

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

**COMPREHENSIVE SCIENTIFIC REPORT**

**Excavations in Xunan settlement at KP 359.6**  
**SCPX pipeline**

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# 1 SUMMARY

The report describes excavations of Khunan settlement located at KP359.920 of the SCPX pipeline corridor. During the studies conducted in this settlement with evidence of very thin occupation layer, only potsherds and primitive fragments of stone objects were found. The artefacts obtained were found mostly on the upper depth of the soil layer. All the ceramics found reflects the Late Bronze-the Early Iron Age (the end of the 2nd millennium BC to the beginning of the first millennium BC). Unlike excavations conducted in the BTC corridor, it was not possible to define the Khunan site, within the SCPX corridor, as part of a particular settlement. It is suggested that this area was a part of the extremity of a larger settlement, of which the focal point lay to the north of the pipeline corridor.

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## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 SITE DISCOVERY

Khunan settlement located at KP359.920 of the SCPX pipeline was recorded during the first and second stages.

The main BTC export oil pipeline was laid parallel to the current excavation site, but 25 metres to the north. In September 2004, during the construction this, archaeological excavations were conducted resulting in the discovery of 6 large household pots and a small number of potsherds [1, from. 1-13]. The household pots were very big, their height was 130-140cm, with diameter 115-120cm. These large capacity household pots were used to store the food stock. Discovery of these pitchers, which were found together in one area, suggested that this area was a storage area, part of larger settlement. During BTC project, radiocarbon analysis was carried out giving a date in the middle Bronze Age. Therefore, there was a high probability that further evidence would be located in the SCPX corridor.

In accordance with the SCPX archaeological program, an archaeological survey of the site (David Maynard, Shamil Najafov) was conducted at the second stage in 2013, and a small number of surface finds of pottery were found. During the archaeological survey it was established that the site is used for sowing, and the potential existence of the archaeological site was only assumed. Since this is an area of archaeological risk, excavations in this area were scheduled.



*Photo 1. The site divided into excavation units. View to north-east.*

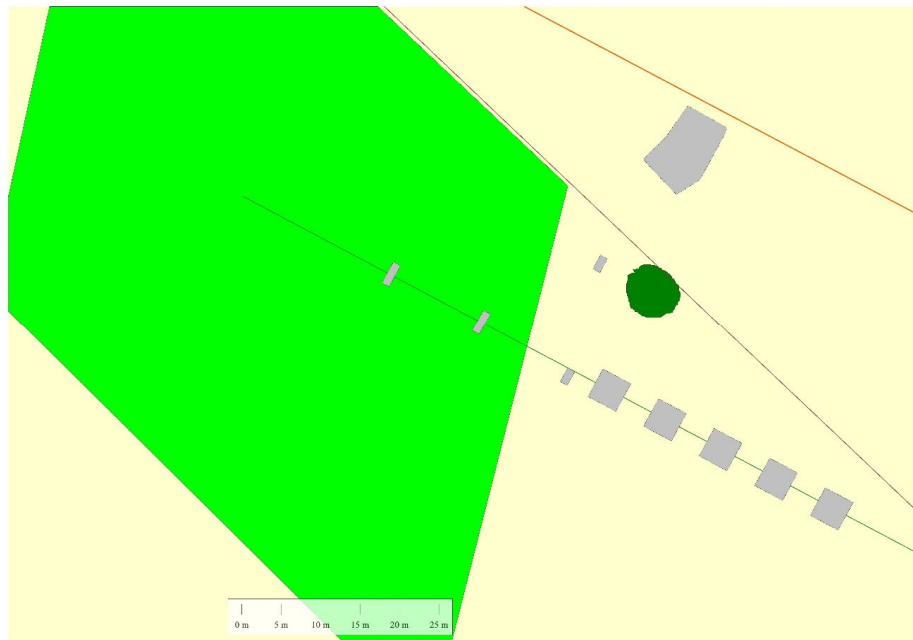
### 2.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The excavation site selected on the SCPX pipeline route is located on a plain land and within a crop area. The territory is fertile black soil. The rural population mostly grows wheat, potatoes and beets. Nearby there is an orchard with an area of 2 hectares. The margin of this was close

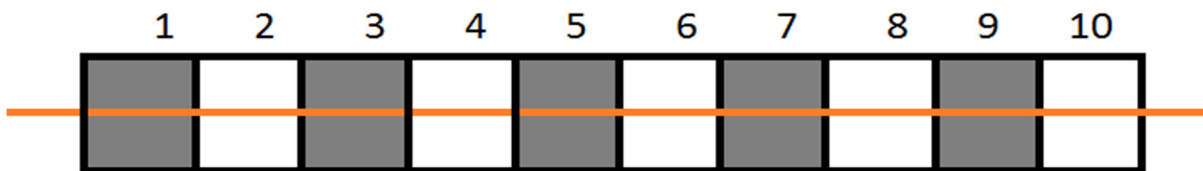
to the excavation site. Pits excavated at the end of the excavations to check the occupation layer of the site, also fell inside this orchard (plan 1). However, excavations of the pit were conducted without damage to the fruit trees. Garakhanli village of Tovuz district is the nearest village to the site. The site is located about 500-700 metres to the south of the village. The Baku-Gazakh-Tbilisi automobile road passes to the south of the site at a distance of approximately 70-80 metres from the monument. The monument is located in coordinates N 41001.310 / E 045038.649 / (N-4543269.795, N-454301.122, E-8554303.77, E-8554245.753) at an altitude of 385 metres above sea level.

### 2.3 TIMING OF THE EXCAVATION

An archaeological expedition team of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) also conducted archaeological excavations in SCPX KP 359.920 on 03-15, 2014 under the guidance of leading researcher, PhD in History Shamil Najafov, with the participation of the Institute staff, the leading researcher, PhD in History Anar Aghalarzade and research scientist Ahliman Abdurahmanov. Excavations were conducted in line with previously established program. Muhammad Novruzov- SCPX Cultural Heritage Site Construction Manager of BP company (SCPX)) and David Maynard- Archaeologist of BP company (SCPX) participated in the excavations as observers.



Plan 1. General plan of excavation site



Plan 2. Diagrammatic plan of the archaeological excavations site (excavations were not conducted in white units).

### 3 RESULTS OF THE EXCAVATIONS

#### 3.1. Description of the site

the territory is a part of the Ganja-Gazakh plain and is located in the centre of fertile, cultivable lands on the right bank of the Kura river. Looking at the geological panorama, one will see this area to be comprised of a wide flat territory and hilly slopes exist only in some places (photo 2). Most of these hilly slopes were partially levelled with the common area in terms of the surface during the sowing season. In this area, the local village population prefers to grow potatoes, tomatoes and cucumbers. As the area is very fertile, local residents benefit from these lands by means greenhouses in winter months as well. The territory is located at an altitude of about 380 metres above sea level. In these areas, winter is harsh, and the summer months are mild and warm. In the spring and autumn months, irrigation works are not implemented in the regions because of rains. Since rains often fall in these months. Meadow-grassy vegetation, wormwood and a lot of juicy herbs very important for livestock is the vegetation cover typical for the territory.



*Photo 2. General view of the site.*



*Photo 3. Archaeological excavations process. View to south-east.*

#### 3.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF OCCUPATION LAYERS

A very few potsherds were discovered from the territory of the excavated units(1, 3, 5, 7 and 9), (photo 4). They were found at a depth of no more than 20-40cm. These ceramics were mostly red and black-grey, well-made, and some fired at stable, and some at unstable temperatures. They belong to the end of the Bronze Age in terms of their features.

Potsherds discovered from the marked depth repeat ground finds. Surface finds relate to the mouth and the body of large-volume household pots. They have thick walls, a mixed clay composition and fine gravel and small particles of sand are observed in the clay composition.

Based on the artefactual remains and records made during excavations, as well as on surface finds, we can note that the settlement is located somewhere in the north, and the site we excavated is probably on the edge of the settlement. Generally, this is observed with very weak ceramic samples, which could be accidentally distributed. There is no occupation layer in the excavation area, and materials base is scattered.



*Photo 4. Overview of excavation site. View to north-west.*

## Unit I

Coordinates: Centre: N. 41001.303 / E 045038.665 /

During archaeological excavations in Unit 1, only 2 potsherds were found.

Total depth over the entire area of the unit was 70cm. First layer of soil 35cm thick up to this depth was black soil fit for sowing. Soil was soft and easy to dig. Then there was a highly compacted layer of yellow soil 20cm thick. Last 15cm layer of the unit was composed of solid carbonic calcium gypsum clayed soil. There was a rocky- ravel soil layer 5cm thick along the south-western corner of the unit in an area of 2 x 2 metres.

At a depth of 70cm, the unit was divided into two sectors and another 10cm with dimensions of 2 x 4m were excavated from the east sector. At that time, no archaeological material was found.

The ceramics found were well-made and had pure clay composition. They had thin walls, of which the first was grey, and other ones were black. There are 2 wavy lines on the surface of grey ceramics (Fig. 1, 2).

Unit was most likely empty due to the fact that it was outside the area of a settlement.

There were no occupation layers in the unit. Note that soil of the territory is fine soil and rich in grass. The first depth was completely fertile soils of about 10-25cm and the next 20-30cm depth- soil with a mix of yellow clay, and soil layer of 30-40cm at the last depth (total depth of

70-85cm) is a layer of soil mixed with yellow clayed sand. There was no doubt that no traces of archaeological deposits in these units. Final depth was 80cm.

### Unit III.

Coordinates: Centre: N 41001.304 / E 045038.660



*Photo 5. Unit III.*

Only four ceramic fragments were found in this unit. Two of them were coarse-made yellow ceramics. These types of ceramics were classified more as the ceramics of the Very Early Iron Age. The remaining two painted in black and polished half and painted on top ceramics have the features of the Bronze Age. Excavations ceased at a depth of 55cm of the unit and an area of 1m x 4m from east to west along the northern wall was excavated. As we noted, during excavations, solid clay soil appears again after the natural soil layer (photo 5).

Final depth was 85cm.

### Unit V

Coordinates: Centre: N 41001.308 / E 045038.665

No significant archaeological materials were found.

Final depth was 120cm.

### Unit VII.

Coordinates: Centre: N 41001.309 / E 045038.650

No significant archaeological materials were found.

Final depth was 70cm.

### Unit IX

Coordinates: Centre: N 41001,311 / E 045038,646

There was no occupation layer. No significant artefacts were found.

Final depth was 80cm.

It should be noted that during excavation of units 5, 7 and 9, the soil layer was observed to have a similar structure of the similar depth. After digging 80cm of the total unit area in unit 5, the site was divided into two sectors. Along the eastern wall to the north-south, the site of 2 x 4m was excavated, and its depth was 100cm. Then a pit of 1 x 1m was dug inside of it. Its depth was 20cm. An area of unit in Unit 7 was lowered to a depth of 50cm. After that, a 1-metre long trial pit was dug in the north-western corner. Its depth was 20cm.

In Unit 9, soil was excavated to a depth of 40cm. Then the northwest corner was dug for another 40cm.

To determine the presence of an occupation layer, as mentioned above, four pits inside the orchard were additionally dug in the orchard by the end of the excavation site (with permission of the garden owner). However, all the pits were empty.

1st pit: N 41001,320 / E 045038,624

This pit was dug in a vineyard opposite the corridor (photo 6). That is, it was dug to the west of Unit 10, at a distance of about 18 metres. The purpose was to determine the direction of this settlement and its borders. The pit was 1 x 3m in diameter. During the excavation, only 1 potsherd of rough shape was found inside the pit. The soil layer of the pit did not differ from the soil layer excavated in the units, and the occupation layer was not traced here. Excavation of the pit was stopped at a depth of 90cm when a gravel bed was found.



*Photo 6. Pit 1.*

2nd pit: N 41001,317 / E 045038,633

This pit was dug between Pit 1 and Unit 10. Its depth was similarly only 90cm, and dimensions- 1 x 3m. First soil layer of the pit at a depth of 45cm was a fertile black soil. Next 45-cm layer of soil was a rocky-gravel soil layer. There was no occupation layer in it either.



3rd pit: N 41001,317 / E 045038,642

This pit was made at a distance of 2 metres from Unit 10. Its dimensions were 1 x 2m. Despite excavation at a depth of 75cm, no archaeological material was obtained from the pit.

4th pit: N 41001,312 / E 045038,641

This pit was also dug to the north of the Unit 10. Its dimensions were 1 x 2m, and its depth was 75cm. Description of the soil layer and strata was the same as in previous pits. There was no occupation layer.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS**

### **Ceramics:**

In each of the excavated units only 2-3 potsherds were found. They were found mostly at a depth of 20-45cm. Considering that the territory has been used as a sowing area for many years, and the sowing ploughs the site to a depth of approximately 30-40cm, it is assumed that the obsidian and potsherds found at the depths could have been accidentally fell here during planting. Therefore, it is somewhat doubtful that such potsherds could be found from this territory, where no occupation layer can be traced in any unit.

Ceramic fragments belonging to household pots are very rough, and clay compositions are mixed. Clay contains coarse-grained gravel, sand and quartz mixtures. Edges of the mouth are slightly bent outward and have brims. There are grooves made by notching on the surfaces of some of them (Figure 1.2).

Thin-walled grey and brown ceramics relate to boiler and jug. They are thin-walled and contains pure clay and fired at stable temperatures (photo 13). Body of the boiler is girded with a convex belt. Some of the fragments of red and light red pottery probably belong to the jug. Wavy patterns pass through the shoulder and body parts of the jugs.

Surface of two more black ceramic fragments is well polished and coloured (photo 18). All these ceramics reflect the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age (the end of II millennium BC- the beginning of the I millennium BC). Similar potsherds are found from many sites of the Ganja-Gazakh region, which comprehensively features the Khojaly-Gadabay archaeological culture (XIV-VIII centuries BC) [3, p. 106-112].

### **Stone:**

They are represented by three samples. two are surface finds and were obtained from the surface of the excavation site. The remaining one was found near the northern wall of unit 2 at a depth of 75cm. This was a flake of obsidian, obtained during the excavation of the unit. It is of medium size and triangular, and its end is well serrated and pointed (photo 22-23). Most likely, it was used for cutting and grinding.

One of the two obsidians being another surface find, has a small size and shape of the tip. It is assumed that it was made for piercing. The large size of obsidian is very well processed and the edges are broken off into fragments and serrated.

During walk and inspection around the monument, a boat-shaped stone for feeding the birds was found (photo 21, image 3). Both ends of the stone for feeding birds were slightly broken, but the main part remained intact. Length was 44cm and width was 24cm. Made of hard rock

basalt stone. It is not included in the inventory book, as it was not found at the excavation site. However, we took it as an interesting find.

During ground observations, near the excavation site, at approximately 100-150 metres to the northeast, at the intersection of sowing areas with an intermediate road junction, we witnessed a heap of large river stones with a height clearly visible on the plane of the territory and obsidian stones scattered around them. The middle part of this high section was once excavated, and the earth is scattered around. It might be assumed that there was a burial mound in this territory, and due to its location in the centre of the sown area this high area was slightly excavated and its level was lowered.



*Photo 7. Backfilling excavation.*

## **5 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

The results of the archaeological excavations were successful, though they have not justified the pre-scheduled outcomes. Thus, the expectations of the expedition staff regarding presence of more rich occupation layer of the settlement in the territory were stronger prior to excavations. In any case, this idea has been confirmed by presence of very large capacity household pots discovered in the territory during construction of the BTC route [1, pp.1-13].

However, despite the established schedule, the measured excavation site and additionally dug excavation pits, archaeological excavations have not justified the hopes of expedition staff to some extent. A final conclusion was more precise and pointed that territory of the settlement was not directed towards south of the BTC corridor. Borders of settlement are likely to be located to the north of the BTC corridor. The excavation site was backfilled in accordance with the archaeological procedure upon completion of excavation works (photo 7).



*Photo 8. Excavation site. View to south.*



*Photo 9. Excavation site. View to northwest.*

## **6 DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

Excavations were conducted in 2004 in the location parallel to the current excavation site where the BTC route corridor passes. At this time, large capacity pots were found of Bronze Age date. Most likely, this excavated area was a part of a storage area of a settlement. It is not possible to define the area of the SCPX KP 359.920 excavation and the material in the BTC corridor, as a particular settlement. With great probability and based on our scientific evidence we can say that this area was a part of the household purpose of some large settlement.

## 7 INVENTORY

No	Item	Description	Unit, Depth	Dimensions
1	Potsherd	Mouth fragment of large capacity household pot. Funnel-shaped mouth is folded down. Thick-walled, poorly fired of grey inorganic mixed clay. Top of the pot is scaled. Inside there is a handprint remained as a result of juice concentration.	Unit 3, Depth: 40-60cm	wall thickness- 2cm
2	Potsherd	Body fragment of large capacity household pot. Thick-walled and has grey-brown clay. Upper layer (1cm) of the pot has been burnt due to the effects of unstable temperature and black colour was formed. Poorly fired of inorganic mixed clay. There is a weak scratching trace on the outer surface of the pot.	Unit 5, Depth: 40-60cm	w.t.-3,3cm
3	Potsherd	Body fragment of medium capacity household pot. Thick-walled, poorly fired of grey-brown inorganic mixed clay.	Unit 5, Depth: 40- 60cm	w.t.-2cm
4	Potsherd	Body fragment of medium capacity household pot. Thick-walled, poorly fired of black inorganic mixed clay. There is a weak scratching trace on the surface and inside of the pot.	Unit 57, Depth: 60-75cm	w.t.-1,3cm
5	Jug	Fragment of medium capacity jug type pot. Thick-walled, well-fired of black inorganic mixed clay. There is a scratching trace on the surface and inside of the jug	Pit 1, Depth: 60-80cm	w.t.-1cm
6	Jug fragment	Fragment of body of thick-walled grey large capacity jug type crock with inorganic mixture clay composition. There is a saddle-backed belt-shaped pattern on the body part. There is a scratching trace inside of the jug.	Unit 9, Depth: 40-60cm	w.t.- 1,3cm
7	Potsherd	Fragment of thin-walled black pottery well-fired of poorly sand mixed clay. Surface of the pottery is polished.	Unit 9, Depth:40- 60cm	w.t.- 0.5cm
8	Potsherd	Fragment of thin-walled grey pottery well-fired of pure clay.	Pit 2, Depth: 40cm	w.t.- 0.7cm
9	Potsherd	Fragment of red pottery, well-fired of pure clay. A barely traceable channel-shaped line is drawn on the outer surface of the pottery. There is also a thin layer of scale on the surface.	Pit 2, Depth: 40cm	w.t.-0.5cm
10	Potsherd	Fragment of red pottery, perfectly-fired of pure clay.	Pit 3, Depth: 20cm	w.t.-0.5cm
11	Potsherd	Fragment of light orange pottery, well-fired of pure clay. On the upper part of the fragment, a wavy pattern was applied before cooking by comb-like tool.	Pit 3, Depth: 20cm	w.t.-0.5cm
12	Potsherd	Fragment of pottery, well-fired of inorganic mixed clay. Clay grey brown- inside and black- outside	Pit 4, Depth: 40cm	w.t.-0.5cm
13	Potsherd	Fragment of thick-walled grey brown jug type pottery well-fired of sand mixed clay	Pit 4, Depth: 40cm	w.t.-1cm
14	Potsherd	Fragment of thin-walled black pottery well-fired of fine sand mixed clay	Pit 4, Depth: 40cm	w.t.-0.7cm
15	Potsherd	Fragment of light red pottery, well-fired of pure clay There is a trace of rotation on a potter's cartridge wheel inside.	Pit 4, Depth: 40cm	w.t.-0.7cm
16	Obsidian curry- comb/cut ter	Multi-functional tool on matt black obsidian fragment. Clearly visible that the tool was used of the tool as a curry-comb/cutter. Tool was finely seamed on the top and bottom like a curry-comb. There is a cutter-like work element near the downward striking face of the fragment. A striking face is also covered with natural thick shell.	Unit 5, Depth: 40cm	width-3.5cm, Length- 4.5cm
17	Micro- drill	Drill-type tool made of a matt black obsidian fragment. The tool is 3 flute and its left side is finely notched from outer surface and the right side-from the bottom surface. Pointed. End is leaf-shaped.	Unit 9, Depth: 70cm	Length.-2cm, width-1cm

## 4. APPENDICES

### 7.1 REFERENCES

1. Museyibli N. *Short Report Excavations of Khunan Settlement KP 380- BTC ROW*. Baku-Azerbaijan, 2006, 13 p.
2. Taylor P.M., Polglase C.R., Museyibli N.A., Koller J.M., Jonson T.A. *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.
3. Chalilov D.A. *Archaologische Forschungen in Azerbaidjhan*. Das Albertus. 1982, Bid 28, Hf 2, p. 106-112.

### 7.2 ILLUSTRATIONS

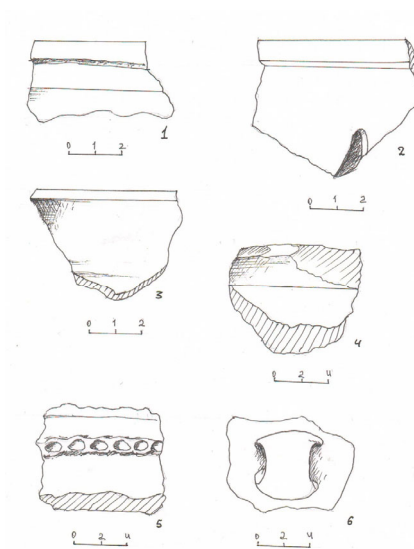


Image 1. Fragments of pottery of different shape and content

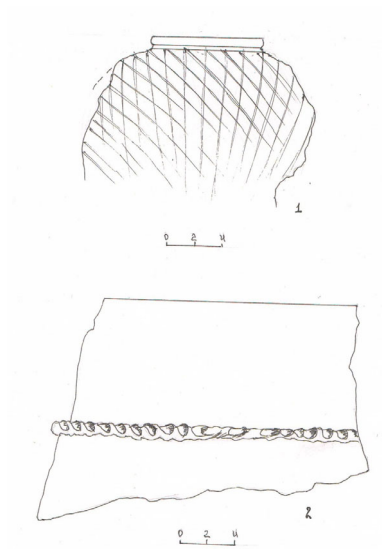


Figure 2. Decorative elements on pottery fragments

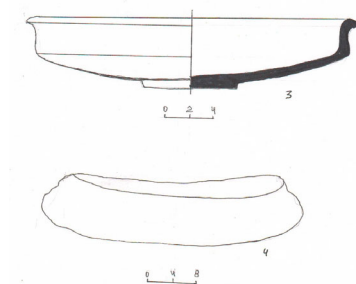


Figure 3. Earthenware pot type crockery and mortar.

### 7.3 Photos



*Photo 10. Archaeological Excavation Site, view to east.*



*Photo 11. Excavation in process*



*Photo 12. Fragment of narrow necked, straight-mouth pottery.*



*Photo 13. Small capacity pottery vessel.*



*Photo 14. Part of the dish type vessel. (partially restored).*



*Photo 15. Part of crock*



Photo 16. Fragments of thick-walled roughly made crock



Photo 17. Handle of scaled pottery



Photo 18. Pure clayed ceramics



Photo 19. Ceramics with no shape.



Photo 20. Ceramics with no shape.



21. Boat-shaped feeding-stuff mortar (surface find).



Photo22. Obsidian

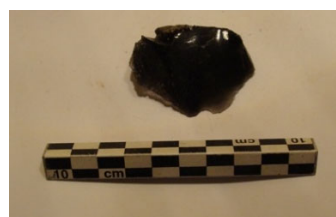


Photo 23. Obsidian