

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

BRIEF SCIENTIFIC REPORT

**Excavations of Seyidlər II settlement at KP297.5
SCPX pipeline**

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**Baku-Azerbaijan
2018**

1 SUMMARY

Archaeological excavations were conducted during the construction of the SCP pipeline in June 2005 (at KP318 of the pipeline route) on what was recorded as Seyidlar II settlement. During the excavations, remains of an Antique period village-type settlement were found, including a large number of samples of ceramic utensils and metal samples.

For this reason, due to the construction of the SCPX route, this area was considered to be an archaeological risk zone, so a trial archaeological excavation was planned here. Parallel with the SCP pipeline, an excavation site was selected and excavations were conducted using machinery. The objective was to determine the presence of an archaeological site in the new corridor. Excavation works were conducted during two days on July 10-11, 2015, under the guidance of two archaeologists. Finds discovered in a very small quantity belong to the period of the Middle Ages (IX-XII centuries).

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2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 SITE DISCOVERY

During construction of the SCP gas pipeline, remains of an ancient village-type settlement with many interesting artefacts were found here [1, p. 1-16]. In this regard, the site was declared closed for construction and drilling works, and archaeological excavations in this area were planned in advance. The site was inspected by David Maynard - Archaeologist expert of the BP company (SCPX) and the Leader of the SCPX Archaeological Monitoring Team, Shamil Najafov, and site for archaeological excavations was identified.

2.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

Archaeological site is located in Seyidlar village of Samux district, in the territory of Gilinjbeyli village (former name-Kommuna), 1km to the south in Shamkir district. The site is located on KP297.580 of the SCPX pipeline route. From the distribution of ground archaeological materials the area of the site area covers about 2 hectares [2, p. 1]. The site is located at an altitude of 215 metres above sea level and in the coordinates as follows: N-452863.403; N-4525856.996 and E-8607962.859; E-8607863.05. The area is relatively sloping plain. Soil cover of the territory is clay and grey saline.

2.3 TIMING OF EXCAVATIONS

Archaeological excavations on the site were conducted using machinery (JCB). Archaeological excavations were conducted only during two days, July 10-11, 2015, by IAE archaeologists - PhD in History, leading researcher Vagif Asadov and researcher Ahliman Abdurahmanov. Muhammad Novruzov - SCPX Cultural Heritage Site Construction Manager of BP company (SCPX) and David Maynard - Archaeologist expert of BP company (SCPX) observed the excavations.

3 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

Due to the lack of reclamation work over a long time, salinity of the soil layer increased and became unsuitable for planting. Some time ago, the territory of the archaeological site was used for agricultural purposes. However, now it has remained unused due to the decreased fertility. There are vineyards at quite a distance. Below the ground cover layer about 1 metre thick, which we mentioned, there is a relatively black layer with sand mix.

Due to the leakage of groundwater and soil salinity, water was found in a layer mixed with sand 1.3m deep. On the section of the site that was excavated along the pipe trench, no occupation layer was found [2, p. 1]. The finds were discovered only at a depth of the first 40cm, and it was somewhat suspicious that they belong to the occupation layer. Probably, some time ago during the sowing works, a weak occupation layer was completely destroyed here, and materials were mixed. There were no similar results to that excavated during the construction of BTC pipeline.

3.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF OCCUPATION LAYERS

As we have already noted, during the archaeological excavations no occupation layer was observed. Therefore, we conducted the excavations by entirely using the machinery. In order to prevent additional waste of time, the designated area was excavated within a short time, but no traces of the occupation layer were found. Probably this section is already the end of the site, and the main part of the settlement would be found in the BTC route corridor [1, p. 1-16]. Fragments of pottery in small quantities were found at a depth of the first 40cm. All of them belong to the period of the Middle Ages (IX-XII cc.), and not the ancient period.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF FINDS

Description of the artefacts found in a small quantities is given in the inventory list. We can only state that all the finds represent fragments of ceramic dishware made of clay. The number of finds is 11 pottery sherds. These are base (photo 5), handles (photo 2, 4, 6), body (photo 3), shoulder and rim sherds (photo 8) of dishware. Handles are in the shape of ears and round (Drawing 2.3; dishware 3.1-2). Patterns are applied on the surface of the lids (photo 1, 7). Edges of some lids are flat, and some are in the shape of a round embossment. Spike-like decoration using embossing and notches was widely used (fig. 1.1, fig. 2.2). Most of the pottery fragments show that the pottery was made of pure well-mixed clay and fired at a constant temperature (photos 2, 3, 8). They are mostly light pink and light red.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The main part of the archaeological site appears to be located outside the excavation corridor which prevented more detailed information being about it. Nevertheless, an analysis of the detected various samples of ceramic dishware allows some ideas regarding the site. Analysis indicates a date during the Middle Ages period. The pottery obtained from Seyidlar II excavation site is identical and similar to the ceramics of Faxrali, Dashbulag, Hajjalili III and Kerpjilitepe [3]. In our opinion, the ceramic samples found here represent the examples of art made by professional potters who mastered high technologies of medieval people.

4 ANALYTICAL RESULTS

4.1 COLLECTION OF RESULTS

Excavations conducted at SCPX KP297.580 were successfully completed. Archaeological excavations were conducted in line with a timetable provided for during the excavations. Laboratory analysis of the artefacts obtained was implemented. Summarizing our findings, it can be noted that no occupation layer in the excavations was observed and the finds were disturbed during recent cultivation. The main settlement area is also located off-site. Artefacts found in the vicinity, including ground finds at the excavation site, show that the settlement probably covered a large area outside the limits of the excavation.

4.2 PERIOD AND CHRONOLOGY

Form and content of the fragments of the ceramics allow us to relate them to the earliest Middle Ages period (IX-XII centuries.)

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

SCPX KP297.580 and the artefacts discovered here are important in terms of studying the medieval material culture of the region. Ceramics samples scattered on the excavation site including the territory, cover an area of approximately 1 hectare. The area where surface materials are mostly spread in the pipeline corridor is larger than 250m. Features of the site's topography, as well as nature of the ground materials, indicate that the village centre is located north of the pipeline corridor. The excavation site was on the south-eastern edge of this settlement. Finds discovered during construction of the BTC pipeline, indicates earlier occupation in the Antique period. Probably, this continued at these stages, and in the Middle Ages there was an intense life in this territory. However, traces of a medieval village were not found. It is likely that the medieval villages are away from the pipeline corridor.

6 INVENTORY

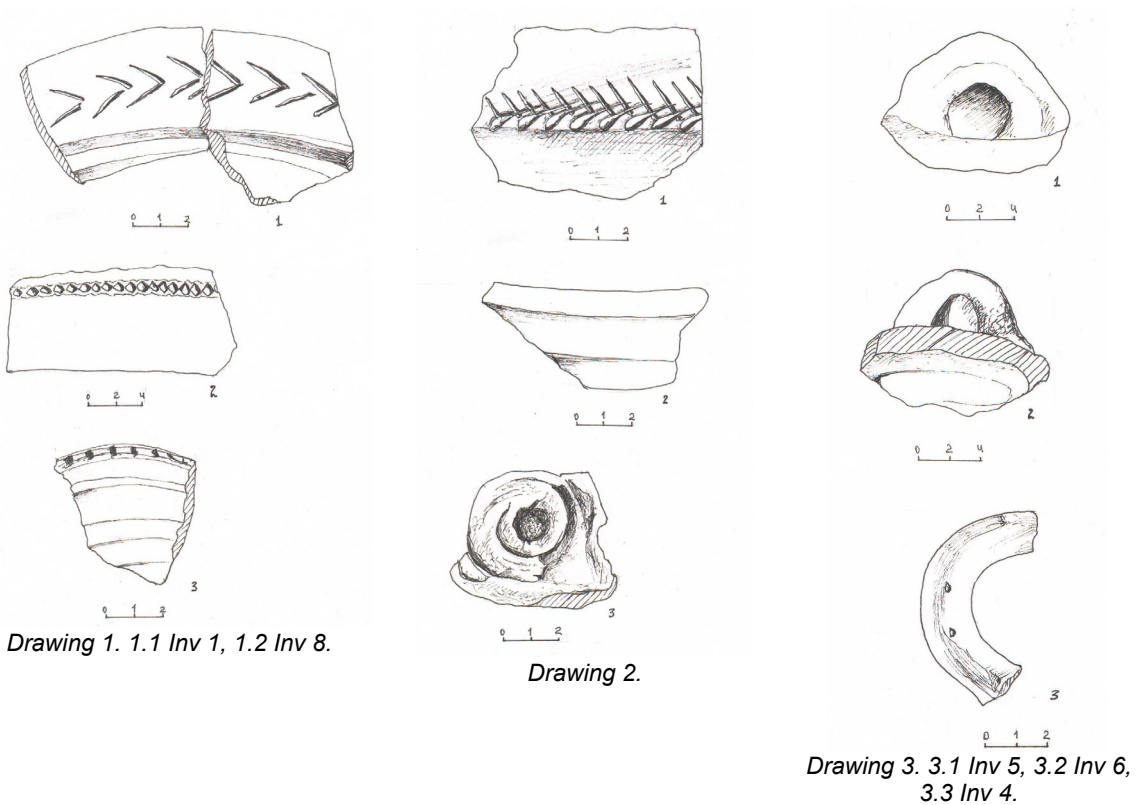
No	Type	Description	Unit, Depth	Dimensions
1	Lid fragment	Fragment of clay lid. Red. Clay composition is slightly mixed. Handmade. Edges are bas-relief. There is a spike like pattern on the edge. Fig 1.1, Photo 1,	Unit 1 Depth: 30cm	10 x 5.2cm
2	Lid fragment	Small lid fragment. Light red and there are few fractures on the surface. Clay composition is clean. Edges are embossed with ornamental patterns.	Unit 1 Depth: 30cm	3 x 2cm
3	Lid fragment	Light red lid fragment. Clay composition is mixed. Surface is rough. There is a handle like circular outlet in the centre.	Unit 3 Depth: 35cm	10 x 8cm
4	Handle	Round section handle. Well made. Fig 3.3, Photo 6.	Unit 3 Depth: 35cm	Height=7cm
5	Handle	Earlobe-shaped modelled handle. Probably, a handle of either pot or jug-type vessel. Roughly handmade and round inside curl in shape. Fig 3.1 Photo 2.	Unit 8 Depth: 40cm	Diameter =8cm
6	Handle	Earlobe-shaped tempered handle. Belongs to a pot type vessel, pure clay composition. Fig 3.2, Photo 2.	Unit 8 Depth: 40cm	9 x 8.7cm
7	Handle	Earlobe-shaped modelled handle. Belongs to a pot type vessel, red, pure clay composition	Unit 8 Depth: 40cm	9 x 8.6cm
8	Potsherd	Fragment reflecting mouth and shoulder part of vessel. There is a spike-like pattern in the shoulder section. Fig 1.2 Photo 3.	Unit 9 Depth: 40cm	5 x 6cm
9	Potsherd	Rimsherd. Mouth edge is bended out. Thin-walled, free, pure clay composition.	Unit 9 Depth: 40cm	3 x 4cm
10	Potsherd	Base sherd of the vessel. Probably, belongs either to churn or a large jug. Thick-walled and large. Photo 5.	Unit 10 Depth: 30cm	Diameter=13cm
11	Potsherd	Body fragment of the pottery. Embossed patterns from the body centre. Patterns embossed on the pottery before firing.	Unit 10 Depth: 30cm	14 x 10cm

7 APPENDIX

7.1 REFERENCES

1. Taylor P.M., Polglase C.R., Museyibli N.A., Koller J.M., Jonson T.A., 2011. *Past and Future Heritage in the Pipelines Corridor – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey*. 2011, Smithsonian Institution Asian Cultural History Program, Washington, D.C. Design by Graphics, Inc.
2. Asadov V.A., 2015. *Brief scientific reference on the archeological excavations at 297.580 km on the pipeline along the SCPX infrastructure project, II Seyidlar settlement*. ANAS, IAE, SASNCS department. Baku, 2015, p.1
3. Jalilov B.M., 2007. *A brief scientific report on the excavations of the ancient II Seyidlar settlement located on 318 km of BTC route*. Baku, 2007, 16 p.

7.2 Illustrations



7.3 Photos



Photo 1. Lid fragment. Inv 1.



Photo 2. Earlobe-shaped pottery handles. Inv 5 and 6.



Photo 3. Pottery fragment with embossed patterns. Inv 8.



Photo 4. Tempered handle.



Photo 5. Base sherd of the vessel. Inv 10.



Photo 6. Handle with round section. Inv 4.



Photo 7. Lid fragments.



Photo 8. Potsherds.