



Recognition, Chronology, and Analysis of Cultural Interactions of Sarab Tepe, Khorasan Razavi Province, Northeast Iran


Javad Khodadoost¹ , Mahboobeh Rahmatzadeh², Hossein Kouhestani Andarzi³


Abstract

Hezar Masjed and Shahneshin mountain ranges can be considered amongst the easternmost heights of Iran in Khorasan Razavi Province, which stretch in the northwest-southeast direction and have created a natural corridor leading to the Harirud River banks. This feature, along with favorable living conditions, has attracted human communities and habitats for a long time. The historical site of Sarab Tepe is one of these settlements, which is located 30km west of Saleh Abad County and at the northeast of a village of the same name. Abundant and diverse cultural materials on the surface of the site and archaeological reports show the importance of this site in terms of archaeological studies. Therefore, this research is carried out to understand the eras of settlement and its cultural interactions. The results show that this site was home to settlements in the prehistoric era (Early Bronze Age) and the Islamic era (9th to 11th century AD). Sarab Tepe's findings from the prehistoric era indicate its cultural interactions and connections with other sites of the Early Bronze Age in northeastern Iran. The findings belonging to the Islamic era are also similar to the findings of Neyshabur. The results show the extensive connections of this site with the most important cultural centers of its time.

Keywords: Khorasan; Saleh Abad County; Sarab Tepe; Early Bronze Age; Islamic era.

¹ PhD of Archaeology, University of Mazandaran, Mazandaran, Iran (Corresponding Author)  j.khodadoost@umail.umz.ac.ir

² MA of Archaeology, University of Birjand, South Khorasan, Iran  mahboobeh.rahmatzadeh1376@gmail.com

³ Assistant Professor of Archaeology, University of Birjand, South Khorasan, Iran  hkoohestani@birjand.ac.ir

Article info: Received: 17 December 2023 | Accepted: 8 March 2024 | Published: 1 July 2024

Citation: Khodadoost, Javad; Rahmatzadeh, Mahboobeh; Kouhestani Andarzi, Hossein. (2024). "Recognition, Chronology, and Analysis of Cultural Interactions of Sarab Tepe, Khorasan Razavi Province, Northeast Iran". *Persica Antiqua*, Vol. 4 (7): 5-18.

<https://doi.org/10.22034/pa.2024.43113.1073>

Introduction

Saleh Abad County is located 190km southeast of Mashhad, Khorasan Raza-vi Province at coordinates $34^{\circ}41'15''$ N, $60^{\circ}05'42''$ E. This county is bordered by Sarakhs in the north, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan in the east, Torbat-e-Jam in the south and Mashhad in the west. Saleh Abad Plain is considered part of the central zone of Iran in terms of natural geography and is located at the end of the Binalud mountain range in the south and Kopet Dag in the north and is separated from the counties of Sarakhs and Torbat-e Jam. These natural ridges act as a high wall, affect the natural appearance of the plain and have caused water currents and even transportation routes to be arranged accordingly. On the other hand, these natural fences appear as a barrier against the movement of clouds, leading to sufficient rainfall and the emergence of rivers and springs at the foothills. Saleh Abad Plain is about 73km long and about 20km wide. Through natural mountain paths, this plain reaches Mashhad (Fig. 1).

Saleh Abad Plain is also referred to as Zoor Abad in historical sources. This plain has always been the focus of human societies as a natural passage between Herat and the plains of southern Turkmenistan and Central Asia. Archaeological evidence consists of fortifications, castles, and bridges such as Pol-e Khatun, which was built on the Harirud River, shows the importance of this route in the historical relations of Khorasan. Harirud passes through the low plains and after connecting to Kashafrud, it continues to the Karakum Desert without any natural obstacle and creates a natural corridor to

connect with the northern areas of Kopet Dag. In the Islamic era, this route and the passage of military forces were mentioned. Al-Baladhuri and Ibn Athir's references show that Yazdgerd III of the Sasanian Empire travelled to Merv via this route (Al-Baladhuri, 1960: 568; Ibn-Athir, 2000: 9/203). Khvandamir also mentioned the retreat of the Ghaznavid army from Merv to Herat via the same route (Khvandamir, 2001: 2/483). During the Timurid era, this route was very important due to its location between Herat and Merv, and the numerous castles related to this period corroborate the information found in historical sources from the Timurid era (Khvandamir, 2001: 3/430; Zamaji Asfzari, 1960: 2/37; Tatavi & Qazvini, 2003: 8/5393; Tatavi & Qazvini, 2003: 8/ 5340). The importance of this road in the Safavid and Qajar eras was more than ever due to the continuous attacks of the Turkmens, and for this reason, this route is mentioned in various sources of this era (Vambery, 2008: 285; Ramezani, 2003: 68).

Contrary to historical references, archaeologists know very little about this important region. The oldest archaeological activities in Saleh Abad County were carried out by Mr. Rajab-Ali Labaf-e Khaniki in 1985, during which very important sites from the Bronze Age to the Islamic era were found (Labaf-e Khaniki, 1986). Then, two geologists named Ariai and Thibault, while surveying this area, were able to identify the Chopper tools of the lower Paleolithic era on the shore of Kashafrud River and near the villages of Baq-Baqu and Abarvan (Ariai & Thibault, 1975). After that, Mana Jami Alahmadi reviewed this survey and was able to identify more sites and

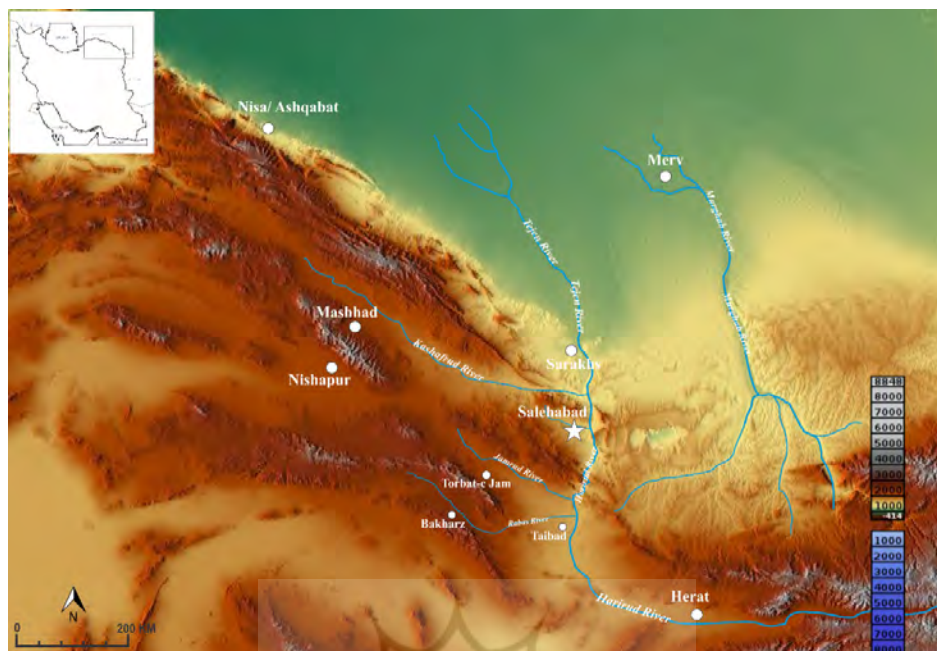


Fig. 1. Location of Saleh-Abad (Star Symbol) Concerning Important Cities and Rivers (Relief Map).

evidence from this period in Saleh Abad County (Jami Alahmadi, 2008). These are considered to be the oldest evidence of human presence in Iran and indicate the importance of this cultural area in understanding human development. As it was mentioned, these few archaeological activities have also highlighted the importance of the region from an archaeological standpoint, but they were not continuous and lacked followed up. In fact, the remoteness of this area from the center and its relative lack of security in the past decades have caused archaeologists to pay less attention to it. Therefore, in this research, an attempt has been made to compensate for some of the lackness in studies of this area by recognizing one of the important sites of the Saleh Abad region.

Sarab Tepe

The historical site of “Sarab Tepe”, which

is also known as “Qale Kohneh Sarab”, is located in the geographical position of $35^{\circ}40'58''$ N, $60^{\circ}51'37''$ E, in the northeast of the Sarab village and 20km west of Saleh Abad city (Fig. 2). This monument is a rectangular ridge with a width of 55×65 m, which proportional to the slope of the earth, has stretched in a northeast-southwest direction and its tip is about 6m higher than the surroundings.

There is evidence of scattered cultural materials on the surface and within a radius of 300m around the monument. This dispersion is particularly noticeable on the south and southwest front, and part of the monument is likely buried beneath the village's residential area.

Sarab's seasonal river originating from the Nagahani Mountains, flows in a southwest-northeast direction, passing 650m east of the Sarab Tepe, ultimately pouring into the Harirud River. Addition-

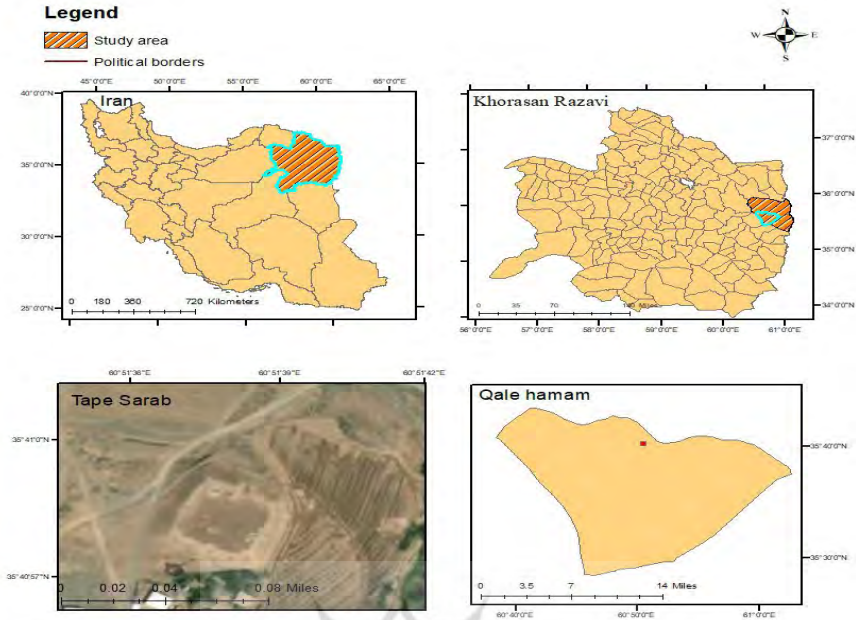


Fig. 2. The Location of Sarab Tepe in the Political Divisions of Iran

ally, the Sarab Spring is situated 100 meters from the site, and the Sarab aqueduct passes it at a distance of 600m (Fig. 3).

The mountains surrounding the monument serve as the habitats for animals such as antelope (mountain goat) due to the existence of numerous springs. Additionally, these mountains are covered with rangelands and forests of pistachio and juniper trees. Due to the location of the monument amidst the mid-mountains and the challenges associated with utilizing arable lands, the surrounding area is arable. As a result, the dispersion of cultural materials is visible across vast distances. Besides, the progress and development of the village toward the monument have accelerated in recent years. However, part of the wall of the monument has been destroyed in recent years due to cultivation and rainfall, and as a result, bricks have come out of the wall. There have been instances of illegal exca-

vations on the surface of the monument, with the most important significant being a large hole in the northwest corner. Consequently, cultural layers are visible in the exposed walls.

Archaeological Study

The survey of Sarab Tepe has been conducted with the permission of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Khorasan Razavi province. The aim is to determine the exact chronology and analyze the cultural interactions of this area with the surrounding regions. For this purpose, a grid topographical map of the site was initially prepared. Subsequently, a group of archeology students collected significant samples from the surface level. Through this method, various cultural materials were identified, which significantly contributed to achieving the goals of this research. These findings generally indicate two



Fig. 3. The Location of the Sarab Tepe into the Important Rivers (Relief Map)

different settlement periods at this site, which will be further discussed.

First Period: Early Bronze Age

According to the results of this survey, the first period, in which, human settlement formed in the Sarab area is related to the Early Bronze Age. The Bronze Age represents a significant period, during which, the technical and social complexities of human societies increased, leading to the emergence of the first cities. One of the most important characteristics of this era was the increase in regional and extra-regional exchanges, evidenced by pottery styles. Among the cultural materials discovered at Sarab Tepe, the “orange-gray slip polished pottery” can be attributed to the Early Bronze Age. Additionally, the Spindle Whorls can also be attributed to the same period. Orange-gray slip polished pottery is the most abundant type, particularly around the site within the residential context of the village (Fig. 4). Generally, these types feature a delicate body with mineral chamotte. The body thickness of these samples ranges from 3 to 10mm. The polishing of the pottery is well-executed in all samples, with the slip

of the pottery visible in most of the samples, resembling burnished ware. The findings encompass three types of rims, bodies, and floors, crafted by hand or wheel. The edges include turned-out and simple s. Most examples of this type consist of closed-mouth containers, while a few cases with open mouths have been discovered. All discovered floors are flat. All pottery of this type features a thick orange coating. The majority of cases found, both inside and outside, exhibit the same coating. However, in some instances, only the inside of the pottery is coated in orange, while the outside remains gray. The slip is one of the most important features of this type, appearing as a spectrum of orange colors on both the outer and inner surfaces. The presence of chamotte is another notable feature which in all the pottery samples is mineral, with only two samples containing mixed chamotte. The granulation of this chamotte includes sand and gravel. All exposed samples exhibit a mineral chamotte mixed with sand, with some containing mica and lime particles. Pottery of this type is divided into two categories: those with sufficient and those with insufficient cooking. In some cases, due to

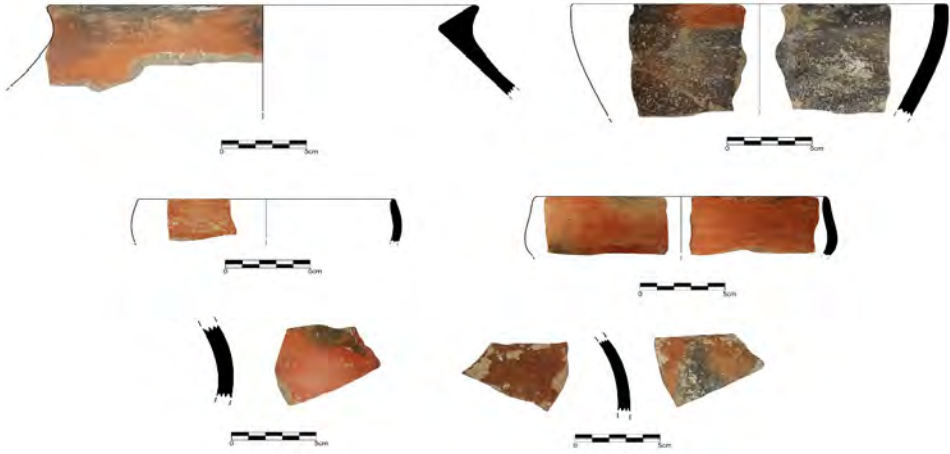


Fig. 4. Orange-Gray Slip Polished Pottery Samples

incomplete baking, the effect of excessive exposure to smoke is obvious in the terracotta. This defect is only observed in potteries with an orange coating. The second category of pottery is fully baked, with the terracotta displaying a uniform color. This process is observed in most gray samples. Further, on some samples, the burnish effect is evident in the form of parallel lines and they are scorched. The most significant and most common feature of this type of pottery is the presence of stains in the form of burnished in all samples. The extent of penetration of these stains varies, with some samples showing progressed penetration from the surface of the body to the depth of the terracotta.

Considering the presence of these stains on the body of all pottery of this type, it seems that potters were aware of how to create them on the surface of the pottery during the backing process. However, they had no control over the shape, size, and location of the smudges (Dana, 2019: 99).

According to archaeological reports, this type of pottery appeared in southern Turkmenistan from Namazga II (Hiebert,

2003: 70) and continued until the end of Namazga IV (Kohl & Frankfort, 1984: 113). This period corresponds to the Middle Chalcolithic Age through the Early Bronze Age, chronologically covering the period from 3500 to 2500 BC. Among the most important differences of this type in the Chalcolithic Age is the use of very small pieces of chamotte in pottery from the Middle Chalcolithic Age or Namazga II (Hiebert, 2003: 70); whereas, the chamotte used in the Bronze Age was different, particularly with the chamotte containing sand and gravel (Dana, 2019: 99). Accordingly, this pottery presents evidence of slow and continuous changes from the Chalcolithic Age to the Bronze Age in the south of Turkmenistan. It indicates that Namazga III and IV had close relations with each other and the bronze culture in southern Turkmenistan is a continuation of the older culture of Namazga III. Apart from the sites in the south of Turkmenistan, this type was also found in Tepe Borj from layers 20 to 22 (Garazhian, 2008: 9). This type was found in the mentioned layer alongside ocher pottery and gray-black

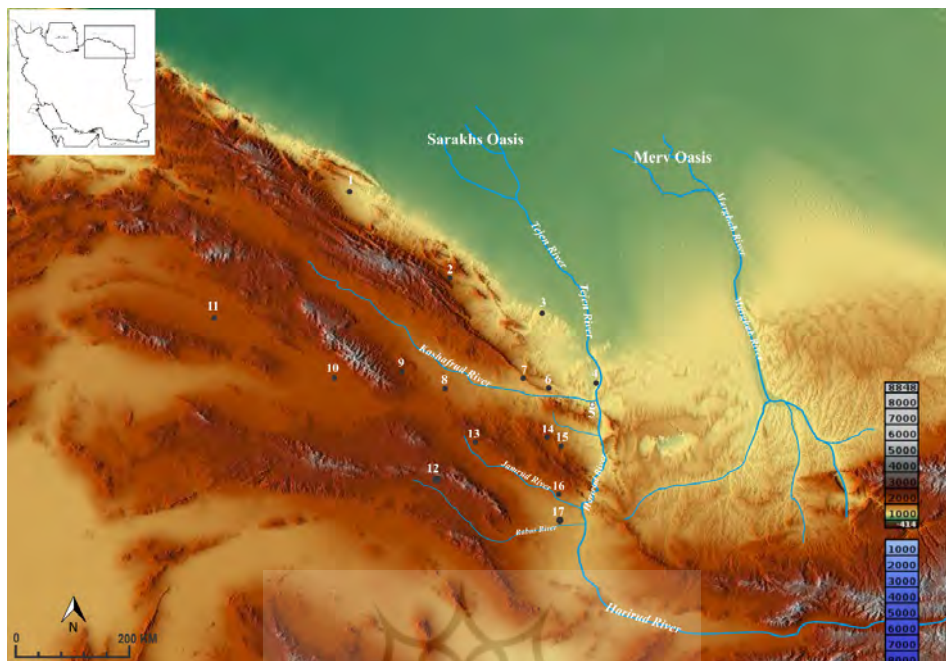


Fig. 5. The Abundance of Sites with Orange-Gray Polished Pottery: 1. Anau Tepe, 2. Dergz Plain, 3. Altin Tepe, 4. Garmab Tepe, 5. Shorkala Tepe, 6. Bazangan Tepe, 7. Baq-Baqu Tepe, 8. Nader Tepe, 9. Naderi Tepe, 10. Borj Tepe 11. Damghani Tepe 12. Aynak Tepe 13. Gabri Tepe 14. Sarab Tepe 15. Qosheh-Toot Tepe 16. Mokhar/Kol Tepe 17. Sardab 5 Tepe

pottery, which have relative chronologies. Ocher pottery, a characteristic of the Early Bronze Age, has been introduced in the Neyshabur Plain. Gray-black pottery from Tepe Borj is also suggested based on ^{14}C layer 21 tests and comparison with gray-black pottery from Tepe Qala Khan in Bojnord County, dating back to 2500-3100 BC (Dana, 2019: 101). In addition to Tepe Borj, orange-gray slip polished pottery has also been reported from the only stratified trench in Tepe Damghani located in Sabzevar County. This trench comprises 4 layers and 6 phases, revealing only the remains of the Namazga IV, belonging to the Early Bronze Age culture in Central Asia (Frankfort *et al.*, 2014: 111). Orange-gray slip polished pottery was identified from this trench in the first and second surface layers, and ocher pottery was

found next to gray-black pottery in layer III (Frankfort *et al.*, 2014: 124). The results of ^{14}C dating on samples from layer III of this site indicate the date of 2500-2520 BC (Frankfort *et al.*, 2014: 123). According to archaeological reports, this type of pottery is widely distributed in Khorasan (Fig. 5). Many examples of this type have been found in the south of the Kopet Dag Mountains, and during the archaeological survey of the Dargaz Plain, some of which have been attributed by the authors to the Early Bronze Age (Kohl & Frankfort, 1984; Garazhian, 1999; Sheikh, 2014: 198). In the archaeological surveys of Sarakhs Plain, located in the north of Saleh Abad County, this type was identified at the sites of Bezegan, Garmab, and Baq-Baqu (Behrouzifar, 2013: 59). In the Saleh-Abad region, this type of pottery has been re-



Fig. 6. Spindle Whorls of Sarab Tepe

ported from the Qoshe-Tot and Doab sites (Labaf-e Khaniki, 1984: 1/131; Labaf-e Khaniki, 1986: 2/131). In the Torbat-Jam region, situated in the south of Saleh-Abad city, this type of pottery has been reported from Mokhar (Kol) tepe, near Torbat-Jam city (Korbel, 1983: 41). Besides, pottery of this type was found in Fariman, located in the Jamrud catchment area, at the Gabri Tepe of Qalandarabad (Toghraei, 2004). In addition, pottery of this type is reported in the catchment area of the Rabas River, especially from Tepe Sardab 5 in Taibad County (Labaf-e Khaniki, 1986: 24) and Tepe Aynak in Bakharz County (Khodadoost, 2022). Furthermore, a lot of pottery of this type has been identified in the archaeological surveys of Mashhad Plain, particularly at the Tepe Naderi in Mashhad City (Habibi *et al.*, 2015: 4-5; Davari *et al.*, 2016: 62).

According to the above, the distribution shows this type is found at least in a part of Iran's Khorasan. Orange-gray slip polished pottery with coarse-grained mineral chamotte and lumpy stains was one of the characteristics of the Early Bronze Age. Meanwhile, in the south of Turkmenistan, red pottery with simple black geometric motifs is defined as an

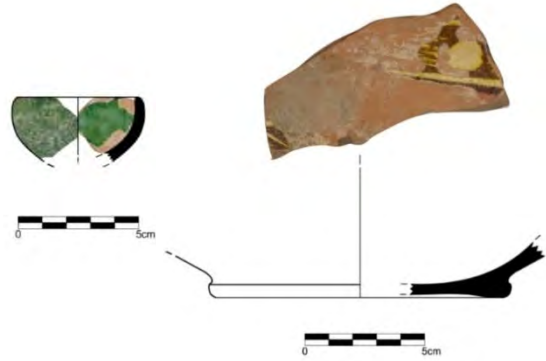


Fig. 7. Islamic Pottery in Sarab Tepe

indicator of the Early Bronze Age -NMG IV- (Msson & Sarianidi, 1972: 113-197; Kohl & Frankfort, 1984: 117-191).

In addition to the orange-grey polished pottery, spindle whorls are also among the finds that can be attributed to the Early Bronze Age in Sarab Tepe. In the layers of the new Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age in Altyn Tepe various samples of these spindle whorls have been found (Masson, 1988: 8-9). However, according to the chronology of the pottery and the slow and continuous changes in the cultural traditions from Namazga III to Namazga IV, this type of spindle whorls is also attributed to the Early Bronze Age.

The spindle whorls of Sarab are made of river gravels, with a gray to black color, and diagonal lines are carved on them. As a result of turning during work, they acquire a beautiful circular shape. In the center of the spindle whorls, a hole with a diameter of 1 cm was created, which was used for passing spinning wood. The stone is completely polished and has a smooth and flat surface. To rotate more quickly and accurately, the opening of the cone has been drilled to a diameter of 2.5 cm and a depth of 1 cm and flattened (Fig. 6).

Second Period: Early Islamic Centuries

In the survey of the Sarab Tepe, two types of pottery were found, which can be attributed to the Islamic period.

This type of pottery includes rim, body, and bottom. Most of the samples have open mouths and belong to bowls. This type of pottery is divided into two types: Monochrome Ware and Buff Ware (Fig. 7). A considerable number of vessels found in Sarab Tepe were decorated with lead glaze of a single color, applied either on a white or a colored engobe; and occasionally directly on the clay surface. Buff ware generally has a buff body in color with decoration painted in black, yellow, and green, followed by the application of a lead glaze, this ware constituted (Wilkinson, 1973; 128).

Neyshabur sites are the most important sites that present similar examples during exploration. During the excavations of Neyshabur, a team of American archaeologists discovered a wide range of pottery fragments, which has been dated according to their style and form. Wilkinson divided the pottery discovered from the excavations of the ancient Neyshabur mounds into 12 types, which are attributed to different periods from the 8th to 12th century AD. The monochrome ware of Sarab Tepe is comparable to the pottery samples found from Madrasa Tepe and belonging to the 9th century AD (Wilkinson, 1973: 246/30). Furthermore, the Buff Ware of Sarab Tepe is comparable to the pottery from the Tepe Arsalan belonging to the 9th century AD (Wilkinson, 1973: 11/172). In addition to glazed ware, molded unglazed ware also belongs to the same group. This type forms a small part of



Fig. 8. Molded Ware of Sarab Tepe

the survey findings in Sarab Tepe. These types of pottery are parts of the body and are made with a wheel. The chamotte of all the samples is mineral, and they have fine to medium thickness. All the samples have molded patterns on the outside, and there are finger pressure marks on the inside, indicating the pressure of the body to create a pattern. The motifs used include Swastika, which is placed inside a frame, and due to its similarity, it is probably repeated (Fig. 8).

Many examples of this type have been found in Neyshabur (Wilkinson, 1973: 155/357). In the Saleh Abad region, very beautiful samples of this type have been reported from Tepe Shurestan (Labbafe Khaniki, 1984: 1/152). Another find that belongs to the Islamic era is a part of a naked female statue made of plaster. The length of this statue is about 20cm and of course, its head is missing. The figure's statue is fat, and the hands are placed on each other above the stomach and below the chest, and the right hand is placed on the left hand. The legs of the figure are broken from the thigh down. The technique of representing the statue is from the front, and only the hair of

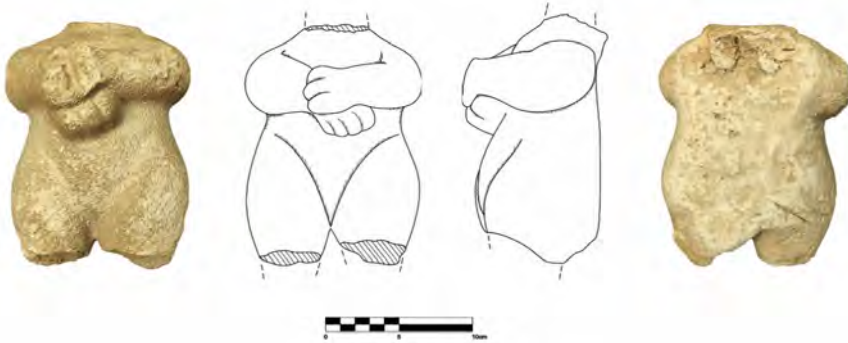


Fig. 9. The Statue of Sarab Tepe

the figure is shown on the back. These hairs are open and have been highlighted using the added technique (Fig. 9).

Although considering the very few similar examples, it seems difficult to compare and assign this figure to a specific period, some evidence such as the general figure, the position of the hands. Finally, the small traces of hair placed on the back of the figure's head confirm that it belongs to the 9th and 10th centuries AD. Although there is currently no evidence of color on the surface of this statue, color has been used in similar samples. The general form and style of this figure suggest representation from the front. Although it has a long history in the regional art of Khorasan and its use can be traced in different periods, the most similar example can be recognized in examples from the late Sasanian period to the 10th century AD. For example, we can mention dancers drawn in various situations on Sasanian silver cups. Among other things, a statue discovered in the Barzqawale site has been attributed to the late Sassanian period by the explorers (Karamian & Farrokh, 2017: Fig. 9). In the meantime, another statue uncovered from the historical site of Barzqawale, comparable to the Sarab

statue in terms of the front view and body size has been attributed by the researchers to the late Sassanian era. In addition, another sample from the 8th century AD, made of stone, was obtained from Qasr al-Moschatta in Jordan (Mohammad Amin, 2019). Qasr al-Moschatta is one of the late Umayyad palaces built during the reign of Al-Walid II (Troelenberg & Weber, 2011, 105). In addition to the mentioned examples, we can mention the statue found in Neyshabur, which in terms of chronology, size and iconography is comparable to the statue of Sarab Tepe (Wilkinson, 1987: 262/ Fig. 4.2). This statue is made of plaster and is shown from the front, meaning that the back of the statue is completely flat and without patterns. The figure has less prominence than the figure of Sarab Tepe, but it is similar to the figure of Sarab in terms of attention to female features. On the neck of this figure, a necklace can be seen, which extends to the chest. This necklace has been added to the figure using plaster wicks and resembles the hair of the Sarab Tepe figure, which shows slight signs of it on the back of the head. This figure was found alongside a coin of Nuh Ibn-Mansour Samani; therefore, it is attributed to the 9th century AD (Wilkin-



Fig. 10. From Left to Right: Statues Found from: A. Sarab Tepe, B. Neyshabur (Without Mentioning the Place of Discovery) (Jenkins & Keene, 1982: 29/ Fig. 3), C. Qanat Tepe (Wilkinson, 1987: 262/ Fig. 4.2), D. Qasr al-Moschatta (Photographer: Osama Shukir, 2019).

son, 1987: 262/ Fig. 4.2). Another similar statue has been discovered in Neyshabur, which, while having similar features, also contains more details (Jenkins & Keene, 1982: 29/ Fig. 3).

This figure is also made of plaster, with a height of 15.6cm. Its details have been added to the statue using wicks and clay balls. This statue depicts a naked lady with her hands raised. The artist has attempted to depict the woman holding her hair in her hand; hence the right palm of the figure is hidden behind the hair. The hair is depicted as curly, with the artist creating grooves to show this feature. The breasts of the figure have been added to the figure using two plaster balls, although symmetry has not been observed in their placement. On the neck of the figure is a long necklace that extends to the stomach. This necklace represents a long chain that carries a three-pronged collar in the middle. There is no trace of paint on the surface of the figure, and the back of the figure is completely flat, suggesting it was probably used as part of building decorations. As described, this figure shares many similarities with the

Sarab Tepe figure in terms of gender, representation, and decoration technique. Researchers have also attributed this figure to the 9th century AD. The way of displaying the hands and placing them on top of each other is one of the important features of the mirage figure. A look at the figures found in Neyshabur shows the prevalence of this hand iconography. In this technique, first, the general shape of the hand is shaped as a lump, and then the fingers are demarcated by cutting and creating lines (Heidenmann *et al.* 2014). Therefore, the age of the exposed body of Sarab Tepe can be attributed to the 9th to 10th centuries AD (Fig. 10).

In addition to the cultural materials, the structure in Sarab Tepe also appears to be the remains of a fortress from the Islamic era, which was built in an area from the Bronze Age. The houses of ordinary people are also scattered around it. This fort has a square plan with dimensions of 55×65m, with the top standing 6m higher than the surface of the surrounding. According to topography, this structure is comparable to other similar structures of this era in the region. A re-



Fig. 11. Sarab Tepe (The North View)

view of the settlements around this site, such as Jahan-Abad e Maleki Tepe, Yeke-Bagh Tepe, Shurestan Tepe, Talaei Tepe, and other sites of this region, indicates that during this period, the construction of square castles known as “Arg” was popular in the region (Fig. 11).

Conclusion

Sarab Tepe is one of the important sites in the eastern region of Khorasan Razavi province, which underwent archaeological investigation due to its importance. Various artifacts such as statues, spindle whorls, and numerous pottery pieces were collected during these investigations. These findings were recorded for their characteristics and typology, and finally compared with artifacts from other ancient sites to establish the chronological context of this site and its cultural connections. Based on this analysis, it was determined that the settlement in this area occurred in two periods: The

Early Bronze Age and the 9th to 10th centuries AD.

The findings of the Bronze Age at Sarab Tepe, including orange-gray slip polished pottery and spindle whorls, confirm the existence of the settlement. This suggests that during this period, the Saleh Abad region was connected with Dargaz, Mashhad, Neyshabur, Sarakhs, Torbat-Jam and Bakharz Plains and distant areas such as South Turkmenistan. The location of this establishment amidst pastures, with access to permanent water provided by the Sarab spring, along with the discovery of ancient evidence such as spindle whorls, indicates that animal husbandry and the use of animal wool in spinning were likely important activities for the residents of Sarab Tepe during this period. However, habitation in this area was abandoned at the end of the Late Bronze Age, only to be resettled by human societies during the 9th and 10th centuries AD. According

to various evidences, it is likely that during this period, a fortress was built on the level of the Bronze Age settlement, leading to the destruction and scattering of Bronze Age artifacts. In addition to the citadel, the pottery such as buff wares and molded wares as well as unique statues are among the most important finds

from this period, showing strong connections with Neyshabur. This city, during this period, served as a political and cultural center of Khorasan and the capital of Iranian governments, and there were many cultural interactions between it and its subordinate regions, as evidenced by the findings at Sarab Tepe.

Bibliography

- Al-Baladhuri, A. Y. (1960). *Futuh al-Buldan*, Translated into Persian by Mohammad Tavakkol, Tehran: Noqreh.
- Ariai, A., & Thibault, C. (1975). Nouvelles précisions à propos de l'outillage paléolithique ancien sur galets du Khorassan (Iran), *Paléorient* 3(1): 101-108.
- Behroozifar, D. (2015). *Archaeological survey of prehistoric sites in Sarakhs plain*, unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation, University of Sistan and Baluchestan (In Persian).
- Besenal, R., & Francfort, H. P. (1994). "The Nad-i Ali 'Surkh Dagh': A Bronze Age monumental platform in Central Asia", In Kenoyer J.M. (ed.), *Sumer to Mella: contributions to the Archaeology of South and West Asia in Memory of George F. Dales*, *Archaeological Reports* 3, Wisconsin: 3-14.
- Dana, M. (2019). "Early Bronze Age in the Neighbour plain of Khorasan; A local culture", In Yousef Moradi (ed.), *Afarin Nameh; Archaeological Articles in commemoration of Mehdi Rahbar. Essays on the Archaeology of Iran in Honour of Mehdi Rahbar*, Tehran: Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (In Persian).
- Davari, M.S., Basafa, H., Toghraei, M. (2020). Kashafrud River (Mashhad Plain) from the Neolithic to the Middle Bronze Age, *Quarterly Journal of Archaeological Studies* 12 (3): 66-43 (In Persian).
- Francfort, Henri-Paul, Vahdati, Ali A., Bendezu-Sarmiento, Julio, Lhuillier, Johanna, Fouache, Eric, Tengberg, Margaret, Mashkour, Marjan, Shirazi, Zohreh. (2014). "Preliminary Report on the Soundings at Tepe Damghani Sabzevar, Spring 2008", *Iranica Antiqua*, 49, 111-158.
- Garazhian, E. (2008). "Stratigraphy in Trench 1 of Borj Tepe in Neyshabur; an interpretive approach", *Journal of Payam-e Bastanshenas* 10 (5): 1-19 (In Persian).
- Habibi, S. K.; B. S. Bagloo Eslam; A. Eshghi & M. Toghraee. (2015). *Evidence of prehistorical cultures of Central Asia in northeastern Iran based on the systematic survey of Naderi Toroq Tepe*. 2nd national symposium of Iranian Archaeology. Mashhad: Great Khorasan Museum. (In Persian).
- Heidemann, S., Lapérouse, J. F., & Parry, V. (2014). "The Large Audience: Life-Sized Stucco Figures of Royal Princes from the Seljuq Period". *Muqarnas Online* 31 (1): 35-71.
- Hiebert, F., Kurbansakhatov, K. (2003). *A Central Asian village at the dawn of civilization: excavations at Anau, Turkmenistan*, UPenn Museum of Archaeology.
- Ibn al-Athir, A. M. (2000). *Al-Kamil fi al-tarikh*, 16 volumes, Translated into Persian by Abbas Khalili & Abolqasim Halat, Tehran: Institute of Matboat Elmi.
- Jami Alahmadi, M. (2008). *Review of Paleolithic studies in the Kashafrud River Basin and introduction of new Paleolithic sites*, unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation, University of Tehran (In Persian).
- Jenkins, M., Keene, M. (1983). *Islamic jewelry in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Karamian, G., Farrokhi, K. (2017). "Sassanian stucco decorations from the Ramavand (Barz Qawaleh) excavations in the Lorestan Province of Iran". *Historia i Świat* 6: 69-88.
- Khodadoost, J. (2022). *Aynak Tepe of Bakharz City*, Unpublished archaeological report in archive of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Khorasan-e Razavi Province (In Persian).
- Khvandami, G. M. (2001). *Tarikh-e Habib Al-Siar*, Vol. 3 & 4, Tehran: Khayyam.
- Kohl, P. L., Francfort, H. P. (1984). *Central Asia Paleolithic beginnings to the Iron Age = L'Asie centrale des origines à l'âge du fer*, Paris
- Labbaf-e Khaniki, R.A. (1984) *Archaeological Sur-*

- vey of Torbat-e-Jam County (1), unpublished archaeological report in archive of the Archaeological Research Institute (In Persian).
- Labbafe Khaniki, R.A. (1986). *Archaeological Survey of Bakharz* (1), unpublished archaeological report in archive of the Archaeological Research Institute (In Persian).
- Masson, V. M., Masson, V. M. (1988). *Altyn-depe* (55), UPenn Museum of Archaeology.
- Ramezani, H. R. (2003). Khorasan Dar Jang-e Jahani Dovvom, Master Dissertation of History, Ferdowsi University: Unpress.
- Seyedi, M. (1994). *Zurabad-e Jam*, University of Ferdowsi (In Persian).
- Sheikh, M. (2014). *Archaeological systematic survey of Yarim tepe in Dargaz plain (study of prehistoric settlement of Yarim tepe and the compilation of a chronology based on pottery findings)*, unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation of Sistan and Baluchestan University (In Persian).
- Tatavi, Q. A & Qazvini, A. (2003). *Tarikh Alfi*, Vol. 5 & 8, Gholamreza Tabatabaei Majd (ed.), Tehran: Elmi & Farhangi (In Persian).
- Toghraei, M. (2005). *Archaeological Survey of Fariman County: Qalandarabad Ward*, unpublished archaeological report in archive of the Archaeological Research Institute (In Persian).
- Troelenberg, E. M., Weber, S. (2011). "Mschatta im Museum: zur Geschichte eines bedeutenden Monuments frühislamischer Kunst". *Jahrbuch Preußischer Kulturbesitz* 46: 104-132.
- Vambery, A. (2008). *Siāhat Davishi Dorooḡhin Dar Asia-ye Miāneh*, Translated into Persian by Fathali Khajehnoorian, Tehran: Elmi & Farhangi (In Persian).
- Wilkinson, C. K. (1973). *Nishapur: pottery of the early Islamic period*, Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Wilkinson, C. K. (1987). *Nishapur: some early Islamic buildings and their decoration*, Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Zamaji Asfzari, M. M. (1960). *Rozat Al-Jannat fi Owsaf Herat*, Vol. 1 & 2, Seyyed Mohammad-kazem Imam (ed.), Tehran: Tehran University (In Persian).

