

# BELLE TEN

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## THE SAKCE GÖZÜ CAVE SİTE 1949

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This site was called the cave site to avoid confusion with the site of Jobba Hüyük which had been extensively excavated earlier in the year. The present site lies at the foot of a small bluff about a quarter of a kilometre from the village of Sakje Gozu and on the track from the village to the cemetery. In this bluff are a series of small caves. It was not in these caves, however, that the soundings were made, but in the sloping ground below the cliff face.

The original purpose was to see if there was any Palaeolithic material in this deposit, but nothing earlier than the material to be described was found.

Three trenches were dug, "A,, being the furthest from the village, trench "C,, in the middle, and trench "B,, nearest to it. Trench A measured 4 X 2 Metres, B 6 X 2 Metres and C 3 X 2 Metres.

*Stratification.* The deposit in the three trenches was the same, a light brown earth on top, and below, a more compact deposit. In all three trenches this extended down to a little over 1.50 metres and rested on rock. The lower deposit was slightly softer towards the rock face and as it did not contain either floors or extensive hearths, the placing of objects had to depend entirely on their position from the surface.

That some disturbance had taken place in antiquity, is clear enough from the material, but this could not be demonstrated during the actual excavation. In all cases, the material described below, is from the lower level.

*The Pottery.* (Fig. 1.)

The pottery from the trenches in the rock shelter above Sakce Gözü was predominantly Al 'Ubaid. There appears to be no stratification and there are a few wheel-made sherds mixed with the hand-made Chalcolithic wares which are mainly painted.

*Painted Wares*

There is a noticeable difference between the wares from Trenches A and C. Those from A, exhibit a greater range of colour, firing and design. The clay of those from C, is exceptionally light, buff to cream in colour and fired softer than those from A. Both are decorated in matt black paint, but that of C is of exceptionally poor quality. These differences do not, however, preclude them from belonging to the same Northern 'Ubaid period. The closest affinities are with the painted pottery found in the 'Amq plain at Tell es Sheikh<sup>1</sup> by Sir Leonard Woolley and his Turkish colleagues, Ahmet Dönmez and Baki Ögin. The vases which have the closest connections are the round based bowls (Fig. 1:4) and the high necked globular jar both from A. while designs in common are the low hung swags, rosettes and hatchings. The rosette at the Sakce Gözü site appears on the neck of a globular vase (Fig. 1:2). It is thus on a different form from that at Tell es Sheikh where it is represented on a footed bowl,<sup>2</sup> or from Mersin where it is illustrated on a barrel jug, and a small round-based cup.<sup>3</sup> There is a tendency in the vases from B, to follow in shape and design though not in technique, the wares of the earlier Halaf period. The resemblance may well be accidental as the clay is not well worked or fired as in the earlier period, and the paint is matt and poor. This is well shown by the two jar-necks illustrated (Fig. 1:10,11)

<sup>1</sup> American Journal of Archaeology Vol. LIV. No. 1, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid* Fig. I, bottom register.

<sup>3</sup> A. A. A, Vol. XXVI Nos. 1-2 Pl. XXVII.

Wares: Buff, brown, soft, levigated with large white grits, hand-made. Brick red hard to medium firing, with white grits, hand-made.

Designs: In black, red or brown chocolate paint, in swags, chevrons, rosettes, stipples, running lozenges.

Shapes: Thin bowls with incurving rims. (Fig. 17) or straight sides (Fig. 1:3) or jars.

#### *Cooking Pot Wares*

These occurred all over the site, and the wares were very similar with only minor variations. The pots usually had knob-handles placed near the rim or on the bulge of the pot to facilitate lifting when hot.

Ware: Core black tempered with both straw and grits, black to grey outside, occasionally red outside.

Shape: Deep bowls, with straight or incurving or everted rims. (Fig. 1:13, 14, 16)

Handles: Knob, straight or upturned.

#### *Chalcolithic Plain Wares.*

There are some plain chalcolithic sherds usually in a soft fired ware.

Ware: Buff, soft, hand-made, straw tempered, self-smoothed.

Shapes: Bowls, small jars. (Fig. 1:5, 8)

Similarly shaped vases came from Arpachiyah in the 'Ubaid level.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Bronze Age Plain Wares.*

The majority of the plain wares belong to a period after the end of the Chalcolithic period. They are wheel made and probably are to be dated to the second millennium B. C. Unfortunately, there is little comparable material. The most common fragments of large jars probably water pitchers (Fig. 1:22) Small jars, (Fig. 1:17). A ring based pot (Fig. 1:19), a bowl with bead rim (Fig. 1:21) or roll rim (Fig. 1:20). The only piece likely to pre-date this, is the pierced lug handle (Fig. 1:12) which may be Early Dynastic in date.

<sup>1</sup> Iraq. Vol. II. pt. 1 Fig. 39]: 2, Fig. 40 : 2.

*Pre-Hittite Cilician Painted Wares.*

There are a few fragments of wares that resemble those from the Plain of Cilicia. Similar sherds come from Kazanlı,<sup>2</sup> and Mersin Levels. XIa, XIb, XIZ. c. 1950-1450 B. C.<sup>3</sup> Those from the cave are wheel made and one may represent part of a bowl or chalice common in this period. (Fig. 1:18)

Ware : Pinkish-buff or orange, self smoothed, wheel made, hard to medium firing, wheel made.

Decoration : Light brown or red paint, in chevrons, or parallel lines.

Shapes : Bowls or chalices. (Fig. 1:9)

Conclusion :

It would seem that the pottery from the site is of two periods. It was first occupied during the middle Chalcolithic 'Ubaid Period, and then by the peoples who lived in the valley during the early part of the second millennium. There is no trace of a later occupation so that this particular site seems not to have been inhabited after about 1500 B. C.

## FIGURE

1. (317) Cup or bowl. Ware buff, soft straw tempered, hand-made, unslipped decorated in matt chocolate paint outside and over rim. also second example not drawn decorated with rosette.
2. (52) Neck of jar. Ware buff, thin soft straw and grit tempered, hand made decorated in matt chocolate paint outside only.
3. (29,27) Water pink, tempered with straw and large grits, unslipped, decorated in matt chocolate paint. Cf. Coba Hüyük, Level IV. Iraq Vol. XII. Pt. 2. Fig. 17:6.
4. (28) Bowl. Ware pink, thin hard, few white grits. Cf. Arpachiyah Iraq Vol. II. Pt. 1. Fig 34:7.
5. (80) Neck, Ware soft buff, straw tempered, undecorated. Cf. Arpachiyah. Vol. II, Pt 1. Fig. 40:2.
6. (63) Neck. Ware soft buff tempered with straw and grits, decorated in matt chocolate paint.

<sup>2</sup> A. A. A. Vol. XXV. Nos. 1-2, Pl. LVIII : 1, 12.

<sup>3</sup> A. A. A. Vol. XXVI. Nos. 3-4. Pl. LXVI : 1, 2, 7.

7. (54) Rim. Soft buff ware, straw and grit tempered, decorated in light brown paint outside and over rim.
8. (250) Bowl. Buff soft straw tempered, hand made, may have been decorated with bands of paint but now too worn to be certain. Cf. Arpachiyah, Iraq Vol. II, Pt. 1, Fig 39:2
9. (43) Rim. Pink-buff ware, medium firing, some grits, decorated in thick dark brown matt paint.
- 10.(301) Body and neck of jar. Pink gritty ware with some straw, covered in a cream slip, decorated in dark brown paint, hand made. Cf. Arpachiyah, Iraq Vol. II, Pt. 1, Fig. 34:4
- 11.(422) Neck and body of jar. Brown, medium firing, limestone grits and straw, brown slip, decorated in matt chocolate paint, hand made.
- 12.(404) Buff lug pierced, core grey, surface buff, straw tempered.
- 13.(257) Handle. Core black, outside surface grey, inside red hand-made, with large white grits, self smoothed.
- 14.(467) Rim and handle, Thick grey-black core, with grit and straw tempering, grey surface self smoothed, hand made.
- 15.(332) Rim. Coarse grey core, straw tempered, large grits, grey inside, buff outside, self smoothed.
- 15.(386) Rim and handle. Ware grey thick straw and grit tempering, small knob - handle.
- 17.(329) Neck and rim of jar. Buff medium fired with small limestone grits, cream slip out, wheel made.
18. Bowl or chalice. Buff ware, hard white limestone grits. base missing, self smoothed, wheelmade, decorated in light brown paint.
- 19.(391) Base. Core, pink with large white grits, surface very crackled, brown.
- 20.(109) Rim. Core sandy, straw tempered soft surface, light brown self smoothed.
- 21.(381) Bowl. Core grey, surface brown large limestone grits, self smoothed, wheel made.
- 22.(270) Jar rim. Brown large limestone grits, medium firing, surface orange, wheel made.

## SMALL OBJECTS. FIG. 2

## STONE.

Most of the stone objects found in the cave came from Trench A. The most interesting was a small adze in schist with a ground and polished surface. Length 3cm. (Fig. 2:14) This was from the top level.

*Discs.* There were several of these. One in serpentine with a scratched design on it. Width 1.5 cm. (Fig. 2:2) There was a similar disc of the same width in quartz. (Fig. 2:6) These discs were too small for spindle whorls, but may have been used as beads.

*Beads.* There was one quartz bead from the upper level, a standard barrel. (Fig. 2:5) And a typical barrel in marble. (Fig. 2:3) from the top level. Neither of these beads are of any assistance for dating purposes as they have a long range and occur at almost all periods. In addition there was an unfinished pendant in amber chalcedony, with a boring through the upper end. Length 2.25 cm. It showed slight signs of retouching down both edges. (Fig. 2:4) An irregularly pierced bead was found in C. Length 2 cm. (Fig. 2:10)

*Whorl:* An interesting specimen was the spindle-whorl made of limestone with a diameter of 3 cm. As there was a distinct curve on this object, it looked as if it had been part of a larger limestone vessel and had later been used as a spindle whorl. No traces of stone vessels were, however, found in the site. (Fig. 2:8) There was another from C, 1.3 cm. (Fig. 2:9)

*Axe.* From B came a serpentine axe broken at the butt. Length 4.5 cm. (Fig. 2. No. 13) In this trench was also a point of obsidian similar in shape to the bone points found with it and probably both made for the same purpose. The point is finely ground. (Fig. 2 No.) From C there was another axe of granite, with a ground and polished cutting edge. Judging by the state of the butt, this had been used as a pounder. Length 6.5 cm. (Fig. 2 No. 16)

*Bone :*

The bone tools of which there were several, all show signs of wear. The long spatulate-shaped implement from A, Length 11.5cm. is polished on both faces (Fig. 2:1) There is also a thicker type of tool made of horn or antler with a very worn surface, and shaped into a rough point with the tip missing. Length 10.5 cm. (Fig. 2:11)

In B there was a bone point. It was 5 cm. long, one end being blackened apparently by fire and the whole tool highly polished. (Fig. 2:7). In C there was part of a weaving tool with both ends broken. Remaining length 16 cm. (Fig. 2:12)

*Flint Implements.* (Fig. 3)

*Material.* The majority of the pieces are made on a very good quality grey tabular flint.

*Arrowheads.* 13. Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 8. Only two are complete. Nos 4 and 5. The majority of the remainder have the tang reduced by rather coarse steep retouch. One specimen however, though only the tang remains, is of a very different technique, the tang is delicately fluted on the upper face. (Fig. 3 No. ) A second specimen, again a tang only, though wider than the former, has fluted retouch on the lower face as well at the very base of the tang, for the purpose presumably of reducing the bulb.

*End-scrapers.* 9. (Nos. 10, 11, 13) All are made on the ends of blade flakes, and all are rather rough.

*Side-scrapers.* No. 9. 1. A very rough specimen made on the side of a broad flake.

*Burins.* 1. A single faceted ordinary made on the end of a blade flake.

*Borers.* 10. No. 12. Not a very well made group, generally they are blades with the ends reduced from both sides, the retouch does not occur on the underside even at the tip.

*Backed blades.* 4. (Nos. 6, 7) One is a well made specimen with retouch up the back and across the end. (No. 6) One is pointed (No. 7) also with retouch up the back as is also the third, but in this case the end is rounded. The fourth is also retouched on the back, but only for three quarters of the way and not across the ends. None of these blades have lustre.

*Sickle blades.* 1. A parallel-sided blade without retouch, but with marked lustre.

*Blade flakes* 26. All are simple blade flakes without retouch or lustre.

*Cores* 12. No. 14. A large proportion are very shapeless, but some are flat blade cores, three of these have been struck from two directions.

Retouched flakes. 6. All are flakes with some retouch on some part of the edge.

*Flakes.* Only one was kept out of a large number of waste flakes ; this was a broad Levalloise flake with a prepared platform, but without either secondary working or patina.

*Obsidian* 13. Mostly small blade flakes without retouch and a few chips. The material ranges from light grey, almost transparent to black, but there is none with any green.

*Core Picks.* 2. No. 15. These are the residue from small blade cores which have subsequently been used either as a small pick or chisel. One specimen is broken and only one half remains.

*Lames de degagement.* 8. (No. 16) As the presence of blades and two directional cores suggest these are not uncommon. Several specimens are remarkably well defined and in two cases very long, 13 cms. None of them appear to have been utilised as fabricators as is sometimes the case.

In addition to the above there are two curious implements which do not fit into the usual classifications. Both are small flakes one wider than the other. In one case half and in the other case two thirds of the flake have been reduced and then polished, the remaining part having steep retouch on the sides, the total effect being a very small end scraper on the end of a polished stem ; the ends of these stems are not pointed. It is difficult to imagine what use these objects could have had, the labour of polishing seems unnecessary if only an end-scraper was required. The only possibility is that they are in fact unfinished, and it is likely that the original intention was to polish them all over, (No. 2)

*Animal remains.*

The majority of the bones were in a very fragmentary condition and were unsuitable for identification. There were, however, a number of teeth. The majority of these were either goat or sheep, and there was also a horn core of the former. Pig is represented by two molars, one of them still set in part of the lower jaw. Two human teeth were found, a pre-molar and a first molar, but there was no trace of the rest of the skeleton. Two extremely large canines were also found and were possibly from a bear, but the rest of the teeth were not found. Lastly there was a fragment of the left half of the lower jaw of a medium sized dog containing three teeth.



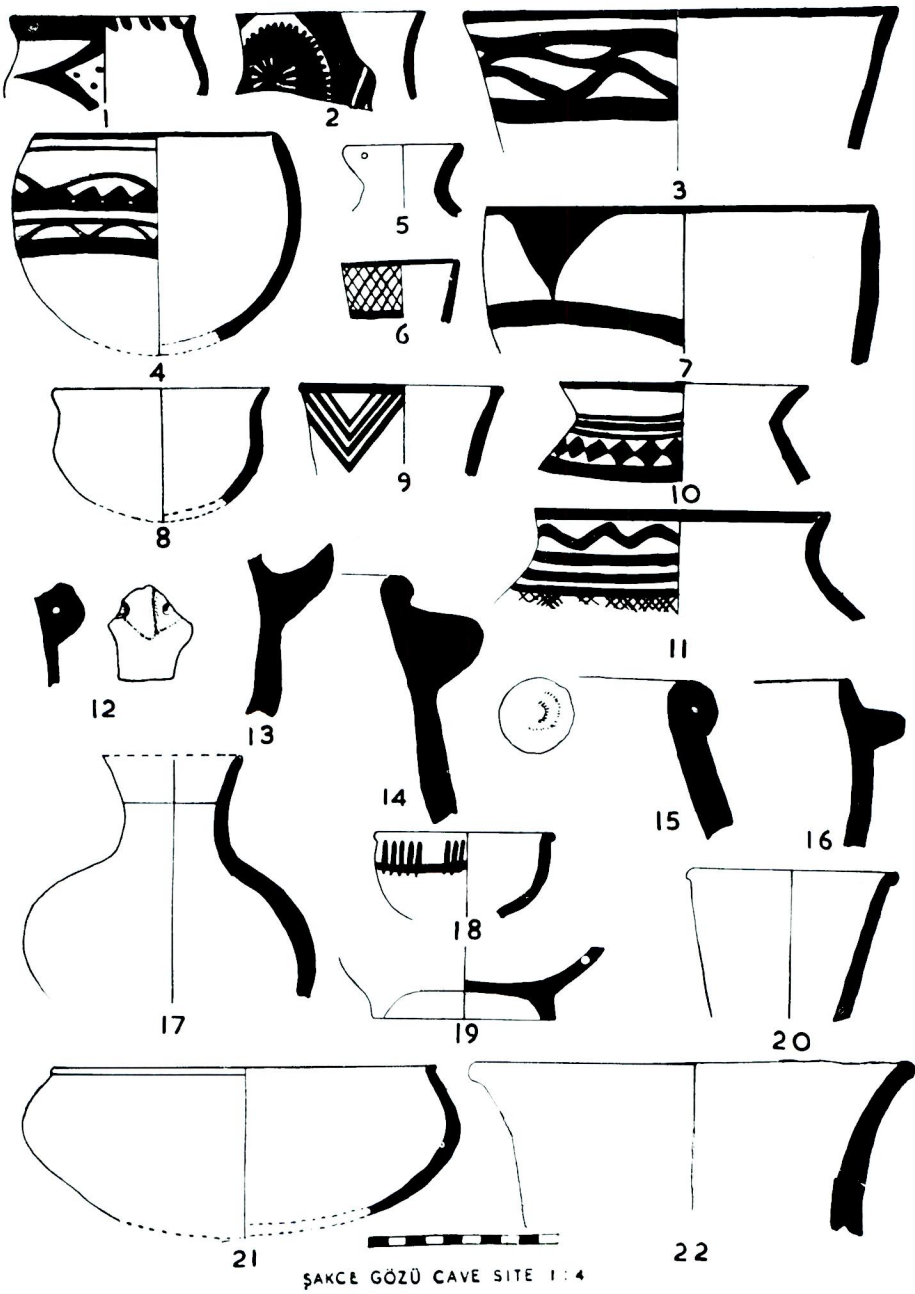
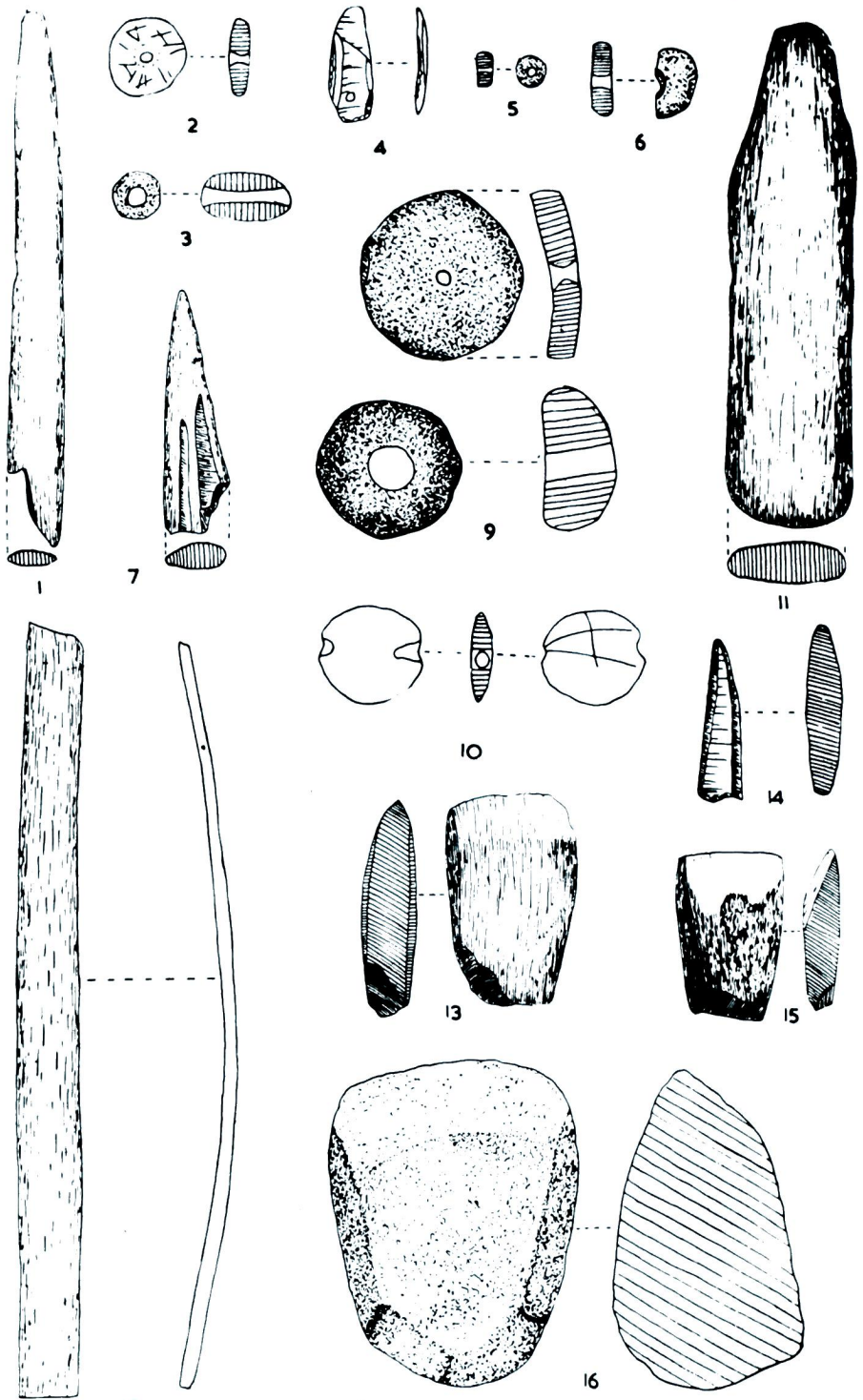
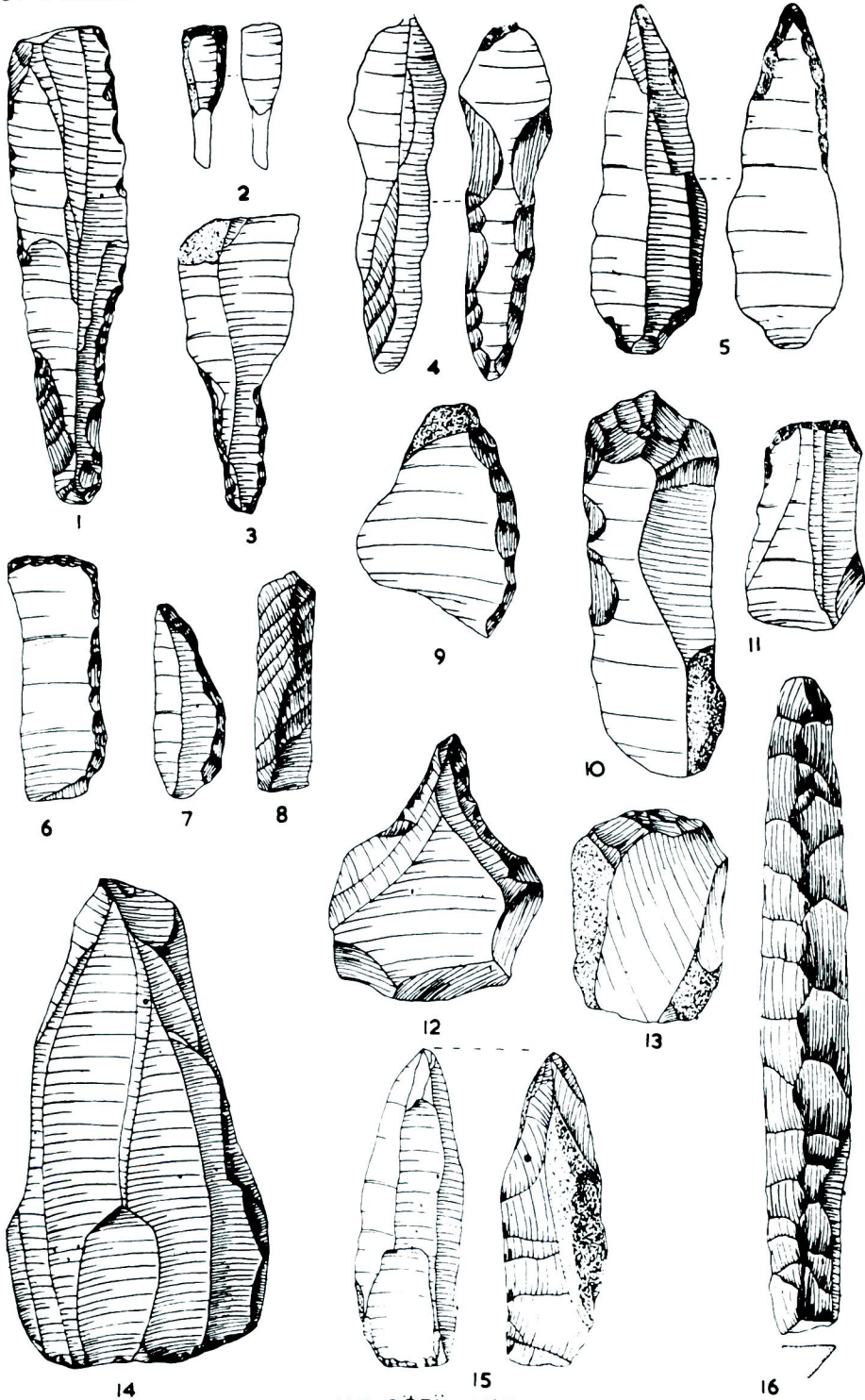


Fig. 1



SAKCE GÖZÜ CAVE SITE. X 2/3

Fig. 2



SAKCE GÖZÜ CAVE SITE, X 2/3

Fig. 3



## CONCLUSION

In spite of the deposits being somewhat mixed, the larger part of the material seems to be a homogenous group, that is the Chalcolithic pottery, most of the flints and a greater part of the small objects.

In the flint industry, the apparently intrusive piece is the arrowhead with fluted retouch, Fig. 3 No. . The backed blades are very similar to those from Jobba Huyuk where they occur from the earliest level to the Al 'Ubaid, and sporadically later. The absence of sickle blades with lustre, is interesting and suggests that the occupation of the site was seasonal, and it was used only during hot weather as it is much higher than the plain and very much cooler. Therefore, as the occupation took place out of the harvesting season, the absence of sickle blades is not surprising.

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