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Georgian National Museum

Vani Archaeological Expedition

Report on Phase 2 Archaeological Investigations Conducted in March-April 2026

R E P O R T

Date	23. 04. 2026
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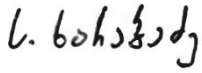
Signature	

Tbilisi

2026

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Introduction

This document was prepared by the Georgian National Museum, commissioned by LayerCo LLC (ID No. 405721713), on the basis of the contract dated 27.02.2026. The present document provides the report on the second phase archaeological investigations carried out by the Vani Archaeological Expedition of the Georgian National Museum in the town of Vani, Vani Municipality. The archaeological works were conducted within the project area of the ongoing water-supply and sewerage-system construction works in the town of Vani.

The Phase 2 archaeological works were carried out on the basis of Permit No. N/12/15 issued by the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia on 18 March 2026. The works were initiated pursuant to Letter No. 17/1429 of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia, which identified four locations for Phase 2 archaeological investigations:

I. I. Nikoloz Baratashvili 1st Lane - situated in the vicinity of an existing and confirmed archaeological site; archaeological materials are frequently encountered throughout the area. The risk of identifying and damaging new archaeological finds in the area is relatively high.

II. II. Sakanchia, Galaktion Tabidze and Rapiel Eristavi Streets (the exact extent is difficult to determine, as the area is located in Sakanchia and surface ceramics are widely dispersed around it). The location is in the immediate vicinity of an existing and confirmed archaeological site, and there is a high risk of identifying a new site which, without prior investigation, could be damaged or destroyed.

III. III. Sakanchia, north-west of the cemetery (GPS: 294828.00 m E, 4663239.00 m N), the selected location for construction of a pumping station/well. The location represents an area of archaeological potential, where abundant surface material of the Classical period is recorded, indicating the possible presence of an archaeological site.

IV. IV. Kechinara, at the end of Akaki Giorgadze 1st Lane (GPS: 293289.00 m E, 4662425.00 m N), the selected location for construction of a pumping station/well. Archaeological material is also widely scattered at this location, and few chance finds were recorded here in previous years, indicating the presence of an archaeological site.

At the above-mentioned locations, the Vani Archaeological Expedition (Director: Sulkhan Kharabadze; members: Gia Chilingarashvili, Davit Jalabadze, Eleonora Sakhvadze) worked from 24 March to 8 April 2026 (16 days). Within the expedition, evaluation trenches were excavated at all four locations. Locations II and III were combined into one location, as both relate to the same confirmed archaeological site, the "Sakanchia Settlement":

1. Location I (N. Baratashvili 1st Lane) - 4 evaluation trenches;
2. Locations II and III (Sakanchia, Galaktion Tabidze and Rapiel Eristavi Streets, north-western section of the cemetery) - 23 trenches;
3. Location IV (Kechinara, Akaki Giorgadze 1st Lane) - 4 evaluation trenches.

1. Historical and Bibliographic Study of the Project Area

The study area is located in the town of Vani, the administrative centre of Vani Municipality, in the south-western part of Imereti, one of Georgia's most important historical-geographical regions. It is bordered by the villages of the same municipality: Salkhino to the south-east, Zeda Vani to the south, Gaghma Vani to the south-west, and Shuamta, Zeda Tsikhesulori and Kveda Tsikhesulori to the west [Kharabadze, 2008, p. 18, Pl. V]; to the north it borders the village of Bashi in Samtredia Municipality and the village of Sakulia in Tskaltubo Municipality (Figs. 1-3).

The town of Vani is located on the bank of the Sulori River, a left affluent of the Rioni River. In terms of geomorphology, Vani represents the erosional basin of the Sulori and Chishura rivers; to the north it is bordered by the southern wing of the Colchis lowland, from which it is separated by a belt of hilly relief [Maruashvili, 1964, pp. 286-289; Jakeli, 1959; Geography of Georgia, 2000]. The hilly zone is composed predominantly of marls, clay shales, sandstones, conglomerates, limestones, and Sarmatian and Pontic clays; the plain lowland is formed by ancient and modern Quaternary alluvial deposits [Tsereteli, 1958]. Soil types in the hilly zone include red soils, yellow soils, humus-carbonate soils and their variants, while the plain lowland is represented by podzolic

and alluvial soils [Kirkitadze, 1958; Sabashvili, 1965]. A large part of the population is densely settled on the plain lowland along the left and right banks of the Sulori River, while in the hilly area settlement follows less eroded ridges. The Rioni riverside lowland is used as agricultural land.

In Old Georgian, the name "Vani" meant a house, station, small town or dwelling [Javakhishvili, 1946, pp. 7-9; Lortkipanidze, 1996, p. 3]. Written sources provide information on a name for this area only from the eighteenth century. According to Vakhushti Bagrationi, the area was formerly called Sachino, while the Sulori River was called Sachinoskhevi. On the historian's relevant map, the settlement and fortress of Sachino are marked on the bank of the Sachino ravine, with Sebeka Fortress located nearby [Beradze, 1979, p. 31]. In the 1770s, the village located 7-8 kilometres from the territory of the modern town, now Zeda Vani, was called Vani [Beradze, 1979, p. 32]. In the Late Middle Ages the area was held by the Chijavadze family [Soselia, 1981, pp. 7-28], and Sachino is therefore often referred to as Sachijavadzo [Beradze, 1979, p. 35]. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, after the abolition of the Kingdom of Imereti by the Russian Empire, the administration and judge of the Sebeka police district of Kutaisi Uyezd, Kutaisi Governorate, were placed on the territory of Sebeka Fortress. From the same period, Jews settled near Sebeka Fortress, in the area between the confluences of the Sulori and Chishura rivers. The settlement gradually developed into a small town, which in 1930 became the administrative centre of Vani District; on 19 October 1961 it was granted the status of an urban-type settlement (Fig. 4) [Administrative-Territorial Division of the Georgian SSR, 1966, p. 9], and in 1981 it received town status.

Trade routes passed through and near Vani, including a trade and transit highway of international importance that ran from distant India to the Caspian Sea and then, via the Mtkvari River, the Surami Pass, and the Kvirila and Rioni rivers, reached the Black Sea; routes also came from southern Georgia (Meskheti) and south-western Georgia (Guria) [Lortkipanidze, 1996, p. 3].

The modern town occupies the territories of the historical villages of Kveda Tsikhesulori (Kechinara district - Akaki Giorgadze Street), Zeda Vani (Nikoleishvili district, Chintilari - 26 May, Korneli Kekelidze, Akaki Tsereteli, Mikheil Chungadze, Solomon II and Sergo Chakhunashvili streets), and Gaghma Vani (Mikheil Diasamidze and Giorgi Nafetvaridze streets).

The local population divides Vani into districts, including: Akhvlediani district (Otar Lortkipanidze Street, from No. 11 Vakhtang Gorgasali Street, including the beginning of Akaki

Giorgadze Street up to house No. 10); the Jewish district (Gia Chanturia Street, the beginning of Vakhtang Gorgasali Street up to house No. 8, the beginning of Akaki Jorjiashvili Street up to house No. 10, Freedom Street up to house No. 87a, Shaftai Tsuri Street and Ilia Chavchavadze Street); Sakanchia (Galaktion Tabidze Street up to house No. 45, Tamar Mepe Street from house No. 38, Rapiel Eristavi, Niko Nikoladze and Bagrati streets); Sanisouli (the end of Galaktion Tabidze Street from house No. 49); Akhali Ubani (the end of Freedom Street from house No. 49); Chintoura - Nikoleishvili district (26 May Street from house No. 44, Giorgi Saakadze, Korneli Kekelidze, Akaki Tsereteli, Mikheil Chugnadzze, Solomon II and Sergo Chakhunashvili streets); Leghvnari (St. Nino Street); Shengelia district (Vazha-Pshavela Street, Nikoloz Baratashvili Street up to house No. 23, including the 1st Lane of the same street); Mosavlidze district (Nikoloz Baratashvili Street from house No. 25); Diasamidze district (Mikheil Diasamidze Street); Vashakmadze district (Giorgi Nafetvaridze Street); and Kechinara (Akaki Giorgadze Street from house No. 23).

In the Akhvlediani district, west of the administrative centre of Vani, archaeological excavations first initiated by Ekvtime Takaishvili in 1896 revealed an ancient urban site (for the bibliography on the history of excavations, see [Archaeological Excavations, 1996, Nos. 18, 119, 147, 156, 244, 334, 336, 406, 423, 482; Lortkipanidze, 1996, pp. 4-5; Kacharava, 2010, pp. 35-40]; for the bibliography of excavation reports, see [Archaeological Excavations, 1996, Nos. 14, 19, 23-32, 54-55, 64-66, 69-70, 78, 85-86, 92, 95, 100, 106, 109, 111, 115-117, 120-122, 129, 132, 134, 160, 166, 189, 199-200, 205, 226-227, 245-248, 250, 252, 260-262, 363, 365, 367-369, 371-372, 379, 434, 469, 476; Matiashvili, 2013; Akhvlediani et al., 2022]).

The Vani archaeological site is located on a triangular hill covering approximately 6.5 hectares and is organized into three terraces. The hill is naturally bounded on two sides by ravines formed by the Sakvabia and Samghele streams. Archaeological excavations at Vani have revealed evidence of continuous occupation throughout the entire first millennium BC. Based on these findings, four principal phases of development have been identified [Lortkipanidze, 1996, p. 5]:

I. Eighth-seventh centuries BC, represented by a sacrificial area and associated archaeological deposits [Tolordava, 1990];

II. Late seventh century to first half of the fourth century BC, represented by remains of buildings, altars, rich burials and associated archaeological deposits;

III. Second half of the fourth to first half of the third century BC, represented by remains of buildings, rich burials and archaeological deposits;

IV. Mid-third to mid-first century BC, represented by fortification walls, temples, altars, sacrificial installations, a workshop for casting bronze sculptures, fragments of bronze sculptures, a hoard or temple inventory, associated archaeological deposits, and other structural and material remains.

From the second half of the first century BC, the site ceased to function as a major centre. Subsequent occupation of the hill was limited in intensity, and the archaeological record is correspondingly fragmentary. Nevertheless, remains from later periods have been identified, including Late Antique burials, coins, and ceramics; an Early Medieval church, burials lacking grave goods, and a kiln for firing qvevri; as well as Developed Medieval burials, glazed ceramics, and fragments of glass bracelets.

In the north-eastern part of Vani, approximately 1 km from the administrative centre, on the plain between the Rioni River and its tributary, the Sulori, lies the "Sakanchia Field" (encompassing the yards of Softechnika and Dvalishvili, as well as Galaktion Tabidze, Rapiel Eristavi, formerly Koghuashvili, and Bagrati Streets). Archaeological investigations conducted in 1974–1976 revealed a settlement dating to the third–second centuries BC, extending over approximately 20–25 hectares and interpreted as the economic quarter of ancient Vani. The site yielded remains of residential and administrative buildings, narrow paved streets between houses, local ceramic products (roof tiles, qvevri, storage jars, amphorae, pots, pans, jugs, bowls, plates, cups, drinking vessels, louteria, ichthyai, unguentaria, lamps, kantharoi, loom weights, spindle whorls, terracotta figurines and moulds for their production), imported ceramic products (amphorae from different production centres; black-glazed bowls, platters, plates, fish plates and kantharoi; a brown-glazed cup and bowl; red-glazed kantharoi and plates; louteria, lagynoi, unguentaria, lamps and a brazier), a coin (gold stater of Lysimachus), metal, stone and glass objects, and a burial of the second century BC [Licheli, 1977; Licheli, 1991].

In the north-western part of Vani, approximately 1.5 km from the administrative centre, on an elevated hill within the residence of the Vani–Baghdati Diocese (5th Lane, Freedom Street), stands the Sebeka Fortress, dated to the High Middle Ages (ninth–thirteenth centuries). Only heavily

ruined fragments of its walls have survived, while the remains of a small church, likewise dating to the High Middle Ages, are visible in the vicinity [Beradze, 1979, pp. 31-32].

In the eastern part of Vani, approximately 2.5-3 km from the administrative centre, on the so-called “Peace Hill”, within Givi Kipiani Park, are the ruins of Sachino Fortress of the High Middle Ages. Only the remains of the fortress, including the base of a tower and traces of other structures, have survived to the present day [Beradze, 1979, p. 31].

In addition to the aforementioned archaeological discoveries, several further finds have been documented on private properties belonging to local residents in the vicinity of the Vani archaeological site:

1. In the garden of the residential house of Razhden Akhvlediani (Giorgadze Street), a number of finds have been recorded, including scaraboid and white-stone seals bearing engraved images, a gold bracelet (1947 register, Inv. Nos. 4–5, 467), two silver coins (1951 register, Inv. Nos. 49–50), fragments of ceramic vessels (1952 register, Inv. Nos. 15–16), as well as a coin with an Arabic inscription and a fragment of a gold plate (1960 register, Inv. Nos. 83–85).

2. In the garden of house of Klimenti Mikadze (Gorgasali Street), fragments of ceramic vessels have been unearthed in 1947 (register, Inv. Nos. 15-17) and 963 register, Inv. No. 149);

3. In the garden of the residential house of Beglar and Mariam Akhvlediani (Giorgadze Street), a flint sickle insert (1951 register, Inv. No. 70), a stone chisel-like tool and ceramic vessel fragments have been documented (1952 register, Inv. No. 52);

4. In the land owned by Zaur Popkhai (Giorgadze Street) several archaeological finds have been documented, including the gold rosettes and a clay loom weight (1952 register, Inv. Nos. 52-53), a bronze bracelet, glass beads, a stone object, a bronze bracelet fragment (1957 register, Inv. No. 570), a ceramic vessel fragments (1959 register, Inv. Nos. 12-46; 1963 register, Inv. No. 73);

5. In the land owned by Nina Simoneishvili (Lortkipanidze Street) numerous finds have been discovered including a clay loom weight and vessel fragments (1958 register, Inv. Nos. 9, 11, 56, 566), a stamped roof-tile fragment (1959 register, Inv. No. 88), an iron spearhead, a clay loom weight and a spoon (1961 register, Inv. Nos. 60-62), a ceramic vessel fragment (1961 register, Inv. Nos. 60-62), a Colchian tetri (coin) (1966 register, Inv. No. 86) and an Athenian drachm (1978 register, Inv. No. 1122);

6. On the territory of the Vani archaeological museum (Lortkipanidze Street), a Russian coin of 1857 (1957 register, Inv. No. 662) and a bronze ring fragment have been found (1959 register, Inv. No. 135).

On the territory of Vani the following fnds have also been recorded: 1. Chance finds including a silver object of the Classical period (Chanturia No. 43), ceramics, a ring bezel and a bronze bracelet fragment have been found during earthworks in the vicinity of Gia Chanturia Street; 2. Chance finds including the black-glazed pottery, flat roof-tile fragments and ceramic vessel fragments of the Classical period have been discovered in the vicinity of Shaftai Tsuri Street (within the territory of No. 7) during construction works; 3. A bronze bracelet fragment and Colchian tetri coins were found on Baratashvili Street (1961 register, Inv. No. 316); 4. A calf figurine made of a goold sheet and attached to three hollow gold beads (1961 register, Inv. No. 656); 5. in the yard of Eduard Kaladze (Baratashvili Street) together with the fragments of black-glazed pottery (1958 register, Inv. No. 478) have been unearthed in the garden of Davit Alavidze's house (Baratashvili Street), 6. at Chintoura (S. Chakhunashvili Street), three coins were found in 1946 (a Colchian stater imitating the stater of Alexander the Great, first century BC, and a tetradrachm of Mithridates Eupator, 120-63 BC) [S. Kharabadze, 2008, pp. 20-21, Pl. XVIII, 11-12]; 7. At the place called Kechinara (the local population uses this name for one district of Vani, adjoining Akhvlediani Hill from the north-west; the area formerly belonged to the village of Kveda Tsikhesulori. modern Akaki Giorgadze Street) prehistoric artefacts, pre-Classical and Classical period archaeological deposits, qvevri burials and numismatic materials of Classical and Hellenistic period, and a hoard of Medieval coins have been discovered [S. Kharabadze, 2008, pp. 40-41].

2. Report on the Phase 2 Archaeological Excavations in Vani

The project area designated for the construction of the sewerage system extends along the central and internal roads of the town, predominantly following the central axis of these roads. According to the project design, the width of the corridor/trench intended for pipe installation is 1.2 m, while its depth varies between 1.5 m and 5 m, depending on topographical conditions and engineering requirements.

Archaeological evaluation trenches were positioned within selected segments of the projected pipe-laying corridor. The coordinates and reference points for these locations were provided to the expedition by the construction company's geodesist. As the construction corridor is situated along active motor roads, preliminary measures were undertaken prior to the commencement of fieldwork: the local population was notified, traffic was temporarily suspended, and the work areas were secured by fencing.

During the initial stage, construction personnel cut through the concrete road surface (and, in some instances, asphalt) using specialized cutting equipment. Subsequently, under archaeological supervision, heavy machinery removed the segmented road surface. This process included the removal of the asphalt or concrete surface, its underlying base layer of crushed stone, and associated fill deposits. In cases where no cultural layer was identified and sterile subsoil was encountered beneath the fill, the trench sections were cleaned, photographed, documented graphically, and measured, after which they were reinstated (Figs. 5–9).

In total, 31 archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated during the expedition (Fig. 10). Maps of the study area, photographic documentation of the fieldwork, and trench plans are presented in Appendix 1, while detailed coordinates of the trenches are provided in Appendix 2.

The descriptions of the archaeological trial trenches are presented below by location, with a continuous numbering system maintained throughout.

Location I - Nikoloz Baratashvili 1st Lane. 4 trial trenches (Figs. 11-12):

Trench No. 1 (2 x 1 x 1.6 m) - Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.3 m, lies a 0.5 m-thick deposit of grey-coloured fill composed

of loamy clay. This layer rests directly on the natural subsoil, identified as sterile yellow clay (Figs. 13–14). The grey fill layer yielded a fragment of the base and wall of a locally produced ceramic vessel, provisionally dated to the Classical period (Fig. 15).

Trench No. 2 (2 × 1.2 × 0.8 m) - Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.3 m, the natural substrate (yellow bedrock) is exposed (Fig. 16).

Trench No. 3 (2 x 1 x 1.3 m) - Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.4 m, the natural substrate (yellow bedrock) is exposed (Fig. 17).

Trench No. 4 (2 × 1 × 1.4 m) - Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.3 m, there is a 0.5 m-thick deposit of made ground containing construction debris and various materials of the Soviet period, including fragments of brick, iron, glass, and aluminium objects. This made-ground layer overlies the natural subsoil, consisting of yellow clay (Fig. 18)

Locations II and III - Sakanchia District (G. Tabidze and R. Eristavi Streets, north-western section of the cemetery). 23 trial trenches. (Figs. 19-21)

Trench No. 5 (3 × 1.2 × 1.8 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.3 m, there extends a 1.5 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period, including fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects. This deposit overlies the natural substrate, represented by alluvial gravel. Within the trench, at a depth of 0.7 m from the present surface, an iron water-supply pipe dating to the last century and now disused was exposed. At a depth of 1.70 m, a disused asbestos sewer pipe of the same period was recorded. According to local informants, this infrastructure was never put into operation, as construction was halted following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Fig. 22).

Trench No. 6 (3 × 1.2 × 1.85 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.3 m, there is a 0.3 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period, including fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects. This layer overlies the natural substrate, represented by alluvial gravel (Fig. 23).

Trench No. 7 (3 × 1.2 × 1.7 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there extends a 1.4 m-thick deposit of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects), as well as sherds of locally produced and imported ceramic wares of the Hellenistic period (Figs. 24–25). Within this layer, at a depth of 0.9 m from the present surface, a fragment of an imported black-glazed fish plate of the Hellenistic period was identified (Fig. 26). This deposit overlies the natural substrate, consisting of alluvial gravel.

Trench No. 8 (3 × 1.2 × 1.7 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.3 m, there is a 1 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground (Fig. 27). This deposit contains construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects), as well as sherds of locally produced and imported ceramic wares of the Hellenistic period. Among these is the base fragment of a Sinopean amphora (Figs. 28–29). This layer overlies the natural substrate, consisting of alluvial gravel.

Trench No. 9 (3 × 1.2 × 1.7 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there extends a 0.9 m-thick deposit of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). At a depth of 0.7 m from the present surface, a disused iron water pipe of the Soviet period was exposed. This deposit overlies the natural substrate, represented by alluvial gravel (Fig. 30).

Trench No. 10 (3 × 1.2 × 1.7 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.7 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). Within this layer, at a depth of 0.8 m from the present surface, a disused iron

water pipe of the Soviet period was identified. The deposit overlies the natural substrate of alluvial gravel (Fig. 31).

Trench No. 11 (3 × 1.2 × 1.8 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there extends a 0.7 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). This layer overlies the natural substrate, consisting of alluvial gravel (Fig. 32).

Trench No. 12 (3 × 1.2 × 0.9 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 1st Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.3 m, there is a 0.3 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). This layer overlies the natural substrate, represented by stratified alluvial deposits of sand and gravel (Fig. 33).

Trench No. 13 (3 × 1.2 × 1.8 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 1st Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there extends a 0.3 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). This deposit overlies the natural substrate, consisting of stratified alluvial sand and gravel (Fig. 34).

Trench No. 14 (3 × 1.2 × 1.6 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 1st Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.3 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). This layer overlies the natural substrate, represented by stratified alluvial sand and gravel (Fig. 35).

Trench No. 15 (3 × 1.2 × 1.6 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 2nd Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there extends a 0.7 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). This deposit, in turn, overlies a 0.25–0.3 m-thick archaeological deposit of the Hellenistic period. Beneath the Hellenistic layer, the natural substrate is represented by alluvial gravel (Figs. 36–38).

Trench No. 16 (3 × 1.2 × 1.5 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 2nd Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer, with a combined thickness of 0.4 m, there extends a 0.6 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick and metal objects). This deposit overlies a 0.2 m-thick layer of silty alluvial clay and gravel, beneath which a 0.3 m-thick deposit of the Hellenistic period was identified. The natural substrate below the archaeological deposit consists of alluvial gravel (Figs. 39–42). The Hellenistic deposits yielded fragments of Colchian ceramic wares (including amphorae, *qvevri*, terracotta objects, pots, jars, and roof tiles) as well as imported ceramics from various production centres (including amphorae and black-glazed bowls) (Fig. 43).

Trench No. 17 (2 × 1.2 × 1.6 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 2nd Lane — At the request of the construction team, and in order to determine whether the cultural layer extended across the full width of the road, an evaluation trench was excavated perpendicular to Trench No. 16. Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), a gravelly made-ground layer was recorded, measuring 0.55 m in thickness in the southern part of the trench and 0.9 m in the northern corner of the trench. This layer overlies a 0.3 m-thick cultural layer of the Hellenistic period, which in turn rests on the natural substrate of alluvial gravel (Fig. 44). The cultural layer contained fragments of Colchian ceramics (including amphorae and roof tiles) as well as imported wares from various centres (including amphorae and unguentaria) (Fig. 45).

Trench No. 18 (3 × 1.2 × 1.7 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 2nd Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.9 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects), as well as a small quantity of ceramic fragments of the Hellenistic period. This deposit overlies the natural substrate, represented by alluvial gravel (Fig. 46).

Trench No. 19 (3 × 1.2 × 1.7 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 2nd Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.9 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects), as well as a small quantity of ceramic sherds of the Hellenistic period. This deposit overlies the natural substrate, represented by alluvial gravel (Fig. 47).

Trench No. 20 (3 × 1.2 × 1.8 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 2nd Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.3 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). This deposit overlies the natural substrate of alluvial gravel (Fig. 48).

Trench No. 21 (3 × 1.2 × 1.9 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 2nd Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), the natural substrate is exposed, consisting of stratified alluvial deposits of gravel and sand (Fig. 49).

Trench No. 22 (3 × 1.2 × 1.9 m), Galaktion Tabidze Street, 2nd Lane — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), the natural substrate is exposed, consisting of stratified alluvial gravel and sand. At a depth of 1.8 m, groundwater was encountered (Fig. 50).

Trench No. 23 (2 × 1 × 1.9 m), road passing through the modern cemetery — (The cemetery is active, with modern graves located on both sides of the road; therefore, trenching was only possible at the beginning and end of the road section.) Beneath a 0.4 m-thick topsoil and gravelly layer, the natural substrate consists of stratified alluvial gravel and sand (Fig. 51). The upper topsoil layer contained fragments of Hellenistic period pottery, including sherds of Sinopean amphorae (Fig. 52).

Trench No. 24 (3.5 × 1 × 0.8 m), entrance to the road passing through the modern cemetery — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.4 m thick), there is a 0.3 m-thick grey clayey gravel layer, which is overlain by a 0.2 m-thick cultural layer of the Hellenistic period. This cultural deposit rests directly on the natural substrate, consisting of alluvial gravel (Figs. 53–54). The archaeological deposit contained fragments of locally produced and imported Hellenistic pottery (Fig. 55).

Trench No. 25 (3 × 1.2 × 1.7 m), Raphael Eristavi Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.7 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). This deposit overlies the natural substrate, represented by alluvial sand (Fig. 56).

Trench No. 26 (3 × 1.2 × 1.8 m), Raphael Eristavi Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.6 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). Within this layer, at a depth of 0.5 m, a fragment of a flat tile of the Hellenistic period was recovered. This deposit overlies the natural substrate of alluvial gravel (Fig. 57).

Trench No. 27 (3 × 1.2 × 1.8 m), Raphael Eristavi Street — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.7 m-thick layer of gravelly made ground containing construction debris of the Soviet period (fragments of brick, iron, and aluminium objects). At a depth of 0.5 m, a fragment of a flat tile of the hellenistic period was identified. This deposit overlies the natural substrate, consisting of alluvial gravel and large water-worn cobbles (Fig. 58).

Location IV. Akaki Giorgadze Street, 1st Lane. 4 trial trenches (Figs. 59-60)

Trench No. 28 (2.2 × 1.3 × 1.6 m) — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.3 m-thick yellow silty alluvial deposit and sandy archaeological deposits formed from crumbled rocky substrate. Below this, two archaeological deposits were identified: a 0.5 m-thick dark brown to black layer and a 0.3 m-thick yellow clay layer, both containing clay plaster and charcoal inclusions. These deposits rest on the natural substrate, consisting of yellow clay (Figs. 61–63). All three cultural layers contained fragments of locally produced and imported pottery of the Classical and Hellenistic periods (Fig. 64).

Trench No. 29 (3 × 1.4 × 1.3 m) — Beneath the road surface and its crushed-stone foundation layer (0.3 m thick), there is a 0.2 m-thick made-ground deposit containing gravel and redeposited yellow bedrock inclusions. This layer yielded modern construction debris as well as a small number of fragments of Classical and hellenistic period plaster and ceramics. The dumped deposit overlies sterile yellow clay subsoil (Figs. 65–66).

Trench No. 30 (2.5 × 1.4 × 1 m) — A 0.6 m-thick deposit of road surface material and modern construction debris overlies sterile yellow clay subsoil (Fig. 67).

Trench No. 31 (2 × 1 × 1.45 m) — A 0.35 m-thick humic clay layer overlies sterile yellow clay subsoil. A fragment of a Hellenistic period roof tile was recovered from the topsoil deposit (Fig. 68).

It should also be noted that in certain sections of Giorgadze Street, particularly in areas considered at risk of landslade, archaeological investigation and the excavation of evaluation trenches could not be carried out due to opposition from local residents.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

On the basis of the information presented in the previous chapter, the following conclusions should be drawn:

1. Among the locations studied by the expedition, archaeological deposits were confirmed at Locations II-III (Sakanchia district) and Location IV (Giorgadze Street, Kechinara). No archaeological deposits were identified at Location I (N. Baratashvili Lane).
2. An *in situ* (undisturbed) archaeological deposits were confirmed in the vicinity of the Sakanchia settlement, on the 2nd Lane of Galaktion Tabidze Street (Trenches Nos. 15-17) (Fig. 69). Here, the archaeological deposit is preserved over an approximate length of 50 m.
3. An *in situ* (undisturbed) archaeological deposits were also identified in the Sakanchia area, in the vicinity of the cemetery, at the beginning of the cemetery access road.

Further trenching in this area was not possible, as the cemetery remains active and the road is narrow, with graves located on both sides.

4. Disturbed cultural layers were recorded along Galaktion Tabidze Street, resulting from the construction of Soviet-period water supply and sewage systems. These installations run along the central part of the road and coincide with the new project corridor. Any alteration of the planned construction corridor and/or its alignment along this street may lead to the exposure and potential damage of *in situ* (intact) archaeological deposits.
5. Archaeological deposits were also confirmed at Location IV (Kechinara), in the 1st Lane of Giorgadze Street (Fig. 59, Trench No. 28). However, full investigation of the area was not possible due to landslide-prone conditions.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the second Phase archaeological investigations carried out by the Vani Archaeological Expedition within the project area, the following recomendations are presented:

1. Of the four archaeologically sensitive locations, no archaeological remains were recorded at location I (Baratashvili 1st Lane). Accordingly, construction works planned in this area may proceed under a systematic archaeological monitoring.
2. Archaeological remains were identified at locations II, III, and IV. Accordingly, further investigations must be conducted at these locations, or the recommendations must be taken into account.
3. In the Sakanchia area (Locations II–III), in the vicinity of the Sakanchia settlement site, in the 2nd Lane of Galaktion Tabidze Street (Trenches Nos. 15–17), a preserved *in situ* (undisturbed) archaeological deposits extend for approximately 50 m within the designated construction corridor. As the excavation of the sewage system trench without impacting these deposits is not feasible, it is strongly recommended that this area be subjected to Phase III archaeological excavations.

4. In the Sakanchia area, along Galaktion Tabidze Street, cultural deposits disturbed during Soviet-period construction works were identified. Available evidence suggests that archaeological deposits extend across the entire area. Accordingly, even minor deviations in the alignment of the proposed construction corridor may result in the exposure and potential damage of intact archaeological deposits. It is therefore recommended that the installation of the sewage system in this section be carried out within the already defined corridor under continuous archaeological monitoring, following the route of the existing Soviet-period water and sewage infrastructure.

5. In the Sakanchia area, in the vicinity of the cemetery, cultural layers were identified over a considerably wider area (several hundred metres) than in the previously discussed locations. The investigation of these deposits through Phase III excavations is considered inappropriate, as the area is occupied by an active modern cemetery with continuously expanding boundaries. It is therefore concluded that the installation of the sewage system in this section is not advisable. We regard it as an essential recommendation to change the trajectory of the construction corridor in the cemetery area.

6. At Giorgadze Street (Location IV), archaeological deposits were identified in the evaluation trenches excavated at the end section of the planned sewage pipeline corridor. However, archaeological investigations could not be conducted in other parts of the road due to its location within a landslide-prone zone and opposition from local residents regarding the removal of the road surface. For the investigated areas where cultural layers were confirmed, Phase III archaeological excavations are recommended, or alternatively, the planning of a modified construction route.

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Appendix 1 - Photos

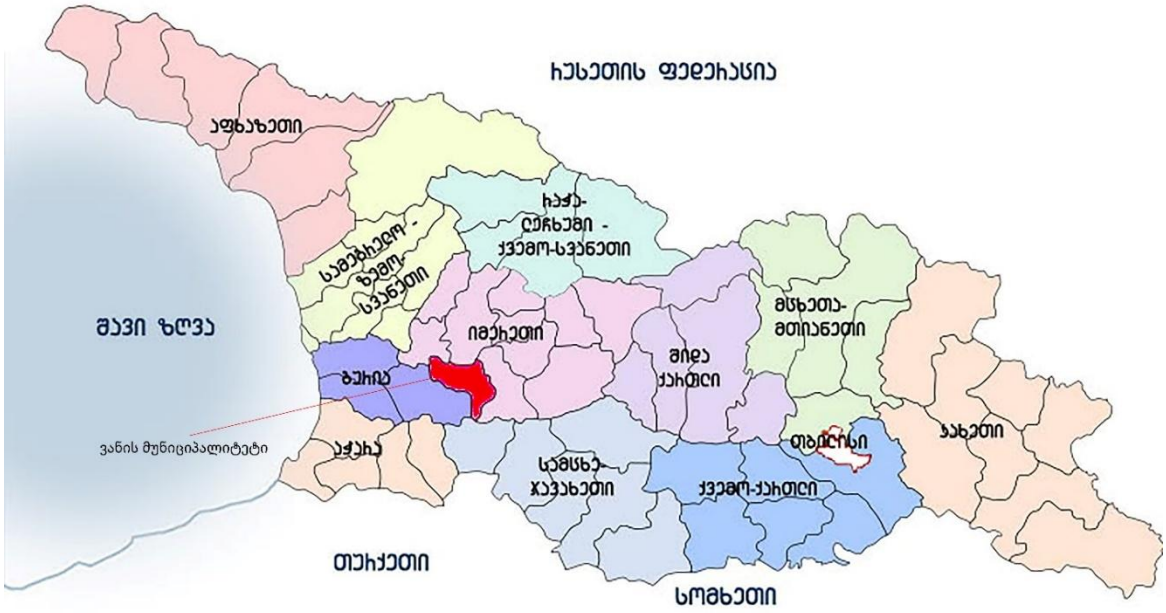

Fig. 1

Fig. 2


Bagdat-Vani-Dapnari
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Image © 2026 Maxar Technologies
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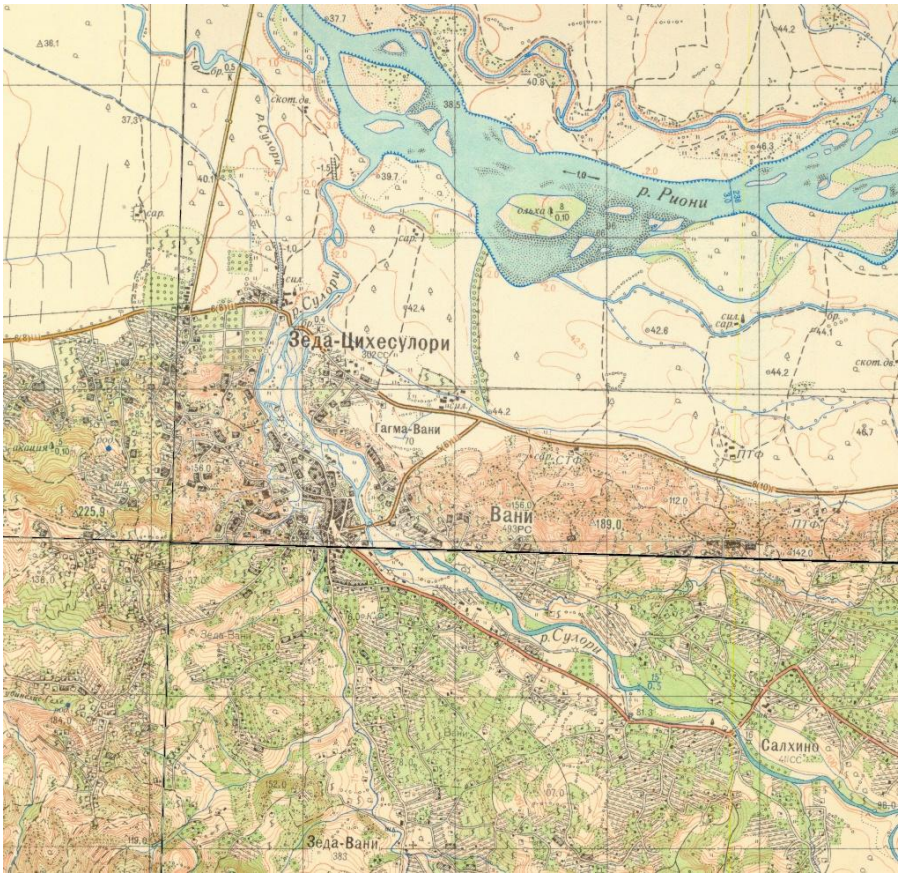
Fig. 3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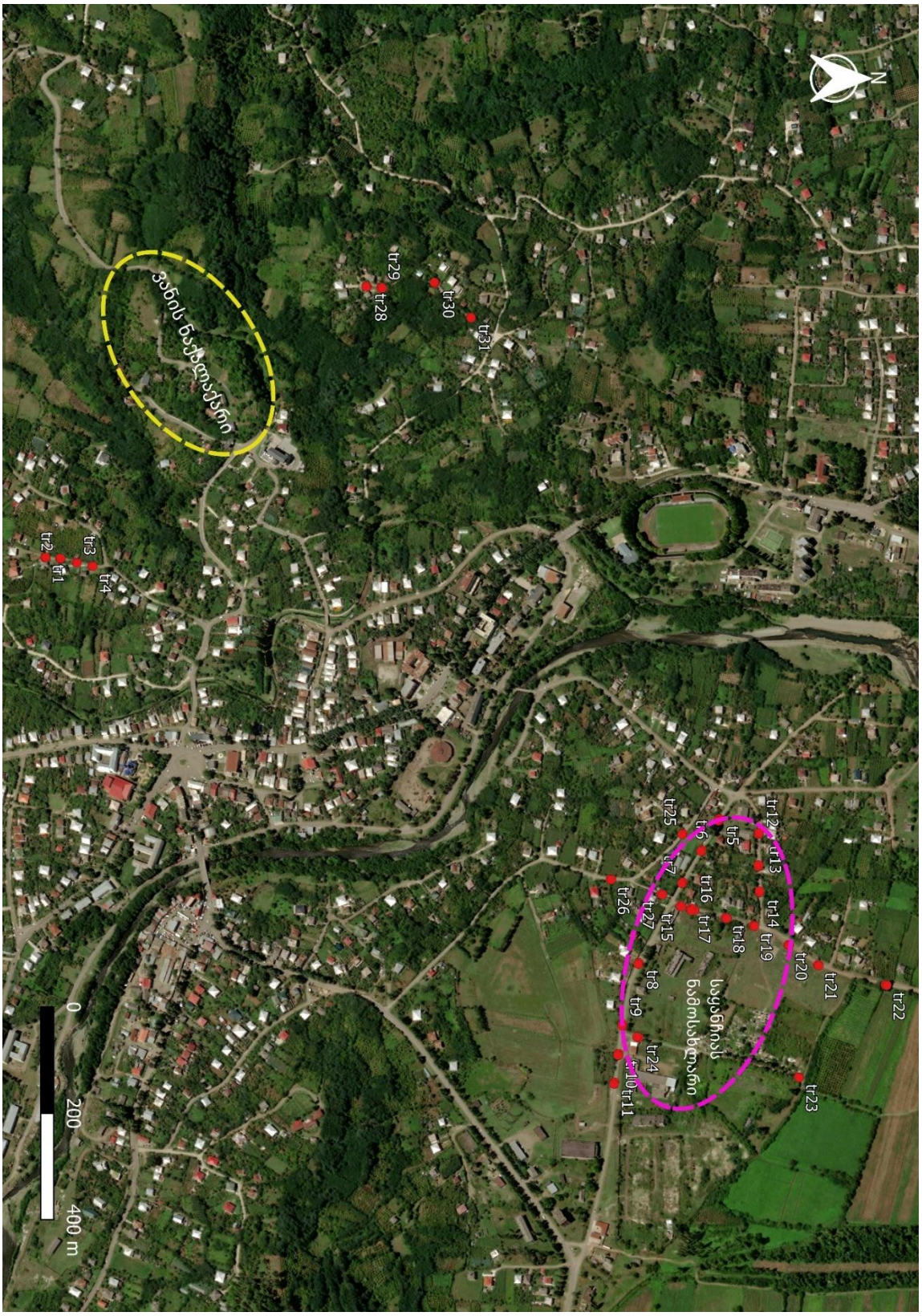
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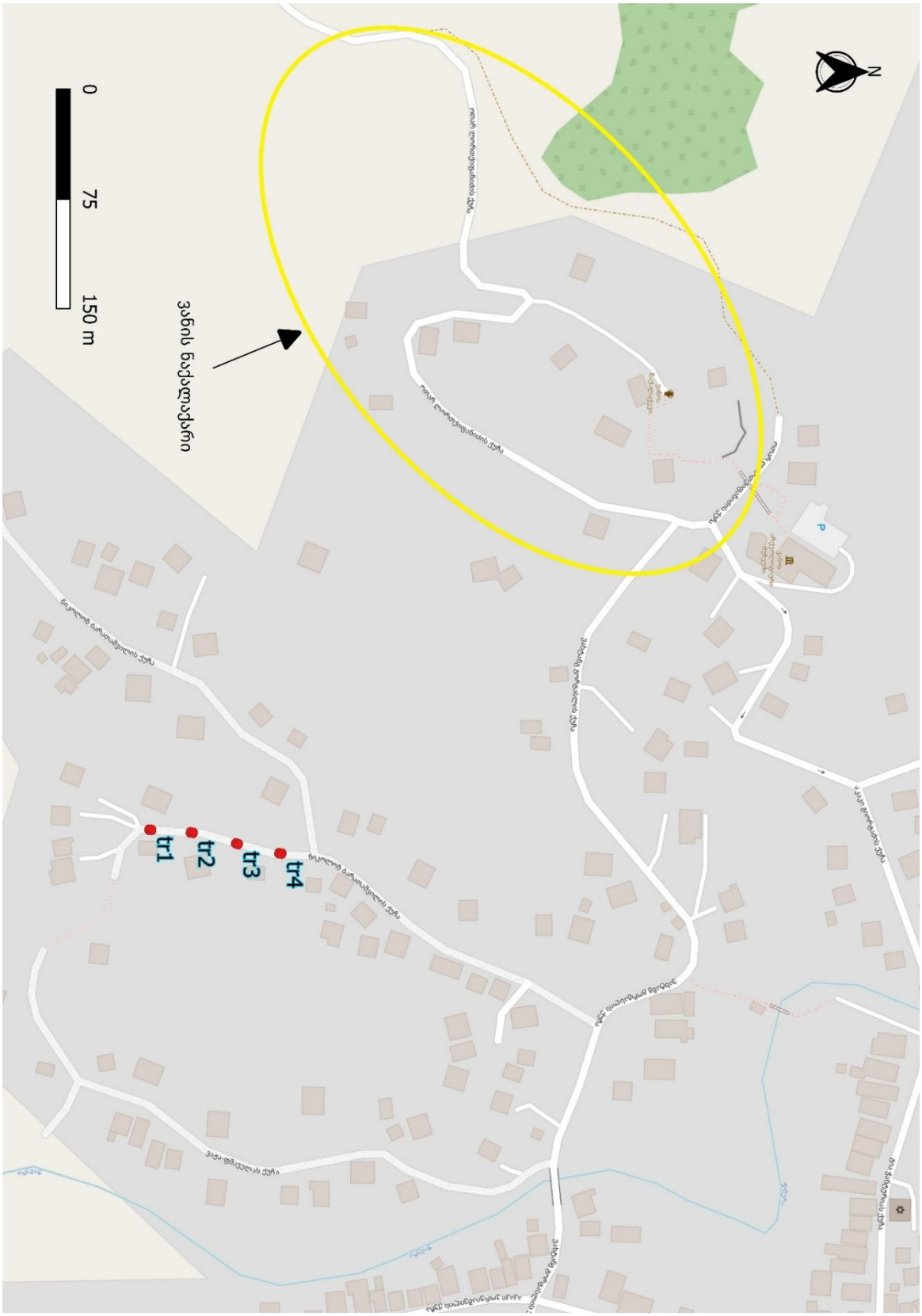

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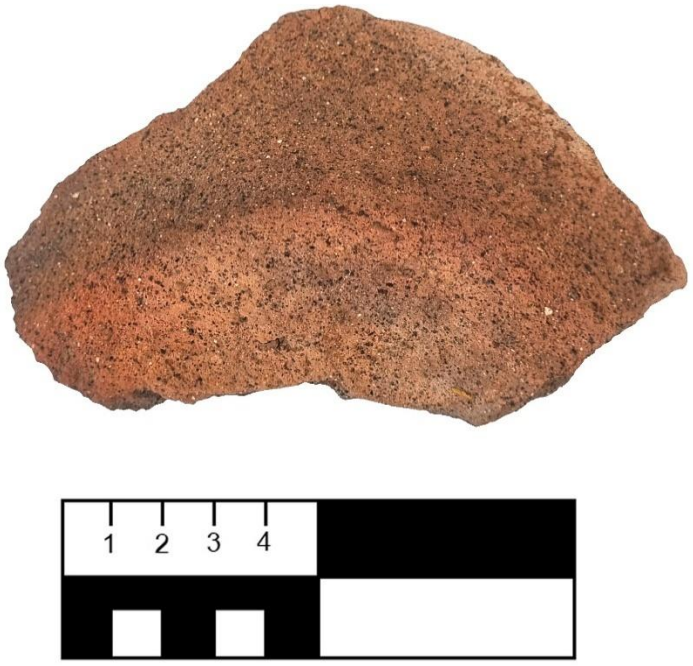

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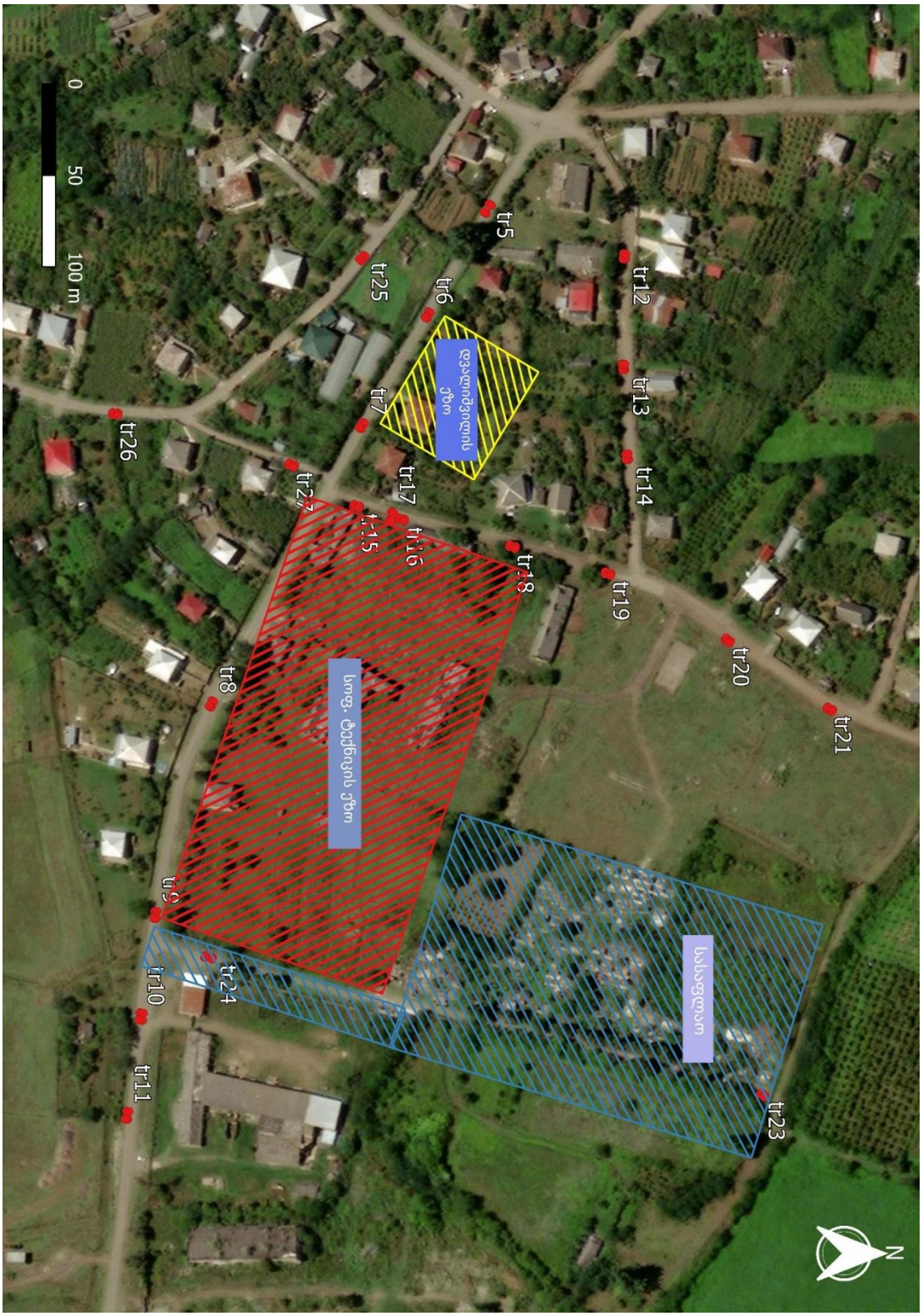
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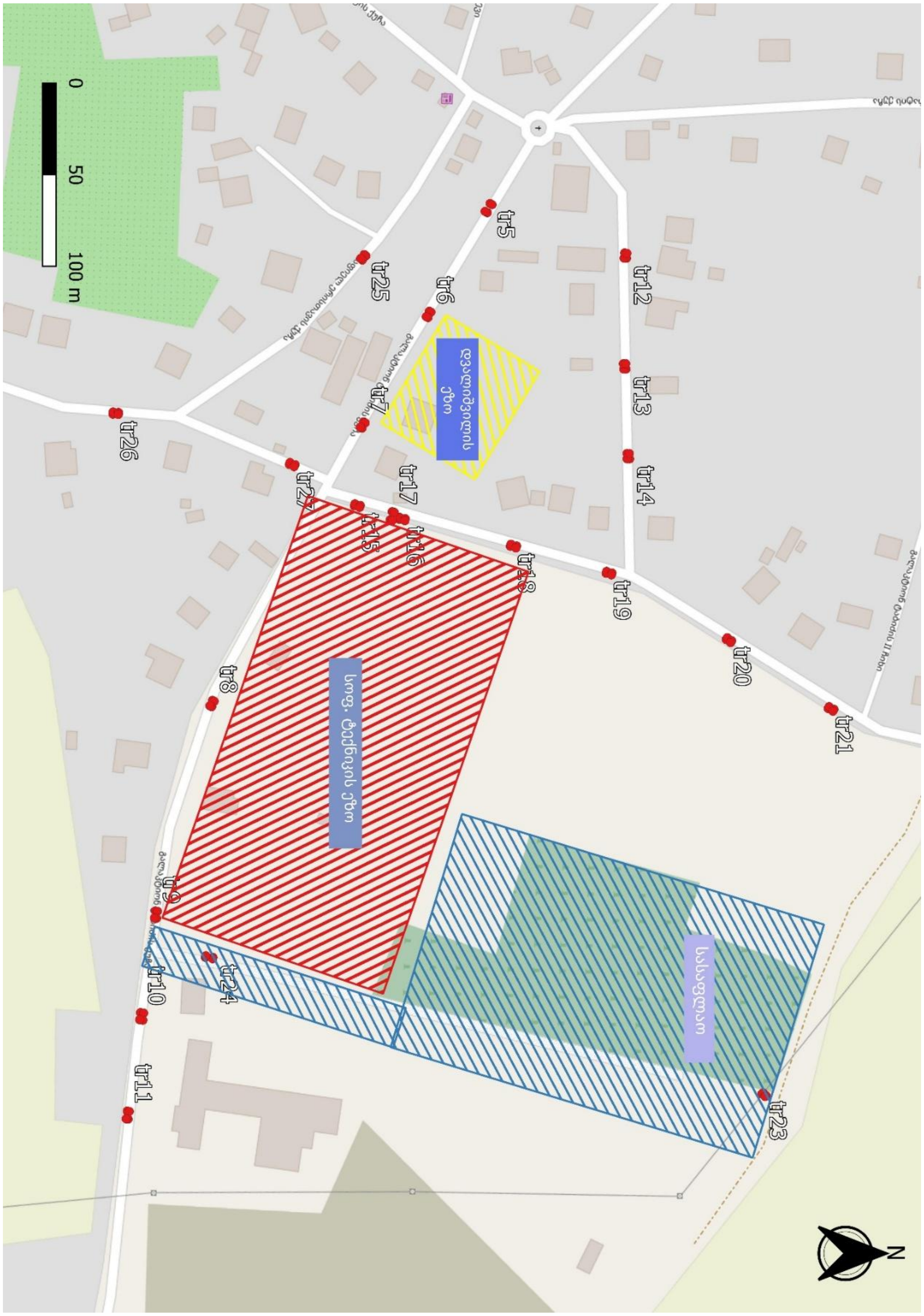
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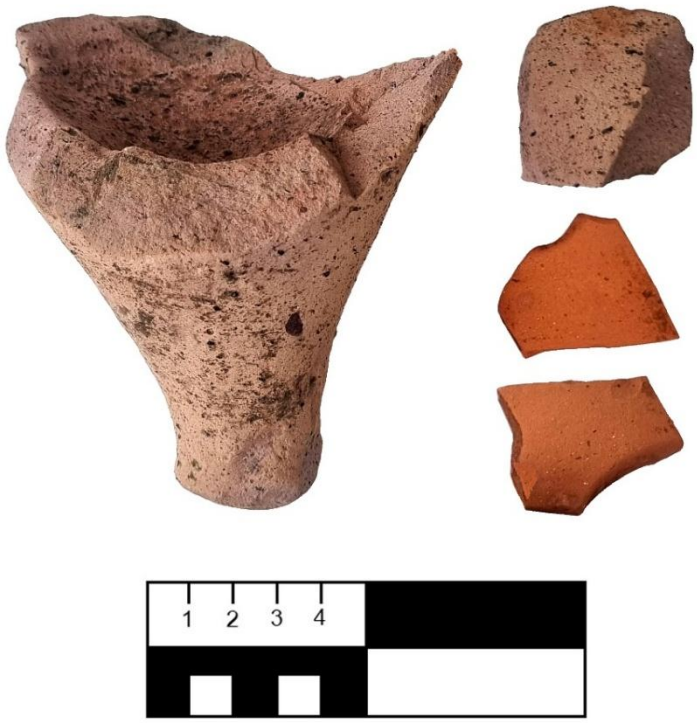

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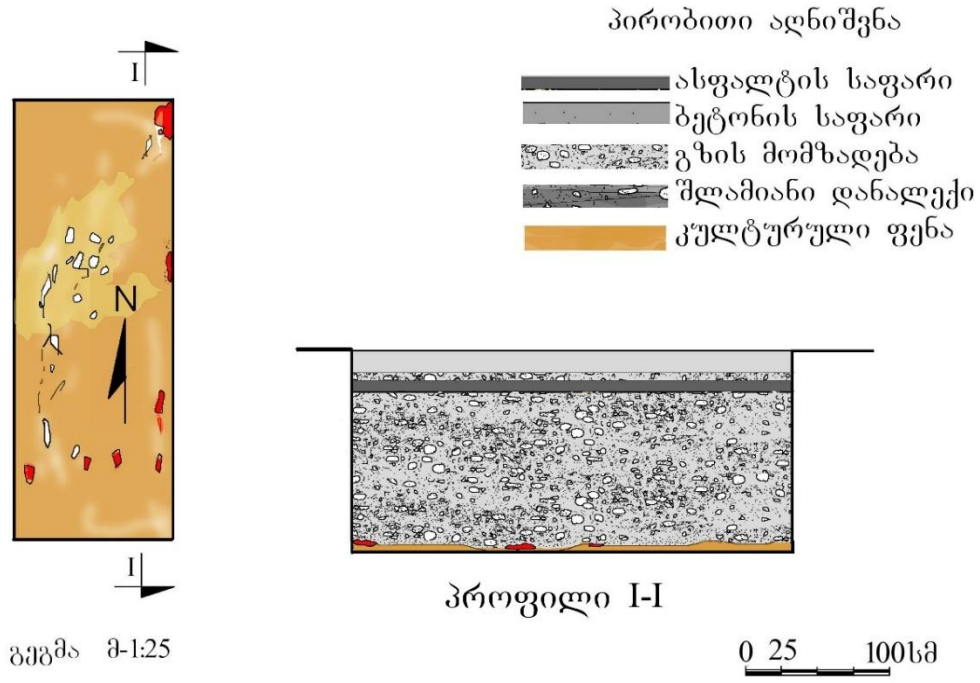
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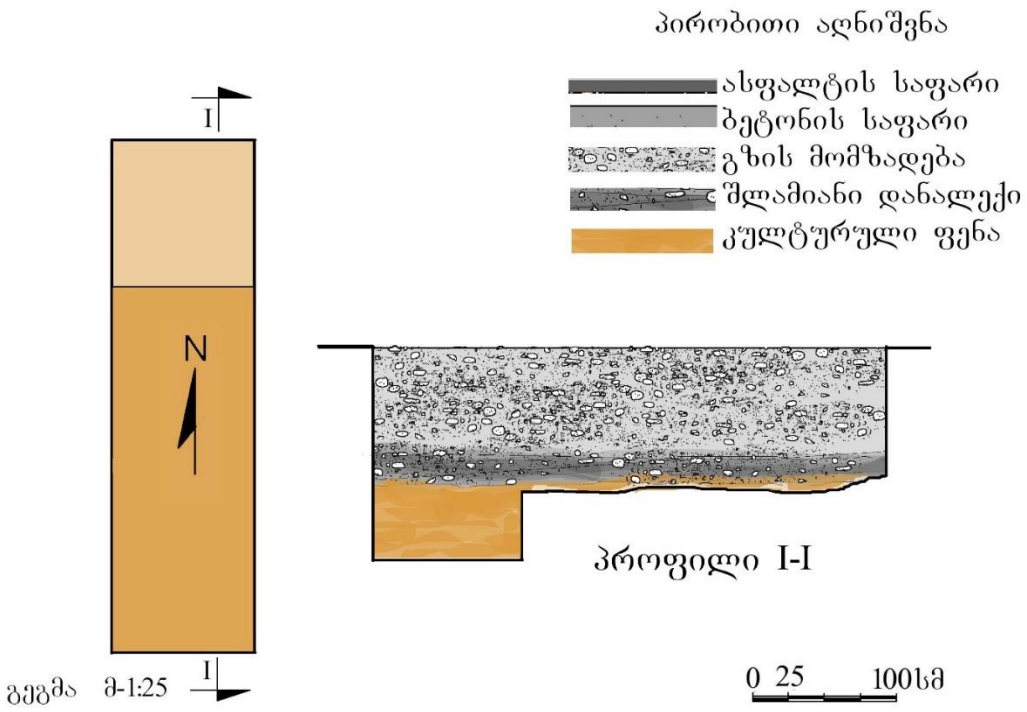
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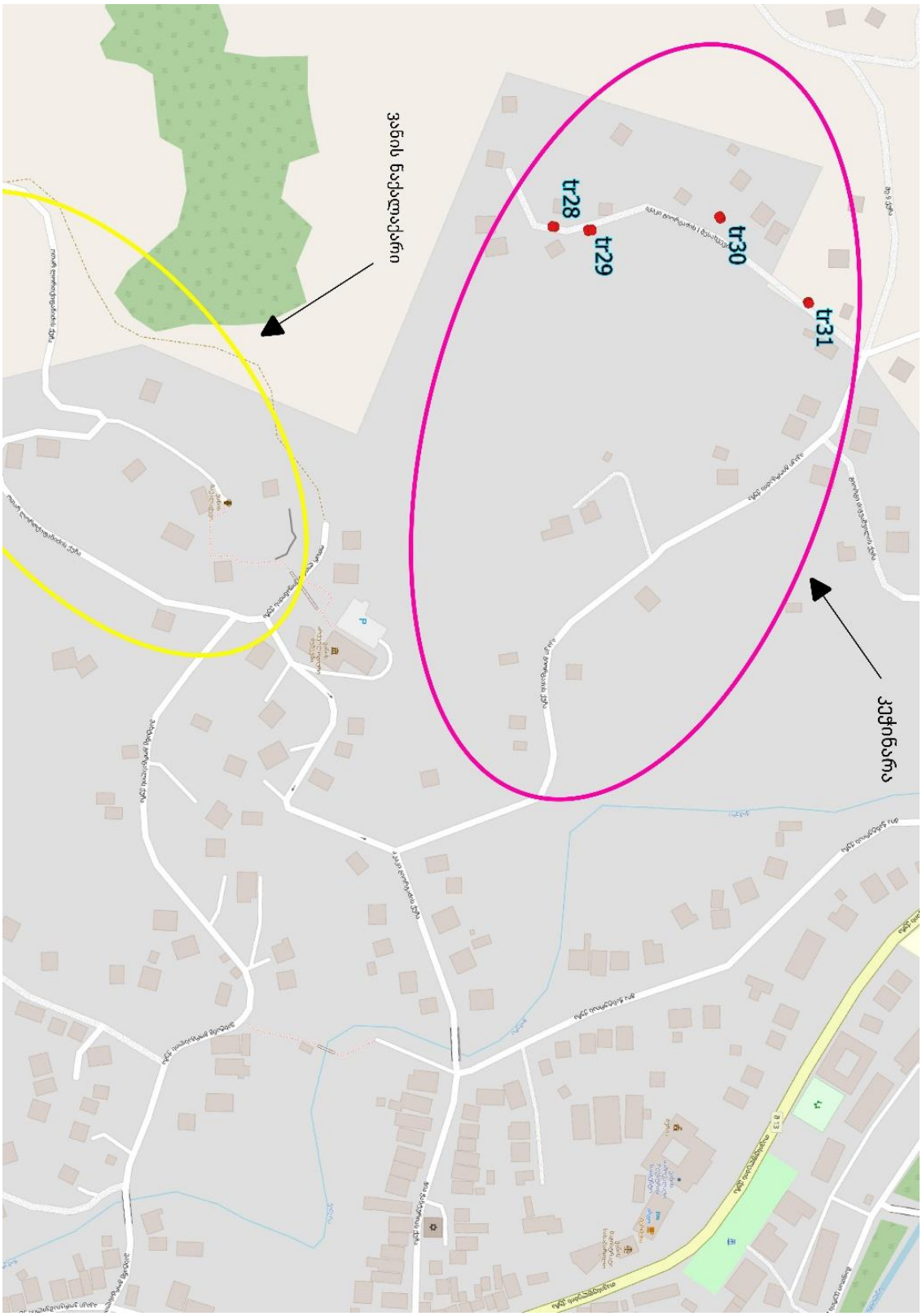

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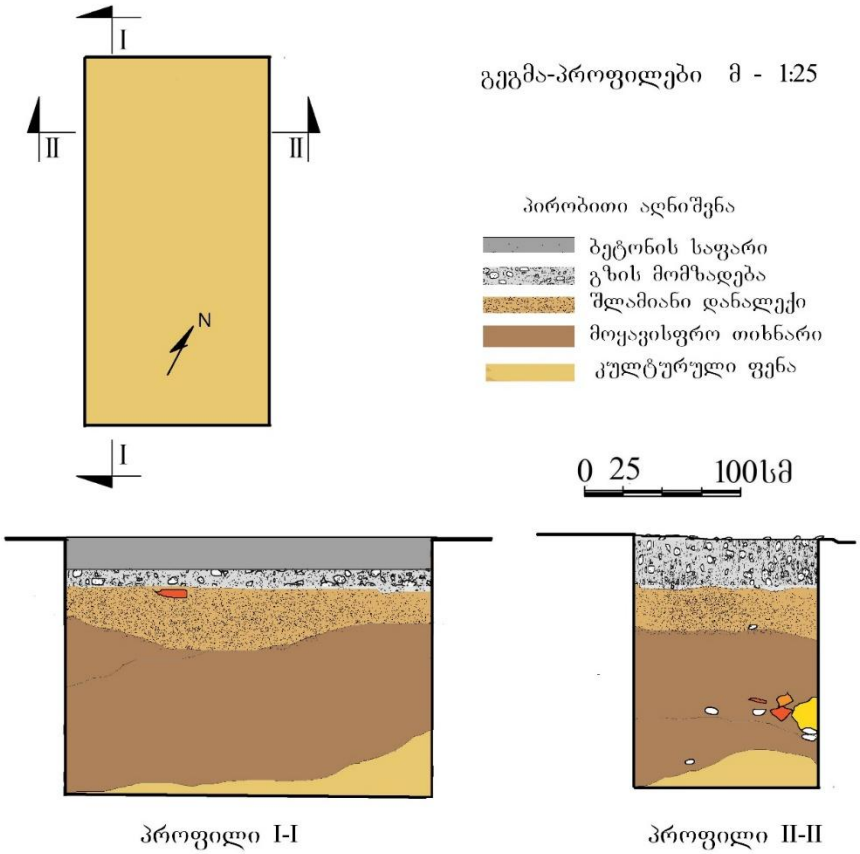
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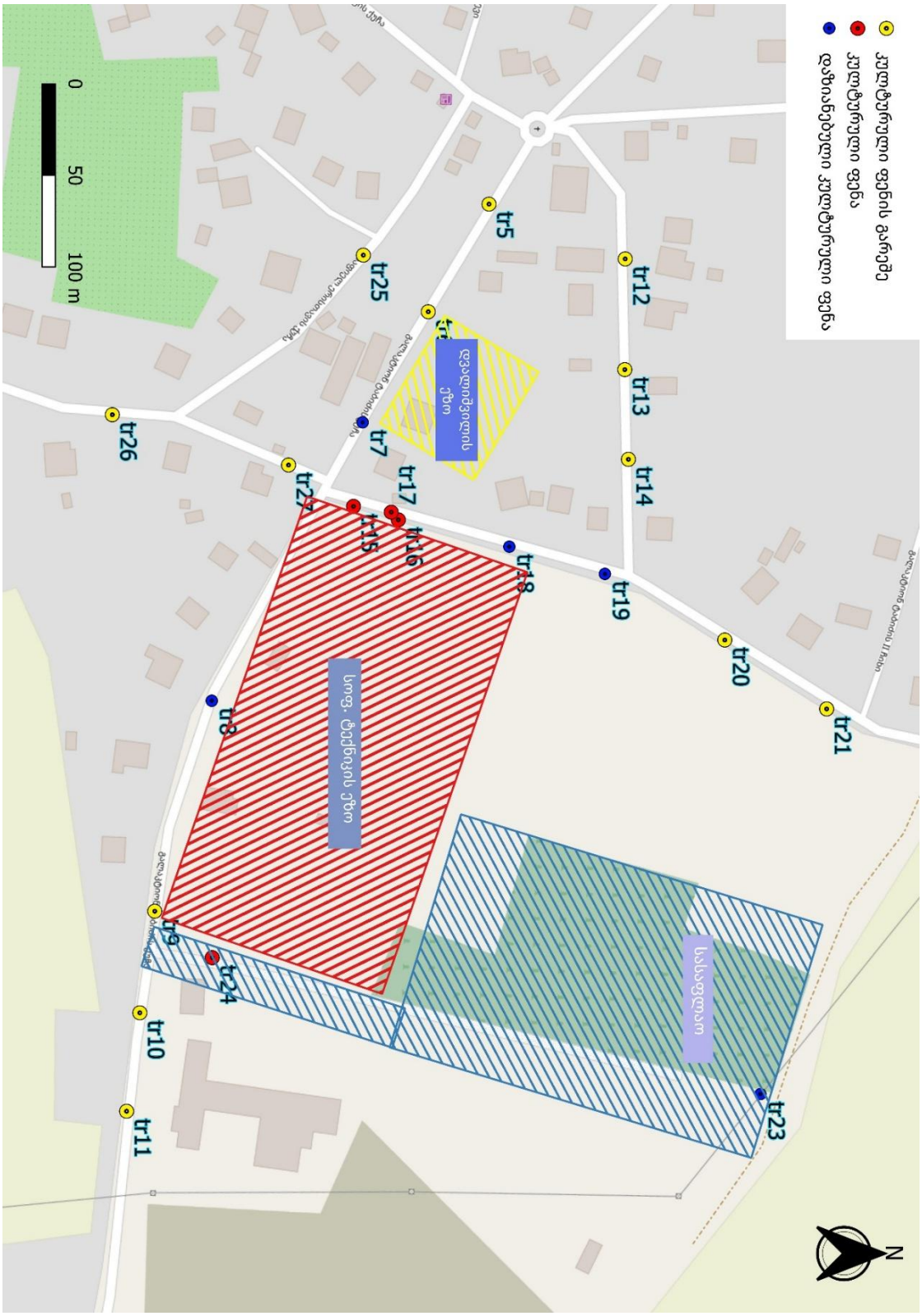
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Fig. 69