

Description

The "Hasanlu Lovers" are two skeletons discovered in 1973 at the Iron Age site of Teppe Hasanlu in northwestern Iran, dating to approximately 800 B.C.E. They were found in a mudbrick bin, locked in a final embrace during a violent military attack that destroyed the settlement. For decades, the pair was widely assumed to be a man and a woman. Modern DNA and osteological analysis have confirmed that both individuals were chromosomally male. Neither showed signs of fatal trauma; they almost certainly died of asphyxiation from fire and smoke while hiding.

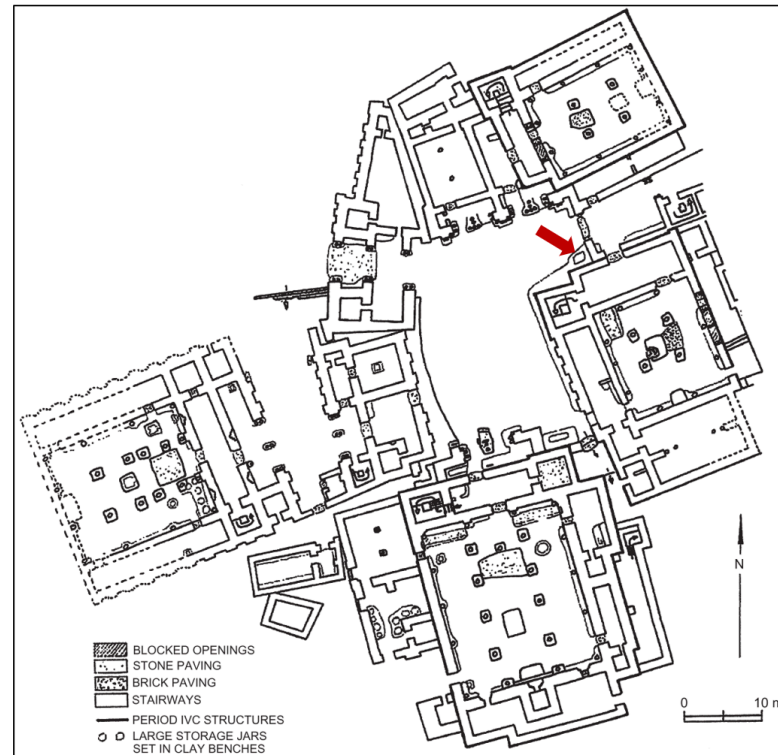
Teppe Hasanlu was a significant Iron Age settlement, and its destruction around 800 B.C.E. was sudden and total. The archaeological record captures a city overtaken by violence: valuables abandoned, bodies left where they fell. The two men in the mudbrick bin were among the civilians caught in that catastrophe, with no grave goods beyond a stone slab beneath their heads — not a formal burial, but the position in which they were found when the site was excavated nearly 3 millennia later.



Map showing the location of Teppe Hasanlu in northwestern Iran.

Image by Bes365

Isotopic data established that both men were local to the Hasanlu area and consumed similar diets, suggesting they were from the same community. Genomic testing found no evidence of a familial relationship. The exact nature of their bond remains unknown. Their discovery has become a significant case study in the limitations of projecting modern assumptions onto the archaeological record — about gender, identity, and social relationships in the ancient world. It is also a clear forensic record of the human cost of Iron Age conflict: two individuals, known to each other, who died together in the destruction of their city.



Modern population	Distance
Kurdish (Turkey)	1.833
Talysh (Azerbaijan)	2.018
Kurdish (Iran)	2.193
Yazidi	2.252

Modern population	Distance
Lur (Lorestan)	2.313
Bukharan Jew	2.519
Persian (Tehran)	2.559
Zoroastrian (Shiraz)	2.610
Udi (Azerbaijan)	2.641
Kurdish (Iraq)	2.650

Source

Date: 789–546 BCE

Y-DNA: R-FGC14590, R-Y88647

mtDNA: H, X2d

Location: Iran

Research: The genetic history of the Southern Arc: A bridge between West Asia and Europe

Sample(s): I4269.AG, I4280.AG