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**Short Report
Excavations of Antique Period Jar Graves
KP 237 - BTC ROW**

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the excavation of Antique Period jar graves discovered at KP 237 of the BTC ROW, Yevlax District.

Two jar graves were discovered and recorded at the site. Both graves contained human skeletons. The jar graves also yielded a number of artefacts. Pottery placed around the jars consisted of several complete and incomplete pots of different sizes and fragments of spouted vessels and ladles without handles.

Based on the comparative and stylist study of the artefacts recovered from this site and the artefactual material found at other sites along the pipeline route and other areas of Azerbaijan these jar graves can be dated to the second to first centuries, B.C.

Comment [dj1]: I have some major problems with the finds from this site, in particular the open end necklace (torc) that is supposed to come from Grave 1. It says here that it came from the neck bones of the skeleton look at the photograph of grave 1, most of it was taken out with the Cleveland, the only surviving bones are the legs and thighs. There is a missing torc from KP233, I think Mikayil has got confused. The same may go for some of the other small finds, I don't remember so many of them, but have no documents to show this

Comment [dj2]: What happened during SCP construction? DJM took and excavator to this area and carefully opened up a 2m by 40m trench to a depth of 1m prior to construction in the area. The trenching was also carefully followed through this area. No additional features were revealed. The conclusion is that the main extent of the cemetery lies to the south of the pipeline.

Comment [dj3]: Many of the illustrations are mucky and need a clean up to bring to proper standards

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I. Introduction

- *Description of the BTC and SCP Archaeology Programme*

Archaeological excavations in connection with the construction of the BTC and SCP pipelines were conducted prior to, and during the construction of these pipelines. These excavations generally were carried out within the 44 m wide pipeline corridor from 2001 to 2005. The

archaeology programme consisted of five phases of which the first four phases constituted field investigations:

Phase I – actual and potential archaeological sites were visually identified during walkover or baseline surveys during the selection of the pipeline route.

Phase II – the sites that were identified during Phase I as archaeologically potential were tested by digging test pits and conducting small-scale trial excavations.

Phase III – small and large-scale excavations were carried out within the BTC ROW.

Phase IV – small and large-scale excavations were carried out within the SCP ROW.

In addition to these, all the construction activities were monitored by watching brief archaeologists.

In general, during the core Phase III and Phase IV archaeological excavations were carried out at 41 sites with thousands of artefacts discovered. None of these sites had been previously known to archaeological science.

Phase V – preparation of scientific reports on the archaeological excavations carried out during the previous phases.

- *Discovery of the Archaeological Site*

This jar graves site was discovered by the watching brief archaeologist Mikayil Mustafayev on 15 October 2004 when trenching work for the BTC pipeline was carried out. All construction work was immediately suspended in order to prevent further damage to the jar burials exposed. The archaeological site was not recognized as such during the previous phases as graves of this type do not have any surface indicators or markers.

Archaeological excavations continued for four days from 17 October to 20 October 2004 and were jointly supervised by Mikayil Mustafayev and BTC archaeological representative David Maynard.

II. Field and Office Methods

- *Field Methods*

Both jar graves were discovered in the wall of a 2.5 m deep and 1.5 m wide trench dug for the BTC pipeline. In line with standard field procedures the area was benched back to enable safe entry into the trench. The excavation site was then divided into two separate 2 x 3m quadrats. The work was conducted by the project labour force using such hand tools as spades, barrows, trowels and brushes to clean and expose features as they were located and photographs were taken where relevant (Plate 1 and Plate 2).

- *Office/laboratory Methods*

All artefactual material recovered from site was treated, restored, and conserved. The finds were illustrated and photographed, and then recorded in a logbook which work constituted part of the reporting procedure resulting in this current Short Report.

- *Archive Disposition*

All the processed archaeological material was handed over to the IoAE special archive set up for the storage of finds discovered on the BTC and SCP ROW.

III. Excavation Results

- *Site Description*

The site is located at Nematabad village in the Yevlax District, 237 km west of Baku, at KP 237 of the BTC ROW. The area is predominantly flat and is characterized mostly by sierozem, grassland and saline soils. The prevailing vegetation is field and semi-desert plants. The land had been used for agricultural purposes. The site is located at 8672969, 4500853, 28 m above sea level.

- *Description of the Graves*

Both jar graves exposed in the trench had south to west orientation. Jar Grave 1 was badly damaged by trenching. Pottery wares of different sizes were recorded in the area around the jars.

Both jar graves exposed in the trench lay with their mouths orientated towards the south east. Grave 2 lay to the south of the trench and was largely unaffected by trenching operations.

Jar Grave 1

Grave 1 lay to the north of the trench and been severely affected by trenching which had removed approximately half of the feature. At least seven pottery vessels lay outside the jar, others may have been present, but were lost during discovery. There was a 5cm diameter hole near the base of the funerary jar, this had been covered during the burial process by wall sherds of a similar sized vessel. Within the grave was a human burial, represented only by several leg bones, the remainder having been removed by trenching. There were at least two pottery vessels and possibly other deposits accompanying the burial.

Jar Grave 2

This was largely intact. Outside the jar were at least seven vessels. The jar contained a human skeleton, lying on its right side with the knees bent and arms extended towards the face. Amongst the finds from around the neck area were 10 beads made of glassy paste, remains of a bracelet, 2 rings, 1 button and an ear-ring, all made of bronze (Photo 4 & 5).

- *Archaeological Material Recovered from the Graves*

Ceramics

Jar Grave 1:

1. A white-pink, wide-mouthed, flat-based jug. The body widens down to the base. A ribbon handle is attached to the mouth and body. One side of the jug is heat affected. Vessel dimensions: overall height 13.5 cm, mouth diameter 11 cm, body diameter 14 cm and base diameter 9 cm (Plate 2.1).

2. A light red, hand-made, well fired ladle coated with angobe. The body gets narrower towards the base. Vessel dimensions: overall height 5.5 cm, mouth diameter 12 cm, body diameter 13 cm and base diameter – 6 cm (Plate 3.2).

3. A light red, well fired milk jug-shaped pot. The mouth is sulcate with two eye-shaped lugs applied on either side of it. The neck is decorated with 3 parallel lines of small vertically notched cuts. The shoulder bears a pattern of 2 parallel wavelike lines with dots between them. This narrow-necked jug widens towards the flat base giving the body a globular shape. A ribbon-shaped handle is attached by one end to the rim and by the other end to the body. Vessel

dimensions: overall height 15 cm, mouth diameter 7 cm, neck diameter 5.5 cm, body diameter 10 cm and base diameter 5 cm (Plate 2.2).

Jar Grave 2:

1. A light yellowish, well fired milk jug-shaped pot. The lower part of the neck is decorated with 2 parallel lines of small vertically notched cuts. Below on the shoulder there are 2 more wavy lines incised along the perimeter of the jug. This narrow-necked jug widens towards the flat base giving the body a globular shape. Part of the mouth is missing. A ribbon-shaped handle is attached by one end to the rim and by the other to the body. Vessel dimensions: overall height 19 cm, mouth diameter 7 cm, body diameter 17 cm and base diameter 10.5 cm. (Plate 2.3).

2. A light yellowish, well fired, flat-based ladle with a diagonal ansiform handle attached with both ends to the inner-thumbed rim. Vessel dimensions: overall height 17cm, mouth diameter 16 cm and base diameter 8 cm. (Plate 3.1).

3. A light red, hand-made ladle with an everted rim and sagging base concaved up in the middle. Well fired and angobe coated. Vessel dimensions: overall height 4.5 cm, mouth diameter 10 cm, body diameter 11 cm and base diameter 4.5 cm. (Plate 3.3).

4. A light brown ladle with an everted rim and sagging base concaved up in the middle. Hand made, well fired, angobe coated. Vessel dimensions: overall height 6.5 cm, mouth diameter 13 cm, body diameter 13 cm and base diameter 2.5 cm. (Plate 3.4).

Beads

Both jar graves produced jewellery items.

Grave 1 Forty small paste beads (Photo 6)

Grave 2 ten glass beads of various colours - yellowish, blue and green (not illus.)

Metal Objects

Grave 1, 2 bronze necklaces (Pl 2.1); 3 bronze bracelets (not illus?); 1 bronze bell (Pl 2.3, Ph 6); 1 iron coin (not illus?)

Grave 2 1 bronze bracelet (Ph 6); 2 bronze rings (one Ph 4); 2 bronze ear rings (Ph 4); 1 bronze button (Ph 6). There is an unknown object in Ph 4 that may be a bone button or a spindle whorl.

The metal ware recovered from the site include 2 necklaces, 3 bracelets with twisted spiral ends, 2 rings, 2 ear-rings, a button, a jingle, a coin, all bronze and intact and also 6 separate pieces of a broken bracelet (Plate 1), (Photo 6).

IV. Analytical Results

• Interpretation of Excavation Results

The artefacts recovered from these jar graves are similar to the artefactual material revealed by excavations in Ismayilli, Mingachevir, Muganli and other regions of Azerbaijan. It is thought that these artefacts were produced in Mingachevir, as the abundance of raw material (clay and sand) and fuel (firewood) promoted development of ceramics here.

These vessels were used both for household and religious purposes. Based on the comparative analysis of the artefacts recovered from this site both jar graves can be dated to the second to first centuries, B.C.

Comment [dj4]: Some comments on other parallels similarities etc would be good here, as with all the descriptions of vessels. 'Eye dots are typical of Antique period....'

Comment [dj5]: There are only seven vessels described here, the report states that over 17 vessels accompanied the two jars both inside and out, it looks as if only the illustrated vessels are described, why are these vessels singled out for description, are they specifically good examples that can be compared with other sites, if so this should be stated and these comparisons detailed. There is no attempt even to classify the other vessels, even a table showing what is going on might help to show trends and similarities, such as if there is a lot in the jar, then there is a lot outside, does every grave contain milk vessels, or is there always a range of types.

Comment [dj6]: Where is the descriptive text about these finds?

Comment [dj7]: Is there any indication of the date of the coin was it too poorly preserved? We need to know, were coins common in the Antique period?

Comment [dj8]: Overall there needs to be more descriptive text about these and searches for comparative material (despite the fact that some of this does not come from this grave), other wise this material cannot be used to advance the general state of archaeological knowledge in Azerbaijan

Comment [dj9]: It would be easier to follow the text if each drawing contained only material from one grave

Comment [dj10]: Can some examples from other sites (BTC or outside) be used to demonstrate this, rather than sheer assertion?

- *Discussion and Analysis of the Results of the Work Compared with Other Sites of a Similar Nature on the Pipeline Route*

During construction of the BTC and SCP pipelines jar graves of a similar nature were found at KP 194, KP 200 and KP 204.25 (Amirarkh) in Agdash District and KP 241 (Yaldili) in Yevlax District.

- *Discussion of the Site within a Regional and National Context*

The first jar graves ever found in Azerbaijan were those excavated by F. L. Resler in Shusha in 1895. But the systematic study of jar graves began in 1927. Large-scale archaeological excavations were carried out in Lachin (1927), Mugan (1930), Mil Valley (1933), at Sultankend, Ismayilli (1934), Agsu (1960) and Mingachevir (1935-1938; 1941; 1946-1953).

The jar graves found at Nematabad, Yevlax, are one more proof that this area has always been very favourable for occupation because of its rich nature and geographic position. Located on caravan trade routes this area played an important part in the development of links between the east, west, north and south regions of ancient Azerbaijan. The diversity of pottery vessels found in jar graves, their delicate making, decorations and high firing quality suggest that Azerbaijan was a culturally developed country at that time.

- *Special Recommendations Regarding the Protection of the Site or Future Research*

In case of discovery of any archaeology during construction or any other activity at the site the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, and the local authorities should be immediately notified and actions should be taken to declare the site a closed zone to warrant future archaeological research.

V. Illustrations



Photo 1 Grave 1



Photo 2 Grave 2



Photo 3 Grave 1



Photo 4 (Grave 2)



1



2



3



4

Photo 5 (grave



Comment [dj11]: Scale looks a bit dubious

Photo 6 (Grave 1)

Plate 1

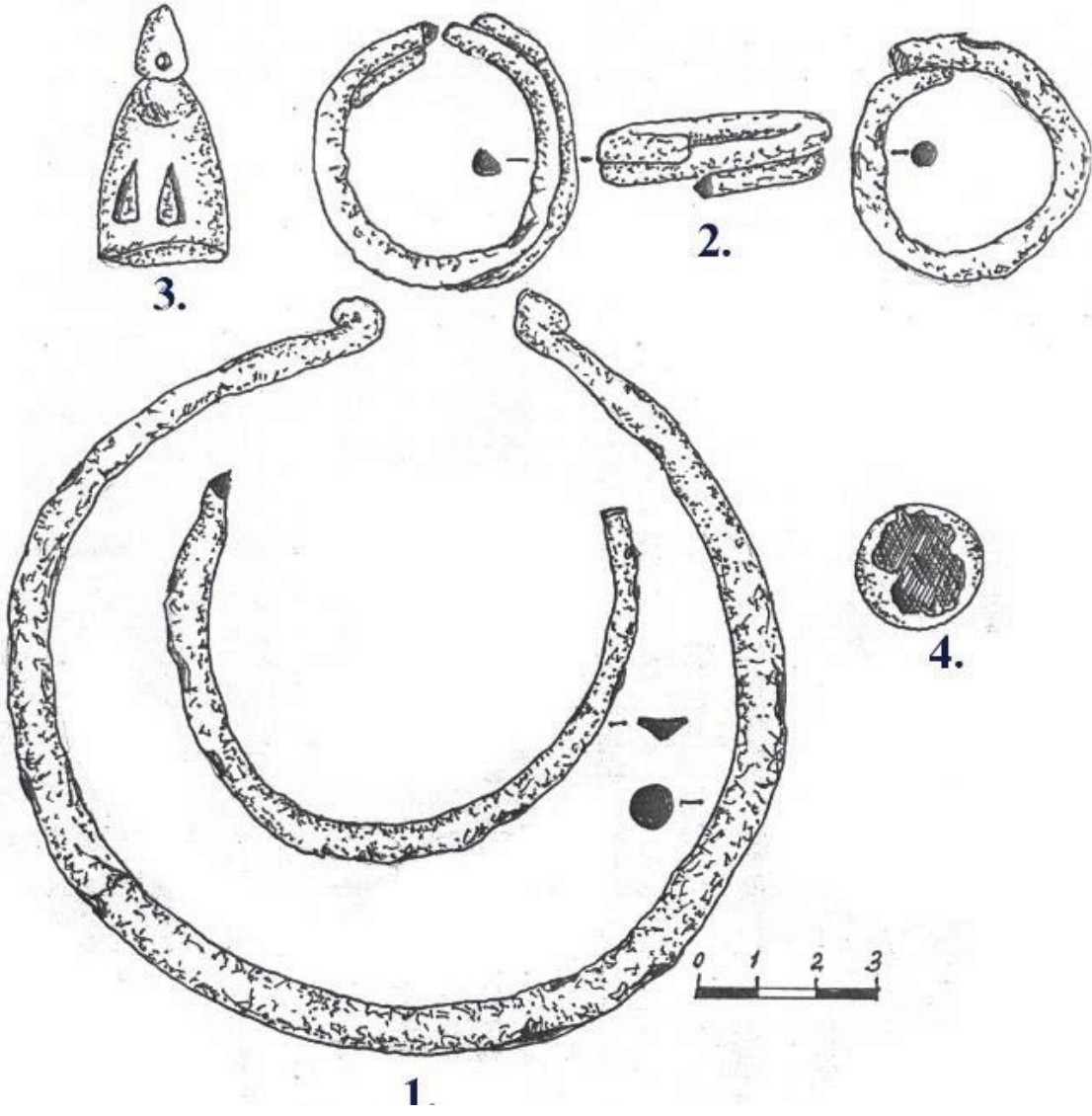
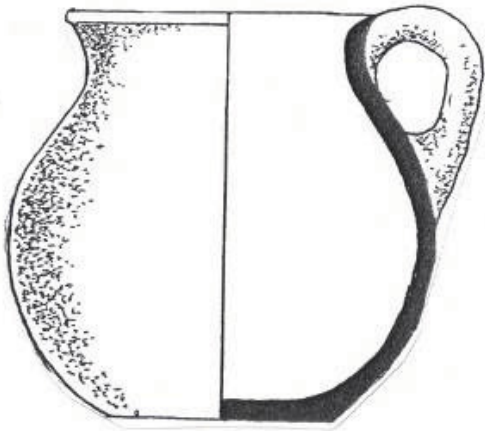


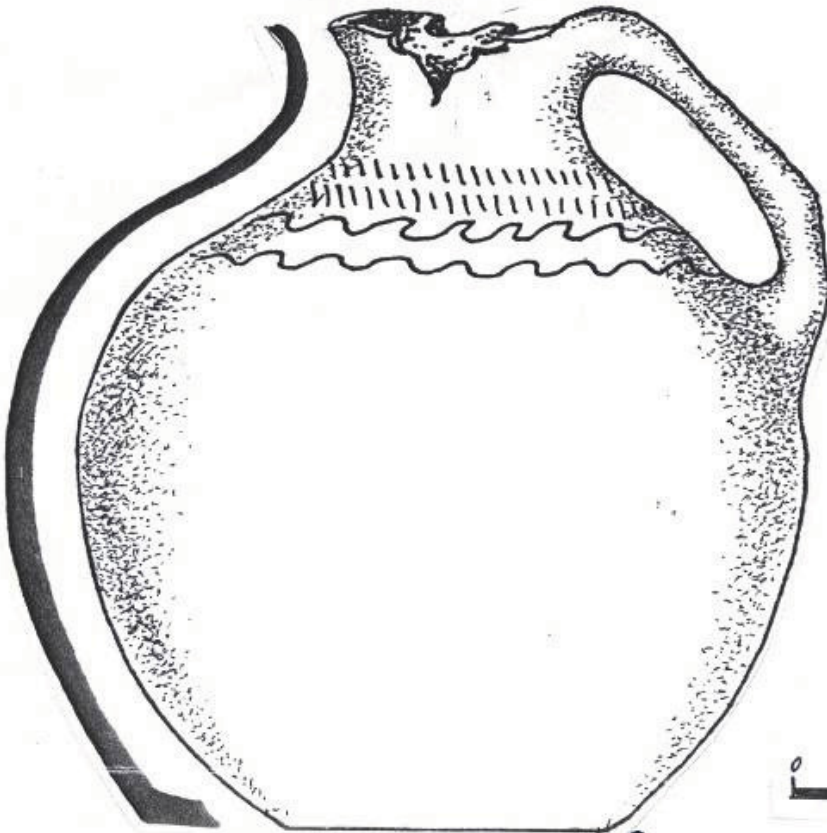
Plate 2



1.



2.



3

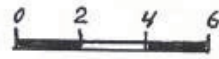
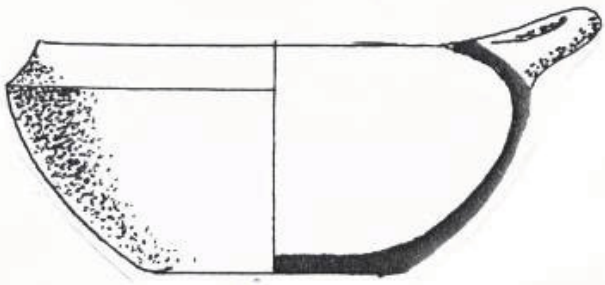
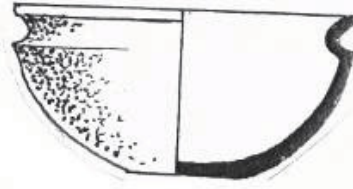


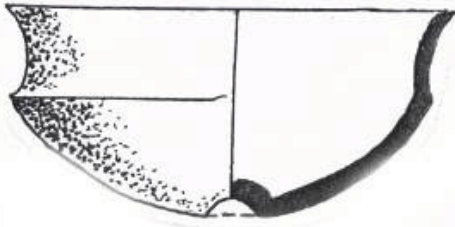
Plate 3



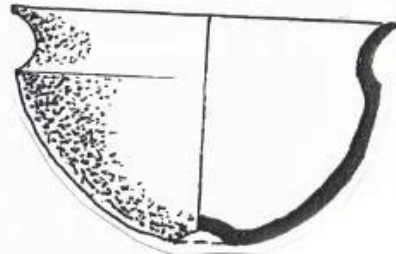
1.



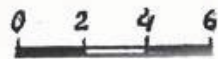
2.



3.



4.



VI. Inventory of Artefacts

| KP | Type of Site | Material | Find | Grave No. | Comment |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| 237 | jar grave | ceramic | jug | 1 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | ceramic | ladle | 1 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | ceramic | milk jug | 1 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | paste | bead | 1 | 40 pieces |
| 237 | jar grave | bronze | necklace | 1 | 2 pieces |
| 237 | jar grave | bronze | bracelet | 1 | 3 pieces |
| 237 | jar grave | bronze | jingle | 1 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | iron | coin | 1 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | ceramic | milk jug | 2 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | ceramic | ladle | 2 | 3 pieces |
| 237 | jar grave | ceramic | ladle | 2 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | ceramic | ladle | 2 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | glass | bead | 2 | 10 pieces |
| 237 | jar grave | bronze | bracelet | 2 | 1 piece |
| 237 | jar grave | bronze | ring | 2 | 2 pieces |
| 237 | jar grave | bronze | ear-ring | 2 | 2 pieces |
| 237 | jar grave | bronze | button | 2 | 1 piece |