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**SITES OF THE KURA-ARAXES CULTURE IN NORTHEASTERN
AZERBAIJAN: ISSUES OF HISTORICAL-CULTURAL AND
CHRONOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION
(based on material obtained during archeological surveys
of 2001-2002 within the IPARC international project)**

Abstract. The article presents the results of the archeological investigations, conducted in 2001-2002 in Northeastern Azerbaijan, in the territory of the so-called Khachmaz-Quba zone, in the context of the IPARC project (The International Program for Anthropological Research in the Caucasus; head of the project – Professor F.L. Kohl, Wellesley College, US). Along with the study of the medieval Gilgilchay defensive complex, an international expedition, in which Azerbaijani, Dagestani and American researchers participated, conducted a survey of fifteen known settlements of the Early Bronze Age: Kuchumkhantepe, Beyuktepe I-II, Gevdishantepe, Gyafletepeleri I-II, Tepeyatagi, Filtrtepe I-II, Gasankala, Mollaburkhantepe, Akhtytepe, Dashlytepe, Chakkalyktepe, Rustepe, and Serketepe. Generally, the sites have not been thoroughly investigated. Minor excavation works were conducted previously on one of the hills of Gyafletepeleri by D.A. Khalilov and G.P. Kesamanly. Large-scale excavations for 8 years were conducted at the Serkertepe settlement by D.L. Musaev. A deep stratigraphic sounding was opened at the last site during the IPARC expedition in 2002, which provided interesting archaeological material that allows for a fresh look at the results of previously published works. The present paper discusses the issues of historiography of the archaeological study of this region of Azerbaijan, adjacent to Dagestan; provides an overview of the exploration and monitoring of the known Kura-Araxes settlements (the data from Issue 1 of the “Compilation of Archaeological Sites of Azerbaijan” are widely used for comparison [Khalilov DA, Koshkarly KO, Arazova RB, 2011] and monographs by T.I. Akhundov “Historical topography of settlements and settlement system of Northeastern Azerbaijan” [2009]); outlines the prospects for further study. Subsequent publications will pay much attention to the characterization and analysis of the materials of the stratigraphic sounding at Serkertepe; a new concept of the historical, cultural and chronological interpretation of the Kura-Araxes monuments of Northeastern Azerbaijan within the framework of the Velikent archaeological culture will be proposed.

Keywords: Northeastern Azerbaijan; Khachmaz-Quba zone; Northeastern Caucasus; Kura-Araxes culture-historical society; Velikent culture; archeological survey; settlement; ceramics.

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КУРО-АРАКСКИЕ ПАМЯТНИКИ СЕВЕРО-ВОСТОЧНОГО АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА: ВОПРОСЫ ИСТОРИКО-КУЛЬТУРНОЙ И ХРОНОЛОГИЧЕСКОЙ ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ (по материалам археологических разведок 2001-2002 гг. по Международному проекту IPARC)

Аннотация. Статья посвящена итогам разведочных археологических исследований, проводившихся в 2001-2002 гг. в Северо-Восточном Азербайджане, на территории т.н. Хачмасско-Кубинской зоны, в рамках выполнения проекта IPARC (The International Program for Anthropological Research in the Caucasus – Международная программа антропологических исследований на Кавказе; руководитель проекта – профессор Ф.Л. Кол, Уэлсли Колледж, США). Наряду с изучением средневековой Гильгильчайской оборонительной системы, международная экспедиция, в которой участвовали азербайджанские, дагестанские и американские ученые, провела разведочный осмотр 15 известных поселений эпохи ранней бронзы – Кучумхантепе, Бююктепе I-II, Гевдишантепе, Гяфлетепелери I-II, Тепеятаги, Фильтртепе I-II, Гасанкала, Моллабурхантепе, Ахтытепе, Дашлытепе, Чаккалыктепе, Рустепе и Серкертепе. В основном эти памятники не подвергались археологическим раскопкам. Небольшие раскопочные работы в свое время были проведены на одном из холмов Гяфлетепелери (работы Дж.А. Халилова и Г.П. Кесаманлы). Широкомасштабные раскопки в течение 8 лет были проведены на поселении Серкертепе (работы Д.Л. Мусаева). На последнем памятнике экспедицией IPARC в 2002 г. был заложен глубокий стратиграфический шурф, давший интересный археологический материал, позволяющий по-новому смотреть на результаты предшествующих опубликованных работ. В настоящей статье рассматриваются вопросы историографии археологического изучения этого региона Азербайджана, примыкающего к Дагестану; дается обзор разведочного осмотра и мониторинга известных куро-аракских поселений (при этом широко используются для сравнения данные из Выпуска 1 «Свода археологических памятников Азербайджана» [Халилов Дж.А., Кошкарлы К.О., Аразова Р.Б., 2011] и монографии Т.И. Ахундова «Историческая топография поселений и система расселения Северо-Восточного Азербайджана» [2009]); обрисовываются перспективы их дальнейшего научного изучения. В последующих публикациях большое внимание будет уделено характеристике и анализу материалов стратиграфического шурфа на Серкертепе, а также будет предложена новая концепция историко-культурной и хронологической интерпретации куро-аракских памятников Северо-Восточного Азербайджана в рамках великентской археологической культуры.

Ключевые слова: Северо-Восточный Азербайджан; Хачмасско-Кубинская зона; Северо-Восточный Кавказ; куро-аракская культурно-историческая общность; великентская культура; археологические разведки; поселение; керамика.

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Introduction

The earliest reports of prehistoric sites of the Early Bronze Age were in the North-eastern Caucasus during the 5th Archeological Congress in 1880 in Tiflis. The most famous site discovered at that time was the Velikent settlement [1, p. 515]. After more than half a century, the number of sites increased due to the efforts of A. P. Kruglov. Of these, the Kayakent settlement is of particular interest. It can be attributed to the group of early agricultural settlements of the Shengavit-Shreshblur type as the most northern point of such monuments [2, p. 29]. Soon B.A. Kuftin distinguished a cultural association called the “Kura-Araxes Eneolithic age” [3, p. 73–127]. It should be noted that the attempts to systematize and analyze the original archaeological culture of Transcaucasia in the third millennium BC were made by this outstanding scholar earlier. Thus, back in 1940, he wrote about the selection of sites of Transcaucasia, which can be distinguished in the “culture of the lower layer of ash hills and the oldest cyclopean fortresses of Transcaucasia”, noting that ceramics of this community can be found in Dagestan [4, p. 5–35]. He elaborates the latter statement in a more substantive way in his remarkable article “Urartian «columbarium» at the foot of Ararat and the Kura-Araxes Eneolithic age” [3, p. 126].

B.A. Piotrovsky made a great contribution to the recognition of the concept of the “Kura-Araxes Eneolithic age” by publishing in 1949 a course of lectures titled “Archeology of Transcaucasia”, and a special article on the Kura-Araxes settlements of Armenia (“Settlements of the Copper Age of Armenia”) [5; 6]. B.A. Piotrovsky also paid attention to the South Dagestan monuments “with a very early settlement at the Kayakent station”, suggesting that an intermediate link should be looked for in East Azerbaijan, which would connect them with settlements of the “Eneolithic period of the Central Transcaucasian type” [6, p. 179; see also: 5, p. 38–39].

There are two main groups of researchers in the Northeastern Caucasus (including Northeastern Azerbaijan), who argue on the level of cultural similarity of the Kura-Araxes monuments. The first consists of, with a few exceptions, Azerbaijani scholars who consider the Kura-Araxes monuments of Northeastern Azerbaijan as a separate variant of the Kura-Araxes culture and think of it as a kind of link between similar sites of Dagestan and the North Caucasus, on the one hand, and the main (southern) body of this culture, on the other [7; 8, p. 1, 24–25; 9, p. 114–115]. Somewhat different, though similar, ideas [10] were proposed by G. S. Ismailov, who considered it possible to separate a number of independent cultures, including the North Caucasus and Azerbaijan (“approximately the current territory of Azerbaijan”), within the framework of a single Kura-Araxes cultural-historical community. It is interesting that later he corrected his opinion, highlighting the similarity of the materials of the Baba-Dervish settlement to the sites of Armenia and assuming that “a local

group of the studied culture developed in these adjacent areas, which had their own specific features” [11, p. 100–101].

The view of the second, more predominant group of researchers, sees the similarity of the Kura-Araxes sites of Dagestan and Northeastern Azerbaijan as a reason to include them in one local version of the Kura-Araxes culture. If at that time A.P. Kruglov [2, p. 29], B.B. Piotrovsky [6], R.M. Munchaev [12; 13, p. 155], E.I. Krupnov [14], K.K. Kushnarev, T.N. Chubinishvili [15], while speaking about the Dagestan settlements (Kayakent, Velikent) as the most northern sites of the Kura-Araxes culture, which have clearly defined local features, did not know about the antiquities of the Early Bronze Age of Northeastern Azerbaijan, then since the early 1970s, as more and more Kura-Araxes artifacts were revealed in this zone, the assertion about the separation of the monuments of Dagestan and Northeastern Azerbaijan into a separate local version of the Kura-Araxes culture became widespread [16, p. 173; 17, p. 273–274; 18, p. 19; 19, p. 230–231, etc.]. Representatives of this group of archaeologists can also be found in Azerbaijan [see: 20, p. 59; 21, p. 125–126]. The possibility of attributing the settlements of the Early Bronze Age “in the adjacent regions of Azerbaijan and Dagestan” to the sites of the East Caucasian local version of the Kura-Araxes culture was recognized in a monograph by G. Ismailzade [22, p. 15]. Later R. M. Munchaev somewhat changed his previous perspective on this issue, stating that “the settlements and burial grounds of Dagestan constitute a pronounced local group of monuments... (Kura-Araxes – auth.) culture-historical community”, the similarity of which to the sites of the Khachmaz-Quba zone can be discussed after further research [23, p. 23].

The Kura-Araxes monuments of the Early Bronze Age, located on the territory of the Northeastern Caucasus, were traditionally considered as part of a separate version of this culture. There was no fixed name for this variant; it was often referred to as “Northeastern Caucasian version of the Kura-Araxes culture”, in other cases – “Dagestan version of the Kura-Araxes culture”. We have made an attempt [224, p. 60–65; 25, pp. 86–102; 26, p. 691–692; 27, p. 111] to revive the old suggestions of some of the authors (G.S. Ismailov, M. G. Gadzhiev) on the need to consider the Kura-Araxes sites within the framework of a broad culture-historical community with the separation of individual archaeological cultures within it, including the Velikent culture, which combines the sites of the Northeastern Caucasus.

Thus, the urgent need for a direct comparison of the Kura-Araxes monuments of Dagestan and Northeastern Azerbaijan is obvious for researchers. It seems that the survey material obtained in 2001–2002 in the territory of Northeastern Azerbaijan within the framework of the IPARC project («The International Program for Anthropological Research in the Caucasus»; project director: prof. P.L. Kohl, Wellesley College, US) have a certain significance for such a comparison. The introduction of this material is the subject of the present paper. The first part of this article primarily aims at reviewing the reconnaissance routes of 2001.

Brief historiographical overview of the archaeological study of the territory of Northeastern Azerbaijan

The Northeastern Caucasus is an independent geographical and ethno-cultural region, which naturally included the part of the territory of Azerbaijan that is commonly known as Northeastern Azerbaijan [18, p. 10–26; 19, p. 7]. The Khachmaz-Quba zone¹, which is a kind of continuation to the south of the Coastal Lowland of Dagestan, is part of Northeastern Azerbaijan and is a triangle bounded by the Samur River from the South-South-West (the place of the administrative border between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan), with the Great Caucasus Mountain Range from the South-South-East, and with the Caspian Sea from the East-North-East (Fig. 1). The total area of the zone, which includes 4 administrative districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Khachmaz, Qusarsky, Qubinsky and Divichinsky – renamed in 2010 to Shabransky), is *ca* 8.5 thousand sq. km, while the altitude fluctuations of the landscape have a large amplitude: from -28 m near the sea and up to 4485 m at the top of Bazar-Dyuzyu.

When considering the history of the study of archaeological sites in the Northeastern Caucasus, a certain paradox arises: the region, on the one hand, was the first, and, as it seems, remains the only one on the territory of Azerbaijan, where for some years, with the involvement of a large number of specialists, a continuous survey in order to identify and record the monuments was conducted [21; 28, p.6]; on the other hand, the degree and scale of excavation works on archaeological sites in this zone is absolutely incomparable with other regions of Azerbaijan. In line with the latter statement, we can also recall that Northeastern Azerbaijan generally remained a ‘white spot’ on the archaeological map of Azerbaijan for a very long time. The earliest more or less professional excavations were carried out here only in the late 20s of the last century. The first publication devoted to these salvage operations appeared in 1929 and was written by J. Alexandrovich-Nasyfi [31]. Thus, the beginning of the archaeological study of the Khachmaz-Quba zone was almost half a century late in comparison with Coastal Dagestan.

In the subsequent pre-war years, the region was visited sporadically by researchers (A. K. Alekperov, E. A. Pakhomov et al.), who examined certain destroyed monuments; there are some publications on the results of these trips. In the post-war years, in connection with the intensification of construction work on the national economic objects of Azerbaijan, relatively large-scale fieldwork was also launched. However, for a long time the Khachmaz-Quba zone was avoided. A more systematic

¹ There are also other variants of this toponym: «Quba-Khachmaz zone» [29, p. 5]; «Khachmaz-Divichin zone», «the zone of Khachmaz-Divichi» [22, p. 15, 177]. A comprehensive physical and geographical description of Northeast Azerbaijan can be found in A. N. Asadov [30] and T. I. Akhundov [28, p. 13–31].

search for archaeological sites in this area, with limited reconnaissance being carried out on some of them, was undertaken by J. A. Khalilov in the late 50s – early 60s of the last century. Most of the monuments first identified and investigated during the reconnaissance were of Albanian or early Medieval time. In the context of our subject, we should mention the article by J. A. Khalilov and G. P. Kesamanly [20], devoted to the first results of a stationary study of one of the Early Bronze Age monuments of Gyafletepeleri.

A significant event in the history of the study of the archeology of the North-eastern Caucasus was the formation in 1975 of the expedition «Compilation of the Archaeological Monuments of Azerbaijan» (hereinafter – CASA), which for 5 years systematically conducted a frontal survey of the entire territory of Northeastern Azerbaijan and recorded the identified sites based on the results of their surface inspection and the opening of prospecting trenches. The logical result of such work was the publication in 1991 of the first issue of CASA, specifically dedicated to the archaeological sites of the Northeastern Caucasus [21]. Despite the depressingly poor quality of the illustrative material given in this publication, it is generally of great scientific importance in the recording, protection and monitoring of cultural heritage sites in this region of Azerbaijan. In addition to the “CASA”, the participants of this project published a number of articles and notes that addressed the issues of historical, cultural and chronological determination of the identified monuments [32; 33; 34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 20; 45; 46; 47]².

It is interesting that in the course of the work on the compilation of the CASA, the idea of a special study of the historical topography of settlements of different times on the territory of the Khachmaz-Quba zone was proposed [48; 49]; subsequently, according to the results of such developments, T. I. Akhundov defended his PhD thesis [7], which is relevant even today, as evidenced by its recent publication in the form of a separate monograph [28]. The great value of Akhundov's scientific work also lies in the extensive use of data from other related disciplines (geology, paleomorphology, paleoclimatology, etc.) to clarify the system of settlement of the ancient population in the territory of Northeastern Azerbaijan.

Simultaneously with the CASA expedition, the archaeological expedition of the Azerbaijan State University began its work in Northeastern Azerbaijan under the direction of A.S. Orundzhev, which studied the early medieval antiquities of the region. Later, in 1980, in connection with new construction projects, the fieldwork on the medieval settlement of Shabran by Shirvan-Shabran archaeological expedition under the leadership of R.B. Geyushev started.

In 1983, a new stage in the archaeological investigation of Northeastern Azerbaijan began in connection with the organization of the Quba-Khachmaz archaeological

2 For the detailed bibliography of such works, see: [21, p. 10-11].

expedition under the leadership of J.A. Khalilov. One of the detachments of this expedition began to excavate the medieval settlement of Sandyk-Tepe. The second detachment for 8 years conducted large-scale excavations on a multi-layered site – the settlement of Borispoltepe (later, after the renaming of the city of Borispol, founded by the German colonists, in Serker, the monument acquired a new name – Serkertepe). The archaeologist D.L. Musaev directed these works. The works on Serkertepe were covered in the articles and notes of the author of the excavations [50; 51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 9; 58; 59; 60]. In 1992 D.L. Musaev defended his PhD thesis, which was based entirely on the materials of the excavations of this extraordinary site [8]. In 2006, D. L. Musaev published a monograph “Serkertepe – a settlement of the Early Bronze Age” [29], which is a slightly edited text of his PhD thesis. This is the first work specifically devoted to summarizing the materials of the excavations of this extraordinary monument, but, unfortunately, it does not cover the issues of the nature of stratigraphy of layers, statistics of finds, drafts– wall profiles and cross-sections. The book also lacks information about the prospecting work of the international group of archaeologists (Azerbaijan, Russia and the United States) in Northeastern Azerbaijan in 2001-2002.

Here we should mention the background of the Azerbaijani-Dagestan-American joint work in Northeastern Azerbaijan. The idea of conducting these international studies was a logical development of the large-scale archaeological investigation carried out within the framework of the International Program of Anthropological Research in the Caucasus (IPARC), led by one of the authors of this work [see: 61]. In the second half of the 1980s – early 1990s, thanks to the financial opportunities provided by this program, large fieldwork was conducted in Armenia [62; 63; 64] and in Georgia [65], which also included the study of the Kura-Araxes sites.

Soon after the beginning of the most acute ethnopolitical conflicts and local wars in Transcaucasia and the subsequent collapse of the USSR, the main work on the IPARC program was relocated to the territory of Dagestan. In 1994-1999, in Coastal Dagestan, a joint Dagestan-American archaeological expedition launched large-scale excavations of a number of sites of the Early Bronze Age, attributed to the Kura-Araxes culture [66; 67; 68; 69; 70; 25; 27]. The largest works of the expedition, which included specialists from Georgia, Great Britain, Spain and other countries along with Russian (Dagestani) and American archaeologists, were focused on the Velikent set of monuments of the Early and Middle Bronze Age. However, by the end of the 1990s, the large-scale studies of Dagestani-American researchers were essentially curtailed due to the aggravation of the ethnopolitical and criminogenic situation in the Northeastern Caucasus.

Due to the prevailing force majeure circumstances, on the initiative of the American director of the Dagestan-American (Velikent) expedition, Prof. Philip L. Kohl, with the support of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National

Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan (Director - corr. member of ANAS A.A. Abbasov) in 2001, the work within the framework of the international IPARC program was launched in the territory of Northeastern Azerbaijan. As part of the international archaeological expedition of ADA, the following researchers participated: from the Azerbaijani side – K.O. Koshkarly, T.I. Akhundov, I. A. Aliev, D. L. Musaev et al.; from the Russian (Dagestani) side – M. S. Gadzhiev and R. G. Magomedov; from the American side – P.L. Kohl M. F. Hainth and M. G. Gaither.

The work of the international group of archaeologists in 2001 was generally of a survey nature. The settlements of the Early Bronze age known at that time were visited, the preservation of these sites was monitored during the inspection, and surface finds were collected.

The work of the ADA expedition with almost the same composition was continued in the following year of 2002. One of the main aspects of the expedition's work that year was the exploration route along the remaining remnants of the defensive system – the “Gilgilchay Long Wall” [71, pp. 441-464; 72, pp. 143-177]. For the first time in Azerbaijani archaeology, a significant part of this fortification system of the early Medieval period was mapped in detail. Another important direction of the expedition was the opening of a stratigraphic trench at the famous multi-leveled settlement of Serkertepe. The circumstances that caused the need for such work on the site, which was previously studied for almost ten years, will be covered in the second part of this paper.

Here, for the time being, we should note that the large-scale excavations at Serkertepe, interrupted due to the collapse of the USSR and the discontinuation of funding for large-scale excavation works, have now been resumed again under the leadership of D. L. Musaev. The preliminary results of the work in 2009 were covered in the press [73, pp. 76-80]. There is also preliminary information about the start (since 2016) of large-scale excavation work at the settlement of Chakkalyktepe under the leadership of the famous Azerbaijani archaeologist S.G. Ashurov.

Summing up the historiographical review of the archaeological study of Northeastern Azerbaijan, first of all, regarding the Bronze Age, we can say the following:

- the region, despite the continuous field survey in it and a published consolidated volume of CASA, is still the least studied area on the territory of Azerbaijan;
- certain sites that have undergone large-scale excavations (the settlement of Serkertepe); the materials of these works are still poorly introduced into scientific circulation and, in fact, remain little known to specialists;
- so far, there have been no identified and investigated funerary sites of the Early Bronze Age in this area, which leads to one-sided idea about the features of the historical and cultural development of local tribes in the Bronze Age.

Azerbaijan-Dagestan-American Archaeological Survey of 2001 in Northeastern Azerbaijan

The work of the International Azerbaijan-Dagestan-American Expedition (ADA) in the 2001 season was of exploratory nature and lasted for one month. During this time, the members of the expedition visited and visually examined 15 settlements – almost all the known sites of the Early Bronze Age of this region: Kuchumkhan-tepe, Boyuktepe I, II, Gevdeshantepe III, Gyafletepeleri I, II, Tepeyatagi, Filtrtepe, Gasankala, Mollaburkhan-tepe, Akhtytepe, Dashlytepe, Chakkalyktepe, Rustepe and Serkertepe.

Below is a brief overview of the locations of these sites (Fig. 1), the features of their topography, a description of the surface materials collected during the survey of the settlements by the participants of the international expedition and their comparative analysis against the background of the data obtained by the CASA expedition.

The settlement of Kuchumkhan-tepe is located 1 km south of the village of Kullar in the Qusar district, near the intersection of the Samur-Absheron Canal with the Khanarkhy Canal. During the construction of these hydraulic structures, the settlement was severely damaged (Fig. 1-A). The area of the survived part of the settlement is 250 sq. m., the hill height is 15 m. During the field survey of the site in 1976 and making prospecting sounding by the CASA expedition members, certain data were obtained, that allowed to attribute the site to the Kura-Araxes culture [21, p. 89-90; 34, 1984, p.78-82; 28, p. 34]. According to the results of the prospecting sounding, the thickness of the cultural layer is 3.2 m, while the lower two meters belong to the Early Bronze age. Thus, the site is two-layered: at the bottom – the Early Bronze age, at the top – the Developed Middle Ages.

Among the surface finds of the CASA expedition, a jug with a curved large handle with a “moustached base” and a large frying pan with shaped sides are of particular interest [28, Fig. 34]. One can also note a large number and variety of bowls with internal thickening at the rim; some of them have handles with closed bases.

Describing the surface materials collected during our survey of the monument in 2001, first of all, we should mention an expressive stone axe with an undrilled hole (Fig. 3, 1-2). The axe is made of dark brown river stone, of the following dimensions: height 10.3 cm, hole diameter – 2.3 cm. The head of the axe with a height of 2.5 cm is separated by a ledge; the blade expands downwards and is not very sharp.

In total, we collected, described and illustrated 33 ceramic fragments (Fig. 2-B, 1-6; 3, 3-29). Of these, 8 fragments can be certainly attributed to bowls with expanded sides in the form of inverted truncated cones. According to the form of the rim, such bowls can be divided into 2 types: bowls with an internal thickening at the rim (Fig. 3, 3-4, 6, 9, 14) and bowls with straight pointed or blunt beveled rims (fig. 3, 5, 7-8). The surface of all these bowls is well polished, has spots of brown-gray and pinkish

shades. 18 fragments are pots with sharply excurved rims (Fig. 3, 11-13, 15-29; 2-B, 4). According to the surface finish, the vessels of the pot type are identical to the bowls described above. Particularly noteworthy is the presence of fragments of vessels on hollow bases in the collection of the surface material (Fig. 2-B, 1-2). One of the fragments belongs to a vessel with a recoverable diameter of the lower base-stand of 23 cm; the surface is of gray-brown glossy colour (Fig. 2-B, 1). Judging by this fragment, the stand was decorated with a hole – a “window” of a sub-rectangular shape, which is extremely rare for this type of vessels. Among the surface finds there is also a fragment of a brazier with a recoverable mouth diameter of about 30 cm, a vertical, slightly inclined side with curly waves on the top (Fig. 2-B, 3). A distinctive feature of this type of cookware is the protruding pointed edge of the base. Finally, two handles of different types conclude the description of the surface material of this monument (Fig. 2-B, 5-6).

The settlements of Boyuktepe I and II are located close to each other, and, in general, unlike Kuchumkhantepe, have survived in a satisfactory condition (Fig. 4-5). Both sites were discovered and investigated by the CASA expedition in 1976 [32, p. 95-99; 21, p. 68-72].

The settlement of Boyuktepe I is located 2-2.5 km to the northwest from the village of Gidzhanoba in the Qusar district, at an altitude of 175 m above sea level, on an oval hill with steep slopes and a height of 15 m, adjacent to the Khanarkhy Canal [28, p. 35]. The area of the top of the hill is 3600 sq. m. The CASA prospecting sounding allowed us to determine the thickness of the cultural level of the monument – 3.5 m, of which the lower 2 m belong to the Early Bronze age, and the upper 1.5 m – to the early Middle Ages. In Boyuktepe I, the CASA sounding provided a representative collection of indicative ceramic forms [28, Fig. 27], among which bowls with an internal thickening at the rim, small pots, braziers with slightly protruding sides. The 2001 collection is modest (Fig. 4-B, 1-5): 5 ceramic fragments, of which 3 are rims with an internal oblique thickening (Fig. 4-B, 1-3), 1 fragment of a jar vessel (Fig. 4-B, 4) and 1 fragment in the form of a sharply excurved rim of a small pot-type vessel (Fig. 4-B, 5).

Boyuktepe II is located 0.5 km south of the previous site, at the same height, on several hills of different sizes [28, p. 36]. The largest of the hills has a height of up to 15 m and is a cape-like elevation with a peak area of 12,500 sq. m. On the smaller of the two largest hills, the CASA prospecting trench was opened, which revealed cultural deposits of the Early Bronze Age with a thickness of 3 m. Among the surface material from the hills and the trench is a whole selection of large, very expressive vessels such as bowls with an internal thickening, pythos, pots and cans, vessels on hollow bases, braziers, etc. [28, Fig. 28].

The participants of the ADA expedition collected little surface material, including a fragment of a flint insert of a sickle of the middle type (Fig. 5-B, 9), 4 bowl rims with

internal thickening (Fig. 5-B, 1-4), 3 pot fragments with sharply excurved rims (Fig. 5-B, 5-7), 1 fragment of a jar vessel with an excurved rim, the outer edge of which is dissected by rounded indentations (Fig. 5-B, 8), 1 fragment of the vessel side with an incised pattern (Fig. 5-B, 11) and, finally, a fragment of a very rare corrugated vessel base (Fig. 5-B, 10). It should be noted that the Boyuktepe II site has ceramics with bodies coated with liquid clay, as well as vessels with a zigzag incised pattern on the shoulders and on the edge [28, Fig. 28]. Among the illustrations of artifacts revealed by the CASA expedition, there is a fragment with a characteristic pattern in the form of a zigzag ribbon applied in the form of a comb stamp [28, Fig. 30]. This fragment, judging by the nature of the pattern, is very similar to the so-called high-quality ceramic wares of the Velikent II type, but neither T. I. Akhundov, nor the authors of the first Issue of CASA provide any information confirming this fact.

The settlement of Gevdishantepe³ is one of the best survived sites of the Early Bronze Age in this part of Azerbaijan, which is partly due to its remoteness from people. It is located 1 km to the south from the village of Kalajyk in the Qusar district, on a hill (Fig. 6-A) of an elongated sub-triangular shape (the area of the upper leveled part is 7100 sq. m.) and a height of 7-12 m [21, pp. 76-77, Fig. 30; 28, p. 76, fig. 4, 1]. During the field survey of the monument by the CASA expedition, the thickness of the cultural layer was established at 2 m; the settlement is single-leveled. Among the surface material and the collection of finds from the prospecting trench of the CASA expedition, there are well-known bowls with an internal thickening, equipped with handles, various pots with excurved rims, as well as braziers with prominent rims [28, Fig. 32].

The surface material from the 2001 filed survey includes: 4 fragments of bowls in the form of rims with internal thickening (Fig. 6-B, 1-4), 3 fragments of pots with sharply excurved rims (Fig. 6-B, 6-7, 9), one of which belongs to a vessel with an incised pattern on the body (Fig. 16, 6), 1 fragment of a bowl with a ledged neck (Fig. 6-B, 8), 1 fragment of a bowl with a slightly bent neck (Fig. 6-B, 10), as well as fragments of 3 different vessels on hollow bases (Fig. 6-B, 5, 10-11; one of these vessels has an open round hole on the base (Fig. 6-B, 11)).

The settlements of Gyafletepeleri I-II are situated close to each other, and in fact represent one single site, located on two butte-hills (Fig. 7), 1 km south of the road fork of Quba city, at an altitude of 300 m above sea level [21, p. 81-83, Fig. 35-36; 28, p. 38-39, Fig. 3].

The settlement of Gyafletepe I is located on an oval-shaped hill, with a height of 7 to 11 m; the area of the upper platform is 2250 sq. m. The site was discovered in 1960, and in 1970 minor excavations were carried out on it (the generalized information about the results of the excavations are mentioned above [20]). Judging by the

3 Other spellings of this toponym can be found in the literature: Govdishantepeh, Gevdishantepeh.

inventory of one of the hills, namely Gyafletepe II, given in the book of T. I. Akhundov [28, Fig. 31], the site is characterized by bowls with oblique rims with internal thickening, pots with sharply excurved rims, pots with cylindrical high necks, vessels on hollow ornamented bases, braziers with prominent sides, as well as stone axes with grooved eyes. One such axe, poorly preserved, was found during our investigation of the monument in 2001 (Fig. 8-A, 2). Dimensions of this axe are: height – 14 cm, width – 10 cm; made of river cobblestone. Another stone tool (of black river pebble) uncovered accidentally is an axe of the adze type with a roughly emphasized cutting edge (Fig. 8-A, 1). Both of these finds were uncovered on the hill of Gyafletepe I. In addition, a number of interesting objects were found on the same hill. Among them are: a fragment of a clay mold of a wheel (Fig. 8-A, 3), a flint knife-shaped plate with retouched edges (Fig. 8-A, 11), 7 bowl fragments with internal thickening (Fig. 8-A, 4-10; one bowl in the upper part of the body has a number of open holes – Fig. 8-A, 10). On the second hill of Gyafletepe II, fragments of bowls with internal thickening-sides at the rims (3 fragments – Fig. 8-B, 1-3), fragments (3 samples) of pots with sharply excurved rims (Fig. 8-B, 4, 6-7), 1 fragment of a flat brazier with a slightly raised rim at the edge (Fig. 8-B, 9) and 1 fragment of a corrugated vessel base (Fig. 8-B, 5) were found.

The settlement of Tepeyatagi is one of the most heavily damaged monuments of the Early Bronze Age in this part of Azerbaijan. Local residents systematically make adobe bricks from the clay of the hill (Fig. 9-A). The monument was discovered on the outskirts of the city of Khudat (Khachmaz district of the Republic of Azerbaijan) in 1963 by the Shemakhi archaeological expedition [21, p. 117]; in 1977, it was investigated again by the CASA expedition [21, p.117]. The settlement is located on a low (height – 3-4 m) hill of elongated shape (top area – 23,000 sq. m), stretched in the direction of East-West.

Although our Azerbaijani colleagues uncovered a large number of pottery samples on the slopes of the hill and in the prospecting trenches, the illustrations of the artifacts, unfortunately, were not published. Our small collections of surface material are given in Fig. 9-B: bowls with an internal thickening at the rim (Fig. 9-B, 1), bowls with a straight rim, pots with a sharply excurved rims (Fig. 9-B, 4, 7-8), a fragment of a brazier with a slightly raised rim (Fig. 9-B, 9), a stone pestle-courant (Fig. 9-B, 6). Among the surface material there is a bottom part of a vessel with a thickly coated body (Fig. 9-B, 10). One of the fragments of the pot has incised lines on the neck and a heavily coated body, separated from the neck by a relief roller, dissected by obliquely applied nail-like notches (Fig. 9-B, 7).

The archaeological sites identified by the CASA expedition near the filters of the famous Shullar reservoir, which supplies water to Baku, received quite non-euphonious names – Filtrtepeh I-II, which are mentioned in the book of T. I. Akhundov [28, p. 40-43]. In our opinion, the old names (Chinartala I-II), used in the book

by J.A. Khalilov, K.O. Koshkarly, and R. B. Arazova [21, p. 118-121], were more successful. Basically, it is a single settlement located on two neighboring hills. The site was revealed in 1977 by the CASA expedition, at the same time a control trench was opened on a larger hill (Filter I). Both hills are located 1 km south of the village Chinartala of Khachmaz district, on the territory bounded by a deep ravine and forest, at an altitude of 100 m above sea level (Fig. 1). The first hill is oval in shape, with the height of 11-14 m, and the top surface area of 2200 sq. m. The second, smaller hill is located 150 m to the North-West from the first, has an elongated oval shape, the surface area of the top is 1300 sq. m, the height of the slopes is 8,5-16 m.

The CASA control trench on the large hill revealed the total thickness of the cultural layer (4 m) and the nature of the stratigraphy of the site as a whole. We can state that the settlement is four-leveled: the lower layer is the Early Bronze age; it is overlapped by the layer of the Early Iron Age; even higher is the layer of the end of the I millennium BC – the beginning of the AD; the upper layer dates from the Early Middle Ages [28, p. 41]. The surface materials collected by the CASA staff and us, members of the ADA expedition, generally reflect the stratigraphy of the settlement, but overall, the material of the Early Bronze Age prevails. Unfortunately, the inventory from the trench and the CASA collections from the surface have not been published. With this in mind, the few surface materials of 2001 are of interest (Fig. 10-A). One can see that this settlement also contains a typical for this zone of Azerbaijan selection of earthenware: bowls with an internal thickening (Fig. 10-A, 1), pots and jars with sharply bent rims (Fig. 10-A, 2–3, 6–7), vessels on hollow bases (Fig. 10-A, 5) and braziers with low sides (Fig. 10-A, 4). Of particular interest is a pot fragment with an incised characteristic pattern on its body (Fig. 10-A, 3). All the ceramics are distinguished by a glossy surface of gray-brown color.

The settlement of Gasankala is another site, badly damaged by local residents during the manufacture of adobe bricks (Fig. 11-A). It is located in the vicinity of the village of Gasankala of Khachmaz district of Azerbaijan, at an altitude of 80 m above sea level. The preserved part of the hill is elongated oval in shape and has a height of 3–5 m; the top area is 1500 sq. m. [21, p. 107–108; 28, p. 42–43, fig. 5, 1, photo 10]. Judging by the slope cross-sections, the cultural layer of the settlement has a thickness of *ca* 2.5 m, while “the lower, thickest layer of 2 m belongs to the Early Bronze Age” [28, p. 42]. The upper, poorly preserved layers can be attributed to the first centuries AD and to the time of the Developed Middle Ages.

The surface material from the field survey of the expedition is not published illustratively. Collections during the survey of the settlement by the ADA expedition are also modest: in total, 6 fragments of ceramics with a glossy surface of gray-brown color were drawn, which allow us to distinguish bowls with an internal thickening (Fig. 11-B, 1–3) and pots with excurved rims (Fig. 11-B, 4–5), one of which had a roller on the outside of the rim, dissected by round indentations (Fig. 11-B, 5).

The Mollaburkhantepe settlement differs from the other sites of this type by the very large size of the hill of sub-square form (the surface area is more than 22,000 sq. m) and at the same time by the low height – from 3 to 5 m (Fig. 12) [28, p. 43, Fig. 5, 2]. The site was discovered during the CASA survey [21, p. 114], on the left bank of the Kudialchay River, close to the road leading to the village of Mollaburkhantepe of Khachmaz district of Azerbaijan (Fig. 1). In the CASA prospecting sounding, cultural layer of the Early Bronze Age with a thickness of 2 m, overlapped by a half-meter layer of the Early Middle Ages, was revealed. The collection of materials from the trench is typical of the Kura-Araxes sites of this zone: mainly ceramics with a glossy surface and a predominant gray color (wide-necked pitchers, bowls with an inner rim, braziers); other finds include grain grinders, a pebble scraper, and a flint sickle insert [28, p.43].

In 2001, when visiting the settlement, members of the international expedition uncovered: a flint arrowhead with a broken end (Fig. 13-A, 1), a fragment of a flint sickle insert (Fig. 13-A, 2), a whole flint insert of the middle type (Fig. 13-A, 4), a fragment of a miniature flint plate with retouched edges (Fig. 13-A, 3) and 7 fragments of ceramics, according to which we can get an idea of bowls with internal thickening (Fig. 13-A, 5–7), vessels on hollow bases (Fig. 13-A, 11), a vessel with a ledged neck and a incised pattern on the body (Fig. 13-A, 10), a vessel with a heavily coated body, separated from the neck by a relief roller, dissected by diamond-shaped indentations (Fig. 13-A, 9).

The settlement of Akhtytepe is located on a high (12 m) hill of an elongated oval shape (surface area of 4150 sq. m), separated from the rest of the terrace by wide gullies (Fig. 13-C). The site was discovered in 1977 by the CASA between the villages of Akhtygzamalary and Uchkyun in the Khachmaz district of Azerbaijan (2 km to the west of the first village and 2 km to the east of the second, respectively) [21, p. 104–105, Table. XXXVII]. XXXVII]. T.I. Akhundov notes the double ramparts and ditches recorded outside the hill itself, along the long sides [28, p. 46, Fig. 8, photo 1], but does not provide any information on the dating of these fortifications and their connection with the Early Bronze Age.

We possess no illustrations of artifacts of the Early Bronze Age, discovered by Azerbaijani colleagues on this site. According to the description of T.I. Akhundov, “the resulting material consisted of fragments of gray-fired ceramics with a glossy surface. These are bowls with an inner rim, a fragment of a ceramic vessel molded on a fabric base. There is a stone potter’s wheel” [28, p. 46–47]. During our investigation, a very poor surface material was uncovered (Fig. 13-B): 2 fragments of ceramics, related to vessels with sharply excurved rims (Fig. 13-B, 1–2).

The settlement of Dashlytepe is the only site known to date on the territory of the Khachmaz-Quba zone, which was not identified by the CASA expedition, but was discovered in subsequent years. A description of the site can be found in the book of

D.L. Musaev, dedicated to the excavations at Serkertepe [29, p. 18]: the settlement is located in the Kubinsky district of Azerbaijan, 2 km south of the village Nyugedi, on a large hill, stretched from west to east; the height of the hill is 10-15 m. The monument is three-layered, the lowest layer belonging to the Early Bronze Age; above are the layers of the Early and Developed Middle Ages. The hill is heavily overgrown with bushes and trees, well preserved, thus the search for surface material is difficult (Fig. 14-B). Nevertheless, samples of traditional Kura-Araxes ware with a gray-polished surface were collected at the site [29, p. 18–19]. During our visit to the hill in 2001, several small but indicative fragments of high-quality ceramics of the Velikent II type were found (Fig. 14-A, 1-4, 1-a, 2-a, 3-a).

The settlement of Chakkalyktepeh is located 0.5 km south of the village Aigyunli of Divichinsky (now Shabran) district. A high hill (12 m) on which the settlement itself is situated has an oval shape and is elongated in the direction of NW-SE (Fig. 15-A-B). “During the construction of the Samur-Divichinsky canal, the hill was divided into two parts: a smaller southern and a larger northern ones, which are located on both sides of the canal” [21, p. 19]. The site was discovered by the CASA expedition in 1978 and then investigated by collecting surface material and a control trench, opened on the southern slope of the better-preserved northern part of the hill [33; 21, p. 19–21, Fig. 4–5; 28, p. 44, Fig. 4, 2, 33, photo 5]. The surface area in this part of the hill is 2300 sq. m, and the total area of the tops of the two parts is 4000 sq. m.

Judging by the table of artifacts from this site, given in the book of T.I. Akhundov [28, Fig. 33], we are dealing with the known selection of pottery, characteristic of almost all sites of this type in Northeastern Azerbaijan: here are bowls with an internal thickening (bowls, as a rule, are equipped with a handle at the edge), cans and pots with sharply excurved rims, vessels on hollow bases, vessels with hemispherical handles, vessels with incised patterns on their sides. The finds of a stone axe with a grooved eye and a stone pestle-courant is also noteworthy. The collection of surface material obtained during the visit of the monument by the participants of the international expedition in 2001 also gives an idea of the inventory: a flint insert of a sickle of the edge type (Fig. 16, 1), a fragment of a clay mold of a wheel (Fig. 16, 2), fragments of bowls with an internal thickening at the rim (Fig. 3–11, 23–23, 26), bowls with a straight pointed rim (Fig. 16, 24), pots with sharply bent corollas (Fig. 16, 12–14, 16–19), pots with a high cylindrical neck and a sharply bent corolla (Fig. 16, 20–21), vessels on hollow bases (Fig. 16 22), a vessel with a relief roller dissected by seed-shaped notches on the outside of the rim (Fig. 16, 27). The handles of vessels with annularly closed bases are recorded (Fig. 16, 3, 4, 26).

T.I. Akhundov writes that “300 m to the northeast of it (from the hill divided by the channel into 2 parts. – *R. Mag.*) there is a low (6 m), oval-shaped hill, on the surface of which there are fragments of ceramics similar to those collected from the

first hill, but the cultural layer is lacking. Only the burial of a teenager with a stone pestle was revealed here” [28, p. 45]. This settlement, named as Chakkalyktepe II, can be found in the first issue of CASA, but here it states that “a prospecting trench was opened on the western slope of the hill. The cultural layer is soft, 2 m thick, with rare fragments of ceramics similar to the ones, found on the surface of the hill [21, p. 21, Fig. 5]. And there is no mention of the teenager’s burial...

Concluding this study on the settlement of Chakkalyktepe, it should be said that since 2016, for several seasons an archaeological expedition from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia under the leadership of the Candidate of Historical Sciences S.G. Ashurov, has been carrying out intensive, large-scale excavations on the northern large butte of the hill occupied by the main settlement. Unfortunately, we do not yet have the opportunity to review the publications of the materials of these very interesting excavations, but, judging by the video reports on Azerbaijani TV, the results of the work of the archaeologist S.G. Ashurov are impressive: the cultural layer is much thicker than 3 m indicated above. Deep dugouts with walls lined with mud bricks were cleared out, numerous and diverse collections of finds were obtained (polished ceramics, clay hearth stands, zoomorphic figurines, tools made of stone, flint, bone, etc.). One can only hope that the results of the new excavations at Chakkalyktepe will be quickly introduced into science.

The Rustepe settlement is the southernmost site in the group under consideration (Fig. 1); it is located to the east of the Baku-Divichi road, 0.5 km south of the city of Divichi (‘Shabran’ since 2010), on a relatively high (6 m) hill, at an altitude of 10 m above sea level [28, p. 45–46]. The hill itself is elongated along the NW-SE line, has an elongated-curved shape; the surface area of the top is 2300 sq. m. Akhundov pays attention to some of the fortification nuances of the monument’s location: “the hill is additionally separated from the terrace by an artificial moat, opened at the ends to the Northeastern and overgrown with reeds. In the southern part of the hill, the moat is crossed by a bridge connecting the settlement with the terrace” [28, p. 45–46; Fig. 6, 2].

The total thickness of the cultural layer is about 3.5 m. The monument is two-layered: the lower, the deepest layer belongs to the Early Bronze Age, the upper one – to the first half of the I millennium BC. A burial ground with stone boxes, discovered by accident near the same hill, also belongs to this time. We have no illustrations of the archaeological artifacts found on Rustepe by Azerbaijani colleagues; according to T. I. Akhundov, the main layer of deposits of the settlement “is characterized by gray and brownish ceramics, often with a polished surface, typical to the Early Bronze Age of this region” [28, p. 46].

The following is a description of the surface material collected by the participants of the international expedition in 2001: a fragment of a bronze rod with a round

cross-section, possibly a pin or an awl (Fig. 17-B, 1), a talus bone of small cattle with sharpened lateral faces (Fig. 17-B, 2), bowl-type vessels with half-closed mouths (Fig. 17-B, 5, 10), jar vessels (Fig. 17-B, 12), pots with sharply bent rims (Fig. 17-B, 9, 11), etc. There is also a very interesting vessel with a high bell-shaped expanding neck, on the shoulders of which there is a handle (Fig. 17-B, 8). The body of the vessel is separated by a ledge from the neck, the lower part of the body together with the bottom have not preserved. The outer surface of the vessel is gray-brown, glossy, with black spots, the inner surface – brown smoothed. The firing is poor, the surface peeled off in places. The vessel was found in a section of the slope in a broken state.

And, finally, **the settlement of Serkertepe**, the most studied site of the Early Bronze Age in the Khachmaz-Quba zone of Azerbaijan. The settlement is located on the northeastern edge of the village Serkerli (former Boryspol) of the Khachmaz district [21, p. 113–117, fig. 62; 29, p. 9; 28, p. 44–45]. The Akhchay River flows near the hill, and there is also a spring nearby. From the north and west, the hill was destroyed during the construction of the reservoir; however, there is now a wide swamp. In its current state, the hill has an elongated shape, stretched along the E-W line. The area of the surface preserved is 0.54 ha, the hill height is 5–9 m (Fig. 18-A-B). Excavations at the Serkertepe settlement were conducted for 8 years, the total excavated area is more than 1000 sq. m. As the researcher of the site notes, the total thickness of the cultural layer is about 6 m, of which 1.2 m belong to the IX–XIV centuries AD [29, p. 9]. Under the medieval layer, according to the author of the excavations, there is a layer of the Middle Bronze Age with a thickness of about 0.6–0.7 m. The lowest layer with a thickness of about 4 m belongs to the Early Bronze Age, and, in turn, the Early Bronze Age layer is divided into 2 stages: the late one with 4 building horizons and the early one with 7 building horizons [29, p.9].

In the course of long-term and large-scale research, numerous remnants of structures were discovered and studied in the Serkertepe settlement (Fig. 18-B), usually having a circular plan and associated with dwellings and outbuildings, and in some cases with places of worship. Unfortunately, there are still no good publications of the construction remains identified at Serkertepe; due to the lack of profiles and cross-sections of the trench, we cannot clearly imagine the stratigraphy of the site.

Excavations at Serkertepe have yielded a staggering number and variety of tools, among which there is a very expressive series of bronze products (knife blades and daggers, punctures, pins, pendants, rings, etc.), tools made of bone (punctures, needles) and stone (arrowheads, sickle inserts, axes with grooved eyes and drilled, pendants, grain grinders, pommels of clubs, potter's wheels, etc.) [29, Tables XXXVIII–XXXIX, XLI–XLII, XLIV, XLIX].

Undoubtedly, the most interesting category of finds from the Serkertepe excavations is ceramics. Here, along with the traditional ceramics characteristic of most Kura-Araxes sites (bowls, jars, pots with polished surface), original dishes with rare

analogies on the side are found in large numbers and varieties. This is, first of all, an extensive series of vessels on bases; most of them have bases decorated with incise compositions, rounded holes on the walls. Some bases are corrugated [see: 29, Tables XXVIII–XXIX, XXXI, XXXIII–XXXIV]. Cup-shaped vessels with black-glossy surfaces, equipped with one and two handles, are also very characteristic of Serkertepe [29, Tables XII, XVIII, XXI, XXXIII–XXV].

Specialists are also very interested in such finds as clay nozzles for metallurgical furnaces, braziers with raised sides, stone molds for casting bronze products, clay molds of wheels, hearth stands of various shapes. This list does not end with the abundance and variety of artifacts discovered during the excavations of Serkertepe. But again, it is unfortunate that these numerous finds, original and often unique, are depassportized, since there is no information about the conditions of their discovery in the publications.

The book of D. L. Musaev and his numerous articles do not provide any information about the findings from the Middle-Bronze layer, about which he writes. There is no information about the ceramics of the Velikent II type, the fragments of which were found by us during the inspection of the site in 2001 (Fig. 19, 17–19). In our view, similar ceramics should have been discovered during the old excavations at Serkertepe.

Among other ceramic finds that we accidentally uncovered during the survey of the settlement, we can mention a fragment of a rare bowl with a faceted body (Fig. 19, 3), a fragment of a pot-type vessel with a heavily coated body separated from the polished neck by a relief dissected roller (Fig. 19, 13), fragments of vessels on hollow bases (Fig. 19, 14, 15), a part of a brazier with a curved raised side (Fig. 19, 16).

Conclusion

Summing up the results of the archeological surveys on the famous sites of the Early Bronze Age of Northeastern Azerbaijan, it should be noted that they provided a lot of material, allowing us to compare the opinions of Azerbaijani colleagues about these monuments with the view of American and Russian researchers.

The collections of finds obtained during the surveys mainly consist of numerous fragments of traditional Kura-Araxes ceramics, which are typologically and morphologically similar to Dagestan samples. Among the ceramics there are also fragments of late thickly coated pottery (Boyuktepe II, Tepeyatagi, Mollaburkhan-tepe, Serkertepe), which served as an argument for researchers when identifying a separate local variant of the Kura-Araxes culture here. It should also be noted that the Northeastern Azerbaijani pottery of the Early Bronze Age, which can be defined as the traditional Kura-Araxes pottery, is the most similar to the ceramics well studied in stratified settlements and in catacomb burials of Coastal Dagestan [19; 74; 75; 25; 27], which is evident in the comparative analysis of, for example,

vessels such as bowls, bowls with an inward-curved, thickened and oblique edges, cups and jar forms.

A great achievement of these surveys is the discovery of fragments of high-quality curved ceramics in the settlements of Dashlytepe and Serkertepe, which are absolutely identical to the type of Velikent II ceramics known on a number of sites in Chechnya (Serzhenyurt I, II) and Dagestan (Velikent II, Kabaz-Kutan I-II, Torpakh-kala, Sugyut, Novo-Gaptsakh, etc.). Currently, it is becoming clear that all these examples, to which we can add more illustrative cases related to high-quality ceramics from Azerbaijan (Leila-Tepe), Georgia (Berikldeebi), Dagestan (the Eneolithic settlement of Ginchi) and other places, serve as an additional argument in asserting the undoubted cultural and genetic moments between the famous Maikop culture and the 'Uruk expansion' from the south [for more information, see: 76; 77; 78; 79; 80; 69]. On the other hand, high-quality ceramics, along with the possibilities of its use in cultural and genetic constructions, in establishing contacts and connections with neighboring territories, also have an important independent value for a comprehensive description of the historical, cultural and chronological features of the monuments themselves and culture as a whole, for studying the level of development of the economy and crafts of the local population [see: 81].

It is noteworthy that among the identified objects of the Early Bronze Age there are no grave sites, which, of course, narrows the source base for a full study of the material and spiritual culture of the region of the said age. Taking into account the fact that individual hills with no visible traces of the cultural layer are recorded in the vicinity of almost all settlements, it is necessary to admit the possibility of discovery of underground catacomb burials in the future in Northeastern Azerbaijan, as it happened in Dagestan (Karabudakhkent, Dzhemikent, Velikent) [74].

The fifteen settlements investigated by the international expedition, although exhaust the total number of known sites of the Early Bronze Age, hardly reflect the full and actual picture of settlements in Northeastern Azerbaijan.

The further publications will describe and analyze the materials from the prospecting sounding opened in 2002 at the Serkertepe settlement by the ADA International Expedition, as well as summarize the historical, cultural and chronological interpretation of the sites of Northeastern Azerbaijan within the framework of the Velikent culture of the Kura-Araxes culture-historical community.

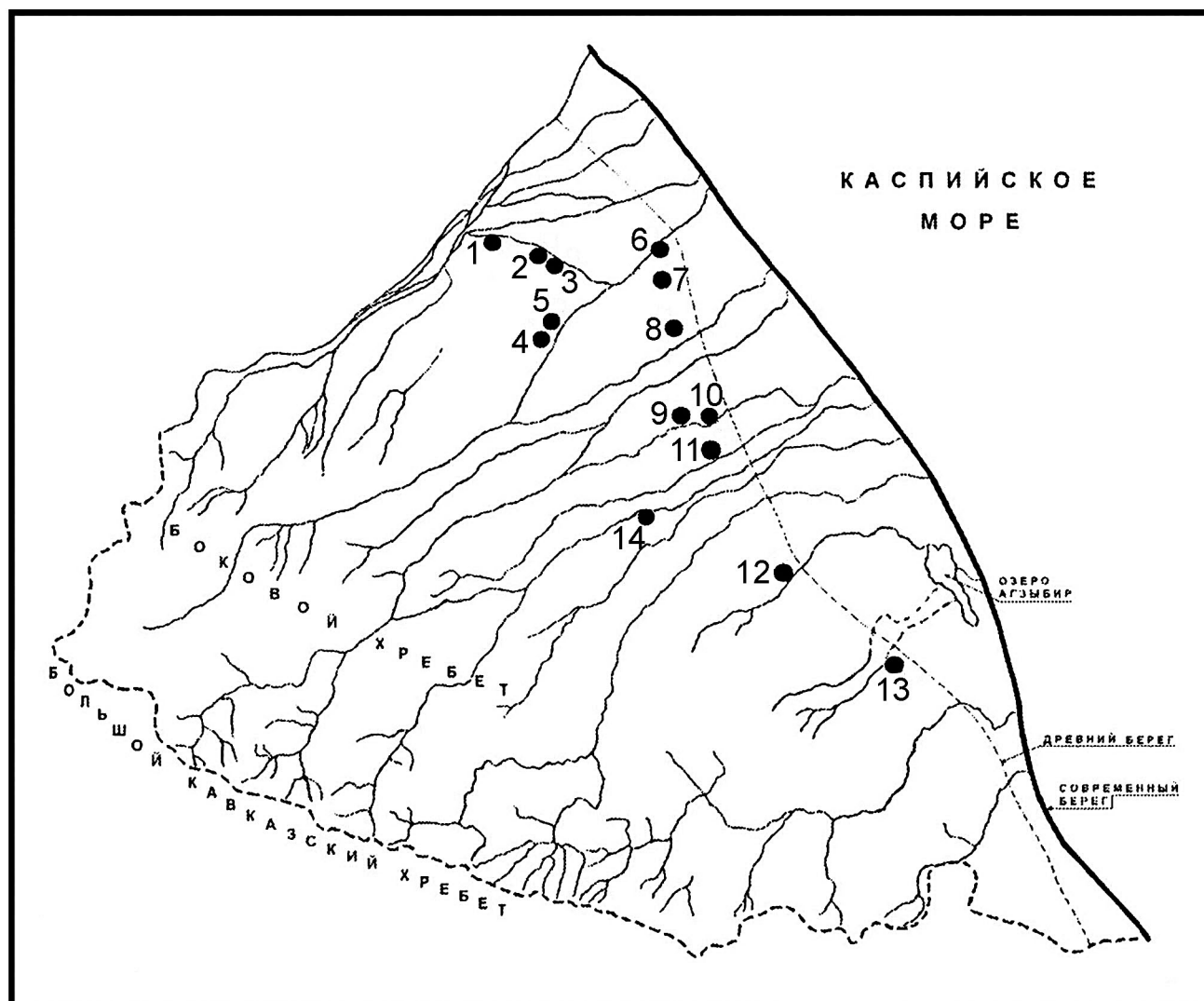


Fig. 1. Map of monuments of the 1st period of settlement (mid-3rd millennium BC – border of III-II millennium BC) in Northeastern Azerbaijan (T.I. Akhundov, 2009. p. 195.

Map 1): 1. Kuchumkhantepe, 2. Boyuktepe I, 3. Boyuktepe II, 4. Gevdishantepe, 5. Gafletepeleri I-II, 6. Tepyatagi, 7. Filtr, 8. Gasangala, 9. Mollaburkhantepe, 10. Akhtytepe, 11. Serkeretepe, 12. Chakkalyktepe, 13. Rustepe, 14. Dashlytepe (the names are given according to the original work by Akhundov [Akhundov T.I., 2009])

Рис. 1. Карта памятников I периода расселения (середина III тыс. до н.э. – рубеж III-II тыс. до н.э.) в Северо-Восточном Азербайджане (по Т.И. Ахундову, 2009. С. 195. Карта 1):

1. Кучумхантепе, 2. Беюктепе I, 3. Беюктепе II, 4. Гевдишантепе, 5. Гяфлетепелери I-II, 6. Тепеятагы, 7. Фильтр, 8. Гасангала, 9. Моллабурхантепе, 10. Ахтытепе, 11. Серкертепе, 12. Чаккалыктепе, 13. Рустепе, 14. Дашлытепе (названия даны по оригиналу работы [Т.И. Ахундов, 2009])

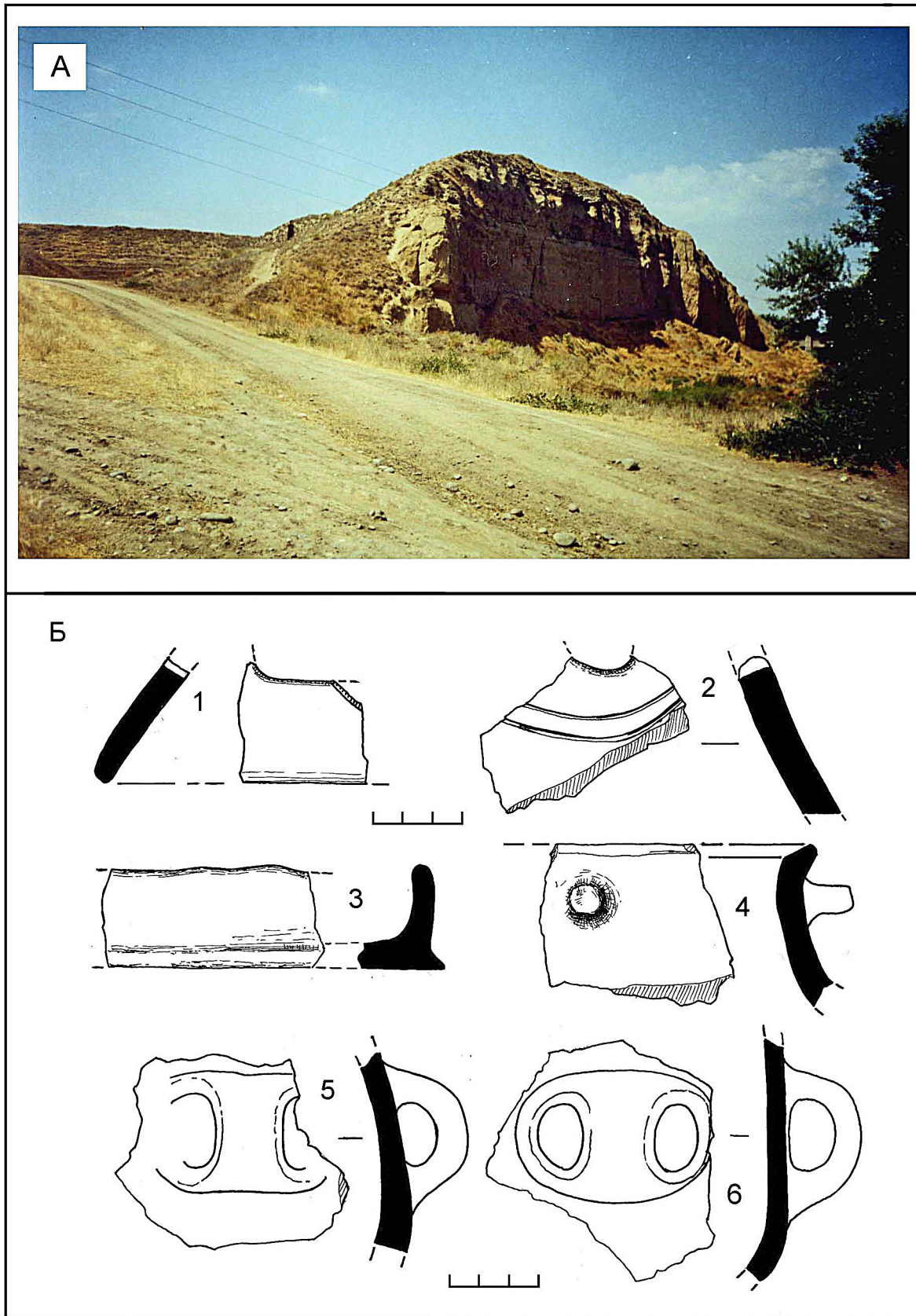


Fig. 2. Kuchumkhantepe: A – photo of the hill; B – surface material (1-6 - ceramics)

Рис. 2. Поселение Кучумхантепе: А – фото холма; Б – подъемный материал (1-6 – керамика)

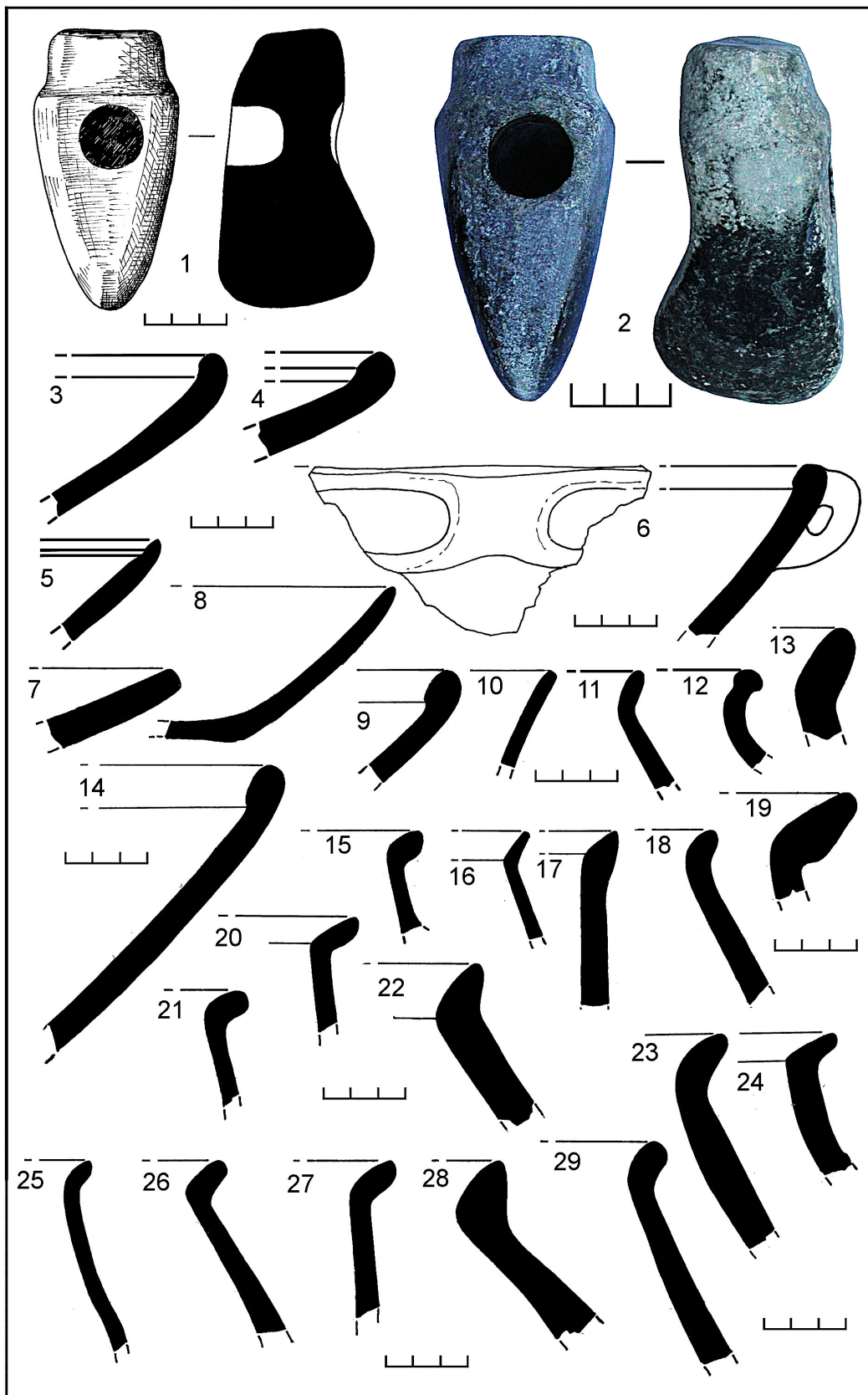


Fig. 3. Kuchumkhan-tepe: surface material (1-2 – stone axe; 3-29 – ceramics)

Рис. 3. Поселение Кучумхантепе: подъемный материал (1-2 – каменный топор; 3-29 – керамика)

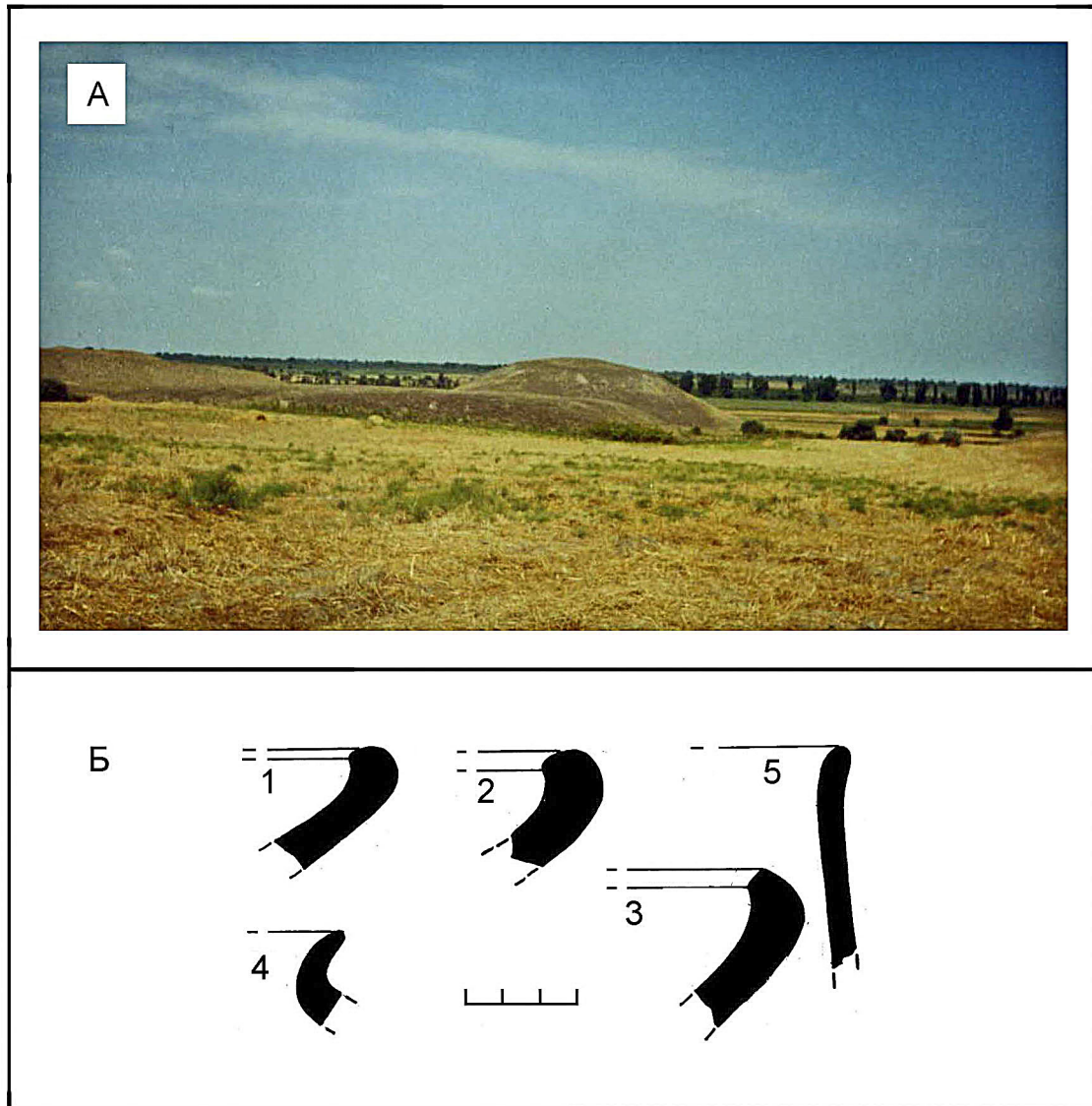


Fig. 4. Boyuktepe I:
A – photo of the hill; B – surface material (1-5 – ceramics)

Рис. 4. Поселение Бююктепе I:
А – фото холма; Б – подъемный материал (1-5 – керамика)

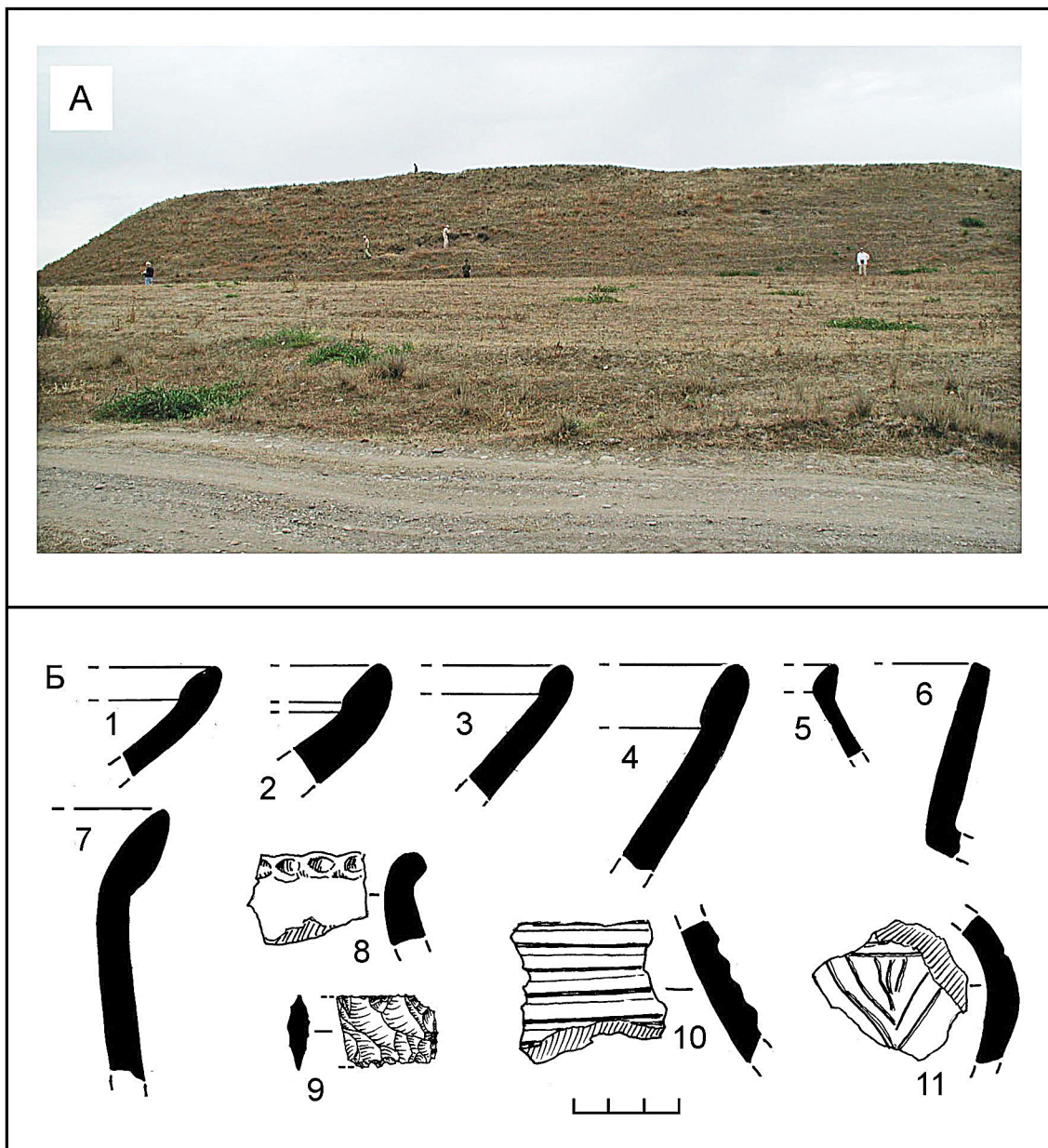


Fig. 5. Boyuktepe II:
 A – photo of the hill; B – surface material (1-8,10-11 – ceramics; 9 – sickle flint insert)

Рис. 5. Поселение Бююктепе II:
 А – фото холма; Б – подъемный материал (1-8,10-11 – керамика;
 9 – кремневый вкладыш серпа)

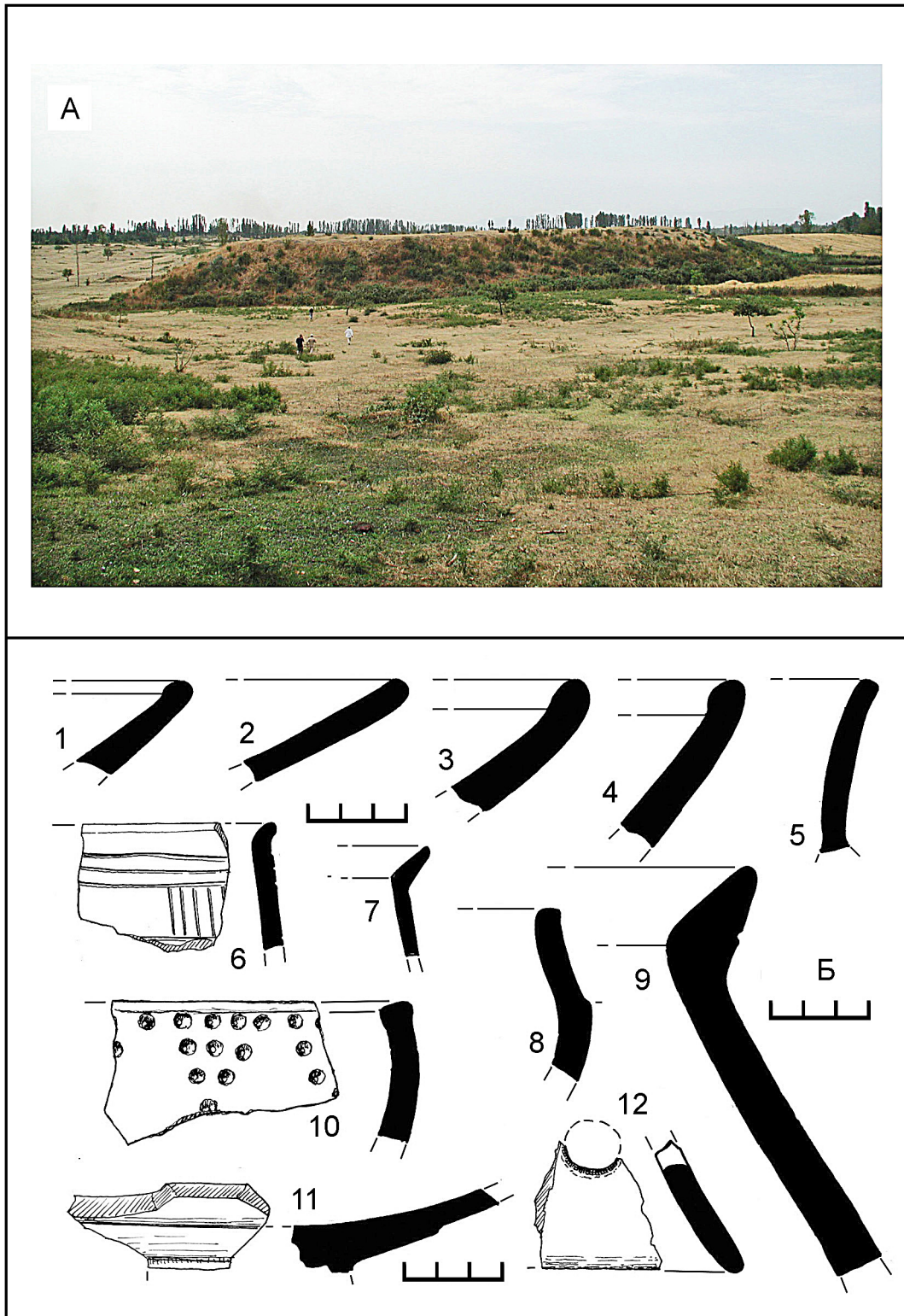


Fig. 6. Gevdeshantepe: A – photo of the hill; B – surface material (1-12 – ceramics)

Рис. 6. Поселение Гевдешантепе: А – фото холма; Б – подъемный материал (1-12 – керамика)



Fig. 7. Gyafletepeleri I-II: photos of hills

Рис. 7. Поселения Гяфлетепелери I-II: фото холмов

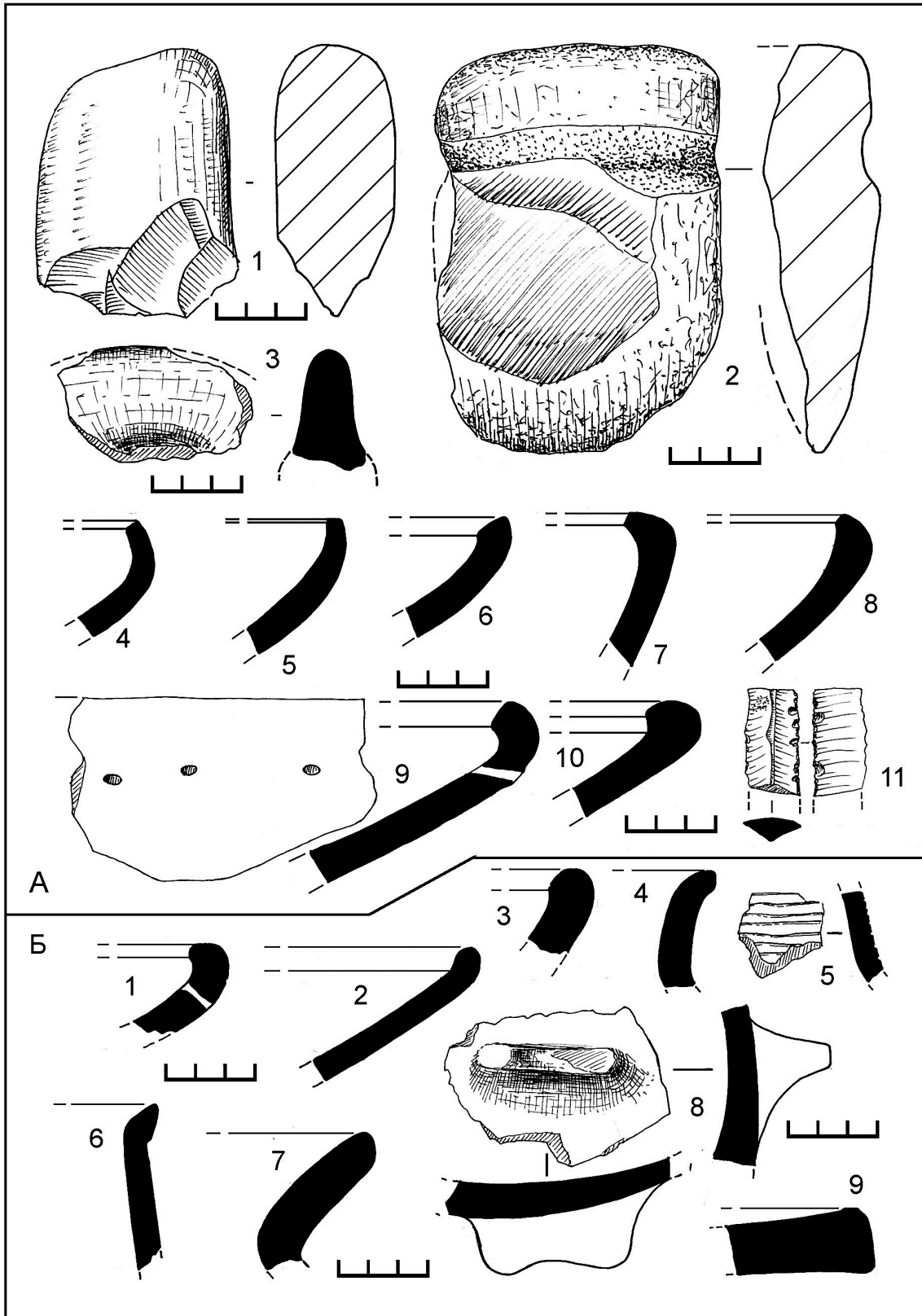


Fig. 8. Gyafletepeleri I-II. Surface material: A – Gyafletepe I (1-2 - stone tools; 3 – fragment of a clay wheel model; 4-10 – ceramics; 11 – flint knife-like plate); B – Gyafletepe II (1-9 - ceramics)

Рис. 8. Поселения Гяфлетепелери I-II.

Подъемный материал: А – Гяфлетепе I (1-2 – каменные орудия; 3 – обломок глиняной модели колеса; 4-10 – керамика; 11 – кремневая ножевидная пластина); Б – Гяфлетепе II (1-9 – керамика)

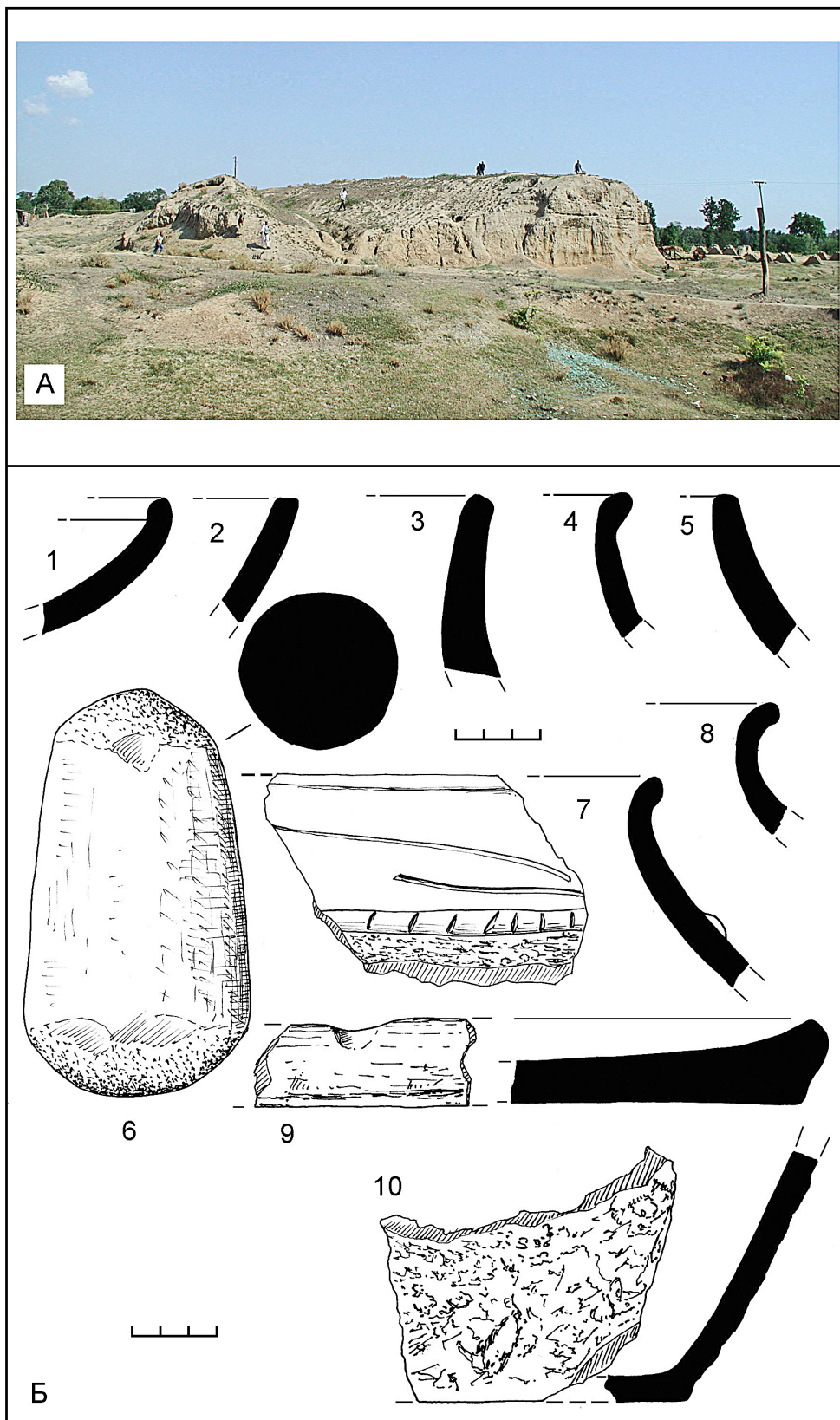


Fig. 9. Tepeyatagi: A – photo of the hill; surface material (1-5,7-10 - ceramics; 6 – stone pestle)

Рис. 9. Поселение Тепятаги: А – фото холма; подъемный материал (1-5,7-10 – керамика; 6 – каменный пест)

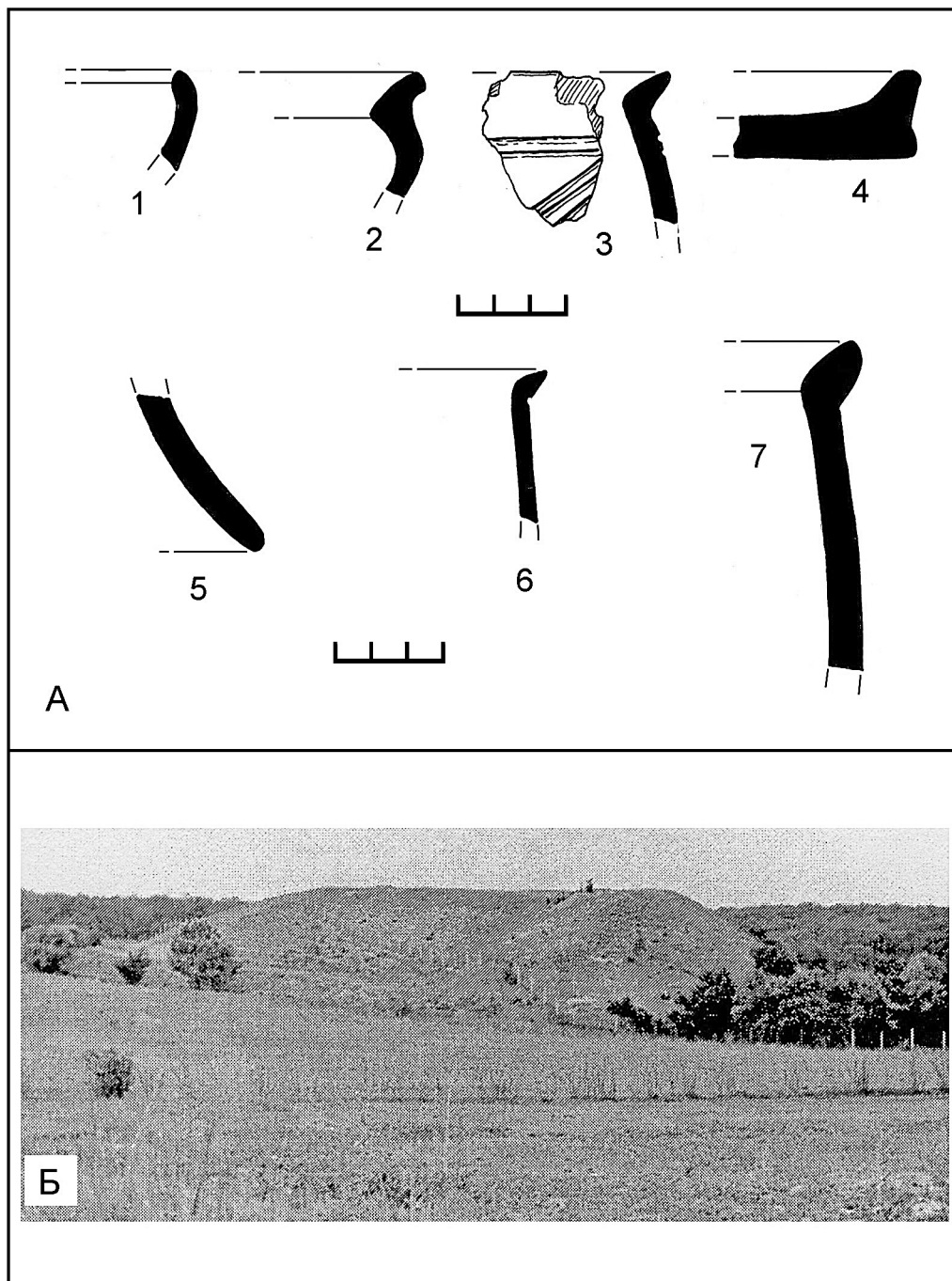


Fig. 10. Filtrtepe I:
 A – surface material (1-7 - ceramics); B – photo of the hill
 [according to: T.I. Akhundov, 2009, photo 2]

Рис. 10. Поселение Фильтртепе I:
 А подъемный материал (1-7 – керамика); Б – фото холма
 [по: Т.И. Ахундов, 2009, фото 2]

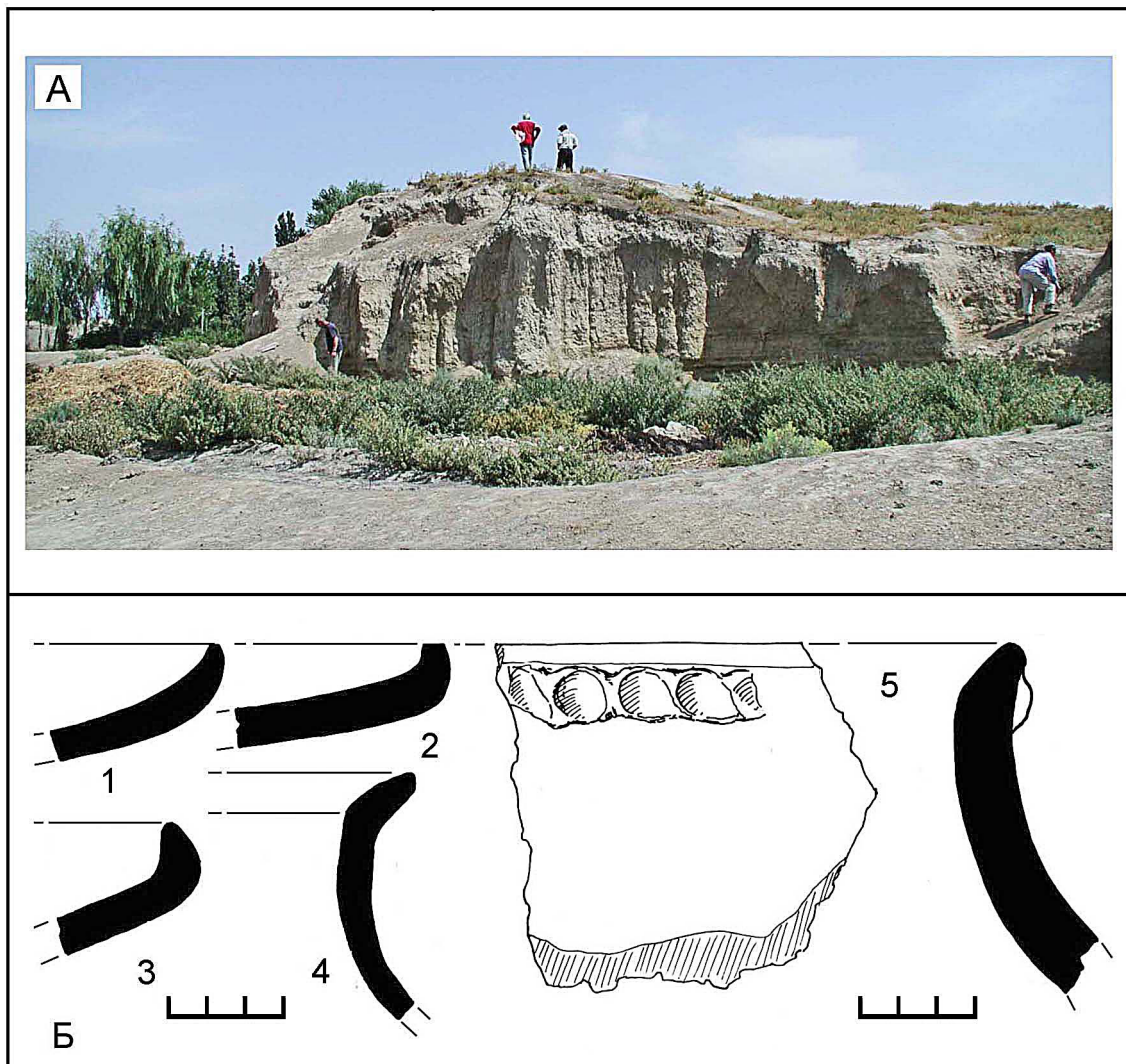


Fig. 11. Gasankala: A – photo of the hill; B – surface material (1-5 – ceramics)

Рис. 11. Поселение Гасанкала: А – фото холма; Б – подъемный материал (1-5 – керамика)



Fig. 12. Mollaburkhantere: photo of the hill
Рис. 12. Поселение Моллабурхантере: фото холма

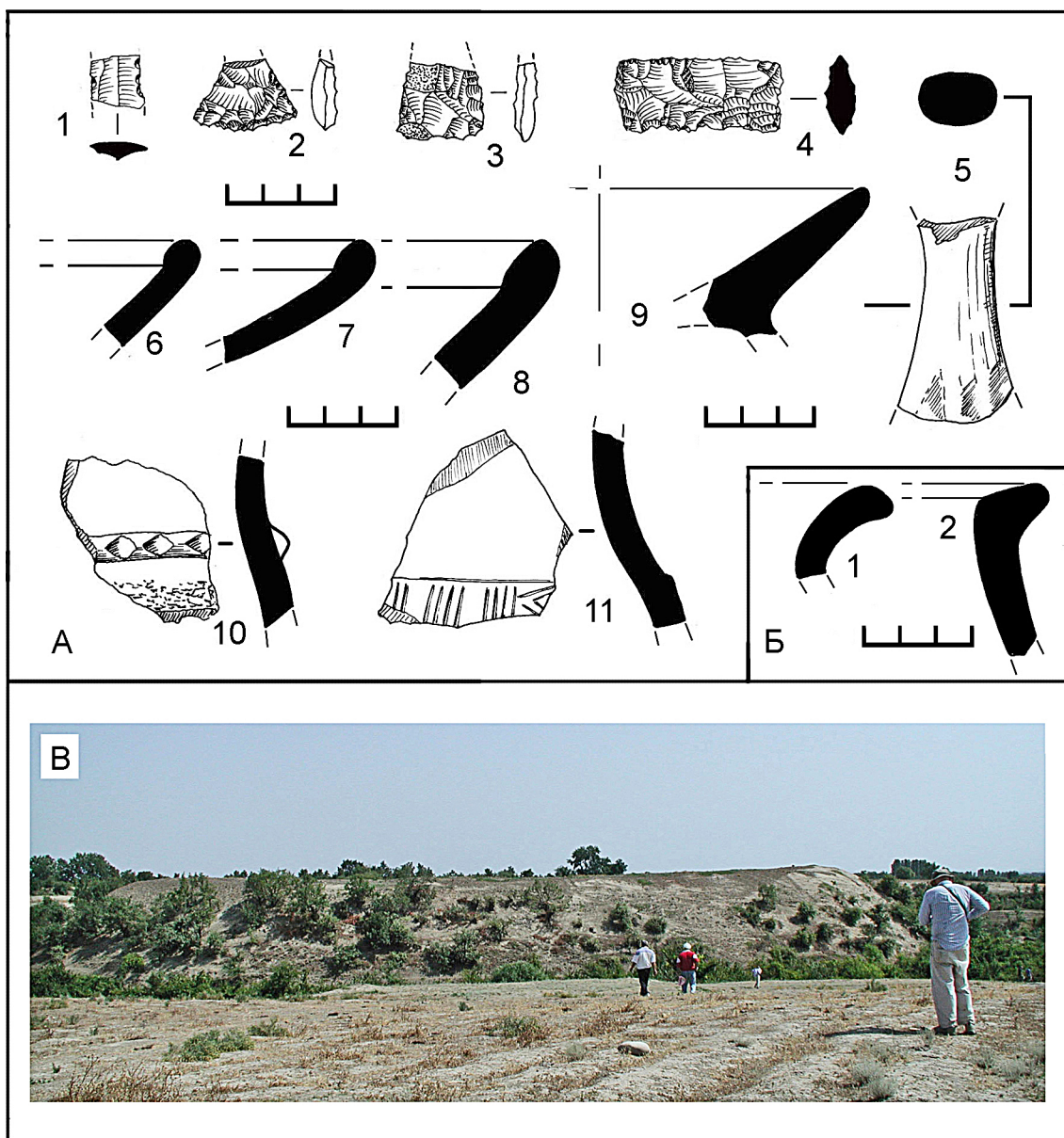


Fig. 13. A – Mollaburkhantepe
 (surface materials: 1 – knife-shaped flint plate; 2-3 – flint arrowheads; 4 – sickle flint insert;
 5-11 – ceramics); B-C – Akhtytepe (B – surface material – ceramics; C – photo of the hill)

Рис. 13. А – поселение Моллабурхантепе
 (подъемный материалы: 1 – кремневая ножевидная пластина;
 2-3 – кремневые наконечники стрел; 4 – кремневый вкладыш серпа; 5-11 – керамика);
 Б-В – поселение Ахтытепе (Б – подъемный материал – керамика; В – фото холма)

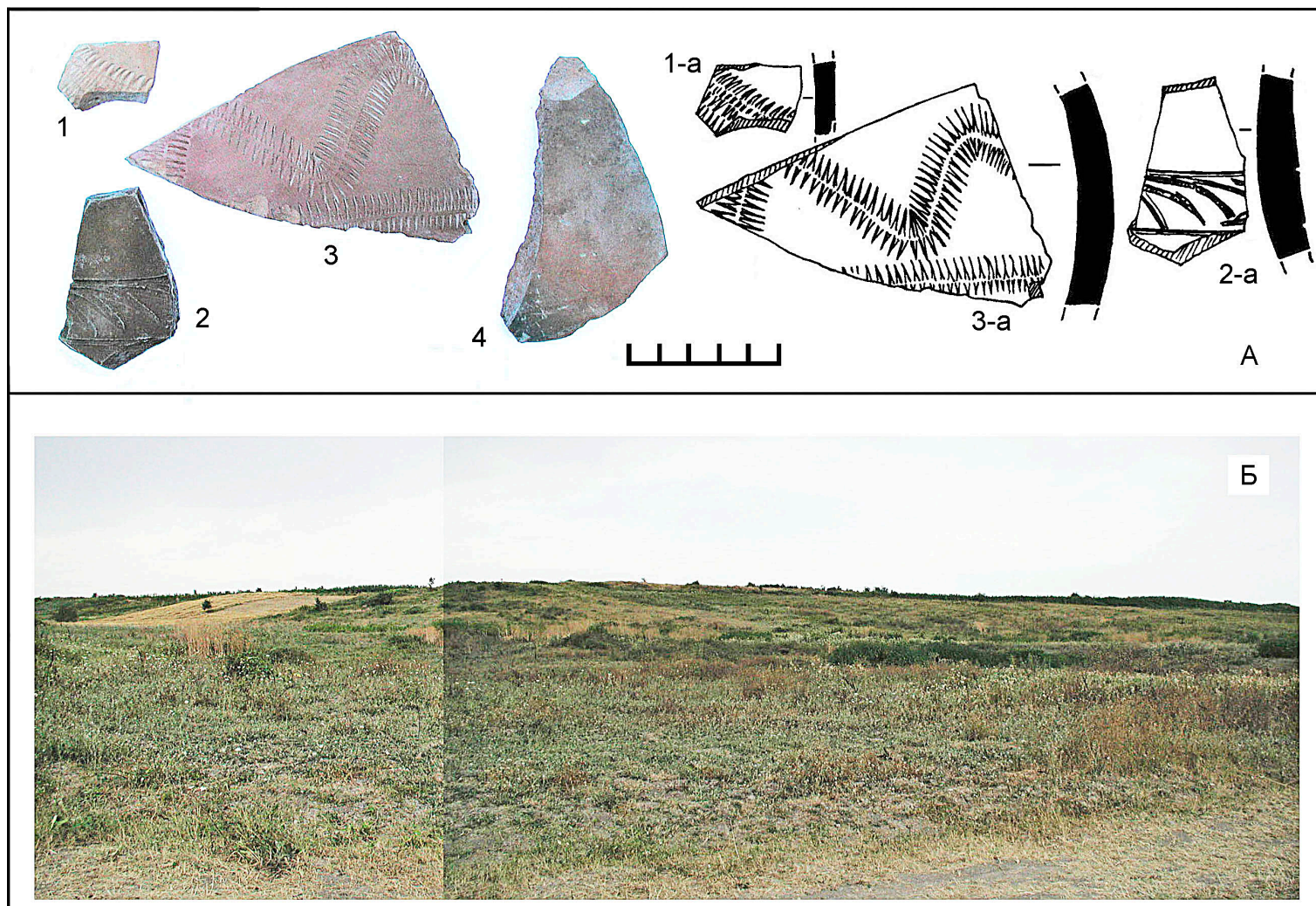


Fig. 14. Dashlytepe: A – surface material (1-4,1-a, 2-a, 3-a - ceramics); B – photo of the hill

Рис. 14. Поселение Дашлытепе: А – подъемный материал (1-4,1-a,2-a,3-a – керамика); Б – фото холма



Fig. 15. Chakkalyktepe: AB – photos of the remains of the hill
Рис. 15. Поселение Чаккальктепе: А-Б – фото остатков холма

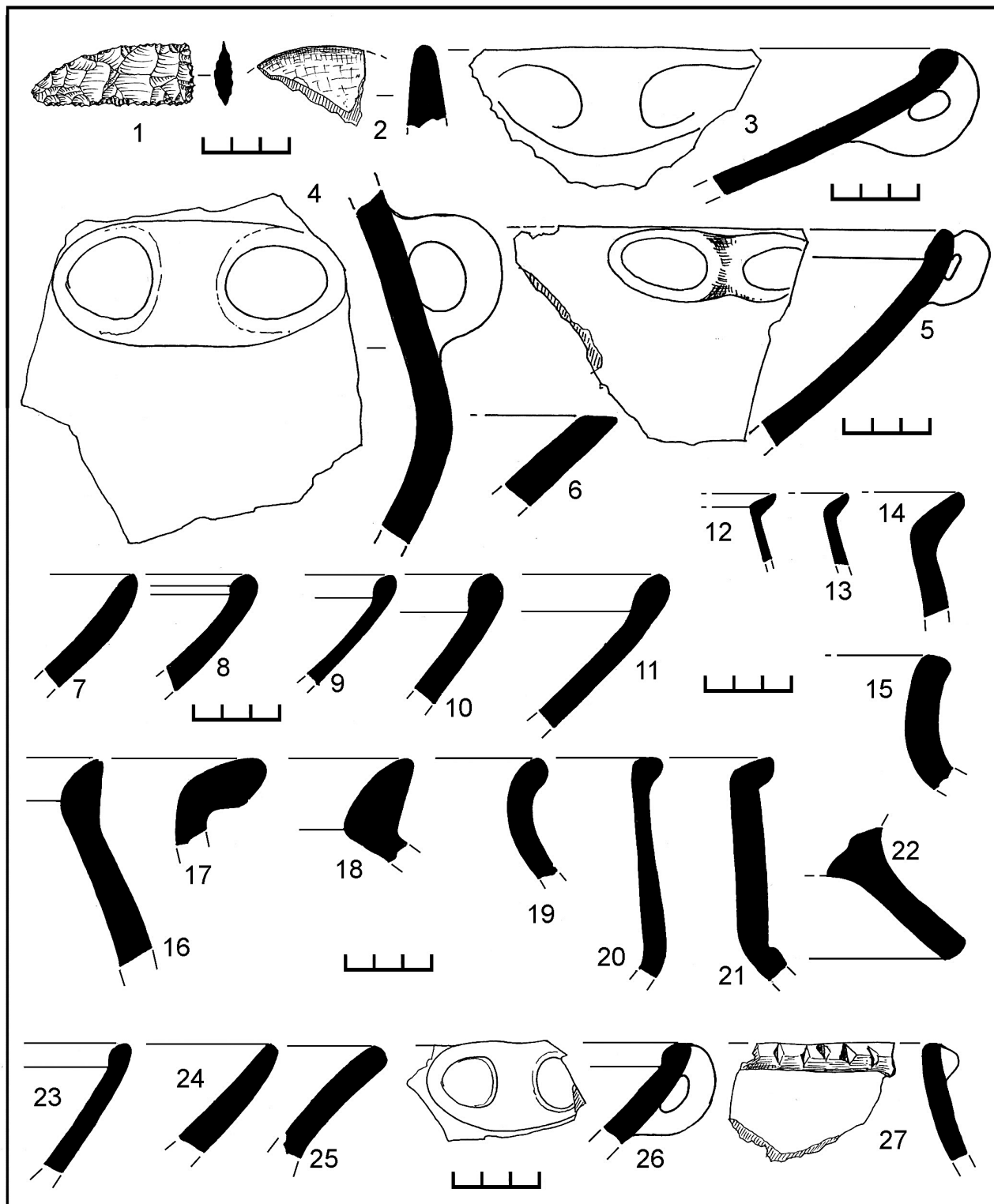


Fig. 16. Chakkalyktepe:
 surface material (1 – sickle flint insert; 2 – a fragment of a clay model of a wheel; 3-27 – ceramics)

Рис. 16. Поселение Чаккалыктепе:
 подъемный материал (1 – кремневый вкладыш серпа;
 2 – обломок глиняной модели колеса; 3-27 – керамика)

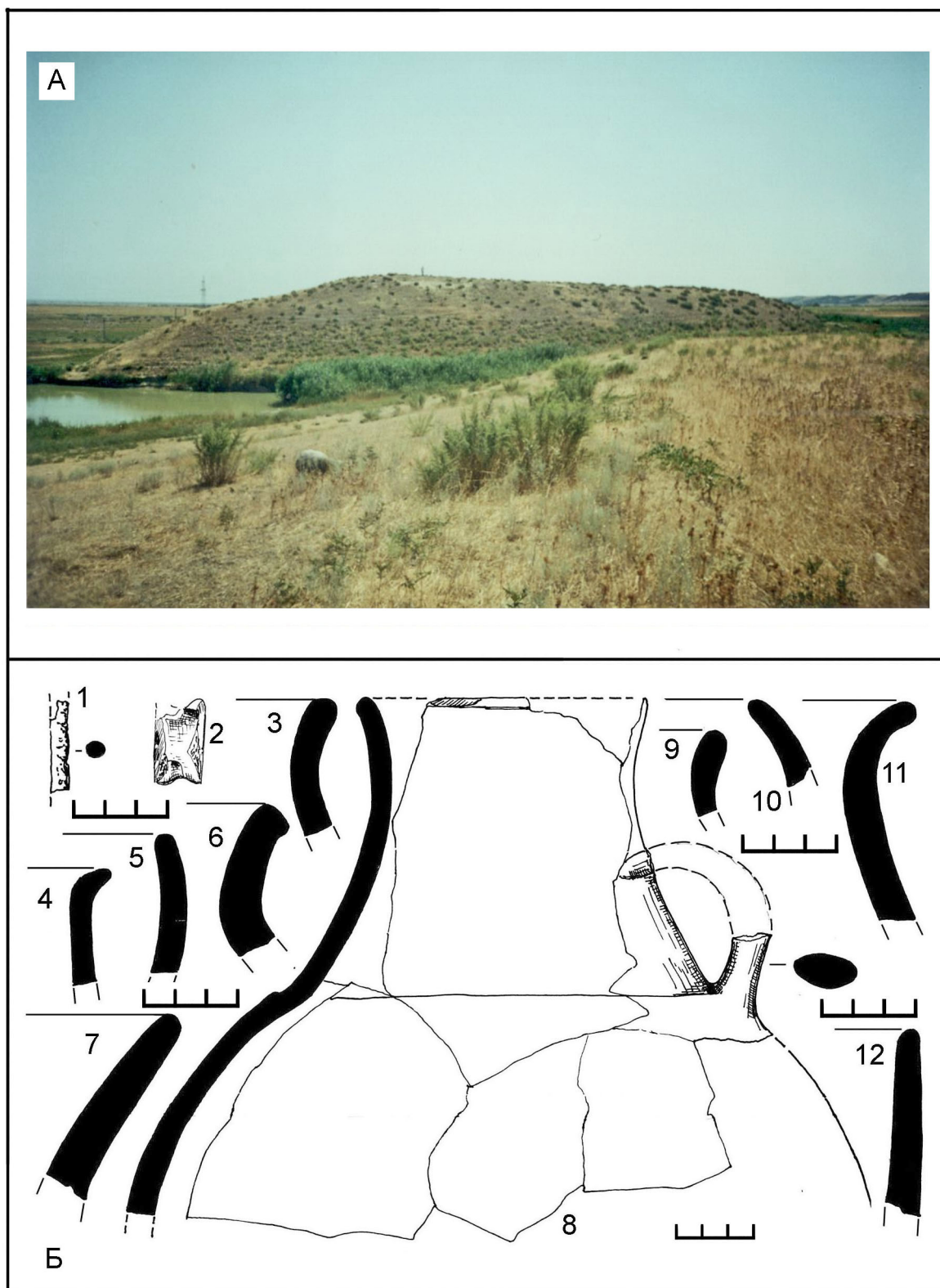


Fig. 17. Rustepe: A – photo of the hill; B – surface material (1 – a fragment of a bronze rod; 2 – talus bone of small cattle with polished edges; 3-12 – ceramics)

Рис. 17. Поселение Рустепе: А – фото холма; Б – подъемный материал (1 – фрагмент бронзового стержня; 2 – астрагал МРС с подшлифованными гранями; 3-12 – керамика)



Fig. 18. Serkertepe: A – photo of the remains of the hill and reservoir;
B – photo of the old excavation site (works by D.L. Musaev, 1983-2001)

Рис. 18. Поселение Серкертепе: А – фото остатков холма и водохранилища;
Б – фото старого раскопа (работы Д.Л. Мусаева, 1983-2001 гг.)

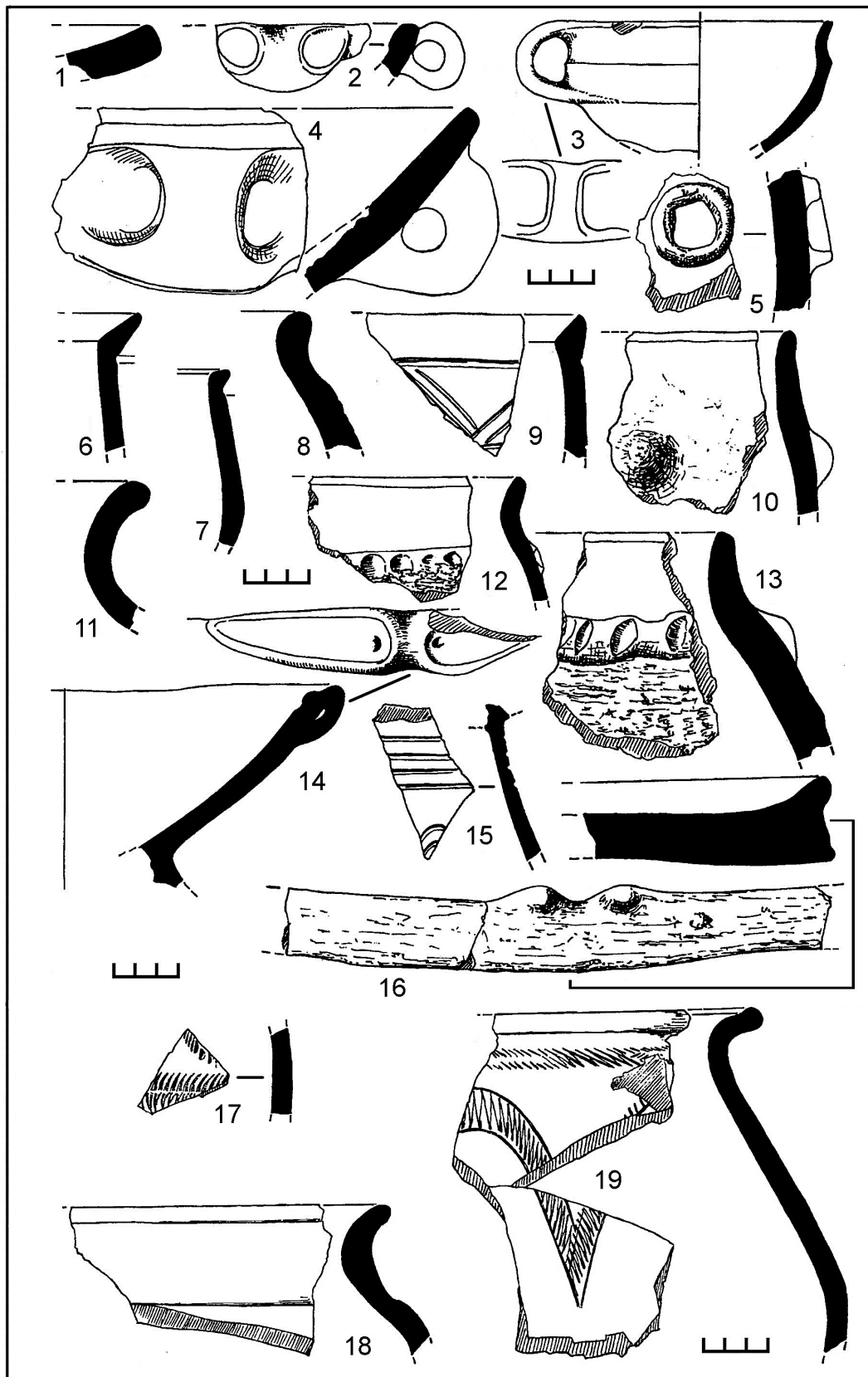


Fig. 19. Serkertep. Surface material: 1-16 – traditional Kura-Araxes ceramics;
17-19 – high-quality ceramics of the Velikent II type

Рис. 19. Поселение Серкертепе. Подъемный материал: 1-16 – традиционная куро-аракская керамика;
17-19 – высококачественная керамика типа Великент II

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