



Assigning the Geographical Location of Toranjeh Historical City Based on Written Sources and Archaeological Researches

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Abstract: According to historical and geographical sources, Totanjeh has been one of the important cities of Tabaristan in the early Islamic centuries. This city had a military function in the Abbasid period. In historical sources, Toranjeh has been recognized as Borji, Toranji, Torji, Tariji, Toranjir, and Tazhir which is located in the lowland zone between Mamatir (Babol) in South, Mileh (Southeast of Amol) in West and Sari in the East. The noteworthy political and military aspects have focused on the localization of Toranjeh city in early and medieval Islamic periods by historical sources and archaeological findings. On the base of documentary evidence, it can be given that the cultural sequence of the city of Toranjeh is divided into three phases. The formation of the Espahbodan Tabarestan reign, the development phase, and finally the collapse of the Samanid rule in the Mazandaran Marashyan period. The authors in the framework of a program of archaeological research surveyed Abolhasan kola-i- Babol located in the province of Mazandaran. The findings and review of archaeological and historical evidence suggest that the studied area (the village of Abolhasan kola-i- Babol) is the probable location of the city of Toranjeh.

Keywords: Tabaristan, Early Islamic Centuries, Toranjeh Historical City, Abol-Hasan-Kola village Written Sources.

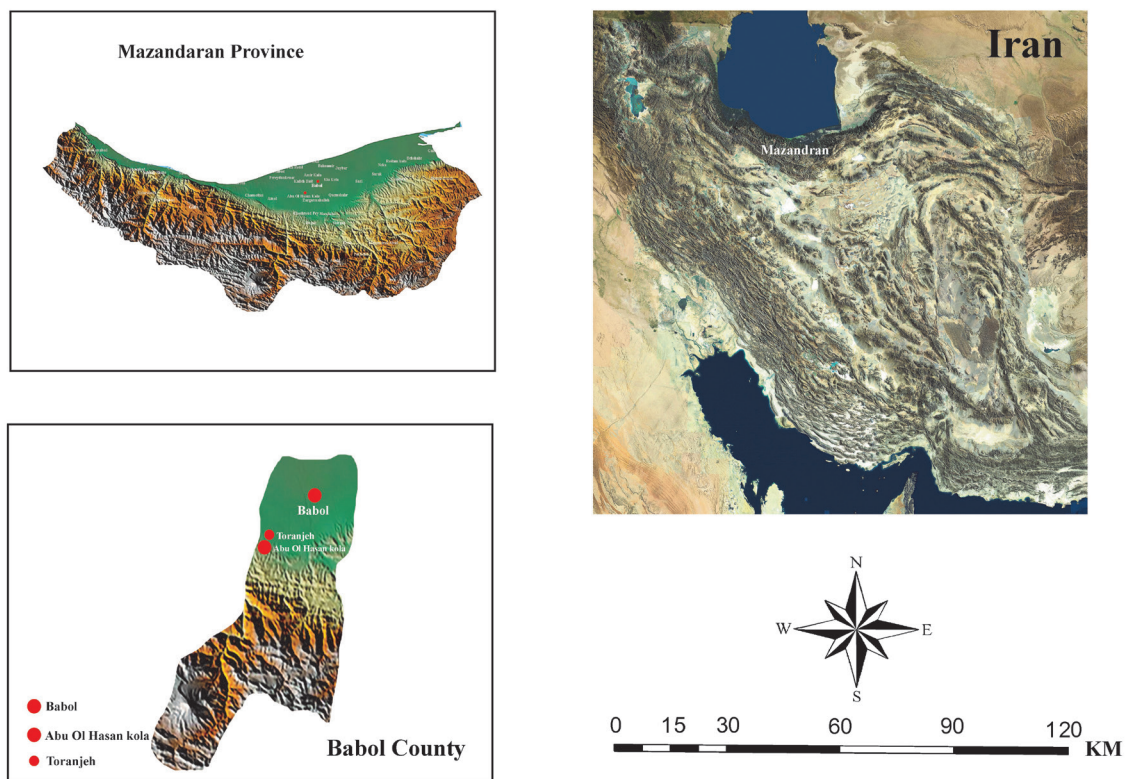
Introduction

In Abbasid political geography, the Tabaristan state had been known as one of the important and strategic areas. Contemporaneous presence of local governments as Ispahbos of Tabaristan, Bavandies, Padusbans, and Alavis on one the one

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hand and Abbasids government on the other, made Tabaristan the focal point of continuous and political disputes (Hakimiyan 1989: 1-6). Historical written sources indicated the tenses and inflamed atmosphere among mentioned governments. For instance, the distribution of forts and defensive constructions in vast parts of mountainous regions in Tabaristan indicted its strategic importance for enemy forces. Following historical written sources (local historians and Muslim geographers) of the early Islamic centuries, Toranjeh was one of the 16 cities which was constructed in the plain region of Tabaristan during Farkhan governing (98-115 A.H.)- the second Ispahbod of Tabaristan (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 73-74). The reason for examining the historical existence of Toranjeh and its probable location was the archeological examination of Abul-Hasan-Kola in Babol in 2010 A.D. (map 1 and fig. 1). The authors recognized by field method research that this area could be the location of Toranjeh in early Islamic centuries. For this purpose, the main question which was raised in this paper is on the original location of Toranjeh. Since, information on cities during the Sassanid era and early Islamic centuries in Tabaristan is mostly based on historical, geographical, and literary texts, it is utilized historical sources such as local histories (Tarikhe-Tabaristan by IbneIsfandiar; The History of Royan by Olia-Allah Amoli, History of Tabaristan and Royan and Mazandaran by ZahiroDin Marashi), geographers' observation in itineraries and geographic books to localize and determine the probable location of Toranjeh.



Map 1: location of Toranjeh at Babol (North of Iran, Mazandaran province)

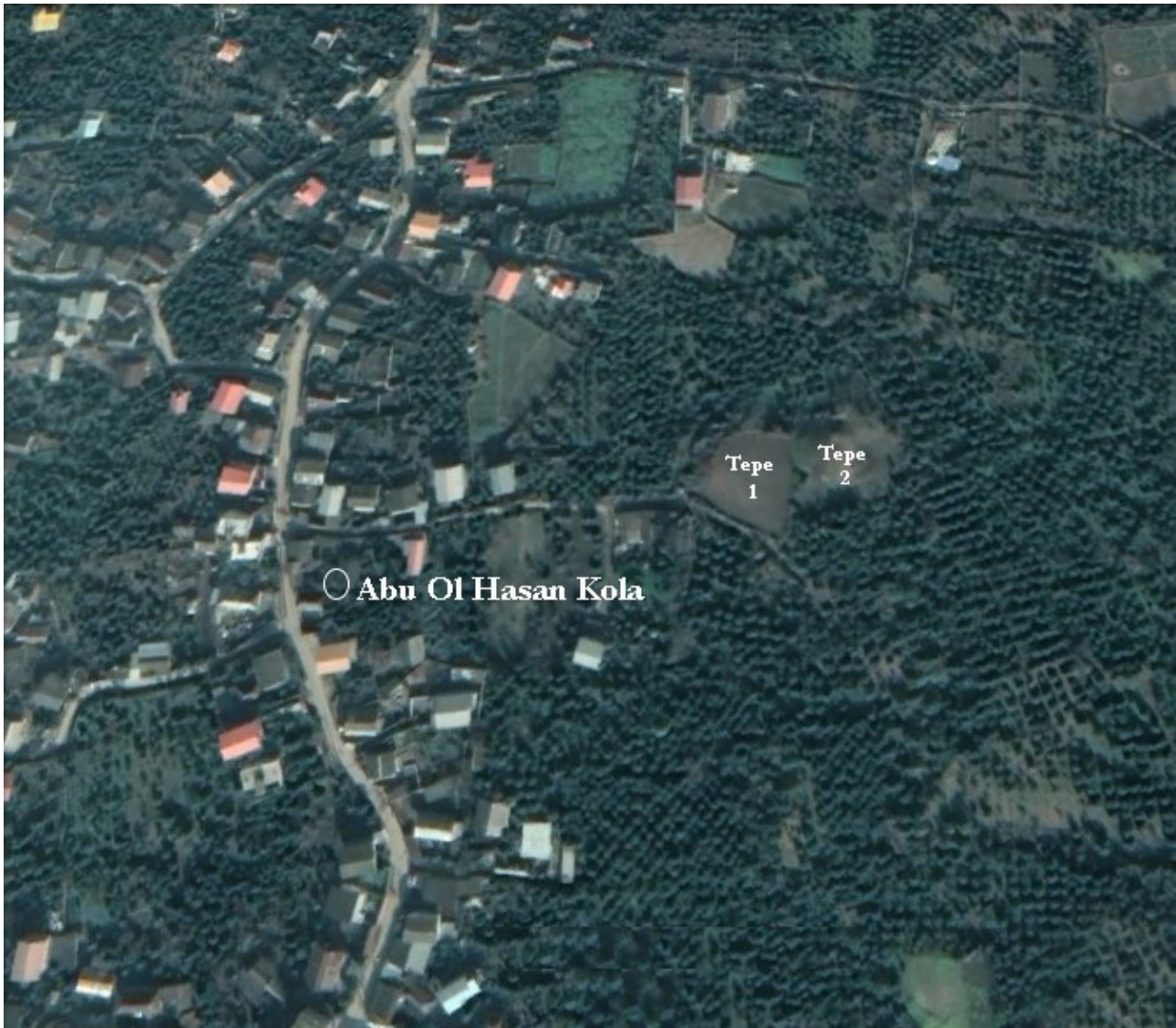


Fig. 1: Possible location of Toranjeh in Abo Ol Hassan Kola

It should be mentioned that the background of studies on this city is limited to archeological studies by Musa Darvish Ruhani as well as historical research by Ardeshir Barzegar, Javad Neyestani, and Abed Taghavi which has dealt with the historical geography of Toranjeh and its constructed garrison.

Refers to Toranjeh in written source

The oldest source which mentioned Toranjeh as a city in Tabaristan is Alaaq al Nafisih (written in 290 A.H.) (Ibne Rasteh 1986: 176). This city, in old texts and sources, are mentioned by various names as: Toranjeh (Ibne Rasteh 1986: 176; Ibne Faqih 1970: 147; Yaqoot 2004: 27), Toranji (Moqadasi 1982: 120), Borji (Istakhri 1961: 170-175; Lestrangle 1958: 400), Tariji (Ibne Huqel 1987: 120), Tarji (Hodud AlAlam 1983: 145; Jeyhani 1989: 146; Olia-Allah Amoli 1969: 90-126), Triche, Tuji and Turan Chi (Rabino 2003; 200-201), Tarijeh, Tariji, Tarjeh and Torji (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 74, 180, 231, 239), Istakhri (written in 340 A.H.), the pioneer in the field of

illustrative/pictorial map, has specified the probable location of Toranjeh among other cities in Tabaristan under its map (fig. 2).

The author of *Hodud AlAlam* (written in 372 A.H.) named Toranjeh as ‘Torji’ and described it: “It [Toranjeh] is a prosperous town and the oldest one in Tabaristan” (*Hodud AlAlam* 1982: 145). Ibne Faqih Hamedani believes that the distance between Mamatir (present Babol) and this city is six farsakh (36 kilometers). He also called Toranjeh ‘a town’ that is appeared it was not a big and prosperous town at that time (Ibne Faqih 1970: 147). in 4th A.H., Ibne Huqel named it as ‘Teriji’ and believed it was located between Eyn Alham port (present MahmudAbad) and Mileh. He also estimated that the distance from Mileh to Toranjeh was three farsakh (18 kilometers) (Ibne Huqel 1987: 126). in accordance with *Tarikhe-Tabaristan* by IbneIsfandiar among 27 cities in Tabaristan, there are 16 ones in plain region during early Islamic centuries. Toranjeh was one of the cities which



Fig. 2: location of historical city of Toranjeh in Estakhri’s map (Estakhri 1961:169).

were located in plain region, among Mileh in west, Mamatir (present Babol) in south and Sarravieh in east (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 74-75).

There is the most documented version on derivation of Toranjeh in Tarikhe-Tabaristan. IbneIsfandiar believed that etymology of the city was related to Farokhan's fighting –the second governor of Ispahbods of Tabaristan- against Turks which resulted in their defeat in this location. He mentioned on this event: "In the reign of the Great Farokhan, Turks -as mentioned before- received tax in order not to attack Tabaristan, after two years Tabaris protected the ways and didn't Toranjeh pay attention to pay tax and enclosed narrow places with wall as well as made gates for city afterwards they left the plain towards a place called Firooz Abad which was next to the border of Lafoor and bivouacked there. As Turks informed on breaking their pledge, came towards Tabaristan and assisted Sool come to the throne, encamped where now is the city and pillaged until Farokhan launched a night assault and triumphed, Sool and a wealth of Turk forces were killed as it was massacred a huge number of them and others who weren't there caught in their stalk and Turks left Tabaristan. It was constructed a city in this location which was named Turamji (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 73).

Historical refers

Historical events indicate strategic position of Toranjeh which was located in an area between Mamatir, Mileh and Sari. This is led to single out Toranjeh as a headquarters for the military operations by most of the military commanders and governors in history. One of the events is Turks attacks under the command of 'Sool' in Ispahbod Farokhan's reign which is the first historical refer to Toranjeh. Turks singled out Toranjeh as their headquarters to attack other cities in Tabaristan but finally they were conquered by valor of this great governor (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 73). Constructing Abbasid military garrisons is another historical refers to Toranjeh which are constructed in mountainous, forest and plain regions by Abu Alabbas Toosi in 144 A.H. One of the garrisons was located in Toranjeh where was managed under the commanding of Moslim Ibn-e Khalid and one thousand and five hundred military forces who were from Soqd, Samarqand, Kharazm, Nesa and Bavard and guarded the controlled areas (Ibne Isfandiar, 1366: 180; Amoli, 1348: 61; Marashi 1966: 60). Though just after one and a half year of Abu AlAbbas Toosi's governing, people who were harassed by foreign governors' cruelty (Arabs) and waiting to take revenge on them, rose up with the assistance of Ispahbods, occupied all garrisons in a day and murdered soldiers as well as commanders. Arabs, who were away from garrison, were eliminated but a few of them fled to forests and thickets were killed by savage animals and finally governing was returned to Ispahbods (Barzegar 1950: 120-128). Heavy taxes by Taheris and the cruel behavior of 'Mohammad Ibn Oss' –one of the Khali-pha (Montasir Abbasid) representatives- in Ruyan region resulted in another public up-

rising. It should be mentioned that in Taheris' reign, people of Toranjeh and Mamatir (present Babol) had to pay three hundred and seventy thousand derhams in tax (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 74-75) which led to the uprising of the people of Ruyan under the leadership of 'Hasan Ibn Zeyd' -one of the Alavids- who was known by Daeë Kabir (the great man who invite to goodnes). After conquering Ruyan, Daeë went towards Amol and Torji and then stayed there for three days (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 231; Marashi 1966: 128-131). 'Solomon Ibn Abdallah Tahir' -the governor of Sari- sent his commander-in-chief 'Asad Jandan' towards Torji to suppress 'Hasan Ibn Zeyd'. As 'Asad Jandan' arrived Torji, Daeë left there (Marashi 1966: 128-132). in fact, 'Hasan Ibn Zeyd' pretended that he was not able to defend against enemy by his politic escape. As soon as Solomon was informed on Daeë's, he would stay in his capital whereas was not aware of Hasan ibn Zeyd's politic. Daeë did not utilize main way from Torji to Sari to attack Solomon Ibn Abdallah Tahir but he altered the direction to another way. While Solomon conquered Torji with no battle and stayed there, Daeë's army attacked in the morning to surprise him by the motto of 'Allah O Akbar' (God is the greatest) and since Solomon was not able to defend so, he fled which led to Daeë's successive conquests (Itimad AlSaltaneh 1994: 115). Hasan Ibn Zeyd returned to Torji after his considerable conquests (Rabinoo 2003: 199). He managed appointment and dismissal of governors in Toranjeh. He arrested 'Sarkhab Ibn Isphahbod of Qaran' as well as his brother 'Maziyar' and appointed 'Seyed Hassan Ibn Ja'afar Alaqiqi' as the governor of Sari and its outskirts (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 239).

After a short time of Alaqiqi's governing, 'Mohammad Ibn Nooh', Isphahbod of Malek Jebal 'Qaren Ibn Shariyar' and 'Mosmaqan' decided to attack Sari. Alaqiqi who was not able to defend, left toward Torji to Hasan Ibn Zeyd (Daeë Kabir) after awarding of enemy's decision. Daeë sent 'Ja'afar Ibn Mohammad' and 'Leys Ibn Feneh' with one thousand military forces to assist Alaqiqi, they began their military operation from Torji and moved toward Sari. Initially, he was defeated and flet and also his brother-Abbas- were killed during battle. Then Mohammad Ibn Nooh was forced to retreat but the valor of Leys ibn Feneh led to victory while Alaqiqi attacked, killed a large number of enemies and took a great wealth of their property and animals as the spoils. Mohammad Ibn Nooh went toward Estar Abad to Solomon Ibn Abdallah Tahir and they entered Gorgan (Ibid, 241). It should be mentioned that Isphahbod of Qaran was defeated and pushed back from the territory of Sari (Barzegar 1959: 191).

In the third century A.H., when 'Ismaeel Ibn Ahmad Khorasani' was governing Khorasan and after defeating Amroly Saffarid, he decided to conquer Tabaristan and Gorgan. Hence, he sent 'Mohammad Ibn Haron Sarakhsi who was Mohammad Zeyd Alavi's old enemy known as Daeë Saqir, with a three thousand army who were from Kharazm and Bokhara to this region. Daeë, by reason of his successive conquests, initiated war

with his twenty thousand army against Mohammad Ibn Haron. But he was defeated heavily and killed. After Mohammad defeated Dae Saqir, he returned Sari and then Amol and was governing there for one and a half year. Since he gained power during this period, he initiated to disobey Amir Ismaeel Samani. Samanid governor moved toward Gorgan and Tabaristan to conflict him. As soon as he arrived the outskirts of Amol, Mohammad Ibn Haron know that he was not able to fight him so, went toward Deylaman and then Rey. After Amir Ismaeel entered Amol, he implemented justice and returned Tabaris and their heirs whatever Alavids had taken by force. He also returned all property of the heads and famous people which are possessed by Sadats and their relatives for fifty years. People of Toranjeh also were benefited and some of Faqihs (religious scientists) as well as grandees were gifted seven thousand derhams, ones as: Ibrahim and Mohammah –sons of Almazza, Ibrahim Ibn Mehran, Mansoor and Jalvanan. Besides, he gave properties and grains to people and the poor, also commanded that they would pay their taxes just once in a year. People lived in an atmosphere of security and peace for Samanids actions which led to their acceptability among people (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 259).

It is inferred from historical sources that Toranjeh had been the headquarter of Ispahbod Ali Ala Doleh Bavani during Saljooqid era. At the beginning of Farvardin (April) in 512H., commanders and their military forces joined together which paved the way for suppressing Ispahbod's younger brother -Bahram- who was one of his serious oppositions. Finally, this led to the victory of Ala Doleh. After defeating Bahram, he came to the throne and besides suppressing his oppositions, he decided to stabilize his authority as well as his position and conquered all over Tabaristan (Mahjoori 2002: 240)

After the death of Ispahbod Ali Ala Doleh, his old son -Third Rostam Shah Qazi- came to the throne in Tabaristan. Since grandees and commanders were dissatisfied with Shah Qazi, he sent a man to his brother -Mardavich- who was in Marv, to invite him return to Tabaristan and be the governor. Mardavich consulted Sultan Sanjar-Saljooqid king- on this proposal. Sultan sent a ten thousand army with Mardavich, under the command of 'Qatashmar', toward Tabaristan and they conquered many cities in Tabaristan, made Shah Qazi retreat. He sheltered in 'Dara Dej' and stayed there for eight months until a heavy rain and horrendous flood in 573 A.H. Helped him. Turks, who hadn't seen such a horrendous scene, lifted the siege of Dara Dej and sheltered in Toranjeh. Rostam Shah Qazi came out of Dara Dej and moved towards Torji. He defeated them in this city, made them to retreat and conquered all over Tabaristan (Barzegar 1950: 279-281). Shah Qazi routed Turks as well as stabilized his sovereignty and afterwards shared positions among ones who were trustworthy. He appointed 'Amir abu Isaq Qaranvand Lapur' as the governor of Torji and is stipulated that he would pay twenty-five thousand golden *dinars* annually (Ibne Isfandiar 1987: 88).

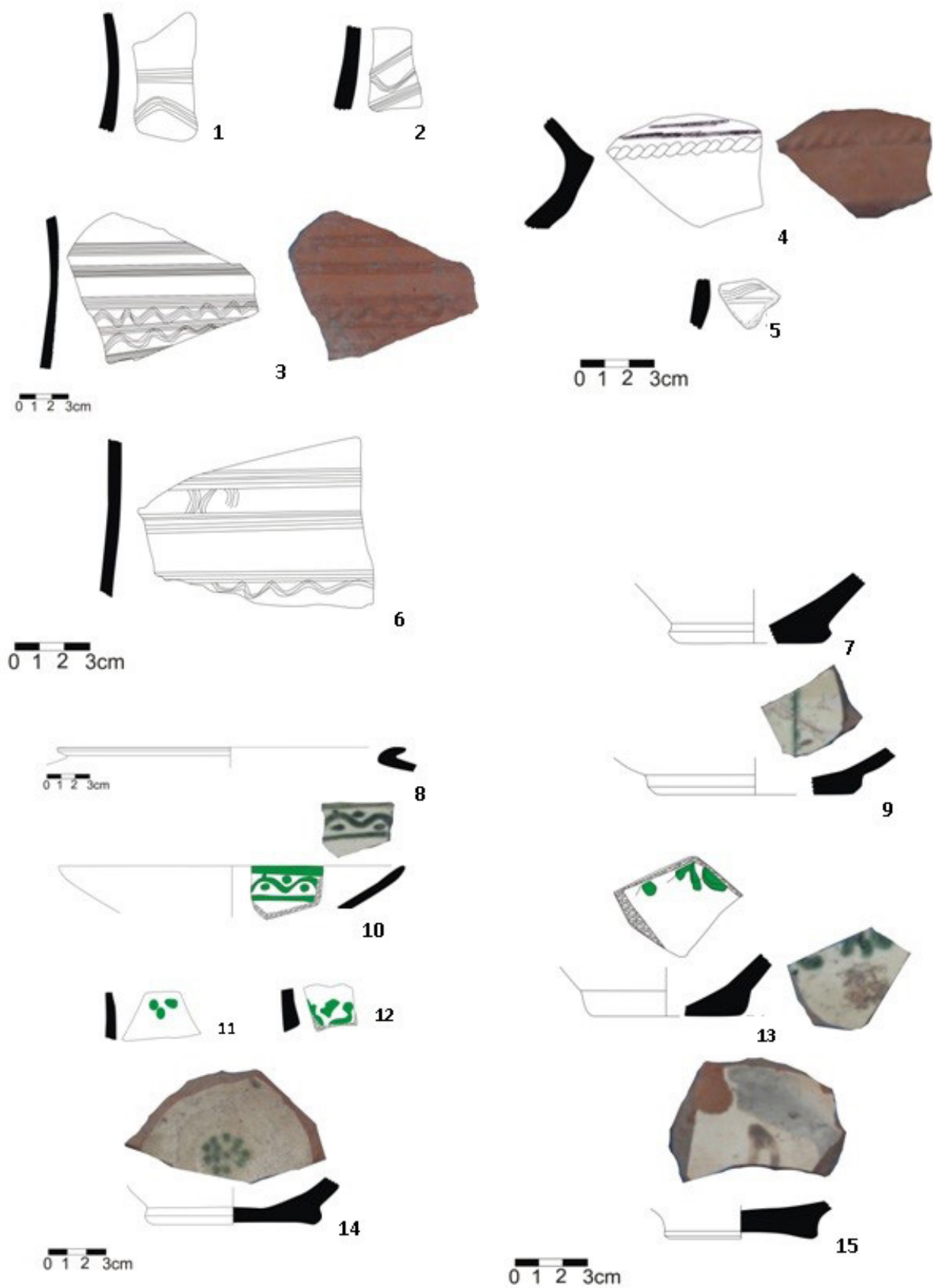


Fig 3: pottery of Islamic period indicators of the ancient sites of Abol hassan Kola village

Shah Qazi had two sons: 'Sharaf Al Molk Hasan Ibn Rostam' and 'Ala Doleh Ali' which the latter was killed by the command of king Ardeshir in Torji. It is appeared that Hasan, as the old son, had been in power after his father death and appointed his brother as the governor of Torji and when Hasan passed away, his son -Ardeshir- killed his uncle due to prevent him from coming to power and then seized the control of all affairs.

Field research

The village of Abu al Hassan Kola is located in central part of Babol in Mazandaran province at N36°23'118", E52°38'319". Plant dense covering in this region is the result of locating mentioned village in mild climate. Hence, this was a serious obstacle in field survey of archeological area (fig 3). in accordance with field survey in the region, two areas were recognized and the first one was called 'Qale Koti' which consisted of two hills. These two hills were named as A and between hills. The second area which were known by local residents as Aroos va Damad (bride and groom) area, were evaluated and documented (Safari 2010). Also, to obtain ethnographic information, local residents were interviewed and it was indicated that residents excavated these two areas illegally and utilized the bricks to construct walls and other parts of their houses. The great wealth of safe and waste bricks in one part of the area supported this hypothesis that brick kilns probably produced a wealth of necessary bricks of the region. By survey study in north-west part of the lands which are around the archeological area of Abu al Hasan Kola, it was indicated that one part had been leveled to supply the water to the village.

Conclusion

Utilizing written sources and comparing them with archeological findings is one of the common approaches in archeological researches. Although outcome information of the study and field survey in such researches doesn't completely obviate the vagueness, it -approximately- gives researchers some evidences to analyze data by documented and logical reasons. Localizing the probable location of Toranjeh is the purpose of this paper. Historical evidence indicated that this city has been located between Mamatir, Mileh and Sari. The most important factor in localizing the exact location of this city is the study of distances between cities which have been mentioned in some sources. in accordance with old geographical sources which mentioned distances of six farsakh (36 kms) and three farsakh (18 kms) in order from Mamatir and Mileh to Toranjeh as well as archeological studies, it was indicated that indicator areas in this geographical region, on the basis of explanation and localization, are our case studies (Aroos va Damad and Qale Koti) where could be part of the city of Toranjeh. Also, historical events which had been happened in this city indicated Toranjeh as a strategic place for supplying and organizing the military forces. With the reference to the written sources on local history,

this city had been the scene of conflict between Ispahbos of Tabaristan, Taheris, Alavis, Samanids and Bavandies in political- militant changes during Islamic era. As, during the reign of Alavids of Tabaristan, this city had been their military headquarters (Ibne Isfandi-ar 1987: 239). in this era, the pressure of increasing tax resulted in popular movements so that Toranjeh had been the place of conflict between rival forces. It is appeared that the strategic importance of this city which was located between Mamatir (present Babol), Mileh (near Amol) and Sari, is the result of increasing military conflicts. As, it could be concluded that Toranjeh had been so important in victory or defeating of military forces as a city which played the role of political and military supporter.

As mentioned above, the reason of construction and real function of this city was political and geopolitical changes during early Islamic centuries in Tabaristan which gave this city and twentyseven other cities of Tabaristan a military nature (sixteen of them in plain region as well as twelve in forest and mountainous region). The archeological findings, as the height of examined hills and the wealth of excavated bricks, indicated that this city was the location of fortresses as high rises which could control surrounding area. Rabino mentioned Qale Tooji in Toranjeh, besides he illuminated the process of its reconstruction and destruction: "Despite Kiyavoshab Jalal and his son resistance was intense, fortress of Tootji was defeated and devastate by Seyed Kamal Aldin. The fortress was reconstructed but Amir Teymoor destroyed it when he attacked Mazandaran. Seyed Ali Ibn Kamaledin repaired it again. But it never ended. Qale Tooji had been as a mound during Zahia-e-din reign (880 A.H.) (Rabino 2003: 200-201). A vast part of these two fields as well as other spaces of the historical city of Toranjeh were seriously damaged by irregular constructing, digging wells and other constructional operations so that archeological layers were disarranged as well as earthenware's diffused inaccurately. Also, there was no specific earthenware sample belonged to establishing epochs which resulted in lack of our information to present a chronological order of establishing and cultural events of Toranjeh. Despite there is no enough archeological findings to indicate strong evidence of Toranjeh's historical existence, to some extent historical evidences could clarify the probable location of the city on the basis of its strategic position, military importance of the region and its access to cities around Toranjeh. So, according to written evidence, the cultural sequence of Toranjeh could be consist of three stages: first stage of establishment of the city during the reign of Ispahbos of Tabaristan, second stage of development during the reign of Samanids and final stage of devastation during the reign of Mar'ashides of Mazandaran. in accordance with linguistic aspect, various names of the city have the same origin. Torji, Borji, Tajir and Toranjeh indicate that Muslim geographers and local historians have accounted for the city in different eras and mentioned names of city in different dialects. Today, the differences between present Mazani dialects -from east to west of Mazandaran province- is obvious. in other words,

dynamism of Tabari language and its vast vocabulary among residents led to name it variously. As, present residents of region name the city as Tajir, Torji and Toranjeh.

Although our knowledge on cities of Mazandaran during transferring period from Sassanid era to early Islamic centuries is just on the basis of old written geographical and historical sources and there is no doubt that the archeological excavations would elaborate predominant pattern of urbanization of this era especially different parts of urban spaces, their constitutions, elements and quality of old texture of cities.

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