

Workshop n. 20: A Public House at Shahr-i Sokhta

Hossein Moradi

Iranian Center for Archaeological Research

h_moradi57@yahoo.com

Abstract

Building No. 20 is located 200 metres northwest of Building No. 1 in the east of the industrial sector, northeast of the cemetery, in squares K'NA, KNB, KNF and KMA. The building is a rectangular structure 20 by 15 metres oriented north-south. Excavations in this area revealed 12 rooms enclosed by mud brick walls with white and red coatings around the entrances, consisting of an ochre-red undercoat and a white top coat. This type of decoration has not been found in any other excavated building at Shahr-i Sokhta. In addition, there are two large fireplaces, one located in Room 4 and the other in Room 5, measuring 115 by 113 centimetres bounded by walls with a wavy profile. No particular cultural artefacts were found inside the spaces of this building, which was abandoned after a short period of occupation. The excavation shows that we are dealing with a public building, such as a small temple, in use in the late third millennium BC.

1. Preface

Shahr-i Sokhta is located in the Sistan plain in the southern part of the Hirmand

Delta with a residential area of more than 100 hectares. This ancient city witnessed four interconnected cultural periods from second half of the fourth millennium to the late of the third millennium BC. The 'Residential Area' of Shahr-i Sokhta is divided into the 'Eastern Residential Area', the 'Central Quarters' and the 'Monumental Area', with the 'Industrial Area' to the west and the necropolis to the southwest. Little evidence of industrial activity has been found in the 'Residential Area', although household activities did include craft production during periods III and IV. After more than half a century of excavations, by the Italian mission in the 'Eastern Residential Area' and 'Central Quarters' (Tosi 1983: 102-125; Salvatori - Vidale 1997: 8-25) and the Iranian expedition (Sajjadi - Moradi 2014; 2016; Moradi 2021a) in the 'Monumental Area', 'Central Quarters' and 'Eastern Residential Area', a relatively clear view of the architectural styles - in some cases with general and detailed features of construction - has emerged (Mariani 1992: 183-193; Moradi 2020a: 63-69). The work carried out in connection with the residential quarters includes research into Building No. 1, conducted within an area of 1600 square metres in the 'Monumental Area', located in the northern part of the 'Residential Area' from 1999 to 2009 (Sajjadi - Moradi 2014: 77-79); excavations of Building No. 5 within an area of 200 square metres in the north-eastern sector; research into the 'Industrial Area' in 2001 and 2002 (Moradi 2020b: 125); excavations in Building No. 20 within an area of 400 metres in the northern sector (Moradi 2020b: 127); excavations in Buildings No. 26 and No. 28 within an area of 1000 square metres in the 'Central Quarters' (Sajjadi - Moradi 2017: 152-164); and a number of smaller trenches and investigations of various structures in the 'Residential Area'.

2. Location

As mentioned, in the northern part of the 'Residential Area' (the 'Monumental Area'), evidence of settlement from the middle of period II to IV has been found. Workshop No. 20 is located on a semi circular mound with a diameter of 20 meters, in squares K'NA, KNB, KNF and KMA, and it corresponds roughly to a 20 × 15 metre-rectangle oriented north-south.



Fig. 1: location of Building No. 20 in Shahr-i Sokhta.



Fig. 2: Building No. 20 before excavation.

3. Excavation in Building No. 20

Building No. 20 is divided into 12 architectural spaces divided by walls made of raw clay bricks with white and red coating arranged on a north-south axis. The walls are right-angled and perpendicular to each other, coated with white soil and a layer of ochre at the entrances to the spaces. Some of these spaces have 2, 3 or 4 entrances. The main entrance to the building is blocked off with mud bricks (Figs. 4 and 5).

Except for a few cases, the walls with entrances have two layers of coating, which includes an undercoat of ochre-red and a top coat of white, which were probably applied in two periods separated by a short time interval (Fig. 9). Such decoration has not been seen before, and a very thick white coating is used only in Workshop No. 26 (Sajjadi - Moradi 2017). No special cultural artefacts were found inside the spaces of Building No. 20. It seems that the building was abandoned after a while for a specific motive, after which the building was filled with sand and roof debris that has protected this construction until the modern day.

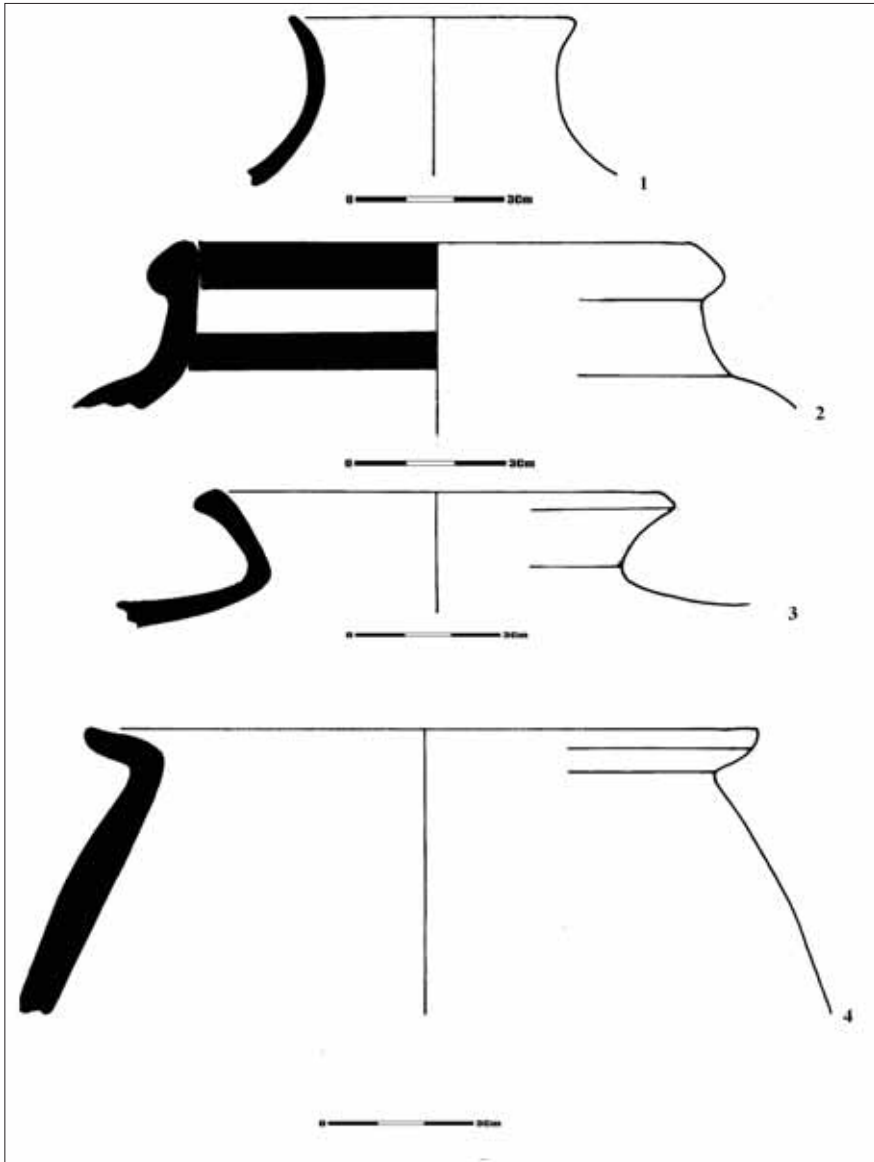


Fig. 3: pottery found on the surface. Wheel-made, soft sand temper: 1, 3, 4. Unpainted brick-coloured jars; 2. Painted brown on Buff Ware jar.



Fig. 4: Building No. 20, seen from the northwest.

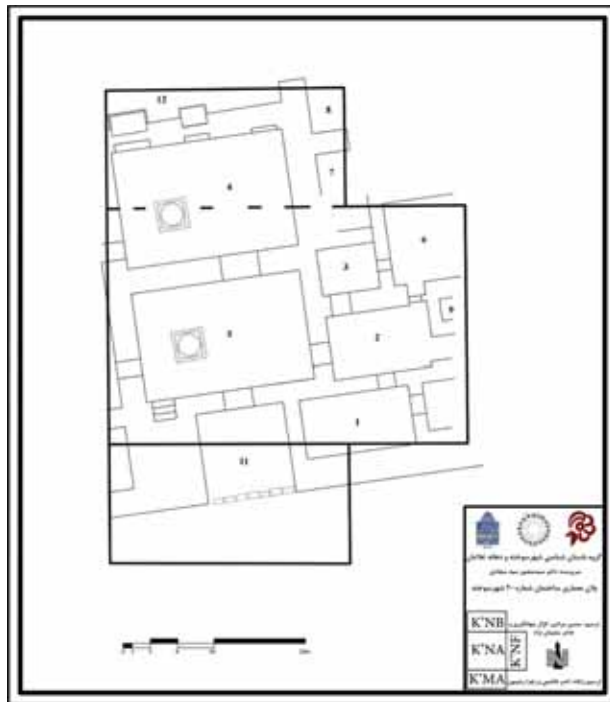


Fig. 5: the floor plan of Building No. 20.

Space No. 1

This rectangular space measuring 250 × 442 cm is located in the southeast corner of Building No. 20. Oriented east-west, its entrance on the north side connects it to Space No. 2, and another entrance on the east side connects it to Space No. 10. The interior walls of this room are covered in a white coating while the entrances are coloured with red ochre. There are two niches on the northern wall of this space and the main entrance to the building is located on its western side (Fig. 6).

Space No. 2

This space is located on the east side of Workshop No. 20 and is a rectangular room oriented east-west. All four main walls of the room have two entrances. The north wall has two entrances, of which the eastern entrance is blocked with a brick wall. The walls of the room have a white coating and the entrances have an undercoat of red ochre with a white coating on top. On the north side of Space No. 2 is a concavity with a depth of 8 cm. Space No. 2 is connected via entrances on the north side to Spaces No. 3 and No. 8, on the east side to Space No. 9, on the south side to Space No. 1 and on the west side to Space No. 5 (the central room) (Figs. 7-8).

Space No. 3

This space is a quadrangular room oriented east-west, connected by entrances to Space No. 2 on the south side and to room 8 on the east side (Fig. 9). It should be noted that the entrance in the eastern wall was probably blocked with mud bricks in the same period as the building was in use. The western wall is shared with Space No. 5 and the northern wall with Space No. 6, although there is no entrance on that side. In the southeast corner of this space, debris of fallen mud bricks with unknown dimensions can be seen. Among the debris in this space, a large quantity of animal bones was found.

Space No. 4

This space is located in the northern part of Workshop 20. It is a rectangular



Fig. 6: Spaces No. 1 and No. 11. Niches and ochre coating of the entrance.



Fig. 7: Space No. 2. A brick next to the entrance to mitigate the difference in height between the doorway and the floor.

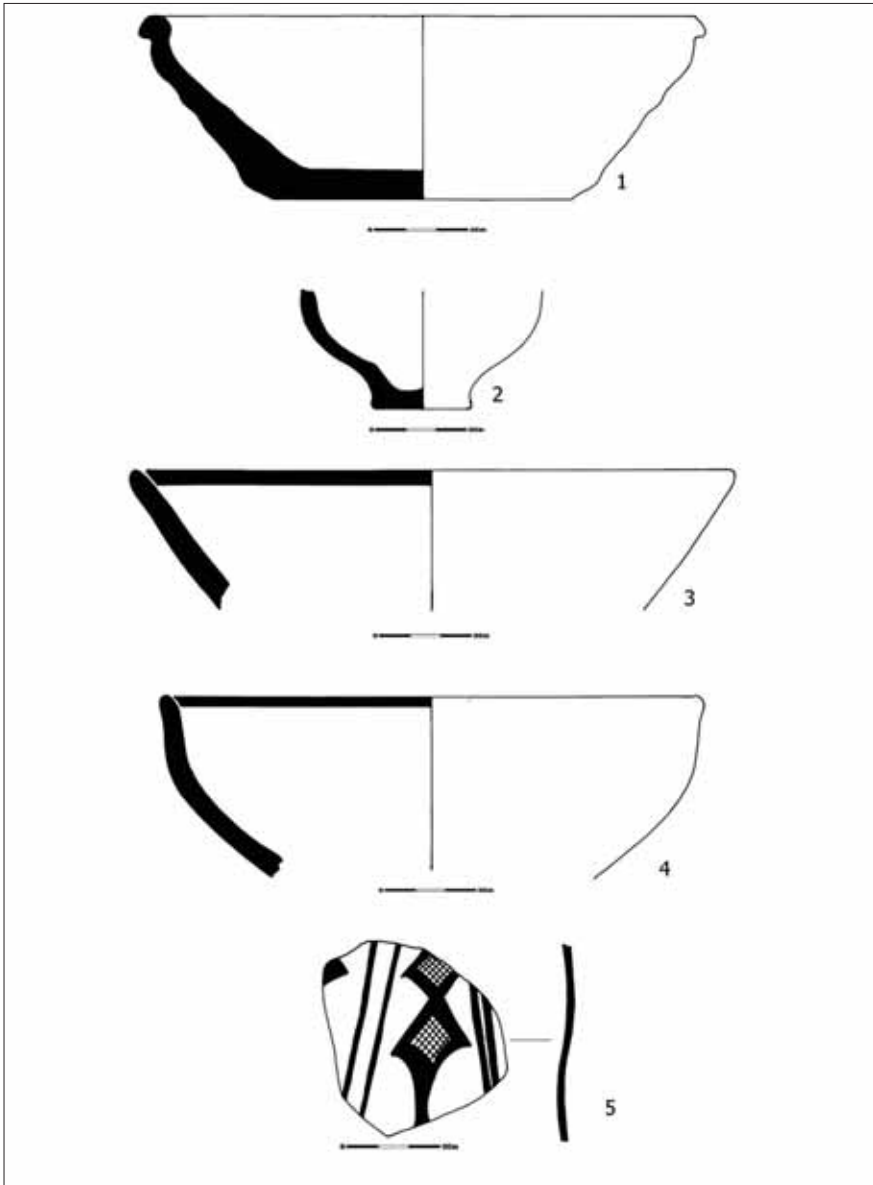


Fig. 8: pottery fragments from Spaces No. 1 and No. 2, layer 1. Wheel-made, fine sand temper. Space No. 1: 1. Unpainted Buff Ware bowl; 2. Unpainted Buff Ware beaker. Space No. 2: 3-4. Painted brown on Buff Ware bowls; 5. Painted brown on Buff Ware beaker.



Fig. 9: Space No. 3 next to a pottery deposit.



Fig. 10: doorway connecting Spaces No. 2 and No. 3 with ochre and white coating.

space oriented east-west, the north, south and west walls of which have entrances (Fig. 11). The north wall of this space has three entrances which seem to have been blocked with mud bricks at a later time and then covered with white mud (Fig. 14). The thresholds of all three entrances are approximately 15 to 20 cm higher than the main floor of the space. When the above-mentioned entrances were blocked off, the bricks were laid 20 cm from the inner surface of the walls, forming niches. No materials or objects or traces of heating are seen inside these niches. The walls of the space are coated with white mud and the entrances are coated with two different layers: The underlying layer is ochre-coloured and the upper layer is composed of white mud. Set in the southern wall of Space No. 4 is a large doorway measuring 160×107 cm, the largest entrance to Space No. 5. The threshold of this entrance is 30 cm above the main floor of Space No. 4 (Fig. 13).

In the southwest corner of Space No. 4, a rectangular hearth measuring 113×115 cm surrounded by a low wall rising in the corners made of rammed earth with a white coating, was located. The firepit, 20 cm diameter in the middle of the hearth, is much smaller than the hearth itself. No trace of ash or charcoal was seen around this hearth (Fig. 12). This is the largest hearth ever found at Shahr-i Sokhta, much larger than the standard-size hearths at the site. The shape of the outer edges of this hearth is also different from other hearths, which have a simple vertical protection wall. In Space No. 5, another, similar, hearth was discovered. Traces of heating are visible on the northern part of the floor of this space, next to the entrance to Space No. 4.

Space No. 5

This space is located in the centre of workshop No. 20 and is a quadrangular room that has entrances on all four sides. Due to its size and location in the building, it seems to be the main room, with access to other interior spaces (Fig. 17). Inside the space, very cohesive and compacted clay and mud debris with an approximate thickness of 85 cm was observed. Space No. 5 (the central room) has entrances in the walls on all four sides of the room: on the north side to Space No. 4, on the



Fig. 11: Space No. 4 and related structures.



Fig. 12: Space No. 4. Large hearth.



Fig. 13: the ochre coating of the doorway connecting Spaces No. 4 and No. 5.



Fig. 14: Space No. 4. North wall with wide niches.

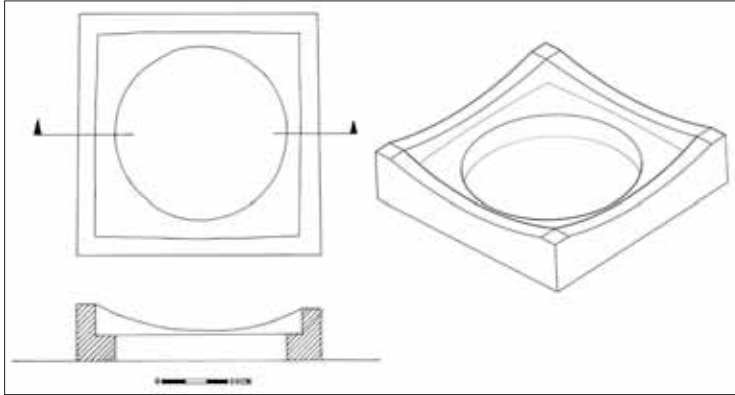


Fig. 15: Space No. 4. Drawing of the large hearth.

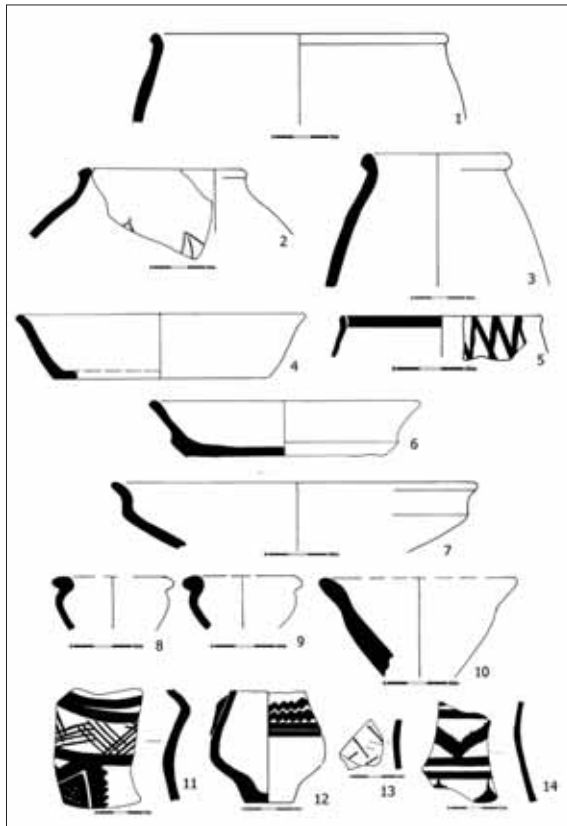


Fig. 16: Space No. 4. Pottery from Layer 1. Wheel-made, fine sand temper: 1-3. Unpainted brick-coloured/Buf Ware jars; 4, 6, 8-10. Unpainted Buff Ware bowls; 5. Painted brown on Grey Ware jar; 7. Brick-coloured bowl, red slip; 11, 14. Brick-coloured/Buf Ware, painted brown on body; 12. Buff Ware beaker, painted brown; 13. Buff Ware, painted brown on body.

east side to Space No. 2, on the south side to Space No. 11 (the entrance space) and on the west side to unexplored spaces (covered with mud bricks). The walls of this room are covered with white mud and the entrances have a layer of ochre covered by a layer of white. The thresholds of the entrances are located on a level above the floor of the room, almost facing each other. The entrance in the northern wall of the room is the largest of this space. In the southwest corner, three brick steps measuring 28×92 cm were excavated. They are probably part of a staircase connecting this space to the roof, although only clay and mud debris are visible. The width and length of the steps are the same but the height varies: $92 \times 28 \times 30$ cm, $92 \times 28 \times 34$ cm, $92 \times 28 \times 16$ cm. In addition, in the southwest corner, Space No. 5 has a rectangular hearth, like the one found in Space No. 4, with crescent-shaped walls 12 cm thick covered with white mud, 116 cm long, 120 cm wide and 20 cm high. Unlike the hearth in Space No. 4, inside the fire box of the hearth in Space No. 5, a large volume of ash and charcoal had accumulated (Figs. 18-19).

Space No. 6

This space is a square room in the north-eastern part of Workshop 20. The north-western section of this space, measuring 130×145 cm, and the south-eastern section, measuring 130×170 cm, have been excavated, while the eastern part remains unexcavated and its entrance has not been determined. Inside this space, which is filled with sand and alluvial deposits, charcoal, ash and pottery fragments have been found. The arrangement of pottery fragments on the floor of this space indicates that it was probably used as a storeroom for food (Fig. 21). As mentioned before, the pottery fragments belong to the vessels deposited in this building that were then buried due to the collapse of the roof. The pottery fragments form a layer 40 cm thick. The pottery is divided into some of which is comparable with specimens from Shahr-i Sokhta IV, particularly those of Phase 2 (Fig. 23).



Fig. 17: Space No. 5, central room. Stairs and large hearth



Fig. 18: Space No. 5. Large hearth.



Fig. 19: Space No. 5. Large hearth and stairs in the southwest corner.

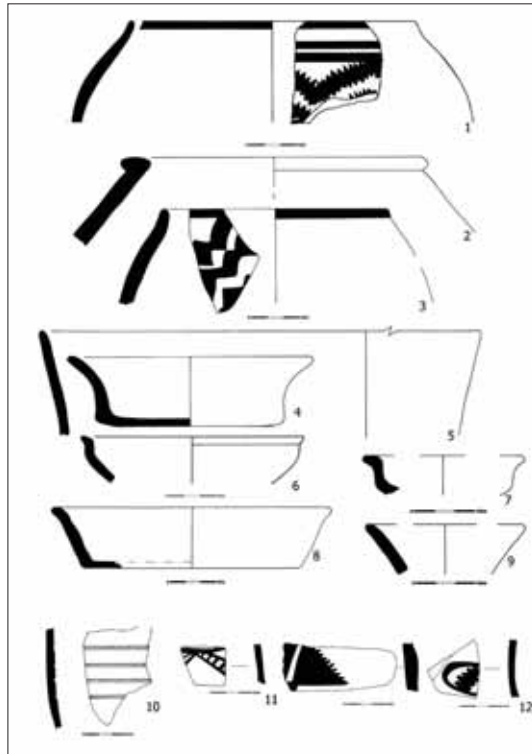


Fig. 20: Space No. 5. Pottery. Wheel-made, fine sand temper: 1, 3. Painted brown on brick-coloured pottery jars; 2. Unpainted Buff Ware jar; 4, 6. Unpainted brick-coloured bowls; 7. Unpainted brick-coloured bowl with red slip; 8-9. Unpainted Buff Ware bowls; 10. Unpainted Buff Ware body fragment with incised lines; 11-12. Painted brown on Buff Ware body fragments.

Space No. 7

This space is a quadrangular room oriented east-west. The southern side is connected to Space No. 6, while the other parts remain unexcavated. Inside the excavated parts, traces of heat, ashes and charcoal can be seen and next to the western wall a large Buff Ware jar was placed. The soil of this space is different from that of the other spaces and it consists of mud and debris with pottery fragments (Figs. 22 and 24).

Spaces No. 8, No. 9 and No. 10

Spaces No. 8, No. 9 and No. 10 are located on the east side of Workshop 20 and are rectangular rooms oriented east-west that have been washed away and destroyed due to being in the path of surface rainfall runoff. The western wall of Space No. 8 has an entrance coated with ochre and white mud, which connects this area to Space No. 3. The south wall had an entrance connecting it to Space No. 2 that was later blocked with mud bricks (Fig. 25). Space No. 9 is connected to Space No. 2 on the west side and to Space No. 8 on the north side and has not been fully excavated. Accumulation of ash and sand was observed inside the space. Space No. 10 is bounded by Space No. 2 to the north and its western wall is connected to Space No. 1 through an entrance (Fig. 26).

Space No. 11

Space No. 11 is a vestibule oriented north-south. The northern wall has an entrance that connects this room to Space No. 5. This entrance is 115 cm wide and is covered with a layer of ochre and a layer of white mud. This space was filled with dune sand and had no cultural material. Space No. 11 is also connected to Space No. 1 on the east side. The southern side of Space No. 11, which originally formed the main entrance to Building No. 20, is blocked with bricks measuring $12 \times 24 \times 47$ cm, in a single row without any mortar. This is a very special point concerning the abandonment of the building, because so far in Shahr-i Sokhta such a closure of the main entrance to a building has not been observed. Indeed, in all other cases, the entrances have been completely blocked with clay and



Fig. 21: Space No. 6. Pottery fragments mixed with collapsed debris.



Fig. 22: Space No. 7. The broken jar *in situ*.

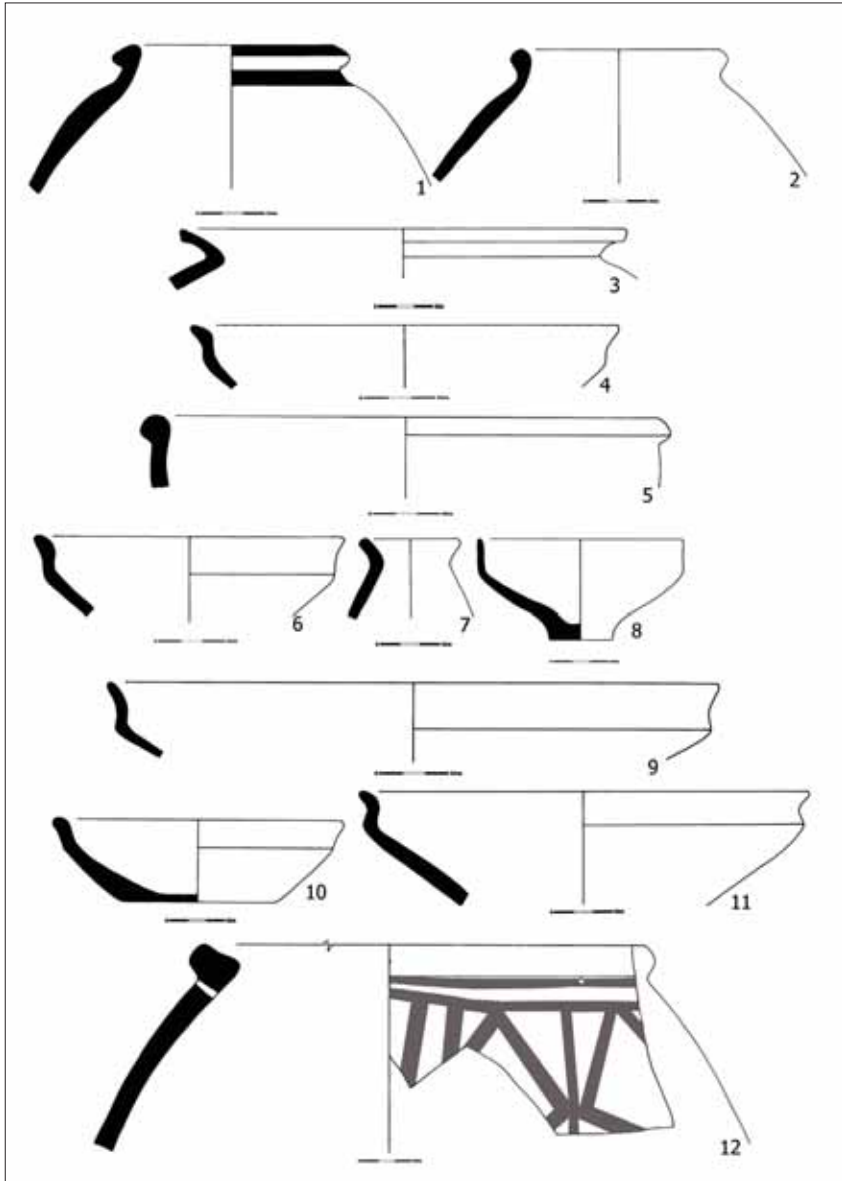


Fig. 23: Space No. 6 Pottery. Wheel-made, fine sand temper: 1. Painted brown on Buff Ware jar; 2. Unpainted Buff Ware jar; 3. Unpainted Buff Ware jar with brown slip; 4-6, 9, 11. Unpainted brick-coloured bowls; 7. Unpainted Buff Ware beaker; 8, 10. Unpainted Buff Ware bowls; 12. Polychrome jar.

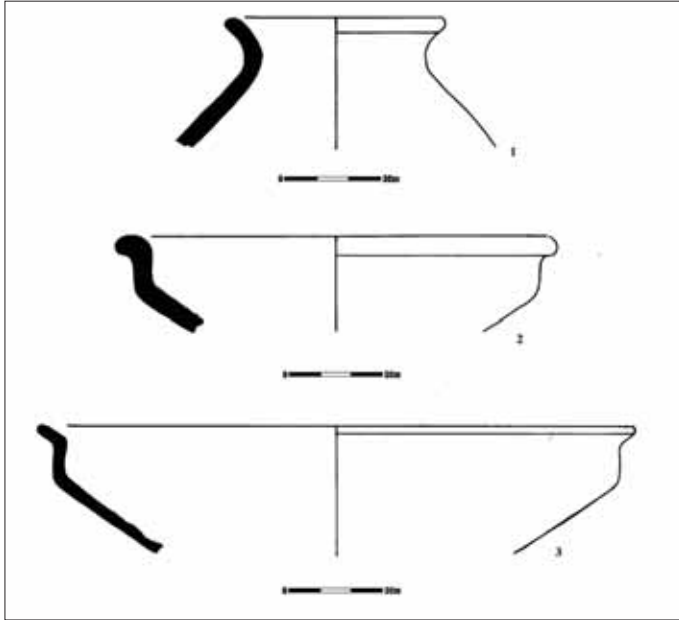


Fig. 24: Space No. 7 Pottery. Wheel-made, fine sand temper: 1. Unpainted Buff Ware jar; 2-3. Unpainted Red Ware bowls.



Fig. 25: Space No. 8. Filled with runoff sediments due to its proximity to a water course.



Fig. 26: Space No. 9. Unexcavated space.

mortar and masonry, while in the case of Building No. 20, it seems that a simple row of bricks was enough (Fig. 27).

Space No. 12

Space No. 12 is located at the northern end of Workshop 20, adjacent to Space No. 4 (Fig. 28). The southern wall of this space had three entrances to Space No. 4, which were subsequently blocked off. Next to these entrances were two buddle-like structures made of rammed earth, in which a few animal figurines (cows, pigs), a number of counting tokens made of baked clay and four clay fragments related to wall decorations were found (Fig. 29). In addition, a large volume of animal bones was found inside this space next to the buddles. It seems that these buddle structures lay outside the original building, in this case being built sometime after it was abandoned. They are probably related to the layer associated with the late period IV pottery found in the north-eastern part of the building. The type of closure of the three entrances is in line with those of other buildings at the site. It was executed not when the building was abandoned but



Fig. 27: Space No. 11. The main entrance to the building closed off by one row of mud bricks.

shortly afterwards, when the two related buddles were built just outside it. The shape of the two buddle is also different from the main construction style of the building, which is highly regular, geometric and based on the previous design, while the buddles were built irregularly and hastily.

4. Stratigraphy

Evidence from Building No. 20 indicates that it was deliberately abandoned and may have been used only in one short phase (Sajjadi - Moradi 2016: 104-107). For reasons that are not clear to us, the building was no longer used after this abandonment and was filled with sand over time. On the margins of the building, in Spaces No. 7 and No. 8, limited pottery evidence has been found which shows that a more recent layer, about which little is known, formed on the margins of the building after its abandonment, which probably corresponds to a very short period of occupation (Figs. 23, 24 and 30). Evidence of such a layer is documented on the basis of several Buff Ware and dark red pottery fragments



Fig. 28: Space No. 12. Baddles and other related structures.



Fig. 29: Space No. 12. Buddle No. 1 (Western wall) built just behind Niche No. 1 of Space No. 4, probably added at a later time.

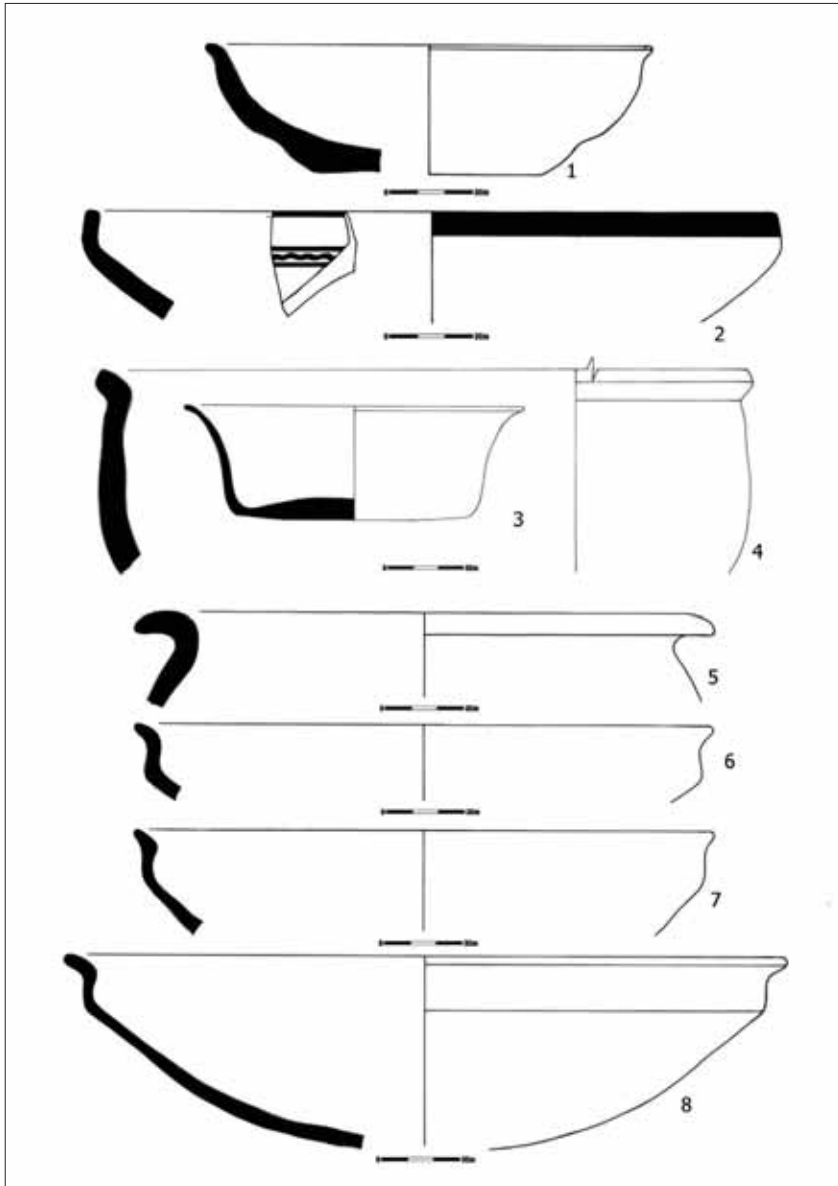


Fig. 30: Space No. 12, layer 1. Pottery. Wheel-made, fine sand temper: 1. Unpainted brick-coloured bowl; 2. Painted brown on brick-coloured bowl; 3, 4, 6, 8. Unpainted Buff Ware bowls with brown slip; 5. Unpainted Red Ware jar with brown slip.

which were later found on the outskirts of Building No. 26 and on a number of hillocks around Shahr-i Sokhta (Sajjadi - Moradi 2016: fig. 11). These pottery fragments are made from a dark reddish paste and belong to a shiny polished body that has vertical edges flaring outwards and is very similar in construction and shape to specimens of the Parthian in Sistan. This type of pottery has been recovered from the satellite areas to the southeast of Shahr-i Sokhta such as Tepe Taleb Khan, Tepe Yalda, Tepe Graziani (Kavosh *et al.* 2019: fig. 124. 14-17) and a number of other sites such as No. 19 and No. 20. Dating this pottery is difficult due to the lack of excavations in these layers. However, based on the shape of the pottery it can be concluded that it probably belonged to Phase 0 of Shahr-i Sokhta i.e. 2300-2000 BC, or even a little later (Moradi *et al.* in this issue).

Layer 1 in Workshop 20 is the only standard building layer that is identified with the floors of the excavated Spaces No. 4 and No. 5. The layer on these floors includes two sub-layers, of which the upper one consists of soil, debris, clay and mud and the lower one sand. As mentioned earlier, this is the result of the destruction and erosion of the building over time by rain, wind and other atmospheric agents, which has left a dense crust of clay, mud, soil, pottery and plant and bone remains. The thickness of this layer varies and in Spaces No. 4 and No. 5 it reaches approximately 60 to 70 cm, thicker than elsewhere. The cultural artefacts and materials of this stratum are very small and include only unpainted pottery fragments, clay slingshot bullets and a few stone tools. Excavation of Spaces No. 4, No. 5 and No. 12 did not reveal any traces of wooden roof beams, and the wide dimensions of these spaces rule out the possibility of them being covered. The debris on the building floor forms a thick layer of sand.

The architecture of layer 1 is one of the best examples in Shahr-i Sokhta, which is known for its double-lined and right-angled walls (Figs. 31-32). This architecture includes walls with a thickness of approximately 70 to 80 cm, which are covered with white mud, creating a very smooth and even surface. In the entrances to the building, a light ochre coating can be seen under the white mud, which most likely belongs to the unexcavated lower layer. This building has various elements such as the central room, side rooms, courtyard, storage room

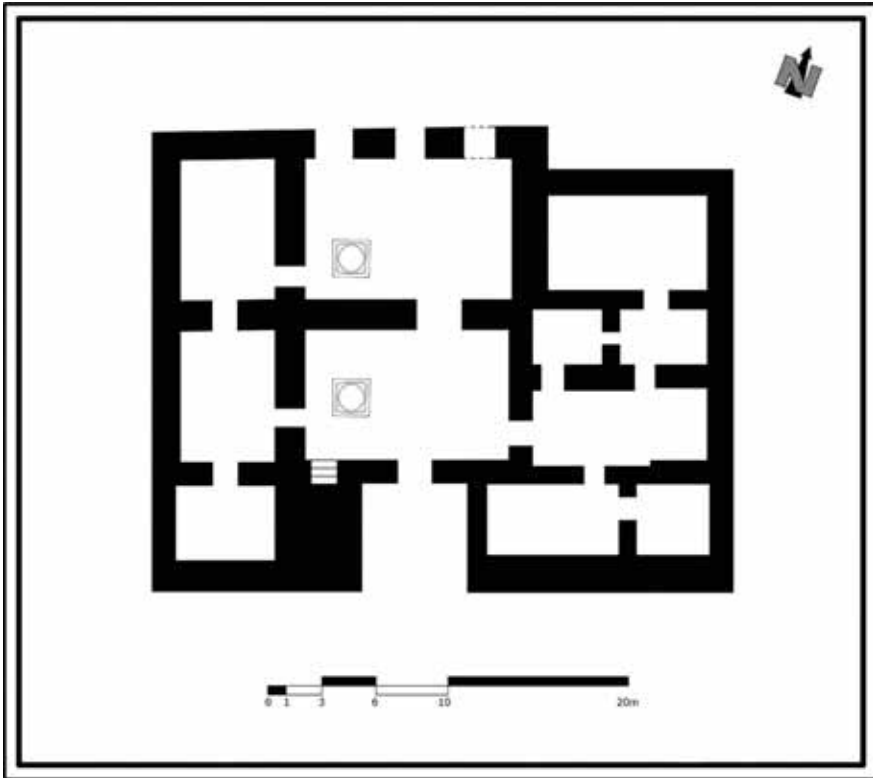


Fig. 31: reconstruction of the floor plan of Building No. 20.

and stairs that probably reach the roof, and in this respect it is very diverse and impressive. The material used to build this layer is unbaked clay. The architecture of this building includes a main entrance between two supporting walls on the south side, i.e. in the lee of the prevailing winds, preventing the wind from blowing into the space of the central room (Space No. 5). The main entrance opened on to a vestibule, which created a kind of initial separation from the surrounding spaces. From the vestibule, a doorway led to Space 5, from which all the other spaces in the building could be reached. There is a courtyard to the north with three recesses or false doors, which also marks the northern border of the building. On the east side there is a small space in the form of a storeroom and on the west side there is a staircase that leads to the roof.

5. Cultural materials

The only space containing cultural materials in any quantity is Space No. 12 in the north of the building, beyond the north wall, which contained two buddles. Here, five zoomorphic figurines, clay counting tokens and a large shell were found. The buddles do not seem to be related to the main context of the building and represent one of the extensions of the building after it was abandoned. Therefore, the only cultural material that can be examined in connection with Building No. 20 is pottery (Figs. 34-35). The cultural materials of Space No. 5 are more diverse than other spaces and include six pieces of cow figurine and one female figurine, a fragment of a cross-shaped stamp seal made of soapstone, a few pieces of beads made of lapis lazuli, calcite and limestone, a seal impression, a number of slabs, a perforated spindle whorl and clay counting tokens. Most of these objects were found on the surface layer of this space, and as we got closer to the floor of the building, the density of cultural materials decreased. Eight slingshot bullets and two clay counting tokens were found in Space No. 4. The density of slingshot bullets in Space No. 4 is significant compared to other spaces.

The pottery related to Layer 1 is in two spectra, i.e. Buff and Red Ware. Red Ware is one of the more significant products of Phases 3 and 2 of Period III and probably Period IV. It consists of shallow bowls with everted rims and a slight carination (Moradi in press). Samples of Red and Buff Ware without this carination, which are comparable to the final phases of Period III, have also been found. The Buff Ware of this layer is generally unpainted and the patterns are limited to linear geometric lines. Other notable pottery specimens found along the edges of this building include quasi-historical specimens that contain only a few fragments of Red and Buff Ware. Red Ware vessels have everted rims and a delicate texture with an ochre or brown slip. Two fragments of Buff Ware with grooves and parallel stripes were also found.

This type of pottery was not found in the main rooms but in a small area on the eastern side of the building, and it may belong to a later period of occupation on the margins of the building. It makes sense to assume that these ceramics are not related to the stratigraphic unit associated with the main Building No. 20.



Fig. 32: Building No. 20. Aerial image after excavations and preliminary restoration.

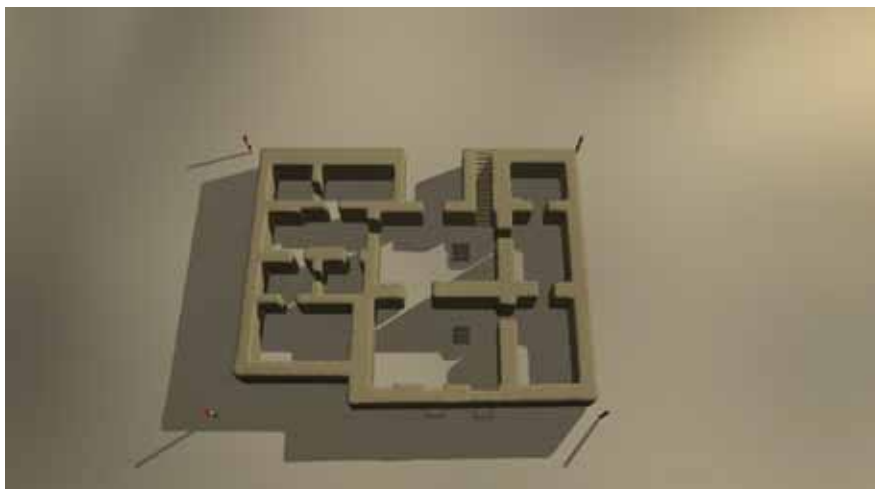


Fig. 33: Building No. 20. Reconstruction by N. Hashemi Golshanabadi.

Although this kind of pottery has not been found in any of the main rooms of the building, as mentioned above, it has been found in a large number of satellite sites southeast of Shahr-i Sokhta and in the Rud-i Biaban area (Tab. 1).

6. Conclusion

Building No. 20 is located on the north-western edge of the site, and in terms of location, it should be considered part of the 'Residential Area' of Shahr-i Sokhta, which seems to have been inhabited mainly in Period III. The location of the building in the 'Residential Area' helps to determine its date with reference to comparative studies of pottery. If we look at the development of the urban area in the various periods, we see that the 'Eastern Residential Area', on the eastern edge of the site, is where the pulse of life and urban trends flowed continuously from Periods I to IV. Settlement shifted to the west and northwest from the middle of Period II onwards, from the 'Eastern Residential Area' towards the 'Central Quarters' and the 'Monumental Area'. Later, with the gradual increase in population, the shift towards the northwest of the site increased. Another reason for this change is probably the use of a large lake located between the 'Industrial Area' and the 'Residential Area' in the west of the site. It seems that this lake supplied water to the inhabitants in all periods and had the same function as the modern Huotak in Baluchistan in the absence of rivers. Therefore, due to the increase in population and decrease in sources of water, the central lake became increasingly attractive and the dwellings tended to move towards it. On the other hand, the suburbs allowed the residents of Shahr-i Sokhta to build larger buildings due to the existence of suitable land. However, other issues may have been involved in the formation of the urban sector in the western section of the site. Considering the cultural materials found in this building, of which the pottery is the most important and significant, the construction of this building can be dated to the end of Period III or the beginning of Period IV, around 2300 BC. However, pottery sherds show that the area around the building was used shortly after this date and probably until the end of the occupation of Shahr-i Sokhta. Another reason for the importance of Workshop 20 is the particular architectural



Fig. 34: pottery samples from various spaces.

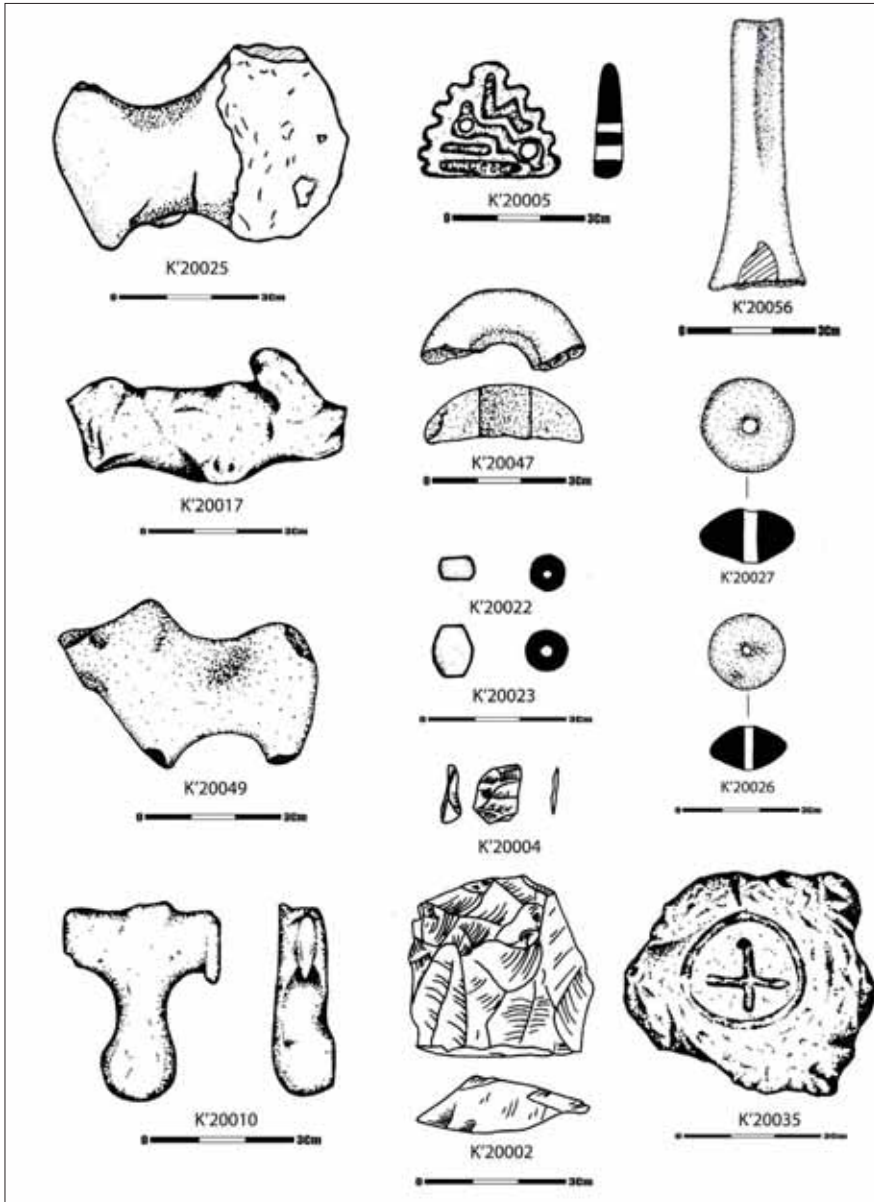


Fig. 35: Building No. 20. Cultural material found in various spaces.

N	Cat. No.	Object	Material	Length	Width	Thickness	Diameter	Space	Square	Depth
2	K20002	Stone Tool	Stone	41	38	16	-	-	K'NA	-
Core in the southern part of the space										
4	K20004	Blade	Stone	11	7	2	-	-	K'NA	10-
Stone blade (microlith)										
5	K20005	Seal	Stone	22	28	4	-	-	K'NA	-
Dentate seal made of soapstone										
10	K20010'	Figurine	Pottery	41	32	12	-	-	K'NA	-
Anthropomorphic figurine										
17	K20017'	Figurine	Terracotta	61	21	20	-	-	K'NB	-
Zoomorphic figurine made of terracotta										
22	K20022'	Bead	Lapis lazuli	5	3	-	5	5	K'NA	70-
Lapis lazuli										
23	K20023'	bead	stone	10	9	-	-	5	K'NA	75-
White stone										
25	K20025'	Figurine	Terracotta	60	21	20	-	5	K'NA	75-
Zoomorphic figurine made of terracotta.										
26	K20026'	bead	clay	19	9	-	19	4	-	85-
A buff-colour clay bead										
27	K20027'	bead	clay	22	12	-	22	4	-	89-
Buff clay bead										
35	K20035'	Seal impression	Clay	150	130	45	-	5	-	145
Cross pattern										
47	K20047'	Spindle whorl	clay	33	14	10	-	12	K044'	-
Spindle whorl										
49	K20049'	Figurine	terracotta	53	25	20	-	12	K 044'K;NB	-
Zoomorphic figurine										
56	K20056'	A tool handle	bone	59	10	5	12	-	-	-

Tab. 1: Workshop No. 20. Small finds from Layer 1.

style. It is a large building in which we encounter structures such as large hearths and ochre-lined walls, which are innovations compared to other buildings in the city. The geometric order and standard shape of its architecture shows the maturity of the architectural style, which is also reflected in Building No. 26, which was probably built at the same time (Moradi 2020b: fig. 19). Building No. 20 has thick walls coated with double layers and large hearths that are too large for daily use. It should also be considered that the abandonment Building No. 20 was deliberate and planned, and the evidence shows that in the after the abandonment, there was no attempt at modification. As in the case of Workshop No. 1, it was not re-occupied, and was simply abandoned, retaining its original form. The main entrance was closed off with just a few mud bricks, showing the inhabitants' respect for this structure.

Another issue is the evolution and transformation of architectural style in Shahr-i Sokhta. The main materials used are unfired clay and mud bricks. The vestibule of the structure is comparable to the Phase E entrance to Building No. 1 in the 'Monumental Area' (Moradi 2020a: 62). The presence of a quadrangular space enclosed on three sides, open only on the south side, and the large entrance on the northern side represent comparable features of the two buildings. The transfer of storage and residential spaces to the eastern or western edges of large buildings is another aspect that can clearly be seen in Building No. 1 (Sajjadi - Moradi 2014). It seems that the construction of this building is the result of the evolution of the architecture of residential structures in Shahr-i Sokhta during Periods II-III, which eventually took on a standard shape. This means that initially, a few rooms were built along the central axis of the structure, with smaller rooms, probably for storage, being built subsequently on both sides of the central building. The entrance is located on the south side, in the lee of the building, opening on to a space with three enclosing vestibule walls. The interesting point in this section is that when the building was abandoned, the main entrance was closed with only a single row of mud bricks placed on the ground: blocking the entrance in the simplest possible way, signalling a ban on entrance, shows the value of the building's location (Sajjadi - Moradi 2014: 84-88). The architecture of this

building includes a main entrance between the two supporting walls on the south side, in the lee of the building so as to prevent the wind flowing into the space of the central room (Space No. 5). After this entrance, the courtyard was located in the northern part, with three recesses or false doors that mark the northern limit of the building. Some spaces have two, three or four entrances, some of which are blocked off with bricks for unknown reasons. All the entrances, except in a few cases, are covered in a red ochre undercoat with white mud on top, which are the only colours used to decorate buildings in Shahr-i Sokhta. In the south-western part of Space No. 4, there is a rectangular stratified hearth, with walls rising in the corners, covered with white mud, measuring 115×113 cm, which probably had a decorative function. The fire box in the middle of this hearth is much smaller than the main volume (Fig. 18). It seems that this hearth, together with a similar example in Space No. 5, was not subject to ordinary usage, because both its dimensions and function are different from other specimens found at Shahr-i Sokhta. A similar example was found during excavations in 2017 in Workshop No. 26, in which the fire box was filled with mudbrick fragments (Fig. 19). The hearths of Building No. 20 are similar in size to the hearth in room number 56 in Building No. 26 and the hearth found in Workshop No. 33, the differences between them being in the shape of the embossed edges of the hearth and the diameter of the fire box. It is interesting to note that in both Workshops No. 26 and No. 33, the entrances to the rooms where the hearths were situated were filled and intentionally closed off.

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