



## BĀBĀ JĀN TEPE

---

**BĀBĀ JĀN TEPE** (Tappa), an archeological site in northeastern Luristan (34° north latitude, 47° 56' east longitude), on the southern edge of the Delfān plain at approximately 10 km from Nūrābād, important primarily for excavations of first-millennium B.C. levels conducted by C. Goff from 1966-69. Work concentrated on two mounds joined by a saddle. The East Mound (85 m in diameter, 9 m high) yielded a series of first-millennium B.C. buildings (Baba Jan III-I) above Bronze Age (Baba Jan IV) graves. On the Central Mound (120 m in diameter, 15 m high), excavation concentrated on the Baba Jan III Manor on the summit; an 8 x 6 m Deep Sounding provides a partial late fourth- to mid-second-millennium B.C. sequence (Baba Jan V-IV; see [Table 4](#)).

*Baba Jan V.* Levels 7-6 in the bottom 2 m of the Deep Sounding yielded late fourth-millennium B.C. chalcolithic pottery similar to Godin (Gowdīn) VI (Goff, 1971, fig. 7; Goff, 1976, pl. VIIIc-d).

*Baba Jan IV.* In the Deep Sounding on the Central Mound, two levels of domestic architecture (level 5, 2300-2100 B.C. and level 4, 1800-1500 B.C.) were separated by a period of abandonment during which four burials were dug into the area. Four other Baba Jan IV graves were cut into virgin soil on the East Mound; these date to the late third (Goff, 1976, fig. 11.10-13, 16-18) and mid-second millennium B.C. (*ibid.*, fig. 11.19-23). The assemblage is comparable to that of period III at Godin Tepe.

*Baba Jan III.* On the Central Mound only the superimposed foundations from two phases of a Manor (30 x 35 m) survive. The earlier, level 2, consisted of a



rectangular court with a north-south axis flanked by long narrow rooms, the whole with towers both at the corners and midpoints of all sides. When rebuilt in level 1, the Manor consisted of a central columned hall (one row of three columns) surrounded by long narrow rooms. On the East Mound the almost 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> excavation yielded the Fort and Painted Chamber. The excavated portion of the Fort, whose walls survived to a height of 3-4 m, consisted of a large (12 m<sup>2</sup>) room with four irregularly placed columns and surrounded by long rectangular chambers. A spiral ramp led either to a second story or the roof. Further rooms extended to the south. The Painted Chamber (10 x 12 m) unit was added at the east end of the Fort. This ceremonial hall, which opened southward onto an enclosed courtyard, had two columns, a niche and doorway with reveals, white walls decorated with red paint, and a painted-tile ceiling. The Fort and Painted Chamber were probably the seat of a local ruler. The extent and nature of the settlement are uncertain. Fire destroyed this complex at the end of the eighth century B.C. The pottery evidence suggests that the East Mound buildings were built and used after the Central Mound Manors. The columned halls at Baba Jan are analogous to contemporary buildings of Hasanlu (Ḥasanlū) IV, Godin Tepe II, and Nush-i Jan (Nūš-e Jān).

Baba Jan III pottery, long known as Genre Luristan, was a handmade, turntable-finished buff ware with distinctive decoration in a thick red-brown matte paint. Typical motifs included ladders and pendant triangles with hatching or crosshatching. Common vessel shapes were simple: wide-bodied jars with narrow necks, small bowls with incurved rims and horizontal loop handles, conical bowls, and cups. A range of iron weapons and tools were found, but classic Luristan bronze artifacts were uncommon.

*Baba Jan II.* The walls of the ruined Fort remained standing until late in Baba Jan II; squatters briefly reoccupied the eastern rooms. While the eastern wall of the Fort remained standing, three phases of small structures were built in the area of the Painted Chamber and its courtyard.

The Genre Luristan pottery of Baba Jan III continued with simpler decoration, but small quantities of a new type of wheel-made buff pottery with small golden mica inclusions appeared. The most common shapes were deep bowls with a thickened rim and horizontal handle, double-handled jars, and jars with a vertical handle and tubular spout with trefoil-mouth. This ware and characteristic shapes are very similar to Tepe Nush i Jan level I (Malāyer plain). Baba Jan II probably dates to the seventh century B.C.



*Baba Jan I.* On the East Mound poorly preserved village house walls covered the summit and extended down the east slope in a series of terraces. Superposition of architectural remains suggests two to three phases. The buff ware Baba Jan I assemblage, whose closest affinities are with Period II at Godin Tepe (Kangāvar valley), is characterized by numerous bowl forms and is a development from the wheelmade pottery of Baba Jan II. Baba Jan III wares disappear. Baba Jan I probably falls within the Achaemenid period.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The final report on the excavations consists of a series of articles by C. Goff: "Excavations at Baba Jan: The Bronze Age Occupation," *Iran* 14, 1976, pp. 19-40; "Excavations at Baba Jan: The Architecture of the East Mound, Levels II and III," *Iran* 15, 1977, pp. 103-40; "Excavations at Baba Jan: The Pottery and Metal from Levels III and II," *Iran* 16, 1978, pp. 29-65; "Excavations at Baba Jan: The Architecture and Pottery of Level I," *Iran* 23, 1985, pp. 1-20.

Goff also published substantial preliminary reports on the first three seasons of excavation (*Iran* 7, 1969, pp. 115-30; *Iran* 8, 1970, pp. 141-56; C. Goff Meade, *Iran* 6, 1968, pp. 105-26).

On the Painted Chamber, cf. R. C. Henrickson, "A Reconstruction of the Painted Chamber Ceiling at Baba Jan," *Iranica Antiqua* 18, 1983, pp. 81-96, for an alternative reconstruction.

For revised dates for Baba Jan IV material, see R. C. Henrickson, "A Regional Perspective on Godin III Cultural Developments in Central Western Iran," *Iran* 24, 1986, table 2 and fig. 2; for Baba Jan III-I, see L. D. Levine, "The Iron Age," in *Archaeological Perspectives on Western Iran*, ed. F. Hole (Smithsonian), in press.

*Search terms:*

بابا جان تپه    baba jan tepe    baba jan tape baba jan tepeh  
baba jan tapeh baba jaan tapeh

