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Recent Post-Achaemenid Finds from Southern Fars, Iran

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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Iran*, Vol. 40 (2002), pp. 277-278

Published by: [British Institute of Persian Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4300632>

Accessed: 30/12/2012 10:02

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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS

### RECENT POST-ACHAEMENID FINDS FROM SOUTHERN FARs, IRAN

By Ali-Reza Asgari Chaverdi

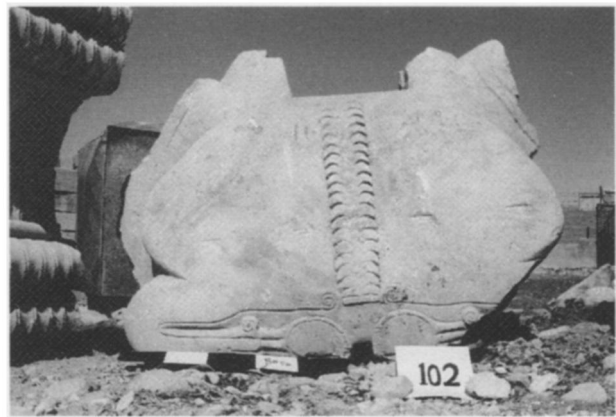
*Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation, Shiraz*

The province of Fars in southern Iran, known as Parsa by classical authors, was home to two major Iranian empires, those of the Achaemenids and the Sasanids. The Macedonian invasion and the fall of the Achaemenid Persian Empire brought major, but little-known, changes to Fars. Apart from art historical and numismatic evidence, there are few sources on Fars from the fall of the Achaemenids and the rise of the Sasanids.

With this gap in mind, the author designed an archaeological field project specifically aimed at exploring the evidence for this little-known period. The first stage of fieldwork was carried out in the Lamerd district in southern Fars in the Spring–Summer of 2000 (Asgari Chaverdi 2001). Early in the first season we recorded an important site, locally known as Tomb-e Bot, in the northwest part of our survey area, next to the village of Shaldon.

The site consists of at least three tells to the east and southwest of a field in which recent ploughing has revealed some interesting architectural elements (Fig. 1). The most important finds include several column capitals with double volutes, zoomorphic column capitals, a bust of a man, and a head of a bird. These finds are all carved from local whitish limestone.

The column capitals with volutes (Figs. 1–2) are cubical in shape, 100–110 cm. in height. Each side is



*Fig. 3. Column capital, in the form of double bull protomes; whitish limestone.*

decorated with eight flutes, terminating in double volutes on each end. The zoomorphic column capital, 70–90 cm. in height consists of double bull/oxen protomes with broken heads (Fig. 3). A frontal human bust, 27 cm. in height, shows a male figure with long curly hair, beard, earrings, and a necklace (Fig. 4). His face is damaged, but traces of a ribbon holding the hair and a diadem are still visible. There is also a badly damaged head of a bird, 16 cm. in height. It is probably a bird-of-prey, presumably an eagle with a wide beak and penetrating eyes.



*Figs. 1–2. Column capitals, with flutes with double volutes; whitish limestone.*



Fig. 4. Bust of a male figure, perhaps a king or a noble; whitish limestone.

Some features, especially the general form of the column capitals, point to Achaemenid Persian art, but lack the high standard of Achaemenid court style known from sites such as Persepolis or Pasargadae. We can therefore suggest that these finds were imitations of the Persian style by local rulers in the post-Achaemenid period, who used royal Achaemenid iconography to legitimise their rule.

A thorough study of the finds from Tomb-e Bot is underway and we are planning further field research at the site and its environs.

#### *Acknowledgements*

Archaeological research in the Lamerd district was carried out as part of the author's M.A. thesis at the Department of Archaeology at Tehran University under the auspices of the University's Institute of Archaeology, and with support from the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation. This note has been translated into English by Kamyar Abdi.

Asgari Chaverdi, A.-R. 2001. "Fars after Darius II: New evidence from Lamerd District", *Iranian Journal of Archaeology and History*, 26–27, pp. 66–72 (in Persian with an English abstract).