

SURVEY OF EXCAVATIONS IN IRAN — 1978

Reprinted from
IRAN XVII 1979

Published by
THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PERSIAN STUDIES

SURVEY OF EXCAVATIONS IN IRAN — 1978

The principal excavations and surveys carried out in 1978 are listed below.¹ Sites marked with an asterisk are reported in greater detail.

Excavations

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Spring | Chogha Mish and Chogha Banut; H. Kantor; Oriental Institute, Chicago and UCLA.
Hadjiabad; M. Azarnoush; ICAR
Rayy; Y. Kosari; ICAR
Shahdad; M. A. Kaboli; ICAR
Haft Tepe; E. Negahban; University of Tehran |
| Summer | *Tepe Abdul Hosein; J. Pullar; British Institute of Persian Studies
Malyan; W. Sumner; University of Pennsylvania
*Eshkaft-e Gavi; M. Rosenberg (the Malyan Project); University of Pennsylvania
*Bastam; W. Kleiss; Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
Takht-i Sulaiman; D. Huff; Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
Ziwiye; M. Motamedi; ICAR
Kordlar Tepe; A. Lippert; Innsbruck University
*Haftavan Tepe; C. A. Burney; University of Manchester and University of North Iran
Sang-i Siah (Borazjan); E. Yaghma'i; ICAR
Ashkavar; S. M. Musavi; ICAR
Kangavar; M. Azarnoush; ICAR
Bisitun; M. Rahbar; ICAR
Tepe Nur (Sultaniyya); S. Ganjavi; ICAR
Tepe Hammam (Takestan); Y. Kosari; ICAR
Ardabil; S. M. Musavi; ICAR
Ismailabad; F. Nava'i; ICAR |
| Autumn | *Shahr-i Qumis; J. Hansman and D. Stronach; British Institute of Persian Studies
Firuzabad, Qal'eh-i Dukhtar; D. Huff; Sazeman-i Hefazat-i Athar-i Bastani
Shahr-i Sokhta; P. E. Pecorella; IsMEO
Pusht-i Kuh, Luristan; L. Vanden Berghe; University of Ghent
Sagzabad; E. Negahban; University of Tehran
Jurjan; M. Y. Kiani; ICAR
Susa; J. Perrot; CNRS
*Qal'eh-i Yazdigird; E. J. Keall; Royal Ontario Museum |

Surveys

Ahar, east Azarbaijan; S. Kroll; Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
Bakhtiari highlands; A. Zagarell; National Geographic Society
Darregaz; P. Kohl and D. Heskell; Wellesley College and University of Utah
Gunbad-i Qabus region; M.Y. Kiani; ICAR
Karaj-Qazvin; Y. Kosari; ICAR
Khorramabad region; J. Burman; Hunter College

¹ The Editors thank the Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research in Iran (ICAR) for their kindness and cooperation in providing this information.

ADDENDUM

Qal'eh-i Yazdigird

The fifth expedition to Qal'eh-i Yazdigird was conducted in the winter of 1978, beginning October 1st. Despite the peculiar conditions that prevailed during the course of the four month season, the expedition was brought to a successful conclusion on January 25th, 1979. I am happy to report that we have continued to make exciting new discoveries, though many of them are as enigmatic as the previous ones. We have unearthed more stuccoes (mostly from the context of ancient dumps), and we have exposed more monumental architectural features. But it would be presumptuous of me to suggest that we have been able by any means to clear enough of the Gach Gumbad buildings to permit us to ascertain either their precise date of original construction or their real function. We have been able to add to the circumstantial evidence in support of a late Parthian date for the Gach Gumbad sub-site, while at the same time unearthing features which indicate a fairly complex building history, with the possibility that the latest phase of repairs occurred very close to the beginning of the Sasanian period. Work at another sub-site (Qal'eh Dawar) exposed part of a building that has a classic *chahar-taq* plan, for which one has to surmise a Sasanian date. Modifications occurred to the building in Islamic times, with the latest activity in it occurring shortly before or at the beginning of the Seljuq period. The Islamic occupation appears to have been industrial in nature, possibly involving glass working. It is noticeable that there was no occupation within the Qal'eh Dawar in Seljuq times, only pitting activity. East of the site, the presence of fugitive Seljuq remains has been reaffirmed as a result of a rescue operation during which we unearthed an oven (or possibly bellows), along with twelfth and thirteenth century pottery.

Gach Gumbad: Our attention this year was focused upon the remains which lie on the west side of the gully that runs down through the Maydan enclosure from north to south. Here, from surface indications of walls, we had assumed that we were dealing with the domestic and residential quarters associated with the monumental building in the east side of the gully. It appears, however, that the size of the gully is largely a modern phenomenon (resulting from environmental damage) and that this has tended to create in our minds a greater distinction between Gach Gumbad East and West than was originally there. Limited clearance on the west side also now reveals that the structures were far more monumental than one might have suspected. Their use for menial tasks is certainly in doubt. The use of a broad corridor surrounding a series of rooms is a most noticeable characteristic. This kind of layout, with courtyards, flanking rooms, and circumambulatory corridors is very extravagant of space. Without wishing to imply anything in terms of date or cultural association, it might be useful to reflect that the extravagance is the same kind of thing that one sees in Roman imperial villas or Abbasid palaces. The monumentality of the structures on the west side of the gully is underlined by the presence of an arcade on the side of the complex that overlooks the long enclosure. Part of this area has been used as a dumping ground for architectural debris. The material represents the same kind of deliberate dumping action that was observed in the formation of the Hushtareh dump (1975 season). The debris includes decorative stucco work (for example, a prototype *senmurv* (Pl. VIIIb) identical with that recovered in 1976 from Gach Gumbad East, Room 1), as well as polychrome fresco fragments and one gilded fresco fragment. Glass mosaic fragments and flat plate glass have also been found. Highly significant is the discovery, along with the frescoes, of a hitherto unprecedented number of green glazed potsherds of a type that probably belongs to the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.

In the area of the arcade the dumping had occurred after the arcade had actually been put out of use by the construction of a mass of walling along its outer face. Whether the erection of the walling and the dumping reflects repairs following earth-quake damage remains to be seen. Elsewhere the same massive rebuilding is seen in the large, seemingly amorphous mass of masonry, known by us as the Gach Gumbad "block". It now transpires, resulting from the examination of a fissure which penetrates the block throughout its width, that the face on one side of the fissure represents an articulated façade, very similar in style to the niched façade exposed in 1976 in Gach Gumbad, room 5. The façade in the "block" was at one time obliterated by the addition of another mass on its outside, the addition itself being then articulated with a blind façade. The original façade is seen in the fissure in reverse,

since the decorated façade became one with the mass that was added to it, and then it was pulled away from its original base when the fissure was formed. Although reflecting a complex building history, there is no reason to suppose that this all cannot have taken place in Parthian times, although it would appear to demand that the activity took considerably longer than the fifty years or so once surmised for the life of Gach Gumbad.

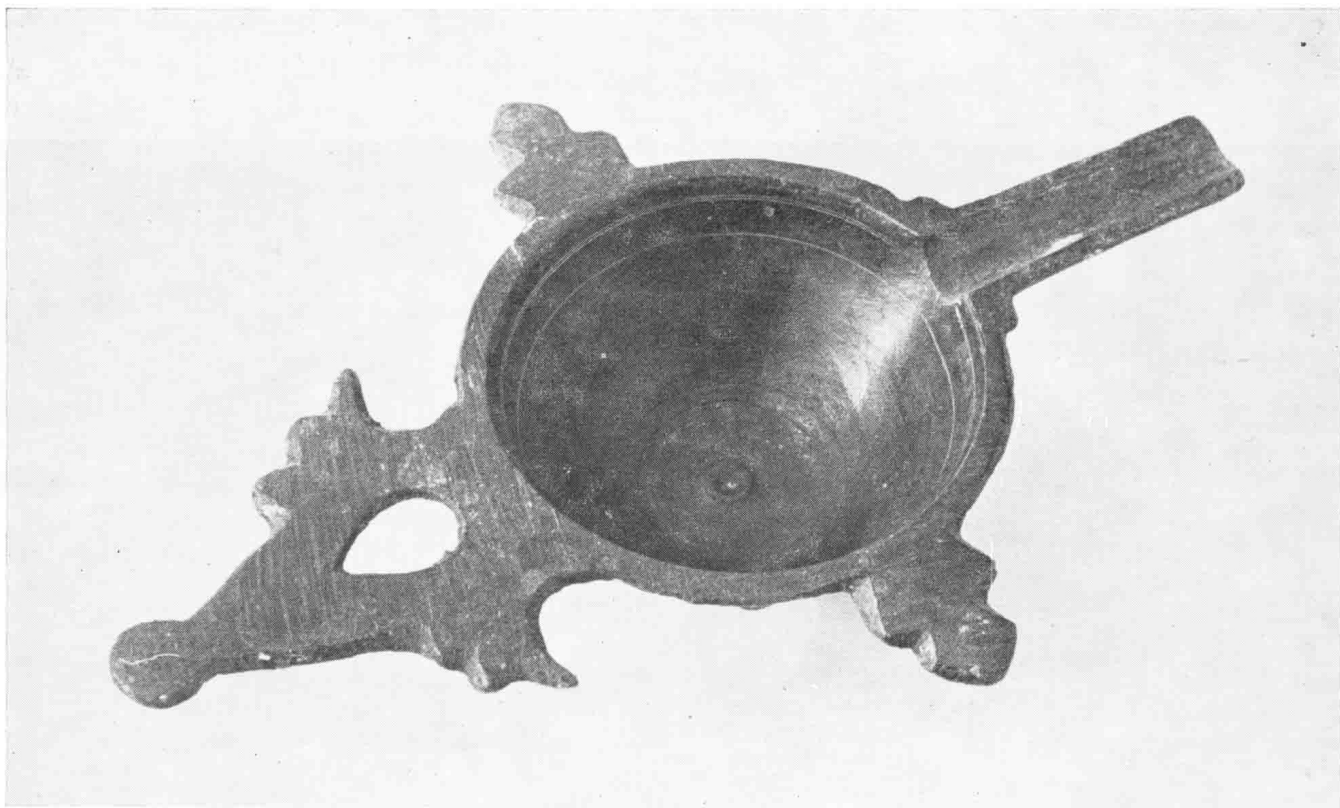
We have, in addition, considerable evidence for the refurbishing of the rooms which takes the form of stuccoes plastered over in such a way as completely to obliterate them, as well as repaintings and touch-ups which speak merely of minor face-lifts. In any event it points to a relatively long period during which the buildings were occupied. There is no evidence, however, so far to indicate that the elaborately carved and moulded stucco decorations were executed in anything but the original phase of the site's construction.

Qal'eh Dawar: We were thwarted this season, to some extent, in our attempt to examine remains that represent occupation other than military or princely. The excavation of Qal'eh Dawar, representing as it does another monumental structure rather than a domestic residence, has nevertheless added a whole new dimension to our knowledge of the overall settlement pattern of Qal'eh-i Yazdigird. The structure is built of rubble and mortar masonry and has a standard *chahar-taq* plan (Pl. VII), with the addition of rooms on the outside (so far, exposed only on the west side). The central structure suffered severe damage at one point, after which the exterior rooms were used for menial tasks which produced lots of ashy debris. Industrial activity is surmised. Numerous glass fragments were found in the debris. Dating is difficult on account of the considerable pit disturbances which were most prevalent between the 11th and 13th centuries. Pottery of that date is well documented for Qal'eh-i Yazdigird during those centuries (with black under blue glaze and Sultanabad-type wares), but none of it is present at Qal'eh Dawar except an occasional fragment in the pits. A bronze lamp (Pl. VIIIa) and a bird finial represent this early or pre-Seljuq intrusion at the site. One of the most enigmatic finds of the season was a relief-decorated, green-glazed jar which was at one time deliberately embedded in the plaster floor of one of the secondary rooms. It was perhaps an heirloom piece since it is quite unique for the site. It may also have been a treasure pot, for it was broken into when a large pit was dug through the floor. In style, the pot would not be out of place in the 2nd to 3rd centuries, but it would also be equally at home if labelled late Sasanian-early Islamic. It is typical of the intriguing problems that continue to fascinate us at the site.

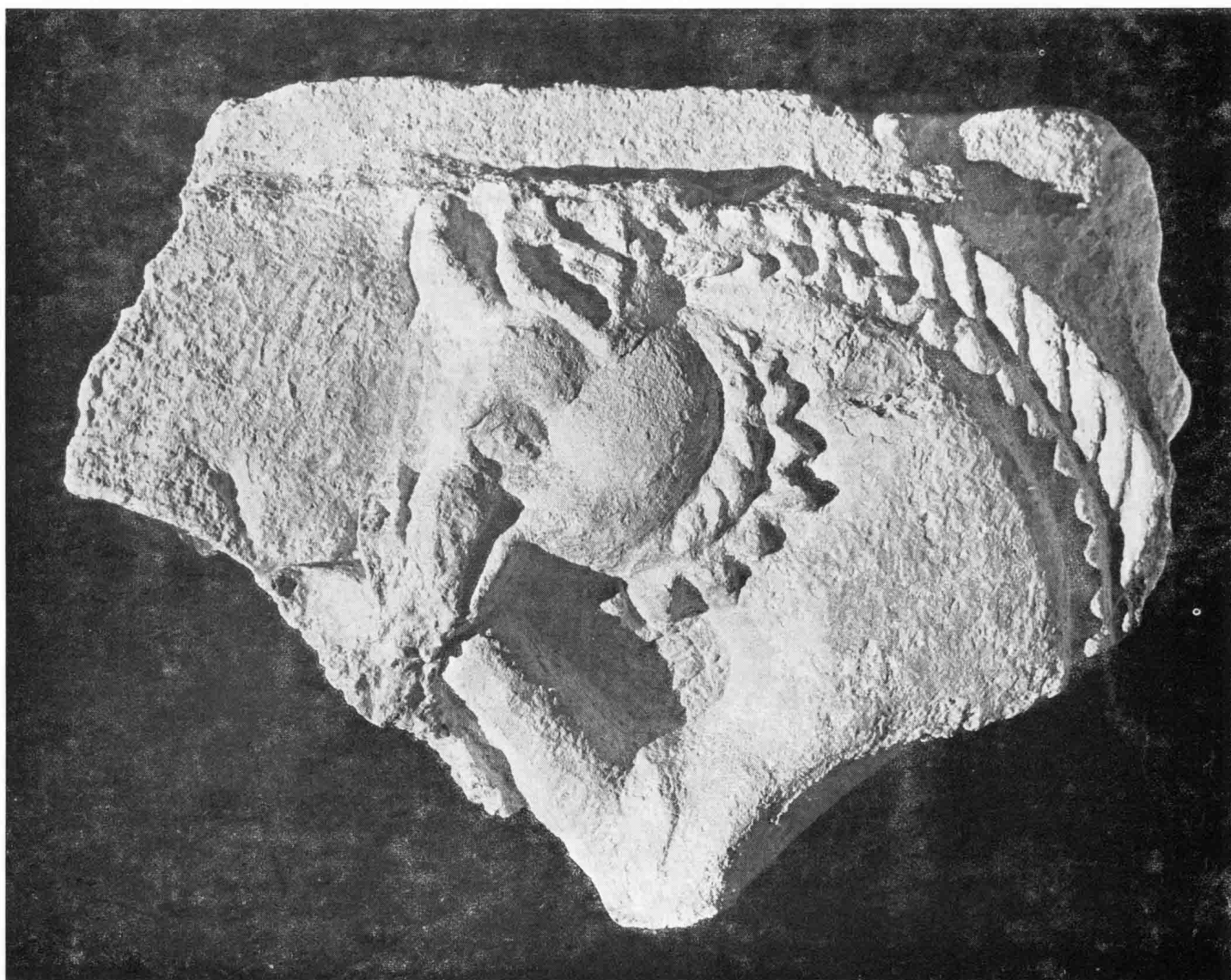
E. J. KEALL



Pl. VII. Qal'eh-i Yazdigird. Qal'eh Dawar, Chahar Taq. Northwest corridor and west pier: view looking south.



Pl. VIIIa. Qal'eh-i Yazdigird. Bronze lamp, QY 78.11.



Pl. VIIIb. Qal'eh-i Yazdigird. Stucco head of Senmurv, QY 78.A 22.