

KP 378 Tovuz Chai

The Site

The site was centred on a spur of high ground to the east of the Tovuzchai River. To the east, the land drops away into a small dry valley then rises again over another spur of high ground before dropping away in a series of undulations to the floor of the river valley. South of the site, there is a steep drop to a small tributary stream of the Tovuzchai, while to the west the ground dips less steeply, then rises and runs level to the metalled road to Alimerdanli village from Tovuz. The flat land the west also runs round to the northwest of the site and is cultivated, with a standing maize crop at the time the excavation was carried out. Beyond this, and to the northeast of the site, an area of quarry-pits and hollows has been used for dumping domestic rubbish. The site itself and the steep slopes to the west, south and east were all covered with sagebrush scrub grazed by sheep and goats.

The route of this section of the pipeline was not finalised until a late stage in the construction process, and this area had not been included in the pre-construction surveys. As a consequence, it was only found during topsoil stripping, on 8th June 2004, despite a number of stone settings being visible on the surface.

Excavations were carried out from 11th June to 15th September 2004. The visible features were concentrated on the south side of the working width, close to the BTC centreline, and excavation started here. It quickly became apparent that it was a much more extensive site than first thought, and the excavation area was subsequently extended to a 50m by 11m area on the top of the ridge. Construction activities, especially benching of the side slopes to the east and west, revealed the further extent of the site and the excavation area was extended to the east by 35m.

In consultation with the pipeline engineers, the working width was narrowed to 24m through this section, by moving the SCP pipe closer to BTC, in order to minimise the damage to the archaeological deposits. The north, SCP side, of the site was not excavated at this stage, but was covered by a protective layer of

Description of Archaeological Remains

Graves: 59 numbered

Proportion with skels, groups of pots, other finds, beads, bronze knife blades.
Alignment, depth

Graves in benched section.

Interpretation

Cemetery , extent, density of burials, few intercutting so probably marked.

More to come when SCP side excavated.