



JARI, TALL-E

JARI, TALL-E, a Fars Province site named for its two closely situated prehistoric mounds, Jari A and B. The two mounds are located approximately 12 km southeast of Persepolis. Both mounds were initially excavated by Louis Vanden Berghe from Gent University in 1951 (Vanden Berghe, 1951/52, pp. 212-15) and then by Namio Egami of the University of Tokyo in 1959 (Egami, pp. 2936-39). Jari A was excavated again in 1971 under the direction of Sei'ichi Masuda from Tsukuba University (Egami et al., pp. 1-7). Furthermore, in 2004, a team led by Abbas Alizadeh of the University of Chicago conducted small-scale sampling investigations of the two mounds (Alizadeh, pp. 99-103). Masuda's 1971 and Egami's 1959 excavations yielded most important archeological information for Jari A and B, respectively. The combined Tall-e Jari data trace the cultural developments in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic of southwest Iran, spanning a period of the 6th and the 5th millenniums BCE.

Jari A is a circular mound of about 100 m in diameter. It rises approximately 2.5 m from the surrounding area, but the cultural deposits are found to be far deeper, down 6 m, representing three different phases. The chronology presented in the original report (Egami et al., pp. 3-4) now requires revision. The available drawings of the excavated materials suggest that Level 1, directly below topsoil, is comparable to Bakun B2, the early Bakun culture of the Chalcolithic. A large quantity of fine black-on-buff painted ware has been recovered, along with other stone, clay, and bone objects. The stone and clay stamp seals with geometric designs indicate some social complexity in this period. Level 2 should belong to Bakun B1, the Shamsabad phase of the late



6th millennium BCE. The pottery of this phase is predominated by a straw-tempered coarse ware, which shows virtually no decoration but appliqué ornaments and vertical winding lines on the surface. Level 3, situated on virgin soil, can be assigned to the TMB or the Bashi phase of the Pottery Neolithic. The associated painted pottery is wholly comparable to that from the bottom layer of Jari B, dated to the beginning of the 6th millennium BCE. Thus far, the published accounts of the site's excavated assemblages are very limited, and the extensive cultural deposits over the course of a millennium are yet to be studied in detail.

More informative is the mound of Jari B, situated about 200 m southeast of Jari A. Jari B is the eponymous site for the Jari culture of the Pottery Neolithic. It is an elongated low mound measuring approximately 120 m in length, 60 m in width, and 2.5 m in height. Egami's excavations in 1959 exposed an extensive area of about 600 sq m, which established the basic stratigraphy consisting of eight occupation levels (Nishiaki and Mashkour, pp. 77-80; Nishiaki, 2010a, pp. 3-7), dated from the first half of the 6th millennium BCE (Nishiaki, 2010b, pp. 5-8). The oldest level (Level 8) has been compared to the TMB or the Bashi culture, the interface phase between the Mushki and Jari cultures. The overlying levels all belong to the Jari culture.

The buildings from all these levels showed a similar construction technique. A typical building consisted of three rows of square rooms with sides of approximately 1.5 m, and the rooms in the central row were larger than those on the sides. The walls were generally made of *chineh* (built-up layers of mud) and occasionally of stacked mud slabs. The rooms often had domestic installations such as ovens, ash bins, and large storage jars. Their floors and inner walls were mud-plastered. Some of them were painted in red. The building technique and the main axis, east-west on all levels, were consistent throughout the levels, and re-flooring was a very common practice. The considerable investment devoted to building houses indicates intensive occupation, suggesting that the settlement of Jari B was a sedentary village rather than an ephemeral hamlet, as was common in the preceding Mushki phase (Nishiaki, 2010a, pp. 7-8).

The typical Jari ware is a heavily plant-tempered, brittle ware with thick, yellowish buff clay coating (Figure 1; Maeda, pp. 63-66). The surface is usually further covered with thin, whitish slip. Painting decoration, generally geometric designs in a dark brown color, was found on most of the rim sherds. The continuous changes in the typological and technological features of the



pottery over the Jari B sequence also show the intensive occupation of this site. Flaked stone artifacts were mostly made from blades detached from chert. No obsidian was recovered. Sickle elements for cereal harvesting were common, and a small number of trapeze arrowheads for hunting were manufactured (Hori, p. 22). Ground stone tools, made of limestone and sandstone, were also common. They often retained traces of red pigments. They served for the processing of pigments as well as grain. Most numerous in the other finds were bone artifacts, mainly awls. Clay objects such as animal figurines and pegs were also present. The objects that excavators of the Neolithic report as “ear plugs” were in evidence, but far less than in the preceding [Mushki](#) phase. Other small finds included a few grooved stones, stone/shell beads, and metal objects. Shell beads include pendants made of gastropods, disk beads, and a tusk bead. Many of them are of marine species, perhaps imported from the Gulf of Oman. A few metal objects, fragments of possible copper pins, were also recovered.

Preliminary results of the animal bone analysis (Mashkour et al., p. 105) show that the majority represents capra/ovis of domesticated species, demonstrating the common practice of herding. Wild, hunted game such as gazelles, bos, and equids were recovered in a far smaller quantity than in the Mushki phase. Unfortunately, analyses of the plant remains from Jari B have not been published. However, the more common stone sickles blades and ground stones suggest that plant cultivation might have been a major source of subsistence. The practice of irrigation in this period has also been suggested on the basis of the geographical setting of Jari sites, which are often located on arid plains (Sumner, p. 300). Whether or not irrigation was practiced, heavy reliance on farming for subsistence is evident. Jari B thus represents the initial stage in the development of a more sedentary farming village in Fars Province.

See also [FĀRS ix. PREHISTORIC SEQUENCE](#).

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