

MONOGRAPH 48

# Yeki bud, yeki nabud

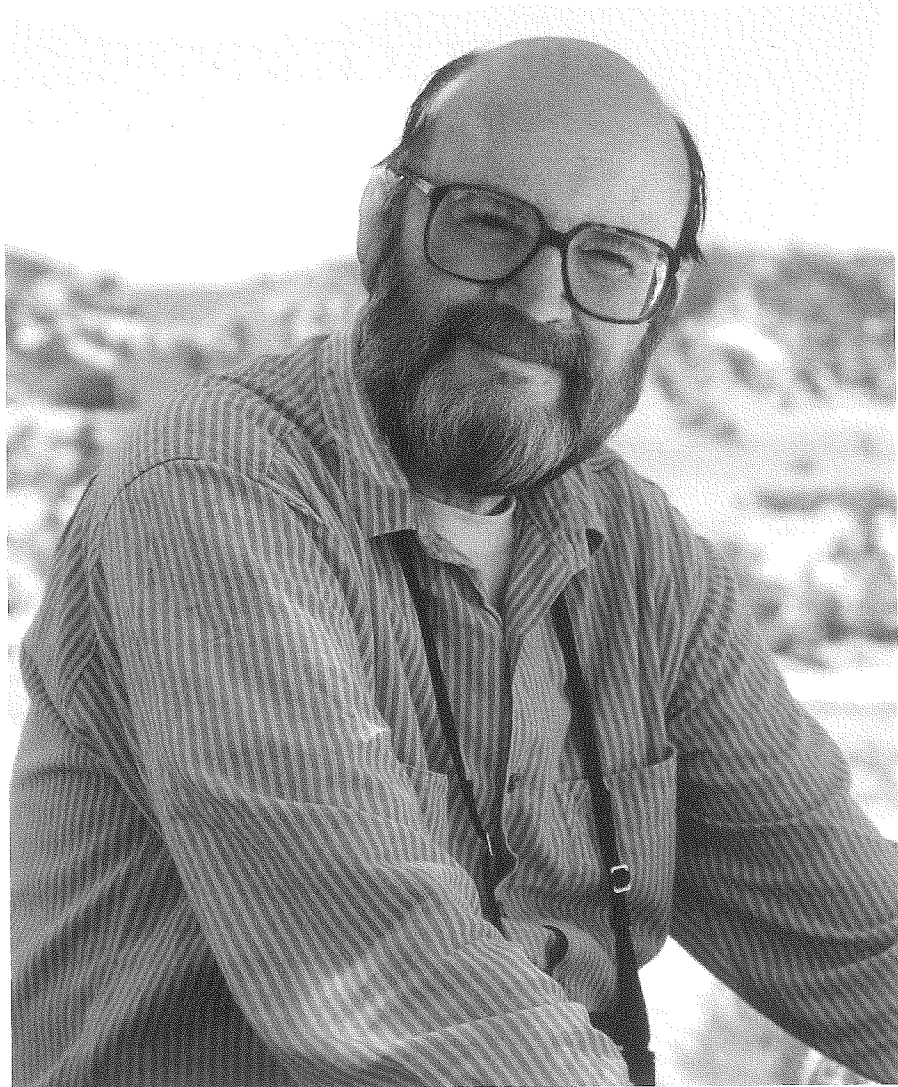
## ESSAYS ON THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF IRAN IN HONOR OF WILLIAM M. SUMNER

Edited by Naomi F. Miller and Kamyar Abdi



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1.1 William M. Sumner. *Photograph by N.F. Miller*

# INTRODUCTION

NAOMI F. MILLER AND KAMYAR ABDI

**T**HIS VOLUME is a collection of essays by colleagues, friends, and students of William M. Sumner (figure 1.1) in appreciation of his outstanding contribution to Iranian archaeology, especially to our archaeological knowledge of Fars, a center of Iranian civilization. Besides sharing a long friendship with Bill, contributors to this volume mostly share a not-too-distant history of working in Iran, either at Malyan or at other sites. As systematic archaeological fieldwork in Iran by foreign expeditions has been halted for the past two decades, some authors, eager to take part in this jubilee, contributed chapters on their current research dealing with geographical areas beyond modern Iranian borders, that nonetheless demonstrate the breadth of cultural interaction in the ancient Near East of which Iran was an important part.

## WILLIAM M. SUMNER

Bill Sumner's interest in archaeology developed while he was a supply officer for the US Navy, improbably stationed in land-locked Tehran from 1960 to 1962. On his overland trips to southern Fars and the Persian Gulf, he took the opportunity to visit archaeological sites; he even discovered a Middle Paleolithic knapping site near Jahrom. These visits were essential in forming his decision to become an Iranian specialist. During his tour of duty he also took Ezat O. Negahban's evening classes on Iranian archaeology at Tehran University (see chapter 27). Upon resigning his commission in 1964 with the rank of lieutenant commander, Supply Corps, he embarked on his new career by enrolling

in the graduate anthropology program at the University of Pennsylvania as a student of Robert H. Dyson, Jr. After first excavating at Kithera, Greece (1965), he quickly focused on his original goal: Iran. Bill chose the Kur river basin in Fars province for his dissertation study for several reasons. It met the intellectual requirement of archaeological interest—not only did the remains of Persepolis provide an immediate touchstone for research but also the plain clearly had a long history of occupation worthy of an intensive survey project. In addition, earlier work in the area by Louis Vanden Berghe provided a foundation upon which he could build his more comprehensive study.

The Kur river basin is only about 40 km by paved highway from Shiraz. Ever practical, with a wife and children to take care of, Bill found it convenient to be based in that "city of roses and nightingales" (Sumner 1972). During the period he spent in Iran conducting the survey of the Kur river basin (1967–1969), Bill found time to hone his already fine excavation skills helping fellow Penn graduate student Mary Voigt (at Hajji Firuz in 1968) and working with Robert H. Dyson, Jr. (at Dinkha Tepe in 1968) and T. Cuyler Young, Jr. (at Godin Tepe in 1969). It never hurts to make a living, and in 1971, the American Institute of Iranian Studies hired Bill as its first director in Tehran. With his first wife, Frances, he organized the hostel, library, and associated facilities at 9 Khiaban-e Moshtaq.

By the time Bill began excavations in 1971 at Malyan, the largest site in the Kur river basin, he already had quite a bit of experience, both organizational and archaeological. After the first two exploratory field seasons of 1971 and

1972, he assembled a varied crew for the major excavations of 1974, 1976, and 1978. It is now considered normal, if not necessary, to have a zooarchaeologist and an archaeobotanist involved in an excavation from the very beginning. When M.A. Zeder and N.F. Miller joined the project in 1974, not only was it a novel concept to look *systematically* for plant remains from Bronze Age sites (Helbaek's 1969 archaeobotanical report on Ali Kosh had gone a long way toward persuading archaeologists to look for plants on Neolithic sites) it was also very unusual to involve the faunal and botanical specialists in determining sampling strategies. But Bill fully supported that work, despite the kicking and screaming of the excavators that it was too much trouble to screen deposits for bones and other items, to take soil samples, and most difficult of all, to actually record the volume of the sampled deposits! Other specialists, like M.J. Blackman (geologist) and M.W. Stolper (epigrapher), were similarly integral to Bill's plan for a large, multidisciplinary project. The Malyan crew (archaeologists and local workers) were a dedicated lot, however, and the high quality of the work is a testament to Bill's archaeological and directorial skills.

Meanwhile, back at the dig house... After an episode of hepatitis in 1972, Bill made certain that in subsequent field seasons the highest standards of cleanliness were maintained. By 1974, at least, when Miller joined the project, Malyan was one of the best fed and healthiest digs around, thanks to the superb Iranian cook Bill knew from his time in the Navy. When leavened bread was a rarity even in town, visitors marvelled when offered a choice of eggs (any way) and toast or French toast for breakfast, with bread freshly baked at 3 A.M. by the cook. For several of the crew, Malyan was their first exposure to village life in the Near East. The mix of old hands and neophytes made for an interesting and rewarding experience.

Relations with the village were generally cordial. (Well, we did once suffer some minor vandalism to our excavation trenches, but Bill solved the problem. He held hostage a sheep that strayed into our courtyard. Before returning it, he extracted a promise from the shepherd boys' parents that the kids would stay out of the excavation trenches.) The team was always a bit of an American enclave at the edge of the village, but it did have a place. In 1976, Bill donated some money towards building a mosque in the village; that same year he served as the head of our highly unusual household for purposes of the Iranian census. Bill's vision for the Malyan project was always more than just his own excavation. With a multiyear commitment to the project, he set up the dig house so that it could support satellite studies during the regular excavation

season (M. Rosenberg). He also had the foresight to make arrangements so that in the off-season people could use the dig house as a base for survey and other work (L. Jacobs, J.R. Alden, N.F. Miller). Had the Americans not been, however temporarily, part of the community, that would not have been possible.

As the excavation season ended in August 1978, the Iranian Revolution was gaining momentum. Although fieldwork at Malyan came to a halt, the next decade saw the completion of a number of Malyan project dissertations (see below). It had not been possible to use computers in the field (the project pre-dated both the personal computer and the Internet), but Bill foresaw the value a computerized database would have for a big project like Malyan. His second wife, Kathleen J. Sumner, was a registrar during the 1976 and 1978 field seasons. The team depended on her organizational skills back in the United States, too, where she mediated access to information on the new computerized database on the mainframe at the Ohio State University and cheerfully answered queries that allowed research to proceed. During this period, Bill continued to give generously of his time as an advisor, and he obtained grants to help support students working on their dissertations. He also wrote a number of articles synthesizing his ideas about cultural development in the Kur river basin.

Although it was not possible to return to Iran, Bill missed archaeological fieldwork. So when Mary Voigt proposed that he join the University of Pennsylvania Museum project at Gordion, Turkey, to conduct preliminary regional survey in 1987 and 1988, he quickly accepted. He put many miles on his new motorbike and the old 1960 Gordion pickup truck, visiting prominent mounded sites (and non-sites!). Surveying more intensively on foot immediately around the Gordion Citadel Mound, he made the dramatic discovery that the settlement had an extensive outer town.

In addition to Bill's contributions to archaeology, especially in Iran, he has had a significant career as teacher, mentor, and administrator. The Ohio State University Department of Anthropology appointed Bill assistant professor while he was finishing his dissertation. He followed a fairly traditional academic path, becoming an associate and then full professor. In 1989, he retired from OSU to take on the next challenge—directorship of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

The Oriental Institute benefited more from Bill's extensive administrative experience than from his archaeological knowledge. In addition to bureaucratic tasks the director of such a prestigious and complex institution

must carry out, Bill was also faced with the mammoth responsibility of fund-raising, building a new wing to the Oriental Institute, and renovating the storage and gallery space of the museum, projects that were well under way by the time he retired in 1997. Abdi had the privilege of studying with Sumner during his later years at the Oriental Institute. Despite his busy schedule, Bill took the time to mentor Abdi through a number of independent study courses including the archaeology of Fars and survey methodology. In the summer of 1995, when everybody else had taken refuge next to an air-conditioner to avoid the intolerable heat that killed nearly seven hundred people in the Chicago area, Bill and Abdi sat in the office, drank gallons of water, and went through sample sherds from each and every pottery tradition in Fars. Abdi has vivid memories of how Bill was trying hard to explain details of stylistic variation in Bakun IA and IB pottery or the significance of concave rank-size distribution to this confused student fresh out of Iran.

#### **WILLIAM M. SUMNER AND IRANIAN ARCHAEOLOGY**

Bill Sumner has influenced archaeology and archaeologists in Iran over his entire career, both directly and indirectly. Through his institutional positions at the American Institute of Iranian Studies, Ohio State University, and the Oriental Institute, he has always encouraged young scholars. The influence of his scholarly work is reflected in the range of topics discussed in this volume. Although a number of researchers had both excavated and conducted surveys in Iran, Bill was among the first anthropologically-trained archaeologists to pursue a regional approach aimed at answering broader questions about demography and land use. Furthermore, when many of his peers were working in the already crowded Susiana plain in Khuzestan, he chose to focus on an equally important region, namely, the Kur river basin in Fars. In the 1970s, one of the main topics discussed by American archaeologists working in Iran was the development of complex societies and the origins of the state. With its long cultural sequence, the Kur river basin provided data for evaluating that question, as well as data concerning the somewhat less popular subject of subsequent cycles of development and collapse. Sumner's survey was one of the first regional studies of cultural and demographic cycles in an important cultural area focusing on both sedentary and nomadic populations. His project provided much of the basic data and interpretive approach for answering questions about the evolution of societies in Fars from the Neolithic period to the Bronze Age and about the nature of the Proto-Elamite, Elamite, and Achaemenid worlds.

Perhaps one of Sumner's most important contributions to Iranian as well as Near Eastern archaeology was his re-discovery of Malyan on March 27, 1968. Subsequent confirmation of the identification of the site as ancient Anshan ended nearly eighty years of speculation about the location of the highland capital of Elam. With Malyan identified as the city of Anshan, we gained a whole new view on the long-known, if poorly understood, relations between the highlands and the lowlands—a key to understanding the course of Elamite history. It is therefore no surprise that Bill's contributions are valued by those interested in contemporary developments in Susiana and Mesopotamia.

Some of Bill's innovative studies have broader application. One can readily think of articles about archaeological survey methodology (1990b), the use of ethnographic analogy for developing plausible population estimates (1979, 1989b), and his already classic attempt to correlate the survey data with textual references of the Achaemenid period in the Persepolis area (1986b). Bill Sumner's ongoing scholarly legacy includes not only his own publications but also the dissertations, theses, and articles of the Malyan project members (see partial list following Sumner bibliography).

#### **THE SCOPE OF THIS VOLUME**

This book focuses on two of the main geographical areas studied by archaeologists in Iran: the southwest and the northwest. The chapters concern primarily the fifth to second millennia BCE in the southwest and the first millennium BCE in both areas. In southwestern Iran, the fifth to third millennia BCE witnessed the development of complex societies. Elamite culture and society prevailed for about two thousand years (2600–600 BCE); towards the end of that period, cultural developments in northwestern Iran came to bear on those to the south. Assyrians impinged on the Elamites in the lowlands of Khuzestan and on the Urartians in the northwest; Iranian-speakers migrated, or at least came to the highlands of Fars from points north, and in a few centuries established the Achaemenid empire.

The attentive reader will notice several recurrent themes in this volume: the relations between mobile and sedentary peoples; the difficulty of identifying political or cultural boundaries; the importance of geographical factors for understanding sociocultural phenomena. Even as our field work necessarily deals with individual sites or regions, the populations we study did not live in isolation from each other. We hope this volume adequately addresses the complexity of the archaeology of Iran.

On the edge of the Near East but near the center of Eurasia, Iran has seen the movement of materials, people, and ideas over vast distances from earliest times. Such large geographical units are difficult to study, in part because it may not be possible to define ancient cultural and social boundaries. The regions examined may be separated by archaeologically unstudied areas; for example, stone tools of Epipaleolithic Fars have parallels with the Zarzian tools first recognized in the northern Zagros (chapter 8). The ancient social reality itself may have been characterized by fuzzy or permeable boundaries—a consideration for the later periods, which saw the movement of the first crops and obsidian in the arc of the Fertile Crescent (chapter 2). Given the difficulty of recognizing culturally and/or geographically distinct groups in the archaeological record, it is hard to frame questions concerning the relationships among them, whether social (nomad and farmer, or elite and commoner) or spatial (highlands and lowlands, or mobile, rural, and urban [for the latter, see chapter 26]). Even so, many topics, such as the development of agriculture and village life and the beginning of social complexity, have been usefully examined at the fairly local level of site or watershed (for example, chapter 5).

With all the uncertainties of archaeology, ethnographic and historical studies provide useful models, especially for the later periods. One of the most influential models is that of the thirteenth-century political philosopher, Ibn Khaldun, who emphasized the alternating dominance of tribes and states (see Khouri and Kostiner 1990; chapter 3). There are more specific regularities and continuities that link the ancient and modern Near East, too. For example, we can note that the distribution of fifth millennium BCE Bakun pottery coincides with the territory occupied by the present-day mobile pastoral populations (chapter 7) or look to ancient Mesopotamia for origins of the *waqf*, the Muslim pious endowment (Zettler 1992:211–213).

It is not environmental determinism to point out that the historical and ethnographically known pattern of pastoral nomadism is one of the most efficient ways to utilize the landscape of southwestern Iran (chapter 28). The herds of sedentary farmers can graze only part of the year, so the farmers have to store at least some fodder, whether collected or cultivated. By moving between lowland winter pastures and upland summer pastures, pastoral nomads can take full advantage of seasonally luxuriant grazing lands. Consequently, more people and animals can live in the same territory when mobility is part of the subsistence system. Ecological and ethnographic models cannot, however, fully address questions about the origin and early development of tribes and states, nor can they tell us ex-

actly how the institutions analogous to those observable today operated in the past. The farther back in time we consider, the more our information comes from archaeology and related disciplines; the social context in which the earliest interactions between mobile pastoralists and sedentary folk took place surely differed from any in recorded history.

Southwestern Iran includes the highlands of Fars and lowlands of Khuzestan. Writing systems, which appeared at the end of the fourth millennium, mark one of the most important cultural boundaries of the time. Mesopotamians began keeping records in an archaic symbol system that developed into cuneiform. In Susa (in the plain of Susiana, the eastern extension of Mesopotamia in Khuzestan) as well as in settlements further to the east and north, people used a different system, as yet undeciphered, called Proto-Elamite (chapter 11). Although Potts (1999) proposes that the language referred to as Proto-Elamite was not necessarily ancestral to that of the later Elamites, there is no evidence for population replacement, and the Proto-Elamite phenomenon does include a highland and lowland component, much as in later times.<sup>1</sup>

Miroschedji (chapter 3, see table 3.1) considers periods of integration, expansion, and collapse in southwestern Iran. One key issue is the alternating connection between Susiana and Mesopotamia, and between Susiana and Fars. The nature and causes for this cyclical (but not exactly repeating) pattern may relate in part to the basic geography of the region, and people's cultural response to it. Demographically the pattern is expressed in part by movement between the urban, rural, and nomadic components of the population (chapter 4). For example, Wright and Carter (chapter 6) note that during several periods, population grew in the Ram Hormuz plain in response to excess population in neighboring Susiana. In the highlands, despite the archaeological problem of finding traces of mobile populations, regional survey data support baseline demographic inferences for the Kur river basin. In this context, excavation results from Banesh phase (circa 3000 BCE) Malyan shed light on urban organization in a nomad-dominated setting (Sumner 1986a; chapter 9; chapter 10).

Sometimes, identifying contact with evidence of exotic materials or foreign technologies is the first step toward evaluating the limits of cultural or political influence—an Early Dynastic Mesopotamian style statue found on Khark Island in the Persian Gulf (chapter 12), Kaftari and Middle Elamite (second millennium BCE) artifacts found on the Oman peninsula (chapter 13), a shift from arsenical to tin bronze alloys at Kaftari phase Malyan (chapter 14). Unfortunately, it is hard to distinguish the quality of an

interaction from the quantity. In the absence of recognizable exotic goods and relevant texts, “foreign” influences are even harder to document.

The late third/early second millennium BCE saw renewed urban development in the Kur river basin centered initially at Kaftari phase Malyan (Anshan). Texts and other material remains show connections between the Elamite highlands and lowlands, reflected in one of the royal titles, “king of Anshan and Susa.” The ruling dynasty of the time is conventionally referred to by another royal title, Sukkalmah, which was borrowed from Mesopotamia (Sumerian *sukkal.mah*, Akkadian *sukkalmahhu*) (see also chapter 3; chapter 15; chapter 17). The archaeological site of Tall-i Qaleh is of particular importance for the Kur river basin ceramic sequence, as it has sherds of all the phases of that urbanizing period—Kaftari, Qaleh, Shogha/Teimuran (chapter 16). A gap in that sequence at the beginning of the first millennium BCE reflects a gap in continuous settlement on the plain.

At some point in the late second or early first millennium, pastoral peoples, probably Iranian speakers, moved into the region from the north, mixing with the local population (Sumner 1994a; chapter 3; chapter 22; chapter 23). Persians were probably in the Kur river basin by the time Late Plain Ware appeared, a marker for the Achaemenid period in Fars (chapter 24). Evidence for the early imperial Achaemenid period in Fars is, however, elusive. As Boucharlat (chapter 24) notes, “beyond a radius of about 25–30 km [from Persepolis and the Kur river], the pastoral way of life remained undisturbed” by the political and economic developments of the empire, even at its height. One may well wonder what multicultural political reality is reflected in the trilingual inscriptions at Persepolis, written in Babylonian, Elamite, and Old Persian (chapter 25).

Much of our historical information from the early part of the first millennium BCE is filtered through Assyrian accounts of devastation wrought on Urartu in the northwest and Elam in the southwest. Fortresses dating to this period are common in the archaeological record (chapter 18), as well as in the iconography of the time (chapter 19; chapter 20). The military activity of the ninth and eighth centuries, a dramatic example of which is seen in Hasanlu’s destruction (Dyson 1989a), may be both cause and effect of the population movements of the time. Stylistic similarities between objects from Mesopotamia and eastern

Anatolia/northwestern Iran are common, such as those described by Dyson and Voigt (chapter 20). Yet similarity in styles is not always evidence of contact, as Rubinson (chapter 21) points out in her comparison of the iconography on the Hasanlu gold “bowl” with that on objects of the Trialeti culture of Armenia, dated at least five hundred years earlier; Hurrian influence is seen independently on both.

Landscape, in the sense of the physical features of land and climate as used and perceived by people, is one of the major forces shaping society. As people moved around—Iranian speakers perhaps in the second millennium BCE and Turkic speakers in the first millennium CE—they entered a territory with its own history and constraints to which they had to adjust. Both continuity and change, so basic to the archaeologist’s world view, are exemplified by Alizadeh’s mapping of the distribution of Bakun pottery (fifth millennium BCE) onto the territory of the present-day mobile pastoralists of southwestern Iran (chapter 7), and by Rothman’s comment, “the heartland of the Urartian empire coincides almost exactly with the distribution of groove and circular groove and dimple and groove wares [of the Early Transcaucasian culture], yet Urartu rose to prominence almost two millennia later” (chapter 18).

There are many ways to look at the history of Iranian civilization. Southwestern Iran, with its early use of writing, dominates the historical record. Archaeological data support and extend some of the text-based interpretations. Both data sets show long-term demographic cycles and alternating cultural dominance between highlands and lowlands and between nomads and sedentary folk, and may suggest a kind of timelessness for the study of Iran’s past. But even during the more than two millennia of Elamite presence, internal development and interchange with the wider world promoted change. Migrations of Iranian speakers, the introduction of Islam, and the movement of Turkic tribes each added to and changed Iranian culture.

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#### NOTE

1. Most of the authors in this volume completed their chapters before Potts’s (1999) comprehensive book became available.

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