



The Hasanlu VII Culture in the Southern Lake Urmia Basin, Northwest Iran: A New Archaeological Outline

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(1-24)

Abstract

Hasanlu archaeological joint project in partnership with Iranian-American archaeologist is the one of the rare long-term archaeological projects carried out in northwest of Iran. In the process of this project (1957-1978), the layers from the Neolithic period to the historical period have been excavated. The Seventh period of Hasanlu Tepe is contemporary of early bronze age and the beginning of massive economic and social mutation in the cultural developments context of Middle East. Cultural materials of this period in Hasanlu Tepe have illuminated the obvious cultural differentiation between southern area of Urmia lake and the whole of Iran northwest region. Although the short report on this period material have been published, but there is still very little awareness on this period around the pottery types and its distribution, burial traditions and relationship between neighbors. Therefore, the present study intends to introduce the general characteristics of the culture of the seventh period of Hasanlu by referring to the findings of Hasanlu project and other excavations carried out in this area. cultural materials of this period illuminates that during the third millennium BC, there have been a distinguished socio-cultural zone from the Kura-Araxes area with painted Orange and Red pottery characteristic in the southern part of Lake Urmia to the southern slopes of Sahand Mountains. Which on the one hand interacted with northern Mesopotamia in west and on the other hand interacted with the Kura-Araxes communities in whole of north, eastern and southern area.

Keywords: Hasanlu, Northwest Iran, Early Bronze Age, Painted Orange Ware, Kura-Araxes.

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1. Introduction

The heightened scholarly interest in the recent decades in the Bronze Age, notably the Early Bronze Age (EBA), of northwestern Iran has brought about increases in our understanding of the period.¹ On the other hand, a statistical evaluation of the pertinent scholarship and fieldwork reveals a heavy focus on the Kura-Araxes period (e.g. Alizadeh and Azarnoush 2003a, 2003b; Omrani 2006; Abedi et al. 2014b; Abedi 2016; Alizadeh et al. 2018). Chronological and cultural attributes of the Bronze Age of northwestern Iran are currently studied and discussed on the basis of the results of earlier excavations at such sites as Hasanlu (Dyson and Pigott 1975), Yanik Tepe (Burney 1964), Haftavan (Burney 1976), Geoy Tepe (Burton-Brown 1951), Kordlar (Lippert 1979), and Gijlar (Belgiorno et al. 1984: 241-299) as well as a series of more recently excavated sites, including Kul Tepe of Hadishahr (Abedi et al. 2014b), Köhne-Shahar of Chaldoran (Alizadeh et al. 2015, Alizadeh et al. 2018) and Kohne-Pasgah Tepesi in Kaleibar (Maziar 2010; Aghalari and Abdollahzadeh 2015). Yet, the advent of the Hasanlu Project marked a turning point in the archaeology of not only Iranian Azerbaijan but also Iran as a whole, with the Project's 12 seasons of excavations between 1956 and 1977 (Dyson 1969, 1972, 1983) establishing a general cultural and archaeological sequence for the Urmia Lake Basin, in particular its southern quadrant, spanning the Neolithic to historic times (Young 1965; Dyson 1983; Voigt and Dyson 1992; Danti 2004). Today, the general framework proposed by the Hasanlu Project enables comparative analysis of the related individual periods in the archeology of Iran and neighboring regions based on the existing data on technological trends in manufacture of ceramic and metal objects, social systems, architectural styles, burial traditions and even clothing and personal ornament of certain periods.

In the Hasanlu sequence, Periods VII-V represented the Bronze Age material culture, encompassing the third and second millennia BC (Danti et al. 2004; Danti 2013). Period VII, characterized by the so-called Painted Orange Ware, postdates the Late Chalcolithic Pisdeli Period typified by a painted Buff Ware assemblage (Dyson and Young 1960) that ends around the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC. Hasanlu VI is defined by a distinctive painted Buff Ware tradition, which is regarded as a link between the southern Lake Urmia region and the Khabur Ware Horizon of northern Mesopotamia (Hamlin 1971; Kroll 1994).² The contemporary assemblages also contain sherds, albeit in smaller numbers, which point to connections with the areas to the north of Lake Urmia and Caucasia (Rubinson 2004; Danti, 2013: fig. 17b). The cultural complex was attested at Hasanlu in the upper strata of the Period VII deposits³ (Dyson 1958, 1960, 1973; Young 1959; Dyson and Pigott 1957) as well as at Dinkha, some 27 km west of Hasanlu, similarly excavated by the Hasanlu Project during 1966-1968 (Muscarella 1968; Dyson et al. 1969).⁴ Finally, Hasanlu V marks the Late Bronze culture in the region at the time of its historical turning point, which would culminate in the Iron Age and the emergence of empires.

The Lake Urmia region and northwest Iran was apparently settled by two distinct archaeological cultures in the EBA, with cultural attributes rooted in Caucasia and the Bronze Age archaeological culture evidenced at Hasanlu as well as the recent finds from Tepe Se-Girdan of Mahabad (Binandeh 2014; Sohrabi and Ebrahimi 2015), Tepe Qara-Qouzlou

(Kharazi *et al.* 2013) and the extensive excavations at Tepe Silveh of Piranshahr (Abedi 2018; Abedi and Ebrahimi 2019). While a few sites reflect connections and overlap of the two cultures, we are progressively documenting a marked north-south distinction in their geographic distribution. With a special emphasis on the cultural material deriving from several excavations in southern Lake Urmia, the present paper attempts to propose an outline of the archaeological culture of the Hasanlu Period VII in terms of ceramic assemblages, burial practices, urban form, and settlement patterns.

2. History of Excavation in Hasanlu VII Deposits

Period VII materials at Hasanlu are attested on both the High Mound (Dyson 1960; Dyson and Pigott 1975) and the Low Mound as architectural remains and burials. A human burial of this date was also discovered at the nearby site of Tepe Hajji-Firuz (Voigt, 1976: 805). Period VII was first documented in 1957 in Operations IV, V and VI opened on the Low Mound (Dyson 1958). In 1958, excavation was resumed to study the pottery sequence identified in the previous season (Young 1959) and continued down to sterile soil. Later, in 1960 Dyson dug a deep well⁵, the Well Sounding, from a surface 10 meters below the highest point of the mound (Danti, 2013: 59-61). This small sounding produced a sequence spanning the Iron Age, Early Bronze Age characterized by Painted Orange Ware, the Pisdeli ceramics, and the Dalma material (Dyson 1960, 1961). Again in 1974, limited excavations were carried out on the High Mound in Grid U22, which probed Period VII material down to a depth of 3.80 m beneath the Period VI deposits and stopped at the level of the Pisdeli layers (Dyson and Pigott 1975).

Based on the short available reports from the Hasanlu Project covering the excavations on the Low Mound and on the excavation records and collections at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Period VII materials mainly were encountered in Operations IV, V, VI and X at the depth of 8.5 meters above sterile soil, and this was also the case with all other operations opened in the east and north quarters of the High Mound. Hence, the earliest attested cultural and archaeological deposits on the Low Mound date to Period VIIc, and after this period Low Mound spaces alternatively used between cemetery and occupation (Danti, 2013: 119-141). In Operation VI, the small houses of Period VII were invariably made of mudbrick and had clean floors (Dyson, 1958: 25-26).

Apart from Hasanlu, the excavations for the Hasanlu Project directed by M.M. Voigt at Hajji Firuz Tepe to examine the earlier periods brought to light a human burial with Hasanlu VII ceramics (Voigt, 1976: 805, fig. 115). This single burial is the only published grave from the period. It was made in a 30-cm deep rectangle pit. The grave fill consisted of a loose brown soil containing a mixture of animal and human bones. Fragments of clay were also present, in particular by the edges of the grave pit, suggesting that the latter were probably lined in wooden planks or wattle and daub. The burial was of an adult male laid in a fetal position in an east-west orientation, with the arms flexed against the chest and five vessels flanking the body (Figure 1). A sixth vessel, of Painted Orange Ware, which occurred in the fill above the burial, was presumably part of the burial gifts but made its way to the overlying layers as a result of later pitting (Voigt, 1976: 805). It is notable that other Period VII burials have been mentioned from the areas around Tepe Hasanlu without

any further details (Dyson, 1958: 26; Danti, 2013: Appendix IVb). Only two pottery vessel from the contemporary burials has been published from the Low Mound (Figure 2: 1-2).

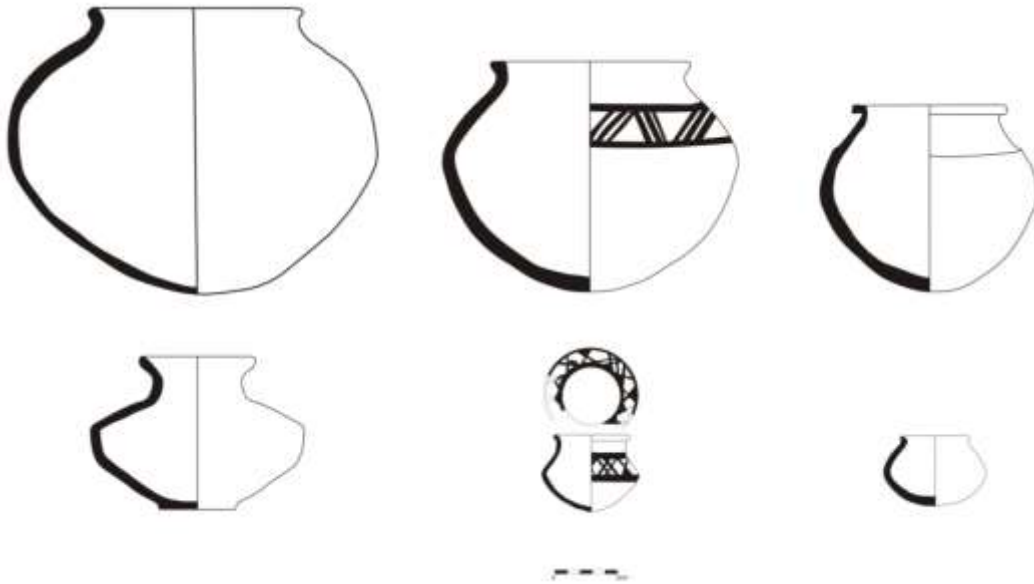


Figure 1: Hasanlu VII assemblage pottery from Hajji Firuz H11 Burial1

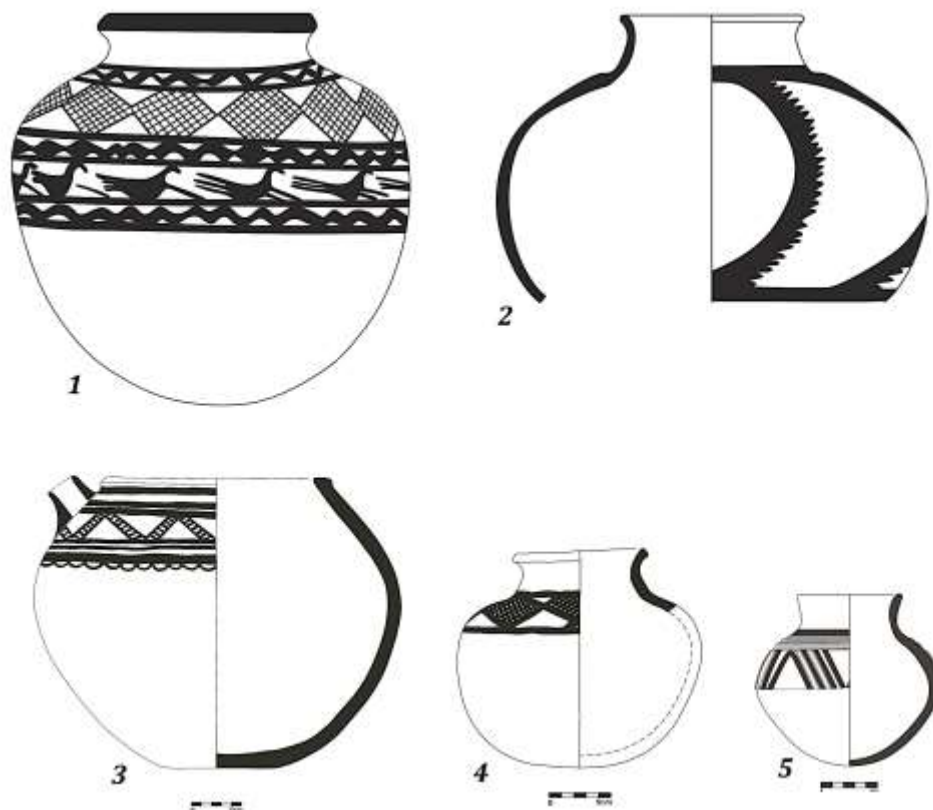


Figure 2: Orange Pottery Ware from Hasanlu: 1-2 (Dyson 1968), 3 (Sadraei and Elliyoun 2019a: Fig. 52) and 4-5 (Sadraei and Elliyoun 2019b: Fig. 45, 112)

3.EBA Pottery Traditions of the South Urmia Basin in the Context of the Stratigraphy of Hasanlu

Excavations in the Hasanlu High Mound to establish the cultural and archaeological sequence of the site (Dyson 1960, 1967; Dyson and Pigott 1975) exposed Hasanlu VII materials below those of Period VI (Middle Bronze Age) and above the Pisdeli (Late Chalcolithic) deposits. In the well sounding made in the 1960 season, Period VII was encountered beneath the middle and late Bronze levels as a 6.5 meters deposit. Most importantly, excavations in the 1972 and 1974 seasons aimed at completing a deep sounding in Grid U22 below levels below Period V revealed 32 stratigraphic units, of which strata 19 to 42 represented Hasanlu VII (Danti, et al. 2004: 586). The U22 Sounding clearly showed that Hasanlu flourished in the Early Bronze Age with a long sequence of presumably continuous occupation—archaeological surveys and excavations at other sites in the Southern Lake Urmia Basin demonstrate this represents a pattern in the wider region.

In light of the changes observed in the painted wares and motifs, Dyson preliminarily divided the period into three *phases* VIIa-VIIc, with VIIa being the latest (Dyson and Pigott 1957). Strata 19 and 20, the uppermost layers, contained globular jars with short necks and everted rims, decorated with a band of cross-hatched lozenges running around the shoulder.

Below this, a band consisting of an undulating line framed by two straight, parallel lines runs all around the body. This group of vessels belongs to Phase VIIa. Strata 21-30, relating to the intermediary phase (VIIb), yielded jars with larger mouths and the same decorations as phase VIIa, except for the presence of a band of birds below the lozenges (Fig. 2: 1). In the lowermost layers, strata 31-42, the Painted Orange Ware disappeared, although undecorated Orange Ware predominates, and sherds from small bowls decorated with parallel vertical lines framing dotted circles emerged. Dyson designated the assemblage as phase VIIC given its relation with the material from the upper phase and its difference from that of the Pisdeli period (Dyson and Pigott, 1975: 182). The above categorization was however proposed in a short report in early years by Dyson on the excavated pottery assemblages of a period spanning almost a millennium. Notably, a series of popular motifs on the contemporary pottery, such as dentate circles (branch-like or flame-like spirals in Kroll, 2004: 680) are absent from Dyson's periodization scheme, while they often occur at other Period VII sites in the region (Dyson, 1958: Fig. 27; Dyson 1968) (Fig. 2: 2).

The assemblages from phase VIIC have been split into five stratigraphic phases, labeled as VIIC:1-5 (Danti et al., 2004: 589-594), by virtue of the five architectural levels recorded in the 1974 excavations. The predominate ceramic types in the VIIC:2-5 assemblages are slipped, wet-smoothed forms "often with lustrous streaks," termed by Danti as Streaky Ware. Their surface color ranges from light brown/pale orange to reddish orange/red and light gray to black. The paste is tempered with a mixture of chaff and grit (Danti et al., 2004: 590). In this phase (strata 42 and 42a-c), two classes of painted wares occur: Black on Orange and Black and Red on Orange (Figure 3). The vessels are invariably wheel-made.

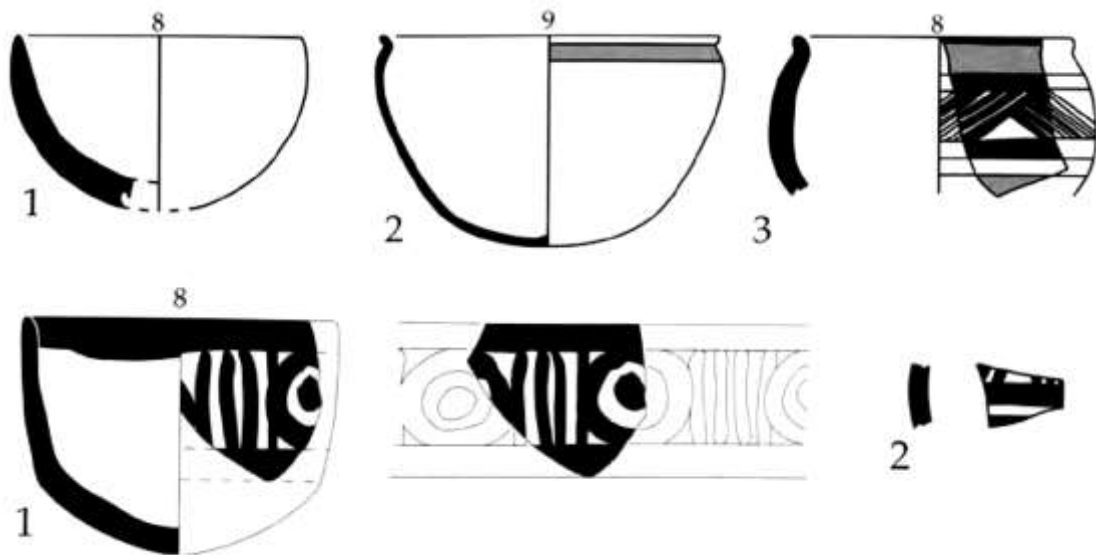


Figure 3: Hasanlu VIIC Painted Wares (Danti et al., 2004: Fig.3, 4)

In the VIIC:4 (strata 40-41) assemblage, the sherds tend to be from simple hand-made bowls with flat bases in Streaky Ware.

Among the finds from Phase VIIC:3, strata 37-39, a large bowl with a fragment of a small, presumably triangle lug at the rim and deep open-mouthed bowls with almost vertical walls are in Streaky Ware. The assemblage also contains two painted examples: a cup with a pointed base decorated with circles confined within horizontal lines and punctuated by vertical lines, and a necked, closed vessel with a cream slip and painted motifs in reddish brown.

With larger exposed contexts than the lower subphases, VIIC:2 is represented by greater architectural remains and a larger pottery assemblage. The latter consists of the same material as the three earlier subphases. It yields the first attestations of the wheel-made Orange Ware as fine, uniformly fired orange vessels with grit temper. As regards morphology, vessels tend to be open bowls with straight walls. The major change in the pottery is the emergence of carinated bowls with everted rims fashioned in Streaky Ware. Other typical forms are hand-made jars with short necks, everted rims and globular bodies. The necks and bodies of these jars were separately made and joined together, and in some cases the body shows a circular depression. A few close-mouthed and short-necked jars with simple rims in Streaky Ware and Orange Ware also occur, as are medium to large wheel-made jars in Orange Ware. Two fragments of Soapy Ware are also present.

VIIC:1 occurs in strata 31a-f, 32a and 32, which comprise three architectural phases on the basis of the excavation records. The most noticeable intra-phase change in the pottery is the drop in the frequency of Streaky Ware and the absolute lack of so-called casserole forms. The mottled surface colors characteristic of the Streaky Ware assemblages in earlier subphases virtually vanishes, giving way to highly burnished ceramics.⁶ The true black burnished pottery of the Kura-Araxian type emerges in this subphase. The bowls are in Streaky or Orange wares and are smaller and shallower than those of the early subphases. Also, a small group of finer bowls or cups in Orange Ware with grit temper are conspicuous in the assemblage. Red-slipped vessels in Streaky Ware and Cooking Pot Ware vessels are among the open forms of VIIC:1.

Medium-to-small jars with a fairly thin body, mainly in Orange Ware, account for the majority of the closed forms. Also present are a few Streaky Ware jars, as is a unique vessel in the shape of a handled jar of Cooking Pot Ware. Bag-shaped jars with simple rim in Orange Ware, Cooking Pot Ware, and Streaky Ware predominate the closed forms category, replacing casseroles as the vessels of choice for food preparation. In one case, in Orange Ware, has a tab or regular handles below the rim. As stated above, the earliest attestations of the Kura-Araxian pottery are found in VIIC:1. Surface decorations are utterly absent, bar the lenticular depressions on a single Kura-Araxian sherd (Danti et al., 2004: 81-86).

4. Burial Traditions in Hasanlu Period VII

Little is known about the mortuary customs, places used in the disposal of the dead, and the grave goods in the Bronze Age northwest Iran. The situation might be related to several factors: the scarcity of extensive and targeted excavations at the contemporary sites, the

lack or insufficiency of scientific research approaches, and ignorance of the spatial criteria of the places used for burial purposes.

In the southern Lake Urmia region, burial evidence from the 3rd millennium BC comes from the two mounds of Hasanlu and Hajji Firuz. As stated earlier, H11 Burial 1 from Hajji Firuz Tepe stands as the only fully published human burial dating to the Hasanlu VII period.⁷ This grave indicates that the dead appear to have been buried following special ceremonies and funerary customs. A rectangular pit was dug, and the body was interred together with offerings after the pit walls were coated in clay or cased in wooden planks (Voigt, 1976: 805). Alongside the one from Hajji Firuz, the graves excavated at Hasanlu provide a relative picture of the mortuary practices of the period. In the operations completed around the central area of Tepe Hasanlu, several burials belonging to the POW traditions were unearthed, though exact information on the contexts in which they were made is unavailable. Dyson reports that:

“One complete Burial, VI B 21, was recovered in which the body of an adolescent child lay on its right side in a slightly contracted position, oriented east-west with its head to the west and facing southeast.”(Dyson, 1958: 27)

The skeleton was associated with six jars of varying sizes. A small jar was above the skull. Dyson also provides the following description of this burial:

“The body was clad in a tunic of some sort fastened by a slender copper pin at the left shoulder. There was a coiled copper ring in the hair just over the left ear and a necklace of white paste beads was hung around the neck.” (Dyson, 1958: 27)

This is the only description Dyson ever provided on Operation VI Burial 21 excavated on the northern Low Mound. It is noteworthy however that it is not the sole excavated burial from Period VII as hints of several others occur scattered in the preliminary publications (Figure 4).

A recent review of the Hasanlu excavation records at the University of Pennsylvania Museum shows that a total of six Period VII graves were recovered in the Hasanlu Low Mound excavations, including SK9 (i.e., Skeleton 9), SK10, SK31, SK458, SK508, and SK509 (Danti and Ebrahimi forthcoming). These burials were all simple, single inhumations located in the area of the Period VII northeast Low Mound settlement, but probably not within contemporary houses, but rather in the intervening open areas. Grave goods consisted of Orange Ware and Painted Orange Ware vessels and personal ornament, including copper/bronze garment pins, copper/bronze coiled wire earrings, stone pendants, and bead necklaces of paste and semi-precious stones.



Figure 4: Operation VI Stratum 5 showing Burial 21/SK31 looking south (Danti and Ebrahimi forthcoming; Fig. p)

While the number of Period VII graves is small, the available sample exhibits few status distinctions in terms of the mortuary assemblages and method of burial. The Hasanlu cemetery was apparently attached to a contemporary settlement, while the aforementioned grave at Hajji Firuz Tepe appears to have been unattached. Such a pattern of both attached and unattached (*viz.* extramural) cemeteries in the region also typifies the Late Bronze Age (Hasanlu Period V) and the Iron I and Iron II periods (Hasanlu Period IVc–IVb), suggesting the region was simultaneously inhabited by both sedentary and non-sedentary populations. In the attached cemeteries, the dead were disposed of at points outside but close to the residential areas. Such a situation would well have been dictated also by the regional geography as the high soil moisture of the Solduz plain prompted by its location in a basin precluded the interment of the deceased in areas lower than the peripheries of settlements. Though the paucity of Hasanlu VII burials hinders in-depth analysis of the social status of specific individuals or the social hierarchy that prevailed at Hasanlu in Period VII, what one may conjecture is that the dead were buried with certain types and amounts of grave gifts according to their social status. Such funerary traditions in this chronological horizon are widely known from West Asia and are not specific to the Lake Urmia region. Though the exact date of the Hajji Firuz burial will continue to elude us,⁸ a cemetery of the Kura-Araxian culture has been identified to the north at Köhne-Shahar in Chaldoran (Alizadeh et al. 2015), where the dead were buried outside of the settlement within isolated chambers. Further evidence of burial practices concurrent with the Hasanlu VII community comes from a royal grave at Arslan Tepe in Turkey (Frangipane et al. 2001) and royal tombs of Ur (Woolley and Litt 1934), which attest to the arrival of distinctive funeral practices at the time. Indeed, lack of recovered contemporary burials by no means imply there were no burial

traditions, but Hajji Firuz demonstrates the existence of burial grounds detached from settlements. Thus, a superficial understanding of the burial traditions coupled with the lack of targeted investigations to spot related cemeteries has limited our knowledge of the cultural characteristics of the Bronze Age populations of the southern Lake Urmia. However, in this context the kurgans at Se Girdan are particularly interesting. The site today contains 11 kurgans⁹ dating to the early Bronze Age, of which six were excavated in 1968 and 1970 (Muscarella 1969, 1971). Based on the characteristics recorded for those of the Maykop culture¹⁰ of Caucasia, these kurgans suggest a date between the late 4th and 3rd millenniums BC (Muscarella 2003). A deeper look into similar kurgan-type traditions in Iranian Azerbaijan (northwest Iran) suggests that the kurgan tradition could have sustained throughout the Lake Urmia Basin. The hypothesis is supported by the presence of two related kurgans in the Takht-e Soleiman region (Wiegartz 1965) and Kleiss' reports from the eastern edge of Lake Urmia (Kleiss, 1972: 143). Furthermore, objects that closely resemble an artifact from the third kurgan of Se Girdan (Muscarella, 1969: 25) possibly derived the kurgans east of the Lake Urmia region (Figure 5).

Overall, the range of diversity exhibited in the mortuary practices of the Ushu-Solduz region in the Early Bronze Age indicates that the region constituted a shatter-zone or border region between distinct cultures. In this regard, the Early Bronze Age is similar to better attested proto-historic and historic periods.

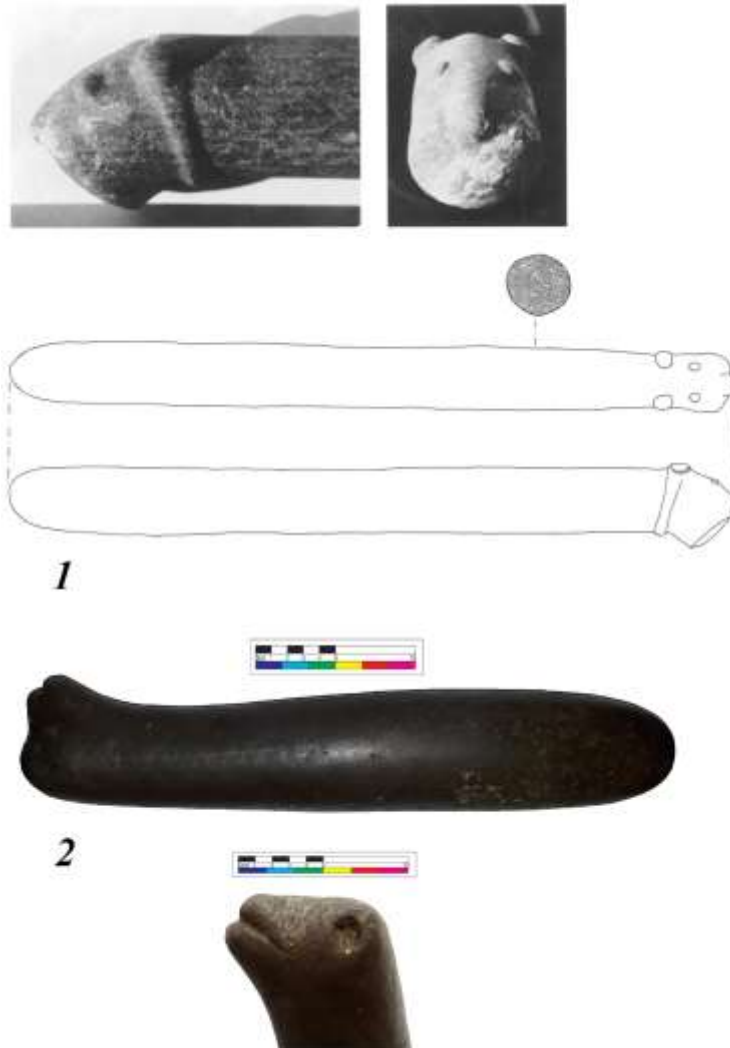


Figure 5: Stone grinders or whetstones: 1 from Se Girdan near Ushnu (Muscarella 1969: Fig. 25-27) and 2 the Eastern Shore of Urmia Lake

5. Cultural Continuity in Light of Multilateral Interactions in Southern Lake Urmia

Developments accompanying the inception of the Bronze Age (at the end of the 4th millennium BC) in northwest Iran and other major regions of West Asia lay the foundations for substantial social and economic changes that in turn precipitated a marked transformation in the social structure of local communities. For precisely that reason, G. Childe designated the period as the Urban Revolution (Smith 2009). Archaeological work that has long been underway in southern quarter of this general region, .i.e. in northern Mesopotamia and adjacent regions, has suggested that at the beginning of the period a distinct cultural horizon, known as Uruk, dominated large parts of southwestern Asia. Related material is reported from Mesopotamia (Algaze 1993), and southern (Wright 1997) and western Iran (Young 1969; Gopnik and Rothman 2011), and Uruk colonies have been recorded more recently

in central to northeastern parts of Iran (Hesari 2011; Ghasemi et al. 2018). Surveys have also identified related settlements in the valleys of the neighboring Northwest Iran (Nobari et al. 2012; Binandeh 2016; Abedi et al. 2019). The Uruk declines around the end of the 4th millennium BC. In other hand, investigations in Caucasia, East Anatolia through the Levant, and Northwest Iran have demonstrated that a prominent tradition with a distinct, fairly consistent material culture began to be paramount across these regions at the Late Uruk culture. According to scholars, this culture are Known as Kura-Araxian or Transcaucasian culture, with Black and Red Burnished pottery with distinct lug on it, and round houses.¹¹ Relevant cultural material occurs in the Iranian Azerbaijan at such sites as Yanik Tepe (Summers 2004) east of Lake Urmia, Haftavan (Burney 1972, 1975), Geoy Tepe (Burton-Brown 1951) and Gijlar (Belgiorno et al., 1984: 241-300) in the western Lake Urmia Basin, KöhneShahar (Alizadeh et al. 2015) in the northwestern and Kul Tepe of Hadishahr (Omranian et al. 2012; Abedi et al. 2014b; Abedi 2016), Kohne Pasgah Tepesi (Maziar 2010) and Nadir Tepesi (Alizadeh et al. 2018) in the northern quarter of the region. The latest research has revealed the material cultures of these communities along with a round house decorated inside in Ardabil region (Ebrahimi 2020). In West Iran, the culture was for the first time attested during excavations at Godin (Young, 1969: 10; Mason and Cooper 1999) and the surface surveys in the region (Young 2004). The farthest extension of the culture based on the available evidence is the northwest central Iran (Alibaigi and Khosravi 2009; Fazeli et al. 2013; Abedi et al. 2014a).¹² The Kura-Araxes culture, known as the Yanik culture in Iran, continues well into the late 3rd millennium in parts of western Iran and throughout the Iranian Azerbaijan.

Yet, results of excavations at Hasanlu and a series of other sites suggest that the southern Lake Urmia Basin together with the headwaters of the Zab have proceeded along a quite different route. Quite contrary to other parts of northwest and west Iran where the Kura-Araxian black burnished pottery began to predominate, here the Pisdeli pottery tradition is followed by some painted styles exhibiting continuity with the late Chalcolithic traditions. Though the archaeological culture proper is yet to be fully known, its pottery traditions have been published under various designations. At Hasanlu, Dyson termed them as Painted Orange Ware after their surface color (Dyson and Piggott, 1975: 182), while Kroll (2004) published the related material from Stein's excavations at Tepe Hasan Ali as Hasan Ali Ware. It is particularly notable that prior to Tepe Hasan Ali, Stein had excavated the same material at Dinkha but had inadvertently attributed them to the Chalcolithic period (Stein, 1940: 361-376) as the ware type was unknown to him at the time. More importantly, in Kroll's research, he nominated a painted pottery collection that was distinct from Late Chalcolithic and Iron Age pottery as Hasan Ali Ware, simply because it was first discovered from Hasan Ali. and more interestingly, Kroll classified these potteries considering to the Kura-Araxes period in the northwest Iran and the preliminary dating from Hasanlu VII period in Middle Bronze Age (Kroll 2017), while most recently, the Tepe Silveh excavation (Abedi 2018), located in the adjacent Ushno valley in South, demonstrated some of this collection (Kroll, 2004: Ab.3 n.18-19) in the early 3th millennium and some types (Kroll, 2004: Ab.1 n.5) in the late 3th millennium B.C. Therefore, use of Hasan Ali Ware for these types of pottery is excluded. The general impression is that the period followed the

Late Chalcolithic and apparently continued up to the Middle Bronze Age, traditionally known as the Khabur Ware period. Related material is reported from other plains in the southern Lake Urmia region, not to mention those excavated by the Hasanlu Project. Results of surface surveys in the southern and eastern parts are suggestive of its distribution over a vast region of the southern Lake Urmia Basin.

Around the Lake Urmia, related pottery was excavated at Qara Qouzlou (Kharazi et al. 2013) in the Miyanduab Plain. Excavations at Se Girdan (Binandeh 2014; Sohrabi and Ebrahimi 2015) near Mahabad drew light on the presence of such material in the southern basin (Figure 6). Beyond the southern plains, assemblages a kin to Hasanlu VII pottery, especially its earlier phases, are known from the intermontane valleys in southern slopes of the Sahand Mountain at Kul Tepe of Hashtrud as well as Topraghli Tepe in the Aydoghmush River basin of Mianeh (Omrani, 2006: 51). The excavated dataset is supplemented with the Hasanlu VII type pottery collections from the surveys of Sumuk Tepe¹³ (Kroll, 1984: 37; Kroll, 2005: 120) about 40 km south of Yanik Tepe and Kul Tepe of Ajabshir (Talai 1984; Voigt and Dyson, 1992: 175) (Figure 7). Ceramics comparable to those from earlier phases of Hasanlu Period VII were found in the Charuymaq Region, and the material from Kul Tepe of Ajabshir and Qara Qouzlou finds parallels at Qara Aghaj (Ghandgar, 2005: 1). On the southern as well as eastern slopes of the Sahand Mountains, such ceramics occur at Deyirman Tepe in the Ujan plain (modern Bostan-Abad) associated with Kura-Araxian material (Chaychi and Omrani 2008). Sherds from Yanik Tepe (Burney, 1962: pl. XLIV n.21) and Geoy Tepe (Burton-Brown, 1951: fig. 12 n.1249; Kroll, 1984: 37) link these peoples with the residents of Yanik Tepe and the Kura-Araxes cultural realm of the eastern Lake Urmia and the regions to the west.

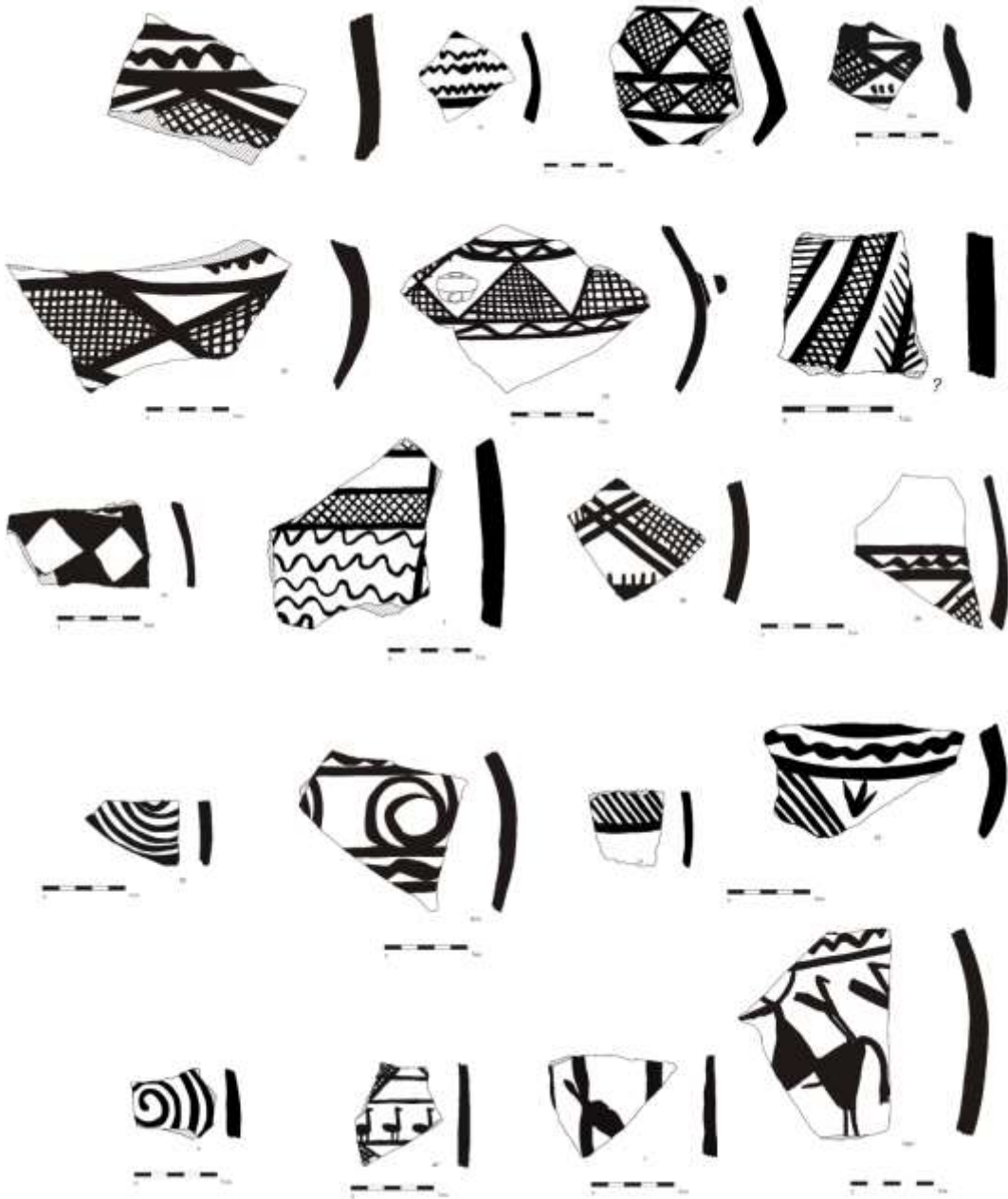


Figure 6: Tepe Se-Girdan Painted Ware (Binandeh 2014; Sohrabi and Ebrahimi 2015)

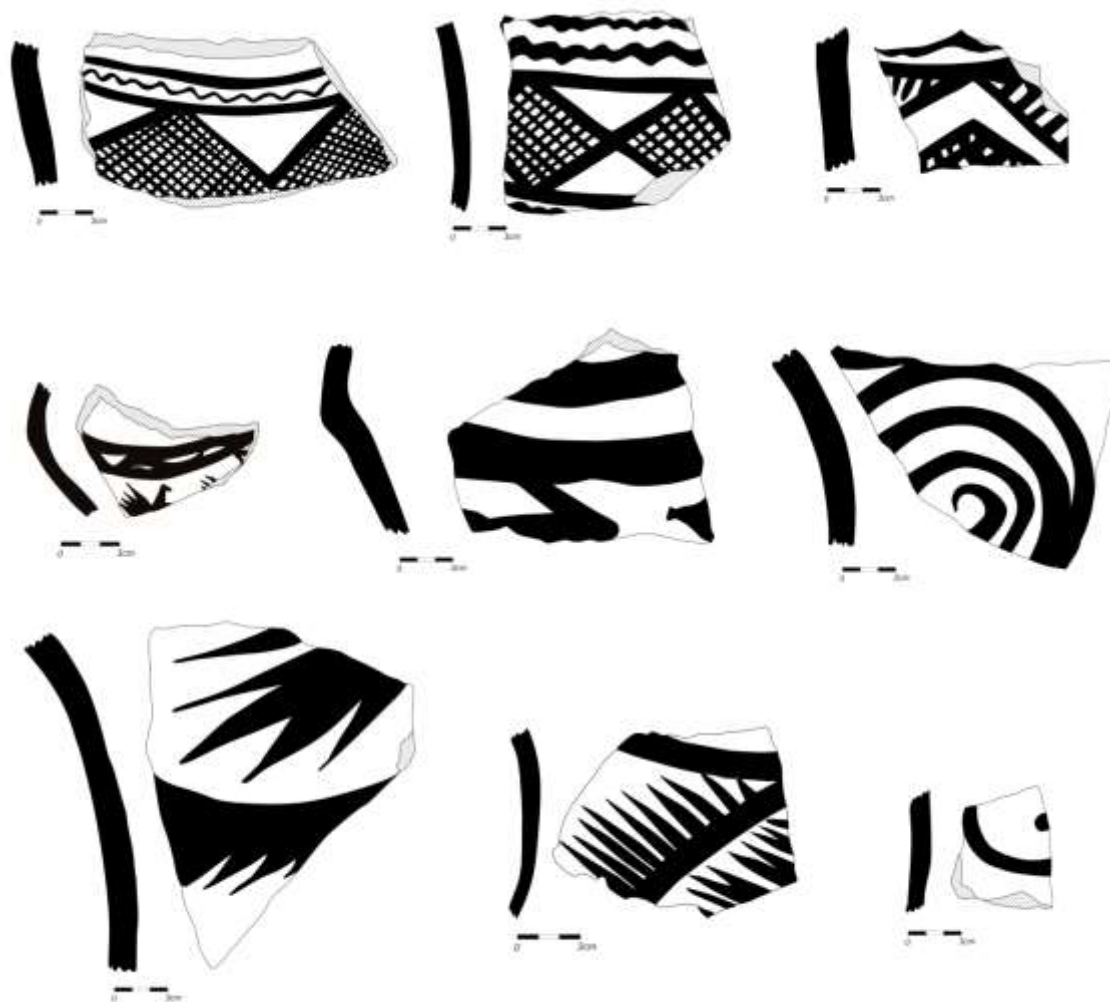
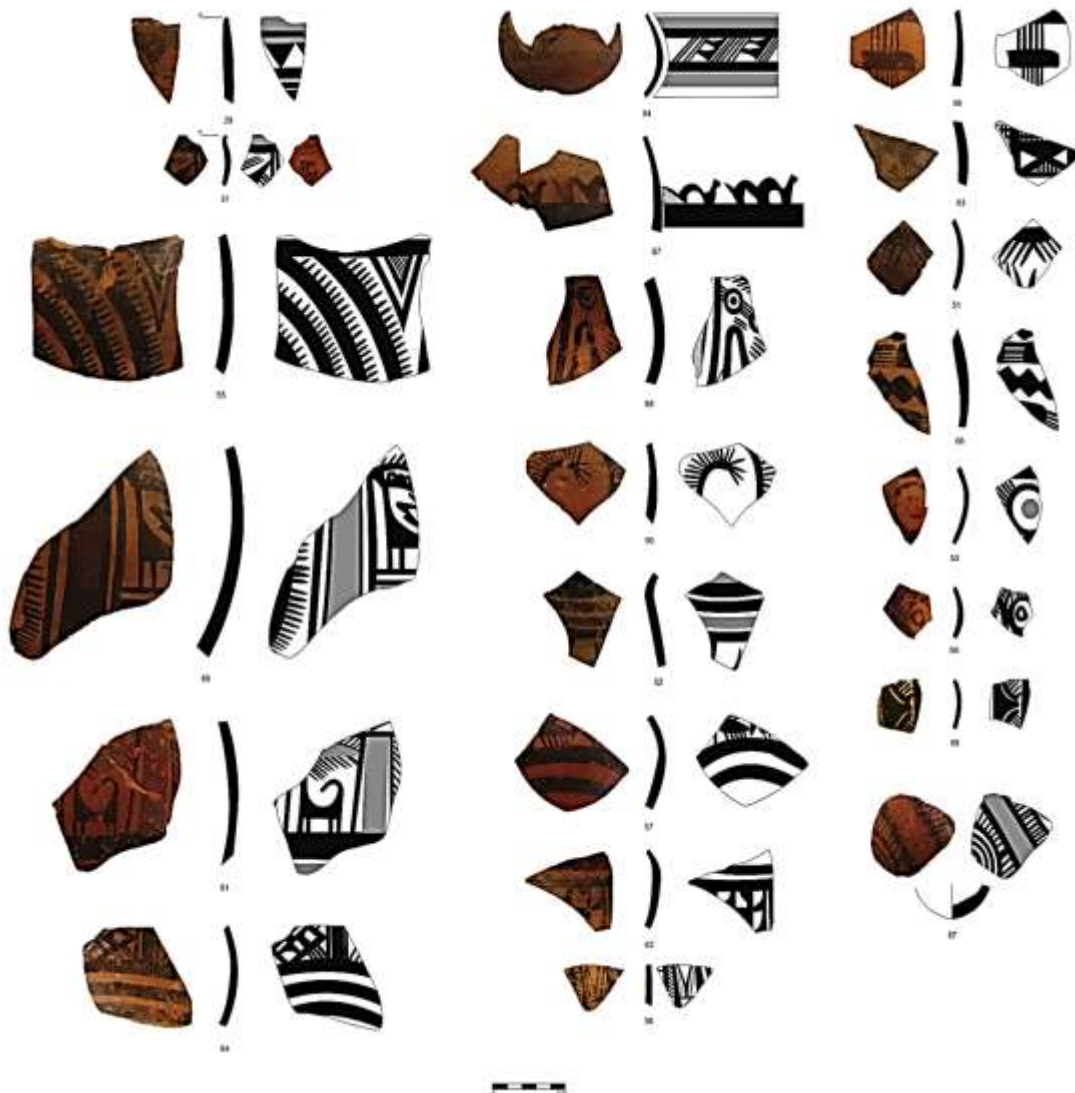


Figure 7: Kul Tepe Ajabshir; Orange Painted Ware (Surface sherds)

As noted, the valleys and plains of the Zab headwaters were in full contact with the entire Lake Urmia region, and the 3rd millennium BC cultures there show cultural alignment with the southern half of the lake. Excavations at Lavin Tepe in the Piranshahr plain pointed to the presence of two different cultures in the late 4th and early 3rd millennium BC (Nobari et al., 2012: 104). On the other hand, excavations at Tepe Silveh in the intermountain plain in northern Piranshahr revealed a sequence spanning the Chalcolithic through the late 3rd millennium BC (Abedi 2018; Abedi and Ebrahimi, 2019: 243-246). At Silveh, with an about 8 meter of deposits dating between the late 4th and late 3rd millennium BC, there are no indications of the Uruk or Kura-Araxian presences, but the local culture is predominated by painted orange and buff wares (Figure 8). Although Kroll speaks of the existence of Kura-Araxian sites in the region (Kroll, 2005: 119), the recent excavations (Sharifi 2019, 2020) have highlighted two facts about the late 4th and 3rd millennia BC cultures. Firstly, the region was

inhabited by populations of the Painted Orange Ware horizon, which is related mainly to the southern Lake Urmia Basin, but also slightly to Northern Mesopotamia. Secondly, the Kura-Araxian and Beveled Rim Bowls (BRB) materials collected in various surface surveys do not testify to the dominant presence of the respective cultures that dominated large parts of the Middle East, but rather evince inter-regional ties (Figure 9). Therefore, the persistent and dominant presence of the bearers of Painted Orange Ware in the region resisted the Kura-Araxian settlements and Uruk conquest.



Figur.8: Monochrome and Bichrome Painted Orange Ware from Tepe Silveh Piranshahr; Tr. I Locus 1143 (Abedi 2018)

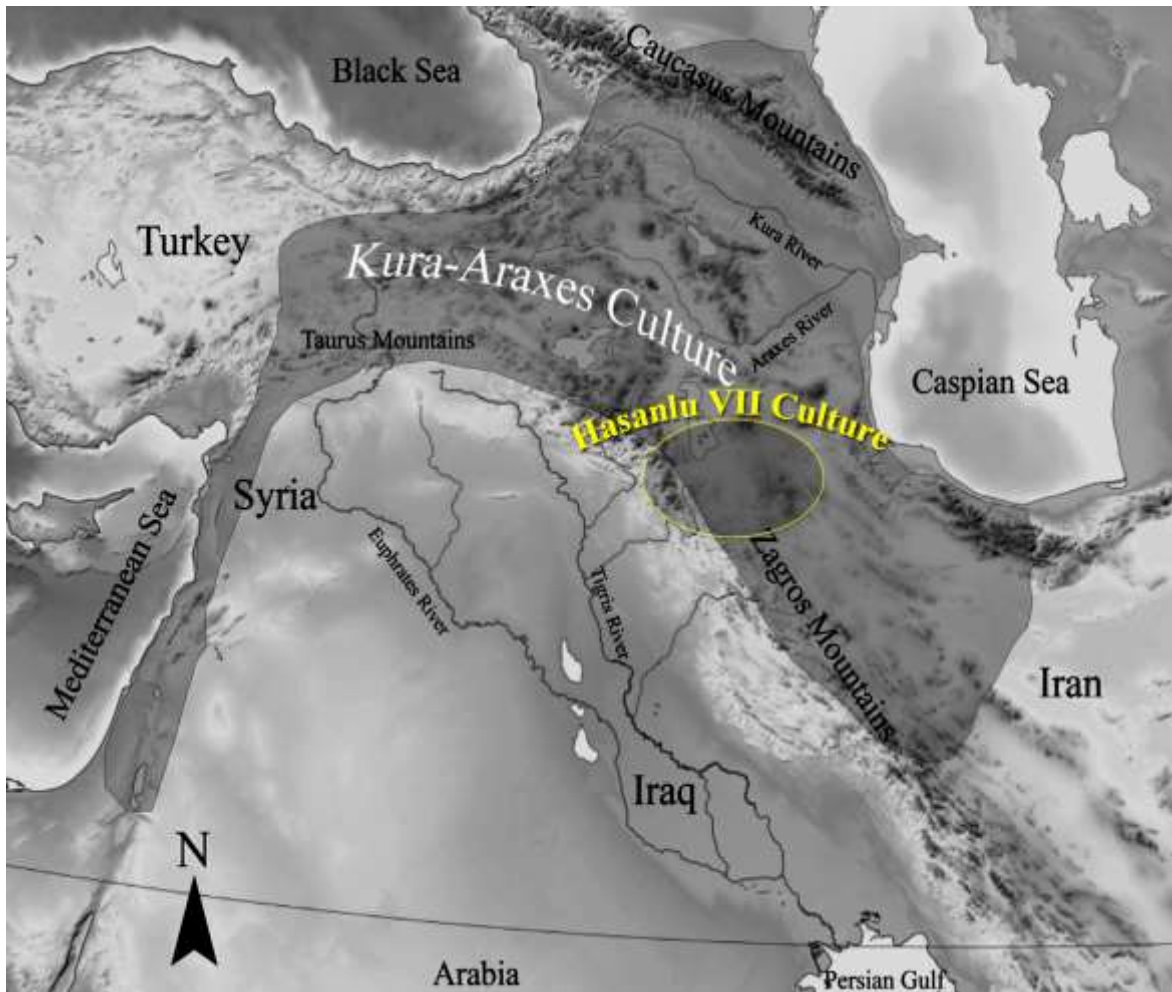


Figure 9: Distribution of Hasanlu VII Communities in interaction with Kura-Araxes (modified map from Wikimedia.org, after Alizadeh et al. 2019: Fig. 1)

6. Conclusions

The results from fieldwork in Northwest and West Iran as well as the central Iranian Plateau précised above show a discrete distribution of related archaeological material belonging to a large community over a vast region, which is generally regarded as the region dominated and settled by the bearers of the Kura-Araxian culture. On the other hand, excavations in the southern Lake Urmia Basin, particularly at Hasanlu, as well as the lack of dominant presence of the Kura-Araxians in the southern shores of the lake have presented a cultural zone with a material culture distinct. Distribution of Hasanlu VII type assemblages over a vast area extending from the Ushnu region to the vicinity of the Alborz Mountains in the Mianeh Region reveals a region dominated by the bearers of the Hasanlu VII type ceramics. The original pottery culture of the period was characterized by bowls

and storage jars, which were replaced in later phases by the POW culture. The sequence of pottery phases of this period at the concerned sites shows that the Hasanlu VII culture emerged concurrently with the Uruk and Kura-Araxian cultures and sustained its evident and dominant presence across its area of influence up until the end of the third millennium BC. Contemporary mortuary practices evince social complexities and genesis of social classes. Ceramics reminiscent of the Ninevite V material—as the dominating culture of northern Mesopotamia—attests to links with the latter region, though the extent of these links and comparisons in material culture cannot be answered with the current limited excavations. What is certain is that the culture and its bearers were totally independent and engaged in full interaction with the Kura-Araxians of the southern Lake Urmia Basin, and controlled the headwaters of the Zab River, and also maintained wide-ranging ties with Mesopotamia particularly its northern regions.

Footnote

1. The enthusiasm might be said to have its roots in the similitude between the material cultures of the Kura-Araxian communities of Caucasia (Kohl 2007), Northwest Iran (Alizadeh and Azarnoush 2003b), eastern Anatolia and Syria as well as the Levant.
2. INAA and petrographic analyses of the Late Bronze (Khabur type) pottery from Hasanlu and Dinkha show they were local products (Bedal et al. 1995).
3. There is now a Hasanlu VIc, VIb, and VIa in the sequence. Hasanlu VIc provides the late 3rd/early 2nd millennium transition from “classic” Hasanlu VII to “classic” Hasanlu VI with Khabur Ware. Dyson never published this material and few areas of the Hasanlu High Mound, where Period VIc levels are present, were excavated by the Hasanlu Project through deep soundings. The U22 Deep Sound is the main exception.
4. While the sequence established by the Hasanlu Project for Dinkha consists of four periods (Muscarella 1968), the depth of the excavated deposits and the comparative analysis of the pottery excavated by Stein (1940: 361-376, Pls. XXI, XXII, XXIX, XXX) at the base of the mound’s northern slope seem to strongly suggest that the settlement history at Dinkha extends far back into the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze times.
5. Operation LXXX in the Gird W28
6. It is notable that these ceramics are comparable to the smoke-blackened and polished Red Ware of the Late Chalcolithic type of the eastern Lake Urmia region, just as the Streaky ware occurs on the surface of Kul Tepe of Ajabshir, located on the eastern shores of the lake.
7. Note that many of the detailed Excavation Reports of the Hasanlu excavations, in particular Hasanlu VII, are still pending.
8. In her published report, Voigt (1976: 805) dates the burial to 2500-2000 BC, but fails to describe the procedure that led her to this chronology.
9. While the original excavator recorded them as tumuli, the term kurgan appears a more proper designation for these royal tombs as they date to the early Bronze.
10. The culture is generally dated between 3700-3000 BC.
11. Some scholars suggest that Kura-Araxes Communities may have contributed to the collapse or abandonment of Uruk colonies and enclaves in highland areas, which in turn, led to the collapse of the whole Uruk system (Algaze 2001; Kohl, 2007: 97-98)

12. In West Iran, related material is known from the excavations of Tappeh Pisa (Mohammadifar et al. 2009) and Malayer (Khaksar et al. 2014) as well as surveys of eastern Zagros (Motarjem and Niknami 2011).
13. Shiramin in the latest Reports

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درآمدی بر دوره فرهنگی حسنلوی VII در جنوب دریاچه ارومیه، شمال غرب ایران

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چکیده

پروژه مشترک ایرانی-آمریکایی حسنلو از معدود پروژه‌های باستان‌شناسی انجام یافته در محدوده شمالغرب ایران است که در فرایند این مطالعات لایه‌های فرهنگی دوران نوسنگی تا تاریخی مورد کاوش و مطالعه قرار گرفته است. هفتمین دوره فرهنگی این محوطه معاصر با عصر مفرغ قدیم و شروع دگرگونی‌های شگرف اقتصادی و اجتماعی در بستر تحولات فرهنگی منطقه خاورمیانه است. یافته‌های این دوره تمایز آشکار مواد فرهنگی این محوطه را با سایر محوطه‌های مفرغ قدیم منطقه شمالغرب ایران از جمله یانیق تپه نشان می‌دهد. علیرغم انتشار گزارشهای جسته گریخته از این دوران فرهنگی، هنوز آگاهی از این دوران و ویژگی‌های سفالی و توزیع پراکنش آن، سنن تدفین و ارتباط آن با سایر مناطق فرهنگی بسیار اندک است. از اینرو، پژوهش حاضر در صدد است با استناد به یافته‌های پروژه حسنلو و سایر کاوشهای انجام یافته در این منطقه ویژگی‌های کلی فرهنگ دوران هفتم حسنلو را بازسازی نماید. مواد فرهنگی این دوره فرهنگی نشان میدهد در طول هزاره سوم پیش از میلاد یک پهنه فرهنگی-اجتماعی متمایز از فرهنگ کور-ارس (یا فرهنگ یانیق) با شاخصه‌های سفالی نارنجی و قرمز منقوش در محدوده جنوب دریاچه ارومیه تا دامنه‌های جنوبی کوهستان سهند شکل گرفته است که از طرفی در تعامل با شمال بین‌النهرین و از طرف دیگر در تعامل با جوامع کورا-ارس قرار داشته اند.

واژه‌های کلیدی: حسنلو VII، عصر مفرغ قدیم، شمالغرب ایران، سفال نارنجی منقوش، حسنلو.