

**Azerbaijan
National Academy of Sciences
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography**

Tarikh Dostiyev

**Short Report
Excavations of Garajamirli II Settlement
KP 323.57 - BTC ROW**

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ABSTRACT

This report gives an account of the archaeological excavations carried out at Garajamirli II Settlement located at KP 323.57 of the BTC pipeline ROW. In addition to depicting the excavations at this site, the report provides a description of each archaeological feature exposed and the artefacts discovered at the site. The detailed study of the factual material obtained from the site indicates that this was a double-layer settlement containing evidence of two periods of occupation - the Eneolithic Period and the middle Ages.

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I. Introduction

- *Description of the BTC and SCP Archaeology Programme*

Archaeological excavations in connection with the construction of the BTC and SCP pipelines were conducted prior to, and during the construction of these pipelines. These excavations generally were carried out within the 44m wide pipeline corridor from 2001 to 2005. The archaeology programme consisted of five phases of which the first four phases constituted field investigations:

Phase I – actual and potential archaeological sites were visually identified during walkover or baseline surveys during the selection of the pipeline route.

Phase II – the sites that were identified during Phase I as archaeologically potential were tested by digging test pits and conducting small-scale trial excavations.

Phase III – small and large-scale excavations were carried out within the BTC ROW.

Phase IV – small and large-scale excavations were carried out within the SCP ROW.

In addition to these, all the construction activities were monitored by watching brief archaeologists.

In general, during the core Phase III and Phase IV archaeological excavations were carried out at 41 sites with thousands of artefacts discovered. None of these sites had been previously known to archaeological science.

Phase V – preparation of scientific reports on the archaeological excavations carried out during the previous phases.

- *Discovery of the Site*

The Garajamirli II Settlement site was discovered by a watching brief archaeologist during topsoil stripping for the SCP pipeline at KP 323.57 of the BTC ROW. The site was not recognized as such during Phase I or Phase II because of the sameness of the site microrelief with that of the surrounding land and the absence of any surface indicators that could have allowed visual identification of the site.

Excavations at the site were carried out between 17 July and 23 July, 2005 under the guidance of Tarikh Dostiyev and participation of Bakhtiyar Jalilov from the IoAE, and monitored by the BTC archaeological representatives Edward Dan and Chris Polglase.

II. Field and Office Methods

- *Field Methods*

The Garajamirli II settlement site was excavated in a traditional hand digging manner using spades and shovels, knives and trowels, paint scrapers and brushes. The excavations were initiated along a 16m long strip centered on the SCP pipeline. The section to be excavated was divided into four 4m x 4m quadrats to enable accurate recording and drawing of features and artefacts to be exposed. The excavation area fell within an area of 64m² where the spread of finds was relatively dense. Later by lengthening the excavated area to the west by another 4m the number of quadrats was brought to five and the total area of the excavation reached 80m² (Figure 1). In addition three test pits of 2m by 2m were opened up at the excavation site.

Both horizontal digging and vertical profiling were used to determine stratification of cultural horizons. All work was daily recorded in detail in a field diary. All of the archaeological finds discovered in the course of excavations were initially field sorted, washed and recorded in a field logbook with brief descriptions of their morphology.

After this treatment the finds were packed in boxes and taken to the BTC Ganja Guest House from where they were later delivered to the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography (IoAE), Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

- *Office/Laboratory Methods*

The finds were then subjected to thorough treatment at the Archaeological Service Department of the Institute which included printing and cataloguing of photographs, making drawings of finds, where relevant, treating and reading the legend on the copper coin which was among the finds recovered. Finally, Tarikh Dostiyev who led the excavation works produced this Report which contains all the data related to the course of excavations and the scientific results obtained.

- *Archive Disposition*

All the processed archaeological material was handed over to the IoAE special archive set up for the storage of finds discovered on the BTC and SCP ROW.

III. Excavation Results

- *Site Description*

Garajamirli II Settlement is situated in a flat area at KP 323.57 of the pipeline 1.5km east of the village of the same name and 2km north of Gilinbeyli village in the Shamkir District. The site lies at Pulkovo coordinates 8604287, 4523022. The site is located in the north-east part of the Minor Caucasus Province of Azerbaijan, in the Ganja-Gazakh plain. The landscape is predominantly arid terrain as the area lies on the belt where the Minor Caucasus foothills merge with the valley. Cainozoic group sediments are spread in the area.

The microrelief of the area where the site is situated had drastically changed because it had long been used as vineyards and areas under crop. The site was characterized by a sparse scatter of pottery sherds, small fragments of fired bricks, and charcoal bits found over nearly a 100m segment of the pipeline construction corridor.

- *Description of Cultural Horizons*

The excavations revealed that this was a two-layer site. During site preparation for the construction of the pipelines, a 25-30cm thick topsoil, which contained the upper layer of the cultural horizon of the settlement had been removed by heavy machines. Based on the visual survey of the site, the removed layer of soil was in fact a cultural layer damaged and mixed up as a result of continuous agricultural activity.

The excavation revealed the upper cultural layer was not thicker than one spit, i.e. no more than 20cm.. The upper horizon dating from the Middle Ages was characterized by a soft and fine-grained soil layer which contained small pottery sherds, brick fractions, ash, charcoal and burnt clay. At several points, specifically in Quadrat 5 this layer rested immediately upon the natural gravel layer.

The second spit was different because of the sedimentary dark soil with scarce debris of fragments of small pottery vessels, burnt soil and fractions of animal bones. At some points of the excavation site this layer went down to 50cm in depth. The lower cultural horizon yielded

fragments of obsidian implements, fractions of ceramic vessels and obsidian splinters dating to the Eneolithic Period.

Further extensive excavation of the site was unpromising because of the heavily disturbed upper horizon and extreme poorness of the lower one. Taking this into consideration it was decided to investigate the western periphery of the site by digging 2m x 2m test pits. Test Pit I was dug three metres west of the westernmost quadrat. The upper horizon, which was almost 20cm thick, represented hard clayey soil containing small pieces of ceramics. The lower horizon represented by a black soil layer was extremely poor in terms of artifacts. The natural layer was also reached here at a depth of 50cm.

Two more test pits were opened up equally spaced at an 8m distance from each other. The upper Middle Ages cultural horizon of Test Pit II was noted for the dark fussocky medium-hard soil. Small pottery sherds, fired brick fragments and animal bone fractions were recorded at this horizon. Among the finds a fragment of the base of a **bardag**- or jug-type vessel and a fraction of the rim of a thin-walled **bardag** are particularly worthy of attention (Inv. Nos. 17 and 18). The lower horizon yielded no finds.

The upper cultural horizon in Test Pit III was distinguished for hard soil of a slightly dark color containing a few fractions of fired brick, burnt clay fragments and unglazed pottery sherds. The lower cultural horizon was composed of sedimentary, relatively hard black soil. There were only a few finds, namely, several pieces of obsidian and a fraction of the wall of a ceramic vessel typical of the Eneolithic Period. The horizon went down to 50cm in depth.

The excavations and the factual material obtained indicate that this site contained evidence of two periods of occupation. The upper cultural horizon represented an occupation during the Middle Ages, while the lower horizon represents activity during the Eneolithic Period. Both cultural horizons were extremely poor in terms of artifacts recovered.

- *Description of Finds*

Eneolithic Assemblage

All of the samples of implements and ceramics typical of the Eneolithic Period were found in Quadrats 4 and 5 and Test Pits I and III.

Pottery

The number of pottery fragments recovered from the Eneolithic layer is restricted. Many of these fragments are extremely small and cannot be identified to forms, therefore they do not provide much new archaeological data. Two specimens, however, are worth special consideration.

16. One of them is interesting for its double layer composition. The inner surface of this pottery fragment tempered with sand is grey-black, whereas its outer surface is pink. The outer surface is coated with a thin whitish layer of angobe (Plate 1.4).

21. The second fragment is sand-tempered, fairly fired, light brown piece of pottery coated with a grey-black layer of paint. It is worthy of attention because of its combed decorations (Plate 2.1).

Stone Artefacts

Stone artifacts are represented mainly by pieces of obsidian and cutting tools.

15. Narrow 3cm long flake of flint. There are no traces of retouch on it.

12. Small piece of opaque obsidian one side worked may be a cutting tool (Plate 1.2).

20. A similar but a slightly smaller fragment worked in the same manner also looks like a part of a cutting tool (Plate 1.1).

13. Fragment of translucent obsidian one side of which is worked and the other side is flat, possibly part of a knife-type tool (Plate 1.3).

Animal Bones

Several animal bones were found in the Eneolithic horizon. The morphological characteristics of these specimens suggest they are cow, sheep or goat bones.

Medieval Assemblage

The artifacts found in the Middle Ages horizon are predominantly pieces of glazed and unglazed pottery, a few metal items, several glass pieces and a copper coin. The pottery include small fragments of **bardag**-, jug-, bowl- and salt-cellar-type vessels with unglazed pottery samples prevailing.

Pottery

Bardag

17. Part of a flat-based **bardag**- or jug-type vessel, with the body tapering down to the base. Judging by the colour and the dense texture of the sherd, the pot is made of well mixed clay fired at a stable temperature (Plate 2.2).

8. Another sherd of pottery also comes from a **bardag**-type vessel that had a flat base, with the body gradually narrowing downwards. This sherd also appears to reflect a pot that was well fired at a stable temperature (Plate 2.3).

1. Fragment of a small **bardag** or jug represents a flat base getting thinner towards the centre. It has a clear clay composition and dense texture, it was well fired to a pink surface at a stable temperature (Plate 2.4).

???. Everted rim of a narrow-mouthed **bardag**. The clay it is made of is pure and well mixed. The fragment has a thin angobe coat. This dense texture piece of pottery seems to be well fired to a pinkish surface at a stable temperature (Plate 2.5).

One group of unglazed pottery sherds is made up of rim fragments of **bardag**-, **dolcha**-, **dopu**- or jug-type pots.

4. One of such fragments is a thin-walled everted rim thickening towards the edge. The clay is relatively pure and well fired to a red surface; the texture is dense (Plate 1.11).

7. The rim of another thin-walled pot is flattened both on its internal and external edge. Fabric of the dense texture fragment is pure, it was fired to a pinkish surface at a stable temperature (Plate 1.12).

9. Fragment of the body of a thin-walled pot decorated with incised and notched patterns (Plate 1.10).

6. Unglazed fragment resembling a ribbon handle. Two hardly visible grooves are incised lengthwise on its outer surface This dense texture ceramic piece of a pink colour is well fired (Plate 2.6).

2. A small fragment of a salt-cellar of delicate making is also among the finds. Its low wall bends and narrows towards the base. This is a well-fired grey colour piece of ceramics (Plate 1.8).

Glazed pottery samples from the upper cultural horizon mainly consist of small fragments and fractions coated with green glaze.

3. Of particular interest is the fragment which is part of the rim of a thin-walled pot coated with a yellowish-brown glaze (Plate 1.9).

Glass Artefacts

Unfortunately, the glass fragments found in the upper, Middle Ages horizon are so small that they cannot be identified to forms. Their thin walls suggest they are parts of some glass vessel.

Metal Objects

A limited number of iron objects were recovered from the Medieval deposits. These objects are heavily corroded by long exposure to high humidity in the soil.

19. The back of the knife blade fragment is flat and thick and gets thinner closer to the blade (Plate 1.7).

11. One third of the metal item resembling a ring (Plate 1.5).

5. The cross section of a relatively well preserved nail remnant is oval. The nail-head is square. More than half of the nail is missing (Plate 1.6).

Special Finds

10. A copper-alloy coin was recovered from the upper cultural horizon of Garajamirli II Settlement at a depth of 20cm in Quadrat 4. Its diameter measures 1.6-1.8cm and it is about 2 grams. The obverse bears a three-line legend, which is heavily worn and reads that the coin was minted in Madinat-as-Salam. The date of coinage is missing. The legend on the reverse of the coin is almost worn off; with difficulty, it reads: "There is no God but God." It is thought that the coin was minted in the eighth century in the Baghdad mint on behalf of the Abbasi Caliphate.¹ (Plate 3).

Faunal Remains

The upper cultural horizon yielded also a number of faunal remains. These mainly consisted of cattle (cow) and small bovid bones with the latter prevailing.

IV. Analytical Results

• Interpretation of Excavation Results

It is possible to form definitive judgements about the nature of Garajamirli II Settlement based on the results of the excavations, although restricted by the pipeline construction corridor. The establishment of the chronological framework of the lower and upper cultural horizons is based on the comparative analysis of artefacts.

The obsidian tools recovered from the lower cultural horizon are coeval with the stone tools found in other Eneolithic settlements excavated in Azerbaijan, first and foremost in the Ganja-Gazakh region of the country. The pottery samples similar to those found in Garajamirli II Settlement are also well known to archaeologists who are familiar with the results of excavations of other Eneolithic settlements in this area.

The finds recovered from the lower cultural horizon show short-lived occupation or temporary occupation of the site during the Eneolithic Period. The discovery of a burnt lump of clay with a wattle imprint on it suggests that wattle and daub structures were widely used in this area. It is most likely that the excavation site was in the periphery of a major settlement site.

The study of the upper cultural horizon, of medieval date, produced no evidence of permanent structures or domestic or production activity areas. This is taken to indicate that the site was possibly utilised as a seasonal site.

The potential of using the numismatic evidence to establish the chronology of the upper cultural horizon should be emphasized. The copper-alloy coin dating to the end of the eighth century indicates a date towards the end of the eighth century and the beginning of the ninth century as

¹ The coin was examined by numismatist Ganira Pirgulyeva, Candidate of Historical Sciences.

being the earliest date of the upper cultural horizon. The latest date of this cultural horizon is thought to date to the eleventh to twelfth centuries, based on pottery evidence. An early date may be supported by the scarcity of glazed vessels, compare with 405, and more glazed ware at 289.

- *Discussion and Analysis of the Results of the Work Compared with Other Sites of a Similar Nature on the Pipeline Route*

Eneolithic

A number of other Eneolithic settlement sites have been revealed and explored by archaeological excavations carried out within the BTC and SCP pipelines construction corridor. Such Eneolithic settlement sites as Khojakhan (KP 361), Poylu (KP 409.1) and Boyuk Kasik (KP 438) appear to be of paramount importance to the archaeological science of Azerbaijan. The stone implements found at Garajamirli II Settlement are identical to the stone tools recovered from these sites. Virtually, correct interpretation and dating of fragmentary Garajamirli II stone artefacts was made possible only by their comparison with similar coeval finds from the above-named sites. As regards the pottery sherds recovered from the Eneolithic horizon at this site, they are similar to the Eneolithic pottery ware of the Khojakhan settlement site.

Medieval

The results of the excavations conducted within the BTC and SCP pipelines construction corridor at such medieval sites as Fakhrali (KP289), Dashbulag (KP342) and Girag Kasaman (KP405) and the comparative analysis of finds from these sites with those recovered from Garajamirli II site played an important part in the interpretation and dating of the upper cultural horizon of the Garajamirli II settlement site.

- *Discussion of the Site within a Regional and National Context*

As is known the Ganja-Gazakh region of Azerbaijan, particularly, Kura riverside areas, including the Shamkir District, are rich in archaeological monuments of different types. The fertile soil of the area, plenty of water sources, favourable climatic conditions were the reasons the settled farmers occupied this area as far back as the Eneolithic.

The Eneolithic phase of the Garajamirli II Settlement is located in the region where the Shomutepe Culture first emerged and developed. The investigation of this site has allowed an additional site to be included in the list of monuments of this period.

The medieval portion of the site contains a rare element in the discovery of a coin possibly lost in the period 1000-1100. This is doubly unusual in that few rural sites of the period have been examined, and that the use of coinage in this period would be thought to have been concentrated in the towns and be a rare commodity in the countryside. It possibly indicates the relative richness of this area, reinforced by the proximity of the town of Ganja, despite the fact that the excavated evidence on site and interpretation of the excavators that this is a seasonally occupied location.

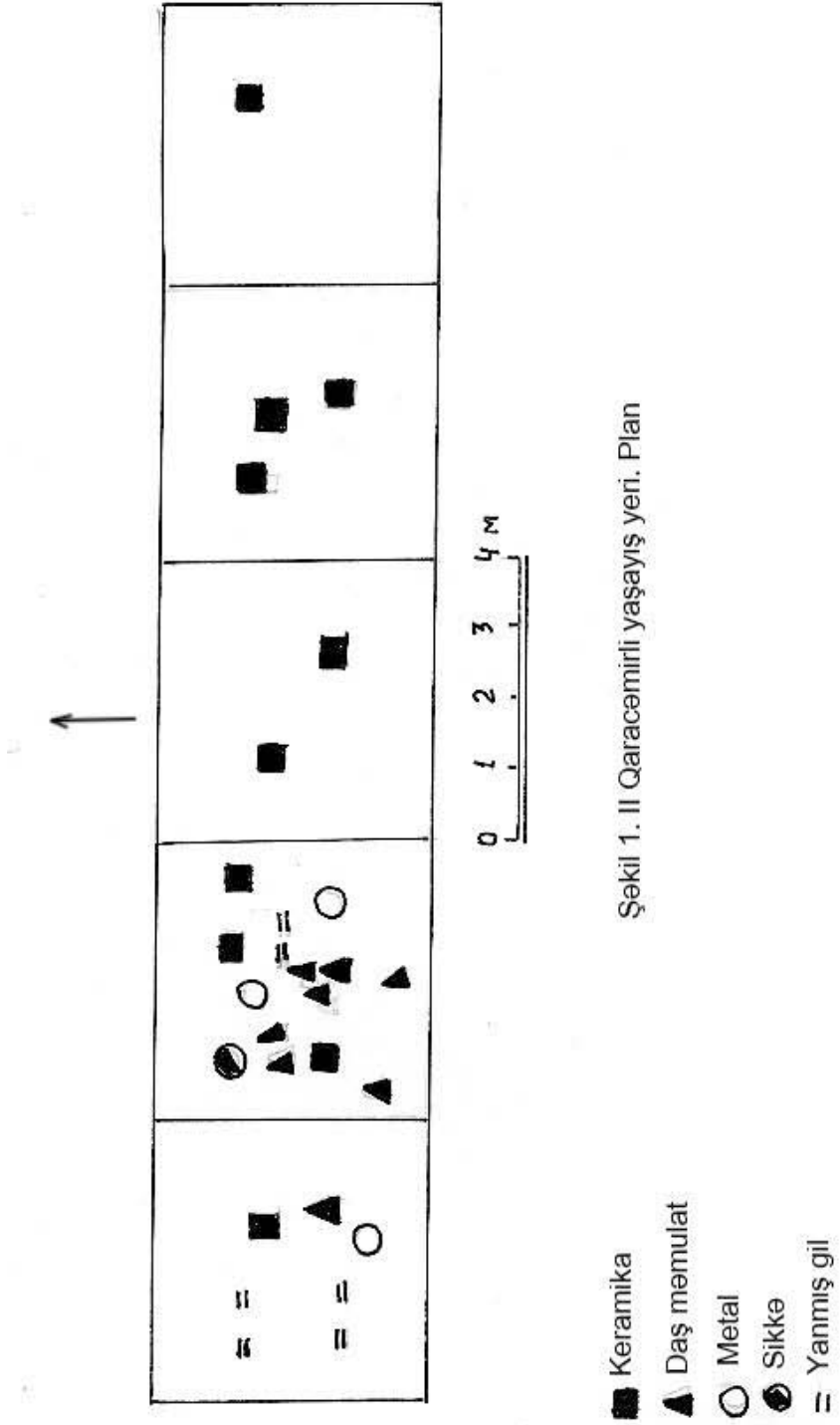
- *Recommendations Regarding the Protection of the Site or Future Research*

The scope of conducted excavation work is sufficient for site characterization and the desired research objective has been achieved. There is no need for further exploration of the portions of the site within the BTC and SCP pipelines construction corridor. However, the area should be protected as archaeologically sensitive, should any future work be planned in the immediate vicinity.

References

Kiguradze T. and Sagona, A, 2003 On the Origins of the Kura-Araxes Cultural Complex. In *Archaeology in the Borderlands: Investigations in Caucasia and Beyond.*, Smith, A.T., and Rubinson, K.S. eds. pp38-94. UCLA monograph 47.

V. Illustrations



Şekil 1. II Qaracemirli yaşayış yeri. Plan

Figure 1 - Site Plan

Plate 1

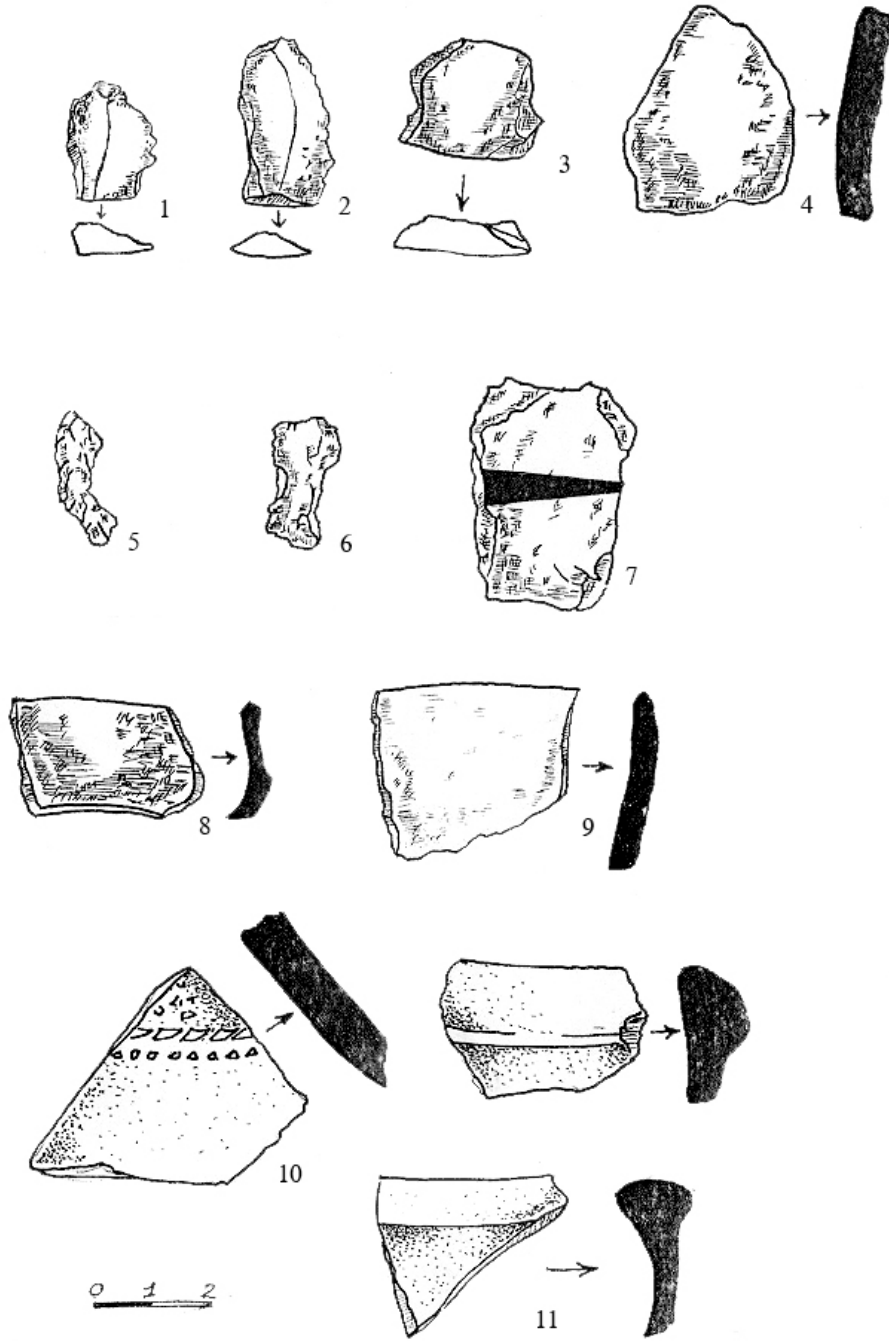


Plate 2

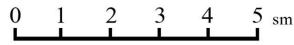
Tablo II



1



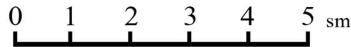
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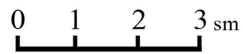
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4



5



7



6

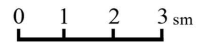


Plate 3

Obverse

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَسْلَام



Reverse

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ



Copper-alloy Coin

VI. Inventory of Artefacts

| No. | KP | Type of site | Material | Find | Quadrat Number | Comment |
|-----|--------|--------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|----------|
| 1 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 1 | |
| 2 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 2 | Pl 1.8 |
| 3 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 2 | Pl 1.9 |
| 4 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 3 | Pl 1.11 |
| 5 | 323.57 | settlement | metal | artefact fragment | 4 | Pl 1.6 |
| 6 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 4 | Pl 2.6 |
| 7 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 4 | Pl 1.12 |
| 8 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 2 | Pl 2.3 |
| 9 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 3 | Pl 1.10 |
| 10 | 323.57 | settlement | metal | copper artefact | 4 | Pl 3 |
| 11 | 323.57 | settlement | metal | metal artefact | 4 | Pl 1.5 |
| 12 | 323.57 | settlement | obsidian | knife fragment | 4 | Pl 1.2 |
| 13 | 323.57 | settlement | obsidian | knife fragment | 4 | Pl 1.3 |
| 14 | 323.57 | settlement | obsidian | knife fragment | 4 | 4 pieces |
| 15 | 323.57 | settlement | flint | fragment | 4 | |
| 16 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 4 | Pl 1.4 |
| 17 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 4 | Pl 2.2 |
| 18 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 4 | |
| 19 | 323.57 | settlement | metal | metal | 5 | Pl 1.7 |
| 20 | 323.57 | settlement | obsidian | fragment | 5 | Pl 1.1 |
| 21 | 323.57 | settlement | ceramic | vessel fragment | 5 | Pl 2.1 |