



CERAMICS VIII. THE EARLY BRONZE AGE IN SOUTHWESTERN AND SOUTHERN PERSIA

CERAMICS

viii. The Early Bronze Age in Southwestern and Southern Persia

Southwestern Persia, ca. 2000-1000 B.C.E. Knowledge of the ceramic sequence of southwestern Persia between 2000 and 1000 B.C.E. is based primarily on excavated material from the Ville Royale at Susa (Gasche; Steve et al.; Carter, 1971; idem, 1980; Miroschedji), supplemented by assemblages from the Susiana sites of Haft Tepe (probably ancient Kabnak; Negahban; cf. Herraro, p. 113), Sharafabad (Šarafābād; Schacht, 1975; idem, 1987, p. 181), and Chogha Zanbil (Čoḡā Zanbīl, ancient Al-Untash Napirisha; Ghirshman, 1966; idem, 1968), which are dated mainly to the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C.E. Because it is better known and uninterrupted, the Susa sequence has been used to date ceramic finds in the Deh Luran (Dehlorān) plain to the west (Carter, 1981) and the Iseh (Īza), Rāmhormoz, and Kur (Kor) river basins in the southeast (Carter, 1971; idem, 1979a; idem and Stolper; Schacht, 1987).

The ceramic repertoire of the 2nd millennium B.C.E. in Kūzestān is dominated



by plain buff-ware forms, the development of which can be traced through approximately 1,000 years, with four major subdivisions. The most common and long-lived forms are illustrated in Figures 28-31; the type numbers are those of Hermann Gasche (plans 7-9).

1. Shimashki phase (ca. 2200-1900 B.C.E.; [Figure 28](#)). Buff ware from this phase is predominantly grit-tempered. The most common forms include hemispherical bowls with inverted rims (type 5; [Figure 28.1](#)), upright bowls with indented band rims (type 6; [Figure 28.2](#)), small jars with multiple grooved rims (type 15; [Figure 28.3](#)), large jars with single ribs separating necks from bodies (type 18; [Figure 28.4](#)), and squat double-angled jars (type 21; [Figure 28.5](#)). The ceramic forms of the Shimashki phase are closely paralleled by Mesopotamian types of the Ur III period (cf. Gasche, esp. fig. 2). Comparative material has also been found at Farukhabad (Farroḳābād) in the Deh-Luran plain (Carter, 1981).

2. Sukkalmah phase (ca. 1900-1600/1500 B.C.E.; [Figure 29](#)). In the early 2nd millennium the grit-tempered wares of the late 3rd millennium were largely replaced by a vegetable-tempered ware, often with a cream slip (Carter, 1971, pp. 101-11; Gasche, p. 54). The bowl with indented band rim disappeared, whereas bowls with complex contours became more popular (type 3; [Figure 29.1](#)). The assemblage is dominated, however, by closed forms, including elongated goblets (type 19b; [Figure 29.2](#)) and shouldered jars (types 21a-b; [Figure 29.3](#)). Large vats, or pithoi, either open (types 33-35) or closed (types 36-37; [Figure 29.4](#)), became common. Throughout the 2nd millennium both were also popular in variants with heavy overhanging rims and ribs or ridges on the bodies. The Sukkalmah painted flask ([Figure 29.5](#)) appears to have been a distinctively Elamite form. It occurs outside Susiana in the Deh-Luran plain at Mussian (Mūsīān), in the Rāmhormoz region at Tall-i Ghazir (Tal-a Ġazīr), and in the Kor river basin at Malyan (Malīān, ancient Anshan; Carter, 1984, fig. 10; see vi, above; for parallels, see 3 below).

3. Middle Elamite I (or transitional) phase (ca. 1600/1500-1300 B.C.E.; [Figure 30](#)). The most common forms from this phase are button-based goblets with rounded (types 20x-b; [Figure 30.1, 2](#)) or stepped shoulders (Carter, 1984, pp. 1, 63-64; [Figure 30.3](#)). More distinctive but much less common at Susa is an elongated form of the same basic vessel type ([Figure 30.4](#)). Full description of this phase must, however, await the forthcoming publication of the pottery from Kabnak (Negahban). Both Sukkalmah and Middle Elamite I buff wares are paralleled in contemporary Mesopotamian assemblages (cf. Gasche;



Carter, 1971, pp. 101-11). The appearance of such Elamite types as gray wares, painted flasks, and other painted wares points to links with the Kaftari (Kaftari) and Qaleh (Qal'a) wares of Fārs (see below; Carter, 1979a, pp. 122-24, fig. 3; idem, 1984, p. 148).

4. The Middle Elamite II-III phases (ca. 1300-1000 B.C.E.; [Figure 31](#), [Figure 32](#)), are defined on the basis of excavated finds from Al-Untash Napirisha (Ghirshman, 1968) and from Susa Ville Royale II, levels 13-10 (Miroschedji, pp. 12-24). Conical bowls (type 1; [Figure 31.1](#)), tall footed goblets (type 19c; [Figure 31.2, 3](#)), squat goblets (Miroschedji, p. 16; [Figure 31.4](#)), band-rim jars (types 29a and 30), vats, and pithoi (types 33c, 35b, 37; [Figure 31.5](#)) constitute the bulk of the assemblage. The most distinctive shape is the “Elamite goblet” (type 19c), which became more elongated and cylindrical in phase III (Miroschedji, pp. 15-16; Ghirshman, 1966, pp. 91-92) and appeared together with a squat shouldered goblet (Miroschedji, fig. 22/1-11), a form that was also apparently more common in the late 2nd millennium. The closest parallels for both the squat and the elongated forms have been found at Malyan, operation EDD, level IVA (cf. Carter and Stolper, p. 40, figs. 1-3; [Figure 32](#)). In the Middle Elamite II-III phases the common buff ware forms show only general similarities to the Kassite and post-Kassite vessel types of Babylonia. A tendency toward a more uniform, less varied ceramic assemblage is, however, observable in both the Elamite and Mesopotamian sequences over the course of the 2nd millennium B.C.E. (Carter, 1978; idem, 1984, p. 164). In Kūzestān this standardization of ceramic shapes may have reflected a more centralized system of production, coinciding with the trend toward increasing urbanism observable in the settlement patterns in the last centuries of the 2nd millennium B.C.E.

Fārs in the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C.E. ([Figure 33](#)). Qaleh (Qal'a) painted wares, named for the site on the west side of the Kor river basin where they were first discovered (Vanden Berghe, 1959, p. 42, pls. 52b-c, 53), occur at Malyan in strata above Kaftari wares in operation GHI, levels I-II, dated ca. 1650 B.C.E.; they continued in use until the end of the second millennium B.C.E. It is difficult to distinguish the earliest examples from Kaftari painted buff wares (Nickerson, pp. 138-41), though further study of the Qaleh assemblage will no doubt lead to finer chronological subdivisions. At present the later phases (ca. 1300-1000 B.C.E.) are best known from operation EDD at Malyan, as GHI and BB33, where these wares have also been found, have not yet been studied in detail (Carter, forthcoming; idem, 1984, p. 174). The most distinctive component of the Qaleh assemblage is painted buff ware,



which is well made, high-fired, predominantly sand-tempered, and decorated in dark paint. Both open and closed forms have simple bands on the rims (Figure 33.1-2). Jars (Figure 33.2-4) with precisely painted geometric designs on the shoulders are the most distinctive forms in this class. They are stylistically linked to the earlier Kaftari wares, with which they share some forms and many design elements (Carter, 1984, p. 174; *idem*, forthcoming). Whereas Kaftari painted buff wares are commonly decorated over their entire surfaces and the decoration usually incorporates rows of birds framed by geometric bands (Nickerson, fig. 40), however, Qaleh buff wares are more carefully painted with decoration restricted to several geometric bands, which generally appear on the upper body of the vessel.

Qaleh wares have been found in association with plain buff wares that are nearly identical in form with contemporary Middle Elamite II-III types (cf. Figures 31 and 32); these forms include conical bowls, vats, squat goblets, and elongated Elamite goblets, all found in operation EDD at Malyan. The Middle Elamite assemblage appears to be intrusive in the region; it appears only in EDD at Malyan and is closely paralleled at sites in Kūzestān. In the other operations (BB33 and GHI) at Malyan other plain buff wares are associated with Qaleh painted wares, but these assemblages have not been studied. Outside Fārs Qaleh painted wares have been discovered in the Iseh (Sajjidi and Wright, figs. 42-43) and Rāmhormoz regions of eastern Kūzestān, and a few examples are known from Kabnak in Susiana proper (Carter, 1971, pp. 264-70, fig. 55/12-19).

Shogha (Šoḡā)-Teimuran (Teymūrān) ceramics (Figure 34, Figure 35) are named after the sites where they were first discovered. The assemblage has been described on the basis of excavated samples from Darvazeh Tepe (Darvāza Tepe) 80 km southeast of Malyan on the southern shore of Lake Niriz (Neyrīz). Shogha pottery consists of simple handmade forms, predominantly trays, bowls, and jars (Figure 34). The paste is dark orange to orange-buff in color, with grit temper. The ware sometimes has an exterior slip of buff or red to red-orange color. Painted decoration in black is common. Motifs include geometric patterns combined with animal (fish, birds, and goats) or plant designs (Jacobs, pp. 63-75; Vanden Berghe, 1959, pls. 54, 56). Teimuran pottery is distinguished from Shogha pottery by a harder paste, which ranges in color from orange-brown through orange to orange-buff. There are traces of a thin slip, often decorated with geometric designs in dark paint that include sharply ruled horizontal lines and sometimes solid triangles (Figure 35; Vanden



Berghe, 1959, pl. 59; Jacobs, pp. 79-83). Unlike the Shogha wares, which are all handmade, Teimuran pottery shows traces left by the wheel. These two wares have been found together at Darvazeh Tepe and in surface collections. Dating Shogha-Teimuran wares exactly has been difficult because the carbon-14 data are ambiguous. Nevertheless, it appears that Qaleh wares form a small part of the excavated assemblage in all the levels at Darvazeh except the earliest, which suggests that Shogha-Teimuran wares appeared sometime in the middle of the 2nd millennium and were approximately contemporary with Qaleh ceramics (Jacobs, pp. 115-19).

The composition but not the distribution of the ceramic wares of the late 2nd millennium B.C.E. in the Kor river basin is comparable to that of the earlier Kaftari phase. Local painted buff wares, local plain and painted red wares, and buff wares related to lowland Susiana types were all in use in the region during the Kaftari period. In the latter half of the 2nd millennium B.C.E. occupation sites where Shogha and Teimuran assemblages occurred were concentrated east of the Kor river, whereas Qaleh painted buff ware was more common on the west side of the basin (cf. Jacobs, pp. 157-70); Middle Elamite lowland types are known only from Malyan. This distribution pattern suggests that contacts between the two sectors of the basin were less close than they had been earlier in the 2nd millennium.

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