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THE POLISH-UKRAINIAN EXCAVATION AT KOSHARY
(ODESSA PROVINCE) – SEASON 2004*

(PL. 111-120)

In 2004 a Polish-Ukrainian archaeological expedition, organized by the Jagiellonian University Institute of Archaeology and the Archaeological Museum of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Odessa, continued fieldwork in the seventh season of excavations at the Koshary site in the Odessa district¹. The Polish section of the expedition directed by E. Papuci-Władyka worked from July 17 to August 14, 2004. Supervising particular squares were members of the Institute staff: J. Bodzek and W. Machowski, assisted by doctoral candidates A. Kowal, M. Kania, M. Woźniak and 16 student-trainees from the Jagiellonian University Institute of Archaeology (plus student-volunteers)². Also participating in the excavations were J. Martynowicz and K. Matys from the Anthropology Department of Jagiellonian University, both charged with the study of the skeletal material. The Ukrainian part of the expedition directed by E. F. Redina from the Archaeological Museum in Odessa included as team members student-trainees from the University in Odessa and from the University in Kishiniov (Moldavia), as well as N. Meteevici of the Kishiniov Historical Museum.

The complex of ancient sites near the modern village of Koshary³ is situated about 40 km east of Odessa, west of the mouth of the Tiligulskii Liman (ancient Axiakos), where it flows into the Black Sea (Fig. 1). It occupies a promontory which juts high above the coastal terrace now some 700 m away from the modern shoreline and which is connected with an adjoining upland crest. The promontory rises some 25 m above the present-day

surface of the broad, mud-filled mouth of the Liman. The ancient complex comprises chiefly the remains of a settlement (town) with stone architecture recognizable on ground surface, situated at the highest point of the promontory (Fig. 2). The slope of the promontory, which falls away steeply on the east and south limited the spread of the settlement in this direction, while on the southwest there was a deep gorge. At the southeastern end of the promontory and already below its plateau, there was an open area occupied by an open offering altar (Rus. *zol'nik* similar to Greek *eschara*). At the opposite northwestern end of the promontory, the plateau joins an extensive upland crest where the settlement's vast burial ground was located.

The site is excellent ground for comprehensive scientific research. It was presumably part of the territory of the city-state of Olbia, which was among the most powerful of the Greek Black Sea colonies (Fig. 1). A key objective of the investigations is to understand the status of the Koshary complex in the agricultural *chora* of Olbia, as well as in the Olbian state structure. Of equal importance is the task of gaining insight into the relations between the community of Black Sea Greeks and the indigenous, mainly Scythian tribes. The expedition is working partly as a salvage team, hoping against hope to win the race with very diligent modern robbers. Based on the work conducted to date, it is to be supposed that the origins of the Koshary site lie in the late 5th - early 4th century and that the settlement remained in existence until around the mid-3rd century B.C.

* The results of the Koshary archaeological expedition in the 2004 season were presented at the annual conference of the Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology, held in Warsaw on 8 December 2004.

The photographs for this article were made by W. Machowski and E. Papuci-Władyka, the drawings come from Koshary Archive, computer elaboration by U. Bąk.

¹ See preliminary reports concerning the work of the expedition: J. CHOCHOROWSKI, E. PAPUCI-WŁADYKA, E.F. REDINA, *Polish-Ukrainian Archaeological Research of Ancient Settlement and Necropolis in Koshary, Odessa district. Preliminary Report* [Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization, vol. 9], Kraków 1999, p. 55-63; iidem, *Polsko-ukraińskie badania wykopaliskowe zespołu stanowisk z okresu antycznego w miejscowości Koşary koło Odessy* [Materiały i Sprawozdania Rzeszowskiego Ośrodka

Archeologicznego, vol. 21], Rzeszów 2000, p. 185-202; iidem, *Polnische-ukrainische Ausgrabungen an dem antiken Fundstellenkomplex von Koşary bei Odessa* [in:] *Recherches archéologiques de 1993-1998*, J. Blajer, J. Poleski eds, Kraków 2004, p. 243-265; E. PAPUCI-WŁADYKA et al., *Koshary: Greek Settlement on the Northern Black Sea Coast. Polish-Ukrainian excavations in the 2001-2003 seasons (Preliminary report)*, *EtTrav* 29, 2005, p. 193-234 (with further references: 194 note 2 and 203 note 16).

² Student trainees: M. Czarnowicz, M. Czech, A. Drzymuchowska, A. Fedorowicz, D. Gołębiewska, U. Gorczyca, M. Jedličkova, E. Kostro, K. Mirczak, B. Miska, P. Nalepa, A. Ochał, M. Pilch, M. Stachowski, S. Stelmach, P. Surówka; student-volunteers: L. Duda, K. Gazda, T. Gerjatowicz-Ćwiok, U. Longa, G. Łączek, J. Trojan, B. Rułka.

³ Koshary belongs to the Kominternovskii district of Odessa.

During the 2004 excavation season, the expedition conducted work in all the constituent parts of the site, that is, in the settlement, at the *zol'nik* site and in the cemetery.

Settlement

Explorations were continued in trenches III and VI dug by Ukrainian archaeologists, and in trenches VII and VIII assigned to the Polish part of the expedition.

Based on the results of fieldwork in 2003 and 2004, the settlement at Koshary can now be considered as a small town. Its center is presumed to have been located in the northeastern part of the promontory, on naturally elevated ground, where architectural remains have been discovered in trenches III (still in exploration), IV (excavated in 1998-2002) and VII (opened in 2002). The town was presumably fortified on the west with a wall and embankment following a roughly NE-SW line. "Suburbs" comprising single households, such as Farm 1 excavated in trench VI, appear to have existed outside the town center. The features uncovered in trench VIII may have also constituted a suburb of the town, although until the explorations are completed this interpretation is provisional at best.

Trench III. A 100 m² area of the town is being explored in trench III (Fig. 3). To date, the architectural remains uncovered in this area include a cobbled floor of a house or courtyard, and a pit, the lower parts of which are on the same level with a sunken hut investigated in previous seasons. The hut was found to be filled with stones, presumably coming from the collapsed stonewalls. Near the cobbled pavement and level with it, excavators uncovered fragments of a storage amphora; somewhat further south, they came across a big pithos, which must have been originally sunk partly into the occupational level.

In the sections of trench III investigated in 2000, remains of a wall provisionally designated as a "defensive structure" were recorded. A continuation of this wall had been expected in the western part of the trench, excavated in the 2004 season, but no traces of any construction of the kind were found. House walls were discovered instead, obviously extending beyond the northern trench wall. Consequently, it is now clear that the northern extent of the settlement has not been reached as yet. Not far is a depression in the ground in the form of a not very deep gorge, which is presumed to be a natural limit for the architecture. In order to establish the northern confines of the town, more work needs to be done, extending squares in trench III in this direction.

Trench VII. The discoveries made in trench VII appear to confirm the presence of the above-mentioned "defense embankment" separating the center of the town located on the northeastern end of the promontory from the so-called "suburbs". Work was continued in squares 1 and 2, both of which had been not finished in 2003. Another four squares were traced this year (nos. 3-6), but

only nos. 3 and 6 were opened. Altogether an area of 100 m² was explored (Fig. 4).

Square 1 yielded typical domestic pits (nos. 1-6). Finds were not prolific from the fill of these pits: primarily household amphorae and handmade pottery, animal bones, organic remains, grass included.

In **square 2** work continued on cleaning and recording successive levels of a stone tumble discovered in the western part of the square. The tumble took on the shape of an irregular semicircle and consisted of stone blocks of varying size, from small to very big. It found its continuation in the newly opened square no. 3 (west of square 2), thus providing a full view of this feature, which was designated as no. 1. It was roughly round in plan, the diameter being over 3 m, and at the level at which it was discovered (level K in square 2) it was covered with stones forming a kind of pavement (intentional?) (Fig. 5). Feature 1 was sectioned and explored in the southern part to a maximum depth of 3.80 m (Fig. 6). Time was lacking to explore also the northern part of the feature during the present season. The fill in the southern part did not contain anything much apart from the shards of a storage amphora. The function of feature 1 has not been determined as yet. It may have been a big domestic bin (for grain?). Exploration of the northern part of the feature, scheduled for 2005, may bring some conclusive evidence for its function.

Apart from feature 1 described above, digging in **square 3** revealed color-differentiated bands of soil characterized by varying consistency (Fig. 4, 5) running parallel to the said "defense embankment" (discovered in squares 1 and 2 in previous years; Fig. 4). These are most likely the remains of a ditch. Square 3 was explored down to level G. Finds were abundant, mostly amphora shards (including stamped amphora handles) and handmade pottery, not to mention animal osteological remains.

Similar bands of soil of varying color and consistency, six altogether, were observed in **square 6** on level D. They are presumed to correspond to ancient ditches. The square was dug to level E and is scheduled to be continued in 2005.

Turning now to the "suburbs", we shall begin the report with the results of digging in **trench VI** situated in the southwestern part of the promontory. Work continued on Farm no. 1 (Russian *usad'ba* 1) and adjacent domestic structures, which have been under excavation since 2002. The square was extended to the north, south and east, the total trench area now covering 375 m², of which 175 m² was investigated in 2004 (Fig. 7). A large number of domestic pits were discovered, some with stones lining the opening, traced at the level of discovery. The exploration of the hut investigated in previous seasons was also completed, discovering in its fill traces of a conflagration. As stated above, was also continued on Farm 1, part of which extends in an easterly direction. The finds include large quantities of pottery, including

handmade pottery and amphorae, some of which were stamped (from Tauric Chersonessos among others). A bronze coin, presumably an Olbian “Boristhenes”, was discovered in one of the pits. Coins of this kind are generally dated to ca. 330-250 B.C.⁴

In **trench VIII** three new squares were opened, nos. 3, 4 and 5, adjacent on the north with squares 1 and 2, which had been explored in the previous season. Newly discovered features, walls and pits were numbered continuously with regard to the documentation of squares 1 and 2 from 2003. In **squares 3 and 4**, the most important feature was the partly explored feature 6 found in square 2 in 2003. Unfortunately, robbers have destroyed part of the feature extending north of square 2, although fortuitously they did not reach virgin soil and hence did not damage the entire structure. Feature 6 may be deemed part of a domestic structure of some kind. A walled rectangular room was cleared (the northern wall probably damaged by modern robbers) revealing an entrance from the south (**Fig. 8**). Inside it, the most important discovery was a big oven, presumably intended for drying grain. The hearth was constructed of flat stones laid either flat or on end, forming a kind of box, on top of which smaller stones of regular oval shape had been placed and covered with a layer of gravel to form a floor. It remains a moot point whether feature 6 was an independent structure or functioned within some household unit.

The northern part of feature 4 in **square 3** was also explored (the southern end having been excavated in 2003). Initially round in plan, the feature turned into a ditch lower down. At level I (ca. 160 cm depth), it took on the form of a regular ditch running SE-NW, filled with dark brown deposits mixed with local nummulithic limestone and clay-floor fragments. A continuation of the ditch at the same level was recorded in square 4 (west of square 3), where it formed a shallow but regular trench (about 25 cm deep). The ditch was perfectly visible in the north trench wall section of square 4, thus indicating that it will be continued to the northwest of the settlement. An extension of the trench to the north will be required in order to explore it in full. A concentric ring of stones was recorded inside feature 4 on level E, and inside this ring of stones a virtually whole big wheel-made bowl with two horizontal handles turned upward (**Fig. 9**) along with amphora and tableware shards.

In **square 5** two regular round features, nos. 8 and 9 (sunken huts?) were explored. The former turned out to be later, as it partly cuts into no. 9. At a depth of ca. 180 cm, feature no. 9 took on the form of a narrow ditch disappearing into the west baulk of the square.

Finds from trench VIII included, among others, four coins. Of these, three were discovered in features 8 and 4. Two have provisionally been identified as belonging to the “Boristhenes” issue (ca. 330-250 B.C.). The third is too corroded to be identified. Another “Boristhenes” was uncovered in layer E-F of square 5.

All squares in trench VIII finished being explored in 2004. In the coming season, the trench will be extended to the north and west in the direction of trench VII in order to search for the mutual relations between the features discovered in the two trenches, the presumed ditches in particular, which may have some connection with the alleged “defense embankment”. It remains to be seen whether the architecture in trench VIII is still part of the city center or already a section of the “suburbs”. Work in the future season is scheduled to address this issue.

Zol'nik

The *zol'nik*, which is investigated by the Ukrainian part of the expedition, is an open altar for offerings, represented in the archaeological record by a mound of successive layers of offerings burnt on the spot over a long period of time (**Fig. 2**). The mound is oval in shape at the base (ca. 20 m by 30 m in size, maximum preserved height being ca. 2.5 m). Its central section was explored, work of the previous season being completed this year and new sections of the mound being opened as well (**Fig. 10**). Pits were among the features recorded this year. The typical *zol'nik* includes mostly pottery and other clay objects (loom-weights, spindle whorls etc.), as well as metal items (lead, iron and bronze etc.) Terracotta figurines are seldom found; hence this year's discovery was quite a sensation. One of the pits yielded a fragmentary figurine of a seated woman with a *kalathos* basket next to her right foot and a thread running across her right knee to a spindle (?) held in her left hand. The terracotta presumably represented one of the Moiras, spinners of human fate.

⁴ On the classification and dating of Olbian “Boristhenes”, cf. P.O. KARYSHKOVSKII, *Ol'viiskie “Borispheny”*, Numizmatika i Sphragistika 3, Kiev 1968, p. 62-85; idem, *Monety Ol'vii*, Kiev 1988, p. 80 sq.; idem, *Monetnoe delo i denezhnoe obrashchene Ol'vii*, Odessa 2002, p. 167 sq.; Pls. XII=B-XV=C, CXXI-CLXI; a different dating of this type to ca. 350-275 B.C. was

suggested recently by S.G. DEM'ANČUK and E. JA. TUROV-SKII, (*O vremeni chekanki ol'viiskikh “borisfenov”* [in:] *Sed'maya Vserossiiskaya Numizmaticheskaya Konferenciya*, Moskva 1999, p. 19-20); in Polish literature, cf. M. MIELCZAREK, *Olbijskie monety z głową boga rzeki Borysthenes*, Łódzki Numizmatyk 21, 1992, p. 17-22.

Necropolis

Explorations of the ancient burial ground belonging to the Koshary settlement and situated some 600-700 m to the north of the site are conducted by the Polish and Ukrainian teams jointly (Fig. 11). In 2004, close to 800 m² were explored, discovering and clearing only 14 tombs, relatively little compared to previous seasons. This may be due to the presence of tumuli in the area now under investigation and the rule was for few other burials to be made around such sepulchral mounds.

As in previous seasons, the tombs discovered this year fell into three categories: pit burials, niche tombs and chamber tombs (also called in Russian "catacombs"). Niche tombs were the most popular (Fig. 12). They consisted of a vertical entrance shaft, a niche for the body and a wall-barrier separating the entrance shaft from the niche. Usually these walls were built of slabs of the local nummulithic limestone, often salvaged from the ruins of the settlement, set at an angle against the opening of the niche (Fig. 13). Sandstone slabs were used more rarely, as were sun-dried mud bricks or more precisely briquettes.

Large chamber tombs (Fig. 14) consisted of a deep entrance shaft and a big chamber excavated in bedrock. The chamber was separated from the entrance shaft by a screening wall, as in the niche tombs, except that here mud bricks or stones or stone slabs were laid flat in horizontal courses. All kinds of buttresses and additional, secondary walls were also used.

Simple pit burials were the third type (Fig. 15), possessing no additional structures around the more or less rectangular pit. Occasionally, however, a stone "pavement" can be observed covering the burial.

In previous years the unlooted tombs yielded sizable quantities of grave goods, which, while not very rich in most cases, consisted mostly of a few clay pots and elements of weaponry and ornaments. Predominant among the pottery were amphorae, most frequently originating from Pontic Heraclea, Thasos and Sinope, and Athenian tableware imports in the form of black-glaze vessels, chiefly *kantharoi*, cups and small bowls. Also encountered among the grave goods were squat *lekythoi* and *unguentaria*, both intended for unguents and fragrant oils, and the gray ware wheel-made pottery so characteristic of the Black Sea littoral: jugs, cups and so-called fishplates. Weaponry is represented mainly by bronze arrowheads, other types of weapons, like iron daggers, being less

frequent. The ornaments recorded in the burials include glass beads, bronze bracelets, earrings and pendants. Ornaments of silver and gold are rather exceptional.

Most of the tombs discovered in 2004 proved to be plundered already in Antiquity. Three of the burials are noteworthy for their general character as well as the grave goods found with them.

Chamber tomb no. 249 proved extremely interesting. For the first time in the necropolis at Koshary a stepped *dromos* was found leading down to the burial chamber (Fig. 16). About 3 m long, the *dromos* consisted of six irregular steps cut in the loess virgin soil. The female buried in this tomb was found in a sitting position, not laid out horizontally as was the practice recorded hitherto. Analysis of the position of the bones suggested that the body had leaned against a stone wall separating the *dromos* from the burial chamber. Presumably soon after the burial, this partition wall collapsed, crushing the body. Her grave goods included a small *unguentarium* for storing fragrance, a spindle whorl, bronze earring and glass beads (Fig. 17).

One of the best furnished tombs discovered in 2004 was the niche tomb no. 252. A small wall of three slabs of local nummulithic limestone separated the shaft from the niche. The dead woman had been buried in supine position, head to the east. Her grave goods included a gray-clay jug, black-glaze bowl and small *oinochoe*-jug with trefoil rim, small iron knife, pin and a bronze ring (Fig. 18).

Similarly as in previous years, the number of child burials discovered was relatively big, again emphasizing the exceptional character of the Koshary burial ground in this respect. One of these child tombs was a small pit burial no. 255 which yielded a necklace of glass beads (Fig. 19). The bones, presumably of an infant, were not preserved.

The finds from the tombs overall did not differ from the assemblage recorded in previous seasons. These were chiefly clay pots, including toilet vessels, jewelry mostly in the form of glass beads, also spindle whorls, needles (of bronze and iron), and small iron knives.

Judging by the material recorded to date, the cemetery at Koshary was in use from the very late 5th century to the middle of the 3rd century B.C., corresponding very well to the settlement chronology of the nearby town site.

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SUMMARY

In 2004, a Polish-Ukrainian archaeological expedition organized jointly by the Institute of Archaeology of Jagiellonian University and the Archaeological Museum of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences in Odessa continued investigations of the Koshary site in Odessa district. The seventh season of excavations was co-directed by E. Papuci-Władyka and E. F. Redina. As in previous years, work continued in all the separate identified parts of the site: the settlement, open-air altar (Rus. *zol'nik*, Gr. *eschara*) and necropolis.

In the area of the settlement, trenches III, VI, VII and VIII continued to be explored. Based on the expedition's results, Koshary may be deemed a small town. The main part of the town, which incorporated the architectural remains discovered in trenches III, IV (dug in 1998-2002) and VII (traced in 2002), lay in the northeastern end of the promontory, on naturally high ground, probably defended by a wall on the west (in trench III) and a rampart running in a NE-SW line (in trench VII). Outside this part, we are probably dealing with a "suburb" consisting of individual farms, such as the one investigated in trench VI. The features excavated in trench VIII may have also belonged to the "suburbs", but until the work is completed in this area the conclusions can be considered as preliminary at best. Trench VII proved particularly interesting – an unusual pit was discovered and

only partly excavated due to its size: 3 m in diameter and 3.80 m in depth. Of the features explored in trench VIII, an exceptionally well preserved hearth for drying grain (?) was the most distinctive element.

The *zol'nik* has been investigated only in its central part so far. The open-air altar takes on the form of an oval mound (ca. 20 by 30 m, preserved maximum height of ca. 2.5 m) formed of layers of ashes from the offerings made over a long period of time. Previously dug trenches were now completed and new trenches were opened. Pits were found, including one containing a terracotta figurine presumably representing one of the Fates.

In the necropolis situated a few hundred meters to the north of the settlement, an area of ca. 600 m² was explored revealing a surprisingly small number of structures compared to previous years. Most of the 14 tombs discovered appear to have been plundered already in Antiquity. One of the chamber tombs (249) proved interesting because of its unusual form. It is the first funerary structure at Koshary to have a stepped dromos leading to the burial chamber. The six irregular steps of the dromos, measuring some 3 m in length, were cut in a layer of virgin loess. The body of the dead woman buried in this tomb was not laid out flat, as in previously investigated burials, but was placed in a seated position.

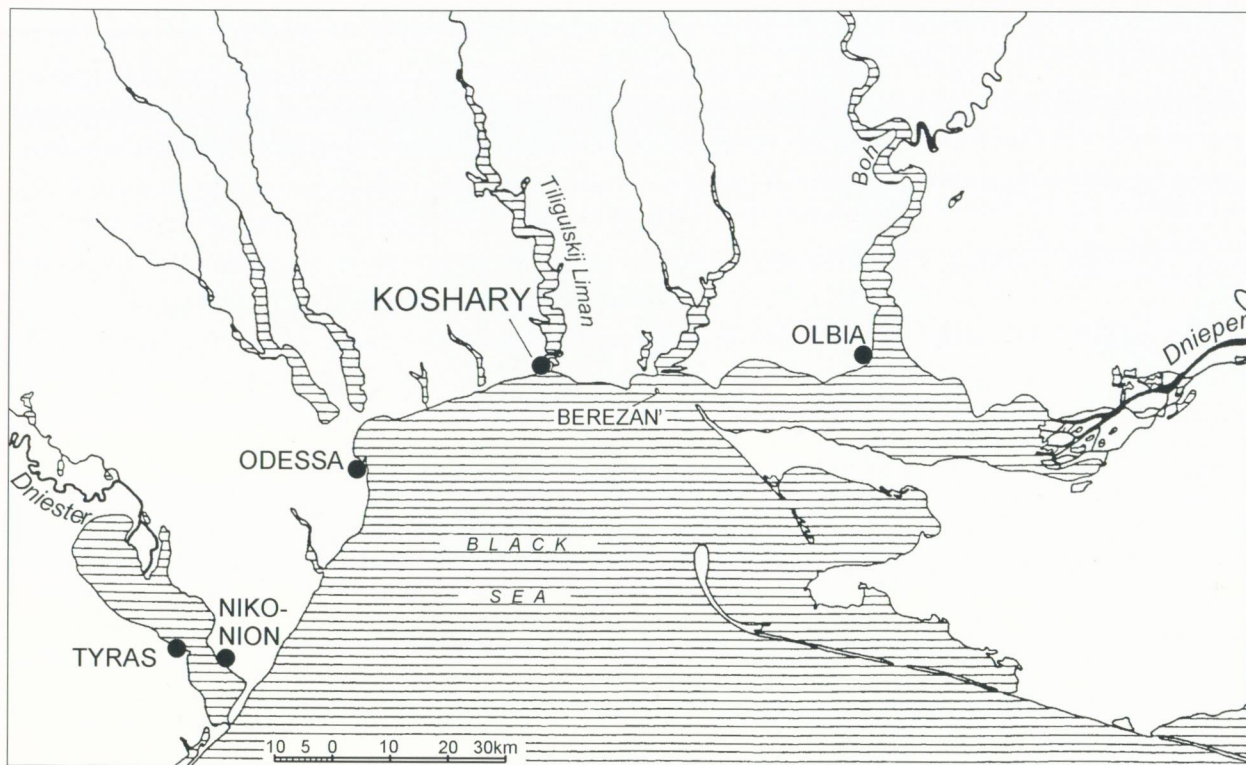


Fig. 1. Koshary site on the northern shores of the Black Sea



Fig. 2. Koshary, general view of the site with the *zol'nik* in the foreground, trenches III and IV visible in the middle ground and the Tiligul'skii Liman in the background

PLATE 112



Fig. 3. Settlement – trench III, general view in the 2004 field season

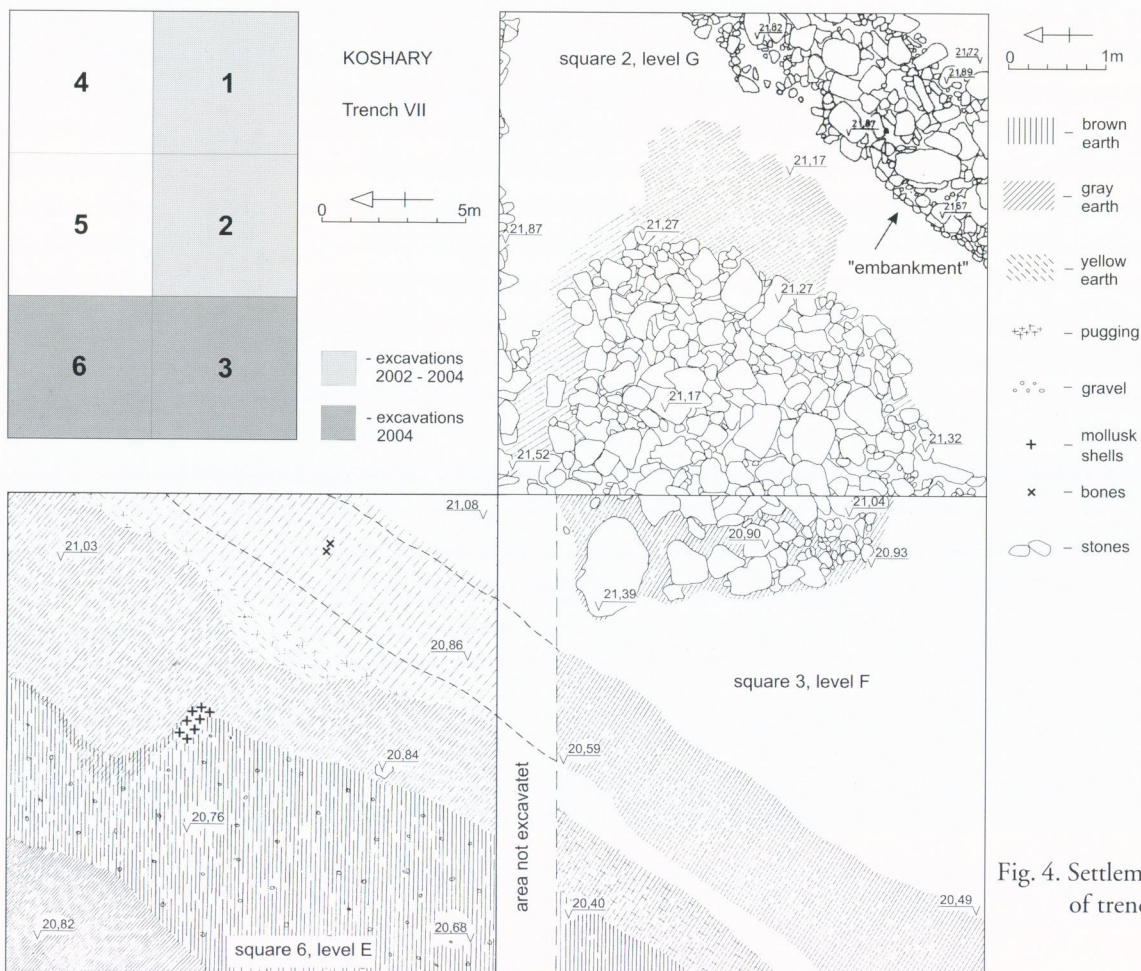


Fig. 4. Settlement – plan of trench VII



Fig. 5. Settlement – trench VII, Feature 1 before exploration

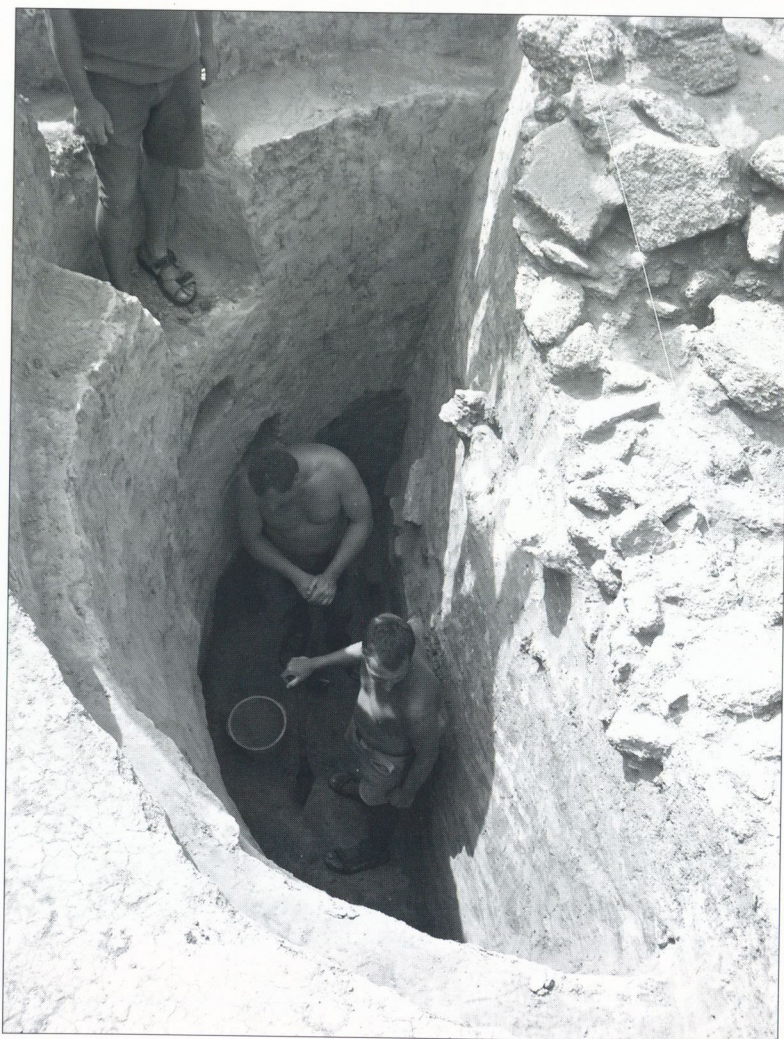


Fig. 6. Settlement – trench VII, Feature 1 during exploration

PLATE 114



Fig. 7. Settlement – trench VI, general view

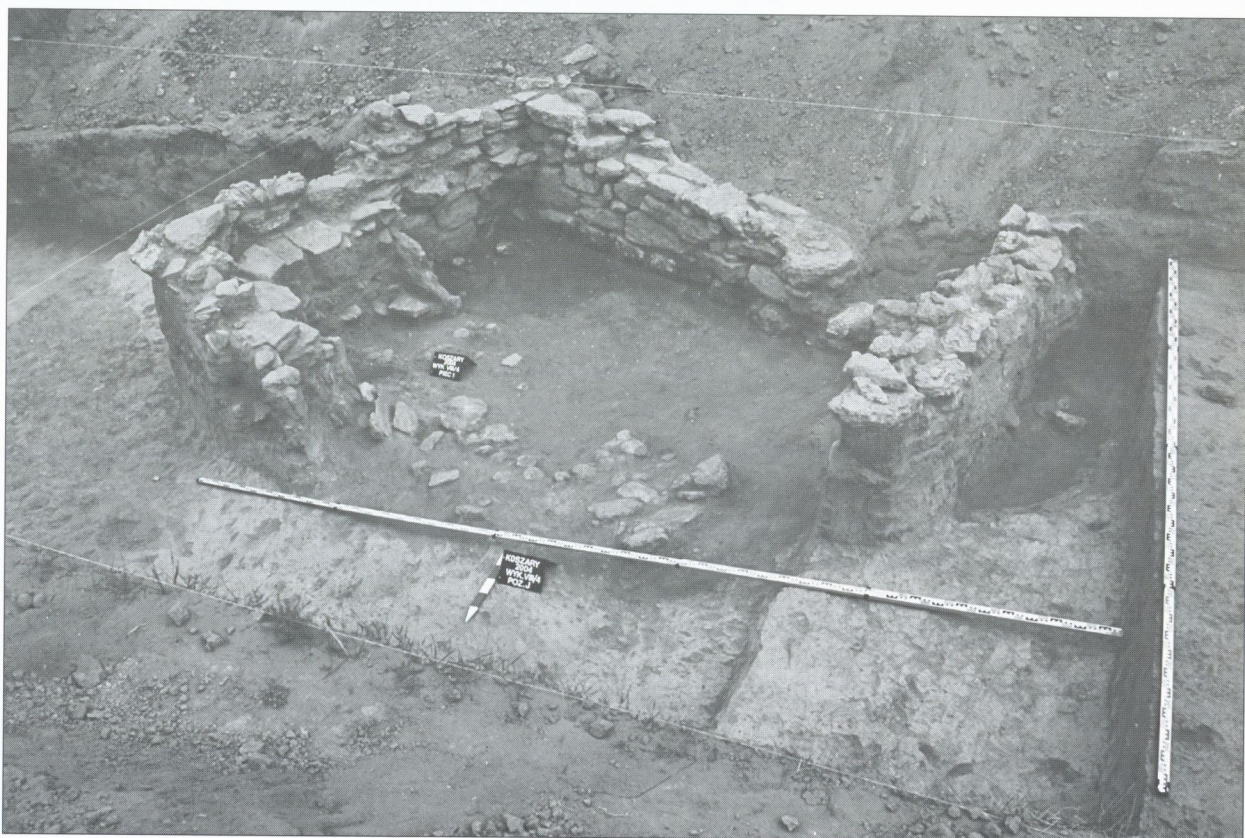


Fig. 8. Settlement – trench VIII, Feature 6 with the hearth



Fig. 9. Settlement – trench VIII, bowl with two handles from Feature 4



Fig. 10. *Zol'nik* – trenches dug in 2004

PLATE 116



Fig. 11. Necropolis – general view during explorations in 2004



Fig. 12. Necropolis – niche tomb no. 244



Fig. 13. Necropolis – niche tomb no. 252
– closing wall

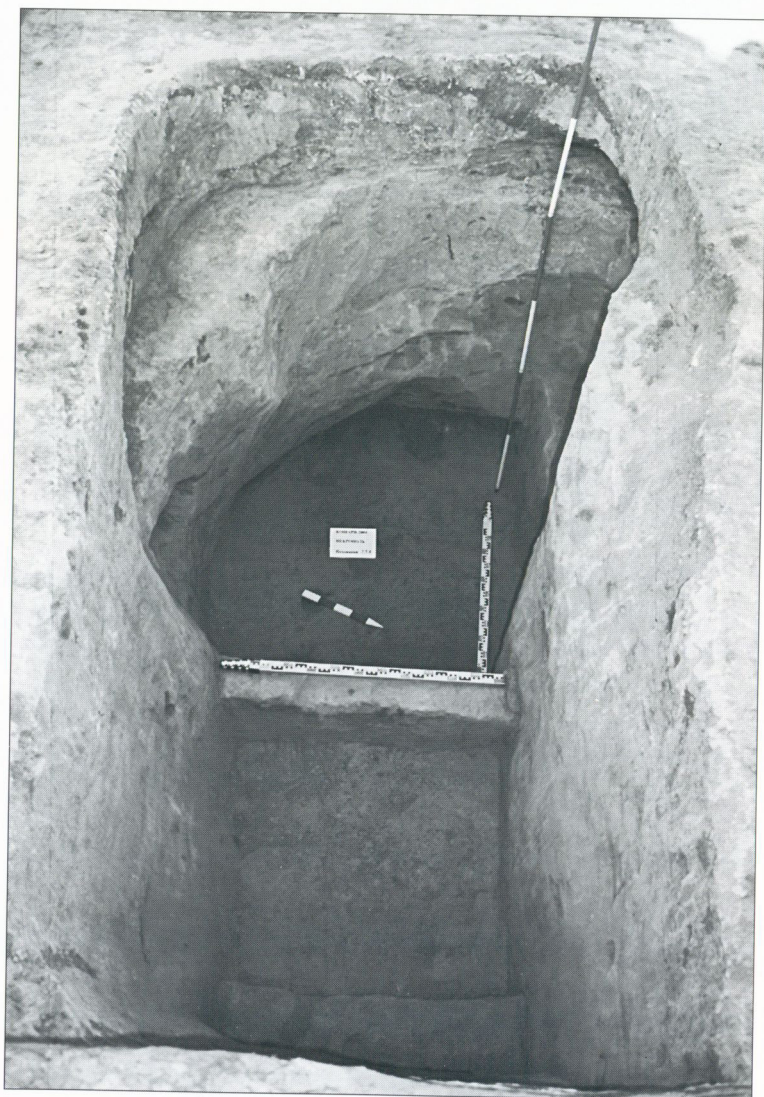


Fig. 14. Necropolis – chamber tomb no. 254

PLATE 118

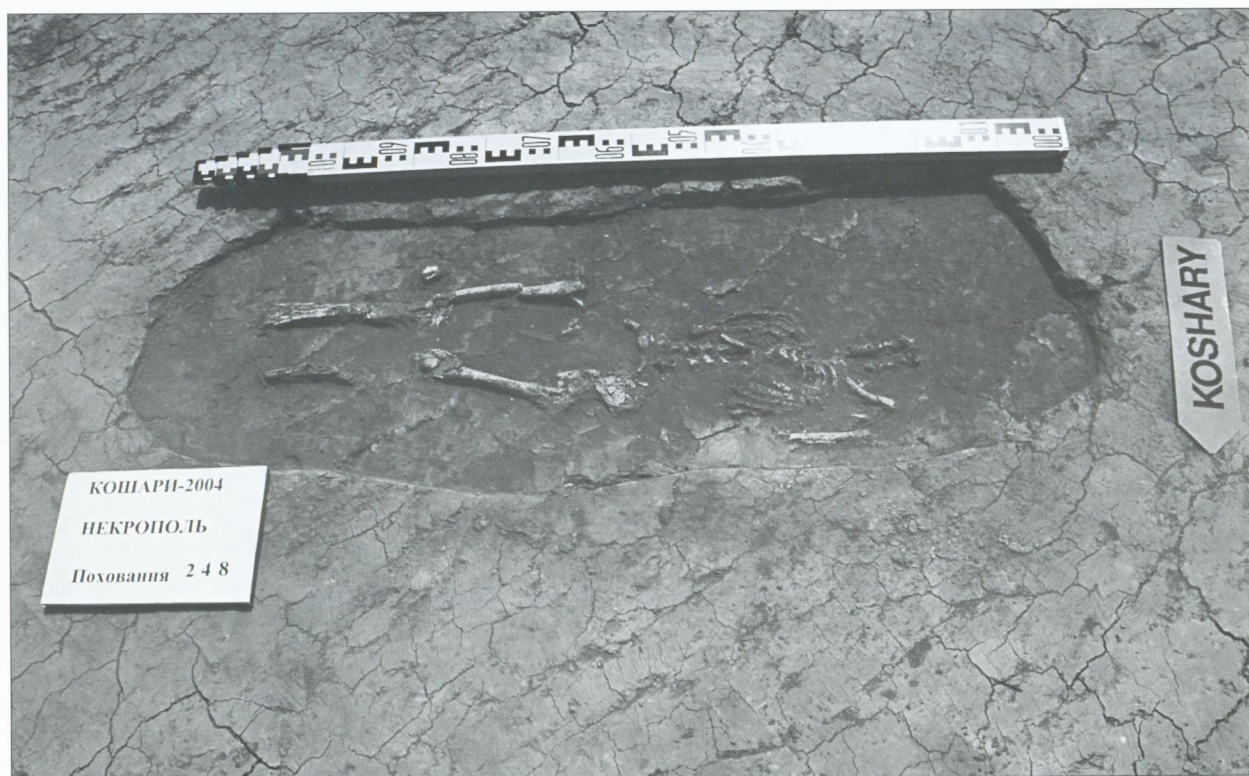


Fig. 15. Necropolis – pit tomb no. 248



Fig. 16. Necropolis – chamber tomb no. 249
– general view

Fig. 17. Necropolis – chamber tomb no. 249 – grave goods

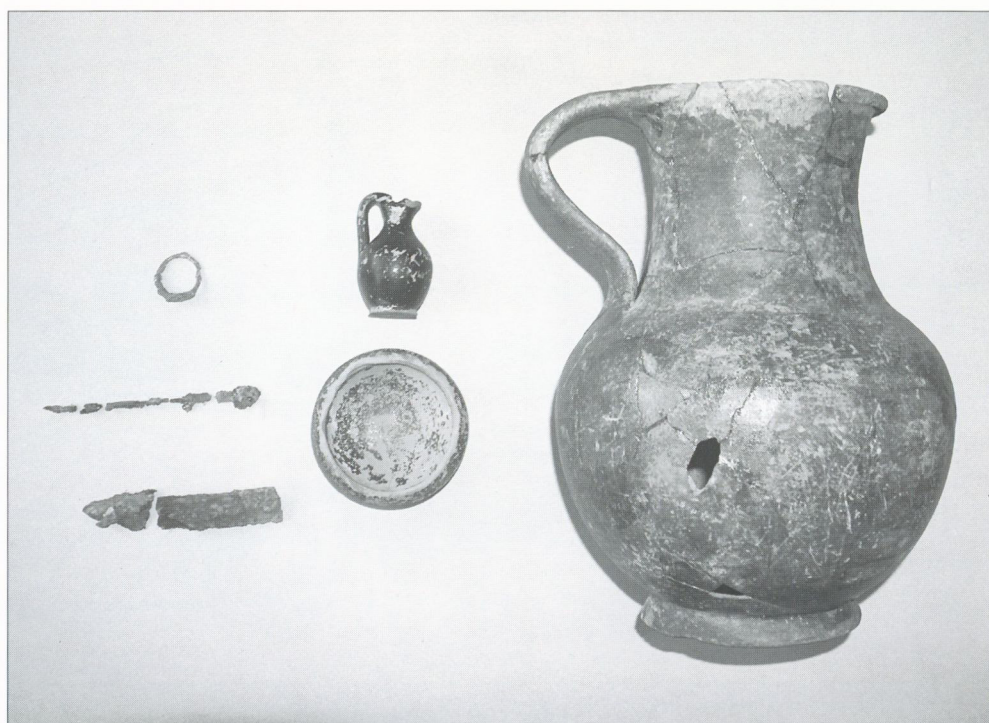
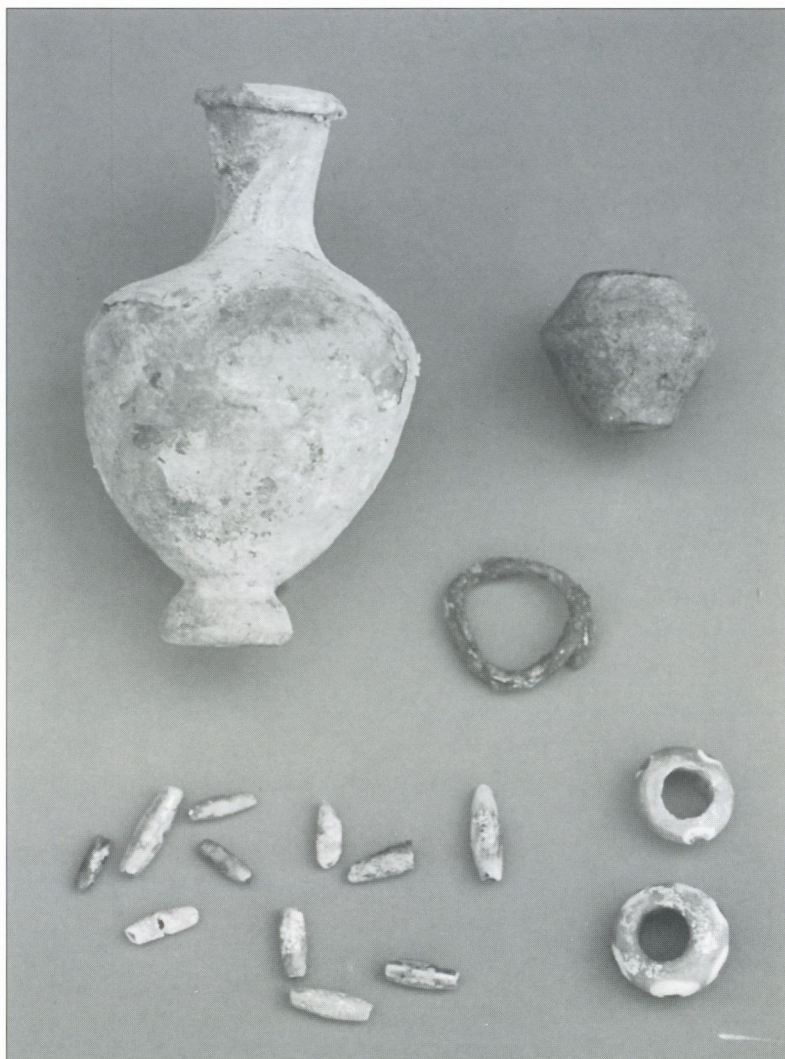


Fig. 18. Necropolis – niche tomb no. 252 – grave goods

PLATE 120



Fig. 19. Necropolis – pit tomb no. 255 – grave goods