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Classification, Typology and Chronological Analysis of the Islamic Middle Ages Pottery from Robāt-e Āghāj, Khomeyn County

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Abstract

The troglodytic complex of Robāt-e Āghāj, nestled within a 50-meter-tall hill, holds great historical importance in Khomeyn County. The inaugural archaeological excavation season of this site occurred in 2015, unearthing a variety of architectural spaces and archaeological findings. Notably, the most abundant findings at this site consist of diverse unglazed and glazed potsherds belonging to the Islamic era. A diverse array of pottery types has been unearthed from the site, ranging from plain unglazed pieces to those adorned with impressed patterns, as well as pottery featuring incised and excised motifs, molded motifs, monochromatic glazed pottery, blue-and-white porcelain, lusterware, and enamelware. The significance of addressing these findings lies in the fact that all these types are linked to the Islamic Middle Ages, suggesting that they were crafted and employed during that specific era. Through the current research, a comparative source on medieval pottery in Markazi Province and Iran can be established. The primary focus of this study revolves around the comparative chronology of these pottery items and their potential production centers. Employing a descriptive-comparative method, data collection involves field surveys and desk research. The findings indicate that the majority of the potsherds discovered likely dates back to the 6th and 7th centuries AH. Furthermore, similarities were observed between these artifacts and those from production centers like Zolfabād, Moshkoye, Kāshān, and Ray, suggesting a possible exportation to Khomeyn, as archaeological studies have confirmed this claim. These similarities were also noted in historical sites such as troglodytic complexes at Tahyaq-e Khomeyn, Sāmen-e Malāyer, and Arzānfud in Hamadān.

Keywords: Pottery, Troglodytic of Robāt-e Āghāj, Khomeyn, Seljuk and Ilkhanid Periods.

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Introduction

Throughout history, the inhabitants of the Iranian Plateau have chosen different ways to live according to the climate, economic, political and social conditions. Given its position at the nexus of political and cultural interactions in the Middle East, Iran has faced periodic threats that have necessitated its population to adopt diverse living strategies to address these challenges. Doing so, the development of usually underground troglodytic complexes is a method that has been employed, with visible traces of such structures scattered across different areas of Iran. A notable instance of this can be identified in the location of the contemporary village of Robāt Āghāj, an associated village with Khomeyn County. Within this village, a historical mound (Tepe) stands, showcasing evidence of a fortress, as well as the presence of a subterranean troglodytic complex.

The examination of Robāt Āghāj Tepe in 2015, authorized by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism, facilitated the exploration of its architectural spaces (Montazarzohori, 2015). Following a surface survey and archaeological excavation, it was inferred that both the fortress and subterranean structures were utilized simultaneously. The excavation of the troglodytic complex unveiled a range of architectural spaces with distinct functions. Noteworthy archaeological discoveries, particularly various types of unglazed and glazed pottery dating back to the Islamic era, were uncovered within the site. The substantial quantity and diversity of pottery findings, in conjunction with other artifacts like decorative items linked to women, indicate a continuous habitation of the site. The primary focus of this study revolves around the diversity and abundance of clay findings at the site, along with the exploration of their comparative chronology. Furthermore, the research aims to investigate the connections of the site with other locations based on the pottery evidence and try to guess their potential production centers. The hypothesis posits that the potteries discovered at this site, much like other troglodytic sites in Markazi and Hamadan provinces, largely belonging to the Islamic Middle Ages and may have been brought to the region from nearby centers such as Kāshān and Ray.

Research Questions: What is the range of diversity and abundance of Robāt Āghāj Tepe pottery and how is its comparative chronology explained?

Research Method: The study presents the results of the description and classification of the pottery discoveries within the troglodytic complex of Robāt Āghāj in Khomeyn. Following the descriptive examination, the potsherds underwent comparative analysis. Initially, the potsherds

discovered at the site were attempted to be correlated with the study samples of similar pottery findings in Khomeyn, such as those in Tahyagh, from the same period, and subsequently assessed with the findings from other identified locations. Ultimately, the findings were described, compared, and analyzed by utilizing additional written resources through the library method. Consequently, the current research approach is descriptive-comparative, and the data collection method is based on field and library investigation.

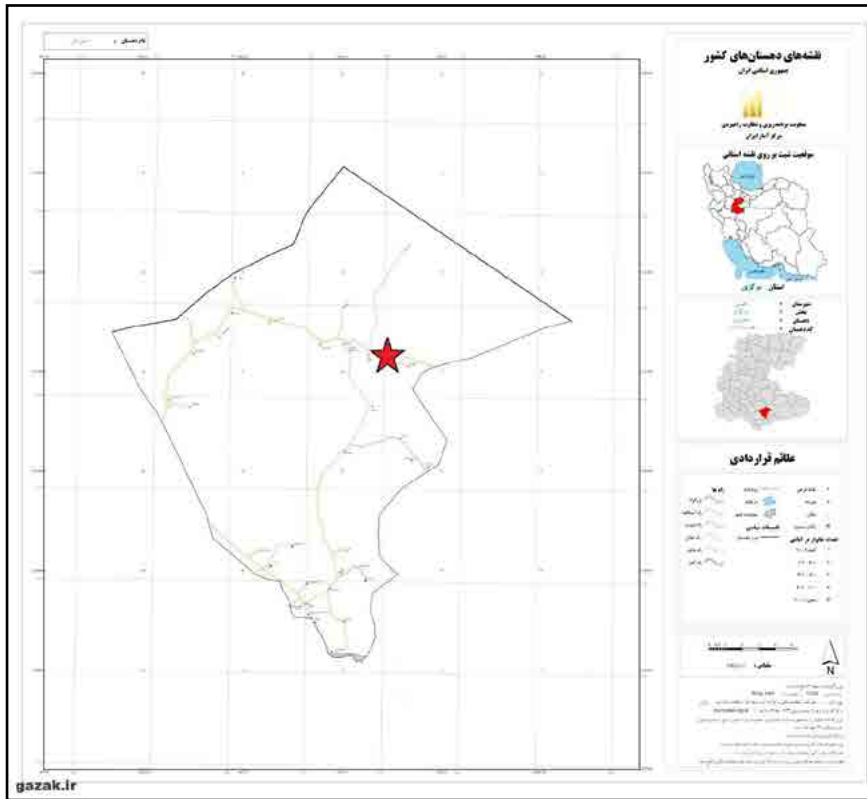
Research background

To date, minimal research has been conducted on the pottery unearthed in the troglodytic archaeological digs of Robāt Āghāj (Montazar Zohori, 2015). The Unpublished report of this site solely documents the potsherds recovered from the excavation, providing images and a table of technical-stylistic specifications. Furthermore, two separate studies have analyzed fragments of lusterware and enamelware pottery recovered from the excavation, determining the potential origin of these pieces through PIXIE analysis (Montazar Zohori, 2019 & Nikbakht & Montazer-Zohouri, 2021). With the exception of these cases, no other independent research has been conducted on the recovered potsherds, resulting in a lack of information about the different types of pottery from Robāt Āghāj prior to this research.

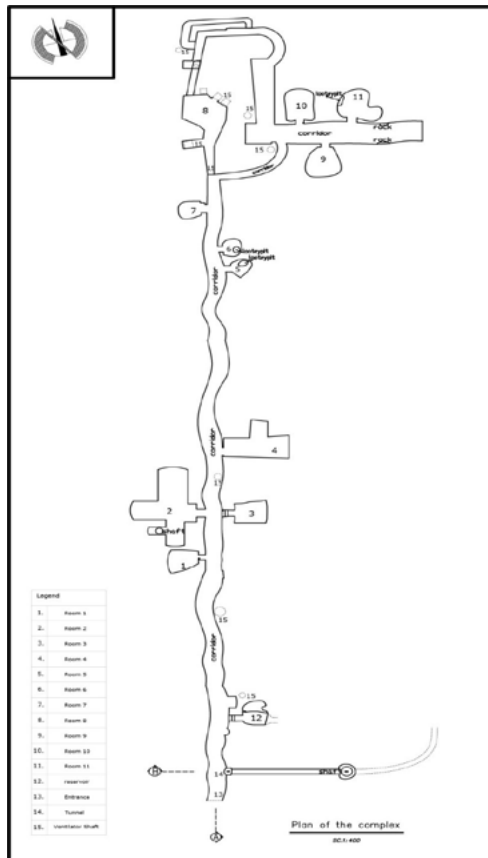
Introduction of the Site and Excavation in the Troglodytic Complex

Situated in the north of Robāt Āghāj village, within the Hamzehlu district of Khomeyn County, lies the troglodytic complex of Tepe Qale. This unique complex is nestled within a sandy mound that stands at an impressive height of 50 meters. At the summit of the Tepe, one can observe the remains of a defensive castle, clearly visible in aerial photographs showcasing its rectangular dimensions of 100 by 150 meters. Through excavations of the troglodytic architecture at Tepe Qale, it was discovered that the complex comprises two main corridors, one running from north to south and the other from east to west.

At the conclusion of the two mentioned corridors lies a narrow-arched passageway that connects them. A total of 12 rooms have been identified along the sides of these corridors, with rooms 5 and 6 likely serving as small storage areas due to their compact dimensions, while the remaining rooms were utilized as living spaces, each likely belonging to a distinct family (Montazar Zohori, 2015). The presence of various artifacts within these rooms, such as pottery of different varieties and unique objects like beads,



◀ Map 1. The location of Robāt Āghāj village in Markazi Province (Cultural Heritage archive of Markazi Province).



◀ Fig. 1: Plan of the troglodytic complex at Tepe-e-Qale Robāt Āghāj village (Authors, 2022).



▲ Fig. 2: Samples of unglazed pottery from Robāt Āghāj with impressed patterns, incised and excised motifs (Authors, 2022).

glass fragments, bracelets, and metal items, serves as tangible evidence supporting this assertion. Additionally, the discovery of an adult female skull within room #1 of the north-south corridor raises questions about the reasons behind her burial in this specific location (Sołtysiak et al., 2017).

Unglazed pottery

During the initial phase of the archaeological dig at Robāt Āghāj, a diverse array of unglazed pottery was discovered. The pottery exhibited a paste that ranged in color from buff to red and brown, and predominantly featured a closed mouth shape. While the majority of the unglazed wares at this site were plain, there were occasional pieces that showcased decorative motifs and molded patterns. The majority of these artifacts were crafted using a pottery wheel, although a few samples were identified as handmade kitchen ware.

The kitchen ware found in the site is primarily found inside a few rooms space, these specimens are characterized by a smoky dark brown paste and a mineral mixture of grits and mica as temper. They are handmade and have a closed shape. Similar pottery can be seen in the troglodytic complex of Tahyaq-e Khomeyn from the 6th-7th century AH (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: p146, fig. 1). Additionally, Unpublished reports indicate that deposits from the 4th to 6th centuries AH at Palang-Gerd site in Islamabad-e Gharb and layers from the Islamic Middle Ages at the Laodicea in Hamadan share similarities with the kitchen ware recovered from Robāt Āghāj (Alibaigi, 2021: p38, no2 & p43, no12). Therefore, the kitchen ware of Robāt Āghāj can also be dated to the Islamic Middle Ages.

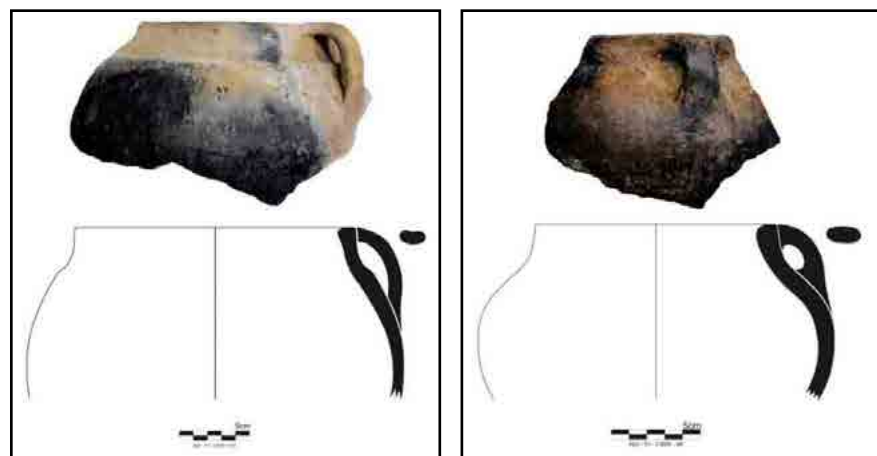
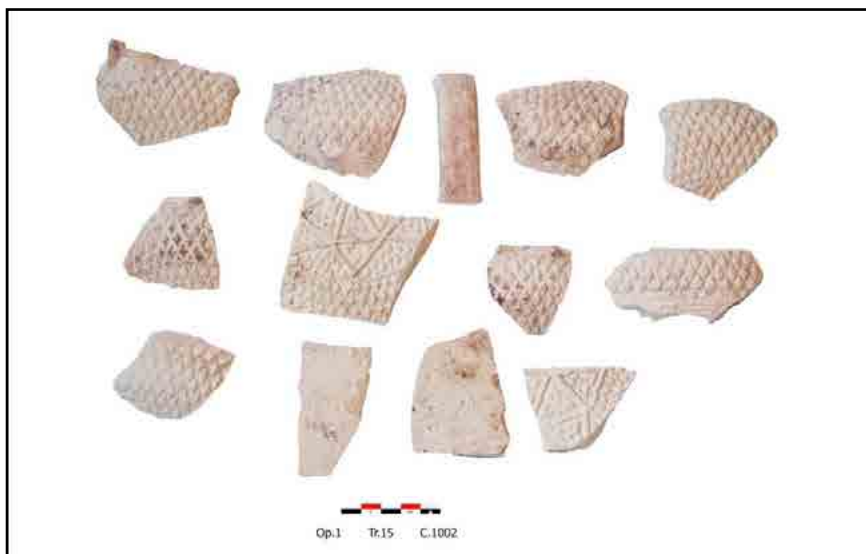


Fig. 3: Samples of kitchen ware from Robāt Āghāj (Authors, 2022). ►

Another category of unglazed pottery discovered at the site consists of items featuring molded decorations. These artifacts were found in nearly all areas excavated at the site. They exhibit a closed form and were created

using a potter’s wheel. Almost all the external surfaces of these pieces are adorned with distinct geometric molded decorations. These specimens bear a striking resemblance to the pottery recovered from the excavation of the troglodytic complex at Tahyaq Khomeyn, the Zolfabad site, Rayy, and Ojan site (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: p146, fig12; Nemati, et.al. 2020: 132; Mahjour & et.al. 2011: 171; Velayati & et.al. 2019: 110). It is worth noting that the decoration of pottery with the molding technique was common in Iran mainly during the Seljuq period until the beginning of the Ilkhanid era and was produced in many centers such as Nishapur, Kāshān and Jiroft (Dezhamkhooy, 2007; Yuosefvand, 2015; Kambakhshfard, 1967: 350; Bahrami, 1992: 190; Chubak, 2012: 89; Wilkinson, 1959). This pottery which belongs to the Seljuk period was produced in the Markazi Province in sites such as Zolfabad and Moshkoye (Nemati et al., 2020; Mahjour & Sedighian, 2009). Therefore, due to the close similarity of the motifs of the molded samples of Rabat-Aghaj and Zolfabad, it is possible that the molded pottery of Rabat-Aghaj was produced in site such as Zolfabad.



◀ Fig. 4: Samples of pottery with molded motifs obtained from Robāt Āghāj excavations (Authors, 2022).



◀ Table 1: Pottery from the other archaeological sites with molded decorations similar to Robāt Āghāj (Authors, 2022).



▲ Fig. 5: A clay thermos obtained from the Robāt Āghāj complex (Authors, 2022).

The unglazed pottery discovered at this site, particularly in trench number 7, yielded fragments of a clay mug with dual handles on both sides. This thermos, composed of mineral temper and buff paste, features minimal decorations in the form of a comb-like motif encircling the vessel's midsection (belly). Although this style of pottery container is relatively uncommon in archaeological excavations from the Islamic era in Iran, similar examples have been found at sites such as Tahyaq Khomeyn and Tepe Sabz Poshan Nishapur, both dating back to the 6th-7th centuries AH (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: p146, fig6 & Wilkinson, 1973: 323 & 352). Among other samples similar to this vessel obtained by non-scientific methods, it can be mentioned the flasks identified from the village of Farhadgerd in Fariman City and the Seljuk-period molded sample obtained from the Ali-Sadr Cave (URL1 & 2). It must be noted that the production of clay flasks in Iran started at least from the second millennium BC onwards and continued until the late Islamic centuries (Ghezelbash et al., 2016: 184).

Table 2. Several samples of thermos comparable to Robāt Āghāj (Authors, 2022). ►





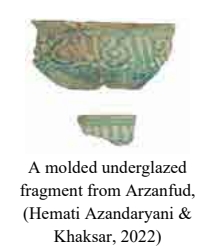

<p>A clay thermos obtained from Farhadgerd-e Fariman (URL 2)</p>	<p>A clay thermos obtained from Ali Sadr Cave; Seljuk era (URL 1)</p>	<p>A clay thermos, Tahyigh troglodytic complex; 6-7 AH</p>

Glazed pottery

Robāt Āghāj's glazed pottery displays a wide range of motifs and decorations, making it the most diverse type of pottery found at the site. These artifacts have been discovered in various areas of the excavation site. Due to their significant diversity, they have been categorized into three subgroups: monochromatic glazed, painted underglaze, and painted on-glazed. Among these, the monochromatic glazed pottery is the most prevalent, with most samples featuring white frit paste, although some oil lamps are made from reddish clay paste.

1) Monochrome glazed pottery: The potsherds found at the site exhibit a wide range of forms, including both open and closed mouth varieties. While most of these items are crafted using a potter's wheel, it is believed that some clay oil lamps may have been handmade. Frit paste pottery comes in either turquoise or lapis lazuli colors, while clay paste pottery is available in turquoise and dark green hues. The majority of

monochromatic pottery discovered at this location is plain and undecorated, although some pieces feature incised or excised decorations, as well as one specimen with molded underglaze motifs, all of which showcase simple geometric decoration. Various potsherds resembling those described have been documented at numerous Islamic Middle Age sites in Iran. Examples include Amir-Sharloq Tepe in Shahrud (Zarei & Sharifi, 2019: 93), the Bozanjerd site in Hamedan (Rezaei, et.al, 2021: 27), Zinu-Abad in Hamedan (Mohammadi & Shabani, 2015: 144), Samen-e Malayer (Hemati Azandaryani, et.al. 2016: 195), Jurjan (Qaini, 2004: 48) and Qale-Sang Castle in Sirjan (Amirhajloo & Sedighian, 2020: 166). According to the published sources, such vessels were crafted in centers such as Moshkoyeh and Zolf-Abad Farahan (Mahjour & Sedighian, 2009: 112 & Nemati, et.al. 2012: 133). Among the monochromatic ceramics of Robāt Āghāj, parts of a small miniature vessel with simple turquoise color and frit paste were obtained. This utensil, which has an almost closed mouth shape, was probably used as an inkwell and oiler in the past. Similar samples can be seen among the findings of the Tahyaq of Khomeyn and Qale-Yelsui-e-Germi, which are dated to the 6th-7th century AH (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: 151; Tahmasbi, et.al. 2022: 129, No13 & URL7).

			<p>Robāt Āghāj</p>
 <p>Miniature utensil (Yal Soei) (Tahmasebi et al., 2022)</p>	 <p>A molded underglazed fragment from Arzanfud, (Hemati Azandaryani & Khaksar, 2022)</p>	 <p>A potsherd of the 6-7 AH (Hemati Azandaryani et al., 2017)</p>	<p>Comparable evidence</p>

◀ Table 3: The monochromatic glazed pottery from Robāt Āghāj and some comparable specimens from the other sites (Authors, 2022).

Among the monochrome glazed pottery of the site, a number of tallow-burner have been identified, most of which have a frit paste. Samples of frit paste come in two colors, turquoise and lapis lazuli, and are made in two shapes, simple bowl or based (leggy). However, the samples of the clay paste have two colors, dark turquoise and dark green, and they are simply made in the form of a two-part tube with a base. It should be noted that the bowl-shaped oil lamp is one of the common forms of pottery in Iran, whose history goes back to the Achaemenid period (Rezazadeh,

2020:120). Similar examples of these pottery have been identified in sites such as Troglodytic Structure of Tahyagh and Rayy city, which are dated to the 6th-7th centuries AH (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: 153-154; Treptow, 2007: 20).

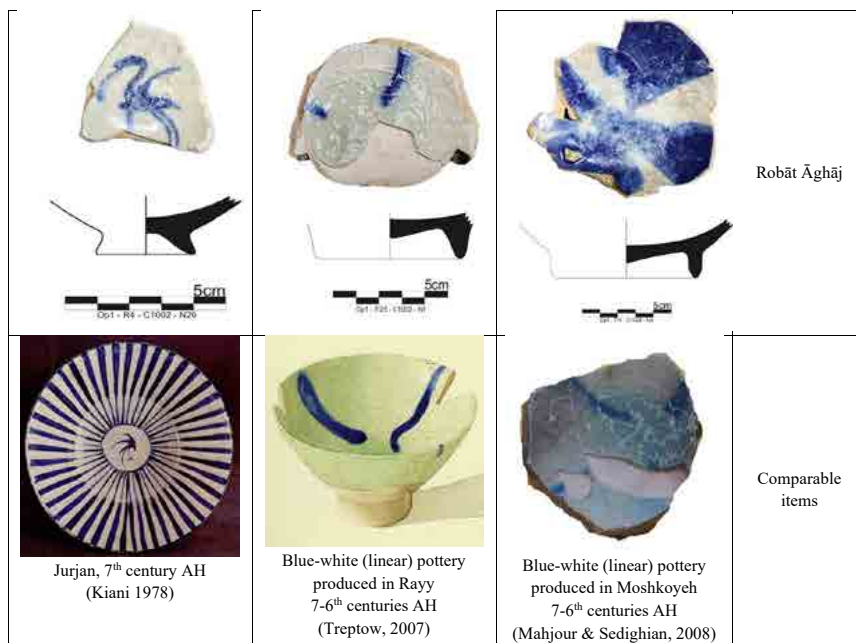


Fig. 6: Samples of oil lamps obtained from troglodytic complex of Robāt Āghāj (Authors, 2022). ►

2) Underglaze decorated ware: A different set of glazed pottery unearthed at the site comprises pieces featuring painted underglaze patterns. These specimens which are all made from frit paste exhibit diverse types and designs, including blue and white vessels, black painted decorations under a turquoise glaze, and silhouette ware. Detailed descriptions of each type are provided separately:

Blue and white ware: Numerous pottery fragments with white frit paste and blue and white linear designs in an open mouth shape were discovered during the excavations at Robāt Āghāj. It is important to highlight that the tradition of blue and white pottery decoration in Iran can be traced back to the early Islamic era, persisting until the later Islamic centuries. However, it was during the 6th and 7th centuries AH that this technique was innovatively combined with frit paste, featuring underglaze alkaline glaze drawn in linear patterns with various orientations (Salehi Kakgki, et.al. 2013: 4-5). According to the evidence obtained in archaeological excavations, it seems that this decorative method was produced in several

different centers such as Moshkoyeh in Saveh, Zulf-Abad in Farahan, Jurjan, Nishapur and Jiroft (Nouri Shadmahani, 2010; Nemati, et.al. 2012: 133; Mortzraei, 2004: 64; Choubak, 2012: 94; Kiani, 1984: 48 & Wilkinson, 1973: 280). Similar artifacts have also been unearthed in Tahyaq in Khomeyn (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: 150), Qoroq Dasht in Hamedan (Rezaei, et.al, 2023: 225), Poinak in Varamin (Choubak, 1997: 54), Ardabil (Yousofi, 2006: 127), Bisotun (Klaise, 2006: 224) and Qale-Sang in Sirjan (Amirhajloo & Sedighian, 2020: 170), suggesting a widespread distribution throughout Iran. Within the collection of blue and white frit ware, there exists a piece of an open-mouth utensil painted underglaze with a bird motif resembling a stork. This particular motif was not frequently found in the blue and white ware of the Islamic Middle Ages. However, it has been discovered in sites such as Jurjan, the eastern region of Iran, and Zolf-Abad in Farahan. Several similar evidence of this specific find dates back to the late 6th to the 7th century AH (Murgan, 2005: 177; Nemati, 2019: 39 & Kiani, 1978: 249).



◀ Table 4: Samples of blue-white decorated ware from Robāt Āghāj and some comparable items from the other archaeological sites (Authors, 2022).

Black painted ware under a turquoise glaze: Among the pottery findings at the site, a notable group is the black painted ware under alkaline turquoise glaze, all featuring a white frit paste. The motifs found on these pieces exhibit a wide range, including various geometric shapes of plants, animals, as well as inscriptions or pseudo-inscriptions. Notably, one item bears the personal signature “Abdul Saki”, likely indicating the name of the artist. This marks one of the unique instances of personal names appearing on Iranian pottery, a singular occurrence not found in other samples from

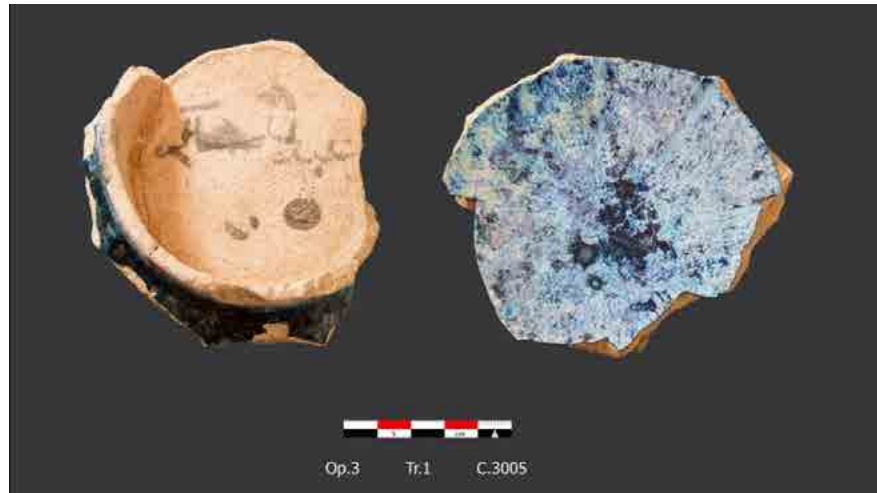


Fig. 7: A painted vessel under a turquoise glaze (with the signature of Abdul Saki on the bottom of the utensil) (Authors, 2022). ▶

Table 5: Robat Aghaj painted underglaze Pottery and samples comparable to them (Authors, 2022). ▶

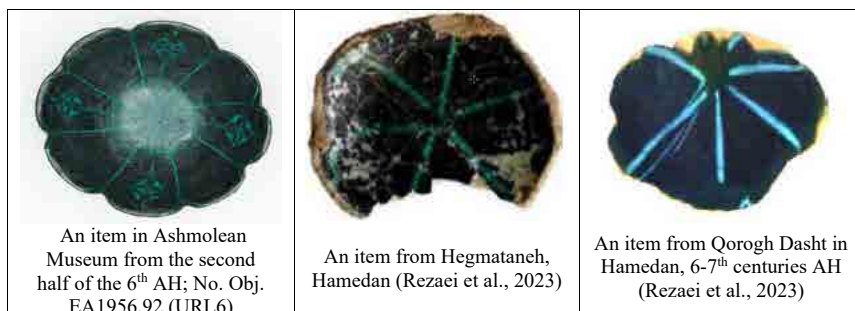
			Robāt Āghāj
			Comparable items
Kashan, 6-7 th centuries AH (Grube, 1976: 189)	Tahyagh, 6-7 th centuries AH (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: 150; Sharahi et al., 2023: 66)	Tahyagh, 6-7 th centuries AH (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: 150; Sharahi et al., 2023: 67)	



▲ Fig. 8: The base of a glazed ware with silhouette decoration (Authors, 2022).

our site. The black underglaze technique was prevalent in Iran during the late 6th to early 7th century AH, with key production centers located in Kāshān and Rayy (Pope, 2008: No4, p1839 & Watson, 2004: 343).

Silhouette ware: During the excavations carried out at Robāt Āghāj, archaeologists were able to identify only a single fragment of pottery belonging to the decorated Silhouette type. This particular item is an open vessel characterized by a white frit paste and intricate carvings on the slip, featuring black and turquoise motifs under the glaze. The motifs consist of radial linear designs drawn inside the vessel. Such decorative techniques were commonly employed in the carving of ceramics dating back to the 6th-7th centuries AH, with numerous examples on display in museums both within and outside the country. Kāshān is believed to have been one of the key production centers (Morgan, 2005: 138; Gerab, 2005: 129; Barand, 2004: 86; Fehérvári, 2009: 37 & Watson, 2004: 333-334). for this type of pottery, with similar samples discovered in locations like Qorogh Dasht and

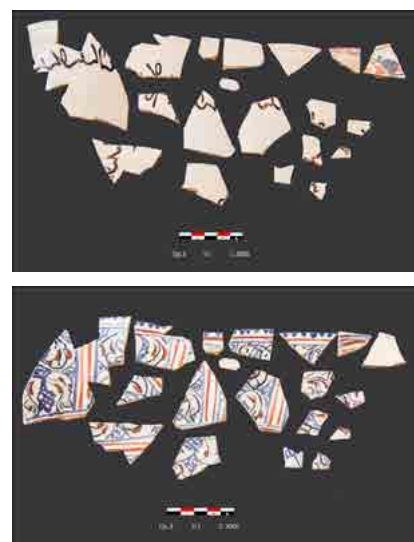


◀ Table 6: Fragments of utensils with silhouette ware decoration comparable to the sample recovered from Robāt Āghāj (Authors, 2022).

Hegmataneh in Hamadan (Rezaei, et.al, 2023: 225), Tahyaq in Khomeyn (Sharahi & Sedighian, 2019: 150) and Qale-Sang in Sirjan (Amirhajloo & Sedighian, 2020: 170).




3) Painted-on-glaze ware: The final category of glazed pottery discovered at the site consists of pieces adorned with painted designs on the glaze, including enamel and lusterware. A detailed account of each of these varieties is provided individually in the following sections:

Enamelware: Unearthed in trench number 3 were fragments of an enamelware piece, regrettably, the inability to piece together the item is attributed to the loss of numerous fragments (Nikbakht & Montazer Zohouri, 2021). The object showcases a white frit paste and a layer of matte white tin glaze, embellished with intricate geometric and floral motifs in blue, turquoise, black, and reddish brown. Evidence indicates that the inner and outer surfaces of the vessel feature decorative frames adorned with floral motifs, separated by three rows of vertical lines. This particular decorative technique is seldom observed in enamelware artifacts, although there are comparable specimens dating back to the 6th to 7th centuries AH (Karimi & Kiani, 1985: 249 & Yazdani, 2015: 243). The exterior of the enamelware artifact from Robāt Āghāj displays an inscription in a Taliq-like style, with words connected together. Unfortunately, due to the fragmented nature of the pottery, the inscription cannot be read correctly. This vessel, which is open in shape, is believed to have been part of a small bowl or cup in the past. Historical sources, such as *Arayis al-Jawahir va Nafayis al-Atayib*, suggest that enamelware ceramics were only produced in Kāshān for a brief period before the Mongol invasion (Kashani, 2006: 347). While other regions like Rayy and Saveh are said to have also manufactured such pottery, there is a lack of solid archaeological evidence to support this claim (Salehi Kakhki, et.al. 2015 & Kambakhshfard, 2010: 464). The production of enamelware ceramics likely flourished between 575-640 AH, ceasing thereafter (Fehérvári, 2009: 39; Bahrami, 1948: 113; Yazdani, et.al., 2015: 53;



▲ Fig. 9: Exterior and interior parts of potsherds belonging to a lusterware recovered from Robāt Āghāj (Authors, 2022).

Table 7: Enamelware specimens similar to Robāt Āghāj sample in figure 8 (Authors, 2022). ▶

		
<p>A sample from Victoria & Albert Museum. No. Obj. C.379-1919 (Pope 1971: VolX, p695)</p>	<p>An enamelware sample available at Christine's ceramic auction; belonging to the late 7th century AH (Yazdani, 2015: 103)</p>	<p>An enamelware sample, probably produced in Ray. Available in the National Museum of Iran (Karmi & Kiani, 1985: 249)</p>



▲ Fig. 10: Samples of lusterware items recovered from Robāt Āghāj (Authors, 2022).

Watson, 1982: 178 – 180 & Lane, 1971: 42). Laboratory analysis of the Robāt Āghāj samples indicates a connection between the enamelware specimen found at the site and those associated with Kāshān (Nikbakht & Montazer-Zohouri, 2021).

Lusterware: Numerous fragments of Lusterware artifacts are scattered throughout various sections of the underground troglodytic complex, some of which could be pieced together with other damaged vessels (Nikbakht et al., 2019). These potsherds exhibit a white body with a matte or tin glaze, all in the shape of an open-mouthed vessel. Laboratory analysis indicates the presence of magnesium in the glaze composition, a characteristic not found in comparable samples from Kāshān, Jurjan, and Rayy, but present in some samples from Kerman (Amirhajloo, et.al. 2020: 17 & Kemshaki, et.al., 2020: 95). While the predominant background color of most pieces is white, some feature a lapis lazuli background on both the exterior and interior surfaces. Gold was the primary color used for decoration, although lapis lazuli or turquoise hues were occasionally employed. Notably, the ceramics are distinguished by motifs depicting various forms of a seated human figure alongside geometric designs. Figurative motifs are a prevalent type of motifs found on lusterware from the Islamic Middle Ages in Iran. Similar items can also be observed in other Iranian sites dating back to the 6th-7th centuries AH, such as Aveh, Kāshān, and Rayy (Lashgari, 2017: 122 & Treptow, 2007: 29). Various opinions have been put forward regarding the production centers of lusterware pottery during this period. Recent research and archaeological excavations point to cities like Kāshān, Jurjan, Jiroft, and Kerman as key centers for producing this type of ceramics between the 6th and 7th centuries AH (Amirhajloo, et.al. 2020; Kemshaki, et.al., 2020: 97-98; Choubak, 2012: 94; Kiani, 1984: 49; Bahrami, 1988: 81 & Mason, 2004: 487 - 492). PIXIE tests conducted on pottery samples from Robāt Āghāj indicate a closer connection to Kāshān production samples from the 7th-6th centuries AH compared to other sites (Montazerzohori, et.al., 2020: 218).

		
Kashan, Late 6 th century AH, No. Obj: B60P2003 (URL5) Asian Art Museum	Kashan, Late 6 th century AH, The Fitzwilliam Museum, (URL3)	Ray, 6 th century AH (Treptow, 2007: 29)
		
Ray Or Kashan, 6-7 th centuries AH, Asian Art Museum, No. Obj: B60P1987	Kashan, 1170-1200 AD (Watson, 2004: 351)	Kashan, Glassware and Ceramic, National Museum of Iran, Late 6 th century AH (Nasri, 2021)

◀ Table 8: Lusterware items similar to the samples from Robāt Āghāj in figure 9 (Authors, 2022).

Conclusion

The Iranian Plateau during the Islamic Middle Ages witnessed a tumultuous period characterized by significant political and religious turmoil, culminating in numerous violent conflicts and massacres. The invasion of the Mongols stands out as a particularly devastating event, resulting in the destruction of many cities and the loss of countless lives.

The historical and archaeological evidence indicates that the inhabitants of certain regions in central Iran constructed troglodytic complexes, or underground shelters, as a defense against the Mongols' assaults. One such shelter is located in the present-day Robāt Āghāj village in Khomeyn County. The archaeological excavations at this site yielded a large quantity of potsherds dating back to the Islamic Middle Ages, which necessitated further investigation. Despite the abundance of unglazed pottery, there was limited diversity in terms of motif type and decoration. Notably, the mold decorations produced during the 6th-7th centuries AH are closely linked to ceramic products from Zolf Abad in Farahan and Moshkoyeh in Saveh. Additionally, fragments of a clay thermos from the 6th-7th centuries AH were discovered, although the exact production center remains unidentified, similar samples were found in other centers.

The diverse range of glazed pottery predominantly utilizes frit paste in its composition. Based on the comparative chronology, the majority of these ceramic pieces were crafted and utilized in the 6th century AH. The pottery discovered at the site indicates that it predominantly dates back to

a specific period, namely the Seljuk era until the early Ilkhanid rule in Iran. These ceramics exhibit a wide range of styles, including monochromatic glazed, painted underglaze, and painted on-glaze varieties. The decorative elements found on these pottery items are reminiscent of those seen at contemporary sites in Markazi Province, such as Tahyaq, Zolfabad, and Moshkoyeh, as well as in other areas like the troglodytic sites at Samen in Malayer and Arzanfod in Hamedan, and the pottery samples from Kāshān and Ray. Some of the glazed pottery pieces at this site bear similarities to the monochrome and blue and white linear decorated ware found at Zolfabad and Moshkoyeh, while others, like the lusterware and enamelware samples, are more akin to the pottery produced in Kāshān.

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This article was a collaborative effort between the two Authors, reflecting equal participation and input from both.

Conflict of Interest

In commitment to publication ethics, there are no conflicts of interest to declare for this research.

Preference

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طبقه‌بندی، گونه‌شناسی و گاهنگاری سفال‌های قرون میانی اسلامی دست‌کند زیرزمینی رباط آجاج، شهرستان خمین

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چکیده

مجموعه دست‌کند زیرزمینی رباط آجاج، یکی از محوطه‌های تاریخی شاخص در محدوده شهرستان خمین است که در دل تپه‌ای شنی به ارتفاع ۵۰ متر ایجاد گردید است. فصل اول کاوش‌های باستان‌شناسی این اثر در سال ۱۳۹۵ صورت پذیرفت. در نتیجه این کاوش‌ها، فضاهای معماری مختلف و یافته‌های متنوع باستان‌شناسی به دست آمد. بیشترین فراوانی یافته‌های شناسایی شده این محوطه را انواع متنوعی از سفال‌های بدون لعاب و لعاب‌دار دوران اسلامی تشکیل می‌دهد. سفال‌های ساده بدون لعاب، سفال‌های بدون لعاب با نقوش فشاری، کنده و افزوده، سفال با نقش قالبی و هم‌چنین سفال‌های لعاب‌دار تک‌رنگ، آبی سفید، زرین‌فام و قططعات ظروف مینایی از انواع سفال‌های شناسایی شده در دست‌کند رباط آجاج است. نظر به این‌که تاکنون پژوهش مستقلی درمورد این آثار صورت پذیرفته بود، ضرورت داشت که بدان‌ها پرداخته شود؛ چراکه تقریباً تمامی سفال‌های به دست آمده این محوطه مربوط به قرون میانی اسلامی هستند و احتمالاً تنها در یک دوره زمانی تولید شده و مورد استفاده قرار گرفته‌اند؛ بدین سبب با انجام پژوهش حاضر می‌توان یک منبع مطالعاتی و مقایسه‌ای در زمینه سفال‌های این دوران استان مرکزی و حتی ایران را ارائه داد. با توجه به این موارد، مهم‌ترین پرسش پژوهش حاضر در زمینه گاه‌نگاری مقایسه‌ای این سفال‌ها و مراکز تولیدی احتمالی آن‌ها است. روش پژوهش حاضر توصیفی-مقایسه‌ای و شیوه گردآوری اطلاعات در آن بر پایه مطالعات میدانی و کتابخانه‌ای است. در نتیجه پژوهش حاضر، چنین مشخص شد که بیشتر سفال‌های این محوطه احتمالاً مربوط به بازه زمانی قرن ۶-۷ ه.ق. هستند؛ هم‌چنین برخی از این گونه‌های سفالی با بعضی مراکز تولیدی هم‌چون: ذلف‌آباد، مشکویه، کاشان و ری، تشابهات بسیاری داشته که احتمال دارد از این مراکز به خمین صادر شده‌اند، چنان‌چه مطالعات باستان‌شناختی نیز این ادعا را تصدیق می‌کند. علاوه بر این، با نمونه‌های مشابه در برخی محوطه‌های تاریخی مانند: دست‌کند تهیق خمین، سامن ملایر و ارزانفود همدان، تشابهات بسیاری دارند.

کلیدواژگان: سفال، دست‌کند رباط آجاج، شهرستان خمین، دوران سلجوقی و ایلخانی.

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