

The Second Season of the Archaeological Survey of the Qeshm Island, Iran

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The second season of the archaeological survey of Qeshm Island was conducted during the winter of 2012, during which the team identified a total of 138 sites. The preliminary analysis of the ceramic assemblage from these sites suggests that 5 sites date to the 3rd millennium B.C.(Bronze Age) and represent the earliest in the directory. The remainder includes 3 Iron Age, 4 Achaemenid, 23 Parthian, 20 Sasanian, 11 early Islamic, and 34 Ilkhanid and Timurid as well as 102 sites ranging in date from the Safavid to Qajar period.

Bronze Age was simply represented by two settlements and three burial sites, all clustered in the central part of the island and the Turiyan plain. The three Iron Age sites previously recorded in the first season were complemented with 3 others in this season. Four sites likely datable to the Achaemenid period all lie on the shore or close to it. Pay Posht 4 (QS 129) appears to have been a harbour and an “industrial center.” Large number of copper slag and some fragments of copper and bronze vessels were found on its surface. Several settlement and burial sites can be dated to the Parthian period. As in the Achaemenid period, these are on the shore or next to it, though a few contemporary sites were recorded in the Turiyan plain located in the central island some distance from the sea. The Sasanian period does show a significant change in the number of sites compared to the earlier Parthian period. Indeed, the sites are now larger than those in the preceding period. Islamic period was attested by a plethora of structures and sites. These show great variety and include extant constructions such as mosques, imamzadehs, cisterns, dams, forts, cemeteries, sites and large and small mounds.

Keywords: *Archaeological survey; Qeshm Island; Persian Gulf.*

Introduction

As the largest Iranian island in the Persian Gulf, Qeshm lies in the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance from the Sea of Oman to the Persian Gulf (Fig. 1). The island is bounded on the north by the city of Bandar Abbas, the center of the Khamir District, and the Bandar Lengeh County, on the northeast by Hormuz Island, on the east by Larak Island, on the south by Hengam Island, and on the southwest by Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa islands. Qeshm covers a total area of 1491 sq. km, and it is almost 2.5 times the size of Bahrain, the second biggest island in the Persian Gulf.

The toponymy of the island has varied greatly over time. Nearchus referred to an island near the mouth of the Persian Gulf as Oaracta, where, in Arrian’s account, Nearchus was shown the tomb of Erythras, after whom the Erythraean Sea was thought to have been named. Portuguese sources refer to the

island as Queiximi/ Queixome /Queixume, in which we easily recognize Qeshm. They also mention Broco/Boroch/Beroho/Brocto, which scholars have long identified with Greek Oaracta (Potts 2004).

In Islamic sources the name of Qeshm appears as Abarkaavaan (Baladori, 1959: 386), Abarkaafan (Mustawfi 2003: 186), Abarkaavaan (Ibn Hawqal 1987: 183), Banookaavaan or Banikaavaan (Masūdi, 2004: 240; Ibn Balkhi 1995: 114) and laaft (Hodūd al-ālam, 1973: 13).

The first season of archaeological survey of Qeshm was carried out in February-March, 2006 and led to the identification of 53 sites from different periods (spanning from Iron Age III to Qajar period). The area covered by extensive survey of the first season largely included eastern parts of the island, with Qeshm, Dargahan and Shibderaz determining the extents. The area contained the villages of Shibderaz, Bagh Bala, Berkeh Khalaf, Jijiyan, Khaledin, Dargahan, Deirestan, Ramchah, Ramkan, Rigu, Ziranagh, Soheili, Giyahdan, Masan

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and Nakhlgah (Khosrowzadeh 2006).

In the second season, completed in March-April 2012, the survey area was essentially confined to the areas either not covered or simply cursorily visited during the first season. These included western and central parts of the island. Full-scale intensive survey was carried out at the villages on the central island, located in the Turiyan plain, while fieldwork at the remaining villages, in particular those on the western quadrant, was restricted to identifying and registering the sites due to certain reasons; a few villages were not subjected to survey at all. The objective of the second season was to record and register the major, endangered sites given the ever increasing construction activities on the island that have put several sites in particular the littoral ones in danger, with a large numbers of identified sites already completely destroyed or remained only partially preserved. The villages covered in

this season included: Basa'idu, Laft port, Bangali, Pay Posht, Tomban, Tam Sonnati, Turiyan, Jijiyan, Darku, Dustku, Dulab, Salakh, Tabl, Karvan, Kani, Konar Siyah, Kusheh, Gavazhin, Gambron, Gorbekhdan, Guran, Naghasheh, Haft Rangu, and Holor (Khosrowzadeh 2012).

Survey Methodology and Environmental Considerations

Regional topography was the main consideration for determining the survey methodology. The survey area consisted of several large and small plains, highlands and coastal areas. The plains on Qeshm are flat and relatively low, mainly covered in alluvial deposits. They are characterized by mild slopes, rare ridges, and deep soil with medium to heavy texture. Also visible are narrow, relatively large plains covered by mud flats or sand.



Fig. 1: Location of Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf.



Qeshm littorals feature varying characteristics at different points, which were crucial to site formation processes and socio-economic life of the island. The coasts fall in three main categories. The first consists of low, marshy shores with very shallow water. The situation exists between Qeshm and Suza, characterized by a chain of mountains stretching along the shoreline. The mountains frequently approach the sea, generating impressive landscapes. Water depth in most coastal areas affords harbouring to ships, and the coastline is flecked by several villages and towns at irregular intervals. The characteristics, mainly seen in the southern coasts of the island, have provided the local population with a favourable setting; this part was therefore historically home to the densest settlements. Among the major attributes of these coasts are:

- Mountainous terrain that enabled sailors to spot the coasts by the appearance of these hill chains.

- Surrounding landscape provides a safe setting for navigation as large parts of the coasts here lack underwater projections that would present a serious threat to a ship.

- They are deep enough to serve as anchorages.

- There are several natural shelters in the area to be used by ships.

Potable water was available at a short distance, in particular in the Turiyan plain, so sailors could easily fill up their containers during a short stop.

The coasts partially consist of flat, sandy patches that lack any sort of natural features. Though small hamlets did exist there, they lacked basic settlement requirements till the last century. The main vegetation type on the island's shores is Mangrove forests, which have particularly higher concentration on the northern coasts. The heights of the island are typified by anticlines consisting of marl formations, though salt domes are also visible on Western Island. The uplands are characterized by table shaped hills of a light color with steep walls. The main peaks in the island include a white, conical peak (135 m), Finger (280 m) and Bisku (294 m). The highlands across the island tend to be mildly sloped on one side and steep on the other.

There are no permanent rivers on the island, but several wadis with small basins lead the runoff to the sea. Given their short length, their water seldom penetrates the ground. Qeshm Island is formed by impenetrable marl, clay, shale and schist deposits or of alternating sandstone and conglomerate, which are medium in water quality and poor in water yield. The southern end of the island is occupied by fractured carbonated formations that have a satisfactory water quality but poor water yield.

The average rainfall of the area is not trustful. Most rain fall during the 6 coldest months of the year. Most rains are in the form of sudden, irregular storms with dry periods in between. Because surrounding by water, the percentage of moist in the Island is rather high, but as warm air ascend to upper levels above the ground the weather prevailed is considered as dry.

The proximity to the water is amongst the most influential factors dictating the climatic characteristics of an area that can leave direct impact on the other ecological aspects. As an island, Qeshm has been subjected to considerable effects by the surrounding waters. The temperature is high especially during the first six months of the (Iranian) year, i.e. from March to September. The difference between absolute highest and lowest temperature reaches 40 ° C. As an island, in addition to lacking conspicuous elevations, Qeshm enjoys a monotone climate throughout its area.

In regards to geomorphology, Qeshm is an elongated island stretched along the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf. It has been built through different phases of orogenic activities and includes numerous low anticlines and synclines. In Quaternary the rate of erosion and weathering reached its zenith and current morphology of the island was established.

During the second season attempts were made to cover the entire landscape by intensive survey, but the short time at our disposal coupled with some other considerations restricted intensive survey only to the Turiyan plain, with the remaining areas only extensively visited. The latter was particularly the case in the western sections and northern coasts of the western quadrant. Some portions lying between



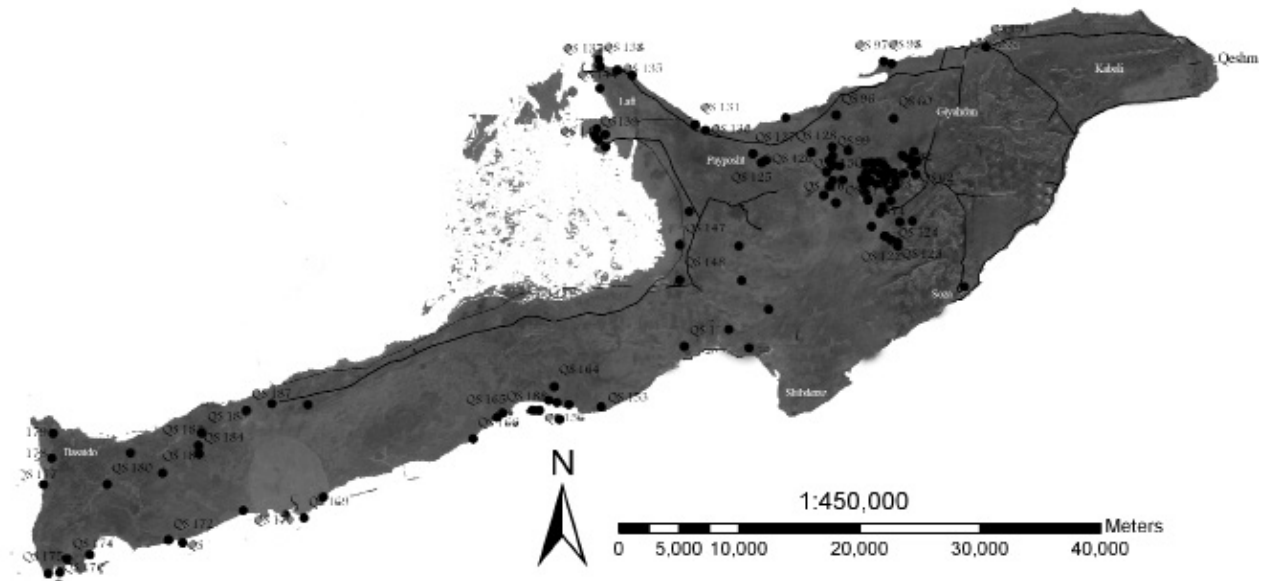


Fig. 2 : Site Distribution within Qeshm survey area.

the villages of Laft and Dulab were not visited at all. A code consisting of the prefix QS (standing for Qeshm Survey) followed by a sequential number was assigned to the identified sites. Where available, the sites were designated by their local names; otherwise, the name of the general area or nearby village was assigned to them. Therefore, several sites in the vicinity of a same village may have an identical name but a different number.

Surface finds (mainly pottery and glass, stone and metal artifacts) were sampled by our judgment. It is noteworthy however that the sites with surface scatters, except the large trade-industrial sites and large rural settlements, typically contained sparse finds, a fact that biases our sampling.

The Surveyed Sites

During the second season we were able to extend the scope of the surveys to unexplored parts of Qeshm Island. The survey area was limited to the villages of Shibderaz on the south and Dargahan on the north of the island up to the Basa'idu village. In total, 138 sites were identified and recorded, which in the main lie in the Turiyan plain and next to the coastline (Fig. 2).

The recorded sites are of different types. (1) Anchorages that were mainly used in fishery and usually contained meagre scatter of sherds and ruined sandstone structures on the surface; (2) Harbors used in fishing, trade and industrial purposes that represent fairly large sites with numerous surface finds, including ceramics and fragments of glass and metals as well as other objects. This group is typified by presence of metal slags, wasters, and glass slags. Another outstanding feature is a profusion of various kinds of shells, snails and other sea animals on the surface; (3) large and small rural settlements which fall in turn into two categories: they are either on or near mountain slopes or in large and small plains, or perch on arduous uplands usually provided with fortifications. This type is particularly found in the Turiyan plain and Laft. The related sites are typically large and contain several ruined structures made of sandstone and clay mortar. They are also usually equipped with oval or square cisterns hollowed out the bedrock. The cisterns are mainly roofless, though a few have a dome-shaped cover built by stone and plaster or clay mortar; (4) Installations relevant to water storage and conveyance to farmlands and occupational areas, including dams, barrages and artificial ponds (cisterns) that were found while surveying the two ancient dams in Pay Posht and Dulab; (5) Ossuaries



cut into sandstones, two instances of which were recorded at the villages of Bangali and Suza; (6) Forts were represented by four attestations. One is the Portuguese Fort at Laft; two were located on rocky outcrops to the south of Laft, and another one was high on a rocky mountain lying 1 km from Darku village and 2 km the west of the Konar Siyah village; (7) A number of identified sites (11 sites) are cairn burials which, in light of field observations and limited available evidence from them, date to the historical, especially the Parthian-Sasanian, periods; though a few might have belonged to the third and second millennia B.C. The sites appear as humps of stones on rocky outcrops and hill crests. Indications of related occupations are usually found on the slopes of these outcrops. This group of sites is mainly clustered on the western uplands of the Zeinabi and Bangali villages; (8) Cemeteries from the Islamic era mostly dating to the Safavid-Qajar period. A number of graves are attested on their surface some have horizontal or vertical tombstones bearing inscriptions in Naskh or Nastaliq writings and others are simple, cairn burials; (9) Water conveyance canals and flumes, of which those in Zeinabi and Kardova are noteworthy; (10) Ancient mausoleums and mosques. Several mausoleums, such as that of Sheikh Shams al-Din at Laft, and the so-called Pir (a tomb of a spiritual leader) at the village of Tameh Sonnati, and a single mosque at Holor were recorded. They primarily date to the mid- and late Islamic centuries.

Though the largest recorded sites, QS 64, QS 112, QS 131, QS 133, QS 146 and QS 179, are not mound, their surface is laden with Achaemenid, Parthian, Sasanian and Islamic material. Identified sites tended to lie in the fertile parts of the plains and on the littorals, and the surface assemblages suggest them as multi-period settlements. Several ruined stone structures are visible on their surface. Some sites sat on the mountain bedrocks. The smallest registered site is Site QS 87, which lies on a low mound and is likely a Parthian cemetery with cairn burials.

Large and small settlements comprises the main category of sites identified during the survey. Mound sites with significant height are quite rare on the island. It is evident that a number of small, low sites

were seriously damaged as a result of agricultural activities and earth removal operations as part of the recent construction activities, with some totally erased away with no discernible remains at the surface. Many sites in the Turiyan plain were levelled to make way for farmlands given the fertile nature of the plain and availability of abundant underground water resources, and today only scattered surface pottery sherds are attested in their places. Large sites often contained fairly abundant material from different cultural periods, while smaller ones appeared to have been single-period sites represented solely by surface sherd scatters.

Pottery dominates the surface assemblages, though as mentioned earlier some sites also produced evidence of other materials, including glass, metal and stone objects and vessels. Remains from industrial activities (metalworking and glassworking) were found on a few sites, including metal slags, wasters, and glass slags.

Bronze Age

Five of the identified sites date to the Bronze Age (Fig. 3). Bangali 5 (QS 112), located in the Turiyan plain, is the only settlement in the survey area that is securely datable to this period. Roughly measuring 580 x 180 meters, the site lies within a flat landscape. Its surface is virtually buried under a layer formed by various types of shells and bivalves as well as pottery sherds. The site is fairly flat and encompasses some squat hills covered by sandstone gravels. The density of sherd scatter is not consistent across the site it shows a denser distribution at some points than the others. The northern and southern ends of the site are marked by a few low humps with their surface similarly covered by numerous sherds and shells. The densest surface scatter attested at these points and the central part of the site. A large number of metal slag, glass waster and groundstone are visible at the surface. The surface of the site is littered by cobbles and boulders indicative of the remains of once-stood stone structures there. What makes Bangali 5 particularly important is the fact that it represents the only Bronze Age site as yet identified on the Iranian islands. The surface pottery assemblage collected in the survey demonstrates



that the site was settled during the third millennium B.C.

Pottery in the Bronze Age surface assemblages can be divided into three classes:

(1) Painted pottery with an orange paste and sand inclusions as temper. Related vessels are very fine and invariably wheelmade. Geometric designs in black paint decorate the surface. The ware closely parallels the contemporary pottery of southeast Iran (reference!).

(2) Fine, sand-tempered gray pottery with a core lighter in color than the surfaces. A single sherd bears black paintings.

(3) Plain, red, orange and black pottery (Fig. 4).

Most of the cairn burials (Sites QS 103, QS 104, and QS 105) from this period were recorded in the second season. These for the most part are concentrated on the southern uplands of the Zeinabi village. They are similar in structure and appearance and lie usually on the mountains, though some were attested in the flat plains. The burials come in large and small dimensions, occasionally reaching a diameter of 10 meters. They were raised using flat rubbles in the form of oval or circular heaps of stones. Such tombs occur in abundance in southeast

Iran (see Khosrowzadeh 2007-2008). Large numbers of related tombs are known from southern littorals of the Persian Gulf, the noteworthy instances being those in Sharja (Jasim 2003: 86-93), Fujairah (Brass and Britton 2004) and Wadi Safad (King and Maren-Greisebach 1999: 11-14) all in the UAE (Fig. 3).

Iron Age

The first season had recorded two Iron Age III sites. The second season added three more to the inventory (QS 106, QS 129, QS 187) (Fig. 5). Evidence from this period is attested at sites where material from later periods, in particular Islamic era, also occurs. At all the three identified sites the Iron Age materials account for only a small portion of the assemblages. The main settlement therefore belonged to later, in particular, Islamic periods. Site QS 186 marks a settlement-workshop with a large number of glass slags on it. The site is formed by several large and small humps rising 2.5 meters above the surrounding lands. Site QS 129 essentially belongs to the Achaemenid-Sasanian period, but its assemblage also includes a few sherds of a probably Iron Age. This is a coastal site and, as with the earlier one, served as a settlement-industrial center. Zeinabi 7 (QS 106) is a burial site, located on a rocky hill 2.5 km southwest of the namesake Zeinabi village. The

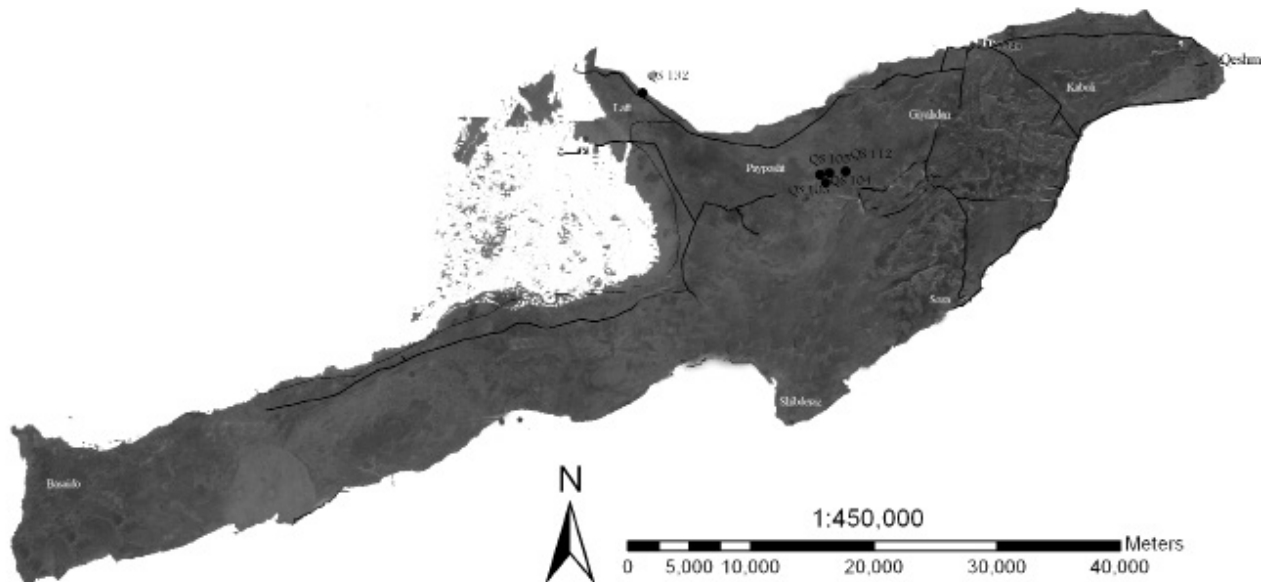


Fig. 3 : Distribution of the Bronze sites in the survey area.

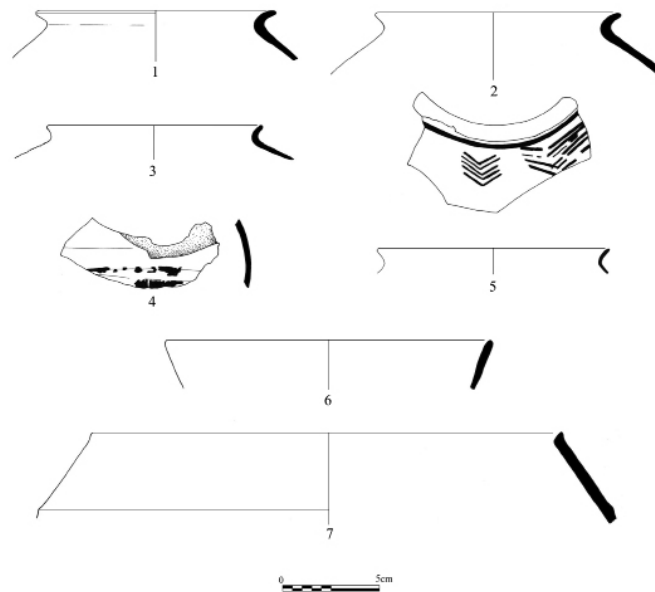


burials are of cairn type, and they closely resemble related examples from the Bronze Age.

Achaemenid

Two sites are presumably datable to the Achaemenid period (QS 106, QS 129). Both lie on the coast or a short distance from it (Fig. 6). Located in a foothill area, Pay Posht 4 (QS 129), is about 100 meters long and 90 meters wide and covers a total area of ca. 1 hectare. Substantial levelling is being

carried out in the area, probably mainly to make way for new roads and coastal constructions. Based on the observations made on the walls of several clandestine pits, the site contains deposits evidently of occupational nature. At the moment, no arable lands are visible at least within the 1 km radius from the site. Given the presence of large numbers of metal fragments (particularly in northern quadrant within a 100x100 area) and evidence of ash on the site, it probably functioned as a harbourage-workshop. The surface pottery is dominated by the Achaemenid material (Fig. 7). Site 106, a burial ground, contains



N	Site	1. Manufacture 2. Fabric Colour (Ext.Int.Core.) 3. Temper 4. Finish 5. Decoration 6. Interior coating. Colour.Treatment 7. Exterior coating.Colour. Treatment
1	QS 103	1. Wheel made 2. Light Brown. Light Brown. Light Brown. 3. Fine Grit 4. Medium
2	QS 103	1. Wheel made 2. Brown. Brown. Brown. 3. Fine Grit 4. Fine 5. Black Painted 7. Slip. Red
3	QS 112	1. Wheel made 2. Reddish Brown Brown. Reddish Brown Brown. Reddish Brown Brown. 3. Fine Grit 4. Fine
4	QS 103	1. Wheel made 2. Buff. Buff. Buff. 3. Fine Grit 4. Fine 5. Black Painted 7. Slip. Red
5	QS 103	1. Wheel made 2. Orange. Orange. Orange. 3. Sand 4. Fine
6	QS 112	1. Wheel made 2. Light Brown. Light Brown. Light Brown. 3. Fine Grit. Sand 4. Medium
7	QS 112	1. Wheel 2. Brown. Brown. Brown. 3. Sand 4. Medium 7. Slip. Grey

Fig. 4 : A selection of the Bronze Age pottery.



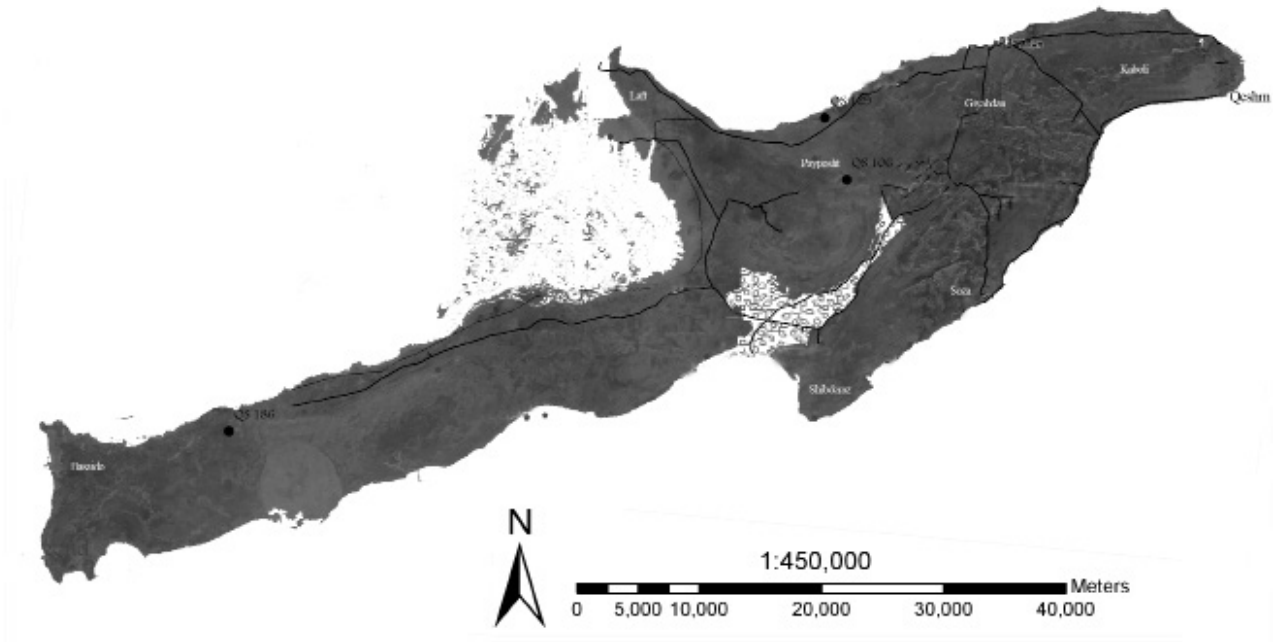
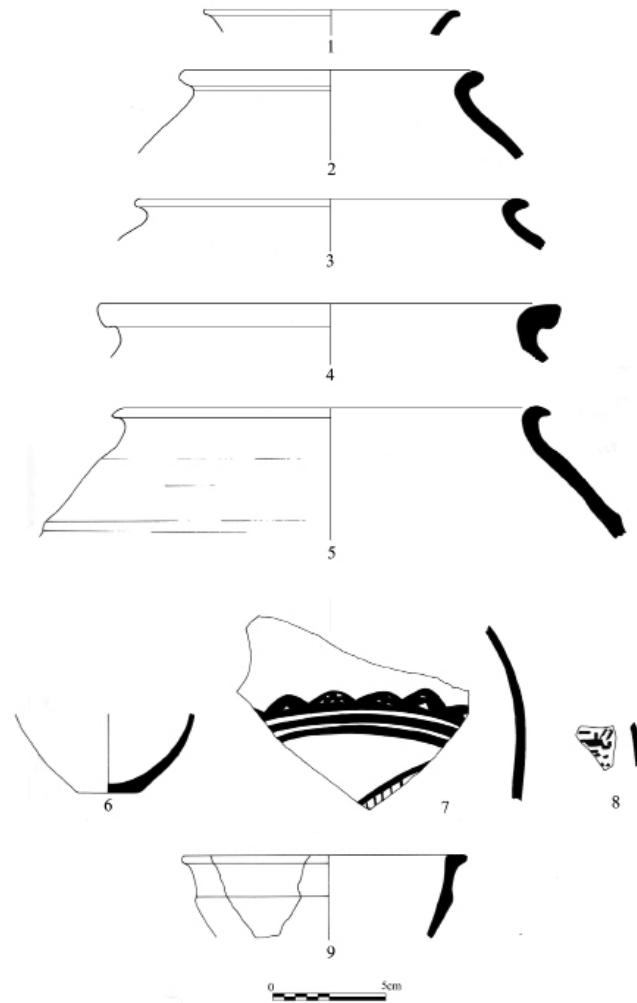


Fig. 5 : Distribution of the Iron-Achaemenid sites in the survey area.



Fig. 6 : View of Pay Posht 4 (QS 129)(Photo by Author).





N	Site	1. Manufacture 2. Fabric Colour (Ext.Int.Core.) 3. Temper 4. Finish 5. Decoration 6. Interior coating.Colour. Treatment 7. Exterior coating.Colour.Treatment
1	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Brown. Brown. Brown. 3. Sand 4. Medium
2	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Orange. Orange. Orange. 3. Fine Grit 4. Medium 7. Slip. Beige
3	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Reddish Orange. Reddish Orange. Reddish Orange. 3. Sand 4. Medium. 6. Slip. Beige. 7. Slip. Beige.
4	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Orange. Orange. Orange. 3. Sand 4. Medium 7. Slip. Buff
5	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Beige. Beige. Beige. 3. Fine Grit 4. Medium
6	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Orange. Orange. Orange. 3. Fine Grit. Sand 4. Medium 7. Slip. Beige
7	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Red. Orange. Red. 3. Sand 4. Fine 5. Dark Painted
8	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Orange. Orange. Orange. 3. Sand 4. Fine 5. Dark Painted
9	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Orange. Orange. Orange. 3. Sand 4. Fine
10	QS 129	1. wheel made 2. Light Brown. Light Brown. Light Brown. 3. Sand 4. Medium 5. Black Painted 6. Slip. Cream 7. Slip. Cream

Fig. 7: A selection of the Iron-Achaemenid periods pottery and their illustration.



tombs with a structure and appearance resembling the cairn burials of the third millennium B.C.

Parthian

Parthian period is likely attested at 23 sites (QS 27, QS 23, QS 86, QS 87, QS 103, QS 104, QS 107, QS 110, QS 112, QS 124, QS 132, QS 133, QS 156, QS 157, QS 159, QS 160, QS 162, QS 163)(Fig. 8). They are again situated on the coast or near it and, similar to the Achaemenid examples, represent fishery and trade harbors. A few of them also contain

metal melting furnaces and glass workshops (Sites QS 110, QS 129). Some served as cemeteries (QS 85, QS 86, QS 87, QS 103, QS 104, QS 105, QS 106, QS 107 and QS 110) (Fig. 9) and the rest were settlement sites.

With a single exception, material from this period is invariably found at sites that also contain later, i.e. Sasanian and Islamic, material. In the assemblages from all of them the Parthian evidence makes up only a small part. Thus, it is likely that the main occupation or settlement phase goes back to

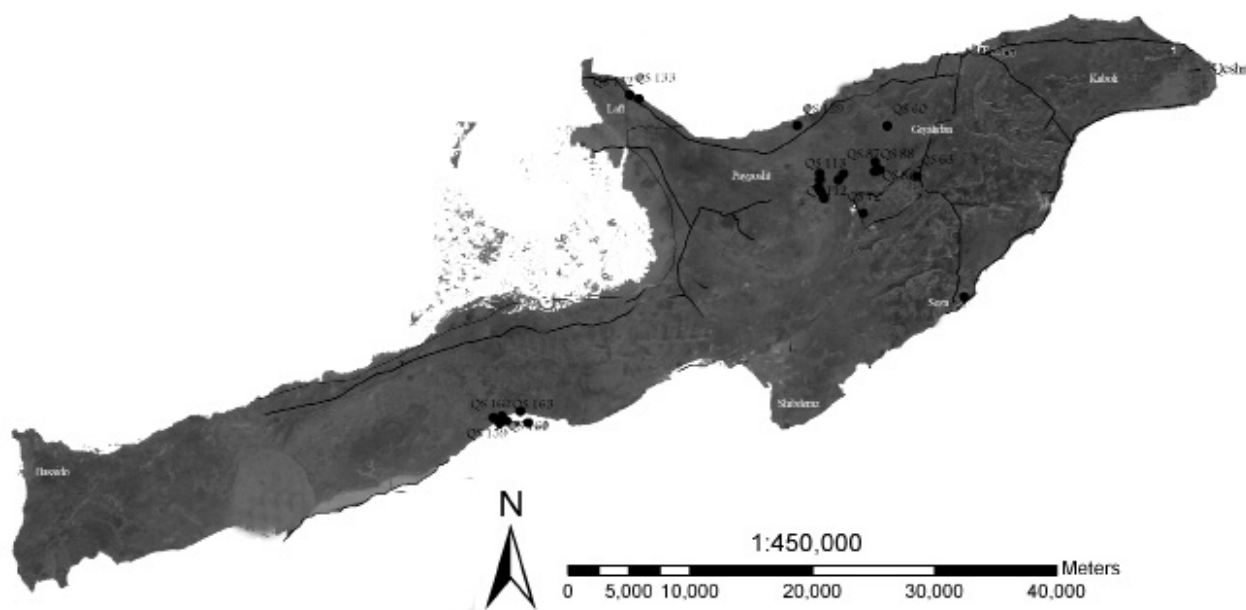


Fig. 8: Distribution of the Parthian sites in the survey area.



Fig. 9: A Parthian Burial in Qeshm Island (Photo by Author).



these later periods. Among these are Sites QS 132, QS 160, QS 162 and QS 163.

The characteristic site of this period is Gorbedan (QS 72). Despite its vast extent, it does not show any degree of projection; this might partly be due to serious deflation and partly due to the meagreness of its archaeological deposits. Thus, one can speculate that the settlement did not span a long period. Some ceramics show attributes which are characteristics of the Parthian pottery assemblages on the Persian Gulf's southern littorals, dubbed Large Coarse, Black Ware (Fig. 10: Nos. 1-2). The ware has a black, red or dark gray fabric tempered with fine or coarse grit and occasionally small particles. A black slip in some cases was applied to the exterior. It has a hard, coarse fabric due to overfiring. The characteristic ceramic types include closed forms such as necked jars and large storage jars decorated with a raised horizontal band and often with simple flat bases. The type was fairly typical of the southern Persian Gulf and similar forms occur at ed-Dur (Sales 1984: fig. 11. 110), on the islands of Abu Dhabi (King & Tanghini 1998: fig. 5. d), Dibba (Jasim 2006: 220, fig. 27: 1-7), Mleiha (Benoit et al. 2003: 66, fig. 11-12), Qala'at al-Bahrain (Hojland & Andersen 1994: figs. 1644-1645) and Janusan (Lombard & Salles 1984: 116).

A number of recorded Parthian sites are cemeteries. The burials lie in fairly flat surfaces atop the high rocky hills. Some were also cut into the soil or rock in the level plains. The burial pits are oval or square in shape, created on the bedrock using the sandstones slabs of the same hills. Their main structure is lost to sight today, with only a short portion of the original height of their stone circles preserved. Related tombs frequently occur in the Iranian provinces of Kerman, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Hormozgan. This burial type has a wide distribution and is reported from a vast region extending from Pakistan through western Iran (see Khosrowzadeh 2007/2008).

On the southern coasts of the Persian Gulf a plethora of cairn burials from the Seleucid and Parthian periods occur and some were excavated. The notable examples are the those at the Dibba region in Sharja (Jasim 2006: 215-216, fig. 7), Ras

Musandam and al-Ghanam in Oman (de Cardi et al. 1975: 22-23), Wadi Safad (King and Maren-Grisebach 1999: 11-14) and the Kalba region (Philips 2009) both in the UAE, and the Ibra region in Oman (Yule and Kervran 1993: 98, fig. 15).

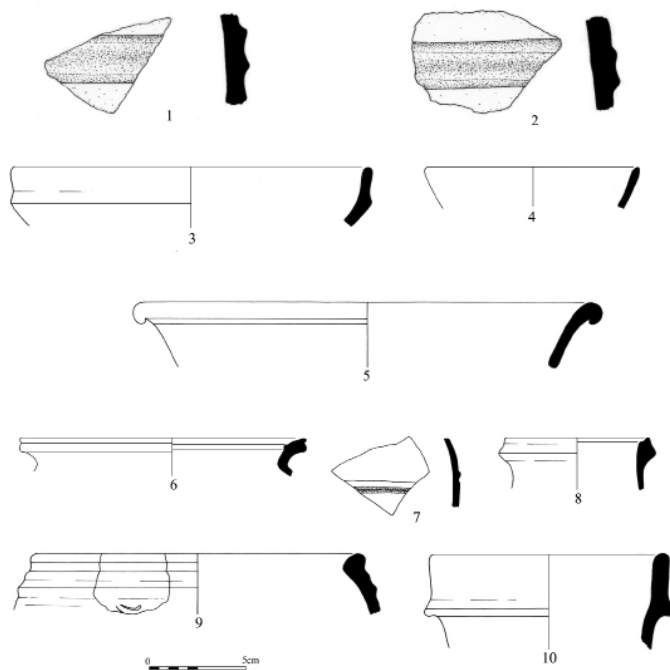
Sasanian

Twenty of the recorded sites belong to the Sasanian period (Fig. 11). Of these, 10 contained evidence of Parthian or earlier occupations as well, and the remaining 10 lacked any material predating the Sasanian era. The Sasanian sites can similarly be divided into three categories: (1) burial sites (QS 103, QS 110); (2) industrial sites (QS 130, QS 186); and (3) settlements (QS 63, QS 131, QS 132, QS 154, QS 156, QS 157, QS 159, QS 160, QS 161, QS 12, QS 163, QS 182, QS 187, QS 188). An interesting point about the contemporary sites on the Qeshm Island is that they mostly lie on the coast and are significantly different from the earlier sites in this regard.

These sites chiefly represent settlements and contain thick occupational deposits. The key site of the period is Laft 1 (QS 133), which contains the deepest strata among the entire sites recorded on the island. It is located on the northern coasts of the island, about 4 km east of the Laft village. Based on the distribution of surface material, its area was estimated about 30 hectares, thus putting it among the largest sites recorded during the second season of survey. It should be noted that the main occupation of the site dates to the Islamic era as evidenced by the large amount of relevant surface finds.

Interestingly, two forts are among the sites dated to the Sasanian period: Gambron 2 (QS 160), and Adam Rikhteh (QS 182) (Fig. 12). Gambron 2 is square in plan, with each side measuring 30 meters. This is part of one of the largest Sasanian, and likely, Parthian sites, located halfway between the two villages of Gambron and Salaku. To the south of the fort, a number of chamber tombs were cut into the northern slope of a low rocky ridge. The ridge is composed of sandstone and contains four chamber tombs. Entrances of all these burial chambers face north. They have a square or oval interior. The burial ground of the site lies about 300 meters to





N	Site	1. Manufacture 2. Fabric Colour (Ext.Int.Core.) 3. Temper 4. Finish 5. Decoration 6. Interior coating, Colour, Treatment 7. Exterior coating . Colour, Treatment	Notes/References
1	QS 72	1. Wheel made 2. Dark Grey. Dark Grey. Dark Grey 3. Fine. Medium. Grit 4. Coarse 5. Impress. Incised Decoration	de Cardi 1984, fig. 9: 12 Salles 1984, fig. 11: 110 King and Tanghini 1998, fig. 5: d Jasim 2006, fig. 27: 2
2	QS 72	1. Wheel made 2. Dark Grey. Dark Grey. Dark grey 3. Fine. Medium. Grit 4. Coarse 5. Impress. Incised Decoration	de Cardi 1984, fig. 9: 12 Salles 1984, fig. 11: 110 King and Tanghini 1998, fig. 5: d Jasim 2006, fig. 27: 2
3	QS 162	1. Wheel made 2. Buff. Buff. Buff. 3. Sand. Fine Grit 4. Medium. 6. Glaze. Green. 7. Glaze. Green.	Mouton 1992, fig. 10: 7 Kervran 1986, fig. 10: 17
4	QS 162	1. Wheel made 2. Buff. Buff. Buff. 3. Sand. Fine Grit 4. Medium. 6. Glaze. Green. 7. Glaze. Green.	
5	QS 160	1. Wheel made 2. Light Grey. Light Grey. Light Grey. 3. Fine. Medium Grit 4. Medium 6. Slip. Grey 7. Slip. Grey	Kervran 1986, fig. 10: 2
6	QS 162	1. Wheel made 2. Red. Red. Red. 3. Sand 4. Fine 6. Slip. Red 7. Slip. Red	Whitehouse and Williamson 1973, fig. 5: D-E Kervran 1986, fig. 12: 18
7	QS 162	1. Wheel made 2. Red. Red. Red. 3. Sand 4. Fine 6. Slip. Red 7. Slip. Red	
8	QS 129	1. Wheel made 2. Brownish Grey. Brownish Grey. Brownish Grey. 3. Fine grit 4. Medium	Mouton 1992, fig. 66: 5
9	QS 160	1. Wheel made 2. Buff. Buff. Buff. 3. Sand. Fine Grit 4. Medium. 6. Glaze. Turquoise. 7. Glaze. Turquoise.	

Fig. 10: A Selection of the Parthian-Sasanian periods pottery and their illustration.



residential area is flanked by the cemetery, the fort and the rock-cut tombs. Abundant large and small sandstones are scattered on the site. This is a very vast site, measuring about 300 x 300 meters. Sherd scatters however continue some meters beyond the discernible center of the site. The site sits on the bedrock, and its eastern corner, where the major distribution of scatters occurs, was completely cut away and levelled. Again, the site does not have a discernible height despite its vast area, presumably due to deflation and meagreness of its archaeological record.

A characteristic Sasanian pottery from the site is a painted orange ware. This sand-tempered fine ware has a red-yellow body covered in a red thin slip. Decorative designs are usually geometric motifs executed in black paint on the exterior. The ware is alternatively known as Painted Orange Pottery or Namord ware. It has a wide distribution and occurs at several sites on both northern and southern littorals of the Persian Gulf, among them Tepe Yahya (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1970: fig. 9: 2-3), al-Ghanam (de Cardi 1972), ed-Dur (Mouton 1992: 129), Mleiha (Benoist et al. 2003: fig. 9: 2-3), Fars, Kerman, Baluchestan and the northernmost point on the Oman Peninsula (e.g. Williamson 1972: 104; Whitehouse and Williamson 1973: fig. 6), Qana in Yemen in contexts datable to the second-fourth centuries A.D. (Sedov 1996: 21-23, fig. 6: 2-7), and Qala'at al-Bahrain (Hojland and Anderson 1997: 213-215).

Islamic Period

Of the 116 sites identified from the Islamic period, the majority date to the Safavid-Qajar times (Fig. 13). The Islamic sites reveal a consistent spatial distribution throughout the island. Some comprise vast areas, including Basa'idu (QS 179). The estimated area of this site, based on surface pottery scatter, is ca. 77 hectares, thus it represents the largest among the all sites identified during the survey. QS 179 includes several densely packed large and small humps, covered by sandstone gravels. Traces of structures are also visible on the surface, as are large numbers of shells and sea snails. The pottery scatter over the site is also significant.

As mentioned earlier, Laft 1 also contains evidence of Sasanian occupation, but it is difficult to firmly assign the main settlement or use phase of the site to a specific period in terms of the surface assemblage collected. Nonetheless, the main occupation appears to date to the Islamic era given the wide distribution of contemporary pottery on it.

Gavazin 2 (QS 148) is a puzzling site from the period in that its surface is laden with metal slags, likely of copper, which are usually attested at slag sites that lie next to mines rather than mound sites with no recognized mines in the vicinity. The site is a small mound measuring ca. 80 x 30 meters, and it seems to have least ordinary archaeological deposits, if any, as the inspection of the walls of illegal pits suggested (Fig. 14). It lies in a fairly desert landscape, environmentally typified by dense distribution of tropical shrubs. The slags are matte black in color, and green copper oxide is visible on their surface. Among the slag assemblage small fragments of copper also occur. Presence of large numbers of slags, occasionally piled in a heap, is indicative of a metal smelting furnace. The pottery assemblage dates to the Safavid period.

Laft 3 (QS 135), Laft 5 (QS 144), Tonban 2 (QS 150), and Konar Siyah 2 (QS 184) are other workshop sites on Qeshm Island with surface scatters of metal and glass slags.

Eleven sites identified during the first season are likely datable to the Islamic era. Of these, four also yielded evidence of Sasanian occupations. Of the pottery diagnostics of the early Islamic period is the blue and turquoise glazed ware with a yellow paste that resembles related material from northern littorals of the Persian Gulf.

The number of sites shows an increase in the Seljuk period compared to the early Islamic centuries. The Seljuk sites typically have a fairly vast area, and they are located both on the coasts and the rocky flat hills and in small plains on the island. Sites QS 77, QS 113, QS 131, QS 133 and QS 186 represent some of the largest sites of the period. They similarly represent harbors, settlements and workshops. The Seljuk pottery assemblage from Qeshm incorporates the following classes: (1) pottery with splashed glaze in green, brown, white



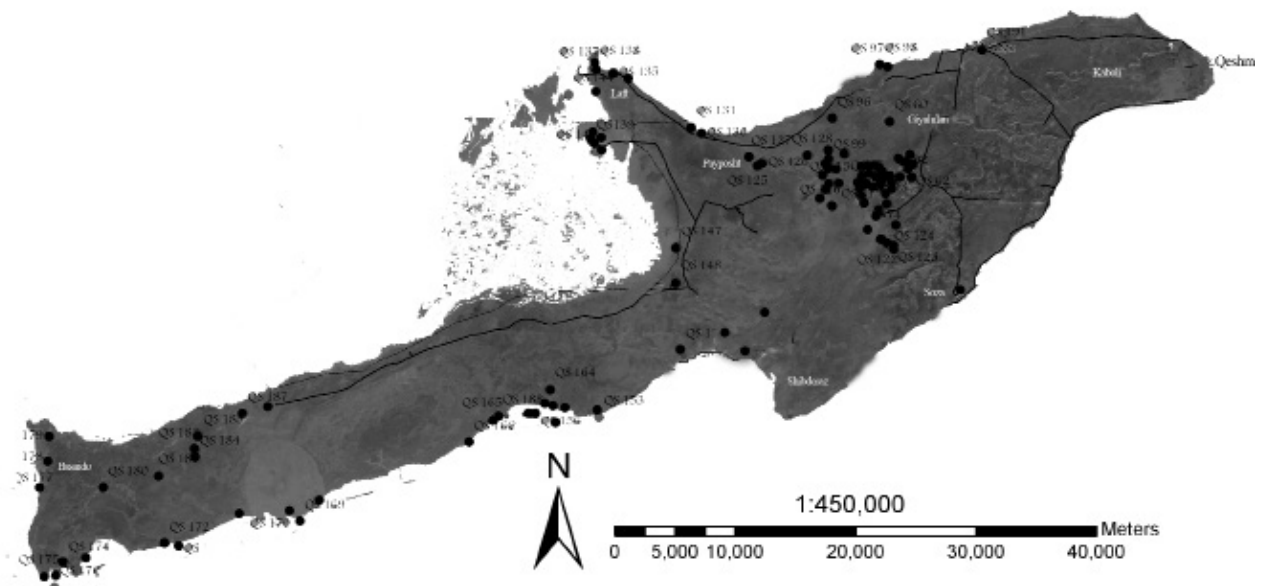


Fig. 13: Distribution of the Islamic sites in the survey area.



Fig. 14: View of Gavarzin 2 (QS 148) (Photo by Author).



and other colors; (2) pottery with impressed designs in the form of geometric and floral motifs; (3) pottery with monochrome green or turquoise glaze; and (4) the characteristic sgraffiato usually with green, cream or other glazes and incised motifs in different colors that the surface.

A total of 32 sites have yielded ceramics attributable to the Ilkhanid-Timurid period. The Ilkhanid sites tend to contain Seljuk settlements as well. The Ilkhanid and Seljuk assemblage is made up of plain, glazed and underglaze painted classes. It also includes a painted ware that is paralleled in the painted assemblages from the northern littorals of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. The ware has frequently a buff, orange or black paste and bears red, black or brown painted motifs. The vessels are both hand- and wheelmade (e.g. see Kennet 2004). This ware is found in abundance at the Islamic sites on the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman (e.g. see Kennet 2004). Also, painted ware dating to the mid-Islamic period occurs in the surface assemblages from the Islamic sites in Fars Province and southwestern Iran (see Whitcomb 1991) which differs from the painted variety that prevailed in southern Iran.

The majority of the sites identified on the island date from the Safavid-Qajar timespan, with 63 belonging to the Safavid and others to the Zand, Afsharid and Qajar periods. These have differential natures: some lie on the coasts, while others occupy the intermontane plains or on the slopes of low hills, and still others perch on high Rocky Mountains. The latter category is provided with stone fortifications. On the bedrock at these sites were usually created oval or square cisterns to store water. They cover a vast area, and rich cultural material is visible on them, including pottery, metal and glass objects, and metal slags. Their surface also shows evidence of stone structures represented by clearly defined traces of stone foundations or stones piled in heaps. Some also contain standing structures such as mosques, imamzadehs and covered cisterns.

Conclusion

A total of 138 sites encompassing settlements

and workshops associated with fortifications, cemeteries, cisterns, and chamber burials, as well as cemeteries were identified during the second season of archaeological survey of Qeshm Island. An important fact about the documented sites is that they mostly lie in the Turiyan plain where fertile farmlands and underground water resources abound. The higher density of settlements in this plain indicates that a type of agriculture dependant on simple irrigation using water from wells and precipitation probably prevailed in the Bronze Age. The later Iron Age, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian periods most probably witnessed conveyance of water to the plain from piedmonts and “dams” constructed on the seasonal watercourses running down the surrounding mountains by the use of flumes and water conduits.

Another interesting observation is the regular displacement of settlements over time, which is manifested by the paucity of multi-period sites. Most sites were occupied only in one or two periods, hence the rare occurrence of sites significant height.

Collecting surface runoff and storing water from precipitation are reliable ways in provisioning potable water. Therefore, several cisterns were constructed on the island, though they mostly date to the later periods. Such cisterns are found on many islands in the Persian Gulf. Those on Qeshm are large and deep. They were constructed on or at the end of rocky slopes to facilitate draining the rain water. They are oval or square in shape and are either roofless or provided with a dome-shaped cover. Other than cisterns, a few dams were also identified across the island, which served to store and convey water, the most important of which is the dam in Pi Posht. Though none of these hydraulic installations likely predates the Islamic era, one might presume that a similar system was in use during the pre-Islamic periods.

The earliest settlements recorded in this season are dated to the Bronze Age. Settlement are sparsely distributed in the island in this period, indicating probably the least population. The same site location pattern continues into the Iron Age, with the exception that the settlements are now mainly clustered in the Turiyan plain. The largest Bronze



Age pottery assemblage comes from Site QS 112.

The survey produced rather limited evidence on the Iron Age and Achaemenid period, and diagnostic pottery occurred only on a small number of sites. However, the assemblage, specifically the material from the central and northern parts of the island, where the majority of recorded sites are located, shows clear links with southeast Iran and southern littorals of the Persian Gulf, in particular Oman and the UAE.

Parthian and Sasanian periods mark a rise in the number of sites and, probably, population in the island, though no significant changes in site location patterns is evident, with the notable exception of higher concentration of the Parthian sites in the Turiyan plain and northern coasts of the island (around Bangali village) and in particular during the Sasanian period when the majority of sites were established on southern (around Bangali village) and northern (Laft) shores. Areas that were so far somewhat desolate, especially the western parts, become occupied in the Parthian and Sasanian periods, and the Turiyan plain that hosted much of the settlements from the third millennium B.C. up to Achaemenid period remains the most alluring for human occupants. In effect, following a population boom, settlements extend to include hitherto unpopulated parts of the island. In addition, as trade grow and adequate facilities for exploiting water resources and the surrounding environment become available, settlements begin to emerge on coastal areas as well. The period also marks an increase in site size. The contemporary settlements are all sedentary rural or urban centers or coastal sites, and no large site with attributes characteristics of a city was located on the island. As in the previous periods, the island is culturally oriented towards southeast Iran, as painted ceramics characteristic of the latter (painted orange pottery, bichrome or polychrome painted pottery with a brown or red slip, and Namord pottery) occur on the contemporaneous sites on the island.

The sites from Islamic period are small or large rural settlements, though relatively large urban centers also occur, in particular on the coasts and in north of island (Turiyan plain). Contrary to the earlier periods, we are now faced with a consistently

dense distribution of settlements throughout the island. They were for the most part settled only during this period.



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