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SUSA II. HISTORY DURING THE ELAMITE PERIOD

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Introduction. The research carried out on the site of Susa for more than a century has yielded a wealth of archeological and epigraphic material. For the most part, it is published in the 51 volumes of the *Mémoires de la Délégation Perse (MDP)* and the 15 volumes of the *Cahiers de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Iran (CDAFI)*, and has led to a reconstruction of the history of this city with its uncommon destiny.

The Elamite period lasted from about 2400 BCE, when Susa was probably the domain of the kings of Awan (before that, Susa belonged to the proto-Elamite world), up to Cyrus the Great's seizure of power in 539 BCE. This span of almost two thousand years has been divided into three clearly defined phases called paleo-, meso-, and neo-Elamite, each of which presents peculiarities of its own.

But we must emphasize that the history of Susa is inseparable from that of Elam, for a major part of the elements that enable Elamite history to be established derive from the excavations of Susa and its environs (FIGURE 1). The first part of an exhaustive study of the research conducted on this site has been published by M.-J. Steve, F. Vallat, and H. Gasche (2002; see for further

development of the points summarized here). This monograph, which is almost entirely devoted to Susa, has usefully replaced the older histories of Elam, now obsolete (Cameron, 1936; Hinz, 1964; Steve, Gasche, and De Meyer, 1980; and even Carter and Stolper, 1984; it has also corrected Potts, 1999).

Moreover, most of the elements discovered at Susa is to be found in the article ELAM (*EIr.* VIII, 1988, pp. 301-44). But since its publication, progress has been made, and major modifications can be added to this historical reconstruction. This is particularly true of the chronology. The short one proposed by H. Gasche et al.(1998) is more appropriate for the history of Susa and Elam than the medium-sized chronology used previously (Vallat, 2000).

Description of the city of Susa. A rough description of the city of Susa during the Elamite period has been made possible by means of three different and complementary sources: archeological excavations, Elamite inscriptions, especially those of Šilhak-Inšušinak (collected by F. W. König, 1965), and certain Mesopotamian texts—such as the description of Assurbanipal's sack of Susa during his campaign in Elam—and a relief found in Nineveh. The city appeared to be divided into three separate sectors: the Acropolis, the Palace, and the City proper with its living quarters (FIGURE 1).

The Acropolis is referred to in the texts by the Akkadian term *alimelu*, the High City. It included a sacred sector called *kizzum*, with the ziggurat looming over it. Oddly enough, the word "ziggurat" has not been attested at Susa. Yet the existence of a ziggurat in the city is certain, for several texts of the *kukunnum* (the ziggurat's high temple) do refer to the high temple, which, *pars pro toto*, may refer to the ziggurat itself. In the inscriptions, the ziggurat is simply called "temple of Inšušinak of the *kizzum*" when it was to be distinguished from the second temple dedicated to Inšušinak in Susa, the one belonging to the Royal Palace.

The ziggurat was a building with several floors which we consider as a typical Elamite monument, before it was adopted by the Mesopotamians. It included a high temple (*kukunnum*/*ulhi*) and a low temple (*haštu*). It was built in the midst of a sacred grove (*husa*), as illustrated by a relief in Nineveh (Amiet, 1966, no. 430). It was surrounded by a wall, with richly decorated gates through it (*hiel*/*sip*). Contrary to all established theories, the ziggurat did in fact have a funereal character, as illustrated by the epithet of the great Poliad god Inšušinak, who was called "Lord of death in the high temple" (*Inšušinak temti kukunnum lahakra*;Vallat, 1997).

The area of the Royal Palace (*hiyan*) is more difficult to define, for it has left no significant archeological traces. In all likelihood (Vallat, 1999), it was built on the Tell nowadays called "Apadāna," where the palace of Darius was discovered. To construct his own palace, Darius appears to have chosen the site of the palace of the kings of Elam who had preceded him, and had therefore completely remodeled the site (Perrot, 1981).

This palace is known for its temple called *kumpum kiduya*. This Akkadian term means "external chapel" and is so named because it was built outside the Acropolis, the sacred quarter (*kizzum*). The building presents some peculiarities. First of all, it is the most richly decorated one in Susa. Its outer walls display a series of brick reliefs alternately representing a woman (or goddess), a stylized tree, and a man-bull (Amiet, 1966, no. 299). After being restored by Kutir-Nahhunte, it was completed by Šilhak-Inšušinak. Inside it was the *suhter* (Grillot, 1983), a kind of tabernacle in which the statuettes of the royal family and the insignia of power were preserved.

The palace complex was surrounded during the Elamite period by luxurious homes discovered by R. Ghirshman in the "Ville Royale A" site, which belonged to the court nobility or the high bourgeoisie. All these residences, which were in fact little palaces, provided great comfort. There were fireplaces in them, the most frequent type being intended for heating, while the rest were used for cooking (Gasche, 1986). There were also sanitary installations, such as baths and latrines. In this part of the Royal City, the earliest buildings are dated around 1700 BCE (while on the Acropolis, they date to at least 4000 BCE; cf. Le Brun, 1978). A slightly older occupancy may have existed on the Apadana Tell (Steve and Gasche, 1990).

Much later, popular quarters with housings for small shopkeepers, artisans, and workers were situated to the east on a number of hills. But these broad sectors are as yet little known, for the archeologists have only explored a small part of them. The most interesting site is the one Ghirshman (1954) called the "Village Perse-Achéménide," which provided a neo-Elamite tablet and two documents from the Achaemenid period (Paper, 1954).

This outline, which is mainly based on Meso-Elamite inscriptions from Susa, appears to be confirmed in all its points by Assurbanipal in his account of the sack of Susa in 647 BCE (Aynard, 1957, pp. 53-59).

The elements of this description were essentially provided by royal

inscriptions. But the excavations of Susa for the Elamite period have provided a large number of other, more modest texts, which show us what was being done there and how people lived at the time. Just like everywhere else, people started learning to read and to write. There are numerous school tablets illustrating the work of students (Dossin, Van der Meer). Once they had finished their course, they could look around for various occupations, for scribes have always played an important part in the city; there are hundreds of legal or economic tablets to prove it (especially Scheil, *MDP* 10, 14, 22, 23, 24, 28). Some became specialists in fields such as divinatory sciences (Scheil, 1917; Labat, 1974), religion (Vallat, 2003), or mathematics (Bruins and Rutten, 1961).

The practice of long-distance trade has been proved by certain objects discovered in the excavations: Lapis lazuli came from Badakhshan (see BADAḴŠĀN) in Afghanistan, chlorite vases from Kerman, and diorite from Oman. Depending on the periods concerned, exchanges were as numerous with Mesopotamia as they were with the entire Iranian plateau, which was a great supplier of raw materials (stone, wood for building, metals, etc.). Thus, for example, tin from the east transited by way of Susa before reaching its final destination, such as the city of Mari on the upper Euphrates, or even the Mediterranean.

Manual and artistic crafts are also abundantly illustrated in the excavations. Thus stonework was found not only in monumental sculptures like those of Puzur-Inšušinak, for example (Amiet, 1976), but also in the work of stonecutters who, at all periods, furnished cylinder seals of an often exceptional quality, illustrating various aspects of daily life (Amiet, 1972). We may also mention work on clay represented by a great number of figurines of a vast variety (Spycket, 1992) or by the quality of the pottery (Gasche, 1973). The inhabitants of Susa were also distinguished in their metalwork, as is particularly testified by their work on the statue of Napir-Asu, the wife of Untaš-Namiriša, and by their abundant metallurgical production (Tallon, 1987).

Finally, Susa and its environs enjoyed a climate allowing various kinds of agriculture and the breeding of cattle (buffalo), sheep, and goats. The surroundings were at all times effectively exploited, and fishing and hunting provided a considerable complement for food.

THE PALEO-ELAMITE PERIOD (ca. 2400-1450 BCE)

The paleo-Elamite period lasted from about 2400 to about 1450, according to the brief chronology recently established by H. Gasche et al.(1998). It is subdivided into three periods, which roughly correspond, in Mesopotamia, with the period of Agadé, that of Ur III, and the paleo-Babylonian period.

The first Paleo-Elamite period: The Awan dynasty (ca. 2400-2015 BCE). We know the kings of the Awan and of the Simaški dynasties through a paleo-Babylonian tablet discovered at Susa (Scheil, 1932, IV-V), which mentions the names of 12 kings said to be "from Awan," followed by the names of 12 other kings described as "Simashkeans." It may be assumed that, before the conquests of Sargon (2200-2145), Susa was under the Elamite sphere of influence. The fifth king of Awan bore a compound name including Susa: Šušun-tarana. But their successors, Luhhiššan and Hišephatep, the eighth and ninth kings, respectively, were the ones who fought against Sargon and his son, Rimuš, when they advanced deep into Elamite lands. However, the last king of Awan, Puzur-Inšušinak, having subdued Susa and united the Elamite country under his crown, attacked northern Mesopotamia and appears to have put an end to the Sargonid dynasty. But he was soon defeated by Ur-Nammu, the founder of the third dynasty of Ur, and by Gudea, the prince of Lagaš, who subjected Susa, Anshan, and part of Elam.

The second Paleo-Elamite period: The Simaški dynasty (ca. 2015-1880 BCE). The majority of the twelve Simaškean kings mentioned in the paleo-Babylonian list of Susa are also referred to in other sources, Mesopotamian or Susan. It appears that these dynasties opposed the expansionist ambitions of the kings of the third dynasty of Ur to conquer Susiana. To begin with, the kings of Ur took hold of the metropolis and of some urban centers. But soon after the reign of Šulgi (2000-1953), relations worsened and finally grew so acrimonious that Ibbi-Sin, the last king of this dynasty, who was probably defeated by Kindattu, the sixth Simaškean king, was taken prisoner in Elam in 1911. From then on Susa remained under the Elamite hold until it was conquered by the Achaemenids.

The last members of the Simaški dynasty were contemporaries of the first Sukkalmah, whose dynasty was begun by Ebarti/Ebarat II, the 9th king of Simaški.

The third Paleo-Elamite period. The dynasty of the Epartides or the Sukkalmah (ca. 1880-1450 BCE). By "definitely" settling down in Susa, the Elamite royalty seems to have become "semitized" or at least "westernized." The majority of

legal or economic tablets, those concerning daily life, are written in Akkadian, while the Elamite language was only used for some rare royal inscriptions. The Suso-Mesopotamian pantheon was not disrupted by inclusion of the cult of divinities indigenous to the Iranian plateau (see ELAM i and vi). Inšušinak continued to be the primal divinity. And among his set of titles, Ebarat refers to himself as "king of Anšan and Susa" and shows that his city has attained the rank of a capital. But with Silhaha, his successor, the kings adopted a Mesopotamian set of titles, attributing to the principal personality of the state the title of *sukkalmah* "grand regent," while their eventual deputies or vice-regents were called *sukkal*.

The most famous of the thirty-odd sukkal and sukkalmah who wielded power in Susa was no doubt Siwe-palar-huppak, better known from the Mari tablets than from the Susa inscriptions. He ruled over Mesopotamia for two years, where Hammurabi of Babylon (1696-1654) and Zimri-Lim of Mari considered him as their overlord (Charpin and Durand, 1991). But the alliance of Babylon with Mari put an end to the western adventure of the sukkalmah. From then on, no relationship with Mesopotamia has been recorded, until a tablet dated the first year of Ammiṣaduq (1550) mentioned a Kuk-Našur, the second of this name.

Documents of the last sukkalmah, Kuk-Našur III, were found at the base of layer XII of Ghirshman's "Ville royale A," while the imprint of the cylinder seal of Kidinu was discovered at the top of the same layer (Steve, Gasche, De Meyer, 1980). The two dynasties thus followed one another without any major conflicts.

THE MESO-ELAMITE PERIOD (ca. 1450-1050 BCE)

The dynasty of the Kidinuids (ca. 1450-1400 BCE). Quite recently, certain problems regarding the Kidinuids have been solved. Contrary to a widespread belief, the kings of this dynasty did not abandon Susa for Kabnak (Haft-Tépé [see HAFT TEPE]), where numerous documents about them have been found (Herrero, 1976).

The person who appears to have been the last sovereign of the dynasty, Tepti-ahar, boasts in the formula of a date to have expelled a certain Kadašman-dKUR.GAL. It was thought that this was a Kassite (see KASSITES) king called Kadašman-Enlil, but recent research has shown that the king's name could also be read as Kadašman-Harbe (Cole and De Meyer, 1999; Vallat, 2000), the

father of Kurigalzu the First, whose reign ended about 1375. This version leads to combining all the new chronological data contributed by the Berlin Letter (Van Dijk, 1986) with the documentation at our disposal, such as the inscription of Kurigalzu I (all too often attributed to the second of that name!), in which he asserts that he ravaged Susa and Elam. In fact, it may well be that Kurigalzu wanted to avenge his father Kadašman-Harbe by putting an end to the Kidinuid dynasty and by establishing on the throne Igihalki, an Elamite *homo novus*.

The dynasty of the Igihalkids (ca. 1400-1050 BCE). The image of the Igihalkide dynasty has thus been completely renewed by the publication of a letter found in the Berlin museum (Van Dijk, 1986; Steve and Vallat, 1989). In this document the sender, probably Šutruk-Nahhunte, demands the throne of Babylon from the Kassite sovereign under the pretext that several kings of Elam had married Kassite princesses. We thus learn that Pahir-iššan had married the eldest daughter of Kurigalzu, and that Untaš-Napiriša, the builder of Tchoga Zanbil (see ČOGĀ ZANBIL), was not only the son of a Kassite princess, but had also married the daughter of Burnaburiaš II (1354-1328), thus becoming the brother-in-law of the Babylonian Kurigalzu II, of the Hittite Šuppiluliuma, and of the Egyptian Amenophis IV (Vallat, 1999). This document further tells us that the author of the letter married the daughter of Melišihu. Thus three sovereigns may be added to the seven already included in the dynasty: Kidin-Hutran II (son of Untaš-Namiriša), Napiriša-Untaš (son of the preceding), and Kidin-Hutran III, the victor over the Kassite kings Enlil-nadin-šumi and Adad-šuma-iddina.

The most remarkable sovereign of this dynasty was no doubt Untaš-Napiriša (his name has also been quoted as Untaš-dGAL or Untaš-Humban), who was known for building the famous ziggurat of Tchoga Zanbil (*Dur Untaš* or *Al Untaš*; it is now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site). Despite the considerable efforts devoted to building this religious compound, the city of Susa was not neglected under his reign, nor were other sites of Susiana such as Tepe Bormi, Deylam Gotwand, or Tchoga Pahn. At Susa itself, he built or restored several chapels dedicated to divinities who are not documented at Tchoga Zanbil. In the case of Upurkupak, the “lady of the stars” (*zana hute hišipri*), he declares out that none of his predecessors had built a temple in her honor at Susa.

The politico-religious complex of Tchoga Zanbil nowadays appears as an illustration of the king’s policy to achieve the “Elamization” of Susiana. The

great majority of his inscriptions are written in Elamite; he adopted the old title of “king of Anšan and of Susa”; and, above all, he imposed several divinities of the Iranian plateau on Susiana in order to have the two entities Susa and Anšan, equally represented in the pantheon. He went even further by attributing to Napiriša, the main god of Anshan, precedence over Inšušinak, the principal divinity of Susa.

It was also during his reign that the most remarkable work of the Elamite bronzecasters was produced, namely the statue of his wife, Napir-asu.

The family of the Šutrukids (ca. 1200-1050 BCE). Until recently, the members of this family were considered to have formed the dynasty of the Šutrukids. But the author of the Berlin Letter, probably Šutruk-Nahhunte, claimed to be directly related to Pahir-iššan, the son of Igi-halki, in calling himself “the descendant of the eldest daughter of the mighty king Kurigalzu.” In fact, all the characteristics of the Igi-halkid dynasty are also found among the Šutrukids (the use of the Elamite language rather than Akkadian, the same divinities, and even the same titles, etc.). The only difference was that the international exogamy of the Igihalkids was followed by the incestuous endogamy of the Šutrukids.

Royal incest. The inscriptions of Šutruk-Nahhunte and his successors have revealed the practice of incest within the royal Elamite family. The principal member of this family was Queen Nahhunte-utu. This altogether exceptional woman in Elamite history, and even in the ancient history of the Near East, bore ten children from four different fathers, who followed one another on the throne of Elam. From her father, she had at least two children, a son Hutelutuš-Inšušnak and a daughter, Inšnikarab-huhun. When he died, she married his elder brother, Kutir-Nahhunte, from whom she had two or three children. Shortly afterwards, the king was killed, and she then married his second brother Šilhak-Inšušinak, from whom she had 4 or 5 children. Finally, she gave birth to Melir-Nahhunte, a princess she had had from her own son, Hutelutš-Insušnak, whom she had had from her own father (Vallat, 1994).

Even though Šutruk-Nahhunte and his son, Kutir-Nahhunte, put an end to the Kassite dynasty in Mesopotamia by successively eliminating Zababa-šuma-iddina and Enlil-nadin-ahi, the most important sovereign of this period—after Untaš-Napiriša—was Šilhak-Inšušinak. He not only led a large number of campaigns against his Mesopotamian neighbors, but also enriched and embellished the city of Susa, as described by his numerous inscriptions (König,

1965, nos. 32-59). Besides erecting a large number of religious buildings, he finished construction of the palace (*hiyan*) of the kings of Elam and its chapel, the *kumpume kiduya* (Vallat, 1994).

The dynasty died out with Hutelutuš-Insušnak, who, long before his death, was attacked by Nabuchodonosor I (1125-1104). According to a neo-Elamite inscription, the fourth child of Nahunte-utu, Šilhana-hamru-Lagamar, was to have succeeded him on the throne of Elam.

THE NEO-ELAMITE PERIOD (ca. 1050-539 BCE)

This division, encompassing the first half of the first millennium BCE, can be divided into three separate periods (Vallat, 1996).

The first, the neo-Elamite period I (ca. 1050-770), was the longest and is the most poorly documented. For more than two and a half centuries, Susa provided no inscriptions, so none of its sovereigns is known.

The second neo-Elamite period corresponds with the dynasty of the Humbanuids and the last “kings of Anšan and Susa” (ca. 770-585). It is much better known, thanks to Mesopotamian sources, which provide us with numerous texts devoted to the events opposing the Assyrians against the Babylonians, and which are closely connected with the inhabitants of Susa and Elam. The Mesopotamian inscriptions, particularly the *Chronicles* (Grayson, 1975), as well as the *Annals* (Borger, 1996), and the *Letters* (Harper, 1892-1914), provide us with essential elements of historical reconstruction. But the kings of Susa, who were probably too much involved in the conflict, left behind no testimonies of their reigns, except for Šutruk-Nahunte (717-699). (He was long mistaken for Šutur-Nahunte, who reigned after the sack of Susa.)

Hostilities started when the Elamite King Huban-nikaš I assisted the Babylonian Merodach-baladan in his fight against the Assyrian Sargon (721-705). His successor, Šutruk-Nahhunte II (717-699), also became involved in the upheaval and was unable to prevent Sargon from imposing himself on Ellipi, on the border of Elam, around 708. He was then confronted Sennacherib, who defeated the Babylonian and Elamite armies near Kish and Kutha; and the Assyrian king took advantage of this to put his son Aššur-nadin-šumi on the throne of Babylon in 699. Following this defeat, Šutruk-Nahhunte II was replaced by his brother, Hallušu (699-693). (He was long confused with Hallutaš-Inšušinak, who also reigned, after the sack of Susa.) In

691, there was another confrontation at Halule on the Tigris between the Assyrian Sennacherib and an Elamite-Babylonian coalition, but the name of the victor is not clearly known. After a period of calm under the reign of Asarhaddon (680-669), who succeeded Sennacherib, the conflict became more acute following Assurbanipal's (668-627) accession to the Assyrian throne.

The first Elamite sovereign contemporary with Assurbanipal was Utruk, but six more kings ascended the throne before the fall of Susa in 646. This was a period of great unrest, with acts of treason following assassinations and usurpations. Finally the last member of this dynasty, Humban-haltaš III, was humiliated at Niniveh, where he participated as a prisoner in the triumph of Assurbanipal, as illustrated in a relief of this city.

This sack of Susa by Assurbanipal was probably not as terrible as its story (Aynard, 1957, pp. 45-53) purports or suggests. In any case, Elamite royalty rapidly recovered. In 626, Nabopolassar restored to the Susans the statues that the Assyrians had taken from Utruk, and the Susan authorities were present to receive them. Some believe that Nabopolassar and his successors occupied Susa, for certain objects bearing their names were found there, including a brick bearing the titles of Nabopolassar. But the same inscription was found at Persepolis, leading to the assumption that it was a booty taken by the Achaemenids and thus disproving this argument. Moreover, the last kings "of Anšan and Susa" must have reigned before the disintegration of the ancient empire, and its sovereigns must have left written records at Susa. These were Šutruk-Nahunte (König, 1965, no. 71), Hallutaš-Inšušinak (no. 77) and Atta-hamiti-Inšušinak (nos. 86-89), who occupied the throne approximately between 646 and 585.

Susa in the third neo-Elamite period (ca. 585-539 BCE). The history of Susa during the third neo-Elamite period is documented by Elamite texts found at Susa and at other Iranian sites. At that time, Susa appears to have lost its rank as a capital. The last three kings, Ummanunu, Šilhak-Inšušinak II, and Tepti-Huban Inšušinak (who has been mistaken for the Te-Umman of Assurbanipal's annals), no longer bore the title of "king of Anšan and Susa." But we do not know what happened, for we can find no trace of a conflict or a war. On the contrary, things went on well between the ancient capital and the regions depending from it. Political, commercial, artistic and cultural relations appear to have been excellent, as indicated by inscriptions of various provenance, and particularly the economic tablets of the Acropolis (Scheil, 1907). We learn that the ancient Elamite capital maintained economic relations with the Persians

Huhnur, Kisat, Malamir, and with the kings of Zamin, Samati, Zari, and the city of Anšan.

Susa during the Elamite period had been not only one of the political capitals of Elam and Anšan, but one of the economic, cultural, and artistic, capitals of the Near Eastern world. The Achaemenid Persians who followed had no apparent difficulty in settling in Susa, where they turned one of the most prestigious pages of the city's millennia-old history.

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