EXCAVATIONS TO THE SOUTH-WEST OF HANLAR IN 1941

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(Hanlar)

The area extending to the south-west of Hanlar (the former Helcnendorf) along the right bank of the Gandzha-chaj is of considerable interest. In recent years, at a spot close to the town of Hanlar, between the residential area and the water-tank, we investigated several Chalcolithic monuments as well as Bronze Age sites, and recovered some valuable material representing the oldest period in the history of Azerbaijan.¹

The high ground near that area, ca. 1.1.5 km. from Hanlar, between the water-tank and the point where the Zurnabad road turns towards the river (fig. 1), had been investigated more thoroughly in the summer of 1941. Several barrows, Nos. 8-13, 34 and 35 had been excavated there earlier by E. Ressler.² The most interesting of those were No. 8 with a cremation, encircled by ten smaller barrows, and No. 12 containing over 50 clay vessels. A survey of barrow No. 8 revealed that the excavations undertaken by Ressler had not been completed. This makes the dating of this most important monument rather difficult. The remaining barrows investigated by Ressler belong, judging from the grave-goods recovered, to the Late Bronze period, that is to the early 1st mill. B.C. Several monuments of an earlier period than the Late Bronze Age, as well as some of a later date located there, were not noticed by Ressler: they are shown by no external features and can hardly be detected on an almost flat surface covered by scanty and monotonous vegetation.

The land, where the monuments in question are located, has never been cultivated. Under a thin layer of soil lies a layer of brown clay about 1 m. deep, then a layer of soot, 1.5-2 m. thick, covering a bedrock of pebbles.

Burial No. 148 (see the ground-plan and fig. 2), discovered by means of sounding, showed no external features. It was sealed with river pebbles and fragments of boulders bound with brown clay. The size of the burial pit was 5.0 x 1.7 m. and 1.7 m. deep, its main axis running in a N.W.-S.E. direction.

¹ Ya.I. Gummel, Pogrebnyj kurgan No. 1 okolo Elenendorfa. AzSSR. (Baku: 1931); J. Gummel, “Zur Archäologie Aserbeidsjans.” Eurasia Septentrionalis antiqua. T. 8. (Helsinki: .....) 211-234. Unpublished material recovered from barrow No. 7 (Late Bronze), burial No. 12 (Eneolithic) and burial grounds No. 10 and No. 15 containing cremated bodies (Eneolithic) is now in the Museum of Hanlar.

Nothing was found in its south-eastern half: there was only a layer of clay on the bottom, 20 cm. thick. When clearing the central part of the grave we discovered the skeleton of a stag, and behind it by the south-western wall that of a sheep; in the northern corner were the bones of a snake. The deformed skeleton of a woman aged 30-35 lay on its left side with bent legs (the vertebrae, from the epistropheus to the sacrum, had fused together, making an inflexible structure; certain anomalies were traceable on the thigh-bones and on the toes). The physicians we consulted could not give a reason for these deformities. Only the right side of the skull, which had not touched the bottom of the pit, has been preserved. This shows that the skull was most probably of the dolichocephalic type. Twelve unusual carnelian beads were found by the neck. Besides the skeleton were many splinters of red flint and green jasper, four of them shaped like knives and one like a scraper. Most interesting were the finds of pottery: two intact bowls and some fragments of a third. These are