



Tang-i Bulaghi Reports 2: TB 75

Edited by Rémy Boucharlat & Hasan Fazeli Nashli

Takuro Adachi

University of Tsukuba

**Mohsen Zeidi Iranian Center for
Archaeological Research¹**

**Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid
Remains from TB 75 and the General
Survey of the Tang-i Bulaghi**

TB 75 (Haji Baharami Cave) is the most conspicuous cave in the Bolaghi Valley, with an opening that measures about 9 m wide and 2.8 m high. It was chosen for excavation because of its strategic location in the valley and because of the presence of prehistoric material on the surface. We dug three trenches (Trenches A, C and D, totalling 10 m²) inside the cave and one 2 × 1 m trench (Trench B) in the middle of the terrace slope. We reached virgin soil at a depth of about 2 m in the cave

¹

With the collaboration of Akira Tsuneki, Kazuya Yamauchi, and Shin'ichi Nishiyama.



trenches. They produced almost the same cultural deposits, consisting of six cultural layers. Layer 1 is Islamic, layer 2 is Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid, layers 3-4 are proto-Neolithic, and layers 5-6 are Epi-Paleolithic. Layer 2 produced characteristic large ribbed pithoi and an iron trilobate arrowhead. It is presumed that the cave was used as an army post during the Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid period.

Pottery from TB 75 - Most of the pottery from Layer 2 of TB 75 is wheel-made and well-fired. The surface colours vary from yellowish grey to orange, a few are light grey. Most of our specimens have grit-tempered paste and were horizontally wet-smoothed, but a few are scraped or burnished.

The most diagnostic late Achaemenid pottery from this site are the ribbed pithos sherds (Fig. 1.1, 3, 5-8). The ribbed decorations vary in shape and interval. Specimens from Persepolis, Tall-i Takht, Pasargadae and Tape Suruvan have broad ribbed decorations; the interval of the ribbed decoration of the materials from TB 75 seems to be narrower. Two of them, found in Pit 1 in Trench D, are slipped in a light grey or light yellow orange colour (Fig. 1.5, 8). The paste is coarse, grit-tempered and well-fired. The core and inner surface are orange in colour. Both are horizontally wet-smoothed.

A jar rim fragment was also unearthed from the same pit (Fig. 2.4). It is a very fine ware with very small white and black sand inclusions. Both are horizontally wet-smoothed. Parallels to this piece were reported from Tall-i Takht, Pasargadae and Tape Suruvan. The vessel shape is dated to the late Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid period.

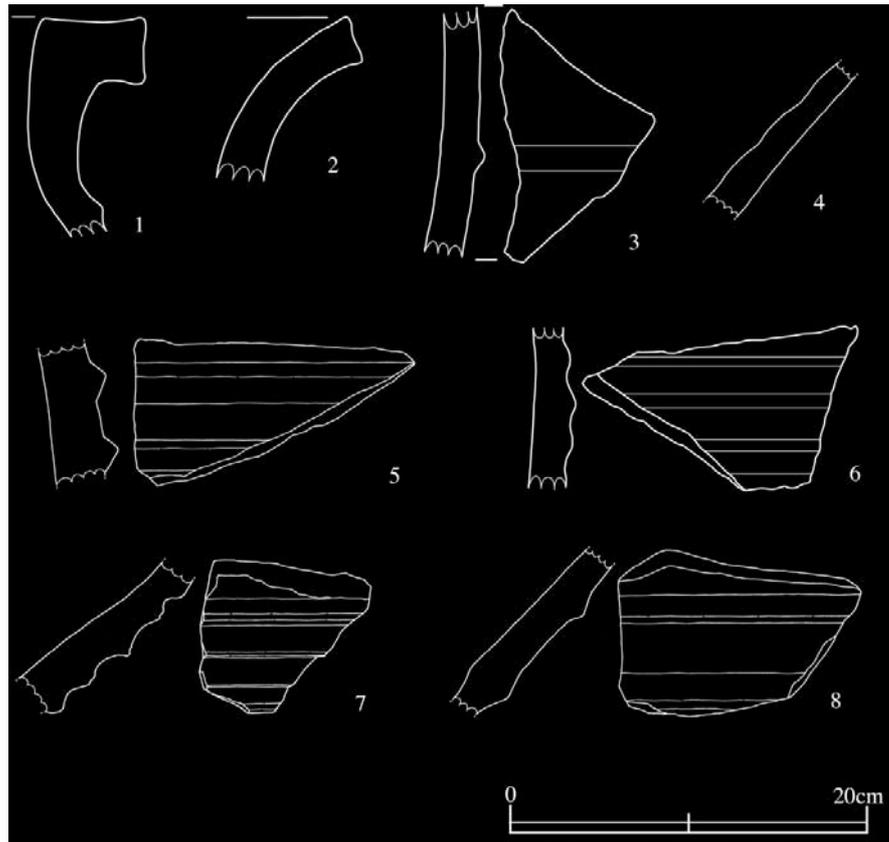


Fig. 1: Pottery from TB 75.

Only one fragment of a canteen jar (or a pilgrim flask) was found in Layer 2 (Fig. 2.10). It is a very fine ware with small white sand inclusions. Canteen jars are one of the typical vessel forms of late Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid pottery. Although this piece is a body fragment, it can be identified as a canteen jar because of the treatment on the interior, circular wet-smoothed and a twisted trace from detaching redundant clay. The outer surface is lightly burnished and orange in colour. The dark core in the section is olive grey in colour.

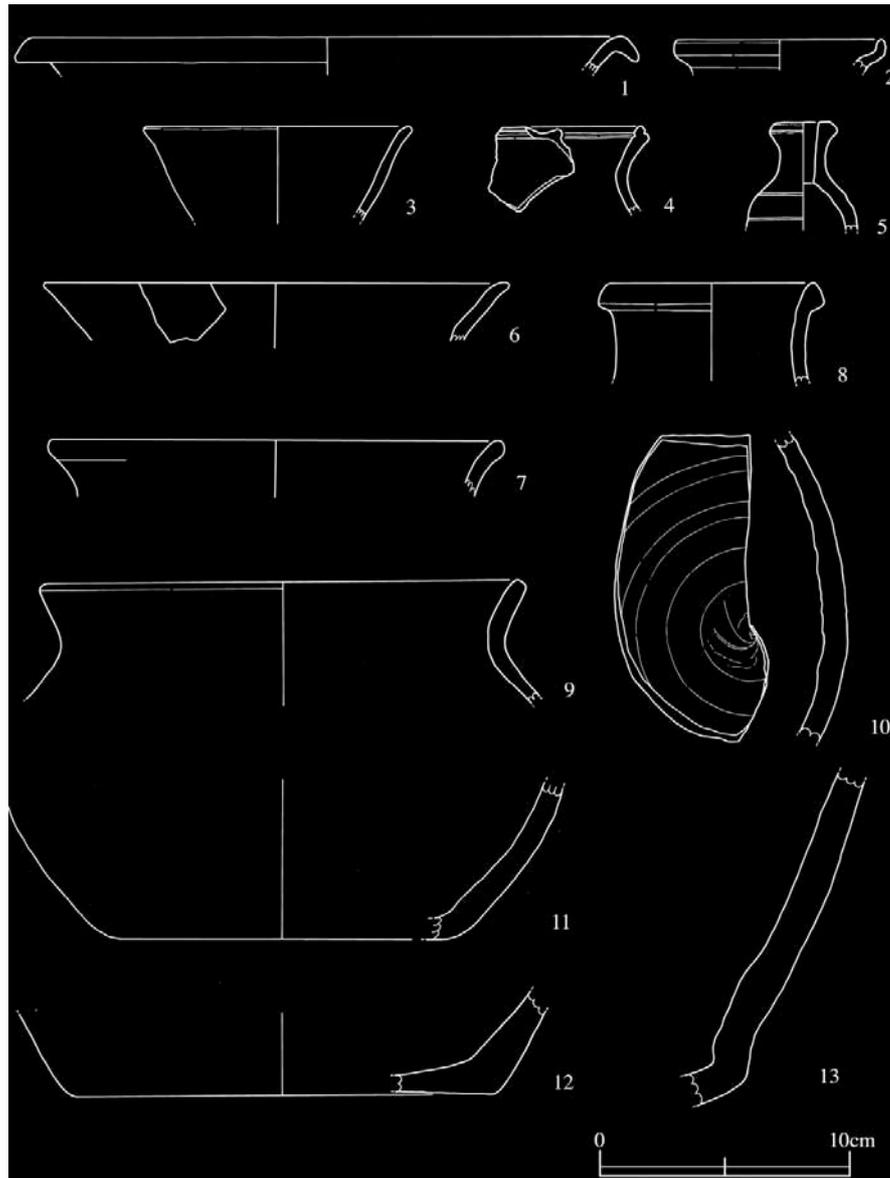


Fig. 2: Pottery from ТВ 75.



Yellowish grey potsherds were most frequently found in Layer 2, TB 75. Since most of the potsherds are small and fragmentary, it is very difficult to reconstruct their vessel shape. One of them is a flat jar base fragment (Fig. 2.12). The inner surface is wet-smoothed, both horizontally and finely. The paste is coarse and hard. The inner paste is yellowish grey and the outer surface is dull yellowish orange.

There are a few light grey potsherds. One is a jar fragment (Fig. 2: 13). The jar is wheel-made and horizontally wet-smoothed. The paste is coarse, soft and grit-tempered.

Although Layer 1 belongs to the Islamic period, late Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid potsherds were also found. A rim fragment, unearthed from Layer 1, seems to be of the late Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid variety (Fig. 2.2). The same vessel shapes were unearthed from Tall-i Takht, Pasargadae. The paste is coarse and grit-tempered. The outer surface is orange and the inner surface and paste are dull reddish brown. A bottle rim fragment, found in Layer 1, would also be datable to about the late Achaemenid or post-Achaemenid period (Fig. 2: 5). Parallels are reported from Tall-i Takht, Pasargadae.

Other objects from TB 75 - A few iron artefacts were found in TB 75. A remarkable piece is a tanged trilobate arrowhead (Fig. 3.1). Although socketed bronze trilobate arrowheads are common items in Achaemenid inventories, the iron specimens are exceptional. One tanged iron trilobate arrowhead, however, was reported from the Treasury at Persepolis. Furthermore, an iron four-flanged arrowhead was



unearthed from the Perso-Achaemenid village at Susa. It should be pointed out that the shape of this specimen resembles that of the tanged iron trilobate arrowhead from TB 75. Additionally, fragments of an iron pin or nail were unearthed from Layer 2. Both ends were broken and the section is irregular in shape.

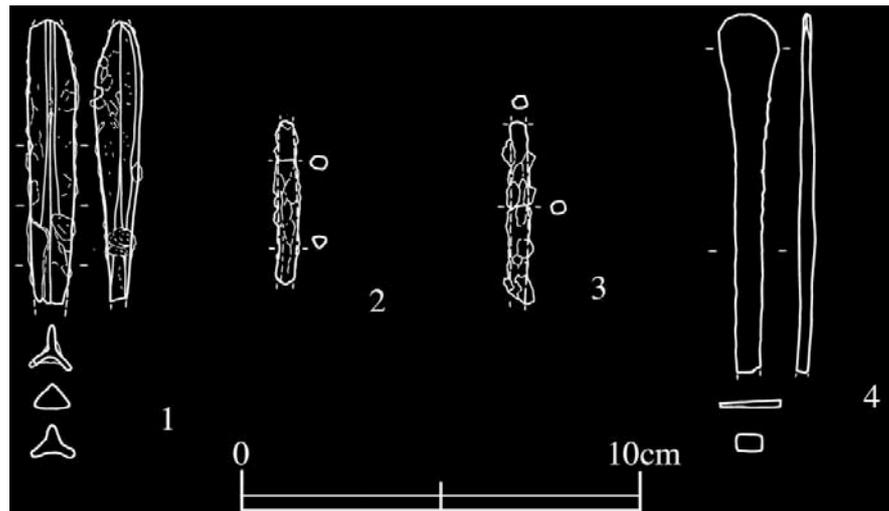


Fig. 3: Metal objects from TB 75-2 (1-4).

Only one bronze spatula was found in Layer 1 and its lower part was broken (Fig. 3.4). Comparisons of this piece were unearthed from Tall-i Takht, Pasargadae and Level 1, Chaour, Susa. The specimen from Pasargadae is dated to the post-Achaemenid period, and those from Susa to the Sasanian or early Islamic period.



Pottery from the General Survey - The general survey results have been reported in chapter 11 of our final report.² Some characteristic potsherds are shown here. Pithos rims have a flat end and horizontal grooves (Fig. 4.1-4). Some of them have incised decorations. A specimen with the same shape, reported at Tepe Suruvan³ and Susa, has a similar paste to the materials from the general survey. The pithoi could therefore date to the late Achaemenid period.

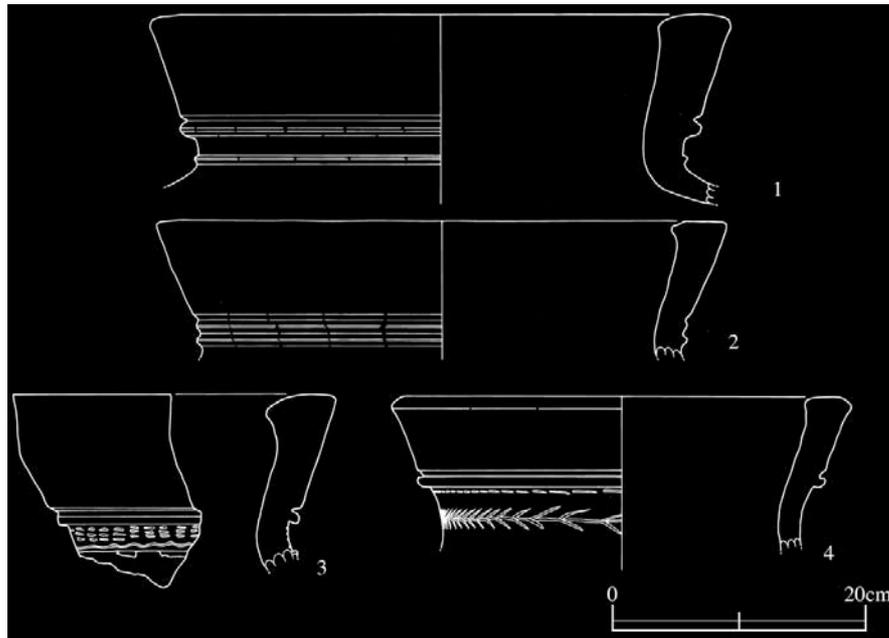


Fig. 4: Pottery from the general survey.

- ² Tsuneki, A. and M. Zeidi, *Tang-e Bolaghi: The Iran-Japan Archaeological Project for the Sivand dam Salvage Area (al-Shark 3)*, Tehran and Tsukuba 2008.



Conclusion

Although we have no clear diagnostic objects from the post-Achaemenid period in TB 75, TB 130 and the general survey, for example, “fish plate,” “ringed base bowl with inturned rim” and other types known at Tall-i Takht, Pasargadae, some pottery fragments from Layer 2, TB 75 can be dated to the post-Achaemenid period. However, we cannot with certainty divide our specimens into the two periods, Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid. In the future it would be important to compare objects from Layer 2, TB 75, to those from Pasargadae, TB 34, 64, 73, 76, 77, 85 and 88, in order to consider the chronological sequence of the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid material culture at Tang-e Bolaghi.

Takuro Adachi
mppnb@yahoo.co.jp

Mohsen Zeidi
mohsen.zeidi-kulehparcheh@student.uni-tuebingen.de

- 3 Courtesy of Dr. Y. Nishiaki, the author observed the specimens (Atarashi and Horiuchi, *Fahlian I: The Excavation at Tepe Suruvan*, The Tokyo University Iraq-Iran Archaeological Expedition Report 4, 1963, Tokyo: Fig. 16.13) in the Museum of the University of Tokyo.