



ELAM II. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ELAM

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The archeological use of the term “Elam” is based on a loose unity recognizable in the material cultures of the period 3400-525 B.C.E. at Susa in Kūzestān, at Anshan (q.v.) in Fārs, and at sites in adjacent areas of the Zagros mountains, particularly in the modern provinces of Lorestān, Kordestān, and Kermān (Figure 1, Figure 2; Carter, 1984, p. 103). Text-based definitions (see i, above; cf. Steinkeller, 1988; idem, 1990) often lead to interpretations that are at odds with those derived from the study of material culture. This article is based on evidence from controlled excavations and surveys in the geographically diverse areas called Elam in a general cultural sense, though not in a more precise geographical sense. Most of the archeologically excavated material comes from the large site of Susa.

The archeological record.

Susa was excavated almost continuously from the late nineteenth century until the Persian revolution of 1357 Š./1978. Both Jacques de Morgan and Robert de Mecquenem, the successive directors of the French archeological mission from 1897 to 1946, were trained as mining engineers and brought that background of large-scale earth removal to archaeology. They were also



uninterested in the excavation of mud-brick buildings and little concerned with archeological contexts and associations. Roman Ghirshman, director from 1946 to 1967, adopted the “organic” method of excavation, clearing large areas of mud-brick buildings, in order to gain an idea of the overall city plan in the 2nd millennium B.C.E. Controlled stratigraphic excavations at the site began only in the 1960s, when first M.-J. Steve and then Jean Perrot became directors of the French archeological mission at Susa. Although large numbers of objects were found in earlier campaigns, the relative chronology of this material has only recently been established (Carter, 1992, pp. 20-24). Other excavations, in Kūzestān, Fārs, Lorestān, and Kermān, have been so much smaller in scale and shorter in duration that comparisons with Susa are difficult (for summaries of these smaller excavations and surveys in both Kūzestān and the highlands, as well as comprehensive bibliographies, see Carter, 1984, pp. 108-10; Hole, 1987, pp. 293-321).

The setting.

Elam was distinct from the contemporary civilizations of Sumer and the Indus valley in the episodic cultural and political integration of large expanses of geographically diverse territory. The lines of communication between Susa and Anshan, the largest cities of Elam, as well as with other, more distant mountain regions, were limited in number and generally difficult, owing to rugged topography. Neither Susa nor Anshan was centrally located in its own region or lay directly on major international trade routes; both could easily be bypassed through the Persian Gulf, on the sea route between Mesopotamia and the Indus valley. Susiana, the plain in which Susa is located, was the only large lowland region in Elam, an extension of the Mesopotamian plain. It is the best known from excavations, but, because of its location, its material culture was also the most heavily influenced by Mesopotamia of any Elamite region. Many upland valleys in the folds of the Zagros were linked with Susa culturally or politically at various points in its history. Most prominent were the Kor river basin in Fārs ca. 500 km southeast, where Anshan was situated, and Lorestān and Kordestān, where the Simaški lands may have been located (Henrickson, 1984; for another view, see i, above). These highland areas, which are still for the most part unexplored, are considered to have been the Elamite core. The southeastern Zagros, where large deposits of copper ores have been identified, are known through excavations at Tepe Sialk (Sīālk), Tepe Yahya (Yaḥyā), Tall-i Iblis (Eblīs), and Shahdad (Šahdād). Excavated finds suggest that this region was part of the Elamite cultural world, at least in some periods (cf.



Amiet, 1986, pp. 160-70, referring to the region as “trans-Elamite”). Both Susiana in the west and the regions to the southeast in the Kermān range should perhaps be considered the Elamite periphery. Mobile pastoralism and agriculture formed the basis of economic life in Elam, but trade and exchange with lowland Mesopotamia, particularly in metals, timber, and various stones, also played a part in the Elamite economy from as early as the 4th millennium B.C.E. (Alizadeh, 1988; Algaze, pp. 11-18).

The Proto-Elamite (Susa III/Banesh) period, ca. 3400/3200-2800 B.C.E.

The Proto-Elamite period was characterized by a distinctive assemblage of artifacts and an artistic style distributed from Lorestān in the west to Kermān in the east. The artifacts include administrative texts written in the still undeciphered proto-Elamite script (see iii, below; [Plate I](#)); a distinctive glyptic style (Pittman, 1992a; see [CYLINDER SEALS](#), p. 485); ceramics (cf. Le Brun, 1971, figs. 60-66; see [CERAMICS vi](#)); and various stone and metal objects made from materials mined, worked, or both in the Iranian highlands and shipped east and west. The establishment of a city at Anshan during the Proto-Elamite period (also called Banesh after the corresponding archeological phase in central Fārs) and smaller outposts at Tepe Sialk and Tepe Yahya in the eastern highlands suggest that the foundations of the union between lowland and highland regions characteristic of later Elam were first laid in the late 4th millennium. The archeological evidence also indicates that in the Kermān range an indigenous population coexisted with a foreign, Proto-Elamite group; the latter had an administrative technology and material culture closely linked to, if not imported from, those known from Susa or Anshan (Carter, 1984, pp. 115-32).

Susa remains the site of reference for any discussion of the Proto-Elamite period, as controlled stratigraphic work on the Acropole (Le Brun, 1971; idem, 1978) has led to a more exact definition of the assemblage. Earlier excavations had also yielded more than 1,450 tablets written in the Proto-Elamite script and a large corpus of contemporary seals and sealings (Damerow and Englund, p. 2 n. 4; Harper et al., pp. 70-77 nos. 48). Excavations at Anshan (Sumner, 1974; idem, 1976) have revealed the construction of a city wall and a sequence (ABC levels IV-II) of mud-brick public buildings dated to the Proto-Elamite (Banesh) period ([Plate II](#)). Most remarkable are the building phases from levels III and II in operation ABC. The level-III structure was precisely constructed and had painted walls ([Plate III](#)); the level-II building was a fragmentary large structure containing twelve painted pithoi, indicating a



central storage facility. Some idea of daily life in Proto-Elamite Anshan can be gained from a building characterized by domestic installations and areas of small-scale craft activity, called TUV, on the edge of the city (Nicholas). By 3000 B.C.E. Anshan, estimated at 50 ha (Sumner, 1988, p. 317), had become the largest known settlement in Elam. Contemporary Susa is estimated at less than 11 ha. There were no other large settlements in Susiana during the Proto-Elamite period. The rapid growth of Anshan, coinciding with the decline of population in Susiana, led J. R. Alden (1982, p. 620; 1987, pp. 159, 164 table 28) to suggest emigration from lowland Susiana to Anshan just before 3000 B.C.E.

The Old Elamite period (ca. 2600-1600 B.C.E.).

The dynasties of Awan and Simaški. The period in which these two dynasties reigned corresponds approximately to periods IV-V at Susa (ca. 2600-1900 B.C.E.; Schacht). At sites in the Kermān range Proto-Elamite administrative texts and associated glyptic and ceramics fell into disuse at some time between 2900 and 2800. At Anshan a gap in the sequence occurs at ca. 2600, and the site was not reoccupied on an urban scale until the Kaftari phase (ca. 2200), when the Proto-Elamite city wall was repaired (Sumner, 1988, p. 317). Proto-Elamite tablets and seals disappeared at Susa at about the same time as in the Kermān range. Statues and wall plaques found without clear contexts on the Acropole indicate the presence of a temple of Mesopotamian type, albeit a rather poor example (Amiet, 1976). Susian ceramics datable to the mid-3rd millennium are not of Mesopotamian inspiration, however. Monochrome-painted wares decorated with birds, plants, and geometric motifs (Henrickson, 1986, pp. 15-16 table 3) and accompanying plain wares have their closest analogues in assemblages from Lorestān and Kordestān (Godin III6-5; [CERAMICS vii](#)).

Susa grew from approximately 11 to 46 ha during the 3rd millennium. According to textual sources, it was a border city alternately under control of the highland polities of Awan and Simaški and the Akkadian and Ur III empires of Mesopotamia. To a degree these shifting relations are reflected in the archeological record, for example, the increasing popularity of Akkadian glyptic and ceramic types and the disappearance of monochrome-painted wares in Susa IVB (Carter, 1980, pp. 25-30). After the Akkadian period, seals (CYLINDER SEALS, pp. 486-92) and ceramics in Susiana continued to be strongly influenced by Mesopotamian styles through the 3rd and most of the 2nd millennia; at Susa, for example, buff-ware cups, bowls, and goblets were similar to, though not identical with, Mesopotamian pottery forms ([CERAMICS viii](#)).



Only a few small scattered settlements appeared elsewhere in Susiana during the last centuries of the 3rd millennium. Tepe Mussian (Mūsīān), on the Deh Loran (q.v.) plain 90 km to the northwest of Susa, was the only other large town (14 ha) of this period in Kūzestān (Schacht, pp. 174-75; Wright, 1981, pp. 192-95).

In Lorestān, in the Pošt-e Kūh, several small groups of stone-built underground burial chambers have been investigated; they are located apart from settlement sites. These cemeteries, datable ca. 2600-2400 B.C.E., attest to a period of prosperity in the region (Vanden Berghe, pp. 39-50). Funerary goods in the larger tombs included copper or bronze weapons and ceramic pots closely paralleling those of Susa IVA and Godin III6-5 (Henrickson, 1986, pp. 23-25). Around 2400 these tombs were superseded by smaller stone cist graves also grouped in cemeteries isolated from settlement sites. Claire Goff (pp. 150-51) points out that new settlements were appearing along traditional migration routes during the late 3rd millennium and that these changes in the locations of settlements away from prime farming land may have reflected a shift from agriculture to stock breeding and the beginning of transhumance in the region. Farther north the establishment of towns at sites like Godin (Gowdīn) Tepe, Girairan (Gereyrān), and Tepe Giyan (Gīān) indicate a period of growth in Lorestān. The painted-ceramic assemblage called Godin III, dating from the mid-to-late 3rd millennium, though modified over time, continued in use in Lorestān until the second half of the 2nd millennium, when it was superseded by Iron I wares (Henrickson, 1987).

During the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C.E. cities, presumably the centers of larger states, also grew up in the areas southeast of Anshan. Shahdad, on the western edge of the Dašt-e Lūt, and Shahr-i Sokhta (Šahr-e Sūkta) in the Helmand river valley on the Afghan border are the two best-known sites (Hakemi; Lamberg-Karlovsky and Tosi). It is possible that Shahdad (Šahdād) should be considered an Elamite center, but limited excavation and publication of the archeological finds prevent final identification. Material remains discovered there and at Tepe Yahya, 250 km to the southwest, date from the late 3rd through the early 2nd millennium. These finds show links with the east (in ceramics, compartmentalized stamp seals, various exotic stones) and the west (cylinder seals, stone and ceramic vessels, a Proto-Elamite B inscription; Carter, 1984, pp. 136-41; Amiet, 1986, pp. 160-70). Growth in the Shahdad region may perhaps have been initially stimulated by an earlier Proto-Elamite presence in the area, but by the



mid-3rd millennium the city was the major urban center in the region, identified by Piotr Steinkeller (1982; 1990) with Marhaši and by François Vallat (1993, pp. cxiii-cxviii) with Simaški.

At Tepe Yahya a workshop for making chlorite vessels was discovered in level IVB (ca. 2600-2300 B.C.E.). Chlorite vessels decorated in the intercultural, or “old,” style were shipped from Yahya and presumably neighboring sites to Mesopotamian temples, as well as to destinations in the east (Kohl, pp. 464-66). A simpler, “new,” style of chlorite vessel and “Persian Gulf seals” were found together at later sites on the Persian Gulf and in Susa and Mesopotamia. These discoveries, as well as the use of Omani copper in Mesopotamia by the mid-3rd millennium, attest to use of the sea route between Mesopotamia and eastern Iran in the late 3rd millennium. By period IVA (ca. 2300-1800 B.C.E.) Tepe Yahya had reached its maximum size and come within the sphere of influence of the Shahdad culture (de Miroschedji, 1973; Carter, 1990, pp. 97-98).

The Sukkalmah Period (ca. 1900-1600 B.C.E.). Early in the 2nd millennium Susa expanded and became a city covering an estimated 85 ha. New towns and villages appeared all over the Susiana plain and in the surrounding upland valleys (Schacht, pp. 177-80; Carter, 1984, pp. 146-55). Anshan and the Kūr river basin also experienced a period of growth, and settlement in both areas reached a peak that remained unparalleled until the Achaemenid period (Sumner, 1988; de Miroschedji, 1990, p. 49-62). The distribution of small settlements across the Susiana plain and the Kūr river basin suggests the agricultural exploitation of the two plains and the use of irrigation canals (Sumner, 1989; Carter, 1984). Texts from Susa and the relatively large number of villages and towns found in the plains indicate a high level of agricultural development in the period. Susa became a political capital and an international city active in Near Eastern politics and trade, a locus of cultural and commercial interchange between the mountain folk of the Zagros and the inhabitants of the Mesopotamian plain.

The excavations in Ville Royale A and B at Susa, conducted by Roman Ghirshman (for a complete bibliographic summary, see Steve et al., pp. 148-54), yielded archeological and architectural sequences spanning most of the 2nd millennium B.C. and provided evidence of town planning. Courtyard houses of mud brick opened from large intersecting streets or from smaller alleys. The dead were frequently buried in baked-brick (family?) tombs under house or courtyard floors; this custom remained in use at Susa until the middle of the 1st millennium.



In this period the repertoire of buff-ware ceramics at Susa was expanded to include such new forms as the “Elamite flask” with painted decoration and gray wares; these objects permit cross dating with the Kaftari assemblage at Anshan (Carter, 1979; idem, 1984, fig. 10).

Contemporary Anshan is much less well-known than Susa. The Kaftari ceramic assemblage, characterized by painted buff ware decorated with rows of birds (Plate IV), is clearly a local development, as are the plain and painted Kaftari red wares (cf. CERAMICS vi). These vessels were used along with plain buff wares reminiscent of Susian and Mesopotamian types. Cuneiform documents from Anshan also underscore the ties of the city with the lowlands in the *sukkalmah* period. There was a scribal school at Anshan (Stolper, 1976, pp. 90-91), and all known documents were written in both the language and format usual in Mesopotamia. So far no Elamite tablets from the early 2nd millennium B.C.E. have been found in Anshan, but it seems possible that they will appear in future excavations. The glyptic includes Mesopotamian-inspired pieces, an eastern group of cylinder and stamp seals distinguished by ladies in “crinolines,” and “popular style” seals, usually of bitumen (cf. CYLINDER SEALS, pp. 489-90).

There is still little archeological evidence for this period from areas farther east, but to the northwest, in Lorestān and Kordestān, the older towns of the Godin III4-3 cultures continued to be occupied.

The Middle Elamite period (ca. 1600-1000 B.C.E.).

The beginning of the Middle Elamite period is marked historically by the disappearance of the dynasty of the *Sukkalmahs* and the revival of the royal title “king of Susa and Anshan.” The end is conventionally placed at ca. 1000 B.C.E. Few changes in material culture can be identified before the 8th century, however (de Miroschedji, 1981a; idem, 1982, pp. 60-63), and there are gaps in the written sources at both the beginning and the end of the period.

Middle Elamite I (1600-1350 B.C.E.). The archeological and art-historical distinctions that mark the beginning of the period are matters of debate (e.g., Carter, 1984, pp. 144-45; idem, 1994b; Steve, Gasche, and De Meyer, p. 78; Spycket, 1992a, pp. 230-33). This uncertainty reflects the absence of published stratigraphic information on the Ville Royale A at Susa and a scarcity of other documentation (cf. Vallat, 1990, pp. 124-25). Architectural remains from Susa AXII-XI include the large central building (ca. 1600-1450), possibly a beer hall



and brothel associated with the cult (Trümpelmann, pp. 36-44), and a large courtyard house (the eastern complex) with a long construction history. The use of four pilasters attached to the long walls of the main reception room distinguished the Susian house plan from those common in Mesopotamia (Roaf, p. 82).

The major architectural remains known from this period are, however, at Kabnak (Haft Tepe) in the Susiana plain 25 km southeast of Susa. Excavated structures include a funerary temple and associated vaulted baked-brick underground tombs, as well as two mud-brick terraces (possibly the eroded cores of ziggurats) and adjacent rooms (Negahban, pp. 12-19, plans 1-7). One fragmentary inscribed stele found in the temple courtyard near the largest of the tombs indicates that the complex was part of a funerary cult center maintained by, if not built for, King Tepti-ahar in the 16th century B.C.E. (Reiner). Attached to the larger mud-brick terrace were a double-chambered kiln and a workshop area, providing evidence of metal, bone, mosaic, and shell-working, as well as ceramic production and the modeling of unbaked clay heads. Painted clay funerary heads first appeared in Middle Elamite I contexts at Kabnak and continued in use throughout the period (cf. Amiet, 1966, figs. 347-53; Spycket, 1992b, pp. 135-36; Negahban, pp. 37-39; [Plate V](#)).

Characteristic Middle Elamite I ceramic types include a variety of round-shouldered, button-, stump, or pedestal-based jars or goblets (Negahban, figs. 2-7; Gasche, type 20 a-b). The final date at which these forms were in use appears to have been ca. 1350, for they are unknown at Āl Untaš Napiriša (Čoġa Zانبیل, q.v.; the ancient city was also known as Dūr Untaš). Glyptic of this period from Susiana shows close links with seals and sealings from Nuzi in northern Mesopotamia; the latter are well dated to the 15th-14th centuries B.C.E. (cf. CYLINDER SEALS, pp. 492-93).

Middle Elamite II-III (ca. 1350-1000 B.C.E.). The periodization followed here is less finely drawn than one based on texts. The written sources show that the Elamite kings of this period successfully invaded Mesopotamia and controlled the hinterlands of Susiana: the Persian Gulf coast and Fārs. This picture is confirmed by the distribution of archeological sites and finds from Fārs to Lorestān (Figure 2). The use of the Elamite language in documents and inscriptions, as well as the development of distinctive art and architectural forms, underscores the rise of Elam as an international power. The royal sponsorship of metalworking and related technologies is revealed by finds from the major cities of Kūzestān. The demand for minerals and luxury goods



in the sanctuaries and courts of the Late Bronze Age indicates that interregional and international trade in raw materials was an additional factor in the growing power of the Elamite kings of this period (Carter, 1984, pp. 156-81). The concentration of population in larger towns and cities during the Middle Elamite period suggests that pastoralism, trade, and plunder may have replaced an earlier life style in which both the Susiana plain and the Kūr river basin were farmed extensively by a more settled rural population.

Āl Untaš Napiriša is the major excavated site of the period. The ziggurat and its surrounding temples may have served as a kind of common sanctuary, where the major divinities of the entire realm were brought together (de Miroschedji, 1980, pp. 142-43). It appears that most of the city was never settled intensively (Ghirshman, 1966, pp. 7-10; idem, 1968, *avant propos*). In the royal quarter excavation revealed a group of three monumental buildings with large courts surrounded by long halls and storerooms. Palaces II and III may have served to house the royal entourage and can be dated to the time of Untaš Napiriša; Palace I, the hypogeum palace, was planned to include five vaulted underground tombs similar to those at Haft Tepe.

Architectural remains from Susa are poorly known from this period owing to the methods of the early excavators. To judge from the numbers of inscribed bricks found on the site, Untaš Napiriša was an active builder and restorer of sanctuaries, but the major preserved remains date from the Šutrukid dynasty (ca. 1210-1100 B.C.E.). These rulers rebuilt the structures on the Acropole, using glazed bricks (Heim, 1992b, pp. 123-27). Restored plans, based on the inadequate records of the early excavators, include temples identified as those of Ninhursag and Inšušinak in the central and western parts of the mound flanking the central ziggurat. An enigmatic southwestern structure yielded the stele with the law code of Hammurabi, the stele of Naram Sin, and a number of victory trophies brought back from Mesopotamia by the Middle Elamite kings. Through the display of such captured monuments and trophies it is probable that they attempted to establish Susa as a great city in the Mesopotamian tradition and to legitimize their dynasty as the successors of the defeated Kassite kings, who had ruled in Mesopotamia for around 400 years (Brinkman, pp. 86-90; Harper).

Inscribed baked bricks and pottery from Liyan (modern Būšeher) on the Persian Gulf and inscribed bricks from Tulaspid (Tolaspīd), not far from Fahliān (90 km northwest of Anshan), reveal a Middle Elamite presence along the major trade routes between Susiana and Fārs in the latter half of the 2nd



millennium B.C.E. (Pézard, pp. 39-96; Herzfeld, pp. 176-78). In Fārs proper, no trace of artifacts of Susian style has been recovered outside Anshan (see Sumner 1988). Contemporary sites west of the Kūr river are identified by the presence of painted Qaleh (Qal'a) pottery ([CERAMICS viii](#)), those east of the river by Shogha (Šoḡa) and Teimuran (Teymūrān) wares (Jacobs, pp. 157-70). The strong lowland cultural affinities of the Middle Elamite materials from Anshan, in contrast to the local character of the finds from archeological surveys of the surrounding Kūr river region, suggest that in the late 2nd millennium the town was an isolated outpost of the kings of Susa (Carter, 1984, pp. 172-80). The highest point of the city was occupied by a variety of constructions, including a monumental structure covering more than 1000 m² (Carter, forthcoming; idem and Stolper; [Figure 3](#)) and datable, by epigraphic, archeological, and radiocarbon-14 data, to the time of Hutelutuš-Inšušinak (ca. 1120), the last king of the Middle Elamite dynasty. The core of the building consists of an unroofed rectangular courtyard surrounded by a long, narrow corridor from which open rooms or suites. The entire structure has the same basic layout, pattern of access, and architectural decoration as those in the palaces at Āl Untaš Napiriša in Kūzestān (cf. Ghirshman, 1968, plans 13, 14), but it is smaller and constructed without extensive use of baked bricks. Cuneiform texts written in Elamite were stored in the building, which thus functioned as some kind of administrative complex (Stolper, 1984). Many tablets were impressed with a distinctive seal, its design composed of deeply impressed points arranged in intersecting lozenge patterns (Carter, forthcoming; [Plate VI](#)).

The ceramics of Middle Elamite II-III are defined by excavated assemblages from Āl Untaš Napiriša and Susa (Ville Royale II, levels 13-10). The most distinctive shape is the “Elamite goblet” (Gasche, type 19c), which became more elongated and cylindrical in phase III (de Miroschedji, 1981a, pp. 15-16; Ghirshman, 1966, pp. 91-92). These vessels are found as far north and west as Tepe Guran (Gorān; Thrane, p. 31) in Lorestān and as far south and east as Anshan. At Anshan the buff wares, with their parallels in the lowlands, were associated with Qaleh painted wares. Outside Fārs Qaleh painted wares have been discovered in Īda (Wright, 1979, figs. 42-43) and the Rāmhormūz region of eastern Kūzestān and in Lorestān (Carter, 1994a; Schmidt, van Loon, and Curvers, pls. 109/g, k, e, 115/b). Only a few examples of Qaleh painted wares are known from Kabnak in Susiana proper (Negahban, fig. 13/153-55). The distribution of 2nd-millennium painted wares suggests that the ceramic traditions of the central Zagros were distinct from those in contemporary



Susiana, where ceramics influenced by Mesopotamian wares prevailed.

The main evidence for Middle Elamite II-III glyptic is a group of more than 160 seals found at Āl Untaš Napiriša (CYLINDER SEALS, pp. 494-96). They were votive objects and were found in association with numerous small animal figurines that must have served a similar purpose (Porada, p. 3). The cylinders in “pseudo-Kassite” and “elaborated Elamite” styles closely resemble Mesopotamian Kassite seals but are made of a distinctive dark-blue glass. Sealings in the latter style from as far away as Zubeidi (Zobeydī) in the Jabal Ḥamrīn in Iraq reveal trade links between Elam and Kassite Babylonia (Boehmer and Dämmer, pp. 68-73). The majority of Middle Elamite II-III seals were made of faience, with banquet, hunting, and worship scenes (Porada, 1970, pp. 27-41, 57-74). The same types have been found at the sanctuary site of Surkh Dum (Sork-e Dom) in Lorestān (e.g., Schmidt, van Loon, and Curvers, seals 65, 75, 77, 80).

The most outstanding works of art from the period are cast bronzes found by the early excavators at Susa. They include the headless bronze and copper statue of Napir-Asu, wife of Untaš Napiriša, found in the so-called “temple of Ninhursag” on the Acropole at Susa (Harper et al., pp. 132-34). The “sit šamsi” (lit., “sunrise”) is a three-dimensional bronze model of a cult scene made for Šilhak-Inšušinak (Plate VII). The setting of this ritual scene between a ziggurat and a temple recalls the arrangement of cult installations discovered at the foot of the ziggurat at Āl Untaš Napiriša and those presumed to have existed on the Acropole at Susa. In addition to metalwork, glass, faience, and glazing technologies were highly developed in the Middle Elamite II-III period (Heim, 1992a, pp. 202-04) and continued to flourish during the first phase of the Neo-Elamite period (de Miroschedji, 1981a, pp. 37-38). Discoveries of faience figurines and containers at Surkh Dum (Schmidt, van Loon, and Curvers, pls. 148-54) suggest the impact of lowland Elamite culture on the mountain folk of Lorestān.

Characteristic of the popular arts in Elam in this period are terra-cotta figurines and models. Small round tables holding food offerings have been found at Susa and Haft Tepe (Trümpelmann, pl. 4). Terra-cotta models of beds are also typical of the late 2nd millennium B.C.E. but do not appear to continue into the Neo-Elamite period. Naked female figurines supporting their breasts with their hands came into fashion at mid-millennium and continued in use until ca. 1000 (Spycket, pp. 237-50). Figurines of hump-backed bulls were found in levels AXII-IX at the Ville Royale at Susa and have parallels at



Kabnak, Āl Untaš Napiriša, and Anshan (Carter, 1984, fig. 11). These objects suggest a continuity of popular religious beliefs through the latter half of the 2nd millennium.

Also suggesting continuity of religious beliefs are the rock-cut sanctuaries of the Elamite highlands: Kūrāngūn and Naqš-e Rostam (Seidl, pp. 6-19) in Fārs and Kūl-e Fara and Šekāfta Salmān near Īḍa/Malāmīr in eastern Kūzestān (de Waele, pp. 45-62). Kūrāngūn was begun under the *sukkalmahs* but was expanded during Middle Elamite II-III. Kūl-e Fara and Šekāfta Salmān were also carved in the Middle Elamite period but possibly usurped and reused later in the Neo-Elamite period (see below). These shrines indicate an Elamite presence in the mountains of Iran through the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C.E. and the early 1st millennium.

The Neo-Elamite period.

At the end of the 2nd millennium B.C.E. Susa rapidly lost its position of importance. Famines around the turn of the millennium appear from archeological surveys to have had disastrous effects on the farming populations of Susiana (de Miroschedji, 1981b, pp. 170-72; idem, 1990, pp. 58-60). By 1000 the Susian kings had also lost their foothold in Anshan, and new ethnic groups, or perhaps groups that had been subservient to Elamite populations, may have pushed the remaining Elamites into the valleys of eastern Kūzestān (Carter, 1994a).

Both archeological and historical records confirm the renewal of Susa late in the 8th century B.C.E. By that time, however, at least two other Elamite centers, Madaktu and Khidalu, had come to play major roles in Elamite politics (de Miroschedji, 1986). Excavations at Susa nevertheless provide some data on the period. A sounding in Ville Royale II produced eight levels dating from the second half of the 2nd through the first half of the 1st millennium. Pierre de Miroschedji (1981a, p. 40) dated levels 9-8 to Neo-Elamite I (ca. 1000-725/700) and levels 7-6 to Neo-Elamite II (ca. 725/700-520). Little imported pottery and few small objects are known from these excavations, but there is enough to show considerable continuity between the early Neo-Elamite phase and preceding late Middle Elamite. Shared features include ceramic types, faience objects, and glyptic styles. Neo-Elamite II was distinguished by disappearance of long-lived Elamite ceramic types like the “Elamite goblet,” the vat, and the band-rim jar, as well as the introduction of new ceramic and glyptic types (Carter, 1984, pp. 184-85 fig. 12). The seals and impressions, for the most part



discovered in the earlier excavations, include both examples closely related to contemporary Assyro-Babylonian cut-style seals and a more local group, characterized by pairs of confronted or entwined beasts framed by inscribed panels (de Miroschedji, 1982, pp. 51-63; CYLINDER SEALS, pp. 496-501).

Early excavations at Susa also revealed a small temple decorated with glazed tiles on the Acropole; it was datable to the time of Šutruk-Nahhunte II (ca. 716-699 B.C.E.; Amiet, 1966, fig. 380), the most powerful of the Neo-Elamite kings. Burial vaults of mud or baked brick or both were also discovered in several areas at Susa. They yielded gold jewelry and richly decorated faience objects, including containers and small bird figurines. These burial practices are linked with earlier Elamite traditions (Heim, 1992a, p. 203). The rich funerary offerings also attest to a period of renewed prosperity at Susa in the 8th century B.C.E.

Scattered archeological evidence shows that eastern Kūzestān increased in importance during the late 2nd and early 1st millennia B.C.E. The only excavated site in the region is Tall-i Ghazir (Tal-e Ġazīr) in the Rāmhormūz plain about 150 km southeast of Susiana and less than 50 km east of Ahvāz, surrounded by the foothills of the Bakhtīārī mountains. The ceramic sequence found there parallels that known from Susa, and archeological surveys suggest that the period was one of population growth in the area (Carter, 1994a). Surveys in the Īda region, 80 km north of Rāmhormūz, have so far failed to reveal any material of the Neo-Elamite I and II periods (Bayani, p. 102). The inscriptions carved on rock reliefs at Šekaft-e Salmān, 3 km south of Īda, and Kūl-e Fara, 7 km northeast, indicate that the region was part of a state called Aapir, ruled by Hanni, a contemporary of Šutur-Nahhunte (for the dating of these reliefs, see de Waele, 1972; Carter, 1984, pp. 170-71; Stolper, 1984, pp. 170-71 nn. 364, 366).

The chance discovery of an extraordinarily rich tomb near Arjān, on the road to Fārs 10 km north of Behbahān and 100 km southeast of Ghazir (Alizadeh, 1985, p. 49), also suggests that eastern Kūzestān was probably much more important in the period than can at present be proved. The Arjān tomb contained a U-shaped bronze coffin of a type known in Mesopotamia (e.g., at Ur) and Iran (e.g., at Zivīā). Objects inside it included a large, inscribed gold “ring,” ninety-eight bracteates, a dagger, some textile fragments, and a silver rod. On the floor of the tomb chamber were an elaborate bronze stand, a lamp, a silver jar, a bronze jar, a bronze cup with rounded bottom, and ten cylindrical vases. The date of the tomb is disputed; both the late 8th century



and the period between 640 and 525 have been suggested (Alizadeh, 1985, pp. 67-68; Vallat, 1984), but there is no doubt that it is of the Neo-Elamite II phase.

Northwest of Susiana in Lorestān Neo-Elamite II material has been discovered at the Surkh Dum shrine, level IIB. These discoveries in turn confirm that the influence of Šutruk Nahhunte II (ca. 716-699 B.C.E.), the most powerful of the Neo-Elamite kings, also reached into the mountains northwest of Susiana (Schmidt et al., p. 490). But the rising power of the Medes still farther to the northwest and of the Persians to the southeast appears to have pushed the Elamites of the early 1st millennium B.C.E. into the Baḫtīārī mountains between Anshan and Fārs at the end of the period (Carter, 1995).

The rise of the Achaemenid empire brought an end to the existence of Elam as an independent political power but not as a cultural entity. Indigenous Elamite traditions (e.g., the use of the title “king of Anshan” by Cyrus (q.v.); the “Elamite robe” worn by Cambyses (q.v.) and seen on the famous winged genii at Pasargadae; some glyptic styles; the use of Elamite as the first official language of the empire; and the persistence of Elamite religious personnel and cults supported by the crown formed an essential part of the newly emerging Achaemenid culture in Fārs. Neo-Elamite traditions in domestic pottery, metallurgy, and glyptic, however, continued in use in Kūzestān until at least as late as ca. 520 B.C.E., when Darius I (q.v.) took Susa (de Miroschedji, 1985, pp. 296-303). Under Darius the entire city was rebuilt, and, although some Elamite traditions, like the extensive use of molded glazed-brick panels and the use of Elamite in official inscriptions and administration, persisted, they were minor elements in the newer and more international Achaemenid imperial styles.

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