

## THE NECROPOLIS OF ANTIQUE SETTLEMENT KOSHARY

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The archaeological complex of a settlement and burial ground nearby Koshary village is one of the brilliant sites of ancient time at Odessa region (Ukraine). This site locates on the western bank of Tiligulsky estuary (ancient Asiakos), near it flows into the Black Sea. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this region had attracted attention by the scholars in the connection in search of an ancient Greek settlement Odessos. We know the survived information by the ancient authors as Pliny the Elder, Claudius Ptolemy and Anonymous Periplus. Up to the present time a question about when this city had been situated is not determined completely. From 1950, when Koshary settlement had found and since 1955 after the beginning of its research, this site went down to the candidates for a name of Odessos (S.E Ymonovich, E. Diamant, E. Levina, E.Redina).

At the last years (1998-1999) the excavations have been continued by the Odessa Archaeology Museum at the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences in cooperation with The Institute of Archaeology at the Jagiellonian University at Cracow (Poland). The researches are hold in a settlement and necropolis. This site is dating the end of 5<sup>th</sup> - early the 3<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.

The Koshary necropolis situated to the north from its settlement on plateau, along the Tiligulsky estuary, where placed ancient barrows group of the Bronze Age. The excavations held complete square. The Greek burial ground is constitutes from the complexes of burial and funeral rites. Moreover, reveals the Scythian influence on these sepulchral constructions.

The 103 graves had been researched in this necropolis and the 4 ones on settlement area were found. One of these is dating by the Bronze Age, one of time when this settlement functioned and two uncertain ones. The Greek period burial complexes are represents the various types of sepulchral constructions with inhumation: the graves with recess (63 in number), catacombs (10) and grave pits (17). Also, we had investigated the cremation complexes (2 in number). Not total grave pits we can date from the Greek period. Possibly, several from them concern with the late nomads. It is of interest a grave No. 56, which is situated in the necropoles. The skeleton had southern orientation and was accompanying the grave goods of the end of 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. A grave No.42 with the wooden construction which in settlement area under the pavement of the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. was found is evidence of coffin using.

The recesses are wider - spread type of the funerary constructions. We have varied types of the grave slabs building; such as using the stones mudbricks and stone - mudbrick combination, which were revealed in the Koshary necropolis. Their time of appearance in necropolis is the early of 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

The ground vault - catacombs were built, besides the graves with recess, from the second half of 4th century B.C. The lack of Dromos and its substitution by the entrance pit is distinguishing a feature of the Koshary necropolis vault - catacombs from the Greek ones. The grave slabs were made of mudbricks and stones. We can note certain technological methods such as using the buttresses in one case had been used an entrance well of the neighbouring burial for the second grave chamber construction of other tomb. However, the common entrance may show for us, that the burials had kinship ties.

The certain location of the constructions and indication have the separate lots, for instance, a child cemetery, can be recognized in the necropolis.

The cremation is exclusively Greek rite. It is represented by two kinds: the burning of dead corpse on the other side with subsequent burying of the ashes (cremation place undefined, also, the burning on a special area, which was a circular in plan spot with ashes and the burned bones). The place of cremation (it traced through the wooden blocks remains of dais) was located in central part of this spot. A large grey vessel contained the ashes had been placed on the northern sector of this spot, behind an altar masonry construction.

The eastern orientation of skeletons is basic. This is usually characteristic of the Greek funerary rites. Furthermore, we can mark the western orientation, which evidenced about presence of the local population component.

The grave markers in this burial ground were found here: the barrows, grave tombs, altars (monolithic and masonry constructions), *bothroi*, as well as the places for funeral ceremonies (funeral reports) - the sacrificial grounds. We may assign a find of marble fragment from the tomb with name of one deceased person. This is the lower part of a stele surmounted the pediment and acroterii. According to this inscription, a tomb belonged to *Leophantos*, son of *Nanionos*, which was a citizen of *Olbia Polis*. The finds of 14<sup>th</sup> coins minted at Olbia, which were defined in Koshary settlement corroborate this inscription.

The funerary ritual was connected with placing the certain things in graves. The grave-gifts of the Koshary necropolis correspond with the traditional set of the Greek cemeteries: The vessels used for food and liquids storage (amphorae, jugs): the vessels used for drinking water and wine (*kylikes*, *kantharoi*); the vessels contained the aromatic substances (*lekythoi*, alabastra). Also, had been put in burial pit the weapon, household goods (domestic utensils) and adornings.

A settlement on the bank of Asiakos occupied the important geographical and political state at the Olbia polis. Its researching in broadens our conception of the culture, life, cults and religion of the north Black Sea littoral population and its relations with the Scythian ethnic component.