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CANINE BURIALS FROM THE ROMAN PERIOD ON THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA COAST IN THE LIGHT OF MATERIALS FROM THE NEYZATS CEMETERY

cave canem

The article tackles the question of the “canine burials” from the northern Black Sea coast area in the light of materials from the Neyzats cemetery (Belogorsky Raion, Crimean peninsula) dated from the 2nd to the 4th century AD. In this necropolis, 22 dog remains have been discovered in 20 archaeological features (in pit, undercut, and vaulted graves, as well as in pits). These burials are divided into three basic groups: independent canine burials, burials of dogs with other animals, and canine burials clearly associated with human graves. Each of the types is discussed in detail in the context of its broad cultural background. The analyzed material also makes it possible to attempt to explain the genesis of such burials and to interpret their meaning.

KEY WORDS: Late Scythian culture, Sarmatians, Roman period, Neyzats, canine burials, funerary ritual

INTRODUCTION

The question of “canine burials” in the Roman period has been well discussed in the context of materials that come mainly from the territories of the Eastern European *Barbaricum* (Makiewicz 1987; 1989; 1993; 1994; Gralak 2012; Sielicka 2015; further literature there). Nevertheless, the discussion taking place for the past dozen years or so has clearly broadened to include the territory of the northern Black Sea coast, although the interest of scholars focuses chiefly on settlement materials (Malûkevič 2003; Žuravlev *et al.* 2016; further

literature there). As a consequence, the meaning of the canine remains in the cemeteries has not been sufficiently interpreted. This is a considerable oversight, since in the northern Black Sea coast area, mainly in the Crimean peninsula, canine burials often occur in cemeteries, and discussing them would be important not only for the topic of funerary rites, but also for the question of the everyday lives of the societies inhabiting this area in the Roman period. The unquestionably greatest number of such burials comes from the Neyzats cemetery (Belogorsky Raion, Crimean peninsula), which thereby represents a solid basis for broadening our knowledge of the subject.

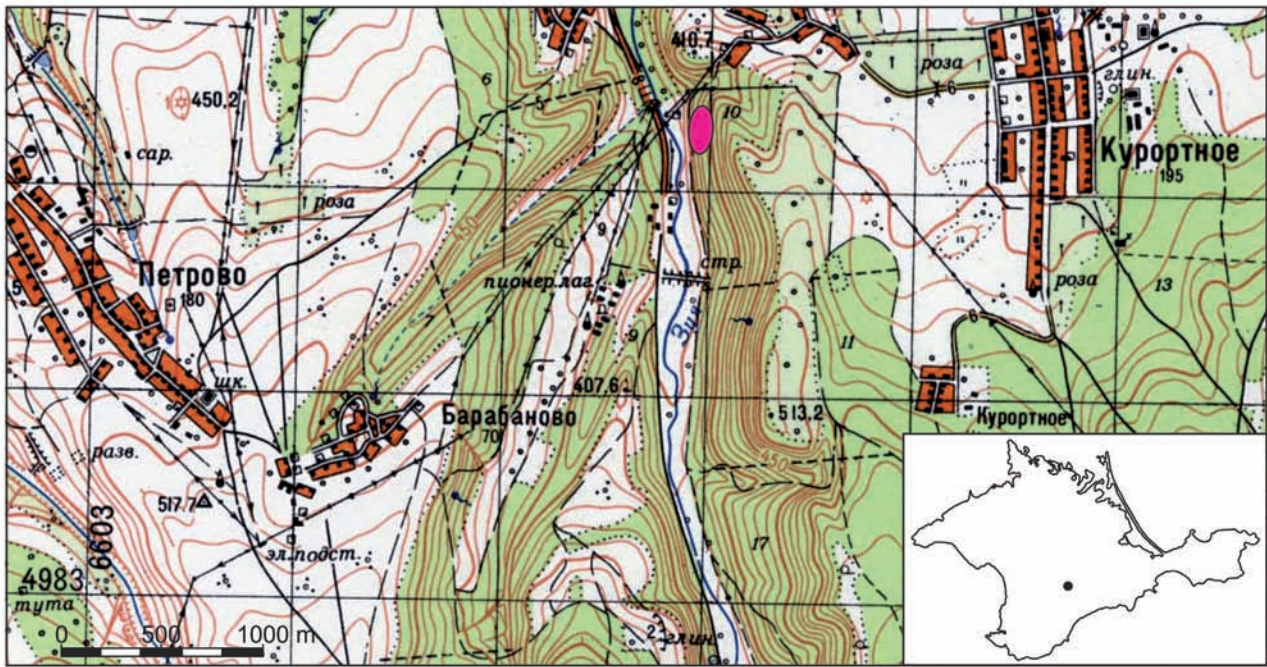


Fig. 1. Location of the Neyzats cemetery (Belogorsky Raion, Crimean peninsula). Illustration B. Polit (base: topographic map of Crimea from 1975, sheet L-36-117-B)

The site is located approximately 20 kilometres east of Simferopol, where it occupies the foothill of Tašly-Bair mountain, which lies in the central part of the Crimean foothills, in the valley of the Zuâ river (Fig. 1). The necropolis was discovered in 1927, and regular excavations under the direction of Prof. I. N. Hrapunov¹ were conducted in the years 1996-2015. During the 19 seasons of research, 602 features were explored, yielding abundant archaeological materials that make it possible to date the cemetery to between the 2nd and the 4th centuries AD (cf. Hrapunov 2016, 12; Mul'd 2016, 38). Among the materials from the examined features, numerous animal bones were registered, including complete dog skeletons. To date, only a few of them have been presented in publications (Hrapunov 2013, 192, Fig. 2:1, 3). There are many indications that the animals in question were intentionally deposited in pits or graves. This allows us to suspect that we are dealing with canine burials and examining them would not only shed new light on the question of the funeral rites predominant in the Roman period's Crimea population, but also introduce important information necessary for researching such features in other territories.

CANINE BURIALS: DEFINITION AND DIVISION

Deliberations on the question of the canine burials from the Neyzats cemetery should start with the definition of the term “canine burial” and with pointing out the basic criteria used in the material selection. According to the assignments established in archaeological literature, in the choice of sources, an animal (or animals) deposited intentionally in a feature (pit or grave) by humans can be qualified as a “canine burial” (Andrałójć 1986, 3; Węgrzynowicz 1982, 26; Kołodziej 2011, 58). At the same time, elements recognised as indicating intentional acts are: the lack of post-consumption traces on bones, the considerable completeness of a skeleton, body arrangement, the possible presence of grave equipment, the structure of a feature containing a skeleton, and the location of a burial within a human grave or in its close vicinity. With the help of these indications, 20 features, containing 22 dog skeletons discovered in pit, undercut and vaulted graves, as well as in pits, have been selected². These burials can be divided into three basic

¹ I would like to thank Prof. I. N. Hrapunov for his consent for the elaboration of unpublished materials.

² Funerary features containing remains of a dog and a human were also classified as belonging to this group. In



Fig. 2. Neyzats cemetery. Grave 482. Photo S. Mul'd

groups: independent canine burials, burials of dogs accompanied by other animals, and canine burials clearly connected with human graves.

INDEPENDENT CANINE BURIALS

In the analysed material, sepulchral features containing single canine burials, not accompanied by the skeletons of other animals or humans, represent a small group – specifically, 2 graves (465 and 482) and 3 pits (6, 7, 9). In each of these features, a complete canine skeleton was found. The remains had been deposited in anatomical position, on the

such cases, it is impossible to state categorically whether it was a “canine burial” or an offering to a buried person. Nevertheless, because such situations are recorded in ordinary pits, as well as in graves, it was agreed that they would be included in the analysis and treated as “canine burials”.

left (grave 465, pits 6, 7, and 9) or on the right side (grave 482). In this feature category, grave 482 is noteworthy (Fig. 2). It is a small, rectangular pit, whose dimensions are 0.9 x 0.45 m, and the depth is 0.35 m. At its bottom, a skeleton of a dog, died at the age of 5-7 years, was found. The animal was lying on its right side, with its head to the east. A groove (1.1 m long, 0.3 m wide, and 0.15 m deep) extended from the northern edge. According to I. N. Hrapunov, the dimensions of the pit indicate that it was dug specifically for the inhumed dog (Hrapunov 2013, 192).

In grave 465, where an animal was deposited on its left side at the bottom of a rectangular pit, near one of its shorter sides (eastern edge), we have a different situation (Fig. 3). The dimensions of the feature, that is 1.8 x 0.9 m, may indicate that the grave was intended for a human. Nevertheless, it appears that no person was ever inhumed there, since the grave was unfinished, which can be attested by its very uneven bottom. It is worth pointing out that this is a unique feature not only for the

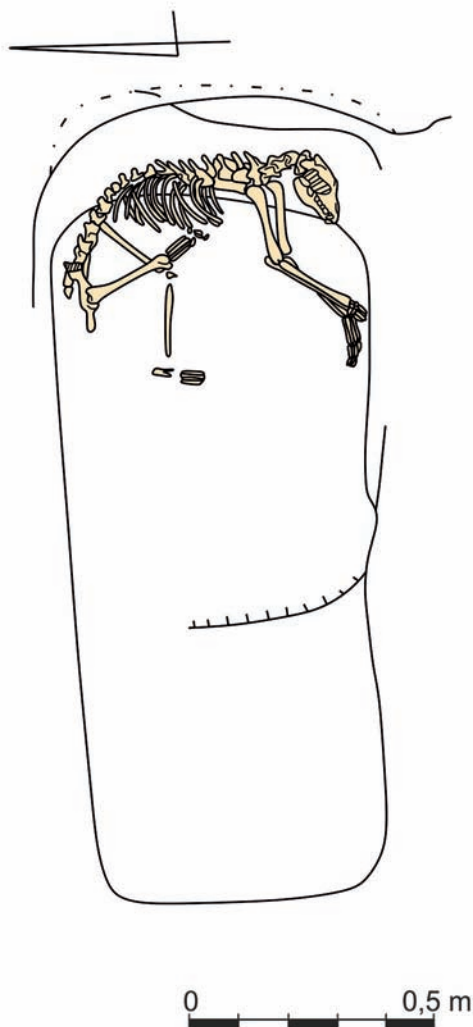


Fig. 3. Neyzats cemetery. Layout of grave 465. Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd)

Neyzats cemetery and the northern Black Sea coast, but also for the whole *Barbaricum*.

As mentioned above, in 3 cases canine burials were recorded in circular pits (pit 6, 7, 9). The features, 0.8 – 1.2 m deep and having diameters ranging from 1.4 to 1.8 m, were located on the fringe of the cemetery (Fig. 4:1, 2). Their fills contained complete canine skeletons, but there were no artefacts of the kind that usually appear in analogous pits from the necropolis.

In the Roman period, canine burials in pits were common and they occurred across vast territories, including the northern Black Sea coast and the Central-European *Barbaricum* (see: Malûkevič 2003; Sinika 2006). They are found mainly in settlements, but sporadically they are also recorded in cemeteries (Symonovič 1983, 41-79; Vysotskaâ

2001, 78-79). In the northern Black Sea coast area, they are also characteristic of antique sites, as well as those associated with the Late Scythian culture (Vysotskaâ 2001, 78-79; Malûkevič 2015, 349; Žuravlev *et al.* 2016, 35)³. Archaeologists interpret such features as “ritual burials” that contain bodies of dogs representing “sacrifices” (e.g. Andrałojć 1986; Troickaâ and Šiškin 2004, 118; Sielicka 2015, 148-149, 153). Some scholars think that these pits are the remains of magic activities during which animal sacrifices were made, and that the ceremonies might have been combined with ritual feasts (Bichir 1973, 252). This interpretation most especially concerns pits containing traces of bonfires, ash layers, or charcoal, as well as those in which there were vessels or their fragments, deposited intentionally and in a characteristic arrangement (cf. Grumeza 2013, 413). The function of “sacrifice” is also attributed to dogs whose remains (whole skeletons or their parts) were recorded in wells, often occurring in the Przeworsk culture settlements (cf. Beneš and Nývltová-Fišáková 2009, 534; Gralak 2012). The same role is linked, for instance, with canine skeletons discovered within houses (Makiewicz 1987, 255).

There is also a group of scholars who think that, in most cases, the discovered dog remains were not “sacrifices”, but “ritual burials”. According to them, based on information obtained from excavations, it is possible only to state that the animals were, in most cases, thrown into pits that served as dumps (Scheibner 2013, 29-31). Such pits contained mainly diverse, fragmentarily preserved materials. As an example, pit 12 (excavation ditch 5) from the Golubitskaya 2 (Temryuk-sky Raion, Russia) settlement was interpreted this way. The fill content indicated that it was composed of waste materials, including animal bodies (Žuravlev *et al.* 2016, 35).

It is impossible to determine unequivocally the function of the pits containing canine burials from the Neyzats cemetery. Lack of artefacts in the fills may indicate that such features served as waste

³ Until 2015, at the Mologa II site, 36 skeletons, skulls, and individual bones of dogs were recorded in 26 pits (Malûkevič 2015, 347). Also at other Late Scythian sites, like the Scythian Neapolis and Ust'-Al'ma (Bakhchysarai Raion, Crimean peninsula), canine skeletons occurred in pits (Symonovič 1983, 41-79; Vysotskaâ 2001, 78-79).

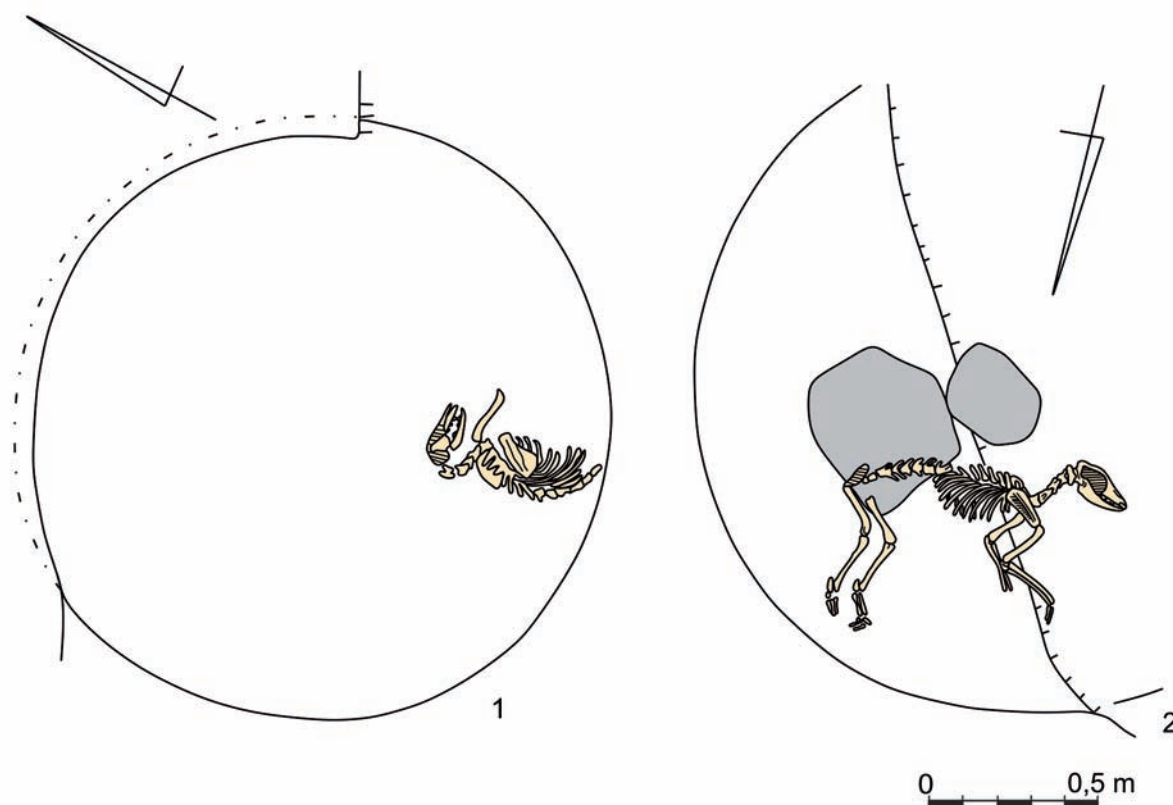


Fig. 4. Neyzats cemetery. Layout of pits containing canine burials. 1 – pit 6; 2 – pit 9.
Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd)

containers⁴. Given the location of the pits, on the fringe of the cemetery, as well as the presence of complete canine skeletons in them, we may suspect that they played a ritual function. It is worth pointing out that the dog was known to accompany chthonian deities, often appearing in mythologies as the guardian of the entrance to the underworld. In Greek mythology, the gate to Hades was guarded by the gigantic three-headed dog, Cerber, whereas in Germanic mythology, the underworld was watched over by Garm, the companion of the goddess Hel (Kopaliński 1985, 45-46). Taking into consideration the beliefs predominant in various societies at that time, we may assume that the dogs

inhumed in the pits, as mythological guardians of the underworld, protected the entrance to the cemetery against intruders. Such a role for the dog can be also observed with regard to other features from the Neyzats necropolis.

BURIALS OF DOGS WITH OTHER ANIMALS

In the analyzed material, features containing canine burials accompanied by skeletons of animals belonging to other species have also been selected. Such a situation occurred in 8 pit graves (grave 128, 143, 198, 251⁵, 365, 454, 488, 513). In each of these

⁴ It is impossible to rule out the possibility that pits contained organic products which later underwent complete decomposition. Nevertheless, it appears that pits serving as a waste containers should also comprise fragments of other items, like pottery, tools, stones, or individual animal bones. Lack of such objects makes it impossible to interpret pits 6, 7, and 9 as dumpsites.

⁵ In grave 251, a canine skeleton was damaged by a modern-day robbery shaft, and this is why it is incomplete and the bones are in disarray. The preservation state of the bone material does not meet all of the criteria used when selecting canine burials. Despite this fact, the feature has

Table 1. Configuration of equine and canine burial co-occurrences in two-strata graves.

Grave number	First layer	Second layer
198	Dog	Horse + Horse + Goat
251	Dog + Horse	Horse
365	Dog + Horse	Horse + Dog
454	Dog + Dog	Horse
488	Dog	Horse
513	Dog	Horse

features, a horse was inhumed with a dog. Only in one case were a complete canine and two equine skeletons accompanied by a goat skull (grave 198). Such burials are associated mainly with stratified graves (grave 198, 251, 365, 454, 488, 513). The observation of skeleton arrangements in particular strata allows us to perceive two basic relations. In each grave, at the level of the first (upper) stratum, there was at least one canine skeleton, whereas the second (lower) stratum contained at least one skeleton of a horse. At the same time, in individual strata of particular features, various configurations of these species' co-occurrences were recorded, not demonstrating any clear correlations (Tabl. 1).

Moreover, there were two single-stratum graves: each of them contained one dog and one horse (grave 128, 143). Here it is worth pointing out that in a situation where an individual stratum contained an equine and canine skeleton, the latter was lying on its right side, near the hind or fore limbs of the horse. In such a grave, the dog remains lay parallel (grave 143, 365) or perpendicular (as in the case of grave 128) to the horse (Fig. 5).

Based on the studied materials, it is impossible to determine unequivocally if animal burials in particular graves come from the very same time, if the creatures died a natural death, or if one of them was intentionally killed. In the case of single-stratum graves, we can assume that the animals were inhumed at the same time. Their bones do not bear traces that could have resulted from intentional killing. Nevertheless, it appears quite likely that one of

the animals in such pairs did not die from a natural cause. Because horses were more valued, we may assume that it was dogs that were killed and added to the graves. In the case of stratified graves, however, we may assume that the animals were buried at different times.

In the Crimea, graves containing skeletons of a dog and horse are rare. This is why the high number of such burials in the Neyzats cemetery was considered by I. N. Hrapunov as one of the features that distinguish the necropolis from other sites (Hrapunov 2013, 192). This is an apt observation, since such archaeological features are a rarity not only in the northern Black Sea coast area, but also in other territories. A few cases of graves wherein a complete horse skeleton co-occurred with a dog body, or with individual canine bones, are known from the territory of Hungary and are dated to the Early Iron Age (Škvor Jernejčič and Toskan 2018, 254). Joint dog and horse burials from Dagestan, dated to the Albanian-Sarmatian period (3rd century BC – 4th century AD) are chronologically and culturally closer to the materials from the Neyzats cemetery. In most of the recorded graves, a dog skeleton was entirely or partly located under a horse (Bakušev 2008, 145).

As we see, despite the cult of the horse, widespread in the Iron Age and in the Roman period, that is reflected by numerous burials of these animals, and later by their equivalent in the form of harness elements (cf. Sinika 2004, 237; 2011; Hrapunov 2011, 35-37), there is but a small number of graves from these periods that contain both a horse and a dog⁶. It appears that such cases were not linked with some ritual associated with the funerary

been included into the analysis, as the location of the mixed up dog bones near the hind limbs of an intact horse skeleton makes it possible to suspect that the dog was inhumed intentionally. This argument is confirmed, e.g., by graves 128 and 143, where complete canine skeletons occurred in the vicinity of horses' hind limbs.

⁶ It is worth pointing out that in Europe, horse burials were common in the Migration period and in the Middle Ages.

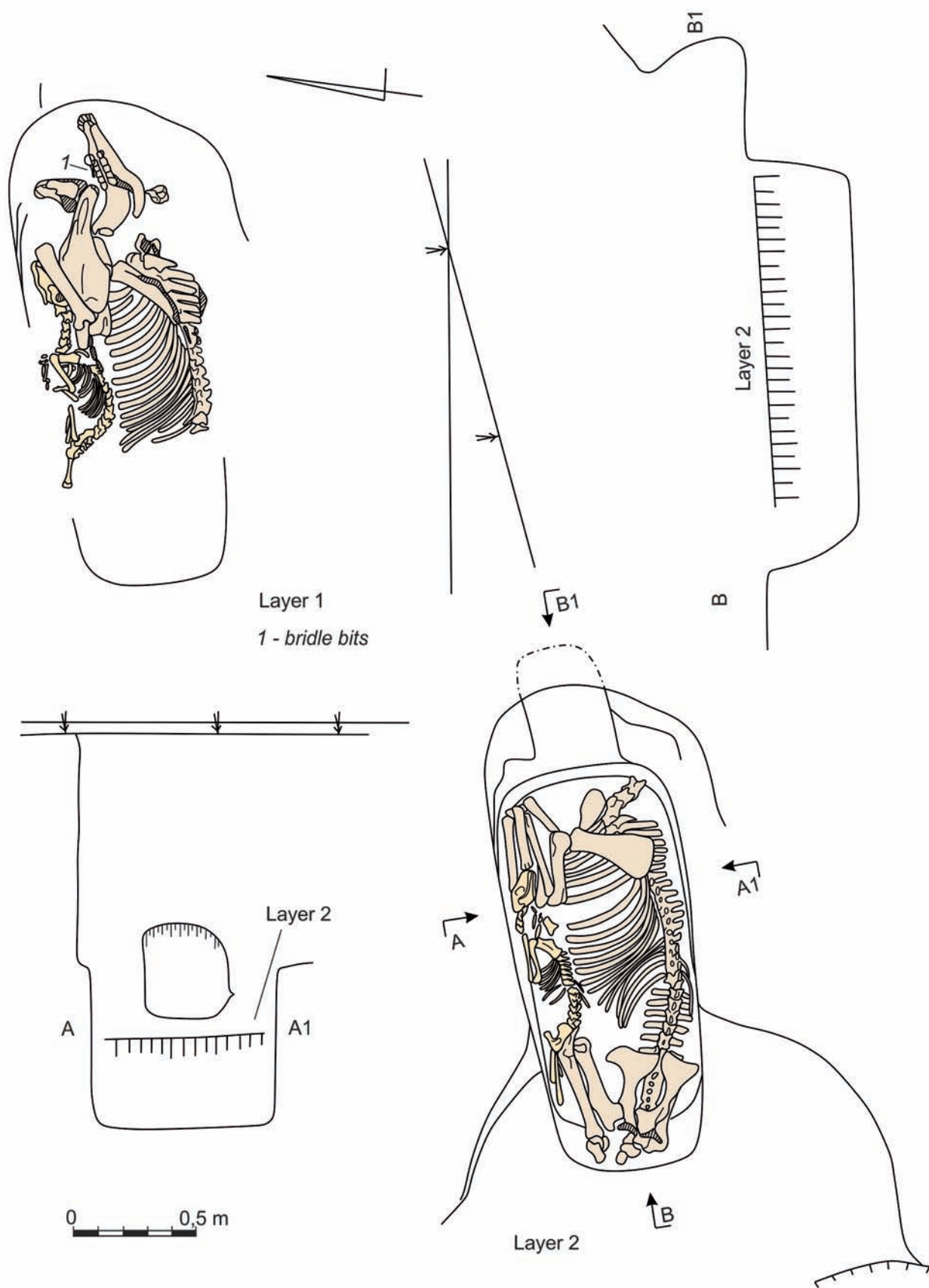


Fig. 5. Neyzats cemetery. Layouts and profiles of grave 365. Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd)



Fig. 6. Hydria with black figures and white ground neck and mouth. The Leagros Group, Paris, Louvre Museum, inventory number CA 4716. After Cohen 2006, Fig. 53

beliefs of the relevant societies, but rather that they resulted from the owners' attachment to their animals, as well as from strong bonds existing between two beasts. Mutual amity between the two species was noticed by ancient people and was reflected in their art, as well as in written sources. Many sculptures, mosaics, and amphorae present hunting and fighting scenes (Fig. 6), where, next to a human, images of a dog and horse appear (cf. Ebertshäuser and Waltz 1981, 76-77; Cohen 2006, Fig. 53). Here it should be pointed out that the dog motif often appeared in ancient Greek and Roman art, which proves that the animal played an important role in Greek and Roman antiquity writ large. Nevertheless, this is a broad issue which goes beyond the problematics of this article and to which many studies have been devoted (Toynbee 1973, 102-124; Gilhus 2006; Ferris 2018; further literature there).

In the context of these data, it is also worth pointing out that in the Roman period, the Crimean population was exposed to risks resulting from raids conducted by different cultures, e.g., Germanic tribes (Khrapunov 2012, 210-212). This is corroborated by archaeological materials from the

Crimea, as well as by a great number of weaponry elements (constituting warrior's equipment) in the Neyzats cemetery (Hrapunov 2011, 29-35; Khrapunov 2013). Taking into consideration the location of the cemetery in the foothills, we may assume that one of the basic sources of food for the community populating the area was hunting. However, the zoological analysis of the animal bones discovered in the cemetery indicated that these were the remains of domesticated beasts. Thus it appears that hunting did not constitute an important element of everyday life, but this possibility cannot be ruled out. It should be noted that in modern times, in order to provide entertainment for horses, farmers furnish their stalls with toys, or they let other animals (goats, dogs, etc.) inside.

CANINE BURIALS CLEARLY ASSOCIATED WITH HUMAN GRAVES

The next category comprises canine burials clearly associated with human graves. Such cases have been recorded in 7 features, including vaulted graves (graves 104, 308), undercut graves (grave 355), a pit grave (grave 372), a grave of unspecified character (grave 370), and in pits (pit 506, 520).

In two cases, a canine skeleton was discovered in a vaulted grave (grave 104, 308). Grave 308 is a three-strata burial, where an untouched dog skeleton was placed near one of the edges of the burial chamber, in stratum 1, which also contained a few human and animal bones. Below, there were two other strata of human burials separated from each other by a soil layer of considerable thickness. Such accumulation made the dog skeleton lie practically at the level of the chamber ceiling, giving the impression that it had been tossed on the bottom burial layers (Fig. 7). Analogous situations are known from the Scythian Neapolis (Simferopol, Crimean peninsula), from grave 75 (where at the level of the first stratum, which covered several layers of human burials, there were two dog skeletons) and vaulted grave 96 (Symonovič 1983, 51-55). Also in these cases, the skeleton arrangements gave the impression that the dogs had been thrown upon the buried persons (*ibidem*).

Vaulted grave 104, whose burial chamber was plundered in ancient times with the use of a very

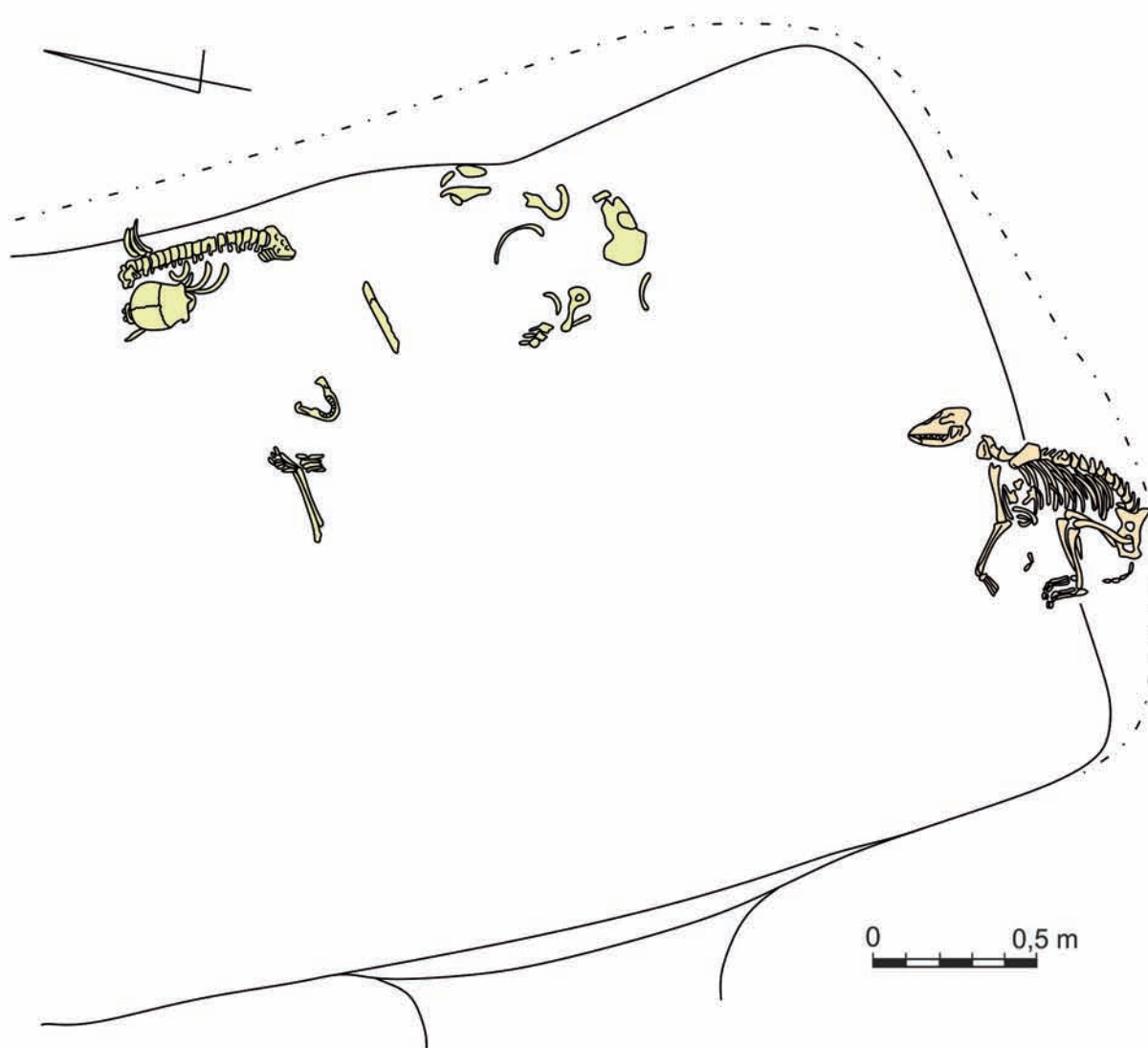


Fig. 7. Neyzats cemetery. Grave 308. Layout of the burial chamber, layer 1 (upper layer).
Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd)

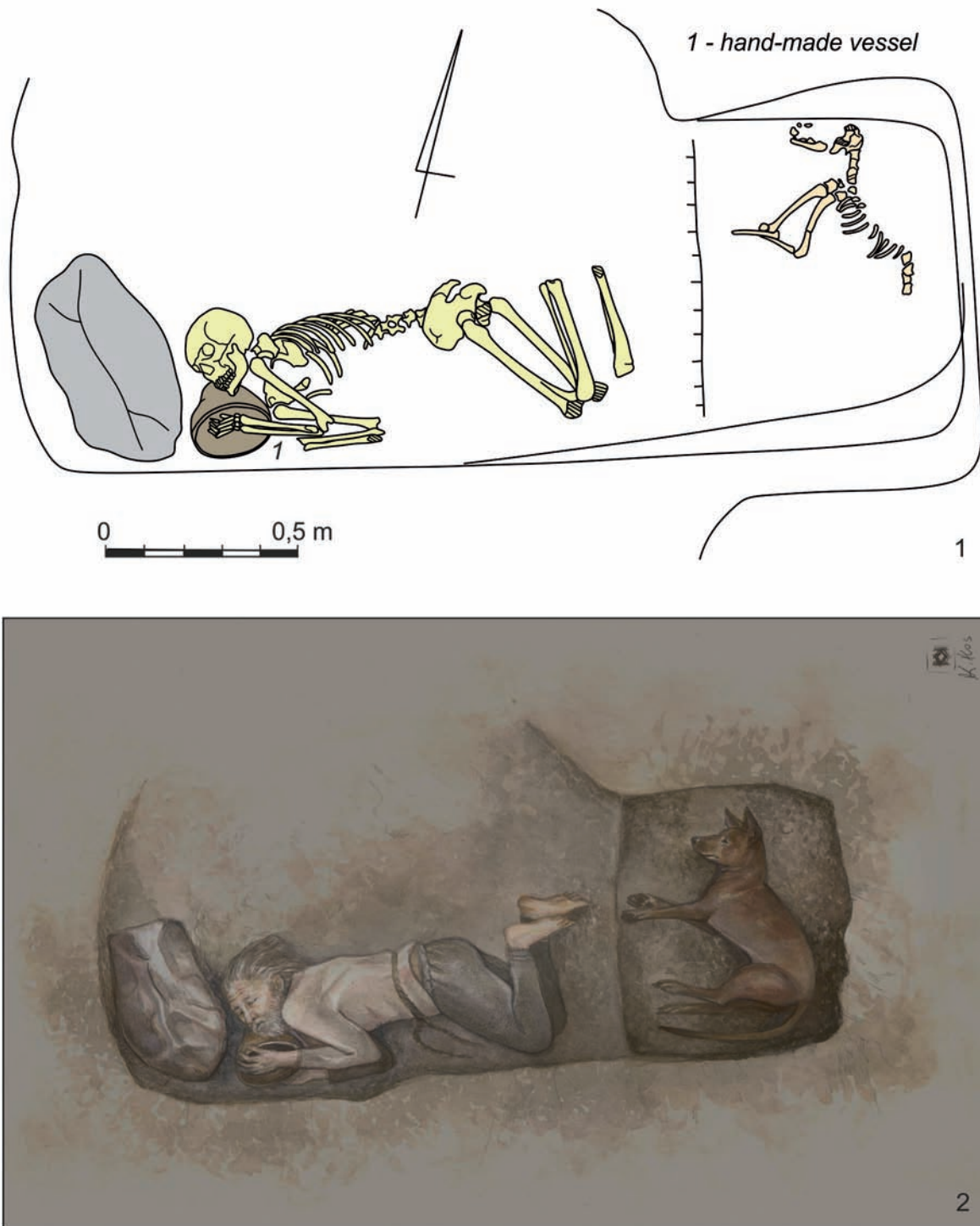


Fig. 8. Neyzats cemetery. Grave 355. 1 – burials of a human and canine in the corridor; 2 – artistic reconstruction of the human and canine burials in the corridor. The canine burial was above the human.

1 – Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd). 2 – Drawing K. Kosińska

narrow shaft dug over the corridor and the entrance leading to the chamber, appears to be quite interesting. Above the robbery ditch, there was a burial of a horse lying on its left side, with flexed legs and with its head pointing to the east. However, west of the horse skeleton, above the corridor leading to the

burial chamber, there was a burial of a dog, laid on its left side, with slightly flexed limbs. The stratigraphy of the grave and the animal body arrangements indicate that they were added to the feature after the previous plundering of the chamber. This is the reason why the skeletons are intact. Examples of

such procedures are known also from the Scythian Neapolis, from graves 37 and 39 (Symonovič 1983, 42-43). The ritual was practiced in other epochs, as well. Such a case was registered in burial mound no. 1, dated to the Early Iron Age, from Kaspan (Almaty Region, Kazakhstan) (Beisenov *et al.* 2017, 100-101). According to scholars, such funerary practices were most probably used in order to offer sacrifices to buried persons and thus to assuage their anger or to protect the plunderers from due punishment (Malûkevič 2003, 110; Razumov 2018, 63). The dog buried after the plundering might also have played the role of a guardian, creating a barrier that was intended to separate the world of the living from the negative influence of the realm of the dead (Troickaâ and Šiškin 2004, 118; Beisenov *et al.* 2017, 107). Also in this case, such a dog sacrifice might have been performed by the plunderer or people belonging to the local society, who buried their dead in this necropolis. The practice of such rituals clearly proves that these ancient societies believed in the existence of the underworld, as well as in its influence on the sphere of the living.

It is worth pointing out that also in the robbed undercut grave 355, a complete canine skeleton was located almost at the ground level (2 m above the bottom of the pit), near the eastern edge of the entrance pit. The animal was lying on its right side, with its head to the north-west. Found 0.7 m below the dog skeleton (1.3 m above the bottom of the pit), near the southern edge of the entrance pit, was a burial of a man lying on his right side, with his head to the west, with slightly flexed legs and with his hands near his face, holding a hand-made vessel (Fig. 8). Both the man and the dog had been inhumed in such a way that the robbery shaft did not disturb their arrangement. The stratigraphies of the burials indicates that they come from different times. In this case, it is difficult to establish whether the burials played the role of a sacrifice. Nevertheless, if we accept this possibility, it would likely concern only the dog. It appears, however, that there are situations where, in an unlooted grave, a canine skeleton was located in a *dromos* or near the entrance to a burial chamber. Such cases occur in the graves from the north Black Sea coast dated to as early as the Neolithic (see: Razumov 2018). Such burials also appear often in Early Scythian and Late Scythian graves (see: Pogrebova 1961, 108; Alekseev *et al.* 1991, 64; Sinika 2006; 2019).

At the Glinoe site (Slobozia Raion, Moldavia), in several unrobbed female graves containing weaponry elements, a dog was inhumed in a *dromos*. Such funerary features were interpreted by E. E. Fialko as Amazon burials (Fialko 2017). In such cases, scholars link the meaning of canine burials with the role of the guardian watching over buried persons (Razumov 2018, 63).

In just a single case, in a pit grave (grave 372), a human skeleton was discovered along with bodies of a dog and horse. This is a stratified burial, with the equine and canine remains at the bottom. The animals had been inhumed in a way typical for such situations: the horse was lying on its side and the dog was located near its hind limbs. The burial of a one-year-and-a-half-old child was above the skeletons, in a layer separating the strata of the grave (Fig. 9)⁷. It is a unique burial, because features containing remains of a child and dog occur sporadically, and they are mainly pits. In Sarmatian materials from the Carpathian Basin, there are several burials of this type. In Tiszaföldvár (Kunszentmárton District, Hungary), a pit (26/1982) was found. It contained a skeleton of a 10-year-old child buried along with two dogs and 4 eggs (Vaday 1997, 83; Fig. 3). In Dunakeszi-Alagi, however, in pit 138, there was a child skeleton, with dog remains lying on it and with another dog deposited next to the body (Istvánovits, Kulcsár 2015a, 62; 2015b, 116, Fig. 4). The cases of discovering child and dog skeletons in pits concern also Late Scythian materials, and such features have been recorded three times at the Mologa II site (Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi Raion, Ukraine), in pits nos. 7, 64, and 87⁸ (Malûkevič 2008, 178-180; 2015, 336). According to arguments presented by Jacek Rogatko, in the Chernyakhov culture, single dog bones are found only in child burials (Rogatko 1991, 175).

The examples of the co-occurrences of child and dog burials in features other than pits are not known, and thus it can be stated that grave 372 from the Neyzats cemetery is untypical (Fig. 10)⁹.

⁷ The child was buried without grave inventory, flat on its back, with its head to the north-east.

⁸ On the basis of 128 pottery fragments from the fill of pit no. 87, it was established that it had been used between the 2nd and the 1st half of the 3rd century AD (Malûkevič 2008, 79).

⁹ There are features containing a child skeleton along with a dog, but also with adult persons.

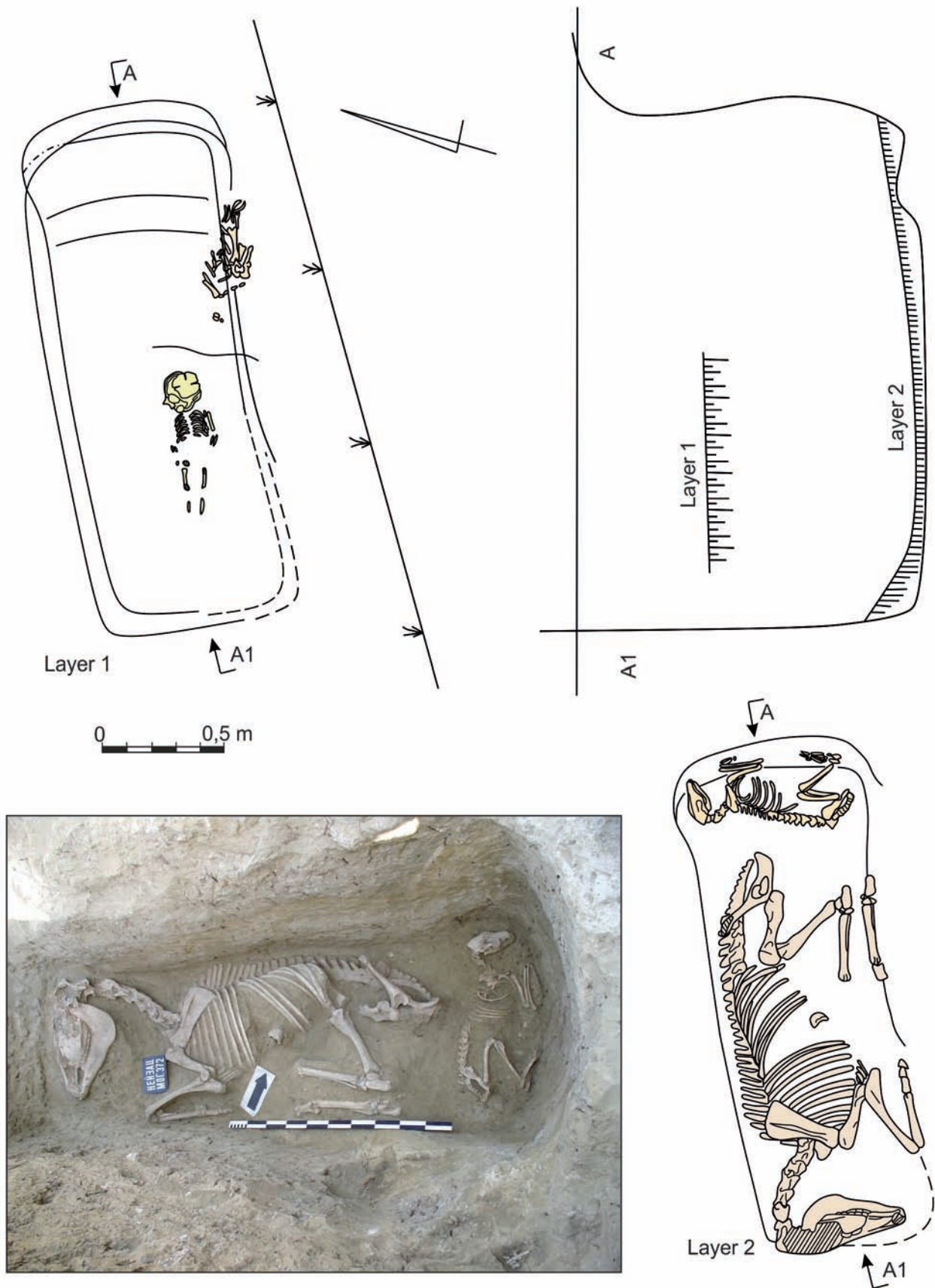


Fig. 9. Neyzats cemetery. Layouts and profile of grave 372. Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd), photo S. Mul'd



Fig. 10. Neyzats cemetery. Artistic reconstruction of grave 372. Drawing K. Kosińska

Its interpretation is not obvious and we cannot answer unequivocally if the feature was of a sacral nature, or if it is sheer coincidence. The two-strata character of the feature, the thickness of the layer separating the strata of the grave, as well as the shallow location of the child remains (0.3 m below the ground level)¹⁰ allow us to think that the animals were buried first, and next (probably after some time), the body of the child was added, disturbing the arrangement of the layers, which can be attested by the intermingled animal bones. It cannot be ruled out that the choice of the inhumation place was accidental, and the persons taking part in the ceremony were not aware of digging into an older grave, or they re-used it.

In the Neyzats cemetery, there are also features containing human and animal remains that, nevertheless, due to their character (oval pits), cannot be considered typical graves. Burials 370, 506, and

520 were included in this category¹¹. Analogously to pits containing only individual canine skeletons, features 506 and 520 are located on the fringe of the cemetery. Grave 520 is a circular pit, 1.7 m in diameter and 1.85 m deep (Fig. 11). At its bottom, a dog skeleton, lying on its left side, with its head pointing to the north-east, was found. The animal burial had been covered with soil that did not contain artefacts. In the pit, besides the canine skeleton, there was also a skeleton of a 45-50-year-old man. He had been buried c. 0.5 m below the upper edge of the pit in a sitting position, with his face to the north-east and with his back leaning against the edge of the pit. His elbows were flexed, and his hands were resting on his pelvis. Also in feature 506, the bodies, buried along with a dog, were inhumed in a position incompatible with the predominant funerary norms. In the pit, at the depth of c. 0.6 m below the ground level, in the centre, a skeleton of a 40-45-year-old woman was found (burial I).

¹⁰ Such shallow burials of children were used in the Neyzats cemetery, but in other cases, they were single-stratum graves.

¹¹ Feature 520 bears two different numbers in the documentation. Due to its shape, it was marked as "pit 5", but, because it contained a human skeleton, it was also designated as "grave 520".

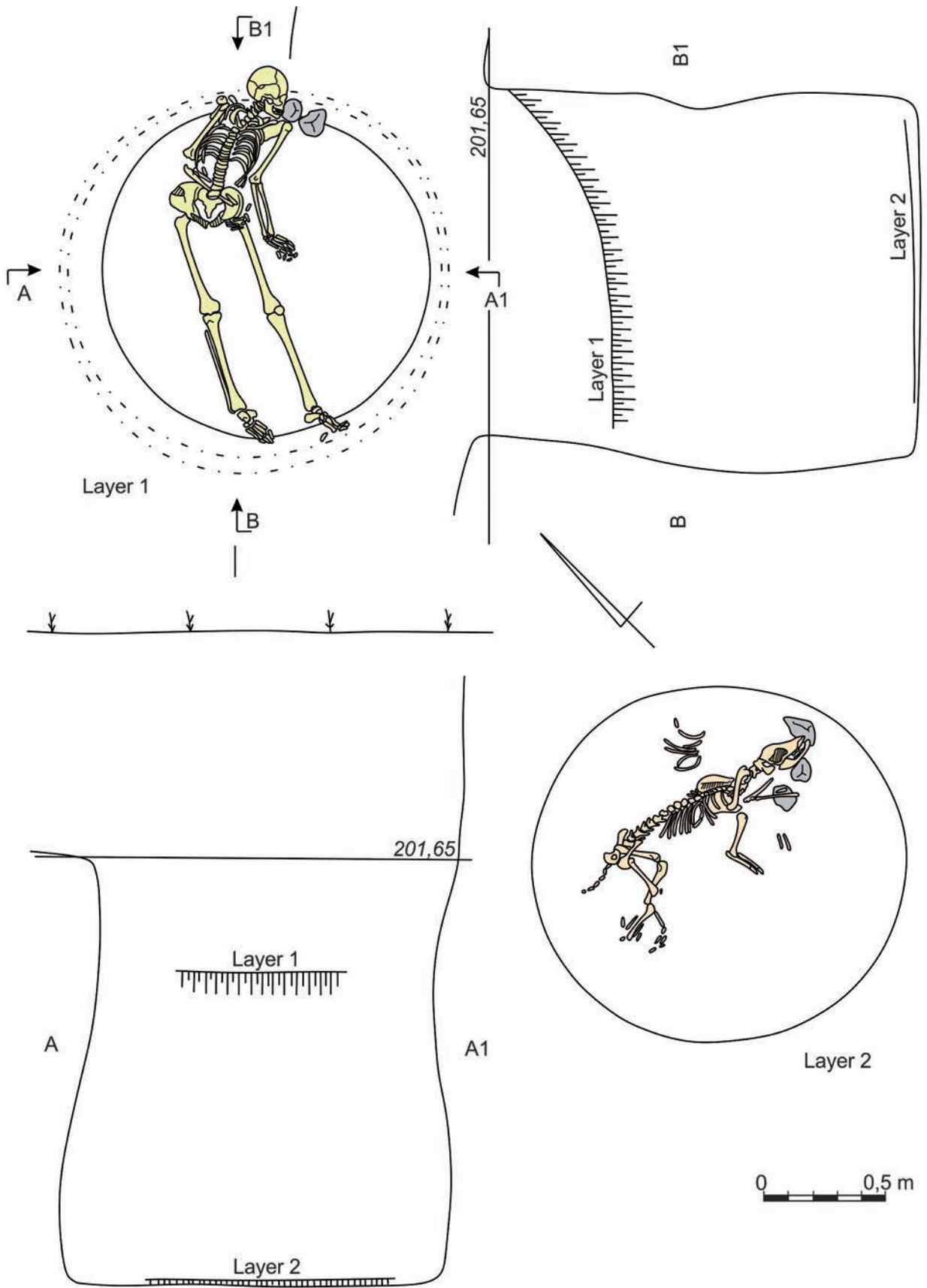


Fig. 11. Neyzats cemetery. Layout and profiles of grave 520. Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd)

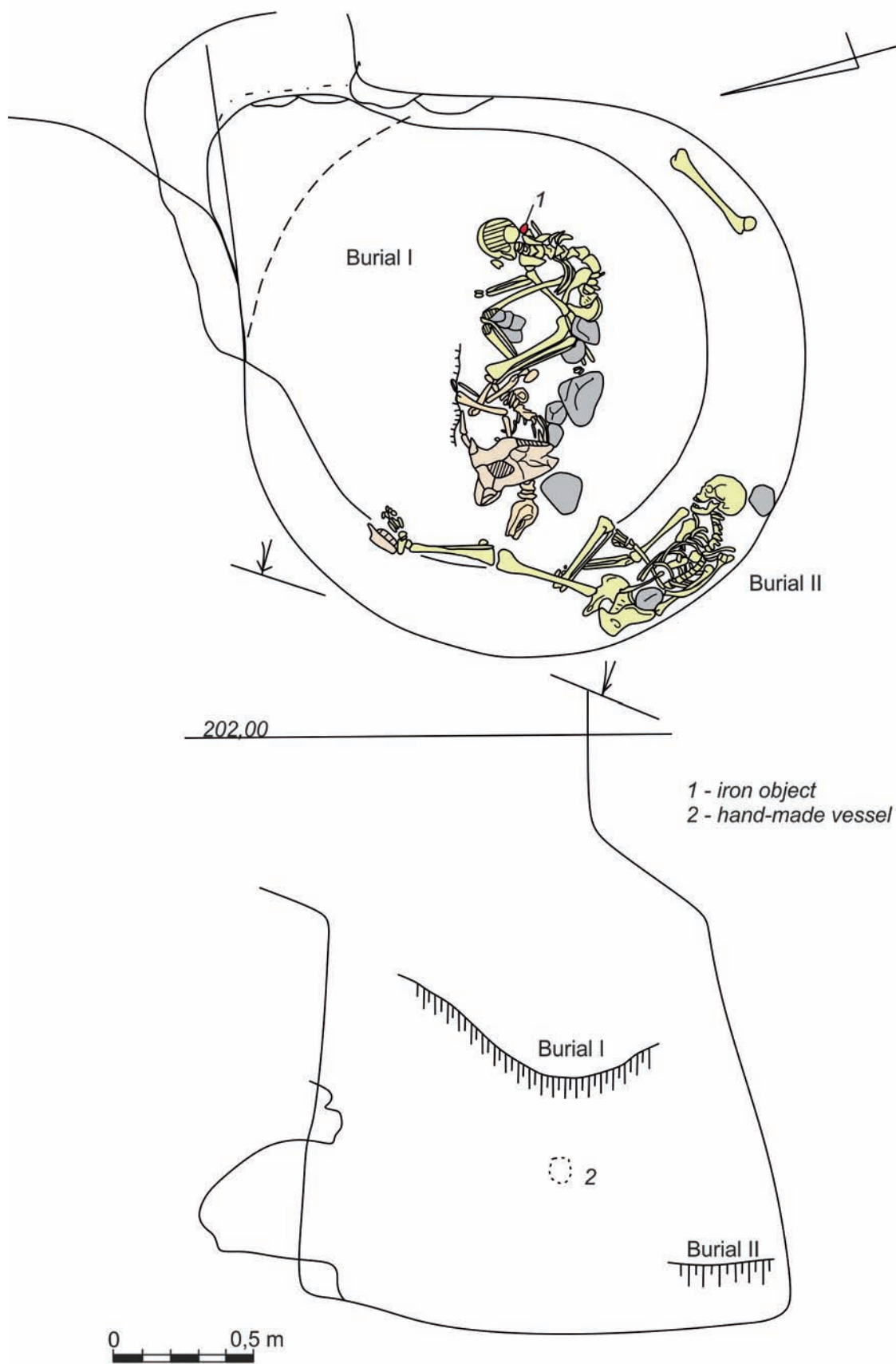


Fig. 12. Neyzats cemetery. Layout and profiles of grave 506. Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd)

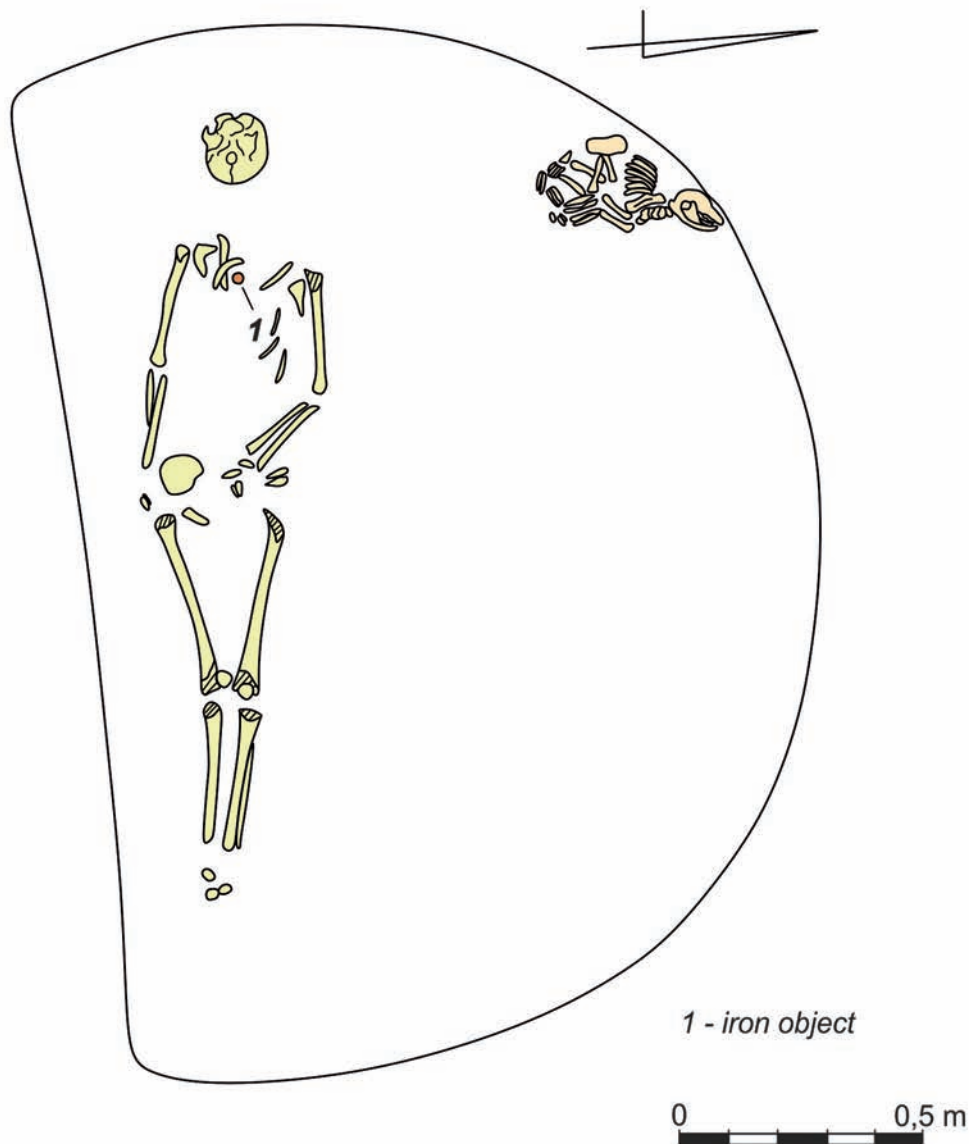


Fig. 13. Neyzats cemetery. Layout of grave 370. Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd)

The deceased was buried in a tightly curled position, lying on her right side, with a strongly bent spine and with her face directed towards the pit bottom. Her legs and her right arm were flexed, whereas her left arm was straight. In the neck area, a fragment of an unspecified iron item was found. The arrangement indicates that the woman might have been buried in a sitting position, and the position in which she was found represented a result of natural post-deposition processes (cf. Skóra 2017). Near the legs of the woman, there was a canine skeleton, lying on its left side, with its head to the west. On the dog, there was a cow skull. Another skeleton of a woman (burial II), aged 20-25

years old, was located at the depth of 1.7 m, near the western edge of the pit. This person was lying on her back, perpendicular to the rounded pit edge. Her trunk was strongly bent in the thoracic and cervical area. Her right arm was straightened along the body, and the left one was flexed. Her right leg was straight, whereas the left one was incomplete: only the lower leg bones were preserved *in situ*. Their arrangement indicated that the left limb had probably been flexed. For unknown reasons, the left femur was located in the southern part of the pit¹². In the

¹² The arrangement of the left leg and left arm bones suggests that they were disturbed in ancient times.

soil layer separating the burial strata, a hand-made vessel was discovered (Fig. 12).

It is worth pointing out that the shape of feature 370, which is of unspecified structure, resembles a round pit. At its bottom, a human skeleton was found. The body was lying flat on its back. The skull was lying not far from the rest of the skeleton, with the face to the ground. A partially preserved canine skeleton had been deposited near the north-western edge of the feature, lying on its right side and with its head pointing to the north (Fig. 13).

There are cases of discovering human skeletons (also along with dog remains) in pits from the northern Black Sea coast area and dated to the Roman period. Such features are found mainly in Late Scythian sites (Vysotskaâ 1972, 38; Malûkevič 2008, 180-181; 2017, 348). In the Mologa II cemetery, what we find in pits are chiefly child skeletons, whose arrangement slightly deviates from funerary norms prevalent in this community. The layers of ash and coal (e.g., pit 64) suggest that various rituals might have been used during the funerals (Malûkevič 2008, 179-180). In the pits, mainly complete human skeletons are found, but there are also fragmentary inhumations or single human bones. Such features are rarely recorded in Sarmatian or Meotian sites.

Features 506 and 520 from the Neyzats cemetery are immensely interesting not only because of canine skeleton occurrences, but also due to the fact that they contain burials of people in a sitting position, which was untypical for the funerary rites of the societies from the Roman period Crimea. What is more, it was practically absent in Sarmatian and Meotian burials. Such a method of burying the dead occurs however in the Wielbark culture, in the Masłomęcz group, as well as in the Chernyakhov culture (that is, in the circle of Gothic cultures) (Kokowski 1995, 88; Skóra 2017; Petrauskas 2014). It is worth pointing out that untypical body arrangements are usually associated with the “bad death”, i.e., what happened to persons somehow excluded from the society, like convicts, suicides, people who died of plagues, etc. Another reason for a different treatment of the bodies was the fear of the return of the dead to the world of the living (Tempelmann-Maczyńska 1992, 198; Mončinska 1997, 208).

For the reasons stated, the interpretation of the two features is uncertain. On the one hand, their location on the fringe of the cemetery and the pres-

ence of a canine skeleton in each of them make us suspect that, analogously to pits 6, 7, and 9, the dogs might have been “sacrifices” and they were intended to play the role of guardians. On the other, discovering (at the top of the pits) human skeletons in such untypical arrangements associated with being “excluded” may stand in contradiction with this assumption. It cannot be ruled out that the features were secondarily used (the skeletons were added), which can be proved by their shallow locations. The body arrangements may result simply from lack of time and hasty burial.

INVENTORIES¹³

In just a single case – namely, grave 454¹⁴, near a canine burial – an inventory was discovered (Hrapunov 2013, 192) (Fig. 14:1). This is an item in the form of a wheel, made of a bronze band (7 mm wide). One of its ends is slightly widened and has an aperture near the rounded edge. The other end was broken off in ancient times, and it could not be found during the grave exploration. The dimensions of the object are 135 x c. 138 mm¹⁵ (Fig. 14:2). Most probably, the artefact served as a collar, which can be attested by its location near the dog’s neck, the shape of the preserved end¹⁶, as well as by the lack of analogous items among wire necklaces worn by the Sarmatia period Crimea population (cf. Stoânova 2011). This is undoubtedly a unique find, although the popularity of such items in ancient times is corroborated by numerous Roman and Greek works of art, like sculptures, frescos, and mosaics. They present dogs wearing collars, to which chains or straps (serving as leashes) were

¹³ The section of the article discussing the subject of jewellery has been realised within the framework of research project No. 2014/13/N/HS3/04575 financed by the National Science Centre.

¹⁴ Pit grave 454 is a stratified burial. At the level of the first stratum, two canine skeletons were discovered. On the neck of one of them, there was a bronze collar. 0.5 m below the skeletons, a horse burial was found.

¹⁵ The dimensions were estimated after the reconstruction of the missing part. This is why they may slightly differ from the actual size.

¹⁶ An aperture preserved near the end makes it possible to assume that it was a fastening element.

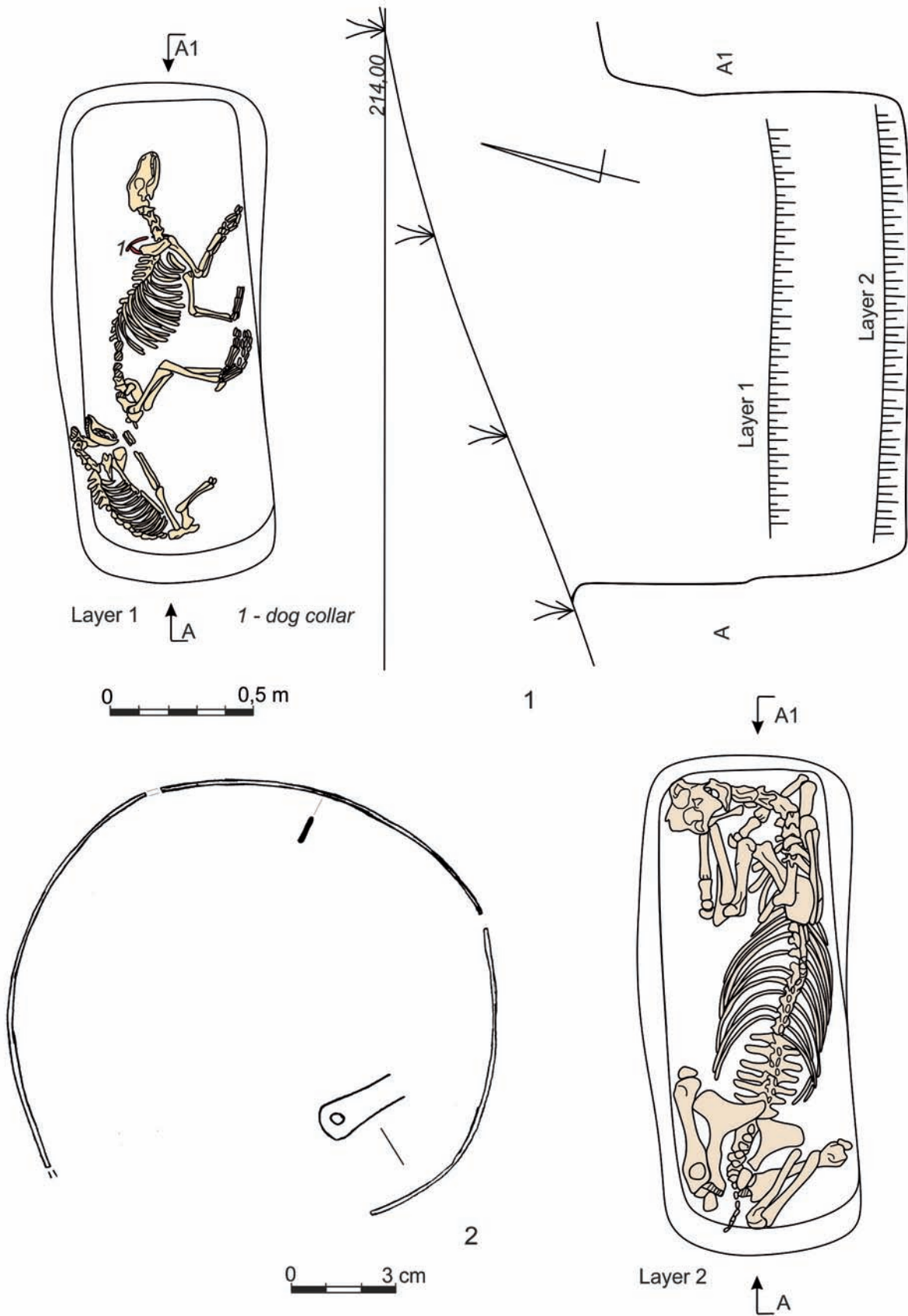


Fig. 14. Neyzats cemetery. Grave 454: 1 – layouts and profile of the grave; 2 – bronze dog collar. Illustration B. Polit (on the basis of field documentation by S. Mul'd)



Fig. 15. The *Cave canem* Roman mosaic at the entrance to the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii (Italy). After Nappo 2000, 143

attached (Fig. 15). Unfortunately, funerary materials do not yield other examples proving this phenomenon¹⁷. This is why the collar from the Neyzats cemetery is an important artefact not only regarding the northern Black Sea coast area, but also other territories. We must remark, nonetheless, that the lack of recorded co-occurrences of such items with canine skeletons does not mean that they were not used. A collar might have been removed before a dog was inhumed. It is also possible that artefacts of this type were made of organic matter (ropes, straps) and underwent decomposition.

Most probably, the function of the artefact was practical, and not decorative, although there are single cases of discovering jewellery near the skeletons of dogs and other animals¹⁸. Such a situation

¹⁷ Dog collars are sporadically found in materials from later epochs, e.g. in Sweden, at a Viking period site (Valsgårde), in a boat-grave (grave 10) dated to the end of the 10th century, a spiked dog collar was discovered (Gräslund 2004, 168).

¹⁸ Jewellery is found sporadically in animal burials. In any case, this is mainly represented by earrings. Grave 359 from the Neyzats cemetery serves as an example. It is

occurred at the Bilsk hillfort site (Poltava Oblast, Ukraine), where, in a pit dated to HC2, a burial of a dog was found. On the neck, there was a collar of beads made of so-called Egyptian faience (Shramko 2015, 46-47). What is more, in Mikulin (Lublin Voivodeship, Poland), in a pit dated to the Roman period, among bones of 4 dogs, a pendant of shells was discovered (Maciejczuk 1987, 28). We need to stress that the occurrences of artefacts near canine burials dated to the Roman period, as well as to other times, are rare. Among items belonging to this type, mainly whole vessels and their large fragments are found (Bichir 1973, 250-251;

a pit grave, in which a horse was inhumed. Left of the skull, there was an earring, made of a smooth, bronze wire of circular ($\varnothing = 1$ mm) cross-section. Each of the ends is bent in the shape of a hook. This way they form a fastening. A pendant, in the form of a bronze bell (29 x 17 x 21 mm) is strung on the hoop of the earring. The shape of the specimen is close to circular (21 x 31 mm). Right of the skull, a fragmentarily preserved earring, made of a bronze, smooth wire of circular ($\varnothing = 1$ mm) cross-section, was found. One of the ends is shaped in the form of a loop and attached to the hoop. The other one is broken off. It was probably in the shape of a hook that formed a fastening with the loop.

Vahtina 2007, 143; Sielicka 2015, 158). They have been discovered between the limbs of animals, and thus scholars interpret them as bowls used for feeding particular individuals (Makiewicz 1987, 258; Foucras 2014, 262). This assumption has been ultimately proved by the discovery of a *terra rubra* vessel in the form of a bowl that bore bite marks left by a dog (Grunewald 2009, 252). Canine skeletons are also frequently accompanied by items made of stone or, less often, iron (Sielicka 2015, 158).

GENESIS OF THE CONCEPT AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BURIALS

Canine burials are associated with various cultures, and their occurrences are conditioned by the religious beliefs professed by particular societies, and thus it is difficult to explain unequivocally the origin of this phenomenon in the Neyzats cemetery. The problem can be handled only after tracing the occurrences of such features in the northern Black Sea coast area, taking into account materials from cultures influencing the area. In archaeological materials, evidences for intentional canine burials are associated with periods as early as the Neolithic and the Bronze Age (Razumov 2018). Nevertheless, contrary to S. I. Berestnev, who deemed “archaeological traces of the dog cult” to be absent in territories west of the Dnieper (Berestnev 1999, 44), S. N. Razumov, having analysed a collection of 12 dog skeletons from 10 burial mounds, came to the conclusion that in the Bronze Age, canine burials in the region of the north-western Black Sea coast represent important elements of the funerary and commemorative rituals practiced by a particular group inhabiting the region of the Lower Danube and the left bank of the Lower Dniester. The burial complexes belong to the later stage of the Usatovo culture and are dated to the turn of the 4th and 3rd millennia BC (Razumov 2018). It nonetheless appears that the adduced number of the recorded canine burials is not sufficient to state that the occurrences of such features are associated with a distinctive funerary ritual of the society inhabiting this vast area. The scholar’s remark that the discoveries of canine bones in the region of the northern Black Sea coast in the Middle Bronze Age remain distinctly rare,

and there are only seven such cases in relation to several thousand burials of the Catacomb cultures, is very important for further considerations (Razumov 2018, 64). According to these data, it appears that the custom of burying dogs was not linked with a local tradition, but it arrived in the northern Black Sea coast area along with a new population.

The custom of burying dogs is clearly perceptible in Meotian and Sarmatian materials (Limberis and Marčenko 2002, 177; Sinika 2006, 221; Istvánovits, Kulcsár 2015a, 62). Single findings of canine skeletons do not make it possible to define them as typical for funerary customs. Archaeological materials indicate, nonetheless, that canine burials occurred often in the rites of the Early Scythian culture (Sinika 2006, 221). In the early stage of the Scythian culture, such burials were characteristic elements of aristocratic graves (Ol’hovskij 1991, 75, 118, 144, 160). As remarked by, V. S. Sinika, the most popular phenomenon of canine burial occurrences is perceptible in the Late Scythian period, when the culture transforms from nomadic to a settled one, without discernible aristocratic features (Sinika 2006, 221). In that period, dog burials were present in settlements, as well as in graves. Canine skeletons are also discovered in antique settlements. It is worth pointing out that in the Early Iron Age and in the Roman period, dog burials frequently occurred in Europe (see: Gräslund 2004; Kmeťová 2006; Scheibner 2013).

In light of the above considerations, we may posit that in the Neyzats cemetery, features of the type here discussed were linked with rituals that might have arrived in the area along with a new population. This is attested not only by the diversity of the archaeological features, but also by the fact that, despite the occurrences of canine burials in the Sarmatian period Crimea, such a great number of features containing dog skeletons has not been registered in any other cemetery. The archaeological materials we have access to do not allow us to define unequivocally the origin of the custom of burying dogs. Taking into consideration the fact that in the materials from the cemetery the influence of Germanic tribes, including those from Scandinavia, is clearly discernible (cf. Khrapunov 2013), we cannot exclude that this was the direction from which the idea of burying dogs spread. As mentioned above, in Germanic mythology, the dog played an important role, which is corroborated by archaeological materials. In the Central European

Barbaricum, entire or partial canine skeletons were phenomena generally associated with Germanic tribes (cf. Makiewicz 1987; 1989; 1993; 1997; Beneš and Nývltová-Fišáková 2009; Gralak 2012). They are common, for example, in the Przeworsk culture, where they occur mainly in settlements (in houses, pits, wells) or in places defined as ritual sites (Sielicka 2015, 150). Also in Scandinavia, canine burials represented widespread phenomena in the Roman period, but they are clearly discernible also in Viking period materials (Gräslund 2004, 167). We cannot also exclude the influence of the Late Scythian culture. It appears that the people burying their dead in the Neyzats cemetery lived in fixed settlements, similarly to the Late Scythian culture population. Dogs must have played an essential role for a society leading such a lifestyle, not only as human companions, but also as homestead guardians and hunting assistants. It is also possible that the dog played a certain role in the religious beliefs of the society, especially considering the fact that this was the case among the Iranian and Germanic peoples (Abetekov 1978, 62; Gräslund 2004, 171; Razumov 2018, 50-51). The phenomenon of burying dogs in cemeteries might have also appeared independently, particularly as many of the elements of the burials from the Neyzats cemetery find no analogies in the surrounding areas.

The number and diversity of the dog skeletons discovered in the Neyzats cemetery make it one of the most attractive sites for tackling the issue of Roman period “canine burials” in the coast area of the northern Black Sea. Despite the abundance of the material, it is not easy to explain the occurrences of such features, their role, and, above all, the origin of the concept, which is an intriguing problem. Nevertheless, in light of the issues discussed, it appears that the burials recorded in the Neyzats cemetery played a ritual role. As mentioned above, in the case of pit burials, this fact is attested by the scarcity of artefacts (e.g. pottery fragments, single animal bones, etc.) in the fills, as well as by the locations of such features on the edges of the cemetery. It also appears that the presence of dogs in some of the graves can be interpreted in this manner. Moreover, it is worth pointing out that, as in other societies, dogs might have been symbols of social status.

Above all, canine burials discovered in rich burials, especially in vaulted graves, can be interpreted this way. Intentional canine burials clearly indicate that the species was important in the religious, but also in the social aspect of people’s existence. As mentioned earlier, in societies living in such tumultuous times, dogs played a crucial role as homestead guardians and assistants in combat and hunting. Most probably, they were not used as a source of meat, which is attested by the lack of traces indicating that the animals were consumed.

CATALOGUE¹⁹

Grave 104: vaulted grave

Rectangular corridor (2.2 x 0.8 m); 0.8-1.5 m deep; oriented along the west-east axis. In its eastern edge, a *dromos* (dimensions 0.35 x 0.8 m) was dug out. It was covered with a stone plate (0.9 x 0.9 m). The burial chamber is rectangular (2.2 x 2.4 m). At its bottom, which lies 0.1 m below the floor of the *dromos*, the following items were found: human and animal bones, a bronze bracelet strung on the needle of a bronze fibula, a fragment of a bronze fibula, a belt end fitting, a belt buckle, a ring, a fragment of an iron knife, iron rod-shaped objects (awl/firesteel?), fragments of a glass vessel, *terra sigillata*, beads. The burial chamber had been robbed in antiquity with a narrow shaft dug over the *dromos* and the entrance to the burial chamber. Later, a horse was buried below this place. The animal was inhumed on its left side, with flexed limbs and with its head to the east. It was impossible to get to the burial chamber through the entrance without disrupting the horse burial. West of the horse, a canine skeleton was discovered.

Grave 128: pit grave

Rectangular grave (1.95 x 0.75 m); 1.0 m deep; oriented along the west-east axis. Two grooves, opposing each other, one in each of the longer edges of the grave, were carved. Most probably, their function was to maintain two beams placed perpendicular to the long axis of the grave. At the bottom of the tomb, there was a horse, buried on its left side, with

¹⁹ The information presented in the catalogue comes from Prof. I. N. Hrapunov’s private archive.

flexed limbs and with its head to the east. Near the western edge of the grave, a canine skeleton (on its left side and with its head to the south) was found.

Grave 143: pit grave ?

The grave was dug in a clay layer. This is the reason why its outline could not be captured. At the bottom of the grave, there was a horse, buried on its stomach and with its head to the east. In the area of its hind legs, there was a dog inhumed on its left side. A stone rested on its head.

Grave 198: pit grave

Dimensions: 1.8 x 0.85 m; 1.2 m deep; oriented along the west-east axis. In the eastern part, the layout takes an oval shape, whereas in the western part it is rectangular. The south-eastern section of the grave collapsed into the niche of grave 199. In the feature, there were two horses, buried one on the other. The animal from the bottom was lying on its right side, and the upper one on its left side. Their heads were directed to the east. Along the horses, near the northern edge of the grave, a goat skeleton was discovered. Above the equine burials, in the south-eastern part of the grave, there was an untouched dog skeleton. The fill of the grave contained glass vessel fragments.

Grave 251: pit grave

Rectangular grave (2.2 x 0.9 m); 1.5 m deep; oriented along the west-east axis. The southern part was destroyed with the creation of grave 267. The upper and the western part of the sepulchre were disrupted by modern robbers, who dug a shaft that partly damaged a canine burial located in the grave fill. At the depth of 1.3 m, there was an equine burial: the horse lay on its left side, with flexed limbs and with its head to the east. Another horse was found directly beneath it (at the bottom of the grave), in the same position. Both burials had been disrupted by the creation of a modern robbery shaft. By the northern edge of the grave, in the north-eastern corner, a circular niche was discovered. It was separated from the burial chamber with a vertical stone plate (0.8 x 0.6 m). The diameter of the niche was 0.7 m. Its floor was 0.2 m below the grave bottom. The height of the niche was 0.6 m. In its bottom part, there were iron bridle bits. 0.2 m from the western edge of the grave, in the rock-bed, there was a circular hole (0.25 m in diameter and 0.35 m deep).

Grave 308: vaulted grave

Rectangular corridor (2.6 x 0.9 m); 1.1 m deep; oriented along the west-east axis. The north-western part of the pit collapsed to an unexplored grave. The entrance to the *dromos* (dimensions: 0.6 x 0.8 m) was in the eastern edge of the pit and was covered with a stone plate (1.0 x 0.9 m). The layout of the burial chamber is rectangular (3.6 x 2.1 m). The bottom of the chamber is 0.35 m below the floor of the *dromos*. In the chamber, at the level of the rock-bed, there was a burial located near the northern edge. The skeleton was lying on its back, with its head to the west. Below the skeleton, a layer of organic matter was recorded. Near the skull, there was a knife with a bone handle. One bronze belt buckle was found in the chest area, and another was discovered near the left hand. At the level of the chest, to the right, there was a flat stone. Near the western edge of the burial chamber, right of the skull, there were hand-made vessels. In their vicinity, an animal bone with a knife on it were found. The burial was covered with a 30-centimetre layer of soil, upon which there were two other burials. The persons were lying in the central part of the burial chamber, 0.2 m from each other, flat on their backs, with their heads to the west. A layer of organic matter was found under one of the persons. In the chest area of the skeleton, there was an iron belt buckle. Near the inner side of the right knee, a bronze belt buckle was found. Under the left tibia, a knife, and 0.4 m from the skull, in the south-western corner, a sword and a bronze belt buckle were discovered. Near the head of the other person, there was an iron sword, in the chest area there were beads and a little bell. Under the right ilium, small fragments of an unspecified bronze item were found. The burial was surrounded from all sides with vessels. In the eastern part of the chamber, animal bones were discovered. The burials were covered with a 0.15-0.55 cm-thick layer of soil. At this level, most probably just below the ceiling of the burial chamber, there were human vertebrae and a human skull, as well as intermingled human and animal bones and a complete canine skeleton. A bronze earring was found among the bones (Fig. 7).

Grave 355: undercut grave

Rectangular corridor (2.5 x 0.75 m); 1.6 m deep; oriented along the west-east axis. An oval niche (3.0 x 1.0 m) was dug out in the northern edge of the corridor. Its bottom is 0.3 m below the floor

of the corridor. The passageway was designed to form a step. The corridor was separated from the niche with a wall made of various stone plates, which also filled the corridor. Robbers damaged the stone wall in its central part and broke into the niche. The western and the eastern part of the niche turned out to be untouched. In the western part of the niche, there was an animal bone, a knife, and a *terra sigillata* jug. In the eastern part, a large iron belt buckle, four iron belt fittings, and another belt buckle were found. Further east, there were: a *terra sigillata* vessel, iron bridle bits (with lateral surfaces covered with fragments of gold and silver foil), an iron openwork plaque, an iron belt buckle, a knife with a bone handle, two bronze circles, and bone lining. Near the eastern edge of the niche, a bottom part of a hand-made vessel, blackened with smoke, was found. On it, there were a censer and another vessel in the form of a cone with two handles. Along with this pottery, an amphora and a hand-made footed vessel were discovered. Additionally, the fill of the grave contained a *terra sigillata* bowl, fragments of iron belt buckles, and fragments of a knife (with a portion of a pendant attached to it). In the burial chamber, near the southern edge of the corridor, at the depth of 1.3 m, there was another burial. Robbers, digging into the northern part, did not damage the skeleton. The skeleton was lying on its back, with its head to the west. The knees and elbows were bent, and the hands were placed near the face. They were holding a hand-made vessel. Near the eastern edge of the corridor, at the depth of 2.0 m, practically at the level of the rock-bed, a canine burial was discovered (it lay on its right side, perpendicular to the long axis, with its head to the north-west) (Fig. 8).

Grave 365: pit grave

Oval burial pit (1.5 x 0.7 m); 0.6 m deep, oriented along the west-east axis. In the eastern edge of the grave, 0.4 m above the bottom, there is a niche (0.35 high, 0.3 m wide, and 0.4 m deep). Two layers of burials were recorded in the tomb. 0.35 m above the bottom, a horse was found. The arrangement of the bones had been partly disturbed by robbers. The animal was lying on its right side, with its head to the east and with flexed limbs. The head was resting in a niche carved out in the eastern edge of the grave. Near the skull, fragments of a bridle bit were found. Near the legs, there was a canine burial: it lay on its right side, with flexed limbs and with its

head to the east. Another equine burial was found at the bottom of the grave pit. The arrangement of the body indicated that it had been originally inhumed on the stomach, with flexed legs and with its head to the east. Later, as a result of posthumous processes, the body fell on one side. The skull is not preserved. Possibly, the head rested in a niche, specially carved out in the eastern edge of the grave. When the next horse and dog were being added, the skull was removed. Near the northern edge of the grave, there was a canine burial arranged along the stomach of the horse (Fig. 5).

Grave 370: ?

It is impossible to determine the structure of the grave. It was dug in the slope of a ravine and it was almost completely destroyed by later geological processes. At the level of the rock-bed and slightly above it, the construction resembled an undercut grave, but its higher parts deviated from this form. Only the southern edge of the grave is well preserved. The buried person was inhumed along this edge, flat on the back and with the head to the west, at the depth of 1.2 m. The left elbow was bent and the hand rested on the pelvis. In the chest area, an unspecified iron item was discovered. North of the person, in the place where there had been supposedly a niche, at the depth of c. 2.7 m, there was a canine burial. The animal was lying on its right side, oriented along the west-east axis. The neck was bent at right angle to the rest of the spine. The place of the supposed niche was thoroughly dug at the depth of one metre below the dog skeleton. No traces of a human burial were found. This part of the grave had been destroyed by geological processes (Fig. 13).

Grave 372: pit grave

Rectangular grave (2.2 x 0.8 m); 1.2 m deep; oriented along the north-south axis. Above the ceiling of the feature, in its south-eastern part, intermingled animal bones were recorded. 0.3 m below the upper edge of the grave, there was a child grave. The buried person was lying flat on the back, with the head to the north-east. No funerary inventories were found. At the bottom of the burial pit, one equine and one canine burial were discovered. The horse was lying on its right side, with flexed limbs and its head near the south-western edge of the grave. The dog had been inhumed near the north-eastern edge of the tomb, perpendicular to the long

axis of the feature; it lay on its left side, with its head to the north (Fig. 9, 10).

Grave 454: pit grave

Rectangular grave pit (1.7 x 0.7 m); 1.0 m deep. At the bottom of the burial pit, a horse was inhumed: on its stomach and with strongly flexed limbs. The neck was firmly pressed against the edge of the tomb, thus the head was elevated in relation to the rest of the body. 0.5 m above the bottom of the burial pit, there was a burial of two dogs. The animal lying closer to the eastern edge of the grave had been inhumed on its left side, with straight limbs and with its head to the east. On the neck, there was a bronze collar. Next to the dog, there was another one, buried on its left side (Fig. 14: 1, 2).

Grave 465: pit grave (unfinished construction)

Rectangular burial pit (1.8 x 0.9 m); 0.65 m deep; oriented along the west-east axis. On the uneven bottom of the burial pit, near its eastern edge, there was a canine skeleton, inhumed on its left side with its head to the south (Fig. 3).

Grave 482: pit grave

Rectangular pit (0.9 x 0.45 m); 0.35 m deep; oriented along the southwest-northeast axis. In the grave, on a 0.02-0.2 m-thick layer, a dog (5-7 years old, size of the spaniel-type) was buried: it lay on its right side and with its head to the east. A groove (0.3 m wide, 0.15 m deep, and 1.1 m long) extended from the northern edge of the burial pit (Fig. 2).

Grave 488: pit grave

Grave (3.2 x 0.7 m; 0.70-0.85 m deep) oriented along the west-east axis. Its layout is rectangular in the western part, but it widens in the eastern section. In the eastern edge of the grave, a small niche was carved out. The bottom of the grave was levelled with ballast whose thickness reaches up to 0.25 m in the eastern part. On this layer, a horse was buried (on its left side, with flexed limbs, and with its head to the east). Near the eastern edge of the grave, above the level of the horse burial, there was a dog skeleton: it lay on its left side and with its head to the south.

Grave 506: pit ?

Circular pit; 1.9 m deep; broadens slightly to the bottom. Its diameter is 1.7 m in the upper part and 2.15 m near the bottom. The north-eastern edge of the grave was damaged with a robbery shaft. At

the depth of 0.6 m, in the centre of the pit, burial 1 was recorded. The spine of the inhumed person was bent practically at a right angle. The knees were flexed. The right elbow was bent, and the left arm was straight. The skull rested in a face-down position. In the neck area, there was an unspecified iron item. A canine skeleton was discovered near the legs of the person. It was lying on its left side, with its head to the west. A cow skull rested on the dog bones. At the depth of 1.7 m, near the western edge of the grave, burial 2 was located. The buried person was lying on the back, along the edge of the pit. The right arm rested straight along the torso. The bones of the left arm are not preserved. The right leg rested at a certain distance from the rest of the body. The bones of the left leg were not found *in situ*. It should be noted that in excavated ditch no. 2, whose length is 38 m, only grave 506 was discovered. This was probably the western edge of the cemetery. Thus, on the periphery of the burial ground, not an ordinary grave, but a deep hole, had been dug. First, one body was thrown inside. Then, it was covered with soil. Next, another dead person, a dog, and a cow skull were added. The second body was also covered with soil. The fill contained spindle whorls, fragments of an amphora handle, a hand-made vessel, and fragments of pottery (Fig. 12).

Grave 513: pit grave

Rectangular burial pit (1.8 x 0.9 m); 1.15 m deep; oriented along the west-east axis. The western edge of the grave is not preserved. In the northern edge of the grave, a niche (1.1 x 0.9 m) was carved out. The bottoms of the niche and the grave are at the same level. The niche was separated from the burial pit with a wall composed of stone plates. 0.2 m above the niche bottom, there were three hand-made and seven *terra sigillata* vessels. Along them, iron bridle bits and a belt buckle were found. At the bottom of the grave, there was a horse buried on its left side, with flexed legs, and with its head to the east. In order to fit the legs in the grave, a small niche had been carved out in its southern edge. Above the level of the equine skeleton, canine bones were found.

Grave 520: pit

The burial was discovered in the northern part of pit 5. Circular pit (1.7 m in diameter; 1.85 m deep). The buried person was inhumed in a sitting position, with the spine leaning against the pit

edge. The head was at the level of the upper edge of the pit. The elbows were bent to the left. The wrist bones of the right hand rested on the pelvis and the left femur. The bend of the left elbow is not natural. The buried person was placed face to the north-east. At the bottom of the pit, a canine skeleton was discovered: it lay on its left side, with its head to the north-east (Fig. 11).

Pit 6

Circular pit; 0.7 m in diameter; 1.2 m deep. C. 0.3 m above the bottom of the pit, a dog skeleton was found: it lay on its left side, with its head to the north-west (Fig. 4:1).

Pit 7

Circular pit; 1.4 m in diameter; 1.2 m deep. The fill of the pit contained a canine skeleton: it lay on its left side and with its head to the south-east.

Pit 9

Circular pit; 1.8 m in diameter; 0.8 m deep; partly enters under the edge of the excavation ditch, thus it was not dug up completely. The fill contained a canine skeleton: it lay on its left side, with its head to the west (Fig. 4:2).

Translated by Piotr Moskała

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