



## CHAPTER 35

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# MEDIA, KHUZESTAN, AND FARS BETWEEN THE END OF THE ACHAEMENIDS AND THE RISE OF THE SASANIANS

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## INTRODUCTION

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Despite the existence of a series of sources (Wiesehöfer 1994), the period between the end of the Achaemenid empire and the rise of the Sasanian dynasty can be considered one of the “dark ages” in the history of Iran. Archaeological research on this period has been neglected for decades and only in recent years have comprehensive projects dedicated to it been conducted. On a historic level, the end of the Achaemenid empire and its conquest by Alexander the Great represent a crucial phase in the history of Iran because the complex process of encounter and fusion between Hellenism and Iranism (cf. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993) that belongs to what is generally described as the “Hellenization” of Asia reached the core of the largest empire of the ancient Near East (Callieri 2001a). At the same time, the Seleucid kings did not reign everywhere for the same length of time before the Arsacid conquest of most of the Iranian plateau and adjoining areas in the mid-second century BC. In Media Seleucid power lasted until about 145 BC, when the region was conquered by the Arsacids. Elymais and Susiana were under Seleucid domination until the Arsacid conquest of the plateau, but the beginning of local coinage around 147 BC suggests that the local Kamnaskirid dynasty took advantage of these conflicts, retaining power in Elymais until the mid-first century AD, while Susa, on the other hand, had a more troubled history. A new, local dynasty bearing Arsacid names took power until the very end of the Arsacid period, when Susa at least was ruled by the Arsacid Artabanus V, who lost his city and his



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kingdom to Ardašīr I in 224. As for Fars, the end of Seleucid rule is linked to the beginning of the coinage issued by the local dynasts of Fars bearing the title *frataraka* (Chapter 36). While the traditional dating of 300–250 BC would assign Fars a very short-lived Seleucid rule, a new chronology for the coin issues (Alram 1986) and a reexamination of the historical sources (Wiesehöfer 1994) have shifted the beginnings of the *frataraka* coinage to 200–180 BC (contra Curtis 2010). In fact, Fars was never under direct Arsacid rule, and the use of the term “Arsacid” for Fars is only convention. Political history thus followed different paths in each of the three regions considered here.

In the more than five centuries of this period we can single out two main cultural phases. The first, lasting until the first century BC, including the Macedonian, Seleucid, and Early Arsacid periods, can be defined as Post-Achaemenid or Hellenistic according to the prevailing cultural orientation. On the Iranian plateau the Achaemenid heritage was strong, surviving the end of Achaemenid rule, particularly in Fars, the cradle of the dynasty, but at the same time the Seleucids continued the policy of interest in Asia that had characterized Alexander’s kingdom, with the foundation of colonies and establishments that contributed to the diffusion of Hellenistic culture, lasting into the three first centuries of the Arsacid empire. If, on the whole, the Greco-Macedonian presence on the plateau differed from region to region, all three areas investigated in the present essay offer evidence of this presence. Media, corresponding to the present provinces of Hamadan, Kermanshahan, Kurdistan and Luristan in western-central Iran, represented the strategic point of contact between Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau. Susiana, in modern-day Khuzestan, along with the Zagros piedmont of Elymais, was a particularly fertile agricultural region. Even Persis—modern Fars, Bushehr, and part of Hormozgan provinces—although generally considered of marginal importance in the Seleucid kingdom, seem to have had a Hellenistic presence.

For the second phase, starting in the first century AD, even though it is often termed “Parthian” in the literature, we use the term “Arsacid,” because of the distinct cultural re-orientation of this dynasty, which also shaped the cultural milieu from which the Sasanians dynasty arose. Despite some important contributions to the study of pottery (Haerinck 1983), the difficulty in dating archaeological evidence from these centuries makes it impossible to attribute every piece of archaeological evidence to one or the other of these two phases. Therefore, the exposition of the archaeological evidence here will follow the chronological scheme used within each region and site, under a common heading for the two phases.

## MEDIA

Traversed by the major route linking the eastern capital of the Seleucid kingdom, Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, with the “Upper Satrapies” (i.e., the Iranian plateau and Central Asia), Media received great attention from the Seleucids and indeed, despite a shortage

of archaeological research, the epigraphic and topographic evidence taken as a whole shows this to have been one of the major areas in Iran with a Hellenistic presence.

Ecbatana, the former summer capital of the Achaemenid empire (modern Hamadan), continued to be an important town during the Seleucid and Arsacid periods. Excavations there between 1983 and 1999 at Tepe-ye Hegmataneh, where the old houses of this quarter of the city center were demolished in order to allow archaeological investigation, brought to light parts of a great mudbrick architectural complex with a plan of remarkable regularity. The first report did not give any information on associated finds and refrained from suggesting a date (Sarraf 1997). The regularity of the residential complex was tentatively interpreted as possible evidence of use in the Seleucid period (Boucharlat 1998), when the older Achaemenid structures are said by Strabo to have been used by the Seleucid kings (*Geog.* 11.13.5). Further soundings produced reliable stratigraphic and ceramic evidence that dates the complex to the late Arsacid period (Azarnoush 2007). From Hamadan we also have a gray limestone male head which may be of Mithridates II (Kawami 1987: 51–3).

As for the famous Sang-e Shir (“lion of Hamadan”), an over life-size sculpture of a lion in the round revealing, despite its poor state of preservation, a naturalistic conception typical of Hellenistic sculpture, it has been suggested that this belonged to the cenotaph commissioned by Alexander to commemorate his companion Hephaestion on the site of his death (Luschey 1968). Excavations in a nearby cemetery revealed simple inhumations in flexed position, attributed to the late Achaemenid period; terracotta sarcophagi and jar burials of Seleucid date; and boat-shaped, terracotta sarcophagi dated to the early Arsacid period on the basis of associated coins from the late second century BC (Azarnoush 1975, 1976, 1979). The evidence of settlement in the Hamadan region has been expanded by the recent discovery of Arsacid-period sites on the northern slopes of Mount Alvand (Motarjem and Balmaki 2009).

The existence of Greco-Macedonian colonies in Media, structured exactly like other Hellenistic *poleis*, is attested by the important Greek inscription from Nehavand, ancient Laodicea (Robert 1949; Rougemont 2012). The inscription is carved on a stele crowned by a tympanum on small columns, now in the National Museum of Tehran. Dated to 193 BC, the text preserves an edict issued by Antiochus III upon the institution of the cult in honor of his queen Laodice. A second, fragmentary version of the same text was found near Kermanshah, while a third copy was discovered in Phrygia (Anatolia). In all three cases the text of the edict itself is preceded by a letter from the sovereign to the local authorities (Robert 1967).

These inscriptions are of considerable importance, both because they provide a picture of the administrative structure of the Seleucid satrapies in Iran and because they serve as evidence of a Seleucid royal cult practiced in the temples mentioned in the inscriptions. One of these was very probably the site in Nehavand that, as recently as the early twentieth century, still displayed six columns. Identified by Ghirshman as a Hellenistic building (Robert 1949: 21), it has never been investigated. Also found at this site were a small, circular stone altar adorned with a garland in relief and five bronze statuettes of Hellenistic divinities, all of Hellenistic craftsmanship, now in the National

Museum in Tehran. Regardless of the complexity of their dating (Invernizzi 2000: 247–9)—these objects have been variously considered late Hellenistic works of the first century BC or Roman products (Fleischer 2000: 223)—they reflect the historical importance of Laodicea, a point emphasized by yet another Greek inscription from 183/182 BC honoring the governor of the “Upper Satrapies” (Robert 1950). It is not, perhaps, by chance that the so-called “Karen treasure,” which includes Hellenistic metalware, is supposed to have originated in Nehavand (Herzfeld 1928; Khachatrian 1989: 299).

On the main road between Ecbatana and Seleucia, at Bisotun—site of the rock relief of Darius I and of an open-air shrine (Kleiss and Calmeyer 1996)—is a relief depicting Heracles Kallinikos recumbent on a lion skin, accompanied by a Greek inscription dated to 148 BC (Hakemi 1958; Robert 1963: 76; Bonanno Aravantinos 1991: 170; Luschej 1996b). The addition of a quiver and arrows to the traditional iconography of Heracles depicts the god as a hunter and allows the identification of Bisotun Mountain with the Mount Sambulos mentioned by Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.13) in connection with the cult of a local Heracles (Boyce and Grenet 1991: 91–4). While the *leontis* in low relief could be an earlier—possibly Elamite—creation, the image of the naked Greek hero, holding a goblet in his hand, in high relief is nearly sculpture in the round. However, Heracles’ physiognomy, particularly his body, betrays the sculptor’s local origins in an area where, by the time the sculpture was made, naturalism had virtually disappeared. The dedicatory inscription is of particular interest since it expresses a sort of ex-voto wish for Kleomenes, the Seleucid governor of the “Upper Satrapies,” to achieve victory over the Parthians. The wish was expressed by one Hyakinthos, whose father bore the Macedonian name Pantauchos, thus attesting to the presence of Macedonian settlers in the region. Traces of an Aramaic translation of the text have been interpreted as a local, “nationalistic” proclamation (Huysse 1996: 66).

Moreover, two rock reliefs dated between the second and first centuries BC are also located at Bisotun, one of which depicts a king (?) (Mithridates II?) before four dignitaries, while the other shows a horseman named Gotarzes, identified, on no solid grounds, with the Arsacid sovereign of the same name. The continued use of Greek in the region is indicated by the inscriptions accompanying these reliefs.

The stone block in the *Partherhang* of Bisotun, preserving the frontal representations of a king standing before an altar, flanked by two assistants (Gall 1996), is evidence of the diffusion onto the Iranian plateau of so-called “Parthian art” of Syro-Mesopotamian origin in the later Arsacid period. The Parthian inscription on the altar mentions Vologases, king of kings (Gropp 1970: 200–201), probably a reference to Vologases II, who reigned in the early second century AD. Finds dated to the Seleucid and Arsacid periods have also been identified in the settlement and graves on the eastern slope of Bisotun Mountain (Kleiss 1970, 1996).

An imposing architectural complex at Kangavar, between Bisotun and Hamadan, was long attributed to the Seleucid period and later to the Arsacid era. Much of the enormous basement of this structure remains intact. An exterior wall of ashlar masonry has, on its south side, two flights of stairs meeting in the center. This building has been identified by various scholars as the temple of Anahita at Concohar mentioned by Isidore of

Charax in his *Parthian Stations* (§6) (Kambaksh Fard 2007), but M. Azarnoush demonstrated that it dates to the late Sasanian period and was probably a palace (of Xosrow II?) (Azarnoush 1981, 1999). On the other hand, graves attributed to the Arsacid period, both terracotta coffins covered with stone slabs and jar burials, have been excavated at the site (Azarnoush 1981: 69–71; Kambaksh Fard 2007 2: 9–50). Finally, a survey of the Kangavar Valley located ninety-five settlements dated to the Arsacid period (Young 1975).

Moving on to the region of Kermanshah, an Arsacid-period settlement with an adjacent graveyard has been identified at Kuh-e Paru, not far from the Sasanian reliefs at Taq-e Bustan (Matheson 1976: 131). From Denavar come three fragments of a large basin made of local, porous limestone rendered waterproof with yellow plaster (now in the National Museum, Tehran). Decorated with the heads of Silenus and a Maenad issuing forth from what has been interpreted as Dionysus' *nebris*, they are rendered in a naturalistic style and on stylistic grounds have been dated to the third or early second century BC (Parlasca 1991: 457; Luschetzky 1996a). Associated speculatively by Ghirshman (1972: 189) with a temple of Dionysus that he suggested was built by Greeks who saw the Kermanshah Plain as Dionysus' birthplace, these fragments should more cautiously be considered evidence of a sculptural school of Hellenistic inspiration, dating to the Seleucid period, but very probably consisting of local craftsmen, as suggested by both the stone used and the fairly massive dimensions of the pieces. Two further stone Silenus heads from the same area might have belonged to the same basin (Luschetzky 1996a: 266), as indeed might four other fragments now in private collections (Parlasca 1991: 457). In the early twentieth century a fragmentary Greek epitaph which probably preceded an epigram was found near Kermanshah (Robert 1967: 295).

Several monumental rock-cut tombs in Media (Qyzqapan, Dukkan-e Da'ud, Fakhriqa), although attributed by Herzfeld to the Medes, in fact date to the post-Achaemenid period. Their iconographic program seems to echo fairly closely the tombs of Darius I and his successors, with a palace façade and a ritual scene with fire altar. However, the presence of Ionic capitals and the distance between the two pairs of half-columns shown suggest a date in the fourth or third century BC (Gall 1966, 1974; Huff 1971).

Further north, a Greek dedication to Heracles incised on the entrance to a complex of rooms excavated in the rock at Karafto, in northern Kurdistan, and dated between the fourth and third centuries BC (Robert 1946–47: 364), has given rise to contrasting interpretations of the complex itself. Rather than a sanctuary dedicated to the cult of Heracles, as suggested by Sir Aurel Stein (Stein 1940: 340–2), it is now considered more likely to have been the residence of an officer in charge of the border between Media, then a part of the Seleucid kingdom, and Media Atropatene, where an Iranian dynasty ruled (Bernard 1980; cf. Hamzalu and Mir Eskandari 2002–3).

A new interpretation has also been proposed for the architectural complex at Khorheh, southeast of Qom in north-central Iran. On the basis of two slender columns of Ionic type, Herzfeld had identified Khorheh as a peripteral temple of Seleucid date (Herzfeld 1941: 283–4). Excavations by A. Hakemi in 1955 (Hakemi 1990) yielded no material

predating the Arsacid period, and showed that the columns belong to a colonnaded portico in front of three rooms—the central one larger than the two side rooms—and a square hall surrounded by corridors. Subsequent surface investigations led W. Kleiss to interpret the building as a palace of the Arsacid period (Kleiss 1981b, 1985). In the last few years the Organization for the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of Iran has returned to the site, correcting some of Hakemi's reconstructions. The portico evidently had a single row of columns, while the central room had a pilaster base in the middle (Rahbar 1999a).

## KHUZESTAN

Another region where the post-Achaemenid period is characterized by a profound and lasting Hellenistic cultural presence—at least to judge by the abundance of epigraphic finds in Greek—is Susiana, the core of ancient Elam, a particularly fertile agricultural region, corresponding to the lower part of present-day Khuzestan. Sources mention the towns of Seleucia-on-the-Eulaeus (ancient Susa) and Seleucia-on-the-Hedyphon, a site yet to be located with any certainty (Le Rider 1965: 261).

While a Hellenistic-type administration, a cult of the dynasts, a gymnasium and a Seleucid garrison are attested epigraphically at Seleucia-on-the-Eulaeus (Le Rider 1965), the presence of a substantial colony of Greco-Macedonians and the survival of Greek institutions, even after the Arsacid conquest, are evidenced by a considerable number of inscriptions in Greek dating right up to the turn of the Christian era (Chapter 41; Huyse 1996: 69–70). Over and above the city's importance as a commercial center, it seems likely that favorable conditions for agriculture and the availability of water, as highlighted by one of the few studies on the settlement patterns of the historic periods in Iran (Wenke 1975–6: 104–115), excited the interest of the Seleucid sovereigns, as they did in neighboring Mesopotamia, to which Susiana was a natural adjunct.

Unfortunately, the poor methodology of the French excavations at Susa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries complicate our understanding of the Seleucid, Arsacid, and Sasanian levels exposed (Martinez-Sève 2002b: 45–9). Nevertheless, based on the large stratigraphic excavation carried out by Ghirshman between 1946 and 1966, unfortunately unpublished, and subsequent excavations in the 1970s, it has been possible for L. Martinez-Sève to reconstruct the life of the city from the fourth to the first century BC (Martinez-Sève 2002b), when the city extended beyond the main four mounds investigated by the French mission (Boucharlat and Shahidi 1987; *Recherches archéologiques françaises* 2001). In the early Hellenistic period very few areas on the old settlement mounds of Susa bear traces of new structures, probably because the explored areas were then still the Royal City (“*Ville Royale*,” see Chapter 26). The first extensive, new occupation which extended to parts of the palace of Darius I began around the mid-third century BC. The main architectural evidence from this period is a large house with a peristyle court and a wooden roof complete with terracotta tiles and antefixes,

the mudbrick walls of which were painted with large, monochrome panels. The area of Darius' monumental gate and causeway was not part of the city until the first century BC, as shown by the fact that an urn containing a cremation burial was found, pointing to a funerary custom unattested in Greek cities. We know also that Seleucid-era inhabitants used part of the Shaur palace of Artaxerxes II (Labrousse and Boucharlat 1972: 55–96) and the Acropole, which was also used in the Arsacid period. The so-called “Ville des artisans,” on the other hand, contained craft workshops and a necropolis with jar burials, sarcophagi, and vaulted, underground tombs during the Arsacid period (Boucharlat et al. 1987).

The archaeological finds from these centuries include, first and foremost, a great many terracottas, some of decidedly Hellenistic inspiration, including figurines (Martinez-Sève 2002a) as well as architectural elements such as tiles and antefixes (Labrousse and Boucharlat 1972: 95–96; Martinez-Sève 2002b: 41, 51). A marble head of Tyche, with crenellated crown, that bears the incised signature of the sculptor with the Greek name Antiochos son of Dryas, was identified in the past as queen Musa (Cumont 1939, contra Colledge 1990). Although thoroughly Hellenistic from a stylistic point of view, the stepped merlons on the crown and the plastic rendering of the iris suggest production in an Asian workshop (Colledge 1979: 225–6) sometime between 100 BC and 45 AD (Colledge 1990). The gradual weakening of Hellenistic craft traditions at Susa can be considered complete with the appearance of Parthian art of Syro-Mesopotamian origin. This is well attested by a stele commemorating the investiture of the satrap of Susa, Khwasak, by the Arsacid king Artabanus V, found in 1947 in the Ville Royale, on which the two figures are represented frontally and the accompanying inscription is in Aramaic rather than Greek (Ghirshman 1950).

In the early twentieth century, several sarcophagi dated to the Arsacid period were discovered at Bulaylah in the hinterland of Susa (Unvala 1929). In the graveyard of Gelalak, near Shushtar, five tombs dated to the first century AD were excavated in 1968 and 1986. The best preserved of these (no. 1) consists of a rectangular, subterranean chamber accessible via a small stairway covered with a barrel vault, the bricks of which stand on edge. Three terracotta coffins decorated with garlands and covered with lids were placed along the sides of the tomb chamber while two more graves were placed under the arches, below the level of the coffins. Tomb nos. 2 and 3 also have rectangular chambers, while tomb nos. 4 and 5 have square chambers (Rahbar 1997). East of Shushtar, a survey of the Mianab plain carried out by A. Moghaddam located sixty-one sites dated to the Seleucid and Arsacid periods (Khosrowzadeh and Aali 2005). Of these, thirty-one are concentrated in the northern part of the plain, where the large site of Dastova is located. In 1969 A. A. Sarfaraz discovered graves of the Arsacid period there (Sarfaraz 1970: 12–13). From an unspecified site in Khuzestan comes a plain, stone statue base in Hellenistic style with an Aramaic inscription dated according to the Seleucid era. Two depressions in the shape of feet with mortises for dowels show that it originally supported a bronze statue, presumably of Hellenistic type (Bashshash Kanzaq 1996).

In the mountainous region coming between Susiana, Media, and Persis, the Greek name of which, Elymais, suggests a direct connection with the ancient Elamite population,

archaeological evidence of the Seleucid period is represented mainly by the small sanctuary of Shami and the two extensive complexes of Masjed-e Soleyman and Bard-e Neshanda. These represent a particular type of cult place known in the archaeological literature as a “sacred terrace,” that is, a natural hilltop bounded by walls upon which podia, altars, statue bases, and temples were built in successive stages. Although their excavator, R. Ghirshman, dated the foundation of these two cult sites to the Achaemenid period and dated the construction of the temples of Masjed-e Soleyman to the post-Achaemenid period (Ghirshman 1976), a reexamination of the available evidence suggests that only the first phase of the Bard-e Neshanda and Masjed-e Soleyman complexes dates to the post-Achaemenid period. A reanalysis of Ghirshman’s excavation data from the upper terrace at Bard-e Neshanda sanctuary by E. Haerinck suggested it was founded sometime between the end of the Achaemenid period and 150 BC. This date is supported by the presence of eight Hellenistic and two Elymaean coins of Kamnaskires I (to whom a fragmentary inscription is also ascribed) in deposits belonging to the second phase of occupation at the site (Haerinck 1983: 13). With a square vestibule giving access to an oblong cella and two side rooms, the Bard-e Neshanda temple was probably only built in the late Arsacid period (Hannestad and Potts 1990: 115). The sculptural reliefs at the site, all of which are in the frontal, Syro-Mesopotamian “Parthian” style, date to the same period.

Ghirshman (1976) attributed the earliest phase of the two temples at Masjed-e Soleyman to the Seleucid period. On the evidence of two bronze images of Athena and a great many terracotta figurines depicting Macedonian horsemen, the principal temple (“Grand Temple”), known in this phase only through some limited sondages, was dedicated to Athena Hyppia, according to the French scholar. On the other hand, the images of Heracles found near the second temple in its Arsacid phase suggest that the temple was already sacred to this hero in its Seleucid phase. Closer examination of the evidence reveals that these attributions and dating are in fact unfounded. While the open-air terraces may indeed date to the Seleucid period, between the third century and 150 BC (Haerinck 1983: 13–14; Martinez-Sève 2004: 199–200; but see Boyce and Grenet 1991: 44), we lack any clear evidence that would allow us to date the temples erected upon them earlier than the Arsacid period (Hannestad and Potts 1990: 115), the period to which the stone sculptures found there must be referred as well.

The small sanctuary of Shami was subjected to a brief excavation and survey in the 1930s, and while not stratigraphic, the work was thorough enough to convey an indication of the organization of the site (Stein 1940). Within an enclosure wall built of mud-brick on stone foundations were a parallelepiped altar and two paved areas, all of baked brick, with seven stone bases—not found *in situ*—for eleven or twelve bronze statues of various sizes, the remains of which were found in the area, deliberately reduced to fragments. The great quantity of charcoal and ash suggests there may have originally been a wooden roof, possibly only partial, above the statues. Apart from the famous bronze statue of the “Parthian prince” in the National Museum (Tehran), certainly dating to the Arsacid period (Godard 1937), some fragments appear to be from bronze images of Greek divinities. Others belonged to a naturalistic head of a ruler (Seleucid or local in



Hellenistic guise), which suggests the existence of the sanctuary in the Seleucid period (Cumont 1936; Sherwin-White 1984; Callieri 2001b). A small head in white marble which Stein interpreted as a Hellenistic Aphrodite but which could just as well be an expression of a local version of Artemis (Stein 1940: 134; cf. Kawami 1987: 218, n. 56; Parlasca 1991: 460, with dating to the late fifth century BC) was also found at Shami, along with a small altar and various other artifacts of a cultic nature.

We also owe to the mountainous Bakhtiyari region a naturalistic marble torso from a small, composite statue now in the National Museum of Iran, representing a female deity. The piece shows iconographic traits common to both Artemis and Aphrodite but with some original features, and might represent Nanaya, the main goddess of Susa (see Chapter 40). It attests to the widespread nature of Hellenistic sculptural production and was probably crafted in an Oriental workshop between the third and the first centuries BC (Fleischer 2000: 229; Callieri 2003a).

Rock reliefs constitute the most typical genre of art production in Elymais during the later Arsacid period (see Chapter 37). These have been found at various sites including Tang-e Sarvak, Khong-e Azhdar, Khong-e Yar-e Alivand, Khong-e Kamalvand, Bidzard, Tang-e Butan, Shimbar, Kuh-e Taraz, Bard-e But, and Kuh-e Tina. Some of these are accompanied by Aramaic inscriptions. Expressions of local religiosity, these reliefs attest to the diffusion in the region, during the second and third centuries AD, of the main features of “Parthian art” (Vanden Berghe and Schippmann 1985; Mathiesen 1992). The main exception to this is the relief of Khong-e Azhdar (also known as Khong-e Nowruzi), where the image of a mounted, diademed figure in profile contrasts with a series of other figures shown in full frontal view. The hypothesis that the two scenes date to two different phases (Mathiesen 1992) has recently been confirmed by an Irano-Italian expedition (Messina and Mehr Kian 2010, 2011), whose work for the first time explains the presence of a second or first century BC profile bust alongside frontal figures of “Parthian” type. In the past, the mounted figure in profile has been identified with one of the kings named Mithridates, but it could also be one of the early Elymaean kings of the Kamnaskirid dynasty (Messina and Mehr Kian 2010, 2011). The Irano-Italian mission has also excavated some sondages at the foot of the boulder on which the reliefs were carved, revealing the presence of stone structures that were modified around the mid-first century BC.

## FARS

In the post-Achaemenid period, Fars (Gr. Persis) does not seem to have enjoyed the same pre-eminence under the Seleucids that it had under the Achaemenids. Possible reasons for this may have been its limited agricultural potential, compared to Susiana, and the marginal position it occupied with respect to the major land route for traffic between the Mediterranean and Central Asia (the Great Khorasan Road) that crossed the plateau further north, between Media and Parthia, despite its importance as a

conduit for traffic between eastern Iran and southern Mesopotamia (Wiesehöfer 1996b: 37). However, even though no important settlements of the Seleucid period have yet been identified—the locations of the main Greek foundations recorded in the sources, Antioch-in-Persis, Laodicea-in-Persis and Seleucia-on-the Persian Gulf, are uncertain Callieri 2007a: 24–8)—evidence of a Greek presence is not lacking.

Use of the Greek language is attested by inscriptions belonging to two distinct classes: the two milestones from Pasargadae (Lewis 1978: 161; Bivar 1978) and Persepolis (Kabiri 1993–4; Callieri 1995), which reflect the existence of a well-organized road system and thus of the involvement of Greco-Macedonians in territorial control, and inscriptions from the so-called “temple of the *fratarakas*,” a monumental complex brought to light by E. Herzfeld c.200 m to the north-northwest of the main terrace of Persepolis. The latter, long unpublished apart from brief references by Herzfeld and the epigraphist L. Robert (Herzfeld 1935: 44; 1941: 275; Robert 1967: 282; Rougemont 1999: 6; see now *IGIAC*), consists of the names of five Olympian divinities in the genitive case typical of inscriptions on altars—*Dios Megistou*, *Heliou*, *Athenas Basileias*, *Artemidos*, *Apollonos*—incised on five thick limestone slabs (c.30 × 10 × 10 cm) that are in fact reused Achaemenid architectural elements. Unfortunately, the exact location(s) in which these were found is unknown (Callieri 2007a: 56).

A review of the archaeological evidence from Fars begins in the center of the province where archaeological work has been the most intensive. After the early surveys of L. Vanden Berghe (1952, 1953, 1954) and P. Gotch (1968, 1969), the main survey undertaken was that of the Marv Dasht Plain or Kur River Basin by W. M. Sumner. This work is particularly important because it was carried out before major leveling and earthmoving during the 1970s, conducted in connection with agricultural expansion, drastically altered the surface of the plain (Sumner 1986). Unfortunately, the set of type-fossils used by Sumner for the identification of Achaemenid sites on survey were taken from an excavation dump near the *frataraka* temple excavated by Herzfeld (Sumner 1986: 3, fig. 1), a monument very likely to date to the post-Achaemenid period. Moreover, even Sumner stressed the similarity of his type-fossils to material from Persepolis, dated by Schmidt to the late Achaemenid period, and Pasargadae, attributed by Stronach to the fourth and third centuries BC (Stronach 1978: 183–4; cf. Sumner 1986: 3–4). Indeed, Sumner based the Achaemenid attribution of his sites on comparanda which could just as easily be post-Achaemenid. Therefore, we can rely on Sumner’s dating only when other diagnostics, such as architectural elements and techniques, are attested as well (Sumner 1986: 7).

The influence of Sumner’s conclusions is evident in later works, such as the survey of the upper Kur River Basin by A. Alizadeh, who attributed only one site to the Arsacid period in contrast to thirty-nine sites of alleged Achaemenid date (Alizadeh 1997: 72). In fact, new material brought to light by the Irano-Italian excavations at Tang-e Bolaghi, Pasargadae, and Persepolis confirm the remarkable continuity of pottery production during the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid periods already documented on the Tall-e Takht at Pasargadae by Stronach. Bearing this in mind, published chronological attributions of survey sites by Sumner and Alizadeh should be regarded with

great caution and the hypothesized, predominantly nomadic occupation of Fars in the post-Achaemenid period put forward by R. Boucharlat (Boucharlat 2003b: 265), which was influenced by Alizadeh's attributions, must be reconsidered.

Due to the difficulty of distinguishing Achaemenid from post-Achaemenid pottery, the date of the material from Qasr-e Abu Nasr, on the outskirts of Shiraz (Whitcomb 1985: 150; Sumner 1986: 19), and sites near Lake Maharlu (Kleiss 1973: 69) is still debated. Particularly in the case of Qasr-e Abu Nasr, dated by Sumner to the Achaemenid period, D. Whitcomb suggested a date range from "Seleucid or Parthian" (Whitcomb 1985: 150) to "probably late Parthian" (104), while R. Boucharlat wrote more generally of a post-Achaemenid date (Boucharlat 2005: 231). It is important to recall that, in the 1930s, hundreds of stone cairn tombs stood on the ridges behind Qasr-e Abu Nasr, similar to those found by Sir Aurel Stein at Baghan near Kavar (Stein 1936: 114). Twelve of these cairns were excavated by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the few Arsacid coins recovered in them all date from the first century BC to the first century AD (Whitcomb 1985: 210–16; Boucharlat 1989: 687). The foot of a small Hellenistic-Roman statue was also discovered at Qasr-e Abu Nasr in a Sasanian context (Whitcomb 1985: 190, fig. 73j).

Further to north, on the western part of the Marv Dasht Plain, the "sparse Partho-Persis material" discovered at Tal-e Malyan includes evidence of the typically Greek custom of placing an obol for Charon in the mouth of the deceased (Balcer 1978: 86–7). Nearby at Qal'a-ye Now, surface survey suggested the existence of a "substantial Parthian site" (Balcer 1978: 90) where a large male head of limestone, belonging to a bust probably associated with architectural elements, was discovered that is remarkably similar to a head discovered at Tomb-e Bot in southern Fars (see below). The poor state of preservation of the head does not hide the naturalistic rendering of volume, while the presence of a mustache, beard, and tall headdress on bulging hair suggest a date in the late Arsacid period, immediately before the rise of the Sasanians (Kawami 1987: 138–9, 222; Curtis 1998: 65). This attribution brings us to the question of the location of the seat of the rulers of Fars who, according to Ṭabarī, lived at al-Bayda', identified with the present village of Bayza', near Tal-e Malyan, in the period immediately before the rise of Ardašīr ī Pābagān (Bosworth 1990: 6, n. 17). A careful survey of this site in the late 1980s by D. Huff identified pottery of the Seleucid-Arsacid period as well as several stone architectural elements of Achaemenid type and workmanship, which Huff believed were brought there from Persepolis in the Seleucid or Arsacid period. Huff put forward the hypothesis that they belonged originally to a monumental building at the seat of the rulers of Fars (Huff 1991: 63, 67).

At Persepolis, the southwestern corner of the Terrace has, in particular, yielded evidence of the post-Achaemenid period. Schmidt found the remains of a post-Achaemenid building on the site of the so-called Palace H, in which materials from destroyed Achaemenid palaces were recycled (Schmidt 1953: 43, 279–80). Subsequent study and restoration by G. and A. B. Tilia (Tilia 1972: 255–8, 315–16; 1977: 74–6; 1978: 258, 315; cf. Wiesehöfer 1994a: 68–79; Boucharlat 2006: 451–5) confirmed that the building included a podium, today visible in the unexcavated hillock, to which access was

gained via a stairway that had been brought from the destroyed palace of Artaxerxes III (so-called Palace G). The podium was supported by a revetment wall built with reused blocks and filled with earth and fragments of sculptural and architectural elements. On it stood partition walls, the lowest courses of which are preserved, as well as columns, only the rough-hewn stone foundations of which remain. A mudbrick wall enclosed a courtyard to the north of the building, perhaps as far as the so-called *tačara* of Darius I, where Schmidt also found traces of reuse (Schmidt 1953: 279). Schmidt thought the courtyard probably belonging to the same phase as the pavillion to the south of Palace H, on an intermediate step at the southern edge of the terrace (Schmidt 1953: 43).

The attempted reoccupation of the Palace G area, indicated by the closing of a drain in the western part of the area using blocks from the horned parapet of the southwestern corner of the terrace, probably dates to a different phase (Tilia 1972: 316). The traces of this new occupation are all the more relevant when we remember that the excavators of the 1930s were not particularly concerned with the stratigraphy of the deposits overlying the imposing remains of Achaemenid date, and destroyed a precious series of occupation surfaces and collapsed mudbrick walls which no doubt would have allowed us to establish a secure sequence for these now isolated architectural episodes, leaving very little documentation of their work. If Schmidt gave only a very general chronological attribution to these deposits (“certainly prior to the Islamic era,” Schmidt 1953: 279), A. B. Tilia attributed the post-Achaemenid architectural phases to the independent rulers of Fars whom she dated, according to the theory prevailing at the time, to about thirty years after the fire that destroyed Persepolis (see Chapters 34, 36; Tilia 1972: 315). A. S. Shahbazi also attributed the post-Achaemenid occupation of Persepolis to the *fratarakas* (Shahbazi 1977: 200).

There is also archaeological evidence at Persepolis which may be linked iconographically with the local rulers of post-Achaemenid Fars, thanks to comparisons with coinage. We refer to the finely engraved graffiti on some architectural stone blocks in Darius I’s *tačara* and in the so-called “harem” of Xerxes. Whereas, initially, only isolated images of noble figures were discovered here (Allotte de la Fuje 1928; Herzfeld 1935, 1941; Schmidt 1953), more careful investigations have subsequently revealed at least two examples of more complex scenes, surprisingly reminiscent of Sasanian reliefs (Calmeyer 1976: 65–67), that were probably painted (Callieri 2006: 140). The figures show features that reflect their royal status: the diadem and tall tiara correspond to those on the coins of the *frataraka* between the early first century BC and the first quarter of the third century AD. More precise identification of most of the figures depicted is impossible (Callieri 2006: 135) and we cannot accept as certain the identifications proposed with specific rulers on the basis of coin portraits (Herzfeld 1941: 308; Huff 2008: 32–4). One of the personages is represented in profile, facing right, as are obverse portraits on Sasanian coinage. He wears a headdress consisting of a plain, hemispherical cap, surmounted by a seven-pointed, fan-like element extremely similar in shape to the five-pointed, fan-like element on the head of the figure represented on the reverses of some *frataraka* coins (Alram 1986: 185, nos. 653–5), such as those of Šābuhr, the penultimate king of Persis

and predecessor of Ardašīr, who became first king of the Sasanians, interpreted subjectively by some scholars as the image of Ardašīr's father Pabag (contra Callieri 2006: 136). But in general we are unsure of the identity of the figures on the reverses of many of the *frataraka* coin types who may represent the biological father, forefather, or even the son or heir of the king (Alram 1986: 164; contra Lukonin 1969: 29, who, on the basis of the legend *BRH bgy X MLK*, interprets the images on the reverse as those of the father of the king). At any rate, the iconographic similarities between the graffiti and the coin portraits suggest that the person depicted is the last of the series and closest in time to the Sasanian period.

The presence of these graffiti at Persepolis is easily explained if we remember that the site recalled the power and magnificence of the Achaemenid “ancestors,” fictive or not, for the local rulers of Fars (cf. Frye 1975: 238). There is an evident continuity from the *fratarakas* to the first Sasanians in their privileged relationship with this site, at least until the fourth century AD, when the *sakashah* Šābuhr had his inscriptions engraved here (Frye 1966; cf. Wiesehöfer 1994: 139, n. 4). Engraving and painting on the walls of the old palaces probably constituted an homage to the “ancestors” and an expression of continuity with heroes of the past, be they the mythical Kayanids of the epic tradition or more probably the Achaemenids in mythical guise (Callieri 2011). The graffiti are even better explained when we remember, as shown above, that life at Persepolis had resumed after the site's destruction by fire, and new buildings had been erected: a sign of new ownership was indeed necessary.

The attribution of the Persepolis graffiti to the rulers of Fars does not, however, exclude the possibility that some of the post-Achaemenid evidence there might be even older, perhaps dating to the Seleucid period. As P. Bernard has proposed, Persepolis was probably the seat of the Seleucid satraps of Persis, the last of whom is mentioned in connection with the rebellion of Molon (222–220 BC), and later of the *frataraka* dynasts (Bernard 1995a: 84). However, a passage in Strabo's *Geography*, written between the first century BC and the first century AD, suggests that the terrace was no longer fully occupied in the Arsacid period: “These [i.e., Susa, Persepolis, Pasargadae] were the palaces in the times of the empire of the Persians, but the kings of later times used others, naturally less sumptuous, since Persis had been weakened not only by the Macedonians, but still more so by the Parthians. For although the Persians are still under the rule of a king, having a king of their own, yet they are most deficient in power and are subject to the king of the Parthians” (*Geog.* 15.3.3).

The so-called “temple of the *fratarakas*” at Persepolis, excavated by Herzfeld in 1932, where the above-mentioned Greek inscriptions were found, is a monument of great complexity, both in terms of its function and its chronology, which brings us again to the Hellenistic period. As far as function is concerned, the identification of it as a fire temple, advanced by Herzfeld (1935: 46–7; 1941: 275, 286) was based on the contemporaneity of a stone window jamb showing, in low-relief profile, one person with a long, priestly dress who was identified as a “priest” because of the barsom (the bundle of twigs characteristic of Zoroastrian cult) held in his right hand (Herzfeld 1941: pl. 86) and of a square hall (c.5 × 5 m) with four three-stepped column bases, displaying a layout similar to the so-called

Ayādāna at Susa and other buildings considered at the time to be among the earliest fire temples. However, it has been pointed out that the complex to which the square hall (supposedly the temple, called the “Pedestal Temple” by Stronach 1985) belongs is separated from the room with the window jamb (Stronach’s “Window Temple”) by a road or a broad aisle, raising questions over Herzfeld’s suggestion that the two belonged to the same complex (Schmidt 1953: 56; Boucharlat 1984: 130–32). Indeed, the rectangular, two-stepped molded base situated in the center of the rear wall in the square hall (Kleiss 1981a) bears traces of a socket for the tenon of a stone statue (Callieri 2003b) and is therefore not the base of a fire altar, as suggested by Herzfeld and others (Litvinskij and Pičikjan 2000: 230–31). Even if the plan of the square hall with the four column bases resembles that of the Hellenistic houses of Ai Khanoum (Bernard 1969: 337, n. 1; Boucharlat 1984: 130–32), it is also true that the position of the statue base suggests a cultic function, as does the lack of rear access to the square hall. However, rather than a fire temple, or one of the temples built by Artaxerxes II for a statue of Anahita (Stronach 1985: 616), the building was probably one of those temples for cult images that proliferated in Iran during the Hellenistic period. And indeed the three-stepped column bases in the square room, of a post-Achaemenid type, the dimensions of the baked bricks, differing from those used in the terrace, and the Hellenistic date of the comparanda for the molded base (Callieri 2007a: 61–3) all suggest that the presence of Achaemenid bases in the same building does not provide a valid basis for its attribution to the Achaemenid period as once thought (Francovich 1966: 207; Kleiss 1981a; Stronach 1985), but rather represents a case of reuse. Only a new survey of the monument and the documentation on Herzfeld’s excavation, if extant, could eventually shed more light on the matter.

The general stylistic character of the priestly figure with the barsom bundle on the “temple” doorjamb, as well as that of the similar, though poorly preserved, female figure (?) on the opposite jamb, is far from the style of both Achaemenid sculpture and the Hellenistic tradition, particularly in the lowness of the relief. Rather, these look like products of a local tradition by second-rate craftsmen and recall a small (*c.* 50 cm), badly preserved image of a praying female (?) shown in profile, facing right, carved on the wall of a stone quarry between Naqsh-e Rostam and Hajjiabad, which D. Huff dated to the post-Achaemenid period (Huff 1984: 240–41, fig. 18). A similarity to the relief of Kel-e Dawd, a short distance from the “Median” tomb of Dokkan-e Dawud in Media (Huff 1984: 241), is even greater. From an iconographic viewpoint, the similarity with the images of officiants on *frataraka* coinage is also striking.

Further north, along the piedmont of the Kuh-e Rahmat, is the so-called “Persepolis Spring cemetery,” a necropolis with terracotta sarcophagi containing few grave goods which, however, parallel material from the terrace of Persepolis. Dated to the late and post-Achaemenid period (Schmidt 1953: 56; 1957: 123; Boucharlat 2006: 454–5), the site must also be considered in any evaluation of occupation in the Persepolis area after 330 BC. Stone cairn tombs attributed to the late Arsacid period have also been found behind the Persepolis terrace on the Kuh-e Rahmat (Gotch 1971: 162–3).

Several scholars have dated the origins of Istakhr, the major settlement in the region from the Sasanian through the early Islamic period located 13 km north of Persepolis,

to the Seleucid period. The idea that references to “Persepolis” in the Hellenistic sources relating to events after the Persepolis fire in fact refer to Istakhr, thereby confirming the city’s foundation in the Seleucid period, dates to the late nineteenth century and is widely accepted (Tomaschek 1883: 32–3; Brunner 1983: 751). However, excavations by Herzfeld and Schmidt did not bring to light any post-Achaemenid phase remains below the Sasanian levels at the site, apart from several reused Achaemenid architectural elements, a few *frataraka* coins, and a fragmentary stone vessel. The limestone capitals and bases were taken by Herzfeld to show a local variant of Hellenistic orders (Herzfeld 1941: 276–9; cf. Bier 1983: 307). However, P. Bernard has suggested that these attest to the persistence of Hellenistic models in the Sasanian period (Bernard 1974: 284–8). Perhaps the foundation of Istakhr dates to the time of the *frataraka* dynasty. According to Middle Persian texts, Ardawān (Artabanus), the enemy of Ardašīr I, lived at Staxr (*Kārnāmag ī Ardaxšēr ī Pābagān*, Grenet 2003a: I. 4), a town which he himself had founded (*Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr*, Daryae 2002: 41). Even though neither text is strictly speaking historical, the basis of this information is likely to have been a Persian tradition concerning the pre-Sasanian foundation of Istakhr, which associated it with last Arsacid king (Callieri 2007b). Some scholars have also suggested that Istakhr was the seat of the *frataraka* dynasty (Chaumont 1959; Bivar 1998: 643) and the location of its mint (Schmidt 1939: 105). The late dating of this coinage brings the *frataraka* dynasty closer in time to the appearance of the Arsacid dynasty in Iran, and we cannot exclude the possibility that the new town was founded in this period, thus diminishing the occupation of Persepolis.

Coins are not the only archaeological evidence of the rulers of post-Achaemenid and Arsacid Fars, however. A silver bowl with a Middle Persian inscription mentioning the sequence of rulers Dārāyān II–Ardaxšahr II–Wahīxšahr, of unknown provenance and in a private collection, has been also published (Skjærvø 2000, 2003: 382; Lerner 2008: 186). The bowl has a central medallion containing the image of a humped bull (zebu), facing right, and conforms in its overall composition to eastern metalwork of the Seleucid and Arsacid periods (Lerner 2008: 186). The figural medallion in the center and multiple registers decorated with different motifs find comparanda on several bowls attributed to the Hellenized Near East (Pfrommer 1993: 22). The style of the bull is also naturalistic, pointing to the same cultural area and confirms the appreciation of Hellenistic craftsmanship we can see on coinage.

At Naqsh-e Rostam, the Aramaic inscription on the façade of Darius I’s tomb was dated to the third century BC by W. B. Henning, who read the name Seleucus and interpreted it as a reference to a Seleucid king (Henning 1958: 24; Schmidt 1970: 12). Such an attribution suggests that the king in question would have shared in the great honor accorded to the Achaemenid kings (contra Frye 1982, who denies any Seleucid presence in the area and dates the inscription to the late Achaemenid period). The period between the Achaemenid and the Sasanian periods, which Schmidt called “Hellenistic,” is represented at Naqsh-e Rostam by sparse remains (Schmidt 1970: 12). The possibility of a phase below the Sasanian mudbrick fortification walls was considered but then ruled out by Schmidt (57).

The group of rock-cut tombs at Akhur-e Rustam, 8 km to the south of Persepolis, includes an isolated tomb at the northern edge of the site with a square cornice recalling Achaemenid architecture. Boucharlat dated this to between the late fourth and the third century BC (Boucharlat 2006: 454). Huff considered the site a “small dynastic cemetery” in use from late or post-Achaemenid times to the late Arsacid or early Sasanian period (Huff 2004: 597–8; cf. 2004: 187).

Between Persepolis and Pasargadae lies the Tang-e Bolaghi, a valley in which the British team working at Pasargadae in the 1960s documented stone cairn tombs dated to the Arsacid period (Stronach 1978: 167). In the framework of an international program of rescue excavations, a joint Irano-Italian team investigated a small, rural settlement (TB 76) where occupation began in the Achaemenid period and continued through the post-Achaemenid period with no evident interruption in the sequence. In particular, the last phase (Phase 2) of occupation in a house in the main trench (TB76–3) built of mud and stone above stone-block foundations is certainly post-Achaemenid. Despite the presence of several artifacts typical of the Achaemenid period, finds of post-Achaemenid date in earlier Phase 3 contexts suggest that this phase belongs to the same period (Askari Chaverdi and Callieri 2006, 2009, forthcoming).

An episode in the life of the site which C14 analyses have dated to the late or more probably post-Achaemenid period is represented by an isolated grave in Trench TB76–1 (Askari Chaverdi and Callieri 2007b, 2009). Here the deceased was deposited in an oval grave pit in a foetal position, along an east-west axis, with the head to the west, facing south. The sole grave furnishing was a handmade beaker of gray-buff ware with concave sides (Askari Chaverdi and Callieri 2007b: fig. 21) which can be compared in shape to a beaker decorated with black-painted bands found by Sir Aurel Stein in an “Early Historic” context during his sounding at Tol-e Zahak near Fasa, in eastern Fars (Stein 1936: 149, pl. 19.20).

If we move to Pasargadae, on the Tall-e Takht, the imposing Achaemenid platform on a hilltop which Darius I transformed into a proper citadel, the extensive British excavations of the 1960s demonstrated substantial continuity in occupation between the fifth century BC and a vast episode of diffuse destruction across the site apparently unrelated to the Macedonian conquest. Stronach linked the “large conflagration” to the uprising of the local rulers of Fars against the Seleucids, which he dated to the beginning of the third century BC in conformity with the then common opinion (Stronach 1978: 146). Recent excavation of a trial trench on the north side of the Tall-e Takht, carried out in 2006 and 2007 by a joint Irano-Italian Archaeological Mission, has revealed a much more complex sequence with nine stratigraphic phases (Askari Chaverdi and Callieri 2007a, 2010), confirming the need to review the sequence proposed by the British excavators, particularly the pottery (cf. Levine 1980; Boucharlat 2006: 460). Unfortunately, relatively little pottery was recovered. Nevertheless, some C14 analyses have provided interesting evidence. The second earliest phase (Phase 8), which ended with the plundering of the walls and a large-scale fire indicated by a considerable amount of ash, most likely dated to c.410–380 BC. It is indeed tempting to identify this fire with the “conflagration” of which Stronach found evidence throughout the excavation. However, whereas Stronach



attributed the fire to events occurring at the end of Seleucid rule, which he dated to c.280 BC (Stronach 1978: 146), the date of the episode we recorded, instead, falls squarely within the Achaemenid period. As for the later deposits, Phase 7 dates to c.380–250 BC, while Phase 6 dates to c.250–200 BC. No C14 dates are available from the later deposits.

The presence of post-Achaemenid sherds on the surface of the area north of the Tall-e Takht, where geomagnetic surveys have shown the possible existence of a residential area (Boucharlat and Benech 2002: 29; Boucharlat 2002: 282), suggests that the settlement there could have been occupied after the end of the Achaemenid period, like that on Tall-e Takht. Nor should we forget that amongst the surface pottery picked up to the southwest of Palace S Boucharlat found sherds that he dated to the Seleucid or Arsacid periods (Boucharlat and Benech 2002: 14; Boucharlat 2006: 460, n. 6).

As for the northernmost areas of Fars, Stein found sherds of red ware with polished slip on the surface of the Qasr-e Bahram mound near Dehbid which he attributed to a pre-Sasanian period (Stein 1936: 215–6). In western Fars, the recent Irano-Australian investigations in the Mamasani district have revealed several stratigraphic sequences in which the Achaemenid phase is followed by a post-Achaemenid phase which is not always easy to define given problems of pottery chronology similar to those encountered in central Fars (Potts and Roustaei 2006: 12). Phases B5 and B4 at Tol-e Nurabad have been dated to the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid period, while Phases B2–B1 are considered post-Achaemenid, based on the presence of a turquoise-glazed vessel base which can be compared to Parthian ceramics from Khuzestan (Potts and Roustaei 2006: 77). At Tol-e Spid the post-Achaemenid Phase 3 is C14 dated to between 370 and 50 BC (Potts and Roustaei 2006: 77; Askari Chaverdi et al. 2010: 290). Surface surveys in the area have shown that twelve sites of Achaemenid date continued to be occupied during the post-Achaemenid period (Askari Chaverdi et al. 2010: 292). In the same area, excavations of an Achaemenid building at Qaleh Kali (Jinjun) have revealed occupation dated by C14 to the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid periods (Potts et al. 2007, 2009). The multiple architectural phases at the site date to between the sixth/fifth and fourth to mid-second centuries BC (I. K. McRae, A. Dusing, and D. T. Potts, pers. comm.)

Another important monument that can probably be assigned to the aristocracy of Fars during the Seleucid or early Arsacid period is the rock-cut tomb of Da o Dokhtar, also in the Mamasani district. Typologically this tomb belongs to the widespread group of so-called “Median rock-cut tombs” and therefore differs from the Achaemenid tombs. The monumental façade, cut into the rock of a cliff above a large smooth area, reproduces the façade of a building with central, rectangular door, flanked by two pairs of half-columns that support the entablature, thus perpetuating the scheme of the Achaemenid tombs of Naqsh-e Rostam in reduced dimensions though with obvious differences in architectural detail. The bases of the half-columns consist of a low torus on a two-stepped plinth. The half-columns themselves have smooth shafts and support simplified, pseudoarchaic Ionic capitals with volutes which project exaggeratedly from the shaft. The tomb proper consists of a funerary chamber cut into the rock, accessible through a door with raised threshold and projecting jambs on the sides, and has been assigned to the early post-Achaemenid period based on the fact

that the intercolumniations occur in pairs (Gall 1993). Iconographic reference to the Achaemenid tombs is, however, explicit, and the grafting of Hellenistic architectural elements onto a Persian typology accords well with the date proposed by H. von Gall. Most probably, this was the work of “provincial” craftsmen. As for the tower monument of Dum-e Mil, near Nurabad-e Mamasani, which Ghirshman (1944–5) interpreted as a temple of the Seleucid period, this has been better interpreted by D. Huff as a building belonging to the proto-Sasanian period, having an either funerary (ossuary) or commemorative function (Huff 1975: 209).

Moving to the south of Shiraz, archaeological evidence of pre-Sasanian occupation in the Firuzabad area consists of a molded, square statuette base (15 × 15 × 4 cm) found at Qal'a-ye Dokhtar, carved in marble from Greece or Asia Minor and still bearing the right foot of the statuette which it originally supported (Huff and Gignoux 1978: 120, fig. 2). Considered a Roman object, it could have arrived at the time of the construction of the building in the early Sasanian period or in the preceding Arsacid period. In the surface layers of a trench dug at Tal-e Gawd-e Rahim, in the Sarvestan area between Shiraz and Fasa, Stein discovered sherds decorated with parallel bands typical of Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid pottery (Stein 1936: 182).

In eastern Fars the major evidence of post-Achaemenid period occupation is represented by Tal-e Zahak, near Fasa, where in 1934 Stein discovered the marble head (c. 11 cm tall) of a female Greek goddess (Aphrodite?). This has been dated stylistically to between the mid-third and mid-second century BC and attributed to a workshop in Asia Minor (Stein 1936: 140–41; Colledge 1979: 225; Schlumberger 1983: 1037, pl. 57). Although the site may have played an important role in the Elamite period, it is topped by a large settlement of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries AD. Although never excavated, surface survey has revealed ceramics of the Achaemenid period (Stein 1936: 140; Miroschedji 1973; Hansman 1999) as well as fragments of rounded-rim bowls of a less refined ware which Hansman took as an indication of probable “Hellenistic occupation” (Hansman 1975: 299, fig. 3.1–2; 1999: 391).

From Tal-e Zahak we also have a series of bell-shaped, stone column bases of Achaemenid type, datable to the Achaemenid and/or post-Achaemenid periods, as well as another group of bases with a thick torus, in some cases standing above a square plinth and in some cases with decoration (Pohanka 1983; Boucharlat 2005: 234; Callieri 2007a: 88–90, 94–6). The origin of this type of barrel-shaped torus seems to be the thick torus that was widespread throughout the Hellenized East, as far as Bactria (Bernard 1968: 132, 138, fig. 8; Boardman 2000: 206), itself derived from the elegant torus of Achaemenid architecture. These are similar to the toruses of bases discovered in Media, dated to the late or post-Achaemenid period and much more similar to Greek models (Huff 1989: 295).

Several stone cairn tombs have been recorded between Fasa and Darabgerd (Stein 1936: 158). As for Darabgerd itself, although the circular city was long considered an Arsacid foundation, it is now known to have been founded in the Islamic era (Huff 1993: 56). Nevertheless, three stone column bases, the shapes of which are derived from the bell-shaped bases of Achaemenid type but with a decorated or undecorated *cyma reversa* profile, could date to the Seleucid or the Sasanian period (Morgan 2003: 334).

Moving to southern Fars, on an isolated rock boulder near Qir-Karzin is a relief representing a life-sized bowman in profile, facing right, in the act of shooting an arrow (Huff 1984; Vanden Berghe 1986). Although badly eroded, it is possible to recognize several iconographic elements of Achaemenid type in the clothing and weaponry, but with peculiarities which led Vanden Berghe to date the relief to the post-Achaemenid period. Despite its flatness, the rendering of the figure is much more statuesque than other reliefs of the same period and the figure is shown in profile, with none of the frontality typical of the later Parthian period. Consequently a Hellenistic date, some time in the second century BC or earlier, has been proposed by D. Huff (Huff 1984: 246–7).

Further to the south, in the Lamerd district, the architectural complex of Tomb-e Bot, discovered by A. Askari Chaverdi, is characterized by architectural elements and other objects carved in a gray-white limestone of local origin (Askari Chaverdi 1999/2000, 2002). At least three capitals of Achaemenid type were found as well, the lower portions of which have volutes and the upper parts of which are decorated with well-preserved projecting, addorsed bull protomes. The rather poor sculptural quality and schematization of several iconographic elements suggest a post-Achaemenid date. More problematic, however, is the bust of a male figure in the round found at the same site. The figure is shown in frontal view, with physiognomic features rendered in a rather naturalistic way, particularly the eyes, which have well-carved eye-lids. This bust finds no comparanda in post-Achaemenid art, but is very similar to the yellow limestone bust from Qal'a-ye Now, between Malyan and Bayza,' that T. S. Kawami dated to the period immediately preceding the Sasanian ascent to power, when the artistic tradition of Arsacid Fars gave birth to Sasanian art (Kawami 1987: 138–9, 222). Since the same naturalistic qualities characterize the Tomb-e Bot bust, it is logical to attribute it to the same period and thus it seems reasonable to assign the same date to the other architectural elements found at the site (Callieri 2007a: 139). Moreover, capitals with bovine protomes, dating to the third and fourth centuries AD, are known at Bishapur and Hajiabad.

During his survey of the Lamerd valley, Askari Chaverdi discovered twelve sites attributed to the post-Achaemenid period, eight of which were new foundations (Askari Chaverdi and Azarnoush 2004). In the same area, Sir Aurel Stein located a site with pottery described as “early historical” at Tump-e Podu, less than 1 km east of Galehdar (Stein 1937: 220).

We arrive finally on the coast of the Persian Gulf, which was an integral part of Fars and fully connected to the plateau (Salles 1990: 125). The main site of historic date on the Bushehr peninsula (originally an island) is Reshahr, a site that has been identified with Rev-Ardašīr, founded, according to Tabari, by Ardašīr I (Schwarz 1896: 120–1; Marquart 1901: 27; Bernard 1995b: 402, n. 112). In the middle of a vast sherd scatter are the remains of an imposing, square, mudbrick fortress measuring  $c.500 \times 500$  m (Stein 1937: 241; Mostafavi 1978: 279–80). Some 70 m from the southwest corner of the fortress are the foundations of a long platform projecting toward the sea, possibly a pier (Whitehouse and Williamson 1973: 35–42). Recently, an Iranian team has identified a white limestone, molded base, reused in one of the two walls supporting the platform. This limestone base is considered Hellenistic and has been attributed to the *frataraka*

dynasts of Fars (Ata'i 2005). The surface pottery, dated by the Iranian team from the Achaemenid period onward (Ata'i 2005: 87), was dated by Whitehouse and Williamson to between the first and the fifth centuries AD (Whitehouse and Williamson 1973: 38–9) and by Whitcomb to the “Parthian and Sasanian” periods (Whitcomb 1987: 317–19). It is therefore possible that the site has a pre-Sasanian phase. However, the stone base is not Hellenistic, but rather an unfinished base of Roman type with comparanda of second to fifth century date (Callieri 2007: 96; cf. Pensabene 1998: 10, fig. 16). It is not, therefore, possible to link this alleged pier to the notice preserved by Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 6.152), according to which a Persian fleet fought against a Seleucid fleet from Mesene, since the pier cannot predate the Roman Imperial period and most likely dates to the Sasanian period. Perhaps linked to the pre-Sasanian occupation of the area are the cairn burials directly behind the ruins of Reshahr (Stein 1937: 240–41; Whitehouse and Williamson 1973: 37) where sherds of glazed and unglazed pottery have been found.

A very interesting piece of evidence that has been attributed to the Hellenistic period is a fragment of a white marble statue representing Marsyas, found in 1988 at Tol-e Khandaq, near Borazjan, in an architectural complex of baked brick identified as a religious building, perhaps a fire temple. The lower part of a naked male figure with tail, sitting on a rock covered with a goat skin, against which a flute, a *pedum* and a syrinx lean, is supported on a rectangular, molded base (52 × 29.5 cm). Even in the absence of precise comparanda, the figure can be identified with Marsyas based on the associated objects (Rahbar 1999b). However, the use of a drill and the emphasis on light and shadow argue against the first century BC date proposed for the sculpture, which should rather be dated to the Roman Imperial age, the Flavian period or better yet the third century AD (Callieri 2007a: 108).

## FURTHER READING

An important contribution to the knowledge of the Hellenistic-Arsacid period in Iran is made by the ancient sources, particularly by the Greek and Roman historians. These sources describe the Iranian plateau according to the various regions of its historic geography, not from the unitarian perspective present in the Iranian tradition, at least from the third century AD onward, when the concept of Ērān was finally shaped. One of the most interesting Greek texts of descriptive geography is the *Geography* by Strabo of Amasia (end of first century BC to early first century AD), while the only ancient Iranian geographical text available dates to the late Sasanian period (Daryaei 2002).

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