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**“South-Western Georgia (Ajara) in Late Middle Ages  
(According to Written Sources and Archaeological Materials)”**

**Abstract**

Of the Dissertation submitted for the Academic Degree of  
Doctor of Archaeology (PhD)

Batumi

2016

The dissertation thesis was accomplished at the Faculty of Humanities of the Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University.

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## *General Description of the Thesis*

**Topicality of the thesis.** Owing to its geographical location, South-Western Georgia (Ajara) used to be actively involved in the worldwide historical processes since the ancient times and played an important role in the political, economic and cultural relations between different countries. Strategic location of Ajara greatly preconditioned constant interest from the outer world with its ongoing processes and events. In fact, Ajara represented one of the main supporting points not only for the South-Western Georgia but the whole Transcaucasia. This fact was accompanied by the passing important trade roads through which the eastern, western, northern and southern countries conducted political, economic and cultural relations. Hence, the desire to possess and control these roads was the ambition of great kingdoms and states of all times.

Our country had hard time of severe ordeal in the late medieval period. In the second half of 15<sup>th</sup> century, after the split of the entire unified Georgian state into separate kingdoms, hard period full of contradictions begins in the history of our country. The fight for primacy among the Georgian kingdoms was accompanied by activation of external enemies. Unfortunately, being in crisis prevented the country to resist numerous enemies. Especially difficult situation was created in South-Western Georgia.

The fight for the supreme power in Transcaucasia between the two mighty and aggressive states of Persia and Ottomans was terminated in 1555 with the Treaty of Amasya according to which the conquerors divided between them the territory of Transcaucasia. Eastern Georgia and the eastern part of Samtskhe-Saatabago went to Persian whereas Western Georgia and the western part of Samtskhe-Saatabago – to the Ottomans. It is true, the fight for the primacy between these two countries still lasted for a long time, but during the cease-fire negotiations the conditions of the Amasya Treaty mostly remained unchanged.

A considerable part of South-Western Georgia, including Ajara fell under the Ottoman rule. The Ottoman dominance was long lasting and hard.

The exact date when Ajara was passed into the Ottoman possession is still uncertain in scholarly references today. There are different dates of the conquest of Ajara by the Ottomans indicated in sources. According to the opinion common in Georgian historiography, Ajara was the last among the Samtskhe-Saatabago territories to be conquered

in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The basis for such opinion was provided by the fact that in the “Defter-i Mufassal Vilayet-i Gürcistan” compiled in 1595 Ajara was not included yet. Lately an interesting opinion has been expressed on the issue by the scholar of Turkish Studies Zaza Shashikadze. On the basis of the documents found in the archives of the Council of Ministers in Istanbul, the researcher indicates: “Apparently, the Ajara gorge becomes the part of the Ottoman Empire much earlier, from 1561 and the administrative rule is established on its territory. In means as well, the establishment of the form of land owning as well as the taxation system. All this is verified by the documented materials about Ajara dated to the following years.”

After the conquest of South-Western Georgia the Ottomans began to establish the favourable order there. For the strong dominance of the Ottomans over the conquered lands the essential importance was given to the implementation of the Ottoman laws of land ownership and complete elimination of Georgian feudal order. The population of Ajara never abandoned the hope to return to the motherland. A number of generations strove to win back the Georgian lands. Finally, the goal was achieved in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the aftermath of the Russian-Ottoman war in 1877-1878, the historical south-western territories were returned to Georgia.

The year-long research works conducted by the historian enabled to determine to a certain extent the historical processes taking place in Ajara. Rich scientific and scholarly heritage has been created on certain issues. However, the late medieval period is still partially explored, especially from the archaeological viewpoint, or not studied at all. The study of the monuments of material culture enables to uncover many topical issues of the history of our country in a new perspective.

The base of the Ajara historical source study has been enriched as a result of regular archaeological excavations conducted in the region by the Batumi Archaeological Museum and the standing archaeological expedition of the Gonio-Apsarus Museum and Sanctuary.

The revelation and study of the late medieval monumental fortification, the lay, cult and public buildings and determination of the late medieval stratigraphy can be considered as a special achievement, as well as the chronological division of the cultural layers and construction stages of the period under study and their relevance and correlation with the written sources.

**Aim of the Research.** The aim of the dissertation is to study certain issues of history and archaeology of the late medieval South-Western Georgia (Ajara in particular) on the basis of comparing and contrasting written sources and archaeological materials. Moreover that in the region there is great number of fortification or homestead and other types of buildings, old settlements and material monuments (plain and glazed pottery, faience, porcelain, metal ware, etc.) the monographic study of which has not been accomplished so far.

The source study base for the thesis is mostly the archaeological one and is based on the main finds of the exploration and research conducted by the Batumi Archaeological Museum and the archaeological expedition of the Gonio-Apsarus Museum and Sanctuary.

**Novelty and Importance.** As it is well known, compared to previous epochs the monuments of the period under study (especially in Western Georgia) are less studied through regular archaeological excavations. Majority of them have been uncovered in relation with the excavations of other multi-layered monuments; and what is revealed is either not published or only partially studied yet. The thesis provides the comprehensive study of the issues of late medieval history and archaeology of one of the most important regions of South-Western Georgia. Actually, it is now that the rich and diverse monuments of substantial and material culture obtained through the field archaeological research for years are first entering the scholarly circulation.

***Structure and volume of the thesis.*** The structure of the dissertation is determined by the research goals and objectives. The thesis consists of an introduction, four chapters, twenty paragraphs and general conclusions. The work is followed by the list of references, graphic and photo materials. The electronically printed thesis together with graphic and photo illustrations comprises 258 pages.

***Approbation of the thesis.*** Separate issues of the thesis have been presented at the international scientific conferences of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Batumi Art Teaching University, Ajara Autonomous Republic Governmental Institution – Archive Department, Cultural Heritage Institute of Moldova Academy of Sciences, Moldova National Historical Museum, Second International Congress of Eurasian Turkish Art in Istanbul.

The approbation of the thesis was held on 15 July, 2016 at the session of the Department of History, Archaeology and Ethnology of the faculty of Humanities, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University (see Minutes # 10).

### ***Main Content of the Thesis***

**Introduction.** The introduction of the thesis presents topicality of the research problem and the research goal is determined. Apart from this, the introduction gives the explanation to the scientific novelty and significance of the dissertation.

#### **I Chapter.**

##### **Written Sources and Historiography**

###### **§1. Written Sources about South-Western Georgia**

The paragraph deals with and reviews the written sources on the late medieval period of South-Western Georgia that are divided into four groups according to their origin: Georgian, Turkish, Russian and European.

The review begins with the Georgian written sources among which the oldest is the information preserved in “New History of Kartli” compiled by monk Egnatashvili. Among the later period sources, the work by Vakhushti Batonishvili is of a peculiar interest. For the study of certain issues of the history of late medieval Ajara, the source is presented by the notes and memoirs of Georgian (David Bakradze, George Kazbegi, Zakaria Chichinadze, Tedo Sakhokia, Sergei Meskhi, Petre Umikashvili, etc.) and foreign (Giosafat Barbaro, Ambrojo Kontarini, Evliya Çelebi, Katib Çelebi, Don Christoforo de Castelli, Jac Fransua Gamba, Karl Koch, Alexander Frenkel, Eugene Veidenbaum, Preskovia Uvarova, etc.) travelers.

Among the sources of the history of Georgia of the late Middle Ages an important place is taken by the Ottoman books of records. The most completed among them is „Defter-i Mufassal Vilayet-i Gürcistan” Although there is no information about Ajara in it, the book is still a very significant source for the study of the social-economic, political and demographic issues of South-Western Georgia. „Defter-i Caba-i Eyalet-i Çildir” contains interesting information about Ajara. Interesting information about the period under study is

provided also by the Ottoman documents of the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries preserved at the eastern department of the Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia, Bulgaria. Lately the following interesting books for the history of Ajara have been found in the archives of Istanbul and Ankara: „Acara Sancağının Mufassal ve İcmal Defterleri”, Defter-i Mufassal Liva-i Batum”, Defter-i Mufasal Liva-i Ajara-i Uliya”, that are first-rate sources for the study of the social-political history of Ajara in the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Among the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries Ottoman documents we can single out canun-nammes (books of laws) (by Kochibei Gorijel, Aini Ali, etc.). Important information about Ajara can be found in the works of Turkish historians as well (Evliya Çelebi, Katib Çelebi, Mustapa Naima, Fahrettin Kirdzioğlu, İsmail Hakki Uzunçarşili, Halit Özdemir, DüNDAR Aidin, etc.).

## **§2. History of the Study**

The paragraph briefly reviews the history of the study of some issues of the history and archaeology of South-Western Georgia of late medieval period. A number of special works have been dedicated to the study of the Ottoman-Georgian relations, Ottoman taxes and dissemination of Ottoman taxation system, Ottoman rules of land management and land ownership, form and types of taxes and duties and generally, social-economic and political state of the population. As for the archaeological monuments, their thorough study began relatively later. Various publications by different authors have been dedicated to the fortification, homestead or other types of buildings and substantial material of this period revealed through the archaeological expeditions conducted for years.

## **§ 3. Physical and Geographical Environment of the Region**

The paragraph deals with the physical and geographical environment of the Ajara region. Namely, it describes its location, area, relief and landscape, climate, minerals and mineral resources, rivers, vegetation, etc.

## II Chapter

### Late Medieval Architectural Monuments of South-Western Georgia

#### § 1. Late Medieval Constructions in Gonio Fortress

Gonio Fortress is situated in south-western part of the city of Batumi, in the northern entrance of the suburb of Gonio, on the left side of the river Chorokhi (up to 2011 in the northern entrance the village of Gonio of Khervachauri municipality, 12 km away from Batumi). The archaeological excavations have revealed quite strong cultural layers of the Roman (I-III centuries), Byzantine (VI-VII centuries) and Ottoman (XVI-XIX centuries) periods in the inside area of the fortress. There are the remains of the constructions of various purposes.

One of the most distinguished places among the late medieval construction buildings is taken by a bathhouse. The bathhouse is located in the central part of the fortress (22x11,5 m). It is built over the Roman period bath. Although the Ottoman as well as Islamic world baths, like the ones of Roman types, consist of 4 departments – hot (*sıcaklık*), warm (*ılıkılık*), cold (*soğukluk*) cloak-waiting rooms and boilers (*Külhan*), they still differ from each other in forms and techniques of roofing. Eastern bathhouses are roofed with a dome. The Gonio-Apsarus bathhouse used to have the same type of roofing as well. The bath supposedly had four domes. Additional walls are built with small size bricks plastered with mortar afterwards. The walls used to depict various images (sheep, horses, sailboats, etc.).

Late medieval bathhouses are especially numerous preserved on the territory of eastern Georgia. To this period belong the following ones: the so called “Rostom’s Bath” in Tbilisi, the so called “Erekle’s Bath” in Telavi, baths in Samshvilde, Gremi, Khertvisi, Kvemo Chala, Akhalkori, Nichbisi, Mdzovreti, Gori, Akhaltsikhe and others. In western Georgia they are known from Kutaisi fort and Ozurgeti.

The mosque belongs to the number of the late medieval construction-buildings on the fortress territory. It is located to the north of the bathhouse. The mosque is built with blackish-white processed stones of different shapes and sizes (14,8x11,20 cm). The stone arrangement is irregular. The construction uses different size quads of the earlier, Roman period that are mostly laid in the corners (80x70 cm; 115x80 cm). The original type of roofing of the mosque is uncertain. Generally, the Ottoman Empire was characterized by



dome mosques representing the leading architectural type in the Islamic world. It is also remarkable that often mosques did not differ in shape, size and roofing types from the ordinary dwelling houses and did not attract the eye from their appearance, especially the village mosques the majority of which used to lack one more specific attribute and component of the Islamic monuments – a minaret. The same picture can be seen in Gonio-Apsarus. In western Georgia one more mosque is known built by the Ottomans – in Kutaisi fort which is dated to the last period of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

On the territory of Georgia the earliest mosques are found on the Dmanisi ancient site and are dated to 12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries and 13-14<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The most important and main part of the mosques was a sanitary-hygienic room, the so called „ablution rooms” where the believers used to wash hands, face, feet, get cleansed and prepared for the prayers. As a result of the archaeological excavation conducted in Gonio-Apsarus in 2012, the remains of such type of construction were revealed to the north of the mosque. Its southern section is of oval shape. Only one row of the laying is preserved.

The south gate of the fortress is reconstructed in the late middle ages. In front of the tower N.20 close to the gate a watchtower is supposed to be located (4,15x2,6 m). Westwards to the watchtower, in the south-western corner of the fortress there is one more late medieval building - a palace. It is quadrangular in shape. The walls of the stone fence are used as western and southern walls. As for the eastern and northern walls, they are built later (26x18 m).

In the late medieval period (1590-1595) the walls of the fortress were reconstructed as well. The walls were increased in height in 85-90 cm and over them 140 cm high battlements were erected. The distance between them in 80-85 cm while between the towers – 95-100 cm.

Close to the foundation of the tower No 20, outside the fortress the remains of a path pavement of the late medieval period have been revealed through the archaeological excavations. Most part of it is destroyed. The path structure uses big size cobblestone plates. Their surface bears the traces of polishing and refinement. A longer part of the path is preserved in the inside territory of the fortress as well. Naturally, it is the continuation of the outer path. It stretches the whole way from the south gate towards the north direction.

At the south gate the remains of the furnace-workshops for the construction ceramic ware of the late medieval period have been revealed. The building is quadrangular with thick walls (3,1x3,1 m). The furnace must have been two-storied in its time: a fire part downstairs and ceramic burning part – upstairs.

Two wells found on the territory of the fortress belong to the late medieval period too. One of them is located in the south-western sector, the other – in the central part of the fortress, opposite the mosque.

The thesis discusses and studies the water supply systems of the Ottoman period. The excavations have revealed them in almost every section of the fortress territory. Their surface is covered with bigger stone layers.

Among the late medieval cultural layers on the fortress territory the so called “Ottoman pits” can be singled out. Their number increases annually. The pit contours are revealed after removal of each humus layer. The majority of them are of circular shape. The diameter fluctuates between 1-1,7 m while the depths are different. While digging out the pits the old (Byzantine, Roman) cultural layers were destroyed. Owing to certain intents of the Ottomans, the tradition of pit digging is confirmed on other archaeological monuments as well. Namely, the similar picture is seen along the northern Black Sea littoral. The excavations of different sectors of the city of Azov have revealed a number of pits including the earliest dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century whereas the rest of them – to the late medieval period. There are mixed views on their purposes: some consider them functioning as “well-refrigerators”. There are irregularly thrown earthenware, glass and iron items, construction ceramics, etc. of various types and functions in the pits. It explains their functioning as landfills. According to the similar types of materials in them they can be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **§ 2. Late Medieval Architecture of Batumi Fortress**

The Batumi Fortress is situated at the north-eastern entrance of the city of Batumi, confluence to the sea, on a high hill to the left side of the river Korolistkskali. The archaeological study of the monument began in 1960 s. Notwithstanding the manifold reconstruction of the fortress walls, the excavators managed to separate two layers in the

wall construction according to the construction methods – the remains of the fortress – “Inner Fort I” and the remains of the previous fort – “The Inner Fort II”.

The defense system on the late medieval period (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries) of the Batumi fort (Inner Fort I) is represented by rectangular-shape quads and mortared walls. In the plan the fort has a rectangular shape. Its inside sizes are: 18,65 (west-east) x 18,45 (south-north). The best preserved construction on the fortress territory is the palace. In its time the palace must have been two-storied. Quite a big part of the first floor has been preserved. The palace is built with stone quads and mortar.

The materials revealed through the archaeological excavations have proved that the Batumi Fortress is a multi-layer monument. The urbanized settlement has undergone many reconstructions, changes and attacks but no particularly raids had taken place by the late Middle Ages. Stone and iron shells found during the archaeological excavations can serve as confirmation as well. The fortress finally lost its function in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **§ 3. Late Medieval Architectural Constructions of Petra-Tsikhisdziri Fortress**

Petra-Tsikhisdziri is situated in the village of Tsikhisdziri, Kobuleti Municipality, on a hill erected over the sea, on a strategically favorable place. The fort is built on two hills. Two construction periods can be distinguished in the wall construction of the fortress: early and late medieval periods. The citadel is the best studied area at the moment. Its well-preserved part is 200 m in length while the width is 100 m. in the late medieval period a tower (4x3,30 m) was built to the eastern gate that specially protected the fort from this direction. The fortress is built with faceted basalt stones and mortar.

Some buildings and constructions of the fortress territory underwent considerable changes in the late medieval period, namely, the construction in the central part of the fortress. The excavations confirmed that in its time it represented a small size hall-type church that had been later reconstructed as a homestead storeroom.

Among the late medieval constructions we can single out a bath located in the north-western part of the eastern gate of the fortress. It was constructed to the eastern wall of the threshold (12x8,40 m), on a rectangular tower and used to be roofed in a dome. It was exploded and destroyed in 1878 during the Russian-Ottoman war.

#### **§ 4. Zendidi Fortress**

The Zendidi fortress is situated in the village of Zendidi, Keda municipality, on the right bank of the river Adjaristskali. The fortress is erected on an inaccessible hill, quite favorable spot. Its area comprises 6000 m<sup>2</sup>. The plan is relevant to the relief and landscape – it is rectangular from the north-eastern part whereas oval in the south-western part. The threshold walls, towers, gates and other types of constructions have been preserved on the fortress territory.

The archaeological excavations confirmed that the Zendidi fortress is a one-layer monuments of the late medieval period and according to the archaeological materials must have been built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **§ 5. Late Medieval Constructions of Khikhani Fortress**

Khikhani fortress is situated in Khulo municipality, on one of the branches of the Arsiani Range, at the border of Ajara and Shavsheti, left bank of the river of Khikhanistskali, 2235 m above sea level. The length of the fort fluctuates between 15-25 m. It is inaccessible from all side as it is surrounded with high and steep cliffs. The one and only entrance to the fortress, and a rather difficult one, was from the south-eastern part in its time. Nowadays the fortress can be reached through a newly built path on the west slope.

The most distinguished building of the fortress is the palace located outside of the top forest surrounded with high stone fence, on the lower terrace of the fortress. The palace is one-storied rectangular building according to the plans (15, 70 x 8,70 m).

Among the late medieval buildings on the territory of the palace a small construction built into the north-eastern part can be singled out (5,60x4,70 m; length of the walls 70-80 cm). The north and east walls of the construction are attached to the palace walls. Their maximum height reaches 1,90 cm. the laying of dry-built walls contains mortared stones and tiles of secondary utilization.

The other later building is attached to the palace outside of the eastern walls. In the plans the building is more close to a square (4,10x3,40 m). There are mortared stones and tiles of the palace included into the 70-80 cm thick drily built walls preserved at the height of 1,6 m.

The construction (5x7,5 m) built to the west wall of the palace was reconstructed too. The wall consists of the masses of mortared stones (the preserved height is 35 cm, thickness – 60 cm). The new wall is built on the place of the original wall of the palace, with the stones taken from the remains of the original palace.

The late medieval constructions are located in other sections of the fortress as well. One of them is situated from the tower No 4 westwards 50 m away. A hollow is made on the artificially smoothed terrace in which north, south and east walls of the construction are built.

The next building is situated between the towers No 1 and 2, namely westwards from the tower No 1 in 23 m distance on the slope descending from west to east, on the specially cut and leveled terrace. It is built in rocky stone fragments.

In the distance of 7,2 m away from here, on the north slope, a similar half-ground construction is built.

One more construction is built on the north-eastern slope of the fortress, 50 m southwards to the tower No 2, on an artificially leveled platform.

In the central part of the fortress, south-western part of the wine cellar with 43 wine pitchers in it, the expedition studied in 2015 the remains of the building with a fire place built in dry laying. The building was much damaged (4,10x3 m).

In the central part of the fortress, 1 m away westwards to the well lies the next construction built in dry laying – the so called oval-wall construction (5x3,40 m) attached to the fence.

During the expedition in 2016 two more late medieval buildings were studied. The first one (3,30x3,10 m) is located between the south wall of the church and the fence wall. Three walls of the construction are built in dry laying. As for the fourth – south wall – it is the citadel wall built in mortar.

The other construction is built in the extreme north-western part of the citadel, on the territory between the oval wall of the citadel and the church (2,35x2,40 m). Its north-west wall is the threshold wall preserved in this section on the height of 6 m (wall thickness 1,10 m). North-east wall is built in dry laying and is rather badly preserved.

The remains of one more building belong to the late medieval period. It is located between the tower No 2 and the water reservoir. The eastern side of the wall is an irregular

row of stones. Apparently, the wall was covered with land on this side. A small closet is attached to the north-eastern part, also built in dry laying.

Supposedly, all of them were shingle-roofed. The studied constructions have the following features in common: 1. They are of rather small areas and consist of only one room; 2. All of them are semi-ground buildings; 3. The constructions are built in dry laying; 4. All of them contain a fireplace (there is only exception – the building between the oval citadel wall and the church), whereas in the constructions of the earlier period of the fort there are no heating means. All the constructions are built in one period and can be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They might have functioned as well to the last stage of the fortress functioning at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

As we see, the fortification buildings studied by us undergo considerable changes in the late medieval period. In our country the greatest and famous fortresses of various historical parts including Ajara were built mostly in the classical, early and developed medieval periods. As for the late medieval period, due to the hardest internal and foreign political and economic situation, construction of fortresses exceeded the abilities of the kings and queens. On the other hand, a big place is taken by restoration and reconstruction of old fortresses. However, it should be noted that rather seldom but still, new ones were also constructed. The fortresses of Zendidi and Nigazeuli were built in exactly this period in the region of Ajara.

Due to manifold reconstruction and changes of the buildings of different purposes, it often becomes difficult to separate construction layers of different periods. However, this period is still different from the early and developed medieval periods in construction art and techniques. In the late Middle Ages stones are often roughly processed and the laying is frequently irregular. Stone breaks and sometimes bricks are used in the construction. The trace of late medieval construction is well seen on the fortresses of Gonio-Apsarus, Batumi, Petra-Tsikhisdziri and Khikhani. Sometimes, during the building process, dry laying is used. All the constructions of the late medieval period preserved on the Khikhani fortress are built in such laying. In restoration and reconstruction of the buildings of various purposes the construction materials of previous period is often used. Seldom but still are met fortresses built in regular laying and well-processed faceted stones. Such samples on the territory of Ajara are the Zendidi and Nigazeuli fortresses. Their walls are built with similar

construction technique. The laying uses well-processed bigger stones. Space between the irregular size stones is filled with smaller stones or tiles. The height of rows is equal almost everywhere. The space between walls is filled with relatively smaller fragments of stones.

Peculiarities of defensive architecture of the fortresses were determined by the appearance and spreading of firearms since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The impact of this new technique on the architecture is especially well noticed in Georgia from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is with the appearance of firearms that the fort walls were raised and battlements were added to the Gonio-Apsarus fortress by the Ottomans.

### III Chapter

#### Archaeological Materials Found on the Late Medieval Monuments in South-Western Georgia

##### §1. Porcelain

The earliest group of late medieval archaeological finds is formed by the china ware found on the territory of the Gonio-Apsarus fortress. All of them are of cup type. They are characterized by firm, high quality white earthen; round, ring-like developed heel and semi-spherical or bell-shape slope. According to décor, painting technique and artistic decoration the cups can be divided into several groups. **Group 1:** unifies cups painted with cobalt blue paints under the transparent glaze against white background. This is a leading group of the finds. The main type of artistic decoration is a many-lapelled flower or a many-lapelled flower surrounded with small plant ornaments and/or round geometrical ornaments. An exception is a sample with a bird decoration. Two subgroups are singled out according to earthen: a) thin-walled and b) thick-walled cups. Thin-walled cups are the majority; **Group 2:** is formed by the cups with plain inside and small plant ornaments painted outside in blue cobalt paint against white background; **Group 3:** unifies samples decorated with polychrome décor expressed with blue, light blue, coral and light green paints; **Group 4:** comprises cups painted in brown paint.

As it is well-known, China is the homeland of porcelain. However, the exact time of its origin is unknown. Supposedly, porcelain decorated with cobalt blue paints under the transparent glaze against white background first appears in the 14<sup>th</sup> century during the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368). The year 1351 is considered as the earliest date.

The Golden Age of the development of such type of porcelain belongs to the Ming dynasty reign period (1368-1644). However, at the end of their reign, production and quality of porcelain decreased due to hard conditions in the country. During the following Qing dynasty (1644-1911), after the settlement of political and economic situation in the country, the production of porcelain was resumed. In 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries Chinese porcelain gradually reached the quality of the Ming dynasty porcelain and even more – the peak of its development. A new stage of porcelain production begins from the reign of the Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722).

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century activation of trade relations between south-eastern Asia and Europe as well as high demand on porcelain product promoted production improvement, perfection and development of forms. Porcelain masters did not neglect Muslim countries. Quite often this new type of “blue-white” porcelain was prepared in specifically Islamic style to be exported in Near East. Chinese porcelain of that period is discovered in Samara (Iraq), Nishapur (Persia), Hama (Syria), Iznik, Bitlis fort (Turkey), Afrasiab (Uzbekistan), Nisa (Turkmenistan), Otrar (Kazakhstan), etc.

Spreading of this porcelain begins in Persia as early as from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and passes onto the territory of Turkey, though in small numbers, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, especially after Selim I defeated Iran in 1514 and successfully terminated the Eastern invasions in 1516-1517. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century the porcelain product becomes widely spread. Knowing about the Ottoman addiction to coffee, small-size coffee cups and saucers were specially made for them.

According to the latest archaeological excavations it becomes clear that the “blue-white” porcelain is mostly met in the areas that used to be under the Ottoman rule. The porcelain ware of the similar décor is found in the following Hungarian fortresses and cities: Eger, Kanizsa, Szolnok, Buda, Gyula, etc. in the cultural layers dated to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as in Sharm-El-Sheikh along the Red Sea coast, together with Ottoman pipes and red-earthenware ceramics of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in Azov, in the cultural layer of the end on the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Balaklava together with the Ottoman artifacts of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.



A certain number of the “blue-white” porcelain is kept in the funds of the Georgian National Museum. Some specimens preserved there are similar to the porcelain products found on the inside territory of the Gonio-Apsarus fortress.

At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, apart from the cobalt blue paint the application of different colors of paints started for decoration of porcelain items. The product decorated with polychrome décor also starts to emerge. Similar type of porcelain fragments have been found of the Gonio-Apsarus territory as well. This type of products is unified into the 3 group.

Among porcelain cups one group is singled out in which the leading place in decorations is taken by brown paint. Such type of cups is included into the 4 group and can be divided into two sub-groups according to decoration: a) cups with various kinds of plant ornaments painted in blue cobalt paint under the polished transparent glaze inside against the white background whereas covered in brown paint from outside. Two shades of brown coloring are used in the cups of this type: dark and relatively light brown ones; b) cups painted in brown from both sides of the surface.

Decoration of porcelain items in similar décor became popular from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) and won popularity in England, Germany, Holland and America, though the popularity did not last long. In the late years of his reign – the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – banned the brown-painted porcelain and it completely disappeared from the market.

This type of coffee cups and bowls/saucers were very popular in the Ottoman Empire too. The Ottomans widely used products decorated with similar décor. Similar samples are found in great numbers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century cultural layers in Istanbul and saraçhane as well as in the cultural layers of Hungarian fortresses and castles dated to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Ondod, Szendrö, etc. as well as in the northern Black Sea littoral, in the layers of Azov and Balaklava fortresses of the same period.

It should be noted that in 1720-1775 porcelain cups of the same décor were produced in Meissen, Germany too. From the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century all through the 19<sup>th</sup> century European producers of porcelain actively sold China style porcelain production including coffee cups at Ottoman markets. At this period the Ottoman Empire had good relations with Germany. Great part of their production in the 18<sup>th</sup> century came on the cups

prepared in the city of Meissen in Germany. Brown-painted porcelain cups are discovered in the city of Jaffa, in the materials of the Ottoman period, dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and identified as the produce of the Meissen center of production.

According to the decoration technique and décor the group 4 comprises several fragments of coffee cups as well. Their inner side is decorated with cobalt blue paint performed in traditional Chinese motifs whereas the outer side is covered in dark brown paint. According to the earthenware, the cups are quite different. Their earthenware is of low quality, rather harsh and represents the medium ring between porcelain and faience. It is obvious that the cups are made in other Chinese center that was apparently not distinguished by good-quality production.

In our opinion, porcelain found on the Gonio-Apsarus territory was imported by the Ottoman soldiers and served to the satisfaction of their needs rather than being trade-export items. It is also confirmed by the fact that the porcelain ware is not numerous and the majority belongs to the cup type. Besides, they are discovered together with the faience products made Ottoman centers of Iznik and Kutahya. Similar picture is depicted in accordance of the outcomes of the archaeological excavations conducted in different countries worldwide.

## **§ 2. Faience**

The faience production made in different production centers of Ottoman Empire – Iznik and Kutahya are found among the late medieval archaeological finds of the monuments of south-western Georgia – Gonio-Apsarus, Petra-Tsikhisdziri, Batumi, Zendidi and Khikhani fortresses.

Production of faience begins at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in different countries of the world in imitation to the Chinese porcelain. The city of İznik (former Nicea) was one of the leading production centers in the Ottoman Empire. As it is known, the craftsmen emigrated from Persia made great influence on the commencement of faience production in this city. After the defeat of the Persians in the battle of Chaldiran (1514), the Ottoman sultan Selim I took the capital of Persia Tebriz and became the owner of diverse and numerous ceramic ware of the Tebriz palace. With the order of the sultan, hundreds of craftsmen were exiled to İstanbul, İznik, Kutahya and other centers of Ottoman Empire for the Ottoman ceramics to achieve such heights and be as

developed and of high-quality as the Persian ones of that period. The work of craftsmen was regulated through the sultan's orders (color, size, shape, etc. of the vessels) as a result of which the Ottoman ceramics developed a new style; shapes, technique and décor were elaborated that made the Ottoman faience products popular throughout the world. Thus, the first stage of development of the Ottoman white-clay pottery developed with the support of the court and mainly served the demands of the high-class society members. Although the development of pottery should have passed through the corresponding procedures, it spread outside the court too among the middle and lower strata of the population because the product destined for the rich society was actively traded at the market. Today the reasons as to why Iznik became the main production center of the Ottoman Empire are quite obvious. The craftsmen migrated from Persia settled and worked not only in Iznik but in other cities of the Ottoman Empire too, including İstanbul. Researchers explain the fact with the following: 1. the tradition of pottery making existed in Iznik as early as the Byzantine period; 2. there were rich deposits of clay around İznik; and 3. important trade roads used to pass through the city.

According to colors and artistic decoration, three main periods can be singled out in the development of Iznik ceramics: İznik I (Abraham's Kutahya - 1480/90-1525/30), specimens decorated with blue paint against white background; İznik II (Damascus style - 1525/1530-1555), various other colors appear together with the blue paint; İznik III (Rhodes style - 1555-1700), polychrome ceramics decorated with red, green, light blue and blue paints surrounded with black contours with dominant red color. However, as much as it is rather difficult to make chronological distinction when this or that color entered the scene, the scholarly literature prefers to distinguish between two types of İznik ceramics: early İznik ceramics (1490-1555) and late İznik ceramics (1555-1700).

In the decorations of İznik I period the main place is taken by flower motif. The leading motif if this type of İznik ceramics was mostly the depiction of lotus flower called in Ottoman as "khatai".

The pottery of İznik I are represented in the area of the Gonio-Apsarus fortress with the fragments of plates, bowls and jugs. The plates are characterized by roundish lap, widely convex mouth and low ring-like heel. Bowls are represented by wall and bottom-heel fragments. They are characterized by high heels and flat bottom. The produce of the "Halıç

style” (“Golden Horn”) creates an interesting group. The design of this type of pottery consists of spirals like small flowers and ivy. The bottom of one of the bowl in Gonio is decorated in similar décor. The mouth-wall fragments of two different plates also belong to the “Halyç style”. The fragments of mouth, lap and walls of a jug, bowl and lid are also unified into İznik I group.

The most creative period of the Ottoman ceramics is İznik II (Damascus Style). This period is considered as the highest peak of development of the İznik pottery production. It is distinguished by rich decoration variations and colorings. To the samples decorated in blue against the white background were added green, olive, purple and black colors, mostly for contours, from 1530. For the decoration of ceramics the following flowers appear and occupy the dominant places: roses, hyacinths, honeysuckle, chrysanthemums, and most of all – tulips and carnations.

The ceramics of İznik II is represented on the Gonio-Apsarus territory with the fragments of walls and bottoms of plates and jugs. The majority of them are plate fragments. Among the bottoms two fragments can be especially singled out – unlike the other specimens they are covered with light-green glaze. They seem to be produced in imitation to Chinese celadon. Among the next type of products a mouth-lap fragment of a bowl is significant. Jugs are also represented in fragments.

The group of late İznik III ceramics is dated to the years 1555-1700 and is known as the Rhodes style. In the Rhodes style ceramics the Ottoman potters use in painting distinct green and especially, distinct red colors. From that period the majority of specimens are painted with colors characteristic to bright tones: blue, red, green, yellow, brown and grey that are surrounded with black contours. The highest quality ceramics in İznik pottery is made in exactly this period and the ceramic ware of this period occupy one of the distinguished places in the most valuable collections of the world-famous museums.

The İznik pottery of this period is represented on the Gonio-Apsarus territory with the mouth, wall and bottom fragments of plates, bowls and jugs.

Specimens similar to the İznik ceramics found in Gonio fortress through the archaeological excavations are discovered on Crimean peninsula (Ukraine), fortresses along the Black Sea littoral in: Akerman, Ochakov, Izmail, Lutik (Ukraine), Varna, Sofia (Bulgaria), Jassy, Suceava, Tirgoviste (Romania), Istanbul (Turkey), Moscow and its vicinities (Russia),

Buda, Barcs, Eger, Esztergom, Gyula, Ozora, Pécs, Fechervar, Szolnok, Vác, Vicegrád (Hungary), Venice (Italy), Corinth, Glarentza, Athens, Boeotia, Thessaloniki, Crete island (Greece), the islands on the Aegean Sea: Skyros, Kos, The Cyclades, Rhodes, Cyprus, etc.

In Georgia, various fragments of vessels of İznik pottery are known from Dedatsikhe in Tbilisi, archaic fortress of Nardevani (Tsalka), Sulori fortress (Vani) and Kutaisi fortress.

The production of the ceramic ware in İznik reduces from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, whereas from 1716 ceases existence completely. It is explained in different ways. Some think it was caused by the fact that the city lost its strategic importance due to removal of the caravan road northwards. Others connect it to the spread of malaria disease in those places due to which craftsmen left the city. One of the main reasons is the reduction of demand on the product inasmuch as the items made in İznik were mostly intended for the high society. Apparently, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century high society members gave advantage to Chinese porcelain and European produce. Respectively, the İznik produce lost its popularity.

After the final fall of the İznik production center, Kutahya became the new main center for ceramics production. The products from Kutahya are painted in polychromic way in blue, green, red, purple, yellow, brown and violet and decorated with flowers, geometrical and figure ornaments. The most popular shapes were small thin-walled bowls, coffee cups and jugs. Chinese and European porcelain made especially big influence on the Kutahya products. In order to have success at European markets, the samples were often made in imitation to the European products.

The majority of the Kutahya ceramic ware found on the territory of the Gonio fortress during the archaeological excavations is the fragments of small size coffee cups and jugs. The coffee cups are characterized by semi-spherical or bell-like laps, merged with straight, roundish lap or slightly concave and separated mouth, round, disc-shape heel and flat bottom. According to the shape and decoration coffee cups can be divided into four groups: 1. painted in cobalt blue paint; 2. painted in one color (“monochromic”); 3. painted in two colors (“bichromic”) and 4. painted in many colors (“polychromic”) cups.

In the inside part of group 1, cups various types of flower ornaments are painted in cobalt blue paint against the white background. The main décor is many-petal flower, lotus, rose and Cyprus. The outer lap surface is decorated with ornament. For the inside part ornaments are met at the bottom of the vessel. In the inside surface of some vessels the

ornament is surrounded with one or two circular lines. Paintings are of light-blue color, while contours are dark blue. According to the earthenware thickness they are divided into two groups: a) thin-walled and b) thick-walled specimens. On the bottom of some samples different types of stamps are painted in cobalt blue paint: star-like consisting of 4 or 3 intercrossed traits thus getting the image of six or eight-point stars; two intercrossed traits in a circle, lozenge stamps and a stamp like a bird image. Star-like stamps are met most often. Similar stamp is met on the cups of other group as well but unlike this group, the star-like stamps are painted in black paints on them. Apparently, the idea of putting stamps on the Ottoman faience is of European origin and made in imitation to Meissen production. This group of Kutahya coffee cups was greatly influenced by the “blue-white” porcelain of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The group of faience coffee cups made in imitation to the “blue-white” porcelain appears from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century and becomes especially popular at the end of the same period. This group of coffee cups was produced until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since that time the samples decorated with cobalt blue paint were replaced by polychromic painted ceramics.

Apart from coffee cups, a lid and a bowl decorated with cobalt blue paint were discovered on the territory of the Gonio fortress.

Group 2 After the group of coffee cups comes the group of monochromic cups. So far the group consists of only one fragment of mouth-lap of one cup. Two-colored and many-colored painted cups appear relatively later, in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and spread more widely than the specimens painted in cobalt blue paint or brown paint.

Group 3 The group comprises cups painted in two different colors. They are characterized by bell-like laps, slightly convex mouth and low ring-like heels.

Painting of cups in brown color became popular at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, under the influence of the porcelain cups made in China during the reign of Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722).

Group 4 comprises cups painted in many colors. There are small ornaments of plant often merged with geometric figures on the specimens of this group. The contours of images are elaborated in dark brown or black paints whereas the images are of distinct yellow, green, light blue or red colors that rendered vessels festive look. The plant ornaments consist of flowers, leaves, boughs, grape clusters, cypresses and medallions. According to the

decoration technique they are divided into two subgroups: a) for painting of cups light blue, green, black, blue and red colors are used, and b) here belong the cups painted in black, yellow, green, light blue, blue and brown colors. Dominant color in images is yellow.

There are several fragments of coffee cups found on the territory of Gonio fortress that were produced in different production centers. One of them should have been made in the city of Kashan, Persia. It is the first case in the region under study. It is difficult to define for today how the samples appeared on the territory of Gonio.

Bowls and jug fragments of the Kutahya production center are found on the Gonio fortress territory. They are decorated with different décor. Apart from the Gonio fortress, the fragments of various vessels of Kutahya faience are discovered in Batumi and Petratshkhisdziri fortresses too. They are met on the monuments of Ajara highlands, though in small numbers. A fragment of thin-walled vessel with a small foot is found on the territory of Zendidi fortress. A small fragment of a wall of a turquoise glazed bowl is found on the Khikhani fortress as well. Because of fragmented materials it is difficult to make the impression about the entire shape of the vessels.

Despite not very high artistic level, the faience products were made in the city of Kutahya all through the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since then the city loses its significance and the center for ceramic ware transfers to Çanakkale (Dardanel). As a result of archaeological excavations, the Kutahyan products are found in great numbers in the following places: Jerusalem (Israel), Damascus (Syria), Cairo (Egypt), Marseille (France), The Crimean peninsula (Ukraine), Kouklia (Cyprus), Athens, Boeotia, Thebes, Corinth, Thessaloniki (Greece mainland); islands in the Aegean Sea: Skyros, Melos, Rhodes, Crete. Samples of this type of ceramics are found in North America as well. They were the products of special mass distribution on the archaeological monuments of the former Ottoman Empire.

In Georgia the Kutahyan products are found on Dedatsikhe in Tbilisi, Dmanisi ancient site Nakalaqari and Kutaisi fortress.

The distribution of the products of İznik as well as Kutahya in Georgia, including the area under our study, is obviously connected to the Ottoman garrison here and is not related to the economic relations. First and foremost, this product was spread here through military channels and used to serve Ottoman soldiers' demands and requirements. It is confirmed by

the fact that the production specimens are mostly found on the territory of Gonio fortress that represented the main outpost of dominance for the Ottoman Empire in south-western Georgia.

### § 3. Glazed Ceramics

Among the archaeological finds glazed pottery is significant in number. Late medieval glazed pottery is met along the littoral as well as Gonio, Petra-Tsikhisdziri and Batumi fortresses, also in Zendidi and Khikhani fortresses of the Ajara highlands. The ceramics found in the inside territory of the Gonio fortress is particularly remarkable in number and shape diversity. The samples of this ceramic ware sharply differ from one another in earthenware as well as shapes and glaze technique. Apparently, they should have been made in different production centers. Three main groups can be singled out according to earthenware: a) red-brownish, b) beige and c) pink earthenware. Most popular shapes are bowls, cups, trays, jugs and candlesticks.

The earliest group of the late medieval glazed pottery is discovered in Batumi and Gonio fortresses and belongs to the group of the Ottoman glazed pottery, known in scholarly literature as the „Miletus-ware”. The „Miletus-ware” was first produced in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The name is given by a German scholar Frederik Sarre. In 1930, according to the numerous fragments found while working in the Antique Miletus area, he supposed the ceramics was produced in Miletus. However, the archaeological excavations conducted from 1960 in İznik under the leadership of Oktay Aslanapa confirmed that the ceramics of „Miletus-ware” were produced in İznik. There is another opinion as well, namely, concerning the production of the „Miletus-ware” ceramics not only in İznik but also in other cities of Asia Minor such as Kutahya, Çanakkale, Konia, Diarbakir, etc. it is obvious that in respect to earthenware or ornamentation motifs, the „Miletus-ware” ceramics found in Batumi and Gonio fortresses are different from each other. According to Oktay Aslanapa’s conclusion, production of the „Miletus-ware” ceramics ceases at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, on the basis of the stratigraphic cultural layers of Saraçhane, J.W. Hayes considers the date of termination 1520. Lately the suppositions appeared concerning the prolongation of the production up to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The „Miletus-ware” ceramics is found in great numbers after archaeological excavations in different cities of the former Ottoman Empire: Kutahya, Konia, Antalya,



Silifke, Bursa, Ankara, İstanbul and Malatya. However, it is also widely found all throughout the Black Sea littoral region, especially on the Crimea peninsula, in Mangup, Inkerman, Balaklava (Chembalo), Gurzuf, Simeiz, Alusht, Sudak, Partenit, Azov, etc.

The following items of glazed ceramics belong to the later period and are dated to the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to the artistic ornamentation they can be divided into three groups: 1) items glazed in one color, mostly green, relatively less in yellow, light blue and brown colors (“monochrome” ceramics); 2) ceramics glazed in two colors (“bichrome” ceramics) and 3) multi colors (“polychrome” ceramics). There are two qualities of glaze over the engobed surface: a) glossy, crystal color and b) relatively rough, darkened.

**Ceramics glazed in one color (monochrome).** Among the one-color glazed pottery, most numerous are the bowls ornamented in green glaze paint of different shades. Yellow and brown glazed samples are found in less number, although they are not different from the green glazed ones in shape, ornamentation and earthenware structure. One-color glazed bowls are represented by mouth-lap and bottom fragments. They can be divided into the following 4 groups according to the mouth-rim and lap shapes: **Group 1.** they are mouth-gathered bowls, characterized by flattened mouth-rim and roundish, semispherical laps; **Group 2.** It comprises mouth-gathered bowls, characterized by roundish mouth-rim and roundish, semispherical or bell-like laps; **Group 3.** The samples included here are characterized by widely convex mouth, irregularly sloped laps and upward mouth-rim. **Group 4.** It comprises bowls with profiled slightly convex and upward mouth-rim and roundish lap.

In comparison with mouth and lap fragments, the bottoms of one-color glazed bowls are more numerous. However, judging from the big quantity of the material it can be said that not all of them can belong to bowls exceptionally. Certain part of them may easily be bottoms or heels of trays or plates. According to heel shapes two groups can be distinguished: a) high heel and b) low heel forms. According to shape variations each group is further divided into subgroups. The group of high-heeled vessels is divided into two main subgroups:

**Group 1** comprises high heels with flat support areas separated from lap and curved outside; **Group 2** is characterized by wheel-like heel separated from high lap, with rounded inside area.

Low-heel bowls are more numerous and are distinguished by shape diversity. There are several groups of them: **Group 1** comprises low flattened heels separated from lap; **Group 2** is characterized by low, wheel-like heel separated from lap; **Group 3** comprises bowls that have convex heels with flat support areas, separated from low lap; **Group 4** comprises slow, straight-walled and slightly convex circular heels with flat support area, separated from lap; **Group 5** is characterized by low, slightly convex, straight-walled heels of circular shape, separated from lap; **Group 6** comprises low, slightly convex heels, separated from laps. The heels of the bowls unified in this group are characterized by walls rounded gradually from inside towards the bottom.

Bowls with stands form a separate group among one-color glazed bowls. They are found in small numbers.

**Two-color (“bichrome”) glazed pottery.** The next group of glazed bowls is formed by two-color glazed specimens known in the scholarly literature as “bichrome” ceramics. The name is given by I. Teslenko on the basis of the study of the main properties and features of this type of pottery – according to the thick colored stripes made on the surface and outer lap of the bowls. According to decoration technique, glaze quality and ornaments two main groups can be single out: 1. Bowls painted in green with yellow, yellow-brownish and various coloring and 2. Bowls painted in green with yellow, yellow-brownish and various coloring, with different types of geometrical ornaments, like spiral coils, loops, ovals, etc. inscribed in scratch techniques.

**Multi-color (“polychrome”) glazed pottery.** There are two groups among the specimens of polychrome glazed vessels. **Group 1.** it comprises different bowls whose inner and outer laps are glazed with different types of glaze. They are characterized by low, circular, straight-walled heels separated from lap, and flat bottom. **Group 2.** It comprises the bowls decorated in the so called “Marble-like” technique. The group is represented by fragments of mouth-laps and bottoms. The bowls are painted in alternating or mixed dark-green, light green, yellow, brown and black paints. They are coated in transparent glaze. There are two qualities of glaze – pure color and relatively dull and darkened.

**Cups.** Unlike bowls, cups are comparatively bigger and deep in capacity. There are samples with one-color (mostly green and yellow) glaze as well as multi-color painted samples and the specimens performed with scratching method or technique.

**Plates.** Plates are glazed in one color as well as many colors. The majority is represented by green-glaze samples.

**Jugs.** Jugs are also included in the finds of late medieval glazed ceramics. The jugs differ in the shape of mouth-neck and body: a) mouth-pipe jugs; b) narrow-neck jugs; c) jugs with high wide cylindrical necks and d) massive big size jugs.

The excavations on the Gonio fortress territory discovered wall fragments of a pot glazed in green as well as small size jug lids. Separate group of glazed pottery is formed by the green-glazed handle, bottom and side fragments of the so called “thick” vessels. The majority is represented by handle fragments. All of them are massive flat cross-sectioned samples. They are fragments of long jars. Jars are remarkable among the other samples of glazed pottery.

There are candlesticks among the clay products of household utilization. The discovered items show that they are elaborated on lathes. In most cases brown-earthen and pink-earthen forms are presented which are glazed in green or yellow. So far no samples of a wholesome item have been found. Therefore, it is hard to identify the entire complete shape. They are divided into two groups: a) candlesticks have high concave-surface mouth that has a small edge-raised bowl modeled to the foot, about 4-5 cm away, for candle melts. They seem to have had cone-like body and flat bottom. Flat bottoms of some samples are cone-like concave in the central part; b) the next group comprises candlesticks characterized by relatively low, cone-like body and flat bottom with edges raised in 2,5-3 cm.

It should be noted that dating of the glazed ceramics found on the monuments of south-western Georgia – Batumi fortress, Petra-Tsikhisdziri, Gonio fortress - causes contradictory opinions. M. Mitsishvili divides the glazed vessels of Western Georgia into two parts: the local and the imported ones and dates them to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Besides, according to the materials found in Petra-Tsikhisdziri and Batumi fortress, the author supposes that there was a production center for one-color glazed pottery in Batumi fortress and a production center for multi-color glazed pottery in Petra-Tsikhisdziri. In the scholar’s opinion, the glazed vessels discovered in Gonio repeat the shapes of unglazed vessels that points to their local production. If we judge according to the glazed pottery discovered in Gonio as well as other types of products found in the cultural layers of the Gonio fortress (faience, porcelain, pipes, metal ware, etc.). We consider them as the

production of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. If we take into consideration the quantity of the materials found on the territory of the fortress as well as their resemblance of the part of them with the local plain pottery, it cannot be excluded that part of them had been made locally, in particular the brown-earthen samples and specimens glazed in one color – green and yellow. However, inasmuch as no traces of furnace-workshops for pottery have been found in the vicinities of the fortress territory so far, their local production is mostly conditional. The same can be said about the glazed ceramics found on the territories of Batumi and Tsikhisdziri fortresses. Moreover, unlike Gonio fortress, glazed ceramics are found in very small quantity on the territory of these monuments. The picture similar to the Gonio fortress can be observed in the north Black Sea littoral of the late medieval territory, namely the Crimea peninsula. Proceeding from the great quantity of one-color glazed pottery discovered in the city of Kefe (Theodosia), there appears a supposition concerning the local production of part of them.

In Georgia, the local products of one-color, mostly green and yellow and multi-color glazed ceramic ware of late medieval period is known from the following places: from the Tbilisi archaeological monuments – Narikala, Karvasla, Sinagoge in Telavi, Gremi, Ujarma, Uplistsikhe, Akhalkalaki in Javakheti, Kveteri fortress, Kutaisi, etc.

The glazed pottery from the Gonio fortress significantly differs from one another according to earthen as well as painting technique and décor. It is obvious that they are made in different workshops and production centers. Part of them must have been imported from different centers of the Ottoman Empire, including one of the main centers – the city of İznik in Anatolia (former Nicea).

As it is well known, the city of İznik used to be an important strategic location during the Ottoman period. Significant caravan roads used to pass through this place from Istanbul towards the central Anatolia. Therefore, due to its convenient strategic location, apart from being economic and cultural center, it also became the main center for production the Ottoman ceramics. One of the reasons for this was the fact that ceramics production used to have longtime tradition in this city and was known as early as the Byzantine period (10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries). The first samples of red-earthen Ottoman pottery produced here were performed with the influence of the Byzantine ceramics. Since the Byzantine period one-color, mostly green and yellow glazed pottery became the objects of intensive utilization. It is still not

determined when their production was started in the Ottoman Empire. The reason is that the earthen as well as the painting technique and shapes were used in both periods and in most cases the first specimens of the Ottoman ceramics resemble the late Byzantine products.

The famous French scholar François studied the Ottoman ceramics similar to the Byzantine ceramics made in İznik in the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries and came to the conclusion that Ottoman ceramic masters took from the Byzantine craftsmen the techniques for producing such types of pottery and continued the tradition of ceramics production in the Ottoman Empire. The bowls or cups produced there were the direct descendents of the Byzantine tradition. The scholar finds a logical explanation to this fact and states that if there was a clay ore near Nicea (İznik) that was used during the Byzantine period, it would be unjustifiable to abandon the clay production right after the conquest of the territory by the Ottomans.

It is true, the earthen, elaboration technique and glaze of the glazed ceramics were the same but in later period, in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the items produced in the Ottoman Empire were already distinguishable from the previous period items. The quality of the products suffers degradation and the items are often careless and tasteless items are made whereas glaze becomes of bad quality, dull and dark. The earliest green and yellow glazed shapes found during the excavations of the Roman theatre in İznik, as well as the ceramics found during the excavations in Kadmea, Gano and Dimetoka and the specimens found during the excavations in Saraçhane in İstanbul by J.W.Hayes were similar in shape as well as painting technique and ornamentation and represented the ceramic ware produced by the Ottoman craftsmen in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Therefore, on the basis of the archaeological material obtained through excavations it is supposed that the glazed pottery, especially green-glazed ceramics were actively produced and distributed in the Ottoman Empire in the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, in İznik, where different types of ceramics had been produced non-stop from earlier periods, the production of ceramics ceases at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Certain part of the pink-earthen and one-color glazed pottery found on the territory of Gonio fortress greatly resembles the products prepared in the south-eastern part of Crimea peninsula, known in the academic world as “South-Eastern Crimea Ceramics (IOBK)”. During the Ottoman period the “South-Eastern Crimea Ceramics (IOBK)” was produced in

great quantities and distributed in various parts of the Ottoman Empire. Ceramics of this group occupies a leading place in all the archaeological monuments or fortresses of the Crimea peninsula as well as outside its borders on Azak fortress (Azov), Bihorod-Dnistrovskiyi, Kuban littoral monuments. The “South-Eastern Crimea Ceramics (IOBK)” is also found in İstanbul during the archaeological excavations in the Tekfur Palace. Introduction of them into the Gonio territory must have happened by the Ottoman soldiers.

As for the next group of the glazed pottery, the two-color (“bichrome”) glazed ceramics, this type of ceramics was quite widely spread on the archaeological monuments of late medieval Crimea peninsula at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They are found in Sudak, Chembalo fortress in Balaklava, Mangupi citadel, Partenit fortress, etc. such ceramics is unfamiliar up to the third quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, supposedly, they should be dated to the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries and mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. So far the origin of the ceramics of this group is not determined. The analysis of the inscription made on one of the bowls found in the Sudak fortress makes scholars think that one of the production centers should have been a province of eastern Arabia. However, neither is it excluded that such ceramics were produced in the Ottoman provinces too from where they appeared in the Gonio fortress.

One of the production centers of the glazed pottery in the Ottoman Empire was the district of Eyüp Sultan craftsmen in İstanbul. The ceramics production began there as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century and continued non-stop up to 1936. The active production of the items for everyday use, especially green-glazed pottery actively developed in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since the year 1718, when with the initiative of Ibrahim Pasha the craftsmen left in İznik were transferred to the Tekfur Palace, the expansion of the Eyüp Sultan craftsmen district took place. The ceramics produced in the Tekfur Palace gained popularity quite soon. The production of the glazed ceramics made with the new style of the so called “marble technique” in the Ottoman Empire is connected to the Tekfur Palace. Initially, this type of ceramics was discovered in Istanbul together with the ceramics of the Byzantine period and the production center was not identified. However, after the archaeological excavations the “marble-like” ceramics appeared together with the Ottoman materials in Greece (Dimetoka), Sudan and Crimea, Kefe and Sudak fortresses that were similar to the production prepared in the Tekfur Palace.

Supposedly, the commencement of their production in the Ottoman Empire after the expansion of the Eyüp Sultan craftsmen district between the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries is connected with the names of the craftsmen from the Tekfur Palace.

In our opinion, the certain part of the glazed ceramics found on the monuments of south-western Georgia, namely one-color glazed pottery painted in green and yellow and the items decorated with the so called “marble-like” technique were produced in the Tekfur Palace in İstanbul and the district of the Eyüp Sultan craftsmen.

Bowls decorated with the so called “marble-like” technique are widely found on the Gonio fortress. Several fragmenst have been found on the Batumi fortress as well and Tbilisi Dedatsikhe in eastern Georgia. M. Mitsishvili considers them as Dagestan production and connects their distribution in Georgia to the activation of the Dariali trade road from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.

“Marble-like” ceramics produced by the Eyüp craftsmen and green-glazed bowls, jugs and candlesticks have been discovered in great quantities during archaeological excavations in Crimea, Kefe and Sudak fortresses and the Caucasus. Their distribution is related to the Ottoman soldiers and warriors. Apparently, these products were spread from İstanbul to the Black Sea littoral countries via sea. These products might have reached the territory of Georgia, namely Gonio, in the same way.

#### **§ 4. Plain Ceramics**

Plain ceramics is found in most quantity and variety among the archaeological finds of south-western Georgia in the late medieval period. They are mostly represented by kitchenware, table and construction ceramics. Plain pottery is found on the coastline monuments (Gonio, Batumi fortress, Petra-Tskhisdziri) as well as in the Ajara highlands (Zendidi and Khikhani fortresses).

Among the kitchenware we should single out various types of earthenware characterized by roundish mouth, low lap and wide flat bottom. Since the Middle Ages this vessel still preserves sustainability of the shape to this day and does not differ greatly from present-day earthenware. Such vessels are found in great numbers in eastern as well as western Georgia, including the medieval monuments of the Adjaristskali gorge. They are especially greatly found in the late medieval layers of different sections in Gonio fortress.

Excavated materials also contain fragments of pan-like vessels. Among tableware utensils bowls can be singled out that create different variations of shapes, such as: 1. flat bottom, low shoulders distinctly separated from the lap and roundish lap. The outer mouth of the vessel is decorated with indirect notches. 2. The bowl is surrounded with a relief wavy ornament along the mouth. Coil-like lines are preserved on the inside mouth. 3. Bowls have rounded and widely convex mouth. Equally rounded lap ends in flat heel-less bottom. Coil-like lines are preserved on the inside mouth.

The next group of plain ceramics is created by pots. Some pots have flat bottom, straight mouth, low neck and lowered shoulders. At the beginning of the shoulder there is a grooved wavy belt. Inner and outer surface is ornamented with coil-like lines. Part of the pots is characterized by flattened bottom and low straight neck. Shoulders are sharply separated from the neck. On the body they are surrounded with indirectly bent grooved centric lines. There are also triangular cross-cut pots with convex mouth. Part of the pots is decorated with grooved wavy ornament or “rope-like” belt. Flat cross-cut handle is attached to the mouth and shoulder.

Among the plain ceramic ware discovered on the monuments of south-western Georgia most numerous are jugs and pitchers. They are found in great numbers on the territory of Gonio fortress. In smaller numbers they are found on the territories of Batumi and Zenedi fortresses. There are two types of pitchers: Type 1 is comprised by pitchers with pipes sometimes called as vessels with “beaks”, “pipe-beaks” or “kettle-like” pitchers. Similar types of pitchers are widely spread on the late medieval monuments of Georgia as well as whole Transcaucasia. They are met in Mtskheta, Rustavi, Tbilisi – in Dedatsikhe, Karvasla, Synagogue, Kvetera, etc. of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Supposedly, such type of vessels is mostly characteristic to the Islamic world and was spread in our country from Persia or Ottoman Empire. Initial distribution of this product is indeed connected to the Islamic world. However, this shape of vessel became so much familiar that was preserved in the local ceramics production almost till the latest period; Type 2 pitchers comprise plain jugs. These are also typical samples of the late stage of the late medieval period and together with pitchers with pipes can be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries.



Jars appeared in small numbers in the excavated materials. They are characterized by triangular cross-cut slightly convex mouth and high neck. The vessel is surrounded with coil-like lines along the inner and outer rims.

Apart from the described specimens, a vessel with “strainer” found during the excavation of the tower No10 on the territory of Gonio fortress should be singled out among the archaeological finds. Similar vessel is found in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Dmanisi, Ujarma, Telavi, etc.

The fragments of *dergi* (long oval jar) form a separate group in plain ceramics. They are characterized by flat mouth and narrow higher neck. Rough surface is ornamented with grooved central lines or relief rope-like ornament.

The next group of plain ceramics is comprised by construction ceramics – tiles and bricks. Grooved tiles are most numerous. Tiles are found in great numbers on the Gonio fortress territory. Relatively more tiles are found in Zendidi fortress territory. There are some on the territory of Batumi fortress and Petra-Tsikhisdziri fortress. Rarely can they be found on Khikhani fortress as well. Apparently, in the late medieval period certain part of the constructions used to be roofed with tiles. They were made from red-burnt thick-sand clay. Bricks are small in number compared to tiles. They are rectangular, narrow and oblong in shape. Like different products of plain ceramics, construction ceramics must also be made locally. The mentioned products are especially greatly represented in the late medieval layers of the Gonio fortress. The archaeological excavations conducted at the southern gate of the fortress territory revealed the remains of furnace-workshops used for burning construction ceramics.

Together with its accompanying and parallel materials, construction ceramics can be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## § 5. Pipes

Clay pipes are found in significantly large numbers during the archaeological excavations on the monuments of south-western Georgia. Like other ceramics of the late medieval period, their absolute majority is found on the territory of Gonio fortress. They can be found in certain numbers on Batumi and Petra-Tsikhisdziri fortresses as well whereas in the Ajara highlands they are mostly found in the finds of the Zendidi fortress. Two

fragments are found on the Khikhani fortress territory too. Clay pipes are found in small numbers on the medieval monuments of the Adjaristskali gorge as well.

The shape and ornamentation of the pipes are diverse. Most part of them is placed in mould and decorated with notched geometric or plant ornaments. Some of them are coated with brown or red clay substance. Some stamped samples are also met. According to the shape pipes resemble opened flowers, bells, funnels, discs, cones, etc. as a rule, the joint places of pipe bodies and stems are separated by distinct notched or dotted lines. According to earthen they can be divided into red, reddish, grey and white earthen items.

Clay pipes are mainly related to the Islamic world. Majority of them are revealed in such places that were ruled by the Ottomans or Persians for a long time. Actually, the recognition of their Ottoman origin became the background for the opinion established in the Georgian historiography that the date of their introduction to Georgia should be determined as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, recent research shows that it was practically impossible to introduce Ottoman pipes to Georgia until the 16<sup>th</sup> century for their production is not confirmed in Ottoman Empire not until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century either with written or with archaeological data. The real date of their introduction to Georgia is the last decade of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with taking into consideration political and economic as well as other factors: high price of tobacco, different types of prohibitions, etc.

Clay pipes are found on the following late medieval monuments of Georgia: Tbilisi, Gori, Karaghaji, Mtskheta, Rustavi, Gremi, Gudarekhi, Dmanisi, Nadarbazevi, Telavi, Ikalto; in the ancient sites of Kvemo Kartli – Rkinis Tskali, Dzveli Bogvi, Poladauri; in southern and western Georgia: Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Vardzia, Vani caves, Kutaisi, Tsakvinja. They are dated everywhere to the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **§ 6. Metal Ware**

There are various types of ware made from iron and bronze among the archaeological materials of the late medieval period. The earliest among them are two lance-type weapons found on the Gonio fortress territory. The weapons are of Italian type and according to their exact analogues can be dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Presumably, their introduction is connected to Genoa. However, we do not share this opinion. Although the lance-like weapon was not the main type of the Ottoman armament, we consider that this

weapon appeared in the hands of the Ottoman as their combat trophy after one of their raids into European countries and eventually they introduced it to the Gonio fortress.

Among the iron items, shells and groove bombs of spherical shape are most frequently met. They are found in numerous numbers on the coastal monuments in Gonio, Batumi fortress and Petra-Tsikhisdziri as well as in the highlands of Ajara, on the Zendidi and Khikhani fortresses. A fragment of cannon barrel was found in one of the towers (Tower No 6) in Gonio fortress. Iron cores are the last stage of the late medieval period and should be dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among other types of iron items the scales are remarkable, found in Gonio. Only the flat cross-cut stem is preserved; round bullet-casting moulds; nails; horseshoes of different sizes. Among other types of item a small size fire poker found in the Khikhani fortress is to be singled out.

Apart from iron items, some bronze objects are also met though in smaller quantities. First and foremost, we should single out a mortar, pitcher lid, jug, miniature vessel and belt buckles. Like iron items, bronze objects also belong to the last stage of the late medieval period and should be dated to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **§ 7. Coins**

As a result of accidental discoveries as well as archaeological excavations conducted on the monuments of south-western Georgia coins of the late medieval period are also revealed. The Ottoman coins are mainly identified as belonging to the periods of Ahmed III (1703-1730), Mahmud II (1808-1839) and Mehmed Rashid V (1909-1918). Obviously, introduction and distribution of the Ottoman money in our country was the result of the political situation existing at that time between Georgia and Ottoman Empire.

Ottoman invasions in Transcaucasia caused accumulation of Ottoman money in great numbers in the western and south-western part of Georgia. Ottoman pricings found here must have been part of the Janissary wages, confirmed by written sources of documents too. Some Venetian ducats of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries have also been found on the territory of Gonio fortress and in the village of Khutsubani (Kobuleti municipality). There are only a few pieces of them. As it is known, a customs department was arranged at the Gonio fortress territory; hence the appearance of European coins seems quite natural. Several Polish coins have been found in Gonio and in the village of Khino. All of them were minted in the name of Sigismund III (1587-1632). Supposedly, Polish coins begin spreading in Georgia from the

first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, preconditioned by the political relations with Poland against the Ottomans' growing expansion, trade relations, Catholic missionaries' activities in Guria and Samegrelo principalities, movements of Dnieper and Done Kazaks, etc.

## IV Chapter

### Economy and Economic Life in Medieval South-Western Georgia

#### § 1. Farming

According to historical and ethnographic data and explorers' information notes it becomes clear that in crops such as barley, millet, rye, wheat, hominy, etc. were harvested in Ajara in the late medieval period.

Archaeological materials also confirm cultivation of cereal crops in this region. In this respect the remains of crops discovered during the archaeological excavations on the territory of Chvana (Takidzebi) fortress in 1984 are of great significance. The varieties of soft and hard wheat have been identified, including *doli* bread and *dika* samples, rye, hominy, lentil and chickling vetch.

Spreading of cereal crops in the late medieval Ajara is verified by the notes and information preserved in the Ottoman book-registers that show that apart from ispenj (tax fee for non-Muslim population), the population of upper and lower Ajara used to pay taxes in jars and akhchis.

The culture of bean used to be very popular in late medieval Ajara too. Vegetable growing was greatly developed as well. The tobacco was also spread but in rather less degree.

#### §2. Viticulture

Great number of wine cellars, wine presses cut in the rocks, various sizes of long wine pitchers buried in the ground in considerable numbers all point to the development of viticulture and wine-making. Discovery of such vessels as jugs, jars, bowls, goblets, wine cups, etc. must be connected with the development of viticulture and wine-making.

In the late medieval period viticulture was decreased or completely disappeared. Islamic faith prohibited wine making and consuming. However, it should be noted that Muslim religion did not ban viticulture. In this respect the following fact should be taken into consideration: the information preserved in the Ottoman taxation registers (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>

centuries) about upper and lower Ajara and Batumi districts shows that apart from other taxes and fees, the Ajara population used to pay rather big tax on *shira* (grape molasses). Wine making and drinking was prohibited by Muslim legislation. Although the Ottomans destroyed wine-making, viticulture still continued to exist (mostly eating plants were left). The reasons for reduction and destruction of viticulture and wine-making in Ajara during the Ottoman rule are of complex character and connected to religious as well as social and economic factors. Religious factor directly influenced the process of reduction and destruction of wine-making and consumption as well as wine varieties of vines, although not the complete destruction of viticulture.

### **§3. Fruit Growing**

Information about development of fruit growing is provided by the travelers and explorers of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the ethnographic data presenting Ajara as a well-developed region in fruit-growing, gardening and vegetable gardening. According to these data it becomes clear that many fruit species were developed in Ajara in the late medieval period: apple, pear, sweet cherry, peach, fig, cherry plum, cornel, walnut, nut, melon, etc. apples and pears were especially well cultivated. Fruit satisfied the needs of the Ajara population and was used as an imported products as one of the sources of income.

### **§ 4. Animal Husbandry**

Animal husbandry seems to have been well developed in late medieval Ajara. During the Ottoman rule the number of cattle was considerably reduced. The reason was the increased tax on the cattle. Nevertheless, animal husbandry and cattle breeding remained as one of the leading branches of agriculture in Ajara. Cattle breeding developed not only for household needs or demands but it also represented a significant source of family income. Cattle and animal products (butter, cheese, cream and leather) were important items of exchange and trade.

According to the registers in upper and lower Ajara, pig breeding was also well developed in Ajara at that period. The proof to this is the fixed tax on pigs preserved in the registers, assigned to almost every village in the region.

### **§ 5. Bee Keeping**

Apart from animal husbandry, bee keeping was also well developed in Ajara. Bee keeping products (honey, candles) used to be objects of import in Ajara. Even as early as the Ottoman rule, Batumi was its exporter together with some other agricultural products.

### **Conclusions**

After analyzing and studying the materials found as a result of archaeological excavations conducted on the monuments of south-western Georgia as well as the information preserved in the written sources, the history of south-western Georgia of the late medieval period can be represented in the following way:

1. In the 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the convenient strategic location of south-western Georgia, transecting important trade-transit roads and natural environment still play an essential role in this period of history.

2. New fortification constructions are rarely built; mostly the fortifications of previous periods are used. Seldom but still new fortresses appear. Among them are Zendidi and Nigazeuli fortification constructions. In late medieval period stone order is narrower, often roughly elaborated and irregular. The construction uses broken stones and sometimes bricks. Sometimes dry laying is used while building the constructions. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century the 1.40 m high battlements are built over the Gonio stone fence with the influence of firearms.

3. A great number of various types of rich and diverse archaeological materials have been found on the monuments of south-western Georgia, especially in the coastline zone. Chronologically earliest among them is the Chinese porcelain of the times of Ming (1368 – 1644) dynasty found on the territory of Gonio fortress. The next group of the porcelain found on the territory of Gonio fortress belongs to the Qing (1644-1911) dynasty. The product is introduced to the Gonio fortress by the Ottoman soldiers and served to satisfaction of their needs.

A separate group of ceramics is formed by faience production made in Ottoman empire, the cities of Anatolia – İznik (the 16<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of 18<sup>th</sup> century) and Kuthaya (the 18<sup>th</sup> century).

The distribution of the products of İznik as well as Kutahya in Georgia, including the area under our study, is obviously connected to the Ottoman garrison here and is not related

to the trade-economic relations. First and foremost, this product was spread here through military channels and used to serve Ottoman soldiers' demands and requirements.

The next group of ceramics is represented by glazed pottery. The earliest group of the late medieval glazed pottery is discovered in Batumi and Gonio fortresses and belongs to the group of the Ottoman glazed pottery, known in scholarly literature as the „Miletus-ware”. The next items belong to the later period and are dated to the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Part of them must have been imported from different centers of the Ottoman Empire, including one of the main centers – the city of İznik in Anatolia (former Nicea). Certain part of the pink-earthen and one-color glazed pottery found on the territory of Gonio fortress greatly resembles the products prepared in the south-eastern part of Crimea peninsula, known in the academic world as “South-Eastern Crimea Ceramics (IOBK)”. Introduction of them into the Gonio territory must have happened by the Ottoman soldiers.

So far the origin of the next group of the two-color (“bichrome”) glazed ceramics is not determined. Presumably, such ceramics was made in one of the production centers of the Ottoman Empire. The thesis expresses supposition that part of the glazed pottery was prepared in the Tekfur Palace in Istanbul. Namely, the production of the Tekfur Palace should be the ceramics of one-color (mostly green-glaze) pottery as well as the items ornamented with “marble-like” décor. We think it possible that certain part of items was made locally, namely the brown-earthen ones for they resemble the local plain ceramics in the structure of earthen.

The next group is created by plain ceramics: earthenware, pots, bowls, jars, jugs, pitchers, etc. earthenware as well as pipe-mouth jugs and pitchers of different sizes so characteristic to the Islamic world are found in most numbers. Construction ceramics is also found in quit numerous quantities too, namely bricks and tiles. Tiles are found on the Gonio fortress territory in great numbers. They are also numerous found on the territory of Zendidi fortress and less – in Batumi and Khkhani fortresses.

Apparently, in the late medieval period certain part of the constructions used to be roofed with tiles. Like different products of plain ceramics, construction ceramics must also be made locally. Together with its accompanying and parallel materials, construction ceramics can be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Pipes comprise a separate group of ceramic ware. Their shapes and ornaments are diverse. Most part of them is placed in mould and decorated with notched geometric or plant ornaments. Chronologically, the samples with white earthen are the earlier ones (17<sup>th</sup> century). Compared to the white-earthen specimens, the red-earthen ones are more numerous and are dated to various periods of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Among the finds of the late medieval period we also meet metal ware. The earliest among them are two Italian lances discovered in the Gonio fortress. They are dated to the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There are other types of products also found on the Gonio fortress territory, namely a bronze mortar, a bronze jug and iron and some bullet-casting moulds. Shells are found in great numbers on the monuments. They reflect the last part of the late medieval period and are dated to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Different size iron nails are also discovered in great numbers.

Archaeological finds comprise coins as well. Majority of them has been discovered during the archaeological excavations conducted at different sections of the Gonio fortress. Among the coins we can find different types of European coins (Venetian, Polish) as well as the Ottoman *akhchis*.

4. The archaeological and ethnographic materials as well as the written sources show that the main fields of economic activities of the population in south-western Georgia in the late medieval period were the following: farming, viticulture, fruit growing, animal husbandry, bee keeping, etc. According to historical-ethnographic data and explorers' information notes it becomes clear that in crops such as barley, millet, rye, wheat, hominy, etc. were harvested in Ajara in the late medieval period. Viticulture seems to have been developed in almost all parts of Ajara. Great number of wine cellars, wine presses cut in the rocks, various sizes of long wine pitchers buried in the ground in considerable numbers all point to the development of viticulture and wine-making. Information about development of fruit growing is provided by the travelers and explorers of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the ethnographic data presenting Ajara as a well-developed region in fruit-growing, gardening and vegetable gardening. Animal husbandry and bee keeping were also well developed in Ajara in the late medieval period.

Since the ancient times to the late medieval period inclusive, south-western Georgia played an important role in the process of formation of the unified Georgian culture and



outlook. During the centuries south-western Georgia in general and in particular the area under study represented a significant center of the Georgian sovereignty in almost every field.

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