

---

DIMITAR CHERNAKOV\*

## A HOARD OF CERAMIC VESSELS IN A CHALCOLITHIC NECROPOLIS NEAR THE VILLAGE OF KOSHARNA, DISTRICT OF ROUSSE

---

**Abstract:** The Kosharna tell is known since 2006, when regular terrain observations were conducted in the region of the Slivo pole municipality. It is located in the “Kainak dere” area, 3 km to the south of the village of Kosharna, Slivo pole municipality. The mound has the shape of a truncated cone. It is located on a slope with a southeastern exposure next to a small spring, out of which a small stream starts. The site has a size: diameter of 66 m, average height of 5 m, area of 2,7 dca. It is researched since 2007 with Dimitar Chernakov being the scientific director. Through archaeological drillings 4 construction horizons have been partially investigated so far, the materials of which belong to the Late Chalcolithic Age and the Gumelnitsa culture. In 2009 and 2010 the necropolis, which belongs to the tell, have been investigated through drills (26 in number) in the “Koru Gioldjuk” area, located 160 m to the northwest. The investigated area is a total of 900 m<sup>2</sup>. 6 graves and other burial structures (4 pits and two positive structures) have been found. The graves are at a depth of between 0.67 – 1.20 m from the surface. The skeletons belong to men in a mature age (30 – 35 years old), 2 pieces, women in a mature age (30 – 35 years old), 1 piece, female individual at an infans II age range (12 – 18 years old), 2 pieces, and one of a child (infans I). The skeletons of the male individuals are strongly flexed, which is probably the result of intentionally binding of the corpse. The deceased are buried through body-laying in a hocker position to the left with their heads to the northeast. Inventory is found in only one grave, lumps of red ocher are found on the bones of some of the skeletons, small coals are found in the fill of the grave pits of the female and of one child's skeletons. Some of the graves form a row. In direct proximity to grave 3 at a depth of 0,75 m from the surface is found a collective find of 31 pieces of ceramic vessels, one cover and 2 vessel stands. They are located one next to another and are laying on different sides of a fired floor level. Fragments of thick-walled vessels are registered among them, as well as a stone with a flat shape (a millstone), cracked. Over the vessels are found burned plasters brown in color. The floor level, over which the find was discovered, lies 0,10 m above the loess surface. The situation may be interpreted as a depot for ceramic vessels, which have been used during the burial ceremonies. The collective find belongs to the Late Chalcolithic Age and the Gumelnitsa culture. On the basis of the finds discovered in this context the necropolis allows to be referred at the Late Chalcolithic Age and the Gumelnitsa culture. With a view to the analogs of finds from the tell, investigated by us in proximity to the necropolis, we can conditionally state that the necropolis belongs and is chronologically referred to the last three construction horizons of the tell.

---

\* Regional Museum of History – Rousse, dpriensis@yahoo.co.uk.

**Keywords:** Chalcolithic, necropolis, hoard, vessels.

The village of Kosharna is located 37 km to the South-East of the town of Rousse and 11 km away from the town of Slivo pole. The prehistoric monuments in the area are presented by 4 tells and one cave dwelling, which belong to different stages of the Chalcolithic Age in terms of chronology (Чернаков 2007, 624-627).

Tell № 1 is located 3 km to the South-West of the village. It has the shape of a truncated cone and the following size: 66 m in diameter, and an average height of 5 m. Its area is 2.7 dca. It is located on a slope with a Southeastern exposure next to a small spring. The site is excavated since 2007 with the author of the present report being its scientific director. Four construction horizons were partially investigated through soundings and can be related to the Late Chalcolithic Age and the Gumelnitsa culture. The destructions of several burnt constructions were found, dug-into sites as well as other structures (Чернаков, Гюрова 2008, 68–70; Чернаков, Гюрова 2009, 90–93; Чернаков, Гюрова 2010, 73–75; Чернаков 2010, 55-69). At around 40 m to the South-East of the first one, a second tell is located, which significantly smaller in size.

The Chalcolithic necropolis is located 160 m to the West and North-west of the tell on a slope with southeastern exposure (Fig. 1). It is separated from the tell by a shallow gully. An area of 900 m<sup>2</sup> was studied in seasons 2009 and 2010 through soundings (26). Stratigraphically, the situation is as follows: **1.** A layer of dark brown sediment with a mixture of burnt plasters, ceramic fragments and bones (fallow land) with a thickness between 0.30 and 0.80 m. **2.** A layer of yellow-brown sediment with mixture of small rubble (loess) with cultural materials found in it as well.

Six graves were discovered, along with other structures (Fig. 2), which may be isolated as dug-into and positive.

The basic group of graves (5) is located on the border between the highest part of the slope and its ridge. Prior the beginning of the excavations the terrain had been used for agricultural purposes.

The deceased are buried through the method of body laying in burial pits with an undetermined shape. They are dug into the loess at different depth (from 0,40 down to 0,60 m). The graves are at a depth between 0,64 – 1,20 m from the level of the contemporary surface. All of the skeletons found so far are in a crouched position (hockers), lying on their left side and with their heads oriented towards Northeast and face to the South with the exception of a single skeleton, whose head is pointing exactly to the East. Graves 1 – 3 form a row with a northeast-southwest direction with an average distance of 5,5 m from one another. No regularity is caught between the rest 3 graves in terms of their location. They don't overlap which is an indicator that they were marked somehow on the surface. The skeletons belong to two men of mature years (30 – 35 years old), 1 mature woman (30 – 35 years old), 2 female individuals in an age range infans II (12 – 18 years old), and

one of a child (infans I)<sup>1</sup>. Lumps of red ocher were found in 5 of the graves. Grave inventory is found only at a single skeleton (5), consisting of two ceramic vessels. In the filler of the grave pits or at the level of the skeletons of 2 female and the infant's graves were found small coals.

Besides the graves, several structures and situations were revealed, which may be isolated as dug into (4 pits) and positive – 2 sites of sacrifice. Bones of domestic animals (a cattle, a swine, a sheep and a dog) were found in them, as well as fragments of ceramic vessels – the result of conducted funeral feasts.

Nowhere within the borders of the research a regular cultural layer or data for the existence of a settlement have been determined, although in many places in the fallow land and the loess small parts of plaster, ceramic fragments of vessels, typical of the Late Chalcolithic Age, animal bones are found, as well as very little in number flint artifacts. On the basis of the discovered archaeological materials, we refer the revealed structures to the Chalcolithic necropolis. The animal bones found in the necropolis are fragmented and possess the characteristics of kitchen remains<sup>2</sup>.

To the so-called positive structures should also be referred a clay-rammed structure with a hoard discovered in it, which is the subject of the present report.

Discovered at 3 m to the Southeast of Grave 3 at a depth of 0,75 m from the surface (fig. 3). It consists of 31 pieces of ceramic vessels, one cover and 2 vessel stands. They are located one next to another, lying on different sides over a coated floor level of brown-red clay, some of them are standing upright over it. Two vessels are found in each other. Among them fragments of broken thick-walled vessels are registered, some of which with barboutine decoration, covers with decoration of white paint, a stone with flat shape (a mill) relatively in the middle, cracked. The stone is directly over the floor level. Burnt red-brown colored plasters were found over the vessels, the result of the demolition of the building over them. As a consequence some of the vessels are broken. The floor level, where the find was discovered, is lying 10 cm above the loess surface, which is a marker that this facility is not dug into the ground.

It is concerned of a clay-rammed facility, similar to a furnace, located over the ancient Chalcolithic terrain and destroyed by fire. It was destroyed by fire after vessels were deposited in it. It cannot be claimed for sure whether the fire was set on purpose or the construction have fallen due to accidental factor, i.e. Whether the structure and the situation are the result of conducted ritual-ceremonial actions or not. We present the statement that there is no question of a dwelling, as the terrain of the situation has been researched and there are no archaeological proofs for the presence of such found. The location of the vessels (some of them in each other, others with their rims down), the presence of a millstone, the coloring of the

---

<sup>1</sup> The anthropological analysis is made by Steve Zauner, for which I'll take the opportunity to express my gratitudes.

<sup>2</sup> The osteological analysis is done by Dr, Lazar Ninov, for which I'll take the opportunity to express.

plasters in red-brown and mainly of the floor level, exclude the possibility for interpretation of the situation as a kiln for pottery. According to us the question in matter here is of a depot for ceramic vessels of a clay-rammed construction within the borders of the necropolis, which have went out of use after the end of the given burial ritual<sup>3</sup>. They have acquired from brick to orange-red color as a result of their secondary burning as a consequence of the burning of the structure. With a view to the location of the situation it can be presumed that the facility has had a relatively oval shape with a diameter of around 2,5 m.

The vessels of the collective find have been produced on a slow wheel<sup>4</sup>. They are made of purified clay with mineral admixture in low concentration. The surface of the smaller vessels is copperbrowned while that of the larger ones – lightly smoothed. Its color is from beige-brown to orange-red, a result of the secondary burning of the vessels, which have fire-burnt to a different degree. They are well baked and strong, which is the result of the fore-mentioned. This is the reason that we can say nothing about their primary baking. It is most likely that the vessels were not produced for the burial rituals specifically, but to have been used in everyday life and have been brought here from the settlement when the necessity of their use has emerged. A reason for this conclusion is the fact, that vessels with similar shape and decoration were found in the settlement tell as well.

By shape and decoration 5 groups can be isolated (fig. 4–7). First group – it is the largest and covers 25 vessels (73,6 %). Those are cups and bowls with biconical shape, concave under-rim part and profiled on the outside and thinned rim edge (fig. 4 1-10; fig. 5 12, 14, 17,18, 21; fig. 6 22, 23, 25, 27-29; fig. 7 32, 34), with decoration of graphite over some of them (fig. 8) in the under-rim part in negative (6) (fig. 4 1,2,7,9; fig. 5 20; fig. 6 26) and positive (2) (fig. 4 10; fig. 6 24). The decoration motifs are of parallel aslant lines, limited at the upper or lower side with a single horizontal (fig.8 2,3), in combinations with triangles (fig. 8 4,5) or concentric arcs (fig. 8 6), in three cases the lines form V-shaped motifs (fig. 8 4,7,8); only one of the vessels has a decoration of pairs of concentric arcs in combination with single ones, laid consecutively (fig. 8 1). Second group – it includes 2 vessels (5,9 %). Those are cups with biconical shapes, concave under-rim part and profiled on the outside and thinned rim edge with relief-plastic decoration of vertical ribs in the most protuberant part (fig. 5 19), as well as the same decoration in combination with scratches in the lower half of the vessel and a graphite one in the under-rim part and between the ribs, which however is almost completely erased and unrestorable (fig. 7 30). Third group – it consists of 3 vessels, one of which with a cover with a mushroom shape (11,7%). They have a cone-cylindric shape, concave under-rim part, profiled on the outside and thinned

---

<sup>3</sup> With the term «burial ritual» I mark the totality of all ritual actions, concerning the deceased, before, during and/or after their burial takes place.

<sup>4</sup> The consultation is made by Vasil Georgiev, a potter, who has participated in the excavations of a tell and a necropolis at the village of Kosharna, for which I'll take the opportunity to express my gratitudes.

rim edge and protuberant middle part. Those are two cups (fig. 5 5, fig. 5 13, fig. 5 16), one of which is with a stabbed and indented decoration over the whole surface, with exception of the under-rim part, and a bowl with two opposite roped handles in the most protuberant part (fig. 7 31). Fourth group – it is the smallest and consists of 1 large flat vessel (2,9 %) with double-truncated cone shape, profiled on the outside rim edge and barboutine decoration (fig. 7 33). Fifth group – it consists of 2 stands for vessels with a double-truncated oval shape (5,9 %) (fig. 4 11; fig. 5 15).

Vessels with a similar form and decoration (mainly those of the first group, which present to be the largest part of the collective find) are found as an inventory in graves of other Late Chalcolithic necropolises : Vinitsa (Радунчева 1976, 71, fig. 59 2; fig. 65 2; fig. 66 2; fig. 75 2; fig. 84 3; fig. 93 4; fig. 97 5), Liliak (Овчаров 1963, 54, fig. 1), Smyadovo (Чохаджиев, Венелинова 2008, 215, fig. 1), in grave 5 from Kosharna is also discovered a cup with a similar form, etc. Placing millstones or parts of them in the graves is also a well-known practice from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic Ages. All of this is indicative for the grave purpose of the collective find. Chronologically, it can be referred to I-II phase of the Gumelnitsa culture. The situation is without an analogy in the known Chalcolithic necropolises so far.

### Catalogue of the hoard<sup>5</sup>

1. A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, graphite decoration in negative in the under-rim part, concave bottom. Size: height 5,2 cm, diameter of the rim 6,8 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,3 cm.

2. A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, graphite decoration in negative and positive in the under-rim part, concave bottom. Size: height 5,1 cm, diameter of the rim 7,3 cm, diameter of the bottom 2 cm.

3. A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – beige. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, leveled bottom. Size: height 6,3 cm, diameter of the rim 8,9 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,9 cm.

4. A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 5,5 cm, diameter of the rim 7,4 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,9 cm.

5. A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – brown, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical-cylindric form, protuberant middle part, thinned and profiled on the inside rim edge, decoration of aslant stabs in combination with incised lines, concave bottom. Size: height 6,3 cm, diameter of the rim 6 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,4 cm.

---

<sup>5</sup> The numbers of the entire vessels of the hoard in Fig. 3 corresponded with the numbers in the catalogue and figurines 4 – 7.

**6.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – beige. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 5,5 cm, diameter of the rim 8,5 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,3 cm.

**7.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, graphite decoration in negative in the under-rim part, concave bottom. Size: height 7,5 cm, diameter of the rim 10 cm, diameter of the bottom 3,5 cm.

**8.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 5,5 cm, diameter of the rim 7,7 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,9 cm.

**9.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom, decoration of graphite in positive. Size: height 5,3 cm, diameter of the rim 7 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,2 cm.

**10.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom, decoration of graphite in positive at the under-rim part. Size: height 7,7 cm, diameter of the rim 10,2 cm, diameter of the bottom 3,3 cm.

**11.** A ceramic stand, color of the surface – brown, fire-blackened in some places, a truncated spherical shape. Size: height 3,4 cm, diameter 6,6 cm.

**12.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – beige. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 4,9 cm, diameter of the rim 7,1 cm, diameter of the bottom 2 cm.

**13.** A ceramic cover, color of the surface – brown, fire-blackened in some places. Mushroom shaped. Size: diameter 6,8 cm.

**14.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 5,2 cm, diameter of the rim 6,7 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,2 cm.

**15.** A ceramic stand, color of the surface – red-brown, fire-blackened in some places. A truncated spherical shape. Size: height 3,3 cm, diameter 6,2 cm.

**16.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical-cylindrical shape, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, leveled bottom. Size: height 6,5 cm, diameter of the rim 7,2 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,4 cm.

**17.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 5,8 cm, diameter of the rim 8,5 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,6 cm.

**18.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – brown, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 5 cm, diameter of the rim 6,6 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,2 cm.

**19.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – beige-red, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave

bottom. Decoration of vertical ribs. Size: height 7,1 cm, diameter of the rim 7 cm, diameter of the bottom 3,2 cm.

**20.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom, graphite decoration in negative in the under-rim part. Size: height 5 cm, diameter of the rim 7 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,3 cm.

**21.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 5 cm, diameter of the rim 7 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,3 cm.

**22.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 5,8 cm, diameter of the rim 8,5 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,6 cm.

**23.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, level bottom. Size: 4,6 cm, diameter of the rim 5,3 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,3 cm.

**24.** A ceramic vessel, fragmented, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, level bottom, graphite decoration in positive in the under-rim part. Size: height 5,1 cm, diameter of the rim 7,3 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,8 cm.

**25.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – beige. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 10,4 cm, diameter of the rim 13,7 cm, diameter of the bottom 4,8 cm.

**26.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – beige-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom, graphite decoration in negative in the part under the rim. Size: height 8 cm, diameter of the rim 12,9 cm, diameter of the bottom 3,5 cm.

**27.** A ceramic vessel, fragmented, color of the surface – beige. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, level bottom. Size: height 4,2 cm, diameter of the rim 5,5 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,2 cm.

**28.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – beige, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 10,5 cm, diameter of the rim 13,4 cm, diameter of the bottom 5,2 cm.

**29.** A ceramic vessel, fragmented, color of the surface – beige. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, level bottom. Size: height 4,6 cm, diameter of the rim 6,1 cm, diameter of the bottom 2,4 cm.

**30.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – red-brown. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Decoration of vertical ribs at the most protuberant part in combinations with scratches from the most protuberant part down to the bottom. Size: height 7 cm, rim 6,7 cm, diameter of the bottom 3,3 cm.

**31.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – brown, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, protuberant middle part, thinned and profiled on the outside

rim edge, concave bottom, two roped handles. Size: height 9,2 cm, diameter of the rim 15,1 cm, diameter of the bottom 5,7 cm.

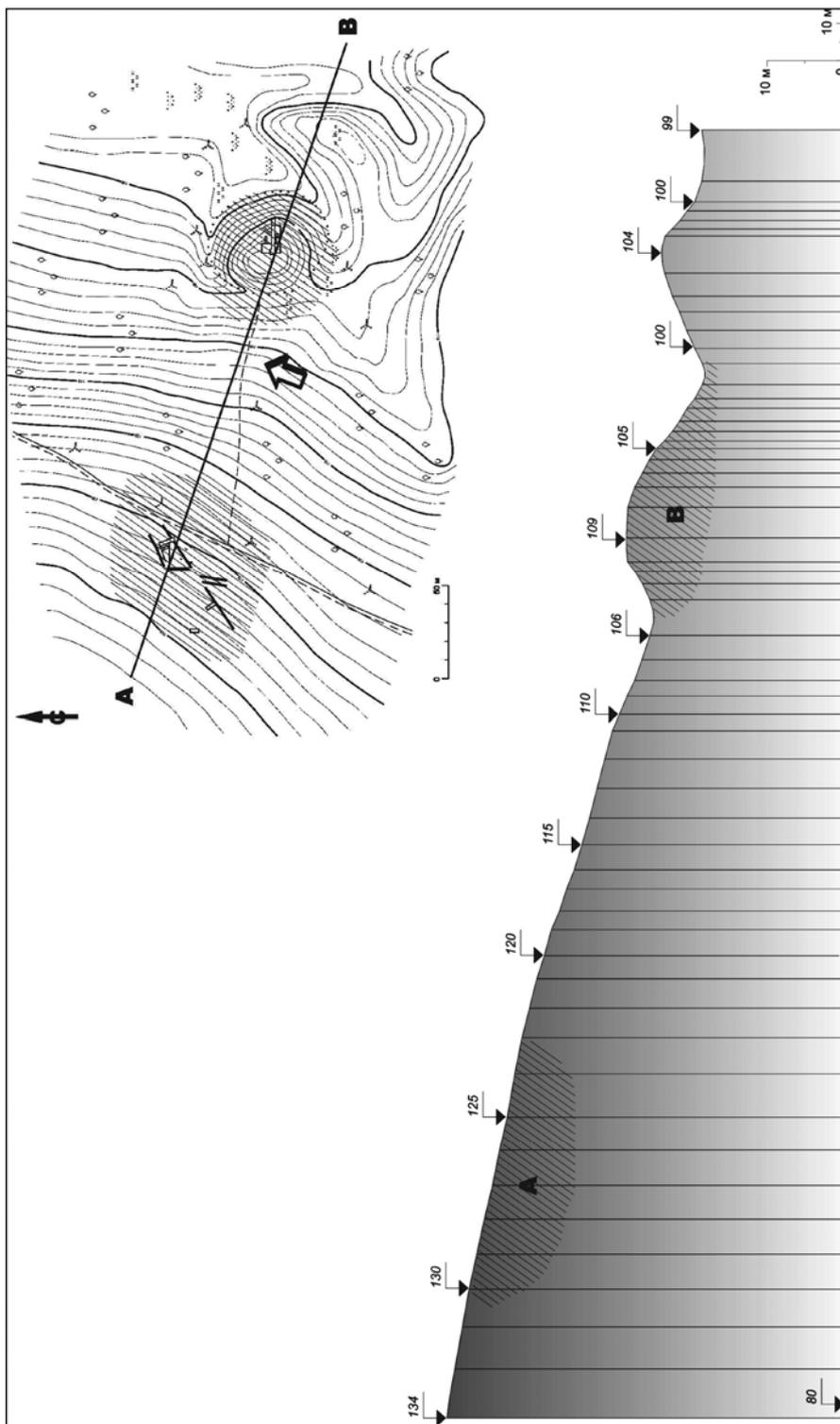
**32.** A ceramic vessel, color of the surface – brown, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 9,8 cm, rim diameter 12,7 cm, diameter of the bottom 4,4 cm.

**33.** A ceramic vessel, fragmented, color of the surface – gray, fire-blackened in some places, form of a truncated cone, barboutine ornament. Size: height 6,9 cm, diameter of the rim 45 cm, diameter of the bottom 27 cm.

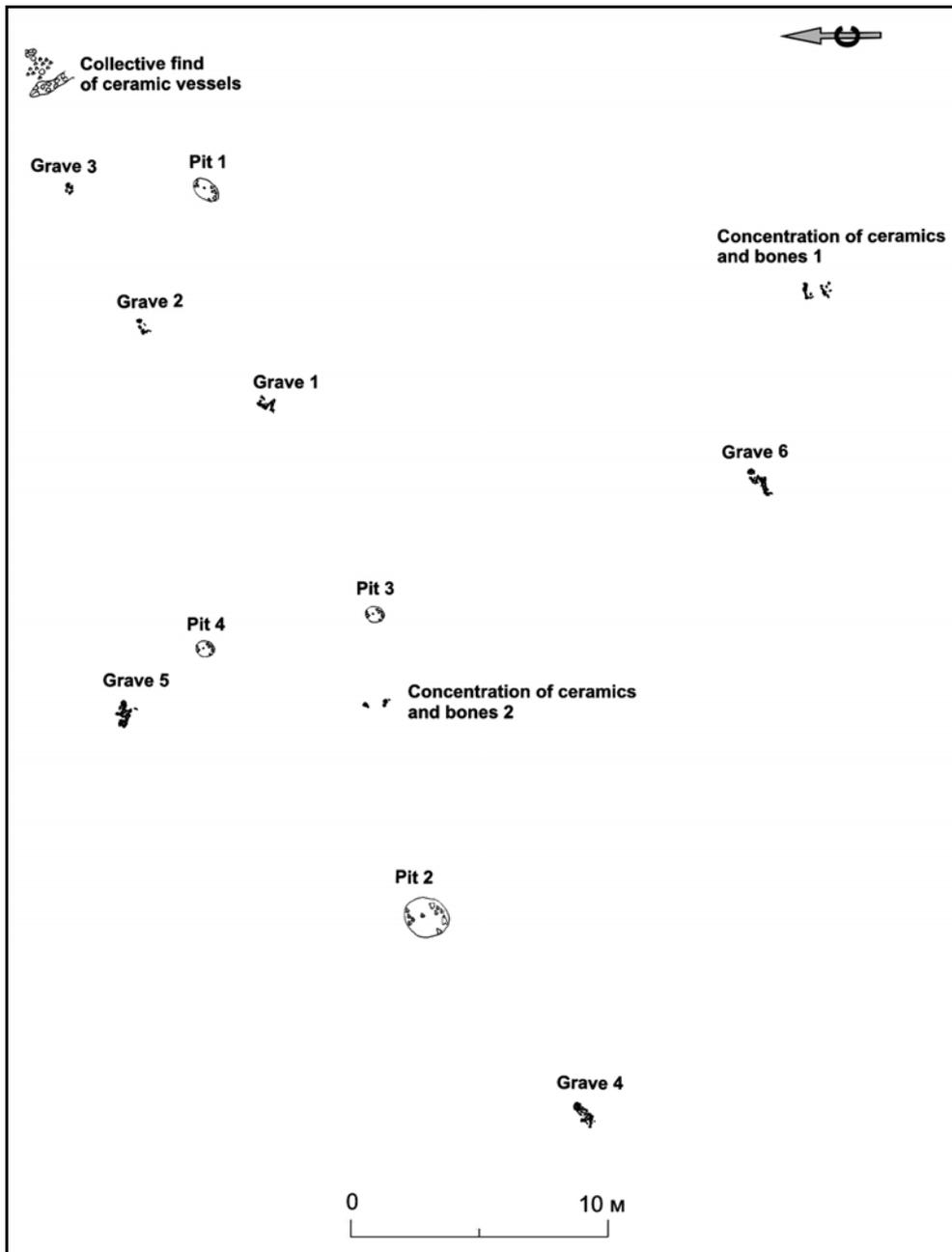
**34.** A ceramic vessel, fragmented, color of the surface – grey-black, fire-blackened in some places. Biconical form, thinned and profiled on the outside rim edge, concave bottom. Size: height 11 cm, rim 14,5 cm, diameter of the bottom 5,7 cm.

## REFERENCES

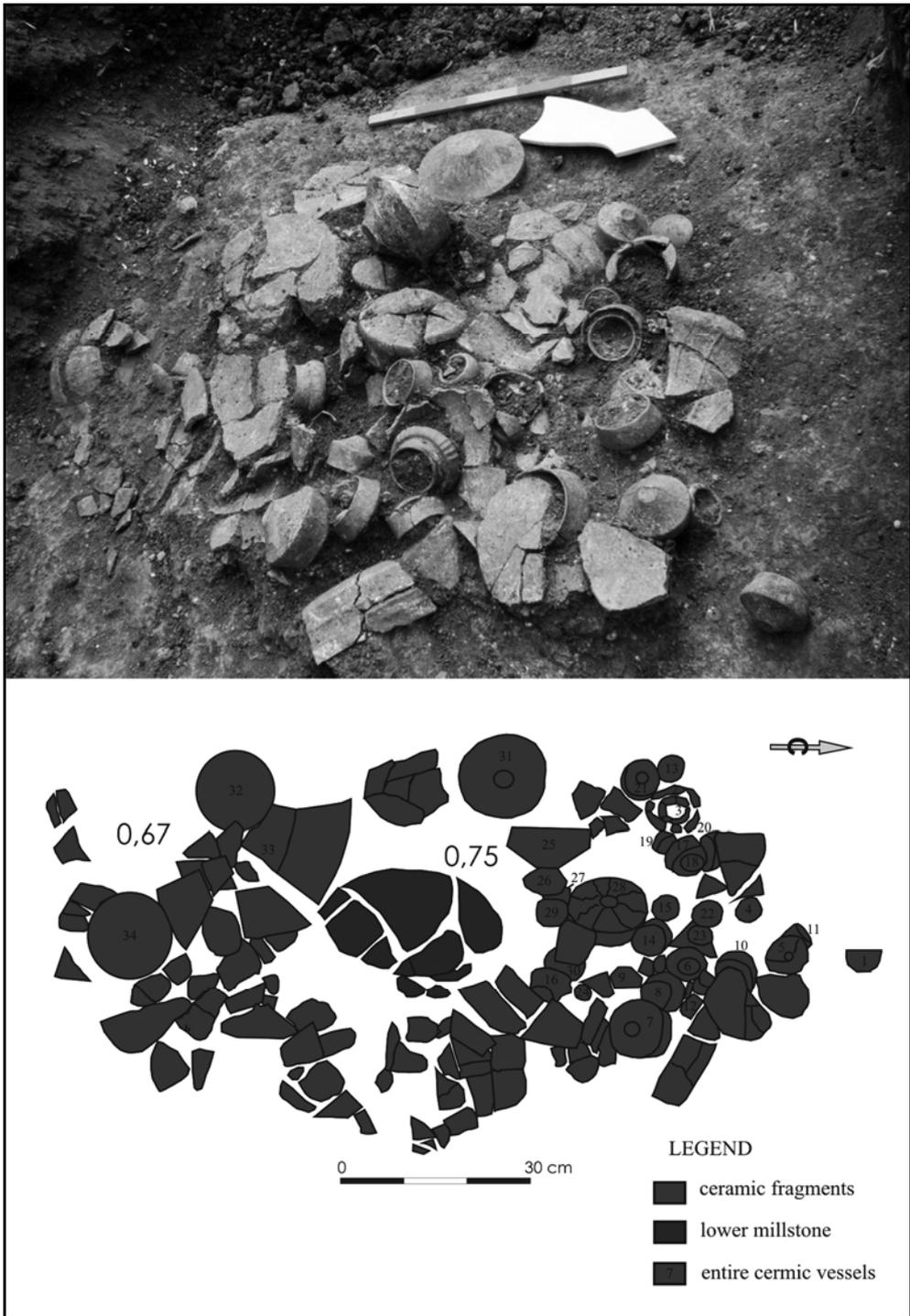
- Овчаров 1963: Д. Овчаров. Енеолитен некропол до с. Лиляк, Търговишко. - Археология, 1963, 1, 53–56.
- Радунчева 1976: А. Радунчева. Винаца. Енеолитно селище и некропол. (Разкопки и проучвания, 6). София, 1976.
- Чернаков 2007: Д. Чернаков. Теренни археологически обхождания в община Сливо поле, Русенска област. – Археологически открития и разкопки през 2006 г. София 2007, 624-627.
- Чернаков, Гюрова 2008: Д. Чернаков, М. Гюрова. Аварийни археологически разкопки на селищна могила № 1 до с. Кошарна, община Сливо поле, Русенска област. – Археологически открития и разкопки през 2007 г. София, 2008, 68-72.
- Чернаков, Гюрова 2009: Д. Чернаков, М. Гюрова. Археологически разкопки на селищна могила № 1 до с. Кошарна, Русенско. – Археологически открития и разкопки през 2008 г. София, 2009, 90-93.
- Чернаков 2010: Д. Чернаков. Селищна могила № 1 до село Кошарна, община Сливо поле (Археологическо проучване през 2007). – Във: Великотърновският университет «Св. св. Кирил и Методий» и българската археология». 1, Велико Търново, 2010, 55–69.
- Чернаков, Гюрова 2010: Д. Чернаков, М. Гюрова. Археологически разкопки на селищна могила и некропол до с. Кошарна, Русенско. - Археологически открития и разкопки през 2009 г. София, 2010, 73–75.
- Чохаджиев, Венелинова 2008: С. Чохаджиев, С. Венелинова. Новооткрит халколитен некропол край Смядово: предварително съобщение. – В: Праисторически проучвания в България: новите предизвикателства. София, 2008, 211–218.



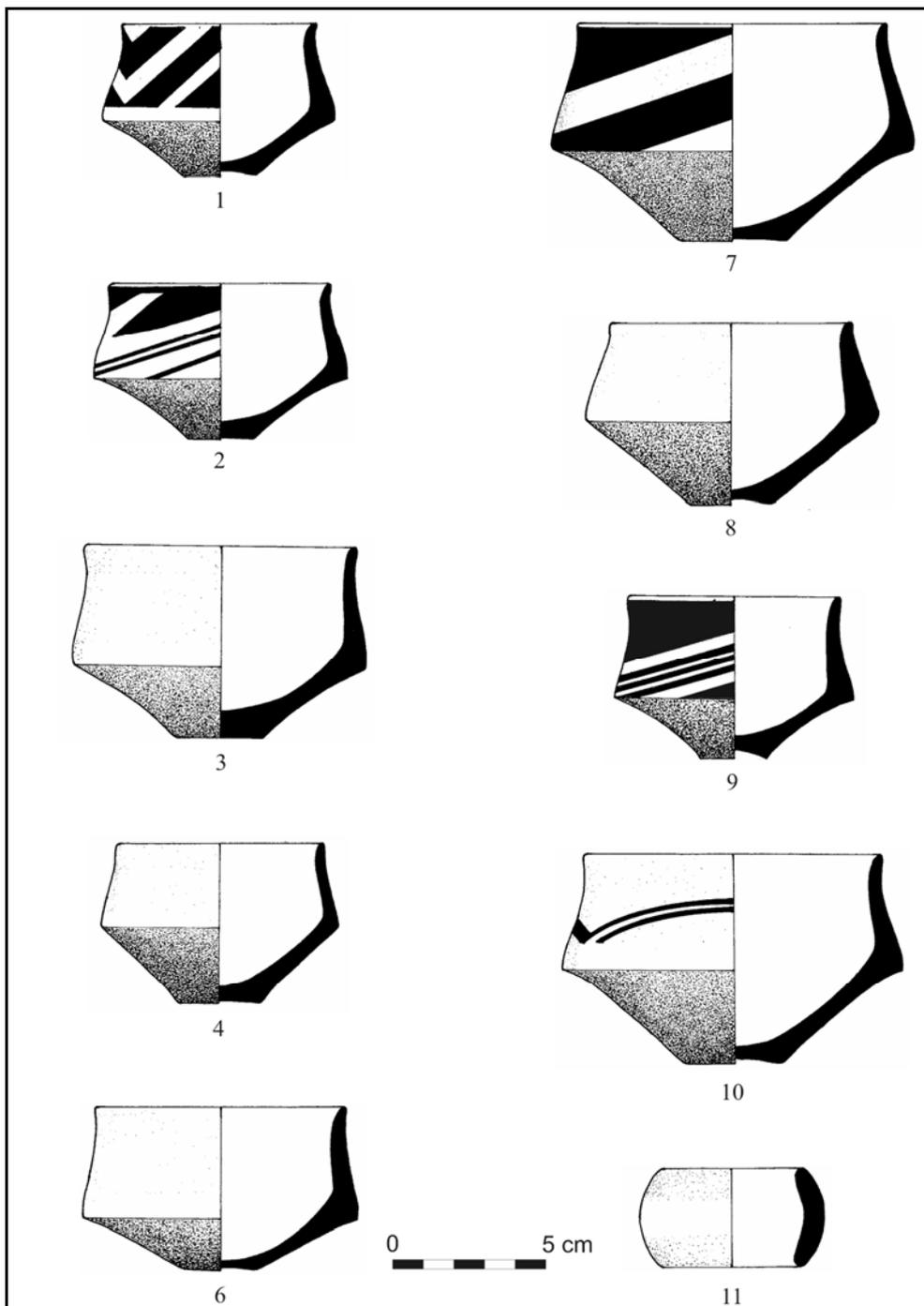
**Fig. 1.** Chalcolithic necropolis at tell 1 near Kosharna. Topographic plan and profile of the relief. A. Necropolis; B. Tell 1 (author eng. Atanas Kamenarov).



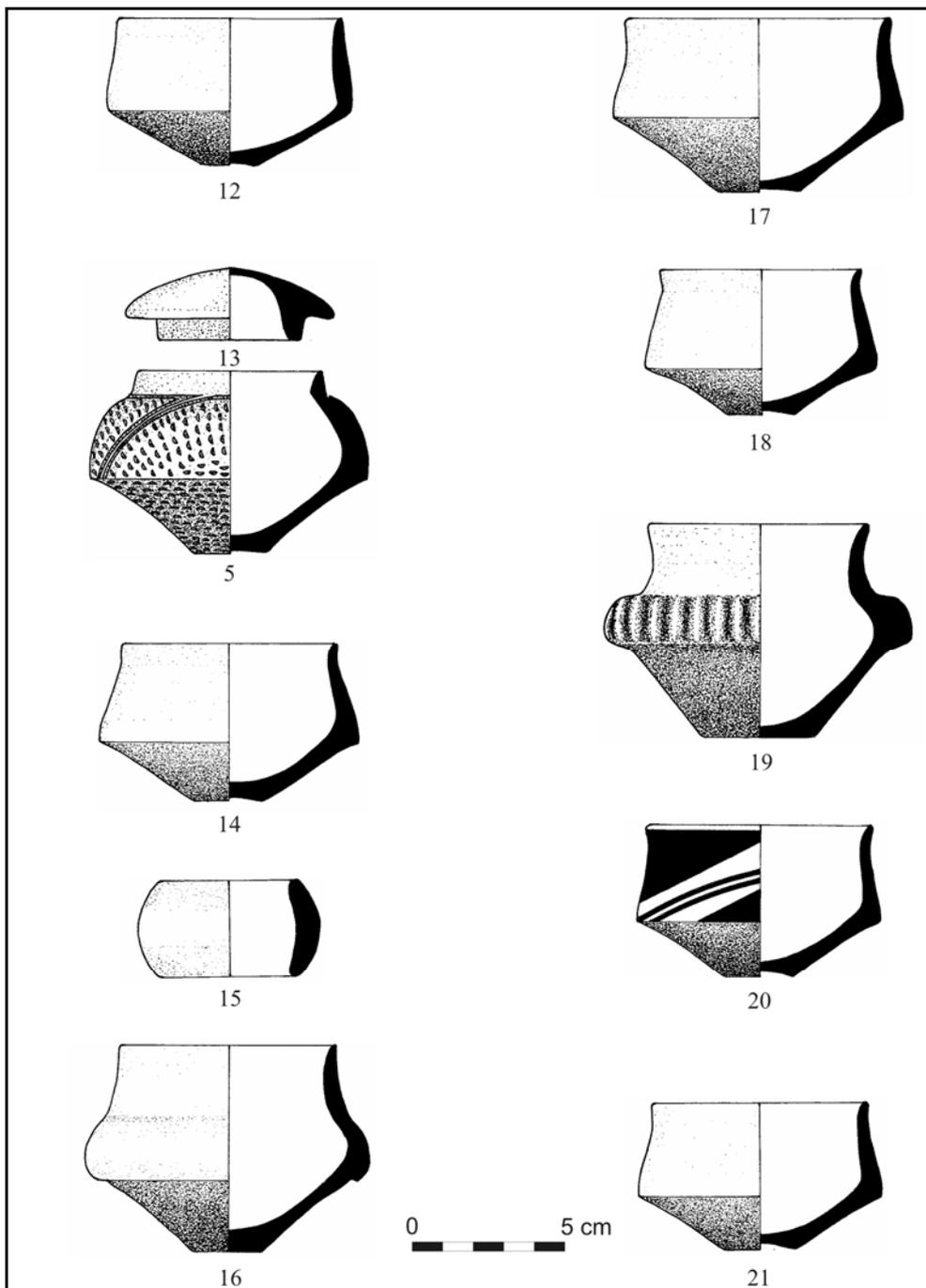
**Fig. 2.** Chalcolithic necropolis at tell 1 near Kosharna. A general plan.



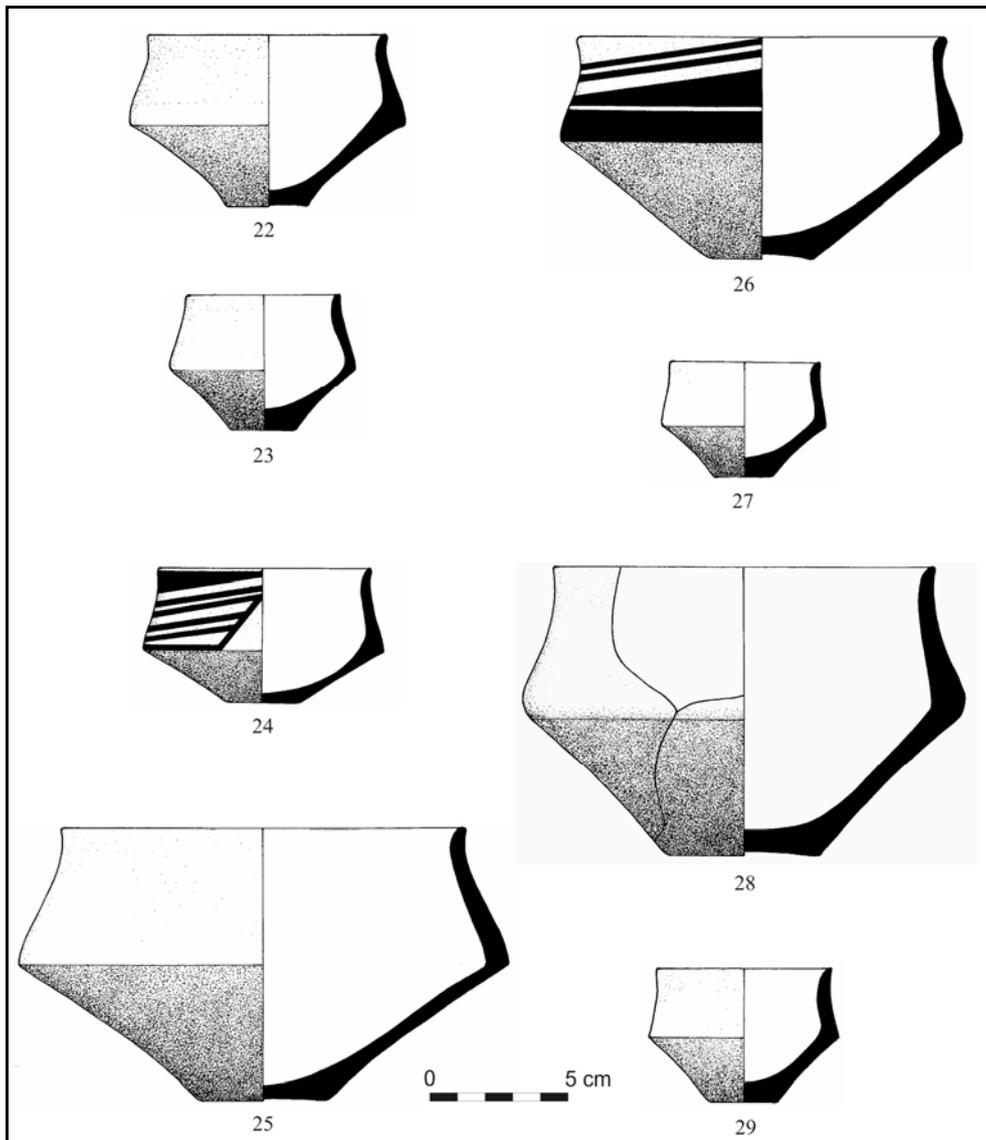
**Fig. 3.** A collective find of ceramic vessels in situ.



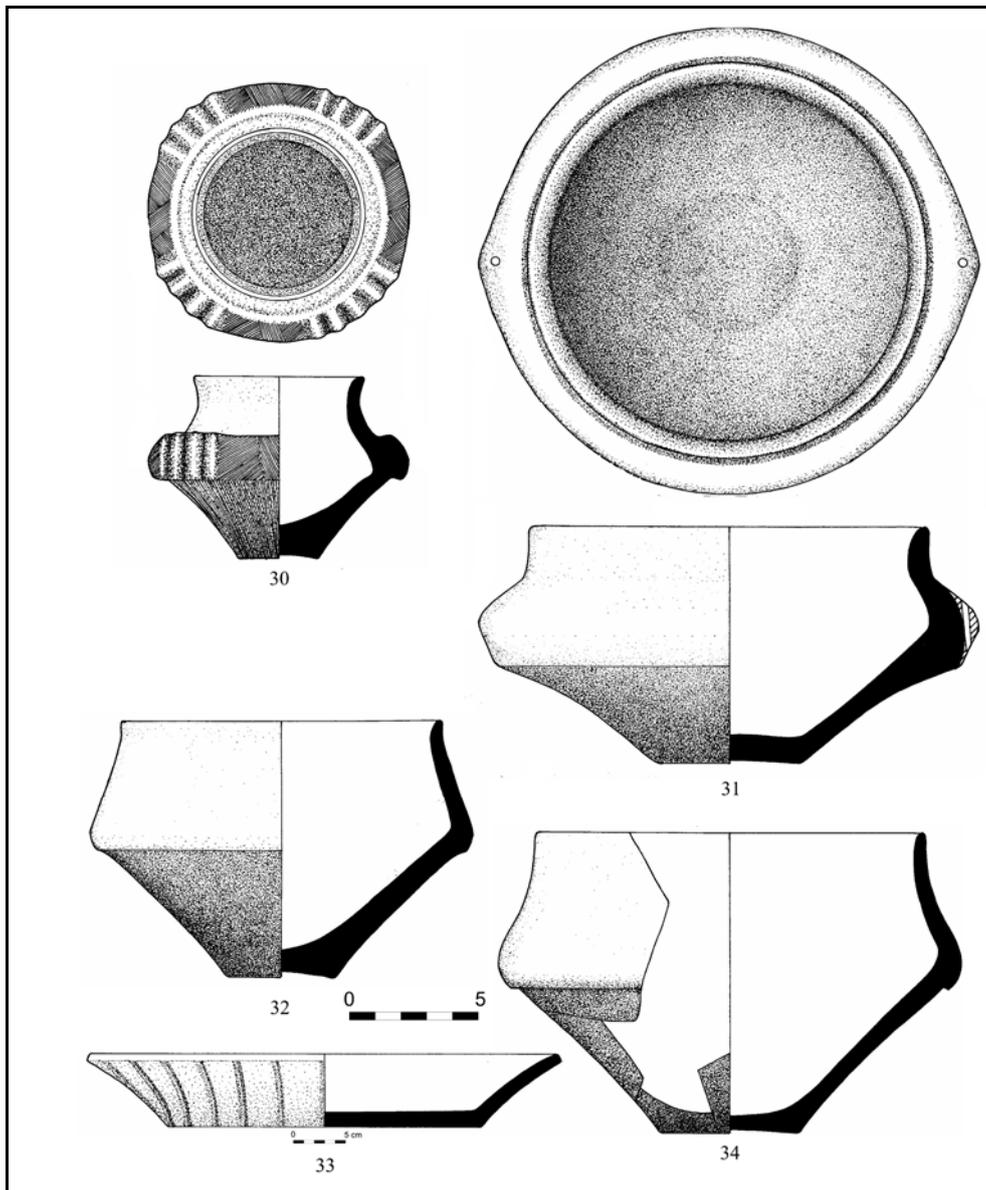
**Fig. 4.** A collective find of ceramic vessels. Forms.



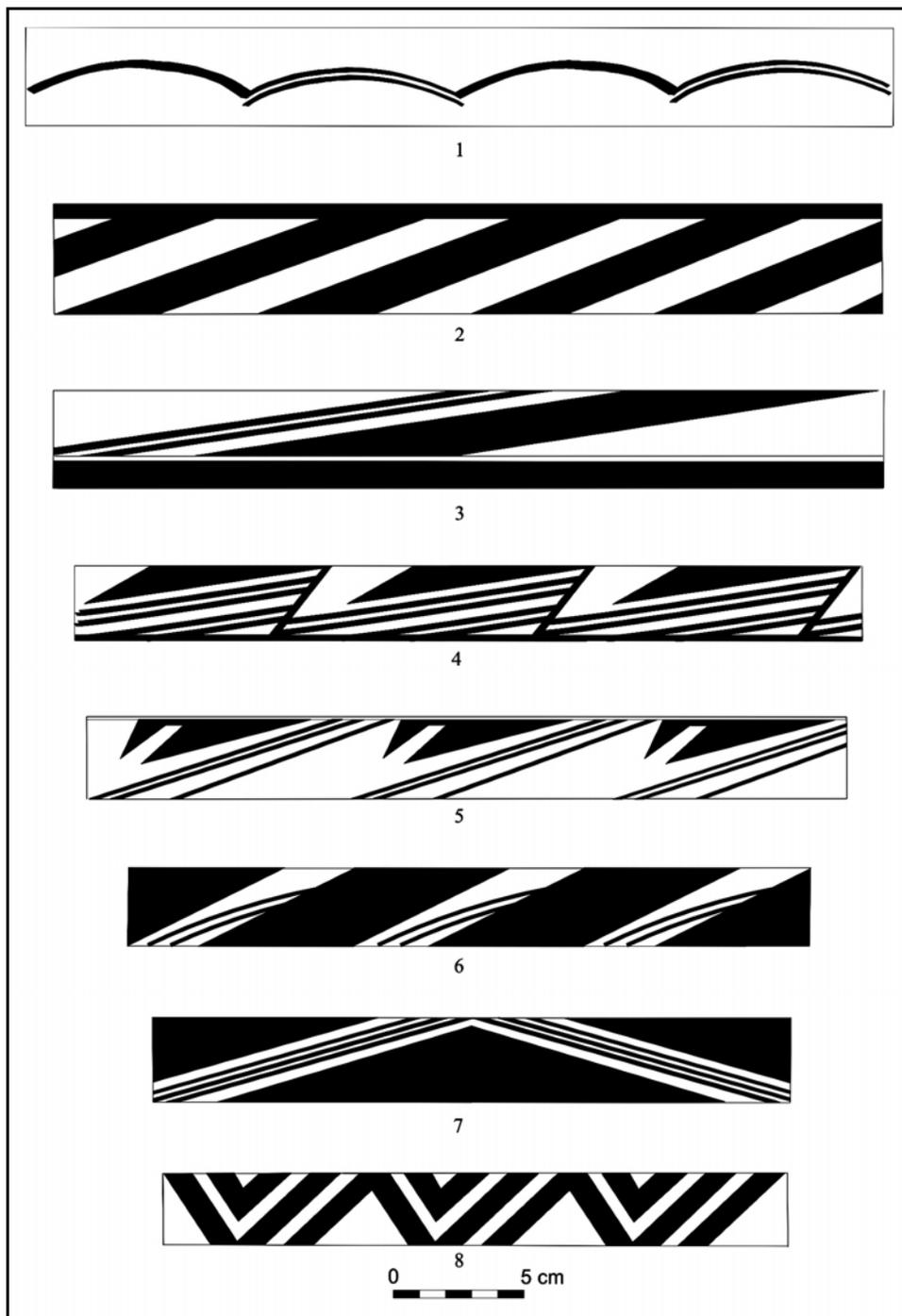
**Fig. 5.** A collective find of ceramic vessels. Forms.



**Fig. 6.** A collective find of ceramic vessels. Forms.



**Fig. 7.** A collective find of ceramic vessels. Forms.



**Fig. 8.** A collective find of ceramic vessels. Graphite decoration, ornamental motifs. 1. Vessel 10; 2. Vessel 7; 3. Vessel 26; 4. Vessel 24; 5. Vessel 2; 6. Vessel 20; 7. Vessel 9; 8. Vessel 1.