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### NEW FINDINGS OF THE CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD IN NAKHCHIVAN

**Ruhiyye Rzayeva,**

*Doctor of Philosophy in History, Lecturer at the Department of General History,  
Nakhchivan State University (Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan)*

*ORCID ID: 0009-0004-0127-1264*

*zayeva.ruhiyye.001@gmail.com*

**Abstract.** In 2010–2018, newly discovered archaeological monuments in Sirabçay and Gahabçay basins provided archaeological materials of great importance for the dating of the Chalcolithic period. During the research conducted around Sirab, it was established that some of the newly recorded monuments belong to the middle stage of the Chalcolithic period. Ubaid and Dalma Tepe type ceramics were discovered in Uçan Ağıl, Uzunoba and Bülovkaya settlements. It was established that the settlements of Azerbaijan located in the south of Aras mainly used Zengezur obsidian. The population of the settlements located in Sirabçay and Gahabçay Valley also mainly used Zengezur obsidian. This is one of the facts confirming the connection between these monuments.

The new Chalcolithic monuments of Sirabçay and Gahabçay Valley also made it possible to determine the direction of relations with Mesopotamia and the Urmia Basin. At present, it can be said that one direction of relations with the Urmia basin was Nakhchivançay and Sirabçay Valley through Kültepe of Julfa. On the other hand, based on the researches, it can be said that the Chalcolithic culture found in the archaeological monuments located in the Şerur region or in the Sirabçay and Gahabçay valleys developed in interaction with the countries of the Middle East.

**Key words:** ceramics, chalcolithic, archaeological monuments, settlements, obsidian.

**Introduction.** The influence of Ubaid culture has clearly manifested itself in a number of monuments of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. On the other hand, it cannot be said that the Chalcolithic culture of Azerbaijan, including Nakhchivan, was brought from southern cultural centers, including Mesopotamia.

During the archaeological investigations carried out in Nakhchivan in recent years, new monuments and many ceramic products have been discovered. Ceramics found in the Chalcolithic monuments of Nakhchivan can be divided into two groups. The first group includes ceramics made of clay tempered with straw and baked in yellow or red. As mentioned above, this type of ceramics is distributed over a large area, starting from the middle reaches of the Aras River and ending with the Caspian Sea, including the Kura-Aras lowland and the Urmia Region. A group of monuments where this type of ceramics is widespread in Nakhchivan are in the Sirabçay Basin. Ceramic product with straw mixture is also known from the Neolithic layer of Kültepe I (Habibullayev, 1959, pp. 57–58). In shape, bake and color, they were identical to the ceramic product of the Chalcolithic era.

The ceramics of the Sirabçay Basin are somewhat different from the Chalcolithic ceramics of Ovçular Tepe in terms of technological features. Based on the research, it can already be said that a certain part of the archaeological monuments of Sirabçay and Gahabçay valleys, especially Uçan Ağıl and Uzunoba ceramics, belong to the stage before Ovçular Tepe.

**Main part.** It should be noted that the ceramic products of the newly discovered monuments around Sirab are similar in technological and morphological features to Kültepe I. But the ceramic product differs in certain properties. Studies show that most of these monuments were seasonal, with little or no use of comb-shaped ornament in ceramic products. Some samples of the comb-

shaped ornament found in the Sirabçay Valley are similar to ceramic products of the early stage of the Chalcolithic period. This allows you to date a group of newly discovered monuments by the early and middle stage of the Chalcolithic period (Seyidov, 2010, p. 81). However, most of the monuments located in the Sirabçay Valley are typical for the end of the Chalcolithic period. The priority in the dating of ceramic products was given to the results of carbon analyzes. The analysis of coal samples taken from the Uçan Ağıl showed that it dates back to the first half of the fifth millennium BC.

Based on research, it can be said that the traditions in the production of straw-mixed ceramics, which began back in the Neolithic period, continued until the late Chalcolithic. Consistency in pottery production is also evident in stone and bone tools. Undoubtedly, in the late Chalcolithic, the range of ceramic products increased in comparison with previous periods, but traditionalism is clearly traced in the technology and color of the wares.

Painted ceramics belonging to the Chalcolithic period were found in Alikomektepe in the Muğan plain, Goy Tepe in the Urmiye basin, Yanık Tepe, Kültepe near Julfa (Stephan, 1984, p. 23) and other monuments.

The ceramic ware found in the Muğan plain is mainly with light yellow slip, but chestnut and cherry tones are also found. Some examples of painted ceramics found in Muğan and Mil plain are patterned with wavy lines, the top of which is turned down, and the angles drawn inside each other. The designs mainly extend downwards from the painted band around the rim of the bowls. This type of ornament motif is characteristic of Halaf and Ubaid culture. Alikomektepe is characterized by the patterning method with angles drawn into each other. But at the same time, there is also a grid-shaped and arch-shaped ornament. Painted ceramics embroidered on this motif are not found in northwestern Iraq and Iran. I.H.Narimanov compared the painted ceramics of Alikomektepe with Halafwares, especially the painted ceramics of the Tepe-Quran dating back to the VI millennium BC.

Thus, based on comparative studies, we can say that the ceramics of the Sirabçay valley, engraved on red slip, belonging to the early stage of the Chalcolithic period, continued the Late Neolithic traditions.

Studies show that painted ceramics of the Chalcolithic period were widespread in the territory of Azerbaijan. As is known, this type of ceramics was also characteristic of the Haji-Firuz settlement. The ceramic product found in Kültepe of Julfa is similar to the painted ceramics of Ubaid culture. According to J.Kroll, Azerbaijan is characterized by the inclusion of Ubaid traditions in the monuments of the Urmia Basin in the late Chalcolithic period, despite the presence of specific cultural traditions in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods (Stephan, 1990, p. 71). This type of ceramics was also found in Barujtepe.

One of the bowl-shaped vessels embroidered in Halaf-Ubaid style was discovered in Shortapa settlement located near Ibadulla village of Şerur region. This bowl is patterned with nested angles in brown. The patterns are separated by a wide strip drawn around the rim of the bowl. This type of patterning is typical for Halaf-Ubaid ceramics.

According to research, it can be said that a large part of the painted ceramics found in the Chalcolithic monuments of Nakhchivan was a product of local production. A lot of painted ceramic products were also found in Halaj settlement located in Şerur region. One group of Halaj painted ceramics is characteristic of the last phase of the Neolithic period, while others are characteristic of the Chalcolithic period. They can be divided into three groups. The ceramic product included in the first group was embroidered with red and black lines directly on the red pottery of the wares. All of them are made of clay tempered with straw and are unpolished. Some of them also contain large sand admixture. The ware embroidered in this way in the Sirabçay Valley are known from the Yeni Yol monument.

The ceramic product included in the second group is made of clay tempered with straw. Patterns are drawn on the polished surface of the wares. Some wares are embroidered with brown lines. Some ceramic product made of clay without admixture, painted red and polished well. Some are unpolished.

The wares included in the third group differ in their pattern. Soot or antimony was used in their patterning. These containers were made of clay tempered with straw and baked in yellow. This type of ceramics mainly dates back to the late Chalcolithic. The painted ceramic product of the late Chalcolithic period was also discovered in Ovçular Tepe. Some of them were embroidered with lines drawn directly on the pottery of the wares, while others were embroidered with lines drawn on the polished surface. Some of these dishes discovered from Khalaj and Ovçular Tepe were decorated with buta.

Examination of the painted ceramics found in Nakhchivan shows that at least two of their variants belong to local production. The red painted ceramic ware with slip was most likely made by local craftsmen, imitating imported goods. However, during the investigations carried out in Ovçular Tepe, a number of imported goods were also found. Undoubtedly, these facts confirm the development of cultural relations between the Ubaid tribes and the tribes living in Nakhchivan. Painted ceramics with red slip as well as wares found in Uçan Ağıl and Uzunoba settlements located in Sirabçay Basin were mainly slipped with red color and embroidered with black color. Analysis of the remains of coal taken from the settlements of Uçan Ağıl and Uzunoba indicated that this type of ceramics appeared in the first half of the fifth millennium BC. The analysis of some coal samples taken from Ovçular Tepe also belonged to the middle of the fifth millennium BC.

Based on the research, it can be said that the influence of Halaf-Ubaid style ceramic products is also evident in Nakhchivan. Ubaid-type painted ceramics found in Çolpantepe in Eastern Anatolia (Marro, 2007, p. 80, plate I, 1) show that the influence of Ubaid culture spread far beyond the Urmia basin.

As mentioned above, the Chalcolithic monuments of the Sirabçay Valley are characterized by ceramics with an admixture of straw of red and yellow colors. In addition, along with red ceramics, yellow, brown and black ceramics are also found here. Nakhchivan's red slipped ceramic can be divided into two groups according to its technological features. Ceramics included in the first group were made of clay tempered with straw, but they were without a pattern. Ceramics belonging to the second group, unlike this, were patterned with black and sometimes brown color. Some examples of red slipped pottery were well polished but not embroidered.

Among the Chalcolithic ceramics of the Sirabçay valley, bowl-type wares with a hole on the edge of the rim are predominant. This type of bowls with holes in the edge of the rim was discovered from Neolithic monuments of Anatolia and the lower layers of Kültepe I. During the research conducted in the Sirabçay valley, it was possible to determine the characteristics of the technique of making holes in Neolithic and Chalcolithic wares. It has been known that in the Neolithic period, after the clay pots were baked, a hole was made in their body with a drill. These holes sometimes served to repair wares, although they were decorative. One of the jar type wares discovered by O.H. Habibullayev in Kültepe I is remarkable from this point of view. The entire body of this ware was surrounded by circular holes. Undoubtedly, these types of holes were not decorative.

Studies show that the ceramics of Nakhchivan are similar to the ceramics of the Urmia Basin and eastern Anatolia. Close similarities of Nakhchivan ceramics are also known from Urmia Basin and eastern Anatolia. But ceramics with red slip are more similar to Azerbaijani monuments. Ceramics found in Ovçular Tepe are similar to those found in Norşuntepe. However, as is known, the ceramics of Norşuntepe are brown, while the ceramics of Nakhchivan monuments are red. This type of ceramics is common in Yank Tepe, Goy Tepe and other monuments of Azerbaijan. Red-colored ceramics are a common distinctive feature of the southern regions of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. Ceramics with red slip are also widespread in the eastern regions of the Urmia Basin. According to I.H. Narimanov, red ceramics were the product of local production.

Studies show that since the Neolithic period, ceramics with a mixture of straw were produced in Nakhchivan. This is confirmed by research conducted in Kültepe I. It should be noted that mainly red and yellow ceramics were common in Nakhchivan. However, gray, brown and black ceramics have also been found.

Red-colored ceramics tempered with straw were produced in Nakhchivan until the late Chalcolithic period. However, in the late Chalcolithic, the range of ceramic products increased significantly.

As is known, ceramic products embroidered with a comb-shaped tool were widely spread in Azerbaijani monuments, including Nakhchivan in the late Chalcolithic period. However, there are very few comb-like ornaments in the ceramics of Sirab monuments. The study of ceramic products of Sirabçay Valley monuments shows that the comb-shaped ornament appeared at an early stage of the Chalcolithic period. This type of ornament from the beginning of the Chalcolithic period is distinguished by its neater and finer patterns. It is possible to see that the comb-like ornament became untidy in the late Chalcolithic period in the example of Ovçular Tepe.

**Conclusions.** The discovery of seasonal settlements near Sirab indicates the development of semi-nomadic cattle breeding in the middle and late stages of the Chalcolithic period. The ceramic product found in these monuments does not differ from the ceramics of Kültepe I in terms of technological and morphological features. This allows you to determine the sequence in the manufacture of a ceramic product. Studies show that the painted ceramics of Kültepe I appeared under the influence of Southern cultures, especially Halaf culture. The occurrence of painted vessels in the Chalcolithic monuments of Azerbaijan has been associated by researchers with Mesopotamian cultures. Some researchers linked this event with the migration of a certain group of population from Mesopotamia to the north, including to Azerbaijan. It is possible that painted ceramics were brought from the South by the migration of a certain population group. However, this does not mean that the ancient agricultural cultures of Azerbaijan were brought from other regions. First of all, it should be noted that local traditions have existed here since the Neolithic era. The discovery of painted ceramics from the Neolithic layer of Kültepe I confirms this. On the other hand, this area was inhabited starting from the Paleolithic period. In Nakhchivan, as in Eastern Anatolian monuments, the production of painted wares was not widespread and differed in texture. It can be said that relations with Northern Mesopotamia and the influence of these cultures on the North became possible as a result of economic and cultural ties. However, the study of the faunal remains found in Ovçular Tepe suggests that migration processes also exist. In our opinion, these migrations were related to economic and cultural relations.

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