

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

BRIEF SCIENTIFIC REPORT

**Səmədabad Settlement Site Excavations at KP 211.5
SCPX Pipeline**

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1 SUMMARY

The report reflects the archaeological excavations carried out at Samadabad settlement site of Yevlakh District located at KP 211.480 of the SCPX pipeline. Archaeological excavations were carried out elite between February 16 – March 05, 2015. Local municipalities and executive authorities were informed about the archaeological excavations in advance. 40 metres long and 4 metre wide excavation site was allocated. 10 units were specified at the area and excavations were carried out at 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10th units respectively. Excavations were carried out to a depth of 1-1.20 metres and no significant archaeological findings were made. These findings mainly repeat the surface materials and consist of the pieces of mouth, neck, body and handle of ancient-early medieval age pottery.

Contents

1	SUMMARY	1
2	INTRODUCTION	2
2.1	SITE DISCOVERY	2
2.2	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA	2
3	FIELD AND OFFICE METHODS	2
3.1	FIELD METHODS	2
4	RESULTS OF ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS	3
4.1	SITE DESCRIPTION.....	3
4.2	GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CULTURAL LAYERS	4
4.3	DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS	5
4.4	ANALYSIS OF RESULTS.....	5
5	ANALYTICAL RESULTS	6
5.1	GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ARTEFACTS.....	6
5.2	PERIOD AND CHRONOLOGY.....	7
6	DISCUSSION	8
6.1	INTERPRETATION OF FIELD AND LABORATORY RESULTS	8
7	INVENTORY	9
8	APPENDIXES	10
8.1	REFERENCES.....	10
8.2	ILLUSTRATIONS	11
8.3	PHOTOS.....	11

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 SITE DISCOVERY

Samadabad settlement site located at KP211.480 of SCPX route was recorded during the first and second stages. 3 earth graves of antique period date were revealed and excavated while removing the surface layer of soil in the course of constructing BTC export oil pipeline close to the monument in 2004. Archaeological inspection of this area was carried out during second phase in 2013 under the SCPX Archeology Program (David Maynard, Shamil Najafov) and many above ground archaeological findings were revealed at the area. Taking into consideration the probability of discovering potential funerary monuments and various findings, Samadabad archaeological site was recorded as a potential site.. The excavations were agreed between IoAE (Institute of Archeology and Ethnography) and BP (SCPX).

2.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Samadabad settlement site is located in Yevlakh district 18-22 metres above sea level at the coordinates N40°36'45.3"; E047°05'16.4" (N4499723; E8676795). The site is located on the right side of the highway to Samadabad village, at a distance of 12-15m from the road, approximately 500m north from the village, at KP 211.480 of the SCPX route. The settlement area is surrounded by areas under crop and a drainage canal at the east. The area, which mainly consists of grey meadow, meadow-forest, saline grey-brown soils, is plain and vegetation cover is of semi-desert type. As the area is arable vegetable plants are grown here mostly.

3 FIELD AND OFFICE METHODS

3.1 FIELD METHODS

Archaeological expedition team of Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences conducted excavations at Samadabad settlement site during February 16 – March 05, 2015 under the leadership of Shamil Najafov, Doctor of Philosophy in History, Leading Scientific Worker with the participation of collaborators from the institute – Doctor of Philosopher in History, Leading Scientific Worker Vagif Asadov and Doctor of Philosopher in History, Leading Scientific Worker Anar Agalarzade and Ahliman Abdurahmanov, a scientific worker. Mammad Novruzov, SCPX Cultural Heritage Site Construction Manager from BP SCPX and David Maynard, expert archaeologist from BP (SCPX) witnessed the excavation operations.

Excavations were carried out along the length of the monument at part of the settlement site falling to the pipeline route, 10 units with a dimension of 4 x 4 covering an area of 160 m² in total were selected for the purpose of acquiring necessary information about the monument (Figure 1). Bedding of cultural layer was registered after each 20cm depth, description of the cultural artefacts discovered in the course of excavation was reflected in the field note, drawn plans and photos. Prior to start of excavations, surface structure of units was clarified, relative heights were determined and datum point was identified. A GPS device was used to determine the altitude of the area from the seal level and get a fix on the location. Archaeological findings were inventoried in the field records.

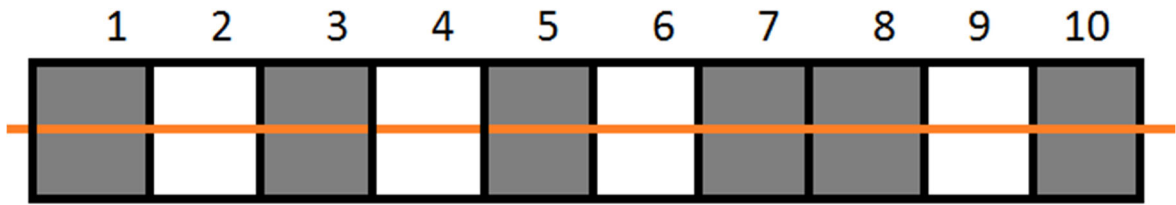


Figure 1. Outline plan of the archaeological excavation site (no excavation carried out in white coloured units)

4 RESULTS OF ARCHEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

4.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

Samadabad settlement site is located approximately 500m north from same-named village of Yevlakh district, on the right side of the access highway to village at a plain area. Settlement site is located above the sea level. Microrelief was destroyed as a result of long-term agricultural activities conducted at the location of the monument. There is no distinction between the relief of the settlement site and surrounding area during visual observation. It was possible to determine the boundaries of the settlement site approximately based on surface archaeological materials. It became clear that surface materials had been scattered to 1 ha adjacent area. From geomorphological point of view, Yevlakh district, where surveyed monument is located, consist of recurrent relief and plains. Quaternary age sands and clays of Cenozoic era and neotenic deposits are distributed throughout the area of the region. Moderate-hot semi-desert and dry steppe climate with rainy autumn and winter exist at these areas. Maximum rain falls during spring and autumn months. Grey-saline and grey-brown, light grey-brown, dark and common grey-brown soils are prevalent at the district. Ground waters accumulate at these areas abundantly after rainfall due to closeness to Kura River and keeping the drainage canals uncleaned.



Photo 1. View of the archaeological site, looking West

4.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CULTURAL LAYERS

Excavation site was divided into 10 units with a dimension of 4 x 4 metres and a total length of 40 metres. The units were numbered from east-westwards and these units were excavated in a chequered form (Photos 1, 2). Coordinates of excavated units were as follows:

Unit I N 40°36'45.1" E 047°05'17.0" Last depth 110 cm

Unit III N 40°36'45.2" E 047°05'16.7" Last depth 100 cm

Unit V: N 40°36'45.3" E 047°05'16.4" Last depth 105 cm

Unit VII Last depth 100 cm

Unit VIII Last depth 110 cm

Unit X Last depth 100 cm

The monument consists of one cultural layer. The surface layer, mixed up as a result of regular ploughing of the cultural layer, was stripped off due to sowing. This led to mixing of the already poor cultural layer. Excavation works were carried out in these units down to a depth of 1 metre from the surface.

A well was recorded nearby the northern wall of the 5th unit at a depth of 80cm and surveyed. As more than half of the well had remained northwards from the excavation wall, excavation area was extended here 40cm outwards. It became clear that mouth diameter of the well was 120cm and bottom diameter was 140cm. Its preserved depth was 60cm. The well had a conic form with a sheared surface at the cross-section and contained fine, ash mixed soil with fragments of clayware and a small amount of animal bones. While cleaning, the if e following findings were discovered in the well: base of jug like vessel, fragment of what covering neck and shoulder sections with light yellow engobe on the surface. Other findings consisted of small pottery fragments with no scientific value.

Fragment of a buried jar was discovered at the south-west of the 7th unit at a depth of 60-80cm. Broken top section of the jar had fallen inside and shattered around. Apart from this this, remains of a hearth was discovered and cleaned at the 7th unit. Height of its wall reached 20 cm. There were a pile of small jar, pitcher and jug fragments and animal bones westwards from remains of a hearth. Fragments of the household jar among these broken potsherds. Were taken for the fund, as they provoked interest. A fragment of a thin walled pot with englobe covered surface was discovered in the hearth. Pile of clayware fragments discovered at the east side of the 7th unit consisted of mainly pieces of a household jar and body of a large jug type vessel.

Two compressed burnt sand layers were revealed at the 10th unit at a distance of 50cm from each other at a depth of 100cm of the cultural layer. They were 10cm thick. One of them, located at the centre of the unit, had dimension of 160cm x 110cm and the other, 120cm long sand layer, was attached to the excavation wall and main section had remained under the excavation wall.

Additional 1 x 1 metre pits were drilled for the purpose of identifying cultural layer and revealing findings at each unit (Photos 3, 4, 5). However, no findings were made in any of these pits. Materials discovered at the units are similar to surface materials, but pieces of handles are

found most among the materials discovered at the units. Body fragments are thin and are probably, attributed to bowl, basin and plate type vessels.

Among these units 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10th units were excavated to a depth of 1m approximately. Acquired samples of ceramics are attributed to early medieval ages and majority are composed of pure clay. Sections of handle, shoulder, body and bottom are found among the fragments. It should be noted that body fragments are more. Photos of all acquired fragments were taken and they were inventoried.

Findings during the archaeological excavations at Samadabad settlement site were limited to the aforementioned. No remains of construction or residential structures were revealed at the excavation site.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF FINDINGS

Surface materials were discovered at Samadabad settlement site location prior to archaeological excavations. These materials were fragments of body, handle and shoulder sections of red coloured, thin walled pottery attributed mostly to early medieval ages. Composition of these ceramics was clean and some of them had a thin engobe cover (Photo 6). Relatively thick handle samples are found too. They all had a circular cross-section with well-polished and smoothed surface. None of these obsidian fragments had been treated and serrated.

Number of handle fragments among surface materials is more. Majority of handle fragments have ribbon line cross-section and are composed of pure clay (Photo 13). There are also, handles with circular cross-section (Photo 11). Sometimes, there are two sunken parallel ribbon like patterns on these red and light red coloured handles.

Mouth fragments are thin walled and are attributed to a jug, pitcher and ewer. There are light yellow coloured ceramics inside; clay composition is clean and well smoothed. Signs of a potter's wheel are visible inside the base (Photo 10.1; Photo 14.1). Hop

The ceramics discovered during excavations repeat the surface materials. The findings acquired during the excavations are composed of ceramics. They consist of the fragments of household jars, pitchers, milk vessels, jugs, basin and goblets and ewers. Fragments of household jars are more among the samples. Also, fragments reflecting neck or body are common. One of the fragments of pottery was decorated with a protuberant wave like girdle. Surface of a light pink coloured clayware was neatly glossed. Findings are listed as per the inventory numbers and description of all artefacts is given in the inventory list below.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Earth graves attributed ancient period were excavated and surveyed at Samadabad during construction of BTC and SCPX pipeline routes. These graves, where interesting findings were made, are attributed to the Antique period. This type of grave were also discovered and surveyed in places on the SCPX pipeline. Excavations at Samadabad settlement site proved existence of accommodation at this area apart from funerary monuments [1, p. 52].

During excavations surface materials and also, artefacts were discovered at Samadabad excavation site at various depths of soil. These materials were fragments of body, handle and shoulder sections of red coloured, thin walled pottery mostly attributed to early medieval ages. These ceramics have clean composition with thin engobe coating on some of them. Also, relatively thick handle samples are found. They all have circular cross-section with well-polished and smoothed surface [1, p. 52-53]. Number of handle fragments is high among above-ground materials. Majority of discovered handle fragments have a ribbon like cross-

section and are composed of clean clay. Sometimes, there are two sunken parallel ribbon like patterns on these red and light red coloured handles.

Mouth fragments are thin walled and are attributed to a jug, pitcher and ewer. There are light yellow coloured ceramics inside; clay composition is clean and well smoothed. Bases are little uneven (Photo 9). The bottoms found here are thick walled (0.8-1cm). Traces of potter's wheel are visible inside the bases of vessels.

Some vessel types among the discovered samples of ceramics have continue to be used to the present day without changing their form and content. As an example, we can indicate vessel samples, such as churn, mil pail, and pitcher for holding fluid. Use of clay churns, which were typical for kitchen-household and everyday life of a nation usually engaged in cattle rearing, i.e., semi-nomadic cattle breeders, still exist in everyday life today.

5 ANALYTICAL RESULTS

Excavations at the Samadabad settlement site were successfully finalized and archaeological excavations were carried out based on the schedule specified during excavations. Laboratory analysis of acquired artefacts was conducted. Summarizing our views on outcome of the excavations, we can note that the artefacts discovered at surrounding areas, including the excavation site indicate that this settlement site probably covered a larger area. However, excavation site covered a remote part of this settlement site.

Collection of results. Failure to discover structural features during the excavation within the border of the pipeline corridor give grounds to think settlement had been scarce here. The open question is whether centre of the settlement site fell to the exterior of the excavation area. The centre of the settlement site may be presumed to be outside the excavation area, since, as is seen, the facts confirming this are evident. It is suggested that a village type settlement site, which was populated for several decades and was later abandoned, exists at the area. We can even presume that the area was populated seasonally and later moved to one of the neighbouring permanent settlements. Very few ancient findings discovered during excavations of the monument suggest that the area was used by people at the end of ancient period, who returned to the area in later centuries. It is not possible to suggest that the area was regularly and continuously settled during ancient period [1, p. 53]. Cultural artefacts revealed during archaeological excavations give grounds to think that villagers were mainly engaged in husbandry and cattle breeding and also, craftsmanship to some extent.

5.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ARTEFACTS

The majority of artefacts discovered at Samedabad settlement site during the archaeological excavations consist of ceramics. There are only a few materials and they are pieces of stone tools discovered on the surface. During the excavation, the artefacts of scientific importance, which allowed studying typology and nature of the monument were collected, included in inventory list and handed over to the Archeology Fund. Samples of less important ceramics and pieces of stone tools having no important in terms of form and content were reburied on the pipeline route nearby the corridor.

Ceramics: Analysis of the ceramics discovered at Samadabad area indicate that engobe coating was applied to enamelled and unglazed clayware. Analysis of engobe applied on clayware with no enamel attributed to early medieval centuries has shown that they consist of varicoloured clay materials. Englobe was applied to unglazed pottery for various purposes – to fill the pores of clayware, smooth the vessel surface and change the clayware's colour. The

englobe layer applied on enamelled clayware differs a little from the unglazed fabric. In numerous cases, the englobe, which served as a prime coat and background for decorating, was also, used for decoration purpose.

The majority of discovered ceramics were not enamelled except for a few (Photo 7). Both enamelled and unglazed vessels mainly consist of the fragments of jug, pot, plate, saucer, bowl and churn type vessels. It is seen from the fragments of pots that the majority of them are decorated by scratched and pressed geographical patterns and are spherical shaped. Such pot fragments are typical for whole Aran region. Clays of the pots attributed to this period are greyish and pink coloured. Clay contains other mixtures increasing resistance to fire. Lower section of and base of, the bodies seem to have been manufactured by hand, while upper sections were manufactured by a potter's wheel. Clay material is grey and pink coloured. Surface of pot fragments are coated by a grey and pink coloured englobe layer. Pieces of saucers remind the form of plate type vessels of the period. Walls are inclined inwards slightly in an archwise form later opening outwards. A multi-petalled flower is drawn inside towards the centre of bottom and scratches and radiant lines on the walls. The bowls discovered at Samadabad are uniform and have ordinary and simple decorative elements. Similar to early medieval age jars, Samadabad jars are pear shaped and spherical. Bodies of jug and pitcher type vessels used for storing and carrying water egg shaped and oblong. Some of them have very thin walls and are manufactured delicately. Generally, irrespective of designation, the majority of material discovered at the area are red and light red coloured and have thin walls. Imprinted geometrical and plant descriptions are found on few ceramics.

Images are found on few examples of enamelled clayware. This type of vessels were decorated by method of scratching the englobe following initial baking and method of boring on englobe. Analysis and definition of the composition of few ceramics discovered at the area have revealed that this enamelled clayware is decorated by paints of plant origin, minerals and metal oxides. It becomes clear from clayware that the decoration stage commenced following coating their surface by englobe. There are a few clayware samples with decorations directly applied on clay (with no prime coat). But such vessels are limited in number. Main body of discovered enamelled clayware are decorated by various methods applied on englobe background. Analogous types of ceramics are found at the areas, such as I Lak, II Lak, I Hajjalili, II Hajjalili, III Hajjalili, Dashbulag, Girag Kasaman, II Seyidlar, Garajamirli.

Stone: Fragments of stone tools used for processing grains were discovered at the settlement site as surface materials. One of them is a boat shaped grain stone hewn out of a hard stone. Fragment is 22cm long and 15cm wide. Its thickness is 7 cm. Another stone item is oblong with a protuberant surface. There are traces of treatment on one side. Its preserved length is 7 cm, width is 4 cm, thickness is 3 cm.

5.2 PERIOD AND CHRONOLOGY

Stratigraphic observations play a very little role in determination of the chronological framework of Samadabad settlement site, because the stratigraphy is both poor and is in a mixed up form. Typological and typical properties of artefacts were referred to in order to define the period and chronology. Period of monument is based on comparative analysis of discovered cultural findings. It has become clear that Samadabad settlement site was a small scale village type, possibly even seasonal [1, p. 53]. Although the settlement site consisted of a single cultural layer, poor in artefacts. The artefacts are attributed to late ancient-early medieval ages, i.e., IV-IX centuries A.D.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 INTERPRETATION OF FIELD AND LABORATORY RESULTS

Although no wide scale archaeological researches have been carried out at the territory of Yevlakh District as yet, there are several historical monuments proving that these areas are ancient settlement sites. Many archaeological monuments known to date to the period of early bronze age – late medieval ages are the facts proving that the areas were populated from ancient times and large settlements were built here due to suitable natural-geographical position [2; 3; 4]. The territory of Yevlakh district is located in Shirvan region. This was known for the city of Arash, one of the large medieval age cities of Azerbaijan. Arash district is taken from the name of this city, which was located 3km east of the present Khaldan village. Ruins of the city walls are nearby Khaldan village. Even today, the area surrounding Khaldan village is known as Arash.

A large number of archaeological monuments in Yevlakh district were surveyed within the archeology program of new construction sites or during construction of BTC, SCP and SCPX oil and gas pipelines (Samadabad, Nematabad, Narimankend, Sabirabad jar graves – necropoleis, Garkhun settlement, Yaldili jar graves – necropolis falling to the pipeline corridor are among these). Discovery of more jar graves attributed to ancient period at the region is explained by the intensive habitation of the area during that period of time and wide distribution of the area of funerary monuments.

Samadabad settlement site and the artefacts discovered here are very important in terms of studying early medieval age material culture of the region. Early medieval age ceramics distributed in the monument area covers an area of 1ha approximately. The area on the pipeline corridor, where surface materials are spread most, covers a distance of over 50 metres. Topographic features of the monument as well as nature of above-ground materials give ground to define centre of the early medieval age settlement site eastwards from the pipeline corridor. The excavated area covered the south-western edge of the settlement site. Although surface materials are abundant at the north-east and east of the corridor, they were very rarely found westwards and southwards from the corridor.

7 INVENTORY

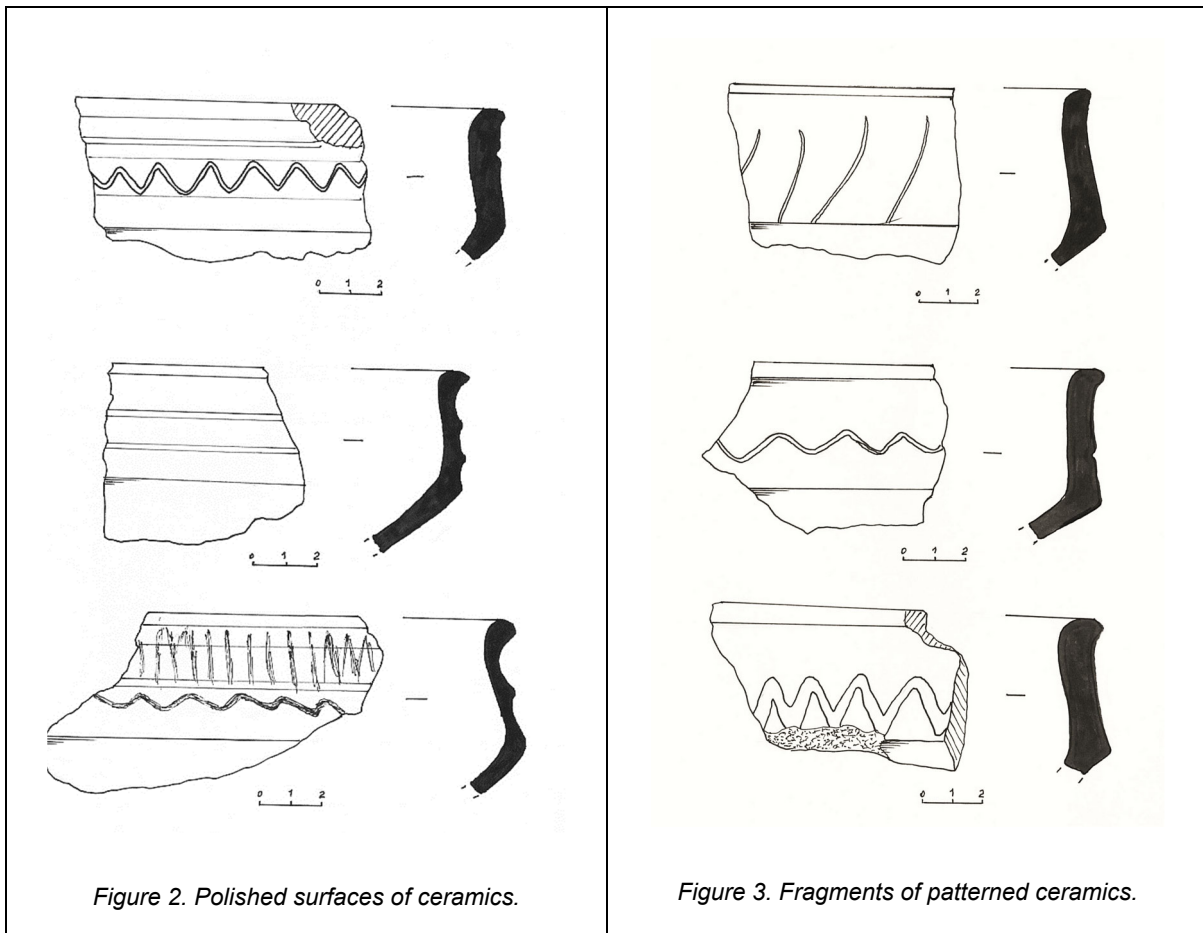
No.	Type	Location	Dimension
1	A piece of a medium sized jug type vessel. Base is wide and flat. Vessel is baked qualitatively. Traces of potter's wheel are visible inside. Body expands sideways starting from the seat. Surface is glossed. Color is pink.	Unit 1 Depth: 40-100cm	Wall thickness=07-1.5 cm
2	A piece of a medium sized vessel. Base is wide and flat. Body opens edgeways. Fine sand was added to clay material. Exterior is grey, while interior is black.	Unit 1 Depth: 40-100cm	Wall thickness=1 cm
3	A piece of pottery body. Baked qualitatively. Fine sand was added to clay material. There is a row of slant incised patterns on the surface. Other analogous patterns descent perpendicularly to the former. Color is pink. Traces of scale are left on the surface.	Unit 1 Depth: 40-100cm	Wall thickness=0.7 cm
4	Half of a large sized clayware handle. Handle is semi-circular and has a rough vertical connection. Cross-section is circular. There is a protuberance in the lower section enabling to connect to body. Color is pink. Surface is englobed in white. Surface is uneven.	Unit 3 Depth: 40-100cm	Cross-section dia=3 cm
5	A piece of mouth to neck connection of a medium sized vessel. Rim has a flat slope. Low neck gradually transfers to body. Body is felt to be oblong. Color is pink. Surface is englobed in white.	Unit 3 Depth: 40-100cm	Wall thickness-1 cm Body width-1.2 cm
6	A piece of a small sized clayware bottom. Seat is wide and flat. Body expands sideways and towards the top. Color is pink. Surface is englobed in white.	Unit 3 Depth: 40-100cm	
7	A piece of large, mouthed clayware mouth. Mouth is circular and directly transits straight neck. Neck is low and wide with protuberant edge. Surface is polished and coated with whitish englobe.	Unit 3 Depth: 40-100cm	Wall thickness=1-1,3 cm
8	A piece of a small sized clayware seat. Seat is wide and flat. Body opens widely edgewise. Surface is glossed. Clay colour is light grey, top surface is blackish grey.	Unit 3 Depth: 40-100cm	Wall thickness-0,5-1 cm
9	A piece of the body of a thin walled clayware. Body descends straight. Neck is seen to bend edgewise. Clay is of pure composition and compact. Surface is slightly glossed. Color is pink.	Unit 5 Depth: 40-100cm	Wall thickness=0,7 cm
10	A piece of a medium sized clayware handle. Handle is arch-shaped, vertically connected to the vessel, cross-section is ribbon-like. Middle section is slightly sunken along the handle. Clay is of whitish colour.	Unit 5 Depth: 40-100cm	Cross-section=2 cm
11	A piece of handle belonging to a small sized vessel. Handle is narrow and has a ribbon like shape. It is baked in a straight form vertical to the vessel. Clay has a pure composition. Surface is polished. Color is light pink.	Unit 5 Depth: 40-100cm	Cross-section=1,6 cm
12	A piece of a small sized clayware handle. Cross-section is circular. Vertically connected to vessel. A lot of sand is added to clay composition. Clay is grey, surface is light pink.	Unit 5 Depth: 40-100cm	Cross-section=1,5 cm
13	A piece of a tray type clayware body. It is flat and wide. Fine sand is added to clay composition. Color is pink. There are traces of patterns inside made by white and green coloured englobe.	Unit 7 Depth: 40-100 cm	Wall thickness=1 cm
14	A piece of a jug type medium sized clayware body attached to seat. Body widens upwards starting from the seat. Seat is narrow and flat. Clay is compact. Color is light brown. There is a reddish slant strip on the surface running upwards from seat.	Unit 5 Depth: 40-100 cm	Wall thickness=1 cm
15	A piece of a large sized clayware body. Wall is thick. Sand was added to clay material. Color is pink. Surface is polished. Surface is trimmed by thin scratched parallel lines and strips internals of which are filled by dots. Surface of strips are coated by whitish englobe.	Unit 8 Depth: 40-100 cm	Wall thickness=1 cm
16	A piece of a vase type clayware seat. Base has heels. Vessel is made roughly. Clay material is compact and has clean composition. Color is pink. Dark green plant image inside are trimmed by light green. Plant images are trimmed by brown lines. A transparent enamel coat is applied on the paint. Vessel is thick walled.	Unit 8 Depth: 40-100cm	Wall thickness=1.3 cm

8 APPENDIXES

8.1 REFERENCES

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8.2 ILLUSTRATIONS



8.3 Photos





Photo 4. Unit 3 and test pit at the centre



Photo 5. Unit 7 and test pit at the centre.



Photo 6. Rimsherd with engobed surface.



Photo 7. A piece of enameled clayware.



Photo 8. Ceramic with patterned surface.



Photo 9. Base of potsherd with painted patterns.



Photo 10. Fragments of various clayware.



Photo 11. Handle with circular cross-section.



Photo 12. Fragment of a thin walled clayware.



Photo 13. Fragments of handles.



Photo 14. Fragments of clayware.