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Research paper

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THE NEWLY DISCOVERED CLASSICAL PERIOD TOMBS OF GARNI

Abstract. This article is dedicated to the study of several burials from the Classical period that were accidentally uncovered during the installation of a water pipeline in the village of Garni, Kotayk Province, Republic of Armenia. In spring of 2022, a rescue excavation was carried out by a team from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, during which one slab-lined cist burial and three jar burials were unearthed and documented. The first of the jar burials revealed a distinctive ritual burial practice: the remains of a mother and child were interred alongside the heads of a cow and a calf within the same grave. The other two jar burials were associated with children. The slab-lined cist burial, which yielded relatively richer grave goods, contained the remains of a 15–16-year-old adolescent girl. The burial assemblage included two locally produced ceramic vessels and one imported unguentarium, along with personal items, jewelry, and a metal pair of scissors. A palynological analysis of the soil residues from the vessels suggested that two of them had contained a substance likely used for treating skin diseases. Based on the recovered material, a 3D reconstruction of the cist tomb was created. Both through parallels with contemporaneous archaeological sites and on the basis of radiocarbon (^{14}C) dating, the newly discovered burials of Garni are dated to the 3rd–2nd centuries BC through the 1st century AD. Their study significantly enriches our understanding of urban life in Armenia during the classical period, offering new insights into daily life, diet, clothing, adornment, medical practices, belief systems, and funerary rituals of the time.

Keywords: Armenia; Garni; Classical period; jar burial; burial rite; beliefs; grave goods; folk medicine; cosmetics

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Исследовательская статья

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НОВЫЕ ПОГРЕБЕНИЯ КЛАССИЧЕСКОГО ПЕРИОДА ИЗ ГАРНИ

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена изучению нескольких погребений классического периода, случайно обнаруженных при прокладке водопровода в селе Гарни Котайкской области Республики Армения. Весной 2022 года были проведены спасательные раскопки экспедицией Института археологии и этнографии Национальной академии наук Армении, в ходе которых были вскрыты и задокументированы одно плиточное ящичное погребение и три кувшинных захоронения. В одном из кувшинных погребений зафиксирована своеобразная ритуальная практика: останки матери и ребёнка были захоронены вместе с головами коровы и телёнка в одной могиле. Два других кувшинных погребения принадлежали детям. Плиточное ящичное погребение, содержавшее относительно богатый погребальный инвентарь, принадлежало девушке-подростку 15–16 лет. В составе погребального комплекса находились два керамических сосуда местного производства и один импортный унгвентарий, а также личные вещи, украшения и металлические ножницы. Палинологический анализ остатков почвы из сосудов показал, что в двух из них, вероятно, содержалось вещество, использовавшееся для лечения кожных заболеваний. На основе полученных материалов была создана 3D-реконструкция плиточной могилы. Как по аналогиям с синхронными археологическими памятниками, так и на основании радиоуглеродного (^{14}C) датирования, вновь открытые погребения Гарни датируются III–II вв. до н.э. — I в. н.э. Их исследование существенно обогащает наши представления о городской жизни Армении в классический период, предоставляя новые данные о повседневной жизни, питании, одежде, украшениях, медицинских практиках, системе верований и погребальных ритуалах того времени.

Ключевые слова: Армения; Гарни; классический период; кувшинное погребение; погребальный обряд; верования; погребальный инвентарь; народная медицина; косметика

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Introduction

Garni is located 28 km east of Yerevan, the capital of the Republic of Armenia. The site lies at the foot of the Geghama Mountains, on a high promontory on the right bank of the Azat River, at an altitude of 1400 m above sea level (Pl. 1/1).

Since 1949, the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia has conducted systematic archaeological excavations here, initially under the direction of Babken Arakelyan (mid–1949–1980s) and later Zhores Khachatryan (1980s–1990s). Excavations in the fortress area uncovered a temple, a bathhouse with a mosaic floor, palace structures, and burials from the Classical period [1; 2; 3]. These excavations revealed that during this period (2nd century BC–2nd century AD), an urban population lived in the settlement adjacent to the Garni fortress [1: 54]. In the northwestern part of the fortress, a burial ground measuring 400×300 m was identified for this settlement. However, according to the head of the archaeological expedition, B. Arakelyan, this area was originally larger but was gradually destroyed and looted over the years by local residents, who unearthed various artifacts during construction work [1: 43].

In April of 2022, during the installation of a water pipe along G. Narekatsi Street in the Martoi Blur ("the Mound of Marto") district of the Garni village in Kotayk Province, several jar and slab burials were discovered (Pl. 1/2). According to initial reports, the archaeological objects were left in their original position and covered with earth after their discovery. Urgent rescue excavations were conducted by a team from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia led by Armine Gabrielyan.

The first exploratory trench was placed in the part of the street where workers reported one of the jar burials, which included pottery. At a depth of 1.20 m below the surface, the team uncovered the main water pipe, along with the remains of a completely shattered jar and a few fragments of a bowl, likely part of its associated grave goods. Unfortunately, it was determined that the slab and jar burials discovered along the road had been completely destroyed by demolition equipment.

Jar Burial with a Distinctive Rite

Thanks to Yervand Sukiasyan, a resident of the community, it was possible to preserve one jar burial located in front of his garage, which was minimally affected by the construction work (Pl. 2). A second exploratory trench was placed in front of the garage, and the topsoil was removed. Beneath it, at a depth of about 70 cm, fragments of an *in situ* jar were discovered. The jar was positioned horizontally, oriented from northeast to southwest (the height of the preserved part – $H_{preserved}$ = 108 cm, D_{body} = 84 cm, D_{base} = 16.8 cm). The burial vessel was asymmetrical, with a light reddish-pink surface. A hole, about 3 cm in diameter, had been made in the bottom part after firing (Pl. 2/7). Jar burials featuring small holes pierced in the base prior to firing were also documented during the 1950s excavations at Garni, as well as at other Classical-period sites in Armenia and neighbouring regions [2: 21; 4: 99]. B. Arakelyan, while not excluding the possibility of a ritual significance for this practice, suggests that the hole may have been intended to accelerate the decomposition of the deceased. On this basis, the researcher proposes that such jars were specially prepared for burial purposes and could have been purchased on the market [2: 21].

The southwest-facing rim of the first burial jar was missing up to the base of the neck, and two flat slabs, positioned perpendicularly to each other, were used to replace it. It appears that a dromos-type structure was present, though the third stone was damaged and removed during the construction of a water pipe in the Soviet period (the old water pipe's rusty iron directly touched the wide part of the jar's body) (Pl. 2/2). The exterior of the jar was lined with small to medium-sized stones for reinforcement.

Bones of two individuals were found within the burial vessel. The pelvis of the first individual, exposed at the center of the jar's upper layer, was positioned so that the femur rested on the jar's broken rim and the tibia on the walls of the dromos (Pl. 2/1). It appears that a dromos-type structure with three slabs was added in front of the broken rim to accommodate the individual's feet. Unfortunately, the skull and upper vertebrae of this individual were missing (Pl. 2/1; Pl. 13/2). It is likely that during the construction of the water pipe in the Soviet period, the upper part of the burial jar, a stone from the dromos–type structure, and the skeleton of the upper-layer individual were damaged. Based on the epiphyseal portions of the long bones and the pelvis, which showed no scarring, the first individual was likely 12–13 years old.

Immediately beneath the bones of the first individual, the torso of the second individual was uncovered, lying contracted on its left side with a curved spine. Based on the fineness of the preserved bones and the morphology of the frontal section of the mandible, this individual appears to have been a female aged approximately 30–40 years (Pl. 2/2, 3; Pl. 13/3). Age-related degenerative changes, in the form of osteophytes, were observed on the bodies of the lumbar vertebrae, possibly attributable to chronic spinal stress or strain (Pl. 13/8).

It is assumed that the individuals buried in the jar were members of the same family, with a mother buried alongside her child.[1]

At the bottom of the jar, facing north, the skull of a cow without horns was found (Pl. 2/4, 5; Pl. 13/1). Lying directly beside the cow's skull, on a flat stone, was the decomposed skull of a calf[2] (Pl. 2/6). Aside from the heads of the domestic animals, no other accompanying objects or grave goods were found within this jar burial. Radiocarbon analysis indicates that the burial dates to the 1st century AD (sample number: JB 01; Pl. 15).

In archaeology and anthropology, interpreting burials is always challenging, and complete certainty is rarely possible since we cannot know exactly how these rituals were understood by the people who performed them. However, certain patterns and interpretations are common. Ancient burial rites from different cultures often use varied symbols and rituals, which may have multiple meanings. One possible interpretation relates to the cult of the mother goddess, frequently associated with animals like cows.[3] This could have been a ritual involving sacrifice and worship, carrying religious or cultural significance. The iconography of a cow nursing a calf was common in the middle of the 1st millennium BC, as seen in the bas-relief of the Musasir temple from the palace of King Sargon II in Dur-Sharrukin, and in many examples of decorative art from the Assyrian city of Nimrud.

In our opinion, the example from Garni is not part of a broader tradition or custom but rather an exceptional case. A preliminary examination of this jar burial suggests that a special ritual burial was conducted here. Cows were highly valued by the community and family, providing essential meat and dairy products, ensuring the continuation of the family line, and requiring significant resources for care. The sacrifice of a cow would have been a great loss, implying that the woman and child buried with the cow must have held significant importance. It seems that a tragic and painful death occurred, prompting the burial of both the cow and her calf alongside the woman and child. Notably, only the heads of the animals were placed in the jar. This suggests a possible *pars pro toto* (part for the whole) phenomenon, where a part of a sacrificial animal, usually the head (considered the vessel of the soul), or an object was placed in the tomb. People believed that this part would represent the whole after death, accompanying the deceased in the afterlife. In this case, the heads of the cow and her calf were expected to be reborn in full form with the deceased mother and her child. Animal flesh could have been cooked and shared as part of a funerary feast.

Other Newly Discovered Jar Burials

A few days after the completion of work on that section of the road, another resident of the same street in Garni, Artur Yeghoyan, reported discovering vertically placed slabs, potsherds, and human bones while digging a ditch to build a water line in his yard. An exploratory trench measuring 4×1.5 m was placed in A. Yeghoyan's yard. At a depth of 0.45–0.50 m, slab burial stones were uncovered, and 1.10 m to the north, jar burial no. 2 was discovered (Pl. 3/1–3). The jar was positioned horizontally, slightly tilted east–west, and was only 20 cm below the surface. Its walls were externally lined with small to medium-sized stones and plastered with a thick layer of sandstone mortar. This mortar was also poured into the jar's mouth, causing the soil inside the vessel to harden significantly.

The burial vessel was a double-handled jar, smaller than the first one (H = 68 cm, D_{rim} = 28.5 cm, D_{body} = 55 cm, D_{base} = 17.5 cm). It had a smooth light pink surface, with two decorative bands of solid and hollow triangles pointing upwards, painted in red, on the wide section of the body (Pl. 4/5). The jar had been used and

1 For complete genome sequencing, the samples from the anthropological material were submitted to Daniel Bradley's lab at Trinity College, University of Dublin. The laboratory tests are currently in progress.

2 The cow was determined to be 7–8 years old, and the calf 1–1.5 years old.

3 Before taking on an anthropomorphic form, Tsovinar, one of the main characters in the Vipasank epic, was initially depicted as a cow, which, during thunderstorms, emerged from the *Aryun Tsov* (Armenian for *Blood Sea*) and drank water from the heavenly Katnaghbyur [5: 22] The cult of the goddess Anahit is also associated with oxen, cows, and bulls [6: 232]. In Armenian folklore, cows frequently appear as characters that nurture orphaned children [6: 232]. Similarly, in ancient Greek mythology, bulls were sacrificed to Zeus and cows to Hera [7: 229].

repaired, as indicated by several holes symmetrically placed in different parts of its body. The hole in the center of the base was likely intended to speed decomposition.

In the center and lower part of the jar, the skeleton of a 5–6-year-old child was identified (Pl. 3/1, 3; Pl. 13/4). Additional items discovered inside the jar included a broken fine bronze earring (Pl. 4/2), a seed from a Caucasian hackberry (*Celtis caucasica*) (Pl. 4/3), small snails (Pl. 4/4), a piece of obsidian, approximately 40 blue paste beads (Pl. 4/1), and half of the skull of what appeared to be a small bird (Pl. 10/7). Radiocarbon analysis dates the burial to the last quarter of the 3rd century BC (sample number: JB02; Pl. 15).

To the west of jar burial no. 2, the symmetrical arrangement of stones led to the expansion of the excavations, revealing jar burial no. 3. This burial was separated from jar burial no. 2 by a vertically placed flat slab. It was surrounded by large stones on both sides and lined with smaller stones on one side (Pl. 3/1, 2, 4). Unlike the other two jars, this smaller handled vessel (H = 40 cm, D_{rim} = 26 cm, D_{body} = 44 cm, D_{base} = 18 cm) was placed vertically at a depth of 40 cm. Its surface was smooth and yellow-brown, with traces of fire or ash visible in some areas (Pl. 5/3). The bases of two handles were preserved at the rim and body of the jar. Like the previous jar, this one also had a series of incised holes on different parts of the body and the center of the base, indicating its previous domestic use and later reuse for funerary purposes.

It is worth noting that the mouth of this jar was covered by three stone slabs, which had fallen into the vessel under the weight of the soil, crushing and deforming it. This is a unique aspect of the burial ritual that we have not encountered before, as burial jars are typically sealed with a flat slab, a large bowl, or fragments of other jars and vessels. In this case, the triple covering was unusual, particularly given the small size of the burial jar and the young age of the child inside. After removing the stones, the remains of a 2–3–year–old child were uncovered (Pl. 13/ 5), along with two small paste beads, one large but worn out eye bead (Pl. 5/1), and a small bronze snake-headed bracelet with outward-facing pressed ends (Pl. 5/2). Radiocarbon analysis dates the burial to the early 3rd century BC (sample number: JB03; Pl. 15).

Excavations of a Slab Burial

The excavations of the slab burial found in A. Yeghoyan's yard yielded interesting and relatively richer material (Pl. 6/1–2). The tomb, whose covering slabs had been inadvertently damaged during the installation of a water line, was opened at a depth of 0.50 m below the ground surface (chamber length: 1.30 m, width at the head: 0.50 m, width at the feet: 0.45 m). It consisted of one slab at the head and feet, and two slabs at the sides (Pl. 3/2; Pl. 6/2-3). The fill soil in the upper layer of the burial chamber was loose. At a depth of about 0.40 m, the soil hardened, and the skull of an individual was exposed in the northwestern part of the slab. A 15–16-year-old girl was buried on her right side (fetal position) with her arms raised to her face (right hand under her right cheek), legs folded. In the lower epiphyseal part of the humerus of the individual, between the big fossa of the humerus and the fossa of the humerus, there is a missing thin bone part (Pl. 13/6, 9), acting as a septal aperture perforation. This trait is classified as an alternative non-metric trait and may be hereditary [8: Pl. 8 F]. Another alternative non-metric characteristic of the individual was documented: bifurcation of the spinous process of the fourth cervical vertebra [9: 176–198] (Pl. 13/7).

The burial property of the slab tomb consisted of three pottery vessels, four metal bracelets, iron scissors, various items made of marlstone, three seeds from the Caucasian hackberry (*Céltis caucasica*), and a large number of beads made of glass, glass paste, and carnelian (Pl. 7–12).

Two of the vessels were found next to each other behind the individual's head. The first one was a gray pot with an outwardly inclined rim, a spherical body, and a flat base, placed in a vertical position (H = 9.4 cm, D_{rim} = 6.8 cm, D_{body} = 9.7 cm, D_{base} = 5.2 cm, Pl. 7/3). The other one was also gray, but smaller, with an outwardly inclined rim, a slightly more elongated body, and a flat-bottomed vessel (H = 6.5 cm, D_{rim} = 3.4 cm, D_{body}= 5.8 cm, D_{base} = 2.3 cm), found in a horizontal, flexed position (Pl. 7/2). The shoulders of the two vessels are decorated with carved bands of downward-pointing, hatched triangles with geometric motifs in horizontal lines above them. The decorative motif of triangles crossed with a toothed stamp, with the tops pointing downwards, was widespread in the decoration of vessels at Garni, Kirovakan, Trialeti, and other Middle Bronze Age sites [10: 92, 109, 112, fig. 94, pl. XXXII/1–3]. This seems to be the first example of this motif in tomb material from the Classical period, which in turn testifies to the continuity of the traditions of artistic pottery decoration.

It is worth noting that the rims of both vessels were damaged.

A third vessel, an *unguentarium* (better known as a clay vial for perfumes and aromatic oils), was found placed on the individual's back, a little below the waist (Pl. 7/1, H = 10.2 cm, D_{rim} = 2.4 cm, D_{body} = 5 cm,

D_{base} = 2.7 cm). The rim of the light pink vial was painted with black lacquer, and two horizontal lines of black lacquer encircled the torso. This type of pottery, characteristic of the Hellenistic period, was widely used both domestically and during cultic and funerary rites, and was widespread in the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Near Eastern regions. Unguentaria similar to the example from Garni are known from well-dated archaeological complexes in Armenia and neighboring countries [11: 41; 12: fig. 3; 13: 6-7; 14: 63, fig. 85; 15: 43–44, fig. 32, 39, 40, fig. 6, 231; 16: fig. 6/2,3; 17: 68–69; 18: 23–27, pl. 12/163–196, pl. 34/163–174, pl. 35/175–196; 19: 105–122), and are dated to the 3rd–2nd centuries BC.

Among the metal objects, bracelets are particularly noteworthy. On the individual's right hand, positioned under the head, was a low-grade silver open bracelet with diverging ends (Pl. 8/1). On the left hand, two bronze bracelets were found, each with bent, animal-shaped terminals—one snake-headed and the other ram-headed (Pl. 8/2, 3). A third identical ram's head bracelet, however, previously damaged, broken, and divided into three parts, was found behind the individual's back, under the wall of the cist (Pl. 8/4). Similar bracelets with indented serpent heads or animal-shaped finials have been found in previous excavations at Garni and have been dated to the 4th–1st centuries BC [2: 75, fig. 44; 3: 88, 90]. The above-mentioned bracelets from Garni can be found at other Classical period sites in Armenia [2: 77, fig. 44; 3: fig. 32/2; 20; 21: 81], as well as in Georgia and Iran with materials dating from the end of the 4th century – early 3rd century BC [22: 18–23]. The bracelets from the newly discovered slab tomb in Garni are dated to the 3rd–2nd centuries BC.

Two fragments of iron scissors, also intentionally broken, were found behind the individual, under the wall of the cist (Pl. 8/5). Iron scissors with a similar simple structure are known from previous excavations in Garni [3: 18], the southeastern burial ground of Artashat [23: 70, fig. 12/2], Avan [24: 34, Pl. 82/2], Tigranakert in [25: 297, fig. 12], and Chankatagh [26: Pl. 1/7], as well as from numerous Classical period tombs in the South Caucasus [27: 101; 28: 73–87]. This form of scissors appears in the Hellenistic period and survives until the 1st–2nd centuries AD [23: 72]. The scissors found in Garni date to the Hellenistic period, 3rd–2nd centuries BC.

Incidentally, one fragment of the broken scissors had come into contact with the exquisitely colored clay unguentarium placed beside it, leaving a bright orange corrosion mark from the decay of the iron on the vessel's surface.

Near the torso of the individual were found half of a bronze dagger, a ring made of round wire with diverging finials, a very fine tin hemispherical object, and three seeds from the Caucasian hackberry (Pl. 9).

A rectangular object made of marl (length 6.5 cm, width 1.5 cm) was found near the hip bone. It has a smooth surface, is worked on the exterior, and displays traces of ash or black paint within a shallow groove that runs along the entire interior (Pl. 10/1). Another identical example of this object (likely the other flap of the given object) was found on the other side of the individual, between the folded legs and the torso (Pl. 10/2). Once again, we encounter the phenomenon of objects being deliberately broken apart.

Fragments of other items (tools?) made of marl were found in various parts of the burial chamber (Pl. 10/3-6, 8, 9). One of them is a spindle whorl with a diameter of 1.5 cm (Pl. 10/4), many of which were found in the Classical period tombs of Garni [2: 82, fig. 7b, 58b; 3: 106]. Earlier excavations in the burials of Garni frequently found buttons, buckles, and other items made of this type of stone [3: 82].

In the slab tomb, two simple circular bronze beads, two spherical carnelian beads, and numerous glass and glass paste beads were found (Pl. 11, 12). Glass and glass paste beads, both in their various shapes (spherical, cylindrical, biconical, drop-shaped) and colors (golden, yellow, sky blue, turquoise, blue, black), are well-documented from Armenia (Avan, Oshakan, Dvin, etc.) and from the Classical period sites in Georgia, as well as from the North Black Sea region settlements and burial grounds [3: 109-112; 20: 37; 29: 53-54; 30].

Among these beads, the spherical ones with a golden luster, pressed on both sides, and inlaid beads with a biconical outline stand out (Pl. 12). Similar beads inlaid with fine gilt plate are known from excavations at Garni, Avan, Dvin, and other contemporaneous sites. Researchers consider these beads to be products of the Hellenistic period [29: 54; 24: 42].

Although the beads were quite damaged by soil moisture and often disintegrated upon handling, it was possible to confirm that a few larger beads made of carnelian and paste were placed around the girl's neck, while the majority of small beads made of paste were scattered from the top of her head to her tailbone (Pl. 6/3; Pl. 11).

Under the individual's feet, a layer of ash mixed with soil was recorded at a depth of 0.50 cm. The lower layer, on which the burial took place, was quite thick. This layer was slightly purple with blue-tinged pebbles in the cut. According to the radiocarbon analysis, the burial dates to the early 3rd century BC (sample number: SB01; Pl. 15).

Conclusion

The results of the 2022 rescue excavations at Garni and the study of archaeological objects allow us to examine several questions related to the burial rite in Armenia during the Classical period.

Three of the four excavated burials are jar burials. Jar burials were widespread in Armenia, especially in the late Hellenistic and late Classical periods, and often appeared in the same burial grounds alongside other forms of burial (cist graves, inhumation, etc.), as seen, for example, in Garni. In these jars, the deceased was buried in a flexed position on the right or left side. The jar itself has been compared to an egg or womb and associated with the concept of rebirth.

Jars of different sizes served as burial vessels, with children typically buried in two-handled vessels. As a rule, these vessels were used in daily life and bear signs of reuse, evidenced by a number of holes made in the body and base of the vessels. Over time, these utilitarian pots gained ritual significance due to their importance in the household, being used to store food, a symbol of prosperity and flourishing. Burying a household member in such vessels could represent a means of maintaining a connection between the deceased and the surviving family members.

As observed, a hole approximately 3 cm in diameter was found in the bottom of the first jar burial, made after the firing process, presumably for burial purposes. This phenomenon has been documented in burial vessels from several Classical period settlements in Armenia and neighboring countries. Furthermore, our observations suggest that the jar was placed in a pre-dug hole in such a way that the hole touched the ground, creating a symbolic link between the deceased and mother earth. For the first time in Garni, we encounter the practice of sealing the mouth of the burial vessel with three slabs. Considering the small size of the vessel and the small stature of the child buried within, the triple covering may have had ritual significance.

The heads of the cow and presumably her calf in the first jar burial represent the fulfillment of the magical formula *pars pro toto* (part for the whole). This phenomenon was common in ancient burial rituals, where part of a sacrificial animal or object was placed in the tomb (in this case, only the heads of a cow and a calf, which were considered the repositories of the soul).

Another aspect of the burial ritual is the intentional breaking or damaging of grave goods. The rims of two black vessels in the slab tomb were damaged, as were the iron scissors, one of the bronze bracelets, the bronze awl, and the marl/diatomite objects. In our opinion, this was done deliberately and is linked to certain beliefs about the burial rite and the afterlife.

The act of deliberately breaking pottery is known as early as the Hittite texts, which mention the breaking of vessels after sacrifices [31: 126]. This ritual has been confirmed archaeologically in tombs from the Middle Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in Armenia and in the South Caucasus, as well as in Urartian and post-Urartian tombs, where the most valuable items were broken and scattered throughout the chamber [32: 185; 33: 143; 34: 72]. The custom of placing previously damaged or broken objects in tombs was also a characteristic of the Maykop culture of the 4th millennium BC [35: 886-911], the Albanian-Sarmatian archaeological sites of Dagestan [36: 42-50], and other cultures.

In several Classical period sites in Armenia (Sisian, Artashat, Beniamin), evidence of funeral feasts has been found, during which animals were slaughtered on altars, the meat was consumed, the remains were thrown into fires, and all vessels brought for sacrificial bread were broken and also thrown into the fire or onto the grave [23: 52-53; 21: 105]. According to our observations, the phenomenon of deliberately breaking pottery and other objects was confirmed in Garni and several other sites in Armenia. For example, in the Eastern cemetery of Tigranakert, Artsakh, a cist tomb excavated in 2016 revealed a jug with a missing rim as part of the *in situ*-verified double burial, and at the tomb entrance, half of a small bowl was found. A jar burial found inside the northern wall in 2017 contained pre-broken iron scissors in three pieces and half of a mirror. This phenomenon applied not only to pottery and metal objects but also to jewelry and seals. Blue glass polyhedrons, previously split in half and found in Classical period tombs, can also be considered part of this practice [37: 113-114].

The meaning of this ritual could be tied to the concept of rebirth, where even broken vessel fragments held magical significance. As the deceased's belongings were meant to accompany them to the afterlife, the objects had to "die" with their owner to be reborn alongside them. This can be understood as a sacrificial ritual, reflecting the concept of resurrection through destruction.

From the earliest periods, tombs in Armenia and elsewhere have contained various vessels thought to hold food for the deceased. The contents of three small pots discovered in the Garni cist tomb were analyzed at the Institute of Palaeobiology of the Georgian National Museum. The results of palynological analysis indicate that the larger vessel contained porridge made from groat and meat, flavored with celery and tarragon, and covered with a painted flax cloth (Pl. 7/3; Pl. 14/3). The other two vessels (one of which is an imported unguentarium) contained a skin disease treatment made from volcanic ash and mallow (*Malva*) (Pl. 7/1, 2; Pl. 14/5). Recent research indicates that small clay and glass vials found in tombs often contained medicine. For example, eight small glass vials found in the Kanchani tombs of Georgia, dating from the 1st–3rd centuries AD, have been authenticated as medicinal [38: 227-251]. In this context, Garni's findings provide intriguing insights into folk medicine (ethnopharmacology) in Classical Armenia.

The palynological analysis of the black material in the groove of a rectangular marlstone object found in the same tomb revealed the presence of charcoal, including pine parenchymatous cells. Soot and starch particles were observed in large quantities, while bone salt crystals and remains of freshwater diatoms were found in small amounts. The material most likely contained cosmetic paint, possibly antimony, used for eye or eyelash decoration (Pl. 14/2), intended for the young girl buried there (Pl. 10/1, 2).

Examining the *in situ* arrangement of the beads found in the slab tomb, it can be concluded that most of the small beads were scattered from the individual's head to the pelvis. This suggests the beads could have been attached to a girl's veil, cloak, or top, providing information about women's clothing and fashion in Classical Armenia.

The majority of the pottery, metal objects, marl/diatomite artifacts, stone items, and paste beads discovered in the jar burials and a slab tomb at Garni are locally produced and date to the 3rd–2nd centuries BC. However, jar burial no. 1, in contrast, is dated to the 1st century AD and is distinct from the others in lacking any grave goods. Imported materials were also found, most notably an unguentarium recovered from the slab burial, which provides valuable evidence of Armenia's trade and economic connections with centers in Asia Minor during this period.

The analysis of the excavated materials suggests that an urban-type population inhabited the settlement adjacent to the Garni fortress in the Classical period. This discovery enhances our understanding and offers new insights into various aspects of urban life in Classical Armenia, including daily life, diet, clothing, luxury items, medicine, beliefs, and burial customs.

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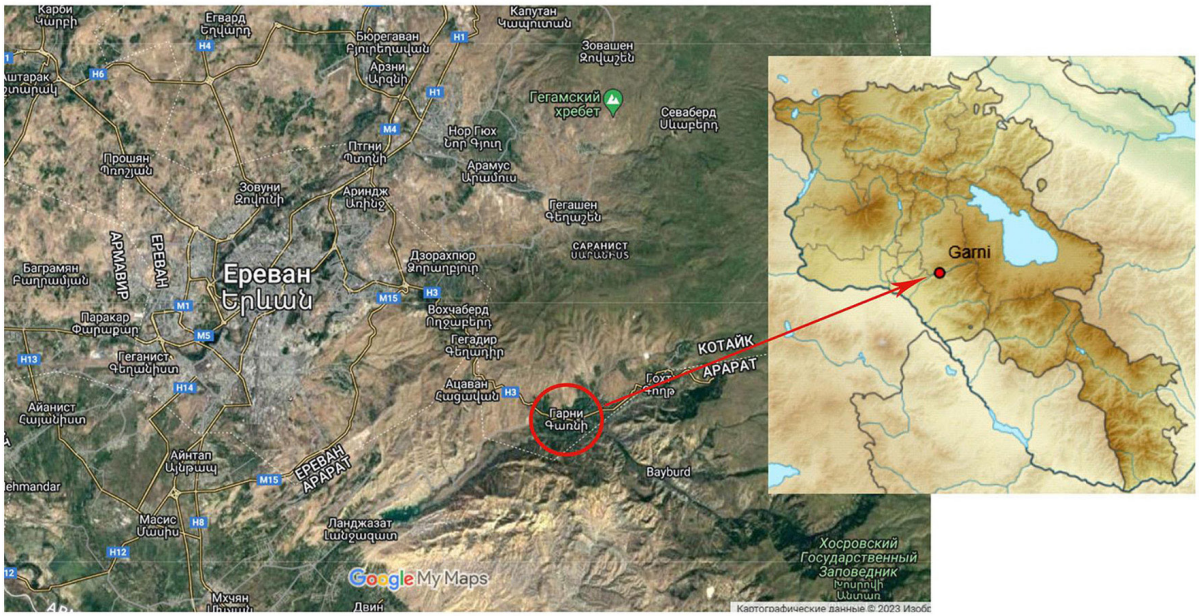
Appreciation is extended to Hayk Kyureghyan, expedition architect, for carrying out the architectural measurements and preparing the drawings. The pottery and metal artefacts were professionally restored by Manvel Ghalachyan, Head of the Scientific Research, Restoration and Conservation Department of the Erebuni Historical-Archaeological Reserve-Museum, together with Suren Manukyan. Object drawings were prepared by Ani Sahakyan. Photographs were taken by Vram Hakobyan, while pottery photography was undertaken by the author.

Anthropological analysis was conducted by Hasmik Simonyan; zooarchaeological research by Dr. Noushig Zarikian; archaeobotanical material was studied by Dr. Roman Hovsepyan; stone identification was carried out by Dr. Lilit Sahakyan (Institute of Geology, NAS RA); and palynological analysis was performed by Dr. Eliso Kvavadze (Institute of Palaeobiology, Georgian National Museum). The 3D reconstruction of the slab burial was prepared by architect-restorer Ruben Sargsyan.

The radiocarbon analyses were undertaken with the financial support of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Knights of Vartan Fund, whose assistance for this component of the study is gratefully acknowledged.



1

2

Fig 1. Location of Garni on the Google Maps (1) and location of the classical-period burials on the Google Maps (2)

Рис. 1. Расположение Гарни на карте Google Maps (1)
и расположение погребений античного периода на карте Google Maps (2)

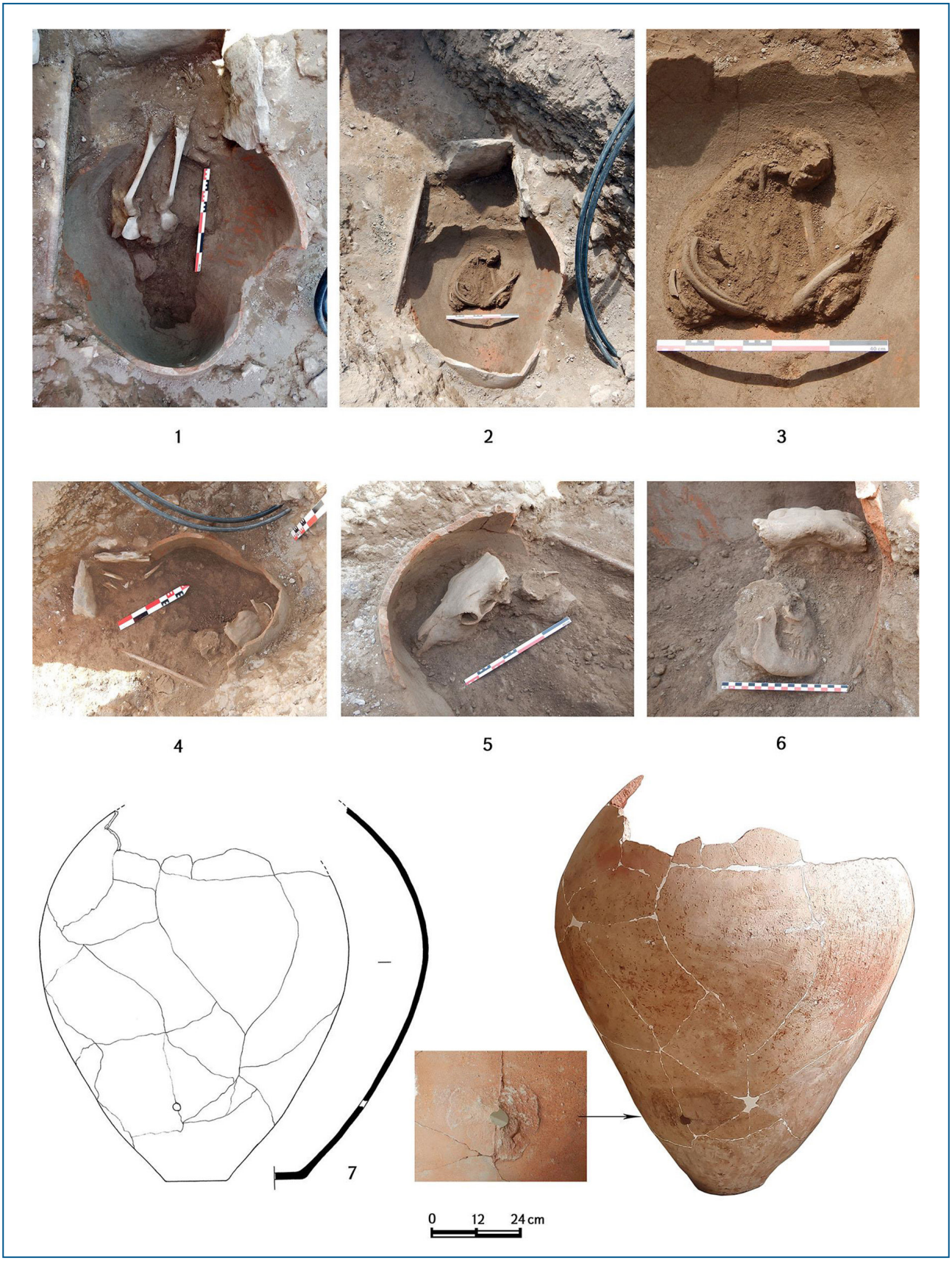


Fig. 2. Jar burial No. 1

Рис. 2. Кувшинное погребение № 1

Fig. 3. Garni. Classical-period burials discovered in the yard of Arthur Yeghoyan

Рис. 3. Гарни. Погребения античного периода, обнаруженные во дворе Артура Егояна

Fig. 4. Garni. The jar and associated grave goods from jar burial No. 2

Рис. 4. Гарни. Кувшин и сопутствующий инвентарь из кувшинного погребения № 2

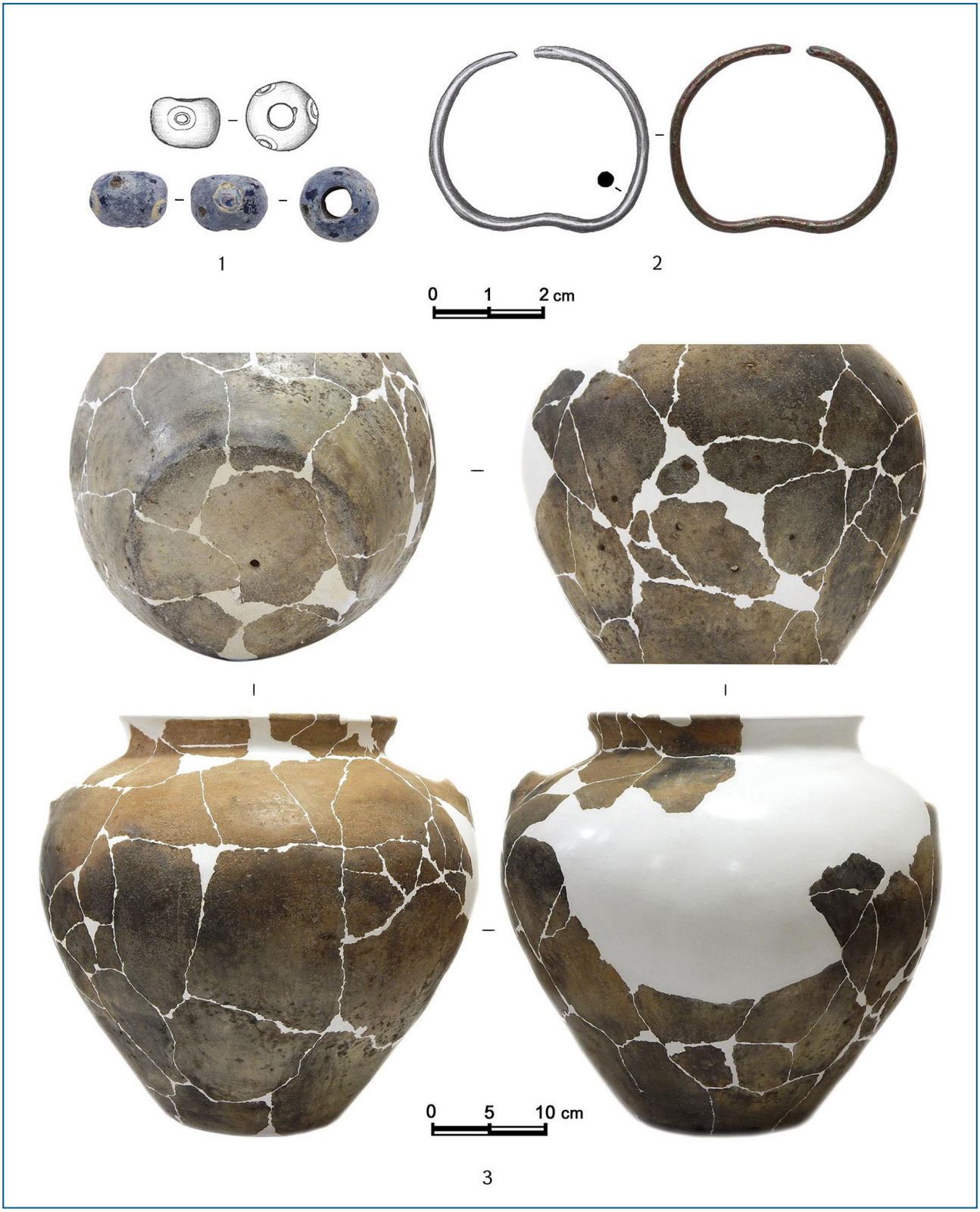


Fig. 5. Garni. The jar and associated grave goods from jar burial No. 3

Рис. 5. Гарни. Кувшин и сопутствующий инвентарь из кувшинного погребения № 3

Fig. 6. Garni. 1, 2 – The slab tomb; 3 – 3D reconstruction of the slab tomb

Рис. 6. Гарни. 1, 2 С плиточная гробница; 3 С 3D-реконструкция плиточной гробницы

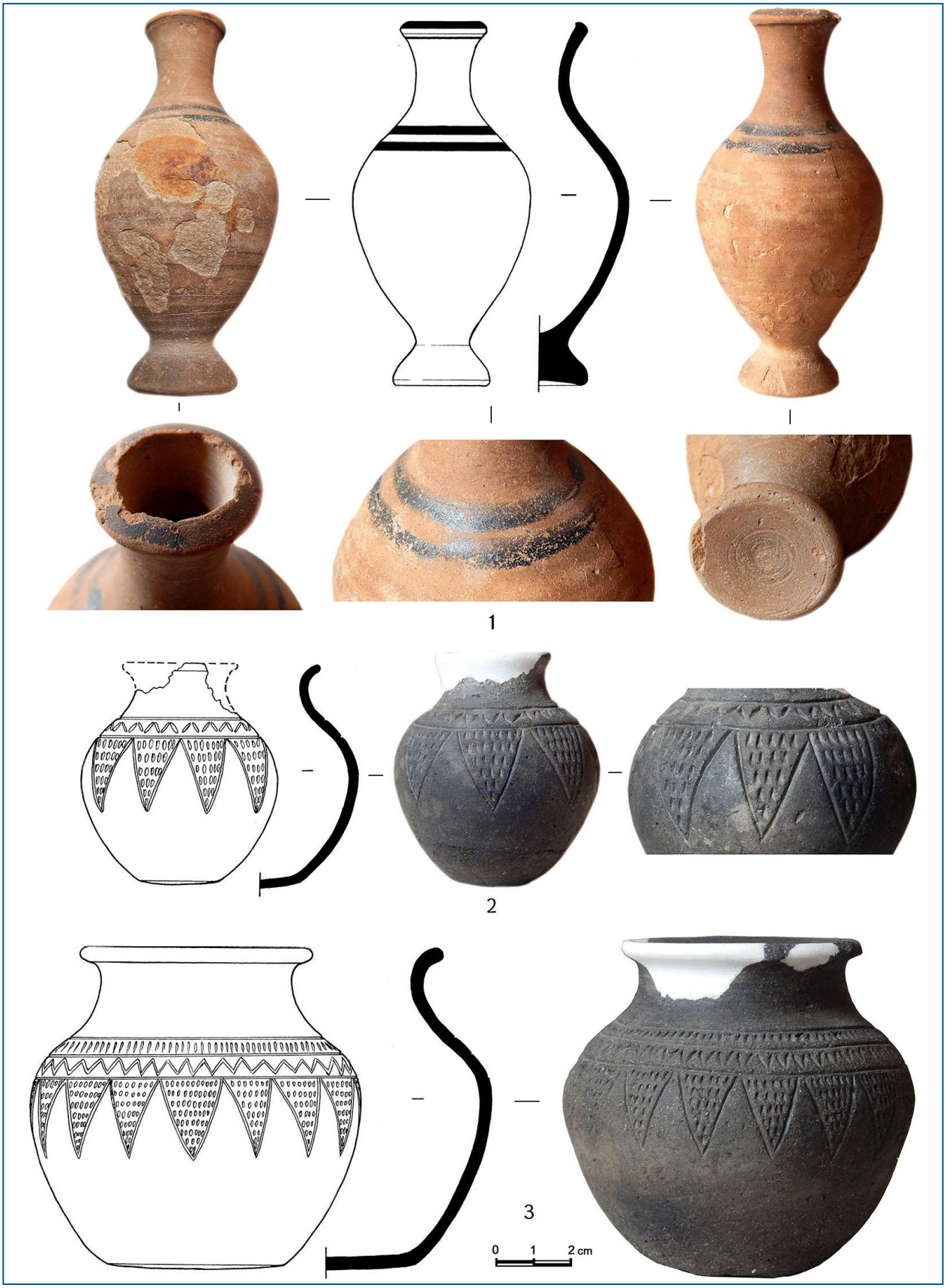


Fig. 7. Garni. Pottery associated with the slab tomb

Рис. 7. Гарни. Керамика из плиточной гробницы

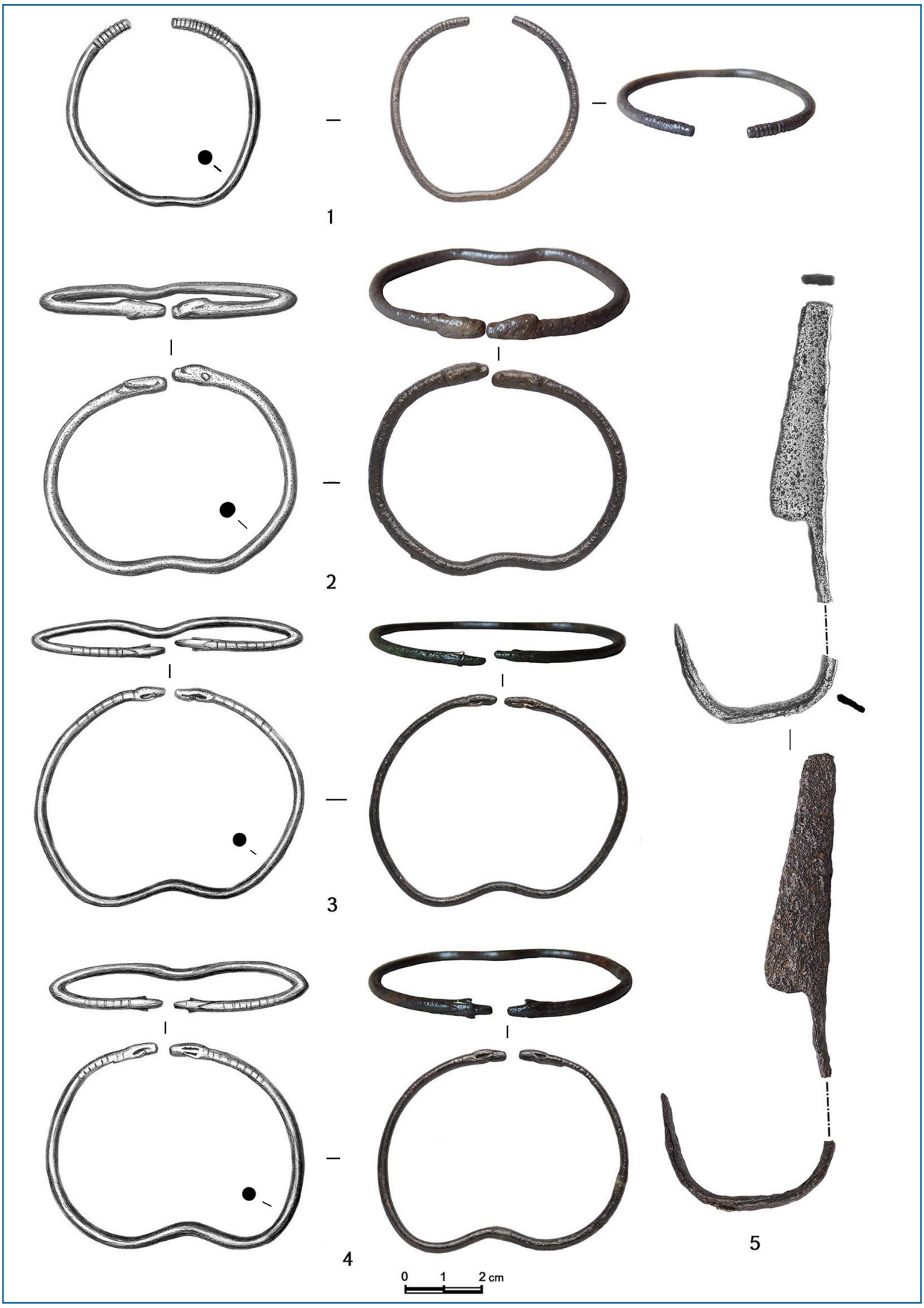


Fig. 8. Garni. Metal artifacts associated with the slab tomb. 1-4 – bracelets; 5 – Scissors

Рис. 8. Гарни. Металлические изделия из плиточной гробницы. 1-4 С браслеты; 5 - ножницы

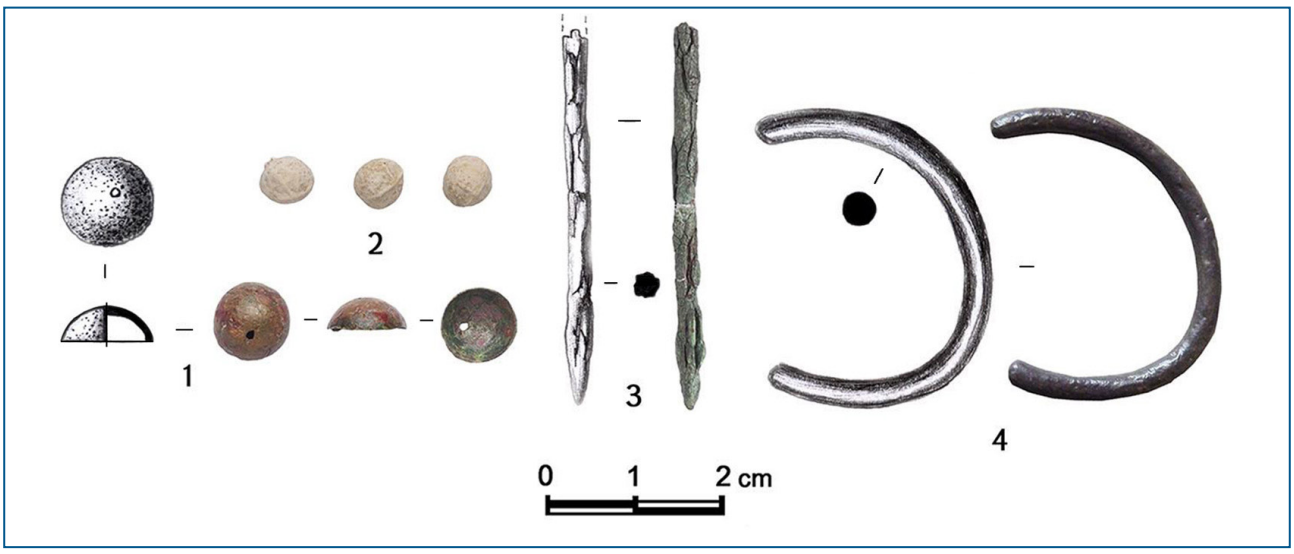


Fig. 9. Garni. Grave goods associated with the slab tomb. 1, 3, 4 – metal objects; 2 – seeds of hackberries

Рис. 9. Гарни. Погребальный инвентарь из плиточной гробницы. 1, 3, 4 – металлические предметы; 2 – семена каркаса

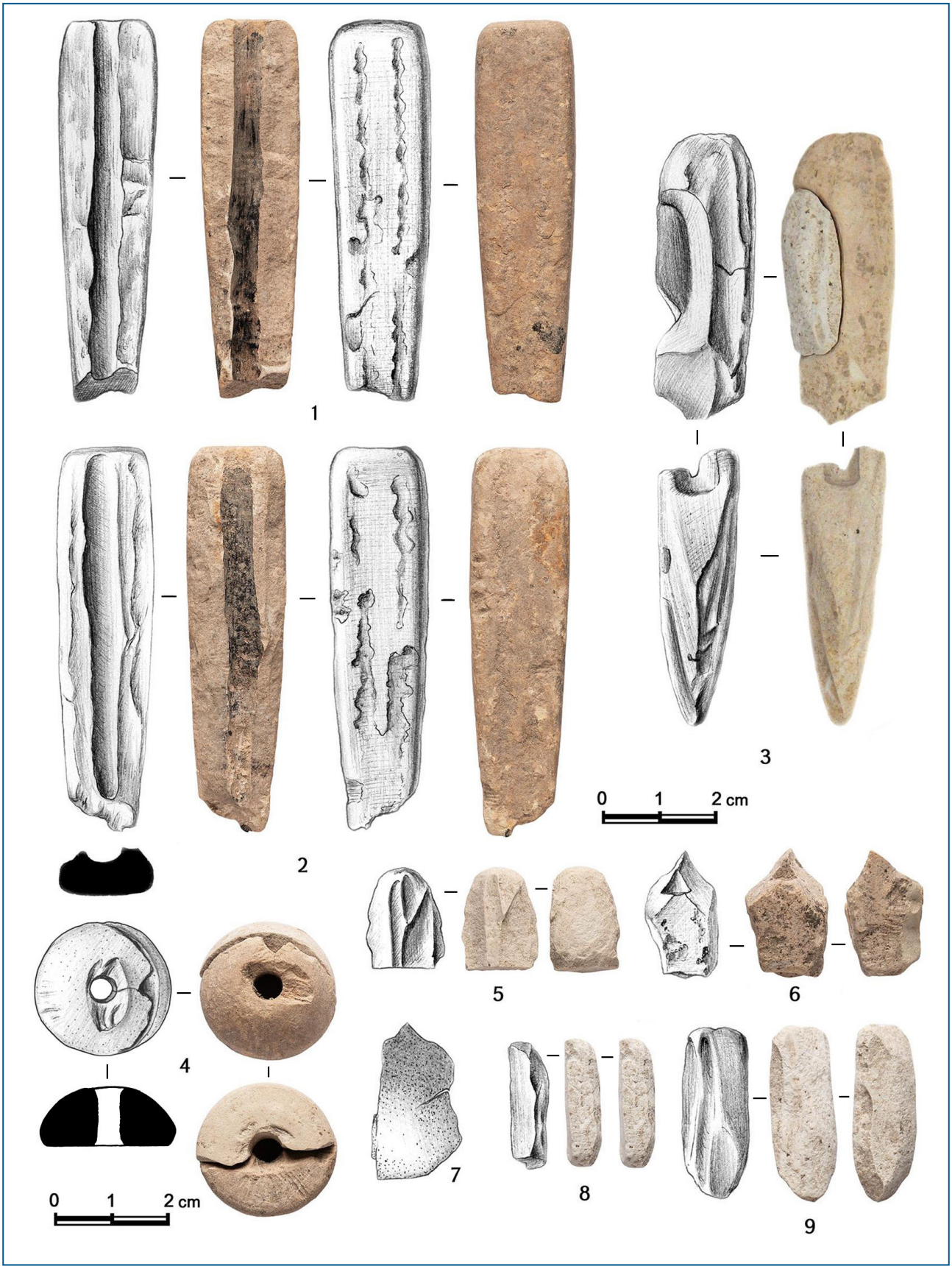


Fig. 10. Garni. Beads associated with the slab tomb

Рис. 10. Гарни. Изделия из мергеля из плиточной гробницы

Fig. 11. Garni. Beads associated with the slab tomb

Рис. 11. Гарни. Бусы из плиточной гробницы

Fig. 12. Garni. Beads associated with the slab tomb

Рис. 12. Гарни. Бусы из плиточной гробницы

Fig. 13. Garni. Human and zooarchaeological remains.
1 – cow skull; 2 – jar burial No. 1, Individual No. 1; 3 – jar burial No. 1, Individual No. 2; 4 – jar burial No. 2;
5 – jar burial No. 3; 6 – slab tomb; 7-8 – details

Рис. 13. Гарни. Антропологические и зооархеологические остатки.
1 – череп коровы; 2 – кувшинное погребение № 1, индивид № 1; 3 – кувшинное погребение № 1, индивид № 2;
4 – кувшинное погребение № 2; 5 – кувшинное погребение № 3; 6 – плиточная гробница; 7–8 – детали

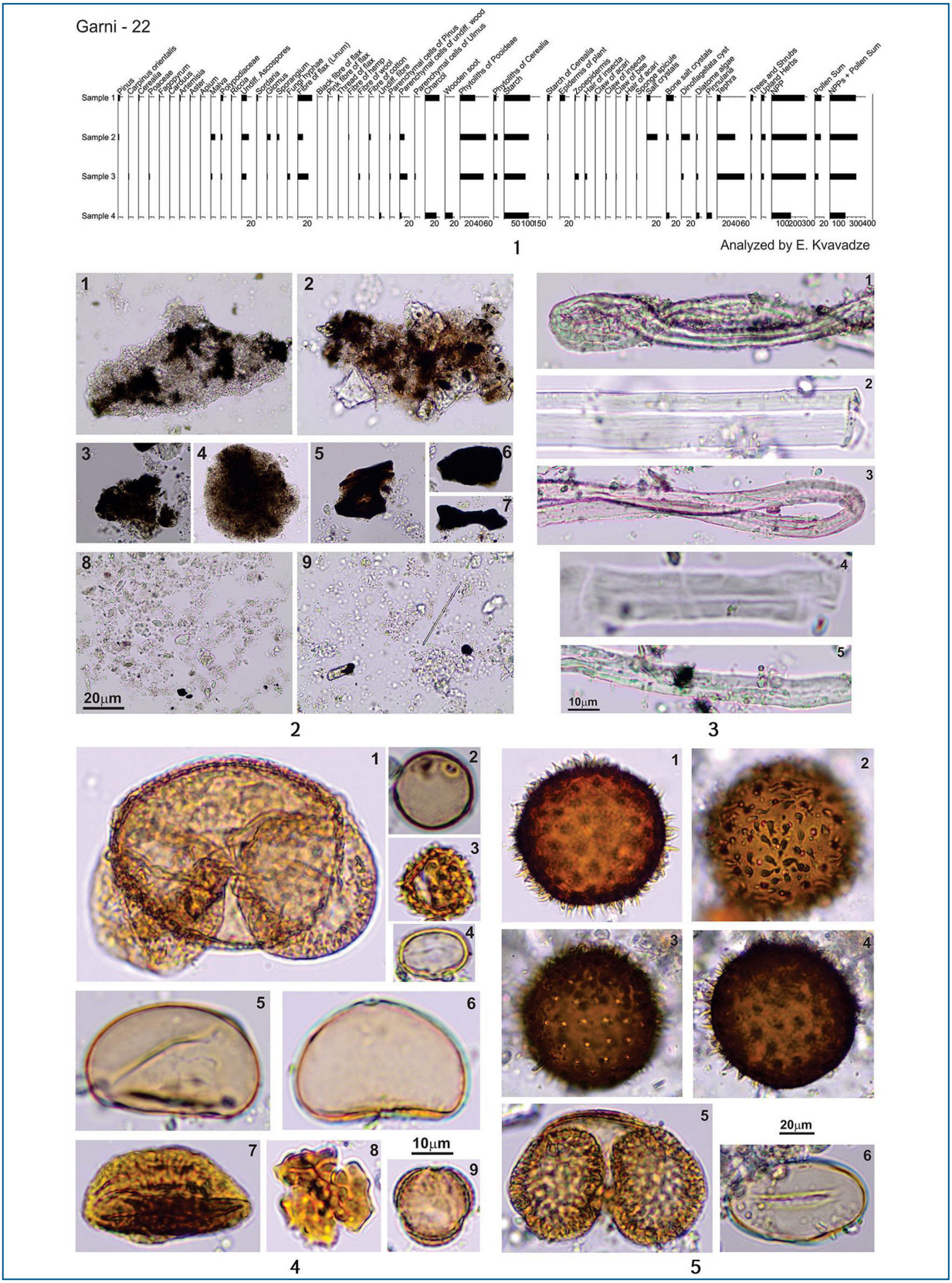


Fig. 14. Garni. Results of palynological analysis of grave goods from the slab tomb.
Compiled by Dr. Eliso Kvavadze

Рис. 14. Гарни. Результаты палинологического анализа инвентаря из плиточной гробницы.
Составитель: доктор Элисо Квавадзе

POZNAN RADIOCARBON LABORATORY

Poznań, 16-12-2024

Report

on C-14 dating in the Poznań Radiocarbon Laboratory

Customer: **Armine Gabrielyan**
Institute of Archaeology and
Ethnography of Armenia
Paruyr Sevak str. 8, apt. 76
0014 - Yerevan
Armenia

Job no.: 22595/24

Sample name	*Lab. no.*	*Age 14C*	*Remark*
GARNI-JB-01	Poz-185923	**1890 ± 30 BP**	2.1%N,7.1%C, 10.5%coll,
GARNI-JB-02	Poz-185924	**2165 ± 30 BP**	0.7%N, 4.4%C, 0.4%coll,
GARNI-JB-03	Poz-185925	**2235 ± 30 BP**	0.5%N, 4.6%C, 1.6%coll,
GARNI-SB - 01	Poz-185926	**2220 ± 30 BP**	0.7%N, 4.6%C, 2.5%coll,

Comments: Results of calibration of 14C dates enclosed

Head of the Laboratory

Prof. dr hab. Tomasz Goslar

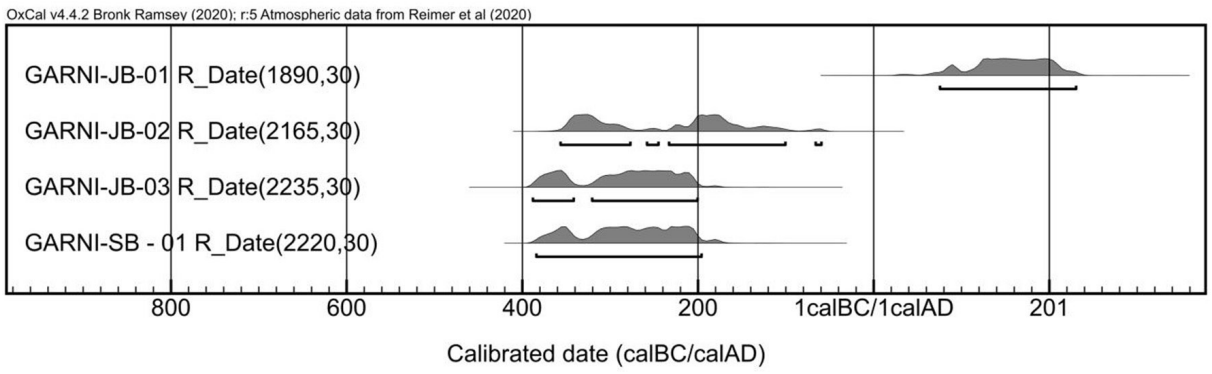


Fig. 15. Results of C14 analysis conducted on four samples at the Poznań Laboratory

Рис. 15. Результаты радиоуглеродного анализа (C14) четырех образцов (Познанская лаборатория)

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