

Reassessment and Analysis of the Seleucid Tumulus at Naqqārechi Tepe, Nahavand (Based on the Qajar Period Exploratory Report and Two Seasons of Archaeological Excavations)

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Abstract

The Naqqārechi Tepe, located on the southern outskirts of Nahavand, is among the surviving remains of the Seleucid period. Although it lacks visible surface evidence and recognizable cultural materials, a detailed account of its exploration during the Qajar era does exist. According to the report by Dr. Feuvrier and Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan E'temād-al-Saltāna (1309 AH), which accurately describes and illustrates the structural characteristics of the site and correctly identifies its historical period, the Naqqārechi Tepe may represent a tomb or tumulus belonging to one of the Seleucid commanders. A careful examination of this structure offers insights into the burial methods and funerary practices of Seleucid society. The Tepe was re-excavated in two archaeological seasons in 2019 and 2022 in order to reassess the buried structure and to critically re-read the Qajar-period descriptive account. This reconsideration aims to enhance our understanding of Seleucid architecture and cultural traditions in Iran. The main research questions, based on existing hypotheses, include: Does the buried tomb at Naqqārechi originate from Greek cultural traditions? How does the architectural design of the Tepe relate to similar Greek tumuli? Accordingly, the study proposes the hypothesis that the Naqqārechi Tepe is a tumulus, likely containing the burial of a Seleucid military commander or satrap of the region. Archaeological evidence and structural features obtained from the site, in comparison with similar Greek examples, suggest that this tomb reflects Seleucid cultural and architectural traditions. The research methodology is based on a combination of fieldwork and library studies. The description and analysis of the findings follow a historical-analytical approach and rely on the results of two excavation seasons at Naqqārechi. The findings indicate that the Naqqārechi Tepe exhibits all the key characteristics of Hellenic tumuli. The construction of a dedicated funerary monument for a single individual, along with the preparation of a carved stone sarcophagus, demonstrates the high social and political status of the deceased—status comparable to that of military commanders, warriors, or even successors of Alexander.

Keywords: Nahavand, Naqqārechi Tepe, Seleucid, Tumulus, Architecture.



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Introduction

Given the short duration of Seleucid rule over Iran, only limited remains and evidence from this period have survived, such as sculptures (for example, the statue of Heracles), coins, and architectural remains (such as those at Khurheh in Mahallat and Nahavand). Among the cities mentioned by historians and writers from the time of Alexander the Great and his successors in Iran and other conquered territories, names such as Alexandria, Apamea, Antiochia, Laodicea, and others are recorded. Unfortunately, aside from these names, little information about these cities has been preserved. Alexander and his successors, in order to secure control over Iran—a land with a flourishing civilization—implemented policies to settle Greek immigrants in the region. Some Iranian cities were also expanded with the intention of blending the Iranian and Greek cultures, leading to the settlement of Greek populations within them. Given Alexander’s short reign—merely twelve and a half years, during which he was continuously engaged in military campaigns from Asia Minor to India and Egypt—it is unlikely that he founded fully developed cities in the true sense of the word. Therefore, it is more plausible that the so-called “cities” were in fact military encampments for the Macedonian army. Cities established during this period were often named after kings or their wives. Greek cities typically featured temples, gymnasiums, theatres, and agoras (public gathering and trading spaces). With the aim of Hellenizing Iran, Alexander brought teachers, artists, historians, merchants, and other groups of people with him. It is said that new cities were founded across Iran, and Greek quarters were established within existing cities. The Seleucids continued this policy. In 1943 (1322 SH), a Greek inscription belonging to Antiochus III (223–187 BCE) was accidentally discovered in the Do-Khāharān district of Nahavand. This inscription indicated that the city of Nahavand was called Laodicea during the Seleucid period and that a temple with the same name existed there (Rahbar, 2013: 1). Following this significant discovery, along with a brief Qajar-era report referring to a burial structure from the Seleucid period in the city, archaeological attention turned toward Nahavand and its Seleucid remains. Despite the accounts of historians and researchers, as well as limited traces of Greek material culture—such as architectural features typical of Greek cities and their burial customs—precise information about the Seleucids in Iran has remained scarce. Therefore, identifying the Laodicea temple or the Seleucid tomb at Naqqārechi Tepe could provide valuable clues for understanding Seleucid architecture and funerary practices in Iran, as well as the extent of their cultural interaction with Iranian traditions. With this presupposition, targeted excavations were carried out in Nahavand in search of Seleucid remains. Based on Qajar-era studies (Feuvrier, 1989: 377–382; E’temād-al-Saltāna, 1998), Naqqārechi Tepe may represent a tomb or tumulus belonging to a Seleucid official. A detailed investigation of this site could shed light on the burial and funerary customs of the Seleucid community. Accordingly, the site was excavated in two seasons (Rahbar, 2019; Janjan, 2022).

The main objective of these excavations—according to the Qajar report—was to uncover and clearly identify remains from the Seleucid period, including the buried

tomb. If it can be established that this tomb belongs to the Seleucid era, significant information will emerge regarding Seleucid funerary practices and the potential influence of Eastern, particularly Iranian, traditions upon them. Therefore, the primary aim of this research is to analyze and interpret the archaeological findings from Naqqārechi Tepe.

Research Questions and Hypotheses: The questions posed regarding the excavation of Naqqārechi Tepe, based on the proposed hypotheses, are as follows:

Does the burial structure at Naqqārechi Tepe originate from Greek cultural traditions?

What is the nature of the architectural construction of the site, and how does it relate to similar Greek tumuli?

Accordingly, the main hypothesis assumes that Naqqārechi Tepe is a tumulus, likely containing the grave of a Seleucid commander or satrap of the region. Based on the archaeological evidence and the structural features uncovered at the site—along with comparative analysis of similar Greek examples—it appears that this tomb reflects Seleucid cultural and funerary traditions.

Research Method: This study is methodologically based on a combination of fieldwork and library research. The description and analysis of the findings have been carried out using a historical–analytical method with a fieldwork-oriented approach, grounded in the results obtained from two seasons of archaeological excavations. In this research, after presenting the research propositions in the introduction, the theoretical foundations of the study—namely the reports of Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan E‘temād-al-Salṭana and Dr. Feuvrier—are explained. Then, the geographical setting of the Tepe and the tomb under investigation is described. Subsequently, the excavation findings are discussed along with an explanation of the architectural features that influenced the condition of the structure. Finally, the studied tumulus is examined and analyzed in comparison with the cultural traditions common in Greek funerary structures (tumuli) and other Greek architectural remains.

Research Background

The earliest scholarly archaeological studies in the city of Nahavand can be attributed to Roman Ghirshman and Georges Contenau, whose excavations at Tepe Giyan in 1931 and 1932 marked the beginning of systematic research in the region (Contenau & Ghirshman, 1935). Subsequently, other sites such as the Jamshidi Tepes (Vanden Berghe, 1966) and Abdolhossein (Goff & Pullar, 1970) were examined through scientific archaeological investigations. In more recent decades, further studies have been carried out by Iranian archaeologists, including the determination of the boundaries of the Tepe Giyan site (Malekzadeh, 2003; Khaksar, 2011). Alongside these efforts, surveys and documentation projects aimed at identifying and registering the historical monuments of Nahavand have also been undertaken (Mohammadifar & Motarjem, 2010; Mohammadifar *et al.*, 2008; Saraghy, 2005; Arab, 2019).

It may be claimed with confidence that the archaeological significance of Nahavand is largely due to its Seleucid remains. Scholarly attention to Seleucid heritage in the city began with the discovery of a Greek inscription in 1943 (1322 SH) in the Do-Khāharān

district. This led to a series of archaeological investigations focused on identifying the Temple of Laodicea. For this purpose, four seasons of trial excavations and speculations were conducted by Mehdi Rahbar in 2005, 2011, 2012, and 2019 (1384, 1390, 1391, and 1398 SH). These excavations resulted in the discovery of architectural elements such as column capitals, columns, bases, statues of Greek deities, and Seleucid coins (Rahbar, 2013: 1–5).

Further investigations aimed at locating the Temple of Laodicea were pursued during the fifth to seventh seasons of excavation, conducted by Mohsen Janjan in 2020–2022 (1399–1401 SH).

Among the other significant Seleucid-period remains in Nahavand is the Naqqārechi Tepe, which was excavated in 1309 AH by the order of Nāser al-Dīn Shāh. The initial information regarding this excavation was provided by Dr. Feuvrier (the personal physician of Nāser al-Dīn Shāh) and Mohammad-Hasan Khan E‘temād al-Saltaneh (Minister of Publications). Given the importance of this report, a brief description of it is presented below (see: Feuvrier, 1989: 379–382). In the same context, and for the purpose of obtaining accurate archaeological data from this tumulus, scientific excavations were carried out in two seasons by Mehdi Rahbar (2019) and Mohsen Janjan (2022).

It should be noted that, in line with introducing the archaeological findings of Nahavand—particularly the Seleucid remains—numerous articles have also been published (e.g., Rahbari & Alibeigi, 2011; Rahbar *et al.*, 2014). However, the most significant of these outputs can be found in the volume Proceedings of the One-Day Conference on the Archaeology of Nahavand (in Honor of Professor Mehdi Rahbar), published in 2013.

Theoretical Foundations

Theoretical Foundations (The First Exploration of Naqqārechi Tepe in Nahavand Conducted under the Order of Nāser al-Dīn Shāh)

In 1309 AH, Nāser al-Dīn Shāh began his journey toward ‘Erāq-e ‘Ajam and Kurdištan, and he recorded his memoirs during this trip (see: Nāser al-Dīn Shāh, 1983). In this text, he provides substantial and precise information on the political, social, natural, and ethnographic conditions, as well as on archaeological matters. His first exploration (a commercial excavation) was carried out not with the intention of obtaining treasure but in order to learn about the customs and rituals of the local people in the area of Mahallat (Markazi Province). The second exploration, which was carried out during the same journey, was the excavation of Naqqārechi Tepe in Nahavand.

In 1298 AH, during the governorship of “Solṭān-Aḥmad Mirzā ‘Azod-Al-Dawla”, the Shah’s younger brother in Nahavand, farmers—while digging into the Tepe to extract soil for poppy cultivation—encountered a space containing a stone door and a sarcophagus within it. ‘Azod-Al-Dawla informed “Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan E‘temād-al-Saltāna” of this discovery. At the same time, the work was halted and the area was refilled. During Nāser al-Dīn Shāh’s visit to Nahavand, the matter of Naqqārechi Tepe was raised again, and the Shah ordered it to be excavated.

The detailed descriptions recorded by two of his companions— Moḥammad-Hasan Khan E‘temād-al-Saltāna” and Dr. Flandin-Fauvel (Feuvrier)—constitute an exemplary account of Iranian reporting on an archaeological artifact, one that suggests it was written by an experienced archaeologist. The location of the site, the dimensions of the Tepe, the architectural descriptions, the size of the bricks, the construction materials, the condition of the discovered corridor, the stone door, and the sarcophagus—inside which only a few bone fragments remained—along with the measurements of the coffin, which fully correspond to Parthian-era stone sarcophagi, are all among the key components of this report, presented in a thoroughly scholarly manner. Therefore, this report may also be considered part of the research background concerning Naqqārechi Tepe (see: [Feuvrier, 1989](#)).

Regarding the excavation of Naqarachi Tepe, Moḥammad-Hasan Khān E‘temād al-Saltāneh writes: “Naqqārechi is a farm on the southern side connected to the agricultural lands of the city of Nahavand. It is uninhabited, and its land is flat. A Tepe in the middle of this farmland is known as Naqqārechi. A few years prior, when opium cultivation had become common in Nahavand and ancient Tepes were used as a source of aged soil for this purpose, during the governorship of His Highness Prince ‘Ezz al-Dowleh (the Shah’s younger brother), which coincided with the year 1298 AH, the farmers were extracting soil from this Tepe. A decorated hall and portico facing west were discovered. Subsequently, a stone door appeared, the entire door and its frame being made of stone. Inside, there was a passageway about one cubit wide and five ‘charak’ high. At a distance of two cubits further, another stone door and its stone frame were visible, with the sidewalls built of stone and lime, and its ceiling vaulted with brick, remaining intact as it was. That year, His Highness ‘Ezz al-Dowleh traveled to Nahavand. He ordered the passageway to be excavated. After digging two cubits beyond the second stone door, they reached a crypt three cubits long and three cubits wide. A stone tomb appeared in the middle of the crypt, carved from a single piece of stone, upon which the stone lid had been placed. The bones of the deceased—whose flesh and skin had completely decayed—were visible inside the stone coffin.

The head of the corpse lay toward the west, and several of its teeth remained extraordinarily hard and firm. His Highness ordered the tomb to be sealed again as it had been and prohibited any further disturbance.”

He continues: “The aforementioned investigations concerning Naqqārechi Tepe were based on the description that His Highness ‘Ezz al-Dowleh himself had written and sent to me that same year. When the auspicious imperial entourage was present in Nahavand, I ordered an excavation from the western side of the Tepe, where the entrance to the tomb lay. A passageway was dug toward the east, and with precise measurement and examination, the description is as follows. It appears that this tomb belonged to one of the Seleucid Greek kings, likely the same Antiochus who fell from his horse and died, and whom, according to Greek custom, was placed hastily in a stone-carved sarcophagus, laid upon the ground, and covered with a vault. Following the Greek tradition of piling soil on the graves of their kings—each soldier throwing one

or two handfuls of earth—this Tepe was formed. The entrance was likely constructed so that, when the opportunity arose, his body could be transported to Antioch in Syria, the capital of their kingdom.

This Tepe is artificial, located a quarter of the city of Nahavand on the southeastern side. It is circular in form, measuring 40 cubits in diameter at the base and 10 cubits in height. Beneath the Tepe lies a circular crypt with a diameter of two and a half cubits and a height of two cubits from floor to ceiling. The entrance of the crypt faces the southwest, measuring seven cubits in length, one cubit in height, and three ‘Charak’ in width. The crypt walls are built of rough stone up to the springing of the vault, and the vault and entrance are constructed in a crescent form. The bricks used in the vault, although equal in thickness—four finger-breadths—are of two shapes: square bricks and half Khata’i bricks (larger than standard Khata’i), used in the main vault; and rectangular bricks—half the size of the main vault bricks—used in the entrance vault.

The door is missing, although it was certainly made of stone, likely bearing the name of the deceased and the date of his death. The coffin is 40 centimeters deep, 50 centimeters wide on the eastern side (toward the head and shoulders of the deceased), and 40 centimeters wide on the western side (toward the feet). Since the crypt had previously been opened and the sarcophagus unsealed, spectators gradually emptied it of remains, scattering the decomposed fragments here and there. Trusted informants of Nahavand reported that when the tomb was first discovered, the governor entered, removed a sword hilt and a very small white handkerchief filled with some unknown items. Afterwards, townspeople and villagers who entered found some ancient coins.

Our firm belief that this Tepe and tomb belonged to a king—and specifically to a Greek king—is based on two reasons: first, the burial method indicates a Greek identity. The Kayanian kings placed the dead in crypts. The Parthians either cremated or entombed their dead. The Sasanians, following the Kayanians, also placed corpses in crypts. After the emergence and spread of Islam, the inhabitants buried their dead according to Islamic practice, placing the head toward the west and the feet toward the east, facing the qibla. This coffin is entirely contrary to that orientation. Therefore, the deceased was neither Muslim, Sasanian, Parthian, nor Kayanian. Without doubt, he was Greek”. (E‘temād al-Saltāneh, 1998; cited in: Āzarfashī, 2002: 50–58)

Dr. Feuvrier likewise records information concerning the excavation of Naqqārechi Tepe in his book *Three Years at the Persian Court* (1989: 377–382). Although his account is broadly consistent with that of Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khān E‘temād al-Saltāneh, both reports complement each other. Therefore, Feuvrier’s report is presented here as well.

Feuvrier writes (12 July – 22 Dhū al-Ḥijjah): “Near Nahavand lies a Tepe which was excavated under the Shah’s orders, and previously ‘Ezz al-Dowleh, the Shah’s younger brother, had done the same. After the excavation was completed, E‘temād al-Saltāneh and I visited the site on the eighteenth day. The diameter of the base of this large Tepe is 40 meters, and its height is 10 meters. The passage opened to access the interior extends from near the top of the Tepe directly toward its center. After removing the soil, we first reached a one-meter-thick layer of mudbrick bonded with a weak mortar.

Beneath this layer, we encountered a firm roof, and after breaking through it, we entered a tomb structure containing a sarcophagus. On the western side of this chamber, a corridor appeared, leading to the main passageway of the structure. After clearing the obstructions and opening the way, a hole was made in the ceiling for light to enter, allowing everyone to step inside and view the tomb.

Entering from the natural western entrance of the burial place, we first observed a trench 12 meters long. Then we reached the end of a corridor two and a half meters long, built of river stones and baked brick. A door of a single stone slab, 90 centimeters high and 60 centimeters wide, set within four stone blocks serving as its frame, opened and closed the way. The corridor connected to a long passageway five meters in length, 80 centimeters in width, and one meter and fifteen centimeters in height, ending at the tomb.

The tomb structure lies about one meter below the passageway floor. It is circular, with walls and ceiling built of river stone (rough stone), while its roof is made of red brick, measuring 2.5 meters in diameter and 2.2 meters in height. The sarcophagus placed at the center is aligned east–west and made of white marble, roughly polished inside and out. Its lid, shaped like a fish’s back, had been previously removed and later placed askew, thus not properly closed. The sarcophagus is two meters long, 66 centimeters wide at the upper end, 55 centimeters wide at the lower end, and 50 centimeters high, with walls 15 centimeters thick. The lid measures two meters in length and 67 centimeters in width.

We were told that during the first excavation, some unusable weapons had been found, but since they were of no use, they were discarded. After placing the lid upright so that the interior could be seen, we observed nothing inside except soil mixed with a few bone fragments” (see: [Feuvrier, 1989: 379–382](#)).

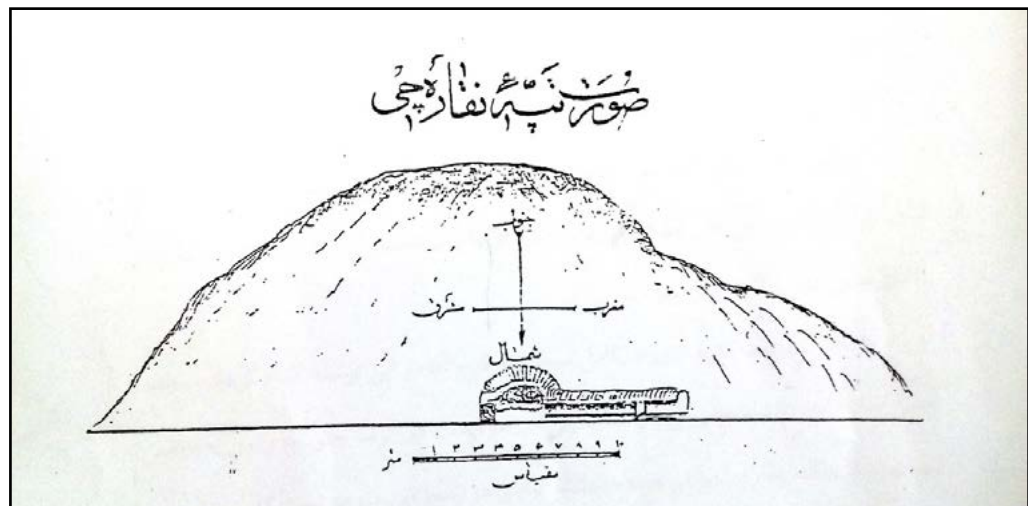


Fig. 1: A schematic plan of the cross-section of Naqqārechi Tepe that was excavated by order of Naser al-Din Shah ([Azarfarshi, 2002: 51](#)).

Geographical Location of Naqqārechi Tepe

Today, the Naqqārechi Tepe, located in Nahavand County, Central District, Shaban Rural District, lies about 700 meters northeast of the village of Dehnow-ye Sofla. It is

a small, rounded Tepe with a diameter of approximately 30–40 meters and a height of about 7–8 meters. The Tepe is situated among orchards on the southwestern edge of the area, approximately 2 kilometers southeast of the city of Nahavand, surrounded by fruit gardens. At present, the distance from the site to the Gol-e-Zard neighborhood on the eastern side (in a straight line) is about 1,167 meters, and to the Javadiyeh neighborhood to the north, as part of the urban fabric, is roughly one kilometer (Fig. 2).

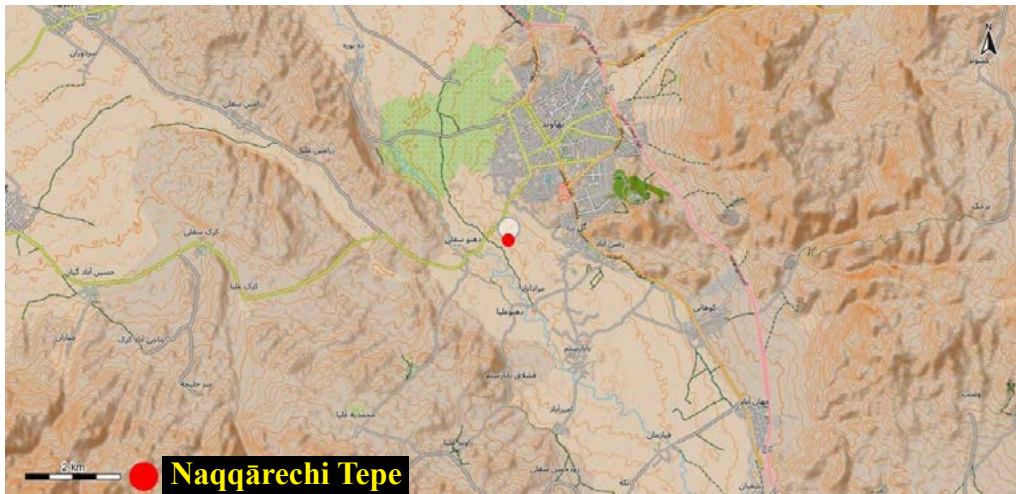


Fig. 2: Location of Naqqārechi Tepe on the topographic map and the geographical features of the Nahavand Valley (Google Earth, 2023).

A dirt road running between farmland, branching off from the asphalt road from Nahavand to Dehnow-ye Sofla and Sarab Giyan on the northern side, provides access to the site. The Gamasiab River, a permanent river that drains the entire Nahavand valley, flows 124 meters west of the Naqqārechi Tepe.

It should be noted that the lands surrounding the Tepe are owned by the Nahavand Office of Endowments (Awqaf) and leased to private individuals. For this reason, the surrounding lands and orchards have no fixed private owner whose name might be used for geographical designation (Figs. 3 to 6).



Fig. 3: Satellite image of Naqqārechi (Google Earth, 2023).

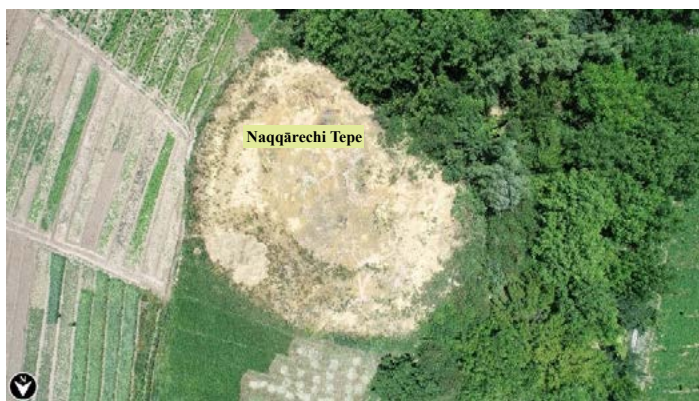


Fig. 4: Aerial close-up view of Naqqārechi before the first and second excavation seasons (Rahbar, 2019).



Fig. 5: The latest condition of Naqqārechi; top: view from the south, middle: view from the east, bottom: view from the northeast (Janjan, 2022).

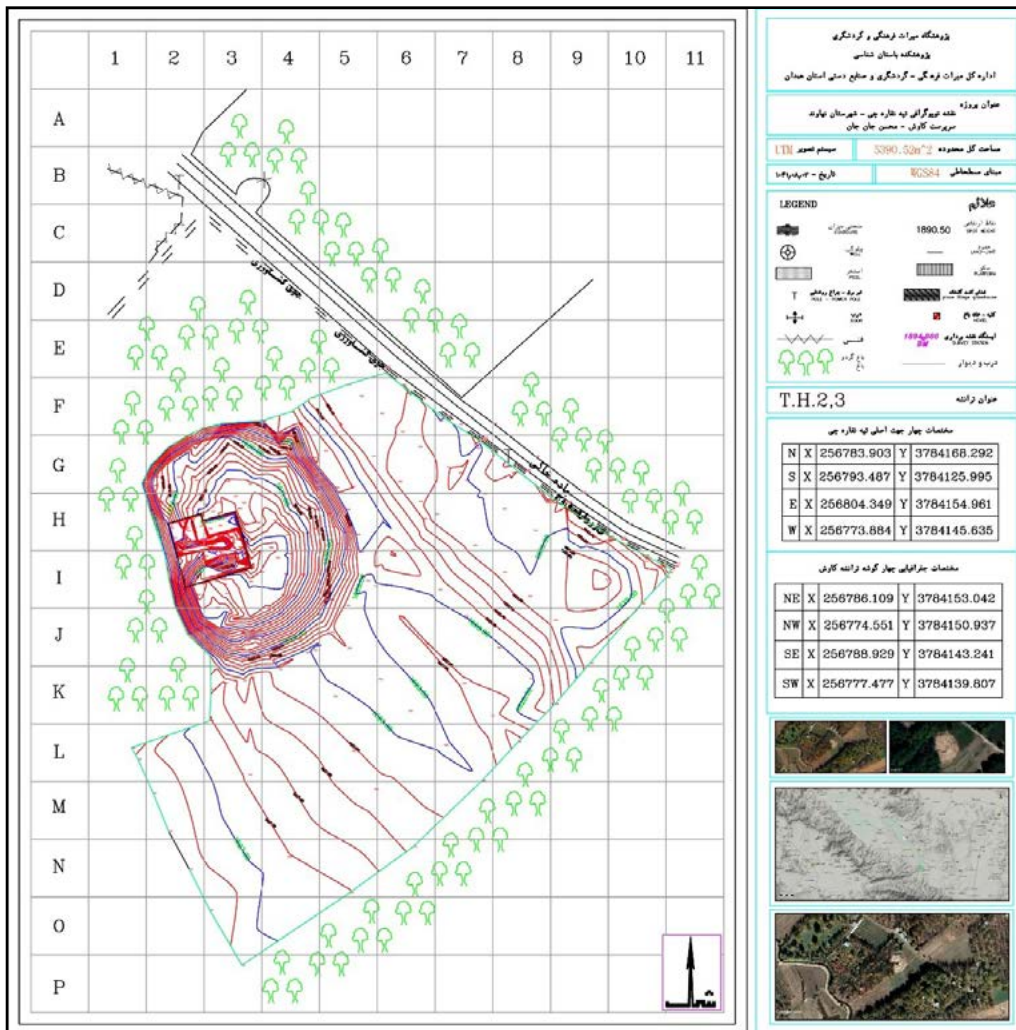


Fig. 6. Topographic map and surrounding features of Naqqārechi, along with geographical coordinates and the excavation trenches of the first and second seasons (Janjan, 2022).

Overall, the slopes of the Tepe descend steeply into the surrounding terrain. Numerous unauthorized excavation pits and areas of disturbance are clearly visible today. Over many years, large portions of the eastern slope, sides, and surface of the Tepe have been subject to soil removal.

Archaeological Findings of the Naqqārechi Tepe (Results of the First and Second Excavation Seasons)

As a result of the first (Rahbar, 2019) and second (Janjan, 2022) excavation seasons at the Naqqārechi Tepe, an orderly architectural structure was uncovered, representing a single, elongated building-oriented west–east, with a slight rotation toward the northeast–southwest axis (Fig. 6). Overall, the structure consists of three spaces or components, which are described in detail below. The first is a longitudinal corridor whose entrance lies on the western slope of the Tepe, at the same level as the surrounding agricultural land, and extends eastward. The corridor connects on its eastern end to a circular chamber identified as the tomb structure or domed sanctuary. The third component is a

continuous, circular mudbrick wall that most likely encircled both the corridor and the tomb structure/domical structure. Within this architectural complex, a stone lid and a stone coffin were identified.



Fig. 7: Location of trench T.H.2,3, excavated sections at the end of the second season of the excavation of Tepe Negarchy (Janjan, 2022).

The Corridor (Space No. 1)

The corridor, measuring approximately 7–8 meters in length and 90 centimeters in width, extends along a west–east axis. According to [Fourrier’s report \(1989: 380\)](#), the dimensions of the corridor were recorded as 5 meters long and 80 centimeters wide. The entrance, located on the western side and emerging from the western slope of the Tepe at the level of adjacent farmland, had been largely damaged and disturbed due to illicit excavations, resulting in the destruction of much of its western half.

At the midpoint of the corridor, an entranceway existed, constructed with a regular stone frame, whose stones—except for the threshold or pivot stone—had been displaced from their original position and moved to the western edge (Figs. 8 and 9). The entrance frame consists of monolithic limestone blocks with a light cream or off-white color and rectangular cross-sections (Fig. 9). The upright stones forming the northern and southern jambs measure 93 centimeters in height and 30 centimeters in width. Based on the dimensions of the jamb stones and the thickness of the lintel or upper stone, it appears that the corridor originally had a height of approximately 100–113 centimeters.

The jamb stones were set into the corridor walls and secured with mortar. The threshold consists of a carefully carved stone with an L-shaped cross-section, still preserved in situ. A matching stone likely served as the lintel, positioned above the standing jamb

stones. A circular socket is visible on the step of both the threshold and lintel stones, particularly on their northern sides, which served as the pivot for a monolithic stone door—a feature also mentioned in Qajar-period excavation reports. Thus, the entrance to the corridor originally formed a well-constructed rectangular doorway consisting of four carved stones and a single stone door fitting precisely together.

In the eastern half of the corridor, no change in width is observed; only past disturbances and illegal excavations have caused disorder in this section. The corridor walls on the north and south sides were constructed with unshaped natural river stones bonded with clay mortar, without any surface coating. The arrangement of the stones appears irregular, influenced by the pressure of accumulated soil behind the walls, natural erosion over time, and minor displacements. In the better-preserved sections, the height of the corridor walls from the floor to the base of the vaulted roof ranges from 75 to 113 centimeters (Fig. 13), a measurement consistent with the height of the entrance jamb stones.

Based on the surviving evidence, the covering and ceiling of the corridor space were vaulted and constructed using brick and sarooj mortar (a mixture of lime and ash), built in what is architecturally referred to as the Roman technique. The ceiling of the corridor and its upper covering were completely destroyed during excavations carried out in the Qajar period as well as by illicit excavations, and at present only very limited remains of broken bricks embedded in the walls have survived.

The bricks of the vault/ceiling were laid vertically with an inclined arrangement alongside one another. To construct the corridor vault, two courses of bricks were first placed horizontally as the springing or base of the vault on top of the stone walls, after

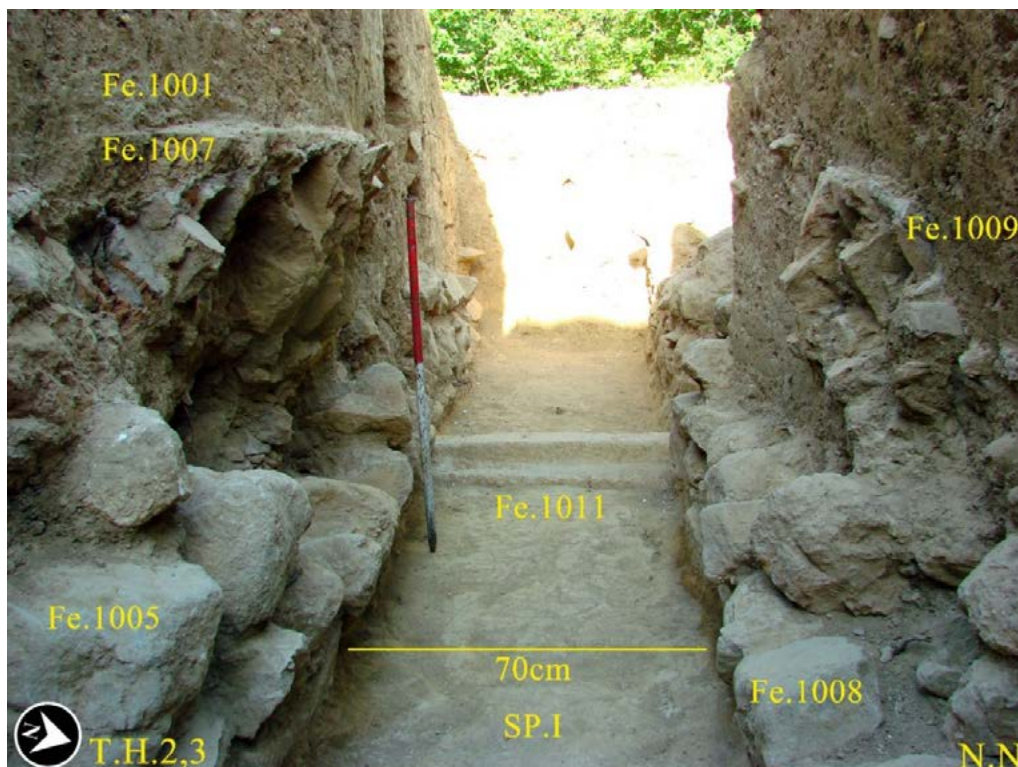


Fig. 8: The condition of the corridor space at Naqqārechi after the excavation; view from the east (Janjan, 2022).

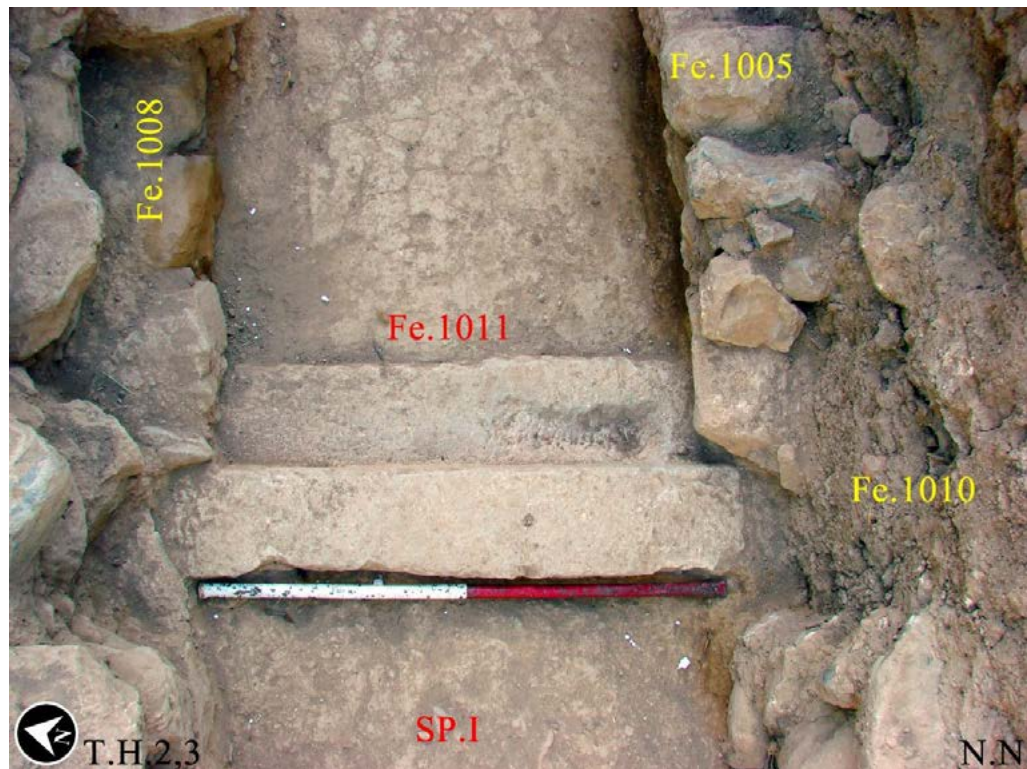


Fig. 9: The lower stone of the stone-framed entrance to the corridor at Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022).

which the Roman vault was built upon this base. Given the narrow width and limited space of the corridor, the rise of the vault was very low, and it appears that the height of the corridor from floor level to the apex of the vault did not exceed 150 cm.

Based on the remaining architectural evidence, the upper or exterior surface of the vault was covered with mud bricks, and this mud-brick covering was itself coated with a thick layer of compacted clay; in other words, the upper surface of the corridor vault was finished with a mud-brick layer, while the exterior surface of this mud-brick covering was coated with clay. At its terminal section, or eastern side, the corridor leads directly into Space No. 2, namely the burial chamber or domed hall (Figs. 10, 11 & 12).

2. Tomb or cupola (Space No. 2)

At the eastern end of the corridor lies the tomb structure or domed sanctuary, which has a circular plan. This space has an internal diameter of 280 centimeters and a height of approximately 2 meters from the floor to the apex of the dome (for reference, Feuvrier (1989: 379–380) reports the dome with a diameter of 2.5 meters and a height of 2.20 meters). The walls of the tomb structure are constructed from natural river stones bonded with clay mortar, similar to the corridor walls. The height of the circular stone walls from the floor to the base of the vault ranges between 150 and 165 centimeters.

This structure is a continuation of the north and south corridor walls, which converge into the circular plan of the eastern tomb structure. The domed roof of the chamber was built directly on top of the stone walls, using bricks and mortar (a mixture of lime and ash) in a Roman-style technique, identical to the corridor roof. After constructing

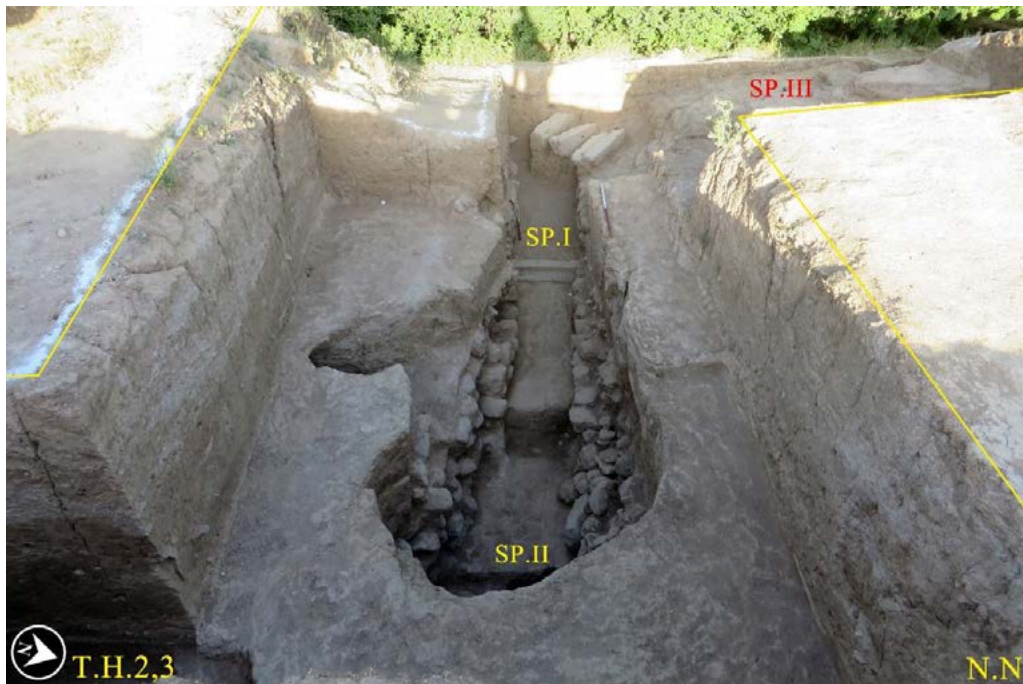


Fig. 10: The condition of the corridor and the tomb chamber (in trenches T.H.2 and T.H.3) at the end of the second excavation season at Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022).

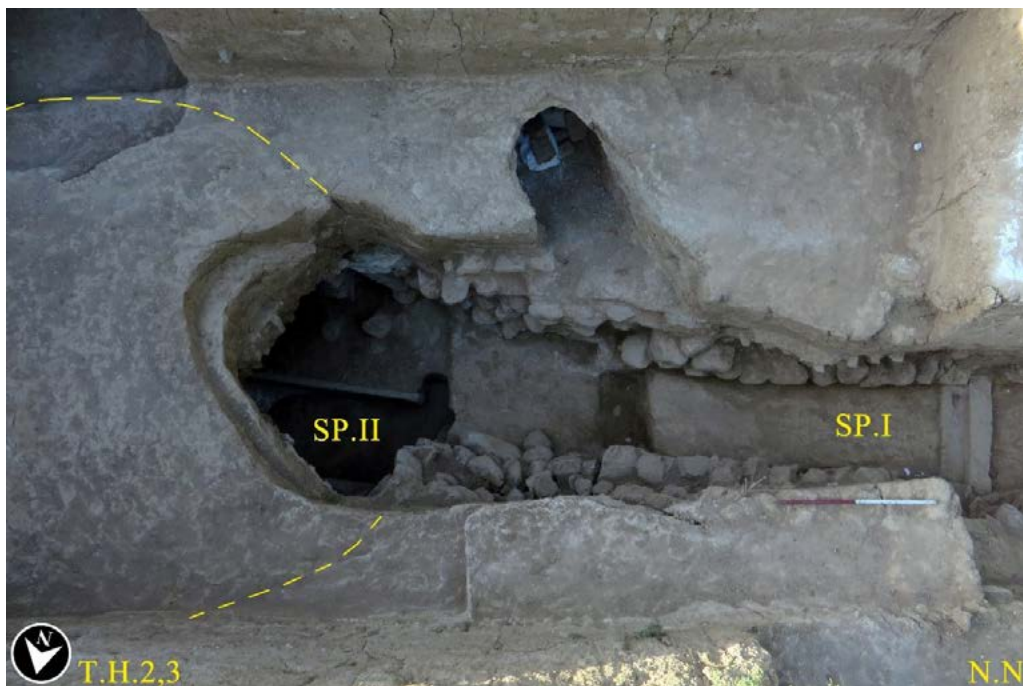


Fig. 11: Orthographic (top) view of the corridor and tomb chamber in trenches T.H.2 and T.H.3 at the end of the second excavation season at Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022).

the brick dome, its exterior surface was covered with mudbricks arranged in the same Roman-style pattern, and a thick layer of clay was added over the dome.

The western half of the tomb structure has been completely destroyed in previous excavations. Based on the corridor walls connecting to the chamber, it appears that the entrance measured approximately 90 centimeters in width and 150 centimeters in height

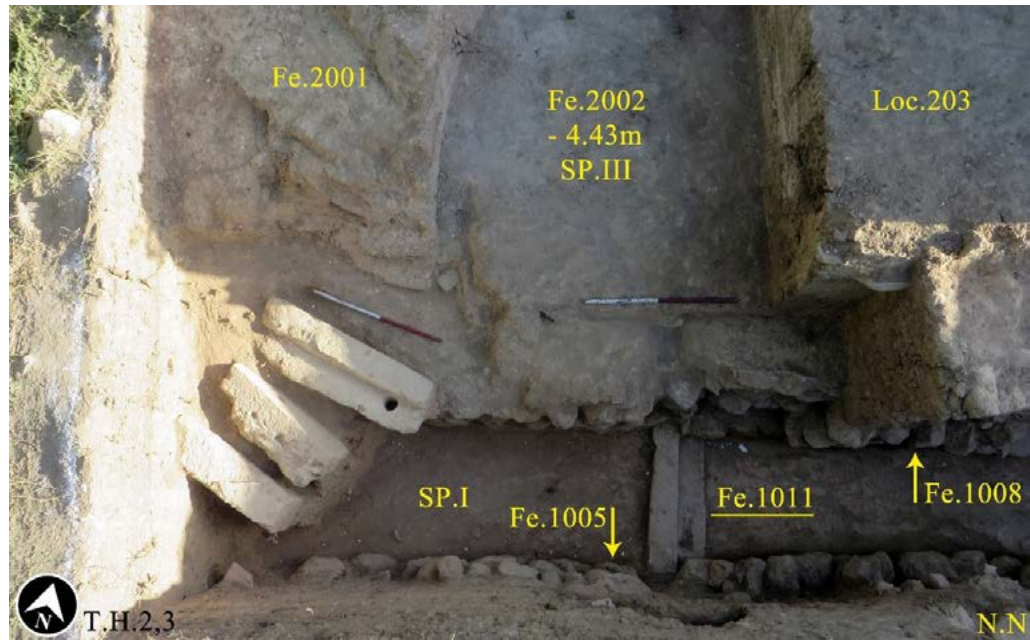


Fig. 12: Spatial relationship of the architectural elements in the western half of the excavation area at the end of the second excavation season at Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022).

(Figs. 13 & 14). The vaulted roof of the chamber collapsed due to structural pressure; therefore, during the second excavation season (2022), the interior was not entirely cleared of debris.

On the northern side of the tomb structure, a small window or secondary entrance was created within the stone wall. This structure, with a horseshoe-shaped lintel, was built using large river stones and mortar. The upper surface of the opening is curved, and the floor is flat. The walls leading up to the arch were constructed with river stones, and the ceiling of the opening is connected to the vault, built with bricks (Fig. 15). The width of the opening is 33 centimeters, with a height of 58 centimeters from the floor to the base of the brick arch. Damage to the vault and walls prevented excavation and exploration of this opening. This structure is bounded by stone walls on the east and west and by the brick vault above.

Inside the tomb structure, a stone coffin is placed along a west–east axis. Due to the limited of excavation and for conservation purposes, the surrounding area was not explored, but the exterior of the structure appears filled with clay deposits and lime remnants. As previously mentioned, the stone coffin, located along the southern edge of the chamber, was heavily damaged in previous excavations, leaving only part of its half intact. The coffin door lies along the northern wall, separate from the southern-positioned coffin.

3. Large Mudbrick Wall

In the northwest section of the excavation trench in the second season (2022), the excavation area was extended to identify potential peripheral structures of the tomb structure. Consequently, part of a large circular mudbrick wall was revealed. Feuvrier's

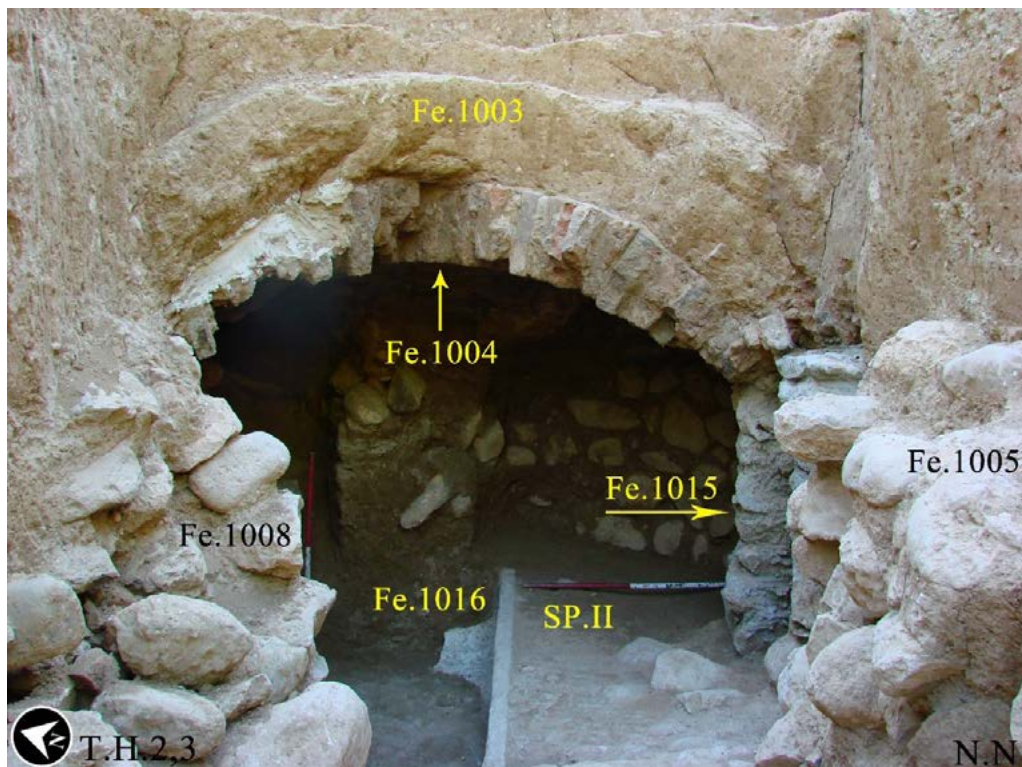
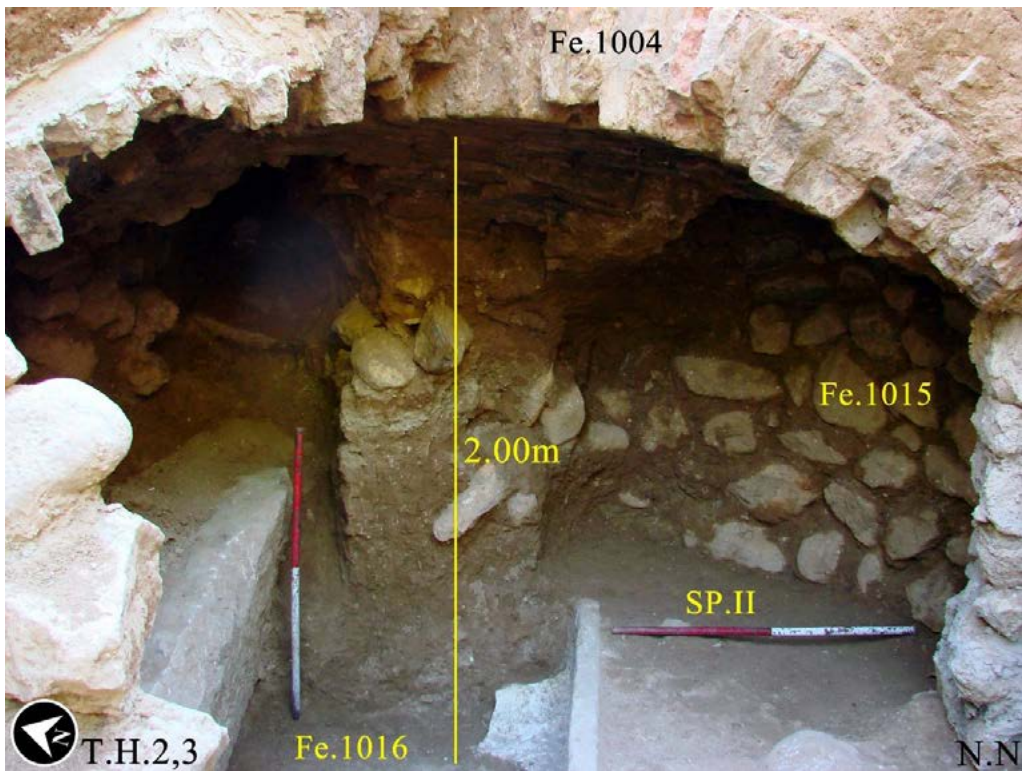


Fig. 13: Proportions of architectural elements in the tomb chamber of Naqqārechi ([Janjan, 2022](#)).

report also mentions a mudbrick structure and trench: “...we first encountered a thick one-meter layer of mudbricks, connected with weak mortar...” ([Feuvrier, 1989: 379](#)).

The exposed mudbrick wall extends roughly 4 meters in length and 270 centimeters in width along a north–south axis. The surviving section consists of five rows and six

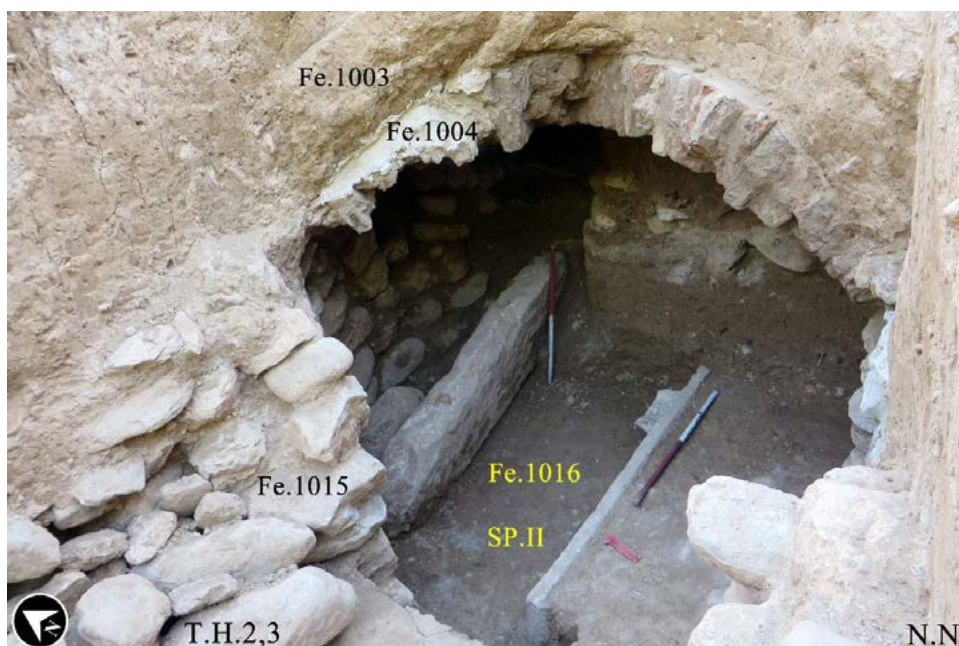


Fig. 14: Placement of the sarcophagus in the tomb chamber of Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022).



Fig. 15: Part of the brick dome or vault of the tomb and the vaulting technique in the Naqqārechi tomb (Janjan, 2022).



Fig. 16: North wall of the tomb chamber, circular plan, and the presence of a small doorway or window on the northern side of Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022).

courses of bricks. The mudbricks, measuring 10×50×51 centimeters, were made from a clay and sand mixture, sun-dried, and incorporated into the wall. The bricks appear in two color ranges: light brown and white-cream, with each course primarily using a single color. The mortar between courses is light lime mixed with sand, approximately 3 centimeters thick.

The wall has a gently curved, circular longitudinal section, seemingly surrounding both the corridor and the tomb structure, enclosing the complex. Its surface and edges were coated with a lime deposit. Based on the Tepe's size and the structure's layout, the corridor and tomb structure appear centrally located, encircled by this large mudbrick wall. After constructing the tomb structure, the structure was covered layer by layer with silt and lime deposits to form a circular Tepe with an approximate diameter of 50 meters (Fig. 19). The current height of the Naqqārechi Tepe is about 5 meters, though historical reports indicate that it was originally taller and wider (Feuvrier, 1989: 379). Expansion of surrounding agricultural land has been a significant factor in the Tepe's damage.

4. Stone Coffin and Lid

As previously mentioned, the stone coffin is aligned along a west–east axis near the southern wall of the tomb structure. It was heavily damaged in prior excavations, with only part of its half remaining. The coffin is carved from a single piece of light-colored limestone with rough, uneven surfaces. Its longitudinal and transverse sections are rectangular. Dimensions: Length along west–east: 2 meters; width: uncertain due to breakage; height: 39 cm to the interior floor, 45 cm to the base beneath the floor.



Fig. 17: Vertical view of the stone sarcophagus of Naqqārechi and damage incurred during past periods (Janjan, 2022).

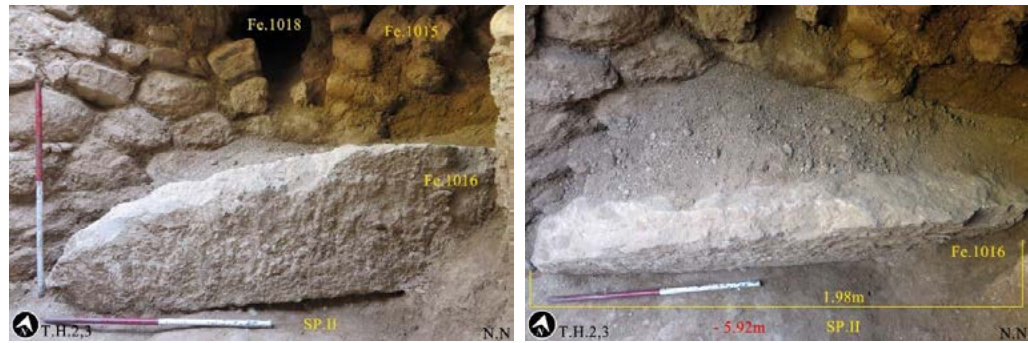


Fig. 18: Upper surface and cross-section of the stone lid of the Naqqārechi sarcophagus (Janjan, 2022).

Wall thickness: 7 cm in all directions. Coffin floor thickness: maximum 5 cm. Feuvrier (1989: 380) reported slightly larger dimensions (length: 2.15 m; upper height: 66 cm; lower height: 55 cm; wall thickness: 15 cm), reflecting a better-preserved state at that time.

The coffin has a stone lid with an irregular oval longitudinal cross-section, carved from a single block. One surface (likely the underside) was finished, while the upper side shows no signs of finishing (Fig. 18). The upper section of the lid is approximately 40 cm wide, expanding to 65 cm at the shoulder and tapering to 25 cm at the end. The lid length is 198 cm, with a thickness of about 25 cm. The lid is placed along the northern wall of the tomb structure, separate from the coffin at the southern edge.

Structure of the Naqqārechi Tomb Complex

In the first excavation season (Rahbar, 2019), due to financial and temporal constraints, only a limited portion of the corridor space was re-examined. Therefore, in the second excavation season (Janjan, 2022), in addition to the first season's trench, the trench area was expanded toward the eastern, western, and northwestern sections, allowing a substantial part of the burial structure to be studied. As a result of the second excavation, the Naqqārechi Tepe revealed an orderly architectural structure representing a single building oriented along a west-east axis, with a slight rotation toward the northeast-southwest. As previously described, this building generally comprises three distinct spaces or components.

Based on the study and analysis of the surviving architectural remains and considering the dimensions of the stone coffin within the tomb structure, it appears that the construction sequence of the tomb structure and the Tepe above it followed a specific order. Initially, the stone coffin was placed at the center of the building. Subsequently, the tomb structure was constructed around the coffin, followed by the formation of the corridor. After completing the tomb structure, a circular mudbrick walls enclosed both the tomb structure and the corridor. Finally, the surface of the tomb structure and the circular mudbrick wall was covered with a substantial volume of silty-limestone deposits, forming a large, Tepe-like structure. Consequently, the Naqqārechi Tepe appears as a relatively elevated Tepe, approximately 50 meters in diameter, visible across the flat southern plains of Nahavand (Figs. 19–23).

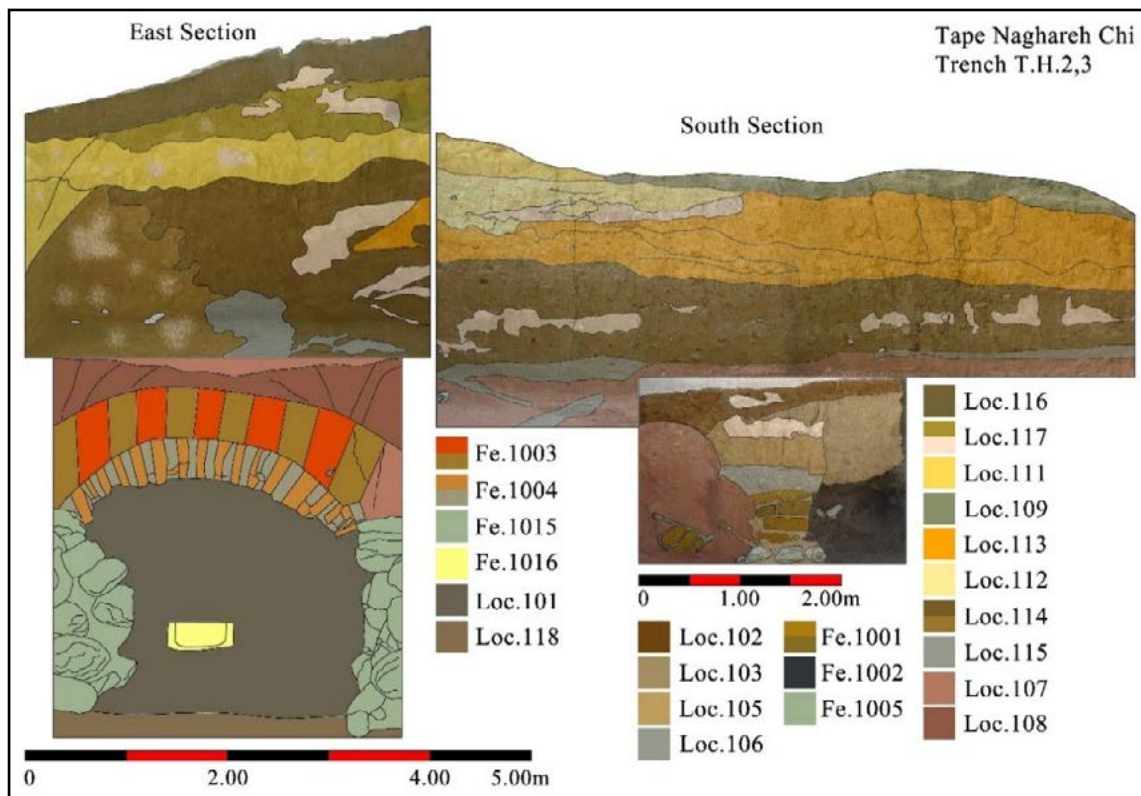


Fig. 19: Sequence of cultural and architectural layers of the tomb structure in the eastern and southern walls of trench T.H. 2, 3, Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022; drawing: Zabihollah Bakhtiari).

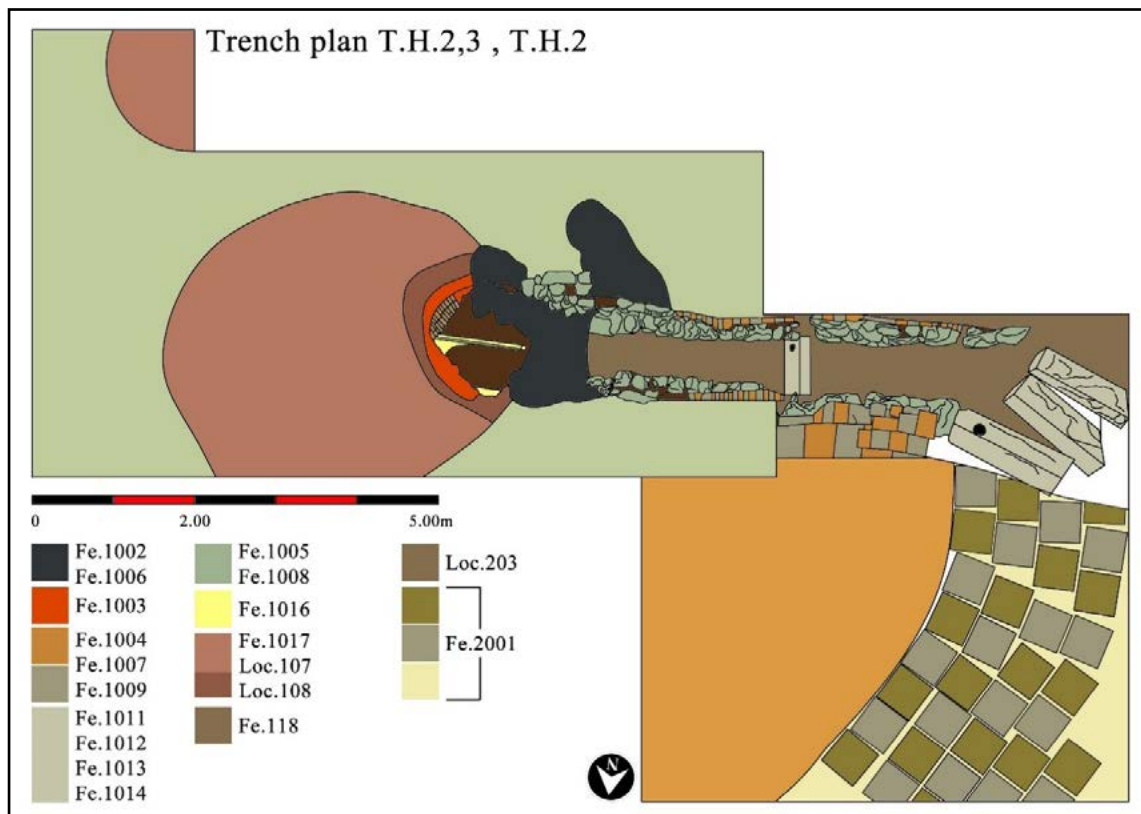


Fig. 20: Plan of the tomb's architectural structure and circular mudbrick structure at the northwest side of trench T.H.2, 3, Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022; drawing: Zabihollah Bakhtiari).

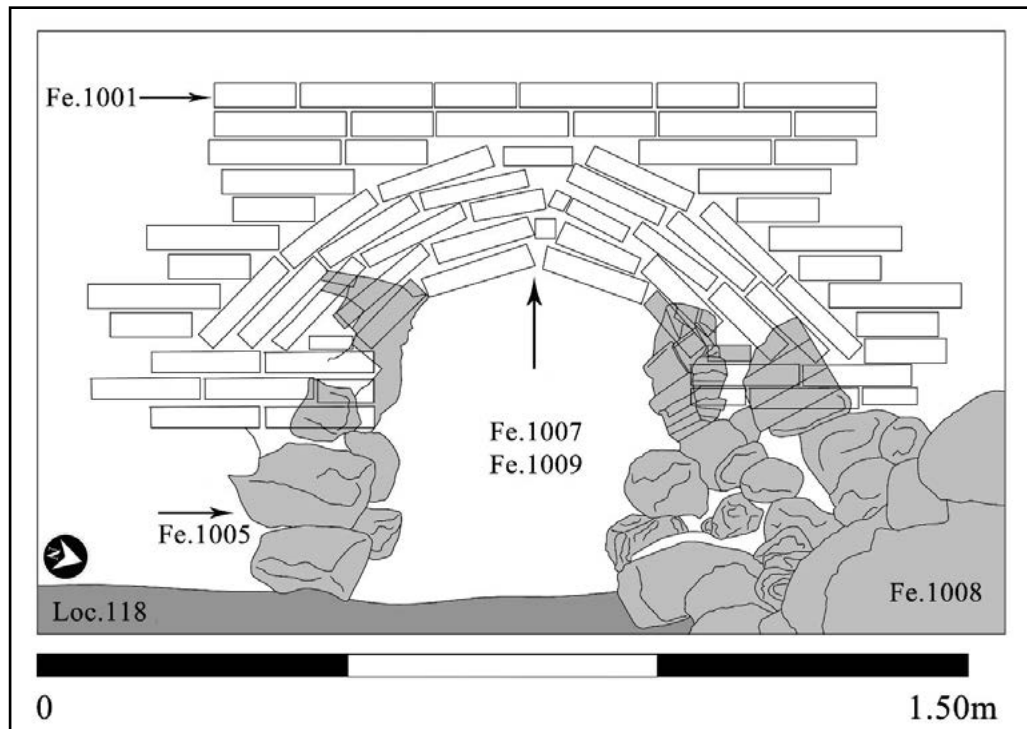


Fig. 21: Reconstruction of the mudbrick and brick roofing of the corridor leading to the tomb, Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2022; drawing: Zabihollah Bakhtiari).

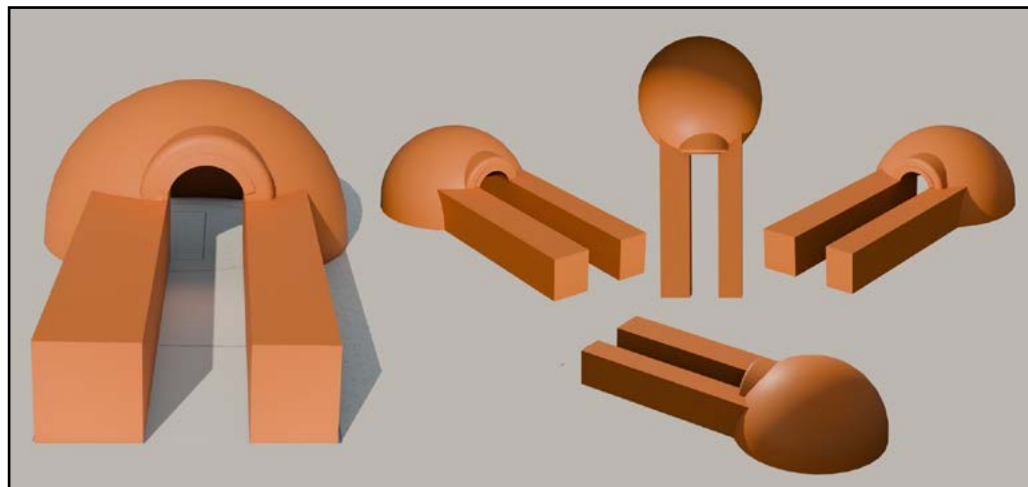


Fig. 22: Three-dimensional reconstruction of the tomb space (dome chamber and corridor) from various angles, Naqqārechi (Janjan, 2025; drawing: Hamed Hajilouei).

It is noteworthy that, as observed on the floor of the corridor (Space No. 1), the substructure beneath the tomb structure appears to have been prepared with a layer of lime deposits before the construction of the chamber itself.

Regarding the chronological determination of the tomb structure and Naqqārechi Tepe, no direct evidence exists for establishing a relative or absolute dating framework. Due to extensive disturbances caused by both past excavations and non-scientific interventions, no significant cultural materials were recovered for precise dating, nor are there any surviving historical written records. Therefore, any attempt to determine



Fig. 23: Reconstruction of the tomb after the deposition of soil over the structure, Naqharehchi (Janjan, 2025; drawing: Hamed Hajilouei).

the Tepe's period must rely on the burial practices and architectural features, with comparative analysis against similar structures.

Based on historical sources and archaeological findings, the closest comparable traditions are burial practices from the Hellenistic and Seleucid periods in western regions, namely Anatolia, Syria, and Greece. However, such structures have not yet been documented within the current geographical and political boundaries of Iran. For comparative purposes, eastern Anatolia is currently the nearest region where Tepe-like structures similar to Naqqārechi have been identified and excavated. Consequently, the following section briefly examines and compares tumulus structures in Greece and Anatolia.

Discussion and Analysis

A tumulus or tumuli is a term in archaeological literature referring to artificially constructed burial Tepes; that is, Tepes made of soil, stone, or a combination of both, erected over the tomb of an individual or a group of individuals. These structures typically enclose the graves of important Figs, royal or aristocratic elites, or prominent members of society, either individually or collectively. In another definition, a tumulus is an artificial Tepe generally built over a significant tomb and used in many ancient cultures as an aristocratic funerary structure—essentially, an alternative form of royal or elite burial. The tumulus tradition was practiced from around 2000 BCE until the 3rd–4th centuries CE in regions including Bulgaria, Greece, Central Asia, southern Russia, Anatolia, and Syria. With the spread of monotheistic religions such as Christianity, the use of this tradition gradually declined (Mesfroush *et al.*, 2022: 106). The diameters of tumuli range from approximately 25 to 65 meters, although most are between 30 and 40 meters. In many cases, particularly in Troy and Lydia, tumuli were organized in family groups, with each Tepe visible from the others (Rose & Körpe, 2017: 168–177). By the late sixth century BCE, burial in tumuli had become the primary option for elites (Mesfroush *et al.*, 2021: 110).

Other notable Greek tumuli Tepes include the Midas Tumulus (Firoozmandi-Shirejini & Rezaei, 2008) and the Tatarli Tumulus (Hajizadeh-Shirmard *et al.*, 2021). Perhaps the most well-known tumulus across Anatolia is Tumulus MM (commonly known as “Midas Tepe”) in the Phrygia capital, Gordion (Fig. 24). Around 100 tumuli have been identified in the Gordion region; of these, approximately 35 have been excavated, dating roughly between 850–825 BCE and 550–525 BCE (Rice, 2016: 98–99). Stone tumuli are also dispersed in the ancient peninsula of Halicarnassus in central Caria (Üzel, 2007: 42). Troy is famous for its tumuli because many of them are identified as the graves of Homeric heroes, spanning nearly three millennia across Greek and Roman periods. Two of the most notable examples are the Sivrit Tepe, located 4 km from Troy, and Karağaç Tepe, often recognized as the tomb of Protesilaus at the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. Other examples include Hanay Tepe and Pasha Tepe. The Iliad and Odyssey texts reference the construction of large-scale tumuli for Greek and Troja heroes near Troy, supporting the identification of the Ilium Tepes as Homeric burial sites. Ancient sources attest to ten such tumuli near Ilium, evenly divided between Greeks and Trojans. The most prominent include Achilles (Fig. 25), Patroclus, Ajax, and Protesilaus, as well as Hector, Hecuba, Aisyyetes, Baticia (wife of Dardanus), Myrina (queen of the Amazons), Iilus, and Antilochus (Rose & Körpe, 2017: 168–177).

Various plans, materials, and different techniques were used in tumulus construction. Hellenic tumuli with circular or rectangular plans primarily employed stone, though some incorporated brick and wood. Tomb structures generally had a forecourt and were accessed via a corridor and entrance hall (Dromos). Tumulus roofs were constructed in various forms: flat, triangular, circular, or conical. Large tumuli sometimes contained multiple burials, occasionally familial, accessible multiple times via the dromos. Wooden tomb structures were typically small and accommodated only a single burial, with no

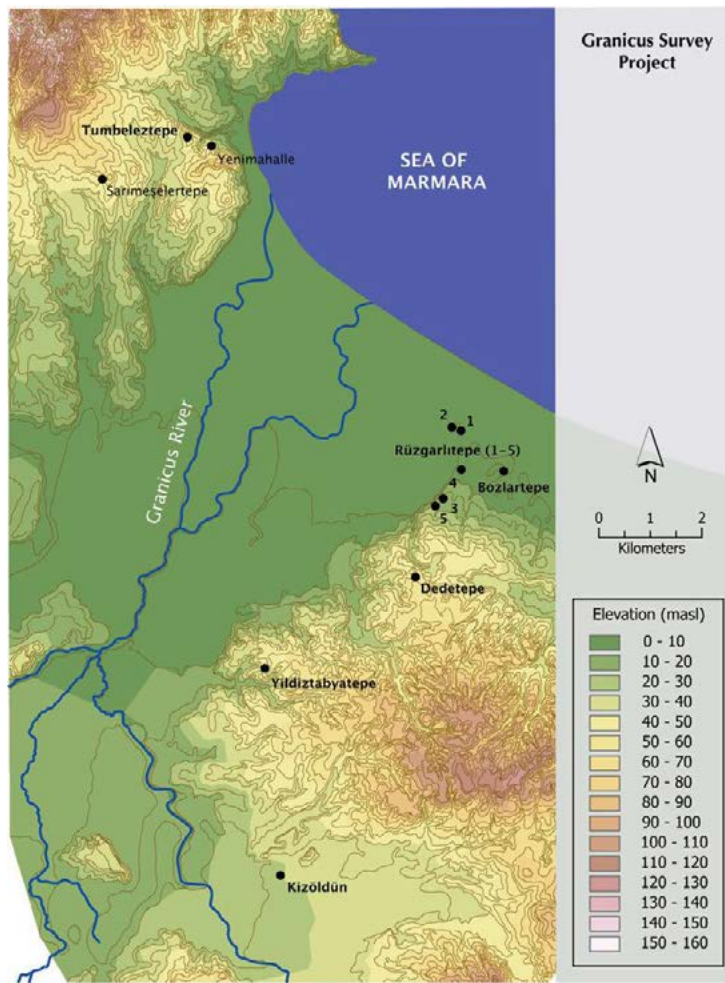


Fig. 24: Distribution of tumuli along the Granicus River (Rose & Körpe, 2017: 395, Fig. 11, Pl. 174).



Fig. 25: View of the Sivri Tepe / Tomb of Achilles (Rose & Körpe, 2017: 389, Fig. 4, Pl. 170).

pathway for future access. Burials were usually situated in the southwestern quadrant of the Tepe, built of wood, then surrounded by clay and rubble, and finally covered with an earthen Tepe. Many tumuli appear to have included a central vertical post for shaping the conical form. Excavated tumuli contained rich burial goods, including textiles, leather belts, fibulae, cauldrons, ceramics, bronze and silver vessels, omphalos bowls, wooden furniture, ivory carvings, and sometimes glass items. Burials before the seventh century BCE were typically inhumations, later including cremation, with both forms sometimes coexisting. Structural differences in Phrygia tumuli contributed to their unique functional development. Lycian tumuli are predominantly stone rather than earthen, often with circular stone architecture and conical roofs. Many excavated examples utilize corbelled vaults and some include krepis built from well-cut large blocks (Rice, 2016: 100–105).

In a study of tumuli near Phellos, Jan Zahle identified two distinct Lycian types (Figs. 26–31):

- which Oliver Hülken argues is the earlier type, situated on a relatively low krepis and utilizing a stone core
- a somewhat later development whose distinctive characteristics include a round structure with high enclosure, usually a conical roof, and one or two tomb structures accessible from the exterior through a 2 long or short dromos.

In most cases, the most precise chronological sequence for these burial Tepes generally relates to the Archaic period, though the tradition likely began in the seventh century BCE. Type A tumulus ceramics near Phellos date to the seventh or sixth century BCE, whereas Type B examples likely date from the sixth century BCE or later. Stone construction, multiple tomb structures, and accessibility from the exterior link Lycian tumuli more closely with Lydian tumuli than with central Phrygian Gordion examples. Gordion tumuli are primarily wooden Tepes with earthen covers, feature a single burial, and once sealed, are entirely inaccessible. Phrygian tumuli are also significantly larger than Lycian examples. However, these differences extend beyond architectural techniques, highlighting functional distinctions between Lycian, Lydian, and Phrygian traditions, particularly regarding the number of tomb structures and external access via dromos.

This distinction shows that while a large earthen Tepe served as a shared visual marker across cultures, Lycian, Lydian, and Phrygian builders attributed different functional meanings to their structures. Lycian and Lydian traditions maintained post-mortem interaction between the exterior and tomb structure, whereas the Phrygians conducted elaborate funerary feasts at or near the tomb structure, afterward closing off access. Two tumuli from the late seventh or early sixth century BCE excavated in Bayındır, in the Elmali plain near the Phrygian-Lycian border, offer a unique case study, showing architectural and grave evidence more closely aligned with the Phrygian tumulus tradition than geographically closer Lycian examples. Interpreting these burial Tepes highlights the importance of situating each grave's evidence within the context of ethnic identity and cultural practice (Rice, 2016: 102–110).

Two tumuli from the late seventh or early sixth century BCE excavated in Bayındır, in the Elmalı Plain near the border between Phrygia and Lycia, provide a unique case study. Architectural and grave findings indicate a stronger connection with the Phrygian

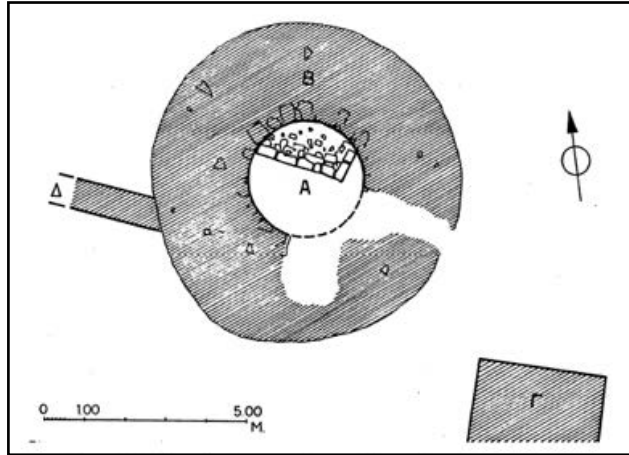


Fig. 26: Thracian tholos in the necropolis of Zone (Rice, 2016: 475: Fig. 36).

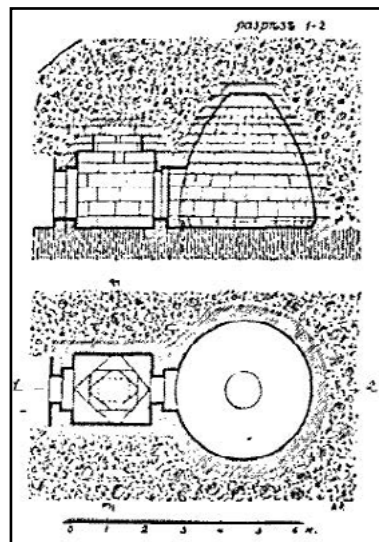


Fig. 27: Plan and cross-section of the lantern-roofed tomb at Kurtkale (Rice, 2016: 475: Fig. 36).



Fig. 28: Büyük Tumulus near Nikomedia (modern İzmit), (Rice, 2016: 476: Fig. 38).

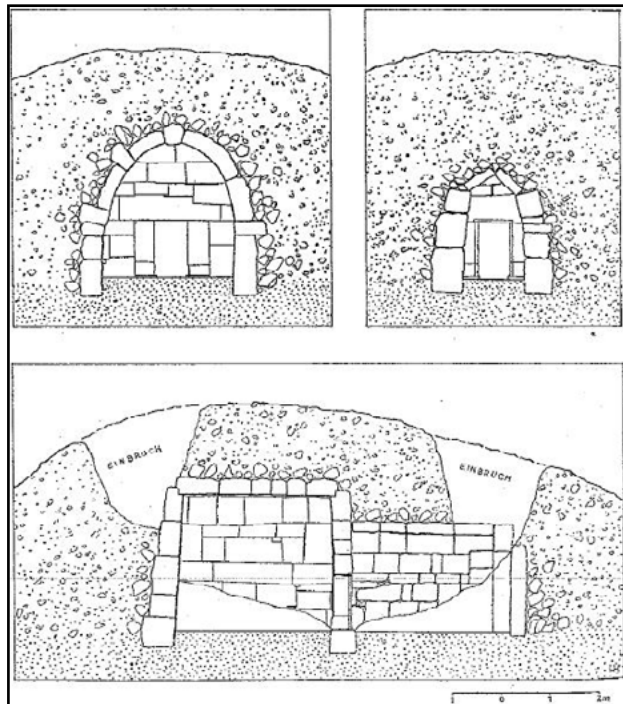


Fig. 29: Cross-sections of the Beşevler tumulus near Eskipazar (Rice, 2016: 488: Fig.60).

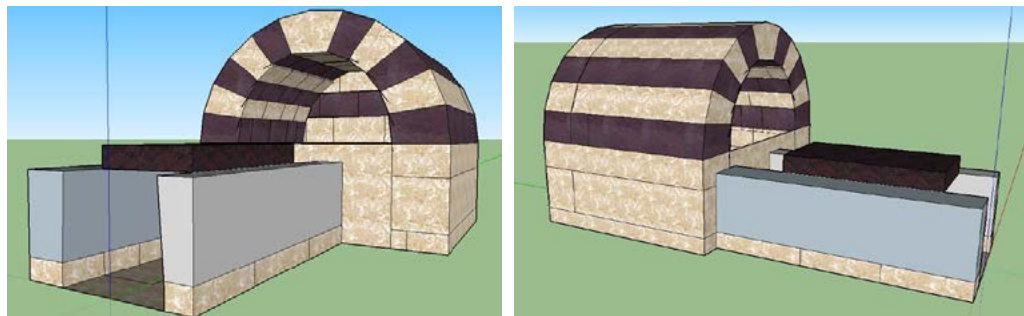


Fig. 30: Reconstruction of the chamber tomb beneath Tumulus A at Karalar (Rice, 2016: 486: Fig. 57).



Fig. 31: Photograph of the appearance of vault of the chamber tomb beneath Tumulus A at Karalar (Rice, 2016: 487. Fig. 58).

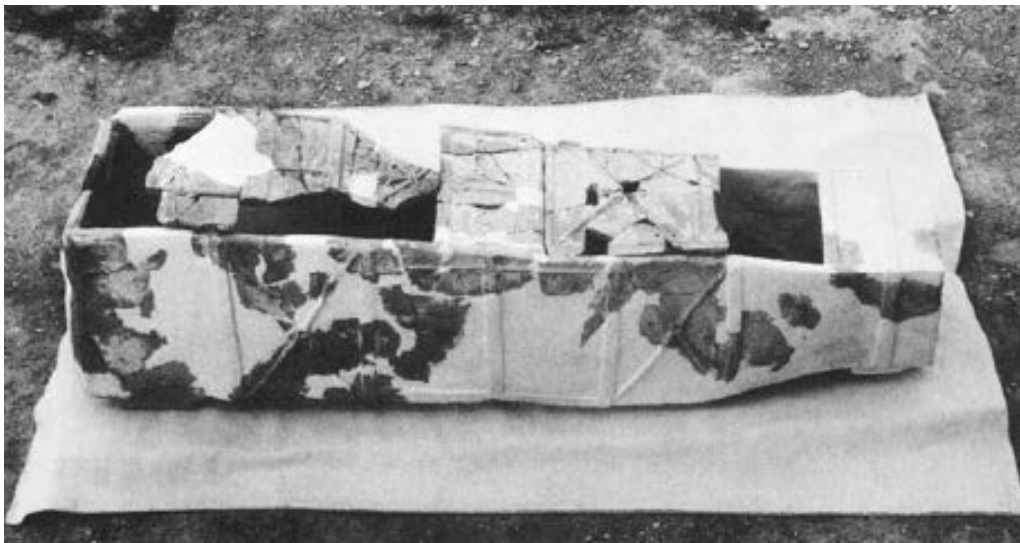


Fig. 32: Terracotta larnax discovered in Tumulus O near Gordion (Rice, 2016: 506. Fig. 88)

tumulus tradition than with geographically closer Lycian examples. Discussions regarding the interpretation of these burial Tepes underscore the importance of situating the evidence of each tomb within the context of ethnic identity and cultural practice (Rice, 2016: 102–110).

Considering the recognized characteristics of Hellenic tumuli, the Tappeh-ye Naqqārechi tumulus in Nahavand holds particular significance compared with Hellenic funerary traditions. This tumulus, with a circular plan and dome-shaped cover, accompanied by a corridor and entrance hall (dromos), is classified as Type B. Only one dromos has been identified at Naqqārechi. Reference to the sole discovered sarcophagus indicates that this tomb was designed for a single burial and intended for one-time use; after the burial ceremony, the entrance was deliberately sealed with no provision for reopening or reuse.

Conclusion

The identification of the Laodicea temple and the Seleucid tomb at Naqqārechi provides a crucial clue for understanding the architecture and funerary practices of the Seleucids in Iran, as well as their potential interaction with Iranian traditions and cultures. Accordingly, systematic archaeological studies have been conducted in Nahavand County. In this research, the nature of the Naqqārechi burial Tepe was investigated based on the findings of the excavations, with the goal of documenting and identifying the buried structure in accordance with the information recorded in Qajar-period reports—one of the main objectives of the archaeological study program at this Tepe. This study addressed two central questions: does the tomb buried within Naqqārechi have roots in Greek culture, and how does the architectural structure of Naqqārechi relate to similar Greek tumuli? The aim was to clarify ambiguities surrounding the Seleucid remains of Nahavand.

As previously noted, earlier information on the Naqqārechi tomb was vague, providing only general descriptions without any visual documentation of the main features and

architectural elements of the structure. By integrating the reports of Mohammad Hassan Khan Etemad al-Saltaneh and Dr. Feuvrier regarding the Naqqārechi excavations with the results of systematic investigations of the Laodicea temple, the study allows for an assessment of the consistency and alignment of the available sources.

In the first excavation season, only a limited portion of the corridor space was revealed. In the second season, a significant part of the funerary structure was studied. As a result, the second-season excavations at Naqqārechi revealed a regular architectural structure representing a single building oriented along a west-east axis, with a slight rotation toward the northeast-southwest. As discussed, the building generally comprises three elements: the corridor, the tomb structure or domed space, and a continuous mudbrick circular wall surrounding the corridor and the tomb. The tomb contains a single stone sarcophagus.

A major challenge in studying the Naqqārechi Tepe is the looting that occurred in earlier periods, which removed and destroyed many potential artifacts along with the burial contents. Consequently, no cultural objects or remains suitable for dating were recovered during the two excavation seasons. Based on the architectural features and archaeological findings, the Naqqārechi tumulus represents a simple yet Hellenic-style tumulus. Compared to similar tumuli in western Hellenic territories (from Anatolia to Greece), it indicates a funerary tradition or ritual of the Hellenistic and Seleucid period.

Archaeological and historical studies in eastern Hellenic regions reveal numerous burial Tepes referred to as tumuli in reports and documents. Evidence suggests that the practice of constructing burial Tepes (tumuli) dates back to the third millennium BCE and persisted in more elaborate forms during the post-Achaemenid and Hellenistic (Seleucid) periods in areas influenced by Hellenic culture. Notably, in Hellenic culture, tumuli were often attributed to mythological and heroic figures, highlighting the significance of such monuments, especially the Naqqārechi tumulus. Although the prominence of these monuments diminished somewhat during the era of Alexander the Great compared to earlier periods, the practice continued as an important tradition. The significance of Greek tumuli was such that local inhabitants considered them gifts from Homer.

Moreover, in Hellenic culture, tombs were part of a system of aristocratic competition among Anatolian elites; the more numerous and larger the tumuli in a territory, the higher the associated social status. Consequently, tumuli, particularly the largest ones, were designed to be prominently visible, often constructed on elevated Tepes or near major waterways. This emphasis on height, scale, and proximity to watercourses is clearly reflected in the construction of the Naqqārechi Tepe.

The creation of a tall Tepe (probably over 10 meters in height) near the permanent Gamasiab River in the expansive plain at the edge of Nahavand city exemplifies this careful spatial planning.

It should be noted that the Naqqārechi burial Tepe stands alone in a flat plain and is visible from a distance. Viewed in its historical and natural landscape, the monument possesses all the structural characteristics of Greek (Hellenic) tumuli. Another important

consideration in studying tumuli is the wealth contained within them, including the tomb structures and associated grave goods. Constructing a dedicated tomb for a single individual, along with a carefully carved stone sarcophagus, indicates the high social and political status of the deceased, who, according to Qajar-period excavation reports, was equipped with weapons and a sword, placing him among commanders, warriors, or even local rulers.

The Naqqārechi tumulus was constructed using local materials (stone, brick, and mudbrick). The use of these specific materials, the creation of a structure resembling Hellenic and Greco-Roman funerary buildings, its location in the center of the plain near a large, permanent river, all contribute to its classification as a Hellenic and Greek-style monument with Iranian-localized characteristics. Additionally, the relationship between this tomb and the Laodicea temple remains an important topic for future research. In conclusion, continued excavation and reconstruction of the Naqqārechi burial Tepe can provide further evidence and insights into the cultural and political mindset of its creators.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks are due to Professor Mehdi Rahbar, the founder of Seleucid-period studies in Nahavand County. We have long been indebted to his efforts in this field. He has also generously shared his valuable information with the team conducting the second season of excavations. The authors wish to express their sincere gratitude to Mr. Zabihollah Bakhtiari, Mr. Abbas Saremi, and Mr. Aref Biglari as members of the second-season excavation team, as well as to Mr. Khalilollah Beyk Mohammadi, Mr. Hamed Hajilouei, and Ms. Azar Sarmadi for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

Author Contributions

This article is derived from the first author's thesis under the supervision of the second author and with consultation from the third author. Accordingly, the collection of data was carried out by the first author (based on the second-season excavation of the Naqqārechi Tepe), and the manuscript was prepared under the guidance of the second and third authors.

Conflict of Interest

This article presents the results of the project "Second Review Excavation Program of the Naser al-Din Shah Period at the Naqqārechi Tepe, Nahavand," conducted under permit No. 401329 issued by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, with funding provided by the provincial budget of the General Office of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism of Hamadan Province (No. 3558/146/14003).

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بازخوانی و تحلیل تومولوس سلوکی تپه نقاره چی نهاوند (براساس گزارش کنکاش دوره قاجار و دو فصل کاوش باستان شناختی)

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چکیده

تپه نقاره چی در حاشیه جنوبی شهر نهاوند، از جمله آثار برجای مانده از دوره سلوکی است که هرچند فاقد شواهد سطحی و مواد فرهنگی مشهود است، اما گزارشی مفصلي همراه با جزئیات از کنکاش دوره قاجار درباره آن وجود دارد. براساس گزارش دکتر «فوریه» و «محمدحسن خان اعتمادالسلطنه» (۱۳۰۹ ه.ق.) که ضمن توصیف و ترسیم ویژگی‌های ساختاری اثر، به درستی بر دوره زمانی آن نیز اشاره کرده است؛ بر پایه این گزارش، تپه نقاره چی می‌تواند مقبره یا گور تپه‌ای (تومولوس) متعلق به یکی از سرداران سلوکی باشد که بررسی دقیق آن، شیوه‌های تدفین و آئین‌های خاک‌سپاری جامعه سلوکی را روشن می‌سازد. این گور تپه در دو فصل به سال‌های ۱۳۹۸ و ۱۴۰۱ ه.ش. بار دیگر مورد کاوش علمی باستان‌شناختی قرار گرفت تا ساختار مدفون و همچنین گزارش توصیفی دوره قاجار درباره این تپه بازخوانی دقیق شود تا بتوان از این رهگذر، شیوه‌های معماری و فرهنگ سلوکی در ایران را بهتر شناخت. پرسش‌های مطرح درخصوص کاوش تپه نقاره چی براساس فرضیات موجود بدین شرح است؛ آیا مقبره مدفون در تپه نقاره چی ریشه در فرهنگ یونانی دارد؟ کم‌وکیف سازه معماری تپه نقاره چی چه ارتباطی با تومولوس‌های مشابه یونانی دارد؟ بر همین اساس، فرض بر این است که: تپه نقاره چی یک تومولوس است که احتمالاً گور یک سردار یا ساتراپ سلوکی این منطقه در آن دفن بوده است. با توجه به شواهد باستان‌شناختی و ویژگی‌های ساختاری به دست آمده از تپه نقاره چی و بر پایه قیاس با آثار مشابه یونانی، به نظر می‌رسد که این مقبره معرف سنت و فرهنگ سلوکی است. روش پژوهش در این جستار، از نظر روش‌شناسی مبتنی بر مطالعات ترکیبی میدانی و کتابخانه‌ای است؛ توصیف و تحلیل یافته‌ها به روش تاریخی-تحلیلی و با رویکرد مطالعات میدانی و براساس نتایج حاصل از دو فصل کاوش در تپه نقاره چی انجام شده است. برآیند پژوهش نشان می‌دهد که تپه نقاره چی از تمامی ویژگی‌های تومولوس‌های سنت یونانی (هلنی) برخوردار است؛ احداث بنایی منحصراً برای تدفین یک فرد و نیز اختصاص و تهیه تابوت سنگی تراش خورده، بیانگر اهمیت جایگاه اجتماعی و سیاسی فرد متوفی بوده است؛ جایگاهی که او را در ردیف سرداران، جنگاوران و حتی از جانشینان اسکندر قرار می‌دهد.

کلیدواژگان: نهاوند، تپه نقاره چی، سلوکی، تومولوس، معماری.

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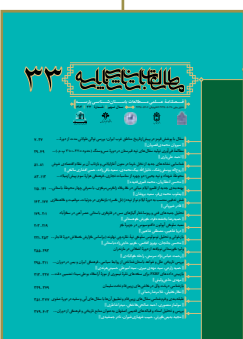
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