haut-Euphrate au Bronze Ancien. Essai de interpretation a partir de la Ceramique peinte de Keban, Paris

**Marquet-Krause, J. 1935**  
La deuxieme campagne de fouilles de Ay (1934). Syria, XVI,4:325-345

**Mellaart, J. 1985**  
Torgovlya i torgonye puti mejdu sev. Siriei i Anatoliei (4000-1500gg do n.e.). Drevnyy Ebla: 20-34. Moskva  
Меллаарт, Дж. 1985  
Торговля и торговые пути между сев. Сирией и Анатолией (4000-1500 гг до н.э.). Древняя Эбла: 20-34. Москва

**Müller-Karpe, M. 1995**  

**Narimanishvili, G. 2004**  
Нариманишвили, Г. 2004  
Цилиндрические печати из Триалети. Международная научная конференция: Археология, Этнология, Фольклористика Кавказа:105-106, Тбилиси

**Narimanishvili, G. 2004a**  
Ritual Roads at Trialeti Barrows. Journal of the Georgian Archaeology 1:120-133

**Narimanishvili, G. 2006**  

**Narimanishvili, G. 2007**  
Predmety byta, izobrajennye na serebryannom kubke iz Trialeti. Voprosy armianskoj etnologii i arheologii 3: 41-48, Eravan  
Нариманишвили, Г. 2007  
Предметы быта, изображённые на серебряном кубке из Триалети. Вопросы армянской этнологии и археологии 3: 41-48, Ереван

**Ortmann, V. 1985**  
Keramika Ranney i Sredney bronzi na Srednem Evfrate i ee sviazi s keramikoi Hami i Ebli. Drevnya Ebla:61-81, Moskva
Ортманн, В. 1985
Керамика Ранней и Средней бронзы на Среднем Евфрате и ее связи с керамикой Хамы и Эблы. Древняя Эбла: 61-81, Москва

Özfırat, A. 2005:

Parrot, A. 1955:

Piliposyan, A. 1998
Печати армянского нагорья в системе древневосточной глиптики, Ереван. (на арм. языке)

Pitskhelauri, K. Н. 1973
Основные проблемы истории племён Восточной Грузии в XV-VII вв. до н.э., Тбилиси (на груз. яз.)

Pitskhelauri, K. 2005
Археологическая культура центральной части Южного Кавказа во второй половине II тыс. до н.э. (на груз. яз.), Тбилиси

Pogrebova, M.N. 2000
Печати митанинского стиля из Закавказья как исторического источника. Вестник древней истории, 4: 145-150

Puturidze M. 2003:

Puturidze M. 2005
About the problem of South Caucasian – Near Eastern cultural relations according to the items of artistic craft during the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. Metalla #12. ½. Bochum, pp.8-22.

Rothman M.S. 2005

Salje, B. 1990
Der „Common Style“ der Mitanni-Gliptik und die Gliptik der Levante und Zyperns in der späten Bronzezeit, Mainz am rein

Shanshashvili, N. 1999
Знаки и символы на керамике куро-аракской культуры, Тбилиси

Шаншашвили, Н. 1999
Знаки и символы на керамике куро-араксской культуры, Тбилиси
Shanshashvili, N. 2007
K rasprostraneniu raspisnoy keramiki kuro-arakskoy kultury na territorii Gruzii. Arheologia, Etnologia, Folkloristika Kafkaza: 227-229, Tbilisi

Shanshashvili, Н. 2007
К распространению расписной керамики куро-аракской культуры на территории Грузии. Археология, Этнология, Фольклористика Кавказа: 227-229, Тбилиси

Shanshashvili, N. and Narimanishvili G. 2009

Simonyan, A. 1984
Dva pogrebienia epohi sredney bronzi mogilnika Verin-Naver. Sovetskaya Arheologia #3: 122-135

Симонян, А. 1984
Два погребения эпохи средней бронзы могильника Верин Навер. Советская археология № 3: 122-135

Simonyan, A. 2004
“Zarskoye” pogrebenie epohi sredney bronzi Nerkin-Naver. Arheologia, Etnologia, Folkloristika Kafkaza: 126-127, Tbilisi

Симонян, А., 2004
„Царское“ погребение эпохи средней бронзы Неркин-Навер. Археология, Этнология, Фольклористика Кавказа: 126-127, Тбилиси

Starke, F. 2002
Die hethitische Verfassung. Die Hethiter und ihr Reich: 316-317

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/egam/ho_10.130.2355_10.130.2358.htm

http://www.digitaleargypt.ucl.ac.uk/burialcustoms/amuletsindex.html
Description of the Plates:


Pl. II – Ritual Roads at Trialeti kurgans: 1. Trialeti, kurgan №47; 2. Zurtaketi, Barrow №6; 3. Trialeti, kurgans №№ 47, 49, 51; 4. Trialeti, kurgans №№ 1, 47; 5. Trialeti, kurgan №15.


Pl. VII – Map of Early and Middle Bronze Age Culture in South Caucasus. Direction of the routes are shown by arrows.

Pl. VIII – Map of connection routes between Near East and South Caucasus in 16th – 14th cc. B.C.

Pl. IX - Map of connection routes between Near East and South Caucasus in 14th – 13th cc. B.C.
Торговля и торговые пути между Южным Кавказом и Ближним Востоком в III-II тысячелетии до н.э.

Резюме

Товарно-обменные отношения между Южным Кавказом и Ближним Востоком возможно существовали еще в верхнем палеолите. Эти торговые отношения с хронологическими перерывами продолжались в эпоху неолита и энеолита. Хотя регулярный торговый обмен по-видимому берет начало в бронзовой эпохе. В конце IV тысячелетия до н.э. южнокаракский чернолощенный керамика куро-арахской культуры появлялась в регионе Малатья, а затем в начале III тысячелетия до н.э. на восточном побережье Средиземноморья. По мнению некоторых ученых торговые пути из Южного Кавказа в Левант с конца IV тысячелетия до н.э. до начала III тысячелетия до н.э. контролировали племена куро-арахской культуры и с конца III тысячелетия до н.э. возникновение городской культуры в Северной Сирии способствовало развитию торговых отношений Южного Кавказа с Месопотамией. Концентрация памятников куро-арахской и триалетской культуры вблизи залежей руд (в основном медной) или их расположение на транзитных дорогах, высокий уровень развития металлургии свидетельствует, что формирование и расцвет культур бронзовой эпохи на Южном Кавказе было связано с производством металлов. Основным источником богатства общества эпохи средней бронзы являлась торговля металлом. Экономической основой расцвета южнокаракских культур в эпохи средней бронзы, по-видимому являлось интенсивная эксплуатация медных, сурьмяных и мышьяковых рудников Кавказа. Именно металлургия вывела Кавказ на международную арену. В среднебронзовую эпоху всё ещё существовал тот торговый путь, который в IV-III тысячелетиях до н.э. связывал Южный Кавказ (куро-арахская культура) с Сирией и Палестиной (кербет-керакская культура). Существование карумов (торговых колоний) месопотамских купцов в Кюль-тепе (Канеш) и Берут-тепе обусловливало функционирование торгового пути связывающего Южный Кавказ с Сирией и Палестиной. Разрушение торговых колоний и нарушение торговых путей вызвал упадок среднебронзовых культур Южного Кавказа. Упадок триалетской культуры видимо был связан с протекающими в Анатолии процессами. XIX-XVIII вв. до н.э. являлся финальной фазой ассирийской торговли. После создания хеттского государства, монополия торговли металлом оказалась в руках хеттов. Нарушились традиционные торговые связи, временно утратились рынки сбыта для обществ Южного Кавказа эпохи средней бронзы, специализированного на горном деле и металлургии.

В IV-III тысячелетии до н.э. торговый путь из Южного Кавказа в Месопотамию, Сирию и Палестину видимо проходил через Малатью, что способствовало развитию раннебронзовых культур Кавказа и их распространению на юг. Функционирование этой дороги способствовало расцвету триалетской культуры. В раннебронзовую эпоху также формируется торговый путь идущий вдоль урмийского и ванского озера. В XVIII в. до н.э. ассирийские торговые колонии были разрушены. Ввиду создавшейся политической ситуации торговые связи Южного Кавказа в основном осуществлялись через оз. Ван и Урмия. В XVI-XIV вв. до н.э. появление новых элементов культуры на Южном Кавказе последовало за расцветом государства Миттани. По видимому, Южный Кавказ испытывал его сильное политическое, экономическое и культурное влияние. Торговые взаимоотношения Южного Кавказа с Месопотамией, Сирией, Палестиной и Ираном, видимо осуществлялись при посредничестве миттанийского царства. Позднее, после усиления Ассирии начинается новая волна экспансии на север, в основном с целью захвата торговых путей. На смену сравнительно мирным торговым взаимоотношениям приходят военные походы и завоевательная политика.
Rimual Road: 1. Trialeti, kurgan 47; 2. Zurtaketi, kurgan 6; 3. Trialeti, kurgans 47, 49, 51; 4. Trialeti, kurgans 1, 47; 5. Trialeti, kurgan 15.
Artifacts of the Late Bronze Age:

27-34. Frog amulets (27. Lchashen; 28. Metsamor; 29-32. Pevrebi and Shilda; 33-34. Ilanlitepe);
35-36. Egyptian stones, Saphar-Kharaba
Bronze (1-19) and ceramics (20-24) artifacts from South Caucasus and Mesopotamia:

Map of Early and Middle Bronze Age Cultures

Beyond Babylon 2008.

Map by Nino Shanshavili and Goderdzi Narimanishvili.
Map of connection routes between Near East and South Caucasus in 16th – 14th ce. B.C.

After: Starke 2002; Shanshashvili, Narmanishvili 2007
Beyond Babylon 2008
Map by G. Narmanishvili
N. shanshashvili
Map of connection routes between Near East and South Caucasus in 14th – 13th cc. B.C.

After: Starke 2002; Beyond Babylon 2008.
Map by G. Narimanishvili and N. Shanshushvili.