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# Between Highlands and Lowlands. The Ram Hormuz Plain in the Neo-Elamite and Early Achaemenid Periods, and Comments on Five Burials from the Fort Mound at Tal-i Ghazir

***Abstract***

*The plain of Ram Hormuz was a strategically important area of southwest Iran connecting the Susiana lowlands with the Zagros highlands, and undoubtedly a critical zone of Elamite and Iranian interaction in the centuries leading up to the emergence of the Persian Empire. Its archaeological remains must therefore be regarded as a vital key to our comprehension of the processes of acculturation that gave rise to the Elamo-Persian culture of the early Achaemenid period. While the plain has been extensively surveyed, its only excavated site remains Tal-i Ghazir where just two seasons of excavation were conducted in 1948/49 by Donald E. McCown under the auspices of the Oriental Institute. McCown worked in three separate mounds—Mounds A and B, and the so-called Fort Mound—but he never published his results. Almost half a century later, Elizabeth Carter (1994) published a series of burials in the Fort Mound from his field notes, and another two decades later, Abbas Alizadeh (2014) published the complete records of the Tal-i Ghazir excavations. The purpose of this paper is to outline the evidence for the Neo-Elamite (ca. 1000-525 BCE) and Achaemenid periods (ca. 525-330 BCE) collected during the surveys across the Ram Hormuz plain and the excavations at Tal-i Ghazir, with special attention to the burials in the Fort Mound.*

***Keywords***

*Iran, Ram Hormuz, Tal-i Ghazir, Fort Mound, Elam, Neo-Elamite, Achaemenid, burials, pottery, Oriental Institute archives.*

# The Ram Hormuz Plain in the Neo-Elamite and Achaemenid Periods

For at least seven millennia the Ram Hormuz plain has played an important role in the history of southwest Iran, offering its inhabitants a large alluvial fan of the 'Ala river supporting agricultural production, local sources of alabaster,[1] gypsum and bitumen,[2] and a central position along natural paths connecting the lowlands of Susiana in the west, the highlands of Fars in the east, and the Persian Gulf in the south (Wright and Carter 2003: 62) (Fig. 1). Surveys conducted by Donald E. McCown in 1947-48, Henry T. Wright and Elizabeth Carter in 1969, and Abbas Alizadeh in 2005-2009[3] have shown that the plain became a thriving settlement zone from the early second millennium BCE (Wright and Carter 2003: 61; Alizadeh 2014: 239-240), reflecting its strategic position communicating between Elam's lowland capital of Susa and highland capital of Anshan (today's Tal-i Malyan on the Marv-Dasht plain, situated about 40km from Persepolis as the crow flies); a geo-political marriage that would later also characterise the Achaemenid heartland.[4] The largest ancient site on the plain is Tepe Bormi, which is believed to have been the ancient Elamite town of

1 Local utilisation of an alabaster source at the northeast of the plain is attested by finds of partly worked pieces of it at Tal-i Ghazir (Wright and Carter 2003: 65).

2 It has been reported that a bitumen source at Mamatain, about 15 km northeast of Ram Hormuz, was used in Achaemenid monumental construction at Susa (Wright and Carter 2003: 65; Alizadeh 2014: 7). However, the reference cited for this information is Connan and Deschesne (1996: 74-75), which states only that the *type* of bitumen occurring at this source, "Type 1", was used at Susa. It should be noted that this same type is found at many locations along a northwest-southeast line through the Zagros foothills from Luristan to the Persian Gulf, and there are several sources much closer to Susa than Mamatain.

3 Wright and Carter surveyed only to the west of the 'Ala river, crossing over with areas covered by McCown (Wright and Carter 2003: 62), whereas Alizadeh also covered areas on the east side (see Alizadeh 2014: Pl. 14).

4 The highland-lowland union was expressed in the title "king of Anshan and Susa" from the time of Sukkal-mah ruler Ebarat II (ca. 1880 BCE), and the intermediary position of Ram Hormuz in this dualistic sphere is mirrored in its ceramic repertoire combining Susiana lowland wares and highland Qaleh wares (ca. 1600-900 BCE) (Carter 1994: 68; 1996: 53). Whether this political union was preserved in the Neo-Elamite period is unclear, but from the use of the "king of Anshan and Susa" titulary by at least two Neo-Elamite kings (for which see Gorris 2014: 64, 150-51) we may infer at least a historical memory of this past political reality and its ideological significance.

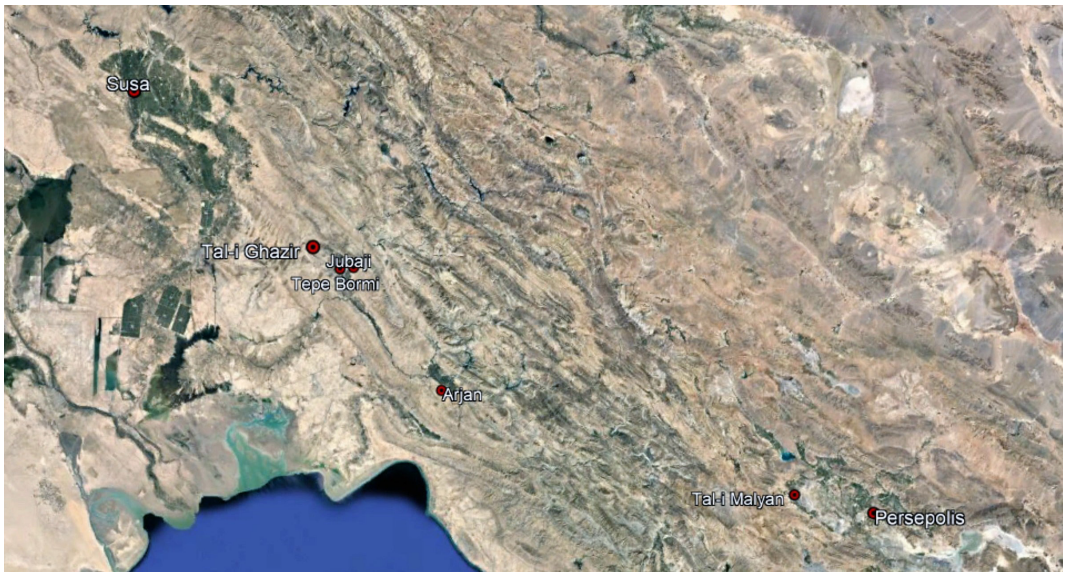


*Fig. 1. Map of archaeological sites mentioned in text (courtesy of Google Earth, 2018).*

Huhnur (Achaemenid Hunar).[5] Highlighting this town's crucial location is a reference to it as "the bolt (i.e. the key access) of the land of Anshan" in the 9th year name of Ur III ruler Ibbi-Sin (1934-1911 BCE).[6]

That the plain sustained its population into the first millennium is suggested by the Neo-Elamite (ca. 1000-525 BCE) remains detected at seven sites: Tal-i Ghazir (also Tall-e Geser) (RH-001); Tepe Bormi (RH-011); Jubaji (RH-058); and four much smaller sites (RH-007S, RH-087, 116A, 116B).[7] Tal-i Ghazir (ca. 7.5 ha) lies on the far northwest of the plain and boasts a long stratigraphic sequence extending from the fifth millennium down to the Safavids, broken only for about 700-800 years after the Proto-Elamite period (Alizadeh 2014: xxvi). Situated southeast of Tal-i Ghazir, the

5 Behzad Mofidi-Nasrabadi (2005; 2018) identifies Tepe Bormi as ancient Huhnur based on an inscription said to have come from the site. Despite Alizadeh's (2013, 2014: fn. 84) questioning of the provenance of the text, and hence the validity of the connection between Huhnur and Tepe Bormi, most scholars still accept that Huhnur was located somewhere on the Ram Hormuz plain (Basello 2018: 238; Henkelman 2017: 97-98, fn. 70; Steinkeller 2018: 193; Potts 2016: 116; however, Gorris 2014 presents the Mamasani region as an alternative).

6 See Basello 2018: 121, fn. 122, with refs; (IS 9) in http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=year_names_ib-bi-suen, accessed 14 Feb 2019.

7 The early surveys on the plain detected Neo-Elamite remains at only the two largest sites, Tal-i Ghazir and Tepe Bormi (Wright and Carter 2003: 69). The other five sites were added during the 2005-2009 surveys (Alizadeh 2014: 240, 302, table C10).

large artificial mound of Tepe Bormi (ca. 18 ha) was occupied periodically from the Late Susiana 1 phase (4700-4300 BCE) and then continuously from the Sukkalmah period (ca. 1900-1600 BCE) down into the Achaemenid era (Carter 1994: 68; Alizadeh 2014: 285). The archaeological area of Jubaji (ca. 7.73 ha), about 7 km northeast of Tepe Bormi on the east side of the 'Ala river (an area not covered by the early surveys), seems to have been a later settlement zone, comprising several low mounds with Middle Elamite, Neo-Elamite and Achaemenid sherds (Alizadeh 2014: 240, 291).

The continued occupation of the Ram Hormuz plain in the eighth and seventh centuries when sites in Susiana were dwindling (Carter 1994: 72-73) was presumably a product of political circumstances. As antagonism between Elam and Assyria grew and the sites in Susiana became increasingly vulnerable to attack, the plain of Ram Hormuz and the next major plain of Behbehan to its southeast — probably the location of the Neo-Elamite royal city of Hidali —[8] offered more suitable bases for power, with agricultural land and good access to mountain refuges, the Persian Gulf, and allies in southern Babylonia (e.g. Stolper 1992: 199; Wright and Carter 2003: 72).

These two plains have also unveiled the most dramatic signs of an Elamite renaissance as Assyrian pressure subsided and of an emergent Elamo-Persian culture. Near the archaeological site of Jubaji a tomb containing the richly equipped burials of two elite, possibly royal, women in bronze "bathtub" coffins was discovered in 2007 beside the 'Ala river (Shishegar 2015). These burials date to about 625-525 BCE,[9] and the proximity of their assemblages to Persian material culture is clear: some of the metalwork pre-empts formal and decorative styles favoured by the Achaemenid elite (Álvarez-Mon 2018, forthcoming); the numerous small containers made of stone (a material otherwise rarely, if ever, used for Neo-Elamite vessels) presage the return to

8 In his annals, the Neo-Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668-627 BCE) placed Huhnur at the border of Hidali (Borger 1996, 51, A V:115-116 = F IV:57-58), which was probably located on the Behbehan plain despite Sennacherib's (705–681 BCE) description of it as being "in the distant mountains" (Grayson and Novotny 2012: 153, text 18, lines 1–7). Amongst the scholars to weigh into the debate over Hidali's location are Potts 2008: 291; Gorris 2014: 281-83; Henkelman 2017: 97, fn. 70; and Basello 2018: 238.

9 Many of the objects in the tomb are typical of the Neo-Elamite II archaeological phase (ca. 725/700-520 BCE). A gold "ring" attributed to the assemblage is inscribed "Šutur-Nahhunte, son of Indada", a presumed reference to the Neo-Elamite king of this name. The excavator, Arman Shishegar (2015), followed the reign dates of ca. 585–539 BCE proposed for this king by François Vallat (2006). Alternatively, Jan Tavernier (2004: 21–22) gave an earlier range of ca. 645–620 BCE for Šutur-Nahhunte, son of Indada, which has since been adjusted slightly by Elynn Gorris (2014) to 635–610 BCE.

popularity of stone vessels in the Achaemenid court;[10] and the burial containers are clearly forebears of the elite fifth century BCE bronze coffins attested at Susa (Wicks et al. 2018). This remarkable discovery followed the 1982 find of a similarly dated tomb housing an elite male bronze "bathtub" coffin burial on the Behbehan plain beside the Marun river (Alizadeh 1985; Álvarez-Mon 2010).[11]

That Susa was also now faring well is evident from the material wealth of its funerary record (see Wicks 2019) and from its position at the nerve centre of a complex royal administration. Dating within a narrow window sometime between about 590 BCE and 555 BCE, the homogenous group of 299 "Acropole" texts excavated at Susa in 1900 offer fascinating insights into a Susa-based system embracing areas as far away as the Ram Hormuz plain (Basello 2018: 230-232, with refs; texts published in Scheil 1907 = MDP 9 1-298 and 1911 = MDP 11 309). Huhnur, in fact, is the most frequently mentioned town in the date formulae of these texts after Susa itself (Henkelman 2008: 17, fn. 29, with refs). The apparent importance of Huhnur in the late Neo-Elamite administrative network aligns well with the impression we obtain from the settlements and tombs in the area.

The texts also complement our archaeological evidence for the critical role of the Ram Hormuz plain in Elamite-Iranian interaction. Of the twelve tablets in the corpus that mention Huhnur in transactions of goods such as weapons and clothing,[12] at least four refer to individuals with Iranian names; a rather high proportion considering that only around 10% of the names preserved in the corpus are Iranian (Tavernier 2018: 168). We meet a Kamdamanna (Iranian *Gaudamanā) in an exchange of coloured

10 The particular popularity of stone vessels in the Achaemenid court has been observed, for example, by Françoise Tallon (1992: 252).

11 The Arjan and Jubaji tombs doubtless represent the highest Neo-Elamite social classes. I have argued elsewhere based on the riverside locations, the use of bronze "bathtub" coffins descending from an Assyrian ritual basin type, and the cultic character of the grave goods in comparison to typical elite Neo-Elamite assemblages, that these were burials of either high-status figures in a religious institution (probably centred on a water deity) or elites who had entered into the care of such an institution after their deaths (Wicks 2015: 100-110; 2019: 163-165; forthcoming). The remarkable metalwork found in the tombs has been studied in several publications (Álvarez-Mon 2004, 2008, 2011; Majidzadeh 1992; Wicks 2015, 2017, 2018, forthcoming). Some of the products are unique and hint at the presence of local metalworking centres in Elam, probably in the foothill areas, with access to highly skilled artisans and a considerable volume of metal (Wicks 2019: 212).

12 MDP 9 28, 42, 43, 51, 114, 115, 128, 159, 180, 192, 237, 291.

wool garments (MDP 9 42; Tavernier 2011: 198, 247) and a Manuša in an exchange of a belt (MDP 9 43) and three *tamšium* (MDP 9 237). This Manuša was apparently an important individual in the administration (Tavernier 2011: 202, 240-41; 2018: 167). The fourth tablet (MDP 9 51) mentions several people with Iranian names: an individual named *Nāfēca- and four others, *Patirapa-, *Tēza-, *Xvarθis, *Yuvātaka, amongst a population group called "**Dātāyana*", which is explicitly described as "Persian" (Tavernier 2011: 198, 240; 2018: 168, tab. 9.1). A second group qualified as "Persian" in the texts is "*Zambegir*", one of whose members, a certain Išpugurda, was present at nearby Hidali (MDP 9 238; see Henkelman 2008: 42; Tavernier 2011: 240).[13] Also worth noting is a man at Huhnur with the Elamite name Barru (MDP 9 28), who may be the same Barru listed in another text as the father of *Pārsa ("the Persian") (MDP 9 47; see Tavernier 2011: 194). As Wouter Henkelman (2008: 42) observes, a Neo-Babylonian legal document referring to a local "assembly of the Babylonians" at nearby Hidali (albeit seventh century in date) further enhances our sense of the rich ethnic and cultural composition of the wider Ram Hormuz region.

Whether the Ram Hormuz plain retained its strategic importance for the Achaemenids is not clear,[14] but the Persepolis Fortification archive informs us that a treasury was now in operation at Huhnur (Hunar) (PF 0406) and refers to the town repeatedly in relation to transactions of grain (PF 0010, 0011, 0479, 0970, 2019, 2026), sesame (PF 0480, 2082), flour (PF 0406), beer (PF 0255), barley loaves (?) (PF 0734) and even sheep and "portions" issued as rations to women "chiefs" (PF 1790).[15] In one case, rations of grain are allocated to 161 workers at Hunar, including men, women, boys and girls (PF 0970). Whereas Huhnur/Hunar had been embraced by the Susa-based network of the early sixth century, it now seems to have been incorporated into the Parsa economy managed from Persepolis (Henkelman 2008: 112 fn. 245, 115; 2017: 113).

While the three major Neo-Elamite sites in region, Tal-i Ghazir, Tepe Bormi, and Jubaji, appear to have continued into the Achaemenid period—and this should be seen in terms of a broader emerging pattern of late Neo-Elamite/early Persian continuity in southwest Iran—it comes as a surprise that the period did not bring a new burst

13 The "people of Parsa/Persians of the Zambegir chiefdom" also appear in MDP 9 11, 94 (Henkelman 2008: 42).

14 Had it been traversed by the Royal Road, the area would have retained its significance as a part of the main communication network. However, the route of this road is still much debated (Potts 2008; recently, Basello 2018: 240-241).

15 Translations of the Persepolis Fortification texts following Hallock (1969).

of prosperity to the area.[16] Conversely, the occupations of the three main sites now actually shrank (Wright and Carter 2003: 75, 79; Alizadeh 2014: 283, 285, 291).[17] The surveys of Alizadeh detected a change in settlement pattern, with the appearance of several more sites near the piedmonts, but their small total area still implies only a small population (Alizadeh 2014: 241).[18]

The possibility should be kept in mind, however, that a lack of knowledge of early Achaemenid ceramics has contributed to this perception of a paucity of settlement. While some of the most common recognisable forms were found across the plain, including carinated bowls with turned out lip ("phiale"), globular unshouldered jars, and straight-sided bowls with flat or very low ring-base (Alizadeh 2014: 42; figs. 30F; 33A; Pls. 104: K-L; 120-H-R; 137A-B; 180E-L), it is possible that less distinct Achaemenid forms have simply been missed.[19] Furthermore, in the absence of a clear rupture between late Neo-Elamite and early Achaemenid material culture, a situation noted

16 Evidence for Elamite-Iranian acculturation and the material continuity it produced between the late Neo-Elamite and early Achaemenid period was highlighted long ago in the artistic record by Amiet (1973b: 26). Pierre de Miroschedji (1985: 295) further developed this observation into a thesis of ethnogenesis whereby Elamite and Iranian acculturation produced a new *Persian* ethnicity. A handful of scholars have continued along this path, building a solid corpus of evidence for continuity from the archaeological, artistic and textual records (see especially Álvarez-Mon 2010, 2018, 2019: 115-117; Basello 2018; Henkelman 2008, 2018).

17 Alizadeh (2014: 241) even surmises that Tepe Bormi was abandoned during the Achaemenid period.

18 The sites listed by Alizadeh (2014) are as follows: RH-001 (Tal-i Ghazir), RH-004, RH-005, RH-011 (Tepe Bormi), RH-032, RH-040(?), RH-058 (Jubaji), RH-77C, 8 RH-1, RH-084A, RH-084B, RH-085, RH-089, RH-091, RH-097B, RH-115, RH-116A, RH-116B, RH-116C, RH-117. Note, however, that while RH-117 is included in table C11 calculating the total area covered by Achaemenid sites, the catalogue entry for it (Appendix C) does not mention an Achaemenid presence. Conversely, RH-004, RH-005, RH-011, and RH-040 are excluded from table C11, despite the mention of Achaemenid presence in their respective catalogue entries. It can be noted that a similar picture has emerged from surveys by Abbas Moghaddam and Negin Miri in the Mianab plain and the so-called "Eastern corridor" linking Susiana and Ram Hormuz. In both areas Achaemenid remains were often found in existing Elamite sites (Moghaddam and Miri 2003: 103; 2007: 41)—though in the "Eastern Corridor" the Achaemenid finds suggest a minor westerly shift in settlement (Moghaddam and Miri 2007: 45)— and in the Mianab Plain the total number of Achaemenid sites grew from 10 in the Neo-Elamite period to 29 in the Achaemenid period (Moghaddam and Miri 2003: 102-103). As Moghaddam and Miri (2003: 105) observe, the existence of about 30 Achaemenid sites in this area offers an excellent opportunity to learn more about ordinary Achaemenid occupations.

19 This problem is highlighted by Alizadeh (2014: 42).

by Rémy Boucharlat (1994: 227) at Susa, some early Achaemenid ceramics may have been misdiagnosed as Neo-Elamite types.[20]

## Tal-i Ghazir in the Neo-Elamite and Achaemenid Periods

Today Tal-i Ghazir remains the only site on the Ram Hormuz plain to have been subject to any systematic excavation. In 1948/49 under the auspices of the Oriental Institute, Donald McCown led two seasons of work in three separate mounds at the site—Mounds A and B on the southeast side and the so-called Fort Mound on the northwest side—but he never published his results. Much later, in a 1994 article entitled "Bridging the Gap between the Elamites and the Persians in Southeastern Khuzistan", Elizabeth Carter published a selection of McCown's finds including five Neo-Elamite burials in the Fort Mound based on his notes in the Oriental Institute archives. More recently, in 2014, Abbas Alizadeh published the complete records of excavations in all three mounds in his volume *Ancient Settlement Systems and Cultures in the Ram Hormuz Plain, Southwestern Iran*. Combining the archived field notes with observations made in a short article by McCown's field assistant, Joseph R. Caldwell (1968), and logic of stratification, Alizadeh attempted to correct and finalise "in-progress" section drawings and top plans wherever possible (Alizadeh 2014: xxv). McCown's excavations established that Mound A had been the centre of early occupation at Tal-i Ghazir with remains going back to the fifth millennium (Carter 1994: 69), but it does not appear to have been occupied after the Sukkalmah period (Alizadeh 2014: 12). Nevertheless, some kind of first millennium presence is attested by Neo-Elamite (or Geser III phase) sherds in Trench 3, level 3 (Alizadeh 2014: 16, fig. 29I), by two late Neo-Elamite or early Achaemenid metal bowls buried with a juvenile (G3) and an adult (G4) in Trench 2, level 2 (a Sukkalmah layer) (Alizadeh 2014: 16, 48, figs. 5, 98A-B, vessels G-7 and G-36), and by an isolated first millennium object, an Egyptian faience scarab, in a mixed layer of the Stake Trench (Alizadeh 2014: 20, 45, fig. 87:1). A late Neo-Elamite/early Achaemenid date for this object is supported

20 Perhaps a future study of material from Ram Hormuz with reference to the well-stratified Achaemenid material published by Miroschedji (1987) from the Ville Royale II at Susa and the recent study of Achaemenid ceramics by Iona Katherine McRae (2014) at Qaleh Kali in the Mamasani area could change our view of Achaemenid settlement on the plain.

by the presence of a stylistically comparable faience scarab in the Jubaji tomb (see Shishegar 2015: 21).

In contrast to Mound A, excavations in Mound B did not penetrate deposits earlier than the Sukkalmah period. All three levels of this mound produced Neo-Elamite remains: typical Neo-Elamite ceramics spanning most of the period were excavated in the lower two levels 3 and 2 (Carter 1994: 70, fig. 6; Alizadeh 2014: 18, fig. 31),[21] and the upper level 1 contained Neo-Elamite ceramics, part of a wall, and an adult (G1) and two child (G2-3) burials (Alizadeh 2014: 17, fig. 7). The burials were dated based on their vessel assemblages, which have not been published to enable comparison with known types, and one of them (G3) had been cut into the Neo-Elamite wall indicating its deposition sometime later in the period. Achaemenid materials are not mentioned amongst the finds in any level of this mound.[22]

The so-called Fort Mound, discussed further below, was excavated in a single trench divided into three "plots": a top, centre and base plot. Three building levels were identified in this trench and again, although there were some proto-Elamite sherds in the lowest level of the mound, the earliest settlement seems to date to the Sukkalmah period (Alizadeh 2014: 19). This mound was clearly the centre of Neo-Elamite occupation at Tal-i Ghazir, bringing forth several burials, which will be closely examined here, and ceramics ranging in date from early to late in the period in all three plots (Carter 1994: fig. 13). The continued occupation of this mound into the Achaemenid period (Wright and Carter 2003: 76) is attested by the presence in the top and bottom plots (levels 1 and 3) of sherds with well-stratified early Achaemenid comparisons in the Ville Royale (level 5) at Susa (Alizadeh 2014: 18-19, figs. 30F, 33I, 34A, fig. 36F; Carter 1994: fig. 14, nos. 2-5, 8 with comparisons in Miroschedji 1987).

21 Was the presence of the ceramics in all three levels a consequence of McCown's system of working from the upper and lower ends of the trench and meeting in the middle? No section drawing was preserved for this trench, so the problem cannot be clarified (see Alizadeh 2014: 17).

22 In the preface of his volume, Alizadeh (2014: xxv) writes that Sukkalmah-Achaemenid deposits were found in Mound B; however, no Achaemenid remains are mentioned in the report on Mound B (pp. 17-18). Wright and Carter (2003: 76) refer only to *possible* Achaemenid remains on this mound.

# The Fort Mound Trench

In March of 1948, McCown spent nine days excavating a 5 x 28 metre northeast-southwest trench on the west side of the Fort Mound. Whether or not he reached virgin soil is unclear. McCown found in this trench a jumble of material ranging in date from the Sukkalmah (ca. 1900-1600 BCE) to the Seljuk era (11th/12th centuries CE). The stratigraphic order of the finds had been badly disturbed by the construction of the fort, traces of which were preserved on top of the mound, and it is possible that his method of working simultaneously in top, centre and base sections or "plots" progressing down the side of the mound had further mixed the deposits (Alizadeh 2014: 18). To add to these problems of stratigraphy, McCown registered the position of his finds in relation to the topmost level of the excavation unit (Alizadeh 2014: 13), but inconsistently stated the maximum height of the mound across his documentation. Alizadeh (2014: 18) observes that whereas the height of the mound is 9 metres above the level of the plain according to the original plan and recent surveys by other archaeologists, the drawing of the western sector places it at an elevation of just 5.7 metres. This may be a factor in some of the discrepancies between Carter and Alizadeh's publications that will be discussed below.

Adding another layer of difficulty is the recording of three stratigraphic "levels" within the three plots. In Alizadeh's publication of the west section drawing, no clear horizontal division is marked between the stratigraphic levels, but the comments in text in combination with the illustrations imply that most of level 1 fell within the top plot, most of level 2 within the centre, and most of level 3 within the base (Figs. 2-4). At one point, Alizadeh rather optimistically states that level 1 is securely

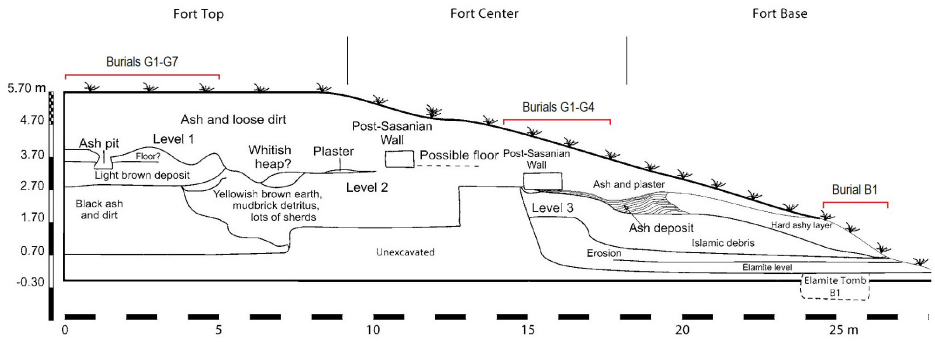


*Fig. 2. Fort Mound west section drawing (after Alizadeh 2014: fig 10B).*

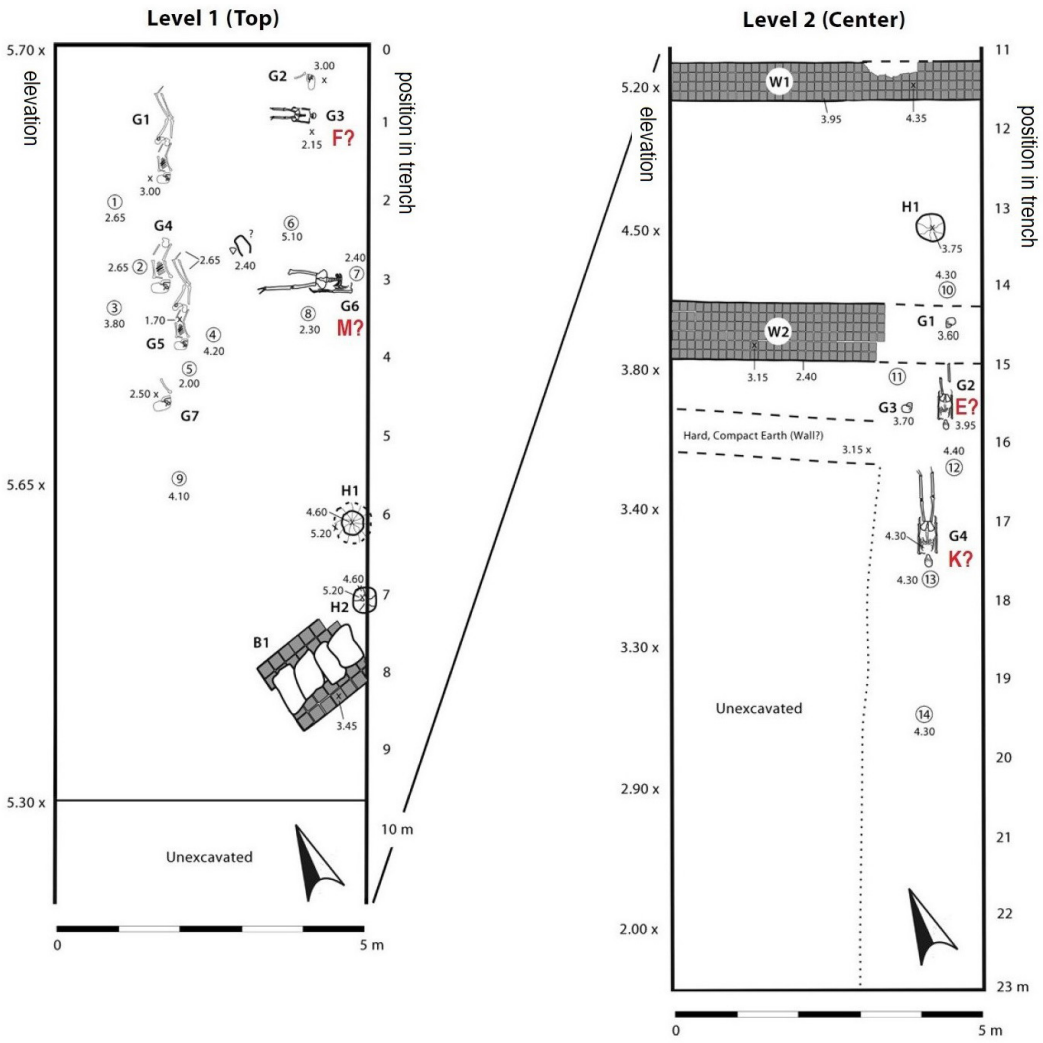


*Fig. 3. Fort Mound, Top and Centre Plots, top plan with possible burial correspondences marked in red (after Alizadeh 2014: fig. 9).*

dated to the Neo-Elamite period, level 2 is "probably" Middle Elamite, and level 3 may be Sukkalmah (Alizadeh 2014: 19). Yet, one of the burials in the Neo-Elamite level 1 was associated with two copper rings tentatively dated to the sukkalmah period (Alizadeh 2014: figs. 9, 91I-J). And the introductory chapter asserts that level 2 was not in fact Middle Elamite, but "basically of the Sukkalmah phase" (Alizadeh 2014: 11). The confused information about this trench from the outset reflects Alizadeh's own concession that: "the top plans and one section drawing in McCown's records do not match, and it was impossible for us to reconcile the differences in the absence of detailed stratigraphic information".

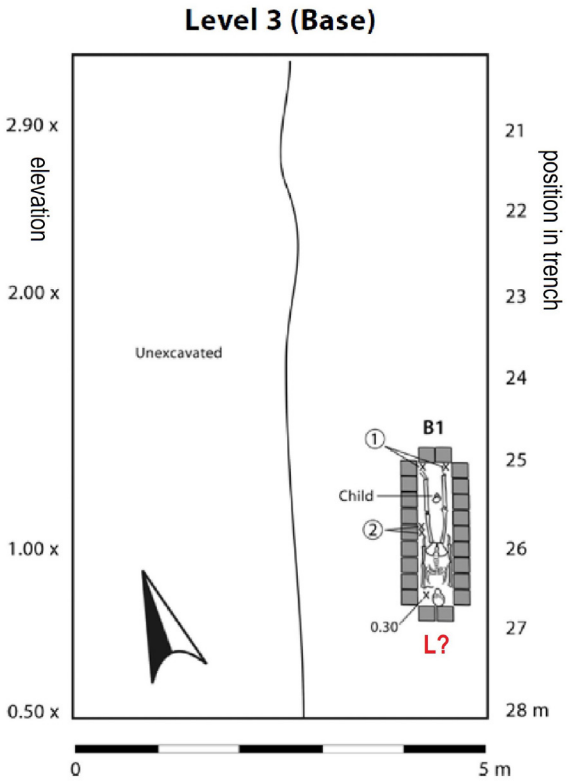


*Fig. 4. Fort Mound, Base Plot, top plan with possible burial correspondence marked in red (after Alizadeh 2014: fig. 10A).*

## Burials in the Fort Mound

The five Fort Mound burials that Carter labelled E, F, K, L, M and assigned to the Neo-Elamite period were found in a "trash layer" described by McCown as an "Elamite dump" partly covered by an Islamic wall (Carter 1994: 70-71, figs. 8-12). From the fact that no contemporary architecture was reported in the area, Carter inferred that the burials might have belonged to a cemetery.[23] Pit burials E and F were in the top plot (Figs. 5-6), pit burial K was in the centre plot (Fig. 7), and brick burial L and pit burial M (Figs. 8-9) were in the base plot. Each was published with a grave good assemblage of between two and seven vessels. Carter noted that McCown had excavated other burials, but she deemed them too poorly recorded to warrant publication.

23 A "dump" is not mentioned by Alizadeh, but this does not disprove the later use of the area as a dump or cemetery. In fact, Alizadeh (2014: 19) highlights in level 2 the remains of two large walls of an earlier almost east-west oriented and seemingly monumental building.

Alizadeh later published a total of thirteen burials in this mound (Alizadeh 2014: 18-19, figs. 9 and 10). His plan of the top level (Figs. 2 and 3) shows a constructed tomb labelled B1 and seven pit burials labelled G1-G7. In his text it is stated that G2, G3 and G6 lacked grave goods, while G1, G4, G5 and G7 contained vessels drawn in figs. 33-34, some of which date to the Neo-Elamite period.[24] It is not clear whether *all* vessels in these two figures were found in the burials or only a selection of them. In any case, none are attributed to a specific burial and the only two marked on the plan are a small, glazed, open vessel (G-64) a metre or so beyond the head of G7 (Fig. 3, no. 9)[25] and a glazed jar (G-62) at the head of G6 (Fig. 3, no. 7), which was earlier described as being without grave goods. Another four pit burials, also labelled G1-G4, are reported in the centre level without reference to grave goods or possible dates (Figs. 2 and 3), and a "typical Elamite brick-lined burial" labelled B1 is the only burial noted in the base level (Figs. 2 and 4). Surprisingly, Alizadeh makes no mention of Carter's five burials in this mound and, as will become clear below, their notes on the position and context of their burials and grave goods are in almost all cases irreconcilable.

Using the tabulated information gathered from both publications of the Fort Mound burials (Tables 1 and 2) and the vessel assemblages (Table 3), Carter's five Neo-Elamite burials will now be examined one-by-one to establish whether they can be matched with any five of Alizadeh's (all proposed correspondences are marked in red on the top plans in Figs. 3 and 4), and whether the dates of their vessels are in accordance with current knowledge of Neo-Elamite ceramic sequences.

Before proceeding, however, a brief comment is needed regarding the vertical positions of the finds under discussion. While Alizadeh chose to convert the levels of McCown's finds from depths below the top of the excavation unit to elevations above the plain, Carter instead appears to have adhered to McCown's records. Thus, as can be observed here in tables 1 and 3, levels were expressed by Carter as depths in metres preceded by minus signs (-). Where it seems appropriate and facilitates a correlation of the finds across both publications (in the top and centre plots only), an adjusted level in relation to the plain has been added to the tables in parentheses, taking the maximum 5.7 metre elevation of the mound given on the stratigraphic drawing of the western sector.

24 Alizadeh dates the Neo-Elamite ceramics based on comparisons with Miroschedji's (1981a) material from the Ville Royale II trench at Susa.

25 This vessel is published by Carter (1994: fig. 13:9) in the top plot at -1.6 m, but it is not allocated to a burial.

| Burial (type) | Publication | Level (Plot) Elevation/Depth | Grave Goods/Placement | Orientation (head-feet) | Body Arrangement | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Burial E (pit) | Carter 1994 Fig. 9 | top<br>"burial at 120" on sketch<br>vessel depths:<br>-1.70/-2.60 m<br>(=4.0/3.10 m elevation) | • G-66 (F-28) at feet<br>• G-60 (F-13) at feet<br>• G-63 (F-12) between knees<br>• G-65 (F-29) beside left hip<br>• G-102 (F-27) beside left hip<br>• no. 6 (no inventory no.) at feet<br>• no. 7 (no inventory no.) at left waist | S-N | extended supine<br>hands at pelvis | NE I/II |
| Burial F (pit) | Carter 1994 Fig. 10 | top<br>"burial at 240" (sketch)<br>vessel depths:<br>-2.40/-2.50 m<br>(=3.30/3.20 m elevation) | • G-47 (F-2) beyond head<br>• G-55/56 (F-16) to left of head<br>• G-52 (F-8) be+side right knee<br>• G-53 (F-6) (lamp) beside right hip<br>• G-54 (F-3) at left foot | W-E | extended supine<br>hands at pelvis | NE I/II |
| Burial K (pit) | Carter 1994 Fig. 8 | centre<br>vessel depths:<br>-0.60/-0.90 m<br>(=5.10/4.80 m elevation) | • G-100 (F-24) 50cm from right knee<br>• G-48 (F-9) beyond head | S-N | extended supine, hands at pelvis | NE I |
| Burial L (constructed brick with plaster and mud slab roof) | Carter 1994 Fig. 11 | base<br>vessel depths:<br>-0.30/-0.50 m | • G-50 (F-10) at feet<br>• G-49 (F-5) at feet<br>• G-51 (F-4) at feet<br>• G-99 (F-1) at feet<br>• fragments of an infant skull beyond right foot<br>• animal bones beyond the pots at both feet | S-N | extended supine<br>hands at pelvis | NE II |
| Burial M (pit) | Carter 1994 Fig. 12 | base<br>vessel depths:<br>-0.70 m | • G-57 (F-17) beyond left foot<br>• G-55 (F-19) beyond right foot<br>• G-58 (F-20) beyond right foot<br>• G-61 (F-21) beside left hip<br>• G-62 (F-22) beside left hip<br>• iron bracelets at the wrists<br>• faience beads at the neck<br>• animal bones beyond the feet | S-N | extended supine<br>hands at pelvis | NE II |

*Table 1. Burials in the Fort Mound at Tal-i Ghazir published by Carter (1994).*

| Burial (type) | Publication | Level (Plot) Elevation/Depth | Grave Goods/Placement | Orientation (head-feet) | Body Arrangement | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G1 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | top, lvl 1, 3 m elevation | • vessels (and semi-precious stone beads?) | SE-NW (text) S-N (plan) | almost extended on right side | NE (?) |
| G2 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | top, lvl 1, 3 m elevation | no objects | almost N-S (text) (plan unclear) | extended supine | - |
| G3 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | top, lvl 1, 2.15 m elevation | no objects | almost N-S (text) SE-NW (plan) | extended supine | - |
| G4 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | top, lvl 1, 2.65 m elevation (?) | • vessels (and semi-precious stone beads?)<br>• two copper rings near skull | SE-NW (text) S-N (plan) | on right side (legs not shown) | rings dated Sukkalmah (?) |
| G5 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | top, lvl 1, 1.70 m elevation | • vessels (and semi-precious stone beads?) | SE-NW (text) S-N (plan) | almost extended on right side | NE (?) |
| G6 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | top, lvl 1, 2.40 m elevation (?) | no objects (text) (but G-62 near head in fig. 9, lvl. 1 plan) | almost N-S (text) almost SE-NW (plan) | extended supine | - |
| G7 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | top, lvl 1, 2.50 m elevation | • vessels (and semi-precious stone beads?) | SE-NW (text) S-N (plan) | on right side (?) (only head shown) | NE (?) |
| B1 (lvl. 1) (two parallel walls of two rows of bricks covered with stone slabs) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | top, lvl 1, 3.45 m elevation | - | almost E-W | - | - |
| G1 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | centre, lvl 2, 3.60 m elevation | - | - | - | - |
| G2 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | centre, lvl 2, 3.95 m elevation | - | SW-NE (plan only) | extended supine | - |
| G3 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | centre, lvl 2, 3.70 m elevation | - | - | - | - |
| G4 (pit) | Alizadeh 2014 Fig. 9 | centre, lvl 2, 4.30 m elevation | • wooden comb in the debris to the south of the burial (probably intrusive from the time of the fort)<br>• A pot and a jar (both unnumbered) at the feet and head respectively | SW-NE (plan only) | extended supine | - |
| B1 (brick-lined burial) | Alizadeh 2014 fig. 10a, 10b | base, lvl 3, 0.30 m elevation | • skull of a child/baby between the legs of the adult skeleton<br>• animal bones at feet<br>• conical bowls at hip | SW-NE (plan only) | extended supine | - |

*Table 2. Burials in the Fort Mound at Tal-i Ghazir published by Alizadeh (2014).*

| Find No. | Publication | | Context | | Plot/Level | | Depth/Elevation | | Date | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Carter (1994) | Alizadeh (2014) | Carter | Alizadeh | Carter | Alizadeh | Carter Depth (elevation) | Alizadeh Elevation | Carter | Alizadeh |
| G-66 (F-28) | Fig. 9:1 | Fig. 35:B | Burial E | - | top | centre, lvl 2 | -1.70 m (4.00 m) | 1.70 m | NE I or II | NE II |
| G-60 (F-13) | Fig. 9:2 | Fig. 35:I | Burial E | - | top | centre, lvl 2 | -2.60 m (3.10 m) | 2.60 m | NE I or II | NE I |
| G-63 (F-12) | Fig. 9:3 | - | Burial E | - | top | - | -2.60 m (3.10 m) | - | NE I or II | - |
| G-65 (F-29) | Fig. 9:4 | Fig. 33:G | Burial E | possibly burial G1, G4, G5 or G7 | top | top, lvl 1 | -1.70 m (4.00 m) | 4.00 m | NE I or II | Achaemenid (?) |
| G102 (F-27) | Fig. 9:5 | Fig. 33:A | Burial E | possibly burial G1, G4, G5 or G7 | top | top, lvl 1 | -1.70 m (4.00 m) | 3.90 m | NE I or II | Achaemenid |
| G-47 (F-2) | Fig. 10:1 | Fig. 35:C | Burial F | - | top | centre, lvl 2 | -2.50 m (3.20 m) | 2.50 m | NE I or II | NE II |
| G-55 (F-16) | Fig. 10:2 | - | Burial F | - | top | - | -2.50 m (3.20 m) | - | NE I or II | - |
| G-52 (F-8) | Fig. 10:3 | - | Burial F | - | top | - | -2.40 m (3.30 m) | - | NE I or II | - |
| G-53 (F-6) | Fig. 10:4 | - | Burial F | - | top | - | -2.40 m (3.30 m) | - | NE I or II | - |
| G-54 (F-3) | Fig. 10:5 | - | Burial F | - | top | - | -2.40 m (3.30 m) | - | NE I or II | - |
| G-100 (F-24) | Fig. 8:1 | Fig. 33:J | Burial K | possibly burial G1, G4, G5 or G7 | centre | top, lvl 1 | -0.60 m (5.10 m) | 5.10 m | NE I/II | NE II |
| G-48 (F-9) | Fig. 8:2 | Fig. 33:D | Burial K | possibly burial G1, G4, G5 or G7 | centre | top, lvl 1 | -0.90 m (4.80 m) | 4.80 m | NE I (?) | Achaemenid |
| G-50 (F-10) | Fig. 11:1 | - | Burial L | - | base | - | -0.30 m | - | NE II | - |
| G-49 (F-5) | Fig. 11:2 | - | Burial L | - | base | - | -0.30 m | - | NE II | - |
| G-51 (F-4) | Fig. 11:3 | - | Burial L | - | base | - | -0.30 m | - | NE II | - |
| G-99 (F-1) | Fig. 11:4 | Fig. 33:K | Burial L | possibly burial G1, G4, G5 or G7 | base | top, lvl 1 | -0.50 m | 5.20 m | NE II | NE II |
| G-57 (F-17) | Fig. 12:1 | Fig. 34:I, Pl. 5:D | Burial M | possibly burial G1, G4, G5 or G7 | base | lvl 1B | –0.70 m | 5.0 m (fig. 33:K) 0.70 m (Pl. 5D) | NE II | NE II |
| G-55 (F-19) | Fig. 12:2 | - | Burial M | - | base | - | -0.70 m | | NE II | - |
| G-58 (F-20) | Fig. 12:3 | - | Burial M | - | base | - | -0.70 m | | NE II | - |
| G-61 (F-21) | Fig. 12:4 | Fig. 33:E | Burial M | possibly burial G1, G4, G5 or G7 | Base | top, lvl 1 | -0.70 m | 5.0 m | NE II | NE II |
| G-62 (F-22) | Fig. 12:5 | Fig. 33:F, Pl. 5:E | Burial M | at G6 head in fig. 9, no. 7 | base | top, lvl 1 | -0.70 m | 2.40 m (fig. 33:F) 4.95 m (Pl. 5E) | NE II | NE II |

*Table 3. Vessels in burial assemblages in Carter (1994) and cross-references with Alizadeh (2014).*

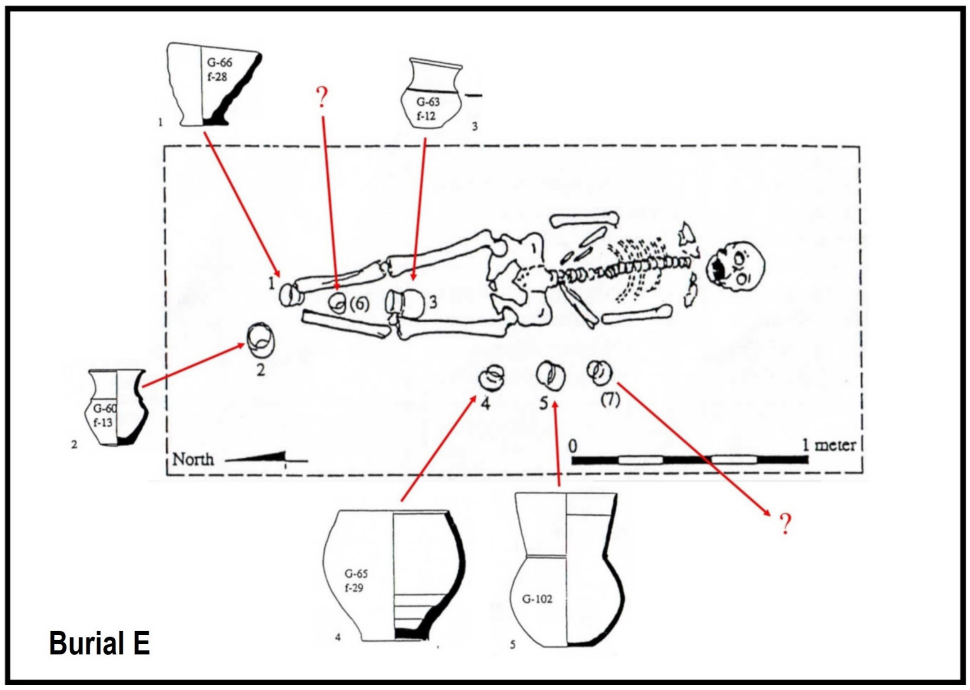


*Fig. 5. Pit Burial E, Fort Mound Top Plot (after Carter 1994: fig. 9).*

## Burial E

Carter reports that Burial E was excavated in the top plot. According to the published sketch (Fig. 5), the body had been laid on a south-north orientation in an extended supine position with a conical cup (G-66) and small jar (G-60) at the feet, a second small jar (G-63) at the knees, and a deep bowl (G-65) and long-necked jar (G-102) at the left hip. Two other vessels shown in the published sketch, one between the lower legs and the other to the left of the waist, were not assigned field numbers (presumably because they could not be connected to any of the inventoried pots). It should be noted that the two small jars (G-60 and G-63) were both recorded at a depth of -2.60 m, which is 90 cm below the other three vessels at -1.70 m, raising questions over their association with this burial.

In seeking a match amongst Alizadeh's Fort Mound burials, it must firstly be noted that all four of his interments in the top plot described as having grave goods (G1, G4, G5 and G7) were laid down on their right sides and therefore could not correspond to this, or any other, of Carter's five supine burials. Four of the vessels from the burial E assemblage appear in Alizadeh's volume, but they are not explicitly attributed to burials and are assigned dates ranging from the NE I (G-60) to the NE II (G-66), to the Achaemenid period (G-65, G-102) (Alizadeh 2014: figs. 33 and 35). Furthermore, the first two are listed in the central rather than the top plot. However, if we remove

the minus sign (-) from Carter's levels, the recorded levels of these two vessels match Alizadeh's. This could mean that Alizadeh has not converted their depths to elevations and therefore positioned them lower in the mound than they were actually found; i.e., G-66 at 1.70 m instead of 4 m, and G-60 at 2.6 m instead of 3.1 m. After this conversion, burial E would contain the three vessels recorded in both publications at about 4 m elevation and we could contemplate that Alizadeh's relevant burial is the approximately south-north oriented, extended supine burial G2 marked at 3.95 m elevation in the central plot (level 2) (Fig. 3).[26]

*Notes on Dating:* Burial E was dated by Carter very broadly to the NE I (ca. 1000-725/700 BCE) or NE II (ca. 725/700-520 BCE), somewhat reflecting the difficulty of reconciling the dates of the wares attributed to it. For the two small jars (G-60 and G-63) she highlighted a similar vessel found at surface level at Tal-i Malyan (Sumner 1974: fig. 13e) where occupation seems to have ended at around 900 BCE. Yet, the conical cup with corrugated walls (G-66) is a typical NE II type attested at Jubaji (ca. 625-525 BCE) (Shishegar 2015: 131, nos. 23-28) and at Susa in the Ville Royale (Miroschedji 1978: fig. 54, nos. 3-4; 1981b: fig. 51 nos. 2, 7) and the Village Perse-Achéménide, level 1 (Ghirshman 1954: Pl. X3). Also known as the Ville des Artisans, this latter sector of the site was established less than a century before the Achaemenid period (Álvarez-Mon 2010: 198, with refs), or perhaps even early in the reign of Darius (Carter 2007: 148, fn. 9), and offers an important body of evidence for studying the still poorly understood transition from "Elamite" to "Persian" material culture.

Carter compared the long-necked jar (G-102) in burial E to a crude local, handmade vessel from Tal-i Malyan, level IIIA, dated to around 1000 BCE (Carter 1996: 3), whereas Alizadeh noted a much closer—and much later—vessel form found by Pinhas Delougaz and Helene Kantor (1996: 16, Pl. 75A) in "mixed debris" at Chogha Mish and dated by them to the Achaemenid period based on comparisons with narrower-necked versions from Persepolis.[27] Another reasonable match is a well-stratified early Achaemenid vessel from level 5B of the Ville Royale II at Susa (Miroschedji 1987: fig. 13, no. 9). For the remaining vessel, a deep bowl (G-65), no comparisons have been identified. Alizadeh tentatively proposed an Achaemenid date for it, but similar forms are not

26 Note that the elevation of this burial marked on Alizadeh's plan of the centre plot is actually *higher* than the ca. 3.8 m surface level indicated for this section of the mound. This may mean that it should have instead been positioned in the top plot where Carter places burial E.

27 One was from the top level of the "Garrison's Quarters" and another from an unspecified location (Schmidt 1957: 208, fn. 36, Pl. 71:3 and 72:9).

published amongst the Achaemenid ceramic assemblages from Persepolis (Schmidt 1957), Pasargadae (Stronach 1978) or Susa (Ghirshman 1954; Miroschedji 1987).

In both their recorded level and their form, the two small jars (G-60 and G-63) reported by Carter for burial E appear to be earlier than the other three vessels and, presumably, the interment itself. The most appropriate date for this burial is therefore sometime in the 6th century, either very late in the Neo-Elamite period or early in the Achaemenid period. The latter date would not be at odds with the use of burial pits and the positioning of the body in a supine position with both hands at the pelvis, which is also seen in the early Achaemenid period at Susa (burial T. 682 in Miroschedji 1987: 15, figs. 2, 6; Miroschedji also mentions other partly excavated pit burials of a similar date). Here it is worth contemplating Alizadeh's (2008: 48) assessment that much of the "Achaemenid" material from Chogha Mish (and presumably other Elamite sites) has better Neo-Elamite parallels and might be seen in terms of a continued Neo-Elamite presence in the early Achaemenid period. We could equally regard funerary practices at Susa and Tal-i Ghazir in the same light. However, in view of the long process of Elamite-Iranian acculturation leading up to the Achaemenid period, the identification of a boundary separating "Elamite" and "Persian" seems a moot point.

## Burial F

Carter places burial F (Fig. 6) in the top plot and shows it on a west-east orientation, despite stating that "all the [five] bodies were oriented with the head facing south".[28] The body is sketched in a basically extended supine arrangement with two conical bowls (G-47 and G-56)[29] beyond the head, and a third (G-52) beside the lower right leg, a pot (G-54) beside the left foot and a lamp (G-53) beside the right hip. Alizadeh published only one of these objects (G-47), and the 2.5 m level he provides for it would match Carter's level if her minus sign (-) were removed. Perhaps, as suggested above for two vessels in burial E, the number should have been converted to an elevation of 3.1 m. In this case it could belong to the top plot as it does in Carter's report, rather than to the central plot, level 2. Possible matches for burial F in the top plot are Alizadeh's extended supine burials G3 and G6 (Fig. 2), although neither was supposed to have been accompanied by grave goods and their levels are given as 2.15 m and 2.4 m. Again, if these measurements had not been converted from depths, the first

28 Conventionally the head end should be expressed first, but based on Carter's images of the other four burials, which are all positioned with the head to the south, this convention has not been followed.

29 G-56 is incorrectly tabulated as G-55 in Carter (1994: 89, fig. 10).

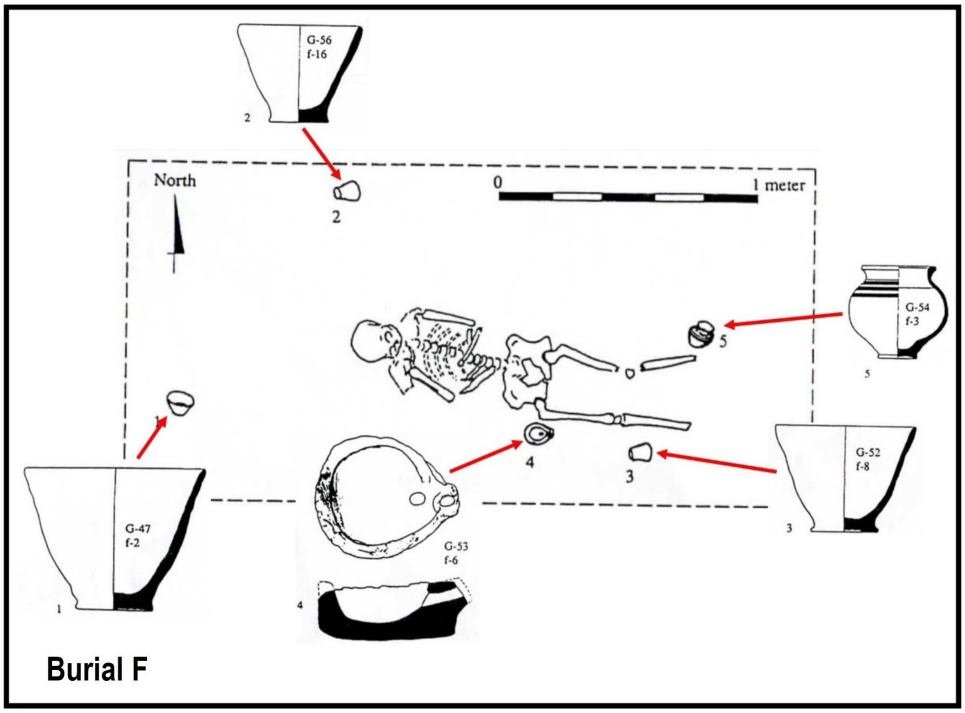


*Fig. 6. Pit Burial F, Fort Mound Top Plot (after Carter 1994: fig. 10).*

would be close to and the second an exact match for Carter's 2.4 m depth for burial F. With regard to orientation, burials F, G3 and G6 are all inconsistently reported in their respective publications: their alignments are described as north-south, yet, as noted above, burial F is illustrated on a west-east orientation, while G3 and G6 are on a southeast-northwest orientation. Since G6 is probably the best correspondence for burial M (below), G3 is the most suitable candidate for burial F.

*Notes on Dating:* Carter broadly dates burial F to the NE I or NE II period. The NE II references from Susa's Ville Royale II, level 7B, that she provides for the three un-corrugated conical bowls (G-47, G-52, G-56) and that Alizadeh provides for one of them (G-47) are fair, although similar bowls also occur in the NE I levels 9-8 of the same trench (e.g. Miroschedji 1981a: fig. 17, no. 9). The red-painted orange-tan ware bowl (G-54; not published by Alizadeh), does not belong to the lowland NE II repertoire. A second-millennium vessel, also from Tal-i Ghazir (Carter 1971: fig. 56, no. 2), was the closest comparison Carter could point to, and presumably this is why she brought the burial's date tentatively back into the NE I period. This bowl may well reflect the highland aspect of Tal-i Ghazir's dual geographic orientation, since geometric painted wares in a variety of fabrics (e.g. Shogha, Teimuran and Qaleh wares) are attested in the highlands up to at least the first century of the first

millennium BCE (McCall 2009: 162-63).[30] The fifth vessel, a lamp (G-53), is of little assistance, as a study of Elamite lamps by Pierre Amiet (1973a: 3) presents similar versions from the Susiana area dating to both the Middle and Neo-Elamite periods.

In sum, a date in the NE I period has to be considered for burial F to account for: i) its lower position in the top plot than the late NE II/early Achaemenid burial E; ii) the likely early first millennium date of its painted orange-tan ware pot; and iii) the possible NE I date of its conical bowls.

## Burial K

Regarded by Carter as the oldest of the five burials, the south-north oriented, extended supine burial K (Fig. 7) in the central plot is difficult to correlate with any of Alizadeh's four burials in this plot. It is not clear from which surface the depths of its vessels, a larger pot (G-100) near the feet at -0.60 m and a smaller pot (G-48) beyond the head at -0.90 m, were measured. But if taken from the top of the mound (i.e., 5.7 m), they could be converted to a level above the plain to reconcile with the 5.1 m and 4.8 m elevations given by Alizadeh (2014: Fig. 33J and 33D). Despite his dating of the higher-positioned vessel (G-100) to the Neo-Elamite period and the lower one (G-48) to

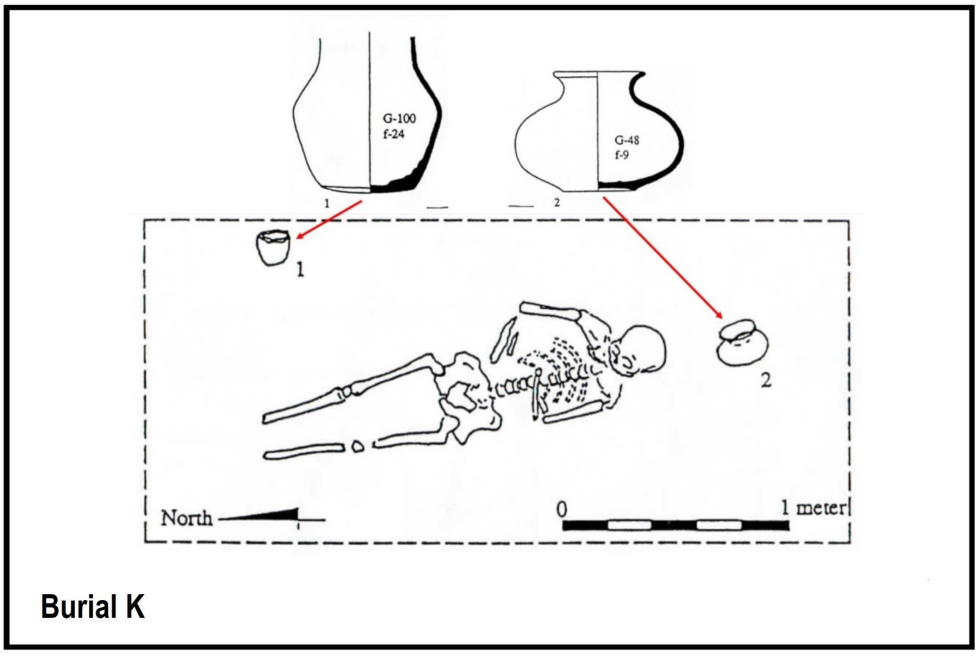


*Fig. 7. Pit Burial K, Fort Mound Centre Plot (after Carter 1994: fig. 8).*

30 However, a rare geometric-painted NE II ware from level 1 of the Village Perse-Achéménide at Susa has been published by Ghirshman (1954: Pls. XIII.1 and XXXII, no. GS. 1017).

the Achaemenid period, and his placement of both in the top rather than the central plot, it might still be possible to propose a rather imperfect pairing of burial K with his central plot burial G4 (Fig. 3). It too had a pot and a jar (field numbers unspecified) at the feet and head respectively and was laid supine on an approximate south-north orientation. The 4.3 m elevation of G4 is not well-aligned with the reported 5.1/4.8 m elevations of the vessels, but it is the best available correspondence.

*Notes on Dating:* While Carter considers burial K the oldest of the group and attributes it to the NE I period based on its stratigraphic position and assemblage, a later date more in line with Alizadeh's dating of its vessels is preferable. Both authors find fitting NE II comparisons for the larger pot (G-100) at Susa in the Ville Royale II, level 7B (see Miroschedji 1981a: fig. 29, nos. 7-8, Pl. VII, nos. 7 and 10), but Carter's additional reference to a NE I version of the pot with a more rounded shoulder (Miroschedji 1981a: fig 23, no. 6; 1981b: fig. 49, no. 8) brings the date back too far. The second vessel, a squat globular bottle (G-48) dated by Alizadeh to the Achaemenid period without stratified references, lacks obvious comparisons. Globular bottles without lugs are common in NE II levels at Susa (see Miroschedji 1981a: fig. 39, nos. 26-33, and funerary vessels excavated by Roland de Mecquenem in Wicks 2019: Pls. 23 and 25), and several were found in the Jubaji assemblage (e.g. Shishegar 2015: 117-120), but these tend to be smaller with narrower necks and corrugated walls, and they are usually glazed. Nevertheless, going by the popularity of globular vessels in the NE II and the more angular shoulder of the pot in the NE II style, a NE II date is most fitting.

## Burial L

The closest correlation in Carter and Alizadeh's publications is between Carter's burial L (Fig. 8) and Alizadeh's B1 (Figs. 2 and 4), both of which are reported in the base plot at about -0.30 m. Alizadeh's measurement should be expressed as an elevation in relation to the plain and Carter's as a depth. If this burial was dug below the base of the mound as Alizadeh depicts, then Carter's depth must be in relation to the level of the plain (though this is not stated). Both authors describe a brick burial on a basically south-north orientation containing an extended supine adult body with animal bones beyond the feet, a child skull and conical vessels (G-49, G-50 and G-51 in Carter). However, Alizadeh makes no mention of the plaster coating or mud slab roof reported by Carter.[31] Furthermore, Carter has the child skull (as fragments) near

31 Alizadeh does mention a slab roof on a different constructed burial from the top plot, also labelled B1, but specifies that the slabs were made of stone.

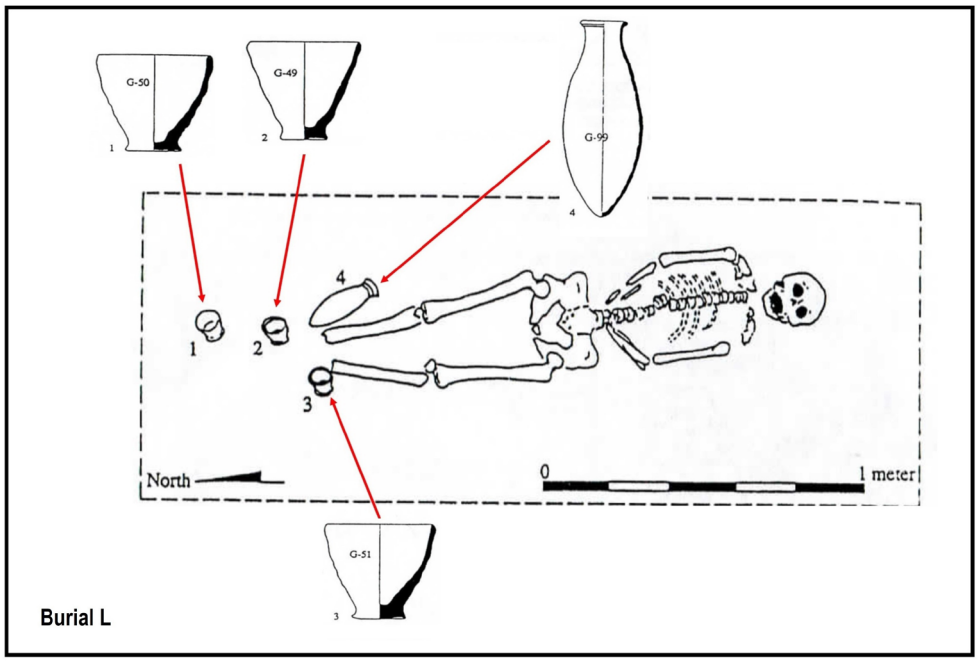


*Fig. 8. Brick Burial L, Fort Mound Base Plot (after Carter 1994: fig. 11).*

the right foot while Alizadeh has it between the lower legs, and Carter has the conical vessels at the feet while Alizadeh has them at the left thigh. Beside the right lower leg Carter also includes an amphora (G-99), which Alizadeh instead places in the top plot, level 1, at 5.2 m elevation. If we convert Carter's depth of -0.5 m for this vessel to an elevation (going down from the 5.7 m height of the mound) it is likewise 5.2 m. This position is credible considering level 1 is well-dated to the Neo-Elamite period, but just as plausible is the vessel's deposition in the brick burial in the bottom plot at -0.5 m below the level of the plain.

*Notes on Dating:* Carter dates burial L to the NE II and is well-justified in doing so. The conical cups (G-49-51) have good NE II references at Susa (Miroschedji 1981b: fig 51, nos. 4 and 5; Ghirshman 1954: Pls. XXV, nos. GS. 953 and GS. 1271) as does the amphora-style pointed-base jar without handles (G-99), which Alizadeh also dates to the NE II (Miroschedji 1981a: fig. 35, nos. 3 and 15; 1981b: fig. 53, no. 1; Ghirshman 1954: Pl. XXVII, GS. no. 2383). These vessel types were also ubiquitous locally in the Jubaji tomb (Shishegar 2015: 131, nos. 23-43, 131-32, nos. 6-17).

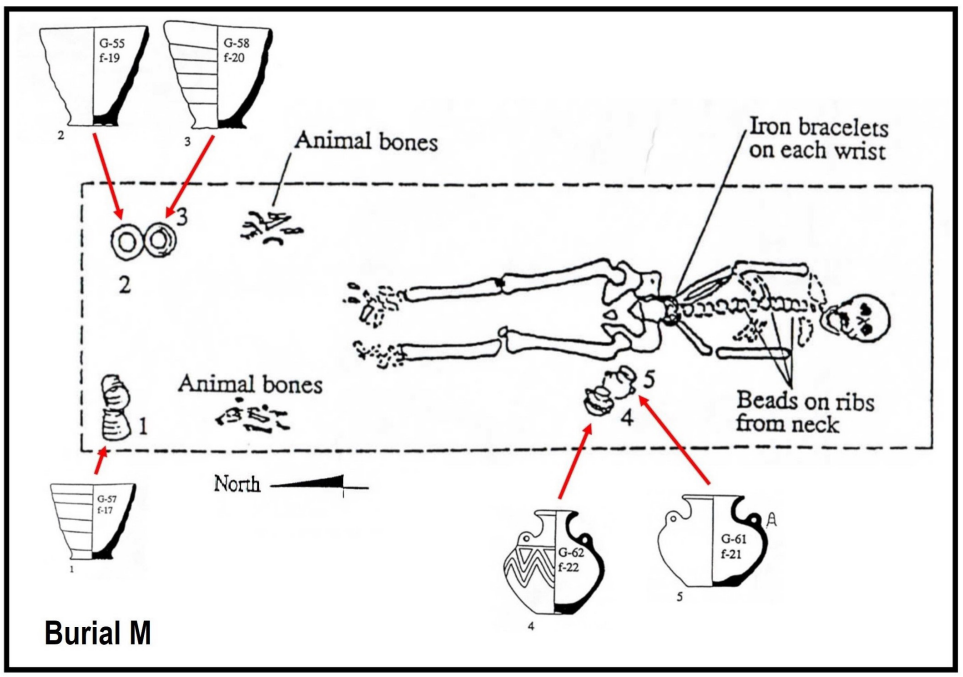


*Fig. 9. Pit Burial M, Fort Mound Base Plot (after Carter 1994: fig. 12).*

## Burial M

While Alizadeh places only B1 in the base plot, Carter also includes pit burial M at a slightly deeper level of -0.7 m (Fig. 9). This south-north oriented, extended supine burial may be a female based on the iron bracelets at both wrists and faience beads (a necklace?) at the ribs. The skeleton was accompanied by two small glazed, lugged bottles (G-61, G-62) at the hip, and three conical cups (G-55, G-57, G-58) and animal bones beyond both feet. Alizadeh places one of the glazed bottles (G-61) in the top plot at 5 m elevation in fig. 33E and one of the conical cups (G-57) at 5 m in level 1B[32] in fig. 34I, but then places the latter at 0.7 m (an unconverted depth?) in Pl. 5D. The other glazed bottle (G-62) is recorded at 2.4 m elevation in fig. 33F and again at 2.4 m on the top plot plan (Fig. 3) at the head of burial G6 (which supposedly contained no grave goods), however, its elevation is given as 4.95 m in Pl. 5E. If Carter's levels of -0.7 m for these three vessels were taken as depths below the top of the mound and converted to 5 m elevation, they would more or less agree with Alizadeh's levels. But this would do little to facilitate a correlation of burial M with any of his burials in the top plot, which are all situated much lower than 4.95/5 m. Assuming that Alizadeh's text has the extended supine interment G6 correctly oriented south-north (and that the southeast-northwest orientation shown on the top plot plan is incorrect), it could

32 Level 1B is not discussed in the text, and I am uncertain of precisely what it is meant to refer to.

be a possible match. The identification of G6 with burial M, however, would raise the question of whether it should be attributed to the top plot, at approximately 5 m elevation, or to the bottom plot.

*Notes on Dating:* There is no doubt that the NE II date Carter provides for the assemblage of burial M and Alizadeh for three of its five vessels is accurate. The corrugated conical cups (G-55, G-57, G- 58) are a typical NE II vessel type (see burial E above) as are the glazed, lugged, globular pots (G-61 and G-62), which are well-represented at Susa in the Ville Royale and Apadana mounds (Miroschedji 1981a: fig. 33, nos. 5 and 6; 1981b: fig. 51, no. 10; Álvarez-Mon 2010: Pl. 114-115) and in level 1 of the Village Perse-Achéménide (Ghirshman 1954: Pls. XXXI, nos. GS. 863, Pl. XXV, GS. 953, GS. 1203, GS. 1271).

## Closing Comments

As it stands, only five of the burials from the Fort Mound—Carter's burials E, F, K, L, M—can be dated with certainty to the first half of the first millennium BCE. Apart from Carter's burial L and Alizadeh's B1 in the bottom plot, which are an imperfect but fairly clear match, the correspondences that I have proposed between the burials in the two publications are all hypothetical and problematic in one way or another. While Alizadeh cautions that the Fort Mound top plans and section plan are not consistent with each other and that this may introduce serious problems into the work, he is surprisingly silent on Carter's earlier publication and its discrepancies with his own. It is also unclear why Carter was able to reconstruct the assemblages for her five burials, while Alizadeh was apparently unable do so based on the records available to him. Were the two authors looking at different sets of documents?[33]

Even if these publications necessitated a degree of guesswork regarding the excavator's methods and were subject to any omissions and inaccuracies in the field records, their results are extremely important. The Fort Mound burials are rare and valuable sources of evidence for both the material culture and funerary practices of the inhabitants of the Ram Hormuz area in the Neo-Elamite period and even potentially (in the case of burial E) the very early Achaemenid period. In these pages we have seen that it is difficult to assert any strict division between late Neo-Elamite and early Persian archaeological material. And it is clear the Ram Hormuz plain and other piedmont areas linking Khuzestan and Fars hold the key to further developing

33 In this regard it may be worth noting that Carter uses an additional find (F-) number for the pottery in addition to the field (G-) numbers.

a more complex model of change for this pivotal period of history in southwest Iran, less entrenched in notions of ethnic difference embedded in the labels "Elamite" and "Persian".

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