

Last Vestige of Nomadic Pastoralism

Frank Hole



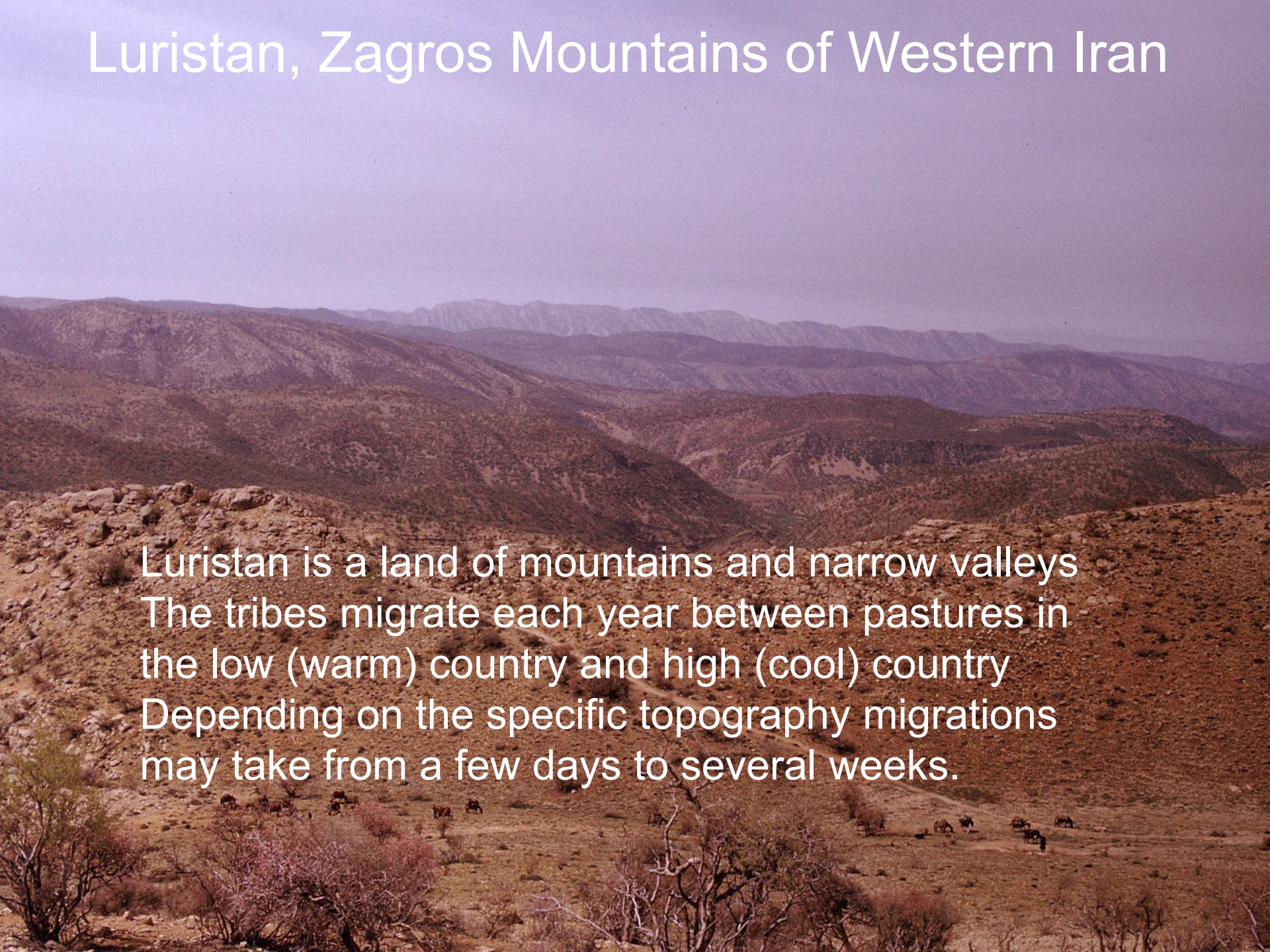
SUNY, Stony Brook, September 19, 2012

Last Vestige of Nomadic Pastoralism

- A bit of geography and history
- A bit of social anthropology
- A lot of migration, including some video clips
- Quick look at an ancient nomad camp

Luristan, Zagros Mountains of Western Iran

Luristan is a land of mountains and narrow valleys
The tribes migrate each year between pastures in
the low (warm) country and high (cool) country
Depending on the specific topography migrations
may take from a few days to several weeks.



My Migration in 1973

- Arranged by an Iranian Anthropology student and tribal member, Sekandar Amanolahi Baharvand



- The migration took about two weeks and was followed by about six weeks of visiting other nomadic camps

Goals of My Trip

- To try to discover the origins of nomadic pastoralism
- To learn how to manage herds of sheep and goats
- To learn how to travel and how to camp
- To discover what kinds of traces nomads leave
- To find ancient nomad sites

Migration Route

- We started in March at the winter camp in Chin-i-Zal and ended high in the mountains above the city of Khorramabad
- We traveled over successively higher mountains at each stage
- We camped for one or more days at each stop, depending on available pasture for the animals



Legend

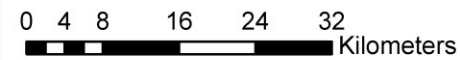
- Area of Inset map



Chin-i-Zal Migration route

Legend

- Migration Stops
- Migration Route



Khorramabad



Migration route

Chin-i-Zal

© 2007 Europa Technologies

Image © 2007 TerraMetrics

© 2007 Google™

Pointer 33°06'40.74" N 48°25'23.14" E elev 6180 ft Streaming ||||| 100%

Eye alt 52.26 mi

Winter campground: Chin-I-Zal



A Little History

- Lurs are one of many tribes of Western Iran – others are Kurds, Laki, Bakhtiari, Qashgai
- Traditionally independent and often feared by the central government
- Regarded by European travelers as lawless, liars, thieves and murderers
- Conquered and settled by Reza Shah's forces in late 1920s
- Resumed migration during and after WWII

Social Organization

- Tribal
- Descent through male line with eldest male first in line - primogeniture
- Tribes have “ancestor” male
- Tribal sub-sections (e.g., Baharvand) are named for their lineage ancestor
- Camping units have fluid composition, but often are composed of close relatives



The sheltered winter camp in Chin-i-Zal where they do some cultivation of wheat



The Ab-i-Zal river

The Ab-i-Zal upstream from the winter camp







Breaking camp and packing for migration

























Kialon Kuh



































Summer pasture and wheat fields

Results?

- I accomplished my main goals to learn how nomadic pastoralists travel, where they camp, and what kinds of things I might look for as an archaeologist
- I recorded many installations, such as acorn grinders and kilns, grain bins, watering troughs, tent foundations, etc
- Soon after the trip I excavated an 8500-year old nomad camp – the first of its kind discovered

Lessons from the migration

- Transhumance essential for the animals to find fresh forage
- Distances may be short if route is vertical
- Tents and pack animals not necessary
- Wild foods, both game and vegetable were readily available in the past
- Nomads had small farms in both winter and summer camp grounds
- Shift from settled to nomad relatively easy

Facilities made by nomads in the Zagros Mountains

- Tent bases, partially outlined with rocks
- Rock platform to hold skin bags and bedding off the ground
- Mangers
- Water troughs
- Acorn crushers and kilns
- Grain and straw storage bins
- Pens and corrals for animals







Tepe Tula'i, an ancient herders' camp

- Located on a semi-arid steppe grassland in the northwestern part of Khuzistan
- Among the hottest places on earth in summer, Khuzistan receives about 15" of rain in the cool winter
- Traditional Luri and Bakhtiari pastoralists move seasonally between Khuzistan in the winter and the nearby mountains in summer
- Tula'i is about 8500 years old

Landscape of Tepe Tula'l, Khuzistan, Iran-
Winter pasture of Luri pastoral nomads



Tula', an 8500-year old campsite



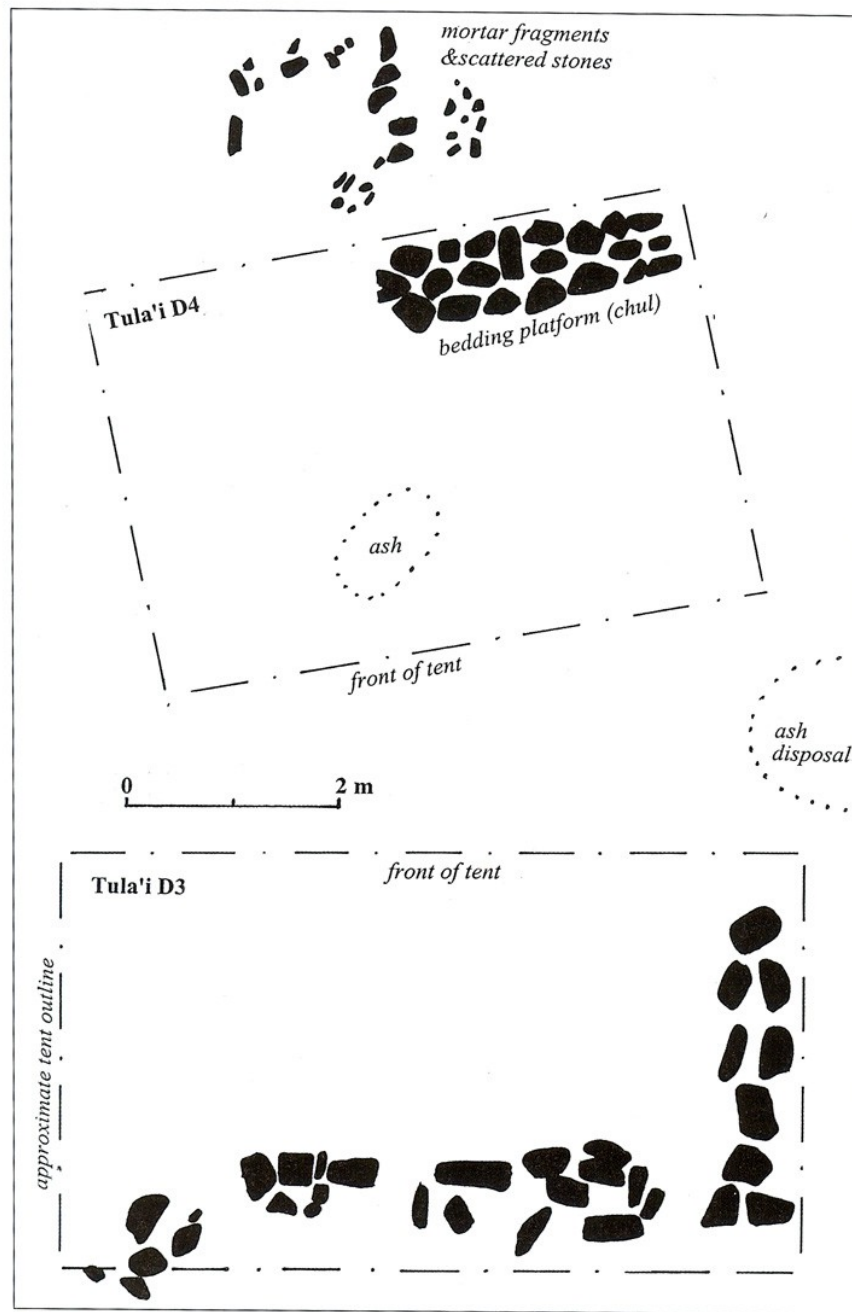


Fig. 5. Two archaeological traces of tent sites at Tula'i in Khuzistan.





8500-year old pottery and figurines from Tula'i

Now we look at some video

- I took these pictures in 1973 with a Hi8 film video camera. Each film reel was good for about 3 minutes. None of the footage was staged. I filmed activities when I could, sometimes from horseback. The clips that follow show the people in motion and some of their daily activities.

Laki Transhumants

- Studied in 1959-50 by Patty Jo Watson, this is a tribe that takes a one-day migration from their winter village of Mangalat to their summer pasture, Duzaray
- En route, setting up tents, collecting water
- Shearing sheep

























































