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CHALCOLITHIC ERA

CHALCOLITHIC ERA in Persia. Chalcolithic (< Gk. *khalkos* "copper" + *lithos* "stone") is a term adopted for the Near East early in this century as part of an attempt to refine the framework of cultural developmental "stages" (Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages) and used by students of western European prehistory (E. F. Henrickson,1983, pp. 68-79). In Near Eastern archaeology it now generally refers to the "evolutionary" interval between two "revolutionary" eras of cultural development: the Neolithic (ca. 10,000-5500 b.c.e., but varying from area to area), during which techniques of food production and permanent village settlement were established in the highlands and adjacent regions, and the Bronze Age (ca. 3500-1500 b.c.e., also varying with the area), during which the first cities and state organizations arose.

Although archeologists have devoted less attention to the Chalcolithic, it was an era of fundamental economic, social, political, and cultural development, made possible by the economic advances of the Neolithic and providing in turn the essential basis for the innovations of the Bronze Age. The era can be divided into three general phases, Early, Middle, and Late Chalcolithic, approximately equivalent respectively to the Early, Middle, and Late Village periods identified by Frank Hole (1987a; 1987b; for more detailed discussion of the internal chronology of the Persian Chalcolithic, see Voigt; idem and Dyson). Those aspects most directly attested by archeological evidence (primarily demographic and economic) will be emphasized here, with some attention to less clearly identifiable social, political, and ideological trends.

Persia is essentially a vast desert plateau surrounded by discontinuous habitable areas, limited in size and ecologically and geographically diverse, few of them archeologically well known, especially in the eastern half of the country. The evidence is highly uneven and drawn primarily from surveys and excavations in western and southwestern Persia.

Settlement patterns. It is remarkable that in so geographically diverse and discontinuous a country a single distinctive pattern of settlement development characterized the Chalcolithic era in most of the agriculturally exploitable highland valleys and lowland plains that have been surveyed. During the early phase most habitable areas were sparsely settled; small, undifferentiated village sites were located near streams or springs. This pattern was essentially an extension of the prevailing Neolithic settlement pattern and in a few areas (e.g., northwestern Iran; Swiny) appears to have continued throughout the Chalcolithic. In the great majority of the arable mountain valleys and lowland plains, however, it developed in several significant ways through the Middle and Late Chalcolithic. The number of villages increased substantially (in many areas strikingly so) at the end of the Early and especially in the Middle Chalcolithic; then, in the Late Chalcolithic the trend was abruptly reversed, and the number of permanent settlements had dropped precipitously by the end of the era. On the Susiana plain, an eastern extension of the Mesopotamian lowlands in southwestern Persia, Hole (1987a, p. 42) recorded sixteen sites of the Early (= Susiana a) and eighty-six of the Middle Chalcolithic (= Susiana d). In the Late Chalcolithic the number declined to fifty-eight (= early Susa A), then thirty-one (= later Susa A), and finally eighteen (= terminal Susa A). In the much smaller and slightly higher adjacent Deh Luran (Dehlorān) plain the pattern was similar but developed somewhat earlier. Fewer than ten settlement sites were recorded from the early phase of Early Chalcolithic (Chogha Mami Transitional phase 5, Sabz phase 8), approximately twenty from the later Early and early Middle Chalcolithic (Khazineh [Ḵazīna] phase 20, Mehmeh 18), and a steady decline through later Middle and Late Chalcolithic, with only a few permanent settlements by the end of the era (Bayat 14, Farukh [Farroḵ] 12, Susa A 5, Sargarab [Sargarāb]/Terminal Susa A 2; Hole, 1987a; idem, 1987b, p. 100). The best survey data available from southern Persia come from the Marvdašt plain in the broad Kor river drainage basin (Sumner, 1972; idem, 1977) and the smaller Fasā and Dārāb plains (Hole, 1987a, pp. 52-55; idem, 1987b, p. 101). In all three areas the overall settlement pattern was the same: The number of villages increased gradually through the Neolithic and the Early Chalcolithic to an impressive peak in the Middle

Chalcolithic Bakun (Bakūn) period (e.g., 146 sites in the Kor river basin), only to drop off dramatically during the Late Chalcolithic and Bronze Age levels. In a survey of the Rūd-e Gošk (Kūšk) near Tepe Yahya (Yaḥyā) Martha Prickett (1976; 1986) found a similar pattern, with the peak in the Yahya VA phase and the sharp drop immediately afterward in the Aliabad (ʿAlīābād) phase (both Late Chalcolithic). In the central Zagros highlands of western Persia the three most comprehensively surveyed valleys revealed a generally similar settlement pattern, though the timing of the peak differed somewhat. In the Māhīdašt, one of the broadest and richest stretches of arable level land in the Zagros, alluviation has added as much as 10m to the late prehistoric land surface, and many Chalcolithic sites are undoubtedly still buried (Brookes et al.). Nevertheless, the number of known villages shows a marked increase from the Neolithic (ten in Sarāb) to the Early Chalcolithic; an abrupt and complete change in the ceramic assemblage, with the appearance at seventy sites of J ware, showing definite generic influence of Halaf (Ḥalaf) pottery in neighboring Mesopotamia (See ceramics iv. the chalcolithic period in the zagros), suggests that the increase may have been caused by an influx of people from the north and west. In the Middle Chalcolithic the number of sites at which black-on-buff and related monochrome-painted wares were found rose sharply to a prehistoric peak of 134. A small number of sites yielded pottery from the purely highland Dalma (Dalmā) tradition, indicating another source of external cultural influence (E. F. Henrickson, 1986; idem, 1990; idem and Vitali). Some degree of indirect outside influence from the Ubaid (ʿObayd) culture of lowland Mesopotamia is also apparent in several of the locally made monochrome-painted wares (E. F. Henrickson, 1986; idem, 1990). In the Late Chalcolithic the flourishing village life in the Māhīdašt seems to have declined; only a handful of sites have yielded pottery characteristic of this period (E. F. Henrickson, 1983, chap. 6; idem, 1985b). Either the settled population dropped considerably at this time, owing to emigration, increased mortality, or adoption of a more mobile and less archeologically visible life style like pastoralism, or the monochrome-painted buff-ceramic tradition persisted until the end of the Chalcolithic. Definitive answers await further investigations in the field. In the Kangāvar valley, 100 km east of the Māhīdašt on the great road to Khorasan, the pattern was noticeably different from that in the western and southern Zagros. The number of villages rose from a single Neolithic example, Shahnabad (Šahnābād) on mound C at Seh Gabi (Se Gābī; McDonald) to twenty in the early Middle Chalcolithic (Dalma phase), located almost exclusively near the streams crossing the central valley floor. All these villages were small, typically covering about 0.5 ha. In the Middle and early Late Chalcolithic the

number and location of sites remained relatively stable (seventeen in the Seh Gabi phase, twenty-three contemporary with Godin [Gowdīn] VII), even though the ceramics and other aspects of material culture changed abruptly between these two phases. This stability probably reflects a similar stability in subsistence strategy, as well as greater isolation from external cultural influences. Only toward the end of the Late Chalcolithic was there a notable increase in the number of villages (thirty-nine sites contemporary with Godin VI). The delayed and less marked population increase in Kangāvar, anomalous compared to most well-surveyed areas of western Persia, may have resulted from the cooler, drier climate, established from both ancient and modern ecological data and from the marked clustering of sites on the valley floor near sources of irrigation water (E. F. Henrickson, 1983, pp. 9-36, 466-68). Sociopolitical developments and external connections with the lowlands may also have accounted for a local increase or influx of population during the Godin VI period (E. F. Henrickson, forthcoming; Weiss and Young). The smaller and more marginal Holaylān valley south of the Māhīdašt has been more intensively surveyed. Permanent settlement peaked there in the Middle Chalcolithic; subsistence strategies appear to have become more diversified in the Late Chalcolithic, followed by a marked decline in preserved sites of all types. Peder Mortensen (1974; 1976) found three cave sites, one open-air site, and five village settlements dating to the Neolithic, reflecting a diverse and not completely sedentary system in which both the valley floor and the surrounding hills were exploited economically. Neither J nor Dalma wares were found that far south, and the developments in the Early and early Middle Chalcolithic are thus unclear. Eleven sites with Middle Chalcolithic black-on-buff pottery resembling Seh Gabi painted and Māhīdašt black-on-buff wares were recorded, all on the valley floor (Mortensen, 1976, fig. 11). By the early Late Chalcolithic settlement had again been diversified to include two open-air and two village sites in the hills, as well as seven villages on the valley floor, all yielding ceramics related to generic Susa A wares, including black-on-red; the number of sites remained quite stable (Mortensen, 1976, fig. 13, legend erroneously exchanged with that of fig. 12). The sharp decline in settlement occurred later; only two villages on the valley floor, two cave sites, and two open-air camps, all yielding ceramics related to those of Sargarab and Godin VI, are known (Mortensen, 1976, fig. 12), suggesting a destabilization of village life and a concomitant increase in pastoralism in this area, as in others where the same general pattern has been observed (E. F. Henrickson, 1985a).

Modest settlement hierarchies seem to have developed in some highland

valleys during the Chalcolithic, though such geological processes as alluviation and water and wind erosion have undoubtedly obscured the evidence in some areas. Normally a few larger villages seem to have grown up among a preponderance of small villages. In the Māhīdašt the average size of sites without heavy overburden was 1.6 ha in the Early and just over 1 ha in the Middle Chalcolithic, but several sites covering more than 3 ha existed in both phases (E. F. Henrickson, 1983, pp. 458-60). Nothing more is known about these sites, as none have been excavated. Tepe Giyan (Gīān) in the Nehāvand valley was a relatively large highland site (in the 3-ha range) from Early Chalcolithic times; seals and copper objects were found there (Contenau and Ghirshman; Hole, 1987a, pp. 87-89). At Godin Tepe, a small town in the Bronze Age (R. Henrickson, 1984), the Chalcolithic is buried under deep Bronze and Iron Age overburden, and it is not known how large or important it was in relation to the rest of Kangāvar during most of that era (Young, 1969; idem and Levine). During the Late Chalcolithic, however, an oval enclosure (Godin V) was located there, the seat of an enclave of people from the lowlands apparently involved in long-distance commodity exchange, contemporary with the latter part of the prosperous period VI occupation at Godin and in Kangāvar generally (Weiss and Young; Levine and Young). Elsewhere in the central Zagros, especially in northeastern Luristan, several large and strategically located Late Chalcolithic sites developed just at the time when the number of smaller settlements was abruptly declining (Goff, 1966; idem, 1971). In the southwestern lowlands of Ḵūzestān the evolution of a settlement hierarchy progressed farther than anywhere else in Chalcolithic Persia. In Dehlorān two settlement centers grew up. In the Farukh phase of the Middle Chalcolithic Farukhabad (Farroḵābād), estimated to have originally covered approximately 2 ha, contained at least one thick-walled, elaborately bonded brick building, constructed on a low platform (Wright, 1981, pp. 19-21), and in the Susa A period of the Late Chalcolithic the large site of Mussian (Mūsīān; Gautier and Lamprey dominated Dehlorān. Farther south, on the Susiana plain, two "primate" settlement centers developed during the Chalcolithic. Chogha Mish (Čoḡā Mīš) in the east flourished in the Middle Chalcolithic, when the number of sites on the plain reached its peak; it covered an area of 11 ha and included domestic architecture and at least one large, thick-walled monumental public building with buttresses, containing many small rooms, including a pottery storeroom and a possible flint-working room (Delougaz; Delougaz and Kantor, 1972; idem, 1975; Kantor, 1976a; idem, 1976b). The contemporaneous settlement at Jaffarabad (Jaʿfarābād) was a specialized pottery-manufacturing site with many kilns (Dollfus, 1975). After the demise of Chogha Mish the

settlement on the acropolis at Susa in western Susiana gained prominence, developing into the most impressive Chalcolithic center yet known in Persia, with an area of approximately 20 ha. The high platform was about 70 m^2 and stood more than 10 m high. Its brick facing was adorned with rows of inset ceramic "nails," cylinders with flaring heads (Canal, 1978a; idem, 1978b). Fragmentary architectural remains atop the platform suggest storage rooms and a larger structure that may have been a temple (Steve and Gasche) but the evidence for its function is inconclusive (Pollock). Beside one corner of the terrace was a mortuary structure analogous to a mass mausoleum (de Morgan; de Mecquenem; Canal, 1978a), containing an unknown number of burials, recently estimated at 1,000-2,000 (Hole, 1987a, pp. 41-42; idem, 1990). This burial facility was apparently not intended only for the elite: Only some of the burials were in brick-lined tombs, and a wide range of grave goods were included with individual bodies, from ordinary cooking pots to luxury objects, particularly eggshell-thin Susa A fine painted-ware goblets and copper axes (Canal, 1978a; Hole, 1983). The acropolis at Susa was thus a unique multipurpose Chalcolithic settlement and ceremonial center, a focal point for the region. It may not have had a large resident population, but it nevertheless served a series of complex centralizing sociopolitical functions, presumably both religious and secular. Centers like Chogha Mish and Susa, like the late Ubaid center at Eridu, presaged the rise of the first true cities in the Mesopotamian lowlands in the subsequent Uruk period.

Strategies for subsistence. Irrigation appears to have been utilized throughout the arable highland valleys and lowland plains of Persia for the first time during the Middle Chalcolithic. The best-documented area is Dehlorān, where careful collection and interpretation of botanical, settlement, and geomorphological data by several different expeditions have resulted in an unusually clear picture both of flourishing irrigation agriculture and the subsequent abuse of the land and decline of permanent agricultural settlement in the Late Chalcolithic (Hole, Flannery, and Neely; Hole, 1977; Wright, 1975). Direct botanical evidence of Chalcolithic irrigation is not as rich for other sites in Persia, but in surveys of the Māhīdašt (Levine, 1974; idem, 1976; idem and McDonald), Kangāvar (Young, 1974), Susiana (Hole, 1987a; idem, 1987b), Kāna-Mīrzā (Zagarell), the Kor river basin (Sumner, 1983), and elsewhere linear alignment of contemporaneous sites along ancient watercourses provides strong indirect evidence. In the Rūd-e Gošk survey Prickett (1976) also noted a strong association between many Middle Chalcolithic (Yahya VB and VA) sites, on one hand, and alluvial fans and ancient terraces

used for flood irrigation. Of course, not all Middle Chalcolithic villages required irrigation; many were located in areas with sufficient rainfall for dry farming.

In the western highlands there is strong evidence of specialized mobile pastoralism, apparently distinct from settled village farming, during the Middle and especially the Late Chalcolithic (E. F. Henrickson, 1985a). It includes the isolated Paṛčīna and Hakalān cemeteries in the Pošt-e Kūh, located far from any ancient village site (Vanden Berghe, 1973; idem, 1974; idem, 1975a; idem, 1975b; idem, forthcoming); an increased number of open-air and cave sites located near sometimes seasonal sources of fresh water, in Holaylān, Ḵorramābād (Wright et al.), the Pošt-e Kūh (Kalleh Nissar [Kalla-Nesār]; Vanden Berghe, 1973), the hinterlands south and east of Susiana, including Īza and Qaḷʿa-ye Tal (Wright, 1987), and the Baḵtīārī region (Zagarell); and the appearance of at least one distinctive pottery type, black-on-red ware, which was widely but sparsely distributed in Luristan, Ḵūzestān, and adjacent areas, probably carried by mobile pastoralists (E. F. Henrickson, 1985a). The pervasive Late Chalcolithic decline in the number of villages provides indirect support for the hypothesis of increased diversification and mobility in subsistence strategies. In areas like the Kor river basin, where this decline appears to have been more gradual, many of the remaining sites are adjacent to natural grazing land, suggesting increased reliance on herding even among villagers (Hole, 1987a, pp. 54-55). Some degree of ecological or climatic deterioration may have contributed to this shift in certain areas, and political and economic pressures from the adjacent lowlands may also have increased (Lees and Bates; Bates and Lees; Adams; E. F. Henrickson, 1985a).

Crafts and "trade." The Chalcolithic era was distinguished from other eras of prehistory by the variety of painted pottery that was produced, most of it utilitarian and probably made in village homes or by part-time potters who did not earn their livelihoods entirely from their craft. With a few notable exceptions, each highland valley system and lowland plain produced a distinctive ceramic assemblage over time; although there was some resemblance to pottery from nearby areas, typically each assemblage was recognizable as the work of a separate community, with different approaches and expectations. Technical and aesthetic quality, though variable, tended to improve over time, culminating in the Bakun painted ware of the Middle Chalcolithic and the Susa A fine ware of the Late Chalcolithic. Both were produced in prosperous and heavily populated areas during phases in which

village settlement had reached or just passed its prehistoric zenith and pronounced settlement hierarchies had developed; their demise was associated with the subsequent rapid decline in permanent village settlement. Both were of extremely fine buff fabric without inclusions, skillfully decorated with a variety of standardized geometric patterns in dark paint; each, however, was characterized by a unique “grammar,” “syntax,” and symbolic “semantics” of design (Hole, 1984). It is not yet clear, however, that either or both of these wares resulted from occupational specialization. Archeological evidence for specialized ceramic production in the Persian Chalcolithic is extremely rare. At Tal-e Bakun, the type site for Bakun painted ware, one Middle Chalcolithic residential area of twelve buildings was excavated (Langsdorff and McCown). Several appear to have been potters’ workshops, in which work tables with nearby clay supplies and storage boxes for ash temper were found. In addition, three large kilns were associated with this group of houses (Langsdorff and McCown, pp. 8-15, figs. 2, 4). Hole (1987b, p. 86) has pointed out that the published plans imply that only one of the kilns was in use at any one lime, which suggests specialized production, most likely of Bakun painted ware, perhaps partially for export: The ware was quite widespread in the Kor river basin and adjacent areas of southern Persia. The technical prowess and artistic sophistication involved are arguments for specialized production, possibly involving full-time artisans. From Susa itself there is no direct evidence of specialized ceramic production in the Susa A period, but many of the sites surveyed in Susiana have yielded remains of kilns and many wasters, evidence of widespread localized pottery production in Middle and Late Chalcolithic times. Although some excavated sites have also revealed houses with kilns (e.g., Tepe Bendebal [Band-e Bāll]; Dollfus, 1983), only one is known to have been devoted exclusively to ceramic production: Middle Chalcolithic (Chogha Mish phase) Jaffarabad (Dollfus, 1975). As with Bakun painted ware, however, the exceptionally high technical and aesthetic quality of Susa A fine ware strongly suggests production by full-time specialists at Susa itself and perhaps at other sites as well.

Wide geographic distribution of a distinctive ware or pottery style does not automatically indicate a centralized network of commodity distribution. The absence of efficient transportation in the Chalcolithic, especially in the highlands, must have precluded Systematic, high-volume ceramic exchange, even between the few relatively highly organized centers. For example, in the early Middle Chalcolithic the full Dalma ceramic assemblage, characterized by painted and impressed wares, was remarkably widespread, dominating the

Soldūz-Ošnū area of Azarbaijan and the Kangāvar and Nehāvand valleys of northeastern Luristan. The latter ware also occurred in conjunction with Dalma plain red-slipped ware in the Māhīdašt. This distribution pattern was almost certainly not the result of organized long-distance trade in Dalma pottery, which was not a “luxury” ware and was far too heavy and bulky to have been transported economically through the Zagros mountains, especially in the absence of wheeled vehicles and beasts of burden. Furthermore, Dalma settlement data reveal a strictly village economy with no sociopolitical or economic settlement hierarchy. The wide distribution of the pottery must therefore be explained sociologically, rather than economically, as reflecting the distribution of a people, probably a kin-based ethnic group that may have shared a common dialect or religion and produced a distinctive utilitarian pottery, as well as other visible but perishable items of material culture; these items would have served as group markers, analogous to the distinctive dress and rug patterns of today’s Zagros Kurds (E. F. Henrickson and Vitali). Similar situations in the Early Chalcolithic include the spread of Chogha Mami (Čoḡā Māmī) transitional pottery from eastern Mesopotamia into Dehlorān (Hole, 1977) and probably the appearance of J ware in the Māhīdašt (Levine and McDonald). Any pottery “exchange” over a considerable distance was probably a coincidental result of contact for other reasons; late Middle Chalcolithic-Late Chalcolithic black-on-red ware is a good example (E. F. Henrickson, 1985a). In other instances “related” pottery assemblages from adjacent areas are not identical, which implies that, instead of actual movement of vessels, indirect “exchange” took place involving assimilation of selected elements from an external ceramic style into local tradition. One example is the diluted and locally “edited” influence of Ubaid ceramics on otherwise diverse highland Māhīdašt pottery (E. F. Henrickson, 1983; idem, 1986; idem, 1990) in the Middle and Late Chalcolithic. In the eastern central Zagros and adjacent plateau area a different ceramic tradition, labeled Godin VI in the mountains and Sialk (Sīalk) III/6-7 (Ghirshman, 1938) and Ghabristan (Qabrestān) IV (Majidzadeh, 1976; idem, 1977; idem, 1978; idem, 1981) farther east, developed in the Late Chalcolithic. Other archeological evidence suggests that this particular phenomenon may have coincided with an attempt at organizing a regional economic or sociopolitical entity (E. F. Henrickson, forthcoming). The broad distribution of these distinctive ceramics, taken together with glyptic evidence (E. F. Henrickson, 1988) and the remains in several eastern Luristan valleys of large settlements (Goff, 1971), at least one of which permitted the apparently peaceful establishment of a lowland trading enclave in its midst (Weiss and Young), supports an economic

explanation.

The special cases of Susa A fine and Bakun painted ware have been discussed above; as true “art” wares, they are probably the best candidates for medium- to long-distance ceramic exchange in Iranian Chalcolithic, but available data are inconclusive, and strictly local production (probably by specialists at a few sites in each area) cannot be ruled out.

There are almost no archeological data for craft production other than ceramics in Chalcolithic Persia.

Only a few widely scattered examples of copper, stone, and glyptic work have been excavated. There are a number of sources for copper in central Persia, but copper processing is known from only one site of this period, Tal-i Iblis (Tal-e Eblīs) near Kermān (Caldwell, 1967; idem and Shahmirzadi). In Iblis I (Early Chalcolithic) and II (late Middle-Late Chalcolithic) hundreds of slag-stained crucible fragments were recovered, along with chunks of slag and rejected copper ore. Although the accompanying ceramics do not reflect outside contact, the presence of large quantities of pyrometallurgical debris and the remote location near copper sources strongly suggest that the site was established specifically to process locally mined copper ore in quantity for export (Caldwell, p. 34). Sialk, from which copper artifacts were recovered in various Chalcolithic levels (Ghirshman, 1938), was also located in a copper-bearing area, near Kāšān; there is no known direct evidence of copper processing at the site, but cast copper tools and ornaments (e.g., round-sectioned pins) were found (Ghirshman, 1938, pl. LXXXIV). In Chalcolithic Giyan V, west of Sialk in northeastern Luristan, copper objects included borers, small spirals, tubes, rectangular-sectioned pins, and a rectangular axe (Contenau and Ghirshman, pp. 16-45, 64ff.). Only a few other sites have yielded copper objects, including the axes from burial hoards at Susa. Copper thus seems to have been a rare and presumably expensive material throughout the Persian Chalcolithic. Direct, unequivocal evidence for other craft production and exchange (e.g., stone, glyptic, and textile work) is either rare or lacking altogether, though scattered small finds from various houses and graves suggest at least a low level of such craft activity in certain areas during certain phases. The exception is obsidian, which was obtained from Anatolian sources in small quantities throughout the Neolithic and Chalcolithic (see Hole, 1987b, pp. 86-87).

Burial practices. Outside the realm of economics and subsistence available

archeological data and their interpretation are extremely problematic. The only evidence consists of sparse and unevenly preserved burials and associated structures and goods (for detailed discussion, see Hole, 1987b; idem, 1990). In the Early Chalcolithic all known highland and lowland burials (fewer than a dozen, from three sites: Seh Gabi, Jaffarabad, and Chogha Mish) are of infants or children, who were deposited under the floors of houses, a possible indication of family continuity and settlement stability. As in the Neolithic, grave goods were limited to a few modest personal items, mainly pots and simple jewelry, suggesting a relatively egalitarian society. These data reflect continuation of the predominant Neolithic pattern in southwestern Persia and in lowland Mesopotamia as well. Burying customs for adults are unknown; the burials must have been extramural, but no Early Chalcolithic cemetery has been identified. In the northern and central Zagros the Early Chalcolithic pattern continued to evolve in the next phase. At Dalma Tepe, Seh Gabi, and Kozagaran (Kūzagarān) children were buried under house floors but were first placed in pots or bowls. In contrast, a completely new burial form developed in Ḵūzestān. At Jaffarabad, Chogha Mish, Jowi (Jovī), and Bendebal infants (and a very few adults out of a relatively large sample) have been found in brick tombs outside the houses. Grave goods still consisted of a few simple utilitarian objects, primarily pots, with nothing to indicate differences in status. In the Pošt-e Kūh just north of Dehlorān abundant data have been recovered from almost 200 stone-lined tomb burials, mostly of adults, in the two pastoralist cemeteries, Parchineh and Hakalan. These cemeteries appear to reflect the adoption of lowland burial customs in the outer ranges of the Zagros, lending support to speculation about migration routes between the two areas and interaction between pastoralists and villagers. Grave goods were limited almost entirely to utilitarian ceramics and a few stone tools, weapons, and pieces of jewelry, insufficient to suggest significant differences in status.

The Late Chalcolithic burial sample is very small, except for the large mortuary at Susa. The few known burials were all of children or infants and generally continued the two Middle Chalcolithic patterns: Those from Seh Gabi and Giyan in the central highlands were in jars or pots without burial goods, though architectural context was unclear at both sites. Two infant burials from lowland Jaffarabad were in mat-lined mud “boxes,” accompanied only by pottery and a single seal; it is impossible to interpret this one instance as a status item. Although the large Susa A burial facility appears to have been unique in Chalcolithic Persia, it nevertheless reflected the Middle-Late Chal-

colithic lowland custom of burial in brick tombs, demonstrating a formal standardization in the treatment of the dead: one corpse to a tomb, supine in an extended position. Grave goods were much more elaborate than elsewhere, but, with a few striking exceptions (hoards of copper objects), they, too, seem to have been standardized, consisting primarily of ceramics vessels ranging in quality from utilitarian "cooking pots" to distinctive Susa A fine painted goblets (often in the same tombs). The absence of an excavation record for this part of Susa is frustrating, but, even though the size and architectural elaboration of the site are evidence of its function as a regional center, the burials do not seem to reflect a society in which status differences were structurally the most important; rather, an emphasis on the unity of the regional "community" is suggested. It is possible, however, that only individuals or families of high status were buried at Susa and that the majority of those in the economic "sustaining area" were buried elsewhere, probably near their own homes. If so, then the simple fact of burial at the regional center, rather than elaborate individual tombs or grave goods, would have been the primary mark of high status. The rest of the population of Chalcolithic Persia seems to have lived in egalitarian villages or pastoral groups. Larger local settlement centers, involving development of sociopolitical and economic differences in status, were clearly the exception.

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