

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

**EXTENSIVE SCIENTIFIC REPORT**

**Excavation of the Mahmudlu land grave at KP 310.7 SCPX  
pipeline**

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# 1 SUMMARY

The report provides information on the course of archaeological excavations carried out near the village of Mahmudlu in Shamkir District at KP 310.720 of the SCPX pipeline corridor from 13 to 17 June 2017 and the artefacts that were discovered. During the archaeological excavations, a land grave with grave goods were discovered here. Archaeological material that explains the economic activity, life, and religious views of people who populated this area during the last Bronze-Early Iron Age was obtained here. Based on the analysis of the archaeological materials, it was established that the land grave belonged to the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age and that there was a necropolis in the 11th-9th centuries BC here.

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## **2 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 SITE DISCOVERY**

The Mahmudlu land grave located on AT KP 310.720 of the SCPW project was registered in the second round. Due to the fact that the territory of the monument was previously subjected to intervention and exposed to anthropogenic effects, it is difficult to visually identify the presence of graves here. The excavated land grave was discovered in connection with the construction of the pipeline here. The Mahmudlu land grave was initially registered on the basis of a procedure agreed upon by the ANSA and BP (SCPX) and was included on the list of monuments where archaeological excavations were to be carried out in the SCPX corridor.

### **2.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

The Mahmudlu land grave is located in Shamkir District at an altitude of 208-210 metres above sea level, at coordinates N-4526679; E-8597482. The SCPX route is located on the right side of the Baku-Gazakh highway, approximately 550-600 metres from the village of Mahmudlu in Shamkir District, at KP 310.720 of the SCPX route. The site is located on the gravel terrace to the east of, and overlooking the river Shamkir.

### **2.3 WHO CARRIED OUT THE EXCAVATION AND WHEN**

The Mahmudlu land grave was excavated from 13 to 17 June 2017 by an expedition of the ANSA Institute of Archaeology led by the PhD in history and leading research fellow, Vagif Asadov, employees of the Institute, PhD in History and junior research fellow Jeyhun Aliyev and chief research assistant Farhad Farmanov.

## **3 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS**

### **3.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

The area where the Mahmudlu burial ground is located is plainland. The monument is 208-210 metres above sea level and is located at coordinates N-4526679; E-8597482. The name given to the monument has a conventional character and belongs to the Mahmudlu village of Shamkir District. The monument is located 550-600m from the village with the same name, on the right of the Baku-Gazakh highway, at KP 310,720 of the SCPX pipeline.

The position of the area around the land grave is favourable from the point of view of its location.

Around the monument, there is a fertile land fund and a source of water for farming.

### **3.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE GRAVE**

Archaeological interest in the area started with the identification of the site during construction activity. The object to be excavated was in the new pipeline corridor 40 metres from the BTC and SCP pipeline corridor. In the course of the work done here, one grave was damaged from the bottom (photo 5). Prior to the excavation, security measures were implemented and then the excavation of the grave began (Figure 6). The length of the excavation site was 3 metres and its width was 2 metres. Unfortunately, part of the grave was destroyed during the work on the pipeline.

Six stone layers were registered on this land grave covered with stone. They consisted of large and medium-sized river stones. Limestone layers were also found among them. The gaps between the layers of stone were filled with soil:

The **first stone layer** was discovered at a depth of 70cm below ground level. Large, medium and small river stones were placed in a circular form. The diameter of the stone structure was 1.3m (Figure 7).

The **second stone layer** was 10cm below the first layer, 80cm below the ground level. The dimensions were 90 x 60cm (Figure 8).

The **third stone layer** was discovered 10cm below the second one at a depth of 90cm. The stone structure of the third layer was in the centre of the chamber, stretching 1.3m east and west. Its width was 90cm (photo 9).

The **fourth stone layer** appeared at a depth of 1m. This layer of sparse stone layers stretched 1.3m northeast and southwest. Its width was 1m (picture 10). Layers of limestone were also found among the stones of this layer.

The **fifth stone layer** was discovered at a depth of 1.1m. This layer, stretching in the same direction as the fourth layer, consisted mainly of large-sized elongated river stones (Figure 11).

The **sixth stone layer** was discovered at a depth of 1.2m above ground level in the southeast of the chamber. The stone layer had a circular shape with a diameter of 90cm (figure 12).

After the six stone layer, a burial chamber was discovered at a depth of 1.4 metres. In the southern part of the chamber there was a large stout-bodied bowl (1). The mouth of this light brown vessel with a combed surface was broken. The vessel was broken up. A crushed human skull was found on this vessel. To the west of the vessel, human ribs and shoulder bones were discovered. The skull and bones indicated that they belonged to a teenager. The approximate diameter of the body of the vessel was 40cm (Figure 13). Two bone beads were found near the skull bone.

During the subsequent cleaning of the grave chamber (Figure 14), three earthenware dishes (2,3,4) were placed to the east of the first vessel. The first of the vessels (2) was a jug with a large mouth or a bowl. Only a fragment of its body was found. The jug was lying on its side. The second vessel (3) was a single-handle jug with a narrow neck and stout body (Fig. 15; 17), and the third one (4) was a mug with one handle (Fig. 16).

A big grey jug with a narrow neck, stout body and semi-circular handle was discovered to the southeast of these vessels. The vessel was in a fragmented state (Figure 18). Fragments of three more medium-sized vessels were found around these vessels. One of them was a jug's mouth.

A second human skull was found northwest of vessels 2 and 3, and in the southeast, rib bones were discovered (Fig. 19). Thus, it was found that the surviving length of the grave chamber was 1.5m and width of 80cm. The vessels were placed in the northeast and southwest sides of the grave chamber.

After the aforementioned vessels were removed, human legs, arms, ribs and jaw bones were discovered under them. Two more limbs, pelvis and hand bones were found in the southeast part of the chamber. One of the leg bones was facing the south and the other - the east. The pelvic bone was located next to the skull bone mentioned above.

It must be noted that in addition to the earthenware vessels found in the grave chamber, the equipment that was found when part of the grave was destroyed was placed between the grave equipment and photographed (photo 20). One of these was a fragmented medium-sized grey,

polished, stout-bodied and single-handle vessel, the second one was a grey polished single-handle bowl, and the third one was a biconic-shaped dopu. There was also a bronze bracelet among them.

After the bones in the northeast of the chamber were removed, an elongated river stone was discovered there. The length of the stone was 28.5cm and width of 10cm.

Two people were buried in this grave, a teenager and an old man. Skeletal bones were found throughout the chamber. The bones were rotten. The location of the bones indicates the performance of a splitting burial ritual here.

During the cleaning of the tomb, 18 earthenware vessels were discovered. Seven of them were fragmented and the remaining 11 were obtained as fragments. Examples of these ceramics included stout-bodied and narrow-necked jugs, wide-mouthed jugs, bowls, dopus, and a mug. In addition, a bronze bracelet and two bone beads (next to a teenage skull) were also found in the grave chamber.

The artefacts obtained indicate that this stone-covered land grave dates back to the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age. Most likely, there are other necropolis graves near this grave.

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

### **Ceramics:**

The ceramics found in the grave equipment are identical with Tovuzchay and Seyidlar I materials in terms of form and content. Based on typological features, we can attribute these materials to the 11th century - 9th century BC.

The earthenware vessels found in the grave chamber are intact, broken, or fragmented. These samples are pieces of clay vessels like jugs, dopus or mugs.

Among the ceramic samples found, there are mostly pink and grey vessels and sometimes black, brown or light grey ones. The tops of the vessels are mostly polished and decorated with embossed, combed and notched patterns. Their clay is pure or mixed with sand.

The jugs that were discovered have broad mouths and stout bodies (Figure 21-22). Their mouths are round or folded (Figure 3, 4; 23-25). The small and wide necks flow into a sloping shoulder (Figure 26-27). Their seats are flat (Figure 28).

Jugs were also found inside the grave equipment (Figure 2.1; 4.1; 29). The jugs have stout bodies, narrow necks, and flat bases. Their mouths are round. There are round handles on the back, which connect the shoulder or body with the mouth. One of these types of vessels is a stout-bodied jug. It has a narrow neck. The mouth opens to the side. The neck gradually flows into the sloping shoulder. The body widens towards the middle and narrows towards the seat in the form of a cone. The base is wide, flat and slightly oval. The neck is covered by two embossed lines. Polished lines descend from the neck to the shoulders. A shallow line runs over the shoulder with 3 parallel dotted strips beneath it. Underneath the strips there is a pattern made of nipples located at the same distance (14cm). The sides of the nipples are decorated with two rows of dots. The middle of the bowl is covered with a dotted line. There are polished stripes going down from the line. There is a stick-like handle that connects the edge of the mouth with the shoulder in the back. The clay is clean, grey and polished. Its height is 21cm, neck height = 4cm, mouth diameter = 6cm, body diameter = 19cm, seat diameter = 12cm, handle diameter = 4cm (Figure 17; 30). The second jug has a biconic shape. Its narrow neck is bent to the side. The neck gradually flows into the shoulder. The body becomes stouter towards the bottom and narrower towards the seat. The seat is flat. There is a semi-circular

handle that connects the edge of the mouth with the shoulder in the back. The handle is oval in cross section. There is a furrow in the middle of handle. The shoulder and the middle of the body have horizontal embossment. The clay is mixed with fine sand. Height = 22.5cm, body diameter = 22cm, seat diameter = 10cm, neck height = 5cm (figure 31).

The mouth of a medium-sized wide-mouthed bowl found inside the grave equipment opens to the side. The part of the side which flows into the body is edged. The body becomes narrower towards the seat. The seat is flat. There is a small semi-circular handle that connects the edge of the mouth with the body on it. The handle is ribbon-like in cross section. The clay contains a large amount of sand and granulated shells. Its colour is grey (Figure 32-33).

The mouth of the discovered biconic-shaped dopu is broken. Its low neck gradually flows into the body. The body becomes wider towards the bottom and then narrower. The seat is narrow and has a ringed heel. The body has the foundation of a circular protrusion left on it. The clay contains sand. There are traces of burns underneath. Its colour is light pink (Figure 34).

A one-handle mug was also found during the excavations. The mug is wide-mouthed. The neck slowly flows into the body that becomes wider towards the seat. The seat is wide and oval. Part of the seat is broken. There are two thin lines on its neck. There is a semi-circular handle that connects the edge of the mouth with the lower part of the body. The handle is round in cross section. The clay is mixed with sand. Its colour is pink (photo 35).

#### **Metal products:**

One bronze bracelet was found during the excavations. The tips of the bracelet, which is ribbon-like in cross section, are ramified (Figure 2,1; 36).

## **5 GENERAL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS OBTAINED AT THE SITE.**

We can attribute the archaeological artefacts found in the grave chamber to the following types:

household items: clay containers (2,1; 3-4; 17; 21-35).

decorations: these include a bronze bracelet (Figure 2.1; 36) and two bone beads (Figure 37).

The household items were mainly used in the household and kitchen as well as in the farm. They include primarily clay vessels. The clay vessels vary depending on their purpose and use. These include jugs, dopus, bowls, and mugs (Figure 2.1; 3-4; 17; 21-35). The clay products are mainly made in pottery wheels and contain pure clay or clay mixed with sand. They were baked at a constant fire temperature. Most of them are polished.

The number of decorations is second only to clay vessels. These include a bronze bracelet (Figure 2.1; 36) and two bone beads (Figure 37).

### **DESCRIPTION OF ARTEFACT MATERIAL CLASSES**

The artefacts found in the excavation area were collected and grouped. Some of the finds, which are of no importance in form and content, were buried at the edge of the excavation area again. Collected and stocked artefacts belong to various material classes. Below we provide specific descriptions of these classes.

## 6 DISCUSSION

When submitting the results of the work for open discussion by summarizing the results of archaeological excavations, the scientific position of the author who wrote the report and the final results are summarized. These scientific findings have been confirmed by the observations of other scientists involved in the archaeological excavations.

### 6.1 INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS OF EXCAVATIONS

Archaeological excavations at the site of the future ditch for the pipeline were of a rescue character. A visual inspection of the area allows us to conclude that the excavations were carried out only on one of the numerous graves of the necropolis.

The earthenware vessels and their fragments, bronze bracelets and bone beads found in the grave chamber belongs to the 11th-9th centuries BC based on typological and analysis methods. It is likely that there was a residential settlement nearby during this period.

## 7 INVENTORY

No.	Grave	Name	Description
1	1	Bowl	Medium-sized wide-mouthed bowl. The mouth opens to the side. The part of the side that becomes wider and flows into the body is edged. The body becomes narrower towards the seat. The seat is flat. There is a small semi-circular handle on it, which connects the mouth edge and the body. The handle is ribbon-like in cross section. The clay is mixed with a lot of sand and shells.
2	1	Mug	One-handle mug. It has a wide mouth. The neck flows into the body that becomes wider towards the seat. The seat is wide and oval. The neck is surrounded by two convex lines. Behind it there is a semi-circular handle that connects the mouth edge to the lower part of the body. The handle is circular in cross section. The clay is mixed with sand. Fig 35
3	1	Dopu	Biconic-shaped dopu. The mouth is broken. Its low neck gradually flows into the body. After becoming wider towards the bottom, the body becomes narrower. Its seat is narrow and has a ringed heel. There is the foundation of a circular protrusion remaining on the body. The clay is mixed with sand. There are traces of burns underneath. Fig 34.
4	1	Jug	Biconic-shaped jug. Its narrow neck bends to the side. The neck gradually flows into the shoulder. After becoming wider towards the bottom, the body becomes narrower towards the seat. The seat is flat. There is a semi-circular handle that connects the mouth edge and the shoulder behind it. The handle is oval in cross section. There is a furrow in the middle of the handle. The shoulder and the middle of the body are horizontally ribbed. Fig 31.
5	1	Jug	Stout-bodied jug. It has a narrow neck. Its mouth opens to the side. The neck gradually flows into the sloping shoulder. After becoming wider towards the middle, the body becomes narrower towards the seat in the form of a cone. The seat is wide and flat and is slightly oval. The neck is surrounded by two convex lines. There are polished lines from the neck to the shoulder. There is a shallow furrowed line on the shoulder and three parallel dotted stripes under it. Under the stripes, there is a decoration made from moulded nipples located at the same distance (14cm) from each other. The area surrounding the nipples is decorated with two rows of dots. There is a furrowed line in the middle of the vessel. There are polished stripes going down from the line. Behind it there is a stick-like handle that connects the mouth edge and the shoulder. The vessel is grey and polished. Fig 30.
6	1	Jug	Large wide-mouthed jug. It is fragmented. Its mouth opens to the side. The neck is surrounded by poorly-made two convex lines. Between the lines there are notched patterns located in the form of an angle. After its neck becomes wider towards the bottom, it flows into a body that becomes

No.	Grave	Name	Description
			narrower. The wall becomes narrower towards the bottom. The seat is wide and flat. The clay is mixed with sand. Its surface is covered by soot and is black. Fig 23.
7	1	Jug	A large stout-bodied narrow-necked jug. Its mouth opens to the side. Its mouth edge is round. Its low neck gradually flows into the sloping shoulder. Its neck is poorly-ribbed horizontally. Behind it there is a circular handle in cross section that connects the mouth edge and the shoulder. Its interior surface is not smooth. The clay contains sand with shells. Fig 29.
8	1	Jug	Fragments of a stout-bodied jug. The upper part and middle of the body are covered by convex stripes. The seat is wide and flat. It has a handle with an elbow that is oval in cross section. Its tip is broken. The vessel is grey and polished. Fig 28.
9	1	Jug Body	A fragment of the body of a stout-bodied vessel. Its middle is covered with convex stripes. Fig 21.
10	1	Jug Body	A fragment of the body of a stout-bodied jug. Its middle is surrounded by three embossed stripes. There is an embossed zigzag-shaped pattern under the stripes. The interior part of the pattern is decorated with dots. The vessel is brown and polished. Fig 22.
11	1	Jug rim	Fragment of the mouth of a wide-mouthed jug. Its round mouth opens to the side. Its low neck flows into the sloping shoulder. The clay is mixed with sand and shells. Fig 24.
12	1	Jug rim	Fragment of the mouth of a wide-mouthed jug. Its round mouth opens to the side. Its low neck flows into the sloping shoulder. The clay is mixed with sand and shells. Fig 26.
13	1	Body	Fragment of the body of a large thin-walled vessel. Its surface is combed horizontally. The clay is mixed with sand.
14	1	Mouth	Fragment of the mouth of a wide-mouthed jug. Its round mouth opens to the side. Its low neck flows into the sloping shoulder. It is visible that it had a stout body. The clay is mixed with sand. Its surface is poorly-polished. Fig 25.
15	1	Body	Fragments of the body and base of a small stout-bodied vessel. The body is covered with two horizontal convex stripes. Its seat is flat. The surface of the vessel is black and polished.
16	1	Body	Fragments of the body of a vessel. Its surface covered with notched lines and decorations made from grain-like patterns.
17	1	Body	A fragment of the lower part of the body of a vessel. It has an elongated body. Its seat is flat. The clay is mixed with sand. Fig 27.
18	1	Bracelet	Bracelet, ribbon-like in cross section. Its tips are ramified. Fig 2.2, Fig 36.
19	1	bead	Biconic-shaped beads (2 pieces). Their surface is covered with notched patterns. Fig 37.
20	1	Base	Flat base of a small vessel. The upper part of the seat is covered with notched lines. The vessel is grey and polished.



## 8 APPENDICES

### 8.1 REFERENCES

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## 8.2 ILLUSTRATIONS

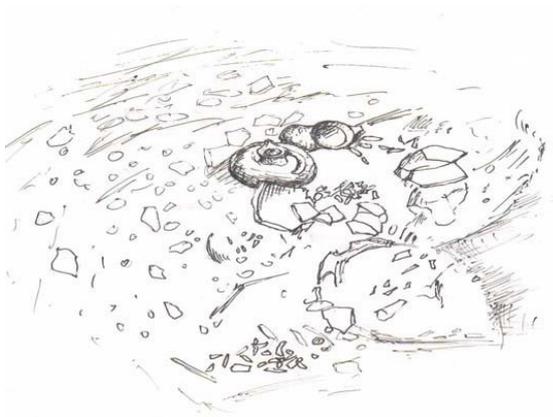


Figure 1. Mahmudlu land grave.

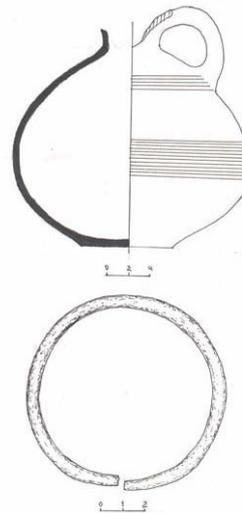


Figure 2. 1-clay jug; 2-bronze bracelet, Inv 18.

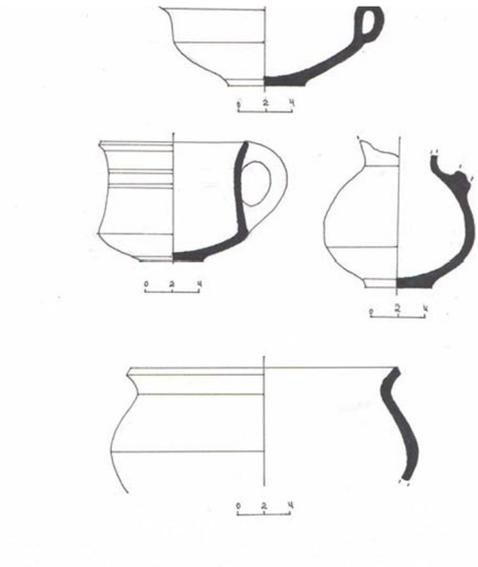


Figure 3. 1-bowl; 2-mug; 3-dopu; 4-wide-mouthed jug

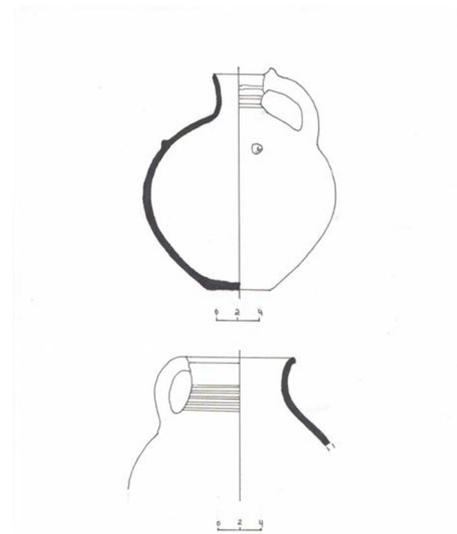


Figure 4. 1-jug; 2-narrow-mouthed jug.

### 8.3 PHOTOS



Figure 5. Grave 1 on discovery. View to west.



Figure 6. Safety measures in the grave. View to west



Figure 7. First stone layer. View to southeast.



Figure 8. Second stone layer. View to south.



Figure 9. Third stone layer. View to southeast.



Figure 10. Fourth stone layer



Figure 11. Fifth stone layer. View to south.



Figure 12. Sixth stone layer. View to west.



Figure 13. Big, fragmented vessel.



Figure 14. Cleaning of the grave chamber. View to southeast.



Figure 15. Earthenware vessels.



Figure 16. Jug and mug.



Figure 17. Stout-bodied jug. Inv 9.



Picture 18. Grey stout jug.



Figure 19. Human bones discovered in the grave chamber.



Figure 20. Grave chamber. View to south.



Figure 21. Stout-bodied jug fragment. Inv 9.



Figure 22. Stout-bodied jug fragment. Inv 10.



Figure 23. Wide-mouthed jug mouth. Inv 6.



Figure 24. Wide-mouthed jug mouth. Inv 11.



Figure 25. Wide-mouthed jug mouth. Inv 14.



Figure 26. Fragments of jug mouth. Inv 12.



Figure 27. Fragment of jug mouth. Inv 17.



Figure 28. Fragments of jug body and base. Inv 8



Figure 29. Jug fragments. Inv 7.



Figure 30. Stout-bodied jug. Inv 5.



Figure 31. Biconic-bodied jug. Inv 4.



Figure 32. Bowl. Inv 1.



Figure 33. Bowl. Inv 1.



Figure 34. Dopu. Inv 3.



Figure 35. Mug. Inv 2.



Figure 36. Bronze bracelet. Inv 18.



Figure 37. Bone beads. Inv 19.