

# IRON AGE SETTLEMENT OF BALITCHI - DZEDZVEBI CERAMIC MATERIAL FROM PITS - STORAGE OR DISPOSAL?

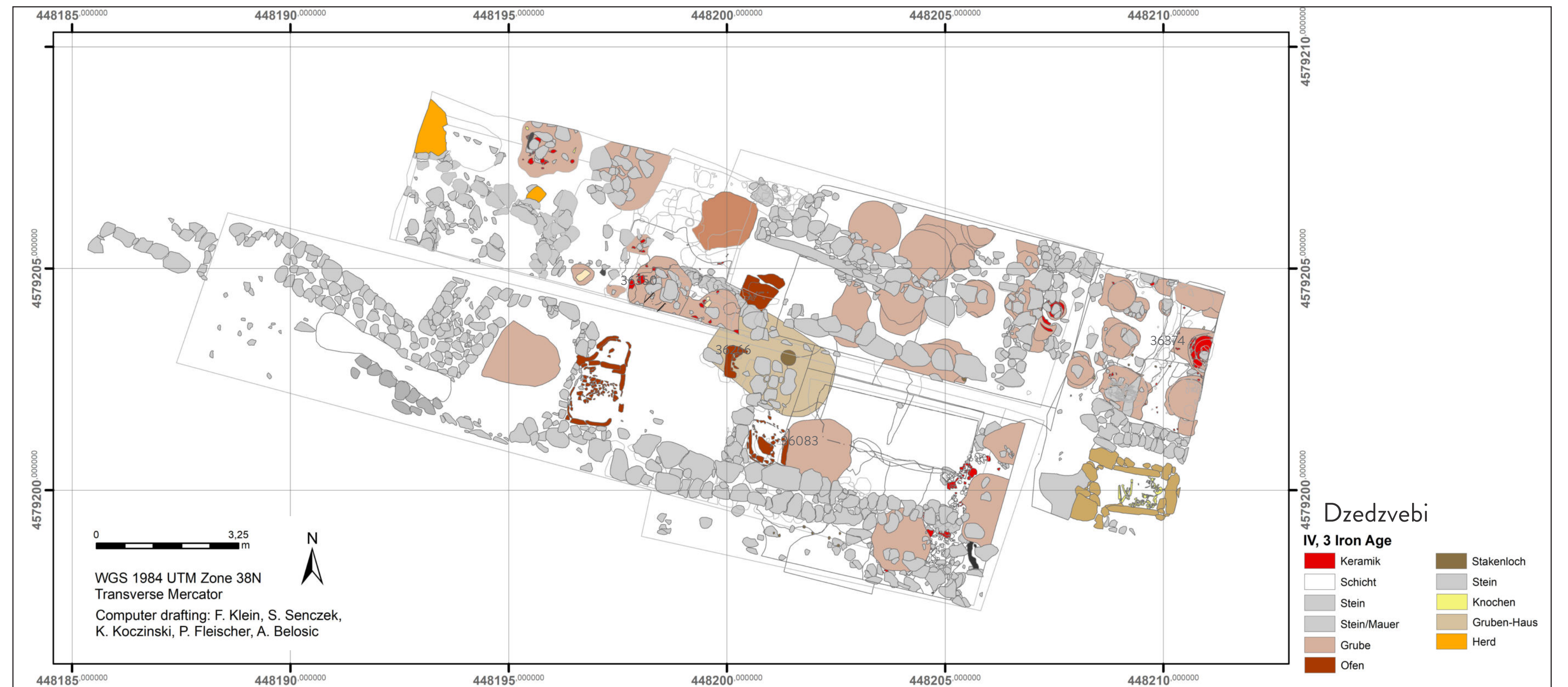
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## INTRODUCTION

The multilayered site Dzedzvebi in the province of Kvemo Kartli, Georgia, was an important settlement during the Iron Ages. The plateau was recognized in 2007th and shortly after started to be part of joint excavations of German Mining Museum and Georgian National Museum.

On the southern plato of the site a strong and extensive Iron Age settlement was built on Chalcolithic and Bronze Age remains. Constant activities from 11th to 6th century BC, when the Iron Age site was dated, resulted with complex stratigraphic relationships on the site.

Current focus of the research is on the investigated area of Area IV,3, which constitutes the largest part of the so far investigated area belonging to the Iron Age at the Dzedzvebi site. The Iron Age period at the site can be divided into three periods, each of them marked by numerous pits. Altogether, there are more than 60 pits belonging to the Iron Age. Throughout the middle, or younger phase of the site, the pits are the main feature of the structure at the site in the researched area.



## MATERIAL

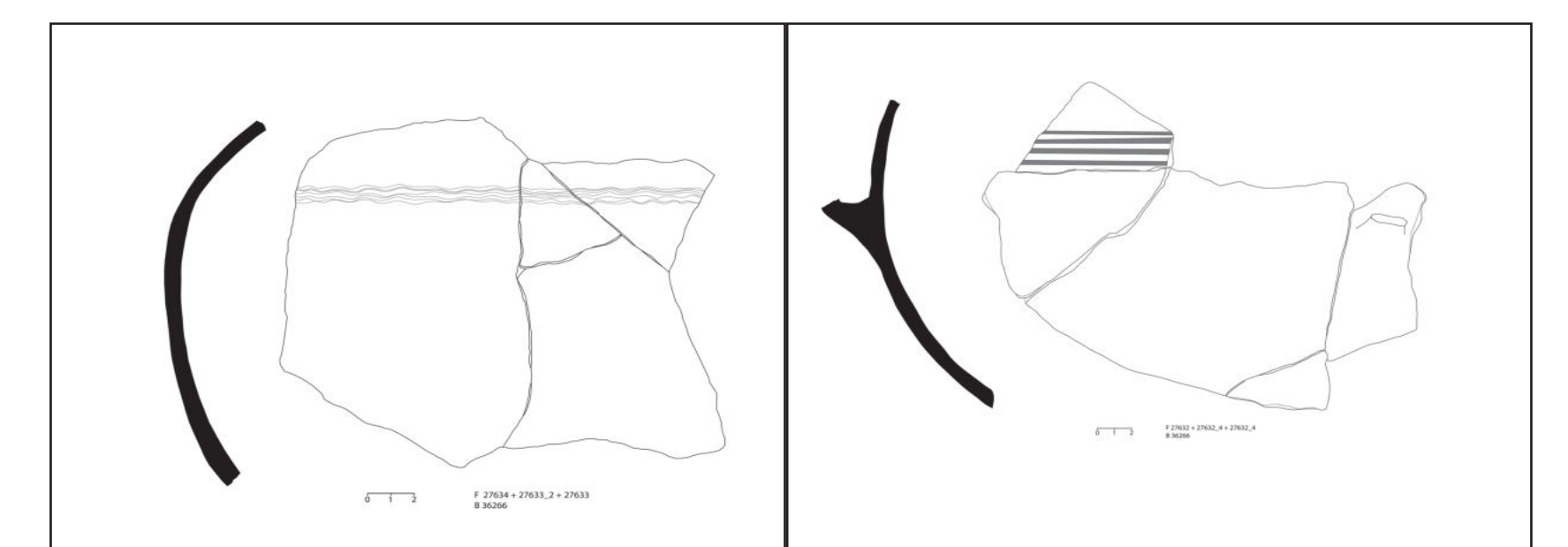
The most numerous ceramic material is coming from large pits that are spread through whole settlement. Since the pits on the site are one of the closed stratigraphic units that occur in each of the phases of the site, it was the material from that context that were taken for the fundamental analysis of the ceramic's characteristics.

The pit 36083, belonging to the older phase of the settlement, as evidenced by its multilayer stratigraphy, was in use for a longer time. The primary function of the pit can be related to disposing of the material. Most of the sherds could not be reconstructed. The pit was located just next to the cultural layer with hearth, so there is a possibility of a connection between those two features.

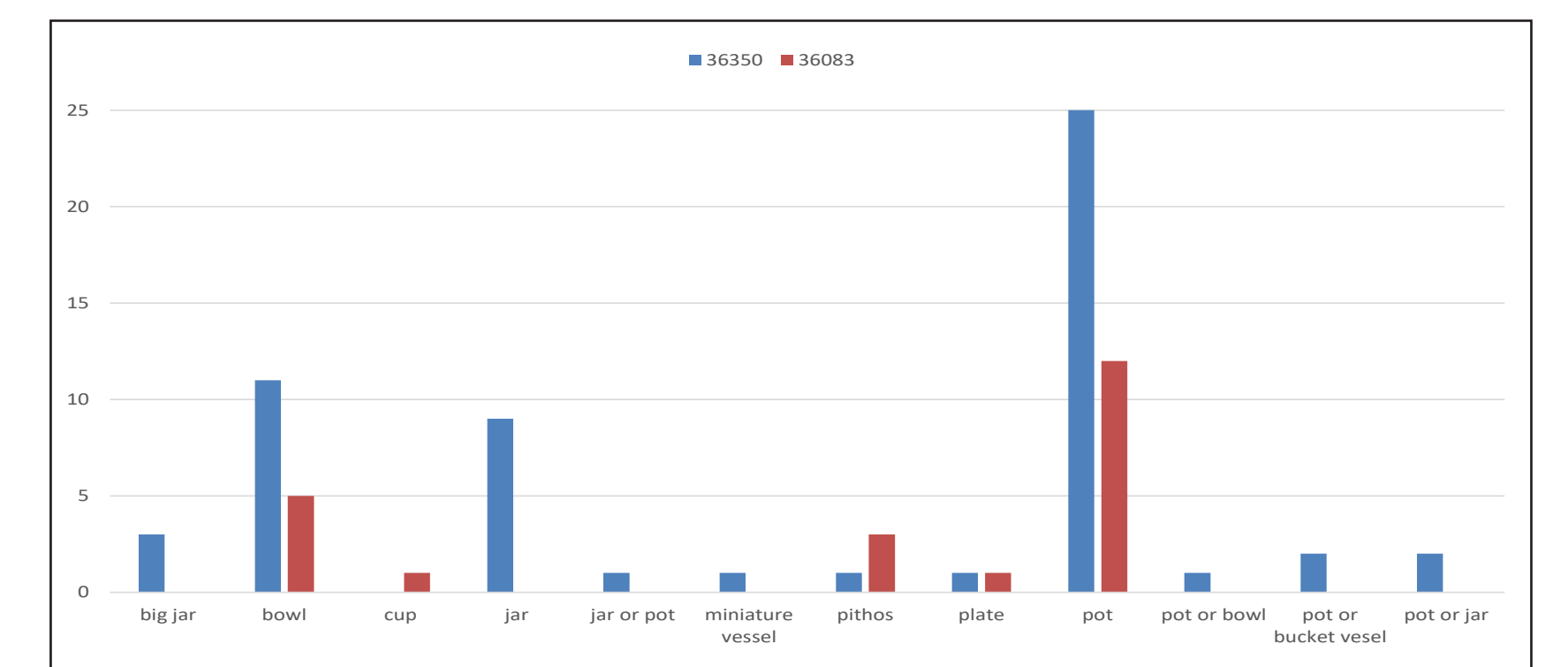
An interesting example is pit 36266 that was primarily used as a pit-house. This conclusion is reached based on the presence of two postholes located exactly in the middle of the pit. Additionally, the shape and dimensions of the pit are also supporting this assumption. In this pit, only a small amount of material was found (38 different find numbers with 156 sherds). Some of the vessels were possible to restore partially but not completely.

Pit 36350 is specific for the large amount of different material found inside. It had at least two phases where deeper layer had greater accumulation of material. Based on the possibility of reconstructing whole vessels, it can be concluded that the entire vessels were thrown into the pit. The vessels themselves often had traces of burning. During the study of the material from pit 36350, 248 ceramic findings were separated with all together 634 ceramic sherds.

The pit 36374 is an example of pit burial. Together with the buried child almost a complete jar and parts of pots were found.



Restored vessels from 36266



Pit grave 36374

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Determine the typological development of pottery
- Understand the chronology of the site based on the ceramic material
- Influence of other cultures in the form of import and trade of material
- Organisational structures of the site
- Information on the economic situation within the site
- Secondary use of materials on site



Material from 36350

Jar from the grave 36374 and a pot from 36350

## CONCLUSION

If the typological segregation of materials is compared, it is evident that bowls and pots are the most common types of vessel. Apart from them, finds of large storage jugs and ordinary smaller jugs are also frequent in the younger pit 36350. The clear typology related to chronology can still not be determined, but the development in shapes can be recognised.

The examined pits are all with different function and also have the different material assortment. Considering the quantity and wealth of materials found at the site, there is an assumption that the site was a center of ceramic production. Although no pottery kilns have been found so far, perhaps the large pits with a huge amount of accumulated material could be connected with this conclusion.

## LITERATURE

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