

CHAPTER TWELVE

ELAM IN THE MIDDLE ELAMITE PERIOD

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INTRODUCTION

After a long period during which the rulers of Elam named themselves *sukkalmah* (grand regent) and claimed sovereignty as the “*sukkalmah* of Elam and Shimashki”, the old title “king of Susa and Anshan” re-emerges in the royal inscriptions around the middle of the 2nd millennium BC (Vallat 1997). The reintroduction of the term “king” is realized first with the sign EŠŠANA and written later in Elamite language su-un-ki. The cities of Susa in Khuzestan and Anshan (Tall-e Malyan) in the province of Fars seem to be the capitals of the two main Elamite territories, Elam and Shimashki, respectively. The new royal nomenclature is attested until the reign of Shilhak-Inshushinak in the 12th century BC, after which ensued several centuries without documented evidence.

The common Middle Elamite periodization is formed by dividing the rulers of this period into three groups. The first (ME I) includes five rulers: Kidinnu, Tan-Ruhuratr II, Shalla, Inshushinak-shar-ili, and Tepti-ahar (Steve, Gasche and De Meyer 1980: 92–100). Since Kidinnu was generally assumed as the earliest of them, this group is sometimes alternatively named “Kidinnuid”, though neither the chronological sequence of these rulers is clear, nor were there certain family ties between them. The second group of rulers (ME II) includes the successors of Igi-halki and is referred to also as the dynasty of Ighalkids. The third (ME III) concerns the third group of monarchs, known as Shutrukids after their founder Shutruk-Nahhunte I. The end of the Middle Elamite period is usually considered to be marked by the fall of Hutelutush-Inshushinak, the successor of Shilhak-Inshushinak ca. 1100 BC.

This historical periodization is not followed by all scholars. For example, Pierre de Miroschedji (1981) preferred to divide the Middle Elamite period into two phases based on the stratigraphy of the *Ville Royale* at Susa. Steve, Gasche and De Meyer (1980: 91–107) also propose two phases: 1475–1325 (ME I) and 1325–1075 BC (ME II). Later Steve (1992: 19) divided the Middle Elamite period from a philological point of view into two phases, further subdividing the second phase into ME IIA and ME IIB. The following table shows the suggested dating by several scholars.

This chapter gives an overview of the current state of knowledge of the Middle Elamite period following a three-phase system (ME I–III), introducing new evidence to assist in clarification of the dating.

— *Elam in the Middle Elamite period* —

Table 12.1 Proposed dating systems for the Middle Elamite period

	<i>Steve, Gasche and De Meyer 1980: 91–107</i>	<i>Miroschedji 1981: Tab. 2</i>	<i>Carter and Stolper 1984: Tab. 4</i>	<i>Potts 1999 2002–03: cols. 367–368</i>
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Transitional	–	–	1600–1450	–	–
ME I	1475–1325	1500–1300	1450(?)–1330	1500–1400	1450–1400
ME II	1325–1075	1300–1000	1320–1215	1400–1200	1400–1050
ME III	–	–	1165–1120	1200–1100	–

CHRONOLOGY

Middle Elamite I

In addition to the rulers Kidinnu, Tan-Ruhuratr II, Shalla, Tepti-ahar, and Inshushinak-shar-ili, there was another king named Igi-hater. This king is only attested in a single inscription, on a brick from Dehno (Deh-e-no), and his name was formerly incorrectly read as “Igi-halki” because the last sign was not clearly legible. A complete version of the text found in the storage of the National Car Museum of Iran was published in 2015 which reveals that the name of the king is not Igi-halki but Igi-hater. Philological features, including the use of the sign EŠŠANA and the use of “the king of Susa and Anshan”, allow for its dating to the Middle Elamite period (Danesmand and Abdoli 2015). This discovery brings forth two facts. Firstly, there was a king named Igi-hater who also reigned in the first phase of the Middle Elamite period. Secondly, it is no longer certain that the Igi-halki mentioned as father of Pahir-ishshan and Attarkitah in an inscription of Shilhak-Inshushinak (EKI 48) – previously identified as the king in the Dehno brick – was actually a king.

Thus, we can now identify six rulers for the ME I phase: Igi-hater, Kidinnu, Tan-Ruhuratr II, Shalla, Inshushinak-shar-ili, and Tepti-ahar. While Shalla appears without any title (Scheil 1902: 169–194), he is attested in a legal text from Susa in an oath formula similar to that used for Tepti-ahar (Scheil 1932: 327), and therefore his sovereignty over Elam could be expected. Although the exact order of the mentioned six rulers is uncertain, general opinion places Kidinnu and Tan-Ruhuratr II in the early stages (Vallat 2000). Since the grammatical features of the newly discovered king Igi-hater’s inscription seem to be closer the *sukkalmah* period (Danesmand and Abdoli 2015), it may be assumed that he was the first Middle Elamite ruler.

Presently the main piece of evidence for the chronology of the ME I phase is a date formula on a tablet from Haft Tappeh, a large site 15 km southeast of Susa, which mentions “the year when the king expelled Kadasman-⁴KUR.GAL” (Herrero 1976: 102). The tablet bears the seal impression of Athibu, who was the grand governor of the city Kabnak during the reign of Tepti-ahar. Herrero assumed that Kadasman-⁴KUR.GAL should have been the Kassite king Kadasman-Enlil I (ca. 1369–1355 BC). Glassner expresses doubt over the validity of reading ⁴KUR.GAL as Enlil but has not excluded it (Glassner 1991: 118–120; see also Steve, Gasche and De Meyer 1980: 97–100). Cole and De Meyer (1999) instead assume that ⁴KUR.GAL could have been

in this period an equivalent for the Kassite deity Harbe and the named individual was Kadashman-Harbe I (ca. 1400 BC). Their argument was adopted by Vallat (2000) but rejected by other scholars (Glassner 2000; Goldberg 2004).

Recent radiocarbon dating of samples from building level II at Haft Tappeh stemming from the reign of Tepti-ahar and Inshushinak-shar-iti places them between 1525 and 1435 BC (average values) (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2015), earlier than the reigns of Kadashman-Enlil I and Kadashman-Harbe I. According to this result, the Kadashman-⁴KUR.GAL mentioned in the tablet during the reign of Tepti-ahar could have been a formerly unknown individual. It must be noticed, however, that the results could point to a displacement between calibrated radiocarbon and historical dates in the order of 50–100 years and cannot be accepted with certainty.

Middle Elamite II

The ME II phase was previously named after its founder Igi-halki, but now it has become clear that the only inscription that was presumed to belong to him actually belongs to another earlier king named Igi-harter (Danesmand and Abdoli 2015). Since Igi-halki is no longer invoked in any text as the king, the first ruler of the dynasty must have been his first son Pahir-ishshan, who was mentioned about two centuries later in an inscription from the reign of Shilhak-Inshushinak (EKI 48). He is further attested together with his brother Attar-kittah in an inscription of Shutruk-nahhunte I (EKI 28A §19).

Based on these texts and other original inscriptions belonging to Attar-kittah, Humban-numena, and Urtaš-Napiriša (IRS 21–32; Steve 1967), the genealogy of the rulers in the ME II phase could be as follows: Pahir-ishshan, son of Igi-halki; Attar-kittah, son of Igi-halki; Humban-numena, son of Attar-kittah; Urtaš-Napiriša, son of Humban-numena; Unpashash-Napiriša, son of Pahir-ishshan; Kidin-Hurran, son of Pahir-ishshan.

This genealogy shows that there must have been two royal lines stemming from Igi-halki: the line of Pahir-ishshan and that of his brother Attar-kittah (Figure 12.1). Since the name of Pahir-ishshan is mentioned first in the inscriptions of Shilhak-Inshushinak and also of Shutruk-Nahhunte I, it is generally assumed that he was the elder and reigned first. After these two rulers, the sequence of the kings is not clear. Another text known as the “Berlin letter”, a Neo-Babylonian copy of a (pseudo?)letter, introduces further confusion. In this text, an Elamite ruler whose name is no longer preserved draws on his Babylonian maternal line to lay claim to the Babylonian throne (van Dijk 1986). To underscore his right to the kingship, he alluded to a series of marriages between Elamite kings and Babylonian princesses, commencing with Pahirannu-⁴U who is commonly supposed to be Pahir-ishshan. The marriage connections are described as follows:

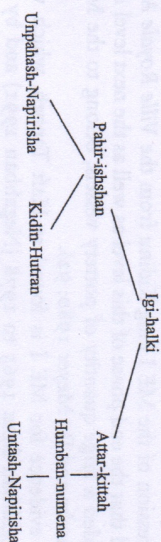


Figure 12.1 The genealogy of the Igi-halkids according to the inscription of Shilhak-Inshushinak.

“Pahirannu-⁴U [married] . . . of the mighty king Kurigalzu, Humban-immenni [married] his daughter, this one born (him) Hundasha-Napiriša. Hundasha-Napiriša] married the daughter of Burnaburiash, this one born (him) Kidin-[h]uduru[d]i[sh]. Kidin-[h]uduru[d]i[sh] married] the daughter of . . . -dunash, this one born (him) Napiriša-h]und[ash]. I, the [daughter-]s[on] married the eldest daughter of Melishihu . . .”

Because the text is fragmentary, several parts cannot be understood and a number of studies seeking to establish the chronology of the individuals have reached different conclusions. For example, the following questions are raised: Is the cited Kurigalzu the first (Steve and Vallat 1989; Potts 1999: 207; Vallat 2006) or the second (Goldberg 2004)? Did Pahirannu-⁴U marry the daughter of Kurigalzu (Goldberg 2004; Vallat 2006) or her sister (van Dijk 1986)? Was Burnaburiash the well-known Kassite king (van Dijk 1986; Vallat 2006) or a prince (Goldberg 2004)? Whom did Kidin-huduru[d]i[sh] (Kidin-Hurran) marry since no Kassite king can be identified as the father of his wife? Is Pahirannu-⁴U with certainty Pahir-ishshan (van Dijk 1986: 164)? Who was the author of the letter?

Another problem is in regard to the genealogy of the rulers mentioned in the letter, which differs from the above-mentioned inscription of Shilhak-Inshushinak. The letter indicates Kidin-Hurran was son of Urtaš-Napiriša, while in the inscription of Shilhak-Inshushinak he is the son of Pahir-ishshan. Furthermore, the rulers in the Shilhak-Inshushinak inscription must have been from different family lines. It is unclear why they are arranged in that manner, as if they all were members of the same chain of descent and ancestors of the sender of the letter. Goldberg (2004) suggested that the passage of the letter “Pahirannu-⁴U [married] . . . of the mighty king Kurigalzu, Humban-immenni [married] his daughter” implies Humban-numena (Humban-immenni) married the daughter of Pahir-ishshan who was born through the marriage to the daughter of Kurigalzu. If the suggestion of Goldberg is true, Urtaš-Napiriša and his son and grandson, Kidin-Hurran and Napiriša-unrtaš, were not only offspring of Attar-kittah but also of Pahir-ishshan (Figure 12.2).

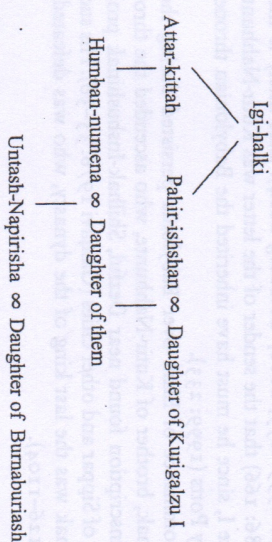


Figure 12.2 Genealogy of Igi-halkid proposed by Goldberg (2004).

Concerning the last kings of this phase, Mesopotamian sources offer some information. According to Chronicle P, Babylonia was first conquered by Kidin-Hurran at the time of Enlil-nadin-shumi (1224 BC) and then during the reign of Adad-shum-iddina (1222–1217) (Glassner 2004, no. 45, iv:14–22). It remains unclear whether this Kidin-Hurran was the same cited as son of Pahir-ishshan and the last king in the inscription of Shilhak-Inshushinak, or if he was the son of Umash-Napirisha as described in the “Berlin letter”. In both cases, he would have lived around the beginning of the 13th century and could not be the person who defeated Adad-shum-iddina at the end of the 13th century. Because of this discrepancy, some scholars have suggested that there must have been two or even three rulers of this name and that the last one conquered Babylonia (Steve and Vallat 1989; Potts 1999: 207, Tab. 7.5; Vallat 2006).

Middle Elamite III

The synchronism between the Shurrukid kings and Babylonian rulers allow us to determine the absolute chronology of this last phase of the Middle Elamite period. The first ruler is Shurruk-Nahunte I, who reigned in the 12th century and who had no direct link to the previous royal house. His presence is documented by several hundred inscribed bricks from Susa. Dehno, Chogha Pahan West and Lyran, close to Bushehr, naming him as son of Hallutush-Inshushinak (Malbran-Labat 1995: 79–83; Steve 1987: 20–26, 29). Since his father is not attested as a king, Shurruk-Nahunte must have been the first ruler of the new dynasty. He is well known for his campaign against Zababa-shuma-iddina (1158 BC) and the conquest of Babylonia, from where he brought booty such as the Naram-Sin stele and the stele of Hammurabi to his capital city of Susa (Frame 1995: no. B.2.4.6). His campaign against Babylonia has led to the assumption that he must have been the Elamite ruler who claimed his right over the Babylonian throne in the above-mentioned letter (Seve and Vallat 1989: 228; Potts 1999: 233; 2006; Goldberg 2004). Less likely is the suggestion of van Dijk (1986: 166) that the sender of the letter was Kutir-Nahunte, son of Shurruk-Nahunte I, since he must have inherited the Babylonian throne from his father as argued by Potts (1999: 233).

The dominance of Elam over Babylonia persisted during the reign of Shilhak-Inshushinak, brother of Kutir-Nahunte, who ascended the throne after him. In an Elamite inscription found near Dezful, Shilhak-Inshushinak probably describes his conquest of Sippar and other cities (Ganjavi 1976: 35–36). His successor Hutelutush-Inshushinak was the last king of the dynasty, who was defeated by Nabu-kudurri-usur I (1126–1104).

TEXTUAL SOURCES

Written sources of the ME I phase are generally in the Akkadian language. Royal inscriptions are rare and limited to bricks of Igi-hater (Daneshmand and Abdoli 2015), Inshushinak-shar-ili (RS 19), and Tepti-ahar (RS 20), describing temple constructions at Dehno and Susa. At Haft Tappeh archives of cuneiform tablets were discovered. One group of these texts originated from a workshop (Negahban 1991: 103–104; 1994) and contains information about deliveries of gold, silver, and other

materials and some mention the recipient of the products (Herrero 1976; Herrero and Glassner 1990; 1991; 1993; 1996). Other archives were found in an administration building in the south part of the city that was used for storage of valuable objects (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2010b: 19–23), hence the tablets are generally inventory lists (Prechel 2010). Other finds like letters, school exercises, and omena found in the 1970s show that there is probably a much larger corpus of texts yet to be uncovered at Haft Tappeh (Negahban 1991: 103–106).

Neither Haft Tappeh nor Susa provide us with legal texts concerning everyday judicial problems of citizens. Only some exemplars known as the “Malamir texts” supply information on this topic (Stolper 1990). Interestingly, a large percentage of the recurrent persons named in this legal archive were women. In 2014, other examples of the same text type were found at Tappeh Boromi.

In the ME II, a transformation in the use of Elamite language took place, with its first introduction into royal inscriptions by Humban-numena (Pézarid 1914: 42–65; Vallat 1984; Malbran-Labat 1995: 59–61). His son Urnash-Napirisha preferred to compose most of his inscriptions in Elamite and left behind a large number of inscribed bricks relating to his building activities in different cities, especially in Al-Urnash-Napirisha, his new foundation at Chogha Zanbil. There he built a zigurat and numerous temples for different deities in the holy area named *sian-kuk*, all incorporating inscribed bricks. Nearly all of these inscribed bricks are attested also at Susa (published by Schell in 1901). Since it is very unlikely that Urnash-Napirisha built a duplicate of the *sian-kuk* at Susa, Hinz and Koch have surmised that the brick inscriptions were transported to Susa from Chogha Zanbil (Hinz and Koch 1987: 1329; Urtn; see also Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2013b: 62–66). The same phenomenon might be observed in the inscribed bricks by Humban-numena also found at Susa mentioning the restoration of a temple for Napirisha and Kuririsha of Lyran (near modern Bushehr) (RS 21).

In the last phase of the Middle Elamite period (ME III), the Shurrukid rulers, who generally used only the Elamite language for their texts, also left behind a large number of inscribed bricks. Of particular note is the lack of other text types such as legal or administrative documents in both this and the previous ME II period. It is unclear whether this is the result of chance or reflects a reduced utilization of writing in the social organization and everyday life in these phases.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The vast excavations of Roman Ghirshman at the *Ville Royale* in Susa provided a large volume of material from the Middle Elamite period, even if the stratigraphic relationship of their context is not precise. The earliest Middle Elamite evidence is a seal impression of the ME I king Kidinu from the *Ville Royale A XII*. It is therefore suggested that the end phase of this level as well as the next level A XI, both of which have yielded a large quantity of pottery vessels, belong to the ME I (Gasche 1973; Steve, Gasche and De Meyer 1980: 92).

More evidence for ME I is found at Haft Tappeh, which was excavated first by E. Negahban from 1965 to 1978 (Negahban 1991) and by the present author starting from 2005 (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2010b; 2012; 2014b). Because several seal impressions from the site include inscriptions mentioning Athibu as great governor

of Kabnak (*šaknu GAL ša Kabnak*), this is presumed to be the ancient name of the city. It is difficult to determine Kabnak's extent, but geomagnetic prospection and surveys suggest an area of about 200–250 ha (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2011a: 1). Negahban's excavations revealed a building incorporating two tombs and parts of two complexes with mud brick terraces, which he named "Terrace Complex I and II". Recent geophysical prospection showed that apart from the tomb building there were at least five monumental complexes (A-E) in this area, separated from each other by massive walls (Figure 12.3). The two terraces were situated in the southern corners of the complexes A and D, respectively. A large number of bronze weapons found on the floor of a room in the western corner of complex (D) indicate probable use of the room by guards. It seems that this complex was added later to complex C and the two were connected through a narrow corridor. Another corridor connected complex D with complex A (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2010b; 2012). Excavations by Negahban in Complex B close to the terrace of complex A uncovered a workshop containing various finished and semi-finished products as well as raw materials, indicating that the workshop's range of production was varied. A life-size clay head and a clay mask as well as objects of bone and ivory were retrieved from the rubble. Negahban (1991: 10) reported remains of the skeleton of an elephant, which could have served as raw material. A large oven for firing pottery was located in the courtyard in front of the workshop. Its form would not have allowed its use for bronze production as was suggested by Negahban (Rafiei-Alavi 2015: 323–326), though the presence of raw material, molds, a large variety of bronze objects, and textual records suggest that Haft Tappeh played a significant role in the manufacturing of bronze articles in the region (Rafiei-Alavi 2012; 2015).

The recent excavations in complex C and in the area at its northern side have yielded information about the stratigraphic sequence of different building levels. Apart from the Parthian and Sassanian remains, at least four Elamite building levels can be distinguished. The first (I) belongs to the *sukkannah* era, while the other three (II-IV) stem from the first phase of the Middle Elamite period (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2014b: 102–106). The urban development at Haft Tappeh reached its climax during building level II, which based on textual sources seems to belong to the reigns of Inshushinak-shar-ili and Tepti-ahar (Tab. 2). It is in this level that the monumental complexes were founded. Their remains in complex C were situated at the same level as the premises close to the terraces excavated by Negahban. Large quantities of pottery, especially oval vessels with knob-foot, as well as vessel stoppers, provide evidence that complex C was used for the management of foodstuffs. Besides the monumental constructions on the northern side of the site, an administration building with a workshop for scribes, archives, and long storage rooms was found in the south part of the city. The tablets were generally inventories listing objects like arrows, quivers, harnesses, and riding equipment that were stored in the building (Prechel 2010). Burned roof beams and ash layers on the premises led to the assumption that it was destroyed by fire. A small structure was situated on the southeastern side of this construction and in one of its rooms an individual had been buried in a terracotta sarcophagus. Two cylinder seals amongst the grave goods are of great interest, as their inscriptions name the proprietor of the seals as Ginadu, the *puhu-teppu* (a highly ranked administration official) of the king Inshushinak-shar-ili. Most likely Ginadu worked as an official in the adjacent administration building (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2011b).

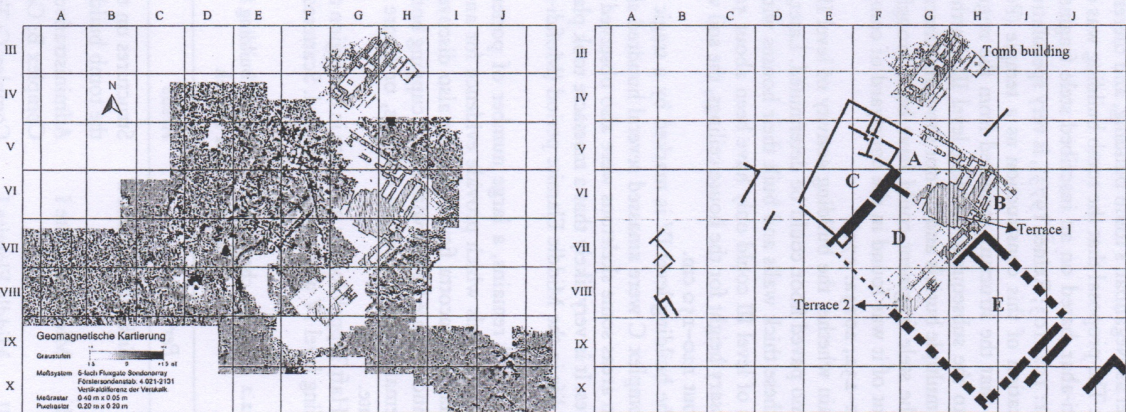


Figure 12.3 Monumental complexes at Haft Tappeh based on geophysical prospections (after Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2014b: Figure 1).

In complex C a thick layer of debris and ashes covered the remains of level II, separating it from level III. It seems that in level III an attempt was made to rebuild the complex. Remains of its thick walls can be observed about 80 cm under the surface on the same level as Negahban's tomb building, and therefore their contemporaneity can be assumed. The proposal that the tomb building was constructed as a "funerary temple" of Tepti-ahar, based on an inscribed stela fragment found in its courtyard (Negahban 1991: 102–103; Reimer 1973), is very speculative. There is no justification for the identification of this construction as a temple (Potts 1999: 196–198), and it is not certain that the structure stemmed from the reign of Tepti-ahar, as it must have belonged to the subsequent building level III. Furthermore, both tombs were constructed for multiple burials and do not show any characteristics of a royal funerary complex. The stela fragment could have been brought there secondarily, since another fragment of it was found in the courtyard of complex B (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2003–2004: 231–232; 2013a: 170).

It is not certain whether the building activity of level III in complex C was completed, because no paved floor could be determined. Later, in level IV, people reused the remains of these thick walls and built their houses within them. At this time the remaining walls of level III could only have been about 50–80 cm high. In order to obtain the necessary height for the house ceilings, the soil within the walls of level III was dug out about 120–150 cm.

The end of the building level IV is marked by a tragic event. In a street close to the houses of complex C were amassed several hundred skeletons behind a wall. In other excavation areas some skeletons were also observed in the remains of level IV outside the graves. It is very likely that a massacre took place at this time, putting an end to the city's life in the Middle Elamite period (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2014b: 72–75, 105–106).

Beside architectural remains, a large number of pottery exemplars are attested in different building levels which provide evidence for an exact chronology of ME I assemblage. Many terracotta figurines were also discovered, among them a large quantity of the nude female figures with hands cupping both breasts. Other examples show clothed females, naked couples on beds, or (more rarely) male figures who usually play a lute.

It seems that Haft Tappeh lost its influence in the region after the devastation at the end of the building level IV and was abandoned. Scattered archaeological materials

Table 12.2 Relative chronology of different building levels in excavated areas at Haft Tappeh

Building Levels	Periods	Areas
Building Level I	<i>Subkalmah</i> period	Structures on the northwestern side of the tomb building
Building Level II	Middle Elamite I	Administrative buildings; Complex A; Complex B; Complex C; Complex D (?)
Building Level III	Middle Elamite I	Complex G; Tomb building
Building Level IV	Middle Elamite I	Complex C

from the ME II phase are limited to pottery examples and terracotta figurines, which show certain similarity to those from Chogha Zanbil (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2013b: 47–52). In contrast, the new foundation at Chogha Zanbil, situated about 40 km southeast of Susa, offers the most important textual and archaeological data for the following Middle Elamite phase. This important site was first excavated by Roland de Mecquenem in 1935–1939 and later by Roman Ghirshman between 1951 and 1962 (Ghirshman 1966; 1968). Geophysical prospection, surveys, and excavations were carried out by the author from 1999 to 2005 (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2007; 2013b).

The city, named Al-Umrash-Napirisha ("the city of Umrash-Napirisha") or later Dur-Umrash ("the fort of Umrash"), was founded in the vicinity of the river Dez during the reign of Umrash-Napirisha. It lay on a plateau, about 30–40 m higher than the riverbed. The city was conceived as a sacred center in which different temples of various Elamite deities were planned. However, the socio-economic aspects that played an important role for the development of urban life remained out of consideration. Although the city was founded near the Dez river, it was not possible to use the river water because of its elevated location. The surmise of Ghirshman regarding the presence of a 45 km long canal from the Karkeh river to Chogha Zanbil is highly speculative (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2007: 26–28; 2013b: 308–311). The city lay on the highest point in the region and it was impossible that water flowed to the city from the surrounding area.

Since the sacred aspects of this new foundation played the fundamental role in its implementation, as mentioned explicitly in the brick inscriptions, the most important building, the ziqqurat, took the central position in the city. It was dedicated to the deities Inshushnak and Napirisha and formed the holiest place enclosed by a wall. On the north-west side of this wall were situated temples for Ishmegarab, Kiririsha, and Napirisha (for more architectural details see Mofidi-Nasrabadi, Chapter 25 in this volume). Other temples built at some distance from the ziqqurat were surrounded by a second thick wall forming a holy district, while the whole city area was delimited by a 4-km-long outer wall (Figure 12.4). At about 500 m to the east of the ziqqurat, Ghirshman excavated remains of two palaces and a funerary building with five subterranean tombs. Most likely the tombs were planned for the members of the royal family, but they must have been used secondarily by other individuals, since the sparse skeletal remains and grave goods do not allow for their classification as royal burials.

According to geophysical prospections, the residential area of the city was occupied with few constructions (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2007: 46–90). Many houses could be observed in the holy district within the middle wall. Recent excavations showed that they do not belong to the period of the city foundation and were built later. Based on stratigraphic relationships and pottery assemblages, the three following building levels were determined for these structures (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2007: 90–91):

- Building level 3 (12th–11th century BC)
- Building level 2 (10th–9th century BC)
- Building level 1 (8th–7th century BC)

Urban life in Chogha Zanbil continued at least until the 7th century BC. Fragments of two glazed bull knobs similar to those from Susa dated to the 8th–7th centuries

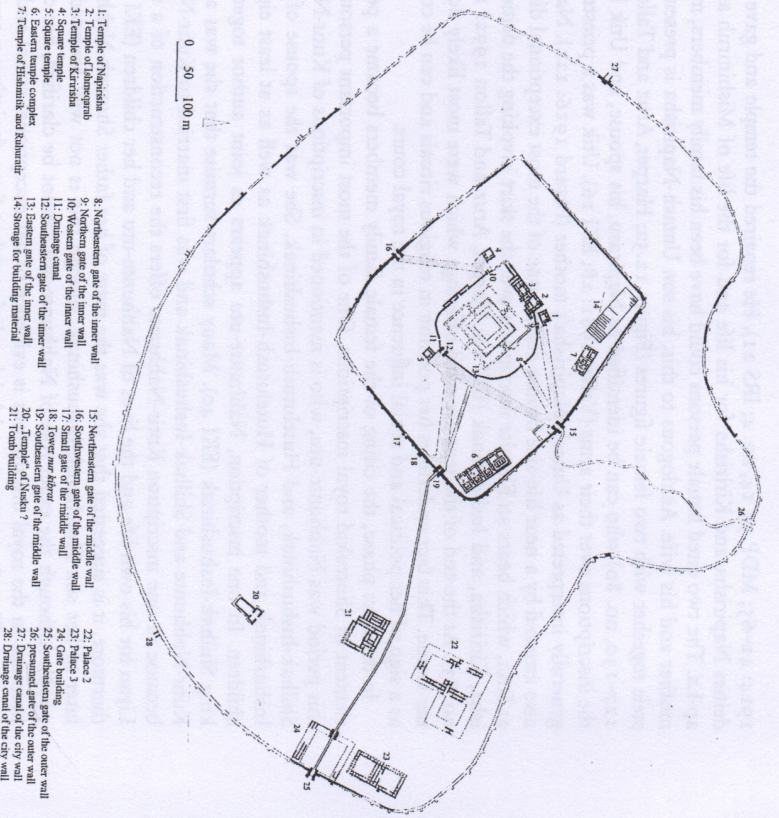


Figure 12.4 Plan of the ancient city Al-Urash-Napirisha (today's Chogha Zanbil).

(Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992: 210) were found recently near the tomb building, which indicate the continued use of luxury goods into this period.

During the reign of Urash-Napirisha, the temples were provided with statues and stelae. Shutruk-Nahhunte started in one of his inscriptions that he brought to Susa several stelae (*submittamēš*) which Urash-Napirisha had placed in the *stan-kuš*, that is, in Chogha Zanbil (EKI 21). Therefore, it is generally supposed that the statue, as well as the stela of Urash-Napirisha found at Susa (Figure 12.5a; Spycket 1981: 307 and Figure 75; Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992: 127–130, Figure 42), were placed originally at Chogha Zanbil (Vallat and Grillot 1978: 82, n. 3). Other inscriptions mention further objects transported from Anshan, Dur-Urash, and Tikni to Susa (EKI 20). Shutruk-Nahhunte's passion for collecting monuments in his capital city resulted in the gathering of a vast number of them at Susa, including many transported by him from Mesopotamia (Potts 1999: 235, Tab. 7.9). Most of the indigenous Elamite art of the ME III phase is attested from the reign of Shilhak-Inshushinak. One of the most remarkable art objects is a cast bronze model depicting, based on its Elamite

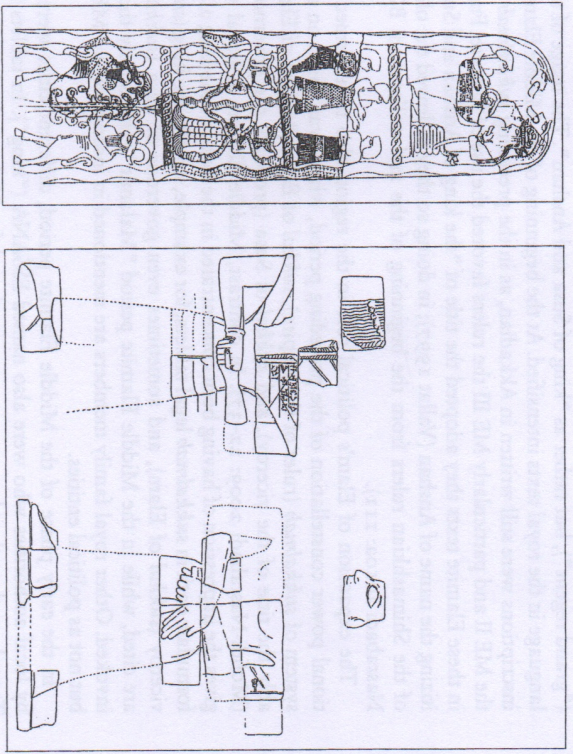


Figure 12.5 Artworks from the ME II and III phases; a: Stela of Urash-Napirisha (after Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992: 80, Figure 42); b: Brick reliefs of Shilhak-Inshushinak from Susa (after Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992: 11, Figure 13).

inscription, the *šit shamshi* "sunrise" in Akkadian) ritual in which two nude male figures, probably priests, carry out a purification or a libation ritual (Harper, Aruz and Tallon 1992: 137–141).

A new artistic phenomenon occurred during the reign of Shilhak-Inshushinak with the use of brick reliefs similar to those of the Kassite period in Uruk. Several molded bricks were found at Susa belonging to facade panels showing a male figure together with a female (Figure 12.5b) as well as a standing bull-man with a date-palm and a standing female figure with hands raised in front of the chest (Harper, Aruz, and Tallon 1992: 11, 141–144, 281–282). An inscription (IRS 41) runs across the panels indicating the brick reliefs were part of a chapel for Inshushinak.

From the end of the Middle Elamite period scarce archaeological material is known. The presence of some inscribed bricks and glazed wall knobs from the reign of Hurelurush-Inshushinak at Susa and Tall-e-Malyan (ancient Anshan) give evidence for this king's building activities in both major Elamite centers.

SOCIO-POLITICAL ASPECTS

In the course of the Middle Elamite period, Elam became one of the most important political powers in the region. Its political and economic rise was mirrored by a certain cultural self-confidence. The rulers no longer referred to themselves as *sukkamuh*

(“grand regent”), but rather as “king of Susa and Anshan”. The usage of the Elamite language in the royal texts intensified. At the beginning of the Middle Elamite period, inscriptions were still written in Akkadian, as in the preceding *sukkalmah* era, but in the ME II and particularly ME III the rulers favored the use of Elamite. Furthermore, in these Elamite texts they adopted the title of “the king of Anshan and Susa”, prioritizing the name of Anshan (Vallat 1997); in doing so they followed the old tradition of the Shimashkian rulers from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2010a: 111).

The expansion of Elam’s political role in the region also transformed the traditional power constellation of the preceding period, which was based on a tripartite system of *sukkalmah* (ruler of the empire), *sukkal* of Elam (“regent of Elam”, probably the title of the viceroy), and *sukkal* of Susa (probably the governor of Susa) (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2009: 22–37). In contrast, Middle Elamite political supremacy gives the impression of having been concentrated in the hand of the king alone. In the formulaic oath in *sukkalmah* legal tablets, for example, usually the king (*sukkalmah*), viceroy (*sukkal* of Elam), and sometimes even governor of Susa (*sukkal* of Susa) are cited, while in the Middle Elamite period “Malamir” tablets only the king was invoked. Other royal family members are mentioned in inscriptions of ME II and III but not as political entities.

In the early phase of the Middle Elamite period, different cities were governed by local authorities who were also named EŠŠANA (“king”). In tablets from Haft Tappeh, such regional governors are mentioned for Huhnu, Anshan, and Hālisratī during the reign of Tepti-ahar (Herrero and Glassner 1990: no. 30; 1993: no. 165). Furthermore, there are other positions like *šaknu* (“governor”), which was held by Athibu, the grand mayor of the city Kabnak in the reign of Tepti-ahar (Herrero 1976: 102–103). However, the ultimate authority of the king can be observed in the use of his seal in the city organization at Haft Tappeh. Compared to other elite seals, that of Tepti-ahar was evidently used more often for administrative purposes, obviously in order to maintain full control over the government (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2011a: 287–288). A record of large cattle herds during his reign indicates his supervision over all administration details: “46 oxen of Ishepilitira, 30 oxen of Tashritu – total: 76 oxen, administrative responsibility of Atta-Napir which the king investigates and adds to the royal cumulative record (lit. ‘big tablet of the king’)” (Beckman 1991). Textual evidence points to a well-organized administration system controlled by the king. All deliveries of raw materials and objects seem to have been registered by special officials, named *puhu-teppu*. One of them was the above-mentioned Ginadu who worked during the reign of Inshushnak-shar-ili (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2011b). Other *puhu-teppu*s are cited in a letter together with the concierge and guardians of a temple who are to deliver a grand chariot (Herrero 1976, no. 8 = H.T. 2).

No indications for the distribution of power can be witnessed with the transition to the next phases under the so-called Ighalkid rulers and later the Shurrukids. Royal family members are cited in inscriptions as an elite group but lack any official position. Interestingly, it seems that the socio-political role of female members was increased progressively during the period. In the ME I phase, the “Malamir texts” demonstrate already the high influence of women in civil society, their right to own property, and their participation in court proceedings. In the ME II, Humban-numena alluded to being chosen (as king) by god Napirisha due to his maternal line (Pézar

1914: 42–65; MDP 53 14, no. 4; IRS 21). He repaired the temple and gave it to the deities Napirisha and Kiririsha for his life and for the life of Mishimruh and Rishap-Ia. The two cited female persons could have been his family members, maybe his mother and his wife. Analogous to this, his son Urhash-Napirisha is presented on a stele together with two female figures (Figure 12.5a; Harper, Aruz and Tallon 1992: 127–130, no. 80) who can be identified as Napirasu, his spouse, and Urtik based on the inscriptions over their arms (Vallat 1981: 28; EKI 16). Urtik was a priestess and is generally interpreted as Urhash-Napirisha’s mother (Pézar 1916: 122). Napirasu is also attested by a near life-size bronze statue, one of the most exceptional discoveries at Susa, which bears an Elamite inscription over the skirt invoking the deities Napirisha, Kiririsha, and Inshushnak (EKI 16; Harper, Aruz and Tallon 1992: 132–135, no. 83). At the end of the text are cited offerings which were most likely donated to her statue. This fact underlines her position in religious rituals and can be considered as a sign of her political and social influence in the royal court.

In the next phase, the citing of the female family members became a permanent element of Shurrukid royal inscriptions. One of the most important personalities of this period was Nahunte-uru, who is mentioned in inscriptions of Kutir-Nahunte, Shilhak-Inshushnak, and Hurelurush-Inshushnak. She was the spouse of Shilhak-Inshushnak and mother of Hurelurush-Inshushnak. As well as at least eight other children. In one inscription, Nahunte-uru appears as joint author together with king Shilhak-Inshushnak (EKI 40). Many scholars surmise that she was a sister of Kutir-Nahunte and Shilhak-Inshushnak and was first married to Kutir-Nahunte, because in one inscription Kutir-Nahunte offers the reconstruction of a temple at Lyran for his own life and the lives of Nahunte-uru and her children (EKI 31). Furthermore, it is suggested that she was the mate of her father Shurruk-Nahunte and later of her son Hurelurush-Inshushnak, though this is not well founded (Stolper 1998). Although the exact role of Nahunte-uru cannot be clarified, her continued presence in the royal inscriptions is evidence of her exceptional social and political position. The above-mentioned brick relief panel at Susa depicting a royal couple from the reign of Shilhak-Inshushnak most probably shows Nahunte-uru with this king (Figure 12.5b). The depiction of female members of Elamite royal families together with rulers in the arts of ME II and III is in contrast to Mesopotamia and goes back to a long tradition in the eastern regions of Elam attested in so-called Shimashkian glyptic from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2009: 53–54). This probably arises from the significant social role of women in the Elamite community and could go back to a matrilineal form of social organization often proposed for the early era of Elamite history.

Without doubt, the intensive building activities and military and political expansion observed in the Middle Elamite period were connected to Elam’s economic development. The socio-political development in this time caused an increasing request for pottery vessels, especially of the so-called “Knopfbecher” that was most likely used for beverage rations, probably beer, of building workers. Improvements in serial production resulted in lower-quality products and a trend towards a simplified shape (Mofidi-Nasrabadi 2014a). The vast building undertakings required changes in the production of manufactured articles in order to optimize the balance of supply and demand.

Undoubtedly the building and military activities can be considered as royal undertakings carried out through centralized power. Textual sources do not allow for the

illumination of the quotidian in the Middle Elamite era. In the absence of private documents like those available for the *sakkaḫmah* era, the social and economic nature of everyday urban life remains to be charted.

ABBREVIATIONS

- EKI Royal inscriptions in Elamite published in König 1965.
 IRS Royal inscriptions in Elamite and Akkadian from Susa (and Chogha Zanbil) published in Malbran-Labat 1995.
 MDP 53 Elamite and Achaemenid royal inscriptions from Susa and Susiana published in Sevre 1987.

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