

ANSHAN, LIYAN, AND MAGAN CIRCA 2000 BCE

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BILL SUMNER'S CONTRIBUTIONS to the archaeology of Fars province in general and Malyan in particular have been fundamental. The present essay is offered to Bill in the hope that he will find the intellectual journey from Anshan to Liyan and across the Persian Gulf to Magan a pleasurable one.

OMAN AND IRAN: THE SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTION

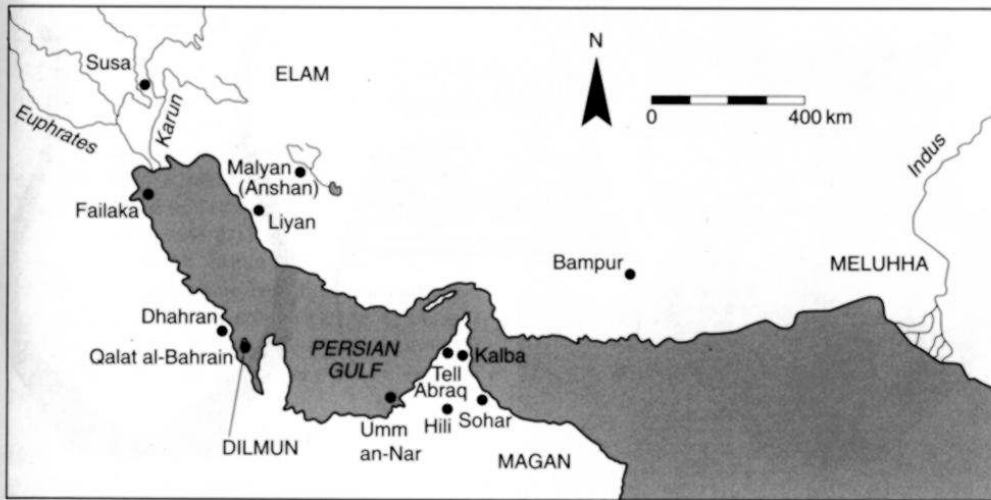
The relationship between the Bronze Age cultures of the Oman peninsula and those of southeastern Iran has been investigated now for nearly forty years (Thorvildsen 1963:219). It is no exaggeration to say that the topic is integral to the earliest intellectual development of south-east Arabian archaeology, which commenced on Umm an-Nar island (Emirate of Abu Dhabi) and at Sohar, Oman in 1958 (figure 13.1). Nor is it difficult to see why this should have been the case. Striking parallels between the painted black-on-gray pottery of the graves excavated by the Danish expedition on Umm an-Nar and that recovered by Sir Aurel Stein in Iranian Baluchestan (Stein 1937:104–125) were noted almost immediately by Knud Thorvildsen (1963:219). Several years later Geoffrey Bibby elaborated on the same parallels in his popular *Looking for Dilmun* (Bibby 1969:278–280), but it was Beatrice de Cardi who, in a series of reports on her 1966 excavations at Bampur, first provided detailed documentation of the parallels between the Umm an-Nar material and both the black-on-gray and incised grayware of Bampur, Damin, Khurab, and other sites throughout the Indo-Iranian borderlands (de Cardi

1967:40, 1968:148–149, 1970:268–276). This was further elaborated by E.C.L. During Caspers (1970), C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky (1970:80), and Maurizio Tosi (1974, 1976b) and has been commented on by numerous other writers as well (for example, Cleuziou and Tosi 1989; Frifelt 1975; Potts 1981; R. Wright 1989). These parallels, of course, pertain exclusively to the southeasternmost portion of modern Iran, the region that today forms the western part of Baluchestan. In contrast, the evidence of parallels between southwestern Iran and the Oman peninsula circa 2000 BCE is much less abundant.

OMAN AND IRAN: THE SOUTHWESTERN CONNECTION

To date, the evidence of ties between southwestern Iran and the Oman peninsula has consisted almost exclusively of soft-stone vessels. Parallels between chlorite or steatite vessels discovered in the early excavations at Susa and Liyan, near Bandar Bushehr, and material found at Hili and Umm an-Nar were highlighted over a quarter of a century ago (Miroschedji 1973a:Fig. 13) and have been discussed subsequently on several occasions (for example, Cleuziou 1981:290; Häser 1988; Potts 1990:110, 1999:120, 180). As for ceramic or other ties, until recently the only links detected between the Oman peninsula and southwestern Iran were of Middle Elamite date, as indicated by a faience cylinder seal and assorted sherds from Tell Abraq (Potts 1993b:434–435, Fig. 4, Table 2).

During the final, 1997/1998 season of excavation at Tell Abraq, however, two complete Kaftari jars were recovered



13.1 Sites mentioned in text. Prepared at MASCA

in the eastern half of a typical Umm an-Nar-type tomb (figures 13.2, 13.3). With a diameter of circa 6 m, the Tell Abraq tomb (figure 13.4) is on the small side as Umm an-Nar tombs go, since these are known to vary in size from circa 4 to 14.5 m in diameter. The archaeological assemblage recovered in the Tell Abraq tomb suggested that it dated to the very end of the Umm an-Nar period (2500 to 2000 BCE) and could even be considered transitional to the following, so-called "Wadi Suq" period (2000 to 1300 BCE) based on the presence of artifacts more typically associated with the early second millennium than with the third (for example, a complete Dilmun-type sac-shaped burial jar with crudely scored rim, Bampur V-VI-type black-on-gray ware, almost two dozen socketed spearheads, and so forth). Indeed, this presumption is supported by a series of five AMS radiocarbon dates run on charcoal taken from the tomb (table 13.1).

Both vessels from Tell Abraq are what could be described as small jars or beakers. TA 1804 has an offset band-rim with painted decoration consisting of simple bands, solid triangles, and loose cross-hatching, while TA 2596 shows simple bands, wavy lines and tight cross-hatching. All of these elements can be found on published Kaftari pottery (Sumner 1974: Figs. 6–7, 1991: Fig. 25), albeit never in the same precise configuration. The design elements, however, are diagnostic and were already recognized by the late Louis Vanden Berghe when he first coined the term "Kaftari culture" in 1954 (Vanden Berghe 1953–54: 402).

I shall not presume to comment upon the veracity of claims that have been made over the years for the presence

of Kaftari pottery elsewhere on the Arabian side of the Gulf, for example, on Failaka island off the coast of Kuwait (Højlund 1987: 100), in the Dhahran tombs of eastern Saudi Arabia (Zarins 1989: 82; see my remarks in Potts 1990: 216) or at Qalat al-Bahrain (Højlund 1994: 119). Given the very obvious general similarities between black/brown-painted, chaff-tempered buff ware with horizontal bands and wavy lines in the early Wadi Suq period in the Oman peninsula (or for that matter in period IVA at Tepe Yahya) and the decoration commonly found on Kaftari-period pottery in Fars, none of these claims should be accepted unless verified by compositional analysis of the pottery in question or a clear set of unambiguous parallels to Kaftari pottery.

LIYAN AND MAGAN

Bill Sumner once suggested, "Although we do not know the geographical limits of Anshan [in the Kaftari period] it is not unreasonable to suggest a governor of the southern districts, including Kaftari settlements reported in Fasa, and perhaps a governor at Liyan" (Sumner 1989a: 148). It is unfortunate that Liyan, a site located circa 4 km south-east of Sabzabad on the Bushehr peninsula (Matheson 1972: 243; Whitcomb 1987: 316, Fig. A), is not better known but there are indications that it must have been an extremely important site and that Sumner's suggestion was well-founded (for Elamite texts mentioning Liyan, see Vallat 1993: 157). In 1913 Pézard found part of an alabaster socle in his excavations at Liyan bearing the name of Simut-wartash (Malbran-Labat 1995: 19, 217, n. 23). If this is the same Simut-wartash known to have been the son of



13.2 TA 1804—E 74.60, N 115.20, elev. 7.25 (layer 1); brown-on-buff, fine chaff; 8.1 cm rim diameter, 5.4 cm base diameter, 15.00 cm tall; excavated 24 December 1997. *Photograph by D.T. Potts; Illustration by Hildreth B. Potts*



13.3 TA 2596—E 74.96, N 115.50, elev. 7.61–7.70 (layer 4); fine brown-on-buff, no visible inclusions or voids; 6.6 cm rim diameter, 4.5 cm base diameter, 12.7 tall; excavated 26 January 1998. *Photograph by D.T. Potts; Illustration by Hildreth B. Potts*

Shiruktuh, then it is indeed likely that Liyan was under the control of the *sukkalmahs* (Vallat 1984b:258; Carter and Stolper 1984:31; Potts 1999:180). Much later, during the Middle Elamite II period (ca. 1400 to 1200 BCE) Humban-numena I (ca. 1350 to 1340 BCE) constructed a high temple or *kukunnum* for Kiririsha at Liyan (Walker 1981:130, no. 192; Vallat 1984b), a building restored during the Middle Elamite III period (ca. 1200–1100 BCE) by both Kutir-Nahhunte (König 1965:§31) and Shilhak-Inshushinak (König 1965:§57–59; Grillot and Vallat 1984; Potts 1999:237–238). Furthermore, Pézard's excavations at Liyan recovered painted pottery (Pézard 1914:Pl. 6) which is widely identified as Kaftari ware (Sumner 1974:173; Cleuziou 1981:290; Carter and Stolper 1984:154; Nickerson 1991:5).

We do not know what sort of a relationship existed between Magan circa 2000 BCE and Elam in general or Anshan in particular. There is, however, plenty of evidence of close links between Magan and Dilmun. In Magan this is demonstrated by the more than six hundred sherds of Barbar red-ridged pottery found at Tell Abraq (Grave et al. 1996); by the presence of sac-shaped Dilmun burial jars at Tell Abraq, Kalba, Shimal, and other sites in the Emirates; and by the recovery of an ivory Persian Gulf seal at Tell Abraq and a stone Dilmun stamp seal at Mazyad near Jabal Hafit (Cleuziou 1981:Fig. 8; Potts 1990:254). In Dilmun, links with Magan are illustrated by the recovery of diagnostic soft-stone in both the major settlements, such as Qalat al-Bahrain (Højlund 1994:386–390) and Saar (Killick et al. 1991:Fig. 16), and tombs (for example, Ibrahim 1982:Pl. 53; Mughal 1983:Pls. L–LI). Further, we know something about Dilmun's relations with Susa in this period from cuneiform sources (Potts 1990:226–228).

If we are to understand Magan's relations with Anshan, I suggest that we look not to Malyan and the highlands of Fars. Rather, in view of Liyan's importance and location, we ought to begin by considering the Bushehr area in general and Liyan in particular as the Gulf coast "hub" for contacts between the *sukkalmahs* and their southern neighbors. This, too, may produce unexpected insights into Elam's relationship with Dilmun which go beyond the data available from Susa. We can only hope that excavations will one day allow scholars to test the hypothesis that Liyan functioned as an important node for interaction between Anshan and such polities of the Lower Sea as Dilmun, Magan, and perhaps even Meluhha.

Acknowledgement. I thank Lloyd R. Weeks for calibrating the latest radiocarbon dates from Tell Abraq and Russell Workman (both University of Sidney) for printing the photographs published here. Finally, many thanks to my wife Hildreth B. Potts for her drawings of TA 1804 and TA 2596.



13.4 Umm an-Nar-type tomb at Tell Abraq, viewed from the south. Photograph by D.T. Potts

Table 13.1. Radiocarbon determinations from the tomb at Tell Abraq

Sample	Level (elevation)	¹⁴ C age BP	Cal. age	
			range BCE (1σ)	range BCE (2σ)
OZD686	3 (7.40-7.50 m)	3677 ± 58	2140-2070 (0.41) 2070-1970 (0.59)	2200-1890 (1.00)
OZD687	4 (7.60-7.70 m)	3826 ± 57	2400-2390 (0.05) 2340-2190 (0.87) 2160-2140 (0.08)	2460-2130 (0.98) 2070-2050 (0.02)
OZD688	6 (7.80-7.90 m)	3742 ± 50	2200-2100 (0.64) 2090-2040 (0.36)	2290-2010 (0.95) 2010-1980 (0.05)
OZD689	6 (7.80-7.90 m)	3650 ± 70	2130-2080 (0.25) 2050-1920 (0.75)	2190-1870 (0.96) 1840-1780 (0.4)
OZD690	6 (7.87 m)	3779 ± 61	2290-2130 (0.86) 2080-2050 (0.14)	2450-2440 (0.01) 2400-2370 (0.03) 2370-2030 (0.95) 2000-1980 (0.01)

Note: Calibrated by L.R. Weeks; numbers in parentheses represent the probability that the date falls in the range indicated. The dates were run at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's (ANSTO) AMS facility at Lucas Heights, NSW, Australia, and were funded under grant 98/152R from the Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering (AINSE).