

Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography,  
The National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan

The National Museum of History of Azerbaijan,  
The National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan

"MIRAS" Social organization in support of studying  
of cultural heritage

# **Researches of the Agsu archaeological expedition in 2010**

## **I volume**

Historical-archaeological research

**Account for print:** Gafar Jabiev  
Fariz Khalilli

**Translated by:** Jeyhun Eminli, PhD  
Ali Efendiyev

**Agsu archaeological expedition staff:**

**Chief of expedition:** Dr. Gafar Jabiev  
**Chief assistant:** Fariz Khalilli, PhD

**Members of expedition:**

Akif Guliev, PhD  
Jeyhun Eminli, PhD  
Suleyman Allahverdiev, architect  
Elmira Abbasova, scientific employer  
Sanan Nematov, PhD student  
Khayala Karimova, head laborant  
Gadraddin Nematzadeh, engineer-conservator  
Jahangir Ahmedov, art-restorer

The archaeological excavations have been started on March, 2010 in the Medieval Agsu town on the basis of joint project of Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography NASA, The National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, NASA, and "MIRAS" Social organization in support of studying of cultural heritage.

The book-album has been prepared for the publication by the Agsu archaeological expedition staff.

## Contents

Agsu archaeological excavations

Stone objects

Hardware

Earthenware

Water vessels

Pans and lids

Grease lamps

Flowerpots

Glazed pottery

Building ceramics

Faience and porcelain

Glassware

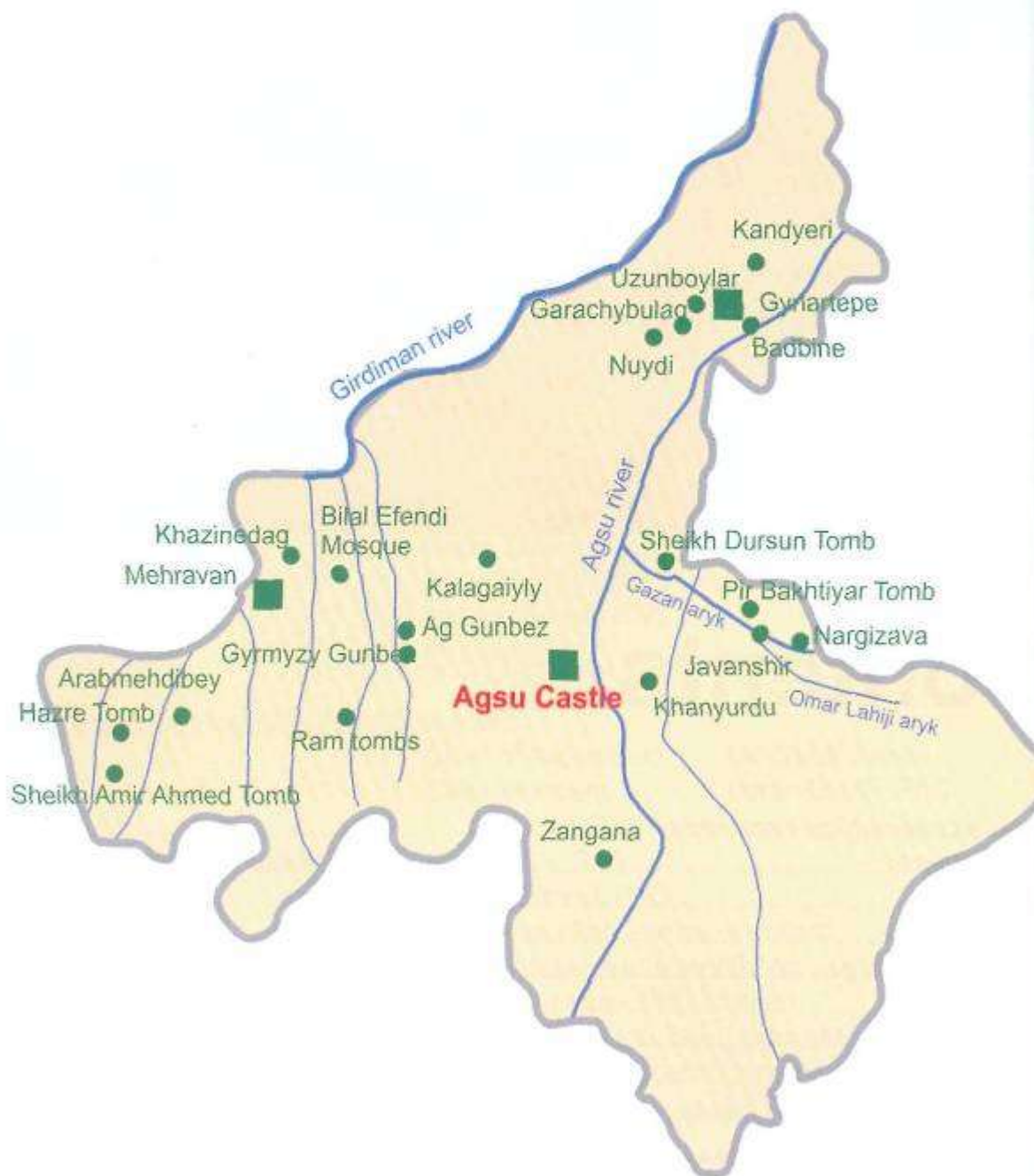
Coins

Haydar Aliyev model in the thoughtful attitude to historical-cultural heritage

Seminar on theme "Archeological tourism and museums" in Agsu



## The historical monuments in Agsu



## **Agsu archaeological excavations**

The ruins of the medieval Agsu town, mentioned in written sources as Agsu, or Yeni Shamakhy, and as Agsu fortress, or Kharaba sheher (ruined town) among the local people, are situated in the territory of present Agsu region, 4-5 km away in the south-east from the town of Agsu, surrounded by villages of Ulguj, Arabushagy, Agarkh and Juruklu.

In consideration of military-political factors, the town of Agsu had repeatedly been destroyed by internal and external enemies, and thus let either Shamakhy or Fitdag (Fit mount) stand alternatively as an official capital of Shirvan.

From time to time, the town of Agsu had been becoming an arena of combat operations and destructions, finally by Mustafa khan, the last Shirvan khan the town was destroyed and since then put an end of life here, avoiding capture of Abbas Mirza in 1806.

The territory of town consists of rectangular plan and occupied 39.8 hectare. It was fortified by defensive construction including a deep row and rampart. Length of the southern walls is 632.6 m, the northern - 629.5 m, the eastern walls - 637.3 m, the western - 630.7 m. Height of the two artificial mounds about 10-15 m away from fortress walls in the south-west and south-east directions is 10m; diameter - 16-18 m. At first glance, these mounds seem to be fortress towers, but in fact the situation is different, i.e. these mounds have nothing in common with fortress walls. In all probability, these were observation posts.

There are four cemeteries around the monument. A well-preserved cemetery is in the north part of the town. A part of tombstones goes back to the later 18 century. Primarily representatives of the Shirvan dynasty were buried in the cemetery.

It was an Agsu-Ismailli expedition that conducted initial archaeological excavations in the territory of medieval Agsu in 1983. Largely of explorative nature, the expedition was successful in identifying a monostratal urban structure of medieval Agsu. A thickness of the cultural layer is 1,4-1,6 m. Artefacts, including earthenware and coins, that came into light as a result of investigations, are indicative of turbulent urban life in the 18 century.

Multicolored material and cultural artefacts unearthed in the course of initial excavations are appreciably different from similar finds discovered in other towns of Azerbaijan by scores of features, including artistic, technical and technological distinctions. From this point of view, it is particularly topical to thoroughly study the mentioned monument and related artefacts and thus contribute to the in-depth exploration of the medieval urban culture in Azerbaijan.

Agsu medieval town is Azerbaijan's rare archaeological sites with no construction or agricultural works ever made after town's collapse. This is to say that the urban structures, production areas, streets and cultural monuments of the town must have preserved better than in case with other monuments. All the above matter most from scientific-research standpoint of studying lay-out, architectural distinctions, sanitary and water supply, developments of handicrafts, tendencies toward revival or decline in separate areas, etc. of Azerbaijani towns of the reviewed period. In other words, Agsu is a bench-mark, not only for Azerbaijan but also the entire Caucasus, in studying late medieval urban problem. In considering the above-stated, at the initiative of «Miras» public association starting with March this year a joint expedition of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan has been carrying out large-scale archaeological excavations in the region.

Note that the excavations are presently over on the area of 600 sq.m of the 3rd excavation site. Mostly of explorative nature, these excavations made it possible to uncover finds that mattered most from the study of the history of Agsu town standpoint.

Numerous construction remains were uncovered in the upper strata of the cultural layer. These were largely composed of river stone. However, these remains are manifest in the form of metal ores and slags, closely scattered hearths and auxiliary constructions. A subject of researchers' interest from urban layout and design standpoint are remains of stone flooring that covered a broader area. A part of the stone remains, above 4 m wide, is scattered north-southwards and must have formed a high street of the town. A length of a narrower part of the street east-westwards is above 15 m. That street served as intra-block road of the town. Covering 16 sq.m area, another stone flooring is of interest for researchers. The flooring gets out of the excavation area in the east and, to all appearances it was one of town's squares.

When widening an excavation area northwards, another pebbled street was unearthed. However, archaeologists failed to trace back the entire street, for it became destroyed and razed to the ground.

Uncovered in the 3rd excavation site a number of large wall remains are, beyond any doubts, house-room masonry. With a floor area of 38.7 m<sup>2</sup>, these room walls are well-preserved. Note that a tailor's shop was cleaned up in the southern part of the same building. A great quantity of prickers, scissors, buttons, clouts, knives, glass and glazed housewares were found.

One more dwelling house was unearthed in the northern part of excavation area. Its walls in the east-west direction were 6.8 m long; in the perpendicular direction - 4.4m long. Thickness of the walls is 1.4m; total area is approx. 30 sq.m. In the north-western part of the mentioned room there was unearthed a small tendir and a hearth near-to. A great quantity of ashes, burnt billets and two pitchers buried in the soil in vertical position were uncovered.

There were discovered subsidiary rooms on the 3rd excavation site. The subsidiary rooms consist of small drying room, a tendirkhana and a workshop. Most of them consisted of single-layer walls with a simple wooden construction.

Worthy of note is the fact that the layers were put one onto another. That is to say that there are, at least, three construction strata, 1.4-1.6 m thick, in place of Agsu town going back to the 18 - early 19 centuries, and each of them, taken separately, may be identified as a construction date.

It would be appropriate to note that constructions in place of Agsu town are mostly made of river stone. As bonding material, ancient builders used mud; in doing so, they did not smooth the foundation out, just laid an upper part with river stone. No wooden supporting stools typical for the Shirvan architectural school and performing anti-seismic functions were identified on the walls. As a rule, no anti-seismic collars were used in subsidiary rooms.

Note that burnt brick was used not very much in the construction of buildings while wooden materials were applied widely. Testifying to this are wooden debris, coal fragments, various nails, etc.

Remains of numerous tendirs were uncovered on the entire area of the excavation site. The well preserved height of the largest tendir is 100 cm; diameter of the mouth - 106 cm; diameter of body is 125 cm; wall thickness is 7 cm. A great quantity of ash and coal was cleaned up inside and outside the tendir which is indicative that the tendir had been in use for long period of time. In the Medieval, tendirs of this type were, as a rule, used at bazaars for producing needs, while small-sized tendirs were applied for household purposes. The same is true of hearths.

It would be appropriate to remind that numerous differently structured hearth and ovens were unearthed in the 3rd site. It is difficult to define all of them properly, for their greater part is destroyed. This largely applies to forge-type hearths uncovered on the site. These hearths were fenced with single-layer river stone. As for their design, most frequently found are horseshoe-shaped hearths. Note that hearths of this type were active under workshops, while family and tendirkhana hearths' design was much simpler and applied under household conditions. A part of them was made of earth in circular and semicircular form and covered with fireclay. Also, some hearths are laid on each side and a back part with baked brick.

The Agsu excavations made it possible to reveal storehouses and handicraft shops. Note that together with ruins of auxiliary facilities, there were unearthed a great quantity of artefacts to support a fact that specialized handicraft shops were active on the area. For instance, hearths used in copper-smith's work, chisel-shaped metal articles, forceps, pliers and moulds, finished and half-finished copper wares, as well as numerous industrial waste are indicative of the level of copper-smith's work.

Note that differently shaped and sized, multicolored metal fabrics were also identified on the site. The use of fabrics of this sort is indicative of the specialization of production and its wide spreading among popular masses.

The excavations made it possible to uncover numerous iron ore and slag specimens. In the south-eastern part of the site there was discovered a place for storage of iron slag. Note that there are hundreds of places of this sort. The is to say that a forging shop had, for many years and uninterruptedly, been active on the site. Also, scores of iron fabrics - nails, hinges, horseshoes, ferrules, cutting tools, etc. were unearthed here.

It should be noted that numerous bone wares were also uncovered, including bone knives and daggers, prickers, rings and bracelets. A pit was discovered where cut, processed, and whittled bone blanks were piled up. The analysis of the material available shows that artisans engaged in manufacturing bone wares preferred to work up horns, thighs and arms of different animal's raw material. All these afford ground to insist that, side by side with blacksmithing and coppersmithing, there were shops on the site to manufacture bone wares.

Buried deep into earth, household pitchers were discovered near copper and iron forging shops. Remains of red and pink dyes were found inside four of them. That means that either dyes had for long been stored inside these pitchers or they were used for dye production. In other words, if these pitchers were used for storage of dyestuff or their mixing, hence, a place where they were discovered could be defined as dyeworks. It should be added that in the end of the 18-beginning of the 19 centuries Agsu was reputed to be one of Azerbaijan's dyeing centers. According to earlier 19 century's sources, half of town's handicraft taxes fell to the share of dyeing.

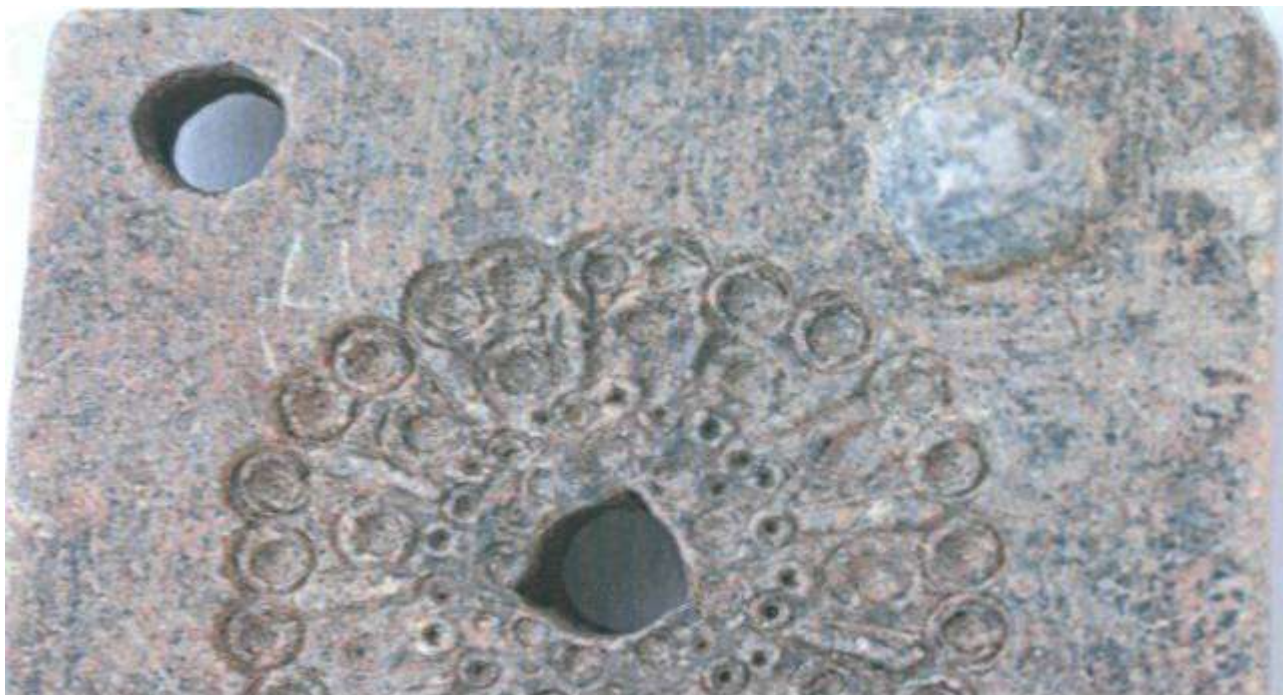
As a whole, one can conclude that building remains, production floors, labor tools and, finally, finished products uncovered on the 3rd site give us ground to insist that the town's artisan production was located in this part of Agsu. It is no mere coincidence that ruins of buildings on the site are none other than remains of artisan shops, barns or dwelling houses.

In the course of excavations, numerous multicolored material artefacts were unearthed on the 3rd site. These included wares pertaining to all kinds of handicrafts. Overwhelming majority of finds was of local production. At the same time, excavations revealed artefacts imported from famous trade and cultural centers of the reviewed period. All these are illustrative that the research into the development of handicrafts, cultural and economic life of the urban population, trade and cultural relations with other countries, matters most from scientific point of view.



Owing to the fact that the town of Agsu was one-storeyed, it turned out not difficult to specify chronological frames of artefacts discovered. In this respect the study of specific distinctions and the history of these artefacts are of great scientific importance from the analysis of the development or decline dynamics standpoint.

Among finds discovered there is a majority of copper and silver coins, metal fabrics, earthenware, glass, stone and bone multicolored articles and labor tools.



## Stone objects

A group of artefacts discovered on the 3rd site is stone objects. These include stone mouldings with holes on sides to connect parts.

There is also a majority of stone plates of square or circular form that were used for shaping food, metal or leather products.

Note that rust remains were detected inside a bathtub-shaped stone ware discovered on the area of copper and blacksmith shops. To all appearances, blacksmiths poured water into this ware in order to cool metal.

A neck part of a stone product is in the form of irregular circle (larger diameter is 40 cm; smaller diameter is 34 cm). The fact that the product was discovered in place of copper and forging shops says that it had been used for artisan purposes as well.

Tub-shaped articles with 2-3 cm deep hollows were, perhaps, used for the manufacture of special iron or copper plates out of metal castings.

Agsu residents widely used stone as building material when erecting and laying foundations of dwelling houses. An upper part of building foundations is made of river stone processed.

Of interest is the fact that ancient populations of Girdiman and Shirvan had for centuries been engaged in using rich stone and pebble resources of Agsu and Girdiman rivers. It is no mere coincidence that the stone materials above were used in the erections uncovered in place of a medieval town.

## Hardware

The excavations made it possible to unearth scores of hardware finds. These include numerous ingot iron, ore and slag specimens discovered in place of workshops specializing in coppersmith's, threshing and blacksmith's work. That is to say that imported copper and iron ores were treated, cut, threshed and melted at the same workshops to prepare a product consistent with market demands. The fact that the remained unused is indicative that the production process was stopped unexpectedly due to fire or for other reasons.

Making up the majority among finds are pans, knives, nails, bolts, horseshoes, chains, etc. A great quantity of blades and helms were unearthed on the site. They vary in their forms and sizes. The same is true of horseshoes, nails and cutting tools.

Among metal finds there are other molds that cause scientific interest. Of interest are also iron products, including a thick-walled pan.

The most frequently found are copper oymaqs. Suffice it to say that approx. ten oymaqs were found on the 3rd site. Of interest is the fact that their majority was uncovered inside a copper shop and around it. That means that the said oymaqs were manufactured at the said shop. Making up the majority among this sort of finds are copper rings and pendants. Frequently found are copper scales, spoons, belts, buttons, tables and forceps; some of them had shebeke patterns. Worthy of note is a heap of copper articles. Of particular interest are patterned human depictions on them.

There were several decorative silver-made articles among the finds. One of them is a ring with agate framing. On the finger-ring there is an inscription in Arabic «Muhammed AN Fatima Hasan Huseyn».

Also of interest is a silver-made bracelet.



## **Earthenware**

These mainly include simple pottery; glazed and partly building ceramics. Simple pottery is largely composed of pitchers, pans, variety water earthenware (water pitchers, crocks, watering cans, etc.), pots used for storage of dairy foods (nehra, sarnie, pitchers, etc.), as well as oil lamps, grease lamps and flowerpots. The specimens above are appreciably different, both technologically and formally, from identical specimens typical for previous centuries. Thus, there was tendency toward numerical reduction of large pitchers and concurrent rise in the number of small and medium sized jugs. Made of different parts, these pitchers were manufactured at potter's wheel. Zigzag-shaped collars are stuck to the parts fastened. Both pitchers and collars upon them are manufactured crudely from technical and technological points of view. No smoothing was applied to the products after their manufacture. Baking of pitchers was also produced at low level. For this reason there is plenty of of unbaked remains inside them.

Note that all of them are of yellow color and easily crumbled. Due to violation of temperature regime in the course of baking, some pitchers were burnt out. There are specimens with some parts burnt-out and other unbaked. It is attributable to the fact that it was inexperienced potters unaware of baking refinements that placed a product into a furnace.

One of the dyeing pitchers discovered on the 3rd site was repaired. Its dimensions are as follows: height is 85cm; mouth diameter is 24cm; diameter of body is 51cm; diameter of tray is 13cm; thickness of external part of the mouth is 3cm; thickness of walls is 1cm. There are zigzag-shaped collars, in an interval of 10 cm, outwardly patterned; these collars were intended to fasten separate parts of the product.

Dimensions of other dyeing pitchers are insignificantly different from pitchers in question by their forms and size.

There are traces of repair on some pitchers. For this to happen, broken parts were holed in several places, tied up with rope and then cast in gypsum. Note that repairs of this sort are frequently found among other earthenware as well.

## **Water vessels**

Vessels of this type were frequently found during the excavations. These largely include cans, jars and pots that vary in their forms and volumes. Thus, jug-type vessels are visibly different from identical water pitchers typical for the 16-17 centuries. These differences mostly manifest themselves in the forms of handle, neck and mouth parts of



water pitchers above. There are ribbon-shaped, rather costiform handles in the middle part to connect back and neck parts. Back part of water pitchers becomes narrower as it tends upwards and ends with 3-3.5cm wide mouth. Note that the clay of practically all water pitchers is greyish. This is to say that the clay was not baked sufficiently.

Numerous clay-made and multiform crocks discovered as a result of the Agsu excavations played a crucial role in the life of population in the 18 century. Most of the crocks uncovered are noted for narrow necks. Large-volume crocks are reminiscent of water pitchers with their form. In other words, it is not very much different from small-sized pitchers. A distinctive feature is that their necks broaden around the mouth to assume a funnel-shaped form.

A crock-type pitcher was thoroughly cleaned from different stuck clays; its case having been processed on potter's wheel and shaped manually, and then a handle fastened to. Like other pitchers, a handle was designed to connect an arm and a mouth. Most part of pottery was not sufficiently baked, so the finds were of greyish color.

An analysis of a part of earthenware fragments uncovered in the 3rd excavation site gave grounds to believe that the earthenware was intended for use and storage of dairy products. Of them, pitchers and churns constitute majority. The belonging of these fragments to either earthenware is established on the basis of forms and structures of mouth, neck and shoulder.



## Pans and lids

Pan-type specimens were uncommon among other artefacts. That is to say that in the 18 century the brown ware was superseded by pans made of iron and copper. It has to be kept in mind that brown wares were frequently cleft into pieces under high temperatures and thus became non-serviceable. Naturally, other earthenwares were not relevant to this type. That's why pan-type ware was superseded by metal articles in everyday life.

Clay pan specimens discovered in place of Agsu town had primarily triangular or auriculate handle. Fragments pertaining to tubiform pans are frequently found among finds. Due to overuse, its walls are covered with soot.

## Grease lamps

About 20 specimens were discovered on the 3rd excavation site. These included both large and small specimens. In general, as compared with similar specimens of the previous centuries, the said samples were manufactured crudely from technological point of view.

Grease lamps were composed of lower and upper cups, and connecting arrows and handles that were attached later. In most cases, the archaeological literature specifies them as a vase-shaped lamp which is linked with their use illumination purposes. Oil or fat was put on the upper cup and then set fire on. There was a special tubiform gable to place it on a plate. A handle of these lamps was intended to connect an edge of the lower cup with a back of the upper cup.

Probable dimensions of grease lamps are as follows: diameter of lower plate is 8-12 cm; of upper plate is 5-7 cm; length of connecting arrow is 3.5-4.5 cm; total height of the vessel is 6-8 cm.

Excavations are illustrative that the grease lamps being used till the 18 century notwithstanding, the population preferred to use tubiform lamps in their everyday life. In saying so, we rely on numerous specimens of this kind and extant fragments. Tubiform lamps, as compared with the previous centuries, are also notable for their dimensions. By their volumes and forms, lamps of this kind are identical to those widely used in the 19 - 20 centuries.

Distinctive features of these finds are large, narrow and relatively short mouth, funnel-shaped and right-side mouth, relatively small, cone-shaped body, a handle to connect the back and mouth parts. A part of the mouth and the body are carbon-black. That testifies to the fact that they had long being in use.





## Flowerpots

It is probable that a part of simple vessels, discovered in the town of Agsu, was used as pots. The vessel of this sort is notable for broader mouth and rather low body. Walls become broader toward the mouth, and then it becomes thicker to reach 3.5cm thick in the form of scar. A space around its mouth is alike vessel widely spread in the ancient and medieval epochs. The fact that the space around its mouth is ended in that manner is indicative that it was designed not only to improve its external appearance, but also its durability.

Distinctive features of non-enameled vessels uncovered in the 3rd layer are as follows in most cases a clay on the artifacts is not cleaned, nor uniformly mixed, carelessly prepared; not smoothed out before putting on the surface. That's why these specimens' surface is not smooth, a space around their tray is subject to deformation. The signs cited above are illustrative of some degradation in the ceramic production. At the same time there are specimens which may be assessed as a new type. In other words, the vessels of this type are not found to go back to the previous centuries. An eloquent testimony is specimens identical to flowerpots. Some vessels underwent changes during their evolution. These involve pitchers, jars with narrow mouths and lamps. Worthy of note is the fact that the vessels of this type, once broken, had repeatedly been repaired. All these may be evaluated both as local and chronological features.

Frequently found among finds there are hookah devices. Specimens uncovered in the 3rd layers are formally identical, but volumetrically different. As is seen from other monuments, Agsu hookah, as distinct from the 17 century specimens are rather large and crude. In turn, this is indicative of two aspects of the matter: first, as compared with the 17 century, the number of smokers in the 18 century urban population had risen; second if just well-to-do people could afford to use tobacco in 18 century, the situation changed in the 18 century where the broader strata of the population began using tobacco products. The rise in the number of crude specimens testifies to the increase of demand in society for hookah products.

## Glazed pottery

Articles of this type include, as a rule, varied bowls, cups and plates. These are primarily anqob- tracery specimens, as well as surface chestnut - colored simple samples. In rare cases, archaeologists discover green, blue, turquoise cups and plates. Worthy of note is the fact that as distinguished from simple wares, this type of wares is manufactured in more complex manner from technical and technological standpoint. They were thoroughly cleaned from clay deposits, uniformly mixed and manufactured at the highest possible professional. As compared with finds pertaining to the 17 century and discovered in different parts of Azerbaijan, the artifacts in question may be evaluated as specimens characterized by higher technical and technological, as well as decor brilliance. On the bottom part of most anqob tracery cups there are human - like depictions inside a concentric circle. These depictions may be likened to oak-leaf. Fuzzy depictions are used in the form of anqob spots around mouths of wares.

Anqob-designed cups and plates had a tray, not very high. Walls of the bottom part of this type wares are thinner than those in other parts.



To judge by volume and form, anqob-designed specimens are deserving re-sercher's attention from the point of view as monochromic glazed samples. The specimens were manufactured carefully and with special love by potters. The fact that the perfection, glaze and baking of these artifacts were made to comply with the highest technical standards is indicative that it was highly professional and competent potter who contributed to the manufacture of these masterpieces.

A distinctive feature of these wares is that their round tray is not high, while their bottom part is thin, volumetrically flat and not much capacious. Their majority is noted for light chestnut or yellowish colors. Scores of them dispose of no anqob backing. In other words, a transparent glazing used both on internal and external surfaces after the manufacture of the ware and its smoothing.

## **Building ceramics**

Specimens of this type are found not frequently on the 3rd site. Water pipe (tung) was manufactured in a crude manner. More frequently discovered are building ceramics made of burnt brick. They vary in dimensions. Baked in low-quality manner, the ceramics of this type is easily weathered.

Practically all burnt brick fragments were scattered around the area. In some places there were unearthed flooring fragments. These give us grounds to insist that together with the river stone, ancient builders widely applied the burnt brick.

## **Faience and porcelain**

Fragments of articles of this kind, including cups, small bowls and plates, are frequently found. Owing to the fact that the fragility of the stuff, practically all offaience wares were broken into small pieces, so it was no possible to specify their initial forms and volume. It is known that practically all of this ware was processed by cobalt glaze both on internal and external surfaces and that they were decorated with depictions of vegetation and sophisticated schematic design. Density of the depictions and their integral matching are illustrative that all of them were manufactured by highly qualitative painters.

As is known, a greater portion offaience discovered in medieval towns of Azerbaijan is products having been imported to the country from the Orient. From this point of view, deserving a particular interest are specimens manufactured in Iranian towns of Ray, Kashan and Sultaniyye. During excavations carried out in place of Agsu, archaeologists were successful in unearthing specimens of this sort. Note that these products were imported to Azerbaijan via commercial and cultural routes. Another interesting aspect of the problem is that it would be wrong to acknowledge that some Agsu faience finds, characterized by visible defects were brought from abroad. In our view, samples of this sort were, beyond any doubts, manufactured by local potters.

An eloquent testimony to the above is the fact that most of them had not been cleaned from clay, full of production, glaze and other baking defects. In other words, it is obvious that these products were manufactured at local workshops.





It should be added that some industrial waste discovered on the excavation site had direct relation to the manufacture of faience-type wares. That is to say that in the 18 century local Aghsu masters, along with glazed and simple wares, had also been engaged in manufacturing faience products.

To sum up, one can say with certainty that in the mid-18 century the Aghsu potters, in accordance with social demands, also manufactured multicolored and various faience products. The analysis of the materials available is illustrative that local manufacturers preferred to imitate imported earthenware. As the volume of production and the level of professionalism of local masters rose, the variety and decor of the products improved as well. A growing emphasis on depictions of local flora and fauna laid by local manufacturers greatly contributed to the improvement of the products mentioned above.

Note that it was china wares and European-made artefacts that made up majority among the imported specimens unearthed out of the 3rd site. These mostly include small-sized bowls, cups and goblets. A greater part of their surface is colored dark-blue. Their internal part is decorated with cobalt glaze bud or leaf-bud depictions. Testifying to the life conditions of well-off circles of the then society, the said wares are likely to have been imported from China, Russia, Germany and Britain.

The above-stated is illustrative that the town of Aghsu maintained intensive commercial and cultural relations with a number of world's cultural centers.

## **Glassware**

There were unearthed multicolored vitreous products at the 3rd excavation site. These mainly included black and blue colored glassware. Of interest are frequently found translucent specimens as well. There is a greater quantity of earthenware fragments. Also, gold-plated glass specimens are revealed among other finds. Of greater interest are thick-walled and black-colored vitreous products, including a large, container-type specimen; glassware with rectangular-form frame. As compared with the frame, these products are noted for shorter neck. There is a seal which says that the product was manufactured in London.

The samples above confirm that a greater part of the glassware was imported via commercial and cultural routes.

From this it follows that in the 18 century the vitreous products, including the decorative glass, were widely used in everyday life by Aghsu residents. The discovery of refined and valuable glassware manufactured in Europe, particularly Britain, is illustrative of high cultural and social level of the Aghsu population in the reviewed period.

## **Coins**

Along with other cultural artefacts as discovered in the 3rd site, there were numerous silver and copper coins.

Coins were discovered both as treasure and separately. A great quantity of copper plates, formerly used as matrices, was also discovered. On some coins there were imprinted words "Lahic" or "Muhammed". To our thinking, a word "Lahij" meant a name of mint-place. Of interest is the fact that a name 'lahij' is found on Aghsu coins only. That was attributable to the name of Zarnaval Hadji Muhammed AN, Shirvan ruler of the mid-18 century.





As is known, Lahij masters are famed worldwide as matchless gold-, silver- and copper-smiths. Their masterpieces are exhibited in many museums of the world. Note that Zarnaval Hadji Muhammed charged Lahij masters with organizing the mint production. It is no mere coincidence that the first coins were minted in Lahij.

In mid-18 century, following the Nadir Shah's death (1736-1747), there sprang up khanates that started minting their own coins. Politically and economically weak, these khanates preferred to pursue a prudent political line and declined from minting coins with their own names. In other words, these coins were of anonymous nature. Note that on the obverse of copper coins there were stamped a dagger, (Zulfugar) a dog, a horse, a peacock, a fish, a cock, a duck, a lion, a snake, a dragon, an elephant, a monkey, plants, etc. On the reverse, there were words like "fulus", a name of the mint-place.

The fact that the forms of stamps are practically identical and placed on the coins of identical type is indicative that the coins were minted at one and the same mint-place. Note that a metal compound of oblong copper coins is identical as well (coins are rusty, for iron is added to copper). As distinguished from coins of Kohne Shamakhy (Old Shamakhy), a dagger is bifurcated (Zulfugar). Words like "Shamakhy mint-place" or "zarb fulus" are stamped on the coins. Different obverses of the coins are explained as being due to the fact that Agsu's ruler Sardar Haji Muhammedali khan ibn Sofu Nabi Zamaval (1748-1763), sons of Shamakhy rulers Khanchobanly Allahverdi bey Sarkar -Muhammed Said and Aqasi khan were Shia.

It should be added that Khanchobanly Muhammed Said and Aqasi khan were appointed to their posts by Kerim khan Zend. For this reason, words "Ya Kerim!" are stamped on some Shamakhy coins.

A stamp "Muhammed" placed on Agsu coins is associated with the name of Hadji Muhammedali khan. The fact that his name and epithets were mentioned in abridged form is due to the safe policy and political developments of the reviewed period. That was vividly echoed on coins of Kerim khan Zend "Ya Kerim" (Ya Allah); on coins of Aga Muhammed khan Qajar minted in Ganja with "Ya Muhammed" inscription after he proclaimed himself Shah in 1796. On the obverse of the said coins words "Lahij"; on the reverse - "Muhammed" were stamped. The lack of date on the coins made it difficult to specify the period of their issue. To our thinking, the coins above were issued by Muhammed Said khan after the death of Nadir-shah (1747) prior to the conquest of Agsu (1763).

The Agsu excavations enabled archaeologists to discover on the site about 20 silver coins. These coins included Abbasi, as well as anonymous coins and farthings issued at Shamakhy and Ganja mint-places by Nadir Shah, Kerim khan. Words "Ya, sahib zaman" and "Şamaxı zərbi" were stamped on the obverse of Shamakhy coins and a date of issue on their reverse (1774-1775)-(1777-1778). On the obverse of coins minted in Ganja "there were words "Owner of the epoch, imam's coin changed the sun and moon to the gold and silver" or "Ya sahib az-Zaman, imam's coin changed the sun and moon to the gold and silver". These coins were minted in 1180, 1190, 1195 Hegira (1766-1767, 1776-1777, 1780-1781). The maximum weight of Abbasi coins made up 4.1gr; minimum weight is 1.85gr. Maximum weight of farthings amounted to 1.5gr; minimum weight is 1.1 gr. In 1187 Hegira (1773-1774) on the obverse of Abbasi minted in Gyandja and weighing 3.8gr there was a word "Nadir/as-Sultan". A word "1187 /Ganja/mint/ was stamped on the reverse of the coin.

Later 1760s, a word "Ya Kerim/as-Sultan" could be seen on the obverse of anonymous Abbasi with the date of issue and a name deleted. A phrase "Laila-haillallah, Muhammed Rasulallah, Aliyyan Valiyullah" was stamped on the reverse side of the coin.

More than 400 copper coins were discovered at the 3rd excavation site. The oldest coin is a copper fulus minted in mid-13 century by Shirvanshah Ahsitan II (1243-1260s) in Shamakhy (w=1.6gr). On the obverse of the coin there is a word "Kaan al-Adel". A trident is stamped in-between lines. On the reverse there is a phrase "Lailahaillallah,

Muhammedan Rasulallah" as Moslem symbolics. A phrase "Kaan al-Adel" on the coin is indicative that the state of Shir-vanshahs was subordinated to the Empire of Tchinghiz khan. Conventionally, professor YA.Pakhomov called these coins as "kaanik". The coins of this type were minted at the Shamakhy mint-place on the order of Khulagu khan till the murder of Axsitan II (1260). In all probability, the coin's discovery on the said area was explained as being due to the rule of chance. Fulus could have been brought here by migrant Shamakhy residents or by the oldest population that settled down in place of Agsu.

It has to be kept in mind that copper coins minted in Shamakhy were noted for their different forms and weight. A portion of the coins has a regular diameter. The coins may be classified into three weight types: Coins of the 1st type (maximum weight 18.0gr; minimum weight 14.6gr) Coins of the 2nd type (maximum weight 12.1gr; minimum weight 8.6gr) Coins of the 3rd type (maximum weight 6.7gr; minimum weight 3.9gr) Coins of the 4th type (maximum weight 3.5gr; minimum weight 2.0gr) Oblong-shaped fulus may be classified into two types: Fulus of the 1st type - wide, light weight Fulus of the 2nd type - not wide, heavy weight.

On the obverse of the both types there are words "a dagger" and "Zulfugar" made in plant pattern; on the reverse words "Shamakhy/zarb" or "fulus/zarb" - "Shamakhy/fulus". The probability remains that a word "Zulfugar" was stamped at the Agsu mint-place. It is confirmed by newly minted coins with a word "Zulfugar". As noted above, no stamp was put on some of the coins or put just on one side (dog, horse, bull, cock, lion, hare, snake, dragon).

Animal depictions on the coins are attributable to the calendar of ancient Turks. As viewed by authors, a wolf inside fulus meant the year of dog; duck and peacock - the year of cock.

As viewed by Prof. Ali Rajabli, a dragon as equivalent of a snake was depicted on the coin. Note that together with a snake in the ancient Turkic calendar there was depicted a dragon as well, so the coin in question was minted in the year of dragon.

On the obverse of a copper fulus there was a picture of lion facing left (w=8.8gr) with sun peeping out of its waist. When depicting an image of sun, a coiner added eyes, eyebrows and a nose. To R.Pool's thinking, depictions of lion and sun had first ever been presented on Keykhosrow's coins. No reverse of the coin is readable. In our opinion, this coin was minted in Shamakhy, 16-17 centuries.

Among coins revealed there are fuluses minted at the Ganja mint-place with a man on elephant and a warder in his hand on the obverse. On the reverse there is stamped a word "Fulus". By weight, the coins are classified into two types:

Coins of the 1st type - weight 18.6gr.

Coins of the 2nd type - weight 8.6gr.

Depictions on the coins of the two types are practically identical. It would be appropriate to remind that coins with elephants were issued following the Nadir-shah's campaign against India in 1737-1739. According to Prof. Yevgeni Pakhomov, these coins were minted at the Ganja mint-place. In our view, the coins of this type could have been issued by other mint-places as well. It is no mere coincidence that the coins were discovered in the territory of Shamakhy region. Thus, archaeologist, Dr. Idris Aliyev presented us in 2009 a fulus with depiction of lion. Also, fish on the obverse and a word fulus were stamped on some copper coins. By weight, the coins are classified into two types:

Coins of the 1st type - weight 17.0gr.

Coins of the 2nd type - weight 5.0gr.

No mint-place and date are shown on the coins.

Note that during excavations were found copper coins going back to Karabakh ruler Panahali khan (1747-1763) and minted in Shusha (weights 3,5; 4,4). The coins are anonymous and classified into two types:

On the obverse of the coins of the 1st type, inside a dotted and straight frame there is a tugra of Panahali khan; on the reverse there is a word "Panahabad/zarb".

The obverse of the coins of the 2nd type is identical to that of the 1st type. A word "Panahabad" was stamped inside a dotted and straight-line frame. No date of minting is readable. Identical coins were published by Prof. Muhammed Seyfeddin.

The 3rd excavation site revealed a bronze coin (5 kopeyka) minted in 1772 by Katherine II in St.Petersburg (weight - 50.8gr). A garland is on the obverse side of the coin. Inside the garland on the right and left of Katherine's monogram there is stamped "1772". A two-headed eagle as emblem of the Russian Empire is depicted on the reverse of the coin. A discovery of the coin may be attributed to the campaign of Russian general V.Zubov against Shirvan in 1796. Coins discovered in place of Agsu medieval town are mainly pertaining to the 17-18 centuries Safavi silver coins; anonymous silver, copper and Russian coins of the 18 century that were in use during the reign of Nadir shah, Kerim khan Zand, Aga Muhammed Shah Qajar, as well as Shamakhy, Ganja, Sheki, Karabakh, Derbend and Guba rulers.

To sum up, numismatic materials are illustrative that the town of Agsu being founded, as mentioned in the sources, in 1735 notwithstanding, an economically and socially developed population resided in place of the town. An eloquent testimony to the fact is the discovery of coins minted in the 17 century.

The chronologically latest coins discovered on the site go back to the later 18 century.



Aghsu castle view from sky



Town view. Observing point



Town view.  
Row on the north part of the town





3rd excavation site



3rd excavation site



3rd excavation site. Square 2a



3rd excavation site. Square 2b





3rd excavation site. Square



3rd excavation site. Square 5



3rd excavation site. Square 5b-6b



3rd excavation site. Square 7a





3rd excavation site. Square 6-8, blacksmith's shop



3rd excavation site. Square 5, baker's shop



**Inv. № 7 - Medieval Agsu town-2010**

Silver abbacy, anonymous, Ganja

D = 25.00-26.00 mm, W = 2.63 gr

OV = "Owner of the epoch, imam's coin changed the sun and moon to the gold and silver".

RV = minted "mint/Ganja/Ya Karim/1190"



**Inv. № 9 - Medieval Agsu town-2010**

Silver abbacy, anonymous, Ganja

D = 23.00-24.00 mm, W = 2.97 gr

OV = "Owner of the epoch, imam's coin changed the sun and moon to the gold and silver".

RV = minted "/Ganja/Ya Karim/mint/1195"



**Inv. № 14 - Medieval Agsu town-2010**

Silver abbacy, anonymous, 18 century. (Mint centre and year unreadable)

D = 19.00-20.00 mm, W = 4.1 gr

OV = 1st line – "Ya Karim", 2nd line – "As-sultan" words minted between dotted and straight fram

RV = between dotted and straight frames minted "Lailahailallah, Muhammed Rasulallah, Aliyyul valiullah"





**Inv. № 15 - Medieval Agsu town-2010**

Silver abbacy, anonymous, Ganja, 1773-1774.

D = 20.00 mm, W = 3.8 gr

OV = between dotted, straight and wavy frame minted – "Nadir/as-sultan".

RV = between dotted, straight and wavy frame minted – "1187/Ganja/zarb".



**Inv. № 16 - Medieval Agsu town-2010**

Silver abbacy, anonymous, Shamakhy, 1766-1767.

D = 24.00-25.00 mm, W = 3.3 gr

OV = between parallel wavy frame minted – "Ya Sahib az-Zaman".

RV = between parallel dotted, straight and wavy frame minted – "Shamakhy/zarb/1180".



**Inv. № 4 - Medieval Agsu town-2010**

Silver abbacy, anonymous, Ganja

D = 27.00 mm, W = 3.00 gr

OV = "Ya sahib az-Zaman, imam's coin changed the sun and moon to the gold and silver".

RV = minted "Ganja/Ya Karim/mint/1180"





**Inv. № 4**

Copper fulus (anonymous) Ganja? Nadir

Gazibeyi – 18 century, D = 26.00-27.00 mm, W = 17.34 gr

OV = between dotted and straight frame minted – "Zarb, fulus".

RV = between dotted and straight frame depicted a man with hand-stick over the elephant.



**Inv. № 25**

Copper fulus (anonymous) Shamakhy (18 century)

D = 17.00-29.00 mm, W = 4.50 gr

OV = Sword depicted between parallel and dotted frame. There are plant ornaments around the sword. In the middle minted "Lahij" in the round seal and peacock faced to the left.

RV = between dotted and straight frame minted – "Shamakhy zarbi".



**Inv. № 26**

Copper fulus (anonymous) Yeni Shamakhy (New Shamakhy) (Agsu) 1735-1763.

D = 15.00-34.00 mm, W = 16.44 gr

OV = forked sword (zulfugar) depicted in the middle of the coin. Over the sword there is a flower.

RV = in the middle of the coin minted – "fulus".



**Inv. № 5**

Copper fulus (anonymous) Shamakhy

D = 21.00-23.00 mm, W = 4.28 gr

OV = between dotted and straight frame depicted peacock faced to the left.

RV = between dotted and straight frame minted – "Shamakhy zarbi".



**Inv. № 6**

Copper fulus (anonymous) Shamakhy, Gazibeyi

D = 25.00-26.00 mm, W = 16.87 gr

OV = there is a fish depicted between dotted and straight frame.

RV = between dotted and straight frame minted – "zarb fulus".



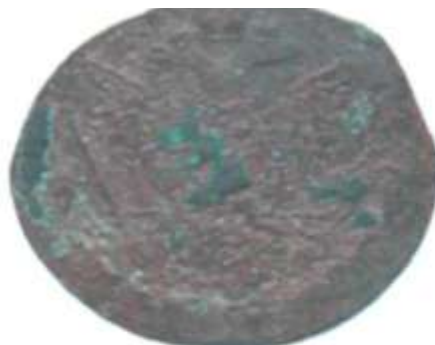
**Inv. № 7**

Copper fulus (anonymous) Shamakhy (17 century)

D = 21.00-22.00 mm, W = 8.77 gr

OV = there is a lion faced to the left. Over the lion there is shining sun with eyes and eyebrow.

RV = between dotted line minted – "fulus".



**Inv. № 1**

Ruble, Russia (Catherine II), copper, 1772. (5 kopeyka)

D = 40.00 mm, W = 50.84 gr

OV = there is a crown over the garland, in the middle a wreath of Catherine II and "1772" were minted

RV = two headed eagle minted.



**Inv. № 51**

Copper fuls.

D = 19.00 mm, W = 2.9 gr

OV = between dotted and straight frame there are sword and plant ornament around it.

RV = between dotted and straight frame minted – "Shamakhy".



**Inv. № 8**

Copper fulus, Shamakhy.

D = 18.00-25.00 mm, W = 4.36 gr

OV = in the middle of the round there is a sword.

RV = inside the round frame minted – "Shamakhy/zarb".





**Inv. № 9**

Copper fulus, Shamakhy

D = 17.00-24.00 mm, W = 4.14 gr

OV = between the straight and dotted frame there is a sword.

RV = between the straight and dotted frame minted – "Shamakhy/zarb/11..".



**Inv. № 10**

Copper fulus, 18 century, anonymous.

D = 15.00-25.00 mm, W = 5.00 gr

OV = between the straight and dotted frame there are plant ornaments and sword inside them.

RV = between dotted and parallel straight frames minted – "Shamakhy/zarb".



**Inv. № 11**

Copper fulus, anonymous, Shamakhy (18 century)

D = 18.00-28.00 mm, W = 4.59 gr

OV = between the straight and dotted frame there are plant ornaments and sword inside them.

RV = between dotted and parallel straight frames minted – "Shamakhy/zarb".



**Inv. № 13**

Copper fulus, anonymous, Shamakhy (18 century)

D = 18.00-28.00 mm, W = 5.40 gr

OV = between the straight and dotted frame there are plant ornaments and sword inside them.

RV = between dotted and parallel straight frames minted – "Shamakhy/zarb".



**Inv. № 18**

Copper fulus, anonymous, Shamakhy (18 century)

D = 15.00-30.00 mm, W = 6.68 gr

OV = between the straight and dotted frame there are plant ornaments and sword inside them.

RV = between dotted and parallel straight frames minted – "Shamakhy/zarb".



**Inv. № 22**

Copper fulus, anonymous, Shamakhy (18 century)

D = 20.00-26.00 mm, W = 6.47 gr

OV = between the straight and dotted frame there is a sword.

RV = between dotted and parallel straight frames minted – "Shamakhy/zarb".





Copper object depicted with human face



Copper decoration



Copper object depicted animal head



Copper rings



Copper wheel



Copper objects: wire and plate



Copper hangs



Copper bar



Copper chisel



Copper button



Fragments of copperware





Copper wire



Copper object and part of scissors



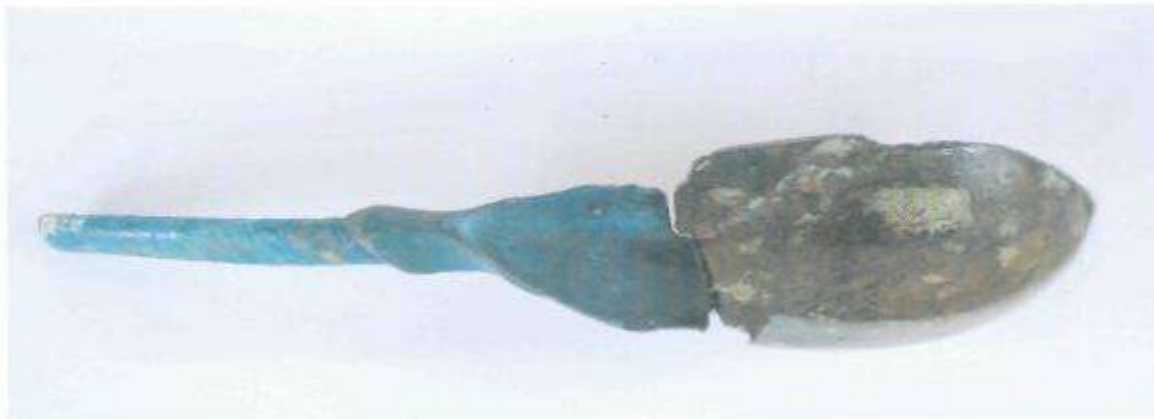
Copperware



Silver hang and copper objects



Silver bracelet



Copper spoon



Copper molds. Upper parts



Copper molds. Lower parts



Part of copper object



Copper handle of knife



Iron horseshoe and bars



Iron tongs, horseshoe and end of bar





Ironware



Iron tongs



Iron scraper



Iron scissors



Iron horseshoes



Iron nails



Copper thimble



Iron disc



Part of iron drill



Iron mold



Iron plate



Stone mold



Stone mold



Stone trough used in black-smith's shop



Part of smithy lathe





Animal track over the burnt brick



Water pipe



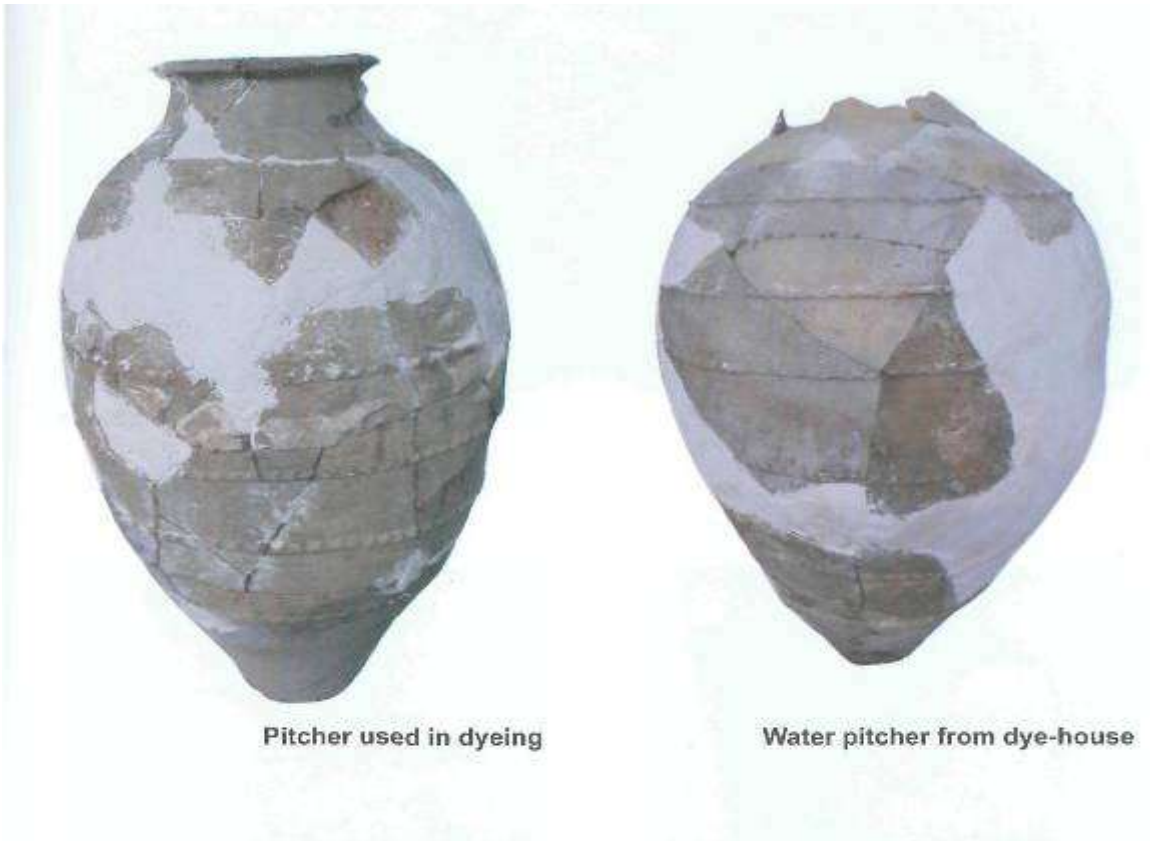
Earthenware with two handles



Bottom of churn



Jug



Pitcher used in dyeing

Water pitcher from dye-house



Jar



Jug



Neck of pitcher



Neck of jug



Neck of jug



Spouted pot



Neck of jug





Neck of jug



Hygienic pot for kids (silbij)



Part of cup



Handle of kettle



Handles



Handles



Lamp



Lamp



Lamp



Lamps



Bottom of grease lamp



Grease lamp



Grease lamp



Pipes



Pipe





Part of colander



Lid



Part of jug



Part of jug



Bottom of glazed potteries



Glazed lid (ceramic serpush)



Jar



Jug



Glazed handles and rims



Part of glazed bowl



Bottom of glazed bowl



Glazed plate



Spout of glazed lamp



Porcelain decorated with plant



Porcelain bowl





Part of faience plate



Part of faience vase



Glass bottle produced in London



Bottom of glass





Part of glass balloon



Fragments of glassware



Bone thimble, bone object, kauri and beads



Fragments of glassware



Fragment of thick walled glass



Handle of glassware



Buttons

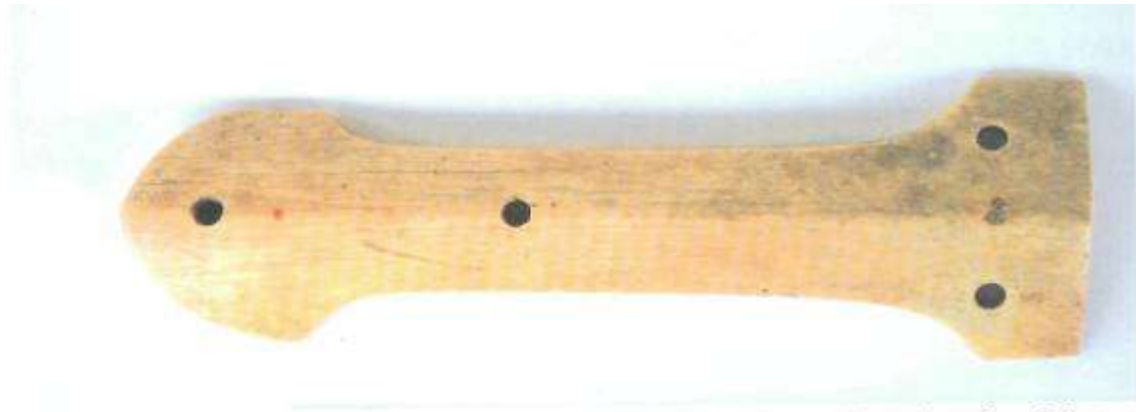


Seal ring. There are "Muhammed, Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Hussein" word over the precious stone of the ring



Fragments of glassware





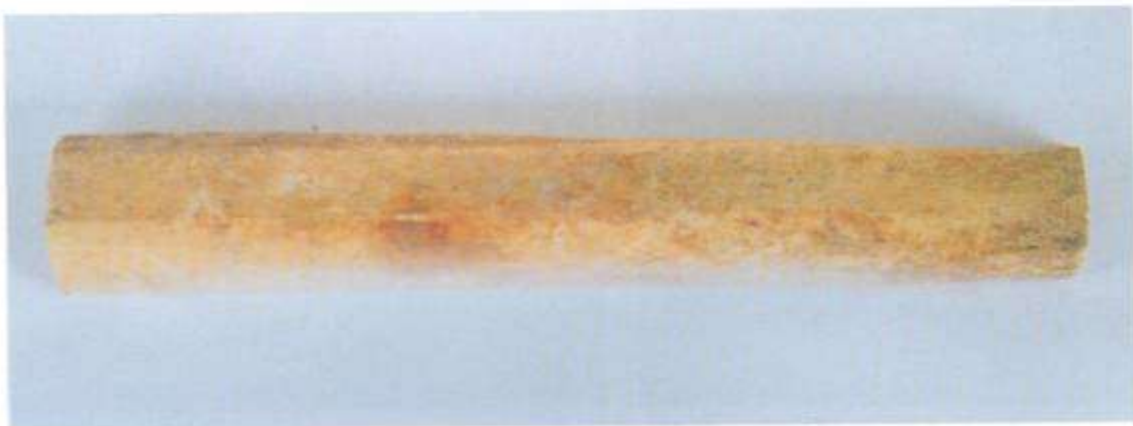
**Bone handle of dagger**



**Thigh-bones used in handicraft**



**Horns used in handicraft**



**Semifinished bone product**

## **HAYDAR ALIYEV MODEL IN THE THOUGHTFUL ATTITUDE TO HISTORICAL-CULTURAL HERITAGE**

There was held an event on the topic of "Haydar Aliyev model in the thoughtful attitude to historical-cultural heritage" in regard with 87th anniversary of National Leader Haydar Aliyev in Agsu City organized by Agsu Region Executive Board and Agsu archaeological expedition of Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of NASA on May 7th.

There were famous historians, archaeologists and ethnographers of the republic led by vice-president of NASA, director of National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, academician Naila Valikhanli, and director of Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of NASA Maisa Rahimova participated in the meeting.

The meeting participants after laying a wreath and flowers on the memorial of the National Leader Haydar Aliyev were in Haydar Aliyev Center.

After then they were shown archaeological excavation carried on the Medieval Agsu town place and an exhibition organized on the occasion of National Leader's 87 th anniversary. After all there were held a presentation ceremony of the book "Medieval Agsu town" and web site of the Agsu archaeological expedition ([www.agsuexpedition.org](http://www.agsuexpedition.org)). The Head of the Executive Power of Agsu Anvar Seyidaliyev, Vice-president of NASA, academician Naila Valikhanli, Director of Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of NASA, historical science doctor Maisa Rahimova, academician Teymur Bunyadov, Associate Member of NASA Ilyas Babayev, the chief of the Agsu archeological expedition, historical science doctor Gafar Jabiyev, assistant chief of Agsu archaeological expedition, candidate of historical science Fariz Khalilli and others had a speech and they talked on thoughtful actions of Haydar Aliyev to historical-cultural heritage.

## **SEMINAR ON THEME "ARCHEOLOGICAL TOURISM AND MUSEUMS" IN AGSU**

On May 18 was held a series of ceremonies on the occasion of International Museums day in Agsu district. Firstly, teachers and students of regional schools became acquainted with the archaeological investigations and held open lessons.

Afterwards, Seminar on theme "Archaeological tourism and museums" was held at Agsu History and Local Lore Museum with the participation of members of Agsu archaeological expedition members, representatives of Executive Power of Agsu district with the participial tion of museum professionals and intellectuals dedicated to International Museums Day.

Chief of Agsu expedition, doctor of historical sciences Gafar Jabiyev, deputy of Agsu Distric Executive Power Akif Mirzayev, restorer-architect Luigi Skrinzi invited from Italy, head of department of National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, PhD on historical sciences Fariz Khalilli, director of Agsu History and Local Lore Museum Sevda Damirova, director of Heydar Aliyev Center Reyhana Tajizadeh talked about recent archaeological excavations at the territory, fortune, restoration and conservations, investigations of found buildings and workshops, necessity of spread of archaeological tourism in Azerbaijan, tourism opportunities of Agsu, place of museum in the development of archaeological tourism.

District representatives, pupils were acquainted with archaeological findings at Agsu History and Local Lore Museum.