

**Chalcolithic cemetery near the tell of Kosharna, Russe region.  
Archaeological investigation in 2009 - 2010 (Abstract)  
Dimitar Chernakov**

Archaeological excavations of the cemetery of Tell Kosharna (termed No. 1), Russe region, took place in 2009 and 2010. The cemetery is situated in the locality Koru Gyoldzhuk at 160 m to the northwest of the tell. A total area of 900 m<sup>2</sup> was investigated in 26 sondages. Six graves, four pits and two above-ground structures were found. The graves were reached at a depth of 0.67-1.20 m from the present surface. The deceased were buried in crouched position to the left, with the head turned to the northeast or to the east. The skeletons are of two adult males and an adult female (30-35 years old), two female infants II (12-18 years old) and one child (infans I). The men are strongly flexed that perhaps is a result of a deliberate binding of the corpse. Grave goods were positively identified only in one grave, but small pieces of red ochre were found on some skeletons, and the fill of the female graves and the child's grave contains small pieces of charcoal. Three of the graves form a row.

A collection of 31 ceramic vessels, a lid and two vessel stands was found in the immediate vicinity of Grave 3, at depth of 0.75 m from the present surface. The vessels are lying next to each other facing different direction or are standing on a red-brown floor that is 3-5 cm thick and with preserved surface of 0.20 by 0.25 m. Two vessels are placed one inside the other. Fragments of thickwalled vessels were found, some of which are decorated with barbotine. Fragments of lids with *Kerbschnitt* decoration, filled with white paint, were also found. Approximately in the middle of this pottery depot, a cracked flat stone, probably a grinding stone, was found directly on the floor level. Burnt daub was found over the vessels – a result of the collapse of the building, causing

fragmentation of some of the vessels. The floor level, where the find was discovered, is lying 0.10 m above the loess surface, thus suggesting that the feature was not dug into the ground.

The structure was an above-ground building that was burnt after the deposition of the vessels. It is not clear whether the fire was deliberate, i.e. if these are traces of some ritual activities, or whether the building collapsed as a result on an accident. The building was not a dwelling, since no evidence was found in the adjacent investigated areas to support such a claim. At the same time, the chaotic location of the vessels, the presence of a grinding stone, the colour of the daub and, most importantly, the red-brown colour of the floor prevent identifying this structure as a kiln. It is a special building for deposition of ceramic vessels that were put out of use after the particular burial rite.

The vessels obtained their brick to orange-red colour as a result of secondary burning in the conflagration of the building. On the basis of the location of the vessels, we can conclude that the structure was most probably approximately oval in shape and had a diameter of 2.50 m.

The vessels are made of fine clay with small amount of mineral temper. The surface of the smaller vessels has a slip, while that of the larger ones is lightly smoothed. The colour varies from beige-brown to orange-red as a result of the secondary burning of the vessels. Nothing could be said about their initial firing. It is highly probable that the vessels were not specially manufactured for the burials, but were used in the everyday life and brought from the settlement for a special purpose.

The characteristics of the material culture from the cemetery at Tell Kosharna point to the Late Chalcolithic Gumelnitsa

culture. The analogues with finds from the adjacent tell allow relating it to its last four

horizons.