



## GODIN TEPE

---

**GODIN (GOWDIN) TEPE**, an archeological site in the central Zagros, which was occupied from ca. 5,000 to 500 B.C.E. It is located at 48° 4' E and 34° 31' N in the Kangāvar valley, approximately halfway between Hamadān and Kermānšāh. The site today covers approximately fifteen hectares. The north side, however, was severely eroded by the Kōrramrud river sometime between about 1400 and 750 B.C.E. Thus the original site may have covered twenty hectares. The mound rises approximately 32 m above virgin soil. It was found on an archeological survey in 1961 sponsored by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. A test sounding was made in 1965, and large scale excavations were conducted in the summers of 1967, 1969, 1971, and 1973, sponsored by the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Eleven distinct cultural phases were identified. Periods VI-XI were excavated only in two small test trenches (Operations B and XYZ), and (except for XI) are much more widely exposed at the neighboring site of Se Gābi. Excavations at Godin concentrated on Periods II-V. In 1974 an intensive resurvey of the entire Kangāvar valley was made, and in 1977 restoration work was done on the architectural remains of Period V, sponsored by the Archeological Service of Iran.

Period V. Exposed over about 500 m<sup>2</sup>, it consists of a central courtyard, three major structures, a gate house and storage rooms, contained within an oval fortification wall. Pottery and small finds have close parallels in Uruk IV and Susa Acropole 17 (late Uruk period, ca. 3500-3200 B.C.E.). The oval stood on the then summit of the mound, the remainder of which was contemporarily



occupied by a local Chalcolithic Zagros culture, Godin VI. It is assumed that the oval enclosure was occupied by Sumerian or Elamite traders, for Godin is strategically located on the High Road or Great Khorasan Road (the western end of the Silk Road).

Period IV. Exposed over about 500 m<sup>2</sup> it represents a major incursion from the north into the central western Zagros of the Transcaucasian Early Bronze I culture (best identified in Persia at Yānik Tepe in Azarbaijan). At Godin this phase yielded village houses, elaborate ceremonial open air-structures on the then summit of the mound, and an industrial area (metal working?). The “invasion” of this culture from the north is probably responsible for the abandonment of the Period V oval enclosure, since it would have completely disrupted east-west trade along the Khorasan Road. Dates for Period IV are around 3000-2650 B.C.E.

Period III. Exposed over an average of 700 m<sup>2</sup> it is an uninterrupted sequence for some 11 m of Bronze Age occupation. Six sublevels are identified stratigraphically and by distinct changes in both painted and plain ceramics. At least one sublevel (III:2) was destroyed by earthquake. Strong initial connections are with Susa D and with Late Banesh Malayan, and continuing connections with most of Luristan suggest Godin was throughout Period III within the Elamite confederacy (perhaps in Shimashki). At this time Godin was the largest site in the valley, which was quite densely occupied, and may be called a town, since pottery was manufactured in centralized workshops and meat was sold from butcher shops. Dates for Period III are about 2600 to 1500/1400 B.C.E.

Godin was abandoned between 1400 and about 750 B.C.E.

Period II. A single structure, a fortified palace of a Median chief, about 133 m long and 55 m wide, was the only Period II occupation at Godin. The public section of the palace contains three major columned halls and small, single-column private audience chamber. The halls had mud brick benches on three walls, and a throne seat against one wall. The largest had five rows of six columns. These halls are clearly in the Iron Age tradition of columned halls in Persia, first documented at Ḥasanlu in Period V and culminating in the famous columned halls of Pasargadae, Susa and Persepolis. The private part of the palace contained magazines (with a second story for living quarters) and a kitchen. Ceramic parallels are with Ḥasanlu III, Zivia, the Zendān-i Solaymān, and, most closely, with Nuš-e Jān, Bābā Jān, and Pasargadae. The primary



occupants abandoned the building at an unknown date, and it was subsequently occupied by squatters. Founded in the Iron Age III period (ca. 750/700 B.C.E), it may well have been occupied into Achaemenid times, around 500 B.C.E.

Period I. Period I is represented by an Islamic shrine (an *emānzāda*, q.v.), which was perhaps built in the 15th century C.E., and by an associated modern cemetery.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Allan S. Gilbert, "Urban Taphonomy of Mammalian Remains from the Bronze Age of Godin Tepe, Western Iran," Ph. D. diss., Columbia University, 1979.

Robert C. Henrickson, "Godin III and the Chronology of Central Western Iran circa 2600-1400 B.C.," in Frank Hole, ed., *The Archaeology of Western Iran*, Washington, D.C. and London, 1987, pp. 205-27.

Harvey Weiss and T. Cuyler Young, Jr., "The Merchants of Susa: Godin V and Plateau Lowlands Relations in the Fourth Millennium B.C.," *Iran* 13, 1975, pp. 1-17.

T. Cuyler Young, Jr., *Excavations at Godin Tepe: First Progress Report*, Royal Ontario Museum of Art and Archaeology, Occasional Paper 17, Toronto, 1969.

Idem, "Godin Tepe Period VI/V and Central Western Iran at the End of the Fourth Millennium," in Uwe Finkbeiner and Wolfgang Rollig, eds., *Gamdat Nasr: Period or Regional Style?*, Wiesbaden, 1986, pp. 212-28.

T. Cuyler Young, Jr. and Louis D. Levine, *Excavations of the Godin Project: Second Progress Report*, Royal Ontario Museum of Art and Archaeology, Occasional Paper 26, Toronto, 1974.