

Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences
Archaeology and Ethnography Institute

BRIEF SCIENTIFIC REPORT

**Excavations at Zəyəmçay Settlement KP 335.4 SCPX
pipeline**

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1 SUMMARY

This Zayam Settlement Site archaeological excavations took place at KP 335.420 of SCPX gas pipeline. This monument is located between Zayamchai necropolis, where archaeological excavations were carried out during construction of BTC route, and Zayam catacomb. Zayam settlement is a Late Bronze – Early Iron Period monument (end of II millennium B.C. – beginning of I millennium). Although the section on the pipeline route examined during the archaeological excavations was not a very rich cultural layer of the settlement site, the above ground archaeological material indicate that this monument can be considered rich from a material resource point of view.

Contents

1	SUMMARY	1
2	INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.1	SITE DISCOVERY.....	2
2.2	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF AREA	2
2.3	WHO CONDUCTED THE WORK AND WHEN	2
2.4	FIELD AND OFFICE METHODS	3
3	RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS.....	3
3.1	AREA DESCRIPTION.....	3
3.2	GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CULTURAL LAYERS	4
3.3	SUMMARY OF RESULTS	5
4	ANALYTICAL RESULTS.....	5
4.1	COLLECTION OF RESULTS	5
4.2	GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL CLASSES OF ARTEFACTS.....	6
5	DISCUSSION.....	10
5.1	INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS	10
6	INVENTORY.....	10
7	APPENDIXES.....	13
7.1	REFERENCES	13
7.2	DRAWINGS.....	14
7.3	PHOTOS.....	15

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 SITE DISCOVERY

The archaeological site was identified during construction of BTC oil pipeline. An area was selected for archaeological excavation prior to construction of the SCPX pipeline.

2.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF AREA

The Zayam settlement site is located on the right-side bank of Zayam river at a distance of 500-600 meters approximately, southeast of the Zayamchai necropolis at coordinates N 40°56'03.0// E 045°53'19.5// (N-4533756.2; N-4533712.962; E-8574928.728; E-8574970.328) and at an altitude of 321 metres from sea level. The monument is located in the territory of Duyerli village of Shamkir region. The area of the monuments is used by local residents to grow potatoes and grain (Photo 1). Archaeological excavations had been undertaken settlement site during the BTC and SCP project. Ceramics and stone samples were the main items discovered during the excavations.



Photo 1. Units allocated at the excavation site. View to west.

2.3 WHO CONDUCTED THE WORK AND WHEN

Archaeological expedition team of Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences conducted archaeological excavations at Zayam settlement site on November 09-26, 2014 under the leadership of Shamil Najafov, Doctor of Philosophy in History, Leading Scientific Worker with the participation of collaborators from the institute – Doctors of Philosophers in History, Leading Scientific Workers Vagif Assadov and Anar Agalarzade as well as Ahliman Abdurahmanov, a scientific worker. Mammad Novruzov, SCPX Cultural Heritage Site Construction Manager from BP SCPX witnessed the excavation operations.

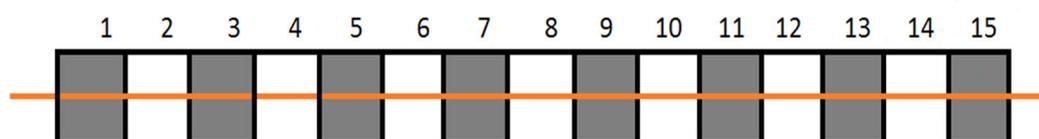
2.4 FIELD AND OFFICE METHODS

15 excavation units with a dimension of 4m x 4m were specified at the site (Plan 1). The excavation was 4m wide and 60m long (Photo 2). In 8 of these units archaeological excavations were carried out till the end of the cultural layer's incidence. units were laid from south-east towards north-west in the direction of the pipeline.

3 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

3.1 AREA DESCRIPTION

The Zayam settlement site is on one of the highest hills on the right-side bank of Zayamchai river. Administratively the site is in the territory of Duyerli village of Shamkir region. Shallow irrigation canals run through the middle edges of the area. There are shepherd barns nearby for small cattle.



Plan 1. Outline plan of the archaeological excavation site (no excavations were carried out in white coloured units).

The site is a plain territory after a little ascent. These areas containing fertile black soils are suitable for sowing. Fertile soil layer varies between 30-40cm approximately. Underneath lie a relatively yellow soil layer mixed with clay followed by a deeper yellow arenaceous-argillaceous soil layer. As the area was used for cultivation, consolidated soils were encountered upon in deeper layers, which caused difficulties for the excavation process.



Photo 2. Archaeological excavation site. View to west.

3.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CULTURAL LAYERS

Although incidence of cultural layer at the selected excavation area of settlement site provided a weak material, it was sufficient with respect to studying the properties of monument. The settlement contained only a single layer.

A small amount of ceramics and stoneware were discovered in units I, III, V and VII. The stone tools mainly consisted of grinding tools and slingshot stones.

A fragment of a large-scale household jar was discovered near the north-eastern wall of quadrant 9 at a depth of 85cm (Photo 3). This household jar had a wide mouth and thick wall and was in the shape of clay oven. The narrow base of the jar widens towards the body. As part of the household jar extended downwards the north-eastern wall, area of the quadrant was expanded to include this. The area was expanded 70cm outwards and 170cm wide. As the remaining section of the jar was cleaned, it became clear that it was the mouth fragment of a household jar reflecting a very large section.

Large pebbles were discovered near the household jar. The pebbles had been laid around to keep the household jar stable and upright, so that food resources could be stored inside. Two grindstones were discovered nearby these pebbles. A very few ceramics discovered nearby these stone tools mainly consisted of a small pot and jar fragments (Photo 4).

The artefacts discovered at Zayam settlement site during excavations of SCPX appeared on the borders of settlement sites mainly.

Excavated units:

Coordinated and excavation depth:

Unit 1: N 40°56'02.5" E 045°53'20.3" depth 110 cm

Unit 3: N 40°56'02.7" E 045°53'20.0" depth 100 cm

Unit 5: N 40°56'02.9" E 045°53'19.8" depth 100 cm

Unit 7: N 40°56'03.1" E 045°53'19.6" depth 90 cm

Unit 9: N 40°56'52.9" E 045°53'19.3" depth 100 cm

Unit 11: N 40°56'03.5" E 045°53'19.1" depth 100 cm

Unit 13: N 40°56'03.7" E 045°53'18.9" depth 90 cm

Unit 15: N 40°56'03.8" E 045°53'18.6" depth 90 cm

Description of archaeological findings. As various agricultural works had been carried out at the foot and on top of the settlement site for a long time, surface materials were either scattered or covered. Very rarely stone tools are found at the settlement site. These are mainly parts of pestles discovered in fragments. During preliminary walks and observations only 2-3 pieces of such tools were found. No surface materials were included in the inventory book.

Ceramics consisted of the fragments of grey and brown coloured large and middle size household jars, mouth and body pieces of black coloured, pot like earthenware, pieces of light yellow and light red coloured braziers and brown and grey coloured, small sized jug, jug, bowl and tureen type vessels composed of pure clay.

3.3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Zayam settlement site is one of the monuments included in complex of Zayamchai monuments. The archaeological excavations carried out at the settlement site has occupied one definite portion of this settlement, which covers just 4-meter-wide trench strip of this pipeline route (Photo 10). Although a few artefacts were obtained during excavations, they all are variegated. The archaeological artefacts discovered here have been useful with respect to studying economic life, craftsmanship and everyday life of Zayamchai residents during end of bronze – early iron age (end of II millennium B.C. – beginning of I millennium).

4 ANALYTICAL RESULTS

4.1 COLLECTION OF RESULTS

Although comparative analysis of the archaeological materials discovered at the site of the monument is not conclusive, it enables making some approximate assumptions regarding their age, location and other parallel issues. Ceramic products provide more information from this point of view. Description and forms of the vessel fragments we have observed share similarities with the ceramics of Ganja-Gazakh region known to belong to late bronze – early iron age monuments. The fragments representing grey and red coloured medium capacity household jars often found at Zayam settlement site are very distinctive from this point of view. Such jars are more often encountered upon among same age monuments of Saritepe, Babadervish, Sarvantepe, Shamkirchai and Zayamchai basins of the region. The stratum, where these ceramic specimens are discovered, is attributed to end of II millennium B.C. – I half of I millennium in almost all these monuments.

The decorative features more often found on the surface of household jars, large jugs and other vessels - surface engravings, incisions (Photo 15), slantwise cuts, girdles decorated with patterns in the forms of sunken channel, wide protuberant belt, scratch and cuts in the form of spikes of wheat – are the characteristic decorations of ceramics at the sites of known monuments in the territory of Azerbaijan during early iron age and South Caucasus in general. These decorative elements gradually disappeared during the VI-V centuries B.C. [10, pages 190-192].

As we mentioned earlier, the sherds discovered at the site are typical of the Khojali-Gedebeý archaeological culture. In general, the artefacts are typical of late bronze – early iron age settlement sites in the Ganja-Gazakh region [11, pages 59-61].

4.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL CLASSES OF ARTEFACTS

Clay: Large size *household jars* were discovered at the settlement site during archaeological excavations. Majority of household jars had thick walls and had remained in poor condition (Photo 3). Each and small gravel had been added to their clay composition. Surface of some of the household jars had been decorated with triangles and patterns reminding spike of wheat. There were button like raised patterns on handles around the mouths of a few household jars. The jars were used for storage of wine, grain and other products. Large household jars were utilized widely in Azerbaijan at the end of II millennium B.C. and beginning of I millennium A.C. Such household jars were found in abundant number at Saritepe, Mingachevir, Sarvantepe [1, pages 52-53; 2, pages 295-297].



Photo 3. Mouth fragment of a household jar mouth.

Based on the fragments, it is possible to suggest that in majority of cases jars were made of sand mixed and well kneaded clay. Their forms are different and structures are appropriate. Other mixtures have been added to the clay for the purpose of ensuring grey colour of some household jars after they were baked in furnace. As a rule, edges of the mouths of jars open outwards and in this section its walls are thicker in comparison with its body (Figure 3). A berm was formed inwardly on the edges of the mouth of some jars. Based on the fragments of jars, it is safe to suggest that their bodies were spherical. In many cases, edges of their mouths were decorated by scallops. Sometimes, bodies of jars are decorated by vertically aligned wide, but shallow furrows. Not all jars are grey. Depending upon the clay mixture, it also, contained dark pink and light red coloured baked samples. There are also, fragments capable of providing a great deal of information about the decorative patterns on bodies of jars. There are mainly girdles containing engraved slantwise short lines and engravings, wide belt like protuberant sashes and patterns in the form of spikes or ears of wheat on the bodies of some household jars (Figure 1). On some jars protuberant strips consisting of obliquely cut lines are encountered upon mainly on the shoulder and body.

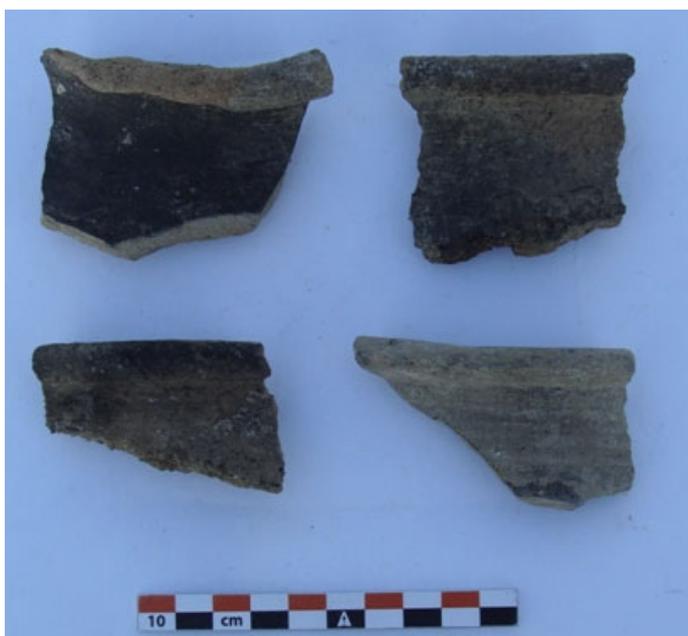


Photo 4. Thin walled sherds composed of pure clay.

Tureen, jar, pot and brazier type vessels discovered at the settlement site and a great majority of their fragments were made qualitatively by being baked in stable temperature and by a potter's wheel. Their surfaces are decorated by geometrical patterns by glossing, scratching and incising (Figure 3).

A few bowl or basin fragments were found. These small vessels, usually with a heel seat, were made on a potter's wheel. Their clay composition is clean and these vessels are baked in a stable temperature. The design element on their surface is either simple or absent altogether. It becomes clear from the edges of mouths of bowl like dishware that they have a clean composition and are well baked. Fragments of bowl and cup like vessels are black and grey coloured, well-polished and glossed. Their shoulder and body sections are decorated by sunken circular scratches and channels parallel to each other. The edges of mouths of some dishware slant inwards (Photo 18).



Photo 5. Rim fragments of jar type dishware.

A fragment of a clay brazier was found. Clay braziers have various forms. Despite different forms, they were all used for one purpose only. Braziers are mainly square and oval shaped, edges of mouths protrude in a triangular form. Middle section of the first are cut in oval form and edges of the oval section are decorated by skew cavities. A small, circular hole is opened on the top section of the walls of some braziers belonging to the second group. The purpose in making the edges of mouths of the third group of braziers in a triangular form is to attach a vessel to the edge of their mouths. Braziers were mainly in square and oval forms in the developed and last stages of

late bronze – early iron ages. The hole found in their middle served to easily removing the ash accumulated on the brazier. Such clay braziers were also, discovered at Saritepe [3, p. 90], Sarvantepe [4, p. 145-147], Uchtepe [5, p. 117-118] and Uzerliktepe settlement site in the territory of Agdham [6, p. 85] attributed to II millennium B.C. V. Aliyev has noted that low walled, circular (frying-pan like) vessels were encountered upon among first bronze age monuments of Azerbaijan, which were, most probably, used clay brazier [7, p. 120]. Research suggests interesting assumptions on purpose of usage of some braziers discovered at the settlement site in Babadervish attributed to late bronze – early iron age. He concludes that clay braziers encountered upon inside or outside the houses with a large hearth were placed on the hearth inside the house during winter seasons. The hole in the middle was for fire to raise upwards. Following origination of cinder in the hearth, pots containing food were placed on such braziers to heat. In warm seasons such braziers were used in the yards together with hearths. V. S. Sorokin and K. Kh. Kushnaryova wrote that these braziers were used for baking bread [6, p. 83], but A.A. Iyessen thinks they were made to heat the houses with no hearth and furnaces [5, p. 118]. We believe the main purpose in preparation of clay braziers is to heat food and cook meat.



Photo 6. Shoulder and body sections of pot like vessels.

Ceramic sherds perforated in the middle and shaped into a rough circle are found among the ceramic products (Photo 19). Opinions on their intended use vary. According to some, these were used as spindle whorls. Others view such circular ceramics as vessel lids. Some sherds show evidence of unsuccessful attempts to drill holes. These circular tools are made of thick walled sherds. Thickness of the walls equals 2cm. Diameters vary between 2-6 cm.

The majority of vessels discovered at Zayam settlement belong to household utensils (Photos 12, 13, 14). Based on the number of fragments uncovered here, it is difficult to talk about the forms of these vessels. However, based on general indications, it is possible to identify a similarity with vessels discovered at sites in the Ganja-Gazakh zone [8, pages 94-97; 9, pages 35-39]. We lean on this analogy to define the age of the Zayam settlement site.

There were pieces of body sections of black and grey coloured sherds with various forms and volumes that reflect many characteristics of the Khojali-Gedebey culture. Their surfaces were decorated by incisions, concave points, straight and wave shaped lines and the patterns drawn by way of polishing (Photos 7, 8, 9).



Photo 7. Patterns incised by finger nails



Photo 8. Wave shaped parallel patterns.



Photo 9. Pottery sherd with handle and decorations in the form of spikes of wheat.

Main materials made from clay are pottery and spindle whorls. Dishes sometimes composed of pure clay and sometimes containing fine sand and earth in clay material were discovered. The majority were baked in a stable temperature. Traces of soot and burns on pot fragments is the result of using these vessels in household activities. The spindle whorls, were made by drilling and adapting pottery fragments.

Stone: Materials made from stone are mainly whetstone (Photo 20) and a piece of spindle whorl made from limestone. Although the spindle is broken, its form and dimensions are clear (Figure 5; Photo 21).

No finds of metal or glass were discovered at the site.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The archaeological excavations carried out at Zayam settlement have revealed that surface layers of the cultural stratum containing the monument were previously destroyed by cultivation activities and relatively lower strata remained intact. The archaeological excavations covering a certain portion are undoubtedly within a narrow framework, the work here cannot be considered a complex excavation. From this perspective, when talking just about the excavated portion of the monument, it is necessary to indicate that this is the smallest part of the cultural layer's incidence. The excavation has determined that fragments of large household jars and other pottery in the lower strata indicate life and occupation of Zayam settlement. The site is a short distance from Meshetepe, Gemetepe, Sari reme and Uzerliktepe settlements. These settlements are considered to be the most important monuments of not only of the Zayamchai basin, but even the Ganja-Gazakh region as a whole with respect to their size and richness of their material resources. It is likely that large local tribal communities lived in the area during the late bronze – early iron age and built this type of large settlement.

6 INVENTORY

No.	Type	Description	Unit, depth	Sizes
1	Pottery sherd	Piece of poorly baked, thick walled, light brown coloured pottery, fabric contains an inorganic mixture. Rim is straight and flat. Manufactured coarsely.	Unit 1, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-1,8cm
2	Jar	Fragment of a well baked, thick walled, black coloured jar made of clay containing inorganic mixture. Folded edge of the jar rim is funnel shaped with thick slope. Shoulder section inclines towards the body in a ball like form. There are fir-tree like decorations on the shoulder. Evidently, it was manufactured on a potter's wheel.	Unit 1, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-7mm
3	Pottery sherd	Fragment of a rim belonging to well baked, thick walled, dark brown coloured jar made of fine sand mixed clay. Rim has a slight slope and inclines outwards. Manufactured on a potter's wheel.	Unit 1, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-7mm
4	Pottery sherd	Rim fragment of poorly baked, thick walled, brown coloured jar made of clay containing inorganic mixture. Edge of the rim has a slight slope and inclines outwards. Slantwise patterns in the form of spikes of wheat were embedded on the shoulder section prior to baking. A trace of burn is observed on the surface of the clayware. There is a channel like line below the decorations.	Unit 3, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-7mm
5	Pottery sherd	Rim sherd of poorly baked, thick walled, grey coloured jar made of clay containing inorganic mixture. Rim has a slight slope and inclines outwards. There are traces of potter's wheel inside.	Unit 3, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-8mm
6	Pottery sherd	Fragment of thin walled, light brown coloured well baked a jar like clayware made of sand mixed clay. Rim has a slope and is inclined outwards. Internally edge of mouth and externally surface is well glossed. Trace of a potter's wheel is observed.	Unit 3, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-5mm

No.	Type	Description	Unit, depth	Sizes
7	Pottery sherd	Rim sherd of a well baked, thick walled, dark black coloured jar made of clay with inorganic mixture. Rim is funnel shaped and inclines outwards. There is a weak channel like protrusion on the inside. It was manufactured by potter's wheel.	Unit 3, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-6mm
8	Pottery sherd	Rim sherd belonging to a poorly baked, thick walled, grey-brown coloured jar made of clay with inorganic mixture. Rim inclines outwards. There is a poor channel like pattern inside.	Unit 3, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-6mm
9	Pottery sherd	Rim sherd belonging to a well baked, thick walled, grey coloured jar made of sand mixed clay. Rim has a thick slope and is inclined outwards. There are several linear channel like furrows on the shoulder section. Traces of potter's wheel are observed inside.	Unit 3, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-6mm
10	Pottery sherd	Fragment of shoulder belonging to a middle size clayware. Wave like decorations are drawn on the shoulder section prior to baking using a comb like tool. It is baked of brown coloured, sand mixed clay.	Unit 3, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-7mm
11	Pottery sherd	Fragment of shoulder section of well baked, thick walled, black coloured clayware made of fine sand mixed clay. Slantwise oculiform patterns and channel like furrows among these patterns were incised on the shoulder section by finger nail scratching prior to baking. There are traces of potter's wheel inside.	Unit 3, 60-80cm	Wall thickness-6mm
12	Jug	Rim sherd of a large jar. Edge of the rim is funnel shaped and folds outwards. It is well baked from brown coloured, fine sand mixed clay. Surface is well glossed.	Unit 3, 60-80cm	Wall thickness-7mm
13	Pottery sherd	Fragment of the shoulder of thick walled, grey coloured, well baked jar like clayware made of fine sand mixed clay. Probably, rim of the vessel and shoulder are connected by a handle with circular cross-section. Section of the neck connected to shoulder is girdled by a deep channel like line. Patterns in the form of fir tree are drawn as an element of decoration below the handle prior to baking. Made on a potter's wheel.	Unit 3, 60-80cm	Wall thickness-5mm Handle diameter - 1.8cm
14	Spindle whorl	Item made from white coloured limestone. It has a circular form. One face is flat, another face is protuberant. A bilateral hole is opened in the middle section. Hole diameter is 1 cm.	Unit 3, 60-80cm	Diameter-5cm
15	Fragment of clay brazier Fired clay	Fragment of a thick walled, brown coloured brazier made of clay. An inorganic mixture has been added to clay composition. Rim is straight and flat and there is a channel like line in the middle. The brazier was formed coarsely by hand.	Unit 5, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-1cm
16	Jar	Rim sherd of a thick walled, black coloured, well baked jar made of sand mixed clay. Rim has a thick slope and are folded outwards. There is an abrupt transfer from neck to shoulder. Probably the body was ball shaped. Surface of the rim have channel like lines. One obliquely cut pattern remains on the side of the rim. Probably, the jar was made on a potter's wheel.	Unit 5, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-6mm
17	Pottery sherd	Fragment of a body belonging to thick walled, light grey coloured, poorly baked clayware made of clay with inorganic mixture. Body section is decorated with a twisted belt like pattern. A trace of burn is left on the surface.	Unit 5, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-1.2cm
18	Pottery sherd	Fragment of body belonging to a thin walled, dark grey coloured, well baked jar made of sand mixed clay. Obliquely cut decorations are drawn on the body prior to baking.	Unit 5, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-5mm
19	Obsidian core	Core of dark brown coloured obsidian. It has a flat-prismatic form.	Unit 5, 40-60cm	Width-3 cm Length-5cm
20	Jug	Fragment of a thick walled, grey-brown coloured, well baked jug made of clay with inorganic composition. Twisted belt like decoration is embedded on the body section of the clayware.	Unit 7, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-11cm

No.	Type	Description	Unit, depth	Sizes
21	Bowl	Fragment of mouth of a thin walled, dark grey coloured, well baked bowl made of sand mixed clay. Edge of mouth is straight. There is a salient pattern, channel like protuberance on the surface. Trace of potter's wheel is observed inside.	Unit 7, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-4mm
22	Jug	Rim sherd belonging to a middle sized, thick walled jug. Rim is funnel shaped and folded outwards. There is a channel like line girdle inside. There is an abrupt transfer from neck to shoulder. It is dark brown coloured, well baked from sand mixed clay.	Unit 9, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-1.2cm
23	Base pottery sherd	Bottom section of thick walled, dark pink coloured, poorly baked fabric made of clay with inorganic composition. Wave like decorations are cut on the edges of bottom prior to baking using a comb like tool.	Unit 9, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-1cm
24	Disk shaped item	A piece of disk shaped item made from a fragment of body of a thick walled, grey coloured, well baked fabric made of clay with inorganic mixture. A bilateral hole is opened in the middle. Hole diameter is 1.2 cm.	Unit 9, 40-60cm	Wall thickness-1.8cm diameter-9.2cm
25	Whetstone	Piece of an oblong, whetstone like tool made of thin pebble. Polished as a result of lengthy utilization.	Unit 9, 40-60cm	Length-11cm Width-1.2cm
26	Jug	Rim sherd of thick walled, light pink coloured, well baked jug like clayware made of clay with inorganic mixture. Rim is funnel shaped and is folded outwards. A channel like line is drawn inside around the edge of mouth.	Unit 11, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-8mm
27	Pottery sherd	Rim sherd belonging to a small sized jug. It is well baked from black coloured, fine sand mixed clay. Rim is funnel shaped and is folded outwards.	Unit 11, 20-40cm	Wall thickness-5mm
28	Jar	Rim sherd belonging to a large household jar. It is thick walled, brown coloured and is well baked from clay with inorganic mixture. Clay contains abundant pebble mixture. Funnel shaped rim opens wide sideways. Surface of the rim is flat and is deep channel shaped. A decorative element in the form of protrusion is drawn by a comb like tool inside this channel like section prior to baking. Traces of potter's wheel are encountered inside the vessel.	Unit 9, 1m	Wall thickness-2.2cm

7 APPENDIXES

7.1 REFERENCES

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7.2 Drawings

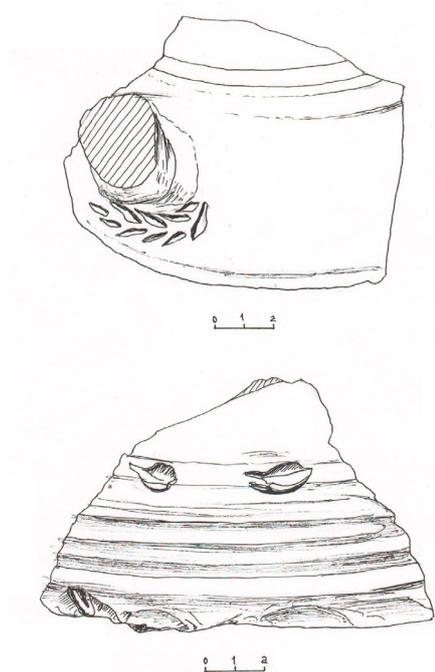


Figure 1.

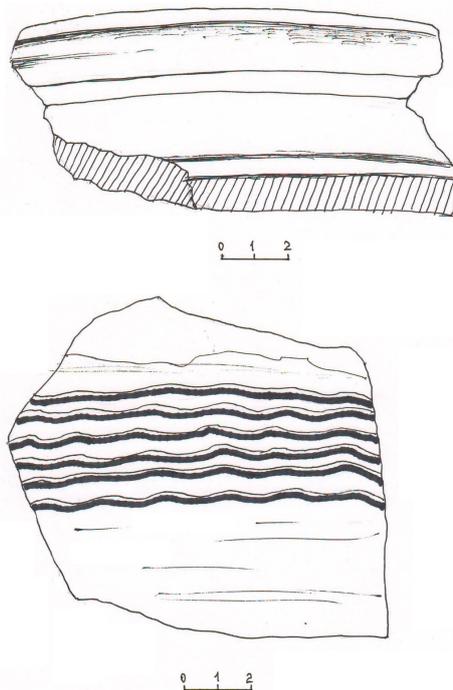


Figure 2.

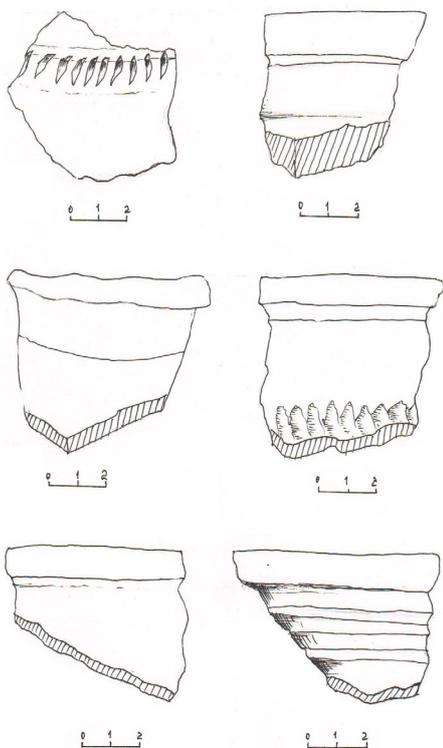


Figure 3.

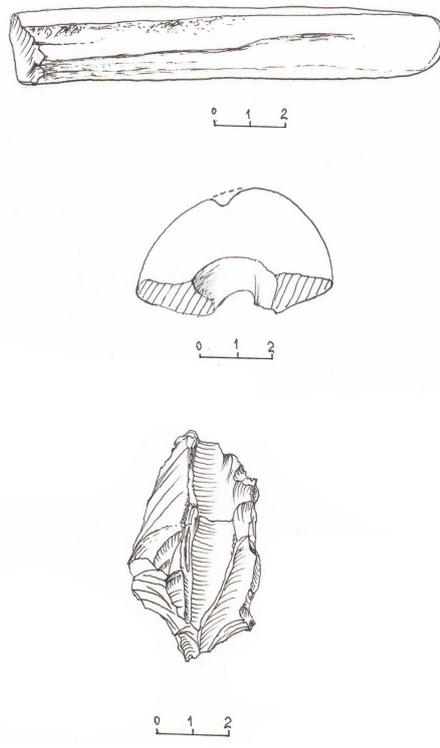


Figure 4.

7.3 PHOTOS



Photo 10. Archaeological excavation in progress. View looking west toward Zayamchai river.



Photo 11. Fragment of household jar and arrangement of large pebbles. Quadrant 9.



Photo 12. rim of pottery vessel.



Photo 13. Fragment of pottery rim.



Photo 14. Fragment of pottery rim.



Photo 15. Base of pottery with incised patterns and rimsherd with wide rim protruding outwards.



Photo 16. Base of pottery with incised patterns and rimsherd with wide rim protruding outwards.



Photo 17. Pottery sherd with deep burns and soot traces on the surface.



Photo 18. Pottery sherd with deep burns and soot traces on the surface.



Photo 19. Spindlewhorl made from pottery sherd.



Photo 20. Whetstone made of oblong pebble.



Photo 21. Spindlewhorl made of limestone.



Photo 22. Obsidian.