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Tappeh Shah Qoli Beygi: Lapui Phase Settlement (4th Millennium BC) in Shiraz

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Abstract: This study analyzes 26 pottery fragments from the Shah Qoli Beygi archaeological site, focusing on their typology, technology, and chronological significance within the Lapui phase of prehistoric Fars in the Shiraz Plain. The assemblage, dominated by red fine wares, also includes common wares and evidence of different from the preceding Middle and Late Fars (Bakun) Phase. Variations in color, texture, and manufacturing techniques, including both hand-made and wheel-made forms, are examined. Comparative analysis with other Lapui sites reveals regional trends in pottery production, including the shift towards red fine wares and the prevalence of specific vessel forms. The study highlights the transition and continuity of ceramic traditions during the Lapui phase, emphasizing the site's contribution to understanding the cultural dynamics of the fourth millennium BC in southern Iran.

Keywords: *Tappeh Shah Qoli Beygi, Lapui Phase, Shiraz Plain, 4th Millennium BC, Prehistory.*

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1. Introduction

In February 2021, following reports from residents of the Shah Qoli Beygi neighborhood on Pasargadae Street in Shiraz regarding the discovery of pottery fragments and ancient layers on a leveled plot of land adjacent to the street, the authors of this article, who at that time were responsible for the archaeological excavation at Tappeh Postchi in Shiraz, visited the site. During this visit, evidence of Lapui phase pottery within the framework of the prehistoric cultures of Fars was identified and recognized. The settlement layers and cultural accumulations in which these pottery fragments were found, located at a depth of two meters, actually belong to a prehistoric site that Paul Gotch had previously briefly mentioned in a short article. Paul Gotch, as the British Consul in Shiraz (from 1959 to 1966) who was interested in historical artifacts and collecting surface pottery from historical sites in Shiraz and Marvdasht, published a simple map of the general location of these sites and the historical mounds he observed (Gotch 1968: 169). He categorized the prehistoric artifacts of Shiraz very broadly into five sites, divided into two groups: buff ware (four sites) and red ware (one site). These sites, named Shah Qoli Beygi A, Shah Qoli Beygi B, Kutahi, Rigi, and Asgari, are located in the center of the Shiraz Plain, all of which (except Shah Qoli Beygi A or Tappeh Poustchi) have now been destroyed and obliterated in the process of urbanization, with perhaps only their lower layers remaining beneath the streets, residential houses, or city parks. Therefore, based on the comparative analysis conducted by the authors with the identified artifacts of Gotch, it was determined that the exposed layers in the excavation adjacent to Pasargadae Street are the remnants of the Shah Qoli Beygi B site mentioned by Gotch.

The significance of the discovery of The Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh lies in its attribution to the Lapui time phase, for which evidence of this phase has been identified for the first time in the Shiraz Plain. In fact, the location that Gotch had introduced as a site containing red ware has now been determined to be related to the red ware of the Lapui phase, not the red ware of the Achaemenid period. Therefore, this discovery showed that the Shiraz Plain also has conclusive evidence of this important cultural phase in the prehistory of Fars. This intermontane plain, located west of the Kūr River basin in central Fars, is an attractive ecosystem for studying past societies from prehistoric times to the present and, on the other hand, is of great interest for understanding the identity and history of the people residing in the city of Shiraz. In this article, while reviewing the importance of the Lapui phase, the status of The Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh within the context of the prehistoric cultures of the Shiraz Plain will be studied and analyzed.

The Lapui Phase in Fars: A Chronological and Archaeological Overview

The post-Paleolithic prehistory of the Fars region in southern Iran commences with the Neolithic period, or "Archaic and Early Village Settlement," which encompasses the chronological phases of Fars Aceramic, Formation Fars (Rahmatabad), Archaic Fars (Mushki and Jari), and Early Fars (Shamsabad) (Sumner 1972; Weeks 2013; Azizi Kharanaghi et al. 2014; Alizadeh 2021: 1). With continued cultural advancements, population growth, and the expansion of villages, the development of trade, the emergence of social classes and ranked societies, administrative management, metallurgy, and the growth of irrigation techniques, Fars entered a new era known as the "Chalcolithic". The style of pottery production also gradually changed during this period, becoming more professional and complex with greater sophistication, dividing into the chronological phases of Middle and Late Fars (Bakun) and the onset of urbanization (Lapui) (Sumner 1972, 1994; Alizadeh 2006: 7; Miki 2022). Subsequently, the late prehistory of Fars is classified within the Bronze and Iron Ages, which are categorized into the chronological phases

of Banesh, Transitional Banesh-Kaftari, Kaftari, Qaleh, and Shogha/Teimuran (Sumner 1972; Alden 2013). The Banesh phase coincides with the Proto-Elamite horizon, and the subsequent phases fall within the temporal scope of the Elamite dynasties, during which the Fars region, as "Anshan," became part of the territory of these royal dynasties. Finally, with the formation of the great Achaemenid Empire, Fars entered a new phase of historical developments.

The Significance of the Lapui Phase:

The Lapui phase, chronologically dated to the first half of the fourth millennium BC, is of significant importance in archaeological studies from various perspectives. This phase coincides with a fundamental change and difference in pottery styles, including the production of fine, yet red, plain, and unpainted ceramic vessels (Sumner 1972). The advancements that occurred in the late fifth millennium BC during the New Fars phase, contemporaneous with the Late Susiana phase in Khuzestan and the Ubaid period in Mesopotamia, led to the formation of urban societies in the fourth millennium BC and the emergence of early states during the Uruk period in Mesopotamia and the Susa II period in Khuzestan during this millennium. Large urban sites such as Uruk (120 hectares) or Susa (25 hectares) with large and concentrated populations are the most prominent settlements of this period. However, in Fars, such large urban settlements attributed to the first half of the fourth millennium BC have not yet been discovered, or perhaps they did not exist at all. It is only in the late fourth millennium BC, during the Middle Banesh phase (around 3250 BC), that the large and fortified city of Anshan (Tal-e Malyan) with an area of 45 hectares emerged (Alden 2013: 218). As mentioned, despite the importance of the Lapui phase, comprehensive and convincing information from this period is still lacking. The beginning of this phase is dated to 3900 BC according to William Sumner (Sumner n.d: 9), 3950 BC according to Alireza Sardari (Sardari 2013: 200), and 4050 BC according to Cameron Petrie. On the other hand, the end of the Lapui phase is generally considered to be 3500 BC (Sardari 2013: 200; Alden 2013: 214; Petrie 2013: 138), and Sumner, without radiocarbon dating, estimates the time to be 3400 BC (Sumner n.d: 9). Although this hundred-year range can also be considered the transitional Lapui/Banesh phase (Alden 2013: 139). Until two decades ago, information concerning the Lapui phase was based on the archaeological surveys of Sumner (Sumner 1972), the upper/surface layers of Tall-e Bakun (A5) (Langsdorff and McCown 1942), the surface surveys of Tappeh Lapui (Vanden Berghe 1954), and the sounding of Tall-e Kureh (Alden 2003) in the Kūr River valley. However, with the increase in prehistoric studies in Iran and Fars, several sites with Lapui period artifacts have been excavated and sounded to a limited extent. These sites include the northernmost parts of Fars, including Tappeh Mehr Ali in the Sadeh district of Eqlid (Sardari 2013), Tappeh Lapui in Zarghan (Abdi and Rajabi 2016), the Naqsh-e Rostam Flour Factory site in the Marvdasht Plain (Yazdani and Habibi 1397), Tall-e Khari in the Morghab Plain of Pasargadae (Sardari and Mousavi 2018), T0l-e Espid and Tol-e Nurabad in Nurabad Mamasani (Potts and Roustaei 2006), Tol-e Bandu in Nurabad Mamasani (Darvishi et al. 2007), and Tol-e Suzu in Ganaveh, Bushehr Province (Azizi Kharanaghi 2018). To date, 9 archaeological sites with Lapui cultural layers have been excavated. 4 sites are located within the Kūr River basin, 4 sites are located outside the Kūr River basin in the plains and valleys of northern, northeastern, and northwestern Fars, and 1 site is located outside Fars in Bushehr and along the northern coasts of the Persian Gulf. 4 of these sites (Tall-e Kureh, Tappeh Mehr Ali, Tall-e Espid, and Tall-e Nurabad) have radiocarbon dating, the results of which, as mentioned above, are reliable and close to each other. All of these sites, except for Tall-e Kureh and the Naqsh-e Rostam Flour Factory site, have revealed remnants of architecture from this phase. The most extensive sequence of settlement layers of this phase belongs to Tappeh Mehr

Ali (Sardari 2013: 199) with seven meters and Tol-e Espid (Petrie et al., 2007: 304) with six meters. So far, only in two sites, Jalyan and Lapui, have evidence of human burial been identified, evidence of administrative management (seals and seal impressions) has been obtained from two sites, Mehr Ali and Lapui, and of course, in no site has evidence of a pottery kiln indicative of the production process of this type of pottery been found.

Shiraz Plain in Prehistory:

The Shiraz Plain is considered one of the intermontane alluvial plains of the southern Zagros Mountains (Zagros of Fars) located on the southwestern edge of the large Kūr River basin (Figure. 1). It has a length of about 40 kilometers and a variable width with a maximum of 20 kilometers, starting from the southern valleys of the Sepidan road (Guyum and Dokuhak) and ending with a gentle slope in the northwest-southeast direction to Lake Maharlu. Currently, the physical expansion of the Shiraz metropolis has covered a large part of this plain and greatly changed its natural-historical landscape; whereas, the presence of gardens and dense vegetation within this plain, along with water resources from several rivers and streams, indicates a suitable environmental capacity for the development of agriculture and village settlement from prehistoric times.

This plain is bordered to the north by Mount Derak and its narrow valleys, which throughout history have been the passage route to northern Fars centers via the Khiyareh Gorge, the Beyza Plain, and Sepidan. On the other hand, the mountains and narrow valleys on the eastern and northeastern sides separate Shiraz from the large Marvdasht Plain and the Kūr River basin. In the southern and southeastern parts of Shiraz, Lake Maharlu is located, which, with a maximum area of 280 kilometers, reaches a depth of up to 2.5 meters (Coats 2021: 30). The most important water resources of the Shiraz Plain are the three seasonal rivers Khoshk, Chenarrahdar, and Qareh Bagh (Fasa seasonal stream). These rivers have played an important role in the pattern of formation and continuity of ancient settlements and habitats in the plain. It seems that the Shiraz Plain, along with other valleys, plains, and foothills of the Fars region and the southern Zagros Mountains, such as the Kūr River basin and the Marvdasht Plain (Rosenberg 2003), has been inhabited from the Middle Paleolithic period onwards, witnessing the presence and dispersal of Neanderthals and Homo sapiens. Archaeological surveys in the foothills of the Shiraz Plain (Barfi 2011) and two seasons of archaeological excavations at Eshkaft-e Qadbar Mashur (Hamzavi Zarghani et al. 2023) have revealed evidence from this period.

Generally, the process of Neolithization and the manner of transition from hunter-gatherer societies to agricultural and pastoral villagers in the Fars region is not precisely clear (Weeks 2013: 98), and it generally seems that this region, including the Shiraz Plain, should be interpreted in line with the hypothesis of an exodus from the central Zagros and the dispersal of these types of societies in the southern Zagros. Despite the identification and excavation of several sites from the Proto-Neolithic and early Neolithic periods in the Fars region, known as "Aceramic Fars" (Alizadeh 2021: 3), no settlement from this phase has yet been discovered in the Shiraz Plain. Based on William Sumner's archaeological surveys in the Kūr River basin, during the Archaic Fars 1 and 2 periods, one can see an increase in sites and villages from the Mushki phase (8 sites) to the Jari phase (50 sites) (Sumner 1994: 49), which indicates the development of interactions of these societies with their surrounding environment. So far, a site with conclusive evidence of the Archaic Fars 1 phase has not yet been obtained from the Shiraz Plain; however, the destroyed site of Tappeh Kutahi, related to Archaic Fars 2, is currently considered the oldest known village from the prehistoric period of the Shiraz Plain (Figure.2). In the Early Fars (Shamsabad) phase, the most famous identified site in the Shiraz Plain is Tappeh Poustchi,

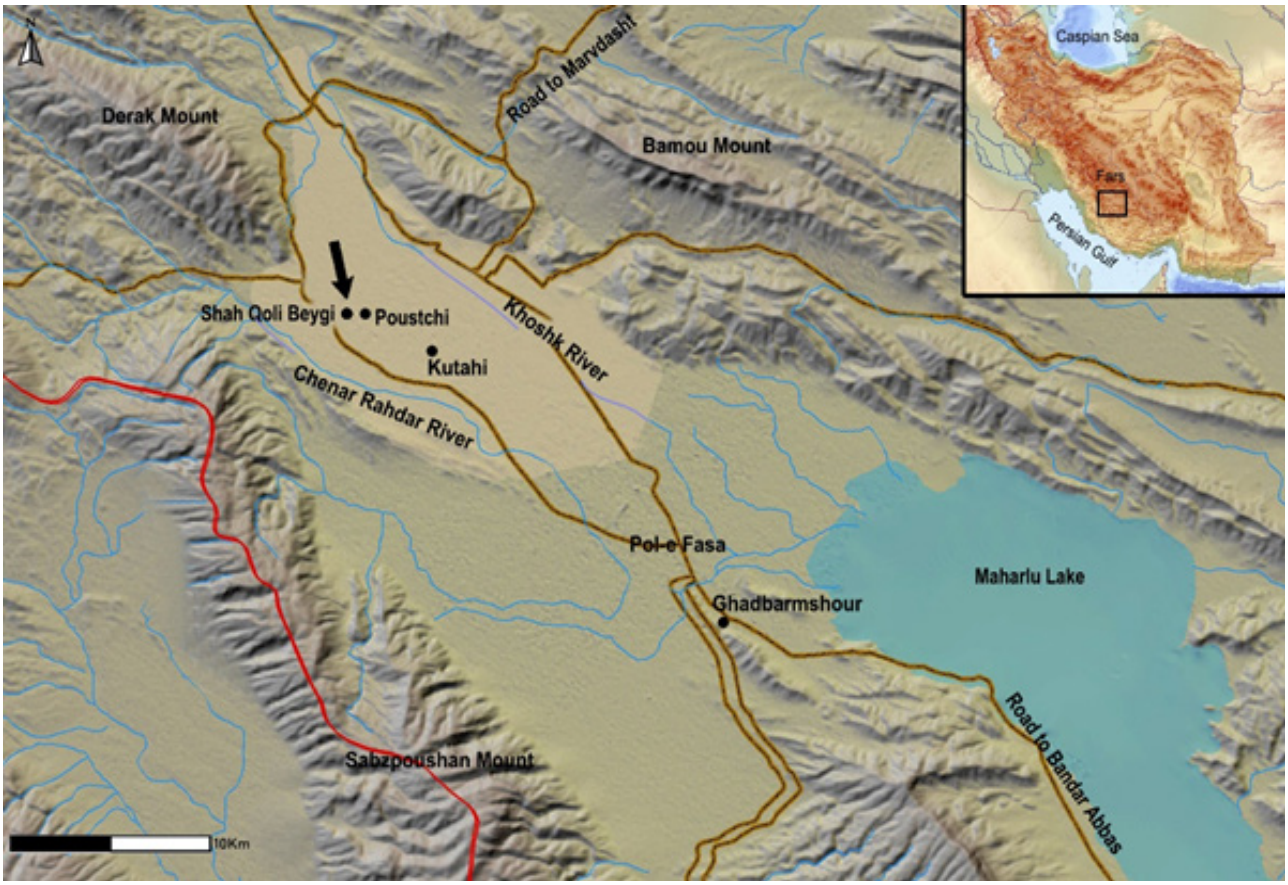

Figure 1: Map of the Shiraz Plain in the center of Fars Province and the location of prehistoric sites.

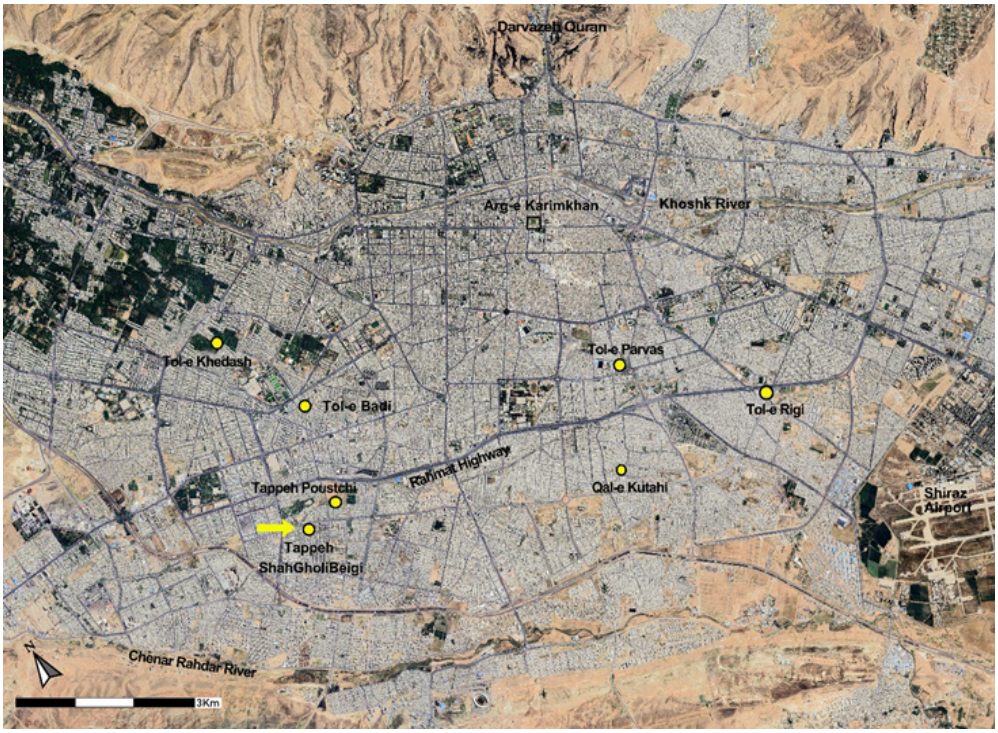

Figure 2: Prehistoric sites in the city of Shiraz and the location of Tappeh Shah Qoli Beygi.

which includes its lowest settlement layers. Tappeh Poustchi, which has undergone five seasons of archaeological excavation and stratigraphy, and from which layers radiocarbon dating has also been performed, in addition to the Early Fars phase, also has extensive evidence of the Middle Fars 1 (Old Bakun) phase. In fact, the results of this stratigraphy reveal the uninterrupted process of transition and settlement sequence of Early Fars and Middle Fars 1 (4700-5200 BC). Although no documented evidence of the Middle Fars 2 and Late Fars (mid and late fifth millennium BC) phases has yet been obtained, the favorable environmental and climatic conditions, which include increased rainfall, higher humidity, and increased groundwater inflow and rising water levels of Lake Maharlu (Coats 2021: 33-34), indicate that the Shiraz Plain had sufficient capacity for agriculture and the development of habitats during this period, which coincides with the transitional phase to the Middle Holocene. As after the New Fars (Bakun) phase, we witness the emergence of new habitats such as Tappeh Shah Qoli Beygi in the Lapui phase, which we will introduce below.

Description of Tappeh Shah Qoli Beygi;

The Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh is located on the southern side of West Pasargadae Street and at the corner of Khosravi (Shah Qoli Beygi) Street with geographical coordinates 39R 643790 – 3275420. The exact nature and extent of this site are not clear due to its complete leveling and destruction; however, the space in which the ancient site is located is still visible as a leveled and flattened ground at the corner of Pasargadae Street with approximate dimensions of 130×120 meters. Unfortunately, after its complete leveling in the last three to four years, the municipality has proceeded with street construction and the division of residential and commercial plots, and private owners have begun excavating and constructing apartments and shops (Figure 3). Tappeh Shah Qoli Beygi is located southwest of Tappeh Poustchi, at a distance of 450 meters (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Leveled ground of The Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh (Taken by the authors).

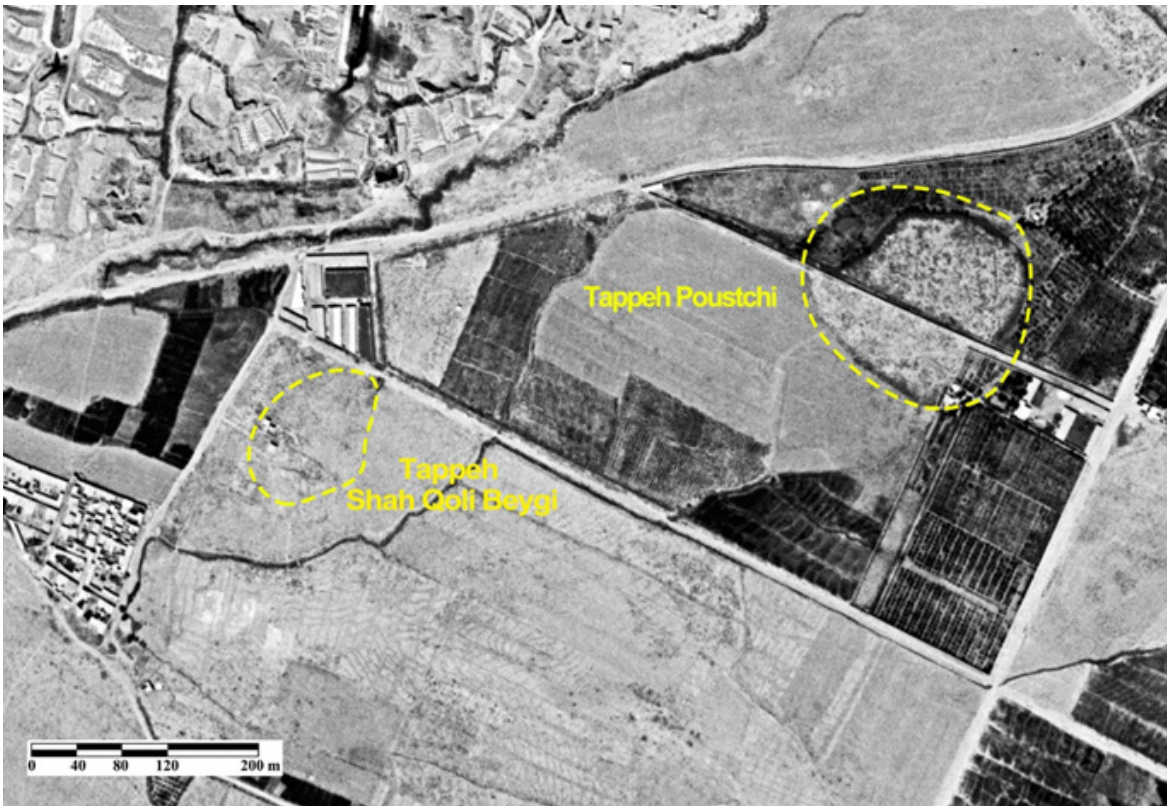

Figure 4: Location of Tappeh Shah Qoli Beygi in the vicinity of Tappeh Postchi (KH-9 Hexagon, 1973).

Old aerial images from the late 1960s from the Corona satellite, which are overlaid with the current location of the leveled ground (Figures 4 and 5), show that West Pasargadae Street existed as a short dirt road, and at The Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh, several very small and low mounds were located south of this road. In the 1977 satellite image, a low mound, roughly oval in shape, is visible (Figure 5a); however, in subsequent years (2001), this mound gradually transformed into smaller, scattered mounds (Figure 5b), and finally, in recent years, all these mounds were leveled and converted into an apartment construction site (Figures 5c and 5d). Therefore, the maximum height of this mound was probably one meter above the surrounding terrain. It appears that the bed of the water channel that flowed along the northern edge of Tappeh Poustchi also passed by The Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh and may have been the old bed of springs or a waterway that, in prehistoric times, was the water supply source for these villages.

The Tappeh Poustchi archaeological team, upon being informed of the excavation operations for the construction of a shop, observed remains of pottery fragments and ash layers at The Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh, which they documented and studied (Figures 6 and 7). In the rectangular excavated area, four sections of the site's cultural layers, along with natural sediments on top of them, were exposed to a depth of 2 meters. The cultural and settlement layers consisted of ash and alternating layers of greenish soil resulting from animal droppings and organic matter, and in the southern section, remains of a large pit were visible. In these layers, in addition to pottery fragments and bone, large amounts of charcoal fragments were also observed. Considering the two-meter depth of the layers, it can be concluded that at the time of the village's formation, the plain's surface was two meters lower.

Pottery Description:

Within the section from the remaining settlement layers of the site, 26 diagnostic pottery

Figure 5: Aerial images of The Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh at different times (KH-9 Hexagon; Google Earth).

Figure 6: Cultural accumulations and settlement layers identified within the excavation area (Taken by the authors).

Figure 7: Green-gray layers and remains of charcoal and pottery fragments in the excavated section (Taken by the authors).

sherds were collected and documented for analysis and comparison, 18 of which were drawn (Figure 8 and 9). These fragments were comparable to Lapui style pottery, and among them, two pottery fragments similar to Bakun culture (Middle and Late Fars) were also identified. The majority of Lapui types are light red to dark red, but four are dark buff and brownish, and four have turned gray. Some have a thick slip, and due to the burnishing of the majority, they are in some cases very shiny and glossy.

Lapui type pottery in Fars was first named after a mound near the village of Lapui (Vanden Berghe 1954: 401), and later in various sources (Sumner 1972, 1988), based on surface surveys, it was classified into two major types: (1) Common ware and (2) Fine Ware, with the main characteristic being its red color and burnishing. The use of the red monochrome criterion for the pottery of this period was in contrast and difference with the dominant buff pottery style of the previous phase (Bakun), which archaeologists used in their reports to distinguish these phases; as it was first used by the excavators of Tall-e Bakun (Langsdorff and McCown 1942: 32) and then used by Vanden Berghe to distinguish these two phases in the chronology of prehistoric Fars (Vanden Berghe 1954: 401). In any case, what is certain is that in the new pottery making tradition that was given the Lapui phase, painting as decoration, except in rare cases such as the Aspas type, had no place. However, according to recent archaeological studies and excavations in the layers of this phase in some archaeological sites such as Tol-e Nurabad (Potts and Roustaei 2006: 174), Tol-e Espid (Petrie et al., 2007), Tappeh Mehr Ali (Sardari 2013), Tol-e Khari (Sardari 2018), Jalyan (Mirzaei and Sardari 2021), and possibly other sites such as Tappeh Lapui, Tol-e Suzu, and Tol-e Bondu, we are faced with a wide range of pottery colors including

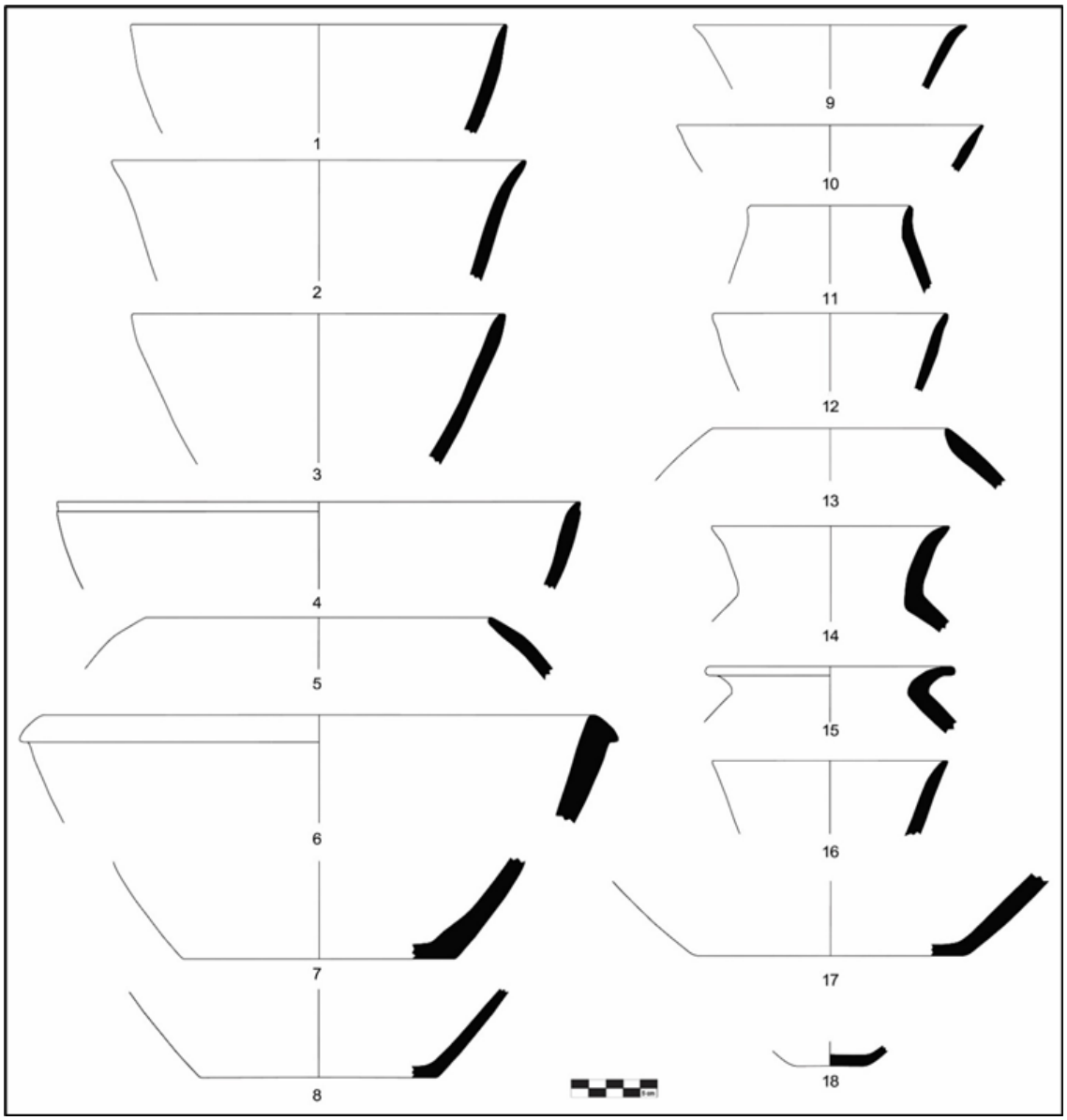

Figure 8: Drawing of Lapui phase pottery sherds from The Shah Qoli Beygi

buff, red, orange, brown, and gray from the Lapui type, although the dominant colors are orange and then red. With this description, for the analysis and typology of the Lapui pottery excavated from The Shah Qoli Beygi, we have also adopted Sumner's classification and used the dual typology of Lapui fine ware and common ware,of the 24 Lapui style pottery fragments, six are of the common type and the rest are fine. The exterior surfaces of some of these sherds are burnished. This burnishing is more common in potteries that have been given a wet hand or thin mud slip and have acquired a glassy body. Because their paste is very well kneaded, they have a uniform, dense, and relatively hard texture; when broken, the edges of the fragments become sharp and cutting, like the fine buff potteries of previous periods. Petrographic laboratory studies show that the production of such pottery is due to the use of soft clay with low calcium (Blackman 1989: 105). Common type potteries, except for differences in texture and paste composition, do not differ much in form and color from fine pottery. This type of pottery also contains a mixture of coarse sand particles, pottery fragments, and gravel, which reduces the fineness of the pottery vessel. Their surface is relatively uneven. In addition, white particles of lime or gypsum are

Figure 9: Picture of Lapui phase pottery sherds from The Shah Qoli Beygi

also seen between the pottery paste. Another factor that makes the pottery texture rough and coarse is the type of soil with high calcium (Blackman 1989: 104) and other impurities, which reduces the uniformity of the paste. The important point about this type of Lapui pottery is that compared to the potteries of the previous (Neolithic) and subsequent (Banesh) periods, these vessels are not very coarse, and Sumner refers to them as "common ware" in comparison with Lapui fine pottery (Sumner 1972: 41, 1988: 27). Among the fine pottery sherds found, samples of dark buff and brownish color were also found (Figure 8:1,2,5,8)), which, having a form and texture similar to Lapui pottery, its buff color is different from the Bakun type pottery. In fact, the high calcium of the pottery clay causes the buff color of the pottery texture and paste to change. Despite the scarcity of buff pottery types at the Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh, sites in other regions such as Mamasani (Tol-e Espid and Tol-e Nurabad) have larger quantities of this type of pottery, and a cycle of change in the production of fine red pottery to fine buff pottery with red slip is seen (Petrie 2011: 167).

Five fragments of fine red potteries (Figure 9:11,15,16,20,21) have a thick dark red slip, which usually have a thin body and, due to repeated use, their thick slip is worn and abraded; however, due to the high strength of the vessel, they were broken and discarded. A complete form sample of these vessels was also found at Tappeh Mehr Ali (Sardari 2011: 290). Among these potteries with thick slip, there is a very shiny fragment whose outer and inner surfaces have become black-gray in spots, but the core of the vessel's paste is red (Figure 9.15). As the blackness of the slip has penetrated the edges and upper parts of the inner surface. Such potteries, which seem to be the result of a combination of burnt materials, probably fat-like, were also common in other sites such as Tappeh Mehr Ali (Sardari 2011), Tol-e Espid (Potts and Roustaei 2006: 225), Tol-e Khari (Sardari 2018) and Jalyan (Mirzaei and Sardari 2021), and even according to the evidence found from Tall-e Khari, they may have been produced and invented from the previous period (Late Fars).Four pottery fragments with red paste have a gray exterior and lack a slip on them (Figure 9:23,24,25,26). It seems that in addition to burnishing, they have used a wet hand technique, and perhaps when using this technique, they have added a substance to the vessel's body. As with skillful firing of the vessel, only its outer surface has turned gray, and the core and inner surface have remained red. The fineness of making these vessels is somewhat similar to Clinky potteries in more recent historical periods. In general, the dominant and common types of Lapui and fine pottery sherds of Shah Qoli Beygi Tappeh, like other contemporary and contemporaneous sites, are open-mouthed bowls, goblets, open and closed-mouthed jars, and various cups, whose edges are made in a range of straight, outwardly inclined, and everted edges (Figure 9:14). The shape of the bottoms of pottery vessels at this site, like other sites of this phase, is generally flat, which seems natural given the abundance of jar and bowl vessels (Figures 8: 7,8,17,18 and 9:5,6,8,26). The production of Lapui type pottery, in addition to being handmade, was also wheel-made. Because, as we see in Shah Qoli Beygi, the mostly identical and standard forms with uniform, consistent, regularly round, and smooth edges and bottoms in this period suggest the use of the wheel in pottery production (Potts and Roustaei 2006: 175) and may indicate specialized mass production due to population growth (Sumner 1988; Petrie 2011: 174). Among the collected potteries, there are two body sherds and one rim that are of the fine buff pottery type with a sand temper and buff or light orange color of the Bakun style (Figure 9:3,4,7). These fragments were plain and undecorated and had a uniform fine texture, although they were thick and were broken parts of large jars. Considering that these potteries were obtained from a settlement texture mixed with Lapui types, there is no doubt that they belong to the Lapui time phase, and their continuation in this phase means that the tradition of making and consuming pottery from previous phases (Middle and Late Fars) continued for

several decades or centuries in the fourth millennium BC. The edge fragment (Figures 8:14 and 9:7) is a completely continued form of Bakun style vessels, which belonged to closed-mouthed jars, and the end form of the edge tends to become sharp.

Final Remarks; Shah Qoli Beygi and the Lapui Phase in the Shiraz Plain

The investigation of Shah Qoli Beygi, though limited by its compromised state, offers a crucial comparative lens through which to examine the Lapui phase within the broader context of the Shiraz Plain's prehistory. The site's significance lies not only in its confirmation of Lapui presence within the plain, but also in the nuanced insights it provides into the ceramic traditions, settlement patterns, and potential environmental adaptations of this period. Comparatively, the Shah Qoli Beygi pottery assemblage, with its dominance of red fine wares alongside common wares and lingering Bakun influences, aligns with wider Lapui trends observed at sites like Tappeh Mehr Ali, Tol-e Espid, and Tol-e Nurabad. The variability in color and texture, while conforming to the established Lapui spectrum, underscores the regional diversity within this phase. The presence of buff-colored wares, albeit in smaller quantities, further supports the notion of a gradual transition of ceramic traditions, reflecting potential shifts in resource availability or cultural preferences. The site's section, despite its limited exposure, reveals a two-meter accumulation of cultural deposits, suggesting a sustained occupation and a lower paleosurface at the time of settlement. The observed use of both hand-made and wheel-made ceramics at Shah Qoli Beygi reinforces the understanding of Lapui technological advancements, possibly linked to increased specialization and population growth. Furthermore, the comparison with Tappeh Poustchi, located in close proximity, highlights the evolving settlement landscape of the Shiraz Plain. While Poustchi demonstrates a continuous sequence from the Early Fars to Middle Fars periods, Shah Qoli Beygi's Lapui occupation indicates a later phase of settlement, potentially representing a shift in settlement focus or adaptation to changing environmental conditions. Academically, the Shah Qoli Beygi findings contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding the Lapui phase's chronology, regional variability, and socio-economic dynamics. While radiocarbon dating from other Lapui sites provides a general timeframe, further research, including detailed petrographic and residue analyses of the Shah Qoli Beygi pottery, is needed to refine our understanding of the site's specific chronology and its relationship to other Lapui settlements. The site's limited data also calls for more comprehensive regional surveys to map the full extent of Lapui occupation and its relationship to the broader cultural developments in Fars. In conclusion, Shah Qoli Beygi, despite its compromised state, provides a valuable comparative perspective on the Lapui phase in the Shiraz Plain. It reinforces the understanding of Lapui as a period of significant cultural development, marked by distinctive ceramic traditions and potential technological advancements. Future research, incorporating interdisciplinary approaches and systematic regional surveys, will be crucial in further elucidating the complex dynamics of this pivotal phase in the prehistory of southern Iran.

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Conflict of Interest: The results obtained in this research do not conflict with any individual or organization.

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