

**Machara and Kodori Valleys (historical Apsilia) of NW Georgia in Caucasia  
in the 1st to 7th Centuries AD**

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents to be what I am today academically. I also dedicate it to my mysterious country Georgia (Colchis) inspired me to drive challenging stories. I equally dedicate it to my thesis supervisors, I am forever thankful.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The dissertation concerns the historical Apsilia and offers a new theoretical approach to the nature of Apsilian material culture, which covers the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Reasons are reflected in critical evaluation of the past scholarly contribution, where all problems have been analyzed.

Three studies are conducted in this thesis that moves over two historical timescale Roman and early medieval periods. The author aims for her achievements and presents a background for new arguments and theories. First is a descriptive-analytical study of cremated minorities of Olginskoe cemetery. This attempts to reveal the full potential of acts, changes, and the purpose of individual choices, leading to distinctive practices and diversifying grave structures. They are patterns rarely considered in past studies of burial customs and drawing on this author's new research, vision and imaginations. It sets out a new approach to the regional context of cremated minorities. New typo-chronology and relevant content of applied specifics (some are resistant to local origin) attempt to reconcile the components of the cultural definition ('Tsebeldian culture') of Apsilian material culture. They are unique components and a new context of hypothesis which can be tested in archaeological evidence.

The other two issues derive from past scholarly contributions concerning the potential, perspectives, and functions of the geo-strategically significant NW region-Apsilia within Colchis/Lazica. It seeks to provide a broader understanding of the evolution of late Roman and early Byzantine Apsilian sites. This is a new approach to the study, which makes accessible the introduction of time-relative pieces of evidence and attempts to encompass existing knowledge about the studied material, but with a different perspective. It explores the possibility of new narratives by investigating broad features of trade and regional militarization that led to a global political establishment in Apsilia.

## PREFACE

All aspects I cover in my thesis is part of my skills and have much to do with a lot of existing moments I have experienced in my scholarly way. But some of them I deeply concerned from the time of my study in academy of sciences. This is the weapon graves of Apsilia, which I found most visionary and relatively long time hanging on my brain. Imperial soldiers with great mood and warriors with migration background, lead own adventures in this land, had me thinking ever since. Why they appear and why here was that question became central to my interest. Because they graphically described the story lacking in textual sources of the area and presented Apsilian valleys as one of the significant parts of the big world rather than the superficial area of Colchis we used to learn. That seems to be a new breath of military history. However, unfortunately, the condition of Apsilian study was weak to provide the same impression whether in database or illustrations. Hundreds of publications (unless specified) had no influential impact on the study.

Thus, I started to find more details of material characteristics during the years 2000-2009, focusing on several avenues of material culture through archive materials, and some critical published issues taught me much about the research problems. Presenting diverse ideas in conferences and scholarly audiences in Georgia and abroad was how I realized all study difficulties, and it kept me motivated to change my research direction towards the caused problems. However, a real challenge appeared when I introduced the archive material of the first archaeological site of the area from the village Olginskoe (modern Oktomberi). I exclusively focused on this material in 2009, but the time I spent on it in the Tbilisi state museum during the years 2009-2015 (MRB)<sup>1</sup> was the most time-consuming part of my investigation. Obstacles I experienced in the archive to reach the entire complex of material consider three years of museum restoration activities and other unfriendly conditions of unprofessional artifact handling and data collection (see IV.2.1). This made me watch longer than expected.

Nevertheless, despite all difficulties, I enjoyed investigating from the perspective of Olginskoe material; while providing very informative digital data of those problems still

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<sup>1</sup> The first advantage began when I tried to involve several responsible departments to reach the Olginskoe cemetery material, since permission for investigation of this materia was not easily obtained. Thanks to Prof.Vakhtang Japaridze and Acad. O. Lortkipanidze I was privileged to deal with material officially from December 2008. However, this bureaucratic success did not go I had hoped. At the beginning of 2008, instead of immediate involvement, I was permitted the only visual introduction of Olginskoe cemetery material and rewrote the related pages of Museum Record Book.

actual in Apsilian study, it held relevance with many significant issues. I could draft new data for cremation graves, which never has been scientifically attended, and give new experiences to the artifacts. Furthermore, scan this data through different Apsilian sites to approach the most unattended aspects of areal development. This was a significant advantage to put all in the original part of my thesis.



**Fig. 1.** Photo illustrate investigation process in archive of Tbilisi state museum in 2014, room N503.

The supervisory committee suggested I keep close to readers for an accessible overview of what I argue in my thesis. Because there are few scholarly works available for European readers to understand the problems, that was time-consuming too, and the final formulation of new ideas, catalogs, maps, and some chapter and revision processes was accomplished towards the end of December 2018. Other moments of my life also break high mobility in-between, when I found myself in a challenging situation, but through this patient, I feel inside the character to explore the quality of academic life. Moreover, with all my experiences, I will say here that this topic is essential; it newly tells people's history and importantly connects with my inspirations to approach what I missed during my previous investigations as a student. I hope that it opens different perspectives for the modern research dynamic.

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I'm immensely grateful to Professor Bernd Päffgen for supervising my study and significant amount of consultations. His inexhaustible supply and prompt response to my endless questions was motivated throughout my investigation.

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Thanks are also expressed to several institutions (Center for archaeological studies (CAS), Tbilisi state museum and academics for archive support (Prof. D.Lomitashvili, Dr. N.Kebuladze, Dr. K.Esakia, Dolaberidze R.) as well as Prof. Nana Nelson and some individuals for great technical help (Lovinova D., Turgel A., Meskhia I.). I wish gratefully thank my brother Levan Bagaturia for long discussions and my nephew Lasha Bagaturia generously provided maps and images of Kodori valley. I bag my warm thank to my mother Manana Kalichava and my late father Valeri Baghaturia, always supported me morally and financial. And special thanks to my husband Thomas Kner for his unending support throughout of this research process.

Finally, I should like to thank LMU staff and each professor officially being involved giving me opportunities to study in LMU and undertake presented research. In this context I greatly appreciate the support of Professor Falko Daim for advices and recommendations in LMU. And my advance thanks to the members of exam committee and experts for constructive comments.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## I. 1 Aim

Dissertation aims to lead alternative approaches to the Apsilian material culture and bring together three solid aspects in three main fields:

- *Diverse communities using cremation custom.* It is a new investigation of cremated graves based on Olginskoe cemetery data and regional comparisons. That is why Olginskoe cemetery data is one of the principal concerns to bring into the conversation and involve it in scientific circulation. While the essential purpose of this is to build a new experimental design for the minorities of the area with whom they are associated, aimed at connecting and critically considering previous research.
- *A 'transit context' of Apsilia.* It considers Apsilian integration into the Roman world as an optimal way for areal development. It shows one of the approaches in updating the potential of the archaeological contribution of historical Apsilia.
- *A geostrategic function of Apsilia and military calculation of area.* It followed the roman development and was identified as confronting the challenge of medieval globalization in global conflicts. This primarily comes down to understanding the geostrategic context of the area.

All three topics fit very well together because connecting different aspects of land and different communities is associated with historical Apsilia. Furthermore, aim to achieve the structured design of complex issues.

## I. 2 Problem statement

Why I care about these issues, a key thing here is that the studies done long before are where most of the problems are set. First, before discussing that, it is proper to consider the term 'Tseveldian culture' while weighty matters as a baseline problem.

### *THE TERM 'TSEVELDIAN CULTURE'*

The idea of the term 'Tseveldian culture' comes from the approach of a leading authority in Apsilian study, Mikhail Traps, in 1971. The concept is about the differences in design

technique and morphology of seven objects (Fig. 2) found in the necropolis of village Mramba and considered culturally essential. In a broad sense, they consider the following:

1. The hemispherical body shape of jugs and the flared form of rims. Most commonly appearing on pouring vessels and seldom on handled storage pottery (**Table 40. 4, 5**).
2. Circle-in-dot decorative elements are sometimes combined with animal representations (**Table 38. A-E**). They generally appear on hemispherical pouring wares.
3. Handled storage jars, often decorated with wavy lines (**Table 40. 10-11**).
4. There are local battle-axes of triangular form with a narrow angular heel, long neck, asymmetric blade, and arch-shaped head (**Table 89. 5-24**). These were interpreted as Franziska type.
5. Bow fibulae, especially with cross-decorated heads (**Table 111b. 9, 14-15**).
6. Spearheads of Javanese type, with slightly concave blades in the middle and widening towards the shoulders, and a shortly pronounced rib and opened socket (**Table 84. 19**).<sup>2</sup>
7. Double-edged swords with surface grooves (**Table 87. 3-5**)<sup>3</sup>

The nature of listed artifacts Trapsh brand as patterns of culture while thought to be meaningful in the identification of society buried in the area of village Mramba, one of the necropolises he excavated in 1969 (**Table 68; 69**).<sup>4</sup> A reason for his choice of the name 'Tsebeldian culture' is an early Byzantine Apsilian fort 'Tzibile' mentioned by Procopius (*Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.x.p.141*), which still stands in the similarly named village Tsebelda in a 3 km north from the village Mramba (archaeologically, it is also evidential).

However, under such formulation, Trapsh does not intend to explain Apsilian distinct origin from the Colchian cultural group of people<sup>5</sup> as is done later by other scholars. Nevertheless, the term is widely recognized as important and over 45 years used as a principal guide to identifying all the archaeological sites along the Machara and Kodori river-valleys that were thought to be geographically shaping the material culture of historical Apsilia.

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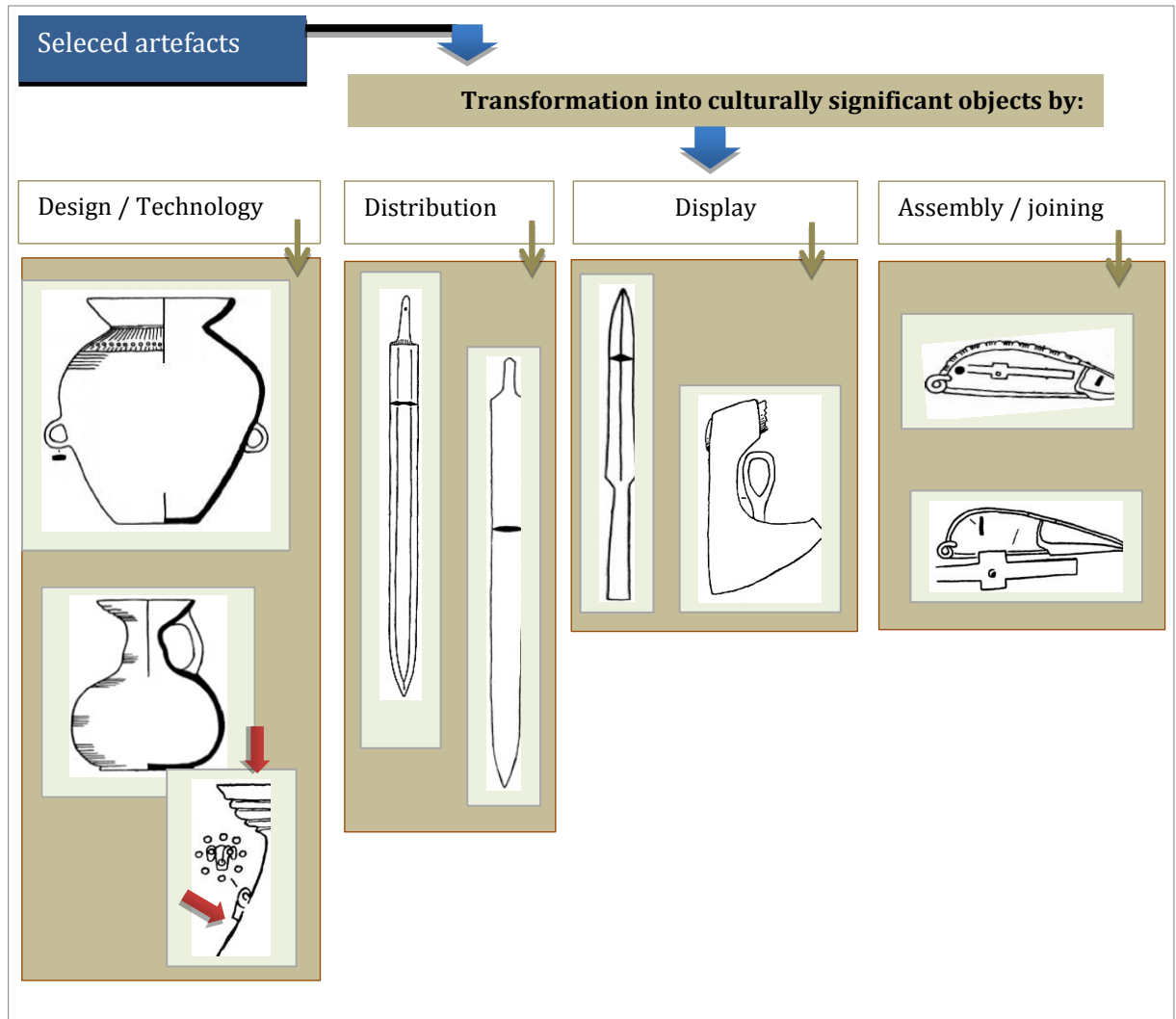
<sup>2</sup> Trapsh 1971:29. Tabl.V.10, 11; VI.14; VII.12, 13; Voronov 1975.pic.29.

<sup>3</sup> Trapsh 1971:29. Tabl.VI.15; XI.9; Voronov 1975.pic.32.

<sup>4</sup> About the definition see Trapsh's valuable work 'Tsebeldian culture' published in 1971.

<sup>5</sup> He argues even for the Colchian origin by defining a number of pottery, leaf-shaped spearheads, bow fibulae, necklaces, and bracelets with enclosed ends. Trapsh refers to the close morphological similarities of areal storage wares with the material of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Colchian settlement. Some spearheads he identifies with late Bronze-early Iron Age and antique Colchian leaf shape and square formed spearheads dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The bow fibulae with spiral strap-end he structurally attributes to the Colchian nature. Necklaces and bracelets with enclosed ends he also associates with Bronze-early Iron age (11<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) and classic Colchian culture. See Trapsh 1971:212.

Chronologically it includes the Roman and early Byzantine period from 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century and is associable with the tribal land of Apsili.



**Fig. 2.** This figure illustrates extent of objects determined as ‘Tsebildian culture’. Transformation of their morphologic and decorative specifics into culturally significant components.

Hypotheses of Trapsh explore adventures in Apsilian study. Since similar objects were found everywhere in southern<sup>6</sup> and northern Colchis, it raised long-standing debates about the nature

<sup>6</sup> West Georgian Apsilian, Chkhorotsku, and Ureki grave complexes give somewhat a similar picture. That is why Voronov attributed the materials of Chkhorotskhu even to the early stage of Tsebildian culture. Voronov 1975: 135, Pic.50. Lekvinadze also pointed to analogies of Ureki material. Lekvinadze 1975:119.

of property.<sup>7</sup> Scholars are arguing in this field without any consensus, while based on the distribution radius of defined objects within Colchis/Lazica.<sup>8</sup>

### *BACKGROUND INFORMATION*

Several theories have been brought from other scholars to increase the context of diversity. Trapsh adds Apsilian identification through the cremation graves of the area to assess this particular group of people. Conceptually it was based on ethnographic sources of modern Abkhazians, similar in attitudes of body cremation. However, since there was no scholarly doubt about the population that settled in those areas was Colchians and Apsilians, Colchian identity was automatically assigned to inhumation graves in the area.

There are three more important points in Voronovs theory about Apsilian origin and political abilities made to keep the story of cultural diversity.<sup>9</sup> First is an ancestral linkage between Apsilians and a ‘Corax’ tribe, which he sets in an area of the Patskhiri valley and have been made for genetic connections with local indigenous Bronze Age communities.<sup>10</sup> But he also documented a large amount of Colchian geometric depictions drawn in early materials of Apsilia, which might be an indicator of cognitive continuity (**Fig.3**).<sup>11</sup> He disregards any connections between the ‘Tsebeldian’ and much earlier German ‘bardāxe’ axes. To be able to conclusively prove Apsilian territory he gives sense to the boundaries by shaping from east to further west in Poltavskoe and Atara-Armyanskaya, and north from Lar-Pushta-Pal to south Gurzuli. The second point is seen in the attempt of maintaining the city-type nature of Apsilia conditioned by trade that showed how they grew inside this territory. The third point he gets in display and character of early byzantine forts, where he finds arguments for powerful Apsilia in entirely blocked exit points into tribal territory, which he also use as evidence for the Apsilian independence within the Lazi kingdom. This he claimed by overturning the chronology of defensive structures<sup>12</sup> by the

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<sup>7</sup> Scholars with similar interests are Voronov, Lekvinadze, Shamba, Gunba. This tendency being criticized by several Georgian scientists see in: Japaridze 1979:82; Lomitashvili, Lordkipanidze 1993:31-32; Lordkipanidze B. 1993:31-32

<sup>8</sup> The genetic unity of the Fibulae from graves of Chkhorotsku, Ureki and Abgidzrakhu grave 37 had been discussed by Apkhazava. He singled out a similar series to Tsebeldian (*Group I, Serie 2, variants I and II*) in the materials of Eastern Georgia and its initial spread in Iberia with linkages to Western Georgia. Apkhazava 1979:19. Tabl.VI-4, 9, 10-12, 19

<sup>9</sup> Voronov 1998.

<sup>10</sup> They first mentioned by ancient authors Hecataeus of Miletus, Pseudo Scyllax of Caryanda and thereafter by Pliny the Elder, Pomponius Mela, and Claudius Ptolemaeus (Voronov 1998:35). Nevertheless, Voronov sets them in Patskhiri valley, where the earliest defensive structures of the Iron Age stood, in the nearest vicinity of Olginskoe cemetery. See: Voronov 1969:133-142.

<sup>11</sup> Voronov 1975.

<sup>12</sup> At the beginning he dated the forts of Apsilia to the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries. Voronov 1975:38. Voronov was accused of falsification of archaeological material. See it in: Abkhazava 2010.



second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. This seems to me to be much focused on bringing into communication a later west Georgian unit named ‘Abkhazian Samtavro.’



**Fig. 3.** Comparisons of archaeological material from central Colchis and area of historical Apsilia.  
**A-** Material from central Colchis 7-1 BC. **B-** Material from Apsilia 7-1 BC. Source: Voronov 1975.

There is a final theory of Kazanski tasked to consider the movements of step-nomadic people through Caucasia.<sup>13</sup> One of the ways he might expect through Apsilia, while attempting to identify Alanian elements<sup>14</sup> inside the Apsilian material culture from an early medieval political perspective. This is based on imported items of the North Caucasian channel involving a few pottery and jewelry. Bringing these objects together with the burial practice they have been involved in, I wonder if what they depict is what Kazanski means.<sup>15</sup>

All these points necessitate effective analytical technique because there are more details to understand Apsilian archaeological heritage in their broad regional context and, to some extent, termed ‘Tsebeldian culture.’

<sup>13</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Concepts related to ‘Alanian’ were supported by few Alanian jugs that were found in the graves of three women, as well as, by male grave, which Voronov described as a possible deformation of skull. See Voronov 1995:219-220 and also Voronov 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:57, 59.

## *CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH*

One of the things I get skeptical about the theories mentioned above of Trapsh and Voronov is approaches done in a quite senseless way. I will go through all of these points with critical assessment, while the ways of thinking about the Apsilian material culture are still the same in published statements.

Both theories of Trapsh, against which I argue, are still raising questions because there was no scientific approach to the subject, and one will never be able to prove it. Apsilian identification through cremation graves simply based on ethnographic sources of modern Abkhazians is a bit dissatisfying as burial practices of the area have never been scientifically studied and sufficiently documented. And, there is no conceptual approach to the funerary context in areal and even at the regional level.

The second point of Trapsh research, where he defines the specifics of seven objects as an indicator of culture, which he termed ‘Tsebeldian’ (**Fig. 2**), does not seem to be a single case. All seven meaningfully connected objects lack the right approach to the object, the proper chronology, and the purpose for appearances, which requires situating in a larger European view. The knowledge gap of material sharing similar patterns dispersed from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea is visible. This connection with the distant world is far more complicated than Trapsh thought and has to be arguably treated with a degree of caution (**Fig. 4**. See: Conclusion). Nevertheless, he was quite right to all specifics and developments are seen in material culture, and their linkages with the beginning stage of transformations<sup>16</sup> and in association with Cherniakhov culture, that reflection is explained in the last two chapters of this thesis.

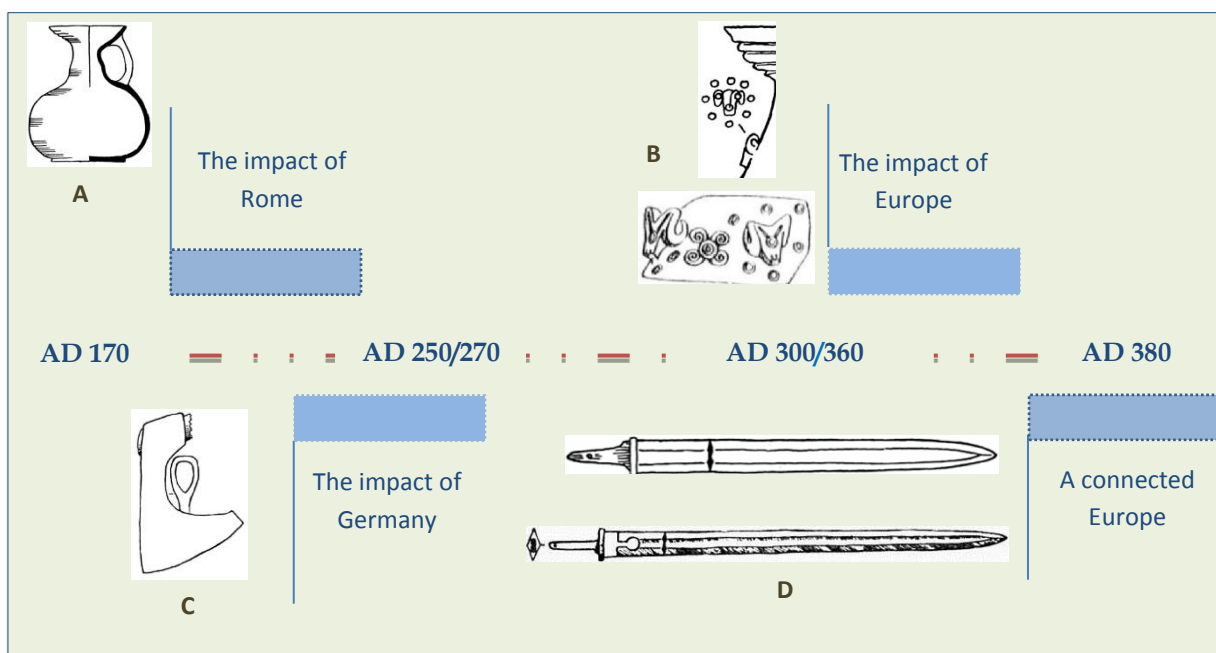
In addition, my attitude to the name of ‘Tsebeldian culture’ is also critical because the name of the early medieval fort has been used to identify the ancient population of both times Roman and early Byzantine periods. There is a still lack of chronological separation of roman and early byzantine material.

I also claim against the basic hypothesis of Voronov about the ethnocultural and political diversity of Apsilia. The first point seems to be trivial, while there is no basis for achieving concrete object-based proposals to indicate their ethnocultural diversity. Each local target group (pottery, metal, assets of burial practices) that can build the cultural heritage is genuine Colchian and regionally based sources or highly influenced by external factors at the intellectual level. Even the second point of his theory lacks the chronological and analytical framework for reflecting larger processes and redefining the challenges that led to population

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<sup>16</sup> Trapsh 1971:212-217.

growth, and empower people to create all of those specifics seen in material culture. I missed the approaches to match with the transformation of Apsilia into a ‘city type’ settlement as Voronov thinks, and the impact of sources may indicate they grew even in the sense of trade or militarization. There is a need to apply rigor in each aspect, which I tried in the last two chapters of this thesis.



**Fig. 4. Internationalist perspective on the design of so called ‘Tsebeldian cultural’ components.** **A**-formal transformation of foreign forms. **B**-Influence of Pannonian type roundel medallion on the design of Apsilian pottery of early 4<sup>th</sup> century. Zoomorphic design feature adopted from the 360 AD, but treated in Apsilian way. **C**- Influence of Elbe Germans and correspondence to the eastern series of ‘bardaxe’ model appearing in Przeworsk, Luboszyce and Chernjakhov cultural groups. **D**-distribution of Nydam type sword.

It should also be mentioned that Kazanski responded to a gap of typo-chronology of Apsilian material culture, traditionally integrate two different periods: Roman and Early Medieval. This I respond to in my dissertation.<sup>17</sup> He also explores the idea about Alanian influence, compared with few imported pottery, some weapons and single grave.<sup>18</sup> However, there is no proper evidence to speak about the scale of Alanian influence in Apsilia.

<sup>17</sup> Primary because no study had existed about single parts of the area, especially in two distinct chronologic periods, and scholars failed reality of areal development.

<sup>18</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:57, 59.

## REASONS FOR ADVANCING THE PAST SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTION

The reasons for advancing the past scholarly contributions in three separate areas that remain associated with my thesis are as follows:

1. *The components pronounced in terms of 'Tsebeldian culture' apply to Olginskoe cemetery material.* Provided research distinctly adjusts each component and defines context specific to the study, which contradicts past theories.
2. *Olginskoe cemetery data has sensitivity to varied burial practices of distinctive communities.* Investigated results are judgmental for hypotheses of Apsilian identification through cremation graves.
3. *An achieved original framework made evidential the impact of two different global processes in Apsilia and gained an understanding of the general principles of the Roman and Byzantine development of the area.* This unfamiliarly associates with the widely cited theories of Voronov.

### I. 3 Research questions and statement

I addressed multiple problems and set various and more nuanced questions to process the analyses. Both statements questioned below gives view on the theoretical part and how it placed in thesis.

*In my first theory, I try to explain that:*

- Three funerary models within Olginskoe cemetery are a theoretical structure of a mixed pagan society existing in Apsilia, whose spectrum may expect more than one tribal context.

In tackling my theory, when I get focused on graphical images of Olginskoe cemetery graves to find how this society intercut with each other and looked at their practical display with a quite distinctive emotional background (**Fig. 13**), I was interested:

- Why do properties, displays, habits, patterns, and performances vary within the same cremation burial custom of Olginskoe society? What purposes force cremation funerals to be distinctive and come in different imaginative ways? Are they clues to

assess their tribal past?- If so, how deeply? Which context necessarily considers the Apsilian tribe, and what properties may raise a different tribal concern? And finally, how could I estimate the ancestors within the varying grave structures?

***In my second theory spell out that:***

- The function of Apsilian land came into a global interest at a certain period of time, in the dynamics of world trade and the eastern frontier line. This activated long-distance trade and, most importantly, a strong fortification system of later appearance is the theoretical prediction of those challenges Apsilia.

In approaching my theory, centered on increased scale, capacity, and quality of imported objects and weapons in Apsilia, showing similar transitions occurring over the trade and military parts of Colchis (and beyond), which raise a number of philosophical questions:

- What niche carries this area for global-scale activities? What are the factors which gave a perspective to activate the trade and warfare through Apsilia in unexpected dimensions? Moreover, is it the real way to understand the reasons for areal developments? If yes, where exactly are the imagined indications of internationality and global scale political interplay, and how do Apsilians advance that challenge?

These questions helped me to explore more innovative ideas slightly in three distinctive fields.

#### **I. 4 Methodological consideration**

*MATERIAL.* Data collection was part of the investigation and the first methodological step. For the Olginskoe, I used archive documentation and other valuable sources (discussed in related chapter IV).

For the other parts of my dissertation, I went through excavation reports, different academic publications in Georgian, Russian, English, German, and French languages, including research reviews of the study area. I collected various descriptive sources to gain the road design, its nature, and functional characteristic. The study was also undertaken from meaningful consultation with several professors that I mentioned in Acknowledgments. Some examination was based on my 15 years of scientific experiences in Apsilian study, including several artifacts based on imported material or individual artifacts.

For the locational, chronologic, or other types of evidence, I used google earth map to load some areal sites. Most maps and grave plans are adopted from the post-socialistic publication of 1969-1990 but presented by modified versions for different purposes and without altering the original features.

I draw my representations of roads, grave plans, or individual graves from Trapsh, Voronov, and Kazanski's contributions and modified them for better understanding. I made a catalog of different object types, reconstructed the graves, and presented an artistic image of warriors, military belts, and weapons.

### *METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS*

According to the aim, I choose the strategy that chooses areas of burial practice, trade, and militarisation. Strategic steps in approaching the knowledge to my research questions reflected in:

- Grave modeling strategy and broad characterizing framework.
- Observable-explanatory framework and the case study used in several instances.

### *Approaches to grave models*

In grave structures, I find opportunities to replicate different practices and individuals. I sorted out the structural components and performing principles to find out the similarities and distinctions. By examining object display and typo-condition showing variable sensing, I identified essential facets and ruling structural settings responsible for the diversity of internal grave structure. Identified structuration principles and related performances, which give a model and guide to how they dealt with practices I controlled by case study and advanced other burial sites of Apsilia and beyond. It brings together practices and funerary concepts and explains how it is designed to predict a diverse grave model. This helped further in approaching the cognitive environment.

However, for *grave model 1* (including graves 2 and 4), I focused on impracticably designated structure details, which is occasional in Apsilia. In *grave model 2* (including graves 1,3,6), I concentrated on the horizontal position of the urn. In *grave model 3* (including graves 5), I focus on object composition and the laid position of the urn. They lead funerary concepts. I put this perspective into the personal dimensions of the corresponding individual to develop their individual story. I tried to address nuances of their position or function in the larger society through the object potential.

*Approaches to the Olginiskoe cemetery material.* I use an artifact-based framework with a significant focus on typo-chronology to control the object potential and measure the capacity of evidence. Each object is examined within inter-site and interregional comparisons. Typologies of Domzalski and Hayes were used for easily identifiable imports like LRCW.<sup>19</sup>

Also, the glass vessel was the most appropriate to the Munsel system, with certain limitations.<sup>20</sup> Some limited objects like imported *spathae* was typologically followed by Byborski's classification.<sup>21</sup> Few weapon types were drawn from Kazanski's classification and correspondingly marked in the text.<sup>22</sup> However, I do not always agree with the weather classification or chronology given by Ambroz' and Kazanski's. Therefore fibulas are followed only their general grouping.

No radiocarbon data is available for the Olginiskoe grave objects that are why they are not very accurate. However, I used an analytics-based framework assessing the evolution of diagnostic parts to obtain information from their anatomy and individual properties. The size, diagnostic parts, and ornament are used as relevant methodological support in defining recognizable types, broadly based variant forms, and their evolutionary phases. However, for the pottery typology, more sensitive diagnostic parts like rim, handle, and the bottom was selected as an effective tool in identifying the possible transformations to obtain corresponding types and variants. For further experimental approach, I tried to speculate with all visually applied properties (clay composition, technologic traits, and decoration) to figure out common ancestry, local and regional linkages.

The Munsel classification used to define the glass property and morphologic characteristics of the Olginiskoe cone was also supportive in recognizing the diverse nature of the glass vessel and utilizing individual typology. Nevertheless, sadly, chronology cannot be obtained closer than the accepted dates for such cones.

In order to obtain the functional character of metal objects, dimensional and graphically distinguishable formations are thought to be an effective technique. However, the formation of blades and other diagnostic parts were used for further typological understanding. The dimensional aspect was the most effective in defining the functional character of knives.<sup>23</sup> The blade length and formation of the tip, cutting parts and tang (sword, knives),

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<sup>19</sup> Hayes 1972; Domzalski 2007:75-77.

<sup>20</sup> Munsel 1976. Book of colour.

<sup>21</sup> Biborski 1978:72. Abb.22-25.

<sup>22</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Longer than 22 cm and up 10 cm tang is determined as a dagger category. The rest are assigned to household knives. In case of disfigured sample, when lacking diagnostic parts like the tip or tang-shoulder, but typologically (or variant form) are recognizable, it has been characterized through reliable evidences from reliable grave context of area.

and a socket (spearheads) was used as an explicit criterion for broad typology. Conclusive in obtaining the same typology of the battle ax is the vertical cross-section and horizontal cross-section applied blade and neck. However, in certain instances, I share Kazanski's typology.<sup>24</sup> Their chronologic and functional relationship in each related grave are treated additionally to give a slight advantage to their combination.

I used the technological (cast and bow) and morphological (details of bow structure) varieties, the head and foot mechanism, and the specific exposition of bow structure with inclusive ornaments as supportive tools in defining uncommon variant types of fibulae.

*Approaches to chronology.* Chronologically absolute dating was impossible. For assessing the comparative data, my innovative guide was Kazanski's progressing typo-chronology. But some objects have produced quite contrary evidence to the types defined even by Kazanski, also by Ambroz and Voronov. Therefore, except the swords, knives, and most weapon types, all are from evaluated objects themselves, connected with areal comparisons from published illustrations and contextual data.<sup>25</sup> But most are dated within the age they are formed.

This potential was used in obtaining a final date of each single grave complex, which is distinctive, but was helpful in placed within thirty-fifty years relevance. They are primarily based on pottery dating, in the case of chronologically infective metal items. The chronological context of complete graves and the chronological cycle of artifacts of destructed graves were used to approach the cemetery chronology and define the cemetery occupation's historical phases. This also tasked to manipulate the date of entire cemetery usage.

*METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE APSILIAN MATERIAL CULTURE.* For the second part of my study, I obtained an observable-explanatory framework to assess the relative chronology of Apsilian sites and define the time appropriable archaeological groups and infrastructural units. In which related materials are selected to show the parts of road activation and weapon graves for militarization. The quality and capacity of imported objects have been proved by how well they communicate with regional and external roads. Import

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<sup>24</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.

<sup>25</sup> There are no precisely dated burials. Numismatic evidences are useless even in obtaining a *terminus ante quem* to the accompanied grave goods. Only few particular contexts of well-dated imported objects made possible to evaluate a relative chronology of high social class burials (Kazanski has partially done this).



dynamic is used for predicting the changes throughout the time and gets results for the trade dynamic.

By analytical technique of weapon graves, battle material and defensive structures explored the mobility of area. Their nature and quality are tasked to approach functional groups, the sources of investments and interests. Textual sources are involved in reconstructing the parts of the military dynamic and assure the quality of information. Both were able to define the basic processes, outline the factors and reasons for areal development.

## **I. 5 Achievements**

I offer a highly detailed design of information regarding two different issues. Through the Olginskoe cemetery data, I went deep into the nuances of cremation grave structures, showed how artifacts built them, and advanced different funeral images. I defined the types of grave structures, which casually gained from distinctive practices and allowed me to see individual pieces of custom as an aspect of diversity. This way, I provide evidence for the model sample, giving opportunities to think from the perspective of distinctive communities. All this I visualized in artistic images of buried society, associated graves, and some diagrams. They helped me explore fresh ideas about the cremation burial practices, emotions, and ways of interacting with the dead.

In addition, it applies rigorously examined data of grave offerings. I offer a new basis for a descriptive system, which produces beneficial results in object classification and allows data refinements. I gave a new typo-chronological perspective to most grave objects (*fibulae*, spearheads, and specific pottery categories), which keeps relevance with the grave complexes of Apsilia. I made Olginskoe grave assemblages technologically innovative, in which methodological approaches are visually depicted. For optical inspections, typologically distinguishable specifics are tabulated (**Table 20-53**). Possible relations or key variables in pottery types and clay matrix are visualized (**Tables 21-28; 34-36**). I consider with morphologic and decorative content of pottery and battle-axe, which allows identification of species and genetic ancestry of a single item. For broad understandings, I made them comparable with archaeological material connecting Europe, which had a significant influence to build knowledge about the components of so-called 'Tsebildian culture.' All they can at least offer some insights and opportunities for the expertise.

The second part of my study is responded to the bias of a structured chronologic framework. I synchronized quite a large body of data by defining two historical timescales, the Roman and early Byzantine. Chronological obstacles I avoid by the roughly set boundary on 450 AD. It is designed to gain information about the relative chronology of Apsilian sites, the nature of corresponding cemeteries, graves, material, structures, and the road connecting them. These allow observing the chronological evolution of Apsilian land, comparing developments of the area, and gaining information, some of which we even know from textual sources. However, through the broadly obtained details of the communication system, I introduce the road potential and a more relevant factor for areal development. Imported wealth I examined in dimension and frequency and provided chronological evidence for road activation. I looked at the objects implying the countries of their transportation, which define the parts of their entry into the broad trade network of Colchis. Furthermore, I gain evidence about regional and international trade by producing more details of imported objects interesting for close and wide distance trade. It was meant to find a trade potential of the area, in which I also showed that the transportation of goods through Apsilia was an enormous logistic challenge.

Further, I gathered the most intrinsic information to the study by gaining a broad character of fortified sites, their function, and relevant military groups, with their possible coordination areas. I also gathered from the nature of colossal weaponry fit into the early Byzantine period. However, when I looked at the rhythm of military activity through weapon graves, in which I defined several chronological phases, it offered a different story about the history of areal militarization. The point of all this was to define the primary process to build the reasons for further development.

However, I put together both global scale processes-trade and militarisation as causal connections for areal development because I think that can predict the function of the area. Final results are used to theorize the causes and effects that contribute to all specifics of Apsilian material culture.

The theoretical part is supported by illustrations of reconstructed grave images, with artistic visualizations of warriors, weaponry, and guarding areas (**Tables** 42-53; 65; 78-79; 84-87; 91-101; 110). Some graphical drawings from past scholarly work are modified for various purposes (**Tables** 61-69; 71,73-77), in which the grave plans and features are altered for a better understanding of the text and their chronological coordination. In the few maps of Voronov, I highlighted the road contours and other details of the communication system indicative of their structure and functional characteristic.

This way, I fully integrated Apsilian material culture, reconstructed all existing knowledge through maximizing meaningful informants, and obtained evidence to argue in several fields.

## **I. 6 Worth, limitations, educational and further academic perspectives of thesis**

Thematically sorted priorities and structured academic knowledge that is able to gain new understandings to the fundamental nature of Apsilian material culture, I think is a worth of this thesis. And there are three more insightful approaches:

1. It presents a broad approach to minorities' study, which guide site-specific minor community of areas using cremation rites in Colchis. This is a first lead of study, addresses the most critical knowledge gaps about them and pushes for further investigation.
2. It brings to light a new typo-chronology of more or less closely dated artefacts, and goes to develop the details of objects conditioned the term 'Tsebeldian culture'. This prevents misunderstandings in this field.
3. Entirely the thesis produces contextualized results of Apsilian archaeological heritage by introducing solid data of past scholarly contribution, with new concerns of interpretation. This tells story a fresh and increases the study dimension.

All this addressed to students, archaeologist and to academics in corresponding fields. From the content it is important for the study of roman-byzantine province Colchis/Lazica, essential for professional guidance of the identified geographic areas and most prominent in the university sector. From various aspects, quite specific in burial practices, trade, battle strategies, tactics, weapon development and military architecture it may highlight different research goals. It may beneficial for lectors and scholars interested in late Roman and early byzantine burial practices within imperial peripheries. But, while it goes beyond the knowledge of the Roman periphery of Colchis/Lazica, giving significant visual and theoretical knowledge all of those issues (over the Caucasia), it may equally supportive for students and academics to explore further approaches to the trade, economic and political studies of the time.

The lack of petrological examination of pottery and radiocarbon dating of objects give limited impact to the approached data. But conducted study about the object nature and property is essential, since there is no comparable study about Apsilian material, with visually

well-defined patterns, to be distinguishable for object study. Also, the entire communication network I developed from previous literature is also an area of limitation, while I was unable to examine the road structure and visibility areal communication system. But what I obtained is more relative account of ancient routes and related roads. From the current stage, it surely outlines the peculiarities of sites with evidence of huge imported objects.

Limitations whether in technological consequences, due communication system or certain conceptual achievements are areas of validation. But the entire thesis that brings together resources, capabilities and expertise of archaeological, social, cultural and behavioral heritage of Apsilian land in Colchis, is a progress of a long term outcome.

### I. 7 Modern political context of study area- Guliripsh region (historical Apsilia)

The study area is geographically identified with places in the modern Gulripsh district of Abkhazia, which lies in the NW of Georgia. Georgia ('Sakartvelo') is the southernmost Caucasian country of 69,700 km<sup>2</sup>, situated at a strategically crucial global location between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea (Map 1). The North and Northeast is bordered by Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia border east and southeast. Southside is bordered by Turkey.



MAP 1. Situation map of Georgia in 2021. In dark brown color is depicted an occupied parts Abkhazia and South Osetia (Samachablo).

Abkhazian nationalists claimed the geographic and ethnic identity of the current state also by justifying the historical capacity of place-Apsilia and Abazgia, considered to be the legitimate ancestors of Apsua. In which Voronov's theories played highly specific role.<sup>26</sup>



**Fig.5.** View of borderline strongpoint and bridge at the Enguri River, between the city Zugdidi and Gali region. The bridge was built in 1948 by German War-prisoners of II World War.

However, the history I bring to explore in my thesis is about Abkhazia, but more specifically consider the Gulripsh district consisting of rivers Machara and Kodori and is a conflict zone today. Military interventions<sup>27</sup> during 1992-2008 led to reinforcement by Russian military troops stationed in the Gulripsh region, and this led to fled of the Georgian population and the closure of Abkhazian borders for Georgian citizens (**Fig. 5**). Lower areas of the Kodori river basin, which became the center of conflicts, were also commissioned by the UN during 2004-2008 with the emergency pursuit of peace only in several single locations (**Fig. 6**). It virtually

<sup>26</sup> Voronov became a Deputy Prime minister of Abkhazia and killed during the Georgian Abkhazian conflict-war in 1995.

<sup>27</sup> The major upheavals that impacted on Georgian-Abkhazian relations in 1992 are assigned to Shevardnaze's military intervention in August of the same year. It followed the fall of Sukhumi on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1992. The author of this thesis, as a student, was in Sukhumi at this time and only thanks to Ukrainian military ship was able to get rid of the horrors of war in 28<sup>th</sup> September.

halted peacekeeping activities for more than seven years until the August invasion of the Kodori valley in 2008.



**Fig. 6.** Photo of peacekeeping group in Kodori valley. Photo is made in 2005 by the UN officer Abulbasher Nesaruddin Nesar, especially sent to the author of this thesis and permitted for publishing.

This entire political picture of internationally monitored or controlled valleys,<sup>28</sup> whether by UN or Russian troops and the ruins of early medieval forts behind them, makes us think back to the early medieval history of Apsilia and gives a straightforward approach to the geo-strategical quality of the area, vital to the historical perspectives of the land. These perspectives might point to the appearance of Apsilian land in roman and early medieval textual sources.

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<sup>28</sup> Other stories from area see in: Herbert R. Baur 2007. *Medizinmann Auf Friedensmission. Leipzig.*

## **I. 8 Guide to the dissertation structure**

The thesis is divided into six major parts and several corresponding chapters, subdivided in further sections.

**Part I** – It outlines author’s interests in related fields. Details the problem of study by examining the key aspects of term ‘Tsebeldian culture’ and introduce how the thesis is set in the context of past scholarly contribution. Criticised the past methodology, outlined emergences and cited own achievements. Explained why they are relevant (I.2) and assesses the value of analysed material and future perspectives within the limitations of study (I.6). In which academic aims (I.1) and methodological approaches are viewed (I.4). It also provides brief political context of study area and show the reasons

**Part II** – It provides background information about the nature of Roman Colchis and Byzantine Lazica (II.1) in which forms the historical Apsilia. Further explores all problematic aspects due to the ethnic composition of the kingdom (II.2) and provides a short analytical resume of the Roman-Byzantine (II. 3-4) and Sassanian policies (II.5).

**Part III** – In this part briefly discussed the context of modern landscape. It deals with demographic, rural and industrial development of modern landscape and consequences of areal erosion. It provides a considerable context of Apsilian material culture, concerns the physical identity of historical Apsilia, guiding the textual sources and archaeological history of identified sites and related material.

**Part IV-** It presents the original body of the thesis. Author’s new argument operates achievements on three different aspects of Olginskoe cemetery data. The first is a three grave models leads community structure and alternatively explains diversified minor communities. Second is attempting a typo-chronology that provides new date for the objects. analysed a reflection of complex audience, constructing the knowledge about the mixed community, provides site dependent stories throughout the time and giving understanding to regional movements. That is a fragmented picture of areal society

**Part V to VIII** - Produces a unique picture of area and gives understanding of Roman (170-450 AD) and early byzantine (450-640 AD) settlements (V), cemeteries (VI), defensive structures (VII) and communication system (VIII). This provides a complex story of areal development, settlement evolution and challenges.

**Part IX** – It gives broad understanding to the transit and trade perspectives through Apsilia, with special emphasis on the transit role of area. The trade dimension remained in distributed import categories, quality and quantity are examined. Details of the trade structure

and composition show how it interacts with the world-trade system of time, while revealing the state managements; identified the trade directions, objects of long and short distance trade, and their transportation perspective according the parts of their concentration.

**Part X** – It provides close access to the military history of area to argue that historical Apsilia is a dynamic frontier, depending on its geo-political and global political factors. It perceived as borderline area (border of exclusion), essential for strategic advantages between Byzantine Empire and Persia; highlighted broad details of military infrastructure, the role of Apsilian defensive sites, corresponding forts those are largely unknown to European literature and military forces. Each aspect is thematically analysed.

In the last general summary is given interpretations as to the nature and all reflected changes of Apsilian material culture. It comes to the conclusion of those issues open to debate and briefly examines material culture. That gives general remarks about the understanding of related implications,



## II. BRIEF HISTORICAL PROFILE OF ROMAN AND EARLY BYZANTINE WEST GEORGIAN KINGDOM DURING THE 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

### II. 1 BRIEF HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ROMAN COLCHIS AND BYZANTINE LAZICA (1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries)

**COLCHIS.** Kingdom in which forms the historical Apsilia is Colchis. From the late 1<sup>st</sup> century Colchis does not seem a powerful union in the eastern shore of the Black Sea. It formed as part of Pontus Polemoniaca before 200 AD, which led incorporation into the Cappadocian complex. Thereafter, similar to all member countries it reflected military or administrative formation and direct transportation of Roman armies that took place inside the Anatolian and Cappadocian complex during the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century similarly. It represented additional supportive sources in imperial security system over the Black Sea, Caucasia and even in Euphrates frontier during the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> But basic factor of strengthening the roman policy in Colchis (as well as the north eastern part of Asia Minor and Transcaucasia) was Rhandaia Peace of 63 AD which led Arsacid recognition in Armenia, while it was the neighbouring country. The first roman military establishment in Colchis was impact of it. Phasis and Sebastopolis were quite solidly controlled areas, where the roman military garrison stood probably from the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

However, defensive line of Colchian shore from Trapezus to Pithius extends 400 km, which connected small forts and large fortresses from Apsarus to Pithius in 65 km intervals, obviously give sense of 'Pontus Lime'. It often had been argued as implication of Roman lime<sup>30</sup> forming during the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries. Design of forts encompasses the original 'Playing-card' system.<sup>31</sup> Some of the earlier structures are predecessors of 'Playing-card' construction assigning the time before 200 AD<sup>32</sup> and rebuilt from the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Appearance of legions XII Fulminata and XV Apollinaries in early 2<sup>nd</sup> century Colchian coastal sites was essentially connected with dislocation from Pannonia to Cappadocia (**Fig. 57. Table 2**).<sup>33</sup> In Pithius and Petra they have been stationed probably from the late second to

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<sup>29</sup> Bosworth 1976, Mitford 1974:163; Dabrowa 1980; Lekvinadze 1969.

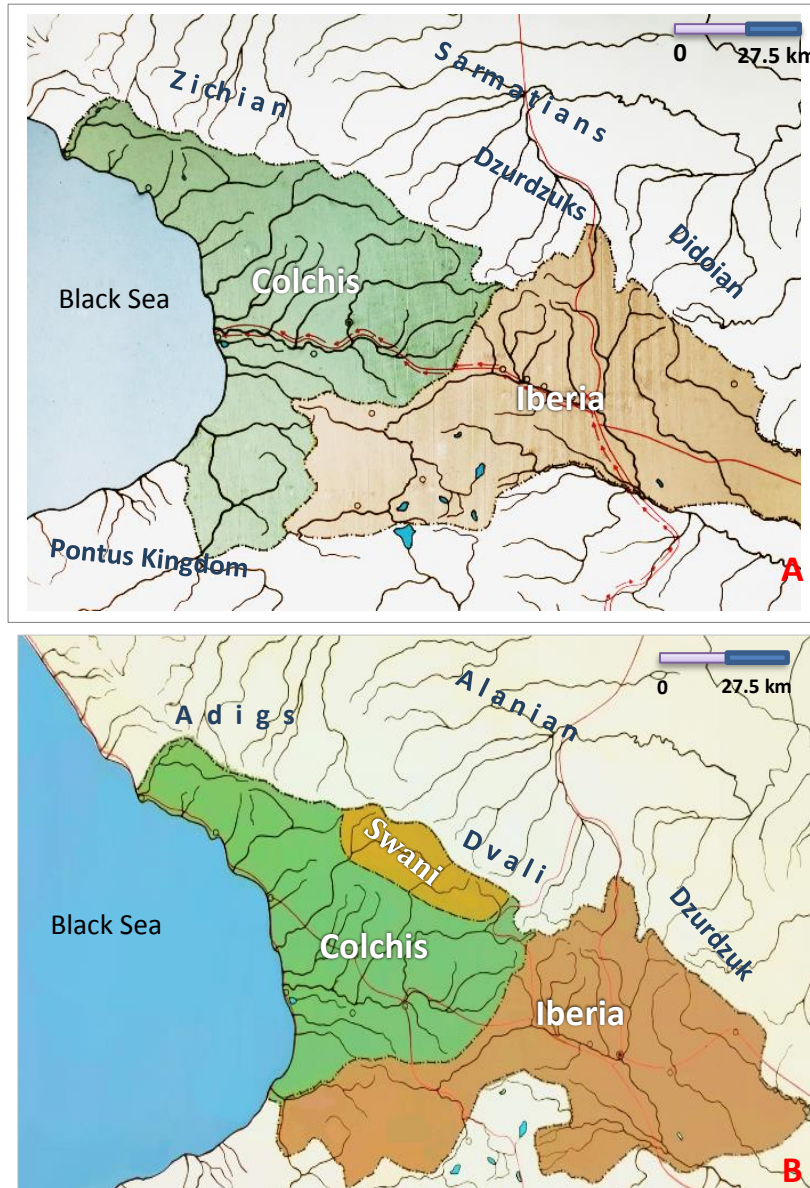
<sup>30</sup> Lekvinadze 1969.

<sup>31</sup> Gregory 1995/96.

<sup>32</sup> Likewise to earlier camps of eastern roman frontier at Satala, Melitene, Tell el Haj. See: Gregory 1995.

<sup>33</sup> Parker 2000:122, Not.Dig. Or 38.13

early 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> The roman numerum was also expected to be stationed in most southern Colchian Apsarus from Trajan time (113-117). Therefore, Trapezus, Apsaros, Phasis, Sebastopolis and Pithius were defensive chain provided imperial security at the eastern black sea shore. Administrative changes in north-eastern Anatolia and Black Sea littoral towards the 3<sup>rd</sup> century consequence new auxiliary units over these shores.<sup>35</sup>



**MAP 2.** Kingdoms of Colchis and Iberia in late roman time. **A**-Historical map of Colchis in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. **B**-historical map of Colchis in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>34</sup> The letters preserved on the inscription found in Pythius are following: (LE) GXV suggested (Le) G (io) XV (Apollinaris) dated about 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century. They assigned to the legion XV Apollinaris. See: Kighuradze, Lordkipanidze, Todua 1987:88-92.

<sup>35</sup> Zukerman 1991.

However, Colchis represented territorial-administrative units of similar tribal entity with more or less peaceful relations between the tribal unite. Their rulers appointed by Roman emperor is indication of weaken state and considered with Vassal Kingdom within the Cappadocian complex.<sup>36</sup> Tribal lands show a different level of development. It was the reflection of trade connections with Hellenistic world give good feedback to this economic-geographic region, while anciently involved in the Silk Road trade. However, ancient cities in southern and northern tribal territories of Kingdom Phasis, Apsaros (in the territory of Zidrits), Kiknos/Gyenos<sup>37</sup> (now Oчамchire) and Dioscuria<sup>38</sup> is topographic complex of Classic-Hellenistic formation of Colchian Kingdom and everything they had previously under leadership of these cities. But Phasis in coastal Colchis, Pithius in *Abasgia*, Dioscuria/Sebastopolis in *Sanigia* continue lead active life (**Map. 4**). Only Pithius and *Ziganeos* (now Gudava) shape the roman landscape. Pithius and Petra becomes a major economic-political and religious site. They follow the coastal security system organized by imperial law and had good position at the defensive line.

Despite of a quite fertile land actively, it was highly depended on trade economically and exported the linen and wood. Most it comes from entire trade system gave new way to significant harbors and activate new land roads. However, militarily connected coastal part produce a special relation of cities and forts in global security network of the Black Sea littoral. It produce new military infrastructure with highways, power supply (soldiers), delivery system of imported and exported goods and form the new attitudes. Such interconnection of coastal and navigable communications, and transportation system led further strategies what occurs in NW Lazica several centuries later. In which rivers also become highly significant for supply the forces. All this could be used to strengthen Lazi in various ways, while the fall of Colchis give way to new formation Lazica probably after the 350 AD.

**LAZICA.** Lazica was the most important early Byzantine local state. The name is Greek-Roman, but Georgian sources always named it as Egrisi Kingdom, because the Lazi called themselves Egri (the same as Mengrel/Megrel, the ancestors of Mengrelians today). It was a politically integrated huge western part and one economic complex, where the turnover of goods is identical (**Map 3**). This is not only a western part, but geographic territories of

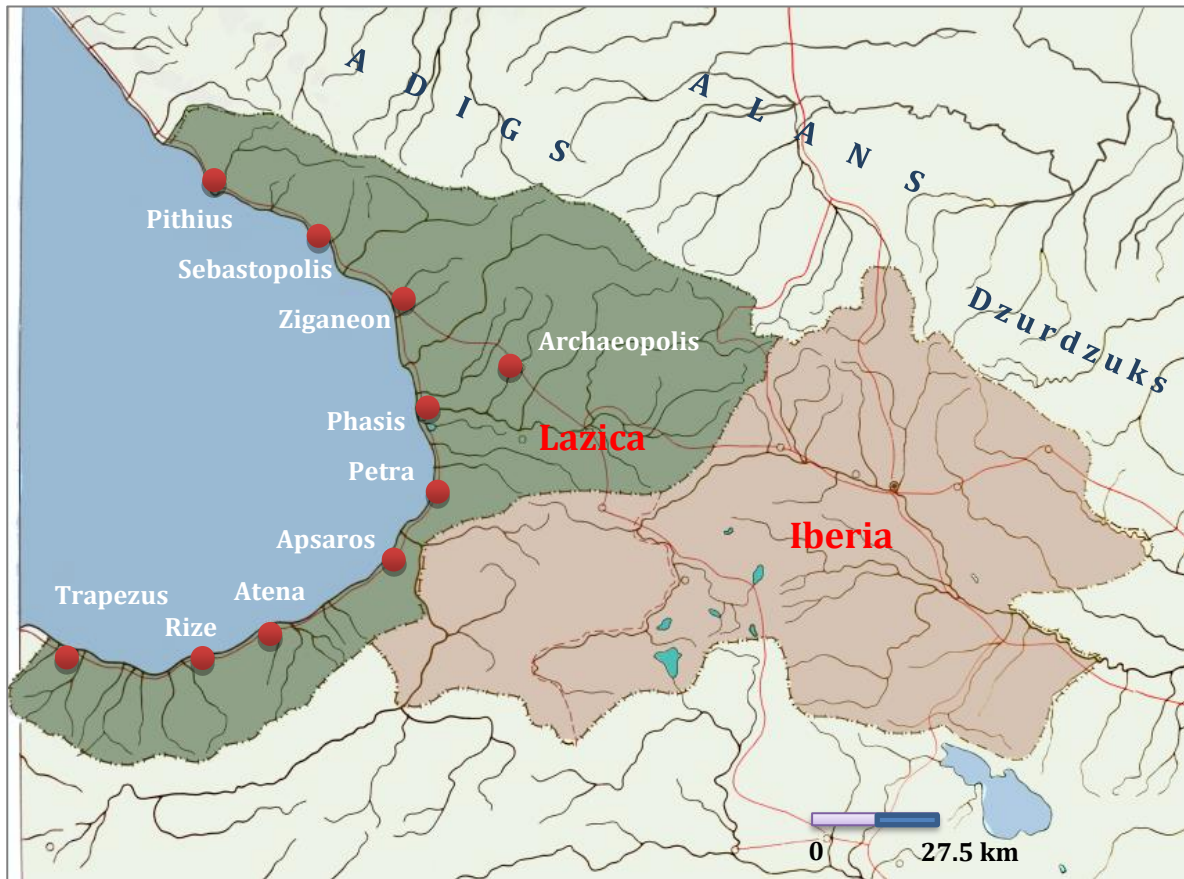
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<sup>36</sup> According to Arrian, the Macron and Zidrits Arrian were subdued by Farsman. The king of Lazica named Malas was appointed by Hadrian (117-138). Rismag, the king of Avask was also appointed by Hadrian, as well as Spadag, King of the Sanigs. Incontrast, the But the Apsilian king Julian was appointed by the roman emperor Trajan (98-117).

<sup>37</sup> Kaukhchishvili 1980. On the problem of Caucasian tribes. *Macne*, N4.

<sup>38</sup> Gamkrelidze 1965:29. Information of Pomponius Mela about Georgia. – *Georgian source study, collection of works*, I.

several Colchian tribes where the Lazi were able to consolidate the territories of the former Colchian Kingdom roughly from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and existed until the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century (according to the Greek-Roman and local textual sources).



**MAP 3.** Historical Map of Lazica in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Locational view of coastal cities of Colchis. *Source: Georgian historical Atlas, 2003.*

Geographically, it covered outlined areas of Trapezus to Pithius and from the Black Sea to the Likhi Range. But the direct territory of Lazian tribes are thought to match a bit north from the confluences of the river Chorokhi to the southeast. To the south, it was neighbored by Zidrits (northern part of modern Achara), after which were the northern mountains inhabited by the Apsili, Abasgi, and Missimians (**Map. 4**). There is no exact place for the boundary in this part. The eastern border roughly crossed the areas of Shorapani and Skanda. In the north were the Missimians/Svans. The central part of the Lazi kingdom is thought to include the section where the Rioni river joins the Black Sea. Here, the city of Phasis was established in the former kingdom, but Archaeopolis/Tsikhegoji (modern day Noqalakevi) on the bank of the

river Tekhuri was considered the capital of Lazica (**Table 4, A-F**). There were other hinterland cities like Qutaia (modern day Kutaisi) and Rhodopolis (**Table 4, G**).

Lazica as a whole was ethno-culturally a west Georgian territory, with minor peculiarities conceivable to tribal schema. Within this union, tribal chieftains could not perform any hegemonic function except the Lazi. The Lazi king directly appointed dukes to rule the provinces of Abasgia, Apsilia, and Missimia in the west and garrisoned the coastal Sebastopolis and Pithius. They offered new strategic advantages to the global challenge. The tribes of those areas were exactly historically a matter of political speculation.

*' the territory of Trapezus reaches to Susurmena, and Rizum, which stands upon the coast in the way to Lazica, two days journey from Trapezond. Next to the Rizaum are Mountains dividing Lazica from Roman land and inhabited by free Nations and village called Athens.' Proc.,Goth.IV.I.20*

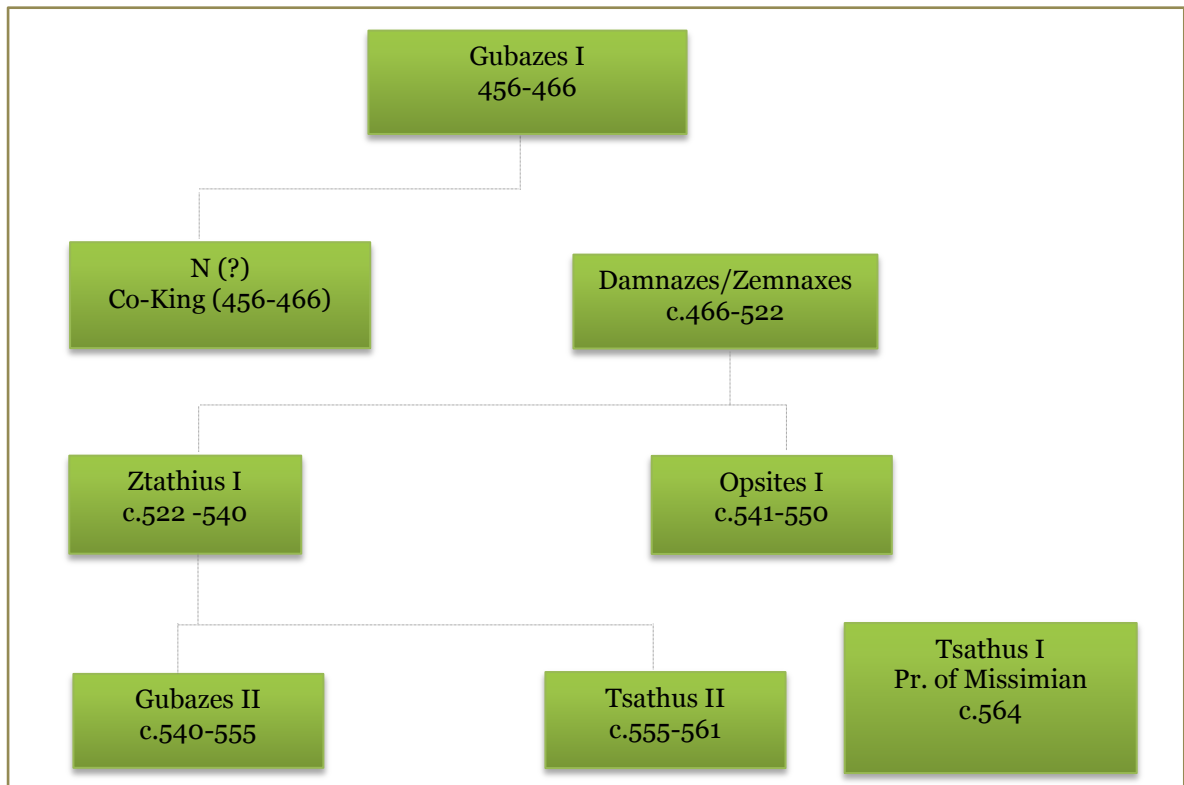
After the death of Theodosius I (395), the Lazi King was able to integrate the border province of Argveti of Iberia and further strengthen the borderline strategic posts Shorapani and Skanda on the Key trade. The communication security of these points, as well as coastal parts was ensured by Romans. These factors let to gain a more powerful insight to life and economy which boomed from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The Rioni/Phasis river,<sup>39</sup> navigable up to Shorapani, did much in the distribution of import-export. It was part of coastal trade involving all the rest areas. These crucial factors made Lazica strategically and economically definable. Beyond it, there was a geo-strategic factor of land, always inspired the Lazi to activate their role in global conflicts. Which was the best tool for speculation in order to hand over own land in conflicts between the Byzantine and Persia over the Caucasia. But both start to step the maneuver policies into war.

The situation of the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, when Byzantine gained control over the important border regions of Lazica, changed during the reign of emperor Marcius' (450–457). Marcius' policy draws imbalance in the relation with Lazi Kings. Therefore, Lazica refused to pay taxes and recruit troops when regional power emerged under King Gubazes I (456–466) as recorded by Priscus Panea. From this point independence became the number one priority that dared Gubazes I to declare in 456 and named his son as co-ruler (**Fig. 7**). This was the beginning of history of warfare in Lazica. Only the reign of Emperor Leo I (457–474) 'the

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<sup>39</sup> Export categories directly transported to Byzantium are the local grains, flax, timber, manpower and handicrafts. They bartered the skins, hides and slaves for salt, corn and other required commodities. See: Braund 1994.

Thracian' granted a short peaceful coexistence between Lazica and Byzantium which preserved until 520 AD. But in 460 AD the Suani soon went into alliance with Persia.<sup>40</sup> Further relation with the Roman Empire seems to have weakened, as during Anastasius' rule (491–518) there does not seem to be any Roman military power stationed in Lazica.<sup>41</sup>



**Fig. 7.** Chart of Lazian kings dynasty.

In the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Lazica lost a number of territories; which can also be explained by the strengthening of Eastern Georgian kingdom Iberia. There were several stressful factors for the Lazi. Of which the most important was Missimia supported by Persians and became a matter of conflict. Second was the coastal trade, where the Lazi profited under the King Damnazes during the years 522–541. But this was changed under the reign of his son Tsathius I (520/522–540), who shifted alliance from the Persians and converted to Christianity in 523. After he was summoned<sup>42</sup> in Byzantium and crowned Tsathius I by Emperor Justin (518–527), the former secretary Peter was sent to Lazica with some Huns in 526–527. Thus, continued the defense of new Roman allies in the next year.

<sup>40</sup> Zuckerman 1991:543.

<sup>41</sup> Scholarly view is based on archaeological evidences. See: Letodiani 1991.

<sup>42</sup> According to textual sources, Tzathius I was charmed in red shoes and white cloak of Silk, with gold stripe (instead of white). Similarly impressive was his tunica with purple border and with gold imperial embroideries.

This time, the Iberian king Gurgenes fled with the nobility into Lazica, after the Persians overran Iberia.

This act was considered by Persians as hostile from the Byzantine side<sup>43</sup> and result the occupation of Lazian approaches in 528 AD, particularly the border fortresses *Skanda* and *Shorapani* (Proc.1.12.15-19). It also consequence in the garrisoning of some fortified cities *Petra* and the capital *Archaeopolis*/Tsikhegoji, where headquarters were stationed (**Table 3, A; Table 4, A-F**). But reorganization of Armenia in 536 AD (eternal Peace) led to the deployment of Roman troops back to Lazica and appointment of a new commander John Tzibus (Ioannes Tzibus) in Petra. He worsened not only the law, but also the relationship with the Lazi. While restricted the trade by regulations and soon even prohibited the direct access of Lazi to traded material (Proc. II.15.1-26).<sup>44</sup> This story ended by killing the *strategos* Tzibus, replacement of the Persian garrisons (Proc.II.17.1-28; II.19.47-49) and destroying of Roman bases in *Sebastopolis* and *Pithius* (Proc.VIII. 4.4-5). That led to the Byzantines' withdrawal from Lazica under the Truce of 545. But Khusro's plan to expel all the Lazi from own land (Proc.Wars. II. 28; 29)<sup>45</sup> laid ground for a new alliance of Lazi again with the romans in 548 AD (Proc. Wars. II.29.1-9); and they received supportive auxiliary army under the *magister militum per Armeniam* Dagisthaeus to siege Petra (Proc. II. 29.10-12).<sup>46</sup> In this conflict Gubazes, responsible for the north, was also assisted with three *centenaria* of the Alans and Sabir Huns (paid by Justinian I). These combined forces (about 14,000 soldiers) that took Petra in the spring of 549 AD, were also tasked to invade Iberia during (Proc.II. 30. 34-48).<sup>47</sup> But the Persian army supplemented by Alans was able to take *Mocheresis* and encamp near to the river Hippis (modern day Tskhenistsqali) (Proc.VIII.8.1-20).

The next year 550 is marked by rebellion of the Abasgi who went into the alliance with Persia (Proc.VIII.8.9-14). Therefore, the veteran commander Bessas (replace the Dagisthaeus), had been sent to put down the rebellion. But the Persian general Nabedes

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<sup>43</sup> Persian Sash Kavadh message to the Emperor Justin that '... *your actions are hostile. Witness the facts that you have yourself appointed as the king of the Lazi a subordinate of mine, who does not come under the roman administration but has from time immemorial belonged to the Persian State.*' This letters was answered with different effect and statement by roman emperor: '... *In fact, a man named Ztathius came to us in our empire and begged us as suppliant to be rescued from some defilement and Hellenic belief, from impious sacrifices and from the errors of wicked demons, and asked t become a Christian, worthy of the power of the eternal God the Creator of all things. It was impossible to prevent someone who wished to enter a better way and to know the true God, so that when he had become a Christian and worthy of heavenly mysteries, we sent him back of his own country*'. Geoffrey Graetrex and Samuel N.C. Lieu, 2002:80.

<sup>44</sup> At this time, among the luxury import appears specific material of Annona system such as wine, oil, grains. He monopolized the local trade and disempowered Lazi king.

<sup>45</sup> Procopius giving notion that in 548 Khusro ordered Persian assassins to kill Gubases II, but he was tipped off by noblemen Parsman; and had made preparation to build a navy in on the Black Sea. See: Geoffrey Graetrex and Samuel N.C. Lieu, 2002:117.

<sup>46</sup> Procopius records inability of Dagisthaeus forces to take and seize control over the Petra.

<sup>47</sup> See also Braund 1994:298.

succeeded in reaching Abasgia. That is why John Guzes and the Herul commander Uligagus (both were sent by Bessas), through the Black Sea coast took control of the Abasgian fortress at Trachei (Proc.VIII.9. 14-30) and gained control of the Apsilian fort Tzibile (Proc.VIII.10. 1-7).

Meanwhile, in 551 AD, several Lazian fortresses experienced falls and besiege are: Petra (city walls were razed to the ground by romans and allied Sabirs. Proc.VIII.11. 1-64),<sup>48</sup> Phasis, Skanda and Shorapani (Mermeroes seized with the assistance of allied Huns), *Mocherisis* (besieged Mermeroes),<sup>49</sup> *Archaeopolis* and another principal strategic site of the hinterland *Rhodopolis* (But incapable location for defense, result abandoning). Strategic significance of Missimia result Mermeroes advance further towards Missimia and Scymnia (Proc. Wars. 8.14.53-54; 8.16.1, 14-15), but without military rewash.<sup>50</sup>

However, during the 551-553 AD Persian took control over the best communicated northeastern part of Lazica and was able to blockade the Roman strongholds and bar their access to Missimia (Proc.VIII. 14.45-54). The Romans were just sure that *Tzibile* and *Archaeopolis* were able to withstand the Mermeroes rewash (Proc.VIII. 17.11-19). This was why Gubazes King of Lazica complained about the poor management of Byzantine military officials. But while the roman generals claimed Gubazes was in alliance with Persia, Justinian ordered both them to bring the Lazian king to Constantinople even by force. And further year 554 ended fatal for the Lazi King been arrested and killed by roman generals.

Irritated Lazian aristocracy requested to recognize Tsathius II (555–561), a brother of Gubazes II and punish the Byzantine generals Martinus and Rusticus.<sup>51</sup> Both requests have been satisfied. The new king had to face Persian interventions with Nachoragan (successor of Mermeroes) invaded Lazica in 555 AD and withdrawn to Iberia in 556 AD. But in the next year 557 Persians entered Abasgia through the northern reaches of Lazica via Missimia and Apsilia. It led the truce in the same year and the 50-year Treaty of Darash in 562 (which only lasted nine years); when Khusro I accepted the suzerainty of Byzantine over Lazica for annual payments in compensation (despite that, Persia maintained its claim to Missimia). Thus, in 561–562 AD, the Persians agreed to resign Lazica to Byzantium (Men.Prot.fr.6.143; ff.495).

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<sup>48</sup> The forces of Bessa been amounted to 6000 men, has matched against 2600 men inside the city. Geoffrey Graetrex and Samuel N.C. Lieu 2002: 118.

<sup>49</sup> *Mocherisis*, recorded as the fertile region, where he rebuilds the fortress existed earlier, to the west at Cotaeum.

<sup>50</sup> Mermeroes did not even consider them worthy of attention and fighting over (Proc.VIII. 14.45-54). Similarly, his successor Nakhueregan characterizes them as thieves and plunderer (Menand. Frg.6.1. 295-507).

<sup>51</sup> At the council convened by Laz/Mengrelian aristocracy, where the Aeetes recommended shifting with Persia, finally won Partadzes' advice about seeking the justice from Justinian.



These treaties repealed the kingdom of Lazica. Around the year 570 after the death of King Tsathius II, Lazica was transformed into a mere vassal state under the *patrikoi* or *basileus*. The local troops were shaped into the Byzantine army. Imperial power vastly increased in areas north of *Phasis*, *Rhodopolis* in the east, towards *Sebastopolis* and *Pithius*. In 571 AD, when Emperor Justinian I profited from the disorder in Persia and the upheaval in Armenia and Iberia, Byzantine was supported by Lazica Abasgia and Alania. This helped drive Persians out of Missimia in 575 AD, but the peace under the Byzantine protection ended with the Arab invasions in 651 AD (when they killed Yazdgerd III Shah of Persia and began raiding Transcaucasia). Finally, Stepanoz II recognized the suzerainty of Arab caliphs over Caucasia.

Under Heraclius (610–641), Apsilia was unified with Abasgia, with the center in Anacopia. This unity was named *Abkhazian Samtavro*. However, from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Apsilia was again under Lazi domination. Only one century later, the Arab invasions freed Lazi from Byzantium. During the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century, the church of Lazica was also separated from the Roman Catholic Church. Soon after, it was politically united with east Georgia.

From the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, only two political entities were known in Abkhazia in West Georgia (Theophanes the Confessor). During the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century, Phasis had a metropolitan bishop while Sebastopolis had an archbishop.

## II. 2 ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF COLCHIS/LAZICA

Diversity within tribal context of west Georgian Kingdoms Colchis /Lazica is one of the most debated issues and unsolved problem. It was the start and conception of several tribal communities distinctive in practices. Earlier context of tribal groups differs from the society of roman Colchis at least from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. But distinction that traditionally recognised in their composition and movements was central aspect of mysteries, in which reconstructed the most powerful administrative unities of tribal entities. In ten tribal regions they developed own stories often by clashing with each other for hegemony, which failed to ensure their unification.

The first history about them was written by Greeks, defining how diferent was the character of Colchian population. But tribal composition appearing in later sources that

remains unchanged until this era is the dominant tribal structure.<sup>52</sup> A classic-Hellenistic list of these tribes preserved fourteen groups with the following names: *Khalibs*,<sup>53</sup> *Tibarens*,<sup>54</sup> *Mosiniks*,<sup>55</sup> *Makrons or Makropogons*,<sup>56</sup> *Mar*, *Fterogags*,<sup>57</sup> *Bidzereian*, *Pilirian*,<sup>58</sup> *Bekirs*, *Heniochs*,<sup>59</sup> *Sani*, *Koliks*,<sup>60</sup> *Colcians*<sup>61</sup> and *Corax*.<sup>62</sup> Since roman time, a slightly different tribal picture applied to north-western coastal and mountainous Colchis which a little gap of information (**Map 4**). While the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century textual sources are still naming the *Macron-Heniochi*, *Sanni/Tzani* (supposed to be ancient Sanni) and *Colchis* (**Fig. 8**). A new tribal composition that comes to light from the 1<sup>st</sup> century includes: *Pthiophages*,<sup>63</sup> *Makrons/Heniochi*, *San/Chan*, *Zidrits* (part of Iberia?), *Lazian/Megri*, *Apsili*, *Abasgian*, *Sanigs* and *Suans/Missimian*.<sup>64</sup>

Topographically their order shows a beginning in Trabzon towards Sebastopolis inhabited by Laz-Sannoi, Machelons, Henniochs and thereafter Zudreitai (unknown ethnos) on the Coruh estuary. One of their best observers Arrian broadly sets Macrons and Inoichs next to the Sanni. Their further neighbors recorded Zidrits, thereafter Lazi and next the Apsili, having

<sup>52</sup> They first appeared in the contexts of Argonauts siege. But several other sources, which gives a view about the ethnic history of Colchis includes records of roman authors Strabo, Pompinus Mella, Pliny the Elder, Flavius Arrian, Claudius Ptolemy and etc.

<sup>53</sup> The name *Khalibs* is associated with their daily metalworking activities. They were first mention by Xenophon (*Xen. Anab.IV,7,15*) and later by several other classic and roman Authors (Virg.Scholia Bernensia, SC, II; Soliinus, XV, 4; Strabo, XII, 3.20; Pomp. Melae De chorographia, L.I.19). Definition of the name *Khalib* may derive from the village *Khalibum* of Eubei (Q.Rufus. VI.17). Their first home place considers with area of the Chorokhi river and Trabzon-Girsen-Ordu (Apoll.Rhod.II), which is still distinguished by metal ores. Flaccus place them between Mosins and Bidzers (Val.Flacc. Argon.,V).

<sup>54</sup> *Tibareni* are mentioned as the western neighbours of the Khalibs and were settled until Cotiora (modern Ordu). They were cattle riders, but also skilled in metalwork. They are cited as distinctive by ritual of hanging the dead on the tree (S. Eusebi Hieronymi opera ex recensione 1. Hilberg et S.Reiter, 1910. II,7. Rufi Festi Avieni ora maritima ed. A. Berthelot P., 1934:349; Pomp. Melae, I; Valerius V.

<sup>55</sup> The origin of the ribal name *Mosinik* is considered to be due their wooden towers. They are placed after the *Tibareni* and characterized by identical ritual of hanging their dead on the tree (Ap.Rhodii Arg., II). Some scholars identified them with west Georgian tribe Chani (Javakhishvili 1913:25).

<sup>56</sup> The tribal name '*Macropaghus*' means 'long bearded'. Some authors such as Plini refer to them as *macrophages* (Plin., NH., VI.11.) and Strabo like *Makropogons* (Strabo, XI.2.). Rhodi sets them between the Pilir and Bekir tribes together with *Tibarens* and *Mosiniks* (Ap.Rodii Argon.II). Macrons are supposed to be the ancestors of modern Megrelians. Javakhishvili 1913:38-39.

<sup>57</sup> This tribal name has been interpreted as 'cone eaters'. Gigauri 1985.

<sup>58</sup> Flaccus mentioned them as neighbours of Bizders (Val.Flacc. Argon.,V).

<sup>59</sup> In Old Greek this word means 'coaches, horsemen or the bridle holders'. They are found among the north-western Colchian tribes from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Scyllax of Carianda, Hecataeus of Miletus). Scyllax names them next to the *Corax*. According to Josephus Flavius, by character they belong to such tribes 'who did not even recognize own rulers until now'.

<sup>60</sup> Their location is unidentified, but some does not exclude modern Abkhazia for their living area. Khorava B 2011:69. Few identify them with Suans (Gamakharia J, Gogia 2011. Abkhazia-Historical region).

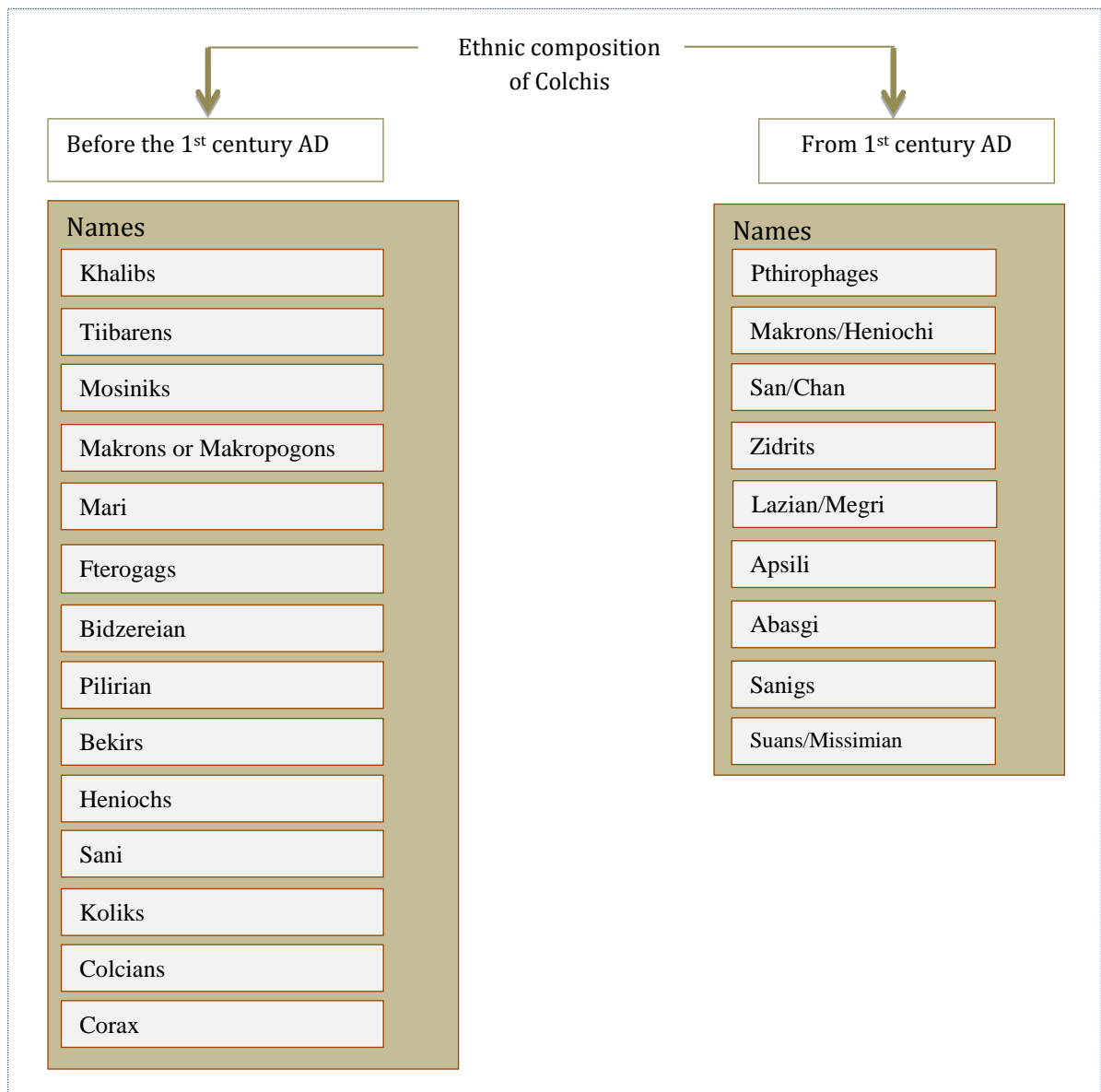
<sup>61</sup> Colchi were the neighbours of the Bidzeri and Zechians.

<sup>62</sup> A Geek translation of this tribal name is 'crows'. Hecataeus records them near to the Koliks (Georgika III.1936:272-289) and Scyllax names next to the *Heniochs*. They were called wild tribes by Plinii (VI.15).

<sup>63</sup> The *Pthiophages* (louse eaters, Satlians) are localized by Strabo and later Arrian in Stenitika at the Gagri. Their location is given by Plini somewhere in Kegritica (modern Megrelia), possibly an interpretive error. From Pithius to the area of Stenitika requires 150 stadia.

<sup>64</sup> Strabo mentions the domination of Suans even over theseaside Dioscuria. They had a kings and could gather the army of 200 000 man if necessary (Strabo. IX.2.14).

border with Avasks; thereafter come Sanigs. He names the river Akheunt (Shakhe) as border side between Sangis and Zechians.

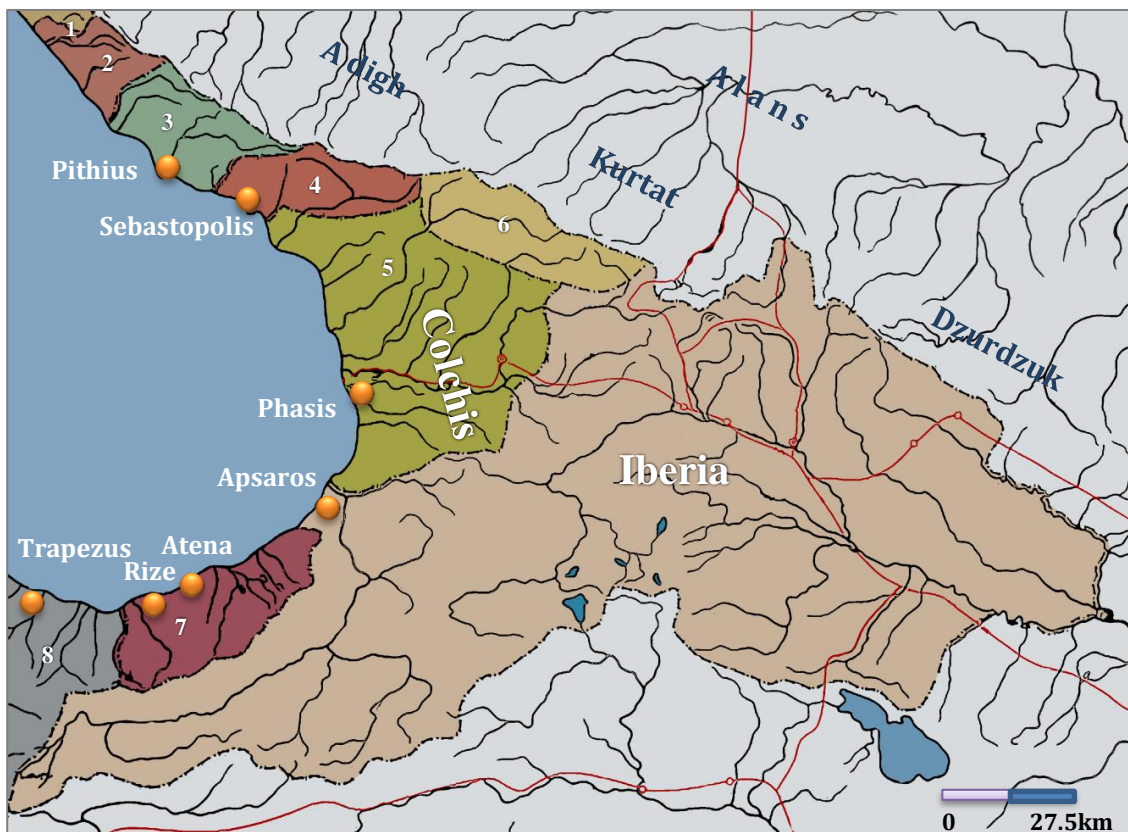


**Fig. 8.** List of Colchian tribes. Contains all tribal names recorded in textual sources.

If we evaluate textual sources, all they dealing with a single body of land structured the Kingdom of Colchis. Only two spoke in their own languages are Colchis and Missimias. But each had own advantages and practices in their allocation place, which might ruled by a tribal chieftains. Some were principal for trade or commodity task and even for food export, since Colchis was involved in such global trading systems as Transcaucasian highway.

This cross Colchian coastal and mountaineer areas, some ran even through the Apsilia. It shed light on the existence of a common system of organization, easily recognised in import types and similarly adopted Western practices (belief, clothing, dining, battle strategies and

etc). This factor affected independent action of tribes and challenged this micro tribal environment by responsible King of Colchis. It also feels when only the King presses their claims against the Roman generals who did not respect local rules. Indeed, all of this linked with imperial security as well. However, the dissatisfaction of the tribes were reflected in their different positions during the Great War in Lazica, when some Colchian tribes were divided into supporters of their two enemies whether Romans or Sassanids and even providing the soldiers. They were open for the frontier conflicts as well.



**MAP 4.** Map shows approximate location of tribes lived in the territory of Colchis in the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries. In colours are given: 1-Zechian. 2-Sanigs. 3-Abasgi. 4-Apsili. 5-Megri/Lazi. 6-Suani/Missimians. 7-Makrons. 8- Zidrits. Modified Map. *Source: Georgian historical Atlas.2003.*

The most debated scholarly issue is their localization. I've grouped this aspect generally about the population of NW Colchis while related.

**APSILIAN.** Apsili are known as hinterland tribes living in the valleys of the rivers Machara and Kodori only from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. They appear to have been wealthy population between 350 AD and 400 AD, result of activated road ran across the land. As central aspect of the curent thesis it is detailed in related chapter IV.

**SANIGIAN.** There is no clear evidence to suggest Sanigian living place explicitly. Textual sources consider with northern shore between Sebastopolis and Pithius is what contain the tribal territory. This regards to the areas between the rivers *Abaskos* and *Acheunt*.<sup>65</sup> Plini specifies their border only with Apsilia in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. That further advance towards north is revealed in placing between Abasgi and Zechians later 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries. This important step give them perspective to control the borders with Apsilia at the east, but this also changes very soon in late 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Scarce textual overview enables reconstruct even little about their physical characters or socio-political conditions. They were principal inhabitent of well known city Sebastopolis in 2<sup>nd</sup> century, ruled by king Spadag (Arr.) and distinguished by military achievements. Remarkable strongpoint holding roman legions was their strength, which is observable probably from the reign of Trajan (98-117). At the time they might a subject whether of romans or the King of Colchis (Proc.Goth. IV.I.120).

Abasgian conquest in 4<sup>th</sup> century causes loss of their influence over the most coastal part, including Sebastopolis until the river Abaskos, probably in early 5<sup>th</sup> century. This could be an application of tribal conflicts and changed alliances, but broad facts are missing.<sup>66</sup> Roman authors find Sanigia (together with Abasgia) as subject of Lazi in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most remarkable facts is their disappearance from tribal nomenclature and political spare in third quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This might most probably result of internal political process regarding to their tribal status or what Abasgian conquest could offer in sense of assimilation of Sanigian communities. But their name has been recorded back in early 7<sup>th</sup> century.

Their close phonetical similarity with San/Chan insured ethnic linkedges with Colchians.<sup>67</sup> Some scholar expects additional linkadge with Suani<sup>68</sup> and few suggest Sadzian ancestry while appearing first in the late medieval textual sources.<sup>69</sup>

**Archaeological perspective of Sanigia.** Archaeology finds little evidence of Sanigians by the remains of military structure in Sebastopolis and several artefacts. As city, belong to very distant past history, process the life by name *Dioskuria*, which has been anciently founded by Miletians, and populated from classic time. Transformation into a new roman town

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<sup>65</sup> Ael.Herod.De comm.pros.3. (SC I.263). *Abaskos* is considered to be either the modern rivers Psou or the Mdzimta. *Acheunt* has been identified with the modern river Shaxe.

<sup>66</sup> The situational change from the 4<sup>th</sup> century some scholar attributes to demolishes of Pithius and tribal hostilities one another. Letodiani, 1991.

<sup>67</sup> Inadze 1992:45,47; Letodiani 1991:120-140; Mibchuan T. 83-94.

<sup>68</sup> Letodiani 1991:120-140.

<sup>69</sup> Anchabadze 1960. Essay on Ethnical History of the Abkhazian People.

Sebastopolis was apparent cause, with typical lead of active life from the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Textual record about the 151 languages were spoken here is indication of growing market for trade activities or even established trading center, where the people from different land allowed to meet (Strabo. IX). But archaeology enables to prove such speed of activities. Such statistic survivor of spoken languages may possibly to identify the character of city consisted of many different communities. The city has been characterised much from its rich natural resources.

Newly transformed political establishment have come in Sanigia with interest building Sebastopolis fort, not toward diversification. It was a nearest defence to Phasis demonstrated in 146 km distance (810-820 stadiums). Structural indicators are few but applied in the ruins of *Castellum* (with ca. 0.8 ha surface) providing important evidence for its nature. Earlier structure with two rounded corners completed before 200 AD. Towers and changes in fortification design therefore turns to the 300-400 AD. Where the further archaeological evidence is available may subjects of many applications in planning of fortified areas, which may possibly gone underwater at the Black Sea shore or hidden in modern city Sukhumi.

Arrian gives more information about the 'weapons and horses', and exercises of riders he had observed in Sebastopolis;<sup>70</sup> and through provoking account on subordination with 'Dux Armena' in entire borderline Pontos ('*Limes Ponticum*'), which has been inherited by Romans, produce the most intense interaction of imperial politic. But he did not record the amount of stationed legionaries in Sebastopolis. More common explanation for troops stationed here is patrolling mountainous tribe particularly active in the vicinity (like Heniochi and Huns helps understand the essence of this). Procopius did not provide compositional guidance on troops installed in Sanigia or any other related context (Proc. Goth. Wars. VIII.ii. 1-6. p. 63).

**ABASGI/Avask.** People living in the area of Pithius (Bichvinta) in north-eastern part of coastal Colchis in the 1<sup>st</sup> century is known as Abasgian and recorded ruled by King Rismag (Arr.).<sup>71</sup> Their southern borders deal with Sanigia and SW with Apsilia (Proc. Goth. Wars. VIII.iii.10-16. p.79). But impossible to pinpoint the exact period of Abasgian penetration on the territory of Sanigia; similarly uncertain if the conquest of Sanigia took place at all (if yes, probably not before the 2<sup>nd</sup> century). Scholars believe that Abasgian territory increases in the 4<sup>th</sup> century from the river Gumista to the rivers either Bzip or Abaskos (Psou/Mdzimta),

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<sup>70</sup> Scholars are expecting the stationed cavalry and think that Arrian, found unnecessary to report about the number of riders; because a legion usually consisted of 120-300 riders from a cavalry forces of the 'Ala'. See Lordkipanidze 1991:3-4.

<sup>71</sup> None of the authors (Strabo, Memnon, P. Mellae) of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, with a good knowledge of eastern Black Sea tribes knew Abasgians at their time.

which also included a part of Sanigia. Abasgi held important land among the tribes of NW Colchis from early 5<sup>th</sup> century, which involve the Sebastopolis (inhabited by the Sangian) and stretched from Pithius to Zechians at the north.<sup>72</sup> At the south linked with Apsilia (Proc.Goth. IV.197.). Princely Abasgia was divided into eastern (ruled by king King Opsites)<sup>73</sup> and western parts (King Sceparna) (Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.ix.11-16.p.135). But formally, they were subject of Lazians similar to other tribal-administrative territories (Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.10-16.p.79). Therefore, Abasgians might freely act on territorial-administrative level and depended on chieftain's authority probably from early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. They in ancient time built a strong fortress in their territory (Proc.Goth.Wars. VIII.ix.11-16.p.135).

There are several hypotheses about Abasgian descent, but none of them are doubtless;<sup>74</sup> in particular north Caucasian ancestry in connection with the Abzoa (or Apsua) tribes in order to ensure their Abkhazian-Adigean origin.<sup>75</sup>

*Archaeological perspective of Abasgia.* They left huge evidences in archaeological context of the city Pithius (now Bichvinta). That was the northern most coastal city in Colchis near to the spa and resort of modern Bichvinta (Pithusnda into Russian);<sup>76</sup> recorded in 350 *stadia* (62.5 km) from the city *Sebastopolis*. A major traded center and seat of Abasgians is also expected here. Where the largest settlement of NW Colchis been imagined. Data produced the burial ground through light on the practices. Locally made particular type of pottery and metal objects traded throughout the northern Colchis are made evidential similar lifestyle shared with neighbors. But archaeology more clearly reveals evidences for international contacts concerning the trade. Huge number of imported pottery (3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century LRW), glass vessels, jewellery and coins<sup>77</sup> reveal different stages of development and commercial exploitations. Huge number of coins also made evidential the regular trade and

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<sup>72</sup> Zechians are expected as coastal tribes, that first appearance in the NE Black Sea coast mentioned by Strabo. Well informed about their piracy oppressions over the lowland peoples similar to Heniochs (Strabo XI.2.12). They lived far from the NW border. Only in the 5<sup>th</sup> century consider their location N of the modern Tuapse. At this time they captured the town of Lazica (Nicopsya). Their origin is not certain with accuracy, but ancient sources name them as Pelazgian. However, some modern scholars consider them to be Adigean.

<sup>73</sup> Opsites wife Theodora had roman origin (Proc.Goth. IV. II. 197). He was the uncle of Lazian king Gubazes.

<sup>74</sup> The definition of word '*Abaskia*' which has been analyzed in Greek language and means 'impassible', has nothing common with the modern Apsua. It just indicates the character of place. Most scholars consider Abasgi to be ethnically Georgian. Some closely relates them with Suan and Mengrelian tribes. Gamkrelidze T. 1993:591-600.

<sup>75</sup> The Abzoe tribe is mentioned by Plini in the 1<sup>st</sup> century north of the Caspian Sea. Absua/Abkhazian are first mentioned by Mari Brose as the ancestors of the Abasgi. Brose M. 1874:2. Inadze expects their shifted towards SW and identifies with the Abaza, who also migrated to Abkhazia in the same century. Inadze 1960 and 1992:140-141. From a phonetic point of view their connection with 'Apsua' and 'Abazg' is considered by Lomouri as insufficient argument for their identification.

<sup>76</sup> From the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC Pithius is mentioned by Artemidor of Ephesus and Strabo. Also recorded the Penia river, which is associated with the Bzip river and consequently, the Pithius area. Lortkipanidze G., 1991: 12. Pitsunda necropolis.

<sup>77</sup> It has been yielded about 1400 Roman coins of 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century date. Entire find consisted over 1.600 gold, silver and bronze coins minted in Caesarea and probably transported from Trabzon. Dondua-Lortkipanidze 1980:41-45.

main lines of communication. Some imported items and battle weapons suggest a security need and tell the story about the daily life of soldiers.

Romanization rooted into the new security and religious practices. There is a powerful fort Pithius tracing the beginning of the roman rules; where the roman army has been stationed several times from the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Initial fort (2.2 ha, 136 m, 162 L) with attached 15 square towers consider to the Roman camp at this time. Two temporary fortifications were made. Earlier timber (oak) structures and the W gate supposed pre-200 date. Larger fort of stone and lime mounted structure with attached towers is quite another appearing from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century. But, eastern wall, gateway, extensions and tower additions suggest second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century date, similar to Sebastopolis<sup>78</sup> and other Black Sea defensive structures, reasonably assumed to the activity of Constantine I.<sup>79</sup> Later activity had assumed well preserved 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century castle and a *canabae*, surrounded with walls and towers. But the question of veteran settlement in Colchis is an issue of further investigations.

The arrangement of '*praetorium*,' 'Principia' and relations between small buildings in central part is something complex. This include a small temple '*sacellum*', a '*aurarium*' and *ainem* '*armatorium*'. The main road through *praetorium* leads to the eastern gate. Both sides of street containing various buildings, one considered to be hospital and rest officers' houses and a bath. This entire is largely a conceptual construct combined with task to monitor the costal routes and land routes that ran from Bzyb, Machara and Kodori valleys. Such locational mission within the chain of *Pontos limes* would execute by the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century. But Pithius fort was ruined when North Caucasian tribes demolished it twice: firstly, by the Boranes in mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century and thereafter by Huns in 370 AD. Both are episodes when Pithius shortly lost its economic importance. A return to normal life shows the material of later 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Another type of castle is also known from the territory of Abasgians is Trachea (having one passage), guarded by Abazgians in order to support the security system (Proc.Goth. IV.197).

Important Christian communities and bishopric grew in Abasgia from mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. Remains of churches inside fortified area of Pithius correspond to the historical truth about important religious center with seat of Bishopric at this time. The religious ceremonies might also put into the context. This circumstance could be fully misunderstood in Abasgian

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<sup>78</sup> Lekvinadze 1969.

<sup>79</sup> Fortification walls of 4<sup>th</sup> century including *canabae*, which considered being for the veteran settlement. Gregory Sh. 1996:206.



practice in which their children appear as *Eunuchs*.<sup>80</sup> Abasgi were only tribes in Colchis accepted such practice, but they seem most friendly and flexible to Roman rules. While the decision of forbidden castration practice and eunuchs export was taken under the emperor Justinian I (527-565).

**SUANI/Scymni/Missimians.** Missimians seem third important tribes (after Tzanni) at the early Byzantine period. They belong to the group of highlanders inhabited northern mountainous of Colchis and share common ancestry. Occupying the peaks of Caucasia, they inhabited mountaineer areas over Dioskuria, what is called today Swaneti in upper Kodori valleys. Other included territories compared valleys with distinctive strongpoints Dzakhar (in Chkhalta) and Buklos (Georgian Bokeri) in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, which give excess to their military abilities.<sup>81</sup> Since they bordered the Apsili at the north-west, they played their part in history of alliances of mountaineer tribes against the banditry of northern rides, easily come through this way. They were often recorded been involved in alliance with Apsilians. Moreover, Agathias account of their quickly turned alliance with Persians has happened after the rebellion against Byzantine in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, when they start resisting the Romans for a long time. There were several reasons to justify strategic importance of this region at the time of Procopius and Menander mentioning ‘*Missimians road*’ and route from steppe through Suania (Men.Prot. fr.6.1.500; fr.10.5); which constitute a piece of evidence about silk transportation through Apsilia.

Missimians did not seem largest settlement, but appear as powerful group. The most distinctive feature of variation between Missimian and other tribes of Kingdom, except the Colchi, is having own language. Ancient traces of this tribe and their achievements are little. They identified with nearly the same territory where the modern Swans are living. Despite of language diversity, skills and technology practiced by the Missimian community does not emphasize different ethnic group.

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<sup>80</sup> Procopius records the following: ‘*But they suffered much from the covetousness of their Princes; who took violently from the Parents such children as were beautiful and made them Eunuchs, and sold them to the Roman at great prices; then killed the fathers, lest they might revenge their Children abusing and they might not have suspected subjects. And hereby most of the eunuchs of the imperial Palace were Abasgians. But in the now reign of Justinian’s all had been changed for the Abasgians to the milder and more civil.. and the Emperor send Euphrates his Eunuch expressly to admonish their princes, to force out no more the vitility of human nature with iron and the Abasgians, bold upon this injunction of the Emperor, have opposed ..; which made it formerly their greatest fear to be Fathers of handsome sons.* (Proc.Goth.IV.II.192).

<sup>81</sup> Muskhelishvili D. 1977:123. See also Gudimov M. Berndt 2012. Shifting frontiers in the Caucasus Mountains: The Suani.

## II. 3 ROMAN POLICY IN COLCHIS

The Romans had quite a particular economic interest. This interest is connected with the functioning of the Transcaucasia highway and to establish a monopoly on world trade. In this context, the defensive industry was their perspective to control the Black Sea trade in the eastern part, but the Colchian Kingdom was a land of powerful tribes with their own borders. To control such a land, there needed to be a free geo-political basis and Rome did it in different ways.

The challenge had already begun at the time of Emperor Nero, when Colchis was incorporated into the Roman Empire as a direct province of Cappadocia and became a traditional vassal kingdom of Rome perhaps in the year 64 or 63 (after the annexation of Pontus Polemoniacus). A further consequence was the stationing of Roman garrisons in Colchian coastal cities from the 1<sup>st</sup> century, which had become strongly fortified in a hundred years. Coastal fortification was established in four tribal areas of the Apsaros, Sanigi, and Abasgi: the ancient cities of Apsaros (modern day Gonio), Phasis (modern day Poti), Sebastopolis (modern day Sukhumi), and Pithius (modern day Bichvinta). It gave them a strategic purpose in the context of participating in international frontier troops. As after the emperor Vespasian, probably in 74 AD two legions XII Fulminata (This legion was also placed in Albania after 84 AD) and XV Apollinaris shifted from Pannonia to Cappadocia and their vexillations established in the strategically important part Petra.<sup>82</sup> Later, to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the part of Legion XV took part in the northern coastal defense Pithius.<sup>83</sup> At this time two more auxiliaries of Claudius supported the Apsaros fort (Table 3, B),<sup>84</sup> suggested a typical provincial cohort '*numeri legionum*'. Functionally, they had to respond to all kinds of hostilities and engaged in the security of the eastern Black Sea. This was met by Gothic and Hunnic invasions in 370 AD.

At this time, the Romans controlled only the coastal shore of Colchis and related road systems. Correspondingly, each defensive point was integrated in the global trade network of the empire (Map 16; Table 2). Thus, Pithius, Sebastopolis, Phasis, and Petra became the main areas of Roman domination and multicultural entity, where foreign ideas, wealth, and currency flew. They were also parts of the modernized Roman infrastructure of the time,

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<sup>82</sup> Evidences are provided a roman brick with stamp VEXFA VEX (illation legionum XIII) F (XV ulminatea et) A (polinaris). It was found in fortified area of Petra (modern Tsikhisdziri), where these two legions are suggested being led the fortification.

<sup>83</sup> It has been proved by ceramic plate with stamp LEG XV, which was found in layers dated to this time.

<sup>84</sup> This information which comes from Fajum paper, inscription of Nola, is recorded a Marcius plethoric the major (*praeposito*) of the stationed troops (*numerorum*) in Apsaros. But scientists doubt the existence of these two cohorts in Apsaros.

where the water supply system was built. However, limitations made clear that empire that did not expected supporting inhabitants widely, as there is no evidence to be linked with other types of water supply infrastructures (like irrigation systems and etc.), but all this surely brought different effects to related settlements. In addition, Roman building traditions that are present in Colchian defensive structures gives us a notion about the financial and intellectual investments of the empire in the security measures of land. It was exactly those secured parts under areas of Roman jurisdiction that ran for longer. The distribution of Roman rules was supposed to be assigned by the emperor Hadrian, when Colchis became a part of the frontier zone. How well the Roman rules functioned from beginning is revealed in the provisioning of stationed armies by the Cappadocian governor (*legatus*) Arrian, who was sent with instructions. The aim of his visit also made it visible that the local tribal power had a lot to indicate; not all Colchian tribes freely cooperated with Romans. One of these examples is the Heniochi, the most problematic tribe for the Roman Empire when it came to payment matters.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, an essential matter for these strongpoints was also the subjugation of local tribes to ensure trade and secure navigation through related harbors. Soon, the Romans conquered the entire Colchis.

Local kings were transformed into Roman allies and this way ruled a large part of tribal verity. They seemingly supported the split of the Colchian Kingdom into separate units to become a Roman servant; tribes became their own rulers textually referred to as ‘basileus’ in the sense of kings appointed by the Roman emperor. However, it does not correspond to the real meaning of ‘king’.

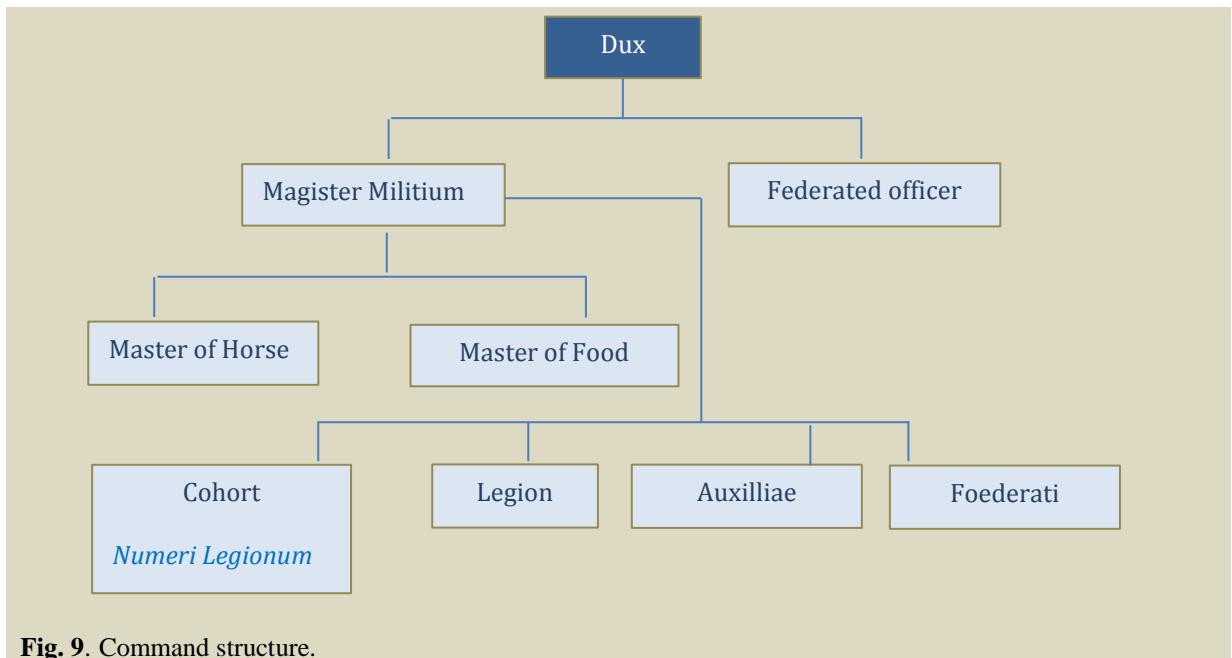
The Roman Empire recognized the important role of Christianity in dealing with Caucasia. Christianity was deeply entrenched later in Colchian society, but in the early years, the story of Andrew The First-Called was included the path of Christianisation.<sup>86</sup> The massive pottery

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<sup>85</sup> The Heniochi are referred as southern mountain tribes bordering the Cappadocia, Colchis and Armenia. At Arrian time in 2<sup>nd</sup> century Heniochs are placed on the SE shore. In fact, the problem of their localization poses difficulties in the accuracy of the localization of the rest remaining tribe.

<sup>86</sup> According to the ‘geography of traffic’, Andrew the first-Called visited Georgia three times to preach Christianity. On the third voyage, he was accompanied by Simon Canaan, Matthew, Bartholomew, and Thaddeus. After converting Colchis in 37 AD, they came to Chorokhi valley together and move to Kartli. From here, only Andrew moved to Khulo and eastwards to Atskhuri. He also bypasses Abazgia-Sanigia and the city of Suani. According to ‘Qartlis Tskhovreba’, before entering Ossetia, he arrived in Svaneti. Andrew died in Gonio/Apsaros, near Batumi, where he was buried. Other later story relates to captive women curing the queen, and an eclipse converting the king. Both stories were confirmed in 402 by roman historian Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411), in his translation of Eusebius The church History. Information about the apostolic travels and preaching of Andrew the First-Called in Georgia (Scythia and the Caucasus) can be found in the following works: Japaridze A (mitropoliti) 2009. Saqartvelos samociqulo eklesiis istoria (*History of the Georgian Apostolic Church*). Tbilisi; Gugushvili G. 2001. Mosazreba andria pirvelcodebulisa da sxva motsiqulta saqartveloshi mogzaurobis erti monakvetis shesaxeb (*About one particular part of the journey of Andrew the First-Called and other apostles to Georgia*) . ‘Saqartvelo da qristianoba’ (*Georgia and Christianity*). *Iw. Javakhishvilis sakhelobis istoriisa da etnografiuli institutis mecniere mushakta da aspirantta samecniere konferenciis masalebi (Proceedings of the scientific conference of scholars and Postgraduate students of the Iv.*

production with Christian signs indicated intensified Christian propaganda from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. This is a time when churches were visible in the militarized coastal areas of Pithius and hinterland Archaeopolis. This time is thought to be when the conversion of the Apsili into Christian belief together with the Lazi took place. The Roman stance was clear.



**Fig. 9.** Command structure.

However, Colchis was reorganized into a province in order to be economically and militarily beneficial. This policy seemingly lasted until the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when among these small states the most important became Lazica and the process of unification became the goal of the future. But under Theodosius II (408–450), Romans lost interest in loyalty. The Lazi were restricted in the Black Sea trade, military duty was not paid and they were not supported by the military. This was an indication of changes in attitudes towards the roman provinces in Lazica and beginning of seriously threatened story revealed in the next centuries.

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*Javakhishvili Institute of history and ethnography*). Tbilisi; Pirckhadze M. 2002. Qristianobis gavrtselebis istoria dasavlet saqartveloshi, I-IX saukuneebi (History of the spread of Christianity in western Georgia, I-IX centuries). Sadisertacio nashromi istoriis metsnierebata kandidatis sametsniro xarisxis mosapoveblad (*Dissertation for admission the candidate degree of Science*). Iv.javakhishvilis Tbilisis sakhelmtsipo universiteti (*Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi state university*).

## II. 4 BYZANTINE POLICY IN LAZICA

Byzantine policies indicated security regulations that easily identified borderline policy. It can be seen directly in the huge investments in defensive infrastructures explored in hinterland Lazica, in their plan and sources for battle. Defensive activities have already begun in the early years of the reign of Justin I (518–527), when new and renewed older fortresses were attached to the Roman power. Petra, Sebastopolis, and Pithius became the prominent defensive centers (**Tables 2-4**), but the penetration of defensive activities in the hinterlands was also apparent (*Notitia Dignitatum* is the valuable source).

Fortification systems now focused also on Caucasian passes through the Kodori valley, as these passes gave radically different perspectives to Byzantine, Persia, and several nomadic tribes in terms of which distinction appears in the direction of their control area. This also became the basis for cooperation on a conceptual and financial level, remarkable from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It outlined the first priority in the imperial security of the Black Sea littoral. This was why the Byzantines had to pay for alliances to protect Caucasian gates. Such diplomacy was activated by Justinian I, who reinforced regular movements, but the case of the senior officer Soterichus makes it clear how dangerous it was to convey money to Transcaucasia through the Apsilian (Kodori valley) northern neighborhood of Missimia.<sup>87</sup>

Indeed, the Lazi also received some financial support from Byzantine, especially by the 550 AD, but textual sources inform us that they were less paid than northern Caucasian tribes (Proc. Wars 8.15.4).<sup>88</sup> To be able to successfully perform their historical function, several critical parts of the Lazian hinterland and northern mountaineers were supported by further fortification. The Byzantines strengthened the coastal Apsaros, Phasis, and Archaeopolis. The new border fortresses in the eastern part of Lazica were established in Shorapani and Skanda. Both were responsible for controlling the road from the north into eastern Transcaucasia and those connected to Iberia, Armenia, Albania, and Media Atropatene. The northern passes of Lazica outlined the significance of Apsilian and Missimian territory, as their south led to the coastal Sebastopolis at the Black Sea shore. But Missimia dominated on two different mountain routes, either through Apsilia according the river Kodori or via the central Lazi according to the river Enguri, and Missimia preferred alliance with Persia, thus becoming superior to fortify all related exists in the neighboring Apsilia, which had an equally significant strategic location.

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<sup>87</sup> When he proceeded to distribute the money in the north, he was murdered by the very first recipient in Missimia, near to the fort Buchloos, because they displeased it.

<sup>88</sup> Blockley 1985.

However, the fortification system of Lazica was a great construction project carried by the Byzantines under Emperor Justinian II (527–565). The knowledge and required sources were foreign, which naturally gave these areas a modern view, but the civil infrastructure was the most serious gap of their building project. Related water supplies still did not occur massive character.

The next important point of Byzantine policy in Lazica was guarding power sources. Existing textual evidence (supported by archaeology) makes it recognizable that local allies were comparable to Roman soldiers and well-trained recruited warriors involved in border defense. The only textual evidence for the involvement of Abasgian recruits in the main frontier line comes from Bosra, which could be an explanation for such military services. In fact, the local dispute between the Roman warriors became high. Some seemingly even found security jobs advantageous in Lazica, as the regional movements of military allies can be proven archeologically. This could be a matter of supplies applicable to their possessions. Perhaps the Romans made a system of privileged militaries for certain acts and guaranteed them a definable social life. The mentality and supply they show in certain practices are worldwide. Obviously, the Lazian military units were allied with foreign powers. Texts often mention the assistance of thousands of Roman soldiers and Huns (Proc.Goth.Wars. VIII.xi.17-25.p.155) in military campaigns against Persia (548–549) and later even with Alans. The precedent for the involvement of Caucasian confederates in military campaigns of Lazica, paid for by Byzantine, is an indication of increased Roman influence over the Caucasia and consequence of negotiations with the Huns; the Hunnic offer to enter in negotiations to control the Caspian Gates after the 504 (Proc. Wars. 1.10.9-12) supported by the Byzantine emperor. Unfortunately there is no textual information if Justinian's reform of the years 528 and 536,<sup>89</sup> and the reorganization of Armenia<sup>90</sup> and Pontus Polemoniacus, equally touched the Lazi Kingdom,<sup>91</sup> and if the Roman troops that were deployed in Lazica were commanded by John Tzibus in Petra (Proc.II.15.1-26). However, there is a notion about

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<sup>89</sup> It also connected with the creation of special military units for *Pontus Polemoniacus*, where more *numeri* were previously been placed (Proc. Aed. III. C.J.I.29.5). At the same time, the reorganization of Armenia reflected in the admission of a new *magister militum per Armenia* (Mal.18.10.) and also of a new institution of *magister militum numeri*, which Armenia has not had before. In *Notitia Dignitatum* some *duces* and *comities* likewise to Armenia, are mentioned in Lazica as well. But we don't have similar information about the *magister militum and subordinated to him* indigenous *milites castrensiani* requested to enroll in security of Armenia (according to the imperial *rescript*); or even of *magister militum numeri* of soldiers; Also uncertain if *duces* and *comities* (and their *consulars*) were formerly *milites castrensiani* that had been established for the former officers in Armenia. We only know that, new *magister militum per Armenia* Sitas spent some years also in mountain Tzani in 520 AD.

<sup>90</sup> The result of the reorganization of Armenia in 536 AD was an establishment of four Armenian provinces. *Armenia I* which incorporated Theodopilis and Satala, produces mutual evidences of installed garrisons similar to that of Pithius and Petra.

<sup>91</sup> *Pontus Polemoniacus* of this period comprises with five cities (*Neocaesarea, Comana, Trapezus, Cerasus and Polemniun*), which also included the following forts of Lazica: Pithius, Sebastopolis, Archaeopolis, Rhodopolis, Scandis and Sarapanis, Maurisius and Lysiris (Nov.J.28).

the new Roman allies departed for a time in Lazica and were defended by former secretary Peter (Proc.1.10.9-14).

Faith always restored the basis for the treatment of the Lazi, but the Byzantines took a unique approach concerning the law. The King of Lazica was selected from locals, but still sanctioned by the Roman emperors.<sup>92</sup> This practice was judiciously employed from 522 AD. Textually, it is invisible if the frontier reorganization carried out in Pontus and Armenia directly and unchanged also touched Lazica in the year 528.

The Byzantines allowed intermarriage between Lazian officials and Roman aristocracy. The fact that the King Gubazes I (456–466) married a Roman woman was indication of the accepted rules (Proc.Goth.Wars. VIII.ix.4-11.p.133); similarly, the marriage of Tsathius I (520–541) to the Roman Patrician Valeriana proves its continuity.<sup>93</sup> Gubazes II (540–555) himself was the son of a Roman woman and his uncle Opsites was also married to a Roman woman named Theodora (Proc.Goth.Wars. VIII.ix.4-11.p.133). Lazian kings were allowed to wear the Roman imperial crown and cloth made of white cloak of pure silk instead of purple stripes having the gold imperial embroideries and border.<sup>94</sup> In addition, certain cultural projects were pursued for the education of Lazian royalty in Byzantium. This was practiced by King Tsathius II and it was an effective strategy to make Lazian kings official Roman allies. However, they could easily be killed by Roman officials in that place. An example for this is a murder of Gubazes II (540–555) by Martin and Rusticus in 555. This case is even connected with the Lazian revolt for their right, where the Lazian delegation acknowledged the killed king and their opinion shifted to be compromised by Byzantine emperor Justinian I. Such stories caused disaffection and made the imperial policy unpopular.

In fact, the number of regulations did not make locals happy; especially since Roman law was now becoming part of the bureaucracy. New approaches of the empire included the taxation of the Lazi, the most famous of which was that of Tzibus in 541 AD when prices rapidly rose because he bought imported goods and sold them to the population at very expensive prices. The Lazi had to pay taxes even for local products, and this law excluded Lazians from coastal trade. Furthermore it was quartered by Roman troops and Lazi kings made claims about the rapacity of imperial officers, especially in the reign of Justinian I. As result, the Romans had to deal with rebellions (like in 542).

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<sup>92</sup> There is no evidence that the king was originally a Roman. But there is a direct reference to how the *heir of Gubazes II* was succeeded by emperor Justinian II.

<sup>93</sup> Valeriana was a granddaughter of a former *curopalates* Oninus (Mal. 17.9). See: Geoffrey Graetrex and Samuel N.C. Lieu, 2002:80.

<sup>94</sup> Such dress wore the Lazi King Tsathius II. This dress in the middle applied a small true purple portrait bust with a likeness of Emperor Justin. But his red shoe recorded been bored pearls in Persian fashion likewise his belt.

Byzantine policy used the tribal variety as a weapon to guarantee their dominance in Lazica, which surely was not a stability factor. From the beginning, Roman emperors gradually declared the Apsilian, Abasgian, Heniochi, and Missimian subsistence of the Lazi kingdom. They could even manage to hold disobedient Tzanni from 536 when they received civic foundations from Romans (Nov.J.28). But the change of political methodology is remarkable from the second half of the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, when the Byzantines tried to cooperate directly with local administrative units. This is exactly what gave a platform for the unification of the former Colchian Kingdom under the leadership of the Lazi. If the Lazi were responsible for rebellions or invasions against Romans, they were punished either by payment or conquest. This is proven by textual facts in two cases in 542 AD and 548 AD, when the city of Petra was destroyed. Therefore, the process of unification became the goal of the future.

Romanized practices that were favored by the local population are revealed in their dining culture, clothing fashion, and imported jewelry types. This was a part of trade and multicultural relations, but how the mass civilians were treated is recognizable in the existence of eunuchs (Proc. Goth.Wars. VIII.1-16. P.79). This was tolerated later, because the locals claimed Byzantine policy in the context of killing their king Gubazes II, but the latest sources provide the case of mass arrest. It clarifies that imprisoned individuals were sent in the eight *exoria* of Apsilia, which indicates Byzantine intolerance to monophysites.<sup>95</sup>

To ensure prosperity and political success, Byzantine made investments in Christian architecture and supported religious centers in Pithius (Proc.Goth.Wars. VIII.iv.11-v.2.p.87). From the 4<sup>th</sup> century, hinterland churches existed in Archaeopolis. Certain imported church furnishings in the Kodori valley a bit later also confirm this. The growth of the Christian community is recognizable through the archaeological material from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and as dominant religion perhaps from the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Byzantine authors' notions about the conversion of Lazi and Apsili from 'ancient' time might be suggestive of this time. In fact, this was a certain model of alliance that always played a decisive role for Lazian Kings. Locals seemed to freely follow the new religion, as seen in their custom and the way they introduced the concept of religious tolerance, recognizable in later synchronic cremation graves among inhumane individuals (even in the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century).

The Byzantines guaranteed the security of communicative areas and related roads. They responded to trade orders with the law in main strategic cities, especially at the coastal part.

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<sup>95</sup> Maximus the confessor and his Companions'. *Document from Exile*. Edited and translated by Allen P and Neil B. Oxford, 2004.



Through this they ensured trade, adding the possible dimensions also to the Lazian economy. Therefore, the Roman regulations, customs, and norms identified in monuments were a reflection of moved ideas, people, and capital. They were the consequence of challenges directed from eastern frontier, which set Byzantine borders over Caucasia and especially in Lazica, provisionally running between the Apsilia and Missimia.

## II. 5 SASSANIAN POLICY IN LAZICA

Byzantine and Sassanian interest over Lazica was identical and co-existing, but distinctive in respect of their political, social and religious policies. Lazian and Sassanian had been shortly companions and enemies for a very long time. Beginning stage of their influence in Lazica is assigns to the year 520, but during the reign of Tsathius (520–541) it became a formal part of the Persian law. But when Sassanians seized more and more territories in eastern and northern over the time, Kavadh tries rebuilt his influence in Transcaucasia.<sup>96</sup> Their intervention was sometimes grounded by complaining of Lazi kings against Romans like in 541 AD, or Svanetia and Scymnia (Lechkhumi) against Lazi in 551 AD, to gain control over the kingdom (Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.xiv.49-xv.p.207). Lazian claims against Byzantium and manipulation was best mask for invasions. Neither side gained real advantage during the 541-562 AD, when Lazi went to war against Byzantines. Since a Persian principal interest was indicated in the conquest of Byzantine strategic points, he activated maneuver policies to ensure sieges at Petra and control the Black Sea trade. But weakness of Roman-Byzantine politics was similarly an Achilles heel of Persians, always used ineffectively, while oppressing locals excepting Zoroastrian belief. One of the best examples was bringing Zoroastrian Magi after occupying Petra in 542 AD. Their strategy to kill Lazi king or deport all the Lazi,<sup>97</sup> as Khusro I hoped, was simple and caused the rebellions of local kings. The only solution finds Khusro I to overrun both lands Lazica and Iberia was Zoroastrianism as opportunity (Proc. Wars. II.28.18-24). That he saw also as perspective to free from the plunder of the Huns concentrated in the northern vicinity of Lazi (Proc.Wars. II.28.23).

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<sup>96</sup> After the suppression of an uprising in Minor Armenia in 513, when he erected fortifications and built a new capital of Albania (at Partaw), he also installs a *marzban* at Iberian Mtsketa.

<sup>97</sup> Geoffrey 2002:11.

After gaining control over Transcaucasia and significant passes Derbent and Daria (in time of Peroz I (459–484), Persian generals Mermeroes' successor Nachoragan, constructed a major road from Iberia into Lazica that they had to use during the 550/555-556 AD (Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.xvi.11-19.p.221). It result rebuilt of fortresses within Iberia at Skanda (it was destroyed by Lazi, so Persians could not use it. Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.xiii.18-26.p.189) and Shorapani (Proc.Wars.8.16.16-17). At Cotais (Kutaisi) has been erected a wooden defensive wall by Mermeroes, also in Onoguris fort at modern Sepieti. Houses were built throughout of Mocheresis (Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.xvi.19-23.p.223). However, Persia empowered the barrier between Romans and Persians in Lazica. It was indication of formal suzerainty over Lazi kingdom.

Archaeology does not support much Sasanian material. The King of Lazi was appointed by the king of the Persians during the rule of Kavadh. Persia assisted Lazian rebellions against the Romans. Textual sources make it recognizable that Colchian kings were Romanizing themselves.

### III. GULIRIPSH DISTRIC - HISTORICAL APSILIA

#### III. 1 INTRODUCTION

The core region of historical Apsilia is largely identical to the territory of the modern Gulripsh, established on 25 m<sup>2</sup> areas and focusing on exceptionally prominent central parts of area Shapka and Tsebelda.

**III. 1. 1 Modern regional context.** The core region of Apsilian archaeological heritage is largely identical to the territory of the modern Gulripsh, which is already mentioned from the beginning. Geo-physically it covers 183 km<sup>2</sup> areas, with the highest elevation 2000 m from the Black Sea. Its different landform produce a thematic geo-physical content of hills, summit, ridges, ravines, several valleys, open woodlands and extremely mountaineers north, which implies a very considerable need for control the land facilitates (**Fig. 10**). This formed



**Fig. 10.** The view of Kodori Valley.

in a subtropical environment at the south and much continental to the north.<sup>98</sup>

Strategically meaningful and well-watered valleys, giving access to passes Qlukhori (281 m), Nakhari (2931 m) and Marukhi (2769 m) at the north been anciently recognized for defensive and communication activities. Furthermore, the location between the Sokhumi (W), Ochamchire (E), Svaneti (N) and the Stavropol (NW) is an important junction for south-east and south-north traffic.

With a particular geologic content of lead (low portion), silver and zinc,<sup>99</sup> tin (Akhupatsi), arsenic (Skhapharchi ridge) and barite (Gvandra, Sakeni), giving potential for industrial activities, is a best known area. The orange brown clay silt (Gvandra subsoil), high concentration of manganese and limestone represent other geologic background. Watercourses Machara<sup>100</sup> and Kodori<sup>101</sup> that descends in mountains towards the Black Sea and partially the Lake Amtkel,<sup>102</sup> made clear the variable function of the rivers. Mountains offer the building material (wood, stone)<sup>103</sup> and the coastal area-the salt, which has much earlier tradition of boiled concentrates of sea-water.<sup>104</sup>

Development outlined here during the 1920-1980 is a result of rural<sup>105</sup> and cultivation<sup>106</sup> activities as maximum achievements. It led to the population increase and density in central Gulripsh, Olginskoe and Tsebelda, those are becoming more important for tobacco and grape planting. The wood cutting process gained during the 1960-1970 and limestone factory built in upland Kodori increases the volume of settled parts in the village Azanta and near to the lake Amtkel. All they become a local market based sources in producing tobacco, some vegetables, fish, wood and limestone, enriched with livestock (favorably ox, goats, sheep).

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<sup>98</sup> From the sea level (650 m) it continues into more continental climate in mountaineer areas until the alpine condition at about 2.100 meters. Climate is seasonal, with a long wet November to April (a high rainfall seasons) and a shorter dry season from May to August. See: Environmental performance reviews. Georgia, Band 11, United Natons Publication. 2003.

<sup>99</sup> This characterizing the upper reaches of the river Kodori, the Amtkel, Khestkvari, Gvandra and Saken areas.

<sup>100</sup> The river length is 21.2 km and its basin is 110 km. Both its tributaries Big and small Machara are formed in the coastal Merkheuli. Its bigger stream, which originates in the village Tsebelda at elevation of 435 m above the sea level, also joins some unnamed stream and the tributary Barjal, where the village Olginskoe is located. Smaller one forms at elevation of 930 m. Both sides of the river contain valleys with prominent Patskhiri part.

<sup>101</sup> This river explores in 110 km length at elevation of 1.300 to 3.983 meter above the sea level and with basin extended of 2030 km<sup>2</sup>. It structurally composed of several streams and joins the Black Sea south of the village Adjubzha.

<sup>102</sup> The average height of this lake is 512 m above the sea level, depth is 65 m and length measures 153 km<sup>2</sup>. It increases from 2.4 km to 4 km. The trout, chub, nase and spirling are fish types common for Lake Amtkel.

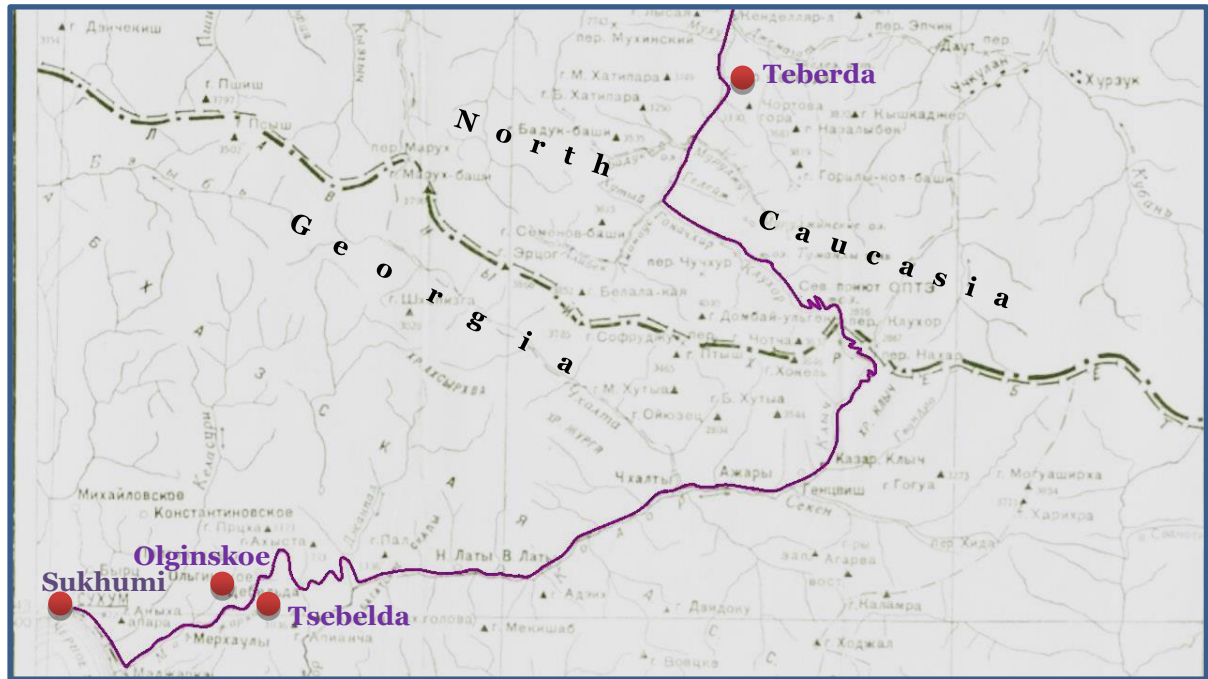
<sup>103</sup> The Abkhazian Mountains are also recorded in the context of such stone sources as Quarz, Agate and Chalcedon, but the corresponding mountains and areas are not named. See: Gogadze, Davlianidze, Patskhava, Lomitashvili 2009:164.

<sup>104</sup> Lordkipanidze 1978:169.

<sup>105</sup> Rural activities of years 1920-1950 spread over the Vinogradni, Akhatsarakhu hills. Further plowed areas of the Abramov, Mahajirov, Monetni and Apiancha hills at the river Machara consider later years 1940-1950.

<sup>106</sup> The grape cultivation that much introduced during the 1950-1980 years was comparably low, but explored in several new hills Panikin, Verin, Barton Jasocka and continually experienced Vinogradni hill. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26-28; Voronov 1998:271.

Gulripsh includes the road with various starting point and destination, which developed through several historical phases.<sup>107</sup> This factor may have increased the population, because of easy communication supported by ‘Sokhumi military highway’ constructed during the 1903-1989 (Map 5).<sup>108</sup>



**MAP 5.** Schematic map of Sokhumi-Teberda military highway, run across Georgia and through the Kodori valley towards Russia.

Entire road consists 337 km<sup>109</sup> and integrates the western Gluripsh,<sup>110</sup> Tsebelda, and the serpentine part of a new road, ‘Iron Bridge’<sup>111</sup> and mountain Pal (Map 6). With a number of

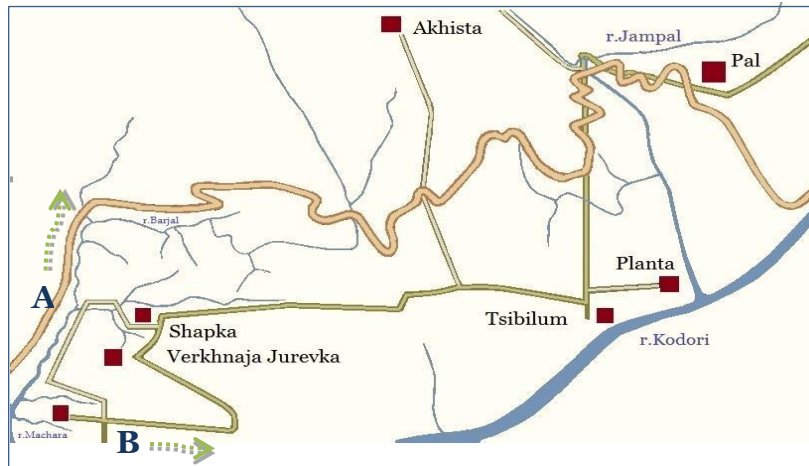
<sup>107</sup> Entire road design recognized as ‘Turkish path’ on the Venetian map of Francis Pizigani, which dates 60s of the XIV century. As project of ‘Sukhumi military road’ it was developed in the early 30s. This road in 171 km length ran from the north to the south Caucasus, from the Teberda George to Sukhumi. The early sections of the road connected the North Caucasian Stanitsa of Batalpashinskaya (the current city of Cherkessk) with Sukhumi, which activated in 1903. This was the equestrian trail of Qlukhori pass. Other significant sections like the Lower Azhara-Teberda through Klukhor pass are recorded impassable. One of the obstacles and factors hindering the construction of this road is recorded its permanent use by the Bolsheviks for political-military chaos in Abkhazia in 1918. It led to the closure of the Kodori (Dalsk) region by the Georgian Democratic Republic during 1918- 1921. In 30s was planned to line with Zugdidi-Mestia road.

<sup>108</sup> This Russian project initiated in 1898, has become special importance since the Germans moved to Klukhori pass (to advance Gvandra), after the capture of Teberda in August of 1942. Gulripsh became a principal part of project during the years 1977-1989. Earliest section constructed in 1903, connected Gurzuli, Patskhiri/Olginskoe and Azanta valleys. Azanta valley led northern passes, through crossing the village Amtkel, towards the Jampal River, where the iron bridge was built in the same year. Voronov 1977:15.

<sup>109</sup> This road starting from the right bank of the river Machara, west of Gulripsh, also met here one of the branches of the ‘Novorosiisk-Batumi’ highway. Voronov 1977:7. Qlukhori-Sukhumi road which has been activated since 1946, was used for public transport and ‘half-ton trucks’. Buses went to depart Klukhori pass, anti-avalanche fortifications were built and pedestrian parts been equipped even with tourist shelters, where the sport routes are mastered.

<sup>110</sup> The 5-6 m rammed earth stripes and eroded parts of Shapka, the clay sources used as filling material are indication of road improvements. Voronov 1975. It has been intensively used by heavy trucks and vehicles during the last ‘Abkhazin-

historic roads it made one of the best communication networks between north Caucasian highlanders, Georgian Svans and Abkhazians. Earliest Russian fort was also built in Shakuran valley in 1838.<sup>112</sup>



**MAP 6.** Gulripsh section of a 'Sokhumi-Teberda highway'. **A**-Brown line corresponds to the Modern highway. **B**-Greenish line corresponds to the ancient road. Modified map.

Source: Voronov 1975:48. Pic.9.

**TOPONYMAL.** Other focal point of modern Gulripsh<sup>113</sup> landscape is history of toponymal as outcome of land cultivation and political processes. Two of which are recorded as early as early medieval, few in 1813, some emerged in 1842–1869 and most appear in the years 1925–1935.<sup>114</sup> Their linguistic spectrum provides Georgian, Abkhazian, Russian, German, and Turkish basis. Etymology-wise some are unclear and few do not give a surer basis.

Earliest Georgian toponyms 'Tsebelda' and 'Apushta' reveal a direct value of Apilian landscape, by linking with famous early medieval military complex. The original form of 'Tzibile' fort (Proc. VIII.x. p.141),<sup>115</sup> used to indicate the tree 'tsipeli' ('beech'), identifies the significance of place- where beech was most available. The name *Apushta*<sup>116</sup> derived from early medieval fort 'Pusta' (Agath.)<sup>117</sup> at the border with Missimia is thought to be a Svan origin, indicating 'pust' ('lord, ruler') and Misimian presence in area (**Map 3**).<sup>118</sup> This name

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Georgian War' in 1998-2008, which left damages. Other factor is weather condition. Even the blue helm group of UN was involved in maintaining the road.

<sup>111</sup> Voronov 1977:34.

<sup>112</sup> Voronov 1975:49.

<sup>113</sup> The Gulripsh as a village is marked on map of 1942. But earlier, in 1839 Nordmann referred as *Gervripsh* (Nordmann 1840:421). This village dispersed on a fairly narrow gorge nestled between the Merheulsky and Parnauskie mountains, separates a small river from the Tsandikuara (Pakhomov, p.278). The etymology of the name is uncertain, but some Abkhazian scholar considers it 'the edge of the Gulovs (or Gulievs).

<sup>114</sup> The information gathered from different sources including cartographic material, published investigations, and directly from archaeological sites, still has a risk of gap in data complexity.

<sup>115</sup> Procopius. History of the wars. VIII.ix.28-x. p. 141. With an English translation by H.B. Dewing. 1962. GB.

<sup>116</sup> This village was mentioned by Nordmann. Nordmann 1840:423.

<sup>117</sup> This fort has been identified by Georgian scholar Muskhelishvili. Muskhelishvili 1977.

<sup>118</sup> Mibchuan 1989. Inal-Ipa believes that Pusta fort located in Missimia/Swaneti. See also: Anchabadze 1959.

may well link with warlike highlanders Futilians,<sup>119</sup> which may suggest the second function of fort (see X).

The rest, west and east Georgian names survive changes or various features of landscape and habitation process. West Georgian names expose non-fertile areas *Lar* and *Amlar* ('hungriness') in the north, indicative for the Svan-Mengrelian inhabitant. The name *Chin*, sometimes recorded as *Gina* (look) points to the settlement increase.<sup>120</sup> Mengrelian Pali means rooting (**Map** 7.3). Some zoological term *Otoronjia* in the south is featuring a specific place of doves or pigeons. Ethnographic survivor *Omarishara*<sup>121</sup> ('Omar road') emerged upland area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, corresponds to the event of a Turkish commander Omar Pasha crossed the entire Kodori gorge. But another version connects with Dalsky prince Omar Marshan, who lived there in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>122</sup>

East Georgian toponyms are limited contribution, with remarkable dynamic in the central part. Some names identifying a geographic locality like *Shuamta* (Middle Mountain), *Kvenobani*, *Zenobani*, *Goriani* and *Zegani* ('upper') southeast of Tsebelda are result of expended Georgian settlement.<sup>123</sup> Physiognomic elements *Zemo Machara*, *Qvemo Machara*, *Zemo Tskaro* ('zemo' – upper, 'tskaro' – spring), *Qvemo Tskaro* ('kvemo' – low spring) concerns the natural water sources. Other cases of *Mziseuli* ('sunny location'),<sup>124</sup> *Tsiplovani*, ('beech forest')<sup>125</sup> gives knowledge of land property. Only three based on social history of areal population in 1940-1967 are: *Marani* (wine store),<sup>126</sup> *Baghmarani* ('garden' + 'wine

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<sup>119</sup> Noteworthy is its resemblance to the name *Phutieth*, which is associated with the main cult center of Colchis, where the temple of the supreme goddess *Futi* (*Phasianes*) was built. The name *Fus (s) Teles* also appear in Old Testament (Foot was the biblical grandson of Noah), in ancient Egyptian and Hittite. Giorgobiani 2010; Giorgobiani, Shalikashvili 2020.

<sup>120</sup> The etymology of the place *Dzina/Azzin* set on the maps of 1842 and 1847, may have derived from the Mengrelian 'dzina' ('increase'). It includes the village Gurzuli. In the 80s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was formed by Russian immigrants by the name Chernigovka and later, in the 20-30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was renamed to Staro-Chernigovka. This changes again, sometimes to Kazbegi (ATD of the Abkhaz ASSR, 1951, p.14) and sometimes to *Gina*, which is recorded in Vedomosti (Vedomosti, p.226) and mentioned by the Nordman as well (Nordman, p.423).

<sup>121</sup> The name connected with Omar Pasha, a commander of the Turkish army who crossed the entire Kodori gorge before the confluence of Guandra and Saken (his army later moved to Mengrelia).

<sup>122</sup> Kvarchia 2000.

<sup>123</sup> This place renamed to Shuamta in 1948, much earlier, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was referred to as '*Bolshoi Kraevich*'. The former name of Zenobani and Kvenobani was *upper Bebutovka* and *lower Bebutovka*, whereas it was handed over to the colonel and the commander of the Tsarist army Bebutov in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both are renamed in 1948 to Zenobani (Upper Bebutovka) and Kvenobani (lower Bebutovka).

<sup>124</sup> It formed at edge of the mountain Akhista in late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the name Kesyanovka, which was renamed to Mziseuli in the 40s.

<sup>125</sup> This village at the south east of Tsebelda has been renamed several times: to '*Jashashkar*'- in 30 s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Nordmann, p.423); to '*Kraevich*' - in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and then again into '*Tsiplovani*' in 1948; into Jaa ('Tsja') - in 1996. The latest name Jashashkar placed on the map of 1847, possibly derived from Megrelian '*Jikhashkar*' (Jikha –'fort', Kar- 'tore'). Some scholar finds more acceptable its etymological link to '*tsja*' ('plain') as relevant to 'flat place' villages.

<sup>126</sup> This name perhaps reflects the wine production activities in the central part since the 1940s (map of 1856). It is known by various names at different times: as *Papa* (Georgian 'Opa') - in earlier maps of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; *Kachaa* (meaning is uncertain) – very shortly, then *Marani* - in 1948 and again to *Papa* in 1996.

cellar’),<sup>127</sup> and *Vashlovani* (‘apple’).<sup>128</sup> They are selected group of places firstly appearing in maps of 1813 and changing their names several times. There is one independent toponymal type *Buduki*<sup>129</sup> derived from personal name.

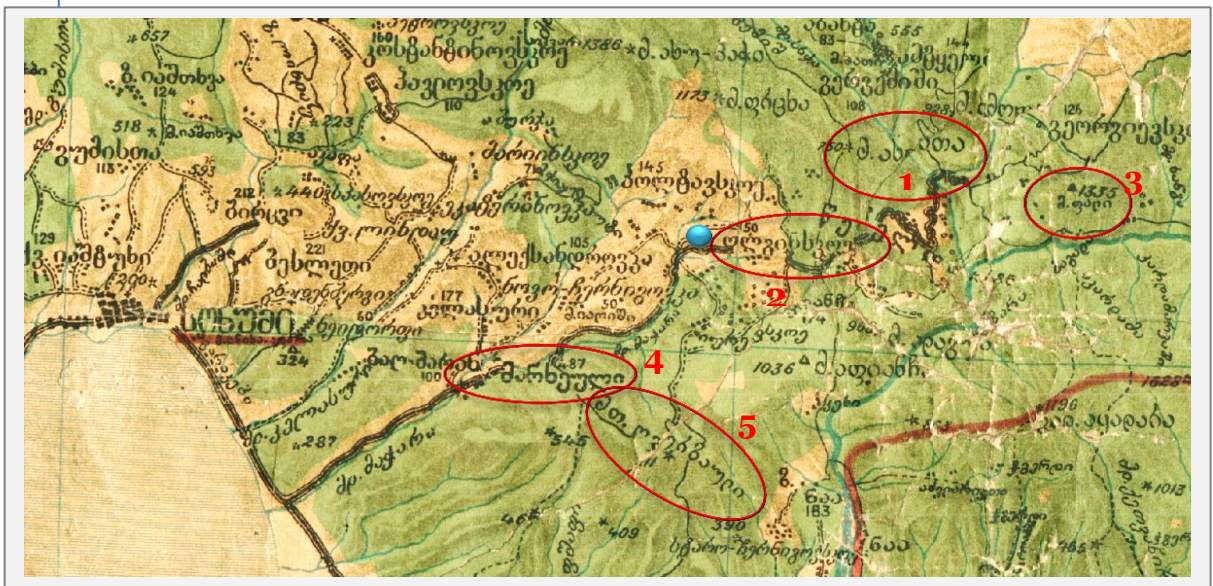
**Past Names:** 1- **Marneuli**. 2-**Gherzauli**. 3- **Olginskoe**. 4-**Akhiata**. 5-**Fali**.

Object type: Village, mountains

In Map: 1933

**Alternative names:** 1-Marani. 2- Ghurzuli/Gerzeul. 3- Oktomberi, latest Barjal (in 1996). 4- Akhista. 5- Pal.

In Maps: 1945, 1956



**MAP 7.** Visualization of applied geographic places in Javakhi map of year 1931-1933. Names are changed throughout the time is marked on the map and described above: 1-Akhiata. 2- Olginskoe. 3-Fali (Pali). 4-Marneuli. 5-Gherzauli.

Abkhazian toponyms are a group of similar meaning class, showing pure disperses on the left side of the middle Kodori and towards Azanta valley. *Adagua* (Abk. ‘Adagea’- deep),<sup>130</sup>

<sup>127</sup> This village formed by Anatolian Greeks in 1869, was named Aleksandrovskoe in honor of the birth of the son of Alexander II in 1869 (See: Dzidzaria ‘Mahajirstvo’., p.432). Later, in 40s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was renamed in Georgian *Akhuti* (*Zemo-Akhuti*). Its latest Abkhazian version is linked with Turkish *Baghbaran*, which means noble name ‘bag’. Some believes that the *Baghbaran* is composed of two words *bah* (‘connected’) and *barun* (‘fortress wall’). Kvarchia in ‘Bah’ refers the surname of the Abkhaz noble’s, but most likely of Turkish origin.

<sup>128</sup> The village has received this name since 1940.

<sup>129</sup> It applies the area of Amtkel (left bank of the river Kodori) in the 1940s and considered to be a Georgian form of the Abkhazian personal name ‘Bydga’.

<sup>130</sup> This mountain near to the village of Naa, in earlier years referred to as ‘*Sakharnaja Golova*’ (Rusian.) or *Tokhi* (Georgian) in the maps of 1956. As the village forms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and renamed several times to ‘Adago’ (AKAK, t.14, p.821), *Megrelovka* (in early 20<sup>th</sup>) and to *Tsebelda* (1948). It is unknown if there are any reason for *Mount Sugar* -‘*Adagua*’ (Kudrayavstev, p.28) called by Russian-speaking population, or simply a visuell factor ‘snow cap’ similarly to *Sakharnaja*



*Apiancha*<sup>131</sup> and *Ablukhvara*<sup>132</sup> identify geographic locality. Toponym *Akhista* ('to go over') express the place potential and pointing towards something at the highest peak. The floral properties reveal toponyms *Agish* ('poplar tree') and *Achandara* (place of oaks). The place name *Arasara* ('nuts') is meaningful content of vegetation growth. Semantic group include places in southeast the *Amzara*<sup>133</sup> and *Mramba* ('the sun is not seen') may produce the aspect of spiritual culture.<sup>134</sup> Two toponyms *Merkheuli*,<sup>135</sup> and *Machara*<sup>136</sup> linked with personal names. Others without any indication are *Patskhiri*, *Shakuran*, *Abgidzrakhu*,<sup>137</sup> and *Alrakhu* and *Azanta* (sometimes appears in form of *Azantxa*).

Russian toponyms over the highest parts and in the west near the Kelasuri river, are historically connected to political processes and demographic changes during the years 1813-1950. From borrowed names *Aleksandrovka*, show the impact of Tsarist naming policies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The choice of name *Jurevka* (*Yuryevka*)<sup>138</sup> is associated with the Bolshevik's political life in Gulripsh district in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They integrate other placename *Oktomberi* (*Olginskoe*) as socialistic ideological framework.<sup>139</sup> Others like *Poltava* (Poltava-Alexanderovskoe),<sup>140</sup> *Vladimirovka*<sup>141</sup> and *Bogdan* (or lower Bogdan)<sup>142</sup> with

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Mountain in Sochi (Voroshilov,p.186. Does not exclude its derivation from 'atagea' which means 'growth and may become the reason for the closure of the passage'. Kvarchia 2000.

<sup>131</sup> Initial form suggested *Ania-nda* derived from an Abkhazia 'a-nda reflecting 'side', 'border' or 'fence'. Kvarchia 2000.

<sup>132</sup> The name may composed by 'Abla'-eye and 'Khvara'-saying. But some consider this village to have originated by *Abgalavira* (Vedomosti,p,226) or *Abgalahvara* (Nordmann,p.423; Machavariani,p.273.) from the very beginning, in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Etymologically 'a-lahvara' is related to the cleaning of millet. Kvarchia 2000.

<sup>133</sup> *Amza-* means the number and *Ra-* the date or month. Apparently there was the place of moon or month and the name *Amzara* may example of people expression looking at moon for various reasons (also mystic).

<sup>134</sup> Suggested that the name *Mramba* is composed from *mra-* 'the sun' and *mba-*'the blind' (Ionova S. Abazin toponymal P.172). Due to the meaning of word 'Mramba', it is also considered a favorite place of jackal. In fact, the earliest settlement of this village appeared in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century under the name of *Makramba* (mentions Dubois). But Nordmann calls it *Bramba* (Nordmann,p.423). In 1840, on the initiative of General Raevsky, the Russian fortification 'Maramba' was built here.

<sup>135</sup> This name is associated with the late medieval history, the noble 'Merghi' and his domination place near to the Black Sea. Voronov 1977:10. On the map of 1842 it finds by name 'Merheuli'. Some scholar suggests its Svan origin 'merheul' (nettle) and others Abkhazian '-Markhaul'. See: Mibchuan 1989.

<sup>136</sup> Some considers this name to be an expression of *Machov* or *Maroda*. Few have linked the *Macha* or *Mach* to the generic name of Abkhazian society (Bgazhba), because they mentioned by Evliy Celebi as well and therefore, connected with Machovs community. The Maroda's community some links to a major tribal name. Kvarchia 2000.

<sup>137</sup> Initial form of this name may related to *Abgydzara* ('Kizlovaja grove'), by which it existed as village in 19<sup>th</sup> century Gulripsh district (Nordmann, p.423).

<sup>138</sup> This valley receives the name 'Patskhiri' in 1874. From early 20<sup>th</sup> century N.I. Voronovs house known as 'Yasochka', became the secret apartment of the Bolshevik revolutionaries and in his honor it was renamed Yurevka. He was a grandfather of scholar Iuri Voronov, one of the excavators of Apsilian material culture. Later, in the 40s the village Jurevka renamed to *Zegani*.

<sup>139</sup> The name *Oktomberi* considers October revolution of year 1945.

<sup>140</sup> This place is mentioned differently at different times: as *Poltava-Alexander* in 1935, as *Kvemo-Axuti* in 40s (ATD Abkhaz. ASSR.1951:14) and as *Avibahu* in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Kvarchia 2000). The toponym *Avibahu* considered being the Russian version of Abkhazian 'ybakhr' ('two rock'). This is where the construction of churches begins and wher the furnishing of ancient churches was also found (stone plates, chancel screens) during the early medieval ages.

<sup>141</sup> The nature of village was conditioned by Bulgarian immigrants in 1879, but former toponymal is mentioned as *Dopuakit/Dopakit* '-Vilage of Dopouvyh' (Estonia). Thereafter, it renamed to *Vladimirovka* in honor of a land survivor Vladimir and once again changed into *Katskyt* in 1955. See: Kvarchia 2000.

migration task, express the movement and resettlement of peoples in mid-18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The ethnotoponym *Megrelovka* indicates southward expansion of the Georgian-Megrelians. The choice of few place names *Grushin yard* ('pear garden') and *Vinogradni hill* ('grape hill') are motivated by cultivation activities in Patskhiri during the 1940–1950. Range of toponymal *Verkhnaja Apiancha*, *Nizhnaja Apiancha* is geographic designation of mountain areas and Russian variant of Georgian names. Some Russian toponyms like *Mahajirov*, *Panikin* are examples of Turkish shift in place and matching with ancient burial places.<sup>143</sup> The rest like *Kashtanovaya Roshcha* ('chestnut grove') indicate the woodland properties, and the *Belosnezhka* applying the Cave area<sup>144</sup> may symbolize the snowy nature of place. But we have bias of the context when coming to the place names *Metlevka*, *Zakharovka* and *Georgievskoe*.

Although, there is a German name of general Heiman, referring to the road section between Gerzeul watch post and Apiancha, resulted from the road construction activities.<sup>145</sup> The name has further connections with the German migration into Caucasia in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when they enhanced the three villages Noidorf, Grandenberg, and Lindau near the city of Sukhumi/Sebastopolis.<sup>146</sup>

Turkish lingual elements *Bogaz* ('neck' or 'narrow passage'), *Shakuran* (*Zakharovka*), *Pskal*, *Bariak*<sup>147</sup> and Lake *Amtkel*<sup>148</sup> features the geographic nature of place and survive an oral information about the Turkish conquest policy after taking control over the road through Kodori valley. The reason for renaming former *Gorzeula* into *Gurzuli*/*Gerzeul* of Turkish influence is uncertain.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> After constructing the fortification of Mramba in 1840, it called the *Bogoyavlenskoe* (Machavariani, p.267). But two years later it bears the name *Bogdan* in map of 1942.

<sup>143</sup> Voronov 1977:1-43.

<sup>144</sup> Voronov 1969:61.

<sup>145</sup> Voronov 1980:39.

<sup>146</sup> The beginning of this history relates to September 21, 1971, when 181 Württemberg Schwab families arrived in Georgia. They were a group of believers called as 'separatists' by the Lutheran Church. They started establishing the following German colonies: *Marienfeld* (in honor of Queen Maria Fidor's daughter), *Petersdorf* (Sartichala), *Elisabethal* (Assyrian), *Noi Tiflis* (Aghmashenebeli avenue and Marjanishvili square), *Aleksandrosdorf* (street Aglaze, Samtredia, Tskaltubo, Tsereteli).

<sup>147</sup> It is one of the confluences of the Machara River. The etymology is not clear, but some scholar associates with '*barra*' or '*a-ral*' indicating steepness. Index of Geographic Names. GUKG.1981:3.

<sup>148</sup> The lake formed as a result of a mountain collapse (latest in 1891) and the raise of dam. Voronov 1977:31.

<sup>149</sup> At different times, it is names as follow: *Gorzeula* in earliest materials of years 1925-1935 (ATD Abkhazia), as *Gurzuli* in 40s, as *Gvarzaul* (Nordman), as *Gordzeul* (Pakhomov), as *Gorazuyul* placed in the map of 1847. It associated also with *Gurzov* clan (Voronov), also *Karzau* /*Gorzaul* or *Garza* as ethno-patronal element of Abkhazians before the Turkish influence (Inal-ipa) and the later Turkish *Gerzeul* derived from *Gerjaul* ('patroll village). See: Kvarchia 2000.

### III. 1. 2 Historical and archaeological context of Apsilia

#### III. 1. 2. 1 Textual background

When we think about what we really know about the historical Apsilia to identify them and their land, first comes textually existing information. The sources are few and generally derived from Roman-Byzantine's written traditions, and some of the Georgian and Armenian authors. Some are eyewitnesses and some provide secondhand information. They are scarce in orientation and partial in view to determine the Apsilian location, administrative or social life.

**Roman textual sources.** We get very stereotype picture of Apsilia from Roman chronicles giving one partial view of Apsilian localization. It began with Pliny highlighting Apsilia among neighboring tribal territories of 1st century lived side by side and listed in the following order: Heniochi, Amprevt, Lazi, Colchi, Satlia-Ptiropaghus, Sani, Apsili, Saniki, Melanchkheli, Corax (Plin.VI.14). The most remarkable in Pliny's knowledge is their locational context at the river *Astelepsos*. But there is more nuanced information from Cappadocian Legatus Flavius Arrian inspected the Colchian shores in 137 AD. He broadly sets them between the Lazi and Sanigi, also the *Astelepsos* river 30 stadia (5.55 km) from the river Hipus (Strabo.XI.3.4) and 120 stadia (22.2 km) from the city Sebastopolis (Arr. PPE.11).<sup>150</sup> Arrian, knew that, the Apsilians had a king named Julian and received kingship regalia from the Roman Emperor Trajan (98–117). This could be an eyewitness version of the Apsilian home place area and their institutional formation.

After two centuries, Castorius map shows the areas where Apsilians are mentioned by the roman sources and sets the named *Stempep* at the place of the river *Astelepsos* (**Map 8**). For this context supportive is Anonymous knowledge about the harbor and shipping perspective of the *Astelepsos* river, which he named *Evripios* (Anon.42.10 FHG, V.p.178).<sup>151</sup> Therefore, it is perhaps a modern view of Apsilian, where the navigation function is survived and result of appearance in *Peutinger Table*. The 4<sup>th</sup> century cartography obviously used a different source.

If we survey the given distance,<sup>152</sup> the *Astelepsos* river might be located 5 km away from the Kodori river and about 21.36 km from the city Sebastopolis, placing it somewhere between the rivers Machara and the Kodori. It naturally gives perspective for speculation that

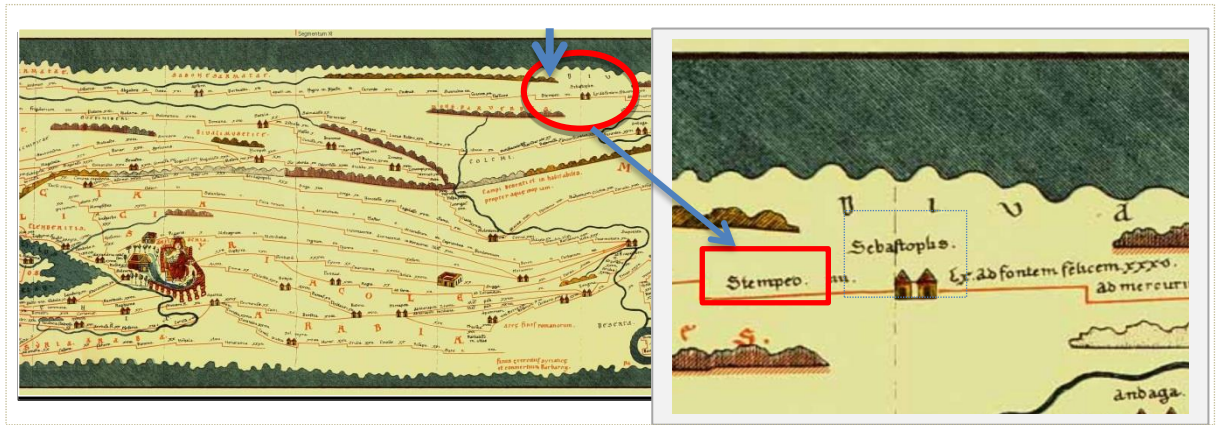
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<sup>150</sup> Arrian account is 630 stadia between the river Kobus (modern Enguri) and the city Sebastopolis (modern Sokhumi). He lists following rivers in-between: Khob (modern Enguri), Singam (modern Oqum), Tarsur, Hipus (modern Kodori) and r.*Astelepsos* and Sebastopolis.

<sup>151</sup> Lomoiuri 1961:90.

<sup>152</sup> 30 stadia from the Hipus River to the *Astelepsus* River is equal to 5.0 km (5.004 verse, 3.188 mile). 120 stadia recorded between the *Astelepsos* and Sebastopolis equals to 21.36 km (20.0187 verse, 13.275 mile).

the Machara river could be an alternative to the *Astelepsos* river and later appeared *Stempep*.<sup>153</sup> Earliest archaeological groups and related imported objects are helpful for the reconstruct the navigable character of the Machara river.



**MAP 8.** Tabula Peutingeriana. Part XII (segmentum X, XI). Conradi Milleri facsimile totum 1887. Map shows the location of *Stempep* near to the Sebastopolis.

Other parts of textual information is quite stale, poor in content and quality, just giving the perspective to recognize Apsilia as a single tribal entity of Colchis, directly subordinated to the Roman Emperor.

**Byzantine textual sources.** The basic source of much of our knowledge is the byzantine authors drawing the picture of military or trade focused areas. All the statements come generally from Procopius,<sup>154</sup> Agathias Scholasticus of Myrina<sup>155</sup> (both are principal for Apsilia), Menander Protector,<sup>156</sup> John of Epiphania,<sup>157</sup> Theodos from Ganger, and Theophanes the Confessor.<sup>158</sup> Georgian and Armenian sources touching several segments of Apslian history is much fragmentary, but not different from the roman and byzantine sources.

<sup>153</sup> Some scholar considers it one of the tributaries of the Kodori River, but the absence of archaeological evidences on its lower parts raises doubts (See Lomouri 1958 and Brun 1880:248). Some considers it a river Dranda. The author of this thesis opposes both views and offers a new alternative, which is based on archaeological evidences. See: Baghaturia 2004:72-73.

<sup>154</sup> He was a 6<sup>th</sup> century (c.500-565) Greek historian from Caesarea (Palestine), the legal advisor and military secretary of Belisarius and commander of against the Persians in the reign of Justinian I. Therefore, his sources are eyewitness to many byzantine-Persian campaigns of time and refer historical facts about the sieges in Area, but generally in Lazica.

<sup>155</sup> He was a Greek historian, poet and lawyer (c.532-580/594), who continued the history written by Procopius to cover further years 552-558.

<sup>156</sup> Menander Protector was a Guardsman and historian of the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. His sources survived in seventy fragments are referring the events of years 558-582 (continuation of Agathias sources).

<sup>157</sup> He was a lawyer and author of 7<sup>th</sup> century, who continued Agathias narration, which survived only in one fragment.

<sup>158</sup> This byzantine monk completed a chronicle of years 284-814, concerned Heraclius campaign. His official reports and provided poems of George of Pisidia are especially valued.

Procopius, looking at the tribal borders get partial feature of Apsilian land siding the Sanigs in the south, Missimians in the north, Lazi in the west, and Abasgians in the east. He nuanced the northern boundary by naming *Pustha* in northern area and the south at the coast of the Black Sea.

Apsilian, have been subject of Lazi from ancient times, controlled by Lazian officials and being anciently Christians- are the context we can understand their past from Procopius records (Proc.Goth.Wars.X.3.p.141).<sup>159</sup> He considers Tzibile fort as a major area of defense, without leaving any message about the administrative functions and says more about the chieftain of fort engaged in two campaigns in the years 550 and 555. We know that Lazian master of the place appears is Terdites and the noblemen governed these sites have taken Apsilian wives. He also characterizes the Apsilian-Lazian relations in conflict situations during the campaign of year 550, when Persians gained control over the Tzibile fort (**Fig. 11**).

*'..there was a certain women who was a wife of the commander of the garrison there, one of the Apsilii, an exceedingly comely person to look upon. With this women the commander of the Persian army suddenly fell violently in love; ...since he met no with no encouragement from the woman, he attempted with no hesitation to force her...The husband of the women slew both the commander and all those who had entered the fortress with him.'* (Proc.Goth. VIII.x. 3-7. P.143).

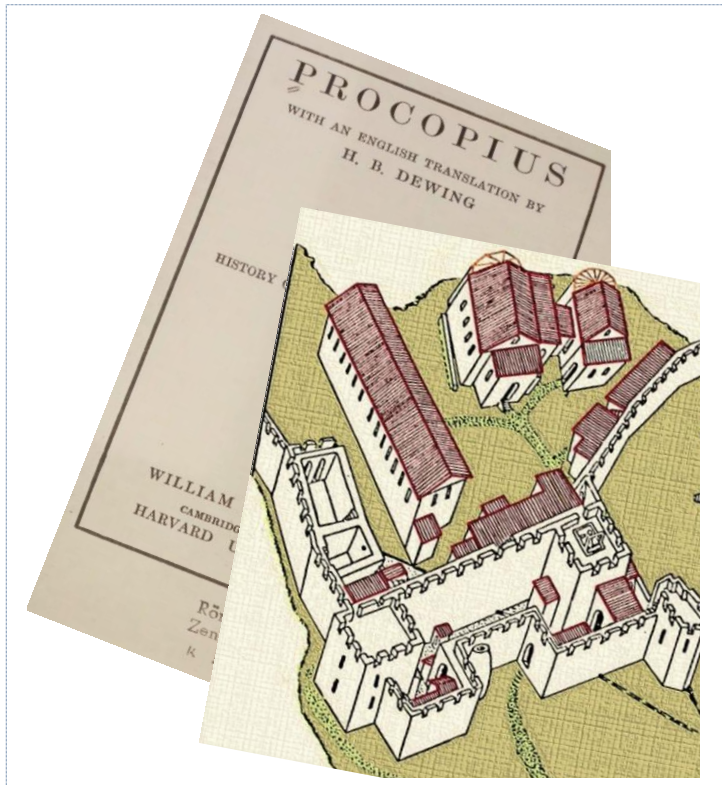
Apsilians complained against the Lazian master of the place, who agreed to receive the Persians into the castle and left in the hands of Persian garrisons. Also, that Persians were forced out by the Apsili later, without Lazian help. And consequences- that after this the Apsili were unwilling to return to their alliance with the Lazi (see below). He names a Roman commander John Guzes who effectively negotiated between the Apsili and the Lazi, because of Roman interest. – This episode links with the historical context when Persian general Nebedes marching in Abasgia, gained the control of an important fort of Apsilia, and imprisoned the widow of King Gubazes II's uncle, Theodora (Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.ix.4-11.p.133).<sup>160</sup>

Other conflicts situations he brings to light, gives weight to the geo-strategic position of Apsilian land. One is when Persian general Mermeroos (Mihir-Mihroe) gain the northern neighborhood of the Apsilian in 551 AD and became the master of Suania and Scymnia

<sup>159</sup> Procopius. History Of The Wars. Book VIII. With an English translation by H.B.Dewing. 1962. GB.

<sup>160</sup> Theodora of roman origin was a wife of late Opsites. Before her, Nebedes took in prisoner also sixty sons of principal man of Abasgia.

(Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.xvi.11-19.p.221). The ability of Tzibile fort's responding the attacks of Mermeroes' campaign in 552 AD, giving hope to Byzantine generals (Proc.Goth.Wars.VIII.xvii. 14–21.p. 233).



**Fig 11.** The ways of thinking about Apsilia in early medieval sources. Representation of Tzibile fort.

*‘ ... there is in this country (Apsilia) an exceedingly strong fortress which natives call Tzibile.. Terdites., who held the office of ‘magister’ had a falling out with Gubazes, the king of the Lazi., secretly promised the Persians to hand over this particular fortress to them and he came into Apsilia... and got inside the fortifications... Thus Terdites received it into the castle; and as a result of this the Medes considered that not Lazica alone, but also Apsilia was held by them... On account of this affair the Apsili revolted from the Colchians... Gubazes sent a thousand Romans and John Guzes the son of Thomas...; this man succeeded, after long efforts at conciliation, in winning them over without a fight and made them once more subject of the Lazi. Such was the story of the Apsili and the fortress of Tzibile.’ (Proc. VIII. x. 7-13. P.141-145).*

Agathias information diversifies Apsilians by their language, spoken differently from Missimians. Remarkable is the decrease of northeastern border between the Missimians and the Apsili at Tzibile in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Agath. Georgica III.p.86). It may consequence Missimian domination over most parts of the upland Kodori river. He refers about the alliances with Lazi and Roman-Hunic alliances involved in Apsilia against Persians. That also links with the second rebellion of Missimia that erupted in 555–556 AD and the murder of the Byzantine general Soterichus when he crossed Svaneti to carry subsidies to Alanian allies. They are stories led conflicts, helped Apsilia to gain influence in politics and keep them fighting against Persian in Lazian alliances.

Another aspect of Apsilian potential highlights Menander and John of Epiphania,<sup>161</sup> dealing with diplomatic dealings through Apsilia. Menander describes the route covered by a Turkish envoy, led by the Sogdian Maniakh and a Greek Zemarchus, through Caucasia via Apsilia. Zemarchus, who was entasked with transporting the silk from Middle Asia via the Caucasus in 568 AD, was advised by the Alanian Sarodes not to pass through the ‘Missiminian way’, where the Persian ambush rate was high. Following this advice, Zemarchus left the ‘Missiminian way’ on his left and continued through the ‘Darin way’ instead (Menand. Prot. fr.6.1.500; Fr.10.5). The Darin way brought him first to Apsilia before reaching Rogatorion and passing through Euxines (the Black Sea), sailed in boats through the Phasis river (Agath). This story indicates opportunity for silk transportation from the Far East through Apsilian land.

The history continued by Theodos of Ganger is reflection of conflicts in year 662 between Lazica and Apsilia. He tells about the Lazian authority (*patrikoi*) as master of place that resided in Apsilia. The subdivision of Apsilia into eight *Exoria* of the Lazi kingdom is suggestive for direct part of Lazica. Apsilian claimed against the management of Patrikios in replacement of settlers and settling the anti-monophysites inside this land. In fact, the martyrs are sent to the frontier fort *Pusta*, emphasis this area the punishment place of the Lazi kingdom. This information is attributed to Anastasia Apocrisiaria, who was mentioned in his letter written in 666.<sup>162</sup> Hereafter the decay begins. He describes the conquest of the Missimian fort Bukhluus<sup>163</sup> and Alanian access in the upland Kodori river.

The last mention of the Apsilian considers the Leo III the Isaurian's mission to Alania in 717, recorded by Theophanes the Confessor. He was entasked by Justinian II to subjugate the Alans (use them against the apostate Abasgi). The first man from Apsilia, Marine, proved his dedication to Leo by announcing with 300 men, to support Leo's journey towards the Black Sea coast in an effort to save him.

However, textual information made recognizable tribal administrative power of Apsilia associable with the areas of the river Machara or Kodori. According to the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century sources Apsilia seem to be one of the single tribal-administrative entities of Colchis (Plin.Arr.), been under the domination for roman emperor Trajan. And also that, the Colchian Apsilia ruled by local rulers appointed by roman emperor. During the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Procopius mentions their powerful center in Tsibile, was definitely under the

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<sup>161</sup> Georgika II, p.234.

<sup>162</sup> Maximus the confessor and his Companions'. *Document from Exile*. Edited and translated by Allen P and Neil B. Oxford, 2004.

<sup>163</sup> The ruins of this fort are preserved along the left tributary-Klich of the river Kodori. Its location on the way to Qlukhori pass indicates strategic significance. It was the main road connecting Alania and Egrisi. See Abkhazava 2010:34.

domination of Lazi King. In Procopius time area presented as undivided administrative entity of Lazica with chieftain authority and with center in Tsebelda. It is obvious that during the war in Lazica, especially in campaigns of 550 AD and 555-556 AD, Apsilia were made peace with Lazi king and Byzantine. But little conflicts in Apsilian-Lazian relations were viewable. By the way, foreign authors did not give any notions that Apsilia ever formed as independent ethno-political state during the 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century. They seem never claimed about the usurpation of Apsilian authorities by Lazi King or rose consequently against him.

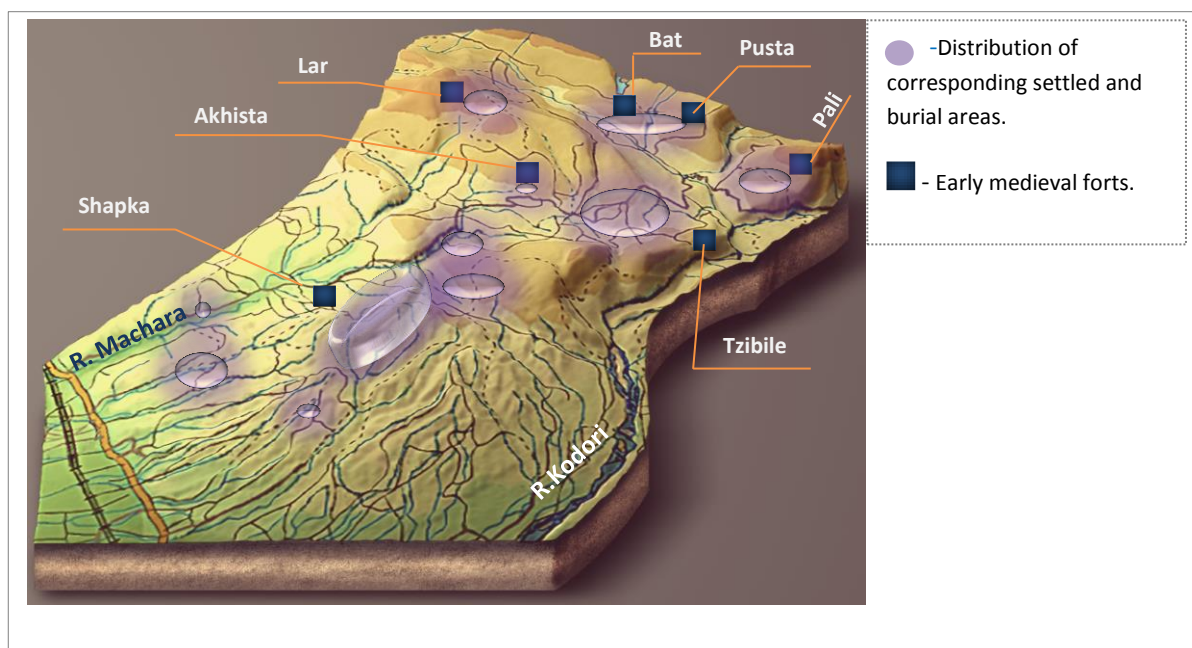
Textual sources clearly define areal effect lie in significant strategic part of Caucasia and having excess to the north Caucasian Marukhi and Qlukri passes. In fact, during the 552 AD and in 662 AD Apsilia was one of the strongly secured regions for empire in Lazica. Archaeological evidenced of the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, in the reign of Heraclius (610-641), did not support Apsilian loss from Lazian influence (as it was suggested by Vakhusti Bagrationi and Armenian geographer). But during the Byzantine-Sassanian war in Lazica that directly transferred in area in certain historical period might cause abandonment of most sites by Population of Apsilia. In fact, in the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Theophanous ('Chronographia') knew only two tribal entities in NW part of Lazi kingdom Abasgia under the domination of Persia and Apsilia perhaps controlled by Lazi. But archaeological evidences are silent about Apsilian life for that time.

### **III. 1. 2. 2 Identification of Apsilian archaeological landscape**

Archaeology comes with another sort of evidences, which made surer the basis for textual sources and enhance the knowledge of textually hidden historical phases of land.

To identify the historical Apsilia, we automatically come back to the areas between the rivers Machara and Kodori, to look at the archaeologically provided Roman and early Byzantine structural survivals and burials producing the most impressive weapon graves near their houses. They are ruined on the hilltops, terraces, and hidden behind their defensive structures in the areas of Shapka, Tsebelda, Apushta, Bat, Lar, and Pal (**Fig. 12**). We know that they coincide with a significant heritage of Apsilian land and huge weapon graves. The greatest part of excavated material are provided by areal graves, some from defensive or settlement structures, and the rest are the stray finds of surface material.





**Fig. 12.** The 3D spectrum of identified landscape of historical Apsilia.

However, archeologically it shapes the areas in the south between the rivers Kelasuri and Kodori, where the upland forts are selected over the above listed areas. This region in the south is broadly identified to include the Machara river basin, corresponding to the central part of historical Apsilia, where the most important weapon graves are concentrated (**Tables 80-83; 91-99**). However, there is a huge scholarly work where the scientist tried to examine their past to find an explanation for their life.

The Apsilian archaeological landscape covers approximately 25 km<sup>2</sup>, between the Machara and Kodori river valleys.<sup>164</sup> Geographically it shapes both sides of the Machara River, including the nearest coastal areas Merkheuli and Gurzuli in the south; and through the Upper Jurevka and Apiancha at the right bank of the river it penetrates north-westwards to Patskhiri valley. This is in the upper reaches of the Machara River, where the archaeological sites are widely spread from the Olginskoe village north of the Patskhiri valley towards the Mramba village in the southwest. In the Mramba village, it explores at the left bank of the Kodori River (at the Mramba stream). This is a central part of Apsilia.

The middle part of the Kodori River demonstrates a significant effect continuing into Tsebelda, where the archaeological sites penetrate in two different directions and covers an

<sup>164</sup> Voronov 1998. Shamba excavated NW part of necropolis Akhacharakhva (discovered by Trapsh) in 1962 and during 1965-1967 (Shamba 1966a; Shamba 1967; Shamba 1970). Trapsh returns to explore excavations in Akhacharkva cemetery again during the 1964-1967 (Trapsh 1975:18-87). The most southern part of this cemetery has been excavated also by Gunba during the 1968-1969, who discovered more 30 graves. Gunba 1978; Voronov 1972. Razvedochnie raboti v Abkhazskoi ASSR. AO-1971:472.

area of approximately 18 900 m<sup>2</sup>. To the northwest it integrates the Akhista Mountain until it reaches Lar at the uplands of the Kelasuri River and the immediate northern distribution along the left bank of the Kodori River. This chains the line involving the farther areas of mountains Apushta and Pshow in the Azanata valleys and Pal at the right bank of the Kodori River.<sup>165</sup> This topographic matrix gives association of settlement penetration and concentration along the roads. Archaeologically confirmed ancient living places are associated with the sites of the Machara river basin up to the middle of Kodori river, inclusive of the village Tsebelda. The rest of the upland areas of the Kodori River rose in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century.

All stated above gives perspective to speculate about the southern border of Apsilia at the Black Sea, west at the Kelasuri River and east at the Kodori River. But from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the northern border line may pass through areas somewhere among the Pshow, Apushta, and the Pal (**Table 65**).

It should be noted that, topographically Apsilian material culture penetrates beyond their geographic area. Similar material appears in the military sites of coastal and central Colchis. Flared rim jugs and battle axes are spread across the territories of historical Abasgia (in the west), Sanigia (in the south), Missimia (in the north) and central Lazica (in the east).<sup>166</sup> Local fibulae show widely distributed areas involving eastern Georgia and northern Caucasia. Therefore, similar influences of specified objects extend throughout the coastal military sites of Colchis as far as Sochi and the most internal fortified areas.

### *III. 1. 2. 3 Previous works in the field*

**Scholarly approaches to the Subject.** Theoretical capacity of excavated material is reflected in big issues. But before analyzing them, there are some textual source-based and thematically sorted reviews necessary to know. Short summaries for ‘ethno-cultural variables’ introduce some of the unpleasant debates about Apsilian distinctive descent, while some scholars<sup>167</sup> were uncomfortable with the concept of Colchian origin of Apsilian tribes.<sup>168</sup> Other malleable

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<sup>165</sup> Voronov 1982; Apushta and Lar cemeteries revealed in 1970 (Voronov 1971:378; Voronov 1973:421).

<sup>166</sup> Lomitashvili 1993.

<sup>167</sup> Scholars associate with ancient ‘Abeshla’ to support modern Abkhazian origin (Chirikba V. 1991:13-18); Hewitt B.G.1990/91:247-263.

<sup>168</sup> The Georgian form is considered to be ‘Apsil-Apsel’ which is mentioned in 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century textual sources (Kaukhchishvili 1964:14,44; Ratiani 1995) and borrowed by later Roman and Latin authors. Since the self-called name ‘Apsua’ stands closer to ‘Apsili’, some scholars do not exclude their connection with modern Abkhazians (Gvantseladze 1998. Anchabadze

versions offer more regional perspective and link with 'Absua' ancestry<sup>169</sup> or North Caucasian Cherkez-Adig origin.<sup>170</sup> One of the reasons has motivated scholars to make sense of Apsilian diversity is their absence in 8<sup>th</sup> century textual sources, believed to be a results of their assimilation done by neighboring Lazians and Abasgians.

Another point is Apsilian geographic location and their move in deferent historical period. Southern boundaries consider areas the Black Sea coast and for northern borderline gained in the sector of Amtkel valley, at the historical Missimia, in all historical time. Only E and W borderline areas concerning to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries are hardly debated. The physical move of Apsilians towards NW suggested in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when the W borderline identified from Sebastopolis upwards to the river Kelasuri and until the river Gumista.<sup>171</sup> That means Apsilian expansion to the NW of Sebastopolis on the territory of Sanigia and direct neighborhood with Abasgia. But there is no explanation what urged their movement.

The second phase of Apsilian move believed to consider the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and explained by Apsilian division between Lazi and Abasgi.<sup>172</sup> But later on during the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century scholars suggest decrease of Apsilian territory until the city Sebastopolis and also the E border with Lazica from the late 5<sup>th</sup> century and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the time Apsilian thought to be borderline integrating both rivers Egristskali (modern Ghalidzga) and Kodori.<sup>173</sup> There is contradictive narrative declining Apsilian movement in any historical time and their division during the 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>174</sup> Sadly, none of these hypotheses has been examined within archaeological context to obtain relative historical borders of Apsilian material culture.

The 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century Apsilia consider with single political entity.<sup>175</sup> The late 4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century has been overviewed to reconstruct the status of province within Lazica.<sup>176</sup> But there

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1976:39). Ghlonti giving different understanding to the 'ps' and 'psa', which is found in Georgian and Apkhaz-Adigian language basis, indicates their genetic-typological connections (Ghlonti 1981:20-23).

<sup>169</sup> Inadze connects this with the process of unification of the west Georgian kingdom under the hegemony of Lazi during late-4<sup>th</sup> and early-5<sup>th</sup> century (Inadze 1992:55-56,60). Other scholars share the view of their Abkhaz-Adigian origin (Javakhishvili 1950:120; Janashia 1952. Melikishvili 1970:360; Gamkrelidze 1993:582-589).

<sup>170</sup> Some scholars have considered phonetic similarity between ethnonym 'Apsil/Apsel' and Abazgian 'Abaza' to be sufficient to argue for their north Caucasian origin (Gvantseladze 1998:15. Trapsh 1971:11-12; Voronov 1975:134-140; Anchabadze 1976:36-48; Inal-Ipa 1976:216-220). Very few connect ethnonym 'Abeshla' with modern Abkhazians.

<sup>171</sup> Melikishvili 1959:371; Inadze 1953:18; Anchabadze 1959:8-11; Inal-Ipa 1976:216-217; Muskhelishvili 1977:117-119; Gunba 1971.

<sup>172</sup> It is believed that the northern Apsilia felt under the influence of Abasgia, which was also a client of Lazica. Lortkipanidze M 1991.

<sup>173</sup> Muskhelishvili 1990. One agrees that the NE border of Apsilia was crossed by the river Ghalidzga, because in the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century, the location of Abasgi is considered above the Apsilia and up to Sebastopolis. Lomouri\_1990.

<sup>174</sup> According to some scholar, Lazica lost control over the Apsilia only once, in early 7<sup>th</sup> century and up to the river Egristkali. Letodiani 1991:189-190.

<sup>175</sup> Letodiani 1991:180. Two scholars deny the possibility of Colchian domination over Apsilia until the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Inadze 1953:17; Muskhelishvili 1979:26).

<sup>176</sup> Some argues that there is no direct textual evidence of Apsilian political integration into Lazica (Melikishvili 1959:384). Some even thinks that, Apsilia was a spare of Lazian influence whether from 370 AD, when entire west Georgia came under

is some opposite view about their separation from Lazi kingdom only in early 7<sup>th</sup> century to consider special policy of the Emperor Heraclius I, when Apsilia and Abasgia believed to be unified.<sup>177</sup> Some land by considering changes that brought a direct control of Lazi again over Apsilia in the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup>. Others contradict Apsilian independent by argument based on absence of direct textual information about it.<sup>178</sup> Scholars remain skeptical of this concept just because of the name of later west Georgian political unity ‘Abkhazian Samtavro’ appears in 30 years of 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>179</sup> Entire hypothesis used to support the context of Apsilian alliance whether with romans (Voronov, Gunba) or against them (Trapsh).

A short topographic survey of settled areas made by Voronov is simplified context of inhabited parts, military sector<sup>180</sup> and trade impact, where he partially visualises selected import. Topographic details produce author of this thesis in order to build new understanding to the settlement location and fortified sites.<sup>181</sup> She also offers a brief story of contacts and connections through analyzes of selected trade objects.<sup>182</sup> The nature of forts, construction technique and chronology became a matter of rigorous analyses. There is a critical monography of this subject differentiate byzantine-Lazian context and decline chronology provided by Voronov.<sup>183</sup>

The burial ground that discovered by Trapsh and other vicinity cemeteries, accessible in monography of several scholars (Voronov, Shamba, Gunba) have much descriptive nature, rather than analytical.<sup>184</sup> The most meaningful about all known sites of Tsebelda is Voronovs last monography published, which gives the biggest volume of artefacts and integrated approach to burial ground.<sup>185</sup> They brought several interpretative summaries and gain little insight to family graves;<sup>186</sup> further assessing city<sup>187</sup> or village type nature of areal population.<sup>188</sup> From generic perspectives grave material determined as ‘Tsebeldian culture’

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the domination of Lazi (Lomouri 1968:66-79; Lomouri 1981:279), or towards last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Janashia 1952:315-317). See also: Ivashenko 1925:85-86.

<sup>177</sup> Letodiani 1991:179.

<sup>178</sup> Melikishvili 1959:384. *Towards the history of Ancient Georgia*.

<sup>179</sup> Anchabadze 1964. *History and culture of Ancient Abkhazia*.

<sup>180</sup> Voronov 1975:75-84.

<sup>181</sup> See also Baghaturia 2003:100-103.

<sup>182</sup> Baghaturia 2006:76-85.

<sup>183</sup> Japaridze 1999.

<sup>184</sup> Trapsh 1971; Gunba 1978; Shamba 1970; Vornov 1982 and etc.

<sup>185</sup> Voronov 2003.

<sup>186</sup> Voronov 1975. Tribal cemeteries see in: Trapsh 1971.

<sup>187</sup> Voronov and Gdzlishvili.

<sup>188</sup> Trapsh, Anchabadze and Shamba.

(detailed in I.2.I). This was earliest scholarly approach, which brought numerous critical comments.<sup>189</sup>

Other advantages in later works give more realistic view of evolution of the Apsilian material culture.<sup>190</sup> There are few articles about the chronology of Apsilian material, lead whether of 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>191</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>192</sup> But broadly defined chronologic phases of selected material made by Kazanski are much aspirational challenge.<sup>193</sup>

Many contributions have been focused on the Christianization of Apsilia. Christian semantics on pottery and other novelties including metal objects of small plastic<sup>194</sup> has been analyzed to connect with early Christian communities of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>195</sup> Other analytical articles discussed iconography and later evidences of Christian architecture supporting earliest 4<sup>th</sup> century date (325 AD)<sup>196</sup> and later chronology concerning whether the late 6<sup>th</sup> or early 7<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>197</sup> or even late 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>198</sup> Some of which are generally based on information of pre-excavation surveys provided by Uvarova.<sup>199</sup> In this, can be assumed study of Georgobiani has shown the character of forts guarded with martial art warriors, which including Pusta from Apsilia and first presented the drawings of this fort.<sup>200</sup> Other occasions for the Christianization of northwestern Lazica, mirroring Apsilia as well, can be viewed in work of Prof. Seibt W.

Subject based works is few. Some concerned with imported glass vessels is particularly valuable in recording of applied techniques, origin and typo-chronology.<sup>201</sup> Further focus on imported amphora considers Black Sea and Mediterranean trade.<sup>202</sup> There are several influential studies of the selected object types producing specific context to fibulas,<sup>203</sup> battle excess, swords and shield bosses.<sup>204</sup> Some metallographic analyses of few knives helped to

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<sup>189</sup> Japaridze 1999. Lomitashvili 2006.

<sup>190</sup> Baghaturia-Kner 2012:241-248.

<sup>191</sup> Trapsh 1971; Voronov, Bgzhba 1979:67-69. *Novie materialy VII vv is mogilnikov Abkhazii*. KSIA. N158.

<sup>192</sup> Ambroz 1971:110.

<sup>193</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.

<sup>194</sup> Khrushkova 1979:62-85. *Materialy po melkoi plastike srednevekovoi Abkhazii*.

<sup>195</sup> Baghaturia 2002.

<sup>196</sup> Narsidze broadly analyses the king portray depicted Olginskoe plate. Narsidze 1994:2-26; Narsidze 2001:56-58.

<sup>197</sup> Trapsh 1971:122; See also: Anchabadze 1959; Shamba 1970; Inadze 199; Amiranashvili, Chubinidze 1936:208-209; Beridze, Aladashvili 1973:210-211; Chubinashvili G. 1936:208-209.

<sup>198</sup> Khrushkova 2002:293:294; Khrushkova 1987; Schmerling 1965:9; Ainalov 1901:33,202.

<sup>199</sup> Uvarova 1891:103-104; In: *Materialy po arkheologii Kavkaza*. IV. Also Uvarova 1894.

<sup>200</sup> Representation of fort is very pure and did not reffer the source. Georgobiani A. 2020.

<sup>201</sup> Sorokinas' work led wider audiences, but author of this thesis responded those vessel types did not appear in her analyses. See Baghaturia-Kner 2009:355-365.

<sup>202</sup> Baghaturia 2004.

<sup>203</sup> Certain fibulae types are broadly viewed by Kazanski (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007). But Apkazava made a generic approach to the fibulae from Apsilia. Apkazava 1979:19. Tabl.VI-4,9,10.

<sup>204</sup> See: Voronov, Shenkao 1982; Kazanski 1997; Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.

reconstruct the techniques used in Apsilian metalwork, which similarly applies in Chernjakhov culture during the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>205</sup> There is introductory article on the pattern occurrences in Apsilia shown by author of this thesis. Prof Bierbrauer also brings Apsilia closer to the scientific interest in context of Alans. They all are telling us slightly different things.

**List of publications and related scientific periodic.** Research agenda of Apsilian study set out series of socialistic periodic, individual articles and few monographies with all the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Significant amount of archaeological investigations are published in several socialistic periodic:

- *Sovetskaja Archeologia* (SA)
- *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* (VDI),
- *Maskovski Institut Archeologii* (MIA)
- ‘*Kratkie Soobshenie Instituta Arkheologii*’ (KSIA)<sup>206</sup>
- ‘*Archaeologicheskije Otkritia Abkhazii*’ (AO).<sup>207</sup>
- *Academy of sciences of Georgia-the center for archaeological studies*’ (CAS)

They are brief account hundreds of systematic reports of broad fieldwork exposing large portion of total publication output. But they are useful additional source to fill limited information. Such is the medallion with representation of Gorgon from Akhacharkhu grave, appearing only within this periodic;<sup>208</sup> as well as the broad account of imported glass vessel produced by Sorokina.<sup>209</sup> Very general sense of stray finds indicative for settlement spread over archaeological sites of Apsilia finds in Voronovs earliest work.<sup>210</sup>

Defining traits of new approaches is accessible in post-socialistic periodic ‘*Academy of sciences of Georgia-the center for archaeological studies*’ (CAS). Issues of Christian semantic drawn from archaeological material<sup>211</sup> and some topographic notes of Apsilian

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<sup>205</sup> The technique indicates knowledge of cementation, normalization and curing. Some selected knives have been shown the usage of fine medium-carbon and high carbon metal, also the two and three layers welding and welded steel blade made of iron (Bgazhba 1979:44-48. *Tekhnologia izgotovlenija Tsebdinskix Nozhei* (II-III vv.n.e).

<sup>206</sup> Latest graves of Apsilia see in: Voronov, Bgazhba 1979:67, 69. Novie materiali VII v is moglinkikov Abkhazii. KSIA, N 158.

<sup>207</sup> They are summaries of field working process of years 1970, 1984-1985 and several graves of Atara Armjanskaja (AO-1971), Tsebdela and Shapka (AO-1989; AO-1990).

<sup>208</sup> Details see in: Elnitski L. 1964:144. ‘*Maloizuchonnikh ili utrachennikh nadpisjakh zakavkazia*’. WDI, N2.

<sup>209</sup> Sorokina 1971.

<sup>210</sup> Voronov 1969, 1977.

<sup>211</sup> Baghaturia 2002:99-101. For the determination of Christian and ornamental signs on archaeological material of Tsebdela (in Georgian: Tsebdedis arkeologiuri masalis qristianuli nishnebisa da ornamentuli saxeebis raobis gansazgvrisatvis). Conference VI of Christian archaeology. ‘*The conference of early Christian archaeology*’. Academy of sciences of Georgia. The center of archaeological studies. Tbilisi.

settlement are few.<sup>212</sup> Summarized outcomes of archaeological excavations also given in 'Archaeologicheskaja karta Abkhazii'.<sup>213</sup> Large audiences of areal cemeteries consider three individual monographies<sup>214</sup> and several descriptive records.<sup>215</sup> Comprehensive data of defensive structures introduced in several articles.<sup>216</sup> Specific survey of chronology of Apsilian material culture is available in monographies of Ambroz and Kazanski.<sup>217</sup>

***The practical value of past scholarly work.*** Published records are important contribution archaeology recovered, but there are certain methodological weakness impact on research quality and chronology of excavated material. First of all, should be mentioned that most data from eroded zones are lacking in publications and if recorded they are not visually available (Voronov 1969). Information obtained from archaeological field working activities is insufficiently scanned. The worry point of past scholarly study is documenting the material, ill description of object and pure, which do not meet archaeological standard. Much work about Apsilian graves is careless and appears to give general view to readers. Almost all works are lacking stratigraphic data, examination of grave adjacent, their interrelations and cemetery boundary. Graves are not coordinated chronologically. There is no unique plan for

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<sup>212</sup> Baghaturia 2003:100-103. Late antique settlement of Kodori basin. In: 'Early mediaeval Georgian villages according to Archaeological material'. Conference II. In: Academy of sciences of Georgia. The center of archaeological studies. Tbilisi.

<sup>213</sup> Little overview of previously investigated material and structures, including areas of Gerzeul, Shapka, Tsebelda, Akhista, Bat, Apushta and Verkhnaia Juevka are provided here: Voronov. 1969:43-69, 76-77.

<sup>214</sup> Trapsh 1971; Gunba 1978; Shamba 1970.

<sup>215</sup> Information about the necropolis Akhacharkva can be viewed in: Shamba G. 1970. 'Akhacharkhu drevni magilnik'. Candidate dissertation. Other works see in: Shamba G. 1962. *Stekljannaja posuda pozdneatichnoi epokhi is raskopok v raione Tsebeli*. In: *Tezisi dokladov i soobshenie nauchnoi sesii AIM, posbjashennoi 50 letiju ego Obrazovania*. Sukhumi; Also see followings: Shamba G. 1965. *Pozdneatichnie Pogrebenija Nagornoj Abkhazii*. SA. N2; Shamba G. 1966. *Keramicheskie izdelja pozdneantichnooi epokhi is nekropolja Akhacharkva*. TSGPI, XIII-XIV; Shamba G. 1966. *Naselenie nagornoj Abkhazii v pozdneantichnuju epokhu (po arkeologicheskim materialami nekropolja Akhacharakhu. Avtoreferat, kandidatskoi dissertatsii*. Tbilisi; Shamba G. 1967. *Fibuli is nekropolja Akhacharkva*. MAA. Later information of Trapsh sees in: 'Mogilnik Akhatsarakhu' (1975). *Materiali po archeologii Abkhazii. Trudi IV*. Analysis of other cemeteries Apiacha, Akhatsarakhu and Atara Armjanska is published in: Gunba 1978. 'Novie pomjatniki stebeldinskoe kulturni'. The rest are individual publications about the cemeteries of Apushta, Lar and Tsebelda, viewed in different journals and periodics: Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin 1970:175-190. 'Apushtinski mogilnik IV-VI vekov n.e.v Abkhazii. SA, I; Voronov 1971:378. *Razvedki Abkhazii. AO-1970*; Voronov, Jushin in 1971. *Pogrebenie VII v. n.e. is Tsebelda v Abkhazii*. KSIA. 128; Voronov, Jushin 1973:171-191. 'Novie pomjatniki Tsebelinskoi kulturni Abkhazii. SA, I; Voronov, Shenkao 1982:121-165. 'Vooruzhenie voinov Abkhazii IV-VII vekov'; Northern grave complexes of Apsilia, recovered in Azanata valley is provided in Voronov 1974b:204-210. 'Pozdneatnichie Pomjatniki sela Azanta'. TAGM. IV. See also: Voronov 1982. 'Pomjatniki Azantskoi dolini'.

<sup>216</sup> About Gerzeul fort see in: Bgazhba, Voronov 1980. *Pomjatniki sela Gerzeul*. Short descriptive summaries about the fort Shapka recorded by several authors see in journals 'AO': Brief result of 1977 excavations in Tsibile fort (1983). But a full discussion of this fort is available in monography of Voronov (1985). Technologic aspects of Tsebelda fort discussed in monography: Japaridze 2001. 'Material cultural monuments of 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century Egrisi' ( In Georgian: *Egrisis axali tselaghritskhvis I-VII saukuneebis materialuri kulturis dzeglebi*).

<sup>217</sup> Previous classification and chronology of Ambroz see in: Ambroz 1966:50-57. *Fibuli Juga evropeiskoi chasti SSSR*. SAI, DI-30. See also: Ambroz 1971. 'Problem rannesrednevekovoi khronologii wastonchnoi evropi'. SA, N2. The chronology of selected imported and local material in wider spectrum is presented by Kazanski (2007). Interpretation to the newly realized details of imported glass vessels from Apsilia is viewed in: Baghaturia-Kner 2009: 355-365. 'Late antique/early byzantine glass vessels from the cemeteries of Kodori and Machara valleys. Izmir. ISBN 978-605-61525-0-4.

the necropolises and cemeteries of Shapka. Most items are lacking sufficient description of diagnostic parts, which enabling to specify objects further.<sup>218</sup> Despite newly established chronology of Kazanski, giving new perspectives to grave material from Apsilia, they are selective and give limited view of imported material.

Some publication even lack visualisation of body disposal (Shamba and Voronov).<sup>219</sup> There is no anthropological study and therefore the gender determinatives are still based on the grave offerings.

Fortification plan miss their configuration within the landscape they stood, which made them useless for identification of direct environ. Some did not present subsequently outlined structures appearing in text. Some sites presented by Voronov are varying in their application in different publications and maps. Archaeological areas still miss the treatment by modern technique like GPR or GIS mapping.

The only specialized study of graves with general view of Tsebeldian cemetery was published by Bgazhba (Voronovs latest contribution) and Kazanski, but there is still no analytical work and complex body of study to be helpful in recognizing the main patterns of area.

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<sup>218</sup> Some objects recorded in text even raises problem to identify typologically, without attached drawings.

<sup>219</sup> Voronov 1982; Voronov 1989; Voronov 1990; Shamba 1979; the best recorded decease position is given by Trapsh 1971.



#### IV. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OF THE VILLAGE OLGINSKOE/ OKTOMERI (r. Machara valley)

##### IV. 1 GEO-PHYSICAL AND HISTORICAL SENSE OF THE VILLAGE AND VICINITY AREA

*Location and geo-physical sense.* The village where the study cemetery is located is now named Oktomberi (Map 9), but at the time of areal observation in 1945 it was called Olginskoe. Therefore, in scientific literature it is generally referred to by the earlier name and similarly recorded in reports and other scientific publications.<sup>220</sup>



MAP 9. Locational view and geo-physical sense of the village Olginskoe/Oktomberi.

The village lies in the central part of the Gulripsh district that is situated near the point where the tributary rivers meet with the Barjal River.<sup>221</sup> In a broad sense, it is a place where the Patskhiri valley terminates and forms the widest part of its last section.<sup>222</sup> The scale and

<sup>220</sup> The Barjal area was permitted for residence by the tsarist administration in 1867, where a Greek village was formed two years later, in 1869. The name of village *Olginskoe* was derived in honor of Grand Princess Olga Feodorovna, who married the king of Greece in 1867. But it was renamed to *Oktjabrskoe* ('October') in 1943, and then to *Barjal* in 1996 (similar to the nearest river *Baryal*). The etymology of the toponym *Barjal* is not clear. Perhaps it derived from the postposition of the name *Barral* or *a-ral* ('steepness', 'steep descent'), which are based on the anthroponym *Bar* (or *Maar*); *Barjal* 'Barov's toughness' (see Garde).

<sup>221</sup> From this place through the narrow Latskiri Valley flows into the Black Sea.

<sup>222</sup> Grdzlishvili 1947:89; Voronov 1971:19.

altitude of this village is not recorded, but the Russian map shows the elevation of this area to be about 450–500 meters from sea level. The southern, northern, and eastern parts are highly elevated, surrounded by upland areas: Amixamara to the north, Apiancha and Gertsaulg to the south, and the Amlara Mountains to the east.<sup>223</sup> Therefore, the local topography shows a variety of terrain types, forming the dominant structure of low, undulating hills. From the point of river juncture, the spatial area faces horizontally penetrated depressions and the structuring is open geosyncline within mountain relief.<sup>224</sup> The surviving middle part is recorded to prove thin layers of Paleogene limestone and marl that are accordingly structured on the upper chalk of massive crystal marl lime.<sup>225</sup>

Its location gives this area prominence as Patskhiri is the best connected valley at the junction of two ancient roads. One of them leads south towards the Black Sea and the other takes the southwest approach to the Shapka area, where the ruins of an early Byzantine fort are still observable. But most importantly, this village lies about 20 km northwest from the coastal Roman city of Sebastopolis (now Sukhumi), 30 km from the Roman Pithius (now Bichvinta) and deviating from the modern Sukhumi-Teberda military highway by around 16 km (**Map 6**).

***Historical environment of the vicinity area.*** Olginskoe is situated within a highly developed Late Roman environment and is considered to contain the densest concentration of burials in historical Apsilia (**Map 10**). But the surrounding 7 km radius contributes evidence of different activities of various historical periods from the prehistoric, through Classic and Roman-Byzantine, right up until the last century (**Map 11**). This historical environment is fundamental for the identity, formation of tribal land, and identification of corresponding communities.

Nearby prehistoric sites that bring together the northeastern part of Oktomberi with west of Apiancha and Kep-Bogaz within a 3 km radius provide a remarkable link to Stone Age exploration, demonstrating tools of the earliest inhabitants.<sup>226</sup> Further northwest, where some Paleolithic and Neolithic structures are known, brings us in contact with new sites at Agish and Chizhoush.<sup>227</sup> It connects northwest with the Mustie settlement again at Kep-Bogaz and 4

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<sup>223</sup> Uvarova 1898:98-99.

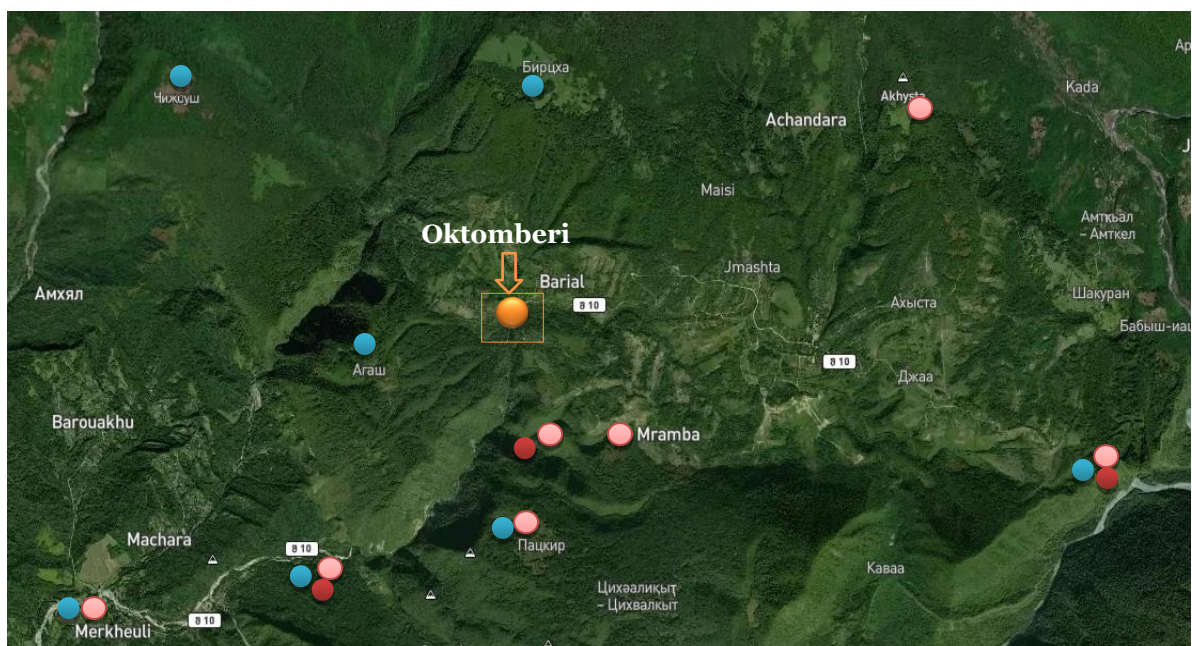
<sup>224</sup> This geosyncline formation is a source of lithic raw material for the areal population.

<sup>225</sup> Grdzlishvili 1947:89-90.

<sup>226</sup> Voronov 1977:20-22.

<sup>227</sup> Voronov 1969; Voronov 1977:20.

km south of Kuabchara pass<sup>228</sup> in the southwest and then the Upper Jurevka valley. The first two are explored Mesolithic sites connected with later settlement activities. The Apiancha and Kuabchara passes become particularly interesting in connection with the Neolithic period, which clarifies the continuity of the first inhabitants. Apiancha is diverse with metalworking activities from the Bronze Age era,<sup>229</sup> but other discoveries offer two new sites: Gurzuli in the immediate vicinity, and Tsebelda 7 km northwest.<sup>230</sup> Tsebelda gives a unique opportunity to share with the activities of Iron Age communities—immediately south of the Olginskoe valley there still remains an Iron Age defensive structure for monitoring the area and securing movement.<sup>231</sup>



**MAP 10.** Historical environment of Olginskoe vicinity. ● - Prehistoric sites. ● - Roman sites. ● - Medieval sites.

Closer south affords attractive opportunities to connect with the Classical-Hellenistic period landscape. It shows that the most prominent sites of the time were still Patskhiri, Apiancha, Gurzuli, and Merkheuli areas. They produce further evidence of the trade opportunities shared by settlements in

<sup>228</sup> Kep-Bogaz locates 1 km away from the road that connects Mramba and Tsebelda (Voronov 1977).

<sup>229</sup> Bzhania B. 1966.

<sup>230</sup> Voronov 1977:24.

<sup>231</sup> It stood at the confluence of the river Machara River and its tributary *Barjal*. This represents a cyclopean structure, including three obscure internal buildings, preserved in 60 meters wide and up to 1 meter height. It chronologically determined by 9<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries. In terms of wall masonry is considered to be an analogue of Tsalka fort in eastern Georgia. Voronov assumes it to the Corax tribes been mentioned in antique sources (Hesychius of Miletus, Pseudo-Scylax of Caryanda, Pliny the Elder, Pomponius Mela, and Claudius Ptolemy). See: Voronov 1968:133-142.

the Classical period, as well as some local artefacts of Hellenistic time. Further interaction with other communities observed 3 km southeast of Olginskoe is that of Roman influence, but with anciently filled experiences.

Tsebelda<sup>232</sup> and its neighbouring village Chini<sup>233</sup> are essentially about the earliest Hellenistic imports to the area. This comes down again to the Apiancha and Verkhnaia Jurevka, with little evidence of brick utilised during the Classical period.<sup>234</sup> And again in the northwest, the vicinity of Patskhiri valley at the confluence of the Machara River and its tributary Barjal led the people to build the earliest Roman structures and explore their history.<sup>235</sup>

All this, combined with a spectacular Roman landscape, continues the provincial life in the ancient sites of the southern vicinity of Apiancha, Upper Jurevka, Gurzuli, and Merkheuli. They border the coastal south and put focus on the earliest cremated individuals of the same mound. It gives an understanding of re-usages of the same ground in two different periods of time rather than of proper continuity. Sites synchronic to Olginskoe are situated in the immediate environment, where different chronological grave groups from the 3rd to the 5th century are known. They are individual hill cemeteries revealed in two different zones within 3 km from Olginskoe. Mid-imperial cemeteries that spread over a kilometre located opposite to Olginskoe represent a western direction, close to minor tracks having contact with the main road (**Map 12**). Southwards within 100–500 m begins a second zone and a further series of important cemeteries regularly located at Verin, Mahajirov, and Tserkovni hills, situated on significant lines of communication (see related chapter *Apsilian cemeteries and graves*). They produce evidence of a mid-imperial population and within 100 m, leading to a final stage cemetery at Tserkovni hill containing burials from 450–550 AD. The relationship of Olginskoe to the Shapka settlement, which lies 1.5 km to the south, explains the circumstances of the surrounding landscape. They provide evidence of intensive Roman development in the Shapka region. This includes cemeteries, settlement, defensive structures, and related roads over which they were developed. A little to the south, Apiancha provides further evidence of central Apsilian inhabitants spreading to the southwest.

In close proximity in the southeast, the Panikin hill produces the same class of burials, suggesting similar communities (**Map 11**). But 4 km away, a different evolution in the north-

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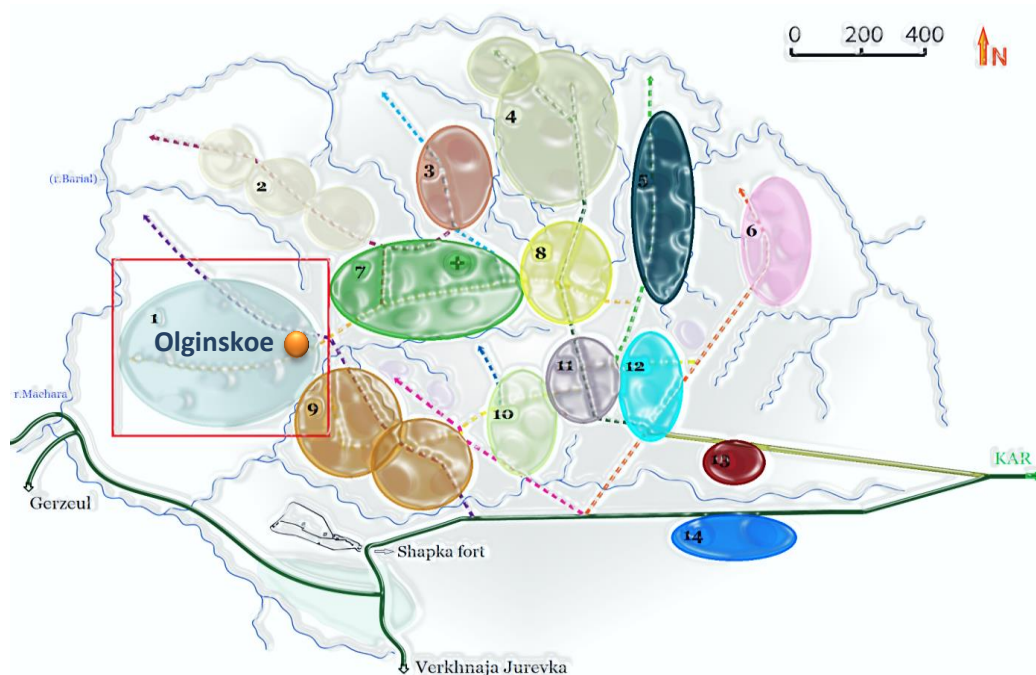
<sup>232</sup> Voronov 1968:137; Voronov 1977:12; Bgazhba, Voronov 1980:39.

<sup>233</sup> Voronov 1998:262.

<sup>234</sup> Voronov 1969:36, 58.

<sup>235</sup> There are the remains of three cyclopean buildings, built in a dry masonry and dated back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. On two sides they were naturally protected by 10 m ravine and 60 m massive walls. These walls are similarly made of dry cyclopean masonry. Voronov 1977:15.

eastern vicinity gives all the necessary information about the inhabitants and their and their specific occasions. It offers the largest burial part of the areal population represented at Mramba village. The northern vicinity (7 km from Olginskoe) contributes evidence of another major Roman site Tsebelda with Roman baths, an early Byzantine fort, and associated settlement and graves. All three neighbouring sites of Gurzuli, Shapka, and Tsebelda consist of well-preserved defensive structures, later becoming a newly reconstructed early medieval site of the area and offering a unique approach to the evidence of the Arab period (including defensive structures and several stray finds). Olginskoe, together with Shapka and Tsebelda, are actual ‘church’ sites with diverse considerations for early medieval religious communities.



**MAP 11.** Burial hills of Shapka area. 1-Abramov hill. 2-Gushin hill. 3-Grushin hill. 4-Justnianov hill. 5-Stekljanni hill. 6-Zhenski hill. 7-Tserkovni hill. 8-Monetni hill. 9-Verin hill. 10-Mahajirov hill. 11-Vinogradni hill. 12-Panikin hill. 13-Mramba. 14-Apiancha. Modified map. *Source: Voronov 1975*

A communication line that easily connected all these nearest vicinities and crossed both north-western mountains from prehistoric time best explains the significance of these areas. Thus the road network with an arterial system was what bound each existing site within 7 km and made this area extraordinary. Its size made the *Wheel Road 1*, activated in the Roman era. It integrated selected parts and connected the coastal region with the hinterland of Apsilia.

There are small areas to the northeast at Gurzuli, Olginskoe, and Poltavskoe (on the Chizhoush Mountain west of Olginskoe) that provide valuable collections of medieval populations and their beliefs, which date from the 6th to the 12th century. The latter even

attracted Ukrainian resettlements in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to build a new church. Three kilometres further south is the largest 60 km long medieval defensive wall of the Kelasuri River, containing 279 towers, which sheds further light on the military history of the area.<sup>236</sup> These are fundamental elements of the Olginskoe valley demonstrating the historical formation of the area, in which Olginskoe features prominently from the mid-Roman period.

*Ancient roads through the village Olginskoe/Oktomberi.* The Olginskoe settlement had a specific location with the best connections within the system of arterial tracks of the Shapka area. It was situated on the Arterial Road 2, which passed the Abramov burial hill in the southwest and thereafter vertically crossed the Patskhiri valley (**Map 12**). On this line it crosses two burial hills, Abramov and Verin, a little to the north, and continues to *Crossing Point I*. Here, it has shifting perspectives on both sides. Turning right it first reaches the central part of the Tserkovni Hill necropolis. To the left, it meets with the Arterial Road 1 running towards the Gurzuli settlement near the Black Sea.

It continues straight on, through the immediate Verin Hill necropolis, shortly before joining the *Key Apsilian Road*, where it approaches the next cross junction from a similar direction. Here it curves to the right, aligning the Barton Jasochka of Mahajirov hill necropolis<sup>237</sup> with the way to the Shapka settlement in the southwest. At the same time, it could access the Mramba settlement further west.

However, the straight direction that leads to the *Key Apsilian Road* opens two other perspectives. The first is towards the coastal inhabitants of the Black Sea to the south, and the second is directed towards the northern mountain settlement of Kodori river valley. The northern direction permits integration with *Wheel Road 1* and the surrounding vicinities of Apiancha and Verkhnaia Jurevka, which turns back to Gurzuli and thereafter again into the Patskhiri valley. This route gives access to the right bank of the Kelasuri River (via the Gurzuli section) and, through the Chizhoush pass, gives access to the Tsebelda settlement without crossing the Patskhiri valley. Such well communicated potential in all directions produces its most active role in the area.

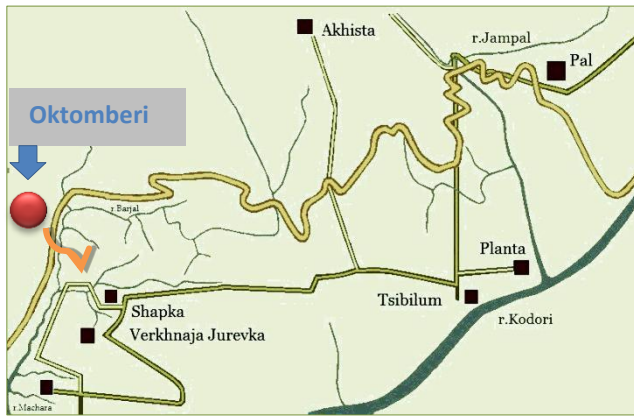
In addition, the *Arterial Road 2* across the Abramov and Verin hills has a specific relationship with the northwest-enclosed burial areas of the Shapka region and access to the

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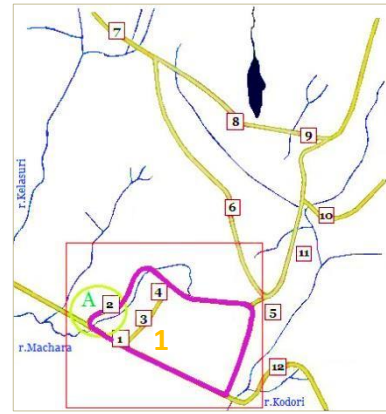
<sup>236</sup> This wall stretches including Tkvarcheli region and some of its towers are faced towards the Enguri River. Chronology is the subject of debate, but generally determined by the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

<sup>237</sup> This is the western slope of the Mahajirov hill necropolis, which is connected to the Verin hill necropolis by a narrow exit. Voronov 1998:102.

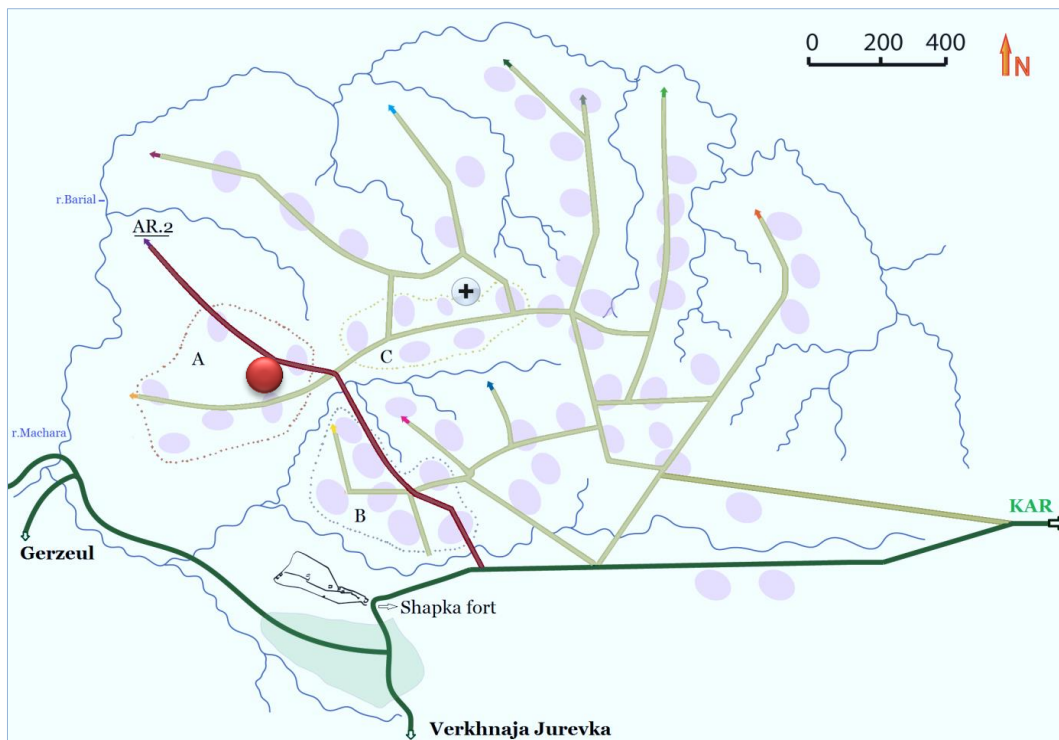
nearest vicinities in all directions. Thus, this great communication potential with further areas all in all emphasises the area's importance.



Relation of AR 2 with KAR



AR 2 involved in *Wheel Road 1*



Abramov hill and location of Olginskoe cemetery. Red line- AR 2 through burial hills of Shapka area and towards *Kay Apsilian Road* (KAR).

**MAP 12.** Ancient routes through the village Olginskoe/Oktomberi.

## IV. 2 OLGINSKOE CEMETERY DATA

### *IV. 2. 1 Finding history of Olginskoe cemetery and comments to the study of Olginske cemetery material*

***Finding history.*** Residents of Olginskoe village have often reported about stray finds from rural areas during their own work activities. It attracted special attention and was responded to by archaeological observation in the process of preliminary geological surveys that took place during construction activities on the Sukhumi-Teberda military road in 1945. This eventually led to a small excavation on the left bank of the Barjal River in the same year, which was undertaken by the geologist Grdzlishvili. Along the ancient road 1 km from the river, he discovered Olginskoe cemetery, the first archaeological site to be found in Gulripsh area. The first information about the cemetery was presented to the Georgian Academy of Sciences by academician Simon Janashia on 9 September 1947. Since 1945, no further access has been gained to the site.

***Accommodation place.*** The Olginskoe cemetery assemblages are an archive material, which in scientific publications is often referred to as the ‘Grdzlishvili excavation’. The entire study material and related documents are held in the Georgian State Museum in Tbilisi. They are housed in the Branch of Medieval Archaeological Collections of West Georgia, Stock 5, Room N502 (until 2014 it was named ‘Branch of Small Cultures’). This material was received by the Tbilisi State Museum in 1958, but only after its first destination in the archaeological branch of Tbilisi Historical Museum, where it was initially held in the years 1956–1958. Apart from items composed of silver, which are stored more securely, most burial artefacts are accommodated in old boxes. Only some spearheads, beads, and glass vessels are on display in the museum exhibitions. Artefacts are assigned a field number and an additional registered number in the State Museum. They are listed and briefly described in the Museum Record Book (MRB).

***Grave condition and preservation of artefacts.*** The cemetery area is so eroded that much information is lost and most graves are destructed. Surface degradation and partial wash-down from higher ground limited the cemetery data. Surface layers are recorded to be deformed and as a consequence, twelve graves were largely destroyed.



The approximate number of surviving graves is recorded to be eighteen, but only six survived completely (graves 1 to 6) and other twelve graves had different degrees of damage or destruction. Less material was recovered from five graves are numbered as 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. Deep ploughing damaged the other graves that seem to be unidentifiable.

Most artefacts from the six complete graves are revealed good condition at the time of their discovery. Comparably good survival conditions occur only with the beads. Jewellery survived better from four destructed grave complexes (8–11). The battle weapons are intact and some are lacking even diagnostic parts. But there is no concrete evidence about survival condition of most metal artefacts.

**Data gathering.** Collected information and documentary data about the Olginskoe cemetery are relatively scarce. All useful scholarly information, records, or articles are located in several libraries and archives the author visited in the years 2009–2015.<sup>238</sup> I collated them based on their impact factor and divided them as primary and secondary sources, which are set out below.<sup>239</sup>

There was a clear notion about its summarised basis of excavation report, giving an impression of the existence of a primary source behind it. But I could find no further information about the formally registered field work, if any existed or perhaps did not survive.

It is worth mentioning here that I used an opportunity offered by the Munich Museum to provide full analyses for the metal and glass items. This would have been helpful to gain more useful data about the artefacts and precisely define technological groups, but the people responsible in Tbilisi museums failed to agree. The glass particles brought to the Munich Museum proved insufficient for further examination.

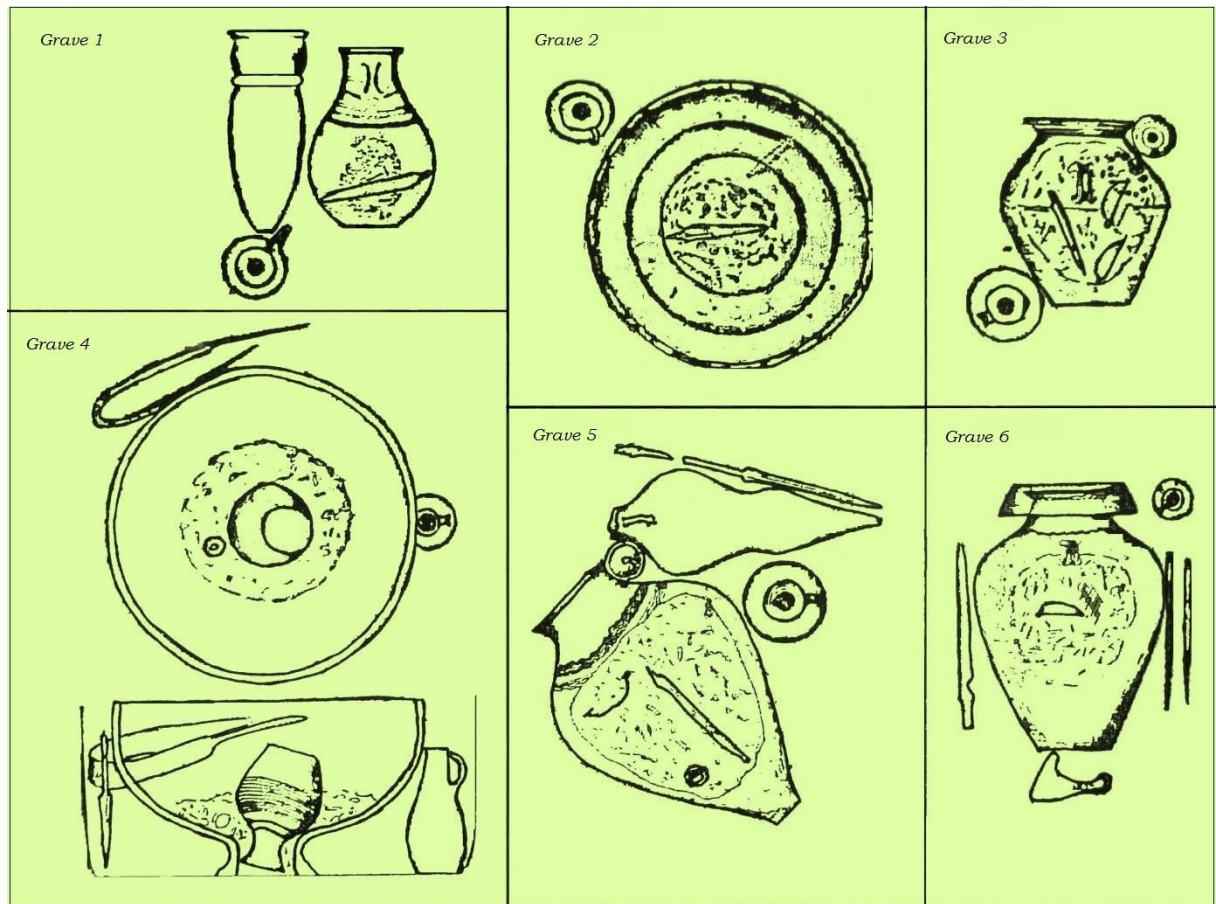
**PRIMARY SOURCES.** The first principal documentary source we have about the Olginskoe cemetery is the record of excavation director Gdzlishvili.<sup>240</sup> This consists of a four-page report regarding eighteen burials and an attached plan of the six complete graves made by Voronov (**Fig. 13**). It is available in the archive of Tbilisi State Museum.

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<sup>238</sup> Academic papers about the archaeological finds of the study area are generally published only in the Russian language. An exception is the few records about Olginskoe cemetery written in Georgian, which are available in the archive of Tbilisi State Museum.

<sup>239</sup> I was looking for other materials and further references as well in libraries of Georgia, Munich, Mainz and even Africa. I found Kazanskis' work in the Munich State Library (at the time was not posted in internet), which proved to be a helpful source.

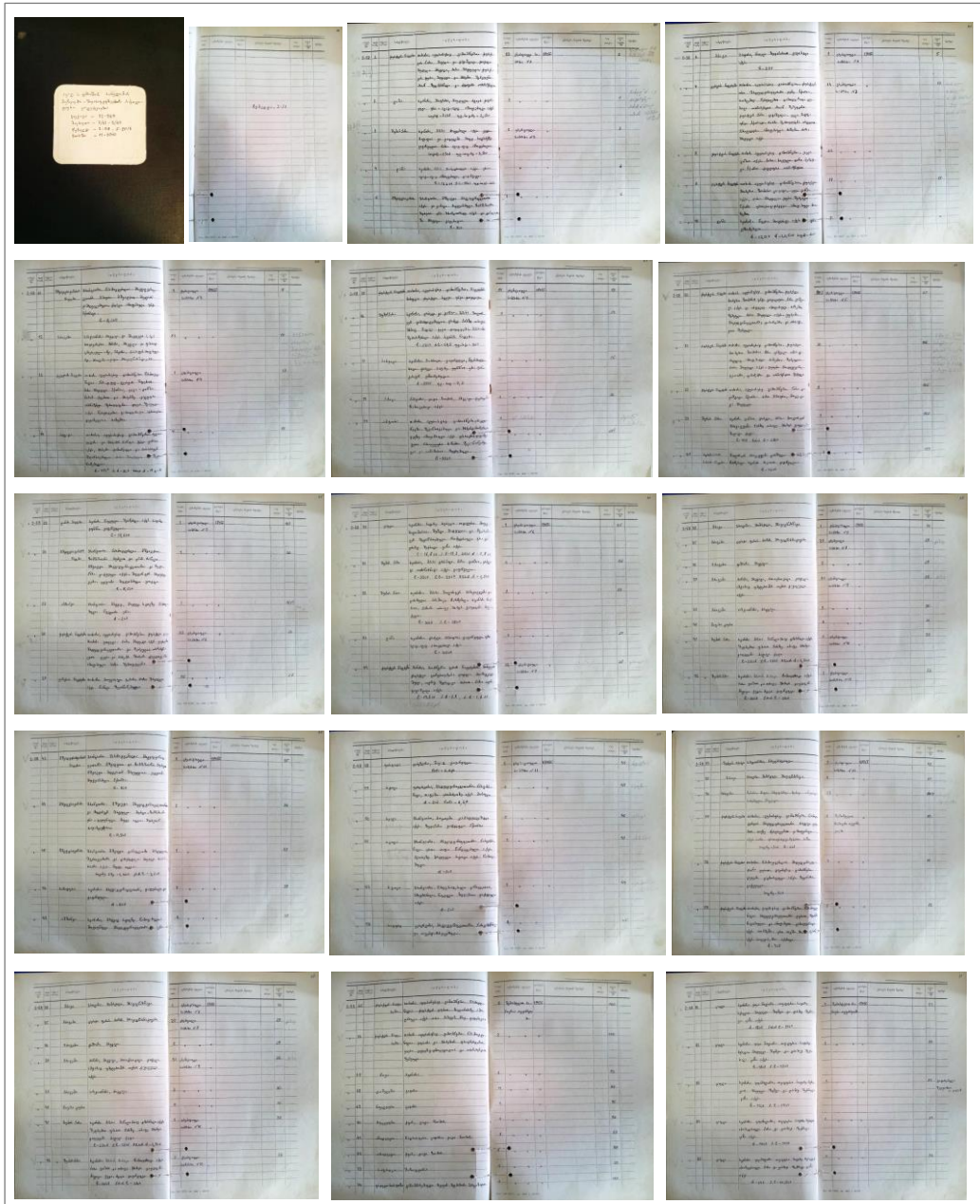
<sup>240</sup> Gdzlishvili I. 1947:89-95.



**Fig. 13. Grave plan of six graves in Olginskoe graves.** Voronov Sketch in: Grdzlishvili I.1947:89-95. *‘saqartvelos mecnierebata akademiis moambe* (of Georgian academy of sciences). Vol. VIII.N1-2. 1947.

The content provides summarised information about the find location, the amount of grave materials, and the comparably broad concerns of the surviving six graves (1 to 6). However, information about the destructed graves and corresponding assemblages are rather incomplete. A summary of the surviving six graves are also simply described without detailing the form and decoration of recovered materials, but the attached graphical information supports the reported depositional categories and makes the internal structure of depicted graves recognisable. Most of the general compositional data of the Olginskoe cemetery based on the excavation record is transcribed in this thesis, but several questions remain unanswered, while there is a clear notion about its summarised basis and feels existence of a primary source behind. Therefore, this archived excavation report could be a secondary source of its producer, Academician S. Janashia, who presented it to the Georgians.

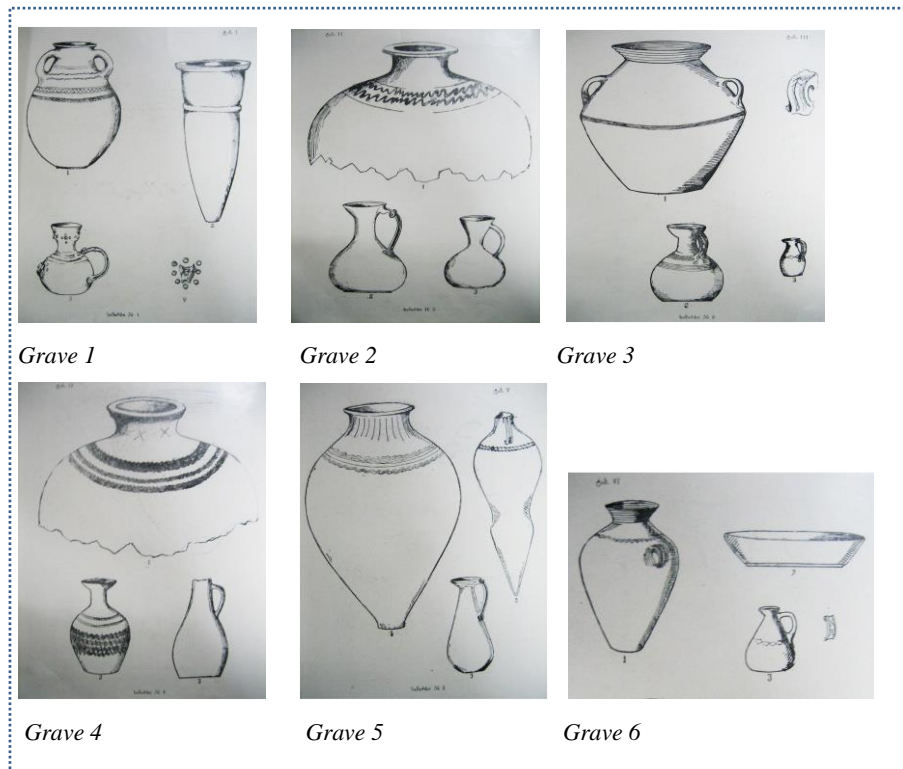
Further data was obtained utilising the second most useful source, the Museum Record Book (**MRB**), referring to the acquisition of grave goods at their last destination (**Fig. 14**).



**Fig. 14.** Copied pages from Museum Record Book.

Here the objects are listed according to their given number and briefly described. They even retain the field number and museum registered number marked in colour on the body of objects. The primary role of the MRB lies in providing details about the number of artefacts recovered and was significant to progress the investigation. They also record the history of lost artefacts.

The third useful source of information was Berdzenishvili's report on vessel form, decoration, type and size (**Fig. 15**). She provides the selection of decorative pottery from complete graves.



**Fig. 15.** Drawings of Olginskoe pottery wares from six graves. *Source: Berdzenishvili I. 1959:95-107.*

However, despite existing documentary knowledge about the Olginskoe cemetery, as grave features and corresponding assemblages are so minimal it is worth investigating to produce adequate information. First I tried to investigate if there are any exceptional sources helpful for achieving the view of lost artefacts and hidden grave features.

Furthermore, Grdzelishvili's information about the cemetery's location made it hard to establish precisely within an archaeologically developed landscape. The identification of its exact location is important in providing even a little context to the cemetery environment. Finally, the scarce information mentioned by Voronov I found in the central library of Munich became meaningful.<sup>241</sup> Two sentences from his latest monograph, which helped in the identification of Olginskoe burial hill and I obtained an understanding of its environment, I was able to move forward with my survey of the cemetery surroundings.

SECONDARY SOURCES. From the secondary material I define the works of Kazanski, Amroz, Hayes, Domzalski, and Biborski as providing broad approaches to the subject.<sup>242</sup> All this is detailed in section 'methodological concern'. They were supportive in filling the gap of

<sup>241</sup> Voronov 1998. It should also be noted that post-1992 academic works on Apsilian archaeological material are not available in Georgia. Also, scientific publications of the Soviet period on Apsilia (and Colchis/Lazica) are not accessible in Europe.

<sup>242</sup> Hayes 1972; Domzalski 2007:75; Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.

available data and helpful in initially allowing me to keep the general chronological line and organise the synchronisation of Apsilian material culture.

### ***Comments to the documentation and artefact handling***

There were several risk factors associated to digital material and documentation variously impact on the research potential. It considers:

- ✓ Destruction of graves and preservation of grave artefacts
- ✓ Artefact handling problem
- ✓ Documentary inaccuracy

The negative environmental impact is the context in which the excavator's report or protocol was composed. But recent survey reveals a decreased number of artefacts.

### **Artefact handling problem**

Grave goods are not comparable with their condition as described in the primary and secondary sources of the years 1945–1959.<sup>243</sup> The fragmentary condition of pottery wares and glass vessel is fact. The fragmentary condition of the pottery made restoration difficult. The most classifiable material is diagnostic fragments like rim-necks, neck-shoulders, and bases. Single pieces consist of a partially reconstructed plate (Grave 6) and an ineffectively restored amphora (Grave 5). The conic glass vessel (Grave 5) that was fully recovered had been partially reconstructed at the time of my investigations in the museum. Metallographic examinations are responsible for further damage to the weapon blades, spearheads, and knives (Grave 5), but result is not available.

The next is unprofessional curation of artefacts which consider their recipient places in Tbilisi museums. All three glass vessels (Graves 3, 6, 7), fibulae (Grave 6), pithoi and red paste bead (Grave 2) had disappeared with inherent uncertainty. The glass vessels and pithoi are not documented in the MRB, which might suggest their loss occurred prior to their arrival in the State Museum, but the rest were lost after their final acquisition.

My effort achieving the view of lost artefacts was unsuccessful, because certain fibulae drawings I found in personal achieve of prof. Apkhazava were made in 1970 were those presented in museum. Only one occasion gives me hope for the existence of the hemispheric

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<sup>243</sup> Berdzenishvili 1959:95-107.

glass vessel in Russian Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.<sup>244</sup> This vessel is recorded from the vicinity of Olginskoe, but no glass vessel is known from stray finds in those areas.

However, from the first-hand information we know that the total amount of recognisable items is 130. But they have currently decreased to 118 objects, and we have left just 18 potter wares, one surviving glass vessel, 6 fibulas, 3 buckles, 76 various beads, 13 weapons including 7 spear heads, 5 iron knives, one sword and an axe.

#### Documentary inaccuracy

Risky was the incomplete nature and the quality of both crucial sources, including Grdzlishvili's protocol and also the Museum Record Book, which insufficiently deals with the Olginskoe cemetery data.

A four page summarized reports of excavator is fairly brief (**Fig. 13**). It merely attached the drawings of Voronov, comprise some details of six complete graves. Text describes all six graves and summarises the data of damaged burials.

Inadequacies in documenting the archaeological site of Olginskoe may explained by geological background of the director of excavations Grdzlishvili. The cemetery elevation, scale, dimensions, original boundaries, cemetery border and grave organisation within cemetery space are unrecorded features of the Olginskoe cemetery. Whether or not this was documented was difficult to recognise. There is no site plan of research area, where the rest of the destroyed graves were located. It is unclear how many graves are unidentifiable and where they are located. The probable extent of damaged graves is entirely absent. The definition and numbering criterion of many destructed graves (13-19) is questionable, as they are not recorded in the text and therefore remain undescribed. The gap in most of the significant physical information of surviving graves limited their research perspectives.

The visual appearance of six complete graves is purely addressed. Apart from one grave (Grave 4), all are depicted without the grave cut. This evidence gives a sense of poor visibility of surface remains; otherwise it is unclear why the shape of the other five graves might be insufficiently documented in the excavation drawings. In fact, none of them are described in the text and their layout is also not detailed. Even the quality of recorded data was quite weak. Objects are also simply described, without detailing the form and decoration of recovered material. Such generalized description was useless for their typological recognition and was problematic especially when dealing with datable lost artefacts.

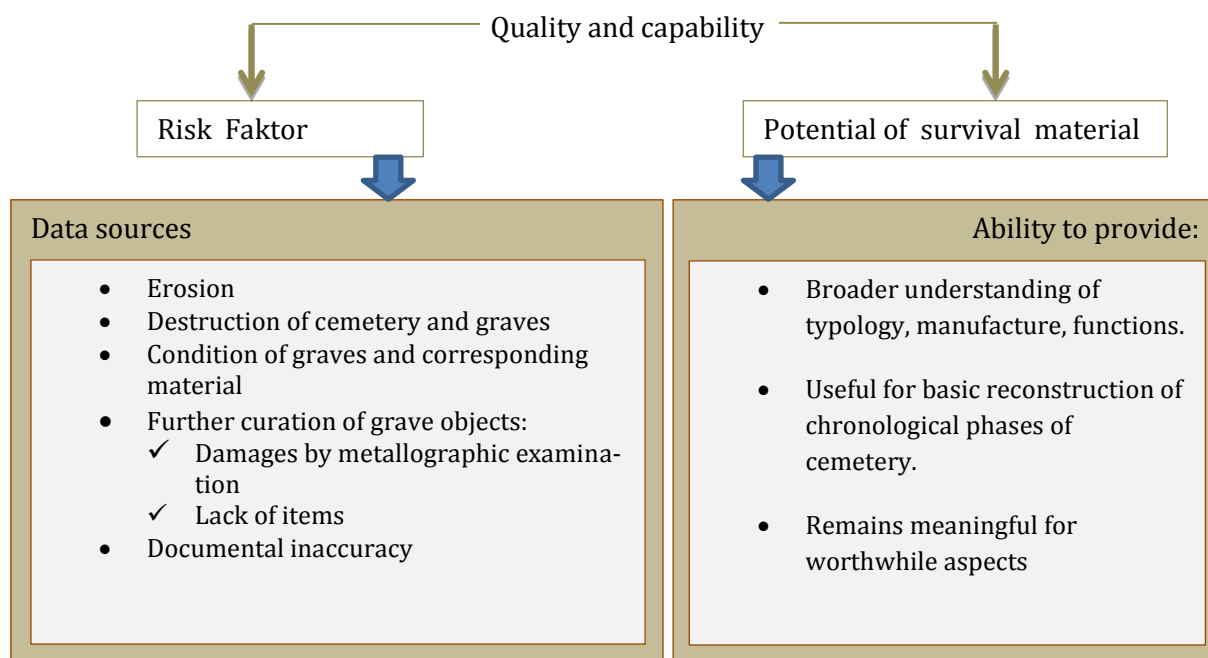
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<sup>244</sup> I suspect that the similar hemispherical vessels from Apsilia, accommodated in the St. Petersburg Hermitage, are not related to Olginskoe Graves 3 and 6. To their discovery place Sorokina made such an interpretation '*unspecified finding place from the vicinity of Olginskoe*', but similar discoveries are not known from Olginskoe. This is still an unproven opinion of the author of this thesis.

The MRB does not provide secure information about stocked artefacts and does not supply the recipient date of the Olginskoe cemetery material in Tbilisi State Museum. It is still unclear if they were directly deposited in the Tbilisi Historical Museum immediately after their recovery or a little later. The history of certain missing artefacts is also lost between the Historical and State museums. Documental disorder, I experienced when dealing with cemetery material, produce certain risk of information. Some pottery fragments were mixed with other grave material, made confusions. Them I easily distinguished only with help of Berdzenishvili record and primarily from the attached drawings. Inaccuracies of the registration process after receiving the grave goods consider glass vessel, but I was able confirm its original context.<sup>245</sup>

### *The potential of survival material*

Fortunately, the entire above discussed documentary notes and survival conditions of material did not pose a high potential risk for what remains (Fig. 16). Despite the pure surviving conditions, artefacts still have ability to provide a broader understanding to their typochronological and functional spectrum. Despite the loss of certain components from complete



**Fig. 16.** Notes to the Olginskoe material and related sources.

<sup>245</sup> The cone glass vessel found in grave 5, but has been registered as material of grave 7. This fact confused me at the beginning, because the grave 7 did not produce any glass vessel according to the protocol of excavator. This I also proved from the information of glass specialist Ugredze, who saw this vessel in the place of first display and also pointed out as a morphological comparison to the Samtavro glass cone of grave N203. Ugredze N. 1967:41.

graves, what they represent about a group of people is suggestive of identity, connections, experiences, and practices. Thus, they are able to guide processes, prove a point, and answer raised scientific questions.

Much scientific data can be drawn from the intact graves as well as related material structures, as they are useful for the basic reconstruction of the chronological phases of the graves and the corresponding cemetery area. Therefore, they remain meaningful materials for many worthwhile aspects.

#### IV. 2. 2 Olginskoe cemetery and grave features

*Cemetery location.* The Olginskoe cemetery area is situated on the southwest part of the Abramov hill crest (**Map 13**). The exact location of the study area lies a kilometre southeast from the village community, opposite of Arakhalia and Sergia's homestead,<sup>246</sup> and at the turn of the road that passes Abramov hill (AR2).<sup>247</sup>



**MAP 13.** A-Identification of the location of Abramov hill. ● - Approximate location of Olginskoe cemetery.

<sup>246</sup> Gdzelishvili 1947:90.

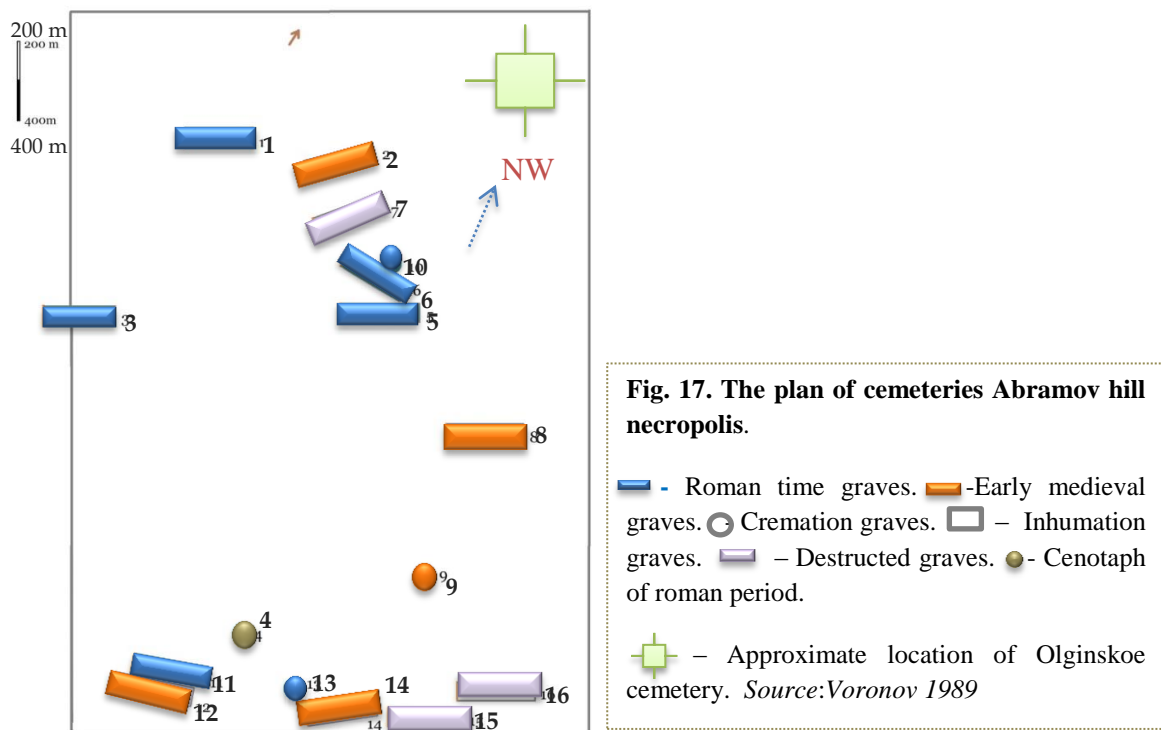
<sup>247</sup> Voronov 1998:271.



Abramov hill was a 16 ha area necropolis of five late Roman time cemetery groups (**Fig. 17**). A number of the smaller neighbouring cemeteries that were explored on the hill appear 80 m east of Olginskoe cemetery, below the road in the vineyard B. Akhalaia.<sup>248</sup>

A further 130 m east appears the next cemetery area,<sup>249</sup> with the other two neighbouring southwestern cemeteries located at a distance of 230 m and 430 m respectively.<sup>250</sup>

Abramov hill had a prominent position on the left bank of the Barjal River, on a reasonably well-drained terrace of an easily accessible limestone ridge. Ease of access is indicated by its gentle flat slope towards the river,<sup>251</sup> and its roadside position on the main communication line of the valley.



**Cemetery Dimension.** The documentary sources included a few details about the cemetery features. The information about the surviving 18 graves and the excavation record (protocol) merely attached drawings of the six complete graves, providing insufficient data regarding scale, grave dimensions, elevations, cemetery borders, or surface features. This prevents an overall view of the organization of the cemetery space and the other details listed above. But

<sup>248</sup> Out of twenty graves of the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, four were destroyed. They are referred to as female and warrior graves. Voronov 1990; Voronov 1998:271.

<sup>249</sup> All twenty graves are destroyed. Voronov 1998:271.

<sup>250</sup> All twenty late Roman graves were suffered from agricultural activities. Voronov 1998:271.

<sup>251</sup> All this information is collected from various sources. See: Gdzlishvili 1947; Voronov 1998:271.

what is executable from the grave plans is a quite closely occupied part of the cemetery space. If grave contour is applied to represent each individual grave, visually they give the impression of enclosed and immediately adjoined six burials because associated drawings do not promise much about the accuracy of their stratigraphic details. This would have assisted in an analysis of the arrangement schema within the space occupied by six graves, but the location of the other damaged or destroyed graves is unrecognizable. It is also unclear how much of the cemetery they represent. Mathematically calculated dimensions of the six appropriately complete graves give little sense of the cemetery's scale, which suggests roughly 12 m of occupied space in length and width. The existence of the other damaged or destroyed 12 burials would double the size of the burial area at the least. But the provided data about the cemetery scale and nature remains limited.

*The nature of Olginskoe cemetery.* Olginskoe can be judged as a burial area of cremation graves, and the six complete graves support this nature. Unfortunately, no interpretation is given to the cremains from 12 destroyed graves, and their identification criterion is also not mentioned.

#### **IV. 2. 3 Analytical framework of Olginskoe cemetery graves**

##### **IV. 2. 3. 1 THE DESTROYED GRAVES N7-N18**

This group extends the contextually and typologically meaningful survivals from four graves: 8, 9, 10 and 11.<sup>252</sup> Their survival condition gives only an introductory knowledge to the item categories and reduces the volume of offered material. The few fragments of pottery are suggestive of household storage and tableware functions. Surviving diagnostic parts are mainly from jugs and jars, but typologically they are mostly unrecognisable and reduce the capacity of information. The other assemblages amount to types of jewellery, dress fasteners, and certain weapon categories, and have potential for further comment. These are useful for

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<sup>252</sup> Information about the other seven most damaged graves (7, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18) is not available in any sources, neither in the museum book nor in the excavation protocol. Corresponding items are generalized without contextual determination in Gredzilishvili's protocol. Gdzilishvili 1947:89-95.

gender qualification and provide chronologically significant qualitative depositions, allowing the assessment of some ideas about their original context. Their content is undoubtedly significant support for the other intact graves.

Contextually available grave complexes are listed below to highlight their owner through defined functional and gender appropriate categories, but such items like beads and fibulae are individually analysed in a separate chapter as well.

#### ***IV. 2. 3. 1. 1 Female defining graves***

Recognisable female wealth, which is apparent in Graves 8, 9, and 11, is the basis of their selection and further analysis. They show quite a rich repertoire of different imported beads, giving the ability to identify the gender of the owner. Grave 11 provides much more capacity, and for both genders.

**GRAVE 8.** The surviving deposition consisted of beads and pottery fragments, but the pottery has since been lost (**Fig. 18; Table 16**). The female character of the grave is attested by bead categories. They consist of 22 items in two distinct categories, and provide the following types:

1. Polyhedral cylindrical beads of royal blue colour, consisting of 20 pieces (*Inv.N.2.58.35*).
2. Black rounded jet beads provided in two pieces (*Inv.N.2.58.36*).

This is a typical selection of bead categories seen from mid-imperial Apsilia. The number of blue monochrome beads allows the identification of an approximately 30 cm neck ornament, but the original length is difficult to estimate. It is a typical late Roman necklace, but no identical combination has been found within other graves in the area.

Theoretically, both bead categories could function (but not necessarily) as components of the same necklace, since they are commonly found as individual pieces<sup>253</sup> and combinations always vary. Both became fashionable from 340 or 350–380 AD. The substantial quantity might also be supportive for this period—such an amount is unusual for the polyhedral blue bead category in the early years of their appearance, where they occur either singly or in a

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<sup>253</sup> They are mostly presented in five pieces in graves. Exclusive is the discovery within a necklace suspended of 109 different beads in Apushta cemetery grave 1. Voronov 1982:48.Pic.21, 23.

group of 5 pieces within various sets of 340–380 AD.<sup>254</sup> It is still uncertain if the decreased amount is an indication of a distinct chronology, or if it gives an understanding of their availability in single pieces because of their high cost, or if it is due to limited demand. In any case, they give perspectives to the transportation of necklaces either in finished form or in single pieces, but their limited nature until the late 4<sup>th</sup> century is a fact, and their high demand in upland Apsilia is seen after 380 AD.<sup>255</sup> This does not exclude Olginskoe necklaces that have been individually composed and threaded in both categories. Noticeably, they are never associated with jet, even when they appeared in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Jet beads are occasional finds and the spectrum of associated categories is limited to black paste beads (decorated with applied lines).

Chronologically however, the longest circulated category of Olginskoe beads are the royal blue pieces, visible from 330 or 340–450 AD. The chronological spectrum of comparison data does not prevent their combination only in the probable years 340–380 AD.

Functionally, both categories are always evidenced in the breast area.<sup>256</sup> They appear to be most favoured by Apushta females. Therefore, concentration in upland parts could be evidence of a northern connection, as they were common in upper Apsilia yet rarely circulated in the south (Tserkovni hill, Abgidzrakhu) and beyond this region. From this collection, it is obviously the purest member of the most popular female jewellery.

**GRAVE 9:** The surviving deposition extends four different bead categories, including stone, glass, and shell beads, and is composed of 36 various pieces (**Table 17**):

1. Gilded glass beads (*Inv.N.2.58.37*). Twenty-three pieces, consisting of 9 different variants.
2. A stone bead of rock crystal (*Inv.N.2.58.38*). A single piece.
3. A stone bead of amber (*Inv.N.2.58.39*). Three pieces.
4. Sea shell (cowrie) beads (*Inv.N.2.58.40*). Nine examples.

This combination is valued by gilded glass beads, because it is relatively rare in other places in Colchis. From categorical, aesthetic, or functional content, they reinforce the impression of

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<sup>254</sup> Identical blue glass beads are often found in a set suspended of incrustated, applied eye, striped, and monochrome bead categories. They occur intensively in Apushta cemetery graves 12, 19, and 22. Voronov 1982. Fig. 25.13,15; 27.15; 28.20. But it is more commonly found in various bead sets in Alrakhu cemetery graves dating to the 340-380 AD. See: Gunba 1978:11. Grave 3. Tabl.III.7,8.

<sup>255</sup> The only case where they apply in appreciable numbers is Apushta cemetery grave 8 of the early- 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is the longest necklace composed of 145 identical pieces and 317 various bead categories. Voronov 1982:53. Pic. 23, 35. Later version found in grave 3 of the same cemetery, produces an increased amount of 378 different pieces.

<sup>256</sup> A woman with impressive jewellery and silver fasteners was evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 45. Trapsh 1971:71-72. Tabl.XXIII.19-29.

two separate jewellerys (**Fig. 18. A-B**). Typologically, it shows the transition from late 4<sup>th</sup> to late 5<sup>th</sup> century. This is an important baseline.

The combination spectrum is remarkable, as an identical comparison is absent. A synchronic appearance reveals rounded variants of gilded beads and seashells within early and mid-imperial female jewellery of Apsilia. However, multisession parts assisting the Olginskoe necklaces are later and longer-circulated variants. This may increase the date of the necklaces to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. This may also support the date of the associated rock crystal bead.

From the amount, gilded beads offer perspective for a short 30-cm necklace, without assistance of any other categories (**Fig. 18**). The combination of rounded and two-piece ovoid variants is rare and seen within the spectrum of 4th century short and long necklaces in upland Apsilia.<sup>257</sup> Similarly occasional is their combination with amber categories that are found among the rich female graves of central Apsilia.<sup>258</sup> The combination with rock crystal (or rounded carnelian beads) is unusual. Despite the gap of such practice, theoretically, it could indicate a re-threaded necklace, fashioned with a rock crystal bead in the centre in slightly later years, as the chronological spectrum and categories of gilded beads gives a perspective for individual transportation of earlier pieces and individually composed necklaces. In addition, identical collections of at least twenty gilded beads are seldom evidenced before the late 5<sup>th</sup> century (dimensions are 1.2 cm diameter and 1 mm threadhole), such that later finds are considered to be early 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>259</sup> Also, chronologically, the associated rock crystal bead is a later variant of a type that may confirm the combination perspective to be after 450 AD, when the entire set of Olginskoe necklaces could be updated.

It should be noted that there is a functional association of amber beads with female clothing that was often practised in Apsilia from 360 or 370 AD. This might suggest decorative beads as well, sewn onto clothes with frontal displays or as button fasteners (detailed in Chapter IV. 4.1.4).

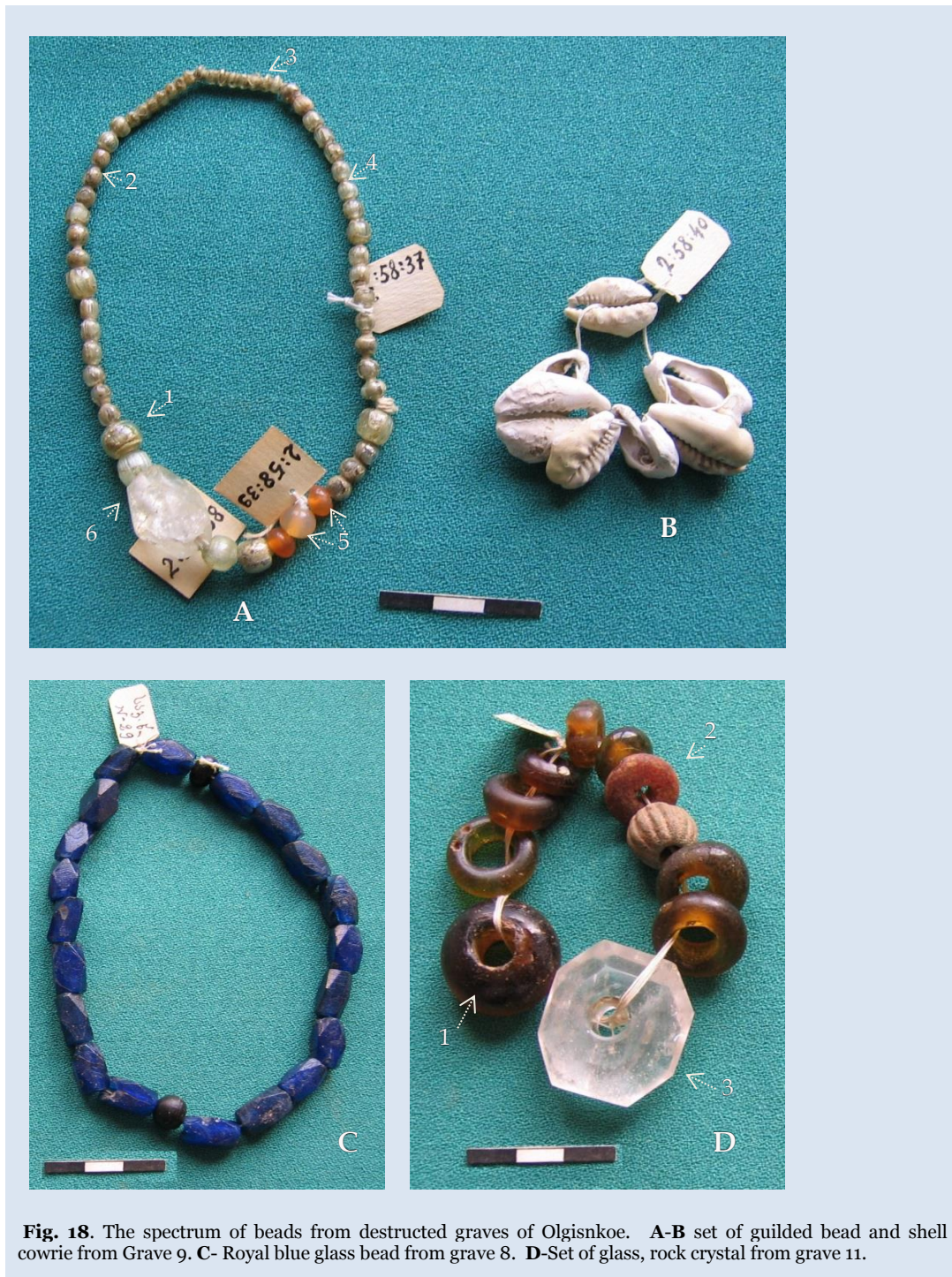
Due to the other cowrie shells, they might be related to the gilded necklace, since no similar context of identical combinations is available in the entire Colchis region. They were observed together with two- or three-sectioned gilded pieces in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century areal

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<sup>257</sup> It is evidenced in Apushta cemetery female grave 35. Voronov 1982:67. Pic.31, 29, 32, 33, 35, 38.

<sup>258</sup> The neckless of the Abgidzrakhu female is dominated by small rounded variants of amber beads (grave 7). Trapsh 1971:28. Tabl.IV.15-17.

<sup>259</sup> The latest set, which is considered to new neckless category, was found in the early-6<sup>th</sup> century female grave 11 of Tsebelda fort cemetery. It suspended of thirteen identical bead types, except the multisession. See: Voronov, Bgashba, Shenka, Loginov. 1989:11, Pic.6,13.



**Fig. 18.** The spectrum of beads from destructed graves of Olgisnkoe. **A-B** set of gilded bead and shell cowrie from Grave 9. **C**- Royal blue glass bead from grave 8. **D**-Set of glass, rock crystal from grave 11.

graves.<sup>260</sup> Such combinations sometimes consist not only of carnelian beads, but of decorated paste beads as well.<sup>261</sup> Comparison data occasionally shows them with amber beads,

<sup>260</sup> The earliest discovery relates to Abgidzakhu high social class women in grave 7, where it was found in pairs. Trapsh 1971:78.Tabl.IV,4,5.

<sup>261</sup> The neckless from Abgidzrakhu cemetery (grave 7) is suspended of 30 examples of gilded beads (Trapsh 1971:28.Pl. IV.7). Another sample from a 4<sup>th</sup> century Lar grave 3 was combined with a carnelian beads. Voronov 1982:34.Pic.14.10,12. The rest 3<sup>rd</sup> –4<sup>th</sup> century necklaces from Bat (grave 5) and Apushta (graves 1,33) cemeteries are not much different. Voronov 1982:48,63. This category of bead continues to exist into the early-5<sup>th</sup> century (Apushta grave 22). Voronov 1982.

recognising later practices of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>262</sup> If we consider the symbolic meaning of cowrie as a protective amulet object, it does not exclude the assistance of any bead categories used at this time in daily life.<sup>263</sup> However, the increased amount does not exclude Olginskoe shell beads worn as separate necklaces or bracelets as well.

Therefore, the chronological spectrum gives a combination perspective for either two different individually composed necklaces, or a single gilded necklace and bracelet of cowrie shells. Most of the components obtained are from the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, which may guide the chronology of the Olginskoe necklace. Much earlier dates to achieve the shell beads suggest late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century. For sure, these are imported objects entering into the area through trade over the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**GRAVE 11.** The context of surviving objects seen in Grave 11 is not precisely predictable for assessing the gender of the owner (**Fig. 19; Tables 19; 19a**). They provide part of clothing fasteners, stone and glass jewellery, all in all 22 item types. Dress attire extends to six objects, comprising fibulae and buckles. Jewellery includes one pendant, one bracelet, 17 beads, and one asymmetric metal wire expected as either an earring or head covering accessory. They are:

1. Fibula – Coil-bended undecorated bow fibula (*Inv.N.2.58.43. Type I.*).
2. Fibula – Slightly distinguished cross headed bow fibula (*Inv.N.2.58.44. Type II, Variant I.*).
3. Fibula – Sharply distinguished cross headed bow fibula (*Inv.N.2.58.45. Type II.*).
4. Buckle – Zoomorphic (*Inv.N.2.58.50.*).
5. Bracelet – Simple rounded (*Inv. N.2.58.46*)
6. Buckle – Oval loop buckle (*Inv. N.2.58.47.*).
7. Buckle – Circular ring buckle (*Inv. N.2.58.51.*).
8. Ringlet – Flattened (*Inv. N.2.58.49.*).
9. Ringlet – Ribbed (*Inv. N.2.58.52.*).
10. Plate – Silver (*Inv.N.2.58.48.*).
11. Earring – Oval (*Inv.N.2.58.53.*).
12. Carnelian gem – Oval (*Inv. N. 2.58.54.*).
13. Bead – Rock crystal (*Inv.N.2.58.55.*).
14. Bead – Incrusted with green glass (*Inv.N.2.58.56-a.*) 6 pieces.
15. Bead – Incrusted with blue glass (*Inv.N.2.58.56-b.*) 4 pieces.
16. Bead – Blue and incrusted (*Inv.N.2.58.56-d.*).
17. Bead – Blue incrusted with red and pale blue glass drops (*Inv.N.2.58.56-a.*).
18. Bead – Royal blue white striped (*Inv.N.2.58.56-e.*) 1 piece.
19. Bead – Black with applied green dots (*Inv.N.2.58.56-f.*) 1 piece.
20. Bead – Royal blue with pale blue incrustation (*Inv.N.2.58.56-a.*) 1 piece.

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<sup>262</sup> Evidenced also in the 5<sup>th</sup> century Alrakhu grave 6 (later cross shape fibulae determines it). Trapsh 1971:112. Pic.XLIII,4.

<sup>263</sup> Their might be used for protective purposes against the sterility, ensuring fertility, and warding off the 'evil eye'. See: Amir Golani, 2013:71.

21. Bead – Black with pinched surface (*Inv.N.2.58.56-a*)
22. Beads – Brownish colour and ring-shaped (*Inv.N.2.58*). 6 pieces.
23. Beads – Greenish colour and ring-shaped (*Inv.N.2.58*) 1 piece.
24. Beads – Brownish colour and flower-shaped (*Inv. N. 2.58.*) 1 piece.

This assemblage has a quite heterogeneous character and is confusing from a chronological and gender perspective. The major problem of this grave context is the appearance of the earliest dated objects, like a 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century iron bracelet, the zoomorphic fastener, and a silver pendant which remains disbanded (**Fig.19. 6**). They give an anomalous character to this grave content. Another problem indicated in the male practicing buckle, usually associated with a military belt and warrior graves. This is an unusual combination for the accompanying female jewellery. Beyond the chronology, the zoomorphic fastener presents fewer difficulties, being supportive for both genders. The disparity between the various preserved items is hard to assign to the same grave complex and to qualify the gender of the individual buried in Olginskoe Grave 11. It obviously gives a feeling of originating from two intermingled male and female graves, but there is no direct or indirect sign for such features or intercut being recorded in the protocol. We may also speculate on the conversion value of the earliest objects, perhaps meaningfully reconciling the family memorial. There is no other alternative explanation to this case. In fact, chronologically significant informants are female-indicative objects to identify the last possible owner of the provided offerings, where the youngest incrustrated representatives of necklaces are easily recognised as an early medieval jewellery class. This might be evidence for the life period of the owner and implication for her as a social middle-class female. Objects are selected to construct and maintain gender relations, which are separately detailed below.

#### *FEMALE RELATED OBJECTS*

Female predictive objects include beads, pendants, bracelets,, and possible earrings or head cover accessories, with the beads perhaps functioning as necklaces. For dress attire, two different coil-bended and cast fibulae types (*Type I, Type II, Variant 2*) are associated with female clothing. They give an image of how four local fibulae supported the female dress in different parts. They reveal the lack of continuity and chronological difference considering the mid-Roman and early Byzantine periods.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> It evidenced also in female grave 9 of Tserkovni hill cemetery. Voronov, Jushin 1971.



**Possible Neckless (-es).** The Olginskoe female wore quite an impressive set of imported glass and stone beads (**Fig.18.D; Table 19a. B**). Typologically, it was composed of at least 28 pieces of varying monochrome and polychrome variants of glass beads. First, it consists of a flower shape and variously formed glass ring-shaped beads of brownish colour. The second category demonstrates three differently incusted types, three variously dotted variants, and one striped hemispheric paste bead. The rest are stone beads including rock crystal and sardonyx. Chronologically they are varying types and look different from Apsilian necklaces that are usually composed of identical pieces, but the disturbed nature of Grave 11 could be a factor resulting in quite a mixed item context. Therefore, this case makes it difficult to judge them as a composition of the same set or of two different necklaces.

Selected categories show the transition of the late Roman phase into the early Medieval, which is an important baseline. The combination schema has been supported by comparison from Abgidzrakhu and Akhacharkhu, but an identical typological set (even from the amount) is not evidenced either in the area or beyond. The combination of monochrome beads suspended by rock crystal and carnelian beads show the spectrum of the necklaces of 380–450 AD. Paying attention to chronologically, the rarest components such as the pinched bead of brown glass, blue paste bead with coloured dots and white striped paste beads, seem to be last additions of 440 or 450–500 AD, pointing to an early Medieval set. Therefore, the Akhacharkhu necklace gives a perspective for the combination of all three following types only from 450–500 AD: blue paste bead with coloured dots, brown glass bead in flower shape, and surface pinched types.<sup>265</sup> The Abgidzrakhu necklace, probably of the same years, integrates the brown glass pinched bead, white striped blue paste bead, as well as the incusted mosaic beads and the ring-shaped brown glass beads.<sup>266</sup> All these categories show a pattern of synchronic existence after 440 or 450 AD. This could be a helpful argument for an early medieval date, probably around 450–500 AD. Since the chronological spectrum agrees with suspending categories threaded in a single row, it does not exclude a necklace as long as it is approximately 50 cm. Their separate threading in two different shorter necklaces is also

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<sup>265</sup> Another version from area representing a set of following beads: polyhedral royal blue glass, several gilded glass pieces, an elongated glass, amber and two distinctive rock crystal beads (Shamba 1970:68. Tabl.XI). The rock crystal beads are identical to both variants of Olginskoe.

<sup>266</sup> Abgidzrakhu necklace from the grave 30 defines by cylindrical polyhedral beads of royal blue colour and a gilded single-piece variant. Trapsh 1971:49-51. Tabl.XIII.31. The identical set of all five categories represents Achacharkva neckless, from the inhumation grave 28. A wide spectrum of other beads was also found here. Shamba 1970:51-52, 68. Tabl.XI.

possible.<sup>267</sup> The damaged condition of the grave does not permit further conclusions about the nature of the necklace(s).

The beads show different origins. Most of them, including eye, striped, or incrustrated pieces and faience, together with carnelian stone beads, are imports, probably from the Near East. Some are associated with Asian products including rock crystal, faience from Egypt, and carnelian beads of Indian nature.

Functionally, they might hang at the chest similarly to comparisons in the area. Such necklace types are rare and exclusively worn by the females of Mramba and Apushta areas. Interestingly, they appear in graves with similar cross-headed fasteners as in Olginskoe.

*PENDANT.* In Grave 11, there also remains two disbanded metal parts and one carnelian gem thought to be related to the same pendant. All three are proportionally and morphologically appropriate components and allow for speculation as to its 'original' form. The rounded silver plate remaining intact with a weight of 0.6 g most probably functioned as a base for the decorative gemstone (**Fig. 19. 6a**; XRF). From the shape, it matches the item that was hanging. The carnelian might be set on the silver plate (**Fig. 19. 6b**),<sup>268</sup> supported by a third component above that represents an asymmetric bronze ring of semi-circular section (**Fig. 19. 6c.**; XRF see in Append. E). It is 1.3 cm in length and of a dark red shade. The third component is thought to be a supportive ring made of narrow wire of semi-circular section, ribbed on the surface and forming a 2 cm diameter, 0.7 g in weight. This may have helped retain the stone or support other decorative parts as well, which could be lacing. It was found broken in two parts.

All three construct a similar view of a few round pendants distributed in Apsilia from 170–270 AD,<sup>269</sup> but from the typo-chronological characteristic of the carnelian gemstone, it might be a later production from 420–450 AD. If pendants actually display this composition, it may belong to the rarest circular pendants found in the area. It might be worn separately or together with the accompanying necklace. Another alternative for the gemstone could be as a decorative component for fibulae, but none of the associated fibulae show any traces of such decoration.

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<sup>267</sup> Necklaces of 380-400 AD are often representing the combination of incrustrated categories with such monochrome bead types as flower, ring shape and also with eye beads (Abgidzraku cemetery grave 46). Trapsh 1971:73. Tabl.XXIV.

<sup>268</sup> Such gems are also found as decorative part of fasteners in Apsilia. But none of the Olginskoe fibulae has a suitable head for this gem, or any indication for gem adornment.

<sup>269</sup> Example comes from the Abgidzrahu grave 37. Trapsh 1971:59. Tabl.XVII.11-15.

*BRACELET.* This female seems to have also owned an iron bracelet, which has survived in three broken fragments (**Fig. 19. 1; Table 19,11; Table 19a, 1**). It is made of rounded section wire and measured 6 cm diameter. From its characteristics, it is most typical of those circulated from 380–450 AD. This type was one of the most common interregional types of simple bracelets. From its value, similar bracelets were worn by most of the middle social class women of the area. Beyond Colchis, they are evidenced in northern areas.<sup>270</sup>



**Fig. 19. Particular metal objects from destroyed grave 11 of Olginskoe cemetery.** 1-Iron Bracelet. 2-Bronze buckle (?). 3-Bronze wire. 4-fragment of buckle. 5-bronze wire with ribbed surface. 6-Disbended components of pendant.

<sup>270</sup> Djurso grave 292. Mastykova 2009:285. Pl.56.2.

*HEAR/HEADCOVER ASSESSOR*. There is one more open bronze ring that is associated with the female jewellery category (*Inv.N. 2.58.53*). Graphically, it is composed of a rounded wire that is thickened in three parts: the middle and at both ends (**Fig. 19. 3. Table 19. 8; Table 19a. 2**). Proportionally, it measures 5 cm in diameter (see XRF in **Appen. E**). Such modelling is not featured on any ringlets from Apsilia, therefore no direct examples are known for a functional understanding.

All four indirect comparisons of similar groups without closure are typologically helpless objects, but they appear in single graves and their placement at the temple may functionally relate either with temple rings or head cover accessories.<sup>271</sup> Therefore, the morphological (both thickened ends) and proportional characteristics of the Olginskoe variant may easily link with temple, head, or head cover accessory types throughout the archaeological results.<sup>272</sup> It's also possible the single appearance in Grave 11 does not go against such contexts. It is difficult to precisely judge its function and how it was worn, but obviously it is not an areal or regional component for clothing or jewellery adornment, which comes into fashion in only a few socially distinguishable female's clothing from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>273</sup> Another remarkable feature is their low dynamic during the two hundred years of their circulation. A good reason for ignorance or limitation could be the choice of local decorative fibulae that had been more frequently used for head cover fastening purposes.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 1. 2 Male defining grave**

*Male relative objects*. The other two buckle categories and one fibula are definitely assigned to the male outfit, indicating the male gender of their owner. They suggestively support not only the male dress, which might be pinned at the waist, but also the belts attached either with sword or sax (**Fig. 19. 4; Tables 19a. 11; 29b. A**). Such a character is indicative of a male owner. Each object is detailed in a related chapter.

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<sup>271</sup> Each was made of rounded wire and can be used as nostril jewellery or a single earring. They came into fashion probably around the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>272</sup> Similar bronze ringlets have been observed to be worn by few women in Apsilia and attach possible head-cover or decorative textiles at the temple area. They are made of 3 mm rounded wire, 1.2 x 1.5 cm in diameter (Abgidzrakhu cemetery female grave 15). Trapsh 1971:38. Tabl.IX.7.

<sup>273</sup> For understanding of clothing practices in Apsilia see Baghaturia-Kner 2012:231. Tabl.VIII.1.

**Possible male grave.** The general character of the surviving weapons is merely representative for a warrior grave, able to clearly define the male owner. They come from Grave 10, which is detailed below.

**GRAVE 10.** Two distinct spear types and the handle of storage ware is all that remains from the offered items (**Tables 18; 18a**). The pottery is unrecognisable. Weapons are not estimated to be of high value, but are important in being able to recognise the types and quality of its owner. They are comprised of:

1. Spearhead of triangular shape (*Inv.N.2.58.42*).
2. Head of a leaf-shaped lance (*Inv.N.2.58.41*).
3. Handle of a big ware

Both weapon types indicate a spearman skilled in distance combat. The typological spectrum makes it remarkable that both were used at the same time. They remain corroded yet intact. The context of the find suggests light equipped lancers.

**Triangular spear head.** This spear is defined by an iron blade of narrow triangular shape with concave edges (*Inv.N.2.58.42*. **Tables 18. 1; 18a. 1**). Along the blade there is a slightly pronounced rounded and thickened midrib of rounded section. This feature gives it a mid-imperial association. The short and massive socket shows further development. Proportionally, its total length of 27 cm and blade length of 20 cm makes it a bigger variant of its type. Pure survival condition is seen in the corroded and intact blade, but certain damage seen in the lower part could be a result of usage in battle.

Typologically, it corresponds to Type 2 (28) of Voronov's classification, dated to the 4th century,<sup>274</sup> but similar comparisons may be helpful to achieve a broad date. The slightly developed rounded and thickened long midrib links it with the type appearing in 340–360 AD,<sup>275</sup> but its narrow triangular blade and slightly sloping shoulders defines it from those samples seen before 350 or 360 AD. The long and rounded midrib with a massive socket is also a distinctive pattern from the later triangular narrow bladed variants of 370 AD.<sup>276</sup> These specifics may distinguish the Olginskoe example as a transitional, appearing probably in 350 or 360–370 AD.

Such spears are generally concentrated in central Apsilia, areas of the Machara river basin in Apiancha, and Abgidzrakhu cemeteries. All finds relate to light equipped spearmen skilled

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<sup>274</sup> Voronov, Shenkao 1982:124. Pl.2, 29

<sup>275</sup> Akhacharkhu cemetery grave 14. Shamba 1970.Tabl.VII.3

<sup>276</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 12. Gunba 1978:22. XII.6

in distance fighting. This proves its functional usage, suggesting active weapons. Beyond Apsilia, there are also two similar spears from eastern Georgia revealed in Dedoplistskaro.<sup>277</sup>

**Leaf shape lance.** The second weapon is structurally distinctive due to its shortly formed iron blade in a leaf shape, which is flattened (**Tables** 18. 2; 18a. 2). The soldered edges provide a typologically significant nature with rounded and sharply sloping shoulders, revealing a late imperial variant character. The thickened midrib reaching closer to the tip is also a typological marker. The socket is long, widened and open, which gives an understanding of the shaft reaching into the blade. Proportionally, the surviving total length is 23 cm, with 13 cm blade length and 1.3–3.8 cm width, making it considered as a smaller variant.

Typologically it may correspond to the *Type I (Variant 2)* of Voronov's classification, dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>278</sup> Earlier variants have been classified by Kazanski into the *Type I* and determined by the earlier Stage I (170/200 up to 260 or 270 AD).<sup>279</sup> Certain specifics of the Olginskoe lance are recognised in the shape of the blade, applied shoulders, tip shape, and proportional aspect, which are chronologically distinguishable features helpful for broad classification.

An identical comparison is not found for this example, but there are some closer variants from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century graves of Apsilia.<sup>280</sup> The short formation of the blade distinguishes the Olginskoe example from earlier ovoid leaf-shaped variants circulated before 340 AD,<sup>281</sup> but the slightly soldered lower blade defined from the socket and narrowing to the tip is a new feature, showing that the blade underwent a change in the following years because such samples are seen in 340–380 AD.<sup>282</sup> Proportionally, it is also a rare pattern. The short blade with a shortened midrib and a much longer extended socket also differs from later variants observable after 380 AD, which lasted until 440 AD.<sup>283</sup> However, all listed specifics defining the Olginskoe example from earlier and later variants suggests a transitional variant, which developed during the probable years 340–370 or 380 AD. Similar types are evidenced in pairs

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<sup>277</sup> Gagoshidze I. 2004:124.

<sup>278</sup> Voronov's classification is based more on general forms, rather than nuances and dimensions. But it gives the perspective of distinguishing proportional variants. See: Voronov, Shenkao 1982:124. Pl.2, 13.

<sup>279</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.30.

<sup>280</sup> A distribution area of this type is limited by the Machara River basin. Only a few samples are found inside the Tsebelda fortress. Earliest variants are evidenced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century graves of Abgidzrakhu (graves 3,11) and Apiancha (grave 36) cemeteries. Gunba 1978.pl.XI, 4. pl.XXXIII, 6. In most cases, they are thrust into the graves (Akhatsarakhu grave 11).

<sup>281</sup> It was found single and thrust in the cremation grave 3 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971:24.Tabl.II,10.

<sup>282</sup> Abgidzrakhu graves 35, Aukhuamakhu grave N11. Trapsh M., 1971:96, Pl. XXXVI, 8. The latest discovery associates to the Tsebelda fort grave 1–75. Voronov, Shenkao 1982 .Pl. 11.4.

<sup>283</sup> Similar types to Olginskoe found also in pairs, but they do not apply graves later than 440 AD. Later variants are proportionally distinct by 22–24 cm length, 2. 4–5.2 cm width and 2 cm socket diameter.

from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. In most cases they are thrust in graves. Similar types are evidenced in pairs from late 4<sup>th</sup> century. In most cases they are thrust in graves.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 1. 3 Typo-chronological spectrum of survival jewelry and fasteners**

##### **IV. 2. 3. 1. 3. 1 Jewellery**

If we additionally look at the typo-chronological spectrum of each suspended piece of Olginskoe necklaces from the destructed graves, they are selected in three main categories according to their material: colour, technological or decorative properties, and related types. It comprises 54 glass, 21 paste, three mountain rocks, two amber, two jets, three sardonyx, nine shell beads. However, some appear in individual pieces. There is no compositional or combination standard observable within this collection. Chronologically, there are distinct types.

Functionally most are components of short necklaces or long collars without enclosures. They are dominated by glass beads. Sardonyx pieces shaped into a gemstone are used as pendant decoration, but certain types of amber beads are more prominently multifunctional and often function as a button for fastening the female dress.

##### ***GLASS BEADS***

Olginskoe cemetery provided more than 60 glass beads. The general identifier is manufacturing features based on colourless, one colour, and multicolour beads. Decorative and morphological differences give understanding of distinct production centres. The three main categories of their materials, representing glass (*Categories I, II*), stone (*Category III*) and shell (*Category IV*) beads, became the basis of their selection and further examination. Their location in the female breast area together with other bead categories may evidence their jewellery function.

**Category I. Group 1, Monochrome glass beads.** This group introduces two distinct morphologic types: rounded and cylindrical. They come from different graves and are similarly distinctive in colours, producing royal blue and yellowish brown. Chronologically, they belong to the late Roman bead categories, but some continue into the early Byzantine phase.

**TYPE 1, Royal Blue Beads.** This type is evidenced in Olginskoe Grave 8 and appears in twenty samples (*Inv.N.2.58.35*). All are intact pieces. Typologically, they are a polyhedral cylindrical shape, four-sided and with 14-cut surface design (**Table 32. 8; Table 33. 26**). The royal blue colour applies a dark shade. Proportionally, they are small variants providing 1.6 cm length, 1.2 cm overall diameter and 6 mm threadhole diameter.<sup>284</sup> Chronologically, they are the longest circulated type, seen from 330 or 340 AD until the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The highest dynamic is observable from 400–450 AD.

This type is attested in a few central Apsilian cemeteries from the beginning of the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. They are evidenced in individual pieces, not exceeding more than five. Corresponding small necklaces from the cemeteries of Mramba and Tsebelda are composed of similar glass pearls of various colours,<sup>285</sup> but the incusted bead categories composing the Tsebelda version have a distinct combination.<sup>286</sup> The late 4<sup>th</sup> century set sees a little increase in the collection with 109 different beads.

Interest is drawn to the fact that this type becomes a part of quite long necklaces of upland Apsilian female jewellery from the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. Necklaces found in the upland parts are defined by combination schema and amount. They prove a distinct combination of polyhedral royal blue beads within the set of silvered or gilded pearls and small carnelian beads,<sup>287</sup> but in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century it appears together with at least twelve different bead categories, wherein the shorter necklace is dominated by blue colour beads and combined with carnelian pearls.<sup>288</sup> The longest set of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, worn by an Apushta female, exclusively consists 145 examples of identical pieces.<sup>289</sup> It includes 317 various beads.

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<sup>284</sup> Distinctive dimensions of bigger variants are 8 mm height and 2.5 mm in diameter (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 48). See: Trapsh 1971:76. Tabl. XXVI.9.

<sup>285</sup> Mramba necklaces are short. Only one longer necklace stands out from an elite female grave of around 360–380 AD (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 45). It was assisted also with a golden bead that represented an exclusive import in Colchis at the time. Trapsh 1971:71-72. Tabl. XV, 18-20.

<sup>286</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:59. Pic. 99.20

<sup>287</sup> Bat cemetery grave 5. Voronov 1982:42. Pic. 18.25.

<sup>288</sup> Apushta cemetery graves 1 and 3. Voronov 1982:48. Pic. 21.23. The longest collar from grave 3 is suspended of 109 pieces of various shape blue glass beads and 2 carnelian beads. Voronov 1982:51. Pic. 22.14.

<sup>289</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 8. This necklace suspended of eighteen categories of beads, but dominated by 317 blue glass beads. Other components are: 145 pieces of Olginskoe *Type 1*, 144 pieces of round shape blue glass, 4 pieces of sub-biconic blue glass, 11 pieces of rounded two-section and 3 four-section blue glass, 8 pieces of prismatic (1) and basket (4) shape brownish beads; as well as 4 pieces of various drop shape beads: one greenish colour and a gilded single corn. Paste beads



This type is seldom evidenced among the elite graves of Apsilia. Beyond the study area, similar versions are known from the Eastern Georgian cemeteries.<sup>290</sup> Further finds are considered with north Caucasia, connecting the way of their penetration from Kislawodsk to Dagestan in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century and later the lower Koban in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>291</sup>

**TYPE 2, Yellowish-brown Glass Beads.** This type exhibits a larger compositional group and is evidenced in nine samples in Grave 11 (**Table 32.** 13-14; **Table 33.** 18-23). The overall view demonstrates rounded and flowered types and other further definable variants (*Inv.N.2.58.35*). All of them show the translucent property of glass with a dominant brown colour, but variant types produce variations of brownish and greenish shades. Each of them is practiced within the late Roman long collar, extending up to 30 beads and integrating identical types provided by the Olginskoe cemetery. They appear in a few graves.

**Sub-Type 1: Ring shape.** Seven beads are defined with a basic ring shape, but some rounded and variously thickened variants give ground for distinction. The colours produced are two different shades, either yellowish or greenish. They are typical pieces of the later phase of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and rarely appear in more than two pieces in one grave. Proportionally, they have an external diameter of 1.3–1.6 cm and an internal diameter of 0.7–0.9 cm. Comparisons confirms them to be a small compositional group.

**Variant A.** This variant is defined by its simple ring shape and distinctive olive-greenish shade (**Table 33.** 22). It shows a rare form of the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century beads from the area and seems to occur earlier than *Variant B*. Identical samples are rare and briefly distributed. It is evidenced in three necklaces of Mramba female.<sup>292</sup>

**Variant B.** This variant differs by a dark brownish colour and a little thickened ring (**Table 33.** 23). Proportionally, the biggest sample produced has a 15 mm overall diameter and 7 mm threadhole diameter. It seems to be a later representative within this category and the rarest component of Mramba necklace seen from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century in Apsilia.<sup>293</sup>

**Variant C.** The case of more thickened ring is illustrated by two distinctive samples (**Table 33.** 18, 20). The first one, producing a light brown colour, is a smaller sample formed with 1.5 cm overall diameter and 0.5 cm threadhole diameter. Another, slightly darker one has

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are also assisted, in which distinguishes: black with white-red lined bead, yellow drops (1), blue with light or white-black lined and a red bead. Combined stone beads are such as amber (2) and carnelian beads (2). Voronov 1982:53. Pic.23.35.

<sup>290</sup> Samtavro cemetery graves 2 and 4. See Ivashenko M 1980, Sulava N 1996:22, Tabl.18, Kat. 44.

<sup>291</sup> The Collective tomb 10 of the Lermntovskaja Shkala 2 in Kislovodsk. Another example from Dagestan is attested in the tomb Palasa-Syrt. See Kazanski 2007:59. It also appears in Pashkovsky cemetery of lower Kuban. See also Deopic.1959:64.

<sup>292</sup> Similar beads occur in Alrakhu cemetery grave 6. But it shows a limited spectrum of suspended beads, including brownish-blue glass pearl, an incrust mosaic bead (red incrust with green glass) and three identical samples of rock crystal with narrow desk. Gunba 1978:15, Tabl.VI.12. Other three samples appear in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 30. Trapsh 1971:49-51. Tabl.XIII,11.

<sup>293</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 30. Trapsh 1971:49-51. Tabl.XIII,19.

an overall diameter of 1.4 cm and 0.6 cm threadhole diameter. Chronologically, both are suggested to be the earliest variants of this type, observable from 380–450 AD within the set of Mramba female necklace.<sup>294</sup> This shows that such categories appear in the last twenty years of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and early 5<sup>th</sup> century. They are always found as individual pieces.

**Variant D.** The morphological distinction of this variant is seen in the most thickened parts of the ring, giving it an asymmetric shape (**Table 33. 21**). The colour is light brown. Proportionally, it represents a smaller variant. This could be the latest exclusive representative of this type. Identical comparison could not be found.

Comparisons prove that except for Variant C, they are all components of the early 5th century jewellery of the Mramba female, but similar to Olginskoe, all four variants appear within the collection of Abgidzrakhu necklaces.<sup>295</sup> This shows later practices and how this type became in use together with incusted, eye glass beads, amber, and rock crystal types. They finally disappeared in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century.

**Sub-Type 2: Flower Shape.** This type is an individual example of a glass bead specified with a flowered form and producing a dark brown colour (**Table 33. 24**). The size has an overall maximum diameter of 15 mm (minimum 13 mm) and a threadhole diameter of 6 mm, compared with a smaller variant. It is a briefly circulated type evidenced from 380 up to 400 or 420 AD.

From its colour, the Olginskoe sample is an exclusive variant of this type, but there are occasional finds from Apsilia made of green colour with which similar comparisons can be made. Due to very limited appearances only two cemeteries in Apsilia are considered: the Alrakhu and Akhacharkhu. The late 4<sup>th</sup> century Alrakhu necklace produces a green variant of this type combined with various monochrome beads of brown colour, polyhedral (14-cut) blue glass, and rounded amber beads.<sup>296</sup> The Akhacharkhu set has a much shorter necklace suspended by a collection of later beads, giving perspective to the later sets of years 400–450 or 460.<sup>297</sup> Therefore, both compressions drive the suggested chronology of *Subtype 2* to 380–450 or 460 AD.

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<sup>294</sup> Both appeared in a collection of beads including amber types, incusted, and eye beads, a flower-shaped blue glass types (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 46). Trapsh 1971:73. Tabl.XXIV,18. The darker version is evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 55. Trapsh 1971. Tabl.XXXII,9.

<sup>295</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 30. Trapsh 1971:50. Tabl.XIII.11-1

<sup>296</sup> Alrakhu cemetery grave 3 (an assisted bow fibula allows the grave to be dated by 340–380 AD). Gunba 1978:12. Tabl.III,12.

<sup>297</sup> Akhacharkhu cemetery female inhumation grave 28. Her collar differs with suspended spectrum of: button shape carnelian bead, mountain rock crystal beads with wider and narrow desk, several incrust and monochrome beads of hemispheric and polyhedral shape. Shamba 1970. Tabl.XI,21.

**Sub-Type 3: Surface Pinched.** The bead is made from a paste of dark brown colour. The surface is smooth but pinched (**Table 33. 25**). It has a 0.86 cm overall diameter and 0.4 cm threadhole diameter.

It is an occasional type with a brief circulation in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. Both finds from Apsilia consider two distinctive long necklaces from Mramba and Apushta that seem to appear in the years 450–500. The Mramba version shows the combination of faceted mountain rock (with narrow desk), polyhedral blue glass, ring beads of green colour, several transparent glass pearls and stripped bead.<sup>298</sup> The Apushta version is a smaller necklace that shows a distinct combination of carnelian, dotted paste beads, and incrustrated types like wavy and striped.<sup>299</sup> Functionally, they are part of the jewellery adorned chest area of females.

**Category II, Group 2, Polychrome glass beads.** This group includes technologically distinctive beads made by transparent and paste glass. *Type 1* represents gilded variants and introduces the folding technique. A further technological distinction among them is also seen at the sharp edges, resulting in broad subtypes. *Subtype 1* are single rounded segments. The *Subtypes 2* and *3* introduce an entirely channelled form. Both seem to be manufactured by heating the glass paste around the stick and melting on either applied eyes or stripes.

**TYPE 1: Gilded beads.** Twenty glass beads with golden inlay are evidenced in Grave 9 (**Table 33. 1**). They are characterised by the transparency of good quality colourless glass, which is shaded by golden inlay. The inlaid golden inlay has recently shown different surviving qualities. Pearls vary in size and shape. The characteristic forms are rounded and ovoid, but presented as either single or segmented. Segmented pieces are shaped in two, three, or multisession shapes. This could be a matter of distinctive chronology and even fabrication, but they are associated with Egypt by origin. Therefore, they are classified into three subtypes and their broad variants. *Subtype 1* introduces rounded corns with two broad *variants A* and *B*. *Subtype 2* provides ovoid pieces and *Subtype 3* represents a multisession shape. The entire spectrum is analysed below.

**Sub-Type 1: Rounded Form.** This form comprises thirteen pearls and shows two broad variants, either single or segmented. Further distinction is recognised in the Hellenistic influences of the shapes.<sup>300</sup> Both are widely distributed and long-lived variants, found in most

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<sup>298</sup> Abgidzrakhu necklace consisted of 30 beads (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 30). Trapsh 1971:49-50. Tabl. XIII, 24.

<sup>299</sup> Apushta collar is composed of 9 beads and evidenced in gave which is possible to date by the 450/500-530 (Apushta cemetery grave 17). Voronov 1982:59. Pic.26.25.

<sup>300</sup> Such a rounded beads that aspherical canal is coiled to the end, are considered Hellenistic forms, which is typical for the Black Sea littoral. However, they continue to exist in 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century graves of Tanais, Olbia, Chersonesus and Gorgippia. See: Alekseeva 1975:32, type 20, tabl. 26-60. Alekseeva 1978:27-33.

parts of Apsilia. From the combination spectrum, *Variant A* is seldom evidenced with *Variant B* (only with three second rounded pearls).

***Variant A: Single corn.*** Single corn gilded pearls are provided in six samples (**Table 33. 1**). From the shape, size, and surface, two further versions are distinguished: four are rounded and two a little asymmetrical. Some single rounded versions with a slightly ribbed surface and an ovoid shape appear in a bigger size with 36 mm height and 10 mm diameter. They purely preserved the golden inlay. Comparison suggests this version as a follower of *Variant B* (segmented corns), appearing not earlier than the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>301</sup> This circulated longer, observable during the years 340–450. It is mostly found in areal graves as a single piece within a short collar. It is also seen as single within the early-4<sup>th</sup> century necklace set of decorated paste beads (eye, striped or wavy lines), polyhedral cylindrical (14-cut) royal blue glass, jet, and amber beads.<sup>302</sup> The latest appearance is in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century shortest necklace excluding jet and amber, but enriched with brownish glass beads of ring and tear shape.<sup>303</sup>

The other two are surface smoothed and much smaller versions showing higher quality. They have a height of 3 mm and a diameter of 6 mm. This version is seldom found and observable from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century in central Apsilia.<sup>304</sup> A little later, they most commonly occur in upland Apsilia, within the 5<sup>th</sup> century female jewellery.<sup>305</sup> From their high quality, such pieces are suggested to be either of Alexandrian<sup>306</sup> or Syrian production.<sup>307</sup>

Both versions of *Variant A* are observable until 450 AD, but they decrease from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. They have a few comparisons in the north, indicating synchronic distribution in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>308</sup> Other finds recorded in Pyatigorsk are also simultaneous with their later appearance in Colchis and almost similar with the eastern Black Sea littoral as well.<sup>309</sup>

***Variant B: Segmented corns.*** This variant is presented by seven different samples showing two- and three-piece segmentations. Five are sandwich corn versions with 7 mm

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<sup>301</sup> The earliest evidence comes from Bat cemetery grave 5 and Apushta cemetery 1. Voronov 1982:42, 48. Pic.18.12, 1.

<sup>302</sup> Such beads were worn generally by women of upland Apsilia. Similar version comes from early 4<sup>th</sup> century grave (Apushta cemetery inhumation grave 12). The second version is shorter necklace of probable years 330/340-370 (Apushta cemetery grave 9). Voronov 1982:56, 54. Pic.25,26; Pic.24.11. The only necklace of this type found in central Apsilia assigns later period 450-500 AD ( Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 14). Trapsh 1971.

<sup>303</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 26. Voronov 1982:62. Pic.28, 45.

<sup>304</sup> For the earliest finds, see Trapsh (1971:199) and Gunba (1978:98). The latest finds relate to the Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 14. Trapsh 1971:199; Gunba 1978:98. See also Maksimova 1948:242; Alekseeva 1978; Kisa 1908:242. 93-94.

<sup>305</sup> They are evidenced in the 4<sup>th</sup> (Bat cemetery grave 5, Apushta cemetery graves 8, 30) and the 5<sup>th</sup> century graves (Apushta cemetery graves 12,22). Voronov 1982:53, 63.

<sup>306</sup> Maksimova 1948:242; Alekseeva 1978; Kisa 1908:93, 94.

<sup>307</sup> Deopik 1958:56.

<sup>308</sup> They appear in North Caucasian graves in the Koban area, Kabardo, North and Samachablo/'South Oseti' and Dagestan. Deopik 1959.

<sup>309</sup> Also common in Crimea, complexes of Suuk-Su and Chufut Kale, but smoothed versions are few. Deopik 1959.

height, 6 mm diameter, and 5 mm threadhole (**Table 33. 2**). The other two versions appear segmented in three pieces and are formed either in rounded or ovoid shape (**Table 33. 3-4**). This variant shows coils in a spherical channel, but in some of the sandwich versions, the breaking points occur on both ends. This is an indication of the manufacturing process of breaking the glass rod, which is a chronologically significant trace. Generally, the rounded forms with coils in the spherical channel ends suggest Hellenistic forms typical for the Black Sea littoral.<sup>310</sup>

Both versions are rare and components of a short necklace composed of 20 beads, including small hemispheric carnelian beads (diameter 1.2 cm, threadhole diameter 1 mm). The earliest sandwich variant is seen in the elite graves of 2nd century Apsilia, in suspended collars made entirely of carnelian beads found in female graves of the Mramba area.<sup>311</sup> The latest combination of the early 4<sup>th</sup> century is primarily made of glass beads of hemispheric and elongated forms and combined additionally with dotted paste beads.<sup>312</sup>

Three-piece versions are observed after 340 AD, with the latest surface-ribbed samples of *Variant A* and within the schema of polyhedral royal blue beads, various monochrome glass pearls, and sardonyx types.<sup>313</sup> A later combination is distinct with early 5<sup>th</sup> century multiple beads.<sup>314</sup>

There is an ovoid form variant with 0.4 cm overall diameter and connected with a channel of 0.2 cm. They are made in various pieces, which show distinction in production details. This may indicate either differing workshops or the time of their production.

Areal comparison supports their combination with single corns of *Type I (Variant A)* from the earliest phase of their appearance in late 2<sup>nd</sup> century, when such forms are favourably worn by Mramba females in combination with carnelian and sardonyx types.<sup>315</sup>

Beyond Apsilia, they are evidenced in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century grave context of western and eastern Georgia.<sup>316</sup> Similar distributions from the Black Sea littoral are proven by several complexes in Tanais, Olbia, Chersoneses, and Gorgippia.<sup>317</sup> Throughout the late 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> See Alekseeva 1975:32, type 20, Tabl.26-60.

<sup>311</sup> Smaller versions of similar segmented beads (H. 4 mm, Dm 1 mm) are evidenced in Abgidzrakhu female grave 1. Others are identic sandwich pearls (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 7). Trapsh 1971:28. Tabl.IV. 15-17. Tabl. IV.7.

<sup>312</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 1. Voronov 1982:48. Pic. 21,25.

<sup>313</sup> It is evidenced in late 4<sup>th</sup> century graves of Bat (graves 5) and Apushta cemeteries. Voronov 1982:42, 62. Pic. 18, 33; Pic.2814.

<sup>314</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 22. Voronov 1982:62. Pic. 28.14

<sup>315</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery female grave 7. Trapsh 1971:28. Tabl.IV.7

<sup>316</sup> Kldeeti in the west and Samtavro in the east, are distinguished by this type of discovery. See Lomtadze G. 1954:57. Tabl. XVII-1; Ivashenko M 1980:28-29.

<sup>317</sup> Sandwich corns are quite common in 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century grave complexes of the northern Black Sea littoral. Alekseeva E., 1975:32. Tabl. 26, 59, 60; Alekseeva E., 1978:27-33. Tabl.26, 59-60. Type 20.

centuries they were frequently found in North Caucasia as well,<sup>318</sup> but their longest circulation during the 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century is observed in Ryazan-Oksk<sup>319</sup> and Ladoga.<sup>320</sup>

**Sub-Type 3: Multisection.** This type is defined by an eight-piece construction and presented in two samples (Table 33. 5). Both are similarly formed with 2 cm length, 6 mm diameter, and 2 mm channel diameter. They are the largest pieces of gilded glass necklace. It is occasional, and the latest type appears in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century necklace of central Apsilia. The Tsebelda necklace shows it in combination with silvered types (two 2- and 3-piece), amber categories, and several monochrome beads of brown and blue colours.<sup>321</sup> The fact that they occurred earlier in the western and eastern parts of Georgia<sup>322</sup> in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, and then a little later in the 4<sup>th</sup> century north Caucasian graves,<sup>323</sup> may suggest the path of their penetration. They are similarly evidenced in Ryazan-Oksk<sup>324</sup> and in Ladoga,<sup>325</sup> where they lasted until the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly, only one example puts the first grave groups of Borisowski in consideration.<sup>326</sup> It is further defined in Dagestan and Pyatigorsk to the south. Few come from Crimea,<sup>327</sup> and much earlier they are evidenced in other parts of the Black Sea littoral in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>328</sup> This does not exclude changes of their production centres.

***TYPE 2: Applied Doted.*** It appears in an individual piece and represents a thickened ring shape bead made from black opaque glass (Table 33. 9). Three single depressions on the surface where different coloured glass are added provide decoration of applied eyes. They are green opaque glass of different sizes applied on the surface. Proportionally, the 1.1 cm overall diameter and 0.5 cm threadhole diameter is identical with areal comparisons.

A sample identical to Olginskoe has not been found, but similar variants are known from the three mid-4<sup>th</sup> century grave contexts of Apushta cemetery in upland Apsilia. They are unlikely to have been made with applied eyes of yellow, pale blue, and white. It is uncertain if Olginskoe *Type 2* is just a further synchronic sample or a slightly later appearance. Two of them are quite a limited set showing assistance with single beads of carnelian, crisscrossed

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<sup>318</sup> They also found in Koban, Kabardo, Dagestan and Oseti. Deopik 1959.

<sup>319</sup> Efimenko 1947:67-68.

<sup>320</sup> Gurevich 1950:176.

<sup>321</sup> Three samples are evidenced in Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 11. Voronov, Bgazhba et al. 1989:11.

<sup>322</sup> It is also observed in the graves of Kldeeti and Samtavro. Lomtadize G. 1954:57. Tabl.XVII-1; Ivashenko M. 1980:28-29.

<sup>323</sup> Similar finds in the north: Koban region, Kabardo and Dagestan areas; a little south in: Pyatigorsk. See: Deopik 1959. But only one example occurs in Borisovski grave (Pokrovski M. 1936). They are also found in the 1<sup>st</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> century graves of Ryazan-Oksk (Efimenko 1947:67-68) and Ladoga (Gurevich 1950:176).

<sup>324</sup> Efimenko 1947:67-68.

<sup>325</sup> Gurevich 1950:176.

<sup>326</sup> Pokrovski 1936

<sup>327</sup> See graves of Suuk-Su and Chufut Kale. Deopik 1959.

<sup>328</sup> They evidenced in Tanais, Olvia and Chersoneses and Gorgipia. Alekseeva 1978:27-33.

stripes, and monochrome glass pearls, which may have been produced in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>329</sup> Another necklace with an increased spectrum illustrates it in combination with two big jet types of square and rounded form, four amber categories, a single piece of gilded glass bead, and two striped beads of earlier variant.<sup>330</sup> It seems to be a later combination of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, such beads finally disappeared after the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

***TYPE 3: Stripped.*** Only one bead appears with a striped design. It is made of royal blue translucent glass and formed in a spherical shape (**Table 33. 6**). In the middle part appear two proportionally distinctive stripes made from white paste. Their adjacent parts are well seen on the surface. It shows a polished surface. Proportionally it has a big size, standardised at 2.4 cm overall diameter and 0.9 cm threadhole diameter.

Similarly, horizontally striped beads with straight decorative lines of white colour are an occasional variant of this type of beads, seen in Apsilia after the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century and until the end of this century. It appears single and was used together frequently with monochrome beads of hemispheric, ring, and polyhedral types, combined with one incrust category.<sup>331</sup> This long necklace from Mramba is probably from 450–500 AD and is the best example of what necklaces they assisted.

***TYPE 4: Incrust.*** All members of this type are evidenced in Grave 11. They show the chronologically significant technological and decorative diversity of hemispheric and ovoid beads (**Table 33. 7-17**). Provided categories are dotted and linear. Other distinctions are reflected in the form and the types of decorative material. Correspondingly, they are classified into the two following subtypes and broad variants according to their decorative character. This could be indicative of manufacturing distinction as well. They show technological progress, imported in finished forms and perhaps as part of a necklace.

***Sub-Type 1: Dot incrustation.*** Beads incrust with dots are considered to be two distinctive decorative *Variants A* and *B*. Both are made from dark blue paste polished into the smooth surface and formed into a hemispherical shape, but the distinctive quality is visible. The size and shape of decorative dots, their denseness, and the overall proportion of beads also vary. All of this led to their classification into *Variants A* and *B*. It is impossible to follow the distinction in decorative materials because of the poor condition of the surviving *Variant A*. Both variants are rare finds. Their function is not arguable in Apsilia, as all are located on the chest area of the female body.

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<sup>329</sup> Apushta cemetery graves 31 and 33. Voronov 1982:64, 66. Pic.30,40; Pic31,16

<sup>330</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 12. Voronov 1982:56.pic.25,28

<sup>331</sup> This necklace belongs to Abgidzrakhu female (inhumation grave 30). It suspended of monochrome glass beads of various colour (green, yellowish-green, royal blue) and incrust beads of red paste. Trapsh 1971:49-51. Tabl.XIII.31.

**Variant A: With dense incrustated dots.** It has a low shape and a 1.4 cm decreased size overall with 5 mm of threadhole diameter (**Table 33. 8**). The colour is distinguished with a slightly light shade. The type of incrustation makes a densely covered surface with variously shaped dots apparent. Hardly visible traces of light blue glass particles seen in some incrustated parts may indicate surviving decorative material, but it is insufficient evidence to judge the entire decorative material. The size reveals similarities with areal comparisons, providing 2.5 cm overall diameter and 0.9 cm threadhole diameter.

This variant seems to be the earliest, rare variant distributed sparsely and briefly between possibly 340 AD to 380 or 400 AD. Morphologically similar examples from Mramba give images of possible decorative materials made of transparent glass of various colours. This primarily appears in a combination including mainly the amber beads and single pieces of incrustated or eye bead types, and monochrome glass in flower shape.<sup>332</sup> It seems to be an exclusive component of a necklace that can be found in the jewellery of socially prominent females in Apushta. This combination of gilded and carnelian pearls, with blue polyhedral glass and several cylindrical glass types may be possible only after 340 AD.<sup>333</sup> An Apushta necklace that seems to have been in production from 340–380 AD may support the chronology of *Variant A*.

**Variant B: With widely incrust dots.** This particular bead is distinctive due to its increased hemispheric body of royal blue colour and widely incrustated dots of different shapes and colours (**Table 33. 7**). The variant character is seen in the restricted three colours of decorative material made of light blue, red, and white. The light blue dots are produced from transparent glass. The other two are white and red opaque paste. The proportional standard is seen to be 2.2 cm overall diameter and 0.7 cm threadhole diameter.

It corresponds to *Type A* (Group III) of Deopik's classification, dated to the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>334</sup> but a few comparisons from two different parts of Apsilia may broaden this data. In fact, this type is an occasional find and an exclusive element of the short necklace first seen in Apsilia in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Integration of such types like mountain rock crystal with a wide disc and glass pearls of earlier types, as shown in the combination of the Akhacharkhu necklace, could be an indication of a little earlier set perhaps of the years 440–

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<sup>332</sup> Abgidzrakhu variant is proportionally distinguished by overall Dm. 1.5 cm and threadhole Dm. 4-5 mm (grave 46). Trapsh 1971:73. Tabl. XXIV.7

<sup>333</sup> Apushta female grave 1 (Types of earlier arched coil banded fibulae of Stage II and bracelets of Stage III dates this grave complex to 340–380 AD). Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin 1970:175. Pic.2,21.

<sup>334</sup> Deopik 1959:56-57.



460.<sup>335</sup> It similarly appears as an individual piece in one necklace from the upland parts. The Apushta necklace is composed of glass beads except for the later variant of surface needed bead type made of brown glass, similar to Olginskoe.<sup>336</sup> This associates it with a necklace from a little later, perhaps from around 450 or 460 to 500 AD. The variety of combinations could also be a time demanded factor, but rare finds with certain bead categories suggests their transportation as a finished necklace,<sup>337</sup> perhaps not available for everyone. Therefore, an existence of this type in Apsilia may be determined to be around 440–500 AD.

Their earlier distribution considers several places in North Caucasia, Dagestan, North and South Ossetia (Samachablo) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>338</sup> although a while later it was widely distributed towards the upper Koban.<sup>339</sup> Some recorded from the Black Sea littoral are observable from the late 4<sup>th</sup> to the early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>340</sup>

**Sub-Type 2: Line incrustation (mosaic beads).** This type occurs in eleven different samples and four different variants. They are formed in two distinctive hemispheric and ovoid shapes (Table 33. 14-17). Most are similar, but a few differ by selected decorative material, colour, and their combination nature and production technique. Therefore, from the spectrum they introduce three different A, B, and C variants. Most provide two mixed colours dominated by red, blue, or green paste. The first three types introduce vertical incrustation and one mosaic. Each is the rarest component of a short necklace and a distinctive chronologic variant.

***Variant A: With blue incrusts lines.*** It has a sub-spherical shape and is defined by the design and colours of the decorative material (Table 33. 14). It is performed with blue decorative transparent glass and combined with inlaid red paste. The blue incrusts ways are dominant and frame the centrally placed red rectangular component on all sides. They are likely suspended by four decorative lines. The bead has a 1.13 cm overall diameter and 0.3 cm threadhole diameter.

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<sup>335</sup> Later variants of cross shape fibulae and rock crystal bead appearing after 450 AD, determines the chronology corresponding grave complex. See Shamba 1970:68. Tabl. XI.

<sup>336</sup> Apushta variant was apparently a shorter necklace, which also consisted of different beads such as: with yellowish dots, striped beads (white-blue stripes), two small rounded carnelian beads, and a light blue glass bead with white dots (grave 17 with an estimated date of 450/500 -530 AD. Voronov 1982:59. Pic.26.20.

<sup>337</sup> A similar set to Apushta necklace was evidenced in Atara Arkmjanskaja cemetery grave 4. Gunba 1978. Tabl.XLV,40.

<sup>338</sup> Deopik 1959:64. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century, they appear in several graves Pashkovski cemetery in central Koban. Minaeva G., 1951.

<sup>339</sup> They revealed in Kislowodsk area during the 430-570 AD (Grave 32). Mastykova A. 2009. It also evidenced in the Borisovski cemetery graves. Minaeva 1951.

<sup>340</sup> By discoveries also distinguished Cremea, Suuk-Su and Chifut-Kale. Deopik B. 1959:57.

It corresponds to the *Group III, Type A* of the Deopik classification dated to the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>341</sup> but no identical sample has been found among the published materials from the area.

**Variant B: With green incrusts lines.** This variant is dominant among *Subtype 2*, evidenced in eight samples. They are similarly produced either in hemispheric or sub-spherical shape. The distinction is revealed in three colour combinations and mosaic decorations. The surface, incrustated with green glass of different shades, produces vertically decorated asymmetrical lines along the entire length. This is combined with a symmetrically placed rectangular composition made of blue transparent glass. It seems to either enclose a similarly shaped red opaque decorative glass or cover its surface. The proportional distinction of the shape comes with its length of 1.2–2 cm, width of 1.2–1.5 cm, and a diameter of 0.5–0.7 cm. The hemispheric beads are similar to *Variant B*. No identical comparison has been found for this variant, but similar types are observed in 370–400 AD.

**Variant C: Mosaic in red-green colour.** It is provided in eight samples and formed either in spherical or sub-spherical form. This variant is characterised by a combination of red and green colours, producing a mosaic decoration (**Table 33. 15**). Most parts of the surface is covered by red paste in square form, which is similar to Variant A (**Table 33. 16**). This is combined with a narrower rectangular form of transparent green glass. Proportionally, they are slightly dissimilar to areal comparisons, with 1.2 cm overall diameter and 0.4 cm thradhole diameter, producing a bigger size.<sup>342</sup>

It is an occasional find. Only two identical samples associate it with the late 4th century necklace of central Apsilia. One from Tsebelda shows it within the set of eye paste beads, blue polyhedral, and several silvered glass pearls.<sup>343</sup> Totally distinct combinations of incrustated types and various monochrome beads illustrate the Akhacharkhu set.<sup>344</sup>

*Subtype 2* is distributed in other places of Caucasus, including the northern Caucasian Dagestan and South Ossetia (Samachablo) where they occur in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>345</sup> They are widespread further in Pashkovski, Borisovski and upper Koban cemeteries from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, which proves their distribution at a later phase.<sup>346</sup> Much later, they appear in the

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<sup>341</sup> Deopiki 1959:56-57.

<sup>342</sup> Similar beads from earlier graves of Apsilia are presented in different sizes: Dm 0.5–0.7 cm, L. 1.2–2 cm and W. 1.2–1.5 cm.

<sup>343</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Pic.99.30.

<sup>344</sup> The Akhacharkva cemetery grave 28 which dates to 380-400 AD. Shamba 1970.Tabl.XI.

<sup>345</sup> Deopik 1959:64.

<sup>346</sup> Minaeva 1951.

Kislowodsk area.<sup>347</sup> Similar appearances are proven by evidence from the Black Sea littoral (Crimea-Suuk-Su, Chifut-Kale), where they lasted until the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>348</sup>

## STONE BEADS

**TYPE 1: Rock Crystal.** This type is provided by two morphologically and chronologically distinctive variants (**Table 32. 25; Table 33. 27**). This indicates different sources and manufacturers, but both are made from a colourless mountain rock crystal of translucent property. Both have survived in good condition. *Variant A* is the most popular in Apsilia, but generally the mountain rock crystal has been used by the population of the central and lower parts.

**Variant A.** This variant from Grave 11 differs by a wide disc that is shaped into an eight-cut profile with finer manufacture (**Fig. 18. D-3; Table 19. 12; Table 19a. B-4**). Proportionally 3 cm in length, 1.4 mm in threadhole diameter, and 6 cm in overall diameter, it matches slightly smaller variants.<sup>349</sup> The provided size of the central hole (threadhole) seems made to be for joining to a metal handle, rather than thread. Typologically, it corresponds to the earlier and longer circulated variant observable from 380 to 450 or 460 AD. Identical beads come from Olginskoe cemetery grave 3, therefore analyses regard both.<sup>350</sup>

Comparisons are quite evident in Apsilia from the beginning to the early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries and thereafter decrease remarkably.<sup>351</sup> A distinctive purpose of their use is verified by the presence in graves of both genders, female and male, where the combination contents vary. However, it occasionally appears among the female graves later than the male. This considers the necklace of only two elite women of Mramba and Akhacharakva, which is evidence for the jewellery's function within two distinctive sets of the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. Both equally include later types of mountain rock crystal beads, but from the combination schema, the Akhacharkhu necklace seem to be a slightly earlier version (440–460 AD) composed of various glass beads, including ring and flower shapes, or small rounded pearls, several incusted and button-shaped amber beads.<sup>352</sup> The Mramba set is quite distinctively suspended by three bead categories made of amber, rock crystal, and blue phase, which shows a

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<sup>347</sup> The grave 32, which dates to years 430/470-530-570. Mastykova 2009.

<sup>348</sup> Deopik 1959:57.

<sup>349</sup> Mramba comparisons show two distinctive sizes, ranging from 3–3.5 cm, with an overall diameter and threadhole of 6–7 mm. It also observed in a latest elite female grave 15 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971:38. Tabl.IX, 11.

<sup>350</sup> Little increased diameter of another sample shows 1.6 mm (from grave 3).

<sup>351</sup> See Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 5 and 30. Trapsh 1971:38, 50. pl.IX, 15; XIII, 18.

<sup>352</sup> See Akhacharkhu cemetery female grave 28. Shamba. 1970:68. Tabl.XI.

combination of later variants.<sup>353</sup> The fact that it makes an occasional appearance among the female necklaces could indicate either the high value of the object, or difficulties in the availability of a single piece, or that finished necklaces are rarely transported in Apsilia.<sup>354</sup> Their decorative and perhaps apotropaic function is suggested by the heavily equipped male graves of the area from the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Single appearances together with either swords similar to Olginskoe or long seaxes may argue for their decorative function adorning the handgrip of the weapon,<sup>355</sup> but other categories of warrior graves producing battle axes, where such variants are identically practiced, may point to their amulet function.

Beyond Apsilia, evidence that shapes three different places in North Caucasia are Diurso, Pashkovski-1 and Kabardo.<sup>356</sup> In Europe, their circulation is determined to be in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Variante B.** This variant is formed into a smaller faceted disc that is evidenced in Olginskoe grave 8 (Table 33. 27). Its distinctive shape is reflected in a narrow multi-cut disc and narrower threadhole of 2.5 mm diameter, suggesting a jewellery function for the thread into the necklace. Its proportionally smaller 2 cm length is the standard size of earlier variants of this type. This type often survived concentrated in the centre of beads typical for earlier long necklaces rather than suspended by stone bead categories.

Identical comparisons are rare finds in Apsilia, appearing from the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and lasting until the early 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>357</sup> It characterises only female graves and is formed as part of necklaces. Very few of these beads accompanied distinctive sets in elite graves, where they are frequently accompanied by amber and the latest type of rock crystal, but occasionally with incusted, eye, or other types of glass beads.<sup>358</sup> However, unique finds from low class female jewellery reveal their assistance with long necklaces suspended by glass beads of a ring shape and small hemispheric pearls, as well as polyhedral royal blue and occasionally with surface kneaded type, as well as some incusted paste bead category, which

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<sup>353</sup> The necklace was combined with an imported golden cross dating back to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. Trapsh 1971:38. Tabl.IX.

<sup>354</sup> Suspended types are illustrated the third necklace of Ataraja Armjanskaja. Gunba 1978:57. Tabl. XLV.

<sup>355</sup> Two similar samples of early 5<sup>th</sup> century are evidenced in Tserkovni cemetery graves 4 and 5 in the Shapka area. Voronov, Jushin 1973. Pic.4, 5. Two other with an 18-cut profile associated with sax may date to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Apiancha cemetery warrior grave 21. Assisted LRCW, dotted glass beaker and buckle of Type 12 of Kazanskis classification suggests this date) Gunba 1978:29, 96.Tabl.XX, 12. Later appearance consider early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Alrakhu cemetery warrior grave 8. Assisted glass vessel suggests this date). Gunba 1978:17.Tabl.VIII,9.

<sup>356</sup> It appears in Pashkovski grave 2. Kazanski, Mastykova 1998:126-127; Mastykova 2000:39-41; Kazanski, Mastykova 2003:163-164; Ivanisevic, Kazanski, Mastykova 2006:70-71.

<sup>357</sup> Akhacharakhu cemetery grave 28. See: Shamba 1970.PI.XI,14; Alrakhu cemetery grave 6. Gunba 1978.PI.VI,14-16; Apushta cemetery grave 22. Further it finds in Armenian Atara cemetery graves 1,2.

<sup>358</sup> Alrakhu cemetery grave 6 and Apiancha cemetery grave 22. Gunba 1978. Tabl.VI. Tabl.XXI,19.

are additionally combined with either dotted paste or amber bead types.<sup>359</sup> Only one set, probably from the later 5<sup>th</sup> or early 6<sup>th</sup> century, proves that assistance with cowrie seashells was unpopular.<sup>360</sup> Their fixed display on the neck area gives a functional understanding. Beyond Apsilia, this variant is recorded in three examples from north Caucasian graves.<sup>361</sup>

**TYPE 2: Cornelian Stone Jewellery.** Two provided subtypes are evidenced in Grave 11. They are distinctive and suggest changes of supply sources. Areal comparisons show that similar carnelian jewels as finished products are the rarest finds among the grave assemblages, but gemstones adorning the local fibulae might evidence their transportation either as finished product or even raw material. They appear in the harbours or trading areas of Colchis, though a wider distribution map links them with North Caucasia, Crimea and particularly, middle Danube region and Serbia, where they are recorded and dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>362</sup>

**Subtype 1: Button shape.** It has a button shape, producing an opaque dark red colour and row in touch (Table 33. 10). In addition, tint is a characteristic nature of this type. Proportionally, its 1.6 cm overall diameter and 0.3 cm threadhole diameter suggests a bigger variant. From colour, surface, and proportional nature, no identical comparison has been found. Morphologically similar but smaller variants are occasional among the beads of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>363</sup> The lack of identical comparisons enables the process of further discussion. Beyond Apsilia it occurs a little earlier in North Caucasia, but within limited types and noticeably more infrequently.<sup>364</sup> They similarly continued into the next 5<sup>th</sup> century graves of Koban.<sup>365</sup> From the Black Sea region they are evidenced in 5<sup>th</sup> century Crimea,<sup>366</sup> also appearing in central Europe (Danube graves) and some graves of Serbia from the Balkan region.<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> Evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 30. Trapsh 1971:49-50. Tabl.XIII, 18. Akhacharkhu cemetery grave 28. Shamba 1970. Tabl. XI.14.

<sup>360</sup> Evidenced in Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Jushin 1971.

<sup>361</sup> Kovalevskaja 1998:34.

<sup>362</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2006:69; Germanen 1987:232

<sup>363</sup> The size of smaller variants does not exceed 1 cm an overall diameter, with a threadhole of 3 mm (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 36). Trapsh 1970:58. Tabl.XVI.10. A smallest variant (overall Dm. 6–7.5 mm, threadhole 3.5 mm) suspend the late 4<sup>th</sup> century short neckless including following beads: various monochrome glass pearls, royal blue polyhydric and bi-pyramidal beads, two eye beads, and one striped bead (Abgidzrakhu cemetery female grave 49. An accompanied Lebyazhy type and profiled fibulae suggests the late 4<sup>th</sup> century to the grave). Trapsh 1971:77, 96. Tabl. XXVII,18.

<sup>364</sup> They evidenced in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century catacomb of Alkhan-Kala. See: Deopik 1951:52.

<sup>365</sup> In twelve pieces were found in Pashkovski burials and further areas of upper Kuban (Minaeva T. 1951:278); as well as in Mingechauri and different parts of Azerbaijan (Deopik V. 1959:51).

<sup>366</sup> Kovalevskaja 1998:16, 17

<sup>367</sup> Rounded carnelian beads appear in the grave of Ostruznica (Germanen 1987:232, Pl.23), cemeteries of Singidum III (Grave 79) and Viminacium I (Grave 1582). See: Ivanisevic, Kazanski, Mastykova 2006:69.

**Subtype 2: Cornelian gem.** This type was made from a brownish carnelian stone with a dark red shade and polished into a smooth surface (**Table 33. 11**).<sup>368</sup> It is formed in an oval shape, showing a maximum of 1.6 cm overall diameter and 1.3 cm length. Both characteristics have chronological significance. Functionally, its decorative nature is recognised in the hemispheric upper side oriented downwards and a flattened reserve useful for the set. Such a shape is similar to the stones adorning fibulae and earrings from Apsilia, but they differ in pale reddish-rose colour, which makes the type of gems used for fibulae decoration clearly definable, as well as those observable before the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>369</sup>

Identical oval versions in reddish-brown gems are limited in area and consider three different objects: buckles, silver fibulae, and pendants.<sup>370</sup> They probably appeared from 400/420 to 450 AD and circulated to the end of this century. The only exclusive finding without any adorning function is evidenced in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century female grave of Mahajirov hill cemetery.<sup>371</sup> The limitation of their finding context in elite graves may dictate it as a valued object. Their single appearance does not exclude transportation of this gem type as decorative components for fasteners or pendants.

**TYPE 3: Amber.** Three versions of amber beads are evidenced in Grave 9 (**Table 33. 12-13**). They are similar in rounded shape, but distinctive in colour. Two provide pale pinkish, orange, and beige colours. From the size of 0.6 cm overall diameter and 0.7 cm threadhole diameter, it is identical to areal comparisons and their smaller versions. Chronologically, they are long circulated types observable from 330/340 to 450/500 AD. The origin is difficult to judge.

Their size and location are indicative of a distinctive functional character. As jewellery components, they function within various sets. Mid-4<sup>th</sup> century compositions show mushroom type amber beads and blue polyhedral glass suspending a small necklace.<sup>372</sup> The late 4<sup>th</sup> century set is distinctive with flower-shaped glass beads and occasional eye beads made from paste,<sup>373</sup> sometimes including several decorated smaller paste beads, silvered and gilded

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<sup>368</sup> Their name 'bear coloured beads' derives from the dark brown colour (Trapshs' classification). See Trapsh 1971.

<sup>369</sup> Of the two distinctive variants of carnelian gems common in Apsilia during 170–500 AD, the earliest (170 AD) was often used to decorate silver fibulae, and rings, rarely for pendants (Abgidzrakhu grave 7). Trapsh 1971.Tabl.IV.7-13, 18.

<sup>370</sup> All three are evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cemetery. The silver fibulae appear in high social female Grave 15 (it may be date to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century). The pendant occurs in Grave 31 datable to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century; See: Trapsh 1971:38, 51-52. Tabl. IX.10; Tabl.XIV.5.

<sup>371</sup> It is evidenced near Olginskoe cemetery of Abramov burial hill and its owner may assign to the middle class (Mahajirov grave 2). Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov, 1990:26-27.Pic.19, 19.

<sup>372</sup> It evidenced in Apiancha cemetery grave 19. Gunba 1978:28. Tabl.XVIII,15-18.

<sup>373</sup> Such small necklaces owned the individuals buried probably during 340-380 AD in Alrakhu grave 3 and Abgidzrakhu grave 14. Gunba 1978:11,24. Tabl.III.7,8; XIV8,9.

single pearls as well.<sup>374</sup> Later combinations of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century are similar, but appear with 10 distinctive categories including transparent glass, paste beads, and carnelian stone pearls.<sup>375</sup> Assistance with the latest type of mountain rock and another amber type is recognised in the latest necklace of the late 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>376</sup>

However, their decorative value may be proven through positional display on the female body among the elite graves from 360/370 AD. Their occurrence below the jaw at the area of neck, either single or in pairs, may suggest a button function.<sup>377</sup> Such facts do not exclude ready dresses either pinned or decorated with carnelian pearls at the neck. This was favoured by the female population of central Apsilia in the area of the village Mramba. The bigger versions similarly appearing on the neck of male dresses could have a similar functional reflection indicating either the male dress or just having an apotropaic purpose.<sup>378</sup>

**TYPE 4: Jet Bead.** This type occurs in pairs in Grave 8 and survives partially damaged (Fig. 18. C). Both accompanying jets are similar in size, with 1 cm overall diameter and 0.4 cm threadhole diameter (*Inv.N.2.58.36*). They show opaque properties and have survived with little damage. It is considered to be the earliest and rarest variant, occasionally occurring in graves of 340–380 AD. Identical comparisons from Tsebelda accompanied black paste beads with applied wavy threads. Other finds from those areas are bigger versions.<sup>379</sup>

### SEA SHELL (Cowries)

Nine samples of seashells occur in Grave 9 (Table 33. 28). Most are intact. They are import types, typologically called ‘cowrie shell’, but they do not reveal any broader typological peculiarities. Proportionally, the 1.7–2.5 cm height is similar to other comparisons in Apsilia.

This type is rare, but circulated longer during 250–500 AD. Cowrie beads are entirely absent in upland parts except in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century grave of Lar, where it can exclusively be

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<sup>374</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 49. Trapsh 1971. Tabl.XXVII,16.

<sup>375</sup> This combination included all shapes of silvered glass pearls (21 samples), cylindrical light blue beads (16 pieces), rounded carnelian pearls (13 pieces), a white stripped blue paste bead, rounded red paste (20 pieces), yellow paste pearls (8 pieces), green glass beads (17 pieces), and two paste beads (Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 14). Voronov, Bgaghba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:12. Pic. 7,14.

<sup>376</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 17. Trapsh 1971:38. Tabl.IX,24.

<sup>377</sup> Proportionally they are made in Dm. 1.4 mm and a threadhole Dm. 4 mm. Identical amber of darker brownish-orange shade wore the high social class female of Alrakhu grave 5. There are three other samples from Abgidzrakhu grave 51 and Alrakhu graves 5, 7. Trapsh 1971:71,98,111, 113. Tabl.XIX; Tabl.XXXVIII,16; Tabl.XLII,13; XLIV,14

<sup>378</sup> Such a size with overall Dm 2.2 cm and threadhole Dm. 4mm are occasional finds in cremation graves as well (Abgidzrakhu warrior grave 6). Some evidenced in inhumation Male grave 51. Trapsh. 1971:29, 79. Tabl.III,7; Tabl.XXIX.5.

<sup>379</sup> Overall Dm. 2 cm and 7 mm threadhole Dm. 7mm (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 31). Trapsh 1971.

found.<sup>380</sup> A much restricted use is seen among the female population of Mramba and Shapka. They are associated with four cemeteries of the Apiancha, Abgidzrakhu, Alrakhu, and Tserkovni areas. Unique finds reveal the different necklaces that they assist. Very few from the earliest collection suggest the beginning of their trade together with segmented gilded beads, small carnelian, and amber pieces in late-2<sup>nd</sup> and early-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, comprising elite graves.<sup>381</sup> From 250–350 AD they are still single components of late Roman female jewellery along with silver earrings, and assisting small necklaces including new types like blue polyhedral glass and striped paste beads.<sup>382</sup> However, later collections picture them with colourless or monochrome glass beads, sometimes mixed with decorated paste categories.<sup>383</sup> There is no combination difference with the latest set except for the much decreased amount of assisted beads.

They are evidenced either below the jaw or in the neck area. Their presence whether in pairs or in four pieces could simply represent a property with amulet purpose or without any jewellery function.<sup>384</sup> In fact, they never found such an amount as in Olginskoe grave 9.

Beyond Apsilia, such shells are relatively rare in northern Caucasia, which may point to the lack of favour or delivery problem. However, Red Sea cowries reached southern Europe much earlier in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and were distributed as far as Scandinavia until early 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>385</sup> Interestingly, shells became similarly favourable but multifunctional for the European females in Alemannia, Gothland, and Sweden, but typologically they are distinct and originate either from Indian Ocean or Red Sea (Cyprian shell).

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<sup>380</sup> Only one sample occurring in Lar grave 3 at the Kelasuri River was part of a necklace suspended by: a polyhedral royal blue glass bead (similar to Olginskoe from Grave 8) and a couple of paste beads made of opaque glass (some are striped types). Corresponding burial can be dated to 340 to 360/370 AD, based on accompanied buckle and arched bow fibulae. Voronov 1982:31 pic.14.10.

<sup>381</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 7. Trapsh 1971. Tabl.IV.

<sup>382</sup> Justinianov cemetery grave 3 (second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century). Voronov, Jushin 1973:182. Pic. 12. Another find from the Armenian Atara (Atara Armjanskaja) is beyond the Apsilian border, but at the Kodori river valley (Atara Armjanskaja). Gunba 1978. Tabl.LII.

<sup>383</sup> Four pieces are evidenced in III stage (350/380 to 450) graves of central Apsilia (Abgidzrakhu graves 40, 48). Assisted colourless glass beads have a ring form; some are a brownish button shape. A combination in which it finds included spherical eye and striped beads. See: Trapsh 1971. Tbl.XIX, XXVI. It similarly occurs in early 5<sup>th</sup> century graves (the later Alrakhu grave 6). See: Trapsh 1971:112. XLIII; They evidenced in several other graves of central Apsilia (Tserkovni graves 8, 9; Apiancha cemetery grave 22). See: Voronov, Jushin 1973:178-179. Pic.8; 9; Gunba 1978:32. Tabl.XXI.10.

<sup>384</sup> Their symbolic power considers fertility purpose, guarding from 'evil eye' or bringing good luck. They are also expected to be used as currency in the Near East and other parts of the world (Hogendrn, Jonson 1986:12-19). But their functional spectrum varied from building into the decorative material and various implement. The name 'cowrie' is Indian origin and according to a 6<sup>th</sup> century Sanskrit denotes either 'change' or 'currency'. See: Kovac 2008:6.

<sup>385</sup> See Lennartz A, 2004. Die Meeresschnecke *Cypraea* als Amulet in Frühen Mittelalter: Eine Neubewertung. *Bonner Jahrbucher* 204, 163-232; as well as : Reese, D.S, 1991:188-189. The trade of Indo-Pacific shells into the Mediterranean Basin and Europe. *Oxford Journal of archaeology* 10/2, 159-196.



### *Origin of Olginskoe beads*

Provided techniques include gilding, incrusting, ribbing, stripes, or applied eyes. Gilded beads and blue faience may link with Egyptian sources. Particular samples made from mountain rocks (*Variant A*) could also be associated with Near Eastern products, as their workshop is evidenced in Alexandria.<sup>386</sup> Another faceted one of mountain rock (*Variant B*) could suggestively be a Mediterranean product.<sup>387</sup> The origin is uncertain for certain glass and amber pieces. In fact, pre- and early Classical knowledge gives perspective to the local industry of such amber beads.<sup>388</sup> Regarding glass beads, except for the late 4<sup>th</sup> century Pithius, no other local sites are known to be associated with the production of glass objects.

The transportation of imported beads does not exclude the semi-finished ones that might have been completed locally according to individual taste and social value. They are distinctly dispersed among the poor and elite societies of Apsilia. The South Asian origin may suggest the tint of button-shaped carnelian beads (*Subtype I*), but the darker shade does not exclude an Indian production. Much speculation associates incrustated beads with Asian sources.

## **IV. 2. 3. 1. 3. 2 Dress attire**

**FIBULAE.** The destructed Grave 11 exposes three distinct fasteners that does not provide any typological evolution. They belong to the arched bow fibulae class but produce two different constructional, stylistic, and chronological groups. It is reasonable to group them into two different types. *Type I* considers the early homogenous type of coil-banded undecorated bow fibulae, illustrative of mid-imperial local fasteners. *Type II* corresponds with the cross-shaped bow fibulae types. Both fibulae within this type are connected by their head ornament motif, but are challenged in bow structure and technique and gives an impression of

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<sup>386</sup> See Rodziewicz M., 1984:243.

<sup>387</sup> Some half-fabricated identical samples without thread were evidenced in the destroyed grave of Lata from the northern neighboring Svaneti. They are supposed to be an unfinished form of such beads. Shamba 1970:55.

<sup>388</sup> The forty-two bead categories discovered in West Georgia includes quartz-agate-chalcedony type, mountain rock and jet. It raises the question of their locally, and existence of the sardonyx and jasper quarries. Let us also recall the semi-finished amber gemstones that come from a context of 7<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> BC. Discoveries of synchronic local workshops in central Colchian villages Oktomberi, Mukhurcha, Martvili and Nokalakevi are also linked to numerous mineral deposits and associated tools, some of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The discovery of 4200 beads in the burials of Mukhurcha, 1315 sardonyx, 50 distinctive precious stones (inclusive imported amber, paste) and jet is also an indication all this. The nearest mountains provided a supply to Ochkhomuri workshop. Leached traces from geologic wounds can be seen on the left bank of the river Ochkhomuri. See: Lomitashvili 2003:43, 95.

variant distinction. Each variant has been treated and examined separately. Both are assumed to be the early Christian fasteners of late imperial Apsilia.

**Type I: Coil banded undecorated bow fibulae.** This type is evidenced in Grave 11 (*Inv.N.2.58.43.*). The basic distinction is expressed in the highly arched bow that is sharply hollowed to the foot, which recognises a transitional character, but the usual typological nature is seen in the profile that narrows to the head and tapers towards the back (**Fig. 20. 1a-b. Table 31. 1**). It is shaped in a semi-circular access and characterises mid-imperial coil-banded bow fibulae. The head is usually banded upwards. Broad typological patterns provide the bending point with five deep set applied coils measuring 0.3 cm in diameter. The bow is made of 0.40 cm of rounded wire. It is in incomplete condition, with only 9 cm length and approximately 3 cm height remaining. On a comparative basis, it is recognised as the biggest size fibula of this type (XRF see in appendix E).



**Fig. 20.** Fibulas from Olginiskoe destroyed grave 11.

This type corresponds to the Group 15 (*Series III, Variant I*) of Ambroz's classification, dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>389</sup> It also matches Group I (*Series II, variant I*) of Aphkazavas' classification, which offers more data to the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>390</sup> Furthermore, it corresponds to

<sup>389</sup> Ambroz 1966:52; Ambroz 1971:101.

<sup>390</sup> Abkhazava 1979:11-12.

Group III (*Type II-1-2*) of Kazanski's classification, broadening this data to 260–410 AD.<sup>391</sup> However, it still shows long lived circulation. Some morphological details of the Olginskoe sample allow the association of a transitional variant. From the grave context, which is already questionable enough, it is impossible to obtain its finer data.

The highly hollowed bow defines it from those appearing before the 260 AD, but the tendency of narrowing to the head and semi-circular shape at the access defines it from the mid-imperial series circulated before 300/310 AD. Stylistic features of its bow are observed before 380 AD. This pattern defines it from earlier and later variants and allows us to drive the approximate date to 320–380 AD. Morphologically, this type closely relates to the mid-imperial coil-banded bow fibulae and stylistically reveals similarities with fibulae evidenced in Grave 2, which is of slightly later appearance. It has decreased proportions and a lower bow.

Stylistically it belongs to the Lazian type. Their principal use by certain female individuals of areas of Mramba<sup>392</sup> and Apushta<sup>393</sup> is remarkable. A slightly bigger variant was worn on the chest, but never single. Females most favourably wore chain-attached (stripe-end-pattern) variants, also in upland Bat.<sup>394</sup> From the combination spectrum, it is often included within a set of three fibulae extended either by similar type bigger variants or other coil-banded types.<sup>395</sup> This may suggest a similarly designed dress. However, their central location and proportional aspects may indicate breast fasteners for a thick overgarment. In contrast to the female, only smaller variants with a hollowed bow apply to the male dress. Males similarly wore them on the chest as a single piece.<sup>396</sup> It was the most popular fibula form until the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century.

***Type II: Cross headed bow fibulas.*** Grave 11 provides two different types of catch-plate fibulae, belonging to the corpus of late Roman cross-headed bow fibulae, made of bronze or iron. The hooked foot and cross shape treatment of head is common for both, imitating a catch-plate section. This shows a developed fastening mechanism and a new catching system for the head, replacing the earliest coil-banded method. The bow structure and modification of the head decorative cross is presented in two broad stylistic categories, which assigns them to

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<sup>391</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:33.Pl. 32.6.

<sup>392</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 45. Trapsh 1971:25-27,71-72.Tabl.III.9; XXIII.9.

<sup>393</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 3 . Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin 1970:176.

<sup>394</sup> Bat cemetery grave 6. Voronov 1982.Pic.18,49.

<sup>395</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 9, 51. Trapsh. 1971.

<sup>396</sup> It was worn by both simple citizens and warriors (Abgidzrakhu males, cremation grave 6 and inhumation grave 51). Trapsh 1971:51. Tabl. XXIX.3; Akhatsarakhu grave 29 (Trapsh 1978:36. Tabl.V.1).

different series. The principal means for their classification is the aspects of manufacture (cast fibulae). Defined variants are rather evolutionary, but have a chronological significance.

**Variant 1: Slightly distinguished cross headed bow fibulae (cast fibulas).** This variant type belongs to a similarly simple bow fibulae class, but challenges the sample with a little scope of technological development. This is recognised in the socket joint foot, very narrow bow, catching head, and its design imitating a Greek cross (**Fig. 20. 2a-b; Tables 19. 3; 31. 5**). They are key typological features. The most common pattern of its design structure is round wire (0.25 cm) forming the bow, but gradually flattening towards the head, where it increases at the decorative field. This is a cross-shaped area decreasing a square section head towards the tip and showing a basic character. The arms of the square-shaped cross are approximately 0.50 cm in length. The pin is lacking. The intact condition is able to provide the bow's full length of 8.9 cm and probably 3 or 3.2 cm height. Comparative basis confirms its medium size.<sup>397</sup> XRF see in appendix (App. E).

This type corresponds to Group 15 (*Series V, Variant I*) of Ambroz's classification, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>398</sup> It also matches the Group I (*Series II, Variant I*) of Abkhazava's classification, dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>399</sup> Similar data is given by Ugrelidze to Pithius comparisons.<sup>400</sup> The second half of the 5th century is assigned by Kuftin<sup>401</sup> and Sistin.<sup>402</sup>

Typologically, it is a less common variant and no identical sample has been evidenced within graves in the area or beyond. Only a few fibulae of this type occur in the Stage III graves (380–450).<sup>403</sup> From its proportional character, the increased size distinguishes it from earlier and later series occurring from around 450–500 AD. The head construction could also be brought into argument to define it from earlier and later series. The Olginskoe variant has a fixed cross design comparable to those appearing after the 380 AD. The fact that such a structure disappears after 440/450 AD gives ground to the upper chronology. Comparisons offer similar data to determine the Olginskoe fibula to be from 380–450 AD.<sup>404</sup>

This type is commonly evidenced in inhumation graves and smaller variants are even used for grave furnishing.<sup>405</sup> The cross was not a principal motif for bow fibula design, but

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<sup>397</sup> This type is observed in three different sizes. The smallest series made of a bronze wire provides L. 7 cm, H. 2.1 cm. Medium size silver variant shows the L. 8.1–8.4, H. 2.8–3.2 cm. Similarly precious bigger fibulae are made of silver in L. 9.5–10 cm, H. 3–3.2 cm.

<sup>398</sup> Ambroz 1966:55.

<sup>399</sup> Abkhazava 1979:14-13.

<sup>400</sup> Ugrelidze 1967:51.

<sup>401</sup> Kuftin 1949:93-94.

<sup>402</sup> Sistin 1907:103-107.

<sup>403</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 41 and Alrakhu cemetery grave 5. Trapsh.1971.

<sup>404</sup> Comparisons from Pithius also suggest late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Ugrelidze 1967:51.

<sup>405</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 48. Trapsh 1971: 75-76. XXVI.3.

ideological shifts might have been influential. The only remarkable fact is the Olginskoe case, when it is evidenced in cremation graves. Functionally, they are used to fasten the female dress at the chest, but in 380–400 AD they always accompanied other fibula types on the chest area.<sup>406</sup> They seldom occur on the left shoulder of females, even in pairs.<sup>407</sup> Only one heavily equipped warrior wore it possibly to fasten the cloak on the chest.<sup>408</sup>

**Variant 2: Sharply distinguished cross headed bow fibulae.** This type occurs in Grave 11 (Fig. 20. 3a-b; Tables 19.2; 31. 6). This variant is the only evidence for the complex cast construction defining a thin bow with catch-plate construction and forming a slightly arched profile. The socket joint foot and much of the elaborate wide back of the bow is also a field of constructional changes. The primary design distinction is revealed in different expressions of the cross motif imitating a Latin cross variant at the head, which narrows towards the tip. The right cross arm remains a rounded hole for catching elements. The bow provides an undecorated surface. In intact condition, it remains at 10.5 cm length and 3.2 cm height with the highest point at 1.3 cm (catch plate and tongue are intact). This is nearly appropriate with original dimensions.

Typologically corresponding to Group 15 (*Series V, Variant II*) of Ambroz's classification, it is dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>409</sup> It also matches Group I (*Series II, Variant II*) of Abkhazava's classification.<sup>410</sup> Furthermore, it corresponds to Group II (*Type II-4-4*) of Kazanski's classification, dated to 380–450 AD.<sup>411</sup> This entire comparison data suggests that *Variant 2* is a comparably short lived sample, but occasional finds might explain the small rate of production for this form. In any case, only two samples of identical finds in Apsilia do not go against this idea. The principal means of this type may be found in design and functional character. The reason behind the dominant structure with cross motifs could be appropriate with time and the influence of Christian ideology.

Locational variety possibly suggests a different function. The only comparable identical sample suggested is the Olginskoe fibulae from 400–450 AD. These fibulae have never been attested as part of the male attire in Apsilia. They were worn by females of the middle social class, either on the left shoulder<sup>412</sup> or on the chest.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 50. Trapsh 1971:78, 111; Tabl.XXVIII.2,3.

<sup>407</sup> Alrakhu grave 1. Gunba 1978:9. Tabl.I.6; Alrakhu cemetery grave 6. Trapsh 1971: 112. XLIII.6.7

<sup>408</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 50. Trapsh 1971:64-65. Tabl.XX.9

<sup>409</sup> Ambroz 1966:55

<sup>410</sup> Abkhazava 1979:14-13. Tabl.XVII-17.

<sup>411</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:34. Pl.33,4.

<sup>412</sup> Aukhuamakhu cemetery grave 5. Trapsh 1971:104. Tabl. XL.3.

<sup>413</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 40. Trapsh 1971:63. tabl.XIX.12.

### ***BELT FASTENERS (buckles)***

All three fasteners are evidenced in Grave 11. They show distinctive morphological and functional characteristics. All of them remain intact.

**Type I: Zoomorphic buckle (?)**. The distinction of structural design is revealed in the semi-circular and a thickened rounded wire expanded into a sub-cylindrical plate at both ends (*Inv.N* 2:58:50). It has an oval looped head. Both sides of the plates are decorated with zoomorphic features (**Fig.21; Table 19. 4; 31.7**). It is suspended by a dot-in-circle decorative component that combines with a V-shaped element engraved above the thickened part. It is followed below by a display of a possible coniferous motif. All these components are of a very strict schema, giving associations of animal depiction with engraved geometric elements and hatched lines (**Fig. 21. 2**). The corroded condition makes further details unrecognisable. This enables the reconstruction of an original schema and judges their meaning (see XRF examination in **Appen. E**). This buckle remains very intact and lacks the tongue, if any existed. The length is 6 cm and a 1.5 cm loop remains.

An identical object from Apsilia is evidenced in a possible female grave, which may be assigned to the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century according to the assisted profiled fibulae.<sup>414</sup> Except for the Lia comparison all four finds from central Colchis are associated with stray finds, and therefore meaningless from chronological, functional, or decorative aspects.<sup>415</sup> Identical object from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century female grave of the village Lia at the river Enguri shows the earliest appearance.<sup>416</sup> From the decorative spectrum, it does not exclude the earliest imported model for a dot-in-circle decorative motif, which is transferred on local pottery later.

The functional context is enigmatic as none of the scholars recorded their position in graves. An idea of its use as a belt fastener is drawn from its morphological characteristics, but the nature of the loop gives perspective for both fastening and hanging purposes. From the fibulae perspective, the applied decorative plate on both sides and the weight could appropriately be a hanger, whereas the fastening mechanism could be based on a hinged pin. The plate and terminal are also similar to the penannular brooches of pre-Roman time,<sup>417</sup> but

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<sup>414</sup> Voronov 2003. Pic.164.

<sup>415</sup> These stray finds are from the northern neighboring Svaneti, Bori and Vakhani village. An identical object from Svaneti (Tzvisi village of Tsageri region) was found with late antique brooches. See in: Sulava N. 1997. Buckles from Bori and Vakhani village are stocked in Kutaisi museum. See in: Apkazava B., 2010:56. *Inv. N.8207/627 and 5636*. But neither samples found in Urdsuari village (Samachablo /southern Ossetia) can add more. See in: Pchelia E. 1960.

<sup>416</sup> Unfortunately, similar sample found in Dida Kirsia inhumation grave 3, is not described in the text, nor are its details easily discernible in drawing. Its location is not specified in text. Tsitlanadze L. 1973:69.

<sup>417</sup> The mechanism (rolled-over terminal) may have been the same as 4<sup>th</sup> century penannular brooches (similar to the pre-Roman types) known from British or later in Spanish contexts. They have a longer pin and barrel-shaped heads (swivelled on the hoop) instead of a loop. See: Flower 1963; Laning 1993:11-20; Laning 2006:153-60. Expanded and flaring sub-triangular plates are suggested to be a characteristic of 6<sup>th</sup> century variants. See: Laning 2010:42. According to the

we suppose this object is much more prominently associated with the belt buckle. From the buckle perspective, the pin might be swivelled into the loop and rolled-over. If it had functioned as a belt fastener, it would be lacking the pin. In any case, this object raises doubts if it actually belongs to the corresponding grave 11.



**Fig. 21. 1-** Zoomorphic buckle from destroyed grave 11 of Olginskoe cemetery.  
**2-** Buckle from Tsebeda cemetery.

The distributional map guides us to northern mountaineer parts. Their spread might be suggestive of the way from Apsilia, Missimia/Swaneti towards the Enguri valley (village Lia), also in Bori and Vakhnari, and farther areas like southern Ossetia.<sup>418</sup>

**Type II: Rounded buckles.** It considers two distinctive buckles of the late Roman time.<sup>419</sup> Both are common types in the Pontic region (Crimea), North Caucasia,<sup>420</sup> and Asia Minor. This rarely occurs in the west, generally being spread over Central and Eastern Europe in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>421</sup>

**Variant 1: Oval and massive ring buckle.** This is the only iron buckle that remains in a corroded, but complete condition (*Inv.N.2.58.47*). The two-part construction of the loop and tongue made of rounded massive wire shows the structural nature of this variant (**Tables 19.5;**

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decorative schema, the turned-over penannular brooch from Ireland is quite distinctive from the Olginskoe variant. Because it depicts zoomorphic circle-dot features on the solid terminals, which represents animal head with nostrils and ears associable to the Celtic influences. See: Kilbride -Jones 1980. fig.2,12.

<sup>418</sup> It appears in the village Ursdzuari (Samachablo/South Ossetia). Pchelia E. 1960.

<sup>419</sup> Beyond Apsilia they occur in several parts of east Georgia. Jorbenadze 1982; Ramishvili 2003.

<sup>420</sup> See: Gavritukhin, Pjankov 2003; Zasetkaja 1993; Abramova 1997; Ajbabin 1990; Ajbabin 1999.

<sup>421</sup> See: Tejral 1997; Bonna 1991; Zaseckaja 1994; Schukin, Kazanski, Sharov 2006; Kazanski 1997.

31. 10). Typological specificity is seen in the slightly oval and thickened front loop, as well as in the sharply exceeding tongue bending downwards and flattened by a cut at the place of flanking loop. The dimensions provide the maximum diameter of the oval ring at 3.1 cm (interior diameter 1 cm) and the length of the tongue at 2.9 cm, showing a quite massive buckle (see XRF examination in Appen. E).

From chronological aspects, scholars attribute either the 5<sup>th</sup> or early 6<sup>th</sup> century to this buckle.<sup>422</sup> Another alternative has been given by Kazanski, classifying them as Type 8 with a broad date of 380–450 AD. This we fully share with the Olginskoe variant.<sup>423</sup>

Functionally, they supported the belts associated with weapons, which seems to be the usual context of these variants. Areal comparisons provide their assistance with sword or seax.<sup>424</sup> In the west, they are rare finds generally spread over Central and Eastern Europe in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>425</sup>

**Variante 2: Circular loop ring.** Structurally this type provides a two-part construction made of rounded bronze wire, circular in section and similar to the late Roman form (Inv.N.2.58.41). This variant's character is recognised in the circular loop and the shape of tongue which exceeds the loop and bends downwards (**Tables** 19.6; 31. 9). At the flanking part both components survived broken while the loop remains intact. Dimensionally, the loop of 2.9 cm diameter and the pin of 3.7 cm length show the standard size (see XRF examination in *Appen. E*).

Typologically, this type has not been classified by any scholar. It is representative of a rare group that was shortly evidenced in the central part of Apsilia. The remaining two graves are obviously bridging the middle phase and the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but none of the graves consist of items appearing from the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. This allows us to set the probable date of this fibula to 380–400 AD.

Functionally, it was a man wearing the buckle, as well examined in the cemeteries producing other relative components,<sup>426</sup> but a good example from Tserkovni hill cemetery shows the context where they were popular. Assisted sets of belts with the scabbard and strap-

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<sup>422</sup> Trapsh and Ambroz are similarly dated it to the 5<sup>th</sup> century. See: Trapsh 1971; Ambroz 1971:103.pic.2,14. But Voronov increased this date to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Jushin 1982. pic.16.22.

<sup>423</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:37. Pl.34.12.

<sup>424</sup> Much earlier variant occurs in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 6. Trapsh 1971.Tabl.III.11. But identical version comes from Tsebelda cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Jushin 1982.pic.16, 21.

<sup>425</sup> Tejral 1997; Bonna 1991; Zaseckaja 1994; Schukin, Kazanski, Sharov 2006; Kazanski 1997.

<sup>426</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 6 of 380–450 AD. Corresponding weapons gives ground to consider a male relative buckle. Trapsh 1971:92.Table. XXXIV.5.



end are connected with the accompanying seax, giving an understanding of their function.<sup>427</sup> Therefore, from its morphological character, the Olginskoe buckle *Variant 2* is not excluded as part of narrow stripes soldered onto the reverse of the belt fitting in the sense of a scabbard support, but in our case the lack of associated weapons and other alternatives makes difficulties.

#### IV. 2. 3. 2 ANALYSIS OF SIX COMPLETE GRAVES N1-N6

##### *IV. 2. 3. 2. 1 Grave features*

*Outer markers, form and size of burial pit.* Outer grave markers are entirely absent because the surface wash is responsible for the invisibility of above-ground grave structures, but information is scarce and it is uncertain if the surface features of entire graves were dispersed into the landscape or there was an observation problem. For sure, they are earth graves, dug in thin Palaeogene layers of white marl, and that after deposition, the burials were covered with 25 cm of backfilled earth.

No further evidence is recorded about the shape, their eventual or top layers, and outer grave markers. However, distinction in shape and size is well observable through an applied framing of each individual burial (**Fig.13**). This is also an intriguing point, because it is uncertain if they are used to identify enclosed parts of individually buried human remains representing actual grave borders or directly matching with grave cut. The spatial distance between the graves is unrecorded and the basic outline is difficult to define. If they displayed a grave pit, we may speculate about two visible forms: square and rectangular. The burials consist of two square (2, 4) and four rectangular (1, 3, 5, 6) graves, usually with square corners. A differing nuance within the square cut graves are rounded corners, reflected in the profile of Grave 4, which is indicated by intermittent lines inside its framework. This profile provides a more authentic impression of the original grave cut. Similarly, a square layout with rounded corners is sufficiently supported by reliable comparisons as the rarest for the male gender.

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<sup>427</sup> Similar buckles evidenced in Tserkovni grave 7 supported the sword and seax. Other buckle types in this graves complex, found near the chest might used to fasten the straps. See: Voronov, Jushin 1973. Pic.7. another sample comes from inhumation grave 3 of Atara Armjanskaja. Gunba 1978. XLIV.11.

Other grave types represent the rectangular cut. There are small variations within the rectangular form that are differently restricted by shorter or longer contours. In any case, a certain regulation in the system of planning the grave cut is observable. Whether the differences between the grave forms displayed are connected to gender cannot be excluded.

**Grave dimensions (size, depth).** In the excavation protocol it is recorded that the general dimensions of all graves are 0.5 m height, 0.4 m width, and 0.6–1.0 m length. However, proportional distinction is obviously seen in their shapes, which may adequately be explained by the capacity of deposition. Therefore, the mathematical calculation of their size was followed through provision of related objects and space strewn over the deposition in the grave pit. The eventual layer of each individual grave is not executable. The lack of top layer linked with erosion makes a recognisable depth of 0.5 m, and the nature of such grave structures with fragmented urns (Graves 3, 4) and clay body container (Grave 5) would be an influential and meaningful factor for the low depth matching this size. The dimensional context of the other graves is supportive for the data of areal comparisons with vertically placed complete urns reaching the depth of 0.7–0.9 cm. It may explain similar instances in Graves 1, 3, 6 and perhaps be helpful for recognising their approximate depth.

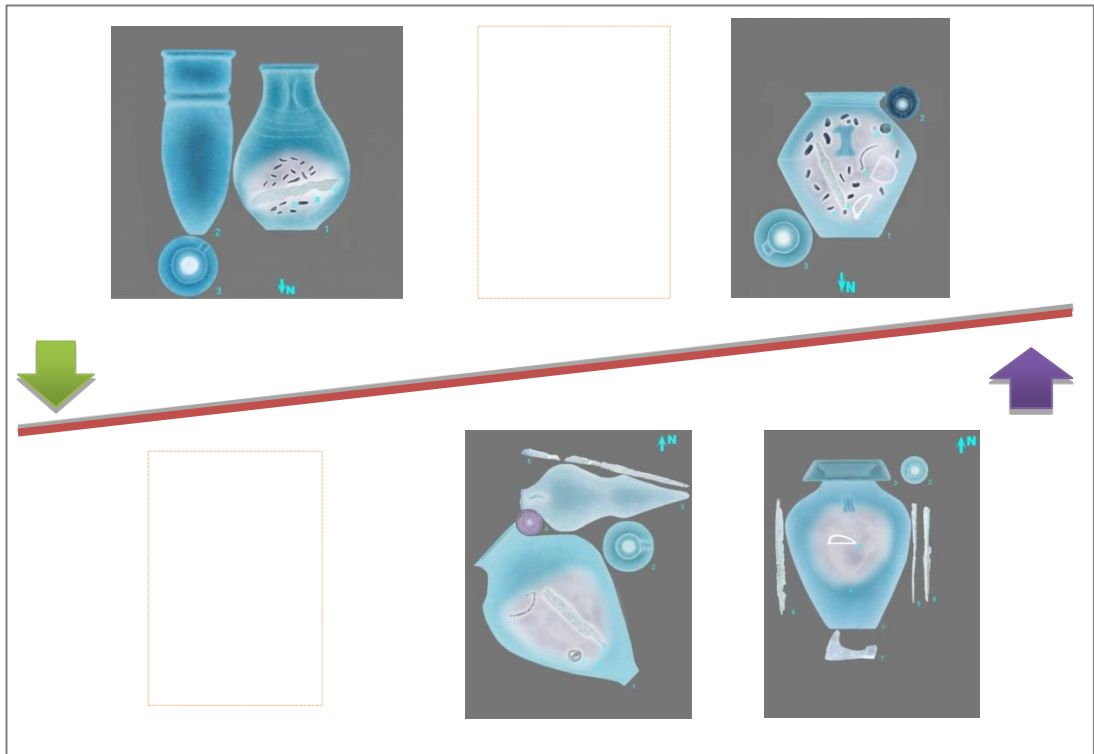
Their length varies between 0.55–1.4 m. The overall width is referred to as 0.4 m. Dimensions we achieved through proportional capacity of associated offerings show them between 0.4–0.64 m. The increased volume obviously distinguishes the three graves 4, 5, and 6, compared to weapon-bearing graves. The larger proportions suggested for Graves 5 and 6 reach 1 m in length. The largest length matches Grave 2 and appears roughly 1.4 m in length and some 1.4 m in width. Square cut Graves 2 and 4 are distinct in proportions. Both Graves 3 and 4 are nearly similar in length (0.6 m) and width (0.4 m), but they are considerably narrower. Grave 1 also appears slightly distinct with the decrease to 0.55 m length and increase to 0.64 m width.

**Grave alignment schema.** A supportive graphical sketch indicates that the surviving six intact graves formed a square plan with relatively close proximity to each other, but it gives a limited view of stratigraphic details (**Fig. 22a; 39b**). Grave contours give an understanding of direct alignments as there is no notion about the spacing between the basic grave alignments. In fact, the accuracy of grave adjacency is a reflection of existing knowledge about neighbouring graves, but a further understanding of the overall layout is not discernible anymore. The positional marker of each grave that is identified through the northwest placing of a jug within the internal structure guides the grave orientation and makes it possible to

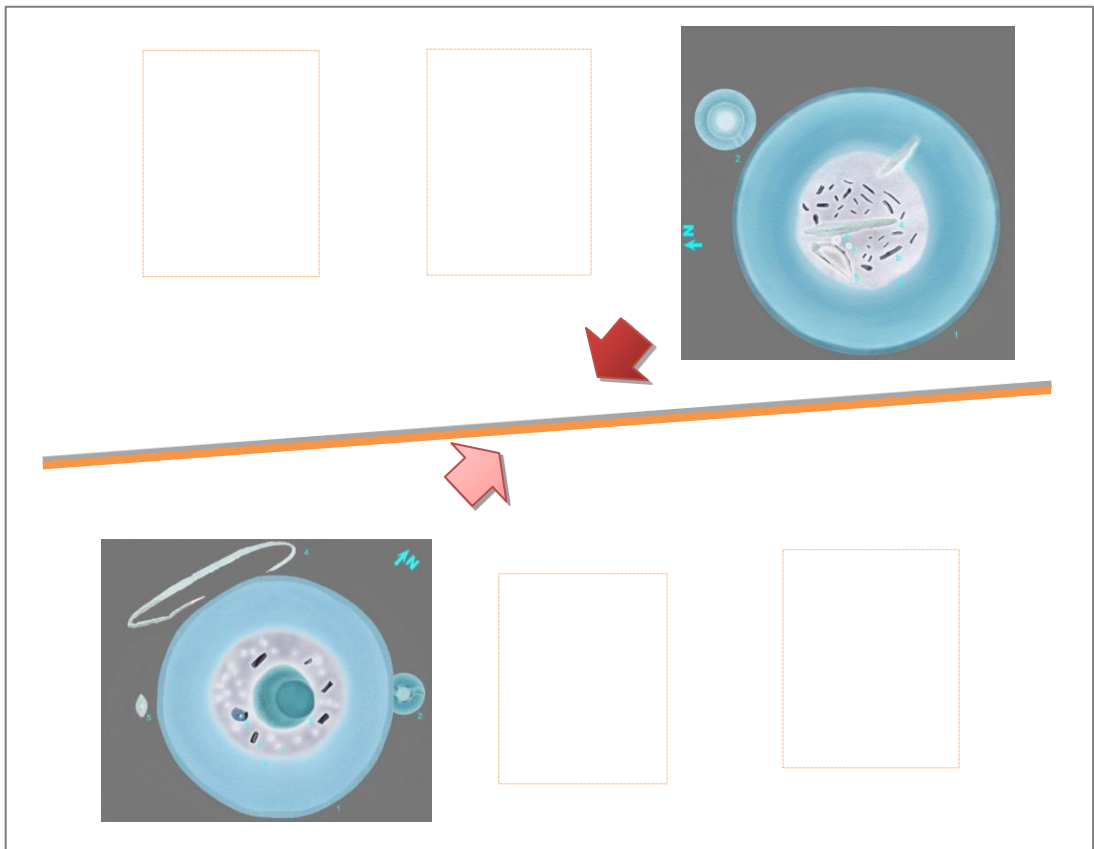
recognise their arrangement. This allows speculation on the alignment schema and gives the following view:

- *CENTRAL PART.* The two vertically arranged Graves 2 and 5 are placed in the central part, showing linkages with the north-western (2) and northern (5) sides. Both evidence three side linkages and appear within the space of neighbouring graves. Grave 2 in the middle is enclosed on the northern, western, and southern sides, and in the same row aligns with Graves 1 (north) and 3 (south). Below it, adjacent on the western side, is another central Grave 5. The latter belongs to the second row with enclosed western, northern, and eastern sides, showing little distinction. In the same line it links with Graves 4 (west) and 6 (east), and directly above it is connected with Grave 2 (north).
- *WESTERN CORNER.* The western corner is occupied by two vertically placed graves, 1 and 4, showing linkages with the northern (1) and north-western sides (4). Both have two side alignments but the differences are also remarkable. Grave 1 of the upper register is enclosed on two sides, north and northwest. In the same row it immediately lies adjacent to Grave 2 (northwest) and is aligned below with the corner grave 4 (north). The latter gives distinction in grave cut that causes three dissimilarly viewed linkages. In the same lower row it links only with Grave 5 (northeast), but on the upper row occurs two adjacent Graves 1 (northwest) and 2 (north).
- *EASTERN CORNER.* The other two graves, 3 (northwest) and 6 (southwest) are set in the eastern corner, showing linkages with the northern (3, 6) sides. Both have two side alignments. On the upper row is Grave 3, enclosed on the north-eastern and northern sides. In the same line it is linked with Grave 2 (northeast) and in the lower row is connected with another corner grave 6 (north). Grave 6, placed immediately below, is also enclosed in two parts in the northwest and the north, but in the lower row is adjacent to Grave 5 (northwest) and on the upper register of Grave 3 (north).

They show a linear display within two possible lines, indicating either horizontal or vertical distribution. The upper horizontal register shares Graves 1, 2, and 3, but a similar positional direction with the downwards oriented northern part reveals only Graves 1 and 3 (**Fig. 22a**). The difference in layout shows only Grave 2 that is oriented slightly to the west in its northern part. From the other graves of the lower horizontal line, the most correct northern position within the grave plan are Graves 5 and 6, but including Grave 4 causes a similar positional confusion as Grave 2 in the upper register. Their orientation gives the feeling of relatedness, as both are directed to the northwest by the northeast to one another.



**Fig. 22a.** Interrelation of Olginское graves 1, 3, 5 and 6.



**Fig. 22b.** Interrelation of Olginское graves 2 and 4.

However, graves are predominantly related to one another by the northern part, recognised as a freely left southern side (except in Grave 2, which might be circumstantial). This is a significant aspect, for their personalised connections might hide in their physical alignments. Only Graves 2 and 4 are remarkable with the westwards or eastwards oriented northern part, which makes it easy to recognise their relatedness (**Fig. 22b**). The above achieved details could be meaningful, and we examine them chronologically in a related chapter below.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 2. 2 Internal grave structure**

*Principles of organizing internal space.* Structural terms are quite present in all six of the intact graves of Olginskoe cemetery. There are two different functional environments of the internal grave structure. One is a grave pit and the other is a body container, where the cremated body remains and offered items are placed. The properties of both environments view contrasting arrangements in most cases. Those structuring principles are rooted by functional, conditional, and positional terms, in which the regular and irregular characteristics of certain offerings are visible. A consistent element of both environments is the pyre debris and its organisational norm, which appears exclusively in one grave (Grave 4). All six graves are filled with human remains, body containers, and accompanied by varied depositions consisting of household or transit ceramics, glass vessels, knives, weapons, jewellery, and dress accessories.

*Grave pit.* The grave pit holds the body container and most of the deposited artefacts. The remaining space is covered by earth backfill up to ground level.

The peculiarities of the grave space are expressed in the system of structuring principles and broad terms. This shows the conventional setting of three pottery vessels, comprising one storage vessel and two drink-related wares. This is a clearly visible standard compositional character, identical in all six graves. Their general organisational term is viewed in the central body container and assembled offerings related to the burial urn, taking a central place in the grave pit. The urn is the key structural element that brings into the focus the central location of the deceased. Associated offering depositions occurring close to the urn, in different directions, is the next regular character of this environment. Its broad term suggests the pouring ware as urn oriented deposition and the most demanded compositional category. Those appearances in pairs are regulated by a proportional relationship. The biggest jug is

always positioned to the northeast of the urn and a juglet basically placed in the southwest part. A repeated placement of a bigger jug to the north-eastern part of the grave pit may suggest a positional order of deposition together with the cremation urn, which was probably affecting the grave orientation. Further north of the urn exclusively appears horizontally placed amphorae (Grave 5) and the appearance of a covering plate above the burial urn is also an exclusive feature within Olginskoe cemetery (Grave 6). One other occasional set presenting a totally changed internal structure depicts a cone glass vessel in between the urn and amphorae (Grave 6). These are arranged north of the body container. Weapons are most commonly placed around the burial urn. To the west are placed a sword (Grave 5) and a long knife (Grave 6). Spears are either put in pairs to the west near the urn (Grave 6) or north near the amphorae (Grave 5). This single find outlines a thrust in the ground in the southern part of urn (Grave 4). A battle axe finds its place in the south next to the urn (Grave 6), but they are all urn-related selective categories, occasionally or exclusively assisting the main pottery set. All of them touch the ground and are arranged in the centre according to the organising principles.

The deposition is quite diverse. Their arrangement is rooted by functional, conditional and positional terms, in which the structuration of accompanying items can be recognised. Urns are depicted as either complete or fragmented. A complete condition is standard for handled storage jars. Pithoi are present whether damaged or complete. However, grave pits that depict urn arrangements are distinguishable by type. Those most commonly occurring are complete and in a vertical standing position (Graves 1, 3, 6), while one case laid horizontally (Grave 5). They occasionally appear in a broken state, inverted on the ground (Graves 2, 4). It defines a model that directly links with structuring principles of offered items. This is seen in such articulations as a smashed body container set upward in the grave pit, and within which is an inverted jug (graves 2, 4); or a cinerary urn and similarly accompanying amphorae assisted jug (Grave 5). They are rare and remarkable finds in Olginskoe cemetery.

Structuring principles differentiate the modelling of open or covered urns. This key element lies in terms of functional transformation of offered items. It affects two-handled storage wares and a plate, which are the basis for the covered urn grave type. Further different functional and positional disorder outlines swords and spearheads outside the urn. A sword appears damaged and bent northwest of the urn and a spearhead was thrust into the grave pit. Both have obvious ritual concerns. Other items were simply put horizontally next to the urn.

**BODY CONTAINER.** The body container stores the cremains and the related property of the deceased. A regular constituent of the internal urn space is a dispersed mixture of clay and ash. This reflects irregularity in consistency, as most of the graves (1, 2, 3, 4) present the ash with body bone bits of the cremated body. It also reveals a different dynamic of properties related to clothing fashion, jewellery, glass vessel, knife, and weaponry, in which the household knife is the most favoured element within the urn space. Accessories consisting of dress fasteners seem to play a pivotal role in the deposited grave goods, as they appear in most body containers. A jug, glass vessel, and spearhead are the rest of properties exclusively found inside the cremation container.

We see that the depositional extent of the urn and grave pit is diverse in arrangement. Certain exceptions incorporated in both environments result in the unstable character of such offerings like a glass vessel, knife, a spearhead, and a large proportioned jug that exclusively appears whether in the urn or internal grave pit, despite individual cases of jugs. It is also seen that functionally transformed urns are not always associated with complete objects. Deposits show a quite distinct cultural, symbolic, and practical consideration, which is separately analysed in different aspects of grave material (see related chapter). Each grave structure is individually described below.

**METHOD OF OBJECT DISPLAY.** All six graves produce cremains, a cremation container, and offered items varying in composition and structure (**Table 41**).

**Grave 1.** In the centre was placed a two-handled storage vessel, which functioned as the cinerary container (**Table 43. 1**). It housed the cremated human remains, clay-mixed ash, and a knife. Other accompanying pottery directly touched the grave pit and followed a different placing order. The jug was found to the northeast of the central urn. Another storage vessel was placed below the jug in the same northeast part of the urn. The grave pit was filled with offerings and above with earth.

**Grave 2.** In the centre was positioned a fragmented *pithoi*, placed upside down, which was used as the container for the cremains (**Table 44. 1**). It contained clay-mixed ash and cremated human bone fragments, and an assemblage of a spearhead, knife, dress fastener, bead, and a jug, which was inverted in the cinerary container. Another, outside accompanying jug was placed in the northeast part of the grave pit.

**Grave 3.** A two-handled storage vessel, the cinerary container, was placed vertically in the central part of the grave pit (**Table 45. 1**). Along with the cremains were two fibulae, rock crystal, a paste bead, knife, and a glass vessel inside the urn.

The urn was accompanied by two jugs that were differently arranged in the grave pit. The juglet was placed in the southwestern part and another bigger capacity jug was found to the northeast of the urn.

**Grave 4.** The upper side of the broken urn that was used as a cremation container was inverted in the centre of the grave pit (**Table 46. 1**). Inside the urn was placed cremated human bones and the charcoal residue of a pyre, a white bead, and a medium-sized jug, which was similarly inverted in the urn. Outside of the urn were arranged three accompanying objects: a pottery jug placed in the northeast part of the grave pit, a spearhead thrust into the south-eastern part, and a bent sword placed at the western part of the urn. Pyre debris (charcoal mixed with burnt earth) was dispersed in the grave pit outside the urn.

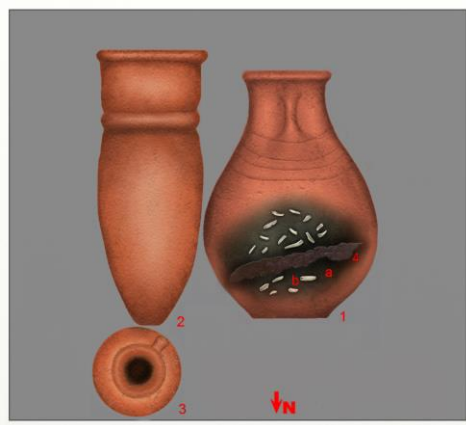
**Grave 5.** A complete *pithoi* was used for the body container, horizontally placed in the centre of the grave pit and oriented to the west (**Table 47. 1**). A similarly positioned amphora was placed outside the urn to its north, as well as a complete spearhead and a surviving spearhead socket on the right side, placed to the north of the urn. Between the *pithoi* and amphora, and near to their rims, was placed a glass vessel in an upright position. There was an accompanying jug set between the urn and *amphora* towards their bottom, north of the cinerary urn. The urn contents were cremated human remains (ash), a *fibula*, and a knife.

**Grave 6.** A complete two-handled jar that was used for the cinerary container was placed vertically in the centre of the gravel pit (**Table 48. 1**). The urn was covered by a plate. Four objects were arranged outside the urn. An accompanying jug was set northeast of it, and a pair of two different spear types (triangular head and a spearhead) was placed next to one another east of the urn. A dagger occurs to the west of the body container, and a battle axe is placed south of the urn. The body container contents consisted of cremated human remains (ash), two *fibulae* and a glass vessel.



#### **IV. 2. 3. 2. 3 Individual extent of grave complexes 1-6**

It can be seen from the above what kind of grave goods were favoured by Olginskoe society. Their graphical dissimilarity recognised a varying potential for grave furnishing, demanded by their ability and choice. Pottery is what varies the most in categories and shapes, but a few imported ceramics increased the diversity of their types. Glass vessels that are rarely represented define some graves. Weapons that are dissimilar in categories and types may provide evidence of distinctive skills and abilities. Jewellery and dress fasteners are very poor. All are reflections of different factors that make distinctions in composition, offering value and grave types. Each grave context and related find is individually presented and interpreted below. The associated catalogue guides an object description and their position in the grave (each object is provided a museum number).



**Abb.1.** Grave 1

**Grave features:** H-0.5 m; W-0.64 m; L-0.55m.

**Grave inventor consists:**

1. Pottery - storage Jar (In.N.2.58.A). H 34 cm; Dm body 25.5 cm; Dm R. 12.3 cm; Dm bottom 8.4 cm. Urn. Placed in central part of the gravel pit.

2. Pottery – handleless rural jar. Placed at the E part of Urn. Lost object.

3. Pottery jug (In.N.2.58.1). H.19.7cm; Neck L.4 cm; Dm body 14.5 cm; Dm R. 8.6 cm; Dm bottom 7.8 cm. Placed in NE part.

4. Knife (In.N.2.58.2). Total L. 25 cm; Greatest W. 2.9 cm; Placed in urn.

a. Ash of cremated human body.

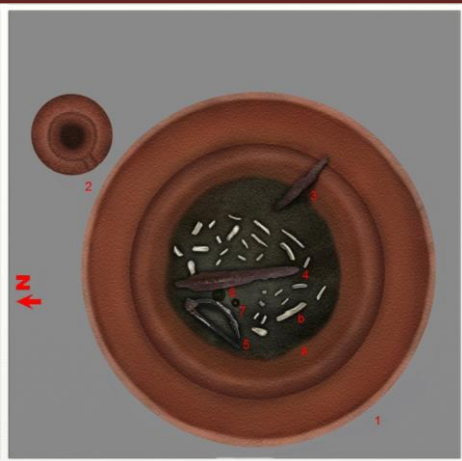
b. Bones of cremated human body.

## Grave 1

This grave contained cremated human remains and four objects made of pottery and metal (**Tables 10; 43**). It included two storage jars, jugs, and a knife. Recently, however, this decreased to three objects, as one jar is lost (**Abb. 1.2**). Cremated materials consisted of clay mixed with ash and burnt bone pieces (**Abb.1. a, b**).

Pottery is represented by three different categories including one functionally unrecognisable ware, a handled jar, and a jug. This is a combination of rural and tableware types. A storage jar (urn) of a light brown colour has large proportions, bag shape, and a specifically globular middle body, with a rounded and pronounced base (**Abb.1.1**). A further characteristic is a short rim with a coiled lip, long neck, and massive rounded handles. The lower neck and shoulders are decorated with two parallel hatched horizontal wave bands. The jar functioned as the cremation container. The largest item is another rural handleless ware with a conical body, which is now lost (**Abb.1.2**). A pouring pot shows a globular shape and orange-brown colour (**Abb.1.3**). Circular decorative motifs are applied to its neck and middle body, where it combines with animal heads to illustrate the popular decorative type. All three shapes view different regional groups.

Inside the cremation urn is set a long knife, which is fragmented and lacking the shoulder and a handle (**Abb.1.4**). It has a thickened blade with straight back and narrow horizontal cutting edge. The blade slopes downwards to the arched tip.



**Abb.2.** Grave 2

**Grave features:** H-0.5cm; W 1.4m; L-1.4 m.

**Grave inventor consists:**

1. Pottery- storage Jar (Fild N, IIa). H.36 cm; Dm body 34 cm; Neck L.4 cm; Dm Rim 14. Placed in the central part of the gravel pit. Urn. Lost object.

2. Pottery jug (In.N.2.58.3a). H.25.4 cm; Dm body 21.4 cm; Dm Rim 12.7 cm; Neck L. 5.2 cm; Dm bottom 14 cm. Placed in NE part.

3. Knife (In.N.2.58.4). Total L 13.6 cm; Blade length 10 cm; Blade W. 2 cm; Tong L.3.6 cm; Tong W. 1.4 cm. Placed in urn.

4. Spear head (In.N.2.58.3). Iron. Overall L.23.2 cm; Blade L. 21 cm; Blade W. 3.5 cm; Blade midrib 8 cm; Socket L. 2.1 cm. Placed in Urn.

5. Fibulae (In.N.2.58.5). Bronze. Bow L.6 cm; Bow H.1.7 cm; Wire W.0.9 cm; Tong L. 6.5 cm. Placed in Urn.

6. In urn inverted jug (invisible in drawing). Lost object.

7. Single bead (In.N.2.58.6). Red paste. L.8 mm. Placed in urn. Lost object.

a. Ash of cremated human body.

b. Bones of cremated human body.

## Grave 2

This grave comprised a cremated human body and eight objects, but not all survived in the full museum assemblage (**Tables** 11; 44). Three lost items are a *pithos*, a jug, and a red bead (Abb.2.1,7). A recent inventory records six objects made of pottery, metal, and glass. They represent storage and tableware, other household and personal articles, and weapons. Cremains comprise clay mixed with and burnt bone pieces (**Abb.2.** a, b).

Pottery includes three wares, storage *pithoi* and two jugs. The lost *pithos* was used as an urn and recorded as fragmented (**Abb.2.1**). It is described with globular shoulders and a wavy line decoration. Jugs are of similar types, showing hemispheric undecorated body and flared rim. The biggest surviving one has a dark brownish-red colour and is defined by a long neck, low steep shoulders, and a low base (**Abb. 2.2**). The handle rises from the shoulder to the edge of the rim and is slightly inverted in the middle part. On both edges, a spiral decoration is applied. Another jug remains in Voronov's drawing and is described by excavators Grdzelishvili and Berdzenishvili.

Metal objects are represented by a fastener, a kitchen item, and a weapon. The kitchen object comprises a small iron knife having a one-cut massive blade and a straight cutting edge (**Abb.2. 3**). The blade is thickened at the back and slightly slopes down towards the tip. Its horizontal tang is convex at the blade back.

The weapon is extended by a triangular spearhead with a lozenge-section blade and shows a lower extended part (**Abb.2.4**). It has steep shoulders and a sharply pronounced square midrib. The socket remains a narrow fragment.

Personal property includes a fibula and two single pieces of glass beads. The bow fibula is made of bronze wire, asymmetrically shaped and undecorated (**Abb.2.5**). It has a flattened and upward-bending head, retaining the five tied applied coils. The lost bead is recorded as a red paste of rounded shape and ribbed surface (**Abb.2.7**).



**Abb.3.** Grave 3

**Grave features:** H-0.5cm; W-0.4cm; L-0.6cm.

**Grave inventor consists:**

1. Pottery- storage Jar (In.N.2.58.7). H 39.3 cm; Dm body 36.5 cm; Dm neck 12 cm; Dm bottom 16 cm; Urn. Placed in central part of the gravel pit.

2. Pottery- juglet (In.N.2.58.9). H.9.5 cm; Dm body 5.5 cm; Neck Dm 2 cm; Dm R. 4 cm; Placed in SW part.

3. Pottery -jug (In.N.2.58.8, IIIb). H.21 cm; Dm body 15 cm; Dm R. 8.5 cm; Dm bottom 10.7 cm. Placed in NE part.

4. Knife (In.N.2.58.10). Iron. Tota L. 17.5 cm; Blade L. 12.7cm; Blade W. 2cm; thickness of blade back 1.2 cm; Tong L.4.3 cm; Tong W. 1.2 cm. Placed in urn.

5. Fibulae (In.N.2.58.11). Bronze. Bow L.8.0 cm; Bow H.4.1 cm; Pin is fragmented. Undecorated. Placed in Urn.

6. Fibuale. Lost object.

7. Glass vessel. Placed in urn. Lost object.

8. Bead (In.N.2.58.12). rock crystal. L.1.4 cm; Dm 1.5 cm; Dm thread hole 0.4 mm. Thickness 0.8mm. Placed in Urn.

9. Bead of Egyptian paste – fiancé. H.3.5 cm; Dm thread hole 0.7 cm; W 3 cm; Thickness 0.4 mm; placed in urn.

a. Ash of cremated human body.

b. Bones of cremated human body.

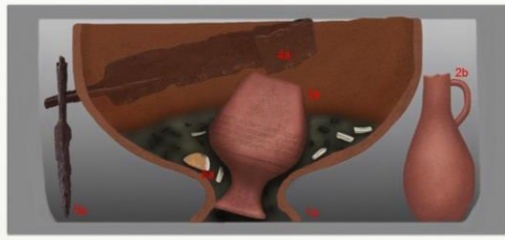
### Grave 3

Grave 3 contained the remains of a cremated human body and nine personal objects (Tables 12; 45). They include a storage jar, two jugs, a glass vessel, a knife, two fibulae, beads of rock crystal, and melon-shaped paste. This assemblage is also incomplete, only seven objects are visible. Two missing items are a glass vessel and one fibula. Cremains consist of clay mixed with ash and burnt bone fragments (Abb.3.a, b).

There is consistently a little increase in grave offerings, but similarly, most belong to the storage or tableware categories, weapons and some personal possessions. Pottery consists of three objects, a storage jar, and two pouring vessels. The neckless jar appears in brownish-red colour, shows a flared rim ribbed on both sides and a long steep shoulders that gradually tapers to the flattened base (Abb.3.1). The handle is small and broadly attached on the shoulders. Decoration that is applied on the middle body suspending grooved lines, but handles show the V-shaped looped lines broadly arranged in two rows. The pouring vessels are varying in shape, size, and fabric. The biggest jug displays a less common hemispheric shape and a dark brownish-red colour (Abb.3.3). Morphologically it does not conform to the 'Tsebdian' type in the area. Another one is represented by a small capacity pear-shaped juglet of light brownish-red clay (Abb.3.2). The body demonstrates a white coated surface. Decoratively, both show a similar pattern of multiple waves applied on their shoulder, but a cross-hatched line with circular elements distinguishes the handle of the juglet.

The glass vessel, which is lost, defines this grave, but since it is not detailed enough in the excavation report, it could not be imagined more than as a thin-walled vessel (Abb.3.7). It was placed in the cremation urn together with a small knife. The accompanying knife has a one-sided blade of triangular section and a straight back (Abb.3.4). It evenly tapers to the oval tip and curves slightly downward.

The other personal items are two single beads and two fibulae. They seem to be becoming more significant. One of the fibulae is lost and there is no potential for describing this type. The other is a bow fibula, a coil banded with a massive bow, circular head section and socket juncture foot.



**Abb. 4.** *Grave 4*

**Grave features:** H-0.5cm; W-0.4cm;L-0.6cm.

**Grave inventor consists:**

1. Pottery- *Pithoi* (In.N.2.58.13). H 40 cm; Dm body 58 cm; Dm neck 12 cm; Dm R. 16 cm; bottom is lacking. Urn. Placed in central part of the gravel pit.

2. Pottery - Jug (In.N.2.58.15). H.31.5 cm; Dm body 13.5 cm; Dm neck 3 cm; Dm bottom 2 cm. Rim is lacking. Undecorated. Placed in NE part.

3. Pottery jug (In.N.2.58.14). H.23.8 cm; Dm body 16.5 cm; Dm neck 4.5 cm; Dm R. 8.8 cm; Dm bottom 9 cm. Decorated. Placed inverted in urn.

4. Sword (In.N.2.58.17). Total L. 65 cm; Survival blade L. 32 cm; Max. blade W. of blade 4.4 cm; Tang 18.8 cm. Bounded. Placed in W part near urn.

5. Spear head (In.N.2.58.16). Triangular shape. Overall L.28 cm; Blade L. 16.5 cm; Blade W. 3 cm; Socket L.11.5 cm. Placed trust into the gravel pit at the S part.

6. Bead (In.N.2.58.18). Paste. Dm 4.8 cm; placed in urn.

a. Ash of cremated human body.

b. Bones of cremated human body.

c. Charcoals.

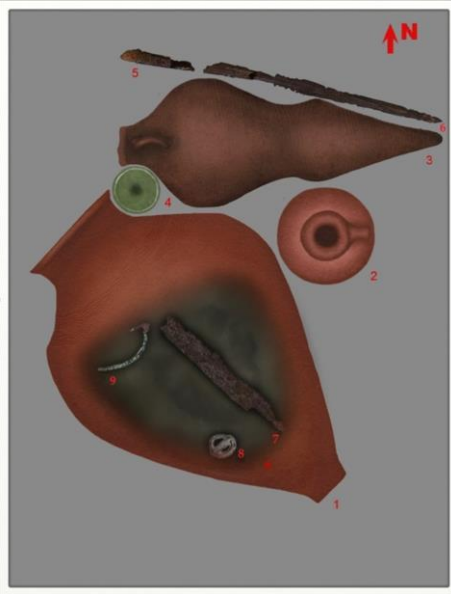
Beads are dissimilar in type and proportions. The largest one is a stone bead made of rock crystal with translucent property (Abb.3. 8). The smaller one is made of Egyptian faience and vertically ribbed on the surface (Abb.3. 9).

## Grave 4

This grave comprises cremated human remains and six objects made of pottery, metal and stone (Tables 13; 46). They represent a storage jar, two jugs, sword, spearhead, and bead. Cremains consist of a clay-ash mixture and also include charcoal from the pyre debris (Abb.4, a,b,c).

The deposited assemblage shows a diverse nature, but similarly includes storage and tableware categories, personal articles, and weapons. The pottery consists of a storage *pithoi* and two pouring vessels. *Pithoi* is shaped in a conical form and produces a light greyish colour (Abb.4.1). It presents a fragmented upper section used for cremains. Pouring vessels are distinctive types, differing in fabric and colour, but they are distinguishable from the rest of the pottery of Olginskoe cemetery. The largest pear-shaped jug shows light orange-brown clay of rare fabric and appears undecorated (Abb.4.2). It lacks the rim. Another jug is ovoid in shape and produces a light brownish-red colour (Abb.4.3). It was inverted in the urn. Both are regional vessel types.

Assemblage weapons include a sword and a spearhead. The sword is intact and lacking the tip, but clearly shows a lenticular-shaped blade matching the dimensions of *spathae* (Abb.4.4). The spearhead has a triangular shape and a slightly pronounced midrib (Abb.4.5). Also present is a white rounded paste bead, partially damaged (Abb.4.6). It is suggested to be a hilt decoration.



**Abb 5.** Grave 5

**Grave features:** H-0.5cm; W-0.4cm; L-1cm.

**Grave inventor consists:**

1. Pottery -Pithoi (In.N.2.58.22). H 60 cm; Dm body 17 cm; Dm bottom 8.4 cm; decorated on the shoulders. Used as Urn. Placed in central part of the gravel pit.
  2. Pottery -Jug (In.N.2.58.21). H.22 cm; Dm body 15.4 cm; Dm neck 4.7 cm; Dm R. 9.8 cm. Dm bottom 7.4 cm. Placed in E part.
  3. Amphorae (In.N.2.58.19). H.52 cm; Ribbed surface. Placed N of the urn and rim oriented towards W.
  4. Glass vessel (In.N.2.58.34). H.14 cm; Dm R. 8 cm; Dm bottom 1.6 cm; Ornamented. It is placed between Urn and Ampora.
  5. Spear head (In.N.2.58.23). Slender triangular. Overall L.32 cm; Blade L.29 cm; Blade W 2.8-3 cm; Midrib L 8 cm; Socket L.4 cm; Placed in N part.
  6. Spear Socket (Inv. N.2.58.24) . L 12.9 cm. Dm. 1.7 cm; It is placed in NW part and next to another spear head.
  7. Knife (Inv.n N.2.58.25). Total L.17.6 cm. Blade L.13.3 cm; Blade W.2.5 cm; tang 4.3 cm; Placed in urn. Fragmented survival.
  8. Fibulae (Iv.n N.2.58.26). Bow L. 8.1 cm; H. 2.3 cm; Placed in urn.
  9. Buckle (Iv.n N.2.58.27). loop 2 cm Dm. Tongue 1.7 cm. Placed in urn.
- a. Ash of cremated human body.

## Grave 5

This grave contained the cremated human body and nine objects made of pottery, metal, and glass (Tables 14; 47). They include pithoi, amphorae, a jug, a glass vessel, two spearheads, a long knife, fibulae, and a buckle. Cremains consist only of ash and lack the remains of bone pieces (Abb.5.a).

The offerings show a remarkable difference in object categories and types, but similar to the other two graves it provides storage and pouring wares, a few personal articles, and weapons. Pottery shows dissimilar functional groups including a pithos, an *amphora*, and a jug. The *pithoi* with a complete conical body of orange-brown colour shows slight vertical corrugations on the entire neck surface (Abb.5.1). The shoulders depict two rows of wavy lines. The *amphora* is formed in a carrot shape with a concave body and produces a dark brownish-red colour (Abb.5.3). An assisted pear-shaped jug of light brownish-red colour shows a flared rim (Abb.5.2). They are areal and regional types.

The accompanying cone glass vessel of a yellowish-green colour has a thickened profiled rim, which is smoothed and rounded at the top (Abb.5.4). The body is decorated with applied blue dots at the upper part.

Weapons are represented by two spearheads and a long knife, but one remains as a fragmented socket (Abb.5.6). It retains mineralised wood inside, which does not exclude the possibility of having been buried with the shaft. Another complete spear has a triangular shape, slender longitudinal blade of rhomboid section, and a hexagonal midrib (Abb.5.5). The last weapon is a long dagger, possessing a single cut narrow blade with straight back, curving to the point (Abb.5.7). Both encompass weapon types of the area.

Personal items belonging to dress fasteners include a *fibula* and a buckle. The fibula has a coil banded arched bow, slightly hollowed in the middle part (Abb.5.8). The bow is decorated with four slightly pressed ribs of different thicknesses. It was bent by two applied thick coils. The buckle is formed in a circular bronze ring, with a slightly enlarged front and suspended tongue (Abb.5.9).



**Abb. 6.** Grave 6

**Grave features:** H-0.5cm; W-0.4 cm; L-0.6cm.

**Grave inventor consists:**

1. Pottery-Handled Jar (Inv.N.2.58.28). H.53 cm; Dm body 39 cm; Dm neck 14 cm; Dm R. 21 cm; Dm bottom 10 cm. Used as urn. Placed in the central part of the gravel pit.

2. Pottery-Juglet (Inv.N.2.58.Vc). H. 10.4 cm; Dm body 8.2 cm. Dm neck 2.5 cm. Dm R. 3.8 cm. Dm bottom 14 cm. Placed in the E part.

3. Plate (Inv.N.2.58.29). H. 11.9 cm; Dm R 5.4 c; Covered the urn.

4. Dagger (Inv. N.2.58.33). Total L. 33.8 cm. Blade L. 28.2 cm. Blade W.2.8 c. Blade thickness 2mm. Placed in urn.

5. Spear head (Inv.N.2.58:31). Square shape. Overall L.32 cm. Blade L.21. cm. Socket Dm.1.5 cm.

6. Spear head (Inv.N.2.58.32). Triangular shape. Overall L.30 cm; Blade L.18 cm; Blade W 2.9 cm; Midrib L 8 cm; Greatest W. of blade 3 cm. Socket L. 12 cm; Placed in N part.

7. Axe (Inv. N.2.58.30). Blade L. 16.8 cm. Beard W. 12.3 cm. Dm. eye 3.8 cm

8. Fibulae. Placed in urn. Lost object

a. Ash of cremated human body

## Grave 6

This grave produced cremated body remains and eight objects made of ceramic and metal (Tables 15; 48). They include a jar, jug, plate, two spearheads, an axe, a long knife and fibulae. However, this assemblage is missing a fibula, which is lost (Abb.6.8). Cremains consisted of ash (Abb.6.a).

The deposited objects show a diverse nature but they are similar in representing household items, weaponry, and a personal article. The pottery demonstrates storage and two different category tablewares. Storage pottery is a handled jar with a conical body of an orange-brown colour (Abb.6.1). This neckless pottery with a flared rim is corrugated on both sides and a small tapering mouth. One is a pear-shaped juglet of a reddish-brown colour and decorated by horizontally arranged cross-hatched lines that are applied to the middle body (Abb.6.2). Both show an areal nature and similarities to the jar from Grave 3. The main exception is revealed in the addition of a plate, introducing a new tableware category (Abb.6.3). It shows finer fabric, unusual beige colour and thinly formed flared walls with a slightly thickened inward rim. The low-footed base is surrounded with a low coil.

Metal objects are demonstrated by weapon and dress fasteners. Weapons are dominant and show a slightly refreshed spectrum of nearly similar categories. It includes two spearheads, a battle axe, and a long knife. Spears are dissimilar in type and size. The biggest one is a square javelin, with a pointed tip and slightly square blade that continues into the rounded open socket (Abb.6.5). The shortest one is formed in a triangular shape and shows a small slender iron blade of lozenge section (Abb.6.6). It has a very pronounced midrib of pentagonal profile and a long tapering tip. The penultimate weapon is an iron axe with a curved asymmetrical blade, of triangular profile and arch-shaped head (Abb.6.7). The blade produces a similarly asymmetrical low beard. The last weapon is a possible seax with a long narrow tapered blade, showing an asymmetrical shoulder (Abb.6.4). Fasteners are represented by a bow fibula which is lost, and further details are unknown (Abb.6. 8).

#### IV. 2. 3. 2. 4 Grave types and considering model structure

Visually distinguishable differences of structural settings become responsible for variations of grave types (Fig. 23). They create three grave models, where the variations are reflected in the structure of cremated human remains, the cinerary container, and internal grave structure. Categories of body containers and conditional contexts deepen their distinction. It guides the typological modelling of urns and provides distinctive importance to two particular storage ware types: pithoi and two-handed jars used to contain the cremated material.

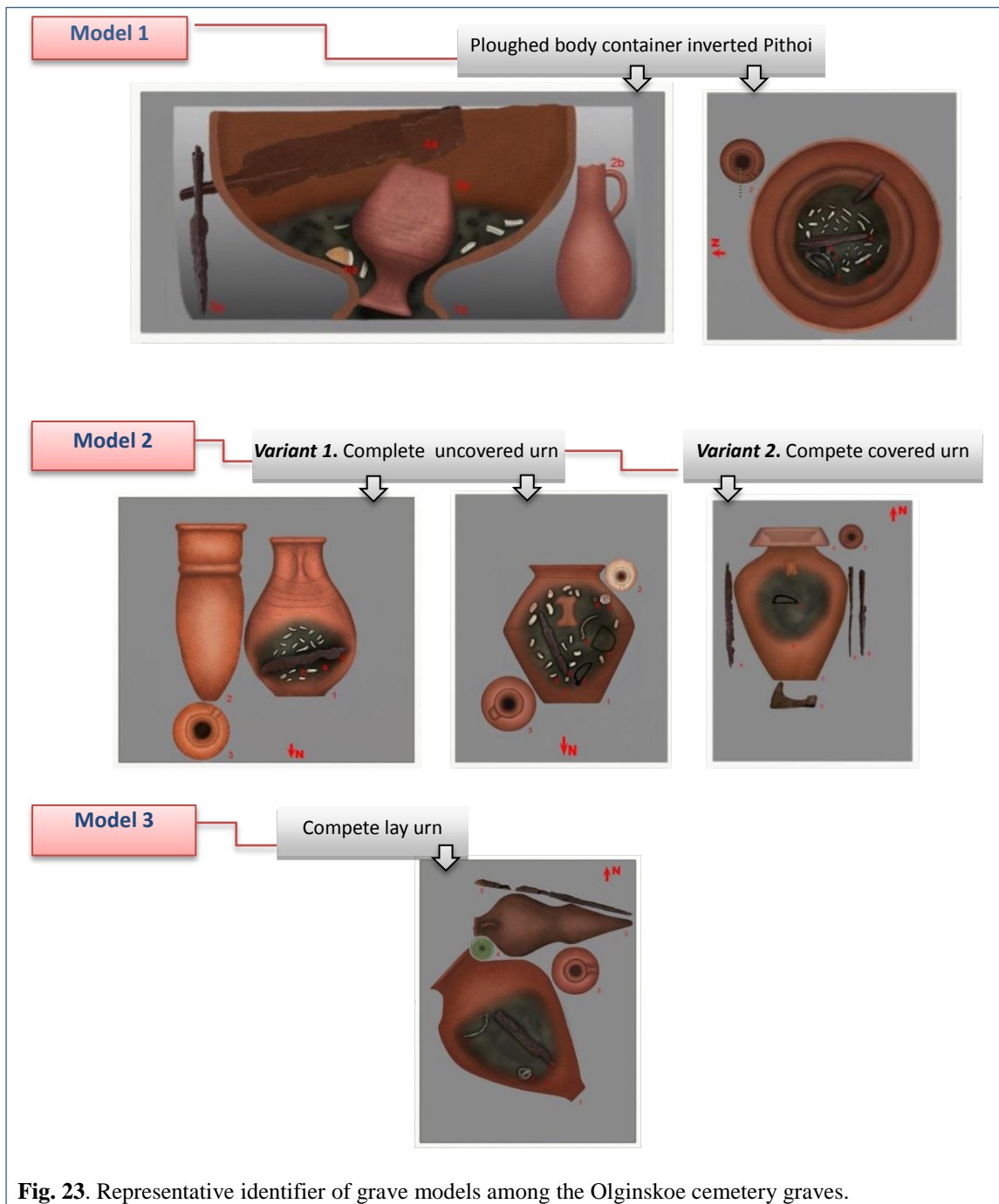


Fig. 23. Representative identifier of grave models among the Olginskoe cemetery graves.



Their broad conditional context, which specifies pithoi either as broken or complete, and complete storage jars are cases that underpin their broad typological considerations. Both urn types are distinctly indexed and articulated in graves. Broken urns are inverted to contrast with the complete ones that are viewed either in horizontal or lateral position. They construct typological distinctions of graves, which concerns also the role of personal representation and corresponding structuring principles. Below we define three different forms of structure and discuss how habitual practices send some signals to model structure, which is extended by objects used in daily life.

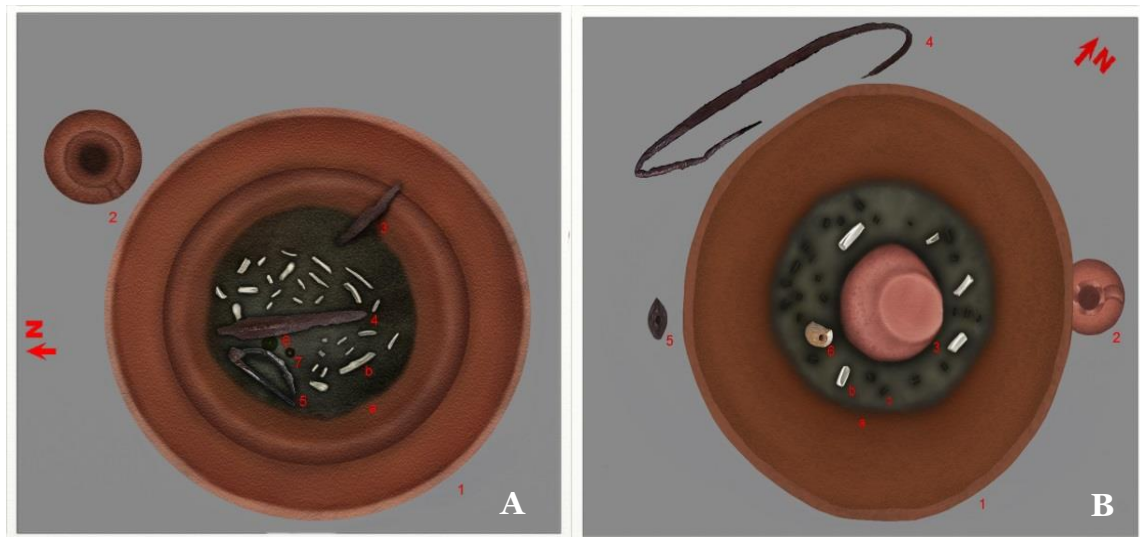
### ***MODEL 1. Ploughed and inverted pithoi urns***

This model is spectacular from a structural and ritualistic context. It concerns two graves, 2 and 4, with a square cut (*Model 1. Fig. 24*). The key asset of this model is the construction norm reflected in the inverted urn and depositional damage. They send a signal regarding behavioural practices and the structural meaning is extended by objects in daily use. The urn appears to have been preliminary ploughed (**Fig. 24. A-B**). The assisted jug seems to also have been broken similarly, while corresponding fragments are lacking in the grave pit (**Fig. 25. 2b**). They were used to exercise the ritual power by connecting the broken inverted urn and within the inverted jug. There are some heading specifics and five major structuring principles that become the visual identity for this model, recognised as:

1. *Standardisation of urns*: Storage pithoi as an urn category is used within this grave model.
2. *Urn condition*: A broken upper part of a pithoi used for depositing cremated remains.
3. *Positional formula*: Inverted urns and similarly inverted jug within the body container.
4. *Depositional composition*: Three pottery vessels consisting of a pithos and two jugs.
5. *Arrangement schema*: Distinct disposal complex of weapons, their condition and display.

Beyond these listed characteristics, certain differences between these graves appear in the pyre composition, deposit types, and their organisational norm that might be a more personal response relating to the skills rather than changes in structure. Usually the pyre composition is not static among Olginskoe graves but the charcoal mixture of the pyre composition is an exclusive marker for the structural index of Grave 4 (**Fig. 25**). Dispersing principles inside

and outside the urn is an unusual feature and defined it from all six graves of the cemetery. A poorer look at its urn property is indicated in the consistency of the beads. Further differences are viewed in pottery shapes. The placement of the jug outside is of course the asset of structure, but a definable nuance is revealed in the broken neck associated with preliminary breakage, which defines Grave 2. The last defining peculiarity of Grave 4 is the bent sword and thrust spear articulated outside the urn, giving an intriguing look to the structure. The urn of Grave 2 dissimilarly offers a slight increase in deposited property, consisting of a small knife, spearhead, fibulae and button bead, which build different data and a little distinctive character of structural implications (**Table 44**). All the model relative markers are best visualised in Grave 4 and have a potential to guide the behavioural structure. This is why they are to be separately examined below.



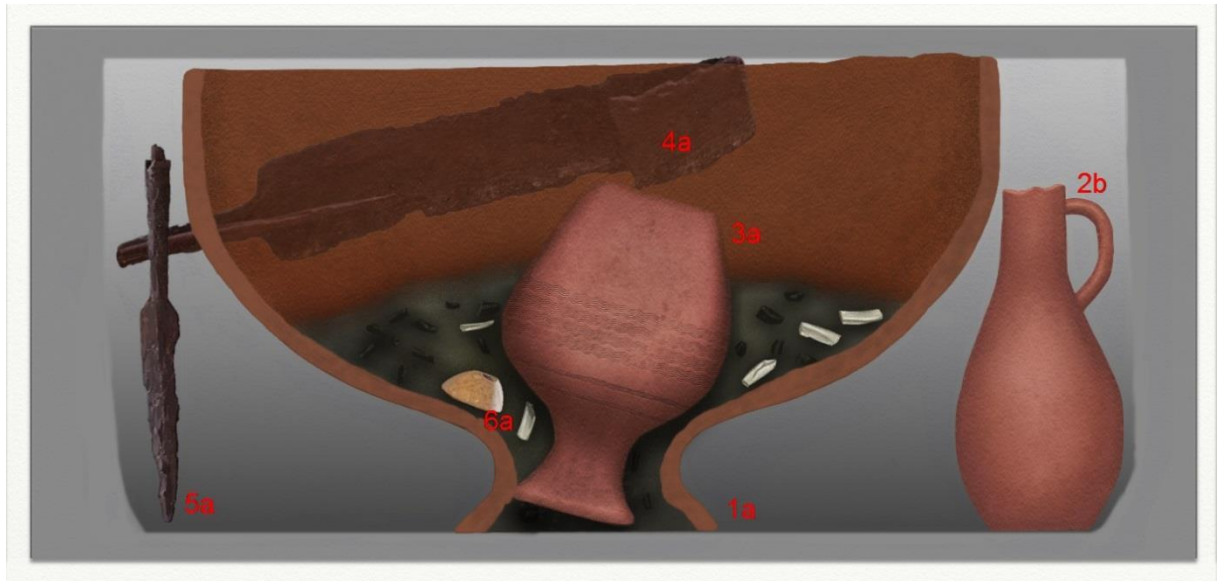
**Fig. 24. Grave Model 1. A-** Olginskoe Grave 2. **B-** Olginskoe grave 4.

However, this grave model introduces distinct structural elements. First, considering the analysis of residual pyre debris and compositional aspects of the cremains, our knowledge is quite limited. Their areal or regional character is not determined in publications except for one un-urn areal grave, which is potentially and structurally insufficient evidence for discussion.<sup>428</sup> Therefore, this issue is open for future research.

The second attentive detail seen in the profile of grave plans is a square cut with rounded corners, having reliable areal and regional comparisons to account the index of male gender (**Fig. 25**). Structurally it identifies a specific group of Shapka inhabitants, where they are

<sup>428</sup> It is an Abgidzrakhu female cremation grave 20, where cremated bone fragments are buried in the ground. Trapsh 1971:41.

relatively few.<sup>429</sup> However even the closest comparison from Mahajirov cemetery is lacking the integration of features like an inverted jug within the urn environment and an identical schema of weapon composition.<sup>430</sup> What is hard to find among Apsilian comparisons is a sword bending practice, which has symbolic meaning and surely increases the value of Grave 4. However, an identical picture of such collective behavioural practices did not find any comparisons in Apsilia. Therefore each specific one must be discussed as a single context.



**Fig. 25. The profile of the grave Model 1.** Olginskoe cremation grave 4. Grave goods: **1a.** Urn-smashed and inverted. **2b.** Jug with Broken neck. **3a.** Jug-inverted in urn within cremains. **4a.** Sword- bound and placed outside urn. **5a.** Spear head-thrust into the grave pit. **6a.** stone bead

The broad context of a smashed or chipped cinerary urn-*pithoi* inverted in the grave pit recognises the rarest urn form and earliest articulated model of body containers. The constructional specifics that lie in the conditional and positional formula are the principal criteria of funerals and perhaps a source of genetic information, as it appears in mid-imperial Apsilia within the limited community of Shapka settlement, where it is used in different ways.<sup>431</sup> But they synchronically built identical environments of burial practice in the

<sup>429</sup> Only three graves of this type have been found in the Shapka area, dating to the mid-Roman period.

<sup>430</sup> A similar model of urn, identically assisted the broken jug (non-areal type) and similarly treated body remains are evidenced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Male cremation grave 5 of Mahajirov cemetery. Unlike both Olginskoe graves, however, this urn accommodated the base of a smashed dish, three flattened arrowheads and the latest variant of leaf-shaped spearhead (the latter is similar to Olginskoe grave 2). Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov. 1990:27. Pic.21.1-8.

<sup>431</sup> Most of them are identified with a weapon-equipped male, but none of them provide identic weapon composition or articulation. Only two shows an interest in urn ploughing (Mahajirov grave 5 and Abramov grave 5). Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:24, 27. Pic.151-3; pic 21.2). For very few inhabitant was acceptable the complete *pithoi* as it found in Akhacharkhu cemetery (graves 15, 18), where the spears and knives are also observed (Trapsh 1975:21,24). Similar

immediate vicinity and two other cemeteries of Abgidzrakhu at the Steklianny hill,<sup>432</sup> and a further 3 km away in Akhacharkhu.<sup>433</sup>

The comparison spectrum makes it unclear if breakage is a gender-dictated urn condition of the earliest generations or for a male qualifying as a certain spiritual mark. The fact is that breakage is a clearly definable sign among inverted body containers, that this practice was intentional, and that *pithois* are the most inverted urn category.

The next specific matter related to the display of battle weapons is the best identifiable mark and guide to a few early Roman inhabitants of central Colchis Chkhorotsku. The most unusual to Apsilia is a bent sword, but small spearman groups of mid-imperial Apsilia are ideologically similar, buried in Apiancha and Panikin hill areas, which occur with both a spearhead and a sword thrust into the grave pit.<sup>434</sup>

The tendency for ritually damaged weapons is apparent among a few inhabitants of the Machara River, which is finally abandoned towards the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The formal knowledge of the spear thrust in the grave is recognised amongst the inhabitants of Classical-Hellenistic Colchis and 3<sup>rd</sup> century Apsilia. It simultaneously appears with sword-enacted rituals among a few mid-imperial graves of well-skilled spearman groups in the area.<sup>435</sup>

However, each of the above discussed criteria that construct the typological specifics of this grave model could be a source of genetic information. The most valuable alternatives from West Colchis blend them with Hellenistic Chkhorotsku on the right bank of the Ochkhomuri River, where such a grave structure first appeared.<sup>436</sup> This is a principal piece of evidence for a central Colchian connection, but what make them definable are body cremation practices, together with personal properties. Furthermore, Chkhorotsku community burials

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graves are also evidenced in upland Apsilia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and early-6<sup>th</sup> century (Apushta graves 5, 6. Voronov 1982:51, 64. Pic. 22.30-33. Pic.29.8, 11-26). In the male grave 3 (3 km from Olginskoe cemetery), a similarly inverted complete urn was covered with Colchian dish (Trapsh 1971:24. Tabl.II). Comparisons made clear that the inverted position of the urn was an essential element for them all, but unlike Olginskoe graves they rarely contained three potteries.

<sup>432</sup> Cremated remains of the male were similarly placed in grave 3, but differs inverted complete urn, covered with a footed Colchian dish. Trapsh 1971:24. Tabl.II.

<sup>433</sup> Remains of a high social class woman were similarly buried in the grave 11. Tapsh 1971: 97 Tabl. XXXVII.

<sup>434</sup> There is also a late roman grave of a chieftain and a representative of the same ideological community (Abgidzrakhu necropolis grave 44). Trapsh 1971:68 Tabl.XXII.17. Other evidence comes from Akhatsarakhu cremation grave 6. Trapsh 1971:96. Tabl.XXXIV. In some graves it appears broken in two pieces, but it is difficult to predict what circumstance or act processed their condition. Gunba 1978:27. Tab.XIII.1.

<sup>435</sup> The earliest evidence considers the warrior (Akhacharkhu grave 11). Both of his leaf-shaped spearheads, which dates to 260–320 AD, were thrust into the gravel pit with a sword (Biborski *Type B*). See: Trapsh 1971:96. Synchronically it appears in Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 3 (Trapsh 1971:24. Tabl.II.10). For the years 350–380, thrust spears also appear in three Apiancha graves (26, 27, 39), where urns are also inverted (Gunba 1978:35, 46. Tabl. XXIV.4, 5; XXV.6; XXXVIII.4, 5). There is only one occasion, where a spear and a knife are thrust in grave (Akhacharkhu grave 18). See in: Trapsh 1975:24. These graves are chronologically and socially distinctive.

<sup>436</sup> Khostaria 1941:90.

lack weapons placed inside the urn and are defined by an increase in depositional capacity, chronologically extending the distinguishable item types. The limitation of this practice inside Colchis is already detected, but an exact area of such habitual origin is difficult to predict. Beyond Colchis, similar but lid-covered urns with a thrust spear and a bent sword placed outside the body container are evidential in the late Roman cremation grave of Gelenjik in Ingdir burial.<sup>437</sup> Statistically however, they give strong thoughts of Colchian connections. These facts give an understanding of distinctive areal minorities using an extremely rare type of cremation burial practice, which continued over 300 years from late Hellenistic to mid-imperial Rome, with low impulses. Their synchronic appearance in two burial hills of central Apsilia (Abramov and Mahajirov) are considered from a cenotaph in the nearest vicinity of Olginskoe cemetery. This is a quite remarkable fact. Despite their sporadic increase towards the south (Steklyanny and Abgidzrakhu Hill cemeteries) they are still limited graves that suddenly disappear after the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century (in the 5<sup>th</sup> century only one such grave appears in Apushta cemetery of upland Apsilia). However, this limited practice that appears among the ‘military population’ of the Shapka area is observable during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

## **MODEL 2. Vertically placed complete urns**

This model is represented by three graves: 1, 3 and 6. The basis for their grouping is the complete condition of urns that share a common character for the vertically placed body container. Variant distinctions most likely demonstrate positional differences, distinction in urn types, and their covering practice. As an urn category it selects two-handled jars, but the individualisation of forms is viewed as two distinctive types. A broad distinction separates covered and open urn categories and the different capacity of offered items. Cremation remains spectrum defines them further, representing either slightly- or fully-fired residues of burnt human remains. Therefore, the provided data suggest splitting them into two different model variants.

### ***Variant 1: Vertically placed uncovered storage urns***

Two graves, 1 and 3, depict this model variant. Both have an uncovered body container vertically placed in the grave pit, which defines them from other variants (Fig. 26; Tables 43; 45). They provide equally treated human remains, containing ash and bone pieces. The

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<sup>437</sup> Late Khalkis Ingdir burials. OAK 1890:54. Khostaria 1941:90.

dispersal of cremated material inside the urn is also identical. Both urns receive a knife as an offering. The compositional structure of associated items is distinct, which influences the formal organisational structure. Other differing specifics of the depositional content are reflected in urn types, assembled pottery categories and glass vessels, which individualises each grave.

From the depositional character no identical comparisons are available to Olginskoe graves. Structurally these model variants are supported by eight areal comparisons, observed from 300–450 AD. It identifies similar communities inhabiting three separate areas: Shapka and Mramba in central Apsilia and Apushta in the upland part (Pshou Mountain). They show distinction in offering compositions and in the placing norm of urn corresponding objects. For a broader understanding, the comparison data gives a notion that the handled jar is specifically attributable to the female gender, except in three occasions where they appear in spearman graves. The unique structural character for both genders is recognised in the depositional arrangement regarding urn accommodated artefacts, but the increased quantity of pouring vessels is compositionally distinguishable as male-related material.<sup>438</sup> From this aspect, evidence of their use in pairs gives a feeling of relatedness to life usage in dining culture, but the meaning of such an urn selection is rather unidentified.

Structurally, the Apushta examples are similar to Olginskoe graves. An atypical component for upland Apsilian burial practices is the knife that is placed inside the urn, and a handmade, white-painted juglet. The glass vessel which may assign time- or gender-demanded elements is also similarly unusual. Small knives exceptionally occur in female burials in the same hill where Olginskoe cemetery is located.<sup>439</sup> Therefore, it could be either a time- or living place-demanded deposition. Thus, all three objects, non-essential for upland communities, are a connective link with central Apsilia.

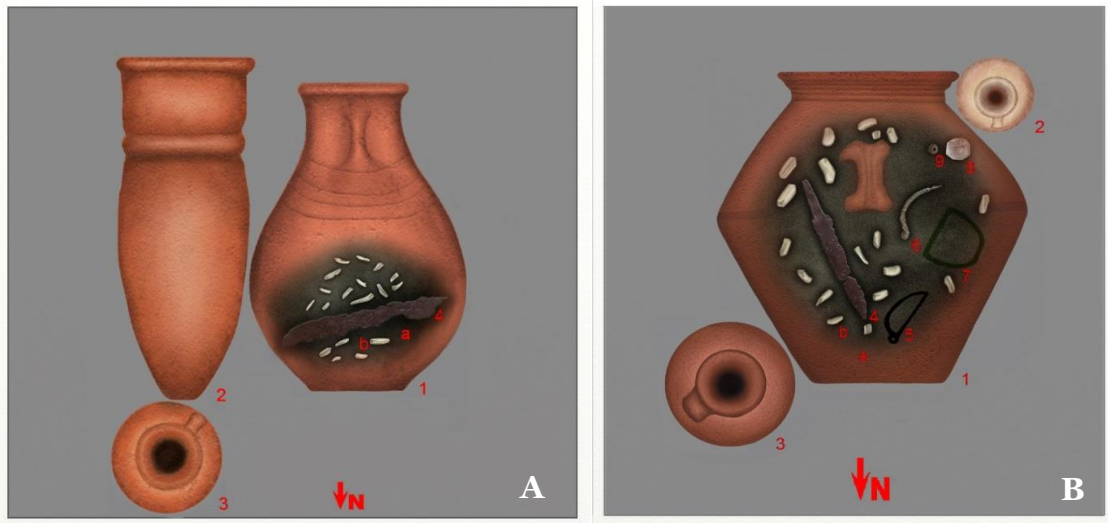
The compositional contrast that is also seen between Olginskoe graves of this model variant are expressed in the distinct morphological nature of handled jars. The most unusual pottery complex is seen in Grave 1. This type of handled jar is exclusive and correspondingly lacking as an urn in other graves in the area. It is similarly accompanied by an unknown

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<sup>438</sup> All four spearman graves with identical grave models (consisting two jugs) have been found in the village Mramba. In three of these, the urn is in lay position and two of them are covered by lid (Akhatsarakhu cremation graves 23, 47 and 56). Trapsh 1975:29, 51-54. Pic. 11a.

<sup>439</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> century woman grave, where a small knife was found, there were such rare items like an Alanian cup, bronze needle, silver earring, also a dotted and amber beads (Abramov hill cemetery grave 10). Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:25. Pic.15.20-31. Distinctive norm of depositional display is observed in cemeteres of Shapka, which is reflected in accommodation of all assembled items (pottery, jewellery, and dress attire) inside the urn. But there are also the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century female graves where lacks the knife (Alrakhu cemetery grave 2. Gunba 1978:10. Tabl.II; Abramov grave 10. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov . 1990:25. Pic.15.20-31).

storage ware category and handmade jug.<sup>440</sup> An identical composition is not accessible in Apsilia or beyond. From this aspect, the exclusive compositional spectrum may suggest the earliest variant of such urn graves, but our knowledge is limited for further discussion and it is open for new evidence and further survey.



**Fig. 26. Grave Model 2, Variant 1. A-Olginskoe grave 1. B-Olginskoe grave 3.**

Further distinction is reflected in disproportionate levels of deposition. It is defined in Grave 3 where it looks more prominent and causes broad discussion.<sup>441</sup> Recognisable structural settings give a more homogenous experience for depositional arrangement, which stands closer to the earliest known community grave structure of upland Apushta observable over the centuries.<sup>442</sup> Object choices, however, connect with females of the Mramba settlement area. It might point to certain areal specifics that directly enter into burial structures of the upland Apsilian community members. By what circumstances they may appear is speculated below. From object chronology, it may suggest later examples of grave model.

<sup>440</sup> A similar storage was also found in the male grave of the village Mramba, the selection principle of which is difficult to approach (Abgidzrakhu cemetery inhumation gave 57). Trapsh 1979:85. Tabl. XXXIII.6.

<sup>441</sup> Both graves provide new item categories such as glass vessels, two fibulae, paste beads and which are lost. Since they are not properly described in excavation protocol and there is no visual representation, it is impossible to avoid knowledge bias.

<sup>442</sup> A very accurate and classic version of depositional display can be seen in Apushta female cremation grave 4. Local pottery demonstrated by a big kitchen, a pot and dish, defines by geometric and linear ornaments, equal to the earliest Colchian pottery (Voronov 1982:51.Pic. 22.26-2; see also Alrakhu female in Grave 2. Gunba 1978:10. Tabl.II). Also, a rare character is shown in the burial complexes of two further community members. To the womens were offered steel, hoe and four spindles and male occur a spear and an axe. See Female grave 7 and ale grave 13 . Voronov 1982:51, 57.Pic. 22, 26, 25, 30-38.

Both Olginskoe graves contribute to all comparative characteristics suggestive of female gender. The physical context of the surrounding community using such models informs us that in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, female members more actively moved to central Apsilia in the Shapka area. This could be circumstantial indications of either simply moving to the south or migrating for marriage.

### ***Variant 2: Vertically placed lid-cover two handles storage urn***

*Variant 2* is a different and more elegant example of a vertically placed complete urn. It comprises Grave 6 (**Fig. 27; Table 48**). The distinctive structural principle of this model is reflected in the lid-covered body container, depicting a two handled jar covered with a plate. The arrangement is a bit off centre, remarkably pulled to the west side. It dissimilarly reveals a fully cremated body containing only ash. The urn contained two bronze *fibulae* and a glass vessel (vessel is lost). Compositionally, urn-associated deposition shows an increased level of weapon combination. They are unusually arranged on three sides of the urn. From an offering spectrum it introduces new pottery and weapon categories representing the plate, square-shaped spearhead (bodkin-headed), and a battle axe.

Comparison basis insured the stylistic and compositional similarities of the model structure.<sup>443</sup> Structurally it contributes a number of regional differences because the covered form of the urn is estimated to be of Colchian character, and the urn category identifies with practices in the area of upland Apsilia. Typologically both produce a chronologically decisive model for the lid cover category.

Stylistically, it shows a typical depiction of lid-covered urn graves, which can be recognised as of a Colchian nature and ensures the continuity of local habit, as the earliest comparisons from the area provide evidence of urns covered with Colchian footed dishes.<sup>444</sup> that were rotated at the bottom of the jug from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in the Shapka area, until the

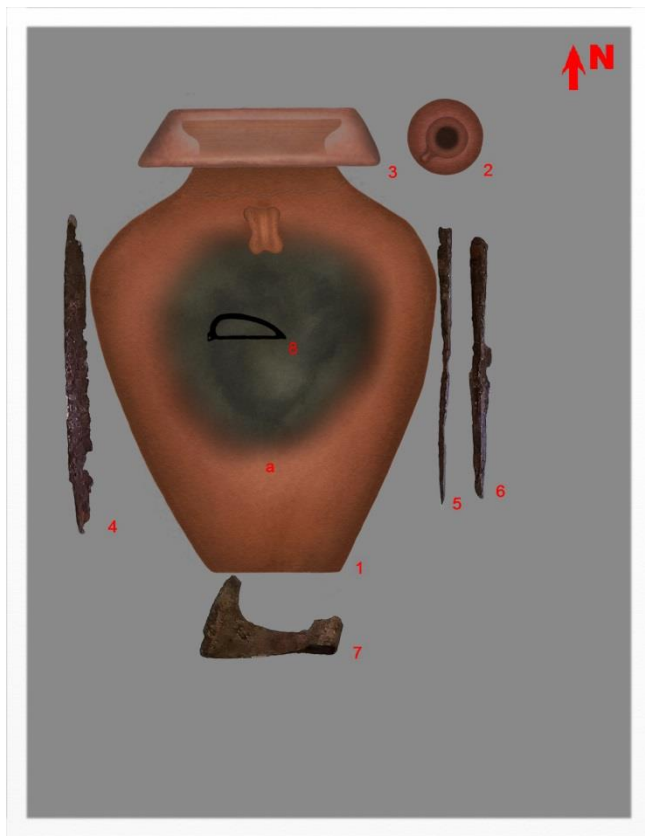
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<sup>443</sup> An identical practice and urn category is viewed a prominent horseman (Akhatsarakhu cremation grave 47). He was dug in a square pit of 130 x 80 and 35 cm deep, was better protected with a rounded shield and well supplied with higher quality weapon categories. Distinction in object display depends on offering quantity and types. The variety of his weapon categories was a time-demanded factor and also consequence of distinctive combat skills, which indicates a best qualified warrior. His weapons also include two triangular types, one identical square-shaped spearhead and an identical battle axe. Ather belongings were sharpening bone and coins that are not unidentifiable (1.8 cm diameter, 1 mm thickness). Horse harness indicates that he was a horseman. Harnesses include two square and segmented bronze buckles possibly of a snaffle, bridle fittings, comprising 20 examples of different silver plates (with animal and bird representations), and a bell. There are several silver oval and square fittings of a horse saddle tracing 1 mm wooden fragments. It may prove the appearance of Germanic horse bits. See: Trapsh 1975:51-54. Tabl.XII.7.

<sup>444</sup> Tsebelda cemetery cremation graves 1–70, 1–66. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136, 138. Pic. 8, 9. They are usually accompanied by two jugs and a deep dish, one or two triangular spears, an imported battle axe, two darts, seldom a small knife, and occasionally an imported sword. Local high foot dishes were used as lid cover in Abgidzrakhu cemetery cremation grave 3; Trapsh 1971:24.Tabl.II.



appearance of a regionally copied fine ware similar to Olginskoe was introduced after 350 AD.<sup>445</sup>



**Fig. 27. Grave Model 2, Variant 2.** Cremation grave 6 of the Olginskoe cemetery.

The grave content:

1. Urn. Two handled storage jar
2. Jug.
3. Plate (LRCW).
4. Dagger
5. Square spear head
6. Triangular spearhead
7. Battle Axe.

An important fact is that lid-covered urns first came into view in prominent warrior graves of Tsebelda in 200–270 AD.<sup>446</sup> This practise later became characteristic for other parts of central Apsilia towards the south.<sup>447</sup> All this proves that the covered form of urn was a predecessor of inverted urns in the area (which began appearing slightly later in the mid-imperial phase). The

<sup>445</sup> In the late roman period such lids were replaced by '*terra sigillata*' and its copies as evidenced in six inhumation burials of heavily equipped (well defended by shields) soldiers (See Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 6, 43, 44 in: Trapsh 1971:25-27, 65-66; Tabl.III; Tabl.XXI.1,4. Tabl. XXII.2. Abgidzrakhu grave 13, Apiancha grave 3, see in: Gunba 1978:23, 43, 45. Pl.XIII.1, 2; XXXV.1, 2; Verin Hill cemetery grave 76 see in: Voronov, Shenkao 1982:142). These graves also show the integration of local traditional aspects into the new belief system.

<sup>446</sup> It was first evidenced in cremation graves 1–82 (Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.7.6. 13-29). In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century such urn graves were gradually spread to south in Apiancha (Apiancha grave 36 see in: Gunba 1978:42-43.Tabl.XXXIII). A little later, lid-covered urns were used by substantial minorities of Apsilia, majority of which are evidenced in the Abgidzrakhu necropolis of village Mramba (Warrior graves 6 and 44. See: Trapsh 1971:25-27, 67-68. Tabl. III, XXII).

<sup>447</sup> This became characteristic of the Shapka inhabitant of the mid-imperial time. Most of them were evidenced in the necropolises of the village Maramba, among which are defines the graves of prominent warrior (Abgidzrakhu graves 6,44). The burial complexes of the most prominent warrior shows a typical resemblance of two jugs with amphorae and glass, two spearheads, a knife, one fibula, two buckles, and one amber bead. An additionally assembled a shield fitted by Dobrodzieri/Zieling bosses and German horse bits (Abgidzrakhu gave 44.Trapsh 1971:25-27, 67-68.Tabl. III, XXII). In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century, such burials are also evidenced further south in Apiancha (Apiancha cemetery cremated spear man grave 36 see in: Gunba 1978:42-43.Tabl.XXXIII).

lid covering practice might exist independently from belief, while appearing in inhumation graves of central Apsilia.

However, the covered urn is direct evidence of Colchian practice, but noticeable is that covering practice was typically used for the pithoi urn and not for the handled jars, defining the Olginskoe *Variant 2*. The handed jar is unusual for its classical structure, which is an indication of distinction or change. Analyses of *Variant 1* give an understanding about the structural origin of such urn graves in the upland Apsilian part of Apushta. From the urn type, which is an equally unusual pattern for the male grave, there is minimal evidence for comparison. From the gender aspect, such containers should not be placed unquestionably in the weapon grave and that is a point. The closest Akhatsarakhu comparison of a prominent horseman buried with identical practices ensures the graphical and compositional similarities of grave structure of identical community members. However, an increased spectral picture of his weaponry with high quality protective categories explains their dissimilar arrangement, which might depend on weapon capacity.<sup>448</sup> In any case, they are similarly conformable to small community groups outside the Apushta area, probably moving to new living places towards the south, which defines some males of mixed tribal descent as being in local security duty. Chronologically decisive grave goods categories determine this model variant as an indication of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century

### **MODEL 3. Horizontally placed and uncover urns**

A key graphical distinction of this model is seen in the laid placement of complete and uncovered urn-pithoi, placed horizontally in the grave pit. It is seen in Grave 5 (**Fig. 28; Table 47.**). From the urn category it is similar to Model I, but is defined with conditions. The human body is fully cremated and only an ash residue remains, similar to *Variant 2* of Model II. A knife placed inside the urn environment is also a norm, as in Model I and *Variant 1* of Model II. Compositional distinction is reflected in new depositional categories introducing *amphorae*, conical glass vessels, and a new shape of spearhead.

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<sup>448</sup> Remains of this individual were buried in a square-cut grave of 130 x 80 cm in Akhatsarakhu grave 47. The time factor is recognizable in distinctive offering types. All three jugs are placed to the west of the body container. The urn was covered with similar plate of different origin. A dissimilar arrangement of weapons is noticeable. It includes two triangular and an identical square-formed spearhead, battle axe and rounded shield. Horse harnesses dispersed in the northwestern part of the grave are strong evidence for a well-qualified warrior -horsemen. Harnesses are extended by two square and segmented bronze buckles (possibly of a snaffle), its bridle fittings extending of 20 different silver plates with animal representation and a similar amount with bird representation; the bell, several silver oval and square fittings of horse saddle (tracing 1 mm wooden fragments) and Germanic horse bits included as well. Trapsh 1975:51-54. Tabl.XII.7



**Fig. 28. Grave Model 3.** Cremation grave 5 of the Olginskoe cemetery.

The grave content:

1. Urn (Pithoi)
2. Jug of hemispheric shape
3. Amphora
4. Glass vessel
5. Soket fragment of spear head
6. Triangular spear head
7. Seax
8. Buckle
9. Bow fibular (coil banded)

Structural distinction might explain the horizontal position of the cinerary urn which guides new roots and corresponding organisational specifics. The conditional and proportional aspect of selected objects seems to be influential and decisive for the urn and the corresponding arrangement of offerings. This may exactly explain the horizontal position of the proportionally largest urn-*pithoi* and *amphora*, identically directed to the west. The same reason may influence a similar arrangement of spearheads placed in the north next to the amphorae. The positioning of the conical glass vessel between the *amphora* and body container may be due to either practical or ideological concerns. It is notable that the east-placed jug somehow keeps a closer position between them. The focus of the structure can be recognised in the complex of all four drink-related objects, which is a considerable aspect of this grave type. This may be grounded by a particular metamorphic sense and new structure.

This model succeeded earlier and entered the burial custom of Apsilia from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, synchronically with other Colchian sites. Structurally it creates a new funerary environment, an arrangement that becomes easy to identify through amphorae and glass vessels. Both items are central to this design and a standard structural mark for the complexes with similar ideological programs that identify the frontier military graves worldwide (further details in the chapter *Burial Custom*). It becomes the basic structural form for certain military

groups associable with well-qualified warriors. This fact synchronises the process of areal development and is indicative of changes in grave structure.

At least 10 warrior graves provide evidence for the same model structure in Central Apsilia, and they are all buried in the Shapka area, over the burial hills of Mramba village<sup>449</sup> and the southern vicinity of Apiancha.<sup>450</sup> Interestingly, they are not evidenced among the cremation graves of Tsebelda in upland Apsilia. They appear possibly in 380–400 AD, but are most coherent in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and finally disappear in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>451</sup>

Horizontal pithos-urns without drink related assemblages have a long history in the Colchian funerary environment, but in Apsilia they are first observed in the Tsebelda area among the earliest 2<sup>nd</sup> century grave complexes, at a time it appears quite rarely in the entire Colchis.<sup>452</sup> When the new drink element of a glass vessel occurs in such graves, it naturally carries a particular meaning for warriors and transforms into a new category structure which identically gets featured in the inhumation practice of highly mobile groups of warriors.<sup>453</sup> This is exactly what made it the most distinctive, as well as providing new information that may explain changes in burial customs as a matter of time-appropriate practice. Therefore, Model III carries a chronological meaning and is responsible for the identification of certain warriors among the military power sources.

From the weapon spectrum, they provide remarkable dissimilarities in distantly increased amounts, categories, and quality. Such structures are most distinctive by deposition and integrate groups of archers, spearmen, and lancers additionally protected by a shield and sword.<sup>454</sup> In this context for the less well equipped Olginskoe individual, we miss close areal

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<sup>449</sup> Of these, relatively earliest can be considered the graves of three warriors buried in different cemeteries (Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 27, 44 and Alrakhu cemetery grave 8. See: Trapsh 1971:44,67. Tabl. XI, XXII and Gunba 1978).

<sup>450</sup> Apiancha cremation grave 40. Gunba 1978:17,47. Tabl.VIII, XIX.

<sup>451</sup> Apiancha cemetery cremation graves 8 and 21. Gunba 1978:17,29. Tabl. VIII; XX. Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 6, 27, 44. pic 6. Trapsh 1971:2. Weapon spectrum shows a functional distinction of warriors.

<sup>452</sup> There are 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century comparisons of Tsebelda cemetery cremated graves 1–82, 1–70. The earliest pithoi-urn of Apsilia is evidenced in the village Mramba, in the Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 6. Trapsh 1971:29. Table.III. Beyond Apsilia such graves are discovered in 2<sup>nd</sup> century Sagvarjile Cave, at the left bank of Dzevrula River (unpublished information); Other three graves are observed among the inhabitants village Mramba (Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 37, Aukhuamakhu cremation grave 3 and Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 23 see in: Trapsh 1971:59, 116. Tabl. XXXIX); Trapsh 1975:29.).

<sup>453</sup> Vertically placed pithois are evidenced in inhumation warriors' graves of Tsebelda cemetery: 1-79, 1-104, 1-73, 1a-2. Voronov 1982:136, 143, Pic.7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15.

<sup>454</sup> Such burials demonstrate well protected archers such as seen in early 5<sup>th</sup> century Abgidzrakhu cemetery cremation grave 27. He was supplied with identic triangular spears (with half midrib), seax and imported sword (with two blood grooves); there were additional weapons the lance, various arrows and crossbow bolt. His shield suspended the *Chapka* type boss. Trapsh 1971:44-47. Tabl. XI. Such picture occasionally appears among the spearman groups of Apiancha area (see the cremation grave 8 of Apiancha cemetery. Gunba 1978:17. Tabl.VIII).

comparisons<sup>455</sup> but we may speculate that he was either a poorly supplied but highly experienced member of the local allies or expensive weapons were not deposited in the grave. In fact, the model structure and offering nature gives a perspective for his involvement in specific warrior groups of Apsilia. The actual cause for their concentration in the central part seems to be due to the most activated road sections and the emergence of professionally managed security.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 2. 5 Cremains display and methodological concern**

There are recognisable distinctions among cremated body remains in their consistency in producing two different cremains categories. First is a powder-like ash residue that is evidenced in graves 5 and 6. Another is ash mixed with bone fragments that characterises the other four graves 1, 2, 3, and 4 (**Table 42. A-D**). This is an applicable result of a distinctly regulated fire temperature wherein the first category, powder-like texture, results from the full cremation of the deceased. The second is ash mixed with bone fragments, which may be explained as a partial cremation of the deceased. Unfortunately, a distinction among the bone fragments is not executable anymore, which limits the examination of further methodological diversities.<sup>456</sup>

This remarkable variation of the treatment of the deceased processed in two different ways seems to be linked with methodological diversity, but no full explanation has been found for the choice of full or partial cremation. Two male graves (5, 6) with full cremation could either be a matter of time or certain practices (**Table 42. E-F**). However, it is uncertain if the rest of the four graves with ash-mixed bone pits may explain the technological principles of earlier appearance. It is surely not a gender-demanded factor presented in Colchian archetypes, where females were deeply treated in fire,<sup>457</sup> but there is a further distinction seen in the

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<sup>455</sup> In terms of weapon spectrum, relatively closer stands the Apiancha spearman grave 21 (cremation). He was similarly equipped with two spears and a seax. Gunba 1978:29. Tabl.XX.

<sup>456</sup> Small bone fragments are considered to be from the lower and cooler part of the pyre, during the initial stage of cremation process. Larger ones considered to indicate the lack of a pyre-tending, which may serve to break up the bones (See Booth P. and etc. 2008:331). Look at this aspect in further publications: Noy 2000; Williams 2002; Downes 1999; Metcalf and Hungtington 1991; e.g. Niblett 1999; Burkert 1987.

<sup>457</sup> There is Greek-Roman textual information that male cremation was not allowed in Colchis. Male decease were wrapped in animal skin and hung up on a tree (Nymphodor of Syracuse, Apollonius of Rhodes (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC), Nikoloz from Damascus (2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD) and Claudius Aelianus are recording that. See: Latishev V. 1886:409). In the Medieval Age male decease were placed in a wooden box and hung on a tree covered with leather – sois it mentioned in 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century

deposition of pyre debris that appears in graves of a non-areal character. It is still difficult to say if it could be a basic pattern for a certain community that underwent a change from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 2. 6 The funerary custom of Olginskoe cremation graves**

*Structural and practical concern of burial custom and related offerings.* Olginskoe society belongs to the group of areal minorities that were ideologically committed to body cremation. A ‘secondary rite expressed in the cremation of the deceased’ is a basic feature of each grave. This was processed into different particles, thereafter dispersed inside the cinerary container and buried in the ground. A case in point of this concept is an individually cremated human body, perhaps fully dressed and without personal adornments (as the lack of burning on personal properties is suggestive of that condition). This character distinguishes them from several cremation graves in Apsilia.<sup>458</sup> It is also evidence that gives perspective for speculation about the existence of a separate pyre place somewhere in the nearest surroundings, where the body cremation might be executed. All the damage seen in the condition of grave offerings and thought to be processed during the funeral could have occurred at the pyre location, as their fragments are lacking in graves. The strongest argument for the existence of a separate pyre place might be the absence of *in situ* burning in the grave pit.

Olginskoe cemetery graves provide practices showing that structure and offering deposition are equally important. They enhance the meaning of differences reflected in their types and related funeral practices. This considers a differently implemented schema of deposition that shows similarities and dissimilarities in model structure. Their schema makes it obvious that Olginskoe cemetery incorporated the consideration of three reintegrated structural models focusing on distinct types of burial practices. All three model structures evidently provided several versions of thoughts and visions. This is well recognisable in the choice of deposition, rituals and performances, which had a powerful effect on distinct communities of Apsilia, but they are in contact on a certain structural level and that is the

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sources (Turkish traveler Evlia Cheleb, Georgian geographer Vakhushti Bagrationi, and Italian traveler Archangelo Lamberti. See: Lamberti A. 1913:189-190; Bagrationi V. 1941:72).

<sup>458</sup> According to Trapsh the cremation of human body together with personal properties is more confirmed in the necropolises of the village Mramba. Trapsh 1971:123.

point. Such contact is seen in functional transformations of offerings, their compositional term, and principles exposing original ideas. The use of storage wares for body cremains is a link of similarities. The standardisation of the conventionally set three pottery items identifies their common compositional term. A broad principle binds together storage and two drink related wares. Drink related ware is rooted in a pouring vessel that only in one case was combined with a transit ware. Therefore, pouring wares seem to be a traditional choice. This statement is common for their structure, but perhaps is adopted as an areal or certain regional trait. What significantly defines them is the commemorative practice and related funerals well reflected in performances. Urns and weapons are central components providing the most important means for structural diversity, but urn modelling is a key element viewing various aspects in structures and is fundamental for distinction. The most visible form of burial custom is expressed in the modelling of the central body container and structure of associated offerings. This formal and practical aspect recognises two general conditional models. It is reflected in broken and inverted urns and complete body containers, but their representational concept produces three further positional variants of complete body containers. This builds distinct funerary models directly in structural units and through corresponding settings. These settings are explained in item position, condition, and composition. There are somewhat notable operational principles and customised components, distinctive in several ways, informing not only about differences in structures but how they were developed. This is exactly what gives an understanding of appropriate time and space.

Therefore, Olginskoe cemetery burial practices consider three typo-conditional formulas of body containers and appropriate modelling with very specific commemorations. These models are an implication of hidden cognitive thoughts, ideological insight, and knowledge systems transmitted through generations, and that is all that matters. Evidence showed that community members using Model 1 (broken-inverted *pithoi* urns) focus heavily on the Hellenistic past of the Central Colchian community. They prefer damage and rituals in their practices to provide a memory link. The first variant of this model (Grave 1, 3) is the best evidence for a homogenous link since this effectively incorporates vertically placed uncovered urns, which makes connections between areal traits and regional practices. *Variant 2*, representing lid covered urn (Grave 6), is a revival of the ancient past with a unique concept of classic ancestors and identifies the grave model for certain northern Apsilian communities. Model 3 (Grave 5), producing a horizontally placed *pithoi* urn with intercultural habitual settings, outlines individual experiences and makes more representative the burial practice of younger generations, which changed over the time. This might be an optimal

model for a good reputation. They survived in the friendly environment of Olginskoe, but each has similar units among the population of Apsilia and beyond. All of this gives an understanding of the coexistence of different communities not only within Olginskoe society, but in the surrounding area.

Central to the burial practices of Olginskoe society is the need for life-influenced deposition that is distinctly transmitted to the afterlife, perhaps to keep ideas about their custom. They are associated with eight separate deposit categories including food-related kitchen and storage wares, drink-related transit or tablewares, kitchen knives, dress accessories, jewellery, belt fasteners, and weaponry. It is notable that the storage jars, pouring vessels, and knives are the most favoured in their custom. Small juglets remain close for use only in the funeral as part of special occasions perhaps for eternity, but the plate, amphorae and glass vessel are a limited set verifying structural and ideological changes in burial customs. The offering selection views evaluated items and how related the dining and commemorative cultures are. Their role is explained in actions and conditions which are influenced by varying ideas. The *pithoi*, jug, sword, and spearhead are solid constituents of a ritual framework. Indeed, they were part of daily use in different conditions, but the selection of body container, sword, and spearhead sometimes views appropriate audiences and changing of roots when interaction is caused by specific ideas. In such cases, pottery is the most functional category that is leading the custom, because the storage wares are more emotionally presented by their usage in the afterlife when accommodating the body remains of their owner (well recognised in Grave 2 and 4). They are touched with emotions and cognition that is performed through their breakage and display practices. This enters differently in funerals and also makes sense for their structural diversity. Such properties like dress accessories and knives seem to be left beyond symbolic attention, as their existence in burial practice is simplified. Other associated items in the jewellery category, hemispheric glass vessel, seax, and axe are also seen as wealth, but they are obviously experience-demanded categories that give imagination to how they might be practised in graves. Their remarkable nature should be also noted as gender qualifying. In any case, they support habitual character on a social level and picture experiences in life (dining, clothing and etc.). However, each object carries a relative task to the funerary practice they were involved in and makes each burial practice very conservative, and they obviously show distinct life influences and the role of society. However, the whole range of burial practice reflects their identity, function, and social structure.



### ***Ideological spectrum***

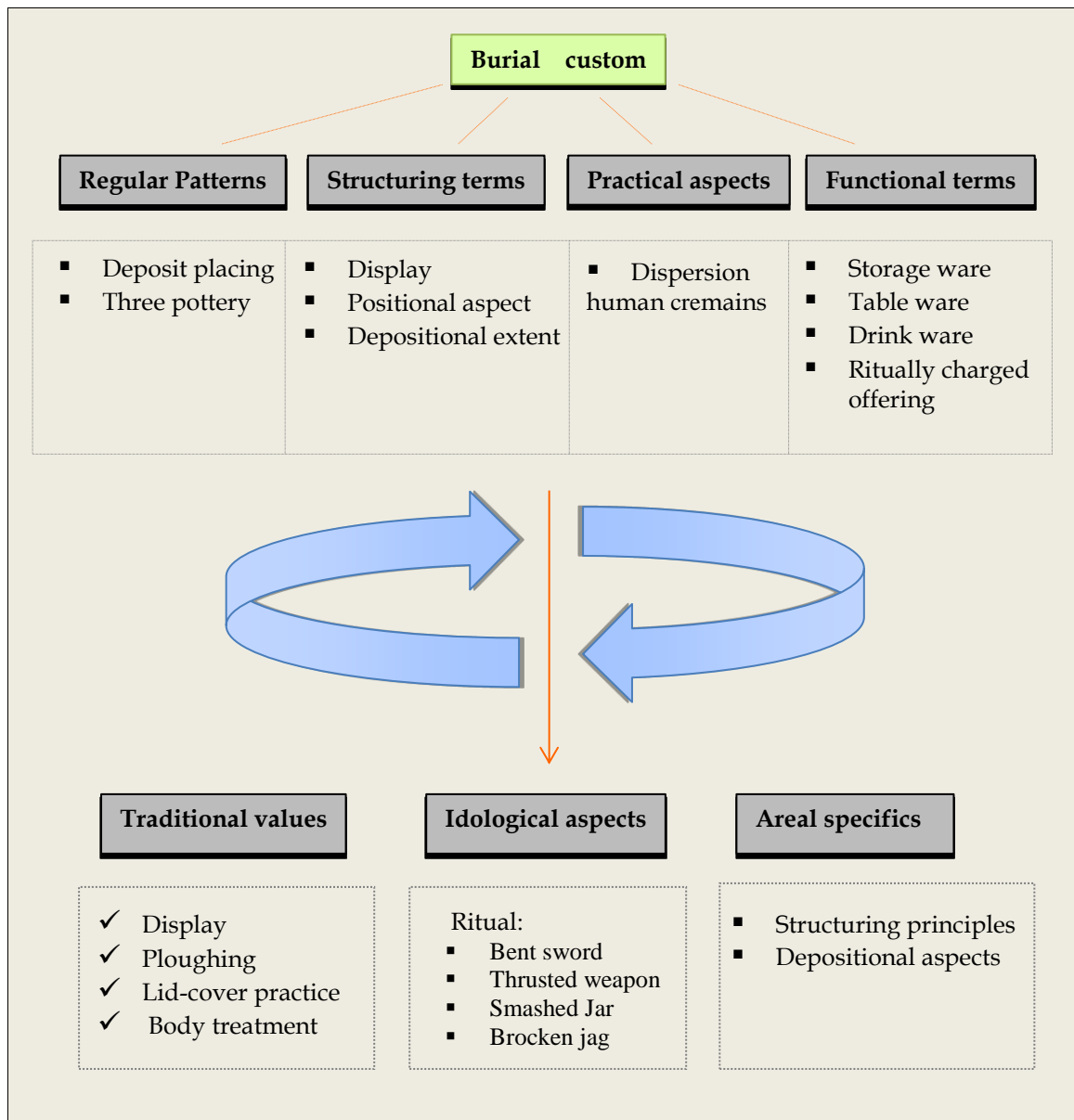
Item choice, their purpose and acts are an opportunity to understand the underlying phenomenon of burial custom (**Fig. 29**). Each grave type outlines the significance of their emotions derived from cognition and experiences. This played a decisive role in shaping behaviours, specified in funeral structures. We also see how ideas interact with a variety of constructional norms, dictated by what they believed, valued, and their attitude. This organised ritual scenarios, multicultural articulations, and different cognitive practices, building a different past. It is an ideological insight into complex audiences, mapping three ideological fields in Olginskoe burial customs that are visible between offering functions and performances; and enabling us to distinguish different minority

### ***Ritual occasions***

The first totally distinct funerary vision is visible in Grave 2 and 4. They show damaged items, acting as a spiritual disposal and entering their basic funerary structure. Within this depositional schema, not all selected items are members of Apsilian material culture, and they are definitely non-ritual in nature.

The imitative part of their symbolic images, binding both individuals, is following the cosmological order of life and death. Phenomenon of rejecting complete pottery and items that were smashed and damaged brought the most negative thoughts, which is the strongest distinctive point of this custom. Damaged components may be associated with a disturbed life for the buried individual. The disposal smashed inverted urns, assisted with deliberately broken jugs and a similarly inverted jug produce structure that may provide its own framework for binding the life and afterlife transformation process together. Preliminary smashing of the body container, which is leading element, could proceed during the cremation of the deceased for synchronizing the sense of ‘transition’. This act may symbolised by an inverted jug. Their direct ideological influence is uncertain, but both encode spiritual disposal taken from a distinct geographic area, evidently for producing similar identification.

This is the particular ritual context of pithoi and jug, sword and spearhead, which are the active daily life objects and hence hold selective significance for the ritual they are part of. A direct link between the object choice and ritual sense might be circumstantial, in which spiritual and practical perspectives drive an understanding of the funeral. In fact, preliminary breakage of pottery, which has no practical concern and might be ineffective for the transportation of cremains from pyre place to burial, is set upside down in the grave pit as logical appearance of its smashed condition.



**Fig. 29.** Chart of burial custom.

Another mystery reflected in spiritually charged damaged weapons, is intact sword that is deliberately bent and a spearhead thrust into the ground outside the urn. The transformational process of the afterlife may see in ways of body container interacts with objects of power. Bent sword and thrust spearhead produce an intrinsic form of funerary vision. Assisted mood and emotions could be well driven from gender concepts. Valuable imported sword acknowledges someone with important personification or skills, which might an alternative cause for the committed ritual act. It is not easy to explain the true significance of the intact and bent sword, but symbolically it gives perspectives to be associated with the popular concept of 'shifted battle' that causes death. Such performances might link with military context as applied in practices of different cognitive groups and similarly central in certain

warrior graves worldwide (interestingly they are all cremated burials).<sup>459</sup> Therefore, it has less impact on biological identity.

The third component of this ideological program is the thrusting of the spear (**Table 25. A**). Its primary function is uncertain, but may similarly conceptualise the military authority to approach the memories of his success and fighting skills. The mind-set of such performances was adopted by small spearman groups of the Shapka area, which does not distinguish between cremated or inhumed warriors.<sup>460</sup> This practice no longer exists in Apsilia after the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Multicultural articulation*

New ideological field and funerary vision appears in grave 5. A quite attentive ‘drink-related repertoire’ reflect unusual commemorative environment, which may have been influenced by external factors, while conceptually and emotionally it bands the global context of military graves, applying from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. A spiritual link of such drink-related composition do not excluded using a metaphor of the wine cult.<sup>461</sup> But in fact, it appears in warrior graves with multicultural impulses that did not distinguish any Pagan or Christian individuals.<sup>462</sup> It is well observed in Andernach graves<sup>463</sup> Eastern sites of Israel (identical choice of amphora, glass, jug and conical glass provided at the Beth She’arim in a Jewish grave dated to 352 AD), Syrian El-Bassa,<sup>464</sup> Nubia (provided assemblage consists of amphorae, red jar and conical glass vessel. It should be noted that it is the most insignificant shape of glass vessels), Qasr Ibrim<sup>465</sup> and Qustul.<sup>466</sup> Their ambiguous appearance in late imperial Apsilian warrior graves matches this context, indicating that it was not only an areal, but a worldwide

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<sup>459</sup> A similar context may have the 1<sup>st</sup> century cremation graves of the middle Danube (Stilfried grave unlike occur a ring-pommel sword. See: Imperium Romanum. 2005-2006:87), Hamburg-Marmstorf, and Schleswig-Holstein (Archaeology.2009:23). Other two graves from Baltic region are Gaffken (Nowakowski 1994:383. Abb. 2) and Vranovic (Peska. Droberjar. 1994:297. Abb.15). Continuation of a similar ritual among the late-roman military community is also observed in further areas Mikulov (Breslav) and Valatice (in Brno-venkov the scissors are bound as well. Lances are also bounded in the cremation grave of Sitborice (Breslav).), Vranovice (Prostejov. see: Droberjar. Peska 1994:271. Abb.3.10). The 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century graves of Kompanichi (Grave 86) and Oselivka ((Grave 70) are of a similar nature). See: Kazanski 1994:467. Fig.153, 10.

<sup>460</sup> Devined spears and imported sword are evidenced in mid-roman Grave 11 of Akhatsarakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971:96.

<sup>461</sup> Amphorae bottom found in the Akhacharkhu male grave contained the wine substance. Puturidze 2001:89. See further literature: Philpott 1991; Fitzpatrick 1997; Millet 1993:258 Polfer 2000.

<sup>462</sup> A similar habits are shared within the community buried in the western part of Mayen tombs (wine jugs, cones, and bowls), which included the sarcophagus and eight graves (1, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 24). Haberey W. 1947.

<sup>463</sup> A glass vessel was placed at the foot of the deceased. Morin-Jean, p.266.

<sup>464</sup> A similar combination of conical glass vessel and two jugs is also evidenced in the Syrian Christian tomb of El-Bassa, which dates to the 378-396 AD. Lliffe, p.81-89. El.Bassa.

<sup>465</sup> Graves 9 (192 B) and 7 (192 A). James, p.43. ed The cemeteries of Qasr Ibrim. Pl. XL; XLVII.

<sup>466</sup> An amphorae and glass cone occur in tumulus tombs 3 and 14 of Qustul, dating to 363-378 AD. Higashi 1990.

phenomenon corresponding with unexplained practices established among certain military groups.

However, quite militarised worldwide funerary environment of this practice develops further thoughts about the funerary propaganda, in which a ‘drink-related item disposal’ shapes a certain form of military funerary practices in areas of Roman military influence. Perhaps it comes with the legitimacy of military authority achieved in wide-ranging battle experiences. The practical consideration of this set, consisting of imported glass vessels, amphorae and local jugs, illustrate their functional imagery in valuable daily life. This gives understanding to certain authoritarian warriors in Apsilia and their high social support, which may be achieved through experiences in global battle fighting, to achieve military worth and possibly make their life special. This multicultural funerary attitude sharply separates the well supplied heavily equipped *sagittarii*<sup>467</sup> and the well skilled spearman group of *foederati* type with ‘recruitment’ qualification.<sup>468</sup>

In fact, it was a component of a new socio-political environment and wide political program, which has simultaneously been evidenced over the military sites of Colchis at Pithius and Tsikhisdziri in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>469</sup> It followed the militarisation of the area, which may connect with the eastern frontier line (see the appropriate chapter) but it is difficult to predict, considering the easy integration into the local burial practice, which was introduced by power politics. Some synchronic areal warrior graves with social abilities did not accept a new funerary element within traditional burial practice and they remain limited in military sites.

### ***Ideology of pagan (?) society***

The other buried individuals (grave 1, 2, 3, 6) lead with intellectual ideas and focus on their biological identity. One of this ways is highlighting personification, which enriches the ideological field. Different and contrasting depositions return equivalent value to the personification of their owner. These specifics may also concern the role of personal representation provided by the modification of the urn and assisted property. In fact, both are essential funerary components and a real source of personal data.

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<sup>467</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 27. He was a shield (with Chapka type boss) protected warrior. Trapsh 1971: 44. Tabl. XI.

<sup>468</sup> In Apsilia distinguishes the Abgidzrakhu cemetery inhumation graves 12 and 13. In general, such warrior types are characterized by specific equipment. Some are protected by imported shields fitted with bosses of *Malaesty* (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 12), *Csongrád/Zieling* (Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 41); few shows a square shield (Officer grave 44 in Abgidzrakhu cemetery). They often carried Nydam type swords (Tserkovni hill 4, 5, 6; Alrakhu 8 a; Apiancha 21. Tabl.XI). All of them had standardized height of 1.7–1.8 cm.

<sup>469</sup> Tsikhisdziri grave 4. Inaishvili 1993:82.Pl.XXXII.

Burial custom illustrate pagan society of Olginskoe conceptually connected with body cremation practice. But, if we look deep into their imaginations and burial custom, however, some elements may even contradict the pagan views. Such is the appearance of cross-shaped *fibulae* in the destroyed grave 11. These fastening elements are seldom visible in cremation graves of Apsilia, which occurs in socially prominent graves.<sup>470</sup> This gives controversial messages about social disabilities, if like explain cremation from social aspect. This makes unclear which matter of choice gives the right explanation for the appearance of cross-shaped fasteners in cremation graves—the jewellery function that may reflect the clothing of pagan society as well, or social disability? Other perspectives are in fact limited, but judgmental for their representational concept.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 2. 7 ANALYSES OF OLGINSKOE GRAVE GOODS**

Olginskoe society is offered with life-used objects. They include household items, weapons and several personal articles. From the first-hand excavation information we know that the total amount of recognisable objects in grave assemblages extends up to 130 objects,<sup>471</sup> but they have currently decreased to 118 objects and we are left with just 18 pottery wares, 1 surviving glass vessel (from three listed), 6 fibulae, 3 buckles, 76 various beads, 13 weapons including 7 spearheads, 5 iron knives, 1 sword, and an axe. Their survival basis presents the pottery wares as fragmented, the metal items intact and corroded or with missing parts. These types make recognisable the protocol's attached drawings and museum illustrations, but it is difficult to be fully informed about the shapes of lost items.

A leading category is pottery. Personal articles are poorly presented. Jewellery types and dress fasteners are few: six survive from complete burials. They are more common in destroyed graves, producing most of their categories. Provided object types do not fit the complete picture of materials from Apsilian sites, which may explain distinction in social

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<sup>470</sup> Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 44 of prominent soldier. Offered glass vessel was decorated with an engraved cross. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>471</sup> Recorded only the composition of 11 graves (1–6, 7, 8, 9, 11). The material containing the rest seven graves are only briefly mentioned, but without any statistic of each corresponding grave material. The excavator also mentions 30 objects of stray finds from the vicinity that include pottery, metal and glass items. Gdzlishvili 1946.

level and particular practices. However, they are able to provide fragmented historical episodes of the population of the area.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 2. 7. 1 Pottery**

Pottery is an important part of the Olginskoe grave assemblages that were recovered from the six complete graves. A recent catalogue produces 16 wares with different functional groups, shapes, and values. They correspond to the transit, storage and tableware categories. Principal types are *amphorae*, *pithoi*, two-handled jar, jug, and plate. Most pots are tableware extended by 8 pouring vessels and one plate. The number of storage pottery is few and presented by 6 distinctive wares. They correspond to similar wares for domestic supply, widely distributed in most cemeteries of the Machara and Kodori valleys.

Typologically, they are individual variants and do not occur in pairs; but are classified into basic functional groups and according to their morphologic, typological and stylistic features. Fabric categories drive locally produced or imported groups and that chronological sequence is reflected in fabric-defining parameters. It gives an idea of mostly locally made pottery, perhaps of cheap market value, and leads to knowledge about their shapes and the activities they carried.

#### ***Local storage wares***

There are two main types of storage categories: *pithoi* and two-handled jar. All six examples belong to the regional morphologically large ware categories. Functionally they address private and public use, either to store dry food or hold grain. Broad categories illustrating food and liquid storing wares are similar to those found in Apsilian houses or storage areas, but in grave practices they might have been used in a funeral for the purpose of transporting cremated human remains removed from pyre place. In fact, both categories were the commonly used cinerary wares and gender-demanded categories in burial custom. However, presented categories are regional morphological types and differ in several ways that are discussed below.

***PITHOIS.*** *Pithoi* are the largest storage ware, attested in three examples in Olginskoe cemetery grave 2, 4, and 5. They remain as classifiable diagnostic fragments consisting of the rim-neck, neck-body, and body-bottom. Proportionally, both suggest a standardised 60 cm

height, but morphologically distinguishable compositional characters define them into two main late 4<sup>th</sup> century types.

**TYPE 1.** This type is evidenced in Grave 5, where it was used as a body container and placed horizontally in the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.22. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue NI*).<sup>472</sup> It has a more recognisable regional form (**Table 14. 6 (a-c); Table 22. 1**). A key defining typological character is the wide and out-turned rim with thickened coiled lip formed on the neck. The long and sloping neck with concave transition is indicative of later development. A distinction of its conical body is seen in the increasingly rounded shoulders, which are sharply inclined towards the bottom and give a disproportional image to the upper body. This is recognised as a variant pattern. The bottom is applied in the manner of a slightly raised and massive rounded base, which becomes narrower and insufficient to stand independently. Walls are of medium thickness. Tool marks from the shaping process remain on the neck and show the direction from left to right, which is responsible for decoration as well. That recognises a mid-imperial technology observable on areal pottery. Another decorative schema is applied on the upper shoulder. They illustrate two bands suspended by three wavy lines and arranged in two thin parallel groves at both sides. Proportionally, it provides 60 cm height with a 17 cm body diameter and 8.4 cm bottom diameter. This matches smaller variants of pithoi, having chronological significance and corresponding to early variants.

From the fabric, it shows rather cracking clay, producing an orange-brown colour. The clay temper contains quartz (approx. 0.2–0.4 mm), fine and intensive sand, as well as black inclusions (approx. 0.1–0.3 mm) and rocky stone grains (approx. 0.2–0.3 mm). Larger size (0.8–1.2 mm) rocky stones of angular form are additionally applied on the surface. From a manufacturing viewpoint, it appears well-fired, but the shoulders show traces of a slight black appearance on the surface. The exterior surface produces a slight burnishing. The tooling direction is left visible on the neck. This pithos belongs to *Clay Group I, Fabric 1* and *Clay Type 1* (**Table 35. A**).

Typologically it corresponds to Type II of Trapsh's classification, dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>473</sup> but the neck formation, proportional and technological details of Olginskoe example gives chronologically remarkable notions, helpful for broad distinction.

No identical comparison is available for this variant. All three comparable pithoi from Apsillia are attributable to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>474</sup> Decoratively, it is simple

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<sup>472</sup> Berdzenishvili Q. 1959:103.

<sup>473</sup> Trapsh 1971:131.

enough to recognise two-handled jars from the area that had little use among the populations of Apsilia. Technologically, a similarly pleated neck was used from 340/360 to 380/400 AD, but the base is still similar to an earlier variant, which offers a slightly reduced date of 340/360 to 370/375 AD.<sup>475</sup> All the rest provide information about variant species. The well-defined concave neck that reveals linkages with later variants is more transitional, while keeping the length. It can be defined by the years 370–380. An increased shoulder is a weak reflection of distinction from both earlier and later examples, but it offers new advantages to this variant and may support defined years. The sharply indented lower body that is not observed in either earlier or later examples is particularly important in the case of lower chronology, which could approve the years 370–380 (defined through the neck). This roughly evaluates a lower date. Interestingly, there is a total lack of pleated necks on the pottery of the area at this time, but the fact of their finds on slightly later examples may be indicative of non-standard technology and characteristic of small production activity, which does not exclude the earliest ancestry with Olginskoe *pithoi* Type 2 and stretches back into the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Proportional characteristics defining it from later examples of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century may drive the upper chronology of Olginskoe *pithoi* to the year 400.<sup>476</sup> The rest, like shoulder decoration providing a wide chronologic spectrum spanning 170–450 AD, is useless data. Therefore, decisive to this variant is the body morphology, the neck formation and proportion, assigning the final date to 370/380 to 400 AD.

**TYPE 2.** This type is evidenced in Grave 4, where it was used as a body container and placed inverted in the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.13. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue NI*).<sup>477</sup> The *pithoi* is featureless at the lower body (**Table 13. 3; Table 22. B-1**). Typologically it is distinctive from massive versions of wide mouth *pithoi*, producing a regional form limited in Apsilia. Its short concave neck sloping to the increased upper shoulders is morphologically distinctive. Increased shoulders suggest a deep construction. The averted, square, and flattened rim terminated on the short neck provides further distinction. All these

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<sup>474</sup> They are evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 44 (Trapsh 1971:67-68, Tabl.XXII.2) and Akhatsarakhu grave 3 (Trapsh 1971:102, Tabl.XXXIX.1). There is a slight difference in decoration suspended a band of wavy lines and two parallel grooves below.

<sup>475</sup> The Apiancha *pithoi* has dissimilar body parts, neck, and lower section. Slight distinction in shoulder decoration is insignificant. Chronologically supportive deposits for this grave are: imported shield with boss *Zieling K2* (330 to 360/370 AD), late imperial triangular (380 to 400/450 AD) and square spearheads (320/330 to 360/370 AD), late imperial banded bow fibulae (340/360 to 380/400 AD), local jug (340–360 AD) and amphorae (380–400 AD). All this occur in cremated warrior grave 38 of Apiancha cemetery. See: Gunba 1978. Tabl.XXXVII.1.

<sup>476</sup> It is evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 44. From accompanied well-datable items, chronological significance occurs a honeycomb beaker (380/400 to 450 AD), silver plate belt buckles (380/400 to 450 AD), sword-related buckles, square shield and late imperial weaponry including seax, sword, spearhead, axe (380/400 to 450 AD) and German-type horse stirrups (380/400 to 450 AD). Trapsh 1971:67-68. Tabl.XXII.2.

<sup>477</sup> Berdzenishvili Q. 1959:103.



are appropriate for the late imperial character of this type. The decoration is diverse with comb latticing and looped patterns. Such a design interacts with rim shape, where the single band is suspended by five thickened and slightly waved lines surrounding the frontal lip. A different display of a similar pattern can be seen on upper shoulders, where four densely arranged bands are combined. Each is composed of deep waves applied in 1 to 3 intervals. The neck illustrates a scant and exclusive display of deeply looped X-shaped intersecting lines. They are depicted on both sides. It is evidence for technological improvement recognisable in much brighter, clearer, and deeper depicted lines. The surviving proportion provides a 40 cm height with 58 cm body diameter and 16 cm rim diameter (2 cm upper lip width), which might suggest a large capacity *pithoi*.

From the fabric, it produces malleable plastic clay with light-greyish colour. The clay shows a low quartz consistency, frequently tempered angular volcanic sand, sporadically appearing rocky stone, and red clay grains. Additional big clay grains, and white inclusions and black particles can be seen on the surface. This variant is thick-walled and well fired. This *pithoi* belongs to *Clay Group II, Fabric 2* and *Clay Type 6* (**Table 34. E**).

No identical comparison has been found to this variant, but the closest examples come from Stage III (380/400 to 450 AD) graves, giving a bit of perspective for interpretation about the shape of the missing lower body. The Apiancha example allows us to imagine a sharply tapering narrow, rounded, and detached bottom.<sup>478</sup> The difficulty is to accept this with confidence. Similarly raised upper shoulders and stylistically identical wavy decoration connects it with the earliest variant of Tsebelda and defines it from later Apiancha examples. This fact determines Olginskoe *pithoi* as transitional and enables us to deepen the lower chronology to the years 360/370. However, the rim formation differentiates it from the earliest generic variants with ledges below the rim, though it is not characteristic of the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>479</sup> It may prove the lower date is slightly later, possibly 370/380 AD. The rim-neck formation commonly connects it with later Apiancha examples, increasing the evaluation of the upper chronology of the Olginskoe variant by 20 years to the year 400. Technologically it also interacts with the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. According to the closest comparisons, further significant linkages to later variants could prove exactly the lacking part. However, the

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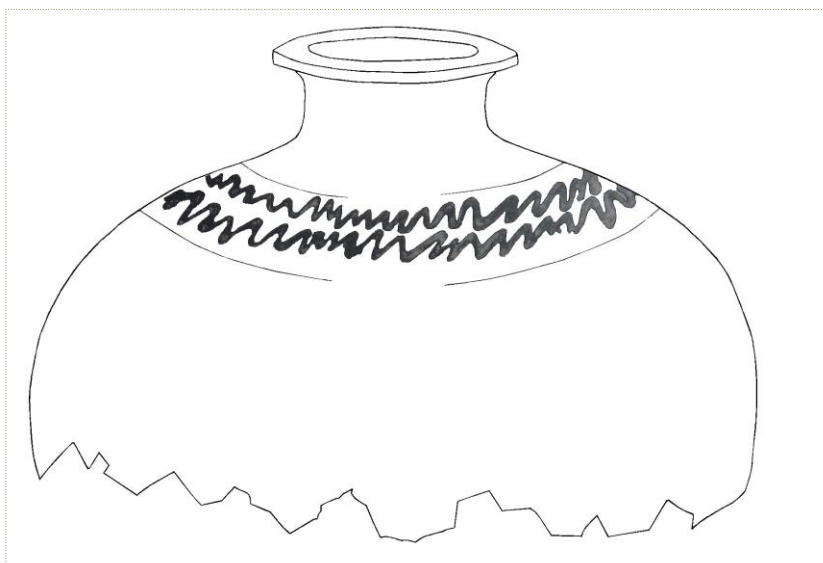
<sup>478</sup> It functioned as a body container and similarly inverted in Apiancha grave 26. Decorative variety can be indicative for typological dissimilarities (two vertical bands of parallel waves, a star set between the vertical line bands). Gunba 1978:34. Tabl. XXIV.1. There is also another late-roman *pithoi* (slightly wider bottom), which was similarly inverted in the grave 38 of same cemetery. See: Gunba 1978. Tabl. XXXVIII.1.

<sup>479</sup> Ledges below the rim are not observed before 320 AD, which lasted until 370 AD. Earliest typological variant occur in the mid-roman phase grave 1–79 of Tsebelda cemetery, where items of years 320–370 were also found. See: Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pic.12.1.

rim-neck formation defining Olginskoe *Type 2* from earlier pithoi and linking with later ones give perspectives to speculate its final date to be from 370/380 to 400 AD.

Functionally, it might be useful to store food, but would be unable to stand freely. All similar wares that appear in cremation graves are similarly evidenced in grave pits. Their limited use might be suggestive of individual transportation for certain purposes.

**TYPE 3.** This type is evidenced in Grave 2, where it was used for body cremains and placed inverted in a grave pit similar to Type 2. This jar is a lost object (**Fig. 30**), but there is some information known only from Berdzenishvili's record and an original drawing, but it is absent in MRB (*It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N1. Tabl. II*).<sup>480</sup> From the record of Berdzenishvili, it implies a fragmented upper part of thick walled pithos with a narrow but longer neck and flattened rim. Shoulders are rounded and decorated above with densely set frequent wavy lines (illustration shows two bands of wavy lines). Proportionally, it was recorded with 36 cm height, 34 cm body diameter, and 14 cm rim diameter with neck of 4 cm length.



**Fig. 30.** Pithois from the grave 2. Lost object.

From the illustrations of Berdzenishvili, it looks like a non-standard type. Interestingly she replicates identical wares of the *Type 2 pithoi* from Grave 4, but the attached drawing prevents recognition of the type, where the rim formation seen is quite distinctive from other

<sup>480</sup> Berdzenishvili Q. 1959:102.

types in Olginskoe.<sup>481</sup> Typologically it is comparable with either the earliest version of Mramba or Apiancha *pithoi* known from illustrations;<sup>482</sup> they could be assigned to earlier 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century or even later. This does not exclude that such *pithoi* were out of use by the time of the burial of their owner.

It is difficult to feel confident about the original nature of this pithos or imagine it as complete with original fragments when the characteristics of diagnostic parts are absent and Berdzenishvili's descriptions are poor (inferences are dangerous). An associated drawing is not secure evidence for closer data so we avoid further conclusions, but without this information it might be more complicated for associated grave complexes that give a view about probable data.

**HANDLED JARS.** The second category of storage ware consists of handled jars. It is produced in two different types, illustrating areal and regional forms, called '*dergi*' in Georgian. All in all, three jars have been evidenced. Despite the fragmented condition there remain such diagnostic parts as the rim, shoulder, handle, a few body fragments or base. The recognisable body profile gives perspectives for it to be split into two types and related variants showing diversity of technique and design. *Type 1* represents an exclusive example influenced by Colchian decorative design. The chronology cannot be established with confidence. *Type 2* provides two different variants and a leading form of upland Apsilian wares.

**TYPE 1.** This type is evidenced in Grave 1, where it was used as a body container and placed vertically in the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58-A. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue NI*).<sup>483</sup> Typologically, it is exclusive and distinctive with the most unusual bag shape (**Table 10. 2; Table 23. A-1**). It might be evidence for transmitted lineage and a new morphologic tendency. The jar is specifically globular at the thickened middle body and slightly tapering to the rounded pronounced bottom. The rim with a coiled lip is shortly formed on the neck, somewhat similar to the *pithoi* from Grave 5. The fairly extended and long cylindrical neck that continues into the sloping shoulder obtains a considerable morphologic effect and highlights a specimen observed among the wide mouthed jars. It provides the most massive and rounded handles, which are attached at both sides below the rim and shoulder. This gives

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<sup>481</sup> The *pithoi* of 'Akhvlediani district' named as analogy, which dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Khoshtaria N. 1949:297-308) shows further similarity with Vani *pithoi* of the 14<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century BC (Koridze D. 1955. p.19, 26, 34, 41). As their contexts specimen, two *pithois* of Olginskoe (graves 3 and 5) are named as later versions. Berdzenishvili Q. 1959:102.

<sup>482</sup> The rim thickness of the Mramba sample is more mid-4<sup>th</sup> century specimen. Trapsh 1971:24. Tabl.II.1.

<sup>483</sup> Berdzenishvili Q. 1959:96.

it an image of transit pottery. The greatest diameter occurs at the midpoint of its body. For decoration, the neck provides an easily identifiable design also seen in the storage ware from Grave 3 and amphorae from Grave 5. It similarly depicts two parallel hatched horizontal waves widely applied at the edge of the neck and shoulders, where it ranges among the lower handles. On the upper body there occurs an additional and specific decorative combination, suspended by two bands. The first band shows the most exclusive design of small X-shaped criss-crossed hatched lines, enclosed between pairs of parallel lines. The second band arranged below is suspended by five homogenous wavy lines. Typologically, it belongs to an extra generic Colchian storage ware group. It provides dimensions of 34 cm height, 25.5 cm body diameter, and 8.4 cm bottom diameter (rim diameter 12.3 cm), accentuating smaller capacity jars in general.

From the fabric, it provides a clay row on the surface and produces a light brown colour. Compositionally tempered with frequent fine (approx. 0.1–0.8 mm) quartz particles, rare sand (approx. 0.1–0.3 mm) and with sporadic rock inclusions (approx. 0.5–0.7 mm). This jar belongs to the clay *Group I, Fabric 2 and Clay Type 2* (**Table 35. D**).

This type is considerable with unusual imitation and more sophisticated form. Nothing is known about this shape within genetic wares in Apsilia, and it is similarly difficult to associate it with any other regional pottery. Only technological and manufacturing features may connect to Lazian production, but the typological appearance is difficult to follow. It is morphologically attributable to one similar equivalent from the area, a proportionally distinct version which chronologically belongs to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>484</sup> From the rim shape and decoration schema it may argue for a late 4<sup>th</sup> century date, primarily because of the ornamentation which is rarely attested on limited pots in 370–400 AD and other such rims particularly appearing on a few pots at this time. Thus, it could rule the probable appearance of this jar to 370–400 AD.<sup>485</sup> This type necessitates further study.

The shape shows a multifunctional nature. Massive handles may qualify it for carrying purposes. The wide mouth could be useful even for carrying fish. The rounded broad bottom is supportive for easier standing and does not exclude the storage function for grains as well.

**TYPE 2.** This type is very common in the upper Kodori valley and becomes a favourite grave deposit for the mid- and late imperial society of upland Apsilia. They were manufactured in various forms. Differing criteria is recognised in the proportions of body

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<sup>484</sup> The burial context in which it occurs in Abgidzrakhu male grave 57, gives a perspective for its dating to 380-410 AD. But, Abgidzrakhu jar is dissimilar with a ribbed upper body. Trapsh 1971:85.Tabl.XXII.6.

<sup>485</sup> Only the knowledge of bag shaped imported wares made possible an appearance of such form; which, in all probability, made after their arrival in Colchis. For this sense Olginskoe jar is the first identified local production

parts like shoulder, middle body, and base. Olginskoe cemetery provides two different variants of this type.

**Variant A.** It is evidenced in Grave 3, where it was used as a body container vertically placed in the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.7. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N1. Tabl. III.*).<sup>486</sup> Variant distinction is recognised in the neckless and less flared rim, long steep shoulders, and increased middle body that gradually tapers to the base (**Table 12. 5; Table 23. B-1, 2**). They are almost evolutionary changes of principal forms, but they still produce the most common character of late imperial jar types. The base is typically flattened. The rim has a comparably low quality of corrugation appearing on both sides. Small broad handles attached on the shoulders are also part of the typological development. The decorated middle body with grooved lines did not survive. Handles providing V-shaped looped lines broadly arranged in two rows is also suggestive for decorative variety. The surface remains coarse. Proportionally it is smaller than the common types, but the provided dimensions of 39.3 cm height with 36.5 cm body diameter and 16 cm bottom diameter (rim diameter 20.5 cm; neck diameter 12 cm) matches the smallest capacity jars.

The fabric provides malleable thick clay of a brownish-red colour. The clay shows a quartz-defined fabric of fine (approx. 0.1–0.3 mm) and medium-sized (approx. 0.5–1.0 mm) temper, with fine sand and other optically active black inclusions (approx. 0.8–1.2 mm). The jar is poorly fired. It belongs to the *Clay Group I, Fabric 1* and *Clay Type 1* (**Table 35. B**).

Areal comparisons make it obvious that this shouldered type may vary in profile. A good parallel for the Olginskoe form comes from stray finds of upland Apushta, which is chronologically useless<sup>487</sup> but typologically identical ware is hard to find. Steep long shoulders that seem to be the variant code do not occur before 380 AD. Morphologically and technologically, the wide mouthed neckless rim formation and more slender ribbing type recognises development from the years 360–380.<sup>488</sup> In addition, high attached handles that still link with earliest variants of this type (observable from 360–380 AD) gives perspectives to determine the lower chronology to 380 AD. The greatest diameter at the midpoint which sharply defines the middle body is a distinctive feature from a later Apushta example.<sup>489</sup> This might prove a source for upper chronology to underpin the years 400/410. However, the reconstruction of its chronology is not accurate due to insufficient comparisons, but

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<sup>486</sup> Berdzenishvili Q. 1959:102.

<sup>487</sup> The Apushta comparison also differs with ornamental details. See: Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin 1970.Pic.16.46.

<sup>488</sup> It appears in a different series (Apiancha cemetery grave 32). Gunba 1978. Tabl. XXIX.1

<sup>489</sup> The Apushta version has a slightly decreased shoulder and middle body, which might have appeared from 400 AD (Apushta cemetery grave 23). But, the grave where it occurs contained offerings of the III stage (380/400 to 440/450 AD). See: Voronov 1982.

distinguishable variant features indicative of the period 380–400 AD may suggestively define the final data to this *Type 1*. The associated grave context also agrees with the obtained date.

The light weight could reflect several functional purposes supportive of easy transport of dry or wet food. The flattened base is practical and well supportive of free standing. The context of their finds in upland parts may theoretically be relevant to their upland Apsilian origin.

**Variant B.** It is evidenced in Grave 6, where it was used as the body container vertically placed in the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.28. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue NI*).<sup>490</sup> This variant still has a flared neckless rim, but is now pretty narrow, which makes it comparable (**Table 15. 5a-b; Table 24. A-1-4**). The major change of design is seen in the slightly sloping high shoulders getting shorter and shortly increasing below the extended upper part. This has considerable potential for characterising this variant. But fundamental is the lower body, steep into the slightly flattened and narrower bottom. It shows the morphological evolution, recognisable from the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Inward handles are of similar formation, but distinctively attached at the upper body on rounded shoulders, which is also an indication of change. The display of looped lines differs from *Variant A* and dissimilarly follows the entire handle edge. The ribbing applied to both sides of the rim is pretty much the same design but done with improved technology, producing high quality corrugation. The shoulder is adorned with a deeply grooved single wavy line, similar to the three other wares in Olginskoe cemetery. It is proportionally deeper than *Variant A* with 53 cm height, 39 cm diameter body, 10 cm bottom diameter (rim diameter 21 cm, neck diameter 14 cm), making it suggestive of a medium capacity jar.

It has cracked clay and produces an orange-brown colour. Compositionally it is specified by frequently tempered fine (0.1–0.4 mm) quartz and hardly visible sand with sporadically applied rocky grains (0.4–0.6 mm). The jar belongs to the *Clay Group I, Fabric 1* and *Clay Type 3* (**Table 35. F**).

This variant is a more limited series of the type and is similarly evidenced in upland Apsilia. It is difficult to follow the development of the shoulders, but it is distinctly absent in all versions before 380 AD. The high attached handles are a variant-definable pattern indicative for the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as are decorated loop handles. The shoulder decoration offers a long circulation date (170–400 AD), but may support an upper chronology. A key distinctive lower body that is typologically transitional and occurring in a few areal examples might represent the limit of the main development in the morphology of

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<sup>490</sup> Berdzenishvili Q. 1959:96-104.

this type,<sup>491</sup> which is observable a little later in 400/410 AD. This entire pattern gives limitations to the chronological approach, but implies the final possible date to the years 380 to 400/410. Functionally, it matches the food storage purpose that could be supported by a separate stand.

### **Local table wares**

Tablewares are meal-related categories demonstrating pouring and food vessel shards. They show the most popular and also the limited forms evidenced in Apsilia. This generally corresponds to jugs; the dominant wares among pottery categories. Morphologically they produce distinct types, which are in a technological and chronological sequence (see below for details).

*Pouring wares.* Six complete grave complexes produce nine jugs, but one is lost (Grave 2). Their fragmented survival corresponds to neck, body, handle, and bottom, through which we can recognise that none of them are identical wares. They are easily identifiable members of the flared rim jug series associated with the mid-phase of late Roman Apsilia. They clearly illustrate the four principal morphological types by ovoid (Colchian), hemispherical (Apsilian), and pear (Lazian) forms. This explains developmental phases and genetic differences. Therefore, pouring wares are classified according to shared forms and characteristics in four distinctive *Types I, II, III, IV*. Those broad modelling and compositional variants are also defined. Genetic differences expose the *Type I* (ovoid) and are also revealed in *Type II* (hemispherical) and *Type IV* (pear-shaped). All four are flared rim types well established in the area for a long period of time, approximately 280–300 years. Decisive differences in their body shape and proportion is a time-demanded factor and reveals challenges that have been kept from the potter's character and skills. This paints an adequate picture of technological or conceptual changes and introduces transitional or later examples of each examined type detailed below.

*Type I* provides a very homogenous character with an ovoid body shape and Colchian decorative repertoire, but the order of applied elements that should drive mid-imperial evolution produces one large capacity jug that shows less contact with others. *Types II* and *III* are successively large series and introduce rarer versions of the hemispheric form, which first entered the Apsilian pottery repertoire in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. This gives knowledge about

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<sup>491</sup> A similar example was found in a destructed grave 5 of Apushta cemetery. Voronov 1982:51. Pic.22.36.

new decorative techniques appearing in the area and initiatives seen in their distinctive variants. *Type II* illustrates morphological and decorative transitions from the old to the new model. It integrates new geometric decorative fantasy. This type produces three variants including one big and two medium size jugs. *Type III* selects regional examples including two variants of small capacity juglet. They seek to define non-homogenous and new artistic impulses that directly link with the Roman-Byzantine world and other mixed imported ideas. This focus on decorative elements like geometric roundels or dot-in-circle and animal head composition and their nature give the meaning of changes. All three show how frequent and fashionable the hatched decorative devices and stamped elements became, but animal motifs are still poorly stylised as favoured by mid-imperial communities of Apsilia. *Type IV* includes two variants of medium and large jugs that introduce a distinctive pear-shaped series, effectively conveying the development of the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, though more expressive of its last stage. Morphological and decorative changes are responsible for their typological distinction.

Proportional varieties give perspective into splitting them into three distinct capacity jugs and juglets. Juglets are defined by a small size of 9.5–10 cm height and 5.5–8.2 cm diameter (Grave N3, N6). Medium capacity is associated with 19.7–21 cm and 14.5–15 cm diameter (Grave N1, N2, N3, N5). A large proportion is considered for those with 23.8–31.5 cm height (Graves N2 and N4) and 9–13.5 cm diameter.

Pouring vessels are usually found in pairs in graves, but never the identical types or proportions. Such a selection may relate to their functional character, imaginative of their daily use during meals. However, the usage of handmade juglets is prior for determination ritual (funeral?) production.

***TYPE 1: Ovoid shape jug.*** The jug was placed inverted in the fill of the cinerary container in Grave 4 (*Inv.N.2.58.15. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N2. Tabl. 4.*)<sup>492</sup> This type is the most distinctive and well identifiable with the ovoid form as the shape code for a long-lived Colchian pottery class. A morphological transformation is recognised in the flared rim that is less clearly delimited from the narrow and medium size cylindrical neck (4.5 cm). The proportionally reduced shoulders and increased middle body that slightly tapers towards the bottom is a mid-imperial development featuring transitional variants (Table 13. 4a-b; Table 24. B-1,2).<sup>493</sup> The bottom is flat and thickened. The jug has no handle, which makes it closer to the Abasgian wares. The decorative basis is a link with continuously treated mid-

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<sup>492</sup> Berdzenishvili Q. 1959:96-114.

<sup>493</sup> A comparison that come from the stray finds of the village Kraevich (north-western vicinity of the Olginskoe) is a more developed variant, which differs by a clearly delimited cylindrical neck, suggested as later appearance.



imperial ornamental repertoire, retaining a Hellenistic genealogical past. The wavy composition illustrating the movement of decorative lines from the shoulder to the middle body is a tendency of later variants. It depicts a reduced number of thirty-two ‘combed’ lines arranged in four bands. The two deeply engraved broad bands (with wavy edges) employed on the shoulder are more independent and stylistically distinctive. Such decorative design is shared by *amphorae* and two-handled storage jars from Olginskoe grave 1 and 6. Proportionally, the jug is of 23.8 cm height, 16.5 cm body diameter, and 9 cm base diameter (rim diameter 8.8 cm and neck diameter 4.5 cm), which matches medium capacity pouring wares.

From the manufacture, it is made of thin clay plaster, producing a light brownish-red colour. The clay shows sporadic appearances of quartz grains and frequently tempered rocky stone grains. The consequence of the poorly controlled firing temperature is traces of over-firing on the upper ornamented parts. It is also indicative of the upside down position of the jug during the firing process. The outer row surface is thinly slip-covered, which shows a distinct technology. The exterior base produces the lines of the burnishing process. The jug belongs to *Clay Group II, Fabric 2, Clay Type 4* (Table 34. C).

It was the least popular form and definitely a much reduced jug category in Apsilia. All twelve complete examples come from grave complexes either of southern Apiancha or upland Apushta. Only a few fragments correspond to finds in Tsebelda fort,<sup>494</sup> but no exact analogy to the Olginskoe example has been found among them. The handles and slender body define it from morphologically comparable early variants (270/300 to 350 AD) from Tsebelda<sup>495</sup> and Apiancha.<sup>496</sup> The elongated effect of the neck also defines it from an early variant that may appear not earlier than 320 AD.<sup>497</sup> The flared rim is an outdated form during 170–500 AD, but technologically the narrow formation may be first produced in the mid-imperial period, as observable in the years 330–360. Their delamination from the neck is also an evolutionary sign first produced after the year 300.<sup>498</sup> This point may lead to a probable date of 330–360 AD to reconstruct the lower chronology of Olginskoe jug *Type I*.

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<sup>494</sup> Voronov 1983. Pic.821.

<sup>495</sup> A difference of this jug revealed in looped handles and decorative technique (cremation male grave 1-66 of Tsibile cemetery).

<sup>496</sup> Apiancha comparison was assisted with storage jar, pairs of narrow leaf-shaped spearheads (270–360/370 AD) and early coil-banded bow fibulae of 170–270 AD (cremation male grave 36 of Apiancha cemetery). Gunba 1978:42–43. Tabl. XXXIII.2.

<sup>497</sup> A similar jug from Apushta was assembled with mid-imperial coil-banded fibulae of 320–410 AD (Apushta grave 1). See: Voronov 1982. Pic.21.3.

<sup>498</sup> Early variants are still preserved with early imperial short concave necks and evenly flared rim that is not restricted.

The chronological basis of the wavy design favoured from 200 to 380/400 AD gives a little more dimension to the upper chronology. The technological difference in the slip coating, which must have been transferred from coastal Colchis, could also follow this data, but it is difficult to prove the first appearance of this technology in the Colchian pottery manufacture. This western influence, relative to the time and well evidenced through the distributed LRC wares in Colchis, may support a mid-4<sup>th</sup> century date. In addition, the local imitations seen in layers of coastal Pithius may suggest the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>499</sup> More secure evidence in support of the upper chronology of *Type 1* is the accompanying pear-shaped Lazian jug; It does not appear earlier than 380 AD, which makes a broad range of dating possible. This also perfectly fits with the archaeological picture of the area, when ovoid jugs are absent in later grave complexes after 400 AD. *Type 1* also went out of use in Colchis around 400 AD. All this allows the obtained probable date of the *Type 1* to be 350 to 380/400 AD.

Functionally it matches any liquid container for kitchen or table use, but the considerable exterior design might be appropriate for demonstrative pouring ware. The handleless performance could be more suitable for either hand washing or other kitchen pottery. Their limited demand in Apsilia and in southern Colchis is noticeable as well, where they represent the most reduced category. Interest is called to the fact that the principal users of all twelve jugs of this type from Apsilia were males and with distinctive cremation burial practices.<sup>500</sup>

**TYPE 2: Hemispheric jugs.** The Olginskoe cemetery produced three hemispherical jugs. One from Grave 2 is lost (**Fig. 15**). They show three variations of new forms shaped in medium and larger sizes. It first came into production around 300–320 AD and had gone out of use well before 500 AD. The hemispherical profile and flared rim shows their common nature, but they are sensitive to stylistic changes and morphological transformations. The most obvious distinctive shaping is recognised in the rim shape and its formation into the neck and further to the neck-shoulders. They provide certain examples immediately preceding the transformation of foreign knowledge well attested in Western pouring wares. Accordingly, they are classified as two different *A* and *B variants*. Both are wheel-thrown wares and flared rim types, but the flaring style has been well established for a long period of time (approx. 280–300 years). Stylistically, both jugs belong to the mid- and late Roman phases of Apsilian pottery. *Variant A* shows the transition from the old into the new model, with an undecorated

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<sup>499</sup> Berdzenishvili 1963:113. Comparisons are glazed pottery from Pannonia and northern Italy, which dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> and early-5<sup>th</sup> century. Many thinly glazed Asia Minor wares are associated with Melitene and Pergamon. Hayes J. 1997:64-65.

<sup>500</sup> They are evidenced in Verin hill, Akhatsarakhu, and Tsebelda cemeteries. Seven jugs occur in graves 1-82, 1-70 and 1-66 of Tsebelda cemetery. Voronov 1983. Only a few fragments were found inside the fortified Tsebelda.

face surface. *Variant B* provides the leading shape of Apsilian pottery, while applying a combination of circles and wavy line decoration. It drives ‘cultural’ and chronological significance.

**Variant A.** This variant is evidenced in Grave 2, inverted in the fill of the cinerary urn (*In.N.2.58.3a. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili’s catalogue N2.*) The most typical character of this variant is a thinly formed flared rim with delimited lip, which is restricted from the widened long neck (5.2 cm). A further specific detail reveals low shoulders steeply sloping to the rounded and increased lower body (**Table 11. 4a-b; Table 25. A-1**). Another distinctive feature of the body is the tapering to the indented bottom having a low base. The slightly awarded middle part is a peculiarity of the handle that rises from the shoulder to the edge of the back rim. On both sides it is enclosed with applied coiled spirals. Proportionally, the 25.4 cm height, 21.4 cm body diameter, and 14 cm bottom diameter (rim diameter 12.7 cm; neck length 5.2 cm) matches large capacity jugs.

The fabric is malleable and thinly plastered, producing a dark brownish-red colour. The clay provides heavily tempered volcanic sand (approx. 0.1–0.3 mm) and sporadic quartz particles (approx. 0.1–0.3 mm). It shows a well-fired condition. The surface is rough and thinly applied with a slip. The jug is a wheel-thrown product belonging to *Clay Group II, Fabric 2* and *Clay Type 5*. (**Table 34. F**)

Three comparable variant series come from Tsebelda cemetery, sharing a number of specifics, but no exact analogy has been found for this example. It is a rare and short-lived variant seen from 320 to 370/380 Based on the body shape it demonstrably belongs to a limited series of this type. The lower shoulders and rounded lower body, which is much the same content of shape, makes it identifiable with a transitional model of this type observable from 300–320 AD.<sup>501</sup> The handle formation is also linked with transitional variants but produced a little later, possibly after 330/340 AD.<sup>502</sup> This implies a slightly increased date, but the own peculiarities of the Olginskoe jug are reflected in the moulded decorative elements which are not observed in any variant of this type and first appears on pottery probably from the 340 AD might be judged as lower data for *Variant A*.<sup>503</sup> Therefore, the ornamental basis of such distinctiveness is important to determine the lower chronology to the year 340. The restricted bottom also has potential to define Olginskoe *Variant A* from later examples appearing after

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<sup>501</sup> This is clearly observable in earlier versions of Apiancha (grave 24). See in: Gunba 1978:33. Tabl.XXII,3. Dissimilar body provides another variant of this type from Tsebelda (grave N1-104). Voronov, Shenkao 1982.Picl.13, 3.

<sup>502</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave N1-79. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:149. Pic.12-3.

<sup>503</sup> Their appearance associated to third period of stage II (340–370 AD) and finds in Apiancha graves 23 and 25. Gunba 1978:33, 35. Tabl. XXII.1, 2; XXIII.2

370 AD (a similar bottom is a common typological nature of three distinctive early variants). This date is also approved by the shallow neck and lower shoulders, defining it from comparison produced around after 370 AD.<sup>504</sup> The characteristics of the vessel body are much more promising for upper chronology, because of absences in later comparisons after 380 AD (evidenced in the later period of Stage III graves). In addition, the delimited lip of rim is a further peculiarity of *Variant A*, supportive of a later date. Therefore, the chronological context of differences gives perspective to propose a final date to around the years 340 AD to 375/380 AD.

Functionally, it might be useful for any type of liquid during the dinner services. This type can be found more in the Tsebelda area than in the southern part and is largely ignored in upland Apsilia.

**Variant B.** This variant occurs in Grave 3 near the urn and at the northwestern part (*Inv.N.2.58.8-IIIb. Attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N2 Tabl. III.*).<sup>505</sup> It has a quite crude construction, distinctive in several ways. Specifically this is seen in the predominance of rounded proportions, body thickness, and slightly raised bottom (**Table 12. 7a-e; Table 25. B-1-6**). The rim has a standard flared shape that is directly terminated on a slightly cylindrical neck. The neck is remarkably shorter and narrower (**Table 25-B. 2**). The inward angled handle with thickened edges is also a deviant pattern. Both are recognised to be an evolutionary phase. Shoulders now become higher and make the morphological development remarkable. The hemispherical body that increases towards the bottom also gives a notion of changes. The bottom is flattened, but slightly restricted. The decorative part introduces a new pattern, but shoulders are surrounded with early imperial relief wavy lines. This is further executed with hatched lines enclosed by roundels, employed horizontally at the adjacent part of the handle. The surface of the upper handle is adorned with cross-hatched lines arranged in the shape of rhomboids. The decoration of this variant is more or less contemporary with *Group II, Fabric 2* and *Type 4*. Proportionally, the provided 21 cm height, 15 cm body diameter and 10.7 cm bottom diameter (rim diameter 8.5 cm) is comparable with medium capacity jugs.

The jug is made of thick and dark brownish-red clay. The clay matrix is distinguished by the frequency of quartz provided in fine and medium size. Similarly defined are other

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<sup>504</sup> A similar feature is observed on later variants of this type (Tsebelda warrior grave 8). The grave it appears complex consisted of such chronologically important assemblages as imported one-blade cut sword dated to 380/400 to 450 AD, two chronologically distinctive oval buckles of 320–370 AD and 380–450 AD, and the local bow fibulae of 260–340 AD. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148. Pic.16.17.

<sup>505</sup> Berdzenishvili 1959:95-103.

tempering agents like rock stone and black incisions. It is a well fired ware, but rough to the touch. The jug belongs to *Clay Group II, Fabric 2* and *Clay Type 4* (**Table 34. A**).

Morphologically, it is a limited variant of hemispherical jugs from Apsilia associated with the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. All comparisons that proved several versions, comes from the Stage III (380/400 to 440/450 AD) grave context. This makes it difficult to define a broad date, but the Olginskoe version is able to demonstrate dissimilarities from known variants and approach chronologically significant points. The undecorated flared rim and lower neck has equal value to all and is insignificant for broad focus,<sup>506</sup> but the short wide cylindrical neck links only with one Tsebeldian version.<sup>507</sup> The body and rim shapes are almost similar to all areal comparisons, but differ in formation of certain components. Out of them a key typological pattern we surely assume for Olginskoe *Variant B* is a hemispherical body with increased shoulders and inwarded handles. Both are chronologically worth discussing separately. Inwarded handles appearing in areal pouring wares in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century may drive the years between 360 and 400 AD,<sup>508</sup> but the high shoulders distinguish it from earlier mass variants of the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the bottom formation links it with latest versions from Tsebelda, possibly appearing around 380 AD, which increases the chronological potential of Olginskoe *Variant B*.<sup>509</sup> There is a considerable contrast in decorative composition as well. The effect of ‘old-fashioned’ decorative elements reflected in the Olginskoe version has not been observed in Tsebeldian variants at the time. Stylistically, it is much the same as a limited series from mid-4<sup>th</sup> century Apiancha,<sup>510</sup> but dating evidence of separate ornamental components suggests that such decorative synthesis may be obtained during the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Such a decorative spectrum may also alternatively mean a distinct geographic production. Definitely they are not seen in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, where they are rotated with pear-shaped morphology and distinct decorative variants. Therefore, the outlined specifics may focus on the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and limit the chronology of *Variant B* to the years 380–400. This dating evidence is not secure, but it may suggest a different date for this variant type. Functionally, it matches all types of liquid serving purposes.

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<sup>506</sup> The areal comparison produces a closely similar pattern to the neck decoration.

<sup>507</sup> Tsebelda version shows a dissimilar low shoulder, flattened bottom and neck ornament (Tsebelda grave 1-43). Its handle is rounded and undecorated. It appears in III stage grave. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148-152.pic.17-4.

<sup>508</sup> Tsebelda cemetery. Voronov 1982.

<sup>509</sup> Tsebeldian ware differs with a twisted ends and undecorated inwarded handle (Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-58). Voronov 1982. Pic.21.3

<sup>510</sup> See jugs of Apiancha graves 34, 39 and Abgidzrakhu grave 14. Gunba 1978:35,46,24.Tabl.XXIV,2; XXXVIII; Tabl.XIV,1.)

**TYPE 3: Globular shape jug.** This type is evidenced in Grave 1 next to the urn and at the north-eastern part of the pit (*Inv.N.2.58.1. Attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N3. Tabl. I.*).<sup>511</sup> This type represents an exclusive model of a globular body among the flared rim jugs of Apsilia. The shortly offset flared rim terminating on a similarly short neck is also very distinctive (**Table 10. 3a-e; Table 26. A-1-4**). The flattened but asymmetric bottom is the next variant character. An exclusive image provides the handle with a semi-circular profile that is inwarded and raised on a low shoulder. Decorative parts incorporate the rim, shoulder, front body, and handle, which makes clear that decoration is based on pottery form. From the spectrum, it is the most complex of all three variations of circle-decorative and moulded design, more typical for the second half of the 4th century. An arrangement of stamped roundels in the shape of a Greek cross below the lip distinguishes it from all other examples in the area. The demonstrative frontal body is adorned with distinctive radiating stamped roundels enclosing a moulded animal head. This is a virtually identical ornament of mid-imperial character. Shoulders are ribbed, supplied from individual fantasy to make it very distinctive from the other pottery. The handle receives one grooved line along its entire length, and an additional clay moulded spiral on both ends. It shows decorative characteristics of mid-and late imperial areal jugs and is similar to the decorative repertoire of central Apsilian pouring wares. The handmade production is recognisable in the finger print marks appearing on the interior bottom (**Table 26. A-3**). Proportionally, the 19.7 cm height, 14.5 cm body diameter and 7.8 cm bottom diameter (neck length 4cm and rim diameter 8.6 cm) fits the medium proportion jugs.

From the fabric, it is formed with thick clay, producing a pale orange colour. The clay matrix shows a slightly sandy fabric tempered with active finer and coarser quartz of angular form and rocky stone incisions. This is responsible for the granular-texture. Poor manufacture is also revealed in the low firing quality and easily crumbling surface, which did not receive any subsequent surface treatment. The jug belongs to the *Clay Group I, Fabric 1, Clay Type 2* (**Table 35. C**).

No identical comparisons have been found as to the shape and size.<sup>512</sup> The most effective explanation for this exclusivity is its handmade production, resulting in difficulties. From the handmade manufacture, chronological conclusions could be limited, but a few points can be made for probable dates. From its globular morphology it somehow imitates the blown glass jugs found among the Mediterranean products of the 4th century, which could be a part of the

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<sup>511</sup> Berdzenishvili Q, 1959:96.

<sup>512</sup> Two analogical globular jugs with wavy ornamentation are known only from Hellenistic (4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) cremation and inhumation burials of the neighbouring areas of Eshera and Ochamchire. Kuftin B. 1949:33–34, 43–44. Pic. 12.

inspiration. From this perspective it reveals a slight similarity with the rounded example of Alrakhu from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century grave of the Mramba area.<sup>513</sup> In addition, the tendency for rounded forms is remarkable in Apsilia in 360–380 AD and applies to very limited Tsebelian groups of pouring wares with a ribbed body.<sup>514</sup> The widened rim and short neck links it more closely with early imperial jugs of Stage I (170–270 AD), but is useless for deriving meaningful information.<sup>515</sup> The morphological and technological specific of the handle that is sliced on the shoulder and lower body is not featured in any Apsilian jugs. Further attention should be paid to decorative devices giving late 4<sup>th</sup> century association. Dating evidences for the Greek cross-shaped roundels (360/380 to 450 AD) and radiating roundels with animal head (360/370 to 450/500 AD) from Apiancha may offer the year 360 as the lower chronology of the Olginskoe jug.<sup>516</sup> The spiral ornament with a long circulation period (340–500 AD) does not give any potential effect to the chronology of *Type III*, but the ribbed shoulders connecting with corrugated wares may support the decorative classification of wares seen from the early 4<sup>th</sup> to end of that century. It implies 320–400 AD, the date when such a technological feature first entered in the decoration of Apsilian wares possibly after 320 AD. Such datable associations also support at least the years 380<sup>517</sup> and provide little significance to upper chronology, but there is no clear criterion for the latest chronologic frame. Therefore, without the help of accompanying items, the examined features allow us to evaluate the final speculative date to 360–380 AD.

Functionally, this jug might be expected to hold liquids during dinner, but the handle construction could also insure easy pouring for hand washing.

***TYPE 4: Pear shape jugs and juglets.*** This type introduced the new pear-shaped pouring wares, but they show different styles and developmental stages of regional pottery viewed from the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century Apsilia. It considers two proportionally distinct juglets and jugs, very distinctive in their body formation and most associated with functional aspects. Each

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<sup>513</sup> The Alrakhu comparison has an unlike defined high massive bottom and handles dissimilarly sliced on the neck and shoulder. This example is distinctive in terms of ornamental schema, which applies the Latin-shaped cross roundel on the middle body and semicircles on the handle. It proportionally matches juglets of 10.8 cm height. It occurs in Alrakhu female inhumation grave 5, which according to the Mayen type cylindrical glass vessel can dated to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Trapsh M., 1971:110 .plXLII.2.

<sup>514</sup> A jug from Tsebelda grave 1-24. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139-40. Pic. 10.4, 5. Other morphological analogy with undecorated body and twisted handle is evidenced in III stage (380–440) Tsebelda grave 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:157. Pic. 21.3.

<sup>515</sup> A similar rim shows the Tsebelian jug (Tsebelda grave 1-70). See: Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic. 8.7.

<sup>516</sup> The earliest comparison from Apiancha, similarly applies the decorative schema of radiated roundel (Apiancha cenotaph grave 24), which is observable in II stage (AD 260–370). Accompanied offerings are earliest hemispheric and pear-shaped jugs and strongly profiled imported fibulae dated to 260–340 AD. See: Gunba 1978:33. Tabl.XXI.1

<sup>517</sup> Earliest appearance is observed within the II stage graves (Tsebelda grave 101. Also Tsebelda grave 1-50, 1-58). See: Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143,155, 157. Pic. 12.14; 20.5; pic.21.3.

offers further stylistic variant types. Their condition is fragmentary and corresponding morphological segments of rim, body, and handles juncture.

**PEAR SHAPE JUGLETS.** Both juglets are accepted to be similar in proportion, with a short flared rim profile and elongated body. The simple linear decorative motifs link it further with the common nature. Nearly half of the juglets from Apsilia are characterised with similar patterns, but the shaping of lower body and termination of handle and rim are distinctive. Some of them are even short term appearances assigned to the period of 380–440 AD.

**Variant A.** This variant is evidenced in Grave 3 near the urn and at the north-eastern part of the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.9. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N2, Tabl. III.*).<sup>518</sup> It is a handmade product, showing the evolution of pottery forms and decoration that is rigorously tied to areal and regional potters (**Table 12. 6a-f; Table 26. B-1-3**). Morphological peculiarities reveal an elongated body construction and asymmetrical profile. It is further specified with a biconic and shortly terminated rim on the narrowest neck. Both give a bit of knowledge about typology, but the mid-imperial character is recognisable in the slightly extended body in the middle part tapering to the narrow flat base, which is also a considerable pattern. Even more distinctive from Apsilian pottery is the handle that rises from the middle body and slices below the lip of the rim. The flattened middle handle, which illustrates a cross-hatched technique of rhomboid, is of Colchian nature (**Table 38. I**), as well as the identical band of rhomboids in the horizontal layout which surrounds the middle body (**Table 38. J**). Three roundels depicted below recognise the mid-imperial development of areal pottery. The equally mid-imperial nature of hybrid composition is recognised in the depiction on the front part integrating the stamped roundel rosette in the centre (**Table 38. C**). This variant is exceptional in having white coating on the surface. It remains not only on the visible parts, but also slightly on the neck and the interior bottom, where traces of slightly irregular finger depressions still remain as an indication of handmade pottery. Proportionally, the 9.5 cm height and 5.5 cm body diameter (rim diameter 4 cm and neck diameter 2 cm) is appropriate for small capacity juglets.

This ware was made of thin clay plaster producing a brownish-red colour. The clay matrix shows rarely tempered quartz grit and coarse grains that also contain a sporadic rock stone and infrequent fine sand. It was poorly fired. The jug belongs to the *Clay Group II, Fabric 2, Clay Type 4* (**Table 34. B**).

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<sup>518</sup> Berdzenishvili Q, 1959:104.



Typologically it may be appropriated with Type I of Trapsh's classification dated to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>519</sup> but the Olginskoe example gives perspective for a broad chronology to *Variant A*.

From the coating technology this variant is exclusive in Apsilia and there are no identical areal comparisons that precisely correspond. Identical juglets were not recorded in any publication, to my knowledge. Proportionally, small capacity jugs are of limited production. They are associated with female graves of the Mramba area in central Apsilia, where they are observed during the years 350–400.<sup>520</sup> Morphologically associable identical rims of pouring wares from the area are always dissimilar in body shape and decoration, but it proves the appearance of biconic rims in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, specifically the years 370–380.<sup>521</sup> Moreover, the reflection of hybrid decorative composition links with late 4<sup>th</sup> century groups of areal jugs at the very start and allows a definition to the years 360/370/380.<sup>522</sup> Both are useful evidence to limit lower chronology of *Variant A* to the years 370/380. In addition, due to the absence of similar body shapes and formal relations with late 4<sup>th</sup> century areal jugs, which are associable to an upper chronological date, may drive the latest possible chronology to the year 400. From its principal morphological and decorative characteristic it is unlikely to be made later than 400 AD. However, the observed unity of the outlined peculiarities makes the final date of *Variant A* associable to the years 380–400.

All these specifics may link with the functional purposes of juglets. The proportional limitation (9.5 cm height) obviously suggests special occasions. It may infer ideas of ritual sequences, perhaps accompanying a memorial or other type of feast. The unusually shaped rim and narrow neck is suitable for liquid purpose, but not for mass use. The white coating for interior body parts is also a specific and thoughtful context, which could expect non-liquid usage as well. Handmade production, recognisable in finger print marks, could also suggest the traditional effect of a ritual vessel type favoured by the Mramba settlement, perhaps for funerals. This lends contextual support for ritualistic traditions having connectivity with certain communities of central Apsilia in the mid-imperial era, but does not exclude the existence of deliberately made ritual juglets for burial customs.

***Variant B.*** This variant is evidenced in Grave 6 near the urn and occurs at the north-eastern part of the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58. Vc. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N3,*

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<sup>519</sup> Trapsh 1971:133.

<sup>520</sup> Jugs from the Abgidzrakhu female graves 35, 45, 53 and Alrakhu grave 5. Trapsh 1971:54-56, 71-72, 112. Tabl.XV.1; XXIII.1, XXX. XLII.2.

<sup>521</sup> Comparison come from the III stage female graves. Trapshi 1971:98,133. XXXVIII. 1.

<sup>522</sup> It identically applies to all small capacity jugs of years 370/380 – 400 in Aukhuamakhu grave 1, where the grave offerings allow the evaluation of the grave date to the years 360–400. Trapsh 1971:98. Tabl.XXXVIII.1.

*Tabl. VI.*)<sup>523</sup> It differs from the previous example by the extended lower body increased to the edge and evenly continues into the flattened bottom (**Table 27. A-1**). This is a variant characteristic and a mid-imperial tendency. Similar rim formations are relevant to the second and third quarter of the 4th century. The termination of the rounded handle raised from the middle body and attached to the neck below the rim, should indicate evolution. It equally shares the decorative schema of crossed-hatched lines surrounding the upper body like *Variant A* (**Table 37. D**). Proportionally, the provided 10.4 cm height, 8.2 cm body diameter, and 14 cm bottom diameter (neck diameter 2.5 cm and rim diameter 3.8 cm) matches small capacity juglets.

The clay matrix provides a reddish-brown colour frequently tempered by smaller size quartz and sand, producing a rough surface. It differs by its thickened walls and well-fired fabric. The jug belongs to *Clay Group II, Fabric 2, Clay Type 4* (**Table 34. D**).

No identical example is available for this variant. The occasional discovery of comparable wares suggest very limited production of this variant. Morphologically it is comparable to Stage II (260/310 to 310/350 AD) juglets from the Mramba area,<sup>524</sup> but the form of the extended lower body is more appropriate to variants of this type seen from 350/360 to 380 AD.<sup>525</sup> From the rim formation and lack of decoration, it is quite comparable with most limited groups of 360–400 AD from the Mramba area.<sup>526</sup> Both indicate that such forms were principally used in 350–380 AD, but the deciding factor for the lower chronology is the body shape that obtains the years 350/360. The date of the rim and handle formation supplies an upper chronology of the year 380.<sup>527</sup> Additional support for upper chronology has been derived from the ornamental nature that does not exceed the year 380.<sup>528</sup> Therefore, they

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<sup>523</sup> Berdzenishvili Q, 1959:104.

<sup>524</sup> The tendency of a low set belly or disproportional increase of lower body is remarkable on central Apsilian pouring wares more clearly during 310–350 AD. Such jug was accompanied with imported golden and silver bracelets of 260–380 AD, imported fibulae of *Aucissa* type and early coil-banded bow fibulae of 260–340 AD in Abgidzrakhu female grave 35. Trapsh 1971:54-56. Plat.XV.2.

<sup>525</sup> A stylistically similar, but distinctive variant of Abramov jug has unlike stamped circle ornament and looped handles (Abramov hill cemetery female grave 10). It was accompanied by an Alanian cup and imported silver jewellery of the years 380–400. See in: Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, and Loginov 1990:25. Pic. 15.22.

<sup>526</sup> The latest appearance of such jugs is evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 6 of cremated male. Assembled well-dated imported offerings are: shield bosses of *Dobrodzień/Zieling* type (360/370 to 400/410 AD), coil-banded bow fibulae (260/270 to 330/410 AD) and LRC ware Hayes *form 1* (late 4<sup>th</sup> century). Trapsh 1971:29. Tabl.III.1.

<sup>527</sup> A sliced handle formation on the neck comes into fashion probably after 360/370 AD. It is a tendency of pear-shaped derivatives and seldom used on areal jugs. A sample of similar handle formation that can be attributed to an evolutionary variant was found in Apushta grave 34 and assisted with early triangular spears of 320–370 AD. Voronov 1982:66.pic.31.18. Other earlier variants from Mahajirov grave 1, was accompanied by an imported ribbed bowl (later version of '*rippenschale*' type) and imported silver coin, which is not detailed. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26 Pic.19.2.

<sup>528</sup> It is noteworthy, that the decoration of most juglets is led by crossed-hatched elements during 350–380 AD. But two later variants of identically decorated jugs are also observed in the Abgidzrakhu female graves 45 and 53. Trapsh 1971:71-72, 80. Tabl.XXIII, 1; XXX.1.

allow speculation of a final date of *Variant B* to 350–380 AD. The corresponding grave context, associated with the LRCW ware and a triangular spear, also agrees with this date.

The proportional decrease of pouring ware is a remarkable tendency of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and indicates a variety of synchronic juglets (juglets from Apsilia provide 9 to 13 cm height). The small capacity naturally contains information about functional speciality. Burials in which such juglets were evidenced are assigned to the female gender of the Mramba area, which provides some idea of their non-incidental usage.<sup>529</sup> Unfortunately, we cannot prove if it had any functional association with special liquids used only by females or heavily depended on the rituals of the small community. The rare discovery suggests their reduced usage and limited industry. Only a few juglets are known from the entirety of Colchis,<sup>530</sup> with most of them demanding indications of the central Apsilian Mramba community over the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

**PEAR SHAPE JUGS.** Here are two selected jugs with a broader stylistic distinction of body from the rim and handle formation. They introduce an evolutionary character and the last developmental stage of pear-shaped pouring pottery. Both are based on a low ring base and have a steep upper body belonging to the Lazian series, developed in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Variant C.** This variant is evidenced in Grave 5, between the urn and amphorae at the eastern part (*Inv.N.2.58.21. Attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N3, Tabl. V.*).<sup>531</sup> It is distinct in various ways. The gradually extended long neck, sharply sloping slender shoulders that evenly enter into the body, and slightly rounded lower body with insignificantly hollowed narrow bottom are variant characteristics of pre-5th century form (**Table 14. 7a-d; Table 27. B-1-3**). The quality of the ribbing that occurs on both sides of the rim illustrates a different version of a highly corrugated fabrication. The further specification of a slightly concave handle formation that rises from shoulder to the lip of the rim gives a mid-4th century style of Tsebeldian pouring wares.<sup>532</sup> On the entire length of the middle part is a crossed-hatched rhomboid design, enclosed on both edges with moulded spirals. It reveals stylistic and thematic relations with both juglets of Type 4 and copied spirals connected with dissimilar

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<sup>529</sup> This is mainly typical for the central Apsilian inhabitant and viewed in the Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 11, 13 (Gunba 1978) and 45, 53 (Trapsh 1971). These women used *Lebjazhi* and strongly profiled fibulae to fasten their clothes. Their earrings imported from the Northern Black Sea, are typical for the jewellery of Stage II and can hardly be found in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Noteworthy is, their appearance in two weapon graves of the Mramba. One of them in Abgidzrakhu grave 11 was assisted by arrowheads (placed W of the decease) and a glass vessel (Gunba M. 1978.p.XI). Another juglet from grave 13 is accompanied by two spearheads and lid-covered *pithoi*.

<sup>530</sup> Some were discovered in Lia graves of Colchian hinterland and at the coastal Petra/Tsikhisdziri (Pichvnari).

<sup>531</sup> Berdzenishvili Q, 1959:95-103.

<sup>532</sup> Similar handles are applied to a jug from Tsebelda grave 1a-2, which accompanied with imported uncoloured beakers of 260–370 AD. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143.Pic.15.3.

Type 2 (*Variant A*) and 3. Proportionally, the 22 cm height, 15.4 cm body diameter and 7.4 cm bottom diameter (rim diameter 9.8 cm and neck diameter 4.7 cm) link with medium-sized pear-shaped jugs.

From the manufacture, it is made of slightly thickened clay producing a light brownish-red colour. The clay composition illustrates a fine sandy matrix, with active quartz grits and sporadic coarse rounded grains including coarse rocky stone, black fine and angular inclusions (**Table 18. E**). On the surface near the handle are traces of mineralisation. The jug belongs to *Clay Group I, Fabric 1, Clay Type 2*.

No exact analogy has been found for this variant, but there are several distinctive versions suggestive of the stylistic and chronological outline of the Olginskoe example. From the body construction, a mid-4<sup>th</sup> century manufacture during the full development of hemispherical jugs can be recognised. The oblong tendency of the body form associates it with areal comparisons of around the years 360–380.<sup>533</sup> The typo-chronology of lower body and handle is broad because of the narrower bottom and proportionally decreased lower belly, unlike the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century examples of around the years 340–360 AD, therefore excluding it from the earliest group.<sup>534</sup> The low foot ring is also lacking in the earliest variants appearing before 370/380 AD and defined from developed examples of the Shapka area produced possibly after 400 AD.<sup>535</sup> The slightly concave middle part of the handle with untwisted edges and decorative complex was experienced by a very limited group of central Apsilian pottery during the years 340–380 AD as well.<sup>536</sup> The high quality ribbing connects it with the Colchian pottery corpus of 260–270 AD, which lasted over the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and best paralleled Tsebelda.<sup>537</sup> However, this is useless data. All of the above examined features suggest *Variant C* as transitional version of the pear-shaped series. The body construction limits the lower chronology to the probable years 360/380, and the upper date to the years 400, an important argument to evaluate final probable data for *Variant C* to 360/380–400 AD. This is also

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<sup>533</sup> Since such jugs are often appearing with the LRCW found in Olginskoe, it can be used as chronologic guideline. Due to the difference in upper body parts and corresponding decoration that reveal a sample from Verin hill, it can be considered another variant of this type (Verin hill cemetery grave 2). Voronov, Bgazhba 1990:28. Pic.22.1.

<sup>534</sup> They are evidenced in Aukhuamaku grave 1 (Trapsh 1971:98. Tabl.XXXVIII.2) and Tsebelda grave 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:14.Pic.15.4.

<sup>535</sup> The undecorated version from Verin hill has a dissimilar wide hollowed bottom and more rounded lower part. Accompanied dateable item is a conical glass vessel, but other offerings include hemispherical jug, a Colchian dish used for covering the *pithoi* urn, and two triangular spears. Verin hill grave 9 see in: Voronov, Bgazhba 1990:25. Pic. 16.5.

<sup>536</sup> The earliest undecorated variant from Apiancha was accompanied by an imported highly profiled fibula of 260–340 AD (Apiancha grave 24). Another decorated version that comes from the same cemetery is hemispheric jug of grave 21. Both see in: Gunba 1978:33, 29.Tabl. XXII.3; XX.11.

<sup>537</sup> It applies on exterior rim of ovoid jugs in mid-roman time. One of the two examples found in Tsebelda (graves 1-82, 1-70), was accompanied by coins of Marcus Aurelius and Septimus Severus (grave 1-70). This feature also appears on interior rim of few hemispheric jugs during 320–370 AD (Tsebelda grave 1-73). Voronov, Jushin 1982:136, 143. Pic. .4; Pic.8.5. Pic. 14.3.

supported by contextual dates associated with the grave as well. Functionally, it is appropriate for all types of liquid. Interestingly, they seem to be a shape favoured by males.

**Variant D.** This variant is evidenced in Grave 4, next to the urn and at the eastern part of the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.15. Attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N3, Tabl. IV.*).<sup>538</sup> It is a more simplified later version and member of the undecorated regional pouring wares typical of the late imperial Lazian class (**Table 13.** 6a-c; **Table 27.** C-1,2). Its long steep neck, slightly sloping shoulder and slender body with a slightly increased middle part is the principal variant characteristic. The rim is lacking, but the relative typological nature may be drawn from the flattened form of handle attaching the neck and shoulder. Comparative basis approves the evenly extended and everted rim of similar jugs morphology. The further angular outer profile of the handle is also a diversifying specific. The flattened base with increased proportions distinguishes it from *Variant C*. The surviving neck is 3 cm long, but from the closest comparisons we may speculate a 3.5-4 cm neck.<sup>539</sup> Proportionally, the provided 31.5 cm height, 13.5 cm body diameter and 12 cm bottom diameter (neck diameter 3 cm) is appropriate for large capacity jugs.

From the fabric, it is made of well-treated clay producing an orange-brown colour. In the thin sections of clay, hardly visible inclusions of fine sand and sporadic white temper (approx. 0.1–1.2 cm) can be recognised on the surface. It is a well-fuelled product. On the surface it could be either coated with a thin brownish slip or well burnished. The jug belongs to *Clay Group III, Fabric 3, Clay Type 7* (**Table 36.** A).

No identical comparison has been found for this variant in Apsilia. The most distinguishable slender body might have been a matter of limited manufacture or chronology. Sadly, the closest Tsebelda example is from a non-datable grave context lacking any offering type, limiting the interpretation.<sup>540</sup> Three other variant types coming from Mahajirov, Tsebelda, and Apushta cemeteries are important to drive chronologic arguments for *Variant D*. On the basis of a long steep neck and flattened bottom distinguishable from other early variants of this type from Tsebelda, which appear possibly in 360–370 AD, the association of the lower chronology of *Variant D* with the year 370 might not be doubtful.<sup>541</sup> The handle formation, its flattened form and angular profile that secures a connection with the late 4<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> Berdzenishvili 1959:103.

<sup>539</sup> Two similar examples are evidenced in Mahajirov cemetery graves 3 and 4. Voronov, Bgazhba O. 1990:27.Pic.20.1, 9.

<sup>540</sup> One jug from Tsebelda found in the grave with a similarly fragmented neck, lacking a rim ( Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 7). Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:11. Pic.5, 12.

<sup>541</sup> See Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:156-157. Pic.21.2.

century group of this type increases the date to 380 AD.<sup>542</sup> Such a flattened handle, however, may be a tendency of the very late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Steep shoulders that evenly continue into the neck and comparably slender belly is not observable before 370/380 AD and after 400 AD, permitting us to limit the upper chronology of *Variant D* to the year 400.<sup>543</sup> The slender body narrowing to the bottom that may be assigned to the transitional variant defines it from the latest Apushta example appearing possibly during the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>544</sup> It is additionally supported by a similar jug from the Apsilian vicinity of Ochamchire.<sup>545</sup> Therefore, the examined diagnostic parts suggest the probable date of *Variant D* to be the years 370–400 AD.

Functionally, it could be useful for any type of drink. It was obviously a successful type commonly used and widespread in military sites of Lazica. Therefore, the decreased distribution of several variants in Apsilia, as well as morphology and fabric, does not exclude their Lazian manufacture, but the limited Olginskoe variant with outlined specifics is distinctive from the Lazian series distributed in both valleys of Apsilia. This does not exclude the existence of Lazian potters in the area. The fact of their varying appearance in Apsilia may suggest the standardisation of Lazian mass produced pottery in the area.<sup>546</sup> Olginskoe *Variant D* is the legible indicator of modification and changes within the pottery production of Apsilia.

### Imported wares

**Transit ware - AMPHORA.** An *amphora* is evidenced in grave 5 at the north of the grave pit in a horizontal position (*Inv.N.2.58.19. It is attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N2. Tabl. V*). It is characterised by a concave-convex body, steeply sloping shoulders, and a less delimited narrow cylindrical neck (**Table 14. 9; Table 28. A-1,2**). The raised upper body is conically structured on a relatedly broad lower part and conical toe. It has a small nipple at the

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<sup>542</sup> Verin jug is a flared rim variant of this type, dissimilar also with an upper body and increased shoulders (Verin cemetery grave 8). But flattened handle is similar, which has been directly attached on an unlike ribbed rim and shoulder. On the handle applied the letters (X and П) is also distinctive. This jug was assisted by a Nydam type grooved sword and a later triangular slender spearhead. Voronov, Bgazhba 1990:29. Pic. 24, 17.

<sup>543</sup> The same feature observed on the pear-shape jug from Abgidzrakhu, which differs by a flared rim and can be dated to 400-450 AD (Abgidzrakhu grave 30). The Apushta jug distinctive with shoulder-neck formation that may have appeared after the 400 AD (based on accompanied offerings) made a clear point. Voronov 1982:62. Pic.28.47. Another distinctive jug from Abramov female grave 12 can be dated to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century based on accompanied later cross-shaped fibulae (with catch-plate mechanism). Voronov J. Bgazhba O. 1990:26. Pic.17.5.

<sup>544</sup> The Apushta variant differs only in extended lower body (Apushta Grave 20). Voronov 1982:59. Pic. 27,18.

<sup>545</sup> It evidenced in grave 2 of cemetery Armenian Atara at the right bank of the Kodori river. Gunba 1978:53. Tabl.XLIII.3.

<sup>546</sup> Japaridze 1999.

center of the foot. Handles are thinly modelled from the shoulder to the neck. They are tapered, square, and smooth (Berdzenishvili's drawing shows them angled slightly inward and attached in the middle part of the neck). The body surface is densely ribbed with slightly grooved horizontal lines and smoothed. A deeply grooved and thickened single wavy line is applied on the upper shoulder. Proportionally, it provides a 52 cm height suggestive of a medium volume *amphorae* category.

The clay shows a finer fabric and produces a dark brownish-red colour. A thin section of the upper body illustrates occasional natural sandy temper and granulated quartz. Conical toe retains black tempering grains. The body reveals a medium firing quality tracing a darker increased surface (**Table 36. C-2**). The shoulders show a wheel-made production integrating all other separately shaped parts. This *amphora* belongs to the *Clay Group III, Fabric 3*, and *Clay Type 7* (**Table 36. C, 1-5**).

The original shape, illustrated in Berdzenishvili's drawings, makes it apparent that a similar morphological construction is not provided by any other amphorae from historical Apsilia. Furthermore, it reveals certain unusual technological and workshop features which are not observed in local *amphorae* at all. The consisting fragments raise several questions. Hypothetically, it corresponds to the transitional variant of local amphorae from Sebastopolis, named as 'pseudo-Colchian',<sup>547</sup> but the body of the Olginskoe variant produces a mixed and combined nature of various sources, revealed in several ways. First, a distinctive morphological marker is seen in the handles and toes. A further technological specification views the colour, surface treatment, fabric, and somewhat wheel-made production. They are completely unusual for the local amphorae, but the Colchian characteristic is recognisable in the following features:

1. *The clay composition of the upper shoulder contains more white inclusions (rather than occasionally traced pyroxene and sand grains), similar to NW Colchian/Lazian production.*<sup>548</sup>
2. *The narrow neck and conical foot is typical for local Colchian brown-clay amphorae, but they have much clearly delimited neck from its shoulder.*
3. *The wavy band is a Colchian class decorative element and typical for the early and mid-imperial amphorae from Apsilia.*

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<sup>547</sup> Kassab-Tezgor, er Akkakaya 2000:127-141.

<sup>548</sup> Vnukov singled out the clay character of southern (Achara) and north-western (Sebastopolis) Colchian productions. Tempering agents like plutonic (granite, diorite), volcanic (basalt, liparite), sedimentary (sandstone, shale), rock and some other minerals are named as distinguishing feature, since they rarely occur in Pontic production. Sea and river sands considered to be characteristic of Pontic pottery, because it was quite common in eastern Black Sea littoral. Vnukov 2006:79, 89; Vnukov 2000.

What is doubtful is the related small handles and rather massive bottom, distinctive in the fabric. Their association with the presented body is somewhat thought provoking. If they are actually original fragments, then it is more difficult to judge the production, chronology, and function. The fact that the Olginskoe *amphora* is a less common example and has such complex morphological features does not provide any comparable 5<sup>th</sup> century local *amphorae*. Furthermore, the decrease of *amphorae* production in Colchis is remarkable until 380/400 AD, where they remain rare. A small volume production of wheel-made *amphorae* is considered in 4<sup>th</sup> century Sebastopolis.<sup>549</sup> Circumstances do not exclude it from being assigned to an Olginskoe example of imported wares, as well as to the production of Colchian coastal sites at Sebastopolis or Pithius. Chronologically, the shoulder decoration gives a quite long circulation date from 170–400 AD. The other details do not offer any reliable data. The chronological spectrum of accompanied objects, supportive of the Olginskoe *amphora*, might be the fibulae dated to 380–400 AD, but the assemblage's glass cone contradicts this date and alternatively evaluates the years 400–420. Therefore, any obtained chronology is inaccurate and speculative.

Functionally, it corresponds to liquid containing purposes. The concave body that is thought to be appropriate for easy carrying could also support its transit function, but its proportionally inadequate to the body handles are against this concept, which is equivalent to serving, rather than transportation, especially for regional trade. These details make such usages doubtful and offer a different sense towards special funerary purposes.

**PLATE (LRCW).** It is evidenced in Grave 6 and occurs as the lid covering of the urn (*Inv.N.2.58.29. Attributed to Berdzenishvili's catalogue N2, Tabl.VI.*). The plate retains a restored shoulder and bottom fragments (Table 15. 6; Table 28. B).<sup>550</sup> Morphologically it gives association of modelling the plates of the fine ware class. Steep and thinly modelled low flaring walls, with rounded ring-foot basis, are specifications of form that makes it easily distinguishable. The equally thinned body and the low ring which slightly deviates from the outer wall is a nature of the Olginskoe example. In addition, an insignificantly thickened inwarded rim, concave on the outer face side, recognises a refined version of this type. All this allows a clear typology as an intermediate form common from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>551</sup> Proportionally, the provided 5 cm height, 17 cm rim diameter, and 10 cm bottom diameter matches the standard wares of this type.

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<sup>549</sup> Vnukov pointed out the mixed nature of such wheel-made *amphorae*. Vnukov 1992:83-84; Vnukov 2003:24, 160, 164.

<sup>550</sup> Berdzenishvili 1959:104.

<sup>551</sup> Domzalski 2007:77. Pl.43.3.



The manufacture shows well-treated clay, high quality firing, and produces a pinkish-beige colour. The plate is assigned to *Clay Group IV, Fabric 4, Clay Type 8* (**Table 36. B**). It is thin walled and very finely made.

Typologically it corresponds to Hayes Form 1 of the Pontic Red Slip wares (PRS).<sup>552</sup> This is also attributable to several classifications of local scholars.<sup>553</sup> From the above listed characteristics, however, it is more attributable to Form 1B of Domzalski's classification, assigning them as a production of the late 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>554</sup> Their discoveries are considerable in the late 4th century context which does little to refine their distribution date in Apsilia. Their production area is still unidentified.

In fact, this form is very limited in Apsilia. But there are few close comparisons from well datable contexts, which typologically prove their pre-420 origin. All three comparable identical plates from Apiancha appear within the late 4<sup>th</sup> century grave material involving a dated glass beaker, imported O-shaped plated buckle, and decorated mid-imperial fibulae (320–370 AD), together with imported beads of applied decor.<sup>555</sup> Since they are absent in a grave context consisting of later objects from 400–450 AD, it gives perspective to drive the most probable date to 380–400 AD.

Functional advantage may correspond to serving some cold food and proportional aspects may also be supportive of daily tableware use. Interestingly, except in one exclusive case, fine ware did not characterise female graves in the entire Colchis.<sup>556</sup> This fact limits the spectrum of their use perhaps also in daily life, as they do not belong to the finds of living structures. This could be indicative of non-household wares in Apsilia, while occurring only in areas of military establishment. In fact, all eight fine wares from the area belong to the weapon grave complexes and warrior groups bearing the battle axe.<sup>557</sup> Only one fragmented example comes from the cultural layers of Tsebelda fort. Further potential in traditional practice is expressed in the standardisation of lid cover use.

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<sup>552</sup> Several prototypes of this form are observed within ARS, such as the *Form 50*, which can rarely be found in Black Sea littoral. See Hayes 1972:68-73.

<sup>553</sup> This corresponds to *Type III* of Berdzenishvili's classification (Berdzenishvili Q., 1963:112.pl. 3, 3), also *Type I (variant A)* of Lordkipanidze's classification (Lordkipanidze O. 1963:100.pl. 2,a), as well as *Type I* of Gunbas' classification (Gunba 1978:72), and *Type II* of Trapsh's classification (Trapsh 1971). They all are found in late 4<sup>th</sup> century graves.

<sup>554</sup> Arseneva, Domzalski 2002. Fig.6.17, 7.21, 37.

<sup>555</sup> They are evidenced in III stage graves dated to 380-400 AD (Apiancha cremation graves 15, 21 and inhumation grave 37). See: Gunba 1978:25, 30, 43-45, 72. Tabl. XV.2, XX.7, XXXV.2).

<sup>556</sup> It is similar to the plate from Tserkovni cemetery grave 1. Voronov, Jushin 1973:172.

<sup>557</sup> All eight examples found in Machara river valley are associated with Abgidzrakhu (grave 6, 43), Akhatsarakhu (grave 1) and Apiancha cemeteries. See Trapsh, 1971. pl.III.6; XXI.4; Trapsh, 1975:22. Pl. XVII, 9.

Beyond Apsilia they are evidenced in coastal Colchis where military units appear, like at Pithius,<sup>558</sup> but some come also from Sebastopolis.<sup>559</sup> This type seems to be either rather popular or quite valuable to reach other parts of Colchis.<sup>560</sup> Generally, the regional fine wares followed the Black Sea littoral, Bosphorus-Tyritake,<sup>561</sup> and Ilurat.<sup>562</sup> Their northern reaching implications are indicative of individual distribution.

### **The understanding of relationship between the pottery groups and fabric**

We need to understand the structural characteristics of properties as they produce eight clay types. They are categorised under four clay groups. For colour, four different clay classes are provided including light orange, dark brownish-red, greyish, and pale beige. Each of this group collects wares of different shapes, properties, capacity, and function.

The general characteristic of the majority of pottery materials show quartz particles, sand, and other visually easy or hard to identify inclusions. All that have these particular properties are put in *Group I* and *II*, but if we compare their matrices we can see a pretty big difference, as the dynamic and activity of constituents are that specimens made them comparable and identifiable into several clay groups. Technologically they did not reveal any specialities, just showing the poor quality of manufacture, but the degree of the potter's specialisation is distinctive. The largest morphological and functional variation of pouring wares can also be found within *Group I*. Remarkably, they are reduced vessels. As a group, the last two (III and IV) show a limited spectrum, but they cannot be linked with the physical properties of the others.

***GROUP I, fabric 1.*** The basis for their grouping is a clay texture common in high quartz compositions and other active inclusions provided in different sizes. Proportionally diverse tempering materials further produce *Clay Type 1, 2 and 3* (**Fig. 31. A**). Their colour varies from orange-brown to brownish-red. It is applied on six functionally distinct potteries including storage and pouring ware categories. This shows the variation in types, technology (surface treatment), and decoration, but all are uncovered wares distinct in wheel and handmade production. The range of the morphological, decorative, or fabric distinction they

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<sup>558</sup> More than 44 similar plates are recorded from the city layers of ancient Pithius. Lordkipanidze 1963:97-101.

<sup>559</sup> Trapsh 1951-1953.

<sup>560</sup> A similar series was also discovered in Vashnari (Gobejishvili G., 1949) and in the area of church N2 (Berdzenishvili 1963:112).

<sup>561</sup> Gaidukevich 1952:123.

<sup>562</sup> See Cilantievas' classification, *type 45*, pl.15,3.

provide and in which developmental procedures are clearly observable, found in the years 360–400. All the contrast they illustrate may be a result of either different chronological sequences or different workshops.

**Clay Type 1.** This clay defines two distinct morphological storage wares:

- Pithoi from grave 5 (**Table 22. A, Table 35. A**). Date 370 and 380/400 AD.
- Two-handled jars from grave 3 (**Table 23. B; Table 35. B**). Date 390–410 AD.

The compositional specific of this fabric is dense sandy clay, with optically observable active quartz (0.3 mm) and coarse rocky inclusion (0.3 mm). It produces either orange-brown or brownish-red colour. Both are wheel-thrown wares sharing a conical shape, but technologically they are distinct variants dissimilar in performance, firing state, and broad function. The typological variety reflected in their shape may be a result of functional distinction. They come from different graves producing at least 20 years of distinction.

**Clay Type 2.** This clay appears on two pouring and storage wares:

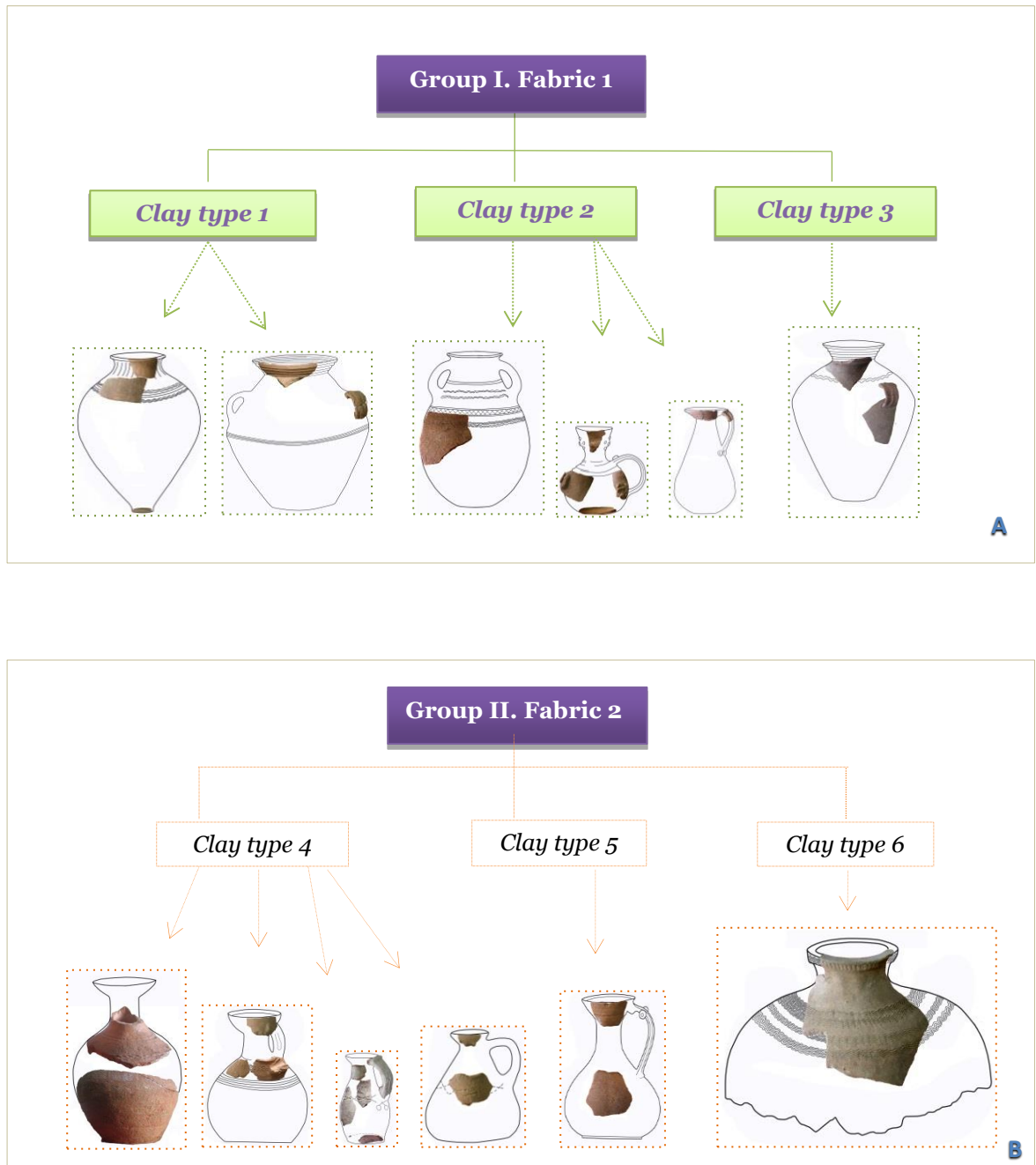
- Globular jug from grave 1 (**Table 26. A; Table 35. C**). Date 360–380 AD.
- Pear shape jug from grave 5 (**Table 27.B; Table 35.E; Table 37.F**). Date 360-400 AD.
- Bag-shaped handled jar from grave 1 (**Table 35.D; Table 23.A**). Date 370/380 to 400.

The overall matrix of clay that continues to dominate the quartz particles now appears either in an active finer or coarser version (in rounded or angular shape). The difference between both wares is based on stylistic, typological, and technological development, in which the main point of their variation is wheel- and handmade production. Both are distinct proportionally, but perhaps from similar functional groups. They come from different graves. Such manufacture can determine distinction in their technology and design.

**Clay Type 3.** This clay type defines only one jar from grave 6, dated by the 380–450 (**Table 24. A**). The difference with this clay type is indicated in the frequently tempered finer quartz and hardly visible sand constituents. This was specified with the sporadic appearance of 0.05 mm rock stones grains on the surface of the ware. The clay provides a light brown fabric. This jar is a similar type to the ware with *Clay Type 1* (**Table 35. F**), but technologically it is a better version.

**GROUP II, Fabric 2.** The advantage of the method that was used in this fabric composition is the low dynamic of quartz and difference in coarse sand consistency. Another revealed specification is the sporadic appearance of red clay grains, which could be simply spread over the mould, but the broad texture of associated wares gives an understanding for further

compositional distinction. It provides *Clay Type 4, 5* and *6*, but the proportion and dynamic of tempering inclusions gives additional variants that are seen within *Clay Type 4*. They vary in colour and produce either oxidised brownish-red, orange brown, or dark grey clay. Comparative reviews to individualise them finds that the fabric associated with all technological developments and changes seen within this group was processed in the years 380–40



**Fig. 31. Clay Groups I, II.** They show variety of shapes and variation in property

**Clay Type 4.** This clay type is frequently used on pouring wares and provides four rather similar morphological and technological groups (**Fig. 31. B**):

- Hemispherical jug from grave 3 (**Table 25. B; Table 38. D**). Date 380–400 AD.
- Pear shape juglet from grave 3 (**Table 26. B; Table 34. B**). Date 380–400 AD.
- Pear shape juglet from grave 6 (**Table 27. A; Table 34. A**). Date 350–380 AD.
- Ovoid jug from grave 4 (**Table 24. B; Table 34. C**). Date 350–380 AD.

The compositional distinction of the clay is seen in the low value quartz providing finer and coarser versions, which is of highly sandy texture 0.3–0.4 mm finer and granulated 0.3–0.4 mm volcanic sand. It is additionally specified either by frequent or sporadic rocky stone grains (0.3–0.4 mm). Their colour ranges from pale brownish-red to dark brownish-red. Two jugs come from the same grave and the rest from different graves.

**Clay Type 5.** This clay type applies to one pouring vessel found in Grave 2 (**Table 25. A**). Sporadic fine quartz and heavily tempered dominant volcanic sand is what makes the difference of this clay (**Table 34. F**). From the fabric, it provides a similarly malleable clay plaster in dark brownish colour and a well-fired consistency like the pear-shaped juglet of this group from Grave 6 (*Clay Type 4*). However, it is a wheel-thrown example possibly of the years 340 to 370/380, which is a 30-year difference.

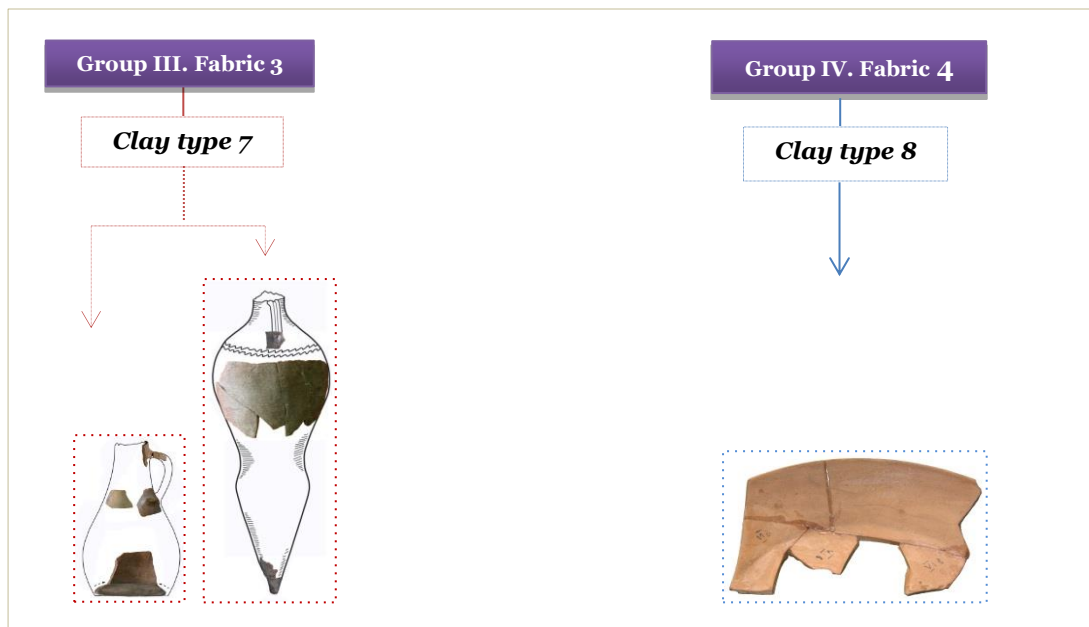
**Clay Type 6.** This clay type is used on storage pithoi from Grave 4 (**Table 22. B**). Compositionally, the clay is specified by the low value fine quartz particles (0.3 mm) and frequently sandy (sub-angular) volcanic grains. Additional compositional specifications are the sporadic appearance of ovoid red inclusions, rocky stone, and white grains on the surface (**Table 34. E**). Fabric distinction can also be seen in the malleable thick clay, which is well-fired and professionally burnished. What defines this clay from all the Olginskoe wares is the greyish colour. It is the latest production within this group, possibly of the years 370/380 to 420. The 14-year difference could be a factor visible in the technological improvements that touched the morphology (rim) and decoration of this *pithos*.

**GROUP III, Fabric 3 (Clay Type 7).** This group of associated wares provide a much finer fabric, easily separated from Apsilian wares (**Fig. 32**):

- Amphorae from grave 5 (**Table 28. A**). Date 400–420 AD.
- Pear-shaped jug that appears in grave 4 (**Table 36. C.1-5; Table 27. C-1, 2; Table 39. E**). Date 370/380 to 400 AD.

Considerable difference in the fabric composition of Clay Type 7 is the barely visible inclusions of fine sand and no trace of temper. There are several other elements for their

distinction in the broad matrix. Basics for further differences are colour, fabrication, and surface property. They are uncoated wares. Both come from different graves, but from a chronological perspective they show equivalent stages of development.



**Fig. 32. Clay Groups III, IV.** They show variety of pottery categories and variation in property

**GROUP IV, Fabric 4 (Clay Type 8).** This applies only to the plate of fine ware category that occurs in grave 6 (Table 28. B) and produced possibly between the years 400 to 450. In contrast to all the above given clay types, it provides a pale beige colour, which is specific to this clay (Table 36. B). Technologically it illustrates a gently treated fabric and demonstrates new skills. This distinctly provides the forming process of the bottom performed on a wheel and offers a high quality burnished surface. Thus, the plate does not share any methodological or technological similarities with any other Olginskoe wares.

#### ***Identification of similar production***

The compositional variety of clay that helps approach geological information is the supportive context for the identification of local or foreign traits. Distinctive inclusions viewed the clay relationship of 15 examples within four major groups. This not only gives an understanding of the developmental history of shapes, function, and manufacture, but also illuminates perspectives for various workshops. If we look at their geological structure the first three pottery groups (I, II, III) produce a similar geological basis and show the complexity of clay

texture associated with local wares. Their compositional, morphological, and stylistic distinctions give the best idea for how they belong to the regional specimens. It should also be noticed here that the origin and workshop lineages are poorly interbred in pottery traditions of local wares, but the tempering material and amount, technological and decorative traits, are that diverse factor we speculate upon to test associations for their origin, cultural group, and time periods. Thus, we have several comparisons and evidences to identify areal, regional, and imported pottery. First, we can check decorative connections and how wares relate with one another.

### *DECORATIVE LINKAGES*

There are three very specific decorative interactions that are interesting in understanding what is going on in practices of local production. Wares are very much influenced by spiral coils and hatched single or double lines, producing some interesting results.

*Spiral coil (Group I).* We have three morphological samples of Clay Group I and II with connections through their sliced spiral coil and concave handle formation, on which the coiled spirals are kept. This visual marker is a source to identify genetic linkage with the Colchian environment of selected wares (**Fig. 50**):

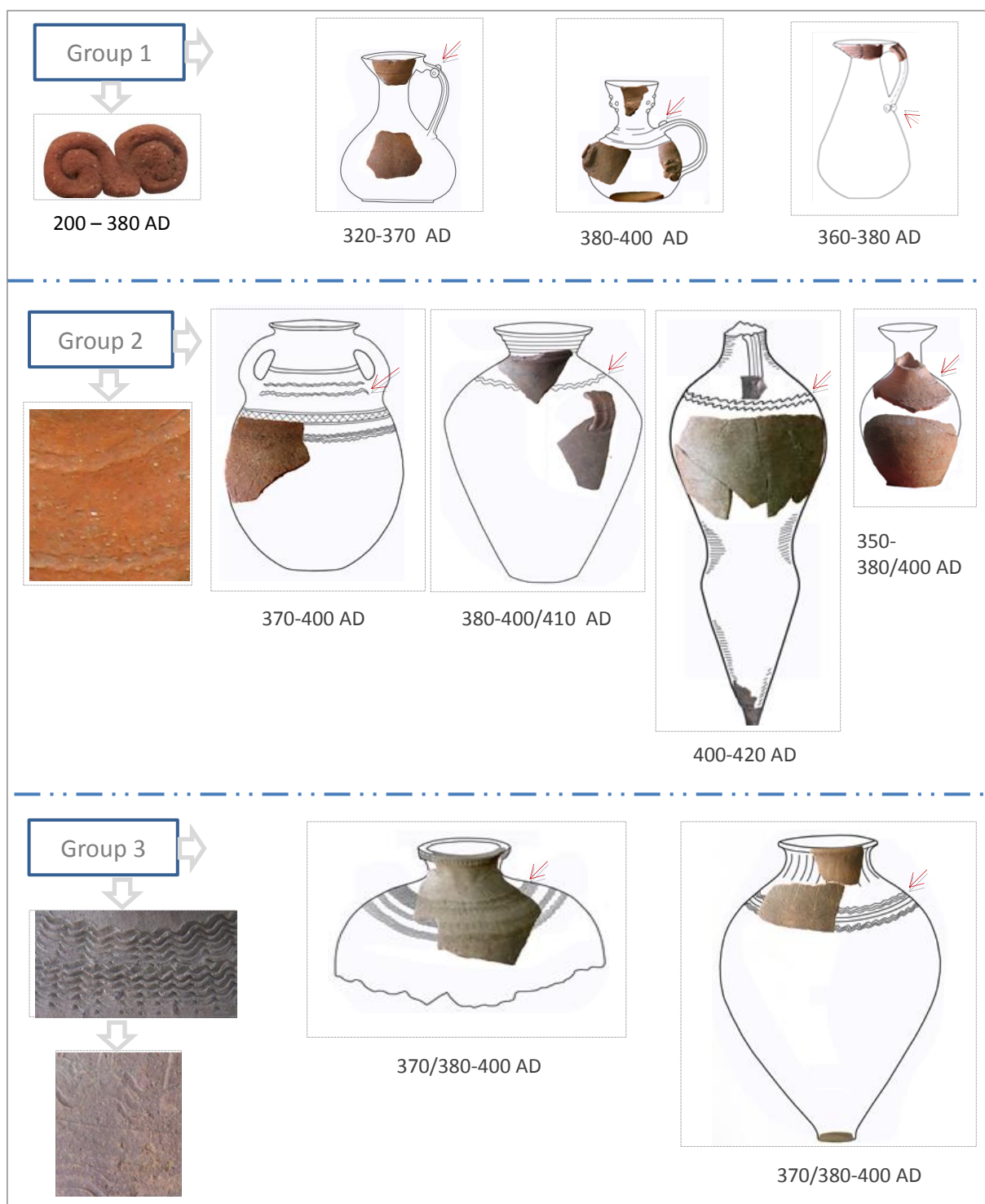
- Globular jug (*Group I, clay type 2*) from grave 1 (**Table 26. A**).
- Hemispherical jug (*Group II, clay type 5*) from grave 2 (**Table 25. A**).
- Pear-shaped jug (*Group I, clay type 7*) from grave 5 (**Table 27. B**).

From the chronological spectrum, they consider different phases of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. They show distinction in fabrication, technology, body shapes, and decorative synthesis. And so, this can be used for figuring this out, assuming we have different workshop evidence.

*Hatched single or double lines (Group II).* The wide hatched line is the most related decorative component holding together four different wares of different clay groups and showing how many forms and categories belong to the same species. This is a purely known element of the years 320–380, which is equally visible on the following wares selected in this group (**Fig. 33**):

- *Amphora (Group III)* from grave 5 (**Table 28. A**)
- Conical- shaped handled Jar (*Group I, clay type 3*) from grave 6 (**Table 26. A**)
- Bag- shaped handled jar (*Group I, clay type 2*) from grave 1 (**Table 23. A**)

- Ovoid jug (*Group II, clay type 4*) from grave 4 (**Table 24. B**).



**Fig. 33.** Decorative groups of similar workshop. **Group I:** Globular jug, hemispherical jug, pear- shaped jug. **Group II:** Amphora, conical handled jar, bag- shaped handled jar, ovoid jug. **Group III:** two different pithoi.

Compositional, technological and chronological data exclude their manufacture in the same workshop or by the same potter. Differences in fabric and clay type enable access even to their site region. They also do not reflect any type of evolutionary history to be supportive.



Moreover, all three wares except the conical jar are limited to Apsilia and more associable with areal pottery.

There is no great stylistic or chronological reason to find relationship between two functionally similar pithoi selected in *Group III* (**Fig. 50**):

- Pithoi (*clay type 1*) from grave 5 (**Table 37. C**)
- Pithoi (*clay type 6*) from grave 4 (**Table 37. A**)

Shoulder decorations responsible for their connection is the framework of a regional workshop from the Classical times, which could be performed elsewhere in Colchis, but they construct the decorative evolution in which the evidence for different workshops may occur.<sup>563</sup> The 20-year time span implied in the old-fashioned pleated neck and simple wavy composition of earlier pithoi (360–380) from Grave 5 testify not only to a limited demand, but corresponding validity of such pithoi. From its style and nature it belongs to the small Tsebeldian storage pottery of late 3rd century (**Table 37. C**) and was a short-lived production of this time. This may help associate it with certain parts of Tsebelda. Another and later version (380–400 AD) of pithoi from Grave 4 with visible technological development and quality (**Table 37. A**) shows a formal relationship with all three central Apsilian pithoi from Tsebelda and Akhatsarakhu.<sup>564</sup> This may indicate non-areal production.

#### *IDENTIFICATION OF AREAL PRODUCTION*

The clay composition presented within the first three pottery groups provides a similar geological basis. Their display of the complexity of clay texture helps to define a local production. The tempering material, their amount, technological and decorative traits are also a supportive context. Therefore, from a technological and compositional structure, wares presenting a brownish-red colour, thickened and low quality clay serves areal characteristics.<sup>565</sup> They are very coarse and tempered by pyroxene, sand, and quartz.<sup>566</sup> If we look at the broad types of clay, especially within Group I and II, where the rock and quartz particles are clearly visible, it may diagnose sources of riverside locations, but compositionally it is difficult to define workshop locality in Apsilian parts (especially from

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<sup>563</sup> The compositional diversity of clay, firing properties, and colour is indication of different manufacture, which may cause either geographic or manufacturing variety.

<sup>564</sup> This context is supported by accompanied non-areal pottery, which was limited in Apsilia.

<sup>565</sup> Loginov 1983.

<sup>566</sup> See Bgazhba 1977.

the low quality published illustrations and descriptions). Technologically, most of them are the wheel-made pottery, defining storage and most pouring wares, but they are not evidence for standard models. Furthermore, the compositional, morphological, and stylistic peculiarities do not always illustrate the same chronological sequences or the developmental history of the shapes and decoration. This is a point that could illuminate aspects of workshop variety in the sense of areal and regional production, which is still open for further research.

**Six wares linked to areal production are (Fig. 34):**

1. Pithoi (*Clay Type 1*) from grave from Grave 5 (**Table 23. A**).
2. Handled jar (*Clay Type 1*) from Grave 3 (**Tables 23. B**).
3. Handled jar (*Clay Type 3*) from Grave 6 (**Tables 24. A**).
4. Bag-shaped handled jar (*Clay Type 1*) from Grave 1 (**Tables 23. A**).
5. Globular jug (*Clay Type 2*) from Grave 1 (**Table 26. A**).
6. Pear-shaped jug (*Clay Type 2*) from Grave 5 (**Table 27. B**).

Five wares belong to Clay Group I and shape the years 340/350 to 410. Only one hemispheric jug of Clay Group II produces the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Since they show the process of morphological and decorative development observed in the central part of Apsilia between the years 350 to 400, where they find synchronic comparisons, it may account for the geographic link for their production area. Each provided specification gives an approach for each of their geographical parts. The handmade pouring wares are important evidence for specific categories defining a certain period and place. That in itself raises the question of how many production sites or workshops they represent, as they are not methodologically closely related wares.

It is still arguable if a large pottery industry could occur in a land of low agricultural basis, and since there is scarce information about the kiln sites of Colchis, speculations might arise. There is a probable manufacturing part of late-Roman Apsilia associated with the fortified Tsebelda. Remains of a square limestone structure (4.7 x 4.6 m) with oval chamber (2.4 x 1.80 m), recorded as a stove for pottery kiln may give an idea about small-scale production sites in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (**Table 61. D**).<sup>567</sup> This was possibly destroyed after the completion of the building of the fort, perhaps towards the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Its destruction has been expected towards the end of the same century after the completion of building the fort,

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<sup>567</sup> This structure revealed in front of an outer double wall, where fragments of amphorae and a knife was found. See: Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao 1982:63.



but if we look at the statistical data and huge quantity of areal pottery, a single Tzibile workshop would not have enough supplementary sources for areal population, which

promptly increases from late 4<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Production variety is also suggestive evidence for the existence of other responsive sources in the densely settled parts.

The variety of production also suggests other responsive sources for the increased demand of settled parts. It should also be noted that there is a huge earlier production of the years 170–260 that carries a homogenous nature. The remarkable increase of functional categories and morphological variety, especially in the years 300–320 and particularly in the Mramba area, indicates continuous production to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. In fact the specific category of small capacity juglets, which was favoured in the area of Mramba village and neglected in most upland Apsilia, confirms some domestic type of pottery production. This does not exclude Mramba as a potential kiln area even for a domestic pottery workshop. The provided knowledge, skills and somewhat conservative design may point to the distinction in taste, but how many domestic workshops existed during the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century is uncertain.

### *REGIONAL VARIATION*

From the geological body and morphological character, three vessels are very sensitive to regional traits (**Fig. 35**):

1. Ovoid jug (*Clay Type 4. Table 24. B*).
2. Pear-shaped jugs (*Clay Type 4. Table 24. B*).
3. Greyish pithoi (*Clay Type 5. Table 22. B*).

All three come from the same Grave 4, but they are not unique in character, chronology, and are of rather common origin. They just give an understanding of the interregional pottery production in different historical phases from 350 to 380/400 AD. This concerns the manufacture of both coastal regions and north-western parts of Colchis,<sup>568</sup> but the identification of a regional workshop is extremely difficult.<sup>569</sup> What is clear is that the tempered limestone fabric with orange and pale brown colour associated with central Colchian pottery is becoming much sandier from the late Roman period.<sup>570</sup> And while the

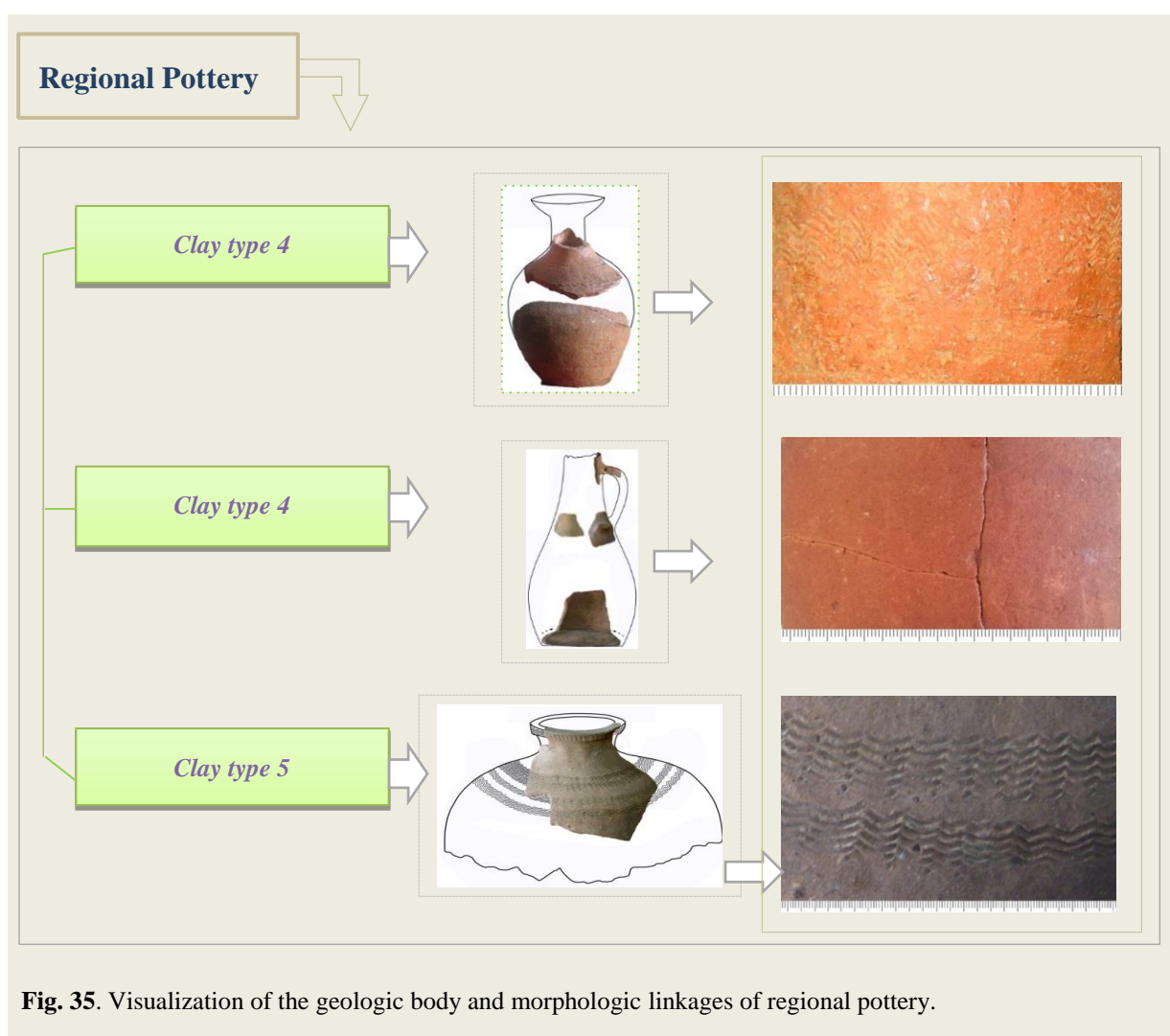
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<sup>568</sup> According to Vnukov record, the compositional schema of north-western Georgian pottery illustrates grains, several minerals (granite, diorite), volcanic (basalt, liparite), sedimentary (sandstone, shale) rock and some minerals that are rather rare in the Pontic region. Vnukov S. 2006.

<sup>569</sup> Potential local pottery production sites are considered to be a coastal Apsaros, Sebastopolis, Pithius and the Archaeopolis in central Colchis. A mass local product of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries is easily distinguishable in areas of Sebastopolis and Pithius. Pithius is even considered a potential producer of 4<sup>th</sup> century fine ware imitations in Colchis. But none of these sites have been properly investigated and studied. For this very reason, there is no distinguishing criterion for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century production sites. Moreover, even the manufacturing peculiarities of inter-areal or interregional pottery are poorly documented in publications. Therefore, it is difficult to provide meaningful comparisons from the materials of the northern-western Colchis.

<sup>570</sup> Lomitashvili 2006:47.

morphology and fabrication of the pear-shaped jug (Grave 4) imitates the Lazian design, it may also communicate with regional workshops. This might indicate changes in the manufacturing process and the transportation of raw material as well, but the area responsible for the transportation of raw materials is unidentified and the natural availability of such clays in the vicinity of Apsilia is doubtful. In fact, the pear-shaped and orange pouring wares that are less demanded objects in Apsilia may account for regional production, perhaps of central Colchis. However, the reduced choice may link between the fabric and demand.



**Fig. 35.** Visualization of the geologic body and morphologic linkages of regional pottery.

### Two wares attempted to define imported wares:

1. Fine ware plate (*Clay Type 8*) from Grave 6 (**Table 28. A**).
2. Amphora (*Clay Type 7*) from Grave 5 (**Table 28. B**).

Both wares give significant differences in fabric and technology, but in contrast with all other wares, the property of unusually fine beige clay with virtual absence of tempering agents that

demonstrate the plate isolates this sample. This allows us to think it could have been purchased at a different time beyond Colchis.

The *amphora* is quite confusing (**Table 28. A**). The finer clay plaster and rather light colour produces similarities with local fabric. In view of morphological similarities with Colchian production and surface decorative features, it is not certain where the source of origin might lie. The mixed construction helps to understand the variation shown in its form and selected material. It does not exclude its foreign origin.

## ORNAMENTAL DEVICES

The decorative devices of Olginskoe pottery gives knowledge of employed artistic elements and the time of their use, but they tend to demonstrate a limited part of Apsilian decorative repertoire and number of ways they were acquired. The decoration is performed before firing and produced by using different techniques. Divided into three components, they conduct different decorative parts and process the connection between the:

- **Technique.** Performed by engraving, grooving, stamping, impressing, applying (coil and moulded plaster).
- **Motif.** Implied wavy horizontal lines, cross-shaped circles, radiating circle rosettes sometimes accompanied with animal heads.
- **Position.** Examined on the rim, shoulder, middle body, and handle.

Therefore, the aim of decorative analyses is to define types and principal motifs to identify their chronological sequences.

## TECHNOLOGIC CONSIDERATION

The decorative framework technologically comprises three further categories:

- ✓ Engraved (grooved)
- ✓ Stamped
- ✓ Coil and moulded plaster

**Engraved.** For making a typical engraved design three different techniques have been selected: incising, hatching, and ribbing (**Table 37; Table 38. C-D, H-J**). The use of different tools employs distinctive lines. More standard samples of slightly waved lines of 0.1 mm width apply to three different pottery categories (jar from Grave 3, ovoid jug from Grave 4, and amphorae from Grave 5). The technologically distinguishable second wave type shows

how the tool pressure may actually apply deeply incised thin (jugs from Grave 3) or thick lines (*pithoi* from Grave 4) to achieve solid application. Both may actually be applied by the comb type tool, or by the use of several tools.

**Hatched.** This technique produces a limited series of criss-crossed lines (**Table 37-D; Table 38. I-J; Table 22-B**). Their thematic arrangement constructs either geometric rhomboids (juglets from Grave 3 and 6) or vertically employed X-form (*pithoi* from Grave 4). The first is used for handle and body adornment and more characteristically appears on small capacity jugs. The second is a rare type and scantily appears on proportionally bigger storage pottery from 170–350 AD. The performance may be based on different tools.

**Stamped decoration.** Technologically, a stamped geometric single roundel is employed by the deep pressing of a tool before pottery firing (**Table 38. A-C, E**). The circle diameter is 0.5 cm. Thematic considerations produce various shapes based on at least two different tools. The first and quite accurately shaped stamping tool can be identified as a Latin cross (**Table 38. B**). The second is in the form of radiating roundels (**Table 38. A, C**) and the third is for easy employment of a single circle (**Table 25. B-3, 4**). The first two applications may have advantages in applying on functionally considerable jugs or juglets from Grave 1 and 3 (**Table 38. C, E**). The earliest appearance of simple roundel designs on Apsilian pottery may be assigned to the probable years 300/320, but thematic compositions were achieved possibly in the third quarter of the 4th century. This technique was commonly used over large geographic areas during the Roman and early Byzantine period.

**Ribbed.** A ribbing technique is selected for the surface linear motifs of rim, shoulder, and handles decoration. Some samples show two distinctive qualities occurring at the same time and give an understanding of corrugation obtained by hand and wheel method (**Table 37. E-G**). Loosely associated ribbing has been applied on the rim of storage ware from Grave 3 and illustrates how the tool direction leaves wide corrugations on both sides during the rim shaping process. The wheel method produces a different advantage in the high quality application to the jar from Grave 6. It shows a special fabrication which, for a limited period (170–200 AD), was gained on the body surface of occasional flared rim shape jugs in Tsebelda.

This technique shows the adoption of decorative characteristics related to fashion in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century. While concerned with foreign samples from the Mediterranean Roman provinces of Egypt and Syria-Palestine, close relation to similar techniques and modification of forms is visible from 150 BC.<sup>571</sup> Much of the importance of this technique is shown in 1<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Hayes 1997:24, fig.31,5-7. Plate 7.

century Egyptian pots. Such an effect is produced also in most of the cooking<sup>572</sup> and kitchenware of the 4<sup>th</sup> century Baalbek in Lebanon.<sup>573</sup> Therefore, the common supply or demand may assign its wider distribution among the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century wares of Aegean, central Mediterranean, or Black Sea regions and Danube countries.<sup>574</sup>

**Moulded.** Moulded pottery design, including two distinctive compositions of stylised animal heads or spirals, are commonly used to indicate popular style and conventional wares for the closely related Colchian society. The zoomorphic animal head of the jug from Grave 1 is made of clay plaster and shaped by hand (**Table 38. A, F**), but in the stamped face and squared structure of the raised mould, several supported tools can be recognised to be used in the modelling process. Anatomically poorly shaped animal designs suggest an inexperienced potter.

Another design type is made of a 1.2 cm spiral coil, banded twice and sliced on both edges of pouring wares before firing (jugs from Grave 1, 2. **Table 38. F-G**). It is applied to produce traditional design mode for the interested user, while showing knowledge employed by Colchian potters. This applies to areal pottery from 200–300 AD. Only the mid-3rd century potters offer additional S-shaped elements on a few occasions, but the discovery of spiral strap-ends for local *fibulae* prove that local smiths produced metal spirals in the 150/170 AD, which were prominently used as well in Apsilia at the time.

### DECORATIVE SPECTRUM

They incorporate two principal geometric and zoomorphic motifs of different chronological sequences, but produce three different decorative types pointing to homogenous and foreign characteristics. They involve:

- **Linear decorative motifs:** wavy, horizontal, cross-shaped, scaled. *Incised and engraved.*
- **Circles:** cross-shaped, radiated, and sometimes accompanied with animal heads. *Stamped, pressed.*
- **Moulded elements:** coils, animal head. *Applied.*

Wavy lines and moulded spirals guide homogeneous elements. Other stylistic element types like roundels, animal heads, and spirals occurring at once indicate a significant change. Their

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<sup>572</sup> Similar features are observed on Hellenistic and Roman cooking wares from Beirut, Roman deep dishes from Kfar Hananya, Roman cooking pots from Jerash, casseroles and jugs from Ain Sinu, frying pans and dishes from Apamea, and casseroles from Dibsi Faraj. See: Vokaer A. 2010:115-130. Fig. 2, 3, 4.

<sup>573</sup> There are jugs with corrugated flared rims from German archaeological sites. See Hamel H. 2010:877-879. Similar reflections are remarkable on 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century Šaratice jugs.

<sup>574</sup> See: Pirling 2000; Schulze-Dörrlamm 1990.



relationship tends to be relatively long-lasting and slow to change, but also shows how different conceptual units fit together. Decorative types, their positioning and component parts make it recognisable that pottery shape and decoration are closely related contexts.

### *GENUINE DECORATIVE ELEMENTS*

Homogenous decorative types are recognised in wavy lines and moulded spiral elements. They apply post-Roman, early and mid-Roman local forms of several vessel categories, including pithoi, handled jar, and pouring pottery. From the type series, linear geometric motifs suspended by wavy lines vary in forms and treatment. They produce a scale pattern distinctive in technologically and stylistically distinguishable line bands of:

- ✓ *Wavy lines*
- ✓ Criss-crossed lines

*Wavy Lines.* The ovoid jug from the Grave 4 (**Table 24. B-1**) is distinguished by classical Colchian decorative tradition and shows the most typical wavy design of the Hellenistic past, which has been significantly applied to early and mid-imperial Apsilian pottery design. The four distinct rows employed in the middle body is stylistic evidence, but each composition suspended by eight waved elements of regular curved lines is that character favoured on areal pouring wares from 170–300 AD. It is scarcely exhibited in late 4<sup>th</sup> century wares. Only the storage jars ensured their longest use until 450 AD.

Other variants identified as shoulder decoration apply to four Olginskoe wares: the ovoid jug, amphora, and two storage wares (**Fig. 33, Group II**). These are independently raised and stylistically distinctive deeply engraved double lines employed in single or in pairs (**Table 24. B2; Table 23. A; Table 28. A**), recognised as a rare but long-lived decorative element observable from 270/300 to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Compositional changes in shoulder decoration are conveyed in the hemispheric jug from Grave 3 (**Table 38. D**). It still depicts a simple motif of five wavy reliefs, which is a low quality tool work, but in decreased number. Synthesis with V-shaped looped lines gives an indication of mid-imperial development. This new compositional element type is set inverted on both free ends of the lower handle and enclosed by a stamped circle (**Table 25. B-5**). It is most favourably used in central Apsilia, but commonly occurs on areal wares.<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> It occurs in Apushta grave 4 and Apiancha grave 39 (pl XXXVIII, 2). Storage jar is evidenced in grave 15 of the same cemetery (Pl. 12-7, 8). Voronov 1982.

Another type presented on pithoi from Grave 4 is a stylistically and technologically developed comb latticing, engaging the shoulder and rim (**Table 37. A-B**). A further peculiarity in the process is the X-shaped decorative element of 1.2 cm, extended by looped intersected lines and formed symmetrically on the upper neck (**Table 22. B**). Both assure gradual technological change shortly appearing on limited pottery of Tsebelda from 340/360 to 380 AD.<sup>576</sup> The rim and shoulder decorations are made by the same tool, but the tooling pressure was performed deeper and clearer in two rows that are closely arranged on the upper shoulder. Compositionally, the entire shoulder decoration illustrates four decorative bands of five wavy lines. The distinctive treatment of the rim is reflected in the five slightly waved but thickened and grooved lines. They are applied on the frontal lip. Both parts provide a visual effect of sharply rendered intermediate waved lines contrasting with the lighter surface.

*Criss-crossed lines.* Distinct modelling and dissimilar stylistic element types produce three different capacity pouring wares from Grave 3, 5, 6 and a jar from Grave 1 (**Table 38. H-J**). The new compositional schema of cross-hatched decorative elements is generally achieved for upper body parts, but the finer version of similarly treated two 1.3 cm intersected hatched lines surround the middle body and are applied on the entire handle (**Table 38. I-J**), recognised as a limited edition. This composition applies to two juglets (Grave 3, 6), implying the central Apsilian pottery tradition of the years 270/300 to 450.<sup>577</sup> Incorporating the radiating rosette of circles, frontally depicted on the middle body of the white-coated juglet, is a well-considered attempt to define it from homogenous pots (**Table 26. B**) which is exclusive even in central Apsilia.

The occasional composition of intersecting decorative lines demonstrates that the shoulders of the jar from Grave 1 fall into a distinguishable pottery group (**Table 23. A**). There is no connection between such shape and decoration in Apsilian or Colchian pottery tradition, but it reconstructs close decorative links with wares appearing from 340–360 AD and point out the continuity in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

*Moulded spiral motive.* The second type is a raised pattern of spiral coils intended for handle design and similarly applied three pouring wares from Grave 1, 2, and 5 (**Table 38. F**). The

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<sup>576</sup> The two-handled jar was found in the genetically definable foreign warrior grave 1-24 of Tsebelda cemetery. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:Pic.10.2.

<sup>577</sup> Identical decoration similarly applies on tall jugs, juglets, and certain storage wares (some from the II stage graves of upland Apsilia are: Apushta grave 3 and Bat grave 3. Voronov 1982:50. Pic.22.4; Pic.17.6. In central Apsilia they are observed in Apiancha graves 11, 25 (Gunba 1978:20-21,35. Tabl.XI.2; XXIII.2) and in Abgidzrakhu graves 45,53 (Trapsh 1971:71-72; 80; Tabl.XXIII.1; XXX.1). Few of them appear in the III stage Lar graves 12, 31 (Voronov 1982:36. Pic.16.3) and in Apiancha cemetery (Gunba 1978. Tabl.XXVIII.2.).

raw clay mould coiled twice and moulded in a spiral shape is a widely shared pattern, first entering Apsilian pottery fashion from 320–340 AD. It was initially applied on hemispheric jugs,<sup>578</sup> rarely on pear forms and never on ovoid types.<sup>579</sup> The advantage of using spiral coils may reflect insights into Colchian culture and metalworking of the prominent prehistoric past,<sup>580</sup> which may remind us not only of the potters' origin. It became popular during the 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>581</sup> but its synchronic appearance on European and Eastern tableware pottery and jewellery type throughout the late imperial time is remarkable,<sup>582</sup> and in fact continues into early medieval time.<sup>583</sup>

Another characteristic is presented by the horizontal arrangement of geometric elements enclosed by spirals at the ends (**Table 38. G-H**). It applies to the jug from Grave 5 and gives an understanding of a slightly later combination appearing possibly during the 340–360 AD. Such a design lasted until the late 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>584</sup>

#### *FOREIGN DECORATIVE ELEMENTS*

The globular jug from Grave 1 produces all three thematic types of stamped roundel decorative motifs that lead to the definition of 'Apsilian culture' and was used with great popularity from the mid-imperial time. This also includes anatomical components occurring from the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Each composition is separately discussed below.

*Stamped roundels.* This type gives an understanding of circles as independent elements, which rarely depicts the 'eye' (dot-in-circle) of animal components. Sometimes it also deals with the composition of the Greek cross and diametric forms like rosette. Both are identified as single motifs. This stylistic composition always incorporates such morphological segments of pottery like frontal body, neck, and handle, but the compositional principle is recognised in distinguishing the lower and upper decorative zones. They show a selected display of:

<sup>578</sup> They appear in the grave complexes of II stage (340–370 AD), where well-datable Lebjazhi or profiled fibulae (320 to 400/410 AD) is still observed.

<sup>579</sup> See Tsibile cemetery grave 1-50. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:154. Pic.20-4.

<sup>580</sup> They are commonly used in Neolithic objects (Pchelia 1930:156) and in Middle and Late Bronze Age Colchian pottery. Kuftin 1948:30; Kuftin 1941; Japaridze O. 1955:10-31.

<sup>581</sup> Spiral strap-ends that hung on the bow fibulae were favourably worn by Colchian and Apsilian females (Alrakhu grave 4, Apushta cemetery graves 1, 12). See in: Gunba 1978:12. Table IV.4; Voronov Jushin 1971.13; Voronov 1982:55. Pic.25-20.

<sup>582</sup> Spirals images are found in different periods on various items: on the 2<sup>nd</sup> century necklaces and 3<sup>rd</sup> century headdresses of Lithuanian females from Baltic region, as well as on eastern *sigillata* and much older Arretine cups of northern Tuscany. See Gimbutas M. 1963:127. Fig. 40-b, c; Hayes 1997. Fig.19.2; Hayes 1997. Plate 15; fig.16.4; 17.6,8,11.

<sup>583</sup> The later 6<sup>th</sup> century earrings with spiral ornaments attached either side are evidenced in Lombardic sites at Castel Trosino near Rome. Spier J. 2010:17. Plate N15; Bierbrauer 1974:318-320.

<sup>584</sup> A single example revealed in Shapka region, Tserkovni grave 5. Voronov, Jushin 1973. Pic.5.2.

- ✓ *Single roundel*
- ✓ *Roundels arranged in the shape of a Greek cross*
- ✓ *Roundel medallion with stylised animal motif*

*Single roundel.* The most limited perspective shows the dot-in-circle element depicted as an animal eye on the globe-shaped jug from Grave 1 (**Table 26. A**; **Table 38. A**). The same device is visible on imported zoomorphic buckles from the destroyed Grave 11 (**Fig. 38**; **Table 19.4**), which is chronologically the earliest object. Therefore, such imported objects may have essential significance for the local imitations. A similar performance is accurately tested on various metalworking items from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. It is concerned with a limited series of fasteners including catch-plate fibulae,<sup>585</sup> buckles, scabbard,<sup>586</sup> belt fittings,<sup>587</sup> imported ivory, and bone adornment or pendant,<sup>588</sup> but it is not shown to be used for limited purpose or given attention to the object task.

The independently applied roundel has not taken into wide use whether in Apsilia or the entire Colchis, where the thematic development of roundel motifs is observable, but it is a highly visible decorative element and widespread examples over the large geographic area that includes Celts, Romans, and Germans.<sup>589</sup> It first comes into view on a Celtic gold coin from Hessen that is dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.<sup>590</sup> It noticeably arrives further on the monumental art of the Augustinian era.<sup>591</sup> Other versions depicted on official items are German<sup>592</sup> weaponry from Vismose<sup>593</sup> and late Roman armoury.<sup>594</sup> Deliberate displays

<sup>585</sup> These fibulae were mainly used by female to fasten clothe and they are evidenced in following cemeteries: Aukhuamakhu grave 3, Apushta graves 6, 9 (Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin 1970:177,181. Pl.6-5; 9-6), Tserkovni hill graves 7, 8, 9 (Voronov, Jushin 1971. Pic.7.2; Pic.8.10,11; Pic. 9.3). See: Trapsh 1971:102. Tabl.XXXIX.8; Two other examples of bronze and iron fibulae were found in Alrakhu female grave 7 and 10. Gunba 1978:17, 20. Table VII.2. Table X.4

<sup>586</sup> This imported scabbard, decorated with single roundels relates to the imported Nydam type sword and evidenced in Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Voronov Shenkao 1982. Pic.18.1a.

<sup>587</sup> X-shape belt fittings was worn by Apusta male and evidenced in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century grave that did not contain any weapon (Apushta grave 10). In other cases, the buried male evidently owned a functional belt with X-shaped fittings that are always found in weapon grave contexts. Voronov 1982:55. Pic.24.22.

<sup>588</sup> It appears in Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 6. Trapsh 1971. Pl. XXXIV.20.

<sup>589</sup> It reminiscent the prehistoric southern Arabian sites of Sharm, Fujairah, Wadi Ashwani, Wadi ah-Shanah, Wadi al-Hilu, and Wadi Daftah. A rosette suspended of five dots, with a dot-in-circle in the ceindicating a 'spiny oyster' from Sharm. See: Ziolkowski M.C & Al-Sharqi A.S. 2006.

<sup>590</sup> The coin on which it is represented, considered to a post-Roman development of Celtic art. See: Hansen 2010:74. For more information see: Laning 1993. Laning 2006. Laning 2010

<sup>591</sup> *Signa militaria* and *signum manipularis* with the legionary eagle that represented on the frieze of San Domenico in Sora (Augustinian date) from Abbazia was decorated with central dot roundels. See: D'Amato R. 2009:127. pic.156g.

<sup>592</sup> From Frankfurt-Sindlingen (Miks Ch. 2007).

<sup>593</sup> Decorated scabbard from Nydam (See: Bemmann G., Bemmann J. 1998; Carnap-Börnheim 1991).

<sup>594</sup> Double roundels with a central dot was the 1<sup>st</sup> century a decorative motif that often appears on the chest fasteners of infantry and cavalry mail, as well as on double S-shaped hooks with a snake heads. The hooks for the *humeralia* of mail belong to the collection of Het Valkhof Museum, Nijmegen. See: D'Amato 2009:128.pic.159. The dot-in-circle decorative images on mail that worn by foot soldiers and also decorative plaques come from Vendel grave 14 and Valsgårde grave 8.

indicate the bone jewellery from the Eastern Black Sea area,<sup>595</sup> combs and various 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century cosmetic sets,<sup>596</sup> and the plate brooches from Britain.<sup>597</sup> The latest evidence is considered to be the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century belt attire of a warrior from the Done area (Arcybasèvo), bone bags of arrowheads from Hungary (Bein), horse saddles (Awar graves), etc.<sup>598</sup>

*Roundels arranged in a shape of Greek Cross.* The system of their arrangement show that circles in a shape of Greek cross occur at the neck<sup>599</sup> or rim of pouring wares; only very few depictions on shoulders can be considered on hemispheric jugs of southern Apsilia.<sup>600</sup> It is applied on the rim of the Olginskoe jug and is formed by pressing the tool (**Table 26. A-1**) to effectively illustrate the profiled middle part of the cross that is sharply hollowed from the surface. The cross is suspended by five small 0.5 cm stamped circles and is structured by three horizontal and two vertical arrangements of circles (**Table 38. B**). It conveys the impression of a 4<sup>th</sup> century decorative schema, which first appears in 360–380 AD,<sup>601</sup> but the intention of such decorative complexity with an accompanying radiating medallion with enclosed animal head directly states an early 5<sup>th</sup> century date, as after 450 AD it had already gone out of fashion. Compositionally and stylistically, it emphasises the formal transformation of foreign themes similarly employed in the decorative schema of 4<sup>th</sup> century combs from Neuburg,<sup>602</sup> Orslavice, Elblag group of Wielbark culture (Vistula mouth), and Pruszcz Gdański.<sup>603</sup>

*Roundel medallion with stylised animal motive.* Most impressively, they produce a stylised medallion depicted on the front body. It is composed of five 0.5 cm stamped single circles arranged in a radiating pattern to enclose the animal head (**Table 38. A**). The first appearance of a single roundel medallion on local products may be expected not before 300/320 AD, but

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See: Slope H. and Arne T. 1927.pl.xlii,fig.i; Ardwidssom 1977.abb.115,120; Bruce-Mitford :214-20; Adams N. 2010:97. Plate 22.

<sup>595</sup> Identical pendants to the Akhatsarakhu appear among the population of Tanais-Sinjavka, Kerch (grave 179) and Skalistoe (grave 421). See: Bierbrauer 2008.Tabl.4.12; .25.12; .28.4.

<sup>596</sup> Evidence comes from Lakenheath, Suffolk, and Norfolk. See: Jakson 2010.29, 144,168.

<sup>597</sup> Laing, Liloyd Robert 2010. Pic.2.1-e; 2.3-b, d.

<sup>598</sup> See in: Bálint Cs. 1989:41, 73, 155. Abb.16.7; Abb.35.4; Abb. 65.4.

<sup>599</sup> There is sufficient evidence for shoulder decorations observed on hemispheric jugs in Abgidzrakhu graves 9, 19, 36.

Trapsh 1971:30, 40, 58, 110. Table V, XLV.1, XVI.2. XLV.

<sup>600</sup> Others with a similar implication occur in Alrakhu graves 3, 4 and Apiancha grave 37. Gunba 1978:12, 43-45. Tabl.III.2b; IV.1; XXXV.3.

<sup>601</sup> The first specimen might Aukhuamakhu jug from female grave 1. Trapsh 1971:98. Tabl.XXXVIII.2.

<sup>602</sup> Cnotliwy E, 2010. Fig.7.9.

<sup>603</sup> A relatively earlier group of this comb patterns dated to the early-5<sup>th</sup> century, occurring earlier than those decorative types in Pruszcz Gdański (grave 8). See: Cnotliwy E. 2010:188. Pic. 11. 14.

the animal motif is a tendency of later years and therefore, it has chronological significance. As a concept only few pouring wares of 340/350 AD emphasises the central stylistic schema.<sup>604</sup> This is widely contextualised in combination with Greek cross roundels, which were commonly used in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. It is difficult to understand why this motif has been radically decreased among the late 5<sup>th</sup> century wares in Apsilia or beyond,<sup>605</sup> finally disappearing by the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, such combined patterns were favoured by potters in the area of the village of Mramba.<sup>606</sup>

Strong connections with foreign stylistic analogies makes obvious that the radiating roundel was an imitation of imported forms. One such rosette is a clear case of a Pannonian version well depicted on 4<sup>th</sup> century combs<sup>607</sup> and some of the Cologne variants. A slightly distinctive concept is shown in the zoomorphic compositions of Budapest, as a comb depicts enclosed bird images inside the roundel medallion.<sup>608</sup> The fact that similar motifs and different series are successfully illustrated in middle Byzantine textual art and personal possessions is an indication of the popularity of composition.<sup>609</sup>

*Moulded animal motif.* The front body of an Olginskoe jug produces the moulded animal motif enclosed by roundel medallion (**Table 26. A; 38. A**). The represented animal head is treated in Apsilian style, that is, a central horned animal head made of 1.6 cm moulded clay. Distinctive parts extended by the head composition, possible eye and horns, show limited head expressions.

The frontally posed head is slightly skewed downwards. The absence of eyes, mouth, and nostrils confirm poor execution of the moulded face. The muzzle is hardly distinguishable. A circle-in-dot which covers the entire face of the moulded animal is thought to represent an eye. The unprofessional performance of horns structured on both sides reveal in quite a widely spread depiction the loss of symmetry of the head. It might be depicting an ox or bull,

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<sup>604</sup> The earliest appearance may associate with pouring vessel from Apiancha cenotaph 24. Gunba 1978:33. Tabl.XXI.1.

<sup>605</sup> At the latest it applies on pouring vessel from the Male grave 5 of Tserkovni hill (Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.5.2). It exclusively appears on two handled storage jars (Atara Armjanskaja cemetery grave 1). Gunba 1978. Tabl.XLII.1.

<sup>606</sup> A radiating animal motif is similar to a jug of Abgidzrakhu (grave 36 ), but differs by the Greek cross depicted on the shoulders (Trapsh 1971:58. Tabl. XVI.2). It also exclusively applied on neck of a storage jar in Apushta cemetery grave 15. Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin. 1970. Pic.12.2.

<sup>607</sup> Cnotliwy E. 2010.

<sup>608</sup> Cnotliwy E. 2010:217. Kat. 241.

<sup>609</sup> Later stylistic analogies of roundel medallions are seen on textiles in the Museum of Haven, Yale University Art Gallery (Fallke O. 1913:57.fig.75; Martiani-Reber M. 1986:63-64, no.33). A silk piece of tunic (possibly of imperial authority), with frontal bust imitation and similar schema, suggests an apotropaic significance. In general, 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century pendants with Christian imagery often imitate the radiating composition of roundels, sometimes incorporating even the coins to give a similar association of radiating roundels (in Virginia Museum of Fine Arts). See: Kondoleon Ch 1987:307-316. Gonosova A. and Kondolen Ch. 1994:109-111.

based on conceptual reasons. The unbalanced modelling sometimes argues for pig depiction, but comparisons that closely match the Olginskoe sample suggest an ox/bull display.<sup>610</sup>

The zoomorphic style that gradually replaced earlier geometric motifs in Apsilia in 360/370 to 400 AD has been conservatively applied only on pouring wares. The increased interest of societies in the area in moulding work fell in the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and was frequently used into the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>611</sup> It is not easy to assess the meaning of the animal choice that may well be achieved either from the practical life of the population or symbolic value. Symbolic value is largely speculated to connect with Christian imagery<sup>612</sup> to symbolise the process of Christianisation in the area. Therefore, conceptually, the representation of an ox may well be assigned to local preferences, because of close links with transportation facilities. Zoomorphic representations were not favoured beyond this region.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 2. 7. 2 Metal Objects**

Metal items provide evidence for distinctive household objects, weapons, and dress attire. By category they consist of knives, spearheads, fibulae, and buckles. From their broad typology a chronology can be inferred to increase the source of knowledge comparable to Olginskoe settlement.

##### ***IV. 2. 3. 2. 7. 2. 1 Knives***

Knives were one of the major items of Olginskoe grave goods assemblages, evidenced in five intact graves. They reveal similarities with several examples in the area and those examined from late Roman grave contexts. In size they consist of either long daggers or small knives.

***Long daggers.*** This group contains three different types of long iron knives with a more or less straight back and horizontal cutting blade. They occur in Grave 1, 5, and 6. All are one-blade-cut knives, but their incomplete and corroded condition makes precise judgment a problem. The tang, tip, and dimension illustrate distinctive features and introduce three

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<sup>610</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 39. Trapsh 1971:61. Tabl.XVIII-2.

<sup>611</sup> It was not a typical motif for the Hellenistic or late Roman Colchian world. Latest figure of moulded wild pig applied on jug is evidenced in 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century grave of Brili. Gobejshvili 1950.

<sup>612</sup> It can be associated with the Apis bull, the horned cow goddess Hathor, or the Christian symbol attributed to the 'horn of unction that poured forth the blessings of God'. Jugs with animal imagery could symbolize male virility and female fertility. Higashi 1990:20.

distinguishable types A, B and C. The first two lack diagnostic parts like the tang, shoulders, or tip, but their original form and exact dimensions are recognisable in alternative groups available in Apsilia.<sup>613</sup> From the length and thickness they are proportionally affiliated with the dagger or seax favoured by both Apsilian males and warriors, but they do not match with those types that have been scientifically classified.

**TYPE A: single cut blade with convex back.** This type is evidenced in Grave 1 and occurs in the urn (*Inv.N.2.58.2. Table 10. 1; Table 29. 8*). The fragmentary condition means that all that remains is only the lower blade, lacking the shoulder and handle parts. The blade has also suffered damage to the edges. Graphically, it is narrow with a thickened back that slightly slopes downwards to the tip. The tip is distinctly extended and a little arched. This is a significant point where typological distinction may be recognised. From the horizontal cutting edge it is similar to Type B. Proportionally, the survival condition suggests it was originally more than 25 cm in entire length. Maximum blade width is 2.9 cm, and from a dimensional aspect it seems to be the longest among Olginskoe knives.

The poor condition makes it problematic to state any exact comparisons. Identical forms of the blade and tip termination associates it with knives characterising a slightly distinguished tang at both shoulders, but complete areal examples with smaller proportions<sup>614</sup> may suggest that this Olginskoe knife is either another synchronic variant developed from this type or few regional preferences of this type, as those with similar dimensions are unlike, having a sharply sloping blade to the tip and with sharply distinguished shoulders.<sup>615</sup> Chronologically, they appear in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, but from 380–400 AD they were still few in number. Their frequent occurrence is remarkable in the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>616</sup> and they finally disappear after 450 AD.<sup>617</sup> This suggests a probable date of 380/385 to 450 AD, but from the associated depositional perspective, the urn and globular jug has potential support only for the years 380–400, which is important in linking that chronology. Both objects might assist the judgment for the Olginskoe knife, evaluating its date to 380/385 to 400 AD.

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<sup>613</sup> They were not detailed either orally or in excavation records. All six knives, with a sharply distinguished tang and a horizontal blade, are recorded as sloping to the tip.

<sup>614</sup> They have a smaller proportion blade, the length of which varies from 14 cm to 17.7 cm, the tang between 4.3 cm to 6.7 cm and a width 2.1–2.2 cm. Only two complete knives of this type are known from the Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 44 (Trapsh 1971:7-68. Tabl. XXII.16). The rest comparisons remain fragmented (Apiancha cremation graves 20,21). Gunba 1978: 35-36. Tabl.XIX.4, Tabl.XXV.9.

<sup>615</sup> Abgidzrakhu inhumation grave 9. Trapsh 1971:6 29-30. Tabl. V.3.

<sup>616</sup> Identical knives are evidenced in the Apiancha cremation graves 20, 21 and Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 44. See: Gunba 1978: 35-36. Tabl.XIX.4, Tabl.XXV.9; Trapsh 1971:7-68. Tabl. XXII.16.

<sup>617</sup> Tsebelda fort N3. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989: 10, pic.4,4; Kazanski 1997.



All associated knives are observed in male cremation graves.<sup>618</sup> They characterise the light equipped warriors carrying them in combination with triangular narrow spears of diamond section.<sup>619</sup> They were used by horse archers as well, together with a short midrib spear, long spatha of Nydam type, a throwing axe, and seax. They were worn by infantry men, as well as heavily equipped foot archers additionally supplied with battle axes and nomadic arrowheads.<sup>620</sup> A noticeable fact is their appearance together with functional belts in their last circulation phase, where their battle character seems to have improved.<sup>621</sup> In inhumation graves they are often evidenced on the right side of the deceased, which might support additional functional evidence.

***TYPE B: Single cut and narrow tapered blade with straight back.*** This type is evidenced in Grave 5 and occurs in the urn (*Inv.N.2.58.25*. **Table 14. 2;** **Table 29. 12**). Variant distinction is seen in the wide and massive matrix of the blade, which is horizontal and straight structured. Further structural peculiarity is recognized in one angled shoulder distinguishable at the back of the blade. The cutting part shares an incomplete tang that is narrow and sharply distinguished at one side. The tip is lacking. The incomplete condition provides a blade with 13.3 cm length, max width of 2.5 cm and 3 mm thickness of the back. The tang remains at 4.3 cm length and 1.5 cm width.

Typologically it is a rare knife and belongs to the smallest group observable within the Akhatsarakhu, Abgidzrakhu, and Apiancha cemetery areas. Comparative basis from Apsilia typologically supports the surviving diagnostic parts (tang and shoulder) of the Olginskoe knife. It makes recognisable a basic form of this type of blade, structured with a horizontal back and slightly sloping to the oval tip. Surprisingly, most areal examples are incomplete and some even remain in the same fragmented condition or a bit intact at the tip. The closely linked Akhacharkhu example makes us imagine its overall length of 18.5 cm with 2.5 cm width and a tang of 6.2 cm.<sup>622</sup> The shape has chronological relations with a small dimensional series occurring after 350 AD,<sup>623</sup> but proportionally it links with later larger variants

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<sup>618</sup> It exceptionally evidenced in the inhumane women grave 1 of Aukhuamakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971:98. Tabl. XXXVIII.18.

<sup>619</sup> Apiancha grave 20. Gunba 1978:28, Tabl.XIX.4.

<sup>620</sup> Similar knives occur in the II stage grave 1-58 of Tsebelda. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:156, Pic. 21.9.

<sup>621</sup> See a horseman of Tsebelda fort N3, wore a functional belt that supported a knife. He probably carried a single spear and a seax. According to the belt accessories and their updated chronology achieved by Kazanski, this grave can be dated from 530 to 550/600 AD. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989: 10, pic.4. 4; Kazanski 1997.

<sup>622</sup> Akhatsarakhu grave 10. See: Trapsh 1971:95. Tabl.XXXV.

<sup>623</sup> Smaller variants are observed in graves up to 400 AD (Abgidzrakhu inhumation grave 13; Apiancha inhumation grave 13). Gunba 1978:23, 27. Tabl.XIII.4; Tabl. XVIII.2.

appearing possibly from 390/400 AD and lasting until 450 AD.<sup>624</sup> Therefore, a bigger proportion might be evidence for further development of this series. There is no reason for neglecting the given chronology of this series. Available evidence implies the final chronology of *Type B* to be 390/400 to 450 AD. From the associated context, an accompanying spearhead agrees with this date. No other associated object may broaden this chronology.

Frequent displays at the waist of the warrior or sometimes on the left hand correspond to their functional purpose. In fact they all relate to male graves either with light or heavily equipped warriors.

***TYPE C: single cut knife with asymmetric narrow blade.*** This knife is evidenced in Grave 6 and occurs next to the urn at the western part of the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.33. Table 15. 3; Table 29. 13*). The surviving condition is poor. There remains the tip and the entire cutting blade, but both are intact and the tang remains incomplete. Typologically it is the most distinctive with an asymmetric and noticeably narrow iron blade that tapers to the tip. The similarly shaped shoulder and cutting part which slightly slopes upwards at the tip is a further dividing pattern. Proportionally, the blade that is curved to 28.2 cm length, 2.8 cm width, and 2 mm thickness is a rare find. The dimensional characteristic producing a total length in 33.8 cm matches it with the long variant.

There are few areal references for this type from the Shapka and Mramba areas. They give understanding of this basic and dominant form. A similarly sloping tip often appears on long knives, but the late 4<sup>th</sup> century development is well recognised in the sharply distinguished asymmetric shoulders and tang. All three closest comparisons correspond to the years 380/400 to 430 AD. Since there are no earlier or later examples of this series, it must have been an individually formed type. Correspondingly, no further chronology may be obtained for the Olginskoe example. Comparative basis justifies Olginskoe *Type C* to 380/400 to 430 AD. None of the assembled deposits are against this date.

Their appearance in cremation graves enables the definition of their exact display in daily life, but evidence of their use by well skilled spearmen groups may inform of a similar functional character.

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<sup>624</sup> Three identical comparisons are evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 13, 31 and Akhatsarakhu grave 10. Trapsh 1971:36-37, 51-52, 95. Tabl. VII.10, Tabl.XIV.10; Tabl. XXXV.1

*Small Knives.* Two small iron knives are evidenced in the complete Grave 2 and 3. Both are narrow-taped single-cut types with a triangular section. A common characteristic is recognised in the flattened and rectangular section horizontal tang, as well as in the horizontal thickened and angled blade back and also in the oval tip. They are distinct in blade and hilt formation. The morphologically differing shoulder and cutting edge link with typological and functional criterion and result in their classification into *A* and *B types*. Structurally, both are appropriate for household function.

**TYPE A: with angled back.** This type is the smallest iron knife of the Olginskoe collection and applies in Grave 2 (*Inv.N.2.58.4. Table 11. 2; Table 29. 3*). Typological specifics are seen in the thickened back of the triangular section blade, which slightly slopes down to the tip and in the straight cutting part. A further defining criterion is the peculiarity of the horizontal tang, unilaterally convex at the blade back and extended at the shoulder. One part of the shoulder continues into the cutting blade. Another is distinctly structured at the back blade. They are all characteristic of a developed variant of this type. Proportionally, the provided 13.6 cm overall length suggests the smallest variant of type. The blade length is 10 cm, with 2 cm maximum surviving blade width at the shoulders. The tang measures 3.6 cm in length and 1.4 cm width.

Morphologically it belongs to the rare and short-lived mid-imperial shapes observable from 310–375 AD,<sup>625</sup> but it is difficult to obtain a clear chronological idea of the lower date because it may almost be compared with other early variants of this type, which does not indicate such change to be bound with variant distinction. It has been associated with a hemispheric jug dated after 350 AD. In contrast, the formation of the shoulder that define it from later variants appears not before 375/380 AD and may limit the upper data of *Type A*.<sup>626</sup> The fact that similar examples did not occur in grave contexts in which occur such datable objects like glass vessels or later cross-shaped *fibulae* from 410–450 AD might be additionally supportive. Circumstances suggest the most appropriate years for the Olginskoe knife are of 350–380 AD.

The shape and proportions suggest multiple functions. It might be useful in a kitchen, handicraft, and for small agricultural activities. It might be most suitable for peeling,

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<sup>625</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 51. Trapsh 1971:79.

<sup>626</sup> Later variants with matching blades are distinctly depredated at both shoulders and receive slightly big proportion. Such knives are curved 19.8 cm length, 2.5 cm width and with a back of 5 mm thick. They were circulated from 375–400 AD and evidenced in the warrior grave 9 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery (Trapsh 1971:29-30. Tabl.V.3). But, a few later variants of this type that possess the rivet holes on the handle, have also been found in a female grave 7 of Verin hill cemetery. See in: Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:28; Pic. 22.17.

circumcising, carving, or sharpening. This could reasonably be favoured by males, while all identical comparisons relate to spearman grave complexes.

**TYPE B: with slightly asymmetric blade back.** It occurs in the urn of Grave 3 (*Inv.N.2.58.10*. **Table 12. 1**; **Table 29. 11**). This type is distinct with a slightly asymmetric narrow blade and angled shoulders. The utting side that evenly tapers to the oval tip is also a typological character. A flattened tang, equally convex at both blade edges, forms comparably small shoulders. The blade is broken in two pieces near the tip, but both segmented parts are able to give an image of overall 17 cm length. Proportionally, the 12.7 cm blade length with 2 cm width (back thickness of 1.2 cm) is suggestive of a bigger variant of this type.<sup>627</sup> It has a tang of 4.3 cm length and 1.2 cm width (tang tip 0.6 cm).

It is the rarest type appearing in Apsilia before 380/400 AD,<sup>628</sup> But proportional variation makes it clear that Olginskoe *Type B* is a bigger, later, and longer circulated variant observable from 380–450 AD. It might be suggestive of the Olginskoe example as well, but the accompanying coil-banded bow fibula and rock crystal bead may provide a closer date of 380–400 AD to *Variant B*.

The structural nature is suggestive of a primarily household function, which might explain their appearance in female graves of Apsilia.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 2. 7. 2. 2 Weapons**

Weapons are evidenced in five complete graves and presented such categories as *spathae*, spearhead, battle axe and dagger (**Table 29**; **Table 29b**). They are late imperial weapons. Apart from the *spathae*, all are suggested regional weapon categories and display developmental phases of their types.

#### **SWORD**

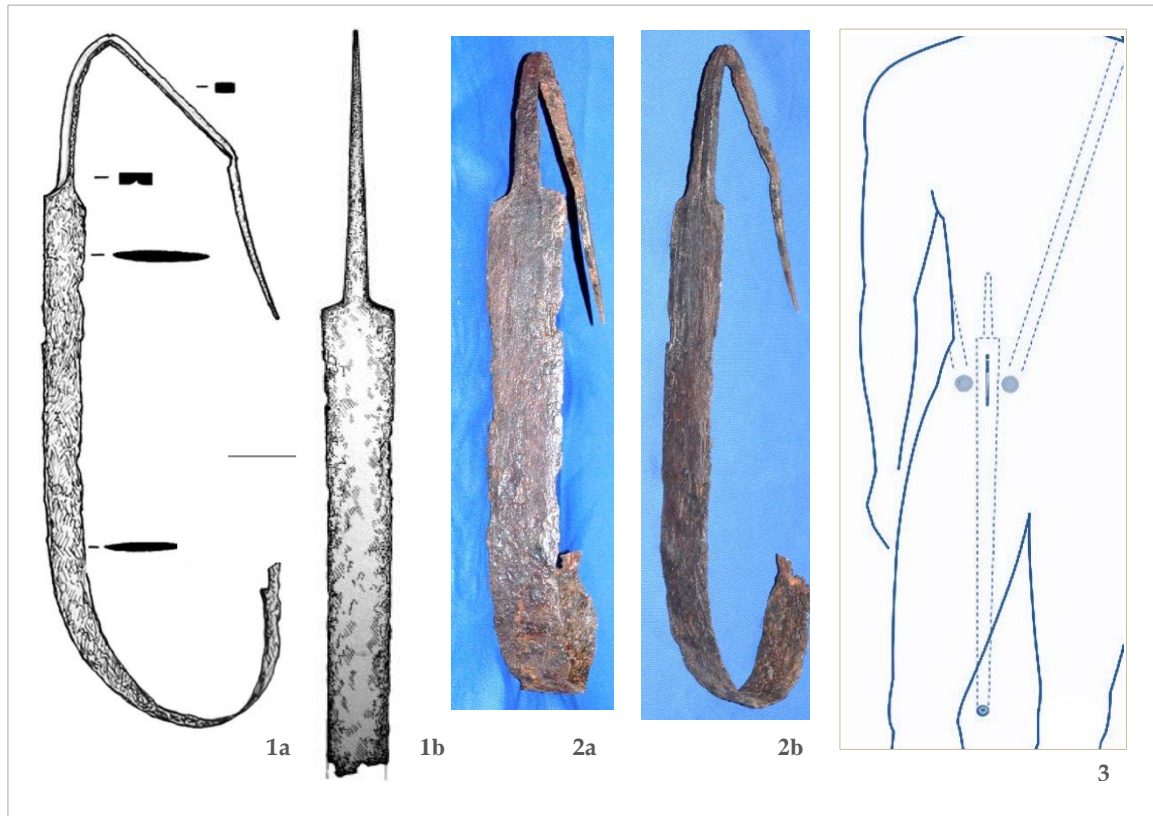
An iron sword is evidenced in Grave 4, next to the urn at north-western side and in a bent condition (*Inv.N.2.58.17*. **Fig. 36**; **Table 13. 2**; **Table 29. 2**). It remains incomplete, with the intact lower part lacking the tip and a too corroded blade. This condition is responsible for

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<sup>627</sup> That is supported by areal comparison from Alraku (grave 6), which has a smaller size. Trapsh 1971:112. Tabl. XLIII.2.

<sup>628</sup> They were found with cross-shaped catch plate fibulae in graves, which is chronologically crucial.

typo-chronological difficulties. The surviving blade proportion, cut contour and the shape of tip provides insufficient information.



**Fig. 36. Sword from the grave 4. 1-2b-** Sword was bent in U type. Tip is lacking. **3-**Perspective of wearing Olginskoe sword.

The blade spectrum shows a lenticular section, with tendencies for carved edges and solid drawn sides.<sup>629</sup> Other specifics of the blade are revealed in a shape that slightly tapers to the tip and slightly sloping shoulders. Its rectangular tang similarly tapers to the top and possesses a short middle groove. Nothing is left to help interpret the lost tip, while the records and illustrations are similarly poor, making it impossible to recognize whether the tip was sharply elongated and pointed as it emphasised in the imagination or had a shortly terminated triangular form. At the top of blade, on the front surface, there are still visible traces of vertical central grooving, but it is uncertain if these are a typologically significant characteristic of surface grooving similar to Nydam swords. Proportionally, the entire length that survived is 65 cm.<sup>630</sup> From a dimensional aspect the blade provides 32 cm of length, with maximum 4.4 cm width at the shoulder and a tang of 18.8 cm, which obviously corresponds

<sup>629</sup> A similar feature of carved blade edges is observed on most blades of 'Putensen-Vismose' and 'Fontillet' type swords.

<sup>630</sup> Original length is unknown, but in Grdzlishvili's protocol the total length is registered as 65 cm. Grdzlishvili 1947:93.

to the spathae categories. However, precise typological assignment is more questionable because of the absence of the tip. The closest comparison is suggestive of the sword of *Biborski Type V*.<sup>631</sup>

The mixed characteristics of Olginskoe spathae is recognised in several parts. From the tang shape with slightly sloping shoulders, it closely links with the ancient model of Castilian La Tène sword, but proportional dissimilarities are apparent.<sup>632</sup> The developed character can be seen in the increased dimensions of blade and tang, as well as in the blade construction, which slightly tapers in appropriate cut contours with drawn edges. All these follow the schema of early imperial spathae,<sup>633</sup> with the decreased width of maximum 4.4 cm also comparable to an early imperial *spatha*.<sup>634</sup> The blade transition to the point is not seen, but the closest local and regional comparisons suggest a shortly estimated and slightly pointed arched form.

The Olginskoe spatha belongs to the rare finds in Colchis. Two areal comparisons are similar in proportions, cross section, shortly terminated arched pointed tip, and top decoration with bead.<sup>635</sup> Both are mid-imperial graves and accompanying items do not predate 270 AD.<sup>636</sup> Another close dimensional and typological equivalent, distinct with a rhomboid cross section, is the earliest dated 1<sup>st</sup> century sword from central Colchian Chkhorotsku.<sup>637</sup> From foreign comparisons, identical swords found in the Przeworsk culture were assigned to the Level B2 (80–180 AD) and correspond to the beginning of the late imperial phase.<sup>638</sup> From the blade and decorated tang it may be compared with the Parusnoe sword, though it is dissimilar in dimensions and is of a slightly later date (C1; 160/180 to 230 AD).<sup>639</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> Biborski 1978:72. Abb. 22-25.

<sup>632</sup> The '*Kastilischer Latèneschwerter*' from Quintanas de Gormaz, Castilla-Lèon has much increased width. See: Schüle 1969. Taf.32, 1.8; 60.1-2; 119.1

<sup>633</sup> The slightly tapered blade corresponds to a semi-spatha of '*Straubing*' type dated to the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Drawn edges of blade cut contour characterize the early imperial gladius of '*Putensen*' type (Miks Ch., 2007:67, 72). The tang proportions correspond to spathae from 'Newstead' castle (Kazanowski 1992:22f. Abb.1,2-3). Similar dimensional characteristics occur the *Nydam* and *Straubing* types during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Miks 2007:82-84.

<sup>634</sup> Swords with a very narrow blade ranging in size 3.0–4.4 cm are considered to be older than those with 4.5 cm width. See: Schulze-Dörrlamm 1985:542. tabl.1; Künzl 1993.

<sup>635</sup> Apparently their tangs were covered with wood and bone, those top was decorated with a paste or other type glass bead. A similar sample from Apiancha cremation grave 19 was placed in the grave preliminarily intact (Gunba M.1978:28. Tab.XVIII.1). Another sword is evidenced in Akhatsarakhu cremation grave 11. Trapsh 1971:96, pl.XXXVI-1.

<sup>636</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:21, pl.21.2.

<sup>637</sup> The sword from disturbed cremation grave Khostaria dates back to the Hellenistic period, while Kuftin dates it to the early imperial time. See: Khoshtaria 1941; Kuftin 1945.

<sup>638</sup> Biborski 1978:72 f. Abb. 22-2. See as well: Godlowski 2007:174. Horiz. 1-2.

<sup>639</sup> The sword from Gafken grave of the Fischhausen region (modern Parusnoe, Kaliningrad) has 75 cm length and 5 cm width. Nowakowski 1994:385. Abb.2, 8a-b.

In fact, the examined characteristics of the Olginskoe sword predominate the early imperial *spathae* of B2/C1 phase that frequently appear in Scandinavia, Przeworsk culture, Danube regions, Slovakia, and occasionally in Crimea and Georgia. This might be indicative of a slightly later date, possibly the C2 (260–310 AD) phase, but the chronological context of the accompanying offerings in which the Olginskoe sword appears gives a more complicated picture, providing at least a 40-year difference.<sup>640</sup>

Such *spathae* were carried by light equipped ‘Apsilian’ warriors, trained either in close combat or additionally skilled in shooting missiles. They are usually accompanied by two different lances and a knife, rarely with arrowheads. The accompanying items do not prove any sword-related scabbard or belt equipment. Interestingly, all finds are evidenced in cremated warrior graves, and therefore their means of attachment is not observable. None of the grave complexes with similar swords are associated with military rank.

### ***BATTLE AXE***

An iron axe is evidenced in Olginskoe cemetery Grave 6, where it occurs next to the urn and at the southern part of the grave pit (Inv.N.2.58.30. **Table** 15. 4; **Table** 29. 10). It is distinguished typologically by the triangular form of the asymmetric blade, having an arch-shaped head, and a low asymmetric beard. The specifics of this variant is recognised in the top being slightly convex below the eye. The flattened and narrow long neck providing the broad beard and angular narrow heel is distinctive. They produce a variant specific to mid-imperial examples, but further peculiarities drive the horizontal cross section of the oval-shaped eye that is extended to the top and designed to fit the shaft. Proportionally, the 16.8 cm blade length and 12.3 cm beard width together with 3.8 cm top diameter (matching with top heads of 4.1 cm length) match the smaller variants.

Typologically it corresponds to the *Variant A* of Voronov’s classification, achieving a quite wide-ranging 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century date.<sup>641</sup> It also matches the ‘*Tsebeldian Type 3*’ of Kazanski’s classification, introduced within the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century period.<sup>642</sup> No finer chronology is attached to such areal axes, but there is potential to make a few new points in chronology of this type through the Olginskoe variant specifics.

This axe evidently belongs to a very small group with scant dating evidence. Morphologically, what directly links it with early variants of years 320/340 are the narrowed

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<sup>640</sup> Noteworthy is accompanying with a spear of 350–360 AD and a local pear-shaped vessel of 375–454 AD.

<sup>641</sup> Voronov, Shenkao 1982:127, pl.35-10.

<sup>642</sup> Kazanski 1994:459. fig.11.12.

long neck, slightly sloping asymmetric back of blade with narrow angular heel of beard, and oval eye.<sup>643</sup> However, smaller proportions make it distinctive from later variants<sup>644</sup> and those bigger examples appear in Stage III grave complexes in the years 380–450 AD.<sup>645</sup> This fact is supportive to determine its lower and upper chronology and confirm the Olginskoe axe as a transitional variant circulated possibly during 350–400 AD. The absence of this type after the years 440/450 is remarkable, but the context of accompanying offerings such as square-shaped *Ango* dagger and juglet may broaden its date to 375–400 AD.

Graphically, such an arched blade is expected to be a local type and attributed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century autochthonous weapons,<sup>646</sup> but they show an obvious imitation of Germanic forms recognising the Bardäxe model. This may correspond to the wide appearance of the eastern series among the Elbe Germans and Przeworsk, Luboszyce and Czerniaków cultural groups of phase C1a–C3 (160/230 AD to 350/375 AD).<sup>647</sup> Two Tsebeldian warrior graves importantly bend this context chronologically and as a source factor they might be derived. The associated, quite ambiguous, depositional context and burial practices that may simply be a response of foreigners gives reason for such speculation.<sup>648</sup> They may be a potential indication that even Germanic warriors were involved in the frontier security of Colchis. Indeed, the Olginskoe example cannot be assigned to foreign production according to its criteria, and while leaving a wide chronological gap between prehistoric and Roman types, the first imports of the Germanic forms of throwing axes might fill in the theoretical gap. Since their presence in the mid-imperial grave context of foreigners may fit into the argument, these axes may potentially indicate foreign troops in Colchis, which does not exclude even Germanic warriors or smiths in the area before 250 AD. Therefore it is possible that they either occurred due to locally stationed foreign troops or were produced by a local smith experienced in Roman *fabricae*.

From a distributional spectrum, arched axes are concentrated generally in Apsilia but there are several reports of such findings from West Georgia. At least 20 battle axes associated with

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<sup>643</sup> Identical examples are evidenced burial complexes of 350–375 AD. Essential for the chronology of Tsebelda sample (grave 1-24) are such accompanied items as coil-banded and semi-circular bow fibulae of 260–340 AD, cloisonné buckle of 320–370 AD, shield with *Zieling K2* type boss of 260–375 AD, Caesarean dirhams of Lucius Vera (161–166 AD), pairs of triangular spears with rounded shoulder, and some local pottery. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139-140. Pic.10.11.

<sup>644</sup> Abgidzrakhu axe from grave 9 is proportionally similar but differs in arched blade. Trapsh 1971:29-30. Tabl.V.2.

<sup>645</sup> The Alrakhu comparison from grave 3 also differs in length (18 cm) and to determine its date attention must be paid to assisted offerings: fibulae of Stage I (260–340 AD) and Stage II (320–370 AD), and a blue dotted cylindrical glass vessel of Stage III (380–450 AD). Trapsh 1971:109. pl.XLI.2.

<sup>646</sup> Voronov 1982:12.

<sup>647</sup> A miniature variant similar to Apsilian has been discovered in southwestern and Elbe German areas, as well as in Böhmens and Luboszyce. Kieferling G. 1994:350. Abb. 12.3.7; Faider-Feytmans G. 1970. TII, pl.82, 282.

<sup>648</sup> A consisted grave offering like axe, Germanic baldrics and small brass coins is hardly relative to local warriors.



coastal sites were recovered in Tsikhisdziri, Kobuleti-Pichvnari and Ureki. Others from central Colchis are the finds of Vani, Vardtsikhe, Racha, Dzevri, Terjola, Ajameti, Gognia village and Nokalakevi.<sup>649</sup> A few are found mapping the Enguri river valley, the villages of Rike and Makharia (axes are stored in Zugdidi Museum). Some evidenced in the northwestern mountain parts are recorded from Lentekhi village (in the area of neighbouring historical Missimia, modern Svaneti in the upper Kodori river valley).

Apsilian comparisons confirm that the Olginskoe variant is a part of the weapon complex worn by the well-equipped spearman in late imperial Apsilia. The standard combination with spears and swords give an understanding of their significance in battle, perhaps for throwing purposes or even for close combat hand fighting. German experiences also suggest their throwing function that perfectly corresponds also to the Apsilian mountain landscape. From the display schema they are found either on the left leg of the warrior, near the right head, or thrust in the grave pit.

### ***SPEAR HEADS***

Olginskoe spearheads deal with examples whose blades are triangular, longitudinal or square. All three types I, II, and III comprise a more or less pronounced lozenge-section blade with distinctly structured midrib and shoulders. *Type I* consists of triangular spears with blades shorter than the socket provides. This is a reduced and short-lived type circulated in lower Apsilia. *Type II* introduces two different variants of triangular spearheads with blades longer than the socket. *Type III* has more developed variants. They are synchronic and slightly later variants and are similarly shortly circulated examples. They all remain intact with corroded blades.

***TYPE I: Triangular spears with blades shorter than socket.*** This variant is evidenced in the urn of Grave 2 (*Inv.N.2.58.3. Table 11. 1; Table 29. 5*). Typologically it gives a hybrid feeling because the blade, which seems to be a more leaf-shaped derivative, is combined with a slender fusiform point and lozenge section, most certainly occurring after the 2nd century. Its' lower extended body and slender upper part that gradually narrows to the tip makes it more akin to the triangular spear groups. The sharply pronounced square midrib, structured on the lower blade, is obviously a sign of mid-imperial development. A further defining characteristic is the very specific steep rounded shoulders and similarly uncommon narrow

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<sup>649</sup> Lomitashvili, Lortkipanidze 1993:31-32.

socket. The total proportion remains at 23.2 cm. The blade measures 21 cm in length (midrib 8 cm) and 3.5 cm in width. The socket that remains at 2.1 cm shows the pressure of use.

Typologically it corresponds to the *Type 3* classified by Gunba and the *Type 4* classified by Shamba, which are dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. However, the Olginskoe variant is quite distinctive in certain patterns and chronologically contradicts the classification of both scholars Gunba and Trapsh, suggesting the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Since there is no broad dating evidence for the Olginskoe variant, it gives potential to examine it below.

It is an uncommon variant so no identical example has been found for this spearhead. With a slightly extended lower blade, sloping rounded shoulders and narrow socket, it links with Abgidzrakhu and Apiancha spears, classed as earlier variants.<sup>650</sup> It is exactly this narrow socket and long midrib that defines it from another earlier Akhacharkhu variant of this type.<sup>651</sup> This comparison basis may account for a bit of evidence for a lower chronology, attributable to the period between 330 and 350 AD. There is a further distinction in steeper shoulders and decreased midrib, which appears even more characteristic, but we don't know if it corresponds to the appointed date. The outlined specifics are totally absent in the comparison spectrum of areal examples of the time to provide any idea about relative chronology, but another comparison from Abgidzrakhu, identical in shoulder and profile but dissimilar with a long midrib, would support an upper chronology to the 380's, because the Abgidzrakhu example is more relevant to later variants appearing in Stage III grave.<sup>652</sup> Therefore, the analyzed context permits us to speculate the lower chronology to the 350's. The fact that identical variants did not appear in any Stage III (380/400 to 440/450 AD) grave could be helpful to focus the upper chronology to the years 370/380. However, obtained data for *Variant A* is 350 to 370/380 AD. The grave context where the Olginskoe spear occurs ranges from the second half to the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the extended date might be quite suitable for this variant.

Functionally, they were used among the small spearman group and also occurred with the shielded missile shooters from the Abgidzrakhu area.<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>650</sup> Abgidzrakhu spearhead placed on the left side of the deceased (Inhumation grave 13), remains a 3 cm wooden shaft in the socket. Chronologically valued assisted assemblages are coil banded bow fibulae of 320/350 to 410 AD and imported bead of 320–400 AD (the buckle is quite smelted). Gunba 1978:23.Tabl.XIII.6). Another version of a narrow socketed spear with a shortly structured midrib is evidenced in Apiancha inhumation grave 31. Chronologically decisive is accompanied buckle of 300–370 AD and a local coil-banded bow fibulae of 320/330 and 400/410 AD (Gunba 1978:38.Tabl.XXVIII.4). Both examples are combined with similar spear types.

<sup>651</sup> It is evidenced in Inhumation grave 14, which can be dated to the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century according to assisted offerings (fibulae of 260–340 AD and 300–350 AD). Shamba 1970:24.Tabl.VII.4.

<sup>652</sup> It occurs in Abgidzrakhu warrior grave 54 (inhumation), consisted such late 4<sup>th</sup> century assemblages as a German type shield boss of *Zieling K1* and a blue dotted conic glass vessel. Trapsh 1971:81.Tabl.XXXI.14.

<sup>653</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 54. Trapsh 1971:109.Tabl.XXXI.14.

**TYPE II: Triangular spears with blades longer than socket.** This type is presented in two different versions.

**Variant A, Triangular spears with slightly pronounced short midrib.** This variant is evidenced in Grave 4 and occurs outside the urn, thrust in the grave pit at the southwestern part (*Inv.N.2.58.16. Table 13. 1; Table 29. 4*). It introduces an extra variant of triangular spearheads with a blade of lozenge section and angled steep shoulders, in which the new morphological character of this type appears. A narrow blade and slight taper to the tip shows how it forms into a transitional variant demonstrable for late 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The tip is flattened and slightly pointed, similar to *Variant B*. The shortly structured and pronounced massive oval midrib that does not reach the middle of the blade is a clearly definable variant pattern. It split into the shorter conical socket, which is thickened and carries a definable variant character. Inside the socket there remains an easily visible fragment of the iron shaft. Proportionally, the blade dimension is of 16.5 cm length with 3 cm greatest width (at the middle body) and 11.5 cm socket, suggestive of the smaller variant.

It corresponds to *Type 2* of Voronov's classification, dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but for the Olginskoe example it is more advantageous to introduce extra variants useful for filling the gap within this type and will be examined below.

This variant is a rare version and dating evidence is scant. The Akhacharkhu example of the early 4<sup>th</sup> century (possibly the years 300–320) is important in linking the lower chronology of this variant because it demonstrates that Olginskoe *Variant A* might not appear before 320 AD.<sup>654</sup> The angled and sharply sloping shoulders as well as the open socket are a clearly separating feature from earlier versions.<sup>655</sup> A decreased oval midrib that looks transitional between the previous (with closed socket) and later versions may be used as evidence for their appearance after 340 AD.<sup>656</sup> It may argue for a lower date, achieving a much narrower chronology and opens perspective to the year 350. Their latest distribution is attributable to beyond 380 AD, where they gradually disappear from view,<sup>657</sup> rather than 400 AD. This association of the latest data with 380 AD is insecure, but quite possible to link with upper chronology. Comparison leaves a short chronological spectrum and guides a final possible date to the probable years of 350–380 AD for *Variant A*.

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<sup>654</sup> Comparisons come from Akhatsarakhu grave 14 and Tsebelda cemetery grave 101 (a reliable context is imported silver coin of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 AD) and small buckles of 320–370 AD). See in: Shamba 1970:24. Tabl.VII.3, 4; Voronov, Shenkao 1982: 136. Pic.12.5.

<sup>655</sup> All earlier spearheads of triangular profile have an extended lozenge-section blade and a middle blade. All they have a closed socket, but some defining with a rib splits along the entire blade is an important chronological pattern.

<sup>656</sup> The discovery of earliest variant from Tsebelda (grave 1a-2), assisting well-dated fibulae may indicate their chronology - the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Shenkao 1983:143. Pic.15.6.

<sup>657</sup> Last example is found in Tsebelda cemetery grave 2-3. Voronov, Shenkao 1983. Pic.15.4.

This form seems unpopular, which could be indicative of their occasional presence in the context of a few heavily equipped spearman groups skilled in close combat and distance fighting. Such spears are positioned at the right hand of the deceased in inhumation warrior graves.

***Variant B: Triangular spears with medium size sharply pronounced hexagonal midrib.***

This variant is evidenced in Grave 6 next to the square spearhead at the eastern part of the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.32. Table 15. 1; Table 29. 9*). This is a slightly slender version of a triangular iron blade with slightly longer tapering point, which is an important variant character. More than half of the overall blade representing the lozenge section is very pronounced and leads to further characteristics. Another structural specification is recognized in the largely performed midrib reaching the middle blade part, which has a quite high and sharply pronounced transitional nature. The high-placed, angled, and slightly sloping shoulders exhibit a developed style. The socket is massive and conical in shape, which does not continue into the blade, and is connected with a broad variant pattern. It still retains a piece of the iron shaft. Proportionally, the intact blade provides the maximum width of shoulders from 2.5–3.0 cm. From a dimensional aspect, the 8 cm midrib associates it with small midrib spears of this type, but the 18 cm blade with 12.5 cm socket matches the medium variant.<sup>658</sup> Therefore, dimensionally it is assigned to medium-sized spears with a short midrib.

This variant may correspond to *Type 2* of Voronov's classification dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>659</sup> and the *Type 3* of Kazanski's classification dated to 380–450 AD.<sup>660</sup> However, they do not give any broad variant classification similar to the Olginskoe spear, which gives sufficient details for sub-grouping and is advisable to define.

This spearhead was the most common late 4<sup>th</sup> century type and another developed form of the triangular shape. The blade structure with modified shoulder section replaced all earlier steep and rounded shoulder variants possibly from 370/380 AD. This may focus on a lower chronology, mainly because the dating evidence from the area judges this data.<sup>661</sup> The blade's association with other versions continuing into the early 5<sup>th</sup> century makes its short socket

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<sup>658</sup> The general dimensions of blades of this type range from 26.5 cm to 33–35 cm. The full length of the short midrib version is 26.5 cm. The overall size of the bigger versions is 33–35 cm. Trapsh 1971:64-65. Tabl.XX.11, 12. Distinguishes another, ribbed socketed types with longest blade (22.4–23.4 cm) and shouldered (3 cm width), whose midrib is 6.4–7.8 cm, tip is 1.4 cm, and socket varies from 11.7cm to 13.2 cm. See: Trapsh 1971:44-47. Tabl.XI.18.19.

<sup>659</sup> Voronov, Shenkao 1982:124. pl.2, 23, 24.

<sup>660</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:30. Pl.30.7.

<sup>661</sup> Such a spearheads appear in Apiancha graves 34 and 38. The closest variant (grave 38), dissimilar in cylindrical socket assisted such datable imported objects as silver fibulae of 380–400 AD and a shield boss *Zieling K2* type dated from 320/330 to 360/370 AD. Gunba 1978:41,45. Tabl.XXXI.3; Tabl.XXXVII.4.

unlikely. Therefore, from a blade perspective it might be weak evidence for arguing early 5<sup>th</sup> century for *Variant B*.<sup>662</sup> Some later types also connected with Stage III graves (380/400 to 450 AD) makes it difficult to achieve a clear chronological cut between them. This might be responsible for the lack of precise classification of Apsilian spears and broadly defined grave complexes. From a dimensional perspective, the blades of 18 cm length with similar profile appear from the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and did not exceed the year 410.<sup>663</sup> Therefore, the proportional aspect could be set into an argument for throwing spears, but since they have never been found with items introduced in the second quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and early 5<sup>th</sup> century, we may speculate the final chronology to the years 370/380 to 400/410. An assemblage of fine ware might also support the perceived chronology.

For functional purpose in combat fighting, this might be indicative of their presence among the simple spearman<sup>664</sup> or heavily equipped and well protected missile shooters (*sagittarii*) well trained in close combat and distant fighting.<sup>665</sup> It is evidenced in the area of Mramba.

**TYPE III, Slander longitude spear with short ribbed socket.** This type is evidenced in Grave 5, and occurs in the northern part of the pit next to the amphorae (*Inv.N.2.58.23. Table 14. 1; Table 29. 14*). It is the largest among the Olginskoe spearheads and survives with a damaged blade. The typological importance is reflected in the longitudinal shape of the slender blade that slightly tapers to the pointed tip and is convex at the socket juncture. This has chronological importance. The rhomboid section of most of the blade parts, from the tip to the shoulders, is a further identifier of later spears. An associated hexagonal midrib with a pentagonal profile is sharply pronounced from the flattened blade surface and continues into the solid neck of the socket. The shortly structured 8 cm midrib that represents more than two-fifths of overall blade length recognises typological evolution, which is primarily of a late 4<sup>th</sup> century character. Remarkably the central ridge continues into the socket through the neck, which gives the impression of a ribbed surface similar to later phase imperial spears. Both shoulders that are strongly intact and did not remain in the original outline are chronologically

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<sup>662</sup> Apiancha comparison from grave 17 is a slender and narrow-bladed variant with a lozenge section, which continues to circulate into the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Gunba 1978:27.Tabl.XVII.4). The latest variant from Alrakhu grave 3, distinctive by a ribbed socket, may also have chronological significance. Trapsh 1971:109.Tabl.XLI.5.

<sup>663</sup> Comparison that comes from the most representative grave complex Abgidzrakhu grave 57 was accompanied with chronologically significant offerings such as strongly profiled fibulae of 320–410 AD and imported buckles of 360–400 AD. Both are crucial for dating this grave to probable years 360–400 AD. Trapsh 1971:85. XXXIII.3.

<sup>664</sup> Alrakhu grave 3. Trapsh 1971:81.Tabl.XXXI.14.

<sup>665</sup> Two samples from Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 27 was assembled by chronologically important following imported objects: a blue dotted conic glass vessel of 380–450 AD, Nydam sword of 380–450 AD, and a shield with *Chapka* type boss of 380–400 AD. Other accompanying objects are amphorae, coil-banded fibulae of circular ware from 320–410 AD, and a complex of missile weapons including five different types of arrowheads. Trapsh 1971:81.Tabl.XXXI.14.

significant components, but the profile that marks the angularity of straight shoulders, similarly found in areal comparisons, is responsible for chronological judgment. The socket is conical and opens to the extended end. It contains more than one-third of the blade and has traces of slight surface ribbing. The provided dimensions are 33 cm total length, 29 cm blade, 2.8–3.0 cm maximum width, and 4 cm socket length.

Typologically, it may correspond to Type 2 of Voronov's classification dated from the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 6th century. This also approximates Type 3 of Trapsh's classification but he did not give any date to this type. This variant does not appear within the spearhead group classified by Kazanski, but since it is not a broadly classified type, certain specifics define the Olginskoe example as transitional. This needs to be examined in more detail to add a little more to this classification.

However, the slender longitudinal blade with hexagonal midrib links it with either 380 AD or later 4<sup>th</sup> century, where this type might appear. The ribbed socketed versions are scarce and introduced as an extra group in late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century prominent warrior graves.<sup>666</sup> It is still difficult to know if the ribbed socket has chronological significance because both are contemporary versions with synchronic circulation, but comparative basis makes the structural and proportional differences between those types clear, which can be recognised exactly in the socket and midrib. The total length of ribbed socketed spears falls within the range of 33–35 cm, matching medium spears of this type. This is a distinctive criterion from those variants having dissimilar nearly cylindrical massive sockets without ribbing. They come from well datable complexes associated with the early and mid-5<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>667</sup> but the absence of the Olginskoe variant in the second half of the 5th century decreases its lower data possibly to 450 AD. Dating evidence suggests type relative chronology to 390/400 to 450 AD.

Functionally it is suitable for close quarter combat and is sometimes associated with heavily equipped late imperial warrior burials, at the left side of a warrior well skilled in close combat fighting. The most favour is recognised in the graves of military authorities of Mramba. From the structure it could be the most prestigious variant and popular among

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<sup>666</sup> Of the two similar specimens, the first spearhead from the Abgidzrakhu grave 12 (inhumation), was found with two grooved *Nydam* type swords and a shield fitted with gilded boss of *Malaesty/Zieling I* type (Trapsh 1971:33-34. Tabl. VI.14). Both are dated by Kazanski to 380/400 - 440/450 AD; Another spearhead of an authority warrior buried in Tsebelda grave 1-43, seems to have been a well-supplied spearman, quite experienced in close combat fighting. His shield fitted with *Zieling K2* boss and wore an exclusive sword the scabbard of which characterized by Sassanian type decorative motifs. This grave can be dated to the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148-152. Pic. 18,7.

<sup>667</sup> This distinctive comparison from the Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 4 accompanied by chronologically important such imported items as hemispheric blue dotted glass vessel of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, a shield with spiked boss of *Libanau/Zieling E2* dated to 380–450 AD, a sword with lenticular section of 380/400–440/450 AD, three socketed Asian arrowheads of Stage III, and weapon supportive belt buckles of the same date. Therefore, grave can be attributed to 400–450 AD. Voronov Jushin 1971:72.pic.4.28, 29.

‘federate’ soldiers, because they characterise shielded and well supplied warriors owning the rarest weapons. Their rare occasional discovery in East Georgia and areas of Sochi may be indicative of limited production.<sup>668</sup> In general, alternative large spears with concave blade, angular shoulders and middle rib are known in the Germanic areas north of the Rhine, particularly in Scandinavia, where they date to the 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>669</sup>

**TYPE IV: Lances, Square section javelin (‘bodkin-Spear’).** This type is evidenced in Grave 6 and occurs next to the urn at the eastern part of the grave pit (*Inv.N.2.58.31. Table 15. 2; Table 29. 15*). Corrosion has affected the outline of the blade, but the deformation seen in middle parts might be due to frequent use. The distinctive typological nature of the square and narrow blade with a pointed tip and cleft socket shows the evolution of heavy javelin.<sup>670</sup> The broad variant specification lies in the square section of blade and its structure that continues into the rounded and cleft socket, which is evidence for variant change. The socket also splits along the entire length of blade without any junction piece or deviation, reflecting the nature of the smallest version. Proportionally, the 32.1 cm overall length with 21 cm blade length and 11 cm socket (socket diameter 1.5 cm) may account for the small variant.<sup>671</sup>

It corresponds to Type 4 of Voronov’s classification, dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>672</sup> It is classified into Type 9 by Kazanski, giving a broader date of 170–450 AD.<sup>673</sup> This obviously adds other significance to the chronology of this type, but it still leaves a chronological gap between variants, which could fit the Olginskoe example.

It is a commonly used type in central Apsilia rather than upland parts. From the profile, it belongs to the short-lived variant. The square blade structure with rounded socket is comparable to several examples introduced after 350 AD.<sup>674</sup> The socket nature of the smallest

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<sup>668</sup> There are east Georgian example from the Nedzevi cemetery and another from Sochi. See in: Ramishvili 2003. Pl. 35.19; Gavrituchin, P’jankov 2003. Pl.75.3, 21.

<sup>669</sup> Ibid. 75-77. They often had shorter midribs and sometimes inlaid blades. Similar types have been found in Alemannic-Frankish areas and also in England (Barford P.). This has apparently been developed by the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century and did not outlast the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>670</sup> An entirely rounded blade of the earliest variant is observable in the II stage Tsebelda graves 1-73, 1-79 (Voronov 1982. Pic.14.8;12.12). A latest find in the Apiancha cremation grave 38 occurs with the following dating items: a shield boss of *Zieling K2* type dated to 320/330 - 360/370 AD, and a short triangular spear with a long midrib dating to 380–400 AD. But this spear can be dated to 360–380 AD. Gunba 1978:47-48. XXXVII.5.

<sup>671</sup> Two longer versions characterized by a blade of 42 cm length and 1.7 cm socket diameter are occasional finds and of later date (Abgidzrakhu grave 14 and Apiancha cremation grave 40). Trapsh 1971:37. Tabl. VIII.2; Gunba 1978:47. Tabl. XXXIX.7.

<sup>672</sup> Voronov 1982:124. Pl.2,26.

<sup>673</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:30. Pl.30.13.

<sup>674</sup> An identical spearhead evidenced in the Tsebelda grave 1-50. Voronov 1982. Pic.20.8.

spears separates it from later variants, appearing possibly from 400/410 AD,<sup>675</sup> but the lack of their synchronic appearance in Apsilian graves might indicate that the last circulation of *Type IV* was possibly before 410 AD (it might also be a matter of poorly dated complexes). This limits the upper date to the years 400/410. Obviously, the structure of blade and socket, demonstrable to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, is a variant defining criterion, but since they come from a widely dated grave context it is difficult to achieve a broader chronology other than 360/370 to 400 AD.

Functionally, it was an appropriate weapon for thrusting at armed troops.<sup>676</sup> Its popularity among Akhacharkhu warriors might link it with a necessity for special battle tactics in the area.<sup>677</sup> This could be favoured for their effect in offensive battle, while assuming the throwing purpose against shielded one. Such javelins correspond to Roman *pilum* from Oberaden.<sup>678</sup> Apsilian comparisons confirm their use in hand-to-hand combat by special units. This occasionally occurs with shielded soldiers of the area, but it is uncertain if it was the principal choice for a few warriors in the Apiancha area, where it is relatively rarely found.<sup>679</sup> Only a few males seem to be impressed with this type in Merkheuli, Vesyoioye,<sup>680</sup> and Tsebelda.<sup>681</sup> Equally, less demand is shown in the mountainous neighbourhoods of Apsilia, at the Northeast Abasgia<sup>682</sup> and Northwest Missimia.<sup>683</sup> Further distribution beyond Colchis connects with Crimea<sup>684</sup> and Czerniaków culture.<sup>685</sup>

#### IV. 2. 3. 2. 7. 2. 3 Weapon combination

Only four graves (2, 4, 5, 6) produce battle weapons, able to identify relevance with weapon combination. Technologically and strategically they are quite an effective matter (**Table 30**). There is also a set of spear and lance from the destroyed Grave 10 that has combinable

<sup>675</sup> A later variant with a deviated socket and an increased blade occurs in the later grave 14 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971:92. Table. VIII.2.

<sup>676</sup> See Khazanov 1971:48; Baghaturia 2003.

<sup>677</sup> In the Akhacharkhu cemetery frequently discovered developed variants and a few earlier types in graves 12, 14, 15, 32, and 43 (Shamba 1970. Tables V.2,3; VI.9; VII.3,4; VIII.5; IX.2,3; .XIV.7.8.9; XV.15). Two more examples occur in graves 25, 47 and from the later 4<sup>th</sup> century Grave 6. See: Trapsh 1975. Tabl.XXII.4; XII.39; Trapsh 1971.Tabl. XXXIV.10.

<sup>678</sup> See: Bishop & Coulston 2006. Edition 2.

<sup>679</sup> Cremation grave 38. Gunba 1978:45. Tabl. XXXVII.5.

<sup>680</sup> Miller 1909:74. Pic.2,9,1.

<sup>681</sup> Only one example was found in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century Tsebeldia grave 1-50. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:154.Pic.20.8.

<sup>682</sup> Amtkel and the villages of Bzip area. Shamba 1970:42 pic 37.31.

<sup>683</sup> Lata. Shamba 1970:42.

<sup>684</sup> Myc et alii 2006. Fig.7

<sup>685</sup> Magamedov, Levada 1996. Fig.6.15.



potential, but the incomplete context leads to an original character of the set. Each of them belongs to late imperial weapons complexes, but the broad chronological distinction gives a more meaningful approach to their classification into three main types A, B, and C. The much younger items collected within *Combination A* are more or less contemporary with particular groups of central Colchis and southern Apsilia, where weapons are basic and combined with either sword or dagger (or even small knife). Chronologically, it corresponds to the mid-phase of the late Roman period.

More qualitative and developed weapon set is seen in *Combination B* and *C*. This combination is more or less contemporary with groups of the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the variety of their categories, types, and dynamics produce alternatives for broad combinations. They show standard use of spears, but better examples of developed types. The key distinction provides exceptional sword and axe weapons. They consider the weapon complexes of Grave 5 and 6.

Their proportional and tactical aspects shows ability to deal with hit-and-run tactics, but from the spectrum Olginskoe weapon sets are quite decreased compared to other grave complexes in the area. From this viewpoint, it is unclear if the functionally diversifying combination was a matter of time, personal preference, services, or supply. This also questions if the full extent was deposited in graves, because the technical capacity obviously suggests an experienced and skilled owner. In fact, most classifiable weapons correspond to the time of their use and burial. Some are even reminiscent of such military weapon complexes as Czerniaków and those from the Baltic Sea.<sup>686</sup> Deformed or damaged weapons may indicate direct contact with battles or conflicts, where they might have been used. It obviously increases the platform for scientific speculation.

***Combination A.*** Grave 4 shows an unusual composition of weapons including (**Table 30. A**):

1. Spathae of *Biborski Type V*.

It measures 65–70 cm and 4.4 cm width, which possibly had white paste-decorative handgrip. Dated to 260–310 AD.

2. Triangular spear with slightly pronounced short midrib (*Type II, Variant A*).

It belongs to a group of triangular spears with blades longer than the socket and measures 28 cm in length. Dated to 350–380 AD.

They are combinable weapons for close combat fighting. Both are the members of earlier weapon combinations roughly associated with the years 260–310 and 350–370, but from the

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<sup>686</sup> Marburger colloquium 1996:171.

typo-chronological spectrum they rather fit together. However, we should also bear in mind that there is no finer date for those complexes they appear in. Areal graves prove that they are unusual limited weapons.

The sword that is an exclusive import is scarcely found in Colchis.<sup>687</sup> From the shape, the blade is definitely an older one considered to be within 260–310 AD and outlines a 40-year timespan for the assembled spear. The Olginskoe sword is entirely absent in Apsilia, but is quite dispersed in areas of Scandinavia, Przeworsk culture, Danubian regions, Slovakia, and occasionally in Crimea. This might mean it was a popular weapon. Possibly, it was the first time it was combined with the type of assisted local spear. The only rather similar Aukhuamakhu sword from the area, which appears in 320–350 AD, shows a little increased capacity of combined weapons, but no similar spear.<sup>688</sup> Another combination from Apiancha provides a slightly earlier *spatha* from 270–340 AD, which also confirms the slight increase in the set of weapons.<sup>689</sup>

Let us check from the perspective of the spear, which is chronologically younger and assigned to 350–360 AD. It is also an occasional find in Apsilia and dissimilarly occurs within the set of increased weapons, including other variants of spear with longer midrib, throwing axe, and small knife with a straight back.<sup>690</sup> In the later years 360–380 it became a component of a high capacity weapon set based on seven different weapon categories, consisting of a similar spear, imported short sword, throwing axe, bodkin-headed missile, and pairs of small knives.<sup>691</sup> Both contexts prove their attributions to the unprotected spearman units: both light and heavily equipped spearmen are well skilled in both offensive and defensive battle.

Both give an understanding of the inconstant types, demonstrating a hardly available imported sword and occasional spear at this time. Therefore, the potential value of the sword can be judged only on the merits of its use for battle or perhaps other necessities which might cause the reconstruction of such a set. It may also be considered a family reliquary object buried together with its last owner. The fact is that sword related contemporary comparisons are quite occasional in Apsilia and the formal typological concern through time is also lacking

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<sup>687</sup> Such a sword type is uncommon in Northwest Colchis. The earliest version which comes from central Colchian Chkhorotsku is rhomboid in section (100 AD) and assisted by an earlier leaf-shaped spear. The combination character of such *spathae* is too limited in all three cremation graves found in Colchis.

<sup>688</sup> A strange combination is viewed in Aukhuamakhu cremation grave 11, where it combined with seven following weapons: a lozenge-sectioned long sword, pairs of leaf-shaped lances, fragmented knife, and three missile weapons. Both spears were thrust in a grave similar to Olginskoe grave 4. Trapsh 1971:96.Tab. XXXVI.

<sup>689</sup> In Apiancha grave 10 it is based on four weapons: a lenticular section long sword, a small knife and pairs of developed lances with triangular blades distinctive in their midrib formation. Gunba 1978:28. Tab.XVIII.1.

<sup>690</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1983:143. Pic.15.6.

<sup>691</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 2-3. Voronov, Shenkao 1983. Pic.15.4.

within relative comparisons. They all give a theoretical perspective on the depositional co-existence in later years and link with the undergoing active formal set on the horizon of 350–370 AD. And even though they are not standard weapons, they seem to have been popular.

The factor of weapon damage could lead to some supportive ideas. The bending of the sword could be enacted either during his burial or influenced by other circumstances, which might be controversial as well. For this context, it might be meaningful to know if the broken blade and lost tip of the sword are a consequence of an active use. The fact is that the kind of damage seen on the tip of the accompanying spear is a result of speed and certain slamming or pressing factors. This does not exclude dealing with battle experience as the one responsible for the break or deformation, rather than being thrust in the grave pit. Thus, deformations and breakages may judge both weapons as a practical and an active set at the time of their deposition.

However, *Combination A* was a primary property of spearmen, which might appear to be a leader or successor and may well characterise a male individual involved in non-regular services of local tribal allies, perhaps useful for emergency cases.

***Combination B.*** This combination from Grave 6 is based on new categories and shows quite an effective set of four weapons, including (**Table 30. B**):

1. A square section javelin similar to ‘bodkin-spear’ (*Type IV*). Dated to 360/370–400 AD.
2. Medium-sized triangular spearhead with sharply pronounced hexagonal midrib (*Type II, Variant B*). Dated to 370/380–400 AD.
3. Triangular throwing axe with asymmetric blade, arch-shaped head and low asymmetric beard. Dated to 375–400 AD.
4. Fragmented single cut long knife (dagger?) with an asymmetric and narrow blade (*Group I, Type C*). Dated to 380/400–430 AD.

They are late imperial weapon types and look like a part of offensive weapons for distant fighting. The chronological spectrum is not against their combination. The closest comparisons could be some from areas of Abgidzrakhu and Akhatsarakhu, where such a set can usually be found. The way they combine shows similar options of weapon property, but there is a quantitative difference between them.

For example, the identical ‘bodkin-headed’ spear that is assigned to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century is a functional alternative of the large throwing spears. This is commonly used

together with slender spears of Olginskoe *Type III* and leaf-shaped solid lances. It usually appears within the weapon set consisting of a type of either one-cut sword or with lozenge-section blade.<sup>692</sup> Thus, it was often a part of other kinds of weapons corresponding to heavily equipped warriors. Functionally, it was effective for thrusting at armed soldiers perhaps in close fighting and was responsible for serious damage. Therefore, it was usually used by heavy infantry troops, or light armed troops, but the common use of such blades poses questions about the existence of soldiers wearing chain-mail shirts.

Another spear that possibly comes from the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century makes clear the relative context of small combinations to which it attributes. The spectrum is usually suspended by either only the seax,<sup>693</sup> or an identical spear in the earliest phase of circulation from 370–400 AD.<sup>694</sup> They at least consisted of a spearhead of Olginskoe *Type III* and a throwing axe slightly later from 400–430 AD,<sup>695</sup> when shields and imported Nydam type swords show increased followers, but even in this case it was not a standard complex of weapons.<sup>696</sup> This indicates a key attribute to the militarily active spearman.

An axe that is dated possibly to 375–400 AD is quite scarce in distribution, but is a nice looking example for the combination including shields, which is often seen among the weapon graves of Tsebelda and Abgidzrakhu. This kind of combination seen during the years 350–375 is distinct not only with an assisted shield (fitted by Zielsing K2 type boss), but also with a spear similar to Olginskoe *Type I*.<sup>697</sup> Other examples are also similarly conservative and interesting by the assembled spear of Olginskoe *Type III*, which indicates that all spearmen using such an axe were additionally protected by such a shield.<sup>698</sup>

The third component is a similar knife occurring within the occasional weapon set of late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is generally assumed to be for the horsemen group of warriors, but it seldom assisted the increased weapon set and is occasionally found with the standard

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<sup>692</sup> Grave 1-50 of Tsebelda cemetery. Voronov 1982. Pic.20.8.

<sup>693</sup> Grave 57 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971:57.Tabl.XXXIII.3

<sup>694</sup> Graves 17 and 34 of Apiancha cemetery. Gunba 1978:27,41.Tabl.XVII,4; XXXI.3.

<sup>695</sup> Alrakhu cemetery grave 3. Trapsh 1971:109.Tabl.XLI.5.

<sup>696</sup> The Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 27 where it occurs, given the rather increased capacity of weapons including identical spears, seax, imported *Nydam* type sword, narrow triangular lance, crossbow bolt head, several arrowheads, and a shield fitted with *Chapka* type boss. Trapsh 1971:57.Tabl.XI.18, 19.

<sup>697</sup> It is found in Tsebelda grave 1-24 with assisted offerings: a coil-banded and semi-circular bow fibulae of 260–340 AD, cloisonné buckle of 320–370 AD, shield fitted with *Zielsing K2* type boss of 260–375 AD, Caesarian dirhams of Lucius Vera (161–166), pairs of triangular spears with rounded shoulder and some local pottery. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139-140. Pic. 10. 11.

<sup>698</sup> In Abgidzrakhu grave 9 it occurs within assemblages involving catch plate bow fibula, knife of medium-size, shield boss of *Chapka* type, several belt buckles, and a hemispherical glass vessel dated to the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Trapsh 1971:29-30. Tabl.V.2

context of combination including axe, arrowhead, and pairs of spears, dagger, and shield.<sup>699</sup> It is, however, always accompanied by different variants of bodkin-headed spears.<sup>700</sup> This may suggest its usage in the case of close combat fighting, but not plausible enough to determine direct military purpose.

The owner of this set collecting offensive weapon might have engaged in distant fighting. The fact that a similar combination generally appears in the area of Abgidzrakhu and Akhacharkhu in the nearest vicinity of Olginskoe is a differently interesting concept. There is no need to question if they belong to a true combination or not, because from the purpose they seem to be a regular combination based on three basic weapon categories: spear, throwing axe, and dagger. But their limited appearance in Olginskoe grave is also a fact. Therefore, entire patterns suggest Combination B as an active weapon and comprise a similar weapon horizon as Apsilian graves.

**Combination C.** Grave 5 produces another kind of combination (**Table 30. C**) based on three weapons including two spears and a long knife (dagger?):

1. Complete spearhead with slender longitudinal blade and short ribbed socket (*Type III*). Dated to 390/400–450 AD.
2. Socket of unrecognized spear type.
3. Fragmented single-cut dagger with straight back and narrow tapered blade (*Group I, Type B*). Dated to 390/400–450 AD.

However, there is difficulty in typologically identifying the surviving socket and knife. The shape of the slender spear revealed in the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century belongs to the important class of late Roman weaponry. Typologically, it is a medium variant of the largest spears revealed in five graves. Comparative basis suggests that it might have been used for close-quarters fighting, but identical ribbed socketed version comparisons are scarce. All three cases are associated with a shield comprising the graves of prominent warriors. This means the best associated complex of imported weapons includes the *Straubing-Nydam* type sword with a grooved blade and shield fitted with a gilded boss of *Malaešty/Zieling I3* type, as illustrated in Abgidzrakhu cemetery (**Table 95. 1**).<sup>701</sup> There is another combination from Tsebelda, where such spears assisted exclusive imported swords assumed to be Sassanian or Alan-Sarmatian in

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<sup>699</sup> Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 44 of prominent warrior. Trapsh 1971:67-68. Tabl.XXII.16.

<sup>700</sup> The Akhatsarakhu weapon set, where it occurs contained a square section javelin, pairs of two distinctive triangular spears, a battle axe, and a rounded shield. Tapsh 1975:51-52.Tabl.XII.37

<sup>701</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery inhumation grave 12. Trapsh 1971:33-34. Tabl. VI.14.

origin and revealed together with a shield suspender with *Zieling K2* boss.<sup>702</sup> It was effectively used by highly skilled archers (*sagittarii*) as well (**Table 98. 2**).<sup>703</sup> As they were designed to appear very specific, limited in amount, and having followers of high ranked militaries, it at least makes for qualitative items. There are non-ribbed socketed variants within poorer weapon sets.<sup>704</sup> It does not seem to be a component of standard combinations available for each simple warrior.

The fragment of the accompanying dagger is quite solid. If we check the accompanying dagger from the achieved typological perspective (see related chapter), this kind of knife appears in late 4<sup>th</sup> century graves often singularly with applied weapon-supportive belt fasteners.<sup>705</sup> They occasionally assist longer variants of identical spear types, but in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century some people mixed them with a set including pairs of triangular spears and swords of lenticular section, in which most exclusive is the accompanying ‘trident’ type weapon, but having two prongs (**Table 80. B**).<sup>706</sup> This may point to their free use rather than being an active military weapon of regular use. The accompanying small buckle may indicate a strapped weapon, relative to the dagger supportive belt, but there is little evidence.

However, from the chronological perspective and examined patterns, it is quite possible that it belongs to a true combination. However, it is pure speculation since we don’t know what kinds of weapons exactly were included in Olginskoe grave 5. In any case, they belong to the same weapon horizon as the Abgidzrakhu weapon set and comprises the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **IV 2. 3. 2. 7. 2. 4 Weapon related objects**

Two different objects and their grave context give association with sword and seax garniture. The first consists of a paste bead handle decoration and another with a small buckle.

*SAEX GARNITURE*. The belt fastener evidenced in Grave 5 is supposed to be a part of seax garniture (**Fig. 37. A**). It is a loop-shaped buckle made of a thin bronze sheet (0.02 cm) of rectangular section (Inv.N.2.58.27). The typological nature is reflected in a small loop, slight-

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<sup>702</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148-152. Pic. 18,7.

<sup>703</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 4. The provided set includes pairs of identical spear, a lenticular-shaped sword, three distinctive arrow head types, typologically dissimilar fragmented seax, and a spiked shield- boss of *Liebenau/Zieling E2* type. Voronov, Jushin 1971:72. Pic.4. 28, 29.

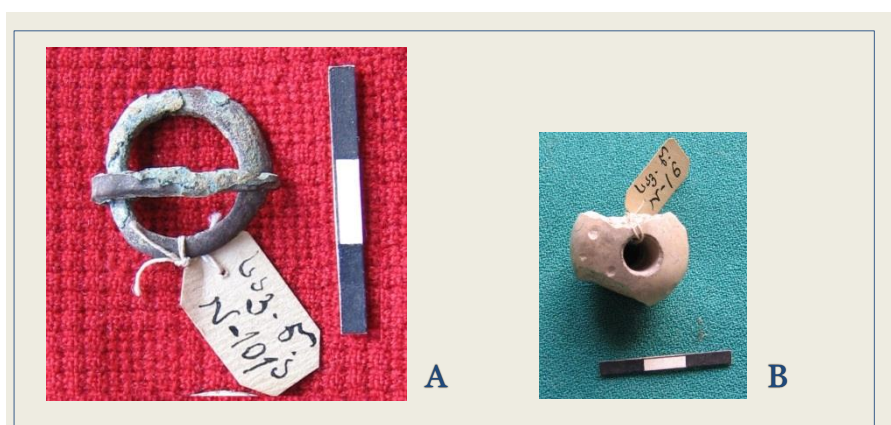
<sup>704</sup> Abramov hill cemetery grave 2. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:24.Pic.14.18.

<sup>705</sup> Akhatsarakhu grave 10. Trapsh 1971:95. Tabl.XXXV.

<sup>706</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 13. Trapsh 1971:36-37. Tabl. VII.10.

ly extended at the front (the anterior). Another specification is seen in the profiled tongue that easily moves on the rounded loop and does not exceed it. Small proportions performed in 2 cm diameter show an overall length of 1.5 cm and tongue length of 1.7 cm.

Typologically it corresponds to Type 5 of Kazanski's classification, dated to 320/330 to 360/370 AD,<sup>707</sup> but later objects from the corresponding grave context of Olginskoe are against this data. This may be indicative either of older production or the buckle being out of use by the time of its burial.



**Fig. 37. Weapon associated objects.** A-Loop-shaped buckle from Olginskoe cremation grave 5. Dimensions: Dm. 2 cm, L.1.5 cm, tongue L. 1.7 cm, thickness of wire 0.02 cm. B-Sax related bead from grave 4. Dimensions: Dm. 4.8 cm, 1 cm Dm threadhole.

In fact, it belongs to the rarest buckle types in Apsilia, fashioned in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. There is only one direct comparison about its use from late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century, in Abgidzrakhu cemetery. This proves that the assistance of weapon-related garniture usually includes three buckles of military character.<sup>708</sup> They suggest a corresponding waist belt and scabbard, but this is not the case with the Olginskoe buckle. An accompanying long knife and other items of military class from a corresponding grave context associates it with a narrow belt. We know that similar knives were supported with belts fastened with a buckle to support them. From the proportional character and weight, such buckles may be supportive only of a thin belt, either for the waist, baldric, or shoes. This single find in the grave gives an understanding of the existence of straps associated with long knives. This may be a functional indication of dagger belts associated with warriors. Similar buckles show a wider distribution including

<sup>707</sup> Kazanski 2007:36. Pl.34.7.

<sup>708</sup> An identical buckle is evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 27. This warrior grave may date to 450–500 AD. Trapsh 1971:45.Tabl.XI.8.

North Caucasia<sup>709</sup> and Black Sea littoral (Crimea).<sup>710</sup> They are generally attested in the Roman Empire.<sup>711</sup>

**SWORD DECORATION.** A rounded white paste bead (*Inv.N.2.58.18*) provided in Grave 4 is assumed to be a *spathae* accessory (**Fig. 37. B**). It survived incomplete with broken sides. Recognizable proportions are a height of 4 cm, diameter of 4.8 cm, and a 1 cm threadhole that is quite unusual for jewellery. Proportionally it matches the top of the sword tang and is identified as a hilt decoration.

Similar beads are rare finds and attributed to a few late imperial weapon graves consisting of swords.<sup>712</sup> No identical sword has been found with white paste beads, but quartz and glass beads were an important and limited decorative attribution of imported swords that reached Apsilian land.<sup>713</sup> Since similar paste beads are not an independent import in the area and find contexts are always associated with swords, it may be a logical argument for their functional purpose. Circulation data is also appropriate with chronology corresponding to swords. Few modern studies deal with the beads or stones used for sword decoration.

#### IV. 2. 3. 2. 7. 2. 5 Dress attire

**FIBULAE.** Four fibulae are evidenced in three complete graves 2, 3, and 5. All three belong to the late imperial coil-banded bow fibulae categories (Table 31. 2, 3, 4), but the distinctive nature performed in three separate ways is reflected in the bow structure and decorative elements. Correspondingly, they are classified into the following types. *Type I* appears to be of West Georgian character and assumed to be mass produced from 260–410 AD. *Type II* is a little modified and thought to be a non-local version. *Type III* is a more specific type of non-local character. Proportional differences make distinctions in function and even relevance for

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<sup>709</sup> Abramova 1997. Fig.52

<sup>710</sup> Ajbabin 1990. Fig.22.

<sup>711</sup> Preda 1980.Pl.33-M35, 35-M362; Boube-Piccot 1994. Pl.17-173.

<sup>712</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 44. Trapsh 1971. Tabl.XXII.24.

<sup>713</sup> It occurs in warrior grave 12 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. He was well equipped with *spathae* and a shield boss of *Malaešty/Zieling 13* type. A quartz bead (verall Dm. 2.1 cm and 6 mm threadhole Dm. 6mm) probably served as a sword decoration. Trapsh 1971:33-34. Tabl. VI.8.



male and female clothing. Chronologically, they generally follow Kazanski's classification, more reliable for these types.

They are all worn *fibulae* with poor survival condition, presented as either intact or corroded. The absence of associated parts, either head or pin, could also be suggestive of being non-functional, when they might just simply be placed in graves as individual related possessions (while lacking the value to treasure). It is uncertain if they were absent from the beginning or just a result of poor conservation after their discovery. In fact, they are associated with clothes fasteners of the male gender.

**TYPE I: Undecorated coil banded bow fibula.** This type is evidenced in the urn of Olginskoe cremation grave 2 (*Inv.N.2.58.5*. **Table** 11. 3; **Table** 31. 2). It belongs to the locally homogeneous arch bow *fibulae* of mid-imperial time. Its typological character lies in the bow form. The broad structural feature is recognizable in the asymmetrically shaped arched bow, which is slightly hollowed to the foot and sloping towards the head. The head is flattened and typically bends upwards with five times applied coils. They still retain the catch. What is atypical is the undecorated bow, which is made of a round section wire of 0.9 cm. The coil for banding the bow shows a 0.3 cm diameter size. Its intact condition enables the recording of an exact size, which is a chronologically important feature.<sup>714</sup> Proportionally, the surviving 6 cm bow, the 6.5 cm pin and height of 1.7 cm are associable with medium-sized *fibulae* of this type, but the Akhacharkhu comparison confirms suggestive dimensions with a bow reaching 8.5 cm in length and 3.3 cm in height.<sup>715</sup>

It corresponds to Group 15 (Series III, Variant I) of Ambroz's classification, dated to the 3rd century.<sup>716</sup> It also matches Group I (Series II, Variant I) of Abkhazava's classification, dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>717</sup> it further corresponds to Group II (Type II-1-1) of Kazanski's classification, offering the defined years 260–340 and 340–410 AD.<sup>718</sup> This broadens the earliest and final stages, but still provides a long circulation date. The considerate variant feature is the head section which offers some clues susceptible to further typological evolution. All this is analysed below.

This variant, with comparable Colchian tradition, is now assumable to the Lazian *fibulae*, which provides the typological evolution of the coil-banded *fibulae* class.<sup>719</sup> Proportionally, the medium-sized size seems to have chronological significance, as all ten identical

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<sup>714</sup> *Fibulae* are broken in bending section and presented in two pieces, bow and pin section.

<sup>715</sup> It evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 27. Trapsh 1971:45-47.Tabl.XI.5.

<sup>716</sup> Ambroz 1966:52; Ambroz 1971:101.

<sup>717</sup> Abkhazava 1979:11-12.

<sup>718</sup> Kazanski 2007:33. Pl.32.5.

<sup>719</sup> A similar *fibula* occurs in destructed Grave 11 (*Type I*) of Olginskoe cemetery.

comparisons from the area first occur in graves of the second half of the 4th century and they consist of such reliable imported objects like the Mayen type glass vessel appearing roughly after 340/350 AD.<sup>720</sup> It might be a logical reason for defining the Olginskoe example from earlier variants and driving the lower date to possibly 350 AD. Further evidence for upper chronology is their absence in later graves. They are never found together with *fibulae* produced after 410 AD (it considers fibulae dated by Kazanski to 400/410 AD). Thus, the Olginskoe example is suggestively dated to 350 AD to 400/410 AD.

It became the most popular in central Apsilia among the Apiancha and Mramba settlements in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The functionally predictive morphological character implies a thin textile. Archaeological evidence confirms that they are commonly associated with male-related clothing, which equally applies to both inhumation and cremation burials.<sup>721</sup> The display suggests varying usage. The Akhacharkhu spearman units pin their clothes at the left shoulder with this type,<sup>722</sup> but those equipped with swords show their use on the right shoulder similar to the Roman style, perhaps practically to keep the cloak back for easy use of sword.<sup>723</sup> Warriors from the three further areas of Apiancha, Mramba, and upland Lar place it on the chest.<sup>724</sup> Occasionally they are evident on the left pelvis.<sup>725</sup> Their occurrence as head cover fastener is almost exclusive, which is evidenced in hee graves of socially distinguished military authorities from Tsebelda.<sup>726</sup>

From the gender spectrum, only four females of high society Apiancha, Alrakhu, Apushta, and Bat areas used them for fastening the cloth on the chest.<sup>727</sup>

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<sup>720</sup> It Alrakhu grave 5 it was assisted with the Mayen type glass vessel dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, which also corresponds to the date of burial (Trapsh 1971. Tabl.XLII.5). In Apiancha inhumation grave 31 it was accompanied with a local triangular spearhead (with short midrib) appearing after 380/400 AD (Gunba 1978:38.Tabl.XXVIII.6). And in Tsebelda inhumation grave 1a-2, it was assembled with a pear-shape jugs which is not observable before 340 AD. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143.Pic.15, 10.

<sup>721</sup> It occurs in Abgidzrakhu inhumation grave 3 and cremation graves 6, 27. Trapsh 1971:24. Tabl.II.9.

<sup>722</sup> Akhacharkhu cemetery graves 29, 38. Trapsh 1975:36, 43. Tab.V.1; IX.4.

<sup>723</sup> For the functional display of fibulae, see: Whitfield 2004:72; This characterize two warriors of Tsebelda cemetery graves 8 and 10. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148. pic.106.22; Voronov, Bgazhba 1983:59.pic.99.14,15).

<sup>724</sup> It occurs in Abgidzrakhu graves 51 and 13 (Trapsh 1971:79, Tabl.XXIX.9; Gunba 1978:23. XIII.13); As well as in Apiancha inhumation grave 31 and Lar grave 7 in upland Apsilia. Gunba 1978:38. Tabl.XXVIII.6; Voronov 1982.pic.14.39.

<sup>725</sup> In Tsebelda warrior grave 1a-2 such fibulae occur at the left hip of decease, near the battle axe and a knife (he was additionally equipped with two similar triangular spears and a battle axe). Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. pic.15.10). similarly illustrated in Apiancha grave 34. Gunba 1978:41.Tabl. XXI.6.

<sup>726</sup> Their discovery at the right temple may indicate the function of head cover fastener (Tsebelda grave 1-24). He was a heavily equipped warrior fastened his clothing belt with a German type *cloisonné* buckle. His weapons include two spears, a battle axe, a knife and protected with shield suspended by *Zieling K2* type boss. His burial practice differs by placing animal bones at the foot, which is an unusual habit for Colchis. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139-140.Pic.10,14.

<sup>727</sup> It fits a light cloak fasteners in female graves of Apiancha cemetery (grave 16) and Alrakhu cemetery (grave 5). Gunba 1978:26. Tabl.16.1,2. These comparisons together with other pairs of coil-banded bow fibulae (with decorated back) fastened the clothes at the chest area. The smallest wrap the dress at the pelvis, while a cross-shaped fibula was used to fastened the head cover. Trapsh 1971:112. Tabl. XLII.5; Such fibula was possessed by Apushta female in grave 33 (Voronov 1982. Pic.31.3). It could possible been used to tie the heavy overgarment of Bat female (grave 5), as it was accompanied by different types fibulae. Voronov 1982. Pic.18.34.

Beyond Apsilia their distributional map guides us to the military sites of coastal Colchis, where they decrease significantly and further to central Colchis (Chkhorotsku, Kldeeti, and Modinakhe). Rare finds are associated with the east Georgian Samtavro<sup>728</sup> and Urnisi<sup>729</sup> in historical Iberia. They can be traced further away towards north Caucasia, occurring in the graves of Sokhta<sup>730</sup> and Stirpas.<sup>731</sup> A little further, they appear in the 5<sup>th</sup> century grave context of the Volga region.<sup>732</sup>

**TYPE II: Decorated coil banded bow fibulae.** This type occurs in the urn of Olginskoe grave 5 (*Inv.N.2.58.26*. **Table 14. 5**; **Table 31. 4**). Its body is incomplete and lacking the front head and there remains only a small part of the rounded pin. The coil-banded nature of the fibulae is recognised in two applied thick coils bent at the head. The distinctive characteristic of this type is the symmetrically arched and decorated bow made of semi-circular wire. A refreshed design form is recognised in the concave central structure, which tends to provide another decorative field on the flattened head (producing a rectangular section with both sides concave). The principal design of this fibulae class applies on the bow. The decoration occupies the bow suspending four slightly pressed ribs of different thickness, arranged in 0.6–0.8 cm interval. The quality and number of the coil patterns noticeably decreases on the lower arranged part. Both morphological and stylistic characters are the result of late imperial development observable from the late 4th century. The bow is made of 0.4 cm semi-circular wire and a pin of 0.3 cm wire. The surviving condition preserves a fibula of 8.1 cm length and 2.3 cm height.

The fibula belongs to the North Caucasian type and corresponds to Group 15 (Series IV, Variant III) of Ambroz's classification, dated from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>733</sup> It also matches Group II (Type II-4-1) of Kazanski's classification, refreshing the date a bit to 380/400 up to 440/450 AD.<sup>734</sup>

This type is seldom found in Apsilia and the reason responsible for their limited use in the area is uncertain. Morphologically, it seems to be modified from a local homogeneous basis of coil-banded fibulae. From the decoration, such a composition is introduced from the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. From the design structure, such a head has not been observed on any fibulae before 380 AD, which may obtain the lower chronology of this type.

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<sup>728</sup> Samtavro grave 322 dated to the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. See in: Sulava 1996:28. Tab. XIX-71.

<sup>729</sup> See Chilashvili L. 1964:60-83; Ugrelidze N., 1967:48, tab.1,3,29.

<sup>730</sup> Graves 1, 3. Pchelia 1969.Tab.VI, 29; Kuftin 1949.Tab.II, 1.

<sup>731</sup> Graves 7, 11. Tekhov 1971:25.Tabl.VI, 22; Gagloev 1976.Tabl.1-28, 30.

<sup>732</sup> Skribkin 1977:108-109.Pic.3-17; Voronov 1975:121. Pic.42-11.

<sup>733</sup> Ambroz 1966:54; 1971.

<sup>734</sup> Kazanski 2007:34.Pl.33,2.

Typologically supportive Abramov and Tserkovni hill comparisons make it evident that these fibulae were applied in 380–400 AD.<sup>735</sup> Therefore, chronologically, the Olginskoe example can't add anything more to Kazanski's date. The associated grave context also agrees to define the probable years to 380–400.

Both areal comparisons confirm their use for female clothing that was worn on the chest, where they occur together with two more distinctly designed *fibulae*. They were likely for fastening an overgarment. There is nothing more to add to this insight.

**TYPE III, Banded bow fibula with circular head plate.** This type is evidenced in the urn of Grave 3 (*Inv.N.2.58.11. Table 12. 2; Table 31. 3*). It is a bronze fibula in incomplete condition and fragmented at the head, which is missing. The massive bow of the semi-circular profile is distinctive, thickening towards the foot where it is a bit hollowed. A circular flattened section at the head makes it easy to recognise typologically. The foot is a typical socket joint construction and introduces a new manufacturing method observable in the later 4<sup>th</sup> century. Other typological specifics are reflected in the applied flattened circular section at the head. The bow shows traces of a slight surface ribbing, which remains hardly visible, but the circular section of the head does not show any trace of decorative features. The bow is made of bronze 0.60 cm wire (wire diameter 2.3 mm). Proportionally, the bow remains at 8 cm length and 2.3 cm height, but comparisons suggest its original size reached 12.5 cm length and 4.1 cm height, which matches larger versions.<sup>736</sup>

The fibula corresponds to Group 15 of Ambroz's classification<sup>737</sup> and Group II (Type II-4-7) of Kazanski's classification, dated to 380/400 up to 550 AD.<sup>738</sup>

This is a challenging type, highly unusual for Apsilia and also limited in eastern Georgia<sup>739</sup> and North Caucasia, where they sporadically appear.<sup>740</sup> Only one Akhatsarakhu comparison is available in the area.<sup>741</sup> Therefore, since there is little advantage in the typological connection of individual examples and in the absence of alternative information, it closely follows Kazanski's progressing chronology. For the beginning phase he suggests the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but the deposit context in which the Olginskoe *fibula* was found does not allow upper chronology to be later than the year 400. Therefore, the suggested date for the Olginskoe example is 380–400 AD.

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<sup>735</sup> In Abramov female grave 5 it was placed on the chest area together with other earlier fibulae. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:25.pic.15.7. Another similar fibula occurs in Tserkovni hill grave 9. Voronov, Jushin 1971:179. Pic.9.3.

<sup>736</sup> A morphologically identical fibula is known from Akhatsarakhu male grave 10. Trapsh 1971:95. Tabl.XXXV.5.

<sup>737</sup> Ambroz 1966:52-55.

<sup>738</sup> Kazanski 2007:34. Pl.33.7.

<sup>739</sup> Ramishvili 2003. Pic.112, 44.

<sup>740</sup> Gavritukhin, Pjankov 2003.Pic.64,76

<sup>741</sup> It evidenced in Akhatsarakhu inhumation male grave 10. Trapsh 1971:95. Tabl.XXXV.5.

The thickened bow recognises a functional character that tends to strengthen the pin. Functionally, only one male grave is able to illustrate its single use on the chest. The proportional character and massive structure supports the appropriate function of fastening a thick textile. From the combination spectrum of areal comparisons, it was assembled with buckles of oval plate that may suggest a foreign origin.

#### IV. 2. 3. 2. 7. 2. 6 Metallographic analyses

Isotope analyses of 9 deposits provide the geochemical character of fibulae, buckles, certain ring-shaped fragments, and a probable earring. Analytical results are presented in the Appendices attached below (Appen. A). Their compositional schema is more diverse and demonstrates variation of copper-based alloys. A greater proportion of **Cu** is usual for fibulae, but there are four deviations, where the average values for **Cu**, **Sn**, and **Pb** do match the compositional values. Only two objects concentrate the measurable consistency of **Fe** and **Ta**, indicating further variation. However, results demonstrate the following chemical types:

1. *Pure copper (Cu)*
2. *Copper-tin (Cu+Sn) or tin-copper (Sn+Cu)*
3. *Copper-lead (Cu+Pb)*
4. *Copper-tantalum (Cu+Ta)*
5. *Iron-tantalum (Fe+Ta)*
6. *Iron-copper (Fe+Cu)*

We can't prove if they provide the standard composition for other identical categories from the area, but they give an understanding of the compositional variation of fasteners from Apsilia.

*Type I* shows that **Cu** display is significantly higher in three different type fibulae and one fibula tongue. It is illustrated by:

- Massive coil-banded bow *fibula* with circular head (Inv.N.2:58:11. *Type III*. Grave 3). Dated to 380–400 AD.
- Greek cross-headed socket joint bow fibula (Inv.N.2:58:44. *Type II. Variant I*). Dated to 380–450 AD.

- Latin cross-headed cast bow fibula with socket joint foot (Inv. N.2:58:45. *Type II. Vaiant 2*). Dated by the 400–450 AD.
- Tongue associated with fibula of *Type 6* (Inv. N.2:58:43).

Within this list, the first fibula is distinguished by an extremely high copper content. They all show variations in silver (Ag) and lead (Pb) composition, but some provide distinction by the constituents of zinc (Zn), tin (Sn), or arsenic oxide. These groups are rare fibulae and none of them can be assigned to areal types. Chronologically it may be clearer, assuming the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or even a little later, but if we compare structural, technological, stylistic or and decorative features they are totally different fasteners. From the functional spectrum, they were used either by females (*Type 2, Variant 2*) or both genders.

**Type 2** (Cu+Sn) copper base alloyed with tin is assumed to be an extremely unusual buckle type with zoomorphic decoration (*Inv.N.2:58:50*. Grave 11. 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD). Its lower layer is even more deviant with higher concentration of tin (Sn + Cu). This was employed in totally different technique, style, and decoration based on non-local values.

**Type 3** (Cu+Pb) shows that the lead constituent defines the circular loop buckle (*Inv.N.2.58.51*. Grave 11) of later dates (5<sup>th</sup> century).

**Type 4** (Cu+Ta) is similarly based on a copper-derived composition, but provides distinction with additionally valued tantalum, which is revealed in a ring (*Inv.N.2.58.53*). This object is typical for the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and shows a category used only by females.

**Type 5** (Fe+Ta) represents a homogeneous coil-banded bow fibulae (*Inv.N.2.58.5*. Grave 2) with a higher display of iron-tantalum composition, which is the potential source for distinction. It is dated to 350 up to 400/410 AD.

**Type 6** (Fe+Cu) has a high composition of iron and copper of average value and is represented by a sharply distinguished cross-shaped bow fibula (*Inv.N.2.58.43*). This variant even left the trace of distinction in individual parts showing different composition. The related tongue shows a higher copper content with additions of Ar+Sn+Fe+As+Ag+Pb. There is nothing complicated about the matching size between the tongue and bow. Therefore it might be evidence for fibula repair.

Therefore, it appears that the main source of variation in composition is the addition of Sn and Pb in valuable consistency. This probably occurs because of changes in time and between the places. All of the copper-based objects with other dominated components are different category fasteners, distinct in many ways, which additionally shows earlier or later

production. This supports the view that they were produced in different single workshops and is suggestive of small-scale metalworking activities from the last quarter of the 4th to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, when several unknown methods were introduced. Results confirm that the bow *fibulae* from *Group 1* are highly unusual not only from an areal context but in the whole of Colchis, and they are later in date. All three related fibulae are typologically and technologically different groups. *Type 2* represents the earliest, non-areal buckle, an obvious member of a small-scale workshop, because their discoveries are truly occasional. *Type 3* corroborates with local models and is contemporary with some of the fibulae of *Type 1*. *Type 4* earring must have had a short life. *Type 5* and *Type 6* demonstrate chronologically distinct variants of more or less identical homogeneous objects, produced with slight variations.

IN. N	Object	Ar	Ca	Fe	Cu	Zn	As	Ag	Sn	Ta	Re	Os	Pb
2.58.5	Fibulae	1.101	0.539	61.612	-	-	-	0.554	35.774	-	-	-	0.420
2.58.11	Fibulae	-	-	-	96.985	-	-	0.754	1.81	-	-	-	1.180
2.58.43	Fibulae bow	-	0.586	61.780	29.805	-	1.192	0.243	4.912	-	-	-	0.093
2.58.43	Fibulae spring	5.802	-	2.280	84.798	-	0.793	0.707	4.074	-	-	-	0.534
2.58.44	Fibulae	-	-	-	93.196	5.141	-	0.542	-	-	-	-	1.121
2.58.45	Fibulae	-	1.002	0.438	79.588	7.225	-	0.583	5.400	1.127	-	0.631	3.846
2.58.50	Fibulae inner layer	-	1.013	0.445	58.995	-	-	1.051	33.397	-	-	0.683	4.417
2.58.50	Fibulae upper layer	-	3.862	1.267	31.395	-	-	1.514	55.109	0.820	-	0.420	5.608
2.58.51	Buckle	-	0.710	0.990	63.252	6.167	-	0.871	10.939	-	0.565	0.467	16.040
2.58.52	Ringlet	-	8.564	1.730	8.791	-	-	32.840	40.753	-	-	0.290	6.646
2.58.53	Ear Ring	-	3.128	1.695	46.687	-	-	0.946	38.883	-	-	0.668	7.978

**Append. A-1.** The results of the KRF analyses. Element composition and comparisons of tinned copper concentration.

Types	Fibulae	Buckle	Earring	Ringlet	Grave	Data
Type 1(Cu)	2.58.11, 2.58.44, 2.58.45, 2.58.43				Gr.3,11	
Type 2(Cu+Sn)		2.58.50			Gr.11	
Type 3(Cu+Pb)		2.58.51			Gr.11	
Type 4(Co+Ta)			2.58.53		Gr.11	
Type 5(Fe+Ta)	2.58.5				Gr. 2	350-400/410
Type 6(Fe+Cu)	2.58.43				Gr. 11	

**Append. A -2.** Chart of metallographic analyses.

Therefore, it is significant to know that the examined context provides evidence for compositional distinction of (objects) certain fasteners and earrings useful for production identification, which is more than just speculations at this point. However, it does not mean any direct link between Apsilian and Colchian production, since there is no evidence from both geographic areas to be tested. Until workshops are discovered, inferences can be drawn at least from the examined objects as evidenced in Apsilia. Drawn results might be suggestive

of a particular context, especially when they are indicative of different productions outside the Roman Empire.

#### IV. 2. 3. 2. 7. 3 Glass objects

##### Glass Vessel

Out of three glass vessels, there remains only one from Grave 5 (*Inv.N. 2.58.34. Table 14. 8*). The vessel is made of low quality bubble glass with a transparent property producing a yellowish-green colour. It has a conical body more specified by the slightly profiled and straight sided form that tapers towards the base (**Table 20**). The rounded and carefully smoothed rim recognises a closer typological variant, but there is a more manufactural sign reflected on the rounded base in a manner of pontil mark, which distinguishes it from most areal examples.<sup>742</sup> Decorative dots are applied alternatingly, giving direction and style to the component motif recognised in the dotted cone series. The slight elongation of dots is a technological factor caused by unprofessional treatment showing that they were applied before completing the vessel. It resulted also in the variation of colour from pale blue to colourless and alternation of three distinctly applied dots. The vessel provides differences at several points.

The rim shape, wall thickness, base marks, decoration, and glass property are exactly the five visually recognisable vital points of technological characteristics that individualise the Olginskoe example:

- **Rim shape.** Slightly profiled, thickened, rounded, and smoothed fire-polish rim.
- **Wall thickness.** Thin wall of 0.75 cm.
- **Base mark.** A circular pontil mark of 3–4 cm in diameter intended on the rounded and thickened base (**Table 20. E-F**).
- **Decoration.** Three differently employed elongated blobs in sizes of 0.01 x 0.4–0.6 mm. They are applied vertically and arranged in a horizontal row on the middle body, near the bottom with 3–6 cm intervals. Two are pale blue and one is colourless (**Table 20. C-D**).

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<sup>742</sup> Technologically it looks like a scar or mark from a removed pontil, perhaps of a solid metal rod with a small wad of molten glass, attached to the tip. A 'solid base is responsible for the wad of glass blown from the parison on the blow pipe and to which the pontil was attached. After the glass had pooled the pontil and cracked off, this traces a rough mark of the bottom'. See: Higashi 1990:410. A bottom of up to 5 cm is considered for thickened versions.



- **Glass property.** Blown and low quality bubble glass, producing a transparent and pale yellowish-green colour. It contains different size black impurities, much finer at the sides and larger nearer to the bottom (**Table 20. E**).

Related differences and similarities that may define this vessel as poor copy model:

1. Differences:

- ✓ Manufactural specifics (glass properties, vessel treatment).
- ✓ Decorative quality and layout (unprofessionally applied low quality dots).
- ✓ Poor variety of colour of decorative elements

2. Similarities:

- ✓ Vessel colour
- ✓ Bubbly quality (impurities)
- ✓ Rim shape
- ✓ Pontil mark
- ✓ Arrangement of decorative elements

There is no exact comparison known to my knowledge.<sup>743</sup> Manufactural specifics obviously limited the comparisons and even perspectives to speculate their date and origin. The only comparable cone from historical Apsilia is dissimilar with a convex body and cracked-off rim, as viewed in illustrations.<sup>744</sup>

Thus, achieving a chronology to the above postulated circumstances is not easy. A similar cone shape from parallels around the world offered quite a large chronological scale from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>745</sup> The rounded base has further potential for a closer date, beginning at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>746</sup> Samarian examples offer the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>747</sup> Karanis

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<sup>743</sup> It should also be noted that the technological properties of glass vessels, as well as their base and rim, are not specifically detailed in any publication, even in the text of Sorokina who made further research of the Apsilian glass collection. The only visual knowledge of types, poorly depicted in sketches is insufficient for judgment. In general, conical glass vessels from Georgia have never been studied in broad categories and no experimental work has been done to test the chemical differences of provided examples. These are based on visual analysis.

<sup>744</sup> It occurs in Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 27 (of *Sagittarius*), with chronologically significant assemblages of III Stage (380–450), such as an imported *Nydam* type sword with two grooves and a shield boss of *Chapka* type. Both match the data of accompanied cone. Trapsh 1971:45-47.Tabl.XI.1

<sup>745</sup> They are known from Knossos, Athenian Agora, Carthage, Sardis, Ephesus, Karanis, and Egyptian Fustat. The earliest is 3<sup>rd</sup> century vessels from Knossos and Karanis. A slightly later date -the first quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century is expected for the Athenian cone from Agora and Carthage. The rest are eastern products from Jalame (Weinberg 1988:24; Barag D. 1971, Catacombs 12-23), Sardis, and Ephesus (Gürler B., Lafli E., 2010:138-139. pl.14, 104,102) those are either of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or early Byzantine date. Northern European counterparts provide a later 4<sup>th</sup> century date and more commonly 5<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, no finer chronological date exists for the Black Sea cones, except the Sazanov's work, achieving a narrower chronology the 380–400 AD for the vessels corresponding to *Type 3* (Sazanov A., 1995:333. Fig.5.1). Sorokina classified Apsilian cones into *Group I, Type III*, which dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> up to the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries (Sorokina 1972:72-76; Sorokina 1979:60-65). West Georgian parallels suggest their short lived appearance during 400–450 AD. In fact, the later cones that were already reduced in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century continue to be imported from Karanis and a little later from the Egyptian Fustat (750–774 AD). See: Scalon G. 1968:188-195.

<sup>746</sup> Syrian examples from El bassa produced in years 378-396.

<sup>747</sup> Crowfoot J., Crowfoot G.M., Kenyon K., M. 1957:419.

comparisons equally provide the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>748</sup> Only the rim provides a limited date suggesting the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The decoration is more typical of the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>749</sup> Associable dating evidence from its grave context might be the *amphorae* of the years 400–420. Therefore, the drawn information gives ground to speculate the data of the Olginskoe cone to 380–400 AD.

#### *Interpretation to the origin of Olginskoe glass*

From the manufactural differences listed above it is hard to connect the Olginskoe glass with any particular production centre. There are difficult to interpret local or imported marks that are equally difficult to combine with any other cones evidenced in Apsilia or in the whole of Georgia.

There are a list of several similarities stated above which associate this vessel with eastern cones from Jalame<sup>750</sup> (Israel), Karanis and Alexandria,<sup>751</sup> Malkata and Lisht,<sup>752</sup> but they differ in many ways. A tendency for impurities near the rim and bubbly glass makes it closer to Karanis cones. The wall thickness also links it with Karanis cones (0.33–3.00 mm), but they do not match in height (9.4 cm).<sup>753</sup> Further similarity is recognised in the equally narrow and flattened base with a pontil mark, unable to stand. An arrangement of blue dots near the bottom links with Karanis cones, but the dot colour defines it from eastern productions, producing a royal blue colour (especially cones from Alexandria).

The greenish colour connects with Syro-Palestinian examples that are dissimilar with high quality glass.<sup>754</sup> The rim shape and profile of geographic significance defines further comparisons. The rim treatment of Olginskoe vessels reveals many similarities with Jalame cones<sup>755</sup> rather than Egyptian Karanis<sup>756</sup> or Malkata and Lisht.<sup>757</sup>

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<sup>748</sup> Higashi 1990:375.

<sup>749</sup> Decoratively it shows an eastern style, but pale dots are a western decorative tendency well imitating the metalwork of inserted precious stones. This is associated with the Cologne center (Fremersdorf 1962; Dotppelfeld O. 1960-1961:16-19; Rademacher 1942:335-339). The precise date of receiving the applied decorative blobs on cone vessels is uncertain, but do not predate the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>750</sup> The Jalame glass factory in Syria existed possibly up to 351–383 AD and chronologically it could fit with the production data of the Olginskoe example. See: Winberg 1988:24, 87-9.

<sup>751</sup> The Alexandrian workshop is of much later date, possible in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Rodziewicz 1984:262-266.

<sup>752</sup> Keller 1983:19-21.

<sup>753</sup> Syro-Palestine cones are even much thicker than Egyptian examples. Barag D. 1970.

<sup>754</sup> Winberg 1988:24, 87-94.

<sup>755</sup> Late imperial cones from Jalame have a wide-mouthed polished rim with approximately 0.1–0.45 cm thickness. Those walls are provided in average thickness. Weinberg G.D. 1988: 87-94.

<sup>756</sup> Karanis cones are distinguishable with the cracked-off and unworked rim that is slightly convex in profile. Some groups are even similar to Syrian and western examples. See: Weinberg G.D. 1988.

<sup>757</sup> These cones have cracked-off rounded and wheel polished rim, lacking a bulge and constriction below. See: Eyre Ch.J 1987:192-193.

That entire pattern (body, glass colour, fire polished rim, and decorative schema) defines Olginskoe glass from western productions which are not commonly decorated with blobs.<sup>758</sup>

From the colour, it could be associated with Pannonian thick walled cones.<sup>759</sup> From the rim diameter it matches undecorated vessels from Agora.<sup>760</sup>

Thus, each examined regional and international comparison suggests the Olginskoe cone as a limited regional production. The decorative technique is a production criteria distinguishable from all eastern vessels.<sup>761</sup> For this aspect, local small scale environs are not excluded from its origin, but the lack of archaeologically proven local workshops raises a problem. The local manufacturing practice on glass products is also unknown, but the physical existence of row chunks in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century coastal defence Pithius is evidence for speculation.<sup>762</sup> The inexhaustible wood availability for fuel and direct sand supply in the vicinity might be a supportive environment for a small scale glass industry.<sup>763</sup>

#### *Functional characteristic of glass vessel*

The above drawn specifics certainly suggest a multivalent function. The narrow base with a pontil mark is recognised as a not freely standing design. From this spectrum lighting devices cannot be excluded, as it might be useful for an Olginskoe warrior for strategic matters in daily life, especially in the militarised areas.<sup>764</sup> The fire-polished rim, however, suggests a more drinking perspective, and even the capacity matches alcohol vessels. The only thoughtful point for this context is the body is incapable of standing unsupported, but if we bear in mind the contextual evidence from the area, which always assembles a standard combination of amphorae and jugs, it may guide us to the direct function of glass cones. Statistically, almost all long glass vessels occur in military graves with identical contexts.

In fact, little is known about the precise function of rounded rim cones even from world examples. From the early Christian era it has been associated with Eucharistic wine. There are

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<sup>758</sup> Dots of western type produced in yellow, brown, green, and blue colour were applied on plates, bowls, bottles, and rython. This offers late Roman western production from Germany west of Cologne in Hambach Forest (see: Brüggler M. 2006) and northern France at Lavoye and Sainte-Menehould (see: Foy D. and Nenna M-D. 2001:58). They are not common on cone vessels.

<sup>759</sup> Barkozi L. 1986:84-85. pl.10.

<sup>760</sup> Attributed to a virtual workshop that existence is believed to be in Izmir from about the early-5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>761</sup> Egyptian and Syro-Palestinian productions are typically gently made and have a thinly applied high quality greenish-blue dots that are hollowed out on the surface.

<sup>762</sup> No information is available to support the glass recycling process, whether tools or furnaces indicative of the glass industry.

<sup>763</sup> The types of trees that grew at that time are unknown and there is no further vegetal information available from those sites.

<sup>764</sup> There is an interesting idea about lighting devices in the northern Black Sea littoral and also as a Roman funerary element, thought to symbolize spiritual fire. See: Cooper J.C. 1978:43, 84,174). This might be a considerable context of Apsilian warrior graves, occur certain weapons of those areas.

several depictions from Africa<sup>765</sup> and Ostia that support the idea of drinking.<sup>766</sup> Identical vessels even in 4<sup>th</sup> century Ostia are evidenced with similarly accompanied drink-related offerings in the grave.<sup>767</sup> Sicilian tombs also provide an identical combination of a glass vessel with a jug, but additionally combined with a clay lamp. It is found in wider geographic areas including Mayen, Rhineland, Adernach, and Cologne.<sup>768</sup> Interest is called to two rounded rim cones with grape decorative schema from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, perhaps illustrating their functional purpose,<sup>769</sup> and another with the direct inscription ‘Drink and Prosper’.<sup>770</sup> All these are attentive evidence for a drink-related context.

Other practical meanings for lighting purpose might occur in Mediterranean practices slightly later, possibly in the early 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, when they were thought to be expected as lamps for illumination.<sup>771</sup> Near Eastern cones suggest lighting evidence,<sup>772</sup> but interestingly, their fixing method is not depicted even on mosaics in Beth Shean and Hammath Tiberias of Israel, where the lighted cones are set on the branches of the monarch. Who knows how many undecorated glass cones might have functioned as lighted lamps in various building structures including churches, chapels or forts and supplementing special services,<sup>773</sup> but direct evidence does not exist. The fact is that all cones with unworked, rounded, or fire-polished rims from Karanis are interpreted as lamps, and evidence of wooden tripod stands were associated with them.

However, the practical and profane nature of the rounded rim of the glass cone is complex and directly relevant to its principal function, which might be established in a drinking culture.

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<sup>765</sup> Carthaginian mosaic from Africa depicts two similar banquet scenes of life and deceased banqueters holding the cone. See: Dunbabin K. 1978:157-158. Pl.XLVI, LIV.

<sup>766</sup> The rounded rim cone of Ostia wall painting, as part of ‘Heavenly Table’, holds Eucharistic meaning and symbolizes the cup of eternal life. See: Meiggs R. 1960:464-466; Higashi 1990:21

<sup>767</sup> Stern 2001:268; Harden 1936. ol.159, Glass VI, types A II and C II.

<sup>768</sup> Morin-Jean p.266; Verrerie en Gaule.

<sup>769</sup> Weinberg 1963:27-28, fig.7; Fund 1913; Higashi 1990:30.

<sup>770</sup> This description is given over the decorative blue blobs. See: Fremersdorf .Taf. 96-97; Higashi E. 1990:31

<sup>771</sup> Harden 1936:155; Issings 1957:130-131; Vessberg 1956:211; Saldern 1968; Sternini 2001:58-62; Dusenbery 1971:23-36; Newman 1977:76.

<sup>772</sup> Crowfoot and Harden 1931:199.

<sup>773</sup> Barag 1970; Keller D /Lindblom J. 2008:332-3; Oclay 2001.

## Fiancé bead

A faience bead is evidenced in Grave 3 and shows a good surviving condition (Table 12. 4; Table 32. 16). It is a melon-shaped bead made of pale blue opaque glass with surface ribbing technique. Proportionally, the 1.2 cm diameter and 4 mm threadhole diameter is the usual size of smaller versions, supposedly a later variant. The suggested origin is an Egyptian workshop.

This type is few and appears possibly after 380 AD in the graves of central Apsilia.<sup>774</sup> A small increase in the amount is remarkable during 380–400 AD within the cemeteries of Apiancha, where most of it is found. This type was similarly used by male and female in individual pieces, which might indicate a pendant function. It seldom appears within the set of various polychrome glass beads and finally disappears after 340 AD. This type was similarly circulated in other parts of Georgia,<sup>775</sup> but comparable beads are known in Caucasia from the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>776</sup> and in Danube graves in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>777</sup>

## IV. 2. 3. 3 FURTHER ANALITICAL SPECTRUM

### IV. 2. 3. 3. 1 Gender-neutral deposition

There are four characteristic artefact types carrying non-gender qualifying data. They include the following kitchen, tableware, dress attire, and jewellery categories:

- Jugs
- Knives
- Bow *fibulae*
- Rock crystal

They are all mass products that assisted gender-leading items in areal graves and are common for both sexes. Pottery may be closely linked to emergence in daily life. The most non-

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<sup>774</sup> Apiancha cemetery. Gunba 1978; See also Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:125

<sup>775</sup> Similar variant is evidenced in Mtskheta cemetery grave 2. Sulava 1990:20.

<sup>776</sup> From Dagestan they are known in Iragi grave. See: Abakarov, Davudov 1993. Fig.50,37. They further occur in Kamunta and Kumbulta. See: Uvarova 1900. Some appear in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century grave complexes of Rukhta, Alkhan-Kala and Baital-Chapkal. See: Uvarova 1909:245; Pokrovski M. 1936; Minaeva 1950; Deopik 1959. It also finds in Azerbaijan. See: Piotrovski B. 1958. The Pyatigorsk tomb 'Western Kugul 2' and two 6<sup>th</sup> century two grave complexes, the grave 23 and of Klin-Jar, are distinguished as well. See: Runich 1979. Fig. 4,27,28; Mastykova 2001:66. Fig.1, 36; Mastykova 2009. Tabl. 115-119. The latest finds of the early 6<sup>th</sup> century correspond to the Kugul grave in Pjatogorsk and the slightly later Grave 2 of Klin-Jar cemetery in the same region.

<sup>777</sup> Similar bead is evidenced in Viminacium cemetery. See: Ivanisevic, Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:72,73.

predictive type of pouring wares deposited in graves is the medium-sized hemispherical jugs. It might be established from daily dining practices, but the household knife is a regionally distinct object which favourably appears with the inhabitants of central Apsilia. Attention should be paid to their size as a gender-demanded factor. The local undecorated bow *fibulae* of *Type I* (also from the destroyed grave *Type II, Variant I*) became a gender neutral item in the years 380–410 AD. At that time, they tended to be used as overgarment fasteners across all parts of central Apsilia, but it might be fashion-demanded and weather sensitive context, because certain fibulae type made clothing distinctions between gender.

From the jewellery category, a rock crystal bead with hexagonal cut is in most cases equally single in graves. It is caused by functional specialty and in male graves easily leads to a sword-related warrior, where it might occur for decorative reasons. It might have amulet functions, leading it to become equally favourable for both genders. All cases of finds in female graves are related with jewellery, but in male graves it primarily occurs with battle-related objects and is assumed to be a sword decoration. This fact does not exclude apotropaic functions as well, which maintains an equal demand within both genders.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 3. 2 Gender determinatives**

One of the reasons that gender-associated marks are still confusing is the lack of knowledge about biological features. Items, ideas, and places are relative avenues for defining gender qualifying marks and personal traits. There are objects that mark differences between male and female graves, but for their choice several factors played a role. Thoughts, emotions, and behaviours obviously generated interconnected gender species. Therefore, the distinctive pattern often focuses on following traits:

- ✓ Gender sensitive objects
- ✓ Behavioural rotation
- ✓ Cognitive attributes
- ✓ Personal values

This complex of patterns produces unexamined possibilities. They make rules and resources that heavily influence the gender structure. Provisionally they depend on gender sensitive objects consisting of selected categories of pottery, drinking vessels, dress attire, jewellery, and weapons. They are deposited similarly in the Apsilian graves. The favour for storage wares shows differences in gender and areal level. Glass vessels guide a socio-cultural

approach to male influential objects, but their choice was obviously motivated by the other three factors. They connect with behaviourally agreed classifiable phenomena and fundamentally cognitive quality of gender-based distinctions, rather than simple object selection. They help to recognise gender categories and distinct grave practices.

#### *FEMALE SPECIFIC OBJECTS*

Female relative marks vary. Certain jewellery types, storage jars, pouring wares, and kitchen knives are objects relative to the feminine gender. They also initiate a series of influential differences. Jewellery as a matter of physical attractiveness and automatically evokes female relative character. This category either minimises or optimises differences in social level. Monochrome ring-shaped beads and seashells are mass and low image products equally indicative for women in the area, but there are more valuable jewellery suspended by gilded pearls, blue glass beads, and decorated beads that distinctly explain more socially able females. Such fibulae types as *Type I* from destroyed graves that are often evidenced together with hairpins and are definable either for female dress or head cover in areal graves.

The rest highlight specifics corresponding to the origins and attributes of women. For this context, the most commonly used handled jars for female body containers are selected for this group. It is empirical evidence for cognitive performance, which treated them as an upland area inhabitant. It is unknown if they originated directly from the area but it surely produces place determinative thoughts,<sup>778</sup> as their number is relatively small and is found over the cemeteries of Abgidzrakhu and Alrakhu. The next pottery category is the miniature juglet which is not only a female identifiable mark, but also notes differences among Apsilian females and may produce location abilities. It attracted central Apsilian women and is highly sensitive to apotropaic context. It is thought to be an emotional input of a certain central Apsilian community, which is largely ignored in upland parts and had little effect on the rest of southern Apsilia. Similarly, a small knife favoured by some females also expresses a locational linkage with the Mramba area. It may suggest task-oriented factors and causal roles in daily life, in which it may have functioned as a costume-related component worn permanently on the body. However, the existence of all those features in one grave could provide a visual field of mental differences. This is helpful in recognising different emotional experiences adopted on a personal level and might trace their existence to a different place.

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<sup>778</sup> This may connect a few male genders, about which provides occasional information and perhaps gives an understanding of their biological origin.

### *MALE SPECIFIC OBJECTS*

A male is understood to be accompanied by weaponry, as Olginskoe males produce an effect in favour of weapons. They emphasise the character of their battle task and increase the power of its understanding on a military, political, or personal level. Their lack in graves is a confusing context, because gender attitudes are weakly presented. In this case the functional characteristic of a long knife is helpful for fulfilment (if any exists). What information they provide is difficult to predict but they create meaning for male individuals and perhaps with a purpose function like seax. In any case they give significant differences between the male and female offering structure of areal graves.

Further male-related context is proven in depositional structures including *pithoi* and *amphorae*. Both are the most commonly used objects, especially in weapon graves, but the amphora is a matter of time and is associable to late 4<sup>th</sup> century male graves. Other experiences elaborating broad male influential context are glass vessels that are usefully defined with a conic form. It is the shape-demanded category for areal males (areal comparisons also incorporate cylindrical vessels). All three occurring in one grave context is not an accidental composition, but an implication of behavioural evolution and changes. This illuminates our understanding about their socio-cultural thoughts or practices. They mark differences between males and visualise considerable military groups from 380–550 AD (because they always appear with active battle weapons).

The next meaningful object for male identification is the oval ring and circular loop-shaped buckles from destroyed graves. A more powerful experience of the first buckle, proven by comparisons, reflects most assisted swords and seax, which illustrates a supportive belt. The same can be said about the next buckle, equally expected as a component of a seax-supporting belt. The third smaller one from Grave 5 might be appropriate for a baldric fastener. Another significant male differentiator is the white paste bead, which is a contextual object and always considered to accompany a sword. Therefore it might be expected to be a warrior equivalent weapon decorative element.



#### **IV. 2. 3. 3. 3 Male graves**

*Graves 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10*

Data concerning the male gender is recognised in four complete weapon graves 2, 4, 5, 6 (**Tables** 11a; 13a; 14a; 15a). Grave 1 with controversial patterns may also be attached to them. From the destroyed graves, one provides battle weapons and surely can be assigned with them (grave 10). From the entire society buried in Olginskoe cemetery, males are more illustrative than females. The dynamic of male specific offerings of *amphorae*, *pithoi*, cone glass vessel, sword and seax give differences between Olginskoe males. Their nature caused functional groupings, but the spearhead which commonly characterises most Olginskoe males confirms the identification of their common task.

The drinking complex defines Grave 5, where two spears automatically qualify the military grave content. The second line of weapon combination unlikely extends to the sword and spear in Grave 4, defined further by simply assembled *pithoi* urn. A singly viewed active spearhead in Grave 2, where it is identically assembled with the *pithoi* urn, surely contributes to the degree of a weapon grave. More powerful experiences and a more increased weapon spectrum is illustrated in Grave 6, but from the jar-urn perspective it provides the most complicated context of burial practices. Another possible way to understand the traits of the male gender buried in Grave 1 is speculatively assigning it to a long knife. This is a typical example for Apsilian male graves. However, the predominance of weapon graves is similarly indicative of a militarised society.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 3. 3. 4 Possible Female graves**

*Graves 3, 8, 9, 11 (?)*

The obvious female-indicative markers within the six datable complete grave complexes are hidden from the view. From the female perspective the most attentive depositional content is constructed in Grave 3 (**Tables** 12a; 16; 17; 19). The miniature handmade juglet is an easily identifiable context for the females of the Mramba area and provides opportunity for speculation. Offerings like Egyptian paste and early type rock crystal are indirect markers less promising for female identification. Further potential could lie in the hemispheric form of the assisted glass vessel, but the vessel is lost. Such a shape is highly sensitive to the social

context of the female gender. The complex of those features might be supportive to expect a female burial in Grave 3.

Other female-identifiable specimens are recognised in the attitudes of wearing such jewellery sets that implicate only the women. They appear in the destroyed graves 8, 9, and 11.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 4 CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF OLGINSKOE GRAVES AND CEMETERY**

##### ***IV. 2. 3. 4. 1 Relative chronology of six datable complete graves***

The examined material shows the lack of ability to absolutely date items and that some chronologically important lost items leave a gap in three graves (2, 3, 6). However, the rest still have the ability to drive a relative chronology of associated grave complexes. This will be discussed below.

**Grave 1** (Possible Female). This grave complex has less consistency (**Table 10-10a; Table 43**). The handle-less jar may be assigned to an exclusive storage ware type. Therefore, it cannot significantly reduce the value of the related chronological context as such types facilitate a basis for comparative analyses. The examined details of the rest of the offering assemblage convey a special chronological setting that fully explores the time roughly between the 370 AD and 450 AD:

1. ***Storage Jar (urn) dated to 370/380-400 AD.*** *The typologically exclusive and decorative date was most judgmental for this type. Therefore, obtained date is largely speculative.*
  2. ***Globular jug dated to 360-380 AD.*** *The chronological evaluation is based on globular morphology and decorative date. But the handmade production does not make it fully confident.*
  3. ***Long dagger dated to 380/385-400 AD.*** *The accompanying jug becomes supportive to evaluate narrower chronology.*
- 

Their dating context indicates a time dimension of 80 years. All three deposits seem to appear in the grave at least within 10–20 years of their circulation. The handmade jug is usually ineffective for dating, which drives a much earlier chronology and agrees with the date of the rest of the associated offerings by the upper phase. The most reliable chronology for the lower

phase is recognised in the knife that appears in 385 AD. All the rest fulfil the upper chronological frame to the year 400 AD. Therefore, the principal item for a final chronology becomes the dagger and storage jar, determining the possible years 380/385–400 AD.

From a gender perspective there is no criterion available to determine the sex of their owner. A long knife is usually evidenced in male graves, which is suggestive.

**Grave 2** (Possible male). The grave complex is lacking the storage jar functioning as the cremation urn, and a paste bead (**Tables 11-11a; Table 44; Table 50**). The bead is not illustrated and detailed for association of its type. Therefore, it is uncertain if the lost objects may correct the dating. The chronological scale is achieved through the four other surviving analysed depositions comprising the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but some define mid-imperial phases as well:

1. ***Hemispheric Jug dated to 340-375/380 AD.** Variant defining diagnostic parts were judgmental.*
  2. ***Spear head dated to 350-370/380 AD.** It has a long circulation data from 320-380 AD, but the judgment for this variant was broad.*
  3. ***Knife dated to 350-380 AD.** For this limited variant, blade specific was decisive, but from a type of long circulated knife (310-375/380 AD). The given date is suggested by the weapon combination as well.*
  4. ***Fibula dated to 350-400/410 AD.** Typologically defined by morphologically specific and proportional data.*
- 

From a chronological viewpoint, the most unreliable is the fragmented pithos, which is featureless in the lower body and debatable from the drawn information. The rest are long circulated items providing a 70-year chronological scale, in which the longest circulation is provided by the *fibula*. The associated knife that possibly appears in the third quarter of the 4th century ensures the date 350–380 AD, coinciding with the other objects. Therefore, the full dating potential lies in the knife which drives the relative date of this grave to 350–380 AD. From a gender spectrum the grave is difficult to judge.

**Grave 3** (Possible female). This grave complex is lacking the datable object category of hemispherical glass vessels (**Tables 12-12a; Table 45; Table 49**). There are no supportive drawings or details from the protocol to recognise the type, except for references to thin-walled properties and hemispherical shape. In fact it is of no help for enhancing a broad date, but is surely a reliable item for a lower chronological phase. The six other surviving objects

suggest the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but some are primarily indicative of the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

1. *Two handled storage jar (urn) dated to 380-400 AD. The middle body and decoration becomes basis for the variant chronology.*
  2. *Hemispheric jug dated to 380-400 AD. Variant specificity had been decisive for the obtained date.*
  3. *Pear-shaped juglet is dated to AD 380-400 AD. The source for suggestive data is the variant-associated diagnostic parts. The jug is handmade.*
  4. *Knife dated to the 380-450 AD.*
  5. *Fibula dated to the 380-400 AD. Chronology is achieved through the broad specific.*
  6. *Rock crystal bead with a long circulation date from 380-550 AD.*
  7. *Egyptian faience bead with a long circulation date from 380-450 AD.*
- 

Within this list, all three pottery types and fibula are chronologically matching objects, guiding the earliest date of this grave to the years 380–400 AD. This is acceptable for a further dating set useful for achieving an upper chronology, which includes other two beads and a knife. They extend at least 50 years later than the other deposits, but do not have much significance for the grave date. Most indicative of a lower chronology is the *fibula*, able to limit the date to 400 AD. Therefore, the final chronology is likely to be 400–450 AD. This fits best with the context in which the hemispherical glass vessel appears as an obvious marker for the lower chronology. From the surviving context the fibula is decisional for achieving a broad chronology, but the appearance of a glass vessel is a chronologically attentive factor.

A gender identifier is unclear, due to the occurrence of the drinking glass vessel, which is observable in female graves in the area from the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and assigned to high status women.

**Grave 4**, (Male grave). This depositional complex contains a number of well datable late Roman object categories (**Tables 13-13a; Table 46; Table 51**). The chronological analysis gives access to the mid- and later phases of the late Roman period:

8. *Pithoi (urn) is dated to 370/380-400 AD. Chronology was evaluated on the basis of the neck formation, supportive of determining the lower chronologic fame.*

9. *Ovoid Jug dated to 350-380/400 AD.*
  10. *Pear-shaped jug dated to 370-400 AD. This is obtained by the variant characteristics that apply during the determined years.*
  11. *Sword dated to 260-310 AD. This is the typological date of this sword.*
  12. *Triangular spearhead (type I variant A) dated to 350-380 AD.*
  13. *White paste bead dated to 380-440/450 AD.*
- 

Within this framework, a wide chronological gap is produced between the sword and the other four objects, except for the spearhead. The sword confirms its burial 60 years later than its circulation phase, which confuses the account of this grave assemblage (the breakage could give perspective for later usage as well). The only object that bridges the sixty years gap within this list is the triangular spearhead, which interacts with the date of the ovoid jug. The upper circulation data of the spear matches all the other objects. The *pithos*, with a more accurate narrower chronology, is less certain for evaluation of a final date because of its condition. However, perhaps it is able to eliminate dates earlier than 370/380 AD for this grave, as the *pithos* and pear-shaped jug convey the more acceptable years 370/380 AD and helps to recognise the lower chronology with the same years. All three pottery objects and the paste bead datable within 380–400 AD may be expected for the relative date of this grave. The contrasting upper data produced by the white paste bead that is thought to be a decorative part of the sword may just support them. Therefore, a final relative date of 370/380–400 AD is obtained.

**Grave 5** (Male grave.). The grave complex consists of nine objects and a spearhead socket which is too unrecognisable to date (**Tables 14-14a; Table 47; Table 52**). The chronological context of all the objects roughly shapes the final stage of the late imperial time:

1. *Pithoi (urn) dated to the 370/380-400 AD. Date is obtained from morphological specifics.*
2. *Pear-shaped Jug dated to 360/380-400 AD. Suggested date has been achieved from diagnostic parts.*
3. *Amphora dated to 400-420 AD. Obtained chronology has been also analysed within associate objects, but it is highly speculative.*
4. *Glass vessel of conical shape dated to 380-400 AD. This relative data was obtained from morphologic specific of diagnostic parts.*

5. *Long knife dated to 390/400-450 AD. This has been suggestively dated on a comparison basis.*
  6. *Spear head dated to 390/400-450 AD. Typologically, it offers quite a long circulated date (260-450 AD), but dimensional aspects and socket specifics became responsible for broad chronology.*
  7. *Spear head socket is not useful even for typological imaginations.*
  8. *Fibula dated to the 380-400 AD. Certain structural specific becomes decisive in suggesting a final date.*
  9. *Buckle dated to the 350-380 AD.*
- 

Within this chronological framework, a slightly special chronological setting covers the *pithoi* and spearhead, giving 20 years alternative to the lower date, to the years 360–380. The buckle stands closer to this date, but the *amphora* that appears closer to other dating evidence may extend the earliest date for this grave to 400 AD. The glass vessel is the most judgmental to increase this date. The long knife and spearhead are mutually supportive of the upper chronology. Within this chronological schema, the *amphora* is able to drive a much broader and possible date for this grave to 400–420 AD. The lost glass vessel might be also supportive.

**Grave 6** (Male grave). The grave complex lacks two datable objects: a bronze fibula and a glass vessel (**Tables** 15-15a; **Table** 48; **Table** 53). As they are lacking the typological character, which is undocumented, their level of usefulness for the relative chronology is unknown. The other objects roughly provide a time spectrum within 360–430 AD:

1. *Handled storage jar (urn) dated to 380-400/410 AD. The date is speculative and based on the lower body and rim decoration.*
  2. *Pear-shaped juglet dated to 350-380 AD. The date is obtained from morphological parts.*
  3. *Pottery plate (copy of LRCW) with suggested data of 380-400 AD.*
  4. *Triangular Spear head dated to 370/380-400 AD.*
  5. *Square Javelin (square section, type III) 360/370-400 AD.*
  6. *Battle axe dated to 375-400 AD.*
  7. *Long Knife with asymmetric blade dated to 380/400-430 AD. The suggested data is based on typological features.*
-

The pear-shaped juglet and square javelin are the most sensible to set the earliest years to 350–360 AD. Other spearheads also allow optimise the generalisation of the data 15-year difference. Some construction evidence provides a much more closely dated fine ware, which permits to shape the years 380–400 AD, but substantial difference can be seen with the knife, which appears 30 years later and is the principal indicator for the upper chronology to present the year 400 AD. The axe provides significant data for the evaluation of the lower date of the grave to 375 AD. Therefore, LRW and battle axe support achieves the final chronology of the grave at 375–400 AD.

#### ***IV. 2. 3. 4. 2 Chronological interrelations of Olginskoe graves***

The existing data of the alignment and orientation of each individual grave is supportive to speculate a chronological interrelation of the six datable graves, but is unable to dictate their expansion within the cemetery territory, as it depends on evidence of the other destroyed graves.

Interestingly, the earliest grave which dates to the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century lay in the upper central place. This is the starting point of their distribution. Relative data suggests that the next burial, which might have been dug at least twenty years later, is Grave 4, located southwest below and at the first corner part of the lower horizontal row. Both reveal the closest link in burial practices. Probably within the next five years Grave 6 appears a little distance away, but in the last corner of the same row. It differs in burial practice. Similarly, five years later there appears another behaviourally different Grave 1 on the first horizontal row to the west side of the earliest burial. From the remaining two, both are thought to be buried at least twenty years later. The earliest is Grave 5, which occupies the central part of the lower row. The last Grave 3, which might have occurred either in the same year or at least 30 years later, shows an equal burial practice to Grave 6 and is viewed above in the last corner part of the upper row.

However, chronological data makes the linear stratigraphy recognisable, which seems to proceed from north to southwest and continues from southeast to northwest. The difficulty of obtaining their precise spread is indicated in the similarly dated graves and their varying alignments. In any case, it roughly forms an occupational progression from west to east, where the latest graves appear.

#### **IV. 2. 3. 4. 3 Chronological manipulation of Olginskoe cemetery and issues of its formation**

The grave data makes it possible to assign single phases of cemetery occupation. But objects from destroyed graves support not only the defined chronology but slightly later periods as well. They all make the transition from late Roman to early Byzantine periods evident. However the six datable grave complexes, together with evidence of four destroyed graves and features of the other eight lost graves, are the reality for judging the Olginskoe cemetery chronology. Chronological parameters offered by the complete graves define three broad phases of cemetery occupation covering a period from the late 4<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century:

- **Period 1/2.** 350-380 AD. Grave 2.
- **Period 2.** 370-400 AD. Graves 1, 4, 6.
- **Period 3/1.** 400-420/450 AD. Graves 3, 5.

From the perspective of the given chronological rubric, one grave identifies the earliest occupation stage, suggesting the beginning for cemetery occupation between 350 AD and 380 AD. The other graves are indicative of continual display with the related Period 2, which encompasses the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century between 380 AD and 400 AD. The latest burials, over the next fifteen years, are evidenced by the two graves linked to Period 3, between 400 AD and 420/450 AD. They evidence cemetery usage between 350 AD and 450 AD, which amounts to a permanent use of the area for roughly 70–100 years, but these leading grave complexes are a proportionally small part of the Olginskoe cemetery graves.

The later usage of the cemetery depends on evidence from two destroyed graves, 10 and 11, having further constructing abilities. What is interesting is that a small proportion of the earliest dated objects give a perspective to deepen the cemetery chronology. This is reflected in the existence of such earlier dated objects like a long-circulated zoomorphic decorative bronze fastener and a local iron Colchian bracelet assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. However, they are chronologically unassociated with the assemblage depositions and therefore quite insecure as evidence. Both provide a more confusing account of this grave complex. In fact, they stand closer to the evidence of the destroyed Grave 10, accommodating the lance from the half of the century, dated to the years 300–350. All three surely indicate important connections with cemetery use and could be purely alternative to earlier phases, but such enigmatic contexts are difficult to interpret as contemporary with the earliest phase of cemetery occupation.



Furthermore, there are three more objects from Grave 11 which may suggest continuous cemetery use in early medieval time. First is a cross-headed bow fibula (*Type II, Variant 2*) more supportive of the early years of 400–450 AD, but a certain bead type of rock crystal which demonstrably appear in years later than 440–450 (*Type 2*) might be partial evidence for focusing perhaps on the final phase.

However, since destroyed graves produce objects justifying the later 3<sup>rd</sup> and later 5<sup>th</sup> century, it gives temporal dimensions in the manipulation of further fifty years and reconstructs two more periods:

- **Period 1/1. 300-350 AD.** Supportive lance from the destroyed grave 10.
- **Period 4/2. 400/450-500 AD.** Supportive *fibula* from the destroyed grave 11.

These achieved dates provide a significant approach to the relative chronology of Olginskoe cemetery. The possible beginning phase is defined roughly to 300 AD. More plausible evidence shows continuity into the middle phase that was determined by the years 350–400. A noticeable extension of occupation occurs during 400–450 AD, proven by certain grave complexes and single items. Further evidence for the latest phase determining the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century could be a simple matter of continuity rather than final phase, since we don't know the potential of untouched cemetery areas when erosion and even artefacts from destroyed graves are not fully visible. A potential final stage of 450–500 AD matches the time when cremated minorities ended their display in Abramov hill cemetery. The presented material gives a perspective to recognise the quite a long occupation period, but they are useless to approach further reasons for cemetery abandonment. This could match with the mass surrender of associated burial ground from the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, but the connection with the introduction of Christianisation might be a weak argument, because during the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century an increase in burial cremations is noticeable. The spectrum of cemeteries in the vicinity of the hill does not produce any features that might be linked to any type of forbidden burial customs such as cremation at the time. However, we don't know if any legislation pressured for such acts. A continuity of a few inhumation graves in the cemeteries of Abramov hill does not exclude them from being an ancestral reflection of new generations with a new ideology. The fact is that the latest display of cremated individuals is associated with another burial place, Tserkovni hill, and corresponds to the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

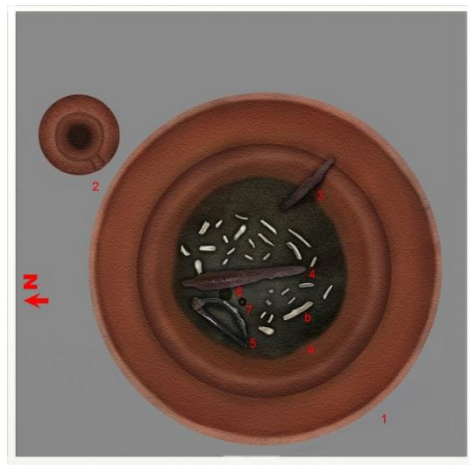
However, analyses that provide important meaning to the use of Olginskoe cemetery make it comparable to those coming into existence in the later 5<sup>th</sup> century over Abramov hill.

## IV. 2. 4 OLGINSKOE SOCIETY

### *IV. 2. 4. 1 Behaviourally identified individuals (cognitive link?)*

Olginskoe society reveals quite mixed burial practices. Behaviourally, they acted in three separate ways, which we suppose were performed according to their tradition or ideology. This is exactly what might program all the memories they received from the past or shared in the present. The specifics they illustrate in burial structures permit us to recognise how they carry the meaning of their geographic identity. This seems to be such an important personal space, necessarily expressed in funerary practice. It could also dictate how they relate to one another, as funerary views are giving support to the distinctions in burial forms, depositional choice and display is identifiable with the areal and non-areal community. The highlighted methods of urn modelling, condition, and position are obvious diversity markers that seem to be decisive for their identity. Who these people were may lie in their habits, images, memories and self-presence that can obviously be viewed in each structure, but it is still hard to recognise them precisely. In any case, they help to reveal close kinds of contact between certain individuals, buried in the graves 2 and 4 or 3 and 6. For the other two individuals evidenced in graves 1 and 5 it is more difficult to define relative context.

**Graves 2-4.** Evidence for non-areal settlers could be recognised in two graves, 2 and 4 (Fig. 38. A-B). The most controversial advantages that bind both graves together gives ground for further speculations. It is a complex of rather common funerary design elements, originating in pre-Roman time. Obviously seen that the identity is much more important, changes are unacceptable and therefore, it could be a case of when the generation reflects the past with the cognitive mechanism. Interest in pottery destruction and imitating principles of smashed inverted urns, within inverted damaged jugs, is a structurally fundamental context of burial practice, examining the identity of a Hellenistic community. It directly links with the Chkhorotsku area of central Colchis, where they proved chronologically earliest and statistically mostly dating from late Hellenistic times, but such ritual episodes like the emotionally charged intact bent sword and thrust spear involved within this practice is based on ideas of Classic and Hellenistic ancestors. This habit is limited to Apsilia and scarcely evident only in the nearest vicinity of Olginskoe cemetery. It also seems to be a hidden band of honourable warriors, revealing a unique structure without any other significant reflection.



**Fig. 38-A.** Warrior buried in Olginskoe grave 2 and image of corresponding grave.

The older one, buried with non-local objects, highlights all of this. The pouring vessels of Lazian type might be a genuinely personal preference, favoured by the male buried in Grave 4 (**Fig.38. B**). His simple clothing, rejecting any fasteners, also attracts considerable attention to this warrior (unlike another individual buried in Grave 2 (**Fig.38. A**) who probably used an overgarment fastened by fibulae) which may be indicative of a more modest attitude. All the above mentioned evidence makes the non-areal character transparent, which permits us to speculate that either Apsilia became their own direct choice for their settlement, or their ancestors moved from central Colchis to Apsilia and brought their burial practices with them. Their number in Apsilia was little more than in Olginskoe cemetery. Similar emotional audiences attracted a few settlers from Patskhiri and Apiancha valleys (Grave 39). It might be supportively predictive of a cognitive thread for some of the resettled and distinct tribal communities they represented. In fact, they established a new location in Patskhiri valley, perhaps to keep close to the cognitive area, because this valley has shown a traditional continuity since prehistoric times.



**Fig. 38-B.** Warrior buried in Olginskoe grave 4 and image of corresponding grave.

Who they were is difficult to advocate, because such graves are a phenomenon of the Colchian Kingdom. What is recognisable is their physical and conceptual link with the central Colchian Chkhorotsku, which might be predictive of ‘new settlers’ of the area. What is obvious is that both belong to a potentially greatly diminished community occupying the upper reaches of the Machara River at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Their burial place can be found in Abramov, Mahajirov, and Apiancha hills,<sup>779</sup> where they created a site memory to connect with their own cognitive landscape in Apsilia. Evidence of synchronic cenotaphs assuming an identical homogenous group, buried in the same hill of the Olginskoe cemetery, is a noticeable fact and perhaps provides conceptual support that could imply a certain expression of identification with an original birth place, where the dead body might be transported for eternal rest.<sup>780</sup> The last appearance of a female grave from the same community observed at the upper Kodori River might be due to the sequence of marriage.

<sup>779</sup> Abramov hill necropolis grave 4; Mahajirov cemetery grave 5; Apiancha necropolis grave 39. Voronov 1990.

<sup>780</sup> Abramov hill, grave 4. Voronov 1990

**Graves 3 and 6.** Certain similarities connect two other individuals buried in Graves 3 and 6 (Fig. 38. C-D). The central feature of their unique burial schema is a similar aspiration in choice of urn type, which clearly relates to the community of Apushta and Lar in upland Apsilia. It occasionally appears in the central part of the area, where it leads only to the Abramov hill necropolis where Olginskoe cemetery is located. Interest is attracted to further define areal attributes, showing the standardisation of knives and small juglets in burial practice, in which areal pattern of the mid-imperial period can be recognised. This indicates similar ideological lines and direct habitual descendancy of commemorative acts from the Mramba and Shapka area, but both are marks of further development and all three are verifiable for their areal identity. The associated glass vessel explains just a social standing and a time of conceivable changes in Apsilia.

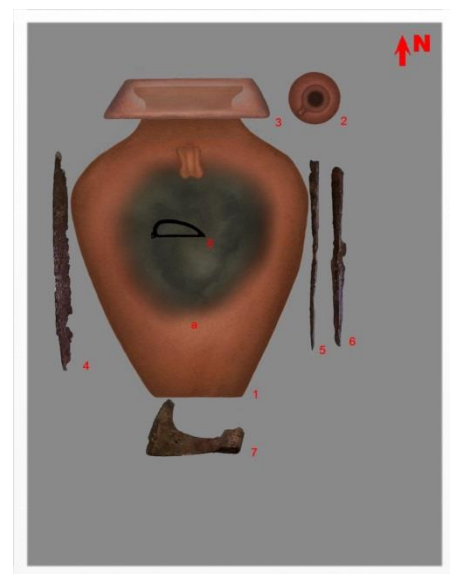


**Fig. 38-C.** Female buried in Olginskoe grave 3 and image of corresponding grave.

However, the contents of Grave 3, which suggest the female gender, seem more clearly connected to a small community appearing in central Apsilia from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 38-C). This opens perspectives to link with a northern Apsilian community that moved to the central part. She wore either thick clothes or an overgarment, fastened at the chest.<sup>781</sup> If such factors and visualisation could reconstruct homogenous minorities of upland Apsilia, it is difficult to interpret, and it is an insufficient criterion to meet the definition of ‘Apsilian’. In addition, an integrated nature is expressed in the imitation principle of a

<sup>781</sup> An identical comparison occurs on the chest of the Akhatsarakhu male buried in Grave 10. Trapsh 1971:95. Tabl. XXV.5.

covered urn viewed in Grave 6 that is associated with a warrior (**Fig. 38-D**). It might be adopted from certain Hellenistic Colchian communities, as this grave context also compares with selected burial places in central Apsilia. A covered urn is a homogeneous model that appears to be independent from belief, as it is traditionalised in certain inhumation graves as well. Such a display maximises the impact of the Colchian funerary concept, which could be supportive of genetic ancestry where a parental link may also realise that it is able to prove mixed descent. In any case, it is a reflection of the continuation of regional burial practices and the type of offerings may be the result of a new perception. Clothing styles also give full recognition to the areal style visible among a militarised society. But the lack of fibulae enables us to make further imaginations about the dress fasteners.



**Fig. 38-D.** Warrior buried in Olginskoe grave 6 and image of corresponding grave.

In broad terms, both are identifiable with areal inhabitants and construct similar identities. The provided patterns could be evidence for the northern settlement of upland Apsilia which is able to identify certain resettled families or female individuals on the basis of marriage.

**Grave 5.** The individual buried in Grave 5 is distinguished by different living standards and developed life principles. This is an effect of his burial structure, well reflecting the social

psychology suitable for the time (**Fig. 38-E**). Within his grave context, valued depositions are mixed and fashionable ideas are strong. Behavioural pressure is revealed in a drink-related composition which is multicultural in nature. It moved local practices aside and ideologically responded to foreign influences. This surrogate nature gives an understanding of adopted international funerary behaviours and directly links this warrior with distinctive military experiences. It also makes it easy to recognise a member of a different cognitive community who finds appropriate forms of self-identification as ‘present’ in a new funerary environment. The horizontally-laid cremation urn, the *pithoi*, is Colchian in nature and the rest of the deposition material is local, so a mental interplay appears, but these are insufficient evidence for areal identity.<sup>782</sup>



**Fig. 38-E.** Warrior buried in Olginskoe grave 5 and image of corresponding grave.

In fact, such urn pithos are favoured by Tsebelda males belonging to the earliest group of cremated minorities in Roman-period Apsilia, and continued to be used even in later inhumation graves, which may represent their permanent residence in Apsilia. However, such graves are limited and defined with a number of distinctive characteristics, reflecting the

<sup>782</sup> A horizontally-laid *pithoi*, rapidly associates information stored in Classical and Hellenistic practices. A fully cremated body is reminiscent of a grave of classic Merkheuli in the Apsilian area.

surrounding impact of the Machara river area (Mramba, Apiancha). This is an issue of limited study.

From the outlook this Olginskoe warrior is equipped with a belted tunic supporting an overgarment which was fastened at the chest. His belt might be either a simple leather seax-related narrow belt or a baldric associated one. From a weapon perspective, he is pretty much a similar spearman to the individual from Grave 2.

All this drives the conclusions that distinctive design and depositional extent defining his burial practice is an impact of experiences that changed his conceptual vision, but he still bears the standard attitude of local practices that drew direct analogies with specific military groupings of the Mramba area. This is an important consideration implying an equal military honor assuming his experiences and relates to the warrior group of the Mramba area.

**Grave 1.** The individual buried in Grave 1 is a case where more imagination is required. The only evidence similar to other graves is the general norm of structuring principles. Apart from this structure, any other behaviour able to lead either to similarity or identity is difficult to define within this grave context. The grave offering types reveal exclusivity that could be non-locally made material, but not decisive enough to determine non-areal dynamics. They stand closer to a regional Colchian environment, but express much about limitations. The assemblage extent contains strong elements of a character which may be associated either with the profession of the individual or the profession of a certain group of people. This exact character makes the content different to leave behind the focus of burial practice, but there is no comparable evidence in Apsilia or in other parts of Colchis and therefore what is represented makes a sense of identity difficult to determine. In fact, there is no interest in areal burial practices and there is a lack of direct links among the burial deposits. Such mental constructs could also drive the conclusions for a non-areal past for this individual.

#### ***IV. 2. 4. 2 Interrelationship of buried society***

Relations and ancestral links are significant factor in understanding of a common burial practice, place and especially when Olginskoe cemetery clearly constitutes three particular types of burial practices. Several nuances raise doubts about a homogeneous community and similar family trees because there are offering categories responding to distinct burial concepts, which might be either biological or ancestral distinctions. Their biological concerns are impossible to define indeed, but there are other clues such as conceptual, structural, alignments and chronological schema, for a key understanding of their relationship basis. It is



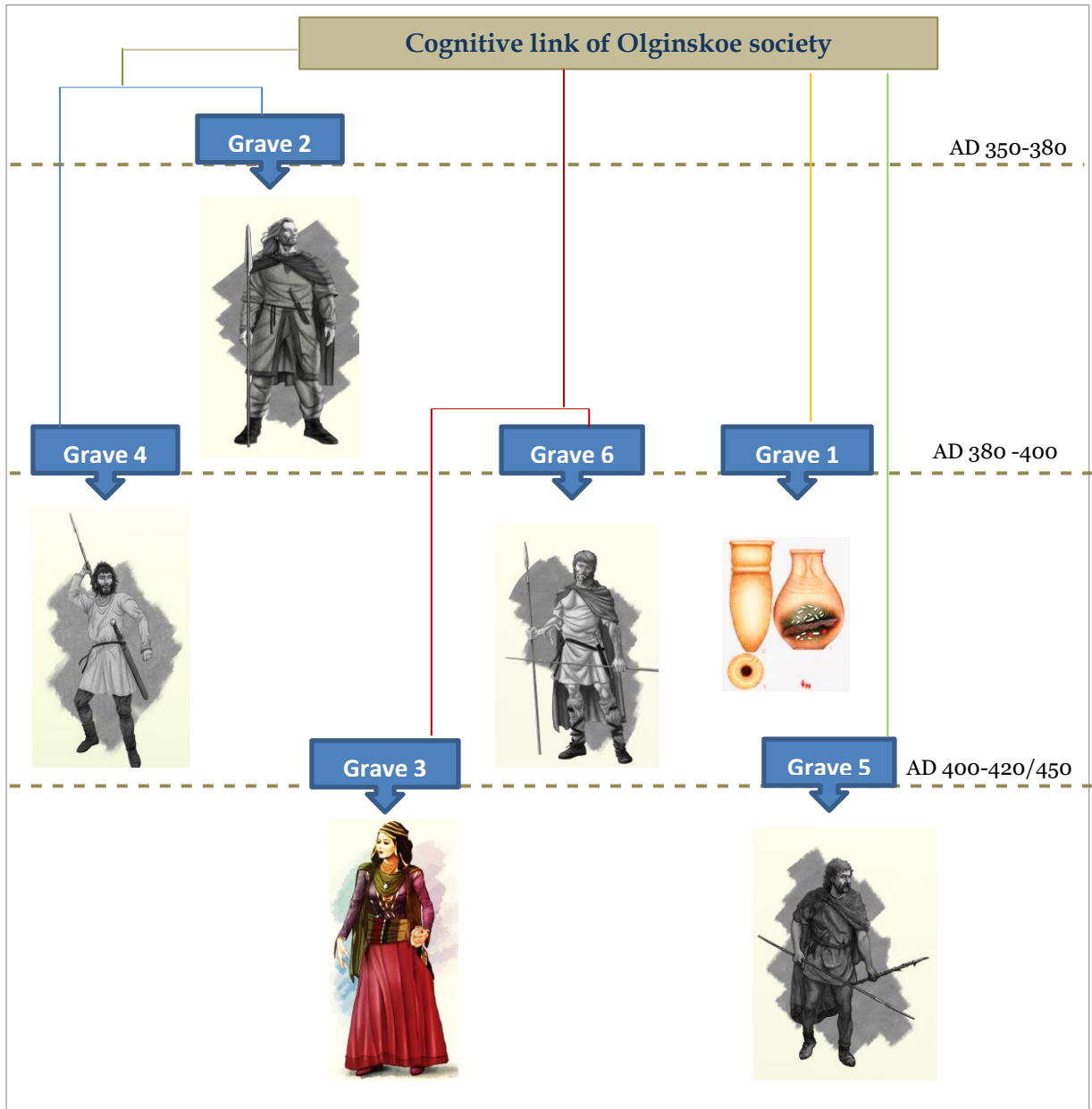
not necessary to find the ancestral or common relatives within Olginskoe cemetery, but what is important is to find a common point able to explain the convenient relationship with burial ground, and if we carefully look at their behavioural interrelations and other synchronic graves of vicinity, such an explanation may be found for certain Olginskoe graves (**Fig. 39**). But in this context, it is difficult to even understand the purpose of the choice for those individuals who have no link within Olginskoe cemetery graves or other adjacent cemeteries. It should also be noted that we don't know if the clear distinctions in funerary practices disappear or not in later years within this burial space due to the disturbed environment. The main point that might intersect with the interest of mixed communities in the Olginskoe burial ground could simply be a matter of either the authority they wielded among the communities or the status of burial areas accessible for the disposal of different communities from Patskhiri valley. The fact that the Olginskoe cemetery similarly offers the space to distinct communities as other northwest cemeteries of the hill is an important context for the further history of the burial place and for the societies who shared it.

Dates obtained from destroyed graves suggest the abandonment of Olginskoe cemetery after 450 AD, but it is uncertain if any other ancestors eventually abandoned this burial space because of the density of other burial sites on the hill or if there were other reasons for leaving their memorial past.

**Graves 2 and 4.** Since Graves 2 and 4 reveal the same behavioural schema, both individuals might be expected to represent either two similar families within one tribal group or the members of one family (**Fig. 39**). Identical descent may be responsible for the funerary concept and identically driven emotions, which is supportive for such a link. The north-oriented physical interrelation viewed in the grave alignment schema and chronologic factors may also lead to their family connection. The short chronology giving a roughly 5- to 10-year difference is insignificant, but it raises perspectives for the early burial of the individual in Grave 4 (380–400 AD).

If that's correct, this fact does not exclude him as the author of similar funerary practices visible in Grave 2. It could also be possible that he was the last member of the family and did not leave any descendants to inherit his honourable sword. This even raises an alternative reason for bending his sword (indeed, if the hypothesis about the tragic battle is incorrect) and if both individuals did not leave any descendants, funerary customs appropriate to their identity was obviously carried out by someone else having knowledge of their commemorative cognition. However, further familial connections are not discernible within Olginskoe cemetery, as it seems unacceptable for other individuals, but in the northwest parts

of the hill there are the two early comparable graves showing identical funerary features. It means that a common burial practice binds three of the earliest graves of the hill, which gives an understanding of the burial ground as a display place for individuals of non-local descent.



**Fig. 39. Interrelationship of Olginskoe society.** Conceptually identified individuals.

**Graves 3 and 6.** Another close link has been identified for two further individuals buried in Graves 3 and 6 (Fig. 39). Similar burial concepts may be highly supportive in suggesting a close familial relationship. Both share identical urn forms and similarly employ distinct local practices, elements most consistent with their common funerary view and equal to areal practices established in Apsilia in the early Roman period. From a gender perspective they

may even be suggestive of a couple or other similar members of the same community or the same family. The female buried in Grave 3 is chronologically a later burial and perhaps was one of the responsible persons for the funeral in Grave 6. She belongs to one of the last buried individuals of the cemetery until 450 AD.

**Grave 1.** It is even more difficult to find any connection between the individual buried in grave 1 and the rest of the society (**Fig. 39**). Beyond the structuring principles, there is no interconnected link. Personal effects of offered items valued by its owner do not make any close sense in relation to burial practices within or beyond Olginskoe cemetery. Therefore, it is hard to find any speculative alternative. Chronologically, it seems to be synchronic with the earliest graves, 2 and 4, which may offer an explanation to the function of the burial ground.

**Grave 5.** From a structural and ideological perspective, the individual buried in grave 5 did not interact with the conceptual environment of the rest of Olginskoe society (**Fig. 39**). The new funerary behaviour made visible did not appear before 380 AD in the area. By this period, three individuals were already buried in the north and west adjacent locations (Grave 2, 3, 4). Behaviourally, no interrelation link may be found with them. What his biological descent has to offer in connection with directly aligned later graves (3, 6) is impossible to assess. The grave's structural and behavioural perspectives do not provide any recognisable traits for a distant relative link or family connection with any other graves in Olginskoe cemetery and beyond. Interplay between the Colchian cognition, military attitudes, and belief is so high in his burial practice that it could reconcile a new generation of mixed communities, but it is almost impossible to attribute to any of the surviving neighbouring graves. It seems that he was accepted in the Olginskoe burial ground without performing any visible similar burial practice. The possible reason could be a military authority because behavioural linkage with specific militaries of Mramba area authorised his equal status, which could be indicative of a leading member of the initial settlers of Patskhiri valley. Therefore, its appearance within Olginskoe cemetery could be understood through authority and interlinked features.

#### ***IV. 2. 4. 3 Social contexts of buried individuals***

Detailed examination of grave artefacts provides many nuances about the social standing of their owners. It is not a spectrum of worthy valued objects and leads corresponding context for simple citizens and individuals with military skills.

### *Social markers*

Three categories—the LRW, glass vessels, and certain beads—are brought into debate to activate the context of social ability. They did not bind aspects of social status; just provide the minor social differences of their owner. From quality, origin and find context, they give the impression of high priced objects, some referring to the middle class and some to military society. Let us first consider their value.

*VALUED ITEMS.* Copies of *terra sigillata* are not only a part of market value items, but also essential for the militarised elite context of Apsilia from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly, they are directly linked with well supplied special military groups of the area,<sup>783</sup> which seems to be accessible for local tribes as well and synchronically appearing in other defensive parts of Colchis between 400 AD and 450 AD. This fact obviously suggests an appreciated cost of the object.

Close examination proves glass vessels as a high social marker, as all types occur within specific weapon graves from military areas and were not accessible for all warriors. From weapon supply they may be an indication of Romanised power sources,<sup>784</sup> and the use of an expensive object, perhaps also related with choice, may possibly be symbolising authority. Areal comparisons prove vessel shapes as decisional for certain power sources, which may be related to an alcoholic-type drink. A notable fact is that most warriors with cremation burial customs focus on conical glass vessels, which might illustrate distinctive drinking practices. In fact, it was not a common shape for all genders or for all graves, but a specifically demanded vessel type. It drives reliable information for their multicultural and commercial value. Indeed, the Olginskoe example is not an exact copy of eastern products, but it surely may have special social meaning and functional purpose. This connects with the accompanying *amphorae*'s popularity among specific warrior graves, having the ability to structure new tendencies.<sup>785</sup> Because the context in which it appears is similarly relevant to ideological value markers as the glass vessel and shows identical engagement within specifically skilled military authorities, it seems to be considerable in the sense of social ability as well.

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<sup>783</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery Grave 9. Trapshi 1971, 1975; Gunba 1978.

<sup>784</sup> Similar vessels from defensive structures and Tzibile church prove the lighting function of certain types of conical glass. This might be a good example for their varying functional level in areas of military campaigns.

<sup>785</sup> The distribution of glass vessels over the late Roman frontier region is associated with federate armies. But due to the typological distinction in different militarized regions, their independent circulation is not excluded. There are regions, where they always appear with amphorae in the warrior graves. This may reflect the specific context of their militaristic life. The standardization of vessels may go beyond individual choice, but it expresses the process of intellectual and ideological exchange.

However, both fine ware and glass vessels may be observed through dining processes, while having the social capacity to reflect distinction and influence on situations. Therefore, it might relate to an authority's appropriate feasting component as well. The fact of their absence in a domestic context in Apsilian populations and among the rural settlement or graves of low social class might be additional evidence for hard to access objects. It should be noted that in the beginning only military personnel were their principal users, but a little later some are evidenced in three female graves of high social standing. This is a new context of their use by both civil and military society, and perhaps assuming a new social meaning for civilians because they occur in later graves and define certain functional groups.

The last male-attributed object dependent on high social status is an imported sword. It is not a high status weapon but it is the rarest circulated in Colchis, confirming certain privileges or the military prominence of its owner. It could also be a granted factor rather than a social ability, but it surely did not reach beyond the middle social class.

There are precious necklaces of gilded or decorated beads and carnelian pendants for jeweled clothing, which might illustrate individual social abilities, but it is difficult to predict if they had any connection with valued jewellery. From the origin and technological quality, they provide a distinguishable volume. Their limited distribution in the area and display in elite female graves shows a high social dynamic that might be an aspect of their high price, and indicative of prestige properties.

*LOW VALUE ITEMS.* The most domestic and personal objects are truly demonstrative of a low social class. They consist of some inexpensive jewellery categories like monochrome glass beads and some local products like fibulae, small knives, and pottery having little scale for social ability. Ring-shaped monochrome glass beads are common within female graves in the area and visualise the simplest social class. This is a direct indicator of their low value and is commonly related to an anaesthetic life. Fasteners representing the local bow fibulae made imaginative the clothing of all types of communities in the area. They were popular objects equally available for any social class and gender, but no recognisable social meaning is thought to occur during the time of their use. Similarly, the storage and pouring wares in the area are easily accessible objects for the simple settlements of Apsilia. The perspective of a small knife equally assigned to the dress of all classes of females is just a clothing phenomenon of a certain community in central Apsilia, and might conceivably be part of their traditional costume. All these interact with a schema of simple inhabitants and are unable to suggest more than the individual activities or habitual tendencies of their owner.

### *Structure of Olginskoe society*

The examined data provide some quality properties related not only to social abilities, but also skills and certain military matters. A slightly stratified societal nature is partially seen in the poor inventory, valued objects, and diverse weapon sets. They support middle and low class social structures with two distinctive genders, but objects attributable to weapon mobility and appropriate skills give functional understanding of military society. Therefore, it recognises a simple civilian and military society, composed of low and middle social class individuals.

*SIMPLE CIVILIANS/settlers.* The very poorly definable deposits give a simple format of life for the two individuals buried in Grave 1 and 2. The complex of unusual pottery seen in Grave 1 obviously suggests familiarity with rural and agricultural activities. Handmade pottery indicative of domestic industrial activities does not exclude defining the function of the owner, associable with a member of rural society. One piece of pottery gives a little scale at an individual level to provide the structure of rural society when identical features are lacking among areal graves. Similarly, local fibulae define increased activities in the metalworking field of Colchis from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and later locally produced weapons are industrial traits. However, they are not directly recognisable within the burial practices of Apsilia.

There is nothing to distinguish the other individual in Grave 2 except the weapon spectrum typical for the central Apsilian inhabitants that will be discussed in a corresponding part below. Domestic assemblages available everywhere in Apsilian villages match the low class individual. Both are defined as poor inhabitants of the area.

*MIDDLE CLASS.* A small degree of social mobility, seen in Grave 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 11, may indicate a middle class society, but social markers do not give them very great distinctiveness. One of them, supposedly a female (Grave 3) is associated with an inhabitant of upland Apsilia from behavioural display. She was socially able to own a glass vessel, which is seldom found among the female society of the area. It could also be a family factor, perhaps easily explained by close contact with the warrior buried in Grave 6. Chronologically she is the later buried bone who could retain such possessions, which might be a logical explanation. The assembled bead category representing rock crystal (*Type 1*) and Egyptian paste are found in all types of female graves of Apsilia, and are not suggestive of a high social status. Equally, the *fibula* that styled her dress is a less attractive object to influence a social context.

Particular jewelry types from the destroyed Grave 8 and 11 may link with females of middle social class. Imported gilded beads and pendants individualise their social ability and

are necessary to mention. The other three males (Graves 4, 5, 6) will be discussed separately below, as they are associated with military power.

*MILITARY CLASS* (Tables 50-53). Weaponry is indeed central to the formation of the military class, but the manner of their combination provides a format providing instruction for their structure. There are three weapon graves (3, 5, 6) variously demonstrating the duty profile of warriors. Their weapons consist of sword, spearhead, and battle axe categories that significantly influence given tasks, but the principal weapon is the spear and the rest are a matter of combination. Apart from the sword, they are components of state supply that are similarly observable among the military groups of central Apsilia during 380–450 AD. From the attested combination and active character they are justifiable for three distinct spearman categories. All three males show the typical image for middle ranking warriors. Their skill in close combat and distance fighting is easily comparable to the models of local allies and larger spearman groups of the Shapka area.

The fact that none of the weapons are identical may prove their individual duties. Proficiency in hand-to-hand combat defines the warrior buried in Grave 4. His ‘honourable’ sword, which is hardly available throughout all of Colchis at time, makes his ability demonstrable. Further skills in distant fighting are also proved by an accompanying spearhead. This combination is suggestive of a lightly equipped but well-skilled warrior useful for offensive and defensive battle. But such limited mobility, rarely observable at the time, might indicate a warrior in authority (see *Weapon Combination A*). His simple life format, recognisable in the distinctive offering structure and practices, may address the appearance of a specific military group in the area. This might be an impact factor within the military society of Olginskoe.

A spearman background is shown by another warrior buried in Grave 5. He was supplied with typical weaponry consisting of two spears and a seax, similar to the warriors of central Apsilia. A seax that possibly hung at the waist also suggests qualification in combat fighting (weapon perspective has been detailed in *Weapon Combination C*). The blunt triangular spear individualises him as an experienced soldier against well-protected armoured militaries. His mobile character connects with specific spearman groups of the Mramba and Akhacharkhu areas and shows the same militarisation level typical of highly secured areas of Northwest Colchis (where they synchronically appear). They used the same operating principles, but prominent warriors are recognised in the Mramba group may even be comparable with the *foederati*.<sup>786</sup> From the context of the offerings and burial practices resulting from military

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<sup>786</sup> Warriors are represented by a slightly increased weapon spectrum in Abgidzrakhu graves 12 and 13. Trapsh 1971.

service, the Olginskoe warriors give an understanding of the recruited military sources and process that is hardly interpretable. It may also indicate distinctive military and social positions within Olginskoe society.

More prominent skills seem to be displayed by the third warrior buried in Grave 6. A more dangerous weapon set easily distinguishes a specialisation in different battle tactics. The axe is a new category of weapon that differently views the abilities of spearmen (for weapon perspective, see *Weapon Combination B*). Typical spearman weaponry consisted of a slender javelin and triangular spear, corresponding to warriors effective in battle against armed soldiers. The entire weapon spectrum links with heavily equipped infantry troops skilled in throwing weapons and well prepared for distance fighting. Similar displays and identical weapon types distinguish the Abgidzrakhu and Akhacharkhu warriors. Identical defensive strategies define them as infantry soldiers of central Apsilia in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The most minimal weapon spectrum suggests the limited military skills of the male buried in Grave 2. What is viewed could be associated with a simple spearman with a military function and possible participation in the security of the area.

The social basis of each warrior might well blend with military duty, seen in their mobility spectrum. Weapon combinations appropriate power sources either with allied groups on the area or members of regional defence supporting stationed soldiers. A minor difference in military skills shows distinct proficiency in distance fighting, but is comparable with spearman groups. The tactic they were trained in could be practical for areal security in several criss-crossed zones of the Shapka area. Their weapons are generally based on local supplementary sources and reveal the same military level typical for the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. This matches the time of the mass militarisation of areal population.

### ***Context of social life (reconstruction of Olginskoe domestic objects)***

The Olginskoe cemetery assemblages offer exhaustive sources for eating, drinking, and storage services. This is a minor portion of synchronic graves from Apsilia, but they are able to provide insights into the daily life of the buried society (Table 40). The earliest offerings set of years 320–380 maintain fragments of a simple feast, recognising a low potential of dining practice. It is presented with more traditional value objects demonstrating a complex of storage pottery, kitchen item, and tableware. The undecorated jug may have been used for hand washing before the meal (Grave 4), but representatively adorned pouring wares are evidently supposed to be for serving a commonly accepted drink, perhaps either water or alcohol. The combination of different proportional jugs might be an indication of the wine



mixing practice of a Greek character, perhaps copied from foreign soldiers co-existing in the area.<sup>787</sup> This could be part of a daily feast, proving a combination of red wine with water but they lack the assistance of dishes and other kitchen wares unlike most synchronic graves from cemeteries in the vicinity.<sup>788</sup> Correspondingly, these are less informative about the cooking practices, but assembled jars that were surely used to store grains and other types of dry food may confirm the existence of various baked or cooked pastry. The obvious difference in functional categories provides the first step for food distinction. The accompanying unidentified large jar from Grave 1 may reference the transportation or storage of fish and even the garden fruits. A small pointed knife (found in Grave 2) corresponding to table equipment and useful for cutting or peeling fruit may support this idea. This paints a picture of a public dining process.

Later assemblages provide more obvious changes in the dining culture of the years 380/400 to 450 and show more elegant forms of dining habit. A few cases restore new materials enriching feast components, such as imported plates (LRCW). This is exceptional and may visualise either an especially served individual meal or a centrally placed ware to share the offered meal. Imported drinking glasses are equally rare, giving a more civilised context to the dining process and showing new tendencies (Grave 3, 5). It repeats the shape of imported cones and similarly mirrors increased drinking practices of Mediterranean influence observable in the area from 380–450 AD. They produce a festive expression in western form, but could be a part of regular dining practice for military personnel. This was perhaps legitimised through an imperial standard for special soldiers. Pouring wares are used in pairs and provide a similar tendency for serving different drinks, but the function of the jugs vary considerably in terms of their proportional task. A medium-sized pouring ware may link with varied tasks in daily use, useful even for milk. They made a rigorous demand of Olginskoe society and are informative about family meals, but further changes in proportion and shape approach the context of specialised occasions, such as small capacity juglets, giving an understanding of individual choice. Some were possibly used for oil as they were highly accepted domestic wares,<sup>789</sup> but enigmatic images are produced by a white-coated juglet that, proportionally and morphologically, was intended for a special spirit. A corresponding

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<sup>787</sup> In was similarly accompanied by two jugs and a bowl in two graves, distinguished by the custom of placing a coin in the mouth of the deceased.

<sup>788</sup> A few co-existed kitchen potteries included knocking pots, baking dishes, and frying pans, which can equally be found in domestic contexts. Some dishes had a convincing tableware function, probably for sharing the meat or fish to serve with bread or even with Colchian mise food 'Ghomi'.

<sup>789</sup> They became significant to the central Apsilian population from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. All in all, five juglets have been found and only in the female burial context of the Mramba area.

meaning may be associated with ritual ware, which could be part of a ceremony relating to the memorial feast of a family member.

In any case the jug, glass vessel, and plate seem to be a display of a tableware set that functioned together. Interestingly, some were accompanied with an *amphora*, from which may be discerned the wine culture (Grave 5) due to the fact that wine *amphorae* become a more prominent liquid container associable with warriors, perhaps emphasising a well-established drinking practice. However, three objects may define the complex of drinking assemblages: two different proportional jugs expected for wine and water, drinking vessels, and *amphorae* (this set always assisted special warriors in Apsilia from 380–450 AD).

Longer knives could also be an integrated component in the daily meal, with similar functions to little ones, useful for cutting meat or bread. Traces of any grains were not found in storage wares and do not make visible if changes affected culinary practices,<sup>790</sup> but the provided shapes may indicate any possible herbs, plants, spices, meat or fish. They are regional types, which does not exclude the transport of similar food observed in Lazica.<sup>791</sup>

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<sup>790</sup> Reconstruction of cooking and dining practices in Apsilian region requires further study. Further issues see in: Dunbabin K. 1993:116-141. 'Wine and water at the Roman convivium'. JRA 6

<sup>791</sup> There are several evidences of millet, wheat, rye, and oat grains found in large numbers in central Lazica, at Archaeopolis/Nokalakevi. There are such species as *Triticum aestivum*, *Triticum compactum*, and most commonly the *Hordeum vulgare* and suggested that they have been stored in *pithoi*.

### IV. 3 SUMMURY TO THE OLGINSKOE CEMETERY

Statistically, Olginskoe corresponds to a small cemetery consisting of at least eighteen individual graves. It is identified as the earliest occupied SW part of the quite dense Abramov burial hill necropolis in the Shapka area.<sup>792</sup> The cemetery was used for more than one century by different generations from early 3<sup>rd</sup> to the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. But burials probably grew over 50 years, and it becomes the smallest cremation cemetery of the hill up to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when it compares with at least the four earliest cremation graves including some of female and male gender.

Evidence of distinct structural and funerary practices recognizes it as burial place of mixed communities. The fact of their burial in the same cemetery may predict good relations between defined community groups. But what that relationship was, exactly, is hard to interpret. It could be caused by various reasons including familial, but associations drawn from social structure leads to an authority factor, because distinctive grave models are indicative for three distinct small community groups, presenting areal and regional traits. They showed differently treated cognition in structures, and how they conducted distinct commemorations, relative to their belief and experiences. In which, their vision about the life and death was gravitated back through their way of thinking. This becomes central for their identity. Each grave model matches the structure of minor or big community of area, where it defines similar groups. And despite the diversity, they share common living and burial places to express their identity in the 'insecure' and well-maintained environment of Olginskoe. For this choice we speculate two distinctive factors which could be decisive. First and essential might be a physical and conceptual attractiveness of the Abramov hill burial ground. The second is an effective location within the surrounding landscape.

From the first point, Abramov hill fully reflects cognitive consideration of earliest buried minorities. But what significant element exactly dictated their choice is obviously hidden within burial environment of those societies was articulated by the body container inverted in graves that begun occupying the burial hill from the beginning. This might similarly be an essential factor for the earliest buried male individuals of Olginskoe cemetery (grave 2, 4) as their appearance in place interacts with graves of an identical community, buried in the NW part of the hill, within approx. 50-60 m. For this context are two neighboring cenotaph graves

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<sup>792</sup> Burial hill consisted of at least 34 graves of the mid and late imperial periods, dated to 350-450 AD. But there are also three early Byzantine male graves, buried during the 450 - 500 AD. Voronov 1977:22

with traces of similar practices. Both are coexisting groups and a limited grave category in the area, that we speculate as evidence of their distinct birthplace (perhaps somewhere beyond Apsilia), from where they might have been transported.<sup>793</sup> They seem to have had contacts with other members of an identical community, similarly buried in the vicinity burial places of Patskhiri in the surrounding 2-3 km.<sup>794</sup> For the other Olginskoe individuals, an appropriate relationship with Abramov hill could be either close relation, ancestral link or simply the burial place. The latter is supportive for the synchronicity of a picture following frequent use of the burial hill; developing in patchwork environment of inherited burials of a mixed community, but where the distinctions were respected. It is also a fact that the Patskhiri valley, where Olginskoe cemetery locates, does not observed any further evidences for cognitive landscape of earlier time (either with Roman or with prehistoric inhabitant of Bronze Age) to connect to a similar genealogical link of cremated societies. The only nearest southern coastal vicinity producing the traits of Iron Age cremated settlers is the Merkheuli area.<sup>795</sup> The gap between the prehistoric and Roman past may emphasize the creation of new cremation landscape of a potentially decreased communities of Colchis. They are observable within Prehistoric, Classic and Hellenistic environments beyond Apsilia, which opens the way of the unique practices of their ancestors from a different geographic area of Colchis.

Further understanding gives the practical meaning to the roadside location and perspective of surrounding landscape. Olginskoe cemetery was an easily accessible SW part of Abramov hill, which lay on the main civic route arteries (AR2). AR2 was also practical for a congregation and other related ceremonies. That is equally significant factor in providing simple communication link with adjoined inhabited areas of south; where it first connected with the main Shapka settlement and the most leading part of area in 500 m. The facility factor might be that opportunity people wanted to use continually and attracted all period inhabitants of this part. It is proved by the variety of roadside settlements of the Patskhiri valley.<sup>796</sup> All these are sympathy factors of areal attractiveness which met all criteria for their choice.

Grave offering content attributes Olginskoe society to the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century Shapka population. That is a time of considerable increase of settlement in central Apsilia. From this

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<sup>793</sup> Both are cenotaphs of cremated individuals, possibly women, evidenced in Abramov hill (graves 4, 13). Voronov. Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:24, 26.pic.151-3; pic 16.12-15.

<sup>794</sup> They are almost synchronic burials of man and women found 2 km away, in the Abgidzrakhu (grave 3) and Stekljanni hill cemeteries. Both provided identically inverted urns. Trapsh 1971:24. Tabl.II. TAnd the third, 3 km away, is the grave of high social class women from Akhacharkhu hill necropolis. Tapsh 1971: 97.Tabl. XXXVII.

<sup>795</sup> The discovery is recorded at the left bank of the Machara River. Baramidze M. 1977

<sup>796</sup> The first prehistoric fort occurs in the Patskhiri valley of this area during the 9<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> BC, indicates the unchanging potential of the place. Voronov 1968:133-142.

point, the fact that Olginskoe society reveals a total analogy with minorities of vicinity cemeteries suggests that the Shapka region as the first living place of distinct communities, perhaps even of different tribes. Despite the distinctions in certain grave materials, they showed how this settlement grew in structure. They recognised as simple inhabitant and some with military background. This pointing case arrive the right destination all goods supposed to be existed in their daily life and assisted in graves after their death.

Indeed, each grave type has its own characteristic and basis for distinctive choiced. If we place them into their historical period, they consider three different phases' of the Roman period, where each phase reflects impacts introduced through social-economic or trade activities and the military context of area.

However, the artefacts from the earliest dated burial, grave 2, is relevant to the period of 350-380 AD. It reconstructs the early period of cemetery occupation which covers a relatively short time span of 30 years. That is matching the period of a population increase in the Shapka area. Distinction in material and practices gives knowledge of ongoing transformations and perhaps imply the changes within the population of this part. Graphically it shows individuals quite specifically in burial structures, obviously signaling a new identity of a regional kind and similarly evident in vicinity cemeteries. Offerings are limited, by which another important aspects may be viewed. New types of local pottery morphologically illustrate ideas imported from foreign countries and prove further development. Storage ware shows immediate contact with regional wares. Metal items viewed developed areal types. Poorly supplied weapons are expressing alliance of their owners with the population of local areas. Dress accessories also points to the changes in clothing fashion. If we trust synchronic processes seen in Apsilian material culture, the slow process of development is easily recognized.

The second grave group is relevant to the period 370/385-400 AD and follows earlier graves uninterruptedly until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It reconstructs the next twenty years, and viewed all thematic incorporated the daily life of two distinctive communities. The nature of offered items has limited basis and provide unexpected evidence, especially the most unidentified pottery types from grave 1 that are showing innovations unusual for Apsilia. The handmade globular jug, which is a specifically areal product, makes visible the activities of domestic workshops in central Apsilia (possibly an area of Mramba village). Graphically and decoratively, they introduce new and intrinsic foreign styles. From the other associated burial perspectives (graves 4, 6), variation among the pouring wares is higher. Hemispherical jugs with western influences contribute ongoing challenges, showing the transformation in pottery

production at an areal level. But an ovoid jug links with NW upland style pottery group. The fact of sharing by small groups of settlers in Apsilia might be evidence for regional connections between defined areas. Locally produced Lazian wares are more evidential in pear-shaped pouring wares of Lazian origin specified by areal nuances. There are other regional representatives like central Colchian *pithoi*. They emphasize the beginning of 'modernity' through an integration of types and style. Some imply communication with communities of upland and central Apsilia, as well as other Colchian regions.

This group contains other noticeable elements of practices and material supply. Handled jar is similarly informative for domestic activities associable with upland parts. That could be also the social factor equally giving the perspective to their domestic task and activity. Leading *pithoi* showing the most important functional properties and categories may also point to pottery exchange processes in Apsilia. There is the additional transport pottery that hardly assigning to areal traits and gives light to the regional interchange. Their functional distinction is an obvious clue for varying food supply from different region. Pouring wares made remarkable the changes in drinking culture, for daily feasts or special occasions.

These are relatively rare imported items that show a few connections with the outside world. Most spectacular for this time is the appearance of a *Byborski type* sword. But it could be also an object in the context of possession brought either by warrior or accounted as some honoured gift. The imports that appear may have been transported along southern routes, either by sea or land. A variety of fine wares, possibly transported from one of the neighbouring countries of the Black Sea littoral, is a general supplementary object of Apsilia. It deals with brief historical period, when trade through this valley was able to change Apsilian land socio-economically. Luxury items like glass vessels appearing through trade might be further logical evidence proving this interpretation.

Weapon types also prove that Olginskoe inhabitant had military pressure. Their spectrum is maximising the nature of a technological evolution and showing impulses of transitional period. From supply nature they are similar to the Akhacharacku area and connected the males of both parts. This similarity made imaginative typical local soldiers of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century from the area. In contrast, grave 6 demonstrate weapons of official supply. They witness the presence of local allied sources of those areas, which is obvious indication of certain instability in central part of Apsilia. The final picture of grave goods, recognized responsibilities, type of services and needs are connected with social-economic and political activities in Apsilia during 350-450 AD. They all give understanding of broader historical events, when military leaders start to control the area.

A third group (graves 3, 5) defines the 50 year interval refers to the period of 400/420-450 AD, giving completely new information regarding themes incorporated into daily life of the population in the last phase of late imperial Apsilia. That is related to the historical episode (?) of areal occupation. It evidences the strong direct contacts maintained with the Mramba community; and witnesses the structural changes in burial custom which is reflected in varying depositional practice. Their capacity is slightly increased and provides an interesting group of local and imported items, most likely related to the Romanized population. They show how society is a little changed social-economically and developed militarily. Entire spectrum leads to distinct organizational control of Lazi Kingdom. Functionally, illustrated military responses accentuate the worth of buried individual and showed how dangerous he could be. Therefore, what grave 5 deliberates is a causal connection of Romanized warrior with specific mobility and a person, who shows different advantages of lifestyle. It also carries information about the political nature of Apsilia and military presence in area.

This group also provides minor part of areal import in the manner of conical vessels, rock crystal and Egyptian faïence bead. They are indication of sea and mountain trade. Unusual specifics make it difficult to recognize the area of simplified eastern glass cones and Black Sea *amphorae*. Despite it, they convey the commercial practices of a regional market across the Black Sea and give access to the coastal trade.

Destroyed graves (8, 9, 10, and 11) give the latest artefact spectrum of the years 450 and shows a transition into the early Byzantine era, when the areal population becomes largely militarized. But it also supports the spectrum of 400 AD and adds a more commercial nature to the next historical period. That is made tangible by the favorable jewelry types of areal females. From spectrum they share potentially little apart from identical categories of imported beads as in other parts of Apsilia. Some objects, like light brown beads rich in a variety of forms are demonstrative for western markets and suggest the Black Sea trade. But there are comparable bead types increasing over the northern mountain upland area. Others products of eastern markets, illustrated by certain encrusted glass or stone beads, are attributable to the land road trade and also via the Caucasian passes. Expensive gilded beads from Alexandria and some cornelian or melon shape paste beads are long distance trade items and further evidence for international merchant operations. They give understandings of areal trade, through two directionally activated roads of Apsilia.

Certain (encrusted) beads of the later group, matching the time of burial abandonment are Asian objects. They provide evidence about the political activities of the related period, when

Sassanian domination over the Caucasus is remarkable. And it gives an approach to the trading role in social-economic life of Apsilians during 500-600 AD.

However, the entire spectrum documents a very complicated past for Olginskoe society, which is a fragmented picture of those challenges similarly affecting other areal populations of Apsilia during 350-450/500 AD. That raises considerable interest as to the military history of area.

#### IV. 4 CONCLUSION

This conclusion turns to the research theory about the identification of cremated minorities of Apsilia. The study of Olginskoe burial customs led to new evidence and three chronologically definable grave models with clear distinction in grave structures, relative terms, and funerary practices (**Table 42**). This is truly representative of behavioural variety and cognitive development in which diverse communities are recognised. They correspond to several small and large settlement groups in Apsilia and give a clear notion that:

- The appearance of inverted-smashed urn models (*Model 1*) show the earliest buried families (Grave 2, 4) are linked with the central Colchian Chkhorotsku and changes among the areal population. They are members of the smallest communities living in the central part, but might not be considered as Apsilian.
- The next graphically definable grave model, with vertically placed complete jar-urns (*Model 2*) reflects the practices of the northern parts and gives associations to areal origins (Grave 3). This also defines a minor group in central Apsilia.
- The design of lid-cover urns are the earliest Colchian models observable in Apsilia and equally distinguish a member of a particular group of people tracing both areal and regional origins (Grave 6).
- The third model of horizontally placed pithos-urns (*Model 3*) with drink related specifics obtain a chronologically definable grave structure and level of internationalised social culture (Grave 5). It links with a regional trait, confirms a short-lived custom and connection with certain members of a militarised Mramba community.



They are all convincing evidence to argue for the reflection of distinct communities in the area. Some suggest the resettlement of small communities in mid-imperial Apsilia, where they left long-term memories of the historical past. To be buried here, they should come from somewhere, but why?—This is a question that gives perspectives to alliances, marriages, or other types of relations between different tribal groups and communities of Colchis. By this way, we may explain a heterogeneous picture of the Olginskoe community. The interrelation schema excludes the concept of family burials (except for Grave 2 and 4), while the entire history of the cemetery was shared by warrior graves, perhaps of different tribal origin, resettled in the small villages in the vicinity. Cremation was a common burial concept appropriate for their cognitive structure.

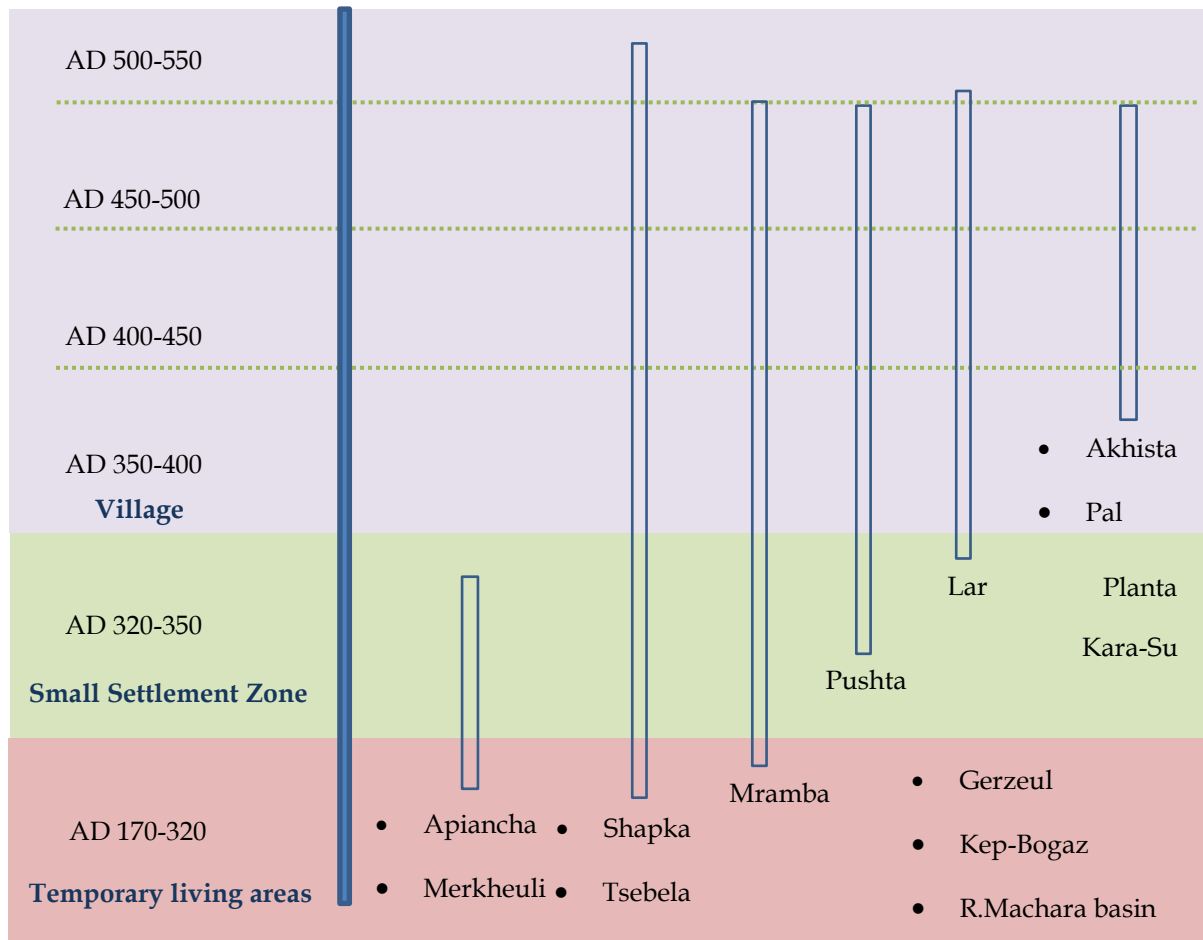
The practical approach to the single artefacts, and more importantly the pottery, produces the plausible arguments for the impact of the influences of foreign morphological and decorative implications. It gives the right understanding of their origin and the causes of their appearance. The earliest imported throwing axes of the area are thought to be a direct conceptual line for areal samples, sharing the basic forms of Germanic axes, because there is no other alternative for the choice of such design. Similar information conveys foreign morphological and decorative tendencies appearing on local pottery at the time. Potters produce the skilful examples of new ornamental compositions suspended by the simplest and most widespread circle motifs which have numerous comparable evidences from the connected Europe, and they show a growing attitude of western model. The earliest imported zoomorphic buckles and depicted stamped roundels may have influenced local imitations. In fact, Apsilia became the main producer of the stamped roundel decorative schema in West Colchis during the years 320–450 AD, but direct or indirect thematic comparisons come from a wide range of geographic areas including Germany, Vismose, and Pannonia connected to Europe. Therefore, this gives a more balanced perspective to alternative interpretations and to the object specifics that has been recognised as components of ‘Tsebeldian culture’ in social science.

## V. SETTLEMENT OF APSILIA

### V. 1 ROMAN TIME SETTLEMENT

The process of areal inhabitation is seen particularly through the evidences of separated single places, small settled zones and dense living parts. Their chronologic shapes give view of scarcely populated Apsilia in earliest years, with gradual expansion from south to north, which becomes most remarkable from early 4<sup>th</sup> century. This time considers with the beginning of developing Apsilian settled parts into central and peripheral settlement (**Fig. 40**). We can construct how they transformed into villages in different historical phases. Entire outcome give complete chronological view of inhabited landscape and results that embodies following:

- Temporary living areas
- Small settlement zones
- Villages



**Fig. 40.** Chronology of an inhabited landscape from Roman into early medieval period.

### V. 1. 1 *Temporary living areas*

Temporary living areas are quite limited and recognized in different type of evidences like pottery fragments, metal implements, settlement cluster and individual graves. But they are most meaningful in identifying continuity of areal settlement from 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and coordination of ten related places at the rivers Machara, Kelasuri and Kodori. Existing information about the finding material is not entirely viewable in scientific literature and enabling broad interpretations. They show life-spread from south-western parts into central Apsilia. In which individual graves of Gurzuli area,<sup>797</sup> farther NW at the Kep-Bogaz<sup>798</sup> and at the W of the mountain Apiancha in upper Jurevka<sup>799</sup> gives little knowledge about the practices involved in earliest inhabited parts. Only 2<sup>nd</sup> century hoard find in Gurzuli proves successful settler of this area, some hidden activities and perhaps voyaging, which may brought people some adventures.<sup>800</sup> All three places geographically may assign to the vicinity of Shapka.

If we follow topographically the occupation directed north, and in which pottery fragments integrate distant parts of the river Kodori, can be defined inhabitant of the Cave Karasu area,<sup>801</sup> Georgievskoe (at the Jampal stream),<sup>802</sup> Planta<sup>803</sup> and the Lake Amtkel.<sup>804</sup> They reflect similar cultural presence in pottery and other artefacts, but with quite different abilities of settler Georgievskoe. Those appearing in two groups further at the Jampal stream and surrounding of the village Akhista are much a rocky hill settlement cluster, producing attending insight of household pottery and imported transit wares.<sup>805</sup> The same group of household may identify other settlers in area of modern village Chini<sup>806</sup> across the river Kodori, which consider peripheral parts of the north-western village Pal. Other locations at

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<sup>797</sup> Represents a male individual buried in an area of early medieval fort. Voronov 1977:22.

<sup>798</sup> This refers to the geographic area between the villages of Tsebelda and Mramba, which is located in 1 km distance from prehistoric Kep-Bogaz. Voronov 1977:22.

<sup>799</sup> Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:14.Fig.10.

<sup>800</sup> The hoard revealed near the crosses of two internal tracks and the grave of a male individual. Bgzhba, Voronov 1960:94-100. Ivashenko 1931.

<sup>801</sup> Voronov 1969:62.

<sup>802</sup> A hill south of the village Georgievskoe, where the storage jars and weapons were found. Voronov 1969:63.

<sup>803</sup> This considers to evidences of Late roman and early medieval pottery fragments. Voronov 1969:62.

<sup>804</sup> A hill about 1.5-2 km south-west of the river Amtkel, on the southern slope of which an early medieval pottery fragments were revealed.

<sup>805</sup> The *group A* was evidenced near the Canyon of Jampal River, about 2 km NE from the village Tsebelda and representing the fragmented surface material spread over 0.25 ha. Evidences of *group B* consider to the grotto at the right bank of the river, which is located 5 to 10 m from the Kara-Su cave. Voronov 1998:259-260.

<sup>806</sup> To the NE of the village Chini, in 2 km from the late roman settlement of Pal, occurs accumulation of pottery, fragmented late roman bronze bracelet, gilded beads. The pottery consisted of household storage wares (*pithoi*) and various table wares, which included jugs and pots. Voronov 1969:63; Voronov 1998:262.

the river Kelasuri are cave Belasnezhka<sup>807</sup> and Chatskal,<sup>808</sup> known with surface visible artifact and give view of vicinity of the late roman village Lar.

### **V. 1. 2    *Small settlement zones***

The 3<sup>rd</sup> century inhabitant produce quite reliable database about the small scale settlement zones in modern village Mramba and Apiancha. That is indicative for settlement grew towards the places where the main villages are forming.

Mramba that remain separate burial areas in 3 km NE from the village Shapka collects high quality data on different type inhabitant, wealth and burial structure. Evidences show the population in different phases continually lived here during the 230-550 AD. But information driven from grave assemblages does not have sensitivity to their exact living area. They just reveal habitual and ideological link with Shapka settlement and give impression of most active communities with high military dynamic and authority leader (**Table 100-101**).<sup>809</sup> Some are comparable with the society of coastal areas in many ways, few have similar accuracy to rediscover the prehistoric and Hellenistic practices, and most show behavioral changes typical to late roman time.<sup>810</sup> They produce view of the richest and socially prominent individuals with fully adopted roman lifestyle that lived here in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, when commercial life activates.

Evidences of areal occupation in Apiancha valley shows how several dozen people continued to relocate on lower part of KAR, at the adjacent of Shapka to the SW,<sup>811</sup> whether in late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century. That is relatively small scale inhabitant extended by two diverse communities of low social level and included warriors and few females. Their practices, skills and attitudes suggest similarity with mid- 4<sup>th</sup> century Shapka inhabitant.

Few graves in Armenian Atara<sup>812</sup> indicate that one dozen people shifted to the right bank of the river Kodori are mobilized power source actively negotiated with different pats of

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<sup>807</sup> Near the right bank of the river Kelasuri and North of this cave, powering and storage pottery were discovered. Voronov 1969:61.

<sup>808</sup> An ancient Colchian kitchen and storage pottery of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC have been found on a hilltop structure in 1-1.5 km distance from the river Kelasuri. Voronov 1969:61.

<sup>809</sup> Trapsh 1971; Baghaturia-Kner 2012.

<sup>810</sup> Some of the weapon-related rituals are consider to the population of central Colchis. But some new drink related practice, can be attributed to military contingents. See graves of the village Mramba in: Trapsh 1971.

<sup>811</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba and etc., 1989:14. P.10-1.8. AO 1984. The author is guided by the new dating of Kazanski. The Voronovs' date of the earliest warrior of this rea is time-consuming, which dates back to 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>812</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba, Shenkao und etc. 1987:101.

Apsilia, when road has been activated. All of these evidences broaden the scale of development.

### **V. 1. 3 Villages and related settlement**

Six subdivided areas are recognisable over the southern and northern valleys of Apsilia, as unique reflection of the village infrastructure. Geographically they match parts of modern Shapka, Tsebelda, Akhista, Bat, Apushta and Lar, and therefore, they are similarly recorded. Revealing different phases of occupation, they show the most important concentration between the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and late 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, with poorly attested domestic structures. Archaeologically recognized clusters of living houses, cultural layers, cemeteries of inhabited communities, and other related facilities, their topographic and rural data are supportive to village nature. They give indication of socially and geographically integrated central and peripheral villages. But purely assessed published data and environmental condition makes it hard to define their boundaries and dimensions. Their natural boundaries that we use to shape proximate territories could be arguable their correspondence to the villages. We split them into three roadside and four mountaineer villages, distinctly developing in central and northern Apsilia.

#### *VILLAGES OF CENTRAL APSILIA*

Central Apsilian villages are divided in two main groups in most developed parts Shapka and Tsebelda. Well communicated roads and navigable rivers increase the perspectives of leading population. Both hold ability of controlling the most important cross-road over the main transport, corresponding material and food sources. Therefore, the massive changes and modification of settlement is seen here during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**SHAPKA.** First is the village in Shapka area, finds at the confluences of the river streams Machara to the NW and at the south of an early byzantine fort (**Table 58**). The settled parts, building structures, cemeteries, corresponding material, water pipes and streets are integral part of this village. It held comparably large area with living houses at the south, including densely settled parts of 200 x700 m scale and five hill cemeteries to the north (**Table 70**),

which occupying at least 56 ha.<sup>813</sup> The focal location on *Wheel-Road 2* on lower part of KAR would equally increase the opportunities and risk factors; while giving easy approach to the coastal area to the south and Caucasian mountains towards north. *Arterial Road 2* and related tracks well connected it with wider vicinities and burial parts, but river offers an additional opportunity to get around and sail by boat into the sea.

This is one of the continually occupied sites of Apsilia inhabited at least from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD,<sup>814</sup> but evidences for the beginning phase are scarce. Living houses are purely preserved and evidences are relatively small. Survival of rectangular structure is identifiable with years 330-350.<sup>815</sup> The main domestic part remains water pipes of the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century, but there is no trace for rural activities.<sup>816</sup> Cemeteries of village produce much obvious picture for regional movement, which seems to be quite a significant event. Earliest mixed settlement of village is more localized in early 3<sup>rd</sup> century Verin hill necropolis (**Table 70. 7, 9**). It processed again around the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century, when a small group of newcomers show more about the differences between the communities.<sup>817</sup> Further years 380-430/440 AD it forms into a large settlement with several smaller groups and becomes a densest village of area. Cemeteries clearly show how the population structured with simple citizens, many warriors and few individuals with rural abilities. Social development of areal inhabitant indicates the communication security as source of their main activity.

Settlement material gives general impression of complexity with Patskhiri, Apushta and different other places at the south. Verity of local storage pottery and liquid wares indicate exchange contacts between southern and northern settlement of Colchis. But it produces little evidence for commercial relations. The locational factor is evidential enough if we deal with grave assemblages. That is reflected in sort of material connecting coastal and central parts of Colchis. The nature of imported wealth is indicative for river and sea trade, much focused on southern roads. Shifting dynamic decisively highlights Shapka as strongest village benefited from location. Therefore, the capacity of distributed goods does not exclude a type of market village until the 450 AD, where the harbour goods are received for further destinations by

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<sup>813</sup> A 16 ha necropolis was revealed on Abramov hill. A little decreased number of graves has been confirmed in the Verin and Panikin hill cemeteries of 12 ha scale. Other relatively small cemeteries covered 10 ha in Mahajirov hill, 6 ha in Vinogradni hill, but the scale of the Gushin yard and Monetni hill cemeteries are not recorded. See: Voronov 1998.

<sup>814</sup> A cultural layer of about 1 m (0.2-1 m strength) is associated with the earliest 1<sup>st</sup> century phase. Colchian pots, stone balls (Strazhev V. 1925:161) and imported transit pottery with table wares were discovered. Voronov 1977.

<sup>815</sup> A huge local and imported pottery including local storage, cooking and other kitchen wares of the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century are comparable with grave assemblages of area. But, the material from the settled zones is quite poor and amphorae. This may also be explained by the poor quality of the settlement study.

<sup>816</sup> The lack of paleo-environmental investigations of provided bones and charcoal limits our interpretation to link any agricultural function of settlement.

<sup>817</sup> Four individuals buried in Abramov (graves 5 and 10) and Mahajirov (graves 5 and 3) hill cemeteries are diverse by burial practices. Voronov and others, 1990:24-29.Pic.15.

land transport. That is why the most skilful warriors from different regions might force in Shapka.

**TSEBELDA.** The second village in area of Tsebelda is formed at the river Kodori in 7 km NE of Shapka (**Table 72**). Cultural layers, building remains, water supply and corresponding material provide the content of their activity (**Table 61**). It is suggested second bigger volume village with 3 ha inhabited scale, bathhouse and some cemeteries at the S.<sup>818</sup> Reason for this might a very organized location at the *Wheel-Road 2*, bending all three areas of Shapka and getting closer northern areas Akhista and Bat (**Table 58. D-5**).

The village included the settlement of two cliffs (**Table 60. A**), with a possible wooden gate on its narrow part (for defense against enemies). Continuity of earliest classic and Hellenistic population and further developments is evidenced in the area of early medieval fort.<sup>819</sup> The roman time settlement starts to grow generally in NE part, where two separated population groups appear across the brick earth and gravel terraces.<sup>820</sup> They were naturally protected by rocky part (NW) and valley (E). Houses with bricks and tile roofing remain in ground level. The water pipes go through of some settled part proved that the spring at the N made the village life easier. But evidences for rural activities are limited. A structural feature inside the fortified area indicates a small scale pottery manufacture to the beginning of fortification (**Table 61. D**). In early 5<sup>th</sup> century they built a bathhouse here, identic to the roman baths. This point something interesting about this bath we don't really see, but could be assigned to a camp type structure perhaps existed before the early byzantine fort.

Evidences from cemetery areas also suggest small groups of diverse communities with three principal burial practices.<sup>821</sup> They show what we need to know about the local groups and migrated settlers of western ethnicity and better dressed wealthy warriors appearing in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century. It often had been in focus of military community as much comfortable place, but we don't know why the males were generally focused on Tsebelda at the time and later in 320/330 and 380 century AD. Simply mobile power of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century is similar to the initial settlement of Shapka area, but arrival of well supplied units in 4<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps with the

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<sup>818</sup> Voronov 1998:259-260.

<sup>819</sup> The cultural layers of classic and Hellenistic time are linked to the earliest history of the village. These cultural layers (0.5-0.8 m strength) revealed under the wall of early byzantine fort and consider earliest horizon consisted of local and imported pottery. Local wares of further horizon confirmed the continuity.

<sup>820</sup> Both cultural layers (0.5-2.0 m) produce identifiable materials of the mid and late roman activity. Other surface material of a domestic nature included local storage jars, kitchen and table wares pottery. The discoveries of imported plates also confirmed contacts with the surrounding population.

<sup>821</sup> Closer the fortified areas there are graves distinguished by a stone lining practice, as well as the practice of placing a coin in the mouth of deceased and the ritual of placing animal bones.

purpose of place safety, is more appropriable with regional and foreign groups.<sup>822</sup> Strange is the evidence of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century imperial type armoury from earliest horizons of Tsebelda fort, which may support the idea of camp existence. The military elite seen here from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century or in later phase, representing distinctive aristocracy that is looks a bit like the formation of administrative regulations.

The nature of consisting domestic pottery from settled parts goes back to the Colchian influence. A differently reflected technologic and decorative change in household material considers mid-imperial phase, but they are much limited types compare to grave assemblages. Foreign commodity that comes only from related cemeteries indicates intensive contacts with coastal part and some with north Caucasia. There are weapon types demonstrate contrast with other villages.

#### *VILLAGES OF NORTHERN APSILIA*

Peripheral mountaineer settlements were potentially smaller villages on the top of the seven hills Akhista, Bat, Apushta, Pal, and Lar at the uplands of the river Kodori. They seem to be more indigenous settlement, possibly split into similar small tribal units in upland valleys and start merging together from the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. Few parts offer the evidences for domestic rural activity. Distinctive and much innovative variants of pottery may suggestive for common workshop. From social aspect they are purer society and similarly supplied with fragile import.

**AKHISTA.** Third village that is associated with area of Akhista locates in Azanta valley near to the pass and 6 km NE from the village Tsebelda. Walls at the SE, different structures (SW, N) and cemetery in 450 m south are components of village. It has smallest volume with about 2.5 ha settled part and corresponding cemetery of 500x200 m scale. Village was naturally protected by cliffs (NE) and diches (SW). Accessible part is NW, where the narrow steep trail lead to the *Arterial Road 4* (**Table 63. A**) and provide easy reach to the nearest water source (N of early byzantine fort).

Village developed on two separated parts holding 500 m<sup>2</sup> over the rocky platform of mountain Akhista, where two valleys met.<sup>823</sup> Three lines of walls survived at 1.5 m height, 3-4 thick and stretching in 100 m indicate the division of Akhista settlement in quarters. They directed towards the early medieval fort. There are purely preserved two distinctive buildings, a rounded structure on SW cliff and square at the N part, those are closely linked with settled

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<sup>822</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-104. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>823</sup> Voronov 1975:18.



part, but condition enabling to provide proper knowledge.<sup>824</sup> Other evidences giving more information about the nature of settlement consider southern plateau<sup>825</sup> and south facing slope in 220 m apart from the early byzantine Akhista fort. Provided material including huge local pottery and scares imported objects, show the close contact with vicinity communities. They seem to be all locals and revealing similarities with Shapka.

**APUSHTA.** Fourth village is on the mountain Pshou, in area of Apushta and finds in a kilometer from village Bat in Azanta valley (**Table 65. B**). Biggest size revealed settled parts holding at least of 5 ha and related cemeteries of 50 ha scale. The *Arterial road 4* made it accessible at the south.

Two settled parts are identified. Bigger and earlier settlement of 4<sup>th</sup> century is occupying 0.8 ha on the southern crest of the mountain Pshow.<sup>826</sup> Living houses are organised over the terraces along the rocky ridge (SW) and on the top of mountain, but surface features are too pure for interpretation. Another smaller settlement occupying 500 m<sup>2</sup> grew outside the wall of defensive structure at the N and produce slightly different patterns.<sup>827</sup> Evidences of cemetery areas highlighted that earliest settler appears in late 3<sup>rd</sup> century and population increases in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Most unlikely they are rural families based on domestic activity, which is a part of distinction showing a native community with own traditions and choice. Their life is changing quite a bit from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, showing a gradual shift of political power and influence of western traditions. They serve as a small military unit coming in early 5<sup>th</sup> century and remain popular to the end of this century.

Material from settled parts compared with local wares, which is quite heterogeneous and suggests individual production. This is well illustrated in grave assemblages. They similarly take over a sort of ongoing changes, but drawn design is reinterpreted new practice, seen in wider spectrum of pouring pottery. Remarkable is the significance of handled jars and their specific forms carried also to the south for burial purposes. The smaller ones suitable for easy carry may replace amphorae, which is lacking in area. Interesting is the fact that pottery from central Apsilia or beyond was never particularly common during the roman period. But they produce interregional types developed in contact with the central Colchis and mountaineer

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<sup>824</sup> On the SW slope preserved a circle wall at 1 m height, 2 m wide and interior 4.4 m scale, which was built of rubble stone on a dry masonry. The second on N edge of the cliff has a more rectangular outline and an area of 13x13 m scale. Voronov 1975:20-21.

<sup>825</sup> This is a cultural accumulation (0.5-2.0 strength) extended of huge fragmented household pottery and containing kitchen pots, storage jars, pouring and transit wares. Imported LRW and fragmented amphorae are also recorded, but the origin of the amphorae has not been mentioned. Voronov 1982.

<sup>826</sup> It finds in a kilometre east of Lake Amtkel and revealed in cultural layers (0.2-1.0 m strength) that covered the terraces are of. Voronov 1998:260.

<sup>827</sup> Voronov 1975:18; Voronov 1982:46. Pic.20-21.

settlement. Distinction in food stuff and supply may explain a less dependent on 'center'. The lack of amphorae may explain distinctive habitual implication of different community, but it does not exclude sequences of pure regionalization of transit wares across the mountain Colchis. Very few southern import including LRCW and some precious jewelry clearly point an abundant contact with coastal areas in late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Even in later centuries there is similarly little to indicate the southern trade. In contrast, there is huge jewelry prior in northern trade, which closely bends with neighbors. Explanation may lie in side factor located on the road lead towards the northern passes.

**BAT.** Fifth village finds in area of Bat, locates at the summit 661 m above the sea level and far NE of the village Akhista.<sup>828</sup> It holds the settled part of 5 ha scale, including cultural layers, artificial terraces, retained walls, two stone structures and cemetery dispersed in 2 kilometre N, near to the Azanta Dolmen (at 300 m N).<sup>829</sup> Settlement was accessible at the west through the AR 4 (**Table 64. D**).

Inhabited area finds in two groups and each in a different part of the village. Southern group near to the medieval fort stretches in 300 m length and 50-100 width. It show poorly attested domestic structures over the dozen artificial terraces which remain southern slopes of cliff.<sup>830</sup> They are made from stone, remain in 50-100 m length, 8-10 m width and stepped down towards the small stream Swiri.<sup>831</sup> Retained walls of rubble stone preserved in 0.5-1 m are indication of security enhancement. The function of rectangular structure at the west, built in 200 m from the portal tower, has not been identified.<sup>832</sup> The swampy interior space of trench,<sup>833</sup> crossing the plateau near to the ancient road in 300 m SW, is indication either of spring or artificial reservoir. Other traces of peripheral settler that appears in little content of stray finds is coming from fundament of nearest church in 30 km N.<sup>834</sup>

Evidence from settled part and corresponding cemetery provides information about shortly formed smallest community with approximate 10 individuals lived here during the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and early-4<sup>th</sup> century. They were conceptually distinctive community while using cremation and inhumation burial practice, but without any particular specifics (except the usage of handled storage ware).<sup>835</sup> Provided wealth illustrates a simple nature of their daily life, with domestic

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<sup>828</sup> Voronov 1975:18.

<sup>829</sup> Voronov 1977:29; Voronov 1975:40.

<sup>830</sup> Remains of fragmented fundaments and coating clay plaster are preserved. Voronov 1998:259-260.

<sup>831</sup> Voronov 1982:39.

<sup>832</sup> It is preserved 1-1.5 m length, 1.5 m thick, with 2x2 m internal scale. Voronov 1975:22

<sup>833</sup> Remained about 1.5 m length and 4 m width; stretches in 1.84 m from north to southern of mountain.

<sup>834</sup> Voronov 1982:44.

<sup>835</sup> Handled jar was found in the grave of only one man (grave 4). Voronov 1982:42, P.17

rural activities that seems to be increasingly important. Revealed grain grinders, iron hoe,<sup>836</sup> pick<sup>837</sup> and spindle whorls<sup>838</sup> may characterize even functional groups.

Several characteristics may describe the household material from settled parts that richly apply in corresponding cemetery.<sup>839</sup> They show similar reflection of changes, but slightly differently potted wares and different kind of decorative resolution. Some local pouring wares give impression of Mramba settlement. Other connection with southern settlement at a very early stage is revealed in types of jewellery and fasteners. Imported silver earrings and precious stone beads also proves trading link with coastal areas. Consisted amphorae, LRW and glass vessels are occasional items proves trading link with coastal areas. There is no evidence for broad contacts with northern neighbouring settlement.

**LAR.** Sixth village finds in area of Lar between the Mjortvi canyon (dead canyon) and western tributary of the river stream Jimele (**Table 67**). Cultural layers, terraces, structural remains and cemetery are integral part of this village.<sup>840</sup> That holds settled part of 2 ha scale and in 1 ha dispersed cemetery. Village is accessible at the S via AR 4 that ran to the vicinity of the river Kelasuri.

Evidences confirm three groups of a small community inhabited in several parts at the south of early byzantine fort. Earliest settlers of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century are identified over the rocky slopes.<sup>841</sup> Further they developed between modern highway and river stream Jimele in 0.5 km west in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>842</sup> Latest inhabited part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century on the way towards the river Kelasuri, show their increase to the south. Burial areas that classify later inhabitant particularly by the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, suggest above 20 inhabitant of different period. Inhumation practice drew them more conservative community with certain attitudes. They left little experiences in rural and perhaps industrial activities, recognizable in sterile clay of daily pottery, metal slags and animal bones, spindles and stone grain grinders (layer I), which finds within the settlement material and grave assemblages.<sup>843</sup> That provides evidence for the male activation in domestic work.<sup>844</sup> Arrival of functional militarized in late 4<sup>th</sup> and mid-5<sup>th</sup> century might impact of the most challenging location at the border side with Abasgia.

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<sup>836</sup> Some revealed in female grave 3 and also, by the stray finds of cemetery area. Voronov 1982:42. Pic.17.5; Voronov 1982:44, Pic.18.45

<sup>837</sup> Found in the grave 4. Voronov 1982:42. Pic.17.13

<sup>838</sup> They appear in graves 1 and 2. Voronov 1982:42. Pic.17.8; 18.

<sup>839</sup> Consider cultural accumulation (0.2-1.5 m strength) consisting of local liquid containers, storage jars (*pithoi*), kitchen (pots, casseroles) and pouring ware (jags).

<sup>840</sup> Voronov 1982:18; Voronov 1998:261.

<sup>841</sup> The earliest and strongest cultural layer (0.5-2.0 m strength) was discovered under the wall of defensive building.

<sup>842</sup> Voronov 1975:18.

<sup>843</sup> Voronov 1982:259-260.

<sup>844</sup> Lar cemetery grave 5. Voronov 1982:16.

A major aspect of household material is more complex and stereotype nature of population life, with little indication of changes.<sup>845</sup> The personal dynamics in choice of household wares and clothing fasteners is evidence of Colchian mountaineer community. Roman influence is seen in battle tactic and equipment. Central Apsilian weapons and shapes also coming into the view. Import dynamic indicates weakly developed commercial activities linked with coastal trade. Graves provide little imported jewellery and fasteners from late 4<sup>th</sup> century. An opportunity of northern road is purely demonstrated in single find of north Caucasian juglet and four bracelets. Such decline gives impression of settlement resistant to change.

**PAL.** Seventh village finds in Pal sector, near to the Jampal stream.<sup>846</sup> Cultural layers, defensive wall and graves are integral part. Village holds an inhabited 1.5 ha scale and corresponding cemeteries dispersed to the south (**Table 66**). Village was approached at the south through the main road of Apsilia.

Inhabited area produces two group of hilltop settlement developed at the southern exterior wall and to the west. They are separated from the fortified area by artificial ditch at the north and framed by wall to the west.<sup>847</sup> Western part is intensively washed and remains little material. Other features explored over the top of the hill gives some indication for the small scale industrial facility, possibly during the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>848</sup> Corresponding material is purely published, but recorded local wealth is compared with object finds everywhere within the northern settlement.<sup>849</sup> Weakly depicted rural implement may point the type of society similar to neighboring communities of upland Apsilia.<sup>850</sup> Recorded little import including amphorae and plate, does not illustrated.

#### **V. 1. 4 Rural and agrarian capabilities of Apsilian settlement**

Settlement of Apsilia does leave visual impact of rural landscape and we don't know if this region was ever meaningful for such purposes. If consider small amount of implements occurring in a few graves and some 4<sup>th</sup> century sites at the north, they produce evidences for

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<sup>845</sup> Changes are viewed in the category and typology of household pottery. It included distinctive kitchen pottery represented by deep dishes, casseroles and various storage wares, much common in Colchian sites. Jugs are rarely found in the settled parts, therefore the evolution of pouring pottery is more visible on grave assemblages.

<sup>846</sup> Voronov 1975:23-24; Voronov 1998:259-260.

<sup>847</sup> This ditch is a rock-lined trench of 0.5 m depth and 0.5 widths addressing towards the cliff. There is also a 100 m wall among the precipitous slope, which is built of dry masonry.

<sup>848</sup> The inhabited communities left their traces in cultural layers (0.5-1.0 m strength). Some pottery slags and metal implement were discovered, but corresponding infrastructure has not yet been revealed.

<sup>849</sup> From local pottery are recorded storage *pithois*, kitchen pots, casseroles, dishes and table ware including jugs and cups.

<sup>850</sup> It consist the grain grinders and animal bones. Voronov 1998:262.

domestic group in Lar, Pal and Bat.<sup>851</sup> Only the Patskhiri in the south reveals implements for plow. They show limited scale of activities, which may include the grain production becoming more pronounced in early 4<sup>th</sup>-century. But we miss direct evidences for arable system to be linked with rural practices.

Metal slags from Lar,<sup>852</sup> Patskhiri valley, Shapka and vicinity of the village Oktomberi/Olginskoe<sup>853</sup> show similar reflection and potential for industrial activities. Certain local weapons and dress fasteners are supportive source for developed local industry, but metalworking industrial areas and quarries of raw material is virtually missing. Pottery and iron-working practices confirm oven of Tsebelda fort in central Apsilia. It is late roman in date and may represent local pots during the 350-450 AD.<sup>854</sup> Personal dynamics seen in pottery manufacture, several handmade wares favorably used in Mrabma are evidences for domestic manufacture, which made evidential some technologically skilled or unqualified potters.

Animal bones from upland villages may indicative for the existence of livestock, but there is no paleo-environmental investigation to determine their categories. This could be an impact of areal potential necessary for cattle grazing. Mountaineer landscape could support woodworking or other type activities for building material, but evidences are hidden.

They show distinctive changes in social history of areal population and organization of craft based gender task,<sup>855</sup> developing different type settlement. But lack of clear structure and corresponding information gives impression of trade based community.

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<sup>851</sup> Voronov 1982:40, 46, 62; Voronov 1998:260.

<sup>852</sup> Voronov 1982.

<sup>853</sup> Voronov 1975. The pottery and iron slags come from the stay finds of the vicinity of Olginkoe/Oktomberi are stocked in the archives of Tbilisi state museum.

<sup>854</sup> The excavator interpreted from the perspectives of the iron smelting industry. Voronov 1989.

<sup>855</sup> The male were probably responsible for the metalworking, stone-working and livestock activities. The coffin found in the Mramba cemetery may also indicate the result of Woodworking activities. The appropriate working tools were fund in the graves. The female were probably most in need of pottery manufacture and other domestic task.

## V. 2 EARLY BYZANTINE SETTLEMENT

The site factor becomes decisional for the later phase of Apsilian villages. Only few continued existence through the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Settlement decreases in upland parts probably from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. When they involved in defensive system and trade was shortly disrupted in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the supply of agricultural products no longer reaches upland area. It is uncertain, if this process may additionally concern with pore supply or certain conflict in upland parts.<sup>856</sup> The scarce appearance of local amphora and imported commodity products is important evidence for it. Final abandonment touches to the village Bat in the first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. But what had been responsible for their replace is textually unsupported. Some individuals are still lived in villages Lar<sup>857</sup> and Apushta at the borderline area. Evidences from corresponding cemetery plausibly suggest Apushta as last depopulated village, which has been abandoned in the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. As opportunity this part could be principal for northern raiders, therefore settlements flee to the south may associate with Persian conquest. Textually, Pusta is a place for refuges and prisoners over several years in the 7<sup>th</sup> century as mentioned by Jerusalem monk Theodosius of Gangra.<sup>858</sup> Archaeological information additionally supportive to latest phase is evidences of small for animal encloses (pastures ?), stand somewhat separate from ancient village and which may consider seasonal accommodation for animal grazing purposes.

Regarding to southern parts, all supplementary sources were increasingly centered in the middle Apsilia in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which may cause gradual move of settlement towards the south. But traces of re-occupations in southern villages are not structurally observed. Only cemeteries made apparent concentration of settlement in Shapka during late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. Synchronic settlement of Tsebelda is much weakly presented. Some early 6<sup>th</sup> century high authority individuals are seen here. This makes arguable if both sites may connect with royal administrative parts of different historical time.

People made themselves more remarkable through clothing nuances. By attaching cosmetic sets and some meaningful brooches females from Shapka produce much western character. Some of them reflecting considerable conceptual change see orthodox community existing in late 5<sup>th</sup> century. This may suitable for Christian environment typically including the church, spreading better theological knowledge. Little specifics shifted in wealth of

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<sup>856</sup> The process of settlement occupation and the reasons of abandonment are issues of further investigations.

<sup>857</sup> Prominent warriors grave 1 dated to 450-500 AD. Voronov 1982:31. Pic.13.1-16.

<sup>858</sup> He was informed by Anastasius Apocrisarius evicted in Lazica (662), to Pushta fort in the territory of Apsilia.

Tsebeldians corresponds clothing items of northern channel. But they did not reveal any significant specific in burial practice. Among them finds an individual declining pottery assemblages. However, inhabitant of Shapka is seen most developed militarily. Highly skilled missile shooters continued to display here during late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, seem to be battle decisional. Some warriors produce international context and gives feeling that Tsebeldian military authority lost control over the Shapka. Slightly distinctive shows small group of Tsebelda. Both area gives particular context of violence and give understanding to finally abandoned villages. Fact is that, people abandoned Shapka last in late-6<sup>th</sup> century. There are several other supportive evidences for warfare from defensive structures. However, all this factors should be adequately considered in obtaining reflected potential of evidences.

## VI. BURIAL GROUND OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> TO 7<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

### VI. 1 CEMETERIES AND GRAVES OF ROMAN TIME (170/200-450 AD)

Hills are common burial ground for Apsilian population. Four necropolises and eighteen single cemeteries are provided over fourteen hills. Majority is concentrated near to the settled parts and was easily accessible by roads or inlay tracks. In central Apsilia distinguishes three burial areas of Shapka, villages Mramba and Tsebelda (**Tables 68-71**). Most southern burial ground consider with Apiancha cemetery (**Table 72. B**). Further five cemeteries occupied upland areas of Akhista, Apushta, Bat, Pal and Lar (**Tables 63-68**).

A complex outcome of burial landscape represented in archaeological records proves at least one hundred seventy years lacuna since earliest graves appears in Apsilia. Earliest evidences associates to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century graves that purely produce villages Tsebelda and Mramba (Abgidzrakhu cemetery).<sup>859</sup> The second phase did not seem to be emerged until the 250/270 AD, which embodies results of extensively occupied hills Abgidzrakhu (in village Mramba), Verin (in Shapka region) and Apiancha at the river Machara basing.<sup>860</sup> That indicates extensively settled areas in central Apsilia. While at this time northern parts are largely ignored. Only two more synchronic graves appear in upland Apsilian Bat at the river Kodori and Lar near to the river Kelasuri.

From the last quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century burial spaces are intensified at the river Machara basing and further area of village Mramba; where the slow appearance of cemeteries are observed.<sup>861</sup>

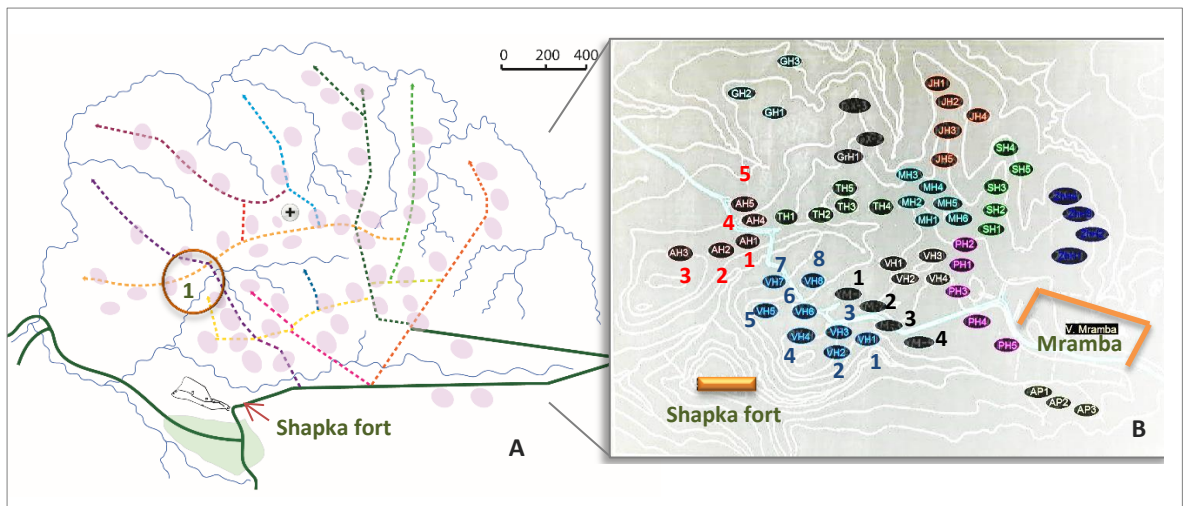
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<sup>859</sup> Agidzrakhu grave 3. Trapsh 1971.

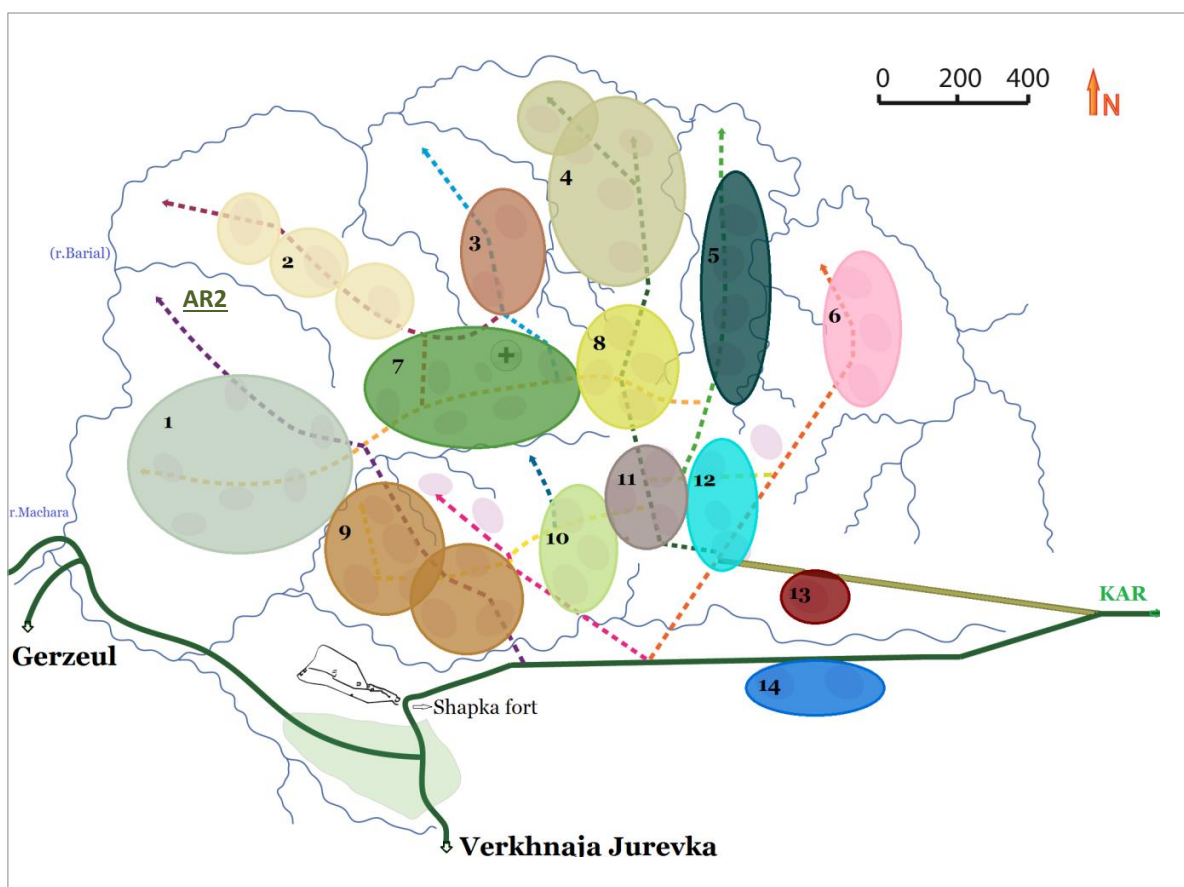
<sup>860</sup> That cemetery finds in 300 m south of of Panikin hill burial. Apiancha burial ground consisting of thee small cemeteries explores in 1.5 ha. The first of them located near a river tributary, consisted of 10 destructed graves, where the only one cremation grave is survived. The second further east in 100 m consisted of 10 damaged graves. On the third cemetery, 80-100 m to the east, revealed 20 destructed graves of 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries. See in: Gunba 1978:45-46; 30-33, 46-48, 26-45. Tabl.XXXVII.1-7.). Those are slightly later graves of the II stage (320/330-330/370).

<sup>861</sup> As the number of graves began to increase, for about 350 AD, the Abgidzrakhu and Akhatsarakhu hills became cemeteries. But this hill formed into the necropolis around the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the newly occupied parts Alrakhu and Aukhuamakhu also appeared and all together produce some more graves. The total occupied scale of this burial ground is 11 000 m<sup>2</sup>. Out of this, Abgidzrakhu cemetery which contained the 54 graves of human and some horses covered an area of 620 m<sup>2</sup> scale. This cemetery consisted of 46 inhumane and 8 cremated individual graves. 12 graves of Akhatsarakhu cemetery was spread over a relatively small area of 180 m<sup>2</sup>. Seven of them are inhumane and five cremated individual. The next Alrakhu cemetery explored in 130 m<sup>2</sup> and evidenced 12 graves. This consisted of 10 inhumane and 2 cremated individuals. The last Aukhuamakhu cemetery is explored in much reduced scale of 120 m<sup>2</sup>. Of the 8 graves, 7 were inhumane and 5 were cremated individuals. Trapsh 1971.





**Fig. 41. The layout of graves in corresponding hill cemeteries of Shapka.** A-1 Abramov hill. B-in red: 1-5 Abramov cemeteries. In blue: 1-8 Verin hill cemetery. Modified map. *Source: Voronov 1975.*



**Fig. 42. Distribution map of cemeteries over the burial hills in Shapka.** 1-Abramov. 2-Gushin. 3-Grushin. 4-Justnianov. 5-Stekljanni. 6-Zhenski. 7-Tserkovni. 8-Monetni. 9-Verin. 10-Mahajirov. 11-Vinogradni. 12-Panikin. 13-Mramba 14-Apiancha. Modified map. *Source: Voronov 1975.*

First occupation considers the Abramov and Mahajirov hills of Shapka (Fig. 41). But from early 4<sup>th</sup> century people try to find new burial areas in Apiancha, Grushin yard,

Akhacharkhu<sup>862</sup> and Tserkovni hills (Shapka region), increasing over next 50 years. Thus, high rise of burial ground in Shapka produces a densest burial part in 5<sup>th</sup> century central Apsilia (**Fig. 42**). Their chronologic distribution gives understanding to the beginning from a northern part of Abramov hill, which dispersed towards the south. Synchronic earliest cemeteries started to grow over the vicinity hills of Verin and Mahajirov at 0.5 km distance from Patskhiri valley. Emergence of new burial places becomes apparent the rest two Tserkovni and Justinianov hills in the middle part. Both are types of later cemetery produce the last traces of Shapka population. All in all central Apsilian hill cemeteries considers Abramov,<sup>863</sup> Verin,<sup>864</sup> Mahajirov,<sup>865</sup> Vinogradni,<sup>866</sup> Monetni,<sup>867</sup> Tserkovni, Justinianov, Panikin hills<sup>868</sup> and Gushin yard<sup>869</sup> (**Fig. 42**). From topography they recorded in 100-250 meters. Each cemetery remains destructed graves caused by different reasons.

<sup>862</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery that occupies 316 m<sup>2</sup> is located south-west of the Verin hill (in 100-150 m) and 5 km from Tsebelda. The graves are spread on its NW, SE and SW slopes. Its south-west slope descends into the Patskhiri valley and the north-western slope is gradually decreasing towards the village Oktomberi (Olginskoe). The cemetery consists of 55 buried individuals, of which 39 were inhumane and 10 cremation graves. Trapsh 1975:16-130.

<sup>863</sup> Abramov hill necropolis, explored over 16 ha, is located near Verin hill and faces to the Barjal river. 90 damaged graves have been evidenced here. Its south-western cemetery contains 20 graves and part of the grave material is stocked in the San-Petersburg Museum of Russia. And, on the modern road leading to the south-western slope, was discovered Olginskoe (Oktomberi) cemetery. The complete graves preserved here date back to 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries and belong to the II and III stage burials. Voronov, Moiseenko 1964; Voronov 1969:30-33. Grzelishvili 1945:1-16.

<sup>864</sup> This cemetery is located near Verin hill, on the right bank of the Machara River and covers an area of 12 ha. The first cemetery, consisting of 10 graves, appeared on its south-eastern part during the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries. The second cemetery, which appears 100 meters to the west (a central part of the hill) is contained 15 synchronous graves. Further 100 m north, where the road turns sharply, explored the third cemetery, which included 50 graves (Kuftin 1949:93-95). The fourth cemetery, which is 100-150 meters to the south-west and represents the northern slope of Akhacharkhu cemetery, consisted of 60 graves dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries (Voronov 1969:60; Voronov 1981:11). Fifth cemetery occurs 150 m west and contained 50 individuals. 100 m further occurs the sixth roadside cemetery, which contained 50 more graves (Voronov, Bgaghba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:28-29; Shamba 1966; Voronov, Jushin 1971). The last two cemeteries were revealed downwards in 100 m (consisted of 10 graves) and 150 to the east (produced 40 graves). The most suffered parts are SE, W and N. Overall 60 destructed graves were identified, several dozen are lost. Well-preserved graves made obvious the existence of the following three groups: II stage (320/330-330/370), III stage (380/400-440/450) and early- IV stage (450-500 AD). They here have confirmed that this cemetery has been used for at least 200 years.

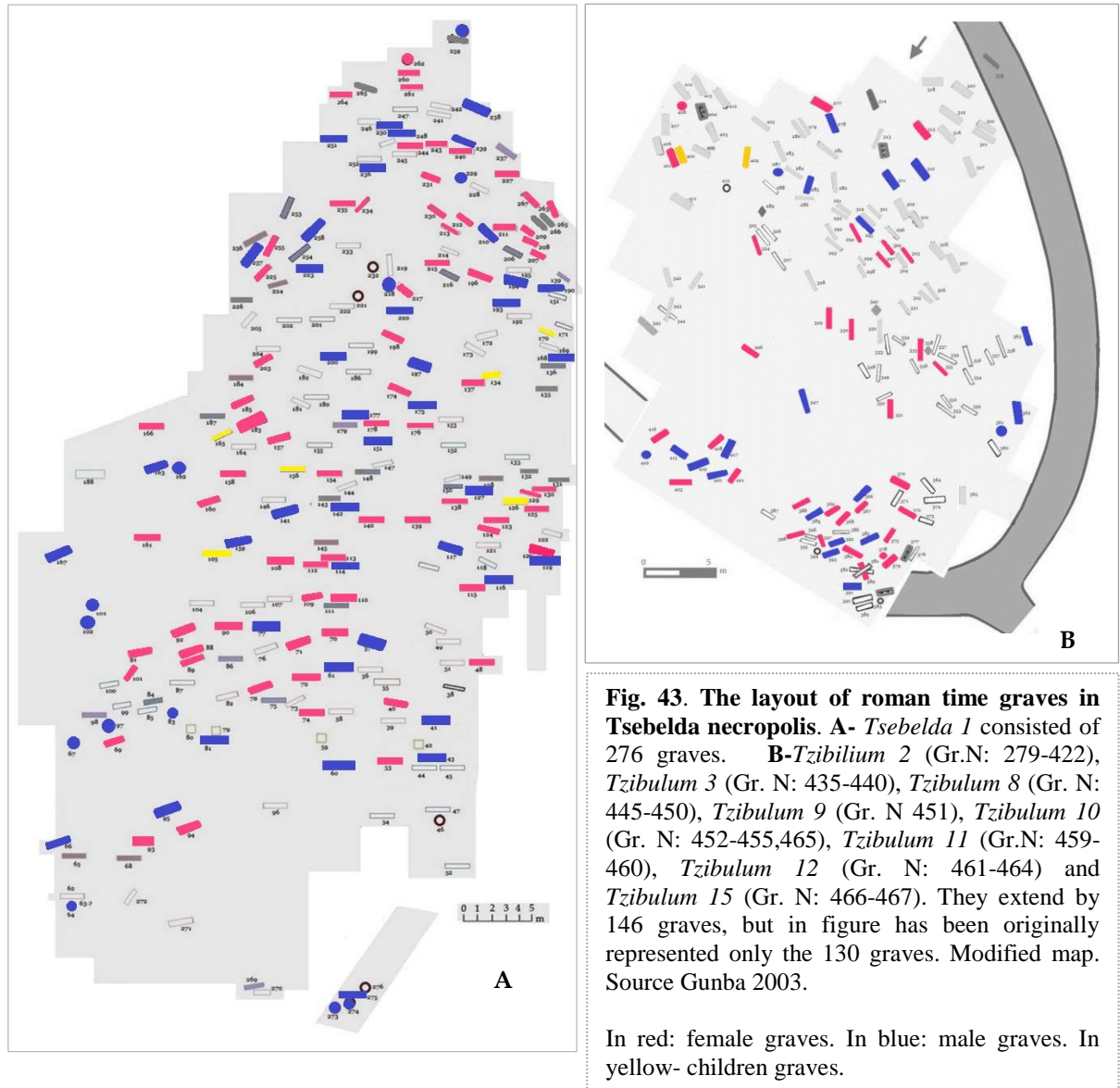
<sup>865</sup> This necropolis, which explored over 10 ha and consisted of four burials, was connected by a narrow canal to the Verin hill. The first cemetery in its NE part consisted of 10 graves of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries (they appeared during the construction of a living house in 1885). The second cemetery on west slope, explored on both sides of the road, extended of 30. In 50 m, the third cemetery on the south-east slope revealed further 50 graves. At the last cemetery in 30 meters away, revealed more 80 graves. Chronology they represent the II stage (320/330-330/370) and III stage (380/400-440/450) graves. See: Voronov, Bgaghba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26-28; Voronov 1977:1-43; Voronov, Jushin 1973:1-16. SA, N1.

<sup>866</sup> This necropolis is 200 m away from Mahajirov, spread over 60 ha and produces 4 cemeteries. Its W slope revealed 10 graves (Voronov, Bgaghba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:29). The second cemetery on the SW slope contained 50 buried individuals of 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century date. The third cemetery spread 100 m to the E consisted of 20 graves. The final fourth cemetery contained 40 graves.

<sup>867</sup> It was a cemetery 100 m east, explored on N slope of the hill and where 40 destructed graves were discovered. Grave material is accommodated in Moscow museum and belongs to the Chetwerukhin collection (Voronov 1998:270). A single male grave discovered here later, provides such rich possessions as a golden plate and a saddle. Voronov 1981:110-111.

<sup>868</sup> This is the last necropolis of Shapka on the left bank of the river little Machara (near the village Mramba), spread over 12 ha scale and provides five cemeteries. The first cemetery on W slope reveals 24 graves (Voronov, Jushin 1973; Voronov, Bgaghba 1987:20-21). The second cemetery on the S slope produces above 50 graves. The third cemetery on the SW slope also produces above 50 roadside graves. The grave material also joined the Chetwerikhins' collection. Further 30 graves were also discovered on the fourth cemetery of SE slope, located in 80 m. Here, excavations of Trapsh in 1965 revealed Alarkhu cemetery (Trapsh 1971:254). The fifth cemetery discovered downward in 250 m, which evidence above 20 graves.

<sup>869</sup> This was a small burial ground with significant II stage graves.

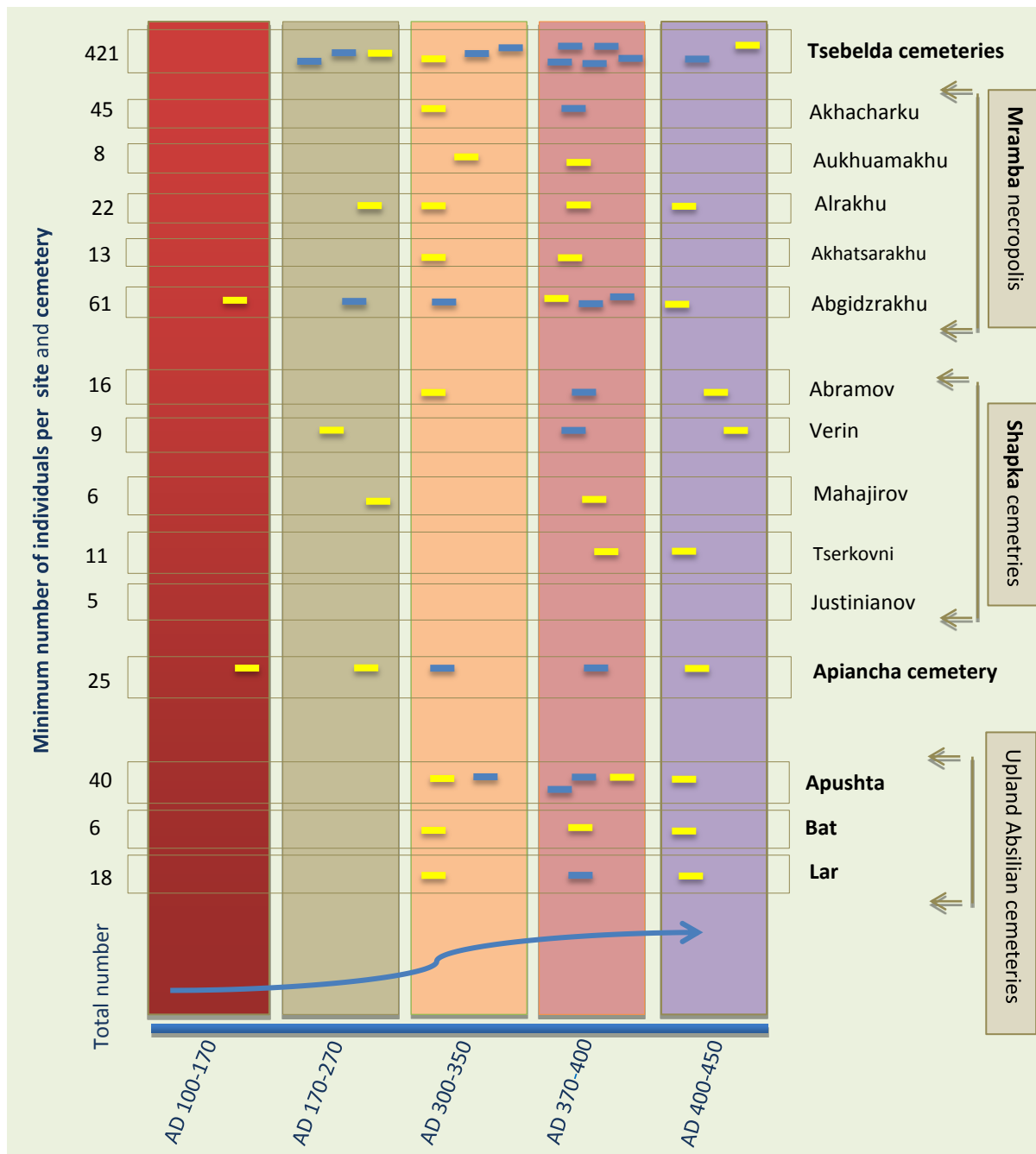


The process of population increase influenced potentially smaller cemeteries of NE vicinity of Shapka. Two cemeteries in Tsebelda at the river Kodori and area of village Mramba show similar impact.<sup>870</sup> Cemetery dispersed in 120 m<sup>2</sup> produces all three stages and evidenced continuity during the 170-450 AD (**Fig. 43. A; Table 73-76**).<sup>871</sup> Cemetery II inside of fortified area occupies 265 m<sup>2</sup> and produces III and IV stage graves (**Fig. 43. B; Table 76**).<sup>872</sup>

<sup>870</sup> Later graves are associated with central Apsilian Tsebelda and Mramba cemeteries. *Cemetery I*-which dispersed over 120 m<sup>2</sup>, produce above 17 graves (Voronov, Bgzhba 1982:54-60). All three stages are evidenced here, which confirmed the continuous use of the cemetery during the 170-450 (Voronov, Shenkao 1982). *Cemetery II* occupies 265 m<sup>2</sup> inside of fortified area, consisted of 29 burials of the III and IV stage. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:9-14.

<sup>871</sup> Above 17 graves have been identified. Voronov, Bgzhba 1982:54-60.

<sup>872</sup> It consisted of 29 burials. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:9-14.



**Fig. 44.** Settlement dynamic and approximate statistical data of individuals from burial areas, according to chronologically well identifiable graves. ■ - About 5 graves. ■ - About 10 graves.

Observable is the slow occupation of upland areas of the river Kodori. Only from mid-4<sup>th</sup> century simultaneously appear five burial upland hills Akhista, Bat and Apushta areas with most observable tendency of small scale cemeteries.<sup>873</sup> In which distinguishes Apushta by grouping of two small liner cemeteries dispersing in narrow line of the AR4. Nearest eastern cemetery of Bat at the river Kodori and northern Lar at the river Kelasuri just dispersed near

<sup>873</sup> In upland Apsilia only Apushta produce grouping of two small cemeteries found along the AR4. The nearest cemetery to the east was in the Bat area.

to the rivers and the same arterial road. One more small size cemetery in upland parts occurs to the NE in Pal area at right bank of the river Kodori to the end of this century.

However, it is a time when small cemeteries noticeably rose in entire Apsilia. Those forming directly on roadside part define Apiancha and Apushta cemeteries of the *Kay Apsilian Road*. Other two Lar and Bat appears on arterial road AR4. From the rest central Apsilian cemeteries Abramov, Verin and Tserkovni lie directly on AR2 and the Panikin hill on the trails of AR2 (**Fig. 42. 12**). Chronologically they decreased in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century and except two occasions they finally abandoned in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. If we compare with broad picture, cemeteries are distinct in scale, grave types and social stratigraphy of buried society. Relating to the grave form, depositional content and offering types they are quite unlike chronologically. That illustrate constant changes and settlement dynamic (**Fig. 44**).

### **VI. 1. 1 Individual graves of humans**

Inhumation and cremation graves synchronically experienced the early population of Apsilia from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. But simultaneous existence of both within inhumation cemeteries is excepted reality of area. This tolerance touched almost all burial areas except the Lar. Inhabitant of Lar refuses cremation graves in all historical period. But statistical distinction is always observable. Cremation was predominated in earliest cemeteries of Tsebelda, Abgidzrakhu and Abramov hill until late 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Inhumation becomes dominant from the beginning. That recognized above stated three cemeteries. There is the only inhumation cemetery over the burial hill Lar. Proportionally they give notion that: between the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century 47 % inhumation and 53 % cremation. That slightly changes to the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> century and cremation decrease from the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. But this statistic is not confident because of hundreds of destructed graves without noting their character.

#### **VI. 1. 1. 1 INHUMATION GRAVES**

Inhumation was the key form of body disposal for the most communities of areal population since human activity exists in area and it was predominant right from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century. There is no anthropological study of inhumane population of area. Therefore, genders are determined according to offering types and their functional character. Therefore, information

about aging is not obtained. Only in two cases believed undertaker that graves could associate with adult. Other broad details of decease is analysed below in related chapter.

#### *VI. 1. 1. 1. 1 Inhumation grave features*

Majority of inhabitant Apsilia had own simple way to memorialise the decease without grave marker and any type of furniture. Only few occasions in Tsebelda cemetery were elaborated with stone frames.<sup>874</sup> But all they draw attention to the grave form, size and displays in internal structure. They are buried in simple earth graves, but certain distinction of details between the male and female graves is apparent.

The grave cut considers males apply the rectangular shape. But number of weapon graves provides similar form with rounded corners.<sup>875</sup> Larger cut with rounded corners seems to be alternative for certain weapon graves. Sizes are varies. Common to majority graves is recorded 1.8-0.8m. Unusual is few warrior graves with length 2.3-2.5 m and width 0.85-1.1 m.<sup>876</sup> It may base on depositional consistence; only noticeable is the fact that some with unusual form and size contains either lid-cover pithois or amphora with glass vessels attributable to changes in burial practices. But it is still difficult to interpret with confidence, if proportional increase is indicative for differences in practices, because from dimensional aspect such depositional complex could be appropriable. For this context confusing is that warrior grave with pore depositional consistence occurring increased grave size.<sup>877</sup> Such change is observable from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century but applies few graves. Such distinction in grave forms and sizes observed within Abgidzrakhu and Akhatsarakhu cemeteries. But in Tsebelda defines occasional asymmetric cut, which might reason by the term of display the storage jars at the pelvis.

The female grave cut is somewhat similar to a traditional rectangular form. But the main differences give the size. They evident either 1.8 x 0.7 m or 1.9 x 0.8 m cut. Except occasional types from Tsebelda they did not show any changes either in shape or size. Few appearing with oval form and outer stone lines seem linked to different community. They are evidenced in two different period first in late 4<sup>th</sup> and after in early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>874</sup> It reveals in three late 4<sup>th</sup> century graves 6,7,8. See in: Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:57.Pic.96.97. Of the later female burials distinguishes one in grave 14 and two early-6<sup>th</sup> century graves 11, 13. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.6;7.

<sup>875</sup> Revealed in Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 9, 14, 47. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>876</sup> Rectangular graves with rounded corner vary in size (Abgidzrakhu graves 41, 43, 57 and Akhatsarakhu grave 6). Most unusual of these was the Akhatsarakhu grave 54, was cut to a 3 m length. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>877</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 14. Trapsh 1971:37. Tabl.VIII.

#### *VI. 1. 1. 1. 2 Position of decease*

The choice of body disposal is one of the significant elements for distinction of funerary practice. It should be noted that articulation of decease are purely recorded in most publications and only supported drawings made them recognizable. In addition, the bone preservation in many case are pore. Some are caused by destruction, but there are number of graves where the lack of body detailing does not comment. And today there is less approach to experience more data. We just analyses little more this information.

Variation in body disposal is observable in most Apsilian graves. That revealed in differing position of body parts torso, head, arm and leg. All they may relate with belief conception, but some cases show their connection with grave orientation. Their display makes recognizable a contrast between earlier and later models.

### ***BODY POSITION***

Majority of Apsilian inhumane graves lead to general norm of decease displays. It is indicated in placing of dead body on the beck in extended position, which applies majority of inhumane individuals. But there are little evidences, of changes in lower body display. Observed positions are:

***Position 1.*** *Body is placed on the back in extended position.*

- ✓ *Variant 1.* With extended foot. SW oriented graves (cemetery Tsebelda 12),
- ✓ *Variant 2.* With crossed foot (in the shaft area).
- ✓ *Variant 3.* With extended left leg and the right foot is bent either on knee or also at the hip.
- ✓ *Variant 4.* With extended right leg and the left foot is bent either on knee or also at the hip. NW oriented horsemen from Tsebelda grave 3.

***Position 2.*** *Body is placed on the back and slightly turned to the right hip.*

***Position 3.*** *Body is placed on the left hip with bent arms and feet.*

- ✓ *Variant 1.* With similarly bent both arms. Tserkovni hill
- ✓ *Variant 2.* With bent both arms but left is upwarded.

The most natural body display was expressed in *Position 1* that shows overall predominance over the Apsilian sites in all historical period (**Table 79a. 2**).<sup>878</sup> And it was the norm on most cemeteries except Tsebelda, Akhatsrakhu and Lar containing unusual form of body display. It was similarly used by both gender and provided in E, S, N, SW, NW, W and WNW oriented graves with various form. But it shows differences in positioning of arm and feet, which give

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<sup>878</sup> Mostly this was confirmed at Mramba cemetery, where the 81 % of decease provides extended body.

significantly differing mean to the body display. That involves all sixteen arm position, three direction of head (*position 1, 2, 3*) and five position of foot (*position 1, 2, 3, 4, 5*). But their combination provides few differences presented in three variants, which characterizing the changes over a time; which also shows a distinction in choice of male and female gender.

Occasional use views the *Variant 2*. A crossed foot in the shin area applies only two warrior graves of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. They were NW and WNW oriented graves with rectangular form rounded at the corners. Both appear with bent one arm, but differing in *positions 14* and *15*.<sup>879</sup> One from grave 9 even provides specifics in burial practice reflected in weapon Devine ritual. Supplied weapons, imported shields and high military skills suggest that they were members of foreign allies. Both graves may belong either to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century or first quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Equally occasional is the *Variant 3* which provides distinction in positioning of right foot (*position 3*) that is bent on knee. Only two males are articulated with this variant and appear in NW oriented graves of two different cemeteries Tsebelda and Abgidzrakhu. It characterizes the males and faced to the right which seems to be a norm. But they differ in arm placing representing the *positions 4, 12* and belong two different historical periods to the last phase of roman and beginning of the early medieval time.<sup>880</sup>

Exclusive is the *position 2* that also applies on male gender in NW oriented grave of Tsebelda cemetery. Peculiarity of this form revealed in lower body which slightly turned to the right hip. It was similarly faced to the right (*head direction 2*) and still articulated in *arm position 1*. This grave appears to the 400-450 AD.<sup>881</sup>

**Position 3** seems to be less favored. It concerned with body, placed on the left hip with *arm position 16*. But a difference given in arm display provides two variants. It even shows significant difference in choice of this position between the male and female genders.

**Variant 1** show legs slightly bent at hips and on knee (**Table 99. 1**). That is a later variant appearing in early medieval Shapka area probably between 450 and 500 AD.<sup>882</sup>

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<sup>879</sup> The male with the arm position 14 is found in the WNW oriented Abgidzrakhu grave 54 (W oriented graves with deviation to the north). 1971:81. Tabl. XXXI.pic.8. Another warrior with the arm position 15 was evidenced in NW oriented Abgidzrakhu grave 9. Trapsh 1971:31. Pic.3.1. Tabl. V.Pic.5 )

<sup>880</sup> The decease of earliest warrior lying on his pelvis (*position 4*) and with his both arms bent at the elbow have been confirmed in Abgidzrakhu grave 43, dating to about 380-410 AD. This grave was rectangular and slightly deviated to the north. Trapsh 1971:29.Tabl.XXI; pic.8.1. A later revelation is observed in the couples' grave 13a of Tsebelda cemetery, where the man placed on pelvis and distinguishes by the arm position 12. This grave is specified by an oval cut and stone lining practice. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:10. Pic.5.3.

<sup>881</sup> It evidenced in grave 6 with a rather unusual oval cut, which can only be seen in the Tsebelda cemetery from the mid-roman phase. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov. 1989:10. Pic.5.3.

<sup>882</sup> This warrior was buried with his horse in the NW oriented Tserkovni hill grave 5. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.5.1.



*Variant 2* characterizes only females and considers with up warded articulated left arm that showing a standard positioning.<sup>883</sup> The right arm is placed on pelvis. Some finding context together with another female suggests that it could appear to be lined with age of decease. Three female graves shares similar articulation within the NE and W oriented groups. They provide either square grave cut with rounded corners or oval shape. All of these graves belong to the late phase of roman time and evidences in Akhatsarakhu and Lar cemeteries. In fact, they characterizes with decreased offerings.

### **HEAD POSITION**

General Head direction considers with central facing, but there are little evidences for directional distinction.<sup>884</sup> It considers with three different facing:

- *Head direction 1*. Faced central
- *Head direction 2*. Faced to the right
- *Head direction 3*. Faced to the left

The most common is a *Head direction 1* concerning with central facing (**Table 79a. 2**). It equally applied on both gender and including all types of arm position. And similarly finds within all kind of grave orientation. Correspondingly it varies considerably in terms of burial practice and community type.

Other two *directions 2* and *3* are occasional. Such facing could be also coincidence, but their discovery within similarly articulated decease in W and E oriented graves made possible to admit as norm (makes presumable existence of certain norm). Usually they are individual graves, but both head directions are also finds within burials of two individuals in Tsebelda cemetery. In this case, their facing towards females could be also a directional indication.<sup>885</sup>

Relatively less use reveals a *Head direction 2* that favoured only male and especially the warriors (**Table 79c. 18**). It finds in small numbers over two southern cemeteries; much more in Tsebelda (four graves) and seldom in Mramba (two graves). That consist W and NW oriented burials, but exception is the SW oriented grave, which appears in Mahajirov hill

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<sup>883</sup> It revealed in W oriented Akhatsarakhu grave 26, where except fibulae no other offerings have been confirmed. Trapsh 1975:33. Pic.12

<sup>884</sup> There is such an exception when the head is removed from the body and placed on the shoulder; or other exclusive cases of discovery the skull on female legs or elsewhere in grave. Due this, the Lar grave is thought-provoking, where the skull that is mentioned placed on the woman knee, belongs to another decease, which is not observed in grave. Several similar examples are also known from the graves of Neuberg-an der Donau and Fufooz.

<sup>885</sup> Both are W oriented family graves. The first of them with *head direction 1* is evidenced in grave 13a (Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:11. Pic.6.16). Another with a *head direction 2* finds in the grave 1a-3 (Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.22.1). Both can be dated probably between the years 450-500.

cemetery. Facing right is always combined with *body position 1* (placed on neck extended) but differing in arm and feet display. Arm shows number of *positions 1, 4, 8* and *14*. Remarkable is a favour of both arms placing on the pelvis (*position 4*). Foot distinction concerned with *positions 1, 3, 4, 6*, dominated by extended outline (*position 1*).

Clearly evident that such disposal is entertained by ideas for little male community probably from the 350/360 AD and continued to the 550 AD.<sup>886</sup> It is unknown sophisticated concept. Clear is the link between the head direction and pottery placing norm. All four graves consisting pottery form their standard location in upper part. Big size wares like pithoi and amphorae are viewed at the right side along the face and jugs above the head. That was obviously motivated by conceptual consideration to identify common patterns. But distinction among similar types provides a weapon disposal. That is a point where differences between the left and right faced warrior area seen. It regards location of spears sometimes seen at the left shoulder.<sup>887</sup> Advantage of this group is regional patterns. Different imagery may produce them at the right shoulder.<sup>888</sup> However, males share similar head direction and pottery placing norm, but it rather appears in choice of grave orientation and other burial patterns. Earliest group show co-existence of two distinct practices well reflected SW and NW oriented groups, roughly dated to the 350-380/400 AD.<sup>889</sup> The later groups show continues feature, but shift in grave furnishing which is unusual for area.<sup>890</sup> It belongs to the IV stage graves and probable years 530-550. Thus, complication is seen in variation of funerary practice, which made invisible that real evidence dictated such facing habitually distinct communities. But it is still a best viewed indication for the norm in head direction freely used among different male communities.

Little more people share the *Head direction 3* which consider with facing to the left (**Table 79a. 3, 5-6**). It evidenced over three southern cemeteries Akhatsarakhu and Abramov and with concertation in Tsebelda. They are E, W, N, NW and SW oriented groups. That

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<sup>886</sup> Its duration is evidenced by appearance in later graves of 450-500 AD and 530-550 AD (NW oriented Tsebeldian graves 6 and 15). Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:10. Pic.5.3;7.1).

<sup>887</sup> It revealed in two, chronologically distinctive warrior graves of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. The warrior articulated in *position 4* appeared in earlier grave 43, dated to 350-380. And a socially distinguished warrior buried in *position 1* revealed in a later NW oriented grave 12, dating to 380-420 AD. Trapsh 1971: 35. Tabl. VI. Pic.8, 5. Trapsh 1971: 35. Tabl. VI. Pic.8,5.

<sup>888</sup> In the earlier W oriented grave 2-3 of Tsebelda cemetery, where the body parts of warrior are displayed in *position 1*, weapons were arranged in following order: spears and axe on the left shoulder, and the knife on the waist. This grave can be dated to 370/380-400 AD. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:147. Pic.16.

<sup>889</sup> In this group, three different practices were proven. The first is the placing of coin in the mouth of decease (SW oriented Mahajirov grave 1). Here decease was outlined extended in body and foot *position 1*, with arm *position 14* (The left arm bent at the elbow was placed on pelvis with hand tassels). Data of this grave does not exceed the years 350-380 (Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26. Pic.1.). another burial concept involves a lid-cover element attested from the local practice (Abgidzrakhu gave 43).

<sup>890</sup> This is a Tsebelda grave 14 with stone-lining practice and similarly applied oval shallow graves (Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao and Loginov 1989:12. Pic.7.1.). Body and feet of decease was displayed in *position 1* and arm in *position 8* (arms are bent at the elbow; the right arm is placed on the stomach; the left arm is placed on the pelvis).

equally applied between male and female gender, but very few females. Dead always lay on back in extended position 1. But the general picture of distinguishing characteristic of body disposal reflected in litter increased combination of arm and foot positions. Arms are outlined in six different positions (1, 2, 4, 8, 10, and 14) and foot defines four (*positions 1, 3, 5, 6*). The combination character constructs some sort of standardisation in E and W oriented graves. E oriented graves ignored all kind of arm and foot display except the *position 1*.<sup>891</sup> Both belong to the mid-imperial graves, appearing roughly during the 320-360/370 AD. They seem to be earliest appearance in mid-imperial Apsilia. Little differences of W oriented graves show the combination of *arm position 2* and *feet position 1* occasionally appearing among the male graves.<sup>892</sup> This gives sight difference in arm positioning between the genders. The rest graves oriented N, NW or SW are later graves, involving arm *position 4, 8, 14* and foot position 3, 5, 6. That made remarkable development in arm and foot positioning and their combination nature.<sup>893</sup>

Distinguishing importance of their common nature held in offering structure of male graves determined by standard location of spears and pottery. In which spears are always recognisable at the left shoulder near to the face, which regards to head direction.<sup>894</sup> The locational nature of axe is similar and appearance on waist is exceptional.<sup>895</sup> A further common pattern evident in pottery disposal is placing norm of big size wares at the right, near to the waist or leg area; and jugs at the left near to the sheen area. They show the consequences of main conception estimated common nature within the male graves. But there are few cases of placing jug above the head.<sup>896</sup> This may belong to the years 400-450.<sup>897</sup> That is a pattern giving difference between the male and female gender. One of them SW oriented late imperial grave 12 from Abramov hill indicated less connection in arm position articulated

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<sup>891</sup> See Tsebelda cemetery male graves 1-79 and 1-73 in: Voronov, Shenkao 1982: 143. Pic. 12.1; 14.1. It similar picture can be seen in the only WSW oriented male grave 51 of Akhatsarakhu cemetery. Trapsh.1975:57.pic.25.

<sup>892</sup> They are revealed in Tsebelda cemetery graves of two different historical phases: II stage (330-370) grave 1a-2 and III stage (400-450) grave 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982: 143; 156. Pic. 15.1; 21.1.

<sup>893</sup> Changes in arm display are mostly remarkable on male gender. And the variety of foot display is more typical for female. The exception is NW oriented horsemen grave 3 of Tsebelda cemetery, where the most unusual combination of arm (position 8) and foot (position 5) was evidenced. This grave is also distinguished by shallow, oval cut and stone-lining practice. It can be dated to probable years 530-550. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:10.pic.4.1.

<sup>894</sup> In the SW oriented Akhatsarakhu grave 20, the man was buried with extended body and with the arm *position 14*. Grave may belong to probably years 400-450. Trapsh 1975:26.pic.9. In another synchronic grave 6 of Akhacharkhu, oriented to the NW, the male body is buried in identical position, but differs with the foot *position 3* (both are bent on knee). Trapsh 1971:92.Tabl.XXXIV. Pic.8, 5,6.

<sup>895</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>896</sup> It evidenced in three following graves: Two W oriented Akatsarakhu male graves 14 and 22, those can be dated to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (the grave 22 did not assisted pottery. Trapsh 1975:19-21, 28..pic.5;10). Third is SW oriented Abramov cemetery male grave 14 (Body displayed in *position 1*, arms in *position 2*).

<sup>897</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov. 1990. Pic.18.1

position 2 and in offering consistence and their disposal.<sup>898</sup> It also differs in use of lid-cover practice. Other two female graves 11 and 23 from Tsebelda cemetery is early medieval date, producing the years 500-550 and 530-550.<sup>899</sup> One is a family grave represented probably a mother with child. They show differing social abilities and identify unusual marks in their burial practices. These graves provide general overview of majority and minority practices differing in several ways.<sup>900</sup> But each shows that facing left was an equally important for this group. We still have a problem approaching relative concept.

### **ARM POSITION**

Arms are either extended or bent at the elbow. And there are four main placing areas where they lie, along the torso, on chest, stomach and pelvis (**Table 79a-c**). Arms are combined in different ways and produce seventeen following positions:

*Position 1. Both arms are extended either along the torso or on the pelvis.*

*Position 2. Both arms are bent at the elbow and placed crossed on the stomach.*

*Position 3. Both arms are bent at the elbow and placed with tassels on the stomach.*

*Position 4. Both arms are bent on the elbow and with hand tassels placed on the pelvis.*

*Position 5. Both arms are slightly bent at the elbow and with crossed palms are placed either on the stomach or chests.*

*Position 6. Both arms are bent on the elbow and with tassels are pulled to the chin.*

*Position 7. Both arms are bent at the elbow; the right arm is placed near to the chest with tassels; the left arm is placed either on the pelvis or on the stomach.*

*Position 8. Both arms are bent at the elbow; the right arm is placed on the stomach; the left arm is placed on the pelvis.*

*Position 9. Both arms are bent at the elbow; sharply bent left arm is placed on the stomach; slightly bent right arm is placed on the pelvis.*

*Position 10. The right arm placed at the chest with tassels, with the extended left arm along the torso.*

*Position 11. The right arm is bent at the elbow and hand tassels placed on stomach, with the extended left arm.*

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<sup>898</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Lognov. 1990. Pic.17.1.

<sup>899</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic. 61.

<sup>900</sup> Few later graves did not provide weapon and pottery. One of them is the Tsebelda grave 5, which dates back to 530-550 AD and where the deceased was burried in *position 1*. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. pic.5.1.

**Position 12.** Right arm is bent at the elbow and with hand clusters on the pelvis area; the left arm is extended.

**Position 13.** Left arm bent at the elbow and hand tassels is placed on stomach, with the extended right arm along the torso.

**Position 14.** Left arm bent at the elbow and hand clusters is placed on pelvis, with the extended right arm along the torso.

**Position 15.** Both hands are overlapped and bent at the elbow and placed on the right arm. It applied on body placed on the left or right hip either in extended or bent position.

**Position 16.** Both arms are sharply bent at the elbow. The right arm placed on the chest and the left pulled to the chin.

*Positions 2 and 3* shows similar form, but distinct in hand outline (**Fig. 45a**). *Positions 4 and 5* are also very similar but differencing in hand display. *Positions 12 and 14* are identical but different arms. Similarly differ the *positions 13 and 15* in arm rotation; the same has to say about further *positions 8 and 9*. Dissimilar is the rest three *positions 1, 6, 7 and 16*.

The choice of arm position could be a conceptual component. Statistic of varying arm position may supportive to the idea. Distinction in choice of arm position between male and female is also remarkable. What factor may it regard is difficult to predict.

*Position 12 and position 14* are rare. Involves little group of officials Notable is the *position 11* that appears slightly later in 400-440/450 and contain most unusual burial practice (**Fig. 45b**). Some has extended arms along the torso. Others have arms bent and lay either on the stomach or on pelvic bone (**Appen. B**).

**Position 1.** This position is much common and majority right in Apsilian sites (**Fig. 55a, 1a-b; Table 79a. 1-2**). This simple position appears from the beginning and lasted until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. It similarly finds among both genders, but favoured slightly more female, those are not distinguished with varying display. It shows much popularity among the population Mramba and Shapka areas.<sup>901</sup> Few are finds over the cemeteries of Tsebelda and occasionally in Akhatsarakhu. Related graves are N, NW (most), and NNW, NE, E, SW (rare), WSW orientated and some even with minority right.

Arm *position 1* was combined only with extended body (*Position 1*), most commonly with extended feet (*position 1*) and *head direction 1*. That characterises W, NW and SW oriented graves. Few cases show combination with slightly deviated head, appearing inn late 3<sup>rd</sup> century Tsebeldian male graves oriented E; where some defers even with non-local burial

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<sup>901</sup> See Abgidzrakhu female graves 14, 30, 49, 53 and male graves 12, 35, 47, 53; as well as the Alrakhu male graves 4, 8 and Akhatsarakhu female graves 4, 10. Trapsh 1971.

practice.<sup>902</sup> Latest appearance of such combination evident towards the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in Shapka area and regards NE and NW oriented graves of both genders.<sup>903</sup> Mid-4<sup>th</sup> century is a time when such displayed arms are decreases. A change in combination is indicated in *head directions* 2 and 3. It becomes observable among the right faced (*head direction* 3) males in E oriented graves of Tsebelda cemetery.<sup>904</sup> From the second half of this century it occasionally appear among few male of Mramba in NW oriented graves.<sup>905</sup>

Latest phase made remarkable that further changes regards to the combination with *foot positions* 3, 4 and 6. First one provided NW oriented Tsebeldian males in the second held pf the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>906</sup> Second combination evidence similarly oriented males from the same cemetery and Akhatsaraku;<sup>907</sup> and third combination produces N oriented family grave of female gender from Tsebelda area.<sup>908</sup> But it should be noted that latest female population of Shapka area favourable used articulation of body parts in *position 1* even in latest phase, during the 400-550 AD. That included NW, E and NE oriented graves.<sup>909</sup>

**Position 2.** The most of the unusual arm *position 2* is evidence two graves over two cemeteries Abramov hill and Tsebelda (**Fig. 45a. Table 79a. 3; 79c. 18-19**).<sup>910</sup> It consist E oriented male grave and SW oriented female grave,<sup>911</sup> appearing probably the years 400-450. Both confirm that bent and crossed arms were combined with body and *foot position 1*. They equally provide to left deviated head. Their grave cut is distinct in asymmetric and oval pit. Characterising patterns for both graves are south placing of pottery. But male distinguishes with nomadic missile weapons and imported fibulae fastened his over garment in western fashion.<sup>912</sup>

**Position 3.** The arm *position 3* is rarely evidenced and applied on both genders (**Fig. 45a. Table 79a. 4**). That is observable over two cemeteries of central Apsilia, Abgidzrakhu and Mahajirov hill. It includes W and WNW oriented graves appearing in two different historical phase. Both bent arms at the elbow that is placed *with tassels on the stomach* seem become favourable for females in years of its appearance to the 340-380 AD; When it was combined

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<sup>902</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-104. Voronov, Shamba 1982. Pic.13.1.

<sup>903</sup> Evidences come from Tserkovni (graves 3,6,7,8) and Justinianov hill cemeteries. In the Tserkovni females graves 1 and 10 the lid-covering practice are also observed. Both may date by probable years 450-500. Only the male grave 2 and the female grave 5 stand out in Justinianov cemetery. Voronov, Jushin 1971:171-190.

<sup>904</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-79 and 1-73. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.12.14.

<sup>905</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 12.

<sup>906</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 6. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.5, 3.

<sup>907</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 13b. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.6.2.

<sup>908</sup> It was grave 12, where the mother and child were buried together. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.6.1.

<sup>909</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery graves 1, 2, 3, 8, 10. Voronov, Jushin 1971. Pic.1.1; 2.1; 3.1.

<sup>910</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-58. Pic. 21.

<sup>911</sup> Abramov hill cemetery grave 12. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26.

<sup>912</sup> Grave 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:156. Pic.21.

with body, head and foot *position 1*.<sup>913</sup> Latest version applied on NW oriented male gender show that it was combined with *foot position 6* and *head direction 2* (faced right).<sup>914</sup> Grave data made it is observable during the 500-550 AD.

**Position 4.** Other evidences of arm *position 4* appear in practice of both bent arms at the elbow, with hand tassels placed on pelvis. It appears in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and occurs in three southern cemeteries Tserkovni hill, Akhatsarakhu, Abgidzrakhu and Tsebelda. That includes W, NW, WSW and SW oriented graves. First two cemeteries proved its equal appearance among the female and male graves during the 360-400/410 AD;<sup>915</sup> when it was combined with *body, head* and *foot position 1*. Only three examples from Abgidzraku, Akhatsarakhu and Tsebelda proved different combination potential revealed in *head direction 2*<sup>916</sup> and 3.<sup>917</sup> Both were synchronic graves but of years 380/400-440.

**Position 5.** A crossed hand palm on the chest is evidence another male in Tsebelda cemetery (**Fig. 45a; Table 79a, 5**).<sup>918</sup> That is W and NW oriented grave appearing probably during the 340-370/380 AD. It showed combination with *body* and *foot position 1*, but *head direction 3* faced left.

**Position 6.** Exclusive is the arm *position 6* providing bent arms that are pulled to the chin. This applies Abgidzrakhu female buried in NW oriented grave probably during the years 340-380 in.<sup>919</sup> It shows the combination of *foot position 1* and *head position 2* faced to the right.

**Position 7.** Second occasional arm *position 7* viewing the right arm placed near to the chest with tassels and the left arm on the pelvis. Exclusive is their evidence in NW oriented female grave articulated with *body, head* and *foot position 1*.<sup>920</sup> This appears in Abgidzrakhu cemetery and during the probable years 380/400-440. Other similar examples from Tsebelda show distinctive combination with *head direction 2* (**Fig. 45a. Table 79a. 6**).

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<sup>913</sup> Two females of Abgidzrakhu grave 2 and Mahajirov grave 6. Trapsh 1971:22; Voronov Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov. 1990:25.pic.21.9)

<sup>914</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 15. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov. 1989:12.pic.7.23.

<sup>915</sup> This is evidenced by the following burials: Akhacharkhu female graves 41, 48, 49, 53 and three male graves 5, 14, 42; Abgidzrakhu males are applied *Arm position 2* in graves 43 and 52. Trapsh 1975:47-58. Pics. 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26; Also observed in Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 7, which may date to 340/360-380 AD. Voronov, Jushin 1971.Pic.7.1.

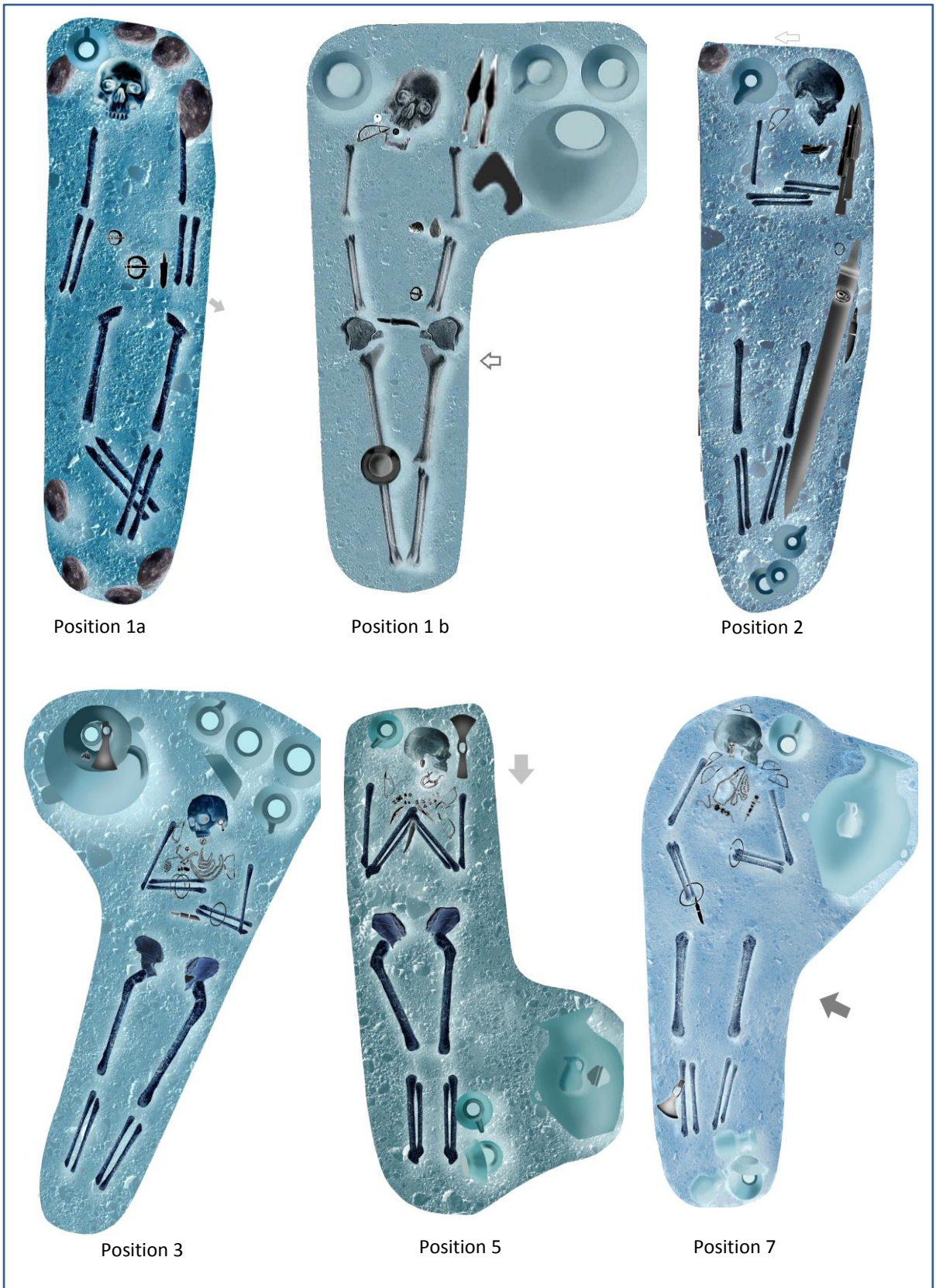
<sup>916</sup> In NNW oriented Abgidzrakhu male grave 43, which is characterises by the lid-covering practice. Trapsh 1971:65-67; As as as WSW oriented Akhatsrakhu female (?) grave 53, which defines in oval grave cut and also with the inverted jar placed at the head. Trapsh. 1975. Pic. 26.

<sup>917</sup> Akhatsarakhu male grave 14 and Tsebelda female grave 5. Trapsh 1975; Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, loginov 1989:10.Pic.5.1.

<sup>918</sup> W oriented grave 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:147.Pic.15.

<sup>919</sup> It was a high social class women buried in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 45. Trapsh 1971:71-72. Tabl. XXIII.

<sup>920</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 40. Trapsh. 1971.



**Fig. 45a.** Visualization of the arm position by Negative Image.



**Position 8.** Equally exclusive is the arm *position 8* showing the right bent arm placed on the stomach and the left on the pelvis. This appears in horsemen grave of Tsebelda cemetery.<sup>921</sup> Grave is NW oriented and belongs to probable years 530-550. Body articulation made clear combination of *arm position 8* with *body position 1*, *head direction 2* faced to left and *foot position 5*.

**Position 9.** Occasionally finds the *position 9* differing with sharply bent left arm placed on the stomach and slightly bent right arm on the pelvis (**Fig. 46. 1**). It is observable in two different historical phases of Tsebelda cemetery and including E, W and SW oriented graves. Earliest E oriented male graves of years 340-380 made clear its combination with *body position 1*, *head direction 1* and *foot position 1*.<sup>922</sup> This seems changed slightly later after the 380 AD, when it shows *foot position 6*.<sup>923</sup> But the W oriented female grave buried in probable years 500-550 show further changes in *head direction 2* faced right, which is combined with earliest articulation norm of other body parts reflected in *position 1*.<sup>924</sup>

**Position 10.** There are few graves with *position 10* displaying the right arm on the chest and the left extended. It includes N and NW oriented two graves of Abgidzrakhu cemetery and characterises female gender.<sup>925</sup> Both are appearing between the years 350 and 400. They show the *position 1* of the rest body parts and placed on back in extended *body position 1*.

**Position 11.** Notable is the arm *position 11* which appears slightly later, with articulation of the right hand tassels on stomach and left extended (**Fig.45b. Table. 79b. 8**). It applied on NW oriented male grave of Abgidzrakhu cemetery which may appear during the 400-440/450 AD.<sup>926</sup> Combination of other body parts show the *body position 1*, *head direction 3* faced to left and *feet position 2*.

**Position 12.** Few settlers confirm the use of *position 12* show the right arm placed on pelvis with extended left arm (**Fig.45b. Table. 79b. 9**). That evidenced both genders over four cemeteries of central Apsilia Abgidzrakhu, Justinianov and Tsebelda. It includes E, N and NW oriented graves and shows slow duration between the years 330 and 550. Usually it appears in combination of body parts in *position 1* that evidenced in II stage (340-370 AD),<sup>927</sup>

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<sup>921</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3, which is damaged by a horse burial. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, loginov 1989. Pic. 4.1.

<sup>922</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 6, which defers by stone-lining practice. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982. Pic. 96.1.

<sup>923</sup> It evidenced in E oriented grave 1-24, possibly dating to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It specifies with deposition of animal bones, placed at the foot. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139. Pic.10.

<sup>924</sup> Grave 14, which like Tsebeldians is distinguished by the stone-lining practice. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, loginov 1989. Pic. 7.1.

<sup>925</sup> Abgidzrakhu graves 36 and 39. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>926</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 9, which is characterised by lid-covered *pithoi* placed at the right leg and an axe divined in ground. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>927</sup> E oriented male grave of Tsebelda cemetery. Voronov, Shamba 1982. Pic.11.1.

III stage (380-400 AD)<sup>928</sup> and IV stage (500-530 AD) graves.<sup>929</sup> They did not distinguish with any specific burial practice.

**Position 13.** That is occasional position, when the bent left arm *placed on* stomach and the right arm is extended along the torso (**Fig.45b. Table. 79b. 10**). It applied on two individuals, male and female. That evidenced within NW<sup>930</sup> and NE<sup>931</sup> oriented groups of different cemeteries Abgidzrakhu and Tsebelda. That show its duration between the years 400-500. Both show other body parts displayed in *position 1*.

**Position 14.** Frequently appears the *position 14* with bent left arm placed on pelvis with hand clusters and the right arm is extended (**Fig.45b. Table. 79b. 11**). That observed over cemeteries Abramov, Mahajirov, Tserkovni hills, Abgidzrakhu and Tsebelda including W (WSW), SW, N and NE oriented graves. It applied both gender, but favorably the males. It always shows the combination with *body position 1*, but differences appear in head and foot positions. The form of combination with body parts of position 1 finds within Tserkovni hill cemetery, where it applying both genders of later phase 400-450 AD.<sup>932</sup> But it was less common in areas where the changes appearing in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, with head *direction 2*<sup>933</sup> and *direction 3*<sup>934</sup> it was commonly representative within the population Tsebelda and occasionally in Mahajirov, Abramov and Abgidzrakhu cemeteries. Only one missile shooter defined by combination of *head direction 2* and *foot position 2* from Abgidzrakhu cemetery, which may assign to years 400-450.<sup>935</sup>

**Position 15.** Most unusual and occasional arm display is *position 16* (**Fig.45b. Table 79b. 12**). That is a later phenomenon revealed in overlapped arms bent at the elbow and placed on the right arms. But generally it depends on side placed *body position 3*. While applying on body placed on the left or right hip either in extended or bent position. Therefore, distinguishable marker is arm display providing two slightly differing variants First variant is

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<sup>928</sup> NW oriented female grave 28 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>929</sup> N oriented female grave 4 of Justinianov cemetery. Voronov, Jushin 1971. Pic.13.1.

<sup>930</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery male grave 41, which may date to 400-450 AD. Trapsh 1971:64. Tabl.XX.

<sup>931</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery female grave 9. It belongs to the probable years 450-500. Voronov, Jushin 1971. Pic.9.1.

<sup>932</sup> Justinianov female graves 3, 5 and Tserkovni male graves 4, 6. Voronov, Jushin 1971. Pic.12.1; Pic.14.1; Pic.13.1; Pic.6.1.

<sup>933</sup> SW oriented Mahajirov male grave 1, where it revealed, also specified with coin placing in mouth. It belongs to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26.pic.19.1. Other corresponds to Abramov grave 5, which may date to 320-360 AD. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:9. Pic. 9.1.

<sup>934</sup> Such articulation was revealed in three male gaves of Tsebelda cemetery: graves 1 which dates to 360-400 AD, grave 4 of 500-550 AD and grave 1a-3 of 500-550 AD. See in: Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:9. Pic. 9; Voronov, Shenkao 1982:157. Pic.22.1. Other comes from SW oriented Akhatsararkhu gave 20. Trapsh 1975:26. Pic.9. The only women from Tsebelda in a similar pose and head deviation to the left was buried in the grave 4 during 500-550 AD. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.22.1

<sup>935</sup> WSW oriented grave. Trapsh 1971:84. Pic. 8.4; Tabl.XXXI.



**Fig. 45b.** Visualization of the arm position by Negative Image.

a downward display, which evidenced a male grave probably of years 500-550. The second variant reflected in up warded arms characterizing females.<sup>936</sup>

**Position 16.** This position is also occasional and observable from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. It differs with the bend right arm placed on the chest and with bent left pulled to the chin. Remarkable is that warrior with such arm position in E oriented grave has been commented with possible deformation of skull (**Table 79b. 13**).<sup>937</sup>

## FOOT POSITION

Foot position is also distinct and represented in six following ways:

**Position 1.** Feet were extended and apart.

**Position 2.** Feet are crossed in the shin/leg area.

**Position 3.** Both feet are bent on knee and lay on the right hip.

**Position 4.** The right foot is bent on hip and knee; the left foot is extended.

**Position 5.** The left foot is bent on knee; the right foot is extended

**Position 6.** Feet are folded at the ankle area

**Foot position 1.** Above provided data about the combination nature of other body parts made visible that *foot position 1* was most commonly combined with *body position 1* and *head direction 1* (**Table 79a. 4; Table 79c.19**). That finds within all W, SW, NW, E, NE oriented graves. It equally applied both gender during the 270-550 AD. In classic body form with *head direction 1* it was combined only with two *arms positions 1* and *3*. This last characterizes females during the years 340-380 in W and WNW oriented graves of Mamba cemetery (**Appen. C**).

Remarkable is earliest combination with *head direction 2* and *arm position 14* during the years 320-380 in SW oriented graves of both genders.<sup>938</sup> That is observable over the cemeteries of central Apsilia. Slightly later after the 340 AD with *head direction 2* it appears in combination of *arm position 6* in NW oriented female grave.<sup>939</sup> And from the 380 AD it is observable with *arm position 4* within BBW and WSW oriented male graves of Mramba

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<sup>936</sup> W oriented Akhatsarakhu female grave 26 and Lar female adult of NE oriented grave 11.

<sup>937</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:156. Pic. 21.

<sup>938</sup> Mahajirov cemetery male grave 1. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26.pic.19.1. Grave 5 of Abramov hill cemetery. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:9. Pic. 9.1

<sup>939</sup> Abgidzraku cemetery grave 45. Trapsh 1971:71-72. Tabl.XXIII.

cemeteries.<sup>940</sup> In latest phase to the 500-550 AD the changes show this combination with *arms position 9* again in W oriented female grave.<sup>941</sup>

Arm position	Body position	Head direction	Head deviation	Foot position	Female	Male	Grave orientation	Date
Position 1	1	1		1	+	+	W,SW, NW, E, NE,	270-550
Position 1	1	3		1			E	270-370
Position 1	1	3		3		+	NW	400-500
Position 1	1	3		4		+	NW	500-530
Position 1	1	3		6	+		N	500-550
Position 2	2		left		+	+	E, SW	400-450
Position 3	1	1		1	+		W,WNW	340-380
Position 3	1	2		6		+	NW	500-550
Position 4	1	1		1	+	+	W,NW,WSW	360-380
Position 4	1	2		1		+	NNW, WSW	380-410
Position 4	1	3		1	+	+	W	380-440
Position 5								
Position 6	1	2		1	+		NW	340-380
Position 7								
Position 8	1	2		5		+	NW	530-550
Position 9	1	1		1		+	E	340-380
Position 9	1	1		6		+	E	380-400
Position 9	1	2		1	+		W	500-550
Position 10	1	1		1	+		N, NW	350-400
Position 11	1	2		2		+	NW	400-450
Position 12	1	1		1	+	+	E,N,NW	340-550
Position 13	1	1		1	+	+	NW, NE	400-450
Position 14	1	1		1	2	2	N, NE	380-450
Position 14	1	2		1	1	1	SW	320-380/400
Position 14	1	2		2		1	WSW	400-450
Position 14	1	3		1		3	W, SW	360-400 500-550
Position 14	1		left	1	1		W	500-550
Position 15	3	3		3	1	2	E,W, NE	400-550

**Append. B.** Display chart of body parts.

<sup>940</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 53. Trapsh. 1975. Pic. 26

<sup>941</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 14. This grave similarly to other Tsebeldian one, distinguishes with stone lining practice. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic. 7.1

It seems that with head direction 3 it synchronically appear after the 270 AD with *arm position 1*. Slightly later, during the years 360-400 it also combined with *arm position 14* among the W and SW oriented male genders of cemeteries Mahajirov and Abramov hill. Changes in arm displayed provided during the years 380-400, when it combined with *arm position 4*. That applied both genders in Mramba cemeteries and within W oriented graves.

**Foot position 2.** It is rare position that appears from the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and applied only males. It involves *head direction 2* and *arm positions 11* or *14*. With *arm position 11* it evidenced in NW oriented graves of Abgidzrakhu cemetery.<sup>942</sup> And with *arm position 14* in WSW oriented graves over the cemetery of Shapka (Abramov).

Foot position	Body position	Head direction	Arm position	Female	male	Grave orientation	Date
Position 1	1	1	1	+	+	W, SW, NW, E, NE	270-550
Position 1	1	1	3	+		W, WNW	340-380
Position 1	1	3	1	+	+	E	270-370
Position 1							
Position 2							
Position 3	1	3	1		+	NW	400-450
Position 4							
Position 5							
Position 6							
Position 7							
Position 8							

**Append. C.** Display chart of foot position.

**Foot position 3.** Foot position 3 is also unusual and occasional position appearing during the 400-450 AD (**Fig.45b**; **Table 79b.** 12). It applied more male than female gender. Combination involves two *body positions 1* and *3* always with *head direction 3* and two *arm positions 1* and *15*. The nature of first combination provides the *body position 1* faced left and *arm position 1*. That evidenced NW oriented male graves of Shapka cemetery.<sup>943</sup> A second variant including the *body position 3* faced left and *arms position 15*. It finds within E, W and NE oriented female and male graves of vicinity cemeteries.

**Foot position 4.** This position is occasional and appears during the 500-530 AD in NW oriented male grave (**Table 79b.** 8). It observed in Tsebelda cemetery.<sup>944</sup> Combination character provides *body position 1* directed in *head position 3* and with *arm position 1*.

<sup>942</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 9. Trapsh 1971:29. Pic. 7.

<sup>943</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery graves 1, 10 and Justinianov cemetery graves 2,5. Voronov, Jushin 1971:171-190.

<sup>944</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 6. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989.Pic.5, 3.

**Foot position 5.** Equally exclusive is the *foot position 5* appearing during the 530-550 AD. It evidenced in NW oriented male grave of Tsebelda cemetery.<sup>945</sup> Combination consisting *body position 1* directed in *head direction 2* and with *arm position 8*.

**Foot position 6.** Few more graves provide the *foot position 6*, which appears in two different historical phase 380-400 and 530-550 (**Table 79a. 1**). Early appearance of years 380-400 show the combination of *body position 1* directed by *head in position 1* and with *arm position 9*. That applied E oriented male of Tsebelda cemetery. The rest two synchronic variant differs in several ways. One of them involving the *body position 1* faced in *head direction 2* and with *arm position 3* is evidenced in NW oriented male grave of Tsebelda cemetery.<sup>946</sup> Another one including the *body position 1* and *head direction 3* with *arm position 1* evidenced in N oriented female grave Tsebelda cemetery.<sup>947</sup>

### **VI. 1. 1. 3 Internal grave construction**

Depositional choice leads their display structure. But diversity of offering types is apparent within female and male gender. Therefore, they analyzed within two different gender groups. But common pattern for both groups consider existence of storage jar, jugs, plate and *fibulas*. If jug appears single in graves they commonly placed at the skull either to the left or right side.<sup>948</sup> Few *fibulas* belong to grave accessories.<sup>949</sup> The *fibulas* occasionally placed by the heads of both genders in early 5<sup>th</sup> century; when it finds under the skull or at the temple, indicative for head cover as well. The rest personal articles are matter of functional purpose. But there are potentially significant objects like *pithoi*, *amphorae*, sword and spear head developing distinctive display practices. They may derive either from daily use, functional characteristic or from different believe.

#### ***Principles of depositing goods***

Evidences from male and female graves show unlike categories, where the combination viewed from different functional aspect. Therefore both are separately examined below.

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<sup>945</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, loginov 1989. Pic.4.1.

<sup>946</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1989:10.

<sup>947</sup> The only exception that has been found in the W oriented grave is Tsebelda cemetery grave 7. 1989.

<sup>948</sup> Abgidzraku cemetery female graves 30, 45, 49, 53 and male graves 9, 47. Trapsh, 1971. Pic.7.

<sup>949</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 75. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

## DEPOSITING OF GRAVE GOODS IN THE MALE RELATIVE CONTEXT

In male graves pottery is leading category from the beginning. In very rare cases they even appear in three different combinations, always including a jug. Jugs are commonly placed at the skull in all historical period (**Table 79a**).<sup>950</sup> But in cemeteries of Tsebelda if they occur in pairs, the smallest appears whether near to the waist or at the foot of the skeleton, as it seen in II stage graves (**Table 79a. 6**). Occasional is a placing of both jugs at the upper head (**Table 79a. 7**).<sup>951</sup> Such display is remarkable from mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. Majority of male graves are offered with set of storage jars placed whether vertically or horizontally in grave pit. The most favorable *pithoi* is commonly deposited in area of lower body (**Table 79b. 13**). It often placed at the right leg within III stage groups in NW and SW oriented graves.<sup>952</sup> But few are deposited near to the either hip (left or right side)<sup>953</sup> or left shoulder (**Table 79c. 17; 79a. 2**),<sup>954</sup> and some of these graves are even draw special asymmetric cut of gravel pit.<sup>955</sup> This is a phenomenon of the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century that characterizes few E oriented males and suggestive even for some ethnically distinctive group. From practice, depositing of a handle jar is seldom and appears probably after the 320 AD. It is usually positioned at the foot.<sup>956</sup> But there is an exceptional case of placing jar near to the middle body at the left side of skeleton.<sup>957</sup> Few graves deposited *Amphora* shows their place commonly at the right shoulder,<sup>958</sup> rarely at the foot (**Table 79c. 20**)<sup>959</sup> and occasionally near to the hip of the skeleton (**Table 82. B**).<sup>960</sup> That is a case when all three pottery categories jug, *pithoi*, *amphorae* are combined and leads distinctive placing order. But such consistence guide placing of *pithoi* generally in area of upper body. This was practiced from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and evidenced in few central Apsilian graves of cemeteries of Mramba and Abramov hill (Patskhiri valley). Local dishes or imported plates are commonly appearing for covering purposes of *pithoi* (**Table 79a. 2**)<sup>961</sup> or jar (**Tables 79a. 4; 79b. 8; 79c. 16**). But plates are seldom located on the knee of skeleton

<sup>950</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 4. Trapsh 1971:81. Tabl. XXXI.

<sup>951</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-104 and 8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.13.1; 16.15.

<sup>952</sup> Abramov hill cemetery grave 14. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:26. Pic.18.1. Another is evidenced in NW oriented Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 9. Trapsh 1971:30. Pic. 7.6.

<sup>953</sup> At the hip area it evidenced in Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-24 and 1-73.

<sup>954</sup> In the same cemetery grave 1-104.

<sup>955</sup> E oriented Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-24, 1-104, 1-73, 1-50. The grave 1-24 is specified with deposition of animal bones. Another grave 1-104 revealed the coin placing in mouth of decease. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.10.1; 13.1; 14.1; Pic.20.1

<sup>956</sup> Observed in E oriented Tsebelda cemetery grave 6, 7 distinguished by stone-lining and assign to II stage grave group.

Voronov, Bgaghba 1982. Pic. 96.1.; 97.1. Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 47. Trapsh 1971:30,74. Pic.47

<sup>957</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 4. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982. Pic. 94.1.

<sup>958</sup> Abgidzrakhu graves 12, 43 and Akhatsarakhu grave 6. Trapsh 1971:33-34, 65, 92; Tabl.VI.4.Tabl.XXI.2; Tabl.XXXIV. Pic. 8.1,5,6.

<sup>959</sup> In Abramov hill cemetery grave 2. Voronov, Bgaghba and other 1990:24. Pic.14.1.

<sup>960</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 41. Trapsh 1971:64-65. Tabl.XX:4.

<sup>961</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.



from late-4<sup>th</sup> century (**Tables** 79c. 16; 83. A).<sup>962</sup> Few casseroles applied above the head within the II stage groups in case of lacking jags.<sup>963</sup> Otherwise it accidentally finds at the area of left leg.<sup>964</sup>

Glass vessels are most commonly finds in area of upper body (**Tables** 79c. 20; 83. A). It placed whether at the right side of skeleton near to the shoulder<sup>965</sup> or rarely above the head,<sup>966</sup> at the left side near to the shoulder<sup>967</sup> or face.<sup>968</sup> But earliest appearance correspond the lower body, area of foot in W oriented grave.<sup>969</sup> Their display near to the knee is seldom evidence in W oriented graves of early 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>970</sup>

Regular position shows a small knife which always placed in lower body near to the hip (**Fig.** 45b. 13; **Tables** 80b. 10; 80c. 15-18). But such weapons like battle, spears and arrow heads are objects usually fixed on the area of upper body (**Table** 79c. 16-18). Only sword and seax appear to be placed in various parts from trunk to leg (**Table** 79b. 13). Spathae is commonly placed at the right (**Tables** 79a. 3; 79c. 20).<sup>971</sup> The sword is placed whether at the left side (**Table** 79c. 18) on the elbow<sup>972</sup> (from mid-4<sup>th</sup> century) or below the pelvis<sup>973</sup> and very exclusive evidence in the eastern part of gravel pit.<sup>974</sup> Daggers are placed either on the right or left may illustrate how they worn in life. Similar purpose may assign to the spear heads which finds either single or in pairs in graves. They commonly placed in upper body frequently near to the skull either at the right<sup>975</sup> or left side (**Tables** 79a. 2-3; 79b. 10, 13; 80c. 16-18, 20).<sup>976</sup> Some are even thrust into the grave. Two socketed arrow heads placed either on the waist or under the shield should point to their structural term. Three socket arrowheads are placed under the square shields in early 5<sup>th</sup> century graves.<sup>977</sup> Battle axe usually located

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<sup>962</sup> It evidenced Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 1 of late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1989:9. P. Another occurs in Tsebelda grave 1-43 of mid-5<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148-150. Pic.17.1, 2.

<sup>963</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-75 and 1-76. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:140,143. Pic.11.2,14.

<sup>964</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-73. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pic. 14. 6.

<sup>965</sup> Appears in Tserkovni cemetery grave 4 (deposited a doted bowl). Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic. 4.31.

<sup>966</sup> W oriented chieftain grave 1-43 of Tsebelda cemetery (deposited a Honeycomb beaker). Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148.Pic. 17.7.

<sup>967</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 12, where the glass cone vessel was found.

<sup>968</sup> One considers a trailed goblet found in Tserkovni cemetery grave 5. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176.Pic.5.20. One is a doted cone in the Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 6. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.6.6.

<sup>969</sup> It regards to a colorless undecorated drinking beaker of Mayen type found in Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pic.15,11.

<sup>970</sup> Considers a blue doted bowl in spearman grave 20 of Apiancha cemetery. Gunba 1978:28.XIX.2.

<sup>971</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 76, 1-43 and Verin hill cemetery. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.11.13; 17.1; 23.1

<sup>972</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 16.15;

<sup>973</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 8, 1-50, 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 16.1; 20.1; 21.1

<sup>974</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 39. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 19.29

<sup>975</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-24, 76, 2-3, 1-43, 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.Pic.10.1; 11.13; 16.1;17.1;21.1.

<sup>976</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-75, 1-104, 1-73; 1-50. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.Pic.11.1;13.1; 14.1; 20.1; Verin hill cemetery grave 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.Pic.15.1

<sup>977</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 39. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:154.Pic.19.14-19.

near to the left shoulder (**Tables 79a. 2; 79b. 10; 79c. 17**),<sup>978</sup> seldom on the right leg (**Table 79c. 18**)<sup>979</sup> and occasionally at the waist.<sup>980</sup> Few cases show similarly thrust battle axe in the ground.<sup>981</sup> Rounded or oval shields appear in four different places (**Table 92. 1**). Most frequently they find either on left<sup>982</sup> or right shoulder (**Table 99. 1**).<sup>983</sup> Occasional is evidences of their location at the area of waist at the right side<sup>984</sup> or on abdomen (**Table 83. C**).<sup>985</sup> Few (with *Homs type* bosses) occurs near to the head either at the left or right side (**Tables 98. 2; 79c. 20**).<sup>986</sup>

Agricultural tools pick and hoe are seldom finds. Hoe is commonly deposited at the left shoulder (**Table 79a. 5**) within III stage graves and occasionally whether at the foot (**Table 79a. 6**) or above the skull near to the storage jar (**Tables 79a. 4; 79b. 8**).<sup>987</sup> But pick appears in area of pelvis or foot (**Table 79c. 19**).<sup>988</sup>

The positioning of bronze loop-buckles on the waist is indicative for the belted cloth and standard waist belt (**Table 79a. 1; 79c. 17**). Such always appear single in graves before the 340/350 AD and suggestive for variations of narrow belt.<sup>989</sup> But during the 360-380 AD two distinctive buckles appear at the area of waist, which may suggest existence of several wide belts (**Table 79c. 16, 20; Table 110a. 2- 3**). There are some silver plate-buckles with asymmetric ring of late 4<sup>th</sup> century, always placed at the waist directly either on sword or near to the leg are indicative for sword relative buckle set (**Table 79b. 10; Table 109. A**). Few of them are combined with two different bronze looped-buckles.<sup>990</sup> But there are cases of three buckle combination appear from mid-4<sup>th</sup> century; when silver loop buckle and two bronze variants are located at the left elbow along the waist and near to sword.<sup>991</sup> This might suspend sword relative straps. For this context interest attracts also to the fittings elements often

<sup>978</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 76, 1-104, 1-73, 2-3, 1-58; Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 11.13; 13.1; 14.1; 16.1; 21.1

<sup>979</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-24. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 10.1

<sup>980</sup> Verin hill cemetery grave 1a-2 and Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-75. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 15.1; 11.1

<sup>981</sup> Apiancha cemetery inhumation grave 28. Gunba 1978:37. Tabl. XXVI.2; Also in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 9. Trapsh 1971:29-30. Tabl. V.2.

<sup>982</sup> It evidenced in early 5<sup>th</sup> century archer grave 4 of Tserkovni hill cemetery. Shield was fitted with spiked boss. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic. 4.31.

<sup>983</sup> Appears in Tserkovni cemetery horseman grave 5 of late 5<sup>th</sup> century, where the shield was fitted with boss of *Misery* type. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic. 5.20.

<sup>984</sup> Appears in the S oriented Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 12 dated to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Gunba 1978:22. Tabl. XII.3.

<sup>985</sup> W oriented Tsebelda fort cemetery spearman grave 1-24 (deposited animal bones). Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139. Pi. 10.1.

<sup>986</sup> In Abgidzrakhu grave 9, at the left side of skull occurs a shield with boss of *Homs* type. In Abgidzrakhu grave 12, at the right side found a rounded shield with boss of *Malaesti/Zieling I-3* type. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>987</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:57. Pic. 97.8.

<sup>988</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 16. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982. Pic. 95.12.

<sup>989</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-79 and 1-104. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 12.9; 13.13.

<sup>990</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:152. Pic. 17.13.

<sup>991</sup> It occurs in Tsebelda cemetery grave 8. Other evidences of sword associated two buckles placed on the right hip area, are observed in Tsebelda cemetery grave 2-3. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148. Pic. 16.18; 16.12-13.

appearing area of the waist. Location of those decorated with sardonic stone<sup>992</sup> recognizes existence of functional belt (**Tables** 110a.1; 110b, 2). Some do not exclude *balteus*<sup>993</sup> worn over the shoulder or *cintus* that fastened around the waist (**Table** 110b. B). Occasional case is the placing of buckle on the right hand palm together with coin, which appears in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>994</sup>

From functional term regularities regards also to the fasteners. Majority of Fibulas finds on the chest may reflect over garment fastener (**Table** 111b. 11-13).<sup>995</sup> But their appearance on the right shoulder is due to the sword or sax consisting graves.<sup>996</sup> It becomes frequent from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century might indicative for a standardized military dress. Exclusive is appearance of two fibulae at the area of skull: a silver bow fibula (with slightly distinguished cross on the head) occurs at the right temple and bronze fibulae below the chin (**Tables** 83. A, 9; 111b. 14).<sup>997</sup> Very few of arched bow fibulas are applied near to the skull at the left side<sup>998</sup> in the ground, which may consider internal grave furnishing.

The use of coins is rarely recorded and their placing in destructed graves is unidentified.<sup>999</sup> Most unusual is their appearance on pelvis area, which might indicative for the currency function. They provide the silver Dirham of Caracalla (197-217) and silver coin of Hadrian (117-138).<sup>1000</sup> Similarly exceptional is appearance of silver coin of Julia Domna (193-217) under the chin.<sup>1001</sup> But few graves provide a coin placing in mouth of decease, which involve silver Dirham of Hadrian (**Fig** 45a, 1b; **Fig.** 45b, 13; **Tables** 79a. 2; 79b. 10; 80c. 15).<sup>1002</sup> This indicates foreign ethnicity and observed during the 350-400 AD. On the chest it occurs seldom in II stage graves and includes silver dirham of Marcus Aurelius (161-180)<sup>1003</sup> or

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<sup>992</sup> Tsebelda fort grave 1, which belongs to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1989:9. Pic.3.15.

<sup>993</sup> Possibly it was used for a leather baldric that passes shoulder and lower part of which might ornamented with metal fittings.

<sup>994</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>995</sup> Verin hill cemetery grave 2a. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.23.

<sup>996</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.22.

<sup>997</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>998</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 2-3. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.16.14.

<sup>999</sup> All three coins that are believed to be minted in Rom come from destructed graves of Aukhuamakhu cemetery (Dirham of the time of Trajan and Hadrian) and Akhatsarakhu cemetery (Dirham of the time of Antonius Pius). Third is a silique of Theodosia II (408-450) of Cesarean mint, that discovery place has not been identified. Trapsh 1971:209-210.

<sup>1000</sup> The silver coin of Caracalla is evidenced in a mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century Tsebelda cemetery gave 1-76. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:140. Pic. 11.20. The coin of Hadrian occurs in Tsebelda fort grave 1, dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1989:9. Pic.3.14.

<sup>1001</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 14. Trapsh 1975:21-22. Pic.14.8.

<sup>1002</sup> That is earliest evidence in Tsebelda cemetery male graves 1-104. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pic.13.15.

<sup>1003</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-79. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pic. 12.10.

hemi-dirham of Hadrian (117-138)<sup>1004</sup> and Julia Domna (193-217).<sup>1005</sup> There are other occasional cases, when skeleton held the silver coin of Lucius Verus on the right hand<sup>1006</sup> or two coins of Hadrian and Antonius Pius (138-161) on the left.<sup>1007</sup> This practice co-occurs in late 4<sup>th</sup> century within graves of distinctive burial custom. At the waist finds the shaving lamella that is most relative to I-II stage grave groups.

There are rare cases within III stage grave groups when black stones appear on the chest, perhaps for apotropaic purposes.<sup>1008</sup> But few males apply the single bead on area of waist,<sup>1009</sup> or right shoulder.<sup>1010</sup> Only one adult evidenced some small blue glass beads below the chin, which may indicative for either dress fastener or decoration.<sup>1011</sup> This is earlier practice and occasional among the II stage grave groups. A reason for doubt of their jewelry function gives their standardize type: hemispheric shape and zigzag design applied in either, white, yellowish color (**Table 107. 32, 34**). It is uncertain if such bead has been worn due to fashion or attributed the magical value. The fact is that, it is unusual for local practice and appears shortly during 270-340 AD in a few II stage warrior graves. But rare evidences of rock crystal on the chest near to the sword suggested weapon decorative stone (**Table 107. 50**).<sup>1012</sup> Similar function may assign to the conic black glass bead with yellow strips appearing near to the sword (**Table 107. 58; Table 83. A**).<sup>1013</sup> It should be notices that from mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, several small glass beads of different color and red paste pearls occur below the chin of skeleton in chieftain graves, which might indicative for adorned dress.<sup>1014</sup> At this time totally distinctive cylindrical black bead (with brown and white strips) occurs on the chest of one warrior.<sup>1015</sup>

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<sup>1004</sup> The hemi-dirham of Hadrian occurring Abgidzrakhu grave 54 is minted in Rom (it has not been published). Trapsh 1971:81, 207. The latest find considers a silver coin of Hadrian, which is minted in Cesarea and appears in warrior grave 6 of Tserkovni cemetery. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.6.7.

<sup>1005</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-75. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:140. Pic. 14.8.

<sup>1006</sup> It is a silver coin of Lucius Verus (caesarian mint) evidenced in E oriented warrior grave 1-24 of Tsebelda cemetery. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:140. Pic. 10.

<sup>1007</sup> Akhacharkhu cemetery grave 12. Shamba 1970:66.

<sup>1008</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 12 of prominent warrior. Trapsh 1971:33-34. Tabl. VI.12.

<sup>1009</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-73. Such black beads are stripped either with blue traits and some even with drops between the braids. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pi.14.11.

<sup>1010</sup> In Tsebelda cemetery grave 104 appears a black bead with yellow strips. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pi.13.17.

<sup>1011</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148. Pic.17.15-17,19-21.

<sup>1012</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery inhumation grave 5. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.5.7.

<sup>1013</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 17,18.

<sup>1014</sup> Three pearls from Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43 included two red pastes and a green glass. Accompanied beads are: two ring shape small glasses of blue color and a melon shape pale blue paste. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148-150. Pic. 17.16-17, 19-21.

<sup>1015</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 7. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.7.16.

Some silver rings apply under the chin<sup>1016</sup> or on the waist<sup>1017</sup> of skeleton. Below the chest only one male occurs a metal objects which may associate with dice.<sup>1018</sup> There is some needle evidenced in pelvis area within the II stage grave (**Table 114. 15**).<sup>1019</sup> At this time observes the Flintstone rarely placed on pelvis area,<sup>1020</sup> seldom on the chest<sup>1021</sup> and occasionally on the left leg<sup>1022</sup> of skeleton. Exclusive is depositing Flintstone in peripheral part of skeleton in early 5<sup>th</sup> century grave.<sup>1023</sup> Seldom occurs a steel fire plate also in area of pelvis or below the chest in II stage graves.<sup>1024</sup> Two evidence of grindstone among the waist of skeleton in III stage graves show occasional practice.<sup>1025</sup>

Exclusive is placing of animal remains at the foot area, which is largely ignored in entire Colchis.<sup>1026</sup> There is an evidence of nuts found in five pieces below the chin of male skeleton in early-5<sup>th</sup> century grave.<sup>1027</sup> That seem not existential as such practice appears first within I stage (170-270) cremation graves of area (**Table 91. 2 (17-18)**).

#### *DEPOSITING OF GRAVE GOODS IN THE FEMALE RELATIVE CONTEXT*

Female graves are generally characterizes with personal items. From pottery composition distinction gives a big dimensional ware, which is rare offering and represented only by handled jar (**Table 79a. 4, 6**). Structurally display of jar is nearly similar to male graves in depositing at the middle body either near to the waist or at the left elbow (**Table 79a. 7**).<sup>1028</sup> But there is three occasions when jar is set inverted at the head in SWS oriented female graves.<sup>1029</sup> Distinction gives few III stage graves with placing of jar set at the foot (**Table 79a. 5**).<sup>1030</sup> Female graves frequently contain jugs and commonly placed at the skull (**Table 79a.**

<sup>1016</sup> Verin hill cemetery grave 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143.Pic.15.12.

<sup>1017</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148.Pic.16.20.

<sup>1018</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-104. Voronov, Shenkao 1982

<sup>1019</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-75. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:140.Pic.11.6

<sup>1020</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-75, 1-76, 1-50; 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:140,156. Pic.11.11; 11.24; Pic.14.15; Pic. 20.11; Pic.21, 1982:140-156.

<sup>1021</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-104 and 1-73. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pi.13.16; Pi.14.15.

<sup>1022</sup> It appears Tsebelda cemetery grave 39 (III stage grave). Voronov, Shenkao 1982:154. Pic. 19.8.

<sup>1023</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 7. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176.Pic.7.8.

<sup>1024</sup> Both are evidenced in Tsebelda cemetery. On the pelvis area it occurs in grave 1-75. It was placed below the chest on the left side of skeleton in the grave 1-104. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:140,143. Pic.11.12; 25.

<sup>1025</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148.Pic.18.24-25; Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 12. Trapsh 1971:33-34. Tabl. VI.13.

<sup>1026</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139-140. Pic.10.

<sup>1027</sup> W oriented chieftain warrior grave 1-43 of Tsebelda cemetery. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148. Pic.17.22.

<sup>1028</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgzhba 1982:56. Pic. 93.1.

<sup>1029</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 53. Trapsh 1975:58. Pic.26,1.

<sup>1030</sup> Mahajirov hill cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:27.

6).<sup>1031</sup> They seldom appear in pairs and placed either at the right or left side of skull.<sup>1032</sup> Three jugs is exception, when two of them located below the torso and third at the left side of skull (**Table 79a. 6**).<sup>1033</sup> Few II stage graves show casserole placed at the foot;<sup>1034</sup> some footed dishes set inside the casserole<sup>1035</sup> or deep dishes covering jar<sup>1036</sup> repeat the construction of lid-covered pottery similar to male graves. Knife is occasional find and positioned on the chest (**Tables 79a. 5; 79b. 8**).<sup>1037</sup> Only few graves provide knife below the chest (**Table 79a. 4**).<sup>1038</sup>

From dress accessories fibulae defines with varying location and quantity, but they did not exceed more than five fibulae.<sup>1039</sup> I and II stage graves clearly show the practice of pin the female cloth with three fibulas (**Table 79a. 5-6**). Therefore, on the chest commonly appears two<sup>1040</sup> or three bow fibulae,<sup>1041</sup> but four is rare occasion.<sup>1042</sup> Some decorated bow fibulae located below the chest, perhaps for different purpose.<sup>1043</sup> Similarly rare is an evidence of three different bow fibulas placed at the right elbow.<sup>1044</sup> It seldom occurs at the head (**Table 79a. 6**).<sup>1045</sup> Some of them are suggestively indicative for a certain headdress types. But few decorated cross headed bow fibulae, some even with spiral- straps occurring at the temple or on the nape, are expected for decorative textile straps.<sup>1046</sup> Brooches are varying during all three historical phases and always deposited on the chest (**Table 111c**). Buckle is seldom found and applies near to hip (oval-ring plate buckle) in two graves.<sup>1047</sup>

Personal property locates on upper body. A silver earring finds at the both temples of female skeleton within I-II stage graves (**Table 79a. 4**).<sup>1048</sup> But few occasions show their location both at the right elbow<sup>1049</sup> or shoulder.<sup>1050</sup> This latter provide the case of two pairs of

<sup>1031</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:58. Pic.99.31.

<sup>1032</sup> SW oriented Mahajirov hill grave 1. This grave features a coin placing practice in the mouth of decease. Pic. 19.1.

<sup>1033</sup> Tsebelda grave 10. Pic.99

<sup>1034</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1 and 3. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:55-56. Pic. 92.1; 93.1

<sup>1035</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:56. Pic.93.7.

<sup>1036</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:58. Pic.99.6.

<sup>1037</sup> Mahajirov hill cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1990:27.Pic.20.6.

<sup>1038</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:58. Pic.99.10.

<sup>1039</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 28. Trapsh 1971:47. Tabl.XII.3-4,7,9,10.

<sup>1040</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:58. Pic.99.14.15.

<sup>1041</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 28. Trapsh 1971:47. Tabl.XII.4,7,9; Mahajirov hill cemetery grave 6. Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1990.

<sup>1042</sup> Mahajirov hill cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1990:27. Pic.20.

<sup>1043</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery gave 5. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1044</sup> Two of these fibulas are occurred with strapped chain in Tsebelda grave 3. One of them remains traces of iron tissue. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:56. Pic. 11-13.

<sup>1045</sup> Evidenced in following cemeteries: Abgidzrakhu graves 28, 45; Alrakhu grave 5; Apiancha grave 37. Trapsh 1971:47. Tabl.XII.10; Trapsh 1971; Gunba 1978.

<sup>1046</sup> Apiancha cemetery grave 37. Baghaturia-Kner 2012.Tabl.XV-b.

<sup>1047</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 2 and 53. Trapsh 1971:22,80. Tabl.I.4; XXX.7.

<sup>1048</sup> Abramov cemetery graves 5, 6 and Abgidzrakhu grave 28. Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1990:25. Pic.15. 8,24. Trapsh 1971:47. Tabl.XII.10.

<sup>1049</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgazhba 1982:56. Pic. 93.9.

earring appearing in the same grave, one placed on the right shoulder and another inside of jar. Hair decorative coils or temple rings are few and evidenced at appropriate area of skull.<sup>1051</sup> Finger ring is seldom offered and placed either below the chest<sup>1052</sup> or on the left hand.<sup>1053</sup> Rare objects found on the chest is a black stone appearing within the III stage grave.<sup>1054</sup> Beads are worn as jewellery and located on the area of neck or chest (**Table 79a. 4-7**). They show silver gilded type, some monochrome royal blue or green glass and dotted paste beads.<sup>1055</sup> But some smallest beads might indicate for their button function. Bracelet appears either on each arm<sup>1056</sup> or at the left arm (**Table 79b. 8, 11**). In addition, there are certain coil-wire hoops evidenced in area of skull and supposed to be functioned as hair decoration.<sup>1057</sup>

Spindle that appears among the II stage graves found at the left side of skeleton, but either outside of jar at the middle body<sup>1058</sup> or inside of jar that is placed near to skull. It seldom deposited below the chest of skeleton.<sup>1059</sup>

Some hygiene or cosmetic items appear within 4<sup>th</sup> century offerings are placed on the chest<sup>1060</sup> and occasionally on the left shoulder (**Table 79a. 7**).<sup>1061</sup> It is obviously indicative for Roman influence.

The rarest offering is the gardening tool hoe which is placed at the foot near to the pottery within II stage female graves (**Table 79a. 6**) and occasionally in the area of skull near to the pottery (**Table 79a. 4**).<sup>1062</sup> Most unusual is number of wooden chips placed inside of *pithoi* in one female grave of this period.<sup>1063</sup> An iron scissor located at right shoulder is very seldom case (**Table 79b. 11**). Knitting needle with one pointing (crushing hocks) placed at the chest is exclusive find (**Table 114. 11-14**). Also the perfume tools found on the right hip. All three are evidenced in the same grave.<sup>1064</sup>

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<sup>1050</sup> From two distinctive earrings from Tsebelda grave 10, one pair was placed at the right shoulder of deceased and another in jar. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:58. Pic.99. 31.99.

<sup>1051</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 40 and Aukhuamakhu grave 1. Trapsh 1971:63,98. Tabl.XIX.9; XXXVIII.6-7.

<sup>1052</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:58. Pic.99.20.

<sup>1053</sup> Alrakhu cemetery grave 5. Trapsh 1971:110-112. Tabl. XLII. 4.

<sup>1054</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 24. Trapsh 1971:44. Tabl. X. 4.

<sup>1055</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:58. Pic.99.23-27.

<sup>1056</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:58. Pic. 99.17,18. Abgidzrakhu female in grave 2 wore one bracelets on both wrists. Trapsh 1971:22. Tabl. I.3,5,7.

<sup>1057</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 5 and Akhuamakhu grave 1. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1058</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:56. Pic.93.10.

<sup>1059</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:58. Pic.99.12.

<sup>1060</sup> Tserkovni cemetery grave 2 and Justinianov grave 3. Voronov, Jushin 1971:171, 182. Pic.2.6; Pic.12.10.

<sup>1061</sup> Tserkovni cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Jushin 1971:171. Pic.3.9.

<sup>1062</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1, 8 and 9. In grave 9 it found between the casserole and dish Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:55,57. Pic.92.2; 99.9.

<sup>1063</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:58. Pic.99.7,31.

<sup>1064</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 23. Voronov and others 1989:12. Pic.8.5.

Rare presence of single needles observed in few female graves of mid-5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1065</sup> Their deliberate position on the left shoulder opens way to sacral attitudes.<sup>1066</sup> On the chest appearing even two bronze needles with leather box (**Table 114. 8-10** ).<sup>1067</sup> Only one coin was evidenced in female grave of Patskhiri valley and it was placed in mouth of decease (**Table 79c. 15**).<sup>1068</sup> There are cases of depositing animal sculpture in female graves of II stage (250-320). Animal types are limited and represented by oxen or wild pig.<sup>1069</sup>

#### **VI. 1. 1. 1. 4 Diversity considerations in inhumation burial practice of population Apsilia**

Some aspects of the inhumane practice, revealed people in different ways and in different part of Apsilia, give an idea of diversity. That is a very small number of male warriors may tell story of gradual changes within communities of Apsilia. Two of them appear in Mahajirov hill and the rest come from the cemetery of Tsebelda. Two distinctive practices revealed in:

- Depositing food
- Coin placing in mouth
- Deformation of skull (?)

#### *DEPOSITING FOOD*

An animal remains that is exceptional find in grave, might not be an accidental in warrior grave from Tsebelda (**Fig. 46**).<sup>1070</sup> From the decease orientation with the head to the E, implies examples of such grave orientation which is limited in Apsilia and show examples of most diverse practices in area. But with extended arms and feet it shows the most excepted body position. There is an evidence of holding the silver coin of Lucius Verus (161-177) in right hand, which is similarly unusual practice. Furthermore, there is no comparison in placing of buckle (bronze buckle with glass cloisonné work) under the palm of right hand in

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<sup>1065</sup> The localization of needle in Justinian hill grave 3 is not recorded and neither can be seen in attached drawing. Voronov, Jushin 1971:182. Pic.12.9.

<sup>1066</sup> In Tserkovni cemetery grave 3, it was assisted with needle box. Voronov, Jushin 1971:172. Pic.3.7,8.

<sup>1067</sup> Justinian hill cemetery grave 4. Voronov, Jushin 1971:184. Pic.13.18-20.

<sup>1068</sup> The type of coin that appears in SW oriented Mahajirov grave 1 is not described in publication. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:26. Pic.19.1,5.

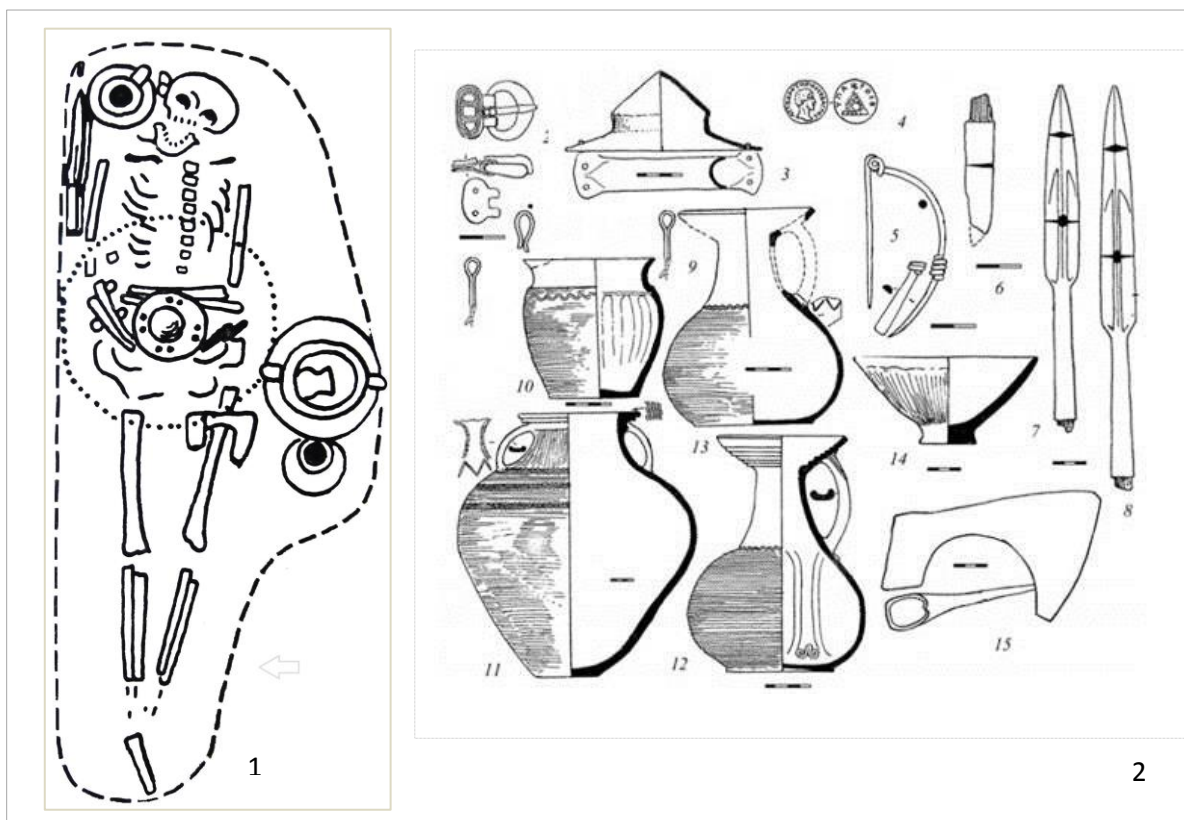
<sup>1069</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 39. Trapsh 1971:61.Tabl.XVIII.2. Sometimes the teeth of animals joints the *fibulas* as strep-ends may reveal similarly apotropaic function (?).

<sup>1070</sup> Animal that bones were evidenced at the foot of male skeleton in Tsebelda cemetery gave 1-24 has not been identified. Voronov 1982:139-140.



majority practice. He shows a head cover that fastened at the right temple by bronze arched bow fibulae, which is very rare practice and identifies some individuals only in Tsebelda area.

We don't know what animal or animal part has been deposited, but the way of their placing at the foot of the skeleton having several comparisons beyond Colchis.<sup>1071</sup> It is surely not characterizing the homogeneity population of area.



**Fig. 46.** Individual has been offered by animal remain (food). Buried in Tsebelda cemetery grave 41. 2 - Corresponding grave assemblages. *Source: Voronov, Shenkao 1982; Kazanski 2015. Pic. 3*

If consider richly offered grave goods, there are many other details contemporary with foreigner. There is shield fitted with imported *Zieling K2* boss. Pottery jug is also exclusive with entirely ribbed body design and producing foreign impressions. But other weapons like spears and battle axe is truly local. Therefore, it is still difficult to explain the choice of presenting ritual deposition of food,<sup>1072</sup> which may linked whether with belief or identity. In fact, such custom is strongly Germanic in nature and its funerary significance within Apsilian population is uncertain. From chronology it belongs to the earlier grave group whether of

<sup>1071</sup> There is another, slightly distinctive comparison from Skovgrade grave on Zealand in Denmark, where the animal was deposited in a large bowl and placed at the food of the female skeleton.

<sup>1072</sup> This could have had a ritual meaning and depicting a dietary of afterlife.

second or third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. All bridges the years of undergoing changes within the Kingdom of Colchis.

#### *COIN PLACING IN THE MOUTH OF DECEASE*

Four individuals are introducing other functional significance of coins in burial practices of Apsilia. It connects two Tsebelda males, one from Akhacharkhu and a female of Mahajirov cemetery in Shapka area (**Fig. 47. 2**). From this practice alone, all four may regard someone non-local. Exception of other details, well presented in funerary structure of Tsebelda warrior, clearly indicates none-indigenous tradition of burring dead (**Table 92. 1-2**).<sup>1073</sup> E orientation of grave (with extended position of body parts) and Hadrian Dirham (117-138 AD) of Caesarean mint placed in the mouth was not only way exposing its distinction. But such limited practice as Flintstone placing on the chest and most offerings rather associated with homogenous objects.

We can see nearly identical jugs as in the warrior grave with animal remains. Furthermore, the metal object suggested as dice, showing roman influence. His fibulae unusually attached with black bead (with yellowish intersected lines) and placed on the right shoulder, is somehow attentive. High quality of weapons and best protected by shield fitted with boss of *Aj-Todor* type, also supports idea of its foreign origin or at least Romanized warrior.

Another case presenting a silver coin of Julia Domna<sup>1074</sup> is distinctive by W orientation of skeleton (with *Head position 3*, slightly bent foot, arms placed on the hip). It also show the male individual consumed with such limited practice as depositing grindstone on the area of waist. We can see similar head cover pinned at the right temple. They all may additional lead of non-areal association. His jug is non-areal version. But from weapon quality including two spears, it does not provide any distinguishable context. Only the imported glass vessel may define him socially.

Link between the female and the male burial practices appears only in the coin depositing in mouth. From condition the coin is recorded unidentifiable.<sup>1075</sup> But only few cases is known of similar SW oriented graves with arm position 3 (left arm placed on her hip), especially with rarest head position 2 (facing to the right). It could be an indirect lead of non-areal identity. There are only one or two samples of female decease in Apsilia, does not occurring fasteners

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<sup>1073</sup> Appear in Tsebelda grave 1-104, Mahajirov grave 1 and Akhacharkhu grave 14. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pic.13.1,15; Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:26.Pic.19.1,5; Trapsh 1975:19-21. Pic. 5.8.

<sup>1074</sup> The coin occurs on the chin of the male skull in Akhacharkhu grave 14, which was faced to the left. Possibly, such facing caused the discovery of coin next to the skull. Trapsh 1975:19-21. Pic.5.8.

<sup>1075</sup> Mahajirov hill cemetery grave 1. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:26.Pic.19.1,5.

likewise Mahajirov. Practice of depositing a local small knife also brings closer to the central Apsilian female community. From grave offerings only jug reveals a similar view of local pouring wares. Little wealthy impression gives only imported bowl of ‘rieppenschale’ type (Table 103. 1). But there is no other evidence for such glass bowl to be appearing in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Dating evidences suggest burry of female roughly during the 360-380 AD.



**Fig. 47. Individuals buried with coins in mouth.** 1-Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-104. 2-Mahajirov cemetery grave 1. 3- Tsebelda cemetery 119 (26). Reconstructed grave structures. *Material sources: Voronov, Shenkao 1982, Pic.13; Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990. Pic.19. Voronov 2003.*

This evidence clearly indicates similarity in exposing dead by coin placing in mouth, which is not indigenous by nature. From many foreign examples we know the metaphor of such practice is linked with ‘Charon’s obol’<sup>1076</sup> and was used not only by Greeks, but quite widespread by Romanized population (also in Germany).<sup>1077</sup> All four interacted graves appearing in the

<sup>1076</sup> The context of ‘Charon obol’ sees also in: Stevens S.T. 1991:215-229; Thüry G.E, 1995; Maguire H., 1997.

<sup>1077</sup> Analogical practice has been widespread among the early medieval Germanic population. See: La Rocca C. 1988:236-245; Christie N. 1995. Much earlier has been observed in Near East and Western desert of Egypt. See: Fakhry A, 1950:122. According to some scholars, low-value coins were used for this practice. See: Herrmann-Mascard N.1975:275-296; Dubois 1976:449-453.

southern cemeteries of Apsilia from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century is suggestive for the short way of use. While did not continue in later years into the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Chronologic timespan produce the picture of earliest buried Tsebelda warrior probably between the 300 AD and 370 AD (**Table 92**); and 10 or 20 years later buried Mahajirov female (**Table 79c. 15**) and thereafter the Akhatsarakhu warrior. But we don't know whether or how this people related with one another or other individuals of cemetery. The fact of appearance in military graves and other distinctive details of their burial practices give reason expect soldiers whether involved in inroads security or just settled in Apsilia. Unfortunately there is no historical information<sup>1078</sup> supportive for this concept, but gradual movement of coastal militaries may source for such practices. 'Cross cultural exchanges' among militaries is also fact.

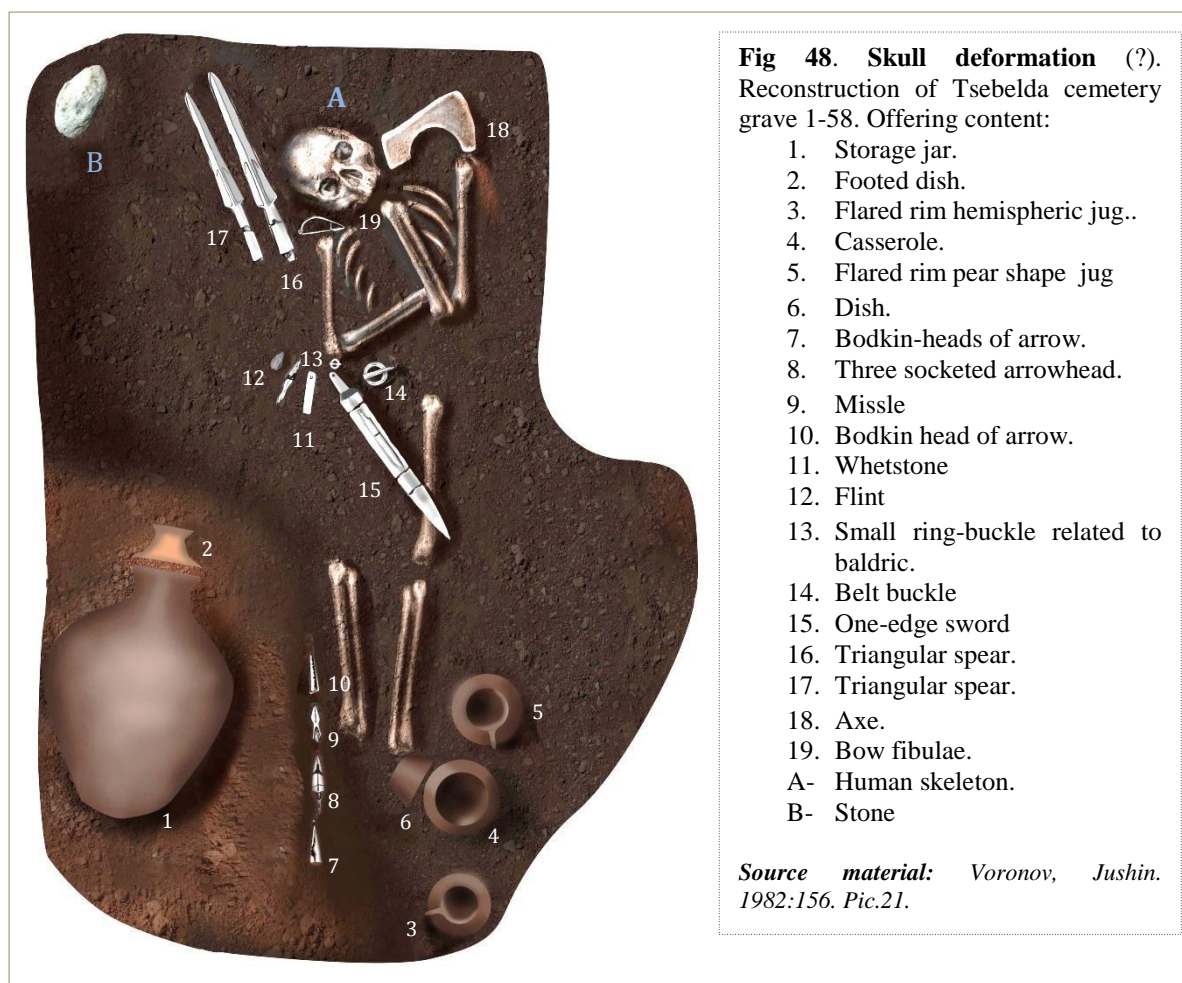
#### *ARTIFICIAL DEFORMATION OF THE SKULL (?)*

There is one exclusive case of male individual buried in Tsebelda cemetery-1, thought bringing in the light Alanian element (**Fig.48**).<sup>1079</sup> This is an integrated grave within the NE section of cemetery and most probably dates from about the late 4<sup>th</sup> century (**Table 73. N85**). It identified as east oriented decease, without any significant difference in body position. Skeleton lying on the back extended, with *body position 1 (variant 3)*; head is tilted to the right near to the shoulder; his both arms are bent on the elbow, with right arm placed on the stomach and left is pulled to the chin, and with *foot position 6*. The stone at the corner of the gravel pit perhaps representing a structural detail. Funerary deposition implied on the both sides and in large number similar to previous period. Pottery including jugs, casserole, and dish are set at the left on lower foot area. Weapons consisting sword, two spears and arrow-heads are placed at the right, but the battle axe is below the shoulder at the left side. Other small depositions intended to accompany the dead next to the waist are whetstone and flint. Unusual is appearance of a storage jar at the right side 15 cm above the fill, which was covered with dish. The position of buckle at the waist and fibulae on the right shoulder is indication of functional link.

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<sup>1078</sup> All we may suggest is possible link with population of coastal Sebastopolis, which is considered to have been grounded by the Greeks in early classical time.

<sup>1079</sup> It evidenced in Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 1-58. Voronov, Jushin 1982:156-157. Pic. 21. This grave has been mentioned in several later publications of Voronov (1995; 2003-printed by Bgzhba), Kazanski (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:57) and also of Bierbrauer (2008:60).



This is an example some scholars clime to find evidence for a concept of Alanian movement. If we focus on that particular sign of skull interpreted by excavator as ‘possible deformation (?)’,<sup>1080</sup> and if we did not accept it as genetic source,<sup>1081</sup> but as sequence of practice, and take into the consideration the deposition of single stone, which may include the ritual, it tells more about the Alan-Sarmatian origin.<sup>1082</sup> Traditional emphasis may also place in battle skills (shoot of bodkin-headed, socketed arrowheads), based on nomadic practice. A display

<sup>1080</sup> Voronov just raise a question of possible skull deformation, but he did not offered any observations on given physiology and anatomy of decease. He even did not detail a shape of the skull and deformation, which might suggestive for a practice of lengthening the head, such as ring-type binding of Sarmatian type or frontal bone bandage of Alan type. See: Voronov, Shenkao 1982:156. Pic.21.

<sup>1081</sup> For this context interest attracts to the naturally long-headed Colchian tribe Macroces distinctive from the rest population during the classic and Hellenistic time (Apoll.Rhod, Valerius Flaccus. *Argonautica*. V.151; Xenophon, Strabo, Plini (VI.11),and Pomponius). They often named as Macrocephalos (‘long-head’s) and Macrocephogones (long bearded) descended from *Pelazgoi* (Apolon Rhod). Hippocrates’ account in *extensor*: ‘I will begin with the Macrocephali. There is no other race at all with heads like theirs.’ Remarkable is their first living areas at the borders with Syria and Cappadocia, some locates them behind the Greek cities of Philocalia, Tipolis and Cerasus. They moved towards northern coastal Colchis. In fact, from roman time they seem in the process of assimilation. Srabo (*Geographica*. XII.iii.18) and Stephanus of Byzantium claim replacement of the name ‘Macroces’ by ‘Sanni’ in their time. But they are recorded as distinct people by Pliny the Elder. See: Gigauri Ts. 1985.

<sup>1082</sup> See also Bierbrauer 2008:57-63. About the stone placing practice and related rituals see in: Kozenkova 1989.

principle of pottery wares at the foot is purely supportive. But if we compare sort of nuances inside grave structure, we can see unusual details. Such is the most unusually placed covered jar, representing Colchian burial practice, where the regional nature of pottery may also seek to understand the reason of enriching the burial. We see the same novelties in offerings whetstone and flint used in areal warrior graves. We also see a little declined discipline of leading features based Alanian graves. Therefore, it is unclear what attitude was more influential to buried male and which of them is emotional decision of person tasked his funeral. We have basically a mixture of different things. And even it represent Alanian, this single grave does not feature Alanian movements into Apsilia.

His weapon capacity is designator of warrior (heavy infantry) skilled in distance and close combat fighting, which may apply roman forces. Particular features of clothing are in connection with Romanised warriors and more practical in a close combat fighting. All this boosts speulations. From dated context probably around the 380-400/410 AD and from Alanian perspective it introduces a possible warrior, perhaps with recruited background who fights for the interests of the empire. It may also linked with Huns invasions around 375, when western group of Alans joins them; could also be imagined as result of roman services after forming *comitatus Alani*, had been incorporated in to the cavalry of imperial army with own leader *Magister Equitium*.<sup>1083</sup> But in this particular case, I think, some kind of genetic information and shift of intercultural marriages might expect rather than direct link with moved Alanian, because, there is no other alternative for their appearance in Colchis at the time.

## VI. 1. 1. 2 CREMATION GRAVES

Existed information leads at least 20 survival cremation graves in Apsilia split in eight different cemeteries over different historical time (**Tables 68-76**). In general it was minority right and no single cremation cemetery existed in Apsilia except certain short period of time. That considers late 3<sup>rd</sup> century when single cremation graves first evidenced in Abramov and Mahajirov hills,<sup>1084</sup> which shows that entire population of Patskiri valley was pagan with

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<sup>1083</sup> *Magister Equitium* -the commander in chief of the cavalry. They received this rank under the emperor Valens from 369AD to 374 AD.

<sup>1084</sup> Inhumation grave 1. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov, 1990:24-29. AO-1985, pic 19.1-5.

attitudes of body cremation. But earliest evidences of cremation graves roughly associates I stage graves of areas Tsebelda and Mramba.<sup>1085</sup> Soon after remarkable is their considerable grew and concentration in central Apsilia at the river Machara basing, when they proceeded also in cemeteries of Apiancha<sup>1086</sup> and other burial hills of the village Mramba and Shapka. But except Abgidzrakhu cemetery they remain few in each burial site even in late 4<sup>th</sup> century, when they increased most. Latest group considers new burial hill of early 6<sup>th</sup> century Tserkovni in Shapka area. Beyond this hill they are not observable in any other cemeteries

During this time only few of them evidence continually use (**Fig 44**). Long term cremation graves evidenced in Verin hill cemetery, which provides I, II and III stage graves during 300 years (**Table 70. 9**).<sup>1087</sup> Some like the necropolis of village Mramba may account at least three generations in Alrakhu<sup>1088</sup> and Abgidzrakhu cemeteries, consisting II to III stage graves (**Table 68**). The same has to say about southern Apiancha cemetery<sup>1089</sup> and northern Apushta cemetery.<sup>1090</sup> Shortest use of cremation graves is evidenced in Grushin Yeard<sup>1091</sup> and Akhacharkhu cemetery<sup>1092</sup> of Shapka area during the years 380-450, which considers to the III stage graves. The longest use of cremation practice is presented in south the Verin hill cemetery of Patskhiri valley; where its duration estimates 300 years and continually provided within I, II and III stage graves.<sup>1093</sup>

However, most unusual cremation graves evidenced in Abramov and Mahajirov cemeteries, those were first earliest cremation cemetery of area. But certain distinctive graves also observable in Abgidzrakhu cemetery, which is biggest from amount. All three made obvious that late 3<sup>rd</sup> century was a time when distinctions within the cremation practices begun and contribute the knowledge of regional graves.

All they proved that decease was cremated in pyre place, as there no information about the *insitu* burning in gravel pit. It is uncertain if all decease was cremated in clothed condition or not, because most excavator does not deal with such details.

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<sup>1085</sup> Cremation graves 1-82, 1-70, 1-66. Voronov. Shenkao 1982:136-140. pic.7, 8, 9; Trapsh 1971 .

<sup>1086</sup> Gunba 1978:46. Apiancha cremation grave N38. Tabl.XXXVIII.

<sup>1087</sup> See the data of consisting graves in Voronov 1982:137.

<sup>1088</sup> Gunba 1978.

<sup>1089</sup> Shamba 1970.

<sup>1090</sup> Voronov 1975.

<sup>1091</sup> Voronov 1975.

<sup>1092</sup> Shamba 1970.

<sup>1093</sup> Voronov 1982:137.

### ***VI. 1. 1. 2. 1 Cremation grave features and cremains disposal***

Cremation graves were placed inside occupied area by inhumane community. No standardised norm revealed for their location. Some appears in the centre of inhumation graves. They rarely evidenced in same way as inhumation, this appears within them.

***Grave forms and size.*** Graves are simple earth dug. Their form is often not detailed. Recorded shapes of grave cut are two types square with rounded corners and rounded; those are gender demanded characteristics (**Table 78**). Proportionally they are distinctive. Rounded form grave pits are much smaller and provide the depth between 0.3-0.7 m and width between the 0.6-1.0 m.<sup>1094</sup> Since this form identifies the female gender, corresponding offering categories might consequence smaller size of graves (**Table 78. 5**).

Other grave types with square cut and with rounded corners are between the 0.5-0.6 m in depth, 0.8-1.15 m width and 1.2-1.6 m length.<sup>1095</sup> Few consisted shield, *pithoi* and amphorae are slightly increased in proportions and appear nearly similar in 0.4x1.6x1.15 m (**Table 78. 1**).<sup>1096</sup> But those with one handled jar having a smaller size with 0.35 m depth, 80 with and 1.30 m.<sup>1097</sup> Increase of size remarkable after the 370 AD is characterises weapon equipped males, where two storage wares are viewed. Therefore, addition of weapons and two storage wares reflected in proportions.

***Cremains disposal.*** The traditional technique of decease treatment is impossible to follow because of lack of solid information. Evidences of complete personal accessories from most graves suggest a decease cremation in naked condition, but few exceptions give contra version information. Some purely described graves also give notion about the common practical knowledge of body cremation used in Apsilia. Which is reflected in slight fired body extending ash and bone fragments;<sup>1098</sup> but cremains are not detailed in structures, which enables to provide further information about them.<sup>1099</sup> Cremains containing the bone remains are rare.

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<sup>1094</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 20; Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 9. Trapsh 1971:41,95. Pic.5.

<sup>1095</sup> Trapsh 1971:123; 1975:65.

<sup>1096</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 27 and 44. Trapsh 1971:44, 67. Pic.6.1, Pic.5. Tabl.XI. XXII.

<sup>1097</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 47. Trapsh 1975:51.

<sup>1098</sup> Such cremains are evidenced in following cemeteries: Abgidzrakhu *pithoi*-urn graves 42, 44 (*lid-cover* urn); Akhatsarakhu *pithoi*-urn graves 9, 11, 12; Aukhuamakhu *pithoi*-urn grave 3; in Alrakhu Jar-urn grave 10. See in: Trapsh 1971:65, 67, 95-97,102,116.

<sup>1099</sup> A variety of cremation practice is detailed in corresponding chapter IV.



## VI. 1. 1. 2. 2 Cremation grave types

There is some variation in display of cremated body, choice of urn and offerings. This made distinction of grave types. Two general grave categories are recognized in un-urn and urn types. They construct distinctive attitudes in structure. Accordingly, their internal design is also varying. But gender relative construction always considers the choice of body container.

**Un-urn graves.** Un-urn graves are exceptional categories. Evidences are little and consider only one female grave from Abgidzrakhu cemetery in village Mramba. Recorded that body cremains with bone fragments are simply dispersed directly in rounded gravel pit.<sup>1100</sup> They seem to be collected from pyre place. But it is uncertain if such cases are suggestive for distinction in decease treatment whether in cloth or naked condition. Deposition included storage jar, clothing fasteners (coil-banded bow fibulas), neckless suspended by various beads made recognisable female gender.<sup>1101</sup> In fact, such custom first appear in prehistoric time in the vicinity of Apsilia and continued into the Hellenistic.<sup>1102</sup>

**Urn graves.** Majority is urn graves, where the cremains of human body were accommodated in body container. Storage pottery is potential source for body container, but noticeable is the significance of their selection. There are two following urn types:

- *Pithoi* urns
- Jar urns

Both urn types are seen over few cemeteries and appear in different historical time. Some are represented in covered form. Other specifics are recognised in their condition and corresponding display. From design they are more depending on urn types and relative customization. Therefore, selected urn categories seem to be decisive for grave structure (detailed in IV). Conceptual basis is hidden behind their choice, but visually recognisable differences seen within the gender context.<sup>1103</sup> All three co-exists in late imperial Apsilia, except an inverted urn which appearing from mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century.

**Type 1, *Pithoi urns.*** *Pithoi* was the most favoured urn category for males from the beginning (Table 78. 1-3). It represent the first largest group of cremation urn types and recognized as commonest over the central Apsilian necropolises of Abgidzrakhu,

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<sup>1100</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 20. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1101</sup> Recorded types are eight various colored beads, one mountain rock of black color and one jet. The grave material is lacking their illustration.

<sup>1102</sup> They synchronically introduced in areas of mountain Guadikhu, Sukhumi Mountain and west Georgian Brili in 8<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> BC. See in: Trapsh 1955:214; Gbejishvili 1952:186.

<sup>1103</sup> This is the authors' investigation examined in chapter IV.

Aukhuamakhu and Alrakhu during 340-450 AD. Only few consider Apiancha and Akhacharakhu cemeteries at the south, but largely neglected in upland Apsilia.

There is no tendency of urn standardisation, often domestic types and sparsely decorated wares. Those differences are seen in design, decorative style and proportions, which is a time demanded factor as well. But all they have a conic body with either flattened or thickened bottom. Earlier forms are distinguishable with everted rim on concaved neck and appear in smaller size during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Some have relatively wide mouth with low rim. They are commonly ornamented with wavy lines. But their arrangements and combined elements, either with X shape looped lines or stars are often distinctive.<sup>1104</sup> The greatest diameter of urn-pithois is 45-50 cm and sizes are ranging from smaller 50 cm to medium 65 cm and big 70 cm. Their rim measure 12-15 cm diameter and bottom 5-10 cm diameter.

It is still difficult to associate these wares specifically with any community of area. In addition evidences from different cemeteries are recognised variation of urn display, decisive for expected structure. They show two following outline:

- ✓ Horizontal
- ✓ vertical
- ✓ Inverted

But there is no dimensional standard for any of this positional type. Some of them are covered *pithoi*-urns. Difference is seen in item condition and object arrangement. Some may consider changes in disposal practices. Such urns show changes in internal grave structure in early 3<sup>rd</sup> and late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Intentionality of rituals also discerns *pithoi*-urn graves<sup>1105</sup> and contains offerings seldom evidenced in Colchis.

Horizontal position is a commonest form of display of *pithoi*-urns (**Table 78. 3**).<sup>1106</sup> Such display seems decisional for funerary practice, since it was a long areal tradition (detailed in IV). Very few occurs lid cover.<sup>1107</sup> Some of these graves finds in periphery part of Abgidzrakhu cemetery and few in Tsebelda. Very few of these graves contain coins dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

Inverted position is occasional form and decisional for internal structure (**Table 78. 2**). It usually defines by smallest size of *pithoi* types (H.60 cm)<sup>1108</sup> provided either in complete or

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<sup>1104</sup> In Apiancha cremation grave 26 it was similarly inverted in gravel pit. Gunba 1978:34. Tabl. XXIV.1. Another similarly inverted urn from Apiancha grave 38 is late imperial type with slightly wide bottom. See: Gunba 1978. Tabl. XXXVIII.1.

<sup>1105</sup> Thrusted swords in gravel pit occur in Abgidzrakhu grave 44 and Akhatsarakhu graves 9, 11. Trapsh 1971:67, 95, 96.

<sup>1106</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70 and Abgidzrakhu graves 27, 37 see in: Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.8.1. Trapsh 1971:44, 59. Tabl. XI. Pic.10. XVII;

<sup>1107</sup> Abgidzrakhu graves 6, 44 and Abramov cemetery male grave 9. Trapsh 1971:25, 65, 67-68. Tabl. II. Tabl. XXII; Voronov, Bgzhzba and others 1990:25. Pic.16.1.

<sup>1108</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 3. Trapsh 1971:24.

fragmented condition. Very few occurs lid cover. The grave structure has been controlled by condition of appropriated pottery and weapons. But most fascinating within this urn type graves are ritual acts.<sup>1109</sup> This group is very limited and characterizes Phatskiri valley. One should be noted that inverted form introduces also the cenotaph burial tradition which provides complete urns and diverse with scarcely offered items.<sup>1110</sup>

Complete pithoi-urns inverted in graves are more vary. They show little distinctive offering arrangement operated through pottery weapons and depended on their damaged condition. Exceptional is deposition of two spear heads, two knives, fibulae and buckle inside urn within *pithoi*-urn graves of stage I.<sup>1111</sup> From age they are hard to assess.

**Type 2, Jar urns.** Handled jar urns is dominant urn type in periphery cemeteries of upland part (**Table 78. 5-6**). In contrast to *pithoi*, they favoured little settlers in central Apsilia, where few evidences come from Abgidzrakhu, Alrakhu cemeteries and Abramov hill burials.<sup>1112</sup> Much popularity used in Apushta and Lar cemeteries from the either late 3<sup>rd</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century, but in a relatively short time. Very few graves of this type provide burnt objects, which may suggestive for distinctive practice in decease treatment.

Jar-urns are smallest group and may assign periphery graves.<sup>1113</sup> They show limited types little distinct in body shape, but not in decoration. Their profile is varying from biconic to ovoid with flared rim. The shaping of shoulders and middle body is chronologically decisive character. They are distinctive in proportion. High-shouldered jars are earlier variants and bigger size wares (**Table 23. B**). Smaller ones are low-shouldered jars and later series of void variants differing with high handle and narrow neck. This is characteristic design of late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Their greatest body dimeter is 35 cm (H. 55 cm, R.D 25 cm, Bottom Dm 15 cm, thickness wall 8 mm). Some mid-4<sup>th</sup> century variants receive grooved design on shoulders and producing a double line composition.<sup>1114</sup> Developed wavy ornament surrounding upper shoulders is indicative for later phase. None of them are closely dated wares.

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<sup>1109</sup> A spear thrust in grave pit is evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 3. Trapsh 1971:24. Tabl. III.

<sup>1110</sup> Abramov cemetery graves 5. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:25.Pic.15.1.

<sup>1111</sup> Verin cemetery destructed grave 5. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:28. Pic.22.12-16.

<sup>1112</sup> They are cremation graves: Abgidzrakhu grave 21, Alrakhu graves 10, 11. Trapsh 1971:41:115-116. Tabl .XVIII.5.

<sup>1113</sup> Akhatsarakhu graves 10 and 11. Trapsh 1971:115,116.

<sup>1114</sup> Lie covered urn appears in Alrakhu grave 11. A Jar-urn, where the bronze fibulae and a necklace were accommodated was covered by Colchian deep dish. It is remarkable that bronze neckless was placed outside the urn. Trapsh 1971:116. Tabl.XLVIII,1-6.

Jar urns apply standard corner location in the gravel pit. They occasionally find in vertical position<sup>1115</sup> and seldom inverted. Very few male jar urns in all three positions. Usual form for female jar urn is lie<sup>1116</sup> and very seldom appears in inverted position.<sup>1117</sup>

Structurally they are not much distinguished graves, but offering context always depends on gender category. But pottery wares and personal properties were the most common. Therefore, most female indicative objects are finds within such graves, especially such categories like spindle whorls and hoe. But such deposition like jug placed inside is exception.<sup>1118</sup>

### ***VI. 1. 1. 2. 3 Internal construction of cremation graves***

Urn display and consistence has been decisional for internal structure.<sup>1119</sup> The most diversifying is the position and condition of urn. Other visible differences correspond to the offering categories, their types and composition as the main influential factor of choice and cause for structural differences. The choice itself has been influenced by gender, their social status, experiences and cognitive practice. Details are presented in special chapters of this thesis, therefore here we summarize here a common character of depositional practices.

In all historical phase the *pithoi*-urn was placed in the centre and surrounded by pottery and weapons (**Tables** 91; 97). The grave goods are arranged outside or inside is due to their functional character, but the space arrangement of grave pit has been controlled by pottery and weapons. They usually contain the pouring wares placed at the north and battle axe at the south. Few of this urn type, diverse with pouring ware placed inside urn. Some covered with bottom of fragmented jug or dish is viewed in terms of differing practices as they consider cenotaph as well.<sup>1120</sup> Such consistence is suggestive for the mid and early-4<sup>th</sup> century. One

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<sup>1115</sup> Akhatsarakhu grave 47 with vertically placed jar-urn was quite different from the internal grave structure. Trapsh 1975:53. Pic.22.

<sup>1116</sup> Abramov cemetery graves 10, 13. Voronov, Bgzhba and others. 1990:25-26. Pic.15.20; 16.12.

<sup>1117</sup> Cemetery *Tsibilium I*. Pic.195.1.

<sup>1118</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 13. Voronov 1982:57.

<sup>1119</sup> Illustrations of internal grave structure are not provided in publications. This especially considers the publication of Trapsh's (1971).

<sup>1120</sup> Abramov cemetery grave 4. Voronov, Shenkao and others 1990:25. Pic.15.1.

latest appearance shows the lack of pottery and weapons.<sup>1121</sup> Distinctive is an early structure of uncover lie *pithoi*-urn graves with sort of pottery at the north-west, including local two jugs, dish with pedestal foot, imported cup arranged in line, but very similar in placing spear at the west and axe at the south.<sup>1122</sup> The typical structure of covered lie *pithoi*-urn graves until mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century show two jugs at the north and spears at the east. But some exceptions of dissimilar construction evidence a spear and sword deposited at the west.<sup>1123</sup> Later 4<sup>th</sup> century structures of both grave types are compositionally distinctive with weapons, amphorae and glass vessels exercised from power sources. Some illustrate amphorae at the west, glass vessel placed directly above the urn or between the jar and amphorae, jugs at the east, equally the shield, sword and spears, which distinguishes from other grave structure.<sup>1124</sup> Nothing distinctly about the lie covered urn forms.

Structurally the basic patterns of male related jar-urn graves are placing at the corner. They are few, compositionally distinct and structurally diversified. Their commonest display is representing a lay uncovered jar-urn with pottery arrangement at the north and spears at the west.<sup>1125</sup> But some exception show pouring wares at the south, battle axe at the west and casserole inside urn.<sup>1126</sup> Covered urn variants are similar in north-west arrangement of pottery and battle axe at the south or south-west (**Table 48; Table 91**). Most exceptional structure considers vertically set and covered jar-urn placed at the east corner of the grave pit with all accompanied offerings deposited at the west.<sup>1127</sup> That shows three jugs arranged in a line below, above the spears and shield near to the urn handle and next the bell, axe, buckles and iron bits of L shape psalm. There is two graves with inverted form of jar-urn those internal construction is distinct with all three pottery placed at the litter south-west together with weapons (spears, one additionally with sword) located above or between the jugs.<sup>1128</sup>

But from positioning of the objects majority of female graves are similar, with usual structure of lie jar-urn graves (**Table 45. 1**). Exception of earlier structure within inverted jar-urns considers jug and hoe placed at the north and another juglet inside urn.<sup>1129</sup> Another case

<sup>1121</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin 1970:181. Pic. 9.1.

<sup>1122</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic. 8.1

<sup>1123</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-82. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.7.1.

<sup>1124</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 27. Trapsh 1971:44-47, Tabl .XI, Pic.10.

<sup>1125</sup> That is intercut grave 23 of Akhatsarakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1975:51.Pic.29.Pic. 11, a.

<sup>1126</sup> Cemetery *Tsibilium I*. Pic. 56.15.

<sup>1127</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery horseman grave 22. Trapsh 1975:51.Pic.22

<sup>1128</sup> Cemetery *Tsibilium I*. Pic.107.1; Pic.129.1

<sup>1129</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 3. Voronov 1982:51. Pic.22.1.

consider vertically placed urn grave, where the big kitchen wire assisted the body container at the right and with inside placed footed dish.<sup>1130</sup>

There is wide variety of offered items in any given time and from depositing of personal accessories inside urn the majority of graves are similar (**Table 78**). They are collected to accommodate in urn and accompany the body cremains; where similarly appears dress fasteners and belts fittings in graves of both genders. Distinction gives occasional evidences of jug inside urn, which characterizes gender and any urn type;<sup>1131</sup> as well as a long knife and spindle whorl deposition in urn.<sup>1132</sup> Small knives are always paced in urn, but they are rare case. Unusual is a placing of pottery cup, which associates only two graves.<sup>1133</sup>

Other depositional content of female possessions is almost the same and includes *fibula*, buckle, necklace, earring, bracelet, finger ring, pendant, and brooch and hair accessories. Occasional is appearance of golden cross in urn of female.<sup>1134</sup>

But some of the female urn possession like bracelet, metal neckless<sup>1135</sup> and finger ring is similarly correspond to the urn properties of male.<sup>1136</sup> Occasional offerings are Shave Lamella, Firestone<sup>1137</sup> and coin,<sup>1138</sup> which occur in few mid-4<sup>th</sup> century male graves. Grindstone is also a rare component of urn in warrior graves during the 260/270-380 AD.<sup>1139</sup> Occasional possession is hazelnuts and walnuts attributed to some warriors within earliest cremation grave groups of stage I (170-270 AD) of area.<sup>1140</sup> But there are rare evidences of such objects like small knife appearing in grave of both gender; arrowheads<sup>1141</sup> and dart are also rare finds within the grave group of stage I.<sup>1142</sup>

Difference between male and female urn structure drives gender demanded categories reflected in shaving tools, horse bit, or such jewellery component like bracelets, necklaces. In

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<sup>1130</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 4. Voronov 1982:51. Pic.22.26-29.

<sup>1131</sup> Abramov cemetery female gave 10, which belongs to the grave group of III stage. Another comes from Mahajirov cemetery male grave 4. Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1990:25, 27.Pic. 15.22; Pic.20.9.

<sup>1132</sup> Apushta cemetery female grave 7. Voronov 1982:53.Pic. 23.12-15.

<sup>1133</sup> They are imported Alanian cups evidenced in Abramov cemetery female gave 10 and Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-60. See in: Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1990:25.Pic. 15.22. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136.Pic.8.3.

<sup>1134</sup> Akhacharakhu cemetery cremation female grave 12. Trapsh 1971:97. Tabl. XXXVII.2; Tabl.B,2

<sup>1135</sup> It occurs in Abgidzrakhu cemetery male grave 3, where the *pithoi*-urn was covered and inverted in grave. Trapsh 1971:24. Tabl.II.7

<sup>1136</sup> In Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-82 a bronze bracelet was also found. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. A bronze bracelet with finger ring occurs in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 3, which belongs to the II stage grave groups. Trapsh. 1971:24. Tabl.II.5,7

<sup>1137</sup> A shave Lamella appears in Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-66. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:138. Pic.9.14. The firestone is evidenced in Apushta cemetery cremation grave 10. Voronov 1982:55. Pic.24.34.

<sup>1138</sup> Three silver coins of Caesarean mint are found in the urn of Tsebelda cemetery cremation grave 1-82. They are Dirham of Antonius Pius (138-161), Marc Aurelius (169-170 and Septimius Severus (193-211). Voronov, Shamba 1982:136. Pic. 7.6.8. Other two from Aukhuamakhu cemetery cremation graves (destroyed) are Dirahm of Emperor Nerva (minted in years 98) and Trajan (minted in years 98-99). Trapsh 1971:209.

<sup>1139</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-82, 1-70, 1-66 . Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136,138 , Pic.7.12;Pic.8.17; Pic.9.18.

<sup>1140</sup> In Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-82 appears hazelnuts and Walnut. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.7.

<sup>1141</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-70, 1-66. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136,138.Pic.8.13; Pic.9.9-10.

<sup>1142</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-66.

this sense no difference can be observed between male and female urn structure. But their choice reflected social profile of individuals, as combination always varies.

#### **VI. 1. 1. 2. 4 The nature of grave assemblages**

Deposition is a regular phenomenon for the burial population of Apsilian land. That is remarkable from the beginning until its final phase to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Both, cremation and inhumation similarly view offered items and there is nothing to distinguish (Fig. 49). But wealth composition is varying across the time. It is not recorded if grave offerings were life used objects or unworn.

Depositional schema provides all possible objects from daily life and views their functional transfer from life use into the death commemoration. In which distinguishes the pottery, personal articles, weapons and coins. Their choice is linked with conception and burial practices, but equally acceptable for Pagan and Christian population. They become regular character and include:

- *Personal objects*
- *Household items*
- *Battle weapons*
- *Coins*
- *Leather shoes* (with hobnails). Imported. An evidence of leather shoe exclusively relates.
- *Animal remains*. Exclusive find
- *Gaming items*. Occasional find
- *Horse harness*. Seldom finds

There is some occasional item spectrum, which appears generally until the last phase of late roman period. Some continued into the later graves. They consists coins, occasional finds of gaming items, horse harnesses and such exclusive finds as leather shoes and Animal remains.

However, most graves consists offerings above defined items. Distinctive is the dynamic of their appearance depended on gender, belief concept and historical period.

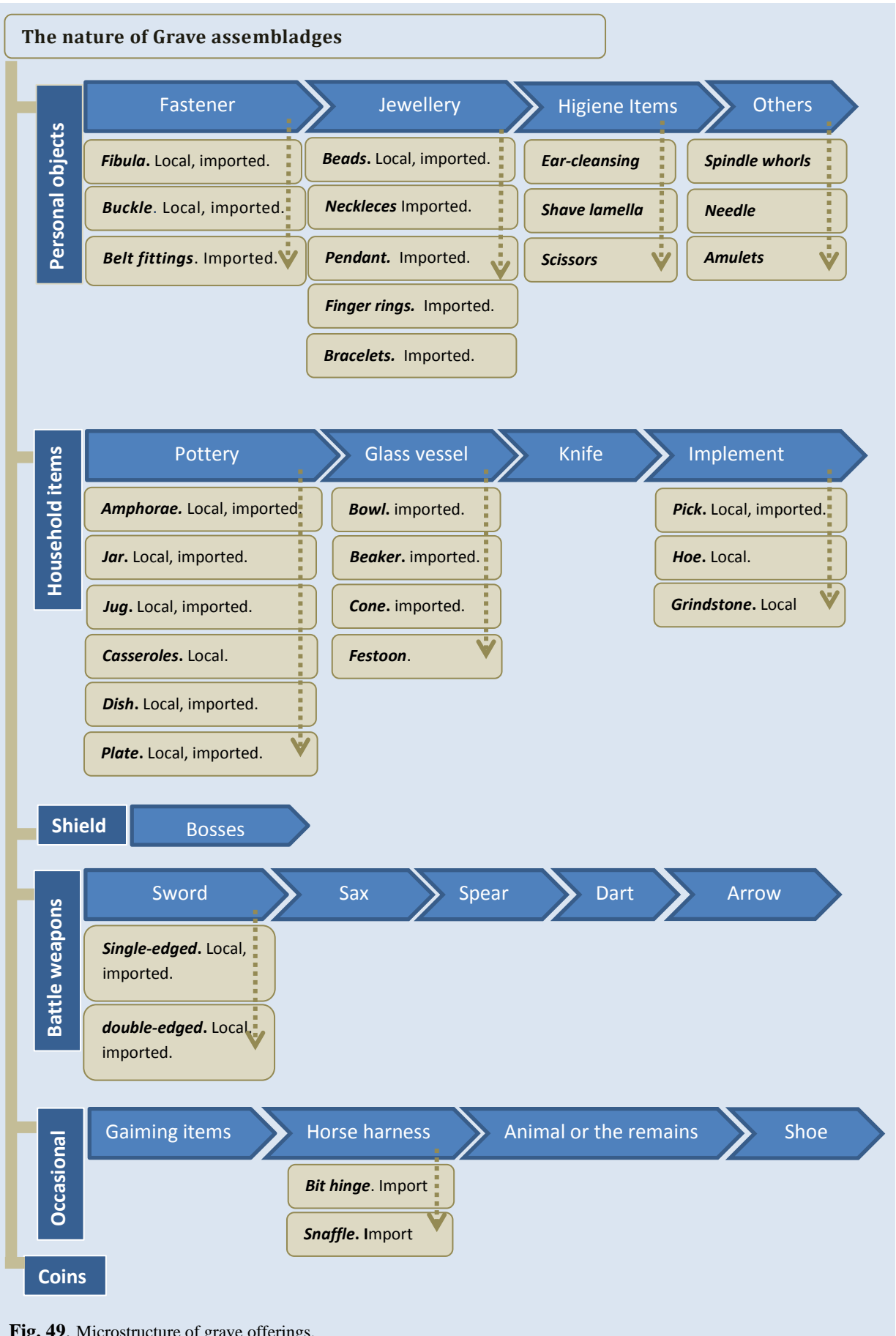


Fig. 49. Microstructure of grave offerings.



### VI. 1. 2 Cenotaph

There are three symbolic graves in Apiancha and Abramov hill (**Fig. 17. 4**) hoped to be related to ‘cenotaph’. They show slightly differing grave form, but equally dug 30 cm deep, and do not trace evidence for body remains or urn. Funeral is performed with offered goods placed in the ground. They show distinctive commemoration, perhaps relative two distinctive communities and three different chronologic groups. Earliest is Apiancha cenotaph about 320-350 AD (**Table 71. 23**).<sup>1143</sup> Consisting offerings are two jugs of areal type. Further details do not reported by excavator. Other two from Abramov may co-resident individuals but members of different community. Because the first imitating a lid-cover urn<sup>1144</sup> gives direct association with population of central Apsilia, that is most commonly used within the minorities of Mramba area. Corresponding deep dishes, hardly attributable to areal product give possible date to the grave not earlier than 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The latest cenotaph of Abramov hill cemetery is occurring inverted disposal of *pithoi*-urn.<sup>1145</sup> Corresponding pottery has areal nature but inverted form may contain direct evidence for regional pattern or for the regionally moved tribes.

We just speculate that appearance of this phenomenon in mid- imperial Apsilia may assign to non-areal settlers having no family in Apsilia and wished to be moved in birthplaces after their death.

### VI. 1. 3 Double burials

Other cases in Apsilia are double burials discovered of similar and distinctive gender. They are few and held three distinctive types:

*Type 1.* Female and male

*Type 2.* Female with adult

*Type 3.* Female with child

*Type 1* may associate with possible couples, while held two bodies of distinctive gender (**Fig. 50. 1, 2**). All three are evidenced in cemeteries of Apiancha and Tsebelda, representing

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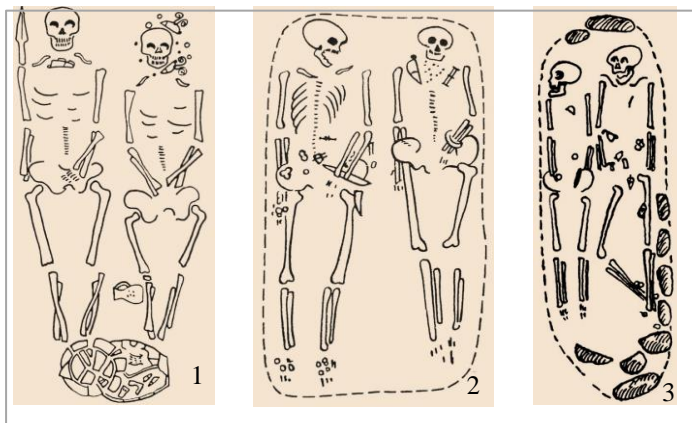
<sup>1143</sup> Apiancha cemetery grave 23. Gunba 1978:33.XXII.1, 2.

<sup>1144</sup> Abramov hill cemetery grave 13. In the drawing is recognisable an accompanied dish, fragmented flared -rim jug and unidentified pottery, which is recorded as amphorae. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov, 1990:26. Pic. 17.

<sup>1145</sup> Abramov hill grave 4. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov, 1990:25. Pic.15.1.

chronologically distinctive west and north-west oriented graves. They differ in three essential respects including the grave form, the stone-lining practice and display of body parts.

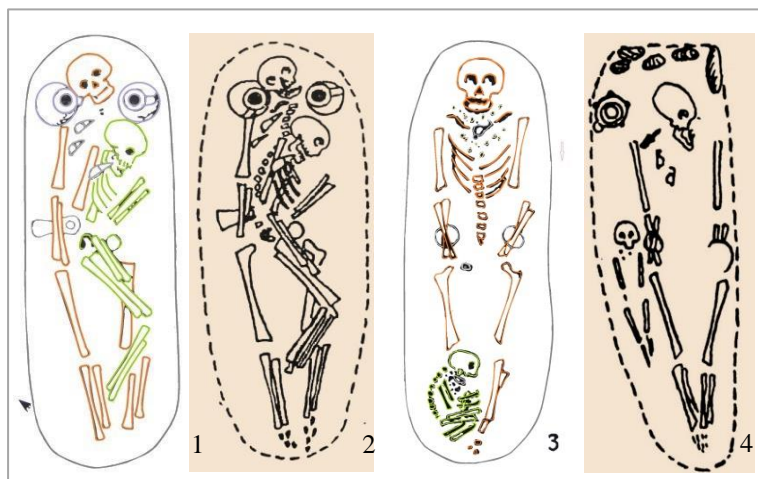
In the case of west oriented two graves of Apianacha and Tsebelda, bodies had been deposited extended on the back (*position 1*), with *arm position 14* and with the female lying on their left side. Only the Tsebelda male is faced towards the female. Such body display typically used in the W oriented graves.<sup>1146</sup> Difference in offering deposition show chronologically youngest Apianacha couples buried probably in the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. It is uncertain if slightly distinctive *arm position 14*<sup>1147</sup> and head covering of Apianacha women played conceptual role. But the lack of pottery in the grave of Tsebeldian couple buried probably in 530-550 AD might expect the sequence of ideological changes revealed in their burial practice.



**Fig. 50. Family graves. Type 1, Couple graves:**

- 1-Apianacha cemetery grave 37.
- 2-Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-3a. Tsebelda fort 13A and 13 B.

Sources: Gunba 1978. Table XXXIV; Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic. 22; Voronov, Bgazhba, etc. 1989. Pic. 6.



**Fig. 51. Family graves.**

*Types 2, female buried with adult:*

- 1- Lar cemetery grave 11.
- 2-Apianacha cemetery.

*Type 3, female buried with child:*

- 3- Apianacha cemetery.
- 4- Tsebelda fort grave 11.

Source: Voronov 1982. Pic.16. 15.

<sup>1146</sup> Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>1147</sup> W oriented Apianacha female grave 37. It is difficult to obtain if unusual *arm position 14* and head cover, which distinguishes this female, but uncommon for the population of Apsilia, may indication of different community. It is similarly uncertain if W orientation of grave can be a signal for Christianization. See: Gunba 1978: 43-45- Tabl. XXXIV.

Considerable is a third case of NW oriented grave, where bodes of couples had been buried in a distinctive position (**Fig. 50. 3**). Diversifying principle is seen in female placing at the right side of male, but extended on the back is the position most graves are identified in Apsilia. Unusual is the deviation in male display, lying on his left side with the *Body Position 3* and *Foot Position 4*.<sup>1148</sup> Both are faced to the right side is somehow a self-characterizing display. Other meaningful difference is seen in stone-lining practices of grave, which has been shortly observed among the population of Tsebelda, in two different historical times and may expect a gradual shift of different community group. Noticeable is their clothing accessories involving sort of imported north Caucasian fibula and Asian type functional belt.<sup>1149</sup> A relation between both Tsebeldian groups is not clearly seen. Separate location within the cemetery area could be result of different phase graves and a reasonably differing mark of distinctive communities.

**Type 2** shows a female with front placed feminine adult, which finds among the late phase graves of roman period (**Fig. 51**). Females buried in most predominant extended position may represent mothers. Distinction in their head facing (*Head Position 3*), could be insignificant (**Fig. 51. 2**). The female adult appears to have been articulated on their right hip, with rarest position (*Body Position 3, Foot Position 3*).<sup>1150</sup> Both are NE oriented graves from the Lar cemetery, showing oval grave cut and equally displayed offering structure. They are dated to the last phase of roman period.

Grave offerings are not characterizing them more than outlined features. But there is a little group of 3<sup>rd</sup> century unsexed young adult graves in Apsilia practiced such manipulations. It is hard to attribute these adults to any specific communities of area since elder females declining such practice of body articulation. Therefore, this model of two bodies display would result their age and indication of similar gender.

**Type 3** representing a child together with possible female parent (**Fig. 51**). They are chronologically different graves from Apiancha and Tsebelda cemeteries, showing two different case of positioning child. Earliest is Apiancha/Akhatsarakhu child buried in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, placed on the right foot of female and with west oriented body. His little body articulated on the right hip, with bent arm and foot (*Body Position 4*), displayed on the

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<sup>1148</sup> Male was placed on the back, with extended arms, but slightly turned on right hip and similarly faced to the right. Left foot had extended, the right is bent on knee (*foot position 4*). Remarkable is his clothing pinned with north Caucasian fibulae, belted with imported functional belt and dressed in imported leather shoes that reach until the sheen area. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:10. Pic.6.1.

<sup>1149</sup> About the functional belts see in: Baghaturia-Kner 2012:243. Tabl.XVII.G.

<sup>1150</sup> Lar cemetery female grave 11, which can be dated to 450-500 AD. This female seems wore a knife on the waist, likewise a little community of Shapka area. Noteworthy is that the lower jaw of child appears on the waist of female, as recorded in text. But it is not seen in attached drawings. Voronov 1982:36. Pic.16.15.

woman's leg, has been suggested exclusive type. But from reasonable comparisons, it might be suggestive pose indicative for female gender. An assisted female with extended body position showed less variation.

Another child buried later during the 500-530 AD in Tsebelda cemetery appears to be similarly placed on the right side of the female. Articulation on the back placed extended body is identic to mother, but differs in central facing of head.<sup>1151</sup> More importantly they differ by stone-lining practice, which is a specific context and offering involving north Caucasian pottery and fibulae. But a major distinction revealed in positioning of their children does not exclude a reflection of age difference.<sup>1152</sup>

#### **VI. 1. 4 Types of interested graves**

There are five types of intercut and one overlap graves observed over three cemeteries Abramov, Akhatsarakhu and Tsebelda. Their number is insignificant and appears relatively short period in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century into the early medieval time.

Intercut is equally applied inhumation and cremation burials, but also appears between both grave types. Most consider with above placed two graves showing the partial destruction and visible within SW, W and E oriented groups. All inhumation graves show the horizontal destruction, only cremation produces a vertical destruction. Above some of this burials were evidenced an earth mound or wooden signs.<sup>1153</sup> There are five destruction types listed below:

*Type 1.* Intercut two inhumation female graves, with horizontal partial cut.

*Type 2.* Intercut two inhumation graves of different genders, with horizontal partial cut.

*Type 3.* Intercut inhumation and cremation graves with vertical cut.

*Type 4.* Overlapped two cremation graves.

*Type 5.* Intercut two inhumation graves of human and animal with horizontal cut.

Some dealing with used burial parts and few appears whether in the center or in periphery of cemetery.

***Type 1, Intercut two inhumation female graves.*** This type made visible intersection between female genders, buried in graves with oval cut and evidenced in Abramov hill

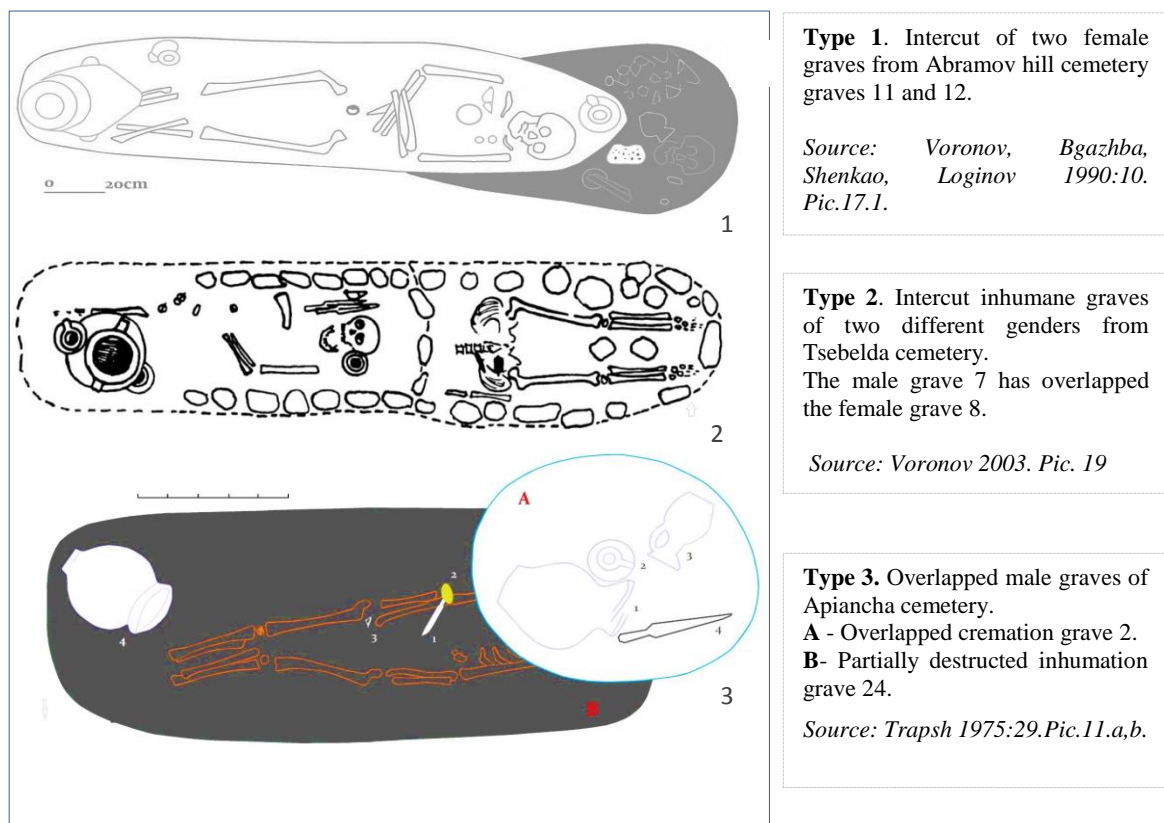
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<sup>1151</sup> Tsebelda cemetery female grave 11, which differs by asymmetric oval cut and stone-lining.

<sup>1152</sup> It evidenced in grave 11. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:11.Pic.6.1. Another Tsebeldian child is similarly placed on the right hip, but near to the waist-sheer area of female.

<sup>1153</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:10. Pic.17.1. See also Trapsh 1971:119.

cemetery of Shapka area (**Fig. 52. 1**).<sup>1154</sup> Above grave with same alignment immediately overlap the most body part of the first one. But similarity in body display has not been observable. Only distinction in head direction is recognizable in drawings. Unusual is articulation of crossed arms (*Body Position 1*, variant 1; *Arm Position 2*) representing above placed female, which appears in SW oriented graves of Abramov cemetery from the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. Left faced head is also rare. Particular character of burial practice is lid-cover jar placed below the feet and supportive to areal origin. Survival offerings from both graves suggests that two different phase comes in play. First buried female in ca. 340-380 AD has been overcut by early byzantine grave of ca. 400-450 AD. Twenty years difference may give understanding to re-using of burial.



**Fig. 52.** Selected spectrum of intercut graves.

**Type 2, Intercut two inhumation graves of different genders.** This type is most occasional by presenting horizontally intersected two graves with opposite articulated deceased (**Fig. 53. 2**). It involves chronologically distinct four graves and W to E oriented grave groups of Tsebelda cemetery. They produce two variants showing that such destructions could equally apply between the male and female gender. Number of similarities and differences are

<sup>1154</sup> The grave 12 has damaged by the grave 11. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:10. Pic.17.1.

identified between them. Most overlap graves with opposite relation of decease are observed within E oriented group.

*Variant 1* considers two earlier graves of male and female, showing 10 years difference of their burry.<sup>1155</sup> The later *Variant 2* considers two male graves with oval cut and exterior stones framing (**Fig. 52**).<sup>1156</sup> Both variants made clear that such features are seen long after the 380 AD and during the 500 -530 AD, within four graves (3, 11, 13a, 14) of different cemetery in Tsebelda area.<sup>1157</sup> They suggest that such destruction was not accidental, but true cause is difficult to interpret. Their use within particular community does not exclude the shift of little new community in Tsebelda during the 340-370 AD.

**Type 3, Intercut inhumation and cremation graves.** This type is exclusive and correspond two intersected male graves of distinctive burial practices (**Fig. 52**). Partial destruction with vertical cut of 50 m deep produce an overlapping cremation grave 23<sup>1158</sup> that is made through inhumation grave pit. In case of inhumation grave (W oriented), male was displayed in most common body *position 1* (variant 1).<sup>1159</sup> However, none of them encompass the changes or any specifics in burial practice itself. Both are late 4<sup>th</sup> century graves. But if they produce chronologic difference because of spearhead dated by 380-400 AD, it should be very short. Little difference in offering composition and quantity may reflect only their life practice and distinctive skills. In fact, there is no stronger argument to be supportive to the cause of such stratigraphic schema.

**Type 4** representing an overlapping two cremation graves with vertical cut (**Fig. 53**). Both are interpreted as weapon consisted male of Shapka. It is difficult to prove if any of this urn features preliminary destruction. Overlapped grave could responsible for total disturbance of below placed one, appearing in inverted position. The precision in grave cut means that destruction could make aware, which excludes using as secondary burial of perhaps family tomb. In fact, a double cremation grave is not a norm in Apsilia and this is an exclusive case. There are no details about consisting offerings to justify their chronology, but Voronov dates

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<sup>1155</sup> The E oriented female grave 10 is overlapped and destroyed the W oriented male grave 13. Relation with head is identic. The female grave inventory, like a few earlier community of area, contained a handled jar covered by bottom of dish and nuts. Her silver fibulas and earring are indication of middle social class. The fact that destructed grave 13 lack offerings could be a sign of looted grave? Bones were completely gone. Voronov, Bgazhba 1977:59. Pic. 99. 1, 2.

<sup>1156</sup> An overlapping E oriented grave 7 has destructed the W oriented grave 10. Both are male graves and related with head. Voronov, Bgazhba. 1977:57. Pic 97.1, 2. Only one synchronic male grave with identic practice and furnishing finds in the same cemetery. Voronov, Bgazhba 1977:59. Pic. 99.1, 2.

<sup>1157</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:10-12. Pic.4.2; 6.1, 16; 7.1.

<sup>1158</sup> Trapsh 1975:29. Pic.11.a.

<sup>1159</sup> Trapsh 1975:29. Pic.11.b.

them to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1160</sup> If this chronology is true, such opposite display may convey association to older grave. We should bear in mind that cremation is quite decreased practice at the time.



**Fig. 53.** Two overlapped cremation graves. *Type 4.* Modified picture.

*Material source: Voronov 1975.*

*Type 5* produces two horizontally intercut neighboring graves of inhumane human and animal. That is NW oriented male grave, cut into the pit of horse burial, responsible for partial destruction and directly placed above its lower part. Both are articulated in the same way. Significant is the deviation is seen in articulation of human with head *position 3*, arm *position 8* and *feet position 5*.<sup>1161</sup> Such body display finds within similarly oriented grave groups and a small community of central Apsilia. Chronologically, both seem to be buried between the years 530-550. But destruction may indicative of slightly later die of horsemen. The horse burial has lesser extent but probably appears in the same period.<sup>1162</sup>

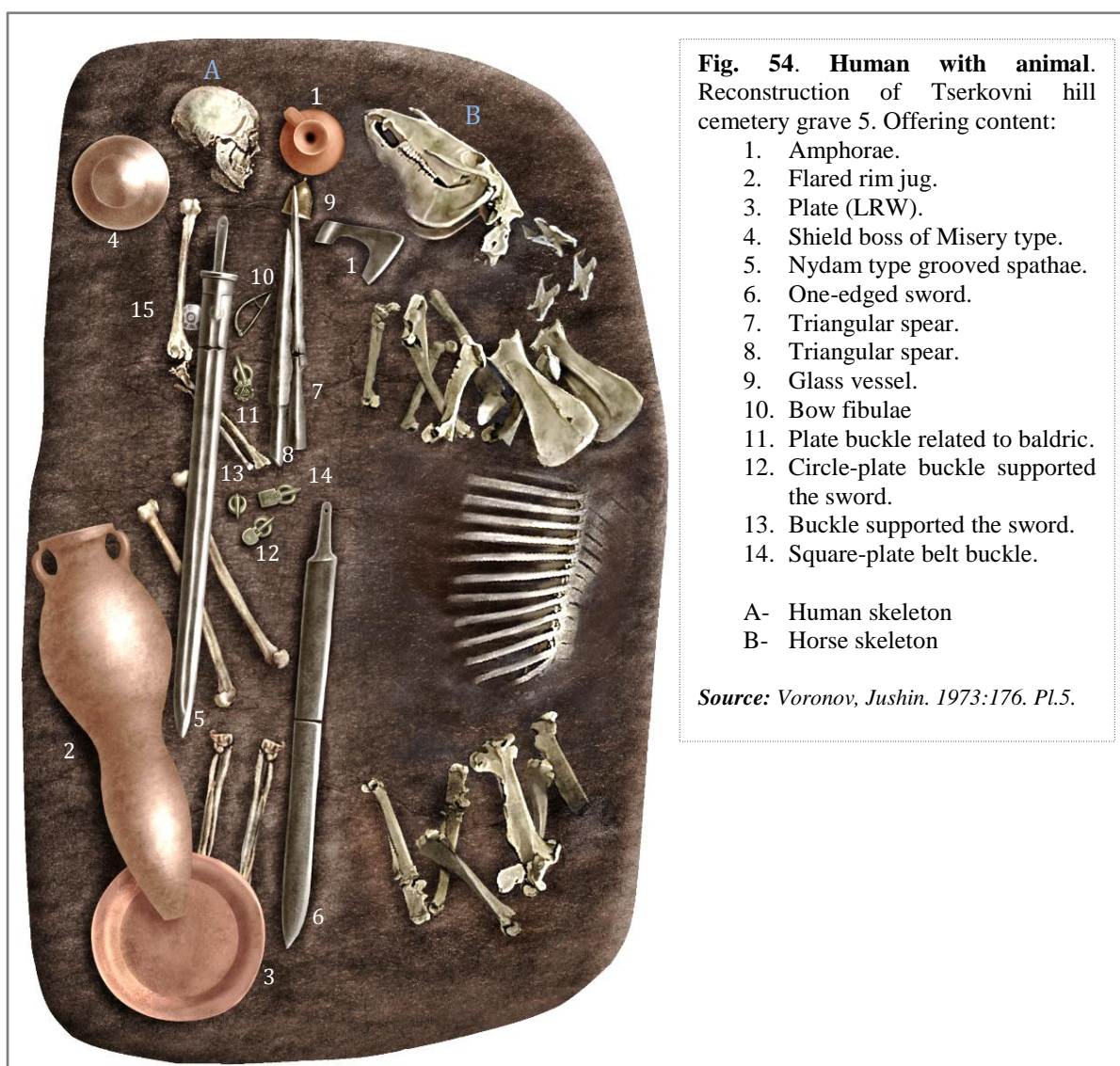
<sup>1160</sup> Excavator provides only a structural representation of graves, without related deposits and its find place. Voronov 1975:111.Pic.37).

<sup>1161</sup> In grave 3, the male was placed on his back, in extended position and with both arms bent at the elbow. But the sharply bent left arm is placed on the stomach and the right arm is on the pelvis. He was faced to left. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:10. p.4.1.

<sup>1162</sup> Horse was buried in grave 2. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:10. p.4.1

## VI. 1. 5 The grave of human with animal (Warrior with his horse)

From all above shown types only one areal grave differs with aligned human and animal in the same grave representing favorable horse and his owner (**Fig. 54. Table 99**). It is a NW oriented grave of Shapka area that seems appears in early 6<sup>th</sup> century grave of Tserkovni hill cemetery.<sup>1163</sup> Both are placed on the hip, but male on his left in body position 4 (arms are bent at the elbow, feet-on knee) and horse on his right in similar position. Their positioning shows relational direction.



<sup>1163</sup> They were buried in grave 5. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176.Pic.5.1.



Horse related burials are special aspect of southern cemeteries of Apsilia, appearing from the last phase of late roman time. Some scholar points to their local tradition.<sup>1164</sup> This was spotted by third but early byzantine sample from Sukhumi area,<sup>1165</sup> but their introduction in Machara basing is quite a later fact and relative to areal militarization. Characterizing offerings of Abgidzrakhu warrior is noticeably internationalized and able to add a different view. The dress attire including imported functional belt and supportive baldric, consist Germanic buckle. His over garment pined by imported silver fibulae might producing an attractive image. Mobility was also suitable, extended by imported Nydam type swords, spears, and axe. He was well defended by shield fitted with *Misery* type boss (**Table 86. B1**). Offered pottery was dominated by imported pottery consisting LRD wares and amphorae, assisted with local jag. Imported glass vessel also fits the picture of internationally outlined practice of warrior graves of time. This character has potential for the context of Germanic recruitment being in military duty of Roman Empire and representing supportive source for areal security;<sup>1166</sup> Horse burials were also common in Alemannic graves and distinguishes prominent families in eastern Alemannic area, connected with Avar expansions in frontier region. Some even thought to be Elbian like Gingen horse burial. In fact, such graves appear into the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century. Behaviorally it stands closer to certain military units of area that appears in Abgidzrakhu in the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. But chronologically it matches the years 500-520.

## VI. 1. 6 Horse burials

Horse burial is a little part of areal graves. Four burials are evidenced over two cemeteries Abgidzrakhu and Tsebelda, and assigns different historical periods. They were placed whether in square or asymmetric cut graves in 0.4 m deep and oriented N or NW. Distinction gives their location within cemetery area. Abgidzrakhu horses were separated from vicinity burials.<sup>1167</sup> But one from Tsebelda was intercepted with graves of possible owner.<sup>1168</sup> Their

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<sup>1164</sup> The opinion of Trapsh was based on the discoveries of the classic Colchian Kulanurkva and Krasni Majak cemeteries in Sukhumi area. Trapsh, 1970:108; Trudi II. 1969:90

<sup>1165</sup> Trapsh, Trudi II. 1969:307. See also : Trapsh 1975:65

<sup>1166</sup> The Germans from middle Danube served in military duty of roman army were supported by similar baldric and armory. Since they were known by using throwing axes in combat, thought to be responsible for introduction of this weapon (See: Quast 1999:11; 2000:273).

<sup>1167</sup> Horses were buried in graves 1, 23 and 29. Trapsh 1971:20:42:48. Pic.5.

<sup>1168</sup> The Horse was buried in grave 2. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989:10. Pic.4.1.

placing character on the right ribs with bent feet shows a common practice. Harnesses of Tsebeldian horse occur a saddle related iron buckles supported with belts near to the ribs,<sup>1169</sup> and tail area.<sup>1170</sup> Some support the skull area even pointing furnished head.<sup>1171</sup> Bridles were tied with iron bits.<sup>1172</sup> Bells adorning the neck of animal seem to be a favourable component as they apply most horses in area.<sup>1173</sup>

Harnesses of Abgidzrakhu horse additionally provided bridle strap runners (rings) evidenced on their neck and some belonging to the foal.<sup>1174</sup> Their tongued-buckles are either square or oval shape made of flattened wire (**Table 109. D**).<sup>1175</sup> The disc-attachments with suspension loops are few.

Harness of both horses differs in typology, amount and category. Looped hinges are imported objects and distinctive types. They prove furnished horses and the social potential of its owner. Noticeable is a similar characteristic reveal certain graves of central Europe at time.<sup>1176</sup> There was obviously a reason that influences people to bury their horses within the human cemetery, since similar appearance is anciently known in vicinity area.<sup>1177</sup> But it was occasional practice and we don't know it such custom traces a distinct community group. The last evidenced associates 6<sup>th</sup> century Sebastopolis in vicinity.<sup>1178</sup>

However, horses are buried whether individually or with their owners. But there is another form of their appearance in memory of horsemen, well reflected in offering practice of their owner.

## **VI. 1. 7 Chronologic grave groups and the nature of corresponding assemblages**

Graves of Apsilian land is divided into four main groups. First three considers three different phase of roman time which shapes the 170-450 AD. Any change in depositing goods and offering structure considers the changes of supply, food, drink, clothing and other mobility. It may indicative for shift of ideas, practices and contacts with outer world. The context of life

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<sup>1169</sup> 1989:10. Pic.4.24.

<sup>1170</sup> 1989:10. Pic.4.26.

<sup>1171</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 23. Trapsh 1971:42. Table. XLIX.10.

<sup>1172</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba and others, 1989:10. Pic.4.22.

<sup>1173</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 29 and Akhatsarakhu grave 42. Trapsh 1971:48.Tabl.XLIX.8; Trapsh 1975:51. Pic.22.10.

<sup>1174</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 23 and 29. Trapsh 1971, 48. Tabl.XLIX.2-3,4.

<sup>1175</sup> Trapsh 1971. XLIX.6-7,10,15.

<sup>1176</sup> Similar evidences of Germanic people are known from areas between the Rhine and Seine in Merovingian time; as well as from 5<sup>th</sup> century Thuringia and from the territories along the Elbe. See: Müller-Wille M. 1970/71:122-172

<sup>1177</sup> Horse harnesses first occurs in 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century Kulanurkhva cemetery. See: Trapsh 1970:108. Trudi I.

<sup>1178</sup> Trapsh 1969:123. Trudi II.

used objects supports to define chronologic phases and corresponding amount of objects meaningful for their burial practice.

### *GRAVE GROUP I*

This group corresponds to the 170-270 AD matches the stage I (170/200-260/270) of Kazanki's classification and representing an earliest archaeological phase of material culture of Apsilian land.<sup>1179</sup> From existed data, majority of corresponding graves are cremation. They all recovered in central part of region and concentrated in areas of modern Tsebelda. Large amount of pottery, rare fasteners, frequent jewelry or other specific objects specify this grave group. They produce eight different offering categories including pottery wares, weapons, agricultural implement, dress attire, jewelry, coins, faunal element and animal bones.

The typical set of grave goods consists of storage, kitchen and table wares correspond the local tradition (**Table 91. 2**). Huge pottery defines this chronologic grave group. Storage ware is represented by pithoi. Some earlier types of 170-200 AD show more Hellenistic shapes and small capacity.<sup>1180</sup> Selected kitchen pottery often provides footed deep dishes, rarely casseroles and occasionally bowls.<sup>1181</sup> From design casseroles are decorated with engraved wavy lines.<sup>1182</sup> Dishes are similarly Colchian, varying in design and function (some with cooking task).<sup>1183</sup> Most of footed dishes are used for covering lid.<sup>1184</sup> This practice may reflection of function in daily life. Jugs are dominant wares, varying in size and shape. Developed types are ovoid jugs, represented in two different variants with distinct decoration. Wavy line bands are usual decorative patterns for shoulder decoration. But some show synthesis of wavy line and geometric motives.<sup>1185</sup> Second type distinct with extended shoulder is unlike with decorative element introducing engraved W or YxY marks placed below the handle.<sup>1186</sup> Only few of this type applies V shaped engraved elements on the neck,

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<sup>1179</sup> Kazanski 1997.

<sup>1180</sup> They have a conic shape with small rounded bottom. Distinguishes thin and thick walled variants. Proportionally they show L.70 cm, Rim Dm. 12 cm rim and body Dm. 50 cm. Trapsh 1971:24.Tabl.II.1

<sup>1181</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.8

<sup>1182</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-82. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.7.15. Casseroles are occasional and presented with shallow body, flat bottom, and thick wall. They vary in low rim (upright and sometimes grooved below the rim).

<sup>1183</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-66. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:138. Pic.9. Earlier Colchian types are undecorated dishes, with conic shape and flared high foot. But some are structured with flat bottom and thick wall, possibly according to the morphologic tradition.

<sup>1184</sup> Tsebelda cemetery cremation graves 1-70, 1-66. Voronov Shenkao 1982:136.pic.8.4; pic.9.3. There is no other type lid observable in Apsilia at the time.

<sup>1185</sup> The first variant characterises with a wide and low neck, and slightly intended bottom in the centre; handles are sharply inwarded and formed at the middle part. Geometric ornaments apply on handle are composed by engraved triangles, generally placed at the edge. They are evidenced in grave 1-82 of Tsebelda cemetery. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136.pic.7.3,4.

<sup>1186</sup> This type is dissimilar with flattened bottom and handle formed either rounded or in-warded in the middle part. Provided marks could be a simple representation of letters or production mark. In any case, meaning is uncertain. It

which always combined with 3 or 4 bands of wavy lines. Both types show the development of years 230/240-300. But flared design noticeably applies after the 260/270 AD.

The most exclusive for this group is imported drinking cup.<sup>1187</sup> Military artefacts are small and consisted of imported and local weapons. They include lances, spear head, battle axes and dart. Imported weapons are small and represented by Gladius<sup>1188</sup> known from central Europe and few battle axes<sup>1189</sup> similar to those of Pontic region, which probably appearing from late 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Dart is also rare and finds in three distinctive variant of triangular type.<sup>1190</sup> Much frequent weapon of time is spear. Provided type is leaf-shape performed in two distinctive variants. Earliest is with long socket and long midrib, expected north Caucasian origin.<sup>1191</sup> Slightly later and rare type shows a slender blade, with little distinguished shoulders, much pronounced, but little decreased midrib, which appear after the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>1192</sup> Only few graves provide barbed flattened arrow heads, represented in two variants: either with square or lenticular section.<sup>1193</sup> Knife is occasionally practiced in graves. There are two different type of asymmetric bladed iron knives diverse in triangular section.<sup>1194</sup> They seem to be made for kitchen, agricultural purposes. Agricultural axe is accidental and prototype of local 'Khuakveriani axes'.<sup>1195</sup> Similarly accidental is a grass moving axe appearing within this grave group.<sup>1196</sup>

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evidenced in following cemeteries of Apsilia: Mahajirov cemetery grave 5, Apiancha grave 36, Akhacharkhva grave 12, Tsebelda cremation grave 1-70 (defines by arrow-head decorative element). See in: Voronov, Bgaghba, Shenkao Loginov 1990:27. Pic.21.4; Gunba 1975:42-43. Pl. XXXIII. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pl. 5,6,7; Shamba 1970. pl.VI.1; Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.8.7. It also evidenced inside the tower 3 of Tsebelda fort. Voronov 1983.pic.82.1

<sup>1187</sup> Tsebelda cemetery cremation grave 1-70. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>1188</sup> It has longitudinal groove on the blade. Typologically matches the type 1/1- of Kazanski classification (Kazanski and Mastykova 2007:25. Pl.29.1). Other finds from Baltic area comes from the necropolis Wieckau/Hurstalnodated grave 34 dated to the 160-200 AD (Nowakowski 1996:30); as well as the Svaljava gave in Transcarpathia, which belongs to Przeworsk culture. Kobal 1993-1994.

<sup>1189</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70. This axe is characterises with asymmetric wide-blade convex at the upper part, long sleeve and angular handle holes. Typologically it matches the type 2-a of Kazanski classification. See: Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.7.11; Kazansky, Mastykova 2007:29. Pl.30.1.

<sup>1190</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-66 and 1-70. It appears either single or in pairs Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136,138. Pic.8.14; 9.9-10.

<sup>1191</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-66. It matches the type I of Kazanski classification (Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139.Pic.9.11-12. Kazansky, Mastykova 2007:29. Pl.30.5). some with rounded midrib appearing in grave 1-70 of the same cemetery, may indicative either for distinctive variant or distinctive chronology. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.8.8-9. For the origin of this spear types see: Trapsh 1971. Hazanov 1971:46.

<sup>1192</sup> It correspond the *type II* of Kazanski classification appearing after the 350 AD.

<sup>1193</sup> Only three Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-70, 1-81 applies a single arrow. Voronov Shenkao 1982. Three sample of lenticular section are evidenced in Mahajirov cremation grave 5. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:27. Pic.21.5-7.

<sup>1194</sup> Verin cemetery grave 5 and Abgidzrakhu grave 7. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:28. Pic.22.12-13; Trapsh 1971:29. Tabl. IV.1.

<sup>1195</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.7.10. One similar axe appears in slightly later Apushta cemetery grave. Voronov 1982. see as well: 'Axes in the Ancient and early Middle Ages in Iberia-Colchis' in:

[www.spekali.tsu.ge](http://www.spekali.tsu.ge)

<sup>1196</sup> Tsebelda grave 1-70. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.7.11.

Coin is rare offering occurs in warrior graves and provided the Caesarean dirham of Antonius Pius (138-161), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), Emessian dinar of Septimius Severus (193-211).<sup>1197</sup>

Fasteners are demonstrated by fibulae and buckle. Bronze fibulas show particular import and exclusive finds of *Omega* and *Aucissa* types (**Table 111a. 1-4**).<sup>1198</sup> Other rare fibula illustrates rounded openwork plates (**Table 91. 2 (14)**).<sup>1199</sup> Local group introduces bow fibulas of two different types (Ambroz types 15-1-4).<sup>1200</sup> Seldom appears an arched shape small variant decorated with sardonic stone.<sup>1201</sup> Belt buckles are few and appears in male graves. They presented in three different types. Rarest is the loop shape and square types known from the weapon grave contexts.<sup>1202</sup> A circular openwork plate buckle is occasional, which may associate with roman military garments. They do not observe any female grave of this stage.

This group rarely contain jewellery. Bracelets are seldom finds, but demonstrate three different types. Golden variant of twisted wire is exclusive find.<sup>1203</sup> One example appears even in male grave.<sup>1204</sup> Other Colchian silver bracelets with interlaced ends are rare and distinguish three further variants. Neckless is occasional find, suspended by small rounded cornelian stone beads, gilded glass beads and some sea shell cowrie (**Table 33. 1-3**).<sup>1205</sup> Commonest among the beads is mushroom- shaped amber (**Table 107. 1**). Few sacral articles consider the black stone observed in some male graves. Accidental is one golden channel bead.<sup>1206</sup> Two croissant shape bronze pendant with sardonic decoration has oval-based plate and thickened hang-loop.<sup>1207</sup>

Agricultural implement continue exist as occasional find, since there are single evidence of mowing-axe and hammer-axe.<sup>1208</sup> Grindstones are also practiced in three weapon graves.<sup>1209</sup> Only few contain faunal elements like nuts (**Table 91. 2**). The most unusual is shave lamella appearing in male grave. They produce fragmented picture of lifestyle of earlier population.

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<sup>1197</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-82. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>1198</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>1199</sup> Tsebelda cemetery and Abgidzrakhu cemetery.

<sup>1200</sup> Verin cemetery grave 5 and Bat cemetery gave 5. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:28. Pic.22. 15; Voronov 1982.

<sup>1201</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 35. Tapsh 1971:54-56. Tabl.XV.8,14.

<sup>1202</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-66. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>1203</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 35. Tapsh 1971:54-56. Tabl. XV.13

<sup>1204</sup> Tsebelda cemetery cremation grave 1-82. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>1205</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 7. Tapsh 1971:28. Tabl. IV.4-5, 7-8.

<sup>1206</sup> Apiancha cemetery cremation male grave 36. Gunba 1978:42-43. Tabl.XXXIII.8.

<sup>1207</sup> Both samples are evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cemetery female cremation grave 37. Tapsh 1971:59-60. Tabl.XVII.12,15.

It correspond the type 2 of Kazanski's classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.38.4.

<sup>1208</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136. Pic.8.10.

<sup>1209</sup> Tsebelda cemetery cremation graves 1-82, 1-70, 1-66. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:136-139. Pic.7.12; 8.17; 9.18.

## GRAVE GROUP II

Chronologically this group correspond to the 270-370 AD and matching the stage II (320/330-360/370) of Kazanski's classification.<sup>1210</sup> They are few and finds in central Apsilia over the Tsebelda, Abgidzrakhu and Apiancha cemeteries. Offerings usually contain pottery, weapons, and few personal accessories similar to earlier years. But changes are seen due their sub-categories and types.

Pottery is still dominant, appears in several series and large number. Some even five or six different local wares appeared in one grave (**Table 92**). They show two different types handled jars and *pithoi*, always applying single in graves (some used as body container some as offering); But occasionally assisted with kitchen pots, frequently with pouring wares and seldom with drinking bowls. Kitchen pots are basic cooking wares including casseroles and deep dishes.<sup>1211</sup> Casseroles are standard pots either handleless<sup>1212</sup> or handle wares, replaced by similar but larger and heavier examples.<sup>1213</sup> Deep dishes are low concentration wares and last of this class used only in this stage, perhaps for preparation of food.<sup>1214</sup> Dishes are few with low foot.<sup>1215</sup> But shapes are little changed. Occasionally seen a new class vessels like vase.<sup>1216</sup> Bowls are few and appear possibly from 330/340 AD and presented in two different shapes. One is medium size height footed ware, which may use as cup or chalice.<sup>1217</sup> Pouring wares increases noticeably. Difference in shapes is view ovoid and hemispheric form. They provide new decorative components such as hatched lines and criss-crosses those are applying on body and handles during the 270-300 AD (they limited appears on storage wares). They often combined with moulded spirals on the handle of pouring wares. Ovoid jug provided in C variant which may appear during the 300-320 AD. Main changes is seen in increased body either with slightly hollowed or flatten bottom and double looped handles.<sup>1218</sup> But during the 320-340 AD they were slowly succeeded by hemispheric body and defined bottoms.<sup>1219</sup> Those flared rims are either grooved below or ribbed on surface (**Table 92. 2 (3)**);<sup>1220</sup> and handles occur the coiled braids. From the mid-4<sup>th</sup> century their body becomes much

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<sup>1210</sup> Kazanski 1997.

<sup>1211</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery graves 3, 5 and 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982. Pic. 93.3; 95. 1,7; 99.4.

<sup>1212</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery graves 1,3 4, 5, 6, 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:55-58. Pic. 92.7; 93.6; 94.7; 95.10; 97.7; 99.8.

<sup>1213</sup> Inhumation graves 8. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982. Pic.97.7.

<sup>1214</sup> Tsebelda cemetery inhumation grave 6. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982. Pic.96.7.

<sup>1215</sup> Tsebelda cemetery inhumation grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982. Pic.97.6.

<sup>1216</sup> Tsebelda cemetery inhumation graves 8 and 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982, Pic.97.15; Pic.99.5.

<sup>1217</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-58. Voronov, Shenkao 1982: Pic.21, 4, 22.

<sup>1218</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-66. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.9.4.

<sup>1219</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-79. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.pic.12.3

<sup>1220</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-104. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.13.3. Unfortunately, technological properties of Apsilian pottery has never been discussed or interpreted.

hemispheric structure and the neck wider and higher. Hybrid version of earlier and later decorative motives occur earlier hemispheric jugs. But appearing circle decoration that generally used on pouring vessels. Ribbing is favourable decorative type sometimes covers the entire body.<sup>1221</sup> This series never occur any mark likewise to ovoid jugs. Such decoration was co-existed with moulded motives shaped in a spiral or animal head.<sup>1222</sup>

Technologically they are developed wares with ribbed surface showing roman influence. That also reflected in using of stamped circle decorative elements. Remarkable is appearance of moulded components in ornamental schema, which also applied on little storage pottery. Such features are commonly shared pouring wares and treated on hemispheric jugs; especially the moulded animal heads, which is phenomenon of this stage. Some special letters apply certain ovoid jugs.

New categories are seen in glass products. Occasionally finds the glass flasks used probably for toilet purposes and occurs few female of central Apsilia. Other provided types are undecorated drinking vessels,<sup>1223</sup> some even of Mayen type.<sup>1224</sup>

This group contain little increased weapons types. Sword is still rare import revealed in three distinctive types. First is a lenticular bladed sword gradually tapering to the pointed tip.<sup>1225</sup> To the earliest variant of this type suggested the 200-370/380 AD and little later date has been determined to the second variants 320/330-360/370-400 AD.<sup>1226</sup> Another type is a long sword distinct with diamond section blade gradually taper to the sharp and long tip. It also appears in two different variants dated to the 320/330-360/370 AD.<sup>1227</sup> Third type

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<sup>1221</sup> Ribbing was commonly used for rim design and generally on pouring wares. Several storage jars also applied similarly ribbed rim. But entirely ribbed pouring wares are rare finds and evidenced only few cemeteries of Tsebelda. See the Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24 in: Voronov, Shenkao 1982.pic.10.4, 5.

<sup>1222</sup> Moulded animal heads applies only the demonstrative pouring wares. They never occur on other pottery types in area.

<sup>1223</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143.Pic.15.11.

<sup>1224</sup> Alrakh cemetery grave 5. Trapsh 1971:112.Tabl.XLII.3

<sup>1225</sup> It revealed in two different variants. Earlier one from Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 6, provides a slightly slender blade and a short tong, which asymmetrically enters into the angled shoulders and producing an obtuse angle at the junction with the blade. This sword has 72 cm blade length and 5.2 cm highest width at the shoulders, and 3cm width near to the tip. The handle is recorded to be fitted with bone. Typologically it correspond the type 2/1-1 of Kazanski's classification. Trapsh 1971:92.Tabl.XXXIV; Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.29.3. Similar sword is recorded in central Colchis Chkhorotsku cemetery (Trapsh 1971:145).

<sup>1226</sup> Another variant from Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-76, is diverse by sharply pointed long tip and gradually tapering long tong, formed directly on the angled shoulders by straight junction. Such sword is often accompanied with supportive silver plate-buckles of oval ring. It matches the type 2/1-2 of Kazanski's classification. Voronov, Shenka 1982.Pic. 11.27,21-22. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.29.4. Similar swords are known from areas of Roman barbaricum (Bishop, Coulston 1993, fig.36.5,6; 86.6,7); as well as from Chernjakhov culture (Magomedov, Levada 1996. Fig. 2,3) and Crimea (Myc et alii 2006. Fig.6.1). In Eastern Europe defines Alan-Sarmatian graves, where they appear probably a later of 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Shukin, Kazanski, Sharov 2006. Fig 56.1; 62.5) and in North-west Aucasian grave Juzhaja Ozereika (Gavritukhin, Pjankov 2003.Pl.72.47).

<sup>1227</sup> The first variant from the Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 11 is quite long tong enter into the angled blade and tapering to the top. This occasional sample is called 'Chkhorotsku variant'. Trapsh 1971:96.Tabl.XXXVI.1. Another variant from the Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-50 defines with wider and shorter tong, formed on entire line of shoulders of the blade and riveted near to the top. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:154. Pic.20.10.. See as well: Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.22.18.

belongs to the short sword category with single-cut blade, which gradually tapers to the short tip and characterises with shoulders forming upper line. This type equally revealed in different versions probably after the 320/330 AD;<sup>1228</sup> from structural nature byzantine-Sasanian origin.

Equally rare a straight bladed single-cut dagger, some with downwards pointed tip.<sup>1229</sup> Little evidences of small massive knife with straight or asymmetric blades and downwards pointed tip are suggested local types.<sup>1230</sup> Other types with blades either gradually tapering to the tip or straight bladed and slight curved at the tip are occasional.<sup>1231</sup> More frequently appears a long socketed leaf-shape spear, which continued into the late-3<sup>rd</sup> century (**Table 84. 1-4**). But further development is also reflected in slender shape local spears heads. New types of local throwing axe, similar to ‘bardāxe’ appear in two different forms: with asymmetric wide-blade pointed at the lower part<sup>1232</sup> or with slender lower blade and triangular profile (**Table 89. 2-4**).<sup>1233</sup> Arrow heads are still occasional, but developed types representing a barbed design.<sup>1234</sup> Some missile is flattened socketed or a slightly later tanged bodkin headed type.<sup>1235</sup> Appears new type shields fitted with imported boss of *Aj-Todor/Zieling H2* type,<sup>1236</sup> *Korzen, Zeling K1* (**Table 86. 3, 4**).

Buckles are little increased and including looped and plated types. Ring-buckles are few and define by small size; some with characteristic thickened frontal exterior part and downwards curved tongue exceeding the loop.<sup>1237</sup> There is an oval buckle with retraced posterior part of the loop and profiled tongue largely attested in Roman Empire during the 320-370 AD.<sup>1238</sup> Small number of buckles with cloisonné glass decoration of oval or disc

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<sup>1228</sup> First is from the Tsebelda cemetery grave 2-3, is distinctive with straight blade, upward curved tip and rectangular short tong. It matches the type 2 of Kazanski’s classification. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.Pic.16.6; Kazansky, Mastykova 2007. Pl.29.7.

<sup>1229</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.Pic.16.23.

<sup>1230</sup> Tsebelda graves 1-24,76, 1-73 and 1a-2. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.Pic.10.13; 11.28; 14.9; 15, 8.

<sup>1231</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 2-3. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.Pic. 16.9,10.

<sup>1232</sup> Its asymmetric wide-blade is distinctive with short sleeve and pointed lower part. Typologically corresponds the *type 2-a* of Kazanski’s classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:29. Pl.30.2

<sup>1233</sup> This slender variant with short sleeve, which slightly curved downwards to the blade, a triangular lower blade, is suggested as Voronov-Shenkao type. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Synchronically appears other forms. Their proportion is varying from 11 to19 cm length, from 9 to 15 cm width and the spine 2.7x4 cm in diameter.

<sup>1234</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70. They match the *type 1* and *2* of Kazanskis’ typology. Kazansky, Mastykova 2007. Pl. 30,15,16

<sup>1235</sup> Socketed flattened arrowhead is evidenced in Mahajirov grave 5 and Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-70. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:27. Pic.21.5-6. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.8.13.

<sup>1236</sup> Tsebelda cemetery inhumation grave 1-104. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.10.12; 11.26; Pic. 13.7.

<sup>1237</sup> It correspond the *type 8*. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.Pl. 34.12. Such buckles accompany the sword and daggers, seldom the lances. It has several comparisons in: Colchis (Vashnari see in: Nikolaishvili 1978. Pl.40.3), North Caucasian Berjozovka in Pjatigorsk (Abramova 1997 Fig.26.3) and other areas (Gavritukhin, Pjankov 2003.Pl.72.13).

<sup>1238</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-79. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.12.9. It correspond the *type 5* of Kazanskis’ classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.Pl.34.7



plate recognises Germanic trend (**Table 108. 5, 7**).<sup>1239</sup> Changes of form within this group recognized in D shape design made of rounded wire thickened in frontal part. Some of this type appears even within the III stage grave groups (**Table 108**).<sup>1240</sup> From gender perspective the buckle first appears within female outfit and correspond either square shape long buckle<sup>1241</sup> or plate buckle with oval-ring type, which evidenced only in two graves.<sup>1242</sup>

Personal accessories also increased in number and category. New fibulae group include *lebjazhi* type,<sup>1243</sup> some profiled<sup>1244</sup> and bronze bow fibulas (**Tables 111a; 112b**).<sup>1245</sup> Exceptional is Colchian-Koban type fibulae.<sup>1246</sup> Rest is local arched bow fibulas, some applying a new coil-wire design.<sup>1247</sup> Few cross headed bow fibulas are attached with decorative spiral straps or animal tooth show sacral attitudes of early Christian population.<sup>1248</sup> Undecorated bow fibulas generally associates with male clothing.

Jewelry of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century illustrates valuable property. Beads arrived in limited quantity was suspended by monochrome green or brownish<sup>1249</sup> and blue rounded glass pearls;<sup>1250</sup> some are added with royal blue polyhedral bead (**Table 33**).<sup>1251</sup> Seldom and perhaps expensive neckless type was suspended by small rounded cornelian stone beads and channelled variant of glass bead with golden inlay.<sup>1252</sup> Equally occasional a silver inlaid glass bead,<sup>1253</sup> sardonic<sup>1254</sup> and mushroom shape<sup>1255</sup> cornelian bead. Most are paste beads, some stripped<sup>1256</sup> or incrust types.<sup>1257</sup> Sea shell cowrie is accidental find.<sup>1258</sup> Croissant type pendant typical for

<sup>1239</sup> The polychrome bronze buckle from Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24, has an oval plate and decorated with glass blue at the center and violet color at the sides. With oval plate it corresponds to the *type 4* of Kazanski's classification. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139-140.Pic.10.8; Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.PI.34.5. Another is showing a round wire loops of slightly oval form and disc-shape plate, which representing a decorative star made with cloisonné technique. It corresponds to the *type 6* of Kazanski's classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.PI.34.6

<sup>1240</sup> Kazanski's classification *type 6*. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.PI.34.8

<sup>1241</sup> Most unusual is evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 35. Trapsh 1971:54-56.Tabl.XV.19. Other accidental type appears in Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 12. Trapsh 1971:97. XXXVII.4.

<sup>1242</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 2 and 53. Trapsh 1971:22, 80. Tabl.I.4; XXX.7

<sup>1243</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 28. Trapsh 1971:47. Tabl.XII.3.

<sup>1244</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 53. Trapsh 1971:80.Tabl.XXX.8

<sup>1245</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 9. Voronov 1982:23-24. Pic. 24.4.

<sup>1246</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 53. Trapsh, 1971:80.Tabl.XXX.5

<sup>1247</sup> Alrakhu cemetery grave 3 and Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 11. Gunba 1978:11, 21--22. Tabl. III.4-5;XI.9-10.

<sup>1248</sup> Baghaturia-Kner 2012:232. Tabl.XV.b.

<sup>1249</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 15. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:59. Pic.100.16

<sup>1250</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 2. Trapsh 1971:22.Tabl. I.11-15. See also Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. PI.45.2,3.

<sup>1251</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:59. Pic.99.26.

<sup>1252</sup> Abgidzrakhu female grave 7. Trapsh 1971:28.Tab.IV.7-18.

<sup>1253</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:59. Pic.99.27.

<sup>1254</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 15. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:59. Pic.100.13

<sup>1255</sup> Apiancha cremation grave 19. Gunba 1978:27.Tabl.XVIII.13-14.

<sup>1256</sup> They appear Tsebelda cemetery male graves 1-104 and 1-73. Beads are distinct with yellowish or blue colour. The letter is combined even with applied dots. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pic. 13.17;11.

<sup>1257</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 10. Voronov, Bgaghba 1982:59. Pic.99.30

<sup>1258</sup> Abgidzrakhu female grave 7. Trapsh 1971:28.Tab.IV.4-5; as well as Alrakhu cemetery grave 2. Gunba 1978:10.Tabl.II.11-12.

earlier stage still exists; but appears two exclusive types of high quality gold. One defines with rounded blue glass gam based on golden circular plate and grape shape elements (**Table 112. 4**).<sup>1259</sup> For hair decorations used such metal components like simple coiled wire hooks made from bronze (**Table 114. 1-2**).<sup>1260</sup>

Most precious jewellery category included imported silver earring<sup>1261</sup> and golden pendant. From design they are long variants with round<sup>1262</sup> or square<sup>1263</sup> plate (**Table 105.**). There is only one bronze version of this type decorated with light blue glass.<sup>1264</sup> A shortly structured type characterises with tear-shape plate at the frontal part and decorated with glass.<sup>1265</sup> It might appear little later probably of years 320-350 and continue exist into the III stage graves. Finger ring is still seldom find and from nature introduces five new types: simple bronze looped wire twisted on the terminal part,<sup>1266</sup> some with snake shape (Guiraid's type)<sup>1267</sup> or with rounded silver hoop and bezel with inset yellowish-green glass.<sup>1268</sup> The rest two has flattened circular bezel, sometimes depicting seal (**Table 106. 2**).<sup>1269</sup> Bracelets are few, distinguish by three different round wire types including earlier variant and continues into the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century.<sup>1270</sup> Hair decorative silver hooks and some coils are occasional finds.<sup>1271</sup>

Coins are relatively few and presented with silver coins of Septimus Severus and Marcus Aurelius (161-180),<sup>1272</sup> Licius Verus (161-169),<sup>1273</sup> Julia Domna (193-217)<sup>1274</sup> and Caracalla

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<sup>1259</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery cremation female grave 12. Trapsh 1971:97. Tabl. XXXVII.2. Similar samples are found in the North Caucasia (Trapsh 1971:193) and Danube regions.

<sup>1260</sup> Aukhuamakhu cemetery grave 1. Trapsh 1971:98. Tabl. XXXVIII.6-7.

<sup>1261</sup> A round plate version from the Aukhuamakhu cemetery grave 1 is decorated by sardonic stone and with a characteristic two long drop-shape attachments, those are twisted wire. One is a long drop-shape, silver plate earrings decorated with sardonic stone or glass. Trapsh 1971:98. Tabl. XXXVIII.9-10. Identical earring is evidence in Akhatsarakhu grave 30 and Alrakhu grave 4. Trapsh 1975:37. Tabl. IV.6; Gunba 1978:12. Tabl. IV.8.

<sup>1262</sup> Four earring of this type discovered in Abgidzrakhu cemetery are three distinctive variants. Most are decorated with green glass. But only one from grave 2, occur a simple drop-shape long attachments. Others from grave 28, 36, 53 have twisted wire with long attachment. Among them, one from the grave 45 is distinctive earring with light blue decorative glass. Trapsh 1971:22, 98. Tabl. I.8, 9; as well as in Apushta cemetery grave 9. Voronov 1982:23-24. Pic. 24.5

<sup>1263</sup> This earring from the Alrakhu grave 7 was decorated by sardonic, similarly to that evidenced in Apiancha grave 37. Trapsh 1971:113. Tabl. XLIV.2; Gunba 1978:43-45. Tabl. XXXVI.4.

<sup>1264</sup> Bat cemetery grave 6. Voronov 1982:44. Pic. 18.51.

<sup>1265</sup> Apushta cemetery graves 3, 8 and 33. Voronov 1982:50-51, 53, 66. Pic. 22.7; Pic. 23.19; Pic. 31.6

<sup>1266</sup> It appears by one example in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 3. Tabl. II.5.

<sup>1267</sup> They are coiled around and flattened at the terminal, and appear either in bronze or silver versions. They are accidental sample evidenced in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 35. Trapsh 1971:54-56. Tabl. XV. 7, 12.

<sup>1268</sup> This is a slightly later type with rounded silver hoop, carinated shoulders and rounded bezel. It occurs in Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 45. Trapsh 1971:72. Tabl. XXIII.4.

<sup>1269</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1a-3. Voronov, Shenkao 1982.

<sup>1270</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 53. Trapsh 1971:80. Tabl. XXX.3

<sup>1271</sup> They appear in high social class female grave 35 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. Further accompanied precious jewelry was a golden neckless made of twisted wire. Trapsh 1971:54-56. Tabl. XV.10-11, 17-18.

<sup>1272</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-79, 1-8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982, 143. 12.10

<sup>1273</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24. Voronov, Shenkao 1982: 140. Pic. 10.7.

<sup>1274</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-75. A silver dirham of Cesarean mint. Voronov, Shenkao 1982: 140. Pic. 11.8

(197-217).<sup>1275</sup> Other like silver coin of Hadrian (117-138) is proportionally little and comes from different cemeteries of central Apsilia (**Table 92**).<sup>1276</sup> Additional type like a silver coin of Antonius Pius (138-161) produces Akhacharkhu cemetery.<sup>1277</sup>

The most unusual offering shaped is square metal may associated with dice. It proved one warrior grave which defines by foreign burial practice.<sup>1278</sup> Similarly unusual is appearance of needle in one male grave.<sup>1279</sup> New pattern of this group is Flintstone, steel fire plate and knife grinders evidenced shortly in few military graves. But exclusive is occurrence of animal remains (bones) in warrior grave.<sup>1280</sup>

Agricultural implement show two distinctive functional categories hoe and pick. Only three examples of typologically similar hoe are evidenced among the female graves.<sup>1281</sup> Few pick-axes are typical for Tsebeldian males.<sup>1282</sup> Axe-hammer is also occasional find among the male graves.<sup>1283</sup> Similarly occasional is spindle whorl that characterises only female grave.<sup>1284</sup>

Entire spectrum of wealth shows changes in social context. New objects lead parallels within areas of Roman Empire. Most associated with warriors of local and foreign origin and generally the leading authorities. Weapon graves are dominant, only few identifies with rural citizens. From few female graves are distinguishable some members of high social class.

### *GRAVE GROUP III*

Chronologically this group correspond the 380-450 AD and matches the stage III (380/400-400/450) of Kazansk's classification. It includes the most graves of central Apsilia in Mramba, Apiancha and few from upland parts.

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<sup>1275</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 76. A silver dirham of Cesarean mint. Voronov, Shenkao 1982: 140. Pic.11.20

<sup>1276</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-104. Voronov, Shamba 1982:143.Pic.13.15.

<sup>1277</sup> Akhacharakhu cemetery grave 12. Shamba 1970:66.

<sup>1278</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-104. See: Voronov, Shenkao. 1982:143. Pic.13, 18.

<sup>1279</sup> Tsebelda cemetery inhumation grave 1-75. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:140.Pic.11.6

<sup>1280</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24. Voronov, Shenkao. 1982:139. Pic.10, 1.

<sup>1281</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1 and 10. They characterise with asymmetric wide mouth-blade, narrow sleeve and a rounded spine with circular hole. Voronov, Bgzhba 1982:59. Pic. 92.2; 99.9. In upland Apsilia appears in Apushta cemetery graves 3, 9, 23, 30 and destructed grave 3 of Bat cemetery. Voronov 1982:51,54-55, 64. Pic.22.9; 24.3; 28.40; 30.2. Voronov 1982:41.Pic.17.5.

<sup>1282</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 5. Voronov, Bgzhba 1982. Pic. 95.12;

<sup>1283</sup> Tsebelda cemetery male grave 7 and Apushta cemetery male grave 27. A characteristic pattern is rectangular slender sleeve and an asymmetric widened mouth. Voronov, Bgzhba 1982:57. Pic. 97.8; Voronov 1982:62. Pic.29.3. See as well Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:30.4.

<sup>1284</sup> Four examples of ceramic spindle whorl appear in Apushta cemetery cremation female graves 3 and 7. Voronov 1982:51, 53. Pic. Pic.22.8; 23.12-15. The rest appear in Tsebelda cemetery female grave 3 and grave 10. Voronov, Bgzhba 1982:56,59. Pic. 93.10; 99.12-13.

Almost all graves contain the pottery and personal accessories, showing variety of local and imported items. Weapons, belt fasteners and jewellery are gender demanded categories and appeared in relative graves.

Pottery is much decreased in amount. The practice of depositing the cooking pots or other type kitchen pottery is extremely decreased from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and finally disappears in early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Storage and table wares are common. Key is to distinguish new pottery types. Developed shapes and changes in design is what defines the pouring wares of this group, which is still common in funerary context. New types include hemispheric jugs and regional pear shapes. But several earlier jugs were co-existed. New group of table pottery consider imported LRC and LRD type plates and some locally made versions of Mediterranean tradition (**Table 104**).<sup>1285</sup> They include also an eastern *sigillata* types A (with projecting molds on the base) and B (low edge dishes molded in internal face); some later variants with hollowed bottom provide stamped deer and three rows of rouletted ornament.<sup>1286</sup> Storage wares illustrate developed types with most heavy examples little increased in shoulders. Their standard dimensions are 65-70 cm. defines some later jars with Christogram signs, probably of symbolic value associable with Christian belief concept. A new category transit pottery is amphorae appear in certain male graves. Casseroles are sporadic and show little changed design of local dishes.

Imported glass vessel becomes a regular phenomenon for particular weapon equipped warriors.<sup>1287</sup> Only one female grave elaborate some Mayen type greenish glass vessel (**Table 103, 16**).<sup>1288</sup> Blue dotted vessels recovered during the 380-400 AD appear in three main forms: hemispheric bowls,<sup>1289</sup> cylindrical beakers<sup>1290</sup> and cones.<sup>1291</sup> But dominant is thick-walled hemispheric cup and beakers with smoothed rim. Their types are more diverse from early-5<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1285</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 9. Low feet slender dishes are provided in L.7 cm, diameter rim 20 cm, and diameter bottom 12 cm. Trapsh, 1971. Tabl.V.5. But some local imitates of fine ware pottery representing walled shallow dish with upright rim and red glazed surface are assumed to the kitchen pottery. They are low feet slender dishes formed in L.7 cm, diameter rim 20 cm, and diameter bottom 12 cm, evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 9. Trapsh, 1971. Tabl.V.5.

<sup>1286</sup> Verin hill cemetery grave 2a. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:158.Pic.23.2.

<sup>1287</sup> Most glass vessels evidenced in central Apsilia. Majority comes from four cemeteries of Mramba necropolises (Abgidzrakhu, Akhatsarakhu, Alrakhu, Aukhuamakhu) and occasionally occur over the hill cemeteries of Abramov, Verin, Mahajirov, Tsebelda, Apiancha and Olginskoe. By one examples appear only in Lar cemetery of upland Apsilia. Typologically they are similar samples well observed over the Black Sea littoral. Trapsh 1971. Voronov 1982.

<sup>1288</sup> Alrakhu cemetery grave 5. Trapsh 1971:110-112. Tabl.XLII.3.

<sup>1289</sup> Evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 31, Tsebelda grave 39, Lar grave 17, Tserkovni grave 4. Trapsh 1971; Voronov, Shenkao 1982; Voronov 1982; Voronov, Jushin 1971. See as well Baghaturia-Kner 2014:359. Fig.2-5.

<sup>1290</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 41, Alrakhu grave 3, Apiancha grave 37, Tserkovni grave 3. Trapsh 1971; Gunba 1978; Voronov, Jushin 1971. See also: Baghaturia-Kner 2014:359. Fig.6-9.

<sup>1291</sup> Abgidzrakhu cremation graves 27, 54, Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 6 and Abramov grave 9. Trapsh 1971; Voronov, Jushin 1971; Voronov, Bgazhba and others 1982; Baghaturia-Kner 2014:362. Fig.6-9,28.

century, when enriched with beakers either of honey comb pattern<sup>1292</sup> or with applied glass treads,<sup>1293</sup> and bowls with trailed threaded decoration (**Table 103**).<sup>1294</sup> Cones introduce drinking and lighting vessels, but for lighting purposes are few. In fact, cones are rare and bowls are occasional vessel types. New category is threaded jug appears in two different version (**Table 103. 22**).<sup>1295</sup>

In a huge number appear weapons of roman military class. The full weapon set considers spear, battle axe, and sword often including certain missile categories. Some provide totally diverse set of weapons showing defensive and offensive weapon categories. Three different sword types are recognised according to their blade structure. The most remarkable is imported Nydam type sword. Second is a Straubin-Nydam type long sword with characteristic two longitude grooves for blood (**Table 87. 3-5**).<sup>1296</sup> Some lenticular sectioned *spatha*es diverse by short tip, sharply angled shoulders and narrow tong, are believed to be originate in German territories.<sup>1297</sup> Occasional is semi-spatha, introduces two variants of the single-cut blade types with triangular section, upward curved tip and riveted handgrip.<sup>1298</sup> There are sword associated bones as well, probably for the grip exposing an antler laths.<sup>1299</sup> This might indication of occasional weapon.

Such burials contain imported circular or oval shields fitted with bosses like *Zieling K1*,<sup>1300</sup> *Zieling K2*,<sup>1301</sup> *Aj-Todor/Zieling, Dobrozien/Zieling T*.<sup>1302</sup> But from new types defines

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<sup>1292</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 13, 36 and Abramov hill cemetery grave 14. Honey comb beaker illustrates the pattern fashionable in eastern Mediterranean. See in: Trapsh 1971; Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990. Typological details see in: Baghaturia-Kner 2014:335-362. Fig.13-16.

<sup>1293</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 9, Akhacharkhu grave 2 and Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 20 . Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1294</sup> Such beaker is evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 15. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1295</sup> One appearing in Akhatsarakhu female grave 30, made of transparent greenish glass is much simple version and somehow gives a feeling of fine copy of local jugs (Trapsh 1975:37. Tabl.IV.4). Another from Alrakhu cemetery grave 6 is made in blue colour. Gunba 1978:14. Tabl. VI.6; Baghaturia-Kner 2014:366. Fig.24.

<sup>1296</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 12, 27 and 44. It matches the *type 1-2* of Kazanskis classification. Trapsh 1971. Tabl.VI.15; Tabl.XI.9; Tabl.XXII.17. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.23.10. Another type of Nydam sword from the Verin hill cemetery grave 5, having much slender blade, with a pointed tip, applying decorated guard above the blade. It remains associated to scabbard and evidenced in. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:28. Pic.23.5. There is also a distinctive sample from the Tserkovni grave 7, with a much slender guard and tong, similarly remains a scabbard. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.7.22.

<sup>1297</sup> Evidenced in Tserkovni grave 4. The handle of this sword seems to be decorated with a rock crystal, supporting a metal pendant above. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.4.30. See also: Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.23.9. Earlier variant of this type from the Abgidzrakhu grave 13 is occasionally finds within III stage (380-450 AD) grave group. Their blade length measures 74 cm, greatest width 2.8 cm and 2.3 cm width at the tip. Trapsh 1971:37. Tabl.VII.8. Such swords are widespread in Europe, where some Nydam versions are given even with roman marks (Bishop, Coulston 1993. Fig.8.7; 8, 9). It is seen among the Germans and distributed also within barbarians in central and Eastern Europe of roman time (Biborski 1978:86-99; Levada 1998). Similarly observed in north Caucasia and some in Bzid. See in: Gavrituchin, Pjankov 2003. pl.74.37,39; 75.37,39; Gavrituchin, Pjankov 2003a. pl.76.70.

<sup>1298</sup> The first type from the Tsebelda grave 1-50 defines with characteristic guard above the blade. Such sword is occasional find and related scabbard with metal frame. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:154. Pic.2.9. Another variant from the Tsebelda grave 1-58 occurs massive handgrip and formed directly on the shortened guard. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.21.8.

<sup>1299</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 44 and Akhatsarakhu grave 6 and 11. Trapsh 1971:68, 92 96. Tabl. XXII; XXXIV.11; XXXVI.2.

<sup>1300</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 54. Trapsh 1971:81, Tabl. XXXI.3.

early 5<sup>th</sup> century bosses of *Malaesty/Zieling I3*,<sup>1303</sup> *Csongrad/Zieling L*<sup>1304</sup> and *Chapka/Kerch* (Table 86).<sup>1305</sup> They recognize imperial influence. Only three body shields are evidenced in rectangular shape. Two of them associate the prominent officer grave (Tables 94).<sup>1306</sup> Daggers of this group include distinctive imported types representing either single-cut<sup>1307</sup> or double-cut<sup>1308</sup> blades tapers to the tip. Also appears an imported throwing axe of *Kompanicy/II Böhém A* type<sup>1309</sup> and other types known from pontic region as well (Table 89. 1-9). Local battle axes similar to ‘bardäxe’ type and remarkable from previous stage developed in further ‘Tsebeldian’ type (?). Missile weapons show different effect of weapons that become hundred times stronger than before. Arrowheads are not significant in amount, but expose range of forms including trilobite, barbed, lozenge and with socketed<sup>1310</sup> or tanged bodkin heads (Table 85).<sup>1311</sup> But new type is recognised in socketed form with barbed heads on a long iron shank. Typologically tanged trilobite arrowheads are dominant from early 5<sup>th</sup> century (Table 85. 3, 7, 10, 12).<sup>1312</sup> Such nomadic arrowheads recovered in several graves of central Apulia. There is evidence for composite bow associated fragments in central Apulian grave (similar to Table 85. 28, 29).<sup>1313</sup> Crossbow bolt heads are rare (Table 85. 17, 19, 23-26).<sup>1314</sup> Square section pyramidal points appear seldom (Table 85. 18, 20).<sup>1315</sup> They usually considered with catapult and also associated with lightweight spears or javelins. A few barbarian heavy javelin

<sup>1301</sup> Three comes from Tsebelda cemetery graves (1-24, 1-76, 1-43), one occurs in Apiancha grave 38 and also in Lar cemetery grave 12. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:139,140,148-152. Pic.10.12; Pic.11.26; Pic.18.8; Gunba 1978:45. Tabl.XXXVII.6. Voronov 1982:26.Pic.16.7.

<sup>1302</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 6 and Akhatsarakhu grave 20. Trapsh 1971:29. Tabl.III.4-5; Trapsh 1975:26. Pic. 9.2. Tabl.XXI.3.

<sup>1303</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 12. Gunba 1978:22. Tabl.XII.3.

<sup>1304</sup> Abgidzrakhu graves 41 and 43. Trapsh 1971:64, 65-67. Tabl. XX.2. Tabl.XXI.10.

<sup>1305</sup> Two of them occur in Abgidzrakhu graves 9, 27 and third in boss in Akhatsarakhu grave 39. Trapsh 1971: 29-30, 44-47. Tabl. V.4. Tabl.XI.2; Trapsh 1975.Tabl.X.6.

<sup>1306</sup> Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 44 and Tsebelda cemetery graves 1-39, 1-43. Trapsh 1971:67-68. Tabl.XXII.10; Voronov Shenkao 1982. Pic.17.1, Pic. 19.29.

<sup>1307</sup> Two daggers of this type were evidenced in Tsebelda cemetery graves 2-3 and 8. It is characterized by a triangular section, with a single-cut blade that gradually tapers to the shot tip; has a massive square tong with guard at the junction to the blade. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143. Pic. 16.5, 28.

<sup>1308</sup> It evidenced in Tsebelda cemetery grave 39. A diverse form of this type is revealed in the double-cut blade that gradually tapers towards the tip. Characteristic semi-circular attachments are seen above the shoulder, on both sides. This may be indication of Sassanian origin. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:154. Pic. 19.9. It matches the *type 1* of Kazanski's classification (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:27. Pl.29.6). Such daggers are observed in Iberia, eastern Europe, some in south-west Crimea and Alan-Sarmatian graves of steppe (Hazanov 1971.Pl.10.2,3.). Rarely attested among the Huns, as evidenced by single finds in the Novogrigorevka grave VII (Zasetskaja 1994, 34). Also recorded in the North Caucasian area (Abramova 1997. Fig. 73.9; Gavrituchin, Pjankov 2003a. Pl.77.20).

<sup>1309</sup> Two samples comes from Apushta cemetery graves 5 and 25. Voronov 1982. Such axes are characteristic of the Pontic region. Kazanski 1994:456.

<sup>1310</sup> Akhatsarakhu cemetery graves 6 and 2. Trapsh 1971:89-90.Tabl.XLVII.11-23.

<sup>1311</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 54. Trapsh 1971:81.Tabl.XXI.24-26.

<sup>1312</sup> They evidenced in the Akhatsarakhu grave 2 and Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 27. Trapsh 1971. Pic.19-15. Trapsh 1971:44-47, 89-90. Tabl.XI.16. Tabl. XLVII.14.

<sup>1313</sup> Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 44 of a horse-archer. Trapsh 1971:67-78. Tabl.XXII.

<sup>1314</sup> Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 27 and Akhatsarakhu inhumation grave 2. Trapsh 1971:44-47, 89-90. Tbl.XI.16. Tabl. XLVII.14.

<sup>1315</sup> Voronov, Shenkao 1982. For functional characteristic of such arrowheads see: Campbell D.B.2003:36.

types are also adopted. They are dominated by spears including a long, narrow or square shape (**Table 84**). Distinguishes three main types of triangular spears are diverse in blade profile and pronounced midrib-blade (**Table 84. 7-13**).<sup>1316</sup> A blade with multicity section midrib is numerous and lozenge sectioned types are rare. *Pilum* type spears appear in two distinctive types (**Table 84. 20; Table 82. B, D**). The most accidental object is two-pronged fork weapon (?) perhaps of 'trident' class (**Table 80. D**).<sup>1317</sup>

Household knives are produced in eight main types and two distinctive functional categories. For kitchen purposes most are straight bladed types with varying tip: whether horizontal, evenly narrowing,<sup>1318</sup> slightly up-warded or sloping down<sup>1319</sup> to the tip (**Table 29. 3, 8, 11**). Few are paring knives (**Table 29. 3**).<sup>1320</sup> None of them remain sheaths or preserve any trace of handle cover.

The sword consisting graves often revealed functional belts, corresponding buckles and other assessments (**Tables 110a; 110b**). Number of imported buckles with D shape ring slightly enlarged in interior part, sometimes with zoomorphic décor<sup>1321</sup> may associate with narrow belt. Looped buckles are numerous and show distinctive sources (**Table 108**). Few consider rarest set of shoulder straps and baldrics. One of such buckle represent Germanic buckle incrust with glass.<sup>1322</sup> New group of plate buckles appear in three morphologic categories rectangular, triangular or semi-circular plates correspond wide belts (**Table 108, 8-25**). Characteristic tongue that exceeds the loop is bending downwards. Some undecorated square plates folded double and riveted at the center associates the functional belt supporting sword (**Table 109. A**);<sup>1323</sup> Defines smaller variants with two section plates used for the belt straps.<sup>1324</sup> Decorated square plate-buckles are nearly identical loop and tongue, but appear distinct in size and decoration. Some are composed whether of hatched elements<sup>1325</sup> or

<sup>1316</sup> They were classified by Kazanski as *types 3,4, 5 and 9* (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:23-30. Pl. 30.7-9). A type 3 and 9 also occurs in the Olginskoe cemetery, but more variants are distinguished than those given by Kazanski, and which are discussed in the analytical section of the Olginskoe spears. Also, spears lacking in the classification of Kazanski are evidenced in three Olginskoe graves 2, 9, 14 (of Abramov hill cemetery). Voronov, Bgzhba 1990. Pic.14.15; 16.11; 18.8.

<sup>1317</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 13. Presented in the following dimensions: L. 55 cm, cross Dm. 7-8 mm. A loop is attached below. Trapsh 1971:9. Tabl.VII.

<sup>1318</sup> Abramov cemetery grave 12 and Mahajirov cemetery grave 6. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:26,27. Pic.17.6a; 21.11.

<sup>1319</sup> Verin cemetery graves 5 and 7. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:28. Pic.22.17; 23.4a.

<sup>1320</sup> Abramov cemetery grave 14. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990::26.Pic.18.6

<sup>1321</sup> They corresponds the *type 8 and 13* of Kazanskis' classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.34,14,18.

<sup>1322</sup> Tserkovni cemetery grave 7. Voronov, Shenkao 1971:176. Pic.7.5

<sup>1323</sup> Verin cemetery grave 5. Some correspond to the type 16 of Kazanskis' classification. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:28. Pl.23,7-8,10,13. See Kazanski 1997.pl.34.16.

<sup>1324</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 53 and Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 10. These are more common variants used for the strap ends. Trapsh 1971:95.Tabl.XXXV.2.

<sup>1325</sup> Correspond to the *type 5* of Kazanskis' classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.Pl.34.21.

coniferous components and combined with dot-in-circle (**Table 109. 23-24**).<sup>1326</sup> Circular and semicircular plate buckles are scarce, but varied in shape.<sup>1327</sup> Few new types of oval loop-buckle with tongue exceed the loop, which considers simple waist belts and occasionally appears even in female graves.<sup>1328</sup>

Belt attachment is a new and rare category showing at least three different belt types.<sup>1329</sup> They expose mainly loop attachments and occasionally the disc-attachments suspended loops.<sup>1330</sup> Some with undecorated oval<sup>1331</sup> or square shape plates<sup>1332</sup> are rare. Belt fittings are other new category observed within the weapon supportive belts. They produce two distinctive types appearing either in X-shape flattened plates<sup>1333</sup> or button shape metal plaques<sup>1334</sup> or both (**Table 110a. 2-3**).<sup>1335</sup>

Fibulas show necessity of variously fastened dress of both genders. Development of bow fibulae is recognized in slightly pronounced cross forming at the head and distinctive arm shape.<sup>1336</sup> Appear several variant of cast bow fibula with narrow rectangular arms of the cross (**Table 111b. 11-13**).<sup>1337</sup> There are few new types showing undecorated circular formation on head,<sup>1338</sup> often decorated with sardonic stone (**Table 31. 3**).<sup>1339</sup> They favourably wore females. Only few of the round-wire bow fibulae applied a circle decorative motive on the central cross.<sup>1340</sup> Most exceptional is decorative composition of radiating rosette or other

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<sup>1326</sup> Abramov hill cemetery grave 2. It classified as *type 15* by Kazanski. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990. Pic.14.21. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.34.22.

<sup>1327</sup> They correspond to the *types 8* of Kazanski's classification.

<sup>1328</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 45. It is presented with internal Dm. 1.2x2.2 cm and tongue 2.5 cm. Another variant from the same cemetery grave 53 differs in an asymmetric shape and gradually increased ring. Trapsh 1971:71-72, 80. Tabl. XXIII.6; XXX.6.

<sup>1329</sup> See: Baghaturia-Kner 2012:238. Tabl. XVII.

<sup>1330</sup> Verin cemetery grave 5. Voronov, Bgaghba and others, 1990:28. Pic.23.11. They are common in the late Roman cemeteries of northern Gaul and Rhineland (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.23.16; 35.12).

<sup>1331</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989. Pic.3.15.

<sup>1332</sup> Verin cemetery grave 5. Voronov, Bgaghba and others, 1990:28. Pic.23.16.

<sup>1333</sup> Akhatsarakhu grave 2 and Tserkovni cemetery grave 7. Trapsh 1971:89. Tabl. XLVII.8-9; Apushta cemetery grave 10.

Voronov 1982:55. Pic.25.24-32. Voronov, Jushin 1971. Pic.7. See as well: Baghaturia-Kner 2014:238. Tabl. XVII. B

<sup>1334</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 6. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.6.10-12.

<sup>1335</sup> Verin hill cemetery grave 5. Voronov, Bgaghba and others, 1990:28. Pic.23.18-23.

<sup>1336</sup> It corresponds to the *type II-4-2* of Kazanski's classification (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.33.2). Those with unusually incised bow are rarest variants. One with chip-carved decoration is evidenced in Akhatsarakhu cemetery grave 6. Another from Abgidzrakhu grave 40, produces a wing type impression of inscribed decoration (Trapsh 1971:63,92. Tabl. XIX.12; XXXIV.8). Both have nearly similar size: L. 9.7-9.8 cm and H. 3.1-3.7 cm. First corresponds the *type II-4-3* and the second appropriates the *type II-4-4* of Kazanski's Classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.33.3,4.

<sup>1337</sup> Mahajirov cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgaghba and others, 1990:27. Pic.20.3-4.

<sup>1338</sup> Akhatsarakhu grave 10. Trapsh 1971:95. Tabl. XXXV.5. It corresponds to the *type II-4-7* of Kazanski's classification (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.33.7). Similar fibulas from Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 24 show the L. 4.5 cm and H. 1.5 cm. But they first appear in I stage grave groups. Trapsh 1971:44. Tabl.3.

<sup>1339</sup> Abgidzrakhu graves 40 and 24. Both are bronze fibulas, but the first with lamella shape panel at the head is a smaller variant made in L. 7.6 cm and H. 2.8 cm. Another with cross-shape panel measures L. 8.5 cm and H. 2.7 cm. Trapsh 1971:44,63. Tabl. X.2. XIX.9.

<sup>1340</sup> Verin cemetery grave 8. Voronov, Bgaghba and others, 1990:29. Pic.24.11.



composition suspended by stamped circles (**Table 98.1**).<sup>1341</sup> Obvious influence of Christianity revealed in later new fibula types with sharply distinguished cross-head (**Table 111b. 19-20**). They are numerous and made from bronze and silver. From imported types of profiled and T-shape fibulas defines the rarest fasteners (**Table 111a. 11-13**).<sup>1342</sup>

Earrings of this group are still import and simplified samples. Their shape produces three distinctive types (**Table 105**). Round wire ring shape type with attached spherical or drop-shape decorative stones are rarest (**Table 105. 19-21**).<sup>1343</sup> Some round wire silver earrings of this type is adorned with grape shape attachment suspended by a metal granules are few and continue exist in the 450-550 AD (**Table 105. 28-30**).<sup>1344</sup> Those with attached decorative loop appear in two distinctive variants: with directly adjoined loop<sup>1345</sup> and with spherical attachment in-between (**Table 105. 23-26**).<sup>1346</sup>

Huge portion of jewellery recovered in female graves. They are particularly beads suspended mainly of blue glass beads (**Tables 107; 112. 22**). Some necklaces often combined with rounded bigger size amber beads<sup>1347</sup> and rarely with disk shape variants (**Table 105. 41-42, 59**).<sup>1348</sup> Metal neckless is occasional and demonstrate a bronze version of twisted types that is observable until the 450 AD (**Table 112. 18**).<sup>1349</sup> Finger rings are little increased and demonstrated in six types (**Table 106**). Only one sample shows a broadly narrow bronze hoop and biconical bezel, which is elliptical in plan and insert with sardonic.<sup>1350</sup> Another type shows narrow D shape hoop and round bezel, with inscribed design is unidentified (**Table 106. 2**).<sup>1351</sup> Third type is made from round-wire hoop and distinct with flattened shoulders and oval bezel (engraved composition is unrecognisable. **Table 106. 3**).<sup>1352</sup> Fourth type is a bronze finger ring similarly made of round wire hoop, but with rectangular bezel representing

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<sup>1341</sup> Apushta male grave 10. Voronov 1982:55. Pic.24.20.

<sup>1342</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery 49. Fibula is represented by L. 5.3 cm, H. 2 cm and placed on the chest area of the woman. Trapsh, 1971. Tabl.XXVII.2

<sup>1343</sup> It corresponds to the *type 5* of Kazanskis' typology (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:41. Pl.37.7).

<sup>1344</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 48, Mahajirov female cremation grave 2 and inhumation grave 3. Trapsh 1971:76. Tab.XXVI.16-17. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:26-27. Pic. 19.15-16; 20.7. It corresponds to *type 3* of Kazanskis' typology (Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:40. Pl.37.5). Similar earrings observed in Lower Danube (Fiedler 1992.fig.4. 2). Some are discovered in North Caucasian Komunta (Trapsh 1971:195) and roman east (Ilife 1934.Pl.24.12).

<sup>1345</sup> Mahajirov inhumation female grave 6. This variant is occurs seldom and corresponds to the *type 2* of Kazanskis' classification. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:27.Pic.21.15-16; Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:40. Pl.37.4.

<sup>1346</sup> Abramov hill grave 6. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1990:27-28.Pic.21.15-16.

<sup>1347</sup> Abgidzrakhu graves 6, 15, 28, 39, 45 and Alrakhu graves 5, 6, 13. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1348</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 15. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1349</sup> Aukhuamakhu grave 1. Trapsh 1971: 100. Tabl. XXXVIII.3

<sup>1350</sup> Tserkovni grave 3. Voronov, Jushin 1971:172.Pic.3.14.

<sup>1351</sup> It corresponds to the *type 2* of Kazanskis' classification. Kazansky, Mastykova 2007.Pl.37.12.

<sup>1352</sup> Alrakhu grave 5. Its dimensions are: loop 1.9x2 cm, internal Dm and the bezel Dm. 1.4x1.7 cm. It correspond the *type 3* of Kazanskis' classification. Trapsh 1971:110-112. Tabl.XLII.4. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.Pl.37.13. Similar beads are found in Iberian territory and in the Northern Black Sea littoral. Ramihvili 2003.pl.114.39-45.

X shape incisions (**Table 106. 7-8**).<sup>1353</sup> The most delicate finger ring is a fifth type distinct by D shape golden hoop flattened at the shoulders, open at the terminal and a slightly oval bezel with inset big sardonic (**Tables 106. 27; 83. 8**).<sup>1354</sup> Simplest is a penannular finger-ring made of lamella type hoops without bezel and open at the terminal.<sup>1355</sup> All they are limited in amount. Bracelets of this group are whether bronze or iron made simple ring types, some with decorated ends (**Table 113. 3-13, 20-21**).<sup>1356</sup>

From category hair decorative elements are presented by coiled hooks<sup>1357</sup> and simple rings (**Tables 114. 3**).<sup>1358</sup> There are few temple decorative silver plates decorated with sardonic gam.<sup>1359</sup> A new set of metal objects begun depositing within this grave group is associated either with hygiene (ear-cleansing) or cosmetic items (**Tables 114. 4-7**). They are rare and characterises few socially distinguished female. Other occasional objects appearing within this horizon in few female graves are spindle whorl, needle<sup>1360</sup> and knitting tools (**Table 114. 8-14**). This shows new practices and contacts with far geographic places.<sup>1361</sup> Fragments of chain mail is evidenced in three female graves is a rare case.<sup>1362</sup>

Some warrior graves are still dwelling the Flintstone,<sup>1363</sup> but apply new unusual implement grindstone.<sup>1364</sup> Number of male graves illustrates few agricultural implements like ‘pickaxe’<sup>1365</sup> and prototypes of local ‘Khuakveriani axes’, useful for the sharpening rock and other agricultural purposes including the woodwork.

Other specifics revealed in appearance of horse harnesses within few cremation graves of warrior in central Apsilia (**Table 109. D**).<sup>1366</sup> Some are Germanic type hinges of bits (**Table**

<sup>1353</sup> Mahajirov cremation grave 2. Two similar variants were identified, distinctive in a round and a semicircular wire. Voronov, Bgzhba and others 1990:26.Pic. 19.13. It corresponds to the *type 6* of Kazanski's classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.PI.37.16.

<sup>1354</sup> It evidenced in the Tsebelda cemetery gave 1-43 of a noblemen male. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148-152. Pic.17.8.

<sup>1355</sup> It corresponds to the *type 7* of Kazanski's classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.PI.37.17.

<sup>1356</sup> Abramov grave 13 and Verin grave 7. Voronov, Bgzhba and etc., 1990. Pl.1;22.

<sup>1357</sup> Aukhuamakhu cemetery grave 1. Two bronze wire coils of a round section, having an internal Dm of 1.2x1.5 cm. Trapsh 1971:100. Tabl.XXXVIII.6-7.

<sup>1358</sup> Abgidzrakhu graves 5 and 49 (placed under the skull). Baghaturia-Kner 2012:241. Tabl. VIII. Trapsh 1971:76-77. Tabl.XXVII.4.

<sup>1359</sup> Aukhuamakhu grave 5, Akhatsarakhu grave 28, Tserkovni grave 3 and Lar grave 4. Trapsh 1971:104. Tabl.XL.4-5; Trapsh 1975:32. Tabl.II.4; Voronov, Jushin 1971:172. Pic.3,4-5; Voronov 1982:34.Pic.14.28.

<sup>1360</sup> The earliest appearance considers to the Tserkovni cemetery grave 1. Voronov, Jushin 1971:171.Pic. 1.12.

<sup>1361</sup> They observed in several parts of Scandinavia and northern Europe.

<sup>1362</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 267 (*Tzibilium -1*), 294 and 351 (*Tzibilium -2*). They are assumed to reflect Germanic influence. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:57.

<sup>1363</sup> Tsebelda cemetery gave 39. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:154. Pic. 19.8.

<sup>1364</sup> Tsebelda inhumation grave 8 and Abgidzrakhu grave 12. Both warriors used it to sharpen their knife, can be associated with foreign confederates and different groups of people. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148.Pic.18.24-25; Trapsh 1971:33-34. Tabl. VI.13.

<sup>1365</sup> They occur in the upland Apsilian cemeteries of Apushta and Lar. They have a narrow mouth, high flat spine and a rounded hole at the handle. Voronov 1982.

<sup>1366</sup> Abgidzrakhu, Akhatsarkhu and Apiancha cemeteries. All three graves they appear are heavily equipped warriors. Trapsh 1971: 67-68. Gunba 1978; Trapsh 1975:51.

109. D-1).<sup>1367</sup> Other associated harness are loped buckles and looped attachments. Agricultural tools are rare and remain in two samples of hoe engravings of upland part.<sup>1368</sup>

They all are evidence for most wealthy burials recovered within this stage. Some of them are selected for particular purpose and indicate habitual changes. Majority of buried population are identified with militarized male society (**Tables 69; 71; 73**). There is only little evidence for simple population generally in upland parts of Apsilia. Female graves are proportionally little. Some are recorded as adult and very few are associated with children buried with their parents.

## VI. 2 EARLY BYZANTINE CEMETERIES AND GRAVES (450-650 AD)

Most cemeteries are abandoned in the late-5<sup>th</sup> century and after the AD 640 they are not attested in any cemetery of area. Therefore graves are not numerous and observed within the few cemeteries, continued in use over following hills:

- Abramov
- Verin
- Abgidzrakhu
- Tserkovni
- Tsebelda
- Apushta
- Lar

But a short lived new burial ground also appears in Justinianov hill, nearest vicinity of Tserkovni cemetery.

From date context they present three distinctive phases 450-500 AD, 500-550 AD and 550-640 AD.<sup>1369</sup> Probably nineteen complete graves may assign to 450-500 AD, including the cemeteries Verin,<sup>1370</sup> Abramov,<sup>1371</sup> Abgidzrakhu<sup>1372</sup> (**Table 69; Table 81. D**), Akhatsarakhu

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<sup>1367</sup> Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 44 and Akhatsarakhu grave 47. Germanic elements are visible among the horse harnesses. Trapsh 1971:67-68. Tabl.XXII.4; Trapsh 1975:51. Pic.22.

<sup>1368</sup> Lar cemetery grave 11. Voronov 1982:36. Pic.16.18.

<sup>1369</sup> Kazanski, Mastykova 2015:29.

<sup>1370</sup> Lar cemetery locates in 150 meters from Akhatsarakhu cemetery. Voronov 1982.

<sup>1371</sup> He was the latest buried female evidenced in the graves 12. Voronov, Bgzhba, Shenkao and Loginov 1990:26. Pic.17.

<sup>1372</sup> Abgidzrakhu male grave 14 and two female graves 15, 30 can be attributed to further generation. Trapsh 1971:37, 38, 40-51. Tabl. VII; IX;.XIII.

(Table 69),<sup>1373</sup> Justinianov,<sup>1374</sup> Apushta (Table 77),<sup>1375</sup> Lar.<sup>1376</sup> But most principal cemetery of latest population of Shapka remains Tserkovni hill and Justiniaov. Both produce few spectacular warriors and female graves of this phase (Tables 82. B; 98. B).<sup>1377</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery produce eight graves of time (144, 205, 211, 283, 376, 377, 403, 413 see in Tables 75, 76).

Other twenty-six graves interact with challenges of years 500-550. Most are observed in Tsebelda cemetery 1 and 2 (graves 107, 181, 279, 284, 290, 301, 316, 314, 322, 326, 334, 358, 405, 466 see in Tables 75, 76). The authority family grave is also evidenced here (Table 82. D).<sup>1378</sup> Others over hill cemeteries Justinianov<sup>1379</sup> and Tserkovni finds in Shapka, which remains as significant place and further involves some other graves from Abgidzrakhu (Table 69),<sup>1380</sup> upland Lar<sup>1381</sup> (Table 83. B) and Apushta (Table 77).<sup>1382</sup> The rest final graves may date by the 530-560 AD finds in Tsebelda fort cemetery 2 (graves 321, 325, 327, 313, 318, 336 see in Table 76).

## VI. 2. 1 Inhumation graves

Inhumation is unique burial practice for the latest population of Apsilia. Structurally and from practice they follow similar principles seen in previous historical phase, there is no need of repetition. NW oriented graves are largest group, only few bodies are found oriented to the E.

They did not show any significant difference in body display. Continued bury of decease lay on the back, in extended positions (*body position 1, variant 1*). Most bodies typically use *Arm Position 1*- both extended arms on the pelvis.<sup>1383</sup> Some identified with left arm bent at the elbow that is placed on stomach and the extended right arm<sup>1384</sup> (*arm position 13*).

<sup>1373</sup> Inhumation male grave 1 and female grave 9. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:158. Pic. 23. Voronov and others, 1990:29. Pic.24.

<sup>1374</sup> Graves 2 and 3. Voronov, Jushin 1971:181-182. Pic.11; 12.

<sup>1375</sup> Apushta graves 5 and 23 revealed continuity. Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin 1970:183:pic.15-1-5; Voronov 1982:62.Pic. 28.40

<sup>1376</sup> In the Lar cemetery, only one grave 11 was found. Voronov 1982:36. Pic.16.15-19.

<sup>1377</sup> Graves 5, 8, 9, 10. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176, 179-180. Pic.5;8;9;10

<sup>1378</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1a-3. Voronov, Shenkao, 1982:157. Pic.22. Female with golden ring is evidenced in Tsebelda grave 413. Kazanski, mastykova 2007:59.

<sup>1379</sup> Both are female graves 4 and 5. Voronov, Jushin 1971:184. Pic.4;5

<sup>1380</sup> Abgidzrakhu male grave 47. Trapsh 1971:74-76. Tabl.XXV.

<sup>1381</sup> Lar cemetery grave 1 of an authority individual. Voronov 1982:31. Pic.13.1-16.

<sup>1382</sup> In Apushta graves 2 and 6 were buried the last two local male. Voronov, Voznjuk, Jushin 1970:175,177: pic. 3,2; pic. 6.

<sup>1383</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery graves 8, 11, 13, 23, Tserkovni female grave 10 and Justinianov male grave 2. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989; Voronov, Jushin 19971. Pic.10; 11.

<sup>1384</sup> Justinianov female graves 3, 5. Voronov, Jushin 19971. Pic. 12;14.

Occasional is left extended arm and right arm bent at the elbow is placed on stomach (arm position).<sup>1385</sup> Heads are faced either right (*position 2*) or left (*position 3*).

Rather distinct the double body graves of mother with child, both are placed on back in extended arm and foot position. Only female was faced to the left. What may define in another case is the position of male articulate with *Body position 1* and *Arm position 1* (similar to the previous grave 390, see **Table 79a-1**). A female was deposited on his right side, *with Body and Arm Position 1* was also faced to the right.

The positioning of offered material gives understanding of ancient practices. What may define is decreased amount. Pouring pottery is found near to the skull or foot in both gender graves. Only the storage ware is placed at the foot. Display practice of male relative offerings is also similar to earlier phase. Jewellery still has been partly articulated to earlier years. Bells applies on the chest of Shapka females together with cross- shape fibulas, might expect an apotropaic function. There are two distinctive cases. First, when a knitting needle is placed on the chest of female and an iron scissor deposited at right shoulder.<sup>1386</sup> Second considers appearance of cosmetic or hygiene item that on the right hip.<sup>1387</sup>

Spectrum of personal accessories and fasteners showed clothing variation. Shapka settlement is dressed in a similar fashion to that of previous periods that stand closer to western style. Only some group of Tsebelda fort cemetery shows cloths fastened with two fibulas whether on the right shoulder<sup>1388</sup> or at the belly area.<sup>1389</sup> Individuals from representing high-ranking civilian and warrior appearing in Shapka and Lar seem reasonable to assume areal responsible authorities.<sup>1390</sup> They produce high quality weapons and belts.

### ***VI. 2. 1. 1 Selected grave types***

The treatment of the Shapka community and some of the Tsebelda demonstrate similarity in attitudes. Same practices for the grave structure seen in previous phase, identical display of body and corresponding offerings are limited the issues about grave types. But a little group of Tsebelda fort cemetery belonging the years 530-600, produce assemblages of regional importance and led me test the hypothesis about the population change in the region. Because

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<sup>1385</sup> Justinianov female grave 4. Voronov, Jushin 19971. Pic.13.

<sup>1386</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 23. Voronov and others 1989:12. Pic.8.6.

<sup>1387</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 23. Voronov and others 1989:12. Pic.8.8.

<sup>1388</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery female grave 11. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.6.

<sup>1389</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery Female grave 14. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.7.

<sup>1390</sup> Kazanski, Mastykoa 2015.

there are no biological indicators for this, but an offering context which is clearly not the same pattern seen before, therefore key points will be summarized.

However, six graves of Tsebelda fort cemetery-2 is one of the important group discovered generally in south-western sector of cemetery (Graves 318, 321, 325, 327, 336 see in **Table 74**). They contain male bodies, female body and two cases of double bodies, including mother with child and a couple. Most viewed traces of stone lining practice, which creates a tight bend with easily recognizable graves in north-western section of Tsebelda cemetery -2 consisting total three graves appearing in mid-Roman period (Graves 390, **Table 79a-1**).<sup>1391</sup> The grave construction, body display is similar patterns to stone-lining graves, so we can follow it back in a spectrum of Roman time practices. But the orientation bodies are distinctive with heads pointing whether west or north-west. In one case male grave with north-west orientation overlaps the horse grave (Grave 313 in **Table 74**).<sup>1392</sup>

Burial wealth made clear that pottery is occasionally offered and it is Lazian type jug. The only grave with stone lining practice, where the north Caucasian bowl was found is double body grave of female and child.<sup>1393</sup> Weapon is occasional, only one presents a single spear, rest are small knives. Beads are typically observed in the chest area. Noticeable artefacts are scissor, rod and knitting needle, which may point an interesting case of the possible hairdresser female.<sup>1394</sup> Male and female grave are common in depositing pin-hinged headed fibulas. Males demonstrate belt relative fittings which differ in some details. These graves are judged by the types of associated north Caucasian pottery which finds occasionally (**Table 103. 28-29**), also pin-hinge headed T-shape fibulas<sup>1395</sup> (**Table 111a. 10-12**) and Asian type male belts (**Table 110a.4; 110b. 3-5**).

Some are obviously new phenotypes of Colchis, specifically addressing the stone-lining practice we don't really know where it came from and what is the purpose compare identity of this structure, which is possibly a nomadic influence.

Theoretically we may assume the use of 'Alan belt',<sup>1396</sup> which is relatively rare type and in some instances similar to the belts from north Caucasia.<sup>1397</sup> But we have three distinctive

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<sup>1391</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery female grave 14 and double body graves 11, 13. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.6,7.

<sup>1392</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.4.1.

<sup>1393</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 11. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic.6. 2. Another similar bow from female grave 297 is identical to that occurs in in Giljach of upper Koban. This grave does not feature a stone-lining practice see: Voronov 2003. Pic. 139.44.

<sup>1394</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 23. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1989. Pic. 8.

<sup>1395</sup> Kazanski considers this as a signal of the Alans' presence in area and singles out two graves 297 and 321, to be associated with them. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:59.

<sup>1396</sup> Kovalevskaja 1992.

belt types very different from the models finds in north Caucasian region and especially the multi-part samples (**Table 110a. 4; 110b. 3-5**). Apsilian samples show changes in model design, perhaps result of workshop changes and changes of taste. But each suspending components categories including B-shape rigid loop plate buckles (heraldic),<sup>1398</sup> strap-terminals of ‘muscle fittings’,<sup>1399</sup> ‘heraldic’<sup>1400</sup> types or with openwork décor, arch type, B-shape fittings are similar to the Agafono (47), Volchikha (70), Verkh-Saya (15/2), Klin-Yar specimen.<sup>1401</sup> There are also rhomboid or 8-shape and other plaques missing in north Caucasian models. Regarding to a type of pin-hinge headed fibulas, except one exclusive case (on the right belly), they did not show any specific context with positioning at the right or left shoulders to be assumed traditional features. Remarkable is their use in pairs. What both items may obtain is information about the broad distribution areas, possible origin and common features in clothing, which attracted people. But practices and behaviors are different from Alan-Sarmatian graves and I wonder why they decline their genetic history of skull deformation in case of nomadic descendent. Perhaps Alans did not played significant role as had been assumed and there is a need to look from different perspectives. The key factors behind it are changes in lifestyle, clothing fashion and supply affected by geo-political context of Apsilia. That also linked with northern mountaineer neighbors, changes of supply sources and therefore, there may have appeared different reasons with different consequences. Written sources mention Alans and Huns in the context of strategic alliances with romans and Lazian king, assured the safety *Tzibile* fort first in 550 AD, when Persian general Nabedes gained control of this fort and later conflicts 555-557 AD linked with Persian interventions with Nachoragan and military punishment of Missimia. But these graves do not show the case of warrior graves with typical weaponry. Only the belts show development from the late roman military functional belts, which raises a question about the occasion it had been worn.<sup>1402</sup> However, their grave context gives us little insights what has been adopted or rejected, and we find only belt, fibulae and girdle framing feature, which does not have such precise connections relevant for Alanian cultural environment.

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<sup>1397</sup> Most of the fittings of such belts are related to military fashion which originated in Byzantium. See Balint 2000; Schmauder 2000.

<sup>1398</sup> Tsebelda fort grave 3. Pic.4.13.

<sup>1399</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 3. Such types have also been found in North Caucasia (Uc Tepe graves of Azerbaijan), in the territory of Sassanian Persia and in Lombard Italy-Noca Umbra (graves 16,18,79,84,85).

<sup>1400</sup> Similar straps are evidenced in Tolnanemedi and Leodorf. Daim 2010:63. Pl.1.1. Heraldic decorative plates are attested in Lazian Archaeopolis (Lekvinadze, Khvedelidze 1981), in Iberia (Kovalevskaja 1992).

<sup>1401</sup> Gavritukhin 2018.

<sup>1402</sup> The appearance of heraldic type belts (characterized by an openwork decoration), Kazanski links to conflict situations of year 550, when *Tzibile* was attacked and some of its section is even fired. See in: Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:59.

## VI. 2. 2 Grave Goods

Both phase graves show similar dynamic in decreased amount of offerings. The contribution of offered material gives understanding of regionalisation relative to 450-600 AD.<sup>1403</sup> New types of grave goods appear relatively short time. Some are occasional and small in amount. There are developed objects categories.

Pottery is homogenous class of assemblage. Jugs are generally Lazian type and easy to define development of pear form. They finds single in graves. Storage pottery are much decreased but still played significant role in graves of Shapka. It involves handled jars and casseroles still observe the previous shapes. *Pithoi* and amphorae are exceptional. Amphorae were particular vessels demonstrated abundant presence only in Shapka.<sup>1404</sup> Red slip wares are occasional with décor in two graves (**Table 104. 6,8**).<sup>1405</sup> North Caucasian wares have extensively demonstrated.

Glass vessel is little part of imported deposition and represented by new types of colourless goblets and faceted vessels (**Table 103. 20**).<sup>1406</sup> Lamps are few and show pointed foot and trailed thread decoration (**Table 103. 7-8**).<sup>1407</sup> Footed vessels<sup>1408</sup> and cones are limited.<sup>1409</sup> Later cones samples differ stylistically and with unworked rim (type of **Table 103. 27**).

Dominant weapon group show spread of new style. They still expose spears, lances, axe and rarely sword. Arrow heads are extremely decreased, but define three new types, include few nomadic socketed variant (**Table 85**). Vital is to distinguish sparsely appeared shields fitted either with *Vermand/Zieling G/11*,<sup>1410</sup> *Misery*<sup>1411</sup> or *Liebanau/Zieling E2* type spiked boss (**Table 86**).<sup>1412</sup> They finally disappear in early 6<sup>th</sup> century. Swords are imported and predominated by lenticular shape (**Table 98. 2**). Some with diamond section, double cut and narrow bladed type is rarest during the 450-550 AD;<sup>1413</sup> Precious cloisonné decoration and

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<sup>1403</sup> It equally matches the stage IV (450/550-550/600 AD) of Kazanski's classification.

<sup>1404</sup> Tserkovni grave 5. Pure survival condition enables interpreting. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176. Pic.5.3.

<sup>1405</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 5 and Verin hill cemetery grave 21. Voronov Jushin 1971. Pic.5.4; Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.2

<sup>1406</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 12. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1407</sup> Tserkovni grave 5. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176.

<sup>1408</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 47. Trapsh 1971:74-76. Tabl.XXV.1.

<sup>1409</sup> Tserkovni grave 6. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176.

<sup>1410</sup> Akhatsarakhu grave 2. Trapsh 1971:89-90. Tabl.XLVII.5.

<sup>1411</sup> Tserkovni grave 5. Voronov, Jushin 1971: 176. Pic.5.20

<sup>1412</sup> A shield with a spike boss which can also be connected to the Huns, occur in the Tserkovni grave 4. Voronov Jushin 1971:172.pic.431.

<sup>1413</sup> Abgidzrakhu inhumation gave 14. The shortest of them is a *spathae* with blade L. 42 cm and highest W. 3 cm at the shoulders. Trapsh 1971:37. Tabl.VII.3. It matches the *type 2-2* of Kazanski's classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl.29.5.



massive guard above blade makes easy to define some *Nydam* type two grooved swords (**Tables** 87. 5; 99).<sup>1414</sup> Spears are still frequent, some show later triangular shape, but new types appear in two distinctive variant of a tongue shape spear heads (**Table** 84. 19). Small knives also draw unusual leaf shape blade,<sup>1415</sup> but some are straight bladed types evenly narrowing to the tip, which maintained in previous stage.

Fasteners for different uses are production of different periods and geographic areas. They are still huge in the female graves of Shapka. They introduce imported cruciform fibulas (**Table** 111a, 15-16).<sup>1416</sup> Most of them show high quality workmanship in cast of bow and sharply pronounced cross-head. New types are zoomorphic brooches and gothic fibulas appear limited in female graves (**Table** 112. 11; **Table** 111a. 17).<sup>1417</sup> Some are decorated with cornelian stone at the center are few samples.<sup>1418</sup> Those derived from local ancestors show short armed variants with a hole in central part. They occasionally apply strap-ends of animal teeth.<sup>1419</sup>

Tsebelda distinguishes with verity of male belt fasteners. It includes previously appeared oval looped variants, but some with rectangular plate that still indicates the existence of three distinctive multi-part belts.<sup>1420</sup> New types are relatively few and illustrate oval looped and shielded-tongue buckles with rectangular plate and some with incrustrated cross. Defines 'heraldic' type with a B shape loop (**Table** 110a. 4).<sup>1421</sup> There are additional plates matching the strip terminals for ending the broad military belts, narrow<sup>1422</sup> or elongated types (**Table** 110b.3,4).<sup>1423</sup> Others are 'heraldic' strip-ends similar to Tolnanemedi and Leodorf (**Table** 110b. B-D).<sup>1424</sup> In fact, male relative **buckles** are varying. They are declined in female graves.

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<sup>1414</sup> Tserkovni grave 5. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176.Pic.5.27.

<sup>1415</sup> Tsebelda grave 3. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989:10; Pic.4.5.

<sup>1416</sup> Justinianov grave 5 and Tsebelda grave 14. Voronov. Jushin 1971:184. Pl.5,4-5; Voronov, Bgaghba and etc. 1989. Pic.7.3-4. They correspond to the *type* 2 of Kazanskis' classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.Pl.33.8.

<sup>1417</sup> Tserkovni grave 4. Voronov, Jushin 1971:185. Pic. 4. 21.

<sup>1418</sup> Justinianov grave 4. Voronov, Jushin 1971:176.Pic. .13, 9. A few silver variant is decorated with sardonic stone, which is set on a golden plate (Tsebelda grave 4).

<sup>1419</sup> Tserkovni grave 10. Voronov, Jushin 1971:180.Pic.10.

<sup>1420</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1a-3 , 83, 4, 8 and 13a. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:158.Pic. 22.1-35; Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989:10-11. Pic.4;5;6.

<sup>1421</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgaghba and etc. 1989:10.Pic.4.13. It corresponds to the *type* D5 of Schulze-Dörrlam classification, dated to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century (Fig.146.13).

<sup>1422</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgaghba and etc. 1989:10.Pic.4.21.

<sup>1423</sup> Tsebelda cemetery 13a. Voronov, Bgaghba and etc. 1989:10.Pic.6.28

<sup>1424</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 3, 8 and 13a. Pic.4.35; 5.16-17,19, 28; 6.28,31-34. See also reconstructed belts in: Baghaturia-Kner 2012:244.Tabl.XVII.G,H.

Jewellery is part of new fashion. Some new types like imported cross and medallion with representation of deer (**Table 112. 2-3**)<sup>1425</sup> appears to carry conceptual mean. Neckless show similar spectrum as in previous stage including royal blue polyhedral types, colorless ring glass beads, amber and rock crystal (**Table 107. 51-55,** ); in which mosaic beads or Sea shell cowry are rarest types (**Table 107. 51-55**).

Earing introduces three variants of round-ware types (**Table 105. 23, 27**). Simplest are the bronze wire ring with attached decorative loop below, those are seldom finds.<sup>1426</sup> Other undecorated silver earrings show both flattened ends (**Table 105. 31, 32**).<sup>1427</sup> Some of diamond section wire does not exclude to be used as nose ring.<sup>1428</sup> Particular new types of new finger rings represented in two variants: the round wire silver or bronze hoops with a raised conic bezel (**Table 106. 13, 15-16**). They generally belong to the male jewellery.<sup>1429</sup> Distinguishes a bronze finger ring depicting stylised animal, possibly a deer, incrust in brownish glass.<sup>1430</sup> Some iron wire rings of D shape hoop are occasion types.<sup>1431</sup> Exclusive is the fine expending bronze hoop with round bezel and decorative yellowish glass that is supported by punched frame above.<sup>1432</sup> From previous types the bronze rings with X shape decoration is still observable.<sup>1433</sup> All in all eight different types of finger ring are evidenced. All bracelets of this group are simple wire type, some of bronze and silver variants with both engraved ends.<sup>1434</sup> Number of female hairpins of previous types is continually uses.<sup>1435</sup> An item with hygienic or cosmetic task is still common within these stage female grave groups.

The most unusual category is bell<sup>1436</sup> and iron scissor appear within female grave (**Table 79b. 11**). The knitting needle with one pointing is observed similar to previous stage (**Table 114. 13**).<sup>1437</sup> Agricultural implements are extremely few; Hoe<sup>1438</sup> and pick<sup>1439</sup> are occasional

<sup>1425</sup> Justinianov grave 3. Voronov, Jushin 1971:184.Pic. 12.20. See also: Khrushkova 1979: 62-73. Materiali po melkoi plastike srednevekovoi Abkazii. Tbilisi.

<sup>1426</sup> Tserkovni graves 8, 9 and Justinianov grave 3. Some bronze samples reveal a directly attached ring or ring that is set on the loop. Voronov, Jushin 1971:180, 172, 182.Pic.9.6; Pic. 8.7-9 and Pic.12.17-15-16.

<sup>1427</sup> Justinianov grave 3. Voronov, Jushin 1971:182. Pic.12.17-18.

<sup>1428</sup> Tserkovni grave 8. Voronov, Jushin 1971:182. Pic.8.

<sup>1429</sup> The silver version with geometric pattern occurs in the Tsebelda male grave 3. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989:10.Pic.4.14. A distinctive version from the Tsebelda grave 1a-3, which shows a geometric design is another variant of this type, similarly made of silver. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:157-158. Pic. 22.19.

<sup>1430</sup> Tsebelda male gave 13a. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989:11.Pic.6.24.

<sup>1431</sup> Tsebelda female grave 13b. They are flattened at the shoulders, and the oval bezel is engraved with an unidentified design. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989:11-12.Pic.6.20

<sup>1432</sup> Tserkovni grave 8. Voronov, Jushin 1971:179.Pic.8.5. It corresponds to the *type 5* of Kazanskis' classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.Pl.37.15. Similar finger rings are found in eastern Georgia (Ramishvili 2003. Pl.114.4,3.) and Crimea (Strzeleskii 2005. Tabl.4.23).

<sup>1433</sup> Tserkovni grave 9. Voronov, Jushin 1971:180.Pic.8.8.

<sup>1434</sup> Tserkovni grave 3. Voronov, Jushin 1971:182. Pic.12.23.

<sup>1435</sup> Tserkovni grave 9. Voronov, Jushin 1971:179.Pic.9.5.

<sup>1436</sup> Justinianov female graves 4 and 5, belonging to the early-6<sup>th</sup> century. Voronov, Jushin 1971:184. Pic.14.16; Pic.14.17.

<sup>1437</sup> Tsebelda grave 23. Voronov and others 1989:12. Pic.8.6

and developed types. Other existential elements are horse-bits and associated harnesses, but distinctive from those recovered in late roman grave context (**Table 109. 2**).

That is overall schema of offerings produce graves of the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Latest phase shows more nuanced evolution of offering structure and consider six graves of early 6<sup>th</sup> century. Remarkable is a sporadic appearance of north Caucasian pottery, including bowls.<sup>1440</sup>

They rarely contain weapons during the 450-500, which practically absent in following years. In the context of warrior graves almost exclusive is sword with wooden handgrip and scabbard which is evidenced in noblemen grave.<sup>1441</sup>

The main discernible change in fastener context is north Caucasian T-shaped pin-hinge headed fibulae types, used few individuals and presented in two distinctive variant (**Table 111a.10-12**).<sup>1442</sup> Other type with T-shape foot is occasional.<sup>1443</sup> Exclusive is zoomorphic (aviform) brooch (**Table 112. 11**).<sup>1444</sup> Massive find is cruciform arched fibulae with enlarged foot and flat head (**Table 111b.19-20**).

Accidental buckles of this phase are some B shape rectangular plated and ‘heraldic’ looped plated types (**Table 108. 17; 110a. 4**).<sup>1445</sup> Most exclusive is Syrian type buckle of rectangular shape with zoomorphic décor.<sup>1446</sup> Occasionally find is B-shaped or rectangular buckles with heraldic plates.<sup>1447</sup> Some belt is fitted either with ‘mask’ type decorative plaques,

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<sup>1438</sup> Aposhta cremation grave 29. Voronov 1982:64.Pic. 29.17.

<sup>1439</sup> Lar cemetery grave 1. Voronov 1982:31. Pic.13.8.

<sup>1440</sup> Sometimes they are used to identify north Caucasian tribes. But the use of single items is insufficient evidence for ethnic identification.

<sup>1441</sup> Verin hill grave (This burial in the latest publications is given in number 61). Its precious decorative components are: the handgrip, which is consisted of silver **trim** and golden oval applique which has a cornea decoration, implanted on a kind of silver nail. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:143-.Pic.23.5. See also in: Kazanski, Mastykova 2007.PI.23.11. This sword is slightly a later date and dating before the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century is not advisable.

<sup>1442</sup> Tsebelda female graves 13-b, 21 and 23. This type show sharply arched semi-circular bow, usually made of squarish-cross—section plate. This flattened variants are quite rare and their discovery in female graves is also noteworthy. Voronov, Bgzhba 1989:11-12. Pic.6.18; 7.30.8.14.

<sup>1443</sup> It corresponds to the *Group VI* of Kasanskis’ classification. Some applies the hooks at the foot. They are evidenced in central, east Georgian and north Caucasian graves.

<sup>1444</sup> Justinianov grave 4. Voronov, Jushin 1971:184. Pic. 13. It is considered to be of byzantine origin (Mastykova 2000:34), but some do not exclude its Sasanian origin as well (Chrishmann 1964.pl.28.9,10). In some variants also observed in the Mokraja Balka necropolis of Giljach (Vuribov 1977).

<sup>1445</sup> B shaped buckle with rectangular plate are considered byzantine origin. They are widespread over the Asia Minor, Crimea and Lower Danube (Schulze-Dörlam 2000.Fig.25). Only a few are found in the north Caucasus. Second type with a looped plate structure, also belongs to the byzantine origin. They corresponds to the *types 17 and 18* of Kazanskis’ classification. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007. Pl. 35, 47.

<sup>1446</sup> It corresponds to the type 20 of Kazanski’s typology. They are observed over the in Pontic-Caucasian region, as well as in south West Germany (at Obeflacht, Mengen) and Slovakia (in Kalna). See: Werner 1974. Fig.2.1-5).

<sup>1447</sup> They are mostly discovered in Asia Minor, Crimea and lower Danube. See: Schulze Dörrlamm 2002:68-78. Fig. 25.

having further parallels from Azerbaijan, Sassanian Persia and Lombard Italy.<sup>1448</sup> But there are other type plaques of either rhomboid<sup>1449</sup> or 8-shape<sup>1450</sup> indicative for narrow belt (**Table 110b. B**). Rivets are few appear in a new T-shape and within three different belt sets.<sup>1451</sup> Arch form is accidental (**Table 110b. D**).<sup>1452</sup> The most unusual is imported Shoes which associates' authority male (**Table 109. C**).<sup>1453</sup>

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<sup>1448</sup> Tsebelda cemetery graves 1a-3 and 8. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:157. Pic.22.21-24. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1983:37. Pic.54,55,56. Belt reconstruction sees in: Baghaturia-Kner 2014:238. Tabl. XVII. Comparisons from Nokera-Umbra graves 16, 18, 42, 79, 84 and 85. See: Firenze 2005.

<sup>1449</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 3. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989:10. Pic.5.28.

<sup>1450</sup> Tsebelda graves 8 and 13. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989. Pic.4.23; 6.37,44.

<sup>1451</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery graves 3, 4 and 13. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989:10,11. Pic.4.30-31; 6.27. Reconstructed belt see in: Baghaturia-Kner 2014:244. Tabl. XVII.H, G.

<sup>1452</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 13a. Voronov, Bgaghba and others 1989:11. Pic.6.29-30

<sup>1453</sup> Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 13a.

## VII. DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES OF APSILIA

Defensive structures were significant components of the early Byzantine landscape. Fortified mountains and ridges are seen in the south at the river Machara. From the middle part, they follow both banks of the upland Kodori and into the last defense at the river Kelasuri to the northwest. Forts are constructed on the hilltops to control areas within 5–7 km. Their planning shows site-specific realities peculiar to design. From plan, size, and shape, they match the landscape configuration. Most are defined by natural defensibility and good water supply.

However, seven fortified sites have been recorded by Voronov. Two of them, Gerzeul and Shapka, monitored the Machara river basin and related ridges. The next five—Tzibile, Akhista, Apushta, Bat, and Pal—secured the movements among the Kodori river. The last fort Lar took the responsibility for the security of upland Kelasuri River. Comparatively, the best preserved is the Tzibile fort. Shapka is purely preserved, but both forts are still standing in the region. The rest are ruined and some recorded as dismantled. Based on the size and structure, the biggest forts are Shapka (15,000 m<sup>2</sup>) and Tzibulus (11,000 m<sup>2</sup>), which lie on the key Apsilian road. Apushta (ca. 8,000 m<sup>2</sup>), Akhista, and Pal (with an area of 4,700–5,000 m<sup>2</sup>) are small forts, though they hold the record for maximum height. Aside from Apushta, they all lie on arterial roads (**Table 54. C**). Their increase is suggested to be during the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Associated settlements and cemeteries were situated outside the forts. It recognizes the system of land division because there are comparably well-communicated parts. Their cemeteries prove both civilian and militarized settlement, strategically located along north-south intersecting roads. There are a considerable number of warriors from different historical periods, with some larger groups suggesting military installation.

### VII. 1 FORTS

The ancient names of the forts recorded as Shapka, Akhista, and Lar (Lari) are unknown and according to their place name have been recorded in the scientific literature. The entire complex of each defense area consisted of a fort, related settlements, and a cemetery.

### GERZEUL (*Ghurzuli*) FORT

Gerzeul is the southernmost defense of Apsilia near the Black Sea (**Table 56**). The fort stands at a naturally defended crest. Surrounding it on both sides are steep slopes and cliffs. This place was not well-supplied by river sources.<sup>1454</sup> The entire fortified area includes a fort with towers, as well as defensive walls, corresponding water supply structures, and several unidentified ruined buildings. Other remnants are the entrance passage and the gate.

The way towards the fort that follows the narrow limestone crest is blocked by towers and defensive walls (**Table 57**). The surviving walls are about 5 m in height and are usually 1.8–2 m thick. The northern side is protected by a longer wall that appears at the crest of the hill. To the south, a wall extends downwards and occupies half of the slope. There is no trace of the upper ending sections of the wall.<sup>1455</sup> Both are of the widely used two-line brick masonry of *opus mixtum*, but the southern wall is distinguished by several lines. Most bricks are identical in shape and similar to those of Tower 1, but distinction reveals the facing part with finger traces.

The surviving entrance of the Gurzuli fort, with a height of 1.8 m (1.6 m width on the exterior part), is arched by brick. The interior part is shaped like a corridor (2.6 m width, 5 m height). The door is locked with timber like the Tsibulus fort, a common feature of forts in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century.

At the northwestern part, Tower 1 (internal size 7 x 7 cm) supported approaches to the main gate of the fort located some 25 m away. It is divided into two buildings of the same size (1.6 x 3.35 m). Both are covered by stone above, but there is no sign of the existence of a wall-walk.<sup>1456</sup> The entrance spaces with raised floors appear 1–2 m above the mountain cliff, which seems to be approached by stairs. On the floor level, a line of brick masonry is recorded. In general, there are three exits (1.15 m width, 1.8 m height), and the internal part is framed by brick arches. The bricks are square (28 x 28 x 5 cm) and rectangular (30 x 18 x 4 cm) in shape.

The **Watch Tower N2** (3.96 x 3.3 m) is located immediately south of the fort.<sup>1457</sup> It is distinct in plan and size with thicker walls (above 2.5 m and 1 m width) and similarly brick arched. At the northern wall, windows with brick arches can be found. Inside are collapsed bricks of a tower, 34 x 26 x 4 cm in size. The upper cultural layer consists of traces of fire (thick layer of ash and charcoal).

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<sup>1454</sup> Voronov, 1980:36.

<sup>1455</sup> Voronov supposes that fort had the crenelated adages. See: Voronov 1980:28,30.

<sup>1456</sup> Voronov 1980:28.

<sup>1457</sup> The cistern found near the tower 2 consisted of a narrow 6 meters deep Camren, with slightly circuit corners. Fragmented items of the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century were found here.

The fort area produced three important water reservoirs of the 4<sup>th</sup> century (**Table 57. E**). One of them is the Cistern 1 (internal size is 3.1 x 4 m at the width of the wall up 1.5 m), built 70 m away from Tower N1. It has a water capacity of 25 m<sup>3</sup>.<sup>1458</sup> The next, bigger size Cistern 2 is built 100 m away and is able to hold 50 m<sup>3</sup> water. It is dissimilar in cross shape plan, with generally square-shaped chambers (2.6 x 5.1 m width; ca. 3.7 m height). It is built by roughly drafted lime rubbles, with three lines of brick masonry (Cistern N3).<sup>1459</sup>

Cistern 3 stood at the southern part of the asymmetric platform, which has not been studied archaeologically yet. The platform, which is 21 m long at the eastern wall, 16.5 m at the western wall, and 8.6 m wide on all sides, consisted of two parts. Above its southern part, there are some buildings recorded with eastern and northern surviving walls, which are twice mortared. The eastern wall provides brick masonry in two lines, but the northern wall with three-line brick masonry shows two entrances.

The later structures of Gurzuli fort belonging to the final stage were strongly built with slightly drafted small limestone and covered with white-greyish mortar mixed with sand.<sup>1460</sup> Masonry lines are generally of regular arrangement.

**Dating evidences from the fort area.** The earliest data provides evidence of local pottery (*pithoi*, jars, evidence of cattle corresponding to the 5<sup>th</sup>-century phase) from Tower 1, which illustrates various phases from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century (horizon D)<sup>1461</sup> and from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The gate part provides evidence of early Byzantine pottery fragments. Other local potteries suggestive of 7<sup>th</sup>- to 8<sup>th</sup>-century occupation were recorded from Cistern N1, associated with the local settlement and building phase of the fort. Other evidence of the early 8<sup>th</sup> century can be gathered from towers and cisterns.<sup>1462</sup> The platform, internal buildings, and first walls suggest the same date.<sup>1463</sup> A thick layer of ash and charcoal from Tower 2 is indicative of a siege. In fact, the Gurzuli fort was long abandoned before the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### *SHAPKA FORT*

Much importance is recognized in the location and capacity for the purely known defensive complex of Shapka in the central part, uplands of the river Machara (Table 58). Its first

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<sup>1458</sup> Voronov 1980:31.

<sup>1459</sup> The alter of a 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century church was built above the cistern, which seems to have collapsed from gravity.

<sup>1460</sup> Voronov 1980:27.

<sup>1461</sup> Voronov 1980:28.

<sup>1462</sup> Voronov 1980:33.

<sup>1463</sup> Voronov 1980:32.

appearance under this name is in a publication of the site excavator Voronov in 1969, but what circumstances led to the choice of this name for the area is uncertain.

Shapka fort stands on a limestone hill, surrounded on all sides by mountains and deep valleys.<sup>1464</sup> Only the eastern section is accessible through a track directed from the settled part, where the gate tower stood. This track connects towards the Patskhiri valley bend, with further cemeteries dispersed to the northwest. The fort is supplied with water from the stream of the river Tsivi (Georgian for ‘cold’).<sup>1465</sup> It is the only water source of the place. Evidence of supplementary water pipes is discovered 200 m southeast, on the way towards the river.<sup>1466</sup>

The entire complex includes the fort (15,000 m<sup>2</sup>), church, and interior graves (**Table 59**). They are dispersed across a 15 ha area, the largest defensive complex of the area. Corresponding features of the outside fort consist of settlements (200 x 70 m<sup>2</sup>) and a relative cemetery (2.5 x 1.5 km<sup>2</sup>). This makes it the most significant stronghold of Apsilia.

The purely preserved three walls and four towers are the visible survivors of this fort. The general outline of the ground level is not clear. Both surviving southern lines of walls occurring at the southern part go up to 1.5 m in height. They represent limestone rubble walls. The largest wall in the north is preserved at a height of 2 m and thickness of 1.5 m, and stretches for 600 m. It blocks a steep part and easily approaches the river stream.

The towers are recorded as two-storey structures. The distance between them varies from 10–90 cm.<sup>1467</sup> The first two are characterized by limestone rubbles masonry, except for Tower 3.

The most advantageous position occupied the square gate tower at the access part, easily approachable from the settlement. It is preserved with 1.5 m height, 1.5–2 m thickness, and an outside dimension of 12 x 13 m. The direct location of the place, connecting Shapka hill and Apiancha Mountain, makes the task significant. Behind it are two other possible towers. They are slightly different in capacity and positional characteristics. The dimension of the tower standing 90 m away from the upper narrow crest is distinct, with an outside width of 2 x 2 m. The least maintained is the second, squarer tower which stands on the summits of massive rocks and is preserved with 10 x 12 m size.

The key Tower 3, built 10 m away, is part of the internal provisioning system. The dimensions are slightly different, with an outside of 8 x 8 m but still standing at a height of 7 m and thickness of 1.5–2.5 cm. The entire surface is characterized by well-drafted ashlar

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<sup>1464</sup> Voronov 1969:59-60; Voronov 1975:30; Voronov, Bgzhba 1985:27 PAI.

<sup>1465</sup> Voronov 1977:17.

<sup>1466</sup> Fragmented pottery pipes within mortar and huge pottery fragments were discovered near the spring. Voronov, Bgzhba and etc., 1989:14. AO; 1984:14; AO 1984.

<sup>1467</sup> Voronov 1975:31.



quadric blocks in *opus quadratum* style, which is built on a lime-sand mortar.<sup>1468</sup> There are 10 to 12 recorded lines of masonry producing different widths: at the interior lower level it is 23–25 cm wide, but at the 2 m height it reaches up to 30–38 cm in width, and the last two upper lines approach its maximum 42–45 cm width. The tower is supported by rectangular-shaped corner pylons at the northern wall with sizes 1.25 x 0.95, 1.26 x 0.97, and 1.27 x 0.94 m.<sup>1469</sup> The internal part records remain of the tower-type asymmetric structure (**Table 59,2**. Corresponding line is marked in red color). The northern walls of this structure are preserved at 5.05 m height and 0.6–0.76 m width; to the east at 5.75 m height, and to the south at 5 m height.<sup>1470</sup> The western wall is lacking. The corner part of the northern wall bends in a way that reflects late medieval structure. Comparable entrance space is recorded in the northwestern part.

A corresponding church is placed in the center of the fortified area, behind the towers, and occupying an area of 200 m<sup>2</sup>. Three more unidentified buildings, measuring 10 x 10 m in size,<sup>1471</sup> can be found in the internal space among the southwestern crests. Other evidence of early Byzantine activity includes two graves inside Tower 3 and fragmented pottery, producing supportive context to the functioning phase of the fort.<sup>1472</sup> The rest of the evidence are tiles similar to those in Tsebelda discovered, which gives an understanding of the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century.

**Chronologic features.** The various evidences give the potential for different historical phases from the early 5<sup>th</sup> to the late 6<sup>th</sup> century. The grave, fragmented pottery and tiles may herald the beginning phase of a functioning fort in the early Byzantine period. The tiles, entrance arches, and *Tower 1* similar to Tzibulum match data from 529–542 AD, but the northern wall among the ancient interior towers and its northern interior corner is determined to be from the late medieval period.<sup>1473</sup> Corresponding church and fort are attributed to different historical periods.

### ***TZIBILE FORT***

Tzibile fort is located 4 km east of the village of Tsebelda (**Table 60**). It is positioned at the edges of Adagua Mountain and on two cliffs with precipices along the Kodori River. The fort

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<sup>1468</sup> Voronov 1969:59; Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1984:76. PAI.

<sup>1469</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba. 1985:32, 29.

<sup>1470</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba. 1985:27. Pic.19.1.

<sup>1471</sup> Voronov 1975:31.

<sup>1472</sup> A child grave 4 appears at the N wall of the tower. And the grave 5 occurs at the SW pylon, near the western wall. See: Voronov, Bgazhba 1985.

<sup>1473</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba 1985:28. PAI.

was built on a naturally defended place, well managed by water sources that flowed in from 200 m away at the southwestern part of Adagua Mountain. It was first identified as the Tzibile fort by Procopius, mentioning it as the chief fort of Apsilia (Proc.). That is why this place has been called Tsebelda (sometimes mentioned as Tsibila or Tibelia) by the locals. In fact, it is the most well-preserved defensive structure of the area. It still stands at a height of 8–12 m, consisting of walls 3–5 m thick, a main gate to the west, and three distinct towers (**Tables 61 and 62**). The entire fortified area includes the fort and several related functional structures, church complexes of various periods, and internal graves. The fort includes all utilities (water supply, heat) necessary for a stationed army. There are related outside settlements and cemeteries as well.

From structural details, the most significant position applies to the southwest Tower 1, towards the slopes at the Kodori River (**Tables 61. B**). It stands at 12 m in height and 6 m in width. Its sharply ovoid face corresponds to the approaches of outer defensive walls made for security reasons. Facing stones are the well-drafted square plates (width at the north is 0.95 m, south is 1.2 m), recorded to be in irregular arrangement. Ten lines of them survived at the southern wall.<sup>1474</sup> The northern wall is completely flat. It contains arched windows (1.9 m in width and 2.75 m in length) suited for the throwing of stones.<sup>1475</sup> An array protrusion (2.0 m in width), which remains at the eastern wall, makes up the fundament of the steps.<sup>1476</sup> It designates the battle platform of outer defensive walls above the tower. A deep chamber with a height of 4–6 m at the western part is built by rubbles. Excavator supposed crenulated edges on the top of the walls.

The next Tower 2 was the main bastion for using the catapults and other missile weapons (**Tables 61. B**).<sup>1477</sup> It is more rectangular in shape and remains above 4–5 m in height. A specificity of the northern wall is that its projection does not attach to the main wall.<sup>1478</sup> Differences in length (northern wall: 5.45 m length and 2.6 m height; southern wall: 5.55 m length)<sup>1479</sup> and thickness (northern wall: 3.15 m; southern wall: 5.45 m; western wall: 4 m) of walls are apparent. They are built of roughly drafted limestone blocks made of limestone mortar. But evidence of *opus mixtum* masonry is provided by collapsed parts, recorded to be

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<sup>1474</sup> The blocks are quite different in size. Some are 25-40 cm thick. Bigger blocks exceed 1 m length and narrow blocks are 25-30 cm long. Voronov, Bgaghba 1985:32-33. Pic.3-1, 2.

<sup>1475</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba 1985. Pic.15-1.

<sup>1476</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba 1985:32-35.

<sup>1477</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba 1985:39.

<sup>1478</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba 1985:36.

<sup>1479</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba 1985. pic.1, 8:2, 1-2.

ruins from the northern and southern walls. Four lines of bricks remain with a standard brick size of 31 x 31 x 4 cm.

The last and square-shaped Tower 3 is represented by a two-storey building (**Tables 61. B, D**).<sup>1480</sup> It survives at above 5–7 m height (northern wall: 5 m; southern wall: 8 m; western and eastern walls: 7–8 m). Massive limestone blocks (*opus quadratum*) of regular arrangement comprise the southern, northern, western, and partially the eastern walls. The eastern part of the tower, which is lacking, is expected to be attached to the main wall of Curtain 2 after it was built, while both are differing in masonry. The eastern wall of the tower features two different masonries. One is roughly draft stones of irregular arrangement (*opus incertum*), similar to the interior facing of Curtain 2, and another is an *opus quadratum*. Other specifics of this tower are reflected in the entrance made of an arch above a corner shaft between the main walls. The heating system recorded in this tower is attributed to a two-brick structure (31 x 31 x 0.95 m). One of them can be found at the southern wall (0.58 x 0.58 m).

The outer defensive walls display two parallel walls, interpreted for the existence of a double wall system. First is Curtain 1, which stretches between Towers 1 and 3. It can be found at the eastern part and stands 8 m long and 2.3 m wide.<sup>1481</sup> The second wall line (Curtain 2) is located between Towers 2 and 3. It remains above 4–7 m in height, 29.85 m in length, and 2.9–3 m in thickness. The interior wall is built by roughly drafted stones of an irregular arrangement in lime mortar, but the attachment parts within the tower are covered with *opus incertum* masonry. There is a space gap in Tower 2 recorded for the connective timber, which might bend with Curtain 2.<sup>1482</sup> The space gap of 14–14.5 and 5 m between both wall sections is considerable. The curtain wall seems to have appeared in the 450s.

Pylons and arches are further details of their uniform architecture. Pylons are mentioned between the Tower 2 and the first outer wall section. Another section designed to provide strategic supply is the parapet (terrain). It is taken into account to post the fiercest warriors (*Balistari*) in Tzibile fort, Tower 2. A corridor is placed between Towers 1 and 2.

Several interrelated structures recorded at both curtains are essential for military operations. Barracks were an important concern for headquarter stations. It is connected to Curtain 1 and built by roughly drafted small rubbles, which is associated with the building of the guards.<sup>1483</sup>

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<sup>1480</sup> Voronov, Bgzhba 1985:41, 53-55. Pic.6, 1.

<sup>1481</sup> Voronov, Bgzhba 1985. Pic. 1, 15; 104-1.

<sup>1482</sup> Voronov, Bgzhba 1985:56.

<sup>1483</sup> Voronov, Bgzhba.1985:59.

For other buildings providing military supply, one considers the wine storage, which is attached to Curtain 2 in the east. It is shaped in a rectangular structure (N2-3) with massive northern (6.48 m length and 1.3 m width)<sup>1484</sup> and eastern walls (6.2 m length and 1.2 m width).

For food services, two other uncertain structures might be useful, built to the north of the wine storage, but there are two more functionally unidentified structures relative to Curtain 2 that might be useful for food. Some are built by roughly drafted small rubble masonry (numbered by N2-1), occupying the middle part (Building 4). Beyond it, other functionally variable structures are also recorded—one separate building of 5 x 5 m in size (Building 5); the stairs towards the Tower N3 built at a later phase, 4.35 x 2.72 m in size (Building 6); at the corner towards the Curtain 3, 5.18 x 6 m in size and surviving above 6 m height (Building 6).<sup>1485</sup>

Bathhouses also had priority in the defensive building agenda, implying great probability for a stationed army (**Table 61. D-2**). It is placed in the northern part and features *caloriferes*, with a cold (4 x 2.04 m), warm (1.8 x 3.1 x 2.4 x 2.9 m), and hot section. Water supply pipes are evidenced through the northern wall (0.6–0.7 m wide).<sup>1486</sup> In the northeastern corner is evidence of a chimney made of fragmented amphorae bottoms. There is also evidence of a collapsed arch with three brick lines.

A pottery oven can be found at the outer wall of the fort. It is a square structure (4.7 x 4.6 m) with an oval chamber (2.4 x 1.80 m) on the ground and associated with the pottery manufacture of the Roman phase (**Table 61. D-3**).<sup>1487</sup>

Other utilities include pipes that provide water supply from the reservoir, as well as the last well-supplied bath system. A water cistern situated to the northeast is shaped in a sub-circular structure and measures 3.75 m long and 1.8 m deep. Supplementary water pipes 354 m in length stretches from the River of Adagua Mountain. Evidence of water pipe (12 x 10 cm and 12–13 cm thick) on a mortar and brick mixture is found in several parts—near the cistern, bath, and outside of the Tzibile fort area towards the Adagua mountain. Other evidence of light-colored fine clay water pipes, which survived in Buildings N2 to N5, is recorded as imported material. Brown and ill-fired pipes can also be traced through Buildings 2 to 4. Supplementary parts used brick-mixed mortar as well (12–13 cm thick). Tzibile's

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<sup>1484</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba.1985:59.

<sup>1485</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1984:75. PAI.

<sup>1486</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba 1985:53. Pic. 9.1-6.

<sup>1487</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao 1982:63.

water supply system was an insult before the fort.<sup>1488</sup> Further structural considerations include the church planned in the northern part of the fort.

*MATERIAL EVIDENCE FROM TSIBULUS FORT.* Objects from the fortification structure and corresponding areas demonstrate activity from five different periods:

- Classic
- Hellenistic
- Late Roman
- Early Medieval
- Late Byzantine

The evidence for Classic and Hellenistic occupation can be found in Layer 3 of Tower 3. It consists of fragmented black-glazed vessels and Sinopian plates of the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries relevant to the earlier trade activities.<sup>1489</sup> However, this data is useless in processing the functioning phases of Tzibile fort.

Evidence for the late Roman occupation includes the watching structure, outer defensive wall, Building 7, and the bathhouse. The earliest is the stage II grave (360–380 AD) occurring in the watching structure according to the peribolus.<sup>1490</sup> It is followed by finds of weapons and local and imported pottery on the floor level of the watching structure, attributable to the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. By the outer defensive wall is an oven, associated with small agricultural activities that went out of use after the fort was built. Other supportive evidence for the late 4<sup>th</sup> century comes also from the V and G horizons of the fort,<sup>1491</sup> but they can still be arguably assigned to the functioning phase of Tzibile fort. Other material evidence from Building 7 gives access to the early functioning phase of the fort. It consists of huge annony and commodity objects of the late 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, including large quantities of transit wares expected for olive, olive oil (LRA), wine, or other types of dry food. Typologically, they illustrate the LRA (type 1 B), LRA 1, LRA 3, and the ‘Bag Shape’ amphorae, for which hundreds of comparisons are documented from the Mediterranean (**Table** 104. 9-20). Associated pottery also includes a regional series of carrot-shaped amphorae and imported ampules, possibly for carrying healing liquid. There are also imported and locally produced military weapons representing the experiences of guarding duty. They may be associated with supplementary material for defenders that already existed in the area of the fort and relevance with the bathhouse may be assessed.

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<sup>1488</sup> Voronov 1985:64.

<sup>1489</sup> The material of the phase 3 contains signs of Hellenistic activities and evidences of the functioning and its final stage. See: Voronov, Bgazhba 1985:9.

<sup>1490</sup> The grave contained a similar jug found in the Verin cemetery grave 1-24. Voronov J. 1985. Pl.22.

<sup>1491</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao 1982:63. PAI.

Evidence for early Medieval activity includes two towers (1, 2), two structures (2, 7), and the entrance passage of the fort. The context of deposition revealed in Tower 2 relates to military activities. The discovery of different imperial type body armors such as ‘ring mail’, *lorica hamata*, and *lorica segmentata* (Table 90. B-C), indicate that the fort was defended by commissioned soldiers.<sup>1492</sup> Artillery missiles that included the cobblestones of massive catapult cores made clear their importance and the fighting at Tower 2 (Table 85. 1-3, 7-8, 14-15, 17-18, 20). Spears and arrows from the ramparts reveal further activity of defenders. Heavily fired layers of Building 1 confirm the siege. Building 7, above the platform and wine storage structures, provides evidence of appropriation logistics and objects of imperial supply. It demonstrates that food, drinks, and medical supplies continued to arrive in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century via amphorae and medicine ampules. Several local storage potteries with interlacing decorations are also visible.

Other evidence attributable to Persian and Arab sieges is provided by internal buildings, near the entrance gate and others. The appearance of the copper coins of Justinian I in the fundament of Structure 2 provides the *terminus post quem* of this building.<sup>1493</sup> Other experiences of Persian contact impart Iranian coins of Kavad I (488–531) minted from 505–506, which can be found in Building N1 near Tower N2. There are traces of fire remaining in Tower 2 and the wine storage structure consisting of smelted weapons and nails.<sup>1494</sup> This gives a better approach to the initial Persian attacks in the summer of 550 AD.

The rest of the 106 Arabian silver coins found in Tower 1 give further understanding of the history of the site.<sup>1495</sup> The northern entrance passage of Tzibile reveals a horse skeleton of Arabian origin with richly gilded harnesses, which may be a source of information about the Arab siege.<sup>1496</sup>

The entire context involves verifying how this place moved into the secured part of the imperial interest and experienced various sieges, but that is not all. The latest period drew fifteen burials from the graveyard located between the entrance gate and Church N3, indicative of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1497</sup>

***Chronology of Tzibile fort.*** Tzibile fort was dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries by Voronov, but later he determined it to be the early 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1498</sup> The evidence highlights late Roman

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<sup>1492</sup> Gunba 1983:30. Pic. 54;55.1-23; 56; 58:1-3,7-9. See also: Baghaturia-Kner 2012:243. Tabl. XV.C1-3; XVI.1-3.

<sup>1493</sup> Voronov 1985:15. Pl.18.

<sup>1494</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba, Shenkao, and Loginov 1984:75. PAI.

<sup>1495</sup> Bgaghba 1998:37.

<sup>1496</sup> Voronov 1977:23.

<sup>1497</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba, Shenkao, Loginov, 1984:76. PAI.

<sup>1498</sup> Voronov 1975; Voronov, Bgaghba 1985.

data and probably the late 5<sup>th</sup> century as the earliest functioning phase of some structures. Fragments of the window glass found in the context of Tzibile fort may suggest the presence of a bathhouse, which may have functioned in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of military units in corresponding cemeteries may also lend support to the time. For the Tzibile Tower 2, the date suggested is 530–540 AD. Other evidence of Persian and Arab sieges include fired layers and smelted weapons or fibulae, confirming continuing function into the early 6<sup>th</sup> century.

### *AKHISTA FORT*

Akhista fort stands on the southern summits of Akhista mountain, 717 m above the Black Sea level.<sup>1499</sup> It is accessible by Arterial Road 3, which runs through the northeastern cliff from the south (Table 63) but is helpful in reaching the nearest water source to the north.

The fort occupies a 5 ha area of the rocky place. Identified within this territory are a gate tower, water supply structures, and some functionally unidentified buildings, all of which are very purely preserved.<sup>1500</sup> The perimeter of the surviving wall is recorded to be 350 m. Ruined walls of 1.5 m thickness survived at 4–5 m height in several parts. They are built on mortar and faced with slightly drafted limestones. Regular masonry is recorded in a few levels above.<sup>1501</sup> The southwestern wall produces a cache 2 x 1 m in size. It has maintained a facing of drafted stones 1 m above.

The gate tower of simple rectangular shape is projected at the south of the fort. The dimension of the original plan recognized at the ground level is 10 x 8 m in size.<sup>1502</sup> To the west remain two square-shaped stone structures connected to a defensive wall. The fundamentals recorded behind the gate tower are considered with several cisterns. Other fundamentals of internal space are traces of unidentified buildings.

The beginning phase of surviving structures is estimated to be in the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the final stage suggested to be in the 8th century.<sup>1503</sup> However, archaeological material from the fort area is not published.

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<sup>1499</sup> Voronov 1985:35.

<sup>1500</sup> The corresponding settlement was located 220 m south-west of the Akhista fort. The related cemetery can be seen 450 m south of the settlement. Fort Akhista is built in 4km from Tzibile fort.

<sup>1501</sup> Voronov, 1977:61. Tabl.XI,6.

<sup>1502</sup> Voronov 1998:293.

<sup>1503</sup> Voronov 1977:26; Voronov 1985:35.

### *PUSTA/Apushta FORT*

The Apushta fort stands on the crest and western spur of the Pshou Mountain (**Table 65**). It faces the valley of the Kholodni river (Russian ‘cold’) with a 200 m cliff. It lies on the *Key Apilian Road* and has an eye view of its neighboring fort Bat. The fort is naturally defended to the north by steep slopes. It is identified with the early medieval Pushta fort, from where its name was derived.

The entire complex includes the fort, defensive wall, and gate. The fort is ruined. The surviving walls that in some levels reach a height of 1 m cover a territory of up to 350 m long and 20–40 m wide. Their thickness does not exceed the usual 1–1.5 m and gives images of dry addition. They were responsible for protecting the northern part, which had two-meter cliffs framing the ridge and thereafter the lower entrance part. This is where the gate is located.

Behind the walls and in the center of the fortified area is an antre, leading into descent through the space of an arch. The upper tier of the antre represents premises with a diameter above 10 m and height above 8 m, but the lower tier is connected to the upper wide vertical shaft of depth 6–8 m.

***Dating evidences from fortified area.*** Archaeological evidence from the fortified area is not published, but the fort was determined by an excavator to be from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>1504</sup>

### *BAT/Bati FORT*

This fort is located at the summit of the same name mountain Bat, at 661 m above the Black Sea level and with the Azanta valley to the south (**Table 64**).<sup>1505</sup> The eastern part is naturally defended by a 100 m steep cliff at the Kholodnaya river valley. The northern part is very steep and abrupt in some places.<sup>1506</sup> The western side is approachable through the *Arterial Road 4* where it lies (**Map 12.c**).

The fortified area encompasses an area of 1.2 ha. It includes a fort, southern and eastern defensive walls, a western tower, and several internal buildings. All are ruined. On the mountain ridge (above the settlement) defensive walls occupy a narrow line of 100 m length and 20 m width. The layout of the fort is recognized to be in the shape of a narrow and

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<sup>1504</sup> Voronov 1982:46.

<sup>1505</sup> Voronov 1977:28.

<sup>1506</sup> Voronov 1998:294.



elongated plan occupying 4,700 m<sup>2</sup>. Walls are preserved above 2–2.5 m height and 1–1.2 m thick. Only the northern wall is lacking. The southern wall that stands at above 2 m height and 160 m length was important in blocking approaches from the west.<sup>1507</sup> It stretches to the western watchtower that was put there to observe the area. The dimensions of the watchtower are recorded to be recorded 8 x 10 m. The fundamentals of several small internal buildings are recorded to be traced at the gate.<sup>1508</sup> More than 10 artificial terraces 50 m to the west are interpreted to be indicative of interior settlement.

Dating evidence from the fortified area is limited. The southern section (an area of terraces) and some internal spaces of the fort produce fragmented pottery of local and imported plates, as well as stone grain mills. They suggest the late 4<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>1509</sup> but the beginning and functioning phase of the fort is determined to be in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century and 6<sup>th</sup> century to the last phase.<sup>1510</sup> Much earlier layers display early antique settlement.<sup>1511</sup>

### *LAR FORT*

The last defensive structure of the northwest line is the Lar fort (**Table 67**). It stands on a tract formed in the middle reaches of the Jimele river, at the western part of the Azanta valley.<sup>1512</sup> The rocky summit of 40–50 m height with a western side naturally defended by a 40 m deep precipice insures it from enemies.<sup>1513</sup> It is accessible through Arterial Road 4, which runs downwards to the river stream and connects with wider areas.

The entire complex of the fortified area occupies an area of about 6 ha. It includes a fort, defensive walls, towers, and internal buildings.<sup>1514</sup> All this is ruined; only its triangular outline is well-preserved. The southern and southeastern walls are still standing at a maximum height of 1.5 m, thickness of 3–4 m, and length of 200 m.<sup>1515</sup> The northwestern wall follows a steep slope at 100 m. The southern defensive wall survives at 120 m in length. It is connected with the fundamentals of the three square towers by the internal side.

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<sup>1507</sup> Voronov 1969:62; Voronov, 1982.

<sup>1508</sup> Voronov 1975:36.

<sup>1509</sup> Voronov 1982:39.

<sup>1510</sup> Voronov 1975:39; Voronov, 1982:40.

<sup>1511</sup> Voronov 1969:62.

<sup>1512</sup> Voronov 1982:29, pic.5-1.2.

<sup>1513</sup> This is a place between the river Jimele and Mjortvi canyon (of 50 m deep). Voronov 1969:61.

<sup>1514</sup> There are also two outside settlement and a cemetery related to the Lar fortified area.

<sup>1515</sup> Voronov 1975. Pic.5,2.

Two square towers were responsible for the protection of the access to the fort. The third likely protected the corner side.<sup>1516</sup> One additional tower-type structure is also recorded in the center of the courtyard, but the most significant position is occupied by a sub-triangular watchtower on the top, which survived at the fundamental level. It suggests having had visual contact with the two neighboring mountain forts of Bat to the east and Akhista to the southwest.

The fundamentals of several unidentified buildings are recorded beyond the fortified walls.<sup>1517</sup> All structures are identically characterized by cyclopean dry masonry built by large stones.<sup>1518</sup> Cultural layers are partially washed and recorded with 0.5 m strength, giving little evidence, but fragmented pottery from the fortified areas including storage, kitchen, and tableware categories that support the late Roman period.<sup>1519</sup> There is evidence of ceramic slags suggestive of agricultural activities. Therefore, the suggested time period of the fort is the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *PAL/Pali FORT*

The Pal fort is located at a kilometer distance from the confluences of Jampal and Schkha in the upland Kodori valley (**Table 66**).<sup>1520</sup> It stands on the northern summit of an ovoid hill and all three sides are naturally defended by precipices. Only the southern section is approachable.

The fort area occupies a 4,700 m<sup>2</sup> area. It shows a very pure survival condition. The total perimeter of the internal walls is recorded to be 340 m. The walls of three sides still stand at 1 m height and 2.5 m thickness, built with dry masonry. The southern wall lining a deep cliff has also played an important role in dividing from settled parts beyond the wall. The fact that only the southern section is accessible is taken into account to suggest the fundamentals of the square building of the courtyard as a tower. The recorded dimension of the square tower is 9 x 10 m. More unrecognized structures are put at this part, joined by huge rocky outcrops.<sup>1521</sup> Archaeological material is limited. The suggested time period is the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.

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<sup>1516</sup> Voronov, 1975:36; Voronov 192:29.

<sup>1517</sup> Some of them are artificial. See: Voronov 1975:36; see as well the Voronov 1982:30.

<sup>1518</sup> Other publications also mention rubbles on dry masonry. See: Voronov 1977:26.

<sup>1519</sup> *Pithoi*, handled jars, deep dishes are observed, but amphorae is lacking. The discovery of pottery slags supports the existence of a pottery stove. See in: Voronov 1982:31.

<sup>1520</sup> Voronov 1977:34.

<sup>1521</sup> Voronov 1969:62; Voronov 1998:295.

## VII. 2 The character and design of defensive structures

From planning nature, Apsilian defensive structures employed a system of hilltop forts naturally defended by three sides to ensure one control access. Another tactical concern that has been taken into consideration in planning advantages together with the spectacular position is the eye view. These complex physical features are no doubt linked with specific tasks.

### *STRUCTURAL DESIGN*

Their conceptual design is recognized through the specifications of complex planning, construction technologies, essential structural details, and time- and landscape-appropriate methodologies. In which well-calculated strategies and tactics can be seen. The main structural components of imperial building practices incorporate:

Flanking towers

- Double wall design (*Proteichisma*-?)
- Tripartite
- Logistic relative structures

**Flanking towers.** The projection of flanking towers plays an important role. The variety of their form offers different tactical capabilities and shows the transition into the early medieval space, but differences in their shape, size, and surface technique are advantages provided by the construction process. Illustrated square, rectangular and pentagonal-pointed shapes are highly interactive units of the Tzibile fort, but the square shapes recorded to be common in the other two upland forts Pal and Lar remain on the fundamental level.

In this context, the most imaginative is the Tzibile fort (**Tables 60-62**). Its western fire exit proceeds as a projection of flanking towers. They planned forward from the line of the curtain wall (corner Tower 1) and into the interior (corner Tower 2) and exterior (corner Tower 3). This views the square Tower 3 of later date as a flanking curtain wall, which points to the continuity of the building process by repeating original arrangements. Their broad picture shows the following. The square version of the outer flanking Tower 3 survived at 5–8 m in length. The design style is directly imported from late Roman fortifications, but the surface technique offers different variants, which has chronological significance. *Opus quadratum* is applied on the southern, northern, western walls and partially on the eastern wall. Frequent stone rows incorporate the parts of the loophole level between the southern wall and it is

adjacent to the main curtain wall. Specifics reveal decreases in the size, length, and width of the ashlar in the masonry of the course, functionally directing to the east and protecting defenders from the missiles of attackers. This is fairly characteristic of late Roman fortifications, restricting the field of fire either forward or sideways and preferred for the *quadriburgia*.<sup>1522</sup> Chronologically, the earliest 3<sup>rd</sup>-century date that can be derived from Ain Sinu connects with the eastern frontier line, but it continues into the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1523</sup> Architects obviously pleasing specify in Roman way through half of their width, similar to those referred for Aurelian, Justinian involvements and those evidenced in North Africa (Kaliakr), Syria, and Constantinople.<sup>1524</sup> Other western examples of small square projected towers can be found in Rhineland's 'paying-card' fort of Stockstadt and Niederbieber, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>1525</sup> The square towers of the 6<sup>th</sup> century group differ by extra-large projection explained by enclosed religious structures.<sup>1526</sup>

A general alternative feature of the internal rectangular Tower 2 is the quality of blocks, which differs from the rest. It is also a side flanking tower that survived at 5 m in length. This contrast of ashlar constructions serves to signal the transition into the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1527</sup>

The last architectural type of the new pentagonal-pointed design introducing the Tzibile Tower 1 (12 m length, 6 m width) is a similar device to the 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century Danubian provinces.<sup>1528</sup> But it is also seen in Martyropolis and Resafa, only intersected with other shape towers. Its internal chamber distinguishes it from the rest of the Lazian forts in Archaeopolis (A-tower), Skanda, and Shorapani.<sup>1529</sup> Landscape requirements and functional responsibilities integrated with design provide new information about technological changes and re-designed processes.

***Double wall design- Proteichisma (?)***. It is the most distinctive structural component among This is the most distinctive structural component among Apsilian forts. It is introduced in the Tzibile fort, which consists of two curtain walls between the flanking towers (**Table 61. B**).<sup>1530</sup> Functionally and from the construction technique, it suggests the outer double wall

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<sup>1522</sup> Gregory Sh. 1995:163.

<sup>1523</sup> Such a design is also used at Diocletian Dibsî Faraj and at Palmira.

<sup>1524</sup> Gregory 1995:167.

<sup>1525</sup> Lander 1984:99.

<sup>1526</sup> Habbat, Eski Hisar, as well as Anderin-with a smaller scale earlier towers and Beth Yerah.

<sup>1527</sup> Kalekoy is dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. See: Gregory 1995:167.

<sup>1528</sup> Crow 1981a:124-132.

<sup>1529</sup> They differ by five rows of brick masonry. See: Japaridze 2001; Voronov, Bgaghba 1987:116-131.

<sup>1530</sup> Voronov, Bgaghba 1985a:46.

system,<sup>1531</sup> but there are some confusing occasions in the reports of excavators. Its first section representing an outer wall includes Towers 1 and 3. The second is provided between Towers 3 and 2. The direct juncture of Tower 3 and the eastern part of the main wall, as well as their facing masonry, is a little doubtful due to their synchronic date. To the curtain of the first outer wall, Voronov suggests a Justinian date, based on comparisons of the outer wall of Lazian hinterland fortifications Vardtsikhe, Nokalakevi, Qutaisi, and the coastal Petra-Tsikhisdziri dated 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century (Tables 3; 4).<sup>1532</sup> However, this is not trustworthy information for this structure, because there are no synchronic outer walls among the late Roman Lazian fortifications to account for the double-wall system in the sense of *proteichisma*.<sup>1533</sup> They provide different chronological projections and illustrated distinctive masonry, making it highly debatable.<sup>1534</sup> Usually, the constructional technique *proteichisma* dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>1535</sup> Some of the earliest Roman examples that use such walls without towers in the 4<sup>th</sup> century are the forts of Singara, Amida, and Resaina.<sup>1536</sup> Other series of similar systems providing towers are the outer Theodosian wall of Constantinople, 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century's Martyropolis and Melitene, and some from the Balkans.<sup>1537</sup>

**Logistic structures.** The organization of the internal space outlines all priorities relative to food and water supply (Table 61. B). Food logistics and drink viewed in related buildings (4 to 7). Equally as important, water supply systems that remain in the Tzibile and Shapka forts show late Roman engineering skills, but evidence of large-scale water conservation can be found in Tzibile and Gurzuli fort.<sup>1538</sup>

Both structures are additional indications for the existence of military installations as well. Small scale accommodation for stationed armies is recorded inside Tzibile fort. It is uncertain if several of the unidentified structures inside Akhista fort may carry similar functions.<sup>1539</sup>

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<sup>1531</sup> An earliest example is Troa (Schirmer 1978:36-37.pl16,18) and later is Jenzirl (Hrouda 1971). It also observed on Arabian sites such as antique Kihlm, Gidrif-ibn Munyahim fort.

<sup>1532</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba 1987:132.

<sup>1533</sup> Japaridze 1991:18; Japaridze 1999:56.

<sup>1534</sup> Therefore, the synchronicity of the outer double walls of the Vardtsikhe fort is considered to be doubtful by its excavator, which interprets it as 'virtual *proteichismata*'. See: Japaridze 1987:51. The same can be said about the Petra-Tsikhisdziri and Qutaisi. However the outer wall of Qutaisi with square towers, which was the main part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century fort structure, requires further study. See: Lanchava 199. Pl.8; Japaridze 1999:57.

<sup>1535</sup> Ovcharov 1973:11.

<sup>1536</sup> Gregory 1995:132.

<sup>1537</sup> Gregory 1995:132.

<sup>1538</sup> Of the two surviving cisterns the N1 is located 100 meters from the northern wall.

<sup>1539</sup> Voronov 1969:59; Voronov 1975:29-30; Voronov 1977.

**MASONRY.** The internationality of design is recognized in masonry that shows different decorative techniques and decorative details. The stoneworking technique produces distinctive properties of design through the exceptionally smoothed facing blocks, roughly shaped stones differing in size, and rubbles and bricks. They illustrate variety and similarities in masonry style, the main types of which are:

Ashlar masonry

- *Opus quadratum*
- *Opus mixtum*
- Limestone masonry

Two types of two masonries, *opus mixtum* and *opus incertum*, are composed of roughly shaped rubbles.

**Ashlar constructions.** These are accurately shaped blocks in regular arrangements used for arches, tower walls, and chambers.<sup>1540</sup> Chronologically, for such massive ashlar blocks to be in the eastern Black Sea littoral, Lekvinadze suggests a much earlier date than the roughly drafted rubble masonry.<sup>1541</sup> However, Voronov argues for the synchronic existence of both on the basis of the existence of Tower 3 in Shapka fort, but this tower is attached to the main wall having different masonry.<sup>1542</sup>

***Opus quadratum.*** This is a dry-stone walling technique. The blocks are required to be either in straight, regular courses, or to have the same degree of curvature. A distinction in quality and size is noticed between the blocks of Tower 1, Tower 3, and the outer double walls of Tzibile fort.<sup>1543</sup> It is also evident in the other Apsilian forts of Shapka, Akhista (tower), Apushta/Pusta, Pal, and Lar. The facing quadrants of Tzibile fort are referred to as a much shorter and more massive line.

***Opus mixtum.*** This is the brick-band masonry that connects the Gerzeul and Tzibulum forts. Tzibulum fort provides four-line brick masonry in Tower 2, bath, and water reservoir (Cistern 1). In contrast, comparatively shorter brick masonry (later form) than a stone can be seen in Gurzuli fort. It is counted as general support to the weight of the wall.

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<sup>1540</sup> On the chamber of the tower 1 of the Tzibile fortress can be seen the limited use of an ashlar limestone blocks; as well as on the southern and eastern walls of the tower N3. It also observed on the Tower 3 of the Shapka fortress, that eastern and southern walls are presented the smoothed larger blocks. A similar masonry produces the entrance passages and the cisterns (1 and 2) of Gerzeul fort.

<sup>1541</sup> Lekvinadze 1959:154.

<sup>1542</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba 1985:41.

<sup>1543</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba 1985:36.

This is primarily displayed in pylons. Generally, the structures consisting of brick masonry with arch pylons in walls give an understanding of Constantinopolitan influences. Similarly, applications of arch pylons in square shapes remain in the Shapka fort.<sup>1544</sup>

A similar design effect is reported in the constructions of some coastal and hinterland Colchian/Lazian forts.<sup>1545</sup> *Opus mixtum* is used only in one coastal defense Petra (Table 3. A), but within Lazian defensive structures, it does not seem to be attested to earlier than the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1546</sup> It is also evidenced in the East Georgian site Urbnisi.<sup>1547</sup> Other practical examples of ideas representing arch pylons can be found in most Lazian hinterland forts, the 5<sup>th</sup> century Qutaisi fort,<sup>1548</sup> Shorapani, and Archaeopolis.<sup>1549</sup> Only one coastal defense Petra (Tsikhisdziri) links with this chain.<sup>1550</sup> This technique is usually associated with the Theodosian period (408–450), but appears in the restored walls of Constantinople that are assumed to be in the second quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1551</sup> It features other forts in Africa,<sup>1552</sup> limitedly in the Balkans,<sup>1553</sup> and seldom occurs in the forts of the eastern frontier line (Resafa, Habibia-Zenobia, Nisaeaznik).<sup>1554</sup> Interestingly, it does not appear in Syria and Palestine.

**Limestone masonry.** The local style is experienced in limestone structures with small and roughly drafted facing rubbles. This tradition is the basic surface technique for the tower walls of Gurzuli fort and the simple walls of Akhista fort.<sup>1555</sup> Limestone blocks in strong mortar are also used in Tzibile Tower 2. It is applied to internal building structures and is provided in constructions of Upper Jurevka (Yuryevka). However, such features do not remain in the ruined upland forts Apushta/Pusta, Lar, and Pal. Such local devices obviously produce a contrasting effect with imperial building practices, in which local characteristic is a central

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<sup>1544</sup> The given dimensions are: 1.25x0.95 m; 1.26x0.97 m; 1.27x0.96 m; 1.27x0.94. See: Voronov 1969:59-60; Voronov 1975:18,30,42,77.

<sup>1545</sup> Three -and four -line brick formation was evidenced in the Scanda and Shorapani construction; Two-three brick lines provided the Rodopolis/ Vardtsikhe and Vashnari. See: Japaridze 1974. Four line was masonry presented in Archaeopolis/Tsikhe Goji fortress. See Lekvinafze 1961:142.

<sup>1546</sup> Japaridze 1999.

<sup>1547</sup> Zakaraia, Kapanadze 1991.

<sup>1548</sup> Lanchava 1994:65.

<sup>1549</sup> Zakaraia 1987:72,182.

<sup>1550</sup> Inaisvili 1993.pl.I; Melitauri 1979:18.PI.12.

<sup>1551</sup> Kischen 1938:7-8. Pl.4; Meger-Plath, Schneider 1943:18; Krauthmeier 1989:72-73; Müller-Wiener 1977:286.PI.324-326.

<sup>1552</sup> See: Diehl 1986.

<sup>1553</sup> See: Vickers 1974:249-254.PI.66.

<sup>1554</sup> For Resafa see Mango. For the Habibia-Zenobia see: the Deichmann 1993; Lauffrey 1991; and for the Nisaeaznik see: Schneider, Karnapp, 1938.

<sup>1555</sup> The walls of the tower of Gerzeuli fort were built with a mixture of send-stone on a white- grey mortar. Voronov 1969:59; Voronov 1975:29-30; Voronov 1977.

concern.<sup>1556</sup> However, construction technique, architectural style, and design are issues up for debate.

**Chronology.** It is an extremely ambitious program of defensive infrastructure, but it is difficult to assess the scale and exact chronology of defensive projects. Secure dating for Apsilian forts is absent. The earliest construction activity took place possibly towards the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the watchtower was built in Gurzuli. They may be associated with areal security for traffic control. In addition, Tzibile fort includes information about reconstruction history both technologically and structurally, defining earlier phases. The coins found inside the Tzibile and Shapka fort are of the very end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The bath complex of Tzibile opens perspectives to its earlier date, perhaps having functioned as a small camp in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. The curtain wall is also supportive for earlier chronology in the context of related towers, which might be of later addition.

Another contribution from Shapka fort is a small older tower, which is enlarged probably after the 5<sup>th</sup> century (**Table 59. 2**). Excavated military material of the 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century from the internal part of the tower may lend support to this. On other hand, the similarities in constructional technique between the biggest forts Shapka, Tzibile, and Akhista should be taken into consideration. All fortified sites have identical signs of 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century materials, including military equipment. They require particular investigations and must be discussed within the complex evidence from the fortified areas.

This is cited in the analyses of two scholars, Voronov and Japaridze. Voronov first reports their chronology to be in the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but later he re-dates to avoid Justinian dates for the Apsilian defensive structures and suggests the years 529–542 for Tzibile and Shapka forts instead.<sup>1557</sup>

### *BUILDING MATERIAL*

The building materials that passed through Apsilia are the best informants for their standardization and common management. Sandstone, limestone, and brick (found in Tzibile fort Tower N2, size 31 x 31 x 4 m) are the preferably used materials. Limestone masonry modifying the foreign fashion into the local style does not view many areas. Other used stones

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<sup>1556</sup> The limestone masonry was introduced in Hellenistic Colchian sites Vani, Vardzikhe and Shorapani. But limestone structures are considered to be of Syria-Palestinian origin. See: Deichmann 1982:699-709. Unfortunately, the study of the Hellenistic and roman limestone structures have never been attracted scientific interest in Georgia. Their appearance in Western Georgia was linked to Roman-Byzantine influence, while eastern Georgian Ujarma city-fortress, Cheremi and other Kakhetian sites is expected to be influenced by Near East and possibly of Iran. Tsitsishvili 1955:506.

<sup>1557</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba 1985-33.



are either well-drafted (with a thickness 23–25 cm, 30–38 cm, and 42–45 cm), smooth, or rough. Ashlar and rubbles show rare demand, but appear in different sizes. Bricks generally functioned as facing material and are arranged into two to three or more rows. Development and foreign ideas that passed through these valleys are reflected in Greek inscriptions displayed on the stones or tiles of the forts Tzibile and Shapka. They demonstrate the following letters Γ, T, I, O, X may carry unknown concepts.<sup>1558</sup> Wood is generally used for gates, but can rarely be found for strengthening the walls. For strengthening, mortar made by cement or lime is used. Few occasions of stone and clay mixture are present in Gurzuli fort (Cistern), showing a greyish-white color as well (**Table 57, E**).

Each component is lacking details of the texture, but the natural resources of Apsilia and its nearest vicinity give perspectives to distinguish stone and wood as an areal building material. The sand composition in Shapka fort appears to be typical of the upland area of the river Jampal.<sup>1559</sup> Transportation could be processed through the rivers. For this context, the location of forts near the rivers might be useful for a quick response. Some could be transported from coastal areas. Tiles may suggest their transportation from any of the fortified areas of Colchis. This naturally gives ground for locally organized sources and common management.

All three building technology, architectural design, and building material bridges Apsilian forts and the central or coastal Lazian defensive structures, and identically show new details of the design schema. The usual building material is local.

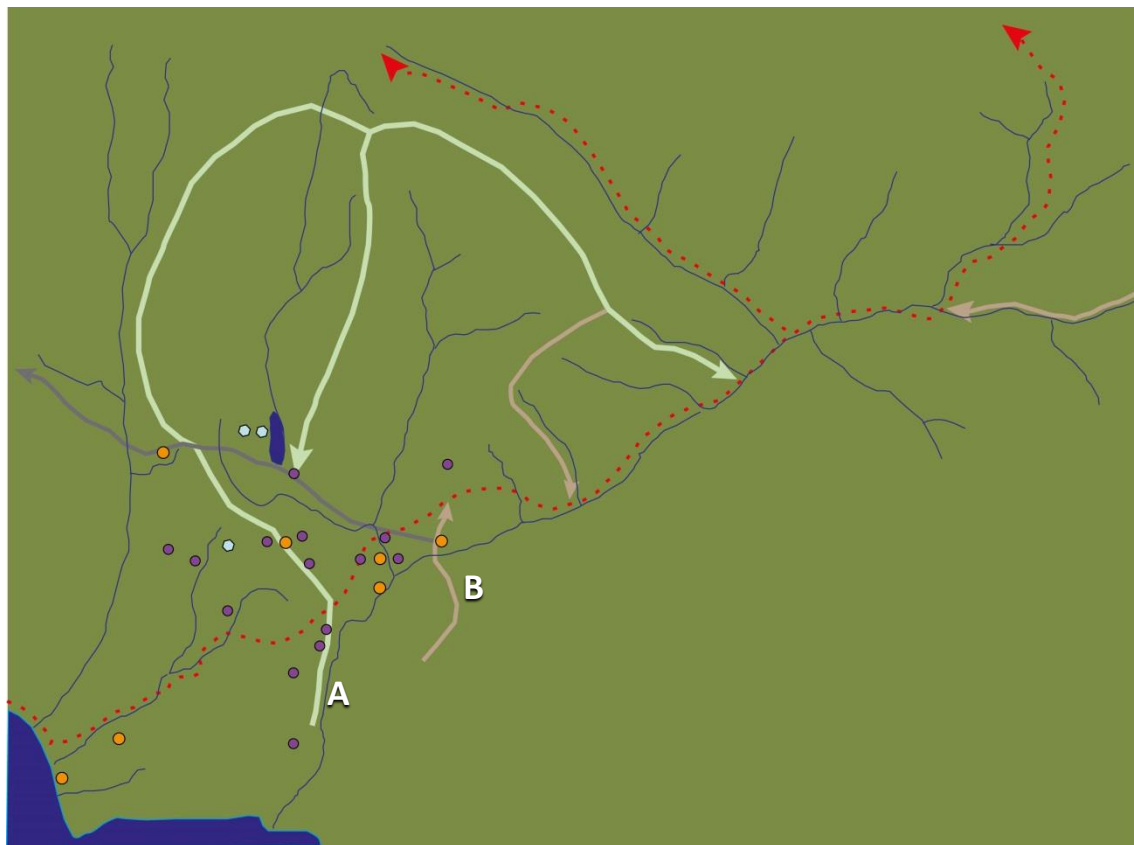
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<sup>1558</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba 1985:28.AO 1981-82.

<sup>1559</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba.1985:29.AO 1981-82.

## VIII. COMMUNICATION SYSTEM OF APSILIA

On the large issues of routes and trade-roads, it is always difficult to be sure, but I tried to be a quick to the concept of major roads and routes through Apsilia. It is known that there was a main way from the Black Sea to the North Caucasia. In this context of course, the major passes of Apsilia are really important. So I give my thought to the communication network of this land, because they produce such a huge number of import in which internationally activated road is evidently derived.



**MAP 14.** Clues of ancient road line in Guliripsh area. White line is reconstructed possible roadway (A). Prehistoric sites: ● - Stone Age sites. ● - Bronze Age sites. ● - Dolmens. Modified map. Source: Voronov 1977.

From the road chronology evidences are not enough to be sure about its roman origin, but continuity from prehistoric, to classic-Hellenistic and early roman time and further usage that is seen in single traces of different parts give possibility to interpret direction and relations between the survival road clues. Such are parts of *Kay Apsilian Road* with most ancient

traces at the base of Gurzuli ridge,<sup>1560</sup> connecting road contours over the Apiancha Mountain and south of Jagashkari meadow on the way to Tsebelda<sup>1561</sup> and Tsebelda-Pal segment, where the ancient glacial moraine is cut through the ‘roman road’ surface.<sup>1562</sup> Antic and Hellenistic imported and local artefacts from Shapka and Tzibile fort areas theoretically may assign continuity of road towards the south.<sup>1563</sup> But we miss chronologically reliable artefacts along these road lines, which might be able to synchronize them in earliest past. The lack of solid evidences might be also result of pure investigations. However, the development of communication until the mid-roman time is unrevealed.

The clues that may assign to the beginning stage of roman time road lines are few. Some evidences from eastern Gerzeuli valley, over the eroded SE slope of Zhenski and Grushevi hills may support existence of the AR 1 and west aligning tracks of AR 2 (**Map 14-A**).<sup>1564</sup> The right aligning trackway of *Cross Point II* directed to Mramba<sup>1565</sup> has been traced by evidences at the SW slope of Mahajirov, SE of Panikin hills and Akhacharku. Other limestone and marl lines connecting Apiancha-Mramba-Mergelovka in 4km length<sup>1566</sup> and further traces in Shapka settled part,<sup>1567</sup> Burdzhia-Poltavskoe and crossing the ford of the river Kelasuri, are definable clues for the *Wheel Road A* (**Map 14-A**). It may also consider AR 3.<sup>1568</sup> Traces of the 1<sup>st</sup> century road piece at the AR 4 in Azanta valley indicate perspectives for movement.<sup>1569</sup>

Other meaningful sources like road parameters, geotechnical or characteristic values, implacable for their complexity are purely investigated. Road contours with bad survival condition consider intermittent lines traced on surface. They are recorded to be recognizable. Surface context and proportions are varying. Minimal building material and simple technology are identifiable constructional method, which is seen in their profile. It includes earth, sand and lime composition. The laid gravel sub-base and limestone component of earthwork design distinguishes KAR and several arterial roads (AR2, AR3, and AR4).<sup>1570</sup> But

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<sup>1560</sup> It folds late Tertiary marine sediment. Voronov 1977:11.

<sup>1561</sup> Voronov 1975:34,47-48.

<sup>1562</sup> The surface of the moraine deposits has preserved synchronous evidences of human activity such as the Mustier flint tools. See: Voronov 1977:31. Voronov 1969:19.

<sup>1563</sup> It was the lower section of the *Kay Apsilian Road* along the Gerzeuli ridge, near the spring, where the remains of antic settlement and corresponding fragmented potteries were revealed. Voronov 1977:11; Voronov 1975:48.

<sup>1564</sup> Voronov 1969:63.

<sup>1565</sup> This track line revealed limestone and marl content over a 4 km distance, which connects Apiancha with the villages Mramba and Mergelovka into a dray valley. Voronov 1998:270-273.

<sup>1566</sup> Voronov 1998:270-273.

<sup>1567</sup> As the excavator recorded, it connected the artificial terraces to the retained walls. Voronov 1975.

<sup>1568</sup> Voronov 1975:47.

<sup>1569</sup> Traces of 1<sup>st</sup> century track are discovered in the central part of the Azanta valley, on the way to the river Amtkel that connected the upper reaches of the river Kodori. Voronov 1971:31.

<sup>1570</sup> Mass appearance of lime is also mentioned here. But it is not specified whether it is mixed with gravel or san. See Voronov 1975:48.

it is difficult to interpret for using the concrete. The connective isthmus between the Shapka fort and settlement produce evidences of clay in deeper ground layer, covered by second layer of stones, sand mixed lime composition and by final course of crushed stones and gravel. Distinctive is the AR 4 (Tsebelda-Akhista section) by visualizing a deep rut, which cut in the ground, in some places to limestone.

Geo-technically they unpaved road lines and may appear as dirty roads suffered by an extreme weather conditions. But their surface could be supported by wooden raft and brushwood, in rainy weather. Some distinguished with a deeper side curves, may expected for drainage purposes to avoid the water splash.

Differences viewed in road stability as well. Gurzuli ridge preserved the road that folded by late Tertiary sediments.<sup>1571</sup> The most stable ground is defining upper part of KAR at the descending of confluences Schkha and Jampal Streams. There is a glacial moraine appearing in Tsebelda-Pal section, at the center of the v.Amtkel/ Zakharovka, which points stability of ground.<sup>1572</sup> The village Amtkel/ Zakharovka also remain protective boulders that formed on that moraine basis.

The safety enhancement is also seen in narrow hilly parts of Apiancha. Some of this artificial terrace is ensured with internal supportive walls, built on slab stones. Retained walls are existed in rocky areas indicate safety movements. One of such reasons might evidence the 5 to 6 m rammed earth stripes, which remain a 100 m trail (1-1.5 m) to the karst source, on the way of eroded slopes and crests of Shapka necropolises.

Some sections of the road line in central part of land, which identified with *Kay Apsilian Road* that measures 4 to 5 meters (bridges parts approx. a half meter height). The narrowest lines made of less than 2 meters, recognized in Shapka, within burial area. Such parts are appropriate with Trails (**Map.14**). In depth they are limited 1.5 to 3 meter. In the section of Adagua mountain a rutted ancient road of KAR shows about 4-5 m width and 1.5 m depth.<sup>1573</sup> But the Pal sector with similar width (4-5 m) has been increased in depth goes 3 meter deeper into the ground.<sup>1574</sup> The height of survival lines recorded generally from 100 to 300 meters. The approaches of Pall sector at the NW of the river Jampal, which was highest road part in upper Apsilia, required climbing 300 m plateau.

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<sup>1571</sup> Voronov 1977:11.

<sup>1572</sup> Voronov 1975:49.

<sup>1573</sup> It was cut into the soil of limestone. Voronov 1975:48.

<sup>1574</sup> That was the section between the village Amtkel and the river confluences (Schkha and Amtkel).

## VIII. 1 COMMUNICATION CHARACTER

Communication dynamic of Machara and Kodori valleys show difficult system of ancient road, track ways and trails. The basic division makes recognizable three routes, one Kay road and several related or indirect lesser arterial roads. If we look how carefully they net by wheel road, intersection zones and appropriated crossing points, it is easy to recognize the complex of areal networking providing one communication system. Entire nets that divided into several branches at the south to north and from west to east is tasked to maintain routes before reaching the tribal borders: Swaneti at the NE, Abazgia at the W and Lazica to the E.

The Kay Road suspended by five aligned arterial roads and several related tracks. It crossed gorges (Gurzuli) and mountaineer edges (Apiancha), pins Patskhiri valley of the river Machara (100 m above from the sea level) with open hill slopes and gravel hills at Verkhnaja Jurevka. Through the settled parts at the upland of the river Machara and middle river Kodori (right bank at the village Naa) the road incorporates further water sources in several parts (at Shapka, Pal).

Some arterial roads (AR 2) integrates further crests of gravel hills (SE of Abramov, N of Verin and Tserkovni, SW of Panikin) and artificial terraces of settled areas (Shapka). Some cut small crossing parts at the village Poltavskoe fording the river Kelasuri at the W (AR 3), the passes in Chizhoush (left bank of the river Kelasuri) and Kjach towards Pskal-Amzara section (wheel road A). All this connect historical sites of Apsilia at a varying distance.

## VIII. 2 ROUTES

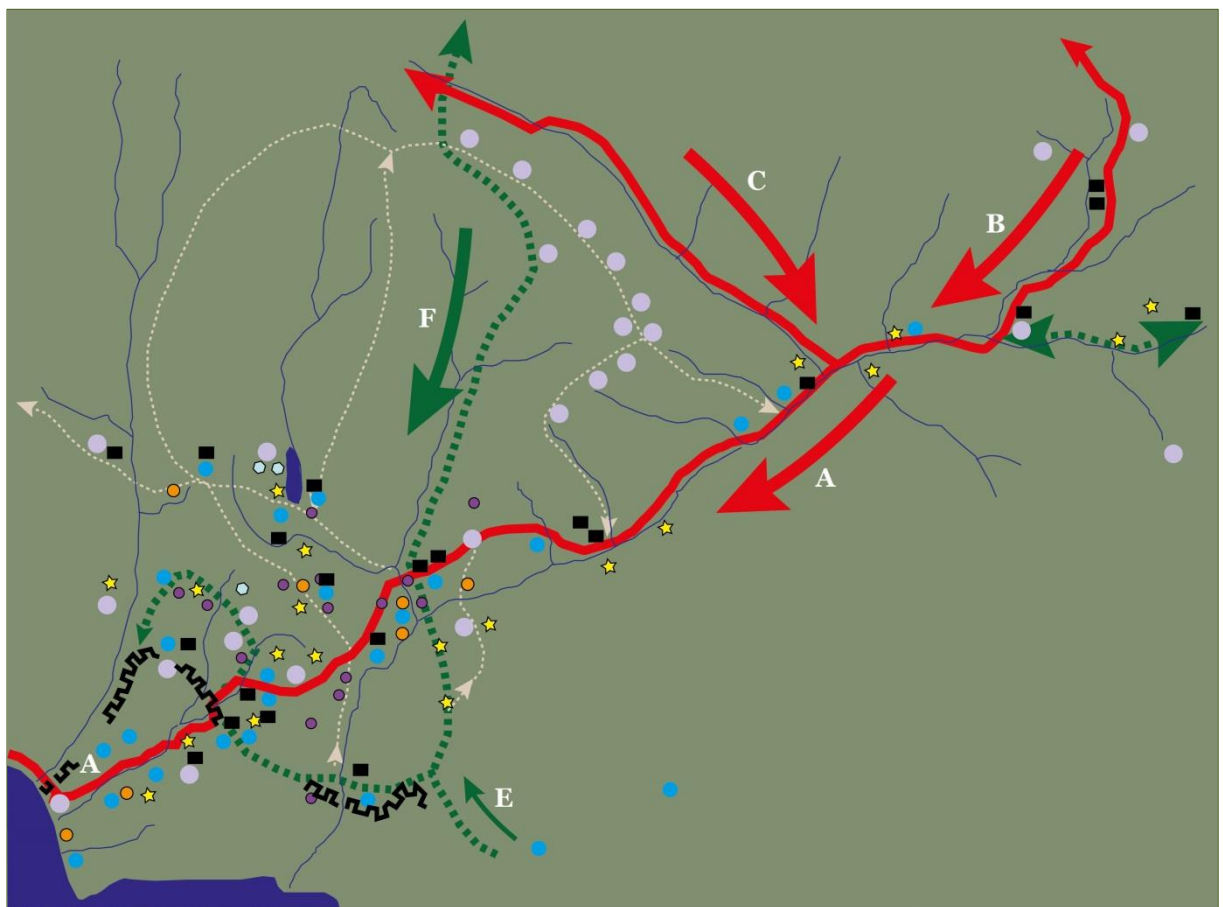
There are three recognizable main routes approach and cross Apsilia (**Map 10**). They imply different direction and significance by linking with most distant parts of Lazi kingdom and neighborhood. It extends the following routes:

- *Route 1*. Towards North Caucasia.
- *Route 2*. Towards Eastern approaches of Apsilia (towards central Colchis).
- *Route 3*. Towards Abasgia.

The first is the most important within the contexts of international road. Others produce the local and regional significance by bending the central and NW Colchis/Lazica.

**Route 1 (R1) - Towards North Caucasia.** It supposed to be a part of international route, between the Black Sea and Caucasian Passes through Apsilia by taking a *Kay Apsilian Road*

line (KAR). Through an extremely communicative down parts, with all three difficult intersection zones, it made headway into ‘Missimian route’ and thereafter North Caucasia (**Map.17.B**). This road integrated *International Routes* over the coastal line of Colchis/Lazica and the ways directed not only from Constantinople or the Black Sea littoral, but also from the East through the Caucasian passes (see details in KAR). Therefore, it may link with historically known ‘*Darin Way*’ (**Map.15.C**) or ‘*Missimian Road*’. It represent the shortest mountaineer route between the Caspian and Black Sea, with further connective alternatives with Middle East and parts of Asia.



**MAP 15.** Simplified map ancient Routes through Apsilia. **A**-Route 1 took the key Apsilian Road between coastal site and Missimia. **B**- North Caucasian direction from Klukhori Pass towards the Black Sea. **C**- North Caucasian direction from Marukhi Pass. **E**- Route 2 directed from Lazian hinterland. **F**-Route 3 took way to Abasgia.  
 ● - Antic sites. ● - Medieval sites.

**Route 2 (R2) - Towards Eastern approaches of Apsilia.** It had local significance and represented the most direct route departed from central Colchis at eastern approaches. An access point thought to be somewhere in the area of modern Atara (**Map 15.E.**)<sup>1575</sup> It had to take the road diagonally crossed the land and ran through the most economic part of KAR, in

<sup>1575</sup> See the archaeological evidences of these parts in: Vonorov 1975; Gunba 1978.

which recognizes a specific course. Other significance of route indicated in easy destination of the W neighboring Abazgia at mountaineer area.

**Route 3 (R3)** - Towards Abazgia. It occur local significance and while connecting coastal areas with Apsilia, thereafter mountaineer Abasgia and through the KAR further Missimia, author calls this direction conditionally as the route of Abasgia (**Map.15.F**). It took southern line of KAR in SW coastal areas, to reach Tsebelda in central Apsilia and through the AR4 avoiding Bat direction destine Azanta valley. By crossing this valley with NE destination at the river Kelasuri it band Abasgia with Apsilia. But it also had ability turning back with the same way or taking AR 5 into the KAR and approach Missimia. Both arterial roads involved in the *Wheel Road 2*.

There was another perspective to reach Abasgia by western part of the *Wheel Road 1*. It started from Gurzuli and through westernmost AR 3 led modern village Poltavskoe in a section between the river Kelasuri and the Big Machara.

### VIII. 3 ROAD DESIGN AND DIRECTIONS

**THE KAY ROAD.** The Key Apsilian road (KAR) is a road section where Apsilia becomes most important (**Map 15**). While stretching the Black Sea and Missimia to led North Caucasia, it is seems to be a principal highway across this land.

It designed as uninterrupted rough line of 25 km length and 4 m width (briding in central part even 5-6 m) and was longest in Apsilia. The broad context suggests formation of its most southern start somewhere at the coastal Merkheuli and by following the right bank of the river Big Machara towards the Shapka area, thereafter through the edges of Gerzeul ridge, and northwestwards following the natural contours of hilly landscape into the Apiancha Mountain;<sup>1576</sup> through artificial terrace of Apiancha settled part, in western edge it proceeded 700 m into the Verknaja Jurevka (upper Jurevka)<sup>1577</sup> and approaches further isthmus of portal tower of Shapka fort; leaving the vicinity of Shapka, further 4 km horizontal line it passed villages Mramba and Mergelovka and neither parts of Adagua Mountain, where it overcome a small dry valley;<sup>1578</sup> thereafter in several hundred meters the road bend around at the north of

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<sup>1576</sup> Voronov 1977:11; Voronov 1975:48.

<sup>1577</sup> The upper Jurevka is an eastern spur of Mountain Apiancha, where it crossed the settled and corresponding burial area. Above it locates the Shapka fort.

<sup>1578</sup> Here, between the Apiancha and Adagua mountains, once flowed the river Praamtke. Voronov 1977.

Jagashkari meadow and through the marl crest stretch the north of Tsebelda defensive area.<sup>1579</sup> Here, to the right, aligns 500 m trail, which directly connects with an early byzantine Tsebelda fort.<sup>1580</sup> It was a Shapka-Tsebelda part horizontal road line. Further 6 km, at the middle Kodori river, the road continues with destination Pal Mountain by proceeding 1.5 km quite a smooth strip of shrubs flank a deep furrow in the marls between the river Shakuran valley and the center of the village Amtkel/Zakharovka. Thereafter, descending to the confluence of rivers Schkha and Jampal, the road led straight 300 m above the modern 'Iron Bridge' of the river Jampal.<sup>1581</sup> Passing this valley in a kilometre strip line, it rises four metre wide on a plateau, encircles southern approaches (over the cliff to the river Jampal) of Pall hill and curves the E part to destine its settlement and fort.<sup>1582</sup> That is a kilometer strip line climbing hill and encircling it from S and E, to get into village Chini. Here it offer two different perspectives: further 3 km westwards to low pass the way ran through the N of village Georgievskoe in the uplands of the river Kodori (here it met with modern military highway); but Turning to the right leaves the Pal Mountain and Bagadtski cliff. Further 4 km destine Chkhalta,<sup>1583</sup> where the way dividing in two different direction. Somewhere in Chkhalta section KAR might link with historical 'Missimian Road'.<sup>1584</sup> Thus, in entire length, indirectly, but easily it bends four fortified areas (Shapka, Tsebelda, Bat and Pal). The first part connected Shapka and Tzibile forts with 7350 m distance in-between in central Apsilia between the rivers Machara and middle Kodori. The second part connected Tsebelda with further forts Bat (directly) and Pal with 3 km distance in upland Apsilia.

Structurally, its middle part involving *Intersection Zone 1*, AR2, AR3 and SE part of the *Wheel Road 1*, permits the rapid areal movements (**MAP 20-A**). It band settlement of three areas Gurzuli, Shapka and Tsebelda and joins with SW territories of Lazica. It's unlimited upper part involving *Intersection Zone 2*, AR 4, AR 5 and E section of the *Wheel Road 2*, connect the inhabitants of Azanta valley, give approach to Abazgia at the NW and to the Svaneti (Missimian land) at the NE (**Map.20-B**). The last section of the road connected with the river Enguri valley in central Colchis/Lazica *via* the Swanetian Sakeni. Existence of this

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<sup>1579</sup> Voronov 1975:48, 49.

<sup>1580</sup> Voronov 1969:63; Voronov 1977:17.

<sup>1581</sup> Schkha was its right tributary, which originated in the Azanta valley. Voronov 1977:34; Voronov 1982:31.pic.14.

<sup>1582</sup> Now easily get through the Iron Bridge that spanned over the Jampal River in 1903. Voronov 1977:34; 1975:49. Pic.9.

<sup>1583</sup> It first crosses two small streams in the Khinga river valley and then follows the Uchkur River until approaching upper tributaries of the Kodori River at above 200 m. From here, it takes the direction to the cliff, where the settlement of Uchkur area was located. Thereafter through the Kodori floodplain and according its right bank, the way reaches the last dividing place Chkhalta.

<sup>1584</sup> Missimian road precedes the right bank of the Kodori River and into the village Gentswish enters the Swanetian land. After approaching the confluence of the tributaries Klich and Guandra, it proceeds further to the Caucasian mountain with destination Qlukhori pass. See: Voronov 1975:50.



route justified by the similar artefact finds until the Enguri valley and its nearest villages of Rike and Lia.<sup>1585</sup> This route may easily connect central Lazica with the Black Sea as well.

However, *KAR* shares the complex of most difficult communications in middle part and indirectly, but easily connected with central parts of Colchis, Swanetian and Abasgian areas.<sup>1586</sup>

**Functional significance of KAR.** The nature of *KAR* and environment in which it explored, gives indication for trade and strategic significance. There are certain directions may easily view in both international contexts. The most southern costal part integrating with an International Route (*Route 1*) over the coastal Colchis/Lazica, also involves the ways started from Constantinople and Black Sea littoral, and the rest that directed from central Colchis to the NW (**Map 16**). By stretching between the Black Sea and Caucasian mountains it had potential to enter and cross North Caucasian passes with two different branches Marukhi and Qlukhori (**Table 5-B**). They are patterns in which the functional character of *KAR* appears.

**Trade significance.** Ability of connect the wide distance movements is first element, in which trade significance appear. Most importantly this road is heading to southern communications at the Black Sea shore, in which the context of international trade appears. Near to the shore it met all long distance routes of coastal Lazica connecting with Black sea littoral and Cappadocia. The first branch of an international highway in coastal Colchis, which started from the Abasgia and functioned as immediate part of international Artashat-Sebastopolis road line met with *KAR*. This line ran from the Trapezus, continued towards the Rize-Athena-Archabis-Apsaros-Batum-Phasis-Ziganeon, heading to Sebastopolis and then to Pithius (**Map 20-A**).<sup>1587</sup> Another SE branch of this highway pass the Lazi hinterland towards the Armenia and via Aila lead to the Red Sea. At the river Chorokhi it continued towards the southern Petra/Tsikhisdziri (**Maps 16-B; 19-B**).<sup>1588</sup> Exactly here it met with road started from the Theodoplis/ Erzurum, heading to modern Batum-Artvin and through the uplands of the river Chorokhi (at PetraTsikhisdziri) excess the SE direction. With further line of

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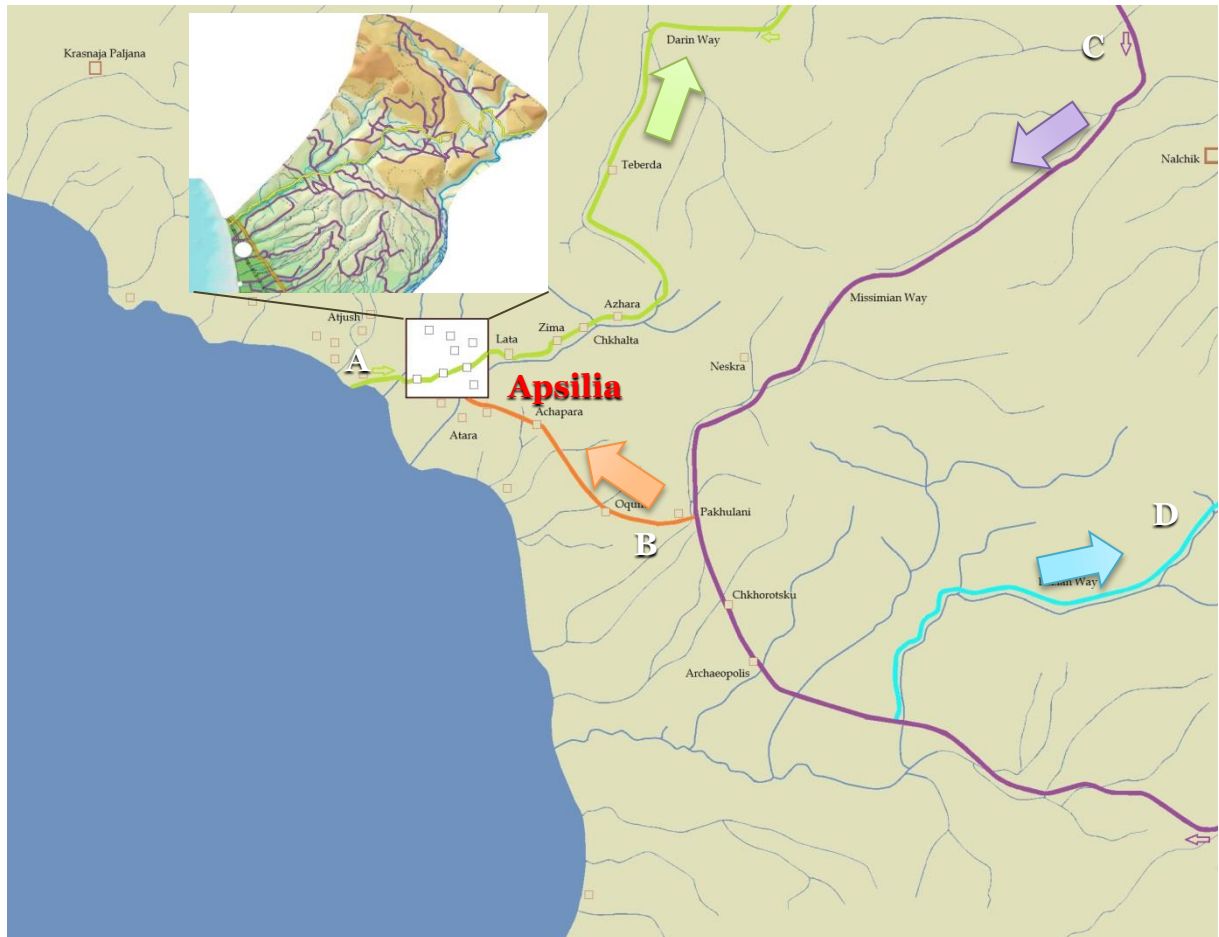
<sup>1585</sup> This direction is formed at the confluence of the rivers (left tributary of the Gvandra and the Kodori River) and leads to the village Sakeni and further to the valleys of the river Enguri. Apsilian type axes found on this road line are stocked in Zugdidi museum. Similar imported *Aucissa* type fibula was discovered in the village Lia.

<sup>1586</sup> *AR3* and *AR4* lead to intersection zone B in the NW Azanta valley. *AR 4* connected to lesser indirect route, provided access to the Kelasuri River and north-westwards to Abasgian Land.

<sup>1587</sup> See also: Lomouri N 1958. Peutingar Table 1976. The Artashat-Sebastopolis highway, which was part of the military highway, extended two different directions: **1.** Nizibis-Zab. In 363 AD this road line started from Nizibis, through Bezabde crossed the Tigris river and headed southeast *via* lower course of the Greater Zab (Dillemann 1962:213,135. Fig.XXIX, Feuille X; Lightfoot 1983:189-204). **2.** Southern direction heading east of Singara *via* Jabal Sinjar, it approach the intersection of two different routes: one destines the Tigris at Nimrud, near Greater Zab and another reached Qal' at Sharjat (Dillemann 1962:149. Fig. XVIII. CF. Poidebard 1939: Planche CXL).

<sup>1588</sup> Gregory S. 1995:3.

Archaeopolis (Tsikhegoji) - Rodopolis (Vardtsikhe) - Zekari it reaches the pass-Samtskhe and via the river Mtkvari, thereafter the Aspindza-Tsunda-Lake continued towards the Paravani and then through Abtoz destine Armenia (**Map 17-B**).



**MAP 16.** Ancient trade roads of Colchis and Lazica. **A**-The way across Apsilia (KAR). **B**-They way connected mountaineer areas with central Lazica. **C, D**- Hinterland ways of Lazica.

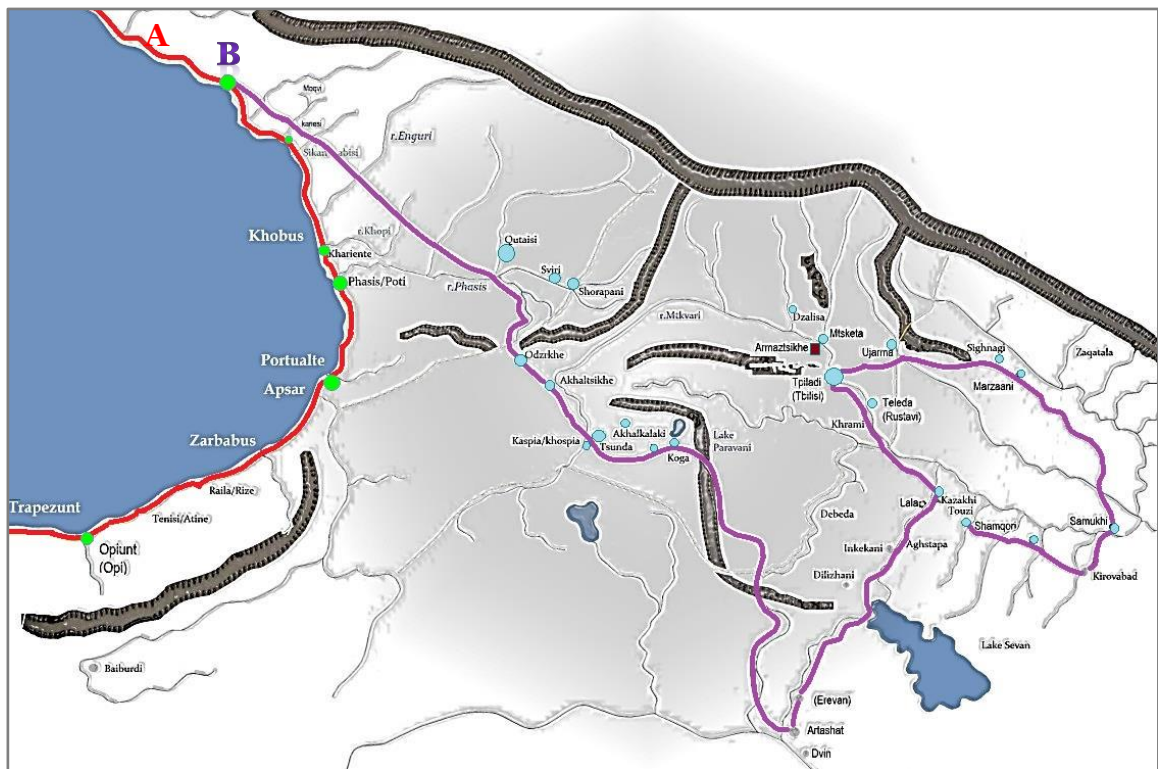
Further course of the main route that opens northern communication perspective at the mountaineer parts, near to the border of historical Missimia (Svaneti) offers the following:

- The first direct line to the NW crosses Missimian land and destines Qlukhori pass (**Table 8-C**).<sup>1589</sup> That is shortest mountaineer route between the Caspian and Black Sea.

<sup>1589</sup> Both directions were formed in central Svaneti. The direction to Qlukhori pass *via* Svaneti is historically known as 'Missimian way'. This way passed the village Gentsvish (near confluences of the rivers Gvandra and Klich) and according the right bank of the river Klich destine Qlukhori pass. The second route identified with the historically known 'Darin Way' is much arguable. We link this to the continuation of the road through Kuabchara pass and thereafter mountain small Skapach. The second alternative is according the left tributary of the river Chkhalta. In fact, both are purely studied archaeologically.

- By taking the NE via Chkhalt'a, it directly leads to Marukhi pass. This could identify with 'Darin Way' which context it has been mentioned in textual sources (**Map 15**).

Both directions lead into the upper reaches of the river Koban and Alania<sup>1590</sup> by the same way, destined Caspian Sea, Middle East and parts of Asia. Towards the Far East it connected the vicinities of the river Oxus (Amu Daria).<sup>1591</sup>



MAP 17. Showing international significance of roads crossed Colchis/lazica. **A**-Identified road map according to *Tabula Peutingeriana*. **B**- The coastal road line from Colchis/Lazica towards Syria.

For the involvement within this particular context the huge import from Apsilia may well be supportive. Number of import originated in Black Sea littoral and Mediterranean is to consider direct activities through Artashat-Sebastopolis highway and Sea road. They quantify the significance of river and corresponding traffic in low part of KAR.

Import category as appropriated to the sources and dynamic, produce images of their distribution way and final destinations. Asian luxuries (Syrian and Egyptian glass products or Chinese beads) and Caucasian product (fibulas) appropriate to the northern and southern distribution connected deep northern valleys. We have decisive evidences for two directional

<sup>1590</sup> This route leading to Alania through the Machara and Kodori valleys, seem had a long tradition and must have functioned at least since Hellenistic time, as archaeological evidence has viewed. See also Janashia S. 1952:46-57.

<sup>1591</sup> Warmington E. 1995:26.

connections and historically proved priority of the KAR representing the southern aligned part of famous 'Missimian Road' (Proc.). Archeologically it show a case how imported goods and service craft guide Svaneti and overcome difficult landscapes towards Sanchari, Marukhi or Qlukhori passes. According to the textual information, it pronounced as Zemarchus route, been traveled through Apsilia when carried the Silk from Sogdiana towards the Black Sea. He probably passed Marukhi pass occasioned by necessity to avoid Missimian Road to the left. This story signifies functional direction of road even in Silk transportation practices between the Caspian and Black Sea in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1592</sup> But archaeological evidences of Silk at upper reaches of river Kuban in the Burial of Bolshaja Laba at Kislowodsk are extensively emphasized.<sup>1593</sup> In fact, this tradition continues also into late byzantine, when the *Kay Apsilian Road* became a part of the 'Abkhazian way' in 11<sup>th</sup> century and connected other significant local sites from Kutaisi to Anakopia (**Map 11**).

**Strategic significance.** There are three sectors of land where three principal routes passed through and give strategic importance to this road. First is the northern borderline area of Pusta, which monitored several adjoined northern routes, directed whether from Caucasian passes through Missimia or from Abazgia NE. It appropriates to the military services of the last part of KAR. Strategic capacity of area also reflected in aligned *Arterial Road 4*, which guide to Abasgia at the river Kelasuri in Azanta valley (NW mountaineer part of Colchis) and borderline Lar fort. But much strategic interest receives a middle part of this road, which easily and indirectly connected here all routes of local significance (AR 3) and those directed from north (AR 4). It was a well accessibility part, with blocking perspective of hostile directed from Missimia/Svaneti, Abasgia or even far Alania. This was well managed by most powerful defence of Apsilia planned along the KAR.

Danger of invasions in all three strategic zones led effective security over this communication line. Archaeologically confirmed carefully controlled all excess parts into the Apsilia, heavily defended by three forts Shapka Tsebelda and Pusta. We have textually known stories about the factors and military conflicts in Tzibile fort and military operations in 550, where the roman troops had been acted. Persian establishment in northern neighboring Missimia increases twice the strategic significance of KAR. First because of appearing new perspective for transportation of silk avoiding Missimia, it applies diplomatic mean. It forms communication corridor, between the Swaneti and Black Sea, where imperial armies are established. Therefore, strategic potential made this road interesting for invasions as well and

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<sup>1592</sup> Baghaturia 2006:76-85.

<sup>1593</sup> Kovalevskaja 2001.

if consider appropriated conflict stories it most probably represented a major invasion route from early 6<sup>th</sup> century. We know that the imperial allied troops are marched here, also the Sassanian military commander Nebedes and later the Arabian army. In fact and from practical mean, geometric parameters of KAR is most suitable for transportation of military facilities or food supply until middle part of the Kodori river. Where the *Wheel Road 1* was responsible for easy supply all the parts of central Apsilia and might equally be important for conquest (**Map 17**); Southern supplies does not directly approach upland forts of the Kodori river in Akhista, Lar or Bat at the NW and in Pal at NE (**Tables 58; 60; 65**).

### ***ARTERIAL ROADS (tracks and trails)***

The road structure shows the capacity of communication system. E and W aligning arterial roads of KAR are quite complicated component of *Routes 1* and *2*. They consider five lesser roads that we name arterial road and some aligned minor trackways. First three AR1, AR2, AR3 forming within the streams of Big and Small Machara, focus on southern communication line. The rest two AR4, and AR5 ran from the middle Kodori area to connect the northern valleys with uplands of the river Kelasuri. Correspondence to the settled and burial parts indicates functional significance useful for internal services.

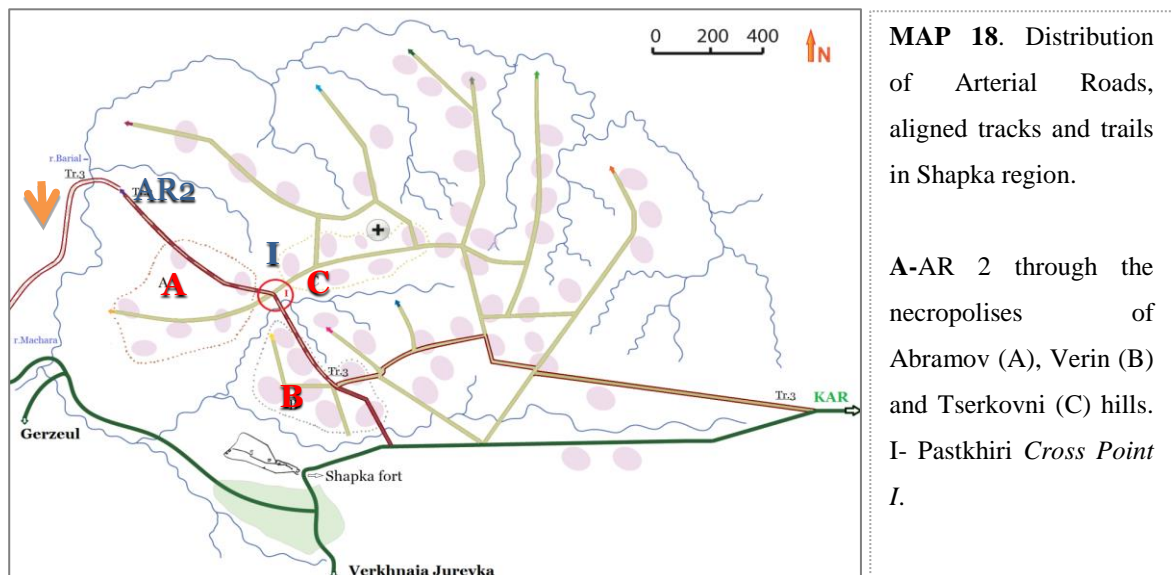
***Arterial road 1 (AR 1), Gerzeuli-Patskhiri section.*** This is a SW shortens way between Gerzeuli and Patskhiri valleys (**Maps 12**). Through the slope of Eastern Gerzeuli and thereafter waterfall it turns westwards into the Patskhiri/Olginskoe valley and proceeds 100 m above the level of the riverbed Bolshaja Machara (Big Machara). Here, it directly enters into the most communicative and open Patskiri valley, nearby to the *Cross Point I* and leads to the prehistoric defensive structure of area. Turning westwards it meets AR 2, which allow easy access to the early byzantine Shapka fort<sup>1594</sup> and reveals secondary importance for internal usage.

***Arterial Road 2 (AR 2 ), Patskhiri valley.*** It ran from the north-western Patskiri valley to Shapka settlement and thereafter linked KAR at the final south (**Map 18**). From design represents a rough line of 2 m width and 2 m height, with various shifting alternatives in two sections. It may appropriable to a narrow street that vertically cross the Patskhiri valley, run through two Shapka necropolises and thereafter approach the unnamed stream of the river

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<sup>1594</sup> Voronov 1975:47.

Barjal.<sup>1595</sup> Leaving the Abramov hill (SE of Olginskoe cemetery) it reaches *Cross Point I*-the widest area of valley with different directions at both sides.<sup>1596</sup> Here to the left via the AR 1 it could run downward to the Black Sea. But if continue direct way into the western slope of Verin hill necropolis (**Map 18, A**) it is able to change again its direction at the second *Cross Point II*. Westwards it integrates further burial hills on aligned track.<sup>1597</sup> Southwards it met with KAR and proceeded to nearby located Shapka settlement<sup>1598</sup> Further SW by easy movable section of Apiancha mountain (road W.4 m, L.700 m.) it has been involved in *Wheel Road 1*. That increases the capacity of inland communication and moving through its cycle areas (*Wheel Road 1*). But from the lower part of KAR it looks direct south to the Black Sea.



However, this road line (AR 2) ensured the public movements between the settled and northwestwards located burial parts in Shapka and made this area most communicative.

**Trackway 1.** Trackway 1 was a long northwestern extension of AR 2, which kept rough horizontal line between the Patkhiri/Olginskoe and Tsebelda valleys. From Phatskhiri valley westwards via the village Burja it approach the western slopes of Chizhoush Mountain. Thereafter at the village Poltavskoe it integrates the northern part of the *Wheel Road 1*. That

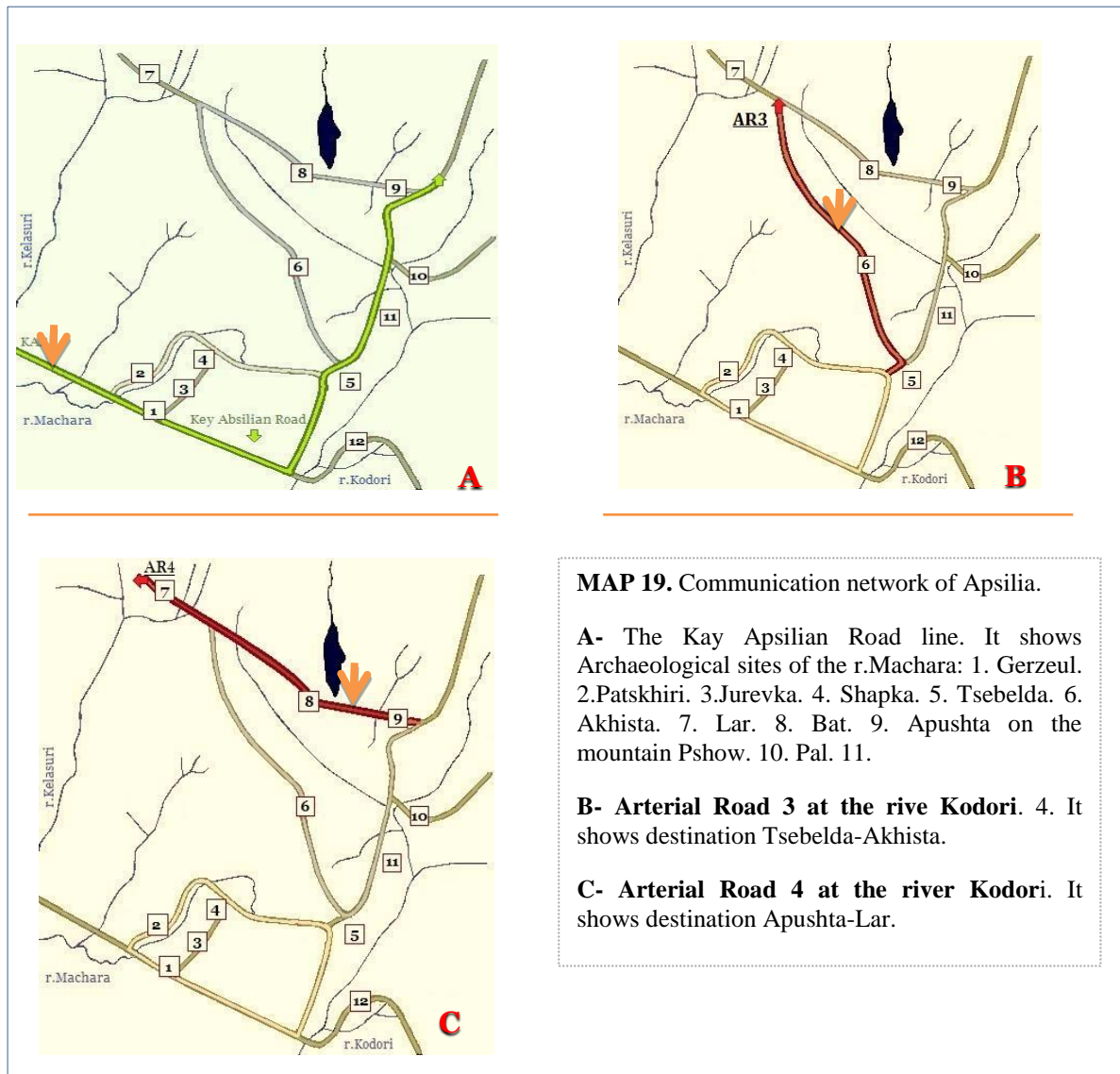
<sup>1595</sup> It intentionally accords the crests and woodlands until it reaches the nameless tributary, which joins the river Machara in 15 kilometer.

<sup>1596</sup> This was a place, where the river Barjal and its nameless stream fall into the Machara River to the east. From this place, the road leads to the prehistoric hilltop of Patskhiri. Voronov 1977:15,16.

<sup>1597</sup> Voronov 1975:48.

<sup>1598</sup> This part, which also included a short 100 m road branch and the subsequent isthmus connected directly with the early byzantine Shapka fort. Voronov 1969:63; Voronov 1975:51. Pic.10.

cycles through Kjach pass, taking probably the village Verknaja Lemsa (upper Lemsa) and destine the Tsebelda valley.<sup>1599</sup>



**Arterial road 3 (AR 3), Tsebelda-Akhista section.** It is a diagonally segmented one of the individual arterial road line of KAR, connected Tsebelda with Akhista Mountaineer settlement and accessing northern sites of Azanta valley<sup>1600</sup> (Map. 19-B.). It was 4-5 m length, 1.5 m depth and originated at the N of Jagashkari meadow. Separating from KAR it moves northwestwards to Tsebelda. Thereafter a very steep trail through forest, bushes, rocky ridge and the village Kesjanova approach the Kuabchara pass at the E. The way brings up to

<sup>1599</sup> Voronov 1977:20; Voronov 1975:47.

<sup>1600</sup> Azanta valley stretches between the river Kelasuri and Amtkel area. It was protected on two sides by the mountains Akhupach-Ürtkha-Akhista at the south an mountain range Mali Skhaphach to the north. See: Voronov 1975. Pic. 9.

the top of the Mountain Akhista (717 m above the sea level), first destined settlement, then the gate tower and after the early byzantine fort Akhista.<sup>1601</sup> Further north, the way leads west of the village Gergemish, overlapping the Azanta valley near to the Dolmen and thereafter mats with AR 4.<sup>1602</sup> At the same time, *Arterial road 3* represents the western part of the *Wheel Road B*, which gives opportunity to come down to the Tsebelda valley (**Map 20, B**).

*Arterial road 4 (AR 4), Apushta-Lar section.* It was horizontally outlined, most northwestern single artery of KAR, which bend three northern borderline settlements Bat, Apushta and Lar. It forms at the right confluences of Jampal stream and stretches between rivers Kodori and Kelasuri (**Map 19, C**).<sup>1603</sup> That is 8 km road line passing Apushta valley, through the isthmus diagonally cross the platinum of the Lake Amtkel<sup>1604</sup> and continues northwestwards to the Lar settlement at the river Kelasuri.<sup>1605</sup> That was NW borderline between Abasgia and Apsilia.

## **WHEEL ROADS**

There are two *Wheel Road A* and *B* connecting Apsilian inhabitant in two different locations at the rivers Machara and Kodori. They allow turning movements from one road to another, sharing some arterial roads, trackways an even the routes of long and short destination.

*Wheel Road 1.* This cycle integrates areas between three rivers Kelasuri, Machara and Kodori (**Map.19-A**). That provides opportunity to bring together settled parts of Gurzuli-Shapka-Patskhiri at the river Machara and thereafter Burja-Poltavskoe at the r.Kelasuri, and come down to Tsebelda valley at the r.Kodori. Further via Apiancha-upper Jurevka it turns back to Gurzuli. It environs the *Arterial Road 2*, *Trackway 1* and *KAR*. Each allows access to Apsilian hinterland and *Route 1* integrates the main SE roads directed from coastal sites and Cappadocia. Therefore it represented an actual complex network of land and sea connections.

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<sup>1601</sup> Voronov 1977:25. Voronov 1975:48. Pic.9.

<sup>1602</sup> Voronov 1977:28.

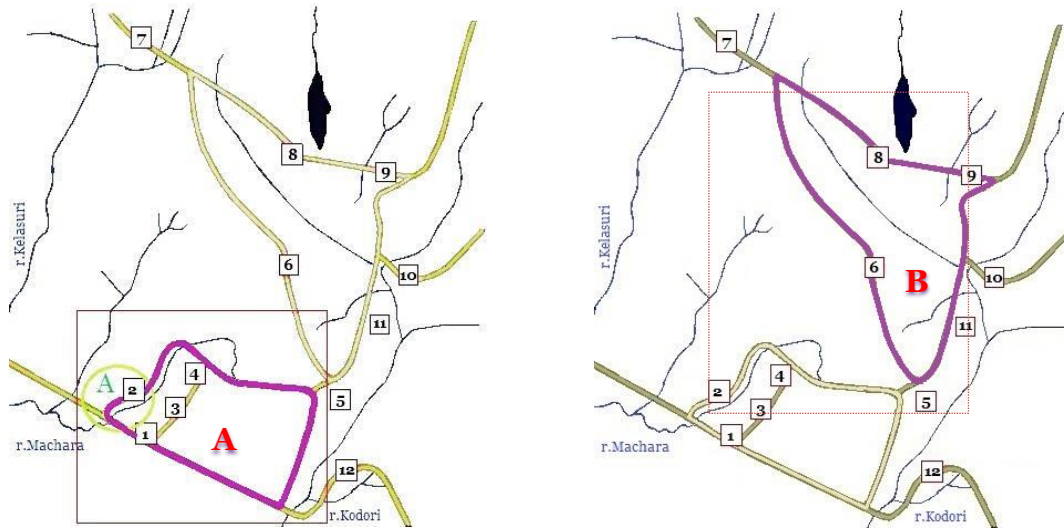
<sup>1603</sup> Voronov 1982:20, 31. pic.20

<sup>1604</sup> Voronov 1982:42.pic.17. Exactly here, Voronov recorded the traces of 1<sup>st</sup> century track. See: Voronov 1969:19; Voronov 1977:31. This part still functions and even a tractor was used during deforestation. Voronov 1975:50.

<sup>1605</sup> Voronov 1982:31.pic.14. Voronov 1975. Pic. 9.



The most southern part was monitored by the late roman Gurzuli watch tower, where the first settlement forms.<sup>1606</sup> Further defense at the north is Shapka, supporting security of northern traffic.



**A-Wheel Road 1 at the rivers Machara.** Consisted of Kay road and several inlayed tracks. Inclusive archaeological sites: 1-Gerzeul. 2-Patskhiri. 3- Jurevka. -Shapka. 5-Tsebelda. 6-Akhista. 7- Lar. 8-Bat. 9-Apushta on the mountain Pshow. 10- Pal. 11-Planta. 12- Pskal.

**B-Wheel Road 2 at the river Kodori.** Consisted of Arterial Road 4. Inclusive archaeological sites: 6-Akhista. 7- Lar. 8-Bat. 9-Apushta.

**MAP 20.** Wheel-roads of Apsilia. Modified Map. Source: Voronov 1975. Pic. 55.

**Wheel Road 2.** This cycle suspend the road lines between Tsebelda-Apushta-Bat-Akhista-Tsebelda (**Map.20, B**). Northern part environs the AR 4, AR 5 and upper part of KAR. It keeps closer mountain neighbors.

<sup>1606</sup> On the road section that passed the Gerzeuli ridge near the spring, an antic settlement and corresponding pottery fragments were evidenced. Voronov 1977:11; Voronov 1975:48.

## IX. RIVERS KODORI AND MACHARA VALLEYS AS TRANSIT REGION

### IX. 1 THE NATURE OF IMPORT CONTRIBUTION

Apsilia produce large volume of imported goods that successfully traveled along the Great Silk road. This process meant a high profit for the trades, for the cities and geographic areas along trade routes and also represented an immediate cause of military conflicts and diplomatic negotiations. Control over the trade routes, held by both Byzantium and Iran, speed up integration of mountain roads into the world trade routes. In this context Apsilia became a strategic transit corridor, crucial to transit policies. The route running from Sebastopolis via Apsilia to North Caucasus designated as ‘Missimian road’ in byzantine narratives and brought circumstances critically depended to bring imported goods safely. This route integrated several areas in the upper reaches of the river Kodori and Koban, ran through Alania. Concentration of imported goods and even silk fragments in the basing of the river Bolshaja Laba and burials of Kislovodsk are also supportive evidence.<sup>1607</sup>

However, trade and transit linked with institutional arrangements and has been strongly associated with bringing relations between kingdoms, markets, producers and consumers. An important implication for seeking regional and international material resources through Caucasia to western market and vice versa, is a process reflected in direction of travelled goods, which richly presented also in Apsilian graves.<sup>1608</sup> Import composition picturing a well-organized long and short distance trade, viewed the state potential in global trade and also how institutional power operated and build transit system through mountain roads. Traded imports produce information not only about the Annona system and commodity objects, but also manufacturing exporters. That made easy to understand linkages between the factors of trade and barter-related purposes and offered supply. It made also apparent that some exported *types* are the result of trade and state supply. There is an exception of single items as well those we assign personal advantage and official gifts.

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<sup>1607</sup> Ierusalimskaja 1992. Kavkaz na sholkovom puti.

<sup>1608</sup> Baghaturia 2004:72-75.

### ***IX. 1. 1 Official, personal gifts and other individual advantages***

There are some artefacts whose appearance we assume to be special cases, diplomatic gifts and other personal advantages. Import that we assume to official (diplomatic?) circuits include scarce objects assumable to protective power (**Table 88**). Asian *spathae* may signify a diplomatic gift (**Table 88. A**),<sup>1609</sup> which occurs in a socially distinguished warrior grave, which may imply the rank of its owner (chieftain?). The particular value of this sword does not exclude political alliances in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Other rare finds like composite bows<sup>1610</sup> and swords with decorative ivory fragments perhaps were arriving there as diplomatic gifts.<sup>1611</sup> There is also an exclusive example of silver chain strap with leaf shape ends owned by prominent horsemen of Tsebelda. It could be a part of jewels relative to rank or loyalty or even friendship. Notably, the time of their appearance is from the early 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Small amount of high quality golden and silver items may also assume to be gifts for aristocracy (**Table 112. 4, 6-8**). They include a golden cross<sup>1612</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century silver pendant with representation of Gorgo that finds analogy with one discovered in Antioch (**Table 112. 1, 3**).<sup>1613</sup>

A distinctive extent of precious commodities essential for certain warrior associates with exclusive dining items, which should be a subject of individual advantages whether in a manner of trade or travel. Such is a metal jug evidenced in the Shapka area (**Table 103. 30**). Since has never been a subject of import, as a response to public demand, it seems to be more personalized. A Chinese bead with hieroglyph was also recorded as an exclusive areal find (**Table 107.**).<sup>1614</sup> Appearance of it may result an individual advantages.

### ***IX. 1. 2 Import related state supply***

There are several important functional objects for soldiers, seems to be institutional and could not arrived by trade. Furthermore, we find linkages of commodity, fuel and manufacturing exporters suggestive for state supply, while responding to high mobility of military developed

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<sup>1609</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:148-152. Pic. 18.1a-2; 3. See: Kazanski 2019:113-121

<sup>1610</sup> Antler laths were attached to it. But nomad is considered to be the owner of the bow laths found in tower 2 of Tsibile fort.

<sup>1611</sup> Two fragmentary sword attachments are evidenced in the grave 44 of Abgidzrakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971:68.

Tabl.XXII. another occurs in the grave 11 of Akhatsarakhu cemetery. Trapsh 1971:96. Tabl.XXXVI.2.

<sup>1612</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 15. Trapsh 1971:38.

<sup>1613</sup> Voronov 1975.

<sup>1614</sup> Unfortunately, only Voronovs' reference on this bead exists, neither drawing nor photo is available in publications.

areas. That feels especially from early Byzantine period, when Annona system supply was directly involved in fortified areas of Apsilia and costal or central Lazica, where large amount of foreign foodstuff including oil and liquid containers for wine were equally found. And they are similar to those supplies observed along the frontier areas. Only few 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century weapons could apply through individual warrior (or other type owner) or recruited units perhaps of Cappadocian frontier (**Table 91. 2 (10-11)**).

If we realize relationship of this object groups recognizes well-structured institutional mechanisms even from mid-4<sup>th</sup> century. But from the last quarter of the century there appear a huge number of such imported weapons like *Illerup* and *Nydam* (as well as *Straubig/Nydam*) type swords (**Table 87. 3-9; Table 97. 2; Table 80-C**).<sup>1615</sup> Several related baldrics, functional belts and ring-mail show the quality n resources (**Table 109. B; Table 90. C**).<sup>1616</sup> Swords with pattern welded blades are a clear indication of a Roman source (**Table 87**). Two different type lenticular section swords (340-380 AD) rare in the West, but similar to Germanic ones and distributed in Eastern Europe,<sup>1617</sup> Northern Black Sea littoral, Northwest Caucasia,<sup>1618</sup> Alan-Sarmatian area,<sup>1619</sup> Volga, Central Asia (**Table 80. C; Table 87. 8-9**)<sup>1620</sup> is indication of certain supply; while it frequently appears in the beginning of the migration period and observed among the nomads in Crimea and Danube regions. But, rounded or oval shields adorned with *Malaesty/Zieling I3* type boss and widespread in Syria (Homs) and Arabia (Hatra) (**Table 86. 1**) were directly link with the Euphrates frontier and therefore, might be obvious evidence for military supply (**Table 86. 1-3**). Typologically, they are presented in nine types with distinctive bosses and pictures their spread across the Pontic region (**Table 86. 15-18**), German sites of central Europe and Danube.<sup>1621</sup> Some shield with *Aj-Tador/Zieling H2* type bosses are connecting with central Europe (**Table 86. 3**). Other types with bosses of *Zilling K1*, *Misery* and *Scongrad* directly come from German regions (**Table 86. 4, 12-13**). In this sense, a simultaneous appearance of various battle axes might supportive for changes in battle tactic, indicative for defensive and offensive combat (**Table 89**). They show a high specification of siege techniques and characterize defensive parts of their use.

<sup>1615</sup> It is observed in several graves and one of them, buried in Abgidzrakhu cremation grave 27, may have been a well-equipped *Sagitari*. Trapsh 1971:45-47.Tabl.XI.

<sup>1616</sup> Baghaturia-Kner 2003.

<sup>1617</sup> They correspond to Germans (Magamedov, Levander 1996. Fig.2.2,4). But Bishop, who dates this sword to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, points to the difficulty of distinguishing it from the contemporary Germanic *spatha* (Bishop & Coulston 2006. Edit.2). Kazanski considers to Roman manufacture. Kazanski 1996:119-121.

<sup>1618</sup> Gavritukhin, P'jankov 2003, pl.72.1, 40, 64; Pl 75.40, 41.

<sup>1619</sup> Hazanov 1971:17. Pl.11.1, 2.6.

<sup>1620</sup> Menghin 1994-1995:165-175.

<sup>1621</sup> Kazanski 2007; Shukin 1993.

This also points to a centralized supply and matter of either Sebastopolis or Pithius or both with direct linkage to the security of Pontic region.

Interest attracts to some local weapons showing the damascene technology, which may assign to foreign techniques or smiths (*ferrarii*). We don't know if they were recycled in Lazica or manufactured in foreign countries. Because, supportive textual information about locally made arms (*officina armorum*) is missing, but capability of Lazica is seen in locally made weaponry, where areal specifics are also well defined (consequence of imperial *fabricate*?).

Little is known about the types of functional belts (**Table 110a. 1-3; Table 110b. 1-2, A**) that always assisted either sword or sax. Supportive fasteners and fittings, including belt fitting strap-ends in various types<sup>1622</sup> appear in graves of heavily equipped federate units. Defines some sword-tie bronze buckles like circular ring (**Table 108. 27-28; 109. 8**), or with *ardilion* profile (**Table 29b. A**), sometimes with rounded or rectangular plates (**Table 108. 14-15**) and those with zoomorphic decoration (**Table 109. 4**) accompanied swords, daggers and cutlasses. The fact that some often finds in defensive structures worldwide, it gives perspectives for speculation. Later belts of warrior show the buckles of byzantine origin with oval loops often having rectangular or semicircular with *cloisonné* decorative plates (**Table 108. 12-13**). They include also byzantine heraldic buckles with B shape loop (**Table 108. 17**) or rigid loop plate with triangular plates (**Table 109. 12**).

Special military units representing horsemen (Cavalry soldiers?) were supplied with imported horse harness. Their complete set consist of bridle strap rings, strap buckles, the jaw belt thread, hinged psalms, bits and saddle (**Table 109. D**). Strap buckles presented either in oval or square shape was used for fastening the belt either on skull, or forehead<sup>1623</sup> or at the cheek. The jaw belt thread was in loops of psalms, with a two-part hinged bit. Such bits with psalms are evidenced in three different types. The first consists of a two part iron round wire hinged bit (total L. 14 cm) and encompasses the nail shape psalms (L.16.5-7 cm) in middle loop.<sup>1624</sup> The second distinctive variant has slightly faceted nail shaped loops.<sup>1625</sup> Third variant show German technological developments.<sup>1626</sup>

The last component of logistic, strongly related to military sites is some kind of healing liquids (**Table 104. 21**). Medicine ampules seem principally for troops stationed in Tzibile

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<sup>1622</sup> Baghaturia-Kner 2003.

<sup>1623</sup> The dimensions of the oval tongue buckles are: Dm. 1.2x1.3 cm, tongue L.2.4 cm, Dm. wire 2 mm. Trapsh 1971:42. Tabl. XLIX.10.

<sup>1624</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 23. Trapsh M 1971:42. Tabl.XLIX.12.

<sup>1625</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 29. Trapsh M 1971:48. Tabl.XLIX.

<sup>1626</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 44. Trapsh 1971

fort, as appearing in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. Their transportation increases during the Byzantine Sassanian war in Lazica, which also touches Tsebelda fortress.

## IX. 2 IMPORT STRUCTURE

The import spectrum suggests that all involved connections moved through the Apsilian road network. Their types and value helped to explain the trade character. Import types known only from Apsilia includes coins, table and liquid transit pottery wares, bronze and glass vessels, jewelry made of various material, as well as metal items of hygiene or dress accessories and weaponry imported during 300-550 AD. The structure outlines responsible markets at an international or regional level. But their dynamic provides statistics about the growth or decrease of certain categories. Connections with all coastal military sites might evidence of common trade mechanism. We don't know how it has been regulated, but from dynamic it gives perspective to identify possible transportation ways and the duration of certain connections.

### IX. 2. 1 *Objects of Interregional Trade*

There are import categories showing the strength of interregional trade, closely connected with 3<sup>rd</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> century Black Sea littoral. They are commodity objects including the fine ware (*sigilatta*), glass vessels, metal or glass jewelry. Pontic *Sigillata*, that discovery is higher than oriental/Phocaeen (with animal motives, sometimes combined with outer rouletting), gives understanding in trade engaged countries Constantinople and Crimea.

Blue dotted vessels that is larger group and showing regional differences in technological details (**Table** 103. 2-13, 17, 20-21), gives similar spectrum seen in Northern provinces, western France, lower and middle Rhineland, but most are output of the Black Sea littoral.<sup>1627</sup> Hemispherical bowls or cylindrical beakers are results of northern channel with a concentration also in Bosphorus (**Table** 103. 9-12).<sup>1628</sup> Some beakers define eastern part of Black sea littoral in Crimea and Olbia, since their single examples appear in Ukraine

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<sup>1627</sup> Their distribution in Colchis is observed generally in coastal areas Pithius/Bichvinta, Sebastopolis/Sokhumi, Petra/Tsikhistdziri, Ziganev/Gudava. See Puturidze 1963:128-129, Lordkipanidze O 1963:97-100, Apakidze, Lordkipanidze 1965:124, Inaishvili 1993:68, Zakaraia, Lekvinadze 1971:139-153; But they are revealed in the mountainous regions of Colchis and also in Eastern Georgian Urnisi, Rustavi and Mtskheta. See: Chkhatarashvili M, 1978a:19-21.

<sup>1628</sup> Baghaturia-Kner 2009:359. Fig.2;3. They are evidenced in Tzibile fort cemetery 39 and Abgidrakhu grave 31.

(Shurovka cemetery). Truncated cylindrical dotted beakers (**Table 103. 2-5**)<sup>1629</sup> that provide a strong link with the Bosphorus and others may suggest Bosphorus as area of manufacture exporter. Other group of trailed bowls<sup>1630</sup> and moulded beakers<sup>1631</sup> are evidence of trade contact western European centers, which might include Cologne area as well (**Table 103. with 6-8, 13**). A Mayen type vessel<sup>1632</sup> is additional facet of western sources (**Table 103. 16**). There are occasional imported vessels facet-cut type<sup>1633</sup> decolorized smooth cups (**Table 103. 18-19**)<sup>1634</sup> and a glass jug (**Table 103. 22,**)<sup>1635</sup> able to define the western production.

Within this group finds earrings and beads arrived in great quantity (**Tables 105; 107**). The high contribution of glass production and a low output of metal and stone objects result two interregional importers for glass jewelry. Few occasions of silver earrings is defines northern Black Sea channel. Polyhedral cylindrical blue glass beads are import of eastern Black Sea littoral may suggestive for the production area as well. Rounded amber and cornelian button shape beads outline several parts of Black Sea region (Crimea),<sup>1636</sup> the Balkans (Serbia, tomb of Ostrunica)<sup>1637</sup> and central Europe (graves of middle Danube) could be an exporter as well.<sup>1638</sup>

Comparably decreased categories are finger rings (**Table 106**), topologically linked with categories distributed in Pontic region (**Table 106. 2**) and defining Crimea (**Table 106. 13 17, 25**). But some of seal depicted variants guide to the northern areas of the Black Sea littoral (**Table 106. 3**).

## ***IX. 2. 2 Objects of International trade***

In some imported object categories finds the context of worldwide distribution by focusing on the Mediterranean market. This involves items of commodity and the Annona system. But some of them make difficulties to assign precisely whether to areal support and with trade.

<sup>1629</sup> Alrakhu grave 3, Abgidzrakhu grave 41. Trapsh 1971; Apiancha grave 37. Gunba 1975.

<sup>1630</sup> Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 5 and Akhacharkhu grave 2. Trapsh 1971; Tsebelda fort cemetery grave 20. Voronov, jushin 1982. One more distinctive beaker is evidenced in Abgidzrakhu grave 15. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1631</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 9. Trapsh 1971. See as well. Baghaturia-Kner 2009:364. Fig.17.

<sup>1632</sup> Abgidzrakhu grave 12. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1633</sup> Alrakhu grave 5. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1634</sup> One of them is evidenced in Mahajirov hill cemetery grave 4. Voronov 1989

<sup>1635</sup> Gunba 1978. Tabl.VI.6. It does not find any direct comparison, but reveals similarities with 5<sup>th</sup> century sample from Köln museum.

<sup>1636</sup> Kovalevskaja 1998:16,17.

<sup>1637</sup> Germanen 1987:232. Pl.23.

<sup>1638</sup> Cornelian beads are found even in the 7<sup>th</sup> century Lombard Italy. Ivanisevich, Kazanski, Mastykva 2006:59-61.

*Amphorae*, Eastern *sigillata*, glass vessels and jewelry are a general class of long distant import, indicating more intensive southern connections. Some objects of interregional trade that later transforming into international, may also link with global political challenges.

**Commodity import.** Several single commodity markets are reflected in limited import categories and presented by following items:

- Fine ware pottery (LRCW, LRDW)
- Ampules (Ungentaria)
- Glass vessels (Dotted cones, honey-comb beakers)
- Beads (gilded, mosaic, amber)
- Fibulae ('AVCISSA' type)

Fine ware pottery (LRC, LRD) that generally distributed from the Black Sea littoral (**Table 104. 1-8**)<sup>1639</sup> mirrors economic relations within Pontic regions. Only small part of LRD wares consider with distant trade import.<sup>1640</sup> Those, A and B types of eastern *sigillata* and few copies of African red slip D wares,<sup>1641</sup> are occasional variants (also Olginskoe fine ware), may relate to fuel and trade relative manufacturing export, but enabling suggest supply sources (**Table 28. B**).

Late Roman ampules/Ungentaria and little consistency of those for healing purposes (**Table 104. 21**),<sup>1642</sup> just shape widely distributed areas of Egypt, Palestine, Aegean, northern and Eastern Black Sea littoral, Greece and Constantinople (Ephesus), may indication of activated route through Constantinople (Ephesus), which destines by land road or sea transport.

Other long distance import are glass products including drinking or lighting vessels and jewelry of Mediterranean and Near Eastern markets, would reach through the regular commercial merchandise (**Table 103**). Earliest imported '*Rippenschale*' bowl representing the latest variant of this vessel type and definite model from Syria (**Table 103. 1**),<sup>1643</sup> show difference of distribution sources compare to similar category of bowls from coastal Colchis.<sup>1644</sup> Proportional majority of glass cones shows eastern Mediterranean market (**Table 103, 24-27**),<sup>1645</sup> suggestive either for Palestinian or Egyptian (Karanis) production and

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<sup>1639</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves 43. Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1640</sup> Verin hill cemetery grave 2a of Shapka area. Voronov, Shenkao 1982:158.Pic.23.2.

<sup>1641</sup> Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 41. Trapsh 1971:64-65.Tabl.XX.10.

<sup>1642</sup> Voronov 1985 b:32.15-17.

<sup>1643</sup> The bowl that revealed in Mahajirov grave 1 of II stage (320/330-360/370) is made in the Syrian technological tradition. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26.Pic.19.3; Baghaturia-Kner 2009:358.fig.1). Syrian production sees in: Whitehouse 1998:13; Jennings S. 2000:49; Nenna 1993:18. Bowls found in coastal Colchis differs in light colour and technological details.

<sup>1644</sup> Light colored bowls considered to be more western product and does not exclude even from a Cypriot workshop.

<sup>1645</sup> Two different types are revealed in Tserkovni cemetery grave 6 and Abgidzrakhu grave 27. Voronov, Jushin 197; Trapsh 1971. Similar forms are known from the coastal military sites Pithius, Sebastopolis, Petra/Tsikhisdziri, Ziganev-Gudava (See: Ramishvili R. 1965, Puturidze R. 1963:128-129; Lordkipanidze O. 1963:97-100, Apakidze, Lortkpanidze 1965:124; Inaishvili



transportation from Near East. Some straight walled cones are directly associated with Palestinian origin. Two analogies of the Syrian type Honeycomb beaker, largely concentrated in northern Palestine (in West appears also in Colon), provides further link with East (**Table 103. 15**).<sup>1646</sup> Only two fragments of identical beakers found in Chersonesus and one in Saldum (Hungary) show direct way via the Black Sea (**Table 103. 14; 83. A-7**). The high percentage of yellowish-green glass that strongly defines early 5<sup>th</sup> century Apsilian glass imports from coastal parts might be indicative for changes of supply sources rather than the population's taste.

Most of the glass beads were produced in the Near East-Egypt, Syria and Iran (**Table 107. 12, 27, 29-31, 47-49, 51-58**). Mediterranean trade is defined by Gilded, mosaic and encrusted variants, stone amber beads, are solid jewelry categories of international trade (**Table 107**). Some gilded glass beads trace Alexandrian merchandise (**Table 33. 1-2**). But mosaic and encrusted types presented in several variants show trend synchronically appear in the North Caucasia,<sup>1647</sup> Crimea, central Asia and India (**Table 33. 7, 14-16; Table 107. 47, 48-49, 51-55, 57**).<sup>1648</sup>

From stone beads, cornelian and amber show a responsible Asian market. Amber is comparably decreased category, distributed in three different forms, including mushroom shape, rounded and button shape, and present in three different areas (**Table 33. 12-13; 107. 1, 5**).<sup>1649</sup> It shows a wide distribution areas including North Caucasia,<sup>1650</sup> central Europe, *Germania Libera*, Danube provinces, Chernjakhov culture, Alan-Sarmatian sites of the northern Black Sea, South-eastern Baltic littoral, Roman provinces Scandinavia and Palestine. Another rounded and disc shaped cornelian beads is a frequent find first in Apsilia<sup>1651</sup> and thereafter in northern Caucasia (**Table 33. 10**).<sup>1652</sup> This fact may link with one of the unknown central European supporters, as the earliest appearance (200-310 AD) is related with the

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N. 1993:68; Zakaraia, Lekvinadze 1971:139-153, Zamtaradze M1979:77. Few revealed in Lazian hinterland Archaeopolis/Nokalakevi (Zakaraia, Lekvinadze, Gvinchidze 1978:80) and in Lake Inkit (Lortkpanidze 1963:88-89), as well as in eastern Georgian Urbinisi, Rustavi and Mtsketa (grave 142). Chkhatarashvili 1978:19-21.

<sup>1646</sup> Trapsh 1971. Tab.XVI.1.

<sup>1647</sup> Discovered in Komunta (Deopik 1961), in the Mokraja Balka graves 59, 114 (Runich 1970,1971) and in the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century grave 10 of Lermontvskaja Skala 2 (Runich 1976).

<sup>1648</sup> Kovalevskaja 1998.

<sup>1649</sup> Apiancha grave 19, Alrakhu grave 14 and upland parts in Apushta grave 14.

<sup>1650</sup> Some of Circassia comes from north Tamgacik. Single finds consider Dagestan and Derbent. See: Kazanski, Mastykova 1998. Mastykova 1999; Kazanski 2003.

<sup>1651</sup> They are viewed in III stage (380/400-450) graves of central Apsilia (Abgidzrakhu grave 15). Trapsh 1971.

<sup>1652</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> century graves 306, 500, and 516 of Durso. See Kazanski, Mastykova, 1998:125; Kazanski, Mastykova 2003:167.

Baltic Sea.<sup>1653</sup> But from migration time they are distributed further in central Europe and Scandinavia as well.

There are distinctive types of 'AVCISSA' fibulae (**Table 111a.3-4**)<sup>1654</sup> appearing in two different periods and could be indicative for their distinct distributional sources. Structurally, some of this *fibula* is similar to the sample from Africa.<sup>1655</sup> Distributional way from Northern regions of the Black Sea from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD<sup>1656</sup> and few finds from North Caucasia<sup>1657</sup> may focus their direction. But such fibulas are quite widespread in Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, evidenced also in German military, in complexes of Scythian Neaple.<sup>1658</sup> They are clear indication for eastward developed connections.

**Import of Annona system.** Several pottery categories linked with international trade are representative of Annona system and obviously points to dominance of wine import (**Table 104. 9-20**). A wine amphora is the most widely distributed import category. The possible countries of their origin reflected in variations in their production, with significant focus on centers of Asian Minor, Syria, and the northern Black Sea littoral. That intensity is remarkable during 450-500 AD. A huge portion of Syria-Palestine amphorae highlights prominence of Mediterranean market and Syrian exporters as the in distribution of pottery and glass vessels.

Statistical decrease of LRA 1, *types B* (**Table 104. 14**)<sup>1659</sup> could be indicative either for high price or limited transportation during the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century. By fabric it is connected to the eastern Mediterranean, south-west Asia Minor and northern Syria,<sup>1660</sup> but exact region of

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<sup>1653</sup> Amber import in Pannonia during the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries is attributed to Germans, since it was available on the Baltic Sea ('Northern' or 'Suevian Ocean') shores and Samland Peninsula (barbarian *Austeravia*). Later on, towards the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and during 4<sup>th</sup>-th centuries, the revival of the amber route in central Europe linked to Goths. This route included the road between Samland and Moravia, that led to the lower Vistula (as in the Mycenaean period) and the Warter river. Thereafter up to the tributary Proсна into Silesia continued towards upper Oder. Reaching Moravia it descends down the Morava river and then towards Danube (Gimbutas M. 1963:121). However, it is also believed that the amber route in central Europe was controlled by the locals. Thus, the amber import to Lazica may also have been the result of Gothic trade, after establishment in the northern Black Sea region. Amber was a very popular among the German Huns.

<sup>1654</sup> In Abgidzrakhu grave 35. *Fibulae* without inscription shows the L. 3 cm and H. 2-3 cm. Analogy with an inscription found in east Georgia. A similar type is evidenced in the 1<sup>st</sup> century grave complex of Stepantsminda (Apkhazava N, 1979. Tab. I; Ambroz A, 1966:26). It was also found in the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century grave 4 of the village Lia (Tsitlanadze L. 1973:68-70); as well as in Mtskheta grave 5 (Sulava N., 1996:30) and in Kartli (Gagloev P. 1980:77-79. Tab.XLIX-10). From the North Caucasian distinguishes Mingechari *pithoi* grave ( Kaziev, Aslanov 1951. Tab.1-4).

<sup>1655</sup> Baatz D, 1987:93-94. Abb.13-49; Jodin A, 1967:209.Tab.98.

<sup>1656</sup> Its appearance was also associated with the Roman expansion of the Bosphoran kingdom. The distribution route is considered towards eastern provinces through the Caucasia to the Asian part of Bosphoran Kingdom. See: Gorokhovski E, 1985:20-21; Shukin 1989:68-69.

<sup>1657</sup> Ambroz 1966:26-27.

<sup>1658</sup> Simonovich E. 1963:144.

<sup>1659</sup> See the classification of Pieri. Pieri 2005:70, fig.25. It is characterized by an oval or cylindrical body, a flared rim and a round bottom (with small bump on the center). Its central body is covered with a wide wheel-ribbing. On the shoulder and bottom are given a tighter ribbing. The two angular and asymmetrical handles are attached to the top of the neck and end of the shoulder. Light clay gives a colour variation from yellow to the light pink. See: Lordkipanidze 1991:78; Voronov, Bgazhba, etc. 1985a, 77-78; Voronov, Bgazhba 1986:54. Some foreign archaeological sites viewed their use for child burials.

<sup>1660</sup> Peacock, Williams 1986:186.

manufacture is uncertain. Analogies shape wide geographic areas including Asia Minor,<sup>1661</sup> Egypt and Nubia<sup>1662</sup> and also the Black Sea littoral: Eastern part (Dranda, Pithius/Bichvinta, Perta/Tsikhisdziri, Apsarus/Gonio and Nokalakevi),<sup>1663</sup> Northern part (Chersoneses, Bosporus, Tiritaki, Pantikapeon, Phanagoria, and Mirmekia)<sup>1664</sup> and southern part (Samsun and Sinope). Further west, such central European countries as Romania (Histria, Suchidava, Dinogecia, Altium, Capidave, Carsium, Varna, Latrus, Constanta, and Dobroudja).<sup>1665</sup> Low output is seen in ‘bag shaped amphorae’ (**Table 104. 20**),<sup>1666</sup> that chronologically attributed to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries and possibly manufactured in Cartago, Kherson or Syria-Palestine.<sup>1667</sup> It similarly spread several geographic parts of Byzantine Empire in: Eastern<sup>1668</sup> and southern parts (Tarsi, Istanbul) of the Black Sea littoral, also in Palestine,<sup>1669</sup> northern Lebanon and the Red Sea littoral.<sup>1670</sup>

Uncertain is the consumer and transporter of some wine transported by Mediterranean LRA (**Table 104.18-19**)<sup>1671</sup> and LRA1<sup>1672</sup> *amphorae*'s. The first one of Mediterranean workshops was traded over a wider distance in northern and western Black Sea littoral during the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>1673</sup> Second type show low quantity probably defines an Asia Minor as manufacture (**Table 104**). It is frequently seen beyond Lazian sites,<sup>1674</sup> in the northern and western Black Sea littoral<sup>1675</sup> 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>1661</sup> Böttger 1992:46-346; Bass 1962:546.

<sup>1662</sup> Sazanov 1989:44; Adams 1962:261,279.

<sup>1663</sup> Khotelashvili M, Iakobson A, 1984:198; Khalvash M, 2002:44; Lekvinadze V, 1987:242.

<sup>1664</sup> Bynatian E, Zubar V, 1991:223; Sazanov I, Ivashenko I, 1989:91; Gaidukevich V, 1940:203; Blavatski, 1951:54-49; Iakobson A, 1951:330.

<sup>1665</sup> Böttger 1980:46-47; Susaveanu Al, 1982; Kuzmanov G. 1973:312-316.

<sup>1666</sup> Corresponds to the *type 3* of the classification of Pieri (Pieri 2005:119-121, fig.76). It has a cylindrical body, a round or conic bottom and a ribbed surface. Given without the neck, with a short, wide, vertical and condensed rim modeled on the body. Two small massive handles are sliced on the shoulder. Characterized by horizontal ribbings of the surface, sometimes even white painted. See: Voronov, *Bgazhba. etc.*, 1982 b.:23; Voronov, *Bgazhba*, 1985b, fig.26-1,2,3. These types are used for child burials in Chernjakhov culture. Shukin M, 1968:44

<sup>1667</sup> Sazanov A, 1989:41.

<sup>1668</sup> Ghambashidze 1963 :92; Ramishvili 1965 :108; Lekvinadze, Khvedelidze 1981 :167; Jafaridze 1989:63-65; North Chersoneses.

<sup>1669</sup> Hayes 1976:66. Plate 39. Fig.361.

<sup>1670</sup> Pieri 2005 :119-121.

<sup>1671</sup> Characterized by a pear-shaped, cylindrical and thin-walled body, with a rounded bottom and a lightly ribbed surface. The differently profiled rim is formed on a cylindrical neck, with small horizontal handles (Voronov, *Bgazhba*, 1982b:24). Compressions are evidences in Lazian coastal sites Pithius, Phasis, Petra and Apsarus/Gonio. See: Berdzenishvili, Puturidze, 1975:273; Inaishvili 1981:55; Lekvinadze, Kvedelidze 1981:134; Lekvinadze 1987:241.

<sup>1672</sup> Presented with an oval body, round bottom (with a knob on the center) and ribbed surface. It has a short and narrow cylindrical neck with a rolled rim. Asymmetrical ring-handles are sliced to the shoulder. It shows poorly fired buff-clay with brown mica. Voronov, *Bgazhba* 1985b:72.

<sup>1673</sup> Distinguishes Chersoneses and Ilichevsk. See: Antonova N, Danilenko V. 1971:85; Brashinski N. 1984:174-186.

<sup>1674</sup> Revealed in Pithius/Bichvinta, Petra/Tsikhisdziri, Gonio, Phasis/Poti, Archaeopolis/Nokalakevi and Rodopolis/Vardztsikhe. Berdzenishvili, Puturidze 1975:273; Gamkrelidze 1987:11-112; Jafaridze 1989:61-62.

<sup>1675</sup> See Chersoneses, Mirekion, Kharaks, Tiritaki in: Gaidukevich 1958:122; Böttger 1980:48; Kuzmanov G.,1974 :312-31.

Imported goods in Apsilia show a high contribution of the Mediterranean market. Their variety and limitations may point to changes between supplying countries. Increased import and intensive trade potential with Asian sector, especially with Cartago, Antioch, and Seleucia is viewable from early 5<sup>th</sup> century. The ‘bag shape,’ widen the importing perspectives for Cartago.<sup>1676</sup> The oil trade suggests the low output countries. Series of LRA amphorae provide potential market in south-western Asia Minor countries and Syria (Antioch or Seleucia).<sup>1677</sup>

### IX. 3 CIRCULATION DYNAMIC OF IMPORTED ITEMS

The import dynamic provides information about long and short distance trade, as well as when they were changed or interrupted.

*Items of long circulation.* Certain eastern products allow an estimation of their relative circulation date. One or two gilded pieces, certain amber or mosaic beads, sea shells and cornelian gemstones are objects easily identified with long distance trade sources during 250/260-450 AD (**Table 33. 2-2, 7-8, 28**). But some, like reddish rose gem stones (170-270 AD) seem to be interrupted during 270-300 AD (**Table 33.11**). But those continued again from the 4<sup>th</sup> century is distinctive source and Sassanian production. From early 4<sup>th</sup> century categories have been released from trade is mushroom shaped amber bead (200-310 AD) and rose gem stone. But from the last quarter of the same century appears a new group of stone and glass categories (**Table 107. 3-5, 8-11**). The glass jewelry concerned to uninterrupted circulation includes Egyptian paste beads (**Table 32. 23**), 14 cut blue cylindrical and rounded eye beads with applied dots, during 380-450 AD (**Table 16a; Table 107. 2**). Similarly, the stone jewelry presenting most powerful brand of amber (disc, rounded and oval shapes), cornelian (button shape, rounded), rock crystal and jet beads are observable during 380-450 AD. Various shaped encrusted glass beads are later types, did not occur in Apsilia before the late 5<sup>th</sup> century (continued into 6<sup>th</sup> century).

Glass vessels and Pontic *sigillata* show unbroken circulation during 380-450 AD (**Table 104. 1-3**). *Amphorae* are obviously long circulated objects with distinct dynamic of types. Bag

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<sup>1676</sup> Scorpan suggests its Carthaginian origin. See: 1977:279-281. Antonova does not excludes it Chersoneses origin. See: Antonova 1971:85. But Sazanov attributes it to a Syria-Palestine workshop. See: Sazanov 1989:41.

<sup>1677</sup> Both workshops are considered with a *LRA 1 (B)*, but for the *LRA 3* is suggested a Ghaza sector, beyond the Palestine-Egypt border. See in: Peacock, Williams 1986:188-189.

shape *amphorae* appears earlier during the 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries. The other types, LRA 1, LRA 3, lasted two centuries- from 4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (**Table 104**).

Comparably long-a century circulation defines Zoomorphic brooches (450-500 AD), ‘heraldic’ (450-550 AD) and oval shape shielded-tongue buckles with variously formed plate and décor (450-550 AD) and others (**Table 112**. 11-15; **Table 108**. 8-15).

**Items of short term circulation.** There are some countries represented a short dispersal of fasteners in trade. From earlier buckles may define some oval shape small buckles made of flattened wire (320-360 AD) and few massive buckles of 360-400 AD (**Table 108**. 32-33, 37).<sup>1678</sup> This list may involve the B shape plate buckles and Syrian type rectangular buckle with animal decor and some brooches circulated during the 530-550 AD (**Table 108**. 21-22; **Table 112**. 11-15). The T shape (450-500 AD) and other north Caucasian pin-hinged or T shape *fibulae* (530-600 AD) types shortly enriched the clothing fashion of Apsilian pupation (**Table 111a**, 10-12, 13-16). A T-shape fibula suggests change of sources, might affected by military conflicts as well.

#### **IX. 4 DIRECTIONAL FOCUS OF TRADE**

The context of import distribution made recognizable the ways of transportation through several direct or indirect sea and land routes; in which revealed a directional speed, distribution character and onwards directions.

##### ***Sea route activity***

Fine ware, glass vessels, certain jewelry (beads, earrings) and fastener categories are the main contributors to the sea route activities, which may consider shipping containers (**Table 103**. 3-5, 9-12). But those distributed in Colchis through Crimea (hemispheric, cylindrical, blue dotted glass beakers) pointing northern trading gateways possibly through Chersoneses (honey-comb beakers) and Ukraine. Black Sea circulated object could have been delivered through northern (Pithius, **Table 104**) and southern harbours (Apsarus, Petra). Southern harbours anciently delivered all sorts of Annona objects and luxury commodities. Some even continued towards North Caucasia, while involved alternative routes and several land roads.

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<sup>1678</sup> Types 5 and 6 from the Kazanski’ typology. Kazanski, Mastykova 2007:35-37. Pl.34.7,8.

They were activated when military campaigns interrupted regular sea trade. This most clearly demonstrated towards the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

Certain glass products were carried through Mediterranean ports, integrated sea and land routes. Such are Egyptian paste, Alexandrian gilded and liver sandwich beads probably brought from Bosphorus entry points (**Table 33; Table 107**); while earlier evidences from the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century Black Sea littoral proved their distribution towards north Caucasia or other vicinities a little later. Evidence of huge glass beads (monochrome, mosaic, eye, applied coils) also supports penetration by sea routes and operated probably through the same entry points. Less common, but equally important, is a blue glass pendant with a representation of the head of a Negro known from the areas of Black Sea. Several stone beads demonstrating mushroom shape or rounded amber give perspectives to link whether with sea route, land roads across the coastal area or mountain roads. Similar data provides a concentration of shell beads in southern and central Apsilia, which is an occasional find in upland parts towards the North.

### ***Distribution by land road***

Only a few artefacts - tone beads, encrusted beads, strongly profiled *fibulae* and glass cone vessels are sources for land road activities that directed from the north Caucasian mountain routes (**Table 107; Table 111a**). North Caucasian strongly profiled (characterizes the 4<sup>th</sup> century Alania) or T-shaped *fibulae* and mosaic beads are evidences assuming a northern distribution route. The rock crystal has little effect for the clothing of areal population,<sup>1679</sup> but they experienced travel between the Black Sea and Caucasian mountains. The dotted beads leading to North Caucasian Dagestan, North and South Ossetia during the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century are evidences for an actively operating northern route, that from the 4<sup>th</sup> century identically applies in the graves of middle and upper Koban<sup>1680</sup> and Kislowodsk (**Table 107**).<sup>1681</sup> Cornelian beads also viewed an equal distributional way linked with northern Caucasia, during the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1682</sup> and continue into the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1683</sup> Also the particular finger ring types guide north-west Caucasian direction (**Table 106. 27**). Asian cone vessels, probably transported

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<sup>1679</sup> Two different types are exported in Apsilia. One type is common in central Apsilia and observed in the following cemeteries: Apiancha graves 21, 22, Tserkovni hill graves 3, 4, 8, 9, Abgidzrakhu graves 15, 62, Akhacharakhu grave 28, Alrakhu graves 8, 18, 26 and Atara Armjanskaja graves 1, 4, 9. Gunba 1978:18.Tabl.VIII.9; 29. Tabl.XX.12; Tabl.XLV.29, 31. The second type was found in upland Apsilia, Pushta cemetery grave 2.

<sup>1680</sup> Pashkovski and Borisovski. See: Minaeva 1951.

<sup>1681</sup> Mastykova 2009.

<sup>1682</sup> It evidenced in a catacomb of Alkhan-Kala. Deopik 1951:52.

<sup>1683</sup> In 12 examples are presented in Pashkovski graves and some graves of upper Kuban. Minaeva T. 1951:278. They also evidenced in the territory of Mingechauri and Azerbaijan (Deopik V. 1959:51).

from the Near East, increase the extent of land road linkages (**Table 103**). Glass cones, gilded beads and Asian mosaic beads examine Transcaucasian transit perspectives through the eastern points and thereafter mountain roads towards the Black Sea, because they connected with Far East distribution towards the Black Sea and identified across five different lands.

## IX. 5 MONETISED TRADE OR EXCHANGE (?)

More than 530 coins have been recovered in the territory of historical Apsilia. The context of these finds concern graves, hoards, and fortified areas, and they have accumulated in three different parts: Gurzuli (hoard), Shapka, and Tsebelda (Append. D; **Table 102**). Chronologically they signify three different phases of late Roman time. The earliest currency corresponds to the 2<sup>nd</sup> up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, a few from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, and some from the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

Coin type	Find area	Find place	Cemetery	Amount
Nero (54-68)	Gerzeul Mramba	hoard	Aukhuamakhu-grave1,	1
			Akhacharakhu	1
				1
Domitianus (69-)	Gerzeul Mramba	Hoard	Aukhuamakhu-Gr.1	9
				1
Nerva (96-98)				
Traianus (98-117)				
Hadrian (117-138)	Gerzeul Shapka  Mramba  Tsibulum fort	hoard	Verinl-Gr.1-104	5
			Tserkovni-Gr.6	1
			Abgidzrakhu-Gr.54	1
			Akhachararkhu-Gr,12	1
			Alrakhu-Gr.2	2
Grave 1	1			
Antonius Pius (138-161)	Gerzeul Mramba Tsebelda	hoard	Akhacharakhu Gr- 12	1
			Gr.1-82	1
				1
Marcus Aurelius (161-181)	Tsebelda		Graves 1-82, 1-79	2
Lucius Verus (161-168)	Gerzeul Tsebelda	hoard		1
			Grave 1-82	1
Septimius Severus (193-211)	Tsebelda Mount.Adagua		Gr.1-82	1
			Female grave	1
Iulia Domna (211-217)	Tsebelda		Grave 1-76	1
Caracala ( 211-217)	Tsebelda		Grave 1-75	1
Domitianus (296-297)	Gerzeul	hoard		2
Theodosius II (402-450)	Mramba Shapka		Akhacharakhu- Gr.12	1
Justinian I (518-527)	Tsibulum fort	Building 2		2
Justinian II (527-562)				

**Append. D.** List of coin types distributed in historical Apsilia.

Numismatic evidence from graves is minimal. All in all, 50 of the coins recovered from cemetery areas were possessions of warriors and come from the mid-phase of the late Roman period. The fact that most do not match the time of their circulation may exclude their monetary context, but evidence for their long circulation before they were buried in graves is a point, giving positive association to trade in the early years.

The extent of circulated coins and imported objects from the vicinity or other parts of Colchis is nearly similar. This fact and a vast majority of silver coins from Apsilia, including denarii and sestertii minted in Caesarea, might indicate the main currency and the same monetary system across Colchis. In addition, the monetary influence of coastal military sites, representing controlled trade areas of Colchis, may also link with stationed armies in Pithius, Sebastopolis, and Ziganes. This could be also an argument for stable supply or helpful in analyses if silver denarii may function for the home market when losing the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Cesarean coins illustrating monetary policy that were produced between the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries span the period of reorganization of the Euxine Pontus, and they include:

- **Gurzuli hoard**, with **500** coins consisting of: Nero, Vespasian, Domitianus, Nerva, Traianus, Adrian, Antonius Pius, Lutsius Verus, and Markus Aurelius.
- **Shapka cemetery**, with **20** coins consisting of: Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, Antonius Pius, and Julia Domna.
- **Tsebelda cemetery**, with **10** coins consisting of: Trajan, Adrian and Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Julia Domna.

In fact, numismatic evidence from Apsilia is proportionally minimal to other militarized parts of Colchis, which does not exclude the exchange of very limited products between Apsilia and different coastal regions of Lazi especially from the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the practice of depositing coins began to get gradually abandoned in cemeteries of Apsilia. Perhaps the reason was the monetary policy of the year 350, which prohibited coin export with the aim of trade. On one hand, this disagrees with the concept of internal monetized trade from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Numismatic data does not show the significance of Roman currency in Lazica, therefore the conclusion is arguable indeed. On the other hand, the coin from Gurzuli which was dug in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, earns little attention at least on the external monetary trade. Hundreds of Stage I silver dirhams and some Stage II copper and bronze coins proves the synchronicity of time and their currency value. Their origin and distribution capacity may confirm the trade routes around Colchian coastal parts and Western Europe, from where they might have come. There are two other coins illustrating the monetary system, represented by a golden imitation of Lysimachus coins among the Gurzuli



hoard and another unknown material from the 1st century found at the Tsebelda fort. They might be supportive of the time when Apsilia became interesting for trade.

Later coins are exceptional finds. Four found in Shapka cemetery warrior graves consisted one silver siliqua of Theodosius II (408–450) minted in Constantinople; the rest are a golden and two silver coins of Justinian I (527–565). It shows that currency still played a certain role, perhaps in payment for military duties. Distributed imports of the time show commodity items that could be a reflection of exchange.

A later hoard from Gurzuli may suggest a similar purpose of coin distribution, since, except for occasional finds from fortified areas, the coin deposition disappears from view. Gurzuli hoard may be concerned with the subsidization of border tribes for strategic duty as well. This has even been proved textually. Procopius records about the subsidization that Svani and Alani received for blocking the passes, which is also a supportive source of information and one of the ways Roman coins could reach Apsilia.

## IX. 6 RECONSTRUCTION OF LOGISTIC

*Supply sources and ways.* The logistics of food, drink, weaponry, foreign equipment, dress related items and medicine (**Table** 104. 21) delivered to defensive parts are component of frontier economy, as it guides from Colchian/Lazian military sites to Mediterranean. Their categories and origin also comparable with similar finds from Constantinople and other places give perspectives for possible routes passed Anatolian communications, partially including the land roads (**Maps** 16 and 17). Their transportations may assign to legionaries stationed in Colchis and Armenia,<sup>1684</sup> while the difficult nature of Caucasian high passes, especially in winter time.<sup>1685</sup>

Gaza wine and Mediterranean oil and grain could be selected for land road transportation. Additional food of local market including crops, wine and other easy available products (meat and fish),<sup>1686</sup> might similarly ready to pass several local and regional roads. There is evidence of exported grain and fuel with storage jars<sup>1687</sup> in the Bosphorus Kingdom<sup>1688</sup> during the Lazian involvement in trade. Particular Colchian amphorae may assign to wine export as well. From textual narrative we know that Romans claimed about its quality of local wine in

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<sup>1684</sup> It is suggested that grain was transported *via* Trapezus and Zigara passes. This was a necessity during the Armenian campaign and launched by Corbulo. See: Wheller 1999:223.

<sup>1685</sup> There is a notion about that *XV Apollinaries* drew its food from the fertile vicinity of Nicopolis, not farther west than Satala and the Roman Colonia. Central Anatolia is considered to be the bread supplier for *XII Fulminata* in Melitene.

Archaeopolis. There are some metal items including particular weapon and dress fasteners may transported from Apsilia<sup>1689</sup> to other parts of Colchis.

***Delivery points.*** Import concentration provides evidence for two different delivery sites in Apsilia, between the Black Sea and Caucasian mountains. First is Shapka and second is Pusta/Apushta. Distribution context of imported and local wealth made clear that they are increases in numbers and categories in area of Shapka area. This is remarkable during 350-450 AD and involved lower hinterland probably until Tsebelda, where the last point of central Apsilia may be recognized. The high dynamic of delivered objects is linked with Black Sea trade. Fine wares categories (LRC and LRD wares), certain pottery assemblages, and hemispherical glass vessels of western production reflect more regular supplies of the Machara river valleys than upland Apsilia and limited within even 7 km distance of the nearest vicinities of Tsebelda. Therefore, it Shapka might function as supportive point in distribution of goods into the uplands of the Kodori River.

The second delivery site in Apushta may operate further NE towards Pal, on the right bank of the Kodori River, and NW towards Akhista, Apushta and Lar. But broader centers are difficult to recognize. Fact is that, import is selected and some objects distributed in southern areas are hidden in most upland sites.

### ***Transportation perspectives of traded objects***

The road structure, location of delivery points, and selected import distribution dictates the possible distributional ways. Transportation of fragile items might expect the river craft, but the rest could be imagined been moved through open woodlands and mountains. A short navigation might meaningful between the coastal sites and uplands of the Machara River, where its streams within 100 m directly approach Patskhiri and Shapka settlements.

Another transportation perspective is provided by the land routes, passing the KAR and some of the aligned arterial roads. The required dimension of KAR and two-way traffic possibilities over aligned road arteries produces perspectives for easy move only in lower area; This connects the KAR with Arterial Road 1 and 2. The AR 2, running through significant locations, crossed the burial hills of Patskhiri valley and connected two crossing

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<sup>1686</sup> The discovery of Atsanguar in upland Apsilia gives the perspectives for the availability of cattle.

<sup>1687</sup> There is also textually about how Apsilian's supplied grain to Missimia, the northern neighbor of Apsili. Justinians' army was dissatisfied with local supply by the Lazi, which was mainly based on millet diet, as Procopius records. This was the claims of the troops installed in Sarapana and Scanda forts (Proc.Goth. 8.13.15).

<sup>1688</sup> Lazica was actively engaged in merchandise with the Romans over the Pontus until 542 AD (Proc.). Commodities they exported were corn, salt, hides, and bartering skins and slaves.

<sup>1689</sup> Evidences of metal slags support this idea, but so far no workshop has been discovered.

points of this area. This line had the most variable communication character and traffic parameters. Communication radius increases the aligned tracks, highly attentive at the crossing points and along the 1.5 km connective isthmus with the main settlement of Shapka. Two-way traffic may be expecting the widest part in the Patskhiri valley. But the road that ran through inhabited areas would have expected stable transportation. The AR 3 of the Shapka area is less than 2 m width and perhaps designed only for commemorative purposes rather than the transportation of goods. Another alternative way to deliver goods takes AR 2 and horizontally in 4 km reach southwest of the Mramba valley, thereafter Megrelovka.<sup>1690</sup>

Much flexible section recognized between Merkheuli, the confluence of the Jampal and lower Kodori river. Much narrower and barred parts could be imagined in the Shapka-Apiancha section. However, the foodstuff from coastal areas might be proceeding along the lowest part, which is a direct land road of the Gurzuli-Shapka-Tsebelda section. Evidence of items shipped by sea in all parts of the Shapka vicinity is indicates well operated through arterial roads. This southern part of highway could guarantee a non-seasonal transportation. Here, all types of animal transport and access by boats could be imagined. Mass evidence of pottery fragments at the river streams, might conceptual support.

The highest parts of KAR show limited potential, because of steeper roads. Tsebelda, goods further destine two different directions. First towards Akhista which probably took the AR4 shows less intensity. This road crosses dry ravine and thereafter Kuabchara pass, might quite risky. The second direction that crossed higher parts of KAR from Tsebelda towards Apushta also offer a risky transportation, but much unsafe is the road along the tributaries (Schkha and Jampal) where the northwest arterial road (AR 5 or AR 6) might supply the Bat settlement. The river crossing further east at the Kelasuri river seems similarly unsuitable. This factor made difficult direct transportation through accessible road line from coastal area until the confluence of the Kodori River with the Jampal tributary. A 300 m difference in elevation and sharply curved narrow spaces towards Pal made it the most risky section. Decease of imports may verify transportation difficulties.

**TRANSPORT.** The nature of landscape dictates oxen and horses suitable for transportation of goods. Oxen were probably moved from coastal areas. A boat supply is also realistic for movements in central parts of the Machara river basin. Further delivery through the arterial tracks in higher regions, might require multiple transport involving oxen and horses.

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<sup>1690</sup> Voronov 1975:48.

## X. APSILIA - THE DYNAMIC FRONTIER ZONE

### *X. 1 PREREQUISITES FOR THE FRONTIER ZONE*

Geopolitical location and unique communication system produce particular charms of the area, which has brought global political interest to it. Linkages with the Caucasus Mountains, then the Caspian Sea to the north and the Black Sea and the Western world to the south, are the geopolitical priority and basis for any political manipulation. We have the complexity of evidence that has to weigh up in the eastern and northern frontier context. Because the formation of military troops in Apsilia within the years 230–299, 363–380, 421–422, 440, and the appearance of robust constructions in the years 542–450 is marked evidence connected with several internal and external processes. However, several points need to be analyzed step-by-step in approaching historical challenges responsible for Apsilian development. Moreover, before accessing the simultaneous development of matters, let us briefly examine the purpose of the earliest weapon-equipped military group in the area.

*EARLIEST STAGE.* The earliest small groups of warriors in the late second and early 3rd-century Apsilia give a dynamic impression. They are skillful spear-man units with extraordinary weapons, battle-axes, and short swords (**Table 91**), controlled the river Machara basin until the Tsebelda valley. Their chieftains may consider representatives of functional administrative authority, possibly ruled from the military coastal sides.<sup>1691</sup> This might appropriate the opportunities of shipping and corresponding navigable rivers, as Anonymous refers to the shipping perspectives of related ports. Nevertheless, nothing further is known about the immediate reason for patrolling the navigable river and processes hidden behind the evidence of coin hoard from the Gurzuli trove at the time. One should be noted that coastal Sebastopolis<sup>1692</sup> is weakened at this time, and the appearance of such mobilized units in Apsilia might reflect Pithius functional responses and necessity for sealing security. This somehow matches with new organizational formations of Roman limes and responsibilities of

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<sup>1691</sup> The warrior buried Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-82 was equipped with a bardäxe –type imported battle axe that has no local prototypes at the time. Voronov 1982:136. Pic. 7.

<sup>1692</sup> According to *Notitia Dignitatum*, Sebastopolis was patrolled by the ‘*Cohors prima Claudia equitabile*’, associated with the horsemen cohorts that was subordination by the *Dux* of Armenia. (Not.Dignit. XXXVIII).

Pithius<sup>1693</sup> in the security system of the Black Sea in the last chain of Pontic Limes. Matching contribution of imperial army *Ala Felix Theodosiana* and later the *Legio XV Apollinaris* stationed there (Fig. 57) and other coastal sites of Colchis,<sup>1694</sup> farther in Satala and Melitene a compulsory proves this complexity.

Legion name	Location	Standpoint	Installation
Legio XII Fulminata	Rhandea		Augustus
	Melitene		
	Quadi	Mesoptamia	Marcus Aurelius
	Albania	Armenia	Vespasian
Legio XV Apollinaris	Iberia	Colchis	Pithius
			Petra
Legio XV Apollinaris	Capua	Carnuntum	Caesar
	Aquileia	Moesia	
	Dacia	Illyricum	
	Pannonia	Zeugma	
	Satala	Mesopotamia	
	Ancyra	Trapezus	
	Armenia	Colchis	Pithius
		Petra	Marcus Aurelius

Fig. 55. For identification of Legions and their location and stationing.

A similar reason should continue the security policy in years 230-280, responded the mid-3rd-century crisis and raids over the Colchian harbor parts, when Pithius<sup>1695</sup> was demolished by Boranes/Scythians in year 257 (Zosimus. Zos. HN, 131).

<sup>1693</sup> A temporary fortification was built in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Lortkipanidze G.1991:43. And it is known from the rom *Notitia Dignitatum* that *Ala prima felix Theodosiana* was also placed in Pithius.

<sup>1694</sup> In Apsaros have been mentioned the auxiliary troops of Claudius.

<sup>1695</sup> For this aspects is also important the series of further invasions of roman territories, initiated by Ardeshir I, the king of Arsacid Iran in 230 years. This in fact lasted to the 384 AD.

*TANSITIONAL PERIOD (320-350 AD).* During the years 320-350 is a noticeably slow change but imported wealth-producing interregional nature perhaps is an indication of activated trade over the Black Sea littoral. We do not know what kind of danger it brought, but a new type of spearman group in Shapka and Tsebelda should guarantee the secure delivery of traded goods (**Table 92**).<sup>1696</sup> They show missile shooters in the Tsebelda area. Some are best supplied with shields and short swords comparable to Hatra and Malaešty. The local spearmen additionally carry the battle-ax. Theoretically is possible that such warriors controlled not only the navigation, but the land road traffic in limited territories, including Apiancha, uplands of the river Machara and Tsebelda.<sup>1697</sup> This evidence may lead the trade perspectives in a close regional context.

*FURTHER STAGE (380-450 AD).* More complex activities began during the years 350–400, when we accessed the first evidence of simultaneous matters, advancing the frontier line. The nature of distributed weapons and soldiers emphasizes the formation of war tactics demonstrated in their composition. Functionally distinct groups have reinforced many places. Evidence of well-mobilized workforce from the local warriors to recruited soldiers<sup>1698</sup> points to an organization in three functional groups. They were typical spearman units of much-skilled field soldiers combined with little missile groups and few commando horsemen (see related subchapter below). Their chieftains (**Table 83. C**) might responsible for managing this coalition over the commercial routes and the most active road arteries in the area of the Machara river in the south near the Black Sea. Supplies are becoming stronger. New battle tactics are insured by standardizing weapons of international character, including Vimose-, Illerup and Ilkjar-type swords, equally seen in frontier lines and usually ascribed to German recruitments. Their body protection is supported by rounded or oval shape shields with variously fitted bosses – *Csongrád/ Zieling L, Zieling K1, Vermand/Zieling, Dobrozień/ Zieling* and *Malaešty* types (**Table 86**).<sup>1699</sup> They show increased imperial impact on the area.

Evidence of imported wealth, their dimension, and capacity indicates the trade impact beyond the capability of Apsilian management. A similar dynamic assumed the coastal military sites Pithius and Petra/Tsikhisdziri, closely related to the Black Sea littoral. That is

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<sup>1696</sup> This may have been the result of the *Nisibis Peace*, which refreshed Roman control over southern Anatolia, as well as new parts of the Tigris frontier, which was controlled the by new legions of the Armeniaca I and II. Kuhoff 2001:164, 458.

<sup>1697</sup> Tsebelda grave 1-73. Voronov 1982:143. Pic.14.

<sup>1698</sup> Warriors buried in the Mahajirov hill and Tsebelda cemeteries. See Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao, Loginov 1990:26. Pic.19.1, 5; Voronov 1982:143. Pic.1-14. Also see the warrior grave in Tsebelda, distinguished by unusual practices and may represent a German *foederati* (?). Voronov 1982:130-140. Pic.1-24.

<sup>1699</sup> These similarities may indicative of the Gothic influence on the Balkan military *fabrics* after the 378 AD and on Illyria in 394 AD. Moreover, in the eastern empire, military bases were forced on barbaric *foederati*.

why short breakages of Pithius trade and diversity in import types might signal the difficulties in the northern commerce of the Pithius line in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. They are implications of changes in trade direction from the northern to the southern commercial line, which might have political significance. However, from historical perspectives, all this looks to be connected with eventful circumstances over the Black Sea and Caucasia. Consequences of two Treaties 363 AD and 380 AD lead a formal Armenia<sup>1700</sup> and thoughtful results for Iberia bred an uncomfortable situation for the strategic mountainous areas of Colchis, changing the political climate there.<sup>1701</sup> More close connection is new strategic situations in the Black Sea littoral<sup>1702</sup> brought up the matter of Hun attacks and directly result on Pithius in the year 380. This impact is visible in special military units of the nearest harbors Pithius and navigable areas, influential for the military mobilization of Apsilia.<sup>1703</sup>

*LATER STAGE (450-500 AD)*. Soon after that, in 387-395 AD, they show the emergence of security strength in various weapon types, *foederati* (**Table 94**), and local manpower (**Table 80**; **Table 81. A, C**). Since Apsilia and Pithius demonstrate similar groups of *ballistarii* (**Table 81. B**) and *sagittarii* (**Table 97**), it may be related to the general picture of the new order in Lazica<sup>1704</sup> during Theodosius' (379–395 AD) reign.<sup>1705</sup> Because it displays the similar system of supplies, strategies, and tactics observed in 370-450 AD, it could reflect new perspectives on protecting the internationality active road (stretching between the BlackSea and the Caspian Sea).

This may bridge the reasons to make the appearance of Apsilia in *Tabula Peutingeriana*, illustrating all the significant trade roads of the Roman Empire.<sup>1706</sup> Conceptual relevance is seen like distributed imports. But it is also a bit like political reconstruction of

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<sup>1700</sup> The fact that the Persians recaptured the five southern principalities of Armenia was the result of a Treaty of 299 AD.

<sup>1701</sup> The years 353–359 characterizes by a rather critical global situation. On the eastern frontier, several border towns and fortresses experienced the severity of a new power that sporadically lasted until 358 AD. This puzzled both empires. Nomadic invasions on the eastern frontier until 359 AD give troubles to Shapur II and Constantius II, in a similar circumstance, repel the Frankish (lower Rhine) and Alemannic (upper Rhine) attacks across the Rhine during 354–357 AD, until suing for peace.

<sup>1702</sup> The disordered condition was caused by the victory of Goths' in Adrianopolis and their access to the Balkan imperial *military fabrica*. There was another factor, such as the Romans campaign against the Goths and Alemanni in the north-western Balkan-Pannonia during 379–383 AD, which lasted 384–386 AD (but, this time against the Alemanni and Sarmatians. In addition, in 380 AD, the Romans recognized the Thervingi as Roman federates.

<sup>1703</sup> Here must be considered the Huns attacks on the Black se coast towards the end of this century and also, the Gothic plunder little later (they overthrew the Bosphorus kingdom around 370 AD), which also affected the Pithius. See also Lortkipanidze O. 1995:308,310.

<sup>1704</sup> The references of *Notitia Dignitatum* about the *Ala prima Felix Theodoiana* stationed in Pithius (ND.Or. XXXVIII.18.19.20) see also in: Speidel 2007:74.

<sup>1705</sup> New reorganization involved the withdrawal of frontier troops from the places territories of Colchis and Armenia.

<sup>1706</sup> Baghaturia 2006:76.

crisis across the Caucasia.<sup>1707</sup> That increases interest in a new image of fearful warriors appears in a large amount of Nydam swords, nomad arrowheads, and bodkin-headed missiles, darts, and lances during the years 400–450 (**Table 82. B**). They have clearly defined task groups well-trained in different tactics and battle strategies to respond to hostages or raids in highly communicative parts. A special commando of horseman groups suggests that there was a ‘call’ for warriors. It does not exclude that Roman baths inside the early Byzantine Tzibile fort may point to certain training camps in place.

Moreover, the Gurzuli watchtower in the south indicates a new military reality predicting the conflict structure. The full use of the northern areas Akhista, Apushta, Bat, and Lar (at the Kelasuri river) valleys is the emergence of increased control initiated by trade activities. The trade impact is evidential, but another connection is a new strategic situation in Lazica, which lines up with the beginning of Lazian engagement in constant conflicts between Romans and Persians that called imperial borders into question. Militaries followed the northern defense of Apsilia precisely indicate the same direction towards Missimia influenced by Persia.

*EARLY BYZANTINE STAGE (450-500 AD)*. Radical changes observed during the years 450–500 may indicate certain aspects of borderline security. A strengthened policy feels in tactics, weaponry, supply sources, food, and related facilities. The level of militarization looks quite extreme. Warriors are preventing remained inhabitants of upland parts from going into disorder. Guarding points are enlarged with specific power structures probably to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which gave a different look. These sites pursued soldiers of imperial mobility, ready to operate broad military acts. The Shapka area produces a picture of well-equipped local allies, defining several organized security groups. Evidence of food logistics reflects the participation of international donors’ well-supplied imperial borders with wine from Syria and the Black Sea littoral. Imported goods are very and huge, which proves that the central road of Apsilia connected with the Black Sea was similarly profitable as before.<sup>1708</sup>

There is no direct textual information for a reason for abandonment in most northern parts of Apsilia (only Lar and Apushta remain evidence of scarce settlers). However, the political circumstances of vicinity areas brought up the matter of two broad influential events. First might the consequences of the byzantine-Lazian wars, after declaring independence by the Lazian king Gubazes I (456–466) in 456 AD. Second is the beginning of negotiations over Missimia went under Persian support, which affected the security of Apsilian land. While

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<sup>1707</sup> The partition of Armenia (‘Roman’ and ‘Persian Armenia’) in 387, as well as the movement of Roman troops to western Armenia during 390–394 AD, certainly filed to provide political stabilization in Lazica, and especially in its mountain parts. See: Idem 1992:42; Wheeler 1999:215; Greatrex/Lieu 2002:28. Heswen 1978-1979:116.

<sup>1708</sup> There was also other route through Missimia, which followed the Enguri river valleys and through central Lazica could reach other coastal defensive structures.



Missimians controlled the uplands of the main arteries towards the Qlukhori passes and related Kuban-Kislovodsk area has been based on Alan elites, which produce danger also from Persian side supporting the raids of the Huns and Alans. The rest of the eastern Black Sea littoral from Krasnodar to northwest Lazica could be a subject of Byzantine troops.<sup>1709</sup> Therefore, both processes are linked with local control over the maintenance of the borderline frontiers in Lazian mountaineer parts, wherein the strategic interests of Lazi and Byzantium should match.

*LATEST STAGE (500-550 AD)*. Heavily fortified Apsilia provided an excellent platform for borderline security during the 500–550 AD. Forts showed precise and exact calculated plans, were built over the significant active roads, and precisely connected with an expansive view (**Table 55**). Two of them connected with warfare are Apushta<sup>1710</sup> at the border with Missimia and Lar with Abasgia (**Table 83. B**). Settlements of both areas and Bat seem to have been evacuated but remain some graves of powerful generals. Warriors are structurally still serious power, including foot and horse soldiers, archery, and artillery, but remarkable is their decrease. This possibly reflects a direct control of Lazi and coordination of troops under his decision. We have direct evidence for Terdetes.

There are missile weapons, but most nomadic. Specific Persian weaponry was shortly overviewed in Tsebelda (**Table 83. A**).<sup>1711</sup> This could indicate allied soldiers connected with two different periods and having to do with the composition of coordinated units. First may connect with Lazian–Persian alliance in 542–547 AD, which led to increasing of Persian impact on coastal strategic and economic points. The second is 548–549 AD, when the King of Lazica was supported by heterogeneous allies of Byzantines, where the Alans and Huns sought their fortune in campaigns against the locals (**Tables 96; 98. B**).<sup>1712</sup>

Populations that left their villages and even in central Apsilia are well recognizable in the occasional appearance of graves and abandoned cemeteries. The food still comes from foreign sources seen in huge, imported transit pottery, highly organized for guarding troops. Imported goods are limited in categories and types, similar to other frontier sites. All they are pieces of evidence of aggressive politics and textually hidden details.

*LATEST STAGE (550-600 AD)*. Dramatic changes show the years 550–600. Apushta, Bat, and Lar still form the boundaries between Apsilia and the Missimians. But we can see

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<sup>1709</sup> Adams 2010:94.

<sup>1710</sup> This is also confirmed by the weapon containing graves 6, 10, 15, 20. See in: Voronov 1982.

<sup>1711</sup> Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Voronov, Jushin 1982. Pic.19.1.

<sup>1712</sup> See a discussion of Tsebelda warrior characterized by deformation of skull in corresponding subchapter VI.1.1.1.4.

coalition forces only in central parts Tsebelda and Shapka (**Table 81. D**), giving platform for difficult sieges. Churches in both forts could offer urgent help to injured soldiers, seen in access to the same medical services used in Constantinople (**Table 104. 21**). Little groups of artillery and archery concentrated in the Shapka consider offensive power (**Table 99**). Warriors are decreased in the northern parts, where the complete absence of graves may suggest the abandonment. Wars and demolitions give the population reasons to leave their homes and flee to the surrounding regions, as the area was abandoned for a long time.

This matches with textually known regional conflicts between Lazi and Missimia. We know that Byzantine troops were attested here around the year 554 or 555 to maintain control over Missimia.<sup>1713</sup> Nebedes attacks at fort Tzibulum occurred in year 550. It also corresponds the time when all routes over the Caucasus were monopolized by Persia during 558–622 AD when Transcaucasia becomes the most important factor for diplomatic dealings. We see diplomatic services of Byzantine envoys (Sarodes) passed through Apsilia in 568 AD, while transporting silk. This evidences assured the geo-political abilities of Apsilian land. Archaeological picture of further years is hidden, but all this gives understanding why and how this area could have been developed.

## **X. 2 MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE**

### ***X. 2. 1 Significance and function of defensive structures***

If we analyze the location, design, and applied strategies of Apsilian forts, we approach the identification of their function (**Table 55**). It recognizes a mutual defensive system examining all the exit alternatives that the land offered. The northward direction is prioritized in scheduling the fixing responsibilities of their tasks against the hostile environment. Their common character is noticeable. They are built along the roads, carefully constructed on purposeful strategic points, considered with places of military pressure and capacity, with visualization based structural plan. They are part of a conceptual design and carefully

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<sup>1713</sup> This was also connected with the revenge of the Byzantine officer Soterichus in the land of the Missimian. We should recall the results of a story related to a Persian officer, who fell in love with the wife of local noblemen, This causes sieges in Tsebelda fort.

maintained defensive system. Their building material and technique traditionally assigning to imperial knowledge, and strategic calculations allows identifying a system.

All are utilized in a wide range of applications to ensure safe operating conditions, in which design and parameters are appropriate for different operational tasks:

- ***The comparatively smaller ones, perhaps for guarding the land roads, are:*** Gerzeul (500 m<sup>2</sup>) nearest to the Black Sea, and Lar (600 m<sup>2</sup>) in the far northwest at the river Kelasuri.
- ***The medium-sized forts, perhaps for emergency maintenance, are:*** to the north—Akhista (5 ha), Pal (4.7 ha), and Bat (1.2 ha).—and the medium-sized Apushta/Pushta (8 ha), are perhaps for emergency maintenance.
- ***The bigger forts, able to accommodate offensive military power, are:*** Shapka (15 ha) and Tzibile (11 ha).

They introduce defensive and offensive strategies, the significance of which is based on the strategic value of fortified areas that maximizes the effectiveness of precise control of vicinity. Correspondingly, forts show various strategic methods associated with their functional character. The first responsibility is visual communication, made by projecting towers corresponding to the locational height of the area. This draws eye contact in that direction. Most of the southern Shapka fort in central Apsilia positioned by the Machara river is visually communicated to forts of Tzibile to the northwest and Akhista to the northeast. Both Tzibile and Akhista are located in the middle of the Kodori river. Similarly, they can be well seen from Tzibile fort, but it has a wider view of the northwestern forts, the nearest being Bat at the Kodori river and farther Lar at the Kelasuri river. Besides, the larger forts Shapka, Tzibile, and Apushta/Pusta arranged in a line along the *Key Apsilian Road (KAR)* are built in the parts where the tactical support was necessary because of difficulties in the communicative part. All three have the most forward position at the river bank. The rest—Akhista, Bat, Pal, and Lar—are positioned to monitor the northwestern uplands of the Kodori river near the northern routes that intersect the area, which necessitated military support. Forts had adequate distance (4–7 km) from the lookout made by the highest towers in Tzibile and Akhista. All of them were blocking all possible movements through Apsilia, assigning their individual task which is diffused and ruled by location.

The main sites responsible for the security of the might be Shapka (15 ha), Tsebelda (11 ha), and Akhista (5 ha). They are positioned on the most naturally protected hills among the routes. Some watch posts to the south, such as Gurzuli, seem to be controlling navigable

ivers. It is an integrated system of defensive complexity (decreasing risk over Apsilian exits), traded material, and market demand and during their function.

***Gerzeul/Ghurzuli watch tower.*** First to mention is the Gerzeul watchtower, the significant nearest secured part by the Black Sea, at the left side of the river Machara (**Table 56**). This watchtower (3.9 x 3 m) has an eye view of Patskhiri valley to the northwest, Tzibile to the northeast and Anacopia to the southern vicinity,<sup>1714</sup> granting it responsibilities best identified by the related road that ran from the tower to the middle of the Gurzuli gorge. This track runs steeply down and arrives at the Tsvafikrika valley<sup>1715</sup> within 20 minutes. Here it opens two different perspectives to reach central Apsilia at the river Kodori. First is an ancient track that runs downwards to the valley and into the forest, thereafter crossing the river stream. It approaches the Kodori river near the pass of Dukahan valley, where it again heads downwards.<sup>1716</sup>

The second is an immediate road constructed on the steep cliff of the Apiancha and later associated with the name of general Heiman. This section is linked with the low part of the *Key Apsilian Road* that stretches between the Black Sea and the northern Caucasus Mountains (**Table 56. C, D**). It opens other perspectives to the west-aligned Patskhiri valley. Patskhiri command two major crossing points at the Machara river. *Arterial Road 2 (AR) 2* connects it with the Olginskoe valley and the Chizhoush mountain, where through the small pass one arrives at areas of the Kelasuri river. This valley was covered by routes connecting Abasgia to the deep mountains at the Kodori river. Examining alternative roads, movement can proceed through crossing points and *Wheel Road 1* of central Apsilia. Beyond them, there is another route in the south, which runs directly from Lazi to Anacopia and thereafter to Apsilia (further to the east, this line is connected to the Lazian hinterlands towards the Surami pass of East Georgia). The peculiarity of this site influenced the protective requirement of the Gerzeul tower, which assumed the responsibility of monitoring them to decrease related risk starting from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. However, the Gurzuli watch post guarded Abasgian and Lazian land roads integrated near the Black Sea and movements directed from the principal crossing points of the upper Machara river. The need to fortify this tower seems to appear towards the 7<sup>th</sup> century, as related early Byzantine structures are dated 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1717</sup>

The biggest in terms of volume is the southernmost fortification of Shapka in central Apsilia, the reason possibly being the tasks evaluated at its geographic location (**Table 58**).

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<sup>1714</sup> Voronov 1980:37.

<sup>1715</sup> Medieval pottery found on the pyramidal hill of the Tsvakrika valley, fill archaeological gap of this section. See in: Voronov 1980:39.

<sup>1716</sup> Voronov 1980:40.

<sup>1717</sup> Voronov 1980:42.

Strategically located on a steep hill about 1 km north of the *Key Apsilian Road*, it overlooks the river streams of Machara and its wider vicinity (**Table 54. A, C-2**). Within this environment, it stands 7350 m southwest of the Tzibulum fort. It has an excellent view of the Machara river into the Black Sea and has further visual contact of the north as well: 18 km to the northeast, Tzibile fort can be visually well seen; 15 km to the northwest, the Akhista fort, and in the same distance the other northernmost defense related to the river stream of Jampal.<sup>1718</sup>

Positional significance determined the most communicative area where it stands. On one hand, the fort is accessible by water transport via the unnamed stream of Machara and the river Tsivi. On the other hand, three different ways are traveled nearby. First is the KAR, an international way that ran south between the Black Sea and the Caucasus Mountains. Second is the internal AR 2 that links with the low part of the KAR and leads east through the Patskhiri valley. This section also matches the local *Route 1* towards Abasgia (see Chapter IV for details). Third, is the internal AR 1 that runs from the south and integrates all southern connections between the coastal Merkheuli and the Gurzuli watch tower. In the complex system of its physical environment, numerous operational tasks must be performed.

The primary factor might be trade activities and movements over the navigable parts and the much intensively related land roads. The most important traffic seems to be Patskhiri valley, involving two crossing points, one *Wheel Road 1*, and several arterial roads of local significance (**Maps 12**). Therefore, the soldiers of Shapka fort had the best opportunities to monitor the movements of people and the transportation of material and food sources over those parts. Thus, it controlled the vital water sources, guarded a key land road in the lower section between the Apiancha and Patskhiri valley, and supported the neighboring defense to the south and northeast. It could easily block the KAR and all other approaches to the coastal site. Similarly, it could guarantee movements in all seasons towards the Black Sea.

The fort Tzibile is a central bastion of Apsilia that stands at the middle part of the river Kodori, 500 m away from the *Key Apsilian Road* (**Table 60**). The road connected it to the Pal fort located 7 km north on the same road line and to the Akhista fort 4 km northeast (**Table 54. A, C-3**). Through its 16 m tower, it had visual contact with Shapka to its south and Akhista to its northwest, and was able to support both. All of this explains its strategic function.

The road environment that runs or crosses nearby involves the next *Wheel Road 2*, which consists of AR 3, AR 4, and KAR (**Table 63. D**). It was the part of internationally active

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<sup>1718</sup> Voronov, Bgazhba 1985:29; Voronov 1981-1982 (AO).

*Route 1* between the Black Sea and Missimia, in the middle part of the Kodori river, where the danger of northern threats might always be relevant. Nearby it meets the second *Route 2* directed from central Lazica in the east, which has a direct way through the Patskhiri valley. Therefore, Tzibile fort had the potential for detailed visual inspection over those roads along the 7 km part of the middle and upper Apsilia. It could also have operated under the given conditions to reduce conflicts and support the southern and northern defensive structures through military forces. It could block Lazian and Abasgian approaches as well. While functionally it has been involved in north-western subline of Egrisi ridge defensive system, which stretched for 100 kilometers. It was responsible for averting threads not only from North Caucasia (protection from the nomadic tribes), but locking the roads crossing the river Enguri valley.<sup>1719</sup>

Akhista fort appears to have observed the safety condition over the AR 3 that gave access to the Azanta valley (**Table 63**). The strategic ability of this part becomes a point of particular military interest, primarily because it could block the northwest areas easily reachable by Abasgians.

Six kilometers away from Tzibile fort appear the northeastern defense of Pal/Pali (**Table 66**).<sup>1720</sup> It is positioned near the upper section of the KAR, which is the last significant point of the Apsilian borderline part. This also includes an adjacent place of two routes, directed from two different north Caucasian passes: Marukhi in the northeast and Qlukhori in the northwest (**Table 54. C-5**). Therefore, it could monitor movement over the crossroads at the river Jampal with the related Kodori river stream (10–15 m wide and 60 m deep) areas and direct approaches from the north. This also guaranteed the movements towards Abasgia in the west and vice versa.

The northwesternmost fort Lar stood on the last part of the Azanta valley, upland the Kelasuri river near its left stream Jimele (**Table 67**). This fort is somehow positioned independently from all strongpoints, which gives it the sense of a secondary military zone, perhaps against nomadic raids. But on a strategic level, it could be useful against the local tribal hostility in the context of the neighboring Abasgians (**Table 54. A, C -8; Table 55**). It has an eye view of Akhista fort in the southwest and Bat fort in the northeast. Functionally, it might be responsible for movements over the road heading to the Azanta valley: the AR 4 that ran through Bat fort.

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<sup>1719</sup> See also: Murgulia N. 2012: 111-113.

<sup>1720</sup> Voronov 1969:64.

The rest of the two hillforts, Bat (**Table 64**) and Apushta (**Table 65**), were responsible for the AR 4 striking the main highway KAR at the borderline Svaneti (**Table 55**). As for the Pusta fort, I would not expel its dual purpose after acknowledging this term mentioned in narratives and corresponding historical data. The name ‘Pusta’ refers to martial art warriors obligated to guard the sanctuary,<sup>1721</sup> and the Apocryphal was imprisoned in this citadel raises the questions Due to the historical evidence, Svaneti was under the influence of Sassanid Iran, and could it be an indication that Pusta fort in Apsilia carried the particular contemplation, which is why warriors protected the temple? However, they are places for the concentration of different warriors or military troops, coming to defend the area or being well paid for defense. They show new supplementary military or financial sources that are able and ready for long-lasting war. Whole arsenals of dangerous weapons predict a difficult war. This appears in new supplementary sources.

### *X. 2. 2 Coordination of military forces*

Places for the coordination of military forces consider the dynamic of hostile actions, which necessitate adequate strategies. Soldier graves from burial hills and some from fortified areas may patrol units that we can only extrapolate from the geographic location of warrior graves, corresponding allocation of tasks and from their weapon combination. From 170–270 AD, the coordination place of little spearman units seem to have been employed for river navigation and most of the traffic in nearby areas. This matches the small security operational responsibilities over the Black Sea harbors and related navigable river sources. Spearman commando groups organized in three parts of Apsilia at that time. The group of lightly equipped local warriors probably guarded the uplands of Machara river and may account for the security of transportation through the river and related traffic areas. Here, AR 2 and AR 3 ran through the Mahajirov, Verin, and Panikin hills of the Shapka region,<sup>1722</sup> but the second spearman commando units that possibly coordinated at the middle of Kodori river in Tsebelda were better skilled in mountain fighting (geographically appropriate).

The coordination mechanisms of the years 320–370 emphasize enlarged protective measures, associable to the functioning of *Wheel Road 1* in central Apsilia. But several purely mobile local spearmen also began to patrol the upland areas of Lar at the Kelasuri river and

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<sup>1721</sup> Giorgobiani A, Shalikhshvili G. 2020:161-167.

<sup>1722</sup> The spearman from Mahajirov grave 5 seems to have the experience of an arrow shooting. Voronov, Bgazhba, Shenkao. Loginov 1990:27. Pic.21.1-8.

Pshou at the Kodori river, perhaps to avoid the conflicts and raids (this surmises the existence of AR 4.<sup>1723</sup> Mixed spearman groups continued to maintain control in Shapka (Panikin hill area) and stayed in Tsebelda, but another functional coalition of a local military community could also be seen a bit to the south. Small offensive units equipped with blunt spares are probably based in the Akhacharkhu area. Sword-equipped individual warriors together with lightly equipped spearmen appeared in the Apiancha valley and Panikin hill area. This road line gives access to the local routes either to the northward neighborhood (see *Route 3*) or the Lazian hinterland (see *Route 2*).

Protective systems re-activated in the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries strongly focused on Shapka and Tsebelda and dispersed over new sites of northern Apsilia, such as Bat in the Azanta valley of the river Kodori and Akhista at the exit of Azanta. Both show how deeply they were coordinated. Military troops are set almost everywhere, but their capacity and their functional tasks perhaps depended on the nature of traffic and communication difficulties. Shapka (**Table 100**), for example, was set by missile forces and prominent riders and mobile spear soldiers, showing different combat situations and the cooperation of the most effective troops (probably of around 40 men).<sup>1724</sup> Areas of village Mramba, Panikin hill, and Akhatsarakhu were heavily powered by archers and arrow fires towards the southern Apiancha. Shield-equipped allies from Mramba were trained in mountain fighting, but some mobile sword units were perfectly prepared for open battle tactics. Little local spearman units (about 15 men) who used standard supply suspended slashing and blunt weapons still protected narrow valleys at Akhacharkhu.<sup>1725</sup> Verin hill illustrates the coordination of two distinctive units of mountain fighters and those with long *spathae* skilled in close combat fighting.<sup>1726</sup> Most of the simply equipped local spearmen could be found in the Abramov hill area. They held the responsibility for safe movements through Arterial Roads 2 and 3, as well as the lower parts of the *Key Apsilian Road* and probably the public places of Shapka area.

In Tsebelda, the mobilization of the units of well-armed and shielded defenders might be caused by location, giving easy approaches to both suspended *Wheel Roads* (**Table 101**).<sup>1727</sup> Small missile groups of arrow-firers and individual lancers made Tsebelda the most dangerous place at the Kodori river.<sup>1728</sup> *Arterial Road 4* and the lower part connecting

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<sup>1723</sup> Lar grave 5 and Apushta cremation grave 34. Voronov 1982:34, 64-66. Pic. 15. 1-11. Pic.29:7-12; 31. Pic. 17-31.

<sup>1724</sup> Their graves are found in the cemeteries of Verin, Abramov, Mahajirov and Panikin hills.

<sup>1725</sup> Military graves are also evidenced in Akhatsarkhu cemetery. Shamba 1970.

<sup>1726</sup> A similarly trained warrior is buried in Shaumianovka as well. See Gunba 1978.

<sup>1727</sup> Tsebelda cemetery inhumation graves 1-24 and 76. See: Voronov. Shenkao 1982. Pic.10; Pic.11.13-29.

<sup>1728</sup> The warrior buried in Tsebelda inhumation grave 2-3 was equipped with tonged bodkin headed arrow heads. Another soldier buried in grave 1-50 occur the lance. See: Voronov. Shenkao 1982. Pic.16.11-14; Pic.20



Apiancha with Tsebelda also puts into consideration the patrolling experiences of Tsebelda soldiers. In fact, both forces of Shapka and Tsebelda obtained a strategic aim in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, being able to provide principal support with fire forces. This could be a fragment of the hidden story linked with the distinctive operational security which requested defensive-offensive powers and corresponding tactical tasks.

Few subordinated shielded soldiers of the same operational group moved to northern Apsilia in Apushta and Lar to monitor Arterial Road 4, which overlaps with the Azanta valley,<sup>1729</sup> but the Azanta sector has been additionally controlled by local spearman allies incorporating purely equipped lancers.<sup>1730</sup> In fact, Lar was the final protected site of upland Apsilia at the river Kelasuri (**Tables** 67; 83. B). Some jeweling men were allocated in Bat.<sup>1731</sup>

They all indicate responsibility for the same security system regarding the *Key Apsilian Road*, which obviously required preventive mechanisms of corresponding arterial or wheel roads. But we don't know if there was any danger from the areal population as well. Large-scale early Byzantine hill forts provide little information about the entered forces, but directly point to their location. Coordination models emphasize defensive reforms in patrolling the border sites that were carried by mixed units. Tactical support of defensive complexes averted the mass attacks on Apsilian villages when met with political targets, which entailed the militarily strengthening the area and the blocking of all exit parts. Cooperation of power sources were still based on allied strategies. Consideration of fire forces followed the same late Roman criteria. Some guarding the watchtowers like Gerzeul might be extended by a maximum of 10 soldiers. Similarly, small-scale upland forts were occupied by spearman patrollers, but in case of war or major interventions, they might be supported by qualified legionary soldiers from other sites.

Legionary armored forces were employed in the large-scale forts of Tsebelda and Shapka. In Tzibile fort, artillery crafts were even constructed. Specialized small missile units were assisted with ballista (*ballistarii*) groups. Their proficiency in stone-projecting ballista and catapulting pyramidal pointed arrowheads guaranteed effective warfare.<sup>1732</sup> Armed frontier troops engaged in Tzibile fort might be members of legionary forces stationed in the nearest coastal fortification or far in the hinterlands. Arrow crafts that are considerably concentrated

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<sup>1729</sup> Lar grave 12. Voronov. 1982:34 . Pic.14. 36-40; 16.2-9.

<sup>1730</sup> Apushta cemetery grave 27. See: Voronov 1982:62. Pic.29.1-2

<sup>1731</sup> The warriors equipped with lance are evidenced in the inhumation grave 4 and several destructed graves. Voronov 1982:13, 42,44. Pic. 17,10-15; Pic. 18. 43-45; Pic. 25.30-41; Distinguishes a soldier equipped with a Pilum equipped in Apushta cemetery grave 12. See: Voronov. 1982:33 . Pic.29.1-4.

<sup>1732</sup> Catapult and 8 pieces of massive catapult cobblestones or core were evidenced in tower 2 of Tsebelda fort. See also: Gunba 1983:30.

in Shapka may be received by the fort as well. Heavy infantry spearmen defended three other forts of Apsilia in Akhista, Apushta (Azanta valley), and Pal (Jampal and Jimele stream), providing adequate military services.

A number of spearman warriors who were qualified in close combat fighting defended areas beyond the fortification. This could be a tactical decision for the battle outside the forts. Most of the fortified parts were supplied by mixed groups prepared for road fighting. They might cooperate with the imperial army in emergency cases.<sup>1733</sup> Such alternative forces of heavily armed intensive archery in the Shapka area may be indicative of tactical tasks for an effective protection of arterial lines.<sup>1734</sup> The security of the Akhacharkhu area continually operated with the same battle maneuver involving soldiers with standard blunt weapons.

Distinct offensive details corresponding to the Tzibile fort area are reflected in attackers and defenders. Horse skeletons with richly gilded harnesses of Arabian origin are found in the northern entrance passage of Tzibile fort. This provides information about Arabian expeditionary military power and is appropriate for siege warfare.<sup>1735</sup> In addition, sieges in mobile Tower 2 show heavily fired layers. Missile fire in other parts remains in Building N1 as well. This period of political crises and invasions dramatically affected almost all aspects of population life.

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<sup>1733</sup> The presence of a military units using fire, indicates a warrior from Atara Armjanskaja grave 1, who was equipped with fire blast stones. See: Gunba. 1978:52. Tabl.XL.

<sup>1734</sup> The fact that, the Cross-bow men faced a different task is well seen in the armaments of the warrior graves in Panikin (Abgidzrakhu) and Tserkvoni hill cemeteries.

<sup>1735</sup> Voronov 1977:23. It is also noteworthy that 106 Arabian coins were evidenced in the tower 1 of Tsebelda fortress. Bgazhba 1998.

## CONCLUSION

In my research, I tried to find a different way to understand the society of tribal land, their material culture, and challenges they responded to in the roman and early byzantine periods. All three key points of my research I will place together to summarize the results and, through a few different possibilities, answer my questions.

1. The first point I want to address is Apsilian identity with cremation graves. In my initial research, I presented an argument against this view by using three grave models of Olginskoe cemetery; I think I uncovered some evidence of three different cognitive groups responding to their mental environment while considering different burial practices. The grave *Model 1* is characteristic of the central Colchian community, while based on structural and funeral principles seen in examples of Hellenistic Chkhorotsku, which is seemingly conclusive and explores a high enough cognitive process. The most pressing point of this model origin appears in other central Colchis comparisons is the chronology, while central Colchian comparisons are several centuries older than the date samples from Apsilia. From this point, it seems to be a practice dying off in the late roman time.

On the other hand, it is possibly a specific indication of something changing in Apsilia in 350 AD; because both individuals of grave *Model 1* are lived in an area when so-called 'Tsebeldian culture' was forming in the central part. But they collect the data on distinct cognitive images, which are a rare case in fact, and include ten individuals in Apsilia. There is evidence of cenotaph with the same grave structures expect individuals of the same community to be moved probably during the 320-350 AD. The places of their burry are closer to learn the environment they fit into the larger society of Apsilia. These points give space to explore alternative interpretations about small-scale regional movements into Apsilia when trade activities show speed.

Another sort of connection I think links the grave *Model 2* are different ways of being Colchian, which gives a unitary sense of being local. All of the points we saw in the *Variant 1* are similar to the ancestry well traced several parts of upland Apsilia from 300 AD, in which Olginskoe settlers were identified as later generations. This provides new information about a specific group of community lived here in 300-450 AD. Another type (*Variant 2*),

which continues the ancestral traditions and incorporates the rules of some areas of Colchis, is presented in the second variant and gives an idea of the regional groups.

In grave *Model 3*, the point is more personal dimensions, replacing the sense of identity by contrasting ‘self-representation’. It shows a couple of objects and related compositional principles that rise as habits and conceptualized in the Roman period. This is a way represents authority associated with specific military units that have been used for a long time. We should not forget that similar changes are observed at the same rate as in neighboring regions and on a larger scale.

They show much more important points through the local identity. We know that all cremation graves in Apsilia do not mean ‘Apsilian’ or even one tribal community. Each case provides individual explanations for their geographic origin and indications for areal and non-areal practices. They are chronologically definable grave structures and meaningful categories, verifying the synchronic existence of minor communities and regional movements into the area. They are points that led to some predictable answers to my questions. And I believe that all three grave models better fit with understandings to minor communities used cremation practice in Apsilia.

2. In my practical approach to single artifacts, we saw that Olginskoe society is similar to the rest communities of Apsilia and had visual knowledge of objects from the distant world (**Fig. 5**). We don’t get all these specifics and types of objects in Apsilian material culture at once, but periodically in the late 2<sup>nd</sup>, early-3<sup>rd</sup> and late 4<sup>th</sup> centuries. I have discussed the Europe-specific trails of flared rim jugs and equally shared basic forms, easily recognizable across the roman peripheries at least as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. That was first discovered in the warrior’s grave of Tsebelda in late 2<sup>nd</sup> century, which I have linked to the foreigner grave.<sup>1736</sup> Also, a new specificity observed in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century decorative tradition indicates the mainline of roman fashion and points out that performers have seen circular decorative artifacts since they produced similar specimens of Pannonian, Cologne, Neuburg and etc.

That also changed in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, and I discussed identified examples of animal depictions pointing towards Europe, but potentially from the Elbe-Weser area. Comparisons are useless in knowing what purpose potters tried to attach and why they occur specifically on powering wares or appears at all in Apsilia. Therefore, there is a lack of evidence to prove this phenomenon. But they are products of identifiable stages, giving a better understanding of their foreign linkages and are many plausible pieces of evidence to claim against ‘Tsebeldian

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<sup>1736</sup> Grave 1-24, 1-104. Voronov, Shenkao 1982. Pic.10.13

origin.’ Indeed using them in Apsilia earlier than in Pithius or other defensive sites of Colchis is the phenomenon of time and may point to some shifts linked with military composition. The battle-axe, for example, unique to German Bardäxe, but more specifically to eastern German prototypes (Elbe areas), could link with the availability of the material in Colchis and broader issues of imperial security. Because it appears in circumstance of militarily controlled Apsilia around the 320 AD, it should have been introduced. We know that the first inspirational concern of imported battle-axe in the area is 2<sup>nd</sup> century foreign aristocracy warriors. This does not exclude conceptually been adapted by few specialized foreign smiths from Europe involved in local workshops towards the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, while the foreign ethnicity is evident among military graves at the time. But the spread of battle axes over defensive sites of Colchis and in Svaneti points to a state or imperial (?) interest in utilizing this weapon.

Particularly types of grooved swords referred to as ‘Tsebeldian cultural component,’ are illustrated examples of the swords of Wilberk culture, Vimose, Illerup, Ilkjar, and Nydam swords feature and reflect original context for the conclusion.

However, these minor points are important in refining existed hypothesis of the phenomenon ‘Tsebeldian culture’, while they are objects showing skills, connections, and ideas, which need to be seen in a European context to make sense. They are principal evidence of the patterns that do not apply on a tribal level and a particular group of people. I am skeptical about their cultural identity and belonging to a single tribal group.

**3.** Now I consider the impact of two defined processes of globalization in the area indicative of imperial interest. Addressing my questions simply by an observable-explanatory framework made two distinct lineages of areal development evident in two historical times. The road potential and trade dynamic has confirmed that my theory about the transit area is most fitting. Because broadly viewed road capacity, its direction and physical aspect drew that potential use for all kinds of transportation activity (with certain limitations). When I tried to bring more nuances by defining arterial roads and related wheel roads, I introduced the most communicative parts, which give capacity to reflected movements in central (AR1, AR2, AR3) and upland areas (AR4, AR5). They produce the most important visible parts, which is reliable evidence. I also highlight the communication power of the main road (KAR) stretching between the Black Sea and textually known ‘Missimian road’ and showed how it was implemented at the northern scale by two-directional perspectives for approaching Caucasia

passes. They are levels of confidence indicative of the importance of the Apsilian road in the context of the trade road between the Black sea and Caucasia.

By dealing with the outcome of the trade, I organized huge imported objects of commodity and annona system, with a view of probability to develop my thoughts on each of the mentioned items. They are objects with different values from Europe and Asia and bring together types of markets used for exchange and trade orders.

This impacted trade, but their origin and distributional ways made more evidential regional and international linkage. Their focus on two-directional and wide dimensional distributions well observed over Apsilian roads, I use clear evidence for internationally activated roads and explain how Apsilia is relative to transit area. From import dynamic, which produce difference and staged activations, I gain evidence how it processed chronologically through the roman and early medieval time. Their compositional spectrum and chronology are about the well-organized long and short-distance trade, with a view of state potential in global trade. However, it made visibly increased opportunities for roman time trade, evidently from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Archaeologically all this looks great, but we do not have any documentary information about it, nor do we know why it happens. Nevertheless, if we look at the concentration of imported objects over the most communicative areas (include AR 1, AR2, AR3) from the 170 AD or during the 170-450 AD or even later (450-550 AD), they show the reasonable frequency of import in any historical phase. It tends to focus on sites of the river Machara basing, which is influenced by constant trade. If this criterion is reliable, I point here meaningful support to the textual appearance of Apsilian River ‘*Stempep*’ in the Roman *Peutinger Table* (**Map 9**). While the map like this mentions the River ‘*Stempep*’ from a certain point of view, which is specific for the roman governmental system and especially with trade purposes.

Moreover, this is a theoretically possible, archaeologically evidential, and inspiring alternative, which fulfills the textual gap in the history of Apsilia in roman time and reinterprets scarce literary information. What we know from later sources about silk transportation through Apsilia is just a new perspective of the same story. This is my obvious association to transit area with the sort of trade I commented on as a ‘trade area.’

This may explain a reasonable expansion of settlement, close to the main arterial road of land and related communication arteries, as there is no other alternative reason for such a remarkable settlement growing and a corresponding increase of imported wealth it would have caused. I also showed the level of inhabitants with purely attested domestic structures, lacking

the opportunities for rural infrastructure, which hardly fits into the schema of city type settlement.

4. The third point of my study considers defining the impact of areal militarization. I went through the process of figuring weapon graves, warriors, military architecture, other buildings for a food store and water supply system to understand how military infrastructure work in Apsilia. There were more details in identifying the diversity of weapon spectrum throughout the several historical phases, which points to the change in strategic thinking. The picture I got of missile shooters, lancers, and spearmen shows the continuity of training routine all over central Apsilia. I introduced a sudden shift of new guarding groups with stuff like Vimose-, Illerup and Ilkjar-type swords and rounded or oval shields with variously fitted bosses (*Csongrád/Zieling L*, *Zieling K1*, *Vermand/Zieling*, *Dobrodzień/Zieling*, and *Malaešty*) coming to the late 4th century. It matches the time when import capacity increases in Apsilia, which is the most plausible explanation, and it is causally possible that this has happened.

However, do we know a lot about them when considering evidence of the early-5<sup>th</sup> century construction of roman bath inside the fortified area? Also, a short-lived defensive structure of this time, which indicates challenges and transition into the conflict area, fits the context of political crises across the Caucasia. Militaries bathing here does not exclude by Roman soldiers. All they are textually missing information, and I do not know what is going on in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Apsilia, but we have literary excess too much information what happens beyond Apsilia, in vicinity places. This I tried to weigh with evidence of militarization from the area for each part of the textually known story presented in ‘Prerequisites for the frontier zone’ in chapter X. I also connect the frequently resulting militarized situations with the gradual success of Lazi and the possible unification of the entire Colchis under his political power. Appropriable literary evidence of years 456 when Lazian king Gubazes I (456–466) tried to hand over, simply by declaring independence from Byzantium, could be a demanding task.

There is no direct information, but there are reasons for the conflict situations. I tried to answer my questions properly by the nature of military forces and nuances of special military units, elite officers, and perhaps strategic experts purposely moved up to the northern valleys during the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

This is interesting, but they assign to the sites where initial fortification appears later and may causally link with potential thread is intractable in many ways. All this stuff could reflect textual information for the Persian support of Missimia, which could not guarantee the peace

and delivery of transported goods. At this point, we have to bear in mind that KAR was a part of Transcaucasian Transit roads and linked with textually known 'Missimian road' recorded in 568 AD. All this led to a northwards developed military agenda and a very fast expansion of defensive structures over the exit parts during the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> century, in which their strategic importance appears. This is a resonance of a range of problems and hostile relations. This relates to a small percentage of the population with seven fortified areas in most communicative parts. Forts are distinctive in many ways show strategic quality in hill-top position, dominating the surrounding landscape, well-communicated distance, and eye-view, which I associate with the fortification system. Other defensively effective peculiarities in the construction of the most impressive legionary fort Tzibile and Shapka indicate transmitted knowledge closely connected with the byzantine strategic system. The outcome of all, including the artillery catapults and other types of a missile from fortified areas, entire logistic and supply sources is considerable imperial investments.

All these complex patterns in military infrastructure in terms of whether Apsilian decided to be independent or Byzantines secure his provincial borders matching with Lazian interest, whom these changes affected, how it happened, and who invested money brings more conclusive points. We need to come back to more causal detail for further points, where the evidence for sieges, attacks, warfare, and demolishes appears. We do not know what historical episode might consider the reconstruction of tower two perhaps a half-century earlier because something is happening. Nevertheless, we have two broad categories of archaeological evidence giving us information on what happened during the next 50 years. Fireproofing all of the structures and renovations exposes what has textually been recorded in years 550 and 555.

Furthermore, if we tie the reasons closely by comparing with official stories, decisive was a Persian-Byzantine war during the 542-555 AD, in which Apsilia was a border side land of Misimia influenced by Persian politic, and Apsilia sometimes went in Alliance with Persia or against them. We have evidence for legionary soldiers, and perhaps some officials arranged in attacks on Tzibile. However, there is no proper evidence for such allied groups like Huns and especially the Alans recorded to cooperate with Lazian officials in Apsilia in 550-555 AD. A further point of this is that central Apsilia has gone through a process of change, and the grave material does not give a sense of Romanized population anymore but is more regionalized. There is something significant happening with the early and mid-6<sup>th</sup> century Apsilian administration. Because little changes in object types may or may not correspond with changes in inhabitant of the Tsebelda area, gives a longer-term unite picture of military processes and brings us to other issues. First to deal is the individuals involved in northern trade and may



result from marriages as it affected some female graves, show the slight distinction. We do not know what ideas of identity this person had this time, but few imported objects, particularly from the northern channel, might have little role in burial practice. Some warriors continued to present themselves as Roman soldiers, but the level of functional identity and the context of weapons are certainly much complicated. This, I guess, is a reflection not only of coalition forces when Byzantines maintained the control over Swania and established in Apsilian fortress in around 554-555 AD. However, there is a potential complexity relative to the security problem of trade across Caucasian passes, in which Colchian mountaineer tribes and Alans played an equally important role. But it is very difficult to consider Alans (except in one case), which is pretty clear from burial customs. In any case, they fit with the concept about the development of the great Silk Road over the western and central Caucasian passes, where the defensive structures are revealed, and Christianity also legitimized.

5. The last point of the entire process is again an indication that many sites were abandoned in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, the northern areas that seem to have been evacuated in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century and reflected in abandoned burial grounds now give impressions of empty parts been shortly controlled perhaps by federate warriors moved from Tsebelda (?). Moreover, the challenge of time highlighted in the evidence of tile of the episcopus Constantine (530?) presented both forts Tsebelda and Shapka is perhaps a fragmentation of long process. It indicates a new cycle of church diplomacy of Byzantine order and may most closely be linked with Persian suzerainty over Iberia in 523 AD when Byzantine by this point led to the emergence of a juristically protectorate over Lazica.

We do not know the time and reason for the destruction of forts and structures, which remain untouched, perhaps because they were all moved to different parts of Colchis or because they were heavily damaged, perhaps during the 554-555 AD. But one is obvious, in later years, when Byzantine envoy- the *magister militum per Orientem* Zemarchus and Sogdian Maniakh successfully transported the silk through Apsilia in 568 AD (Menander frg.10.4-5), it gives the impression of a more stabilized area. There is an example of continued occupation in Pusta (Apusha) fort nearly a hundred years later (662), but not in traditional military function, which becomes more like a prison house as recorded by prisoner Anastasius the Apocrysiarius. That also shed light on the decentralized provincial system of governing and how Apsilian land centered on the power of the Lazian king. If we summarize those points, the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century gives the impression of the beginning of ideological unification because Apsilia significantly weakened, and it had a political culture of alliances with Lazian Kings,

which I guess is a reflection of the later fact of centralization into the west Georgian kingdom 'Abkhazian Samtavro.'

These are reasons and evidence that led me to argue about the function of Apsilian land, which came into a global interest at a certain period, in the dynamics of world trade and the eastern frontier line. From different types of evidence, I have tried to convey the factors and perspectives of Apsilian land, those are distinct in different historical times, but function and responsibilities are similar. This alternative story fits the conclusion that activated trade and warfare, turning all achievements into drama, was global events, which global political situation over Caucasia creates the potential for conflicts of interest between Byzantine and Sasanian. Therefore I consider Apsilian part with dynamic frontier zone.

***Matchara- und Kodori-Täler (historisches Apsilien) im nordwestlichen Georgien im Kaukasus vom 1. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert n. Chr.***

***Zusammenfassung***

Die vorliegende Dissertation widmet sich der materiellen Kultur des historischen Apsilien(s) in der nordwestlichen Kolchis/Lazika, und umfasst den Zeitraum vom 1. bis zum frühen 7. Jahrhundert. Es werden neue alternative Ansätze zur materiellen Kultur Apsiliens vorgestellt, indem auf drei Hauptaspekte aus drei Hauptbereichen eingegangen wird:

- *Diverse Gemeinschaften mit Einäscherungsbrauch:*

Dieser Abschnitt soll ein neues Licht auf das Thema *ingeäschelter Gräber* werfen, indem die Grabdaten von Olginskoe (Friedhof Olginskoe) zur wissenschaftlichen Auswertung herangezogen werden.

Zu den Hauptzielen der Arbeit gehört es, ein neues experimentelles Modell für Minderheiten dieser Region zu entwickeln, *aufbauend* auf früheren *Forschungsleistungen*, aber auch in kritischer Auseinandersetzung mit ihnen;

- *Transit-Kontext Apsiliens:*

Dabei geht es um die Integration Apsiliens in die römische Welt, was als ein optimaler Weg für die Entwicklung dieser Region angesehen werden darf. Dazu kann die Archäologie des historischen Apsiliens einen wesentlichen Beitrag leisten;

- *Geostrategische Bedeutung und Militärkalkulation Apsiliens:*

Die Gegend entwickelte sich als Fortsetzung und in Abhängigkeit von der römischen Geschichte, und gewann ihre Identität in der Auseinandersetzung mit den Herausforderungen globaler mittelalterlicher Konflikte. Diese historischen Gegebenheiten können die geostrategische Bedeutung Apsiliens verdeutlichen.

Diese drei Themenbereiche lassen sich gut miteinander verbinden, da sie sowohl verschiedene Aspekte des Landes als auch verschiedene Gemeinschaften, die im Zusammenhang mit dem historischen Apsilien stehen, vereinen. Außerdem zielen sie darauf hin, ein strukturiertes Modell von allen oben genannten komplexen Sachverhalten zu präsentieren.

Nun möchte ich mich in meiner Arbeit mit den kontrovers diskutierten Fragen auseinandersetzen, die in der Forschung noch offen bleiben. Die Thesen, die von einigen Wissenschaftlern aufgestellt wurden, wollen den Kontext der verschiedenen Fundstücke erörtern. So werden z.B. einige Grabinventare, die im Gebiet des historischen Apsilien entdeckt wurden, aufgrund ihrer morphologischen und dekorativen Besonderheiten als ‚*Tzebeldische Kultur*‘ bezeichnet. Ich bin skeptisch, gegenüber den Thesen bzw. Ansätzen von Trapsh und Voronov, da viele Einzelheiten bedacht werden müssen, um das archäologische Erbe Apsiliens in seiner Ganzheit und in seinem breiten regionalen Kontext richtig zu verstehen bzw. es teilweise auch als ‚*Tzebeldische Kultur*‘ zu bezeichnen.

Die Gründe, mit denen ich alle drei obengenannten Aspekte voranbringen möchte, die mit meiner These in Verbindung stehen, sind folgende:

1. *Die für die ‚Tzebeldische Kultur‘ ausgesprochenen Komponenten sind auf das Olginskoe Grabmaterial anwendbar.* Die durchgeführte Untersuchung begründet jede einzelne Komponente anders und passt jedes einzelnes Element auf je eigene Art und Weise an. Dadurch entsteht eine kontextspezifische Studie, in der ein Versuch unternommen wird, die früheren Forschungsthese argumentativ zu widerlegen;
2. *Die Friedhofsdaten von Olginskoe besitzen eine hohe Sensibilität hinsichtlich verschiedener Bestattungspraktiken verschiedener Gemeinschaften.* Die erforschten Ergebnisse sind verwendbar für eine hypothetische Identifizierung der *Apsilischen Kultur* durch die Einäscherungsgräber;
3. *Die der Arbeit zugrunde liegende Struktur und der Untersuchungsrahmen machten die Auswirkung von zwei unterschiedlichen globalen Prozessen in Apsilien ersichtlich und eröffneten somit einen Zugang zum Verständnis von generellen Prinzipien der römischen und byzantinischen Entwicklung dieses Gebiets.*

Dies lässt sich dann tatsächlich auch mit den weit verbreiteten Thesen von Voronov verbinden, in meiner Abhandlung werden aber diverse neue Fragen aufgeworfen und viele weitere Details in Diskussion gebracht.

Durch die Olginskoe Friedhofsdaten habe ich jedoch die Arten von Grabstrukturen definiert, die von verschiedenen Praktiken stammen und mir erlaubten, diverse einzelne Komponenten des Bestattungsbrauches als Aspekt der Verschiedenheit aufzufassen. Auf diese Art und Weise lege ich Beweise für das Modellbeispiel, die Möglichkeiten bieten, über die

Perspektive unterschiedlicher Gemeinschaften nachzudenken. All das habe ich durch Bilder der Bestattungsgemeinschaften und Gräber wie Diagramme visualisiert.

Außerdem biete ich eine neue Grundlage für ein deskriptives System, welches vorteilhafte Ergebnisse bei der Klassifizierung von Gegenständen erzeugt und Datenverfeinerungen erlaubt, die Relevanz zu den Grabkomplexen von Apsilien behält. Für ein breites Verständnis habe ich einige ausgewählte Beispiele mit archäologischem Material aus Europa vergleichbar gemacht, was zu unseren Erkenntnissen über die sogenannte, ‚Tzebeldische *Kultur*‘ wesentlich beitragen sollte. All das gibt tiefere Einblicke in die Thematik und eröffnet neue Perspektiven für die Forschung.

Im zweiten Teil meiner Studie habe ich eine ziemlich große Datenmenge synchronisiert, indem ich zwei historische Zeitskalen, die römische und die frühbyzantinische, definiert habe. Es beinhaltet Informationen über die relative Chronologie von *Apsilischen* Ortschaften und den Typus von etlichen Friedhöfen; ferner, Informationen über Gräber und Gegenstände, Gebäudestrukturen wie den verbindenden Straßenanschluss. Durch das breitgefächerte Kommunikationssystem stelle ich jedoch das Straßenpotential und einen weiteren relevanten Faktor für die Entwicklung dieser Region vor. Der importierte Reichtum wurde in Dimension und Häufigkeit untersucht, was ein chronologischer Nachweis für die Straßenaktivierung und mehr Details für Nah- und Fernhandel ans Licht brachte. Das Ziel war, das Handelspotential der Region einschätzen zu können. Außerdem konnte gezeigt werden, dass der Transport von Waren durch Apsilien eine enorme logistische Herausforderung darstellte.

Weiterhin sammelte ich die wichtigen Informationen in Bezug auf befestigte Orte und deren Funktion, und die entsprechenden militärischen Truppen mit ihren möglichen Koordinationsbereichen. Chronologische Phasen von Waffengräbern boten eine andere Geschichte über die Militarisierung des Gebiets. Diese Differenzierung lässt den Primärprozess bestimmen. Beide globale Prozesse, Handel und Militarisierung, werden als kausale Verbindungen für die Gebietsentwicklung zusammengeführt: Dadurch kann, meiner Meinung nach, die Funktion des Gebiets vorausberechnet werden. Endergebnisse ermöglichten, die Ursachen und Folgerungen zu theoretisieren, was die Eigenart der *Apsilischen* materiellen Kultur offenbaren ließ.

Auf diese Weise habe ich versucht, die *Apsilische* materielle Kultur möglichst vollständig zu integrieren, das vorhandene Wissen durch die Maximierung bedeutungsvoller Informanten zu rekonstruieren und Beweise zu erhalten, um in mehreren Bereichen zu argumentieren.

In meiner Forschung habe ich jedoch versucht, einen anderen Weg zu finden, um die Gemeinschaft des Stammeslandes, ihre materielle Kultur und die Herausforderungen, auf die sie in der römischen und frühbyzantinischen Zeit reagierten, zu verstehen. Ich stelle zusammenfassend die Ergebnisse meiner Forschung im Folgenden vor:

1. In meinen Erstuntersuchungen brachte ich ein Argument gegen die Auffassung *Apsilischer* Identität mit Einäscherungsgräbern vor, indem drei Grabmodelle von *Olginskoe Friedhof* dargestellt wurden. Es könnten, meiner Ansicht nach, einige Beweise für drei unterschiedliche kognitive Gruppen entdeckt werden, sofern unterschiedliche Bestattungspraktiken bedacht würden. Diese Gruppen sind unterschiedlich ihrer mentalen Umwelt entsprechend.

Das *Grabmodell 1* ist charakteristisch für die zentrale *Kolchische* Gemeinschaft, basierend auf strukturellen und Bestattungsprinzipien, wie es am Beispiel hellenistischen *Tchkorocqu* zu sehen sind. Äußerst aussagekräftig zeigt sich dieses Modell in der Chronologie, während zentralkolchische Vergleiche mehrere Jahrhunderte älter sind als Datenbeweise von Apsilien. Ausgehend von dem Punkt, scheint es eine Praxis zu sein, die in der spätrömischen Zeit ausstirbt. Es ist tatsächlich ein seltener Fall und betrifft zehn Individuen in Apsilien. Andererseits, es ist möglicherweise ein spezifischer Hinweis darauf, dass sich in Apsilien im Jahr 350 n. Chr. etwas änderte. Ihre Begräbnisstätten sind näher, um die Umgebung zu erkunden, und sie passen zweifelsohne in die größere Gemeinschaft Apsiliens. Diese sind Punkte, um alternative Interpretationen über kleinräumige regionale Migrationen nach Apsilien zu erforschen: Es ist die Zeit, als sich die Handelsaktivitäten besonders intensivierten.

Eine andere Art von Verbindungen, die sich, meiner Meinung nach, auf das *Grabmodell 2* beziehen, sind verschiedene Arten ‚*Kolchisch*‘ zu sein, was ein einheitliches Gefühl von Lokalität vermittelt. Alle Punkte, die in der *Variante 1* zu sehen sind, ähneln den Vorfahren, die in mehreren Teilen des nördlichen Apsiliens aus dem Jahr 300 n. Chr. gut nachvollziehbar sind, und mit denen Olginskoe-Siedler als spätere Generationen identifiziert wurden. Dies liefert neue Informationen über eine bestimmte Gruppe der Gemeinschaften, die hier zwischen 350–400 n. Chr. gelebt haben. Anderer Typus, repräsentiert durch *Variante 2*, setzt die überlieferten Traditionen fort und bezieht die Verhaltensweisen ein, die in einigen Gebieten von Kolchis beobachtet wurden. Er soll einen Einblick in die ursprünglichen regionalen Gruppen geben.

Im *Grabmodell 3* wird der Fokus auf persönliche Dimensionen gelegt, die das Identitätsgefühl durch kontrastierende ‚Selbstidentifizierung‘ ersetzen. Es zeigt einige

Gegenstände und die Kompositionsprinzipien, die in der römischen Zeit konzipiert und mit bestimmten Militäreinheiten in Verbindung gebracht wurden. Ähnliche Veränderungen lassen sich in größerem Ausmaß ebenfalls in den benachbarten Regionen beobachten.

Jedes Beispiel bietet individuelle Erklärungen zur geographischen Herkunft und Hinweise auf örtliche und nicht-örtliche Praktiken. Dies sind chronologisch definierbare Grabkonstruktionen und bedeutungsvolle Kategorien, die die synchrone Existenz kleinerer Gemeinschaften und regionaler Einwanderungen in das Gebiet verifizieren. Daher zeigten sie, dass alle Einäscherungsgräber in Apsilien nicht ‚*Apsilisch*‘ waren oder nur einer Stammesgemeinschaft gehörig.

2. In meiner praktischen Herangehensweise an einzelne Artefakte zeigte ich, dass die *Olginskoe-Gemeinschaft* den übrigen Gemeinschaften von Apsilien ähnlich war und visuelle Kenntnisse über Objekte aus der fernen Welt verfügte. All diese Besonderheiten und Arten von Objekten erhalten wir in der *Apsilischen* materiellen Kultur nicht auf einmal, sondern regelmäßig im späten 2., frühen 3. und späten 4. Jahrhundert. Ich habe die europaspezifischen Spuren von Breitrandkrügen und ähnlich geteilten Grundformen diskutiert, die zumindest schon im 2. Jahrhundert über die römischen Peripherien leicht erkennbar sind. Das wurde erstmals im Kriegergrab des späten 2. Jahrhundert von *Tzsebelda* entdeckt, das ich mit dem Fremdgrab in Verbindung gebracht habe. Auch eine neue Besonderheit, die in der dekorativen Tradition des frühen 3. Jahrhunderts beobachtet wurde, zeigt die Hauptlinie der römischen Mode auf und weist darauf hin, dass Künstler und Handwerker kreisförmige dekorative Motive auf Objekten gesehen haben, da sie die ähnlichen Exemplare auch in der *Pannonischen* Region, Köln, Neuburg usw. hergestellt haben.

Auch das änderte sich im späten 4. Jahrhundert, und ich habe identifizierte Beispiele von Tierdarstellungen diskutiert, die nach Europa weisen, aber potenziell aus dem Elbe-Weser-Gebiet stammen. Vergleiche sind nutzlos, um zu erfahren, welchen Zweck die Töpfer verfolgten und warum sie speziell auf Krügen vorkommen oder überhaupt in Apsilien auftauchen. Daher fehlt es an Beweisen, um dieses Phänomen festzumachen. Aber sie sind Produkte identifizierbarer chronologischer Phasen, die ein besseres Verständnis ihrer ausländischen Verbindungen ermöglichen. Folglich gibt es mehrere plausible Beweise, um die ‚*Tzsebeldische Herkunft*‘ zurückzuweisen. Die Einsetzung von einigen militärischen Gegenständen in Apsilien soll freilich auf den militärischen Kontext hindeuten.

Die Kampf-axt zum Beispiel, vergleichbar mit germanischen Bartäxten, insbesondere aber mit ostgermanischen Prototypen (in Elbe-Gebieten), könnte durchaus mit deren Verfügbarkeit

in Kolchis bzw. mit der imperialen Sicherheit in Verbindung gebracht werden. Weil sie unter den Umständen des militärisch kontrollierten Apsilien um 320 auftaucht, sollte es von Militär eingeführt worden sein. Wir wissen, dass das erste inspirierende Beispiel einer importierten Kampf-axt in der Gegend ausländische Aristokratenkrieger aus dem 2. Jahrhundert sind. Dies schließt nicht aus, dass sie konzeptuell von einigen wenigen spezialisierten fremden Schmieden aus Europa adaptiert wurde (die letzteren waren gegen Ende des 3. Jahrhunderts in verschiedenen örtlichen Werkstätten tätig). Denn eine fremde ethnische Gruppe ist unter den Militärgräbern dieser Zeit offensichtlich erkennbar. Aber die Verbreitung von Kampf-äxten über Verteidigungsanlagen von Kolchis und in Svanetien weist auf ein staatliches oder imperiales (?) Interesse am Einsatz dieser Waffe hin.

Besonders die Arten von gerillten Schwertern, die als ‚Tzebeldische Kulturkomponenten‘ bezeichnet werden, sind markante Beispiele für Schwerter der Wilberk-Kultur, Vimose-, Illerup-, Ilkjar- und Nydam-Schwerter, und spiegeln möglicherweise den ursprünglichen Kontext wider.

Diese kleinen Bemerkungen sind jedoch wichtig, um die bestehende Hypothese des Phänomens, ‚Tzebeldische Kultur‘ zu revidieren, während es sich um Objekte handelt, die Fähigkeiten, Verbindungen und Ideen zeigen, die in einem europäischen Kontext gesehen werden müssen, um einen Sinn zu ergeben. Ich bin skeptisch gegenüber ihrer *Apsilischen* kulturellen Identität und der Zugehörigkeit zu einer einzigen Stammesgruppe.

**3.** In Anbetracht der Auswirkungen zweier definierter Globalisierungsprozesse in dem Gebiet, die auf imperiales Interesse hinweisen.

Die Beantwortung meiner Fragen durch eine einfach beobachtbare und erklärende Zeitskala, machte zwei unterschiedliche Entwicklungslinien in zwei historischen Zeiten offensichtlich. Das Straßenpotenzial und die Handelsdynamik haben bestätigt, dass meine These über das Transitgebiet zutreffend zu sein scheint: Weil allgemein betrachtet, die Leistungsfähigkeit der Straße, ihre Ausrichtung und ihr physischer Aspekt die potenzielle Nutzung für alle Arten von Transportaktivitäten (mit gewissen Einschränkungen) nahelegen. Die Nuancen der definierten Ausfallstraßen und der zugehörigen Kreisstraßen bilden die wichtigsten sichtbaren Teile und unterstreichen die Kommunikationskraft der Hauptstraße (KAR). Diese Strecke zwischen dem Schwarzen Meer und der textlich bekannten, ‚*Missimianischen Straße*‘ zeigte, wie sie auf der nördlichen Ebene durch zweiseitige Perspektiven für die Annäherung an die kaukasischen Pässe umgesetzt wurde. Dies sind



Vertrauensniveaus, die auf die Bedeutung der *Apsilienstraße* im Rahmen der Handelsstraße zwischen dem Schwarzen Meer und Kaukasien hindeuten.

Das Ergebnis des Handels waren riesige importierte Gegenstände von Waren und Anona-Systeme, die aus Europa und Asien kamen. Dies vereint Markttypen, die für Austausch- und Handelsaufträge verwendet werden. Herkunft und Verteilungswege importierten Reichtums haben die regionale und internationale Verbindung noch deutlicher gemacht. Der Fokus liegt auf zweirichtungsgebundenen und weiträumigen Verteilungen, die auf *Apsilienstraßen* gut zu beobachten sind; ich verwende eindeutige Beweise für international aktivierte Straßen und erkläre, wie Apsilien mit dem Transitgebiet verwandt ist. Die Importdynamik, die Unterschiede und Aktivierungsphasen erzeugen, ist ein Beweis dafür, wie sie chronologisch durch die römische und frühmittelalterliche Zeit verarbeitet wurde. Allerdings eröffnete es dem römischen Zeithandel deutlich mehr Möglichkeiten, offenbar ab dem späten 4. Jahrhundert.

Aus archäologischer Sicht sieht dies alles großartig aus, aber wir haben keine schriftlichen Informationen darüber, und wir wissen auch nicht, warum dies geschah. Betrachtet man jedoch die Konzentration der importierten Objekte auf den kommunikativsten Gebieten ab 170 n. Chr. oder in der Zeit von 170 bis 450 n. Chr. oder sogar noch später (450 bis 550 n. Chr.), so zeigen sie die vernünftige Frequenz des Imports in jeder historischen Phase. Es konzentriert sich auf den Gebieten des *Matchara-Flusses*, die durch ständigen Handel beeinflusst werden. Wenn dieses Kriterium zuverlässig ist, könnte es weiterhin durch eine schriftliche Bezeugung des *Apsilischen* Flusses ‚*Stempep*‘ in der römischen *Peutinger* Tabelle unterstützt werden. Auf der Karte wird der Fluss ‚*Stempep*‘ aus einer bestimmten Perspektive erwähnt, die für das römische Regierungssystem und insbesondere für Handelszwecke spezifisch ist. Darüber hinaus handelt es sich um eine theoretisch mögliche, archäologisch nachweisbare und anregende Alternative, die die Textlücke in der Geschichte Apsiliens in römischer Zeit schließt und die spärlichen literarischen Informationen neu interpretiert. Was wir aus späteren Quellen über den Seidentransport durch Apsilien wissen, ist nur eine neue Perspektive derselben Geschichte. Das ist, was ich zu Beginn als ‚Transitgebiet‘ und ‚Handelsgebiet‘ bezeichnet habe.

Dies könnte eine Erklärung für eine vernünftige Ausweitung der Siedlung in der Nähe der Hauptverkehrsader des Gebietes und der damit verbundenen Kommunikationswege sein, da es keinen anderen Grund für ein so bemerkenswertes Siedlungswachstum und einen entsprechenden Anstieg des importierten Reichtums gibt, den es verursacht haben könnte.

4. Der dritte Punkt meiner Forschung befasst sich mit der Definition der Auswirkungen der Militarisierung von Apsilien. Um zu verstehen, wie die militärische Infrastruktur in Apsilien funktioniert, habe ich Waffengräber, Krieger, militärische Architektur, andere Gebäude für ein Nahrungslager und ein Wasserversorgungssystem erarbeitet. Die Vielfalt des Waffenspektrums in den verschiedenen historischen Phasen wurde detaillierter dargestellt, was auf einen Wandel im strategischen Denken hinweist. Das Bild, das ich von Balistaren, Lanzenträgern und Speerkämpfern erhalten habe, zeigt die Kontinuität der Trainingsroutine in ganz Zentral-Apsilien. Plötzlich verschoben sich neue Bewachungsgruppen mit Waffen wie Vimose-, Illerup- und Ilkjar-artigen Schwertern und runden oder ovalen Schutzschilden mit unterschiedlich ausgestatteten Bossen (Csongrád/Zieling L, Zieling K1, Vermand/Zieling, Dobrodzień/Zieling und Malaeshty), die im späten 4. Jahrhundert aufkamen. Dies entspricht der Zeit, in dem die Importkapazitäten in Apsilien zunehmen, und es ist möglich, dass dies aus kausalen Gründen geschehen ist.

Jedoch, wissen wir viel über Apsilien, wenn wir die Beweise für den Bau eines römischen Bades im frühen 5. Jahrhundert innerhalb des befestigten Bereiches betrachten? Militär, das hier badet, schließt sich von römischen Soldaten nicht aus. Wissen wir etwas über eine kurzlebige Verteidigungsstruktur dieser Zeit, die auf Herausforderungen und den Übergang in das Konfliktgebiet hinweist und in den Kontext politischer Krisen im gesamten Kaukasus passt? All dies sind die schriftlich fehlenden Informationen. Ich habe versucht, herauszufinden, was in der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts in Apsilien los war, und ferner, abzuwägen mit dem Vergleich jeder schriftlich bekannten Information ihrer Umgebung, die ich in ‚Voraussetzungen für die Grenzzone‘ (Kapitel X) vorgestellt habe. Dies verbindet auch die resultierende militarisierte Situation mit dem Erfolg von Lazi und der möglichen Einigung der Kolchis unter diese politische Macht.

Es gibt keine direkten Informationen, aber es gibt Gründe für die Konfliktsituationen. Ich habe versucht, es aus der Natur der Streitkräfte und die Nuancen von Spezialeinheiten, Elite-Offizieren zu erklären, die in der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts absichtlich in die nördlichen Täler verlegt wurden. Interessant ist, dass sie den Orten zuzuordnen sind, an denen später die anfängliche Befestigung erscheint und kann kausal mit einem „*potential thread*“ verbunden sein, der in vielerlei Hinsicht interaktiv ist. Dies könnte schriftliche Informationen über die Persische Unterstützung von *Missimia* widerspiegeln, was den Frieden und die Lieferung der transportierten Güter nicht garantieren könnte. An dieser Stelle müssen wir bedenken, dass die KAR (die *Kay Apsilian Road*) ein Teil der Transkaukasischen Transitstraßen war und mit jener schriftlich bekannten „*Missimian Road*“ verbunden, die

später im Jahr 568 n. Chr. aufgezeichnet wurde. All dies führte im späten 5. und frühen 6. Jahrhundert zu einer nach Norden entwickelten militärischen Agenda und einem sehr schnellen Ausbau der Verteidigungsstrukturen über den Ausgangsteilen, in denen ihre strategische Bedeutung zum Ausdruck kommt. All dies bezieht sich auf einen kleinen Prozentsatz der Bevölkerung mit sieben befestigten Gebieten in den meisten kommunikativen Teilen. Forts sind in vielerlei Hinsicht unverwechselbar und zeigen strategische Qualität in Hügellage, die die umgebende Landschaft dominiert, gut kommunizierte Entfernung und Sichtweite, die ich mit dem Befestigungssystem verbinde. Andere defensiv wirksame Besonderheiten beim Bau der eindrucksvollsten Legionsfestungen *Tzibulum* und *Shapka* weisen auf überliefertes Wissen hin, das eng mit dem byzantinischen Strategiesystem verbunden ist. Das Ergebnis aller, einschließlich der Artillerie-Katapulte und anderer Raketentypen aus befestigten Gebieten, ganzen Logistik- und Versorgungsquellen sind erhebliche imperiale Investitionen.

All diese komplexen Muster in der militärischen Infrastruktur in Bezug darauf, ob Apsilien sich für die Unabhängigkeit entschieden hat oder die Byzantiner seine Provinzgrenzen sichern, die dem *lazischen* Interesse entsprechen, ferner, wen diese Veränderungen betrafen oder wie es geschah und wer Geld investierte, bringt schlüssigere Punkte. Wir müssen an weiteren Punkten, an denen Beweise für Belagerungen, Angriffe, Kriege und Zerstörungen auftauchen, auf weitere kausale Details zurückkommen. Wir wissen nicht, welche historische Episode den Wiederaufbau des zweiten Turms vielleicht ein halbes Jahrhundert früher in Betracht ziehen könnte, weil etwas passiert. Nichtsdestotrotz haben wir zwei große Kategorien archäologischer Beweise, die uns Informationen darüber geben, was in den nächsten 50 Jahren geschah. Durch den Brandschutz aller Gebäude und Renovierungen wird das freigelegt, was in den Jahren 550 und 555 textuell aufgezeichnet wurde. Wenn wir die Gründe durch den Vergleich mit offiziellen Berichten eng verknüpfen, war außerdem ein persisch-byzantinischer Krieg in 542–555 entscheidend, in dem Apsilien ein von der persischen Politik beeinflusstes Grenzland von *Missimia* war: Apsilien verbündete sich manchmal mit Persien oder trat gegen sie auf. Wir haben Beweise für Legionärsoldaten und vielleicht einige Beamte, die Angriffe auf *Tzibulum* arrangiert haben. Es gibt jedoch keine richtigen archäologischen Beweise für solche verbündeten Gruppen wie die Hunnen und insbesondere die Alanen, die 550–555 in Apsilien mit *Lazischen* Beamten zusammengearbeitet haben. Ein weiterer Punkt ist, dass Zentralapsilien einen Wandlungsprozess durchlaufen hat und das Grabmaterial keine romanisierte Bevölkerung mehr vermittelt, sondern eher regionalisiert ist. Es passiert etwas Bedeutendes mit der

*Apsilischen* Verwaltung Anfang und Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts. Denn kleine Veränderungen der Objekttypen können mit Veränderungen der Einwohner des *Tzsebelda*-Gebiets korrespondieren oder nicht, geben ein längerfristiges einheitliches Bild der militärischen Prozesse und bringen uns zu anderen Fragen. Zuerst müssen die Personen behandelt werden, die am Nordhandel beteiligt waren; betroffen waren einige Frauengräber. Es zeigen sich leichte Unterschiede. Wir wissen nicht, welche Identitätsvorstellungen diese Person diesmal hatte, aber nur wenige importierte Gegenstände, insbesondere aus dem nördlichen Kanal, könnten in der Bestattungspraxis eine geringe Rolle spielen. Einige Krieger präsentierten sich weiterhin als römische Soldaten, aber die Ebene der funktionalen Identität und der Kontext der Waffen sind sicherlich sehr kompliziert. Dies ist, denke ich, nicht nur ein Spiegelbild der Koalitionstruppen, als die Byzantiner die Kontrolle über Svanetien behielten und um 554–555 eine *Apsilische* Festung errichteten. Es besteht jedoch eine potenzielle Komplexität in Bezug auf das Sicherheitsproblem des Handels über kaukasische Pässe, bei dem *kolchische* Bergsteigerstämme und Alanen eine ebenso wichtige Rolle spielten. Es ist jedoch sehr schwierig, Alanen zu berücksichtigen (außer in einem Fall), was aus den Bestattungsbräuchen ziemlich klar hervorgeht. Auf jeden Fall passen sie zum Konzept der Entwicklung der großen Seidenstraße über die westlichen und zentralen Kaukasuspässe, wo die Verteidigungsstrukturen aufgedeckt und auch das Christentum legitimiert wird.

5. Der letzte Punkt des gesamten Prozesses ist wiederum ein Hinweis darauf, dass viele Stätten Anfang des 6. Jahrhunderts aufgegeben wurden. Die nördlichen Gebiete erwecken den Eindruck von verlassenen Orten: sie wurden im späten 5. Jahrhundert evakuiert, und diese Tatsache fand ihre Widerspiegelung auch in verlassenen Grabstätten. Die evakuierten Ortschaften könnten durchaus von verbündeten Kriegern kontrolliert worden sein.

Darüber hinaus ist die Herausforderung der Zeit, die in den Zeugnissen des Bischofs Konstantin (530?), die beide Forts *Tzsebelda* und *Shapka* präsentierten, hervorgehoben; vielleicht ist das eine Fragmentierung eines langen Prozesses. Es weist auf einen neuen Zyklus der Kirchendiplomatie byzantinischer Ordnung hin und kann am engsten mit der persischen Oberhoheit über Iberien im Jahr 523 verbunden werden, als das Byzantinische zu diesem Zeitpunkt zur Entstehung eines rechtlichen Protektorats über *Lazika* führte.

Wir kennen den Zeitpunkt und den Grund für die Zerstörung von Festungen und Bauwerken nicht, von denen einige unberührt geblieben sind, vielleicht weil sie alle in verschiedene Teile von Kolchis verlegt wurden oder weil sie schwer beschädigt wurden, vielleicht während der 554–555 n. Chr. Aber eines ist offensichtlich, als in späteren Jahren der

byzantinische Gesandte – das *magister militum per Orientem Zemarchos* und der Sogdian Maniakh – die Seide 568 erfolgreich durch Apsilien transportierten (Menander frg.10.4–5), erweckt es den Eindruck eines stabilisierten Gebiets. Es gibt ein Beispiel für die fortgesetzte Besetzung der Festung *Pusta (Apusha)* fast hundert Jahre später (662), jedoch nicht in traditioneller militärischer Funktion, die eher einem Gefängnishaus ähnelt, wie es der Gefangene Anastasius der Apokrisiar überliefert. Das warf auch ein Licht auf das dezentralisierte provinzielle Regierungssystem und wie sich das Apsilische Land auf die Macht des *Lazischen* Königs konzentrierte. Wenn wir diese Punkte zusammenfassen, lässt die Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts breiten Raum für eine ideologische Vereinigung, denn Apsilien verlor allmählich an Macht, pflegte aber weiterhin politisch-kulturelle Allianzen mit *Lazischen* Königen, was sich später in der Vereinigung des westgeorgischen Königreiches ‚*Abchasisches Fürstentum*‘ (‚*Abchasian Samtavro*‘ ) widerspiegelte.

Dies sind Gründe und Beweise, die mich dazu veranlassten, über die Funktion des *Apsilischen* Landes, das zu einer bestimmten Zeit weltweites Interesse geweckt hatte, in der Dynamik des Welthandels und der östlichen Grenzlinie zu argumentieren. Aus verschiedenen Arten von Beweisen habe ich versucht, die Faktoren und Perspektiven des *Apsilischen* Landes zu vermitteln, die sich in verschiedenen historischen Zeiten unterscheiden, aber Funktion und Verantwortung sind ähnlich. Diese alternative Geschichte passt zu der Schlussfolgerung, dass aktivierter Handel und Kriegsführung, die alle Errungenschaften in ein Drama verwandelten, globale Ereignisse waren, deren weltpolitische Situation um den Kaukasus das Potenzial für Interessenkonflikte zwischen Byzantinern und Sassaniden schafft. Daher betrachte ich *Apsilien* als ein Gebiet mit dynamischer Grenzzone.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AO** - Archaeologicheskije Otkritia Abkhazii, Moskva.
- IAK** - Izvestia archeologicheskoi komisii, Moskva.
- IANO** - Izvestia Abkhaskovo Nauchnogo Obshestva. I. Sukhumi.
- KSIA** - Kratkie soobshenia Instituta Arkheologii. Moskva.
- MAA** - Materiali po Arkheologii Abkhazii. Tbilisi.
- MIA** - Materiali I issledovania po arkheologii SSSR, Moskva.
- SA** - Sovetskaja Archeologia, Moskva.
- SAI** - Svod archaeologicheskix istochnikov. Moskva.
- TAGK** - Materiali po arkheologii Gruzii i Kavkaza, Tbilisi.
- TSGPI** - Trudi Sokhumskovo Gosudarstvennogo Pedagogicheskovo Instituta. Sukhumi
- WDI** - Vestnik Drevnei Istorii, Moskva.
- SSMAE** - 'Academy of sciences of Georgia-the center for archaeological studies', Tbilisi.
- Abb.** - 1-6 grave structure.

## GLOSSARY

**Allies** – Tribes payed a yearly tribute in the form of military service. It include bucellarii a private armed retainers of generals and form a core cavalry force in army. At various times they include Huns, Goths and Vikings.

**Comes** - A term given to various imperial officials

**Comitatenses** – The ‘field units’ resembling roman legions and were comprised of cavalry, both light and heavy. Some were even the *cataphractarii* (heavy armed cavalry using lance and shock tactic of knights) or *equites sagitarii* (light cavalry using bows). They responded to invasion and threats when necessary.

**Dux Armenia**- Commanded the troops

**Foederati** - Soldiers serving in the roman army by the terms and generally served in regional areas. They were purely made of barbarian tribesmen, were generally a cavalry troops, helped the *Limitanei* and joined roman units.

**Limitanei** - The frontier forces of Roman Empire. Those based in the limites of frontier provinces.

**Magister militum per Armenia** – ‘master of army’ in Armenia with high level military command and subordinate magister *equitum* (cavalry) and a *magister peditum* (infantry). Appointed general to command mobile army in Armenian and Caucasian provinces (Dagisthaesus in 548). Under the emperor Justinian I was formerly in the field of the ‘*Magister militum per Orientum*’.

**Numerus** - A unit of roman soldiers.

**Strategos Greek** - word for a general, often a *magister militum*

**Vexillations** – Permanent stationing of units on the frontiers, being withdrawn temporarily in the events of an expeditionary force being needed.

## NOTES ON THE SOURCES

**Agathias** (c.532-580) - Known as a Greek historian, lawyer and poet. He continued Procopius' history and his narrative of Myrina in Asian Minor cover the years 552-558.

**Amianus Marcellinus** (c.330-395) - Latin historian of eastern origin from Tyre or Sidon. Survived part of his history covers the years 353-378 and provides eyewitness information on later Persian wars of Constantius II and the expedition of Julian.

**Eustathius of Epiphania** (died c.505) - Historian and author of a chronicle which now survives only in fragments. It probably covered the period from the fall of Troy to the Roman wars against Persia in 502-505, and was used as source by Malal and Evagrius.

**John of Epiphania** - 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century lawyer and the author of history continued Agathias stories and survived in one fragment.

**Kartlis Tskovreba** (Georgian Chronicles) - An official collection of some Georgian historical works written between the eight and fourteen centuries. But it commissioned in the early eighteenth century by King Vakhtang VI and includes a *History of the King of Iberia*, a *History of King Vakhtang Gorgasali* (HVG) and other works.

**Malalas Ioannes** (c.490-575) - Rhetor and official at Antioch, who probably moved to Constantinople in the 450s. He wrote the first Byzantine universal chronicle, covering the period from Adam to AD 565. His work preserves much important notice Antioch and the province of Syria.

**Menander Protector** (*Menander the Guardsman*) - late sixth century Constantinopolitan historian and palace guardsman who wrote a history covering, the period 558-582, which was designed as a continuation of Agathias, and survives today in seventy fragments.

**Notitia Dignitatum** - The title given to the catalogue of titles of administrative offices in the two halves of the Roman Empire. Ed. O. Seeck, 1976.

**Procopius** - 6<sup>th</sup> century Greek historian of the reign of Justinian. A native of Caesarea (Palestine), he was military secretary to Belisarius and eyewitness to many of his campaigns.

**Rufinus** (*of Aquilea*) (c.345-410) Latin author and translator who translated and abridged Eusebius' 'Church History', supplemented by two books detailing the period 324-395.

**Theodosius of Gangra** (7<sup>th</sup> century) from Paphlagonia. His eyewitness document 'The Epistola of Anastasius Apocrisarius' accounts a letter of Anastasius the Monk (written in 19<sup>th</sup> of April 658), which provide very vivid insight to the untimonophysit activity of these years; describes the story of Maximus the Confessor and the deportation from Byzantium to Lazica in 662. Preserves information about Lazian provinces Misimia and Apsilia; names 'first house' – the residence of Patriarch Gregory in the village Jikhakhora in the territory of Apsili.



**Theophanes (Confessor)** - A byzantine monk who completed a chronicle covering the years 284-814. His account of Heraclius campaigns, often drawing on official reports and poems of George of Pisidia, is especially valuable.

**Theophanes (of Byzantium)**. Author of a *Historica*, an account of the period 556-581, whose work survives in only a few fragments.

**Zosimus** - Greek pagan historian of late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> century, whose only surviving work, the *Historia Nova*, covers Roman history 180-410. The work contains much material drawn from the now lost *Histories* of Eunapius and Olympiodorus.

**John of Epiphanea**. *Fragmenta* (ed. L. Dindorf *Historici Graeci Minors* I:Leipzig, 1870:375-382).

**Notitia Dignitatum** (Ed. O. Seeck: 1876; repr. Frankfurt am Main, 1962).

**Procopius**. De Bello Gothico, VIII. - A Greek historian of Caesarian (Palestine) origin. Produce eyewitness sources of his campaigns as was military secretary to Belisarius.

**Procopius**. History of the Wars. *Books V, VII and VIII*. With an English translation by H.B.Dewing. William Heinemann LTD, London. 1962.

**The Book of the Popes-** (*Liber Pontificalis*), translation Louise.

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Table 1



Google earth map over the Caucasia.



Locational map of historical Lazica and historical Apsilia.



Locational view of historical city Pithius (Bichvinta).



Locational view of historical city Sebastopolis (modern Sukhumi).



The ground plan of the fort Pithius.

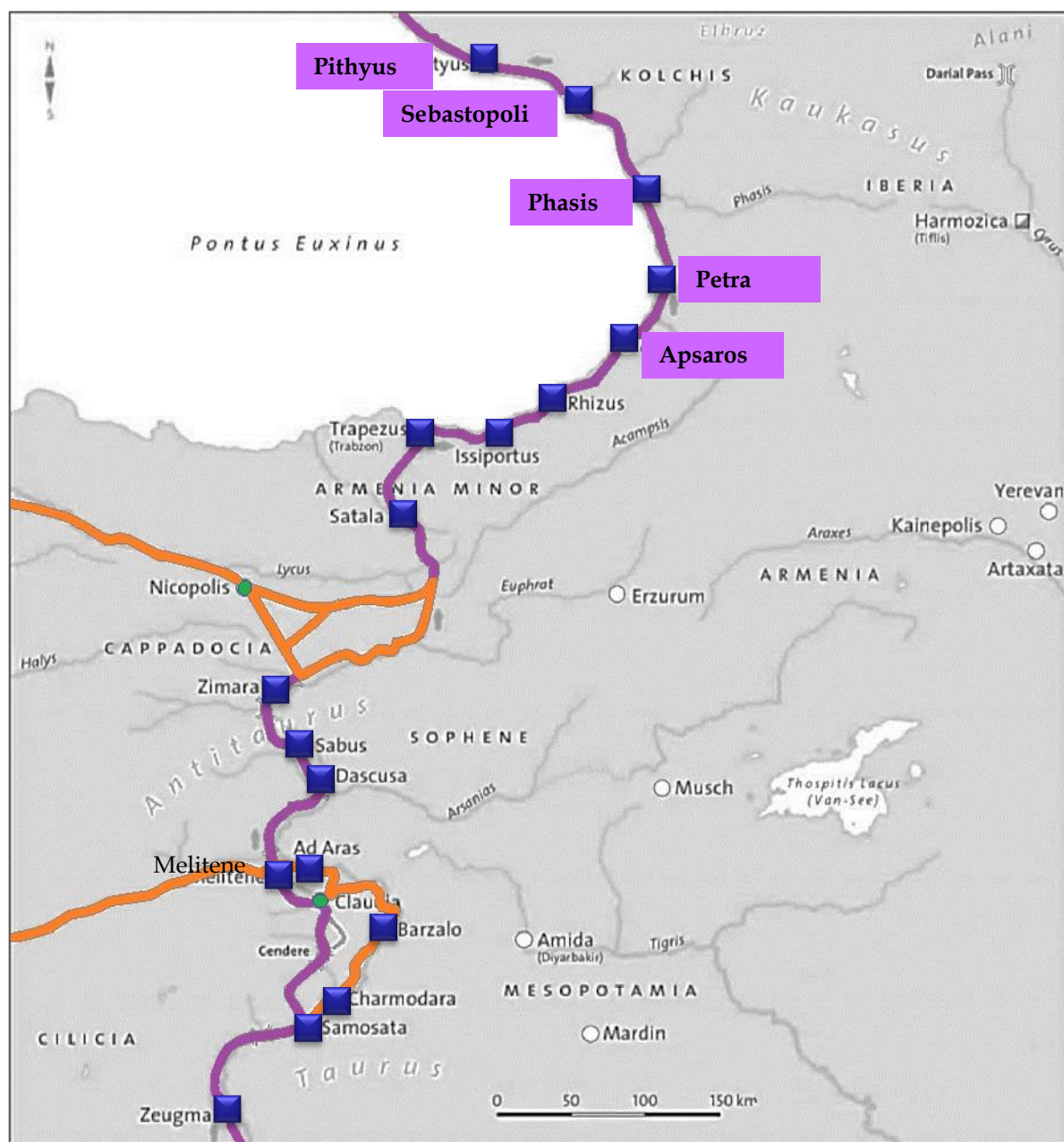


View of the Enguri river dam at the border with modern Abkhazia.

Various images of selected strategic regions of west Georgia.



Table 2

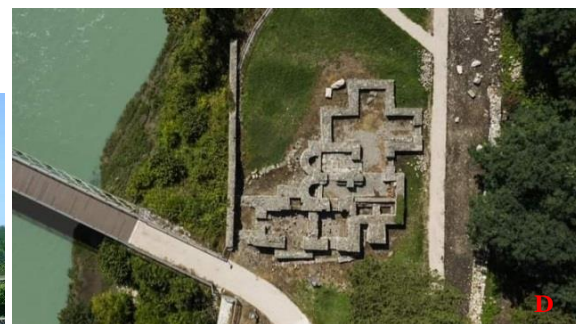


Coordination of frontier troops in eastern frontier line and in Colchis at the Black Sea shore.



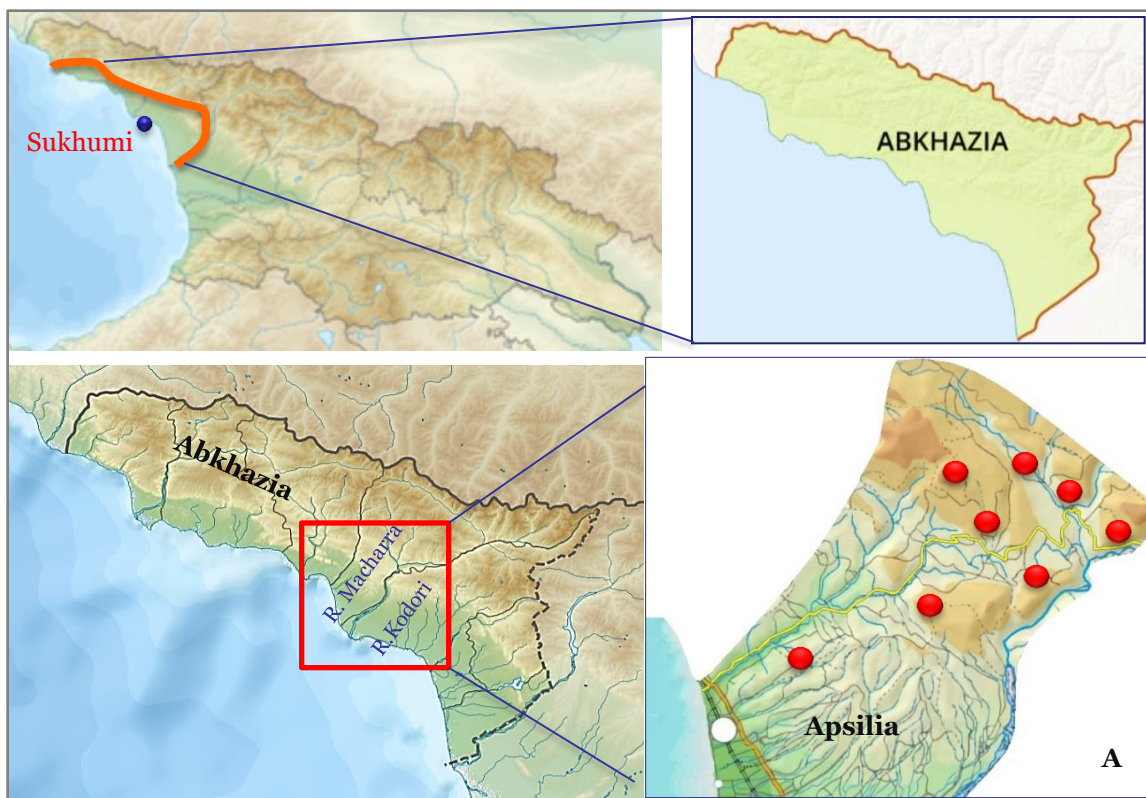
Selected coastal defensive complexes of Roman Colchis and Byzantine Lazica. A – Petra fort.  
B- Apsaros (Gonio) fortress.

Table 4

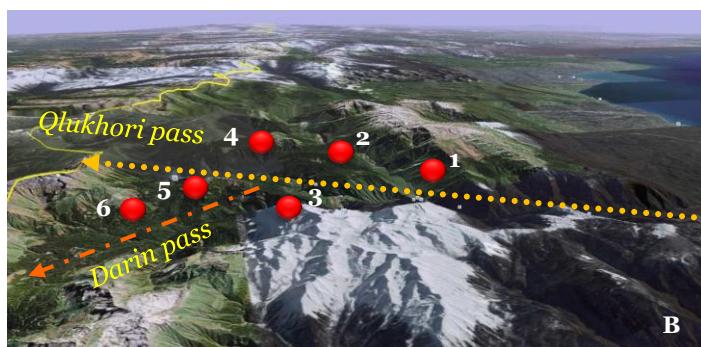


View of selected defensive complexes of hinterland Lazica (Colchis). A-D - Structural components of Archeopolis (Nokalakevi) fortress. E- The ground plan of Archeopolis fortress. F - Qutaisi fort.

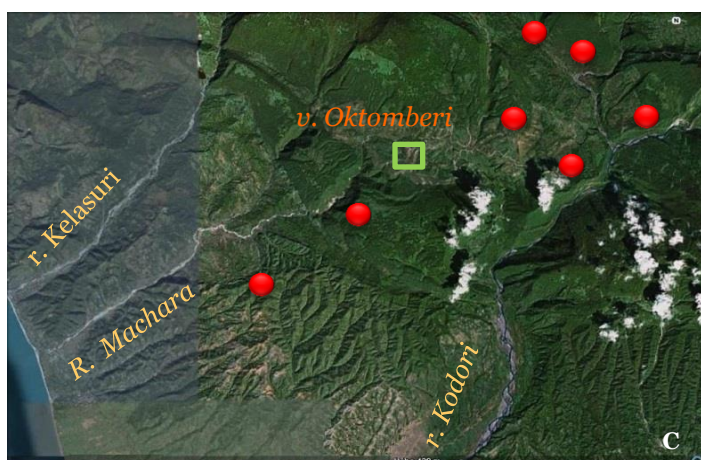
Table 5



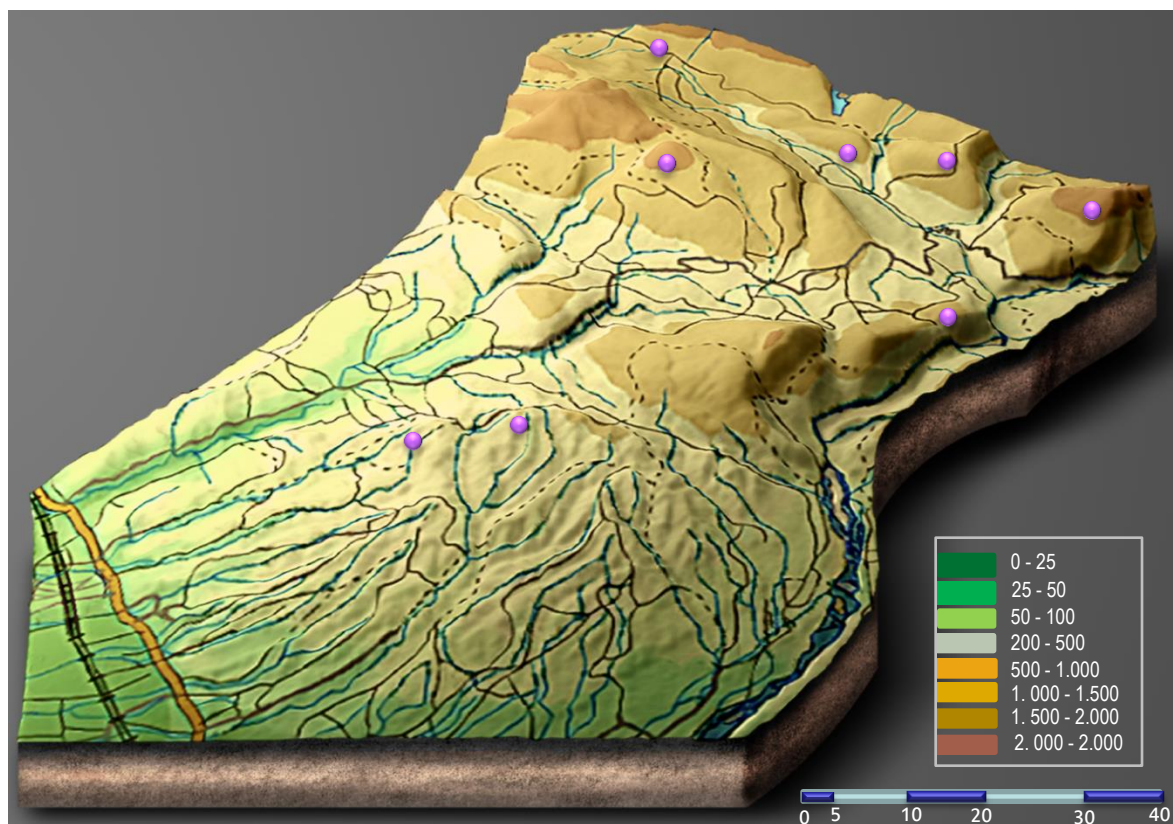
Visual guide to the area between the rivers Machara and Kodori (historical Apsilia).



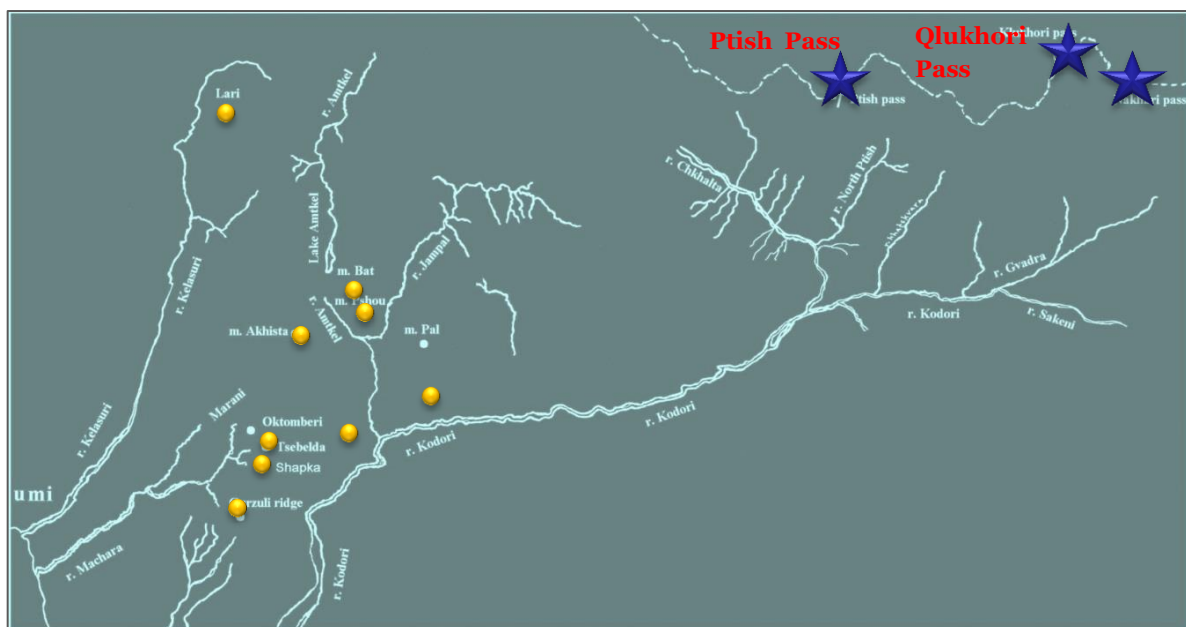
B- Directional view of the *Kay Apsilian Road* between the Black Sea and Caucasian passes Qlukhori and Darin. Related forts: 1- Shapka. 2- Tsebelda. 3- Akhista. 4- Pal. 5- Apushta. 6- Lar.



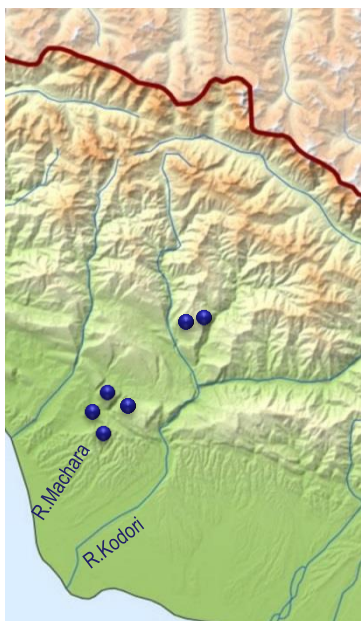
C- Landscape setting of the village Oktomberi (Olginskoe) within the military sites of Apsilian land.



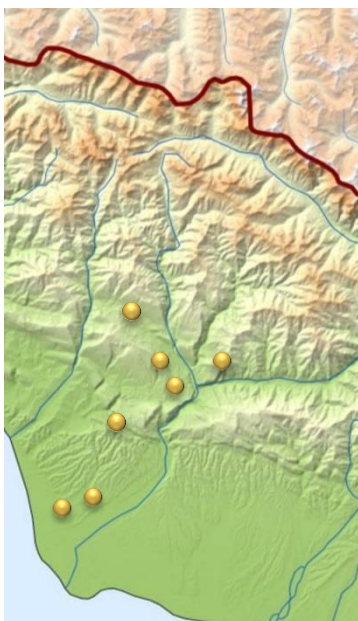
Three-dimensional reconstruction of landform and water sources of historical Apsilia.



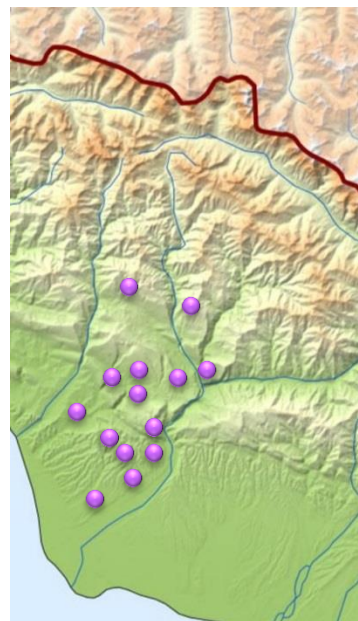
Dispersion of defensive sites of historical Apsilia.



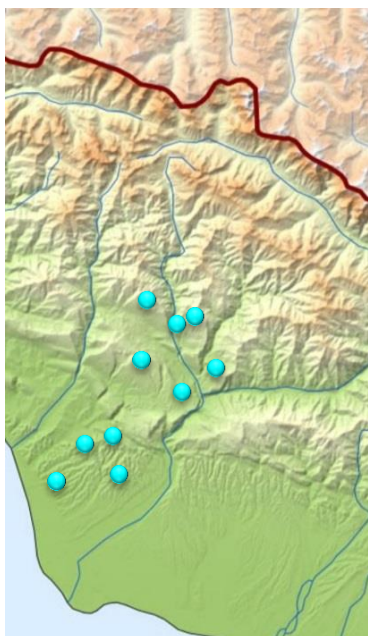
Beginning of areal development. Prehistoric finds and funerary monuments. Period 1 expansion.



Antiquity. Period 2 expansion.



Roman occupation. Period 3 expansion.

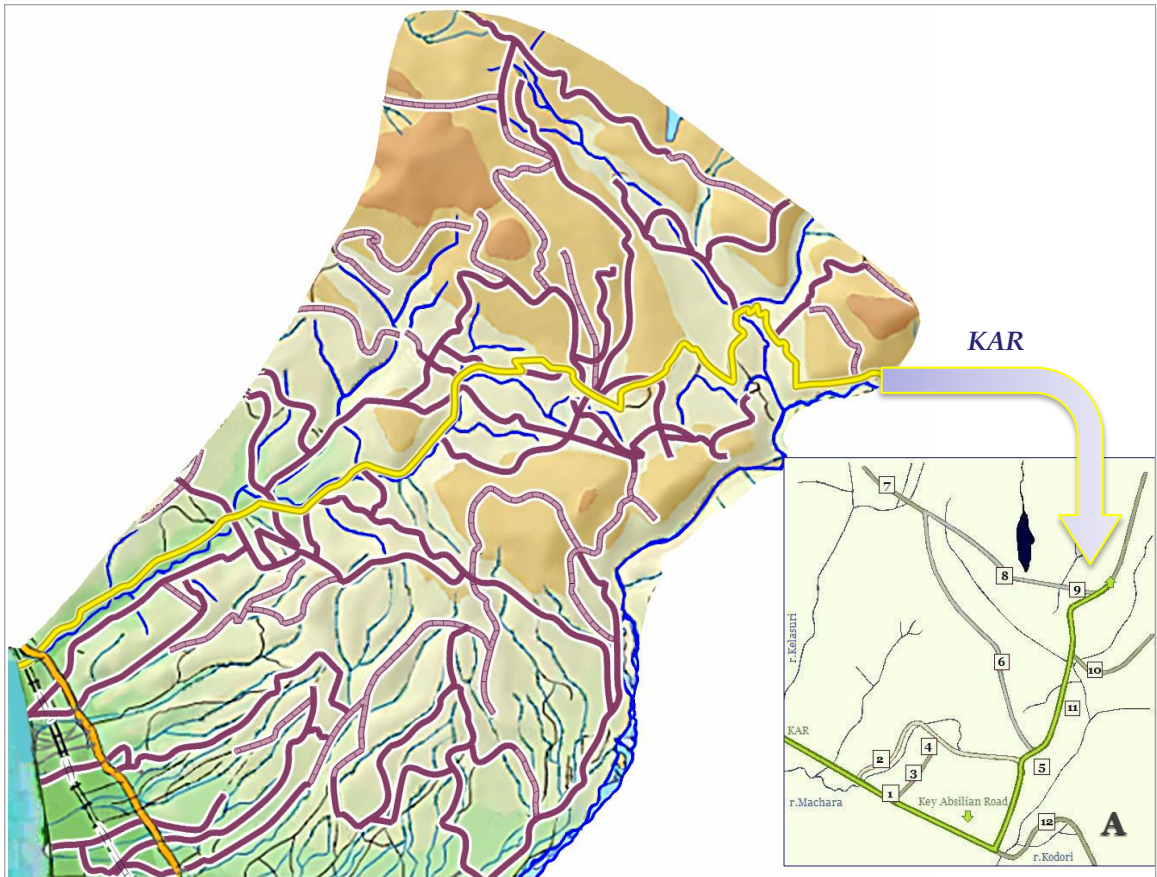


Early medieval development. Period 4 expansion.

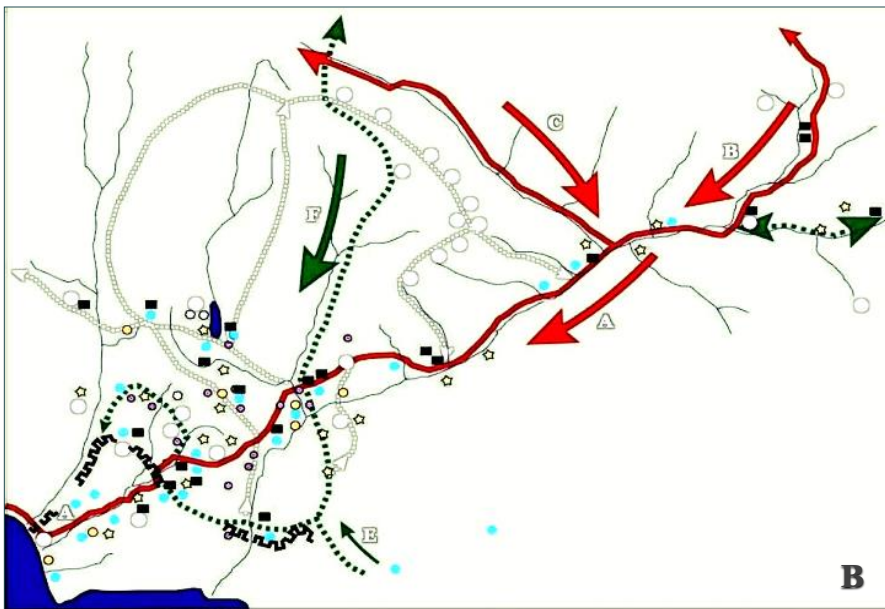


Simple map of archaeological finds corresponding to historical Apsilia.

**Perspectives on the area of human occupation in different historical period.**



Communication network of historical Apsilia in three dimensional image of land. A-KAR



Communication system of historical Apsilia. B- Road-section of KAR (The Kay Apsilian Road) between Gerzeul and Pal.

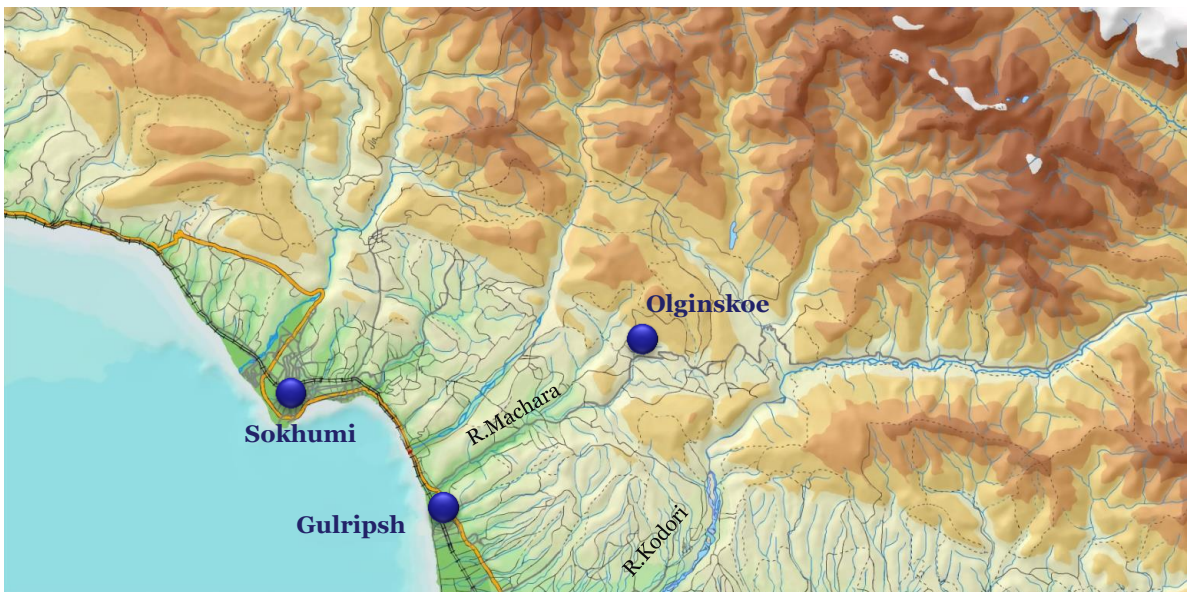
**CATALOGUE I**

**OLGINSKOE CEMETERY ASSEMBLAGES**

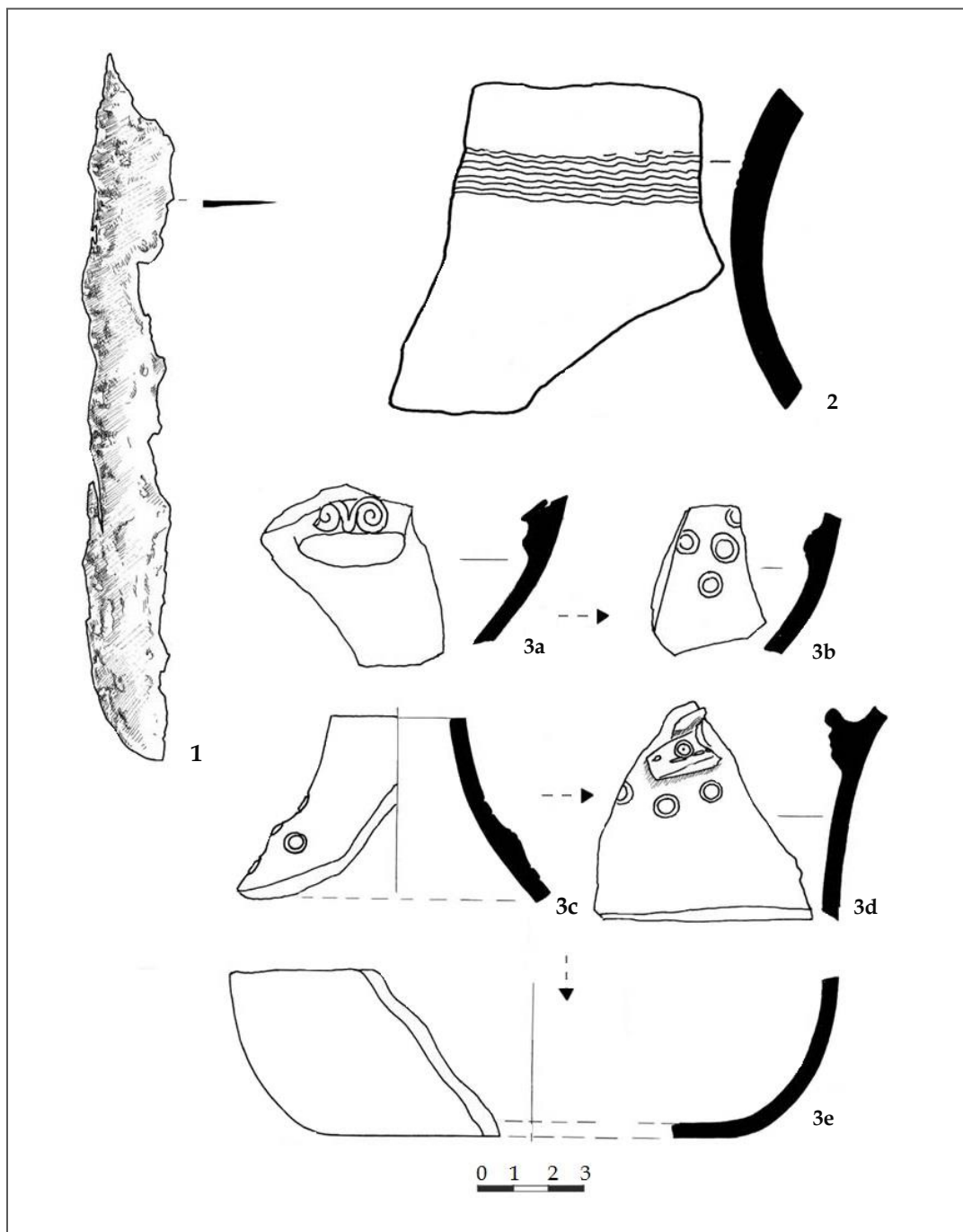




Locational view of the Olginskoe cemetery area.



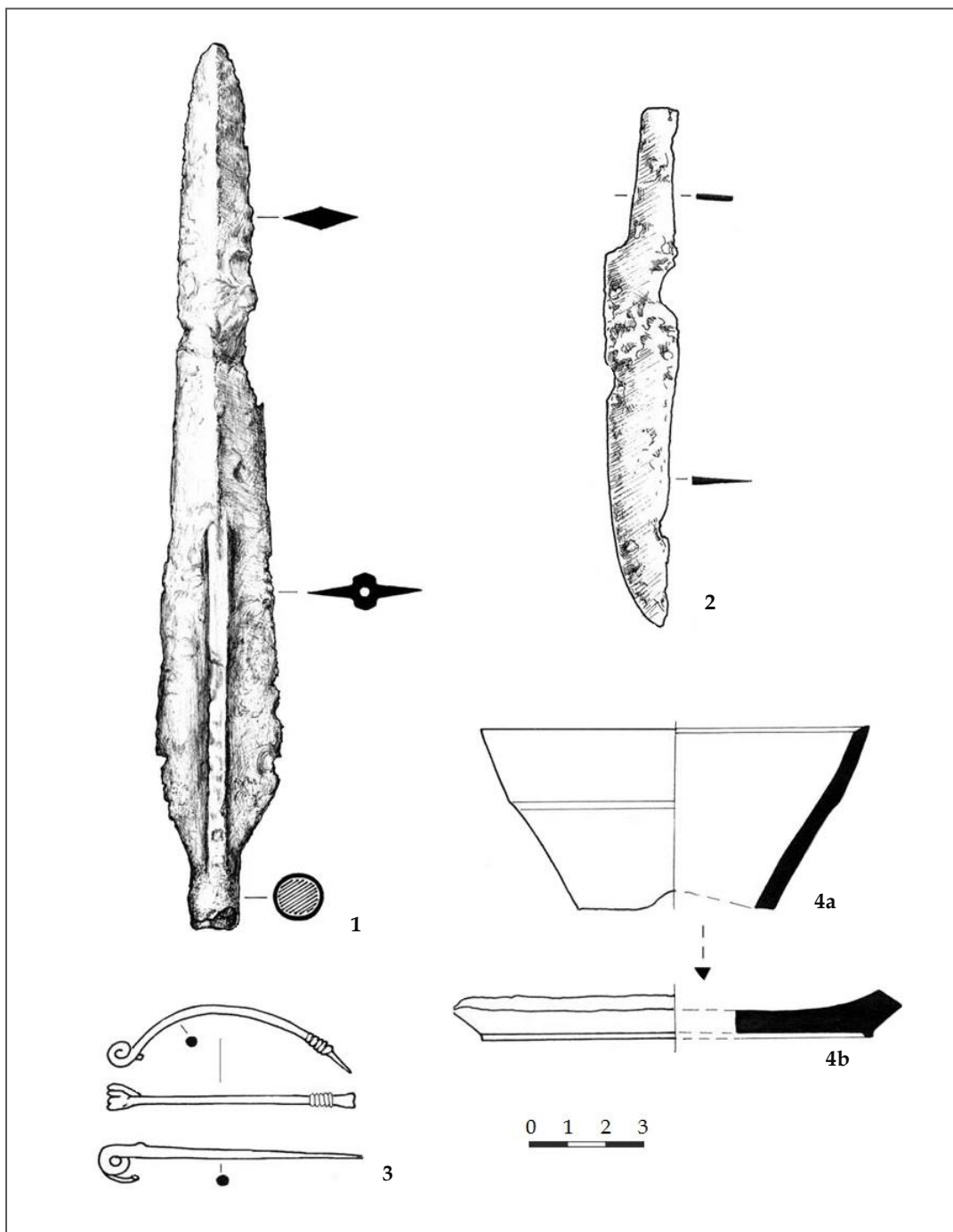
Locational view of the village Olginskoe.



**Depositional complex of the cremation grave 1.** 1 - Knife. 2 - Fragments of jar (urn).  
3 (a-d) - Fragments of jug.



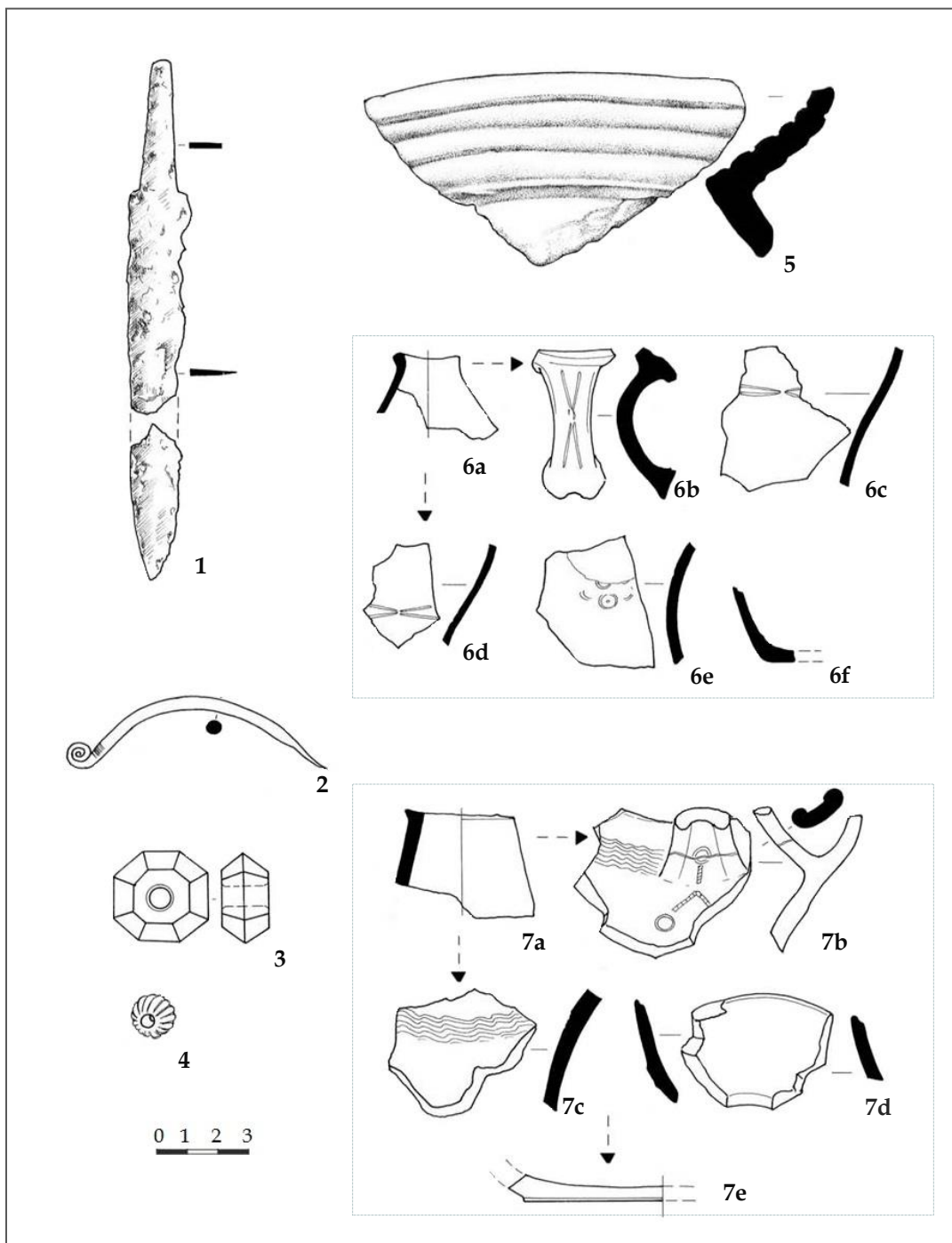
Coloured image of grave goods from the cremation grave 1.



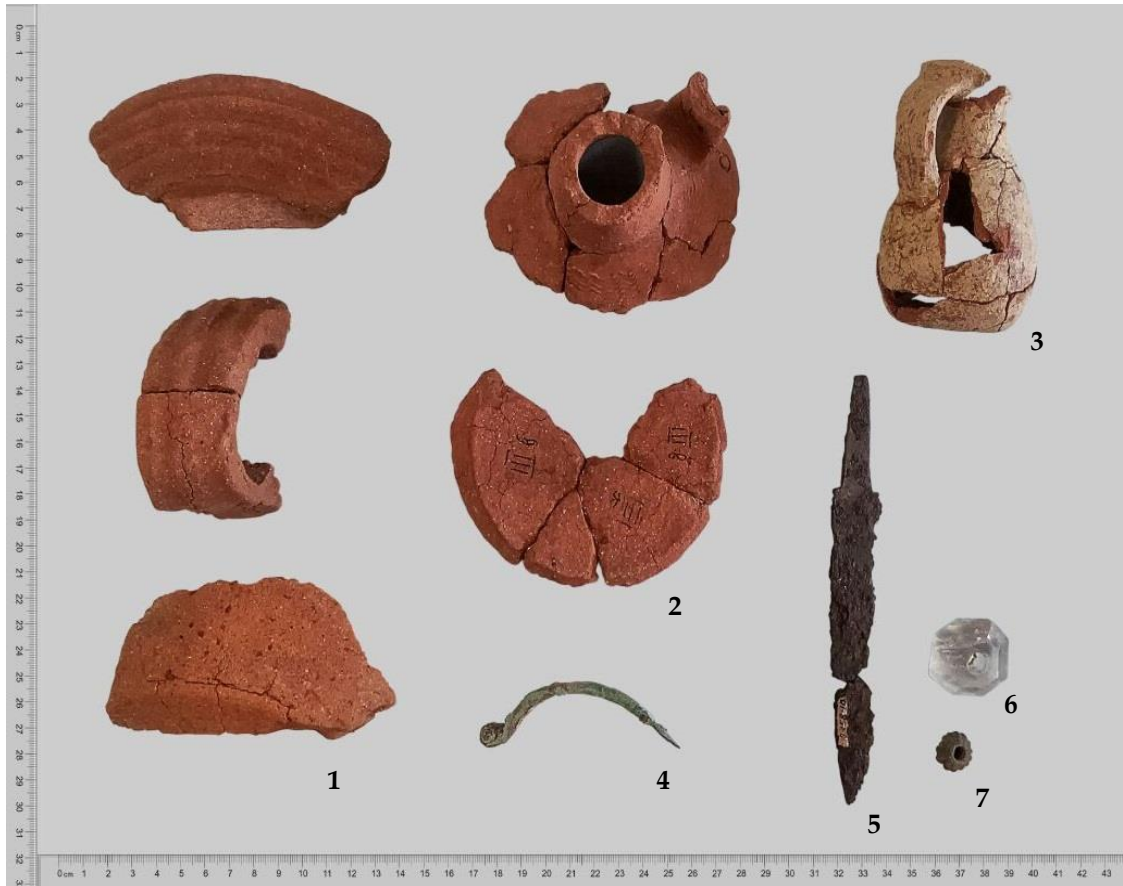
Depositional complex of the cremation grave 2. 1 - Spear head. 2 - Fibulae. 3 - Knife. 4 (-b) - Fragments of jug (urn).



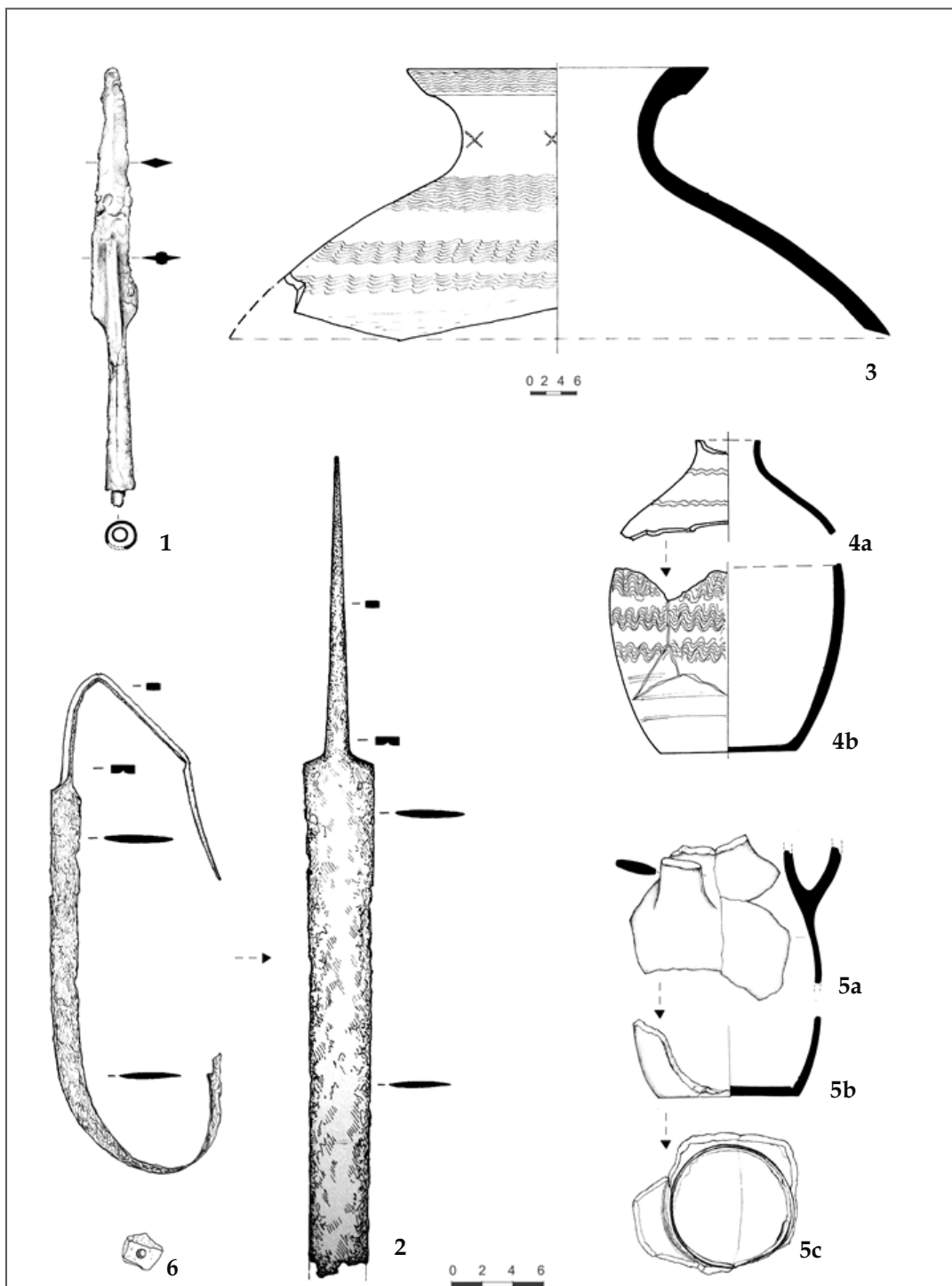
Coloured image of grave goods from the cremation grave 2.



**Depositional complex of the cremation grave 3.** 1 - Knife. 2 - Fibulae. 3- Rock crystal. 4 - Fiancé bead. 5 - Fragments of jar (urn). 6 (a-d) - Fragments of juglet.



Coloured image of grave goods from the cremation grave 3.

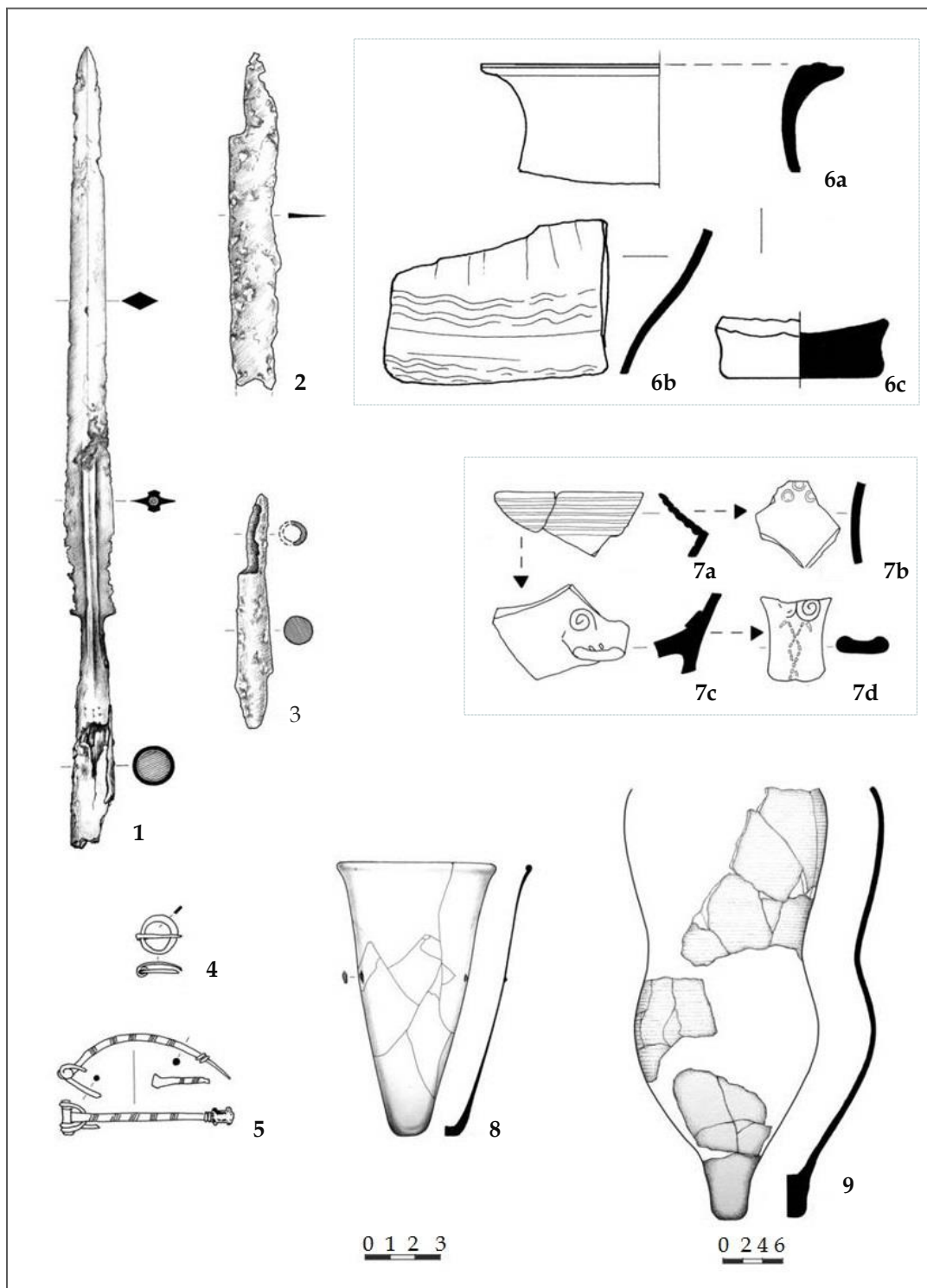


**Depositional complex of the cremation grave 4.** 1 - Spear head. 2 - Sword. 3 - Fragment of jar (urn). 4 (a-b) - Fragments of jug. 5 (a-b) - Fragments of jug. 6 - Paste bead.





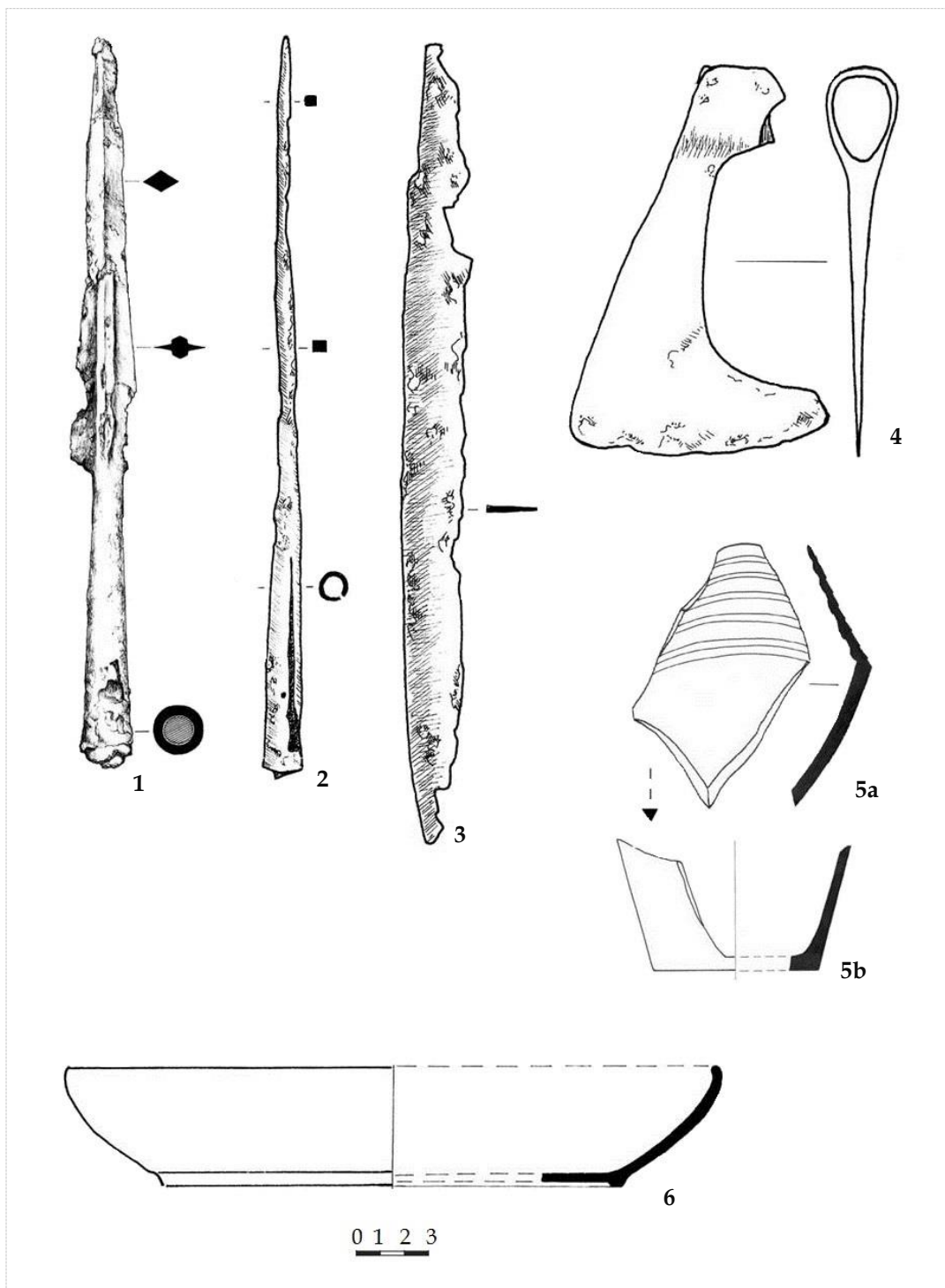
Coloured image of grave goods from the cremation grave 4.



**Depositional complex of the cremation grave 5.** 1 - Spear head. 2 - Dagger. 3 - Socket of spear head. 4 - Buckle. 5 - Fibulae. 6 (a-b) - Fragments of jar (urn). 7 (a-e) - Fragments of juglet. 8 - Glass vessel. 9 - Fragmented amphorae.



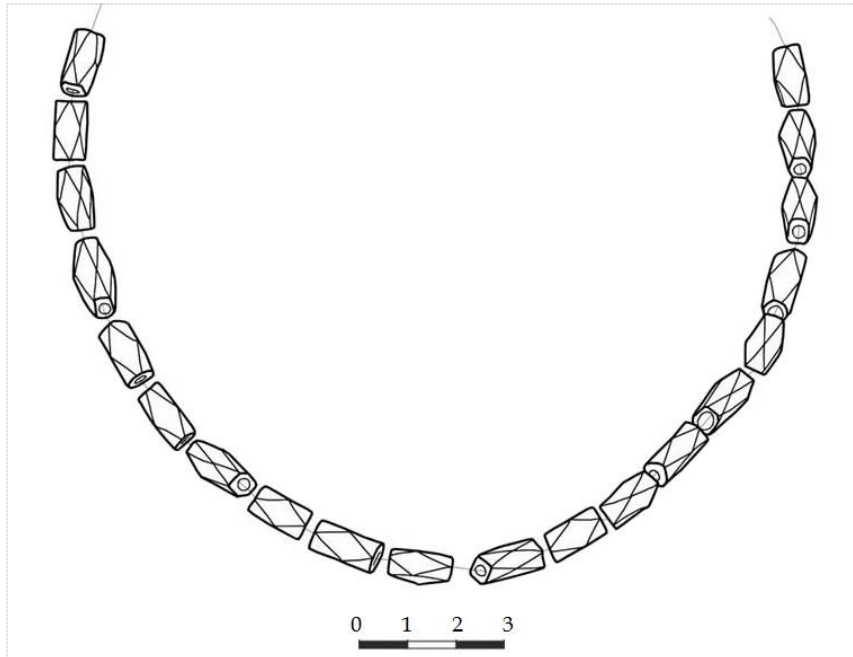
Coloured image of grave goods from the cremation grave 5.



**Depositional complex of the cremation grave 6.** 1- Triangular spear head. 2 - Spear head ('bodkin-headed'). 3 - long knife. 4 - Axe. 5 (a-b) - Fragments of jar (urn). 6 - Plate.



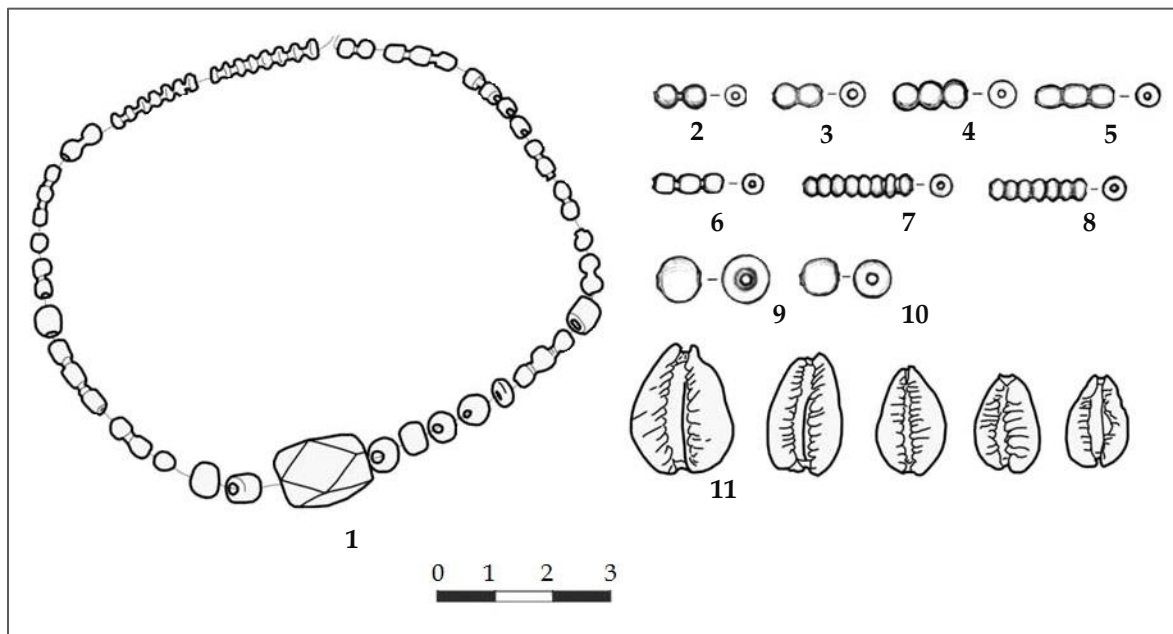
Coloured image of grave goods from the cremation grave 6.



Survival royal blue glass beads of possible neckless from the destructed grave 8.



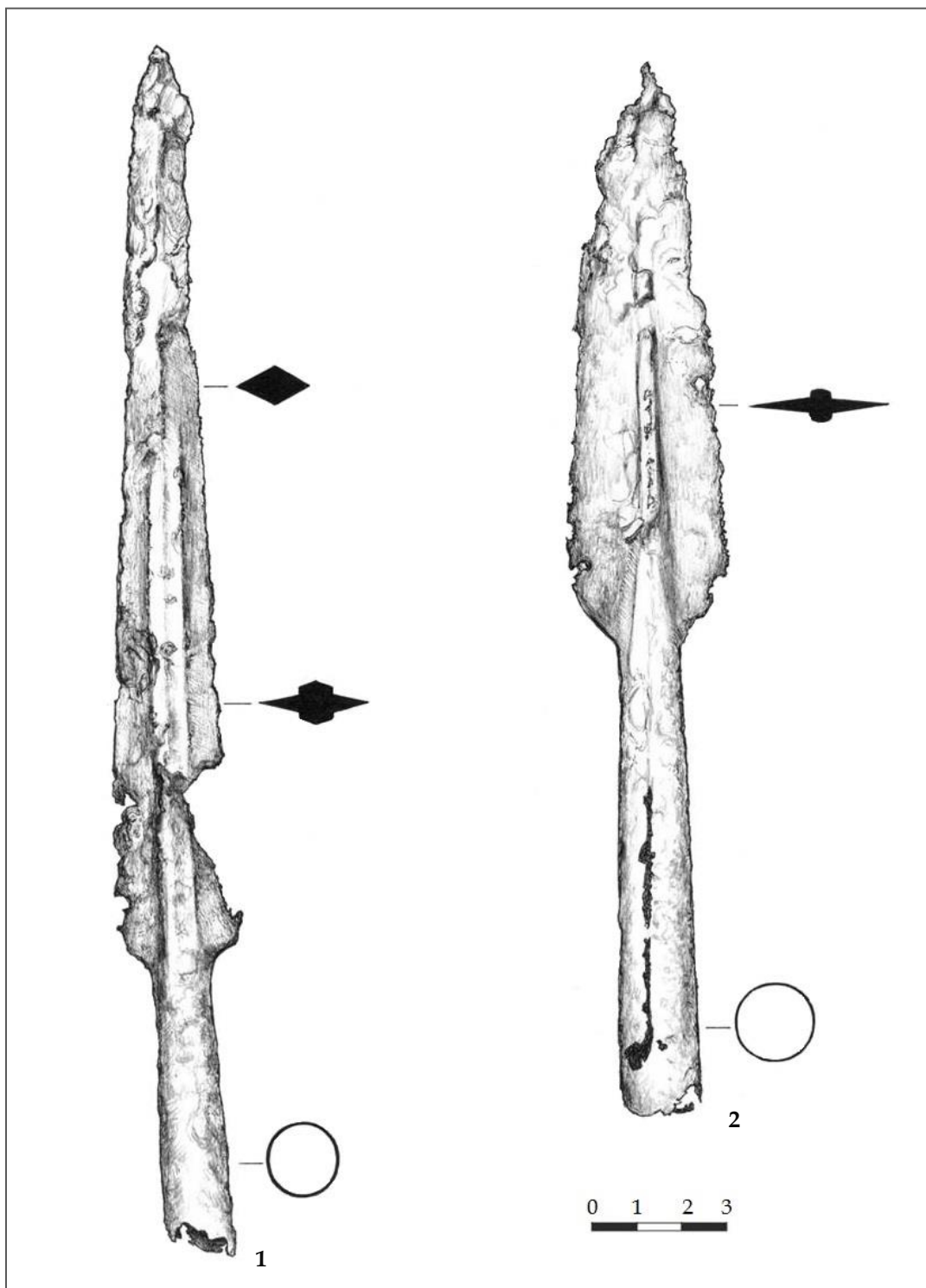
Coloured image of survived royal blue glass beads from the destructed grave 8.



Survived beads from destroyed the destroyed grave 9. 1 (a-g) - Neckless suspended of various gilded beads. 2 - Rock crystal. 3 (h-i) - cornelian beads. 4 - Sea shell.



Coloured image of neckless from the destroyed grave 9.

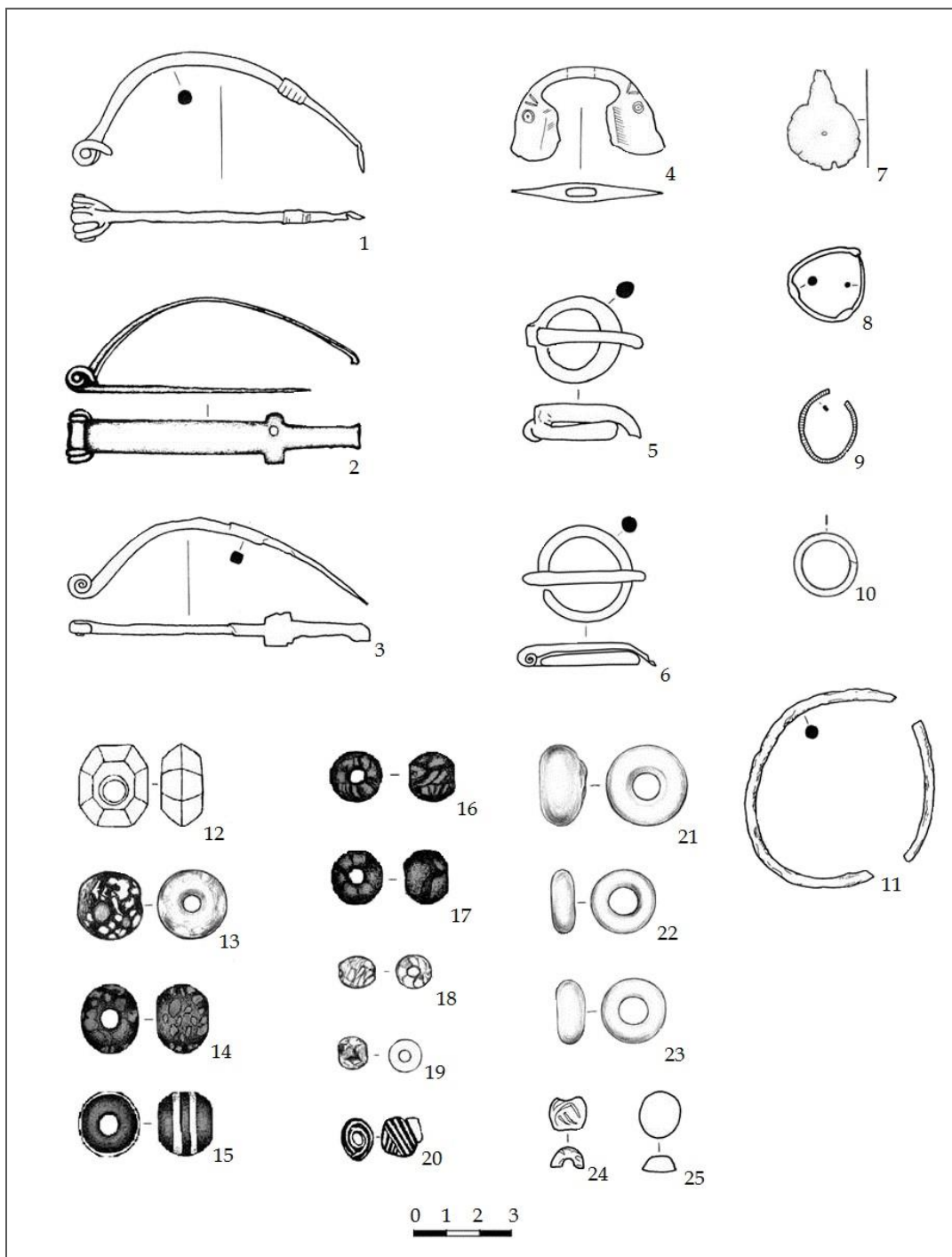


Survived depositional complex of the destroyed grave 10. 1 - Spear head. 2 - Lance.





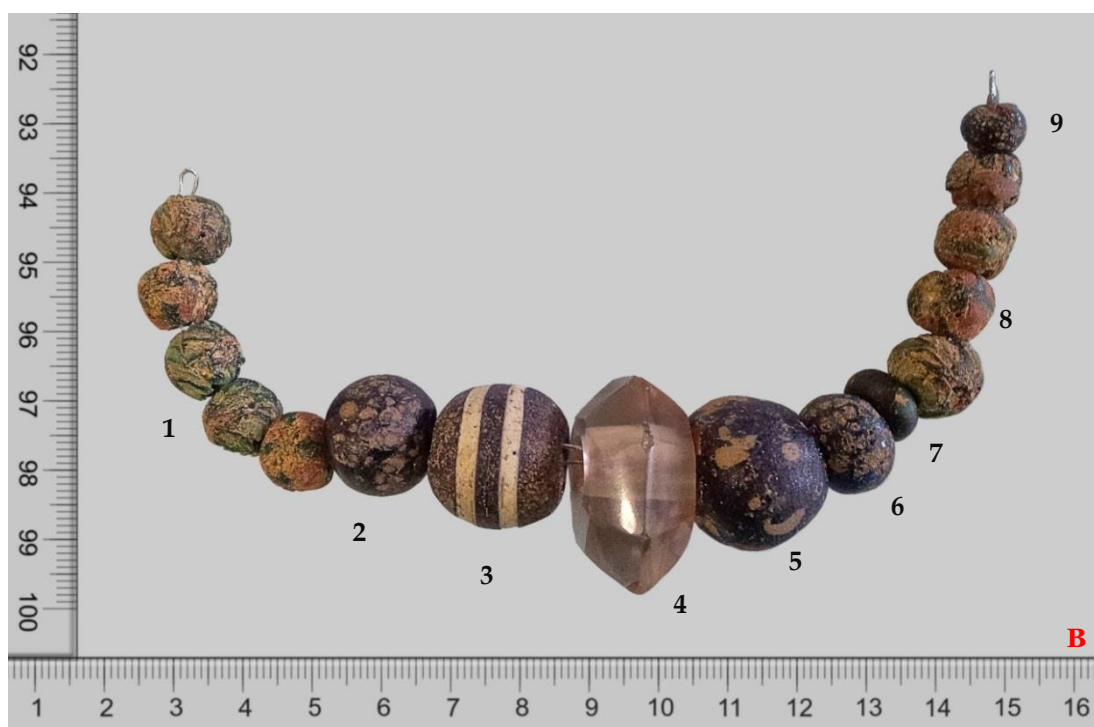
Coloured image of survived grave goods of the destroyed grave 10.



**Survived depositional complex of the destroyed grave 11.** 1-3 - Bronze and iron fibulas. 4 - Bronze buckle (?). 5-6 - Iron and bronze buckles. 7 - Silver plate. 8 - Bronze wire. 9 - Bronze wire with ribbed surface. 10 - Iron loop. 11 - Iron bracelet. 12 - Rock crystal. 13-14 - Dotted beads. 15 - Stripped bead. 16-19 - Incrust coloured bead. 20 - Pinched bead. 21-23 - Ring beads. 24 - Incrust black paste bead.


















Coloured image of the survived grave goods from the destroyed grave 11.



Coloured image of the survived beads (possible necklace ?) from the destroyed grave 11.



Table 21

	Storage wares and liquid container	Plate	Pouring wares
AD 350-370/380	 1  2		 7  8  9
AD 380-400	 3  4  5		 10  11  12  13  14
AD 400-420	 6	 15	

Chronological spectrum of pottery wares of the cremation graves 1 to 6.



*Pithoi* (urn) of the grave 5.



*Pithoi* (urn) of the grave 4.



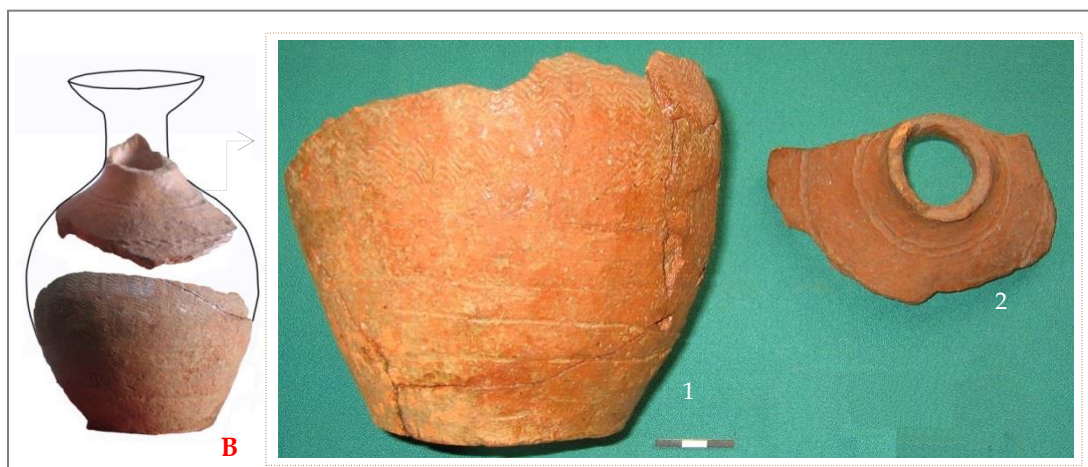
Bag shape handled jar (urn) from the grave 4.



Handled jar (urn) of the grave 3.



Handled jar (urn) of the grave 6.



Handleless jug (urn) of the grave 4.

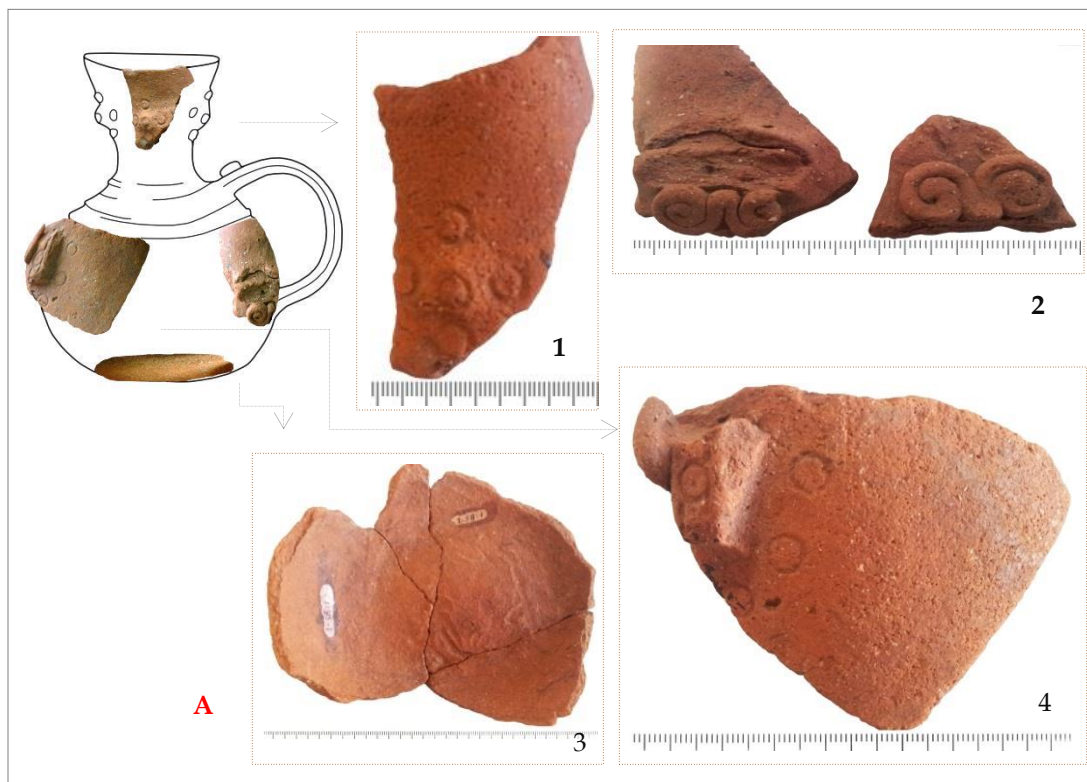




Hemispheric jug of the grave 2.



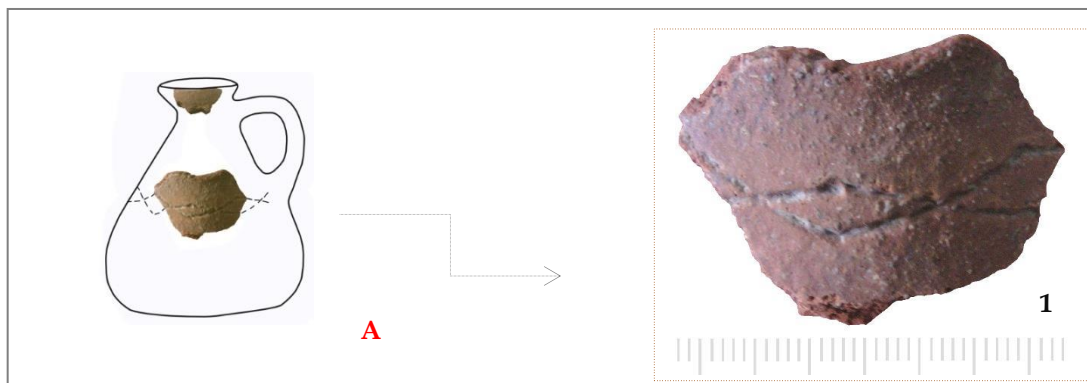
Hemispheric jug of the grave 3.



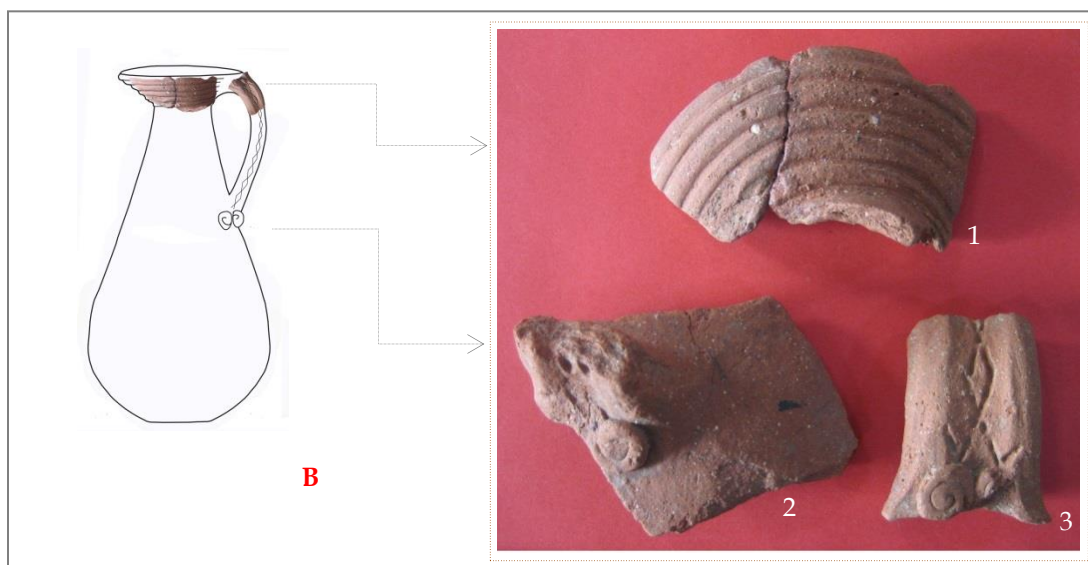
Globular shape jug of the grave 1.



Pear-shape juglet of the grave 3.



Pear-shape juglet of the grave 6.



Pear-shape jug of the grave 5.



Pear-shape jug of the grave 4.










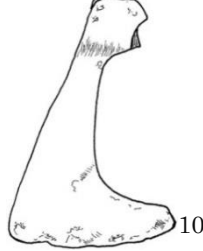







Amphorae of the grave 5.



LRCW of the grave 6.

Table 29

	Knives, daggers and seax	Spears and lances	Axe	Spatha
340-350 AD		 1		 2
350-370/380 AD	 3	 4		
		 5		
		 6		
		 7		
380-400 AD	 8	 9		 10
	 11		 15	
	 12	 14		
400-410/450 AD	 13			

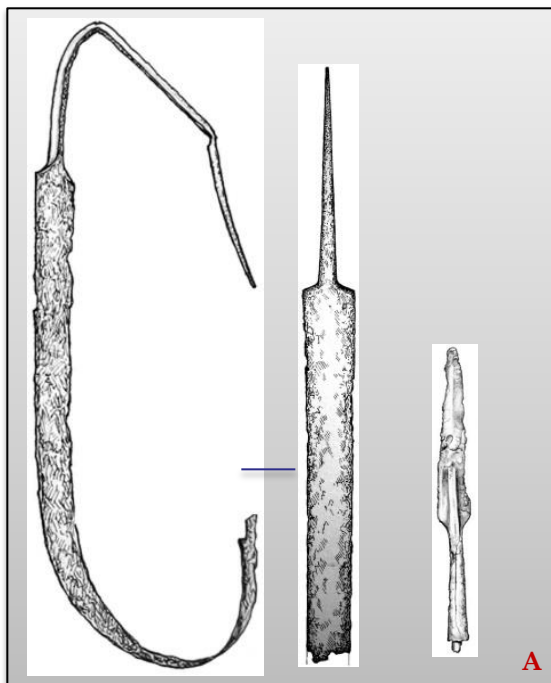
**Chronological spectrum of weapons.** 1 - Grave 11. 2 - Sword, grave 4. 3 - Knife, grave 2. 4 - Spear head, grave 4. 5 - Spear head, grave 2. 6 - Spear head, grave 6. 7 - Socket, grave 5. 8 - Knife, grave 1. 9 - Spear head, grave 6. 10 - Axe, grave 6. 11- Knife, grave 3. 12 - Seax, grave 5. 13 - Knife, grave 6. 14 - Spear head, grave 5. 15 - *Bodkin* spear head, grave 6.



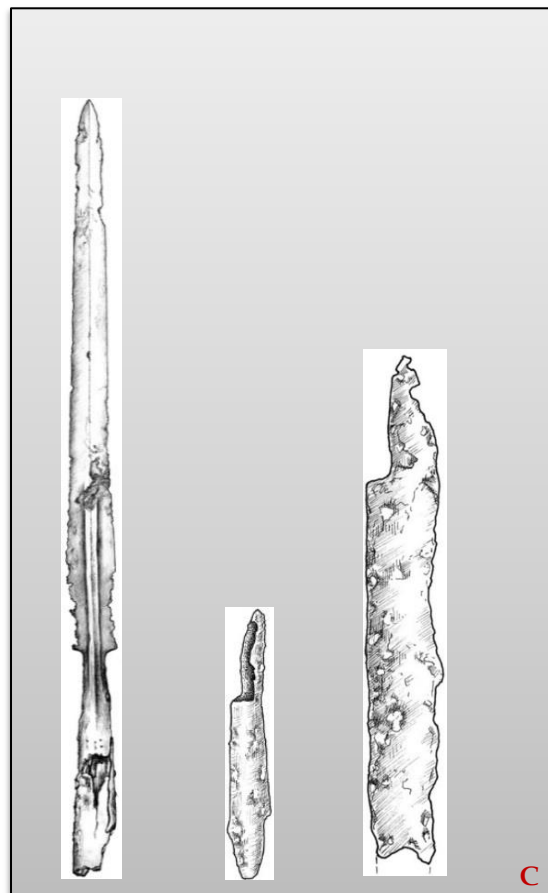
A- Sword related buckle of destroyed grave 11. B- Possible sword relative buckle from Olginskoe grave 5. Identical buckle accompanied decorated sword in Tsebelda graves 229, 248.



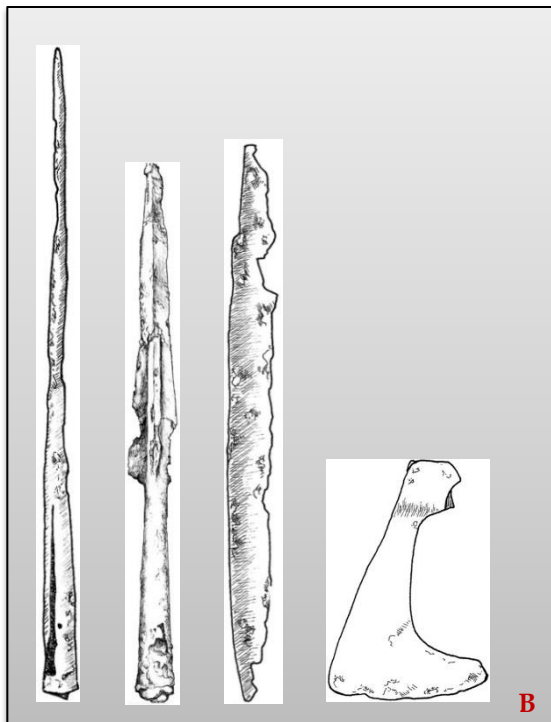
Weapon types and sword related objects from Olginskoe cemetery. 1, 6 - From the grave 4. 2- From the grave 5. 3, 5, 6 - From the grave 6. 4- From the grave 10. 4- From the grave 10.



Weapon combination A. Grave 4.  
Date: 350-370 AD.

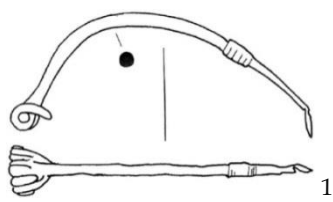
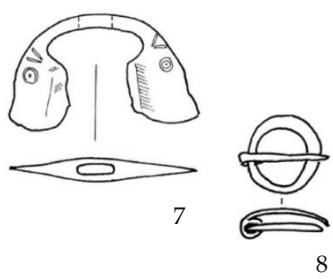
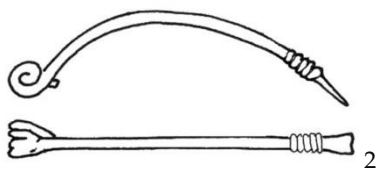
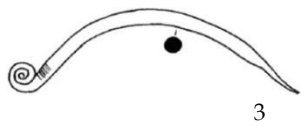
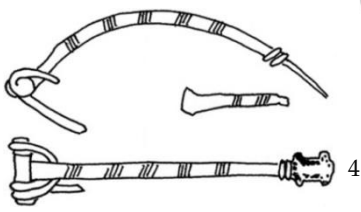
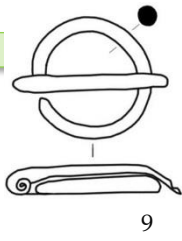
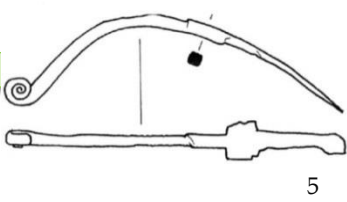
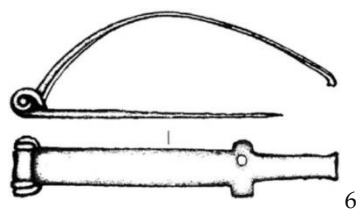
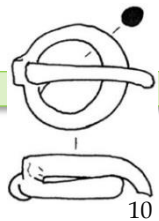


Weapon combination C. Grave 5.  
Date: 375-400 AD.



Weapon combination B. Grave 6.  
Date: 390/400-450 AD.

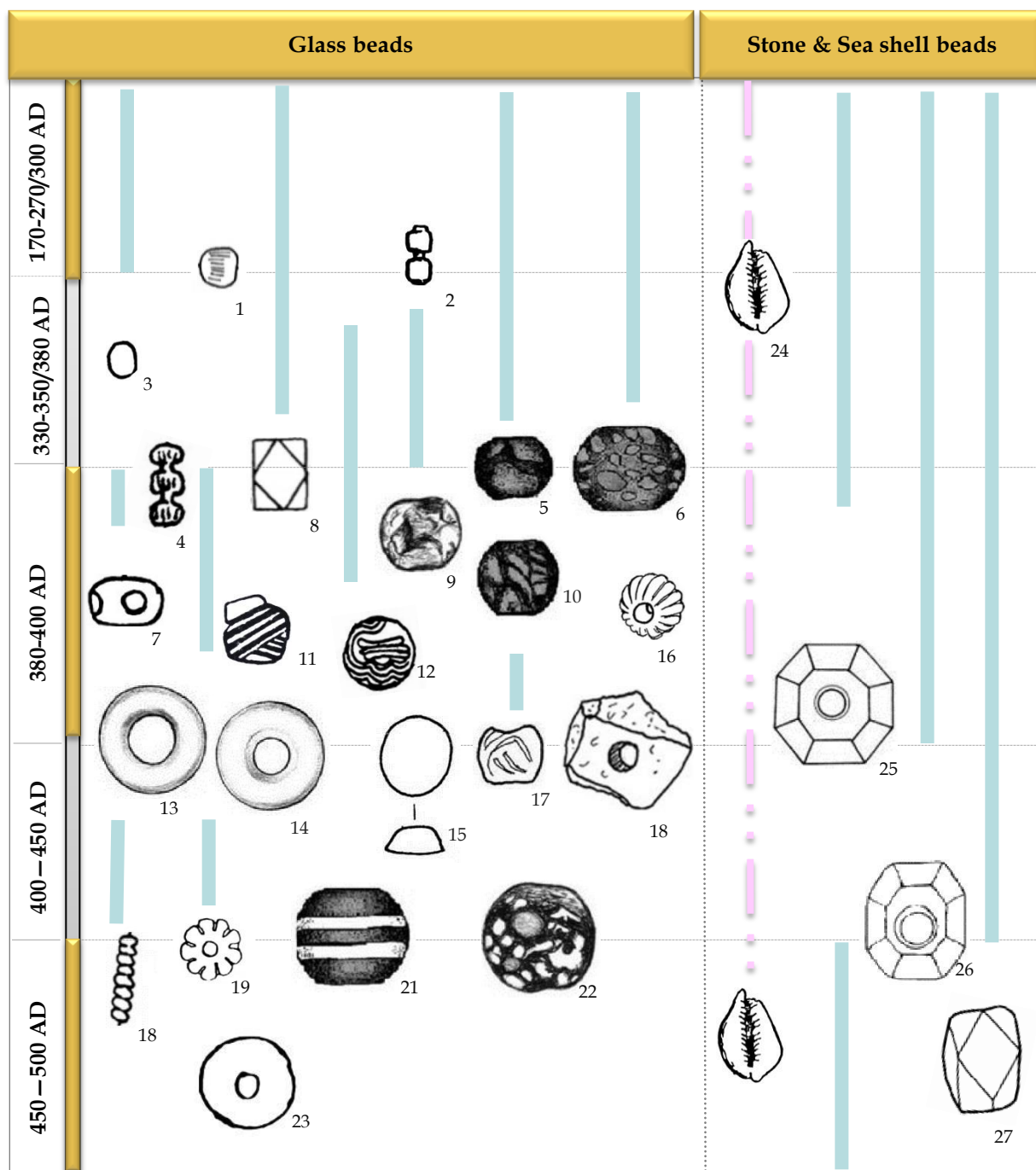
Table 31

	Fibulae	Buckles
320-380 AD	 <p>1</p>	 <p>7 8</p>
380-400 AD	 <p>2</p>  <p>3</p>  <p>4</p>	 <p>9</p>
400-450 AD	 <p>5</p>  <p>6</p>	 <p>10</p>

Chronologic spectrum of Fasteners. *Fibulas*: 1, 5, 6- From the grave 11. 2- From the grave 2. 3- From the grave 5. 4- From the grave 5. *Buckles*: 7, 9-10 -From the grave 11. 5- From the grave 5.

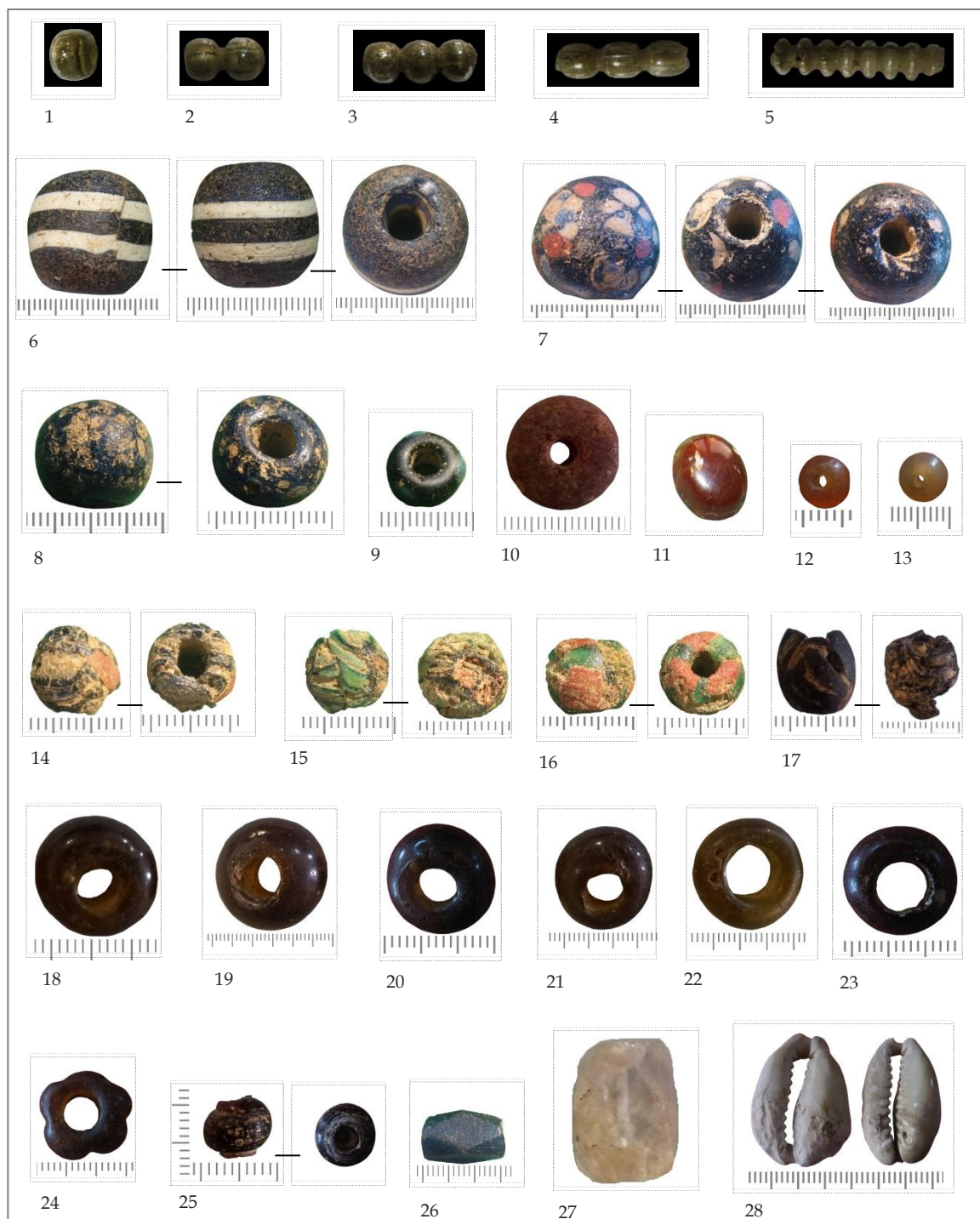


Table 32

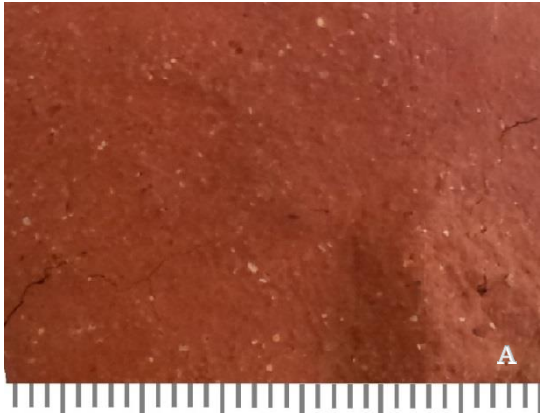


**Chronologic spectrum of Beads.** 1, 2, 4, 189- Gilded beads, grave 9. 3 - Amber, grave 2.

5, 10, 12, 17 - Incrust beads, grave 11. 6, 22 - Incrust dotted beads, grave 11. 7 - Applied dotted bead, grave 11. 8 - Royal blue glass bead, grave 8. 11 - Pinched bead, grave 11. 13-14 - Brownish glass beads, grave 11. 15 - Sardonic gam. 16 - Fiancé. 18 - White paste bead. 20 - Brow glass bead of flower shape. 21 - Stripped bead, grave 11. 23 - Sardonic, grave 11. 24 - Sea shell cowrie. 25 - Rock crystal.



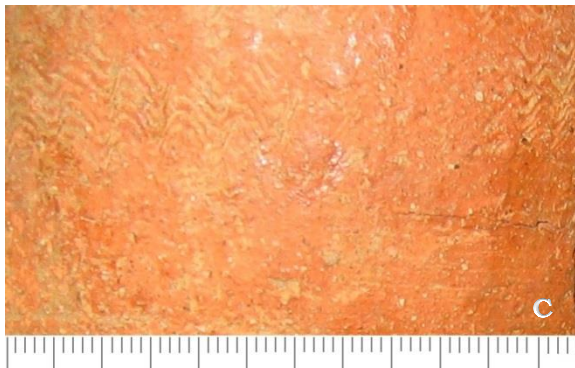
**Spectrum of beads from destructed graves. 1-5- Gilded beads (grave 9). 6 - Striped bead (grave 11). 7- 8 - Doted bead (grave 11). 9 - Bead with applied dot (grave 11). 10 - Sardonic bead (grave 11). 11- Sardonic gam. 12, 13 - Amber bead (grave 9). 14 - 17 - Incrust beads (grave 11). 18 - 24, 26 - Glass beads (Grave 11). 25 - Surface pinched bead (Grave 11). 27 - Rock crystal (Grave 9). 28 - Sea shell cowrie (Grave 9).**



Hemispheric jug, grave 3. *Clay type 4.*



Pear-shape juglet, grave 3. *Clay type 4.*



Ovoid jug, grave 4. *Clay type 4.*



Pear-shape juglet, grave 6. *Clay type 4.*

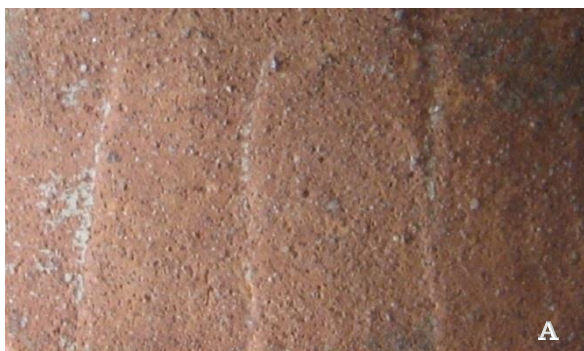


*Pithoi*, grave 4. *Clay type 5.*



Hemispheric jug, grave 2. *Clay type 5.*

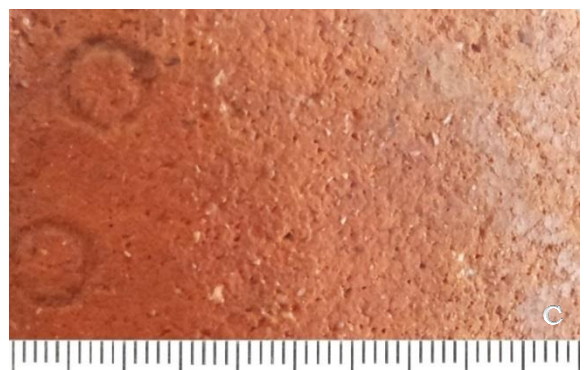
Pottery samples showing visually distinguishable colour and particles of clay types.



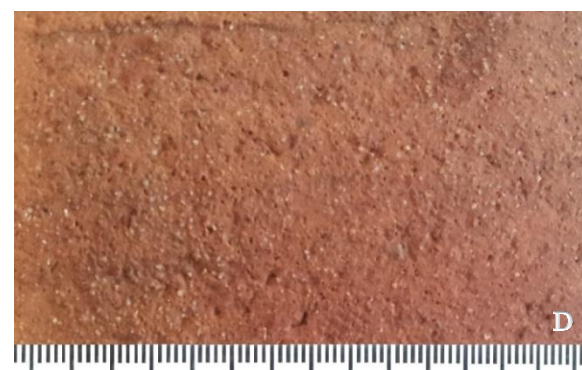
Pithoi, grave 5. *Clay type 1.*



Handled Jar, grave 3. *Clay type 1.*



Globular jug, grave 1. *Clay type 2.*



Handled Jar, grave 1. *Clay type 2.*

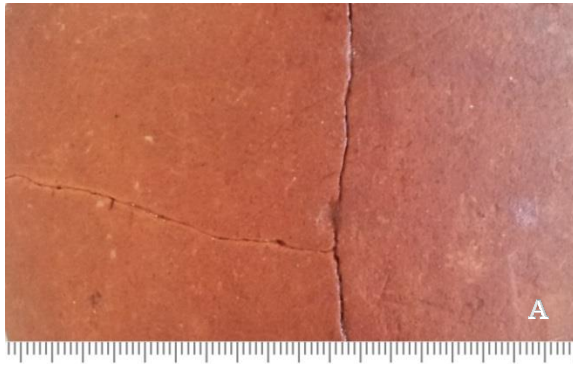


Pear-shape jug, grave 5. *Clay type 2.*



Handled Jar, grave 6. *Clay type 3.*

Pottery samples showing visually distinguishable colour, particles and clay types.



Pear-shape jug, grave 4. *Clay type 7.*

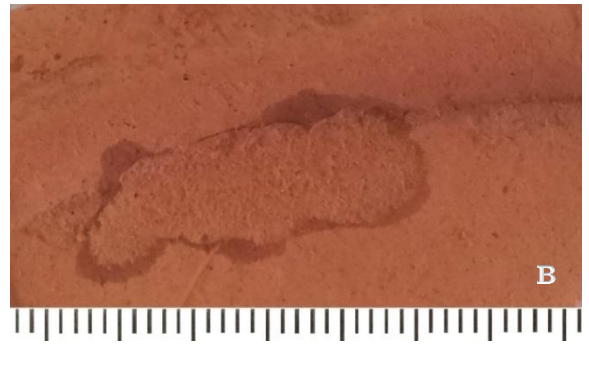


Plate (LRCW), grave 6. *Clay type 8.*



Fragments of *amphorae*, grave 5. *Clay type 7.*

Pottery samples showing visually distinguishable colour, particles and clay types



**Technological aspects of decorative pottery wares.** A-B – *Pithoi*, grave 4. C-*Pithoi*, grave 5. E- Handled jar, grave 3. F- Pear-shaped jug, grave 5. G-Handled jar, grave 6.



Pottery decoration and related motives.



Finger print marks

Traces of the wheel thrown manufacture

Traces of burnishing

Turning (directional) traces

Overfired parts

Traces of manufacture.



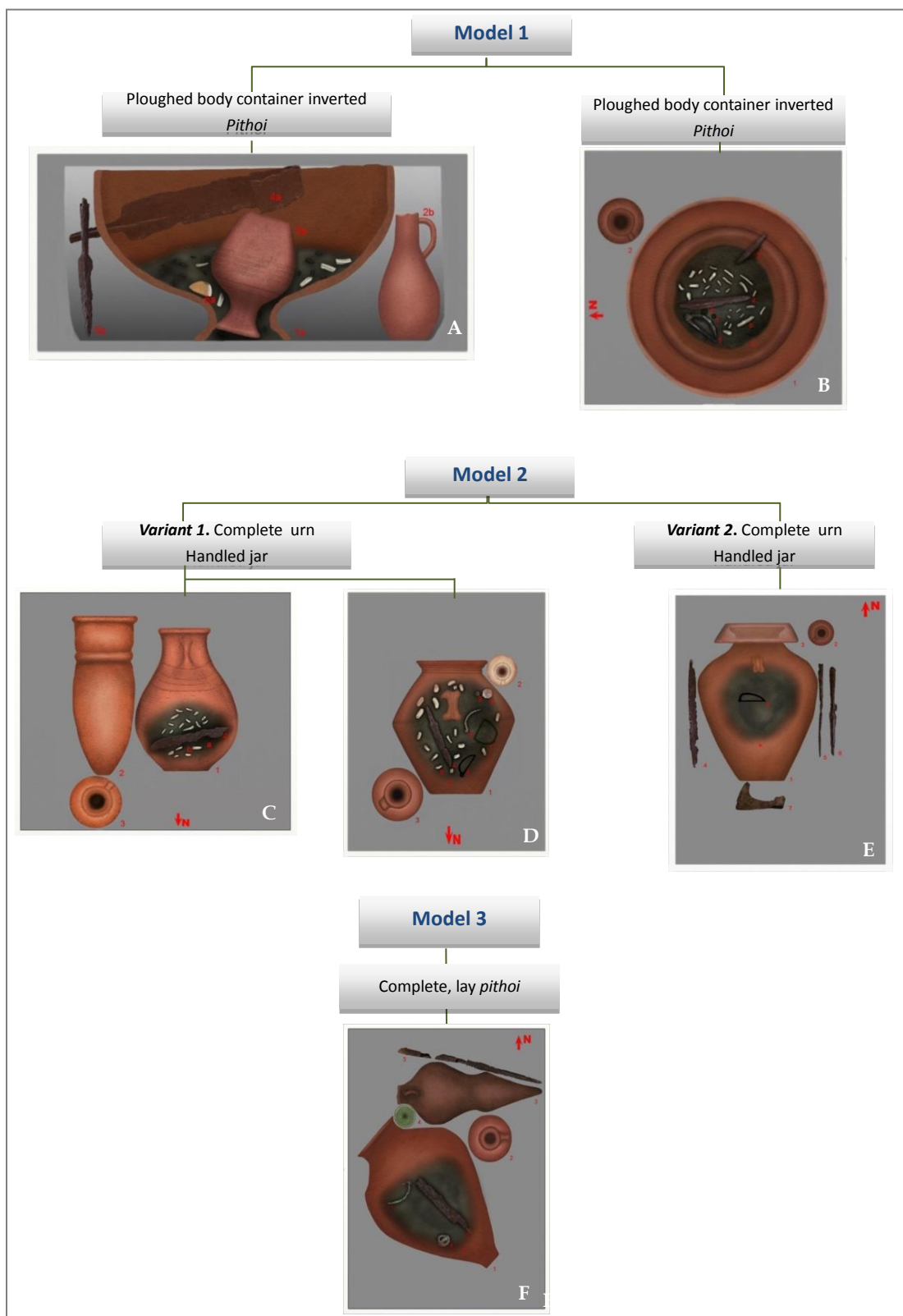
	Local	Import
The stuff of tableware	<p>1 2 3</p> <p>4 5 6</p> <p>7 8</p>	<p>14</p> <p>15</p>
The stuff of storage and transitware pottery	<p>9 10 11</p> <p>12 13</p>	<p>16</p>

Extent of the local and foreign foodstuff used by Olginskoe society.

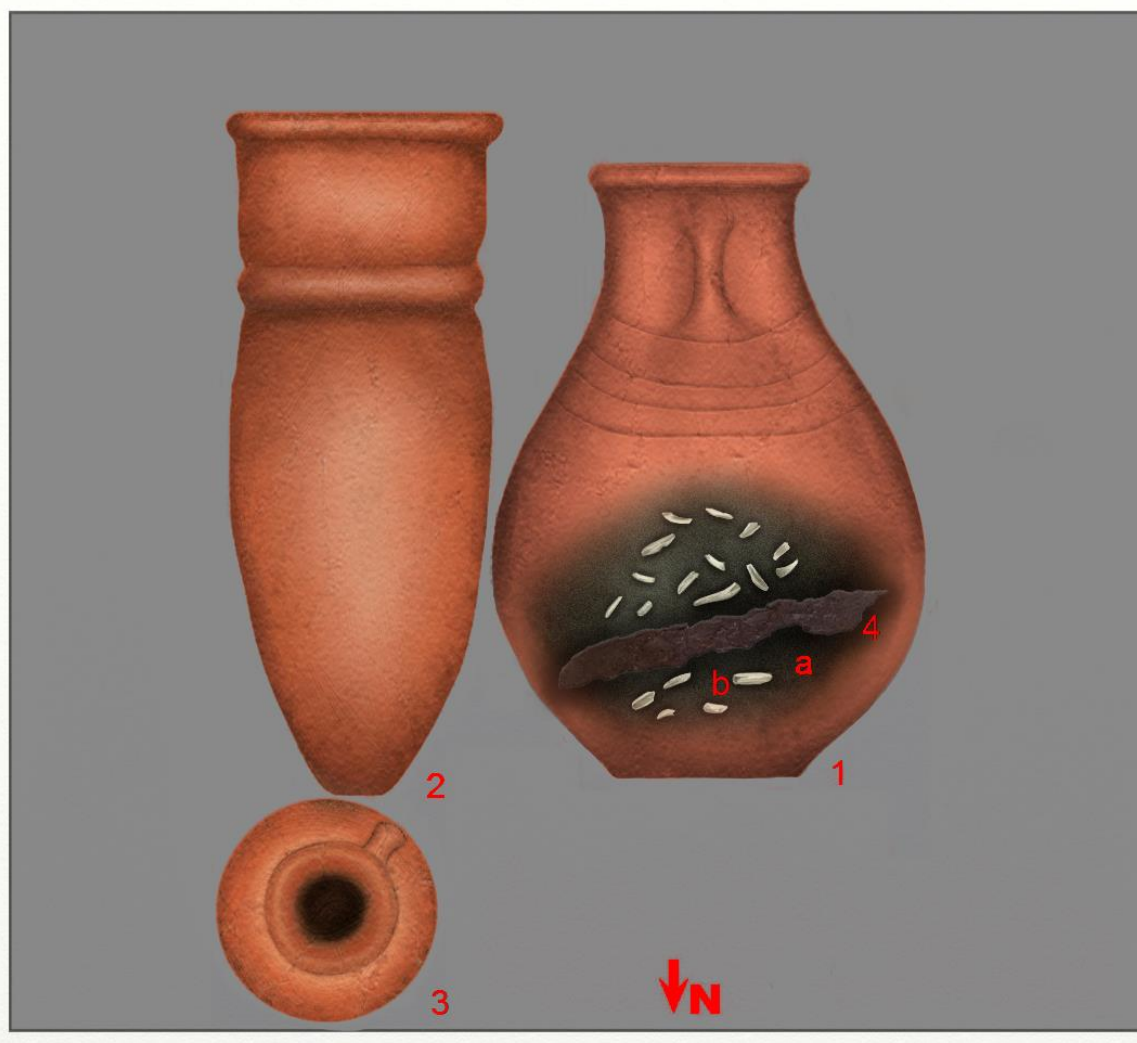
Table 41

Urn type	Pyre	Bone, Ash display	Grave Assemblages				
			Assembled pottery	Glass vessel	weapons	jewellery	Dress attire
 Grave 1							
 Grave 2				-		Bead lost	Fibulae lost
 Grave 3				+			
 Grave 4							
 Grave 5							
 Grave 6							

Depositional content of Olginskoe cemetery graves.



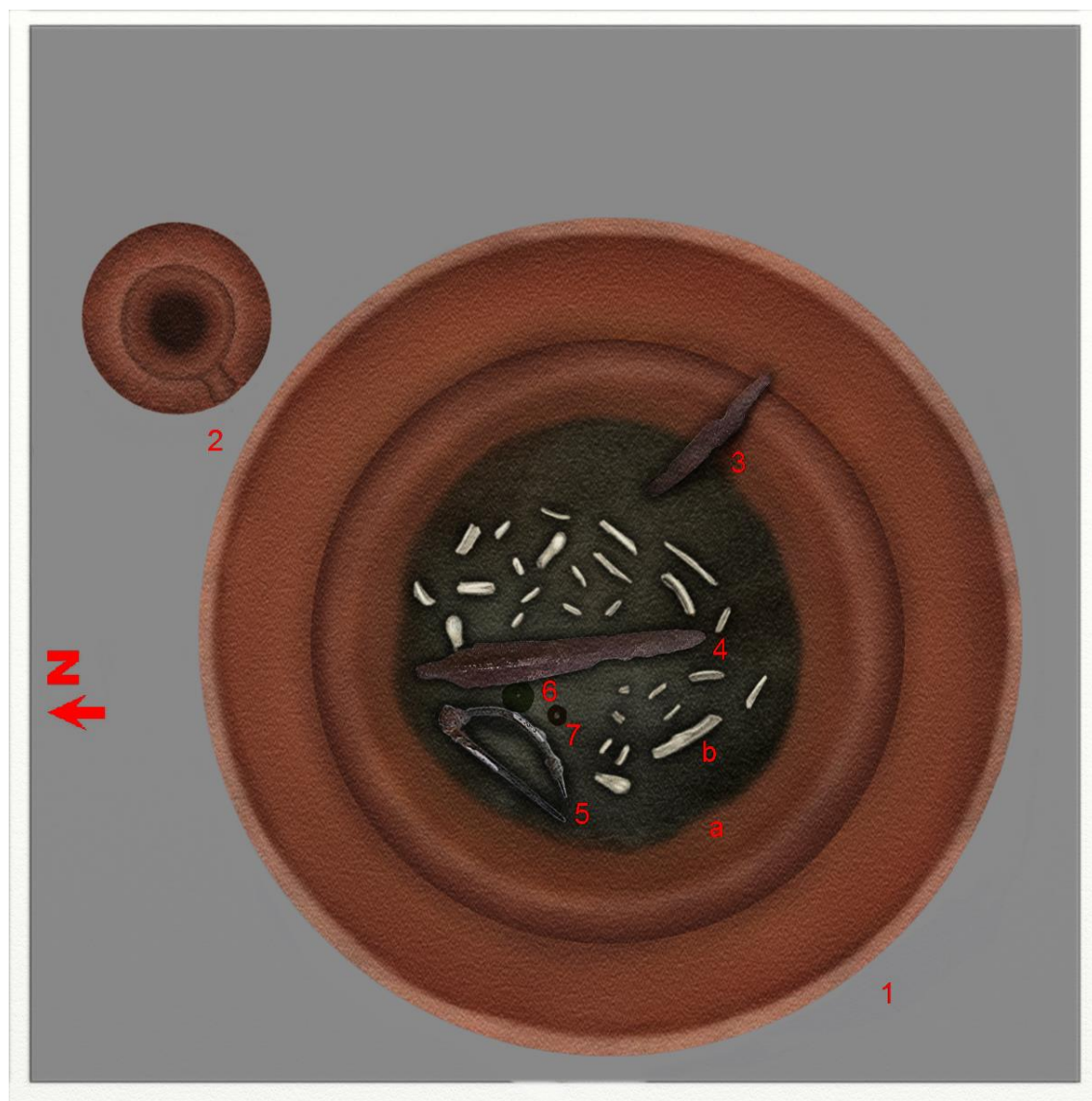
Grave models of Olginskoe cemetery



A

1

**Grave 1.** 1- Reconstruction of internal grave structure. A-Associated grave offerings.  
*Details see in text.*



1

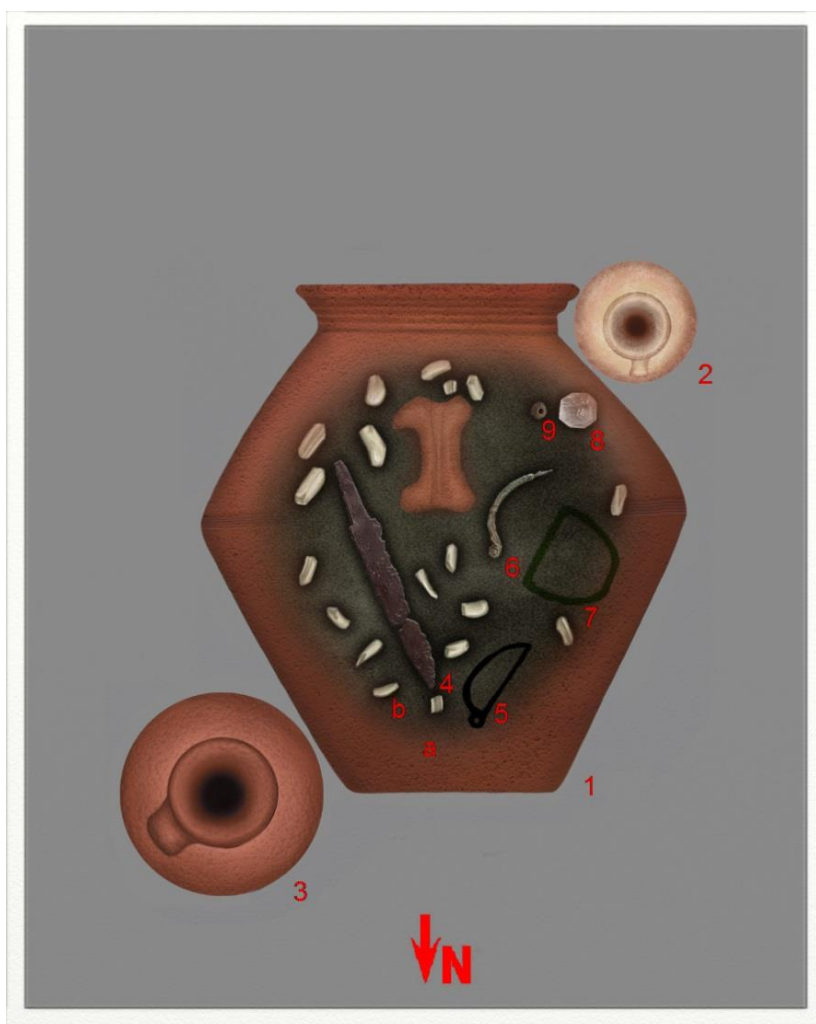


A



B

**Grave 2.** 1- Reconstruction of internal grave structure. A-Associated grave offerings. B- Artistic reconstruction of corresponding warrior. *Details see in text.*



1

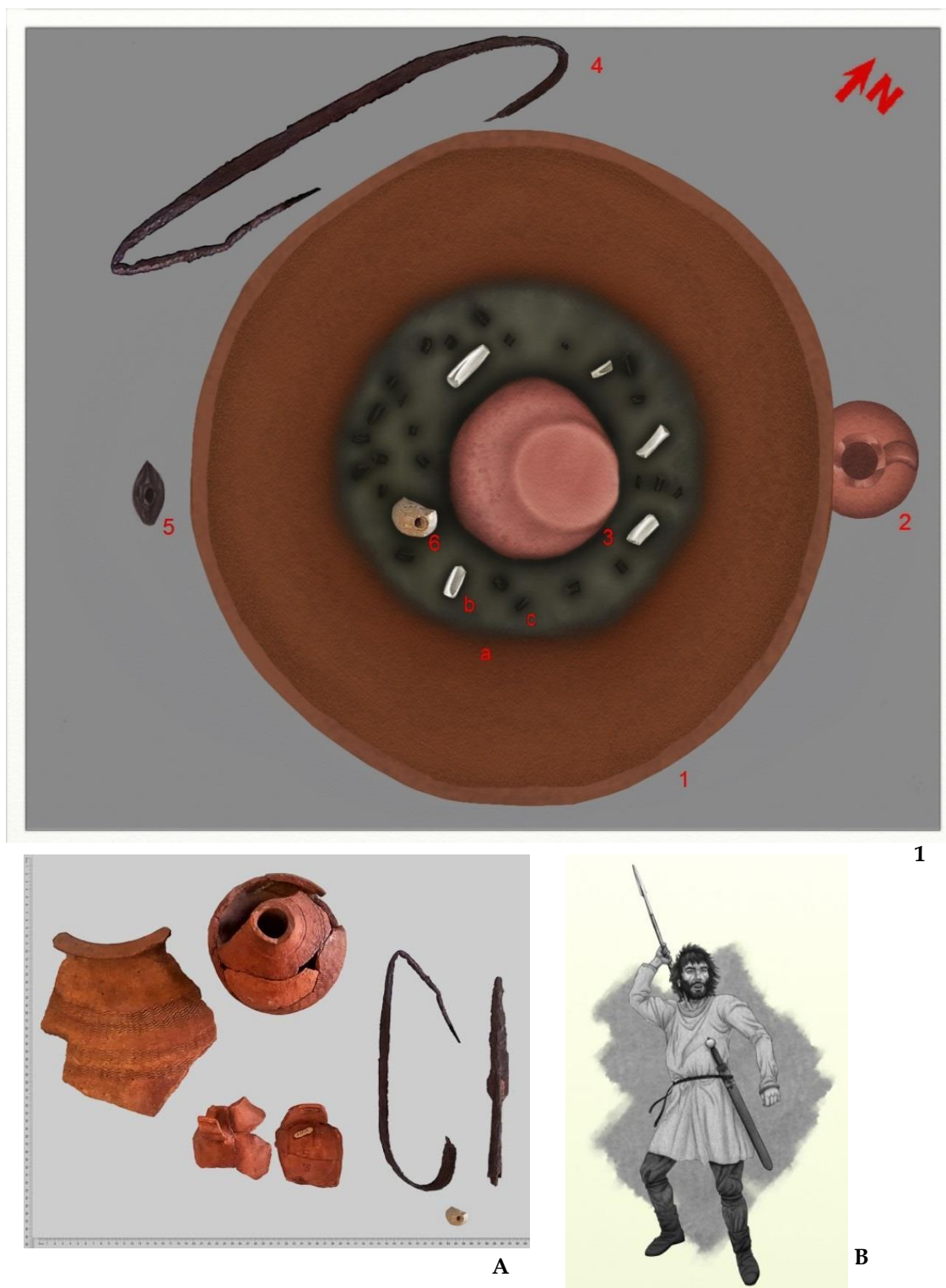


A

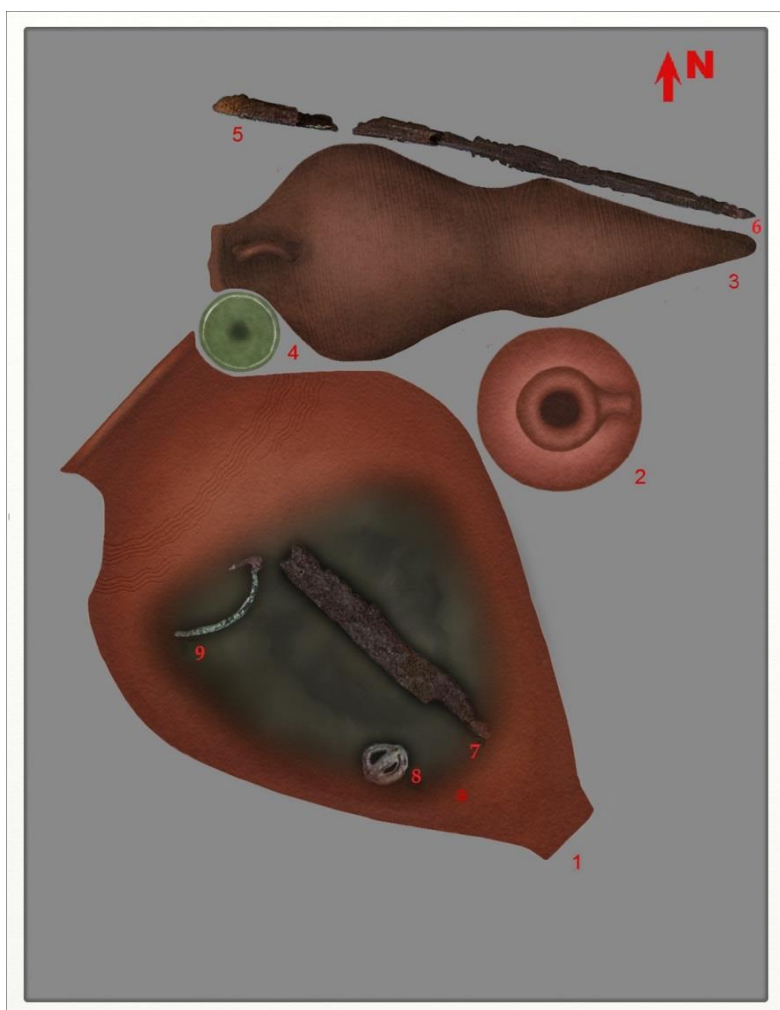


B

**Grave 3.** 1- Reconstruction of internal grave structure. A-Associated grave offerings. B- Artistic reconstruction of corresponding Female. *Details see in text.*



**Grave 4. 1-** Reconstruction of internal grave structure. **A-**Associated grave offerings. **B-** Artistic reconstruction of corresponding warrior. *Details see in text.*



1



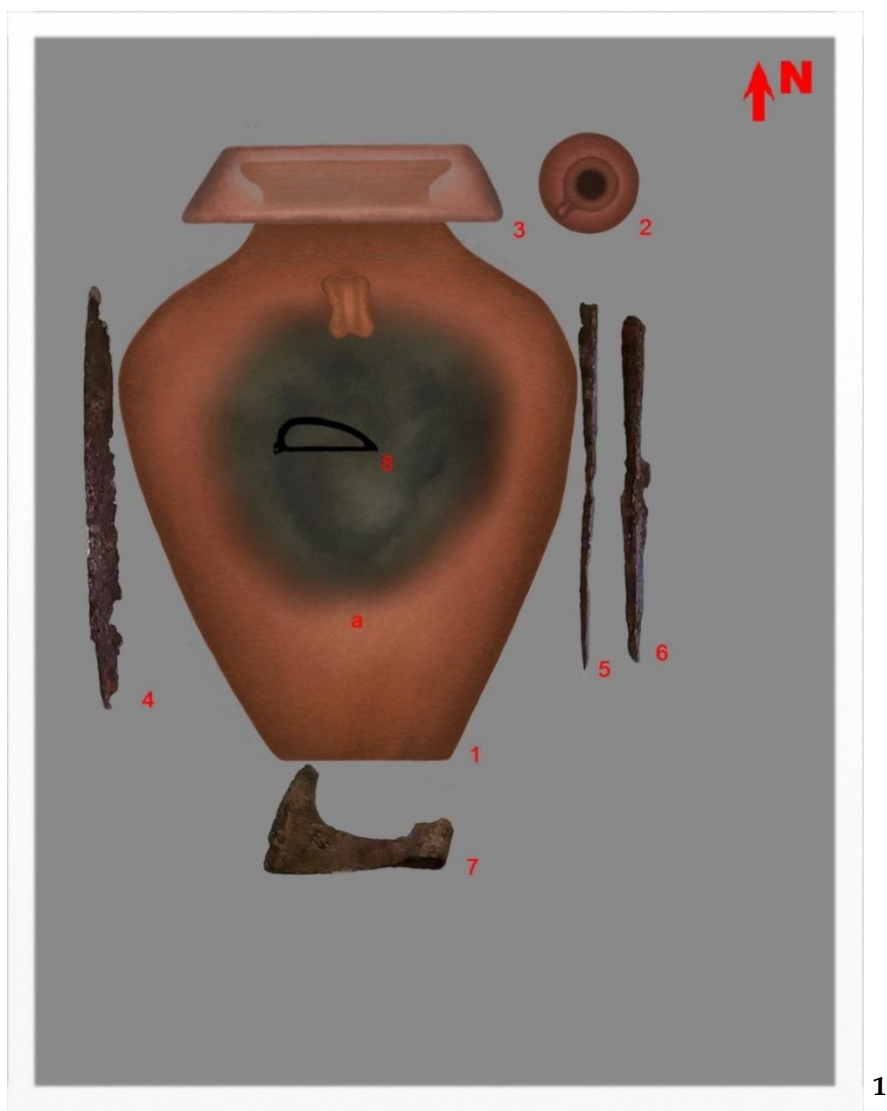
B



C

**Grave 5.** 1- Reconstruction of internal grave structure. A-Associated grave offerings. B- Artistic reconstruction of corresponding warrior. *Details see in text.*





**Grave 6.** 1- Reconstruction of internal grave structure. A-Associated grave offerings. B- Artistic reconstruction of corresponding warrior. *Details see in text.*



Artistic reconstruction of female buried in Olginskoe cemetery 3.



Artistic reconstruction of warrior buried in Olginskoe cemetery grave 2.



Artistic reconstruction of warrior buried in Olginskoe cemetery grave 4.

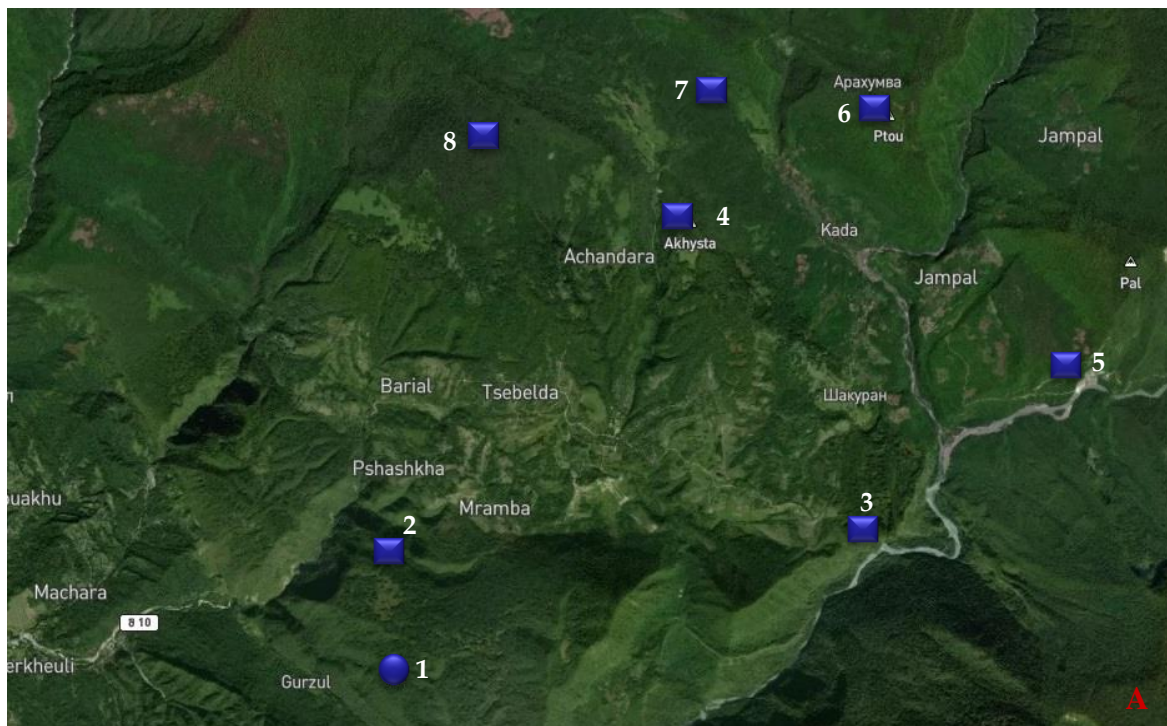


Artistic reconstruction of warrior buried in Olginskoe cemetery grave 5.

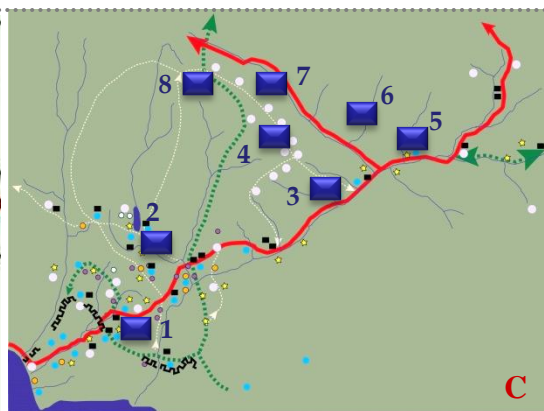
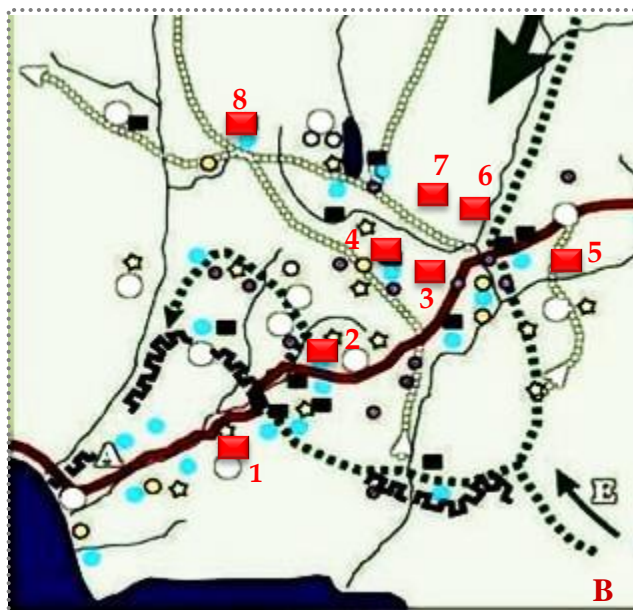


Artistic reconstruction of warrior buried in Olginskoe cemetery grave 6.

**CATALOGUE II**  
**MATERIALS FROM APSILIAN SITES**



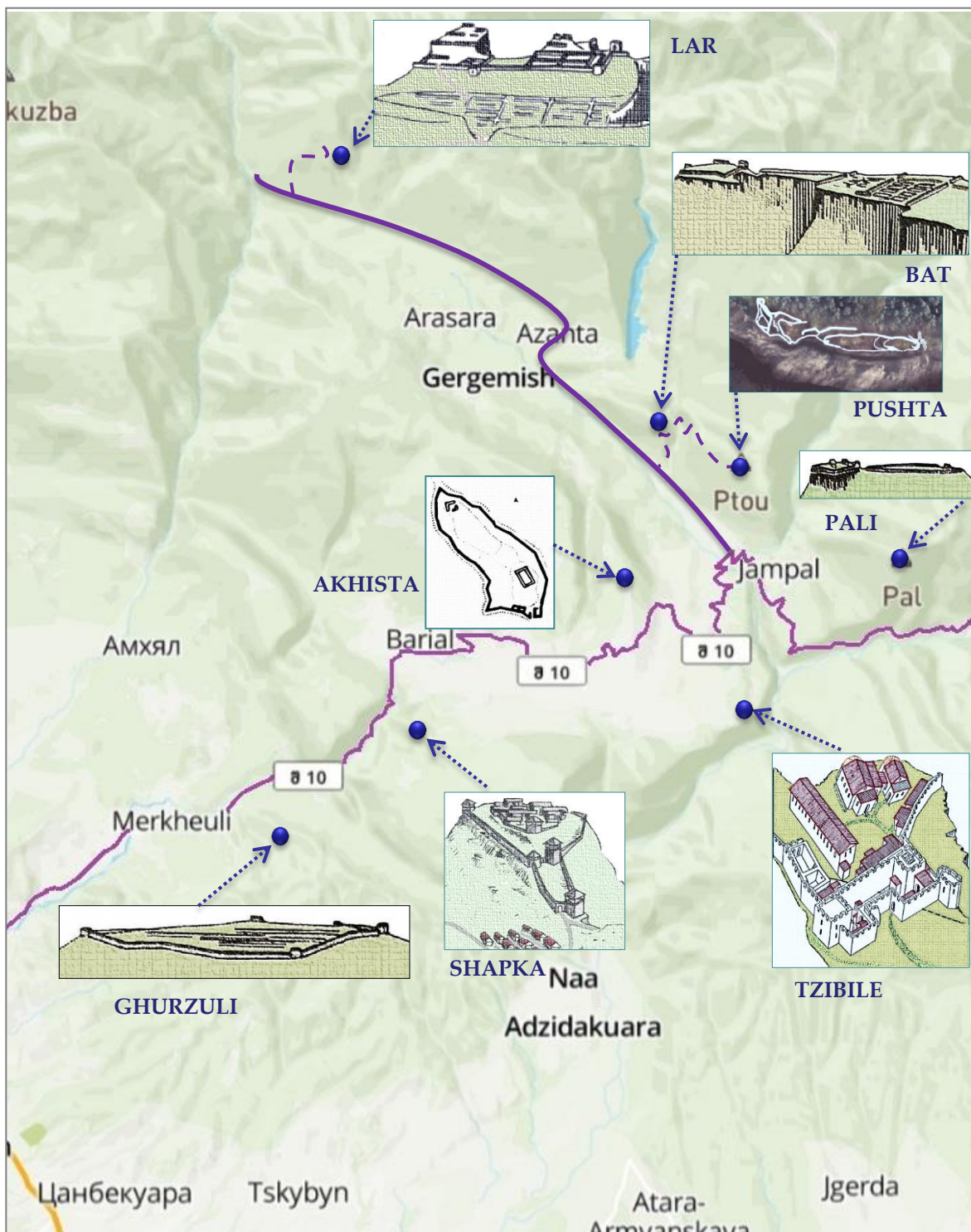
Visualization of Apsilian fortified areas.



Strategic approach to the Apsilian fortification system.

A-C: 1- Gurzuli watch tower. 2- Shapka fort. 3-Tzibile fort. 4-Akhista fort. 5-Pal fort. 6-Pusta fort. 7-Bat fort. 8-Lar fort.

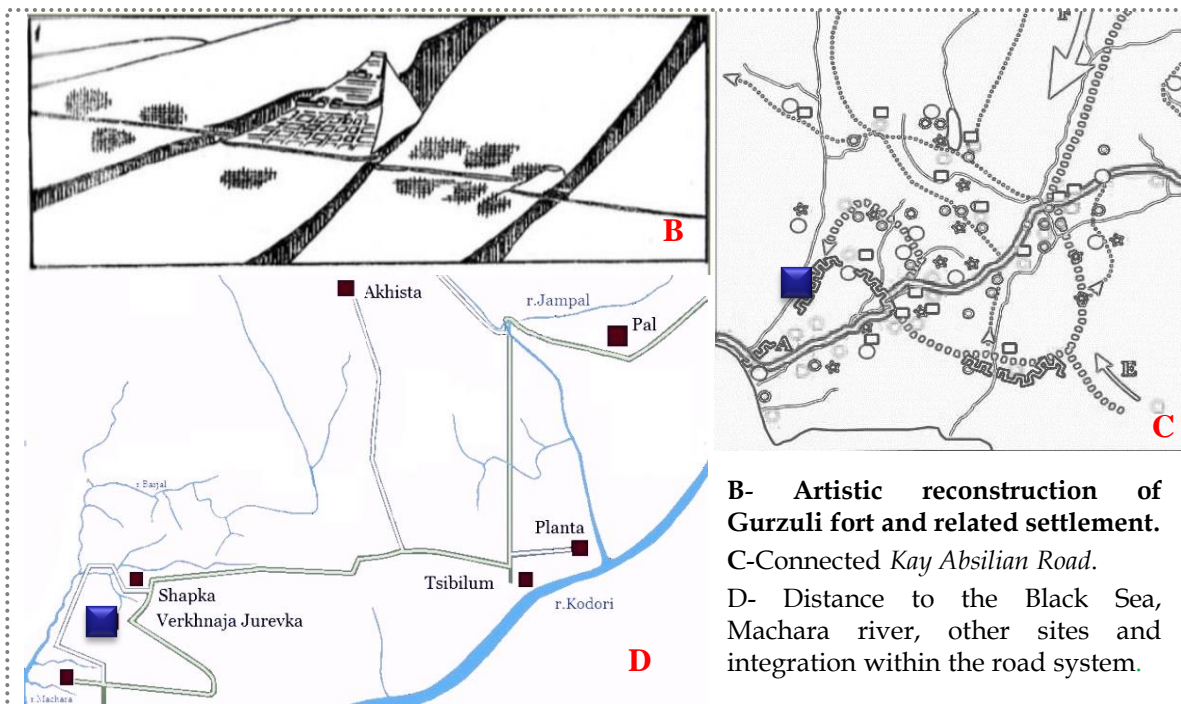




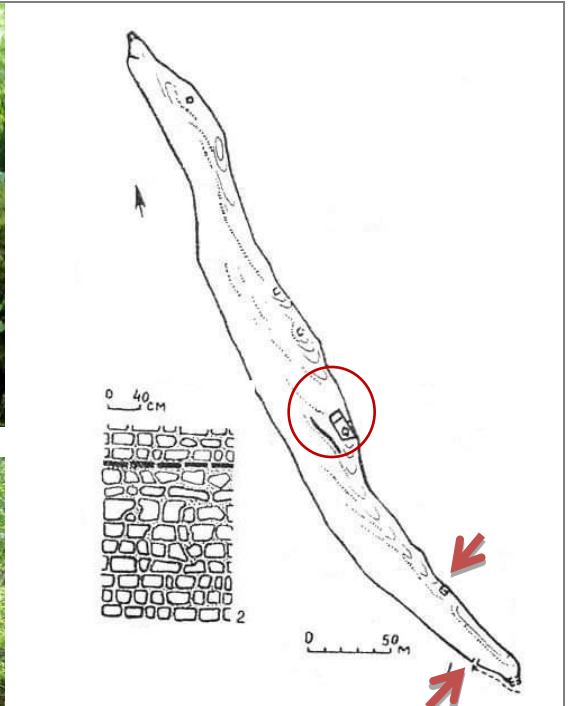
Distribution and condition of Apsilian forts.



Landscape setting of Gurzuli fort area.



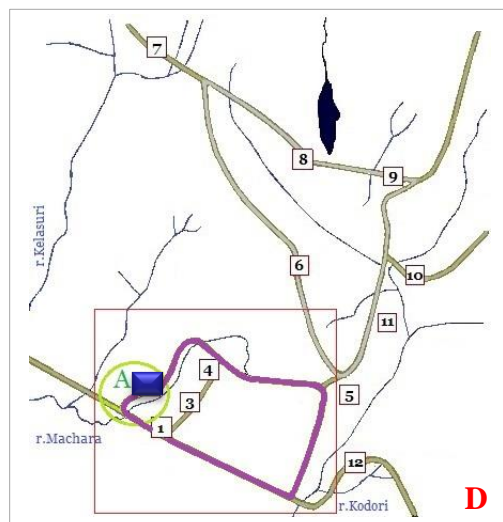
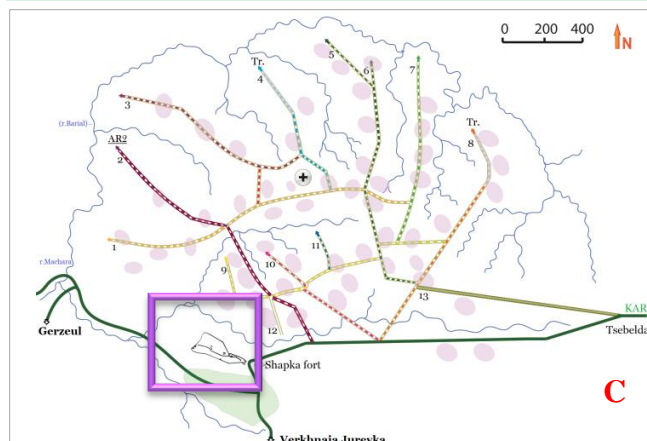
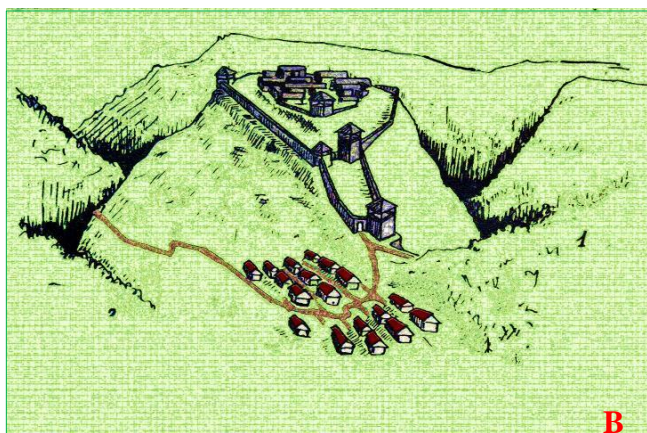
B- Artistic reconstruction of Gurzuli fort and related settlement.  
 C- Connected Kay Absilian Road.  
 D- Distance to the Black Sea, Machara river, other sites and integration within the road system.



Plan of Gurzuli fort, survived parts and related masonry.

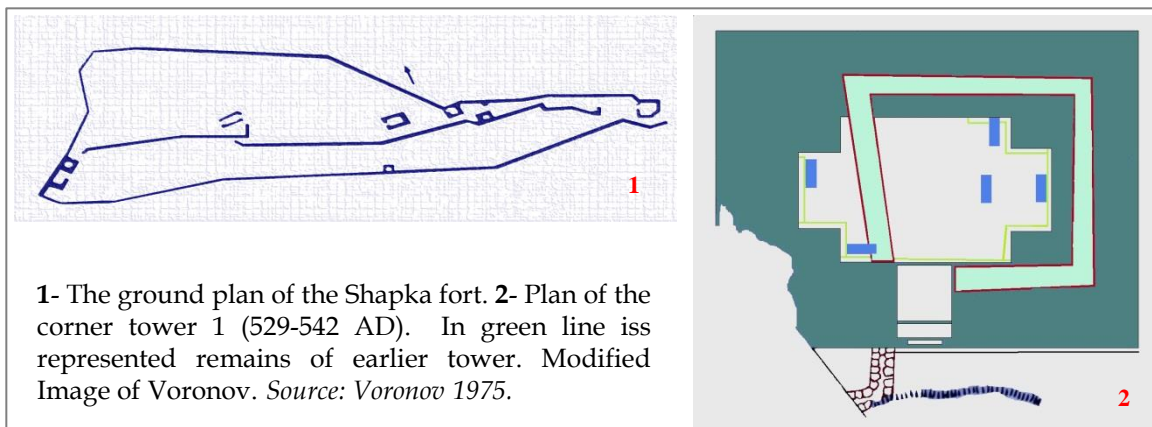


**Gurzuli fort.** A. survival part of tower. B. C. remains of mediaeval fort. D. E. Cistern 1.



**Strategic approach to Shapka fort and integration within the transport system.**

- A- Landscape setting of fort area.
- B- Artistic reconstruction of Shapka fort.
- C- Broad view of connected communication system, relation to the Kay Apsilian Road. And orientation of fort.
- D- Related Wheel Road 1.

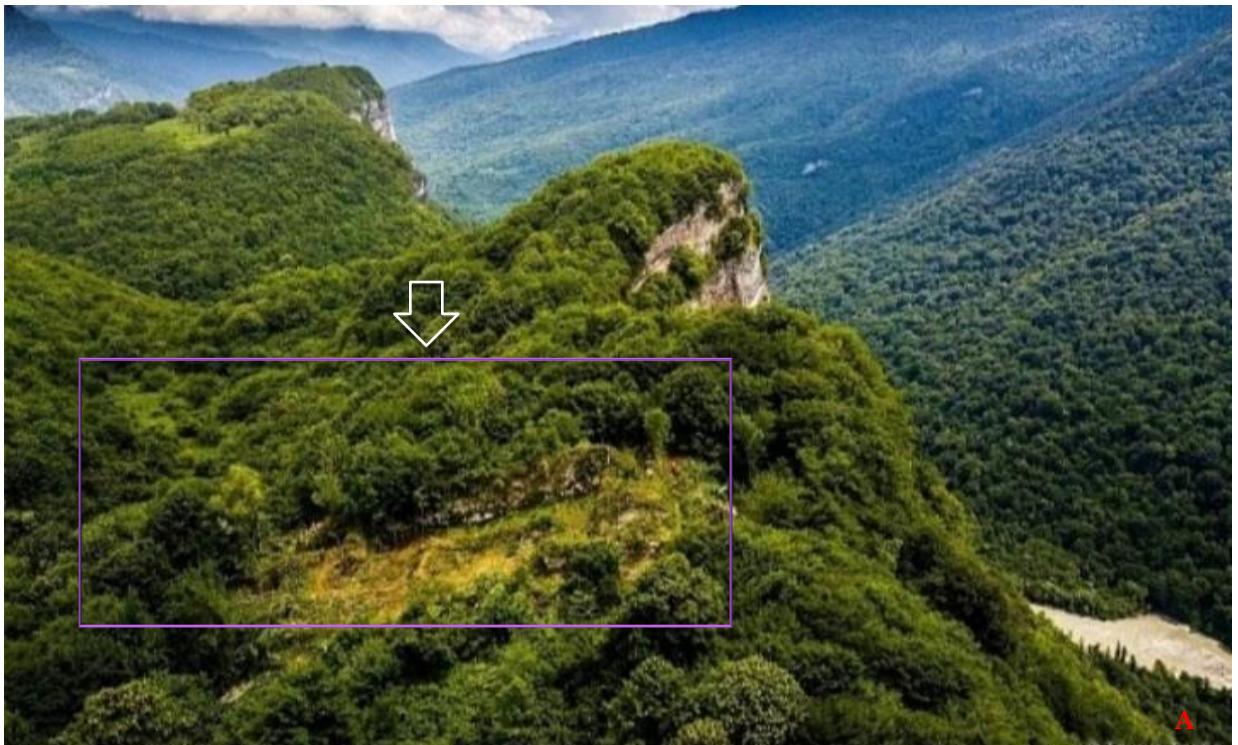


1- The ground plan of the Shapka fort. 2- Plan of the corner tower 1 (529-542 AD). In green line is represented remains of earlier tower. Modified Image of Voronov. Source: Voronov 1975.

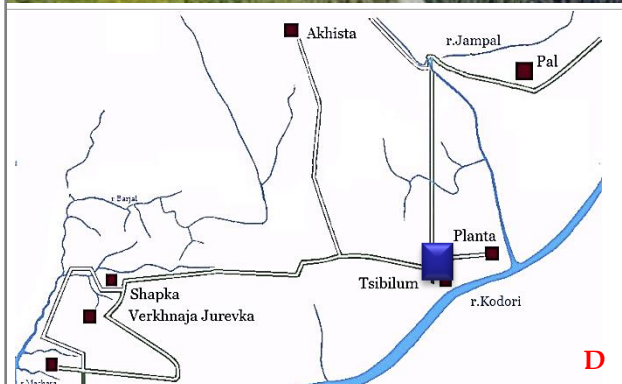
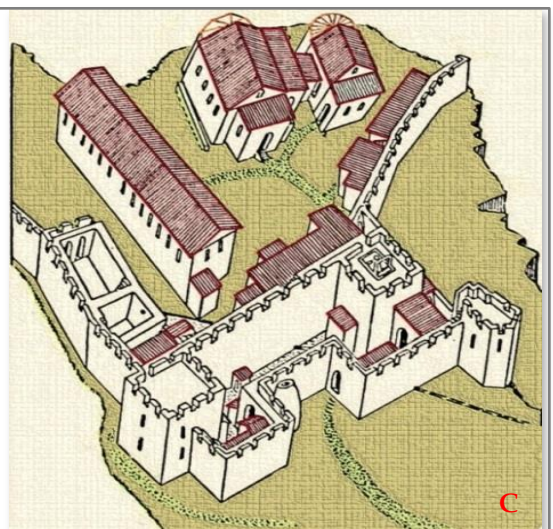


**Visualization of structural remains inside fortified Shapka area.**

- A- Ruins of Shapka fort.
- B- Survival structure of Church inside fortified Shapka.
- C-Niche viewed in Church of Shapka

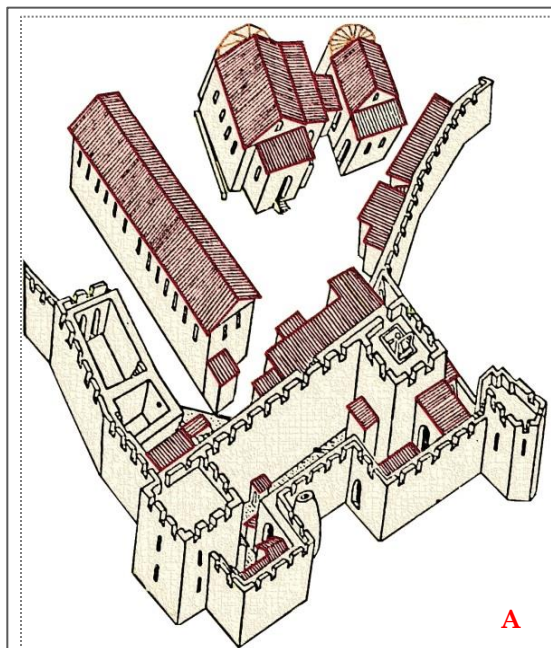


Identification of ridge where Tzibile fort locates. Photo of year 2019.

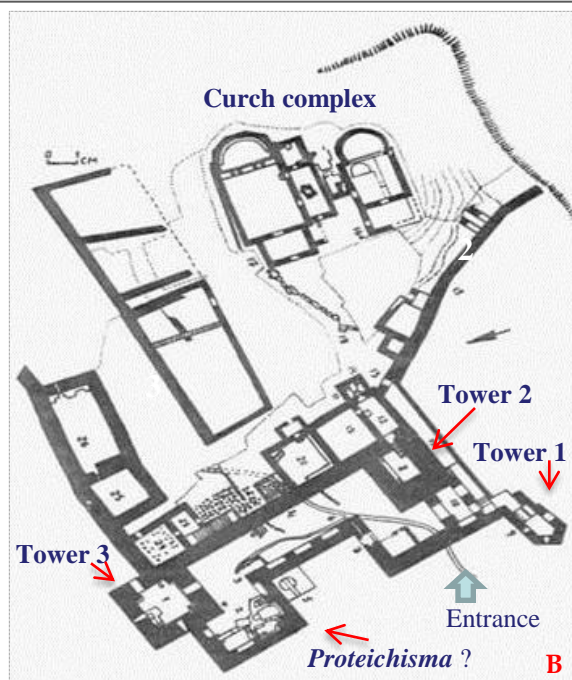


**Strategic approach to Tzibile fort.**

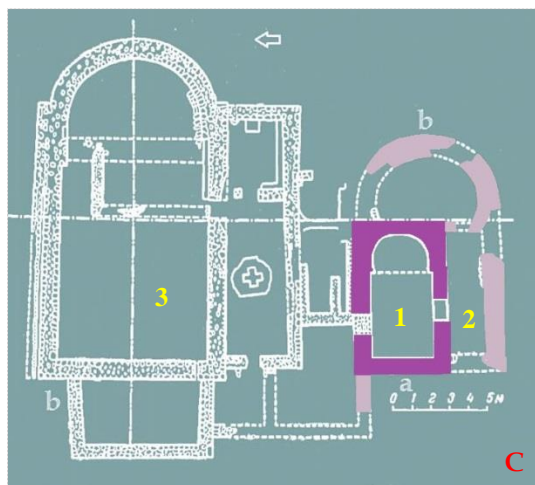
- B-** Landscape setting of fort area.
- C-** Artistic reconstruction of Tzibile fort.
- D-** Connected *Kay Apsilian Road* and visibility of interconnected forts.



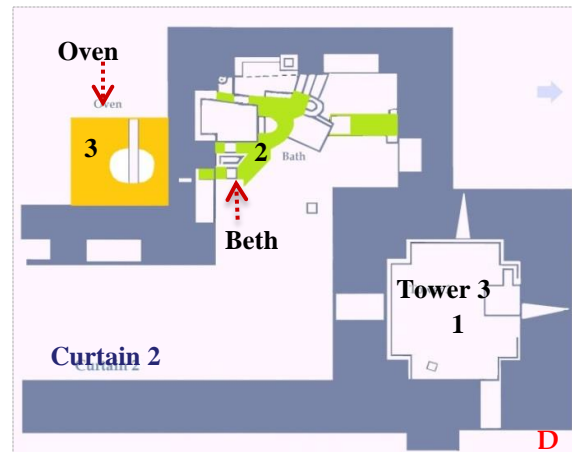
A



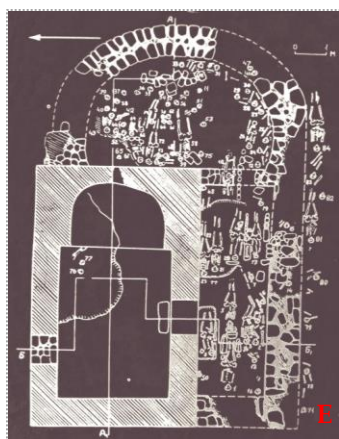
B



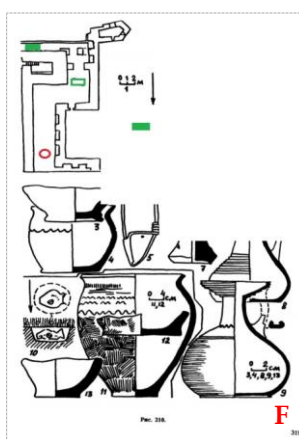
C



D



E



F

**Structural reconstruction of Tzibile fort.**

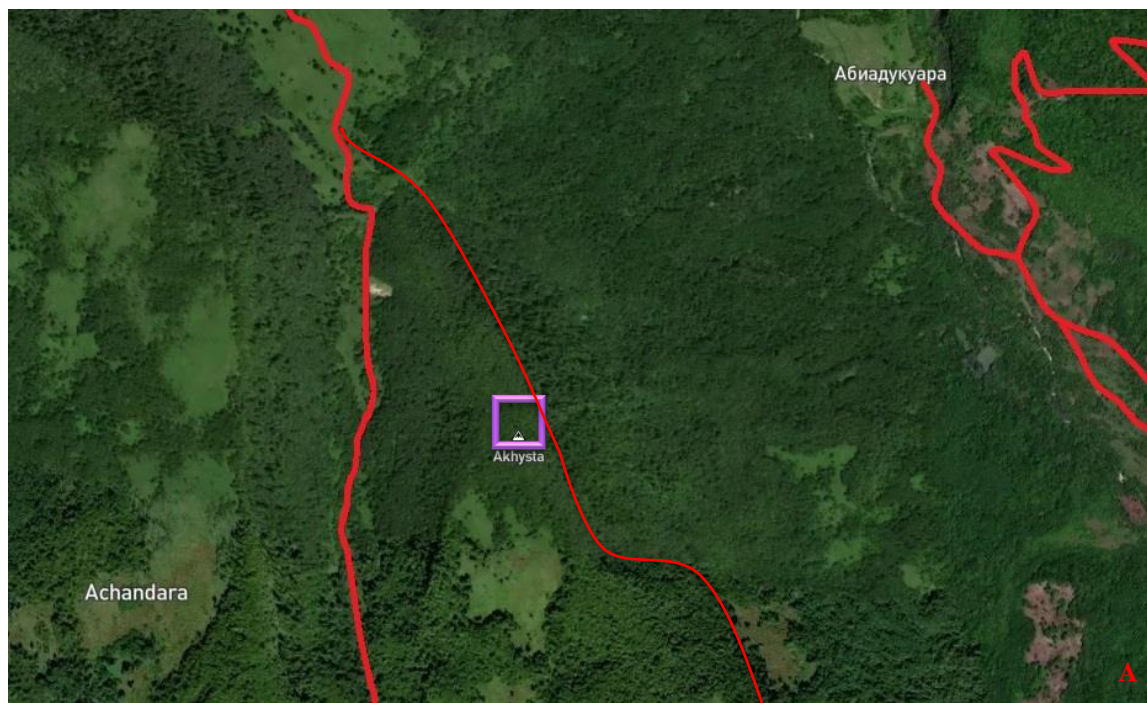
A- Artistic reconstruction of fort.

B- General plan of fort. C- Plan of the church complex inside fortified area: 1- Earlier single nave basilica, semicircle inside. 2, 3-Medieval churches. D- structural attachments: 2-Bath. 3-Oven. E- Medieval graves inside church area. F- 2<sup>nd</sup> century grave 2 from the southern part of peribol 1. Source: Voronov 1985.

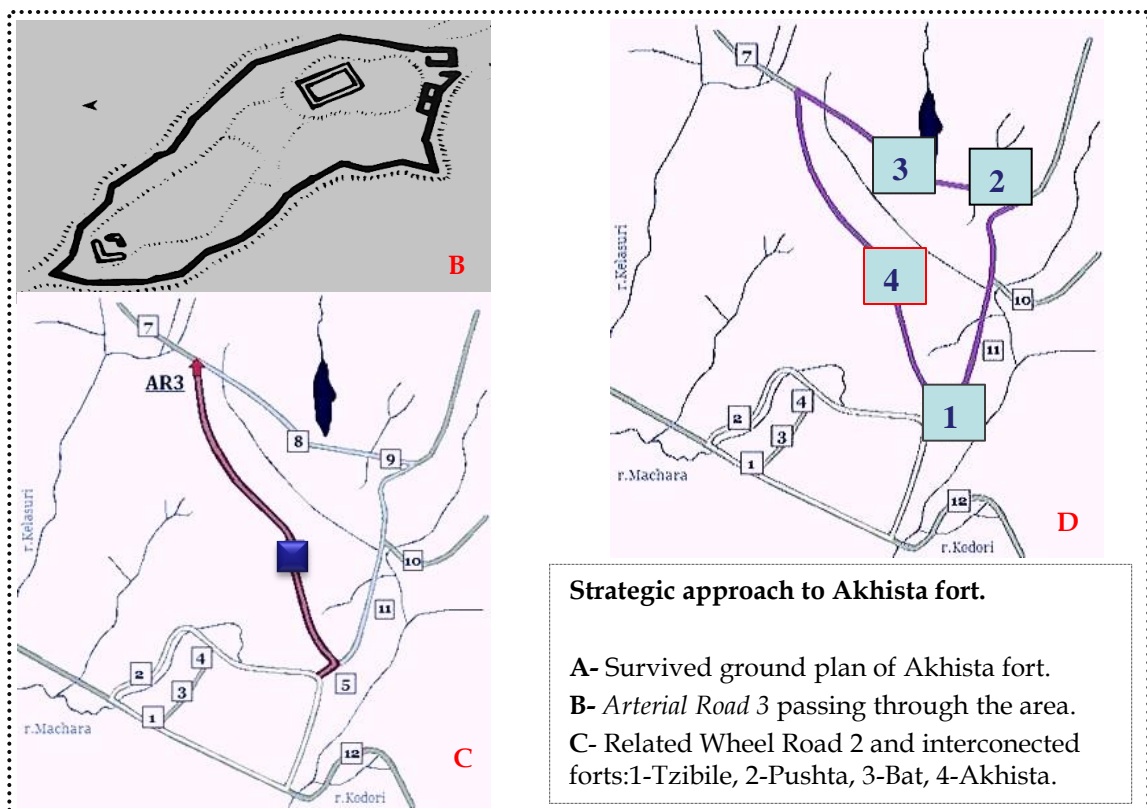


**Visualization of structural remains of Tzibile fort and related church. A-** View of the Tzibile fort during the excavations in 1970. **B-** The south-eastern walls of Tzibile fort covered by wood, during the cleaning activities in 2019. It leads up to a massive square tower built in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century. **C-** View of structural components inside fortified area. **D-** survived part of church. **E-F** Engineering aspect of construction and part of arched tower. **G-** Entrance. **H-** Baptisterium.



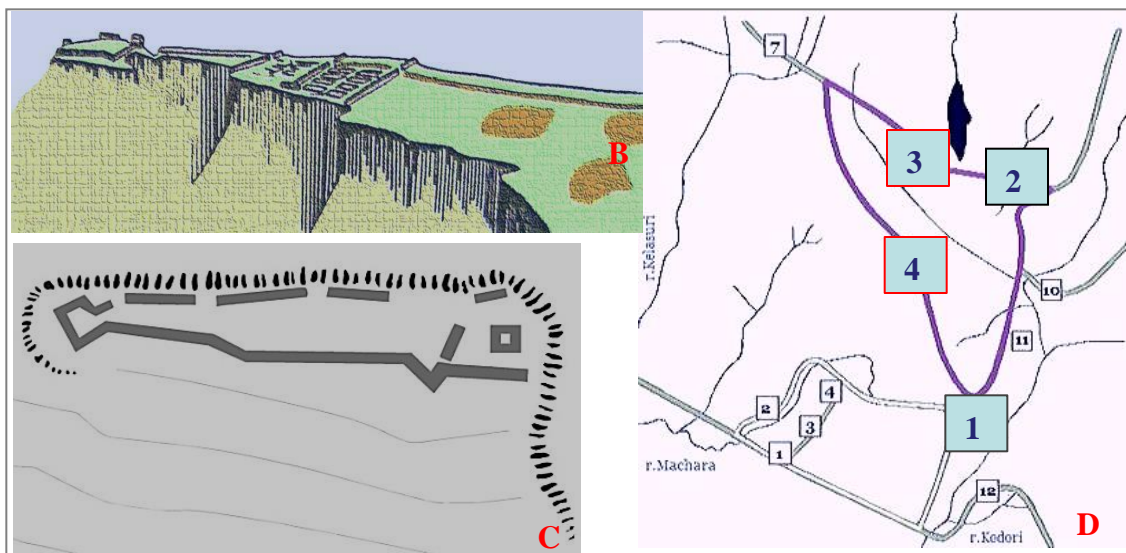


Locational view of Akhista fort.

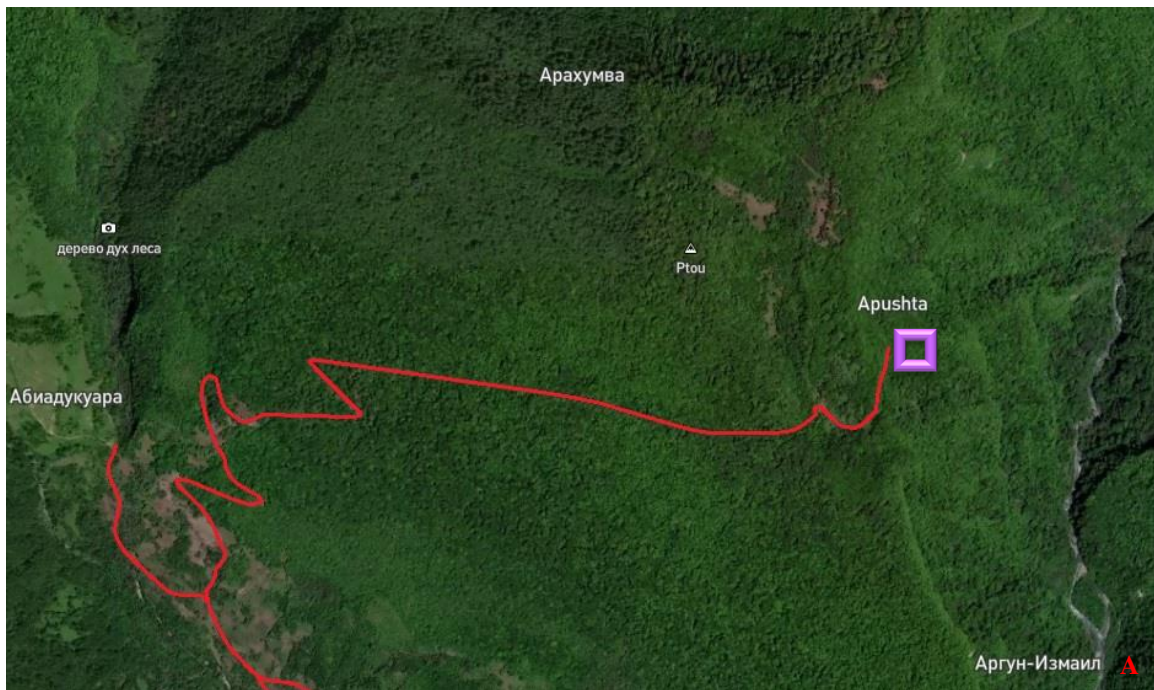




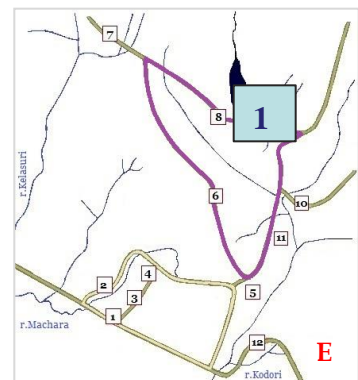
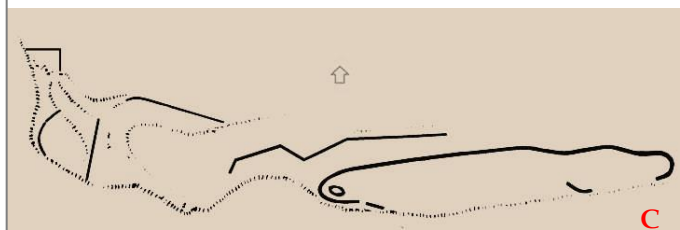
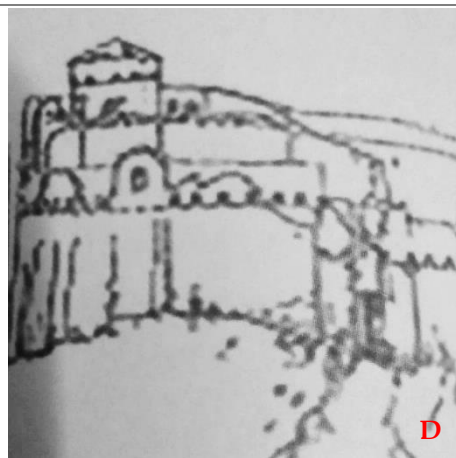
Locational view of Bat fort.



Strategic approach to Shapka fort and integration within the transport system. B- Artistic image of landscape setting of Bat fort. C- Survived ground plan of fort. D- Related Wheel Road 2 and interconnection of forts: 1- Tzbile, 2-Pushta, 3-Bat, 4- Akhista.

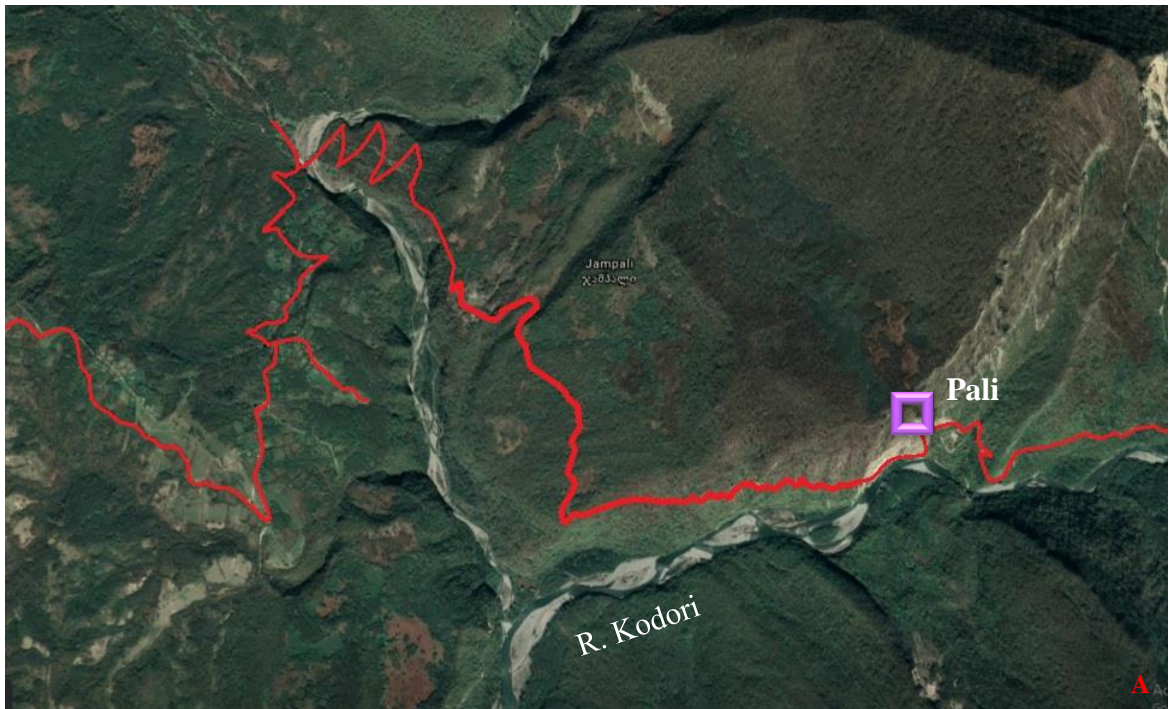


Locational view of Pushta fort.

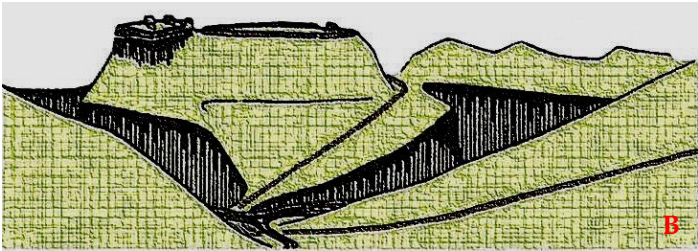


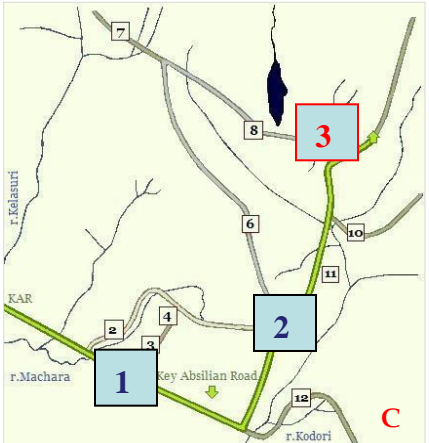
**Strategic approach to Pusta fort.**

B- Artistic image of landscape setting of fort. C- Survived ground plan of fort. D- Pusta Fort. E- Wheel Road 2 and interconnection of forts: 1- Bat. 2-Lar. 3-Akhista.



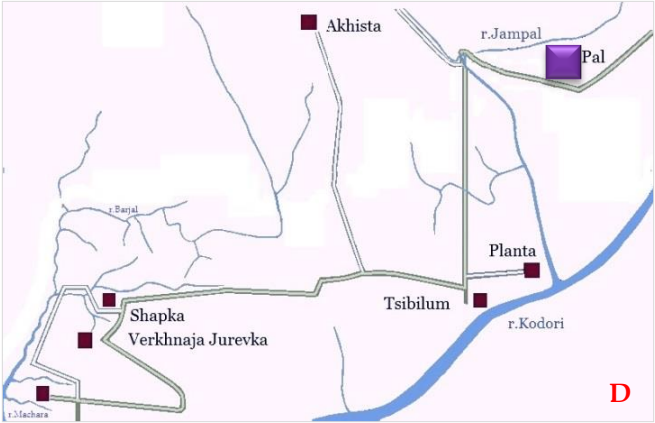
Locational view of Pali fort.





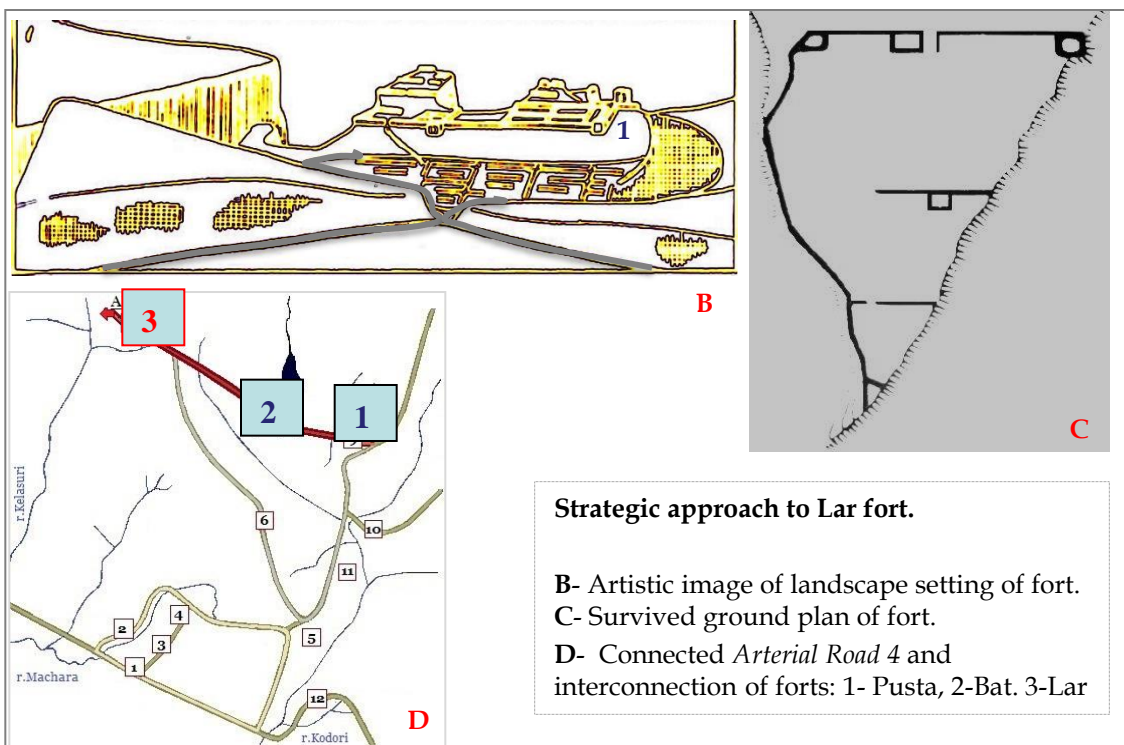
**Strategic approach to Pali fort.**

**B-** Artistic image of landscape setting of fort. **C-** Connected *Kay Apsilian Road* and interconnection of forts: 1- Shapka, 2- Tzibile, 3-Pali. **D-** The view of interconnected forts to the south.



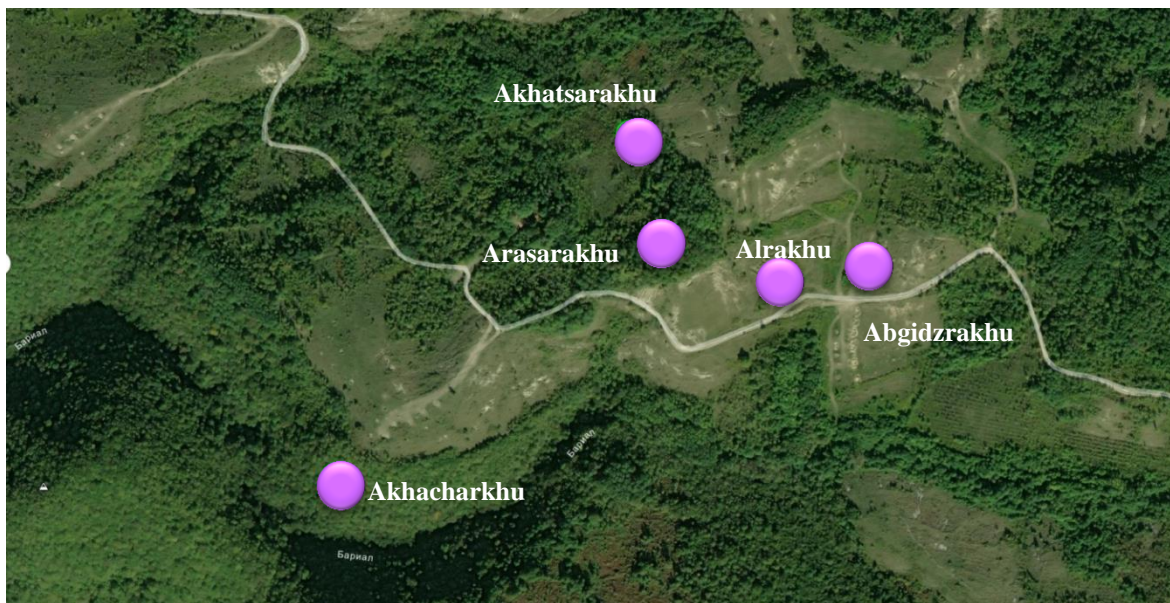


Locational view of Lar fort.

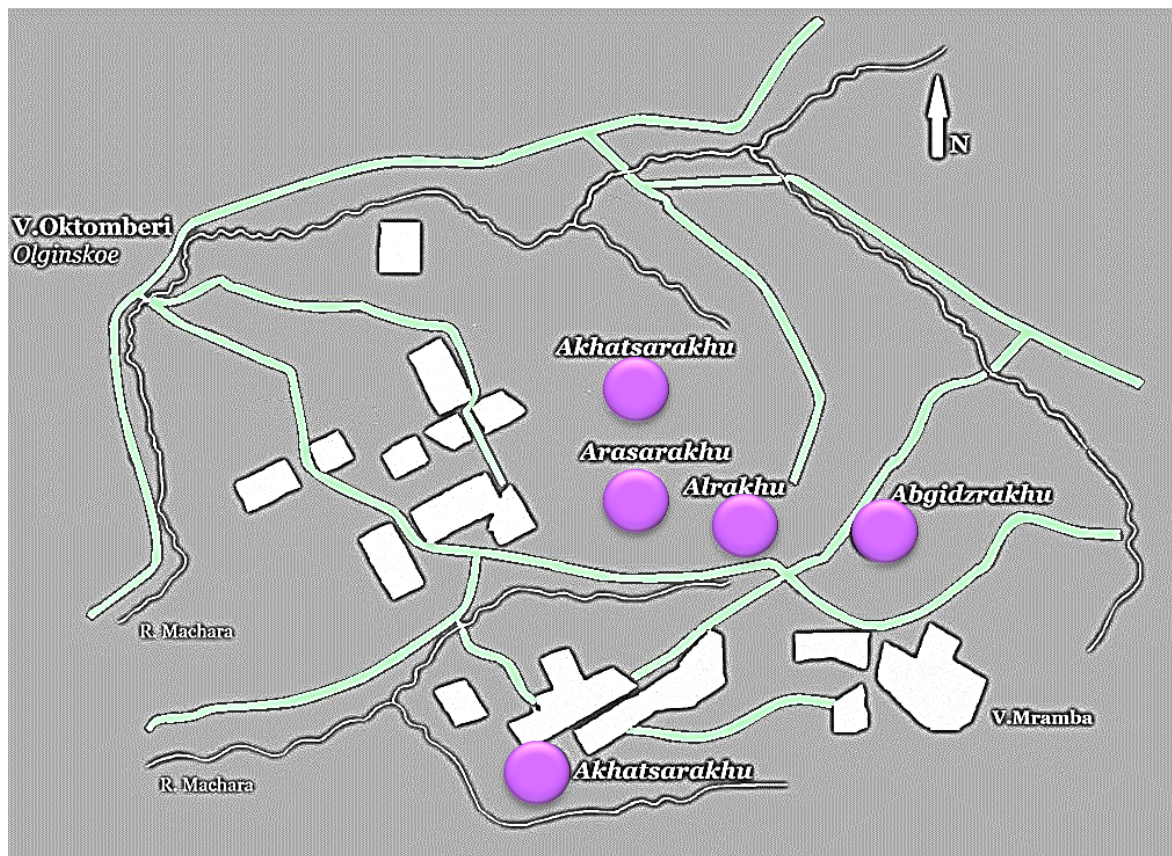


**Strategic approach to Lar fort.**

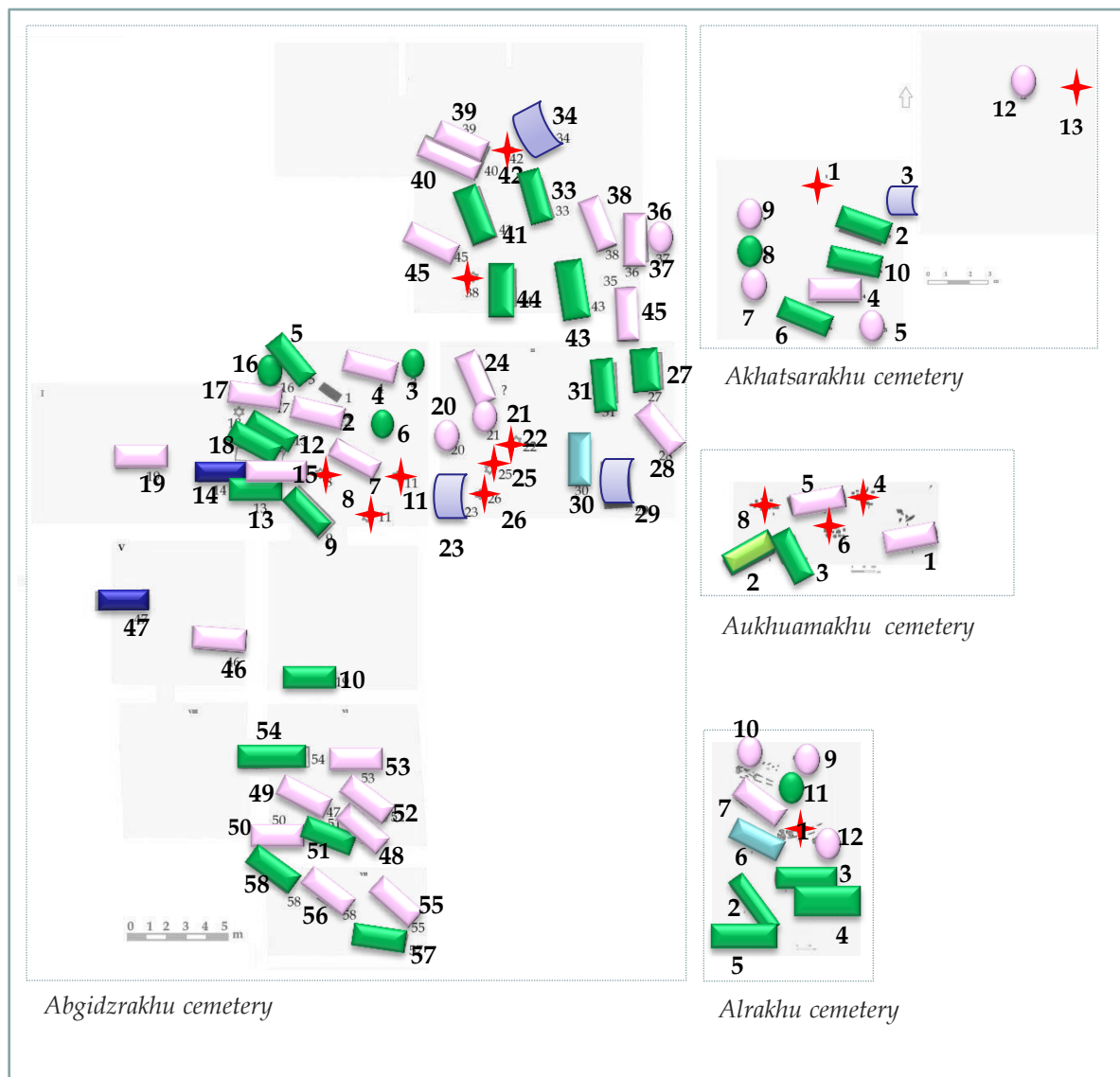
- B- Artistic image of landscape setting of fort.
- C- Survived ground plan of fort.
- D- Connected Arterial Road 4 and interconnection of forts: 1- Pusta, 2-Bat, 3-Lar



Identification of the location of necropolis in the village Mrabma.



Locational view of the necropolis in the village Mramba and related tracks.

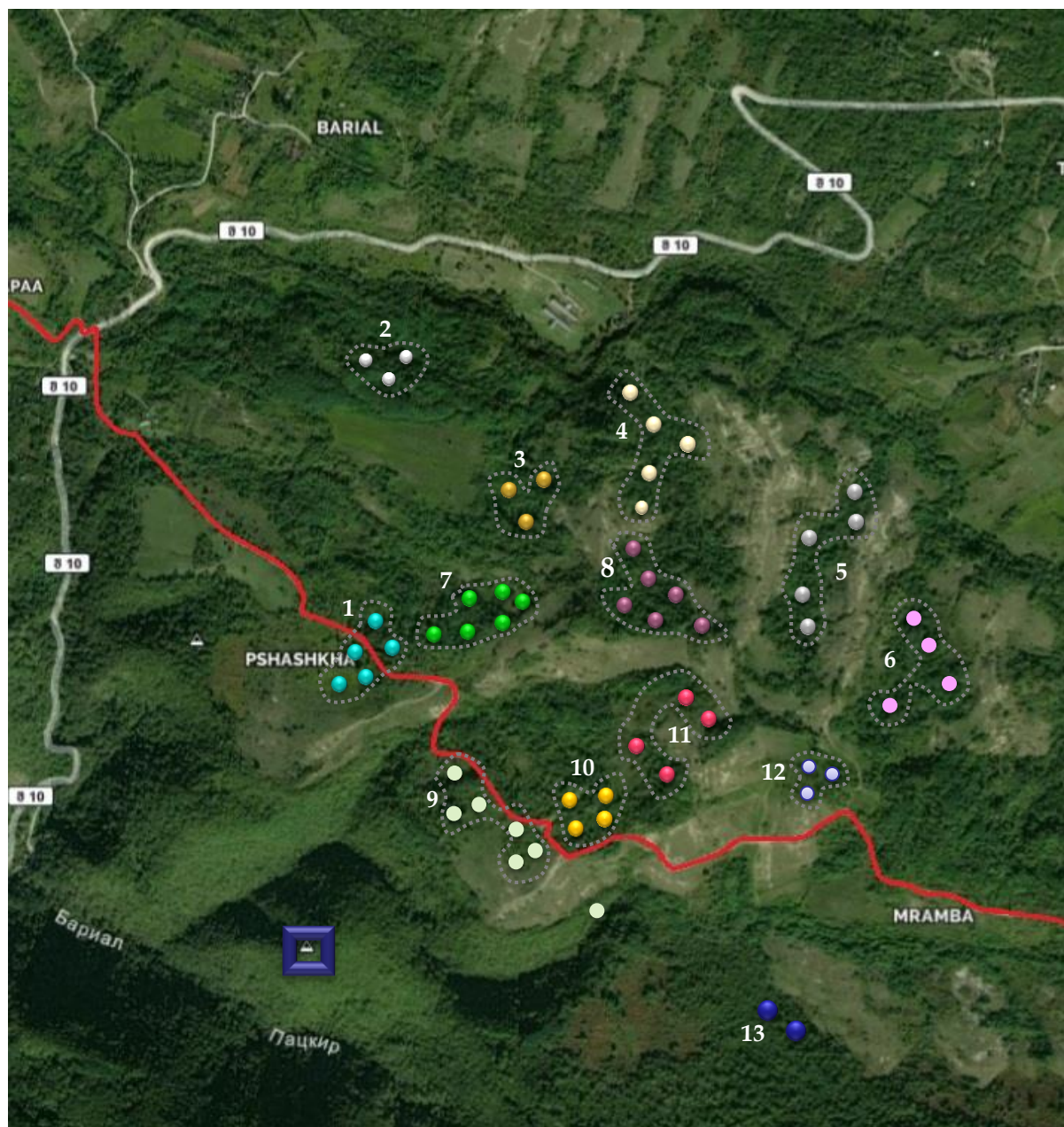


**Partial representation of graves and their arrangement in the cemeteries of Mramba.**

**Late Roman graves:** - Female graves. - Male graves. - Destroyed graves. - Horse.

**Early medieval graves:** - Female graves. - Male graves.

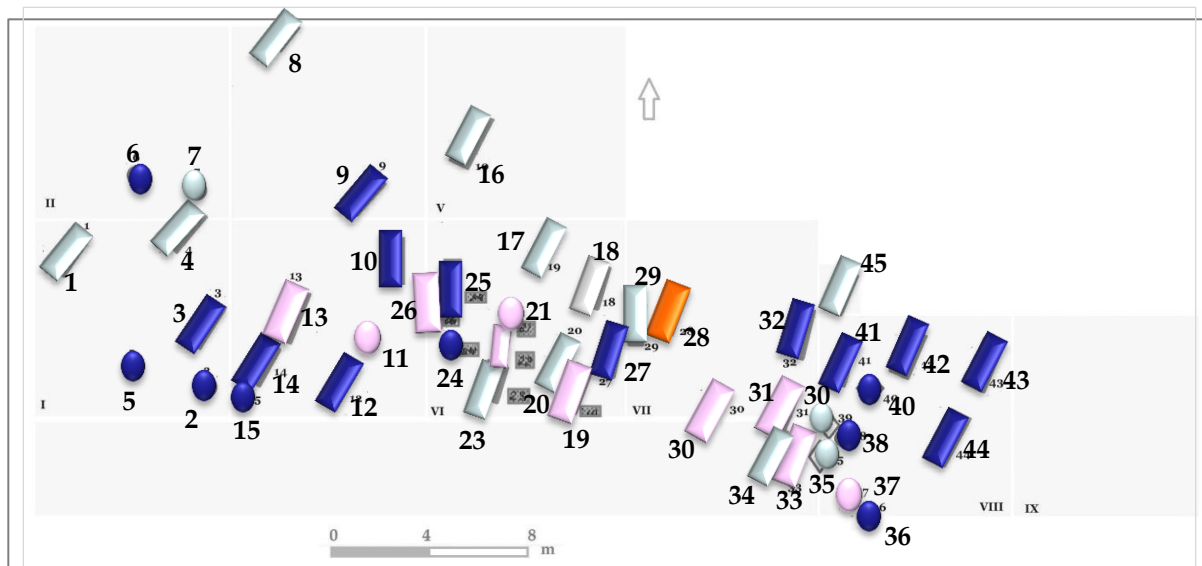
**Weapon consisted graves.** In Abgidzrakhu cemetery are fifteen graves: 3,6,7,12-14, 27, 31, 41- 44, 47, 54, 57; In Alrakhu cemetery are two graves: 2, 3; In Aukhuamakhu cemetery is one grave: 3; In Akhatsarakhu cemetery is one grave: 6. Total 91 weapon graves has been recovered in complete condition. *Information source: Trapsh 1971*



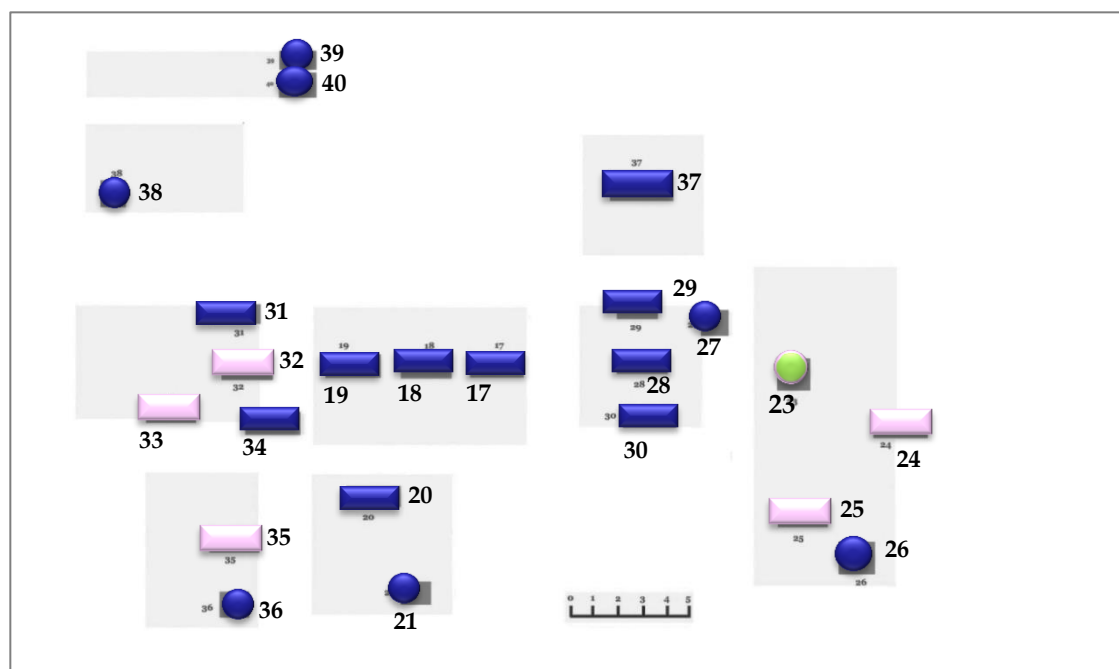
**Identification of the location of Shapka cemeteries in:** 1- Abramov hill (●). 2-Gushin hill (○). 3-Grushin hill (●). 4-Justinianov hill (○). 5- Stekljannii hill (○). 6- Zhenski hill (●). 7- Tserkovni hill (●). 8- Monetni hill (●). 9-Verin hill (○). 10- Mahajirov hill (●). 11- Vinogradnii hill (●). 12- Panikin hill (●). 13- Apiancha (●).



Table 71



Grave arrangement in Akhacharkva cemetery. *Late Roman graves*: ▭ - Female graves. ▭ - Male graves. *Early medieval graves*: ▭ - Female graves. ▭ - Not identified. **Weapon consisted graves**: all male graves.



Partial representation of graves and their arrangement in Apiancha cemetery. *Late Roman graves*: ▭ - Female graves. ▭ - Male graves. ● - cenotaph. **Weapon consisted graves**: each male grave.



**Visualisation of the location of Tsebelda cemeteries and distance with connected fort.**

**1-** Tzibile 1 (in 150 m). **2-** Tzibile 2. **3-** Tzibile 3. **4-** Tzibile 4. **5-** Tzibile 5. **6-** Tzibile 6. **7-** Tzibile 7. **8-** Tzibile 8. **9-** Tzibile 9. **10-** Tzibile 10. **11-** Tzibile 11. **12-** Tzibile 12. **13-** Tzibile 13. **14-** Tzibile 14 (at edge of slope Adagua). **15-** Tzibile 15. **A-** Fort Tzibile.

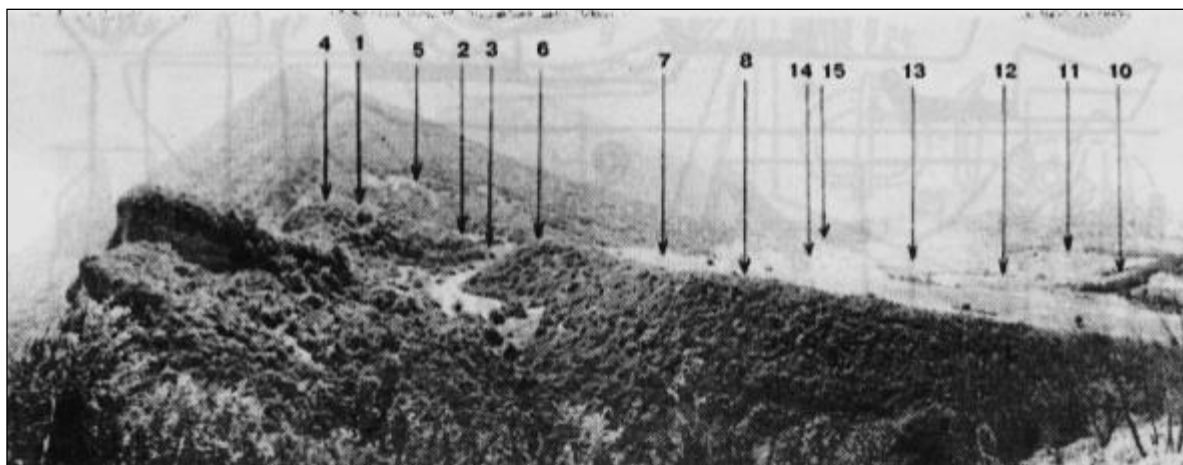
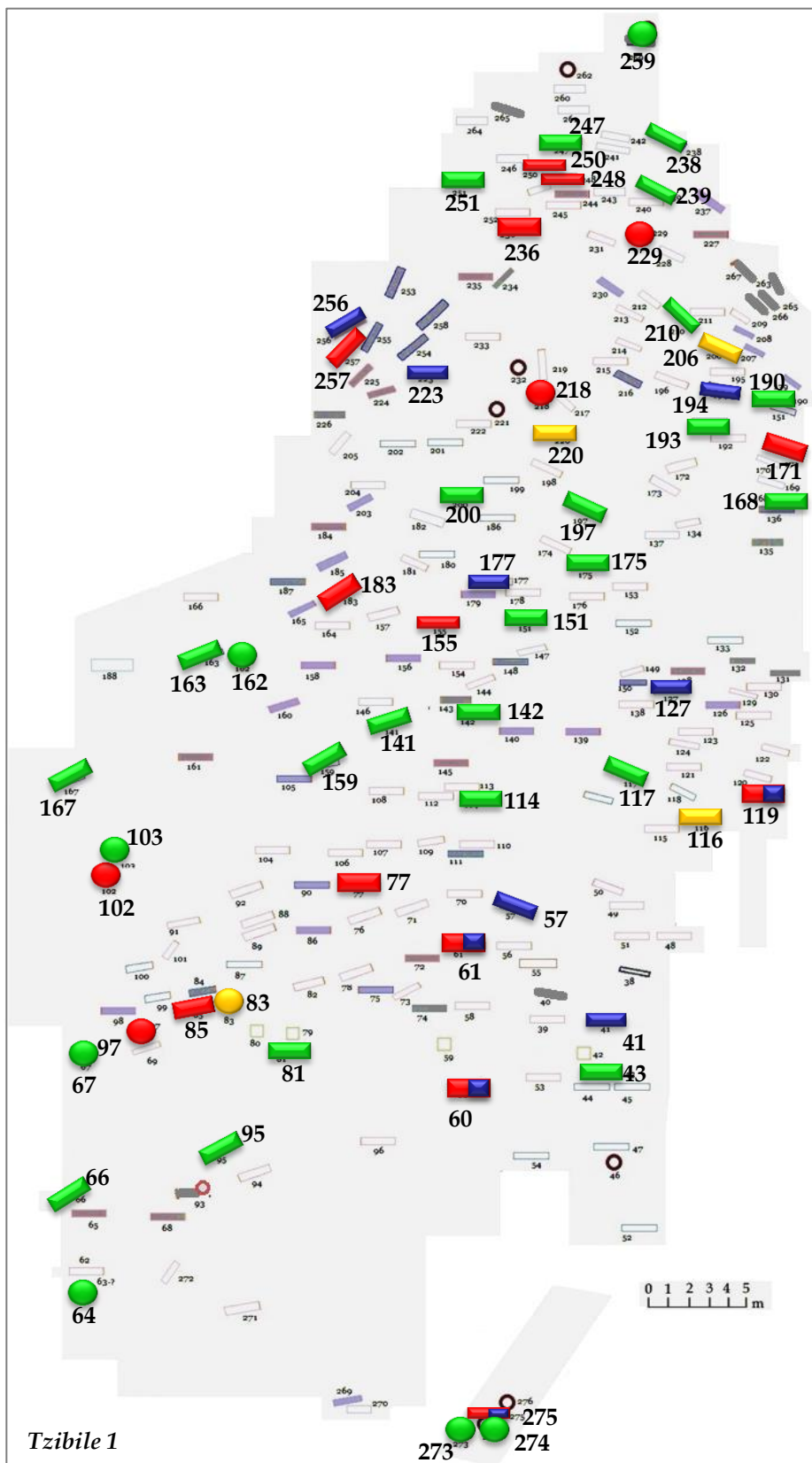
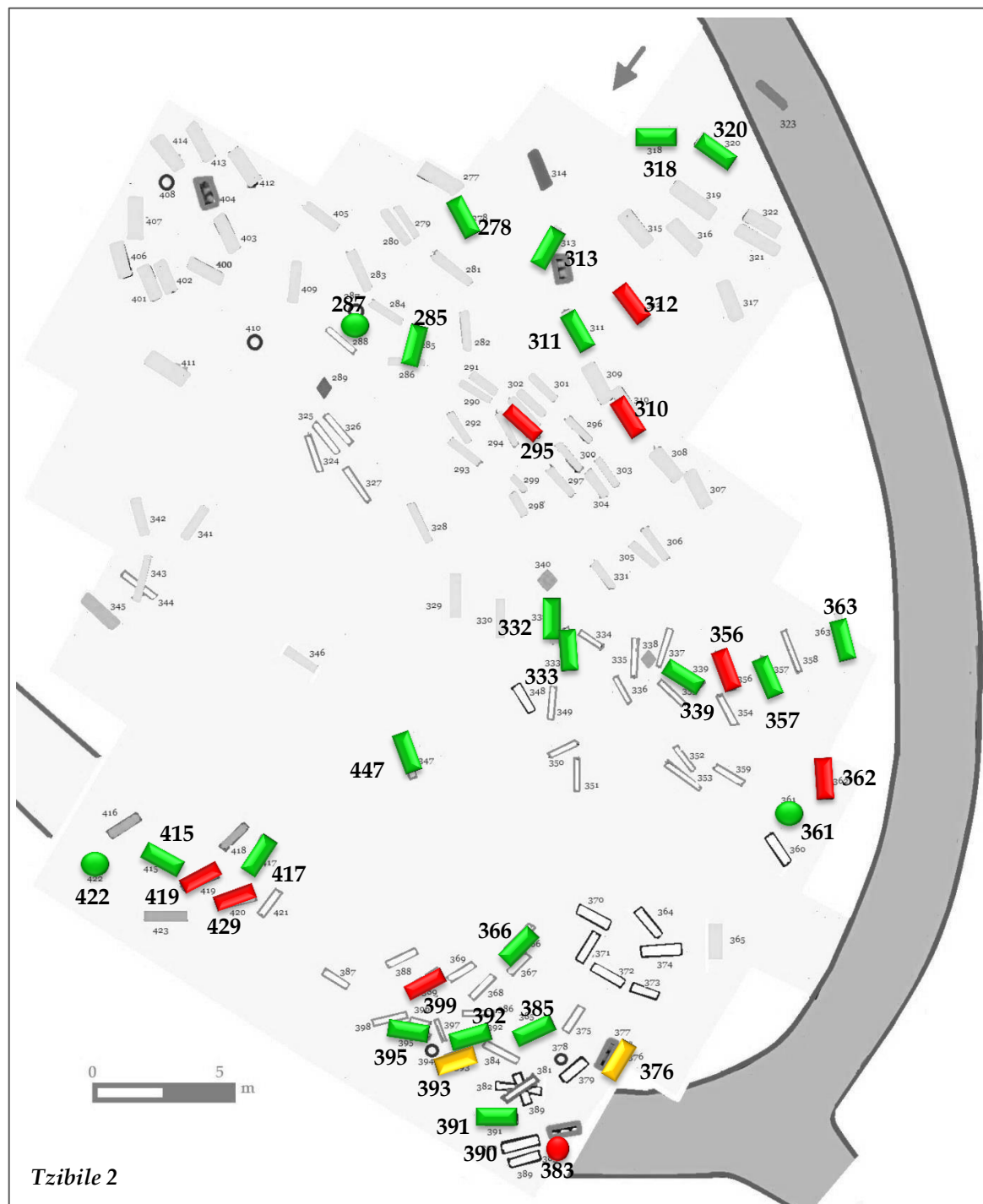


Image showing the location of cemeteries areas in Tsebelda. Sources: Voronov 2003. Fig. 223.

Table 73

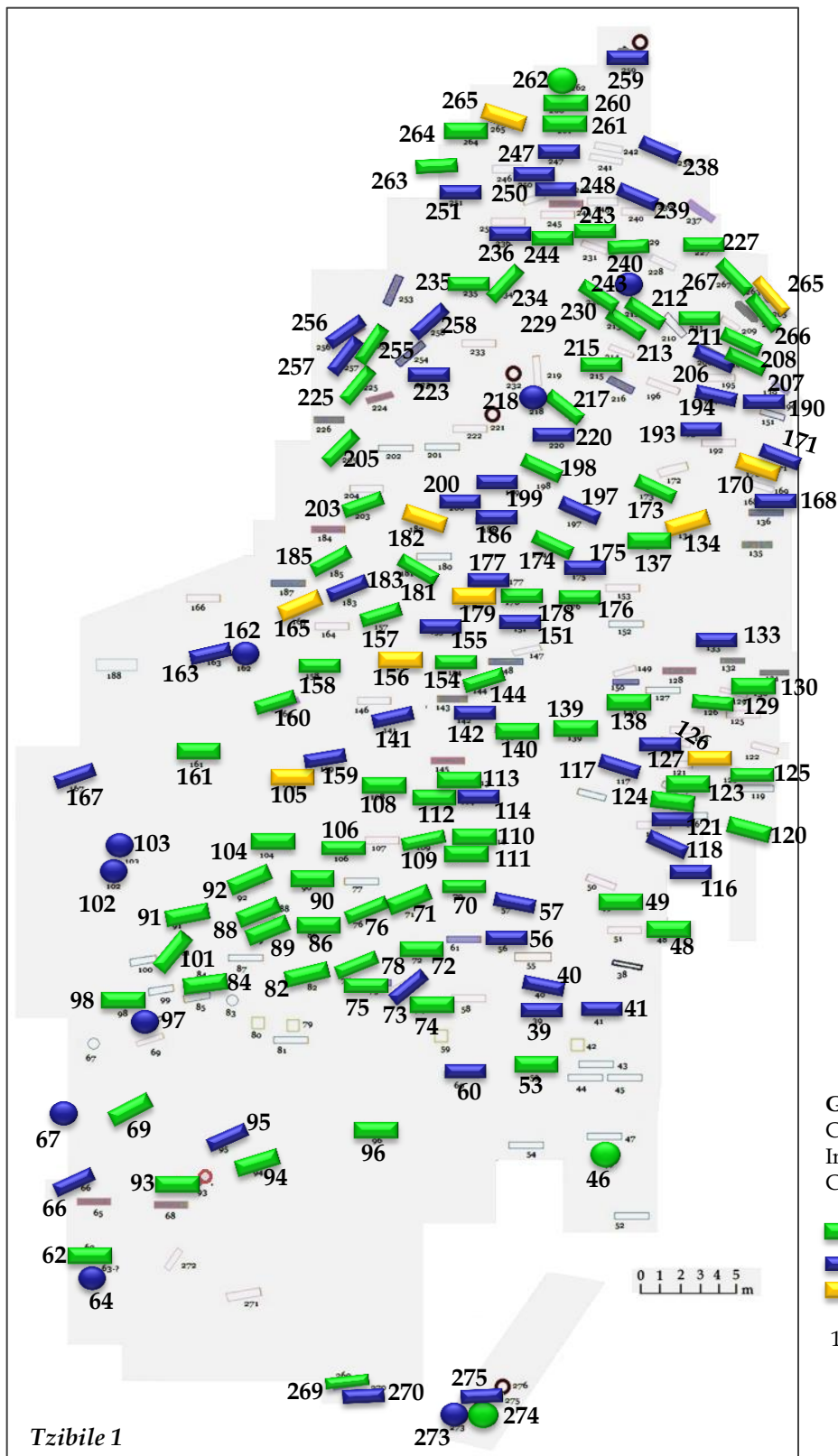


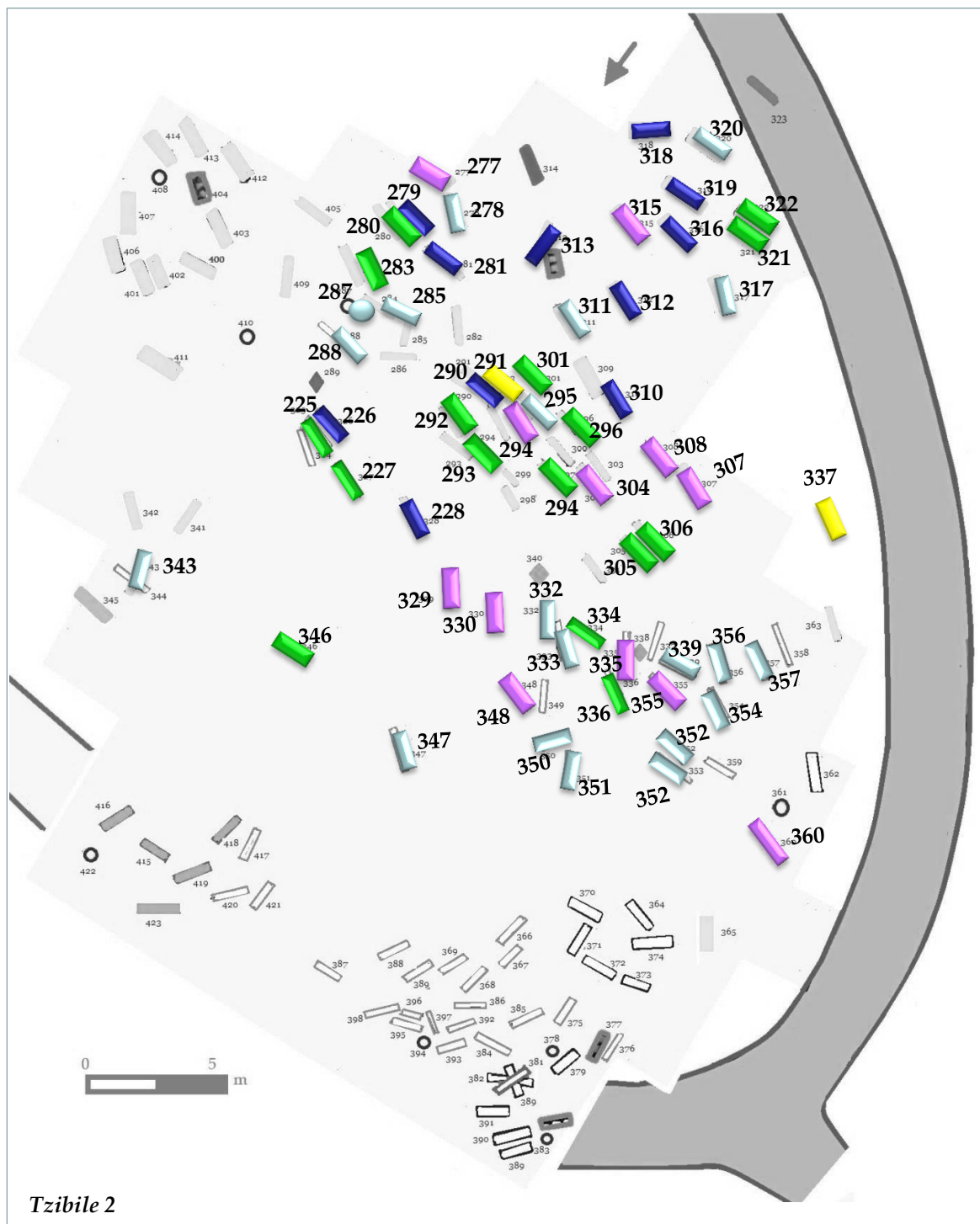


**Weapon graves.** Cemetery Tsebelda 2. Inhumation- . Cremation - .

- Sword. - Shield. - Arrow. - Others. Each consisted spears, most a throwing axe. Graves absent in illustration are: 295 (sword consisted), 429, 435, 438, 446, 451, 455, 461, 463, 465-466. **III Stage male graves:** 362, 369, 383, 399, 420. **IV Stage (450-500/550) male graves:** 376-377. **IV Stage (550-600/640) male graves:** 279, 313, 314, 318, 325.

Table 75



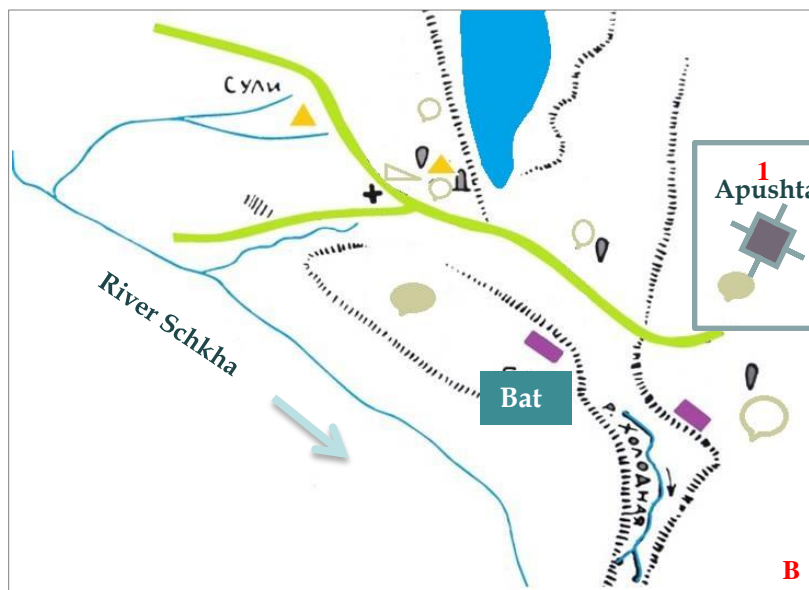


**Byzantine Period.** Cemetery *Tsebelda 2*. Inhumation- . Cremation - .  
 - Female. - Male. - Child. - Roman time graves.  
 - IV Stage graves of 550-600/640 AD and 640-670 AD.



Locational view of Apushta cemetery graves.

- - Inhumation graves.
- - Cremation graves.
- X - Destroyed graves.



**Interrelation of archaeological sites Apushta and Bat in upland Apsilia.**

A- Complex of Apushta: 1- fort; 2- related settlements ; 3- cemetery. B- Complex of Bat: ■- houses. ○- settled parts. ●- cemeteries. 1- Interconnection with Apushta site. Source: Voronov 19852



**Cremation grave types of Apsilia and their reconstructed image.** 1- Abgidzrakhu grave 44. Tsebelda cemetery graves: 2- Grave 229 (62). 3- Grave 83 (13). 4- Grave 273 (270-340 AD). 5- Female grave 18 (5). 6- Grave 67. *Material Sources:* Trapsh 1971; Voronov 2003.





**Types of the body display. Reconstruction of inhumation graves. Tsebelda cemetery graves:**

1- Grave 390 (13). 2- Grave 127 (34), 3- Grave 133 (1). 4- Grave 449 (5). 5- Grave 421 (41). 6- Grave 154 (19). 7- Grave 123 (30). Source: Voronov 2003.

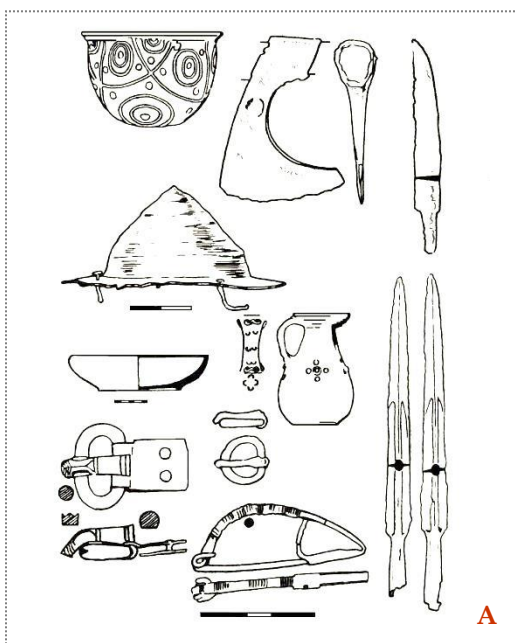


**Types of the body display.** Reconstruction of inhumation graves. **Tsebelda cemetery graves:** 8- Grave 231 (64). 9- Grave 321 (11). 10- Grave 119 (26). 11- Grave 296 (2). 12- Grave 400 (21). 13- Grave 85 (15). Material source: *Voronov 2003*.



**Types of the body display.** Reconstruction of inhumation graves. *Shapka cemeteries:*

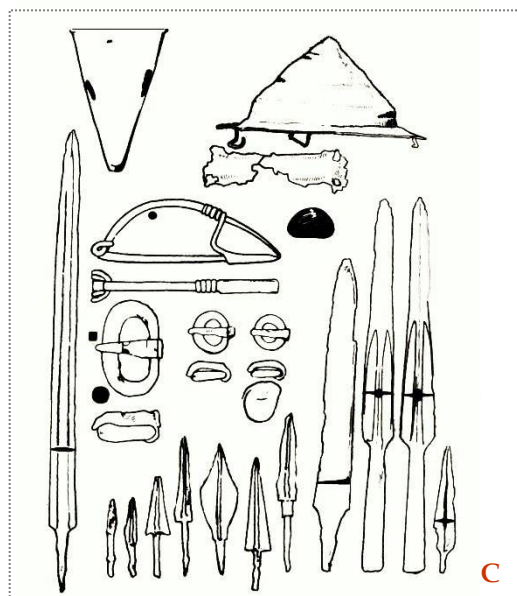
15- *Mahajirov* grave 1. 20- *Tserkovni* grave 5. *Tsebelda cemetery graves:* 16- *Fort* grave 1. 17- Grave 116 (23). 18- Grave 248 (2). 19- Grave 115 (22). Material source: Voronov, Bgazhba, etc. 1985; Voronov, Bgazhba, etc. 1989; Voronov 2003.



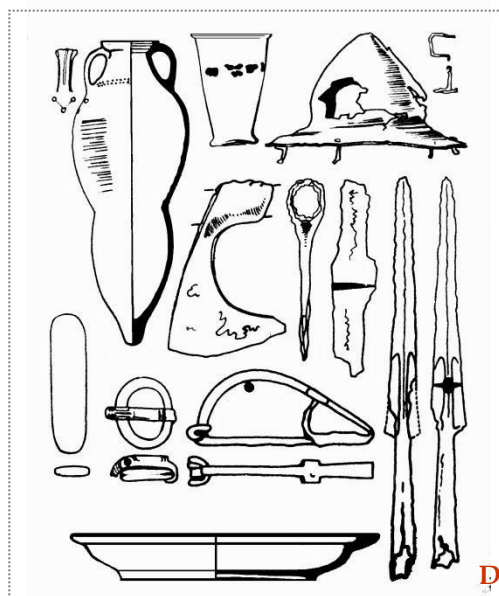
Inhumation grave 9. Spearman.  
Grave date: 400-450 AD.



Inhumation grave 13. Spearman.  
Grave date: 380/400-450 AD.

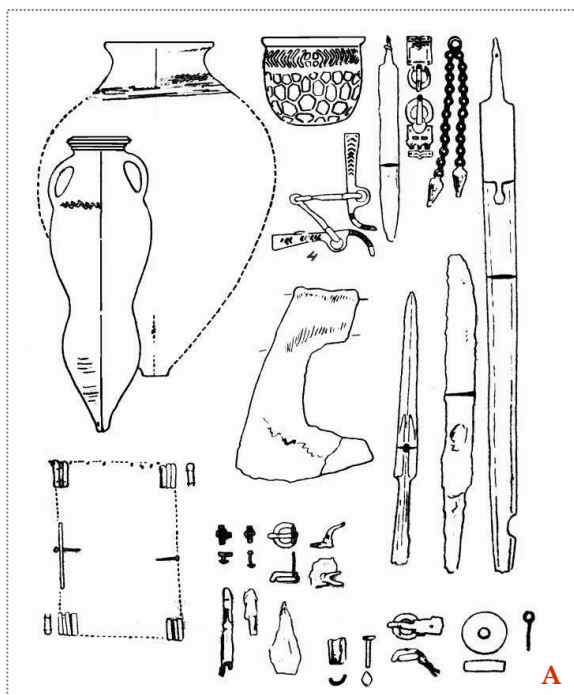


Cremation grave 27. Warrior (archer?).  
Grave date: 400-450 AD.

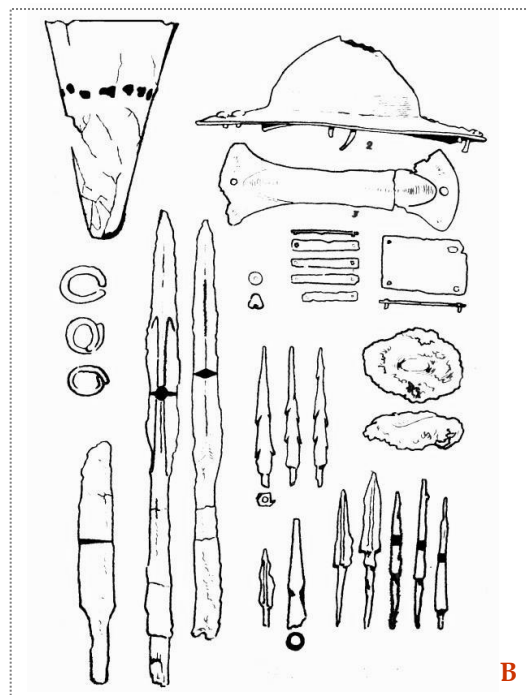


Inhumation grave 41. Spearman.  
Grave date: 380-400/420 AD.

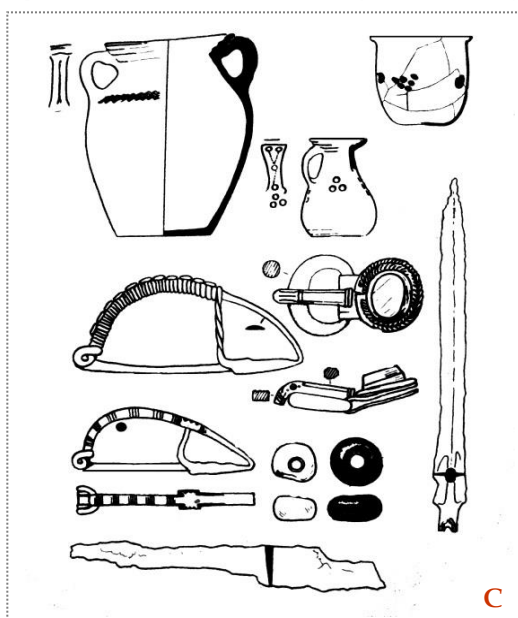
**Comparisons.** III stage (380-450) warrior graves from Abgidzrakhu cemetery of the village Mramba. *Source: Trapsh 1971*



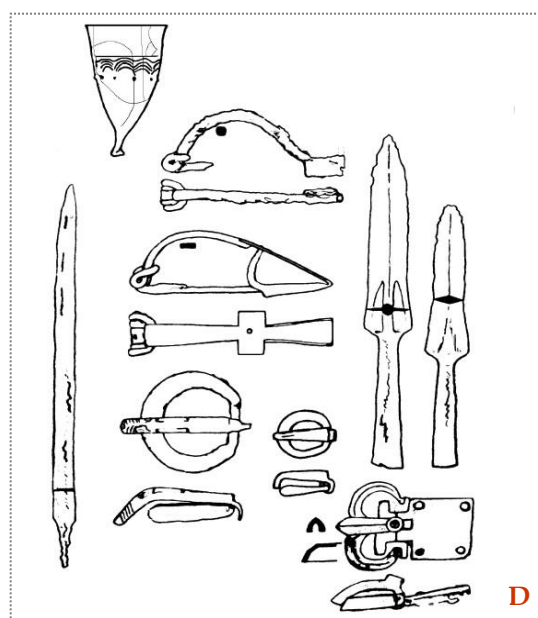
Inhumation grave 44. Spearman (Chiftain ?).  
Grave date: 400-450 AD.



Inhumation grave 54. *Balistarii*. Consisted  
coin of Hadrian. Grave date: 400-450 AD.

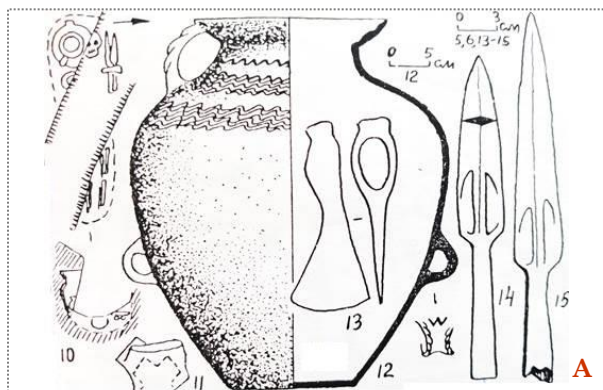


Inhumation grave 31. Spearman (?).  
Grave date: 350-380 AD.

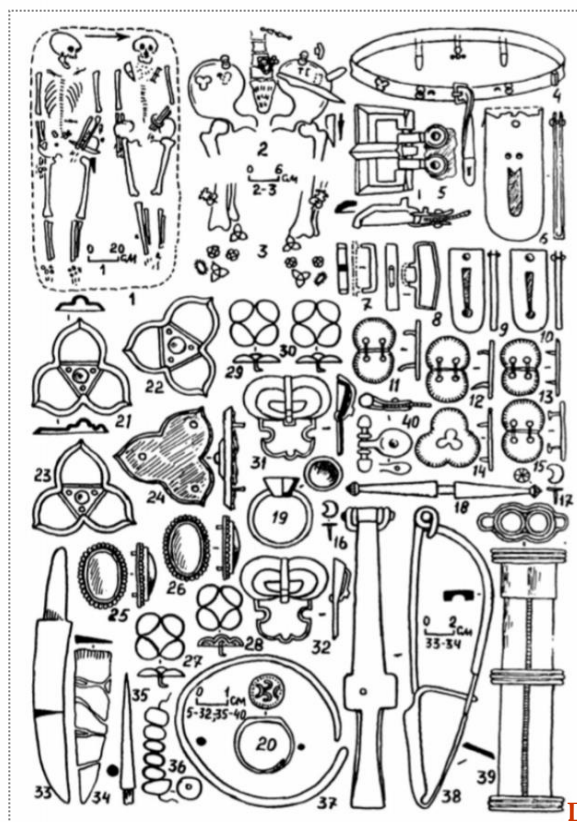


Inhumation grave 47. Spearman.  
Grave date: 530-550/600 AD.

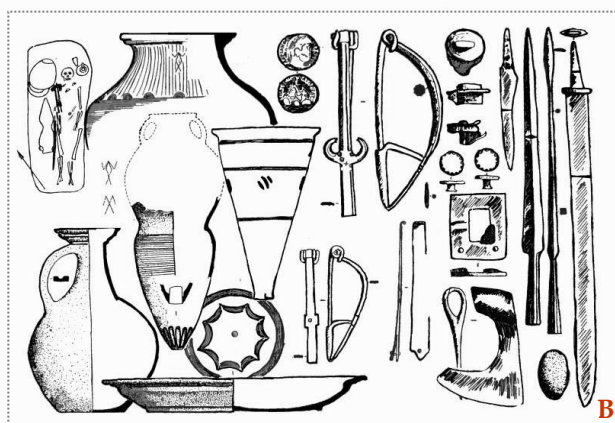
**Comparisons.** Warrior graves from the area of village Mramba. Source: Trapsh 1971.



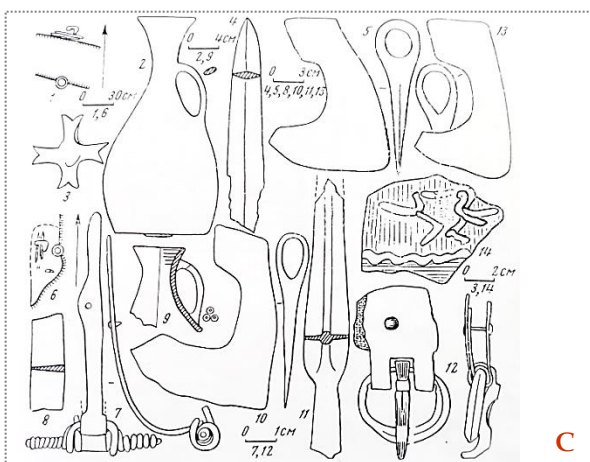
Bat cemetery grave 4. Grave date: 380-400 AD.



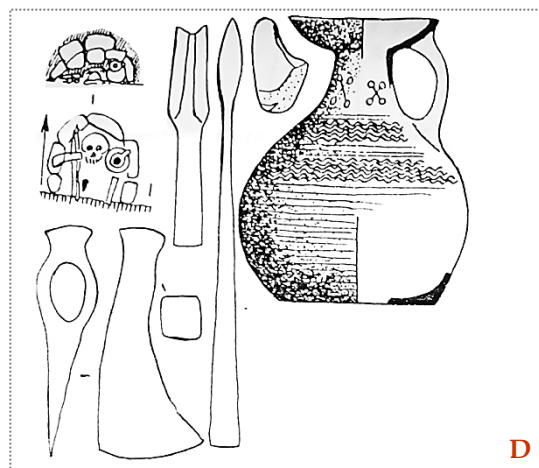
Tsebelda cemetery grave 1a-4. (279) Noblemen Pairs. Grave date: 530/550-600 AD.



Tserkovni hill Inhumation grave 6. Spearman. Grave date: 400-450 AD.

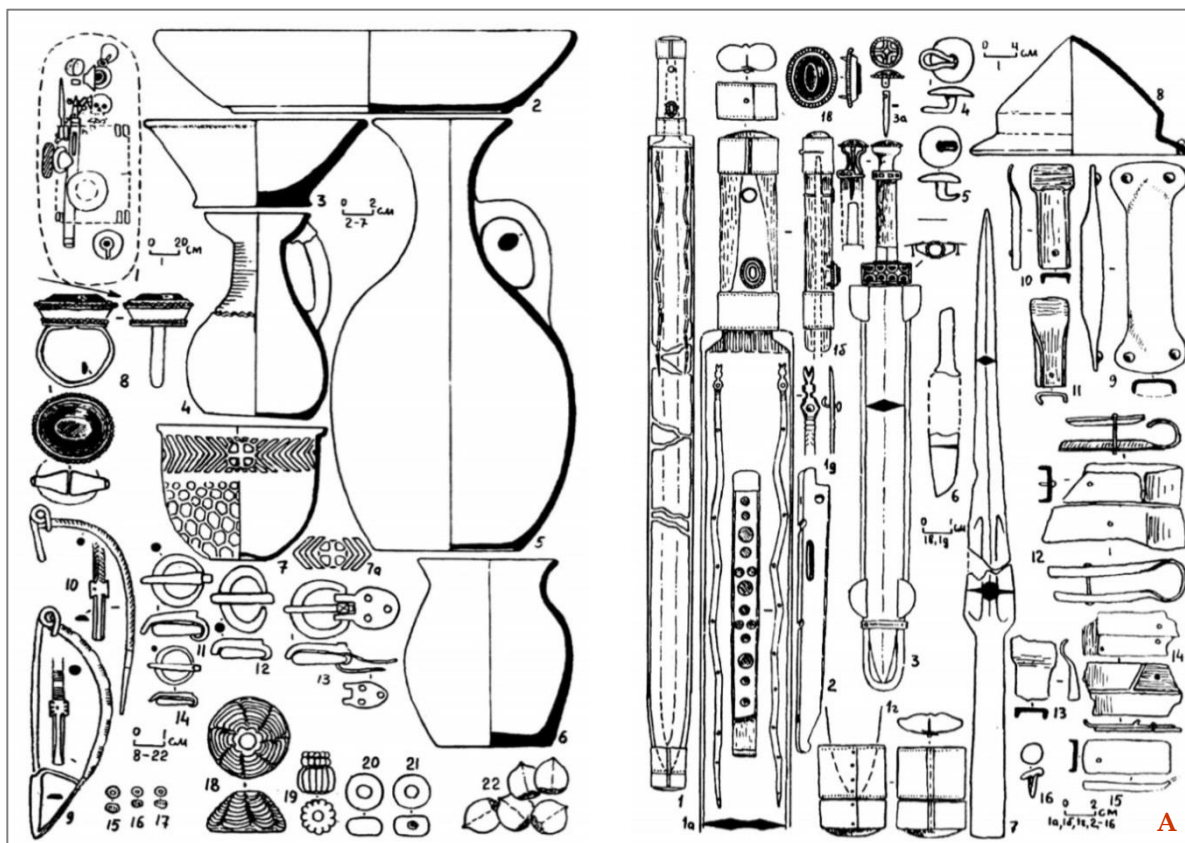


Apushta cemetery grave 2. Grave date: 450- 550 AD.

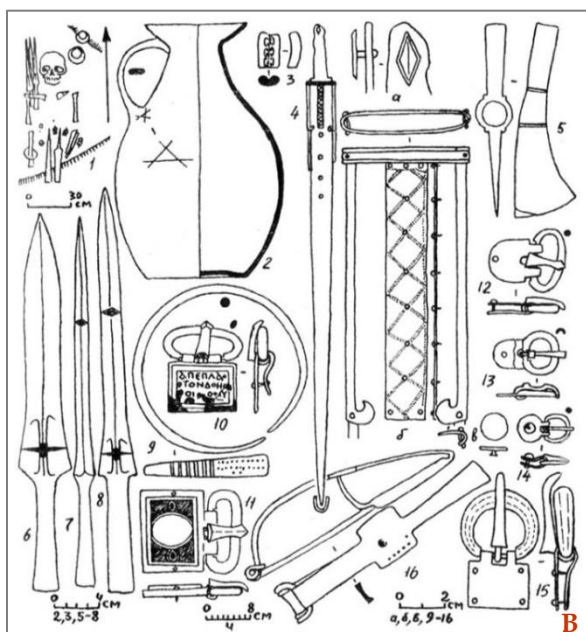


Apushta cemetery grave 2. Grave date: 350-400 AD.

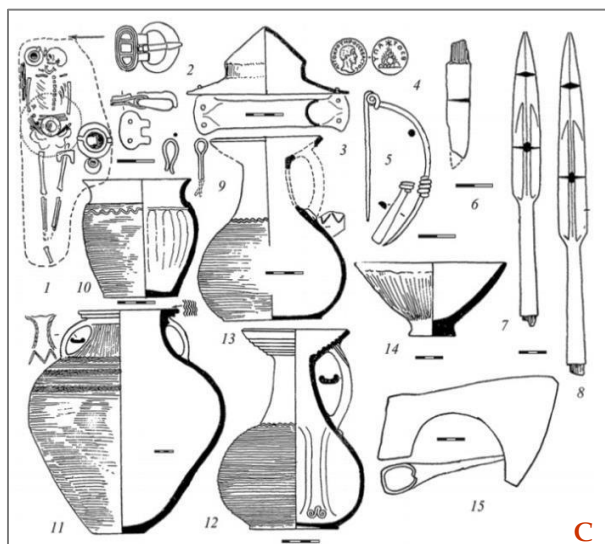
**Comparisons.** Warrior graves from different parts of Apsilia. Sources: Voronov , Jushin 1971; Voronov, Shenkao 1982.



The content of Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. Grave date: 400-450/500 AD. Source: Voronov, Jushin 1982.

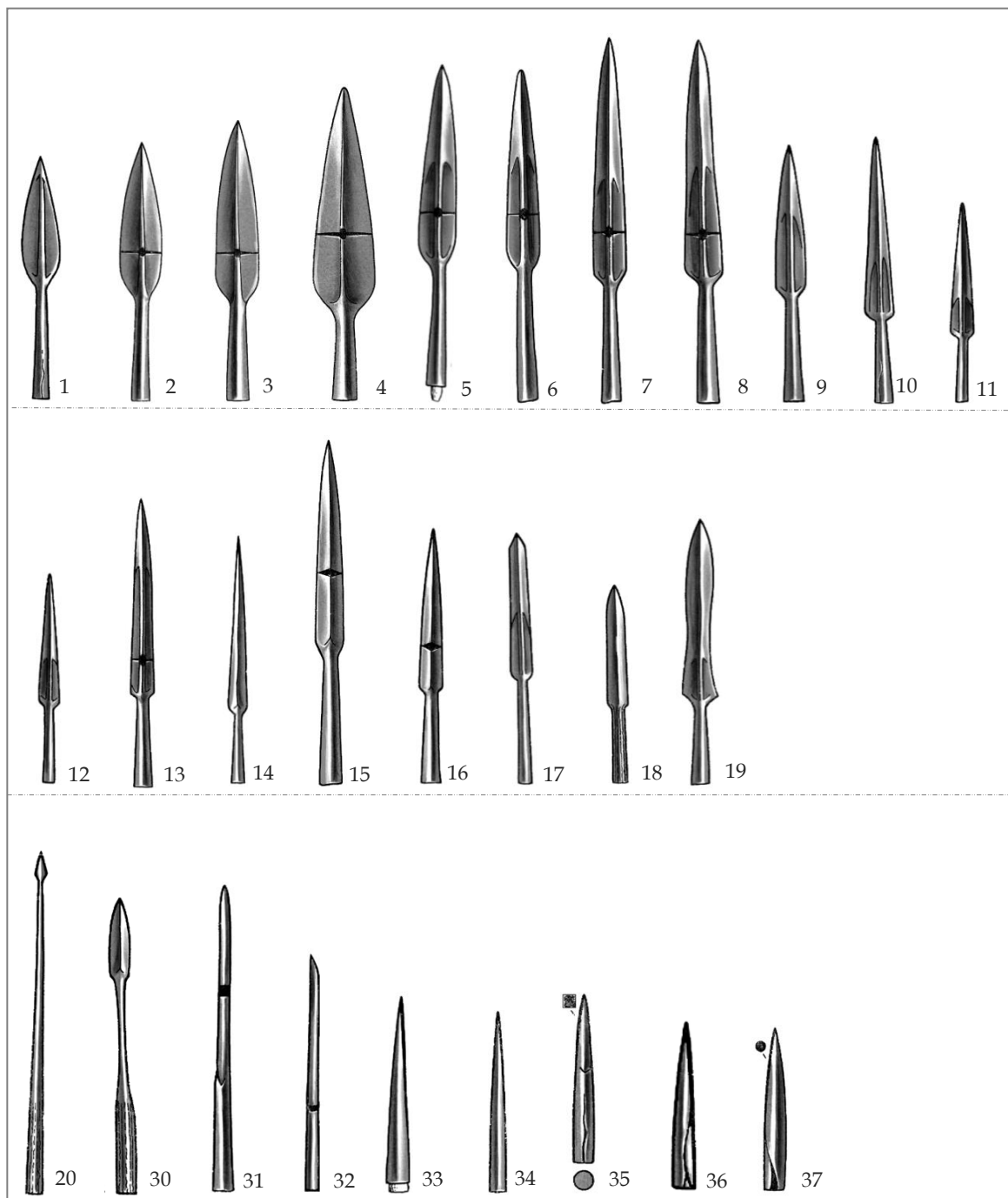


The content of Lar cemetery grave 1. Grave date: 450-550 AD.



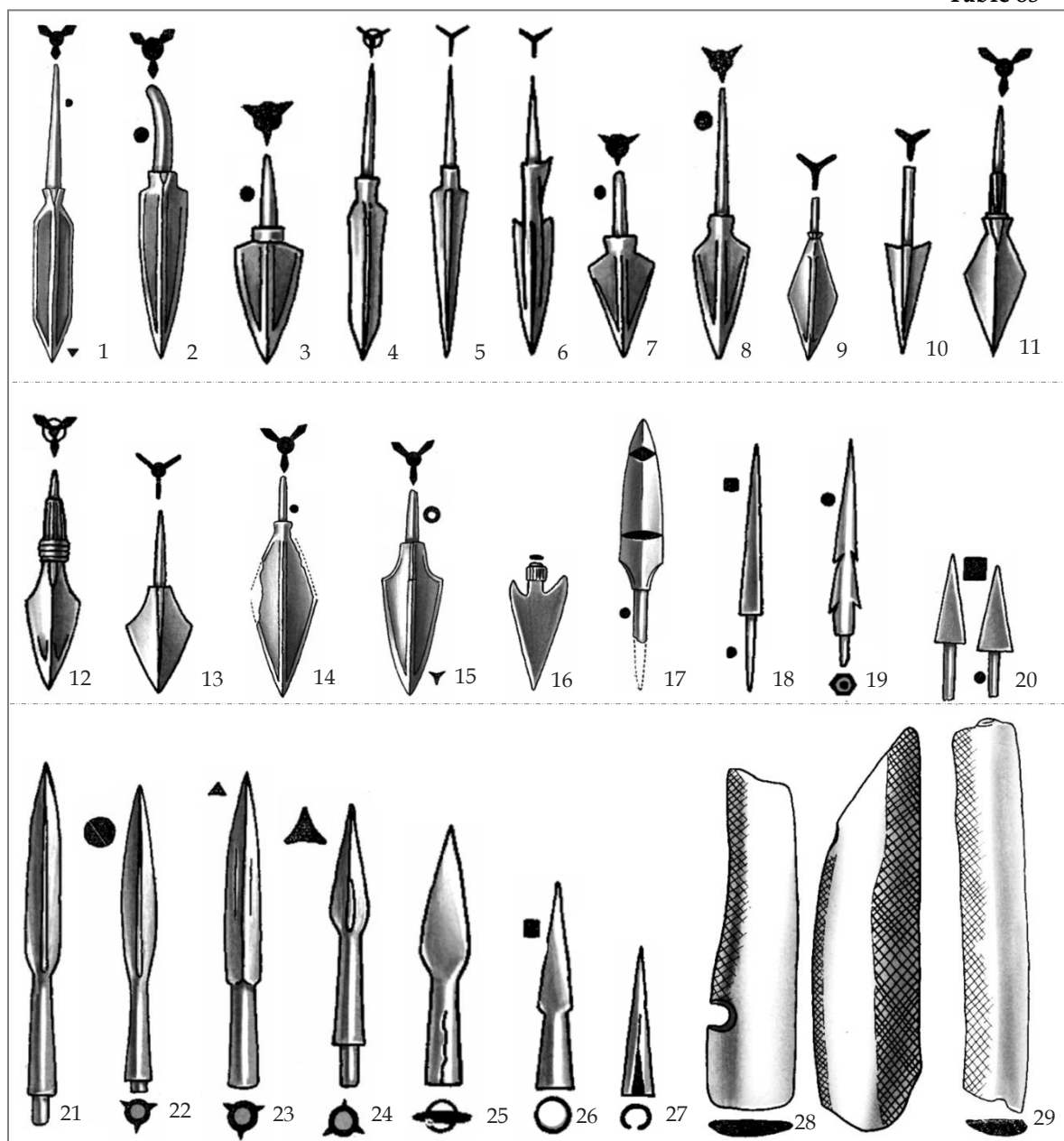
The content of Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24. Grave date: 320/340-380 AD. Source: Kazanski 2015.

**Comparisons.** Warrior graves from Apsilia.



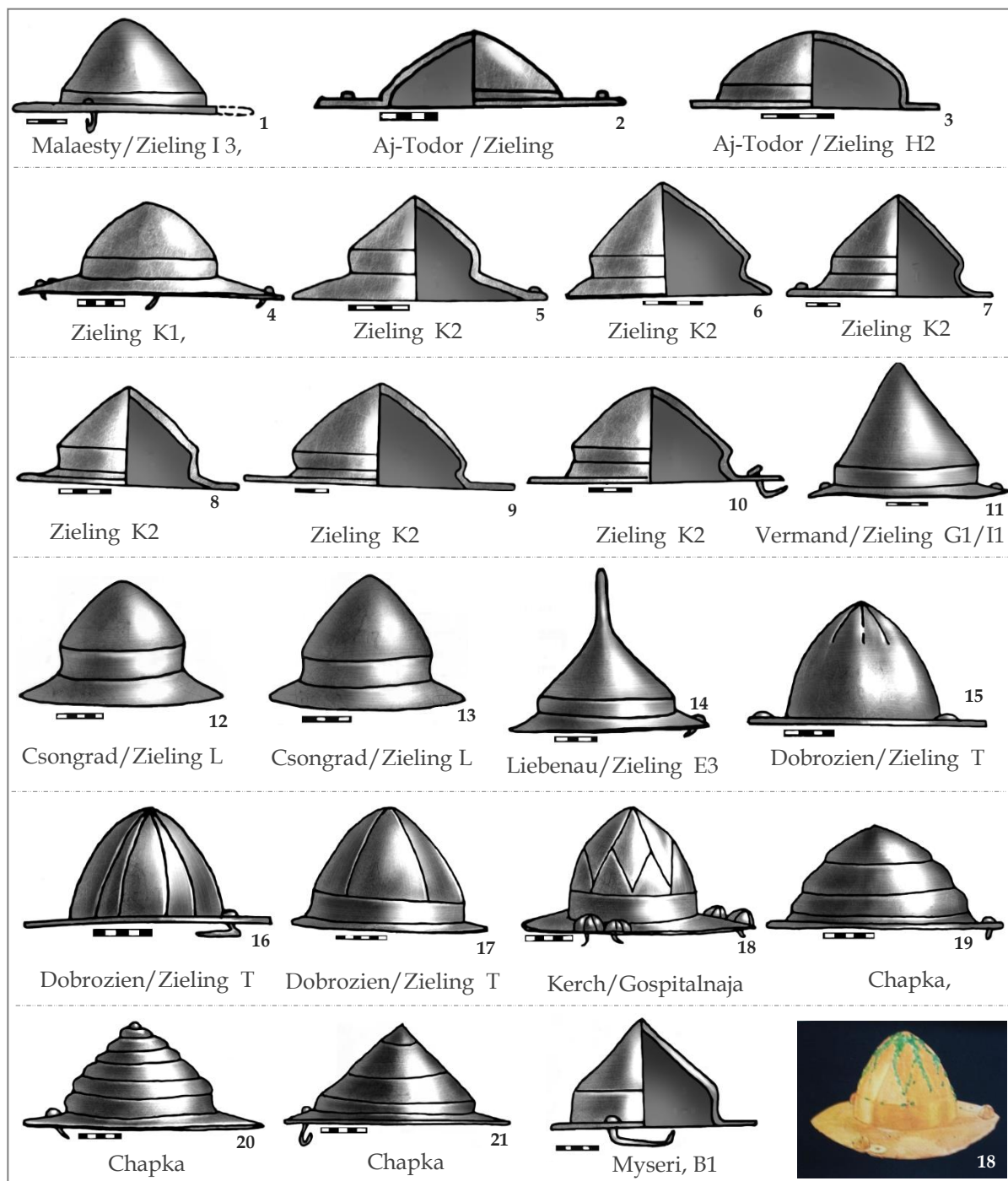
**Spearman weapons. 1-30 Selected types of spears:** 1-3 - Akhacharkhu cemetery graves 12, 14, 15, Apushta grave 13. 4- Lar grave 5. 19- Lar grave 1. **Lances:** 11-12 - Akhacharkhu grave 32. **Heavy javelin:** 20- *Pilum*, Shapka; Apushta grave 27 (slightly different type) 30 - *Angon*, Justiniaov cemetery grave 6. **Darts distinctive in bodkin points:** 31-32 - Long bodkin heads, Akhacharkhu 32, Akhatsarakhu 47. 34-37 - Butt spikes, Justinianov hill grave 5.










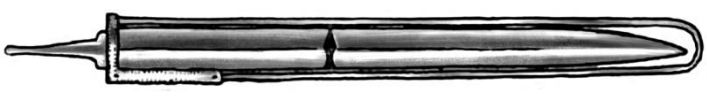




**Archery weapons.** A visual guide to the selected missile weapon types, showing difference in socketed arrowheads and Ballista. *Socketed arrow heads:* 5, 9 - Abgidzrakhu grave 27. 6, 11-13- Tserkovni gave 4. 9, 18, 19 - Abgidzrakhu grave 54. 15 - Justinianov grave 5. 1-3, 7-8, 14-15, 17, 20-24- Tsebelda fort building 1. *Pyramidal and socketed catapult arrowheads:* 18, 20- Abgidzraku grave 54, Tsebelda fort. *Ballista:* 17- Apushta grave 2; 25-26- projectile heads, Tsebelda fort, Abgidzrakhu grave 54. *Bone curving of composite bow:* 28-29 - Tsebelda fort tower 3 and Justinioanov grave 5.

Table 86

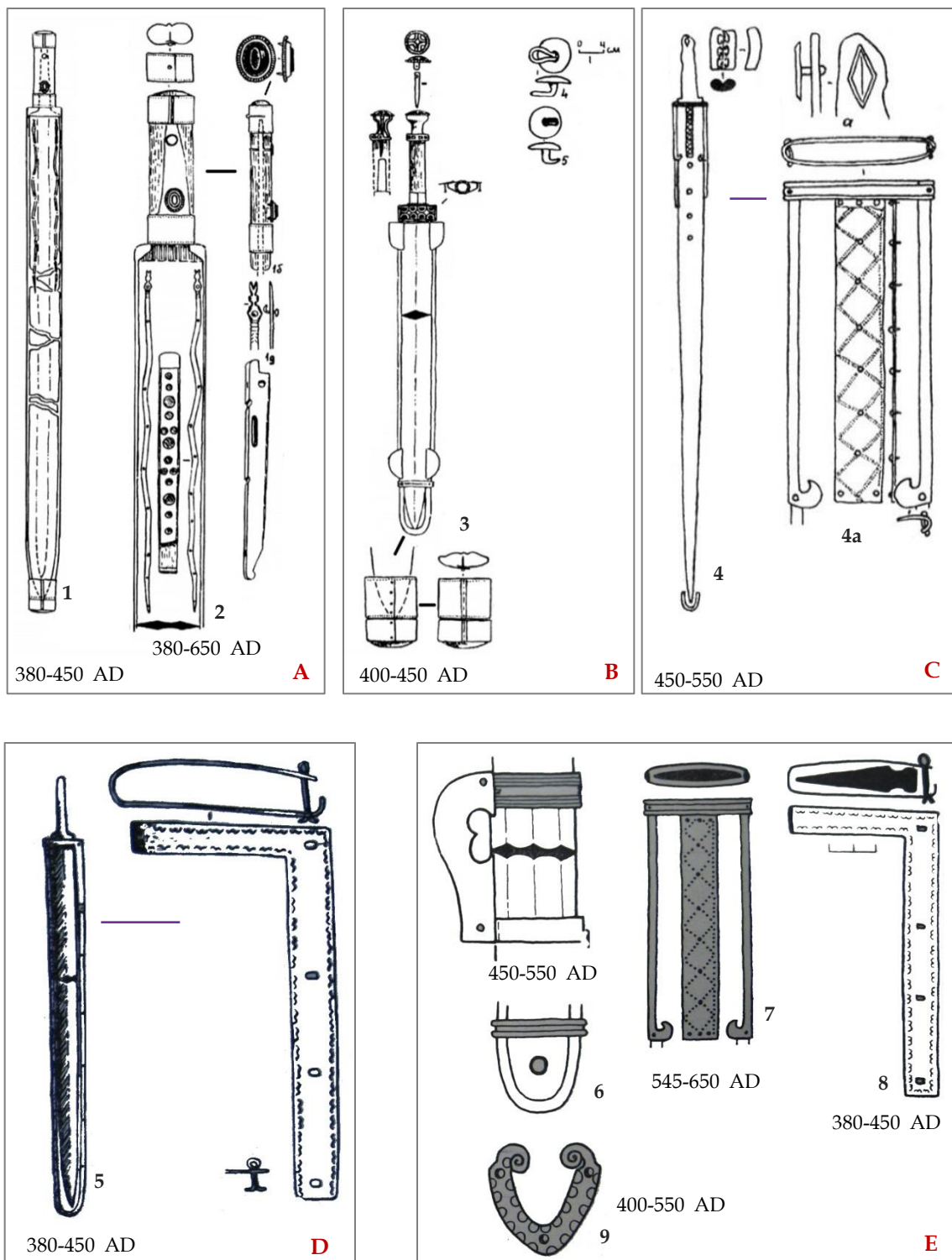


**State organised distribution of shields (*fabricae militares*).** Artistic image of shield boss types. **1, 4, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21** - from Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves (12, 54, 41, 43, 6, 12, 21, 14). **11, 15, 16, 19**- from Akhatsarakhu cemetery graves (2, 15 (horse grave), 20, 39). **14**- Tserkovni cemetery grave 4. **2, 3, 5, 6, 9** - Tsebelda cemetery graves (8, 104, 1-24, 43, 76). **7**-Apiancha grave 38. **8**-Lar grave 12. **10**- Apushta grave 37.

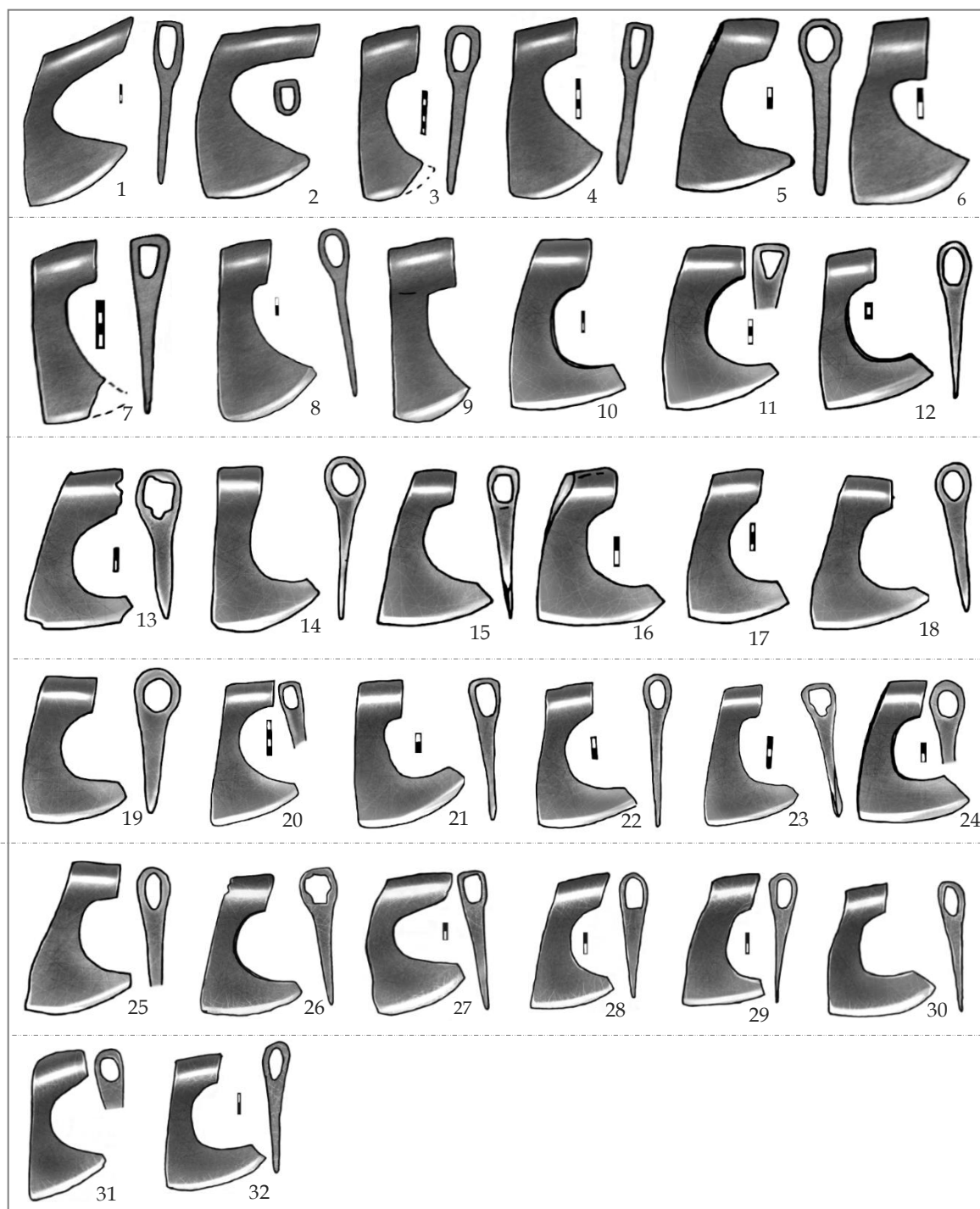
**Table 87**

	1	AD 270- 360
	2	AD 320-370
	3	AD 380-450
	4	AD 400-500
	5	AD 450-550
	6	AD 380-450
	7	AD 380-450
	8	AD 380-450
	9	AD 350-450
	10	AD 530-630

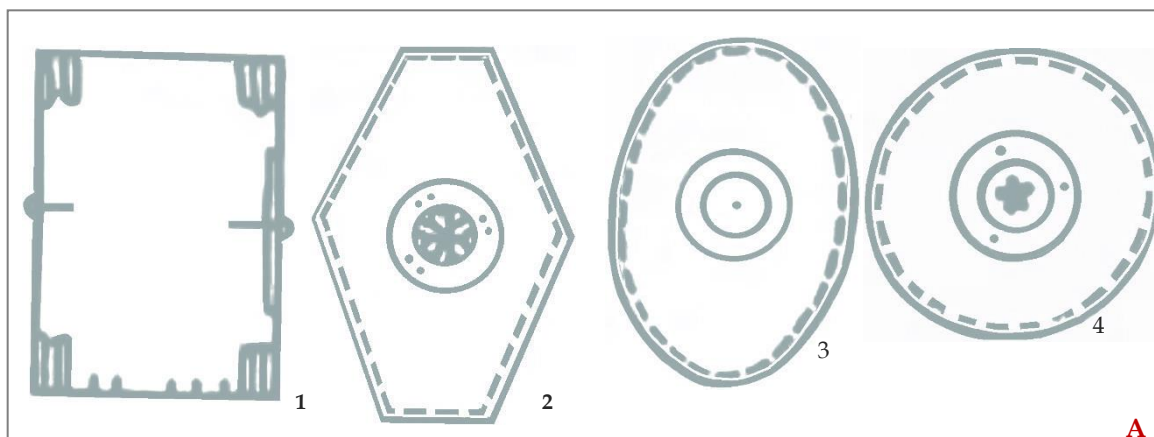
**A visual guide to the selected blade types of swords and sax.** 1 - Apushta grave 2; Tsebelda grave 455. 2 - Akhatsarakhu grave 11. 3 - Abgidzrakhu grave 27. 5 - Tserkovni cemetery grave 5 (450- 500 AD). 6 - Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 7 (340-400 AD). 7 - Justinianov grave 2. 8 - Justinianov hill grave 2-1. 9 - 10 cemetery Tzibile 1,2.



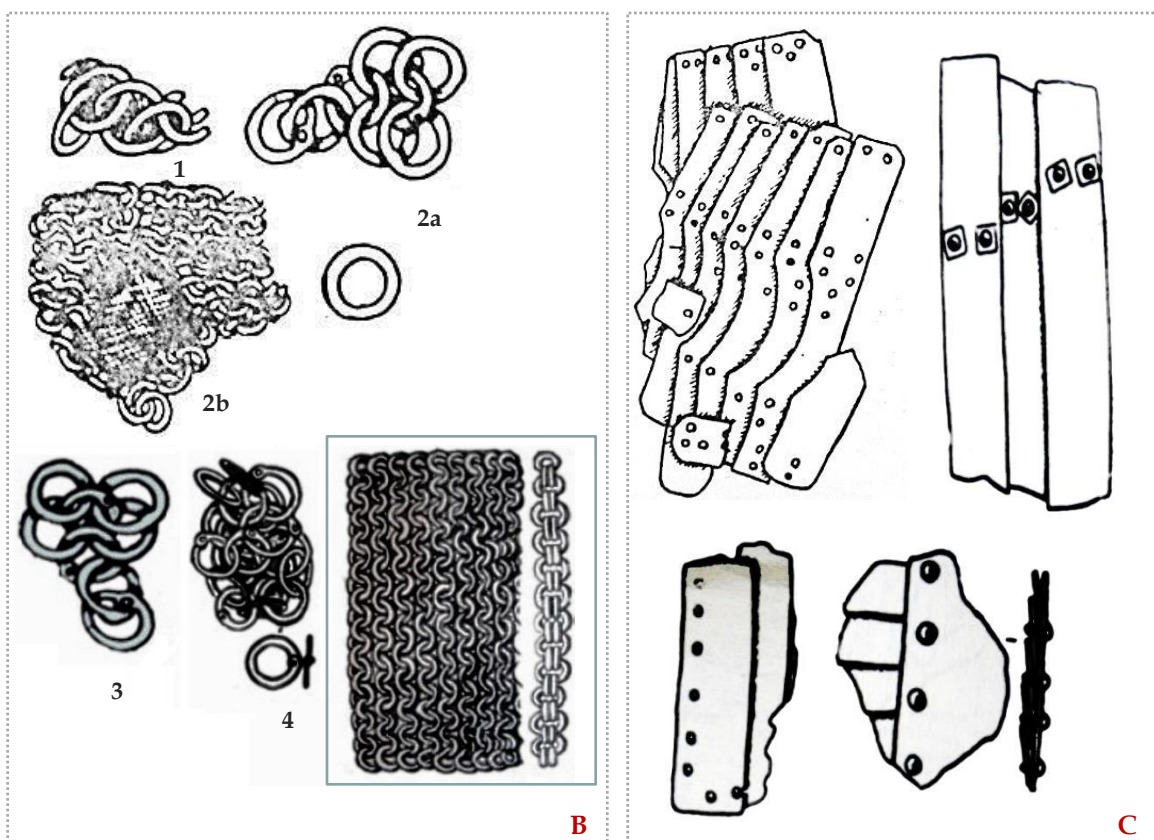
**Selected types of possible official gifts.** A-B - Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-43. C- Lar cemetery grave 1. D - Tserkovni hill grave 4. E- Scabbard types: 6- Eshera. 7 - Lar cemetery grave 1. 8 - Tserkovni cemetery grave 7. 9 - Tserkovni cemetery grave 5.



**Visual guide to the axe types and their artistic image.** 1, 2, 4-8, 20-21, 28, 31- Tsebelda cemetery graves (1-66, 66, 79, 76, 26, 75, 2-58, 73, 104), Lar grave 5. 3, 25, 30 - Apushta cemetery graves (13, 15, 21). 5, 10- Abgidzrakhu cemetery graves (41, 15, 9). 9 - Amtkel area. 12, 32- Tserkovni grave (7, 4). 13- Akhacharkhu grave 2. 14-15, 18, 19- Apiancha cemetery graves (22/37, 6/21, 12/27, 13/18). 27- Lar grave 5. *Information source: Kazanski 1994.*



*Magistri Officiorum*. Artistic image of shield types from Apsilia: 1- Abgidzrakhu grave 44, Tsebela cemetery grave 1-43. 2 - Abgidzrakhu grave 12. Fitted with Kerch type boss. 3 -Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-24, Lar cemetery grave 12. Fitted with Zielsing K2 type boss. 4 - Tsebelda cemetery grave 1-4. Fitted with Zielsing K2 type boss.

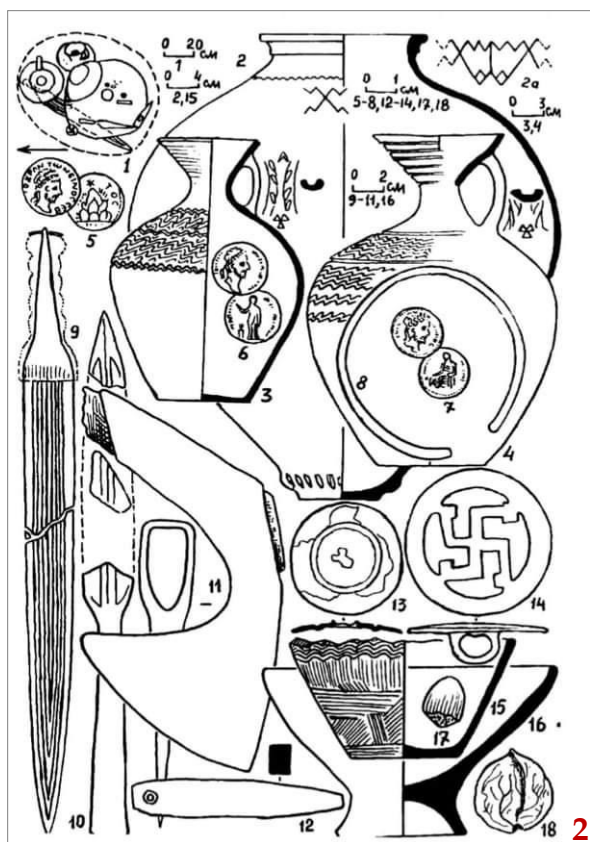


**Selected fragments of armour types.** 1-*'Lorica hamata'*. 2, 4- *'Ring mail'*. Found in Building 1 of Tzibile fort tower 2. Source: Voronov, Bgazhba 1982. Fig.58.

**Selected fragments of segmented plates of the *'Lorica segmentata'*.** Found in tower 2 of Tzibile fort. Source: Voronov, Bgazhba 1982. Fig.56.



1



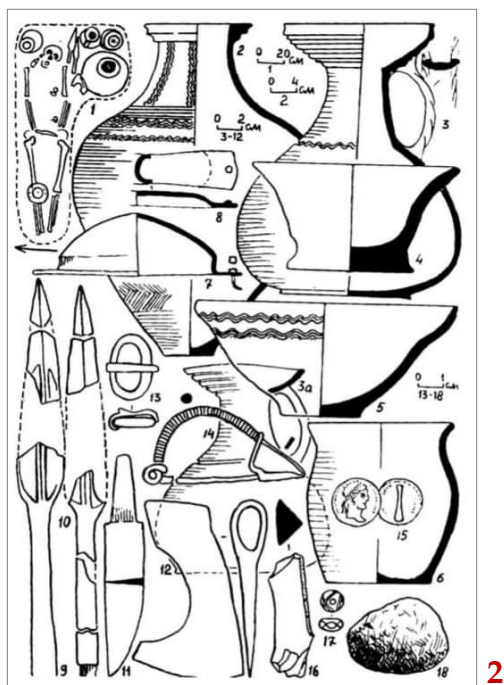
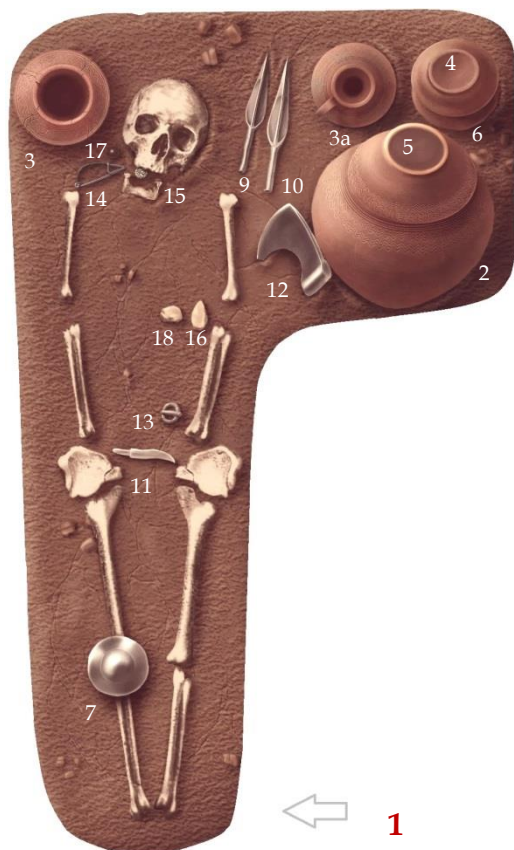
2



A

A- Artistic image of warrior from Tsebelda.  
 1- Reconstruction of corresponding cremation grave 1-82. 2- Related offering complex.  
 Grave date: 200-270 AD

*Material source: Voronov 1982. Reconstructed by Rommie Fabian.*



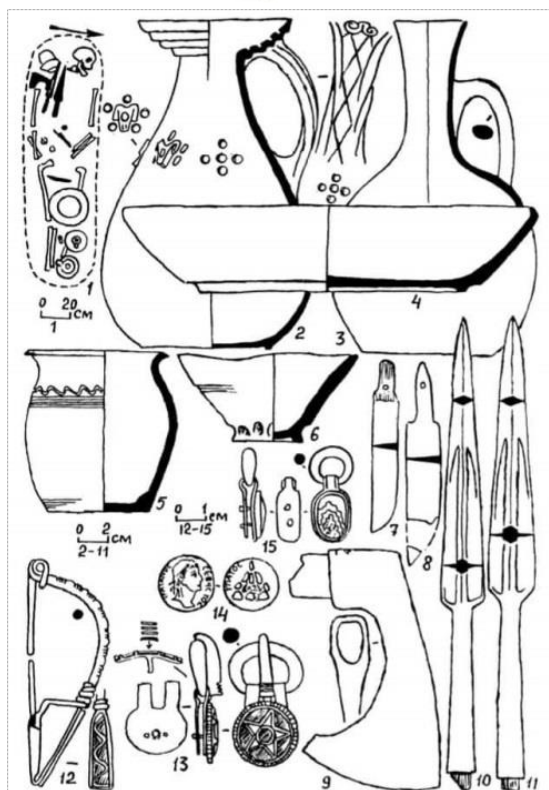
A- Artistic image of warrior from Tsebelda.  
 1- Reconstruction of corresponding grave 1-104.  
 2- Related grave offerings.  
 Grave date: 300-370 AD

*Material source: Voronov 1982. Reconstructed by Rommie Fabian.*





1



2



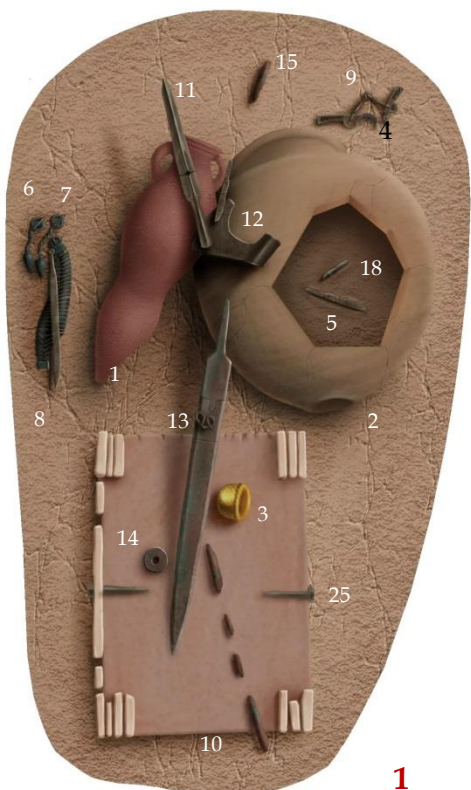
A

A- Artistic image of warrior from Tsebelda.

1- Reconstruction of corresponding Tsebelda fort grave 2. 2- Related grave offerings.

Grave date: 370-400 AD

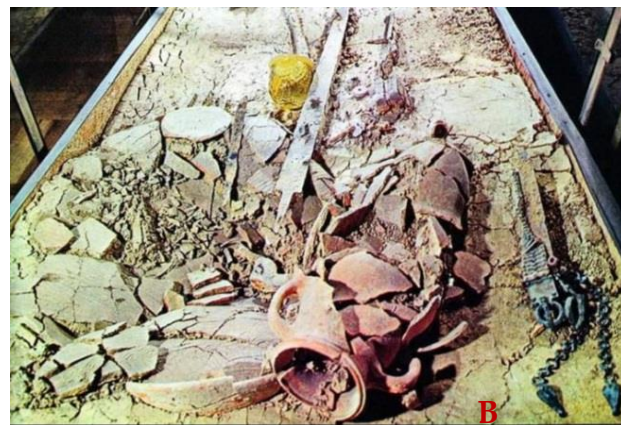
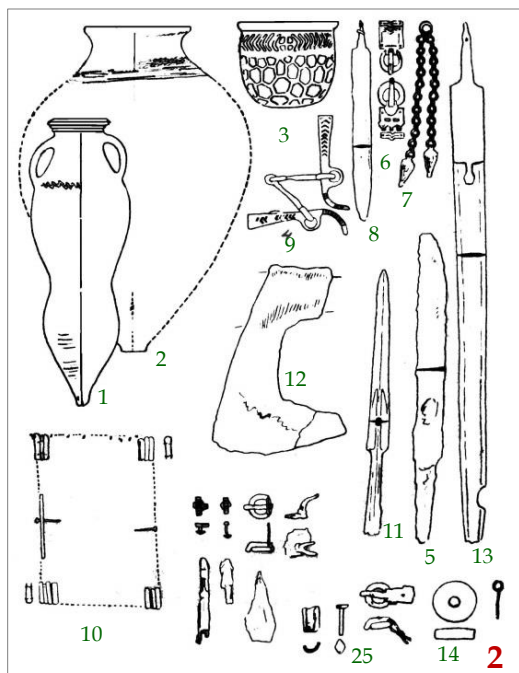
*Material source: Voronov 1989. Reconstructed by Rommie Fabian.*



1



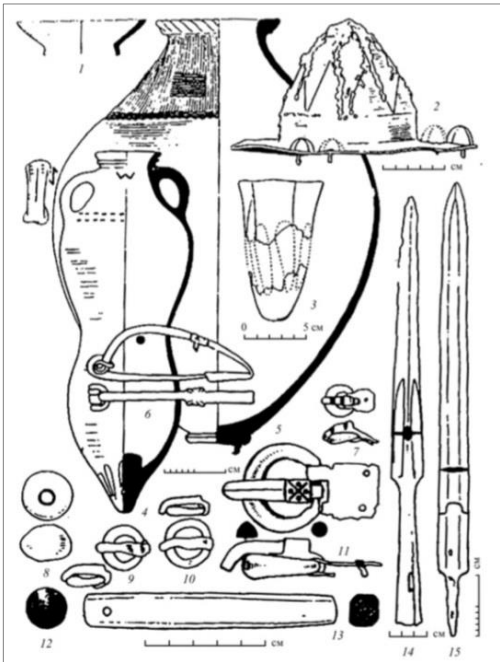
A



B

A- Artistic image of warrior from Mramba.  
 1-Reconstruction of corresponding Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 4. 2- Related grave offerings.  
 B- Photo of related grave. Grave date: 380-450 AD

Material source: Trapsh 1971. Reconstructed by Rommie Fabian.



1



B



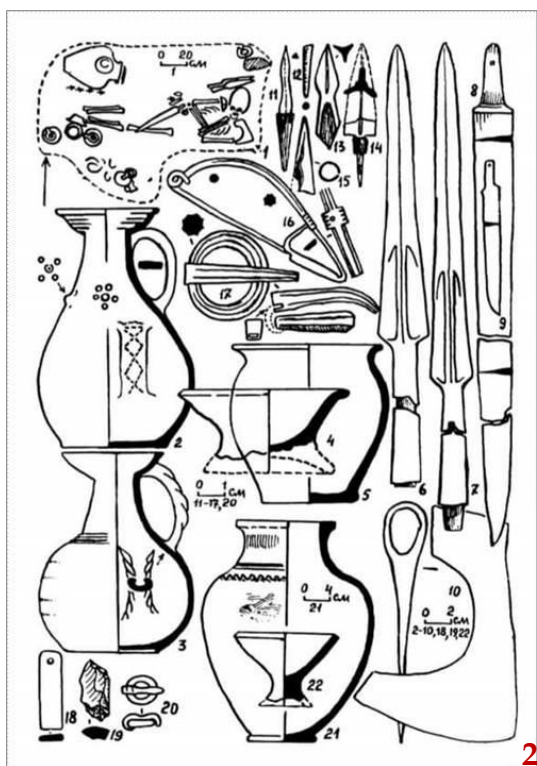
A

A- Artistic image of warrior from Mramba.

1-Reconstruction of corresponding Abgidzraku cemetery cremation grave 12. 2- Related grave offerings. B- Photo of related shield boss.

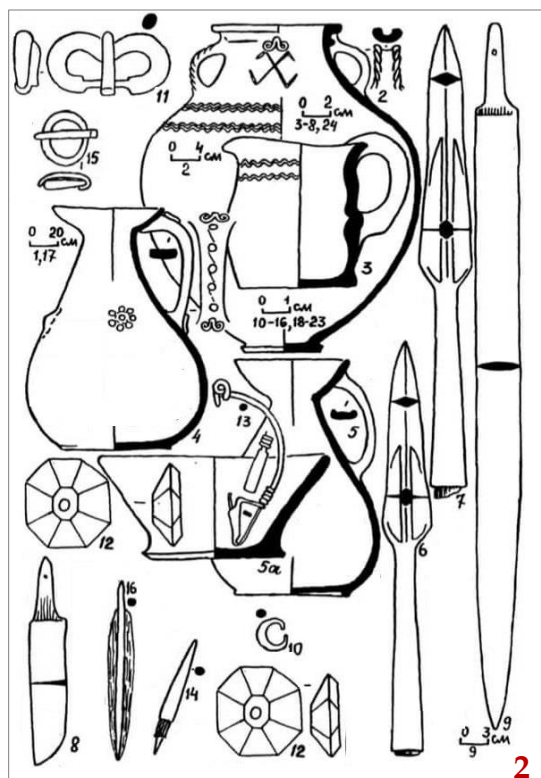
Grave date: 380-450 AD

Material source: Trapsh 1971. Reconstructed by Rommie Fabian.



A- Artistic image of warrior from Tsebelda.  
 1-Reconstruction of corresponding Abgidzrakhu cemetery grave 1-58. 2- Related grave offerings. The skull of decease questioned to be cranial deformed (but not deliberately constricted).  
 Grave date: 340-400 AD

*Material source:* Voronov, Shenkao 1982.  
 Reconstructed by Irakli Meskhia.



A- Artistic image of warrior from Tsebelda.  
 1-Reconstruction of corresponding Tsebela cemetery grave 229. 2- Related grave offerings.  
 Grave date: 380-400 AD

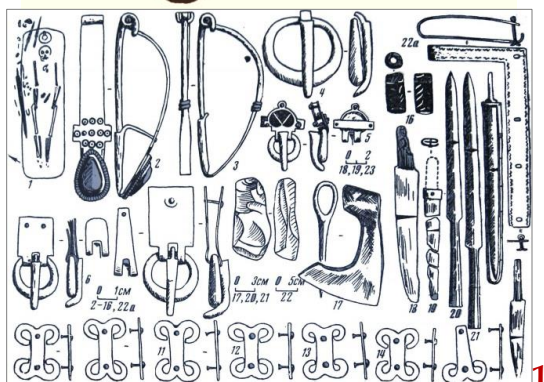
*Material source: Voronov 2003. Reconstructed by Rommie Fabian*



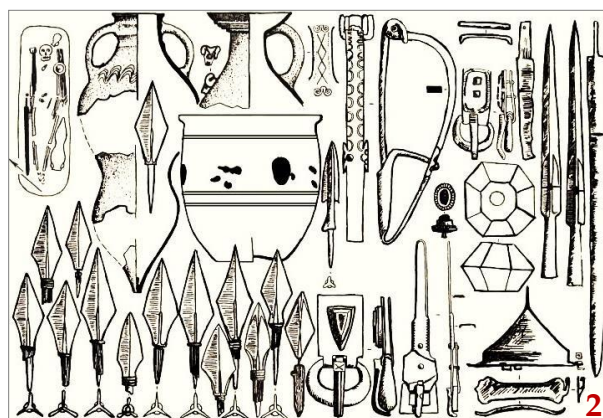
A



B



1



2

A- Artistic image of warrior from Shapka.  
 1-Reconstruction of corresponding Tserkovni cemetery grave 7. 2- Related grave offerings.  
 Grave date: 380-450 AD.

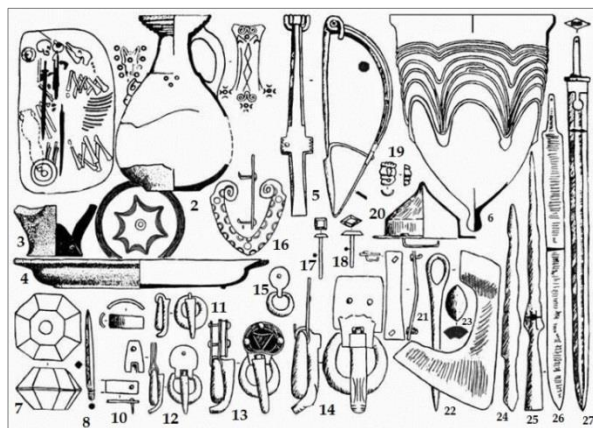
A- Artistic image of warrior from Shapka.  
 1-Reconstruction of corresponding Tserkovni cemetery grave 4. 2- Related grave offerings.  
 Grave date: 380-450 AD



1



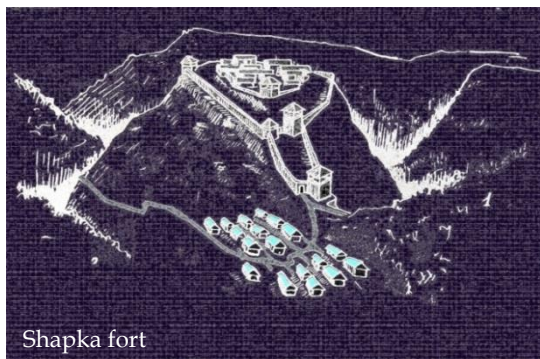
A



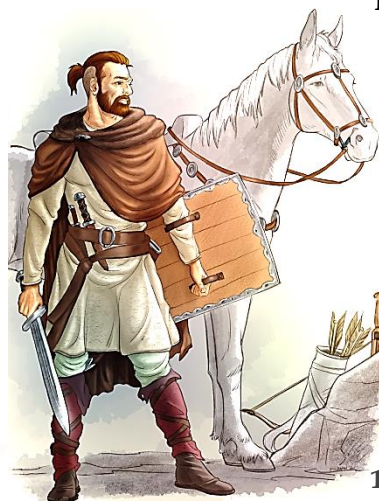
2

A- Artistic image of warrior from Shapka.  
 1-Reconstruction of corresponding Tserkovni cemetery grave 5. 2- Related grave offerings.  
 Grave date: 450-500/520 AD

*Material source: Voronov, Jushin 1971.*



Shapka fort



1  
Warrior (excubitors ?) of Abgidzraku



2  
Auxiliary soldier,  
Heavy equipped



3  
Comitatenses (?),  
Foot archer.



4  
Foederati soldier, Cavalry.



5  
Light equipped allied spearman



6



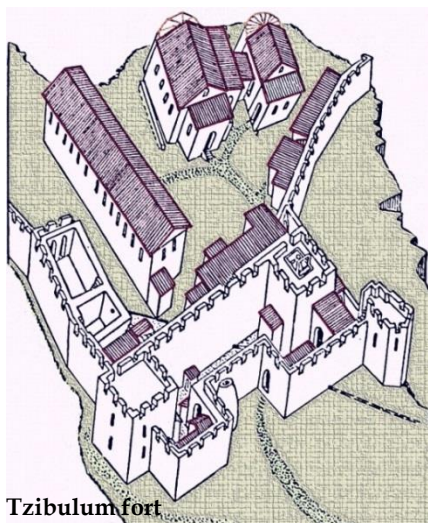
7



8

Coordination of military troops and allied units in Shapka area. 1, 4- Abgidzraku warriors. 2-3 - Tserkovni hill warriors. 5-8 - Olginskoe warriors.





Tzibulumfort



Auxiliary soldier



Limitanei soldier (?)



Limitanei soldier, border units (?)



Light infantry soldier.



Heavy equipped sagittarii.

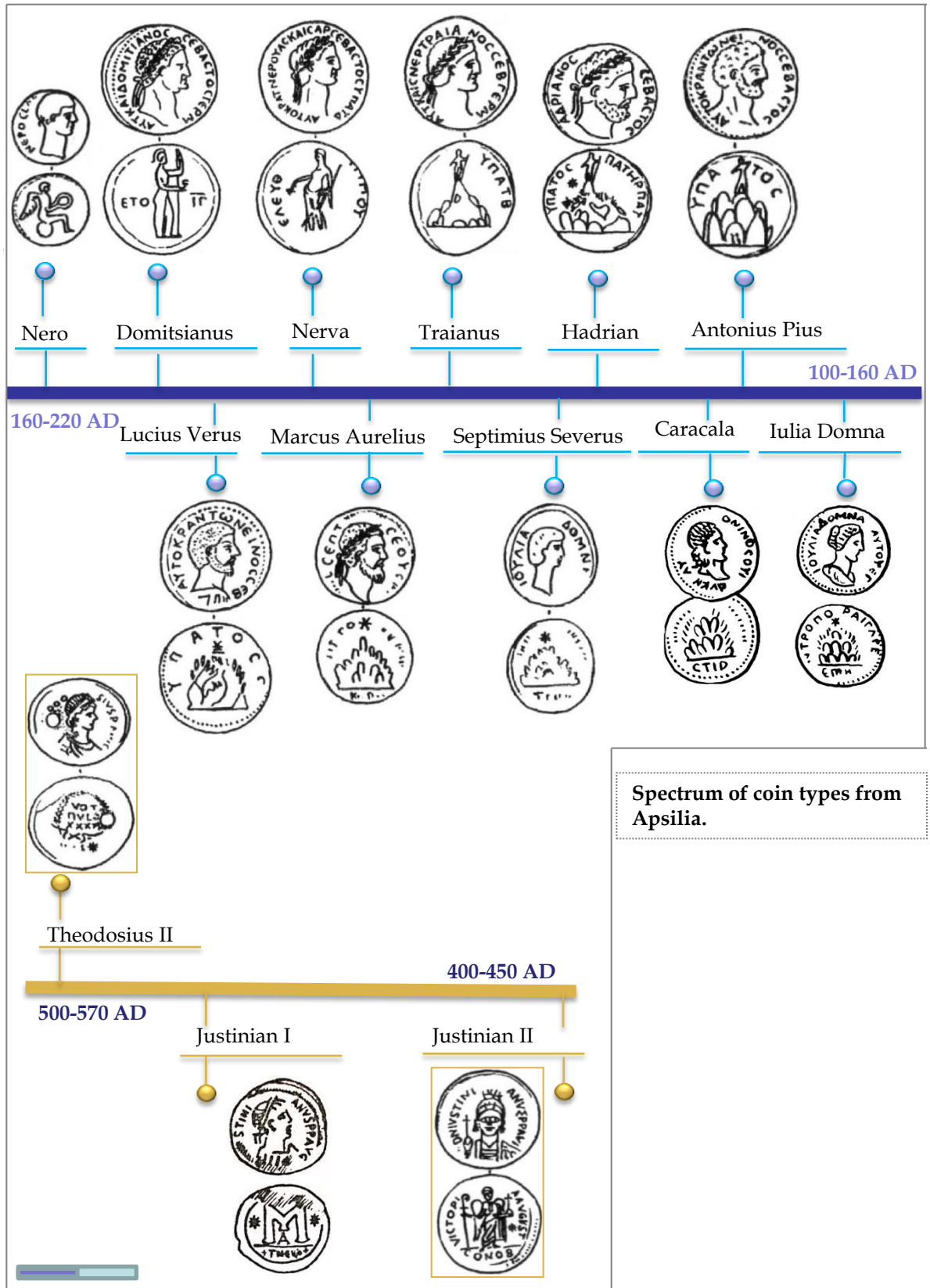


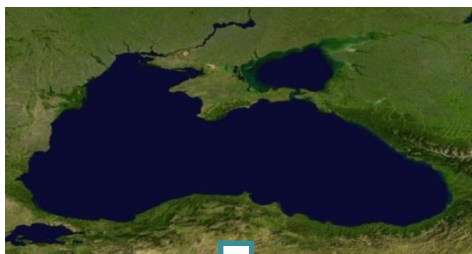
Allied soldier

**Coordination of military troops in Tsebelda area.**

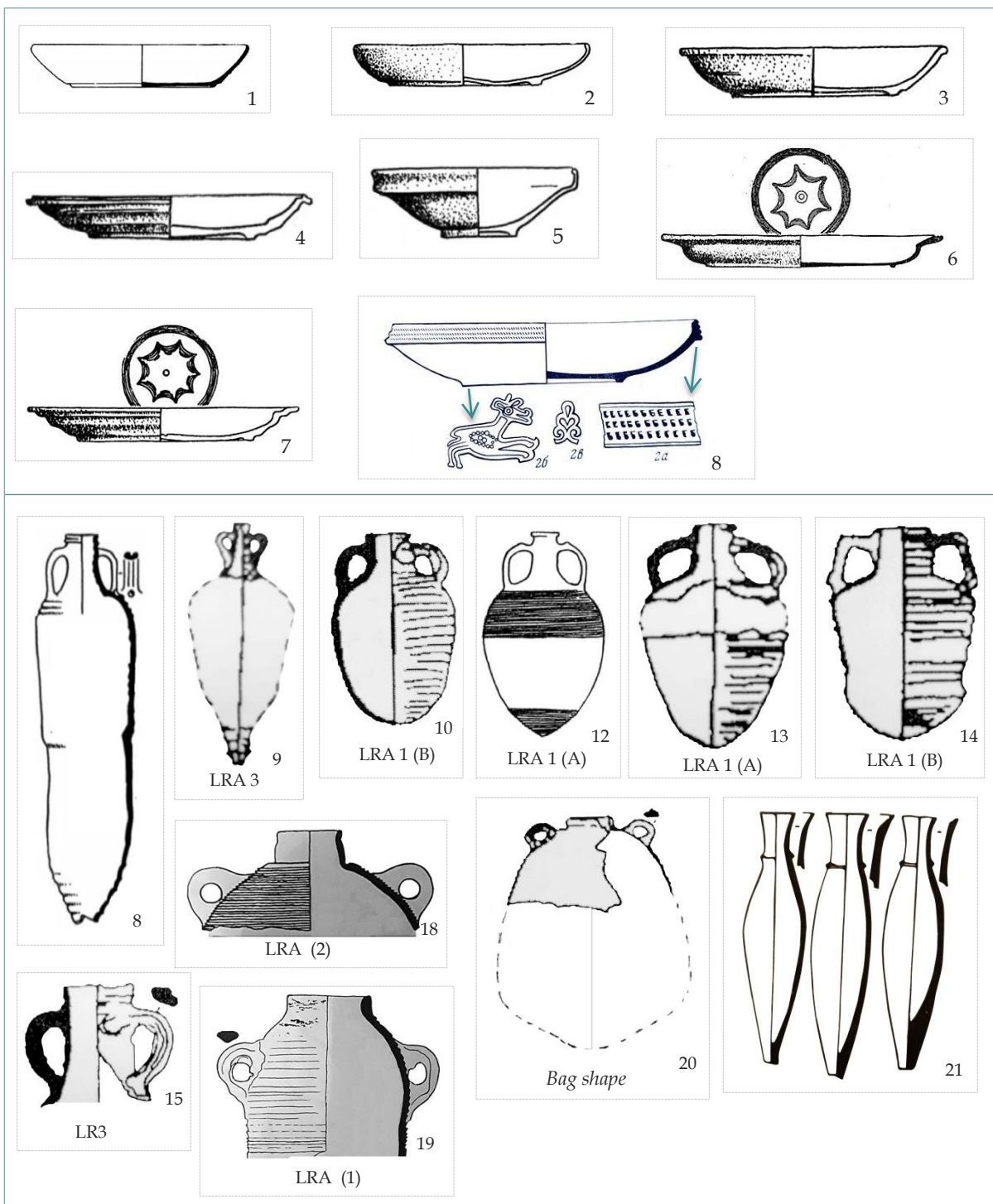
Tsebelda cemetery : 1- grave 1-24. 2- grave 1-104.

3- grave 1-82. 4- fort grave 2. 5- grave 229. 6- grave 1-58.



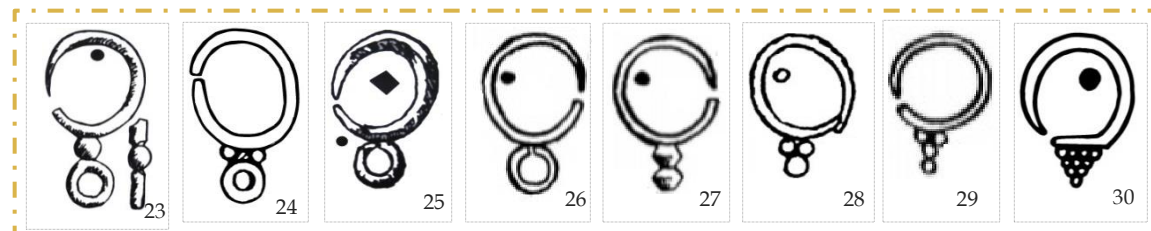
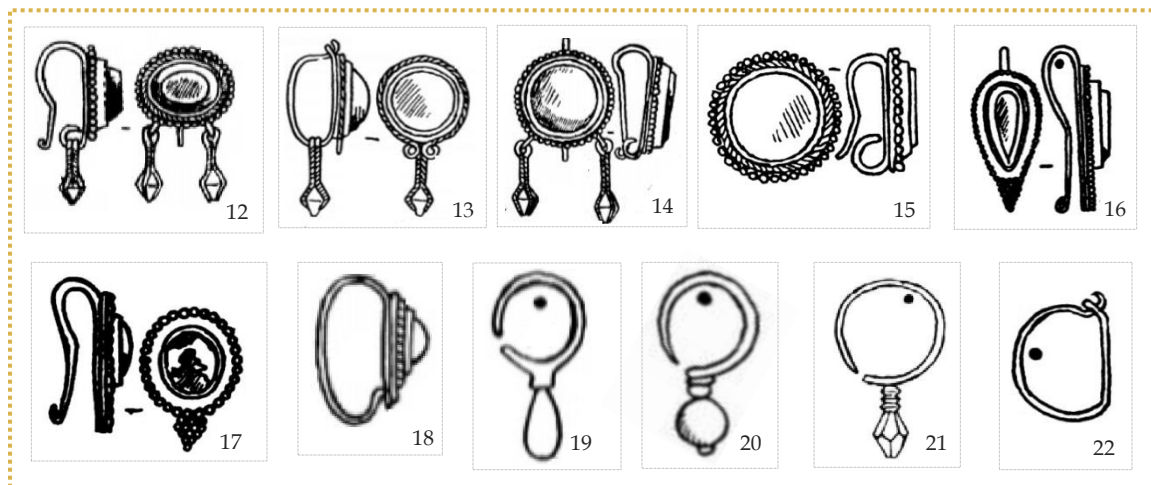


**Imported objects appropriable to trade activities. 1-21 - glass vessels with focus on Black Sea trade. 22-23 - Glass jugs. 25-27 - Glass cones. 28-29 - Pottery beakers constructed north Caucasian distribution. 30- Bronze jug appears probably of north Caucasian distribution way.**



**Contribution to the frontier economy.** Representing import types of annona system.

1-6 - LRW notable for imperial trade regulation. 9-20 - Explores long term effect of amphorae use and state organised distribution under the annona militaries.



**Selective focus on import the most appropriate for trade activities.** Types of earrings from historical Apsilia:

- II stage (200-340/370).
- III stage (380-450):13 , 24,30
- IV stage (450-500/550)
- IV stage (530/550-640)



Selected earrings types may correspond to free trade market.

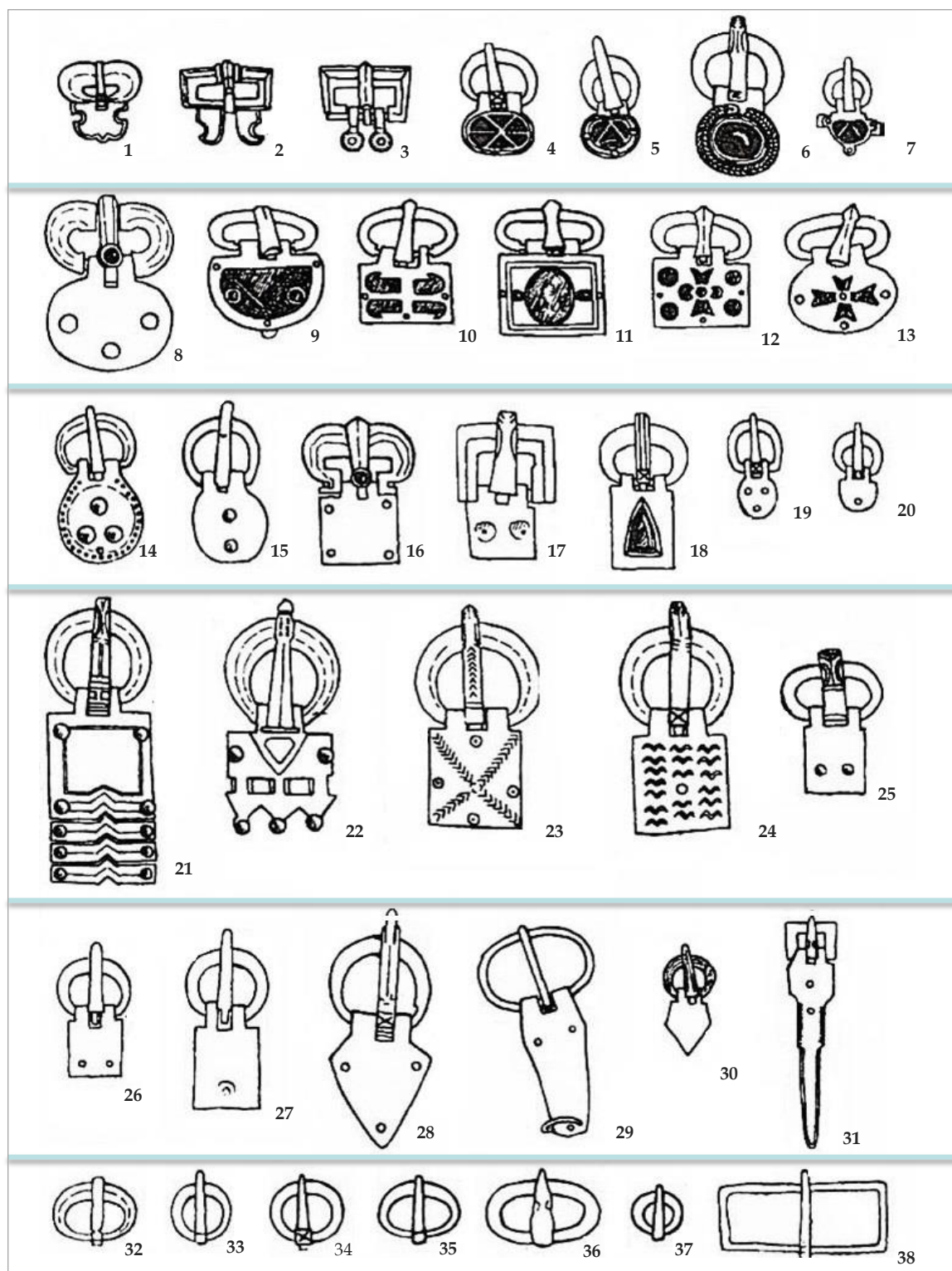
Table 107



**Bead varieties regulated by trade.**

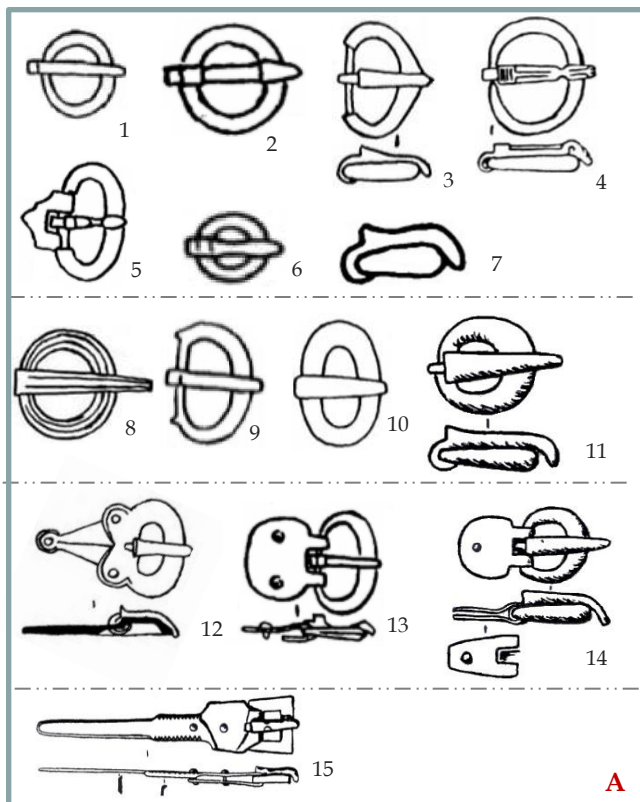
Selected types of monochrome, polychrome and mosaic glass beads.

Stone beads: 1, 5, 41-42, 50, 59, 60, 61.  
 Finds in male graves: 50, 58, 61.



Selected types of imported buckles that attain specific occasions. *Belt buckles: 21-24. Sword buckles: 31-367.*

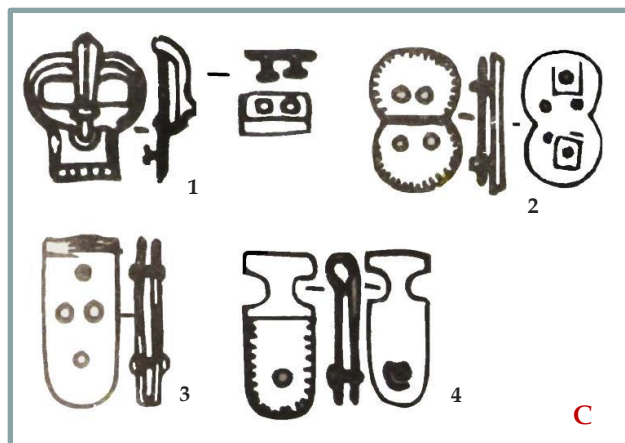




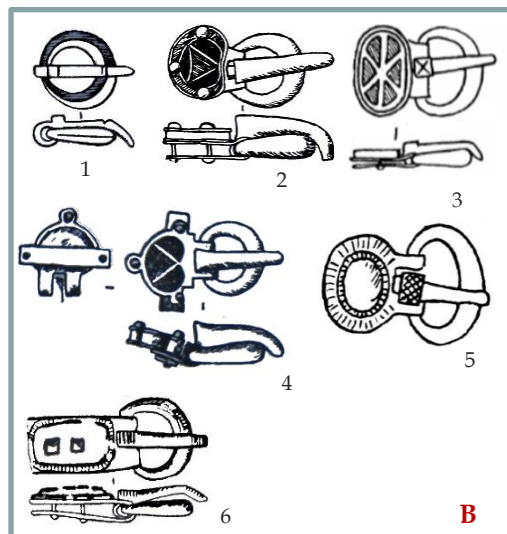
**Selected types of weapon supportive buckles. Sword accompany:** 1-Tsebelda, graves 229, 248. 2- Tsebelda, 295. 8- Tsebelda, grave 85. 11, 14- Tserkovni graves 5, 4. 9- Tsebelda, grave 250.

**Sax related buckles:** 3, 12- Tsebelda, grave 313.

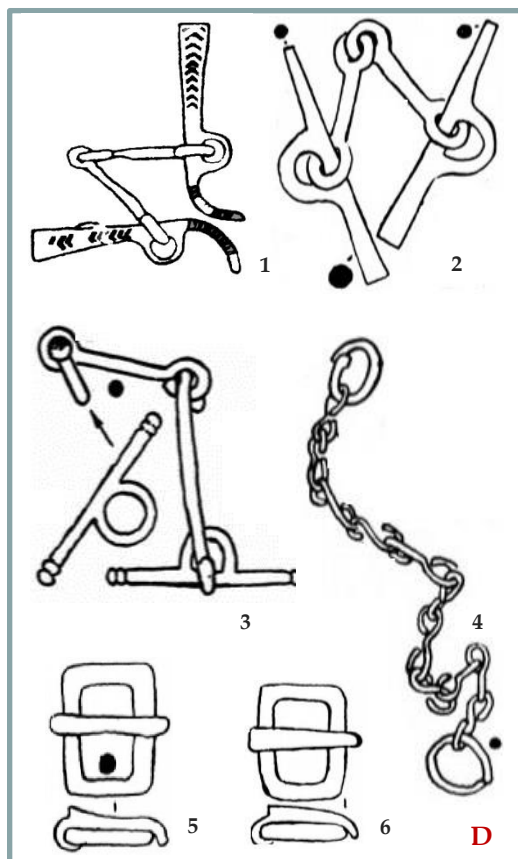
4- Tsebelda grave 3. 11- Tsebelda grave 4.



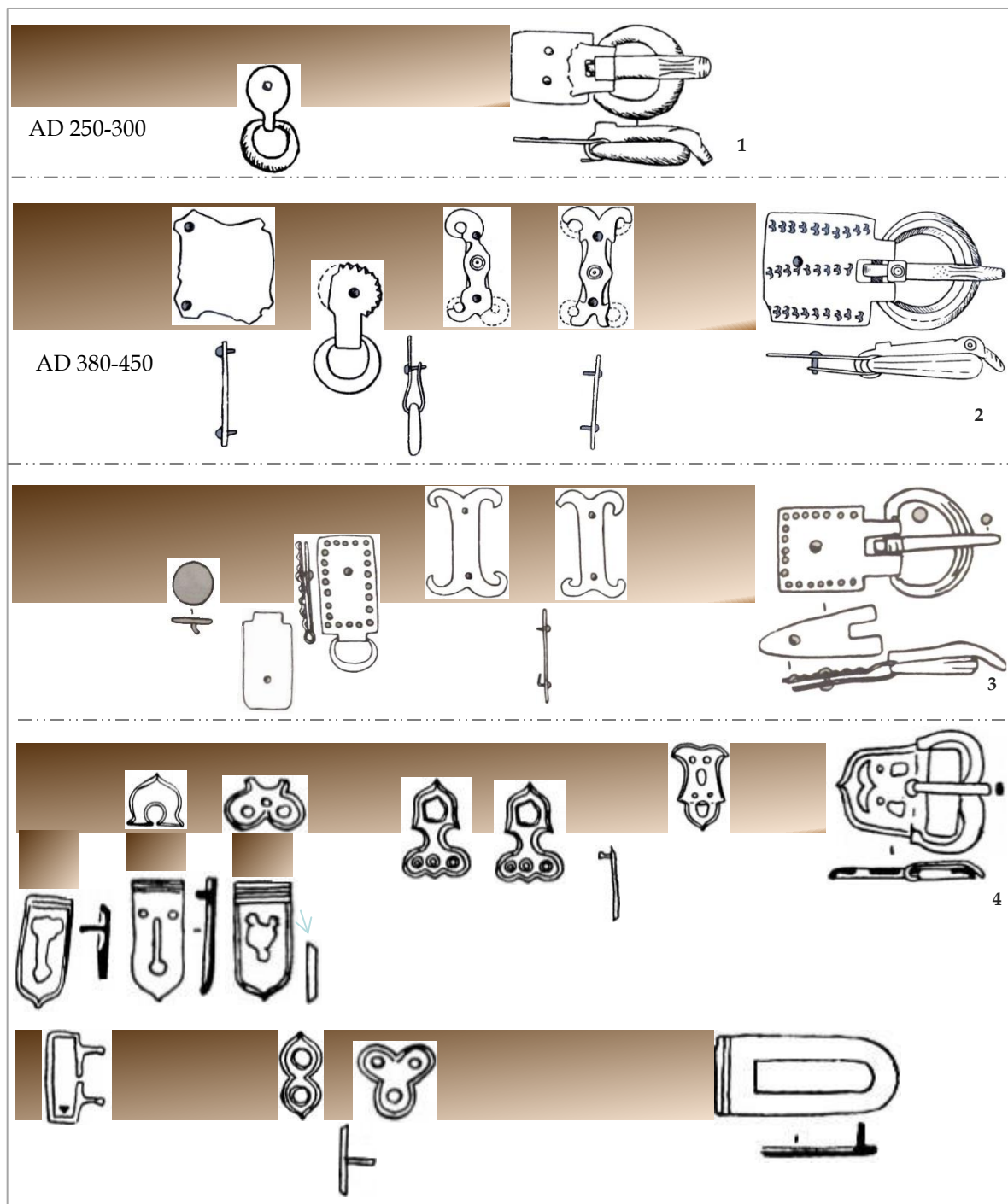
Parts of imported Shoes from Tsebelda fort grave 13a (grave 325).



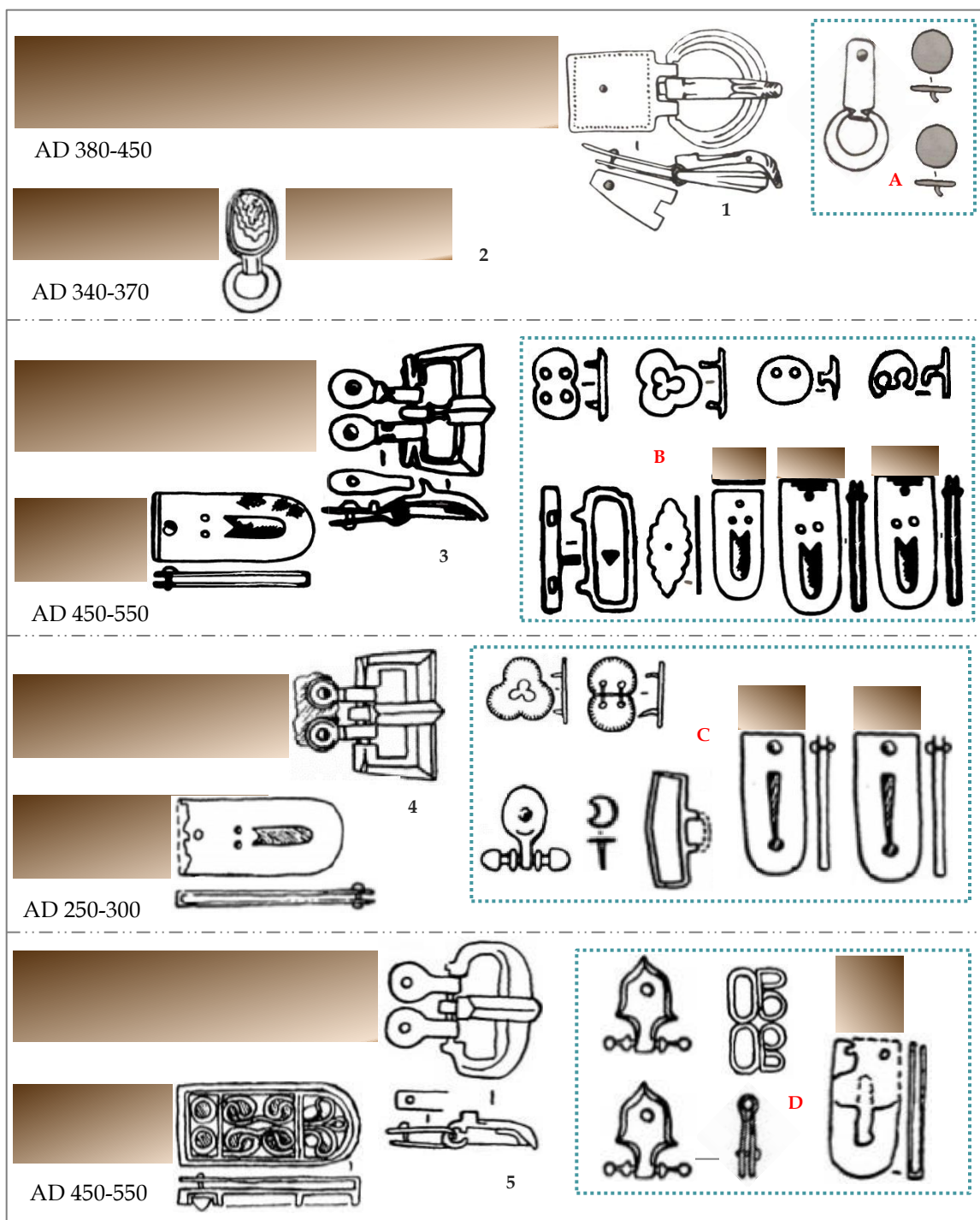
Selected types of possible baldric relative buckles in warrior graves.



**Horse related items.** 1-Abgidzrakhu grave 44. 2, 4, 5-6- Tsebelda grave 313. 3- Tsebelda grave 383 (400-450 AD).

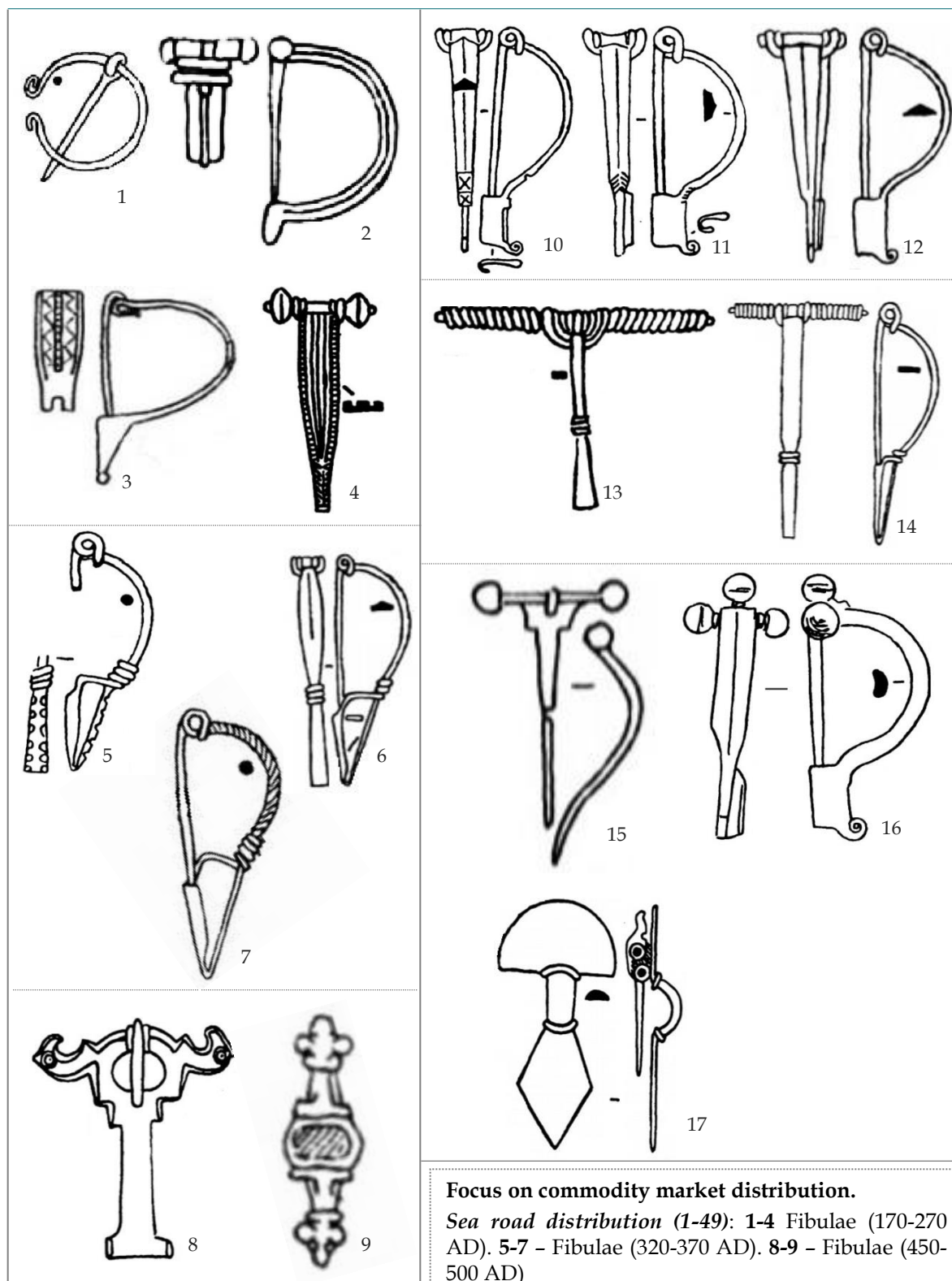


**Types of functional belts and corresponding fittings.** 1- Belt from Tserkovni hill cemetery grave 5. Suspended by plate buckle and circular step loop. 2- Belt from Apushta grave 10. Suspended by plate buckle, circular step loop and several X shape fitting and two square fittings. 3- Belt from Verin hill grave 5. Suspended by square plate buckle, rectangular plate step loop, two X shape fittings and rivets. It was accompanied with two plate step buckles. 4- Sax related belt from Tsebdela fort grave 3. It was suspended by *Syracuse* type bronze buckle, distinctive fittings and three different step ends.



**Types of functional belts and corresponding fittings.** 1- Belt from the Verin hill cemetery grave 5. Suspended by plate buckle and narrow strep loop. 2- Belt from Tzibile fort grave 1. Suspended by silver buckle, with gilded star decoration on the plate and oval strep loop of silver. 3- Belt from Tzibile fort grave 8. Suspended of square buckle, heraldic fitting, three strep ends and three distinctive fittings. 4- Belt from Tzibile fort grave 3. Suspended by buckle, belt ends with brown glass decoration, strep ends and two fittings. 5- Belt from Tzibile fort cemetery grave 4. Suspended by bronze buckle and two curly windings.

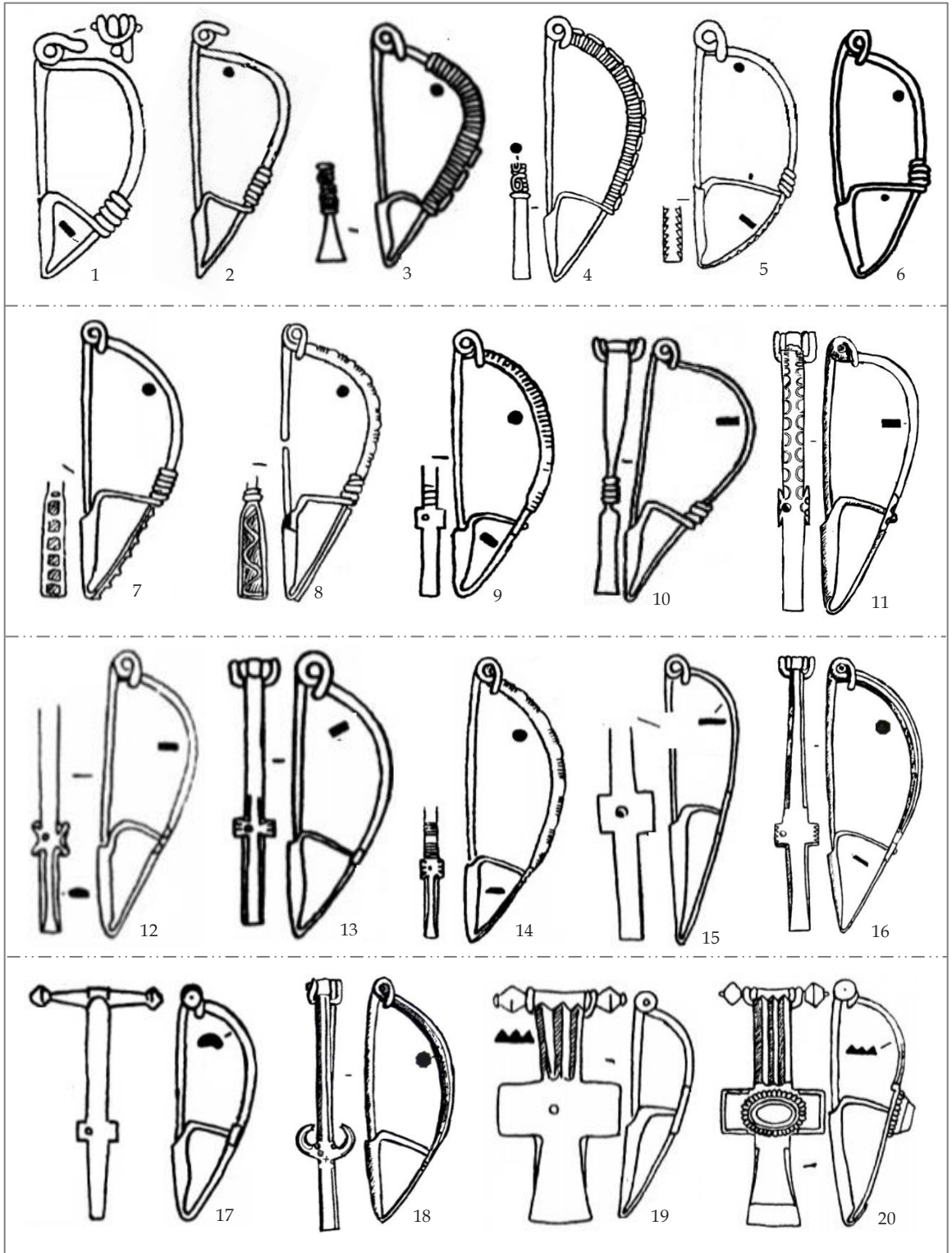
Table 111a



**Focus on commodity market distribution.**

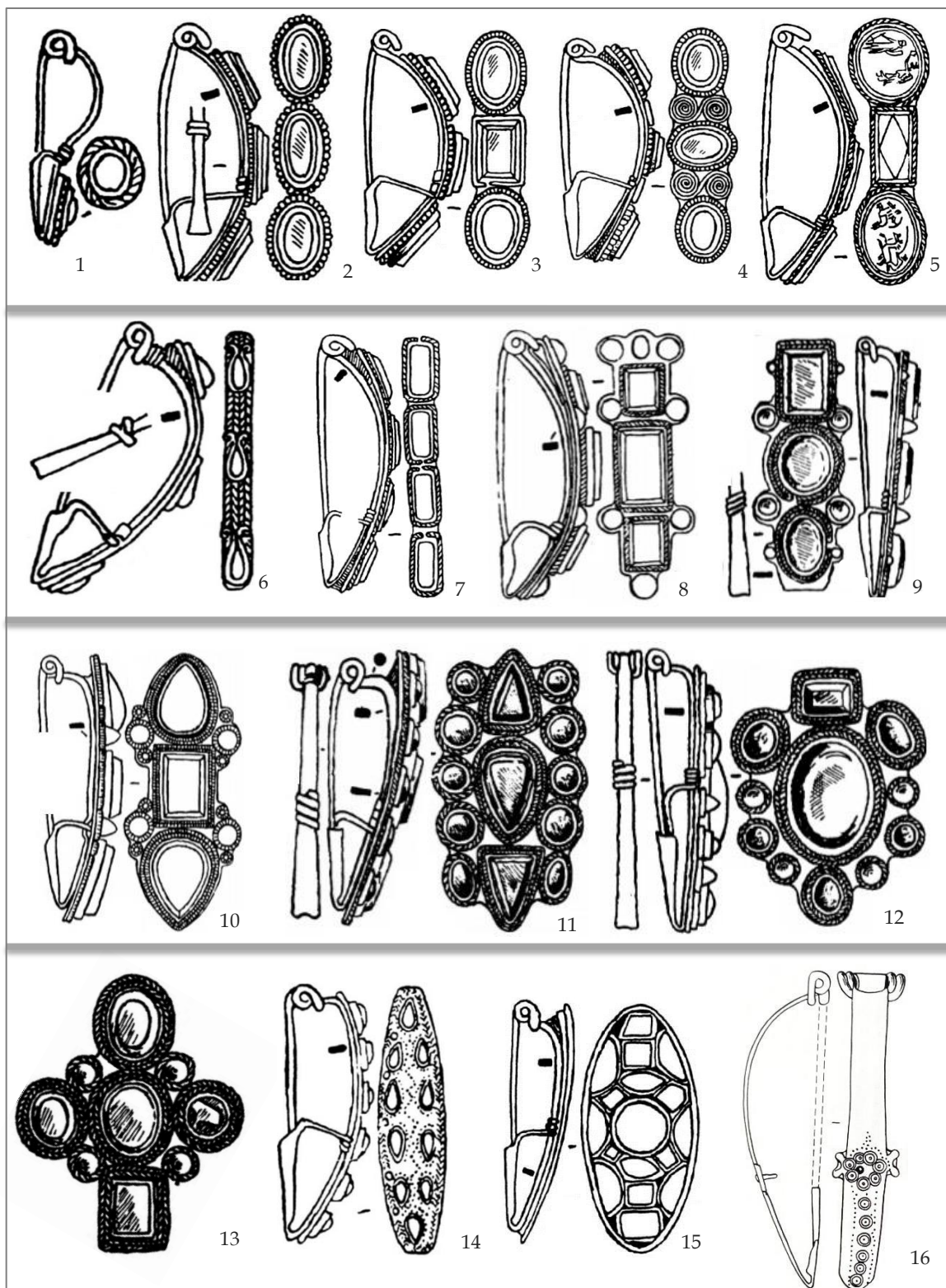
*Sea road distribution (1-49):* 1-4 Fibulae (170-270 AD). 5-7 - Fibulae (320-370 AD). 8-9 - Fibulae (450-500 AD)

*North Caucasian distribution (10-16):* 10- 16 - Fibulae (530-650 AD).

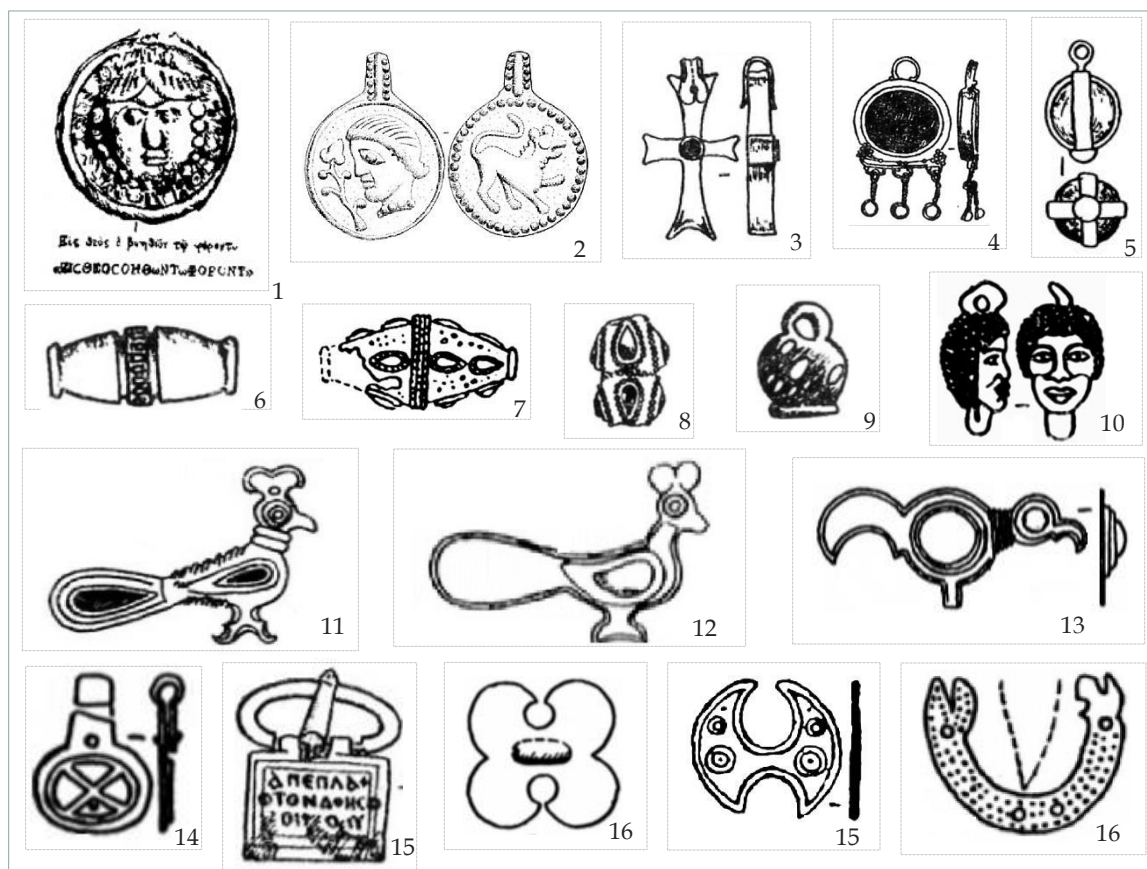


Selected types of local fasteners: 1-9, 14-15. Selected types of import: 11, 12-13, 16-18.

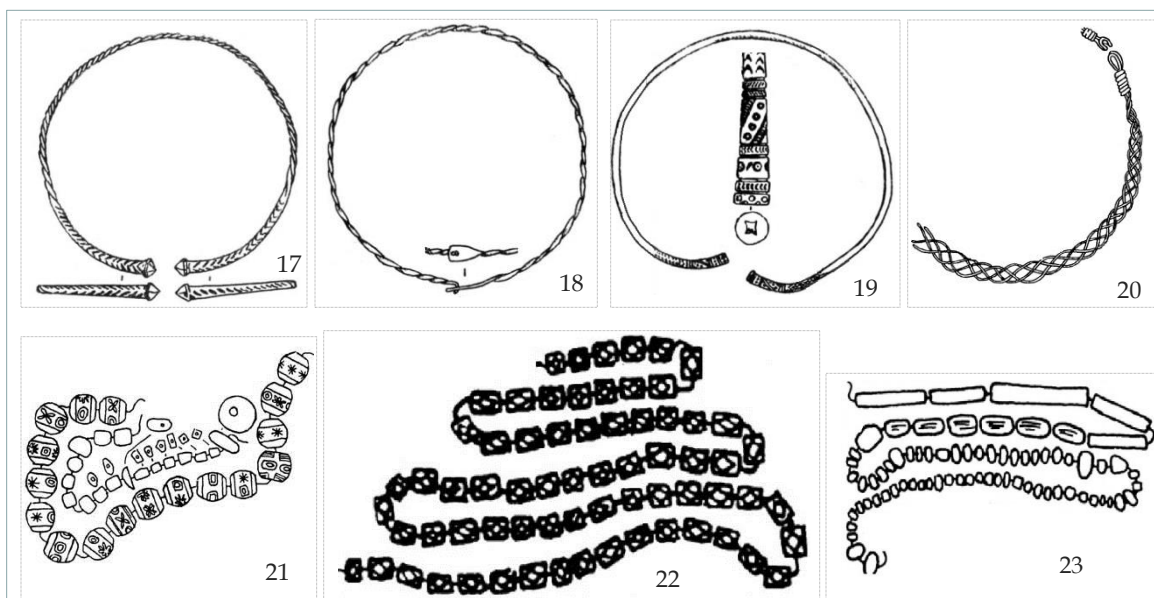
Table 111c



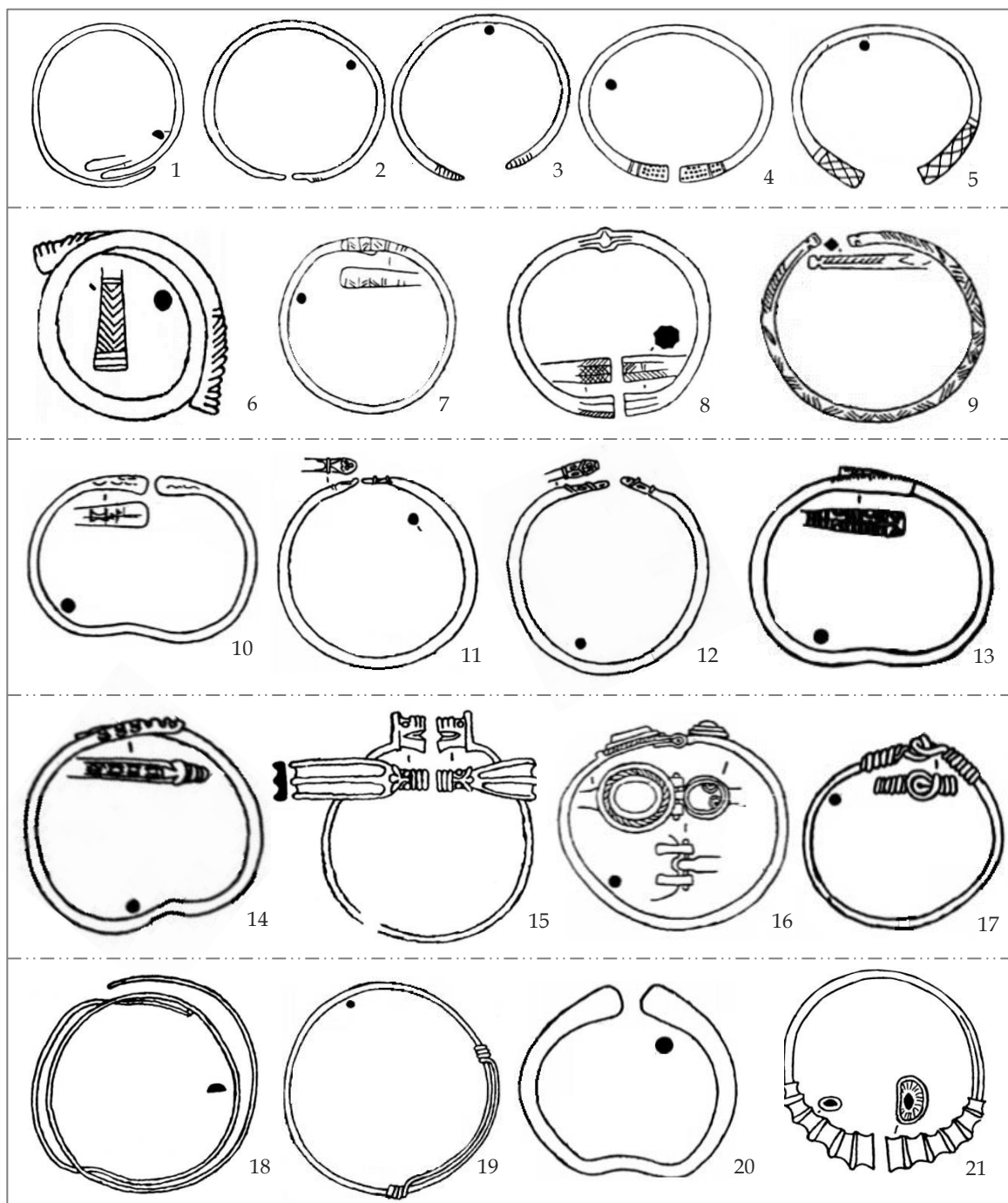
Selected types of decorated brooches and fibulae. They show reaction of local market and branded export.



**Occasional import types.** They show reaction of local market and branded export. 3-4, 6, 8 - Golden objects. 1-2, 5 - silver objects.

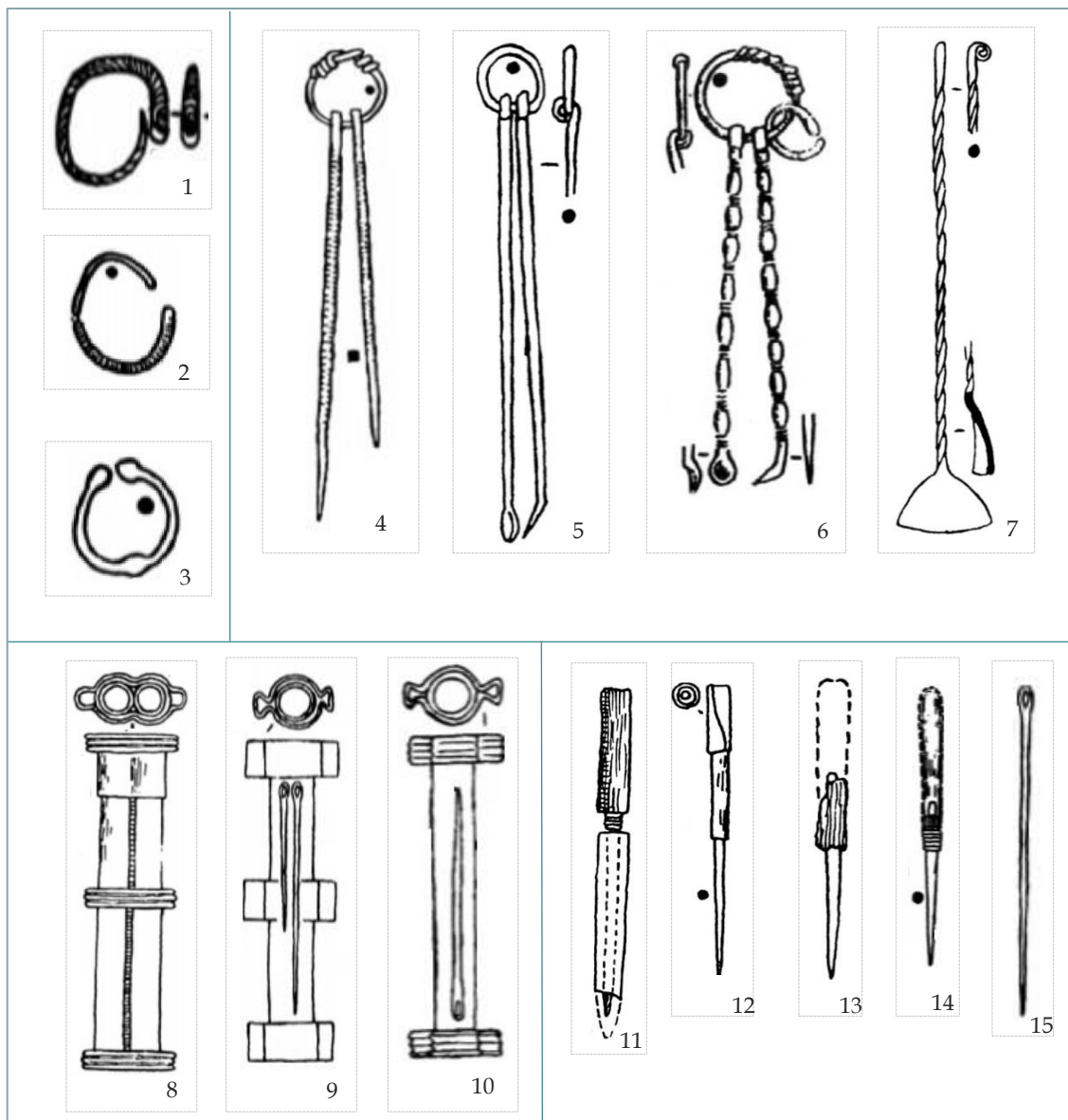


**Selected types of neckless.** 17- Gold, Abgidzraku grave 35. 18- Bronze, Akhacharkhu grave 28. 20- Tsebelda , graves 306, 296. 21- Tsebelda, grave 181. 22- Tsebelda cemetery grave 449. 23- Tsebelda, grave 290.



**Selected types of bracelets.** 1, 2- Tsebelda cemetery grave 336. 3- Tsebelda grave 335. 4 - Abgidzrakhu grave 39 (AD 450-500). 5- Tsebelda graves 195, 221 (AD 500-550). 6- Tsebelda cemetery grave 305. 7- Tsebela grave 307. 8- Tsebelda cemetery grave 290. 9- Tsebelda cemetery grave 138. 10- Tsebelda grave 372. 11- Alrakhu grave 7. 12- Tsebelda cemetery grave 389. 13-14, 20 - Tsebelda cemetery grave 370. 15- Tsebelda cemetery grave 296. 16- Silver, Tsebelda cemetery grave 134 (137). 17 - Tsebelda, graves 173, 459. 18- Tsebelda grave 306.. 19- Abgidzrakhu graves 2, 3 (AD 260-300). 21- Tsebelda cemetery grave 294. Sources: Voronov 2003; see: Mastykova 2020 .

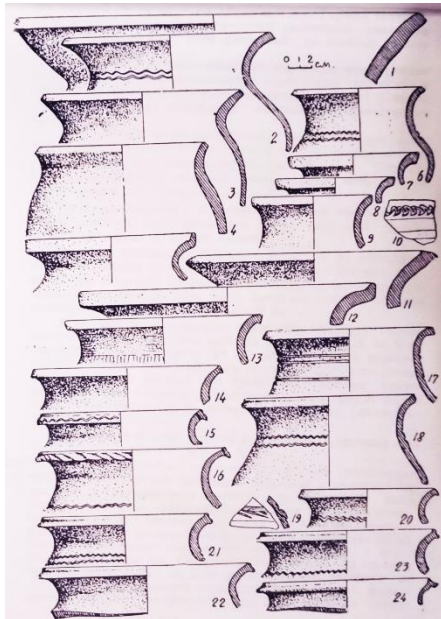
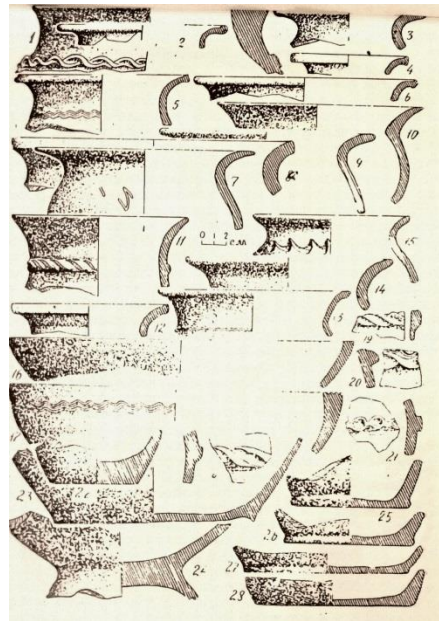
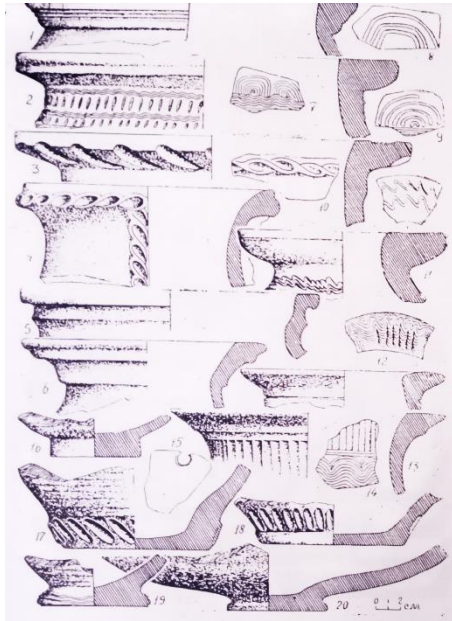




**Selected object categories for different occasions.** Represented local and imported objects may play an important role in life and afterlife. **1-** Tsebelda cemetery graves 123, 374. **2, 3-** Tsebelda graves 370. **4-** Akhatsarakhu grave 28. **5, 7-** Tsebelda grave 336. **7-** Tsebelda cemetery grave 279. **8-** Tsebelda grave 279. **9-** Tsebelda grave 244. **10-** Tsebelda cemetery grave 138. **11-** Tsebelda grave 328. **12-** Tsebelda, grave 248. **13-** Tsebelda grave 320. **14-** Tsebelda cemetery grave 370. **15-** Tsebelda grave 422. Sources: Trapsh 1971; Trapsh 1975; Voronov 2003.



Settlement material from upland Apsilia: Lar, Pal, Bat and Pusta. Source: Voronov 1982.



**Settlement material from upland Apsilia:**  
Lar, Pal, Bat and Pusta. Source: Voronov  
1982.