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The Study of Middle Bronze Age Interments at Khanghah Gilavan: Tentative Results

We give a detailed description of burials 14 and 24, typical of the Khanghah Gilavan cemetery, discovered in 2006 near Khalkhal, in the Ardabil Province, northwestern Iran. Parallels to the finds are discussed, mostly suggesting the Middle Bronze Age, although similar handmade vessels, hairpins, and daggers had been common in the region since the Early Bronze Age. The most illustrative examples are Nakhchivan-type vessels, the two handles of which are decorated with buttons. The burials indicate cultural changes over the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, despite the continuity of the ceramic manufacturing tradition.

Keywords: *Northwestern Iran, Gilavan cemetery, Middle Bronze Age, burial, ceramic manufacturing technology.*

Introduction

The chronology of northwestern Iran is based mainly on the excavation data obtained from the sites that are located on Lake Urmia (which is a watery plain area), and the results of these excavations are generalized to the entire region of northwestern Iran. However, northwestern Iran has varying geographical features, such as plains, low-water areas, and mountainous areas. Most of this part of the country has not, as yet, been covered by systematic archaeological studies.

In May 2006, during the construction of a road in Ardabil Province, the remains of some ancient burials were discovered. In August 2006, an excavation, under the supervision of R. Rezalou, was performed at this site. During the first season of excavations, sixteen graves were excavated. The excavations conducted at Gilavan cemetery showed the continuity of the ceramic and burial traditions of the Bronze Age into the Iron Age without any cultural dynamics. Khanghah Gilavan cemetery is one of the ancient sites peculiar to Iran, with a size of 2000 ha,

which shows a remarkable diversity of burial practices.

Gilavan cemetery is located 48°46'39.7" E and 37°17'39.9" N, at the northwestern edge of Khanegah village, about 60 km southeast of Khalkhal city, in Shahrud County, and about 180 km south of Ardabil Province (Fig. 1–3). The site is located in the verdant valley across the Talesh Mountains. The River Gilavan flows along this valley. Thanks to the river, abundant gardens can be seen in the valley, with most of their trees being walnut, upon which the major economy of the region relies. This river finally joins the River Shahrud, which is one of the Ghizil Uzan River's branches. The climate of this area is a variety of the temperate highland climate (see Fig. 1, 2).

Ceramics of the Middle Bronze Age in northwestern Iran

The end of the Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age in southern Caucasus was

distinguished by the disappearance of the Kura-Araxes culture and its numerous settlement societies. In the Middle Bronze Age, settlement patterns changed as a result of the advent of new ethnic elements and groups whose economic subsistence was based on animal husbandry and a nomadic lifestyle (Badaliyan et al., 2003). Of the most notable changes in this period, the development of metallurgy and the manufacture of beautiful gold and silver vessels, may be pointed out. Also, the advent of new interments (kurgans), using four-wheeled chariots, and changing the settlement patterns, including the use of highland areas for cattle-grazing in summer, should be mentioned (Puturidze, 2003: 114). However, there are very few archaeological sites representing this period: Uzarlik Tepe, Shah Takhti, Kül Tepe, Haftavan Tepe, and Geoy Tepe (Ozfarat, 2001: 117). A major part of the archaeological remains related to the Middle Bronze Age has been obtained from the graves (Kohl, 1993: 128).

During the Middle Bronze Age, there were five local cultures in the Caucasus region: western Transcaucasia, Trialeti, Karmirberd, Uzarlik, and Ghizil Vanak (Kushnareva, 1997: 84). According to the given chronology, two ceramic traditions existed in the Middle Bronze Age in northwestern Iran. One of these, named

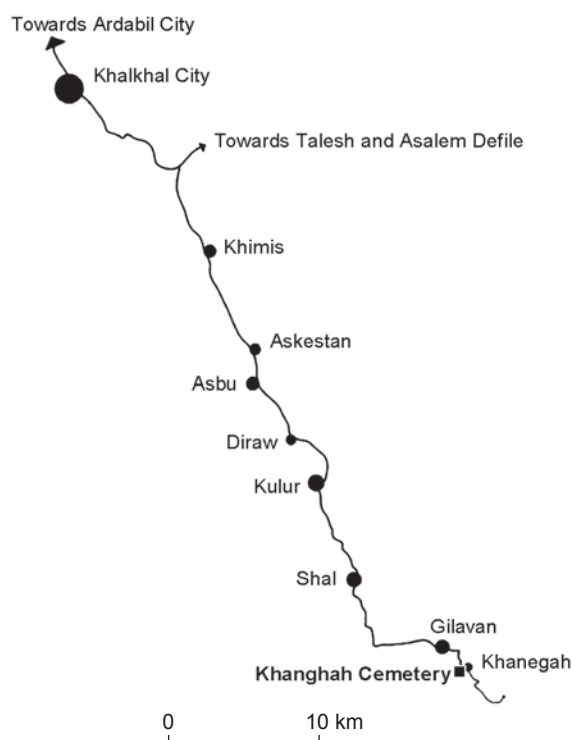


Fig. 1. The access path to the Khanghah Gilavan cemetery.



Fig. 2. A view of the cemetery.

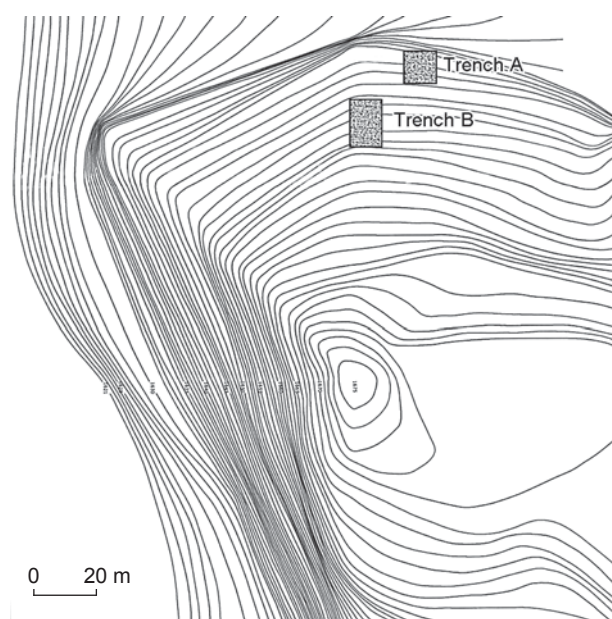


Fig. 3. The topographic map of Khanghah Gilavan cemetery and the excavated trenches.

Urmia wares, obtained from Haftavan VIb, was described by Edwards (1981: 106; 1983: 72; 1986: 65). These vessels, with monochrome and polychrome motifs, were found in Geoy Tepe C and D (Dyson, 1968: 18) and in a disturbed layer relating to the Late Bronze Age at Dinkha Tepe (Rubinson, 1994: 199). Similar wares are also known outside of Iran: in Azerbaijan (Abibullaev, 1982: 4–6; Aliev, 1967: 117) and in eastern Turkey (Cilingiroglu, 1986: 312; 1987: 121). There are some wares kept in Turkish museums, whose place of discovery is not known yet (Cilingiroglu, 1986: 312; 1987: 121; 1984: 131). Pottery finds from Haftavan VI are divided into those from three smaller periods: VIc, VIb, and VIa (from early to late). The classification criterion of the VIa finds placed on top of the VIb (the layer in which the Urmia-type wares have been found) was the presence of roughly painted wares obtained only at the eastern edge of Tepe (jx). These vessels are rough and unburnished, unlike the wares from the earlier period (VIb), which were burnished. For this reason, these wares were considered later; the studies revealed that they belong to one of the varieties of local ceramics identified at Haftavan VIb (Burney, 1994: 54). For Haftavan VIb, there is an absolute radiocarbon date of 1772 BC (Burney, 1975: 161). According to the recent excavations conducted in Armenia, this culture has been dated to between 2400–1600 BC. V.B. Bakhshalief and A. Seidov proposed a dating between 2300–1600 BC (Ozfirat, 2001: 122–123). Using the data obtained at Haftavan Tepe, M.R. Edwards dated this period to 1950–1350 BC, i.e. from the end of the Transcaucasian culture to the beginning of the Iron Age (1981: 102). With given chronologies, it can be stated

that Transcaucasian culture is one of the important Middle Bronze Age cultures in the northwestern Iran, where 24 pieces of its wares have been found, brought to this place by merchants (Rubinson, 2004: 666). Evidences of this culture before the beginning of the Iron Age are few.

Another ceramic tradition of the Middle Bronze Age in northwestern Iran is known as Khabur. The Khabur wares culture has been identified from the finds in Hasanlu VI and Dinkha Tepe IV, and has been thoroughly studied in Dinkha Tepe. In general, the advent of this culture is indicative of the influence of a new culture in northwestern Iran, since Khabur wares are not related to the wares of the previous period. This type of ceramics was prevalent in northern Mesopotamia (Kül Tepe, Chghar Bazar, Tel Alrimeh, and Nuzi) (Hamlin, 1974: 129–130) between 1900–1600 BC. It emerged in this region as a result of trade communications. Six pieces of Khabur ware have been dated by the TL method to between 2106 ± 68 and 1684 ± 58 BC.

Finds from burial No. 14

This burial is located in Trench B. It is a pit grave with no special architectural form. The grave cut had been excavated in accordance with the status of the deceased. The form of the grave depended on the situation of the burial, and the amount of space needed to place the grave goods. To identify the grave after the interment, chipped stones and rubble, pebbles, pieces of rock, and boulders were placed upon the mound. These stones were originally used as a marker for the grave. The largest boulder was $52 \times 33 \times 21$ cm in size. According to the shape of the stone mound, the burial pit was roughly oval. The soil spilled on the grave was dark brown, and its texture was somewhat loose and soft, with inclusions of small, large, and medium-sized grains with gravel and rubble.

It was a standard perfect grave oriented along the NW-SE line, with dimensions of $175 \times 170 \times 100$ cm. Owing to the high humidity inside, and the pressure from the stones, the skeleton was partially destroyed. It belonged to a female, aged 30–35. The deceased was oriented with her head to the SW, and her legs to the SE. The skull was turned to the left, and its face to NW. The upper part of the body was in a supine position. The right humerus was placed along the body, and the right palm was bent upward. The left humerus had been placed in the direction of the body, with the forearm upward (the northeast) from elbow and wrist, bending toward the body. The legs were closed, and the right leg was put on top of the left leg.

In the western part of the grave, approximately 15 cm from the skeleton, the bones of a ruminant, likely those of a sheep (ram), were revealed. On the skeleton, traces

of ocher can be seen, which the body of the deceased was probably covered with before the funeral (Fig. 4).

Grave goods were placed at the edges of the burial, and included the following items:

- Light-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 1, Fig. 5). Similar items were found in the Maykop kurgans and dated to the end of the Early Bronze Age (Lyonnet, 2000: Fig. 3, 4), and in Geoy Tepe C, dated to the Middle and Late Bronze Age

(Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 30, 950). Apparently this was the prevalent form of vessels in the Early Bronze Age. Comparable vessels from this time period were discovered at Yanik Tepe (Summers, 1982: Fig. 42, 5);

- Brown open-mouthed hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 2, Fig. 5). Similar items from the Middle Bronze Age were found in Geoy Tepe C (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 30, 961) and at Yanik Tepe (Summers, 1982: Fig. 42, 6);

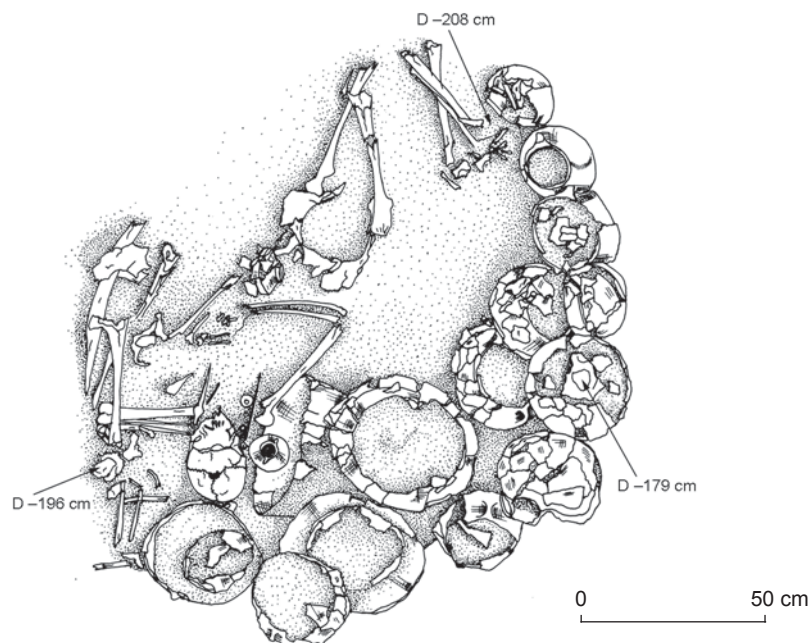


Fig. 4. Skeletal bones and grave goods in burial No. 14.

- Dark-brown open-mouthed hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 3, Fig. 5). Similar items were found in Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 23, 182);
- Light-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 4, Fig. 5). Similar items were found in Haftavan VI B (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 13, 14) and Sos Hüyük VI (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 23, 5);
- Dark-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 5, Fig. 5). Similar items were found in Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 13, 14) and Sos Hüyük IVb (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 23, 5);
- Light-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 6, Fig. 5). Such handles of Nakhchivan type have been known from the finds from the Middle Bronze Age at Sos Hüyük IVa (Ibid., 2000: Fig. 17, 1), Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 21, 882), Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 11, 15), and Dinkha Tepe IV (Hamlin, 1974: Fig. 1, 1). Also, similar items are known in the grave goods from early kurgans excavated in Georgia, dated to the end of the Early Bronze Age (Kushnareva, 1997: Fig. 34, 13). This shape for vessels was apparently prevalent in the Early Bronze Age (Yanik Tepe) (Summers, 1982: Fig. 9, 8);
- Dark-brown open-mouthed hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 7, Fig. 5). Similar items were found in Geoy

Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 19, 846), Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 16, 19), and Sos Hüyük Vc (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 10, 6);

– Dark-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 8, Fig. 5). Similar items are known in Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 25) and Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 18, 11);

– Dark-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 9, Fig. 5). Similar items were found in Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 20, 809), Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 16, 24), Dinkha Tepe IV (Rubinson, 1991: Fig. 27, g), and Sos Hüyük IVb (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 18, 7). Vessels of this shape were common in the Early Bronze Age (Yanik Tepe) (Summers, 1982: Fig. 65, 1);

– Dark-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with a pedestal-base and a handle (No. 10, Fig. 5). Similar items were found in Dinkha Tepe IV (Hamlin, 1974: Fig. 4, 36) and Sos Hüyük IV, and dated to the Middle Bronze Age (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 11, 1);

– Dark-gray hand-made vessel with a vertical rim and two handles (No. 11, Fig. 6). Two bosses can be seen on the handles. Similar prominent buttons can be seen on the wares from Trialeti (Georgia), dated to the Middle Bronze Age (Schaeffer, 1948: Fig. 289, 2), Sos

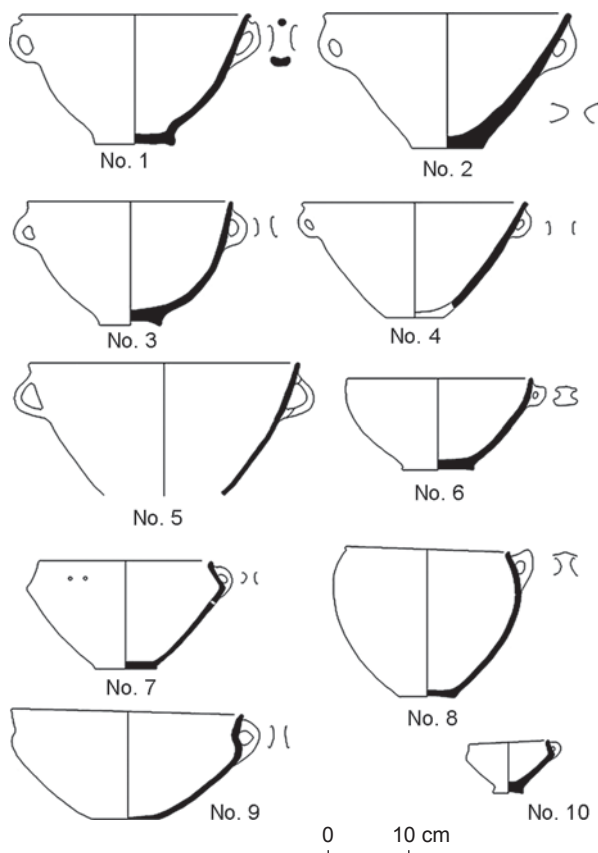


Fig. 5. Pottery from burial No. 14.

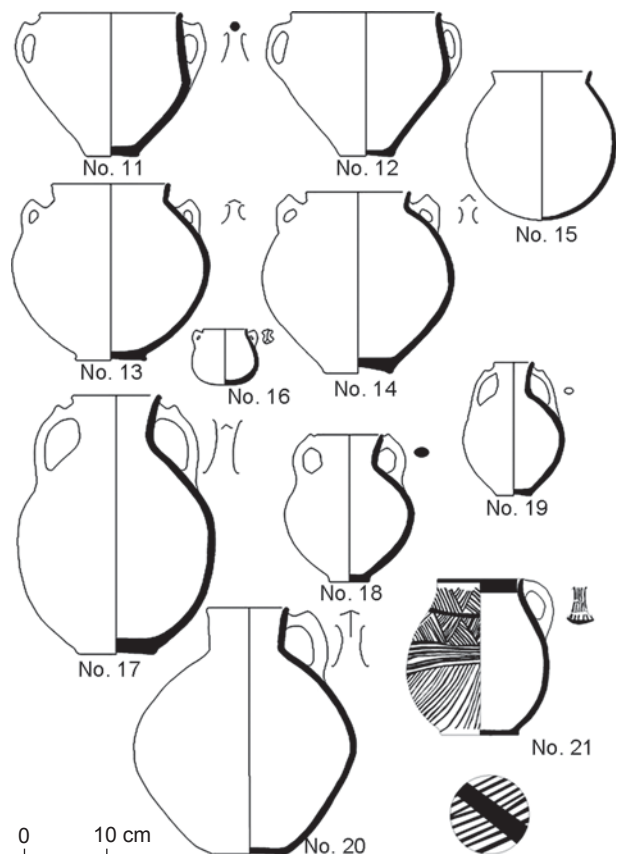


Fig. 6. Pottery from burial No. 14.

Hüyük IVa (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 17, 1), and Dinkha Tepe (Hamlin, 1974: Fig. 5, 43). Vessels of this shape were widespread in the Early Bronze Age (Yanik Tepe) (Summers, 1982: Fig. 53, 7);

– Dark-gray hand-made vessel with a vertical rim and two handles (No. 12, Fig. 6). Analogs are present in the collection from Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 19, 12);

– Dark-gray medium-necked hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 13, Fig. 6), decorated with prominent buttons. Similar items dated to the Middle Bronze Age were discovered in Trialeti (Schaeffer, 1948: Fig. 289, 2). The other comparable vessels, relating to the Early Bronze Age, can be seen in materials from Geoy Tepe C (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 30, 51) and Sos Hüyük V (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 11, 1);

– Dark-gray short-necked hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 14, Fig. 6). Its parallels are known from Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951) and Dinkha IV (Hamlin, 1974: Fig. 1, 2), as well as in the Early Bronze Age kurgans excavated in Georgia (Kushnareva, 1997: Fig. 36, 48). Vessels of this shape were widespread in the Early Bronze Age (Yanik Tepe) (Summers, 1982: Fig. 4, 33);

– Brown short-necked wheel-made vessel (No. 15, Fig. 6);

– Dark-gray closed-mouth hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 16, Fig. 6);

– Dark-gray long-necked hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 17, Fig. 6). Similar items dated to the Middle Bronze Age are known in Geoy Tepe C and Haftavan VIb (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 20, 766) (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 11, 7). Vessels of this shape had been widespread since the Early Bronze Age (Yanik Tepe) (Summers, 1982: Fig. 86, 12);

– Dark-gray medium-necked hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 18, Fig. 6). Its parallels were discovered in Trialeti burials (Schaeffer, 1948: Fig. 289, 3) and Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 20, 768);

– Brown long-necked hand-made vessel with two handles (No. 19, Fig. 6). Its parallels are known from kurgan 5 in the Trialeti burials, dated to the Middle Bronze Age (Schaeffer, 1948: Fig. 289, 5), Geoy Tepe D, and Sos Hüyük IVa (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 17, 5). Vessels of this shape had been widespread since the Early Bronze Age (Yanik Tepe) (Summers, 1982: Fig. 1, No. 13);

– Light-gray medium-necked hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 20, Fig. 6). Similar items, decorated with prominent buttons, were found in the Trialeti kurgans dated to the Middle Bronze Age, and Dinkha Tepe IVd (Hamlin, 1974: Fig. 5, 41). Such handles of Nakhchivan type are known from the finds in Haftavan VII (Summers, 1982: Fig. 48, 41);

– Red medium-necked hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 21, Fig. 6). The vessel shows black geometric motifs. The lower part of it is decorated with parallel and oblique lines; the upper part and neck are decorated with

alternating cross-hatched triangles, which are separated from the lower part by straight horizontal lines. The bottom is ornamented. Parallels are known from Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 20, 802) and Haftavan Tepe VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 11, 14);

– Three bronze hairpins (No. 22–24, Fig. 7a). These were discovered on the skeleton of a ruminant in the

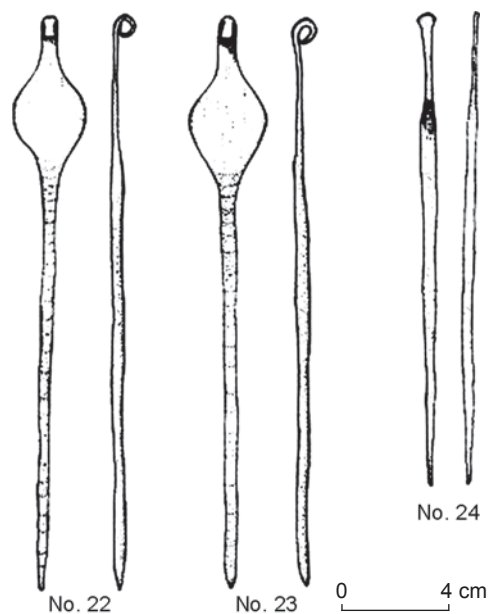


Fig. 7. Hairpins from burial No. 14.

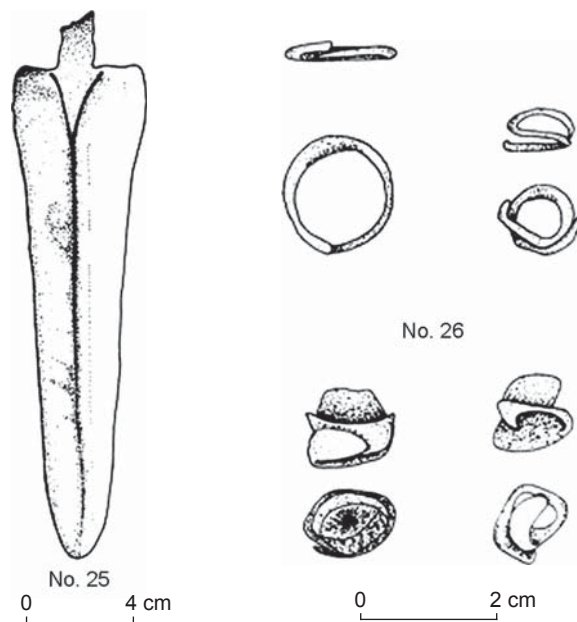


Fig. 8. Dagger from burial No. 14.

Fig. 9. Earrings from burial No. 14.

Table 1. Features of the potteries at burial 14

Vessel No.	Making method	Color			Firing grade	Temper	Finish				Making quality	
							primary		engobe**			
		inner	pulp	outer			inner	outer	inner	outer	inner	outer
1	Hand made	Light gray	Dark gray	Light gray	Complete	Sand + mica*	Polishing	Polishing	Wash	Wash	Medium	Fine
2	"	Brown	Dark	Brown	Low	"	"	"	"	"	Fine	"
3	"	Dark gray	Dark brown	Dark brown	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
4	"	Light gray	Light gray	Light gray	Complete	"	"	"	"	"	Low fine	Low fine
5	"	Dark gray	Dark gray	Dark gray	"	Medium sand	"	"	"	"	Fine	Fine
6	"	Light gray	Light gray	Light gray	"	Sand + mica inclusions	"	"	"	"	"	"
7	"	Dark brown	Dark brown	Dark brown	"	Sand + mica	"	"	"	"	"	"
8	"	Dark gray	Dark gray	Dark gray	"	Sand	"	"	"	"	"	"
9	"	"	Brown	"	Low	Medium sand	"	"	"	"	"	"
10	"	"	Dark gray	"	Complete	Sand + mica	"	"	"	"	Low fine	Low fine
11	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	Fine	Fine
12	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
13	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	Low fine	"
14	"	"	"	"	"	"	—	Partial polishing	"	"	Medium	Low fine
15	Wheel made	Brown	Brown	Brown	"	Small sand	—	Polishing	"	"	"	"
16	Hand made	Dark gray	Dark gray	Dark gray	"	"	—	Partial polishing	"	"	"	"
17	"	"	"	"	"	Large sand + mica	—	Polishing	"	"	Low fine	"

18	"	"	"	"	"	Sand + mica	-	"	"	Slip (red)	Medium	Medium
19	"	"	Brown	Brown	Brown	Low	-	Low	Small sand	"	Low fine	"
20	"	"	Light gray	Light gray	Light gray	Complete	-	Complete	Large sand + mica	"	Medium	"
21	"	"	Red	Red	Red	"	-	"	Sand + mica	Slip (red)	Fine	Fine

*Mica – gold yellow and silvery particles, natural components of temper.

**Wash cover is similar in color to that of pottery paste; slip cover is different in color. This is determined visually.

western part of the grave. Similar pins from the end of the Early Bronze Age are known from the Trialeti kurgans (Schaeffer, 1948: Fig. 291, 9) and Velikent (Dagestan) (Kohl, 2001: Fig. 9, 269);

– Bronze dagger (No. 25, Fig. 8). It was found on the skeleton of a ruminant in the southern part of the grave. Similar daggers are present in the grave goods from the early kurgans of Caucasus (Kushnareva, 1997: Fig. 34, 13) and Velikent, dated to the end of the Early Bronze Age (Kohl, 2001: Fig. 9, 186);

– Three bronze crescent-shaped earrings (No. 26, Fig. 9). These were located to the left of a human skull. The first earring is comparable to those from the early kurgans of Caucasus (Kushnareva, 1997: Fig. 34, 13), from grave No. 11 in Velikent, dated to the end of the Early Bronze Age (Kohl, 2001: Fig. 6, 344), and Dinkha Tepe IV (Rubinson, 1991: Fig. 27, 14). The second is comparable to the earrings found in the early kurgans of Caucasus (Kushnareva, 1997: Fig. 34, 7), from Early Bronze Age grave No. 11 in Velikent (Kohl, 2001: Fig. 6, 345), and Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 29, 1289). The third earring has analogs among the goods from the Middle Bronze Age grave at Sos Hüyük (Hopkins, 2003: Fig. 28, 3), the grave in Velikent, related to end of the Early Bronze Age (Kohl, 2001: Fig. 6, 156), and from Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 29, 1288).

The pottery collection obtained at burial No. 14 can be classified into three groups on the basis of color: gray (67 %), brown (25 %), and red (8 %). 87 % of the total wares are hand-made, and 13 % wheel-made. The temper of 57 % of the vessels is fine sand, 33 % is medium sand, and 10 % is coarse sand. The quality of the exterior surface structure of 71 % of the vessels is fine, and that of 29 % is medium. The temperature in 67 % of the wares is sufficient, and in 33 % is insufficient. Furthermore, 33 % of the wares are necked, 50 % are closed-mouth, and 8.5 % have vertical rims (Table 1).

Finds from burial No. 24

This burial was located in Trench B. The deceased had been buried in a pit. The mound was formed with chipped stones and rubble, pebbles, pieces of rock, and boulders. These stones were originally worked as a marker for the tomb on it. According to the shape of the mound, the grave was roughly oval. The spilled soil in the grave was dark brown, loose and soft, with inclusions of small, large, and medium-sized grains and sand with gravel, rubble, and pieces of boulders.

This grave was non-standard. Its dimensions were 110 × 100 × 85 cm. This was probably a secondary burial. Owing to the high humidity inside, and the pressure from stones, the skeleton was partially destroyed. Only fragments of a skull and foot-bones

were discovered. The remains belonged to a male, aged 15–20. According to the remaining skeletal parts, the burial was oriented along the NW-SE line. The skull fragments were in the northwestern part, and the feet bones in the southeastern. The skull was on the left. It was deformed; the facial part wasn't preserved, but was probably directed to the east (Fig. 10). Foot-bones seem to have been directed to the NE.

Grave goods consisted of the following items:

– Dark-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with upright rim (No. 1, Fig. 11). Similar items are available in the collection from Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 19, 846), Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 16, 19), and Sos Hüyük Vc (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 10, 6);

– Dark-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with upright rim (No. 2, Fig. 11). Similar items were found in

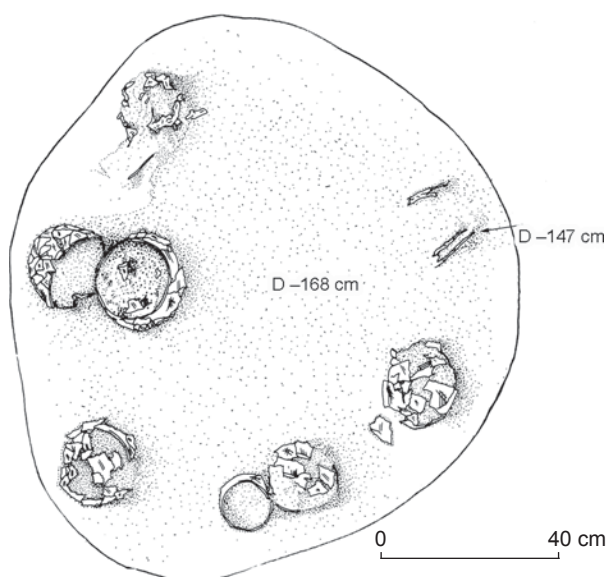


Fig. 10. Skeleton bones and grave goods in burial No. 24.

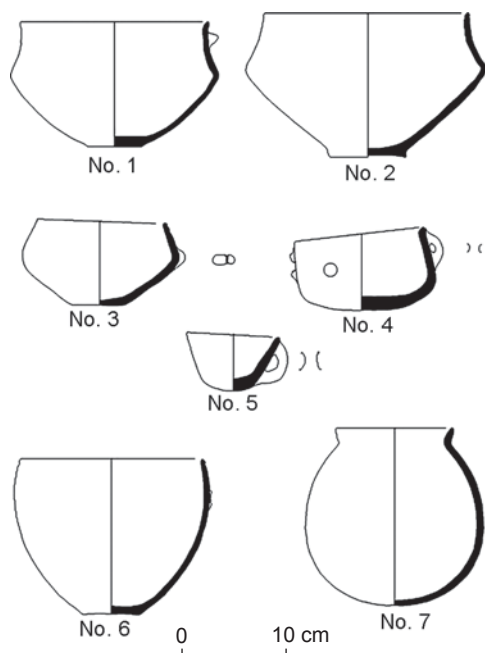


Fig. 11. Pottery from burial No. 24.

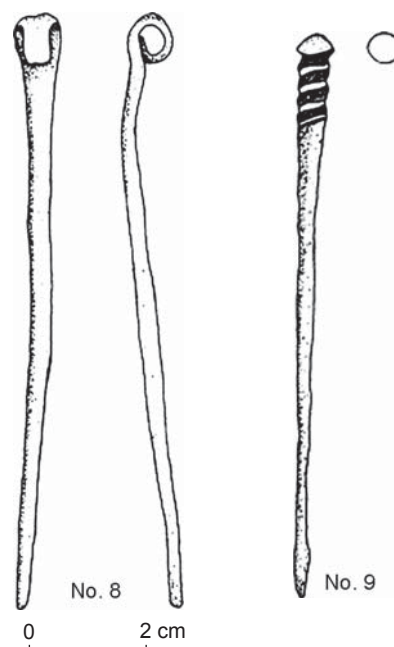


Fig. 12. Metal items from burial No. 24.

Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 20, 809), Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 16, 24), and Sos Hüyük IVb (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 18, 7). Apparently this was the prevalent form of vessels in the Early Bronze Age (Yanik Tepe) (Summers, 1982: Fig. 65, 1);

– Dark-brown open-mouthed hand-made vessel with upright rim (No. 3, Fig. 11). Similar items are available in the materials from Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 21, 54), Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 18, 8), Dinkha Tepe IV (Hamlin, 1974: Fig. 5, 42), and among the gifts from the Alar cemetery (from the Middle Bronze Age) that was excavated in Georgia (Kushnareva, 1997: Fig. 43, 20);

– Light-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with upright rim and two handles (No. 4, Fig. 11). Similar items are available in the collection from Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 7, 1626), Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 18, 29), and among the Alar cemetery gifts (Kushnareva, 1997: Fig. 43, 17). Apparently this was the prevalent form of vessels in the Early Bronze Age. This is confirmed by the artifacts from the Early Bronze Age site of Yanik Tepe (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 9, 6). The circular notch on this ware has parallels in Haftavan VII and VIII of the Early Bronze Age (Summers, 1982: Fig. 148, 149) and Sos Hüyük I (Hopkins, 2003: Fig. 29, 3);

– Dark-brown open-mouthed hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 5, Fig. 11). Similar vessels are available in the collection from Dinkha Tepe IV (Hamlin, 1974: Fig. 4, 32);

– Dark-gray open-mouthed hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 6, Fig. 11). This carinated vessel has a shallow groove under the rim. Similar vessels are available in the collection from Haftavan VIb (Edwards, 1981: Fig. 15, 13) and Sos Hüyük IVb (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 21, 7);

– Brown short-necked hand-made vessel with a handle (No. 7, Fig. 11). Similar vessels were obtained from Sos Hüyük IV (Sagona, 2000: Fig. 17, 5);

– Bronze hairpin, with one end decorated with a spherical ring-handle (No. 8, Fig. 12). It was found to the south of the skull. Parallels to such hairpins with twisted ends are known in materials from Ugarit 2 (1750–1900 BC). Hammered hairpins were widespread in western Caucasia. The center of their production was probably situated in this region (Burney, Lang, 1972: 117). Parallels to such hairpins are available in the collections from Geoy Tepe D

Table 2. Features of the potteries at burial 24

Vessel No.	Making method	Color			Firing grade	Temper	Finish				Making quality	
		inner	pulp	outer			primary		engobe		inner	outer
							inner	outer	inner	outer		
1	Hand made	Brick red	Brick red	Dark gray	Low	Small sand + mica	Partial polishing	Partial polishing	Wash	Wash	Low fine	Low fine
2	"	"	"	"	"	Small sand	—	Polishing	"	"	Medium	"
3	"	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Complete	"	Partial polishing	"	"	"	Low fine	Fine
4	"	Light gray	Light gray	Light gray	"	Medium sand + mica	—	—	Wet	Wet	Medium	Medium
5	"	Dark Brown	Black	Brown	Low	"	—	—	Wash	Wash	"	"
6	"	Red	Dark gray	Dark gray	"	Small sand + mica	Polishing	Polishing	"	"	Low fine	Low fine
7	Wheel made	Brown	Brown	Brown	Complete	Medium sand + mica	—	—	"	"	Medium	Medium

(Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 29, 1277), Dinkha Tepe IV, dated to the Middle Bronze Age (Rubinson, 1991: Fig. 21, a), and Velikent Tepe III, burial No. 11, dated to the end of the Early Bronze Age (Kohl, 2001: Fig. 6, 353);

– Bronze hairpin (No. 9, Fig. 12). It was found in the southern part of the grave, to the right of the skull. Similar pins are known in collections from Geoy Tepe D (Burton Brown, 1951: Fig. 29, 1213) and Dinkha Tepe IV (Rubinson, 1991: Fig. 21, c).

The pottery collection from burial No. 24 can be classified into two groups based on their color: gray (53 %) and brown (47 %). 86 % of the total wares are hand-made, and 14 % are wheel-made. The temper of 57 % is fine sand, and 43 % medium sand. The quality of the exterior surface in 43 % of vessels is fine, and in 57 % medium. In terms of finishing, 57 % of the wares are burnished, and 43 % unburnished. The firing-temperature in the 14 % of the wares was sufficient, and in 86 % insufficient. Finally, 14 % of the vessels are necked, and 86 % open-mouthed (Table 2).

Conclusion

The excavations conducted at Khanghah Gilavan cemetery indicate that the ceramic traditions of the Early Bronze Age continued into the Middle Bronze Age. The above-mentioned changes in the shapes of handles, for example, in vessels from burial No. 14, point to the development of these Nakhchivan-type elements, which appeared in the Early Bronze Age. This was probably because of changes in subsistence patterns after transition to the nomadic lifestyle. This assumption is supported by the low number of settlement sites, as contrasted with the numerous cemeteries belonging to the Middle Bronze Age.

Some vessels and bronze items found in the described burials are comparable with the samples obtained from the Early Bronze Age sites, such as Haftavan VII and VIII, Yanik Tepe, Sos Hüyük Vb and Vc, Velikent, early kurgans in Georgia, and Maykop kurgans. Also, these materials may be compared to artifacts relating to the Middle Bronze Age, obtained from the sites of Haftavan IVB, Dinkha Tepe IV, Sos Hüyük IVb, Geoy Tepe C and D, Alar, and Trialeti.

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