



# A Typological Catalogue of the Pottery from Tepe Sadegh

DATA PAPER

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## ABSTRACT

This dataset presents a comprehensive typological and chronological analysis of pottery from Tepe Sadegh, a Bronze Age satellite site of Shahr-i Sokhta in southeast Iran. Potsherds were classified and typologically analysed based on their physical characteristics, including clay paste, slip, temper, quality, firing rate, decoration, function, and shape. The data is formatted as a CSV file containing all the typological comparisons and chronological studies. Based on the findings of this study, Tepe Sadegh belongs to the second and third periods of the Shahr-i Sokhta period, with most of the potsherds dating from 2700 BCE to 2300 BCE. As a secondary resource for researchers working on the Sistan Plain, the database can serve as a basis for the typological classification of pottery in the area.

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## KEYWORDS:

Archaeology; Pottery; Tepe Sadegh; Shahr-i Sokhta; Iran

## TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Ebrahimiabareghi S, Shirazi R  
2023 A Typological Catalogue  
of the Pottery from Tepe  
Sadegh. *Journal of Open  
Archaeology Data*, 11: 15,  
pp. 1–5. DOI: [https://doi.  
org/10.5334/joad.110](https://doi.org/10.5334/joad.110)

## CONTEXT

Tepe Sadegh is located in the south of Ghale Rostam, 13 km southwest of Shahr-i Sokhta (30.49762°N, 61.23836°E) (Figure 1). It is a satellite site of Shahr-i Sokhta,<sup>1</sup> a Bronze Age site with four periods of occupation covering almost 1,200 years. The archaeological remains of Shahr-i Sokhta cover 270 ha, and it is over 2,220 m long and 1,090 m wide, making it possible to consider Shahr-i Sokhta as one of the largest Bronze Age sites in the eastern part of the Iranian plateau.<sup>2</sup>

Tepe Sadegh's mound is an oval shape with a dimension of 150 × 200 m in the east-west direction, with a maximum height of 6 m. There are millions of potsherds on its hills and hundreds of pottery furnaces around Shahr-i Sokhta. Based on the studies conducted so far, most of the pottery was produced outside of Shahr-i Sokhta and in satellite villages such as Tepe Graziani, Tepe Talebkhan, and Tepe Sadegh.<sup>3</sup> Based on the last survey done in Sistan Plain more than 900 settlements of 1–3 ha of the same period have been registered.<sup>4</sup> Settlements near Shahr-i Sokhta are considered satellite settlements. Tepe Sadegh is located at 13 km in a southwestern direction from Shahr-I Sokhta. Similarly, Tepe Gratziani is situated 12 km to the southeast, and Tepe Talebkhan is positioned at a distance of 12 km to the south.<sup>5</sup> The pottery of this area can be classified into four main categories: buff, grey, red, and multi-coloured pottery.<sup>6</sup>

The lack of knowledge of the pottery typology and chronology of Tepe Sadegh up to now and the importance of pottery for understanding the cultural changes of ancient societies made it necessary to classify and typologically analysis the potsherds.

Based on the pottery, 1,394 potsherds out of 1,959 could be compared with surrounding Bronze Age settlements. Most similarities are with southeast Iran, then Pakistan and Afghanistan. Shahr-i Sokhta with 1,171, Bampur with 53, and Tepe Yahya with 23 comparable potsherds were the main comparable sites in Iran. In Pakistan, Mundigak with 84, and in Afghanistan, Miri Qalat with 32 were the main comparable sites. These potsherds are mainly comparable with Miri Qalat III, Mundigak IV, Tepe Yahya IVB, Bampur IV, Rud Biaban III, and Shahr-i Sokhta II and III. They are from 2700 BCE to 2300 BCE, which, based on all old and new chronologies, belong to periods II and III of Shahr-i Sokhta. Based on the pottery typology and comparisons that have been made, Tepe Sadegh can be dated as being part of the second and third periods of Shahr-i Sokhta.

## METHODOLOGY

Pottery classification is a fundamental technique in archaeological research that is critical for understanding archaeological chronology.<sup>8</sup> Classification serves both descriptive and interpretive purposes and provides a

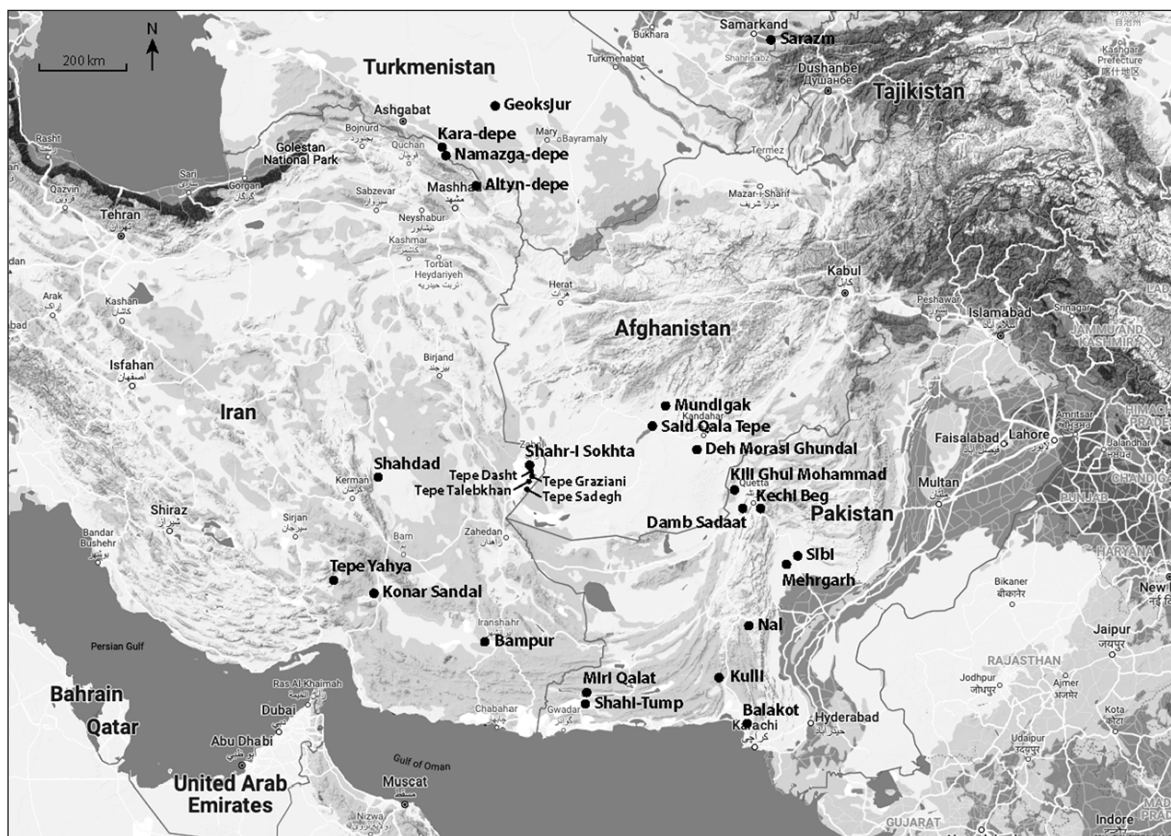


Figure 1 Tepe Sadegh, Shahr-i Sokhta, and surrounding Bronze Age settlements.<sup>7</sup>

method for conducting research and organizing data. Different typologies are used to classify artifacts based on their physical characteristics, enabling archaeologists to differentiate and interpret them.

Tepe Sadegh's excavations were conducted over six seasons, yielding various artifacts such as pottery, figurines, bronze objects, alabaster, botanic, and charcoal samples, but this dataset focuses exclusively on pottery from the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth seasons of excavations. Library and documentation information were combined with archaeological findings, including notes, copies, scans, and photos. The analysis involved several steps, such as the classification of significant pottery, typology, chronology, and comparisons with other sites.

A method was developed using excavation information to select significant pottery. Approximately 1,959 potsherds were selected for typological studies based on specific criteria, including shape, decorations, and other characteristics. The selected potsherds were classified based on various pottery variables.

A comprehensive typological study was conducted, comparing the samples both interregionally and intraregionally. Various sites from southeast Iran, Pakistani Makran, Afghani Sistan, and Mundigak were selected. Based on typology, the potsherds were dated chronologically from 2700 BCE to 2300 BCE, corresponding to periods II and III of Shahr-i Sokhta. All typological comparisons and chronological studies were entered into a database and are presented in CSV format.

## QUALITY CONTROL

All published data have been examined and double-checked in detail; for chronological study, multi-bibliographical cross-checks have been performed on data.

## CONSTRAINTS

The periodization of certain vessels and potsherds is affected by several constraints. In published excavation reports for various sites, typological conservatism and unreliable stratigraphic sequences present one of the major challenges. Due to this lack of reliable data, it can be difficult to determine the chronology of certain artifacts. Furthermore, there are a number of ongoing excavations at the adjacent sites that have not yet been fully published, thereby further limiting the amount of data available for analysis.

## DATASET DESCRIPTION

### OBJECT NAME

The files "Database.csv" and "Database.xlsx" contain data related to the classification, typology, and chronology of pottery recorded through archaeological excavation reports.

Database fields are listed in [Table 1](#).

COLUMN	SCOPE
<b>Drawing No.</b>	It indicates the number of potsherd's drawings available in the "Drawings of Significant Potsherds of Tepe Sadegh. PDF" file.
<b>Trench No.</b>	The trench number of the potsherd's origin is indicated here.
<b>Layer</b>	This field designates the specific layer within which the potsherd was discovered.
<b>Piece</b>	It signifies whether the potsherd represents the rim, base, body section, or a complete rim-base profile.
<b>Clay Paste</b>	This attribute provides information on the colour of the potsherd's paste.
<b>Colour of Wash/Slip</b>	This attribute identifies the colour of the applied wash or slip on the potsherd.
<b>Wash/Slip</b>	It indicates whether the wash or slip is of a watery (wash) or thick (slip) consistency.
<b>Position of Wash/Slip</b>	This field specifies whether the wash or slip is located on the interior, exterior, or on both sides of the potsherd.
<b>Chamotte</b>	This field denotes the size of the chamotte present in the potsherd.
<b>Inside Quality</b>	These fields describe the quality of the potsherd on each side.
<b>Outside Quality</b>	
<b>Firing Rate</b>	Depending on this value, the potsherd may exhibit either sufficient or insufficient firing.
<b>Rate of Safety</b>	This field indicates the current condition of the potsherd.
<b>Inside Painting</b>	These fields provide details regarding the presence, pattern, and colour of any inside or outside painting on the potsherd.
<b>Outside Painting</b>	
<b>Painting Pattern</b>	
<b>Colour of Painting</b>	These attributes specify the position and motif of any engraving on the potsherd.
<b>Inside Engraving</b>	
<b>Outside Engraving</b>	
<b>Engraving Pattern</b>	It indicates which of these categories has been utilized for typological classification.
<b>Drawing/Shape</b>	
<b>Comparable Site</b>	These fields reveal the comparable archaeological site and period associated with the potsherd.
<b>Phase/Period</b>	
<b>Reference</b>	Reference sources are indicated in this field.

**Table 1** Descriptions of column headers appearing in Database.csv and Database.xlsx.

The "Drawings of Significant Potsherds of Tepe Sadegh. pdf" file contains drawings of selected potsherds from different excavations of Tepe Sadegh.

## DATA TYPE

Primary data/processed data

## FORMAT NAMES AND VERSIONS

CSV, XLSX, PDF

## CREATION DATES

September 2018–August 2021

## DATASET CREATORS

Setareh Ebrahimiabareghi

## REPOSITORY LOCATION

Zenodo Repository

<https://zenodo.org/record/7528678#.Y8Ur1ezMJBx>

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.752867

## PUBLICATION DATE

12.01.2023

## LANGUAGE

English

## LICENSE

Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

## DATA ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Our data is technically accessible through the Zenodo Repository, which also allows generating a DOI for proper citation and attribution to the repository's authors. We adhere to modern guidelines for data accessibility and reproducibility within the field of archaeology. It has been meticulously structured to facilitate easy access, conversion, and replication to ensure clarity and comprehensibility.

## REUSE POTENTIAL

The database provides an excellent basis for the typological classification of pottery in Sistan Plain. Pottery types in the region can be derived from this type of material culture. This database can also be utilized as a secondary source for future excavations. Particularly, the analysis of this database may be useful for future research to understand the diachronic and spatial distribution of pottery during the Bronze Age, as well as cross-cultural activities in the region through their similarities.

## NOTES

- 1 Seyyed Sajjadi/Ascalone 2019 [1].
- 2 Ascalone/Fabbri 2022:539 [2]; Biscione et al. 1977: 104 [3]; Seyyed Sajjadi et al. 2003: 21 [4].

3 Seyyed Sajjadi /Moradi 2016: 113 [5].

4 Mousavihaji/Mehrafarin 2007 [6]; 2009 [7].

5 Mousavihaji/Mehrafarin 2007 [6]; 2009 [7].

6 Seyyed Sajjadi et al. 2007:150 [8].

7 After Cortesi et al. 2008 [9], modified by Andrea Bieri, University of Bern.

8 Kiani/Karimi 1985 [10].

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We express our gratitude to the University of Bern, the University of Sistan & Baluchistan, the Zahedan Museum, and the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research (ICAR) for their unwavering support and assistance during the project. Our sincere gratitude goes out to the Editor for their dedication and diligence during the review process. Additionally, we would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments and comments that have greatly enhanced the manuscript.

## FUNDING INFORMATION

The Swiss Government's Excellence Scholarships for Foreign Scholars and Artists (ESKAS) provided funding for this research project.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Setareh Ebrahimiabareghi: Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing, Resources, Data Curation, Funding acquisition; Rouhollah Shirazi: Resources, Data Curation.

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**TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:**

Ebrahimiabareghi S, Shirazi R 2023 A Typological Catalogue of the Pottery from Tepe Sadegh. *Journal of Open Archaeology Data*, 11: 15, pp. 1–5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/joad.110>

**Published:** 15 December 2023

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