



The Shengavit settlement is one of the most significant archaeological monuments in Armenia dating from the early Bronze Age. It is situated in the south-west of Yerevan, on the left bank of the Hrazdan River. The hill occupies an area of 6 acres and lies 30 metres above the level of the river.

Between 1936 and 1938, archaeologist Yevgeny Bayburdyan made observations and conducted excavations. Excavations at the site ceased for almost two decades. In 1958, archaeological observations and excavations restarted, under the direction of Sandro Sardaryan. Between 1958 and 1980, he excavated the central preserved section of the settlement. Since August 2000, further excavations have taken place, undertaken by a joint Armenian-American archaeological expedition under the direction of archaeologist Hakob Simonyan. These archaeological excavations have shown the settlement was surrounded by a high wall built with rough stones, had an underground, tiled tunnel to the Hrazdan River, and that the tombs had spread outside the wall.

The ancient Shengavit settlement belongs to the period of the primitive communal tribal society. The basic settlement consists of four sequential archaeological and cultural layers, built on top of each other, each measuring four metres deep. These can be classified as follows:

First layer: late Neolithic (3500-3000 BC)

Second layer: early Eneolithic (3000-2700 BC)

Third layer: middle Eneolithic (2600-2300 BC)

Fourth layer: late Eneolithic (2300-2000 BC)



The clay vessels, discovered in the first layer and dating from the late Neolithic period, are roughly decorated on a white surface. Pieces of bowls, cups and plates were likewise located alongside. The objects found from the first layer were primarily made of stone – obsidian, flint and basalt. Also found were roughly-hewn stone axes, and tools made of bone such as needles, heads of spindles and arrowheads, evidencing a developed textile industry. Small and large cattle were kept indicating a cattle breeding industry. Further, the spindle heads discovered in Shengavit provide evidence of a highly-developed textile industry making materials and dresses. During the last excavation, traces of cane mats were also excavated.

To this day, the reasons for the collapse of this early agricultural settlement are subject to discussion and debate among specialists. The majority believe there are three major factors which contributed to the settlement's collapse:

- a) ecological changes in the last quarter of the third millennium BC;
- b) economic conditions; and
- c) ethnic replacements and invasions.

As a result of this, the Shengavit settlement was abandoned by the last quarter of the third millennium BC.

According to archaeological materials, in the late third millennium BC and the first half of the

second millennium BC, people occasionally used this abandoned site for graves. Later, in the Middle Ages, a small village was also founded on the site.

On the basis of these excavated materials, the Shengavit Culture-Preserve was opened in 1968 as a branch of the Erebuni Historical & Archaeological Culture-Preserve. In 2003, the museum was renamed the Shengavit Historical & Archaeological-Preserve. Today, some of these items are exhibited in the History Museum of Armenia in Yerevan.



## Shengavit museum

The Shengavit branch of the Erebuni Historical & Archaeological Culture-Preserve was founded on May 24, 1968 according to Resolution 225, passed by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. The discoveries from the famous archaeological site of Shengavit, spanning 18 collections, make up an inextricable part of the museum's Historical & Archaeological Culture-Preserve collection.