Several lines of scholarly inquiry have recently drawn attention to Tall-i Malyan in south central Iran. The low mounds of Malyan cover nearly 200 hectares (500 acres) in the high intermontane valley of the Baiza district of Fars province, 46 kilometers north of Shiraz and 43 kilometers west of Persepolis. In 1969, an archaeological survey of the Baiza district and the adjoining area of the Kur River valley showed Malyan to be by far the largest pre-Achaemenid site in this relatively extensive plain on the Iranian plateau. At approximately the same time, research in historical geography raised the possibility that modern Malyan is the site of Anshan, a place known from cuneiform texts as one of the chief cities of ancient Elam. The University Museum’s excavations at Malyan opened in 1971, with the concurrence of the Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research. Work continued in 1972 and 1974, and plans are under way for a fourth season in 1976.

Early in the 1972 season, a cesium magnetometer survey, conducted by Elizabeth Ralph of the Museum Applied Science Center, indicated magnetic anomalies on the highest point of Malyan’s main mound. A trial excavation showed the source of the anomalies to be the large burned walls of a mud-brick structure. With subsequent work, almost 700 square meters of this building have been cleared. Despite this extensive excavation, the building is not completely
1, 2. Plan of the burned phase of the Middle Elamite building at Malyan.

3. Section A-B, west face, running through the corridor and courtyard. Note the burned beams in the section through the corridor and the lack of any roofed defects in the courtyard fill.
Exposed, nor is the duration of its occupation yet established with precision. Both archaeological and textual evidence strongly indicate a date in the closing centuries of the second millennium B.C. for the burned building and its contents. These years correspond in the political history of ancient Iran to the period of the Middle Elamite Empire. The Middle Elamite Empire refers to the state formed in southern Iran between ca. 1200 and ca. 1100 B.C. by a series of rulers whose immediate ancestors were "Kings of Anshan and Susa." In their reigns, Elam came under the power of contemporary states in Assyria, Media, and Babylonia, although Elam achieved the greatest political and military successes of its long history. Among the architectural and textual remains of this period have in the past come principally from the Elamite cities of Kish and Choga Zambil, especially the old capital of Susa and the newer religious center of Choga Zambil (ancient Al-Urattis-napirasa, later Dur-Kurigalzu III). The inclusion of Malayan in the Middle Elamite state, and the existence of significant Middle Elamite occupation there, were demonstrated in the first season of excavation, when surface finds included brick fragments. On the basis of these data, a Middle Elamite building inscription was proposed for the area. In the second season of excavation, which was the last Middle Elamite ruler, Hutelud-sutuhhush, constructed the building in which the second season of excavation was proposed. The building stands on the main road of ancient Anshan and so adds historic interest and importance to the Middle Elamite period on the site.

However, none of these inscribed bricks fragments has yet been found in a primary context. Scattered over the enormous extent of the site, there are Middle Elamite occupation, but they do not show where the remains of that occupation are to be found. The building and its contents seem to constitute the first extensive remains of the period. Enough excavation has been done to permit a brief description of the finds and the issues which they raise.

**STRATIGRAPHY and ARCHITECTURE**

The plan of the building shown here represents the burned level of the structure, the second of three phases of construction in evidence in the site. A test excavation below the courtyard floor seems to establish the existence of the second floor, but the first floor of the structure. Fragments of the foundation remains of the first phase, a rebuilding on a smaller scale which incorporated some walls of the burned level, were found in the northeast of the area shown on the plan (grid square EE38). At some time after this modest reconstruction, an entirely unrelated structure was built on the site. Its only remains are a line of nine pillar foundations, each of which rests on two river pebbles, set into the earlier burned walls and rooms. The construction and subsequent use of this later structure account, at least in part, for the disappearance not only of much of the third-phase re-use of the burned building, but also of much of the primary collapse of the burned level itself.

The plan of the burned phase, as excavated to date, consists of two sections: a rectangular courtyard, a narrow surrounding corridor, and a series of rectangular rooms attached to the corridor and opening on it. The building is flanked on its north by the radial points of the corner tower.

The courtyard is 10.50 meters wide and about 14 meters long. The surrounding corridor is not entirely regular, but averages 2.00 meters in width. Its short arm, on the southeast, is 18.00 meters long; the length of the other arm remains to be established. The section through the courtyard and corridor (section A-B on the plan) clearly shows the burned floor in the fill of the corridor and the absence of any roofing debris in the courtyard. Hence there is no evidence as to the surrounding areas roofed, a conclusion supported by the character of the fill throughout the central parts of the building.

In a general way, this centralized plan can be compared to plans of Middle Elamite structures from Susa and Choga Zambil. However, the use of corner piers and pillars to divide the courtyard from the surrounding rooms is unique to this area.

All construction was in mud brick. The walls were originally plastered with a coating of straw tempered mud 5-10 cm thick. A fallen pillar establishes that the height of the building was, at a minimum, 3.50 meters. The fired brick is 6.50 by 12.50 cm. The size of the southwest wall and the fill of the adjoining alley demonstrate that this is an outer edge of the building—the only one so far established with certainty. The walls exposed at the southwest corner of the building accordingly part of a second, similarly oriented structure.

**FINDS**

The alley to the southwest of the building produced large amounts of pottery and miscellaneous small finds. In contrast, the finds from inside the building associated with the burned level structure were limited to a few scattered small pieces and larger concentrations of like objects. These clusters of finds are indicated on the plan.

Four pots were found along the south wall of the small room adjacent to the northeast corner of the corridor. These vessels are of particular importance, since they are the only group of pots found in place, in primary association with the burned level. A band-rim jar (no. 5 in pottery group on page 40) was set in a shallow hole in the floor, while the other two—a small band-rim jar and a small pot (no. 3 in the same group)—rested on a prepared surface of fine waste and clay. Nearby but slightly higher in the fill were two nearly complete "Elamite goblets," tall goblets with long, narrow necks and bodies (no. 1 in the same group). All of these vessels can be compared to Middle Elamite pottery found at Choga Zambil and Susa. The rest of the room was littered with a number of flat stones, fragments of grinding stones and fine waste. Floation of the earth around the jars produced a few carbonized cereal grains. The south wall of the corridor was the most systematically burned of the rooms. A large, square jar was found within the fill of the room, and one of the walls of the corridor was burned through. A nearly complete "Elamite goblet" and several fragments of a third, smaller goblet were also found in the same room. The two rooms adjacent to the north were filled with a variety of objects, including small stone weights, a few small stone tools, and a few sherds of fine ware. The east wall of the large room was burned through, with several of the fragments appearing to be part of a larger object. The west wall of the same room was also burned through, with several of the fragments appearing to be part of a larger object. The west wall of the large room was burned through, with several of the fragments appearing to be part of a larger object. The east wall of the large room was burned through, with several of the fragments appearing to be part of a larger object.
where they were written, if not when: An-zon, the common Elamite spelling of Anshan.
Since no other place-name occurs, this notice supports the brick fragments in the identification of Malyan as Anshan.

Apart from this specific evidence, the outstanding general feature of the texts is the fact that they are in Elamite, a language still imperfectly understood despite long study. The gaps in comprehension of Elamite grammar and lexicon result in part from the severe limits of the corpus of texts: thus, texts from the Middle Elamite Empire are confined to about 150 rather repetitive monumental inscriptions. The Elamian texts are therefore a notable addition to the corpus, but because they are without close parallels they can be only partially understood.

To compensate for this difficulty, these texts contain a surprising number of Akkadian loan-words and Semitic terms (that is, Elamite words spelled with Sumerian signs, as an English "pound" is spelled with Latin 'libra' abbreviated to 'lb'). Such terms make at least the general contents clear, and provide a context for the evaluation of uncertain Elamite forms.

Physically, the texts take a variety of sizes and shapes, but the majority are small, nearly cylindrical in shape, 4-7 cm long, with 2-10 lines of script. Briefly stated, these short texts appear to be simple notes of issue and of outstanding items, recording disbursements of metals for the manufacture or decoration of various objects.

The metal bars issued silver and gold (written with the Semitic signs for copper) spelled za-bur) and occasionally tin (aq-nu). Amounts vary from a single shekel to fifty minas—a range of about 3 oz. to 55 lbs., if Elamite and Babylonian measures are equivalent.

The objects for which the metals are handed out are more difficult to characterize. They are named sometimes with clear Akkadian loan-words or Semitic terms; sometimes with Elamite words of certain meaning; sometimes with Elamite terms familiar from building inscriptions but still of uncertain sense; and sometimes with wholly new or uncertain terms. Most of these words which can be understood indicate furnishings and ornaments, and these provide a general semantic range for the terms still unidentified.

Several administrative formulae use a number of Elamite terms, each with its own problems of form and meaning. Their intent seems to be the statement, for accounting purposes, of one or more aspects of the
Both texts illustrated here are sealed, as are many other tablets and fragments. With a single exception, the same seal impression appears on all of them. Its significance is uncertain, since there is no obvious distinction of form or content between sealed and unsealed texts.

The use of a single seal, the general similarity of handwriting among many of the texts, and the narrow limits of the subject matter in comparison with other administrative archives may be indications that these texts are the work of a single scribe or a department of a larger bureaucracy. Correspondingly, there are signs that more texts dealing with other subjects may be found nearby: a small number of fragments from the area surrounding the burned building on the southwest part fragmentary Elamite texts, which are distinct in form, handwriting and content from the texts found within the building. They raise hopes of further additions to the Elamite corpus, a better view of the records kept at Malayan, and a clue to the organization which maintained these records.

DATE
Dating evidence from the burned building

| 1-6 | Common pottery forms found in association with the burned level of the building: 1, 2. "Elamite" goblet; 3. shoulder pot; 4. 5. lidded jar; 6. vat with heavy overhanging rim.
| 7 | Glazed clay cylindrical box with a 12-petal rosette decoration.
| 8 | Selected Middle Elamite uniform tablets illustrating the size range of the tablets found in the burned building.

The Elamite texts from the building do little to lessen these difficulties, since their bilingual contents offer scarcely any historical or chronological information. Only one text appears to mention a king’s name, and that name is broken after the first syllable. The other inscriptions are either fragments of pronouns or of personal names that cannot be reconstructed. This suggests that the texts were not written for a public audience. Instead, they seem to have been written for a small group of people who knew each other well and were interested in their own affairs. It is possible that these texts were used as a means of communication between different communities, such as those of the Elamite and Malayan peoples.

The Elamite texts provide evidence of the political and social organization of the Elamite state, as well as information about the economy and trade of the region. They also offer insight into the religious beliefs and practices of the people who lived there.

In conclusion, the Elamite texts provide valuable insights into the history and culture of the region, and they continue to be an important source of information for archaeologists and historians today.
The C-14 figures offer a maximum span of 625 years, an improbably long life-span for any mud-brick structure. On the other hand, almost 80 cm. of debris (some of it intentional filling) separate the first floor of the building from the floor of its burned level. A preliminary analysis of the ceramics from these two phases suggests that the assemblages differ considerably. Thus the building may span a significant archaeological interval if not a major historical one.

This possible ceramic change between phases of the building also points to a larger issue: the relationship of the Middle Elamite occupation at Malayan with contemporary Elamite centers in Khuzistan on the one hand, and contemporary settlements in the immediate surroundings on the other. The ceramics of the earlier phase include a local painted pottery, Qaleh ware. The pottery of the later burned floor compares closely with Elamite ceramics from Khuzistan, as already mentioned, but it differs sharply from the Shogha-Teimuran ceramics of late second millennium sites in the region of Malayan itself. The evidence is scanty but suggestive: it is possible that by the time the building burned, Malayan was an outpost of Elamite imperial civilization, with ties to Khuzistan, in an area of discreet local character.

Ancient historians have asserted on occasion that Elamite civilization and the successive Elamite states were founded on a union of the plains of Khuzistan with the surrounding highlands, expressed in the enduring royal title, "King of Anshan and Susa." Whatever its strengths, an inherent weakness of such a union is the opportunity for regional separatism. When the last Middle Elamite ruler, Huteludush-Insunshnak, sustained a military defeat in Khuzistan at the hands of the Babylonians, his realm went into a sudden eclipse: Elam disappeared from historic records for three centuries. Regional diversity may have been a condition of the rapid dissolution of the Middle Elamite Empire, and the finds from Malayan may eventually serve as material evidence of this diversity.

Obviously, the first evidence of Middle Elamite Malayan still opens only a narrow view of a wide range of related archaeological and historical problems. Nevertheless, it forms a promising avenue of approach to a new perspective, a view from the highlands, on the rise and fall of Elam as a great power.

Suggested Reading


