

KANI CHARMOU, AN IRON AGE II GRAVEYARD

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Examining the archaeological findings within the Mannaeen kingdom, a significant association with Assyria emerges, highlighting these regions' interconnectedness. The influence of both Urartian and Assyrian cultures on the Mannaeen people becomes evident, indicating a shared cultural heritage or intimate exchanges among these cultures. Notably, the Kani Charmou graveyard in Mannaea serves as a compelling example, revealing a rich assortment of artifacts that parallel those discovered in Ziwiye, a renowned archaeological site in the region. These diverse grave goods unequivocally demonstrate the existence of a robust trade and exchange network between Mannaea and its neighbouring western counterpart, Assyria, and the profound impact of Assyrian culture on Mannaeen society. This connection is also evident in religious practices, which show similarities. Through stylistic analysis and the identification of parallels in metal vessels, glazed jars, and a cylinder seal, the proposed dating of the Kani Charmou graveyard aligns with the Iron Age II period.

Introduction

The areas of Saqqez and Divandarreh, in modern western Iran and in the heartland of the ancient Mannaeen kingdom, have seen limited excavations, despite the potential to explore the fascinating Mannaeen culture. Most of the scarce material in our possession comes from the results of illegal excavations. However, some of these materials offer useful hints on what this culture has to offer, and in some cases, it has been possible to loosely trace the area of provenience. Unfortunately, these pieces of data will never be as informative or precise as what could be learned from a proper excavation.

This paper is based on burial goods recovered from local residents by the police, in the village of Kani Charmou Zaki Baig. The artefacts come from the neighboring Iron Age graveyard with the same name as the village. Kani Charmou Zaki Baig is located in Kurdistan Province, Iran, c. 35 km north of the modern city of Divandarreh. The direct distance from the cemetery to the important sites of Karfto and Ziwiye is 10 and 23 km to the north and northwest, respectively (Fig. 1). The cemetery is located in the hills (Fig. 2) of the eastern folds of the Zagros Mountains, nestled on a slope that descends towards the Zaki Baig River (Fig. 3). This river, once more substantial, has dwindled in size in recent years and only survives as a small stream, flowing through a shallow valley in a north-south direction. On both the eastern and western sides of the river, the landscape is defined by low cliffs. The present-day village of Zaki Baig has developed on one of these cliffs on the west bank, with the cemetery on the east bank of the river. The distance from the village to the cemetery is less than 200 meters (Fig. 4). The area is used by local residents for grazing animals, and there are rock shelters throughout the area, used by local residents for keeping their animals.

At a distance of c. 150 meters southwest of the cemetery, in the valley base, the remains of a few stone walls that form a rectangular space can be seen. In addition, c. 100 meters to the south of the cemetery, in a relatively large and flat space within the valley, there are the remains of a rectangular structure consisting of four walls, which, although difficult to detect on the ground, is clearly visible on satellite images. The approximate dimensions of this structure are 90×110 meters, and it is orientated north-south. A survey of the cemetery area revealed that the burials consisted of pits covered with large flat stone slabs (Fig. 5). At c. 200 meters to the east of the cemetery, there is a limestone mine where stone extraction operations are currently being carried out for construction purposes. Due to the close distance of this mine to the Kani Charmou cemetery, it is likely to be the source of the cemetery's slab stones.

Inventory of Finds

This article deals with various groups of small finds from Kani Charmou, confiscated from local residents by the police. Determining whether the objects recovered represent complete grave assemblages, or solely the unsold material, is a challenging task, and the full grave assemblages

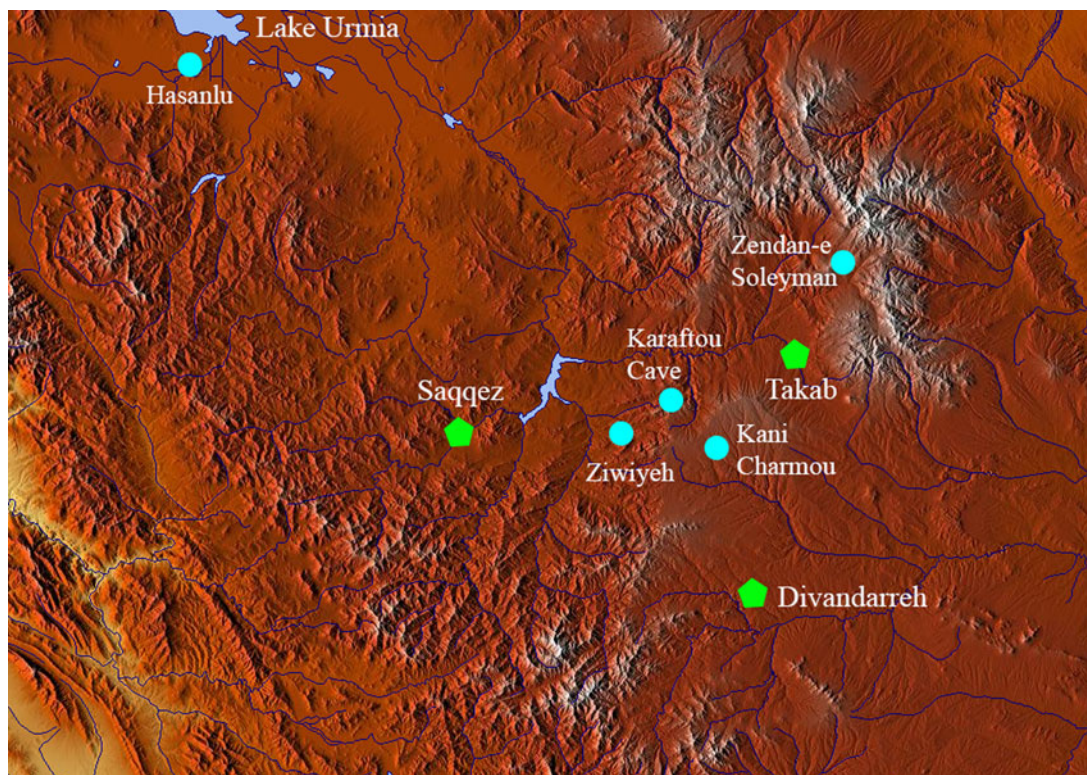


Figure 1. Plan with location of the Kani Charmou cemetery and other sites mentioned in the text

remain uncertain. However, by comparing the Kani Charmou materials with excavated artifacts from Kul Tarikeh (Rezavani and Rostai 2007) and Changbar (Naghshineh 2007) graveyards, we can draw some conclusions. The similarities in both quantity and quality between these materials and these known Mannaean grave inventories strongly suggest that the items recovered from Kani Charmou do constitute the entirety of the grave assemblages, despite the uncertainties that come with looting. The similarities also indicate that the assemblages from Kani Charmou provide a comprehensive representation of the grave inventories of common Mannaean people.

The finds constitute a rich typological variety of materials. The artifacts consist of five pottery vessels, four bronze bowls, a dagger, ten bronze pins, six bracelets, a ring, two horse harness pieces, eight studs, two buttons, 73 different beads and two whetstones.

Dagger

The remains of a dagger consist of the hilt and the initial part of the blade stuck in the guard. The fragment is made of two different metals: copper/bronze and iron. The handle is solid, composed of a bronze pommel resting on the knob shaped terminal of a grip made of alternating rings of bronze and iron, ending in a bronze guard (Fig. 6). This object finds parallels at the Iranian sites of Hasanlu¹ and Ziwiyeh², where similar handles were recovered but in alternating black and white stones, rather than metal rings. Other examples of ring-made hilts, bimetallic or from a single material, have come to light in Iran from Kani Koter³, and in Armenia at Mouci-yeri⁴, Makarashen⁵, and Astkhi-blur⁶. Transcaucasia and the Talesh/Talyche region are identified by Thornton and Pigott as the prime sources of comparable sword types.⁷

¹ Thornton and Pigott 2011: 159; figs. 6.23, 6.25.

² Ghirshman 1964: 118.

³ Amelirad and Azizi 2021: fig. 24.

⁴ de Morgan 1889: 91.

⁵ Martirosyan 1964: fig. 80: 5

⁶ Esayan 1976: figs. 122 and 140: 5.

⁷ Thornton and Pigott 2011: 159.



Figure 2. General view of Kani Charmou cemetery from the west



Figure 3. Location of Kani Charmou Cemetery (based on a satellite image from Google Earth)



Figure 4. The position of Kani Charmou village (upper left) from the Kani Charmou cemetery

Within Room 9 at Hasanlu, the skeletal remains of three adult males were discovered alongside the famous Gold Bowl. It is suggested that these individuals were invading forces engaged in looting the upper levels of the Burned Building at Hasanlu. Their demise was likely a result of the collapse of the structure, causing them to fall into Room 9 from a considerable height, estimated to be at least 3 meters. Consequently, these soldiers can be identified as looting enemy combatants rather than local defenders of Hasanlu. Danti provides a comprehensive analysis of the attire, military gear, and associated objects of these slain enemies⁸. It is noteworthy that the soldiers were well-equipped and prepared for battle, with indications of standardized equipment.

Of particular significance is Skeleton No. 38, who was found carrying the Hasanlu Gold Bowl, housing three additional elite items, including a dagger similar to the one discovered at Kani Charmou. The Hasanlu dagger features an iron blade, mostly deteriorated, a ribbed bone pommel, and a grip crafted from rings of red sandstone and ivory around a bronze core. The presence of this dagger at Hasanlu serves as a valuable example for dating the Kani Charmou cemetery. Dyson's analysis of the stratigraphy within the remaining walls of Room 9 reveals that it corresponds to the terminal Period IVb destruction, which sealed a midden deposit dating to the final phase of the building's use. According to Danti, the maces, helmets, and personal ornaments tentatively suggest that the enemy combatants may have originated from the northwestern Zagros or southern Caucasus regions, potentially including Urartu, during the late ninth century B.C.

Pins

The Kani Charmou collection contained nine pins, varying in thickness and length from 120 to 170 mm (Fig. 7). The pins are characterized by a spherical head, ending in a flat pedunculus. Pin

⁸ Danti 2014: 791–804.



Figure 5. a) Large stone slab tomb cover in the Kani Charmou cemetery, b) Example of a grave cist or chamber constructed of large regular stones of similar size

number 1 (Fig. 7:1) has an undulating decorative line running around the lower part of the spherical head. At the upper part of the shaft, immediately under the head, a three-spoke projection is applied, each spoke shorter than the radius of the overlying sphere, so as not to protrude beyond it. Under the

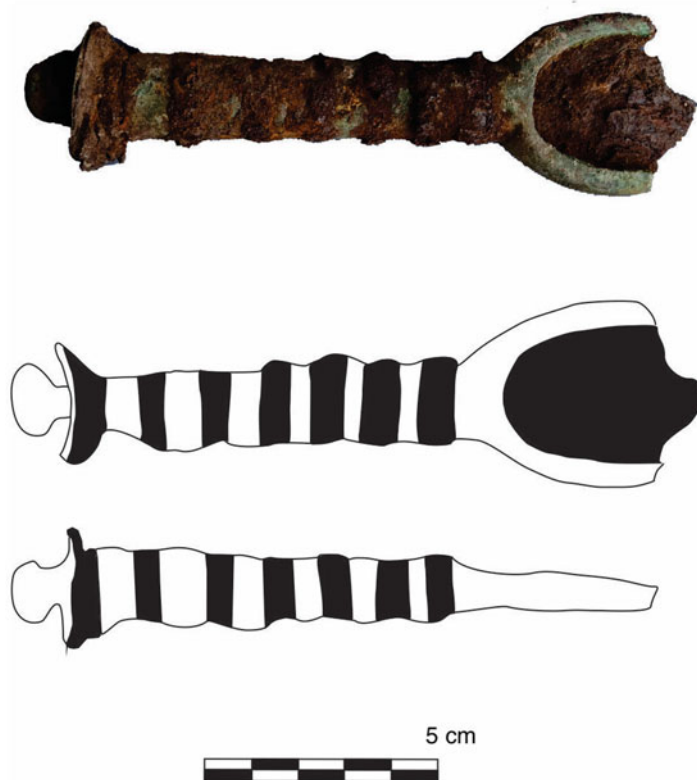


Figure 6. Bimetallic dagger from Kani Charmou

projection, five successive horizontal incisions divide the upper shaft into four segments, the first and the fourth each covering one-third of the area, while the central part is equally divided between two shorter segments. Below the fifth incision, a zigzag line runs around the shaft.

Pins 2, 3, and 4 (Fig. 7: 2–4) present similar, but more complex, decoration in the head area, with three studs protruding from each sphere above the undulating line; the three-spoke projections on these pins are longer than the head's radius. The shafts are instead simpler, with that of pin 2 being plain, and those of pins 3 and 4 presenting horizontal lines immediately under the three-spoke projection.

The head of pin 5 is plain, with a four-spoke projection and incised horizontal lines below. Pin 6 is entirely devoid of decorations, with a less defined, slightly angular surface on the top sphere and a three spoke projection. Pin 7 presents a deep wavy-line decoration on the lower part of the spherical head, similar to a flower's petals, with horizontal lines under a four-spoke projection. Pin 8 has two horizontal lines at the base of the spherical head, under which three studs occupy the higher area on the shaft, followed by three more horizontal lines. Only the upper part of pin 9 survives. The head has no incisions but is decorated with four studs. Under it is a four-spoke projection, protruding beyond the head, followed by five horizontal lines.

Hundreds of such pins have been excavated from Ziwiye⁹, Changbar¹⁰ and Kul Tarike¹¹, all in Iran, but unfortunately at none of these sites is the position of the pins and the gender of the body associated with them discernable. During his expedition in Mokri Kurdistan, de Morgan, with the help of Saifeddin Khan-e Mokri¹², excavated three tombs close to a village which he erroneously named Khalil-déhlil; the correct name should be Khal Dalil (Kurdish: خال دهليل), a village in

⁹ Ghirshman 1979: pls. II: 8; IV: 4, 9, 10; VI: 7.

¹⁰ Naghshineh 2007: passim.

¹¹ Rezvani and Roustaei 2007: pl. 9: b.

¹² Saifuddin, governor of Mokri (Sardar) and ruler of Azerbaijan, the son of the former ruler of Azerbaijan, was a descendant of the Mokri governors and therefore had

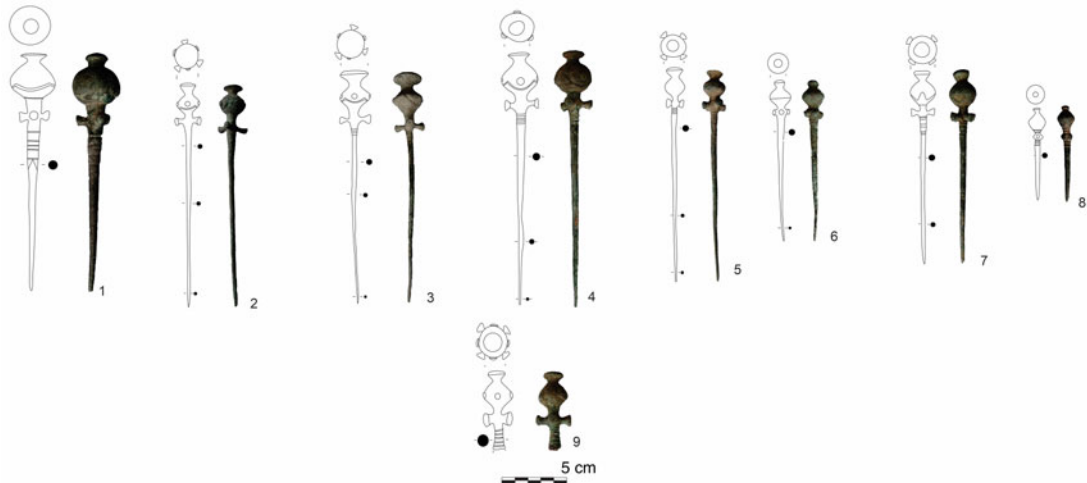


Figure 7. Pins from Kani Charmou

Kani Bazar Rural District, Khalifan District, Mahabad region. One of the excavated tombs contained two bodies, identified as one male and one female. His description of the discovery contradicts the drawings, which he himself drew. Despite the drawing showing one pin on the male body and two on the female, in the description de Morgan claims that all three of the pins were associated with the female skeleton¹³. From 200 excavated tombs at Changbar, 76 such pins were excavated in 43 graves, found in both pairs and single exemplars. An example also has been excavated from section B at Zendan-i Suleiman¹⁴.

Bracelets

Six bronze bracelets were among the objects from Kani Charmou (Fig. 8). They can be divided into four different categories based on their decoration.

The first category is a simple cast bronze bracelet (or anklet?)¹⁵ with open ends (Fig. 8: 1). The second group contains three examples and is characterized by an open hoop shape with zoomorphic terminals (stylized representations of snake heads). One of the examples (Fig. 8: 3) bears additional decoration of diagonally incised lines and flower stems between lines on three sides of the band. It is also heavier than the others. The terminals on both ends of example no. 4 (Fig. 8: 4) are worked into a dragon head shape, with deep cuts.

The third category has a single exemplar, a single wire with a simple pattern of parallel diagonal lines engraved on the surface, and with pierced and flattened club terminals connected with a rivet (Fig. 8: 5). The last category contained only one spiral-shaped bracelet, smaller than the examples from the other groups (Fig. 8: 6). It could have been worn by a child, as the evidence from the Zagros graveyard in Sanandaj shows. The examples from Sanandaj were associated with a child's body in tomb no. 12¹⁶.

Bracelets similar to the Kani Charmou examples decorated with snakes' heads have a long history in the ancient Near East and are presented in a number of varieties, reflecting different production centers. The earliest examples of such bracelets are from the Caucasus, dating from the Late Bronze¹⁷ to the Early Iron Age¹⁸. Examples are reported from Hasanlu¹⁹ (northwestern Iran),

undeniable power and support over various tribes and nomads (de Morgan 1896: 6).

¹³ de Morgan 1896: 9, fig. 12.

¹⁴ Kleiss 1971: 66, pl. 58.

¹⁵ In order to distinguish bracelets from anklets, Moorey classified rings with diameters greater than 9 cm as anklets (Moorey 1971: 227).

¹⁶ Amelirad et al. 2012: 44, pl. 15: a–b.

¹⁷ Cifarelli 2019: 148.

¹⁸ Maxwell-Hyslop 1971: 204–5; Moorey 1971: 220.

¹⁹ Cifarelli 2019: 148, fig. 4a (examples were excavated in Burial SK111 and temple BBII, and an example was discovered associated with the body of child (SK122) in the collapsed building on the citadel).

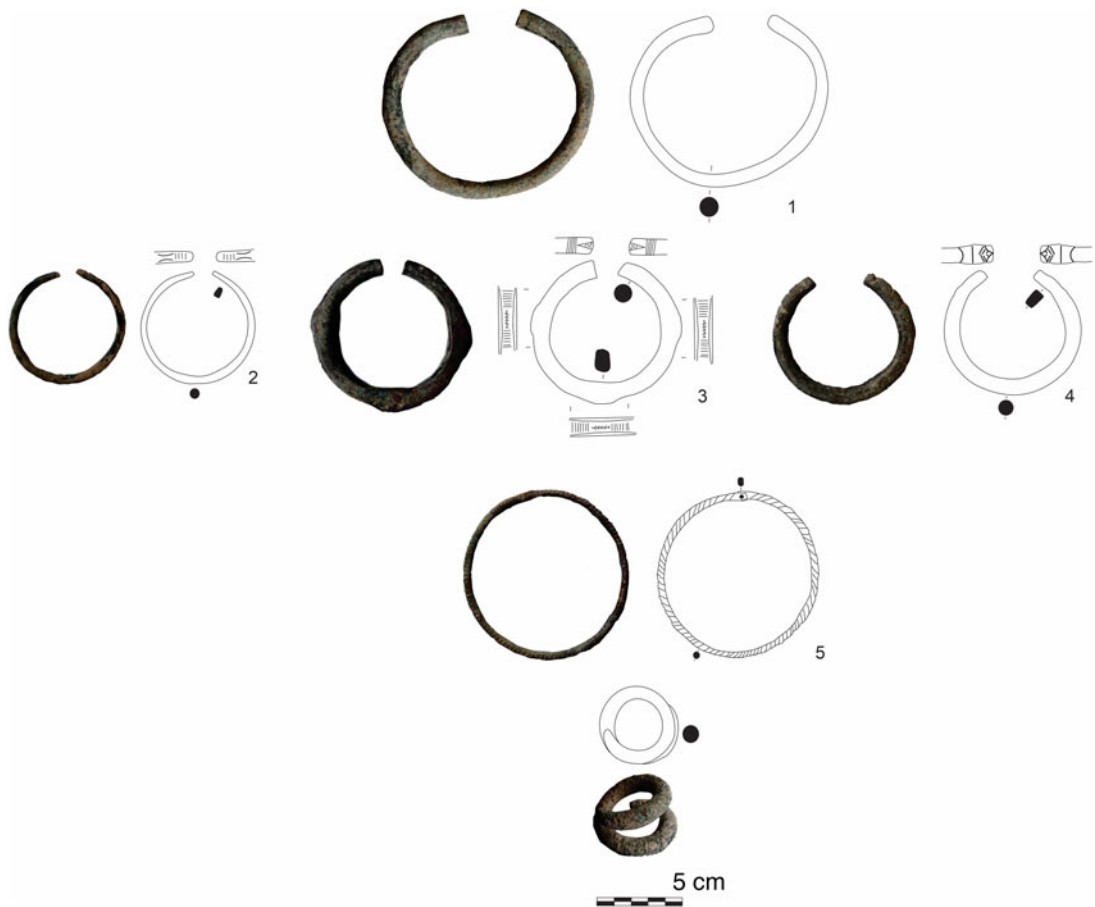


Figure 8. Bracelets/Anklets from Kani Charmou

Dashkesan²⁰ and Gedabek²¹ (southern Caucasus), Mkhart (Georgia), and Talesh²², all dated to the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages.

Such bracelets have also been found in Iron Age II and III contexts at Sarrez (Kurdistan province, Iran)²³, Munjuglutepe (Azerbaijan)²⁴, Kalakent²⁵ (Azerbaijan), Zhinvali (Georgia)²⁶ and Lori Berd (Armenia)²⁷. Two examples are reported from Iraq at Ashur²⁸ and Nimrud, above the Nabu Temple²⁹. They also are known from Urartian sites with numerous slight variations of style from Sos Höyük³⁰ and in a tomb of a child at the Castle of Cavustepe³¹, and at Armavir-Blur,³² Bastam,³³ and Karmir-Blur,³⁴ as well as Urartian cemeteries at Van/Altintepe,³⁵ Van/Kalecik,³⁶

²⁰ Kesamanly 1999: 159, pl. 15: 2–3.

²¹ Afsharova 2007: fig. 19: 2, 3, 4, 6.

²² Schaeffer 1948: 435–439, 500–501, figs 271: 4, 237: 7.

²³ Amelirad and Razmpouh 2015: fig. 2c.

²⁴ Aslanov, Ibragimov and Kashkay 2002: 22, pl. 26.

²⁵ Nagel and Strommenger 1985: Abb. 6, Grave no. 3: 2844a, Abb. 62: grave no. 63: 1: 2651a- 2: 2651b; Abb. 67: grave no. 75: 1: 2664ba- 2: 2664b; Abb. 68: grave no. 79: 1: 2666a- 2: 2666b; Abb. 76: grave no. 96: 2: 2682b; Abb. 88: grave no. 121: 2705a; Taf. 38: grave 94 (s. S. 107b): 2: 2680b; Taf. 39: 2: grave 95 (s. S. 108b): 4: 2681: e; Taf. 44-45: grave 108 (s. S. 116a) and grave 109 (s.S. 116a).

²⁶ Chikhladze 2008: 462, Fig. 11: 1–6.

²⁷ Devejian 1981: pl. 25 no. 10.

²⁸ Curtis 2013: 24.

²⁹ Curtis 2013: 8, 108, pl. LXXXIV: 879–880.

³⁰ Sagona et al. 1995: fig 15: 5.

³¹ Two dragon head bracelets on a child's skeleton were found in excavations at the Castle of Cavustepe in the Gurpinar district of Turkey's eastern Van province on August 20, 2020. <https://www.gettyimages.de/detail/nachrichtenfoto/two-dragon-head-bracelets-on-a-childs-skeleton-found-nachrichtenfoto/1228118782>.

³² Martirosyan 1974: 137, fig. 85.

³³ Kroll 1979: 153, Abb. 1/21, 178, Abb.16/9.

³⁴ Piotrovskij 1970: fig. 79.

³⁵ Ayaz 2006: 20–21.

³⁶ Çavuşoğlu 2015: 237, fig. 5/1–12.



Figure 9. Plain hoop bronze ring from Kani Charmou

Iğdır,³⁷ and Patnos/Dedeli.³⁸ In addition, numerous slight variations of snake head terminal bracelets were discovered from Achaemenid sites of Deve Höyük (Turkey) and Pasargadae (Iran).³⁹

Despite the lack of any sure proof about the provenience of this design, it is still safe to assume that its roots go back to Late Bronze and early Iron Ages in the southern Caucasus. In this area, it is possible to find a large number of very simplified versions of snake head bracelets; the third category described above could be a successive evolution of this type, after the Urartian culture absorbed the indigenous traditions.

Ring

One plain hoop bronze ring with slightly overlapping ends was in the Kani Charmou collection (Fig. 9).

Horse harness and equipment

Bell: The Kani Charmou assemblage also includes a bronze rectangular bell, with sides tapering toward the top, where there is a semi-circular suspension loop, connected to another, smaller ring. There are two circular openings in the top, each with a low collar; originally a clapper was held in place by a wire, now lost, passing through these holes (Fig. 10). An example from Deve Höyük (Turkey) is the most likely parallel for this object⁴⁰.

Frontlet: The frontlet from Kani Charmou is a trapezoidal thin bronze sheet with a central ridge, showing signs of corrosion on the edges. Perforations near the edges of both the upper and lower parts can be interpreted as eyelets for the passage of a fabric or leather binding to keep the piece in place as an ornament or armor to protect a horse's forehead (Fig. 11). An exact comparison piece comes from Ziyiye⁴¹, and three unprovenanced specimens come from the antiquities market⁴².

Studs

Özgen has provided a basic typology for studs or bronze discs. Apart from their potential use as cymbals, Özgen specified that they served as decorative elements for belts, shields, clothing, armor, and horse harnesses.⁴³ The studs found at Kani Charmou (Fig. 12) can be categorized into two groups. The first group comprises a ceramic example with a circular base and a protruding conical center, with an additional circular component attached to the end of the cone. Near the edge of the base, there is a small piercing (Fig. 12: 1).

³⁷ Barnett 1963: fig. 32:10–11.

³⁸ Ögün 1978a: pl. 31/Abb. 14.

³⁹ Moorey 1980: figs. 11,12; Stronach 1978: fig. 90: 1–2.

⁴⁰ Moorey 1980: 73, fig. 233.

⁴¹ Ghirshman 1979: pls. IV: 2–3.

⁴² Seidl 1991: 71, fig. 19.

⁴³ Özgen 1984: 103–109.

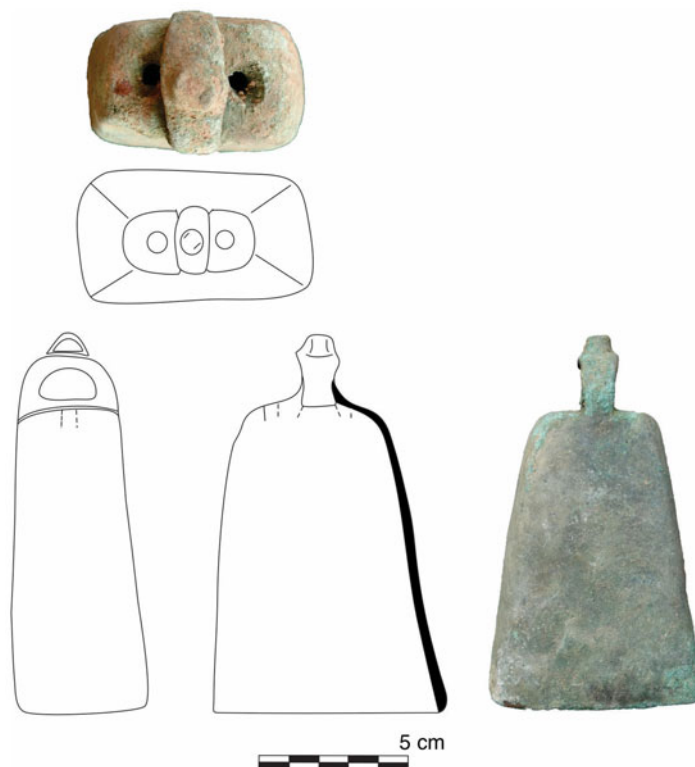


Figure 10. Bronze bell from Kani Charmou

The second group comprises seven circular bronze studs, each with a protruding conical center, featuring an additional circular component fixed to the end of the cone. These studs can be flat or rounded on top, and some have a loop at the interior. Some are decorated with parallel incised lines around the upper cone. Such decorative elements were commonly used in horse bridles, headgear, browbands, and neck straps, fixed to leather straps in order to hold them in place⁴⁴, and served as adornments for chariot side panels⁴⁵. Interestingly, similar decorative elements have also been found on human bodies and may have been attached to clothing.⁴⁶

Studs with loop fasteners, known as Urartian horse harness bosses, were a cultural commonality and widely used in northwestern and western Iran, as well as in Urartian and Assyrian territories⁴⁷ during the ninth to seventh centuries B.C. Comparable examples have been discovered at various Iranian Iron Age sites, including Hasanlu,⁴⁸ Zagros Graveyard,⁴⁹ Baba Jan,⁵⁰ and War

⁴⁴ Valuable insights into the original arrangement of bronze studs in Nimrud were obtained when a collection of these studs was discovered in Room NE50 of Fort Shalmaneser, where the studs were found in their original position on leather straps (Curtis 2013: nos. 778–784, pl. LXXVIII).

⁴⁵ An ivory plaque from Ziwiyé depicted roundel decorations on chariot side panels (Amelirad 2019: fig. 3). The representation of horses on Assyrian palace reliefs remains a crucial source of evidence for the existence of horse harness roundels. These roundels, made of bronze, are depicted in various forms in the reliefs of different Assyrian kings. For example, the reliefs of Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) (Layard 1853: pl. 23), Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.) (Thureau-Dangin and Dunand 1936: pl. LIII; Barnett and Falkner 1962: pl. LXIV), Sargon II (721–705 B.C.) (Botta and Flandin 1849a: pl.39; Botta and Flandin 1849b:

pl.100), Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) (Barnett, Bleibtreu and Turner 1998: pls. 272 and 282), and Assurbanipal (668–631 B.C.) (Barnett 1976: pls. X and LII) all show examples of roundels. These reliefs serve as significant visual evidence for the presence and use of horse harness roundels in the Assyrian Empire.

⁴⁶ In Zagros graveyard such studs were associated with the deceased in tomb A12 on her chest (Amelirad et al. 2012: pl. 18). A bronze plaque from Çavuştepe depicts the same kind of decoration used by Urartian horsemen (Bilgiç and Ögün 1964: pl. XX; Özgen 1984: 107).

⁴⁷ For a comprehensive overview see Curtis 2013: 94–96.

⁴⁸ de Schauensee and Dyson 1983: 63–67; de Schauensee 1989: 41–42, figs. 7–8. At Hasanlu a pile of bronze studs was found in level 4 (Dyson 1972: p. 3, fig. 11).

⁴⁹ Amelirad et al. 2012: pl. 18b.

⁵⁰ Goff 1969: 125, fig. 7.



Figure 11. Frontlet from Kani Charmou

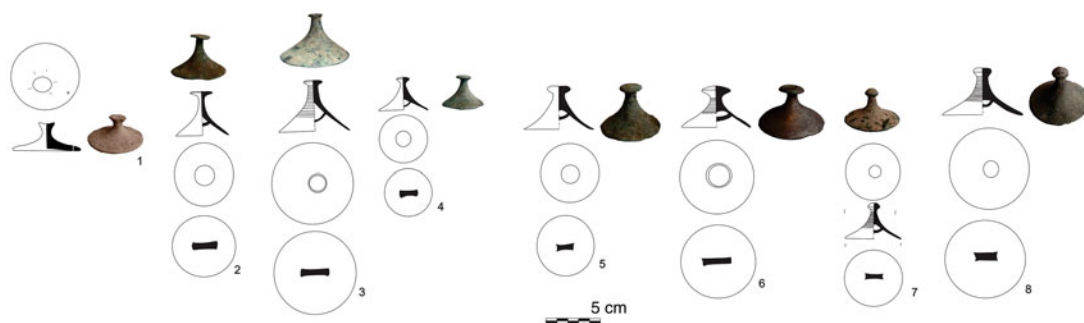


Figure 12. Ceramic (1) and bronze (2–8) studs from Kani Charmou

Kabud,⁵¹ as well as Urartian sites such as the Columbarium in Yerevan,⁵² Dizginkale,⁵³ and Alişar.⁵⁴ In Assyria, they are predominantly found at Nimrud.⁵⁵

Ceramics

The ceramic assemblage discovered at Kani Charmou (Fig. 13) can be classified into three distinct categories. The first category comprises three examples that fall into two sub-types. The first sub-type consists of a fragmented glazed bottle with everted rim, two vertical lugs, and a button-base, adorned with yellow and white lappet motifs on the shoulder (Fig. 13: 1). The second sub-type consists of two polychrome glazed bottles (Fig. 13: 2a and b) with rolled rims and globular bodies. One of these bottles (a) has a slightly pointed base and a petal pattern at the shoulder, executed in green, yellow, and white glaze with prominent dark outlines. The second bottle (b) has a flattened base and a petal pattern at the shoulder, also created with yellow and white glaze and thick dark outlines.

The second category encompasses a single example—a blue glazed bottle with an elongated shape, rolled rim, and round base (Fig. 13: 3). The third category also includes a solitary item, a red fabric jar with a globular shape, flat base, and broken rim (Fig. 13: 4). The neck-shoulder join has two parallel grooved lines.

⁵¹ Haerinck and Overlaet 2004: 54–55, fig. 19, nos. 1–5.

⁵² Esajan et al. 1995: pl. 9.1–2, 9.

⁵³ Sevin 1981. This example is unique, as it carries an inscription of Inušpua.

⁵⁴ Piotrovskij 2011: fig. 6–7.

⁵⁵ Curtis 2013: nos. 732–751, pl. LXXIV.

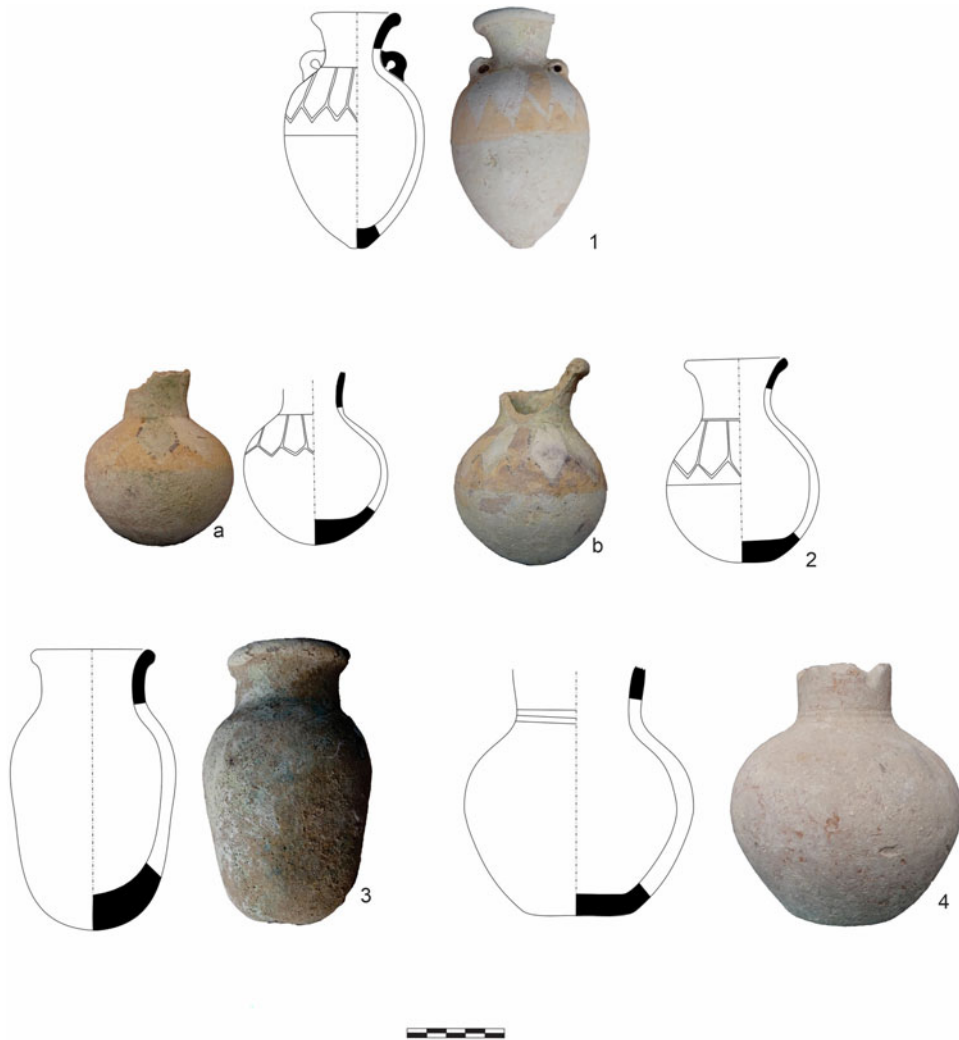


Figure 13. Kani Charmou glazed pottery vessels

The glazed ceramics from Kani Charmou exhibit stylistic characteristics reminiscent of the widely recognized ‘Neo-Assyrian’ style, prevalent during the first half of the first millennium B.C., with the most common dating ranging from the ninth to seventh centuries B.C. These glazed vessels are diagnostic artifacts based on their shape, surface treatment, and fabric, further contributing to our understanding of the period.⁵⁶

The first sub-type with lug handles is very rare in both Iran and Mesopotamia. There are two examples of unknown provenience kept in the Sanandaj Museum, which have the same shape and decoration but pointed bases⁵⁷. The only exact comparison example comes from Kani Koter.⁵⁸ The second sub-type of the first category is the most common form of glazed bottles, which display a remarkable similarity in decoration across a wide range of sites. Examples have been recovered from late Neo-Assyrian contexts at Khirbet Qasrij⁵⁹, Ashur⁶⁰, Nimrud⁶¹, Tell Sheikh

⁵⁶ Doumet-Serhal 1994: 99.

⁵⁷ Hassanzadeh 2016: fig. 33.8: 37–38.

⁵⁸ Amelirad 2019: 58, fig. 4a.

⁵⁹ Curtis 1989: fig. 45/351.

⁶⁰ Andrae 1923: pl. 17c–d. 18 a–b; Haller 1954: pl. 3as–ay; McDonald 1995: 157, nos. 141–142.

⁶¹ Lines 1945; Oates 1959: 138; Oates and Oates 2001: 242, fig. 153; Hussein 2016: pl. 180b, 194a, b, c, 193e.

Hamad,⁶² Tell Halaf,⁶³ Qasr Shemamok (ancient Kilizu)⁶⁴ and Khirbat Khattunya.⁶⁵ Also, in Iran similar glazed bottles have been reported from Ziwiye,⁶⁶ Kul Tarikheh,⁶⁷ Khanileh,⁶⁸ Changbar⁶⁹ and War Kabud.⁷⁰ Porada⁷¹ asserted that the greatest concentration of glazed potteries was found the territory south of Lake Urmia, so this region could be the birth place of this ceramic type. This proposal is also supported by Hassanzadeh.⁷²

According to Assyrian historical texts, the Assyrian Empire maintained political and military relations with the regional power of Urartu and the local Mannaeen governing bodies during the reign of Sargon II. Recent research conducted by Abbas Razmpoush and Shelir Amelirad⁷³ focused on the glazed brick motifs from Qalāichi, in northwest Iran, shedding light on the prevalent motifs and iconography associated with the Mannaeen cultural sphere. The Qalāichi brick motifs portray ceremonial purification and devotional practices, symbolized by the lotus and the sacred tree. The presence of these motifs at Qalāichi cannot be solely attributed to artistic inspiration by or the adoption of Assyrian decorative styles. Instead, they signify an emergent Mannaeen belief in the divine aspects of this purification ritual and the existence of a related religious belief in the region. “A stylized tree with obvious religious significance already occurs as an art motif in fourth-millennium Mesopotamia, and by the second millennium B.C., it is found everywhere within the orbit of the ancient Near Eastern oikumene. About the middle of the second millennium, a new development in the iconography of the tree becomes noticeable leading to the emergence of the so-called Late Assyrian Tree under Tululti-Ninurta I. With the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, this form of the Tree spreads throughout the entire Near East” (Parpola 1993: 161–163). This spread coincides with the peak of Assyrian–Mannaeen contact during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. In addition to brick motifs, these lotus and sacred tree symbols are observed in a diverse range of cultural materials found at Mannaeen sites, particularly in burial contexts, during the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. These cultural materials include ceramics, metals, and ivories, demonstrating their widespread distribution throughout the majority of Mannaeen settlements and cemeteries.⁷⁴

Razmpoush and Amelirad (unpublished) have assessed glazed pottery, including round and conical miniature jars, large conical jars, and pots, with symbols associated with the lotus and the sacred tree. These forms are found in a wide geographical area, including western Iran, especially in areas attributed to Mannaea. These jars were used in funeral rites and are often found in burial

⁶² Kühne 1984: fig. 67: 16.

⁶³ Hrouda 1962: pl. 56/94.

⁶⁴ Anastasio 2010: 194, pl. 59: 3.

⁶⁵ Curtis 1997: fig. 38: 161, pl. XIX.

⁶⁶ Motamedi 1997: 158, pl. 55: no. 7; Ghirshman 1979: pl. XXII: 5.

⁶⁷ Rezavani and Rostai 2007: pl. 12.

⁶⁸ Hassanzadeh et al. 2012: 132–3, pl. 8. 23, 8. 24.

⁶⁹ Changbar cemetery was excavated by Motamedi from 1976 to 1978, and hundreds of graves were discovered, with hundreds of burial goods. Unfortunately, reports of that excavation have never been published. Naghshineh worked on this material in 2009 for his PhD thesis, in which he presented five samples (Naghshineh 2007: 224, fig. 17-2; 258, fig. 51–2; 284, fig. 77–2; 288, fig. 81–2).

⁷⁰ Haerincck and Overlaet 2004: fig. 9: A102–4.

⁷¹ Porada 1962: 134.

⁷² Hassanzadeh 2016: 382.

⁷³ Razmpoush and Amelirad, *in prep.*

⁷⁴ Some of the oldest glazed vessels known from Hasanlu come from the Iron Age I (Period IVc), early Iron Age II (early Period IVb), and late Iron Age II (burned structure of the second phase) as documented by Danti and Cifarelli (2016: 363). These researchers highlight the presence of miniature jars with specific functions, such as containers for cosmetic materials, among the glazed vessels from the Iron Age II at Hasanlu. Danti and Cifarelli propose that Assyrian

reliefs offer substantiation that these jars were stored on racks. At Hasanlu, the glazed pottery was discovered along with ivories in the same layer and context, ivories that are widely regarded as remnants of adorned racks or shelves. In addition, the similar ornamentation of the glazed pottery and ivories, along with the presence of these two objects in a common cultural context, can indicate a potential function rooted in Assyrian origins. No similar glazed jar examples have been found in early Iron Age deposits in sites surrounding Hasanlu. Unpublished research conducted by Razmpoush regarding geographic distribution highlights that although round and conical polychrome glazed jars are common within the core area of Assyria from the ninth century B.C. onwards, no examples identical to the monochrome glazed round jars found at Hasanlu have been discovered within the core area of Assyria. Moreover, the abundance of these monochrome jars in southwestern Iran, as well as their presence in northern and northwestern Iran, suggests divergent origins and distribution routes for monochrome and polychrome glazed jars. Consequently, it is plausible to consider the origin of monochrome jars to be in western Iran. Conversely, the polychrome examples may have originated outside of Iran, specifically within the core region of Assyria. It is important to note that the polychrome glazed jars from northwestern Iran, including those from the Kani Charmou cemetery, belong to a later period compared to the Hasanlu examples.

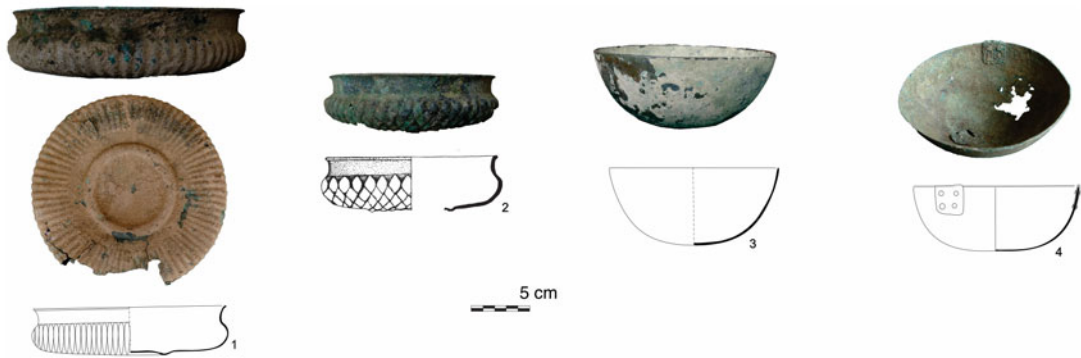


Figure 14. Metal bowls from Kani Charmou

mounds and cemeteries, such as Kani Koter,⁷⁵ Ziwiye,⁷⁶ Kul Tarikeh,⁷⁷ Changbar⁷⁸ and War Kabud.⁷⁹ Based on an example of a larger version of these jars in a tomb in Assyria⁸⁰, it is thought that this type of jar was used to store cremated remains. But use for consecrated oil has also been suggested⁸¹. In the case of smaller jars, due to the numerous relief images that show these jars on special tables in libation ceremonies, their use as containers for transporting and consuming special drinks in Assyrian rituals can be suggested with some confidence.

Metal vessels

Four metal bowls are included in the collection from Kani Charmou, consisting of two fluted and two simple bowls (Fig. 14). The first fluted bronze bowl has a vertical, slightly curved rim, a compressed spherical body and an omphalos shaped base. The body is embellished with 95 relief grooves radiating outward from near the base. The second example is similar to the first but with different cross-hatched fluting. The third vessel is an intact plain hemispherical bowl with a thick rim and rounded base. The fourth bowl has a compressed hemispherical shape, with a vertical rim and a flat base. A rectangular metal sheet is attached to the vessel's rim with four rivets; the bowl had probably cracked, and the metal sheet was used to fix it.

All examples of this style of bowl from sites in Iran, with fluted or lobed decorations, and with or without an omphalos, have come into light from graves, which emphasises their religious connotations as possible parts of funerary banquets. Exact parallels for the first bowl come from War Kabud⁸² and Kani Koter⁸³ in Iran and from Ashur⁸⁴ in Iraq. In Urartian territory, such bowls were discovered in graves and other religion-associated contexts. Examples came from the Ayanis fortress, associated with remains of the sacred tree, a wooden table, decorated walls, and remains of feasting⁸⁵. Other bowls of this sort came to light from graves at Dedeli⁸⁶, Adilcevaz⁸⁷, and Çavuştepe⁸⁸. Comparisons for the second example, with the intricate network pattern, with and without omphalos, are known from Kani Koter,⁸⁹ Zagros Graveyard,⁹⁰ Sarrez,⁹¹ War Kabud,⁹² Djub-i Gauhar⁹³ and Ashur⁹⁴.

⁷⁵ Amelirad and Azizi 2019: Fig. 4.

⁷⁶ Motamedi 1997: 158, pl. 55 no. 7; Ghirshman 1979: pl. XXII: 5.

⁷⁷ Rezavani and Rostai 2007: pl. 12.

⁷⁸ Naghshineh 2007: 224, fig. 17-2; 258, fig. 51-2; 284, fig. 77-2; 288, fig. 81-2.

⁷⁹ Haerinck and Overlaet 2004: fig. 9; A102-4.

⁸⁰ Andrae 1923: 16, 21.

⁸¹ Andrae, 1923: 16.

⁸² Haerinck and Overlaet 2004: fig. 20: 10, B171-12.

⁸³ Amelirad and Azizi 2019: 59, fig. 5.

⁸⁴ Haller 1954: pl. 12h; pl. 22c, d.

⁸⁵ Batmaz 2013.

⁸⁶ Ögün 1978a: 67, pl. 27, Abb. 7; Ögün 1978b: 667, Taf. CLXI, Abb. 33; Sciacca 2005: 59, no. Dd1, fig. 65.

⁸⁷ Ögün 1978a: 62-63, Taf. 29.9; Ögün 1978b: 662-663, Text abb. 7, Taf. CLVI, Abb. 13; Sciacca 2005: 59, no. Ad1, fig. 64; Hasserodt 2009: 468, no. 27.

⁸⁸ Erzen 1978: 44, res. 27, lev. XXXVIIIc.

⁸⁹ Amelirad and Azizi 2019: 59, fig. 7.

⁹⁰ Amelirad et al. 2012: 41-99, pl. 34.

⁹¹ Amelirad and Razmpoush 2015: fig. 4: b.

⁹² Haerinck and Overlaet 2004: pl. 138: A37-4.

⁹³ Haerinck and Overlaet 1999: ill. 15 no. 7, pl. 33, 77b.

⁹⁴ Haller 1954: pl. 22c-e.

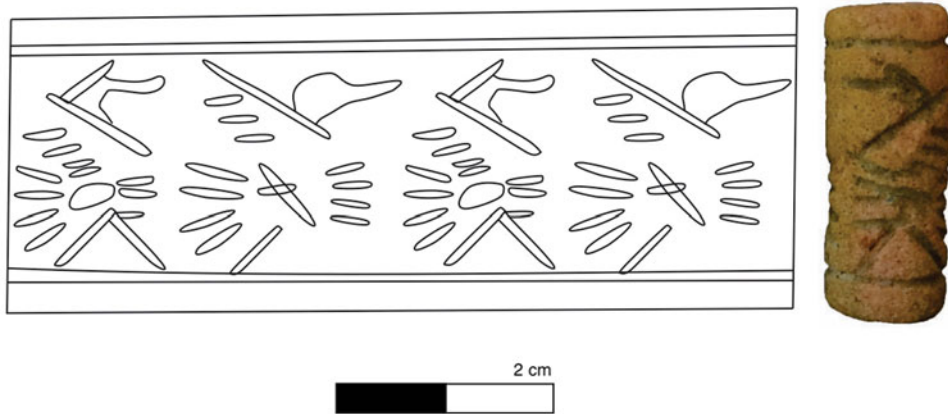


Figure 15. Cylinder seal from Kani Charmou

Bronze bowls with grooved and petal decoration were widespread in west and northwestern Iran, Mesopotamia and Urartu during the ninth–seventh centuries B.C. For this reason, it is difficult to attribute this style of bowl to a specific geographical area, as ideas and techniques spread over large areas through political and economic networks and were adopted by local workshops⁹⁵. Local workshops were also often inspired by foreign ideas⁹⁶. Curtis based his hypothesis that these fluted bowl types were Assyrian on two premises⁹⁷. First, he argued that the same shape occurs in contemporary ceramic vessels, especially from Nimrud⁹⁸. Second, bowls of this shape appear frequently in Neo-Assyrian reliefs,⁹⁹ in contexts that associate them with Assyrians. They are usually gadrooned¹⁰⁰ and appear as utensils at royal banquets or in the context of ritual acts (for example, for royal libations).¹⁰¹

Regarding the first premise, it should be noted that it is possible to observe the same shape, in ceramic, at Mala Mcha¹⁰², situated in Iranian Kurdistan, in the area formerly occupied by the Mannaeian kingdom; this circumstance makes it impossible to safely locate the origin of the form.

Seal

A clay cylinder seal was among the collection of objects found at Kani Charmou. This seal measures 3.1 cm in height, 1.0 cm in diameter, and has a perforation of 0.4 cm diameter. The design is bordered at the top and bottom by grooves, and the scene features two bird-shaped figures, possibly griffins, depicted in a linear style commonly associated with seals from the Neo-Assyrian period (Fig. 15).

⁹⁵ Curtis 1988; Jiménez Ávila 2015; Matthäus 2016.

⁹⁶ E.g., Curtis 2013: 71–72; Hasserodt 2009: 317–328; Sciacca 2015.

⁹⁷ Curtis 2013: 69.

⁹⁸ Oates 1959: 132, 142, pl. xxxvii, no. 59.

⁹⁹ The first type appears in scenes involving libations, such as Ashurnasirpal II's NW Palace at Nimrud, room WI, room B: 19 (Matthiae 1999: 102; Watanabe 2002: fig. 9 and 11), Ashurbanipal's N Palace at Nineveh, room S1, (upper story collapsed), room S in situ, and entrance (columns) (Orthmann 1975: nos. 242 and 243). The second type is depicted in the advance of Assyrian officials and foreign tributaries toward the Assyrian king in Sargon II's palace at Khorsabad: Facade N, slab 21 (Botta and Flandin 1849a: pl. 37; Albenda 1986: 67, pl. 24); Room 10, slabs 2–7 (Botta and Flandin 1849b: pls. 124–129; Albenda 1986: 70, pls. 27–30); Facade L, slabs 26, 35 (Botta and Flandin 1849a: pls. 16, 23; Albenda 1986: 65, pls. 47, 50; Merhav 1991: 200, fig. 1.5); Room 6, slabs 2–6 (Botta and Flandin 1849b:

pl. 104; Albenda 1986: 73, pl. 67) and in the hands of the Assyrian king, who is standing/sitting between dignitaries and/or winged genies (Ashurnasirpal II's NW palace at Nimrud: Room B, slabs 19–20 (Meuszyński 1981: Taf. 1/3); Room C, slab 7 (Meuszyński 1981: Taf. 4/2); Room G, slabs 3, 8, 10, 13, 16, 25, 29 (Meuszyński 1981: Taf. 8, 9/3–4; Merhav 1991c: 174, fi g. 10a), Room H, slabs 2, 4, 9, 13, 16, 19, 26, 29, 31, 33 (Meuszyński 1981: Taf. 11, 12/1,3–4), and in banquet scenes in the hands of Ashurbanipal's queen at Nineveh, North palace, Room S1, slab C (Barnett 1976: 57, pls. LXIII–LXV).

¹⁰⁰ Madhloom 1970: pl. XXXIV-1; Layard 1849: pl. 36 right.

¹⁰¹ Akkadian *kappu* refers to open (plain and fluted) bowls, which were usually made of metal (bronze, silver, gold) or wood. *Kappu* were used for libations of water or oil (Oppenheim, Reiner and Biggs 1971: 188–189; Hasserodt 2009: 9–10, 12–13).

¹⁰² Amelirad et al. 2017: fig. 25f.



Figure 16. Bead assemblages from Kani Charmou

The seal design shares significant similarities in theme, composition, and individual details with Neo-Assyrian seals found in Sargon's Palace in Khorsabad,¹⁰³ and at Ashur,¹⁰⁴ Nimrud,¹⁰⁵ Tell Halaf,¹⁰⁶ and several sites in the Levant.¹⁰⁷ These seals have been dated to the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., specifically during the reign of Shalmaneser III.¹⁰⁸

Similar seals with identical designs have been unearthed in Iran, specifically in Ziwiye,¹⁰⁹ Changbar,¹¹⁰ Qareh Tepe,¹¹¹ Sorkh Dome,¹¹² and Gohargoosh Tepe¹¹³. Additionally, the National Museum of Iran houses four unprovenanced specimens in a collection purchased from Qazvin.¹¹⁴ Buchanan also mentions the presence of comparable seals dating back to the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. in the Ashmolean Museum.¹¹⁵

Beads

Beads represent the most abundant type of grave goods from the Kani Charmou cemetery (fig. 16) and also present the greatest number of different materials, including frit or faience (19), glass (5), carnelian (47), shell (1), and metal (1).

The faience beads of Kani Charmou fall into three typological groups: two long light blue glazed cylinders with incised linear decoration (Fig. 16: a-b), a light blue glazed four-sided star-shape

¹⁰³ Loud and Altman 1938: 98, nos. 90 and 94.

¹⁰⁴ Moortgat 1940: pl. 84: nos. 714–717; Klengel-Brandt 2014: Taf. 51: nos. 270–273.

¹⁰⁵ Parker 1955: 104, ND.1686.

¹⁰⁶ Hrouda 1962: 36, nos. 44–45.

¹⁰⁷ Parker 1949: 7, no. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Parker 1955: 104. Similar representations of winged figures are well known in Mesopotamia; in the Levant and Iran they are infrequent. In Mesopotamia they came to light from Ashur (Moortgat 1940: nos. 710–713) and Tell al Rimah (Parker: 1975: fig. 5). In Iran, such scenes are reported from Sorkh Dome-Lori (Schmidt, van Loon and Curvers 1989: 416, no. 50), and purchased seals from Qazvin in the National Museum of Iran (Saed Mucheshi and Tala'i 2012: nos. 9–10) and Changbar (Naghshineh

2007: pls. 9–2: 55–001–9; 8–2: 55–001–1–2, 8; 19–2: 55–031–1, 3; 79–2: 55–17–11, 96–2: 55–143–14, 16; 97–2: 55–143–26–27. An example from the Levant was published by Parker (1949: 38, pl. 25, fig. 171) and examples in the Ashmolean Museum are published by Buchanan (1966: 112–13: figs. 619–622).

¹⁰⁹ Ascalone and Baseri 2014: 36.

¹¹⁰ Naghshineh 2007: pls. 96–2: 55–143–15; 122–2: 56–061–7.

¹¹¹ Dehpahlavan and Alinezhad 2022: fig. 3, nos. 34–40.

¹¹² Schmidt and van Loon 1989: 416, no. 52.

¹¹³ Ghobadizadeh et al. 2023: fig. 2.

¹¹⁴ Saed Mucheshi 2015: nos. 5–8.

¹¹⁵ Buchanan 1966: 113, pl. 41, no. 623.

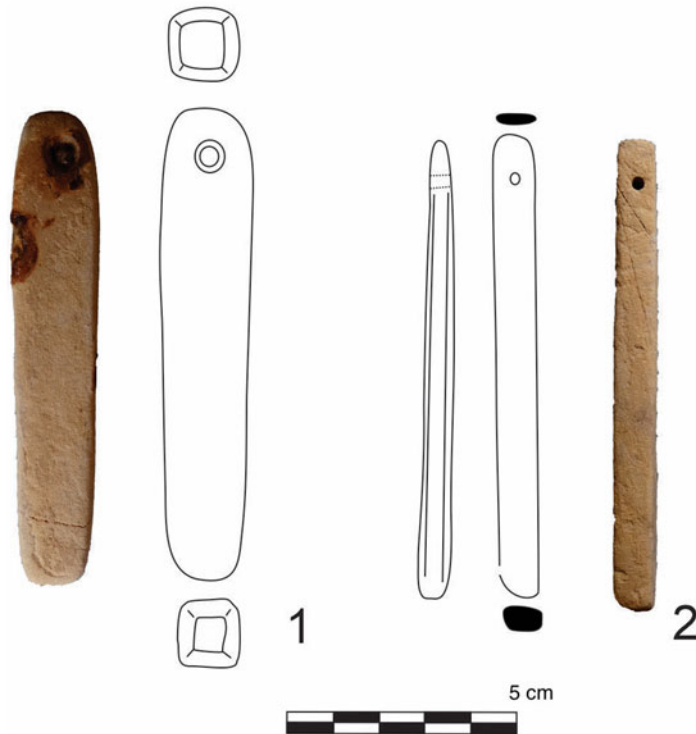


Figure 17. Whetstones from Kani Charmou

(Fig. 16: c) and tiny cylindrical beads in both blue and white colours. Glazed star-shaped beads are common across the Mannaean kingdom; comparable beads came to light in Kultarikeh¹¹⁶, Mala Mcha¹¹⁷ and Changbar¹¹⁸. The glass beads are white and black, with standard cylindrical forms. Carnelian beads have simple shapes: cylinder, barrel and sphere, plus one scaraboid-shaped bead (Fig. 16: d). The metal bead is a cylindrical coil made of a thin, looped copper alloy wire (Fig. 16: e).

Whetstones

There are two perforated whetstones in the collection. They are long and rectangular with rounded edges, made of fine-grained stones, probably sandstone (Fig. 17). In the perforation of one, there is the remains of an iron suspension ring. The second does not have traces of a metal ring, and it is possible that a fabric string was passed through the hole for hanging purposes. These items are fairly common among the finds of Iron Age graves. Examples of such whetstones are reported from Surkh-i Dum¹¹⁹, Bard-i Bal, Kutal-i Gulgul¹²⁰, Sialk B¹²¹, Marlik¹²², Zubeidi, Tell Imihiye¹²³ and Dedeli¹²⁴.

Bronze band

Another item of the collection is a fragment of a bronze band, decorated with two rows of repoussé dots at the edges and a wide repoussé rib in the middle (Fig. 18). Considering the curved shape and size of the band, it is plausible that it could have been a part of a bracelet.

¹¹⁶ Rezvani and Roustaei 2007: pl. 19a.

¹¹⁷ Amelirad et al. 2017: fig. 28b.

¹¹⁸ Naghshineh 2007: pl. 53–2: 55–093–5.

¹¹⁹ Schmidt, van Loon and Curvers 1989: 352, pl. 217.

¹²⁰ Overlaet 2003: 181, fig. 146.

¹²¹ Ghirshman 1939: 60–61, fig. 7.

¹²² Negahban 1996: 299–300, pl. 130.

¹²³ Boehmer 1983: 107–108, figs. 6, 11.

¹²⁴ Ögün 1978b: 667, Taf. CLXIII, Abb. 48.



Figure 18. Bronze band from Kani Charmou

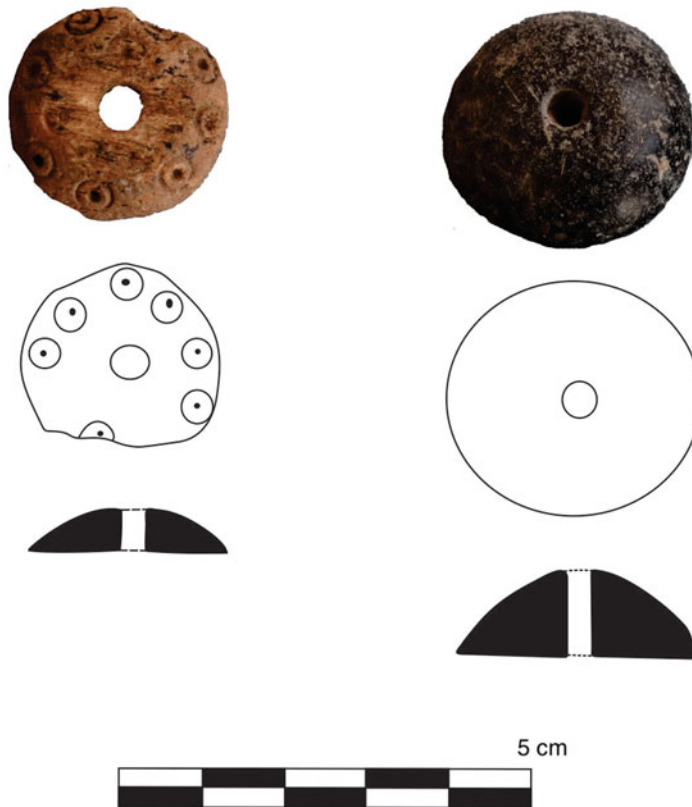


Figure 19. Ivory and stone buttons from Kani Charmou

Buttons

There are two hemispherical flat-based buttons among the Kani Charmou objects. The first example (Fig. 19: 1) is made of ivory and encircled by a row of incised circles with a point in the center. The second one is stone and has a plain surface. Such items were common over a wide area in the first

millennium B.C.¹²⁵. In Iran such buttons came to light from Hasanlu¹²⁶, Haft Tepe¹²⁷, Kani Koter¹²⁸ and Bayazid Abad¹²⁹.

While these objects could possibly function as spindle whorls, there is evidence that suggests they served a dual purpose. Iron Age II burials at Dinkha Tepe provide support for this idea. In some instances, these objects contained what Muscarella referred to as ‘iron/reed pin hooks.’ For example, at Hasanlu¹³⁰ and Bazayid Abad¹³¹, we find similar objects alongside hooked iron pins, implying that the bone hemispheres with iron pins fulfilled the same function. Additionally, in Khatunban B¹³², these buttons were found alongside bent bronze nails with rounded caps, which might have been used to fasten them onto a thin, perishable material¹³³.

It is possible that these items served both decorative and functional purposes, such as adorning horse trappings or clothing. Given the ambiguity in distinguishing whether they were primarily spindle whorls or buttons, it is reasonable to categorize them collectively as buttons. This decision is influenced by the fact that objects with dual functions are commonplace in the material culture of the Middle East’s Iron Age contexts (Amelirad 2021).

Conclusion

This report provides an overview of the discoveries at the Kani Charmou cemetery, primarily artifacts recovered from looted graves. The assemblage of burial inventories from Kani Charmou, as well as other contemporary cemeteries in the Mannaea region, exhibits significant similarities with the material cultures of Neo-Assyrian and Urartian cultures. These two cultures not only share similar material types but also display certain iconographic and ideological features.

The material from Kani Charmou probably dates to the Iron Age II period, spanning from the ninth to eighth centuries B.C. While the collection does not encompass all possible Mannaeen artifacts, it provides valuable insights into a particular category of items, namely pins. These pins found at Kani Charmou indeed stand out as distinctive of the local context. It is important to note that the remaining items are not characteristic of the local area. This suggests that such items were either produced locally based on imported designs or were acquired through trade from outside sources. The glazed ceramic and metal vessels, which may have served ritual functions, were discovered in funerary contexts and were not intended for everyday use. The abundance of available archaeological data, both from systematic excavations and materials from looted graves held in the Sanandaj Museum, highlights the widespread use of these types of vessels in the Mannaeen region. These vessels closely resemble the funerary or ceremonial wares found in Urartu and Assyria, suggesting a potential shared role in rituals and sacred ceremonies associated with feasts and libations. However, the lack of scientific explorations in the Mannaeen region leaves room for uncertainty regarding the exact origin of the vessels common across Urartu, Assyria, and Mannaea.

Considering the current state of our study, the available data are insufficient to determine a terminus post quem for the introduction of these vessels. It is also challenging to establish which region, if any, took the lead in their production and dissemination, or whether one group was merely imitating or importing the designs of another. Making any definitive claims in this regard would be unfair at best. Consequently, it is highly probable that future scientific excavations conducted in this district will yield more contextualized information regarding the findings, ultimately helping to address the ambiguities presented by the Kani Sharmou collection.

¹²⁵ Amelirad and Azizi 2021: 70.

¹²⁶ Hakemi and Rad 1950: fig. 51, 53; Danti and Cifarelli 2015: figs. 15: F1-3; H2 and 23: L4.

¹²⁷ Negahban 1991: figs. 218–227.

¹²⁸ Amelirad and Azizi 2018: fig. 23.

¹²⁹ Amelirad 2021.

¹³⁰ Danti and Cifarelli 2015: 32.

¹³¹ Amelirad 2021: 313–316.

¹³² Muscarella 1974: fig. 36: 755; fig. 47 nos. 756–75.

¹³³ Haerinck et al. 2004: 127: pl. 17–18.

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کاني شارمو، مقبرة من العصر الحديدي الثاني
 بقلم شلير عاملی راد وعباس رزمبوش و بهروز خان محمدی
 خلاصة:

من خلال فحص الاكتشافات الأثرية داخل مملكة معان، يظهر ارتباط كبير مع آشور، مما يسلط الضوء على الترابط بين هذه المناطق. بذلك يصبح تأثير كل من الثقافتين الأورارتية والآشورية على شعب مانايا واضحا، مما يشير إلى التراث الثقافي المشترك أو التبادلات الحميمة بين هذه الثقافات. يتجلى هذا الارتباط بشكل خاص في الممارسات الدينية، التي تظهر أوجه تشابه ملحوظة. ومن الجدير بالذكر أن مقبرة كاني شارمو في المناع هي مثال مقنع، حيث تكشف عن مجموعة غنية من القطع الأثرية التي توازي تلك المكتشفة في الزيوية، وهو موقع أثري مشهور في المنطقة. تثبت هذه البضاعة المتنوعة التي عثر عليها في القبور بشكل لا لبس فيه وجود شبكة تجارة وتبادل قوية بين مانايا ونظيرتها الغربية المجاورة، آشور، والتأثير العميق للثقافة الآشورية على المجتمع المناعي. ومن الملحوظ أنه من خلال التحليل الأسلوبي وتحديد أوجه التشابه في الأوعية المعدنية والجرار الزجاجية والختم الأسطواني، فإن التاريخ المقترح لمقبرة كاني شارمو يتماشى مع فترة العصر الحديدي الثاني.