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Original Research Article

An Introduction to the Socio-Cultural Bonds between Northwest and Southeast Iran in the Bronze Age: A Case Study of Painted Pottery

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Abstract

Socio-cultural ties and similarities among different parts of the Iranian plateau in late prehistory are a primary concern of Iranian archeology. Notwithstanding their differing climates and geographical distances, the northwest and southeast quadrants of the plateau archaeologically exhibit a remarkable degree of homogeneity and similarities in the painted motifs of pottery vessels. The question thus arises: what makes them similar, and what underlying sociocultural factors contribute to the emergence of such similarities despite the geographical dimension and climatic heterogeneity? The authors approach these questions through the hypothesis that despite the theory of the mosaic of ethnicities and climates, which views the climatic heterogeneity and geographical remoteness as obstacles precluding cultural convergence across the Iranian plateau in prehistory, these parallels can indeed be justified by the “Great Oriental Society” theory and Lévi-Strauss’s “cultural structuralism.” The classification of painted motifs underpins the methodology adopted here. The motifs on the pottery from each region were classified — based on their typological description, classification, and relative chronology — and finally compared to pin down and analyze their common attributes. It is noteworthy that neither the archaeological context nor the typology of the form of vessels was addressed here. The similarities between the motifs of the Bronze Age pottery traditions in the northwestern and southeastern Iranian plateau indicate that the “Great Oriental Society” theory of Ravasani can explain cultural integration in the two disparate regions, an observation that can be interpreted by Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism.

Keywords: *Bronze Age, Iranian plateau, The Theory of Great Oriental Society, The Theory of Prehistoric Iran as a Mosaic of Ethnicities and Climates, Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism.*

Introduction

On the plateau of prehistoric Iran, the Bronze Age (from about the beginning of the third millennium B.C. to the middle of the second millennium B.C), which was approximately 1500 years, cultural, social,

and economic processes contributed to the emergence and expansion of urbanization structures has been appropriately called the Urbanization Revolution (Tala’i, 2006; Tala’i, 2018). In the field of industry, the technique of making and casting bronze alloy was

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considered a certain innovation in metallurgy during this period, and at the same time, the technical methods of pottery also changed, and the pottery wheel became popular (Tala'i, 2018). The archaeological evidence of the social-cultural developments of the Bronze Age can be seen throughout the Iranian plateau including similarities between the art of pottery and the motifs of pottery. Such similarities can usually be interpreted as socio-cultural relations. Around 2000 B.C. the extensive Kura–Araxes culture in the northwest and the culture of Shar-i-Sokhta in the southeast, both of which lasted for about a thousand years, stopped growing and Mesopotamia-like urbanization was not formed in these areas. Such developments show the emergence of comprehensive socio-cultural developments at this point, and their relative simultaneity in most areas of the Iranian plateau can be examined from different perspectives (Tala'i, 2006). It is worth noting that in the north-west of the Iranian Plateau and around Lake Urmia, painted buffware of the Middle Bronze period Haftavan VIB culture, or Van-Urmia, which succeeded the Kura-Araxes culture, share similar motifs to the painted buffware of the cultural domain. The so-called Trans-Elamite, including today's provinces of Kerman, Sistan, and Baluchistan, which occurred in the fourth and third millennia B.C. – requires more consideration.

Research Objective

The background of the Iranian people and the nature of the social-cultural ties and similarities of the inhabitants of the different areas of the Iranian plateau in late prehistory (around the 6th to the 3rd millennia BC) are important issues in the history of Iranian culture and civilization. This research argues that despite the different climatic conditions, the geographical distance, and the non-adjacentness of the north-western and south-eastern regions of Iran, significant homogeneity, and similarities can be seen in the motifs based on archaeological evidence and color paintings on pottery. The question is: What makes them similar, and what sociocultural contexts contribute to the emergence of

such similarities despite the geographical dimension and climatic heterogeneity? In response to this question, the hypothesis proposed by the authors is that unlike Hassan Talai's "Mosaic of Ethnicities and Climates" theory, which considers climatic heterogeneity and unlikely geographical distances in the Iranian plateau can be an obstacle to cultural convergence in prehistoric Iran, these similarities can be explained through the lenses of Ravasani's "Great Oriental Society" theory and Claude Lévi-Strauss's "Cultural Structuralism".

Theoretical Background

This research draws upon the three theories of "Mosaic of Ethnicities and Climates" by Hassan Tala'i (2006), the theory of "Great Oriental Society" by Ravasani (1991), and the theory of "Cultural Structuralism" by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963).

Tala'i (2006) is one of the pioneering archaeologists who cast doubt on the viability of links and social-cultural ties between the culturally and geographically distant areas of the Iranian plateau during the Bronze Age. According to him, the prehistoric plateau of Iran has been made up of different climates and more or less of different ethnic groups and local cultures that have been through the stages of their cultural and social development in terms of geographical differences. This theory is known as the "Mosaic of Ethnicities and Climates" theory which suggests that the developments of the Bronze Age of Iran took place in a heterogeneous and diverse manner.

Contrary to Talai's assertion, Ravasani (1991) in the theory of "Great Oriental Society", contends that the Iranian Plateau is part of a comprehensive cultural identity extending from the Indus River to the Nile, from the banks of the Jaxartes and the Oxus, the southern shores of the Black Sea, the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, and in this vast land, communities, both in the form of residents of villages and cities and as nomads, have been ethnically and culturally mixed for thousands of years. Regarding ethnicity, culture and art,

religions, political, social, and economic changes, and in general, they brought up their several thousand years of past separately from each other. The Great Society of the Orient is the mix of unity and ethnic and cultural integration between all ethnic groups and communities, which, based on archeological documents, have a common and unified culture, and its differences and contradictions are only considered internal issues of a great society.

Finally, the “cultural structuralism” school of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963) theories the existence of fundamental and unchanging structures in all cultures that shape the mentality and personality of members of society; This means that the common mental characteristic of human beings is a kind of common structure or a set of common mental structures that leads to cultural similarities in different and distant times and places. Levi-Strauss seeks to prove that the structure of human thought is unique, and in his belief, there is a general and deep structure in the core of the minds of all humans, which makes the way of knowing and thinking the same among people all over the world, and this structural similarity it creates common mental patterns that lead to the emergence of similar cultural phenomena in different times and places.

Research Methodology

The classification of painted motifs underpins the methodology of this study. The motifs on the pottery from each region were classified — based on their typological description, classification, and relative chronology — and finally compared to pin down and analyze their common attributes. The research methodology was framed by Mrs. Ann Louise Perkin’s (1977) *Mesopotamia Comparative Archeology*. However, neither the archaeological context nor the typology of the form of vessels were addressed here.

Dataset

The Bronze Age patterned pottery samples examined in this research were selected from two cultural-geographic

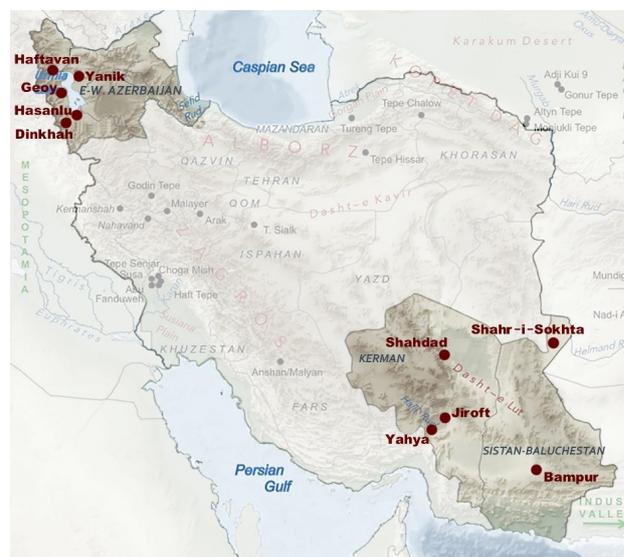


Fig. 1. Map of present-day political borders of Iran showing the ten excavated sites in the northwest and southeast regions that are considered here. Source: Authors.

areas, the northwestern and southeastern regions of the Iranian plateau (Fig. 1). So far there has been no report of a direct relationship between them in the prehistoric context. It seems that the major reasons for the lack of this connection are the lack of proximity and the different climates of the two regions.

The Northwestern Bronze Age is divided into two main periods: the Early Bronze period and the Late Bronze period. Early Bronze period, with the names Early Transcaucasia or Kura-Araxes, and the Late Bronze period, due to the reporting bi-chrome and sometimes poly-chrome buffwares with the name Van-Urmia Culture and sometimes Haftavan VIB, are also known (Tala’i, 2006). The five key archaeological sites of the northwestern region that were analyzed in this research include Hasanlu Tepe, Dinkhah Tepe, Geoy Tepe, and Haftavan Tepe, located in the west of Lake Urmia in West Azerbaijan Province, and Yanik Tepe, located in the east of Lake Urmia and East Azerbaijan Province. In addition to the gray-black pottery with carved decorations filled with white clay in the form of very simple to complex combination patterns, cuneiform, spiral, spiral ram horns, and curved whip lines found

in the Yanik Tepe site (Burney, 1962; Tala'i, 2006 & 2018), the pottery vessels found at other mentioned key sites are generally of the buffware variety, which can be seen in red, brown, and orange colors. This wheel-made pottery is of poor to good firing. The clay is sometimes without temper, but in some cases, sand temper, straw, sand combination, and even mica particles and lime grains are added to the paste, and this has led to the formation of smooth or rough, uneven surfaces (poor and handmade samples). The methods of finishing the surface of earthenware are the wet hand method, matte, and heating the surface before painting. Pottery is made in the form of jars, pots, bowls, cups or small bowls, cups, plates, glasses, lids, and pan-like containers (Fig. 2).

The motifs are painted in red, brown, orange, white, gray, and black colors on the plain ground and sometimes with matte, glossy, white, cream, buff, red, brown, and gray colors, and in four types of geometric, plant, and animal and a human. Human motifs appear first in the Haftavan VIB, and the list of the most common types of geometric motifs is given in Table 1.

Motifs occupy the exterior, mainly the body's upper one-third or half, and the exterior and interior of the bowls (Ajorloo, 2012; Brown, 1951; Burney, 1962; Danti,

2013; Dyson, 1967; Edwards, 1981, 1983; Hamlin, 1974; Muscarella, 1966, 1994; Rubinson, 2004; Tala'i, 2006, 2018 & 2020; Danti, Voigt & Dyson, 2004).

However, the chronology of the Bronze Age of the Southeast Iranian Plateau, or Trans-Elamite civilization

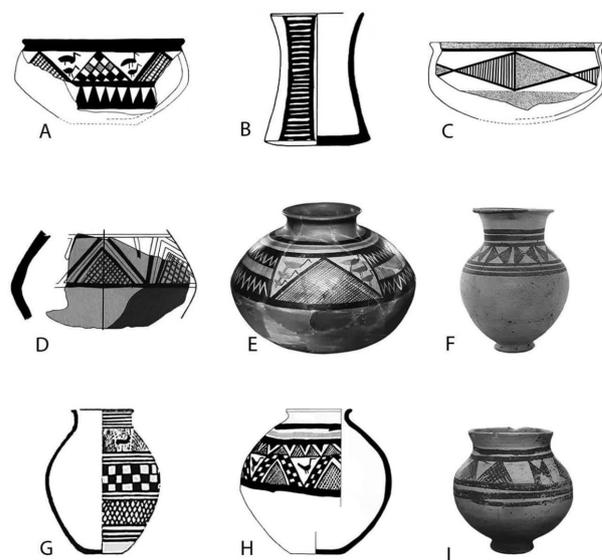


Fig. 2. Selected Bronze Age pottery of northwest Iran: A. bowl from Geoy Tepe. Source: Brown, 1951, 84; Tala'i 2006, 77; B. beaker from Haftavan. Source: Edwards, 1981, 117; C. bowl from Geoy Tepe. Source: Brown, 1951, 74; Tala'i 2006, 77; D. cooking pot from Dinkha. Source: Rubinson, 2004, 204; E. jar from Dinkha. Source: Urmia Museum; F. jar from Hasanlu. Source: National Museum of Iran, No. 2842; G. jar from Dinkha. Source: Tala'i, 2006, 75; H. jar from Haftavan. Source: Edwards, 1981, 120; Tala'i, 2006, 80; I. jar from Hasanlu. Source: National Museum of Iran, No. 4608.

Table 1. General description of the pottery from Northwest Iran. Source: Authors.

Types		Description
Geometric	Line	Simple horizontal and vertical, undulating horizontal and vertical, undulating confined within simple lines, horizontal and vertical zigzags; cross-hatched bands
	Triangle	Empty, solid, hatched, black solid hanging, hanging filled with undulating horizontal lines, hanging filled with crosshatching or zigzag, spindle-like with crosshatching
	Circle	Concentric punctuation, wheel-like, semicircles hanging from the rim
	Lozenge	Crosshatched
	Punctuation	Continuous rows, white dots on black bands, black scattered over the body, slanting and intersecting dotted bands
	Specific	Checkerboard, ladder, hourglass, swastika, quadrilateral
Vegetal		Foliage, festoon (wavy bands hanging from the rim)
Animal	Graminivorous quadruped	Horned (stag), equine, chariot seemingly pulled by two horses
	Predator	Cheetah
		Fight between predatory animals and equine
		Birds
Human		Insect-like creatures Hunting with bow and arrow

which spans from the 4th millennium to the middle of the 2nd millennium BC, includes three periods: Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, and Late Bronze. The five key sites of the Southeastern region analyzed in this research consist of Bampur and Shahr-i-sokhta in Sistan and Baluchistan province and Jiroft, Shahdad, and Yahya in Kerman province. The pottery assemblages from these centers are generally in the buff spectrum fabrics, coming in red, brown, orange, greenish buff, gray, and black colors. The vessels are wheel-made and show indications of adequate, controlled firing. The well-levigated paste is tempered with such inclusions as sand, straw, mica, and occasionally fine white particles. The fabric types include fine, semi-fine, semi-coarse, and coarse, and the surface treatment consists of wet-smoothing, pre-firing painting, and burnishing. A few handmade pieces (in the coiling technique) are also discernible (Fig. 3).

Motifs with red, brown, orange, pink, white, gray, and black colors on plain ground and sometimes covered with white, cream, buff, red, purple, orange, brown, gray, and green earthenware and in four types. They painted geometric, plant, animal, and natural. The most common types of geometric motifs are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. General description of the pottery from southeastern Iran. Source: Authors.

Types	Description
Line	Parallel straight horizontal or vertical, meandering, intersecting; parallel horizontal or vertical zigzag
Geometric	With curving and straight sides, solid, hatched, latticed, hanging from base, symmetric or inverted parallelogram
Circle	Semicircles hanging from the rim, dots between simple horizontal lines, semicircles intersecting or attached to parallel and lower lines
Geometric	Lozenge
	Solid, empty, hatched, divided into four smaller lozenges, with curved sides
Punctuation	Continuous rows, black scattered on the body
Specific	Hourglass, checkerboard, stepped, ladder, crenate, sigma, spiral, cross, whirligig, herringbone, serrate, comb, mat pattern, reel, M-shaped, hatched crescent
Floral/vegetal	Palm tree, fig leaf, aquatic plants, multi-petal flowers
Graminivorous quadruped	Horned (caprine and humped bull - zebu)
Predatory	Cheetah
Animal	Snake and scorpion
	Birds
	Insect-like creatures
	Aquatic animals
Natural elements	Sun and stars

The motifs occur on the exterior, mainly in the vessel's upper third or half, and the interior of the bowls (De Cardi, 1970; Hakemi, 2006; Karlovsky & Potts, 2001; Karlovsky & White, 2018; Majidzadeh, 2013, 2018c, 3; Mogavero, 2018, 1; Sajjadi, 2019a, 2019b, 1, 2022).

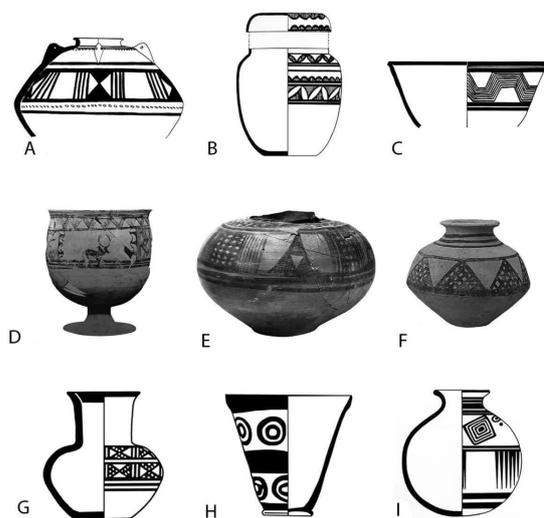


Fig. 3. Selected Bronze Age pottery from Southeast Iran: A. Uruk-type jar from Tepe Yahya. Source: Karlovasky & Potts, 2001, 43; B. pot with lid from Shahdad. Source: Hakemi, 2006, 701; C. bowl from Bampur. Source: De Cardi, 1970, 280; Sajjadi, 2019a, 190; D. stemmed cup from Jiroft. Source: Majidzadeh, 2020c; E. jar from Bampur. Source: De Cardi, 1970, 293; Sajjadi, 2019a, 196. F. jar from Shahr-i Sokhta. Source: National Museum of Iran, No. 7476; G. jar from Shahr-i Sokhta. Source: Sajjadi, 2007, 243; H. beaker from Jiroft. Source: Majidzadeh, 2020c, 385; I. jar from Shahdad. Source: Hakemi, 2006, 699.

Discussion

To provide evidence about the sociocultural similarities of the study areas, 10 motifs of plant, animal, human, and natural species and 40 geometric motifs were selected from each region, placed in Tables 3-6, and compared with each

other. For the motifs of plant, animal, human, and natural species, a complete assessment cannot be given because the geographical complexity and climatic diversity lead to the formation of considerable diversity in the plants (plant life) and the fauna (animal life) of each region.

Table 3. Indigenous floral motifs, animal and human figures, and other elements from nature from the Bronze Age northwest Iran. Source: Authors.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Motif's date in the Northwest (BC)	Affinities with motifs from the Southeast	Motif's date in the Southeast (BC)
1	Hasanlu		Animal (tame bird)	Row of birds (in distinctive sliding pose)	3000-2000	×	2800-2000
2	Dinkha		Animal (tame bird)	Row of birds	1700-1400	×	2800-2000
3	Geoy Tepe		Animal (hoofed - graminivorous)	Stag	2000-1500	×	2300-1900
4	Haftavan		Vegetal	Foliage	1900-1450/1400	-	-
5	Haftavan		Animal (tame bird)	Row of birds	1900-1450/1400	×	2800-2000
6	Haftavan		Animal (predatory)	Cheetah	1900-1450/1400	×	2400-2100
7	Haftavan		Animal (hoofed - graminivorous)	Possibly an equine	1900-1450/1400	×	2880-2300
8	Haftavan		Animal	Fight predator animals with horse	1900-1450/1400	-	-
9	Haftavan		Human	Human and animal (possibly a felid)	1900-1450/1400	-	-
10	Haftavan		Human	Man holding an arrow	1900-1450/1400	-	-

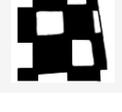
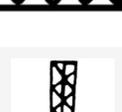
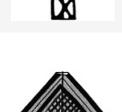
Geometric motifs are based on the human imagination. Due to the creativity of the mind, we see more diversity and abundance in geometric motifs. By comparing and matching the geometric motifs presented in [Tables 3 & 4](#),

it can be seen that out of a total of 40 selected motifs from each region, 17 motifs (42.5%) are similar, and out of these 17 similar motifs, 4 (23.5%) match with each other.

Table 4. Indigenous floral motifs, animal and human figures, and other elements from nature from the Bronze Age southeast Iran. Source: Authors.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Motif's Date in the Southeast (BC)	Affinities with the Northwest	Motif's Date in the Northwest (BC)
1	Bampur		Animal	Scorpion	2300–1900	-	-
2	Bampur		Animal (hoofed - graminivorous)	Goat and palm tree	2300–1900	×	2000–1500
3	Jiroft		Animal (hoofed - graminivorous)	Goat with head turned to back	2880–2300	×	1900–1450/1400
4	Shahr-i Sokhta		Animal (tame bird)	Row of birds	2000–2800	×	3000–2000
5	Shahr-i Sokhta		Natural, combined	Leaf and fish, hatched	2800–2000	-	-
6	Shahdad		Animal (hoofed - graminivorous)	Goat, palm tree, undulation lines	2500–1900	×	2000–1500
7	Shahdad		Floral	Four petal flower	2500–1900	-	-
8	Shahdad		Natural element	Sun	2500–1900	-	-
9	Yahya		Animal	Coiled snake	3000–2700	-	-
10	Yahya		Animal (predatory)	Cheetah	2400–2100	×	1900–1450/1400

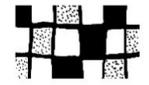
Table 5. Shared motifs between southeastern and northwestern Iran in the Bronze Age. Source: Authors.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Northwest (BC)	Southeast (BC)	Motif affinity	Co-horizon
1	Hasanlu		Geometric	Horizontal hourglass/ papillon /double ax	1700–1400	2800–2000	×	-
2	Hasanlu		Geometric	Parallel and intersecting slanting lines	1700–1400			
3	Hasanlu		Geometric	Simple horizontal parallel lines	1700–1400	3000–2700	×	
4	Hasanlu		Geometric	Indeterminate forms	1700–1400	-	-	-
5	Hasanlu		Geometric	Latticed hatched triangles	1700–1400	2800–2400	×	-
6	Hasanlu		Geometric	Checkerboard with a black circle in white squares	1700–1400	-	-	-
7	Dinkha		Geometric	Checkerboard	3000–2000	2800–2000	×	×
8	Dinkha		Geometric	Undulating a line enclosed within horizontal lines	3000–2000	2500–1900	×	×
9	Dinkha		Geometric	Zigzags enclosed within vertical straight lines	3000–2000	-	-	-
10	Dinkha		Geometric	Horizontal row of assorted triangles	1700–1400	-	-	-
11	Dinkha		Geometric	Horizontal rows of black and white triangles	1700–1400	2300–1900	×	-
12	Dinkha		Geometric	Concentric squares	1700–1400	-	-	-
13	Dinkha		Geometric	Concentric circles	1700–1400	2880–2300	×	-

Rest of Table 5.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Northwest (BC)	Southeast (BC)	Motif affinity	Co-horizon
14	Dinkha		Geometric	Herringbone	1700–1400	2400–2100	×	-
15	Dinkha		Geometric	Wheel-like	1700–1400	-	-	-
16	Dinkha		Geometric	Mat pattern	1700–1400	-	-	-
17	Dinkha		Geometric	Angular straight lines in indeterminate shape	1700–1400	-	-	-
18	Dinkha		Geometric	Assorted lozenges inside a triangle	1700–1400	-	-	-
19	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	lozenge with a combination of hatching and punctuation	2500–2000	-	-	-
20	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	White dots on wide black bands	2500–2000	2880–2300	×	×
21	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Combination of straight, wavy, and festoon lines	2500–2000	-	-	-
22	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Parallel undulating lines	2500–2000	2500–1900	×	×
23	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Curved lines in indeterminate forms	2500–2000	-	-	-
24	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Rows of black and dotted lozenges	2500–2000	-	-	-
25	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Solid connected triangles with vertical base	2000–1500	-	-	-
26	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Empty dotted papillon	2000–1500	-	-	-

Rest of Table 5.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Northwest (BC)	Southeast (BC)	Motif affinity	Co-horizon
27	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Row of solid triangles	2000–1500	2880–2300	×	-
28	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Ladder	1500–1200	2300–1900	×	-
29	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Facing triangles with a central dot	1500–1200	-	-	-
30	Geoy Tepe		Geometric	Cluster of empty lozenges	1500–1200	-	-	-
31	Haftavan		Geometric	Parallel slanted lines	1900–1450/1400	-	-	-
32	Haftavan		Geometric	White lozenge inside a larger black lozenge	1900–1450/1400	-	-	-
33	Haftavan		Geometric	Festoon with a central wavy line	1900–1450/1400	-	-	-
34	Haftavan		Geometric	Nested triangles with a shared base	1900–1450/1400	2500–1900	×	-
35	Haftavan		Geometric	Dotted band enclosed within two thinner black bands	1900–1450/1400	3000–2700	×	-
36	Haftavan		Geometric	Dotted lozenge on a dotted ground	1900–1450/1400	-	-	-
37	Haftavan		Geometric	Swastika	1450/1400–1900	2000–2800	×	-
38	Haftavan		Geometric	Black and white and punctate checkerboard	1450/1400–1900	-	-	-

Rest of Table 5.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Northwest (BC)	Southeast (BC)	Motif affinity	Co-horizon
39	Haftavan		Geometric	Lozenge broken into 9 smaller lozenge	1900–1450/1400	2800–2400	×	-
40	Haftavan		Geometric	Solid stretched hanging triangles	1900–1450/1400	2500–1900	×	-

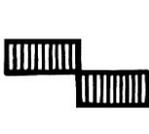
Table 6. Shared motifs between southeastern and northwestern Iran in the Bronze Age. Source: Authors.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Northwest (BC)	Southeast (BC)	Motif affinity	Co-horizon
1	Bampur		Geometric	Latticed black and white checkerboard	-	2800–2300	-	-
2	Bampur		Geometric	Crenate	-	2800–2300	-	-
3	Bampur		Geometric	Horizontal parallel zigzag	-	2800–2300	-	-
4	Bampur		Geometric	Stepped	-	2800–2300	-	-
5	Bampur		Geometric	Horizontal meander	-	2800–2300	-	-
6	Bampur		Geometric	Horizontal row of hatched lozenges	-	2800–2300	-	-
7	Bampur		Geometric	Latticed vertical hourglass	-	2800–2300	-	-
8	Bampur		Geometric	Ladder	1500–1200	2300–1900	×	-
9	Bampur		Geometric	Horizontal rows of black and white triangles	1700–1400	2300–1900	×	-
10	Jiroft		Geometric	Lozenge with curved sides	-	2880–2300	-	-

Rest of Table 6.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Northwest (BC)	Southeast (BC)	Motif affinity	Co-horizon
11	Jiroft		Geometric	Concentric circles	1700–1400	2880–2300	×	-
12	Jiroft		Geometric	Vertical parallel zigzags	-	2880–2300	-	-
13	Jiroft		Geometric	Intertwined and hatched wavy bands	-	2880–2300	-	-
14	Jiroft		Geometric	Vertical register of hatched triangles	-	2880–2300	-	-
15	Jiroft		Geometric	Horizontal row of black triangles	2000–1500	2880–2300	×	-
16	Jiroft		Geometric	Vertical row of latticed lozenges	-	2880–2300	-	-
17	Jiroft		Geometric	White dots on black bands	2500–2000	2880–2300	×	×
18	Jiroft		Geometric	Serrate	-	2880–2300	-	-
19	Jiroft		Geometric	Comb	-	2880–2300	-	-
20	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	Crosshatched Triangle	1700–1400	2800–2400	×	-
21	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	Vertical rows of solid lozenges	-	2800–2400	-	-
22	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	Lozenges divided into 9 smaller lozenges	1900–1450/1400	2800–2400	×	-
23	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	Swastika	1900–1450/1400	2800–2000	×	-
24	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	Whirligig	-	2800–2000	-	-

Rest of Table 6.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Northwest (BC)	Southeast (BC)	Motif affinity	Co-horizon
25	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	Horizontal row of solid lozenges	-	2800–2000	-	-
26	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	horizontal hourglass/papillon / double ax	1700–1400	2800–2000	×	-
27	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	Checkerboard	3000–2000	2800–2000	×	×
28	Shahr-i Sokhta		Geometric	Horizontal row of interconnected semicircles attached to a horizontal band	-	2800–2000	-	-
29	Shahdad		Geometric	Undulating band enclosed within horizontal bands	3000–2000	2500–1900	×	×
30	Shahdad		Geometric	Solid, elongated hanging triangles	1900–1450/1400	2500–1900	×	-
31	Shahdad		Geometric	Hatched quadrilaterals joined at the corner	-	2500–1900	-	-
32	Shahdad		Geometric	Vertical row of hatched triangles	-	2500–1900	-	-
33	Shahdad		Geometric	Nested triangles with a shared base	1900–1450/1400	2500–1900	×	-
34	Shahdad		Geometric	Horizontal parallel undulating lines	2500–2000	2500–1900	×	×
35	Yahya		Geometric	Vertical hourglass/papillon	-	3000–2700	-	-

Rest of Table 6.

No.	Site	Motif illustration	Motif class	Motif Description	Northwest (BC)	Southeast (BC)	Motif affinity	Co-horizon
36	Yahya		Geometric	Dotted band confined within two thin, dark lines	1900–1450/1400	3000–2700	×	-
37	Yahya		Geometric	Simple horizontal bands	1700–1400	3000–2700	×	-
38	Yahya		Geometric	Herringbone	1700–1400	2400–2100	×	-
39	Yahya		Geometric	Vertical row of inverted triangles	-	2400–2100	-	-
40	Yahya		Geometric	Alternating upper and lower hatched triangles	-	2400–2100	-	-

Conclusion

Based on what has been discussed, the common features of some motifs on the pottery of both regions, seem to have the same pattern. Such features can be listed as follows:

Patterns are generally not painted on pottery alone but always appear in combination with other patterns, creating a complete pattern, and the drawing of similar motifs lined up horizontally or vertically has been common in both regions. However, geometric motifs can be seen in almost all samples, either in combination with each other or in combination with plant, animal, and natural elements. Also, triangular motifs are very common in both regions and are drawn in different shapes and sizes. The motifs are usually placed among single or multiple horizontal and parallel delimiting lines (sometimes in the form of decorative strips), which are sometimes combined with vertical lines to form a kind of frame or panel, and sometimes placed inside concentric delimiting circles. It should be mentioned that the motifs are drawn on the outer surface of the pottery, mainly in the upper third or half;

and on the inner surfaces of small bowls and plates, the motifs started from the center, extended towards the edge, and filled the entire surface. Also, the existence of motifs of plant and animal species—and in some cases, human and natural—and the creation of realistic and naturalistic scenes show the potter's attention to these elements, as does the recognition and understanding of the close and necessary relationship between human society and the surrounding nature by the artists of each of two regions. The hybrid, illusory, and mythic creatures are not visible among the motifs of any of the two investigated regions. Based on this information, the mentioned cases, which can be referred to as “structure” in the framework of Lévi-Strauss's cultural structuralism, can be seen as reasons for the existence of common mental patterns between the inhabitants of the Bronze Age in these two different and distant geographical areas. Through the lens of Lévi-Strauss, what is more important than the elements themselves are the relationships between them, which remain constant

despite their internal changeability. Similarly, Ravasani, who gives a cultural concept to “East,” believes that the Great Society of the Orient is the result of the unity and ethnic and cultural entanglement of all human groups that, despite the differences, share a common ethnic and cultural past of several thousand years. They are intermingled, and the past of each is an inseparable part of the common past of the Great Society of the Orient. According to him, the existence of different climatic conditions and, as a result, the asynchrony of the development of techniques and civilization in all the lands of the Great Society of the Orient cannot be a sign or reason for cultural and ethnic separation.

Therefore, the idea of the existence of sociocultural links between the north-western and south-eastern regions of the late prehistoric Iranian plateau cannot be verified due to the lack of archeological evidence indicating the existence of such relations and links between the two regions, as well as the existence of two distinct contexts in these regions as a result of the distance dimension and geographical conditions and a different climate. However, there are remarkable similarities in the patterns of their painted pottery, and these 42.5% identical similarities may have a structuralist interpretation. Also, the low frequency of similar examples of the same horizon (23.5%) strengthens the structuralist interpretation and indicates the existence of common mental patterns between the societies of the Bronze Age of the Iranian Plateau in these two different geographical areas which are far from each other. In conclusion, the accuracy of this hypothesis, which observes the similarity of the motifs of the Bronze Age pottery tradition in the north-western and south-eastern lands of the Iranian plateau appears to be more conforming to reality, via the structuralist theory of Lévi-Strauss and by implying the existence of similar structures in two different geographies but in the context of Great Oriental Society.

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