



## Cultural Dynamics of the Second Half of the Fourth Millennium BC and the Roots of Early Urbanization in Southeastern Iran (3500-3000 BC)

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(211-228)

### Abstract

During the late fourth millennium B.C some changes took place in many archaeological sites of south eastern Iran that affected the different aspects of life in the region. By expanding of local cultures in the late 4<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C, at the same time we are witnessing the presence of proto Elamite cultural materials near some key sites and consequently remarkable increasing in trade exchanges with distant areas. In fact, some evidence of foreign merchants with Banesh/proto Elamite elements that has specialization on storing goods, commodity management and trade in long distances. These evidence have been documented by archaeological excavations near Shahdad, Konar Sandal and Shahr i Sokhta. All these sites are the big cities in the first centuries of third millennium B.C. It seems that in spite of expansion of Aliabad culture in Kerman, Baluchestan, Makran and near Sistan since 3700 B.C to 3300 B.C that consequently followed by local cultures in each area from 3300 to 3000 B.C, the main factor for starting and developing of urbanization in south east of Iran is connected to presence of proto Elamite culture and building the exchange centers or Bazar in the areas with good potential for the natural resource. These areas became the urban centers in the beginning of third millennium B.C. In fact, the art of those merchants was learning to local people that how to control their valuable resource and crafts for exchange and interaction with the other people.

**Keywords:** South east of Iran, Urbanization, Trade, Proto Elamite elements, Parviz Piran.

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## 1- Introduction

Although affected by common climatic currents, the southeastern of Iran is geographically a heterogeneous area where various geographical landscapes have been formed. The provinces of Kerman, Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormozgan and some parts of Yazd and Southern Khorasan form the southeastern Iran generally. If we divide this part of the Iranian plateau into smaller basins in which both cultural-historical homogeneity and geographical landscapes are taken into account, we can generally divide it into three basins: Kerman, Baluchistan and Sistan (Moradi 2018: 65). Prior to the 1980s, most archaeologists believed that southeastern Iran was used as a corridor, linking Indus valley to the western Iran and to Mesopotamia based on the excavations carried out in Mohenjo-Daro, in the Indus valley and the Punjab Delta (Caldwell 1967: 24). Some scholars suggest that, during the late of the fourth millennium BC, these geographic areas can be called 'trans-Elamite regions' (Amiet 1985: 19-26): today, thanks to the recent archaeological researches it seems that such comment needs to be revised fundamentally.

In the late fourth and early third millennium B.C of southeastern Iranian plateau, the presence of Proto-Elamite materials in some key sites, distribution of black on gray ceramics called 'Emir gray ware' (Wright 1984), the emergence of common decorations in pottery, use of shared methods in industrial technologies (Jarrige *et.al* 2011: 29) and similar burial traditions (Sarhaddi-Dadian *et.al* 2019: 123) indicate a cultural homogeneity throughout the south east of the Iranian plateau. In that time, we have also some evidence of specialization in the preparation, production and distribution of various goods such as pottery, stoneware, semi-precious stones and metal objects, as well as settlements with an average area about 15 to 20 hectares in many regions of south eastern Iran appear; during the half of the third millennium BC, indeed, the extent of some sites, were more than tripled (Tosi 1979: 159).

Shortly after, in the first quarter of the third millennium BC, specialization in crafts activities and settlement areas became more widespread and covers many parts of life. A new specialization in the architectural and topographical plans is now reflected both in residential houses and architectural complexes (Sajjadi and Moradi 2014: 89), as well as been seen, for example, in Shahr i Sokhta that shows different urban quarter (Mariani, 1992: 183) and in Shahdad where different areas of occupation have been found (Hakemi, 1997: 63-67). We also witness the emergence of social hierarchy that reflected in burial traditions (Sajjadi, 2021: in press).

In the southeast of Iran, areas reflecting urban developments in the third millennium BC are rare, however if we consider the expansion of settlement area and its spatial development (Liverani 1998: 25), along with mechanisms related to trading (Algaze 1989: 590), as the most basic components for an urban organization, we can state that Shahdad with about 150 hectares (Tosi and Salvatori 1990: 126), Shahr i Sokhta with about 200 hectares (Seyed Sajjadi 2019: 17) and also Konar Sandal, used to be urban population centers during the first half of the third millennium BC. At the beginning of the third millennium BC, these urban centers underwent changes which were signs of economic progress along with an increase in the number of functional and luxurious objects (Tosi 1979: 153), including stone vessels, Lapis beads and turquoise as well as bronze objects. According to researches, three kinds of valuable natural materials, namely, chlorite and copper ore from Kerman region (Beale, 1973: 133; Hakemi 1997: 116) and Lapis from Shahr i Sokhta (Tosi, 1974: 7-155) were exported to Elam and Mesopotamia.

## **2-Cultural dynamics in the second half of the fourth millennium BC in southeastern Iran and the presence of Proto-Elamite materials on the context of Aliabad culture (3300-3000 BC)**

The developments of urbanization in the first half of the third millennium BC in southeastern Iran was mostly influenced by internal factors and possibly due to population growth in the areas with good environment. The dynamic role of cultural interactions in the second half of the fourth millennium BC should be also considered as the roots of next developments of the early Bronze Age or in the beginning of urbanization in southeastern Iran.

In Kerman, the culture of Aliabad refers to a period from 3700 to 3300 BC (Eskandari, 2018: 32). This period is also known as Iblis IV (Caldwell 1967). In the second half of the fourth millennium BC (late chalcolithic period) Aliabad cultural materials (3700-3300 BC) were found in a vast range including Kerman, Baluchistan (Mutin *et.al* 2017: fig.7) and Makran IIIa (Mutin 2013a: 260-3) situated 500 km east of Kerman. The roots of this culture can be traced in the early Aliabad culture and Iblis III in the province of Kerman (Shafiee *et.al.* 2019).

Since the first prehistoric settlements in Sistan basin appear around 3200 BC in the southern Helmand delta, we do not have any evidence recording to settlements prior to this era in this area. The closest Aliabad site to Sistan is situated near the Zahedan and 150 km away from Shahr i Sokhta (Moradi *et.al* forthcoming; Heydari 2016: Fig.3).

After the late Aliabad period in the late fourth millennium BC, Proto-Elamite materials such as cylindrical seals, beveled rim pottery and economic writing tablets were found in different parts of Iran including southeast of Iran and western side of Makrani Pakistan. These marker materials were discovered in Tepe Yayha (Potts 2001:232), Mahtoutabad on the banks of Halilrud (Desset *et.al* 2013: fig.10-11), Shahr i Sokhta period I.9-10 (Amiet and Tosi 1978) and Miri Qalat IIIa between 3200-2900 BC (Besenval 2000: 5) (fig.1). The Kech-Makran Basin, which was previously considered the easternmost area of the spread of Aliabad culture, is also known as the easternmost area of the distribution of Proto-Elamite materials, from which 3 pieces of beveled-rim bowls were found. In fact, Miri Qalat IIIa coincides with Yahya IVC and Shahr i Sokhta I.10 (*Ibid*). This coincidence probably includes the late period of Chah Hosseini in the Bampur plain, in which local materials of Mahtoutabad III as well as some Varamin cultural materials have been found (but with no evidence of Proto-Elamite period) (fig.2).

## **3-Chronological complexities of the Proto-Elamite period in southeastern Iran**

### **3-1- Kerman basin**

The late Aliabad culture probably lasted until 3300 BC in the Kerman basin and other parts of the southeast of Iran. The archaeological evidence has also been obtained from Baluchestan and Makrani Pakistan. Although a clear chronological perspective of the Halilrud Basin is not yet available, some information on post-Aliabad cultures known as the Mahtoutabad III (Desset *et.al* 2013) and Varamin culture (Eskandari *et.al* 2020. in press) recently have been collected by excavations and it needs further evaluations: first, according to the findings from Tepe Varamin and Mahtoutabad, the presence of beveled-rim bowls in Mahtoutabad III and their absence in Varamin (*Ibid*) seems to indicate that the Proto-Elamite period was present only in Mahtoutabad III. The culture of Varamin is probably a local culture (*Ibid*), originated from Aliabad culture and known in proximity of Shahdad on the banks of Halilrud basin (Eskandari, 2018: 32), while

Mahtoutabad III and Yahya IVC should be considered as the results of the interactions with the western regions of Iran, mainly in Fars and Khuzistan

The excavators of Mahtoutabad III introduced this culture as an unknown and foreign culture (Desset *et.al* 2013: 48). However, presenting or interpreting it as a foreign culture is a way to ignore the importance of this culture, a culture which had even reached Shahr i Sokhta (Moradi 2021 in press: fig.27) (fig.2). The Proto-Elamite culture in southeastern Iran is known in Yahya IVC, where a building with a large number of Proto Elamite tablets, seals and beveled rim pottery have been discovered in an well-defined architectural unit (Mutin 2013b: 30). Such complete collection has not yet been discovered from any other area in the east and southeast of Iran and it is comparable only to the Tal-e-Malyan. In this perspective, it is possible to note an overlap between Iblis VI (in the north of Kerman), Yahya IVC (in the center) and Mahtoutabad III (in the south of Kerman); all sites from where beveled-rim potteries come from, well-inserted in different local cultural productions.

On the other hand, the number of beveled rim pottery discovered from Mahtoutabad III is not comparable to either Yahya or Malyan and in terms of number, it can only be compared to the sites of Khuzestan (Desset *et.al* 2013: 27). The site of Mahtoutabad is located in the bed of Halilrud and it has been exposed to erosions over time with a lot of river sediments cover it (*Ibid*: 17): it is possible that materials such as tablets or the seal impressions are lost due to this phenomenon and only pottery, that has a high resistance to natural erosion, has remained. The ecological system in Halil valley, in a historical perspective, carried out a meaningful role in relationships dynamics among inner Kerman regions, Baluchestan, Makran and Sistan.

It seems that in the proto-Elamite economic interactions, Mahtoutabad and Yahya which are closer to each other and are situated in a smaller geographical area, played a dynamic and active role in interaction with other areas in the east. If we consider the so-called 'central place exchange model' (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1972: 222) to understand the exchange mechanism of the Proto Elamite period, we can suggest that, on the basis of the findings of Tepe Yahya, such a central position could be proposed for Yahya IVC and Mahtoutabad III, with Yahya that had to have had a significant role in the documenting of economic exchanges based on the mass tablets production.

Another remarkable phenomenon in Kerman, in the Proto-Elamite period, is the emergence of the local culture of Varamin, contemporary with Mahtoutabad III and Yahya IVC (Eskandari *et.al* 2020 in press), where no signs of the proto Elamite culture have been found. Therefore, it may be possible to date the period of Mahtoutabad III from 3300 to 3100 BC right after the Aliabad culture, which also includes part of the phase of Varamin (fig.3).

To ensure this dating and to place Mahtoutabad III in the chronological table, the cultural materials of the first period of Shahr i Sokhta in Sistan can help us to solve the problem. However, in the phases related to the proto-Elamite horizon in Shahr i Sokhta, no bevelled-rim potteries have been found yet; on the contrary, proto Elamite seal impressions and a written proto Elamite tablet were found, both dating back to 3200 to 3100 BC\* (Amiet and Tosi 1978: 139-140). In a preliminary way, we can only suggest that, from the upper layers of Period I of Shahr-i Sokhta, a number of sherds was comparable to the buff painted wares of Mahtoutabad III (fig.4), meanwhile some other samples seem to be comparable with Yahya IVC (fig.5).

### 3-2- Baluchestan and Makran

Generally, in Baluchestan, the contemporary culture to Aliabad or Iblis IV is called 'Chah Hosseini Horizon', known in the Kech-Makran in Pakistan (as the early Miri IIIa) from where the diagnostic potteries of Aliabad, with local materials of Miri/Makran II, come from (Mutin 2013a: 260-262). However, due to the lack of archaeological excavations in chalcolithic sites of Iranian Baluchestan such as Chah Hosseini, our knowledge of this period is limited. The proto-Elamite period of these two areas differs from which one in Sistan and Kerman in terms of the type of materials because the proto-Elamite signs are rare in these regions does not allowing to consider as dynamic urban or exchange centers. Although in some sites of the Bampur valley, Yahya VA pottery, Aliabad wares and the local pottery of Mahtoutabad III and Varamin have been found (Moradi 2016: 452-455), so far no evidence of Proto-Elamite materials is known (fig.2). In Bampur plain recent archaeological survey (Moradi *et al* 2014) shows that, due to its proximity to the Kerman basin, the presence of Kerman related materials during the early fourth millennium BC is significant. In the second half of the fourth millennium BC, the expansion of Aliabad cultural materials can be seen in many sites of Bampur plain and to a lesser extent in other parts of Baluchistan (Moradi *et.al* 2022, *forthcoming*). The data obtained from surface surveys of more than 48 sites of the fourth millennium BC collected in the Bampur plain reveals that Kermani cultural materials (such as Aliabad wares, Mahtoutabad III /Yahya IVC pottery as well as Varamin potteries) were diffused along with local samples. In Makran, the Aliabad cultural materials were found from the early IIIa Miri Qalat layers, while a few Baneshi/ Proto-Elamite beveled rim potteries were discovered from the late phase of IIIa (Mutin 2013a: 260-62).

### 3-3- Sistan plain

Throughout the Sistan plain, no signs of the presence of Aliabad culture have been documented so far, and the closest place from which such materials are found is around Zahedan (Heydari 2015: Fig.3). It seems that climatic conditions before 3500 BC prevented the formation of settlements in the Sistan plain. The first evidence in this region is in Shahr i Sokhta dating back to 3200 BC (simultaneously with Yahya IVC dating to the Proto-Elamite period) (Salvatori and Tosi 2005: 284). The excavations in Proto-Elamite layers of Shahr i Sokhta include fieldworks in an area of 25 square meters carried out by the Italian team and by the Iranian archaeologists since 2017 (Sajjadi and Moradi 2018: 717-721). In Shahr i Sokhta two interaction spheres; Proto-Elamite and southern Turkmenistan one have been existed at the end of the fourth millennium BC (Lamberg-Karlovsky and Tosi, 1973: 52). The first one was the part of a trans-regional trade system in western Asia, although Nal pottery, Emir gray and Quetta/southern Turkmenia wares were presented in the same layers (Amiet and Tosi 1978: 22-23; Moradi 2021 *in press*). The southern Turkmenia is famous for the Namazga III painted buff pottery (Biscione 1974: 69). This type of wares has already been found in abundance from the Mundigak III, north of the Helmand delta in Afghanistan and in the Quetta Valley in Pakistan (*Ibid*). A number of these potteries was found in the layers associated with the phase 9-10 of Shahr-i Sokhta, around 3200 to 3100 BC. Although the impact of these two areas of interaction is more significant in phase 9-10 in Shahr-i Sokhta, it seems that impact and the presence of cultural materials continued until the end of the period I (up to 2800 BC).

Mutin and Mink categorize the pottery collected for chemical experiments from the excavations related to the period I of Shahr i Sokhta conducted by the Italian team based



on their paste and motifs into three general categories. The first one includes buff wares, local samples, southern Turkmenistan and Quetta wares, the second includes the Makran and Baluchistan related wares and the third group is unknown potteries (Mutin and Mink 2019: 884). In reviewing the cultural materials obtained from the recent excavations at eastern residential area, the author has identified and classified six categories of cultural materials with different origins and styles during phases 9 and 10 of period I (3200-2800 BC). They include local materials, southern Turkmenistan and Quetta wares, Emir Gray wares, Proto Elamite Cultural materials and the Jemdet Nasr jars, Nal pottery from central Baluchistan of Pakistan, Kerman, Bampur and Makran types (Moradi 2021 *in press*)(fig.6). Anyway our focus is on the Proto Elamite cultural materials and Kermani related pottery (figs.5 and 7) that are closely related to each other.

The presence of Mahtoutabad III / Yahya IVC pottery along with Emir gray wares in Shahr i Sokhta I (fig.5) indicates the dynamic role of Kerman and Baluchistan basins in the formation of Shahr i Sokhta (fig.7). The proto-Elamite elements of the first period of Shahr i Sokhta are: 1. One proto-Elamite tablet discovered from the excavations of the Italian missions in the eastern residential area, in the square XDV. This is the only tablet obtained from Shahr i Sokhta. 2. The cylindrical seals impressions with animal, plant and human motifs found from both Iranian and Italian excavations (fig.7) 3. Jemdet-Nasr-like potteries such as nose lugs jars 4. Clay human figures that are generally comparable to some Jemdet-Nasr samples (Matthews 1989: fig.11.3). The pseudo Jemdet-Nasr jars with two or more nose lugs on the upper part have been found in many areas in the south of Mesopotamia, southwest of Iran include Fars and Kerman in 3000 BC. The profile of Shahr i Sokhta samples, unlike the Jemdet Nasr/ Yahya IVC samples (Potts 2001: fig.1.40), is completely round shape and the motifs are mostly similar to Quetta wares (Moradi 2021 *in press*: fig.24) and they cannot be completely compared to the original Jemdet Nasr types. A similar type is also found from Yahya IVC covered and designed by local motifs (Potts 2001: fig.1.40).

The cylindrical seal impressions with animal motifs or four leaf clover flowers are similar to the proto-Elamite samples dating back to the 3100-3000 BC found from Susa (Amiet 1972: Pl.26), Yahya (Potts 2001: fig.10.29), Malyan (Pittman1997: fig.4a) and Oman peninsula (Amiet 1975:426). No beveled-rim bowls have been found so far from the layers relating to the period I of Shahr i Sokhta. The reason may be traced to the fact that many of the sites with beveled rim pottery date back to 3300 and 3200 BC or maybe the lack of beveled-rim bowls usage at Shahr i Sokhta. Probably when the effects of Proto-Elamite culture reached Sistan, the function of such pottery in the context of daily life was lost and such an archaeological phenomenon had no longer a role in people's lives in 3200 BC. Instead, other elements of this culture, such as cylindrical seals impressions and writing tablets related to commodity management and storing, had been more widely used. On the other hand, the presence of pottery similar to Yahya IVC/Mahtoutabad III and the Proto-Elamite elements among Shahr i Sokhta period I materials is significant (fig.4-6). It seems that because of similarity between Mahtoutabad III pottery and some samples in Shahr i Sokhta I, more attention should be paid to the key role of this site in the expansion of the Proto-Elamite culture in Shahr i Sokhta. The explanation for the presence and expansion of Mahtoutabad III along with the Proto-Elamite culture of Yahya IVC can be related to the long-standing links between the Halilrud basin and eastern regions, especially Bampur plain; in Chah Hussein and other

simultaneous sites in the Bampur valley, indeed, we can observe the presence of Varamin related and Mahtoutabad III pottery along with local materials (fig.2).

#### 4- Conclusion

In southeastern Iran, three major urban centers during the early third millennium BC were formed; Shahdad in the north of Kerman, Konar Sandal the south in the southern part of Kerman and Shahr i Sokhta in Sistan basin. Shahdad and Shahr i Sokhta followed almost the same path in urban development. Here are a few debated points about the internal and external contexts of the conversion of these population centers in the late fourth millennium BC to the relatively large cities in the middle of the third millennium BC.

First, the theoretical basis of the discussion is based on Parviz Piran's sociological theory of "Geo-strategic and Geopolitical Theory of Iranian Society" (Piran 2004 cited by Gudarzi 2009: 27). After researches conducted by Western and Iranian scholars on the formation of various aspects of Eastern life, such as the theory of Asian production by Karl Marx and Engels or the theory of water Despotism by Karl Wittfogel (Wittfogel, 1981, cited by Rothman 2004: 79), Piran, is the first sociologist who realizes the importance of trade in the formation of Iranian identity, especially in relation to cities and kingdoms and the Eastern despotism. In fact, the theory of Geo-strategic and Geopolitical problems of Iranian Society has a special emphasis on trade throughout the history of Iran, which has been obtained from the analysis of more than three hundred books on historical research and urban planning in Iran (Gudarzi 2009: 49). This theory is based on three principles. First, the nature and necessity of migration in many parts of Iran due to climate instability. The second is the discovery of agriculture that requires settlement in areas with limited water resources and limited environmental capacities (*Ibid*: 47). These two principals have always created an inherent and inevitable conflict between agriculture and nomadism. Such a conflict has been seen and recorded in the prehistoric period of Iran, especially between nomadic mountaineers and urban dwellers in the lowlands of Khuzestan (Alizade2010).

The third principle is Iran's geopolitical challenge, namely the insecurity resulting from the struggle between local and regional powers for physical control. Piran interprets that Iran's limited attacks on its neighbors have historically been more to reopen and to control trade routes as a source of income for kingdoms, governments, local economies, and suburban artisans, and that the geopolitical challenge is tied to trade (Gudarzi 2009: 50). In fact, the strength of Parviz Piran's theory compared to other Iranian and European sociology theories has been in this understanding of the role of trade in Iranian life. Accordingly, the author has used the third principal to interpret the formation of prehistoric cities in southeastern Iran. Likewise, by modifying the global system model of Wallerstein, Guillermo Algaze emphasizes on the role of trade in urban development and government formation during the Uruk period in Mesopotamia (Algaze 1989: 588-589). In the urban centers of Kerman basin, namely Shahdad and Konar Sandal, we have witnessed cultural changes since the early fourth millennium BC, which eventually led to the spread of Aliabad culture at 3300 BC, from north of Kerman to the Bampur plain and to some parts of Baluchistan and Makran in Pakistan (500 km to the east of Kerman and near Shahr i Sokhta). In Jiroft plain in south of Kerman, the Varamin culture, with local features, has been also identified in Tepe Dehno, near Shahdad. The cultural sequence after Aliabad has been called 'Varamin culture' with the evidence of local factors, and

no witnessing about the formation of primary urban core. Neither in Tepe Varamin, nor in Tepe Dehno there are no evidence for cultural continuity in the urbanization process, as, on the contrary, known in Shahdad and Konar Sandal, two active Proto Elamite centers. Along with this local culture, in the two mentioned regions, we have attested the emergence of settlements with proto-Elamite and local cultural materials. Iblis VI (Chase et al. 1967: 188-97), in the north of Kerman, and Yahya IVC and Mahtoutabad III in the south, indicate the formation of Proto-Elamite colonies near the local settlements. The absolute and relative dating show that these cultures coexisted at the same time.

We face also to the same situation in Shahr i Sokhta. Here is the only settlement where the local and regional materials along with the Proto-Elamite elements were present during 3200 to 3000 BC. This condition is probably related to the limited living space in the Sistan plain as a flat and catchment area with scattered natural Kaluts that make Shahr i Sokhta as the largest habitable flat Kalut. Therefore, the Proto-Elamite cultural materials are in the same place as local ones. The presence of cow bone masses in the lower levels of period I in the eastern residential area indicates the possible extent of agricultural activities in an area where the use of large animals such as cattle for agriculture in muddy and wet lands was necessary (Sajjadi and Moradi 2018 : 718).

Now the question is how to interpret the presence of Aliabad culture and then the Proto-Elamite in the expansion of southeastern urbanization?

In Kerman, it seems that the spread of Aliabad wares alone could not provide a powerful force in forming the foundation of ancient cities. The population concentration happened only in places that had witnessed the presence of Proto-Elamite colonies in 3300 to 3200 BC. The scattered communities that used to be the large villages with an extent of 15 hectares before 3200 BC became larger and formed the urban centers during this period.

Although archaeological excavations have not been carried out in many areas outside of Kerman, where evidence of Aliabad culture has been discovered and all our information is from surface surveys, it can still be assumed that, due to the widespread distribution of Aliabad cultural materials in many areas of the southeast, probably during the Aliabad period, people tried to discover new lands in the east. In fact, the initial acquaintance with the eastern regions by the nomadic groups first began in the second half of the fourth millennium, and then in the last two centuries of this millennium, some groups with Proto-Elamite culture who excelled in commodity management, settled in Kerman, Tepe Yahya and Mahtoutabad. They formed colonies such as Mahtoutabad III and then some of them moved to other areas such as Sistan and Makran plains. By studying the climate of the fourth and third millennia BC, Raïke suggests probable ways in eastern Iran that were used as the seasonal or annual routes (Raïke, 1979: 555-559).

If we accept that the Proto-Elamite features, especially tablets and seals impressions, were related to trade and storing systems, then we can find a clear reason for the widespread presence of these materials in areas such as Kerman and Sistan that were prone to trade. The archaeological evidence reveals that local communities living in these areas before the Proto-Elamite period were not familiar with complex commodity managements, long distance trade and keeping the records of goods. Excavations at Tepe Varamin, tepe Dehno in Kerman, Mundigak in the north of the Helmand Delta, and the Kech-Makran Plain in Pakistan indicate that there is no significant evidence of commodity management practices. Trade and commerce also took place locally and



within a relatively short distance between these communities, which naturally did not require complex storing and accounting procedures. Thus, as these merchant groups gradually entered to these areas, it became possible for small centers to become places to exchange goods and to trade, what we call it today bazaar. This became a reason to attract the population from the surrounding areas, which is the basis for the formation of the first stage of urbanization in southeastern Iran. Such areas reach between 15 and 20 hectares at 3000 BC and about 80 hectares or more at 2800 to 2500 BC. The buildings that can play the role as markets have been discovered only in Shahr i Sokhta in southeastern Iran dating back to 2300 BC. In this historical perspective, the building number 26 known in Shahr-i Sokhta, which is a corridor-like building with retaining walls, appears an important evidence about trade and relationships; the excavators of this building presented it as a probably open Bazar based on its structure and architectural development (Sajjadi and Moradi 2017).

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### Footnote

1. Recent radio carbon dating may back to 3500-3300 B.C (Personal conversations with Dr.S.M.S Sajjadi)

### Attachments



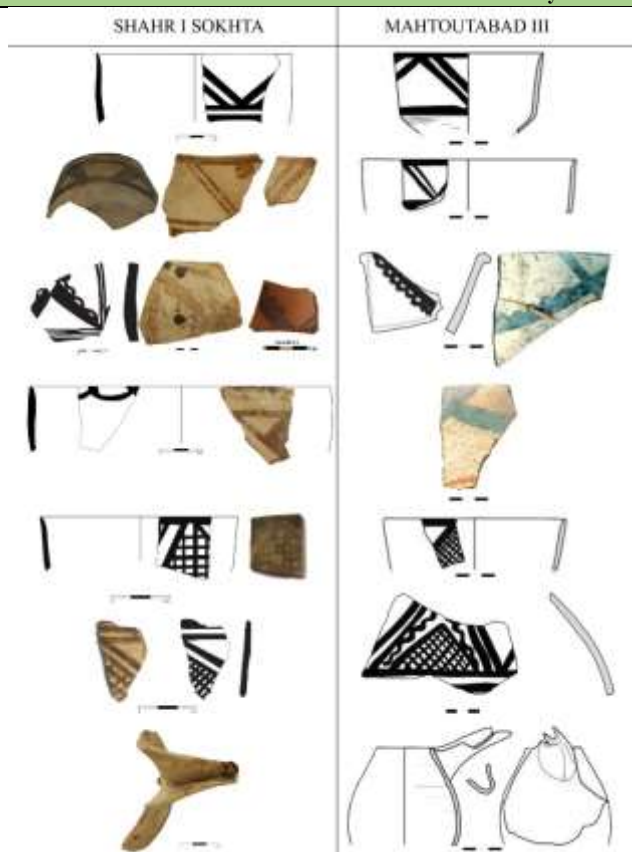
Figur.1. Distribution of key sites with proto Elamite elements (focus on Iranian plateau)



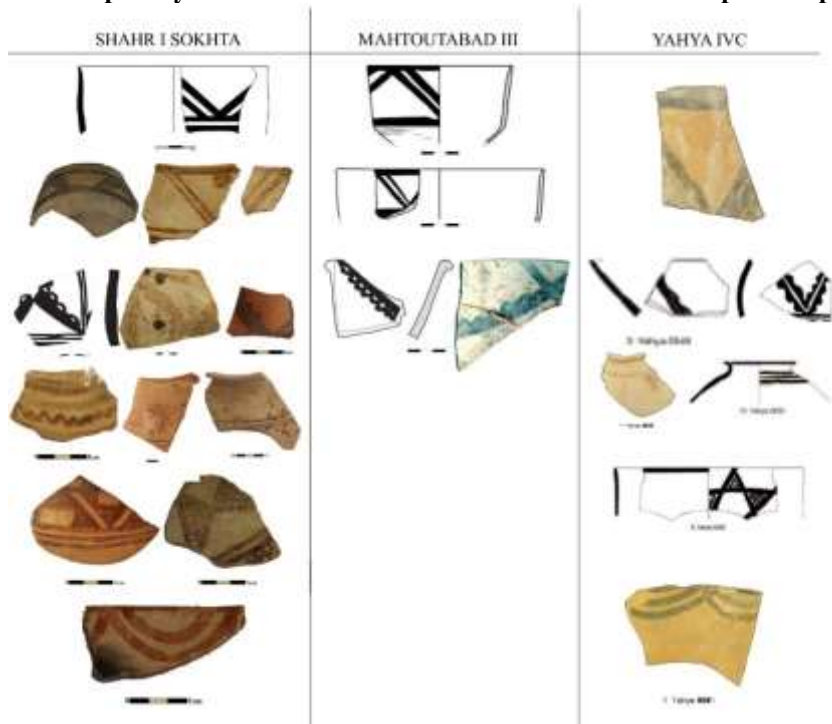
**Figur. 2. Kerman related pottery from Bampur valley (nos 1-6: Yahya VA related wares, 7-9: Aliabad wares, 10-18: Yahya IVC and Mahtoutabad III, 19-23: Varamin wares), (After Moradi 2016)**

Date (B.C)	Susia	Kerman		Baluchestan	Sistan	
		Yahya	Halil Rud			
2500	Old Elam	IVB	Konar Sandal ↑ (Mature Urbanization)	↑	Shahr i Sokhta II (Mature urbanization)	
2600						
2700						
2800	Susia III	IVC  (Proto Elamite)	Varamin/ Mahtoutabad III	Bampur I-IV	Phase 8  Phase 9	
2900						
3000					Unknown Some pottery linked to Proto Elamite culture of Kerman?!	phase 10  Shahr i Sokhta I (Proto Elamite)
3100		Mahtoutabad III (Proto Elamite)				
3200	Susia II	Gap?	Aliabad	Chah Hosscini Horizon with Aliabad Wares	Recently discovered	
3300						
3400						
3500	Susia I	Gap?	Aliabad	Chah Hosscini Horizon		
3600						
3700						
3800						
3900						
4000	Terminal Susia					
4100	Late Susiana 2	VA	Yahya VA-C	Chah Hosscini Horizon		
4200						
4300						
4400						
4500						
4600	Late Susiana 1	VC-B		Unknown		
4700						
4800						
4900	Late Middle Susiana	VC-B		Unknown		
5000						

Figur.3. Chronological table of late fourth and early third millennium B.C in SE Iran.



Figur.4. Parallel pottery between Mahtoutabad III and Shahr i Sokhta period I phases 9-10



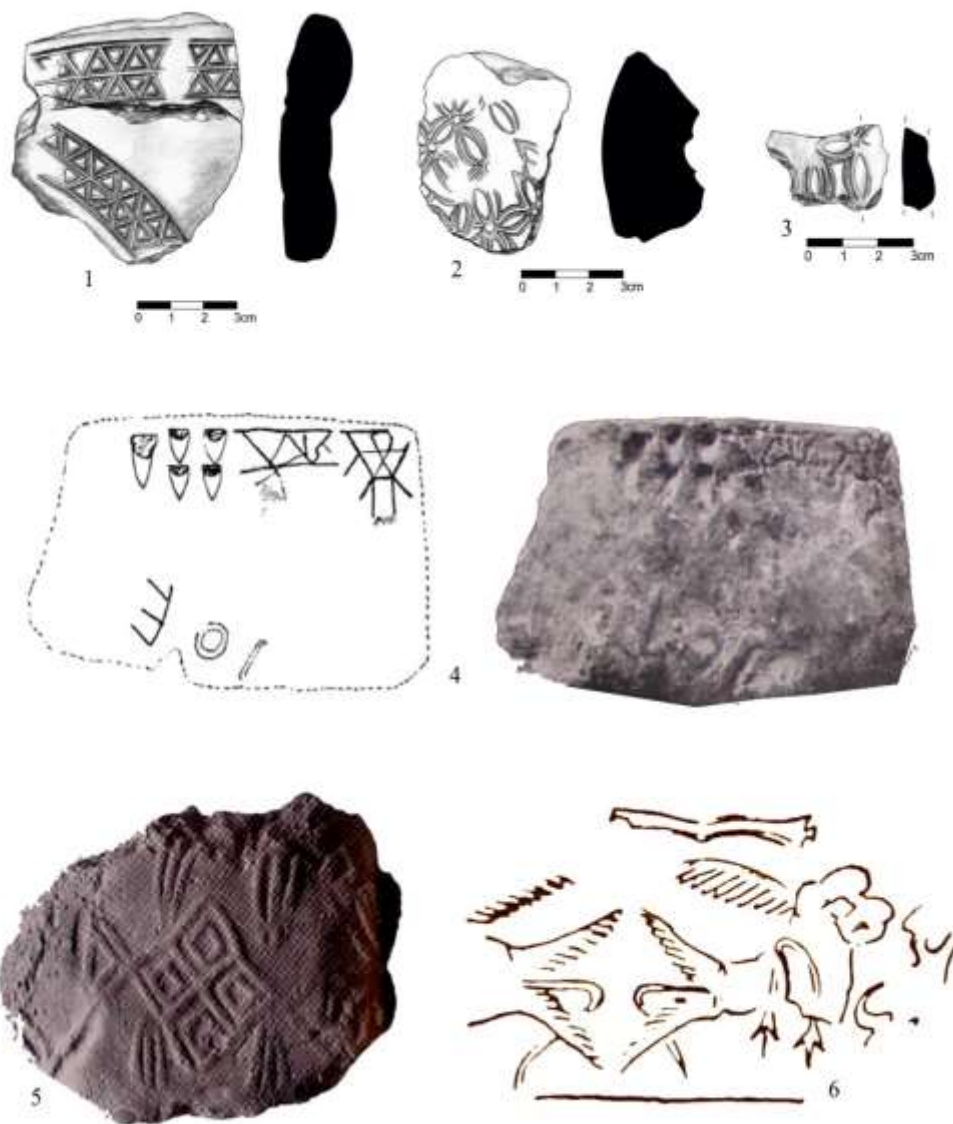
Figur.5. Shahr i Sokhta, Yahya IVC and Mahtoutabad III pottery.





**Figur.6. typology of pottery from period I of Shahr i Sokhta (3200-3000 B.C).**  
Nos.1-2: Namazga III type. Nos.3-4: Emir gray wares; 5-6: Nal pottery, Nos. 7-8: pseudo Jemdet Nasr type (No.7: A pseudo Jemdet Nasr jar decorated with Namzga III motif and no.8 has seen in Yahya IVC period), Nos.9-14: Kerman related pottery (No. 12 is also common in Bampur valley and no.14 is common in Yahya IVC and documented in Bampur valley (see fig.2), Nos. 15-17: Bampur/ Baluchestan type (No. 15 also has seen in Yahya IVC, no. 16 in Yahya IVC, Varamin culture, Bampur valley and Spidej).





Figur.7. Proto Elamite seals impression and tablet from Shahr i Sokhta Period I, phases 10-9, 3200 B. (nos.1-3 After Moradi 2021; nos. 4-6 After Amiet and Tosi 1978)

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## پویایی فرهنگی نیمه دوم هزاره چهارم پ.م و زمینه‌های شهرنشینی آغازین در جنوب شرق ایران

(۳۵۰۰-۳۰۰۰ پ.م)

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### چکیده

در اواخر هزاره چهارم پیش از میلاد برخی رخدادها و تغییرات در محوطه‌های باستانی جنوب شرق فلات ایران به وقوع پیوست که باعث ایجاد تغییرات عمده‌ای در مناسبات فردی و اجتماعی ساکنان این بخش از فلات ایران شد. همزمان با رشد و توسعه فرهنگ‌های بومی در اواخر هزاره چهارم پیش از میلاد، شاهد حضور عناصر بازرگانی آغاز ایلامی و رشد چشمگیر مبادلات بازرگانی با مناطق دوردست و در پی آن رشد شهرنشینی در بسیاری از محوطه‌های فلات ایران به ویژه در جنوب شرق ایران هستیم. در این دوران همزمان با شکل‌گیری هسته‌های اولیه شهرهای نخستین، شواهدی از بازرگانان بیگانه با مواد فرهنگی بانثی/ آغاز ایلامی که در امر مدیریت کالا و انبارداری و احتمالاً بازرگانی دارای تخصص هستند در نزدیکی شهداد و کنارصندل در کرمان و همچنین در شهر سوخته سیستان که هر سه از شهرهای باستانی و کانونهای تمرکز جمعیت در نیمه هزاره سوم پ.م در جنوب شرق ایران هستند گزارش شده است. به نظر می‌رسد که اگر چه در جنوب شرق ایران فرهنگ علی‌آباد از اوائل هزاره چهارم پیش از میلاد تا اواخر آن گسترش یافته و شواهد آن در بسیاری از مناطق دیده می‌شود اما بر اساس رهیافت "راهبرد و سیاست سرزمینی" از پرویز پیران آنچه که باعث رشد شهرنشینی در اوائل هزاره سوم پ.م شد مرتبط با حضور عناصر بیگانه آغاز ایلامی و تشکیل کانونهای داد و ستد اولیه یا بازار در مناطق مستعد توسعه بوده که بعداً و در طی یکی دو سده تبدیل به محوطه‌های کلیدی شهرنشینی در جنوب شرق شدند.

واژه‌های کلیدی: جنوب شرق ایران، شهرنشینی، بازرگانی، عناصر آغاز ایلامی، پرویز پیران