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Taherabad Phase (Godin VIII)? The Correction of a Drawback in Eastern Central Zagros Chronology

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Abstarct

The Chalcolithic sequence of the Central Zagros, which is designed primarily using the potsherds recovered and other associated material culture has long been used by researchers as a framework for the mentioned region. The chronology is originally suggested based on some incomplete excavations and thus, it is now apparently in need of revision, at least in some parts. Part of the problem goes back to the phase known as Taherabad (Teherabad) or Godin VIII, a phase that suffers the most from the lack of secure chronology. What is discussed here is the nature of Godin VIII phase, so that it will be argued here that based on the archaeological data recorded from the Central Zagros region, the existence of such a phase is doubtful. Instead of Taherabad, it seems that Hoseinabad comes after the Seh Gabi Phase. It should be noted that Taherabad Phase has not been identified from the excavations and field surveys. The author suggests here that Godin VII Phase comes right after Seh Gabi Phase in the eastern Central Zagros and the other regions under its influence and the pottery-making tradition of Taherabad Phase (Godin VIII) is probably part of the previous Seh GabiPhase; therefore, it can no longer be considered a separate tradition. Based on what is mentioned, the chronology of the Chalcolithic Period in the eastern Central Zagros is needed to be reassessed. Such a proposition results from the analyses of the potsherds recovered from the old and new field expeditions.

Keywords: Revision in Chronology, Central Zagros, Taherabad Phase, Godin VIII.

ArticleType: Research Article

Introduction

The Godin Tepe project, with focusing on this mound as well as excavations at Seh Gabi and field surveys in other parts of the Central Zagros, introduced various periods from Early Chalcolithic to Islamic period in the eastern central Zagros. Based on the chronology table resulting from this project, the oldest period or the Early Chalcolithic of the region is identified as Godin XI and the youngest, as Godin I or the Islamic settlement (Young 1974: 90). The Chalcolithic of the eastern Central Zagros is including Godin XI (Shahnabad), X (Dalma), IX (Seh Gabi), VIII (Taherabad), VII (Hoseinabad), VI (Cheshmeh Nush), and V (Uruk related material), in time order (Figure. 1). Henrickson, in her chronology, places ShahnabadPhase at Early Chalcolithic and then, dividesMiddle Chalcolithic into three subsets of Dalma, Seh Gabi and Taherabad. In addition, Hoseinabad and Cheshmeh Nushare the two phases of Late Chalcolithic Period, based on Henrickson (1985). The data obtained from the archaeological excavations and field surveys at the eastern Central Zagros[1] and adjacent areas indicate that after Seh Gabi Phase, another tradition known asHoseinabadPhasecame into being and what is introduced as Taherabad by the archaeologists such as Henrickson (1985), Hamlin (1974) and others is presumably a continuation of parts of the

[1]After the publication of the first volume of Godin Tepe excavation report, two more seasons of excavations were conducted at GodinTepe and Seh Gabi, so Godin Project became an umbrella term to address these investigations (Young & Levine 1974: preface).

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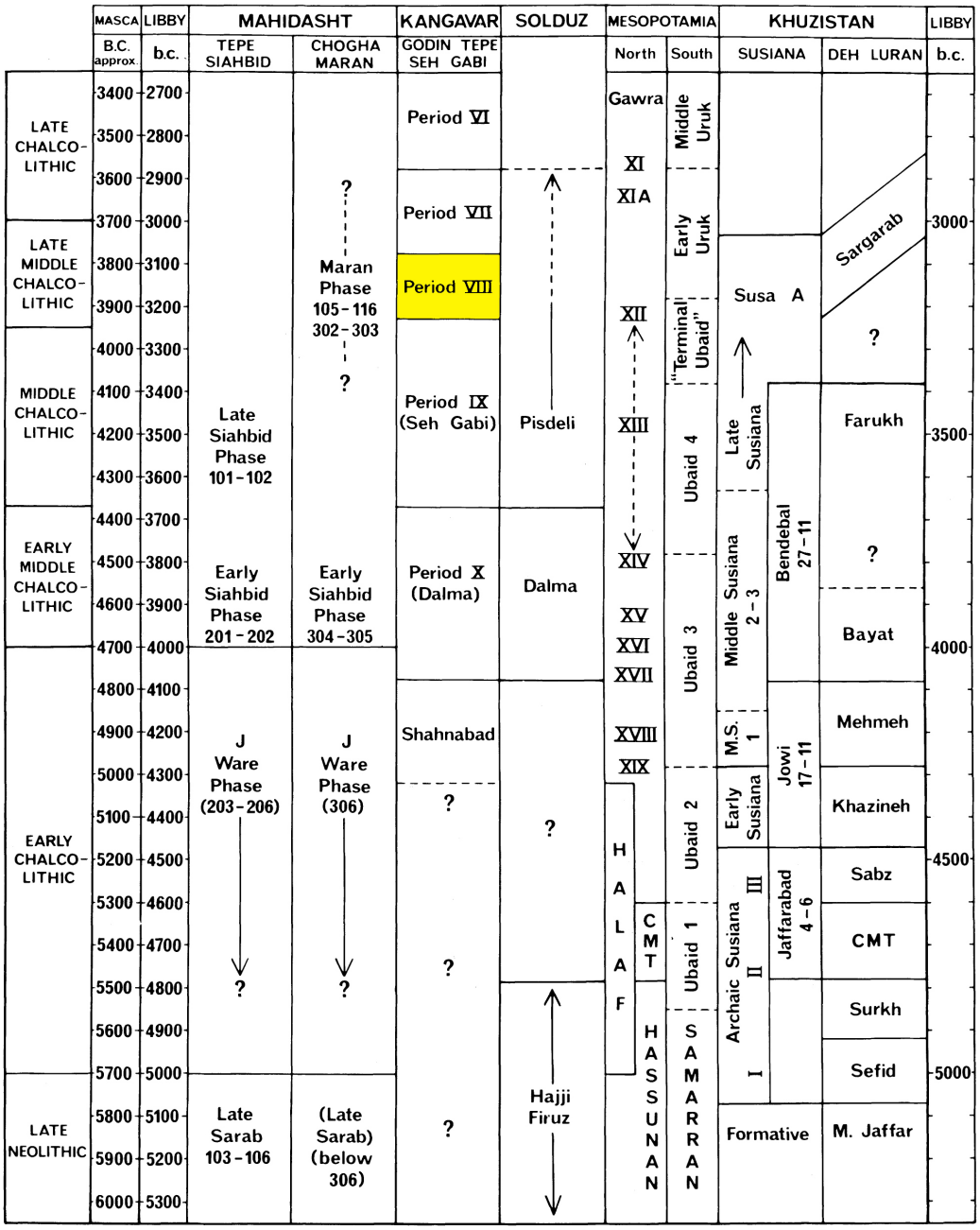


Figure. 1: *The chronological sequence of the Central Zagros and adjacent areas (Henrickson 1985: fig.21).*

earlier phase. The proposal for an entity known as Taherabad Phase is based on the potsherds and stratigraphy of GodinTepe and the mound B of Seh Gabi; a phase that is uncertain at both sites.The point to note here is that not all of the cultural phases introduced by the Godin project researchers were identified at Godin Tepe; but some only existed at Seh GabiTepe. Seh GabiTepe consists of six mounds named as A to F[1]; the highest of which is mound B with about 7m of height. This mound is also the one with the surface material attributable to Seh Gabi[2] and Taherabad Phases. The mounds A, E, and F are the eastern group mounds, which are spatially and temporally linked to each other, despite having

[1]While mounds A and E contain Godin VII data, mound C indicates pre-Dalma affinities and mound B has the assemblages of Dalma and Seh Gabi Phases. Finally, mound F shows Godin VI data and mound G has Godin V-related assemblage (Hamlin 1974: 274).

[2]Young and Levine originally attributed the assemblage recovered from the surface of this mound to Seh Gabi tradition, but they later raised the possibility of a separate entity known as Taherabad Phase.

separate alphabetic names (Young & Levine 1974: 2). In addition to the two mentioned sites of Godin and Seh Gabi, data obtained from earlier and new investigations cast further doubts on the existence of a tradition known as Taherabad.

Dating

The proposal for the existence of a phase known as Taherabad was put forward by Henrickson (1983, 1985) and Hamlin (1974: 277), based on the excavations at trench XYZ at Godin Tepe and the mound B of Seh Gabi. Period that is absent in the pioneering publications of the Godin Project (Young 1969; Young and Levine 1974), but was discussed later (Levine and Young 1987). This alone may imply the uncertainty surrounding such an entity. It should be noted that in some of their publications, Levine and Young did not use numbers for mentioning the chronology of Kangavar Valley (Young 1969; Young and Levine 1974; Levine and Young 1987), but instead, addressed the pottery traditions with local names. One of the reasons for this could be attributed to the drawbacks with stratigraphy in the Godin XYZ trench (Dr. L.D. Levine, *pers. comm.*[1]) and the superficial layer of Seh Gabi mound B. Also in the private conversation mentioned here as footnote, Levine expresses that he does not believe in the existence of TaherabadPhase, but instead reserves Godin VIII for Seh Gabi Phase, a phase addressed as Godin IX by Henrickson. Hamlin (1974: 277) also points to the presence of Ubaid-like pottery between the Seh Gabi and Godin VII deposits at Godin Tepe layers and calls it a separate entity, but as he himself expresses, these potsherds are Ubaid-like; similar to some of Seh Gabi's potsherds. In addition to what was mentioned, there are other weaknesses in the chronological sequence suggested by the researcher's of Godin's project. For instance, Levine (*pers. comm.*) and Hamlin (1974) point to a separate assemblage of potsherds that have been recovered from Godin Tepe, but not at Seh Gabi Tepe. These include red-slipped plain coarse wares beneath the Dalma-tradition layer at Godin Tepe; a tradition which we do not sufficiently know about. Contrary to Henrickson (1983, 1985) with her suggestion of the presence of Taherabad Phase for both Godin and Seh Gabi Tepes, Hamlin, Levine, and Young do not consider this phase for Seh Gabi Tepe.. They arranged various phases of Seh Gabi Tepe in the following fashion in time order: Dalma, Seh Gabi, Hoseinabad, and CheshmehNoush, and for Godin Tepe, they place Taherabad Phase between Seh Gabi and Hoseinabad (Hamlin 1974: 277; Levine 1975: fig.1; Levine & Young 1987: 29; Young 1974: fig.11). Levine and Hamlin (1974) also did not

[1]In a personal conversation of the author with L.D. Levine -one of the Godin Tepe excavators- via email, there was a discussion surrounding the nature of Taherabad Phase in the Godin sequence. Levine's explanations are quoted here and would be cited in various sections of the present paper. His remarks are as the following (pers. Comm., Nov. 27th, 2016; note that contrary to Levine, the author has used the term Phase to refer to the subgroups of Chalcolithic Period throughout the text, such as Seh Gabi Phase, Taherabad Phase, etc. Nevertheless, for the sake of loyalty to the original text of Levine, the following has come in the form of Seh Gabi Period, etc.):

"...As you know, the early sequence which was originally published for Godin Tepe derived from the trenches that I and Young excavated in 1965; the so-called Operations A and B. It based on these that we established the sequence from Period I to VII. With the excavation at Seh Gabi mound B, we extended the sequence backward to include Periods VIII (Seh Gabi Period) and IX (Dalma Period), and then with the excavation in mound C, we discovered what we called Period X (Shahnabad Period is what I think we called it). We were (and still are) quite certain that this material is earlier than IX, but we do not have any stratigraphic proof of this.

During the last season at Godin Tepe (1973), Young dug a trench (Operation XYZ) down the north face of the mound, starting from a period VI context. This trench never reached virgin soil. It needed to be abandoned because it became too dangerous. In addition, it was dug in arbitrary 20cm levels, so there was undoubtedly some stratigraphic mixing. Nonetheless, it established some important facts. I remember this clearly, and am quite sure that I am not inventing this reconstruction.

I. The sequence as we had guessed was correct. Seh Gabi and Dalma levels were under Period VII levels.

II. Between VII and the first appearance of Seh Gabi type painted wares, another "Ubaid"-like painted ware appeared that was not found at TappehSeh Gabi. Young was never convinced that this was a different pottery, but I was, and I had handled a great deal moreSeh Gabi pottery than he had. I am not sure this has ever been reported in the literature.

III. Below the Dalma levels at Godin, another painted pottery, unlike any that we had seen thus far, appeared. It was NOT like the Period X (Shahnabad Period) pottery from Seh Gabi. I do not know if it was ever published.

IV. Neither this material from the lowest levels of XYZ nor the Shahnabad material were known from elsewhere. I do not know if they have since been found elsewhere.

You are free to use this information in your publications, and you may attribute it to me"…

mention a separate Taherabad Phase for Seh Gabi mound B. Moreover, Young and Weiss (1974: 209) do not believe to the existence of such a phase. This indicates the uncertainty surrounding the so-called Taherabad Phase[1]. According to Levine and Young (1987: 29), this phase (or Godin VIII) is a very fleeting phenomenon and includes potsherds similar to black-on-buff (BOB) wares of Mahidasht Plain, although different in forms, motifs, and technical aspects. Nevertheless, it is somehow a continuation of the pottery traditions of the earlier period.

Henrickson has identified Taherabad Phase only in the eroded superficial remains from the ephemeral Godin VIII at Seh Gabi mound B, and also, above Seh Gabi Phase layers and beneath Godin VII Phase layers in Trench XYZ of Godin Tepe. Taherabad pottery is BOB similar to the types recovered from older remains of Seh Gabi Tepe and the sites in Mahidasht Plain. She argues that despite the technological and stylistic differences between Taherabad (Godin VIII) and Seh Gabi (Godin IX) Phases, there is a general resemblance to other Middle Chalcolithic assemblages of the Zagros and Mesopotamia. In this phase, handmade monochrome buff wares became common; a ubiquitous tradition in the Near East at this time. These traditions include the early and late phases of the so-called Siahbid and Maran in Mahidasht Plain, Ubaid in the north and south Mesopotamia, and the sequence of monochrome painted ware in Khuzistan and Pisdeli in Azerbaijan (Henrickson 1985: 70). Levine acknowledges the difference between Mahidasht and Kangavar Valley chronologies at post-Ubaid times and notes that the only similarities were impressed Dalma pottery and painted Godin VIII- and XI-type wares (Levine 1974: 488); therefore, Godin VIII could be considered as a phase featuring painted buff ware.

At Godin Tepe, each layer is divided into several spits, within which the spits 29-40 of trench XYZ are representing Taherabad (Godin VIII) phase (Figure. 2); a phase contemporary to the layers 2-4 of Seh Gabi mound B[2] (Figure. 3), which is referred as the eroded remains of Godin VIII (Henrickson 1983: 175).

Seh Gabi, Taherabad and Hoseinabad Potteries

At first, it is necessary to describe the features of Taherabad and other newer and older traditions of pottery making. To investigate this, it is necessary to study the typology of Seh Gabi and Hoseinabad Phases which are underlying and overlying layers in relation to Taherabad, respectively.Some of the pottery types of Seh Gabi Phase are different from their Dalma predecessors, yet some are rooted in the earlier phases. The pottery of this phase is divided into three groups, including plain wares (four subgroups of red, lightweight fine buff ware, fine buff ware, and Dalma plain ware), painted ware, and impressed ware (Young and Levine 1974: 6-7). Comparative stratigraphy of the mound B of Seh Gabi Tepe highlights its similarity to DalmaTepepotteries and GiyanTepe layers Vc-d (Ibid: 10).

The predominant group of Taherabad pottery (Godin VIII) includes red-slipped ware of Seh Gabi and painted buff ware, which are different to painted Seh Gabi-Phase wares, based onHenrickson. These ceramics are fine to medium in quality and contain straw temper (Henrickson 1983: 174-5). Painted buff ware of Godin VIII was sufficiently-fired (Levine and Young 1987: 29) and opaque-surface painted brown on buff ware (Figure. 3) comparable to the earlier phases in Mahidasht and Kangavar (Seh Gabi Tepe) (Henrickson 1985: 70). E. F. Henrickson points to the disturbed nature of Taherabad Phase at Godin Tepe, but only a handful of painted Seh Gabi and Dalma wares recovered from disturbed contexts. The researcher further adds that some

[1]Godin Tepe excavations suffer from some contradictory relative chronological tables to the extent that some phases could be seen in some publications, while some are absent in the others. As mentioned in footnote 4.IV, Levine refers to a new pottery tradition in the deepest layers of XYZ trench. Henrickson discusses the likelihood of the presence of Godin XI Period with question mark, attributing the red-slipped plain wares recovered from the spits 64-75 to that; although Young and Weiss (1974: 209) named this tradition as “Kucheh”. It should be noted that such namings have been raised with uncertainty and thus, they were never established in regional chronology. It should be noted here that in the chronological sequence presented by Young (1974: fig.11), Shahnabad Phase is beneath Godin XI (Kucheh), which is clearly contrary to Henrickson’s view. She does not mention Kucheh tradition in her chronology table, but instead, accommodates Shahnabad Phase in layer XI of Godin Tepe (Henrickson 1985).

[2]However, E. F. Henrickson elsewhere regarded layers 1-4 of Seh Gabi mound B (Henrickson 1983: 175); if that is the case, she herself deliberately ignored the existence of Taherabad Phase at least in Seh Gabi mound B, and removed layer 1 from taking into consideration (Ibid: 158-169).

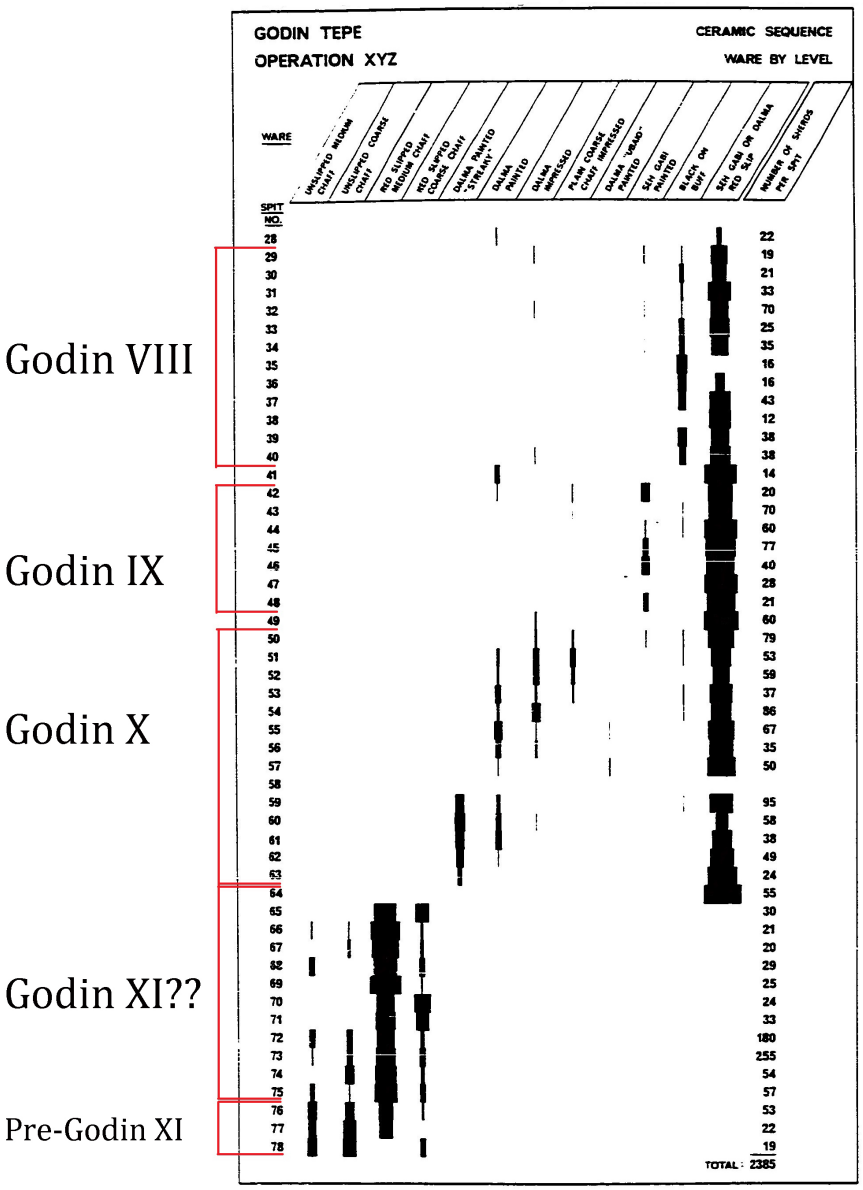


Figure. 2: *The frequency diagram of theceramics recorded from XYZ trench at Godin Tepe based on distinct phases (Henrickson 1983: 220, fig.37).*

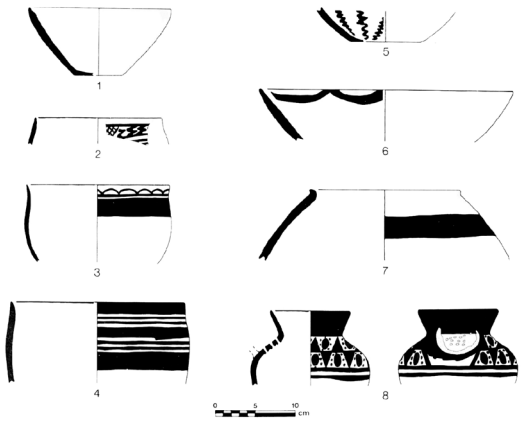


Figure. 3: *Some examples of Taherabad ceramics (Young and Levine 1974: fig.11).*

of these ceramics have been infiltrated to the newer phase of Godin VIII from underlying older spits! (Henrickson 1983: 174).In order to consider ceramics found from spits 29-40 of Godin Tepe as a discrete phase (Taherabad), Henrickson sees the presence of pottery tradition of Seh Gabi in these spits as a result of stratigraphic intrusion and not stylistic continuity; a rather bizarre intrusion from the underlying older spits.

The continuity of the pottery tradition of Seh Gabi to Taherabad Phase could be observed in a variety of cermaics found within this phase.The majority of ceramics recovered fromSeh Gabi Phase (Godin IX) of trench XYZ of Godin Tepe are red-slipped wares, and then, Seh Gabi painted wares, BOB, and a fewDalma impressed and painted wares. Such a ratio is continued in Taherabad Phase (Godin VIII). It should be noted that the number of ceramics in each spit is between 12 to 77, a counting that cannot be realistic (Figure. 2). The list of Seh Gabi Phase ceramic types recovered from layers 2-4 of Seh Gabi mound B includes a variety of species. (included: Dalma monochrome and bichrome painted wares plus, Dalma plain and impressed wares, streaky wares, Dalma double-slipped wares, BOB, Dalma-Ubaid painted wares, shiny black- and red-slipped buff wares, different types of plain wares with straw temper, impressed wares, different varieties of Seh Gabi red-slipped wares, and Seh Gabi painted wares). That all of them are continued to be made through layer 1 of Seh Gabi Tepe (Taherabad Phase) with more or less the same ratio. The only exception is Dalma double-slipped ware that is not recovered from layer 1; by the way, it was rare even in the earlier phase. The counts of potsherds recorded from layers 4-2 of Seh Gabi mound B are 309, 585, and 1797, respectively, and 959 potsherds are recovered from layer 1 (Godin VIII Phase), which is more than the counts of Godin Tepe (Figure. 4).

E. F. Henrickson describes Taherabad Phase with a high percentage of BOB ware and notes that a few Dalma-Ubaid Painted (DUP) and brown on buff wares are also recorded from the upper layers of Seh Gabi mound B (Henrickson 1983: 205). Here, similar to Godin Tepe, the continuation of the pottery traditions of the earlier phase is noted. Henrickson adds that Godin VIII ceramics are comparable toMaran tradition in Mahidasht (Henrickson 1985: fig.21). Voigt and Dyson (1992: 160) make the same comparison between Godin VIII and Late Pisdeli Phase in Azerbaijan. According to the comparative chronology, Godin VIII is contemporary to the phases of Maran in Mahidasht, Late Pisdeli of Azerbaijan, and Late Ubaid and Initial-EarlyUruk in Mesopotamia (Voigt and Dyson 1992: 160).

Hoseinabad Phase (Godin VII) ceramics Include painted and coarse wares within which the painted ones are not comparable to Seh Gabi painted wares; their surface is smooth or shiny and the motifs are painted using light brown to black colors. A large number of coarse wares are also recovered from this phase, among which the vessels with the so-called rope-decorations on the rims with thick and incised rims and with finger-impressed decorations and thin-based strainers are the dominant types (Young & Levine 1974: 12-3).

Technical and Scientific Problems in the Excavation of Layers Attributed to Taherabad Phase

As stated above, the existence of TaherabadPhase in the eastern Central Zagros sequence is based on the excavation at Godin Tepe and Seh Gabi mound B, within which the material of this phase is recovered from uncertain contexts. This phase is identified from the lower spits of XYZ Trench at Godin Tepe and the superficial layers of Seh Gabi mound B. Some researchers also mentioned the disturbed nature of superficial layers at Seh Gabi mound B and the non-standard stratigraphic and excavation techniques at the lower deposits of XYZ trench at Godin Tepe[1]; among which are hasty excavation, lack of supervision, the usage of arbitrary levels (L.D. Levine, *pers. comm.*), and finally, excavation in a limited area (Henrickson 1983: 176). As mentioned above, E. F. Henrickson (1983: 175) has mentioned the disturbed nature of superficial deposits at Seh Gabi mound B, explicitly. As a result, the stratigraphic context of Taherabad Phase is somewhat uncertain. Young and Levine (1974: 4) believe that Seh Gabi Phase was continued until the abandonment of the mound. In other words, they did not believe the existence of Taherabad Phase, at least in the earlier reports, and they divided the deposits of Seh Gabi mound B only in two phases of Dalma and Seh Gabi Phases. The disturbance of the superficial layers of Seh Gabi mound B is also mentioned by Young and Levine (1974: 10).

[1]Some references have referred to using the technique of arbitrary levels (spits) of 20cm thick for the whole XYZ trench (Rothman & Badler 2011: 73).

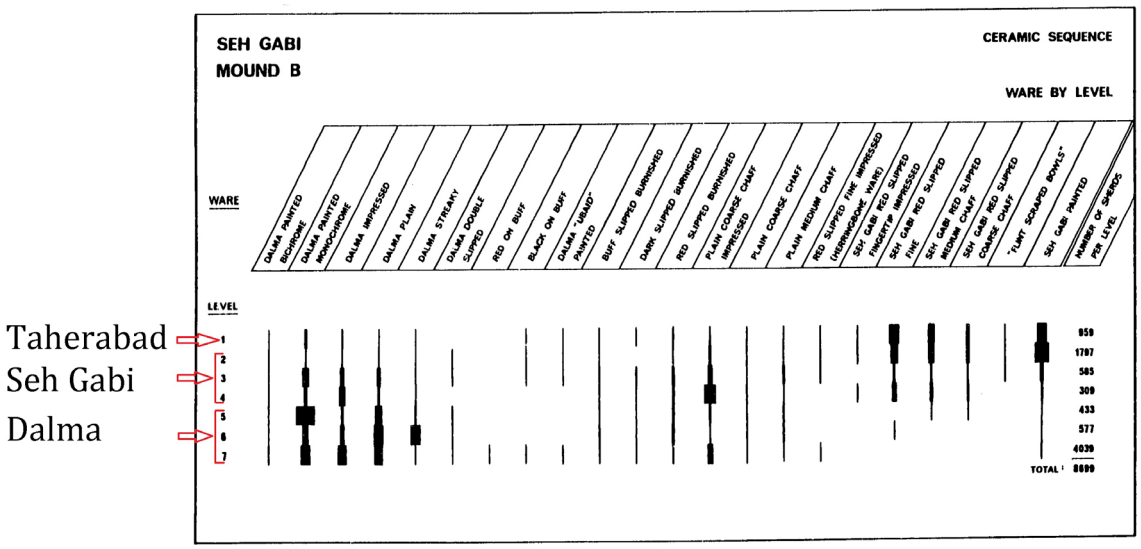


Figure. 4: *The frequency diagram of the ceramic types recovered from Seh Gabi mound B based on phases (Henrickson 1983: 221, fig.38).*

Taherabad Phase is considered a short phase of 100-years duration in the regional chronology suggested by Levine and McDonald (1977: 46), and based on this work, this phase is accommodated at the same horizon of Late Ubaid in Kermanshah and Mesopotamia; a phase which had begun earlier than Taherabad and finished after the end of this phase. As mentioned, Seh Gabi Phase is considered a part of BOB tradition (Ubaid-like) and it is not far from being reasonable to consider it as a continuation of Seh Gabi Phase. The continuation of the BOB tradition is also seen in the west of the Central Zagros (Mahidasht plain of Kermanshah).

The Data Obtained from Archaeological Excavations

Contrary toGodin and Seh Gabi Tepes, excavations in other archaeological sites in the Western Iran do not show traces of Taherabad Phase or a phase separated from Seh Gabi Phase. Excavations at TepeGiyan in Central Zagros and recent field missions at Tepe Gheshlagh and Kul Tepe in the west and northwest of Iran support such a claim. Further proof in favor of this claim has been obtained from field surveys; some of which have been carried out after the completion of the Godin Project.

Tepe Gheshlagh (Tepe Gheshlagh-i Chehel Amiran): is located at the eastern part of Kurdistan Province and features a 12m thick stratigraphyuntil reaching the virgin soil (Motarjem and Sharifi 2015: 27-8). The site contains five phases, with phases I and II belonging to the Iron and Bronze Ages and phases III, IV and V are of Chalcolithic Period (Figure. 5). Phase III is of Late Chalcolithic at the same horizon of Godin VII/VI. While phase IV contains the potsherds comparable to Seh Gabi Phase in Central Zagros region and Pisdeli in northwest, Dalma pottery-making tradition is recovered from phase V (Motarjem and Sharifi 2015: 30). It should also be noted that phase III is comparable to Godin VII (Ibid: 1-90). There are no traces of decline at the transition from Seh Gabi Phase to Late Chalcolithic Period at Tepe Gheshlagh and in fact, the traditions of pottery making have been continued to some extent. In addition to the relative chronology, absolute dating also emphasizes this continuity and there is no layer or phase that represents what is known as Godin VIII (Sharifi and Motarjem 2018: 88).

Tepe Giyan: The excavations at Tepe Giyan have been conducted using metric technique and its stratigraphy was investigated based on the graves (Contenau and Ghirshman 1935: 2). Later, its assemblage was re-evaluated and was compared to the new finds (Dyson 1965; Henrickson 1983/4; VandenBerghe 1959; Voigt and Dyson 1992; Young 1965). Based on these observations, phase V of Tepe Giyan was placed in the Chalcolithic Period and Levine and Young (1987: 3) have also referred to Taherabad pottery in surface collections recorded from the Tepe. Nevertheless, in a reassessment on the material by Henrickson, the traditions of Dalma, Seh Gabi, and Godin VI were mentioned for the Chalcolithic Period, but Taherabad is absent (Henrickson 1985: 75).

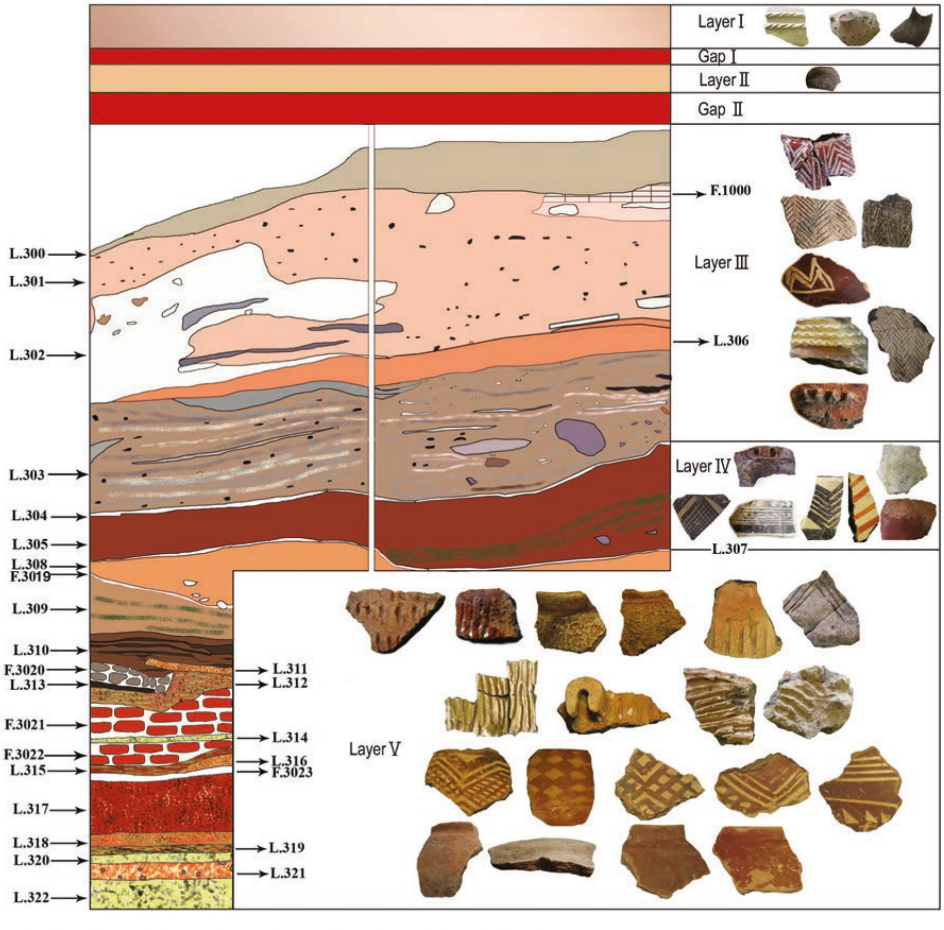


Figure. 5: *Stratigraphic section at Tepe Gheshlagh in addition to some pottery types (Sharifi & Motarjem 2018: fig.9).*

Kul Tepe: The archaeological assemblages of northwestern Iran are closely comparable to Central Zagros during the early phases of Chalcolithic Period. Dalma wares that appeared in both regions were followed by the tradition of painted buff wares; the latter is not very similar to that of the Central Zagros, but it does have the general features of the painted buff wares that were ubiquitous at this time. The phase of interest is named Seh Gabi at the eastern Central Zagros, Siahbid at the western side, and Pisdeli at the northwest of Iran. Following Pisdeli Phase, the horizon of chaff-faced wares was emerged; a tradition comparable to the assemblage recovered from the contemporary northern Mesopotamian sites (Abedi *et al.* 2014; SaedMucheshi *et al.* 2017), and different to Hoseinabad ceramics recorded from western Iran. Apart from the similarities mentioned, one should keep in mind that an assemblage comparable to Taherabad Phase has not been reported from northwest Iran so far; as a result, the ceramics are compared to Pisdeli tradition, in the same fashion as Seh Gabi Phase (Voigt & Dyson 1992: 160).

Data Obtained from Archaeological Field Surveys

Central Zagros: Investigations in different parts of Central Zagros and surrounding areas that feature similar sequences do not have yielded to the discovery of the so-called tradition of Taherabad and the recorded painted buff wares were usually classified in the framework of Seh Gabi or Late Chalcolithic tradition (Godin VII and VI). Taherabad Phase is not reported from the field surveys of Levine and Young in KangavarValley (1987: 33), as well.Young (1974: 83, 1975a: 24-5) refers to the absence of Taherabad Phase (Godin VIII) in the mentioned plain, explicitly; despite the fact that 17 phases have been identified here based on ceramics (ibid). In the 1974 survey of Kangavar Valley, it was roughly stated that the Chalcolithic Period of the valley was started from Shahnabad Phase and the number of settlements was increased throughout

Dalma Phase, a process which was continued through Hoseinabad Phase (Godin VII). However there is no word on the separation of phases from Shahnabad to Hoseinabad, and it is unclear whether archaeological sites belonging to Godin VIII were identified (Young 1975b: 192). In spite of this, Hole (1987: 50) states that no Godin VIII site was identified in the survey. In addition to what mentioned, the results of Malayer archaeological surveys indicated that the area was settled from Shahnabad Phase, Seh Gabi, Hoseinabad (Godin VII), Godin VI, followed it, and V Phases (Howell 1979: 156-7), but no site of Dalma and Godin VIII Phases was identified. There is also no mention of Taherabad pottery in the investigations of the Kermanshah region (Levine 1976). Henrickson (1985: tables 2, 3a,b, 4) refers to the presence ofBOB tradition in her reassessments of the ceramic assemblages obtained from the field studies conducted across various parts of Central Zagros (Goff 1971; Mortensen 1974a, 1974b, 1975; Stein 1940; VandenBerghe 1975), but does not explicitly mention Godin VIII pottery tradition. Additionally, in these investigations, either by them (Goff, Mortensen, Stein and Vanden Berghe) or Henricksnon, only one type of BOB is mentioned. Recent archaeological investigations of Tuyserkan County in Hamedan Province, which is part of Central Zagros, Dalma, Seh Gabi, Godin VII, VI and V are identified, but there is no mention of Taherabad (Godin VIII) tradition (Nazari Arshad and BeikMohammadi 2017; Nazari Arshad 2017). Tuyserkan lies on the eastern side of Godin and Seh Gabi Tepes and the lack of Taherabad traditions (in recent investigations) suggests the need for revision of the regional chronology.

Kurdistan Province: In a non-pedestrian survey of the eastern side of the province, 128 sites of Chalcolithic Period were identified, including at Bijar, Qorveh and Dehgolan Counties (SaedMucheshi 2011); of which, 76 sites are located at Bijar County, while 52 sites are in the boundaries of the modern Qorveh and Dehgolan Counties. The potsherd assemblages recovered from these archaeological sites were collected by various archeologists of the Cultural Heritage Organization of Kurdistan Province (Behnia 2009; Eliasvand 2006, 2007, 2008; Karimi 2007; Motarjem & Sharifi 2015). Investigations on these assemblages indicated that none of them contain Godin VIII ceramics. This is well visible in the sites featuring continuous sequences of various phases, among which are 15 sites in Bijar and 11 sites in Qorveh and Dehgolan Counties which contain potsherds belonging to Dalma, Seh Gabi, and Late Chalcolithic (Godin VI and VII) traditions (SaedMucheshi 2011); as mentioned, the tradition of Godin VII was not identified in any of them. In addition to the eastern side of the province, the data obtained from other parts of Kurdistan also confirm this claim; for instance, the excavations carried out at NamashirTepeinBaneh yielded no attributable Godin VIII ceramic, despite containing Dalma, Seh Gabi, and Late Chalcolithic traditions of pottery making (SaedMucheshi *et al.* 2017).

Zanjan Province: is an intercultural region located at the southern part of northwestern region and the northeast of the Central Zagros in Iranian Plateau. It is also located near the boundaries with the Iranian Central Plateau. 60 archaeological sites attributable to the Chalcolithic Period have been identified in this province. According to the finds, the Chalcolithic traditions are rather similar to the ones of the eastern Central Zagros during the fifth and fourth millennia BCE, including Dalma, Seh Gabi, and Godin VII (Zifar *et al.* 2017). Similar to Kurdistan, the material comparable to the phase known as Taherabad (Godin VIII) is not reported from here.

Discussin

Based on the data obtained from Godin Tepe and Seh Gabi Tepe, it is possible to suggest what is called Godin VIII (TaherabadPhase) is in reality based on the disturbed finds and thus, is not reliable. The existence of Taherabad Phase is proposed based on very limited excavations at Godin Tepe and Seh Gabi mound B. The layers from these two sites attributed to Godin VIII have been excavated from disturbed context, non-standard excavation, inaccurate surveillance and low reliability. Almost the only criterion for distinguishing this period from the previous and after periods is based on pottery, something that has been questioned by archeologists who have worked in this field. In addition, the pottery of this period (Godin VIII) is very similar to the periods before, after (Henrickson 1985: 70; Henrickson 1983), which is itself doubtful, and it seems that it cannot be distinguished as an independent tradition. In order to present as a distinct period, Henrickson considers part of the pottery that is against her opinion to be confused and part to be reliable.

In addition to the data mentioned, excavations atTepe Gheshlagh of Kurdistan yielded Dalma, Seh Gabi, and Godin VII deposits, but not Taherabad, despite the fact that no interruptions were observed throughoutthesequence(SharifiandMotarjem2018). Additionally, in all archaeological investigations conducted both in the Central Zagros and in the adjacent areas (including the Central Zagros Plains, Kurdistan, Hamedan, and ZanjanProvinces), no ceramic attributable to Taherabad Phase is reported. Based on such absence in the surface finds, Hole (1987: 50) also calls Taherabad a "spurious phase". Given the paucity of related distinct material from GodinTepe, Young and Levine, the excavators of this mound, also do not believe in the existence of a distinct phase of Taherabad (Young 1969; Young and Levine 1974). Finally, in later publications, based on the absence of Taherabad ceramics across Kangavar Valley, Young refutes the existence of a phase entitled as Taherabad (Young 1975a: 25).

Conclusion

The existence of an entity known as Taherabad Phase within the ChalcolithicPeriod of the eastern Central Zagros was dubious from the beginnings of intensive archaeological investigations in this region; as it was considered in some of the publications related to the Godin Project as a separated phase, while not mentioned at all in the others. The stratigraphic problems of trench XYZ at Godin Tepe and the disturbance of superficial layers at Seh Gabi are among the reasons to explain this contradictory views.There are no discrete deposits attributable to TaherabadPhase in any of the Seh Gabi mounds. Scholars who believe in the existence of a distinct Taherabad Phase add that its ceramics are distinct from the previous phase (Seh Gabi), yet there are still some similarities. In examining the pottery assemblages, the continuity from Seh Gabi to Taherabad Phase could be observed in the majority of ceramic types; a similarity that is even visible in the ratio of the ceramic types in relation to others. The existence of Taherabad Phase is not mentioned in any of the archaeological surveys carried out by the Godin Project team and the other surveys in central Zagros, and Kurdistan and Zanjan regions. In other surrounding regions, such as Mesopotamia, or the northwest of Iran, there is not even a short period of time that indicates a change in tradition from the perior phase. In this time, the tradition of painted buff wares was widespread during post-Dalma Phase in a large area of western Iran. Levine and Young (members of the Godin Project team) are putting Hoseinabad after the Seh Gabi Phase in the eastern Central Zagros chronology. If the ceramic types of the immediate sub-Godin VII layers in XYZ trench at GodinTepeand layer 1 of Seh Gabi mound B are different to Seh Gabi tradition, it does not seem unsound to assume it a sub-phase B of Seh Gabi tradition; a type of stratigraphy that could be devised for any archaeological site. However, this could be only one of the myriad possible assumptions, because Taherabad ceramics have not been recovered from secure in situ contexts so far. Therefore, future research may shed light on this ambiguity in the chronology of Chalcolithic Period in the eastern Central Zagros. Based on what mentioned and now, here is a suggested, yet not unprecedented chronological sequence from Dalma to the phase of the emergence of beveled rim bowls in the region as the following: Dalma (Godin IX), Seh Gabi (Godin VIII), Hoseinabad (Godin VII), CheshmehNoush (Godin VI), and Suso-Urukian tradition (Godin V).

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