

MeymanatAbad Tepe: An important Site in Late Fourth Millennium BC in Iranian Central Plateau

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Abstract Iranian Central Plateau along with all environmental restrictions and capacities had a key role in Prehistoric time. During the Late Chalcolithic Period and with the increase of Complexity, the ancient societies had been connected with each other and traded the exotic and essential sources. Meymanatabad is located on the southwest of Tehran. It was excavated in the summer of 2012. The main objectives were to explore the stratigraphic sequences of the site and relative and absolute chronology from the lower layers to the end of settlement. In this paper, only the relative chronology results have been pointed and it is hoped that absolute chronology results are independently released in another article, which is currently under consideration. The study shows us Meymanatabad had continuous evidence from Sialk III6 (with the painted black on buff pottery) to Sialk IV (with the presence of Uruk trays and Bevel-rim Bowl) that indicates the interaction between Iran and Mesopotamia.

Keywords Late chalcolithic period, Meymanatabad, Stratigraphic sequences, Sialk III6-7

1. Introduction

The modality of Transition period from Late Chalcolithic to Bronze Period in Iranian Central Plateau is one of the important and ambiguous problems in this scope. A few sites including this era, untargeted studies in these sites and discontinuity stratigraphy on these sites is due to the lack of completed understanding of final developments in late fourth and early third millennium BC. The surface evidences from Meymanatabad tepe shows the cultural and commercial contacts between adjacent sites such as Tepe Sialk, Arisman, Hissar Tepe, Ozbaki Tepe and Ghabristan. Therefore, the excavation of Maymanatabad tepe could open a new horizon on the study and analysis of settlements.

2. The Location of Meymanatabad Tepe

Meymanatabad Tepe (N 3928141.46 and S 515322.47, AMSL: 1053.96 m) is located in southwest of Tehran, in

Robat Karim district and in 500 meters of south of MeymanatAbad village (Fig 1). Shad Chai River, the tributary stream of Karaj river, is 300 meters in the east of this Tepe (Fig 2.). This site consists of two low mounds; Northern Mound (Fig 3) and Southern Mound (Fig 4). MeymanatAbad Tepe is extended to 612×423 meters (Area: 5.1 ha) and almost its height is 4.73 meters from plain levels. Fazeli Nashli was the first person who explored this site in 1998 A.D. (Fazeli Nashli 2001) and then three years later, Baqeri surveyed it (Rahimi 2011). The southern Mound has three occupation phases of Sialk III6-7 with two architecture levels. Furthermore, the northern mound has continuous sequences of Sialk III7 and IV1 (Uruk findings) on the top (Fig 5).

3. Method of Excavation

Our project has two field stages. First, MeymanatAbad was surveyed using the stratified systematic sampling and then these materials were analyzed (Rahimi 2011). Afterwards, on the basis of frequencies of pottery's distributions (Fig 6), the excavation was performed in September 2011 (Yousefi Zoshk 2011). We dug out two trenches in Northern and Southern mound. The database was

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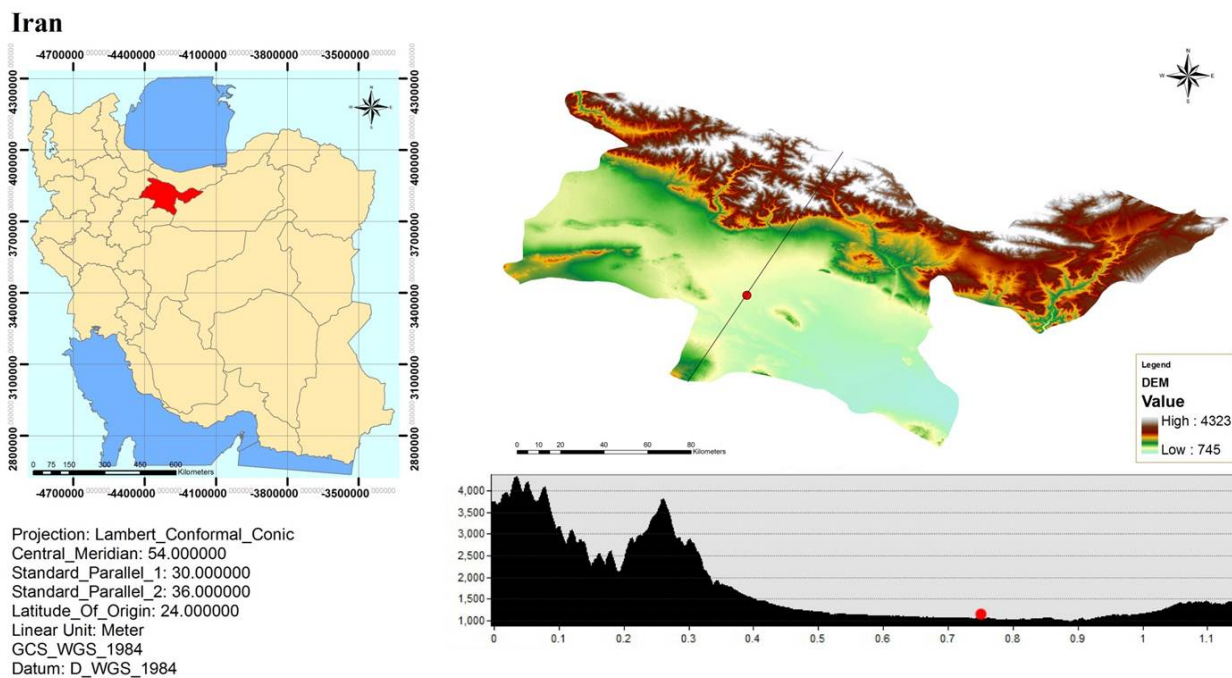
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built with 3D analysis system, which means all the material cultures with no exceptions were recorded and registered and mapped with total station and were entered into GIS database

(Fig 7). After field stages, we registered all findings in Microsoft Access Databases and analyzed them.



Digital Elevation Model (DEM) of Tehran Province and Location of Tepe Meymanatabad

Figure 1. The geographical and DEM map of Tepe Meymanatabad



Figure 2. The geographical Location of Shad Chai River

4. Pottery

The trench of southern has an approximate length and width of 3 meters was excavated to 3.5 meters under the ground. This has 4 stages from the bottom to up and dated back to late chalcolithic period (Sialk III6). The *Late Chalcolithic* period is characterized by increased interaction between Iranian Central Plateau, central Zagros, and Mesopotamia as attested by the presence of painted buff ware, string cut bases, and bevel-rim bowls. The Southern mound has a continuity of pottery tradition in Sialk III6. The pottery was buff, painted and fine and the forms included cups, deep bowl with plain bases, etc. Common forms included vertical and inverted-rim hemispherical bowls of shallow to medium depth, some with a pedestal base painted with rows of animal decoration such as leopards, goats with

S-shaped horns, and cups and open bowls with concave and oblique walls, incurving and flared rims, and flat base. Most motifs consist of geometric designs but stylized animals such as goats, leopards, cattle, and birds were found in abundance. On the basis of potteries, Six general forms were distinguished (Fig 8 & 9); 1) Coarse-Red Chaff Tempered Ware, 2) Meander Washed Buff Wares, 3) Plain Slipped Buff Wares 4) Early Black on Buff (B-on-Bf) wares, 5) Transitional B-on-Bf wares (A: Early Transitional and b: Late Transitional), 6) Standard B-on-Bf wares. These styles and motifs are similar and parallel to Arisman B (Boroffka & Parzinger 2011), Sialk III6-7 (Ghirshman 1938), Ghabristan IV, layer of 6-4 (Majidzadeh 1976), and Godin VI:3 (Rothman & Badler 2011).



Figure 3. The Northern Mound of Tepe Meymanatabad

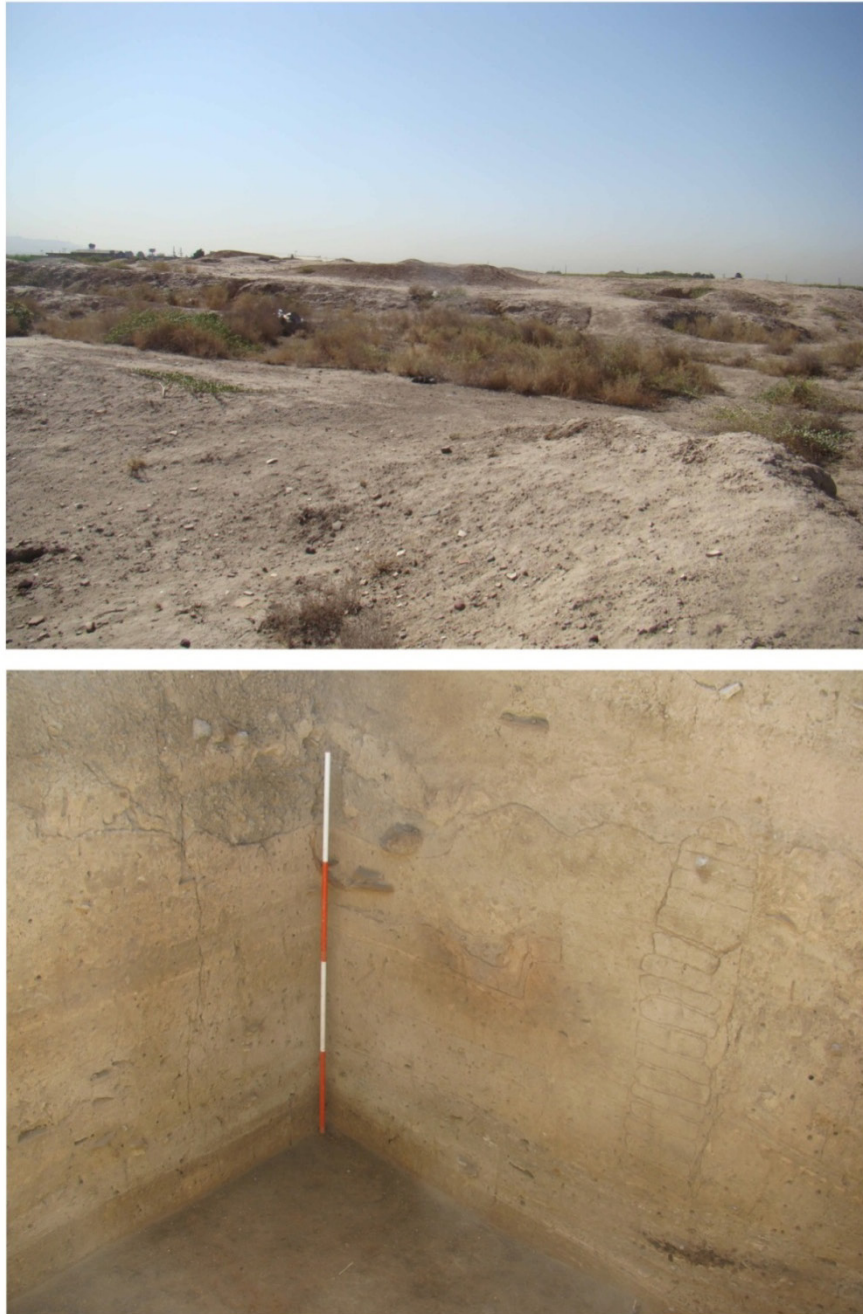


Figure 4. The Southern Mound of Tepe Meymanatabad

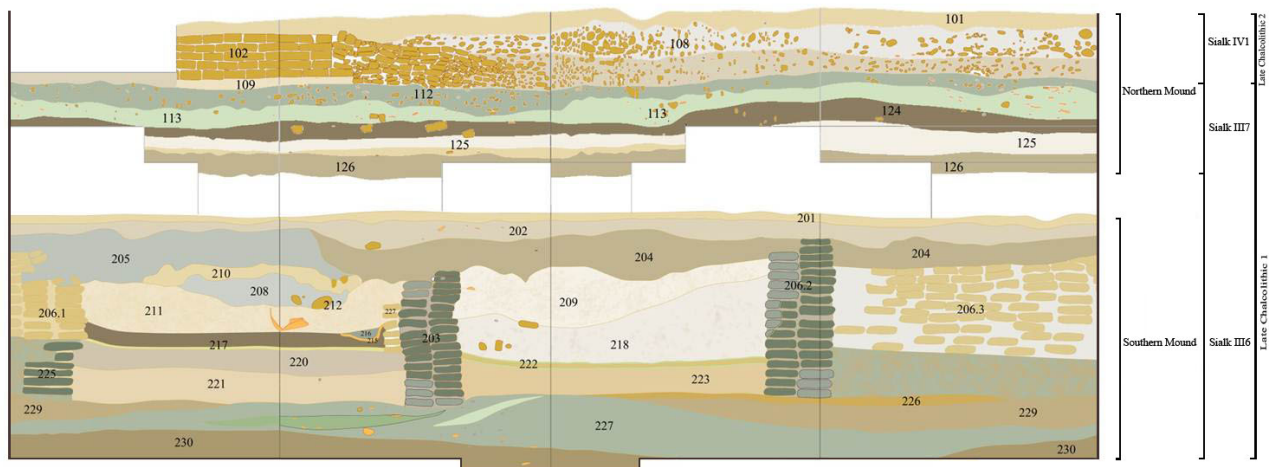


Figure 5. The stratigraphy of Tepe MeymanatAbad

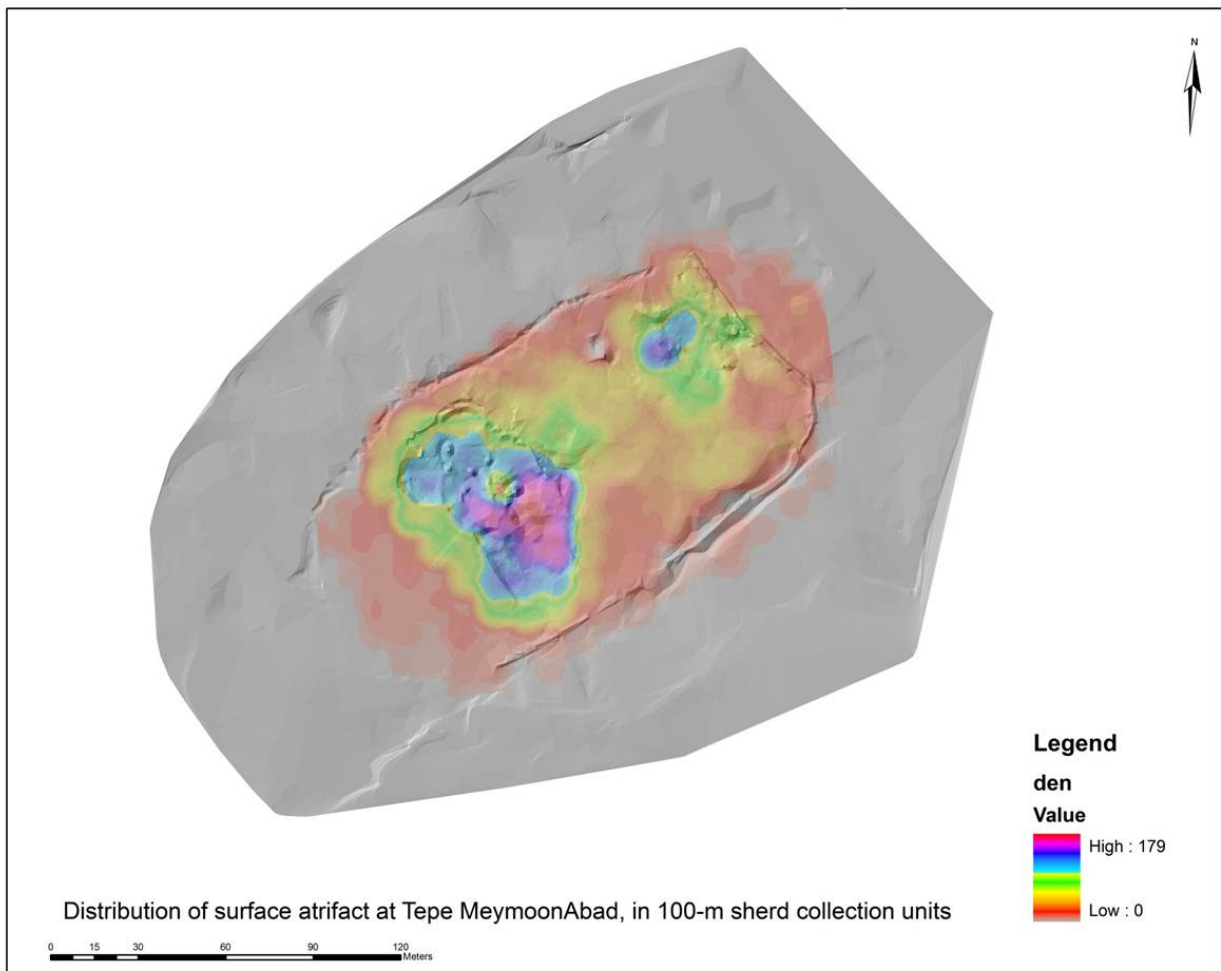


Figure 6. The Distribution of Pottery at Tepe Meymanatabd

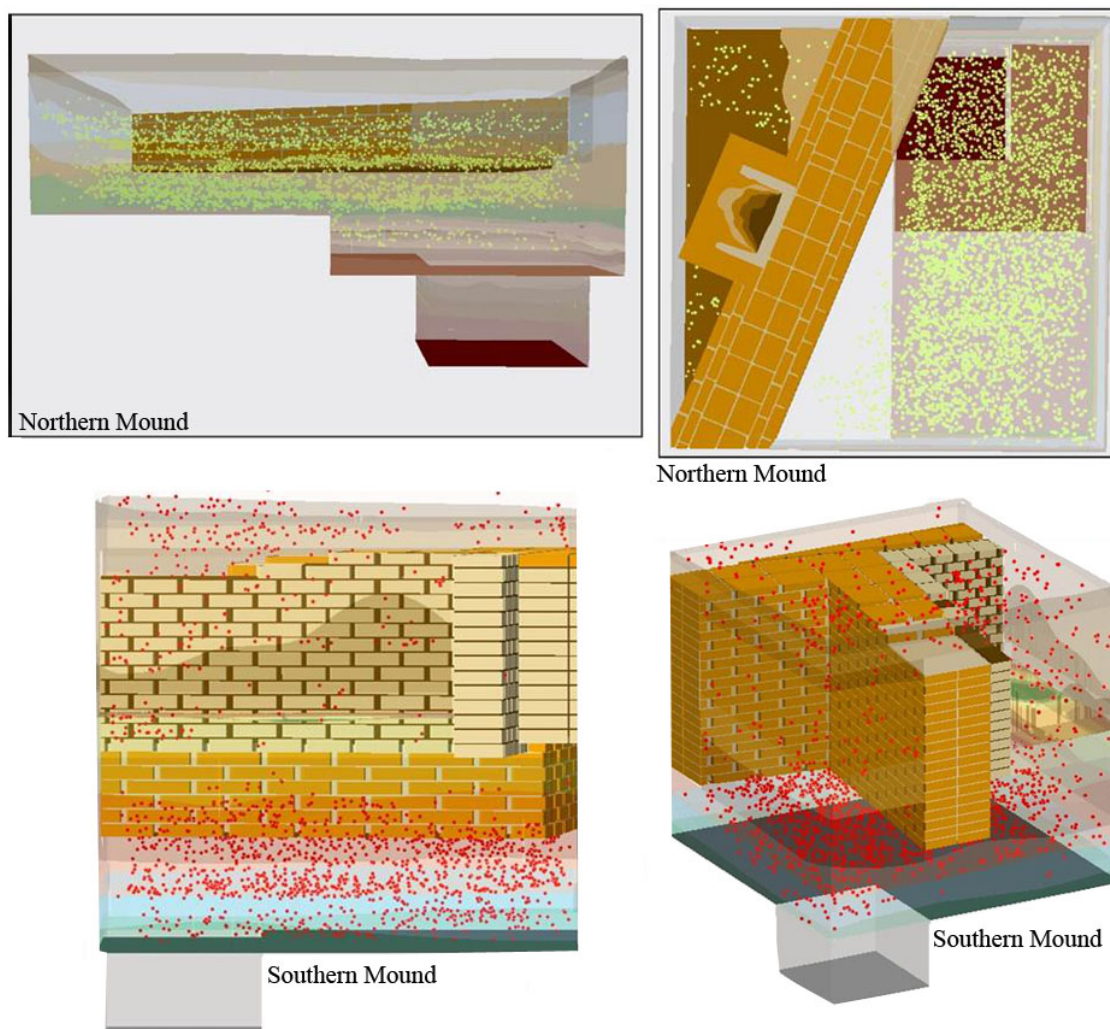


Figure 7. The 3D analysis Pattern of Findings

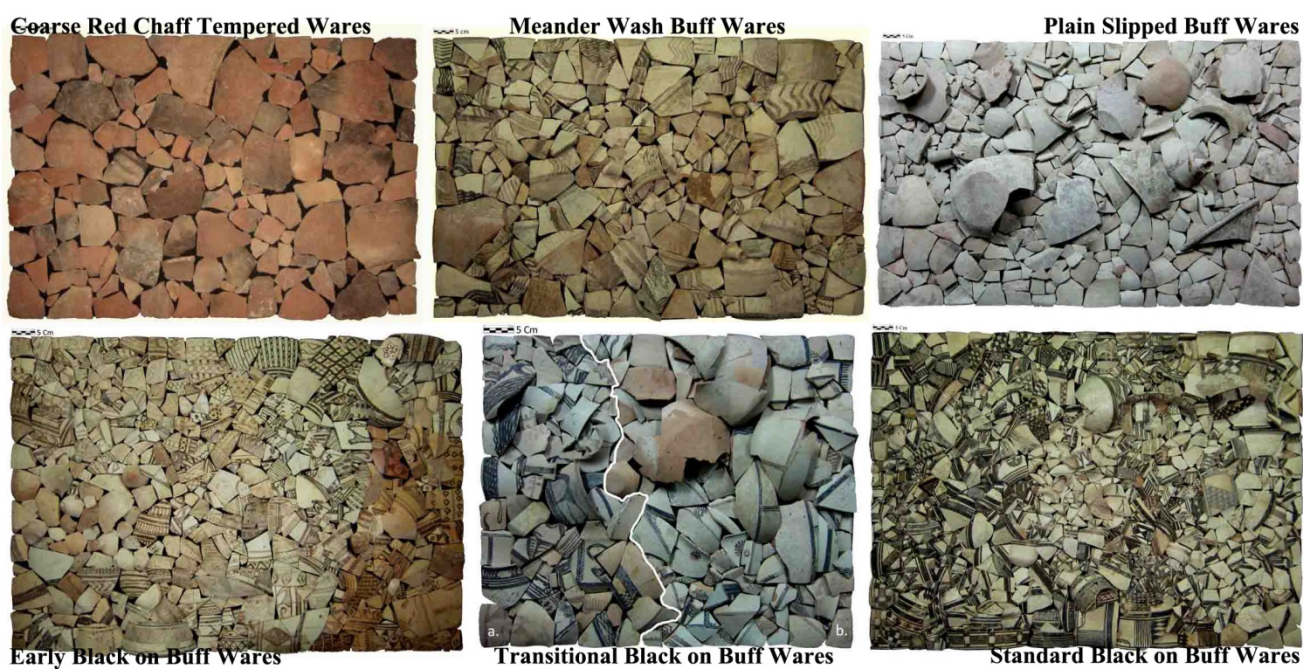


Figure 8. The Pottery of Southern Mound (Sialk III/6-7)

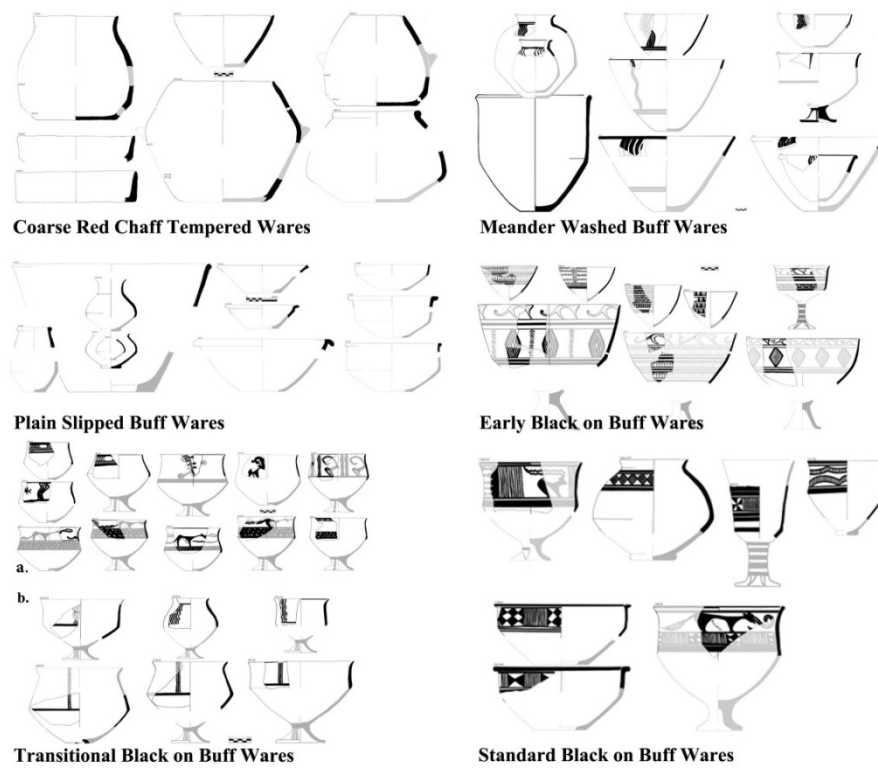


Figure 9. The Pottery of Southern Mound (Sialk III6-7)

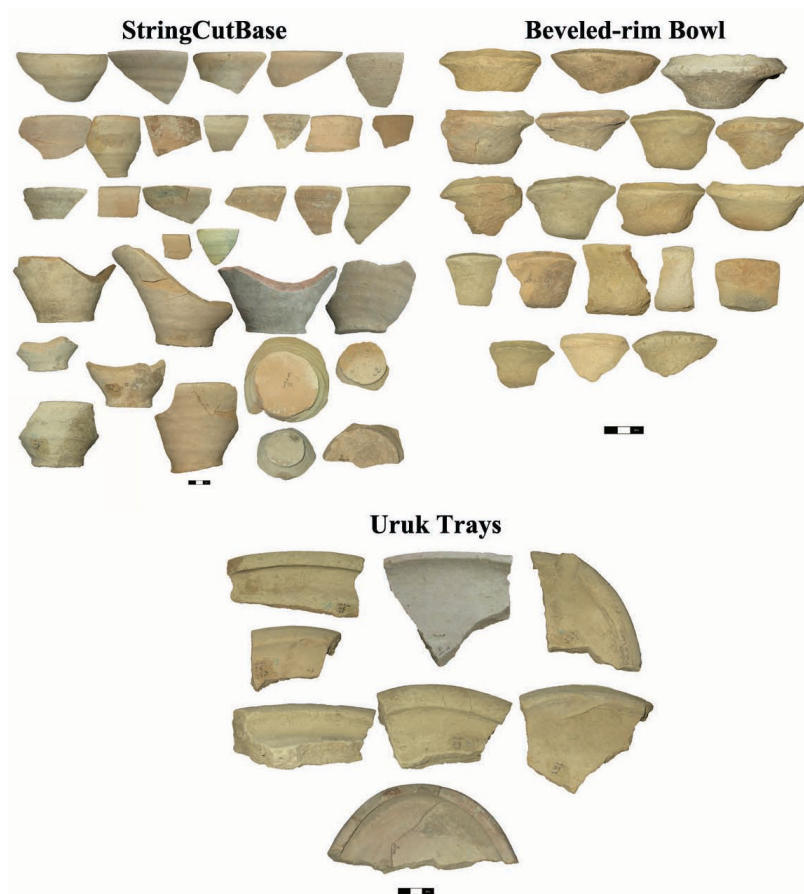


Figure 10. The Pottery of Northern Mound (Sialk IV1: Uruk Type)

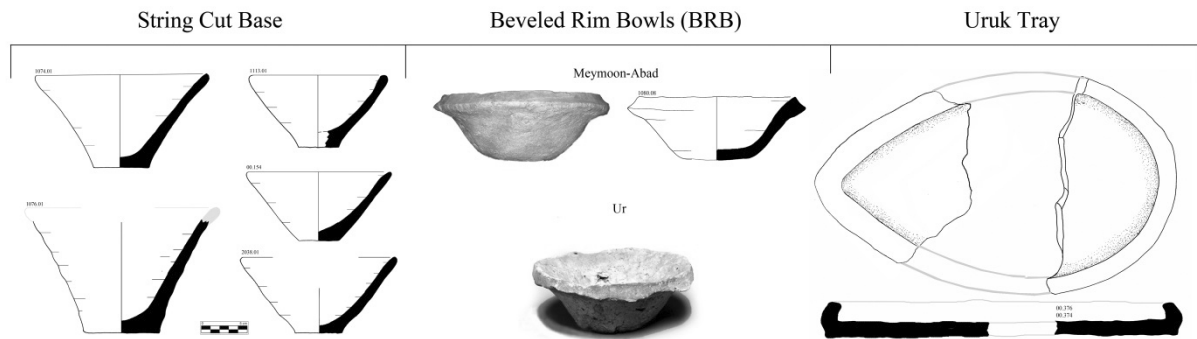


Figure 11. The Pottery of Northern Mound (Sialk IV1: Uruk Type)

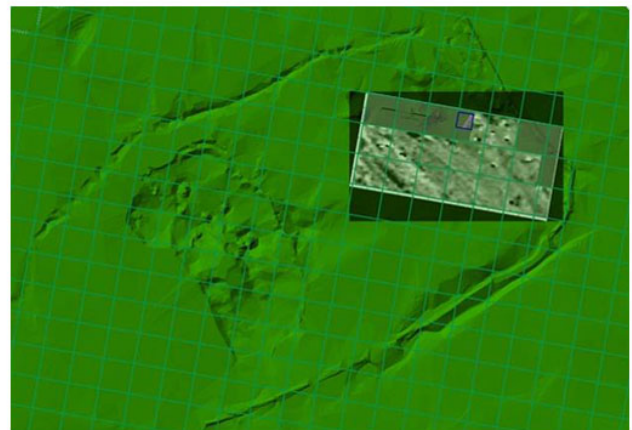
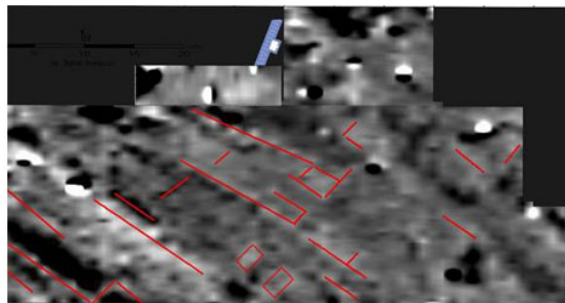
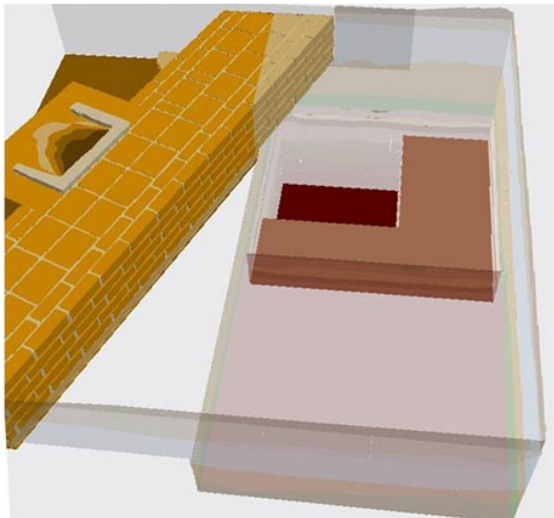


Figure 12. A wall of Northern Mound

The Northern mound included two Phases; Sialk III6-7 and Sialk IV1. In the Sialk IV1 phase, the coarse plain Buff wares including BRBs (Beveled-rim Bowl), Uruk Trays and String-cut Base wares (SCB wares) alongside Standard B-on-Bf wares and carinated plain buff wares were present (Fig 10 & 11). At String-cut bases, using the wheels indicates a specific skill level and also attempts to reduce the amount of time spent on ceramic production. The vessel must first be thrown enough to be quite symmetrical. Bevel-rim bowls have a widespread distribution during the fourth millennium BC in Iranian Central Plateau such as Meymanatabad, Cheshmeh-Ali, and Tappeh Sialk III 6-7, Tepe Ghabristan

and Godin tepe. All forms of coarse plain buff wares appeared simultaneously with a wall. The tradition of Uruk wares resembled to Ghabristan IV, layer of 3-1 (Majidzadeh 1976), Sialk IV1 (Ghirshman 1938), and Godin VI: 2-1 (Rothman & Badler 2011).

5. Other Findings

On the Survey, we found a bronze dagger, a few slags and a piece of shell. In excavation stage, there is a great architecture of Uruk period. The Uruk period at MeymanatAbad is a single level. It appeared at the top of

Northern mound and below the soil Surface. During the excavation, we could unearth a 5.37 cm long wall plus a plastered platform attached to it on which a fireplace was constructed. For reconstructing the wall, we carried on geophysics surveys and their result shows the traces of long wall (fig 12).

6. Conclusions

The material evidences based on cultural developments along with regional origins as well as foreign evidences, indicated economical sources that are the reason of communication between far-off regions. In MeymanatAbad site, these are clear evidences of continuity of pottery's style along with inner changes that indicated gradual developments from domestic pottery-making toward specialized and mass producing with uniform standards.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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