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CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE OLD ELAMITE PERIOD

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INTRODUCTION

The period spanning from the end of the Ur III control over Susa to the beginning of the so-called Kidinuid dynasty in Elam roughly corresponds to the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000–1600/1550 BC) and saw the alternation of the Shimashki dynasty and that of the grand regents of Elam (Sukkalmah, or Epartids, from the name of the probable founder, Eparti/Ebarti). It was a period in which Elam was fully independent, with firm control over the territories of south-western Iran, from the Zagros mountains to the Susiana plain, up to the shores of the Persian Gulf. But the heart of the kingdom was in Fars, with its 'capital' Anshan, identified as Tal-i Malyan in the Marv Dasht plain. At this time, Elam had a structured political framework, with the paramount authority represented by the *Sukkalmah*, flanked by the *Sukkal* of Elam (and Shimahski) and by the *Sukkal* of Susa. It probably also had other authorities who are less clear, with complex mechanisms of succession quite different from those of Mesopotamia that must have grown up within a confederation that united territories occupied by settled and nomadic peoples and tribes, finding a compromise between kinship forms and political hierarchies.

We know little of the equilibrium of this association, in the absence of explicit documents regarding the kingdom's internal structure, but it probably had its roots in earlier times (the Awan Dynasty) and took shape during the period of military pressure applied by Ur III (Shimashki Dynasty). At least initially it was a subdivided state which contained a plurality of entities and powers but which undoubtedly developed into a more close-knit and stable structure during the Epartid Dynasty. It was a powerful kingdom that extended eastwards and possessed in the Iranian highlands an almost inexhaustible pool of resources; it opened onto the Persian Gulf, but was above all ready to play a leading role in the Mesopotamian arena. The latter aspect of Elamite politics is recorded almost exclusively by the scarce references in written sources, though these are indirect and come from the cities of Mesopotamia (Ur, Isin, Larsa, Babylon, Eshnunna, Mari), and virtually nothing is known about what happened on the eastern front. The ease of penetration, especially in the region of Diyala (Eshnunna), where the influence exerted by Elam was at times very strong, reveals expansionist ambitions. A similar picture is obtained from documents from

Mari dating to the time of Zimri-Lim, when the Elamite king Sheplarkak (Siwe-Palarhuppak) seems to have been the main power even in the Mesopotamian arena. Only Hammurabi of Babylon was able to contest this role, inflicting a crushing defeat on Elam, but retaliation came during the reign of his son Samu-iluna, when Kutir-Nahhunte I invaded the lands of Mesopotamia and even threatened the capital. Unfortunately, very little is known of the last phase of the dynasty, but references in texts to numerous princes who could rule simultaneously are evidence of the progressive disintegration of the internal political system, perhaps accentuated by a widespread crisis that also affected Mesopotamia during the 16th century BC and marks the passage from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age in the ancient Near East.

CHRONOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

The chronology of Elam during the Shimashki and Sukkalmah dynasties is constructed on the basis of historical synchronisms with Mesopotamia known from the period of Ur III onwards, which allow the sequence of Elamite rulers – built up using a variety of sources – to be tied into the historical events of the ancient Near East.

In this chapter, absolute dates are given according to the conventional Middle Chronology and the time span considered roughly corresponds to the Middle Bronze Age of Mesopotamia, between the fall of Ur (2004 BC) and Babylon (1595 BC). The so-called New Low Chronology, which moves the dates about one century forwards (respectively, 1911 BC and 1499 BC), proposed by the Belgian school on the basis of a revision of the stratigraphic sequences of Mesopotamian sites and of textual and astronomical data (Gasche et al. 1998; Warburton 2011), is not readily applicable to the sequences of Assyria, Syria and Anatolia, and convincing arguments have been advanced (based on both scientific date determinations and historical and epigraphical considerations) in favour of using the Middle Chronology (with possibly minor adoptions from the so-called Low-Middle Chronology) for the Old Assyrian rulers, the *kārum* of Kültepe/Kanesh and the kingdom of Mari (Bloch 2014; Manning et al. 2016). In recent studies on Elam, both Middle and Low Chronologies have been adopted. For example, the latest overview of Susa (Steve et al. 2002) and the most recent publications of Susian cuneiform texts (De Graef 2005; 2006) use the Low Chronology, whereas in the volume on history and philology in the interregional ARCANÉ series, the chapter on the Ur III and Susa Shimashki period employs – certainly for reasons of internal uniformity – the Middle Chronology (De Graef 2015), as too does the work on Elamite archaeology by D.T. Potts (1999 and new edition 2015). The chronology of Elam is dependent on that of Mesopotamia and itself furnishes no direct evidence that could be the basis for a choice. However, Vallat (2000) considers the Low Chronology more suitable to explain the sequence of rulers subsequent to the latest synchronism of the Sukkalmah period (between Kuk-Nashur II and Ammi-saduqa of Babylon) and the earliest known for the Middle Elamite period (between Tepti-ahar and the Kassite ruler Kadashman-Kharbe; Cole and De Meyer 1999). Since the latter is reliably dated to c. 1400 BC (the Late Bronze Age is not affected by these different chronological options), the use of the Middle Chronology for Ammi-saduqa (1646–1626 BC) would give an interval of two-and-a-half centuries, which is too long to cover the sovereigns attested during this time span. However, this does not seem to be a compelling reason to prefer the Lower Chronology,

since there is no proof that the sequence of the last Sukkalmah and Kidinuid kings is complete. At present, therefore, the Middle Chronology still offers greater uniformity throughout the Near East, allowing the available dynastic sequences, from the Levant to Elam, to be linked together without substantial problems.

The succession of the Awan, Shimashki and Sukkalmah dynasties furnishes a political chronological framework and permits correlation between Elam and the Akkad, Ur III and Old Babylonian periods in Mesopotamia. Independently of the use of a middle or low chronology, a tripartite division of the ‘Paléo-élamite’/‘Old Elamite’ period has been proposed (Vallat 1998; Steve et al. 2002) as follows:

Old Elamite IA-B = ED II-III and Akkad/Awan dynasty – c. 2800/2700–2100 BC
 Old Elamite II = Ur III/Shimashki dynasty – c. 2100–1980/1950 BC
 Old Elamite III = Old Babylonian/Sukkalmah or Epartides dynasty (c. 1980–1600/1550 BC)

In this general periodization of the 3rd and first half of the 2nd millennium BC, the Proto-Elamite phase (c. 3100–2800 BC) is followed directly by the beginning of the earliest phase of the Paléo-Elamite/Old Elamite. From a purely conventional perspective, the terminology of this division does not correspond to those in use in the Near East; it would perhaps be preferable to introduce an Early Elamite phase (in analogy with Early Dynastic/Early Syrian) and use the definition Old Elamite only from the end of Ur III; that is, from the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age.

In a historical periodization linked with Mesopotamia the Sukkalmah epoch may be divided into two macro-phases, roughly corresponding to the Middle Bronze Age, with possible sub-phasing on the basis of historical and archaeological criteria:

Middle Bronze I – Early Sukkalmah = Isin-Larsa – c. 1980/1950–1800 BC
 Middle Bronze II – Late Sukkalmah = Old Babylonian – c. 1800–1600/1550 BC

It is not currently possible to propose an independent archaeological subdivision based on find classes (pottery to glyptics), stratigraphic seriation and radiocarbon datings, although the stratigraphic sequence of Ville Royale A and B in Susa (B VII-V and A XV-XIII) may be correlated with the period of Shimashki and Sukkalmah on the basis of writings found in the various phases (Steve et al. 1980).

The division between the Early and Middle Bronze corresponds in the Mesopotamian periodization to the end of Ur III, while the onset of the Amorite dynasties (during the so-called period of Isin and Larsa), followed by the rise of the Old Babylonian kingdom, covered a time span of about four centuries (c. 2000–1600 BC), which saw the intense participation of Elam in Mesopotamian political events during the Shimashki and Sukkalmah dynasties (Charpin 2004). The history of politics and other happenings in the Elamite kingdom may be reconstructed almost exclusively from indirect Mesopotamian sources, connected by means of several decisive synchronisms, but very little is known of the political situation within the Elamite confederation, especially with regard to relations eastwards. It is thus largely an indirect history involving international manoeuvres on the chessboard of the Mesopotamian plain. Further strengthening this westward bias is the fact that almost all of the Elamite textual information comes from Susa, which was always largely oriented towards the Mesopotamian lowlands.

EPIGRAPHIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

Written sources

Direct epigraphic sources pertaining to the Sukkalmah period are all written in Akkadian (only a few texts from Susa and Tal-i Malyan, a royal stela and some inscriptions on silver vessels of unknown provenance are written in the Elamite language: De Graef 2006: nos. 30, 82; Farber 1975; Mahboubian 2004: 44–49) and come from a small number of sites (Susa, Choga Gavaneh, Tal-i Malyan, Liyan) or the antiquities market. The most substantial and varied inventory is from Susa and is made up of cuneiform tablets, building inscriptions, seal legends and inscriptions on other artifacts. To the Sukkalmah epoch material must be added texts of the Sukkalmahs recopied by Middle Elamite kings and information given in Middle Elamite building inscriptions.

Lists and royal inscriptions

Whereas for the Shimashki dynasty a sequence of rulers is given in the Awan and Shimashki 'Royal List' from Susa (Scheil 1931; Gelb and Kienast 1990: 317–318), dated to the Old Babylonian period, we lack textual evidence of the dynastic sequence during the Sukkalmah epoch. However, a series of Old Elamite rulers are mentioned in the 'Genealogy of Shilkak-Inshushinak', a list of his predecessors drawn up by this king in the 12th century BC, of which three different versions are known (König 1965: 110–115 no. 48). Shilkak-Inshushinak tells us that these sovereigns were known thanks to the discovery of inscribed bricks during restoration work on the religious buildings on the acropolis of Susa. Large numbers of building inscriptions relating to several rulers of Elam dating from the Shimashki (Idaddu-Inshushinak=Idaddu I, Tan-Ruhurater, Idaddu II) and Sukkalmah period (Kuk-Kirmash, Atta-hushu, Temti-Agun, Kuk-Nashur and Temti-halki) were in fact found in Susa; as well as providing valuable information about Susa's public buildings (which are virtually unknown archaeologically), they give important data on the members of the Epartid dynasty (Malbran-Labat 1995: 24–51 and Chapter 23 this volume; Potts 2010). Other royal building inscriptions come from Choga Pan West (a brick fragment of Temti-Agun; Steve 1987: no. 1), Tal-i Malyan (a brick of Siwe-palar-huppak and five other fragmentary bricks with portions of titulature; Stolper 1982: 57–61), and on the Persian Gulf coast at Tol-e Peytul/Liyan (an alabaster socle with a dedicatory inscription of Simut-wartash; Pézard 1914: 91, Pl. 13:4).

Seal legends and dedicatory inscriptions on other objects also give precious information, such as the owner's or dedicator's name, perhaps their occupation and in some cases a reference to the reigning sovereign. However, there exists no single inventory of these inscriptions, descriptions of which are to be found in numerous publications (Potts 2015: tab. 6.1). The catalogue of P. Amiet (1972, expanded by Amiet 1980), is fundamental for inscribed seals and sealings, whereas the epigraphic material (including glyptics) from Tal-i Malyan is still almost entirely unpublished.

Administrative and economic texts

Susa yielded more than 700 economic, administrative and legal documents written in Sumerian and Akkadian which can be dated to the end of the 3rd and the first half of the 2nd millennium BC (Lambert 1991; De Graef 2013). Most were found

in the 20th century during R. de Mecquenem's excavations and published mainly by V. Scheil, with or without very general information on their context of discovery (Scheil 1908: nos. 1–124; Dossin 1927: nos. 67–249; Scheil 1930; 1932; 1933; 1939). Only for the tablets unearthed during Ghirshman's excavations of the Ville Royale (Steve et al. 1980: 119–133) are the circumstances in which they were found reliably known; an archaeological reference sequence covering the entire period from the Shimashki to the Sukkalmah dynasties is available. Those from Sounding B have been published recently (De Graef 2005; 2006; 2007).

Susa texts are mainly lists of household goods, various kind of loans and documents concerning the sale/purchase of various portable objects and property (houses and land). The documents never have a precise date formula (unlike the Ur III texts from the site, which specify the year of the king's reign), but the presence of inscribed seal impressions and references to high officials and rulers (as well as other prosopographical information) make them an important source for the chronology of the Shimashki and Sukkalmah dynastic sequences (De Graef 2008a). The oath formulas of the economic/legal texts commonly include the names of rulers, often mentioned together with their successors or predecessors, and thus constitute the best source for building a relative chronological sequence, although there are gaps and the problem of homonymy.

A few unpublished administrative texts dated to the Kaftari period come from Malyan (Stolper 1982: 57), and the small archive of Choga Ghavaneh is the only other important textual source for this period. The latter may be dated to the 18th century and was found in a room (B15) of a partially excavated public (?) building. It consists of 56 administrative records (plus 26 fragments) related to husbandry and agriculture, with a predominance of lists of rations or persons, receipts or commodity supply records (Abdi and Beckman 2007). The site is located in western Iran, and might have been part of the area controlled by Elam near the boundary with Eshnunna, although the texts (written in Akkadian) do not mention the Elamites and personal names are overwhelmingly Akkadian, with a few Amorite names.

The presence of administrative and economic activities involving textual records are attested by a series of clay labels and sealings from Tepe Hissar in north-eastern Iran (Phase IIIC, c. 2200–1800 BC), showing that an area much larger than Khuzistan and Fars was probably incorporated in the Old Elamite realm, although it remains elusive and virtually unknown (Farokhnia and De Graef 2016).

Scholastic and mathematical texts

The considerable number of scholastic and mathematical texts discovered at Susa show the presence of a local scribal tradition during the Sukkalmah period (Malayeri 2013). The tablets found during de Mecquenem's and previous excavations (Dossin 1927, nos. 1–66; Van der Meer 1935; Bruins and Rutten 1961) can be dated on palaeographic criteria to the Old Elamite period, a chronology confirmed by the group of 30 tablets from stratified contexts in Ville Royale B VII-V (Tanret 1986).

'Funerary' texts

A small group of seven cuneiform texts comes from an area east of the Achaemenid palace of Darius at Susa in which several Elamite tombs were found by de Mecquenem

between 1912 and 1914 (Steve and Gasche 1996; Tavernier 2013). They might be, therefore, related to this funerary context, associated perhaps with a vaulted tomb, and probably date to the very end of the Sukkalmah period. Their content shows the specificity of Elamite rituals concerning the netherworld, and they have been interpreted as a sort of guide for the dead to reach the place of final judgement by the Annunaki, the infernal gods.

Susian texts and inscriptions contain rulers' names, royal titles and useful data regarding political organization: dedicatory and royal inscriptions reveal aspects of ideology, cult and religion, while economic documents – several of which can be grouped into archives of families or officials – mainly refer to socio-economic structures and business activities. However, it must be recalled again that almost all the written sources of this period come from Susa, which was certainly a strategic center for the political control of an important part of the realm but was also deeply influenced by Mesopotamian culture and was only one – the westernmost – of the major Elamite urban settlements. The Sukkalmah probably resided also in Anshan, where it is likely that important 'central' archives were kept, but as yet nothing is known of what must have been the political centre of Elam. The archive of Choga Ghavaneh, on the other hand, provides an example of local administration that seems practically identical to that of Diyala (Eshnunna), although the town itself is in an area that at this time appears to have been under Elamite political control.

Another serious problem is that direct epigraphic sources are silent about historical events and lacking in interregional geopolitical references, and consequently our understanding of the period's history is mainly based upon those Mesopotamian texts that mention Elam.

Mesopotamian texts

Ur III texts shed light on the period of control over Susa and Susiana and on the kingdom's relations with eastern political entities and especially with Shimashki (Stolper 1982; Steinkeller 2007; 2014). Shimashkian rulers mentioned in the Shimashkian King List are attested in Ur III sources (Yabrat=Ebarti I, from Shulgi 44 to Shu-Sin 8, Kirnamme=Girnamme in Shu-Sin 4 and 5, Ta'azite=Tazitte I or II, in Amar-Suen 8 and Shu-Sin 2) and, after the fall of Ur, in a hymn of Ishbi-Erra (Kindattu) and in a text from Isin dated to Ishbi-Erra 16 (Kindattu and Idattu) (Quintana 1998). Royal brick inscriptions and seals from Susa attest a marriage between Tan-Ruhuratar and Mê-Kubi, daughter of Bilalama of Eshnunna (Peyronel 2013: 52–54), and the first year of his reign Iddin-Dagan of Isin reports an earlier wedding between his daughter, Mâtum-niattum, and a king of Anshan, possibly Imazu, crown prince at the time of Kindattu (Vallat 1996b).

A variety of Mesopotamian sources from the Sukkalmah period contain historical references to Elam and Elamite kings that have been used to build up a very general outline of the relationship between Elam and Mesopotamia (Vallat 1996a; Potts 2015: 155–161). Two year names of Gungunum of Larsa (1932–1906 BC) allow the reconstruction of military campaigns against Pashime and Anshan (Sigrist 1990: 7), which perhaps resulted in a period of control over part of Elam, while later events point to greater Elamite involvement in Mesopotamian affairs. Thus, the Elamites were allied with Zambiya of Isin (1836–1834 BC) against Larsa (as mentioned in

Sin-iqisham of Larsa year name 5: Sigrist 1990: 29) and in the period dominated by the expansionist policies of Shamshi-Addu I of Assyria (1813–1781 BC or 1808–1776 according to the Old Assyrian eponym list: Bloch 2014) in the Trans-Tigridian and Zagros regions, the most significant references are in an epistolary text from Shusharra (Tell Shemshara in the Ranja Plain), where the local ruler reports to the king on activities of Shuruhtuh (= Siruk-tuh), king of Elam (Eidem and Lassoe 2001: 32–33). According to the 'Assyrian Chronicle' of Mari, Ipiq-Adad II of Eshnunna was defeated by an unnamed Elamite king (Biro 1985: 229 B 8), possibly the same Siruk-tuh of the Shemshara texts, and a broken stela from an unknown Iranian site records the names of a list of places conquered probably also by this king (Farber 1975).

The conquest of Larsa by Kudur-mabuk of Yamutbal (c. 1835 BC) gave rise to a dynasty (with his sons Warad-Sin, 1834–1823 BC, and Rim-Sin, 1822–1763 BC) which seems to be related in some way to Elam, since his father, Shemti-Shilhak, has a linguistically Elamite name (Henkelman 2010). It is not a surprise that texts from Larsa mention many individuals with Elamite personal names (Zadok 1987: 6–11), although they are not informative regarding possible Larsa-Elam historical connections, with the exception of a letter sent possibly by Rim-Sin to a Larsa official at the court of Eshnunna during the reign of Dadusha (1792–1779 BC), where it is said that 'the great king of Elam' was consulted in order to arbitrate a dispute (Rowton 1967: 269).

After the death of Shamshi-Addu of Assyria, the Elamite expansion in Mesopotamia became stronger, leading to the conquest of Eshnunna thanks to an alliance with Babylon and Mari. The archives from the latter kingdom at the time of Zimri-Lim inform us on these crucial years (Zimri-Lim 7–11; Charpin and Ziegler 2003: 206–230). They mention Siwe-palar-huppak (Sheplarkak), Kudu-zulush, as well as an anonymous Sukkalmah, who was probably the same Siwe-palar-huppak, and show intense diplomatic relations and commercial exchanges with Elam (Joannès 1991), then abruptly interrupted and followed by a phase of aggressive Elamite policy in Mesopotamia (Charpin and Durand 1991; Charpin 2013; Durand 1994; 2013).

The change in the situation is shown by a letter describing the oath of alliance between Hammurapi of Babylon and Zimri-Lim of Mari against Siwe-palar-huppak of Elam (Charpin 1990), and year name 13 of Hammurapi (1792–1750 BC) can be related to a victory against Elam and other allies (van Koppen 2013: 377). After the defeat of Elam by Hammurapi, few historical references are available: a year formula of Abi-eshuh (1711–1684 BC) attests another victory against Elam (van Koppen 2013: 377–379) and a text from Dilbat allows an important synchronism between Kuknashur (II) and Ammi-Saduqa I (1646–1626 BC) (Vallat 1993b). Late Old Babylonian administrative texts from Sippar dated to Ammisaduqa record Elamite slaves and soldiers at the service of the palace (De Graef 1999: 16–19), and in the cuneiform tablets from the First Sea-Land dynasty (Dalley 2009) there are also some references to Elamite messengers and Elamite people, but no mention of rulers. These texts are the latest Mesopotamian sources – though poorly informative ones – concerning Elam in the obscure transition phase between the Old and Middle Elamite periods.

Archaeological sources

With regard to archaeological evidence too, there is heavy dependence on Khuzestan and Susa (Álvarez-Mon 2013). The settlement pattern of the Susian plain during the Old Elamite period has been outlined in the surveys carried out from the 1960s to

late 1970s (Carter 1971: 173–185; Carter and Stolper 1984: 150): during the Shimashki phase, Susa is the only large town in central Khuzistan (with an estimated area of c. 50 ha), followed by Choga Pahn (c. 10 ha), ten medium-sized settlements or 'small towns' (4–10 ha) and nine small villages (0–4 ha). The Sakkalmah period was marked by a significant population increase: all sites of the previous period continued to be occupied, and 20 new villages plus one large site (>10 ha) appeared. Susa probably reached a maximum size of 85 ha, but very little is known of the city's urban layout.

The Mianab plain and the 'eastern corridor' bridging central Susiana and Ram Hormuz have recently been surveyed, revealing a distribution of small settlements dating to the first half of the 2nd millennium BC (Moghaddam and Miri 2003: 102, Figure 5; 2007: 35, 38), and a similar situation has been observed in the Ram Hormuz (Wright and Carter 2003) and Izeh further south and east (Bayani 1979: 99–103).

The urban organization of Susa in the Shimashki and Sakkalmah periods is virtually unknown. Ghirshman's excavations in the Ville Royale (Soundings A and B) brought to light two domestic quarters located at the southern and northern edge of the mound, with a long sequence of building phases well dated by the presence of seals and cuneiform tablets from the Ur III-Shimashki period to the end of the Epartides dynasty (Ghirshman 1965a; 1965b; 1967; 1968; Steve et al. 1980). During the Shimashki (B Level VII-VI)/Early Sakkalmah (B Level V and A Level XV) period, houses were smaller and less uniform with respect to the following phase (A Level XIV-XIII), when large dwellings were recorded, with rooms centred on paved internal courtyards, and blocks of buildings divided by a main street off which led a number of alleys.

Public buildings were probably concentrated on the Acropole, and perhaps also on the Apadana mound (Steve and Gasche 1990), which has been suggested as the possible location of the Elamite palace area (Ghirshman 1968: 6–7; Vallat 1999), though these were almost entirely eliminated by subsequent building activity. The presence of several temples dating to the Old Elamite period are indicated by inscribed bricks found on the Acropole; a well-preserved building excavated in the Ville Royale by de Mecquenem might be identified as a temple on the basis of six terracotta lions found nearby (de Mecquenem 1943a: 53–55).

Important evidence was provided by the discovery of a large number of burials and tombs, in particular during de Mecquenem's excavation of the Apadana, Ville Royale (1 and 2) and Donjon (de Mecquenem 1943b). Unfortunately, the rather superficial published information does not permit reliable cross-referencing between all the tombs and grave goods, and above all does not allow the positions of the Ur III-Shimashki, Sakkalmah and Middle Elamite period tombs to be identified with certainty. However, it is possible to date the introduction of the bath-tub coffins during the Ur III period and their use especially at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, while the vaulted tombs, built with fired bricks and used for multiple/family(?) burials, might be assigned to a later Sakkalmah phase; they remained in use also during the Middle and Neo-Elamite periods.

In the Susiana plain, a few other Old Elamite sites have been investigated: a building with painted walls considered a fortress or temple was excavated at Choga Mish (Kantor 1977: 14), and a short season of archaeological research was conducted at Tepe Sharafabad, a small village founded during the Sakkalmah period where an inscribed seal and a fragmentary cuneiform tablet were retrieved in association

with some dwellings (Schacht 1975). A Sakkalmah phase at Haft Tepe has been only recently recognized, as well as the presence of Middle Elamite building levels preceding occupation in the time of Tepti-ahar (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2014: 102–106; 2015; 2016: 97–98, tab. 1). The earliest settlement evidence comes from the trench IV, and ongoing excavation will surely shed more light on this crucial phase in the history of Elam.

The regions north of Susiana have revealed a considerable number of settlements occupied during Old Elamite times, although few extensive excavations yielded architectural remains and stratified contexts with in-situ material (Potts 2013). In the Deh Luran plain, a rampart dating to the Middle Bronze Age was discovered at Tepe Farukhabad (Wright 1981: 196–199, 219–221), and some other settlements of the period have been identified by surface finds (Wright and Neely 2010: 14–15).

Late 3rd and early 2nd millennium levels in Luristan are attested at Godin Tepe (III: 4–1), Tepe Giyan, Kamtarlan, Chiga Sabz and several other sites (Henrickson 1984). A building discovered at Choga Ghavane can be dated to the Middle Bronze Age thanks to the presence of a small archive of cuneiform texts; it constitutes the most significant evidence for the existence of small administrative centres in the region (Abdi and Beckman 2007). Early Bronze Age graveyards located along the Zagros and in Pusht-i Kuh (e.g. Kalleh Nisar; Haerinck and Overlaet 2008) also show continuity of use during the early centuries of the 2nd millennium BC.

In Fars, survey work conducted in the River Kur Basin has furnished data regarding the growth of settlement during the Early and Middle Bronze Age (Banesh and Kafatari phases) (Sumner 1989; see also McCall 2013a). Ninety-four sites have been assigned to the Kaftari period (named after Tal-i Kaftari) and divided into four hierarchical levels (Malyan, three towns, seven large villages, 82 small villages), with the identification of different zones, each with distinctive characteristics, in the settlement distribution.

Tal-i Malyan, identified with Anshan (Reiner 1973), was the largest site in the River Kur basin (the second-largest site, Qaleh, covers 15 ha) and its Kaftari sequence is chronologically divided into Early (2200–1900 BC), Middle (1900–1800 BC) and Late Kaftari (1800–1600 BC) 'stages' (Sumner 1988). The site grew from c. 40 ha (at the end of the 3rd millennium BC) to a maximum size of 130 ha during the Middle Kaftari; a slight reduction in area has been postulated in the Late Kaftari, when the site is thought to have contracted to 98 ha.

The ancient site was protected by a massive city wall in the Kaftari period, and levels dating to this period were found to be present in several excavation areas and soundings, although they have not yet been published (Nickerson 1983; 1991). The most important data came from Operation ABC, in which a refuse deposit 2–3 m deep with a large amount of pottery and small finds was excavated (Sumner 1974: 164–173). Operation GHI brought to light the remains of buildings and associated deposits with many finds, including tablets and sealings. Operation FX106 unearthed five levels and a domestic structure. A transitional Banesh-Kaftari phase was identified in Sounding H5 of Operation GHI, showing that a hiatus between the two periods, previously thought to last from 2800 BC to 2200 BC, was more brief – if not indeed completely non-existent (Miller and Sumner 2004).

The region between Khuzistan and Fars has been investigated, especially in the Behbahan/Zohreh plain (Dittmann 1984; 1986), and additional data on the Old

Elamite occupation in western Fars comes from reconnaissance in the Mamasani district and excavations at Tol-e Spid and Tol-e Nurabad (Potts et al. 2009; McCall 2013b), where the rock-relief of Kurangun, probably dating to the Sukkalmah period, is also located (Seidl 1986; Binder 2013; Álvarez-Mon 2014).

Lastly, the region of Bushehr on the Persian Gulf coast might have been an important area controlled by the Elamite kingdom, as indicated by finds discovered during an excavation season at Tul-e Peytul (ancient Liyan) in the early 1890s (Pézard 1914; see also Potts 2003), although a recent survey carried out by an Iranian-British team failed to identify diagnostic pottery reliably datable to the Middle Bronze Age (Carter et al. 2006).

Our knowledge of the main classes of finds from this epoch (mainly pottery, metal items, terracotta figurines and glyptics; Potts 2015: 141–144, 162–167) and their assessment with regard to affinities and chronology is restricted to the sequences from Susa (e.g. Amiet 1972; Gasche 1973; Tallon 1987; Spycket 1992), while to the objects from the Kaftari levels in Malyan, Fars (currently unpublished) new material has been recently added, and a reliable regional pottery sequence is being built up (Petrie et al. 2005; 2016). Most recent efforts have been directed on the analysis of glyptic styles, especially on the ‘Anshanite’ production, trying to distinguish different types and their chronological development (Ascalone 2010; 2011; Neumann 2013).

A SKETCH OF POLITICAL HISTORY DURING THE SUKKALMAH PERIOD

From the end of Ur III to the beginning of the Sukkalmah dynasty

Mesopotamian texts allow us to speculate on the countries, territories and political entities located in western Iran and Fars, especially during the period of the 3rd dynasty of Ur. At that time Shimashki and Shimashkian rulers are attested in Neo-Sumerian documents and inscriptions, and the original nucleus of this political entity clearly lies outside Susiana. The geographical name is written in Akkadian (*Ši-maš-ki*) but is also found in Sumerian rebus writing (LÚ.SU^{ki}) (Steinkeller 1988; 1990; *contra* Vallat 1993a and Steve et al. 2002: 432–4, where the expression is interpreted as SU-people, postulating another political power in Susiana).

At Susa the presence of documents dating from Ur III year names stops at Ibbi-Sin 3, and the following loss of control of the eastern area is accompanied by the establishment of a Shimashki territorial state, although this was made up of different interrelated regional powers (De Graef 2008b; 2015). The end of the Ur III dynasty was in fact marked by the destruction of the capital itself by Elam in the 24th year of the reign of Ibbi-Sin, a traumatic event that was long remembered in the Mesopotamian world in hymns, lamentations and historical omens, but of which there is no direct evidence in Elamite inscriptions (Michalowski 1989). In literary texts, the cause of the disintegration and collapse of the kingdom of Ur are attributed – with no particular priority – on one hand, to an internal agricultural crisis, and on the other, to the invasion by Gutian and Shimashki peoples who spread from the Zagros into the eastern provinces (Lagash) but also entered cities in the centre, finally reaching even the southernmost, Eridu. Accounts of the fall of the capital speak of a long siege and final surrender, with Ibbi-Sin taken prisoner and deported. The looting of the city

must have been devastating, the temples desecrated and the heart of what had been until just a few years before the most powerful kingdom of the epoch occupied by a garrison of Elamites – which lasted until Ishbi-Erra of Isin regained control of Ur. The name Ibbi-Sin became synonymous with misfortune, as witnessed by later collections of omens which contain texts such as: “harbinger of Ibbi-Sin, under whom Elam reduced Ur to a pile of rubble”.

South-western Iran during the Ur III period was included in the *ma-da*, a strip that protected the centre of the realm and contained towns directly controlled by governors or senior military officials (e.g. Susa, Sabum and Urua) and independent territories (Shimashki, Zabshali, Anshan, Huhnur, Kimash and Hu’urti) with which political relations varied (Steinkeller 1987). Year names record inter-dynastic marriages, such as that between a daughter of Shulgi and a ruler of Anshan, but also military clashes to make clear Ur’s supremacy over the region. Thus Shulgi 34 records the destruction of Anshan and in the 7th year of Shu-Sin that of Shimashki/Zabshali (Potts 2015: tab. 5.2).

Different ‘lands’ of Shimashki are cited in Mesopotamian texts, and they can be located in the eastern region of the *ma-da*. We know their names thanks to the historical inscriptions of Shu-Sin in particular, which describe the military campaign he conducted in year 7. Two variants of a text copied from a statue or a victory stela listed several principalities/districts of Shimashki (Zabshali, Shigrish, Yabulmat, Alu-midatum, Karta, Shatilu and other smaller places), of which Zabshali was undoubtedly the most important (Kutscher 1989: 90–91; Steinkeller 2014: 291).

The Ur III documentation thus testifies to the presence of different political entities which were not unified in a centralized political structure. It is likely that Ur’s military campaigns created the need for greater political cohesion between the Elamite cantons and tribal lands, through alliances and affiliations (Stolper 1982: 49–54). The control obtained by Shimashki over Susa and Khuzistan at the time of the last king of Ur as a result of this catalytic process enabled the acquisition of Mesopotamian management, political and administrative structures, which conferred a significant advantage with respect to possible competitors for the area. The occurrence of different titles among the Shimashkian rulers (*lugal*, *ensi*, *GIR.NÍTA*), might be considered an indication that the territory maintained a certain level of regional autonomy, and although it is inappropriate to define it as a real ‘federal state’, it has been rightly underlined that Shimashki (and Elam in a wider chronological perspective) resembles a ‘segmentary state’, which is characterized by competition between its various polycentric components, with a hierarchical structure with sectors enjoying comparable powers and a coexistence of interacting peripheral powers (Potts 2015: 145–146).

Twelve Shimashkian kings (*lugal*) are enumerated in the ‘Royal List of Awan and Shimashki’, a document drafted in Sukkalmah times in Susa, in the following order: (1) Girnamme, (2) Tazitta, (3) Ebarti, (4) Tazitta (II), (5) Lu-[...]uhhan, (6) Kindattu, (7) Idattu, (8) TanRuhurater, (9) Ebarti (II), (10) Idattu (II), (11) Idattunapir and (12) Idattutemti (Scheil 1931; Gelb and Kienast 1990: 317–318; see also Roche and Overlaet 2006: 18–19).

The historical veracity of this king-list is certain, although the validity of the sequence’s relative chronology has been much debated (Quintana 1998; Steve et al. 2002: 436–439; Potts 2015: tabs 5.4–5). In any case, the second part of the series (from Kindattu onwards) is of undoubted reliability, since it is confirmed by original

inscriptions and Mesopotamian sources, notwithstanding the fact that unlikely alternative reconstructions have been suggested (Glassner 1996; De Graef 2006: 52–55, 68), motivated by the presence of Shimashkian rulers, listed in a different order, in the Genealogy of Shilkak-Inshushinak (Idaddu > Tan-Ruhuratir > Kindattu):

The earlier part of the series, prior to Kindattu, has been interpreted as a group of contemporary rulers listed in a fictional temporal sequence (Stolper 1982: 49–54). The mention of Girnämme/Kirnäme, Tazitte (I or II) and Ebarti/Yabrat in texts of Shu-Sin is the proof of this overlap, but at the same time it confirms the historical veracity of the list, even in Neo-Sumerian times; it is likely that Ebarti was in a prominent position and had established some kind of political connection with the other two, who belonged to the same lineage (Steinkeller 2007: 222; but see 2014: 288–289, for the hypothesis that the Kirname in the Ur III text was not the same as the founder of the dynasty).

The most important ruler of the Ur III period was Ebarti (Yabrat), attested since Shulgi 44. He basically seems to have had good relations with Ur until the reign of Ibbi-Sin, when he probably conquered Susa for a very short period before it was retaken under Ur III's control, and he began the process of expansion of the Shimashkian state, continued by his son Kindattu (Lambert 1979: 38–44; Steinkeller 2007: 223). The latter carried out the definitive expulsion of Mesopotamians from Susiana – notwithstanding Ibbi-Sin's attempts to react with political and military countermoves (year 5 marriage of a daughter with the governor of Zabshali; year 9 military campaign against Huhnur; year 14 military campaign against Susa, Adamtun and Awan) – and then took the war into Mesopotamia and conquered Ur. The hymn of Ishbi-Erra of Isin (2017–1985 BC) recounts that Kindattu, the man of Elam, was the vanquisher of Ur and that the sovereign of Isin will drive him from Mesopotamia (Van Dijk 1978; Potts 2015: 134–135). The king must therefore have reigned at the same time as Ishbi-Erra of Isin, as also testified by a text (year 19) referring to messengers from Kindattu and his successor Idattu (Vallat 1996a; Steinkeller 2007: 221–222).

Kindattu is also mentioned in a cylinder seal impression from Susa of his son Imazu, who is not included in the royal list (Amiet 1972: no. 1679), and therefore he might have been a junior ruler/crown prince for Shimashki at Anshan. Since we know from the literary tradition that Ibbi-Sin was taken captive to Anshan after the sack of Ur, probably together with the statue of the tutelary god Nanna which was returned to Mesopotamia only in the time of Shu-ilishu, successor of Ishbi-Erra of Isin, it has been argued that the Shimashkian core area lay in the region between Khuzistan and Fars from Kindattu onwards, and that Anshan was in a vassal dependency (Steinkeller 2007: 224–225).

A Shimashkian policy of inter-dynastic marriages that continued a long-lasting tradition deeply rooted in the ambivalent relations between Mesopotamia and the eastern countries is attested by a year name of Iddin-Dagan of Isin referring to an earlier marriage between Mātum-niattum, his daughter, and a king of Anshan, possibly Imazu, son of Kindattu (Vallat 1996b).

The sequence of sovereigns after Kindattu is confirmed by a dedicatory inscription preserved on two bronze vessels of unknown provenance, which identifies Idattu as son of Kindattu and grandson of Ebarti (II) (Steinkeller 2007: 221–222; 2011), while Tan-Ruhurater was the son of Idattu. The affiliation of the latter is indicated in a

cylinder seal legend (Amiet 1972: no. 1675; De Graef 2011), and building inscriptions from Susa testify that under this king an alliance with Eshnunna (Peyronel 2013: 52–54) was celebrated by marriage with the daughter of Bilalama, Mê-Kubi (Malbran-Labat 1995: no. 5; Potts 2010: no. 11). The latter must thus have had an important role in Susa, given that the queen's activities included the building of the temple of Inanna (together with Tan-Ruhurater) and that she is also referred to as 'great lady' (nin-gula) in a sealing of one of her servants found in Ville Royale Level B-VI (Amiet 1972: no. 1676).

The transition period between Ur III and Shimashki is documented at Susa by stratigraphic sounding B in the Ville Royale. Level B-VII is dated by texts which span from Shu-Sin 4 and Ibbi-Sin 1 pertaining to the administrative archive of the scribe Igibuni (mostly lists and receipts of prestiti of barley) and originally kept in his house but then probably dismembered at the time of a rebuilding (De Graef 2005; 2008b). The level ended in a destruction which could be attributed to the conquest of the town by Shimashki as well to its retaking by Ibbi-Sin. The following Level B-VI Early shows a continuity in the occupation without a chronological hiatus and it can be dated by the presence of the sealing of a servant of Mê-Kubi, daughter of Tan-Ruhuratir, while Level B-V (Early) should be associated with the Sukkalmah period at the time of Atta-hushu.

The final part of the Shimashki dynasty overlaps the beginning of the Sukkalmah period, since its ninth ruler (Ebarti II) was also the 'founder' of the new dynastic lineage. This sovereign appears between Tan-Ruhuratir and Idaddu II in the Shimashkian king list, and the latter is also attested in brick inscriptions from Susa where he is said to be a son of Tan-Ruhuratir (Malbran-Labat 1995: nos. 5–6; Potts 2010: no. 12) and on the cylinder seal of his 'chancellor' Kuk-Simut is titled 'ensi of Susa' and 'son of Tan-Ruhuratir' (Lambert 1971: Figure 1). On the other hand, Shilhaha (the first to be called Sukkalmah according to the inscription of Atta-hushu) is the 'chosen son' (*šak hanik*) of Ebarti in the Genealogy of Shilkak-Inshushinak. Ebarti is also associated with Shilhaha in an oath formula (De Meyer 1973: 293–294), he is titled 'lugal' in a seal legend of Kuk-Tanra, servant of Shilhaha (Amiet 1972: no. 1685) and 'lugal of Susa and Anshan' in an inscription of Atta-hushu (Scheil 1939: 7). While the seals of functionaries/servants that mention Ebarti are of Old Elamite style, a completely different Anshanite seal in chalcedony in the Gulbenkian collection bears a fragmentary inscription in which the name Ebarti and the title 'lugal' of Shimashki have been read (Lambert 1979: 43–44, Pl. 5; 1992; Steve 1989: 14–18), variously attributed to Ebarti I or II.

It is certain that Idaddu was ensi of Susa while the first Suhhalmahs were in power (Vallat 1989), since his chancellor Kuk-Simut is known from a cuneiform tablet that lists many individuals who are also named in other texts dating to the time of the 'Pala-ishshan group' and Atta-hushu (Vallat 1996a: 302). Moreover, a synchronism between Idattu-napir, who followed Idaddu in the Shimashki royal list, and Sumuabum of Babylon (1894–1881 BC) is attested by a cylinder seal used both on a tablet dated to the Babylonian king and on another text mentioning the Shimashkian ruler (Scheil 1908: nos. 2, 21).

The effective political power wielded by Idattu-napir and Idattu-tempti (the last rulers of Shimashki) at the time of the early Sukkalmahs is unclear, but it is possible that they controlled a region traditionally tied to the Shimashki, such as Zabshali, as

may be suggested by Idattu-napir's presence in the archive of a merchant at Susa who traded especially with Zabshali (De Graef 2009).

The rise of the Sukkalmahs thus seems to have been gradual, although it is difficult to define the various steps (De Graef 2012). It is certainly possible that it was the result of a shift to a different line within the same extended ruling family, possibly that controlling Anshan and the Fars region (Stolper 1982: 56). It is also possible that initially there was a division between Susiana ruled by the early Sukkalmahs and the nearby highlands ruled by the Shimashki (Vallat 1996a: 315–316). Certainly the confederate nature of the Elamite political structure was maintained, with the Sukkals in charge of regional bodies and the Sukkalmahs as guarantors of the system's cohesion. The continuation of Shimashki in the titles (Sukkal of Elam and Shimashki) also conserved a sign of the hegemony exercised by Shimashki since the early 2nd millennium.

It has been suggested that the final demise of Shimashki power and the definitive rise of the Sukkalmahs in Elam was caused by the reaction to the military campaigns of Gungunum of Larsa (1932–1906 BC) against Bashime (year 3), Anshan (year 5) (Sigrist 1990: 7), and his control over Susa (year 16) (Stolper 1982: 56; Carter and Stolper 1984: 27), although the aggressive policy of Larsa seems to have been directed mainly against regions already ruled by the Sukkalmah.

Generally speaking, in correspondence with this schematic historical trajectory of Elam from the rise of the Shimashki 'segmentary' state or confederation and the beginning of the Sukkalmah control over apparently the same regions, the geography of Elamite lands is dependent on the Mesopotamian 'perception' of the eastern peoples with their composite political organization and the information regarding Mesopotamian relations with them during the Ur III and early Isin-Larsa periods. At the time of the Ur III apogee – when 'Elamites' (lú NIM) frequently appear in messengers' texts from Lagash and Umma (Michalowski 2008) – a series of different lands perceived as 'belonging' to or affiliated with Shimashki appear to be variously located in a large area of western Iran along the Zagros mountains (Steinkeller 1982; 2014: 191–195). During the reign of Ibši-Sin, Ur progressively lost power on its eastern border, Susiana fell into the hands of Shimashki and a major cohesion of the different territories was reached at the time of Kindattu, who also possibly controlled Fars, where Anshan seems to have been subordinated to Shimashkian power (Quintana 1998). The late rulers of Shimashki titled themselves *ensi* of Susa (Idaddu I, Tan-ruhuratir, Idaddu II), showing the continuity of control in Khuzistan. At the time of Kindattu the boundaries of 'Elam' (or the perception of these limits by the Mesopotamians) are indicated in the hymn of Ishbi-Erra as stretching from Bashime/Pashime to the shore of the sea (the Iranian coast of the Persian Gulf) and the frontier of Zabshali, and from Arawa, the 'lock' of Elam, to the border of Marhashi (Vallat 1991). These indications might be considered merely a 'mental' map of the ruler of Mesopotamia at the beginning of the 2nd millennium, but they do show that the northern and southern limits were constituted by the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf, since Zabshali – understood as Shimashki – extended 'from Anshan to the Upper Sea' according to Shu-Sin (Kutscher 1989: 76). Arawa/Urua, defined as the 'lock/bolt of Elam' might be located between Susa and Mesopotamia (Steinkeller 1982: 244–246), while Marhashi is a well-known distant eastern land located in the Kerman region/Jiroft valley (Steinkeller 2012). The epithet 'lock/bolt' is used also for Huhnur in relation to Anshan. This region probably corresponds to the Ram Hormuz plain,

since it is mentioned in a brick inscription of Amar-Sin from a site in the region, possibly Tol-e Bormi (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2005), although the Behbahan and Mamasani regions have also been suggested (Duchene 1986; Petrie et al. 2005: 52).

The historical reconstruction of the vicissitudes of Elam between 2100 and 1950 BC is certainly only approximate, being deduced from sources that are not always explicit and in part contradictory, with debate on certain issues, but it seems undeniable that an independent Elamite power became established at the very end of the 3rd millennium BC. This was made possible by Shimashkian rulers who succeeded in forging tribal and territorial links by means of kinship ties, forming an extensive interregional union (Stolper 1982: 49). The passage to the Sukkalmah dynasty may be seen against the background of this progressive tendency towards the aggregation of territorial units through attempts to formalize interlocking hierarchies, although these might have been unstable and are certainly difficult to understand due to the scarcity of available documentation, reflected in the new titles of the Sukkalmahs and Sukkals.

The Sukkalmah period (c. 1980/1950–1600 BC)

A comprehensive evaluation of the political history, historical geography and socio-political organization of Elam during the Sukkalmah period is hampered by the paucity of information in available written sources.

Geographical information on Elam during the Sukkalmah period is almost non-existent in Mesopotamian texts and very scarce in the documents from Susa (Vallat 1993a). Data on political organization collected from royal inscriptions, administrative records and seal legends are ambiguous and cannot easily be correlated, so that the dynastic sequence has been strongly debated.

The period of the Sukkalmah dynasty is distinguished by several important new developments with respect to the preceding epoch. Above all is the structure of government and principal titles of those at the vertices of power, who are identified in inscriptions by the terms Sukkalmah (literally 'grand regent'), Sukkal + GN (Elam, Shimashki and Susa), although at the same time a great variety of titles also existed (Vallat 1990).

The term Sukkalmah originated in Mesopotamia, where it first appears during the Early Dynastic period, and during Ur III it came to indicate a second office after *ensi*, at least during the long period in which it was held by Arad-Nanna, during which he also became *ensi* of Girsu-Lagash and was appointed to numerous positions, including that of *šagina* of Pashime (Iranian coast of the Persian Gulf) (Michalowski 2013). The Sukkal-mah of Lagash had effective control of the entire *ma-da*, the buffer zone north and east of the centre (*kalam*) of the kingdom, and therefore also of Susa (Steinkeller 1987). The reasons for which the term was chosen for the paramount ruler in Elam are not altogether clear, but are certainly connected with the fact that the authority present in Susa during the Neo-Sumerian period was that of the Sukkalmah. The title could not have been used by the Shimashki dynasties that were active at the time of the fall of the kingdom of Ur III but first appear in reference to Shilhaha, who was also the 'chosen son' of Ebarti II (Vallat 1990).

Administrative texts and royal inscriptions record about 30 *sukkals* and *sukkal-mahs*, and although it is not possible to establish the length of their reigns, they may be placed in order and tied in by means of a few synchronisms to the absolute chronology of Mesopotamia (Tab. 1). However, the frequent occurrence of identical

names shared by different people and the existence of several diverse interpretations of the sequence have led to different reconstructions.

The sequence of Sukkalmahs initially produced on the basis of lineages attested in documents from Susa (Scheil 1933: I-III; Cameron 1936: 229; Rutten 1949: 166–167) was then compared with the Middle-Elamite text, ‘The Genealogy of Shilhak-Inshushinak’, dated to the mid-13th century BC, which gives the names of previous sovereigns who had carried out restoration work on the Temple of Inshushinak (Vallat 1990: 298–299). In reality, there exist three distinct documents: a stela (König 1965: no. 48) and two pivot-stones (48a and 48b), related to different buildings dedicated to the paramount god Inshushinak. Two inscriptions are identical, while the third (48a) has some differences at the end of the Sukkalmah list (omission of Atta-hushu and inverted order for Kuk-nashur and Temti-halki).

W. Hinz (1963; 1971) was responsible for the most popular list drawn up prior to the fundamental work of F. Vallat (1994; 1996a; 2004; 2007; 2009), which has led to a substantial revision and a new version, from which there are some divergences (e.g. Steve et al. 2002: tab. 1; Quintana 2010), but which is currently accepted by most scholars (e.g. Potts 2015: tab. 6.1) (Tab. 1). The principal modification to the original list involves the movement of the Sukkalmahs of the so-called Pala-ishshan

Table 11.1 Most probable sequence of Elamite rulers during the Old Elamite period – Sukkalmah dynasty (in bold the ruler attested as sukkalmah). S = seal legend; B = brick inscription; T = cuneiform tablet(s); O = object inscription; G = Genealogy of Shilhak-Inshushinak (data after Potts 2015: tab. 6.1; see also Quintana 2010 for references).

Ruler	Source	Filiation	Titles (other than sukkalmah)	Synchronism
Ebarat (II)	S, G		lugal of Anshan and Susa lugal	
Shilhaha	S, G	chosen son of Ebarti	lugal adda-lugal of Anshan and Susa	
Pala-ishshan	T, S			
Kuk-Kirmash	B, T, S, G	sister's son of Shilhaha	sukkal of Elam, Shimashki and Susa	
Kuk-Nashur (I)	B?, T, S	son of Shilhaha		
Atta-hushu	B, S, T, G	sister's son of Shilhaha	sukkal and ippir of Susa shepherd of the people of Susa shepherd of Inshushinak he who holds the reins(?) of Susa	Gungunum of Larsa 16 (1932–1905 BC) Sumu-abum of Babylon 1 (1884 BC)

Ruler	Source	Filiation	Titles (other than sukkalmah)	Synchronism
Tetep-mada	T, S	sister's son of Shilhaha		
Shiruk-tuh	T, S, G	sister's son of Shilhaha		Zambiya of Isin (?) (1834–1832) Shamshi-Addu of Assyria (1813–1781 BC)
Siwe-palar-huppak	S, T, G	sister's son of Shiruk-tuh	sukkal of Susa prince of Elam	Hammurapi of Babylon (1792–1750 BC)
Kudu-zulush I	T, S	sister's son of Shiruk-tuh	sukkal of Susa	Hammurapi of Babylon (1792–1750 BC)
Kutir-Nahhunte (I)	T	son of Shiruk-tuh		
Temti-Agun	B, T, S	sister's son of Shiruk-tuh	sukkal of Susa	
Kutir-Shilhaha	T		sukkal	
Kuk-Nashur (II)	B?, G, S	sister's son of Temti-Agun sister's son of Shilhaha	sukkal of Susa sukkal of Elam	Ammi-Saduqa of Babylon 1 (1645 BC)
Kudu-zulush (II)	T		lugal of Susa	
Kuk-Nashur (III)	B?, S	sister's son of Shilhaha	sukkal of Elam sukkal of Elam, Shimashki and Susa	
Tan-Uli	S, T, G	sister's son of Shilhaha	sukkal	
Temti-halki	B, G	sister's son of Shilhaha	sukkal of Elam, Shimashki and Susa	
Kuk-Nashur (IV)	S, G	sister's son of Tan-Uli		

group from the final to the initial period of the dynasty, while current differences of opinion regard in particular the number of Sukkalmahs who share the same name of Kuk-nashur (four according to Quintana 1996 and three according to Steve et al. 2002: 449–452).

The structure of the Elamite realm during the Sukkalmah period is, in any case, still quite unclear. The hypothesis proposed by G.G. Cameron (1936: 69–88, 229), that power was exercised by a sort of triumvirate headed by the Sukkalmah, who resided at Susa, and two sukkals, the Sukkal of Elam and Shimashki, who was normally the brother of the Sukkalmah, and the Sukkal of Susa, who was the son of the Sukkalmah, is based on the evidence of multiple titles and relative associations, but the considerable uncertainties have led to estimates of the number of triumvirates varying from 14 (Cameron 1936) to a maximum of 24 (Börker-Klähn 1970: 180–215).

The first 'triumvirate' is supposed to have been that of Ebarat/Shilhaha/Atta-hushu (Scheil 1939: 7–8 no. 4), but it is certain that between Hatta-hushu and Shilhaha there existed other Sukkalmahs (Steve et al. 2002: 444; Vallat 1996a: 299; *contra* Glassner 2013). The existence of a mechanism that would have determined the passage of power from the Sukkalmah to his brother (sukkal of Elam), whose post would, in turn, have been taken by another brother or the Sukkalmah's son, following a line of descent between brothers that passed only to the son – and thus to the next generation – of the first brother (De Meyer 1982) is not always demonstrable. It should be noted that our understanding of this system is based solely on records from Susa, so it is unknown whether similar systems existed in other parts of Elam, given its undoubtedly confederate nature and centre in Anshan, about which nothing is known.

Another vigorously debated aspect of Sukkalmah succession concerns the interpretation of the epithet *mār aḫāti* (Akkadian)/*ruhu-šak* (Elamite) + NP, which is often used to express the degree of kinship between Elamite rulers. It literally means 'sister's son' and has been interpreted as evidence of the predominance of a line of succession through the sister of the ruling Sukkal or Sukkalmah (avunculate) (Van Soldt 1990; Glassner 1994) or of the custom of sibling marriage with one's sister and/or the widow of a deceased brother (levirate) (e.g. König 1926; Hinz 1964: 76; Vallat 1994; 1996a: 299–300; Steve et al. 2002: 444–445, 546–553). However, the epithet is also associated with the name of the Sukkalmah Shilhaha as a kind of royal title adopted by many Elamite rulers (also by Humban-immena and Huteludush-Inshushinak during the Middle Elamite period), clearly excluding any biological ties. In those cases it seems that it refers to legitimation through kinship with the founder-ancestor Shilhaha and thus would mean 'legitimate descendant' (Steve et al. 2002: 444).

These are, therefore, two distinct uses of this epithet, one probably connected with the development of family ties that could determine succession also (but not only) through lineages different from those traditional in the Mesopotamian world (between father and son line), and another related to a royal ancestor or dynasty founder, Shilhaha, who was also the first to be linked with the title.

The system of distribution and transmission of power was probably based on typical Elamite socio-judicial traditions, since some aspects of these are found in legal documents from Susa regarding the management of family assets, although a progressive tendency to adopt Mesopotamian practices is seen in these (hereditary division, transmission from parent to child, sales and loans as guarantees for land) (Cuq 1931; Klíma 1963; De Meyer 1961; De Graef 2010). Also, in general political terms the system had to answer the need to use diverse forms of kinship bonds so as to maintain the effective cohesion of an extensive and diversified territory. The two primary

centres of Sukkalmah Elam were Susa in Khuzistan and Anshan (Tal-i Malyan) in Fars – and these two cities were almost 400 km apart, whereas Liyan on the Persian Gulf (Pashime) was the principal centre for maritime commercial trading. The land between Susa and Anshan was occupied by small and middle-sized settlements, and a few larger ones (such as Tol-e Bormi, which might be Huhnur), whereas we do not know for certain how far it continued northwards, into Luristan and beyond, and know little of the dynamics of political control towards the east, where Marhashi no longer seems to have been a sizeable regional entity in the early 2nd millennium BC. The most precise historical information at our disposal concerns relations with Mesopotamia, and in particular regards the Elamite influence exercised in the zones of Hamrin and Diyala and the expansionism of the Sukkalmahs at the time of the Mari archives.

The early Sukkalmah period (c. 1980/1950–1800 BC)

As we have seen, the beginning of the Sukkalmah dynasty did not correspond to an abrupt change in the history of Elam, since its first sovereign, Ebarti, appears to have been the same who is also present as the ninth ruler in the list of Shimaski kings, although there are diverse interpretations of the passage from one dynasty to the other, which occurred in about the mid-20th century BC (Vallat 2004; De Graef 2012). Although Ebarti is referred to as 'king of Susa and Anshan' in late Middle Elamite sources, Shilhaha is the first to be called Sukkalmah (by Atta-hushu; Vallat 1990: 121) and certainly in Elamite tradition is considered the true 'founder' of the dynasty, given that the epithet 'sister's son of Shilhaha' which is used for many later sovereigns undoubtedly refers to his special role in the dynasty's early period. However, Shilhaha proclaims himself 'the chosen son of Ebarat' and must have ruled at Susa simultaneously with Idaddu II of Shimashki, as testified to by the seals of numerous high officials, which refer to both the kings of Shimashki and the Suhkalmahs (e.g. Kuk-simut, Turunkunz, Atta-puni: Amiet 1972: n 1677; 1973: nos. 41 and 43; Vallat 1996a: 302–305).

Kuk-Kirmash, who belonged to the so-called 'Pala-ishshan group' of Sukkalmahs that Vallat has shown must be placed in the dynastic series immediately after Shilhaha and before Atta-hushu (Vallat 1996a: 301; *contra* Grillot and Glassner 1991; 1993), was in fact the first to call himself Sukkalmah.

It is in this period that the military action of Gungunum of Larsa (1932–1905 BC) against Elam took place. It is probable that after his victory over Pashime and Anshan (year 3 and year 5) the king of Larsa succeeded in occupying Susa and it was probably he who placed Atta-hushu on the throne (Vallat 1996a: 309–312; Steve et al. 2002: 446–447). This ruler in fact has a unique series of titles ('shepherd of Inshushinak' 'shepherd of the people of Susa', 'sukkal and teppir' and 'he who holds the reins? of Susa'). He never used the title of Sukkalmah (although he ruled over three generations of scribes belonging to the same family), and he is never associated in administrative documents with another sukkal or sukkalmah. Moreover, he was the only ruler whose texts were dated according to the Mesopotamian year system. It therefore seems probable that he was a usurper who came to power with the help of Gungunum and ruled only over Susa. If this is the case, Khuzistan was in some way controlled by Larsa during the reign of Atta-hushu, which was quite long since

the written texts from Susa give two synchronisms (year 16 of Gungunum = 1916; year 1 of Sumuabum of Babylon = 1884 BC). From this year there are no correlatable textual references until the years in which Sin-iqisham (1840–1836 BC) reigned over Larsa, with Susa perhaps still controlled by a probable successor to Atta-hushu, Tetep-mada and maybe other rulers not yet attested in written sources.

The late Sukkalmah period (c. 1800–1600/1550 BC)

A new phase in Elamite politics began at the end of the 19th century BC, under the Sukkalmah Siruk-tuh (Vallat 1996a: 313–314), who took firm control of Susa and may have been the Elamite ally of Zambiya of Isin (1836–1834 BC), defeated by Sin-iqisham of Larsa (Sigrist 1990: 29). The king pursued a policy of consolidation of the lands north of Susiana, together with expansion towards the eastern Mesopotamian region. This policy may have been favoured by the conquest of Larsa by Kudur-mabuk, starting a new Amorite ruling dynasty through his sons Warad-Sin and Rim-Sin. Kudur-mabuk was son of Shemti-Shilkah (Henkelman 2010) and both bore Elamite names and came from Yamutbal in the Trans-Tigridian region, a tribal entity that was not hostile to Elam and may even have been a dependency of it.

Since he could count of the non-belligerence of Larsa, Shiruk-tuh formed an alliance with Shamshi-Addu I of Assyria and Eshnunna to the north against the people of the central and northern Zagros. The king is mentioned in a letter from the archive of Shemshara (dated to 1785 BC) as Shuruhtuh ‘king of Elam’ and it is explicitly said that he was able to raise an army of 12,000 to conquer the lands of the Gutu ruled by Indassu (Eidem and Læssøe 2001: 32–33). It is possible that a fragmentary victory stela of unknown Iranian provenance refers to this particular Elamite military campaign in the Zagros conducted by Shiruk-tuh, since the inscription, written in Elamite, lists several geographical names followed by the phrase ‘I took’ and gives the name of Indassu (the Gutian ruler) (Farber 1975).

The apogee of Elam was certainly reached during the reign of Shiwe-palar-huppak, curiously mentioned in only a few texts from Susa, but whom we know to have had an important role on the Mesopotamian chessboard. The Mari archives of the time of Zimri-Lim (1780–1758 BC) furnish for this Sukkalmah a most interesting collection of information regarding both his direct relations with Mari itself and the part he played in the more general historical events of the period (Lafont 2001). In fact the Mari texts mention two rulers, Sheplarpak (= Siwe-palar-huppak) (referred to as sukkal of Elam or king of Anshan) and Kutu-Zulush (probably his brother, referred to as sukkal of Susa), as well as an unnamed ‘Sukkalmah’ that might have been Siwe-palar-huppak himself (Vallat 1996a: 314–315), although the unlikely suggestion of Siruk-tuh (father of Siwe-palar-huppak) has also been proposed (Grillot and Glassner 1991: 89, 94).

Direct trade with Susa involving above all the procurement of tin is well documented for years 7–9 of Zimri-Lim’s reign, with visits by merchants, diplomatic messengers and the exchange of precious gifts between the royal courts (Joannés 1991; Michel 1996: 390–391). This trade network clearly substituted the traditional route through the Diyala-Hamrin managed by the kingdom of Eshnunna ruled by the powerful king Ibal-pi-El, and might thus have caused a deterioration of the pre-existing balance in political relations, resulting in a confrontation between Eshnunna and Mari-Elam.

It has been rightly pointed out that in this period the prestige of the Elamite sovereign was apparently greater than that of the Amorite kings: the Sukkalmah seems to have had the role of arbitrator in Mesopotamia (between Mari and Babylon and between Larsa and Eshnunna) and was called ‘father’ by the Mesopotamian kings who referred to one another as ‘brothers’ (Durand 1994; 2013). The motive for this presumed ‘superiority’ may have been the tradition connected with the destruction of Ur, which grew markedly during the Old Babylonian period, together with the perception of Elam as a kingdom covering a huge area, without rivals in Mesopotamia, and only vaguely defined, in which rich resources of precious materials and metals were present.

The expansionist policies of Elam in Mesopotamia continued with the conquest of Eshnunna, thanks to the alliance with Mari and Babylon, which have been correlated with the destruction attested at administrative centers (Tell Harmal) and strongholds in the Hamrin (Peyronel 2013: 62). Strengthened by his control of Diyala, the Elamite sovereign carried out successful military raids in Northern Mesopotamia, occupying Ekallatum, Razama and Shubat-Enlil (Charpin 1986), until he was stopped at Hirutum by the joint armies of Mari and Babylon. This anti-Elamite alliance, considered the result of ‘Amorite nationalism’ in response to Elam’s attempt to impose its sovereignty in Mesopotamia (Charpin and Durand 1991), is recorded in a text that reports the oath sworn at the peace treaty (Durand 1986; Charpin 1990). Hammurabi defeated Elam in his 13th year, but Kutu-Zulush’s successor, Kutir-Nahhunte I, who was already an associate to the throne of Shiwe-palar-huppak, was still able to retaliate, attacking Samsu-iluna of Babylon in the mid-18th century BC, and Abi-eshuh had once more to do battle with Elam (Van Koppen 2013: 377–379).

Apart from an isolated synchronism between Ammi-Saduqa of Babylon (1646–1626 BC) and Kuk-Nashur (II), the history of the last Sukkalmahs is virtually unknown, and only the texts from Susa document the dynastic sequence (Steve et al. 2002: 448–451; De Graef 2007).

In any case, due to the large number of homonyms between officials and the number of princes who could come to power simultaneously, understanding the sequence of rulers is a complex matter. The main reference point is furnished by documents that may be attributed to the family of Anih-Shushim, in which the members of five generations are associated with nine sukkalmahs, from Kutir-nahhunte until the last sukkalmah, Kuk-Nashur III (or IV, according to Quintana 1996).

Also significant – but of a process found also in Mesopotamia during the Late Old Babylonian period – is the occurrence of royal interventions that re-established justice in the country, strong indicators of an economic crisis and the progressive indebtedness of many extended families. One has the impression that a marked reduction in size and wealth takes place, accompanied perhaps by a political crisis with internal conflict for the detention of power.

Like the beginning of the dynasty, its end, too, seems to have been marked by a transitional period, and the rise of the Kidinuids, characterized by the new title of ‘king of Susa and Anshan’, was not an abrupt change (Steve et al. 2002: 452–459; Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2010). Ongoing excavations at Haft Tepe will certainly yield an improved understanding of the passage from the Old Elamite to Middle Elamite period as well as the nature of relations with the new ‘capital’ of Kabnak and with Susa, the preceding great centre of Sukkalmah power in Khuzistan.

ABBREVIATIONS

BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
JA	Journal Asiatique
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
MARI	Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires
MDAI	Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique en Iran
MDP	Mémoires de la Délégation en Perse
NABU	Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires
RA	Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale
RGTC	Répertoire Géographique des Textes Cunéiformes
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete

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