

### ***Stop 3/3. Koshary***

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The history of ancient Greek cities (colonies) of the Black Sea coast is an important component of Northern Black Sea Coast history in the second half of the 1st millennium BCE. The ancient poleis of the Northern Pontus are, undoubtedly, not only Ukraine's pride, but also that of European culture in general (Symonovich, 1964; Diamant, 1969; Redina, and Chochorowski, 2001).

The complex of ancient sites near the modern village of Koshary (Fig. 34-39) represents one of the most important monuments of the Odessa region. It is situated around 40 km east of Odessa on the coast of Tiligulsky estuary and was named Asiak in ancient times. The small town arose at the end of the 5th century BCE and lasted until the beginning of the 3rd century BCE. The entire territory covers more than 11 hectares, and a defensive wall encloses 7.5 of them.

The site occupies a high promontory and neighboring plateau, now situated some 700 m from the present coastline and standing around 25 m above the level of the wide, silted- up liman delta. The main part of the complex was a settlement (small town) located on the top of the promontory, where the remains of stone architecture can still be seen on the surface. Steep slopes delimited the town on the west and south; to the southwest, there was a deep ravine. An open-air ash mound altar -Greek *eschara*, Russian *zol'nik*- can be seen in the field on the southeastern edge of the promontory, somewhat below the plateau. To the northwest, this plateau gives way to an extensive hilltop occupied by a fairly large necropolis.

As a result of excavation, the remains of a defensive wall have been found, as well as building complexes, cellars, and streets. Ashy hill - a sanctuary located on the southern suburb of the settlement, was partially investigated. In 2005, on the promontory of the natural shoreline 1.5 km southeast of the hillfort, an underground cemetery dated to the late Eneolithic - Early Bronze Age was opened. Excavation of this necropolis continues. At the present, 260 funeral and cult constructions of antiquity are being investigated.

The siting of the cemetery and small settlement of Eneolithic - Bronze Age date as well as the settlement of Golden Horde age south of the ancient site confirms the advantageous location and its continued utilization over time. Finds from the Koshary excavations are stored at Odessa Archaeological Museum of the National Academy of Science of Ukraine.

#### ***Role of **natural** factors (relief and microrelief) in foundation of archaeological complex of Ancient time next to Koshary village***

The archaeological complex of Koshary village is among the most interesting archaeological sites of Odessa region. Its investigation started in 1954 and, with interruptions, they are continuing. Last year's archaeologists from Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland) and the Department of Archaeology and Ethnology of Ukraine of Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University are taking part in this excavation.

The unique importance of this monument is that it includes the remains of an ancient settlement with its cemetery, which opens the possibility to revise many disputed issues of ancient history in the North Western Black Sea region.

The site is located in the southern part of Black Sea lowland on the right bank of Tiligul estuary (Ancient Asiak). It lies a distance of 700 m from the contemporary Black Sea shoreline. A significant

role in relief formation at the site locality was played by Pontic chalkstones, which appears as eaves on the river valley slopes, in ravines, and girders. Choice of place for the settlement was due to its natural geographic situation. The site's territory lies on a Late Pliocene marine terrace covered by loess-like soils and cut by girders and ravines. The freshwater Tiligul River is rich with fish. The close proximity of the Black Sea, comfortable passage for ships, and connection with a fording place to cross the river situated 12 km to the north determined the economic development of the ancient site. Availability of freshwater and raw materials for construction (clay, sand, stone, wood) were also important in site choice. Nevertheless, the decisive factor was the strategic implication of its geography and topography. First, it possessed favorable defensive features, namely, deep ravines enclosing the settlement from the south and the north, with a water frontier on the east, and the sea nearby, which fit the principles of ancient military theory.

The hillfort was situated on the small promontory, strategically defended from two sides by ravines and from the steppe by a defensive wall and system of ramparts. The monument fortification was in accordance with the local relief - artificial frontiers (ramparts and walls) were created on the non-secured western part. Microrelief consideration was also important. Aerial survey of the neighboring territory lets us infer the existence of overland connections between Koshary and ancient poleis located to the west and to the east. Marine transport connections also existed among a number of settlements on the shore to the west of Olbia as recorded by ancient written tradition.

The current phase of investigation at the Koshary site addresses the full site complex, which consists of a fortified hillfort, suburb with separate households, and a ritual place - ash mound - on the promontory at the southern edge of the settlement.

The settlement was most probably founded at the end of the 5th century BCE. In the second half of the 4th century BCE, it already acted as a center with a typical city planning system incorporating multi-chambered surface constructions, stone basements, streets, internal paved gardens, and household objects, etc. The necropolis was situated next to the hillfort and stretched along the upper terrace of the right bank of Tiligulsky Liman to the north and northwest from the settlement. It was discovered that the ancient Greek settlement and necropolis sprang up on territory that contained a previous barrow field of the Eneolithic. All funeral constructions of the necropolis reveal typical Greek traits. Burial complexes of this period were inhumations in graves of different types, crypts, catacombs, simple graves. Two complexes with cremation were also investigated. Graves were grouped in rows, separate plots containing a certain type of burial could be detected, and concentrations of graves around small barrows. According to funeral rite, certain artifacts were placed within burials. Grave goods fit the traditional inventory of ancient necropoleis: vessels for food and liquids (amphorae, jars), for drinking (kylikes, canfares), for aromatic matter storage (lekythoses, alabastres) as well as arms, household objects and jewelry, and other sorts of decorations. Special constructions (barrows, tombstones, monoliths composed of stones altars) are also found over some graves. A fragment of a marble tombstone is preserved.

The archaeological complex of the Koshary settlement and necropolis possessed an important geographic, political, and economic role in the system of Greek state of Olbia. Materials from the necropolis, despite some peculiar traits, have broad analogies not only to the Olbia necropolis and cemeteries of the Lower Bug region, but also to Crimea and the Bosphorus area. Studies of this complex make our comprehension of culture, livelihood, cult and religion of the Greek population of the Northern Black Sea region more complete.