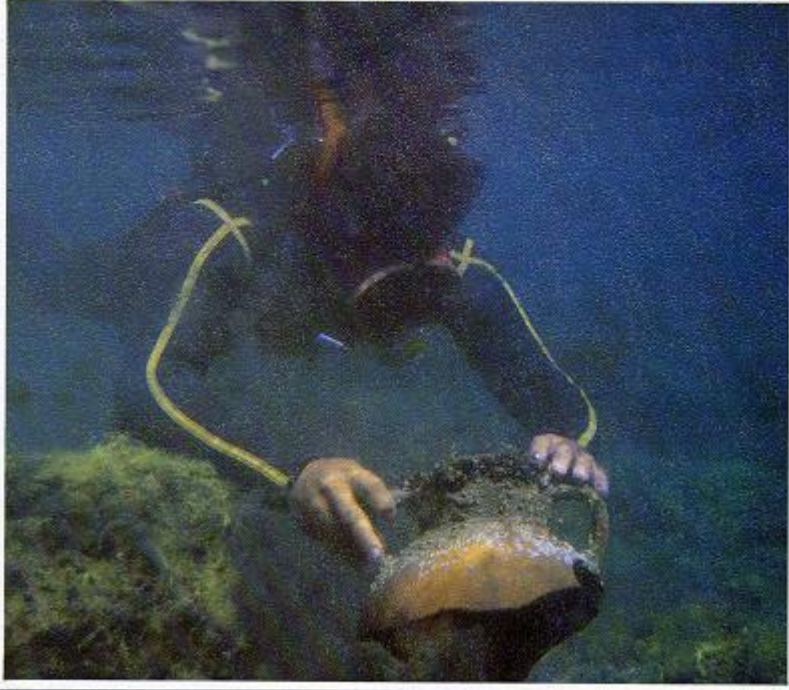


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1. Простая керамика, XI—XII вв. (Бяндосван II)
2. К месту поиска



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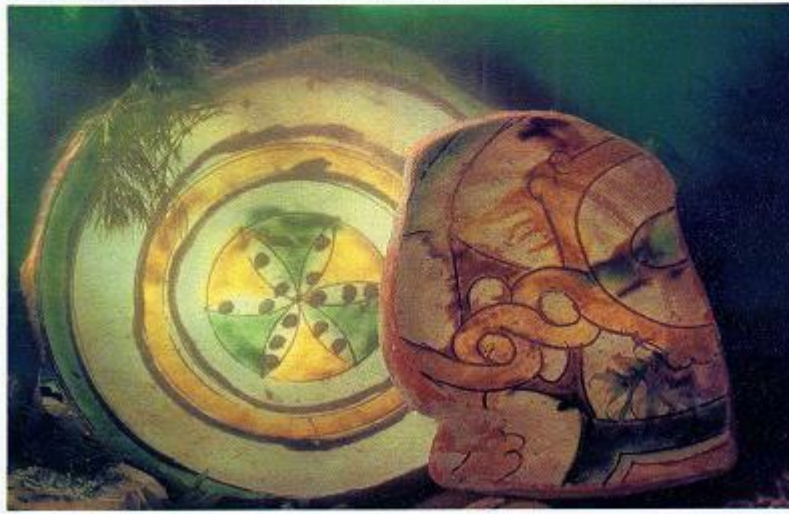
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 14. Фрагмент чаши с изображением животного, XII—XIII вв. (Бяцкован I)
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 16. Поливная чаша с изображением животных, XII—XIII вв. (Бяцкован I)



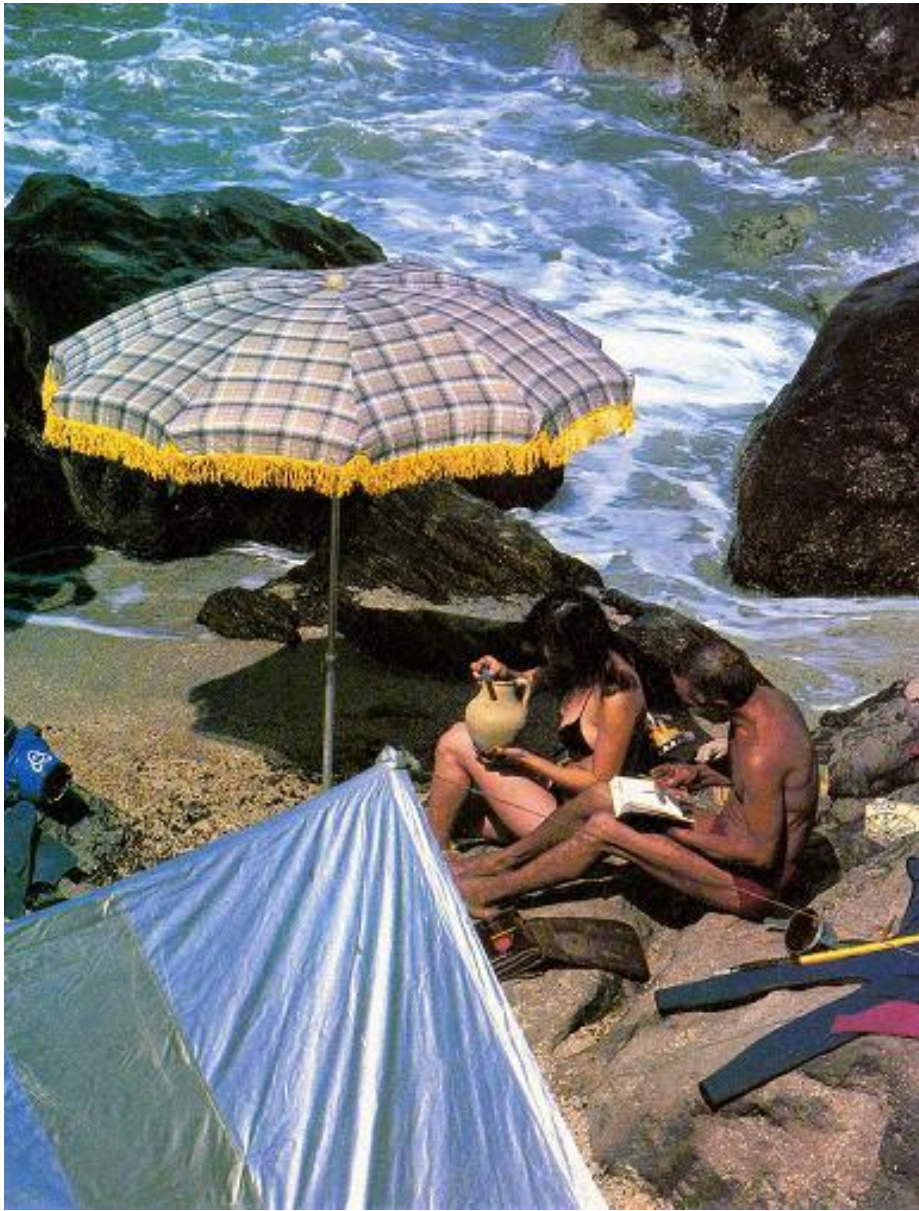


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20. Поливная керамическая подставка, XII—XIII вв. (Бяндосан I)

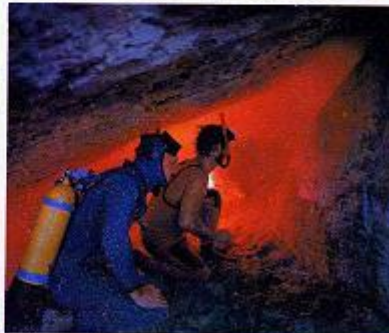




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22. Бронзовый меч с седловидным навершием и железным лезвием талышско-муганской культуры, VIII—VII вв. до н. э.
23. Селадонные блюда, XIII—XIV вв.
24. В подводных пещерах



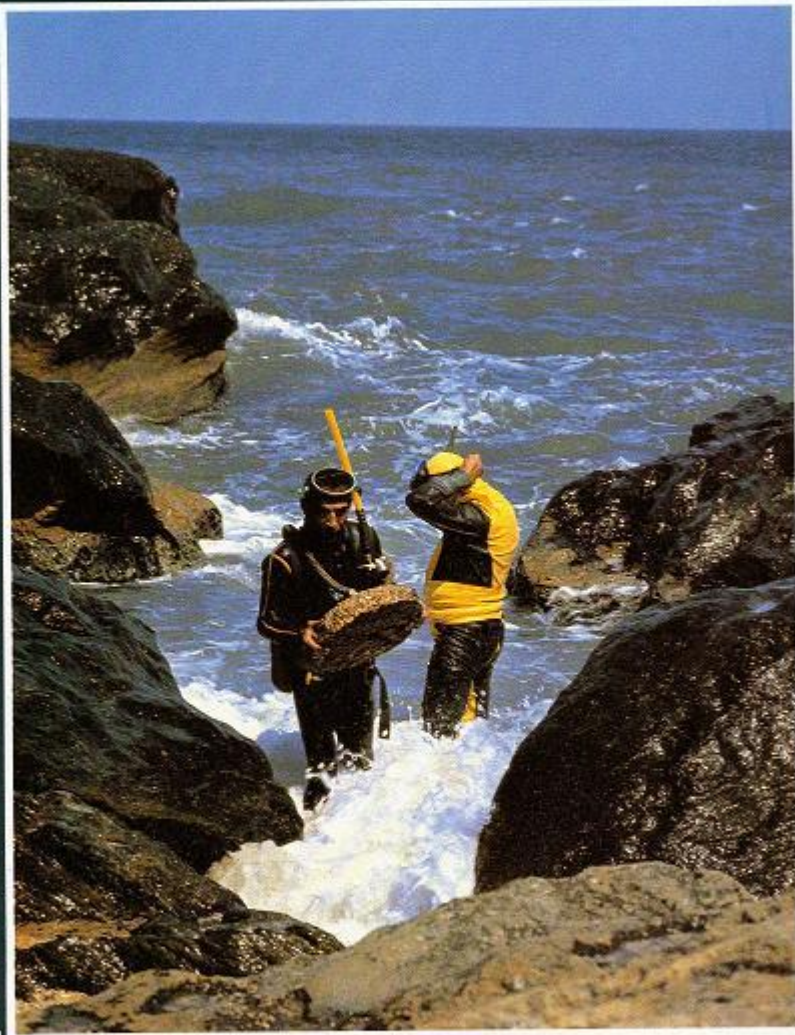


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34. Еще одна находка
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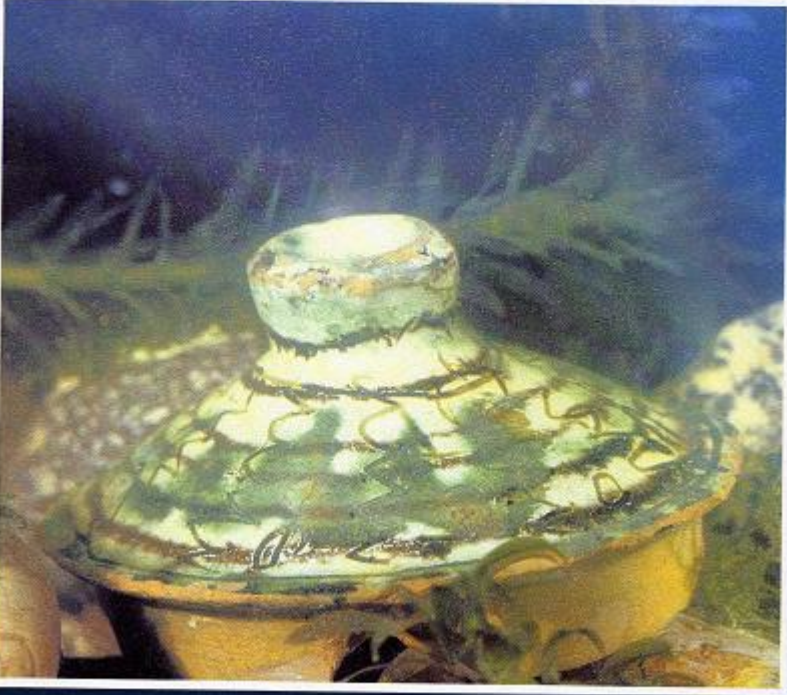
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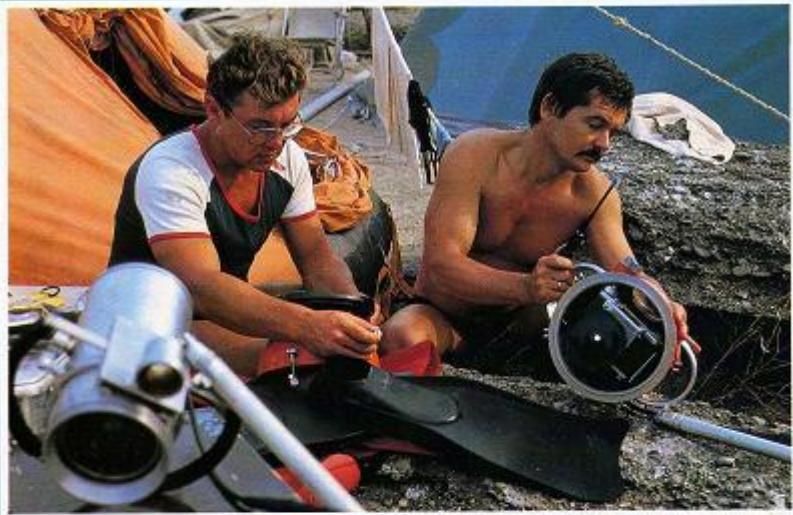
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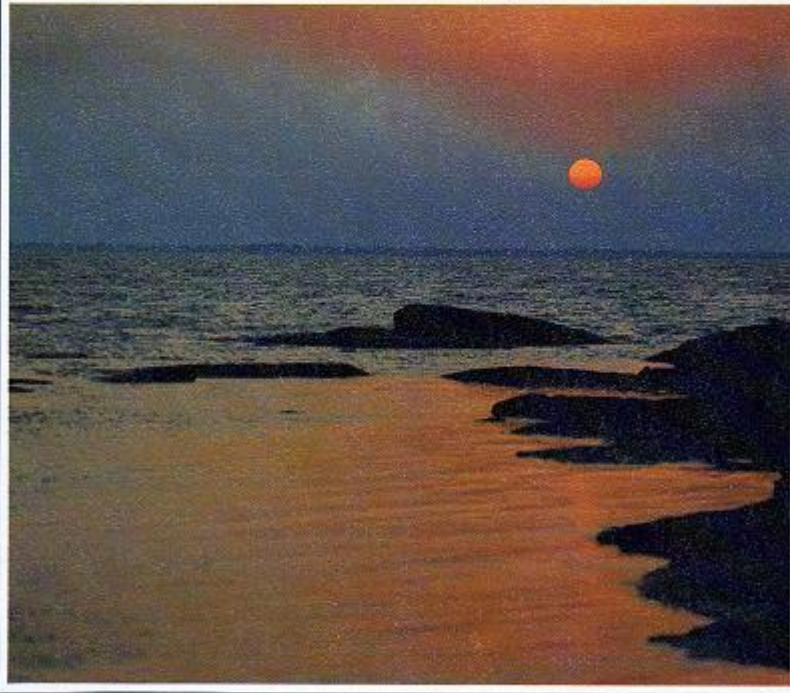
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Archeological Finds on the Caspian Coast

Published under the general editorship of Academician P. A. Azizbekova, Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR

Since 1969 the History Museum of Azerbaijan under the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR has been conducting underwater and coastal historical and archaeological excavation work along the Caspian coast of Azerbaijan.

The expeditions have brought to light and localized the historical region of Shirvan-Gushtasfi which occupied an extensive area in the Kura delta. Archaeological monuments—ancient settlements Byandovan I and Byandovan II—have been discovered along the ancient riverbeds and the Caspian coast.

The first monument (Byandovan I) dating to the 11th — 13th cc pinpoints the site of the medieval town Gushtasfi, the second (Byandovan II) dating to the 9th — 12th cc — the medieval town Mugan. These were centres of large-scale ceramics production. Several kilns have been discovered and a large number of plain and glazed ceramics (9th — 13th cc) has been collected.

Plain ceramics is presented by all types of daily and kitchen utensils: different-purpose pitchers, household vessels, pots and lamps. They were made chiefly on the potter's wheel from well-kneaded greyish and reddish clay and show precise workmanship. Many of the objects, especially lids of vessels, are decorated with imposed, incised or stamped ornaments. Some pitchers are decorated with red engobe, the burnishing technique was also applied.

The discovered fragments of defective pottery, the existence of kilns and pertaining materials testify to the local production

of plain ceramics in Byandovan I and Byandovan II though it is similar to pottery-production in other centres of this kind in medieval Azerbaijan (Bailakan, Shemakha, Kabala, Shabran) and has identical traditions.

Most of the finds in Byandovan I and Byandovan II are made up of glazed ceramics. The ceramics discovered in Byandovan II differs from that found in Byandovan I in terms of both periodization and glazing and ornamentation techniques.

Glazed ceramics from Byandovan II date to the 9th — 12th cc and consist of vessels and plates on raised and circular tray-like supports.

Upon roasting this type of ceramics assumes a pink or red colour. White engobe and manganese were used for underglaze ornamentation. The ornament is more or less identical consisting of combinations of arcs, ovals and circles. A dotted ornament was also employed. Less frequent is the polychrome red-clay glazed ceramics with an engraved ornament and painted with oxides of iron, copper and manganese.

Glazed ceramics from Byandovan I dates to the 12th — 13th cc when pottery production reached its height. It has distinctive local features, a multitude of forms and ornaments. The bottoms of many plates and vessels are painted with birds and animals.

A popular ornament for the centre of a ceramic plate was the image of a dove or peacock, symbols of immortality. Quite frequent are the images of lionesses or cheetahs, their tails curled upwards in "butu" style.

The figure of a deer with wide-spread golden-coloured antlers is remarkably presented on one of the central fragments of a plate. Another plate shows the dynamic leap of a doe. Such a realistically executed image of a moving animal could be the work of a truly experienced artist, when a few incisions and lines applied with special paints produced vivid images of the animal world.

The ceramics masters of Byandovan I were experts at their job. Using different techniques they decorated their objects with a vegetable-geometrical pattern. Using only four colours: yellow, green, brown and purple they produced a colour gamut of incredible beauty. One notes the unrestricted style although the masters obviously adhered to traditional standards.

The underside of glazed ceramics bear diverse stamps. There are local "trade-marks" depicting a lion against the rising sun, a dog, a dove, an antelope, a horseman. Some of these stamps bear a likeness to stamps from medieval Azerbaijanian towns (Bailakan, Kabala, Baku, Shemakha, Shabran).

Some of the fragments of glazed pottery have retained inscriptions of Eastern poetry and diverse well-wishings to the customer. One of the fragments reads: "While you are in the company of effort and science..." The ceramics finds testify to the high urbanistic culture of medieval Azerbaijan.

An interesting site of underwater excavation work is the territory around Cape Amburansky (the village of Bilgya). Here amateur skin-divers chanced to discover a number

of old-time objects, among them an original gilded bronze vessel supported by three cast lions, obviously the work of the late 16th-century Novgorod masters. The inscription reads: "Vessel for a good man's drinking and merriment".

The underwater excavation work of the Museum's archeological expedition in the vicinity of Svinoi Island (Sangi Mugan) yielded interesting materials on the events of 1669 when the island had been camped by Stepan Razin and his Cossaks. A battle had ensued sending many Persian vessels to the sea-bottom.

Underwater excavations brought up metal anchors of those times, anchor weights and wooden vessel parts. Plain and glazed 17th century crockery was discovered in the southern bay off Svinoi Island.

The most ancient find off the Azerbaijan coast was a hilt of a bronze sword with a saddle-like knob and the remains of an iron blade (rhombic shaped cross-section) discovered at Mount Zayachya. The sword is referred to the Astrakhanbazar type, Talysh-Mugan culture, and is dated to the 8th — 7th cc B.C.

The excavation work carried out off the Azerbaijan coast helped specify information on the "Caspian Atlantis" which has become surrounded with legends and tales confirming the words of the well-known academician I. M. Gubkin: "The legends about submerged towns and villages are not legends but real facts."

Now it has become possible to procure materials in support of the true existence of towns that the well-known Azerbaijan historian A. K. Bakikhanov had attempted

to detect in the Caspian sea-bottom with the help of two sail-boats 150 years ago.

The History Museum of Azerbaijan under the Academy of sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR has opened a special section — "Caspian Atlantis" exhibiting a number of finds from the Caspian sea-bottom.

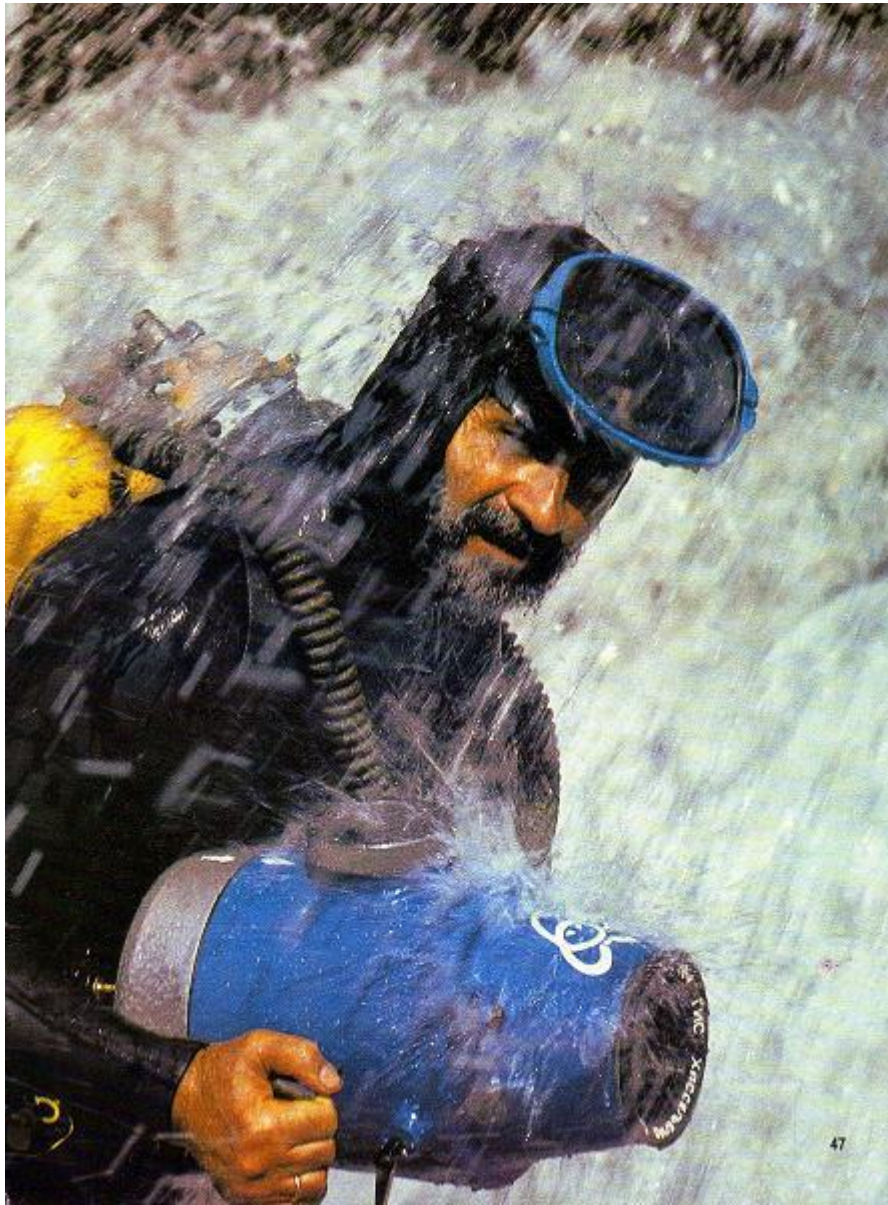
This catalogue presents but a small part of the Museum's archaeological materials testifying to the highly developed cultural level of the Azerbaijan people and its seaboard settlements and towns in the middle ages.

Text by V. Kvachidze
Photos by G. Guseinzade

LEGENDS

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Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR
History Museum of Azerbaijan

**Archaeological
Finds on
the Caspian Coast**

Monuments of Material
Culture of Azerbaijan



Académie des sciences de la R.S.S. d'Azerbaïdjan
Musée d'histoire de l'Azerbaïdjan

**Trouvailles
archéologiques
sur le littoral
de la mer Caspienne**

Patrimoine culturel
de l'Azerbaïdjan

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Внешторгиздат. Изд. № 664р