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SOME ISSUES ON GENERAL FEATURES OF THE LEILATEPE CULTURE

Key words: Leilatepe culture, catacomb, child burials, scepters

Açar sözlər: Leylatəpə mədəniyyəti, katakomba, uşaq qəbri, skipetr

Ключевые слова: лейлатепинская культура, катакомба, детское погребение, скипетр

At the beginning of the 80s of the 20th century, during the excavations of the Chalcolithic Leilatepe site in Agdam region of Karabakh by I.H.Narimanov was discovered a new archaeological culture – the Leilatepe culture in the study of history of Azerbaijan and on the whole of the Caucasus related to the 4th millennium B.C (8). The investigation of the Leilatepe monuments proves for the first time, the existence of a different culture formed on the local ground of the South Caucasus and unlike the Chalcolithic complexes which had cultural and economic ties with Middle East cultures, spread in these areas through the Near East. High-quality ceramic products made in potter's wheel which are not known from the monuments prior to this culture, or from the synchronous and subsequent phases in the South Caucasus found as a result of excavations at the Leilatepe site, child urn graves, finds indicating the high development of metallurgy remove all doubts about the origination of this culture in the Near East. It was qualitatively a new and higher level culture in Caucasian Chalcolite. The Tekhut site excavated in the territory of present Armenia that have similar ceramics and the under layer of Berikldeebi in southeast Georgia relate to the Leilatepe culture.

Until 2004-2005, the Leilatepe culture was almost known for the only eponym monument – Leilatepe settlement, in local, narrow scientific context. The excavations on Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the South Caucasus gas pipeline routes, the dis-

covery and excavation of Beyuk Kesik, Poylu and other settlements and Soyugbulag kurgans belonging to Leilatepe culture in the western region of Azerbaijan in those years contributed to this culture to be maintained in the science of archaeology of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus. The study of this monument helped to determine fundamentally the characteristic typological features of the Leilatepe culture settlements, their ceramic, stone, bone and metal products and burial customs and proved that this culture was spread in wider area. The investigation of Soyugbulag kurgans in 2005, proved the existence of this type of grave monuments of Leilatepe culture, as well as advanced the date of appearance of kurgans in the South Caucasus by more than a thousand years. Just as the result of the investigation of Beyuk Kesik, Poylu and Soyugbulag sites main characteristics of the Leilatepe archaeological culture were defined. Excavations in Galayeri site of Gabala region resulted in the discovery of particularly interesting, rich materials for studying the Leilatepe culture (3).

In recent years, the settlements of Alkhantepe in Mugan, Farmantepe in Karabakh, etc. belonging to Leilatepe culture have been involved in the research. Altogether, in the South Caucasus monuments relating to this culture were mainly found in the territory of Azerbaijan.

Researches in recent years allowed determining that Leilatepe culture had appeared in the local ground due to the junction of Late Chalcolithic traditions of Western Anatolia and Northern Mesopotamia in the South Caucasus.

Studies also have proven that the Mai-kop archaeological culture of the North Caucasus had appeared just on the basis of the Leilatepe culture traditions. Based on the archaeological analyses was grounded the ge-

netic links of both cultures, and the existence of Leilatepe-Maikop cultural-historical unity.

On the basis of archaeological materials the Leilatepe culture monuments were attributed to the Chalcolithic period -first half of the 4th millennium B.C. The results of the last ten years' radiocarbon analyses on Beyuk Kesik, Poylu, Soyugbulag and Galayeri monuments also approved the first half of the 4th millennium B.C. However, the results of two analyses on Beyuk Kesik settlement showed the end of 5th millennium B.C as well. The Near Eastern monuments that the traditions of the Leilatepe culture associated to (Arslantepe VII, Amuq F, Tepe Gawra XII-IX etc.) are also attributed to the first half of the 4th millennium B.C. In the scientific literature this period is determined as the end of 2nd phase, 3rd and early 4th phase of Late Chalcolite (LC). Research of the Leilatepe culture plays almost a key role in determining the historical and chronological position of archaeological cultures in the Caucasus dating to the end of the 5th-4th millennia B.C.

The brick constructions in the residential sites of the Leilatepe culture have a rectangular plan.

It has been established that in some of the monuments were used houses constructed of adobe bricks (Leilatepe, Berikldeebi), while in the others rammed loam structures and balloon-frame, stone constructions and semi-underground mud-huts (Beyuk Kesik, Poylu). But in Galayeri the buildings were constructed of clay layers, an analogue of which is known only from Arslantepe VII.

Grave monuments of Leilatepe culture are diverse. Tombstones laid diverse. First of all, the kurgan type grave monuments should be noted there. If not taking into account some exceptions, this kind of kurgans were mainly dug in Soyugbulag kurgan field. The maximum height of stone covers of these kurgans is about 1 m. More than 20 kurgans has been dug in Soyugbulag necropolis. Only in few of them anatomically whole skeletons have been revealed. These are skeletons buried on the right or left sides. Bone fragments have been found in other graves. The grave goods is quite poor. Often, only a few pottery

fragments were found in the graves (2).

Child burials in jars were revealed almost in all the settlements and in Soyugbulag kurgan field. Child burials in jars discovered at Leilatepe culture monuments is not known in the Caucasus from any monument before and after this culture. Just one of the distinguishing features of the Leilatepe archaeological culture is the burial of infants in clay containers of various types. Interestingly, that in these containers just a few months old infants or children who died around the age of one, were buried. This kind of graves had been found at Leilatepe, Chinartepe, Berikldeebi, Beyuk Kesik, Poylu I and II, Galayeri settlements and Soyugbulag kurgan field (4; 2). Burials were realized in pitcher, jar, plate, pot-type different pottery vessels. The graves of Galayeri being exception, graves in other sites were in the north-west - south-east alignment.

Along with this, soil graves belonging to elders were discovered in Poylu and Alkhan-tepe.

And, for the first time for the Leilatepe culture have been found in Galayeri a child buried catacomb (Fig. 1.1). The catacomb-type grave was discovered in the northern part of 3F square of the excavation site, below the cultural layer of residential place. The soft, light yellow colored upper section in the rectangular entrance of the catacomb, with dimensions 1.1 x 1.2 m, sharply differed from the clay mixed dark-colored soil revealed at a depth of 2.7 m below it. The total depth of the catacomb was 1.1 m deep and 1.7 m long. The floor of entry section at a depth of 80 cm is in the form of stairs. The floor of the grave chamber was situated at a level of 30 cm below the stairs. The oval-shaped burial chamber was of 1.1 m depth, 70-75 cm width and of 1.3 m length. In the grave camera of the north-south aligned catacomb was buried 4-5 year-old child on his right side, tightly bent, with his head to the east. Under the weight of the soil above the infant skeleton had been disarticulated into pieces. The skeleton was surrounded by a black solid substance. While cleaning the grave the substance has been found fragmented. Neither beside the skeleton, nor in the soil filled into

the burial chambers was found any archaeological material.

Interestingly, that in the hole dug in the subsoil on the south-west of the same square have been found a large pitcher (piphos) with an infant buried in (Fig. 1.2). This –grave No.19 is the first pottery grave dug in the subsoil. The mouth of the pitcher buried upright had been placed at the the level of the cultural layer, but the pitcher itself was entirely in the virgin soil. There was a dome-shaped space at the 40-50 cm depth above the pitcher. The space above the pitcher, was covered with a 7-8 cm thick clay layer, more solid than the soil of the cultural layer. Most likely, this grave consisting of a pottery vessel also had been buried in the catacomb dug in the subsoil. But because of the location of its top and the entrance sections on soft cultural layer it has destroyed and not been preserved.

The catacomb grave discovered in Galayeri is the first discovery in the Caucasus relating to the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. This type of graves are not typical for these periods of the Caucasus, including Leilatepe culture.

Few catacomb-type graves are known from the sites Yarimtepe I and II in Northern Mesopotamia. The archaeologists who excavated these sites relate the graves to Halaf culture, and this culture date to the 5th millennium B.C. Despite the absence of Halaf culture layer in Yarimtepe I, the catacombs relating to the Halaf culture have been found in the form of inlet graves here. In Yarimtepe II this kind of graves had been dug in the Halaf culture layer. In the catacombs in both sites were found children buried on the side, in in a half bent position. According to the researchers of these sites N.Y.Merpert and R.M.Muncayev, for their structure these catacombs could have been related to the shape of the circular-planned, dome-like covered, with dromos like entrance houses of the Halaf culture. These researchers, taking into account the spread of this type of graves during the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age in Eurasia, rightly noted that they had emerged on the polycentric basis. (7, c. 31, 46-48).

Pottery of the Leilatepe culture is char-

acterized mainly by vessels of pink, red colors and different shades of these colors, with globular seat, tempered with plant or made of pure clay and formed in potter's wheel (Fig. 1. 2-6). Sometimes potters' marks are found on this pottery marked before firing (Fig. 1. 9-12). These marks are associated with Late Chalcolithic traditions of Eastern Anatolia (Arslantepe VII). The other group includes hand-made brown, brownish-red pottery made of mineral tempered clay; the surface incised with comb-like tool (Fig. 1.8). Clay seals, anthropomorphous and zoomorphic figures, wheel models, earthenware curry-combs, spindle tips and other clayey objects have been discovered from the Leilatepe monuments (Fig. 2. 3-10).

Stone tools include grinding stones, graters, sickle teeth made of flint, stone ax (Fig. 2.12) *etc.* which is typical for an early farming culture. Cutting tools mostly consist of flint, as well as obsidian, including sickle teeth made of silver obsidian, curry-combs, scrapers, knife-type plates, saws, multipurpose tools and other types of tools. At the same time, the reveal of number of nuclei and the waste products in the settlements is the evidence to that the stone tools were made just in these places. One of the interesting features is the reveal of archaic - early Neolithic flat nuclei, chisel, plain-type tools and microlites. This is one of the characteristic features of the Leilatepe culture.

So far, two zoomorphic scepters made of river stone have been found from the monuments of Leilatepe culture. The first has been discovered from kurgan No.1(2006) at Soyugbulag (Fig. 2.1) (6, c. 51) and the second was found in 2016, during excavations in the settlement Poylu II (Fig. 2. 2). The sceptre found in Soyugbulag is intact and round in the section. But the elongated rear of the Poylu sceptre with the rectangular cross-section is broken. The ends of the both findings are in the form of horse head.

Different types of sceptres dated to the 5th-4th millennia BC had been wide spread in Eurasia (5). Opinions about their origin and semantics are not unanimous. Depending on their chronology, geography of spread and the

type their appearance and origin are of the local nature. In this regard, sceptres of the Leilatepe culture have more common tradition.

Bone products found from the Leilatepe culture monuments include awls, needles, spindle tips, nog plates, the Leilatepe-type pin and others (Fig. 2. 13). In this regard, the Beyuk Kesik site should be noted in particular. Unlike other monuments rich bone products were found in this site. Analogue of a tubular instrument discovered in Galayeri is known from Tepe Gawra which is considered to be a musical instrument.

The main development of metallurgy in Azerbaijan, including the South Caucasus in the whole, of course, is connected with Leilatepe culture. Metal smelting furnaces that were used in the production of metals, tools and numerous examples of metal objects - daggers (Fig. 2. 14), awls, ornaments, etc. have been found from the monuments relating to this culture. Crucibles have been found from Beyuk Kesik I, Poylu II and Galayeri settlements. In addition, open and closed clay molds were found from Beyuk Kesik and Galayeri settlements. The two-part closed molds being rare finds for the first half of the 4th millennium B.C were considered for the preparation of axe-type tools (1).

For the type of the settlements and graves (pitcher graves, burial chambers built of bricks, catacombs etc.) and with the main characteristics of ceramic products the Leilatepe archaeological culture formed in Azerbaijan is of Late Chalcolithic origin of Eastern Anatolia and Northern Mesopotamia (Upper Tigris-Euphrates basin).

More specifically, this culture is genetically connected with VII layer of Arslantepe, Amuq F phase, IX and XII layers of Tepe Gawra, lower stages of Tell Hazna, Tell Hamoukar, Oylum Hoyuk and cultural traditions of other monuments of this type. All these monuments dated to the period covering up to spread of Uruk culture from the Southern Mesopotamia to Northern Mesopotamia and Eastern Anatolia (end of the 5th - the beginning of the 4th century B.C) is related to the local Late Chalcolithic culture. Since the Leilatepe culture is connected just with these tra-

ditions no impact of Uruk culture is observed. So, Leilatepe culture cannot be considered of the Uruk origin. On the whole, any monument indicating the spread of "Uruk expansion" in the South Caucasus which began in Southern Mesopotamia in the mid of 4th millennium BC and covered the Northern Mesopotamia has not been found yet, and, this frequently used term has nothing to do with the Leilatepe culture (3).

Our investigations carried out in the last decade in the monuments of Leilatepe culture show that this culture was formed in the territory of Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 4th millennium B.C, with local features but based on the Late Chalcolithic traditions of Eastern-Anatolia and Northern Mesopotamia. The people, who were carriers of this culture, were engaged in sedentary farming-cattle-breeding and partly with mobile mobile pastoralism.

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Nəcəf Ələsgər oğlu Müseyibli

**LEYLATƏPƏ MƏDƏNİYYƏTİNİN
ÜMUMİ SƏCİYYƏSİNİN BƏZİ
MƏSƏLƏLƏRİ**

XÜLASƏ

Azərbaycan ərazisində yayılmış e.ə. IV minilliyin birinci yarısına aid Leylatəpə arxeoloji mədəniyyətinə aid abidələrdə son illər geniş qazıntılar aparılır. Demək olar ki, hər il qazıntılar zamanı yeni faktlar aşkarlanır. 2016-cı il tapıntıları sırasında katakombada tipli qəbir abidəsini və daşdan hazırlanmış skipetri xüsusilə qeyd etmək lazımdır.

Qalayeri yaşayış məskənində Leylatəpə mədəniyyəti üçün ilk dəfə olaraq körpə uşağın dəfn edildiyi katakombada aşkar edilmişdir (Fig. 1.1). Bu katakombada tipli qəbir qazıntı sahəsinin 3F kvadratının şimal hissəsində, yaşayış yerinin mədəni təbəqəsinin altında aşkar edilmişdir. Katakombanın 1,1 X 1,2 m ölçüsündəki düzbucaqlı planlı giriş hissəsi 2,7 m dərinlikdə bilavasitə mədəni təbəqənin altında altında aşkar edilmişdir. Katakombanın ümumi dərinliyi 1,1 m, uzunluğu isə 1,7 m olmuşdur. Oval şəkilli qəbir kamerasının dərinliyi 1,1 m, eni 70-75 sm, uzunluğu isə 1,3 m olmuşdur. Şimal-cənub istiqamətli katakombanın qəbir kamerasında başı şərqlə olmaqla sağ yanı üstdə, sıx bükülü vəziyyətdə təxminən 4-5 yaşlı uşaq dəfn edilmişdir. Üstdəki torpağın ağırlı-

ğından uşaq skeleti yerindəcə kiçik hissələrə parçalanmışdır. Skelet qara rəngli bərk maddə ilə əhatələnmişdir. Qəbir təmizlənmədən həmin maddə hissələrə parçalanmış halda aşkar edilmişdir. Nə skeletlə yanaşı, nə də qəbir kamerasına doldurulmuş torpağın içərisində heç bir arxeoloji material aşkar edilməmişdir.

Maraqlıdır ki, həmin kvadratın cənub-qərbində materikdə qazılmış çalada içərisində körpə uşağın dəfn edildiyi iri həcmli küp (pifos) aşkar edilmişdir (Fig. 1.2) Qalayerində 19 №-li bu qəbir materikdə qazılmış ilk saxsı qab qəbridir. Dik basdırılmış küpün ağız kənarı mədəni təbəqənin bitdiyi səviyyədə, küpün özü isə bütövlükdə xam torpaqda yerləşdirilmişdir. Küpün üstündə 40-50 sm dərinliyində kümbəz şəkilli boşluq var idi. Qabın üstündəki bu boşluğu mədəni təbəqə torpağından daha bərk olan 7-8 sm qalınlığında gil qatı örtmüşdü. Çox ehtimal ki, saxsı qabdan ibarət bu qəbir də materikdə qazılmış katakombada basdırılmışdı. Lakin onun üst və giriş hissəsi yumşaq mədəni təbəqə qatında yerləşdiyindən uçulmuş və saxlanmamışdır.

Qalayerində aşkar edilmiş katakombada qəbri Qafqazda neolit və xalkolit dövrlərinə aid ilk belə tapıntıdır. Qafqazın bu dövrləri, o cümlədən Leylatəpə mədəniyyəti üçün bu tip qəbirlər səciyyəvi deyildir.

Azsaylı katakombada tipli qəbirlər Şimali Mesopotamiyada I və II Yarımtəpə abidələrindən məlumdur. Bu abidələri qazmış arxeoloqlar bu qəbirləri Hələf mədəniyyətinə, bu mədəniyyəti isə e.ə.V minilliyə aid edirlər. Bu tədqiqatçılar doğru olaraq xalkolit və tunc dövrlərində Avrasiya məkanında bu tip qəbirlərin yayıldığını nəzərə alaraq onların polisen-trik əsasda meydana çıxdığını qeyd etmişlər (7, c. 31, 46-48).

Bu günədək Leylatəpə mədəniyyəti abidələrindən çay daşından hazırlanmış iki zooloq skipetrlər (əsa başlığı) aşkar edilmişdir. Onlardan birincisi Soyuqbulaqda (Fig.2.1.). 1 (2006) №-li kurqanda (6, c. 51), ikincisi isə 2016-cı ildə II Poylu yaşayış yerində qazıntılar zamanı aşkar edilmişdir (Fig. 2.2). Soyuqbulaq skipetri bütöv aşkar edilmişdir və kəsikdə dairəvidir. Düzbucaqlı kəsikli Poylu skipetrinin isə uzunsov arxa hissəsi sınımsızdır. Hər iki tapıntının sonluğu at başı forma-

sındadır.

Avrasiya məkanında e.ə. V-IV minilliklərə aid müxtəlif tip skipetrlər geniş yayılmışdır (5). Onların mənşəyi və semantikasına haqqında fikirlər yekdil deyildir. Xronologiyasından, yayılma coğrafiyasından və tipindən asılı olaraq onların meydana çıxması, mənşəyi də lokal səciyyəyə daşır. Bu baxımdan Leylatərə mədəniyyəti skipetrləri daha çox vahid ənənəyə malikdirlər.

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О НЕКОТОРЫХ ОСОБЕННОСТЯХ ЛЕЙЛАТЕПИНСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ

РЕЗЮМЕ

На территории Азербайджана в последние годы ведутся интенсивные археологические исследования памятников лейлатепинской культуры первой половины IV тыс. до н.э., выявляющие новые, ранее не известные, артефакты. Среди этих находок, особенно следует отметить погребение катакомбного типа и зооморфный скипетр из речной гальки.

Катакомба с детским захоронением на поселении Галаери (Fig. 1.1) обнаружена в кв. 3F раскопного участка, в материке, на глубине 2,7 м, непосредственно под культурным слоем. Входная часть прямоугольной формы (1,1 X 1,2 м). Глубина самой катакомбы составила 1,1 м, длина 1,7 м, ширина погребальной камеры 70-75 см, длина 1,3 м. Катакомба вырыта по направлению север-юг. В могильной камере на правом боку в сильно скорченном положении, головой на восток захоронен ребенок примерно 4-5 лет. Под давлением земли скелет раздавлен на мелкие фрагменты. Скелет был окружен кусками черной твердой массы. Рядом со скелетом и в заполнении могильной ямы никаких археологических материалов не обнаружено.

Примечательно, что на юго-западе того же раскопного квадрата в материке обнаружен вертикально поставленный крупный кувшин – пифос (Fig.1.2.), с захоронением младенца. Это погребение в

сосуде № 19 на поселении Галаери до уровня венчика находилось в материке. Над кувшином была куполообразная пустота высотой 40-50 см. Вероятно, данное кувшинное погребение также находилось в катакомбе. Однако, верхняя и входная части катакомбы не сохранились в рыхлом культурном слое.

Катакомба, выявленная в Галаери, не имеет параллелей в памятниках неолита и халколита Кавказа. Такой тип погребения не характерен для культур Кавказа, указанных периодов и лейлатепинской культуры в том числе.

Несколько катакомбных погребений известны из поселений Ярымтепе I и II в Северной Месопотамии. Исследователи этих памятников, относящие данные погребения к халафской культуре и датирующие их V тыс. до н.э., вполне справедливо отмечают, что полицентризм возникновения погребальных сооружений катакомбного типа на широкой территории Евразии, несомненно. Независимое появление катакомб можно предполагать и в различных культурах Ближнего и Среднего Востока (7, с. 31, 46-48).

До настоящего времени из памятников лейлатепинской культуры известны два зооморфных скипетра, изготовленные из речного камня. Первый из них (Fig. 2.1) обнаружен в кургане № 1(2006) в Союгбулаге (6, с. 51). Второй скипетр выявлен на поселении Пойлу II, во время раскопок в 2016 году (Fig. 2.2). Союгбулагский скипетр круглый в сечении, целый. Прямоугольный в сечении стержень скипетра из Пойлу, сломан. Навершия обоих скипетров представлены в форме конской головы.

В V-IV тыс. до н.э. скипетры были широко распространены на обширном ареале Евразии (5). Нет единого мнения об их происхождении и семантике. В зависимости от хронологии, ареала распространения и типологических особенностей появление скипетров носит локальный характер. С этой точки зрения указанные скипетры лейлатепинской культуры имеют общие черты единой традиции.

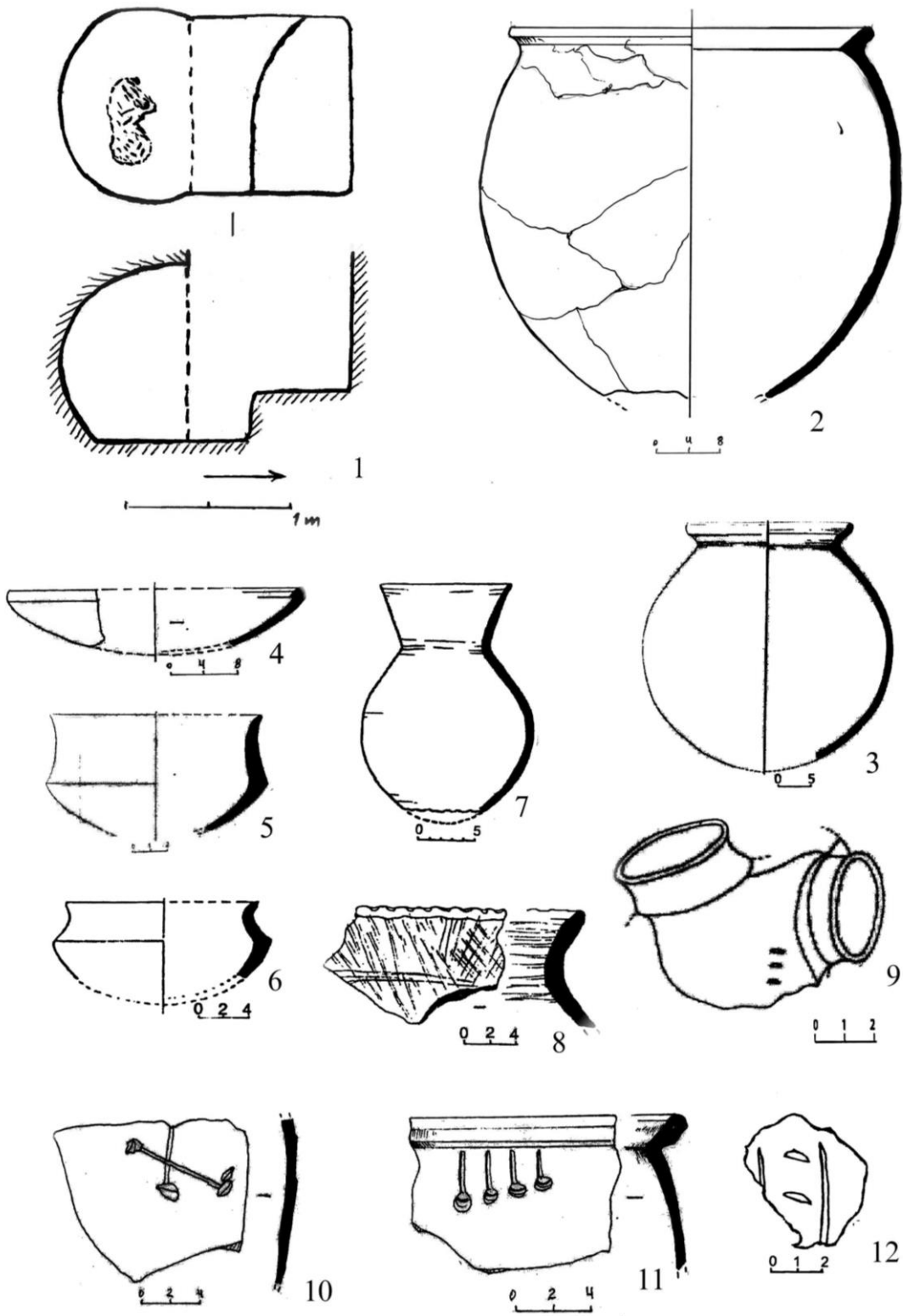


Fig. 1

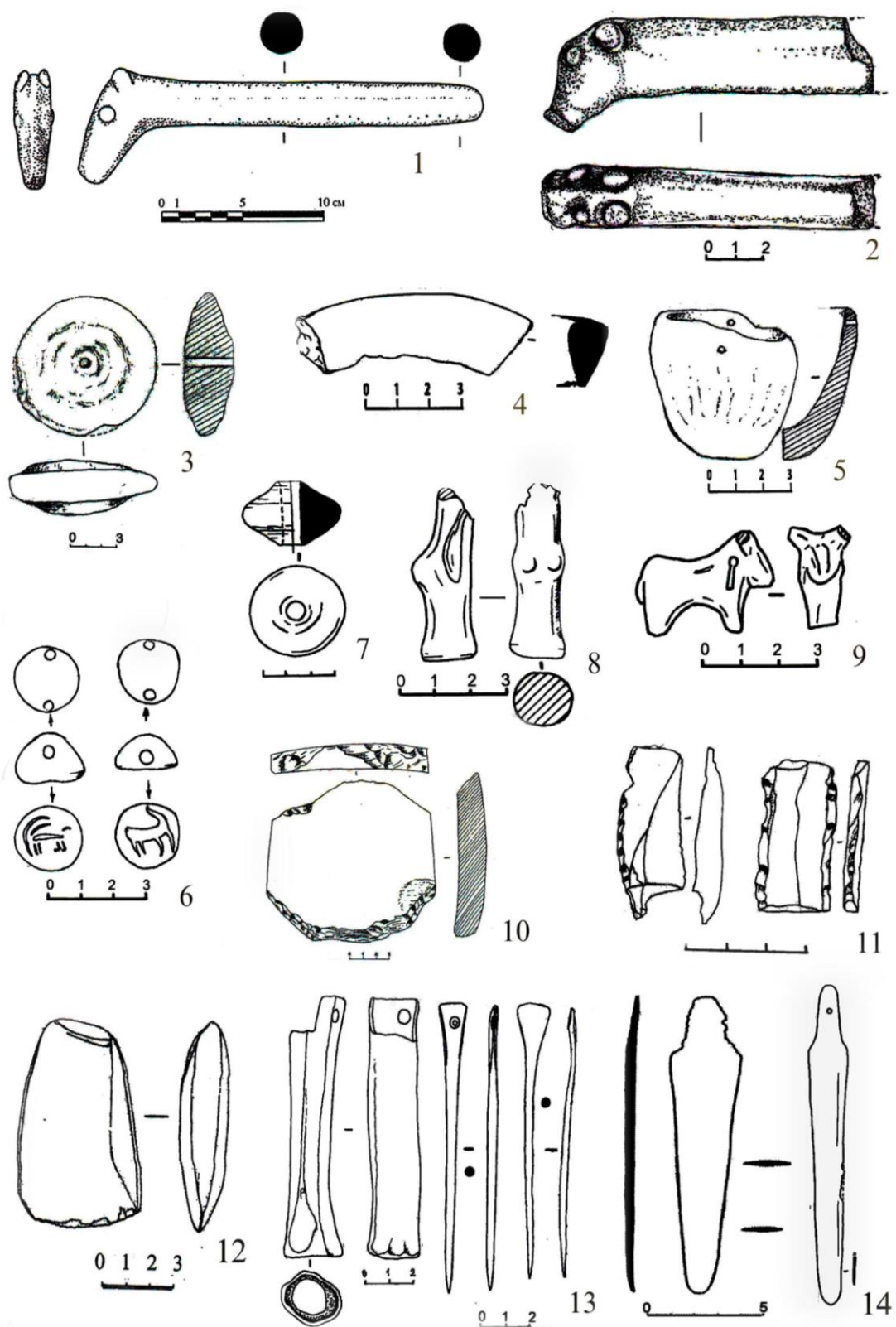


Fig. 2