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# PERSONAL ORNAMENTS AT HASANLU, IRAN

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**Abstract:** The site of Hasanlu, located in northwestern Iran, reached the height of its prosperity in Period IVb (approximately 1050–800 BC), a short-lived zenith that ended abruptly with destruction about 800 BC. Our research encompasses all of the more than two 2000 personal ornaments retrieved from Hasanlu, from the Middle Bronze through the Iron Age, and from a wide range of contexts, including the cemetery on the Low Mound, and the bodies of victims of the destruction of the elite buildings on the citadel, and in storerooms in these buildings. These unusual contexts provide a unique opportunity to compare ornaments found in burials with those worn in daily life, and to assess the extent to which they were deemed valuable within this society. Michelle Marcus's published work on issues of adornment and dress at Hasanlu has been criticized and indeed was limited by a site-wide publication approach that focused on specific materials and artifact classes in advance of a clear understanding of the complex archaeological contexts. Now that the final excavation reports are in preparation, the authors were able to integrate newer scientific research and ground their analysis of personal ornaments in a broader understanding of the site. Some conclusions reached in earlier scholarship have now been revised, but in other cases, the conclusions drawn by Marcus in her work on the women's burial assemblages in particular have been corroborated, namely that at Hasanlu personal adornment played a role in the construction and communication of a gendered, militarized identity that emerged in Period IVb, and indeed have been extended to include adornment in men's graves as well.

**Keywords:** Hasanlu, ancient jewelry, gendered burials, lion pins, elite jewelry, militarization

The site of Hasanlu, located in the Ushnu-Solduz valley of northwestern Iran, was the focus of excavations carried out between 1956 and 1977 by the University of Pennsylvania Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Archaeological Service of Iran, under the general direction of Robert H. Dyson Jr. These excavations revealed a long occupational sequence spanning from the early Pottery Neolithic to the medieval.

Hasanlu is situated in the arable central lowlands of the Solduz Valley, in the Lake Urmia Basin. Mesopotamia and the west could be accessed through the neighboring Ushnu Valley, which was linked in turn to northern Mesopotamia, particularly Assyria, through the Kel-i Shin and Gawra Shinke passes and the valleys of Mudjesir, Sidekan and the Rowanduz Gorge. The Keli-i Shin pass in particular provides an important route

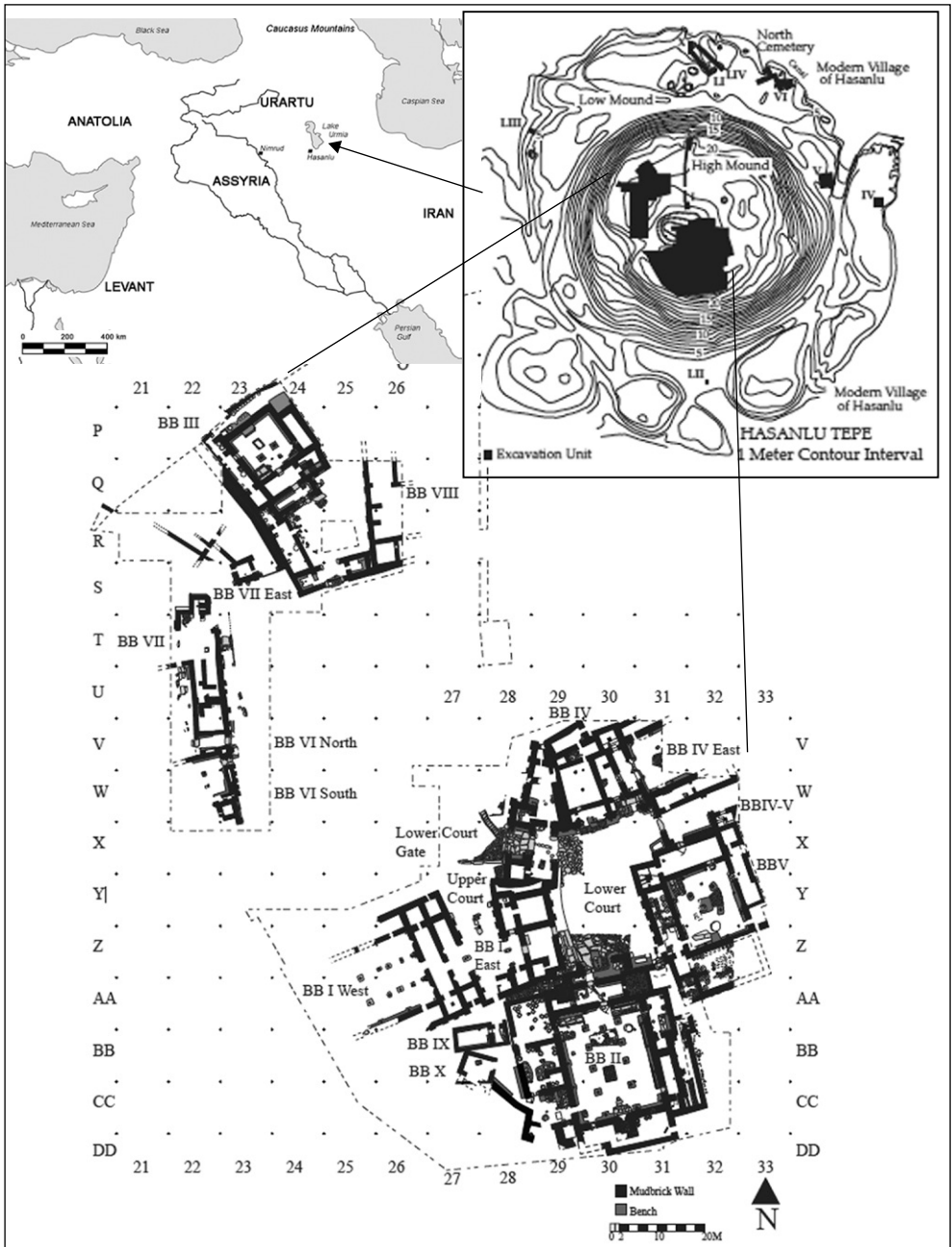


Fig. 1. The Iron II Citadel of Hasanlu, Iran; inset at top right, location of the citadel on the tell; top left, map of the ancient Near East with the location of the site (After Danti 2013: Fig. 1.6)

by which the Assyrian army traveled to the lands controlled by Urartu, and the Urartians would travel to access Musasir, their cult center south of Lake Urmia. To the north of Hasanlu, river valleys and mountain passes connected the Lake Urmia basin to regions extending from the Caspian littoral to the south Caucasus

and eastern Anatolia, including areas that would be encompassed by the Urartian Empire (Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming c). The fate of Hasanlu, particularly by the late 2nd and early 1st millennium BC, was inextricably linked to the ebb and flow of its powerful neighbors, Assyria to the west and Urartu to the north [Fig. 1].

## THE HASANLU CONTEXT

Hasanlu Tepe consists of a central high mound, also called the Citadel or High Mound, 200 m in diameter and approximately 25 m high. This mound is flanked by a low mound, also referred to as the Outer Town. The most significant remains were those of the early Iron Age, Periods V and IV, the remarkable state of preservation of which and large horizontal exposures produced an abundance of material and data. At this time the High Mound served as a fortified citadel featuring many monumental buildings, including columned-hall structures [Fig. 1, bottom]. The Low Mound does not appear to have been heavily occupied at this time and was the site of many burials (Danti 2013; Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming c).

Hasanlu is by no means the largest or most important site in this region, but it is the most comprehensively excavated and is best known for its spectacular destruction level. The date of the destruction and the identity of the destroying army are disputed — the excavators have argued for an Urartian destruction around 800 BC, while others have suggested that Assyrian forces defeated Hasanlu in the late 8th century BC (Medvedskaya 1988; 1991; Magee 2008). Nonetheless, the violent attack and subsequent intense

fire destroyed Hasanlu and the resulting building collapse buried the bodies of the enemy and the defenders, as well as some of the men, women and children who inhabited the site. This destruction earned Hasanlu the moniker of “Pompeii of the Iron Age Ancient Near East,” and resulted in remarkable archaeological contexts for the artifactual remains (Danti forthcoming b).

These remains included thousands of items of adornment including anklets, *appliqués*, bracelets and armllets, beads, belts and belt fragments, buttons, earrings, finger rings, head ornaments, necklace beads, pendants, a variety of pins and cylinder seals (which are used almost exclusively as jewelry at Hasanlu). These ornaments were found in deliberate burials in the Outer Town cemetery, as well as in the Citadel within the sealed storage rooms in temples and other monumental buildings, and with skeletons of individuals trapped in these buildings and elsewhere at the site when it was destroyed. In terms of the study of jewelry and other personal ornaments, this site provides an unparalleled opportunity to study, within a single historical horizon, the use of personal ornament in mortuary contexts as compared to their use in everyday life.

Many years have passed since the close of excavations at Hasanlu, Iran, in 1977, and the publication of the final excavation reports is now well underway. The Hasanlu Personal Ornament Project, a collaboration between the author of Manhattanville College, Yelena Rakic of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Michelle Marcus of the Dalton School and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, has been working with Michael Danti of Boston University to publish the personal ornaments from the various periods and contexts at the site. Previously published work on these objects was limited by a publication approach that focused on materials and artifact classes in advance of a clear understanding of the complex archaeological contexts at the site. In addition, these earlier publications tended to concentrate exclusively on ornaments

dating to Hasanlu's eventful IVb (Iron II) period (about 1050–800 BC). The goal of the project is to ground the analysis of personal ornaments in a deeper and broader understanding of the archaeology of Hasanlu over the *longue durée* and to integrate recent scientific research. The research encompasses all of the more than two thousand personal ornaments retrieved from Hasanlu, from the Middle Bronze through the Iron Age (about 1800–800 BC), and from a wide range of contexts. The scope of this article, however, will be the reexamination of the premises and conclusions of these earlier publications in light of our research, offering refinements and extensions that emerge from recent research in preparation for the final excavation reports for Hasanlu (Danti 2013; Cifarelli 2013; Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming a, b, c; Danti forthcoming a, b).

## EARLIER PUBLICATIONS ON THE ORNAMENTS

As is the case of the finds and architecture of the entire site of Hasanlu, the publication of the personal ornaments has been piecemeal. Personal ornaments were mentioned in preliminary publications and they were included in special studies of objects classed by material (e.g., Muscarella 1965; 1988; de Schauensee 1988). In the 1990s and early 2000s, Michelle Marcus published a study of the cylinder seals from Hasanlu (most of which should be classed as personal ornaments as they were worn as beads), a series of articles on small artifact groups dating to Period IVb, and she also assembled an unpublished catalog of all the personal ornaments (Marcus 1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1995; 1996a; 1996b; Rubinson and Marcus 2005). More recently, several metal

strip belts found in the Lower Mound cemetery were examined (Rubinson 2012), the metallurgy analysed (Fleming *et alii* 2011) and the personal ornaments from the earlier levels of the cemetery studied (Cifarelli 2013).

Marcus's work in particular provides models for approaches to the interpretation of the social role of personal ornaments and other aspects of dress and the body in the archaeological record. Like all classes of artifacts, jewelry and bodily ornaments can provide valuable information about cultural interaction and the construction of identity at a given site (e.g., Gansell 2007; Golani 2010). In her analysis of the Hasanlu jewelry, Marcus draws upon archaeological, anthropological, sociological and feminist

theory, arguing that personal ornaments are exceptional in their contribution to the construction and communication of cultural, social and individual identities in ways that can shift over the course of life. Worn on the body, these objects participate in the ways the body and self are presented to the world.

In the archaeological record, one can most reliably detect traces of this self-presentation through analysis of durable ornaments in mortuary contexts, the most typical archaeological findspot for personal ornaments (Hodder 1987: 6–7). While patterns of self-presentation in death are detectable, patterns of self-presentation in life are more difficult to access, for one cannot necessarily assume that ornaments deposited in burials reproduce those worn in daily life, or that their meaning would be the same in both contexts. Hasanlu provided a unique opportunity for Marcus to undertake an initial investigation of the role of ornaments in the self-presentation of living individuals, examining a group of ornaments found alongside bodies crushed in the destruction of Burned Building II, a temple on the Citadel at Hasanlu (Marcus

1993) [Fig. 2]. The archaeology, however, of this extremely important context is regrettably problematic (Danti forthcoming b; Cifarelli 2013). Oscar Muscarella, one of the excavators of Hasanlu, has critiqued Marcus's interpretation of the rather chaotic archaeological contexts of the ornaments of Burned Building II, her association of items with specific skeletons, and the assignment of sex to those skeletons (Muscarella 2004).

The issues that Marcus and Muscarella raise about the archaeology of Hasanlu highlight the challenges inherent to working on material unearthed in an archaeological excavation carried out decades ago, for which there has been no comprehensive archaeological evaluation or final excavation report. The corpus of unpublished data associated with the Hasanlu Project is massive and at times opaque. The excavation notebooks and burial sheets make it clear that the deliberate burials were difficult to distinguish in the field, and they, as well as the skeletons crushed in the Citadel collapse, seem to have been hastily excavated, idiosyncratically recorded and many of the finds discarded (Cifarelli 2013). The placement and number of objects and their relationships to the bodies were not consistently or precisely recorded in the field, and written descriptions are occasionally at odds with photographic evidence (Muscarella 2004). To further complicate matters, examination of the objects in the University of Pennsylvania Museum's collection reveals occasional discrepancies between the physical objects in storage and the recorded descriptions, drawings and field photographs. Even within the corpus of graves, which are arguably simpler to interpret than the citadel destruction, it is



Fig. 2. Excavation of a skeleton in Burned Building II, Hasanlu, Iran (Photo Hasanlu Project archives)

therefore impossible to consider any burial assemblage or skeletal group as complete, or as necessarily discrete (Danti 2013; forthcoming b; Cifarelli 2013).

Recent years have seen a renewal of the project of publishing Hasanlu, particularly by Michael Danti, who has embarked on a systematic interpretation of the excavations that will result in publication of final excavation reports (Danti 2004; 2013; forthcoming b; Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming c). Karen Rubinson has demonstrated the links between the personal ornaments at Hasanlu and the south Caucasus (Rubinson 2012). In addition, the available skeletal remains have been reevaluated in terms of sex and age (Selinsky 2009). A volume on craft production at Hasanlu was published in 2011 (de Schauensee [ed.]

2011), contributing data to the study of personal ornaments made of metal and glass (Fleming *et alii* 2011; Stapleton 2011). Finally, the author has published the personal ornaments from the burials of the earlier periods (VIb–IVc) in the Outer Town cemetery (Cifarelli 2013), and with Michael Danti, an analysis of the Hasanlu Warrior Graves (Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming b). These new evaluations, and the reassessment and clarification of older archaeological data, bring about the need to revise conclusions reached without their benefit. It is interesting to point out, and it will be detailed below, that although certain, very fine points of Marcus's interpretations require revision based on new information, her overall approach to the issues and her broad conclusions remain sound.

## THE HASANLU “LION PINS”

The bulk of Marcus's published work has focused on the gendered use of various types of metal pins found at Hasanlu: shorter (<13 cm) garment pins, longer (13–30 cm) shroud pins, triangular plaque pins decorated with phalli, and heavy pins with elaborate cast lion-demon finials (Marcus 1993; 1994a; 1995; 1996a). In one of the earliest and most ambitious articles on gender and ornament at Hasanlu, Marcus drew upon post-processual or interpretive archaeology (Hodder 1987; Wiessner 1983) in her argument that the so called “lion pins” (large pins, 11–18 cm long,

approximately 283 mg each) in bronze and iron with leonine finials, functioned as emblems that both signaled and constructed elite group identities [Fig. 3].<sup>1</sup> This specific type of pin, crafted in what is often called the Hasanlu “Local Style,” is unique to Hasanlu and emerges in the archaeological record during Hasanlu Period IVb (Marcus 1993). All of the 97 examples from the controlled excavations of the Hasanlu Excavation Project were found in the Citadel, and of these, 69 were found in the spectacularly gruesome destruction of Burned Building II (BB II), a structure

<sup>1</sup> A few of these pins retain what seem to be links of a chain attached by a loop to the lion's hindquarters. The role of this chain in fastening, and the overall suitability of these thick-shafted, heavy pins for closing garments, is not entirely clear. The few examples found directly on bodies, appear to have been worn near the shoulders (Marcus 1993) and Muscarella (2004: 698) has suggested that they pierced heavy woolen fabric. Indeed, recent analysis of textile pseudomorphs on the shaft of one lion pin (HAS62-525) suggests that this pin pierced a weft-faced, balance plain weave (Love 2011; de Schauensee [ed.] 2011: 71, Pl. 3.6).

on the Citadel identified as a temple, in which 62 individuals (Muscarella 2004: 693), mostly residents but also some of the attacking foes, were crushed, in some cases after they had been murdered. Other lion pins are said to have originated

from burials, but none of these came from controlled excavations (Marcus 1993: 163).

The BB II context is chaotic and difficult to reconstruct from the available records. Certainly, at least some of the bodies of those who died there were

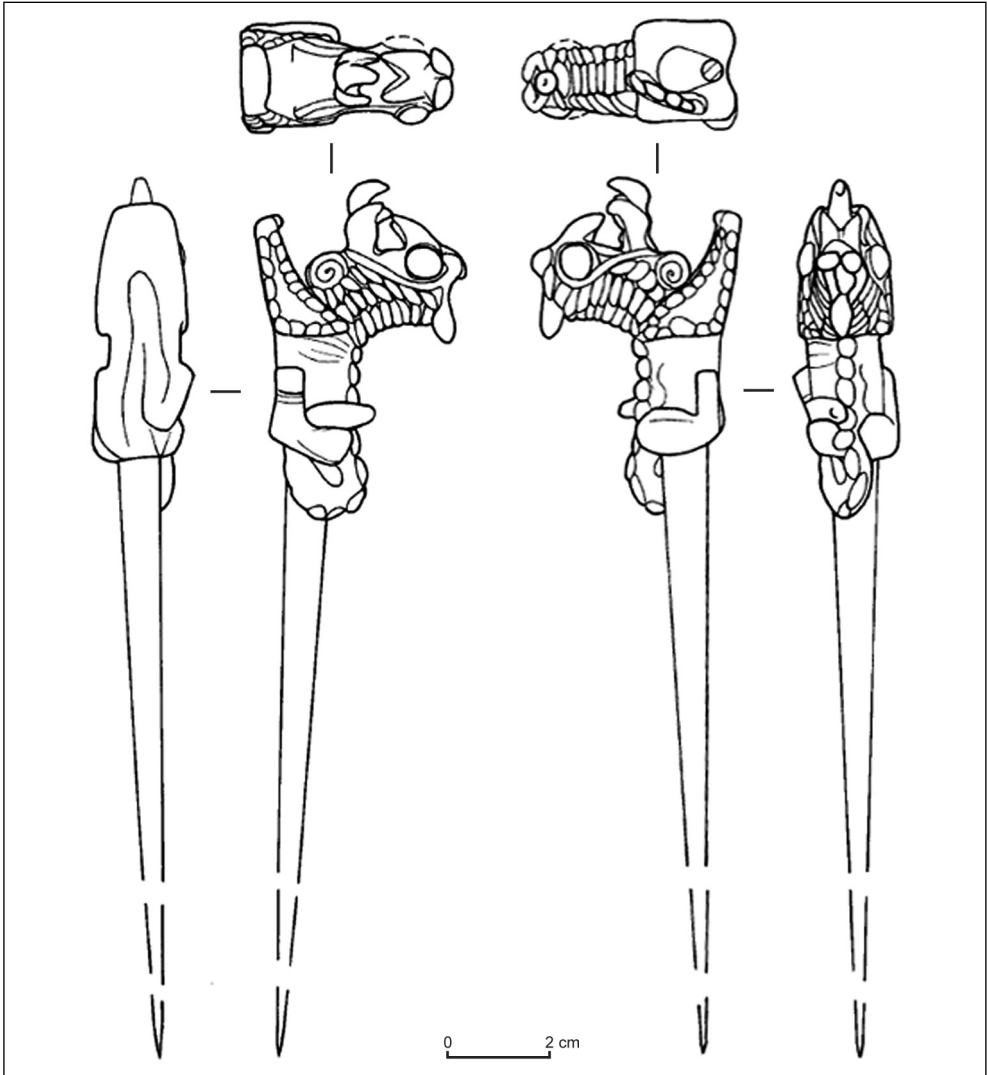


Fig. 3. Cast bronze lion pin with iron shaft (HAS 60-572, UPM 61-5-242) found near skeleton SK 156 in Burned Building II. Length 18 cm (Drawing D.L. Hoffman)



adorned, while others were not, although their jewelry might have been stripped from them. The situation is complicated by the fact that the upper stories of this structure, which held storerooms filled with prestige goods including jewelry, collapsed onto the ground floor as the building burned. The collapse of the building was sudden and thorough, crushing its contents and inhabitants, possibly mixing stored ornaments with those worn by the deceased. In such a murky archaeological context, with the issues detailed above, the task of assigning particular objects to particular bodies is far from straightforward. Moreover, damage to many of the bodies was so extensive that it was not possible to definitively determine their sex (Danti forthcoming b). For these reasons, Muscarella took issue with Marcus's interpretation of these

pins as relating specifically to roles of women and children at Hasanlu (2004). The re-evaluation of the significance and social function of these pins lies outside the scope of this article and will be addressed in the final excavation volume on the Hasanlu IVb Citadel (Danti forthcoming b). It is important to note, however, that the heart of Marcus's argument — that the elite contexts in which the lion pins are found, particularly the dense clustering in the temple (BBII), the iconographic significance of lions as royal and divine attributes in Mesopotamian art, and the evidence for increased militarization and conflict in this period, all indicate that these pins could be emblems of status, lineage or group affiliation (Marcus 1993) — is not dependent on the direct association of pins with individual bodies.

## PINS, GENDER AND MILITARIZATION

Marcus's work on garment and shroud pins furthered her exploration of the gendered use and social function of personal ornaments at Hasanlu (Marcus 1994a). The shorter pins (<13 cm) appear to have been used to close women's garments [*Fig. 5*] (Marcus 1994a; Cifarelli 2013) and the much rarer long pins (>14–36 cm), which are unattested before Period IVb, to close burial shrouds [*Figs 4, 6*] (Marcus 1994a). She drew together a wealth of literary evidence, ranging from Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean world, to mid-century America, as evidence for the notion that garment closures can communicate and enforce female virtue, and that long, sharp pins can be used as weapons for personal protection.

Using more recent anthropological research (Selinsky 2009), we have refined Marcus's shroud pin category, concluding that there were two classes of these rare, long dangerous pins, those with decorated finials, which are found in female burials ("shroud pins"), and those with a needle-headed finial, which seem to be associated with men, both in burials and in the destruction levels of the Citadel. Of Marcus's two "older adult males" found buried with "shroud pins" (Marcus 1994a: 12; following Rathbun 1972), one is now believed to be a young adult female (SK58, Selinsky 2009: 209). The second (SK37) is a young adult male (Selinsky 2009: 208) who is part of the Gold Bowl group, that is, three enemy soldiers who

were crushed as they were (almost certainly) attempting to loot Burned Building I on the citadel [Fig. 7]. In addition to the famous Gold Bowl (Winter 1989), these men had a substantial amount of looted goods, which may have included the long, needle-headed pin found beneath Skeleton SK37.

Interestingly, a pin not mentioned by Marcus, but which was found buried with a definitively male skeleton (SK493, Selinsky 2009: 214), is nearly identical to that found with SK37 of the Gold Bowl group [Fig. 8] (Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming b). The burial of SK493 is one of a small number of Warrior Graves, male burials with a militarized assemblage that included spear points, dagger, sheet metal copper-alloy belts, and copper-alloy *omphalos* vessels [Fig. 9] (Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming b).

Our refinement calls therefore into question Marcus' finer-grained analyses of the association of pin types with women's life stages (Marcus 1994a: 5–7), and of the possibility of a third gender at Hasanlu (Marcus 1994a: 12), while affirming her assertion of the gendered use of personal ornaments. The presence of one of these needle-headed pins in one of our Warrior Graves, as well as under the body of one of the men who died looting the famous Gold Bowl (Burials SK493 and SK37, Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming a), upholds Marcus's claim that long pins could function militarily and mark their wearers as members of a militarized elite. The shroud pins that occur exclusively with female burials not only resemble and are analogous to daggers found in male burials and on male bodies in the Citadel as Marcus suggests, but to these masculine,

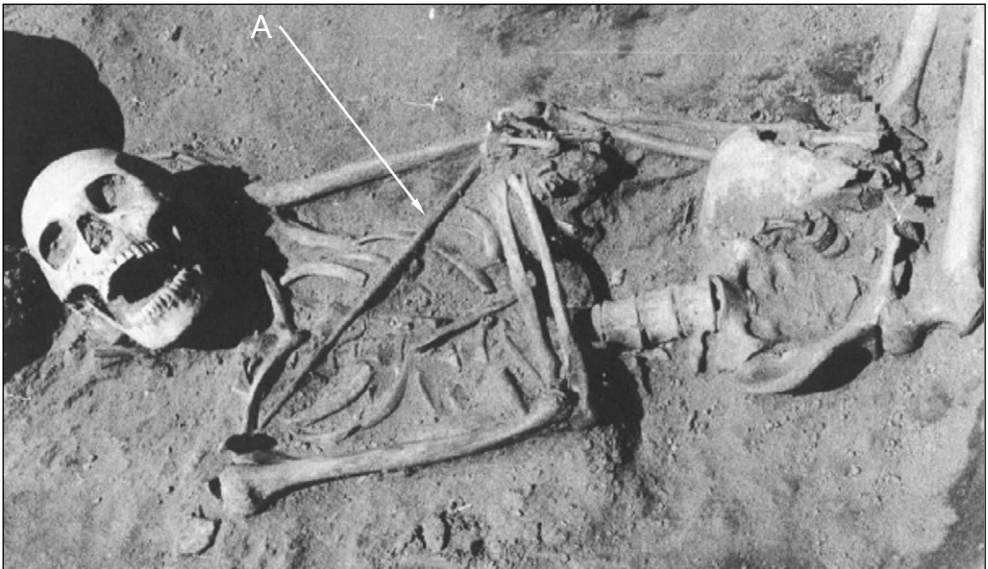


Fig. 4. Detail of an older female skeleton (SK59) in the Low Mound cemetery with shroud pin diagonally across her chest [see A in Fig. 6]; a second shroud pin, removed before this photograph was taken, ran horizontally across her shoulders (Photo Hasanlu Ptroject archives)

long needle-headed pins as well. As such, the introduction of this new artifact type in Period IVb represents the militarization of both women's and men's personal ornament as a function of the militarization of Hasanlu society in general.

Marcus's argument that women's personal ornaments at Hasanlu participated visually in the militarization of the local elite finds its most convincing and provocative expression in a small group of artifacts associated with five burials from the Outer Town, four of which were excavated as part of the Hasanlu Excavation project (Marcus 1996a). These objects are small rounded triangular plaques, approximately 8 cm in length, that were fastened to the chest by means of a pin through fabric or leather [Figs 10, 11, left]. Made of sheet bronze, they are decorated

with raised bosses around their perimeter and with a schematic but unmistakable erect phallus in relief on the surface. The skeletons in four of these burials have been definitely sexed as a female (Selinsky 2009) and all four burials include long shroud pins (Marcus 1996a). These plaques are identical in size and shape to bronze and iron armor scales found across the Near East from sites as widespread as Lachish, Nuzi and Nimrud, most of which have a more schematic vertical element as a strengthening central ridge (Barron 2010: 247). Indeed, as Marcus points out, similar objects (probably armor scales) were found at Hasanlu in a storeroom within BB II, although the Hasanlu examples are made of iron, are not perforated and are decorated with bronze rivets of a type used locally for armor, with a more

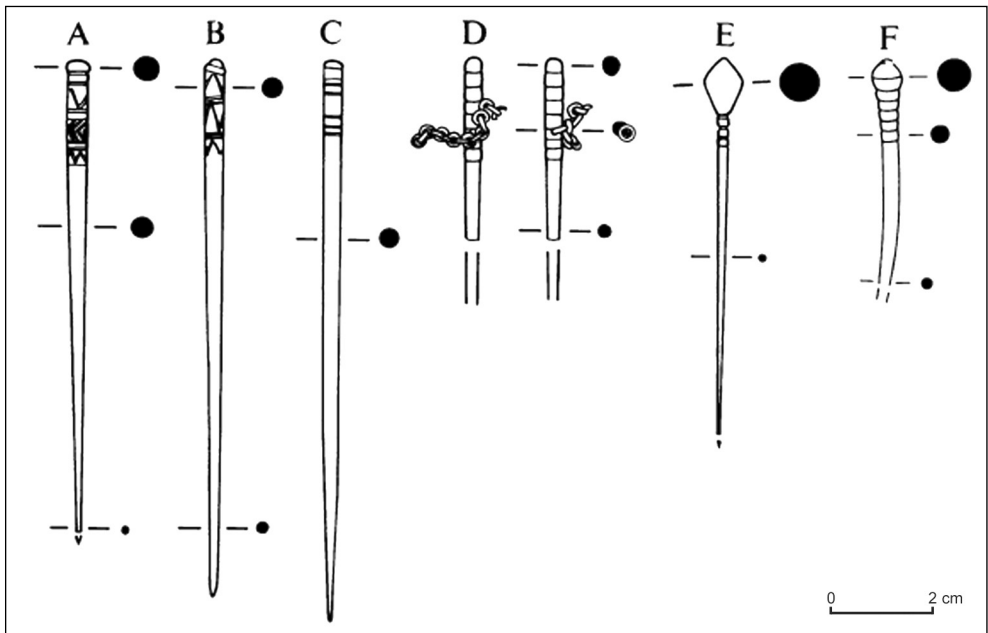


Fig. 5. Selected garment pins from Hasanlu, Iran  
(Drawing D.L. Hoffman)

typically schematic central rib (Marcus 1996a) [Fig. 11, right]. Although these objects resemble armor scales, a parallel for their use as women's personal adornment comes from a late Bronze or early Iron Age dolmens at Djonu and Chagoula Derre in Talish region of Azerbaijan and Iran, where de Morgan excavated what he

referred to as women's burials with belts constructed of rows of rounded, triangular plaques of sheet bronze with *repoussée* dots around the perimeter and a raised rib in the center, providing additional evidence for interaction between the Talish region and Hasanlu (Schaeffer 1948: 431–433, Fig. 233 No. 30).<sup>2</sup>

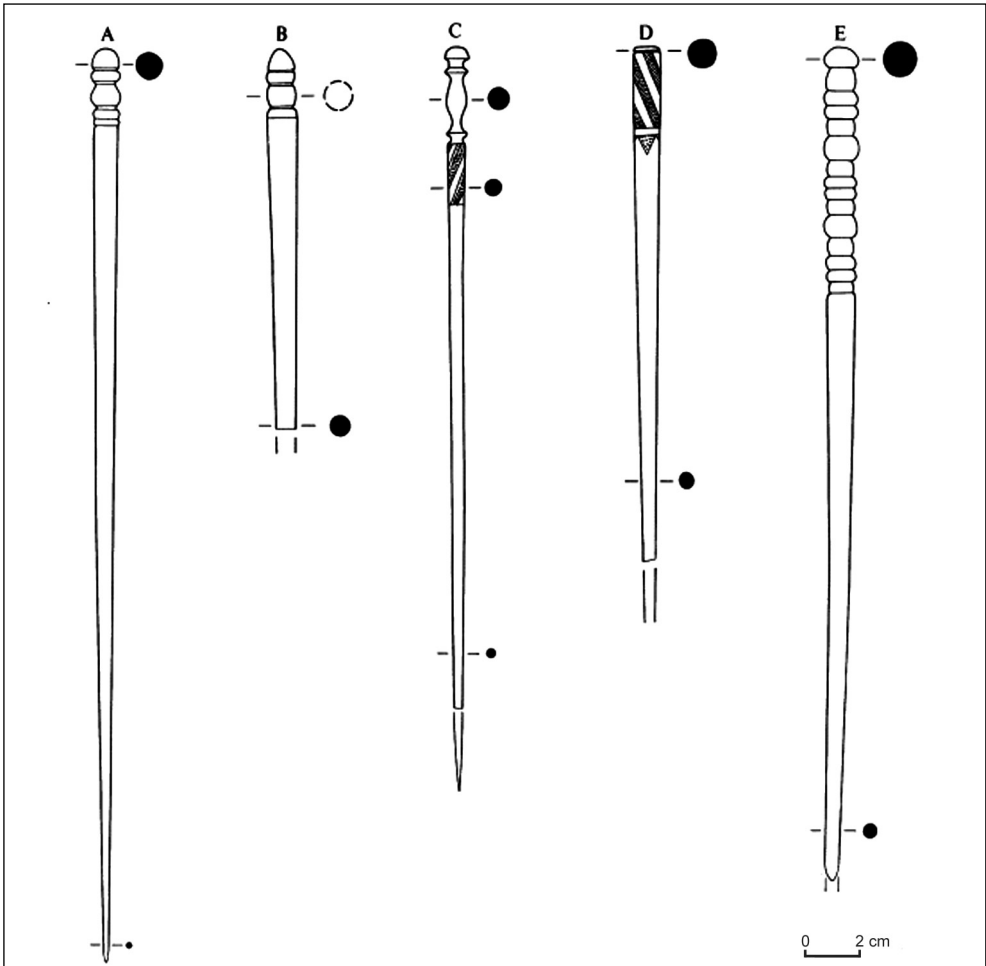
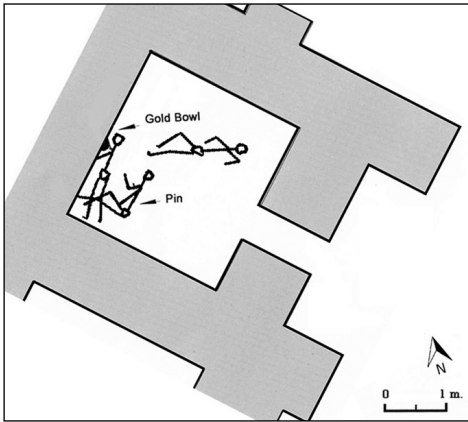


Fig. 6. Selection of shroud pins from Hasanlu, Iran. Pins A (HAS 59-97) and B (HAS 59-112) were found with Skeleton SK59 [see Fig. 4] (Drawing D.L. Hoffman)

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Michael Danti and Manuel Castellucia, who drew my attention to this parallel.



These objects, which juxtapose imagery that is certainly phallic (and may in fact be sexual, if one reads, as Marcus does, the triangular shape of the plaque itself as a vulva) with an object type that is related to armor, are placed exclusively on the bodies of women, who are already “armed” with shroud pins. As Marcus points out, female sexuality and war coincide in the powerful Mesopotamian goddess Inanna/

Fig. 7. Gold Bowl group, Burned Building I West, Hasanlu, Iran  
(Drawing Hasanlu Project archives)

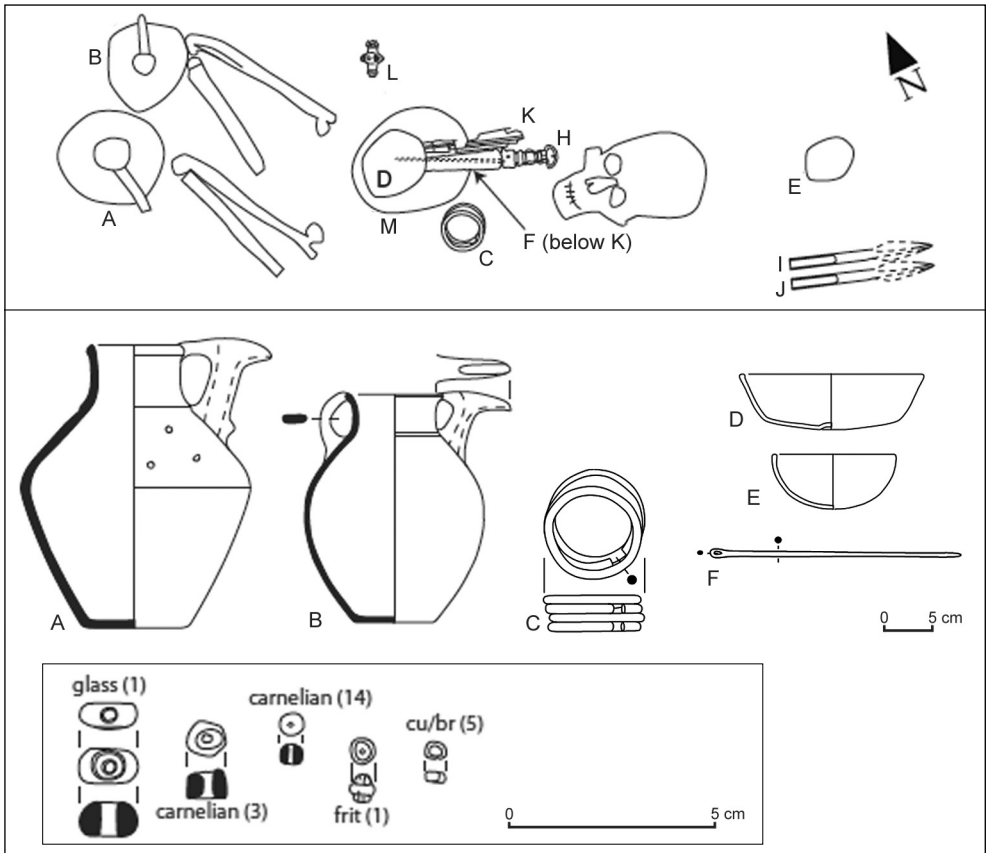


Fig. 8. Burial SK 493: top, excavator's sketch of the burial; bottom, grave goods accompanying the burial  
(Drawing Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming b: Fig. 25)

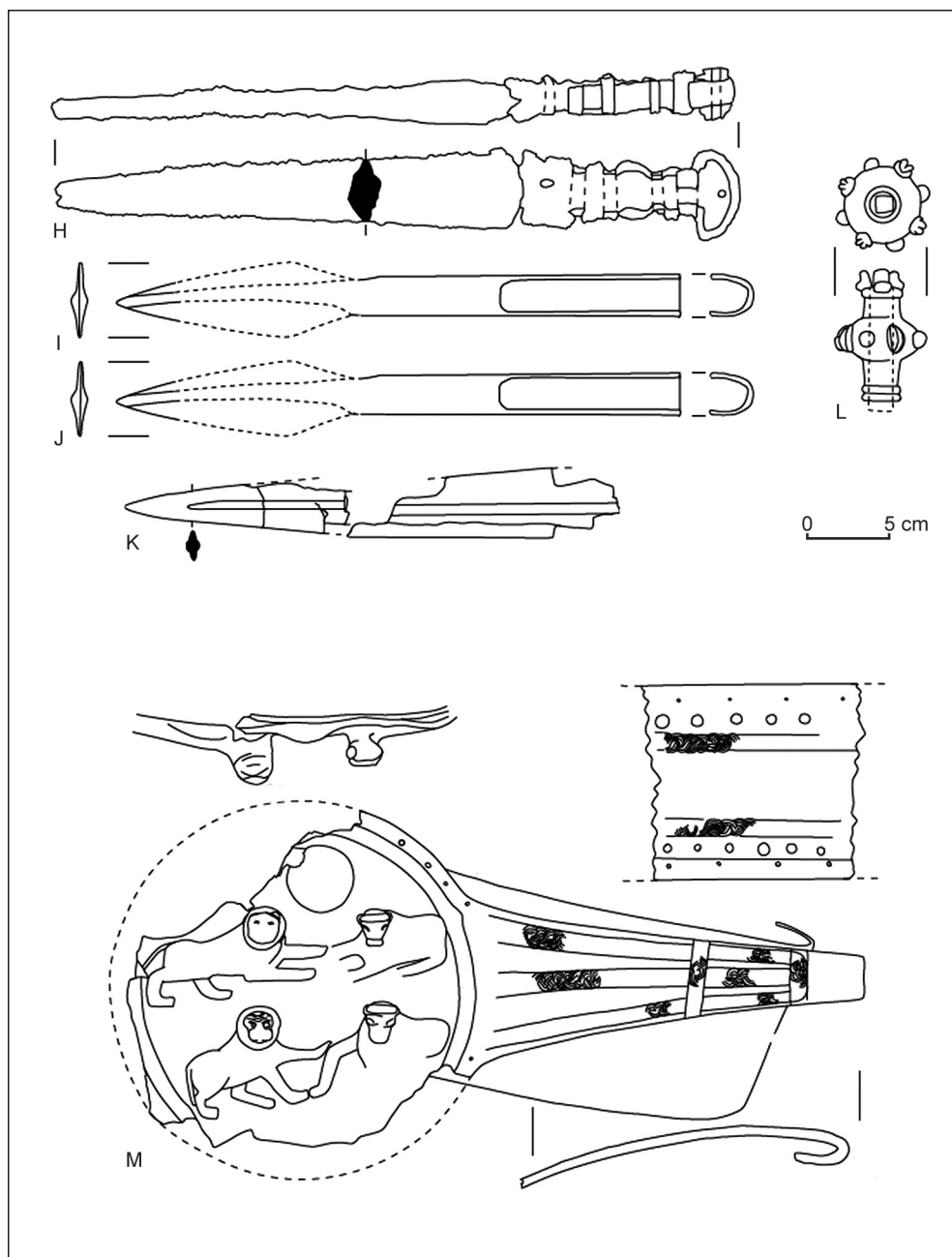
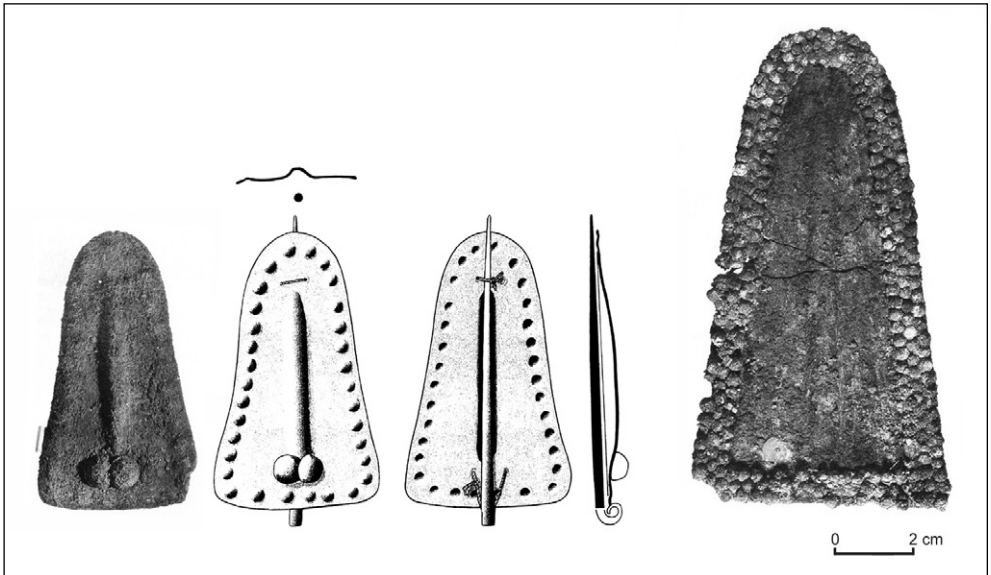


Fig. 9. Burial SK 493. Grave goods  
(After Danti, *Cifarelli forthcoming b*: Fig. 26)



Ishtar, and in the placement of nude female figures and the vulva/triangle motif as a decoration on equestrian armor. The phallus is a powerful, incontrovertibly masculine sign, which Marcus interprets in this context as signifying masculine military power, identifying these women as members of an armed, secure, elite group (1996a: 51). It seems equally possible that the phallus is more generally apotropaic in this context, as it is in so many ancient cultures (e.g., Slane, Dickie 1993), matching the metaphysical protection of an armor scale with that of a powerful protective symbol. The

*Fig. 10. Burial SK 448, showing plaque HAS 64-350 in situ. Note the shroud pin on the upper body as well (Photo Hasanlu Project archives)*



*Fig. 11. Bronze breast plaque (HAS 64-193, UPM 65-31-113) found on the chest of female burial, right, and iron armor scale with bronze decoration (HAS 60-703) from Burned Building II, Hasanlu, Iran (Photo Hasanlu Project archives; drawing D.L. Hoffman)*

potential of phallic amulets for protecting, in particular, the fertility of its wearer is illustrated by the 19th century Armenian practice of women wearing *khiar* (cucumber) amulets to magically promote fertility (Israeli 2011). In any case, these plaques may have endowed the bodies of these four elite women with masculine (phallus) power and protection (armor). It is by no means a far leap of the imagination to suggest, given the likely patriarchal nature of such a society, that ornaments superimposing a phallus onto women's bodies were conferred on the women by the men.

In her analyses of the emergence of these object types and their appearance in the burials in the Outer Town Cemetery in particular, Marcus suggested that the Hasanlu Period IVb burials manifest a marked increase in evidence for social stratification at Hasanlu (Marcus 1993). However, further investigation of personal ornaments from earlier burials in the Outer Town cemetery at Hasanlu (Period VIb–IVc, approximately 1900–1000 BC) has revealed considerable evidence for social stratification at the site as early as the Middle Bronze Age. Within each period, these burials varied significantly in terms of the number and value of the personal ornaments included with the burial goods and the fact that a number of these burials were those of young children, strongly suggests the presence of prominent families.

The determination of the “elite” nature of certain ornaments found in these earlier mortuary contexts relies, in part, on comparison to objects found in the Hasanlu IVb citadel destruction. I have argued elsewhere that these contexts — the sealed storerooms in Hasanlu's monumental buildings and the bodies of those who

died after seeking refuge in those buildings — are inherently elite, and the ornaments found therein prestigious by association. In particular, the objects discovered in the temple storerooms had a high relative value, for they had been intentionally collected over the course of several generations, stored and, in some cases, sealed, and can therefore be said to have been controlled by the elite at the site (Cifarelli 2013).

A few examples will demonstrate the chronological range of this practice. Burial SK45 from Period VIb (approximately MB II or 1900–1600 BC) contains groups of beads that include perforated *Arcularia* shells, a relatively rare and exotic material from the Mediterranean also found in the storerooms of BB II, as well as in sacral contexts throughout Mesopotamia during the 2nd millennium (Cifarelli 2013). Burials SK 57 and 494, from Hasanlu Period IVc Iron Age I (1250–1050 BC) contain cylinder seals quite similar to those found in the citadel destruction. Burial SK494 is that of an infant, with a fabulously varied string of valuable beads at its neck, including an Iranian style blue-green frit cylinder seal with a geometric design (Cifarelli 2013; Marcus 1996b). The use of cylinder seals as necklace beads is typical at Hasanlu, where there are a number of seals but very little evidence for sealing (Marcus 1989). More remarkable is Burial SK57, of a mature male (Selinsky 2009: 209) buried with a cylinder seal inside his mouth (Marcus 1994b; Cifarelli 2013). Marcus has convincingly argued that this placement represents a magical or ritual “sealing” of the mouth of the dead to prevent the pollution of the living. This rather strange placement is perhaps anticipated by the similar placement of a large, well-polished carnelian bead in



the mouth of Burial SK45 from Period VIb (above), a correspondence that suggests that at Hasanlu the mouth may have been considered a “safe” place for the placement of valuables, but more importantly argues for cultural continuity over the centuries among the elite at the site (Cifarelli 2013).

Finally, cultural continuity from the Middle Bronze Age (Period VIc) mortuary material through the Period IVb destruction is further evidenced by the presence in Burial SK24 (Period IVc), a mature female, of bracelets with snake-headed terminals, an ornament type that occurs in burials and in the Citadel in Period IVb (Cifarelli 2013). In their analysis of snake terminal bracelets in deliberate burials as well as in the destruction of BB II, Rubinson and Marcus have argued that this type of bracelet, in conjunction with a particular type of pin, demonstrates either individual or cultural connections to the southern Caucasus region, specifically the site of Artik in Armenia, during Hasanlu Period IVb (Rubinson, Marcus 2005). Bracelets with snake-headed terminals are also found in burials in the Talish region (e.g., Schaeffer 1948: Fig. 237, Nos 7, 11). The discovery of this object type in a Period IVc burial deepens our understanding of the connections between Hasanlu Periods IVc and IVb, and between Hasanlu, Talish and the southern Caucasus, confirming that these northern components are a consistent feature of the Hasanlu *koine* (Cifarelli 2013).

Clearly, the patterns of distribution of these “elite” ornaments in the cemetery

hint at the continuity, complexity and hierarchical nature of Hasanlu society in the Middle and Late Bronze age, as well as the early Iron Age. Social stratification, then, does not emerge in Period IVb as Marcus concludes. The objects that are new to Hasanlu in burials from period IVb, including the long shroud pins, long needle-headed pins, phallic plaques and lion pins, are found integrated into elite burial assemblages that largely resemble those from earlier periods. These forms of adornment are, as Marcus has demonstrated, gendered in their use, and military in inspiration. Moreover, they appear to be culturally related to regions to the north, particularly the Talish or Transcaucasia.

It is not coincidental that Period IVb also witnessed the introduction of a type of Warrior Grave in the Low Mound cemetery [e.g., see *Figs 9, 10*] (Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming b). These burials (SK105–108, 107 and 493) are also characterized by classes of objects that are not attested at Hasanlu before Period IVb: personal ornaments made of iron,<sup>3</sup> bronze sheet metal belts (decorated and undecorated), iron tools and weapons, short swords, mace heads and spear points. The military character of these warrior assemblages is clear, not simply due to the inclusion of weapons, but the metal belts as well (Rubinson 2012). Certain weapon types in these burials, moreover, are paralleled by those found in the Talish region (Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming b, c; Thornton, Pigott 2011).

<sup>3</sup> The iron ring was embedded in a stack of four rings, the other three of which were of bronze. Mentioned first by Dyson (1965: 196), the ring was described by Pigott (1977: 223) as “... the only iron artifact presently known to have come from a well-stratified Iron I context in Azerbaijan ...”. Reassigning this ring to a Hasanlu IVb burial is warranted archaeologically, it makes sense in terms of the chronological distribution of iron artifacts in the region, and stacked rings do not generally appear at Hasanlu until Period IVb.

Selinsky's determination that skeletons SK107 and SK493 are male (the others were poorly preserved) suggests that this type of assemblage is masculine and the presence of objects of these classes (particularly iron ornaments and metal belts) in the storerooms of the citadel points to their elite status as well (Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming b, c). These Warrior Grave assemblages provide a masculine complement to the objects that decorated women's bodies studied by Marcus. We can therefore broaden and extend her findings regarding the use of personal ornaments to manifest a newly militarized elite at Hasanlu.

When viewed against the backdrop of broad cultural continuity and consistent complexity across time at Hasanlu, the introduction of these armaments and militarized forms of personal adornment in a small subset of the Hasanlu burials from Period IVb has broader implications for understanding the socio-political forces

at work in northwestern Iran in the early Iron Age. The coexistence of established elite goods with newly introduced objects hints at the cultural complexity of this site, situated as it is near an important route by which Assyrians approached Urartu and by which Urartians would access their cult center of Musasir. While much has been made of the "assyrianization" of the site of Hasanlu, and the use of Assyrian and assyrianizing objects as emblems of prestige at the site, the personal ornaments in the graves provide no evidence to support this position (Danti, Cifarelli forthcoming a). Rather, the newly introduced items of adornment and armaments in elite burials display stronger connections to the Talish region and the southern Caucasus. Their relatively abrupt appearance may suggest the coming to Hasanlu of individuals with ties to the Talish region or the South Caucasus, perhaps displaced by the expansion of the burgeoning Urartian state.

## CONCLUSIONS

The current publication project, which will result in long-awaited final excavation reports, strives to integrate the new data produced by scientific analysis of the archaeological remains, with a reevaluation of the data produced by the original excavations. This approach will yield a broader and deeper understanding of the different archaeological contexts at Hasanlu, across synchronic and diachronic axes. Naturally, this work will necessitate some revisions and refinements to the conclusions of researchers studying personal ornaments and other

artifacts at Hasanlu without the benefit of this broader understanding. Conclusions drawn from new research, such as that on the burial assemblages in the Warrior Graves in the Low Mound cemetery at Hasanlu, align well with broad conclusions drawn by Marcus with respect to women's burial assemblages in Period IVb at the site. It seems quite clear now that the adorned bodies of men and women played significant roles in the construction and communication of militarized group identity that emerged at Hasanlu during Period IVb.

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