

1ST BIENNIAL
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE SOCIETY OF
IRANIAN ARCHAEOLOGY:
"CULTURAL INTERACTIONS,
CONTINUITY AND DISRUPTION"

EDITED BY:
SEYED MEHDI MOUSAVI
SHAHIN ARYAMANESH
MAJID MONTAZER ZOHORI
MORTEZA KHANIPOUR



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Relations of Middle Bronze Age Painted Pottery Culture of Nakhchivan with the Urmia Basin

Fizza Gulieva
Nakhchivan branch of ANAS

Excavations of Middle Bronze Age settlements, necropolises and other archaeological finds in the Middle East have demonstrated a need to identify the center of a particular widespread painted ware culture. Taking into account the local features of this painted ware culture, this culture has been called the Van-Urmia painted wares (Çilingiroğlu 1990, s. 25; Çilingiroğlu 1990 a, s. 169-173), "Trialeti culture" (Гогодзе 1972, 32 с.; Жоржикашвили, Гогодзе 1974, 125 с.), "Tazakand culture" (Мартиросян 1964, с. 47-56), "Gizilvank culture" (Кушнарєва 1993, с. 163) and "Nakhchivan culture" (Джафарзаде 1956, с. 48).

Archaeological excavations carried out during the last 20 years in Nakhchivan indicate that we should give preference to the term "Nakhchivan culture", as a way to denote the origin of the painted ware culture and the center of its larger spread. Studies have shown that Nakhchivan, the Urmia Basin and Eastern Anatolia are the main areas where the culture of painted wares spread, while other regions of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia have also been included in the periphery of this culture (Бахşəliyev 2004, s. 84-96). While settlements generally disappeared in the lowlands of Eastern Anatolia, the South Caucasus and Northwest Iran during the Middle Bronze Age, sedentary life continued without interruption in Nakhchivan (Belli,

Sevin 1998, s. 14). The encirclement of Middle Bronze Age settlements in Nakhchivan with a strong defensive wall, as well as the creation of settlements such as fortresses in inaccessible positions make it probable that this period and place witnessed the emergence of a great tribal coalition. It is likely that this process led to an increased threat of attack and conflict among the tribes, at least in the short term. The location of the most magnificent monuments in Nakhchivan in the Middle Bronze Age confirms that this region is the main center of painted wares culture (Baxşəliyev 2004, s. 90).

Compared to other regions of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, the culture of painted wares in Nakhchivan, the Urmia Basin and Eastern Anatolia passed through different stages and existed for a long time. Excavations of the settlements of Shakhtakhty, Kultepe I and II, Kızkale and Gizilburun show how the numerous settlements were during the Middle Bronze Age in Nakhchivan. This work also allows us to analyze the diachronic dynamics of development of this culture. Studies conducted in the Middle Bronze Age settlements of Nakhchivan showed that the painted wares characteristic for the settlement Uzarliktepe and Tazakend culture were widespread in Nakhchivan during the first stage (Baxşəliyev 2004, s. 85).

Both the stratigraphy and material from the archaeological sites of the Middle Bronze Age located in the Urmia Basin resemble the settlements of Nakhchivan. This similarity was observed particularly clearly at Geoy Tepe and Haftavantepe, which are located in the Urmia Basin. Although sites of the Middle Bronze Age are characterized by widespread painted wares in this region, the sites of the Urmia Basin have not been studied as comprehensively as the ones in Nakhchivan. Therefore, the monuments of the Middle Bronze Age in the Urmia Basin are limited to Haftavantepe, Geoy Tepe, Kordlar Tepe and Dinkha Tepe.

The monochrome painted wares of Nakhchivan are quite similar to the painted wares of the Geoy Tepe "D" and Haftavantepe VI "C" (Bahşaliyev 1997, s. 32). This similarity is also observed in their various styled decorations, including wavy, grid and zigzag-shaped lines and various geometric, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures. These patterns are common across the painted wares of Nakhchivan and Urmia. The wares decorated with the fortune motif were found from

in a layer of Kultepe I (Fig. 2, 6) and Haftavantepe VI "B" (Fig. 2, 5), patterns reminiscent of the chessboard from the levels of Kultepe II (Fig. 2, 8) and Haftavantepe VI "B" (Fig. 2, 7). Among various geometric patterns on painted wares in Nakhchivan and Urmia, the grid patterns were also comparable. This can be seen clearly in the wares of Haftavantepe VI "B" (Fig. 2, 3) and Kultepe II (Fig. 2, 4). Different decorated triangles were found in Gizilburun (Fig. 4, 3) and Haftavantepe VI "B" (Fig. 4, 1). Wavy lines were found in Nahajir (Fig. 4, 6, 7) and the monument of Geoy Tepe D (Fig. 4, 5).

A comparative analysis of painted wares found in the settlements of Nakhchivan and the Urmia Basin shows that the same patterns were used for the decoration of painted wares. The patterns of painted wares differ only in that they are arranged in different sequences. This difference may be explained by the presence of local production facilities (Baxşəliyev 2004, s. 89).

Similar motifs, colors, styles of painting are common features of the pottery from Nakhchivan and Urmia. Close observation of the decoration of the wares clearly reveals similarity in motifs were painted. The figures and patterns decorating the wares of Nakhchivan and Urmia are sometimes painted between the lines, and are sometimes freely depicted. The realistic paintings are mainly silhouettes. The similarity in artistic depiction is clearest in the bird motifs and geometric patterns that decorate the polychrome painted wares found in the Haftavantepe VI "B" (Fig. 1, 1) and Kultepe II (Fig. 1, 2).

Study of the painted wares found in the Shahtakhty settlement provide further support to the cultural relations of the sedentary and semi-nomadic tribes of Nakhchivan with the Urmia Basin in the Middle Bronze Age. Analysis has shown that the Shahtakhty materials are compatible with the wares found in Geoy Tepe "D" and Haftavantepe VI "C". A large part of the ceramic material in both locations consisted of painted wares. Monochrome and polychrome wares were made in gray, pink and brown colors.

The materials from Shahtakhty are divided into four chronological periods according to the stratigraphy (Baxşəliyev, Seyidov, 1995, s. 27-28). The red, pink, simple, scratch-patterned, monochrome painted wares that date to the first period of Shahtakhty settlement (Fig. 2, 2)

are similar to the ceramics found in the layer of Geoy Tepe "D" dated to 2400-2000 B.C. (Fig. 2, 1) and Haftavantepe VI "C" dated 2200-2000 B.C. (Edwards, 1983, p. 102; 1986, p. 70). The first period of Shahtakhty ceramics was dated to 2300-1900 B.C. according to comparison with the painted wares found from the upper layers of Alishar III, belonging to 2100-1900 B.C. and from the layer dated 2300-1900 B.C. of Turang Tappeh (Seyidov 2003, s. 149; Baxşəliyev 2004, s. 74-79). Simple, pink and polychrome painted wares of the second period are comparable to the materials from period "C" of Geoy Tepe in 2000-1700 B.C. (Brown, 1951, p. 264, Fig. 32, 698, 709, 959) and the early levels of Haftavantepe VI "B" in 1900-1500 B.C. (Edwards, 1983, Fig. 135). Therefore, the wares of this period were dated to 1900-1700 B.C. (Seyidov 2003, s. 149; Baxşəliyev 2004, s. 74-79). The materials of the third period mainly consist of gray and pink, simple, monochrome and polychrome patterned cups, bowls, "teapots", etc. The body of these wares was covered with white or yellow slip and then decorated with black or red or both. The patterns consist of grid rhombuses and triangles, various decorative geometric elements, and animals and bird decorations. Comparable materials was found in Geoy Tepe "C" and "B" (Brown 1951, Fig. 31, 49, 51, 52) and the last level of Haftavantepe VI "B", belonging to the middle and second half of the 2nd millennium B.C. (Edwards 1983, Fig. 116, 1-2). Taking into account these similarities, the third period of Shahtakhty materials has been attributed to 17th-13rd centuries B.C. (Seyidov 2003, s. 149). Simple, pink and gray cups, bowls, "teapots" and goblets belong to this fourth period. Comparable wares were found in the layers "A" and "B" of Geoy Tepe.

A comparison of the Nakhchivan and Urmia painted wares indicates that the Nakhchivan pottery is more detailed, with a greater number of motifs. This richness can be clearly seen in the zoomorphic depictions. The Nakhchivan wares contain depictions of both realistic and fantastically styled birds, unlike the small number of stylized bird motifs that have been published from Urmia. Storks, doves, eagles, owls, partridges, ducks and griffons were depicted on painted and gray ceramics belonging to the Middle Bronze Age of Nakhchivan. The paintings differ in their realistic, schematic and fantastic portrayals. The depiction of birds in various styles was presumably associated with the religious-mythological worldview of people.

Wares from Yayji with bird motifs (Fig. 4, 4) are similar to the painted wares from Haftavantepe VI "B" (Fig 4, 2). The similarities of the ceramics in both form and decorative motif indicate that Nakhchivan, the Urmia Basin and Eastern Anatolia formed a single cultural ecuemene in the 3rd-2st millennium B.C. and that there were economic and cultural relations among these sites (Baxşəliyev 2004, s. 224; Садыхзаде 1973, с. 74-89, с. 20-44).

The similarities etwen the anthropomorphic motifs from Nakhchivan and Urmia also striking. Although people were realistically depicted, they were painted as silhouettes. As other ancient art, feet were depicted from the side, while bodies and heads were depicted from the front. Such anthropomorphic motifs have been found at Gizilburun (Fig. 3, 1) and Kultepe II (Fig. 3, 2, 3) and are similar to those found in Haftavantepe VI "B" (Fig. 3, 4-7).

Analysis of the painted wares found in Nakhchivan indicate that most pots were wheel-thrown, while some were handmade (Baxşəliyev 2004, s. 70), their outer surface was embroidered with straight and wavy lines (Алиев 1991, s. 102) and such patterns were applied directly to the unpainted surface of ceramics (Rəsulova 2016, s. 94). The painted wares found in Geoy Tepe in the north of Urmia Basin are similar to those known from sites in Nakhchivan monuments, probably reflecting the characteristic features of this culture in the early stages of development. Geoy Tepe wares belonging to the early stage were decorated with black and red lines covering the upper part of the vessel and painted directly on it (Brown 1951, p. 69).

Gridded rhombuses and butterfly-shaped decorations are also common in both Nakhchivan and the Urmia Basin. The painted wares from Shahtakhty, Kultepe I, Kultepe II, Kızkale, Chalkhankale, Gurdagh, Karki, Kuku, Nahajir in Nakhchivan can be divided into two groups: monochrome and polychrome. The outer surface of the dishes included in both groups is painted with zigzag, wavy, broken lines, as well as triangular, rhombic and circular geometric patterns. Yet the variation in zoomorphic and anthropomorphic images these vessels reflected people's beliefs regarding the position of both animals and people. Perhaps as a result all of the painted wares of Nakhchivan, the Urmia Basin and Eastern Anatolia have distinctly local characteristics despite these similarities. It is likely that this Middle

Bronze Age painted ware culture of the Middle Bronze Age was created by ancient sedentary and semi-nomadic tribes living in Nakhchivan, the Urmia Basin and Eastern Anatolia.

Painted wares in Nakhchivan have passed through several discrete stages over a long period of time. A reintroduction of painted wares occurred during the Middle Bronze Age. Various stages of the development of these motifs can be observed in the settlements of the Middle Bronze Age of Nakhchivan, including Shahtakhty, Kultepe I, Kultepe II, Gizilburun, etc. However, only the early stages of the culture of painted wares are observed in the monuments of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia. Recent excavations in Nakhchivan once again confirms these similarities.

Since the close economic, cultural and trade relations of the ancient people living in Nakhchivan with Western Asia continued over a long historical period, this also affected the local characteristics of craftsmanship across those territories. As we noted above, related painted wares are widespread. Common patterns can be seen on the Middle Bronze Age painted wares found in the monuments of Urmia Basin, Eastern Anatolia, and Georgia, while many of the technological features of ware preparation also seem to be common. Nonetheless, subtle differences presumably due to local variation persist. Additionally, advances in metallurgy and metal working in the Middle Bronze Age also influenced the development of these wares. The spread of painted wares seems to be correlated with the introduction of tin. This also seems to confirm the close relationship between Nakhchivan and the rest of Western Asia.

A comparative analysis of painted wares found in the monuments of the Middle Bronze Age in Nakhchivan and the Urmia Basin has shown that they reflected the economic and cultural relations between the peoples of the South Caucasus and the Middle East. The intensification of these relations had an important impact on the lifestyle of ancient peoples, especially inter-tribal exchanges, and the activities of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes. The development of relations between people living in Nakhchivan and the Urmia Basin affected the beliefs and craft traditions of these peoples and to the emergence of cultural similarity. These connections affected the development of painted wares cultures in both regions. Comparative

analysis has revealed that, artistic styles, ceramic technology, colors, and various motifs were all shared between the two regions.

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Fig 1. Polychrome painted wares: 1-Haftavantepe VI "B", Edwards 1983; 2-Kultepe II, Bakhshaliyev 2004.

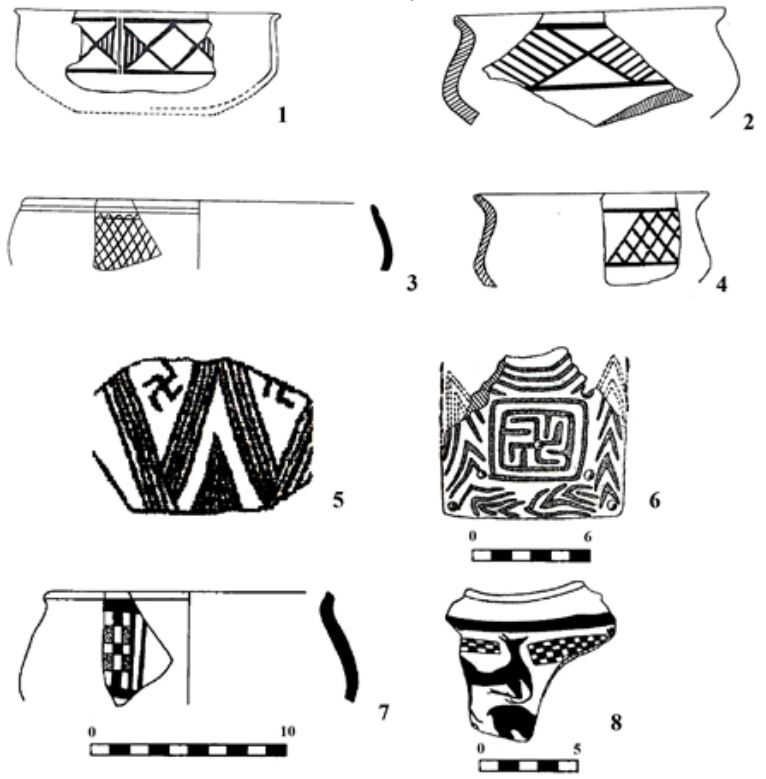


Fig 2. Monochrome and polychrome painted wares: 1 – Goey Tepe D, Brown 1951; 3, 5, 7 – Haftavantepe VI "B", Edwards 1983; 2 – Shakhtakhty, 4, 8 – Kultepe II, 6 – Kultepe I, Bakhshaliyev 2004.

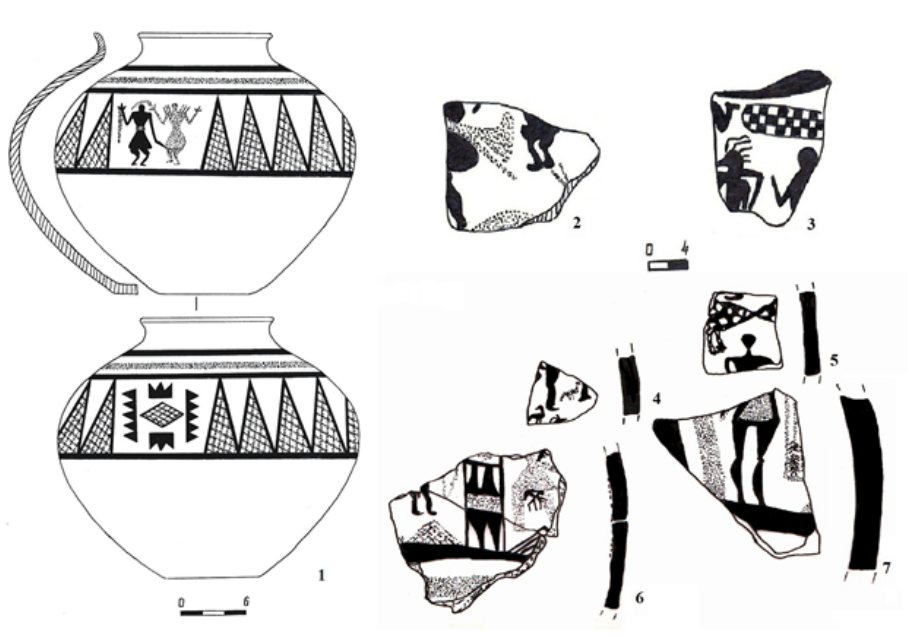


Fig 3. Polychrome painted wares: 1 – Gizilburun, 2, 3 – Kultepe, Bakhshaliyev 2004; 4, 7 – Haftavantepe VI “B”, Edwards 1983.

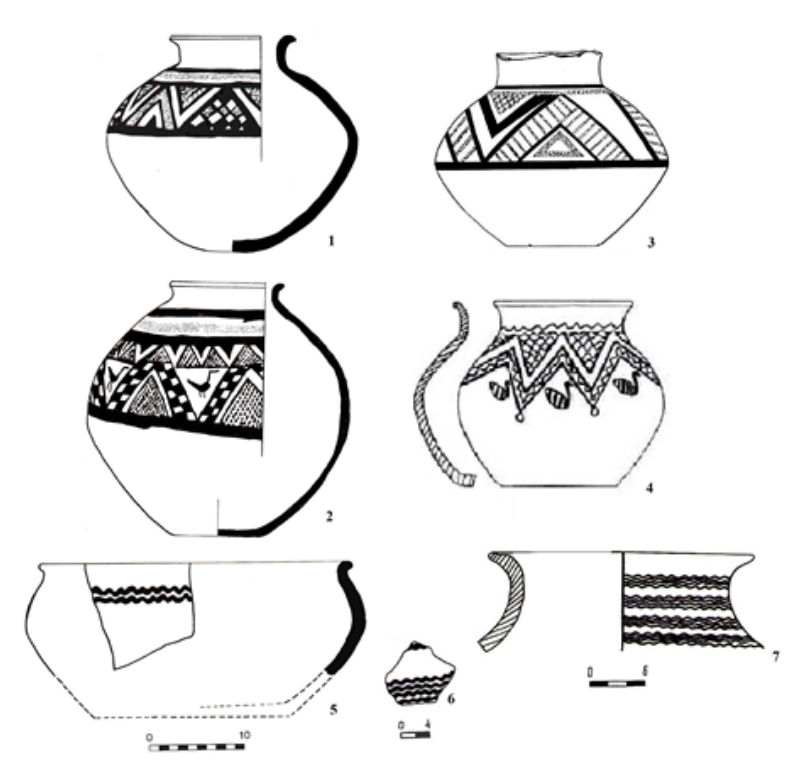


Fig 4. Monochrome and polychrome painted wares: 1, 2 – Haftavantepe VI “B”, Edwards 1983; 5 – Goey Tepe D, Brown 1951; 3 – Gizilburun, 4 – Yayji, 6, 7 – Nahajir, Bakhshaliyev 2004.

انتشارات آریارنا

انتشارات آریارنا بر آن است تا کتاب‌های ارزندهٔ تألیفی و ترجمه‌ای پژوهشگران ایرانی یا نیرانی را در زمینه‌های گوناگون ایران‌شناسی همچون باستان‌شناسی، تاریخ، فرهنگ و زبان‌های باستانی منتشر کند، کتاب‌هایی که برای شناخت تاریخ و فرهنگ گرانسنگ و ورجاوند ایران بسیار ارزشمند باشند. با توجه به پیوندها و ریشه‌های ژرف و عمیق فرهنگی میان ایران و جهان بشکوه ایرانی که از سده‌ها بلکه هزاره‌های دور و دراز برجا بوده است و در دهه‌های اخیر تلاش دشمنان بر آن بوده تا این پیوندهای ژرف را بگسلند و ریشه‌های عمیق را با تیشه برکنند، ایران فرهنگی که دل و دین به آن سپرده‌ایم از چشم دست‌اندرکاران انتشارات آریارنا دور نمانده و چاپ کتاب‌های پژوهشی و ترجمه‌ای ارزنده دربارهٔ جهان ایرانی یا ایران فرهنگی از اولویت‌های انتشارات آریارنا است؛ باشد که از این راه پیوندهایمان پیوسته‌تر و ریشه‌هایمان ژرف‌تر شود. کتاب‌های انتشارات آریارنا پیشکشی ناچیز است به ایرانیان، ایرانی‌تباران، ایران‌دوستان و همهٔ مردمان جهان ایرانی که ایران و جهان ایرانی را از جان دوست‌تر می‌دارند.



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به کوشش
دکتر سیدمهدی موسوی، دکتر شاهین آریامنش،
دکتر مجید منتظر ظهوری و دکتر مرتضی خانی‌پور
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نخستین

همایش دوسالانه بین‌المللی
انجمن علمی باستان‌شناسی ایران:

”برهمکنش‌های فرهنگی، پیوست و گسست“

به کوشش

سیدمهدی موسوی، شاهین آریامنش
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