

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

**DETAILED SCIENTIFIC REPORT**

**Excavations in Poylu III settlement at KP  
390.1 SCPX pipeline**

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# 1 SUMMARY

The report describes the archaeological excavations at Poylu III settlement, located in the Tovuz region of the Azerbaijan Republic. Archaeological excavations at the cultural property site were carried out from June 2 to June 15, 2017. Fragments of ceramics, constructions in the form of two rooms were discovered at the archaeological site during the excavations.

The settlement site was discovered at KP390 in May 2017 during construction of the SCPX pipeline. The settlement site dates back to late medieval ages, i.e., 16 to 19th centuries.

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## **2 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 SITE DISCOVERY**

Poylu III settlement site, located at KP390 of the SCPX route was registered in the first and second stages. In 2004, during the BTC project, archaeological excavations were carried out on this monument and rich archaeological materials were found. Therefore, archaeologists were aware of the existence of this monument. Since the territory of the monument is still used as a sowing area as in previous years and its terrain does not differ from its surroundings, it is difficult to determine visually the existence of a settlement here. Only the large number of ceramics and stone products on the surface showed the archaeological potential here. On the basis of an agreement between the IoAE (Archaeology and Ethnography Institute) and BP (SCPX), the Poylu III settlement was registered and was listed as one of the monuments where archaeological excavations would be carried out in the SCPX corridor.

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

The monument location area consists of a flat plain. Throughout the years this territory has been extensively used by humans as an agricultural area for tillage and cultivation of agricultural plants, etc.

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

The archaeological expedition group of the Archaeology and Ethnography Institute of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences carried out archaeological excavations in the Poylu III settlement site from June 2 to June 15, 2017 under the leadership of PhD in History and leading scientific worker Dmitriy Kirichenko and with the participation of employees of the institute, PhD in History, leading scientific worker Seymour Farmanli and s PhD in History, leading scientific worker, Azad Zeynalov [during June 12-15]. Greg Lockard, an archaeologist of BP (SCPX) and Shahin Aliyev, the SCPX Cultural Heritage Site Construction Manager, witnessed the excavation activities.

## **3 EXCAVATIONS RESULTS**

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

Poylu III settlement site lies on a plain. The coordinates of the monument are N-4566331 and E-8537803. The name given to the settlement site is of general nature and belongs to Poylu village of Agstafa region which it is included in terms of administrative unit. This name was given to the monument during the BTC excavations. The reason for naming it as Poylu III is the presence of two more same name settlement sites nearby (I and II Poylu). The settlement site is located 100-200m west of the same name village on the right side of the Agstafa-Poylu highway at KP421 of the BTC and KP390 of the SCPX routes. Surface of the settlement site is used for cultivation. Kura river runs in the form of a meander about 3-4 km to the east. The local area, consisting of black earth cultivated lands, has long been used for cultivation.

## **3.2 DESCRIPTION OF CULTURAL LAYERS**

Archaeological excavations began initially with the selection of the excavation site. The area chosen was in a new pipeline corridor 40 metres from the BTC and SCP pipeline corridor. The excavation area was 24 metres long and 4 metres wide. A total of 6 units were established (4 x 4 metres in size). The units were numbered from northwest to southeast, i.e. in the direction of the pipeline. Initially, the top fertile layer of the soil with a thickness of 20cm was removed and was placed at the edge of the excavation area. The excavations revealed that Poylu III settlement area is uni-layered and the thickness of the cultural layer varies between 100-110cm. Fragments of ceramics attributed to late medieval ages, also, remains of constructions, such as the stone wall foundations were revealed in the cultural layer.

## **3.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS**

In total, 24 archaeological artefacts were discovered at the settlement site. 22 samples among these artefacts consist of the ceramics attributed to late medieval ages, one sample is the ceramics dating back to late bronze-early iron age. One of the samples is a cast iron stamp belonging to the period of Czarist Russia.

## **3.4 SUMMARY OF TYPES AND NUMBERS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS**

Samples of ceramics discovered in Poylu III settlement site should be attributed to the type of late medieval age housekeeping (household) ceramics. Both simple ceramics and also, glazed ceramics (in various samples glaze has been applied both on the surface and interior of the ceramic ware) are distinct among them. Clay is composed of both fine sand and ceramic ware contain pure clay. Ceramics were made both by hand and potter's wheel. Colour of the ceramics is mainly pink. Surface of one vessel (inv.14) is painted in red. Body of another vessel (inv.6) is englobed in salad colour. Enamel is light blue shaded dark milk, green beige and brown coloured. There are geometrical ornaments (horizontal and wave like lines) incised and ribbed and also, glaze painted on ceramics. Analogues of the ceramics discovered at Poylu III settlement area are extensively found in the same age monuments in Azerbaijan as a whole and in Ganja-Gazakh region, including, the territory of Ganja and Shamkir cities, Lower Kechili, Poylu, Khojakhan and other settlements. Also, a circular stamp (of the postal service probably) left from the period of Czarist Russia were discovered at Poylu III settlement area.

## **3.5 DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC ARTEFACTS**

A round, cylindrical pottery of unclear origin attracts attention. It has a hole in the middle. There are traces inside indicating that the pottery was made by a pottery's wheel. Colour is pink. It may have been used as a fishing tool or was probably a component of a machine tool or a unit. Also, a circular base of a clay salt cellar was discovered at the settlement area. The base is flat. There is a round cavity in the middle inside the vessel. There are traces inside indicating that the pottery was made by a pottery's wheel. Colour is pink. Wall is thick. An artefact (inv.8) consisting of the body of a pottery vessel dating to the late bronze – early iron age and attributed to the Khojali-Gadabay culture was discovered at Poylu III settlement area. It has probably fallen to the area accidentally from more ancient layers of the monument located in the territory of Poylu village.

## **3.6 RESULTS OBTAINED AT THE SITE**

The excavation site was divided into 6 units (4x4 m).

A rectangular shaped, 14m long and 4m wide stone collection pattern lying northwest to southeast was revealed at a depth of 10-20cm in the units 1- 4.

A circular stone collection pattern with dimension of 60 x 90cm was revealed at a depth of 20cm in the 4<sup>th</sup> unit; there were traces of coal with dimension of 20 x 40cm in it.

A circular hearth (No. 1) was revealed at a depth of 20cm at a distance of 1.9m from the east wall and 50cm from the south wall of the Unit 6. The hearth, which had the diameter of 70cm, consisted of coal fragments and ash.

Fragments of a vessel (inv.8) dating to the late bronze – early iron age and animal bones nearby were discovered at a depth of 25cm in Unit 6.

Cultural layer ended at a depth of 1.1m in Units 4, 5 and 6 and was followed by virgin soil.

There was a 80cm long strip with traces of coal and ash inside at a depth of 30-40cm at the north wall of Unit 5.

The second layer of pebble stones was revealed at a depth of 25cm following removal of the first stone layer in 1-4<sup>th</sup> units. Features of two rooms became clear. One of them was 3.1m long, 2.8m wide small square room and the second was 9.2m long, 3.3m wide rectangular shaped large room. In some places thickness of the stone walls was 40-60cm.

The third stone layer was revealed following removal of the second stone layer in the 1-4<sup>th</sup> units. The fourth stone layer composed of large pebble stones and large flagstone plate was revealed after removal of the third layer. This stone pattern was probably floor of a large room. There was only one flagstone plate in the middle of the small room in Unit 1.

A 25cm deep household pit was revealed east from Unit 6. In different parts its width was 45-100cm, total depth was 65cm, thickness was 15cm.

Small fragments of medieval ceramics and also, small animal bones were inside the household pit and bottom was filled with 5-7cm thick coal layer.

Following removal of the fourth stone layer (floor), the excavations were continued to a depth of 1m until cultural layer ended. In the end the walls were disassembled and the soil on which the walls had laid were studied for presence of archaeological materials.

A human tooth with a trace dental caries belonging to a 25-30 year old individual was discovered at a depth of 60-80cm in Unit 3.

## **4 ANALYTICAL RESULTS**

It should be noted that the archaeological excavations in the Poylu III settlement were successfully completed and taking the excavations in the previous BTC and SCP corridors, we can say that a new section of the settlement was excavated. These step-by-step excavations provide us with a wealth of information about the nature, type and time of the settlement, while the artefacts that were obtained give us enough information about the economic life and occupation of the late medieval age village residents.

The features of the topography of the monument, as well as the nature of the surface materials give us grounds to determine the nature of the late medieval age settlement. Here walls of two rooms of accommodation houses were discovered. The definition of the chronological framework of the archaeological complexes discovered in the Poylu III settlement was based on typological and comparative analysis methods, and scientific conclusions were made.

## **4.1 DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL CLASSES.**

### ***Ceramics:***

A fragment of a vessel body belonging to Khojali-Gadabay culture as well as 7 vessel body sherds, 4 base fragments, 2 neck fragments, 5 rim fragments, 2 handle fragments, one clay salt cellar attributed to late medieval ages and one pottery of unknown date were discovered at Poylu III settlement area during the excavations.

### ***Metal:***

Of metal products, a cast iron stamp with a description of two-headed eagle attributed to the period of Russian empire was discovered at the settlement site. The product is round, there are oval hole and cavities on the sides. There is a Russian empire emblem in the form of a two headed eagle on the avers and two Cyrillic letters T and A on the reverse side of the stamp.

## **4.2 PALEONTOLOGICAL AND PALEOZOOLOGICAL REMAINS**

Small animal bone fragments and also, a human tooth with a trace dental caries belonging to a 25-30 year old individual was discovered at a depth of 60-80cm in Unit 3.

No paleobotanical remains were found at the settlement.

## **4.3 DATING AND CHRONOLOGY.**

Based on the ceramics and Russian empire period cast iron stamp, Poylu III settlement site date k to the late medieval ages or 16-19th centuries, if viewed extensively. The pottery types can be found extensively in synchronous monuments of Azerbaijan. One artefact (inv.8) discovered at the settlement belongs to late bronze – early iron age and is attributed to the Khojali-Gadabay archaeological culture, dated to the end of the second millennium B.C. to the beginning of the first millennium. Most probably, it fell to the cultural layer of Poylu settlement area accidentally from another area of Poylu village, where late bronze – early iron age cultural layers are encountered upon and found extensively. In this case, we may have possibly encountered upon repeated user of the vessel in later historical period. Radiocarbon analyses were not taken from the settlement.

## **5 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.

### **INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

Poylu III settlement area falls within the late medieval period. The excavation site is part of the late medieval age Poylu settlement area revealed in the course of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline construction for the first time.

## 6 INVENTORY

No.	Unit	Description
1	4, 0-20	Base of a vessel, flat. Handmade. Pink coloured.
2	4, 0-20	Vessel body sherd. Interior and top surface is glazed. Turquoise-pearl coloured.
3	5, 0-20	Base is flat and stands on a bottom. Made with a potter's wheel. Pink coloured.
4	6, 0-20	Vessel neck. There are protuberant horizontal lines on the surface. Made with a potter's wheel. Pink coloured. Thin walled.
5	6, 0-20	Vessel rim, is wide, opens sideways, and directly passes to the neck. Pink coloured. Thin walled.
6	2, 0-20	Vessel body sherd. Interior and top surface is englobed. Salad coloured. There are weakly incised lines on the body. Made with a potter's wheel. Thin walled.
7	1, 0-20	Round cylindrical pottery. There is a hole in the middle. Remaining traces inside the pottery indicate it was made by a potter's wheel. Pink coloured.
8	6, 20-40	Part of a medium sized earthenware pot. Mouth passes to body. There are horizontal ribbed lines on the body and nose like protuberances on the sides. Poorly polished. Handmade. Colour is blackish-brown.
9	6, 20-40	Vessel body sherd. Interior and top surface is glazed. Colour is greenish-beige. Thin walled.
10	6, 40-60	Part of a jar handle. It is ribbon shaped; cut-off is oval. There are protuberant vertical lines on the surface left from baking. There are traces left from potter's wheel. Pink coloured.
11	6, 40-60	Vessel base sherd. Flat. Made with a potter's wheel. Pink coloured. Thick walled.
12	6, 80	Circular cast iron stamp with oval holes – cavities on the sides. There is a Russian empire emblem in the form of a two-headed eagle on the avers and two Cyrillic letters T and A on the reverse side of the stamp.
13	6, 60-80	Base sherd of a large vessel. Flat. Internal surface is glazed. Internal surface is of greenish-beige colour. Top surface is pink coloured. Thick walled.
14	6, 60-80	Medium sized vessel body sherd. There is an ornament on the surface in the form of ribbed small waves. Made with a potter's wheel. Surface is red painted. Interior is pink. Thin walled.
15	5, 20-40	Large vessel mouth sherd, is wide, opens sideways, passes to the body. Made with a potter's wheel. Thick walled.
16	5, 60-80	Vessel neck sherd, passes to the shoulder. Mouth folds sideways, moves to the neck. A greyish salad coloured substance is applied on the surface. Remaining surface is pink coloured. Thin walled.
17	4, 40-60	Vessel mouth sherd, moves to the body. There is a channel like incision inside the mouth. Made with a potter's wheel. Pink coloured. Thin walled.
18	5, 60-80	Medium sized bowl body sherd. Interior is glazed. Dark milk and light blue coloured. Interior surface is partially glazed. Milky coffee coloured. Remaining part of the bowl is pink coloured. Made with a potter's wheel. Base is flat.
19	4, 60-80	Medium sized vessel handle sherd. It is ribbon shaped; cut-off is oval. Pink coloured.
20	3, 20-40	Vessel body sherd. Mouth passes to body. There are ribbed horizontal lines on the body. Interior and top surface is glazed. Colour is brown. Thin walled.
21	3, 20-40	Large vessel mouth sherd, opens sideways, passes to low neck. There is a protuberant strip on the shoulder with an ornament in the form of incised wave like line; also, surface is red painted. Made with a potter's wheel. Thin walled. Pink coloured.
22	2, 20-40	Circular shaped salt cellar. Base is flat. There is a circular cavity inside the salt cellar. Traces of a potter's wheel are seen inside the pottery. Pink coloured. Thin walled.
23	1, 40-60	Vessel mouth sherd, is wide, opens sideways, directly passes to the body. Made with a potter's wheel. Pink coloured. Thin walled.
24	3, 60-80	Base sherd. Interior and top surface is glazed. Colour is brown. Thin walled.

## 7 APPENDICES

### 7.1 REFERENCES

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## 7.2 ILLUSTRATIONS

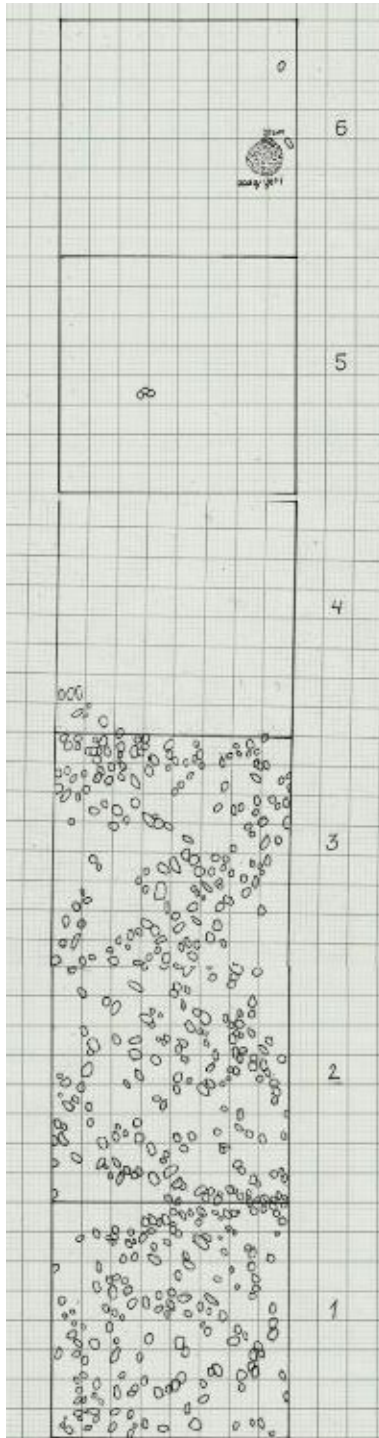


Figure 1. Plan of the excavations.

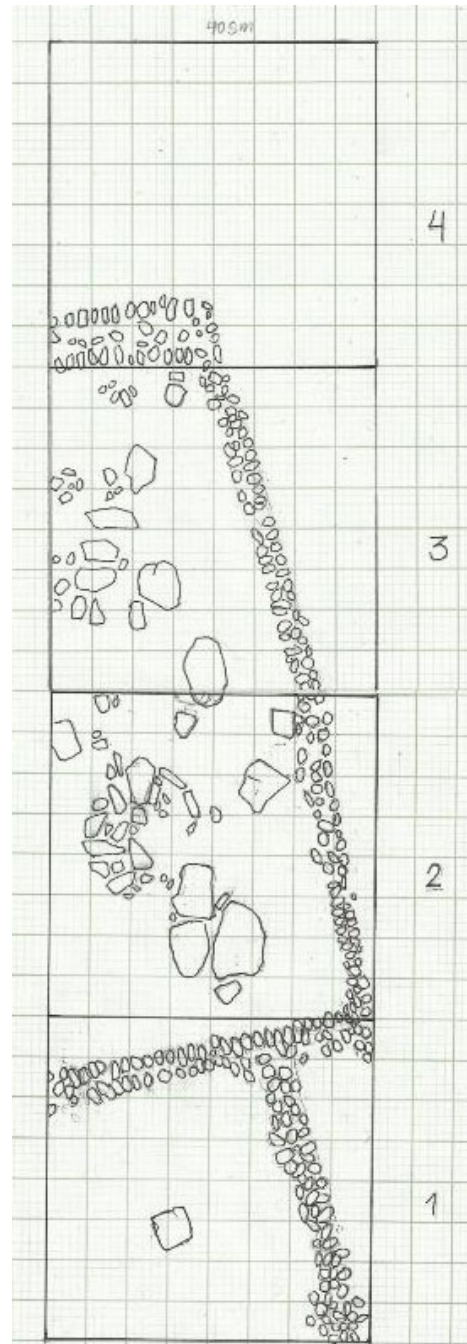


Figure 2. Plan of the Excavations

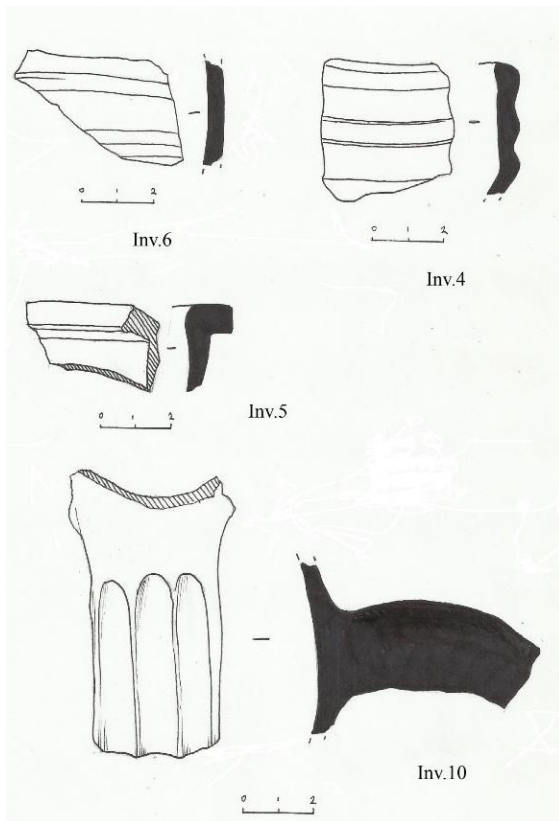


Figure 3. Pottery (Inv 4, 5, 6, 10)

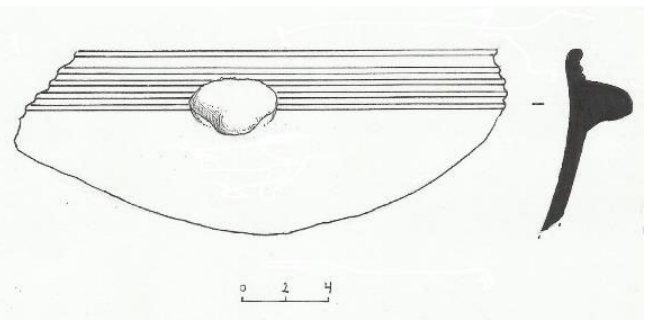


Figure 4. Pottery fragment of Khojali-Gadabay culture (inv. 8).

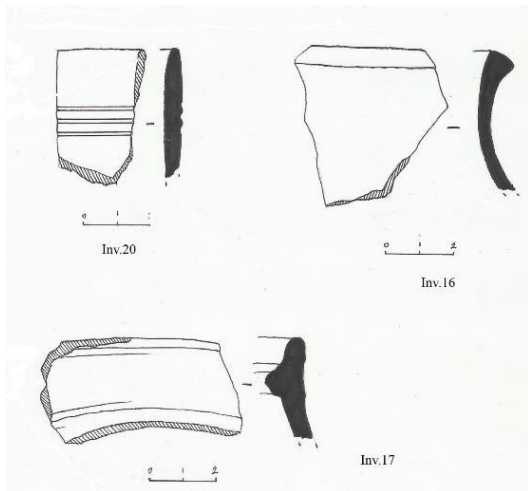


Figure 5. Pottery (Inv 16, 17, 20)

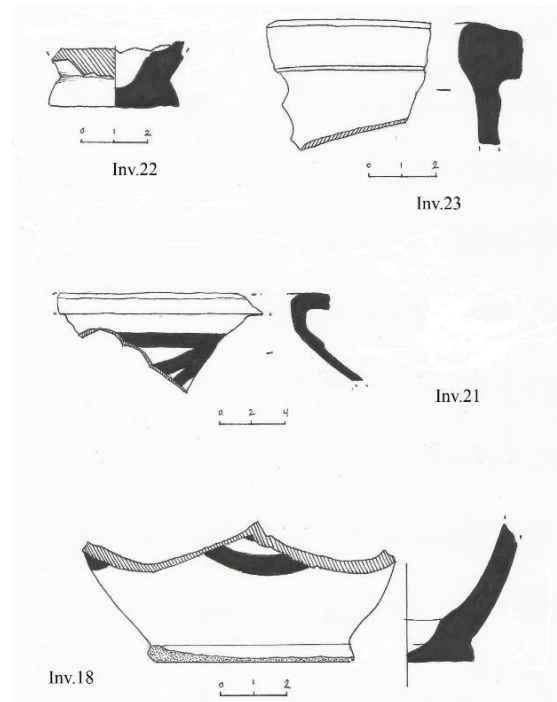


Figure 6. Pottery (Inv 18, 21, 22, 23).

### 7.3 PHOTOS



*Photo 1. General view of the excavation site following topsoil stripping. View to east.*



*Photo 2. General view of the excavation site. View to east.*



*Photo 2. General view of the excavation site. View to west*



*Photo 3. General view of the buildings. View to east*



*Photo 4. General view of the completed excavation. View to west.*



*Photo 5. General view of the "large" room. View to west.*



*Photo 6. General view of the "small" room. View to south*



Photo 7. Stone slab floor of the "large" room. View to south



Photo 8. Excavation in process. View to east



Photo 9. "Large" room. View to east



Photo 10. "Small" room. View to southeast.



Photo 12. Pottery (Inv 1, 2)



Photo 13. Pottery (Inv 3, 4).





Photo 14. Pottery (Inv 5, 6).



Photo 14. Pottery (Inv 7).



Photo 16. Pottery of Khojali-Gadabay culture (In 8)



Photo 17. Pottery (Inv 9)



Photo 18. Pottery (Inv 10)



Photo 19. Pottery (Inv 11)



Photo 20. Seal (Inv 12)



Photo 21. Pottery (Inv 13, 14).



Photo 22. Pottery (Inv 15, 16)



Photo 23. Pottery (Inv 17).



Photo 24. Pottery (Inv 18)



Photo 25. Pottery (Inv 19, 20, 21)



Photo 25. Pottery (Inv 19, 20, 21)



Photo 25. Pottery (Inv 19, 20, 21)



Photo 26. Pottery (Inv 22)



Photo 27. Pottery (Inv 23, 24).



Photo 28. Human tooth