

# CHALCOLITHIC NECROPOLIS AT KAMENOVO VILLAGE, KUBRAT MUNICIPALITY, RAZGRAD DISTRICT. UNPUBLISHED FINDS

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**Cuvine cheie:** *necropolă, Chalcolithic, complexul cultural Kodzhadermen – Gumelnița – Karanovo VI.*

**Abstract:** *The tell in Kamenovo was studied by trenching at the end of the last century by I. Ivanov and L. Manolakakis. Cultural remains of the Late Chalcolithic Age are concerned. Considering the revealed finds and situations, the researchers state the thesis for the existence of a production center for flint cutlery in that place. During construction of contemporary buildings East of the tell skeleton remains were discovered, and finds were revealed in proximity to some of them. It probably concerns the necropolis of the settlement, located at a distance of around 80 m Northeast of the tell on a slope with Southwestern exposure. The article publishes and comments for the first time some of the destroyed graves with finds from the Chalcolithic necropolis in Kamenovo.*

**Rezumat:** *Tellul de la Kamenovo a fost cercetat la sfârșitul secolului trecut de I. Ivanov și L. Manolakakis. Acesta aparține Chalcolithicului târziu. Având în vedere descoperirile făcute și contextele evidențiate, cercetătorii înaintează ipoteza existenței în punctul amintit a unui centru de producție pentru unelte de silex. În timpul lucrărilor de ridicare a unor clădiri la est de tell au fost identificate resturi de schelete umane și alte descoperiri în apropiere de acestea. Probabil este vorba de necropola așezării, aflată la aproximativ 80 m nord-est de tell, pe o pantă orientată spre sud-vest. Articolul publică și comentează pentru prima dată câteva dintre mormintele cu inventar din necropola chalcolithică de la Kamenovo, morminte parțial distruse de intervențiile amintite.*

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The village of Kamenovo is situated in Northwestern Bulgaria close to the cities of Razgrad and Kubrat (Fig. 1). A large number of archaeological sites of different ages are there. Traces of human presence from Late Prehistory are inside the Chairlak cave, in 2 tells between the villages Topchii and Kamenovo, etc.<sup>1</sup>. In the center of the village, on the left riverbank of Topchiiska river there is a tell with 5 m thickness of the cultural layer and 80 m diameter at the basis (Fig. 2, 3.1). It was studied by trenching at the end of the past century by I. Ivanov and L. Manolakakis. Cultural remains from the Late Chalcolithic Age are concerned. Considering the revealed finds and situations, the researchers support the thesis for the existence of a production center for flint cutlery in that place<sup>2</sup>.

During the construction of contemporary buildings east of the tell, human skeleton remains and finds in proximity to some of them were discovered. It probably concerns a necropolis of the tell, located at a distance of about 80 m northeast of the tell, on a slope with southwestern exposure (Fig. 2, 3.2,3). First information for the site was given by K. and H. Skorpil, who also published some of the finds<sup>3</sup>. They are talking about Chalcolithic graves discovered in Kamenovo village area, Razgrad region, where stone and copper labor tools also originate from. There is also a published graphic image of a copper axe-hammer from there<sup>4</sup>. During the construction of the school building in the center of the village in 1910, the building of the Labor Cooperative Farm in 1961 and the building of the Community Center in 1967, other graves with inventory were discovered. A large number of flint labor tools and pieces were found on the terrain in question over the slope<sup>5</sup> (Fig. 3.2). Some of the discovered grave finds are kept in the Razgrad Regional Museum of History. Based on the inventory records, we managed to distinguish the finds from 3 different grave complexes, conditionally numbered by us in an ascending order.

The grave finds have direct parallels with similar ones from the Late Chalcolithic Age. They, mainly the copper items, can be dated in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the Kodzhadermen – Gumelnița – Karanovo VI cultural complex. Based on the published pottery material from the tell, as well as on a fragmented stone axe-hammer from the same place<sup>6</sup>, which is almost identical with the one from Grave № 1, we can presume that the destroyed graves belong to some of the last settlements of the Late Chalcolithic Age in the tell. The stone axe-hammer is a typical inventory piece for the Late Chalcolithic grave complexes in Northeastern Bulgaria and the Black Sea area. The copper axe-hammers of “Varna” type are grave finds, discovered in the necropolises of the Black Sea area – mainly in the Varna Chalcolithic necropolis<sup>7</sup> and are unknown for the necropolises of the Gumelnița and Kodzhadermen cultures area. The flat copper axe and the bracelet are typical for the necropolises from both geographical areas, but are traditionally

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<sup>1</sup> IVANOV 1984, p. 21-22.

<sup>2</sup> MANOLAKAKIS 2011, p. 233-240.

<sup>3</sup> SKORPIL & SKORPIL 1898, p. 6, 9, 81, 83, 85-87, 89, 92, 96, 99, 101, 102-104.

<sup>4</sup> SKORPIL & SKORPIL 1898, p. 104, Fig. 42.

<sup>5</sup> IVANOV 1984, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> MANOLAKAKIS 2011, p. 236, fig. 5, p. 237, fig. 6, p. 241, fig. 10.7.

<sup>7</sup> RUSEV *et alii* 2010, p. 25, Fig. 19.

a rare type of finds for Late Chalcolithic Age grave complexes. Here we should mark that generally the copper finds in grave complexes from the Late Chalcolithic Age on the territory of the Kodzhadermen – Gumelnița – Karanovo VI cultural complex are not widely spread in Bulgarian territories. Except for the finds in Kamenovo, there are only 14 graves with such finds, and the tendency is for placing 1 copper item inside, excepting one case, where there are 2 copper finds along with other items as grave inventory (grave № 25 from Golyamo Delchevo). In comparison, we see that at the Kamenovo necropolis we have at least two grave complexes, with 2 heavy copper tools in each and a total of 3 graves with Varna type copper axe-hammers<sup>8</sup>. This fact contrasts rapidly on the background of the others. It is visible that the number of copper finds from the necropolis in Kamenovo is around 1/3 of the other grave finds from the Late Chalcolithic Age in the Kodzhadermen – Gumelnița – Karanovo VI complex area, known until now. We cannot eliminate the possibility that here there could be a necropolis in Northeastern Bulgaria, similar to the one in Varna, concerning inventory richness and abundance. Regarding the vessels inside the graves, no comment would be possible at this stage.

Most likely, the number of destroyed graves has been much larger and there is a great possibility the larger part of them to have been without inventory – a characteristic feature mainly for the Gumelnița culture area<sup>9</sup>. If we presume that the axes are men's attribute and along with the other things they also have parade functions and are symbols for a higher social status (especially the copper ones), we can conduct the working conclusion that the three graves with the finds, listed here, have belonged to men with high status in the ancient tribal hierarchy. This conclusion is also reasonable on the background of the fact that during the Chalcolithic Age the region of Kamenovo, Topchii and Ravno has formed as a center for extraction of flint and production of flint labor tools. On the basis of a generated added product, different in size personal property, separate tribal groups have distinguished as a result of social stratification. Probably, a large part of the flint artifacts, found on the slope of the necropolis, are grave finds, placed with the deceased as an indicator for their public status.

Regarding the type of the site, commented here – it is clearly a flat necropolis; its location is different in percentage relation according to others known for the Late Chalcolithic Age in the territory of Northeastern Bulgaria and Muntenia – at east/northeast from the settlement. Such orientation is registered in only 3 of the studied necropolises so far – Binitsa, Mariuța – La Movilă and Gumelnița I<sup>10</sup>. All of the others have different diversions to the west. Its location on a slope/ridge of a slope, as well as its location on the same side of the river, where the tell is, integrates it in the known topography of the same sites type in the area of Kodzhadermen – Gumelnița – Karanovo VI cultural complex.

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<sup>8</sup> We also include in this number of graves the copper axe-hammer, published by Skorpil.

<sup>9</sup> Here we should note that the larger part of the studied graves of the Varna Chalcolithic necropolis have no inventory.

<sup>10</sup> LAZĂR 2011, p. 115, fig. 10a.

### Catalogue of the finds

#### *Grave № 1*

Discovered at a depth of 2.20 m from the surface during construction works.

1. Stone axe-hammer, made of grey rock, opening pierced in the widest section. Length: 14.3 cm, maximum width: 5.1 cm, thickness: 2.5 cm, diameter of the opening: 2 cm. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 591a (Fig. 4.1).

2. Copper bracelet, round cross section, sharpened and mismatching ends. Restored, patina removed. Diameter: 3.5 cm, weight: 5 gr. Discovered with the previous item in the same complex. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 591b (Fig. 4.2).

#### *Grave № 2*

Discovered at a depth of 2.20 m from the surface during construction works.

3. Flat copper axe with elongated trapezium shape and fan-shaped blade, Gumelnița type, Vinitsa version (following SCHUBERT 1965). Restored, patina removed. Length: 13.5 cm, width at the back side: 1.8 cm, weight: 358 gr. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 604 (Fig. 4.3).

4. Axe-hammer, copper, "Varna" type (following SCHUBERT 1965), in the upper part – trapezium shape, in the lower part – shape of an isosceles triangle, an opening pierced in the widest part, arc-shaped longitudinal section and fan-shaped blade. Fragmented at the widest part, restored, patina removed. Length: 20.2 cm, width: 3 cm, diameter of the opening: 2 cm, weight: 479 gr. Discovered along with the previous item inside the same complex. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 603 (Fig. 4.4).

#### *Grave № 3*

Discovered at a depth of 1 m from the surface during construction works.

5. Axe-hammer, copper, "Varna" type (after SCHUBERT 1965), in the upper part – trapezium shape, in the lower part – shape of an isosceles triangle, opening pierced in the widest section, arc-shaped longitudinal section and fan-shaped blade. Restored, patina removed. Length: 16.8 cm, width: 2.4 cm, diameter of the opening: 1.8 cm, weight: 325 gr. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 592 (Fig. 4.5).

6. Ceramic vessel, well baked, fragmented, polished surface. Lower cone-shaped part, the middle is protuberant, and the upper – cylindrical, concave bottom. Decoration of graphite. Sizes: height: 6 cm, diameter at the mouth: 6.3 cm, diameter at the bottom: 2.7 cm. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 593<sup>11</sup>.

7. Ceramic vessel, fragmented. Lower cone-shaped part, the middle is protuberant, and the upper – cylindrical, concave bottom. Sizes: diameter at the bottom: 2.6 cm. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 594.

8. 2 pieces, fragments of a thick-wall vessel with biconic shape, polished

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<sup>11</sup> The vessels of the graves have not been identified in the collection and therefore their images are not listed here.

surface. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 595.

9. 2 pieces, fragments of a thick-wall vessel, its lower part has the shape of a truncated cone, middle protuberant and upper cylindrical part. The rim is profiled on the outside. Polished surface, the upper part of the vessel is decorated with graphite. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 596.

10. 2 pieces, fragments of a large flat vessel, polished surface, color – black. Razgrad Regional Museum of History, inventory no. 597.

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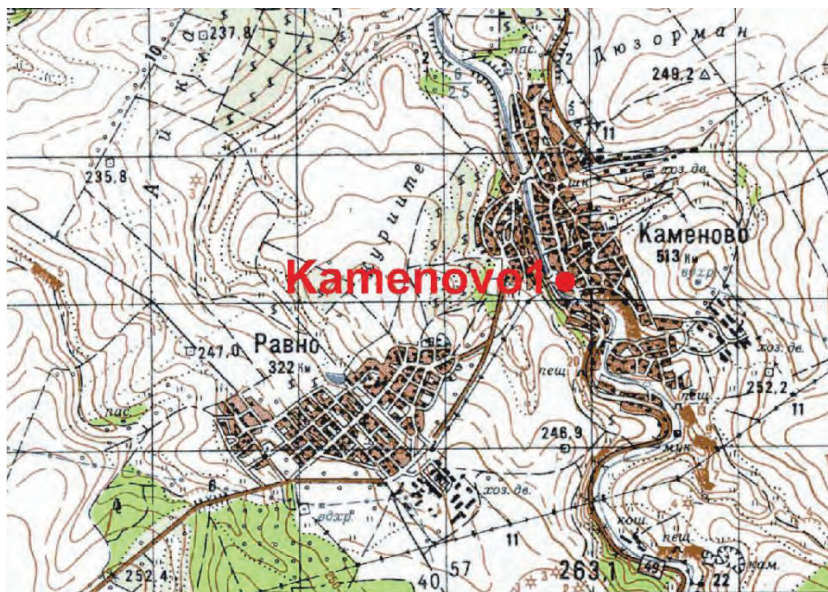
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Fig. 1



1



2

Fig. 2



1



2



3

Fig. 3



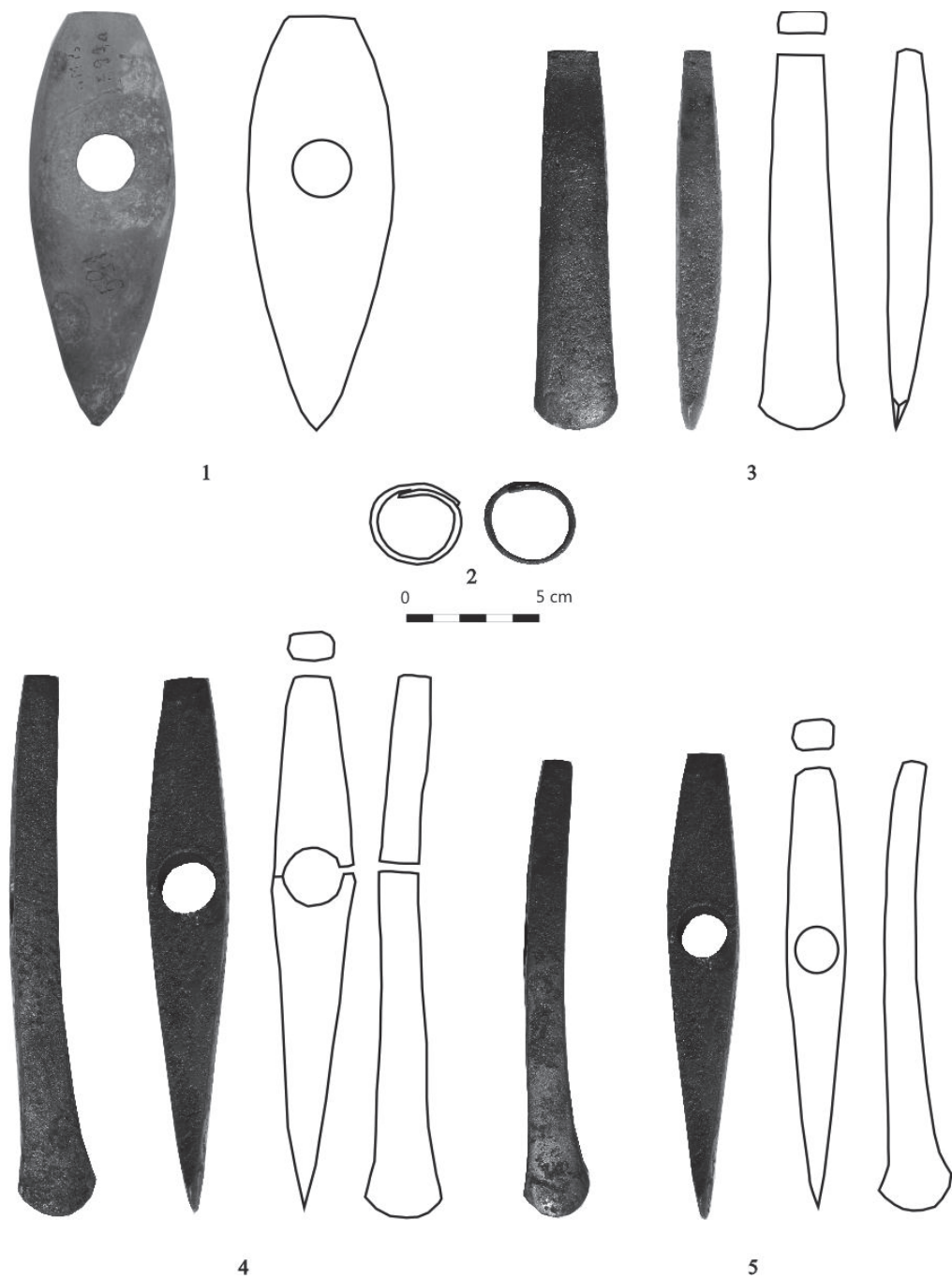


Fig. 4