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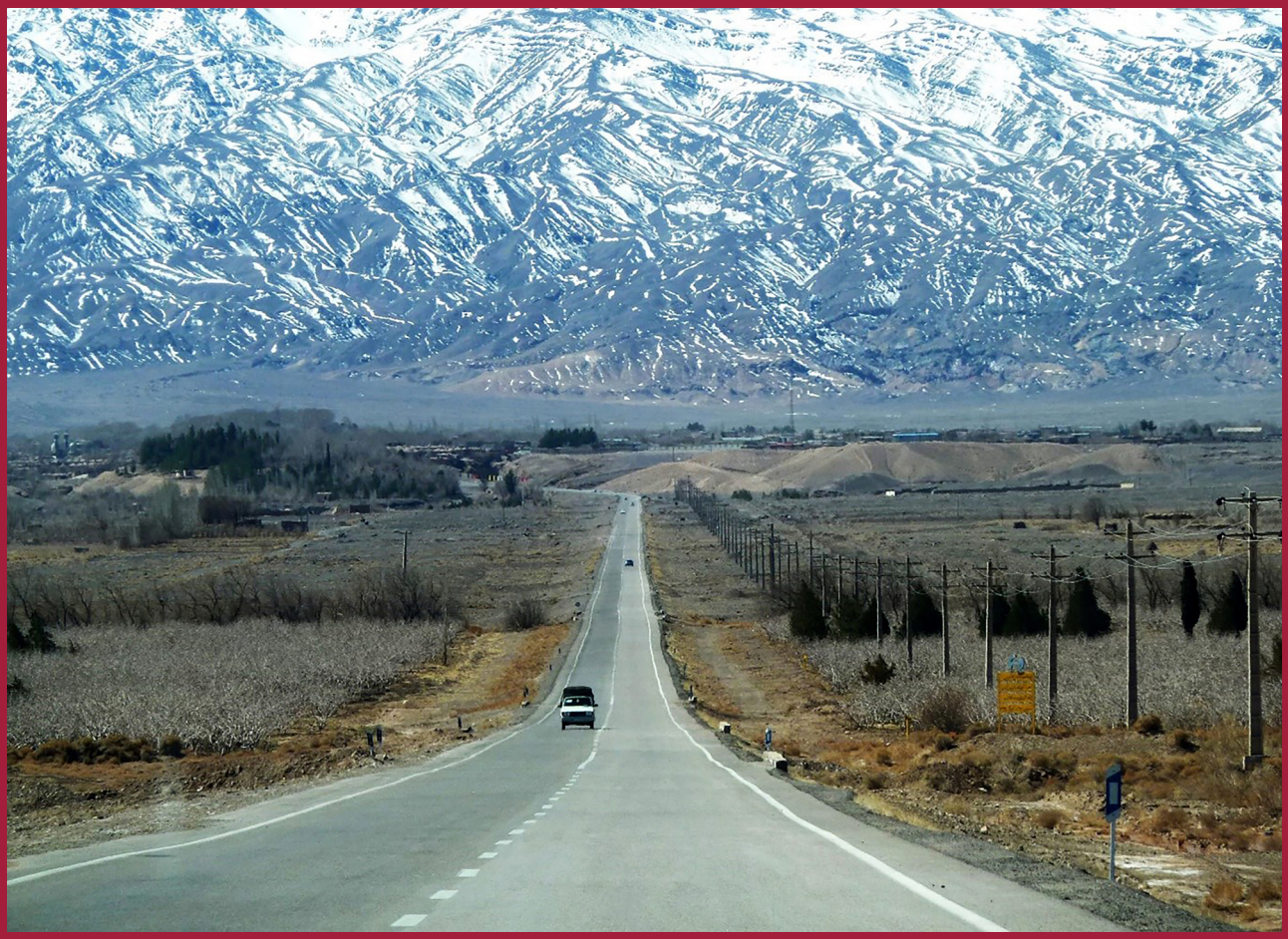
RESOURCES, NETWORKS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN SOUTHEASTERN IRAN

ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES



Editors
Wulf-Marten Frauen,
Mohammad Karami &
Sabine Klocke-Daffa

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Martin Bartelheim und Thomas Scholten

Wulf-Marten Frauen,
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with respect and gratitude to

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whose commitment to the anthropological study of Iran
has left an indelible mark on the field and deeply impressed us.

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could be realized which formed the basis for this book.

Content

Preface

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the German Research Foundation (DFG, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), and particularly the Collaborative Research Centre ResourceCultures (SFB 1070/3, Project No. 215859406). Without the support from the DFG, neither this volume nor the preceding workshop could have been realised, and the research that initially prompted the project would not have been possible.

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Tübingen, June 2025
Wulf-Marten Frauen, Mohammad Karami
and Sabine Klocke-Daffa

Wulf-Marten Frauen, Mohammad Karami
and Sabine Klocke-Daffa

Introduction

The present volume is based on a workshop entitled 'Trade and Trading Networks as Cultural Resources in Southeastern Iran'. As such, it has a clearly defined focus both with regard to content and region: It deals with interdisciplinary insights on resources and resource usage in southeastern Iran.

Southeastern Iran includes the Iranian provinces of Kermān, Hormozgān, Sistān and Balučestān and southern Ḵorāsān. We placed an additional focus on the Persian Gulf area that borders this region to the south. The abovementioned provinces share three common features:

– They possess a rich history and observable cultural diversity.
– They have been neglected in both ethnographical and archaeological research.
– They all offer ample opportunities for interdisciplinary scientific approaches to research.

The significance of the region dates back to prehistoric times: Only recently archaeologists became aware that the present-day provinces of Kermān, Sistān and Balučestān seem to have hosted a major Early Bronze Age culture that originated in the Late Chalcolithic and flourished during the 3rd mill. BC. It now is often called 'Jiroft Culture' or 'Halil Rud Culture', after the biggest river in the region. This discovery broadened our archaeological understanding of the entire southwestern Asian continent, since it revealed the origin of many previously found objects that showed Mesopotamian and Harrapa'ian influences but could not be attributed to either of them (and were therefore simply referred to as objects of 'Intercultural Style').

Today, European scholars work in close cooperation with their Iranian colleagues to discover more about this linkage between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley. This illustrates as well that the region was certainly not always considered provincial in the past and as a historical centre deserves further attention. The whole region has been neglected in terms of archaeological investigation, especially in comparison to localities in the west such as the Fārs Province. This is also true for ethnographic research. While the Zāgros region has been studied extensively with foci on nomadism and village life, since the Iranian Revolution there has been little research conducted in the southeast of the country by Iranian scholars and no research whatsoever by European scholars. Collaborative projects have only recently begun again, and we are happy to present some of the results of our own collaborative project here.

The position of southeastern Iran at an intersection between eastern and western societies has led to a broad plurality of cultural expressions and patterns that certainly deserve more scholarly attention from an ethnographical point of view. This is especially true given that the region has not lost its relevance in contemporary times, but rather has gained a huge political and economic significance because it connects Central Asia to the Persian Gulf via the North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC) and is rich in raw materials. Access to the Persian Gulf remains extremely important as well, just as it has been in the past – Iran's most important port is located at Bandar Abbās in Hormozgān. Modern and traditional ways of living co-exist and sometimes collide in this region, creating an exciting process of transformation.

In accordance with the explanations given above, this volume has a regional rather than a textual focus. Still, the contributions share a common objective. We as editors are all members of SFB 1070 ResourceCultures, a transdisciplinary group of scholars from various disciplines who explicitly examine sociocultural dynamics in relation to resources. Our view of resources supersedes

their traditional perception as raw materials serving purely economic purposes. We rather understand resources as means for the creation, maintenance and transformation of social relationships, orders and identities.

This idea is reflected in the title of the workshop from which this volume emerged, where trading networks, and the material and immaterial things that moved along them, were seen as a cultural resource. Trade and networks constituted through trade are crucial resources in the region, now as in the past, and people attribute values to them that are significant for their broader lives. Many of the contributions in this volume deal with this insight in one way or another: For example, Enrico Ascalone and Seyed Sajjadi discuss cylinder seals from Šahr-i Suḵta that reveal the embeddedness of that particular site in transregional trading relations across the EBA, just as Ferdinand Hollenhorst's discussion of Achaemenid pottery shapes shows influences from adjacent regions in the east. William Beeman illustrates how southeastern Iran is now integrated into the broader Persian Gulf region via transnational family networks and Beatrice Nicolini takes this thought even further when she re-evaluates the Balouč presence in the Persian Gulf as well as in East Africa – the interconnectedness of southeastern Iran with other regions is central to all these contributions, and they can be seen as the direct result of the workshop our volume is based on.

The workshop was held on the 10th and 11th May 2021, organised by the SFB 1070 at the University of Tübingen in close co-operation with the Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research (ICAR) and the Anthropological Research Centre (ARC). This collaboration came courtesy of our project A 03 at the SFB 1070, which is entitled 'Stones from the South'. It started in 2015 as an archaeological field project in the southern Kermān region of Iran and was later accompanied by an ethnographical case study that was conducted in the mountains west of the modern town of Jiroft. Although the interdisciplinary character of the project is certainly worth mentioning, its real strength lay in the fact that it brought together European and Iranian scholars and students. The archaeological survey team was composed of German and Iranian students, and the ethnographic case study was carried out by one German and two Iranian scholars who shared the intimate research experience of participant observation in a village in the mountains. The bringing together of scholars from various disciplines and different parts of the world was a constitutive aspect of the workshop: we wanted to transcend boundaries in more than one way. The only thing that all participants shared was a distinct interest in this fascinating and academically exciting (although at times challenging) part of the world.

The workshop took place under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, which means it had to be held online. In this regard it must be stated that the pandemic, which made it impossible for us to host our guests in person in Tübingen and forced us to employ an online solution, proved to be a double-edged sword: On the one hand we obviously wished to welcome our guests in person, but on the other hand the online format allowed us to expand the range of the workshop beyond Germany and Iran and to invite experts from America, Italy and other countries. In the end we invited anyone who conducted or conducts research on and in the area under study and, fortunately, most answered our call. Realistically speaking it is obvious that this high positive response was at least partly due to the ease and convenience of online workshopping.

Were we to describe the workshop participants in just one word, it would have to be 'heterogeneous'. We not only had participants from all over the world but also from very different stages of their careers. Some were emeritus professors who had conducted their fieldwork in Iran before the 1979 revolution, others were graduate students participating in archaeological survey projects. Equally heterogeneous were the disciplines represented at the workshop: we had participants and lecturers not only from the humanities such as social anthropology, archaeology or history but also from disciplines of natural science such as mineralogy. This intentional diversity led to fruitful discussions in which even established scholars with broad experience occasionally received novel impulses and ideas. In this regard, our workshop was a full success. However, we noticed during the discussion of trade and trading networks, which we originally thought would be quite broad, seemed too narrow

in comparison to the overall diversity of the workshop. This made it clear that transformation processes in the region cannot be explained by trade alone and although trade has always been a crucial resource in the area, it is by no means the only cultural resource of significance here.

For the edited volume that followed the workshop, we therefore decided to open up the thematic spectrum and decided that not only trade but all formative forces shaping the region could be addressed. The result is the present volume with the title 'Resources, Networks and Transformations in Southeastern Iran – Anthropological and Archaeological Perspectives'. Here we have brought together interdisciplinary explorations, mostly from anthropology and archaeology, that give new insights into the region. This multidisciplinary approach does not only explain changes in the region, but also identifies remarkable continuities enduring in a society and culture that is very often in a state of constant flux.

For better readability, the book is organised into four interrelated parts. Trade and trading networks constitute a major formative force that shaped and continues to shape the region and entangles it in far-reaching transnational networks. Accordingly, two sections are devoted to these interrelations: The first section, titled 'Historical Links Between Iran and Its Neighbouring Countries', analyses them in the present and (relatively) recent past through anthropological and historic approaches, while the second section on 'Archaeological Records of Pottery and Cylinder Seals' provides archaeological evidence indicating transregional connections in the past. The third section, 'Ethno-Archaeological Studies on Resources and ResourceComplexes', takes up this guiding thread but spins it somewhat differently: It uses concrete and archaeologically informed ethnographic case studies to identify and discuss the effects of transregional connections on local communities. Finally, an excursus on the broader frame and history of Iranian anthropology closes out the volume.

In terms of chronology, the contributions in this book cover a wide range of historical periods, from the Early Bronze Age to the contemporary Islamic epoch. In the following section, the individual contributions are briefly introduced to help orient the reader.

Section I: Historical Links Between Iran and Its Neighbouring Countries

In the opening contribution William Beeman investigates the integration of southeastern Iran into the broader Persian Gulf region. He states that the population of the Persian Gulf, despite being one of the most linguistically, ethnically, religiously and historically diverse around the globe, is held together by commercial, cultural and kinship ties, all of which often go hand in hand with each other. Beeman calls this 'unity in diversity'. Cultural differences do take precedence over unifying characteristics in this region and the author therefore describes this unity or community as 'unimagined', with the title 'The 'Unimagined Community' in the Persian Gulf'. With this notion, the author is drawing on the famous concept of Benedict Anderson, who sees imagined communities as constructs established through the fact that people believe they have something in common despite a lack of personal connections.

The people of the nearer Persian Gulf are in many ways opposite to those of southeastern Iran. As the author illustrates, the population of the Gulf shares an overwhelming number of cross-geographic patterns, various linguistic interconnections, extensive trade patterns and many customs and behaviours. Despite all of this, they do not identify as a unified community. Beeman believes that much of our academic understanding of the history of the Persian Gulf region has revolved around the study of international-level governmental conflict. This has led to a somewhat false perception of the region under study, since the local-level population has become accustomed to living in a mixed culture that contains elements from the Arabian, Persian/Iranian and Balouči cultural spheres. Beeman sees this as an important opportunity – he argues that increased self-recognition of the communalities in the region might provide an effective tool in improving regional relationships.

In her contribution 'Revisiting Identities and Cultural Influences in the Indian Ocean: Asian Communities Between Land and Sea in the 1800s', Beatrice Nicolini adds another point to the embeddedness of the region in transnational relationships, but her discussion actually goes

beyond the Persian Gulf. She places particular focus on the Balouč people in the Persian Gulf and East Africa during the 1800s. Balouč soldiers were the first settlers on the East African coast and had military posts in major centres such as Mombasa or Zanzibar. They intermarried with the local population and were gradually assimilated. Later, however, they were joined by other Balouč families in search of a better life along the Swahili coast. Over time, they gradually moved inland and established clustered communities. Their mercantile skills and business acumen usually earned them great respect within the communities they settled in. At the same time, the biggest Balouč community in Mombasa was embracing a cosmopolitan lifestyle, getting involved in major trade relations with the Omanis and later the British. Nicolini argues that the traditional view, which tends to see the Balouč as a homogeneous and unchanging presence frequently subordinated to Arab political leadership, is not only simplifying but at least partly incorrect. On the contrary, she believes they played a pivotal role in shaping the social, economic and cultural landscape well beyond the Persian Gulf and contributed to the rich tapestry of identities in the Indian Ocean by transporting their unique traditions across the region.

Section II: Archaeological Records of Pottery and Cylinder Seals

Enrico Ascalone and Seyed Sajjadi present new archaeological evidence from Šahr-i Suḵta in their contribution entitled 'Cylinder Seals and Cylinder Seal Impressions from Šahr-i Suḵta'. Their article focusses on the study of cylinder seals and seal impressions from this Early Bronze Age site in southeastern Iran, and from the Iranian highlands. It aims to present previously unpublished cylinder seals and seal impressions excavated from the site between 1997 and 2021.

Ascalone and Sajjadi refer to these cylinder seals as BMAC seals, denoting their use in the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) that existed in Central Asia, particularly in the regions of Bactria (modern-day northern Afghanistan) and Margiana (modern-day southern Turkmenistan) during the 3rd mill. BC. BMAC seals were characterised by distinctive typological features and played a significant role in the development of the glyptic art of the region.

According to their study, the seals and seal impressions from Šahr-i Suḵta belong to three different typological macro-classes based on style and iconography. Production is homogeneous in terms of technology and dimensions, with most seals made of limestone, although some are crafted from lapis lazuli, faience and bone. Iconographically, three main groups are recognised: the Geometric Group, the Naturalistic Group and the Figurative Group. The Geometric Group is characterised by simple incised lines and repetitive patterns, the Naturalistic Group features floral elements with four symmetrical petals and the Figurative Group depicts humans and animals with simple lines, along with schematic representations of buildings or geographical features.

The authors discuss the diffusion of these styles in Sistān by considering the dynamics of the Proto-Elamite phenomenon during the second half of the 4th mill. BC. They highlight the chronological and typological classification of the seals and their relation to the Proto-Elamite phenomenon, as well as emphasising the importance of these seals in understanding the cultural and historical dynamics of the site.

Ferdinand Hollenhorst, in his contribution titled 'Some Selected Characteristic Achaemenid Pottery Shapes from Jiroft, Southeastern Iran', attempts to explore the pottery tradition in the region south of Jiroft, including Jiroft, the Fāryāb Plain and the region of Golāšgerd during the Achaemenid period. He provides detailed descriptions and comparisons of each pottery shape, discussing their distribution and chronological placement. This discussion highlights the differences between the pottery shapes found in the region south of Jiroft and those found in the Achaemenid heartland, as well as the similarities with pottery from Afghanistan and further areas to the east.

Hollenhorst's overview emphasises that the pottery in this region is not simply a reflection of the pottery from the Iranian part of the Achaemenid Empire, but rather displays influences from adjacent regions in the east. Although he highlights the challenges in understanding the Achaemenid period in southeastern Iran due to limited excavations and surveys, the pottery studies suggest that the southeast of Iran, specifically the Jiroft region, was an important supra-regional hub that connected Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Arabian Peninsula and the heartland of the Achaemenid Empire.

Saeed Amirhajloo and Hamid Alimoradi's contribution, titled 'The Organisation of Local Production and Intra-Regional Distribution of *Jahleh* Pottery in Southern Iran. Case Studies from Mināb', is a detailed exploration of the traditional pottery production of *jahleh* vessels in southern Iran, specifically in the villages of Šahvār and Ḥakami in Mināb-Hormozgān. The article describes the characteristics and functions of *jahleh* pottery, the geographical traits of the region, the livelihood and trade in Mināb, the pottery workshops in Ḥakami and Šahvār villages, the types of pottery wheels and kilns used in the workshops, the clay preparation process, the various stages of *jahleh* pottery production, the distribution and consumption markets, the use of *jahleh* vessels as musical instruments and the cultural significance of *jahleh* pottery in myths and traditions.

The authors discuss the hereditary transfer of knowledge in the *jahleh* pottery tradition and the endangered nature of the profession, considering the use of both wheel and hand methods in *jahleh* pottery production, as well as the addition of ash to repair cracks and improve the finished vessels' cooling ability.

The overlooked cultural significance of *jahleh* pottery in southern Iran is highlighted: 'Jahleh' appears in myths, folk tales and rituals of the region, creating a cultural role alongside its primary function as water storage and cooling vessel. The study also discusses a wider framework of *jahleh* pottery distribution with exportation to other parts of Iran and in the countries south of the Persian Gulf, as well as India and East Africa.

Section III: Ethno-Archaeological Studies on Resources and ResourceComplexes

The cultural significance of objects is also the focus of Mohammad Karami, Wulf Frauen and Hamid Alimoradi's contribution on 'Calcite Gravestones from a multidisciplinary perspective'. Calcite has long been a popular material for the making of gravestones in the foothill villages of Jebāl-e Bārez, southeast of the modern town of Jiroft. Anthropological and historical data prove that calcite gravestones have been used for the past 400 years, dating back to the middle and late Islamic periods. Only recently have they been replaced by other materials. Even today, masons and scribes can be found who specialised in the processing of calcite gravestones, as the authors demonstrate in detail.

Archaeological records of the same area also show that calcite has been in general use from at least the 4th mill. BC onward, i. e. since the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age. Even though uninterrupted use cannot be proven, calcite remained of particular significance in the area at various points throughout this extended period of time. The authors argue that this is not solely because calcite is freely accessible in this region and also easy to process. To understand its particular socio-cultural importance, the authors chose a two-fold theoretical approach. The first approach is based on Bourdieu's theory concerning the forms of capital, the other is based on the resource theory developed by the SFB 1070. The authors' analysis shows that calcite was (and in part still is) placed in the centre of a ResourceComplex, which serves as symbolic capital that not only expresses collective identity but also maintains spiritual relations between the living and the dead.

Calcite gravestones have always been processed at particular sites, and were cut and carved solely by specialists in a process that did not alter the prevailing nomadic lifestyle of the population. However, this was not the case with other stones, in particular chromite. The opening of a chromite mine in the village of Bāḡ-e Borj in the highlands weat of Jiroft had a major impact on those living off the mine. It caused significant changes but also remarkable forms of resilience.

Wulf Frauen and Sabine Klocke-Daffa in their contribution on 'Recurrent Processes in the Use of ResourceComplexes' trace the villagers' process of transition from a mostly nomadic life combined with minor agriculture to the sedentary life of miners over a period of 80 years. Once again, the authors have used the analytical model provided by the Tübingen research centre to examine the cultural dynamics of resources, and here they demonstrate how the existing ResourceComplex around animal husbandry was gradually modified and transformed without ever being genuinely abandoned. The situation became even more complex when the state-run chromite mine closed and the miners had to become independent miners and business people working on their own account. Again, the agrarian lifestyle was maintained at low level and could easily be reactivated whenever a decline in the demand for chromite occurred.

The authors argue that this kind of flexibility might be a symptom of recurrent processes in the use of stone resources over time. Archaeological records from the area do indeed prove that the use of stones can be traced back to Early Bronze Age. Even though there were long periods of interruption and different people moving around and settling in the area, the ResourceComplexes around various stones and animal husbandry may have withstood all the changes of time precisely due to their adaptability and retained value.

This kind of resilience is not always guaranteed, as the following chapter demonstrates. The demographic and economic changes initiated by stone mining that became widely visible in the village of Bāḡ-e Borj also impacted the centuries-old tradition of rug weaving and was largely responsible for its decline. Alireza Barforooshan, in his contribution on 'The Influence of Mining on the Rise and Fall of Rug Weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj Village', traces the economic and cultural significance of this artisanal craft, which was traditionally undertaken almost exclusively by women. Based on historical sources as well as interviews with weavers who still practise the old craft, Barforooshan shows that rug weaving not only served as a source of additional income and an important component of social relationships, but was also a symbol of identity and regional uniqueness.

Although the Bāḡ-e Borj rugs were neither of exceptional refinement nor of extraordinary size when compared to the products of Iran's famous carpet weaving centres, they were of particular significance to the villagers. Woven with wool from their own sheep, the production of these rugs included the carding, spinning and dyeing of the woollen thread, followed by the design of the motifs and the actual weaving, and these were all parts of the inherited local knowledge. It was passed on between generations of females and kept within families due to the prevailing pattern of endogamous marriage. Handmade rugs could be sold and were considered valuable goods for the regional and interregional trade. However, they were mostly used for private needs and as part of a woman's dowry (a woman's knowledge of rug weaving was also an essential immaterial part of that dowry).

There was a gradual shift to a sedentary life amongst the former Eskandery nomads of the area in the mid-20th cent. AD, as stone mining became the main source of income, and rug weaving lost its cultural value and social significance. The author argues that this decline was not only due to the economic impact of mining but was also influenced by cultural factors such as the changing role of women and the new aspirational image of modernity. It was the collective impact of these interconnected developments that fuelled the decline and devaluation of traditional rug weaving. Although this contribution limits itself to this case study, its anthropological aspects show that this is a ResourceComplex in dissolution, in the true sense of the theoretical approach on ResourceCultures.

Throughout the section on ethno-archaeological studies on resources and ResourceComplexes it becomes clear that both disciplines have a lot to offer in terms of potential scholarly dialogue and share common scientific questions. Since the institutionalisation of ethno-archaeology is still being established in many countries of the participating authors, the editors decided to include an excursus on the history of Social Anthropology in Iran. In that history we find close relationships and the exchange of ideas between proto-anthropology, philosophy and theology, an exchange that existed

long before anthropology was formally established as an academic discipline.

Alireza Hassanzadeh traces this history back in a dense descriptive narrative, which he has chosen to begin with the eminent 10th cent. AD Persian philosopher and historian Bīrūnī. Hassanzadeh argues that the first anthropological paradigms actually began with Bīrūnī and some of his contemporaries and successors like Avicenna, Beyhaqī, Ferdowsī and Sohravardī. For the Persian regions, the 10th cent. AD was a historical phase of thriving political life, intellectual open-mindedness, cultural exchange and scholarly interest in pre-Islamic mythology, rituals, language, poetry and art. In this atmosphere Bīrūnī reported on his extensive travels to India in a unique scholarly fashion, producing work that closely resembled what we would now call anthropological fieldwork. The author describes how the liberal and arguably distinctly Persian intellectual atmosphere that allowed Bīrūnī and his peers to flourish was soon hemmed by political conflicts and an intellectually limiting, xenophobic and misogynist interpretation of Islam by the great ruling Arabic dynasties, only to be resumed in the early 20th cent. AD after the Persian Constitutional Revolution. The author refers to the resulting wave of scholarship on the variance of cultures and societies as the 'second anthropological paradigm'. Inspired in great part by European academic developments, ethnographic museums and anthropological research centres were founded in Iran, shedding new light on Iranian culture, traditions and modernity.

Section I: Historical Links Between Iran and Its Neighboring Countries

William O. Beeman

The 'Unimagined Community' in the Persian Gulf

Keywords: Persian Gulf, Arab, Iranian, Balouči, *ḵaliji*, imagined/unimagined community

Summary

The population of the Persian Gulf is one of the most diverse in the world, linguistically, ethnically, religiously and historically, encompassing core populations of Iranian, Arab and Balouči peoples with many other populations from the Indian subcontinent, other parts of the Middle East and Africa also participating in commercial, governmental and civic life. Commercial, cultural and kinship ties span the region. From an analytic standpoint the Gulf population appears to exhibit the kind of 'unity in diversity' that has served as the underlay for what Benedict Anderson and others have characterised as 'imagined communities'. Noting these communalities, social scientists have used terms such as *ḵaliji* reflecting the Arabic, Persian and Balouči word for 'gulf' to characterise the whole of this population. However, despite the communalities seen throughout the Persian Gulf, this discussion explores the apparent fact that the Gulf community remains 'unimagined', with cultural differences taking precedence over unifying characteristics in the region. I suggest that the reasons for this lack of coalescence lie in patterns of historical political development in the 19th and 20th cent. AD that have tended to encourage division rather than unity for the contemporary Gulf population.

1 Introduction: A New Kind of Community – An 'Unimagined Community'

Social scientists have been actively pursuing questions of 'community' and 'identity' in recent years. The work of Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm (Hobsbawm/Ranger 1983; Hobsbawm 1992) and renewed interest in the work of Maurice Halbwachs (1980; 1992) in determining ethnic identity has frequently placed the focus of the locus of identity on the individual or group. Thus, according to Anderson, communities become 'imagined' when enough people believe they belong, and develop symbols and institutions that unite them, even though they may not have any face-to-face connection or personal interaction. Some of these symbolic elements include shared language, shared media, dietary preferences, housing forms, religious beliefs and intermarriage. These ideas about shared community identity have been the subject of a large number of studies in anthropology, history, sociology, political science and cultural studies (see Beeman 2018b; Breuilly 2016).

I maintain in this paper a different notion, which is that there are also 'unimagined communities' where populations, despite the communalities cited by Anderson embracing the imagined community concept, the people do not identify as belonging to a unified whole. The example I espouse here is the Persian Gulf community. It is an 'unimagined' community – a community in fact, but not in name and not in its social identification. The roots of its existence as a community are centuries old, and now so commonplace that few of the denizens of the region bother to think about it.

Defining what an 'unimagined community' might look like, and how its dynamics would function then becomes an intriguing problem. In general, I suggest that such a community would have an overwhelming number of cross-geographic patterns, many linguistic interconnections, extensive trade patterns and many flexible chameleon-like observations of customs and behaviour on the part of people finding themselves in different settings. However, these same people with all their similarities do not identify in an 'emic' fashion as

a unified community. The factors that unify other 'imagined communities' are obvious to outside observers as 'etic' categories.[1]

Linguistically, the denizens of the Gulf form a *Sprachbund*, an area of overlapping languages that mutually influence each other.[2] Most of the residents are fully bilingual, and frequently tri- and quad-lingual,[3] but the patterns of multilingualism are not uniform throughout the Gulf region. The heavily borrowed vocabulary between Arabic and Persian sometimes makes the base language used in any given community difficult to detect, but it can be definitively stated that the population throughout the Persian Gulf shares a multilingual capacity influenced by Persian and Arabic, in contrast to inland populations in both Iran and the Arabian Peninsula.

As befitting an 'unimagined community', the boundaries of the region are fluid, as are the conditions that bind the residents together. In fact, in its social makeup, the Persian Gulf region may most resemble the Caribbean region, with a distinct culture and feel to it, that is a rich mélange of cultural influences: Arabic, Persian, Balouči, South Asian, East African, Portuguese, French and English to name just a few. Some artefacts remain. A Hindu temple in Bandar ʿAbbās in Iran is testimony to the longstanding cultural influence of the Indian community, which increased as British influence in the Persian Gulf strengthened. The ruins of a Portuguese fort are located on Hormoz Island and clear African influence in local music traditions, and the African-influenced trance possession healing ceremony, the *Zār*, is also prominent throughout the region (Beeman 2015; 2018a).

The region also existed in a symbiotic economic and ecological balance – a further source of cultural unity. The Iranian side of the Gulf provided produce, animals for meat and milk and a certain amount of building material. It was also the conduit for trade goods – fine silks, weaving and handicrafts from inland Iran and imports of spices, coffee and later tea from India, the Arabian Peninsula and East Africa. The Gulf itself was (and still is) rich in marine life with multiple species of excellent fish and shellfish. Of great importance down to the present day was pearl fishing – a source of great wealth in trade with India and Europe, although the pearling industry as a major commercial enterprise largely collapsed in the 1930s in part because of the rise of cultured pearl production. The Gulf itself was the launching pad for trade with India and East Africa all the way to the Comoros Islands. In Zanzibār today there are people identified as 'Omānis' and 'Persians' or 'Širāzi' (Nave 2010, 379). On a recent visit to Zanzibār, I was pleased to encounter both Arabic and Persian speakers.

Wave after wave of travellers have, from ancient times, contributed to this ethnic mix in the Persian Gulf. The impenetrability of the geography separating the Gulf from interior regions – mountainous passages leading to the Central Plateau of Iran, and the Rub' al-Ḵāli desert on the Arabian Peninsula – added to the concentration of this mélange, as people living on the Persian Gulf littoral found it far easier to communicate with each other than with those inland. Before modern air transportation, a trip from the Iranian Gulf coast to the inland city, Širāz, might have taken a week or more, but a boat could reach Dubāi in two days with a good wind. Moreover, boats could transport much larger cargoes with far less physical effort than humans or pack animals.

I note that one of the difficulties in establishing a sense of common identity in the Persian Gulf region, as seen below, stems from the multi-

1 The emic/etic distinction, coined first by the anthropological linguist Kenneth Pike in 1954 (Pike 1954), may not be familiar to non-anthropologists. It is based on the linguistic distinction between phone**tic** and phone**mic** units of language. Phonetic distinctions are those discernable by observers from outside a particular linguistic community of which members of that community may not be aware. Phonemic distinctions are those that make a difference in meaning to native speakers of a language, thus the speakers are aware of these differences (Harris 1976). Thus 'emic' distinctions are those of which members of a population are consciously aware, whereas 'etic' distinctions are analytic distinctions recognised by external observers.

2 The *Sprachbund* has been used widely to describe linguistic situations where there is heavy vocabulary and grammatical influence between different languages, particularly when they come from different 'families'. Good examples are the languages of the Caucasus, and also of Northern China, where Sino-Tibetan and Altaic languages converge (Becker 1948; Jakobson 1971).

3 For example, Fuccaro points out that in Manāma, capital of Bahrain, historically in the 19th cent. AD it was necessary to be conversant in Arabic, Persian, Hindi and English (Fuccaro 2009).

Fig. 1. The Gulf cultural world (from: Izady 2002, 36 f.; Potter 2017, 3).

cultural nature of the communities themselves. Arabic, Persian, Balouči and others tend to view the region from their own cultural and linguistic lens. Arabic communities have a particular Arab-centric view of the region, whereas Persian/Iranian communities see the region through an Iranian lens. This difficulty is epitomised in the controversy over the name of the Gulf itself: Persian Gulf vs. Arabian Gulf. With this perspective it might be argued that there are, in fact, not just one potential *k̲aliji* community, but rather many. The map above (*fig. 1*) shows the boundaries of a culturally unified Gulf.

2 Persian Gulf Interconnections

As suggested above, I speculate that the Persian Gulf community is largely held together by patterns of trade, commerce and ecology, replicating historical patterns that have existed since the most ancient times. Although sea trade has been the principal interconnection, as water transport has waned, air and even land connections have increased. The result is that the Gulf community has grown in scope and size, with outposts outside of the Persian Gulf region. I will mention some of the historical movements below but I note that the specific historical events of migration and settlement are not so important as the fact that they have been a pattern for millennia (Potts 1990; Potter 2009). Therefore, each specific case that we can cite in modern times is only a manifestation and reinforcement of this pattern, rather than being attributable as a causal impetus for the formation of the Persian Gulf social and cultural pattern.

The original trade patterns were of course those of the so-called *dāv* trade (somewhat inaccurately named because *dāv* is an African or South Arabian term rarely if ever heard in the Persian Gulf). The *dāvs* plied the entire East African coast to the Comoros bringing not only goods, but also people in the form of able-bodied sailors, and

also slaves (Ricks 2002; Perry 2015). The African influence also may have brought one of the most characteristic ritual forms of the Persian Gulf, the aforementioned *Zār*, a curing ritual involving shaman-like practitioners going into trance to control the *jinni* 'spirits' that inhabit individuals making them disordered physically and mentally.[4]

Today modern air and electronic communication has greatly facilitated the interconnection between people separated by the waters of the Persian Gulf. Air travel routes between all parts of the Persian Gulf are extensive. Satellite television transmission allows people throughout the region to enjoy programs from all areas. As recently as 30 years ago it was impossible to telephone from the Iranian coast to the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf. Now such communication via computer, cellular telephone and internet applications is commonplace.

2.1 An Autobiographical Note

My introduction to the Middle East came in the 1967 when I was a college student working for an oil company based on Lāvān Island (historic name: Šaiḵ Šo'eyb[5]) of the Iranian coast. I came to the end of my employment and continued my residence, spending six months in the village of Lāz, the main settlement on the island, and additional time sailing with tradesmen and fishermen throughout the Persian Gulf. This was before the British had left the Persian Gulf region. With my merchant friends, I was able to visit virtually every major port and every significant island in the Persian Gulf. I wrote an undergraduate thesis about the village of Lāz on Lāvān Island (Beeman 1968), and continue to have great affection for the entire region. I have not been able to replicate this youthful sea adventure, but have spent time in Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait and the Iranian coast on many occasions since then.

Lāvān Island (Beeman 1968; Potts 2015) is one of a few inhabited islands in the Persian Gulf. The communities on the island were multi-lingual, with Arabic and Persian mixed with regional varieties. One village consisted entirely of people of African descent. Food preferences were a variety of Arab, Indian and Persian foods, understandably heavy on fish, and also shrimp, which in many strict Islamic circles is disapproved (*makruh*) as food.

The thesis I articulate in this paper was initially formulated during this first period of my contact with the Persian Gulf region. I was struck by the mixed nature of the populations, and the fluidity of travel and residency throughout the region that continues to this day. During this earlier period in 1967 no visas or even passports were required by the governments of the region with the exception of Saudi Arabia; or if they were required, documentation was rarely checked. I was only confronted one time during my travels throughout the Persian Gulf. An official in Dubāi in 1967, amazed at confronting an American at this then relatively small port, just told me to be quiet and not tell anyone I was there.

During this time, I was able to make friends with many extended families, who had brothers, sisters and cousins living all over the Persian Gulf on both the Iranian and the Arab side. I had the opportunity to visit these relatives of my friends on Lāvān in Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the Trucial States, the British protectorate which later became the United Arab Emirates. I also visited members of these families in Širāz, and learned of other family members in Lār, Bastak, Bandar Lengeh, Gāvbandi (also called Pārsiān), Rostok and Morbaḵ in the Iranian province of Hormozgān as it is known today. These family households were dispersed everywhere and showed widespread intermarriage with families in these relatively distant locations. Even as a very young anthropologist, it was clear to me that this community was vastly different than either the general Iranian population or the other Arab populations of the Arabian Peninsula.

4 The *Zār* resembles the Hamadsha of Morocco and other places in North Africa documented so well by Vincent Crapanzano and others (Crapanzano 1973). For additional information about the *Zār* see Sā'edi 1967; Modarressi 1968; Mirzai 2002; Moqaddam 2009; Beeman 2015; 2018a. Jinn or Jinni are spirit beings mentioned in the Qur'an. Among their other powers, they are thought to have the ability to inhabit humans.

5 Interestingly, Lāvān Island is also identified in history as 'Lār' (Minorsky 1936, 17b). The principal town on Lāvān is today called Lāz, which may account for the identification.

2.2 *Kaliji*? 'Gulfi'?

In an earlier paper I referred to this composite Persian Gulf population as the *ḵalijis*, after the Arabic and Persian word for 'gulf', *ḵaliji* (Beeman 2009). Lawrence Potter and others have also adopted this appellation for the people of the Persian Gulf sometimes spelling it as *khaleeji* (McCoy 2008; Potter 2017). Izady has opted for the term: 'Gulfi' (Izady 2002) as another 'translation' of *ḵaliji*. When we examine these inclusive terms, however, we see that they are 'etic' terms in the sense I stated above – classificatory terms used by external observers.

Despite the convenience of these terms as descriptive analytic appellations for Persian Gulf citizens, not all people living in the Persian Gulf refer to themselves as *ḵalijis* (or the equivalent). When used, the term does seem to have currency largely among Arab populations in the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait in particular. As Paul Dresch notes: 'There are commonly reckoned three circles of identity in Persian Gulf society beyond that of *muwātin* or fellow citizen: *ḵaliji* or Gulf, then Arab, then *ajnabi* or foreign' (Dresch 2005, 25). The term has increasingly become an identity marker for the Arab citizens of the six Persian Gulf states that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – an organisation that sees itself as opposed to Iranian 'expansion'. Gaith Abdulla writing on *ḵaliji* identity writes: 'Although fear of an expansionist post-revolution Iran was one of the primary motivations behind the establishment of this regional architecture, the underlying *khaleeji* [sic] identity common to the [Persian] Gulf states was the social glue that allowed such regionalisation to take place. What's interesting about the GCC is that since its creation in 1981 it has become a key driver of *khaleeji* identity' (Abdulla 2016, 2). In an email exchange with me, Mr. Abdulla wrote:

'[…] the term khaleeji's broadest use currently is by nationals of GCC member states, Oman and Saudi have the lowest identification with the identity amongst the six. Within this context the ethnicity of nationals does not factor into the use so much, as long as the individual is a citizen of a GCC state, they fall under the khaleeji umbrella. It's use is more political than ethnic' (personal email correspondence with Gaith Abudulla, June 21, 2022).

The arts are universally important in marking and concretizing identity, and the term *ḵaliji* has also been identified with art and music traditions. A highly successful photographic exhibition in 2021 was opened at Abu Dhabi's Manarat Al-Saadiyat museum along with a catalogue presenting images of 'Khaleejiness' (Al Hussein 2022). Additionally *ḵaliji* has been used to identify a specific genre of contemporary popular music that pervades much of the (Persian) Gulf region (Saeed 2012; Tadros 2021).

Perhaps not surprisingly, then, the term *ḵaliji* seems not to be used by Iranians as a marker of self-identification, even Iranians living in the (Persian) Gulf Arab states, as McCoy, commenting on Dresch's distinctions above observes: 'Although [Dresch] makes no distinction of where [Persian] Gulf Iranians might fit, it is probably safe to say such individuals would occupy the lowest *ajnabi* rung' (McCoy 2008, 71 f.). One commentator from the Persian Gulf, writing a post on the website Reddit makes this point succinctly:

'I can tell you that I have met many khaleejis who look down on those from Iranian origin. The word '3ajam' ['ajam] (or 3ayam ['ayam] in [E]mirati dialect) is what they used to describe them' (Volgner 2018).

Finally, anecdotally Iranians living in Iran sometimes use the term *ḵaliji* pejoratively, either to indicate Arab visitors to Iran or, in referring to Iranians living on the Iranian Gulf coast, implying backwardness. McCoy proposes yet another identifier for Iranians living in Persian Gulf states outside of Iran, 'Gulf Iranian' (McCoy 2008, 34).

Sarmadi identifies yet another term used in Iran and also in Dubāi and presumably in the other Arab states, this is *ḵalij-boro* or 'Gulf-goer'. Sarmadi elaborates on this designation, pointing out that it identifies an individual (usually male) who chooses to live in Dubāi or another Persian Gulf state, but who is psychologically oriented to Iran. This is not a pejorative term, but '[s]pecifically, the *ḵalij-boro* referred to Iranian males who hailed from the

south of Iran, spoke Achomi [the Iranian language variety of Lāristān], and typically followed paths of chain migration in search of menial labor to financially support their dependents back in Iran' (Sarmadi 2021, 137 f.). Nadjmabadi reports that from the Arabian perspective these individuals are referred to as *hawli* or 'itinerants'. They are also referred to as *Fāris,* when having been born on the southern Iranian coast, and *Irāni* when from the Iranian interior (Nadjmabadi 2009, 140 f.).[6]

Disambiguating the *emic* nomenclature for people of different origins living in areas other than their ancestral homes complicates the classification of identity considerably. An examination of the names applied to Iranian-origin groups living in the Arabian Peninsula shows this complexity. Many of the *ʿAjam*, who are of Iranian origin living in the Arabian Peninsula (Persian) Gulf States, were born there, rather than in Iran, and have been there for generations, some going back to the 18th cent. AD. This broad category encompasses the Lāris from greater Lāristān as well as other regions on the Iranian littoral. Those called *ʿAjam* refer to themselves as *ḵodmooni* (standard Persian: *ḵodemāni*), which in Persian simply means 'we ourselves'.[7]

Looking at the Iranian Gulf littoral itself, one sees yet another emic nomenclature. Iranians living along the Persian Gulf tend to identify themselves and each other according to the specific region in which they live: Bušehr(i), Bandar ʿAbbās(i), Ahvāz(i), Ḵuzistān(i), etc.

A third population, the Balouči (Balochi) are widely dispersed throughout the Persian Gulf from their 'homeland' in the Makrān region on the coast of the Sea of Oman. They have been resident throughout the region since at least the 18th cent. AD. Many have become assimilated, have 'Arabized' their family names, and have even lost their native language, but they continue to identify with their heritage and background (Jahani 1999; Al Ameeri 2003; Nicolini 2006; Suzuki 2013; Jahani 2014; Mürer 2020; Nicolini 2021).

This then, is the crux of the analytic difficulty presented by considering the residents of the Persian Gulf region. From the outside 'etic' perspective of ethnographers and other observers, all core historic residents of the Persian Gulf littoral exhibit a unified cultural picture, but from an inside 'emic' perspective of native residents, the different Persian Gulf populations emphasise their ethnic differences using a wide variety of identifiers. One point comes through clearly, and that is that the people living in the Persian Gulf, whether Iranian, Arab, Balouči, are distinct from other Iranian, Arab or Balouči citizens. I will explore this further below. But first I want to trace three major historical migratory waves – Arab, Iranian and Balouči that contributed to the cross fertilisation of elements that have created the impression of a unified culture.

3 Cross-Gulf Origins – The Qāsimi, Lāristāni/Bastaki and Balouči Migrations

The three historical migratory waves that have had dramatic effects in terms of cross-cultural fertilisation involve the Arab Qāsimi (pl. Qawasim) entrepreneurs, the migrations from Iranian Lāristān and Bastak regions (which might be referred to historically as 'Greater Lāristān'[8]) throughout the Persian Gulf, and finally the gradual settlement of Balouči population throughout the region. These movements have been taking place over multiple centuries in a well-established pattern. They remain today as continual dynamic elements in Persian Gulf cultural unity. I am purposely not dealing

6 Izady also points out that Nader Shah had captured Bahrain in 1743 for Iran. The epithet *hawila* was applied to Arabs who re-occupied Bahrain after Nader Shah's death when Iranians were ousted by the Al-Khalifa family in 1783 (Izady 2002, 68). The term *hawala* is widely used today for peripatetic Gulf residents who move from location to location, often spanning both Arabian and Iranian coasts (Potter 2017, 2; Floor 2014; Al-Dailami 2014). See also Mobasher for more views on the 'Iranian diaspora' (Mobasher 2018).

7 Khodmooni, Acholi or Achali and Lāristāni are used somewhat interchangeably to refer to these Iranian heritage residents in the UAE among themselves. See Khazaeli and Barrett for a case study of two entrepreneur brothers from this community (Khazaeli/Barrett 2014).

8 As I note below, the historic region of Lāristān was far greater in geographical extant than the Lāristān province in modern Iran. It included not only in land Lār, but also the coastal communities of Bastak, Bandar Lengeh, Gerāš, Evaz, Ḵonj and the territory in between. When today's residents of the UAE call themselves 'Ḵodmooni' they are referring to this 'greater Lāristān' cultural sphere.

with other population groups that have had strong influence in the Persian Gulf. European merchants and political groups have been important in shaping the history of settlement in the Persian Gulf, but they are not primary residents there. Finally, Indians, especially South Indians and Gujaratis, have been resident and transient in the Persian Gulf region from antiquity due to historical sea trade patterns (Onley 2014; Mehta/Onley 2015), but, Bangladeshis, Philippinos, Palestinians, Egyptians and other essential workers in the region are relatively recent arrivals, and do not share the same deep historical settlement patterns of the three core groups I am detailing here.

3.1 The Qawasim

The trade connections in the Persian Gulf have been well documented from antiquity, and others have dealt with them extensively (Potts 1990; Izady 2002). In the modern historical period, Iranians continued to migrate to the Arabian Peninsula and Arabs to the Iranian mainland. In particular during the period following the demise of the Ṣafavids in the early 18th cent. AD there was weakness in both the central Iranian regimes (Zand, Afšār, Qājār) and on the Arabian Peninsula, still under nominal Ottoman rule, but with no central organisation. Thomas Ricks in particular has pointed out that the (Persian) Gulf was of little interest under the Zand Dynasty (1750–1794) (Ricks 2002; Nadjmabadi 2009, 132). This left the Persian Gulf region to its own devices, allowing the rise of individual *šaiḵs* and *šaiḵdoms*. The Zand Dynasty actually made one member of the Qasimi clan the governor of Bandar Lengeh (Nadjmabadi 2009, 132). Consequently, the Iranian coast, the *šaiḵs* of Bandar Lengeh and Hormoz were dominant. Concomitantly during this period, the British, adamant to protect their Indian empire, were able to establish their political influence throughout the region.

The anthropologist Louise Sweet makes the strong case for an integrated post-Safavid Persian Gulf society based on the unique combination of political organisation, control of the pearling industry and seafaring skills. She points out that this enabled this society to 'seek to control all merchant shipping moving through the Persian Gulf, including European' (Sweet 1964, 264). This is nowhere more in evidence, than in the rise and dominance of two important dynasties in the region, as I have mentioned above – the Arabic Qawasim,[9] and the rulers and governors of Lāristān, extending to the Bastak region to its south,

Onley and Khalaf (Onley 2004; Onley/Khalaf 2006) go so far as to call the Qasimi a 'state' alongside the Wahābi and Omāni regimes from the same period (roughly 1750–1860). Whatever label one places on these familial political organisations, their organisation and economic activity was uniform throughout the region, forming what most modern anthropologists would recognise as an integrated culture – which, as I have stated above, persists to the present day, although eroded and compromised by political processes starting during the Qājār period in Iran.

The following events involving the Qawasim had profound effects on the Persian Gulf community:

- The ouster of the Qasimi *šaiḵ* of Bander Lengeh by the British in 1887 combined with increased tariffs in Persian Gulf ports in 1903.
- The ascension of Šāh Reżā Pahlavi to power and the consolidation of Saudi Arabia under Ibn Saud following World War I.
- The abandonment of the Persian Gulf Region by the British in late 1971 at the height of the power of Šāh Moḥammad Reżā Pahlavi.
- The Iranian Revolution in 1978–1979.

Each of these events altered migration and trade in the Persian Gulf in fundamental ways, and had profound effects on the integrated culture of the Persian Gulf.

The British began to exert their influence in the Persian Gulf region at the beginning of the 19th cent. AD. The Qawasim were recalcitrant and were labelled as 'pirates' in much of the literature of the day (Risso 1978). The British-led expeditions against the Qawasim in 1806, 1809–1810 and 1819. In 1820 they established a General Treaty with some of the smaller *šaiḵdoms* on the Arab side

9 The Qasimi are referred in literature variously as 'Qasimi', or in the Arabic plural as 'Qawāsim', or 'Qawasemi', or in Sweet and other studies by the corrupted British appellation 'Jowasim', which may reflect the local Arabic dialect. In my experience on Lāvān Island those with this family heritage also said they were related to the 'Jowasim'.

of the Persian Gulf, that later became the UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain. Kuwait had signed an earlier agreement with Great Britain in 1899 in which the ruler, Mubarak al-Sabah, agreed to seek British consent before engaging with any foreign power. Essentially making Kuwait a protectorate of Great Britain (Crystal 1990).

The piracy appellation for the Qawasim has been resisted in recent times by contemporary historians, most notably Šaiḵ Sulṭān bin Moḥammad al-Qasimi (the ruler of Šārjah), who disputes the idea that the Qawasim were anything more than a polity engaged in territorial and trade protection (Davies 1997; Al-Qāsimī 1986; Onley 2004). The British ousted the Qasimi *šaiḵs* from Bandar Lengeh in 1887 (Curzon 1892, 409 f.), but they did not go easily. They retook the port in 1898 and were finally ousted in 1899 (Al-Qāsimī 1986; Risso 1978; Shoup 2022). This ouster was combined with the imposition of high customs duties by Iran under British influence, when, in 1899 the Iranian government hired Belgian customs officials to collect tariffs.[10] By 1903 these actions ended the pre-eminence of this city as a de-facto free port, to the eventual benefit of Dubāi.

Bandar Lengeh partially owed its economic success to the fact that it was a major port for the importation and transportation of tea, which had been gaining steadily as a replacement for coffee as the beverage of choice in the Iranian interior (Floor 2004; Matthee 2009). Willem Floor attributes a great deal of the economic shifts in trade in the Persian Gulf both to the rise of tea consumption, and to changes occurring in import routes for tea during the 19th cent. AD. Tea was imported to Iran from China, India and Java. Russia provided one import route, and whenever this was too expensive or inconvenient, the Persian Gulf ports served as *entrepôts* for this trade. Floor also notes that coffee continued to be consumed on the Persian Gulf coast even after tea became dominant in the interior (Floor 2004, 98). In 1910 coffee consumption at Bandar Lengeh was reported to be two to three times the consumption of tea (Floor 2004, 98), and even today in many areas of the Iranian Gulf coast, Arab-style coffee is served alongside tea in everyday hospitality.[11]

As Floor notes, Bandar Lengeh (Lingah, Lingeh) was primarily an *entrepôt* on the Persian Gulf (Floor 2004, 77; 2010). Goods were deposited here for transshipment to other ports. The Qasimi *šaiḵs* were the aristocracy of the lower Persian Gulf, having been situated there by their own legendary account since the ʿAbbāsid Empire, and having branches on both sides of the Persian Gulf, notably in the *šaiḵdoms* of Šārjah and Ra's al-Ḵaima as well as Bandar Lengeh. Colonel Lewis Pelly, writing in 1864 about a visit to the area in the previous year describes the nature of the commercial enterprise at Bandar Lengeh as well as the clear Qasimi involvement with it:

'The Sheikh (!) of Lingah is an Arab and claims to be a descendant of a family that emigrated to the Persian Gulf at the period when the Arabs were at the height of their power in Baghdad. He is, I believe, related to the Rasulkhymah Chief on the opposite coast. No import or export duty is due in Lingah, and it is probably to this fact, and to that of geographical position having preserved the port from governmental interference, that its hitherto prosperity is due. At present the township, with its adjacent suburbs, may contain from 8,000 to 10,000 inhabitants, of whom the bulk are evidently Africans. The wealthier class are persianised Arabs, and some Persians also have been attracted from the upper country for labour on the spot, or as carriers into the interior. There are also some twenty Hindoos residing in the place as agents for firms in Bombay or Kurrachee. It appears from this

10 This appears to have been a reflex to the increased import duties being imposed by Russia on Iran's northern borders at this time. The Iranians, cognisant that most shipping in the Persian Gulf involved British goods, wanted to make up for the increased Russan duties by imposing the higher tariffs on the Persian Gulf ports. For Bandar Lengeh, this made its *entrepôt* even less tenable. Compare Willem Floor 2004 who notes that Russian dominance in the tea trade – one of the most important imports – came to an end in 1917 at the end of World War I, and the Persian Gulf again became the main source for tea imports, but it was too late for Bandar Lengeh at this point. The trade had already moved to Dubāi.

11 The coffee served is brewed from macerated crushed coffee beans. This is not 'Turkish' coffee, in which finely ground coffee is simmered with sugar. It is unsugared and served in small handle-less cups from a specially shaped coffee ewer. Typically, each cup is refilled three times, at which point the receiver wiggles the cup back and forth to indicate they have had enough (Matthee 1996; Floor 2004).

statement, as well as from the conversation of the merchants themselves, that the little commercial importance of this place is due to its being conveniently situated as a point of agency for trade coming from India and seeking a market along the Arabian coast of the Gulf, and to the Persian territory in the immediate neighbourhood of Lingah and towards Lar. Goods are landed, and, if prices pay, are sold on the spot and are sent towards the interior at the risk of the purchaser. Lingah merchants consider the road through the Eliant haunts too insecure to permit of their trading themselves with the interior. It is, however, I think, obvious that, unless owing to accidental circumstances, Lingah, from its geographical position and from its dangerous anchorage, would be quite unable to complete with the inland trade of Bushire or Bunder Abbass; and its statistics show that the bulk of its trade is with the maritime Arab ports, goods being reshipped thither in small coasting craft, according to demand and opportunity. Specie and pearls, and perhaps a little salt fish, are, I believe, the only returns from the Arab ports' (Pelly 1864, 252).

Nevertheless, in that commercial role Bandar Lengeh was a major trading port for pearls and other goods. The Qasimi *šaiḵs*, who dominated maritime operations throughout the eastern Gulf, while situated primarily in Ra's al-Ḵaima and Bandar Lengeh, were seen by the British as troublesome pirates who interfered with their own naval and trade operations. However, since they were likewise major merchants in the sea trade, their removal from the Iranian coast shifted commercial activity to the Arab side of the coast. The Qawasim shift of their base of operations to Šārjah and Ra's al-Ḵaima starting around 1877 eventually established a kind of sea trade hegemony over the other neighbouring *šaiḵdoms*, and as mentioned, most significantly resulted in using the better port of Dubāi as their principal port of trans-shipment (Olson 1981). When the British Indian Steam Navigation Company began stopping in Dubāi in 1909 (Onley 2005, 38), this cemented Dubāi as the full replacement for Bandar Lengeh.

The Qawasim had a kind of symbiotic partnership with the merchants of Lāristān. Whereas the Qawasim would transport goods to Bandar Lengeh or Bandar ʿAbbās, they did not take the goods further inland, fearing attacks by bandits on the land routes leading inland to Širāz and other cities on the Iranian plateau. In this way there was a longstanding affinity between the two populations, creating a natural migration route for Lāristāni merchants to travel to Dubāi and its neighbours (Onley 2005, 38).

As cited above, the traders on the Iranian coast moved the focus of their activity gradually to the Arabian coast starting in 1877. The Qawasim continued to control Bandar Lengeh until 1887 when they were expelled by the Iranian Qājār ruler, Naṣer ed-Din Šāh (Potter 2008, 126). The Qawasim tried to retake Bandar Lengeh in 1898 but were repelled in 1899 (Shoup 2022, 84). They continued to use the port for trade, but gradually diminished their presence there. Iran imposed a general tariff on Persian Gulf ports in 1903, effectively ending the Qawasim direct influence in Bandar Lengeh, and when eventually making Dubāi the dominant centre of trade for the entire Persian Gulf (Al-Sayegh 1998, 98). Trade and family connections with Iran never ceased, however. In fact, trade at Bandar Lengeh continued to grow for two years after the ouster of the *šeiḵs* there before it went into decline. This shift was the basis for regular sea trade and personal travel between the Iranian and Arabian coasts.

The decline in trade in Bandar Lengeh eventually also affected trade in Bušehr and Bandar ʿAbbās. With the *entrepôt* at Lengeh moved to Dubāi, it became much more reasonable to import goods into Iran from Dubāi through nearby Bandar ʿAbbās. By the beginning of the 20th cent., Bandar ʿAbbās had outstripped Bandar Lengeh entirely in Iran (Floor 2004, 79; 2010), but largely because all Iranian ports had been supplanted by the Arabian ports as primary trading centres.

Dubāi continued to flourish under British 'protected status' under treaty[12] after its ruler, along with other Trucial *šaiḵs*, signed an 'Exclusive

12 There were no formal British 'protectorates' in the Persian Gulf, although by treaty the British assumed military protection and foreign affairs for the Arab states in the Persian Gulf, aside from Oman and Arabia, later Saudi Arabia, whereas these states controlled their own domestic affairs. The nomenclature used in British colonial nomenclature for these states was British Protected States, which was one step short of 'Protectorate' (Onley 2009; 2007).

Agreement' in 1892. It developed a reputation as a free port, especially for the trading of gold. The mix of inland Arab families, *émigrés* from Iran, India and Pakistan added to the international flavour of the community.

When I was living on Lāvān Island, the nominal headman (*kadḵodā*) of the main town on the island, Lāz, claimed to be descended from the Qasimi line. He was immensely proud of this pedigree and pointed out that although his 'cousins' were rulers in Šārjah and were prominent throughout the *šaiḵdoms* of the then Trucial Coast, the family was also still resident throughout the region surrounding Bandar Lengeh.

3.2 The Rulers and Merchants of Lāristān

The second great transnational force in the Persian Gulf region stemmed from the ancient Iranian city of Lār and the region of Lāristān, which before the 20th cent. AD extended all the way to the Persian Gulf coast, including Lār, Bastak, Bandar Lengeh, Gerāš, Evaz, Ḵonj and the villages and territory in between. One of the principal land routes from the Persian Gulf to inland Iran passes through Lāristān and has been so from ancient times (the other principal route being from Bušehr inland). In the 13th cent. AD, Lāristān achieved new prominence as a trade centre with the establishment of a *ḵān-gāh* best described as a 'Sufi brotherhood lodge' in Ḵonj to the west of Lār city. This *ḵān-gāh* also housed travellers and caravans, and so was an important waystation on the inland trade route (Aubin 1969). This became a crossroads for several trade routes, the most important being the Širāz-Bandar ʿAbbās/Hormoz route, and eventually the Širāz-Bandar Lengeh route both of which passed through Lār. Lār is mentioned in a Chinese-Mongolian edict of 1453 directed to the *tou mu* (頭目) 'leader, head person' of Lār currently found in the Topkapi Palace library in Istanbul (Cleaves 1950, 435).

Despite its longstanding importance on this trade route, Lāristān was virtually an autonomous region throughout history until the 1930s. Many Iranian governmental regimes tried to bring the region under the control of the centralised Iranian state without much success. Well into the reign of Reżā Šāh Kabir (1925–1947) the Lāristānis were ruled by the local khans – agricultural landholders who emanated from the nearby town of Gerāš (Olson 1981; McIntire 1984, 53). It was only with the 'White Revolution' under Šāh Moḥammad Reżā Pahlavi (at the urging of the United States government) and the land reform that came as part of it, that the power of the *ḵāns* was finally broken.

One of the reasons for the lingering power of the local *ḵāns* was the geography of Lāristān, which presented formidable difficulties for travel. There was for centuries no alternative trade route between Bandar ʿAbbās and Širāz, but the area between Lāristān and Širāz was highly mountainous, and not even paved for its whole length until well after World War II. In an age when trade caravan transport was on the backs of animals, this was not a comparative disadvantage, since all travel was by animal, but for motorised transport, the road created a barrier. For the citizens of Lāristān it was just as convenient to travel to Dubāi or Kuwait as it was to travel to Širāz.

Communication difficulties also created divisions between Lāristānis. The denizens of Lāristān speak a variety of West Iranian language that is not fully mutually intelligible with Modern Persian speakers, known as Achomi (from the verb for 'to go' in the language) or *ḵodmooni*, which merely means 'we, ourselves'. Several varieties of this local language are seen throughout Lāristān (Mann 1909; Kamioka/Yamada 1979; Kamioka et al. 1986; Skjærvø 1988; 1989; Windfuhr 1999; Moridi 2009; Taheri-Ardali 2017). Emily McIntire, who did an extensive study of Lār before the Iranian Revolution of 1978–1979 reports that in 1966 only 18.4% of the population of Lāristān was literate (McIntire 1984, 81). The combination of a unique local language with functional illiteracy created a cultural separation between the Lāristān region and the Central Iranian Plateau.

Another divergence for the citizens of Lāristān was that they were, and are today, primarily Sunni Muslims, in contrast to the dominant Ši'a population of the majority of Iranian citizens. During the Ṣafavid Era, attempts were made to forcibly convert the Lāristānis to Ši'a Islām, but this conversion effort turned out to be largely ineffective

(Aubin 1965, 155). This disjunction between religious beliefs contributed to the psychological ease with which Lāristānis were able to migrate to and establish residence in the Arabian Peninsula where Sunni belief predominated.

All of these factors have combined over historical time to create a situation for Lāristānis where a sizeable portion of their population was more easily culturally and economically bound to the Persian Gulf region than to the nation of Iran through its many shifts in regime for more than 600 years. They were accustomed to living on both sides of the Persian Gulf, and equally comfortable with travel between the many ports there.

Families from Lāristān spread out during the 19th and early 20th cent. AD, with members on both Iranian and Arab coasts. In 1912, Šaiḵ Saʿid of Dubāi encouraged settlers from Lāristān to settle in Dubāi (Coles/Jackson 2006, 16; Shoup 2022, 85–88). The Iranian settlers in Dubāi and Šārjah came to be known by a name that recalls their origins in the area between Lār and Bandar Lengeh, centring on the town of Bastak. The district of Dubāi in which they settled has come to be named after their former home, called Bastakiya, now identified as the oldest traditional residential quarter of Dubāi, sometimes called 'the city's historic district' and a major tourist attraction today. The Iranian immigrants came to dominate the retail sector of the economy, particularly fresh produce – a characteristic of the community that continues today (Al-Sayegh 1998, 88). One of the major architectural features of Bastakiya are the Iranian-style 'wind towers' installed there. These elevated towers serve to 'catch the wind' channelling the air through long passages leading to the houses below to cool the living quarters (Coles/Jackson 2006). Additionally, Najmabadi reports that 'Šaiḵ Zāyid Al Nahayyān (d. 2004) the ruler of Abu Dhabi and president of the UAE personally promoted the immigration of Iranian coastal inhabitants to the UAE' (Nadjmabadi 2009, 145, footnote 68).

The Lāristānis in Dubāi and Šārjah have maintained a distinct community, including preserving their local language, Achomi, as well as their Lāristāni identity. Sarmadi writing about his research on Iranians in Dubāi writes that on talking to one Bastakiya resident he was told:

'You're here to study us, well then, can you speak our language?' Sarmadi continues: 'He posed the question in Persian, but he wanted to know if I spoke Achomi' (Sarmadi 2021, 125).

Fariba Adelkhah reports a similar experience:

'[…] during a first trip I made to Dubāi in 1998, with my mother. We were both surprised, as Iranians, to meet nothing but 'Laris' and 'Gerashis'. 'What exactly are these Laris and these Gerashis?' my mother asked me. She had never heard these names, and I must admit that I wasn't much better-informed. I told her they were two southern cities, Lari and Gerash. However, it soon became clear that these Laris and Gerashis were ubiquitous in the business environment in Dubāi and constituted the bulk of the Iranian community in the emirate' (Adelkhah 2016, ix).

Aside from the settlements in Dubāi and Šārjah, over a long period of time a pattern developed where a sizeable proportion of Lāristāni men would travel to the Persian Gulf *šaiḵdoms* for work. Unlike other labour migrants, however, they were largely shopkeepers. In the early 20th cent. AD, they primarily set up shop in rented quarters (since they could not own property as foreigners) in Kuwait (McIntire 1984, 63). McIntire shows that their lives were a fascinating complex of travel and multiple residencies. These merchants would travel to Kuwait (later Dubāi) and set up modest shops often selling household goods, cloth, and other everyday items. They would live very simply, often in shared rooms with other Lāristānis. Profits were usually quite good. They would return to Lār for a maximum of six months (longer and they would lose their Kuwaiti visas) perhaps once every two years until they had substantial savings. They would then return to Lār, and often move their family to Širāz where they would build a residence (McIntire 1984, 54). They then might return to their Persian Gulf business and continue to visit relatives in Lār. Frequently they would marry a second or even third wife in the town where they had their business. In 1968, I visited a Lāristāni family originally from Bastak where a second wife lived in Kuwait in 1968 and

subsequently visited the home where the first wife lived in Širāz.

As a result of their involvement with the economy of the Persian Gulf region, the citizens of Lāristān have been among the wealthiest people in Iran. In 1975 McIntire reports that the Iranian national Bank Melli branch in Lār handled more funds than even the very largest branch of the bank in Širāz, largely due to remittances from the Gulf States (McIntire 1984, 63). This appears to be true even today (Hojjati 2015). It is not surprising, then, that one of the principal destinations for nonstop air travel to Iran from Arabian cities is Lār.

3.3 The Balouči

A Gulf population largely overlooked in scholarly literature are the Balouči (Baloch, Balochi). Occupying the Makrān coastal region adjacent to the Sea of Oman east of the Straits of Hormoz as an historic homeland, the Balouči are a distinct population speaking their own Iranian language, which is mutually unintelligible with Persian and Arabic. The Balouči occupy a large segment of Southeast Iran, Southwest Pakistan and Southwest Afghanistan. They also have significant settlements in Oman and Ra's al-Ḵaima. Although Balouči are primarily Sunni Muslims, some are also following Ši'ism, still others have adopted the Ibadi Muslim faith common in Oman and some as well follow the tenets of the small Zikri Muslim community.

Baloučis were known to be fierce fighters and were recruited as mercenaries by the Sultāns of Oman in the 17th and 18th cent. AD. Even today there is a large Balouči population in Oman. Historically, Baloučis were also independent sea merchants throughout the Indian Ocean, especially the African Coast, especially Zanzibār where they also served as troops for the Omani sultāns. This direct involvement with the Sultāns of Oman, particularly the slave trade lasting into the 19th cent. AD, made them instrumental in the transmission of East African peoples and cultural influences into the Persian Gulf region (Nicolini 2006; Suzuki 2013; Nicolini 2021) including the *zār* and related *guati* spirit healing practices (Suzuki 2013, 206; Mürer 2020, 206–213). These practices involving group participation in regular ceremonies under the direction of a *baba* or *mama* curer who address and placate spirits through music, dance and ritual continue to be widespread (Beeman 2015).

One feature of the slave trade was that the African slaves were engaged in the pearling industry in the Gulf. In my residence on Lāvān Island in 1967, I visited one of the villages on the island, Gerad, whose residents were of African descent. They also were engaged in pearl fishing – one of the last pearling operations on the Iranian coast, I was told. The village was surrounded by mounds of clam and oyster shells, and I was told that even in 1967 there were a few pearl fishermen in the village that continued their trade.

It is also the case that Baloučis themselves were kidnapped into slavery, often by other Baloučis. Suzuki documents this extensively, showing how Baloučis were transported from the Makrān to Oman, and the seven *šaiḵdoms* that later made up the UAE in an illegal operation that lasted until the 1950s (Suzuki 2013). The British Protected State status continuing until 1971[13] apparently provided no administrative relief for Balouči slaves. Many repeatedly petitioned the British agents in the Trucial States to be released from their slavery and while some were manumitted, others were returned to their 'owners' (Suzuki 2013, 220). Ali Ameeri reports that these Baloučis also became involved with pearling operations, and accordingly established residence throughout the Persian Gulf Arab communities mingling with the local population but continuing to call themselves today *al-Balūši* (Al Ameeri 2003, 241). Descendants of formerly enslaved Baloučis continue to live in these areas today.

These Persian Gulf connections throughout the 19th and into the 20th cent. AD served as an anchor for later migration from Baloučistan throughout the Gulf, particularly as the pearling trade collapsed in the 1930s. Al Ameeri reports that the 18th cent. AD Baloučis living in Persian Gulf states today have assimilated to Arab society. Though they acknowledge their heritage, many have lost their language and many of their traditional customs (Al Ameeri 2003, 241). Other more recent immigrants, many of whom have joined the military

13 The British did maintain military bases in Šārjah and Oman until 1971 by agreement with local rulers.

and police forces; and work in the oil industry, retain a more explicit Balouči identity. They maintain their language, artistic traditions, their religious practices (Al Ameeri 2003, 242), and congregate in clubs and social halls from Kuwait to Oman (Mürer 2020).

4 20th Century Historical and Political Shifts

The fluid and eclectic nature of Persian Gulf society might have maintained the same pattern it had for centuries had the modern states of Iran and Saudi Arabia (later Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE) not emerged in the 20th cent. AD following World War I. The Pahlavi Dynasty began in 1925 and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. Added to this was the creation of the state of Iraq by the British at roughly the same time, achieving independence also in 1932. These concretised political states created the beginnings of polarisation for both Iranian and Arab littorals of the Persian Gulf.

4.1 The Ascension of Reżā Šāh to Power and the Consolidation of Saudi Arabia under King Saud

Although the Qājār Šāhs had an interest in the Persian Gulf region largely as a route for importing foreign goods, they barely exercised political control or sovereignty over the region. The exception was Bandar ʿAbbās, which was under the control of the Sultān of Muscat until it was brought under Qājār control in 1868 (cf. Potter 2008). The Qawasim continued to have de-facto control over the shipping lanes between the Persian and Arabian coast, leading to some of the ambiguity in later years over the sovereign control of many of the islands in the lower Persian Gulf, such as Greater and Lesser Tonb, Sirri and Abu Musā – a controversy that continues today.

Reżā Šāh Pahlavi's reign, starting in 1925, reestablished Iranian control over the Persian Gulf through road building and the establishment of a strong Iranian Navy. Although Nāder Šāh (ruled 1736–1747) had tried to establish a powerful naval force in the Persian Gulf during his reign starting first with borrowed or captured ships from European powers almost from the beginning of his reign and later commissioning ships to be built (the first arriving in 1741) (Axworthy 2011) in practical terms, until Reżā Šāh, the Iranian regimes had been somewhat indifferent toward naval operations. To be sure, throughout history other nations, notably the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British as well as Arab traders were aggressively active throughout the region. The difficulty of obtaining land access to the Persian Gulf littoral from inland Iran was also an obstacle to naval operations. Nāder Šāh, for example, having ordered ships from India and having purchased them from the Dutch, wanted to establish a boatyard in Bušehr. However, the lack of wood on the Persian Gulf coast prompted Nāder Šāh to order the astonishing transport of timber from Māzandarān in Northern Iran – lumber that had to be physically carried by commandeered peasantry passing the logs by hand from settlement to settlement until they reached Bušehr (Axworthy 2011, 37).

As mentioned above, the British had forged treaties with the *šaiḵs* of the Arabian coast over an extended period beginning in 1892, creating the 'Trucial States', officially, British Protected States, lasting until 1971/1972 when they became independent of Great Britain and federated as the United Arab Emirates. These seven *šaiḵdoms* included Abu Dhabi, Ajmān, Dubāi, Fujairah,[14] Ra's Al-Ḵaimah, Šārjah, Umm Al Quwain. A primary motivation for pursuit of this series of treaties was the desire of the British to Protect British shipping and trade in the Persian Gulf, and the exclusion of rival powers. Including the Ottomans, Russians, French, Germans and Americans.

The consolidation of Saudi Arabia in 1932 forced the British to protect their territories and their shipping and petroleum investments, drawing physical land boundaries for the first time, some of which have never been resolved.[15] The development of the oil industry in Iran started

14 Fujaira was originally part of Sharjah until recognised as a separate *šaiḵdom* by the British government in 1952.

15 The boundary disputes and negotiations were a continual feature of British occupation, as the 29 volumes of documents solely on this topic attest (see Blake/Schofield 1988; for a narrative study see Wilkinson 1991).

with exploration in 1901 and the discovery of oil in 1908 by the geologist George Bernard Reynolds. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) was founded in the following year, in 1909. This suddenly made the region essential for the Iranian economy, causing an eventual shift of Iran's economic life from agriculture to oil and industry. This had a profound effect on life in the Persian Gulf. Gradually a shift in the symbiotic relationship between the Persian coast, from where agricultural goods were exported from Iran to the Arabian Peninsula, changed to a relationship of competition, where the Persian Gulf became a territory to be fought over for its resources and strategic advantage. This dynamic shift accelerated with the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia in 1938. The resulting political and economic changes thus brought about served to divide the various segments of the Persian Gulf community.

In short, the events of this period brought the Persian Gulf region into the modern nation-state system for the first time. Residents of the Persian Gulf region had to choose a nationality and carry documents identifying themselves as citizens of a specific state. In Iran, this began with a new Nationality Law in 1929, which led to the Bahrain Nationality Law of 1937 and then subsequent nationality laws throughout the Persian Gulf region (cf. Mueller 2020). Deciding on a definitive nationality was a new and difficult decision for the Iranians resident in the newly formed Arabian Peninsula states. In the United Arab Emirates, families slowly became divided and parcelled out among states. During this period before 1971, however, travel between nations was allowed for many Persian Gulf residents upon producing a simple identity card.

With the ascent of the Pahlavi regime starting in 1925, one of the primary goals of Reżā Šāh was to bring the entire country of Iran under centralised control, including Lāristān (McIntire 1984, 23) and Baloučistan (Al Ameeri 2003, 241). This meant subduing tribal regions, independent *k̲ans* and other semi-autonomous ethnic populations throughout the country. The Baloučis were such a population. Reżā Šāh arrested and repressed Balouči leaders and any groups resisting the authority of the regime. As a result, there was a large-scale emigration of Baloučis to other areas of the Persian Gulf. The repression of Baloučis continued under Šāh Moḥammad Reżā Pahlavi, prompting even more widespread emigration (Al Ameeri 2003, 239).

Reżā Šāh was bent on 'modernising' Iran, and one of his policies was met with particular discomfort in many parts of the nation. This was his edict in 1935 that women should abandon the *čādor*, the long head and body covering that had been a sign of modesty throughout the areas of the country who were adherents to traditional religious practice. This and other attempts to reduce the influence of conservative religious practice prompted many residents in Lāristān and the Iranian Gulf coast to emigrate to Dubāi, Bahrain, Kuwait and other areas of the Arabian Peninsula along the Persian Gulf (McIntire 1984, 37).

4.2 The Abandonment of the Gulf by the British in 1971

The British pull-back from the Persian Gulf in December 1971 was announced well in advance in 1968. The withdrawal was attributed by the British government to the extraordinary cost (£12 million per annum) of maintaining a military presence in the region (Heard-Bey 2005). The *šaiḵdoms* of the region, however, did not want this. Indeed, the rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubāi offered to pay the costs of maintaining the British fleet and expected the other Persian Gulf rulers to contribute. The British refused, however, despite the offer of local support and the estimation of many that this was in any case a relatively small expenditure (Onley 2004).

The British departure resulted in the near-forcible creation of the modern states of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. More significantly, it impelled an anxious United States to play a more active role in the region. At the height of the Cold War, America feared that the Soviet Union would use this vacuum to make incursions into the Persian Gulf – gaining its historically coveted 'warm water port' as well as access to the petroleum supplies of the region. The Soviet Union had helped briefly to establish communist republics in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan following World War II, and this was still fresh in the

memory of Washington. Therefore, the British departure ushered in the beginning of United States influence in the region. The most significant political development was the establishment of the so-called 'Twin Pillars' policy – Iran and Saudi Arabia serving as U.S. surrogates to prevent Soviet influence in the Persian Gulf and protect Gulf oil supplies (Beeman 2008, 18).

As a result of these new political realities, travel between nations became more difficult for Persian Gulf residents. Increased security in the Persian Gulf resulted in more scrutiny and documentation for the inhabitants of the region. Suddenly people had to have passports and work permits. Citizenship became an issue throughout the region. Property ownership rights – already made more problematic by the new citizenship laws starting in 1929 – were rendered even more complicated, since many families owned property in multiple locations throughout the Persian Gulf region. The Iranian families, long resident in the Trucial States were offered citizenship in the new United Arab Emirates at the time the nation was formed. Some accepted, but many chose to retain their Iranian citizenship, and later regretted this decision. Because families were spread out, many people became, by happenstance, citizens of the new nations where they happened to live when the new states were formed, even though their immediate families might have been dispersed throughout the Persian Gulf and may have retained their original citizenship without the knowledge of other family members. Citizenship had important consequences. A Kuwaiti 'citizen', for example, would have extensive rights to free medical care, education, and other social guarantees that a non-citizen would not enjoy. Even children of non-citizens born in Kuwait were not provided these rights, nor were the children of Kuwaiti mothers married to non-Kuwaiti fathers.

One of the great casualties of this period was the pearling industry. The industry had collapsed as a viable economic enterprise in the 1930s, but there were still traditional pearling operations on a very small local scale carried out until the time of the Iranian revolution (Beeman 1968). The combination of new political and economic realities throughout the region, with the rise in artificial pearl cultivation in East Asia, and a general decline in the popularity of pearls as jewellery and as tokens of economic value, completely eliminated the industry. It now lives only in memory and as an echo of a distant past.

4.3 The Iranian Revolution of 1978/1979 and After

The United States enmity with Iran that emerged following the Iranian revolution of 1978/1979 was an additional factor creating distance between Iran and the Arab States. Before the revolution, the United States was the political 'glue' that created common interest for Iran, Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Persian Gulf states. The Iranian revolution removed one of the 'Twin Pillars' of American Cold War policy, Iran (the other 'pillar' being Saudi Arabia, of course), from U.S. influence. 'Freed' from alliance with the United States, Iran felt empowered to pursue regional competition over territory in the the Persian Gulf. This included renewed claims by Iran over Bahrain, and intensified dispute with the UAE over the islands of Abu Musā, Greater Tunb (*Tonb-e Bozorg*) and Lesser Tunb (*Tonb-e Kučik*), which had first been opportunistically occupied by Iran in 1971 at the time of the British withdrawal from the region.[16] Many Iranians left Iran at the time of the revolution to Israel, Europe, the United States and other nations. For many the Persian Gulf states presented the easiest option, sparking a further emigration in large numbers to the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait.

Nevertheless, the revolution also introduced a new military dynamic into the region as Iran began to assert its political authority. The Iranian Navy became a major military force in the Persian Gulf, and as the United States engaged in military attacks against Iraq in the early 1990s and again in

16 The island of Abu Musā had been governed by Iran and Šārjah jointly since 1971, but Iran seized the island by force in 1991. Negotiations over Abu Musā and the other islands in 1992 failed, further exacerbating relations with the UAE. Of great interest for this discussion is the claim by the UAE that the islands were ruled by the Qawasim in the past and were therefore part of the UAE. Iran, in turn, claimed that the Qawasim were inhabitants of Iran, thus establishing the Iranian claim to the islands (Blake/Schofield 1988; Schofield 2016).

2003, a confrontational dynamic was established between the Iranians and Americans that continues today (Beeman 2008).

The eight-year long Iran-Iraq war (1980–1988) created further complications for Persian Gulf residents, since the air space over the Persian Gulf became a de-facto peripheral theatre of war. Iran's attacks on oil tankers in the Persian Gulf during the war were a particular source of contention between Iran and the Arab states. For citizens, divided loyalties between 'Arabs' and Iranians, Ši'a and Sunni Muslims, and split geographical identities were strained during this period.

Today, the basic complex-but-unified ethnic composition of the Persian Gulf is masked by international economic and travel processes. One very interesting development during the reign of Šāh Moḥammad Reżā Pahlavi was the development of Kiš (Qays) Island off the Iranian coast as a luxury resort. This took place late in his reign, shortly before the revolution of 1978/1979. Kiš is a beautiful historic island with luxurious beaches. I had the pleasure of visiting in 1967 long before it was developed as a resort. Kiš is a privileged resort area today, curiously continuing the mercantile culture of the Persian Gulf region of old, only with European and American four-star hotels and luxury goods available for purchase in high-end boutiques. Initially, it was a bastion for the upper class but following the revolution of 1978/1979 it was gradually discovered by the Iranian middle class as well, especially those who could not afford to travel to Europe or other more expensive locations. More to the point, when talking about Persian Gulf common identity, Kiš became the place where Iranians and Arabs from throughout the Persian Gulf could meet and intermingle. Even today, Kiš has direct air connections to every airport in Iran and airports throughout the Persian Gulf region, Iraq and Turkey. It has one other feature. Foreign nationals can visit the island for 14 days without an Iranian visa. Foreign residents of the UAE who needed to renew their visas by leaving the country and returning would often fly to Kiš for the day to accomplish this bureaucratic task.

Dubāi has likewise become an astonishingly successful tourist destination with extravagant amenities such as golf courses, artificial islands, a ski slope with artificial snow and the tallest building and tallest free-standing structure in the world, the Burj Ḵalifa. American entrepreneurs, such as Donald Trump, have invested millions in resort developments in Dubāi , and it is rapidly becoming an even more astonishing centre for international business as its westernised amenities proliferate. As a result, the native Persian Gulf residents have gradually become a hidden population. They are still very much present in the region, but major governmental and economic forces oriented to international commerce and tourism have overshadowed their presence. One can go to Dubāi and barely ever see a native of the Persian Gulf, although the hardy Qasimi family and the Lāris, Bastakis, and Garašis still remain prominent in local political and economic life.

4.4 21st Century Global Politics

In the 21st cent. AD the development of the complete concretised state system in the Persian Gulf which began in the 1970s with the independence of the British Protected States has been fully established. The central governments of Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, and Kuwait carefully established states on an equal international footing with all the accoutrements – embassies, airlines, national media, news services and of course foreign relations. In recent years the Arab states have risen in popular public consciousness to become widely recognised.

The United States is arguably the most influential non-regional power in the Persian Gulf today. It has played a serious role in Persian Gulf state-to-state relations. The Islamic Republic of Iran following the Iranian revolution became almost instantly estranged from its former alliance with the United States. The American 'hostage crisis' of 1979–1980, where Iranian students occupied the American Embassy in Tehrān for 444 days to protest American admission of the deposed Šāh to American soil, precipitated hostility between the nations that has not healed down to the present day. Added to American anger over the hostage crisis has been American anger at Iran's public hostility toward Israel. Gradually, the United States

worked to befriend the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, and to isolate Iran by convincing the šaiḵly rulers and the kings of Saudi Arabia that Iran was an existential danger to them.

The Iran-Iraq war (1980–1988) was also a factor in reshaping political alliances in the Persian Gulf. Although the United States claimed neutrality in the war, in fact, it ‘tilted’ toward Iraq when Iran appeared to be winning. One incident over the Persian Gulf that has become infamous was the downing of Iran Air Flight 655 *en route* from Tehrān to Dubāi via Bandar ʿAbbās. The plane was shot down by U.S. forces on July 3, 1988, with a missile fired from the U.S. Navy cruiser Vincennes. The United States has never apologised for the incident, and in fact blamed Iran for negligence in identifying the flight.

Added to this enmity, in 2003 during the Presidency of George W. Bush, the United States became convinced that Iran was developing a nuclear weapon. In fact, Iran had been developing nuclear power, including uranium enrichment at the urging of the United States since the administration of President Eisenhower in the 1950s. Moreover, Iran had been bound by the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to which nearly all world nations are signatories that prevented Iran from developing nuclear weaponry. Nevertheless, the United States spearheaded severe economic sanctions against Iran to try and curtail its development of nuclear technology. President Barak Obama and his administration were able to reach an agreement with Iran and five other nations (Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China) in 2015. Known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, it required Iran to cut back its nuclear technology development and allow international inspections in return for relief of economic sanctions. President Donald Trump, elected in 2016 disapproved of the agreement and withdrew the United States unilaterally and reimposed not only the original sanctions, but imposed new ones. At this writing the JCPOA is largely suspended. Iran is economically hemmed in, largely unable to engage in foreign trade including oil sales. This has created great tension in the Persian Gulf region, and further estrangement between Iran and the Arab states.

5 Unifying Forces

Despite the global political forces that continue to work against unification of culture and society in the Persian Gulf region, unifying factors still remain strong, echoing the patterns of centuries past. Transportation between the ports of the Persian Gulf remains highly robust, both by sea, and now by air. Electronic communication in the form of the internet, television, radio, and cellular telephone technology makes interpersonal contact and travel extremely easy.

5.1 Air Routes Supplement Sea Routes

Although the former sea routes have not been completely replaced, they have largely been supplanted by air transport throughout the Persian Gulf region. The routes between the Arabian Peninsula and Iran form an air bridge that replaces or replicates much of the former boat traffic. Although the air traffic has diminished somewhat, clear connections between the Southern Iranian port cities and those on the Arabian littoral are still active.

One of the most interesting aspects of this traffic is the continued role played by the city of Širāz as an important cultural capital for the Persian Gulf region, as seen in fig. 2 and fig. 3. For many years residents of the Gulf have used Širāz as a summer residence. Even today, citizens from throughout the Arabian Peninsula and the Iranian Gulf littoral own land and houses in Širāz and maintain parts of their family there. It has been a longstanding pattern for a second or third wife to live in Širāz with her children, while the first wife lives in Dubai or Bahrain. Below is an air chart of flights to and from Širāz from before the Iranian Revolution. Some routes have been cut back, but basically all roads lead to Širāz from the Persian Gulf.

The importance of Lār as an ‘anchor’ for multilocational families in the Persian Gulf is emphasised by the number of direct international air connection services between Lār and the UAE as seen in fig. 3. Bandar ʿAbbās also has many of these connections.

Fig. 2. Air routes to and from Širāz to the Persian Gulf and other locations 2023 (map by author).

Fig. 3. Air routes from Lār to Kuwait, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Dubāi and Šārjah 2023 (map by author).

Kiš Island still remains an important resort both for Iranians and Arabs in the Persian Gulf. New industrial connections in the gigantic gas field that is shared by Iran and Qatar and is a major source of income for both nations have also spurred transportation links. The petrochemical industrial city of ʿAsaluyeh in Iran between Bandar Lengeh and Bušehr has an international airport, the Persian Gulf Airport (IATA designation code PGU) which offers flights to several Iranian cities as well as Dubāi and charter flights to Doha.

5.2 ḵaliji Music – A Unifying Cultural Force

In recent years a new phenomenon has begun to be seen in the Persian Gulf Region, the emergence of *ḵaliji* music, mentioned above. This distinct popular musical form combines Arabic, Persian, African and Indian influences in a perfect melding of cultural influences. It serves as one source of cultural unity for the entire Persian Gulf region. One of the principal figures in this modern pop phenomenon is the Saudi Arabian singer Mohammad Abdo (Mohammad Abdu), who has found unprecedented popularity in the Arab and Persian world through albums such as 'Masa' al ḵeyr' (Good Night) and 'Al āmāken' (The Places). Singers from other regions, such as Lebanon, have started singing with a *ḵaliji* accent. Many websites now have sections devoted exclusively to *ḵaliji* Music and its stars (Saeed 2012). Today there are hundreds of artists worldwide who are identified with *ḵaliji* music. It is notable, however, that Iranian artists creating music in this genre, though hugely popular in the region, do not publicly identify their music as *ḵaliji*.[17]

It should be noted that Balouči music is also widespread throughout the Persian Gulf region, and is found in every major city. George H. Mürer's extensive study of this phenomenon is perhaps the first comprehensive research into this artistic tradition (Jahani 2014; Mürer 2020).

5.3 Three Persian Gulf Families

As mentioned earlier in this discussion, Persian Gulf families have established themselves in a wide network of residency throughout both Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. James Onley studied a 19th cent. AD family 'the Safar family of Hillah, Baṣrah, Bušehr (Bushire), Širāz, Manamah, Muscaṭ, Mocha (al-Mukha), Ḥudaydah and Bombay' (Onley 2004, 60). Shahnaz Nadjmabadi provides excellent sketches of families and residents today living in the region around Bandar Lengeh and the island of Lārak with ties across the Persian Gulf (Nadjmabadi 2009; 2010; 2021). It is noteworthy how much of the traditional hybrid Persian Gulf culture is preserved in the everyday way of life of these families. The communities she describes exhibit the same creolised culture noted by Pelly, and analysed by Louise Sweet as mentioned earlier.

17 The general disapproval of popular music traditions from conservative religious leaders in Iran and elsewhere is a limiting factor in the ability of musical artists to promulgate their work (Beeman 2010; 2007; 2011).

I would like to add to this discussion by presenting material on several families whom I encountered in my own past research on the Persian Gulf region. Below I provide a sketch of how they live and something of their background, emphasising the characteristics that remain alive in *ḵaliji* culture today.

5.3.1 The Kermati Family

The Kermatis come from a village around Širāz. Assadollāh, the father, is the son of a settled Qašqā'i chief. His wife comes from Bušehr. His two sons have moved to the Persian Gulf coast to work in the petrochemical industry. One is living in Bušehr, and the other near Ahwāz. One of his daughters has married an Iranian citizen who resettled in Dubāi after the revolution. Two of his other daughters are married locally around Širāz.

The son living in Bušehr married a woman whose mother came from Bahrain, and whose father's family was from Bandar-e Genāveh north of Bušehr. Earlier in the 20th cent. AD, his family had boats and travelled back and forth between Bušehr and Bahrain. The Kermatis in Širāz live in a traditional modern Iranian house, steel framed with mud brick and plaster walls. They have a sitting room for guests, a courtyard with a pool and garden and other rooms used both for sleeping and eating. All the married members of the family are monogamous.

5.3.2 The Hamadi (Khamadi) Family

The Hamadis come originally from Rostok, a large inland town northwest of Bandar-e Lengeh, and northeast of Bandar-e Maqam. I first met one of the young brothers of the family, Suleimān, on Lāvān (Sheykh Sho'eyb) Island, where he had set up shop as a merchant. He had four other brothers: one living in Dubāi; one in Rostok, north of Bandar Lengeh; one in Kuwait, where he was working in the oil industry; and one in Bandar ʿAbbās. Some of his uncles called themselves 'Ḵamadi', since family names only became required by the government during the reign of Reżā Šāh. Suleiman had a wife on Lāvān Island, and a temporary contractual wife (*siḡeh*) in Širāz.[18] However, he was a Sunni Muslim. I asked him how he was able to contract a *siḡeh* relationship if he was Sunni, and he was quite matter of fact: 'nobody ever asked', he said. His brother in Bandar ʿAbbās had two wives – one in Bandar ʿAbbās, and one in Rostok. The brother in Rostok was monogamous and the brother in Kuwait was unmarried but planning to marry his cousin. Over the years Suleimān had children by both his 'aqd' or 'official' wife under Islamic law[19] and his *siḡeh* or contractual wife, to whom he remained surprisingly faithful. Suleimān was a regular traveller to Šārjah and Dubāi by boat. His everyday dress on Lāvān Island was western, but he sometimes wore a *dišdāša* within his household. However, when traveling to Dubāi or Šārjah, he would adopt full and rather elegant Arab dress. In recent years he himself has stopped traveling, and began sending his 20 and 22-year-old sons, who still would take wheat, fresh produce and other agricultural products from Bandar-e Maqam, Bandar-e Chiru and Bandar-e Lengeh to the United Arab Emirates. Suleimān lived in a compound with a separate *madhaf* (formal guest reception room). He is fully bilingual in Arabic and Persian. He speaks to his wife most often in Arabic, and to his sons most often in Persian since they were educated in Iranian schools. However, his sons are also fluent Arabic speakers, although they confess that they don't read or write Arabic very well.

5.3.3 The Ḵalifeh Family

The al-Ḵalifeh family lives in Dubāi. The patriarch of the family, Musā, claims to be 'pure Arab', but traces his ancestry to the area around Bandar-e Lengeh and Bandar ʿAbbās. His sons are predominantly Arabic speakers, but also know enough Persian to carry out a social conversation. His three sons all live in Dubāi in the large family

18 Contractual wives, called *siḡeh* or *muta'* wives are exclusively a Ši'a phenomenon, although Ši'a theologians justify the practice in Qur'ānic scripture and inferred historical precedent from known Islamic leaders. The institution is decried by Sunnis. The contract can be as short as one minute, and as long as 99 years, and is outside of the four 'official' wives allowed under Islamic law. The institution has been described masterfully by Shahla Haeri 1989.

19 See footnote 12.

compound. Each son with his family has a quarter to themselves. The oldest, who is now over 40, has two wives, each of which has her own rooms at opposite ends of the compound. The wives appear to be on friendly terms, and are distantly related both to each other and to their husband. The middle son married late, in his 30s, to a maternal cousin, and the youngest married a girl who was the sister of a good male school friend. Three of Musā's four daughters are married to men from the UAE, but the fourth is married to an Iranian shopkeeper in Širāz who saw her when she was there on vacation and claims to have 'instantly' fallen in love with her. There was some discomfort in allowing the marriage, but the family accepted their new 'bridegroom' and commutes freely between Širāz and Dubāi. The Ḳalifeh men all eat together for the main meal of the day, though they take breakfast with their wives and children, and switch between eating something in the evening with their father in the central *madhaf* and with their wives and children. The children – all cousins – are everywhere. To an outside observer it is unclear to whom they belong. They are as likely to be hugged and petted by their uncles and aunts as by their parents. The Ḳalifehs maintain a family residence in Širāz in Qaṣr-ol-Dašt, the garden area of the city on the west side. They travel there regularly throughout the summer and fall, and with so many flights to Širāz from Dubāi, it is very easy. Although the men wear the *dišdāša* in Dubāi, they switch to trousers and shirts in Širāz. Two of the sons and the father somehow have Iranian passports as well as their UAE passports. The family are all merchants. They have retail enterprises throughout the UAE and they import a variety of things – largely building and construction materials from around the Persian Gulf and even from India and Europe. The middle son carried the burden of the business for many years, traveling extensively, which may explain why he married relatively late in life.

5.3.4 Comparing the Three Persian Gulf Families

As can be seen by the description above, these three contemporary families mirror the distributed residence pattern noted by Onley with the

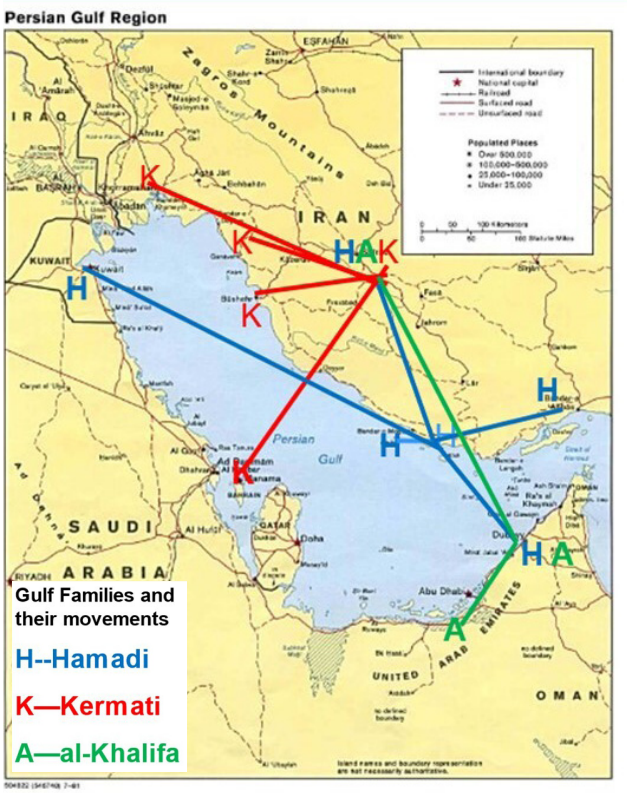

Fig. 4. Three Persian Gulf families and their residence patterns (map by author).

Ṣafar family of the 19th cent., as seen in the map below (*fig. 4*).

Comparing these three families as seen in fig. 4, we see that they all have a presence that encompasses the entire Persian Gulf region, but their patterns of living are slightly different. The Kermatis live in a typical Iranian fashion. They have married outside of their family. They are monogamous, and they speak Persian. Still, they live partly on the Persian Gulf littoral, and have connections throughout the region. The Hamadis are a mix of Arabic and Persian/Iranian cultural patterns. They are not only bilingual, but also heavily bi-cultural. In some ways they are the most *ḳaliji* of the three families. The al-Ḳalifeh family is the most Arabised of the three families. They speak Arabic, have more Arabian family interaction and marriage patterns than the other families, but they still maintain important cultural ties with Iran, and retain the ability to communicate in Persian.

Thus, it is possible to also look at these three families along a continuum from 'more Persianised' to 'more Arabised' as in the chart below (*fig. 5*).

Fig. 5. Persian Gulf families on the Iranian/Arabic continuum (illustration by author).

It might be possible to do a similar chart for Balouči families living in the Persian Gulf where it would be possible to see the degree to which their lifestyles were influenced by Iranian and Arabic cultural factors as seen in fig. 5. Al Ameeri, Nicolini and Mürer all detail Balouči families who exhibit a similar mix of cultural and linguistic practice throughout the Persian Gulf (Jahani 1999; Al Ameeri 2003; Mürer 2020; Nicolini 2021).

6 Conclusion – Unimagined Community – The Meaning of Contemporary Persian Gulf Cultural Identity

Coming down to the present day, we see that a political and technical superstructure now exists throughout the Persian Gulf region that was not present even 60 years ago. This superstructure masks the multi-cultural characteristics of the population of the region, its ethnic composition and the continued interconnections that exist between its citizens. Even before 1971 and the British withdrawal from the region, there was a fluidity and freedom in commerce and travel that allowed people in highly dispersed areas to still maintain a sense of unity with their families, their economic networks and their cultural interests and affinities.

It is this new superstructure with national and political divisions that has, in my view, prevented the people of the region from truly coalescing into an 'imagined community'. They remain 'unimagined' – alike and yet not fully identifying with each other. The distinction between ''Arab' and ''Ajam' is still maintained and has become more pronounced in people's minds despite long co-residence, multilingualism and intermarriage.

It is my belief/contention that much of our academic understanding of the history of the Persian Gulf region has revolved around the study of international-level governmental conflict. However, at the same time, the local-level population of the region has become accustomed to living in a mixed culture, allowing them a seamless flow between Arabian, Persian/Iranian and Balouči cultural spheres.

By contrast, both Iranians and Arabs who live in inland areas have very strong feelings about the other populations that border on prejudice. For example, most citizens of Riyadh do not speak Persian or Balouči, and many would have concerns about their children marrying Iranians or Balouči. Likewise, Tehrani citizens do not, by and large, speak Arabic and would also not welcome their children marrying Arabs (although intermarriage between Iranians and Arabs in Širāz is definitely more common).

I can say with some certainty that the fluidity of identity in the Persian Gulf has been present throughout recorded history. Understanding that this is the natural view of the ordinary people who live in the region helps explain why the battle on the part of forces outside the Persian Gulf region to control and shape their identities can be so fierce. The Šia-Sunni division of the population in the region makes the matter yet more complicated. This religious division has been longstanding, as the earlier account in this paper by Lewis Pelly and the research by Shahnaz Nadjmabadi show (Pelly 1864; Nadjmabadi 2009; 2010; 2021). Nevertheless, historically the Šia and Sunni communities in the Persian Gulf have lived side-by-side with little strife as contrasted with some other areas of the Islamic world. In today's heated political climate where increasing Šia power in the region is causing consternation at the state level, the relatively peaceful co-existence in the Persian Gulf that may have prevailed in earlier times two centuries ago has gradually come under duress. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has proved to be a strong alliance of states, although there are tensions even within this cooperative body. Although there has been some cooperation between Iran,

Oman and Qatar, and strong economic ties between Iran and the UAE, the relations remain fluid and uncertain. Iran has been accused of actual violent action against Saudi Arabia, but the relations between the two states have also seen ebbs and flows of good will.

The rise of the conservative Salafi Islamic movement throughout the Middle East in recent decades, engendering movements such as Al-Qāeda and the Tālibān, which disapprove of Ši'ism, has further complicated the relations between these religious communities. Recent rapprochement between the State of Israel and some of the Arab States has introduced a further source of political tension given the disapproval of Iran's leaders of Israeli politics.

It would certainly be damaging to the patterns of interaction, trade and family structure to enforce any more restrictive border or trade controls throughout the Persian Gulf. In many ways the strength of the economy and social fabric of the region depends on this freedom of interchange, which remains robust. Iran and the UAE are effectively co-dependent economically. The UAE imports enormous amounts of Iranian goods annually and has provided an economic lifeline to Iranian commercial activity suffering under U.S. economic sanctions. With no United States embassy in Iran, the American consulate in Dubāi has become the de-facto American consulate for many Iranians seeking visas or other business with the United States.[20]

For this reason, as an anthropologist I am comfortable embracing the analytic idea of a *ḵaliji* unified identity and way of life is also a source of strength for both Iran and the Arab nations of the Peninsula as a reflection of the multicultural reality of the region. However, I must recognise that the community remains 'unimagined' by its residents. It is my hope that increased self-recognition of the communalities that exist among the peoples of the Persian Gulf will grow and become an important tool in improving regional relationships and insuring peace in the region.

William O. Beeman
University of Minnesota
Department of Anthropology
wbeeman@umn.edu

20 The Swiss Embassy in Tehran handles United States affairs in Iran in the absence of formal United States-Iranian diplomatic relations, but the Swiss Embassy cannot issue visas or conduct other substantive business between the two countries. The Pakistani Embassy in Washington handles Iranian affairs in the United States. By contrast, the Iranian Affairs Section of the Pakistani Embassy is able to issue visas.

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Beatrice Nicolini

Revisiting Identities and Cultural Influences in the Indian Ocean

Asian Communities Between Land and Sea in the 1800s

Keywords: Indian Ocean, Asian migrating communities, Persian Gulf, East Africa, 19th century, slave trade, European powers

Summary

The present study focuses on the interactions and cultural, historical and political influences across the Indian Ocean, specifically South-Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Swahili Coasts of East Africa during the 19th cent. AD. The objective of this study is to reassess the impact of movements and migration patterns on identities and cultural influences during the economies and societies of that time. Existing literature on this subject, derived from both Afro-Asian and Western archival sources, has been limited. For example, the life and experiences of the Balouč in the Persian Gulf and in East Africa during the 1800s have often been examined as a homogeneous and unchanging presence, frequently subordinated to Arab political leadership. It has long been believed that Asian groups primarily sailed to the Persian Gulf and East Africa between the 18th and 19th cent. AD as defensive military squads, overlooking the crucial role played by Asian communities in the Indian Ocean economy. To comprehensively analyse the identities and cultural influences in the Indian Ocean during the 19th cent. AD, it is essential to consider the historical context that shaped these dynamics. This era was characterised by significant economic and social transformations, which led to increased movement and migration across the liquid and interconnected Indian Ocean region. Understanding the broader historical framework provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of cultural exchanges and the complexities of identity formation during this period. In relation to Asian communities in the Indian Ocean, diverse Asian communities, including but not limited to the Balouč, played a decisive role in shaping the social, economic and cultural landscape. These communities contributed to the rich tapestry of identities by bringing with them their unique traditions, languages and customs as they engaged with the many different, but deeply interlinked, Indian Ocean land and coastal regions.

Revisiting Identities and Cultural Influences Among Asian Communities in the Indian Ocean

This short study aims to revisit the multifarious roles played by Asian communities and their changing positions within the East African economy, challenging the prevailing notion that their presence was solely limited to defensive military purposes. With the object of re-evaluating Balouč presence in the Persian Gulf as well as in East Africa, previous scholarship has often portrayed the Balouč presence in the Persian Gulf and in East Africa during the 1800s as monolithic and subservient to Arab political leadership. It is important therefore to rectify this oversimplification by critically examining the diverse experiences and contributions of the Balouč community. By drawing upon Afro-Asian and Western archival sources, a more nuanced understanding of their lives and interactions in East Africa can be achieved, shedding light on their agency and distinct cultural identity. With regards to Asian communities and

the Indian Ocean economy, contrary to the prevailing belief that Asian groups primarily served as defence military squads, their role in the East African economy was significant. This study seeks to highlight the multifaceted roles played by Asian communities in various economic sectors, including trade, agriculture and entrepreneurship. By exploring the economic contributions and interactions of Asian communities, a comprehensive understanding of their impact on the social and cultural fabric of the Persian Gulf and of East Africa in the 19th cent. AD can be attained. By challenging existing monolithic narratives, this research seeks to shed light on the intricate and complex web of interactions and cultural exchanges that shaped the Indian Ocean region during this deeply transformative era. The Indian Ocean region has long served as a melting pot of diverse cultures, where identities have been shaped and influenced by the dynamic interplay between land and sea. This study aims to delve into the historical context of the 1800s and explore the numerous connections between Asian communities in the Indian Ocean, focusing on their identities that took place. By examining the multifaceted interactions within this vibrant maritime sphere, a deeper understanding of the complex tapestry of identities that emerged during this pivotal period may be gained. Consequently, to comprehend the identities and cultural influences in the Indian Ocean during the 1800s, it is crucial to examine the historical backdrop that set the stage for these developments. The 19th cent. AD witnessed significant transformations, such as colonial expansion, the growth of trade networks and the movement of people across the Indian Ocean. These socio-political and economic changes played a crucial role in shaping the identities of Asian communities, as they grappled with new forms of power dynamics and engaged in cross-cultural encounters. Within the Indian Ocean region, Asian communities, comprising diverse ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, formed the backbone of the cultural fabric. These communities carried with them their unique traditions, customs and practices as they traversed the maritime routes. They negotiated their identities in the context of this fluid environment, where multiple cultural influences converged.

The Indian Ocean, functioning as a connective thread, facilitated extensive cultural exchanges among Asian communities. Trade networks not only fuelled economic growth but also catalysed the exchange of ideas, languages and artistic expressions. These interactions created a rich tapestry of cultural borrowings, hybrid identities and new artistic forms that emerged because of cross-pollination between different Asian communities. Against the backdrop of cultural exchanges, Asian communities in the Indian Ocean underwent a complex process of identity formation. The negotiation of identities involved various factors, including religion, language, ethnicity and social status. Communities often embraced and adapted aspects of different cultures, creating unique syncretic identities that reflected the intricacies of their interactions and experiences within this maritime domain. Moreover, colonial powers of the epoch, such as the British and the French, exerted a profound influence on the identities of Asian communities in the Indian Ocean (Welsch 2023). Their presence brought about significant economic, social and cultural changes, as well as power imbalances within the region. The colonial encounter reshaped existing identities, as communities responded and reacted to the imposition of new structures, ideas and norms.

19th Century Historical and Political Framework

We would like to introduce this interesting and quite neglected subject and explain why we believe rereading about the many narratives about Asian communities in 19th cent. AD Indian Ocean is important. During the first half of the 19th cent. AD Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id (1791–1856) – a revolutionary merchant-prince of Muscat and Zanzibar – created a great and powerful mercantile empire in the Indian Ocean. Through a short examination of the relationships between Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id and Europe, we would like to revisit the working hypothesis which defined him a revolutionary merchant-prince or whether he was simply a pawn within the framework of European rivalries in the 'Oriental' seas. The following portrait of Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al

Bu Sa'id induces the revision of the role effectively played by this Arab prince in his relationships with European powers of the epoch. When Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id rose to power in Muscat in 1804–1806, he was fifteen years old, he had few friends and many enemies, the prosperity built by his father was ended and he soon understood that the only possible richness for himself and for his country was the sea (Lorimer 1915, 440–469; Ruete 1929; Farsi 1986; Maurizi [1819] 1984). He soon revealed himself as a keen minded and clever sovereign; in fact, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id saw the importance of the expansion of the East African trade; he considered important as well the creation of an Omani merchant fleet for patrolling the East African trading ports.[1] But, to arm a fleet strong enough to fight against his enemies in Arabia, he needed a substantial financial basis, and the necessary revenues came from East Africa. His modernity was characterised by a great mobility among three littorals: Asia, Arabia and Africa; moreover, the unsettled state of his power both in Muscat and in East Africa enabled him to open a new phase of history in the Indian Ocean, in that microcosmic world that would soon become universal. At the time of his accession to power in Oman, the French menace to British India led to the involvement of the Al Bu Sa'id of Oman within European rivalry in the Indian Ocean. This led to the Treaty of 12th October 1798 between his father, Sultān bin Ahmad Al Bu Sa'id (1792–1804), and Great Britain where Oman accepted to exclude the French from its ports (Hurewitz 1956, 64). The result was that the French started to attack Omani ships in the Indian Ocean. Napoleon, after Austerlitz, renewed his 'Oriental' policy, which led to the signing of the Treaty of Finkenstein with Peršiā – 4th May 1807 – and to a new agreement with Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id (Hurewitz 1956, 77).

In June 1807, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id dispatched one of his agents, Majid bin Ḵalfān, to the Île de France with the objective of reestablishing political relations and, most importantly, the valuable commercial ties with the French. Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id, asserting the neutrality of his country, agreed to the appointment of a French Consul, M. Dallons, in Muscat. On 16th June 1807, he entered a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with General René Decaen, the Governor of Île de France. Under this treaty, France enjoyed privileges as the most favoured nation in Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id's East African territories, as the French were highly esteemed in Zanzibar from a trade perspective (Coupland 1938, 116). Additionally, reports had reached Bombay regarding Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id's renewed openness to French advances, as the shores of the Indian Ocean served as a vast network of information. Jonathan Duncan, Governor of Bombay, was instructed from London not to involve Britain in direct interventions in the internal affairs of the 'Oriental' potentates. Consequently, he decided to use the same policy adopted by John Malcolm, political agent in the Persian Gulf, with the father of Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id and gave to the Omani ruler the following warning: the consequences of his political choices in favour of the French would mean a much less warm welcome to Omani ships in the Anglo-Indian ports. And, from then on, any French presence in the Persian Gulf would be considered as a hostile presence and, consequently, attacked (*fig. 1*).

As stated above, the new architecture developed by Napoleon, based on new plans of invasion of British India, included the enforcement of the strategic base of Île de France as a centre against British trading routes to India, and as a maritime base to a land invasion through Peršiā and Baloučestān, with the alliance of Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id (Miles [1919] 1966, 310 f.). On 27th January 1807, the Governor of Île de France met Napoleon in Paris, where he received a warm welcome. Napoleon subsequently sent him back to the island with nine man-of-war, eleven vessels, and 4600 soldiers. In October of the same year, three additional ships and 12,000 soldiers were added to the French forces. During this period, the French supplied Muscat with weapons and incited acts of piracy against British East Indiamen. These acts of piracy reached an intolerable level for the East India Company, leading Calcutta to decide

1 The word Oman was used by Europeans to describe southeastern Arabia that lies to the east of the sands of the Rub'al Khali.

Fig. 1. Historical map of Baloučestān (map by Sir Henry Pottinger, Pottinger 1816, 3, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_Map_of_Beloochistan_%26_Sinde.jpg>).

that it was time to 'eradicate the thorn' of Île de France from British interests. In July 1807, Lord Gilbert Minto was appointed as the Governor General of India. Minto, an advocate of Enlightenment ideals and a Whig, enjoyed support from both the Tories and the Directors of the East India Company. His aim extended beyond countering Napoleon's power; it was to destroy it (Ingram 1992). Recognising that the East African theatre was interconnected with other regions of the Indian Ocean, Minto devised a detailed plan that included a comprehensive assessment of the possibilities for attacking Île de France (Bourbon) (Coupland 1938, 126). The British navy lacked nautical charts of the Mascarene islands, and this crucial information was obtained from the Portuguese, who were loyal allies of the British at that critical moment. The Portuguese were fully aware of the plans against the French and wholeheartedly supported the British decision to occupy these two islands. Intelligence from the East India Company suggested that the best approach for attacking Île de France (Bourbon) would be through a surprise assault (Jackson Haight 1966, 161). In the summer of 1810, without waiting for official confirmation from London, 4000 soldiers departed from the Rodriguez islands and successfully conquered Bourbon and Île de France in July.[2] Île de France was subsequently renamed Mauritius, reclaiming its ancient Dutch name (Beachey 1976, 41). The year 1810 marked the end of an era and the dawn of a new one – a Eurocentric one – for the Indian Ocean region (Jackson Haight 1966).

The Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean

Returning to Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id of Oman, on 21st March 1821, the Duke of Gloucester

2 B.M. Add. 37292, Wellesley Papers, Vol. XIX, Proclamation in the Name of His Majesty George III, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, St. Denis, July the 18th, 1810.

sent a Memorandum to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, urging them to use their influential mediation with the ruler of Muscat to completely abolish the slave trade. Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id was expected to cooperate with Britain by prohibiting the sale of slaves to any Christian nation (Gray 1962, 232). Christian nations could not trade slaves on their ships directed to Christian countries. Still, he could not ban the export of slaves to Muslim states. On 4th April 1821, Captain Fairfax Moresby[3] was instructed by the Governor of Mauritius, Robert Farquhar, to report on the slave trade conducted by the French between Zanzibar and Bourbon. Moresby reported that 'the French are guilty of the most atrocious crimes in the neighbourhood of Zanzibar by capturing Negroes and murdering those who resisted'.[4] On 10th May 1821, Farquhar wrote to Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id, informing him that French vessels had departed from Zanzibar with 400 slaves destined for Bourbon (Sheriff 1987, 47). The dispatches written by Farquhar, as well as those written by Moresby, were probably intentionally exaggerated to draw attention and, subsequently, military intervention from the British Government. The losses suffered by Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id due to the abolition of slavery could have been as well exaggerated.[5]

On 1st October 1821, Farquhar informed the Marquee of Hastings in Calcutta that it was necessary to persuade Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id to sign a new agreement, with the scope of convincing him to exercise his influence on his slave merchants, and most of all, 'gain the cooperation of the Native Chiefs in forcing France also to abandon the slave traffic'.[6] During the fall of 1821, after a close correspondence between Farquhar in Mauritius and Montstuart Elphinstone (1819–1827), succeeded to Napean as Governor General of Bombay, a draft treaty was prepared with the object of bending Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id to British policy. In December 1821 the ruler of Oman had to accept a British representative of the Company. Following this decision, he received compliments from Farquhar and from Elphinstone for his 'enlightened' policy (Beachey 1976, 43).

The first article of the Moresby Treaty of 1822 prohibited the slave trade to all Christians of all nations,[7] and defined a corridor in the Indian Ocean where British patrolling would have been effective: the Moresby line started from Cape Delgado in the south, til the border with Mozambique,[8] passing along the East African littoral, then deviating in direction of India at a distance of about 60 miles east from Socotra island, and reaching the western Indian port of Diu. An additional requisition to the treaty was exposing that the *quid pro quo* from the collaboration offered by Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id to the banning of the slave trade would have been the formal acceptance of his full sovereignty and authority over the waters of the East African shores.[9]

On 27th August 1822, Moresby visited Muscat and invoked the privileged relationships of amity, commerce and alliance between Britain and Oman to convince Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id to sign a treaty composed of six articles, carrying significant political implications for both countries. From Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id's perspective, the slave trade was considered a social and economic necessity that had to be tolerated, with potential losses estimated to be around 40,000–50,000 Maria Theresa thalers per year. On the other hand, the very political existence of the

3 Fairfax Moresby was Senior Officer in Mauritius; he was very much involved in the fight against slave trade and piracy in the Indian Ocean. In 1837, weakened by the tropical climate, he was transferred to the Mediterranean Sea, and in 1862 was appointed Admiral (Graham 1967, 198).

4 B.M. Add. 41265, Clarkson Papers, Letter from Capt. Senior Officer F. Moresby to Gov. Comm. in Chief of Mauritius, Farquhar, 4th April 1821.

5 B.M. Add. 13772, Wellesley Papers, Series I, 5th November 1800-18, Private Secret.

6 B.M. Add. 41265, Clarkson Papers, To Marquis of Hastings, Gov. Gen. of India, 1st October 1821, from Gov. Comm. in Chief of Mauritius Farquhar.

7 The original text quotes the date of 8th September 1822. I.O.R. V/23/217/24, Treaties and Engagements concluded between Her Britannic Majesty and His Highness the Imaum of Muskat and between the Hon.ble East India Company and His Highness, 1799 to 1846; the reprint quotes the date of the sign: 4th September. Aitchison 1929, 245; Coupland 1938, 212, maintained that the treaty was signed on 22nd September; see also P.P. Slave Trade Series, 361, Vol. XXV, Correspondence with Said bin Sultān concerning the Moresby Treaty of 1822; Beachey 1976, 103–107.

8 The border between the Omani dominions in East Africa and Portuguese Mozambique was never completely defined during the 19th cent. AD (Hoffman 2023).

9 Particulars of Additional Requisition, Moresby Treaty in Beachey 1976, 106.

Fig. 2. The main routes used by Balouč to travel to East Africa (source: Perry Castaneda Map Collection).

Al Bu Sa'id in Arabia and East Africa now rested in British hands, and the continuation of Omani trade in the East India Company's ports was deemed an acceptable compromise.

Violations of the Moresby Treaty within this defined line would result in the immediate confiscation of ships and the same penalty applied to acts of piracy: 'death without benefit of clergy'.[10]

It is true that the Moresby Treaty concealed several ambiguities, leading to significant contradictions between the English version and its official Arabic translation made in Bombay. For instance:

(a) The English text stipulated penalties that would take effect four months after the signing of the treaty, specifically starting from January 1823. This clause was entirely omitted in the Arab version.

(b) According to the English text, since the waters of the East African littoral fell under the sovereignty of Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id, the responsibility for implementing the penalties rested entirely within his jurisdiction. The Arab translation assigned this challenging task to the British navy (Beachey 1976, 223 f.).

The Moresby Treaty signified the territorial recognition of Al Bu Sa'id's dominions as a substantial concession in exchange for the Omani commitment to banning the slave trade. This constituted an important political 'revolution' in the Indian Ocean. Nonetheless, its true significance lay in securing British control over maritime routes to India, gaining the support of British public opinion against the slave trade, and ultimately transforming Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id from an 'absentee ruler' into a stable and dependable political sovereign.

Conversely, the major political advantage for the Al Bu Sa'id Sultān was the official recognition of his – new – dominions, particularly in the face of local adversaries. Regarding slavery, the boundary line from Cape Delgado to the Peršiān Coast left the main channels of Omani commerce intact (Graham 1967, 200).

The British Government was resolute in its determination to halt the slave trafficking conducted by the French in the Indian Ocean and to end the long-standing practice of procuring young Indian girls for the Al Bu Sa'id. The Moresby Treaty proved to be ineffective as the slave trade persisted on neutral vessels flying the Omani red flag.

At the beginning of 1829, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id made the decision to relocate his court composed also by Balouč bodyguards from Muscat to Zanzibar, where he commissioned the construction of a magnificent palace in Mntoni, approximately three miles from Zanzibar town (*fig. 2*).

This decision marked the culmination of a series of events triggered by four equally significant factors:

a) the Moresby Treaty of 1822 with Britain;
b) the gradual political and financial decline of the Al Bu Sa'id in the ports of the Persian Gulf;
c) the Owen episode in Mombasa and the defeat inflicted by Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id upon the Mazrui (Mazaria) along the East African coasts;[11]

10 Penalty confirmed by the Consolidating Act of 1824 (Beachey 1976, 268).

11 Captain W. F. Owen's expedition had been dispatched only because accurate maps of East African waters were

d) the new commercial and financial expansion of Zanzibar Island.

After 1826, the Omani ruler realised that he could not rely on British military support in his personal struggles in Arabia and East Africa. Between 1827 and 1828, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id suffered defeats in Basra and Bahrain. He asked for a permanent political agent from the Government of the Great Company to advise him daily on the best political line (Bhacker 1992, 110–113).

The Charter Act of 1833 abolished the commercial privileges of the East India Company, except for those related to salt and opium, resulting in the loss of the Company's monopoly in the Indian Ocean. Yet, on 1st January 1823 Farquhar defined the Moresby Treaty as a 'successful result of those measures of impressing upon the Imaum the solid advantages which he must expect to derive from the continuance of the friendship and protection of Great Britain'.[12]

In response to the new political landscape, Lord Palmerston (1784–1865) at the Foreign Office undertook a revision of Britain's strategic security in the Indian Ocean, starting in 1839. The British political interventions, such as the capture of the island of Socotra in 1834 and the conquest of Aden in 1839, were driven by the emerging European rivalries.

Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id remained an important pawn in the Great Game. In this context, the Anglo-Indian Government pursued two diplomatic interventions. On 17th December 1839, Lieutenant Hennel, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, secured the signing of three additional articles to supplement the Moresby Treaty of 1822 with the Al Bu Sa'id Sultān in Muscat.[13] Article 1 established an additional line for patrolling the slave trade, extending from Cape Delgado to Pasni, an Omani enclave in South-Central Asia. This region, along with the port of Gwadar, was a significant centre for the slave traffic originating from Africa and destined for Central Asia (Nicolini 2016). Article 2 stipulated the confiscation of all vessels carrying slaves along this new route, while the third article prohibited the sale of free Somali women, contradicting Islamic law on slavery which prohibits any Muslim to be enslaved. This act was equated with piracy and subjected to the same penalties outlined in the Felony Act of 1811.

The second diplomatic step in the new British relationship with Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id followed soon after. On 3rd May 1839, Captain Robert Cogan, acting on behalf of the Governor of Bombay, Lord Auckland (1786–1849), and Her Majesty Queen Victoria, signed a treaty of commerce consisting of 17 articles with the Omani ruler.[14] The first article granted Britain the privileges of the most favoured nation, along with commercial concessions of a 5% duty *ad valorem*. Article 13 reiterated the perpetual abolition of the slave trade between the dominions of Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id and all Christian nations. Additionally, a British Consul was appointed as a political agent and advisor for matters concerning the court of the Omani Sultān.

At the time, France also sought similar privileges from the Omani Sultān. In June 1840, the French obtained Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id's agreement to appoint a French Consul in Zanzibar. When the French explorer Guillain and the consul Noel arrived on the island, they found that the Omani ruler was coincidentally in Muscat. Both French representatives were subsequently sent back to Bourbon by Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al

lacking. When he reached Mombasa in 1824, he prepared plans to eliminate the trade in slaves, and he took possession of Mombasa. London was totally ignoring that the British Establishment at Mombasa had set up a colony of freed slaves, and an order to withdraw Owen's Establishment was immediately issued. Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id was bitterly resentful about Owen's enterprise in Mombasa, a feeling immediately exploited by the French (Owen 1833; Gray 1957; Nicholls 1971, 139–142).

12 P.P. Slave Trade Series, Vol. XXV, Correspondence with Said bin Sultān concerning the Moresby Treaty, Correspondence Relating to Mauritius, N. 1, Copy of Sir R. Farquhar's Despatch dated Mauritius, 1st January 1823, respecting the close of the Slave Traffic by the Imaum of Muscat, addressed to Earl Bathurst. Already laid before Parliament 11th July 1823, N. 556.

13 Reprint of the treaty in Beachey 1976, 107 f.

14 Original text sent to Bombay in: I.O.R. R/15/1/82, Political Department, Treaty of Commerce between Her Majesty, the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and Highness, Sultān Seid Syeed Bin Sultān, Imām of Muscat, 24th September 1839. Copy sent to London in: F.O. 54/8, Extract from the Convention of Commerce between H. M. the Queen and H. H. the Imām of Muscat, May 31st, 1839. Reprint in P.P. Vol. XXXI, The Zanzibar Papers, N. 68, pp. 9–16. The treaty had to be effective after 15 months from its sign.

Bu Sa'id's son, Hilal bin Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id, who was not able to assume such responsibility.

Relationships between Oman and Europe in the Indian Ocean

Eventually, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id had no choice but to submit to British policy in the Indian Ocean. He realised that his dominions' fate rested in British hands, as they were the only ones capable of safeguarding his territories against renewed European threats. In 1841, the sudden French occupation of the port of Nossi Bé in Madagascar, followed by the occupation of Mayotte in the Comoros Islands the following year, convinced Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id of the importance of a strong alliance with Great Britain.

Within this newly changed political situation, starting from 1839, Lord Palmerston (1784–1865) at the Foreign Office revised and completed the chessboard of English strategic security in the Indian Ocean.[15]

Around the second half of the 19th cent. AD, thanks to the agricultural development of cloves cultivation in Zanzibar, the growth of slave and ivory trade with the interior of the African continent, and through a wide net of international treaties and agreements with European Powers, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id found himself at the head of a mercantile empire in the Indian Ocean (Farsi 1986). He was a great navigator, his fleet was composed of 18 sailing ships and of the Liverpool, a beautiful vessel made in Bombay in 1826 carrying on board 100 men and 74 guns. In 1833, he tried to soften British inflexibility with regards to the slave trade and presented it to King William IV, who duly renamed the Liverpool, in honour of its donor, Imam.

On 4th May 1841 Captain Atkins Hamerton (1804–1856) of the 15th Native Infantry of Calcutta was appointed British Consul and political agent in Zanzibar (Crofton 1935). Following an Agreement between the East India Company and the Foreign Office, Captain Hamerton had the twofold task of surveying commercial interests of the Company and of corresponding with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in London, as well as with the Government in Bombay, referring 'any intelligence of a political nature which it may be interesting to HMG to be made acquainted with'.[16]

With regards to our starting working hypothesis, British policy was that of controlling Muscat, not Zanzibar; and the proof was the appointment from the Government of Bombay of Hamerton in Muscat, who had to leave for Zanzibar only due to the sudden, as well as unpredictable decision taken by Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id to move his court to the East African island (Bhacker 1992, 157).

The presence of Hamerton in Zanzibar enforced British authority over the Omani Sultān and a great friendship was born between Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id and Atkins Hamerton, who was the only one among European representatives who spoke Arabic.

In 1845 Broquant was appointed French Consul at the court of Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id, but his influence was obscured by the eccentric and bizarre personality of Hamerton. In 1847 Broquant fell ill and died, leaving suspects among the French of his assassination. The new French Consul, Belligny, was appointed only in 1849 and left the island in 1855, substituted by Cochet.

In 1842 Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id decided to send one of his representatives to London asking for Bahrain in exchange for the abolition of the slave trade in his territories. And he sent to Queen Victoria the following presents with no political results: 'two pearl necklaces, two emeralds, an ornament made like a crown, ten cashmere shawls, one box containing four bottles of roses, four horses'.[17]

On 20th November 1844, to restore the balance of power between France and Britain, the Omani ruler signed a treaty of amity and commerce with France (Hurewitz 1956, 127). According to Article 17 of this treaty, the French obtained the

15 Government of India Act, 1935, c2, part iv, British Baluchistan 95, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo-5and1Edw8/26/2/part/IV/enacted>.

16 See Correspondence concerning Hamerton in: F.O. 54/4 P.R.O. 1841–42; F.O. 54/5 P.R.O. 1843–44; F.O. 54/6 P.R.O. 1844–45; F.O. 54/7 P.R.O. 1845–46; F.O. 54/10 P.R.O. 1846–48; F.O. 54/12 P.R.O. 1848–50; F.O. 54/13 P.R.O. 1850–54.

17 F.O. 54/4, Hamerton to Lord Palmerston, 11 February 1842.

concession for the construction of *magazins d'approvisionements* (supply warehouses), while the British mistakenly believed they had the concession for storehouses and arsenals for weapons. This misunderstanding led to a diplomatic international crisis.[18] Britain grew weary of the political conduct of the Al Bu Sa'id of Oman. On 2nd October 1845, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id signed a treaty with Great Britain for the abolition of the slave trade. Under this treaty, every vessel with slaves on board would be confiscated. Furthermore, this time the slave trade was prohibited for all British subjects, including Indians. This important clause also encompassed the Indian merchant communities (banyans), both Hindu and Ismailis: important communities in the Persian Gulf and in the Indian Ocean. Hamerton had also promised Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id two thousand pounds as compensation for signing the treaty, but Palmerston did not honour this agreement.

On the Omani side, the profits from the slave trade were exceedingly high. A slave bought in the Zanzibar market for five to ten dollars could be sold in Muscat for 20–25 dollars, and in Bushire or Basra for 40 dollars. Hamerton's treaty proved completely ineffective.[19] These events should not lead to a Eurocentric interpretation that assumes Western abolition movements were unique in their fight against the slave trade, while Muslim communities had a will to preserve it. It is important to note that within Islam, there were also Muslim individuals who opposed slavery and the slave trade (Machado 2023). On 19th October 1856, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu Sa'id died on a ship named Victoria while sailing toward Zanzibar. Subsequently, on 5th July 1857, Atkins Hamerton died in Zanzibar. The Al Bu Sa'id dominions over Muscat and Zanzibar were severed in 1861 by the Canning Award, which was confirmed by the Anglo-French Agreement of 1862 between the sons of Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultān Al Bu-Sa'id, Majid bin Sa'id Al Bu-Sa'id (1856–1870) in Zanzibar, and Thuwayni bin Sa'id Al Bu-Sa'id (1856–1866) in Muscat (Bhacker 1992, 179–193; Wilkinson 1987, 228–230).

18 F.O. 54/7, letter from Capt. Hamerton n. 9, to India Board, relative to 17th article of treaty between the Imām of Muscat and the French, dated Zanzibar, 25th October 1845.
19 F.O. 54/7, letter from Capt. Hamerton n. 9 to India Board.

Available Literature and Historiographical Issues

During the past three decades, there have been numerous studies exploring the connections between Asia and Africa, as well as between Oman and East Africa. More recently, scholars have highlighted the significant role played by Oman and Zanzibar in Indian Ocean history, shedding light on the diverse narratives generated by these two countries. As already stated elsewhere (Nicolini 2022), the history of Asian migration routes in the Indian Ocean has evolved and expanded, moving beyond written, colonial and predominantly Eurocentric perspectives and sources (Goldsmid 1863; 1876). It now incorporates new oral, multidisciplinary and global approaches to studying and researching this subject. Consequently, it is – wrongly – believed that Asian groups such as the Balouč sailed to the Persian Gulf and to East Africa between the 18th and the 19th cent. AD mainly as defence military squadrons (Nicolini 2018a). The reasons and the modalities of an earlier recruiting were linked to the Makrān-Baloučestān territory, environment and society as well as to the Omani society and systems of power. Once settled, their roles diversified from the end of the 18th cent. AD onwards. More than one reason and more than one activity existed for those Balouč who risked their lives – most of them could not swim – crossing the other side of the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Peninsula and to East Africa. Here, traditional Balouč culture and lifestyle met the Swahili one (Sarathi 2018). According to Dorzādeh, the 'kafāla' (sponsorship) system in Persian Gulf's countries well functioned to 'hide' Asian – and Balouč – communities within local Arab dominated societies (Dorzadeh 2023). The Sunni Balouč fled from the Ši'a-majority Peršiān Baloučestān to the Sunni Persian Gulf countries, seeking refuge from religious persecution. They often faced isolation from Arab communities and a lack of civil rights (Dorzadeh 2023, 8–12). Despite Oman's important history of its hinterland and desert connections in the Arabian Peninsula, the Eurocentric and 19th cent. AD mainstream recorded histories chose to identify the history of Oman with the sea. Consequently, thanks to the monsoons the trade relations of Oman had been historically through the sea,

although Oman trades were intense through land as well. Maritime coastal trade, as well as long distance trade, constituted the expressions of an economy that was already highly sophisticated, developed and organised; therefore, the necessity of control of these sea trade routes represented a crucial element: a strategic element. According to Pereira, the Portuguese with their coastal forts, the British (via the East India Company) with their trading stations, the Dutch (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) with their coastal and island possessions and the French (Compagnie Française des Indes Orientales) were all essentially sea powers in the Indian Ocean until the 18th cent. AD. So, the change was a change from a trading empire based on controlling coastal key ports to the control of commodity sources inland – *terra firma* – such as trying to establish indirect control of the Indian and Southeast Asian potentates.[20]

In the framework of the multiple Indian Ocean trade migration movements, we are rethinking about the role of Asian groups into East African culture and society. In our case: Balouč presence in the Persian Gulf and throughout the Indian Ocean has been for a long time closely historically and politically connected with military, piracy and measures taken by the British authorities against slave trade (Suzuki 2013; 2021). The Western colonial picture, as well as in many Persian Gulf countries, was of a neglected group of people (Boedeker 2013). Consequently, as above said, the Balouč role has been poorly studied as closely, and often exclusively, related to the military and defensive role especially within the groups of Oman (Murer 2022). Here it is interesting noting that, once in East Africa, and once their military power on behalf of the Omani Sultāns along the Swahili coast was consolidated, some elements among these groups while remaining soldiers had started trading activities; the Balouč settled and gave life to different activities linked to slave and ivory trade: the main merchandise of the time. Therefore, the Balouč role along the Swahili coast throughout the 19th cent. AD was destined to a considerable impact on local societies and to significant modifications in its main motivations and objects: the result was a great contribution to Swahili culture and society, and to relevant changes within Swahili traditional customs (Dorzadeh 2023). It is believed that Balouč groups were found only along the Swahili coast littorals and in the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, but they developed trading relationships into the hinterland of East Africa (Arab 2017). Although, the close connections between the Omani Sultāns and their Balouč soldiers and bodyguards represented a crucial issue: the Asian's loyalty was the prerequisite for the recognition by the Omani leadership to their soldiers, and descendants of Balouč soldiers were gradually absorbed into new political realities and started new activities within Swahili society, economy and culture.

Importance of Events Re-Examination

It is essential to elucidate the reasons behind the necessity of subsequent reflections and re-examinations. Situated near the coast of equatorial Africa, only 50km away from the mainland, lies the island of Zanzibar (Unguja), which is the largest coral island in East Africa. It is part of a coral reef that stretches from the northern island of Pemba to the southern island of Mafia, creating a distinct coastline separate from the mainland. Zanzibar measures approximately 20–30km in width and around 83km in length. The city of Zanzibar, located on the western side of the island, possesses one of the finest ports in Africa, providing excellent anchorage for deep-sea fishing vessels.

The neighbouring island of Pemba (Kisiwa Pemba) is approximately 45km long and 20km wide, covering an area of roughly 980km^2. Comprised mainly of coralline rock, Pemba is characterised by its hilly terrain in contrast to its sister island Zanzibar. Pemba is renowned for its cloves, which remain its primary source of income to this day. Despite its highly diverse population, Pemba is primarily inhabited by the Bantu group known as the Wapemba. The largest town on the island, Wete, situated in the west, features an imposing square-plan fortress constructed by the Portuguese, overlooking a bay of mangroves. In the past, Pemba lacked harbours suitable for large ships. The island's shallow waters and dense vegetation limited its freshwater reserves. Due to the

20 Oral source: Clifford Pereira, The University of Hong Kong, personal interview, May 2022.

protective barrier of the coral reef, Zanzibar and Pemba emerged as strategically dominant islands due to two crucial factors: the monsoon winds and their proximity to the African continent. One of the reasons behind their commercial success was the superior services offered by these islands compared to other cities along the East African coast. During the 19th cent. AD, the fleets of the Omani Sultāns safeguarded merchant ships, taxes were kept low and Zanzibar had a reliable source of drinking water. The Balouč soldiers, until the establishment of the Sultānate in the 1840s, maintained military posts in major centres such as Mombasa, Zanzibar and Pemba. Over time, they intermarried with the local Waswahili population and gradually assimilated into their culture and society. Families from Baloučestān later joined these settlers in search of a better life along the Swahili coast, which had emerged as a significant manufacturing centre before becoming a hub for international maritime trade with Asia. The majority of the Balouč originated from Qaṣreqand, with subsequent arrivals from Sarbāz, Lur and Muscat. Mombasa served as the primary Balouč settlement during this period, as evidenced by the presence of a Balouč Mosque. The highest concentration of Balouč in East Africa can be found in the old town of Mombasa, where Balouč Street and the Balouč Mosque stand adjacent to the general Post Office.[21] It is believed that the first non-African to venture into Maasailand was a Balouč, and the same applies to the first non-African to receive a welcome in the royal court of the Kabaka of Buganda.

As the Balouč moved inland, they established cluster communities in Djugu and Bunia in the Congo, Soroti, Arua and Kampala in Uganda, and Iringa, Tabora, Mbeya and Rujewa in Tanzania. Balouč families were present in nearly every major Swahili town.

The Balouč community in Mombasa embraced a cosmopolitan lifestyle, engaging in small-scale real estate ventures, trade and seeking employment opportunities with the Omanis and later the British. Those residing in the fertile hills of Uganda and Tanzania thrived in the farming and trading sectors. The Balouč's mercantile skills and business acumen earned them great respect within the communities they settled in, including the small yet vibrant Nairobi community.

As Zanzibar's trade expanded and its political influence grew in the interior regions of Tanganyika, Balouč squadrons were dispatched to Tabora in central Tanzania and Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika. In 1873, approximately half of the Omani Sultān's 3000 troops involved in the war against the Nyamwezi ruler, Chief Mirambo, in Unyanyembe, consisted of 'Bulushi' and Shihiri (Hadhrami) soldiers, who were of Balouč descent. Some Balouč soldiers also joined trade caravans as guards and ventured into the Congo alongside the renowned slave and ivory trader, Tippu Tipp (1837–1905) (Bearman et al. 2012; Campbell 2013). As a result of the scramble and colonisation of East Africa, the former armed forces of Zanzibar were integrated into the British forces in Kenya and Zanzibar and the German forces in Tanganikya. The British had as early as 1876 used a Bulushi contingent on a British warship to help the third Omani Sultān Sayyid Barghāš Al Bu Sa'id of Zanzibar (reign 1870–1888) to repress a rebellion in Kilwa further south on the coast caused by decree to forbid the slave trade in the Sultān's possessions. Since Kenya was a British Protectorate on the coast, leased from Zanzibar, and a Crown colony in the interior, Balouč soldiers remained in service mostly on the coast, concentrated in Mombasa and Zanzibar. In German Tanganyika Balouč soldiers were moved to Iringa and other centres after violent resistance and uprisings against German rule. The Wabalushi (singular is Mbalushi) Swahili communities – many of them of Peršiān origins – settled in Saa-teeni, outside Zanzibar town, in Fort Jesus in Mombasa and later in the Unyanyembe. The introduction of military terms such as *jemadari*, commander, singe, bayonet, *bunduki*, rifle, *habedari* or attention have been identified as introduced into Kiswahili from Peršiān Balouč (Lodhi 2013). With regards to the political leadership along the Swahili coast, the Omani Arab governors in main East African trading ports often enjoyed the support of the local, autochthonous Swahili aristocracy, mainly merchants. They were tied to the Omani elite by mutual interests in the exploitation of the resources

21 It's worth noting that the exact number of Balouč, whether old settlers and their descendants or new arrivals, is difficult to acquire since no census in Tanzania and Kenya did consider such information.

offered by the growing demand coming from the eastern shores of Africa. It has been noted that the Omani leaderships did not effectively control, in the modern European sense, the East African coast from Cape Guardafui to Cabo Delgado. To this regard, the level of the deeds of debts (waraqas) between Arab and Asian communities in East Africa has been well explained in Bishara's studies (Bishara 2017). An intense exchange relationship soon developed between the East African hinterland and the Swahili coast, leading to the introduction of rice cultivation in the interior in those areas under Omani presence and dominion such as Tabora, Nungwe, in modern-day northern Congo, and in nearby Kasongo. On the coasts of the continent, on the contrary, local societies experienced significant changes due to the massive influx of slaves from the interior and of Arabs and Asians from abroad. Tabora – a key site on the commercial route towards the heart of the continent – was resembling an Arab town with a considerable Balouč presence (Burton 1860). Thus, differences gradually developed between the cultural identities of the coast and the islands on the one hand, and the interior of the continent on the other, where from the third decade of the 19th cent. AD onwards the opening of caravan routes wrought a revolution in economic, social and cultural terms (Gooding 2022). Maritime ports of the Swahili coast had always been sustained by intimate interaction with the non-Muslims of their rural hinterlands, and this contributed to the composition of the coastal identity also. The Unyanyembe, an Arab cultivating land, the heart of the ivory trade and the home of most male caravan porters, was not a major source of slaves. Rather, it was a region that imported slaves (Rockel 2019). Caravans arrived at the coast usually in September and porters announced their approach by blowing horns and beating drums. The shame and humiliation of enslavement in East Africa had been imposed and exploited by many and different social groups for lucrative purposes mainly originating from southern Arabia and Western India: the Balouč migrants were part of this framework. Balouč have been identified as far afield as Uganda and the upper reaches of the Congo (*fig. 3*).

During the 19th cent. AD there was not only one, but numerous main slave routes; throughout the Indian Ocean there were two main slaves' routes: one from East Africa and the Red Sea to the Arabian Peninsula, to western India and to Southeast Asia, and the other in the opposite direction; consequently, especially during the 19th cent. AD, slaves were not only black people from Africa, but also of Asian origin. The social, political and economic functions of slaves, both in Africa and in Asia, were divided by available sources of the time in the following categories:

(a) domestic – patriarchal
(b) productive – agricultural (bonded labour directed into intensive wet-crop agriculture
(c) military – administrative

Within the Islamic world, armies of slave-soldiers came from Central Asia, mainly Turkish peoples from the Caucasus and from the steppes till their conversion to Islam, while domestic slaves came mainly from the Horn of Africa and from the coastal strip of Sub-Saharan East Africa. Due also to the banning of slavery from the western shores of Africa towards America, around the second half of the 19th cent. AD there was an extensive and growing commerce of slaves from Ras Asir and Pemba and many East African people were exchanged with food, bought with cloth and dates on Zanzibar and Pemba islands, enslaved and transported to Arabia where they were engaged in fishing pearls in the Persian Gulf. From the accounts of the travellers, explorers and European officials of the time, emerging among other Balouč tribes in East Africa were the Hot, the Rind and the Nousherwani (Miles 1984, 94). The Rind was considered the 'blue-blood' group of Makrān, it was probably identified in available sources as the Rind were the most famous and rich ones; other Balouč tribes were also present on the field and in battles. The reasons were essentially coming from the strong rivalry inside Baloučestān, and those tribes who supported Oman were hoping to receive military support against their internal enemies. The result was that the Balouč were mainly employed in the ships of Muscat, one of the main trading ports, together with Sur, Sohar, or sent on military expeditions into the Oman deserts. During the 19th cent. AD, the growing effectiveness of British measures aimed at slave trade abolition caused a reduction in the availability of East African slaves. This was one of the alternative and

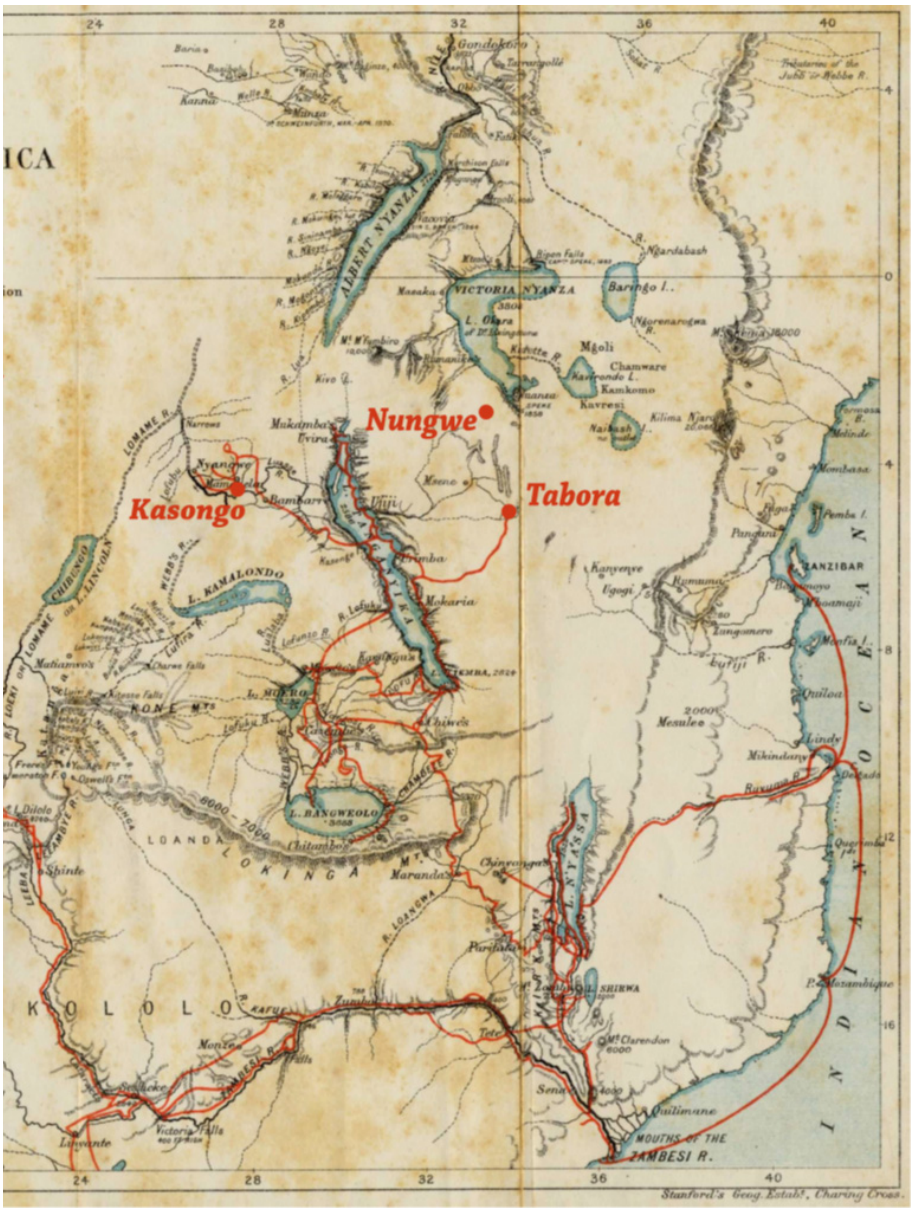

Fig. 3. Historical map of Central Africa with indication of Tabora and Nungwe in modern-day northern Tanzania and Kasongo in eastern Congo (map by Stanford's Geographical Establishment, courtesy Gutenberg project).

poorly studied slave routes in the Indian Ocean. Balouč slave women had their heads totally razed, then covered with quicklime, so that their hair could not grow any more, rendering them perfectly recognisable and preventing them from returning to their families and to their places of origin: a still today poorly studied research topic (Mirzai 2020). The main slaving zones where Balouč traders in East Africa were active also on behalf of the Sultāns of Oman were three and all of them interconnected with other trade routes such as ivory and precious goods:

(1) the 'southern' route from southern ports such as Kilwa to Lake Nyasa and the highlands of the southwestern interior where the Nyamwezi, who were slave collectors and sellers themselves, carried elephant tusks and other goods;
(2) the 'central' route from Bagamoyo in west and northwest directions, where the caravan trade became progressively divided between the Omani Sultāns slave traders and by the Indian slave merchants;
(3) the 'northern' route, the Masai route from Mombasa and Malindi towards Kilimanjaro where the Mijikenda were ivory hunters together with the Kamba (Nicolini 2018b).

The Saadani caravan route did not develop an Arab merchant community, while the Pangani route led to the foundation of Ujiji around 1840

and passed through the Bondei hills and along the foot of Usambara and Pare mountains, with water, and preferred by travellers from other towns of the northern Mrima. This route became the second in importance after Bagamoyo while Taveta trading station on the northern route never became dominated by coastal Muslims, as it was too dangerous. Many Zanzibaris Balouč lived in Saateni, Zanzibar, and were experts of 'darzing kanzu' (white men's wear) with different designs and they used donkeys to ride around the town. The Zanzibar slave market often spared the local population of the worst privations of the slave trade for three main reasons: they shared a common religion with the slave-transporters and with most of their likely customers; most were the subjects of the rulers of the Swahili city-states and enslaving these Swahili citizens might have caused those rulers to retaliate and therefore make sheltering and provisioning ships problematic; specific to Zanzibar, legend tells that the king of the Hadimu of Zanzibar bargained with the Sultāns of Oman. The first mention of a Balouč garrison in Fort Jesus was 1837 at the expulsion of the Mazrui (Mathews 2013). When the last Balouč left the fort in 1895, they were given land where they could settle.[22] During the 19th cent. AD, there was a Balouč *jemadar* or commander with a garrison in all the main centres to provide security. When Malindi was resettled in 1861, fifty Omani settlers with a garrison of Balouč soldiers and several hundred slaves were sent by the Omani Sultāns to redevelop the area. The Balouč jemadar was in a position of trust and power. Balouč in East Africa wore their hair and beards long and were famed warriors with matchlock rifles inlaid with gold and silver decoration and pouches of gunpowder in their belts; their war cry before 1867 was *kai kai*, 'we are coming'. Since Kenya was a British Protectorate on the coast, leased from Zanzibar, and a crown colony in the interior, Balouč soldiers remained in service mostly on the coast, concentrated in Mombasa and Zanzibar.

Conclusion

Among the numerous Asian migrant communities in the Persian Gulf and in the Indian Ocean, there has long been a belief that the Balouč migrated as a unified group, serving as soldiers and bodyguards to Persian Gulf monarchies and Omani Sultāns. They were known for their military prowess and defensive capabilities in East Africa, often carrying firearms. Subsequently, they settled in the region and engaged in various economic activities, gradually establishing a presence in East Africa. It is worth noting that the Balouč community in East Africa, at times, held a sense of superiority over Africans. It is important to recognise that while the Balouč on South-Central Asian coasts and the Persian Gulf remained largely invisible and marginalised under the local leadership, they themselves experienced enslavement by other groups.

This new social status led to different forms of exploitation and abuses, including land confiscation from Africans and the exploitation of slaves on cultivated lands known as *mashamba* along the Swahili coast and the Great Lake region. Consequently, the role of Asian communities, including the Balouč, on the Swahili coast became interconnected with the influence exerted by the Al Bu Sa'id Sultāns. As a result, Balouč groups have often been studied as integral parts of Omani society rather than as a distinct entity with unique identity, culture, rights, and customs. Consequently, they were primarily viewed as soldiers along the Swahili coast from the 18th cent. AD onwards.

It is crucial to understand that the dynamics of power relationships in the diverse realities of the Persian Gulf and of the Indian Ocean shaped the experiences of different groups. While the conservation of Balouč cultural identity both in the Persian Gulf and in East Africa became a distinct feature among some descendants of these Asian warriors, it remained confined to a few enclaves. Therefore, it is important to recognise that the migration routes, fortunes and long-lasting presence of Asian communities, including the Balouč, exerted a significant influence on both the maritime and inland economies and societies of the Persian Gulf and of East Africa. These aspects represent interdisciplinary, important and intriguing research topics that warrant further exploration.

22 There are Balouči living in Mombasa, mainly in the Makadara section of the town. There is a Balouč Mosque, and the old Mbaruk Mosque was dedicated to the Balouč soldier who rescued Mbaruk bin Rašid al Mazrui as a boy.

Beatrice Nicolini
Faculty of Political and Social Sciences,
Catholic University of the Sacred Heart
Largo Gemelli, 1
20123 Milan, Italy
beatrice.nicolini@unicatt.it

Abbreviations

B.M. Add.	British Museum Additional Manuscripts
F.O.	Foreign Office Records, Public Record Office (Kew)
I.O.R.	India Office Records, Oriental & India Office Collections – The British Library (London)
P.R.O.	Public Record Office (Kew)
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers (London)

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Section II: Archaeological Records of Cylinder Seals and Pottery

Enrico Ascalone and Seyyed Mansur Seyyed Sajjadi

Cylinder Seals and Cylinder Seal Impressions from Šahr-i Suḵta

Keywords: Šahr-i Suḵta, cylinder seals, Bronze Age, Iranian Highlands, Sistān-va-Baloučestān, glyptic

Summary

Šahr-i Suḵta represents one of the easternmost Bronze Age sites that used cylinder seals. The diffusion of cylinder seals in Sistān has been the focus of scientific debate, mainly aimed at reconstructing the dynamics of the diffusion and development of the 'Proto-Elamite phenomenon', which during the second half of the 4th mill. BCE is documented from Ḵuzestān to the Makrān coast. This article presents 23 unpublished cylinder seals and cylinder seal impressions from the excavations carried out in Šahr-i Suḵta from 1997 to 2021.

1 Introduction

The study of glyptic in eastern Iran is particularly lacking, both because of the lack of extensive archaeological excavations in the region and the uncertain provenance of many artefacts. If one excludes the work done on the glyptic in southeastern Iran,[1] and in particular on the production of Konār Ṣandal South (Pittman 2008; 2012; 2013), the knowledge of glyptic on the Iranian plateau is still insufficient to try to make deeper typological assessments in order to reach historical conclusions.

The study of the production of bronze stamp seals was addressed by S. Baghestani (1997), while P. Amiet (1983) presented a corpus of cylinder seals attributed to the early Šahr-i Suḵta period and dated to the 'Proto-Elamite phase'.[2] These studies were complemented by more recent publications[3] that made it possible to better define the cultural horizon of glyptic production in eastern Iran.

The ample homogeneity of stamp seals in bronze or stone (mainly steatite/chlorite) throughout the so–called 'Turanian' context (for this term see Tosi 1977, 47; 1979, 151–154; 1986, 154 f.) has made it possible to identify, for the glyptic of the 3rd mill. BCE, a distinctive third area of production of seals in Turkmenistan, Sistān, Gorgān province, Afghanistan and Baloučestān; this area would represent a third alternative pole to both the cylinder seals of Mesopotamian/Elamite cultural extraction and to the quadrangular stamp seals of Harappan conceptual workmanship.

The so-called 'compartmented seals' have a very wide area of diffusion that also touches the remote eastern regions near the Huanghe river, whose nearby centre of Boulobaq, in the Chinese province of Ordos, has yielded a likely and significant example of Murghāb tradition (Baghestani 1997). As stated, this production appears to be very homogeneous and widespread mainly throughout Turkmenistan (Sarianidi 1998).

1 Amiet 1986, 160–170; 1994; 1997; Porada 1964; 1982; 1988; Ascalone 2006a; 2008; 2010; 2011, 331–360; 2012; 2018.

2 The seals from Šahr-i Suḵta excavations were published in Tosi 1968, 60–62, figs. 94–96, 99–107; Amiet/Tosi 1978, 25–31; Salvatori/Vidale 1997, 251–262; Piperno/Salvatori 2007, figs. 98, 199, 292, 323, 380, 389, 461, 484, 518, 582, 619, 626, 716, 764–765, 790, 798; Baghestani 2007, figs. 4.2.3, 4.3.3, 4.4.3, 4.5.3, 4.6.3; Sajjadi 2003, fig. 36; 2009, figs. 1.2.1, 1.2.2; Ascalone 2019, fig. 12; 2022a, figs. 72–73; Ascalone 2025; Rivoltella 2022, figs. 39, 52, 60, 65, 74–75, 77–79, 81, 90–94, 141.

3 Ascalone 2011, 331–360, 443–448, 453–455; Heydari et al. 2019; Parpola et al. 2019; Winkelmann 2021, 215–293.

Anau, Namazga, Ulug, Altyn,[4] Gonur,[5] Togolok (Sarianidi 1998), Sapalli (Kohl 1984, pl. 16, fig. 16b–c), Adji Kui 1 and 9 (Rossi Osmida 2011, 227–231), Dashly (Sarianidi 1976, figs. 51.1, 3–5; Ligabue/Salvatori 1979, 19, fig. 5), Tekkem (Kohl 1984, pl. 20, fig. 20b) and Džarkutan (Kohl 1984, pl. 17, fig. 17c) show how one of the main areas of this production must have lain between the Murghāb plain and the Iassarte depression.[6]

In Iran the use of the BMAC seal is widespread in Gorgān, Sistān and Baloučestān. In fact, Šahr-i Suḵta,[7] Mundigak (related to the Hilmand glyptic cultural sphere; Casal 1961, pl. XLV) and Teppe Hissār (Schmidt 1933, pl. CVII, CXXIX–CXXX; 1937, pl. XXVIII, fig. 118) have all yielded a large amount of material that fits well into the production of the stamp type. Other specimens have also been found at Māri (Beyer 1989), Susā (Amiet 1974, 97; Tallon 1987, nos. 1249–1250), Tepe Yahyā (Lamberg–Karlovsky 1972, fig. 4F; Hiebert/Lamberg-Karlovsky 1992, tab. IIb), Konār Ṣandal (Madjidzadeh 2008, 28d–f, i), in Luristān (Amiet 1988, fig. 18d), Šāhi Tump (Joshi/Parpola 1987, Sht–1), the Persian Gulf (Crawford/al Sind 1995, figs. 1–2), Harappā (Joshi/Parpola 1987, pl. XCI; Vats 1940, H–630, H–631, H–1018), Lothal (Joshi/Parpola 1987, L–173–175), Chanhu-dāro (Joshi/Parpola 1987, C–42, C–49, C–50) and Mohenjo-dāro (Joshi/Parpola 1987; During Caspers 1994), and these must be considered as imports. In Baloučestān they have been observed at Bampur,[8] as well as one at Šāhi Tump (Piggott 1950, 219, fig. 26), two at Dāmin (Tosi 1974, 43 f., figs. 20–21) and more in the Jazmuriān area (Heydari et al. 2019; see Parpola et al. 2019).

New and more complex issues are related to the role played by Šahdād within the dynamics of the diffusion of cylinder and compartmented stamp seals. Šahdād displays an ambiguous cultural personality in the art of glyptic; exposed to the experiences of the province of Kermān, it shows a widespread and numerically more significant presence of BMAC indicators within the glyptic production dating to the end of 3rd mill. BCE. Šahdād seems to represent a border region between the neighbouring provinces of the Jiroft civilisation and the more distant provinces of Sistān and Turkmenistan, displaying a dual personality that adheres to distinct canons of stylistic rendering in glyptic art. This artistic bipolarity, which is well-known and convincingly shown in glyptic art, may be explained via the ample presence of a nomadic sub-class that favoured the adoption of new and unfamiliar art experiences, as well as a cultural elasticity between the experiences of BMAC and those of southeastern Iran. This historical picture is complete if considered that Šahdād is the first/last centre before/after the Lut desert, the only true and substantial barrier between the 'anšānite/transelāmite' artistic and cultural paths and those of the southern Turāniān/BMAC cultural basin.

The aim of this paper, despite the extensive use of these stamp seal typologies, is to present 18 unpublished cylinder seals and five cylinder seal impressions from the excavations of Šahr-i Suḵta (from 1997 to 2021). Where possible, this paper tries to restore their archaeological contexts of origin, and to identify different stylistic and iconographic groups that may allow broader considerations in a diachronic key on the basis of the new chronologies and stratigraphical sequences reconstructed with the most recent excavation activities (*tab. 1*; Ascalone/Sajjadi 2022a; 2022b; Ascalone/Vecchio 2023).

2 Corpus of Cylinder Seals and Cylinder Seal Impressions

The seals and seal impressions presented in this work number 23 (18 seals – Cat. nos. 1–9, 11–16, 20–21 – and 5 sealings – Cat. nos. 10, 17–19, 22); they belong to three different typological macro-classes for style and iconographies (see below).

4 Masson 1981, pls. 16–17, 22: 1a–b, 29: 5–10, 36: 3, 37: 1–6, 38: 1–2; 1988, 89–91, pls. XVI–XVII and XXIX; Kohl 1984, pl. 12, fig. 12b, pl. 13, fig. 13b.

5 Kohl 1984, pl. 14, fig. 14d; Sarianidi 1998, 59, 66, figs. 24: 1–4, 29: 1–11.

6 See Salvatori 2000; Masimov/Salvatori 1998; for the Bactria production see Pottier 1980, 167–174; Ligabue/Salvatori 1979, 137, 169–173, 183 f., figs. 11, 13–14, 46–59; Sarianidi 1998; Winkelmann 2021, tab. 8.1.

7 Tosi 1968, figs. 99–100; 1969, fig. 276; 1970, 189; 1975, 132; 1976, 168; 1983, figs. 73–75, tabs. 65: 5, 66: 6; Amiet 1975; 1983; Amiet/Tosi 1978; Piperno/Tosi 1975, 196; Ferioli et al. 1979, 7–12; Sajjadi 2003; Ameri 2020; for seals in the Sistān region see also Kavosh et al. 2019, fig. 141.

8 De Cardi 1967a, 134; 1967b, fig. 2; 1968, 148; 1970, figs. 47: 15 and 51.

Absolute chronology based on ^{14}C analysis from Šahr-i Soḫta Ascalone/Sajjadi 2022b	Šahr-i Soḫta Ascalone/Sajjadi 2022b	Area 33 Ascalone 2022b	Area 35 Moradi 2022a	Area 26 Moradi 2022b	Central Quarter Salvatori/Vidale 1997	Šahr-i Soḫta Salvatori/Tosi 2005	Tappeh Graziāni Helwing et al. 2019
PERIOD IA 3550–3350 BC*** 3525 BC (92.5%) 3338 BC	SiS I.10 (Early Uruk) (Harappa 1)		**Layer 6–7**			I.10	
	SiS I.9 (Early Uruk) (Harappa 1)		**Layer 5**				
PERIOD IB 3350–3100 BC**** 3371 BC (93.7%) 3096 BC 3351 BC (87.1%) 3079 BC 2930 BC (56.4%) 2837 BC	SiS I.8 (Late Uruk) (Harappa 1)	Virgin soil	**Layer 4–3**		Virgin soil	I.9	?
PERIOD IC 3100–3000 BC	SiS I.7 (Jemdet Nasr) (Harappa 1)	**Layer 5** **Sounding in L.386**	**Layer 2**		Layer 6	I.8	
			Layer 1		Layer 5 Destruction layer	II.7	
PERIOD IIA 3000–2850 BC* 3017 BC (78.1%) 2857 BC 3017 BC (77.1%) 2856 BC 3021 BC (82.9%) 2857 BC 3030 BC (92.1%) 2874 BC 3029 BC (91.5%) 2871 BC	SiS II.6A–B (ED I) (Harappa 2)	**Layer 4a–b** **Western Building** **Eastern Building**			Layers 4–3	II.6	Tosi Phase 6 (?–2850)
PERIOD IIB 2850–2620 BC* 2880 BC (92.0%) 2617 BC	SiS II.5A–B (ED II) (Harappa 2)	**Layer 3a–b** **House of the Courts**			Layer 2	II.5a	Tosi Phase 5 (2850–2600)
PERIOD IIC 2620–2600 BC Abandon and sporadic occupation	SiS II.4 (ED II) (Harappa 2)	**Layer 2** **Squatter occupation**			Layer 1	II.5b	
PERIOD IIIA 2600–2450 BC* 2635 BC (91.4%) 2437 BC	SiS III.3 (ED IIIa) (Harappa 3A)	**Layer 1** **Building 33**				III.4 III.3	Tosi Phase 4 (2600–2550) Tosi Phase 3 (2550–2450)
PERIOD IIIB 2450–2400 BC*****	SiS.III.2 (Harappa 3B)	Abandon		**Layer 1**	Abandon	III.2	Tosi Phase 2 (2450–2400)
PERIOD IV 2400–2300 BC** 2500 BC (80.7%) 2295 BC	SiS IV.1 (ED IIIb) (Harappa 3B)			**Layer 0** **Upper Layer**		IV.1	Tosi Phase 1 (2400–2350)
GAP 2300–2100 BC							
PERIOD V (RUD–I BIABAN PHASE) 2100–2000 BC	SIS V.0 (UR III) (Harappa 3C) (BMAC)					GAP	?
						IV.0	

Tab. 1. Periods and archaeological phases in the Šahr-i Suḫta excavations on the basis of new 14C dating analysis (*14C calibrated on Šahr-i Suḫta samples collected from Area 33 archaeological layers; **14C calibrated on samples from Building 26; *** 14C calibrated on Šahr-i Suḫta samples collected from Area 36 in Eastern Residential Area; ****14C calibrated on Šahr-i Suḫta samples collected from room 88 in Area 35; ***** 14C calibrated on Tape Graziyani samples in Helwing et al. 2019).

Cat. no.	Obejct	Period	Production Phase	Context	Material	Typology	Condition	Measurements
1 (Fig. 1a–b)	Seal	IIA, 3000–2850 BC	Late Phase	Grave 1610	Limestone	Geometric Group	Perfect	H. 3.7cm, W. 1cm
2 (Fig. 2a–b)	Seal	IIA, 3000–2850 BC	Late Phase	Grave 1900	Lapis lazuli	Geometric Group	Perfect	H. 1.6cm, W. 0.6cm
3 (Fig. 3a–b)	Seal	IIA, 3000–2850 BC	Late Phase	Grave 1900	Limestone	Geometric Group	Slightly chipped	H. 2.3cm, W. 1.2cm
4 (Fig. 4a–b)	Seal	IIA, 3000–2850 BC	Late Phase	Grave 3308	Limestone	Geometric Group	Slightly chipped	H. 5.5cm, W. 1.4cm
5 (Fig. 5a–b)	Seal	IIA, 3000–2850 BC	Late Phase	Grave 3503	Lapis lazuli	Geometric Group	Perfect	H. 1.6cm, W. 0.5cm
6 (Fig. 6a–b)	Seal	IB, 3350–3000 BC.	Early Phase	Grave 6708	Limestone	Geometric Group	Good	H. 3cm, W. 1.2cm
7 (Fig. 7a–b)	Seal	3100–2800 BC	Late Phase	Grave 9125	Limestone	Geometric Group	Good	H. 3.8cm, W. 1cm
8 (Fig. 8a–b)	Seal	3100–2800 BC	Late Phase	Grave 9125	Faiance	Geometric Group	Slightly chipped	H. 1.7cm, W. 0.7cm
9 (Fig. 9a–b)	Seal	IB–C, 3400–3100 BC	Early Phase	Grave 9503	Limestone	Geometric Group	Perfect	H. 2.3cm, W. 0.7cm
10 (Fig. 10a–b)	Sealing	IB, 3350–3100 BC	Early Phase	Workshop 35, Layer 4	/	Geometric Group	Missing half	H. 6.6cm, L. 6.2cm, W. 2.1cm
11 (Fig. 11)	Seal	-	-	Surface	Limestone	Geometric Group	Good	H. 3cm, W. 1.5cm
12 (Fig. 12a–b)	Seal	-	-	Surface	Limestone	Geometric Group	Good	-
13 (Fig. 13a–b)	Seal	-	-	Surface	Lapis lazuli	Geometric Group	Missing a part	H. 4.1cm, W. 2.5cm
14 (Fig. 14a–b)	Seal	-	-	Surface	Limestone	Geometric Group	Perfect	H. 3.5cm, W. 1.3cm
15 (Fig. 15a–b)	Seal	IB, 3350–3100 BC	Early Phase	Grave 3105	Bone	Naturalistic Group	Shaved	H. 2.5cm, W. 1cm
16 (Fig. 16a–b)	Seal	IA, 3500–3200 BC	Early Phase	Grave 3203	Limestone	Naturalistic Group	Shaved	H. 2.5cm, W. 1cm
17 (Fig. 17a–b)	Sealing	IIA, 3000–2850 BC	Late Phase	Workshop 35, Layer 1	/	Naturalistic Group	Missing half	H. 2.2cm, L. 3.4cm, W. 1cm
18 (Fig. 18)	Sealing	IB, 3350–3100 BC	Early Phase	Workshop 35, Layer 3	/	Naturalistic Group	Missing half	H. 4.8cm, L. 3.6cm, W. 2.7cm
19 (Fig. 19)	Sealing	IIA, 3000–2850 BC	Early/Late Phase	Workshop 35, Room 27	/	Naturalistic Group	Broken	H. 11.6cm, L. 7.2cm, W. 3.8cm
20 (Fig. 20a–b)	Seal	IB–C, 3350–3000 BC	Early Phase	Grave 8716	Limestone	Figurative Group	Shaved	H. 4.2cm, W. 1.5cm
21 (Fig. 21a–b)	Seal	IIA, 3000–2850 BC	Late Phase	Grave 9416	Limestone	Figurative Group	Shaved	H. 3.3cm, W. 1cm
22 (Fig. 22)	Sealing	IB, 3350–3100 BC	Early Phase	Workshop 35, Layer 4	/	Figurative Group	Missing a part	H. 4.8cm, L. 5.2cm, W. 1.9cm
23 (Fig. 23a–b)	Seal	-	-	Surface	Limestone	Figurative Group	Good	H. 1.8cm

Tab. 2. Cylinder seals and cylinder seal impressions from Šahr-i Suḫta.

From a technological point of view, the production appears to be very homogeneous, as do the dimensions, which vary between 0.7 and 5.5cm in height, with a diameter not exceeding 1.5cm.

The material used is mostly limestone, both samples closer to calcite in Cat. nos. 3, 9, 16, and those of lesser quality and more common use as in Cat. nos. 1, 4, 6–7, 11–12, 14, 20–21, 23. More prestigious specimens seem to have been those made from lapis lazuli (Cat. nos. 2, 5 and 13), faience (Cat. no. 8) and bone (Cat. no. 15), materials that are also particularly common for stamp seal production (*tab. 2*).

3 Archaeological Contexts

The archaeological contexts of the seals presented in this article are from the Eastern Residential Area (Moradi 2022) and the necropolis of the site (see Sajjadi 2022a; 2022b). If we exclude five seals (Cat. nos. 11–14 and 23), the remaining ones have precise stratigraphic and contextual references: five sealings come from Workshop 35 (Cat. nos. 10, 17–19, 22) and 13 from the necropolis (Cat. nos. 1–9, 15–16, 20–21). Upon first assessment, it can be stated that the above identified three macro-types are known both in the individual graves and in the residential areas (*tab. 3*).

Workshop 35 (Cat. nos. 10, 17–19, 22)

Workshop 35 is located in the Eastern Residential Area, where the hillside of the Šahr-i Sukta shows a larger stratigraphic overlap and documents the earliest and most archaic occupation of the settlement, around the middle of the 4th mill. BCE. The sequence of Workshop 35, in particular, was defined within Room 88 of the 'House of the Stairs' excavated by M. Tosi (1968; 1983).

The most recent investigations carried out in this area (Moradi 2022) have identified numerous materials belonging to the first period of the centre with clear references to the 'Proto-Elamite culture'. The new excavated area has been divided into seven macro-layers covering the whole of Period I and the beginning of Period II (from IA to IIA, *tab. 1*), and with the aid of isotope analysis has allowed the cultural and chronological sequences of this sector to be fully defined (Moradi 2022, 143–182).

A seal impression (Cat. no. 17) comes from Layer 1, which must be attributed to Period IIA (ca. 3000–2850 BCE) and represents the most

Absolute chronology (Ascalone/Sajjadi 2022b)	Šahr–i Sukta (Ascalone/Sajjadi 2022b)	Area 35 (Moradi 2022a)	Graves with seals	Cylinder seal production
PERIOD IA 3550–3350 BC*** 3525 BC (92.5%) 3338 BC	SiS I.10 (Early Uruk) (Harappa 1)	Layer 6–7		Early Phase (Proto-Elamite)
	SiS I.9 (Early Uruk) (Harappa 1)	Layer 5	Grave 9503 (Cat. no. 9) Grave 3203 (Cat. no. 16) Grave 3105 (Cat. no. 15) Grave 6708 (Cat. no. 6) Grave 8716 (Cat. no. 20)	
PERIOD IB 3350–3100 BC**** 3371 BC (93.7%) 3096 BC 3351 BC (87.1%) 3079 BC 2930 BC (56.4%) 2837 BC	SiS I.8 (Late Uruk) (Harappa 1)	Layer 4–3 (Cat. nos. 10, 18, 22)		
PERIOD IC 3100–3000 BC	SiS I.7 (Jemdet Nasr) (Harappa 1)	Layer 2		
PERIOD IIA 3000–2850 BC* 3017 BC (78.1%) 2857 BC 3017 BC (77.1%) 2856 BC 3021 BC (82.9%) 2857 BC 3030 BC (92.1%) 2874 BC 3029 BC (91.5%) 2871 BC	SiS II.6A–B (ED I) (Harappa 2)	Layer 1 (Cat. no. 17)	Grave 9125 (Cat. nos. 7–8) Grave 1610 (Cat. no. 1) Grave 1900 (Cat. nos. 2–3) Grave 3308 (Cat. no. 4) Grave 3505 (Cat. no. 5) Grave 9416? (Cat. no. 21)	Late Phase

Tab. 3. Chronological diffusion of cylinder seals from Šahr-i Sukta according to the new periods and archaeological phases.

recent layer of the excavated area. The above impression was found with pear-shaped beakers, black in buff semi-spherical bowls with hashed triangle and linear motifs.

A second seal impression (Cat. no. 18) was found in Layer 3, and must be attributed to Phase 8, Period IB; on the basis of the new sequences to be dated between ca. 3200 and 3100 BCE. This layer yielded an occupation just over 150cm thick, devoid of architectural evidence, in some cases reaching down to the virgin soil. The pottery is predominantly buff, with mouthed bowls and spherical jars with an everted rim, in a few cases with flat handles of clear western tradition, known in the Jemdet Nasr forms.

Two seal impressions (Cat. nos. 10 and 22) come from Layer 4 (Phase 8, earlier phase of Period IB, ca. 3300–3200 BCE), which constitutes a 40cm fill lying immediately below Layer 3. Together with the seal impression, handmade bowls of very fine workmanship, neckless jars (mainly Namazā III–Type pottery) and fragments of Jemdet Nasr pottery were found (Moradi 2022, 143–188).

The sealing on the tablet (Cat. no. 19) found during the 2021 archaeological campaign was found in room 27 of square XID in the Eastern Residential Area. The area has revealed a total of eleven layers that continued to the virgin soil at a depth of -510cm (Sajjadi/Moradi 2022). The tablet was found in Layer 8, next to a kiln of 55 x 35 x 27cm in archaeological association with bi-chrome globular jars showing geometric patterns painted with red and black colours and stepped motifs.

Grave 1610 (Cat. no. 1)

Grave 1610 yielded an artefact that allows the burial to be dated to Phase 6 due to the presence of distinctive pottery elements from this period (Sajjadi 2007, 536–543). Together with the cylinder seal, a pear-beaker of more archaic tradition (Vidale 1984), a perforated alabaster disc, an alabaster vessel with oblique and straight walls and, finally, a polychrome jar, to date from the first quarter of the 3rd mill. BCE, were found (Vecchio 2022, 309–346). Both the pear-shaped beaker specimen and the polychrome jar allow us to attribute the burial to the Period IIA of the site, ca. 3000–2850 BCE.

Grave 1900 (Cat. nos. 2–3)

The same date must be attributed to Grave 1900, which also yielded a polychrome jar, two pear-beakers of the type known during Phase 6 (ca. 3000–2850 BCE), a new alabaster vessel with oblique walls and a pronounced base and a red-on-buff jar (Sajjadi 2007, 600–602). Polychrome pottery, such as that from Grave 1610, also known as 'Nal pottery', is attested in Mehrgarh VB, Nausharo IA–B (ca. 3000 BCE), and is very rarely known in Period I of Šahr-i Suḵta. Its diffusion must mostly be ascribed to Period II, with a production that can also be considered regional, and is widely documented in the sequences of Area 33, Layer 4, Period IIA, ca. 3000–2850 BCE (Ascalone 2022a, 212–226; Vecchio 2022, 321–338).

Grave 3105 (Cat. no. 15)

Grave 3105 yielded very rich grave goods consisting of black on red/orange bowls, two slanted alabaster vessels, numerous ovoid beads made of chalcedony, lapis lazuli, limestone and turquoise, ovoid pebbles and plates of uncertain function (Sajjadi 2009, 593–595). The black on red/orange ware bowl with flat base, with festoons decorating the inside and outside of the vessel's body near the rim, finds strong comparisons with known productions in central Baloučestān dating to the last quarter of the 4th mill. BCE (Franke/Cortesi 2015, nos. 99–149).

Grave 3203 (Cat. no. 16)

Grave 3203 presented some of the richest grave goods. Together with the seal Cat. no. 16, numerous carnelian and lapis lazuli beads, a perforated alabaster disc, a necklace pendant, two alabaster bowls, three bowls and a miniature jar were found (Sajjadi 2009, 622–624). This grave should be dated to the second half of the 4th mill. BCE because of comparisons with the Kili Ghul Mohammed and Togau Red or Black slipped types known in Baloučestān (Franke/Cortesi 2015, nos. 4–62) and because of the bi-conical miniature jar that has to be considered as an import from Baloučestān to be dated to 3500–3200 BCE (Franke/Cortesi 2015, no. 74).

Grave 3308 (Cat. no. 4)
Grave 3308 returned homogeneous material that helps date the burial to Phase 6 (Period IIA, 3000–2850 BCE) (Sajjadi 2009, 570 f.). From this grave there are two jars (one globular black on buff and one polychrome), a pear-shaped beaker from the beginning of Period II (Phase 6), an alabaster vessel and a perforated alabaster disk.

Grave 3503 (Cat. no. 5)
From Grave 3503 (Sajjadi 2009, 548–550) comes a rich funerary ensemble comprising a bronze mirror, two alabaster vessels, an indeterminate parallelepiped stone, numerous chalcedony, agate and lapis lazuli beads (both circular and cylindrical), two circular perforated calcite objects, four red and gray ware bowls and three miniature bowls that are remotely comparable with the production of Makrān IIIa (ca. 3100–2800 BCE) (see Didier/Mutin 2013, 469, nos. 3–4).

Grave 6708 (Cat. no. 6)
From Grave 6708 there are in addition to the seal, a stone smoother, a perforated limestone disc, a bone tool and a bronze pin with a braided head (Sajjadi 2022b, 40 f., fig. 19). The scarce presence of comparisons does not help with the dating of the tomb, although the seal Cat. no. 6, as shall be seen, must certainly be dated to the second half of the 4th mill. BCE.

Grave 8716 (Cat. no. 20)
Grave 8716 returned a chalcedony bead, a perforated calcite disk, a red-on-buff bowl with geometric decoration just below the inside rim of the vessel, and finally, a red-on-buff cylindrical beaker, only slightly carinated at one third of the body of the vessel. This last production must be considered a proto-type of the more fusiform pear-shaped beakers of the Period II (Vidale 1984, fig. 11.7) and must be ascribed to Phase 8–7 of Šahr-i Suḵta (Period IB–C), to be dated between 3350 and 3000 BCE.

Grave 9125 (Cat. nos. 7–8)
Grave 9125 returned only one miniature jar, but it is particularly interesting because it represents a mass production workshop in Baloučestān, widely known between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd mill. BCE (ca. 3100–2800 BCE), also located at Sohr Damb/Nal (Franke/Cortesi 2015, 179, fig. 89: 5).

Grave 9416 (Cat. no. 21)
This grave is certainly difficult to date, due to the absence of material besides the single cylinder seal found. The same seal, as explained in the next paragraph, has no comparable iconography (especially considering the presence of a possible equid in the representation). The style could bring it closer to the production of the end of the 4th and beginning of the 3rd mill. BCE with, however, some uncertainty.

Grave 9503 (Cat. no. 9)
Grave 9503 must be considered one of the oldest graves, due to the material found inside. Two red ware bowls with oblique walls and flat base, a perforated calcite disk, and two proto-beakers, dated to Phase 8–7, ascribe this burial to the Period IB–C (ca. 3400–3100 BCE).

4 Style and Iconography

Three main iconographic groups can be identified in the Šahr-i Suḵta corpus, collected during the 1997–2021 excavation campaigns. A Geometric Group (GG), numerically more consistent, a group mostly characterised by floral and/or vegetal elements (Naturalistic Group or NG) and, finally, a Figurative Group (FG) that reproduces scenes that have a narrative intent and are not simply decorative as the two previous groups.

The style of all three groups appears perfunctory, with little attention to volumetry and, with the exception of a few specimens, mostly characterised by shallow incisions on the surface of the stone of the seal. Only in a few cases is there a careful division of the metopal space to allow for a balanced distribution of representation.

4.1 Geometric Group (Cat. nos. 1–14; *fig. 1–14*)

The geometric style identifies a very coherent and homogeneous group of 14 seals and seal impressions, mostly characterised by simple incised lines reproducing repetitive and generic patterns.

In addition to wavy lines (Cat. nos. 1, 3; *fig. 1; 3*), there are cruciform (Cat. nos. 2, 5; *fig. 2; 5*), rhomboidal, often filled (Cat. nos. 4, 7, 9–10, 12–13; *fig. 4; 7; 9; 10; 12; 13*), and 'fishbone' motifs (Cat. no. 8; *fig. 8*), and only one specimen without an apparent decorative pattern (Cat. no. 11; *fig. 11*).

The entire production, however, seems to be absolutely consistent from a chronological point of view: comparisons are to be sought in specimens belonging to a type not specifically belonging to the classical Proto-Elamite group; they should probably be considered contemporary with the Proto-Elamite production and, in part, slightly later, until the first centuries of the 3rd mill. BCE. The subgroup with wavy lines is comparable with specimens from Susā dating to the Jemdet Nasr and Early Dynastic periods.[9] The cruciform,[10] rhomboidal,[11] fishbone motifs[12] and the seal without a clear pattern[13] must also be dated to the same period. In particular, a seal (Amiet 1971, 59.5), with a clear similarity to the corpus of Šahr-i Suḵta, provides a more precise context of discovery: the specimen was found on the Acropole of Susā (sector H–5) in level 14A, which must necessarily be dated to Susā IIIA, a period between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd mill. BCE. It is interesting to add that level 14A is the first layer that does not return Proto-Elamite tablets. The first Proto-Elamite tablets were found between 17A and 16, but other later specimens were also discovered in levels 15B, 15A and 14B (despite this R. Dittmann proposes to consider the Proto-Elamite period at Susā from level 16 to 11, based also on the pottery evidence; Dittmann 1986, tab. 1). In summary, the GG of Šahr-i Suḵta must be considered as a production unrelated to the classical Proto-Elamite group, but with clear and decisive references to the Susā glyptic art of Period III which, using Mesopotamian terminology, must be attributed between the period of Jemdet Nasr and the Early Dynastic II (Acropole levels 16–14; see Ascalone 2006b, 7–29).

The GG, with all its subgroups, is also comparable with other specimens from the necropolis of Šahr-i Suḵta, excavated by M. Tosi. Linear geometric decoration is known in Grave 19, a so-called 'pseudo-catacomb' with multiple burials (Piperno/Salvatori 2007, 58 f.), which has yielded rather rich grave goods in which prototypes of pear-beakers, dated to Phase 8–7, have also been found.

The geometric pattern with lozenges was found in Grave 410 (Piperno/Salvatori 2007, 216–218), with its bipartite pit typology and multiple usage, and in which, together with the cylinder seal, black-on-buff bowls with festoon decorations appear. This typology should be ascribed to the Period IIA, Layer 4a, Phase 6 (ca. 3000–2850 BCE) as known from the Area 33 sequences (Vecchio 2022, fig. 19).

The so-called 'fishbone' decoration on the seals is known from Grave 738 (Piperno/Salvatori 2007, 302–304), a bipartite-pit for multiple usage, in which chalcedony beads and two goblets attributed to Phase 8 (corresponding to the new Period IC, end of the 4th mill. BCE, ca. 3100–3000 BCE) were also found.

Other comparisons can be found in the older excavations at Šahr-i Suḵta; the filled triangles in Cat. no. 10 are well known in Lamberg-Karlovsky/Tosi 1973, fig. 17; Tosi 1983, 71, fig. 70; Amiet 1983, 85, fig. 9a–b.

From these decorative typologies we have to exclude two specimens, which in terms of style and decorative themes seem to represent a separate group: the seals Cat. nos. 6 and 14 (*fig. 6; 14*) display a stylised arrow and an indeterminate quadrangular element (perhaps to be considered as a strong schematisation of a building or a piece

9 Amiet 1972, nos. 855–857, 1282–1283, 1362; Delaporte 1920, 24, 49, 113, 190.

10 Comparisons with Delaporte 1920, 18, 21–25, 27 f.; Amiet 1972, nos. 852–854, 858, 871–872, 874–875, 877.

11 See Amiet 1972, nos. 816, 1224; see in Šahr-i Suḵta the seals of period I published by Amiet 1983, 86, fig. 16a–b.

12 See Delaporte 1920, 8–11, 45, 121; Legrain 1921, 16; Amiet 1972, no. 1237; see also Khafaja in Frankfort 1955, pl. 3: 10, 8: 52, 17: 164 and 172, 29: 286 in Sin II–IV layers dating to the 'Protoliterate period' and Tell Agrab in Frankfort 1955, pl. 78: 838 and pl. 81: 862 in Early Dynastic II layers; see also in Šahr-i Suḵta the seal from period II in Amiet 1983, 85, fig. 11a–b.

13 See Pézard 1912, 179; Delaporte 1920, 145, 155–157, 163; Amiet 1972, no. 2248.

Fig. 1. Seal (Cat. no. 1) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

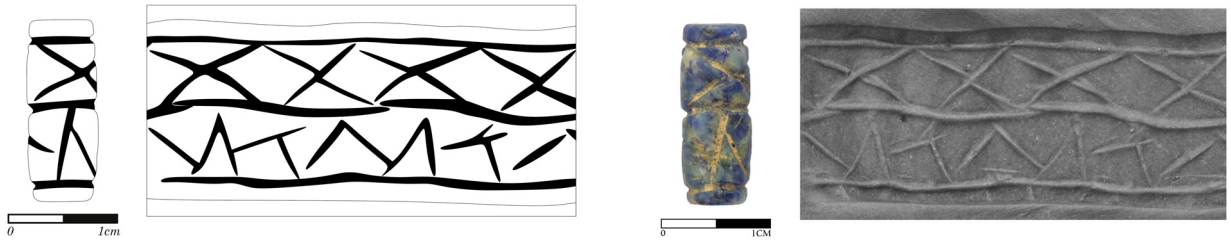

Fig. 2. Seal (Cat. no. 2) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

Fig. 3. Seal (Cat. no. 3) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

Fig. 4. Seal (Cat. no. 4) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

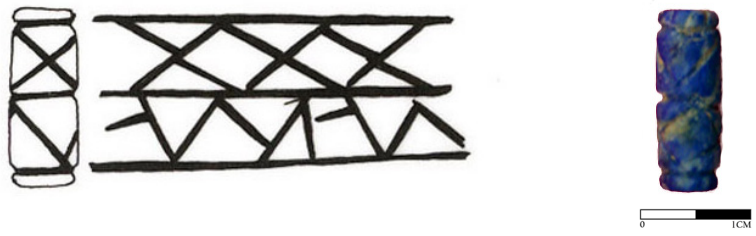

Fig. 5. Seal (Cat. no. 5) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

Fig. 6. Seal (Cat. no. 6) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

Fig. 7. Seal (Cat. no. 7) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

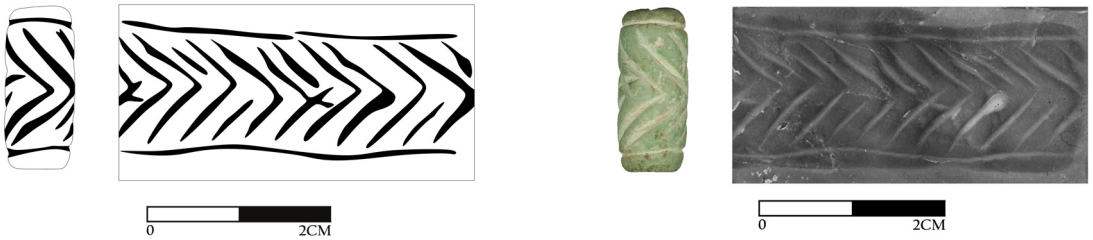

Fig. 8. Seal (Cat. no. 8) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

Fig. 9. Seal (Cat. no. 9) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

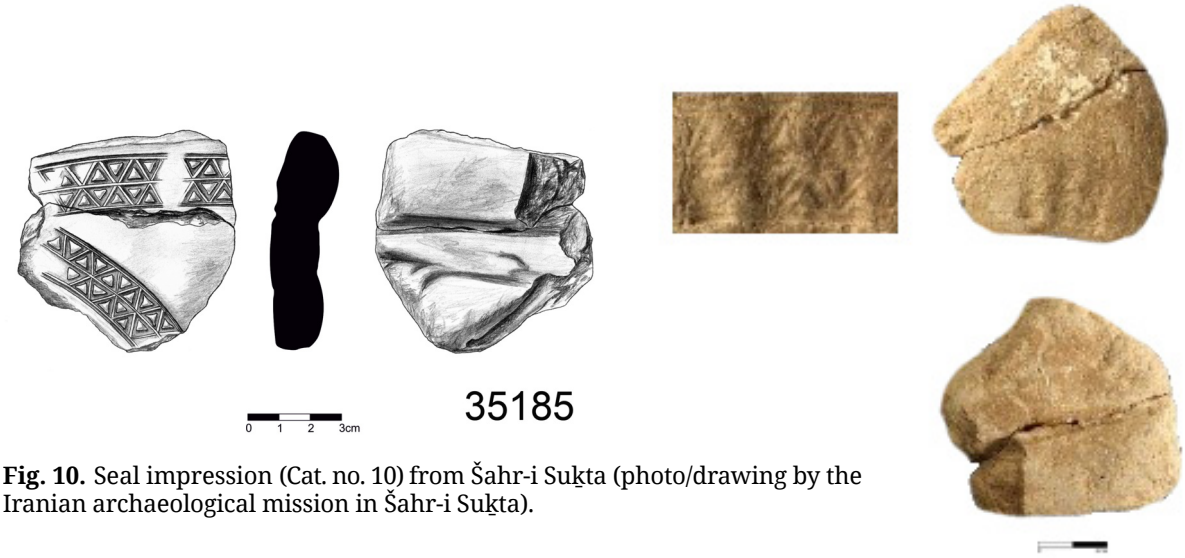

Fig. 10. Seal impression (Cat. no. 10) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

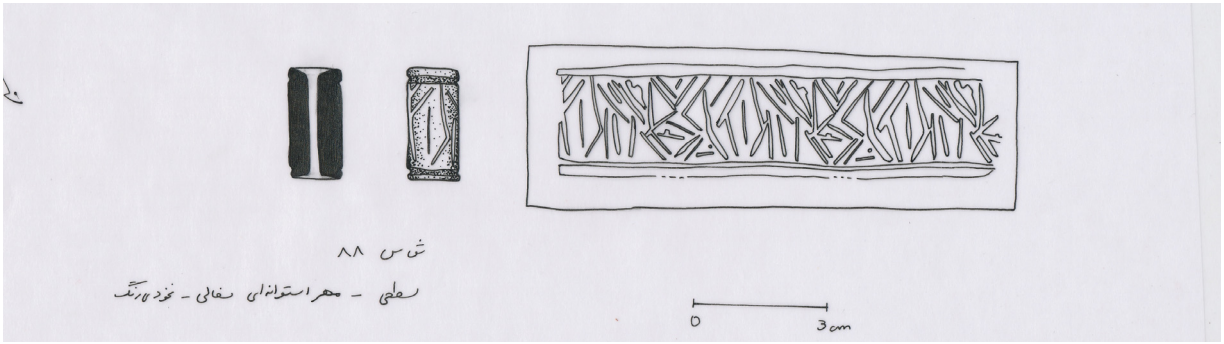

Fig. 11. Seal (Cat. no. 11) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

Fig. 12. Seal (Cat. no. 12) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

Fig. 13. Seal (Cat. no. 13) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

Fig. 14. Seal (Cat. no. 14) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

of furniture) respectively. Both show a style very different from the other specimens: the stroke of the engraving appears sharper, more decisive; it is a stroke that gives more volume to the representations, very different from what is known from the classic GG. The overall stylistic uncertainty and approximation of the seals belonging to this group is, indeed, completely absent in these two seals, which must be considered a different production. These last two seals are very clearly comparable with the production of the second half of the 4th mill. BCE known from Čogā Miš (Delougaz/Kantor 1996, pl. 42S, 142C and pl. 43C–D, 142E). The impressions from Čogā Miš were found in layers whose pottery assemblage belongs to Susā II, in contexts with a strong presence of Uruk-type material and should be ascribed to the glazed steatite Proto-Elamite typology.

4.2 Naturalistic Group (Cat. nos. 15–19; *fig. 15–19*)

The NG consists of two seals and three sealings that all reproduce the same motif: a floral element with four symmetrical petals that is widely attested in Proto-Elamite sphragistics.

The style appears homogeneous with strong engravings that follow a pre-established pattern. In addition to the incised linear lines, the drill is used both to make the pistil of the flower and to insert new filler elements into the figurative field as known in Cat. nos. 15 and 16 (*fig. 15*, *16*). In particular, Cat. no. 16 also adds cruciform elements that alternate with the plant decorations, showing how this typology also includes richer iconographic variants, perhaps to be considered as belonging to distinct social or family groups.

The four-petalled flower came from Šahr-i Suḵta (Amiet 1983, fig. 1a, 6; see Amiet/Tosi 1978, fig. 26) in contexts dated to Period I (Phase 10) of the site and coming from Room CCLXII (26) of the Eastern Residential Area, while it appears completely absent in the necropolis of the same site. New comparisons have been made with the Proto-Elamite production of Susā known in numerous seal impressions found on the tablets from Acropole,[14] Tepe Yahyā (Pittman 2001, fig. 10.29) and, with some iconographical variants, at Tall-i Malyān (Nicholas 1990, pl. 37B). Comparisons can also be found in the later periods at Susā dating Early Dynastic I (Amiet 1980, nos. 489, 499), while specimens were discovered in Khafaja, in Sin temple II–IV layers dating to the so–called 'Protoliterate period',[15] and in Tell Asmar, in the Square Temple, Layer 1, dating to the Early Dynastic II (Frankfort 1955, pl. 43: 459). Similarly, the so–called 'Maltese cross' known from Cat. no. 15 (*fig. 15*) shows new comparisons with Susā production from the second half of the 4th mill. BCE; it was found together with material of clearer Uruk reference,[16] and specifically Proto–Elamite seals.[17] The same iconography is known from a seal impression from Tepe Yahyā (Pittman 2001, fig. 10.16), Khafaja (Frankfort 1955, pl. 12: 95) and older excavations at Šahr-i Suḵta (Amiet 1983, 84, figs. 6a–b), while a Susā specimen was also found in a slightly later context attributed to the Susā Early Dynastic I strata, in archaeological association with polychrome pottery (Amiet 1972, no. 1400; 1980, no. 484).

Of particular interest is the impression on a tablet from the 2021 excavations (Cat. no. 19; *fig. 19*). The seal impression, which reproduces floral elements joined together by a sinuous band, must in fact be considered a specifically Proto-Elamite production because of its comparability with specimens found in Susā (Amiet 1973, nos. 1304–1307; 1980, no. 499). One of these seals (Amiet 1973, no. 1306) has more specific contexts of occurrence (de Mecquenem 1934, 218, fig. 63: 1), although these are severely difficult to reconstruct. The seal in question comes from the Ville Royale, near the southwest corner of the settlement, in particular from pit graves found between -16m (approximately immediately above the virgin soil) and -14m, in archaeological association with numerous polychrome potteries. It is precisely this polychrome pottery that helps to contextualise the Susā seal and allows to be dated to the most archaic phases of occupation at the Ville Royale; the polychrome vessels from Susā were attributed to the 28th cent. BCE by R. de Mecquenem (1934) in layers immediately following those containing monochrome pottery (this pottery finds strong comparisons with the Deh Lurān, in particular Tape Mussiān; see Wright 1981, 111–125), and the Hamrin sites (Killik/Roaf 1979, 540). It can therefore be assumed that the contexts in which the seal was found may correspond to levels 18–17 of the Ville Royale, excavated by E. Carter (1980); to levels 15–13 of the Acropole excavated by A. Le Brun (1971); or to the Da typological class identified by L. Le Breton (1957). This typology seems

14 Delaporte 1920, 124, 130, 135; Amiet 1972, nos. 824–830, 1087, 1107, 1118–1121, 1123, 1126, 1133–1134, 1278, 1297, 1305; 1980, nos. 478–479, 1682.

15 Frankfort 1955, pls. 3: 9–10; 8: 51; 12: 96; 13: 107–108 and also in Amiet 1980, no. 432; for archaeological contexts see also Frankfort 1933.

16 Amiet 1972, no. 463; 1980, no. 244; for stratigraphical contexts see de Mecquenem 1943, 20, fig. 16.

17 Delaporte 1920, 75, 77–79, 306 f.; Legrain 1921, no. 12, 48; Amiet 1972, nos. 825, 929, 996–997, 999, 1064, 1086, 1090, 1092–1096, 1313, 2322; 1980, 514 f., 530, no. 1686.

Fig. 15. Seal (Cat. no. 15) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

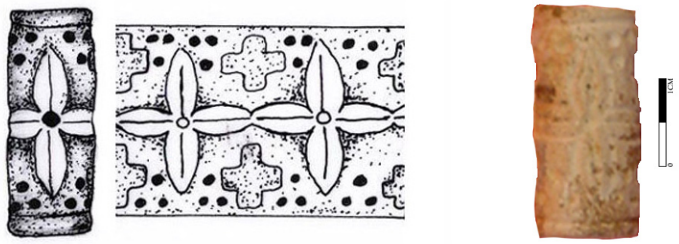

Fig. 16. Seal (Cat. no. 16) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

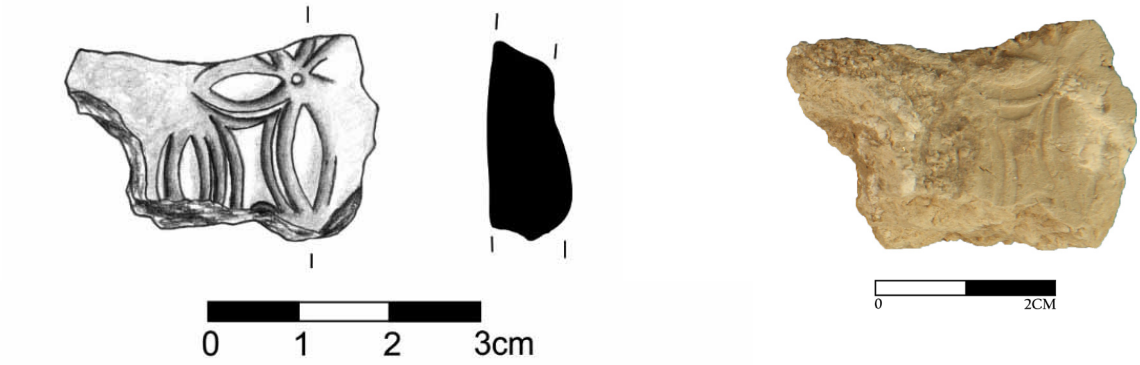

Fig. 17. Seal impression (Cat. no. 17) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

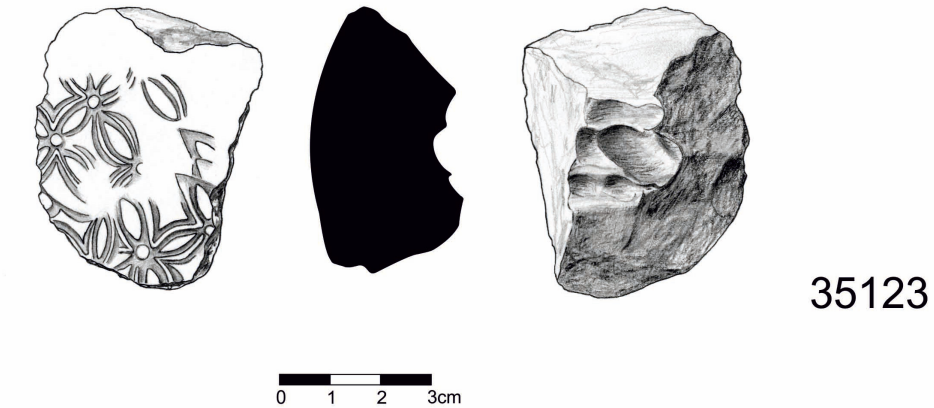

Fig. 18. Seal impression (Cat. no. 18) from Šahr-i Sukta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Sukta).

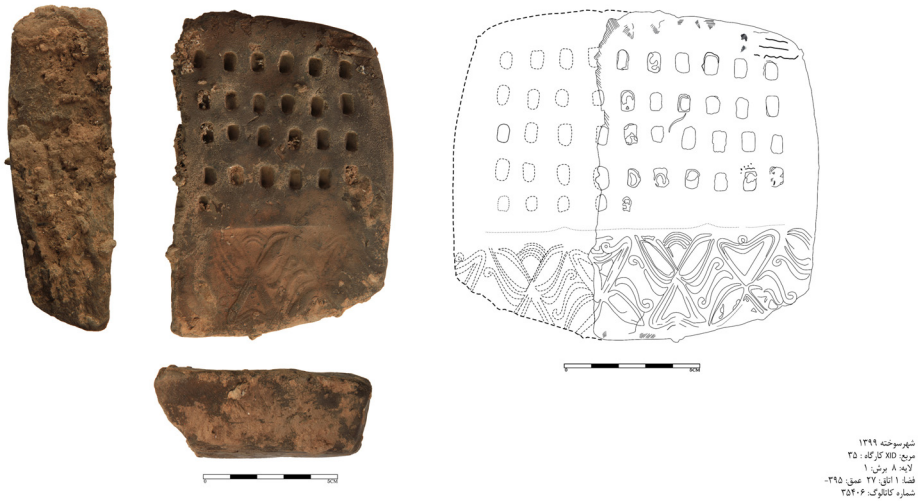

Fig. 19. Seal impression (Cat. no. 19) from Šahr-i Suḵta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Suḵta).

to characterise the layers immediately following the one with the so-called 'Scarlet Ware', a ceramic production commonly dated to Early Dynastic II. In summary, this seal must be ascribed to Susā IIIA, and its context of discovery is associated with the layers that returned numerous Proto-Elamite tablets (the first Proto-Elamite tablets were found in the interface layer between level 17A and 16 of the Acropole, up to level 14B: on the most recent absolute chronologies on Proto-Elamite material from Susā and the Iranian plateau see Dahl et al. 2013).

In conclusion, on the basis of the contexts of the Šahr-i Suḵta finds and comparisons, this group, homogeneous in style and iconography, must be considered a Proto-Elamite production and dated to the second half of the 4th and very beginning of the 3rd mill. BCE, also by virtue of the new absolute dates of the Sistān site which, as we shall see in the conclusion, are in line with the new chronological interpretations of the spread of Proto-Elamite material on the Iranian plateau (Dahl et al. 2013).

4.3 Figurative Group (Cat. nos. 20–23; *fig. 20–23*)

The FG comprises three seals (Cat. nos. 20–21, 23; *fig. 20; 21*) and one impression (Cat. no. 22; *fig. 22*).

The FG style is highly schematic, with humans and animals represented by simple lines lacking anatomical details. In contrast to the other two groups, there is also an attempt to express the geographical context through the representation of schematic buildings or vague geographical references.

The seal Cat. no. 20 reproduces a highly stylised human figure, uncertain schematic lines, and the 'Maltese cross' of Proto-Elamite tradition discussed already (for comparisons see above).

Together with Cat. no. 23, this type of production finds stylistic analogies in a group of seals known in Susā and dated to Susā III (Amiet 1972, nos. 2243, 2246–2247, 2249–2250, 2258, 2261, 2263–2264): a linear production in which the schematic depiction of human figures (probably male) is joined by the representation of architectural buildings rendered through simple horizontal and oblique parallel lines (see Amiet 1972, no. 1449).

The schematic nature of these two seals (Cat. nos. 20 and 23; *fig. 20; 23*) means they must originate from the early period of the settlement (perhaps with overlap into the beginning of Period II), probably to be dated between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd mill. BCE.

The sealing Cat. no. 22 (*fig. 22*) has an approximate but less schematic style and seems to give more volume. Unfortunately, it is not preserved in its entirety and it is difficult to reconstruct its narrative structure. It seems possible to recognise a quadruped with a long tail walking from left to right. The figures in front and behind have mostly been lost. This cylinder seal impression seems to have close links with an impression found at

Fig. 20. Seal (Cat. no. 20) from Šahr-i Suḵta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Suḵta).

Fig. 21. Seal (Cat. no. 21) from Šahr-i Suḵta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Suḵta).

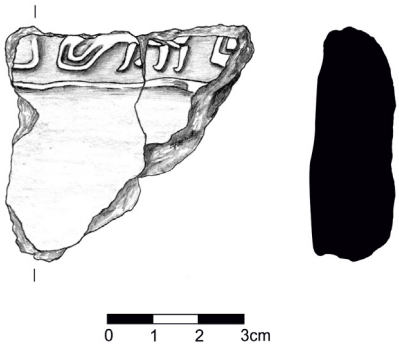

Fig. 22. Seal impression (Cat. no. 22) from Šahr-i Suḵta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Suḵta).

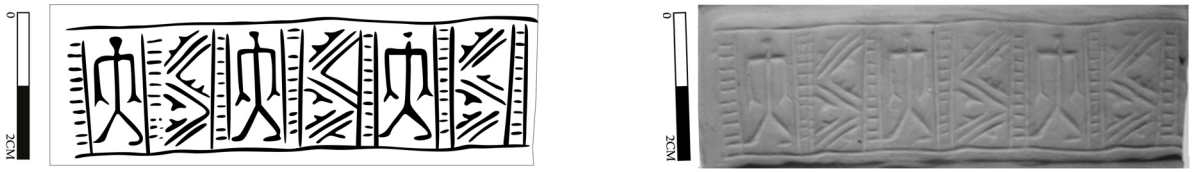

Fig. 23. Seal (Cat. no. 23) from Šahr-i Suḵta (photo/drawing by the Iranian archaeological mission in Šahr-i Suḵta).

Šahr-i Suḵta and attributed to the first period of the settlement.[18] The overall stylistic rendering of the legs of the quadruped and its long tail must necessarily be related to the seal Cat. no. 22 (Amiet 1983, figs. 2–3; 1986, pl. 58: 2). The quadruped from Cat. no. 22 could also be compared to the seal of Šahr-i Suḵta published by P. Amiet (1986, pl. 58: 1), where winged quadrupeds are depicted, also moving from left to right. This sealing was

18 Room XX of the 'House of the Stairs'; for archaeological contextual analysis see Ameri 2020.

found in Period I, Phase 10 in the old chronological sequence established by M. Tosi (Salvatori/Tosi 2005). The absence of the upper part of the impression prevents from establishing a definite relationship between the two figures. Again, on the basis of comparisons found, especially in Šahr-i Suḫta itself, the seal impression Cat. no. 23 must belong to the earliest period of the site and date from the second half of the 4th mill. BCE.

The chronological and typological classification of Cat. no. 21 (*fig. 21*) is much more complex. The style remains schematic, but the overall rendering is far removed from the productions analysed so far. There is more care, and more attention to proportions and an equal distribution of the figures within the metopal space of the seal. The filler elements themselves, such as the star in the upper half of the seal, are very different from what is known in the production of the cylinder seal of Šahr-i Suḫta I. The scene appears to depict a human figure flanked by an equid, a combination of figures completely unknown in the archaic glyptic of Šahr-i Suḫta and the Iranian plateau. More generally, the presence of the equid, the centralised representation that goes beyond the so-called 'figureband' style, the accuracy in the use of the seal space, and the care in proportions all seem to be indications for a later dating of this seal. No Iranian Bronze Age seal depicting an equid is known from the Iranian Plateau and Ḫuzestān.

5 Conclusions

In conclusion, three stylistic macro-groups have been identified in the corpus of cylinder seals from Šahr-i Suḫta. The production of these types must be dated to between ca. 3500/3400 and 2850 BCE, after which time it seems to have completely disappeared, replaced by stamp seal production. The three identified styles seem to fit within two different chronological horizons (*tab. 3*):

(1) Early Šahr-i Suḫta or Proto-Elamite cylinder seal production – SiS IB–C (ca. 3350–3000 BCE);
(2) Late Šahr-i Suḫta cylinder seal production – SiS IIA (ca. 3000–2850 BCE).

These two chronological phases seem to be identified with two typologically distinct productions: the NG, to be considered a specifically Proto-Elamite class, must represent the earliest production that, on the basis of the contexts and comparisons reported, should be dated to the second half of the 4th mill. BCE; the GG, with some exceptions (Cat. nos. 6 and 14), instead have to be considered a type that seems to have a lower chronology going back as far as Period IIA of Šahr-i Suḫta and in any case not known beyond 2850 BCE. These two productions seem to follow the same chronological spread known in more western contexts (Susiānā and Diyāla in primis). The third group (FG), with strong references to Proto-Elamite production in the specimen Cat. no. 20, should be attributed to the first chronological phase (as is evident from the contexts in which it was found) with some overlapping into Period II, based on some comparisons with Susā III in Cat. no. 23.

The absolute chronologies proposed for this group of seals are based on the most recent isotopic analyses carried out at Šahr-i Suḫta,[19] but also find confirmation in the stratigraphies and ^{14}C analysis done on the contexts of discovery of the Proto-Elamite tablets from Susā and the entire Iranian plateau (Dahl et al. 2013). The Proto-Elamite tablets from Susā come from levels 16–14B of the Acropole, those from Sialk at -1/-1.30m below the surface (Ghirshman 1938, 58–61), the tablet of Tepe Ozbaki was found in one of the mounds near the acropolis, those of Tepe Sofālin probably in a dump with much other administrative material (Hessari/Akbari 2007), the only tablet of Tal-e Ghazir was found on Mound A, in Trench I (Caldwell 1971, 348–355), the 32 tablets (and fragments) from Tall-i Malyān come from level III of Operation ABC (Sumner 1988, 309), while other tablets were found in BL 4A–5 (stratum 13A), BL 3B, all of which are from the Middle Bāneš period, generally considered contemporary with the transition between Susā II and III; finally, the Proto-Elamite tablets from Tepe Yahya come from the IVC period (Damerow/Englund 1989, fig. 1). The ^{14}C analysis done on the Proto-Elamite material from Susā returns a very diverse range, in some cases even dated to the 5th mill. BCE. The dates of Tall-i Malyān are however rather consistent, returning

19 Ascalone/Sajjadi 2022b; Ascalone 2022b; Ascalone/Vecchio 2023; Moradi 2022; see also Ascalone/Sajjadi 2019; Ascalone 2021.

an average range between 3500 and 3000 BCE, exactly in line with the results of Godin Tape. It seems likely, in the light of the new evidence also coming from Šahr-i Suḵta, that the so-called 'Proto-Elamite phenomenon' must be circumscribed to the second half of the 4th mill. BCE, and has slightly earlier dates than previously assumed.

From a historical point of view, it seems clear that the spread of the seal in Šahr-i Suḵta is linked to the spread of Proto-Elamite cultural horizons during the second half of the 4th mill. BCE, as also documented by the two tablets found in the site (Amiet/Tosi 1978, 24 f., fig. 16; Sajjadi/Moradi 2022), one of which bears a clear impression of a Proto-Elamite tradition (Cat. no. 19). It is very interesting to note that this Early Group was found together with pottery of clear Baloučestān tradition, as documented by the grave goods found in Graves 3105 and 3203. No cylinder seals have any archaeological association with Namāzgā III material. What seems to emerge is that the ceramic tradition of Baloučestān, well established in Šahr-i Suḵta, is combined with the cylinder seal tradition of clear Proto-Elamite origin. The two factors combined in individual pit graves in the necropolis of Šahr-i Suḵta seems to suggest that the two components coexisted and that the exogenous factor (Proto-Elamite) was absolutely integrated with the endogenous one from Baloučestān.

With the transition from Period I to Period II (IC to IIA), the production of the cylinder seal changes; the cylindrical form remains but is now largely numerically flanked by the stamp typology that will mark the local production until the end of the settlement. The style and themes, however, now change almost entirely, showing a strong schematicism, repetitiveness and stylistic decline. The style appears flatter, more approximate, less accurate, while the themes are exclusively geometric (see above).

The accurate, plastic and varied style of the Early Group is completely forgotten; the artistic deterioration certainly documents a period of strong estrangement from the more archaic Proto-Elamite production, also a strong break with the Proto-Elamite cultural presence. Although the seal remains cylindrical in shape and is still comparable to some southwestern Iranian productions, the suggestion is that it bears no relation to the iconographical and stylistic Proto-Elamite features. Subsequent generations seem to have reminiscences of the cylindrical type, but they are very distant from the Proto-Elamite production, as seems to be amply documented at Susā in the transition from levels 14A to 14B–13 on the Acropole (in the second half of Susā IIIA), in 16–13 on the Ville Royale (in Susā IIIB), or in Jemdet Nasr and Early Dynastic I–II periods in the Diyāla region. At Šahr-i Suḵta this transition occurs between the Periods I and II, in the transition from IC to IIA (SiS 7–6), around ca. 3000 BCE.

It may not be accidental that the appearance of the stamp seal is also strongly associated with geometric production; all the stamp seals of Šahr-i Suḵta (from Period II to IV) (Ascalone/Sajjadi in press) return geometric, aniconic decorations, devoid of any naturalistic or figurative themes. The diffusion of geometric themes could, therefore, begin with SiS IIA, with the most archaic cylindrical production and then spread widely and exclusively through the stamp production. The passage between SiS IC and IIA (or Phase 7 to 6) represents, therefore, a historical caesura also documented in the production of glyptic, which continues the use of the cylindrical form for a couple of centuries, but now completely emptied of the meaning present during the previous period, and with a geometric decoration that will be widely elaborated and used by the later stamp production.

Enrico Ascalone
Professor in Archaeology and Art History of Ancient Near East
University of Salento
Department of Cultural Heritage
Via Dalmazio Birago, 64
73100 Lecce, Italy
enrico.ascalone@unisalento.it

Seyyed Mansur Seyyed Sajjadi
Senior Researcher in Archaeology
Iranian Center for Archaeological Research
Baharestan Square
11416 Tehran, Iran
m_sajjadi@hotmail.com

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Ferdinand Hollenhorst

Some Selected Characteristic Achaemenid Pottery Shapes from Jiroft, Southeastern Iran

Keywords: Iron Age, Achaemenid, pottery, Jiroft, Kerman, Southeast Iran, Afghanistan

Summary

This article explores the pottery tradition in the region south of Jiroft during the Achaemenid period. It concludes that the pottery of this period and region does not merely mirror the pottery from the Iranian part of the Achaemenid Empire and that the assemblages primarily display influences from the adjacent regions to the east. This is achieved by the presentation of characteristic pottery shapes from the region, which are embedded in a supra-regional chronological framework by comparisons to finds from other contemporary sites. The most frequent and relevant pottery shapes found in the region south of Jiroft differ considerably from the pottery of other parts of the Achaemenid Empire. The pottery studies here, at least, show that the southeast of Iran should be recognised as an important supra-regional hub that connected Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Arabian Peninsula and the heartland of the Achaemenid Empire during the period under investigation.

1 Introduction

The Achaemenid period in southeastern Iran is still not well understood, although some excavations[1] and surveys[2] have been conducted. The excavations focused mostly on the architecture and the pottery finds were neglected, although some recent studies aimed to remedy this problem.[3] This makes it imperative to shed some light on the pottery from the region south of Jiroft, introduce some of its characteristic shapes and illuminate its relationship with the surrounding regions.

To accomplish the aforementioned goals this article will draw upon some results from a recent MA thesis (Hollenhorst 2019), which were based on the analysis of the Achaemenid pottery collected in the SOJAS 2015–2018 campaigns, to showcase some of the region's characteristic pottery shapes.[4] The pottery shapes discussed here will be compared to sites in the surrounding areas, thus incorporating them into an inter-regional chronological framework and opening the way for investigations into the relationships between the aforementioned areas during the late Iron Age.[5]

1 For this region, relevant excavations include Tepe Yaḥyā (Magee 2004), Dahān-e Ḡolāmān (Gnoli 1993; Sajjadi 2001a; 2001b; 2007) and in recent times of Mahdiabad-e Olia (Atayi/Zare 2019). At the time of publication, Qaleh Kutchek near Jiroft (Azadi et al. 2012) remains unexcavated.

2 Surveys were conducted for example in Qaleh Kutchek (Azadi et al. 2012) and the Roudbar Region (Sheikhakbari et al. 2015), for an English summary see Maresca 2018. Furthermore, important surveys have been carried out in Sistan (Mehrafarin/Musavi Haji 2008; Mehrafarin/Musavi Haji 2010; Mehrafarin/Musavi Haji 2016).

3 See for example the reappraisals for Tepe Yaḥyā (Magee 2004) or Dahān-e Ḡolāmān (Zehbari/Mehrafarin 2014; Zehbari et al. 2014; 2015a; 2015b; Maresca 2010; 2019a; 2019b).

4 SOJAS, South of Jiroft Archaeological Survey. This project is being conducted by the ICAR and the University of Tübingen in the plains and valleys to the south of the city, in order to understand the connection of the region to the Persian Gulf. For a concise introduction to the project and methodology see Pfälzner/Soleimani 2017; Pfälzner et al. 2019. This paper serves as the development of some ideas conceived during my MA thesis written on the subject. Because of the length limitations here, only a selection of pottery types will be presented.

5 Although the shapes in the article have thus far just been found in Achaemenid sites in the Jiroft region, many of them continue onwards into the post-Achaemenid period as shown below.

Although the Achaemenid period can be considered as being well-researched, this is mostly valid for the core region of the empire only. Investigations in the vicinity of the Jiroft region have largely focused on the Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age: there have been no excavations that focused on the Iron Age or Achaemenid periods until recently and just a low number of surveys that focused on this time-span.[6] Material for comparisons must therefore be drawn from places further away, which in our case means the Persian Gulf region, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Iranian Plateau.

Whereas the Iranian Plateau and the Persian Gulf region have housed numerous recent excavations and surveys, conducted with developed techniques and methods, the difficult situation and conflicts over at least the last two decades in Afghanistan and Pakistan have hampered archaeological ambitions, although important new findings from fieldwork and reports have nonetheless been published in recent years.[7] Therefore, most of the above-mentioned comparable material from these regions comes from older excavations and surveys in the region and doesn't measure up to today's standards in terms of methodological documentation.

One further thing to consider in making these comparisons is the separation between the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid period, since many of the Achaemenid shapes continued to be used beyond their period. Therefore, it has to be understood that there is an overlap in material between the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid periods, as also shown through some of the comparisons below. The focus of this article nevertheless remains on the Achaemenid period, during which these shapes first appeared in the region around Jiroft. Another reason for this is that no immediate post-Achaemenid settlements have as yet been recorded in the region and the later Parthian pottery differs from the Achaemenid material, although some of the shapes appear even in this period.

2 The Pottery

The potsherds discussed in the present article were collected from the plains of Jiroft (Sites G10 and G26), the Faryāb Plain (Site B46) and the region of Golāšgerd (Site H3). They all originate from mound-like sites, with the exception of Site B46, which is a cairn graveyard (*fig. 1*). These sites were chosen since they yielded the best-preserved examples of these particular shapes, although Achaemenid pottery in general and these shapes specifically can be found at many other sites within the three aforementioned areas, as well as on the Boluk plain and in the Baghe Borj mountains.[8]

Overall, 2090 potsherds were considered, of which 230 came from Site G10, 385 from G26, 135 from B46 and 85 from H3.

In total, twelve characteristic shapes can be discerned, two of which display distinctive subtypes.[9] These shapes were selected, because they occurred most frequently in the Achaemenid sites named above.

In this article, then, they will be described and separated into shapes that are characteristic for the region south of Jiroft, and shapes that also appear in the heartland of the Achaemenid Empire. Of these twelve shapes, seven are open forms, four are closed forms and one is a base. The open shapes can be further separated into collared bowls (*fig. 2.1–2*), carinated bowls with a double-sided rim (*fig. 2.3–4*), carinated bowls with a ledge rim (*fig. 2.5*), bowls with an offset vertical rim (*fig. 2.6*), tulip bowls (*fig. 2.10*), hemispherical bowls with a ledge rim (*fig. 2.11*) and carinated bowls with a hanging rim (*fig. 2.12*). The closed

6 Surveys: Azadi et al. 2012; Sheikhakbari et al. 2015; Excavations: Atayi/Zare 2019.

7 For the Iranian Plateau see for example Askari Chaverdi/Callieri 2017; for a concise presentation about the Iron Age I–III on the Arabian Peninsula see Avanzini/Esposti 2018. Although the situation is extremely difficult in these regions, important research has nonetheless been published in recent years. For Sistan: Allen/Trousdale 2019; Balkh: Houal 2016; Herat: Franke/Urban 2017 to just name a few.

8 See Pfälzner et al. 2019, 115; see also fig. 9 for further sites discovered.

9 In addition to these twelve characteristic types, other less frequently occurring shapes can be observed, which are mentioned in Hollenhorst 2019, 47–89. These include carinated bowls with simple rims, s-carinated bowls, carinated bowls with flattened rim, club rim bowls, spouted vessels and storage jars.

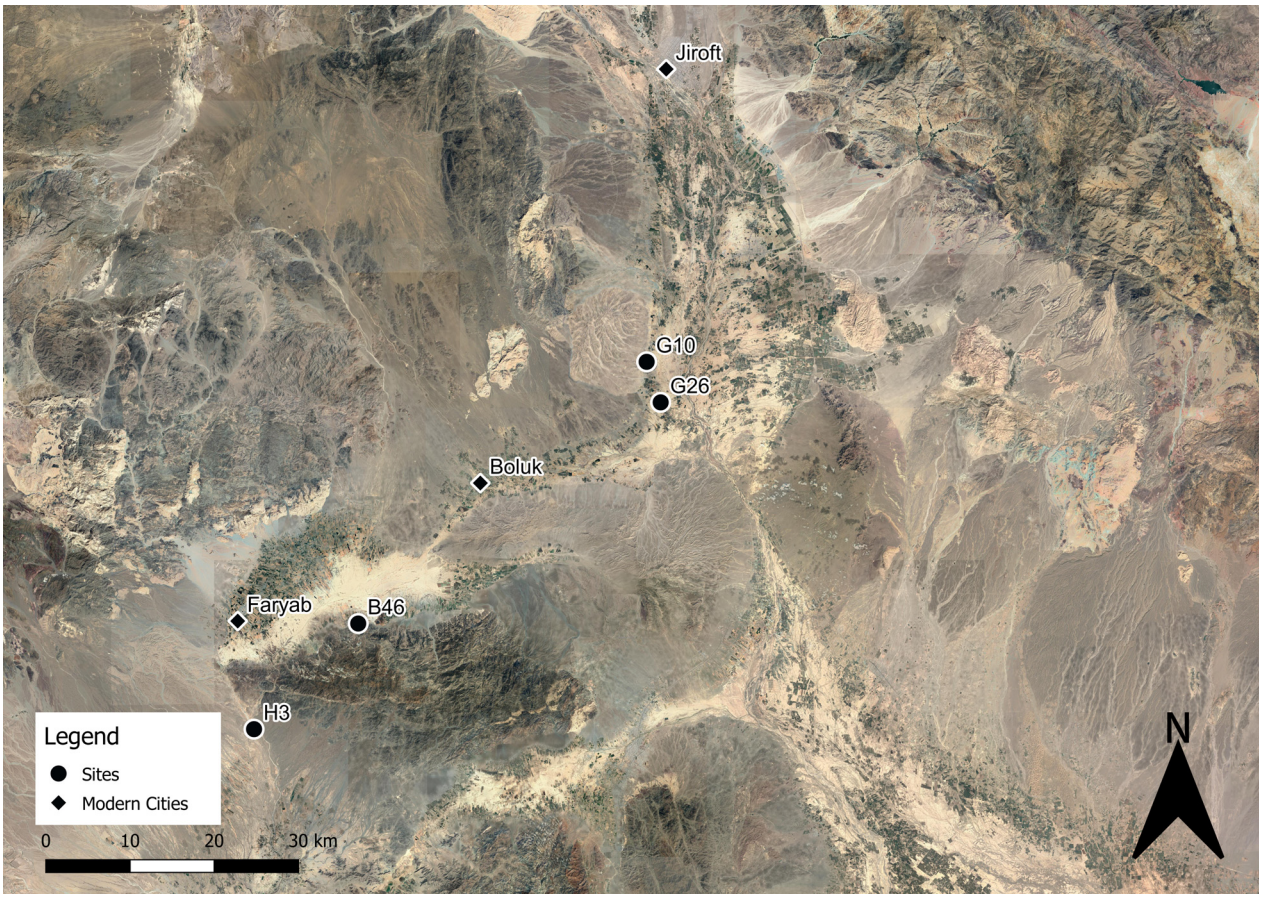

Fig. 1. Map of mentioned Achaemenid SOJAS Sites (Map Data ©2023 Google).

forms can be divided into pots with an S-profile (*fig. 2.7*), hole-mouth jars with a folded rim (*fig. 2.8*) and bottles with simple or indented flaring rims (*fig. 2.13–14*). The single base is a conical cylindrical base.[10]

2.1 Characteristic Pottery Shapes in the Region South of Jiroft (*fig. 2.1–9*)

The area shows nine shapes that can be categorised as characteristic for this region. They appear mainly in the eastern parts of the Achaemenid Empire and differ significantly from the other known Achaemenid pottery shapes, showcasing their difference to the Achaemenid heartland and their connection to eastern Iran and Afghanistan, as well as possible vestiges of a broader shared Iron Age culture, as has also been suggested by other scholars.[11] The pottery vessels discussed here include open-and-closed forms.

Usually, all vessels are wheel-made and are produced from well-levigated clay. They are evenly fired. Judging from the pottery texture and material, they can be divided into medium-coarse and fine wares. The fine wares show no visible mineral inclusions in the matrix whereas the medium-coarse wares show small- to medium-sized mineral inclusions.[12] The finished colour can be buff or orange. The wares are often coated with a whitish or buff slip. Decorations are usually incised, and sherds with painted decorations are rare.

10 Where possible, the nomenclature used here follows Magee 2004, since the area under discussion is the closest in proximity.

11 Magee 2004, 79; Allen/Trousdale 2019, 58 f., 62.

12 Organic inclusions can only be observed in cooking pot wares. For a comprehensive overview of the wares see Hollenhorst 2018, 29–46. Aside from the wares mentioned in the article, a fine and a medium coarse buff ware, a simple coarse ware, as well as triangle ware, burnished maroon slipped ware (hereafter BMSW) and a fine red painted ware can be found.

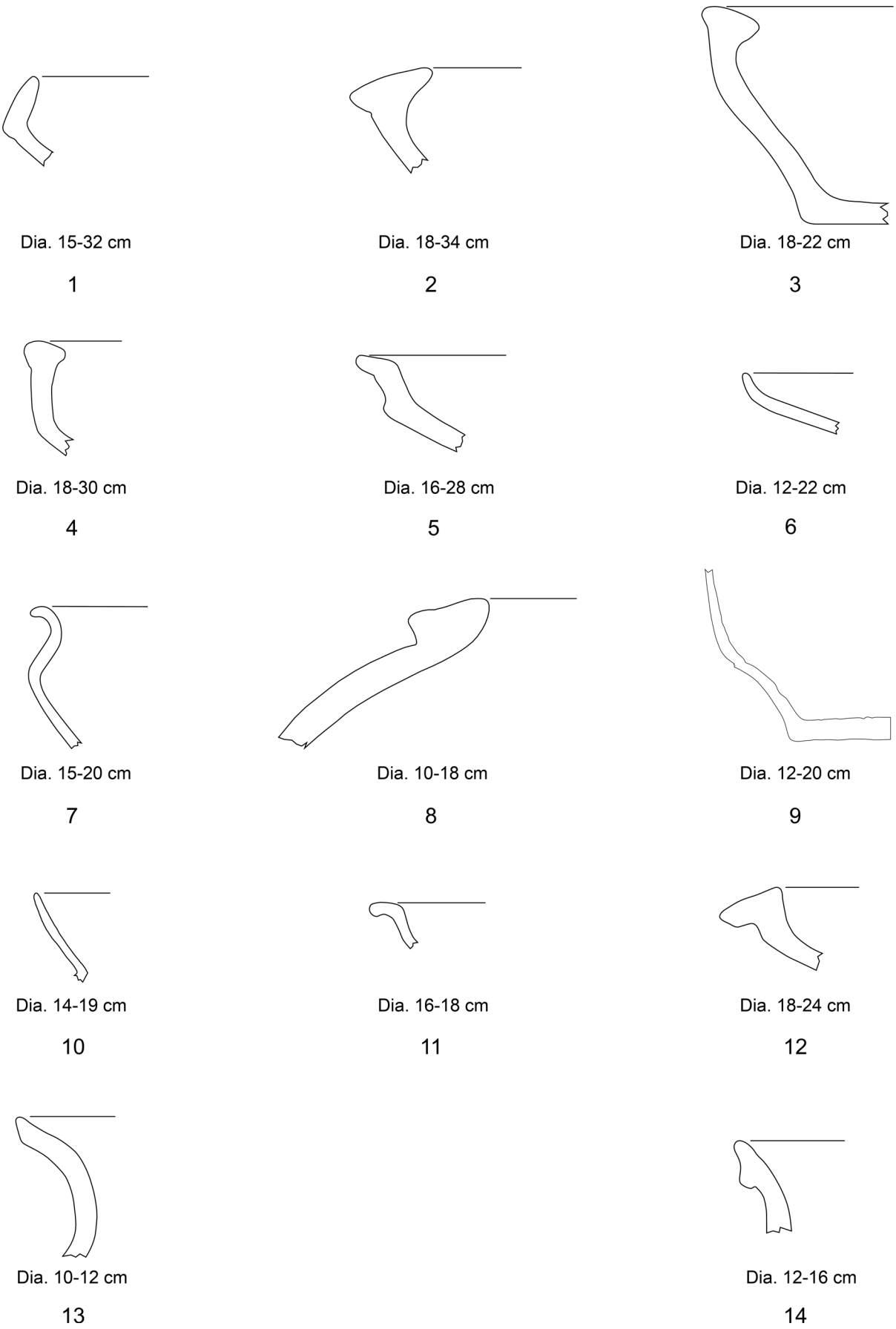

Fig. 2. Characteristic Achaemenid pottery shapes from the region south of Jiroft (all drawings are 1:2, No. 9 1:4; adapted and redrawn from Hollenhorst 2019).

2.2 Collared Bowls (*fig. 2.1–2*)

The collared bowls can be divided into two subshapes according to their rims: simple collared and double-sided collared rims. The latter seems to have developed from the former. This becomes apparent when an undercut occurs on the simple rims, and this technique later results in the double-sided shape, exaggerating the technique explained above.

The bowls with the simple collared rim are deep. The body begins atop a flat, small, circular bottom, rising at a sharp angle and expanding continuously outwards. It can have a rather hemispherical-bellied shape, or can lean more towards a straight conical form, although the former is more widely attested. The rim extends abruptly at an angle of almost 90° inwards from the wall. In most cases, it is slightly curved inwards and not completely straight. Sherds of this shape in rare cases can showcase a small 'undercut' on the outside, below the conjunction of the body and the rim. In contrast to the outer appearance, the inner part of the bowl shows a gradual transition from the body towards the rounded lip of the rim. The diameter can range from 15 to 32cm.

Comparisons that help to place this shape chronologically are difficult to find. The examples that do exist, however, seem to place it mostly in the pre-Achaemenid Iron Age and Achaemenid period. Examples dating from the Iron Age can be found in Pirak (Enault 1979, fig. 68, 354–356, fig. 84, 495), Afghanistan (Casal 1961, figs. 116, 605.a–b, 607.a–b) and Pakistan (Wheeler 1962, fig. 16, 58 f.; Stacul/Tusa 1977, fig. 14.a). During the Iron Age II and III the form also appears on the Arabian Peninsula (Avanzini/Esposti 2018, pl. 39, 4, pl. 51, 8; Højlund/Andersen 1994, figs. 911, 917, 1164–1166; 1997, figs. 408, 477, 504). Evidence from southern Afghanistan (Helms 1997, fig. 90; Casal 1961, fig. 679), Bactria (Houal 2016, fig. 4.2.1), Sistan (Zehbari et al. 2015a, fig. 25.66; Dales 1977, pl. 22.2) and Pakistan (Magee et al. 2005, fig. 15.c; Wheeler 1962, fig. 21, 115; Sharif 1969, fig. 12. 3) also shows that the shape continued into the Achaemenid period and, in Pakistan and Bactria, even into the Hellenistic period.

In the Jiroft region, Vogelsang's observation that this shape is based on handmade examples (Vogelsang 1985, 65) has not yet been verified, which may be due to the fact that sites dating from the earlier Iron Age periods have not yet been found within the region. Interestingly, this shape is not attested in the recently published material from Sistan (Allen/Trousdale 2019), which could either be a result of the small amount of published pottery or may indeed hint that the shape cannot be attested in the region during the Iron Age. This would indicate that the examples in our case may have been introduced into the region of Jiroft via the Persian Gulf.

The two-sided variant (*fig. 2.2*) has a similar construction to the one-sided version. Both shapes share the same flat, rounded bottom and convex body. The main difference between the two variants is just below the rim. While the single-sided example has a shallow undercut, this feature on the double-sided version is more pronounced and a part of the rim projects outwards over the undercut, resulting in a two-sided, almost hammer-headed, appearance. Contrary to the frequently rounded lip of the other variant, representatives of these examples can have an almost 'sharp' character. Similar to the aforementioned variant, the diameter can be between 18 and 34cm.

This shape also has its main distribution focus in the eastern part of the Achaemenid Empire. Many sites, especially in southern Afghanistan (Helms 1997, figs. 63–64, Genre 20, figs. 102–103, Genre 57; Casal 1961, fig. 116, 606, fig. 117, 614), Bactria (Houal 2016, fig. 2.2.5; Bernard 1973, pl. 131.59) and western Pakistan (Sharif 1969, fig. 12.3, 16.7–8, 21.2–3; Wheeler 1962, fig. 25.176, 27.208; Stacul 1995, fig. 24.j; Mughal 1967, fig. 23.18) display exact parallels to this shape. A few examples can nonetheless also be found in the Persian Gulf Region (Højlund/Andersen 1994, figs. 912, 915, 916), and two comparable sherds were found in central and western Iran, dating from the Median (Malekzade et al. 2014, fig. 10, 14) and the Achaemenid periods (de Miroschedji 1981, fig. 10, 7).

Although the examples from Zār Bolāḡ, central Iran, and Bahrain are dated to the late Iron Age, the main bulk of comparable items date from the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods in Afghanistan and Pakistan, suggesting that it might be safer to attest this form to that time span.

Furthermore, there is no evidence supporting the appearance of this form during the Iron Age in Pakistan or on the Arabian mainland, strengthening the argument for the development of the form from the simple collar rim and an Achaemenid dating for this development.

Although the general shape is attested over a long timespan, there is some morphological change. The distribution in the mentioned sites hints that the deeper, closed examples appear to be older, and the shallower variants seem to be more recent, a fact supported by observations from sites in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the shape appears in the deeper shape in Mundigak (Casal 1961, fig. 116, 606, fig. 117, 614) and in the shallower execution in Kandahar II (Helms 1997, figs. 102–103, Genre 57), Taxila (Sharif 1969, fig. 12.3, 16.7–8, 21.2–3) and Tulamba (Mughal 1967, fig. 23.18).

2.3 Carinated Bowls with Double-Sided Rim (*fig. 2.3–4*)

This type of bowl can be categorised into two different sub-shapes: a sloped version and a version with a rounded lip on the outside.

The sloped example (*fig. 2.3)* has a flat bottom, a curved body with a blunt carination and a flattened, sloped rim with a characteristic tilted lip that projects outwards to both sides. The diameter ranges from 18 to 22cm. A singular example from Jiroft has a mineral/quartzite finish on the bottom. This has been applied first through a slip on the outside, which was then impressed into the mineral material while still wet, thus adhering it to the surface. Comparisons for a chronological placement are difficult to find, the shape seems to be unknown in Achaemenid sites in the west and there are also no parallels in the eastern sites of Tepe Yaḥyā and Dahān-e Ḡolāmān.

Comparable pottery can only be found in nearby Qaleh Kutchek (Azadi et al. 2012, tbl. 2.5), in Bahrain during the Achaemenid period (Højlund/Andersen 1997, fig. 397; 1994, figs. 984–986) and in Kandahar during the Achaemenid and the Hellenistic periods (Helms 1997, fig. 95.1237, 96.2319, 96.2248, 96.2276, 96.2296). There are not enough comparable examples to provide a certain dating, although these three sites suggest a date between the Achaemenid and Hellenistic period.

The other rendition with the rounded lip (*fig. 2.4*) has a flat bottom, sharp carination and an almost 90° angular body leading to the lip. The lip is flattened on top, sloped, rounded on the outside and slightly drawn to the inside. The diameter can be anywhere between 18 and 30cm. Comparisons for this shape are even more difficult to find and so far, this kind of bowl finds its only parallels in Yaḥyā II (Magee 2004, fig. 4.27.a), Bactria (Houal 2016, fig. 2.2.11) and Kandahar (Helms 1997, fig. 95.1886, 95.2115), which suggests a localised pottery shape established in Afghanistan and eastern Iran and existing during the 6th to 3rd cent. BC. Nevertheless, this dating should be considered somewhat uncertain because of the lack of other parallels.

All in all, these two shapes still seem to be characteristic for the Jiroft region. They appear in Kandahar and Bactria, which might imply that even though they are missing in Dahān-e Ḡolāmān, they may be especially characteristic for Afghanistan and to a lesser extent also southeastern Iran.

2.4 Carinated Bowls with Ledge Rim (*fig. 2.5*)

This shape is well-known in eastern Iran and Afghanistan from the Achaemenid era and probably even the Early Iron Age (for comparison see Allen/Trousdale 2019, fig. 28a) onwards.

It is shallow and has a flat bottom, a sharp carination and a well-drawn out, simple and sometimes angular rim with a straight or rounded lip. The average diameter lies between 16 and 28cm. Contrary to other shapes in this article, there is an abundance of suitable comparisons, since this type of bowl is characteristic for the Achaemenid sites in both eastern Iran (Scerrato 1962, fig. 13.7–15; Zehbari et al. 2015a, fig. 24.68–69; Moghaddam et al. 2016, fig. 10.13; Sajjadi/Zehbari 2018, fig. 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5) and Afghanistan (Dales 1977, pl. 19; Helms 1997, fig. 96, Genre 49). They also appear in both regions during the Hellenistic/Parthian period (Helms 1997, fig. 124.2533, 124.1233, 124.30, 124.1485, 124.1566; Maresca 2016, fig. 5, 204, 234).

So far, just a few examples of this shape have been found in the region south of Jiroft, but with further field study more should emerge, since they also appear in the assemblages of the nearby Qaleh Kutchek (Azadi et al. 2012, tbl. 4.4) and further examples are also known from Tepe Yaḥyā (Magee 2004, figs. 4.10, 4.28, 4.32, 5.4) in the west.

2.5 Bowls with Offset Vertical Rim (*fig. 2.6*)

This extremely shallow bowl is characterised by its low profile, which ends in a small, flat base. The rim contributes greatly to the height of the bowl and is almost entirely vertical, or sometimes slightly curved to the inside. Diameters can range between 12 and 22cm.

Magee has already remarked on the poor comparability to western Iranian material when he examined the appearance of such bowls in the repertoire of Tepe Yaḥyā and in sites on the Arabian Peninsula (Magee 2004, 43). Just as in those cases, the best comparisons for the examples in our repertoire can also be found in eastern Iran (Magee 2004, fig. 4.31, 5.34; Zehbari et al. 2015a, fig. 28, 94), Afghanistan (Helms 1997, fig. 60.416, 60.1196, 64.184, 64.711, 72.331, 72.769; Casal 1961, fig. 116, 605), Pakistan (Magee et al. 2005, fig. 15.a–b) and Arabia (Højlund/Andersen 1997, fig. 477; Boucharlat/Lombard 1985, fig. 8.8; Potts 1990, fig. 135.10; Avanzini/Esposti 2018, pl. 47.10) where they date into/from the Achaemenid or Iron Age III period respectively.

The examples from the Jiroft region are almost exclusively found in the BMSW and may be recreations of bronze vessels (Hollenhorst 2019, 32), which hints at their usage as prestige and export objects, as can be deduced from the distribution of wares and shapes across the Persian Gulf already been remarked upon by Magee (compare Magee 2005).[13]

Chronologically speaking, two factors play an important role for us: first, the distinct shape that can be compared to the aforementioned sites from the Achaemenid period and second, the production in the BMSW, which according to Magee was only in circulation from roughly 600 to 300 BC (Magee 2005, 85). Both facts firmly plant this shape in the Achaemenid and early Hellenistic period and make it into an important, characteristic chronological marker for eastern Iran.

2.6 Pots with S-Profile (*fig. 2.7*)

These kinds of pots have a flat bottom, a deep convex body and a strong carination leading to a simple, rather sharp out-turned lip. Diameters lie between 15 and 20cm.

The shape has its main distribution within the Achaemenid period and is found spreading out from southern Afghanistan (Dales 1977, pl. 18.D1; Helms 1997, fig. 56.737, 61.37, 61.1438, 61.1662) to southeastern Iran (Magee 2005, fig. 6.c), as well as being present in a singular example from Pasargadae (Stronach 1978, fig. 108.2). This lone parallel in the Achaemenid heartland, and the fact that the form is missing in most western sites suggests that it was a regional form derived from local Iron Age pottery shapes, an idea supported by finds from Sistan (Allen/Trousdale 2019, fig. 24.d). Even though the Iron Age example shows that the lifetime of this shape was long, the other sites mentioned above mainly attest to circulation in the Achaemenid period.

Similar to the bowls with a vertical offset rim made in BMSW, the form, type of ware and poor comparability with pottery from the Achaemenid heartland and other parts of Iran highlight the regionality of this shape.

2.7 Hole-Mouth Jar with Folded Rim (*fig. 2.8*)

This storage jar has a full, almost ellipsoid body. There is a carination in the lower third of the vessel where it is connected to a conical or conical-cylindrical bottom (see below). The opening is present as a hole-mouth with a folded rim that can be concave or convex. The technique for producing the rim can be observed in some vessels where the folding wasn't executed carefully enough, and hollows between the folds remain visible in the matrix. The rather small average diameter of these vessels can be anywhere between 10 and 18cm.

13 BMSW = burnished maroon slipped ware, see above footnote 12, and Magee 2005.

This shape is the predominant form of storage jar in the region of Jiroft, and hundreds of examples of pots with this rim have been recovered from sites in the area.[14]

Comparable rims stem mainly from Arabia (Avanzini/Esposti 2018, e. g. pl. 24.4; Benoist 2001, fig. 3; Potts 1990, fig. 132.9; 1991, figs. 103–104) and Afghanistan (Casal 1961, fig. 121.646, 121.648–649, 126.689; McNicoll/Ball 1996, figs. 46–47; Helms 1997, figs. 82–87, 116), where Kandahar shows a similar numerical distribution to the Jiroft region, especially G10 and G26. Other examples of this shape have also been recovered in eastern Iran from Qaleh Kutchek (Azadi et al. 2012, tbl. 2.2, 5.10), Dahān-e Ḡolāmān (Scerrato 1962, fig. 14.18; Maresca 2010, fig. 3.65; Zehbari et al. 2015a, fig. 18.16–17, 21.38, 21.41–42; Sajjadi/Zehbari 2018, fig. 6.16) and Tepe Yaḥyā (Magee 2004, fig. 4.19.a, 5.25.b, 5.26.a–b, 5.27.b), but they also range as far as Bactria (Houal 2016, fig. 4.6.3) and Parthia (Invernizzi/Lipolis 2008, fig. 297.79–81) during the Hellenistic and Parthian periods.

In the west and the southwest of Iran only a handful of examples can be found, and the shape does not seem to have been widely distributed throughout the rest of the empire.[15]

Chronologically speaking, this shape had a very long lifespan. In Afghanistan, examples can be observed that date from the Early Iron Age and the Arabian Peninsula also boasts examples of this kind dating from the Iron Age. Sites like Nisā show how this shape continued to be used onward into the Parthian period, and other sites even prove that it was in circulation during the Sasanian period (Azarnoush 1994, fig. 185.j; Moghaddam/Miri 2003, fig. 19.1, 19.2, 19.12–13).

The vast number of examples with this rim-shape that have been found, and the number of comparable items found in the eastern Satrapies, show that this is an important characteristic shape for the region, although these examples alone cannot be used for dating, owing to the shape's long-enduring popularity and usage.

2.8 Conical Cylindrical Bases (*fig. 2.9*)

Conical cylindrical bases have a flat large bottom and a concave wall which extends conically from the bottom to the carination that marks the transition to the convex belly of the vessel.[16] The base diameter varies between 12 and 20cm.

Examples of this variant are usually attested in a coarse ware, which is moulded or slab-built instead of wheel turned. It is later attached to the wheel turned top of the vessel. It is fired at low temperature and sometimes irregularly, resulting in softness. Because the connection to the top of the vessel is the weakest part, breaks mostly occur along this line, leaving the lower part separated but largely intact. The outside is often plastered with small abrasive minerals reminiscent of sand, but certain examples show a high inclusion of hematite.[17]

This kind of base is widely attested in the SOJAS survey region. Large quantities of these sherds appear in the assemblages found at the sites discussed here, and are apparently linked to the larger storage jars with folded and flaring rims, as attested by completely preserved examples from other sites.[18]

This kind of base is unknown in the western part of Iran.[19] Comparable examples stem mainly from the Arabian Peninsula during the Iron Age I–II (Potts 1991, fig. 111.3; Benoist 2001, fig. 2.27; Humphries 1974, fig. 12.J; Avanzini/Esposti 2018, pl. 45.5), the Iron Age in Sistan (Allen/Trousdale

14 Hollenhorst 2019, 68 f.; for further parallels concerning shape and number of examples in Achaemenid and Hellenistic sites in different regions see Helms 1997, figs. 82–87, fig. 116, as well as McNicoll/Ball 1996, figs. 46–47.

15 These sites are Susa (de Miroschedji 1981, fig. 17.7, 9), Shushtar (Atayi 2005, fig. 17.1), Qaleh Kali (McRae 2014, pl. 38, QK 1021) and Pasargadae (Stronach 1978, fig. 121,8). Just a single example is reported from every site. No representatives of this type can be found in Perspolis, however.

16 Although the naming differs amongst authors between hipped jars (Allen/Trousdale 2019, 52, fig. 31), bulging Jars (Genito 1990, pl. 6) or conical cylindrical storage jars (Magee 2004, 54, fig. 5.29), considering the description and pictures, they all describe the same type of pottery. For the sake of unity and because the descriptive name is the most fitting, conical cylindrical storage jars will be adopted here.

17 The sandy finish can also be observed on the examples from Tepe Yaḥyā (Magee 2004, 54).

18 Fully excavated examples could for example be observed as a hole-mouth jar by Allen/Trousdale 2019, fig. 31, as a bottle with flaring rim by Atayi/Zare 2019, fig. 5 or as a basin by Majidzadeh/Pittman 2008, fig. 27.

19 It has to be considered though, that bases are generally under-represented in published pottery.

2019, fig. 31; Dales 1977, pl. 27.L7) and the Achaemenid period in the Kandahar region (Helms 1997, figs. 222, 275.14).

Further afield, a large number of examples are known from central Asia, dating from these same periods (compare Magee 2004, 45; Cattenat/Gardin 1977, fig. 3; Usmanova 1992, fig. 8).

Achaemenid sites closer to the Jiroft region showcase this shape of pottery as well, proving the distribution during the Achaemenid period observed in our survey.

Although singular examples appear as early as the Iron Age I, as shown above, the main distribution appears to have occurred during the Iron Age II–III.

2.9 Occurrence of Other Typical Achaemenid Pottery Shapes (*fig. 2.10–14*)

The pottery shapes mentioned above appear in the Jiroft region together with other typical Achaemenid shapes. Those other examples show strong parallels to sites in the Achaemenid heartland and are a valuable tool for the relative dating of our assemblages, especially where they appear in single period sites. As with the other shapes, the wares are usually all fine to medium coarse, orange to buff with almost no inclusions, and a buff or whitish slip on the outside.

The most important of these other typical shapes is that of the Tulip Bowl (*fig. 2.10*).[20] Although the number of these recovered from the region south of Jiroft is very low, they are of immense chronological value. Even so the dating of this imperial Achaemenid archetype outside of the heartland has been debated, its appearance during the Achaemenid period in the Kerman Region and southeastern Iran can be corroborated through its appearance in Tepe Yaḥyā period II (Magee 2004, fig. 5.37), Dahān-e Ḡolāmān (Zehbari et al. 2015a, fig. 17.11) and Kandahar (Helms 1997, fig. 89, Genre 35).[21] The Tulip Bowl's infrequent appearance in the surveyed region may be linked to its imperial significance or lack thereof, especially if a link to the Achaemenid or local elite is considered (Dusinberre 2003).

Further common open shapes that establish a strong link to the Achaemenid layers or strata of other sites include hemispherical bowls with a ledge rim (*fig. 2.11*), which have parallels in Pasargadae (Stronach 1978, fig. 108.7–9), Persepolis (Atayi 2004, pl. 2), Persepolis West (Askari Chaverdi/Callieri 2017, P00630, P00720), Tepe Yaḥyā (Magee 2004, fig. 5.41, 5.11), Charasadda (Wheeler 1962, fig. 20.111), Kandahar (Helms 1997, fig. 72.1474, fig. 95, Genre 47–48), the Atrek Valley (Bruno 2019, fig. 8.4), Akra (Magee et al. 2005, fig. 16.a–b) and Qaleh Kutchek (Azadi et al. 2012, tbl. 5.3), to name the most important ones. Another significant group are the carinated bowls with a hanging rim (*fig. 2.12*) that appear in Bactria (Bernard 1973, pl. 131.51–52; Houal 2016, fig. 2.2.6), Kandahar (Helms 1997, fig. 97, Genre 52), Persepolis (Atayi 2004, pl. 15, 4), Qaleh Kutchek (Azadi et al. 2012, tbl. 3, 10) and Persepolis West (Askari Chaverdi/Callieri 2017, P00443, P00722) during the Achaemenid and Seleucid periods.

Characteristic Achaemenid closed shapes appearing include, in particular, bottles with simple (*fig. 2.13*) or indented flaring rims (*fig. 2.14*), where the latter are especially characteristic for the Achaemenid period as seen in the Fārs Region (Potts et al. 2009, 61; McRae 2014, pl. 21, Variant C, H–I; Askari Chaverdi/Callieri 2017, 151, P535, P670, 165, P358; Atayi 2004, pl. 48.16, 18, pl. 49.14, pl. 52.1, 11, pl. 55.12), northern Iran (Jafari et al. 2019, 101, fig. 37.9) and Tepe Yaḥyā (Magee 2004, fig. 4.24).[22]

Although these renditions already represent the Achaemenid influence in the region and are invaluable in terms of relative dating, there are some typical Achaemenid shapes that appear in the imperial heartland but are absent in the Jiroft region, though not in eastern Iran. Of these, the absence of trifoliar jars and pilgrim flasks is most striking. These pottery shapes have a very wide distribution and it is remarkable that they appear neither in the Jiroft region nor in Sistan. The only sites in the region displaying this type of pottery

20 For the diameters of the shapes mentioned in this paragraph see fig. 2.

21 For a discussion of the dating of Tulip Bowls see Dittmann 1984; Vogelsang 1988; Magee/Petrie 2008.

22 Strangely enough, bottles of any kind are largely missing from Dahān-e Ḡolāmān.

are Kandahar (Helms 1997, fig. 113, Genre 73, fig. 113, 2085, fig. 58, Genre 12) in Afghanistan and to a lesser extent Tepe Yaḥyā (Magee 2004, fig. 5.45). This may be explained by the stronger imperial presence in these locations, as they are more frequently found at larger central sites, or in the case of Kandahar a heightened impact due to the locale's role as a gateway to the Indian subcontinent. In turn, however, this may also indicate the lack of imperial control or interest in the region or might be explained as the consequence of a bias in the archaeological records.

3 Regional Comparability

Through the introduction of the characteristic shapes and comparable examples given above, it becomes apparent that the assemblages from the region south of Jiroft may best be compared with sites in Afghanistan, like Mundigak or Kandahar. They mirror the materials and present an exact match for almost all pottery shapes, even though they are geographically more distant than sites like Tepe Yaḥyā.

Tepe Yaḥyā, on the other hand, only shares the basic Achaemenid shapes with the assemblages discussed here, as well as hole-mouth jars, carinated bowls with ledge rims, and bowls with a vertical offset rim. Many of the shapes mentioned in this article do not exist there. Another difference also becomes apparent from the allocation of the site towards the main Achaemenid pottery group by Boucharlat and Haerinck (Boucharlat/Haerinck 1991, 302–304), whereas the characteristic pottery shapes defined here seem barely comparable to the finds from the imperial heartland and the northern parts of the empire. This is further showcased by the above-mentioned absence of Achaemenid shapes from the region around Jiroft that appear in Tepe Yaḥyā. All in all, it seems that the site was considerably more closely linked to southern and western Iran than the Jiroft region, which was in turn more aligned towards the east, especially Afghanistan.

It is somewhat more difficult to explain why Dahān-e Ḡolāmān and the Sistan Region have yielded less comparable items, despite being geographically closer to our region of interest than Kandahar and also on the same easterly axis.[23] The lack of bottles and jars in the published pottery record of the region is particularly striking compared to the results observed in the region around Jiroft, where bottles were abundant (Moghaddam et al. 2016, fig. 10; Zehbari et al. 2015a; Sajjadi/Zehbari 2018).[24] All in all, we can only speculate whether this may have been due to a strong local tradition that even continued onwards into the Hellenistic period and never reached the southern Kerman region. Furthermore, the differences in function between Dahān-e Ḡolāmān as an administrative, cultural and industrial centre and the smaller rural sites in the Jiroft region have to be taken into consideration, thus perhaps explaining this discrepancy in the occurring pottery shapes.

As for the Persian Gulf region, given the distances involved it comes as no surprise that sites from the Arabian Peninsula show a strong connection to the region south of Jiroft from the Iron Age onwards. Many of the shapes introduced above have close parallels there, which may have resulted from that close relationship.

On the basis of the geographical distances, as well as the showcased regionality of the pottery ensemble discussed here, it can be seen that pottery influenced by the Achaemenid heartland only appears in smaller quantities and is limited to the traditional hallmark shapes of the Achaemenid material culture, with many other less typical shapes completely absent. This might be simply due to the arbitrary chances of archaeological transmission – certain shapes may have been better preserved than others. However, I believe it rather implies that imperial control over outlying parts of the empire may have been weaker than previously assumed, and such control (and therefore also imperial influence) was concentrated on larger centres or strategically important settlements and areas, which the Jiroft region may not have belonged to.

23 Although also comparable to sites in Afghanistan and Pakistan (compare Mehrafarin et al. 2013), the material considerably differs from the Jiroft region, aside from a few shapes mentioned above.

24 In recent times the dating has been partially questioned, which would also explain the rather bad comparability (Maresca 2019a, 145, footnote 46).

4 Conclusion

In a pioneering article, Boucharlat and Haerinck (Boucharlat/Haerinck 1991) categorised Achaemenid pottery throughout the empire, much in the fashion of Haerinck's previous work on the Parthian period (Haerinck 1983). Whereas this categorisation proved valuable for most parts of the empire, it wasn't possible to reliably characterise the eastern regions. Given the time when the above-mentioned article was written, this may have been due to the lack of published pottery, since significant publications that covered these subjects had not been released for many of the sites mentioned in this article.[25] Nevertheless, even today it is not possible to define one all-encompassing eastern pottery tradition, as the regionality displayed in the pottery assemblages of eastern Iran from the Achaemenid period appears to be too strong to allow for any such generalisation. This becomes especially evident when scrutinising the assemblage of the Jiroft region, and comparing it to other sites in the region. As shown above, a lot of characteristic shapes appear in the found pottery and these are not comparable to just one area or one pottery tradition but rather mirror influences from many of them. Still, the fact that the cultural relationship with the pottery tradition of Afghanistan and the eastern territories of the Achaemenid empire appears stronger than those with other regions remains undeniable.

Similar to the position of the region, the pottery thus shows that it lies at a crossroads, a hub of kinds, that connects western Iran and the eastern reaches of Iran and Afghanistan with Hormozgan, the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf Region.

25 The forthcoming final publication about the excavations in Konar Sandal by Y. Majidzadeh will be a key piece in understanding the Iron Age and Achaemenid Pottery of the Jiroft region since Konar Sandal II has been convincingly dated into the Iron Age by ^{14}C Data (Mashkour et al. 2013, tbl. 1), as well as through pottery parallels and architectural comparisons. (Magee 2004, 79; Eskandari 2013; Allen/Trousdale 2019, 61 f.).

Ferdinand Hollenhorst
Junior Researcher in Archaeology
University of Tübingen
Department of Archaeology
hollenhorst.f@googlemail.com

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Saeed Amirhajloo and Hamid Alimoradi

The Organisation of Local Production and Intra-Regional Distribution of *Jahleh* Pottery in Southern Iran

A Case Study from Mināb

Keywords: *jahleh* production, pottery, Šahvār, Ḥakami, Mināb

Summary

Despite industrial advances, pottery in the villages of Šahvār and Ḥakami in the vicinity of Mināb is still produced in the traditional way, using basic tools. One of the most important traditionally produced pottery types, which was used in the past throughout Halil Rud and Jāzmuriyān, is the fine ware pottery called *jahleh*. Until several years ago this kind of pottery was still made using a combination of wheel and hand techniques in the Šahvār and Ḥakami village workshops. Usage of rudimentary tools of production is the main feature of this pottery type. The profession of *jahleh* making has almost disappeared in the southern areas of Kermān. What's more, there has been a significant decrease in the *jahleh* potters of the Hormozgān province during recent decades. The question is, what constitutes the production process, regional traits and geographical distribution of *jahleh* pottery? This study attempts to use an ethnographical approach in order to present two of the last remaining *jahleh* workshops in Mināb and provide a detailed review of the preparation, forming and firing phases of the pottery, as well as of the *jahleh* market and the role it plays in the culture of southern Iran. The results of this study reveal that a similar technique of *jahleh* production has also been found in distant areas like the Indus Valley, and that this form of pottery is closely related to particular geographical conditions and climates. Furthermore, *jahleh* pottery had specific purposes and a distinct status in the culture of southern Iran.

Introduction

In spite of industrial developments, the traditional production and usage of several pottery types still are popular in southern Iran, one of which is *jahleh*.[1] Production of this pottery type was still common in the villages of Šahvār and Ḥakami in Mināb-Hormozgān until 2019. *Jahleh* was also produced until 2003 in the village of Gowdu in Mināb, and up to four decades ago in southern Kermān. This pottery type is made through a combination of wheel and hand techniques and is marked by its use of rudimentary tools and devices. *Jahleh* pottery refers to a specific jug-shaped vessel with a parabolic body, a narrow opening and an unstable form, coming in different sizes with a volume of between 3l and 12l. The base and stand form of *jahleh* is round, leading to its instability on flat surfaces. Stability can be achieved through three measures: first, by setting the base into sand; second, by using a *pājahleh* (literally meaning the foot of *jahleh*) which is a cut piece of palm trunk; or third, by hanging it from the trees or house-fronts using a thread which is tied around the neck of the

1 *Jahleh* is probably a variant of *čahleh*, meaning a well or a small pit.

jug, exposed to the wind, in order to cool the water inside.

Fine *jahleh* pottery was used for a variety of purposes based on its form and size, including usage as a percussion instrument. However, the most important function of this pottery type was as a container and cooler of water. *Jahleh* water crockery usually came paired with a *borang*, a type of local cup or glass. Although the production of *jahleh* has now stopped, *borang* is still produced in Mināb pottery workshops and used for drinking water.

Sherds of exquisite and fine handmade pottery with sleek bodies, which greatly resemble *jahleh* pottery in their fineness, fabric, build and decoration techniques and are thus easily distinguishable, can be found throughout prehistorical archaeology sites right up to the Islamic period in Hormozgān province and the southern parts of Kermān (Amirhajloo et al. 2020).

Production of *jahleh* pottery has decreased significantly during the last few decades in southern Kermān and the Hormozgān province. Until 2019, production continued in two small workshops in the Šahvār and Ḥakami villages in Mināb city (Hormozgān province, *fig. 1–2*), both of which have since become inactive. The gradual abandonment of *jahleh* workshops has led to the writers studying the two small workshops in Mināb closely for documentation purposes. This research incorporates fieldwork (visiting the pottery workshops, documenting every step of the preparation, forming, refinement and firing of the vessels), interviewing local residents and archival studies. The fieldwork component of this research was completed in three one-week, two-day and one-day stages over the spring seasons of 2012, 2019 and 2022. The accompanying archival studies consist of comparative and documentary research.

Geographical Traits

Hormozgān province is an approximately 900km long land strip stretching west to east along the coastline of the Oman Sea and the Persian Gulf in southern Iran, north of the Hormoz Strait. The coordinates of Hormozgān are 27°11′0.00″ N 56°17′0.00″ E. Hormozgān is bordered by Kermān province to the north and northeast, by Fārs and Bušehr provinces to the west and northwest, by Sistān and Baloučestan province to the east and by the warm waters of the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea to the south.

Mināb city lies near the Hormoz Strait in the eastern district of Hormozgān and is the second largest city of that province (*fig. 1*). Ethnicities in this area include Arabs from the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, Baloučs from Baloučestan and African-Iranians. African-Iranian refers to people of African heritage, who have settled in southern Iran, especially in Mināb. This group of people often have a dark complexion and are still known as African-Iranians by the locals (Saeedi 2020, 66).

Mināb has a dry, warm semi-desert climate with long summers and short, mild winters. The warm season is usually humid and lasts as long as nine months. Warm weather in this area starts from March and reaches its climax during July and August. Summer can last into November.

The architecture of Mināb is entirely influenced by this climate. The majority of old houses in Mināb are built on a square plan using clay and mud. Residents of this area used to build huts and cottages from palm tree leaves covered with straw and matting against the sun. It is still possible to find such structures abandoned in mango gardens and palm groves; they were built there as the areas surrounding such gardens were cooler and made life in the huts relatively more comfortable.

Livelihood and Trade in Mināb

Today, most townsmen make their living from subsistence animal husbandry, subsistence farming and handicrafts. Those living in or close to the coastlines engage more in fishing or have jobs related to the harbours and trade. The Panjšanbe-Bāzār (literally meaning Thursday Market) of Mināb is held in high regard due to its long history, direct supply of goods and relative inexpensiveness compared to other markets. The Panjšanbe-Bāzār is an open area on the city outskirts where townsmen bring their merchandise and handicrafts as early as three in the morning on Thursdays or on Wednesday afternoons. Most sellers come from surrounding villages such as Šahvār, Bahmani,

Fig. 1. Location of Mināb county, South Iran (map modified by authors, original map from Wikipedia commons; <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/World_location_map.svg>).

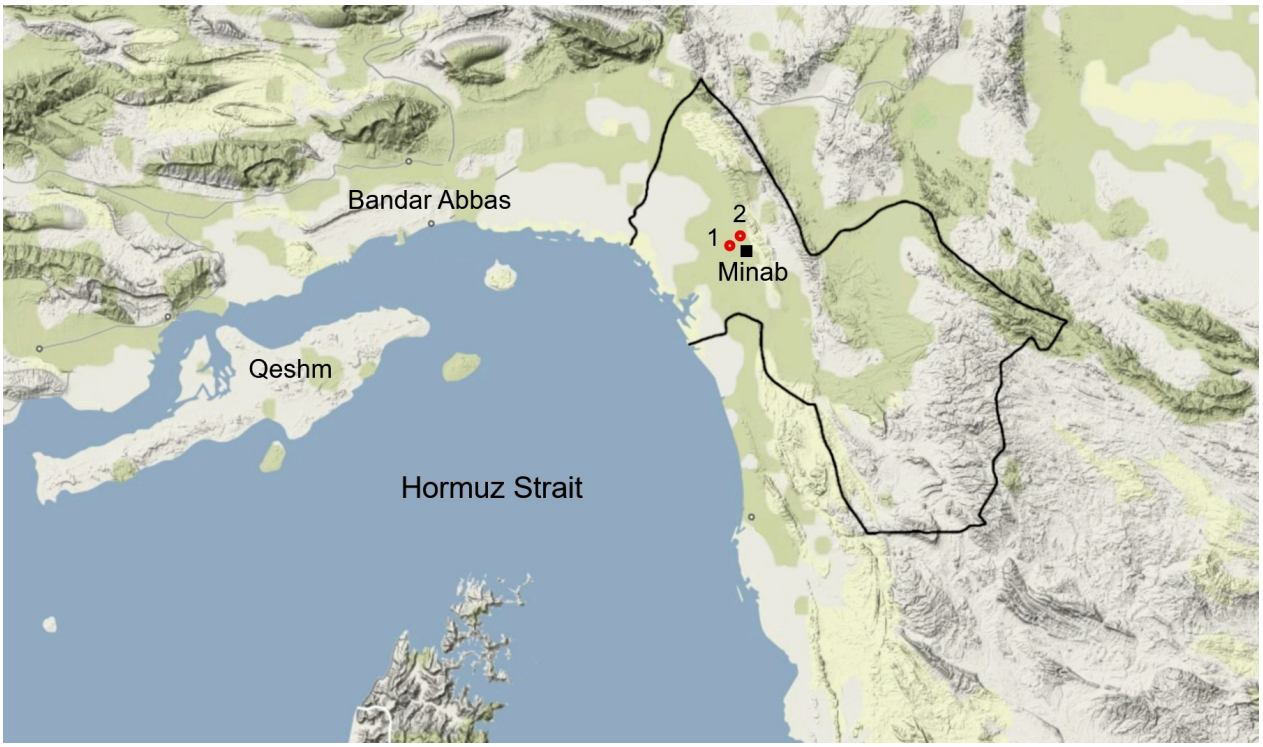

Fig. 2. Location of the two studied villages in Mināb: 1. Šahvār, 2. Ḥakami (map modified by authors after Google Maps).

Ḥakami, Gurzānag, Bāḡ-Golān, Naṣirāyi and Ṭalāru, among others. Customers include buyers from Kermān and Fārs provinces, in addition to those residing in Mināb. Items like mats, Surāḡ (alocal dessert), fish, farming tools, garden and animal products and pottery can be acquired at the Panjšanbe-Bāzār. The men of the Šahvār, Bahmani an d Ḥakami villages are the long-time undisputed masters in making *jahleh* pottery and are known for their strong, white *jahleh* crockery sold in Panjšanbe-Bāzār and admired by the residents of Bandar-Abbās, Mināb, Bandar-Lengeh, Qešm and Hormoz (Saeedi 2020, 69).

At least since the 10th cent. CE, Mināb or the Old Hormoz has operated as a harbour for both Kermān and Sistān. Thereafter, it served as one of the most important trading ports of the Persian Gulf and one of the biggest trading centres between Iran and areas like India, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq, China and the southern coast of the Persian Gulf (Le Strange 1998, 341). In the 13th cent. CE, Mināb was thriving in trade and Old Hormoz or Mināb attracted many foreign travellers. Marco Polo's description of this city is as follows: 'Hormoz (Mināb) has an excellent port and all merchants from around India come here on their ships. They bring spices, and other merchandise, like jewels and pearls, silk and brocades in different colours, ivory and the sort. Here, in the city, goods are sold to men who are distributors all around the world and trade with other merchants. In fact, this is a city with a blooming trade and lots of variety' (Gabriel 2004, 184 f.).

Ḥakami and Šahvār Villages

The first pottery workshop the authors visited is the one in Ḥakami. Ḥakami is currently located 2700m from the Mināb River on northwest side, and 3km from Mināb city on west side. Ḥakami can be reached via the Mināb-Tiāb Port route. The second pottery workshop authors visited is located in Šahvār, which is known as Old Šahvār in official records. This village is situated 3km from the Mināb River on the north side and 1km from Mināb on the northwest side (*fig. 2*).

The Ḥakami Pottery Workshop

The workshop is located 200m from the residential houses on the east side of the village, in between palm groves and mango gardens on flat clay soil. The Ḥakami pottery workshop has an area of 400m^2 and belongs to Master Ali Ḥabib Faḵāry (*fig. 3*). Ruined kilns and a high aggregation of pottery debris throughout the workshop indicates its long active history. At the time of authors' first visit in 2012, seven ruined and inactive kilns used as garbage basins existed in the workshop. The basins were slowly being filled with pottery scraps and ash from the new kiln. During 2019 visit, these old kilns had been filled to the same level as the surrounding land. By 2019, the new and usable kiln in the workshop had also been renovated and coated multiple times. In addition, a new potter's wheel had replaced the old one without. The cabins or huts that comprise the workshop had also been renovated, however, the old potter's wheel had been preserved in the workshop and the old water reservoir had been filled in. According to Master Ali Ḥabib Faḵāry, his ancestors used to practice pottery making at the same place. He stated that more than ten people were recruited into the workshop in the past. Now, the potter's house is fairly close to the workshop, and he works on his own with no help from his family members. Due to a lack of demand and his old age, he cannot make *jahleh* as well as he did in the past, and the workshop is gradually ceasing to exist. The Faḵāry pottery workshop consists of four main parts, namely the workshop structures, the throwing wheel, the basin and the kiln.

The Ḥakami Workshop Structures

There are two cabins in the Ḥakami pottery workshop, also known as huts. These huts are structures built from palm leaves and trunks, with wooden pillars. Such huts are very well suited to the climate of southern Iran and are used to provide shade against harsh sunlight while still providing good air ventilation. Each hut serves a specific purpose in the Ḥakami pottery workshop.

Fig. 3. The southern view of the Ḥakami pottery workshop (photo by H. Alimoradi, 2022).

Hut 1 is made of palm leaves, trunks and wooden pillars. This hut is semi-open, meaning it has a closed ceiling and southern and northern walls, but is open to the east and west (this cabin is on the left in *fig. 3*). A row of cobbles laid by the southern wall ensures durability. The hut was built on a rectangular plan and functions as a sunshade in the workplace, where the majority of the potter's daily activities are done. Pottery clay and leftovers gathered during wheel work are saved as debris in one corner to later be reconstituted and used as clay. A part of the hut is covered in ash and stamped down. According to the potter, this soft area is suitable for placing undried 'soft' *jahleh* crockery. The potter's wheel and a round hole full of ash are placed next to one another in the hut. The ash-filled hole is to rotate potteries in and is known as a *sondeh*. On the eastern side, there is a covered pile of clay. This cover is to keep the pottery clay moist for day-to-day activities.

Hut 2 is a quadrilateral structure with a gabled roof and is relatively large compared to the first hut. It is situated 1m northeast of Hut 1. This second hut is built from palm leaves and is closed on every side. It is used as a product storage room as well as a resting area. Fired potteries, the personal belongings of the potter, items like wooden shovels and other potter's tools and also the camel shoulder blades used on the potter's wheel are kept here.

The Potter's Kick Wheel in the Ḥakami Workshop

The wheel is located in Hut 1 (*fig. 4*). On the northern side of the hut stands a 70cm high platform. This square platform has been fabricated from clay and palm fibres into a 'desk'. Two discs are set in the centre of the platform, positioned parallel to the ground and joined with a wooden shaft (vertical axis). These two discs and the axis comprise the main part of the potter's wheel. The top disc is on the platform and is used to place the clay for the pottery. The bottom disc is under the platform and can be put into motion by the potter's feet. The vertical axis or the wooden shaft connects the two discs. The lowest part of the shaft is anchored to the ground to provide stability for the wheel. Two parallel columns topped with a board have been added to the platform to serve as the potter's seat. Once seated, the upper disc is in front of the potter and the lower disc is next to his foot. By propelling the lower disc with his foot, the potter can rotate the potter's wheel (see above). The potter's wheel of the Ḥakami pottery workshop is small in size with a diameter of less than 30cm and a thickness of 5cm. The wheel can hold up to 3kg to 4kg of clay.

Parts of the potter's wheel are listed in table 1.

In addition to the full construction of the potter's wheel described above, which was abandoned in 2021, a new wheel of the same sort has been built. The older and new platforms are only a few centimetres apart, though the old and new wheel axes are 120cm apart. Although plaster and cement have been incorporated into the platform itself, the general form of the new wheel is identical to the old one (the wheel on the right in *fig. 4*).

Fig. 4. Potter's wheel in the workshop of Ḥakami village (left: photo by S. Amirhajloo, 2019; right: photo by H. Alimoradi, 2022).

Potter's wheel part	Description
sarčarḵ	This is the upper disc of the potter's wheel, made of a mixture of clay and donkey excrement and located directly on the platform. Pottery is turned and thrown on this disc.
hāš or manual grinder	Refers to the lower disc located under the platform and fabricated from clay and donkey excrement similar to the top disc. However, recently Master Ḥakami has been using a stone disc that was previously used to grind wheat. This disc is employed to put the wheel into motion. The potter's foot is placed on the disc and the wheel is then moved by applying pressure.
se-panj	A three-headed metal piece installed under the potter's wheel in order to keep it in place.
galoye-čarḵ (neck of the wheel)	A wooden reinforcement for the *sarčarḵ* on the platform, supported by the wheel installation.
washer for the wheel	Made of leather and serves as a washer between the three-headed metal piece and the neck of the wheel. It is frequently greased by the potter to facilitate wheel rotation.
ṭoge-čarḵ	A piece of tin located on the column. It is used to prevent cracks in the column due to the pressure exerted by the *se-panj* and *sarčarḵ*.
column of the wheel	Carved from the timber of cedar trees and acts as the shaft or wheel axis connecting the lower and upper discs of the potter's wheel.
iron rod	Several centimeters long and attached to the column.
camel shoulder blade or wheel rod	The lowest part of the wheel, fixed into the ground and bearing the whole column and wheel part. The shoulder blade of a camel is utilised for this purpose, not only for its weight tolerance but also for the ease of lower disc rotation. Two spare shoulder blades are stored in the workshop so they can be replaced immediately in case of abrasion.

Tab. 1. Different parts of the potter's wheel which were observed in the Ḥakami pottery workshop.

Fig. 5. The basin or pond in the Ḥakami workshop (photo by S. Amirhajloo, 2019).

The Basin or Pond in the Ḥakami Workshop

A simple basin has been dug in the ground 6m away from the western wall of Hut 1. It resembles a pond and is round, with a diameter of 3m and a depth of 30cm. The basin is used to knead or stamp clay (*fig. 5*). Now, after eleven years of usage, the basin has been filled with soil and flattened out. A new basin has been dug 70cm from Hut 1, by the eastern entrance.

The Ḥakami Workshop Kiln

The pottery kiln is located towards the northeast end of the workshop and 10m away from Hut 2 (*fig. 6*). Unused and idle kilns are also present in the same location and have been used as garbage basins during recent years. Pottery scraps and ash remaining behind from the new kiln have been dumped into the abandoned kilns. At present these kilns are completely filled with pottery bits and ash and have been flattened out with trees planted all around. Debris is now piled up all over the workshop and its surroundings.

The kiln is formed in a hole in the ground, only rising 10cm above the surface. It is made solely of clay, palm fibres and straw. The kiln is similar to an oven in form, except for a horizontal plate made of clay dividing the kiln into an upper and a lower part, separating the pottery firing section above from the fuel compartment, or hearth, below.

Fuel compartment: The lower section or hearth is dug into the ground and is approximately 170cm deep. There is a diagonal canal leading from the surface to the compartment. The canal is built downwind and is used to move fuel, remove remaining ash from the fuel2 and ventilate the compartment.

In this kiln, dried palm leaves are used as fuel. The Ḥakami potters believed using oil or other fossil fuels lessened the quality of their *jahleh* pottery, and that using such fuels for firing would spoil the taste of water stored in the finished *jahleh* jugs.

The firing section or pottery deposit is located directly above the fuel compartment, on the upper level of the kiln. This part is hemispherical and is 80cm high at the apex. The firing section is separated from the hearth by a perforated flat surface. Heat is transferred from the hearth to the firing space through eight large holes aligned around the edge of the surface and four smaller holes in the middle (*fig. 6*).

Initially, the kiln is open. After placing the crockery inside the firing section, the opening is covered by clay sheets and pottery debris to

Fig. 6. The eastern view of the kiln and its location close to the storage huts and the workshop in the Ḥakami village (photo by S. Amirhajloo, 2019).

create a closed firing space. These clay sheets are called Kora in the local dialect. They are removed every time after opening the kiln and retrieving potteries, and put aside in Hut 2 for further use.

Kilns similar to Ḥakami kilns but significantly older have been discovered in excavations in the south of Baghdad-Iraq, dating back to the prehistoric era (Jemdet Nasr period, see: Matthews 2002, pl. 7–8).

The Pottery Workshop of Šahvār Village

Šahvār village, known as 'Old Šahvār' in official records, is located 1100m west of Mināb and 3km north of the Mināb river. To access this village, a traveller must enter Mināb via the Bandar Abbās-Rudān road and take the side road on the right after the Mināb fruit and vegetable market leading to the Šahvār and Bahmani villages.

There is one remaining pottery workshop in the north of this village manufacturing different pottery products using semi-traditional methods: the areas, methods and some tools used in this workshop are traditional, but an electric potter's wheel has replaced hand or kick wheels and a closed kerosene-burning kiln is used instead of an open one made of clay and palm tree fibres, as described above.

Ali Raḥimy Šahvāry, aged 63, has practiced his ancestors' profession for 50 years as the last remaining member of Raḥimy family of potters. He produces items like *jahleh*, *borang*, *korbe* (clay toilet jug), incense burners (pecan burners, censer), hookah bowls, vases, jars, piggy banks and other modern products. The *jahleh* pottery workshop in Šahvār village is located in Master Ali Raḥimy Šahvāry's house (*fig. 7*).

The Pond of Šahvār Pottery Workshop

In this workshop a 100cm deep basin with a rim diameter of 110cm and a base diameter of 80cm has been dug out to be used specifically for watery clay preparation. Next to this basin, several rectangular ponds (3m long, 2.70m wide and 30cm deep) are used to store the diluted mud.

The Šahvār Workspace

A small room can be found in the southwest corner of the workshop where fired pottery is placed. This space, close to the living rooms and kitchen, is used as a storing room for pottery tools. The wheel is also placed there and next to it, a cubic platform of $1m^3$ has been built where crockery is placed after the wheel working is complete.

Fig. 7. Pottery workshop in the Šahvār village (photo by S. Amirhajloo, 2019).

The Šahvār Pottery Kiln

Formerly, the Šahvār pottery kiln was of the same kind as the one in Ḥakami (see Kamaly 2006; Valizadeh 2009, figs. 46–47). Today, a closed kiln has been built in its stead (*fig. 8*). The top section of this new kiln is a 3.40m long, 2.70m wide and 2m high rectangular space with a domed cover. The mouth of the kiln is an 80cm high conical opening in the kiln's northern wall. The bottom section of the kiln is a small space where the torch is placed. The ventilation canal is also embedded in the kin's northern side. Ali Raḥimy Šahvāry, the owner of the Šahvār pottery workshop, uses kerosene to fuel the new kiln. However, until a few years ago, his brother Abdullah Raḥimy still used palm tree leaves as fuel.

Fig. 8. Pottery kiln in the workshop of the Šahvār village (photo by S. Amirhajloo, 2019).

Fig. 9. Potter's wheel in the Šahvār village (after Kamali 2006, 136).

The Potter's Wheel at Šahvār

The potter's wheel in the Raḥimy pottery workshop is set in motion by hand (pole-turned) and is composed of the following parts (*fig. 9*):

– wooden spike or the wheel axis
– wheel disc
– stick or pole

Wheel axis: It is made of a sharp wooden spike, fixed into the ground for additional stability. The spike is called the Tej in the local dialect. The Tej is 5cm to 7cm thick and is inserted as deep as 25cm to 30cm into the ground. Cement is applied around the Tej to fix it. The wooden axis sits 10cm to 15cm above the ground and holds the disc.

Wheel disc: the main part of the potter's wheel. This round plate made of clay mixed with animal (donkey) excrements has a diameter of 1m. The disc is around 6 or 7cm thick and it weighs 30 to 40kg. Based on local data, the disc is buried in soil for approximately three months after it is made to harden in a gradual and controlled manner. After the disc is fully prepared and before putting it in place, holes must be made. Holes with a diameter of 3 to 4cm are made 2cm apart, 5cm from the edge of the disc. These holes are 2 to 3cm deep, enabling the potter to poke the disc by inserting the pole into them. A key step in disc preparation is the meticulous creation of the central hole. During pottery disc preparation, a small pre-pierced stone disc is set under it in the centre. The clay disc with the central hole is then installed on the wheel axis. The stone disc below prevents abrasion caused by friction. The precise placement of the stone disc is highly significant in ensuring that the weight distribution is uniform. In fact, the disc should stay balanced for several seconds after being installed on the wooden spike and not tilt (Valizadeh 2009, 85).

Stick or pole: made of palm tree trunk and fairly strong. It has a circular section with a diameter of around 2cm and is 1m long. The potter places its tip in the outer holes in the pottery disc and thrusts the wheel into motion.

To start the movement, the potter kneels down and places both hands on the disc at an angle of 90° to 120° and starts rotating it forcefully. Next, the stick is used to maintain the rotation by touching the marginal holes repeatedly. Then, the potter balances the pressure exerted on the stick and the

disc by slowly increasing the rotational pressure. At this point, the stick serves as an occasional driver. In the beginning, the potter tries to increase revolutions per minute as quickly as possible. After that, the stick can be put aside, and clay work can start. Depending on the weight of the clay and the exerted pressure, the disc can maintain its rotation for 10 to 15 minutes at high speed.

Observations show that the Šahvār potters gained substantial ability in building, installing, rotating and working with the wheel based on experience. This knowledge was then passed down orally through the generations.

Clay Preparation for *Jahleh* Pottery

The clay preparation process consists of the following steps:

- soil selection and sieving
- soaking the soil in a special basin and turning the mud into rolls
- kneading on a stone surface and balling
- piling the balls on top of one another and kneading again
- shaping 25 to 30 ovals or balls, similar to those used in slingshots, for daily use in *jahleh* making

The soil used for pottery is normally gathered from the lands surrounding the Ḥakami and Šahvār workshops and other sources along Mināb River. Pottery 'soil' is actually clay mixed with coarse sand. For the two workshops discussed above, dry soil is chosen and then sieved on site using special trays before being transferred to the workshop. High-grade soil is usually chosen by experts. The same method is common in pottery workshops across India (see Valizadeh 2009).

In Master Raḥimy's workshop in Šahvār, a pond is used to collect mud. The pond is 3m long, 2.70m wide and 30cm deep. After being sieved, the soil is soaked in this pond and is turned to create a clay slip as the sand settles to the bottom. In case the mud is noticeably watery, it will stay in the pond for one day so the mud particles can settle completely. Afterwards small exit holes on the western wall will be uncovered, allowing surface water to exit the pond. Any remaining water is then evaporated by sun exposure, a process that takes seven days in summer and 15 to 20 days in winter. Finally, the remaining mud is prepared to be kneaded and used on the wheel.

Master Faḵāry's workshop in Ḥakami does not include a pond like the one described above to store the slip and prepare the clay. Instead, the sieved soil is transferred to the workshop basin and the clay paste is then stored on the ground next to the basin. The procedure is as follows: First, soil and water are mixed in the basin near Hut 1. This is done by adding water to the soil and stirring with a shovel. Then the mixture is left for 24 hours to let the soil become saturated. This increases mud particle cohesion and functionality. At this point the mud is watery and very thin. The potter then adds some sieved dry soil to the mud and kneads again. Next, the mud is laid down in sheet form and exposed to the sun for the water to evaporate. Following this, the sheet is stamped with bare feet. Afterwards, a sharp nail is used to split the sheet into smaller pieces. Each piece is then formed into rolls and stored in the potter's corner in Hut 1. In the pottery-making cabin, a significant number of clay rolls are stockpiled and covered by plastic. These are regularly sprayed with water to prevent drying. The potter takes the desired number of clay sheets daily and kneads them on a stone or ceramic plate next to the potter's wheel. Then, the potter separates a handful of clay in a similar manner to bread dough. These clay balls are prodded and examined by hand to ensure their purity. In Ali Raḥimy's workshop, there is a stand next to the potter's wheel where clay balls are placed. After this, the potter combines the clay balls together and starts kneading them on the flat ceramic or stone surface. Eventually, oval clay balls are taken by the potter based on type, form and quantity of planned crockery. For *jahleh* production, 25 to 30 oval shaped balls are prepared for daily use in different sizes appropriate to the planned production. It is noteworthy that potters of Šahvār and Ḥakami are familiar with the available pottery soil and believe that sour, sweet or smelly soils have a pronounced effect on pottery wastage.

Shaping and Making of *Jahleh* Pottery

The *Engāreh* Stage

Rough drafting is the first step in producing *jahleh* pottery using a potter's wheel. In this step the general form of the pottery is made. A prepared oval shaped ball is placed on the wheel to be formed by rotation and turned into a rough draft. For instance, the ball might take on the rough form of a jar with a long neck and a tight opening of a hand's width. After formation, a thread is used to cut the vessel off the disc. The vessel is then placed in the open air for water to evaporate off the clay, leaving the piece ready for the next step.

The Neck Decoration, First Stage of Decoration

Following the rough draft step, *jahleh* pottery is decorated. In this step, only the neck of the vessel is decorated (*fig. 10*).

Fig. 10. The first stage of decoration – decoration in the *engāreh* stage (photo by H. Alimoradi, 2016).

The *Čapā* Stage

After decoration, the rough draft is left in the open air to reach a leather-hard state. Then, the *čapā* process begins. This is a supplementary process and is done by hand. The body of the vessel is pounded by different tools, in particular paddles to thin it as much as possible. Pounding by paddle starts from above the shoulder of the vessel but skips the neck. Čapā increases the size and volume of the pottery. The tools and materials used in this step are simple and basic, including paddles of different sizes, date fibre, cotton threads, needles, *jahleh* stone, *sondeh* and ash.

Sondeh is a hemispherical hole dug in the ground with an approximate diameter of 16cm to 20cm, and 10cm deep (*fig. 11*). Soft, sieved ash is put inside. Turning the vessel in *sondeh* while pounding on its body results in a rounded spherical form. The ash, obtained from abandoned kilns across the workshop, reduces the pressure exerted on the vessel.

Wooden paddles are used to pound, form, enlarge and polish the pottery (*fig. 12*). These paddles are repeatedly submerged in sieved ash while pounding. The ash not only strengthens the pottery, but also mends any cracks caused by the pounding. These paddles have different names, including *kotak*, *čapā*, *vāger* and *mātun* or *mātum*. The heavier paddle is called a *kotak*, and it is used in the beginning. Both the inside and outside of the pottery is coated with ash before using *kotak*. Next, a *mātum* is used. The *mātum* is smaller than the *kotak* and helps in creating fine and delicate bodies. At the end, the lighter paddles called the *vāger* and *čapā* are used for completing the final touches. They fade out any signs of pounding caused by the heavier, more invasive tools, and smooth and polish the vessel.

A *jahleh* stone is a mushroom- or teardrop-shaped tool used to pound the pottery from the inside (*fig. 13*). One side of this item works as a handle and the side used for pounding is flat or convex. Contrary to its name, this tool might be made of fired clay. The lower diameter of a *jahleh* stone is around 4cm, while the upper diameter is around 6cm.

Fig. 11. *Sondeh* in the pottery workshop of the Ḥakami village (photo by S. Amirhajloo, 2019).

Fig. 12. Small wooden shovels or paddles (photo by S. Alimoradi, 2016).

During the *čapā* stage of the production process, a *jahleh* potter takes the *jahleh* stone covered in ash into their left hand and inserts the hand elbow deep into the vessel. Then the right hand is used to apply some sieved ash to the outside of the vessel. Next, the potter holds one of the wooden paddles in their right hand and starts pounding the vessel on the outside while pounding on the same place on the inside wall of the vessel using the Jaleh stone. Simultaneously, the vessel is slowly turned in *sondeh*. This process yields a bigger, more voluminous and spherical vessel, which is

Fig. 13. *Jahleh* stone in the pottery workshop of the Ḥakami village (photo by H. Alimoradi, 2022).

Fig. 14. The shape of pottery in the *čapā* stage (photo by H. Alimoradi, 2012).

closer in form to the final *jahleh* pottery, but still somewhat smaller and thicker. A variety of wooden paddles is used during this stage. During *čapā*, the shoulder of the vessel becomes spherical, and the base is flat like a cut pear (*fig. 14*). A pause follows this step for the vessel to dry out sufficiently so that it can withstand the next stage of handling. The *jahleh* would otherwise be too soft and would most likely fall apart. Two to three hours' rest is needed after the *čapā* stage for water to evaporate off the vessel and make it hard enough for the next step (Valizadeh 2009, 88). For this resting time, the potter takes the vessel into a cabin and places it on a layer of ash or a rubber tube. At this stage the vessel is still slightly wet. The potter bends and slowly smooths the exterior of the vessel, removing residual ash from the surface of the vessel as he goes, so the shoulder will look shiny and smooth and ready for decoration. In case any repair is needed, it can be done by using the wooden paddle and ash in this step. According to *jahleh* potters, using ash in *jahleh* production is crucial and serves three main purposes:

- It serves as a repairing agent during production phase and prevents cracks while making and firing.
- It whitens the *jahleh* pottery after firing.
- It helps with keeping the water stored inside the finished vessel cooler.

Second Step in Decoration

This step takes place between the *čapā* stage and the following *jahleh* stage. After the shoulder has been smoothed, if more time is required before the vessel is dry enough for the *jahleh* stage to begin, there is an opportunity to start the shoulder decorations. Tools like a small comb are used for decorating pottery. This small comb is made of a piece of fired clay with multiple needles or pins inserted in an orderly way and is used to create incised patterns, as well as straight and waved lines (see *fig. 10*). Incised patterns can be created also by using a pointed object such as a needle. In addition to incised decoration, appliqué designs are also used on *jahleh* pottery. These include four to six small conical mud pieces called *pestun* in the local dialect. Authors have identified around 30 decorations for *jahleh* pottery such as patterns of mountains, butterflies, diamonds and farmland (*Kešāri* motif, *fig. 15*).[2] These decorations are repeated alternately and in rare cases a single pattern like the sun can be seen towards the end of the neck. Patterns are mostly placed on the neck and shoulder

2 The *Kešāri* pattern was created by incising continuous points on the vessel shoulder. This pattern can be similar to famous froglet patterns on prehistoric pottery of Iran and Mesopotamia (see Alibeigi 2011, 44) except the pattern is incised in *jahleh*.

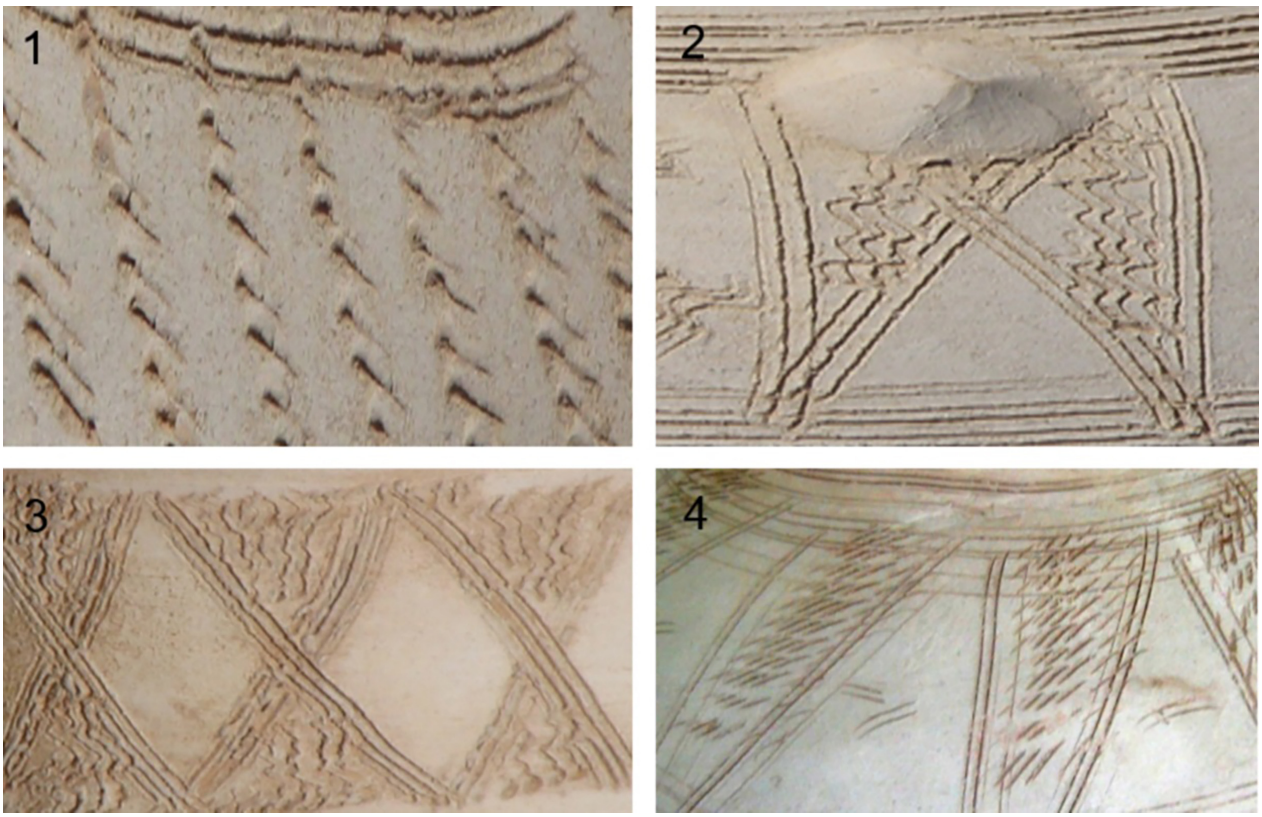

Fig. 15. All types of decorations on the *jahleh*: 1. *Kešāri* (farmland), 2. Butterfly, 3. Diamond, 4. Sun (photos by H. Alimoradi, 2016).

of *jahleh* pottery, but they usually differ from one another. Based on conversations with the potters of Ḥakami and Šahvār, it is understood that they use the same patterns without knowing what they mean. They state that the placement and method for each pattern have been passed down from their fathers. Some locals believe that in the past these patterns had a practical purpose in the old pottery workshops. For example, since Mināb was located next to the sea and on the crossroads for traders and merchants, drinking water was of high value. Thus, potters decorated drinking *jahleh* pottery with wavy or river-like lines to resemble the water inside.

The *Jahleh* Stage

In this step, the potter sits on the ground and puts the leather-hard and almost dried pottery on their thighs. Using a brush made from palm leaves dipped in water, the potter moistens the pottery body. Next, ash covered wooden paddles are used to pound the body in a fashion similar to the *čapā* step. This process is called *bum bālā*. According to local potters, this step is dedicated to curving the base: All the previous steps dealt with the upper sections of pottery and this step deals with the lower parts. As in the *čapā* stage, the potter holds a *jahleh* stone in his left hand, inserting it inside the vessel while using his other hand to pound the exterior with a paddle. While pounding, the paddle is dipped in ash before each blow. At the same time, the vessel is being turned in the *sondeh* ashes until it achieves the desired shape and fineness (*fig. 16*). This step requires extreme skill. If the vessels cracks at this point, it can be repaired by pushing both sides towards one another, adding ash and pounding it (see Anjum 2013). During the *jahleh* process the potter also smooths the interior of the vessel. Towards the final stages, the potter taps the pottery lightly and it seems like the paddle is simply touching the surface. Lastly, the potter's palm is used to completely even the surface and reach what is called a velvet finish. The above-mentioned steps show the strenuous nature of *jahleh* pottery

Fig. 16. The potter turns the *jahleh* in the *sondeh* (photo by H. Alimoradi, 2016).

production. The thickness and evenness of the vessel depend upon the potter's skilfulness. The *jahleh* stage is the last step before firing. After the vessels are completely formed, they are placed on soft materials such as ash or fine soil upside down. There, vessels are accumulated and prepared for firing.

Keeping Pottery Upside Down Before Firing

In the southern part of Hut 1, a place has been covered by soft sieved ash to store the prepared *jahleh* pottery before firing. After *jahleh* pottery is completed, it should be placed on a soft surface upside down on its neck, which can tolerate more pressure compared to its thin, wet body. The neck is after all made on the wheel and is stronger and thicker, whereas the thinner body can easily break apart. The pottery is maintained in this upside-down position until it is entirely dry and it is time for firing. If the pottery undergoes firing while still wet, there is a high chance of it bursting. In recent years, rubber tubes have also been used as a soft base for this final drying process.

The Arrangement of Pottery Inside the Kiln and Firing

After a specific number of *jahleh* items are made, kept upside down and dried, they would be carefully positioned upside down in the firing section of the kiln. The aim is to position the items so that the neck and opening parts are on the kiln plate and close to the holes (*fig. 17*). Other vessels are also stacked in the same fashion on top of this lower layer. Next, the top opening of the kiln is covered by mud sheets mixed with pottery sherds and kiln debris. These sheets prevent heat loss and provide high temperatures while firing. The fuel compartment is filled with dry palm leaves and ignited. Palm leaves are added repeatedly until a high temperature is achieved. Due to the basic and simple structure of such kilns, one cannot control the heat accurately, however, the maximum temperature these kilns reach is usually between 850 and 1000 degrees Celsius. Fire is kept burning for four to five hours, during which the kiln temperature is raised steeply for an hour, so that the added ash on the vessels is oxidized and the

Fig. 17. Arrangement of the *jahleh* jars upside down in the kiln for firing (photo by H. Alimoradi, 2016).

pottery turns white. Afterwards, the fire is put out and the kiln is left to rest for a day. Temperature slowly decreases and the vessels cool down gradually. After the kiln turns cold, the clay sheets are taken off and the clay cover is broken. The pottery pieces are then carefully taken out. Based on experience, a remarkable number of items would be destroyed due to the lack of temperature control and heat shock in the kiln and become kiln debris every time.

Jahleh Decoration After Firing

Occasionally after the kiln firing of *jahleh* pottery, motifs are applied using natural or industrial paint. In some cases, natural paints such as ochre, which is available in Hormozgān, are used. Ochre is called *Galak* in the local language and is applied to the potteries using fingers or a stick.

Jahleh Pottery Characteristics After Firing

Jahleh pottery shows the following characteristics after firing:

- fine fabric
- thin walls
- smooth and sleek exterior

Owing to the sieved soil and its production process, *jahleh* pottery does not include large mineral particles in its matrix. The pounding technique results in an even and thin, yet strong surface. Since the exterior is smoothed by hand prior to firing, a smooth sleek surface is achieved. Most *jahleh* potteries from the Ḥakami workshop show a light brown colour after firing, whereas those from Šahvār are white to creamy white. In the Ḥakami workshop, potteries placed closer to the fire and to the centre of the kiln are white, and those on the circumference or stacked in the higher layers turn reddish. Thus, uneven heat distribution during firing is a key factor in this colour change of *jahleh* vessels in the Ḥakami workshop. In the Šahvār workshop the situation is reversed. Potters there use a relatively more complex kiln with kerosene as fuel. This provides an even temperature throughout the kiln, and consequently the *jahleh* potteries show the same colour after being fired.

Work Distribution and Detailing

According to the locals, *jahleh* was always made by men, while the women of the area were mostly engaged in crafts such as mat-weaving, making mats woven from palm leaves. The potter in Ḥakami and the townsmen there stated that until three decades ago, several people including experts and workers were involved in *jahleh* production. These people were:

- the master or expert in charge of soil selection
- the worker preparing the pottery clay and bringing it to the wheel
- the master in charge of the rough draft and pottery pounding

– the master in charge of decoration
– the worker providing the kiln fuel

Masters working in a workshop usually came from the same family or were related to one another and the workshop was jointly inherited by them. Their wages were settled equally or by agreement and received after selling their finished pieces. Workers had the opportunity to learn from the masters and become experts themselves. They usually received several *jahleh* potteries instead of cash payment, which they could sell directly in the market or exchange.

Today, the above-mentioned jobs have disappeared because of the slow pottery market and the widespread use of non-ceramic products by families. In fact, in recent times the whole process was carried out by a single person in both Ḥakami and Šahvār – until a few years ago, when production stopped altogether.

Distribution and Consumption Markets

Based on information obtained from the masters employed by the workshops, two production workshops existed in the area until 2019, and in the decades prior to that a number of workshops had existed in the majority of areas across Mināb and Bandar Abbās. These pottery products were then distributed in five ways:

– direct consumer to the potter or pottery workshop approach
– direct producer to consumer approach
– both producers and consumers taking part in the Panjšanbe-Bāzār in Mināb
– involvement of a middleman approached by the producer (like a dealer or a merchant)
– middlemen approaching producers

Local consumers bought the finished products directly from the Mināb pottery workshops or the Panjšanbe-Bāzār. From 2012 to 2019, the cost of *jahleh* vessels in the local market of Mināb ranged between four to five euros, based on size. Pottery products from the Panjšanbe-Bāzār also reached neighbouring areas such as Bašāgerd, Manujān, Rudbār and Jiroft through middlemen and dealers.

Some items of *jahleh* pottery were originally produced with export in mind. In the past, they were bought by tradespersons or local dealers and exported by boat to neighbouring countries such as the Arab states of the Persian Gulf or even countries in eastern Africa. At present, *jahleh* is no longer exported due to the prevalence of refrigerators and other cooling technologies.

In contrast to the high quality of *jahleh* pottery and demand for such pottery in the past, the ones produced in Mināb during our first and second visits in 2012 and 2019 were of poor quality and lacked refined aesthetics. The reason is twofold: a limited number of workshops and lack of competition as well as a demand market prioritising practicality over other aspects.

Jahleh Pottery Functions and Types

One function of *jahleh* is the storage and temperature control of drinking water, which is and always has been crucial considering the need for cool water in the very warm climate of Mināb. During the production, which involves pounding by wooden paddles, a thin film of ash is set on the exterior of the vessel and is also taken into the clay matrix. After firing and the oxidisation of these ash particles, extremely small holes appear across the surface of the pottery. Once filled with water, a very small amount of the water inside the vessel exudes from these holes and dampens the exterior of the pot, which then cools down the surface once in contact with the air and keeps the water inside cool as a result. New *jahleh* potteries are primarily used for water storage, and old ones more for carrying water or storing beans and dates. Nevertheless, the size and form also affect functionality. *Jahleh* pottery is produced in a variety of forms such as *ḵaraki*, a small type of *jahleh* vessel used for storing date flesh.

Minor differences exist between the *jahleh* potteries produced in the Mināb workshops. Old ones were produced with a round base. They were then inserted in a hole in the soil or put on *pajahleh* or hung by ropes to achieve stability. Conversely, the modern *jahleh* potteries produced in Šahvār all have flat bases and are stable. Table 2 shows the names and characteristics of typical *jahleh* shapes.

Type	Description
gardan ḡazāli	with a long and cylindrical neck (literally meaning gazelle-necked)
boku	neckless, found only in Ḥakami
nim jahleh	half of a regular *jahleh* vessel, sometimes with a flat base (literally meaning half a *jahleh*)
gaduk	a flat-based jar with a bump and a short or long neck, small in size and used by girls to carry water
gerāši	a jar with an open mouth and a short neck, only found in Ḥakami
yatimak or soruze	a very small *jahleh* vessel with a short neck and without decorations
kovār	similar to a basin, used as a stock can or for bathing
jahleh merk	a short necked *jahleh* vessel
jahleh ḵaraki	smaller than the *gaduk*, but with a longer neck
jahleh jamāli	the biggest type of *jahleh* vessel, with a sloped rim curving outwards

Tab. 2. Different shapes of *jahleh* pottery with their specific names and shape characteristics.

Jahleh Vessels as Musical Instruments

Another use of *jahleh* pottery is as a percussion instrument. Thanks to its shape and thin wall, tapping a *jahleh* across its surface creates delightful sounds. Master Mousā Kamāly Čāhooyi[3] can be considered the pioneer of *jahleh* playing. He was influenced by *koozeh* or *kuzak* playing and widened the use of *jahleh* vessels as percussion instruments in Hormozgān and southern Kermān by teaching others. *Koozeh* or *koozak* playing is common in the southern areas of Iran, but it is particularly well-known in towns around Fahraj, Narmašir, Rigān and Bāḡ babuʾiye in Kermān province (Towhidi 2019, 215). Similarities exist between instruments made from *jahleh* vessels and those made from *koozak*. *Koozak* vessels are made in two sizes in southern Kermān. The bigger one is played by hand, and the musician creates various sounds by tapping on both the opening and the surface of *koozak*. A foam sandal is used to play the smaller *koozak*. At times, the player wears rings on the middle fingers of both hands and uses them to create sounds.

Jahleh vessels are used to produce a variety of sounds based on their sizes. For instance, the *jahleh jamāli*, which is the biggest, sounds like a drum. This type of *jahleh* vessel was used in the past by young women to carry water from the spring or the river. These women's skills in placing the full vessel on top of their head and balancing their movements are also mentioned in historic texts (see Gabriel 2004, 173). Other, smaller *jahleh* types, such as Gaduk, can be used to create bass sounds. To play, the musician sits and puts the *jahleh* vessel on the ground. Then the player's palms and fists are used to tap on the body and below the neck of the vessel. *Jahleh* vessels are usually played in groups, however, solo performances are also common. They are mostly used as percussion instruments at wedding receptions and traditional dances. Some research compares this music style to that of certain African tribes (see Valizadeh 2009, 90 f.).

Jahleh Pottery in Weddings

Using *jahleh* pottery in wedding celebrations is an enduring tradition called ā*zin-bandi-ye jahle* (literally meaning decoration of *jahleh*). Although *jahleh* production has now almost stopped, this tradition is, more or less, popular among people of African heritage living around Bandar Abbās.

3 Mousā Kamāly Čāhooyi was born on 28. 1. 1969 in Bandar Abbās. In addition to playing *jahleh*, he has been engaged in film making, pottery, singing and writing. He started making music at the age of twelve. After studying the theory of music, he began learning the drums out of his own interest in percussion instruments. He made various performances from 1984 on and has collaborated with artists such as Nāṣer Abdullāhy, Amir Raḥmāniān and Morteżā Ḥātamy.

Old decorated *jahleh* are used for the ceremonial bathing of brides (not to be confused with bridal showers). The *jahleh* decoration ceremony starts with the family of the groom decorating seven (occasionally more or less) *jahleh* potteries on the morning of the wedding, using beads and colourful strings. Then the decorated *jahleh* potteries are filled with water and the groom's close female relatives such as his mother, sisters or female cousins place the potteries on their head and carry them to the bride's house among an accompanying group of people playing music, dancing and singing. The water carried in the *jahleh* vessels is then used to bathe the bride. The purpose of this tradition is not so much ritualistic, as for the groom to literally provide the water needed for the bride to bathe.

It appears that the incorporation of *jahleh* vessels in this bathing ceremony is solely due to their abundance and role in storing water. These days, with the development of infrastructure and especially modern water supply systems, this tradition is starting to be lost: If this tradition was actually of a ritualistic nature, people would probably have made more effort to preserve it, a fact that also became clear while talking to the locals on the topic.

Jahleh Keši (Carrying *Jahleh*)

In earlier times, supplying water was a difficult task and would become overwhelming during warmer weather. Family members were forced to travel the long path from the house to the water source on foot, carrying several *jahleh* vessels by hand, and then make their way back with heavy, vessels full of water. In Mināb, this duty mostly fell on women, who fulfilled it skilfully. This mode of water supply was common for centuries in Mināb. In his travel log, Marco Polo commented that half of the lives of women in Mināb was spent carrying water (Gabriel 2004, 173). Women would cross the path connecting their homes to the spring or the river while expertly carrying full *jahleh* vessels on top of their heads. This is why carrying full *jahleh* vessels became the subject of a local competition, still held today under the name of *jahleh keši*. At this event, the girls and women of Mināb run a set distance while holding and balancing heavy *jahleh* vessels on their heads. Whoever crosses the finishing line first wins. This competition is a reminder of the difficulties and obstacles that water supply presented to the people of Hormozgān.

Jahleh in Myths of Hormozgān and Along the Halil Rud

Jahleh pottery has manifested in the myths, literature and culture of people from Hormozgān and southern Kermān. 'Jahleh be Gond', 'Jahleh be Lou' and 'Sar Korreh be Jahleh' are a few examples of these myths and folk tales.

The Myth of 'Jahleh be Gond'

'Jahleh be Gond' (testicle) refers to a very tall black man who appears in the myths of people living in the south, especially in Hormozgān. He has two big *jahleh*-like appendages between his legs. They start from his groin and reach his feet. Locals believe he is always dressed in goat fur and blocks passages and roads. Those who do not fear him can pass through his legs and continue on their way. But those who do fear him will faint and he will crush and kill them with his *jahleh* 'testicles'.

The Story of 'Jahleh be Lou'[4]

Although *jahleh* making is not as customary along the banks of the Halil Rud as in southern Kermān or Hormozgān, there are still stories told about it there. For example, in the folklore of Rudbār in the Halil Rud cultural region, this nursery rhyme is sung to scare children or prevent them from bad deeds:

'Jahleh be Lou
Mādare-e Šou
Folāny Vorgan o Bodo'

(meaning: The mother of the night, with a *jahleh* to your mouth, pick up 'name of the child' and then take off).

4 'Lou' means lip or mouth in the local dialect.

The Story of 'Sar Korreh be Jahleh' Across the Tropical Zones of Jiroft and Rudbar

In the tropical zones of Jiroft and Rudbār, south of Kermān, a tale is told of a person who owned a foal and a piece of *jahleh* pottery a long time ago. One day, the foal put its head inside the tight opening of the pottery and got stuck. The owner realised this and tried in vain to free the head. Since both the foal and the pottery were valuable, the owner decides to sacrifice the cheaper possession. So he cut the head off the foal to easily remove it from the *jahleh* but fails. Eventually he ends up breaking the pottery and loses everything altogether.
Today this story is used as a proverb among people of Rudbār and tropical areas of Jiroft when a duty is entrusted to someone and not only do they not succeed, but they also manage to make it worse. Observations can be made from this story such as 1) how tight pottery mouths were compared to today's products, 2) the value of *jahleh* pottery at that time, which exceeded that of a horse and 3) the expansion of *jahleh* making throughout the Halil Rud area and the Jebāl Bārez foothills.

Jahleh Making, a Withering Tradition

Through questioning the locals, authors realised that many members of the society in Šahvār and Ḥakami bear the surname 'Faḵāry'. Faḵḵār means potter in Arabic. This shows how widespread this profession was among the residents of these villages. In recent decades, the number of people working in this field has decreased. According to potter Ali Raḥimy Šahvāry, twelve *jahleh* potters were still active in the village when he was a child, but since 1975, only three or four people still make *jahleh* in this village. Over time, he has forgotten their names. In recent years, Mr. Šahvāry has become the sole remaining *jahleh* potter of Šahvār in Mināb. He learned pottery making from his father, Master Hossein, from the age of ten. In his family, pottery was a hereditary profession, and his ancestors were potters as well. He has been practicing *jahleh* pottery for 53 years now. Time has changed how things used to be in Ali Šahvāry's pottery workshop. Today, based on market demands, items like *korbe*, incense burners, censers, jugs, piggy banks, Hookah balls, figurines and toys are produced. He confirmed to us that he has not made any *jahleh* pottery since 2019. Observations also show that although traditional tools are used in the Šahvāry workshop, modifications can be found in the wheel and the kiln. For instance, the hand wheel has been modified to an electric wheel, and kerosene is used instead of palm tree leaves as fuel. Ali's younger brother, Abdullah Šahvāry, also learned *jahleh* pottery from his father and worked in this field for a while. However, he gave up his job to teach this art to interested participants at the state welfare organisation of Mināb. According to Ali Raḥimy, a student of his workshop, Ganjali Raḥimy reached high levels of mastery during his last few years. Master Ali Raḥimy Šahvāry, accompanied by his student, Ganjali, trained enthusiasts in the cultural heritage organisation of Mināb for seven years. After the passing of Ganjali in 2018, the collaboration ended.

As stated by the potters and elders of Ḥakami village, between 1925 and 1970 a noticeable number of potters were involved in *jahleh* making. Since many potters have now passed away, the *jahleh* production tradition is also fading.[5] Some potters also changed their profession as time passed. Ali Ḥabib Faḵāry, the only remaining *jahleh* potter of Ḥakami, mentioned that he learned *jahleh* pottery from his father at the age of ten and has been working in this field for 55 years now. He commented that there used to be ten to 15 pottery kilns in his workshop and he worked together with his uncle making pottery. Even though modifications can be seen in the Ḥakami pottery workshop, Ali Ḥabib Faḵāry still uses a kick wheel and palm tree leaves for fuel, unlike at the workshop in Šahvār.

In addition, Ali Ḥabib Faḵāry reported that *jahleh* making was also common in neighbouring towns. For example, until several years ago in Gowdu village, which lies in the Bandzark district

5 A list of *jahleh* artists practising in Ḥakami during recent decades has been collected by the authors: Abbās Moḥammad, Abdullāh Rajab, Ali Hossein, Ali Moḥammad, Ghanbar Mašhady Abdullāh, Ḡolām Moḥammad, Ḥasan Ali, Ḥasan Reża, Ḥossein Rajab, Jafar Mašhady Abdullāh, Šamsa, Mahdy Ḡolām, Mahdy Reża, Moḥammad Ḥabib. Moḥamadreża, Moslem Mašhady Ḥossein, Mousā Ḡolām.

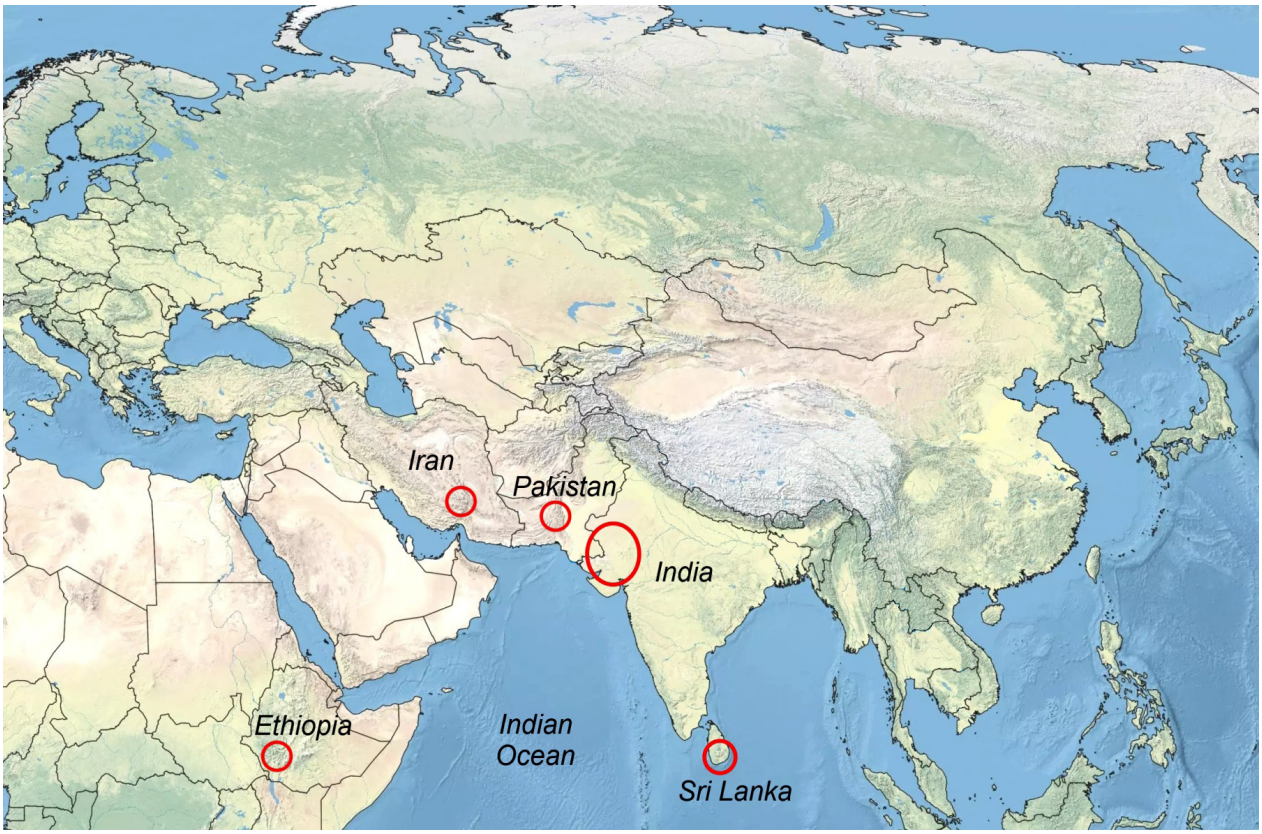

Fig. 18. Pottery workshops with 'paddle and anvil' technique in India, Sri Lanka, Iran and Ethiopia (map modified by authors, after Wikipedia commons; <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/eb/World_map_geographical.jpg>).

south of Mināb, *jahleh* was produced at a place 10km along Jāsk Road. Today, however, it has completely stopped. What is notable is the difference of *jahleh* styles across this area. According to Ali Ḥabib Faḵāry, Gowdu *jahleh* vessels have shorter necks compared to those made in Ḥakami.

Historical Background of Pottery Workshops in Mināb

Nowadays, historic pottery kilns and smoked fine ware pottery sherds are scattered across a wide area of Mināb plains. This shows that pottery was a thriving craft in this region during previous periods. In other parts of Hormozgān, similar pottery workshops were visited by one of the present authors (Alimoradi 2016). Through archaeological surveys in Faḵrābād village in Mināb, a now abandoned *jahleh* pottery workshop was discovered, which is identical to the old workshop in Šahvār (see Sarlak et al. 2003, fig. 24). Moreover, in Gurband, the remains of a historic *jahleh* kiln with signs of burned and fired pottery sherds have been discovered by archaeological surveys 2km southeast of the main square of the village (Sarlak et al. 2003, 44).

Techniques Similar to *Jahleh* Pottery Production Outside of Iran

Ethnological research shows that the paddle and anvil method of forming vessels in pottery production is nowadays widely used in parts of Africa as well as south and southeast Asia (*fig. 18*). For example, this method is used to produce thin-walled pottery similar to *jahleh* in Biyagama, southern Sri Lanka (Anjum 2013, 17), as well as in India, in the towns of Khavda and Lodai, Bhuj city in Kutch (Anjum 2013, 25) and Rajasthan (Kramer 1997, 48, fig. 20) and finally in the Bannu area of Pakistan (Thomas/Khan 2011, 7, figs. c, d; *figs. 19–21*).

Fig. 19. Indian potter paddling pottery (after: Anjum 2013, 127).

Fig. 21. An Indian potter's wheel (after: Anjum 2013, 53); comparable to the Šahvār potter's wheel.

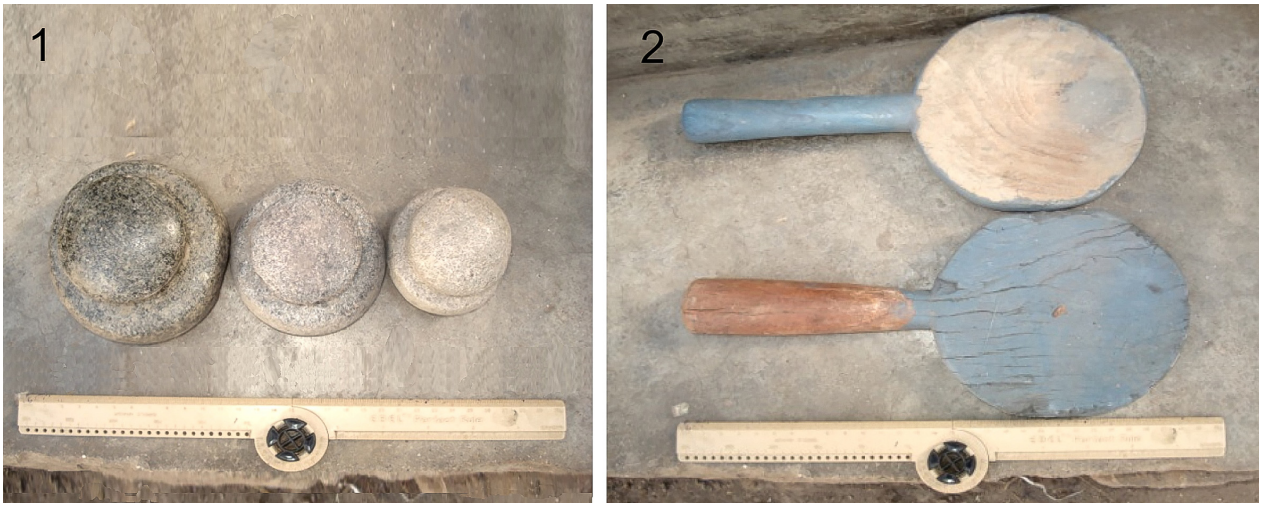

Fig. 20. Two tools in the Indian pottery workshops: 1. The stone known as *pella*, 2. Wooden paddles known as *tapla* (after: Sikdar/Chaudhuri 2015, 5 f.).

A comparison of *jahleh* production methods in Mināb and other areas demonstrates that this is a traditionally male-dominated craft, with the almost exclusive involvement of men in each different step of *jahleh* production. As an example, in traditional workshops in Bannu/Pakistan, where pottery similar to *jahleh* is produced, men play the main role (Thomas/Khan 2011, 5). Nevertheless, exceptions exist. For example, in Udaipur and Judhpur in Rajasthan, India, women engage in producing pottery using techniques similar to *jahleh* production (Kramer 1997, 49 f.).

Examining the steps involved in pottery making, from the initial preparation to the final production, and comparing finds from fine ware pottery production in the above-mentioned areas unveils more or less identical techniques in wall thinning and pottery strengthening. Using wooden paddles and tools for pottery pounding with names similar to the local ones in Mināb is typical in all of these areas. A stone anvil (similar to the *jahleh* stone) is also commonly used (*fig. 20*) and improves the fineness and resilience of the finished potteries (see Sikdar/Chaudhuri 2015; Anjum 2013; Kramer 1997). In India, for instance, wooden paddles are called *kalou* and the anvil is called *kunhera* (*fig. 20*). Furthermore, ash is also used in the pottery making process in most of these areas (Kramer 1997, 48; Sikdar/Chaudhuri 2015, 9).

In addition, the potter's wheel used in Šahvār is not specific to southern Iran and similar examples can be found as far away as the Indus Valley

in India (see Anjum 2013; Kramer 1997, figs. 11, 19, 28). This potter's wheel is completely identical to those found in Indian regions. In Rajasthan a type of potter's wheel is used compromising a round, heavy plate with a maximum 1m diameter. Yet, smaller wheels also exist and are used to produce smaller pottery (Kramer 1997, 58). Holes have been incorporated around the pottery disk, where the potter inserts the stick and propels the wheel into motion (*fig. 21*). The difference between wheels used in different parts of Rajasthan (mainly Udaipur and Judhpur) and those in Mināb lies in their materials. The ones across Rajasthan are made of stone or cement (Kramer 1997, 58), while those in Mināb are made of clay and donkey excrement, which seems to be an old local tradition.

Conclusion

The Šahvār and Ḥakami pottery workshops in Mināb are among the last remaining traditional pottery producers in southern Iran. Pottery as a profession is hereditary among the residents of these villages and the knowledge is transferred from one generation to the next orally and through hands-on experience. Even so, this profession has been disappearing in recent years and with the shutting down of many workshops this pottery technique is being forgotten. The method of making *jahleh* pottery is rudimentary and can also be found across a vast geographical area from southeast Asia to Africa. In Iran, making this type of pottery utilises two methods – wheel and hand –with the initial form made on the wheel and then pounded with hands and tools to thin the walls. In this method, wooden paddles are used to pound the exterior of potteries, while a *jahleh* stone is held against the interior until the walls become uniformly thin and the desired form is achieved. In addition, ash is added to the surface of the pottery to repair cracks, strengthen the vessel and improve the cooling ability of *jahleh* water vessels. Both kick and hand wheels have been spotted in Mināb pottery workshops. Local potters confirmed that many workers were employed in these workshops until several decades ago. A system of work distribution was also present between workers, in such a manner that pounding and thinning of pottery was only done by an expert or a master. Although the majority of workshops have been closed, it is clear from speaking to the locals that minor differences existed between workshops in various towns. As a result, areas of specialisation practiced in some workshops can be discerned. On occasion, the firing method for *jahleh* and the structure of the kiln provide proof of a lack of temperature control in the firing compartment, which leads to high pottery wastage after firing.

Ethnological research shows the importance of *jahleh* pottery in the culture of southern Iran. *Jahleh* is well suited to the climate and geographical conditions of this area, based on its primary function of storing and cooling water. This capacity is the result of adding ash to the thinned walls during production, leading to the creation of tiny holes on the surface during firing, which allow the vessel to self-dampen its outer surface and cool the water inside. Later, *jahleh* vessels became popular as musical instruments and played a part in the daily life and folklore of people. The appearance of *jahleh* pottery in myths and folk tales such as 'Jahleh be Lou', 'Jahleh be Gond' and 'Sar Korreh be Jahleh' and its role in rituals and ceremonies such as *jahleh* decoration in weddings and the *jahleh keši* competition are manifestations of the role and value of *jahleh* in the culture and society of the area. Studies in the region show *jahleh* was exported from Mināb to other parts of Kermān and Hormozgān, as well as other countries, until at least four decades ago. Areas such as the Rudbār Plain, Jiroft in Kermān, Bašāgerd in Hormozgān, the United Arab Emirates and Oman south of the Persian Gulf are examples of export destinations. *Jahleh* vessels were also exported as luxury goods to countries south of the Persian Gulf, India and east Africa. The mass selling of *jahleh* pottery in foreign markets was done through local merchants and dealers. These people bought *jahleh* pottery from the production workshop or pottery masters in Panjšanbe-Bāzār and used local boats and small ships launching from Tiyāb port to foreign destinations and sold *jahleh* pottery in the markets of countries south of the Persian Gulf, India and east Africa.

Documentation of the Šahvār and Ḥakami pottery workshops in Mināb has ethnographical, ethnological and archaeological value. Although this

study has covered the use of local resources, the simple and basic methods and tools used in producing the pottery, some specialised production, work distribution, firing methods and supply systems, further focused ethnographical research is needed. Archaeological studies south of Kermān have discovered that *jahleh* sherds can be found on the surface of late Islamic sites. This could indicate the historical advancement of this pottery type from southern areas. Therefore, ethnographical and archaeological studies of this pottery type are pivotal for our understanding the emergence, peak popularity and gradual fall of *jahleh* pottery in southern Iran.

Saeed Amirhajloo
Associate Professor of Archaeology
Tarbiat Modares University (TMU)
Department of Archaeology
Tehran, Iran
s.amirhajloo@modares.ac.ir

Hamid Alimoradi
Junior researcher in Archaeology
hamid.alimoradi250@gmail.com

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Section III: Ethno-Archaeological Studies on Resources and RessourceComplexes

Mohammad Karami, Wulf-Marten Frauen
and Hamid Alimoradi

Calcite Gravestones from a Multidisciplinary Perspective

A ResourceComplex on the Foothills of Jebāl-e Bārez, Kermān, Iran

Keywords: calcite gravestone, Jebāl-e Bārez, calcite mine, ResourceComplex concept, archaeology and ethnography, ethno-archaeology

Summary

The present paper deals with the use of calcite in the Iranian region of Jebāl-e Bārez. Calcite is a carbonate mineral that can be found in many parts of the country. We argue, however, that the continuous cultural use and attribution of value to the mineral in Jebāl-e Bārez have led to extraordinary, if not unique, dynamics that contribute to the specific socio-cultural character of the region. We hence use the mineral as a 'category of analysis' to examine the culture of Jebāl-e Bārez, following a constructivist understanding of resources that emphasises the fact that they are not only the economic but moreover the social basis of societies. The contribution draws a line of continuation that reaches from prehistory, when the mineral first appeared in the region in burial contexts, to the resent past and even today, since it is still used to manufacture masterly gravestones. To cover this long period of time, a combination of archaeological and socio-anthropological methods is used. The paper, therefore, also strives to illustrate the epistemological potential of interdisciplinary work.

1 Introduction

The present contribution addresses calcite gravestones valued by the people of Jebāl-e Bārez, Kermān, southeastern Iran. Among other roles, the socio-cultural importance of calcite in burial contexts seems to be of special significance. Besides its employment for a wide variety of uses, the importance of the calcite is displayed through its continued use over a long span of time. Even today, the calcite extraction sites and natural outcrops of Jebāl-e Bārez are still active, although instead of being used locally it is now mainly mined for export in its raw state, particularly to countries in southeast Asia (*fig. 1*).

The use of calcite[1] in Jebāl-e Bārez and other parts of Kermān has its roots in prehistory. Archaeology provides evidence for the use of the calcite alabaster stone vessels and objects in Kermān from at least the 4th mill. BCE onwards (chapter 5). During the middle and late Islamic periods, calcite stone was extensively utilised for making gravestones in Jebāl-e Bārez. So far, the earliest known gravestone dates from 1011 Hijri or 1603 CE, and is located at Sālār Reżā near Rudfarq, on the western

1 Calcite is easy to work with since it has a Mohs hardness of just 3 and doesn't splinter. It is part of a group of metamorphic rocks commonly referred to as 'soapstones' which are very suitable for the manufacturing of vessels and the like.

Fig. 1. Location of Jebāl-e Bārez in the south of Kermān, southeastern Iran (DLR e.V. [2014–2018] and © Airbus Defence and Space GmbH 2022 provided under COPERNICUS by the European Union and ESA) (prepared by M. Karami).

slopes of Jebāl-e Bārez (Rafati 1386 SH [2007], 304) (*fig. 2*). In Češār, on the eastern slopes of the mountain, there are several graves of young men marked with calcite gravestones, all dating back to the end of the Ṣafavid period. Most probably the young people were killed in the ongoing conflict between the Balouči and the Afḡāns. The latter repeatedly attacked the region of Kermān during the end of the Ṣafavid period (1501–1736 CE) (Safa 1373 SH [1994], 104). The use of calcite for making gravestones in Jebāl-e Bārez continued after the Ṣafavid period until recent decades.

Thus, calcite has provided the raw material for the manufacturing of calcite gravestones in Jebāl-e Bārez for at least 400 years and this should be considered one of its specific functions or uses. These gravestones show no significant changes in terms of form, engraved writings or motifs over this extended period of time. The historical records only include brief and indeterminate mentions of the gravestones in the study region. Since the tradition of calcite gravestones continued into the recent past, one of the logical steps was to find people engaged in producing these gravestones. For this reason, we strove to find the last generation of masons from the villages across the mountains. Our principal method for achieving this was the conducting of an ethnographical field study on the slopes of Jebāl-e Bārez, including personal observation, interviews and documentation of cemeteries and calcite gravestones. From the archaeological point of view, we have attempted to illustrate the background of the use of calcite in the region, in terms of geographical distribution, object types produced and the find contexts, as revealed in archaeological records. In addition, we searched for references to the stones in historical literature.

Fig. 2. The tomb of Sālār Reża in Garm Sālār Reża, near Rudfarq (photo by H. Alimoradi).

The use of a certain material (in this case calcite) by a given people raises questions regarding the meaning and values attributed to that material. No material becomes a resource due to its intrinsic properties, something especially true for secondary or non-essential resources. Rather it is the surrounding framework of culturally shaped ideas and practices that can, for example, turn a particular type of stone with no self-evident use into a valuable resource. In other words: resources, in particular secondary resources such as craft or building materials, are dependent upon the socio-cultural context. To understand these contexts with regard to the calcite gravestones in Jebāl-e Bārez we have employed the theoretical framework provided by the collaborative research centre 1070 (SFB 1070)[2], which aims to understand such resources from a constructivist perspective.

Following this definition, things (both tangible and intangible) are valued by people and by this act of assigning meaning to them turned into resources. The value and meaning can principally be apprehended through the social structures, activities and networks which are established around the resource (ResourceComplex). The ResourceComplex embraces all inter-connected tangible and intangible elements in the sphere of a specific resource.[3] In our present research, we explore the value and social status attached to the calcite gravestones in Jebāl-e Bārez and attempt to illustrate the ResourceComplex existing in the sphere of these gravestones within the study area.

2 Research Area

The research area for this study is the slopes of Jebāl-e Bārez (the mountains of Bārez) in the province of Kermān, southeastern Iran. Jebāl-e Bārez is an extension of the Zāgros range in southeastern Iran comprising part of the inner mountains of the Iranian plateau. It is oriented northwest-southeast in the south of the province and divides the plains of Jiroft in the west and Bam, Narmāšir and Fahraj in the east. This mountain range is called Jebāl-e Bārez from the northeast of Jiroft downwards. From the northern edge of the plain of Jiroft, Jebāl-e Bārez extends less than 200km to

2 The SFB was established by the German Research Council (DFG) at the University of Tübingen (Germany) in 2013. SFB is an abbreviation of the German term 'Sonderforschungsbereich' (collaborative research centre).

3 In Chapter 3 we comprehensively discuss the SFB's concept.

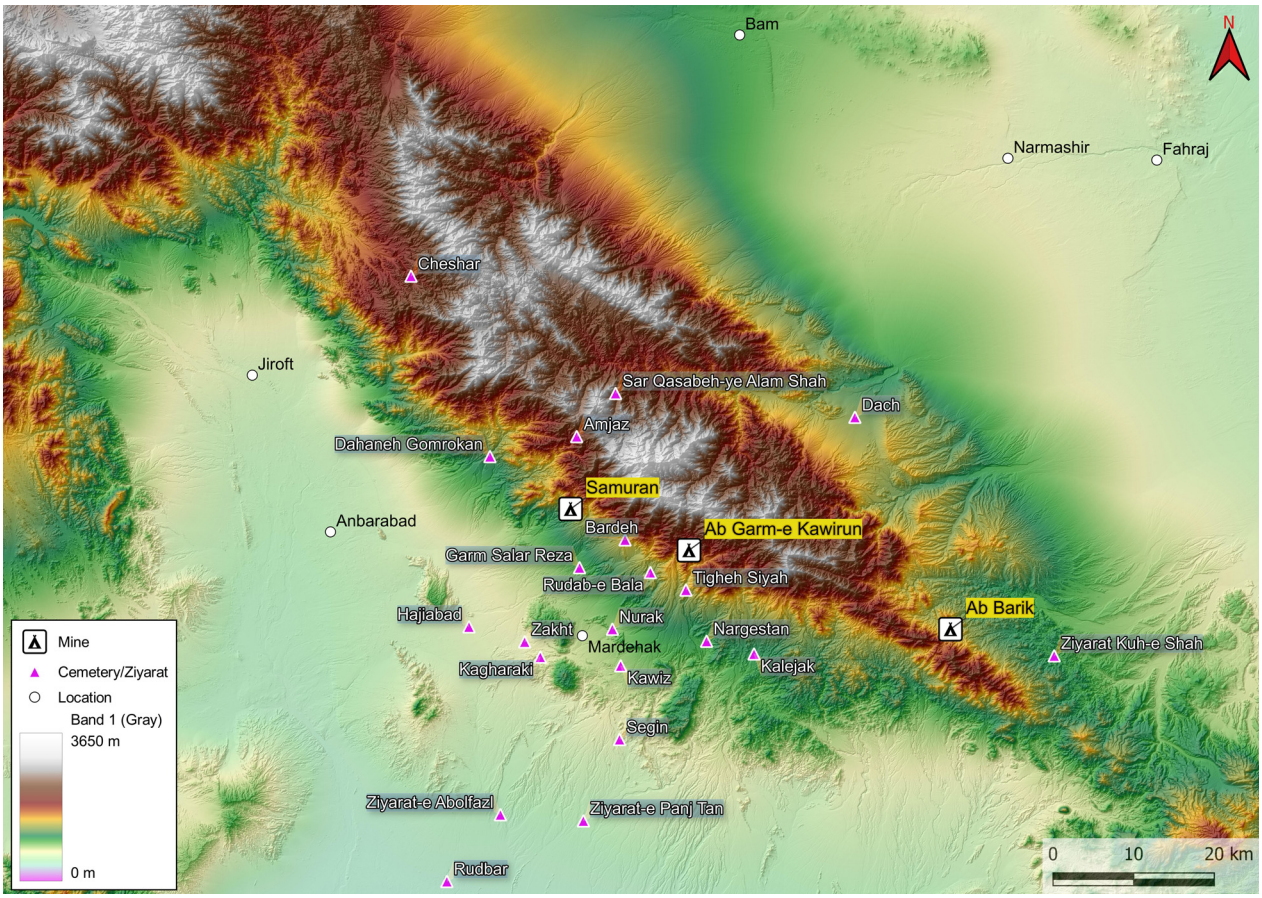

Fig. 3. The calcite mines and spread out cemeteries with calcite gravestones on the skirts of Jebāl-e Bārez (DLR e.V. [2014–2018] and © Airbus Defence and Space GmbH 2022 provided under COPERNICUS by the European Union and ESA) (prepared by M. Karami).

the southeast towards the northern side of the Jāzmuriyān basin (see *fig. 3*).[4]

The highest peak of Jebāl-e Bārez is called ʻalam Šāh or Bon Āvān, with an elevation over 3700m above sea level and located approximately 50km southeast of Jiroft. The snow-capped, high mountains of Jebāl-e Bārez are the main source of both seasonal and perennial streams in the region. Geographical location, annual precipitation and mild temperatures, as well as a variety of mineral resources all make the lower skirts of the mountains very suitable for animal husbandry, small-scale cultivation and trade. The above-mentioned factors have created a triple settlement system of sedentary populations living in villages, pastoral nomads and an itinerant population in Jebāl-e Bārez that endured over a long period of time and remained until recent decades. The Jebāl-e Bārez offered refuge for Zoroastrians who were clinging to their ancestral faith in the early Islamic centuries due to its rather remote setting (Bosworth 2017). It also hosted the infamous Qofṣ or Kufičis (‘mountain dweller’) – a mysterious group found in the writings of Islamic historians and geographers of the 10th to the 11th cent. CE (Bosworth 2011). The Qofṣ seem to have been an ethnically and probably also linguistically distinct group, although they are frequently linked with the Balouč in written sources (Bosworth 2011). The ‘inhabitants of the Jabāl Bārez’, as the Qofṣ were called, seem to have been a raiding people who were reported as terrorising the great central deserts of Iran with their raids, and preying upon travellers and caravans there (Bosworth 2011). It seems possible that the Islamisation of this mountain region, which had remained a stronghold of Zoroastrianism over an extended period, was the result of Ṣafavid operations against the Qofṣ (Bosworth 2017).

4 For more details about the climate, minerals, agriculture and trade in the region of Jebāl-e Bārez see Pourshir Mohammadi Roudsari et al. 2020.

3 Theoretical Framework

To provide an image that is as comprehensive as possible, we have employed archaeological and ethnographical data and various theoretical approaches. In archaeology, the search for the relative meaning and value of an object necessitates a coherent image of the socio-cultural circumstances in which the object is desired, produced, supplied, distributed, used and finally discarded. Such a broad picture can only be built up through the contribution of various disciplines that provide different sets of data such as contextual data, material data and immaterial data (Karami et al. 2021). Nevertheless, archaeologists' interpretations remain uncertain because the data we are able to recover from ancient societies and cultures is limited and difficult to comprehend: there is much 'silent data' (Peregrine 2001). In short, although archaeology is sophisticated in terms of interpreting material remains, it still obviously lacks any direct grasp of a living society.

Ethnography, on the other hand, strives to understand living societies. With regards to our research question, this includes the role that the material and objects under discussion play in the lives of actual people, the values that are attributed to them and the social structures that are established through their use. Although anthropology does not necessarily follow Tylor's rather obscure notion of a 'most complex whole' anymore, culture is seen as an intersubjectively constructed 'web of significance' (Geertz 1973). Ethnography is therefore, per definition, always interpretative in its search for meaning. Just like archaeology, ethnography and social anthropology have their limitations. A pertinent example is the question of how old an observed practice is or how networks around certain resources were structured in the past. In summary, although social anthropology is well equipped to document recent changes that occurred within the last three generations via oral historical transmission, it struggles with all developments that are connected to the *longue durée* in the sense of F. Braudel (1977).

What seems obvious is that archaeology and social anthropology, despite all their differences in methodology, share the same epistemological aim of understanding cultures foreign to the observer. The distinction between the two disciplines, which is especially well-established in German-speaking countries, is, at least from an epistemological perspective, an artificial one. The present contribution looks to overcome this artificial distinction by means of a collaborative examination of the use of calcite in the region of Jebāl-e Bārez, both historically and in the present time.

The common foundation we employ to achieve this aim is the understanding of resources proposed by the collaborative research centre 1070 (SFB 1070) that started its work in July 2013. The SFB's understanding of resources seems to be promising for the analysis of calcite in Jebāl-e Bārez for several reasons. First, the SFB postulates that such resources are always cultural, since meaning is attributed to them within a framework of culturally shaped ideas and interests (Hardenberg 2021, 142). This notion renders the traditional distinction between nature and culture obsolete. At first glance this insight may not seem to be a breathtaking innovation, since a long succession of past anthropologists have expressed similar thoughts, most prominently Marshall Sahlins in the 1970s (Sahlins 1976). Still, although the idea itself is not new, the SFB is the first institution that acknowledges and employs the full epistemological potential that this fundamental constructivist understanding of resources offers. Even raw materials, in this case calcite, are not 'natural' resources but rather resources derived from nature. The fact that people use them and attribute meaning to them is what turns them into resources. That this has long been the case for calcite in the region under study can be seen from archaeological evidence, as stated in the introduction. Were calcite not significant, it would not appear in the archaeological record at all. The question that now emerges is not one of significance, therefore, but rather what specific meanings, values and social practices were and are connected with the mineral. Hence this particular resource has become our 'category of analysis' (Bartelheim et al. 2017, 14) and as such the starting point and foundation of the present study.

Resources may serve individual needs, but these needs are embedded in specific webs of meaning, to quote Geertz again, and also reflect commonly shared ideas and values. Values are

often organised into chains of 'value transformations', an idea that is closely connected with Nancy Munn, Terence Turner and the Chicago School (Robbins/Sommerschuh 2016, 4). Although this sounds a bit like M. E. Porter on economics (Porter 1985), and indeed there are some structural similarities, Munn's concept is more universal and applies to societies that are not embedded in the Western capitalist system as well. The basic idea is very similar to Porter and states that one resource can be used to acquire another. The difference is that the final acquisition is not necessarily money, the ultimate manifestation of value in capitalist societies. The socially embedded values of resources in different contexts can also comprise factors perceived as positive, like salvation, harmony, respect for the ancestors etc. In this way, the chain of value transformation reflects the values of a community and these values are realised through the social interactions that take place during the realisation of the value chain. It becomes obvious that resources are embedded in complex networks and act in the creation, maintenance and transformation of social relationships, orders and identities (Bartelheim et al. 2021, 9). Fundamental questions like 'What social practices and cultural ideas turn raw materials into resources?' or 'What function serves a specific resource in a society?' can be pursued in the past and the present. The fundamental insight that should be emphasised here is that their answers do not only tell us something about the resources themselves but also about the society that attributes meaning to them. Hence, the SFB's definition of resources is as follows: 'Resources are the means to create, sustain and alter social relations, units and identities within the framework of cultural ideas and practices' (Bartelheim et al. 2017, 14). The SFB analyses the complex networks and multidimensional processes that are connected with resources, and the use of and desire for them through different interrelated contexts: resources, ResourceComplexes, ResourceAssemblages and finally ResourceCultures. ResourceComplexes merely draw from the almost self-evident insight that resources do not exist as isolates, but rather in combination with other elements that are needed to make them usable. They are networks that consist of material (tools etc.) and immaterial (knowledge etc.) elements that are intentionally related to each other to serve a certain purpose. The seemingly orderly fashion of these networks emerges from the fact that they are subject to human, goal-oriented planning. This approach is similar to functionalist understandings of culture in the sense of Malinowski, the early work of Evans-Pritchard, Firth and many others. Therefore, it could evoke the same criticism: that it appears static, ahistorical, teleologic and tautologic (Goldschmidt 1996, 511). In short, this approach doesn't seem to correspond to a modern understanding of culture. Hence, it is important to emphasise that ResourceComplexes need to be understood as a heuristic tool: the concept is useful as a first step to understanding the dynamics around resources under discussion here, just as a functionalist view on culture is not 'wrong' but has its merits.

To further grasp the contingent, 'unplanned' aspects connected with resources, the SFB coined the concept of ResourceAssemblages. Assemblage theory, originally introduced by the French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari ([1980] 1992), has become popular among anthropologists[5] and archaeologists[6] alike in recent years, especially as it was enriched by additional concepts, most famously Latour's Actor-Network Theory (Latour 1996). Not every scholar likes the ideas that emerged in the course of this 'new materialism' (Goll et al. 2013) or 'material turn' (Latour 2007; Miller 2005), especially since they are partly counter-intuitive, for example the notion that things are attributed agency. To diffuse these reservations, we would like to draw on the brief example of air conditioners: they changed social life in the southern states of the USA drastically, since they caused people to spend their evenings inside their houses in front of the television instead of sitting on the veranda and interacting socially with each other as they had always done before. Do air conditioners, then, possess agency? In our opinion it can at least be

5 For a discussion on assemblage theory in social anthropology see Marcus/Saka 2006.

6 For a discussion on assemblage theory in archaeology see Hamilakis/Jones 2017.

stated that they appear to.[7] ResourceAssemblages are analytical tools that help to draw attention to the contingent, dynamic and unplanned developments that occur in the interaction between the various elements of ResourceComplexes. ResourceAssemblages are therefore a heuristic extension of the heuristic concept of ResourceComplexes, and as such the notion is useful. The last point that should be addressed is that the use of and desire for resources can trigger dynamics that affect societies as a whole and are not necessarily connected with the resources at first glance anymore. We distinguish between three principal dynamics: developments, movements and valuations (Bartelheim et al. 2017). Resources can lead to developments of new social orders, to new modes of spatial mobility and to transformations of entire value chains. These dynamics might only become visible in intercultural and diachronic comparisons and can potentially once again change the way those resources are used. An understanding of these complex and interrelated dependencies requires a careful examination of the abovementioned heuristic concepts of the ResourceComplex and ResourceAssemblage. The combination of all aspects outlined to this point (resources, ResourceComplex, ResourceAssemblage and the socio-cultural dynamics caused through the use of or desire for resources) might lead us to create a specific model that we call ResourceCulture. ResourceCultures are defined by the SFB as follows: 'ResourceCultures may be understood as specific, dynamic models connecting certain resources, social forms of use, social relations, units and identities in a contingent, yet meaningful way' (Bartelheim et al. 2017, 20). ResourceCultures shape the way people interact socially with each other, influence or determine their social structure and form part of the foundation of their (collective) identity. They are cultures in that although their development is characterised through contingencies, people mentally connect their various elements and spin them into a meaningful whole, as Geertz pointed out. Their characteristics can persist even if the element (resource) that has been at their centre lost some (or most) of its significance. They reflect a people's way and understanding of life. To sum up, our study in the Jebāl-e Bārez area is not merely about stones, although it deals with stones. It is about people.

4 Calcite in Jebāl-e Bārez Today and in the Recent Past

The present section aims to provide an understanding of how calcite is used in the region under study today and has been used in the recent past. It is descriptive in the sense that it primarily provides a structured overview of the collected material without drawing conclusions, which will be done in a later section. Nevertheless, we are already aiming to go slightly beyond a mere description by showing how the interrelated elements that are presented in this chapter work together as a ResourceComplex in the sense of the SFB 1070.

4.1 Spatial Distribution of Calcite

Our excursions in the area showed that there are at least three calcite mines[8] in the southern region of the Jebāl-e Bārez: the mine of Samurān in Rudfarq, the mine of Āb Garm-e Kavirun and the mine of Āb Bārik-e Kuh-e Šāh. The mine of Rudfarq is situated northwest of a village with the same name, in the north of Mardehak.[9] The mine of Āb Garm-e Kavirun is located in the north of Neverk, and the mine of Āb Bārik Kuh-e Šāh is located 46km east of Mardehak. The three mines form a line in whose surrounding area many villages and towns can be found with cemeteries containing gravestones made of calcite. These include Bon Āvān (Sar Qaṣabeh), Rudfarq, Neverk, Garm or Garm Sālār Reżā, Mardehak, Nargestān, Sar Gel Zāḵt, Ḥājiābād, Kaḡāraki, Sar Jangal-e Rudbār, Ziyārat-e Panj Tan near Rudbār, the city

7 We would like to thank the makers of the YouTube-video that provided us with this very illustrative example. Unfortunately, we couldn't find the clip again so that we are not able to give their names here, for which we are deeply sorry.

8 What we refer to here as a 'mine' may in fact simply be a large rock, or outcrops of calcite.

9 Mardehak is the capital of the southern Jebāl-e Bārez District (baḵš-e Jebāl-e Bārez-e janubi) and the only city of the district. It therefore serves as a spatial point of reference for us.

Fig. 4. Qadamgāh and a general view of the cemetery of Dāč (photo by H. Alimoradi).

of Rudbār, Ziyārat-e Bačeh in the south of Rudbār (all in the west and south of Jebāl-e Bārez) and Dāč and Bam on the eastern skirts of Jebāl-e Bārez (*fig. 3*). Three of these villages, Dāč, Neverk and Garm Sālār Reżā, will be described in more detail below, to provide a better overall image.

Dāč

The village of Dāč lies on the eastern skirts of Jebāl-e Bārez, near the plain of Bam and the Nesā Dam. The people of this village believe their ancestors were originally a part of the Gorgij tribe in the Sistan and Balochistan Province (Ostān-e Sistān va Balučestān), who migrated to this area a long time ago. The subsistence economy of the villagers is based on agriculture[10] and animal husbandry. The soil in this area is fertile and the main irrigation system is based on *qanāts*.[11]

Inside the village, there is a small shrine (*qadamgāh*).[12] The name of the shrine is Qadamgāh-e Amir al Moʾmenin. The cemetery of Dāč is nearby (*fig. 4*) and houses the graves of *kadḵodās*[13] and K̲āns of the Dāč and Hušmand tribes (*ṭāyefa*)[14] of Jebāl-e Bārez. The second *ṭāyefa* (Hušmand) originates from the region of Nargestān, near Mardehak, on the southern slopes

10 Persian: *kešāvarzi*. We translate *kešāvarzi* with 'agriculture' since this is the usual translation found in dictionaries and the literature alike. Nevertheless, it is not identical to the European notion of agriculture, since it doesn't include the raising of animals.

11 *Qanāt* is an Arabic loan word for the Persian term *kāriz*, denoting an underground irrigation channel with a slight slope that transports water over long distances using gravity. Although a Persian term exists as well (*kārēz*), the Arabic loan word is used widely in Iran (De Planhol 2011). The use of the term *qanāt* in Jebāl-e Bārez is sometimes different from the common use in Iran. While *qanāt* usually refers to an artificial construction it is locally also used to describe natural wells.

12 The term *qadamgāh* refers to specific small shrines in southern Iran. The term is widely unknown in the European literature on Iran – it does not even have an entry in the Encyclopaedia Iranica. The nature of a *qadamgāh* was explained to us as follows: it is a place that is connected with a dream of one of the prophets or Emāms. In this dream, a holy person (for instance Emām Reża) appeared to an ordinary person and subsequently the *qadamgāh* is built at the place of the encounter. Other than an *emāmzāda* (locally also reffered to as *ziyārat* – 'pilgramate') a *qadamgāh* does not host physical remains.

13 A *kadḵodā* used to be the leader of a tribal unit (*ṭāyefa*). They were selected among the influential members of the tribal community by consent. After the revolution of 1979 the functions of the *kadḵodā* were transferred to councils with the name Šurā, following the ideology of the Islamic Republic (Floor 2009).

14 A *ṭāyefa* is kinship-bound social group. The term is usually translated with 'tribe' in the English literature (for instance Tapper 1997; Stöber 2002). Although the term 'tribe' is not unproblematic (Gingrich 2015), it seems to provide the better fit in comparison to 'clan' or 'linage' since a *ṭāyefa* is always based on kinship, but not necessarily on a shared ancestry (see Bradburd 1984 for a, however rather atypical, counterexample).

of Jebāl-e Bārez. The route between Mardehak, Nargestān, and Dāč passes through narrow corridors of the mountains. Most of the gravestones are of calcite. According to villagers, several calcite gravestones from the cemetery have been stolen in recent decades. Today, between 20 to 30 graves with calcite gravestones exist in the cemetery. Most of the stones show white/beige to light brown colours. Sentences from the Quran, blessing texts, and poems can be found as inscriptions on the gravestones. The only gravestone which shows an engraved scene belongs to Qadam Ali. On his gravestone, besides the inscription, we observe a hunting scene. Besides a personal visit to the cemetery, we undertook a short interview with Mr. Rostam Rostami.

Rostam is an elderly man who originally came from the village of Dāč. He is primarily engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. The unique calcite gravestone with the hunting scene (see above) belongs to his father. According to him, Qadam Ali (his father) and his grandfather were elites in Dāč and inscribed the calcite gravestones as an occasional occupation (*fig. 5*).

Fig. 5. One of the calcite gravestones of the cemetery of Dāč near the Qadamgāh-e Amir al Moʻmenin (photo by H. Alimoradi).

Neverk

The village of Neverk is located four kilometres away from Mardehak in the south of Jebāl-e Bārez. The emāmzāda of Seyed Abdollah, the son of Emām Musā-ye Kāẓem, is in the village. For this reason, many visitors come to the village from Kermān and the other southern cities. The cemetery of Neverk is divided in two parts which are at a distance of respectively 700m southeast and 700m southwest of the shrine. The calcite gravestones are spread all over the cemetery (*fig. 6*). They measure between 0.5 or 0.6m to 1.5m in length. Gravestones measuring 1m in length and 0.5m in width are most common. The veined calcite stones of Neverk show white to beige colours. The size and quality of the stones are influenced by the social status of the deceased and his job on the one hand, and the proficiency and skill of the mason (Ostād) on the other. In Neverk, we interviewed one of the scribes, Mr. Šanbeh Azadi, locally known as Mollā Šanbeh (*fig. 7*). Mollā Šanbeh is 83 years old. He is one of the Šeiḵs of Neverk and works in the shrine. He is one of the literate people of the village and has worked as a scribe in the past. Šanbeh was educated in school when he was a child. Then he went to another scribe, Mollā Hossein Bardeh-ee, in the village of Bārdeh near Mardehak and Neverk to learn the craft of inscriptions. When he became a master in this craft, a Mollā, he began inscribing the calcite gravestones. Mollā Šanbeh completed the inscriptions of twelve gravestones. According to him, the tradition of using calcite gravestones was gradually discarded during the past decades.

Garm Sālār Reżā or Today ʻaliābād Qadiri

The hamlet of Garm Sālār Reżā is situated about 10km north of Mardehak, on the upper skirts of southern Jebāl-e Bārez. It is necessary to mention that the people of the hamlet were originally Kolis. Kolis are not formally educated, but rather trained as skilled craftsmen who migrate from village to village to craft their products and sell them to the

Fig. 6. A general view of the cemetery of Neverk that shows the distribution of calcite gravestones (photo by H. Alimoradi).

Fig. 7. Mollā Šanbeh, one of the known scribers in Jebāl-e Bārez (photo by H. Alimoradi).

villagers. The villagers of Jebāl-e Bārez generally consider Kolis to be part of the lower class of society, but they treat them respectfully. Kolis tend to settle on the margins next to villages and practice metal- and woodworking. Their professions are hereditary. Besides this, they also act as local musicians in marriage ceremonies and undertake some medical practices like performing circumcision. Nevertheless, the most remarkable business of these itinerant pedlars is making metal tools, which are in demand by villagers who work in agriculture and animal husbandry. Chisels, tongs, scissors, shears, axes, hammers, hacks, sickles, needles, spindle whorls and tripods are among the metal products made by Kolis. In return for such products, the Kolis received sheep or other non-cash payments from the villagers. In this hamlet, we undertook an interview with Mr. Yahya

Fig. 8. Yahyā Dāvoodi, the son of Čerāḡ, one of the most famous masons in Jebāl-e Bārez (photo by H. Alimoradi).

Davoodi, the son of Čerāḡ, one of the most famous masons of the region (*fig. 8*). Yahya Davoodi migrated from the hamlet of Garm to ʾaliābād Qadiri and settled there, but he still works his forge and plays music at ceremonies, just like his Koli ancestors. Two other businesses were also carried out by Kolis: ploughing for the villagers and calcite stone extraction for gravestones from the mines. One of the Koli tribes that moved between Zāḵt in the north and Garm Sālār Reżā in the south was Davoodi. The Davoodi tribe used to migrate with pastoral nomads like the Mansour Bahmani, Safaiee, Tawakkoli, Ahmadi and Jahan shahi.[15] They were responsible for producing metal tools for these above-mentioned pastoral nomadic groups in the past. Mašhadi Čeraḡ, the father of Yahya Davoodi, was the head of the Davoodi clan and a well-known mason of Garm Sālār Reżā. According to his son, Mašhadi Čerāḡ had a close relation to one of the biggest pastoral nomadic clans in the region, namely Mansour Bahmani, until about 1970 and was the last mason (Ostād) who extracted calcite from the mine of Rudfarq (in the north of Mardehak and Zāḵt). As mentioned above, in all three places we met persons who had a particular relationship with calcite stone, as a material, through their work, their family, or both: Mr. Rostam Rostami in Dāč, Mr. Shanbeh Azadi (Mollā Šanbeh) in Neverk and Mr. Yahya Davoodi in Garm Sālār Reżā. The following section will report what the three told us about calcite.

4.2 The Manufacturing of Calcite

Rostam remembers that the calcite stones of Dāč came from Āb Bārik, the calcite mine near Kuh-e Šāh in Jebāl-e Bārez mentioned above. The manufacturing of the stones involved primarily two groups of experts: masons – locally known as Ostād – and scribes who are called Mollā. Rostam's ancestors were Mollā. Both professions had been passed down from generation to generation in certain families. Masons were not necessarily literate, while Mollā could read and write. The preparation of a gravestone included the following steps: First, an order was received from the family of the deceased by the mason (Ostād). Second, the mason and some assistants (usually three to five people) moved up to a certain mine with their pack animals. Mountain cattle and mules were predominantly used for the transport. Third, the mason (Ostād) and his assistants selected and extracted the stone from the mine using to their experience. Fourth, the preliminary as well as the final shape of the gravestone was prepared on-site (i. e. near the mine) (*fig. 9*). The size and thickness of the gravestone depended on the order. It took five to six workdays for these processes to be completed. The preparation of the stone included the cutting of a rock from the mine into a preliminary form and then working it into its final shape. Afterwards, one side of the rock was polished for inscriptions. Normally, the masons (Ostād) put some bushes over the back of the animal to prevent it

15 Pastoral nomadic groups in Iran follow a seasonal migration pattern from areas of warm climate in the lowlands (*qešlāq*/Garmsīr) where they have their winter quartiers to an area of cold climate in the mountains (*yeylāq*/Sardsīr) where they have their summer quartiers (Ehlers 2011; Stöber 1978; 2002). Their livelihood is based primarily on animal husbandry.

Fig. 9. A semi-prepared calcite gravestone near the mine of Rudfarq in Samurān (photo by H. Alimoradi).

Fig. 10. A small calcite gravestone in the cemetery of Neverk (photo by H. Alimoradi).

from being injured when carrying the stone. On the way, two people held the stone, stabilising it on both sides of the animal. In the fifth step, the gravestone was transported to the place of the scribe (Mollā), who could live in the host village or another village. In Dāč's case, the scribes, i. e. the ancestors of Rostam, lived in the same village. Only a single face of the stone was polished and prepared by the masons (Ostād) or stonecutters for inscribing purposes. Sixth, the scribe (Mollā) wrote the information of the deceased, the date of their death and poems with inks on the polished side of the gravestone without engraving them. The written texts depended on the size of the stone and the order. Poems and scenes were commissioned for elites whose families usually ordered big stones. Poorer and common people usually ordered small stones, on which only the information of the deceased appeared (*fig. 10*). Although Rostam's formal education is limited, he recognises and remembers the poems on the gravestones properly. The skills and knowledge of his ancestors (who were all Mollā) were also not based on state institutions such as schools but were acquired through transmission from generation to generation. They were able to write poetry themselves and had a high social status as Rostam points out. They usually refused payments from customers who ordered the gravestones for elites and those

of equally high social status. This point will be discussed later in detail. In the seventh step, the stone that was inscribed by the Mollā was delivered back to the Ostād who engraved the inscriptions that the Mollā had written in dark ink on the polished side of the stone. Unlike the Mollā, the Ostād was usually paid for his work. The payments, however, were not in cash. Sheep, oil and cereals were usual and suitable payments for the Ostād.

Mr. Šanbeh Azadi, the 83-year-old man we met in Neverk (locally known as Mollā Šanbeh), is, unlike Rostam, a Mollā himself. What he told us mostly corresponded to what we had been told by Rostam. Additionally, he provided us with some insights about the process of inscribing and engraving:

According to Mollā Šanbeh, the inscribing process was done from right to left, but the engraving by the Ostād was usually done from left to right. Since Šanbeh had experience in the engraving of the stones, he described the engraving tools as well. There were three types of metal chisels with different functions, which were made of hardened steel. They were about 20cm long and had a sharp head. The first type of chisel is called Qalam-e Dor-Gard. This chisel was applied to engrave around the inked inscriptions. The second type of chisel was used to engrave dots and is called Qalam-e Noqṭeh Goḏār. The third type is called Qalam-e Ṣāf Kār and was applied for smoothing purposes. All of these chisesl were made by the Ostād himself. A standard inscription included the following, according to Mollā Šanbeh:

Vafāt-i Marḥum Jannat Makān, Ferdows Āšiyān (deceased and dwelled in paradise); (the full name of deceased) ibn-e (the son of) az Ṭāyefe-ye (from the clan of); Tāriḵ-e Vafāt (the date of death) or Senh-ye (Islamic lunar calendar) be Raḥmat-e Izadi Peyvast (blessed). The poems on the gravestones were short. Usually, the selection of the poem was done by the Mollā or the Ostād. Sometimes, customers ordered poems that they desired. Poems differed according to the gender and the age of the deceased. Furthermore, motifs were inscribed and engraved on the gravestones of people with high social status. This, in turn, reflects Rostam's statement that the Mollās and Ostāds possessed a high social status themselves: In Dāč the only gravestone with a motif on it belonged to Rostam's father, who used to be a Mollā. The motifs are believed to have corresponded not only to the status of the deceased, but also to his business: Mollā Šanbeh mentions hunting scenes, weapons, and camels.

According to Mollā Šanbeh, some of the known scribes of the region had tried to show their proficiency, creating frames and designs on the gravestones of high-ranking people, especially the Khans (Ḵān) and the elites of a *ṭāyefa*. As mentioned above, the motifs are believed to have corresponded to both the business and the status of the deceased. Hunting scenes, weapons and camel motifs were all mentioned by him.

Mollā Šanbeh basically confirmed Rostam's statements regarding the payment: According to him, both the Mollā and Ostād avoided taking money for their services. If they were paid, sheep and cereals were accepted. These transactions should then be understood as an exchange of gifts, rather than a mere economic transaction. Of course, the Mollā and Ostād could use the compensations for their services they received. But the things given, especially sheep and other animals, also expressed certain values that were crucial for the society. The major purpose of these transactions therefore remained the establishment and strengthening of relationships. Since money has the tendency to dissolve kinship bonds (or bonds based on other ascriptive criteria, Parry/Bloch 1989, 5), payment using money was avoided. The fact that people of low rank actually gave at least occasional compensations should be understood as reflecting their lesser contribution to the symbolic capital of the Mollā and Ostād. The relationships that were established included the deceased and their families as well as the Mollā and Ostād and their families, connecting the living and the dead. The higher the position of the deceased, the higher the compensation given to the scribe. Yahya Davoodi, whom we met in Garm Sālār Reżā, is the son of Mašhadi Čerāḡ. Mašhadi Čerāḡ was one of the best-known Ostāds in the region. His son accompanied him several times to the calcite mine of Rudfarq and his descriptions of the work of an Ostād are similar to Rostam's: after his father received an order, Mašhadi Čerāḡ moved with three to five assistants to the above-mentioned mine. The extraction took them between five and

six days. During this time, they camped next to the mine in tents. After the extraction they brought the stone to the nearby village of Rudfarq, where it was worked into its final shape. In the village, masons used two types of hammers: denticulated and smooth-headed hammers. The first hammer was applied to form the general shape of the gravestone and the second was used to smooth one face of the stone for the scribe.

Yahya Davoodi told us that his father received requests to engrave calcite stones from many nearby villages and even bigger towns like Rudbār. We followed the work of Mašhadi Čerāḡ to the hamlet of Kaḡāraki, which lies 9km southwest of Mardehak. The hamlet was the winter pasture (Garmsir) of the Mansour Bahmani and Sālār Karimi Ṭāyefa. At the local cemetery, we found several calcite gravestones. Beside the inscriptions, motifs like guns and swords can be seen. The Mansour Bahmani family in Kaḡāraki informed us that around 60 years ago, Nejat Bahmani (the head of the Mansour Bahmani clan) died and his family ordered Mašhadi Čerāḡ to engrave his gravestone from the mine of Rudfarq. They also remember the name of the scribe (Mollā) who was Abbas Safa from Gomrokān far in the northwest of Mardehak. In this case, the stone was not brought to the scribe's village but rather the Ḵān invited the scribe to Kaḡāraki and hosted him there to inscribe the stone.

4.3 The ResourceComplex Around Calcite

When the use of calcite is described as a ResourceComplex, it becomes obvious that the raw material can only be turned into a resource by a collective act, not only of extraction and manufacturing, but moreover of attribution of meaning. The ResourceComplex consists of various elements, both tangible and intangible. Moreover, tangible and intangible elements show a constant interaction. At the centre of the complex calcite stands as a raw material. Several items are needed to process and craft this material. Examples would be the chisels (Qalam-e Dor-Gard, Qalam-e Noqṭeh Goḏār and Qalam-e Ṣāf Kār) and the hammers used in the process of engraving. The variety of different items employed during the different steps of the manufacturing process shows that explicit knowledge is needed to carry out this highly sophisticated work. This counts for the work with the calcite itself, as well as for the expertise that is required to manufacture the tools that are needed to work the calcite. To draw an example: The fact that three different kinds of chisels (Qalam-e Dor-Gard, Qalam-e Noqṭeh Goḏār and Qalam-e Ṣāf Kār) were employed to engrave the calcite illustrates the extensive knowledge required by both the Mollā and the Ostād.

This knowledge can be understood as cultural capital in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu/Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1986). According to Bourdieu, capital occurs in different forms, of which economic capital is only one. Other forms are social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986, 16). Cultural capital can be thought of as an accumulation of cultural knowledge in a certain society. It exists as 'embodied cultural capital', 'objectified cultural capital' and 'institutionalised cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1986, 17). The knowledge the Mollā and Ostād possess is oscillating between 'embodied cultural capital' and 'institutionalised cultural capital' in a way that would be rather unusual for Western societies. Bourdieu refers to 'institutionalised cultural capital' in the sense of professional qualifications that are formally recognised by institutions. This notion does not apply neatly to the knowledge the Mollā and Ostād possess, since they are not formally educated but receive their skills via inter-generational transmission from their fathers, who in turn were trained by their fathers, and so on. Nevertheless, it resembles Bourdieu's notion of 'institutionalised cultural capital' rather than 'embodied cultural capital', although this is usually obtained to a high degree through the parents as well, since the latter refers to 'long-lasting depositions of the mind and body' (Bourdieu 1986, 17), subsequently famously referred to as the habitus (Bourdieu 1986, 18).

Understood as such, the skills that Mollā and Ostād possess cannot be described as 'embodied' in Bourdieu's sense. The notion of 'institutionalised cultural capital' also seems appropriate when viewing the terms Mollā and Ostād from a linguistic perspective: as will be discussed later, they quite literally resemble academic titles used in European contexts. It can be understood as follows:

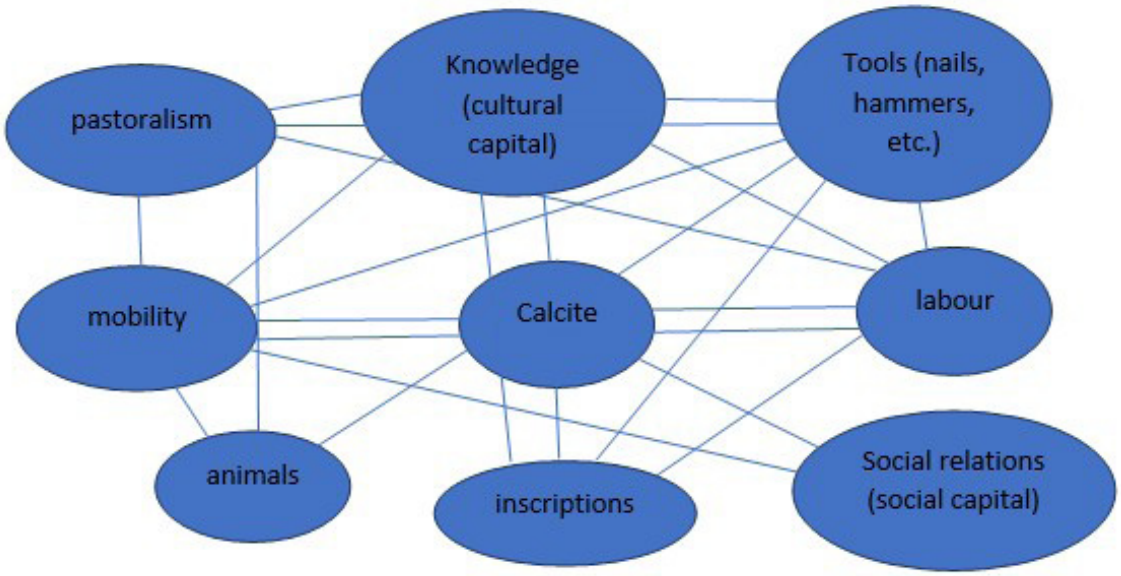

Fig. 11. The ResourceComplex around calcite (diagram by W. Frauen).

Although no Mollā and Ostād ever received a certificate or similar token of qualification, their professional skillset was accepted by the community as if they had. Additionally, the tools that were manufactured by the Ostād and in general the Koli can be seen as 'objectified cultural capital' in the sense of Bourdieu. Cultural capital was objectified or materialised by the Koli (or the Ostād himself). It becomes obvious that tangible and intangible elements are interrelated in the ResourceComplex around calcite to an extent that they hardly can be viewed separately anymore. A somewhat simplified diagram of the ResourceComplex around calcite in Jebāl-e Bārez follows:

The diagram above (*fig. 11*) shows how the single elements are connected. That calcite shows a direct connection with (almost) every other element is no surprise: the heuristic aspect of the ResourceComplex is a tool for understanding the world and hence we can decide freely which element we put at its centre. Since this study is about calcite, we naturally focus on calcite. Other connections are less self-evident. When taking a closer look, it becomes obvious that mobility, just like calcite, is connected to (almost) every other element. This even holds true for unanticipated connections, like the connection between mobility and the production of tools for working the calcite. This connection is created by the Koli who manufacture the tools. The Koli, as 'service nomads' that are more or less attached to other groups in the sense of F. Barth (Barth 1960; 1961; Digard 2002), followed the migration of pastoral nomadic groups. Thus, the tools are also, indirectly via the combining element of mobility, connected to pastoralism and consequently to animal husbandry, since this is the primal means of subsistence for Iranian nomadic groups.

Seen from this perspective, it seems calcite is (or at least has been) embedded in a larger complex centred around mobility and with elements that are interconnected in various ways: it might be asked, for instance, whether the transportation of the calcite to places farther away from the 'three-mine-line' mentioned above (Bam and Rudbār, among others) was organised using the migration of pastoral nomadic groups of the region. The collected data is not sufficient to answer this question. What can be stated, however, is that the region studied here seems to show a finely tuned interplay of various resources, professions and livelihoods, which all mutually define each other.

Following Bourdieu, the different forms of capital (cultural, social and economic) can be converted into each other (Bourdieu 1986, 16). When taking a closer look at our ResourceComplex, it becomes obvious that this is exactly what the Mollā

and Ostād did: they refused payment, but in doing so they achieved an increase in social capital. As can be seen in the diagram above, calcite serves as a mediator that connects the two elements of 'knowledge' and 'social relations'. Hence, they converted their cultural capital into social capital using the calcite. When viewed from this perspective, the seemingly altruistic behaviour of the Mollā and Ostād and their refusal to accept payment (in money) makes much more sense. It just has to be understood that money in the context of Jebāl-e Bārez does not, or at least did not used to, carry the same importance as it does in Central European contexts. Here, it is interesting to note reports that the Mollā and Ostād prepared small stones (less than 50cm in length) for poor people for free as well. This information is interesting, since the conversion of cultural capital into social capital seems to make much more sense when the tombstones are being manufactured for elites, strengthening desirable social ties. In considering this work for the poor, another concept established by Bourdieu may prove illuminating: the notion of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986, 18–27). Symbolic capital differs from the other forms of capital since it is actually derived from them, rather than converted. In Central European societies, money and objects directly connected to money (luxury cars, large houses, expensive clothes etc.) are the primal means to increase the symbolic capital of a person. In the context of Jebāl-e Bārez, money seems to have been a less effective means to increase a person's symbolic capital than the display of sophisticated cultural capital. The fact that money became the ultimate manifestation of value and prestige is, after all, a product of the specific (Western) European historical development that led to the free market economy. Of course, these concepts were globalised in the course of imperialism and, more recently, globalisation. Nevertheless, they cannot be considered as valid for all societies past and present. Additionally, although Bourdieu's concept is illuminating for most aspects that are connected with the heuristics of the ResourceComplex, it reaches its limits when all socio-cultural practices that are connected with calcite are considered. Calcite tombstones also share a connection with the ancestors, whose life stories are portrayed to some extend on the stones, and with the sphere of the supernatural via the inscriptions of Āyāt from the Qurān and the notions of paradise and so on found in the short poems on some of the tombstones. It can therefore be concluded that the socio-cultural practices connected with calcite do not exclusively serve to increase the capital of a person, although this does of course also play a role.

Still, the ResourceComplex around calcite also reflects values and ideas that are crucial to the people of Jebāl-e Bārez. These ideas and values are expressed in and realised through the ResourceComplex. The sixth section will explain this in more detail by going beyond the rather functional and teleologic perspective of this section. In the following section, however, the use of calcite in the region under study must first be examined from an archaeological perspective.

5 Calcite in the South of Kermān and Jebāl-e Bārez in the Past

Objects and vessels made of calcite alabaster are broadly distributed across a large geographical zone from Egypt in the west, to Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east and Central Asia in the north, dating mainly from the 3rd and 2nd mill. BCE (Casanova 1991, 29), while the tradition endured during the later historical and Islamic periods.[16] The archaeological reports show the very early use of this resource in the region (Casanova 2018, 70). In our study region, the calcite alabaster from the ancient sites of Kermān was first reported by Stein at Tell-i Iblis, approximately 180km northwest of Jiroft, in the 1930s (Stein 1937, 166–169, Plate XXIV). Years later, Caldwell found occasional bits of calcite bowls on the destroyed surface of Tell-i Iblis, when he visited the site in April 1964 (Caldwell 1967, 9; 1968). It is difficult to attribute the alabaster objects found on the surface to the earliest levels of Tell-i Iblis. The excavations in Area B of the site in Room 20, dating to Iblis I period, yielded evidence for a single burial with a calcite vessel nearby (Caldwell 1967, fig. 16). It seems that the burial was intrusive and originated

16 For late historical samples from Southwest Asia see Phillips/Simpson 2018.

Period	SOJAS Period No.	Relative Date (BCE)	Regional Period	Stratigraphic Reference
Late Bronze	14	1600–1200		Yahya IVa
Middle Bronze	13	2000–1600		Yahya IVa
Early Bronze 3	12	2500–2000	Early Jiroft B	Yahya IVC1–IVB1 Bampur V–VI K. Sandal CT 1–3 Shahdad
Early Bronze 2	11	2900–2500	Early Jiroft A	K. Sandal LT 1 Bampur I–IV
Early Bronze 1	10	3200–2900	Proto-elamite	Yahya IVC2
Late Chalcolithic 3	9	3400–3200	'Late-Uruk'-Horizon	Mahtoutabad III
Late Chalcolithic 2	8	3700–3400	Aliabad	Mahtoutabad II Iblis IV
Late Chalcolithic 1	7	4000–3700	Mahtoutabad	Mahtoutabad I Iblis III–IV
Middle Chalcolithic	6	4500–4000	Yahya V A	Yahya V A Iblis II
Early Chalcolithic 2	5b	4800–4500	Yahya V B	Yahya V B Iblis I–II
Early Chalcolithic 1	5a	5000–4800	Yahya V C	Yahya V C Iblis I–II
Transitional Chalcolithic	4	5200–5000	Soghun	Yahya VI Iblis I

Fig. 12. The relative chronology of the late Chalcolithic to Early Bronze Age of the region Kermān (after: Pfälzner/Alidadi Soleimani 2017, fig. 13).

from the upper levels, later than the Iblis I period (Caldwell 1967, 307 f.). The excavations showed that the earliest calcite alabaster vessels were often found in their original contexts, from the Iblis IV Period levels at the site.

Similar objects and vessels are discovered 95km west and southwest of Jiroft at Tappe Yaḥyā. The earliest alabaster fragments occurred in levels VB and VA of Tappe Yaḥyā, dated by Lamberg-Karlovsky to the late 5th/early 4th mill. BCE (Lamberg-Karlovsky/Lamberg-Karlovsky 1971, 110) (see *fig. 12*). He reported numerous fragmentary alabaster and steatite bowls from Period V (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1972, 97). Among the alabaster objects found at Tappe Yaḥyā, the curved ram figurine of Yaḥyā VB is prominent (Lamberg-Karlovsky/Lamberg-Karlovsky 1971, 110; Lamberg-Karlovsky 1972, 97).

In the plain of Jiroft, west of Jebāl-e Bārez, an abundant number of calcite alabaster vessels were (and still are) confiscated from illegal excavators who have plundered many Early Bronze Age sites in the region (Madjidzadeh 1382 SH [2003], 144 f.). In the course of the excavations at Konār Ṣandal (Konār Ṣandal South and Konār Ṣandal North) in the same plain, two cemeteries in the vicinity were briefly excavated. The first was Qal'eh Kučak, 4km in the northwest of Konār Ṣandal North. Here, the excavation in eight tombs yielded alabaster vessels (small open bowls and cylindrical-shaped vessels), though these were not found in all eight graves (Madjidzadeh 1399 SH [2021], 210, 216, 219). According to the excavator, the tombs of Qal'eh Kučak did not belong to a single period. While most of the tombs have yielded Early Bronze Age pottery (Early Bronze Age I: 2900–2500 BCE and Early Bronze Age II: 2500–2000 BCE), some provide earlier potteries (comparable with Iblis IV; Madjidzadeh 1399 SH [2021], 228). The second cemetery is called Maḥṭuṭābād, and is closer to Konār Ṣandal South. The deep excavations at the site yielded alabaster bowl fragments (Madjidzadeh 1399 SH [2021], 247). The alabaster vessels of Maḥṭuṭābād (from the deep levels) are earlier than those from Konār Ṣandal South and Qal'eh Kučak. The excavators believe that local societies

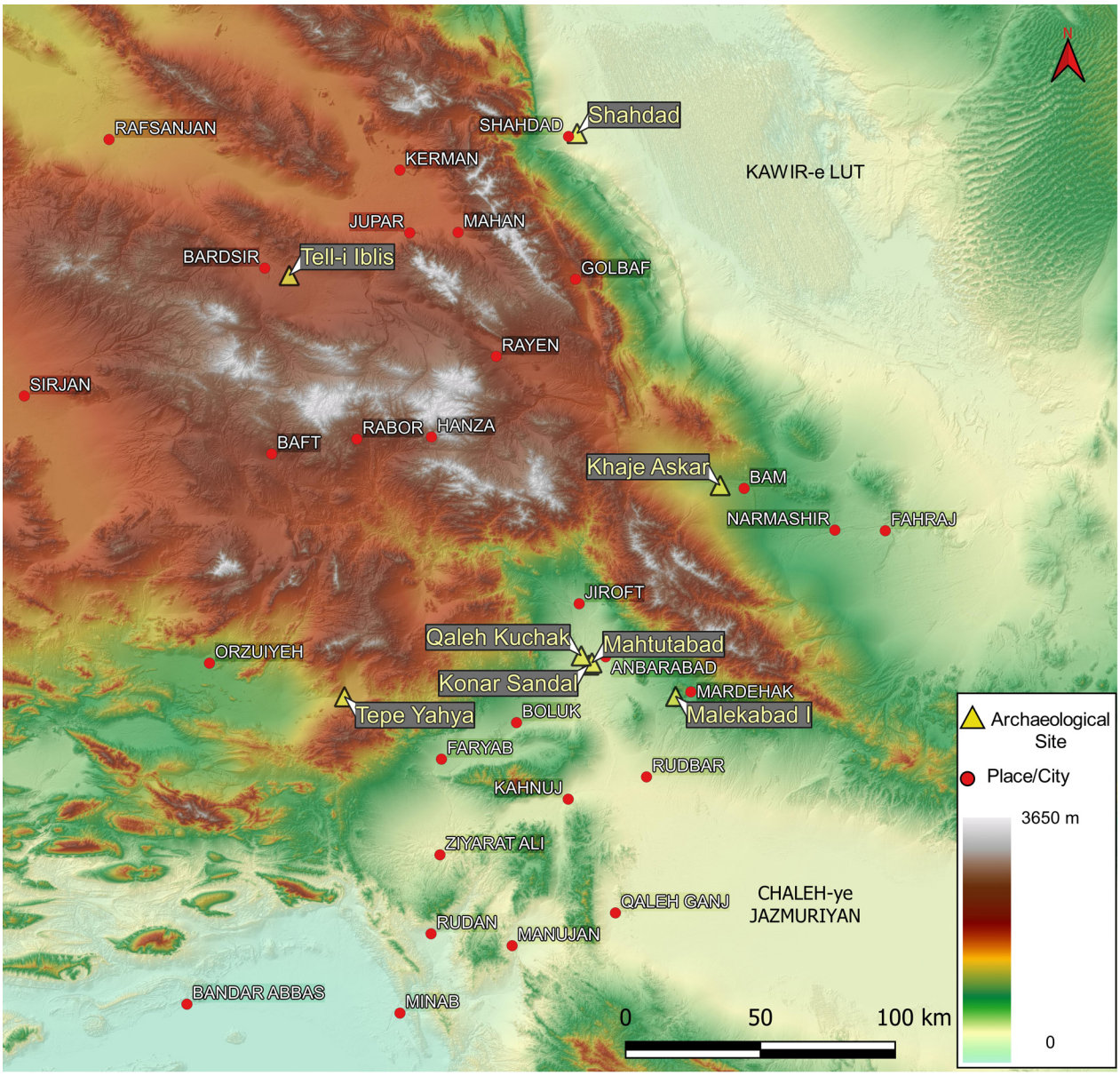

Fig. 13. Location of several archaeological sites which have evidenced for ancient calcite objects in Kermān (Source: DLR e.V. (2014-2018) and © Airbus Defence and Space GmbH 2022 provided under COPERNICUS by the European Union and ESA) (prepared by. M. Karami).

were engaged in the production of alabaster vessels sometime in the late 5th to early 4th mill. BCE (Vidale/Desset 2013; Desset et al. 2013).

Recent archaeological explorations on the western skirts of Jebāl-e Bārez, near the villages of Zāḵt and Malekābād, demonstrated the use of calcite alabaster for the making of stone vessels. Here, at the site of Malekābād I, numerous calcite bits are scattered on the ground beside Iblis IV and Early Bronze Age pottery (Karami et al. 2020, fig. 12).

The other short-term excavation on the eastern slopes of Jebāl-e Bārez at Ḵāje ʻasgar near the city of Bam clearly showed the use of calcite alabaster vessels in burial contexts dating from the Iblis IV period (middle of the 4th mill. BCE) (Alidadi Soleimani et al. 2016, fig 11, fig. 22). The religious function of the same vessels in the region continued long after the 4th mill. BCE and into the second half of the 3rd mill. BCE since at Šahdād, about 140km north of Jebāl-e Bārez a substantial number of calcite alabaster vessels were discovered

Fig. 14. Use of calcite gravestones for nearly new burials in Sar Jangal-e Pūraki (photo by H. Alimoradi).

inside of burial contexts.[17] In addition, the recent ICAR – University of Tübingen joint archaeological expedition to the south of Jiroft (SOJAS) has explored many archaeological sites of the 4th and 3rd mill. BCE, showing calcite fragments on their surfaces (Pfälzner/Alidadi Soleimani 2017, fig. 27; Pfälzner et al. 2019).

6 Analysis

When the cultural dimension of calcite as a resource in Jebāl-e Bārez is analysed from an anthropological and archaeological perspective, a few characteristics stand out. As the fourth section of this article demonstrated, various interdependent practices are connected with calcite.

The fifth section explained that the material has been used in the region since long ago. In addition to the findings at Tell-i Iblis, Tappe Yaḥyā, Konār Ṣandal and Šahdād (all located in a relative proximity to the area studied here), the explorations on the western (near Zāḵt and Malekābād) and eastern skirts (near Bam) of Jebāl-e Bārez are particularly notable since they directly prove the use of calcite in the region examined from the late 5th/early 4th 4th mill. BCE on (*fig. 13*).

It seems obvious that calcite was and is a valued resource as defined by the SFB in the context of Jebāl-e Bārez. One function of calcite has previously been discussed, which is to increase the capital of persons who mine and work the mineral. Although hardly any money is ever paid in the process of the manufacturing of calcite gravestones, the increase of capital, understood in the broader sense coined by Bourdieu, clearly plays a role. Since all sorts of capital (cultural, social and economic) lead to an increase of symbolic capital, it can be stated that there is an obvious connection between calcite and status.

The archaeological evidence supports this assumption, since the calcite vessels found in burial contexts indicate that these vessels possessed a symbolic value and probably had a status-raising effect.

In this regard it seems noteworthy that one of our interviewees, Yahya Davoodi, told us about calcite stones in the houses of the Ḵāns or nobles of villages. They usually hold inscriptions and one of them can be found in Rudfarq, on top of the

17 See Hakemi 1997, 188, Grave No. 033; 203, Grave No. 042; 322, Grave No. 164; 323, Grave No. 166.

entrance of the house of Rahmdel Mansuri, the former head of the clan.

Nevertheless, status doesn't seem to be the most important value expressed through calcite. This can be seen in the practice of providing free gravestones (less than 50cm in length) for the poor. Since these small stones can be found scattered on the ground at the mines no extraction is needed, and due to their relatively low weight they are also easily transported. In short: calcite gravestones were by no means an exclusive privilege of the elites but were available for everybody, rich and poor. As such, they represented a significant dynamic of community, and the fact that they were worked free of charge for the poor by the Mollā and Ostād, who were part of the elite, above all expressed the value of solidarity, although it also helped to increase the symbolic capital of the manufacturers. The salience of the gravestones did not only derive from the fact that status differences were expressed through them, although this holds true as well, but moreover through the mere fact that everybody had one. If this combining element were not there, the expression of status differences via the stones would not have been possible. It should moreover be noted that the stones provided much more information about the deceased than the mere dichotomy of rich or elite (large stones) (*fig. 5*) and poor or ordinary people (small stones) (*fig. 10*). According to information shared by interlocutors, the poems inscribed on the stones differed according to the gender and age of the deceased and the motifs inscribed on them also gave information about their profession. The stones thus reflected the identity of the deceased and, at least indirectly, the perception of this identity by the community, since they linked certain professions to gender and status. Seen from this perspective, the stones represent nothing less than narrative abbreviations of values that were significant to the society. The stones express a series of concepts, each concept building upon the last: community, which builds a sense of solidarity, then personal identities, then the perception of those identities through the community and ultimately a collective identity. The graveyards are places at which identities are, literally, inscribed in stone. Just as a side note it should be mentioned that these inscriptions of personal life stories and commonly negotiated identities drastically increased the value of the tombstones and consequently the calcite: according to a number of anthropologists, attaching a story to objects or materials is a value-increasing practice (Munn 1986; Hahn 2017).

Another noteworthy aspect of the use of calcite in the region is that it facilitates and acts as a vehicle for the establishment, strengthening and structuring of social relations. As shown, calcite is not sold and bought. Nevertheless, it serves as a medium of exchange in various ways. The most prominent form in the exchange of calcite in the region is the form of the gift. According to anthropologists, it is gift exchange, rather than commodity exchange, which primarily serves to establish relationships between the persons involved (Gregory 1982, 40). As Gregory states, this insight defines both the nature of the objects exchanged and the persons involved in the exchange: 'Commodities are *alienable* objects transacted by aliens; gifts are *inalienable* objects transacted by non-aliens' (Gregory 1982, 41, italics in original).

As shown above, the calcite was exchanged between people who were by no means alien to each other. Moreover, it has been stated that calcite served as a means to establish community between the people involved in the exchange. It also should be emphasised that the cases in which the calcite was not worked for free (the inscribing done by the Ostād for instance) also carried the character of gift-exchange: the payments through cereals and especially sheep as described by Rostam and others reflect what Gregory, drawing on fieldwork conducted by Hill among the Hausa in northern Nigeria, calls a 'like-for-like' exchange, in which the various parties become mutually indebted to each other (Gregory 1982, 45). This is the case since specific values are also attributed to cereals and especially sheep in a society based on animal husbandry. The exchange relationship established therefore remains between the persons involved and not between the objects which are inalienable (Gregory 1982, 45).

Gift exchange, including all forms of exchange of 'like-for-like', strives towards the establishment of dependencies by creating unequal relationships (Gregory 1982, 46). They put the giver, in our case the Mollā and Ostād, in a superior position.

Although this seems to be a universal characteristic of gift exchange systems, the precise expression of this superiority can be different, as Strathern states:

'Whether this superiority implies political control over the recipient or whether it merely indicates a gain in prestige on the part of the giver are matters in which individual systems vary' (Strathern 1971, 10; quoted from Gregory 1982).

In the case of the Mollā and Ostād, their superior position didn't correspond directly with political leadership since they were not Ḵāns or *kadḵodās* themselves. Nevertheless, their prestigious position becomes clear when the names are translated: Mollā is derived from the Arabic term *maulā* which can be translated as 'master' or 'lord'.[18] It is a prestigious title that is often used in Iran for religious scholars. Ostād can be translated as 'master', 'professor' or 'teacher' and often also carries a religious connotation.

The fact that titles established through the use of calcite show a certain correspondence with titles used for religious dignitaries emphasises the fact that relations established through calcite do not only include the human sphere, but also the sphere of the supernatural. The inscriptions on the calcite containing quotes from the holy Qurān and references to paradise and other motifs connected with Islam demonstrate that the gravestones made of calcite play a role in the transition of the deceased from the earthly sphere to the realm that lays beyond it.

This again corresponds with the archaeological findings in the region: the excavations on the eastern scopes of the region near Bam showed the use of calcite vessels in burial contexts. These vessels made of calcite, which apparently served a religious function, show a long continuity of usage back to the 4th mill. BCE since in Šahdād similar vessels have also been excavated in burial contexts. While the vessels found near Bam were dated to the middle of the 4th mill. BCE, the vessels from Šahdād stem from the second half of the 3rd mill. BCE. It seems possible that the use of calcite objects in burial contexts continued well beyond this point, although to date direct archaeological evidence for this assumption is lacking. It is remarkable therefore that calcite is still used in burial contexts today, although the gravestones found in the region today do not of course resemble the excavated objects one-to-one (*fig. 14*). Regarding the enormous time span, however, an exact resemblance cannot be expected and would have constituted a huge surprise: various contingent developments changed the concrete practices connected with the material. Changes in the belief system and technological innovations are only two examples. Here it becomes obvious that the ResourceComplex around calcite has to be understood as a ResourceAssemblage in diachronic terms. The noteworthy point is that the material has been attached to burial contexts and as such religious believes for an astonishingly long time in the region under discussion.

The graveyards that host the stones subsequently serve as a bridge between living humans, the deceased and the hereafter. In this context, calcite serves as a medium and the Mollā and Ostād as mediators. Further examples help to illustrate this connection: a shrine (*qadamgāh*) in the village of Sar Jangal-e Puraki holds an endowment made of calcite and the people working at the shrines often occasionally work as Mollā or Ostāds, as for example in the case of Mollā Šanbeh in Neverk, who works in the Emāmzāda of Seyed Abdullah.

7 Concluding Remarks

The previous chapters have explained and analysed the role that calcite plays in the region of Jebāl-e Bārez in the present and recent past. Additionally, archaeological data demonstrate that calcite has been used in the region in the distant past as well, during periods as early as the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age. As shown, there are even certain similarities in the use of the material during the different periods: the use in burial contexts is a good example. Although no direct line of continuation can be proven, it seems reasonable to consider the use of the material to be a specific characteristic of this region over several historical periods.

18 In German: ‚Herr', ‚Schutzherr' or ‚Patron' (Wehr 1985, 1439).

This long tradition is, in our opinion, absolutely essential to the understanding of the use of calcite in the region up to the recent past. Calcite, as the analysis has shown, served in the past and to some extent still serves today in a manner that is, more or less, the opposite of what someone from a Central European country would expect of a raw material: no major industry is involved in its extraction or processing, and no profits are maximised though the use of calcite. It serves to express community and identity and is crucial for the establishment and maintenance of social relations. The relations established through calcite do not only include humans but also the sphere of the spiritual world and the afterlife. This, in turn, makes the relations between humans established through calcite all the more binding. Calcite, then, in the context of Jebāl-e Bārez, serves as something that seems unexpected of a raw material: a symbolic resource that helps to establish identity and structure social relations. This only changed recently when the stone also started to be used as an export commodity.

When viewed as a ResourceCulture, another characteristic stands out. This point was briefly discussed when we described the ResourceComplex around calcite: this stone stands at a junction between the various modes of subsistence occupations that shaped the region for centuries, such as animal husbandry and agriculture. All aspects related to calcite occur in connection with aspects that are embedded in these livelihoods, even the ones that appear unexpected: the tools for working the calcite are manufactured by the Koli people, who in turn follow the migration of the pastoral nomads whose life is based on animal husbandry, and both of these groups show constant interaction with the villagers who engage in sedentary agriculture and so on. It is exactly this inseparable interrelatedness of various elements, containing social practices and shared beliefs, that is at the core of the ResourceCulture in Jebāl-e Bārez. It is worth mentioning that this seemingly 'natural going hand in hand' of the elements stands in sharp contrast to other ResourceCultures in Kermān that have emerged (relatively) recently around mineral resources that are mined for industrial reasons (see Frauen forthcoming). This emphasises once more the long tradition of the work with calcite in the region.

Having stated all this, it should also be noted that a few of our interlocutors reported that the tradition of using the calcite gravestones has been gradually discarded during recent decades. This ought to be regretted, not only because a part of the cultural heritage of the region will vanish with the craft but, more importantly, because it reveals changes that endanger a way of life that is remarkable and unique in its fine balance between various practices, beliefs and (material) elements, and developed in a very specific ecological and spatial niche of the country. When the institutions of the market economy take over the manufacturing of the stones, there will indeed still be gravestones at the cemeteries of Jebāl-e Bārez – but the values that were once connected with them will be lost.

Mohammad Karami
Postdoc Researcher in Archaeology
Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen
SFB 1070 RessourcenKulturen
Hölderlinstr. 12
72074 Tübingen, Germany
mohammad.karami@uni-tuebingen.de

Wulf-Marten Frauen
Postdoc Researcher in Social and Cultural Anthropology
Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen
SFB 1070 RessourcenKulturen
Hölderlinstr. 12
72074 Tübingen, Germany
wulf-marten.frauen@uni-tuebingen.de

Hamid Alimoradi
Junior Researcher in Archaeology
Kermān, Iran
hamid.alimoradi250@gmail.com

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Sabine Klocke-Daffa and Wulf-Marten Frauen

Recurrent Processes in the Use of ResourceComplexes

A Case Study from Kermān

Keywords: Iran, Kermān, resources, Assemblage Theory

Summary

The area around the modern town of Jiroft in southeastern Iran seems to have hosted a major Early Bronze Age (EBA) civilisation, which apparently had close trade relations with Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley. For this civilisation, the mining and manufacturing of stones seems to have been of significance. Up to this day, mining and trade in specific stones play important roles for the local population, in particular for many of the former pastoralists of the region. Based on an anthropological study, it is argued here that there must have been recurrent processes in the use of stones despite long periods of decline, because of the perseverance of particular ResourceComplexes. Extensive fieldwork has been carried out in the mountain village of Bāğ-e Borj, where the villagers lived as pastoral nomads until they began stone mining 70 years ago and this now constitutes the economic and general basis of their lives. It becomes obvious that both of these ResourceComplexes – animal husbandry and stone mining – are dynamic assemblages that underwent considerable transformations over time but still persist today.

Introduction and Research Questions

The area around the modern southeastern Iranian town of Jiroft, which shares its name with the sub-provincial unit (*Šahrestān*) of which it is a part, can be rightfully labelled one of the most exciting zones in the whole of Iran from an archaeological perspective. It seems to have hosted a major Early Bronze Age (EBA) civilisation that apparently had close ties with Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley (Pfälzner/Soleimani 2017; Muscarella 2001; 2008; Madjidzadeh 2003; Madjidzadeh/Pittman 2008). Some argue that this mysterious civilisation, which produced masterly chlorite vessels showing anthropomorphic scenes, whose meaning still remains unclear, is to be identified with the legendary Aratta[1] and had a major influence on the genesis of the Sumerian culture in Mesopotamia (Madjidzadeh 2003). Others are rather sceptical and claim that '[f]or archaeological accuracy the terms 'Jiroft' or 'Jiroft culture' employed to define a specific ancient Iranian culture and its artifacts should only be cited within quotation marks' (Muscarella 2008). Whatever the individual's opinion on this discursively loaded question, there is little doubt that the region is one of the cradles of middle eastern civilisation and that it has been inhabited for thousands of years.

For a closer examination of the region, in 2015 a new archaeological field project was launched in collaboration with the University of Tübingen, the Iranian Centre of Archaeological Research (ICAR) and the Anthropological Research Center (ARC) of the Iranian Cultural Heritage Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO). One major insight provided by the archaeological research is that the region seems to have been densely populated during specific time periods, while during others it seems to have been abandoned (Pfälzner/Soleimani 2017; Pfälzner et al. 2019). This does not

1 A mythical land that appears in the Sumerian literature. It is described as a wealthy kingdom full of precious materials such as gold, silver and lapis lazuli (Cohen 1973, 55).

only apply to the EBA civilisation mentioned above (and its subsequent disappearance) but is rather a pattern that can be observed throughout the area's history right up to the present. Most of the major cities in the Iranian province of Kermān show no continuity as settlements over longer periods of time, and Jiroft and Sirjān are good examples of this (Stöber 1978, 183). The archaeological project was accompanied by an ethnographic study that, besides providing ethnographic data on a region hitherto neglected in this regard by existing scholarship, should provide robust information on the dynamics of these developments by examining recent changes. The question this contribution seeks to answer is how changes in the region can be understood and what dynamics have caused them.

The present paper therefore strives to provide clues to these questions by closely analysing the transition experienced by a particular mountain community in the area during the last 80 years. The community under study here has transformed from a life based on mobile pastoralism to a sedentary mode of living that is economically primarily based on the mining of stones. We argue that these dynamics can only be understood when a processual approach is employed. The collaborative research centre on the dynamics of the use of resources (SFB 1070) has provided a theoretical approach for the analysis of such processes, which will briefly be outlined in the following paragraph.

Theoretical Framework: Resources – ResourceComplexes – ResourceAssemblages – ResourceCultures: The '4-R-Concept'

When the multidisciplinary group of scholars was established as SFB 1070, it became apparent that the most urgent task was to delineate a valid approach that would allow all the listed sub-projects to work under the same umbrella theory, from archaeology to geography, cultural anthropology and many more.[2] Departing from a thorough revision of the term resources, two heuristic concepts generated over the course of time provide a key clue to our understanding of the ongoing dynamics governing the use of resources: ResourceComplexes and ResourceAssemblages. Together they allow us to draw a more detailed picture of the underlying processes and transformation of what we call a ResourceCulture. This idea, referred to as the '4-R-concept', endeavours to explore the importance of resources as driving forces for groups and societies in all places and across all times.

Here, we will briefly explain the details. Our conceptualising of resources, which are to be considered as discrete, ascertainable entities in empirical studies on the one hand, and as a category of analysis on the other, is based on the following conviction: that a clearly defined process is necessary to determine exactly how resources can be investigated over time, and how they are used in different historical contexts, which allows us to understand the impact of social, economic and political changes and continuities. As a starting point for research, resources have been defined as 'the basis for or a means to create, sustain and alter social relations, units and identities within the framework of culturally affected beliefs and practices' (Bartelheim et al. 2015, 39). In a more comprehensive clarification presented two years later (Hardenberg et al. 2017, 14), the authors elaborated on the specific socio-cultural perspective on resources that characterises the centre's approach to the study of the past and the present. Using a constructivist interpretation broadens the scope on resources, with several particularities standing out:

– Rather than assuming that resources possess some kind of intrinsic value that is either obvious to users or remains undiscovered, it postulates that an additional step is necessary to understand how unrated 'sources' turn into socially relevant 'resources' in the first place. This process of resource construction is always a culturally affected process. The underlying dynamics of validation and ascription of meaning are not static once-and-for all decisions, but depend upon place and time. Temporal adjustments and transformations in practice may be induced by economic and ecological factors, social preferences and political constraints. Subsequent changes may mean that a resource is temporarily or permanently abandoned, and the entire complex around it collapses.

2 For an overview see <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/research/core-research/collaborative-research-centers/sfb-1070/>.

– Understanding resources as the basis for societies allows us to broaden the scope denominated by 'resources' to non-material entities. These include immaterial expressions, beliefs, laws and knowledge assets as well as human and non-human agents.

When applying this concept to different case studies it became apparent that it needed further refinement. In general, resources do not emerge as single units but are associated by other components. In order to be rendered usable, they will be clustered and configured by persons, groups or societies and this may occur at any specific place and time. These clusters were subsequently referred to as ResourceComplexes within the 4-R-concept. Again, it emerged that complexes of resources – however meticulously constructed – have no native, independent effect unless activated by and entangled within a surrounding network. It was also proven that beyond the constellations examined, essential external factors need to be taken into account. ResourceComplexes and networks are embedded in encompassing framing conditions, that is to say a context in which networks of actors and resources can act. Framing components may not actually be parts of the complex, nor of the activating network. Yet they are indispensable, serving as the enabling environment or the organisational principle for both the network and complex (for a more detailed explanation see Klocke-Daffa 2017, 254–256). Analytically, this differentiation allows us to properly separate various elements, which could otherwise not be adequately distinguished, since all appear as one large meshwork of interrelated parts. Thus, some additional points need to be emphasised:

– A full picture of the cultural dynamics of resources with regard to their emergence, impact, adjustments and practical value requires a carefully elaborated model such as the one delineated above, in order to differentiate various levels of resources, networks and framing conditions.
– With this model at hand, additional aspects can be included that would otherwise be left out, such as the symbolic connotations of resources, their significance for social identity and the quality of different relationships within networks.

The elements of ResourceComplexes are in any case highly interdependent and subject to change, with far-reaching consequences. As Teuber/Schweizer rightly point out: 'Valuations and practices around resources then affect connected ResourceComplexes and consequently social dynamics of identity building' (Teuber/Schweizer 2020, 16). What is more, despite the inherent advantages of the resources-and-networks approach, one point will fall short if not subject to further consideration: the aspect of transformation over time. In order to meet the challenge of explaining the contingencies of conversions within complexes of resources on the one hand, and historically verifiable continuities on the other, the model underwent a paradigmatic enhancement via the concept of assemblage. As an analytical category, this allows for an additional perspective that supplements the more static concept of ResourceComplexes by broadening our diachronic view of it and taking into account apparent ruptures, coincidences and non-random reconfigurations. The concept of the ResourceAssemblage differs from the ResourceComplex insofar as it includes the relationships between the different elements in a complex that cannot be entirely subject to human planning. Interactions and changes may well be unforeseen and unexpected. For instance, new elements appear while old ones suddenly become unavailable. The ResourceComplex therefore has to be constantly adjusted to meet people's needs in view of these contingent developments. Our case study will illustrate this process. As a heuristic tool, the ResourceAssemblage helps us to understand these developments that could hardly be fully comprehended if interpreted in a goal-oriented, functionalist way.

Following Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari ([1980] 1988), who became known as pioneers of later assemblage theory and with Manuel De Landa further elaborating on it (De Landa 2006; 2016), the focus shifts to the entirety of heterogeneous elements and away from central resources or individual actors within a network. An assemblage in the sense of the original term 'agencement' – a collection of things that have been gathered together or assembled – is a contingent collection of co-functioning bodies, drawing together social, affective and material forces into an

open entity. 'It is a multiplicity which is made up of heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns. The assemblage's only unity is that of co-functioning' (De Landa 2016, 1). The concept thus allows us to go beyond ResourceComplexes, as well as networks and frames as the constituting elements, in both our synchronic and diachronic perspectives. This is all the more helpful in archaeological research, where individual actors cannot be interviewed and many developments seem to remain shrouded in the darkness of history at first glance. Despite the shortcomings of the approaches outlined by Deleuze/Guattari and De Landa (Nail 2017), assemblage theory serves as a valuable tool to look at the interdependencies of human and non-human actors (much as in Latour's [1996] approach to actors and networks, which heavily influenced assemblage theory). Beyond that, it also allows us not only 'to look at 'who acts', but also at 'what occurs'' (Duff 2016) at a given time. For the purposes of this paper, it is important to note that:

- Assemblages are temporarily existing and functioning units consisting of a multiplicity of components with no elements at the centre that would need to be marked as all-decisive parts.
- An assemblage is always in a state of emergence and is thus characterised by temporal instability, which does not preclude its functionality or its capacity to be investigated at a particular point in time.
- Any component element may exist outside the assemblage or be part of another assemblage.

Based on these analytical distinctions, we strive for a comprehensive picture: how are particular material and immaterial resources clustered in complexes and (re-)assembled over time, how are they provided with cultural ascriptions of meaning and value, and how do they set the course of action and enact socio-cultural dynamics to the point that they can coin the social identity of those using said resources? This is what we call a ResourceCulture. We are well aware of the pitfalls inherent to the term 'culture', which may easily imply essentialist connotations. Cultures are never static but ever changing and contingent: they are really just more or less arbitrarily constructed 'webs of significance' (Geertz 1973). Still, this does not mean that there is no organisation and no continuity. Culture as a 'structured system of meaning' (Reckwitz 2006) enables insights into the interrelationship of material objects within a particular environment, as well as ideational valuations and social practices shaping identities, regardless of whether they delimit small or large social units.

This concept will hopefully provide for a better understanding of how resources have been used, altered or retained. We argue that despite the changing validation of resources, there may be a considerable amount of flexibility amongst the local population in regard to their (re-)utilisation. One aspect that has so far received little scientific attention is the recurrent processes involved in ResourceComplex construction, based on contextual adjustments and the causes of resilience to change. We will now illustrate how the SFB's '4-R-model' may help to understand structural modifications and perpetuation of resource use in one particular ResourceCulture in southeastern Iran.

Methods and Challenges

Before delving into the ethnographic details, we will briefly provide some information about how the data was collected and the methods used. This is rather basic and doesn't aim to provide a full narration of the research process, but rather to just give some methodological remarks. A detailed description about the data collection including a self-reflexive analysis of the role of the researcher during this process will be published elsewhere (Frauen forthcoming).

The fieldwork was carried out during the years 2018 and 2019. It was part of the SFB project A 03 Stones from the South. While this project also included a wide and labour-intensive archaeological survey that covers a broad area around the modern-day city of Jiroft, the anthropological segment of the project focused on merely one village that is located in the mountains west of Jiroft: Bāḡ-e Borj. Unlike the archaeological segment it was not carried out by dozens of people collecting large quantities of archaeological remains but by a single researcher who collected qualitative data. This approach was chosen to stay true to the traditional (but in our opinion unchanged) defining

method of anthropological research: participant observation in the sense of B. Malinowski (1922). Participant observation requires the researcher to stay stationary for an extended period of time in one place in order to become, at least to some extent, a part of the community s/he studies. The epistemological aim of this method is to gain a glimpse of the ‘natives’ point of view’.

Participant observation is usually, if not always, accompanied by a variety of other methods used in combination with it. Usually this refers to interviews, which has led to the regularly repeated but universally inaccurate assumption that anthropologists primarily conduct interviews. In the case of our research the participant observation was also combined with the recording of genealogies and the recording of (personal) networks. But, of course, interviews were conducted as well. These were, however, diverse in nature: countless informal interviews were conducted as a natural part of the participant observation and found their way into our fieldnotes. Additionally, formal interviews were recorded. These interviews were always of an open character and not narrowed by strict questionnaires. While some of them focussed on a specific topic (‘problem-centered interview’; Witzel 2000), others were recording life histories (‘narrative interview’; Schütze 1983, 283–293).

Several problems occurred during the research process. The most serious ones were our limited ability to speak the Persian language at the beginning of the research process and the fact that the research in Bāḡ-e Borj was repeatedly interrupted for organisational reasons. Nevertheless, we managed to collect a broad variety of data that allows for a comprehensive understanding of the village and its genesis.

Regional Context – Kermān and the Village of Bāḡ-e Borj

Since two other contributions to the present edited volume also deal with the same regional context (Karami et al. and Barforooshan in this volume), the following descriptions will be confined to some basic points that seem most crucial for the following discussion.

Fig. 1. Map of Kermān with archaeological survey area (A. Ahmadpour).

The Kermān Province and Jiroft

To the east, the province of Kermān in the southeast of Iran is spatially separated from the rest of the country by the Dašt-e Lut, one of the driest deserts of the world, and to the west by patches of wasteland that are locally called Kafa-ye Qaṭru (Borjian 2017). To the south it borders on the province of Hormozgān, which provides access to the Persian Gulf and hosts Iran’s economically most important harbour at Bandar-e Abbās. The Persian Gulf is accessible from Jiroft through the connection of various lowland basins that make it possible to avoid big mountain chains. The area has thus been of historical importance for interregional trade and exchange and continues to be so.

In general, the topography of the province is characterised by the interplay of mountain ranges that are to be understood as a continuation of the Zagros massif and its foothills. These mountain chains occasionally collide and form massifs that have peaks over 4000m high, as for instance to the south of the city of Kermān. The foothills, on the other hand, often only show an altitude of a few hundred metres above sea level. It is this interplay of mountainous and foothill areas that is essential for our understanding of the province, as is rightfully argued by Habib Borjian in

Fig. 2. Highlands and lowlands south of Kermān (photo by authors).

the Encyclopaedia Iranica (Borjian 2017). Two indigenous terms are of crucial importance here: *garmsir* and *sardsir*. *Garmsir* is used to describe zones of warm climate in the foothills, *sardsir* to describe zones of cold climate.[3] This climatic dichotomy finds its expression most clearly in the respective flora and fauna of both areas: plants and fruits grown in *sardsir* are rarely grown in *garmsir* and *vice versa*. Subsistence agriculture with small-scale market-gardens is the norm in the highlands, while the foothills are dominated by citrus and date palm farming (Borjian 2017) (*fig. 1* and *2*).

It should be mentioned, however, that aridity and scarcity of water limits the agricultural potential of the province. The only major exception to this rule is the foothills area around Jiroft, where the Halil Rud, the only major stream of the province, allows for extensive agriculture. Jiroft is, hence, locally also referred to as Hend-e Kučak – the small India of Iran.

Bāḡ-e Borj

The village of Bāḡ-e Borj is located on a highland plain, the Dašt-e Esfandaqeh, which lies to the west of Jiroft. Extensive fieldwork was carried out in the village during 2018 and 2019, and this led to several publications (see Barforooshan in this volume; Frauen/Klocke-Daffa 2023; Frauen forthcoming). Since these accounts also contain descriptions of the village, in the following only aspects that are crucial for an understanding of the present article will be addressed.

Bāḡ-e Borj is a mountain village at an altitude of approximately 2300m above sea level. It is, as is common in Iran, divided into two different parts that are referred to as 'Bāḡ-e Borj up' (*Bālā*) and 'Bāḡ-e Borj down' (*Pāyin*). The two parts are spatially divided by a distance of 3km and connected by a non-paved, rather provisional road – just as the entire village is to the outer world.[4] Both parts of the village have only a basic infrastructure, namely electricity, a mosque and an elementary school, while all other institutions (shops, pharmacy, water supply network etc.) are absent. Accordingly, the households strive to be self-sufficient although most (male) villagers have access to some

3 There is also the term *sarḥadd*. In general, *sarḥadd* is used to describe altitudes at which farming is no longer possible (de Planhol 2000). According to our experience, however, in Kermān the terms *sardsir* and *sarḥadd* are used synonymously.

4 A permanent, asphalted road that connects Bāḡ-e Borj with Jiroft via Esfandaqeh is currently under construction.

Fig. 3. The village of Bāḡ-e Borj (photo by authors).

means of transportation (a car or at least a motorbike) that can take them to the larger villages of the surrounding area (*fig. 3*).

The population of the village is slightly under 200. According to a census conducted in 2006, the village had 166 residents (118 living in the upper part and 48 in the lower part of the village, SCI 2006). All these people belong to a kinship-based unit and share the surname 'Eskandery'. The villagers occasionally use the term *ṭāyefa* to describe themselves, a term that can be translated as 'tribe', and describes people whose social cohesion is based on kinship and who follow endogamous marriage patterns, mostly patrilateral and in some cases matrilateral parallel marriage of cousins.[5] In the extremely rare cases where the Eskanderies are mentioned in European literature, this translation of *ṭāyefa* or its German equivalent *Stamm* is used.[6] The almost equally rare Iranian sources employ the term *ʿAšira*/*ʿAšāyer* instead (Ibrahimi/Ibrahimi-Pur 2017, 96), a term that can be translated as 'pastoral-nomads' and, in the Iranian context, describes people who live primarily on animal husbandry and follow a seasonal migration pattern from *garmsir* to *sardsir* and *vice versa*. There is a connection between the social form of living in a *ṭāyefa* and the way of gaining a livelihood as *ʿAšāyer*. Indeed, until 1950 the Eskanderies also followed a seasonal migration pattern and lived primarily on animal husbandry. Since then, major changes have occurred, which caused the *ṭāyefa* to become sedentary and changed their primary economic activity from animal husbandry to the mining of stones (although the two still coexist in the village to some extent). The following section describes these changes in detail and analyses them using the SFB-framework.

Changing ResourceComplexes – From Pastoralism to the Mining Business

The Eskanderies believe they are the descendants of an ancestor named Karbalāʾ Bārāni, who came to the area about 300 or 350 years ago.[7] Some believe that their ancestor came from Hamadān, a province in the northwest of the country, and indeed some linguistical similarities between the dialect of the Persian language spoken in Hamadān and the Bāḡ-e Borj'ian dialect indicate that there might be some truth in this assumption. The remembrance of Karbalāʾ Bārāni has mystifying

5 The term *ṭāyefa* is used by various groups in Iran, but does not always carry the same meaning. The diversity of Iran's tribal landscape is discussed by Richard Tapper in 'Frontier Nomads of Iran' in the chapter 'The Tribes of Iran: Classifications and Comparisons' (Tapper 1997). Like Tapper, we believe that such terms can be used when they reflect indigenous conceptions without 'expecting it necessarily to correspond with 'tribe' in any other cultural context' (Tapper 1997, 10).

6 Actually the only case that we know of is Georg Stöber's extensive account on nomadism in Kermān which includes a list of the tribes in the province in the appendix. The Eskanderies can be found here (Stöber 1978, 283).

7 The statements of the villagers regarding the precise arrival of Karbalāʾ Bārāni differ slightly. Given the recorded genealogies, however, some point between 300 and 350 years ago seems to be most probable.

characteristics and the tomb of the ancestor is the site of rituals in which the sick ask for healing and childless women ask for pregnancy. The recourse to a common ancestry can be understood in relation to the former mode of life within the community. Back then, it helped provide the social cohesion that was needed to prevent atomising tendencies during the centuries of highly mobile pastoralism and must thus be considered as part of their social identity and heritage.

The ResourceComplex around animal husbandry: In very large parts of Iran animal husbandry used to be, and to some extend still is, based on a seasonal migration from *garmsir* to *sardsir* that combines these two different environments into a functional habitat fully adjusted to the needs of pastoralists and their livestock (Ehlers 2002, 41). This form of animal husbandry is usually referred to as pastoral nomadism and occasionally as mountain nomadism or vertical nomadism (Ehlers 2011). We also favour the term pastoral nomadism, since it most clearly expresses the dependence on stockbreeding that lies at the core of this ResourceComplex.[8] The slaughtering of animals for meat represents one possible usage for livestock but in reality rarely occurs, because after the slaughtering no other renewable products (dairy products, wool/hair etc.) can be extracted from the animal.

The Eskanderies followed this way of life from the arrival of Karbalāʾ Bārāni in the area (and possibly before, but this remains pure speculation since his descendants in the village do not seem to know much about the previous period) until the middle of the last century. Their livelihood was based on sheep and goats kept for wool and milk, usually accompanied by some chickens. The wool was partly manufactured into carpets, the milk almost entirely processed into *kašk* (hard balls of whey) to preserve it. The ResourceComplex around animal husbandry can be illustrated in a schematic diagram (*fig. 4*).

Mobility can hence be identified as one of the key components of the ResourceComplex around sheep and goats, access to pastures and arable land and water. Here it makes sense to refer to an idea that the American anthropologist P. Salzman had already developed in the 1970s. Salzman coined the notion of 'multi-resource-nomadism' to emphasise the fact that nomadic subsistence and economy cannot be explained through pastoralism alone and usually, if not always, contains elements that are not directly connected to animal husbandry (Salzman 1972, 66). A classic example would be small-scale agriculture[9] in the sense of cultivation of soil, which is usually conducted besides animal husbandry on a subsistence level. The following quote of an elderly villager illustrates this:

'*bi-Kešāvarzi nami-šeh Dām-Dāri dorost kard, bi-Dām-Dāri nami-šeh Kešāvarzi dorost kard*' (without agriculture you can't do animal husbandry, without animal husbandry you can't do agriculture).

The verb 'dorost kardan' literally means 'to do something in a proper way' but can also be translated as 'preparing something', 'fixing something' or 'conducting something', depending on the context.[10]

Here, there is a direct connection between agriculture and animal husbandry, in that the nomads in Kermān plant and harvest barley that then serves as fodder for the animals. Most of the crops cultivated, however, do not serve as supplemental feeding for the animals but are rather consumed by the community. In the *sardsīr* this includes the following: 'sib' (apples), 'angur' (grapes), 'zard-ālu' (apricots), 'bādām' (almonds), 'anār' (pomegranates; 'anār' is written and spelled in the local dialect with an additional u: 'anāru'), 'holu' (peaches), 'bādām-kuhi' (a special kind of almond that is only found in mountainous areas, which is why it carries the supplement 'kuhi': 'almond of the mountains'), 'gerdu' (walnuts), 'ānjir' (figs),

8 Of course, this is already implicitly included in the term 'nomadism' which derives from the Ancient Greek term *nomádos* ('being on pastures', Fischer 2011, 304).

9 A brief note on the term 'agriculture': here, we understand agriculture in the way an Iranian would understand *kešāvarzi*. It is a corresponding concept that equals agriculture, and most dictionaries translate it as such. A difference, however, is that *kešāvarzi* does not include animal husbandry (*dām-dāri* in Persian).

10 The same quote is used in another publication by the same authors in a slightly different context (Frauen forthcoming).

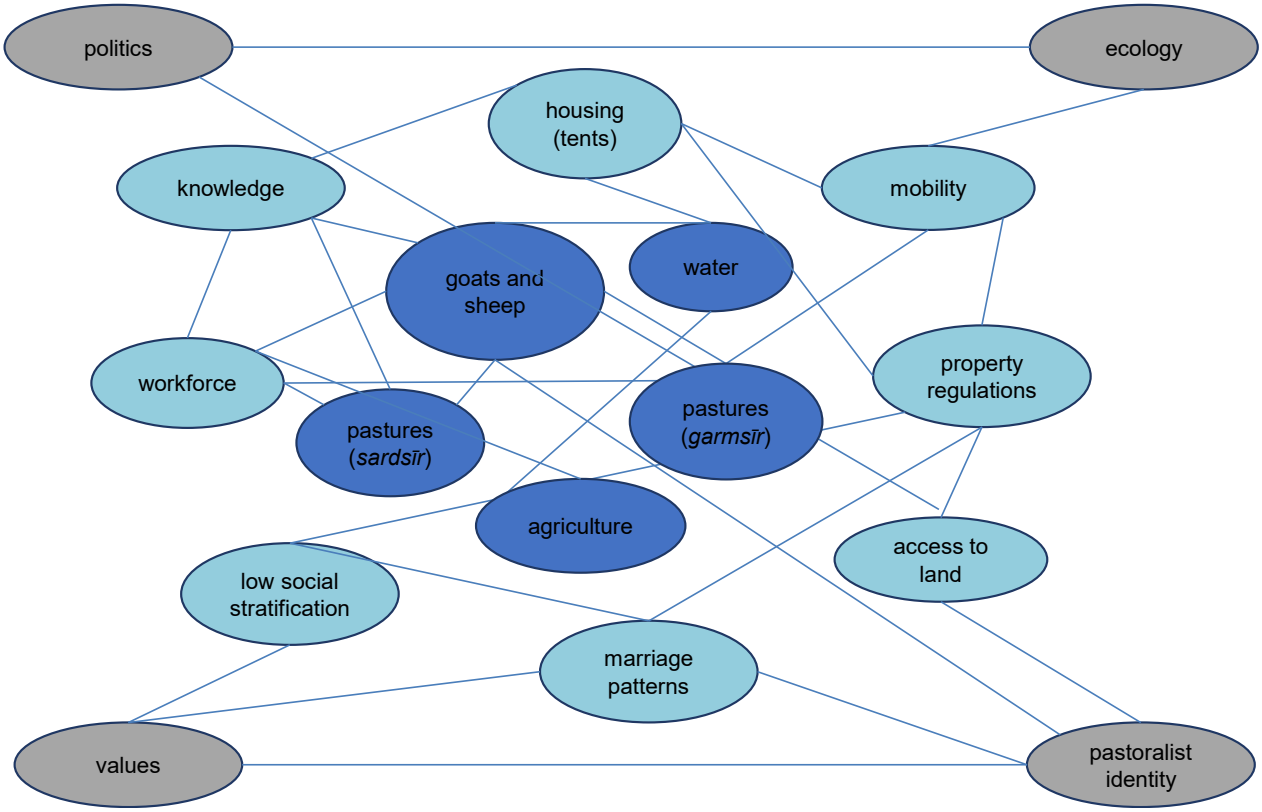

Fig. 4. ResourceComplex around animal husbandry (diagram by the authors).
Dark blue: elements constituting the ResourceComplex in the village. Blue: elements indirectly connected to the ResourceComplex. Grey: framing conditions that influence the overall network and change over time.

'piyāz' (onions), 'bādemjān' (eggplants) and 'kadu' (zucchini) (list taken from Frauen forthcoming).

All these products are presently planted and harvested in Bāḡ-e Borj. The list given here is longer than it would have been during the earlier period of nomadic pastoralism, since planting and harvesting times are no longer limited by seasonal migrations. In total, nevertheless, there are far fewer agricultural products available to the community since everything that can only be planted in the *garmsir* is out of reach for them and needs to be bought. Since Bāḡ-e Borj hosts no shopping facilities, these products need to be acquired from places that are relatively far away. Most of all, this counts for dates (*ḵormā*), which are believed to be an essential part of tea ceremonies, especially on weekends with guests. Salzman's notion was subsequently not followed by most of his colleagues although it undoubtedly holds some truth. One reason might be that Salzman takes the focus away from stockbreeding too drastically, so that in the end forms of mobility that show no connection with animal husbandry at all could also be labelled 'nomadism' (Stöber 1978, 81).[11] The idea, however, that upon closer examination pastoral nomadism turns out to be a combination of various elements, at the centre of which stands animal husbandry (or the livestock itself) remains valid and concurs with the SFB's understanding of resources through the concept of ResourceComplexes.

A crucial element of this ResourceComplex was the resource represented by various kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of how to orientate oneself in the mountainous landscape, the knowledge of where and how to find water, the

11 This represents a contradiction to the term referring to pastoralism as shown in footnote 5. Because nomadism has now become a popular metaphor for various ways of living that are shaped through mobility, however, Anja Fischer differentiates between 'real nomads' whose livelihood is based on animal husbandry and 'metaphorical nomads' in her entry on nomadism in Andre Gingrich's 'Lexikon der Globalisierung' (Fischer 2011).

knowledge of how to conduct the small-scale agriculture that accompanies animal husbandry, and so on.

The Eskanderies possess this knowledge, which has been developed over centuries and is still developing today. Additionally, their identity is still shaped through the experience of seasonal migration. A statement that occurred often (in slightly different variations) throughout our stay was the following:

'We are nomads (*ʿAšāyer*). Agriculture, agriculture and animal husbandry (*kešāvarzi va dām-dāri*). […] Our pastoralists (*dām-dār*) have sheep (*gusfand*).'[12]

In brief, this means that they see what is necessary to make use of the ResourceComplex around animal husbandry, such as the willingness to live in mobile shelter (tents), the knowledge of farming with animals and a sufficient workforce. The surrounding network is further made up of certain property regulations governing land and livestock and specific elements of the social structure such as the prevailing marriage patterns and a generally low level of social stratification. The framing conditions constituted by external politics and the ecological features of the environment, as well as the values and identarian particularities of a pastoral community, are all part and parcel of this complex. We are well aware of the fact that neither of them represents a monolithic category that remains unchanged over time. However, there are some remarkable aspects of continuity that impact the process of resource validation and utilisation, as we shall see in our next diagram.

The ResourceComplex Around Stones – Phase 1

The nomads around today's Bāḡ-e Borj became sedentary roughly 70 years ago.[13] Although a variety of factors contributed to this drastic change in their mode of living, the most important one was a discovery that changed their basic means of livelihood: in 1950, chromite was found in the area around the village and a state-owned company was founded to mine the chromite. Subsequently, most villagers became employed by this company and entered the mining business. The mining of stones did not necessarily match their idea of what a good life should be but employment by a public company offered several advantages over their life as pastoral nomads: a guaranteed monthly salary (*hoquq*), health insurance (*bimeh* in Persian) and education (*āmuzeš*) for their children (see Frauen forthcoming). Not all villagers gave up the seasonal migration at the same time, but in the course of the years more and more of them gave in to the temptation to improve their previously rather harsh life and became sedentary. This process culminated in the building of solid houses made of stone (previously the villagers had lived in tents), a process that started in 1970 and was finished by 1980. It can be argued (Frauen forthcoming) that this transition may also be interpreted as a commitment made by the villagers to their new way of life, confirming that they would not return to their nomadic way of living anytime soon.

What we can detect from the schematic representation in our next diagram are some remarkable features within the initial phase of the ResourceComplex around stones (*fig. 5*). The figure illustrates the growing complexity of the ResourceComplex and the changes that occurred within it. It shows that the existing ResourceComplex was transformed and reconfigured but not completely abandoned. With stone mining becoming significant as a source of income, some components had to be adjusted to the new mode of living (marked in red in the diagram), some became less important (blue/light blue/grey/turquoise), or basically unimportant (white), and some particular components of the frame have been supplemented:

12 Interview conducted by Wulf Frauen with an elderly villager on 21.08.2018.

13 Becoming sedentary, at least in the case of the *ṭāyefa* Eskandery, was not a single, decisive event but rather a process that started 1950 with the foundation of the 'Šerkat-e Esfandaqeh' (the mining company) and ended 30 years later when (almost) all villagers had traded their tents for solid houses. During this time, a series of events took place that contributed to this development: the foundation of the company, the White Revolution (1963) that reduced the available pastures for pastoral nomads and finally a drought in the region in the 1970s. In our opinion, it is therefore not expedient to reduce this process to a single date.

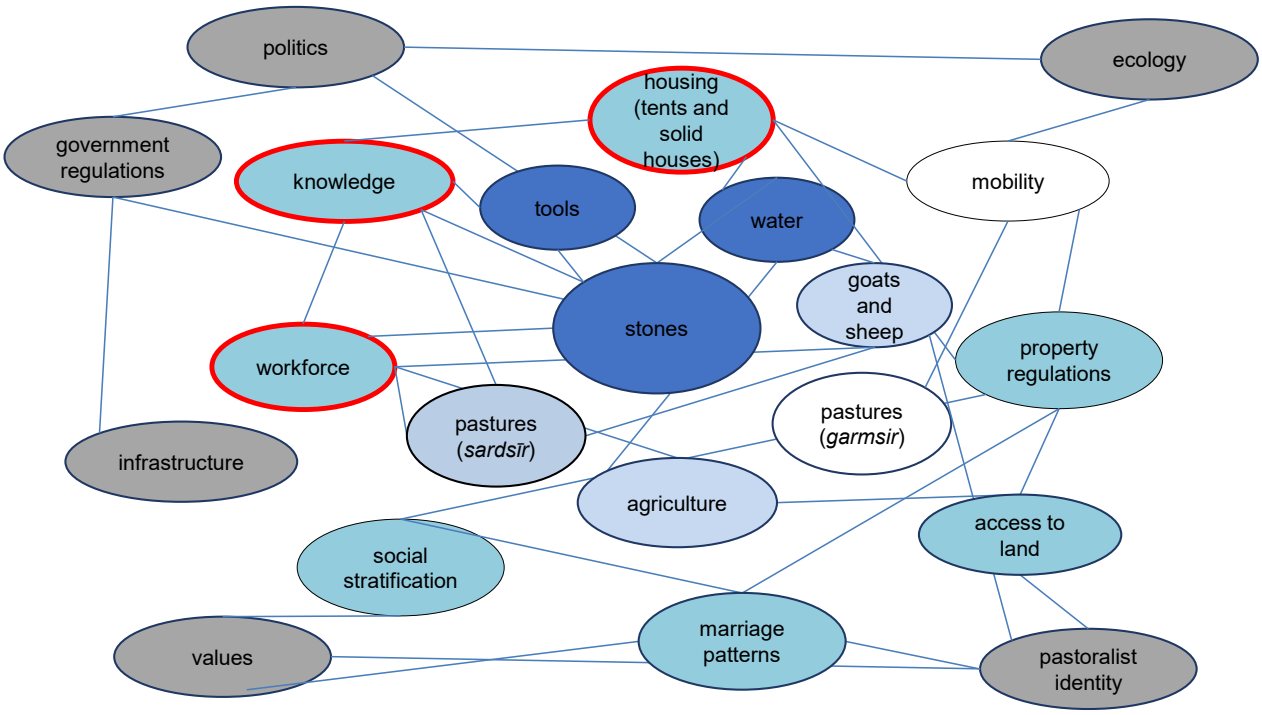

Fig. 5. ResourceComplex around stones and animal husbandry (diagram by the authors).
Dark blue: elements constituting the ResourceComplex around stones in the village. Light blue: elements constituting the ResourceComplex around animal husbandry. Blue: elements indirectly connected to the ResourceComplex. Grey: framing conditions that influence the overall network. White: elements that are inactive/no longer part of the ResourceComplex. Red outlined: changed/modified elements.

- Goats and sheep had to be reduced in numbers while the highland pastures (*sardsir*) and agriculture have diminished in significance.
- Lowland pastures (*garmsir*) were suspended and mobility severely constrained due to the fact that the miners had to stay on site.
- While some elements were downgraded, others gained in significance, such as the workforce becoming a permanently available pool of labourers with the special knowledge needed for mining.
- With regard to the framing conditions, at least two significant modifications must be emphasised: new government regulation concerning the mining of stones in state-owned mines and the increased significance of infrastructure, in particular roads for transport.

In brief, we find a reconstructed ResourceComplex around stones in the first phase that nonetheless still retained a number of essential components from prior periods. Since the villagers became increasingly involved in stone mining their pastoralist life gradually changed, but without being totally turned upside down. Their identity as pastoralists with all the accompanying elements basically stayed unaltered, as long as the state organised the stone-mining industry activities and took care of all subsequent steps such as transport, marketing and selling. This construct ultimately turned out to be an intermediate stage and radically changed when the mine was closed.

The ResourceComplex Around Stones – Phase 2

In 1990, the company stopped its activities in the village. This was preceded by a legislative shift within the Islamic Republic – in 1985, it was decided that too much state control would be harmful for the mining sector. As a consequence, the Mining Act of the Republic of Iran was changed and the mining in category-2 mines (metals, ornamental and precious stones) was opened for the private sector (Floor 2005). Consequently, the mining activities in the village stopped briefly but were started again

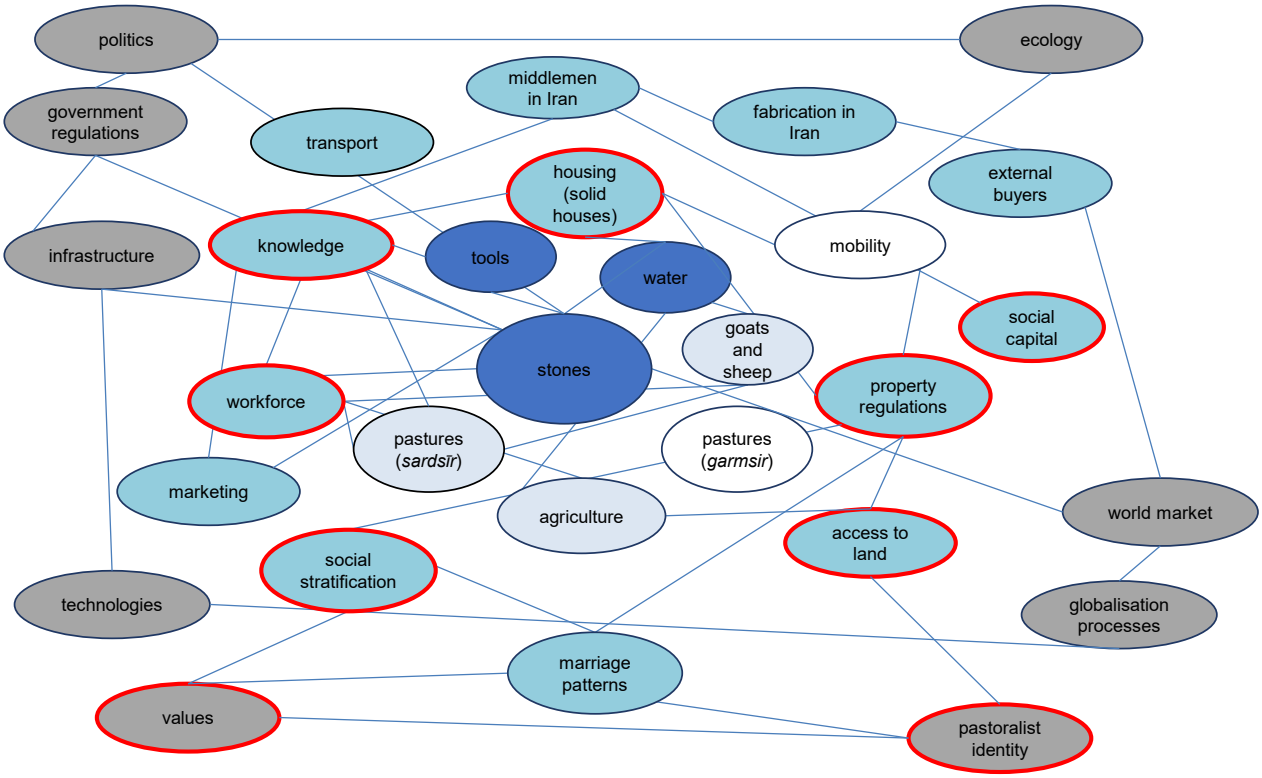

Fig. 6. ResourceComplex around stones in the village today (diagram by the authors).
Dark blue: elements constituting the ResourceComplex around stones in the village. Light blue: elements constituting the ResourceComplex around animal husbandry. Blue: elements indirectly connected to the ResourceComplex. Grey: framing conditions that influence the overall network. White: elements that are inactive/no longer part of the ResourceComplex. Red outlined: changed/modified elements.

a few years later (by 1995), when the first villagers established their own contacts to transport facilities and found ways to sell the chromite. This shift may not seem very relevant at first glance, but although the work itself (mining stones) remained the same, upon closer examination we see that the character of the work changed entirely: the villagers went from being employees to being businessmen without a fixed monthly salary. They were able to make profits if they conducted their business smartly. In our model of the ResourceComplex of phase 2 this shift becomes obvious, not least by the increased complexity displayed. All things considered, the ResourceComplex around stones in the village today can be demonstrated as follows.

As can be seen from the graph above (*fig. 6*), the ResourceComplexes around animal husbandry and stones, both in phase 1 and phase 2, show the expected major differences. Nevertheless, some elements also remained unchanged, although the underlying purpose is altered. The most significant changes are to be found within the enabling network around stone mining that became more and more complex after the stone miners became businessmen:

- Greater importance was attached to the aspect of permanent houses, which had become the standard form of living; the skills of the workforce (knowledge) needed to be expanded in order to stay updated with all the new developments within the economy, and the social stratification became more diverse, owing to the different economic prosperity of individual miners.
- New elements have spiked the network, such as the social capital that individuals need to make the most of marketing their products or to get access to transport, intermediate trade (middlemen) and fabrication facilities in Iran.
- The framework shows significant changes occurring because of the inclusion of overarching components such as new technologies, the emergence of globalisation processes and the constraints of the world market; we also find indications of a change in values and the shaping of pastoralist identity.

In short, the ResourceComplex around stones during phase 2 proved to have initiated many more adjustments and changes than phase 1 had, up to the point where the core values and way of life of a former pastoralist community was altered. Nevertheless, we do not find evidence for the complete collapse of the ResourceComplex around animal husbandry, which was never completely abandoned.

Assemblages and ResourceCulture

In comparing the different forms and phases of the ResourceComplex around stones as demonstrated above, it becomes evident that some elements show a remarkable resilience, but also that new elements appear when found appropriate or inevitable. Looking closely, we clearly see how the heterogeneous elements change and have to be reassembled over time in order to 'co-function', as De Landa (2016, 1) called it. We also see that this form of assemblage resembles the former complex around animals and even overlaps in many parts, as it actually also does with other assemblages not further elaborated in this paper (such as handicrafts, see Barforooshan in this volume).

What should be emphasised here is that assemblages of resources – those of stones and animals for our particular case study – constitute the basis of this society. As such they may exist over shorter or longer periods of time. Even with the breaking off or change of some parts (such as changes in existing political conditions, ruptures in infrastructure, an earthquake or a severe water shortage), the ResourceComplex will continuously be adjusted as long as the elements are co-functioning for the sake of the whole. Should the demand for stones decrease altogether for whatever reason, internally or externally justified, the population may resort to the well-known older and never-fully-abandoned ResourceComplex around animal husbandry. If new opportunities for using stones as an economic and social asset later arise, similar developments might be initiated. We have reason to assume that such recurrent processes of ResourceComplex construction also occurred throughout the past, possibly dating back to the Early Bronze Age 1 (Proto Elamite period, 3200–2900 BC) and beyond. Archaeological findings (Pfälzner et al. 2019) prove that within the same area, the mining of stones must have played a major role over long periods of time, though with interruptions, as can be demonstrated by area surveys.

It might not have been the descendants of the same resident population using and activating the ResourceComplex around stones, but there must have been people to make use of it following an ever-emerging demand for and validation of stones. We cannot say anything about the actors in remote times, but we now have enough information to record what occurred. Our anthropological study on current developments gave us a deeper insight into how the dynamics of this resource developed and allows us to confidently state that stones in this particular area are and have been the basis of a ResourceCulture that constitutes the locals' mode of living and impacts the social structure as well as the values and identity of the studied population. Further inquiries will be necessary if we wish to conclude more about the correlation of resources, value systems and identity construction.

Conclusion

This paper presents the preliminary results of a research project in southern Iran as part of the Tübingen collaborative research centre (SFB 1070) focusing on the cultural dynamics of resources. Conceptualised as an ethno-archaeological project, it aims to trace the use of stone resources, something now proven to date back to the Early Bronze Age. In order to understand what exactly is needed to turn the raw material stone into a culturally valued resource, used and maintained over several thousand years (though with interruptions), an anthropological case study was initiated to supplement the archaeological findings.

Arguing that the cultural dynamics caused and initiated by resources as the basis of societies can only be understood when a processual approach is applied, we used the theoretical model generated by the SFB – we call it the '4-R-model' of Resource, ResourceComplex, ResourceAssemblage and ResourceCulture – as an analytical tool to interpret our

data on the use of stone resources in one particular location in the Jiroft area. The village Bāḡ-e Borj chosen for our fieldwork is not very old but there is evidence that a historical stone workshop dating back to EBA was situated in the vicinity. The entire area south of Jiroft is famous for mineral processing (mostly chromite, diorite and calcite). Trade relations and exchanges with surrounding areas, as well as the more distant regions of the Near East and the Indus region, are documented within the archaeological records. Recent research and the results of our project, however, demonstrated that apparently there have been interruptions, including complete halts in stone production. But even with long periods of suspension, the use of stone resources has repeatedly been resumed. It can be expected that with every decrease in the demand for stones, pastoralism once again became the dominant way of life, as it clearly must have been maintained throughout long periods of time to a greater or lesser extent. It can equally be assumed that the ResourceComplex around stones was established, altered and amended in recurrent processes just as the ResourceComplex around animal husbandry must have been reduced or expanded depending on the changing validation of stones.

Following our anthropological study of the current conditions in Bāḡ-e Borj – which proved that presently the demand for stones is once more increasing – we know how the ResourceComplex around stones is composed and amended, what the 'knots' and interrelations between the components are, and what the different levels of co-functioning elements within the assemblage are. We can also answer our initial question about the impact of the internal and external changes responsible for the dynamics of such a complex, and the concomitant values, social practices and structures that allow us to properly refer to this as a ResourceCulture (in this case, based on stones). The more differentiated a ResourceComplex gets the more attractive its retention and maintenance becomes, and the sooner any former mode of living (in this case based on animal husbandry) will be considered outdated and even perhaps abandoned. For the time being, the question of what is necessary to generate or dismantle a ResourceComplex remains open and in that process it will most likely overlap with other complexes over a considerable time span. In any case, regarding the archaeological study of the use of stones in this area, these findings may help us to take a fresh look at the dynamics of resource utilisation and what occurred in historical phases otherwise inaccessible.

Sabine Klocke-Daffa
University of Tübingen
Asien-Orient-Institut
Abteilung für Ethnologie
Burgsteige 11
72070 Tübingen

Wulf-Marten Frauen
University of Tübingen
SFB 1070 ResourceCultures
Hölderlinstraße 12
72074 Tübingen

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Alireza Barforooshan

The Influence of Mining on the Rise and Fall of Rug Weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj Village

Keywords: Bāḡ-e Borj, rug weaving, mining

Summary

Bāḡ-e Borj is located in the south of Kermān province in Iran. The spread of mining amongst locals has been a major issue for the past 75 years, influencing their culture and traditional way of life. The residents of Bāḡ-e Borj village used to be nomads, who then chose sedentary life around the time of Iran's revolution in 1357 SH (please note that SH refers to the Solar Hijiri calendar, not to be confused with the more commonly used Hijiri calendar. The year 1357 SH corresponds to March 1978–March 1979 CE). Traditionally, the villagers were farmers and herdsmen who practiced rug weaving as one of their artisanal activities. At this point, the majority of men through four generations have worked in industrial and gem mines. This study attempts to document, record and introduce the features of the rugs traditionally woven here and to assess how mining has affected rug weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj village. Today rug weaving has already been abandoned in the village and the assumption is that the reason for this is the shift to mining as a primary occupation. Analytical and descriptive methods have been used in this study, with information gathered through both library research and fieldwork, where observation and interviews were used as tools for obtaining information. Results show that in the past the women of this village wove rugs with specific motifs belonging to Bāḡ-e Borj and thus the rugs may have been considered very distinctive. Nevertheless, as of 15 years ago, rug weaving started to disappear from this region for different reasons, and today no one weaves rugs anymore. Although working in mines has affected the economy and livelihood of the villagers and their customs in recent decades, this does not seem to be the only contributing factor to the extinction of rug weaving. Other reasons include the difficulty of weaving, the low income it offers, the new and modern lifestyle of the villagers, the education and the lack of interest among the youth and external obstacles to the production and trade of Iranian rugs.

1 Introduction

This article is part of a research project titled 'Trade and Trade Routes as cultural Resources in Southeast Iran' which was carried out as a cross border collaboration between the University of Tübingen in Germany and the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute in 1398 SH (March 2019 to March 2020 CE). The finds and conclusions of this study were mostly based on field observations and interviews with the locals. This section of the study attempts to document and record the traits of rugs in Bāḡ-e Borj and to examine how the profession of mining affected rug weaving in this village. In recent years, rug weaving has completely ceased to exist, and mining is assumed to be the reason.

Bāḡ-e Borj village in the south of Kermān province is located in an area accommodating mines for several industrial and precious minerals, extracting stones such as chromite and garnet. The inhabitants of this village were previously nomads, primarily engaging in animal husbandry and rug weaving for their livelihood. Several decades ago, they began to gradually settle and changes appeared in their sources of income. After the permanent settlement and formation of Bāḡ-e Borj village and the extensive employment of the men in mines, mining slowly became the main source

Fig. 1. Panoramic views of the villages of Bāḡ-e Borj Bālā (top) and Bāḡ-e Borj Pāyin (bottom) (photo by A. Barforooshan).

of income for families and traditional occupations like animal husbandry, small-scale farming and rug weaving lost their importance. Implementing the approach of art-based anthropology and based on observations and interviews carried out with some of the female weavers from the village, we discuss the influence of mining on rug weaving as a part of the cultural history of this rural society and look at the effects of changes in their livelihood.

Rug weaving is amongst the oldest human activities in Iran that fulfils not only economical, but also cultural and social functions. Rugs fulfil a simple physical function: They cover the floor or ground where humans live and make it warm, soft and beautiful. From an economical perspective, the production and sale of rugs could provide for part of a family's living costs. On a cultural note, rugs represent a specific phenomenon where an object's motifs state the identity and provide cultural information about its producers, showcasing ethnical and national symbols, and the art and aesthetics of the people who created it. Materials and methods of weaving are specific to each region, which helps to distinguish and differentiate the products of different areas. It is a well-known fact that rugs are one of the most important cultural exports of Iran, almost acting like a cultural embassy to the world, and sent away to the farthest corners of the globe to present a profound part of Iranian culture.

2 Methodology

This study is both analytical and descriptive in nature. Information was gathered through library research and field work, including observation and interviews. Those interviewed were intentionally chosen from amongst the women formerly engaged in rug weaving. All photographs were taken by the author, and all show existing rugs in their owners' houses. All graphics are also the author's own work. Data analysis in this study is qualitative. The EI method has been used for the phonology of local terminology.

3 An Introduction to Bāḡ-e Borj Village

3.1 Geographical and Environmental Location

Bāḡ-e Borj village (Bāq borj/bāq e borj) is located in a mountainous region in Iran, in the south of Kermān province near the city of Esfandaqeh. Technically, the village is part of Ṣoḡān Rural District. Although the southern part of Kermān province is considered one of the tropical regions of Iran, Bāḡ-e Borj is a rural village with relatively pleasant weather and cold winters. This village consists of two parts, Bāḡ-e Borj Bālā (upper Bāḡ-e Borj) with about 60 households and Bāḡ-e Borj Pāyin (lower Bāḡ-e Borj) with about 15 households (*fig. 1*).[1] The distance between these two points is 2.5km, connected via a dirt road. The area has sparse vegetation, with occasional occurrences of 'oros' (mountain cypress), 'bone' (mountain almond) and 'kahkom'. Animals such as wolves, foxes, hyenas, wild goats, partridges, woodpeckers, hoopoes and nightingales live in this area.

3.2 Cultural and Social Situation

The villagers speak Persian with a local accent. Most are related to one another and many carry the last name Eskandari. The people of this village were nomads until quite recently, and settled in this area less than 50 years ago. They are Shiite Muslims.

3.3 Economic Situation

The Soghan/Ṣoḡān region has the largest rich chromite mines of Iran. For many years, the non-governmental sector has been setting up a significant number of chromite and manganese mines around Bāḡ-e Borj. Therefore, many men in the village now work mainly as miners. They usually work for 20 to 25 years in the mines before retiring.

As nomads, the Bāḡ-e Borj villagers used to move in different seasons of the year and had, for many years, chosen Bāḡ-e Borj as their summer settlement. Their main occupation was animal husbandry and limited farming and horticulture. They also earned a small amount of income from rug weaving. They gradually settled and created this village. About 75 years ago, the Esfandaqeh Mining Company was established to extract chromite minerals, and the people of Bāḡ-e Borj – while still nomads – were drawn to mining. Since mining provided an all-year-round job and a fixed salary, it soon became the main profession of the village men. Nonetheless, the villagers continued their animal husbandry, small-scale farming and rug weaving. Now several generations of men have worked in the mines and retired. Of course, since the mid-1380s SH (ca. March 2001 to March 2011 CE), mining is no longer at peak capacity, but the new generations of men still work in the mines. In addition, the men and women of the village still engage in animal husbandry, farming and small scale cultivation to a lesser degree to provide for their families. They mostly breed hens, roosters and goats, with a few families also breeding sheep.[2]

According to local people, in addition to chromite and manganese, precious and semi-precious stones are also found in Bāḡ-e Borj, e. g. garnets, *šāh maqṣud*[3], *dorr*[4], *ʿaqiq*[5] (in green, blue, red, ice white etc.), silica, jasper, hadid, micaschist, pyrite, *yašm* and *firuze*. According to the villagers, veins of *šāh maqṣud* and agate are most common in the area, and turquoise veins are the least common. Green garnet (*fig. 2*) is a rare, highly valuable and globally prized precious gemstone from this region.[6] Thus, for several years some locals have worked locating

1 There are usually more inhabitants during the warm seasons of spring and summer.

2 Goats are a species that finds food in nature for itself and does not need much care, while the maintenance and cost of preparing food for sheep is high. Therefore, nowadays most of the people of Bāḡ-e Borj raise goats and do not have the ability or desire to raise sheep.

3 *šāh maqṣud* or bowenite belongs to the serpentine category of stones.

4 Pearl is a kind of clear quartz.

5 Agate consists of quartz and chalcedony and comes in various types and colours.

6 The demantoid garnets of Kermān are world famous. Even on the world market, they are only preceded by the Nigerian green garnet in importance, see <https://sangshenas.com/demantoid-garnet/> (last access: 08.09.2025).

Fig. 2. Green garnets found in the village of Bāḡ-e Borj (photo by A. Barforooshan).

and extracting garnet stones, then selling them to middlemen who export them to foreign jewellers. Today, finding good garnet veins has become more difficult and new veins are seldom found. Locating new garnet veins has always counted amongst the greatest hopes of the people living in Bāḡ-e Borj. Locating and extracting this stone was easier and provided prosperous incomefrom the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, but nowadays it seems no further good veins are to be found.

4 Research Data

4.1 An Overview of Rug Weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj

The people of Bāḡ-e Borj village have engaged in rug weaving in addition to animal husbandry since their nomadic period, and they continued rug weaving after adopting a sedentary way of life. In the local culture, rug weaving is considered a female occupation, and all women within the community practiced rug weaving in addition to animal husbandry and small-scale cultivation. There was no centralised rug weaving workshop in this area, rather every family had a rug weaving *dār* loom[7] (*dār*) at home. Training in rug weaving began for girls at the age of ten and was handed down from mother to daughter through generations. In every family, the woman of the house would weave rugs, either alone or with the help of her daughters.[8] It was also customary for female neighbours and/or relatives to gather in one house and help the host with weaving rugs while engaging in conversations. Therefore, it can be said that an informal type of cooperation was common in rug weaving. Another custom was for girls to weave rugs in their parents' house and take some of their work along to their husband's home after marriage. This work had both a capital and economic aspect (as the bride's dowry) and demonstrated the bride's accomplishments. However, this custom is no longer practiced.

Through examining the rugs remaining in the houses of Bāḡ-e Borj, it can be observed that low density rugs of medium quality and sometimes of lower quality were produced. Although Bāḡ-e Borj was never considered among Iran's famous rug weaving centres – i. e. places producing high-quality and expensive rugs in large quantities – rug weaving was certainly once popular there and earned families a moderate amount of income.

4.2 The Economic Aspect of Rug-Weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj

Until relatively recently, rugs were produced in all the houses of Bāḡ-e Borj and rug weaving had a role in each family's economy. Those with a better economic situation did not make rugs for sale, but for personal use at home or for a child's marriage. However, since rugs were considered capital items, these same families would sometimes sell off a few of their rugs in the face of financial need or when made a suitable offer. In general, though, most villagers wove rugs simply to provide for their families.

One previous form of income from rug production in the village were orders coming from a cooperative company, the Sirjān Handwoven Rug Company. This company provided the materials[9]

7 Rug weaving loom.

8 Nevertheless, many interviewees stated that Mrs. Khadija Esmailzade (Ḵadije Esmāeilzāde) (*fig. 12*) was a rug weaver who taught many women and girls in the village the correct method of rug weaving.

9 Rug weaving materials include different kinds of threads used for the warp, weft and pile of the rug.

and tools[10] for rug weaving for the villagers and paid them wages for weaving rugs that they then sold on. Orders coming from this company stopped in 1386 SH (March 2007 to March 2008 CE). Simultaneously, some villagers set up a loom at their own expense and wove rugs for themselves, rather than for this company. They then sold their rugs to anyone who would buy them and their customers were mostly Pilehvar people[11] (the origin of these people is discussed below). Weavers were paid using currency or through exchange for items such as machine-made rugs, food or clothing. In an exchange of handwoven rugs with machine made ones, it was noted that Pilehvar customers would usually exchange one or two *taḵte* (a universal unit of measurement) of hand-woven rugs for slightly more than one *taḵte* of other goods.[12] At that time, it was commonly believed amongst villagers that machine-made rugs[13] were more beautiful than their own handwoven ones, which was why they favoured them and were generally satisfied with this type of exchange; today it seems they regret their ignorance of the value of their own artisanal products and see those exchanges as poor decisions.[14]

4.3 Different Types of Rugs in Bāḡ-e Borj and Their Functions

Different types of rugs[15] produced in Bāḡ-e Borj village, in terms of use, were: the floor rug (*farš*) used as a floor covering or underlay, the *pošti* used for a person to lean against the wall of the room while seated on the floor, the *āyene dān* used for storing or displaying a small mirror, the *kašk dān* used for storing *kašk*,[16] the *xorjīn* used for storing ingredients such as rice, wheat, lentils or sugar, the *javāl* used for storing flour and woven goods using cotton thread, the *sofre* used as a textile spread under food and eating utensils, the *čādoršab*,[17] the *haftrang*, the *namak dān* used for storing edible salt, the *dastān* used for storing apothecary medicines, the *tuše dān* used to store bread and food, the *kuče dān* used for storing tools such as pliers, knives, nails and baking tools and the *pelās*, used as a type of underlay.

4.4 Bāḡ-e Borj Rug Features

4.4.1 Pattern, Motif and Colour Palette

The lines used in the motifs and patterns of these rugs are sharp and angular, with no curvatures. Symmetry is strongly observed in the patterns. During our study, the following types of rugs were found (classified here according to the general typology of Iranian rugs, rather than the

10 Rug weaving tools include the *dār* (rug weaving instrument), a knife, shears and a comb.

11 The Pilehvar people were itinerant traders who went from the city to the villages and carried goods for barter and exchange. Items such as new machine-made carpets, food items that could not be found in the villages, clothes, home and kitchen appliances were commonplace. Pilehvars used to go to the villages several times during the year to buy garden and agricultural products, livestock and handwoven carpets. Some were only interested in buying handwoven carpets and had nothing to do with any other products.

12 The measuring unit of rugs and carpets in Iran is *taḵte*.

13 Bāḡ-e Borj villagers used to refer to all machine-made carpets as Kāšāni carpets. Even when the carpets had nothing to do with the products of Kāšān (one of the most important centres of both hand-woven and machine-made carpets in Iran). Rather, the term Kāšāni rug was a common term in Bāḡ-e Borj for machine-made carpets.

14 For the writer it was upsetting to see that in an area where rug weaving was once popular, now all the houses are covered with cheap, mediocre machine-made carpets. Of course, some people still kept some of their hand-woven carpets at home, and I was able to examine them and take pictures. Without this stroke of good fortune, we might have never known exactly what the carpets of Bāḡ-e Borj looked like.

15 The term *farš* 'carpet, rug' has various applications in Iranian society. Its meanings can vary in the eyes of the general public and those involved in the rug market. A rug in the word and general sense refers to anything spread on the surface of the earth, such as street paving. But the rug in a special sense is used in two different forms: 1. In the general form (usually used by ordinary people), rug means all patterned textiles, including carpets (knotted and piled textiles) and rugs (woven without knots and piles) with any shape and application. 2. Rug, in other words, means a textile for flooring and underlay. A textile that is spread on the surface of the ground and may be piled or not.

16 Curd (*kašk*) is a dairy product, the solid white creamy substance left when separating curds from whey. In Iran, it is usually salted and used in certain dishes throughout the country.

17 *Čādoršab* is woven in many parts of Iran. It is woven in a braid weave without pile, and with dimensions of about 2 x 2m. Usually, its design is checkered and has various uses in different ethnic groups, for rolling mattresses, as a food cloth, for making bundles, carrying fodder etc.

Fig. 3. A Bāḡ-e Borj rug (pile rug) with the *Panj Toranj* design. Used as a floor covering and underlay. Its dimensions are 250 x 150cm (photo by A. Barforooshan).

local terminology in Bāḡ-e Borj): *Toranji* (*fig. 3, 6)*, *Goldāni* (*fig. 9–11*), *Vāgirei* (*fig. 5*), *Afšān* (*fig. 5*), *Moḥarramāt* (*fig. 8*) and *Kaf sāde* (*fig. 7*). Some patterns also have local names, of course, such as: *Rāh rāh* (*fig. 8)*, *Toranji* (*fig. 3, 6*), *Šiš dari* (*fig. 7*), *Goldāni* and *Samāvari*[18] (*fig.* 11). The motifs seen in these rugs stem from botanical and animal imagery, decorative objects and geometrical designs. Some of these, given here with local names, include: *Gušvāre, Čang čangu, Šekofte,*[19] *Barg, Sibak,* tortoise *(Lākpošt)*, sparrow (*Gonješk*), chicken (*Juje*) and camel (*Šotor*) (*fig. 4*).

In Iranian rug weaving, each region has its own colour scheme. Pattern and colour are the most important identifying and differentiating factors of rugs from different regions and obviously there are both similarities and differences across various regions. A combination of navy blue, blue, lacquer red, fuchsia, orange, egg-yolk yellow, green, mustard, grey, brown, peach, pink, cream, white and black is often seen in Bāḡ-e Borj rugs.

According to the Bāḡ-e Borj rug weavers, they usually improvised and did not use pre-made paper drafts or designs.[20] While weaving, they imagined new motifs spontaneously by observing other rugs. Sometimes a simple pattern was rather haphazardly drawn with a pencil on a piece of paper and was then executed, but formal drafting seems to have been absent.

18 What can be seen in the *samāvar* (kettle) design is the image of a vase (flower pot) and not an actual samovar. But the weavers of Bāḡ-e Borj called this design *Samāvari*. It seems that to them the vase was simply conflated with a samovar.

19 *Šekofteh* means blossom in the local dialect.

20 The ability to improvise weaving is one of the valuable and charming features of handwoven rugs, which has now become obsolete in most parts of Iran, with all weavers now working from a draft. There was of course great artistic value in the capacity to undertake completely improvised weaving. While weavers who work from drafts are definitely artisans, and many, especially those who design their own drafts, must certainly still be called artists, this abandonment of improvised weaving signals the loss of a very unique kind of spontaneity and artistry not possible when working from pre-made drafts.

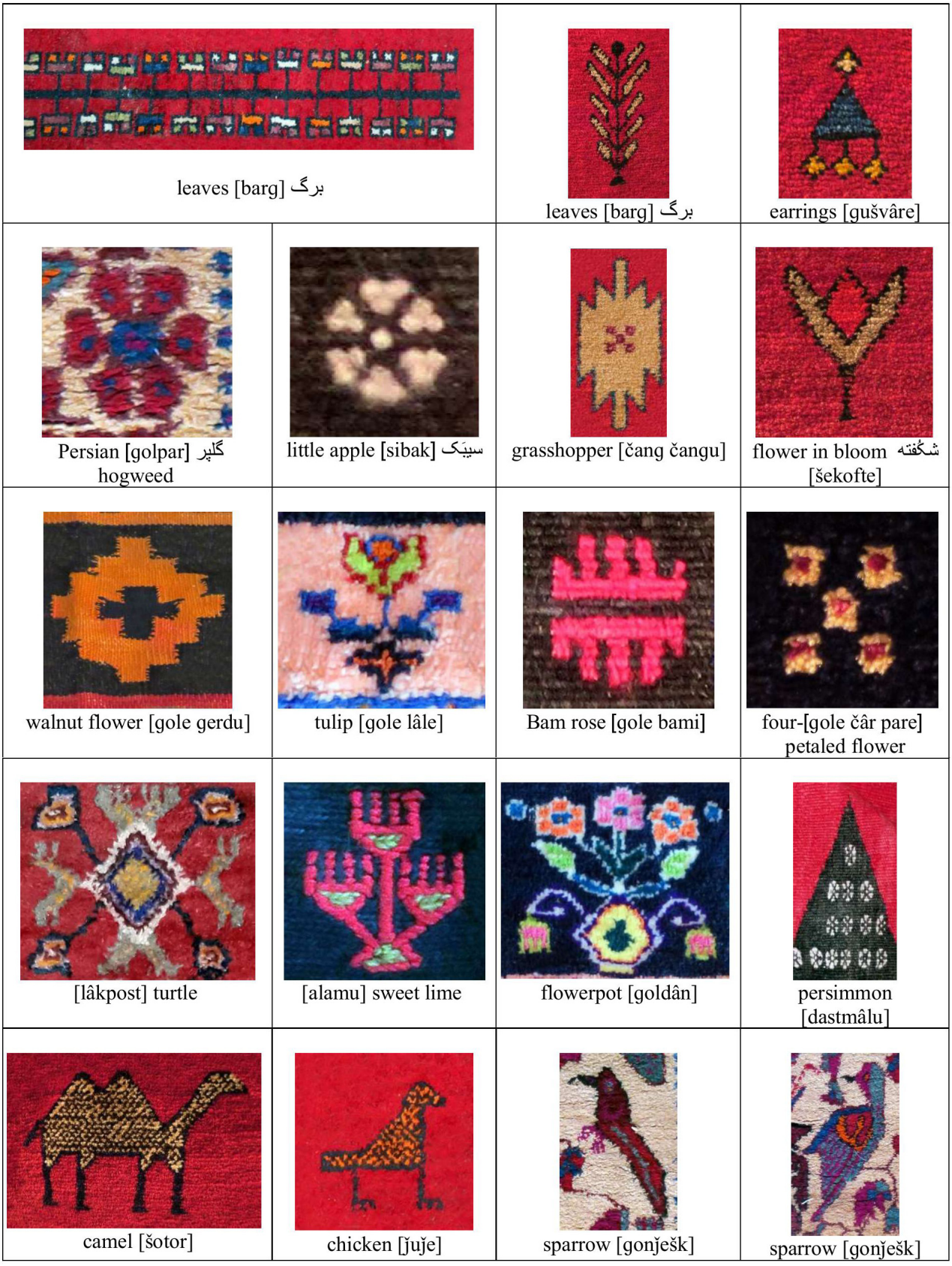

Fig. 4. Examples of Bāğ-e Borj rug motifs (photos by A. Barforooshan).

Fig. 5. A Bāḡ-e Borj rug (pile rug) with the turtle design. Used as a floor covering and underlay. Its dimensions are 150 x 100cm (photo by A. Barforooshan).

Fig. 6. A Bāḡ-e Borj rug (pile rug) featuring the *Toranj* design, used as a cushion for the back. Its dimensions are 95 x 65cm (photo by A. Barforooshan).

Fig. 7. A Bāḡ-e Borj rug (Gelim or flat-weave rug) featuring the *Šiš dari* design. Used as a table cloth. Its dimensions are 120 x 100cm (photo by A. Barforooshan).

Fig. 8. A Bāḡ-e Borj rug (Gelim or flat-weave rug) with striped designs. Used as a floor covering and underlay. Its dimensions are 250 x 120cm (photo by A. Barforooshan).

Fig. 9. A Bāḡ-e Borj pile textile (miniature pile rug) with the flowerpot design, used as mirror holder. Its dimensions are 25 x 18cm (photo by A. Barforooshan).

4.4.2 Dyeing

Dyeing of yarn and thread for rugs made in Bāḡ-e Borj was done by women using home-made and bought herbal and chemical, artificial dyes, either separately or at times combined. They produced some of the herbal dyes by hand from natural ingredients sourced in Bāḡ-e Borj and its surroundings. The remaining herbal dyes and chemical or artificial dyes were brought from the city.

The natural dyes included: walnut shell[21] (*puste gerdu*) and walnut leaf[22] (*barge gerdu)* for black, brown and beige colours (*gušti*), *zārč* plant or *berberis lycium*[23] *(zārč*) for yellow and orange colors, henna leaf (*hanā*) for peach and pea colours, *telbit*[24] for yellow colour, *ronās*[25] for rose colour, turmeric (*zard čube*) for yellow colour, *zafti*[26] as a mordant[27] and other plants.

21 The green peel of walnut.
22 Leaf of walnut tree.
23 Wild barberry leaf (*zereške kuhi*).
24 Leaf of a desert tree.
25 Weavers in many villages and cities of Iran call this red colour *goli* (the colour of rose).
26 *Zaft* is a type of tree gum.
27 Mordants are certain chemicals (most commonly salt, but there are many others) used in textile dyeing. Mordants help the textile to better absorb colour pigments.

4.4.3 Knot Density and Type

In general, one of the factors determining the quality of Iranian hand-woven rugs is *rajshomar*[28] (*rajšomār*) or knot density per the 6.5 or 7cm length (according to each region's tradition). In this aspect, hand-woven rugs are produced in three grades:

(1) low grade with a count of about 15 to 35 knots per 6.5 or 7cm length,
(2) medium grade with a count of about 40 to 55 knots per 6.5 or 7cm length,
(3) high grade with a count of about 60 to 80 knots per 6.5 or 7cm length.

The higher the index, the finer and more intricate the rug, which also means that such rugs are only produced by more skilled weavers and take longer to weave. These high-grade rugs are made using finer and higher quality thread and display a denser and more coherent weaving with more detailed and visible motifs, so they are of higher overall quality and fetch a higher price. The weavers of Bāḡ-e Borj produced rugs with 25 to 30 rows per 6.5 or 7cm length. Therefore, it should be said that Bāḡ-e Borj rugs are in the low-grade category.[29] The knot type used in these rugs is symmetrical,[30]

28 Knot density actually refers to the density of the weave. Knot density is the number of knots in a 6.5 or 7cm length (depending on each region's tradition) of the rug. For instance, a 25-knot rug has 25 knots per each 7cm length.
29 The weavers of Bāḡ-e Borj had no knowledge of the terms and technical rules regarding knot density or the types and names of the knots they used: their knowledge was purely practical, taught and implemented through generations. This means that they themselves did not know how many rows (knots) their carpets had and what their knots were called. Of course, it should be noted that this is common and it is the same in most villages and communities all over Iran. In fact, the people of a small and closed society like Bāḡ-e Borj village would not commonly know about the variety of practices and terms in other parts of their own country. For example, they only know how to make the type of rug knot used in their region and it is therefore not necessary to have a special name for it. The variety of different methods and names is only relevant for experts, researchers, businessmen and those who work in the field of weaving in different regions, not for local people.
30 In the different rug weaving areas of Iran, two types of knots are mainly used. These two are the symmetrical knot (also called the Turkish knot) and the asymmetric knot (also called the Persian knot). The reason for naming these Turkish and Persian is that most of the Turkish-speaking regions use the symmetrical knot and most of the Persian-speaking regions use the asymmetrical knot. But among these there are also exceptions and in some regions there are non-Turkish speaking peoples who weave rugs using a symmet-

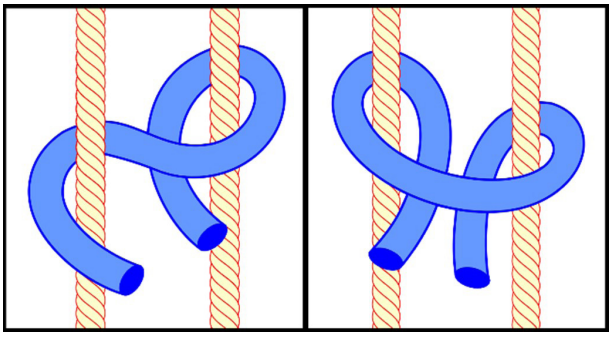

Fig. 10. Right: symmetric knot. Left: asymmetric knot (graphic by A. Barforooshan).

but in this study rugs with asymmetrical knots have also been found (*fig. 10*).[31]

4.4.4 Weaving Looms and Rug Dimensions

Since the Bāḡ-e Borj villagers were nomads in the past, they used horizontal looms,[32] incorporating the loom warping method called *gardān*,[33] or ground-weaving, in which the weaver sat on the threads of the loom placed on the floor and wove the rug. This type of loom facilitated easy packing and transport whenever the nomads moved. It could also be used in the low, enclosed space of the traditional tent dwellings. After the weavers of Bāḡ-e Borj abandoned nomadism and settled down, they continued to use their traditional horizontal looms. Due to the small size of the rooms in their houses, they could not weave very large rugs: the looms were spread on the floor of one room and occupied the space of that room completely until the weaving was finished. Therefore, the size of their rugs depended on the size of their rooms, so the dimensions of the rugs they used to weave were usually 90 x 60cm, 180 x 100cm, 200 x 150cm and 300 x 200cm. According to the former weavers, it usually took about one and a half months to weave a 200 x 150cm rug.

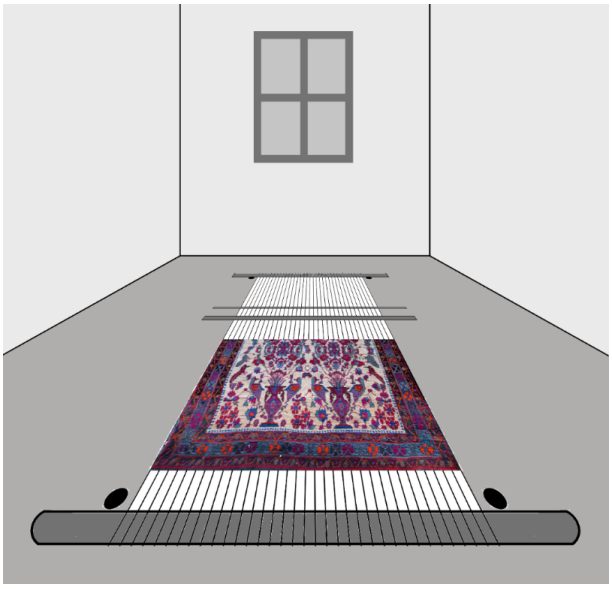

Fig. 11. An illustration of the weaving loom lying on the floor. This is an example of a Bāḡ-e Borj rug featuring the *Samāvari* pattern (named by the weaver, Irān Eskandarinasab).

4.4.5 Rug Weaving Tools

Rug weaving tools in Bāḡ-e Borj included knifes (*čāqu*) for cutting the coloured threads of the knots and piles, iron combs (*dastuk*) for beating and compacting the knots and wefts and scissors (*qeyči*) for shortening and levelling the pile.

4.4.6 Materials Used for Rug Weaving

In Bāḡ-e Borj village, the warp of a woven rug is called *šat*. Pile rugs had the warp made out of cotton, but the warps of other weaves, such as flat-woven rugs without pile, could have been made of either cotton or sheep wool. The weft of these rugs was also made of cotton yarn, but the pile of the rug, called *poj* in this village, was made

rical (Turkish) knot. For this reason, the terms symmetric and asymmetric knots are used more often than Turkish and Persian knots. Usually, each city, village or community uses only one kind of knot and it is considered a feature in their rug weaving. The knot type is therefore a factor in identifying and discovering the place for production.

31 Some women, who came to this village through marriage, still used the asymmetrical knot common in their own birthplace.

32 A type of loom which was set horizontally on the ground.

33 The most common methods of warp installation (warping) in Iran are called Turkish (or *gardān*, meaning rotating) and Persian. Although they use the Turkish method in the Turkish-speaking areas and the Persian method in the Persian-speaking areas, there are many non-Turkish-speaking ethnic groups throughout Iran who use the rotary warping method in their rug weaving traditions.

Fig. 12. Weavers (interviewees) from Bāḡ-e Borj. From right: Ḵadijeh Esmāeilzādeh, Irān Eskandarinasab, Sāhebjān Qāseminejād and Zeinab Roudbāri (photo by A. Barforooshan).

of sheep wool.[34] Each family prepared the woollen yarn needed for rug weaving from the wool of their sheep,[35] carding and pulling the yarn, then spinning the threads by hand, but they bought cotton thread (for use in both warp and weft) from the city.

4.5 Factors Contributing to the Loss of Rug Weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj, According to the Female Weavers from the Village

In the past there were active weaving looms in all the houses of Bāḡ-e Borj, and along with animal husbandry and small-scale cultivation, rug production was a source of income for most families. But today, none of the villagers own rug looms, since rug weaving became completely obsolete in this village 15 years ago and no one weaves rugs anymore. We asked some former weavers (*fig. 12*) in Bāḡ-e Borj why this was, and the majority of their answers were as follows:

- Rug weaving is hard and strenuous work and not worth the effort (in terms of renumeration).
- The hourly pay for rug weaving must be set high compared to other jobs, because of the effort and skill involved. In addition, rug weaving materials (different types of thread) have become very expensive. Therefore, the finished price of the product must be set quite high and has also recently increased and it is very difficult to sell rugs at a price that entails the correct amount of profit. Buyers want a very low price that does not match the effort, hours and outlay involved.
- At present, the cost of setting up a weaving loom is high. In the past, villagers used the woollen yarn from their own sheep. Since many families do not have sheep anymore, they have to buy woollen yarn from the city and they do not have the economic means to do so.
- Today, women have changed their priorities and want more leisure time. As they already have to cook, clean, raise their children, take care of milking, butter- and yoghurt-making,

34 The knots, piles and patterns on the surface of the rug are the result of using coloured threads, which are commonly called *ḵāme* throughout Iran. However, there may be a special local name for them in some regions. Depending on the different cultures and types of carpets, the rugs may mainly be made of wool (*pašm*), fine wool (*kork*), silk (*abrišam*) or a combination thereof.

35 This was when they used to breed sheep. Gradually, most villagers turned to breeding goats and no longer kept sheep.

baking bread, caring for livestock and small-scale cultivation, all of which are laborious and time-consuming, they do not want to spend their remaining time on rug-weaving. Leisure activities such as watching television series have become more attractive for the women of Bāḡ-e Borj.

– Previously, daughters helped their mothers with weaving. When they got married and went to their husband's house, their mothers would be alone and might not be able to weave rugs anymore, however, the newly married young girls would start weaving rugs in their new homes and continue the cycle. Today, younger women and girls are no longer interested in rug weaving.
– The difficulty of rug weaving, the low income and the lack of economic appeal of this profession, along with better education and the expectations of young people for a more modern lifestyle, have made them look for easier jobs with better income and higher social status.[36] It is obvious that in earlier times it was impossible for many villagers to discover and explore the way of life common in urban communities and distant cities or other regions. Therefore, the people of the villages and especially the women – in small and highly traditional communities – lived in the same way as their mothers and fathers and had no knowledge of the world outside their village. But gradually, with the spread of elements of modernism into all societies, many young girls from the villages are moving to cities to continue with further education and have discovered both the lifestyle of Iranian cities and of different countries all over the world. Television, cell phones and smartphones, internet access and social media have also increased the awareness of the villagers, to the extent that today their livelihood demands have far exceeded the facilities and conditions in the villages, and the young people are no longer interested in traditional, difficult and low-income jobs such as rug weaving.
– Many of the former rug-weavers are now elderly women and are both physically frail and lacking in the concentration and patience required for the work. The physical stress of weaving on the spine, eyes, fingers, joints and lungs prevents them from continuing their work.
– Due to the men's employment in the mines, the economic situation of the villagers has improved to some extent, and they no longer feel the need to do the hard work of weaving rugs.

At this point, it seems that the widespread mining among the people of Bāḡ-e Borj was not actually the sole reason for the decline and abandonment of rug weaving, but just one of the reasons for this cultural change, and this will be further discussed below.

4.6 The Fall of Rug Weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj, Influenced by the Stagnation of Iranian Rugs

In addition to the reasons provided above by the former weavers of Bāḡ-e Borj for the disappearance of rug weaving in their village, this occurrence was in fact also caused by other factors that we can trace back to the general stagnation of Iranian handwoven rug production.

Many cities and villages in Iran enjoyed a prosperous trade in artisanal rug weaving up to the recent past. For a long time, the production of handwoven rugs had been a strong local custom and also relatively advantageous, as it used simple technology and equipment, readily available inexpensive raw materials and created sustainable income. But at least in the last three decades, there have been many changes leading to the sharp decline of the Iranian rug market. Contemporary developments in various fields at the global, national, regional and local levels have caused profound changes in the economic and social structures of all Iranian urban and rural settlements, including villages (Geist 2005, 124).

During the last few decades, the structural changes in the Iranian national economy, the growth of urbanisation and the expansion of

36 Since rug weaving is considered to be an old and difficult profession with low income, people in general and especially teenagers consider this profession low status and are reluctant to practice it.

certain industries and oil revenue have led to extensive cultural, social and economic changes. This situation has caused the stagnation of many traditional economic activities, including rug weaving, in many rural areas (Rezvani et al. 2013, 35). Under such conditions, influenced by the dominance of the capitalist system, the survival of small-scale economic activities that cannot maintain competitiveness and respond to the needs of the population, especially in the traditional artisanal sector, are threatened (Andrews 2009, 117 f.). Some people believe that the economy based on oil and gas production in Middle Eastern countries has caused the rapid growth of the modern vs. traditional economy through increasing wages, which in turn has reduced the appeal of traditional economic activities (McLachlan/Tapper 2003, 10–12).

In addition to these developments and the industrialisation of production, the export of handwoven rugs has also faced problems. This is partly due to numerous inadequacies shown in adapting to the new conditions of global markets and gaining a strong position for Iranian rugs (Poursadegh et al. 2010, 155). Many such problems have been generated due to weak performance and efficiency in organisational, structural, managerial and especially commercial aspects of the industry. This has resulted in a period of decline and stagnation for Iranian handwoven rugs in terms of global markets and competition, and this craft is now in a critical situation (Shamabadi/Khodadad Hosseini 2007, 3).

According to the Development and Trade Organization of Iran, the decline of rug weaving can be observed in both the production and export sectors. The most crucial problems are: lack of a comprehensive national plan and codified strategy for the maintenance and promotion of handwoven rugs; lack of basic support for rural and urban rug cooperatives and home-based rug weavers; problems with providing quality raw materials for the production of quality rugs; absence of appropriate strategies and criteria to prevent the export of poor quality rugs; lack of accurate statistical data in different parts of the rug sector; failure to provide producers with necessary information about the needs of the market and the resulting mismatch of products with the consumers' tastes; lack of coordination between production and export organisations; failure to create a support fund for artisanal rug weavers; problems related to labour laws and appropriate insurance for rug weavers (Vaż'iat-e Ṣāderāt Farš Dastbāft-e Iran 2007, 2 f.).

The factors mentioned above have affected rug weaving in all urban, rural and nomadic communities in Iran, but considering the different cultural and social contexts, it is possible to determine those factors with a greater impact on rural societies. The primary causes of the deterioration of rug weaving in villages stem from modern developments within the greater society. The tendency of rural families to now strive towards an urban lifestyle and culture and the inconsistency of this aim with the traditional lifestyle and employment in the villages is the ultimate reason for the abandonment of rug weaving throughout Iran's villages. The reluctance of young people, especially young rural girls, to take up rug weaving has been identified as the second most influential reason for this decline and is in accordance with the idea that modernisation is primarily to blame (Rezvani et al. 2013, 49). Modern developments have led to the transformation of traditional livelihoods and the overall way of life in rural areas, and on this basis, it is necessary for planners to research the vulnerabilities of traditional livelihoods against the wider dimensions of modernisation (economic, political, social, cultural, technological) so that they can provide strategies helping the sustainability of the livelihood and economic systems of the society, including rural communities (Mbaiwa 2011, 1050).

Other reasons for the decrease in rug weaving activities in villages include: the access of villagers to new sources of livelihood through other economic sectors; a decrease in the need for women to share in providing household income due to men's greater access to employment opportunities outside the village; less productivity in rug weaving compared to other economic activities; inclination of the villagers towards an urban way of life and its fundamental differences with the traditional way of living (the trend towards urban consumerism rather than rural-producer culture); deterioration of rug weaving skills from generation to generation in the family as younger women fail to learn the skills of their mothers; health problems created by traditional rug weaving at home and

physical injuries caused by it; the difficulty of rug weaving; absence of major creativity and innovation in this activity; an increase in the price of raw materials necessary for the production of handmade rugs; weakness in rural economy development planning; inadequacy in the government's support policies for rug weavers (such as loans and insurance); problems of marketing handwoven rugs on both a small and large scale; lowered participation of women in the general economic activities of rural households; outdated techniques and technology in the artisanal rug industry; continuous departure of the labour force from the villages due to the general migration of the villagers to the cities (Rezvani et al. 2013, 45–49).

5 Discussion

As seen in the previous section, many of the causes of the general decline in rug weaving throughout Iran have also affected the village of Bāḡ-e Borj. According to the research data, the reasons for the abandonment of rug weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj village can be divided into two main groups. Firstly, the general reasons that have affected all rug weaving centres in Iran, especially villages; secondly, the specific reasons linked to the local conditions in Bāḡ-e Borj.

5.1 General Causes of the Obsolescence of Rural Rug Weaving in Iran

By studying the research data, we can conclude that the most important reasons for the decline and stagnation of rural rug weaving were mostly caused by modern developments in the society, as well as the cultural, economic and political fields, during the contemporary era, and these can be formulated under six main topics and sub-topics:

(1) Social and cultural developments
(2) Economic developments
(3) The difficult nature of weaving
(4) Shortcomings of rug weaving management
(5) Artistic and technical problems
(6) Shortcomings in marketing and export

Social and Cultural Developments

- The growth of urbanisation and the departure of the labour force from the villages, due to migration to the cities.
- The aspiration towards the style and culture of modern urban life on the part of village residents.
- Decline in the traditional method of teaching rug weaving skills from generation to generation.
- Disinclination of rural youth to engage in rug weaving.
- Reduction of the participation of women in the economic activities of rural households.

Economic Developments

- Structural changes in the national economy of Iran.
- Expansion of some modern industries.
- Expansion of oil revenues.
- The rapid growth of the modern economy vs. the traditional economy.
- Wage growth in non-traditional jobs.
- Villagers' access to new sources of livelihood in other economic sectors.
- Reduced attractiveness of economic activities in traditional sectors.
- Inadequacy of rural economic development planning.
- Increase in the price of raw materials for the production of handmade rugs.
- The lower income provided by rug production, compared to other economic activities.
- Disproportionate growth in the price of Iranian handmade rugs and loss of domestic and foreign markets.
- Recession of income from rug weaving.

Difficulty of Work

- The difficulty of rug weaving.
- Health problems associated with traditional rug weaving (mental and physical strain).

Poor Management of Artisanal Rug Trade

- The existence of multiple and parallel government institutions managing the rug trade.
- Inappropriate interference and inadequate government administration in policies and structural functions in the field of rug weaving.

- Absence of correct statistical data in different parts of the rug weaving industry in terms of management and different sectors.
- Non-compliance of Iran's rug trade with the new conditions of global markets and failure to establish a position therein.
- Absence of the necessary structure and criteria to prevent the production and export of poor-quality rugs.
- Lack of coordination between production and export stages.
- Lack of appropriate support for rug weaving cooperatives and home weavers.
- Problems related to labour laws and insurance for rug weavers.

Artistic and Technical Problems

- Perceived lack of creativity and innovation in the patterns and motifs of handwoven rugs.
- Delay in optimising the technology used in the production of handwoven rugs.
- Problems of providing and using high-quality raw materials for the production of high-quality rugs.

Insufficient Marketing and Export

- The lack of information available to the artisans about the market's needs and trends and resulting mismatch of products with consumers' tastes.
- Extensive and numerous problems in the export of handwoven rugs.

5.2 Specific Reasons for the Obsolescence of Bāḡ-e Borj Rug Weaving

As already discussed above, according to the statements of the residents of this village the most important reasons for the abandonment of rug weaving were: the difficulty of rug weaving; the high prices of raw materials for rug production; the low income gained from this time-consuming and physically taxing labour; lack of time for this time-consuming activity; villagers' inclination towards a more modern lifestyle and imitation of urban ways of life; the unwillingness of young rural girls and women to take up rug weaving; the employment of Bāḡ-e Borj residents in mining and the improved family income earned in this way. However, among all the reasons raised, some are more debatable.

5.2.1 Rug Weaving Is Time-Consuming

The villagers have pointed out that rug weaving is time-consuming in addition to daily chores, however, chores such as housekeeping, child care, gardening, and animal husbandry are not new and were part of the usual activities of village women in the past, but they still undertook rug weaving as well. Therefore, the time-consuming nature of rug weaving could not, on its own, be a sufficient reason to abandon it. This raises new questions: Why do they now point out that rug weaving is time-consuming and no longer find time for it? What has happened to their way of thinking and lifestyle that they no longer make time for this inherited activity (rug weaving) that has been a part of their culture and economy throughout history, but at the same time plainly state that they spend many hours watching television on a daily basis?

This is clearly one of the manifestations of modernity, and clearly there are factors that have changed their traditional village life to some extent and caused these women to change their attitudes towards their own lives, prioritising leisure and relaxation. Therefore, it seems that we cannot consider the income from mining in this village as the sole reason for the greatly lessened significance of rug weaving as an economic activity. We have already discussed the crisis of rug production and trade throughout Iran, and the fact that the whole sector has suffered a widespread recession. The changes to traditional ways of thinking, the relatively modern lifestyle and the new expectations and priorities of the women of Bāḡ-e Borj village have led to a point where they consider such traditional activities too time-consuming and not sufficiently rewarding to accommodate, very unlike the generations before them. As a consequence, rug weaving has been ruled as so insignificant that it has now in fact become obsolete.

5.2.2 Lack of Enthusiasm of the Young Generation

Another important factor is the education of young girls and their view of urban and modern life, which does not prioritise rug weaving as a difficult activity providing only a low income and also viewed as low-status socially speaking (at least in terms of modern urban communities). Taking into consideration the current conditions of Iranian society and the dominance of the media, which disseminates an exaggerated and colourful representation of modern life to all parts of Iranian society, it is obvious that people in rural communities also want well-paying jobs and a modern life, and a reduction in overly laborious and poorly compensated activities. It should be stated here that however much the loss of tradition seems a shame, a comfortable standard of living and self-determination are quite naturally rights belonging to all people.

5.2.3 Mining Jobs

By examining the aforementioned points, we can conclude that the new employment of the village men in the mines can only be considered as one of several factors contributing to the decline in rug weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj. As shown above, there were other reasons as to why the people of Bāḡ-e Borj turned their backs on the ancient and traditional activity of rug weaving. The inhabitants of Bāḡ-e Borj started earning income from mining around 75 years ago, while they were still nomadic, but rug weaving has only been abandoned in the area for less than 15 years. If mining were the sole cause of this shift, rug weaving should have become obsolete much earlier. In addition, some residents have said that in the past they had a relatively good financial situation, and they wove rugs solely for their family's comfort and consumption, without the need to earn any money with it. Nevertheless, at present even those families no longer engage in rug weaving.

Taking everything into consideration, it should then be said that there are a number of causes that have made rug weaving obsolete in Bāḡ-e Borj village. The most important ones can be stated as follows: cultural changes and the modern lifestyle of the villagers; young people's unwillingness to engage in rug weaving; the fixed income of the village men working in the mines; fundamental changes in the cultural, social, economic and political landscapes in Iran; and general problems and stagnation in rug production and the rug trade in Iran.

6 Conclusion

Bāḡ-e Borj is a village whose residents used to produce distinctive rugs, tailored to their own culture and geography, ever since the nomadic period of their history right up until 15 years ago. These rugs served as an example of cultural diversity, both in Iran and across the world. However, today rug weaving is completely obsolete in the houses of Bāḡ-e Borj. During the last 75 years (since the beginning of mining in this area) and especially in the last 45 years when the people of Bāḡ-e Borj settled and formed this village, their most important occupation and source of income has been working in mines. Without a doubt, mining has exercised great influence on all the social, cultural and economic issues of the village. Initially, we could assume that the widespread employment of the village residents in the new mines caused the flourishing rug weaving trade to decline.

However, the full review given above demonstrates that although the income from mining has brought about changes in the economy and lifestyle of the village people, the stagnation and abandonment of rug weaving is not only due to mining and there were also other forces at play, similar to other parts of Iran that suffered the stagnation of rug weaving. This hypothesis is supported by the overall decline of rug weaving throughout Iran discussed above and the statements of the residents of Bāḡ-e Borj. Social, cultural, economic and political developments in Iran and the rest of the world; the desire of the villagers and especially the young people of the village for a modern and urban lifestyle; the difficult nature of weaving

and lack of significant profit are among other important reasons. Conclusively, mining can only be considered as one of the reasons for the obsolescence of rug weaving in Bāḡ-e Borj village.

Alireza Barforooshan
Researcher in traditional arts and anthropology at the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism
Anthropological Research Center
Tehran, Iran
barforooshan.art@gmail.com

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Alireza Hassanzadeh

Narratives on Early Anthropology in Iran

Iran's Discursive History of Anthropology from the 4th Century AH (973 CE) to the Constitutional Revolution 1284–1289 AH (1905–1909 CE)

Keywords: Iranian anthropology, pre-modern and modern anthropology, 4th cent. AH, constitutional revolution, discourse, Abu Rayḥān Biruni

Summary

The study of Iranian anthropology is divided into modern and pre-modern anthropology. These two schools have always been separated by a huge gap that demonstrates a real disconnect between two different scholarly traditions. The pre-modern tradition, marked by the turn of the 4th cent. AH (4th Islamic century), is rooted in the works of Abu Rayḥān Biruni (5th September 973 to 13th December 1048 CE). Today, Biruni is known as the initiator and founder of anthropology in the Persian world, and particularly in Iran. Biruni was well-known, and after his death this pre-modern school went into a long decline that led to a long period of the complete absence of Iranian anthropology. This scholarly tradition appears to have completely died out, and was lost to history. After a very long period of silence, the modern school of Iranian anthropology re-commenced during the contemporary era that coincided with the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1909 CE). Compared to the earlier tradition, which was inspired by local, Iranian and Middle Eastern sources, the second school of Iranian anthropology enjoyed a different source: the western study of the humanities and a different form of anthropology imported from European scholarship. The nature of anthropology means that the history of anthropological thought can be used as a lens to perceive the evolution of culture and cultural history and its discursive aspects in Iran and, arguably, in the Persian speaking world (the Persianate World: including Tajikistan and Afghanistan) as well. This article investigates the discursive history of modern and pre-modern anthropology in Iran and tries to provide insights into several key questions. These questions are as follows:

– What are the key distinctions, differences and similarities between modern and pre-modern anthropology in Iran?
– Which discursive sources form the bases for these two kinds of anthropology in terms of epistemological, discursive and paradigmatic foundations?
– Why did the first pre-modern school of Iranian anthropology decline and why did a long absence of anthropological thought ensue in Iran, despite this strong local and traditional background, up until the Constitutional Revolution in 1905?

A review of Iranian anthropology reveals a lack of scholarly effort to properly examine and understand the gap between the modern and pre-modern schools. As such, the purpose of this research is to study the scholarly reasons behind this gap and its key epistemological and discursive aspects. To achieve this goal, this article applies discourse analysis and a review of historical sources will be utilised.

Introduction

Contrary to what Peter M. Burns (1999, 9–11) contends, the familiar image of the 'armchair anthropologist' cannot be used to describe all early-pre-modern anthropology across the world. Burns explains how fieldwork anthropologists such as Boas, Haddon and Malinowski took pre-modern and early modern anthropology as a kind of proto-tradition devoid of direct observation. This hypothesis denies all other pre-modern traditions of anthropology across the world, while other anthropologists such as Restrepo and Escobar (2005) argue for the importance of reviewing the history of anthropology as a multi-voiced narrative that is not confined to the history of anthropology in any particular country. As an example, Michael M. J. Fischer directs our attention to the continental Indian post-colonial approach to the science: Indian scholars use an edited version of their traditional scholarship (Fischer 2003, 199). Even Fischer elucidates how autobiographical writings carry an anthropological voice from very early times (Fischer 2003, 199 f.). Johannes Fabian (2014, 39), in his book 'Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object' defends the fantasy of anthropology as a kind of primitive time machine, and criticises the stigmatising of the early anthropology of the East as a kind of primitive proto-anthropology.

As such, various manifestations of anthropology exist, as geography, period and cultural-historical contexts produce different evolutions of multiple schools of anthropology. Aleksandar Bošković (2007) shares the opinion that post-colonial anthropology is against the marginalisation of otherness and ethnocentrism, and thus its history cannot accept other anthropologies as 'marginalised'. Emily Varto, who is influenced by Tylor, argues (Varto 2018, 2–9): 'early anthropology' encompasses the work and studies of those scholars, dilettantes, lawyers and government officials interested in culture while social scientists such as Biruni and Ebn Ḵaldun were professional scholars of their time.

The epistemological content of anthropology means that its historical narrative should include multi-vocal accounts from the global community of anthropologists. For this group of anthropologists, and according to this understanding of anthropology, cultural diversity is the essence of anthropology as a field of science that opposes ethnocentrism and cannot achieve a strong framework for the perception of different global socio-cultural and historical contexts without that multi-voiced narrative. The multi-voiced narrative of history and the historical evolution of anthropology enhance our understanding of cultural differences. At the same time, the fundamental duty of anthropology is to foster an intercultural understanding of human suffering and the universal desire for a good life and well-being. Recognising and addressing human pain is essential to overcoming obstacles to just and sustainable development, and to advancing core values such as peace, justice, freedom and environmental responsibility (Nanjunda 2009, 103–264; Plemmons/Barker 2016; Kirsch 2018, 71–199). In Iran, just as in other Middle Eastern countries, the historical evolution of anthropology has been strongly tied to the political and discursive contexts of the changing society. Two scholars, Ebn Ḵaldun and Abu Rayḥān Biruni, are known as the founders of pre-modern or early social sciences in the Middle Eastern, Persian, Islamic world, and their role is equivalent to that of Tylor (1832–1917) and Frazer (1854–1941) in the West. Ebn Ḵaldun and Abu Rayḥān Biruni, just like the early western anthropologists – Edward Tylor and James Frazer – sought to explain the origin and ubiquity of religious belief systems, rituals and myths (Steadman 2009, 24).

There was however a major difference: Biruni was not an armchair anthropologist (slang for someone who practises anthropology without direct observation of other cultures), rather he was a field anthropologist in the true sense of the word. While in Turkey, Ebn Ḵaldun's role as the founder of social sciences is emphasised, in Iran Biruni is celebrated as the founder of anthropology in the Iranian world (Hassanzadeh 2022). Biruni is known as a pre-modern, proto-anthropologist (as he worked in the periods before the definition of modern anthropology) in Iran and the National Day of Anthropology in the official calendar of the country coincides with his birthday on 13th *Šahrivar*, the equivalent of the 4th of September. Even before 1979, when the Islamic Revolution began in Iran, the role of Biruni was emphasised in historical books of the Pahlavi dynasty period

as the initiator of early anthropology in the country (Azkai 1973; 1995). It seems the nationalist approach of the Pahlavi dynasty and the Islamic ideology of the Islamic Revolution (Islamic science's discourse) resulted in the same interpretation of academic history: Because of Biruni's field methods (interviews with Indians as key informants concerning the Hindu religion, travel to India, writing on different cultural aspects of the Indian people etc.), he was recognised as an early pre-modern anthropologist. This recognition was combined with the islamisation of science and anti-colonial ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Hassanzadeh 2022). As will be discussed later, Biruni's methodology, framework, epistemology and approach would all be taken as signifying anthropological study as we understand it today. In addition to Persian sources inside Iran, some later scholars of Iranian anthropology such as Akbar S. Ahmed (1989) contend that Biruni is a pioneer of anthropological studies. In another book, Ahmed presents Biruni as the first founder of anthropology worldwide (Ahmed 1984). In 1976, Ehsan Yarshater (1920-2018) held a symposium on Biruni (Biruni Symposium) in New York and also presented Biruni as the world's first anthropologist (Yarshater 1976).

Here, an unanswered question arises among Iranian social scientists and anthropologists: Why was the tradition of anthropology founded by Biruni not continued in Iran, rather than importing the European tradition of anthropology from the West after the Constitutional Revolution without any influence from this Iranian pre-modern academic heritage? This article proposes a discursive and philosophical answer to this question and concentrates on three paradigms that have had a powerful influence on the entire history of Iran and its political and socio-cultural evolution and destiny. Anthropology, as a paradigm, lacked any phobia or discrimination against cultural differences, liminality, physical differences, *heteroglossia*, gender and so on. Meanwhile, the theocracy largely shaped by Ḡazzāli stands in opposition to this non-discriminatory paradigm: a strong fear of the human body and bodily life, of women and female symbolism, and fear and discrimination against liminality, multi-vocality and the celebration of differences. Iranian theosophy (mysticism) is, like anthropology, another key paradigm and enjoyed a discourse of *heteroglossia* and tolerance, trying to reconcile religious world views and worldly and terrestrial life. In this article, anthropology is recognised as a discursive production and a secular (terrestrial) framework of perception that takes humanity and its life on the earth as a rational phenomenon, while the other Iranian competitive and rivalry paradigms open up a meta-physical view towards humans and their lives.

Iran's history of anthropology can be divided into two periods: the pre-modern era, and the modern and contemporary era (Fazeli 2006; Hassanzadeh/Amiri 2008; Nadjmabadi 2009; Hassanzadeh 2013; Hassanzadeh/Fateh 2016; Dalvand 2020). The 4th cent. AH (10th cent. CE) and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1909 CE) – are recognised as periods of a return to Iranian identity and are thus also accepted as distinctive events in both periods of Iran's anthropological evolution. The first period begins with Biruni' works (Biruni 1910; 1923), as the pioneer of Iran's pre-contemporary and pre-modern ethnographic studies, according to Iranian accounts and the perception of the history of anthropology emphasised by Iranian anthropologists (Azkai 1973; 1995; Fayaz 2013; Hassanzadeh/Amiri 2008; Boloukbashi 2016; Hassanzadeh/Fateh 2016; Mirshokrai 2011). Biruni (973–1048 CE) was born in the cultural area of Ḵvārazm (Chorasmia) during the 4th cent. AH, a time recognised as an age of rebirth for Iran's culture, identity and civilization (Meskoub 2012; Zarinkoub 2020). Biruni (1923) accentuated Ḵvārazm as a part of the Persian (Persianate[1]) world, and explained how its people were a key group of Iranians and keepers of a long-rooted heritage. According to some historians' accounts, Ḵvārazm is one of the central areas of Ḵorāsān-e bozorg (greater Ḵorāsān) (Sobti 2006, 828 f.; Mojtahed-Zadeh 2006, 104; Alikuzai 2013, 110; Rante 2015; Khosroabadi/Karimi Alvar 2019).

1 "Persianate world' refers to the early modern geographical continuum where Persian once had a presence as a spoken or written language of courtly literature and correspondence' (Khazeni 2020, 3). Today, the 'Persianate world' signifies a group of countries with similar cultural backgrounds where the Persian language plays a key role: Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan (Amanat 2018, 58).

Other historians give an account of Ḵvārazm's independence as one of the Iranian civilization's areas of cultural influence (Campbell/King 2020, 777).

In spite of these two different accounts, both Ḵorāsān and Ḵvārazm were certainly representatives of Iranian culture and its heritage. Indeed, cities such as Balḵ, Nišāpur, Boḵārā, Merv, Ḡazni, Samarqand, Gorgān and Rey were connected through a common heritage and trade along the Silk Road. They played the role of strongholds defending Iranian culture facing the ideological cultures imposed upon Iran by the Arab conquerors of the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid dynasties (promoting the supremacy of the Arab 'race' and its culture over Iranian 'race' and culture). Biruni travelled to different cities of greater Ḵorāsān, and was influenced by different cultural traditions of science in various regions. The above-mentioned cities were relatively safe places at the heart of the Ḵorāsān region, and thus were the destination of many notable Iranian intellectuals fleeing the frontline of the Iranian-Arab wars of this period (Shahvary 2002; Husain Syed et al. 2011; Dabashi 2012). This made the region not only a treasure trove preserving Iran's ancient civilisation and culture but also a pivotal region for the Sāmānid Empire (Shahvary 2002) and all the other political dynasties that shared Iranian origins and the Iranian orientation and cultural approach. These dynasties shared not only Iranian origins but also understood themselves as Iranian – the Sāmānid empire was one of many *de facto* independent (though legally still part of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate) 'empires' that emerged in the area between 950 and 1150 CE, during a period of weakened Arab dominance, which intentionally referred to their Iranian origins.

In addition, this large area formed a link to the Peripatetic mystical discourse[2], and had significant interactions with the cultures along the Silk Road (Forêt/Kaplony 2004; Nebenzahl 2011), marking this area and its cities as emblematic for religious and cultural tolerance (Tucker 2015; Hoshmand 2019). The diffusion of Buddhism and Islam into areas such as Ḵorāsān, affirms the great influence of the Silk Road on the region surrounding its route (Rapoport 2008, 157; Liu 2010; 2011; Tucker 2015; Brack 2020, 217; Qurbani 2020, 51; Nebenzahl 2011). The works of Ferdowsi (940–1019/1025 CE) and those of other greats like Omar Ḵayyām (1048–1131 CE) and Avicenna (980–June 1037 CE) during this age not only demonstrate the links between the myth-narrative/scape and perceptive horizons of Iranian identity – in other words its cultural sustainability – but also the importance of its location on the Silk Road and subsequent exposure to a multi- and intercultural atmosphere. As such this area witnessed the peaks of polyphonic thought, literature and language as a result of the presence of various competing schools of thought and the rich exchange of ideas in Iran.

It was in this intercultural atmosphere that Biruni conducted a comparative study of the cultures and civilisations of his time; at the same time, this atmosphere fostered a return to the origins and resources of the Iranian identity, beginning with the regeneration and revival of Iranian culture through monumental works such as 'Šāhnāma' by Ferdowsi. These two approaches to recreating the Iranian identity converge in two places: One is the revival of the Iranian mythical heritage and the other is the promotion of understanding of Iranian culture and civilisation, which at the time was considered an unofficial and anti-structuralist culture[3] (nicknamed the 'Shu'ubiyya[4] movement') due to the anti-Iranian ideologies of the Umayyad (661–750 CE) and ʿAbbāsid (750–1258 CE) Arab dynasties. However, these two dynasties could not have created their own literary and intellectual masterpieces, were it not for the self-consciousness brought about by Ferdowsi and Biruni (and many other representatives of Iran's literature

2 Masha'i Philosophy (Peripatetic school): a school of philosophy in ancient Greece that has been incorporated into early Islamic philosophy and is one of the three branches of Islamic philosophy. Its key initiator was the Iranian scholar Avicenna (Mirsepassi 2019, 342).

3 This term is borrowed from Victor W. Turner (2011), as the Iranian culture was an anti-structural culture against the dominant ideology of Arab dynasties that ruled Iran and its political structure rested on Arabian-racist culture (Arab priority over 'Ajam', namely Iranians) and anti-Iranian culture as an official one.

4 'Shu'ubiyya' is known as an anti-Arab feeling among non-Arabs in early Muslim societies and countries occupied by the Arab dynasties. This movement rested upon a discursive clash with the Arab dynasties and enjoyed a sociopolitical aspect (Suleiman 2004, 77 f.).

and cultural knowledge in this period), who heavily impacted the Iranian identity, its historical narrative and its heritage of knowledge, along with its nascent exploration of anthropological thought. This is the perspective from which we should, for example, observe Omar Ḵayyām's thought and his critical poetry. In other words, the revival of Iranian myth-scape, as a key source of Iranian primordial identity, would not have been sustained without the new anthropological paradigm and the emergence of anthropological thought, parallel to literary works as masterpiece such as 'Šāhnāma'. To clarify this point, it should be clear that the revival of Iranian identity under the shadow of Arab military and political supremacy during this period needed anthropological thought both as a key form of heritage sciences and a key body of literature preserving the emotion and symbolism of the Iranian mythical narrative. The Persian/Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1909 CE) is the second turning point marking a new beginning in the study of anthropology in Iran. It also marks a return to the long-forgotten mythical perceptions (the ancient Iranian identity) and the rise of an intercultural and discursive atmosphere during the Constitutional Era. This atmosphere was oriented towards the emergence of dialogical and polyphonic genres such as novels, urban and critical folk poetry, the importance of folklore and folkloric aesthetics and realism, sending young people to study in Europe, the use of taboo subjects and words in press and literary works in public, the competition of informal language with formal language, translation of French, English and German books etc. During this period, in contrast to the officially sanctioned forms of culture, folkloric culture and the life of ordinary people came into the limelight. This period gave an unexpected rise to numerous literary and narrative forms such as novels and political-public poetry, which were new in Iran; with its polyphonic, multi-faceted/multilingual literature and culture and its emphasis on popular and folk-grotesque realism, this period could be described using a term borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin (1984 see also Tasker 2002), as the age of novelisation in Iran's culture. In this respect, the Iran of the Constitutional Revolution period bore strange similarities with 4th cent. AH/9th cent. CE Iran, after Islam, which has been called the era of the narrativisation of the Iranian culture. An important part of this polyphonic and multivocal, multicultural and multilingual dialogue was based on new engagement with literary sources of the 4th cent. AH (10th cent. CE). This is, for example, evident in the work of Sadegh Hedāyat (1974; J. Hedāyat 2019), who drew from Omar Ḵayyām's works: Ḵayyām's contemporary rebirth in the hermeneutic circle and the new, modern and insurgent interpretation of Hedāyat. Needless to say, the narrativisation of the Iranian culture rested on the one hand upon the cultural and anthropological comprehension of ancient sources of Iranian identity, such as rituals and myths (Hassanzadeh 2013), and on the other hand upon a nationalist epic literature, both actualised in the works of Biruni and Ferdowsi.

The 4th Century AH: The Age of Anthropological Discourse – Thought and Paradigm

There are several reasons to consider the 4th cent. AH as an age of anthropological discourse, thought and new paradigms in Iran. This period saw a revival of the Iranian mythscape and mythical perceptions used to redefine the Iranian identity in the wake of the identity crisis created by the Arabian dynasties' (ʿAbbāsid, Umayyad etc.) rise to power. The Arab racial ideology of power had cast a heavy shadow on Iranian culture and identity at this time: Iranians were seen as an inferior 'race' and their culture as a polluted and infidel culture. These mythscapes and mythical perceptions became visible in the epic narratives of Ferdowsi, but also became integral to the intercultural and anthropological views of great thinkers like Biruni in their efforts to understand Iranian mythology and longstanding traditions. There was a new sense of knowing the self through the self and knowing the self and self-discovery through knowing both near and distant 'others' (Iran's different cultural areas on one side, and Indian and other neighbouring and far-flung cultures on the other side). Given the immense power of narrative heritage and the mythscape of historical places, which naturally contains numerous sub-narratives itself (Chris 2004; Mozaffari 2014a; 2014b; Erskine-Loftus et al. 2016, 1) and of the ancient sources of

tradition to define identity (see for example Shils 1957; Geertz 1973; 1963; Hasanzadeh 2013; Moore 2015, 13), a return to the mythical perceptions and myths should be seen as a tangible strategy used by pioneers of the Iranian culture revival like Ferdowsi during the 4th cent. AH (10th cent. CE). As mentioned in the introduction, the phenomenon of the novelisation of Iranian culture during the Era of the Persian Constitutional Revolution can be likened to the narrativisation of Iranian culture during the 4th cent. AH: The narrative here is seen as the key and foundational source of identity. Owing to Ferdowsi's efforts, the creation of an epic work about the glorious history of Iranians activated the oral and cultural memory of this nation and compensated for a historical defeat: The cultural victory of Iranians over the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid rulers demonstrated that culture is the real, long-term conqueror and not political-military power. Nowadays, the works of Ferdowsi and Biruni are among the most referenced sources for understanding the ancient, foundational elements of Iranian culture and identity such as the festivals of *Nowruz, Mehregān, Tirgān* etc. (for instance, see Boloukbashi 2010; Mirshokrai 2017; Roholamini 2018). Biruni believed that cultural knowledge and its historical background (the cultural history of Iran) was the basis for understanding the key elements of the Iranians' identity such as the *Nowruz* festival and other traditions (Biruni 1910; 1923). Then again, this period also witnessed sceptical and materialistic viewpoints, expressed by intellectuals like Ḵayyām and Rhazes. Ḵayyām, in his efforts to restore and redefine the Iranian identity through the revival of mythical Iranian culture, published the 'Epistle of Nowruz' (Ḵayyām 2014); in the meantime, he preached a secular, worldly perspective, which did not rely on postponed rewards or the divine Paradise (Hedāyat 1974). Instead, it encouraged the pursuit of physical values and pleasures such as enjoying the moment and drinking wine. He thought that earthly life was in the control of human hands, while paradise is out of mortal hands. Therefore, humans should create paradise on earth, since death is eventually coming to him or her (Hedāyat 1974; Hassanzadeh 2002; Dashti 2011; J. Hedāyat 2019). Ḵayyām was strongly critical of those who denied the present time in the hope of future rewards (Hedāyat 1974; Hassanzadeh 2002). He believed that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, so he recommended drinking grape juice (wine) and favoured the pleasures within his reach over those greater but unseen pleasures of the afterlife (Dashti 2011; J. Hedāyat 2019): 'How sweet is mortal Sovereignty' – think some others – 'How blest the paradise to come' Ah, take the cash in hand and waive the rest; Oh, the brave music of a distant drum'[5] (Ḵayyām, cited by Coppĕ 1898, 464; Ḵayyām 2017). In the same manner as Ḵayyām, Rhazes, who was a well-established scientist and the man who discovered alcohol, was quite critical of the concept of the holy in his philosophical arguments (Fashahi 1975, 314; Akbarzadeh/Kazemi 2014; Hosseini Shahroudi/Rastin 2014). Interestingly, the city of Rey, where Rhazes lived, was influenced by the discourse of cultural diversity along the Silk Road: Even today, after many centuries, people of this area consider this trait as a key cultural feature and element of their background (Karimi/Hassanzadeh 2022). We should also mention Avicenna, a scholar of natural sciences and medicine in particular, who wrote about the body and the physical and terrestrial world. In this period, the Peripatetic philosophy not only symbolised reason and intellect but should also be considered an intercultural philosophy and school of thought, given the translation of Greek works and Aristotle's influence. In the late 4th cent. AH, Beyhaqi (970–1040 CE) introduced histography to the field of political history; however, unlike the representatives of the theocratic school of thought, he did not engage with sacred or Qur'anic history (Meskoub 2012; Beyhaqi 2020). Beyhaqi focused on the rise and fall of political dynasties, as opposed to the sacred narrative of the universe or the sacred accounts of hell and paradise. Therefore, a new perspective on narrative history and culture, greatly different from the religious interpretation of history, was introduced into society. The collective impact of the views taken by the abovementioned scholars led to the creation of a new anthropological paradigm, which went beyond the field of anthropology by presenting a terrestrial, experimental, social and cultural view of the world

5 Translated into English verse by Edward Fitzgerald.

around us. Similar to what was observed during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, in the 4th cent. AH anthropology emerged as a paradigm that expanded beyond a single field of study. The physical world and body were at the core of this paradigm, which was based upon objective consideration and rationality, rather than the occult and esoteric sciences. Paul A. Erickson and Liam Donat Murphy (2007) believe 'any thought discussion of the origin of anthropology must begin long before the formal emergence of the discipline in the late nineteenth century' (Erickson/Murphy 2007, 21 f.). As such, a genealogical approach to the discursive background of anthropology is necessary.

As Martin Pasgaard-Westerman shows (2018, 5), anthropology is not only a science but rather a type of key paradigm. This paradigm's focus is man: 'anthropological paradigm manifest in major parts of contemporary philosophy sets man as the main concept to which everything else be contemporary' (Pasgaard-Westerman 2018, 5). As will be discussed later, what he argues here (Pasgaard-Westerman 2018, 5 f.) corresponds to what this article seeks to demonstrate: that Iranian anthropology is a paradigm in which somatophobia, kinesiophobia, xenophobia and gynephobia are absent. Contrary to the dominant Iranian theocracy of the time, the Iranian anthropological paradigm displayed no fear of otherness, women, movement and motion, the human body, carnivalism and rituals of reversal. Rituals of reversal such as the rite of the straw man and the ridiculous clown (omar Košan) played important roles in the subversion of the official and dominant narrative (the Arabic-ideological narrative of ruling dynasties), which regarded the Iranian 'race' and culture as inferior (Hassanzadeh 2013). Also, in contrast to the paradigm that Ḡazzāli represents, the anthropological paradigm in the works of Biruni and Fārābi and the poetry of the great Iranian poet Ferdowsi pay respect to women. They were not affected by gynophobia, gynephobia or feminophobia (Manual et al. 2008, 510 f.) as a part of social and political orders (Douglas 2002, 68). In Ḡazzāli's paradigm and amongst his followers, punishment of women demonstrates a deep phobia on the part of the dominant system against any sign of bodily rebellion. Freud (1950, 143; 2000, 41–47, 70–75) attributed the young man's fear to the image of the father (the symbol of order and authority) that seems strongly related to physical emotions and its related erotic taboos in a society (Freud 1950, 143). As such, feminophobia includes fear of the body or a kind of somatophobia[6] that engages men in a kind of phobia (Raymond 1994). This phobia was a part of the ruling ideology and its policies for controlling of cultural expressions. There is no sign of any fear of the body in the works of Biruni, while in the paradigm that Ḡazzāli represents, body and bodily issues are considered a serious and problematic matter that threaten men's virtues, as will be discussed later in this article. Based on grounding myths, women's temptation put men at risk of failure by succumbing to satanic power. In opposition to Ḡazzāli, the powerful theocracy that left a strong impact on the following centuries and dominated the discourse in Iran, the anthropological paradigm does not show any fear of Iranian Pre-Islamic culture as a non-official culture, of women and the female body, anti-structural and liminal rituals, youth and physicality. Fārābi (870-950 CE), who is another significant philosopher of this time, did not advocate the priority of men over women (Hassanzadeh 2002; Bakhshi et al. 2018). Peripatetic mystical discourse, whose key representative was Avicenna, shows us an intermediated idea and image of women compared to Ḡazzāli and the theocracy. Contrary to Fārābi, Avicenna did not recognise or advocate any social role outside of the home for women, but he emphasised respect towards women and believed that without women, men were not able to acquire the high status of virtue. He assumed that housekeeping and housework were female responsibilities, along with managing the household as a kind of art, *tadbir-e manzel* (household management) (Bakhshi et al. 2018). He laid emphasis on men's behaviour and manners, saying they should be based on affection in relation to women (Bakhshi et al. 2018). Notably, during the period following Avicenna's demise, his followers (such as Khajeh Naṣir, one of the key followers of the Peripatetic mystical paradigm) did not follow his standpoints concerning women and found themselves in a context where Ḡazzāli and the

6 The term *soma* refers to the body.

theocracy dominated and distanced themselves from Avicenna's standpoint concerning women by promoting and depicting negative stereotypes of women (Rahimpour 2012; Bakhshi et al. 2018). As will be clarified in more detail later, one of the most important focal points in the clashes between the anthropological and theological paradigms was the status and role of women. In the theological paradigm of Ḡazzāli, women represented carnality, concupiscence, bodily desire and physicality, as opposed to spirituality. Ḡazzāli draws an analogy between the negative function of language and female genitals as the source of pollution in this world (Ḡazzāli 2014; Hassanzadeh 2002). Ferdowsi describes the high virtue of women such as Farānak and Gord-āfarid in his poems (Mazdapour 2003).

Philosopher Elizabeth Spelman coined the term somatophobia to denote the equating of women, children, animals and 'the natural' with one another, and with the 'despised body'. This key feature can be found in the analogies and metaphoric notions that Ḡazzāli produced. Spelman has also argued that somatophobia – a fear and hatred of the physical body and a valorisation of the mind or spirit as separate from the body – has animated much of traditional Western philosophy (Adams 1995a; 1995b). As Spelman recognised when she proposed the concept of somatophobia, one of the important reasons for feminists to recognise somatophobia is to see it within the context of women's oppression (Raymond 1994). In given contexts, as will be discussed below, somatophobia can be traced back to the oppression of Iranian culture by Arab rulers in terms of female symbolism, rituals of reversal and carnivalism, informal narratives, performances, poems and mysticism.

The Political Dynasties of the 4th Century AH

Even though the Buyid dynasty (934–1062 CE) had a central role in spreading Šiite (Ši'ite) traditions, such as the Moḥarram memorials in Baghdad, they still prioritised the Arabic language over Persian or other Iranian languages and over pre-Islamic rituals (Meskoub 2012; Boloukbashi 2010). This made them one of the first Šiite nationalist regimes in Iranian history. They did not represent pre-Islamic nationalism, but rather Šiite nationalism as it related to Iran as the land of the Šiite people. They opposed Arab racism but emphasised Šiite rituals, myths and Arabic language, rather than the Persian language and pre-Islamic myths and rituals. They emphasised Šiite Islam, without an equal emphasis on Iranian languages. Nonetheless, the role of the Buyid dynasty in spreading the Šiite/Iranian traditions cannot be denied (Meskoub 2012). Unlike the Safavids, the Buyid dynasty adopted a conciliatory approach toward Sunnis and their formulation of Shi'i nationalism was not accompanied by the suppression of other Islamic sects. While the Buyids were the founders of several Shi'i rituals and practices, they did not, unlike the Safavids, take a hostile stance toward pre-Islamic Iran. Indeed, they were initiators of a new ritualisation and ritual practices that are still alive today, but the fact remains that they were unconcerned with the Persian language as an inter-ethnic language and *lingua franca* in both Iran and the surrounding area. In fact, it was only after the Buyid dynasty that the Sāmānid (871–992 CE), Ṭāhirid (820–875 CE), Ṣaffarids (861–903 CE), Ḡaznavid (978–1174 CE) and Seljuk (1037–1194 CE) dynasties offered their outright support for the Persian language and focused their efforts on the revival of the Iranian culture and civilisation (Davaran 2010, 153; Meskoub 2012). These dynasties established schools and libraries, supported the Iranian scholars of their time and persuaded Persian poets to write in their native language, with their blessing and favour (Davaran 2010, 58, 87 154–158, 161–166). Ya'qub Layṯ Saffari (862–903), an Iranian patriotic ruler and founder of the Ṣaffārid dynasty, dared to challenge the caliphate. For this reason, he wanted the poets who eulogised him to compose his epithets in Farsi rather than Arabic and tried to revive Iranian ancient cultural elements and rituals such as *Sada* and *Nowruz* (Dabashi 2012, 112).

In various ways, the Sāmānids also played an important role in the scientific, literary and cultural development and revival of 4th cent. AH Iran. A return to the Iranian identity, the promoting of the Persian language and the creation of a bureaucratic system based on this language, the emphasis on education, sponsoring of scholars like Ḵayyām, trade with distant nations like China

Map of Central Asia crossed by the Silk Road.

Fig. 1. The geographical situation of central Asia in Silk Road interactions (Cazaux/Knowlton 2017, 335).

through the Silk Road, the promotion of peaceful coexistence with different religions and the establishment of schools were all part of this Sāmānid revival (Barisitz 2017, 78–83). The core ideal of the Sāmānid Empire was to restore the glory of the golden age of ancient and pre-Islamic Iran, since they considered themselves the true successors of the Sassanid dynasty (Meskoub 2018). The libraries of Boḵārā and Samarqand were refuges for the great thinkers of this period and it was only those thinkers supported by the dynasty who were allowed to access to them (Meskoub 2018). The rapid thriving of culture, civilisation, identity, art and literature during this period is attributed to the special features of these dynasties (their nationalism and openness to the Iranian and Persian culture, science and literature) as well as their active engagement in trade with nations from the Silk Road (Lawton 1991; Tucker 2015; Duturaeva 2022).

The Silk Road linked the Roman Empire with the Han and Tang Empires of China via the Persian Empire (Shafi 1988, 14). The map of the Silk Road (*fig. 1*) shows that the region of Ḵorāsān, particularly the cities such as Balḵ, which was part of the Sāmānid Empire, was one of the main hubs of the Silk Road. Despite the tumultuous events of this period, which can be observed in the biography of Biruni and resulted in the intense wars between the political dynasties of this time, cultural exchange played a huge role in Ḵorāsān's cultural growth and the formation of an intercultural understanding amongst the thinkers of this period. Ḵvārazm, the area where Biruni lived and worked, was one of the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic cities of the region that was considered safe for trade as a part of the Silk Road route (Ahmed 1996; Abbasi 2014, 13; Cazaux/Knowlton 2017, 335; Campbell 2000, 759).

Respect for scholars and scientists was a core principle for the Sāmānid, Ḡaznavid and Seljuk dynasties. For example, Al-Mughaddasi (940–999 CE) writes: 'It's a tradition that scholars are not required to bow down at the royal court. In addition, when a scholar passes away, the Sāmānid rulers attend his funeral and lead the prayers on his body' (Al-Muqaddasi 1994; 2017; see also Refai 2009; Davaran 2010; Starr 2015). This might explain why some of the most monumental works like Abu-Manṣuri 'Šāh-nāma', the 'Šāh-nāma' of Abu'l-Moʾayyad Balḵi (4th cent. AH), the 'Mysteries of The Lands' ('Ajāʾeb al-boldān'), 'Ḥodud al-'Ālam' (in the field of geography), the translation of Tafsir al-Ṭabari, the translation of Tāriḵ al-Ṭabari by Abu ʾAli Balʾami (ca. 920–974 CE) and the works of

Policies of the Buyid dynasty	Policies of the Sāmānids dynasty	Policies of the Ṭāhirid dynasty
Spreading the mourning rituals of the Karbalā (Moḥarram) catastrophe	Spreading pre-Islamic rituals	Spreading pre-Islamic rituals
Emphasis on Arabic language	Emphasis on Persian language	Emphasis on Persian language

Tab. 1. The Buyid dynasty. Šiite ritualisation and the new system of rites and policies, in comparison with the Samanid and Tahrid dynasties.

Biruni (362–440 AH) and Avicenna (370–428 AH) were all created under the Sāmānid Empire and the other dynasties mentioned above. In addition, numerous prominent scholars such as Rhazes (ca. 251–313 AH/865–925 CE), Abu Naṣr al-Fārābi (339 AH), Biruni, Avicenna and many great poets such as Ferdowsi (ca. 940–1020 CE) either emerged during this period or were later heavily influenced by its works (*tab. 1*).

Biruni: The First Pre-Modern Iranian (-Asian) Anthropologist and the Symbolic Value/Symbolism of Anthropological Paradigm

Reading the works of Biruni, particularly his three major books, 'The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries' (Biruni 1923), 'A Critical Study of What India Says', 'Whether Accepted by Reason or Refused' (Biruni 1910) and 'Kitāb al-Tafhim li-awa'il sinā'at al-tanyim' (Biruni 2009), the reader gains an education in Biruni's anthropological method, approach and discourse. Biruni had the chance to accompany the Sultan of the Ḡaznavid Empire, Maḥmud of Ḡazni (975–1026 CE) on his multiple campaigns to India (Nazim 1931). In his efforts to study Indian culture, Biruni learned the Sanskrit language (Malik 2016, 294), interviewed Indian key figures and informants and Indian clergymen (Boloukbashi 2016) and observed their culture at close quarters. Biruni conducted comparative studies of international cultures of his time. But Biruni's interests were not limited to foreign cultures (for example, Indian culture); his ethnographic reports on Iranian traditions and their historical background have provided us with invaluable sources of information. His acknowledgment of the varying interpretations of culture among different nations, his attention to the popular view of cultural elements and popular/folk cosmology, his interviews with cultural experts who were later recognised as key figures and informants and many other features of his work provide much insight into Biruni's anthropological perspective. Biruni spent a great deal of his time in India interviewing Indian clergymen and employing dialogue to deepen his understanding of Indian culture. He recounted different, multinational narratives of culture and cultural history from different national chronologies and various philosophies of time (Biruni 1923). As such, a kind of code of ethics can be found in his work that is empty of ethnocentrism and any need for the humiliation of others and otherness. He argued that science should not be at the service of politics and saw the reduction of science to a power tool and political weapon as wrong and immoral (Haji Babai 2010). This critical approach is traceable throughout all of his work.

Biruniān ethnography should be marked as a type of multi-narrative ethnography, as can be observed in his book about Indian culture (Biruni 1910). He does not present himself as an omniscient narrator; indeed, he allows the Indian cultural voices in his book to resonate (Haji Babai 2010). Biruni is considered a pre-modern or early anthropologist for solid methodological, epistemological and paradigmatic reasons. He applied long term ethnography in the case of India, raising his awareness about that culture in context through field work and ethnography. His ethnographical approach was intercultural and multi-vocal, evidenced by the voices from different nations and cultural groups in his work. He changed the epistemology of science through a combination of humanities and the empirical science of his time: scepticism as a path toward multi-vocal truth. Biruni gave priority to context and fieldwork as a source of knowledge concerning 'others', instead of texts, which is the opposite approach compared to certain other thinkers of his time. In Biruni's paradigm, the terrestrial and natural world is

placed at the core of science and is its central focus. What Biruni left as his scientific and research heritage was not a part of the accepted and legitimate science of his period (the official sciences of the time were theological and religious). As such, his work was not passed on to the next generation of Iranian scholars. Research did not have any place at the official schools, and anthropology, as a branch of social science, was dependent upon research. As the known Islamic schools, such as the Neẓāmiya school in Baghdad (founded in 1067 CE), were under theocratic dominance, the anthropological paradigm could not enter their curricula. Even many centuries later, anthropology and other social sciences had still not been added to the curricula of the school of Dār al-Fonun, founded in 1851 CE. Research was considered a kind of infidelity, since this kind of science was not a matter of faith but rather a matter of curiosity and inquiry (*fig. 2*).

The problem of this failure to transform the anthropological paradigm into an institutionalised form of science comes back to the closed construction and culture of schools of this period. Neẓāmiya Baghdad and its related institutions with the same name in Isfahan, Nišāpur etc. were

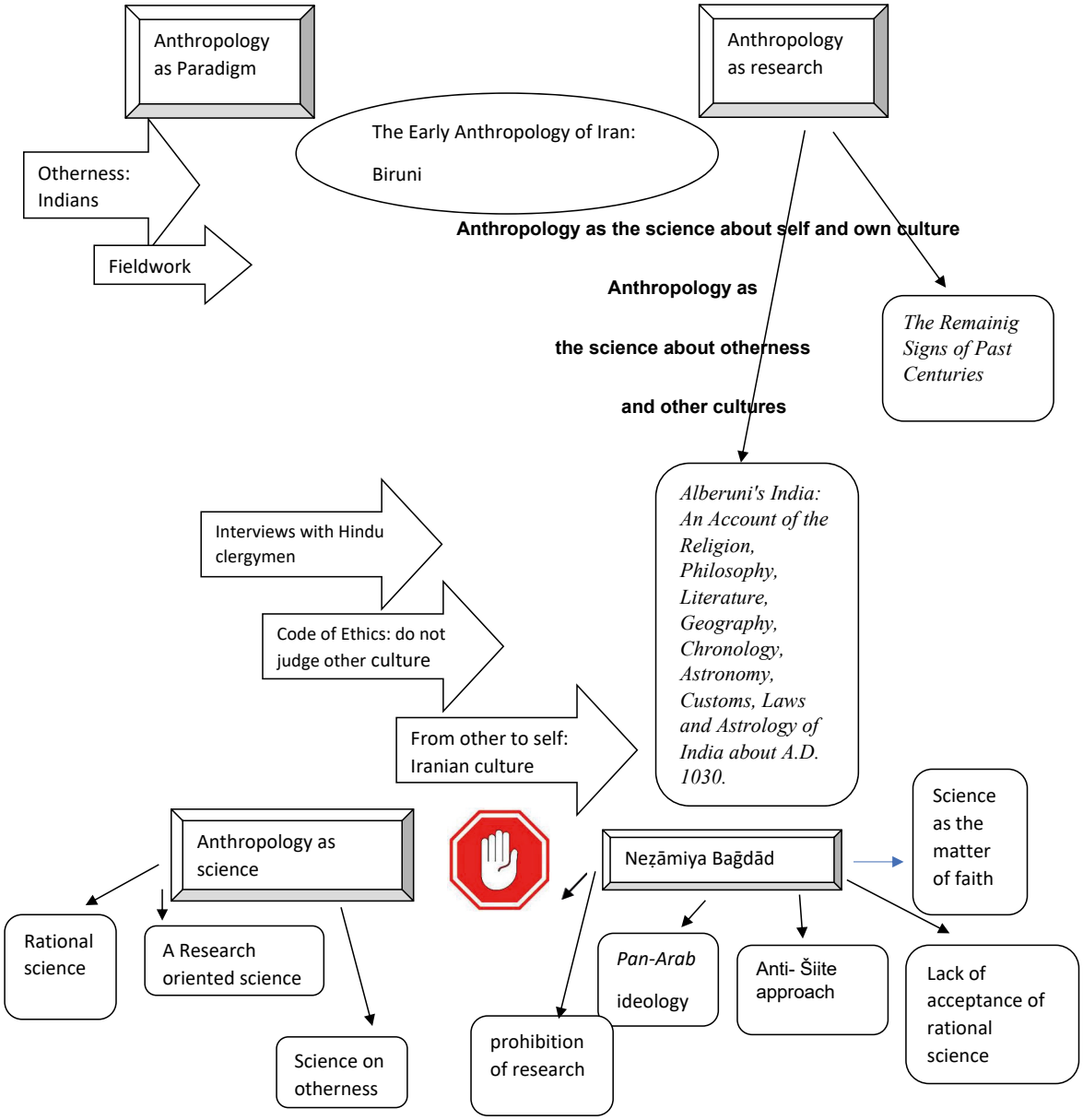

Fig. 2. Similarities and dissimilarities of the paradigms from 4th cent. AH Iran and the era of the Constitutional Revolution. Anthropology as a paradigm.

established as part of the conflict between an affiliation with the Šāfei sect (who were representatives of the school) and the affiliation with other sects of Islam such as Hanafi, Šiite, Ismaili and so forth. This school was the rival of Jami ʻal-Azhar in Cairo (Kasai 1995). Science was at the service of politics at this school, where ideological triumph over other religious groups or sects was a main focus and priority.

The founder of the school, Niẓām-al-Molk (ca. 1020–1092 CH), was intent on helping maintain the ʿAbbāsid dynasty in power. The lecturers and students of this school could only be Šāfei – this was a pre-requisite. The curriculum of this school consisted solely of studies devoted to different theological branches and religious sciences, such as *ḥadiṯ, tafsır, feqh,* and *Oṣul al-feqh*, *kalām* and so forth. Through propaganda, this school mobilised Šāfei against other Islamic sects (Kasai 1995). Rational and positive sciences such as math, philosophy and medicine were rejected by the directors of this school. Philosophical discussion was forbidden, indeed criminalised, and was punished by expulsion. Research was therefore meaningless at this school and its students really only encouraged to embrace their faith. It is plain that under such circumstances Biruni's scientific heritage, which was research-based and rationally oriented, did not enter into the curricula of these kinds of schools.

The Mystic/Theosophical Paradigm

It is fair to say that Šehāb-al-din Sohravardi (ca. 1154–1191 CE) was the most prominent symbol of this paradigm (Amin Razavi 1997; Al-Nur 1998; Dinani 2014; 2016). The attacks on Iran by the Oghuz Turks took place during his lifetime. Sohravardi and ʿAṭṭār of Nišāpur both lived in the same period and shared the same fate: Both were eventually killed by the Mongols (ʿAṭṭār) and religious orthodoxies (Sohravardi) and both had some very harsh experiences (Harvey 2001; Smith 2010; Losensky 2009; Shafii Kadkani 2013). In contrast to the Peripatetic philosophy, Sohravardi introduced reason and intuition as resources for understanding truth (Dinani 2014). Given the unofficial, liminal and anti-structuralist aspects of the Iranian culture (as opposed to the official and ideological culture of the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid dynasties), Sohravardi triggered a return to Iran's intellectual, mystical and theosophical heritage, and the traditional wisdom of the pre-Islamic period. With his support for the mystical view and theosophy, Sohravardi clashed with the *feqh* and theocracy of his time and defended the unofficial culture of Iranians against the official culture of the Arab dynasties. As stated above, the official Arabic culture was based on the supremacy of the Arabic 'race', language and rituals over the Iranian 'race', language and rituals, while the mystic/theosophical paradigm of Sohravardi rested upon egalitarian values and employed Iranian pre-Islamic thought and culture as a source of knowledge.

While scholars like Biruni focused their works on Iranian traditions and folk-ritual culture, Sohravardi engaged in mystical/theosophical studies of traditional Iranian wisdom, and revived it. In the same manner, it could be claimed that Ferdowsi revived the narrative heritage of Iran in terms of mythology, Biruni established the foundations of Iranian anthropology and Sohravardi breathed new life into the Iranian heritage of mystic philosophy and mysticism: *ḥekmate ḵosrovāni* (the ancient wisdom of old Mazdāyiān Iran). In this atmosphere, Sohravardi's clashes with the orthodox authorities of the time led to his tragically premature death (Amin Razavi 1997). Sohravardi admired his mystic predecessors like Abu Saʿid Abu'l-Ḵayr, Bāyazid Basṭāmi, Abu'l-Ḥasan Ḵaraqāni and Ḥallaj, who he believed were the revivers of the magnificent pre-Islamic Iranian mystic wisdom (Dinani 2014; 2016). *Feqh* and Šaria law, which had been turned into instruments of power by Ḡazzāli and his peers, existed before Sohravardi. Sohravardi proposed a dynamic definition and interpretation of *fiqh* and its laws, something that was considered an apostasy in the eyes of Ebn Šaddād, one of Ḡazzāli's disciples and Heirs (Amin Razavi 1997). The outcome of this clash was predictable; Sohravardi was labelled a symbol of Shu'ubiyya because of his attention to the pre-Islamic intellectual and mystic philosophical heritage of Iran. Egalitarian worldviews were one of the key features of theosophy, while Ḡazzāli's theocracy rested upon the supremacy of Arabs over Iranians.

If we consider Sohravardi to represent the non-ruling paradigms such as mysticism, theosophy, Iranian mystic philosophy and the unofficial Iranian culture, Ḡazzāli should be recognised as the theoretician of the ruling political system of his time (Moussa 2016). Ḡazzāli used *feqh* as the scale upon which all the key elements of the Iranian culture should be weighed, such as the festival of *Nowruz*, and in this way, he denounced them (Ḡazzāli 2014). He proclaimed unofficial rituals such as *Nowruz* should be forbidden. In the polyphonic approach of his mysticism, Sohravardi symbolised the converging point of Shiism, mysticism and the Iranian ancient culture in the same manner as other mystics like ʿAyn-alqożāt Hamadāni (1098-1140 CE) and Abu'l-Ḥasan Ḵaraqāni (ca. 960–1033 CE). He criticised the ruling political system of his time audaciously. Sohravardi's mysticism therefore had more in common with the anthropological paradigm of Biruni and the 4th cent. AH, as they were both close to Iranian culture and its unofficial, anti-structuralist nature.

ʿAṭṭār of Nišāpur, who lived during the same period as Sohravardi, was another symbol of mystical thought or theosophy. ʿAṭṭār (ca. 1145–1221 CE) was killed in 618 AH during the Mongol invasion (Baeten 2021, 5–7). ʿAṭṭār was the first theosophist poet to create mystic liminality (theosophical inversion) in his works. He employed symbols and metaphoric figures with the power to reverse dogmatic and ideological norms. He created the character of the eccentric sage Bohlul, and he admired diversity through unification: Without the help of diverse birds, large and small, the *Simorḡ* (a great mystic and mythic bird, the symbol of unification) cannot come into existence. This is the prototype of a kind of theosophical tolerance that gives priority to diversity and heteroglossia in Iranian culture. ʿAṭṭār harshly criticised dogma and dogmatic thought in his poems. In such works, ascendant mystic liminality served as a critical system of thought against the official and formal culture. ʿAṭṭār rejected the racial hierarchy which allowed the Arabs to dominate the Iranians, thus it is not surprising that he had Bohlul (mentioned above), who even did not have cloth to wear, mock a rich Arab caliph such as Harun al-Rashid in his stories (ʿAṭṭār Nišāpuri 2007). The clash and conflict with orthodoxies, the tyranny of the Arab dynasties and ʿAbbāsid and Umayyad despotism were some of the main reasons for the rise of the mystic orientation present in ʿAṭṭār's works, but his death discloses another important cause for the emergence of this theosophical paradigm rise: Under a harsh, theocratic and despotic rule which recognised none but the official culture, there was no room for the continuation of any anthropological paradigms, so mystic paradigms emerged to fill this void.

The mystic heritage of Sohravardi and ʿAṭṭār continued. This mystic heritage, quite like the anthropological paradigm, displayed no fear and phobia of otherness, dynamism or female symbols. In spite of a few expressions that failed to accord an equal value and dignity to women and men, most mystics did not discriminate against women. Indeed, in comparison to Ḡazzāli's theocratic and theosophical paradigms, theosophist poets such as Hafez (ca. 1325–1390 CE) and Rumi (ca. 1207–1273 CE) displayed no fear of physicality, women, the female body, liminality and extrastructural elements, unofficial cultures, pre-Islamic cultures and so forth. Hafez and Rumi applied a symbolic inversion of official cultural elements such as the *Zāhid* (ascetic), while simultaneously elevating and spiritualising the female body as the godly sign of the true (divine) beloved. They employed pre-Islamic symbols such as the *Moḡ Bače* (Zoroastrian child), the *Pire ḵarābāt* (the old sage of the tavern) and the *Rend* (rand, trickster) as high and elevated symbols (Hassanzadeh 2002; 2013). As such, an inter-textual and inter-ritual connection can be observed between the anthropological and theosophical paradigms.

Ḡazzāli: Denying Iranian Forms of Identity, Emphasising Female and Bodily Pollution; *Feqh* and Anti-Šiite Šaria at the Service of Politics

Almost one century after the peak of the 4th cent. AH (10th cent. CE) anthropological thought, which was represented by Biruni, Muḥammad Ḡazzāli (ca. 1058–December 19th 1111 CE) was introduced as the representative of theocracy, political and *feqh*-based theology and an anti-rational and anti-Šiite perspective. He is recognised as the

first and most important key figure of Iranian *monoglossia*[7] after Islam. Ḡazzāli represented a discourse that opposed 4th cent. anthropological thought, its paradigms and its discourses, in which the liminal, anthropological, mystic and celebratory aspects of the body were denied; he also denounced all liminal forms of Iranian culture and identity, on account of his Arab ideology linked to the ruling power structure. The traditions and literary manifestations of the Persian language and Iranian art were anti-structuralist and represented an unofficial culture, which had no links to the ruling power and its dominant and official ideology; for this reason, Ḡazzāli believed all of these traditions and manifestations of the Persian language to be impure and foul (Ghazzālī 2017). Arabic culture was given a formal-official character that determined what was permissible and impermissible, imposed as normative borders of individual and social behaviours and individuals' bodies in Iran. These norms, supported by Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid theologists such as Ḡazzāli dominated discourse on both the social and physical bodies. These views are also evident in Ḡazzāli's views on other topics such as the inferiority of women (Ghazzālī 2017, see also Hassanzadeh 2002). He was hostile to the mystical and illuminationist approach, which was founded on reason and intellect. Ḡazzāli regarded all subordinated elements of society such as women, Iranian culture and rituals and so on as part of the same threat, since his ideology strove to legitimise the aggression of Arab ruling powers against Iranian people in general and the opponents of those Arab rulers in particular. Ḡazzāli really had three roles or faces: an extremist theocratic ideologue, a confused man who left his position at a religious school and finally a man who came back to his teaching position at the end of his life but not in the capital at Baghdad, but rather at Neẓāmiya in Nišāpur. His first role is the most enduring and influential one, which gave shape to the dominant system of the ruling ideology during his time. Ḡazzāli founded the first normative mono-logical and mono-vocal discourse within the discourses and paradigms in Iran. On account of his racist beliefs and support of Arab supremacy, he was intensely anti-Šiite and anti-Iranian. His inclination towards the power structure of the time made him stand against all anti-structuralist elements, which for him included Šiite Islam, Iranian culture, folk traditions, informal rituals and women, (in his words: 'raw and inexperienced') children and youth (Ghazzālī 2017). In combination with the dominant autocratic power structure of the time, Ḡazzāli's influence resulted in the silencing of the nascent 4th cent. AH form of anthropology, and the discipline would not re-emerge until the Persian Constitutional Revolution, so this really was the end of this pre-modern anthropological paradigm.

Ḡazzāli was against the Persian language, women's identity, liminal concepts and all forms of anti-structuralist culture and identities; his views lived on years after his death and resulted in the killing of mystics like Sohravardi at the hands of Ḡazzāli's advocates like ibn Šaddād. Illuminationist mysticism, however, survived in the works of Rumi and Hafez; one can consider Henry Corbin, Seyyed Ḥussein Naṣr and Šāyegān as the last representatives of this mystical discourse (Nasr 1993; Corbin 1997; 1998; 2004; 2014; Hassanzadeh 2010). Ḡazzāli represented the power structure and in line with this discourse, he gave strong criticism of the mystical view from his religious perspective, focussing on the illuminationist mystic philosophers (theosophists) in his book 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers' (Ḡazzāli 1963). His reading of their practices resulted in the excommunication of Avicenna. His views were highly compatible with 'Power Belongs to the Victor' (Mernissi 2011) and therefore, he always sided with the political power. Even after his long silence, he came back to Neẓāmiya in Nišāpur and recommenced his extremist activities as a teacher. Knowing this, Ḡazzāli's clashes with Šiites and followers of Isma'ilism and Bātiniyya, who were all considered dissidents under the ʿAbbāsid dynasty, make perfect sense. He considered Persian speakers to be uneducated people with little understanding (Ghazzālī 2017). He was vocal against the celebration of *Nowruz* and other Iranian traditions. These Arab supremacist views directly reflected the racist ideologies of the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid

7 The term *monoglossia* refers to dominant forms of language and culture that represent the world view and norms of dominant social groups and their monophonic and ideological use of language and cultural expressions that are imposed to other groups in the society (Francis 2013, 98).

dynasties. Ḡazzāli spoke against Iranian culture to appease the ʿAbbāsid rulers and so did his followers such as Mughaddasi: 'Persian is the most disliked language to God; people of Khuzestan speak the language of devils and the people in hell speak the language of Boḵārā; but the language of people in paradise is Arabic' (Mughaddasi cited by Kavir 2017, 288).

A review of Ḡazzāli's theocracy shows its key differences from anthropological and philosophical paradigms: The monophonic paradigm used by Ḡazzāli was based on the fear and hate of several key elements such as women and female bodies, physical desire, pre-Islamic Iranian culture and its rituals and traditions, liminality, mysticism, Šiite Islam and other elements that were outside of the dominant power structure. Ḡazzāli reduced the dignity and status of women to the level of non-human animals, which he believed lacked the capacity for spiritual elevation and saw them as the slaves of men (Rahimpour 2012). He accused women of causing the fall of man from paradise, which also led to punishment of women through penalties such as menstruation, birth and parturition pain, separation from the father and mother at the time of marriage, less legacy from father, lack of ownership of body, monogamy (contrary to the right of men for polygamy) and so on (Rahimpour 2012).

He proposed similarities between specific animals and the tempers and spirits of women. As such, women are divided into nine animal forms: pigs (women who are greedy), dogs (vilification), monkeys (extroversion), horses (wildness), scorpions (provocation), mice (theft), pigeons (wandering), foxes (deception) and sheep (submission and obedience). He only affirmed the last type of women as the proper one: for him, the ideal woman was the 'sheep' type (Rahimpour 2012). He saw the power of women as confined to the creation of evil and evil actions. He believed that women offered men nothing but calamity (Rahimpour 2012). In his opinion, women needed to be restricted inside the home and forbidden to leave the home unaccompanied by their husbands. In order to avoid provoking and tempting men, they must wear old cloth and avoid dressing in white Čādor. Instead, they should wear their black Čādor with a veil in a way that doesn't reveal their face (Rahimpour 2012). Ḡazzāli's assimilation of women and non-human animals is reminiscent of the concept of somatophobia proposed by Elizabeth Spelman: extreme fear of physicality in a patriarchal society (Spelman 1990). Interestingly the footprint of his influence can still be seen in the contemporary era, in the animal symbolism of evil by Fardid (2008) and the guidelines for ruling (Safavi 1950), for example.

Ḡazzāli, who was the most important teacher of the Neẓāmiya Baghdad academy, was a clear obstacle to the existence and promotion of rational fields such as philosophy and anthropology. Neẓām-al-Molk, the president of this school, supported teachers like Ḡazzāli, and under these circumstances, anthropology had no chance to develop into an educational tradition, as part of an institute and the regular syllabus of schools. The theosophical paradigm continued under a heavy shadow of threat from extremists, similar to what Ḥāfeẓ and Rumi experienced.

The Return of the Anthropological Paradigm: The Constitutional Revolution Gives Birth to Iranian Anthropology

In the 4th cent. AH, literature and folk culture combined with each other as the key components of anthropological paradigms, effecting a temporal reversal of official and royal norms and culture. The political repression of the Safavid era gave rise to a carnivalesque culture in Iran, which found expression in the satirical and critical prose of figures such as Abu Ishaq At'ema, ʿObayd Zākāni and Jazāyeri. However, this period also witnessed a decline in the celebration of ancient festivals such as Mehregan and Sadeh. Based on Bakhtin's theory, ʿObayd Zākāni's position can be compared to that of Rabelais (Hassanzadeh 2013) in the French literature (Bakhtin 1984). He was considered an opponent to the official culture of the Ṣafavid dynasty, and to its representatives within the official propaganda machine, namely *Naqibān* (Hassanzadeh 2002; Mahjoub 2018). In his ironic stories, parodies and satires, ʿObayd Zākāni (1319–1370 CE) attacked figures with names ending in the suffix of *-Din* (religion), such as Šams-al-Din, Bahāʾ-al-Din etc. as the key symbols of hypocrisy and double-faced

persons (Hassanzadeh 2002). Harsh mockery of official symbolism through sexual inversion of that symbolism is another rhetorical and metaphorical approach common to both ʿObayd Zākāni and Rabelais (Hassanzadeh 2002). Inspired by folk stories among people, he denigrated beards (the key feature of religious men) and employed words and narratives that were extremely forbidden and taboo in the eyes of the official, ruling culture. Like François Rabelais, ʿObayd Zākāni created a critical response to the over-structuralisation of official and formal culture by the Ṣafavid dynasty. Prior to ʿObayd Zākāni, there were only liminal forms of rituals and literature that functioned as a soft criticism and safety-valve for such subversive discourse, but during the lifetime of this writer-poet, a new carnivalist, absurdist literature emerged in Iran. The degree of critical subversion that ʿObayd Zākāni produced was franker and harsher than that of ʿAṭṭār: ʿObayd (1999) created characters such as Joha to criticise the official symbols in a far more impolite and destructive way than the mad sage character created by ʿAṭṭār. ʿObayd Zākāni left a strong influence that was reflected in the succeeding criticism of official culture and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution is a concrete example of his influence.

The same approach can be seen in a different form during the Persian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1909). The subversive function of celebratory, carnivalesque forms, which aims to relegate traditional-religious elements to a secondary role and prioritise physical elements, can be seen during the Persian Constitutional Revolution, too. Iraj Mirzā (1874–1926 CE), Mirzādeh Ešqi (1889–1919 CE) and other writers like ʿAli Akbar Dehḵodā (1878–1955 CE) symbolised this approach (Meskoub 2018; Dehbashi 2008): From this perspective, then, anthropological thought in Iran was revived once more. A chain of traditions can be traced from ʿObayd Zākāni and Mirza Muhammad Ali Jazāyeri (1580–1640 CE) to this turning point. Firstly, Turān Āḡā (known as Faḵroldoleh, 1863–1930 CE), the daughter of the famous and powerful Qajar king Naṣer-al-din Šah (1247–1313 AH/1831–1896 CE), recorded and wrote down the folktales that the royal storyteller recounted for the king before sleep. She listened to the story behind the door in secret. This was the first female textualisation of Iranian folktales. Mirzā Ḥabib Qā'āni (1808–1853 CE), Yaḡmā Jandaqi (1780–1859 CE) and ʿAbdollaṭif Ṭasuji (born:1223–1270 AH/1808–1853 CE, death:?) as Qajari authors were the keepers of this tradition of the Ṣafavid dynasty, as a kind of royal tradition in Qajar era. This tradition can be traced to Mirzā Ḥabib Laškarnevis and Reża Ḥakim Ḵorāsāni. It seems that these kinds of compilations of literature and folklore lacked any exposure in the public sphere and only occurred within the royal courts. This appears identical to the rituals of reversal that were only held inside the court such as the performances of Karim Širei (see Nourbakhsh 1979) as a royal jester (as opposed to a public one).

In contrast to the situation described above, the period of the Constitutional Revolution was also a time of extensive public discourse in various public spaces and spheres. The key audience of such works and discourse were lay people, rather than royalty and nobility. Printing press technology and the discourse on open plazas produced a kind of public sphere where these kinds of folk and public narratives circulated among different classes of Iranian people. As such, anthropology first re-emerged as a kind of paradigm shift that elevated the status of the common people and their culture on different political, literary, artistic, social and cultural scales. The Persian Constitutional Revolution led to the supremacy of folk, unofficial culture over political power and royal, official culture: This was the time of the non-official cultural voice. This paradigm shift should be recognised as the moment of the anthropological paradigm's re-emergence.

The anthropological paradigm did not lead to the establishment of anthropology as a science and scholarly discipline in Iran during the time of Biruni, but rather simply remained as a paradigm. However, at this next turning point, the Iranian Constitutional Revolution proved the departure point for modernity in Iran, leading to the development of the anthropological paradigm into a recognisable anthropological science throughout the country's schools and universities. This new rebirth of anthropology in Iran then is an offspring of the Persian Constitutional Revolution.

It first appeared as a discourse during this period. The Constitutional Revolution, for the first

time in the history of Iran, restricted political power to obey the public will. But this political reality had powerful social, civic and discursive aspects to it as well. Attentions shifted to the public space and folkloric aesthetics gained cultural currency and were newly valued. Folk culture appeared as a leading source of critical thought against dominant, royal, official and formal powers: a phenomenon for research and at the same time, producing critical discourse, literary and artistic works. Iranian de-mythification and de-mystification played a similar role to the revival celebratory folk culture as part of the public culture of the Iranian people. As an example: Iraj Mirzā, who was inspired by ʿObayd, frankly mocked holy traditions and recounted his stories through poems that employed sexual terms and metaphors as a kind of carnivalesque symbolic reversal and inversion of religious themes (Iraj Mirza 2014; 2018 see Katouzian 2013). In this way, figures such as Jamālzādeh (1892–1997 CE), Dehḵodā (1879–1956 CE), ʿAbdollāh Mostowfi (1876–1950 CE) and Hedāyat (1903–1951 CE) were simultaneously intellectual authors (novelists) and researchers of popular culture and folklore (ethnographer/anthropologist).

The emergence of folkloric and informal language in the works of poets like Iraj Mirzā (see Dehbashi 2008) and Mirzādeh Ešqi (see Meskoub 2018), and in newspapers like Seyed Ašrafedin Ḥosseini Gilāni (1870–1934 CE) and Afṣahol Motakalemin (see Cheraghi 2018), as well as the creation of stories like 'Čarand-o-Parand' (bullshit jokes) by Dehḵodā and modern works that depicts ordinary life like the novels 'The Travelogue of Ebrahim Beg' (Seyyed Zeyn al-'Abedin Maraghe'i), 'The Paths of the Benefactors' (Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh), 'The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isfahan' (translated by Mirza Habib Isfahani; originally by James Morier), 'The Chief Gunner' (Zeyn al-'Abedin Tabrizi, known as Talibov Tabrizi) and 'The Scary Tehran' ('Tehran-e-Maḵuf'; see Meskoub 2018), a return to the Iranian mythological figures and ultimately, the popularity of novels with folkloric language like 'Yeki bud-Yeki Nabud' ('Once Upon a Time') by Jamālzādeh (1954) was an outcome of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. The emergence of novels in Iran was a reminder of a new phenomenon, called novelisation in the literary theories of Bakhtin. The term novelisation holds the same idea meant by Bakhtin (see Tasker 2002, 30) whether it relates to the polyphonic culture in the public sphere or the novelisation of traditional and modern narratives in folkloric language and polyphonic forms, both of which express criticism of formal and monophonic cultures.

To a large extent, this turning point changed the strict horizon of Iranian *monoglossia* into an open field of Iranian *heteroglossia*, at least in terms of socio-political and cultural scales for the first time. Both sides of this can be seen in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution: the creation of a newly polyphonic culture, unofficial culture coming to the limelight, the formation of modern literature forms such as the modern novel and the re-emergence of traditional forms of literature like poetry in new, polyphonic forms. On the other hand, the era of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran, like the 4th cent. AH, moved towards the rebirth and recreation of the Iranian identity and engaged in interactions with outsiders. Whereas before it had been interactions with the cultures of the Silk Road, now it was with Europeans. People became familiar with a new modern dimension of life in the form of cinema, novels, theatre, radio, newspaper, new sciences and so forth. This discourse made it possible for scholars like ʿAbdollāh Mostowfi, the author of 'A Description of My Life' ('Šarh-e-Zendegāniy-e-Man'; Mostowfi 2007) to emerge; these authors produced quasi-ethnographic literary works, through which readers could learn about the customs and traditions of the Iranians in the Qajar dynasty.

Other writers like Dehḵodā and Hedāyat made a grand entrance into the study of the folk culture and anthropology of Iranians. Dehḵodā collected folkloric sayings and proverbs (Dehḵodā 2015; 2020) and, inspired by the Constitutional Revolution movement, Hedāyat expounded on the methodology of folkloric studies. This shows how anthropological studies of Iranian folk cultures had their roots outside the universities and research centres, within the framework of open intellectual discourses and works. In other words, pre-modern anthropological thought and the paradigm initiated by Biruni emerged once more. In the works of intellectuals such as Sadegh Hedāyat, writing around the time of the revolution, we find

both Iranian intellectualism and the notion of anthropology as a science imported from European countries. In the discourse of the Constitutional Revolution, the Persian language and its rebirth became of paramount importance, just as in the 4th cent. AH. Around this time, Kasravi argued (1978) about a proposed purification of the Persian language, to abolish non-Iranian words: This was important because the Persian language was tied to ancient mythological aspects of Iranian culture.

Ultimately, the first museum of Iranian anthropology was founded in 1936 (1315 AH), owing to the efforts of Pahlavi I (Reżā Pahlavi) who is credited with founding Iranian modernity and initiating a return to the pre-Islamic golden age. This Museum of Anthropology had special departments for research, and therefore, it facilitated the first anthropological studies in Iran. History, however, pulled yet another trick on the intellectual sphere in Iran. Al-Ghazālī's legacy – as a discourse of orthodoxy, monologism and resistance to *heteroglossia* – reappeared in two distinct forms following the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, particularly during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi. One manifestation was a combative and monologic religiosity, best exemplified by figures such as Navvab Safavi (1924–1956 CE). The other was an equally confrontational and non-dialogical mode of intellectual modernism, represented by Ahmad Kasravi (1890–1946 CE). Both of these stood in sharp contrast to the dialogical and enlightenment-oriented approach advanced by Moḥammad ʿAli Foruġi (1877–1942 CE) and the then head of the Qom Seminary, Ayatollah Boroujerdi (1875–1961 CE). This monophonic interpretation of modernity instigated monophonic orthodoxies that stigmatised the former, liberal group of thinkers mentioned above as heretics. Kasravi continuously disparaged the newly revived mystical and liminal paradigms and discourses, along with poetry and other non-conformist traditions. He burned books like 'The Divān', written by Ḥāfez and Mafātiḥ al-Jinān (Ridgeon 2006; Hassanzadeh 2013). He saw Persian and mystical poetry as symbols of the decline of language and culture, and preferred prose, claiming that it was empty of liminal, mystical and emotional concepts. One of his pupils, ʿAli Akbar Ḥakamizādeh (1897–1987 CE) wrote the book 'One Thousand-Year-Old Secrets', in which he criticised Šiite Islam and the culture of pilgrimage, among other things (Boroujerdi 1996; Hassanzadeh 2013). Setting forth a new style of life meant facing down the sensitivities of traditionally-minded groups who recommended another form of life in the book 'Guideline of the Truth', according to which, for example, women are not allowed outside the home (Safavi 1950). Ironically, this harsh approach introduced itself as the most significant representative of intellect and reason (Ridgeon 2006; Hassanzadeh 2013), pure Persian prose, modernity and anti-religious superstitions (Kasravi 1978). However, it too faced strong religious opposition, which resulted in the killing of Aḥmad Kasravi in a courtroom. Kasravi can be viewed as the symbol of a normative mono-voiced approach (*monoglossia*) in modern Iran (Ridgeon 2006; Hassanzadeh 2013), since he shared the same stance as Ḡazzāli, opposing the mystical paradigm and thought, criticising Šiite Islam and displaying disdain for all liminal forms, including rituals, poetries, mysticism and celebratory traditions. It is obvious that from this standpoint, Kasravi was really the first Pahlavi ideologue and had separated himself from his role as a proponent of modernity (Hassanzadeh 2013). He left behind any semblance of scholarship to become an ideologue in his last part of life. He denied the two paradigms of theosophy (mysticism) and theology, even while the representatives of theocracy heavily criticised him. In opposition to Kasravi's discourse – namely, a confrontational form of Enlightenment thinking – another version of monoglossia emerged: a militant religious discourse that vehemently rejected modernity, reform, Westernisation and the revival of pre-Islamic Iranian heritage during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi. If Ahmad Kasravi can be regarded as a symbol of monoglossia among proponents of modernity, on the other side, Navvab Safavi and his followers – deeply influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood – represent the earliest form of religious monoglossia and the fusion of religion and politics in modern Iran. They forged a link between Shiʻism and revolutionary activism, resorted to political assassinations such as that of Prime Minister Hassan-Ali Mansur and Ahmad Kasravi and entered into conflict with the traditional, non-political Shiʻi clergy. They also opposed the presence and freedom of women in public life.

With modernisation being incorporated into the social structure, religious and traditional discourses emerged and resulted in a traditional normative monophony (religious *monoglossia*). The killing of Kasravi can be interpreted as a by-product of the confrontation of these two competing forces: two leading forms of *monoglossia* that remained long after his death. This view, which denied tradition and proposed a radical interpretation of Iranian identity, culture and religion, lived on in the works of others (Hassanzadeh 2013). Modernisation became an official ideology and discourse within the government for the first time during the Pahlavi era. It seems that the radical interpretation of modernisation appearing in the works and activities of Kasravi led to an unwanted result: the radical interpretation of religion and tradition. This situation brought about a harsh and severe confrontation of these two groups that left a strong mark on Iran's history.

During the first and second Pahlavi reigns, the nationalistic approach to pre-Islamic and ancient Iran gained some official approval as the discursive system belonging to the dynasty that had come to power. This discursive change in the political system led to new policies, such as new systems of ritualisation and ritual policies, the institutionalisation of Iranian studies, and new attention paid to heritage disciplines such as the study of ancient Iran languages and cultures, archaeology and anthropology, revival of traditional mythscapes and the symbolic usage of public spaces and spheres. The 2500th commemoration ceremony of the Iranian kingdom, which took place during October 1971; the Art Ceremony of Širāz; the birthday of the king and crown prince; the White Revolution and the Ceremony of Women's Freedom are just some examples of the new ritualisation policies that came into place after the commencement of the Pahlavi dynasty. In these events' programmes, anthropology aided the new cultural policies: for example, by providing knowledge of traditional costumes and dress, as Jalil Żiyāpour (Ziyapour 1967; see also Hassanzadeh 2013) and Satāri did, to complete the spectacle (Hassanzadeh/Amiri 2008). Portable exhibitions were another example of the role of anthropology in these new policies of nation building through image building. The establishment of the Museum of Ancient Iran (1935–1937) and the country's first ethnological museum were part of a policy of modern institutionalisation and the retrospective invention of traditions. The Ethnological Museum, founded in 1936, boasted an ethnological research department. Plazas, squares and streets found more expression and importance as spaces of public and discursive rituals. During the second Pahlavi reign (Moḥammad Reżā Pahlavi), the ancient Iran Golden Age faced opposite discourses stemming from a new generation of Iranian intellectuals (Hassanzadeh 2010). The most important of these was an Islamic Golden Age discourse that later came to maturity in the works of ʿAli Šariyʿati (Byrd/Miri 2017; Miri 2021). M. Bahār founded the theory of pre-Aryan mythology, which opposed the Aryan mythology of Ibrāhim Pourdāvood (Hassanzadeh/Amiri 2008; 2014). Ale Aḥmad and Sāedi produced some quasi-Marxist and leftist ethnographic works that emphasised the spread of poverty and lack of justice, and the literal and social distance between marginalised and central regions/groups in Iran, viewing these problems from critical standpoints (Saedi 1966; Ale Ahmad 2019). They discussed the monstrous birth of machine-dependent societies (Western technology), which led to the pollution of rural-traditional cultures, as well as metamorphosis and the metaphorical disfiguration of the human shape into animal shapes: metamorphosis as a kind of somatophobia (Hassanzadeh 2019, 105–109). Later, a revolutionary discourse came into being through the works of the leftist thinker aṢamad Behrangi (Hassanzadeh 2013; 2023), who theorised the revolutionary rite of passage, and in the works of the Islamist intellectual ʿAli Šariyʿati, who was involved in a new definition of rituals and a ritualisation system (Hassanzadeh 2013; Miri 2021). On the other hand, one of the most significant changes in the dynamics of discourses surrounding Iranian identity during the second Pahlavi era was the emergence of the earliest form of political theosophy. Figures such as Ali Shariati (1923–1977 CE), Seyyed Hossein Nasr (born 1933 CE), Dariush Shayegan (1935–2020 CE), Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1924–1969 CE) and Ahmad Fardid (1910–1994 CE) played a central role in this shift. These intellectuals reinterpreted mystical concepts from the theosophical paradigm – such as the ontological notion of the

West (Sohravardi) and the theory of substantial motion – in explicitly political and revolutionary terms (Mulla Sadra). In its evolution, this discourse was eventually transformed into the discursive foundation of the Islamic Revolution, particularly in the thought of Fardid and Shariati, (Hassanzadeh 2010). These groups of intellectuals feared that modernisation might serve as justification for supremacy and prevalence of the body over the spirit. For this reason, this produced an image of a 'twilight' of spirituality across a vast network of thinkers and scholars that paved the way for subsequent political and social events.

A comparison drawn between the 4th cent. AH, when anthropology was not allowed to enter in the Neẓāmiya school, and 1936 CE, when Iran's first ethnological museum and research centre was established, indicates how the emergence of Western schools since the Constitutional Revolution facilitated the foundation of Iran's first anthropological centre. While traditional schools denied the status of research in the 4th cent. AH, in the mid-20th cent. CE a new system of research-oriented education could be imported from Europe into Iran.

The institutionalisation of anthropology occurred during the first and second Pahlavi reigns, through the establishment of museums, research centres and universities, and thus the founding of intellectual anthropology can be said to belong to the Constitutional Revolution period, while the Pahlavi era included the institutionalisation of anthropology in the dual setting of research centres and universities, where it was treated as a science. Later, in the Islamic Republic of Iran (that can be considered a third era, from 1979 to the present), Iranian anthropology turns into a form of internal anthropology, influenced by the state policy of Islamicising the social sciences and all post-colonial approaches. In spite of these key features of this field of science, Boloukbāši elucidates (Boloukbashi 2016) that Iranian anthropology has tried its best to remain independent and non-political or authoritarian from its beginning in 1936 to now, mainly through the will of Iranian anthropologists and their critical approaches and use of free agency. In summary, Iranian anthropology has played two evident discursive roles over the course of its history: nationalist, and critical-intellectual. Intellectual anthropologists usually consisted of a group of writers who were interested in recording and analysing cultural phenomena such as rituals and traditions. Some of them had a paradoxical approach to the culture of people: They admired certain ancient myths and rituals that were still alive in their time, but condemned others as the products of superstition. The best example is Hedāyat (1963), who criticised Arabian-rooted rituals and beliefs but admired pre-Islamic culture.

Conclusion

This article seeks to scrutinise the evolution of anthropology in Iran from the 4th cent. AH (10th cent. CE) until the end of the Qājār dynasty. Here, I have tried to gain insights into why Biruni's scientific tradition of anthropology halted and remained dormant for centuries. Three main discourses and paradigms in the pre-modern period (before the Constitutional Revolution) of Iran have been discussed: anthropological, mystic and theocratic paradigms.[8] It is also possible to pinpoint the emergence of these paradigms in the post-Islamisation era of Iran, namely the 4th cent. AH, which marks the rebirth of Iranian culture and civilisation. The rise to power of political dynasties supportive of Iranian culture and civilisation, such as the Ṣaffārids, Sāmānids, Ḡaznavids and the Seljuks, along with tireless efforts of certain scholars to revive Iranian culture and civilisation through science, literature and philosophy, as well as the opportunities for intercultural interaction with the Silk Road cultures and the translation of Greek texts were among the main factors that led to the creation of these paradigms.

Iran was a bridge between the Western and Eastern civilisations of the world, against a background with two paradoxical features: war on the political level and tolerance on the cultural level, cultivated through contact with different nations. In 4th cent. AH Iran, Biruni symbolised anthropological thought and was its leading figure. His

8 The Sadrai paradigm could be seen as the fourth paradigm, but has not left such a strong discursive influence on Iranian history and culture as the aforementioned three paradigms.

anthropological thought encompassed an intercultural and comparative understanding of Iranian culture and civilisation in comparison with other cultures such as the Indian culture. In addition, it led to a greater Iranian sense of self-consciousness, based on Iran's cultural and narrative heritage as represented in literary works. This period featured narrative treatment as a key and dynamic source of identity redefinition. These major schools of the 4th cent. AH thought opposed the discourse represented by Ḡazzāli, whose thinking was anti-Iranian, anti-Šiite, anti-liminality, anti-rationality, anti-women, misogynist and anti-mystical, and lay firmly within the framework of the ideology founded on a specific form of theology and the *feqh*, which was an instrument of the ruling powers of the time (Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid dynasties).

This anti-Šiite approach condemned representatives of other paradigms such as Avicennā, Rhazes, Sohravardi and others. The mystical paradigm (i. e. theosophy) reached its peak in the work of Sohravardi; this paradigm posited itself in opposition to the instrumentalisation of theology at the hands of the ruling power or politicisation as defined by Ḡazzāli. Sohravardi contrasted the salvatory and liberating power of mysticism and anti-structuralism with the representatives and symbols of power. Both anthropological and theosophical paradigms served to strengthen anti-structural thinking, combined with the credibility and power of Iranian culture against the theology of Ḡazzāli as an ideologue serving the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid dynasties (as a key proponent of Arab racism). Given the recurring theme of catastrophes like droughts, earthquakes and war, it seems the redefinition of the Iranian identity as a liminal and post-catastrophic identity continued with the mystical paradigm and its symbolism, focussed on the ritual narrative of rebirth through martyrdom. Both the theosophical (Iranian mysticism) and anthropological paradigms represent a polyphonic discourse that rests upon a strong connection between pre- and post-Islamic Iran.

In opposition to this anti-structuralist discourse and mystical paradigm, a structuralist approach was formed with the intention of supporting the dominant Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid regimes, led by Ḡazzāli and his theology as a structuralist and anti-Šiite, and this approach lasted for centuries. This orthodox paradigm opposed mystical paradigms and scientific reasoning (including the anthropological paradigm) and was inherently anti-Iranian and anti-Šiite. The clash of these opposing paradigms (peripateticism signifying mystical anthropological thinking and illuminationism versus theocracy, extreme bias and structuralism) led to the condemnation of the mystical paradigm and all its associated elements. As a result of Ḡazzāli's theocratic paradigm and its dominance in Iran's history until the Constitutional Revolution, the anthropological paradigms, which relied on intellectual freedom and the revival of Iranian culture remained dormant for centuries. This long period can be referred to as the period of anthropological silence. In other words, while we are able to mention the existence of Biruni's attempts in early anthropology and ethnography during the 4th cent. AH, which enjoyed an empirical approach to science of culture, the dominance of Ḡazzāli's work and the resulting paradigm became a huge obstacle for the continuation of Biruni's anthropological paradigm, his methods, epistemology and discourse.

On this basis, Iran's anthropology lost all ties with its traditions and pre-modern history as preserved in the works of scholars like Biruni. Owing to Ḡazzāli's paradigm and its political influence, Biruni's anthropological paradigm did not lead to the establishment of anthropology as a science. The traditional schools, whose discursive foundations were represented by al-Ghazzālī, did not allow for the teaching of the Bīrūnian anthropological approach – an empirical and positivist method exemplified by Biruni. Consequently, within the dominant scientific paradigm of the time, such a method could not be institutionalised or formally embedded within academic structures. In reaction to the ideology of the Ṣafavid period, there was a new diversification of literature aimed at criticising the ideology of power in the works of ʿObayd Zākāni, Abu Ishaq At'ema and Jazāyeri. Given its distinctive discourse and paradigm, the Safavid period marks the emergence of a carnivalesque paradigm, in the Bakhtinian sense, which subsequently continues through both the Constitutional Revolution and the Islamic Revolution eras. This diversification came to maturity and peaked during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. The era

of the Constitutional Revolution was marked by the emergence of anthropological discourse, including a new emphasis on celebratory culture, an increased importance of the public sphere, liminal cultures and liberal thought.

The Constitutional Revolution was a period of polyphonic culture associated with the new discourses of culture, and with anthropological paradigms and thinking. The anthropological paradigm that emerged during this period is best described as paradigmatic and intellectual anthropology. During this period Iranians once again enjoyed close contact with various 'others' (and otherness), and Iranian intellectuals became familiar with Western anthropology and folklore. The discursive context of Iranian paradigmatic and intellectual anthropology led to emergence of anthropology and folklore as a recognised discipline or science, in collaboration with Western universities and integrating certain Western scientific movements. Later on, the scientific study of anthropology initially gained wider recognition through the work of intellectuals like Dehḵodā, Jamālzādeh, ʿAbdollāh Mostowfi and Hedāyat, who published in media such as newspapers and books. Eventually, the discipline was further established by the founding of the first ethnological museum and its research department under the first Pahlavi reign by Reżā Šāh (16 September 1941–11 February 1979 CE) in 1936 CE. William S. Haas (German anthropologist, 1883–1956), Ḡolām Reżā Rašid Yāsemi (1896–1941) and Moḥammad ʿAli Foruḡi (1875–1942) played the most important roles in the new institutionalisation of anthropology as a science in Iran. At the time of the Constitutional Revolution, the University of Tehran had not yet been established, so research centres had overtaken the scientific and educational departments of universities. This period, which embraced the first movements of modernisation in Iran, led to the emergence of monophonic and radical interpretations of modernity that denied all forms of tradition as a source of archaism and backwardness. Kasravi, Ḥakamizādeh and others harshly attacked religious world views and values and this in turn instigated the anger and harsh criticism of representatives from the religious and traditional establishment such as Navāb Ṣafavi (1924–1956). This kind of clash was to remain constant over the following decades.

Alireza Hassanzadeh
Associate Professor/Anthropological Research Centre
Anthropological Research Center/Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute, Iran, Tehran
a.hasanzadeh@richt.ir

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RESSOURCENKULTUREN 34

RESOURCES, NETWORKS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN SOUTHEASTERN IRAN

Trade and socio-political exchange have been a characteristic feature of the Iranian regions of Kermān, Hormozgān, Sistān and Baloučestān, and southern Ḵorāsān for more than 5000 years. From the Chalcolithic up to modern times, the country's southeast maintained its vital economic and political importance, linking Central Asia to the Persian Gulf and beyond.

One resource in particular stands out: stones and stone artefacts. The mining, processing and trading of stones such as calcite, diorite and – more recently – chromite can be traced back to its beginnings and is up to this day an important trading commodity despite all interruptions and setbacks. Trade and transregional trade networks have been crucial to the entire area. They constituted the base of the rise and fall of settlements, promoted the exchange of people and ideas and initiated a rich cultural diversity by a constant flow of transformations.

The contributions of this book are predominantly based on archaeological and anthropological research in southeastern Iran. In addition, historical and linguistic investigations provide insights into the adjacent areas of the Persian Gulf and their connections to eastern Africa. They all outline a lively picture of a hitherto largely neglected region with its millennia-old history.

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