

INVESTIGATIONS OF NECROPOLEIS OF KYTAION IN 2014–2018

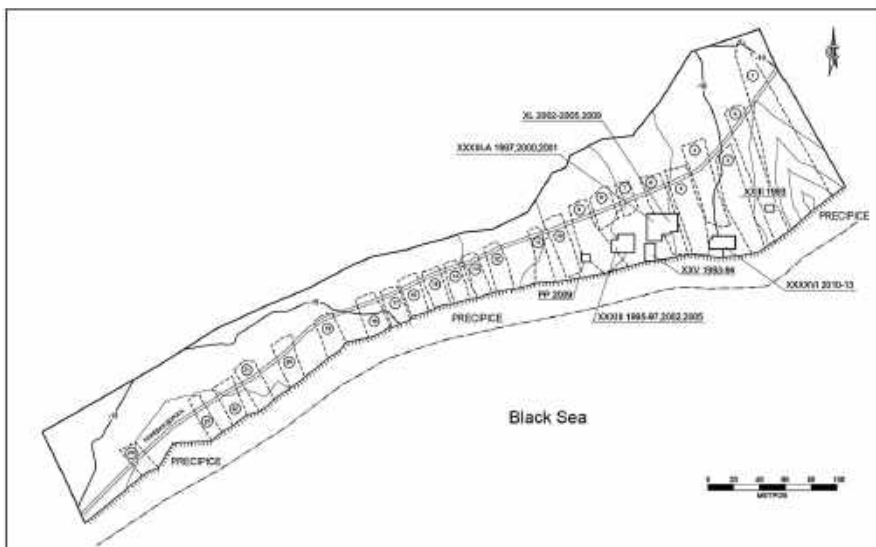
In 2014–2018, the archaeological expedition of the Institute of Archaeology RAS continued protective and rescue archaeological investigations in the zone of the shore abrasion in the south-western area of the necropolis of Kytaion. Along with these works, one of the kurgans of the necropolis on the Chatr-Tav Ridge, 2 km north-west from the townsite of Kytaion, was excavated to completion. This barrow was rifled not once in the early 2000s.

South-western area of the necropolis of Kytaion

Ten years ago, in the south-western area of the necropolis of Kytaion, systematic excavations were started due to the necessity of investigation of the zone of intensive shore abrasion doomed to vanish in the foreseeable future. In the course of the studies it was established that extremities of four (of the total 24) easternmost earthen ‘banks’ were located here. Running parallel to each other 50–650 m to the west from the western defensive wall of Kytaion, they extended in the meridional direction from the shore precipice towards the ridges of Dzhurg-Oba and Chatr-Tav. All of them were distinctly discernible to as far as the country road running along the coast and were lost in the ploughed field. The largest ‘bank’ (no. 1, the closest to the western defensive wall of Kytaion) was at least 40 m wide, 2.5 m high and its extant length was 140 m. The other ‘banks’, no. 2 to no. 24, gradually diminished in size and lowered westwards (Fig. 1 a, b).

Already during excavation of ‘bank’ no. 4 (excavation area XLVI) in 2010–2013, beneath its fill at the level of the ancient horizon, several burial complexes and ritual deposits were discovered: sacrificial (?) pits nos. 377–379, 381 and 383, ritual complex no. 380 (a rectangular structure with the walls constructed of small limestone pieces and plates and a deep pit with a discoid stone altar inside) and two flat graves nos. 382 and 384. These objects suggest that we are dealing here with a part of a late Classical necropolis. The fill covering the ‘bank’ was rich in numerous fragments of diverse amphorae (including those with stamps of Thasos, Herakleia,

a)



b)



Fig. 1. South-western area of the necropolis of Kytaiou.

a) 'Banks' – mounds. Topographic plan.

b) Excavation areas XLVI and XLVII. Aerial photos

Sinope, Rhodes and Rome), black-glossed and red-glossed ware (some with graffiti), red-ware, black-polished, handmade pottery of different periods (from the 4th cent. BC to the early 5th cent. AD). In the course of the excavations, fragments of terracotta figurines, clay lamps and copper coins (examples from Pantikapaion dated to the turn between the 4th and 3rd cent. BC and last Bosphoran ones of the late 3rd – early 4th cent. AD)¹ were recovered, as well as bones of animals (horses, cows, pigs, sheep and goats, dogs), birds, dolphins and fishes.²

Investigations of the last five years have confirmed the earlier supposition of the functional purpose of the ‘banks’. Under the fill of mentioned ‘bank’ no. 4 in excavation XLVI, at the level of the ancient horizon, still other seven sacrificial (?) pits (nos. 385, 387–391 and 393) from 0.2 to 1.8 m deep, a fenced-off ritual area with ash deposits and several limestone altars were found, as well as two flat graves without funerary inventory (nos. 386, 392) oriented meridionally similarly to the above ones (nos. 382 and 384).

The finds of the last five years at excavation XLVI generally differed from the previous examples neither in their repertoire nor in the chronological range. However, found among the amphora pottery in pit no. 391 there was a rim fragment of an amphora from Klazomenai dated to the turn of the 6th to the 5th cent. BC,³ which is one of the earliest specimens from Kytaion. The imported ceramic stamps were represented by Thasian, Herakleian and Sinopean examples.⁴ Their chronological range was from 390 to 240 BC. Among the Herakleian imprints there was a retrograde stamp absent in *IOSPE* III and, perhaps, altogether not encountered before (Fig. 2): Ἀπολλο(-) / ἐπὶ Εὐθ(-).⁵

¹ Khrshanovskiy 2015, 111–114 Fig. 4–6.

² Kasparov–Khrshanovskiy 2019 [А. К. Каспаров, В. А. Хршановский. Фаунистические остатки из юго-западного участка Китейского некрополя (по итогам раскопок 2010–2018 гг.), in: *Боспорские чтения: Боспор Киммерийский и варварский мир в период античности и средневековья. Основные итоги и перспективы исследований. Материалы международной научной конференции*], 272–283.

³ Monakhov 2003 [С. Ю. Монахов, *Греческие амфоры в Причерноморье. Типология амфор ведущих центров-экспортеров в керамической таре. Каталог-определитель*], 54, Var. 5, Pl. 33. 2.

⁴ Pavlichenko–Khrshanovskiy 2017 [Н. А. Павличенко, В. А. Хршановский, “Керамические клейма из тризны на юго-западном участке некрополя Китея”, in: *Боспорские чтения: Боспор Киммерийский и варварский мир в период античности и средневековья. Торговля: пути – товары – отношения. Материалы международной научной конференции*], 385–393.

⁵ Fedoseev 2016 [Н. Ф. Федосеев, *Из собрания Восточно-Крымского музея-заповедника. Керамические клейма. Гераклея Понтийская*], 66 no. 357.



Fig. 2. Fragment of the neck of a Herakleian amphora with a stamp

In addition to the amphora stamps, a stamp Βα[συλική] was found on a Bosporan tile dated to the 290–280 BC or 245–235 BC. All these stamps reliably marked the lower chronological limit of the finds from excavation XLVI. However, along with fragments of imported amphorae of the Classical and Hellenistic period, in this layer, like previously, late Hellenistic amphora remains were encountered dating from the turn of the eras and the Roman period right up to the 3rd–4th cent. AD. The chronological span established through the amphorae was confirmed additionally by other ceramic fragments: from red-figured and black-glossed ones, sherds of ‘Megara’ bowls and painted late Hellenistic ware to late red-glossed vessels (3rd–4th cent. AD). Probably, the handmade pottery was synchronous to the practised funerary rituals. It included numerous fragments (e.g. examples decorated with ornamentation) found in the fill layer and at the level of the ancient horizon. The identified copper Bosporan coins of Ininthimeos (no. 677 after Anokhin) and Rheskouporis IV (nos. 700, 720) minted between 238/239 and 276/277 AD)⁶ defined the *terminus post quem* of the upper chronological level. Judging by the results of palaeozoological analysis, the range of species of animals and birds, of which the remains were found during recent seasons in excavation XLVI, also did not differ in its composition from the skeletal remains encountered here before.

In order to verify the conclusions drawn in the course of investigation of ‘bank’ no. 4 in 2016, excavation XLVII was started at ‘bank’ no. 1,

⁶ Anokhin 1986 [В. А. Анохин, *Монетное дело Боспора*], 169–171.

the nearest one to the western defensive wall of the Kytaion townsite (Fig. 1 b). The supposition that under the mound here another defensive wall of the city or a front defence *proteichisma* could have been located was not confirmed. Under a thin humic stratum (only 0.1–0.3 m), a layer of an artificial mound was uncovered with ritual areas containing fragments of stucco (!), hearth clay and accumulations of valves of sea shells. Similarly to the fill of ‘bank’ no. 4, that of ‘bank’ no. 1 proved to be saturated with numerous (over 10 thousand) fragments of amphorae, wheelmade and handmade pottery. In the same layer, along with sherds of imported Classical/Hellenistic amphorae (including those with Herakleian and Sinopean stamps), there were a fragment of a Bosporan tile (with the same stamp Βα[συλική] as in excavation XLVI) and profile fragments of light-clay amphorae of type E after Shelov and redware amphorae of type 100 after Zeest (‘Delakeu’ type) dated to the 4th – early 5th cent. AD. The fragments of painted red-figured, black-glossed and red-glossed pottery correspond to the chronological ‘fork’ identified here earlier. Similarly to excavation XLVI, fragments of handmade vessels (including decorated ones) were also fairly numerous and miscellaneous.⁷

Along with the numerous ordinary finds there were also exclusive specimens, e.g. a fragment of a *louterion* (presumably Syrian) with the inscription on the edge: Διοῦε[ι]/κου (Fig. 3).⁸

Fragments of a light-clay bowl of a large diameter must also be considered as a rare find (and unexpected in a ‘barbarian’ context). It had an upright wall bearing relief representations of Greek theatrical tragic masks, a bunch of grapes, the muzzle of a goat and the body of yet another quadruped: goat or dog (Dionysian motif?). The bowl was covered with a thin light yellowish slip and painted in blue (Fig. 4). No parallels to this example have been found so far.

Among the artefacts from excavation XLVII, similarly as at excavation XLVI, there were weights, spindle whorls, badly corroded copper coins (unidentifiable reliably prior to their restoration but according to some indirect indications also dated to the second half of the 3rd – 4th cent. AD), fragments of glass vessels, bone objects and numerous skeletal remains of domestic and wild animals (horses, cows, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs, red deer, wild boars, foxes, grey hares), as well as of birds and fishes, and crab claws. In terms of its composition this material is almost completely identical to the palaeozoological finds from excavation XLVI.

⁷ Khrshanovskiy 2017 [В. А. Хршановский, “Между готами и гуннами”], 208–228.

⁸ Reading by N. Pavlichenko. At the moment of publication, no parallels have been found for the stamp on the *louterion*.



Fig. 3. Fragment of a South Pontic (?) louterion
with a stamp

Thus, basing on the evidence now available, it may be supposed that ‘banks’ nos. 4 and 1 belong to a single historical epoch of the 4th – early 5th cen. AD and the same ethnocultural unity. They represent funerary and ritual structures never before revealed at Classical Bosphoros, i. e. the preserved part of the late Classical necropolis situated south-west from the townsite of Kytaiion.⁹

⁹ Khrshanovskiy 2018 [В. А. Хршановский, “Боспорский некрополь нового типа на некрополе Китея”, in: *Ольвийский форум. Памяти В. В. Крапивинной. Материалы международной научной конференции*], 78–80.

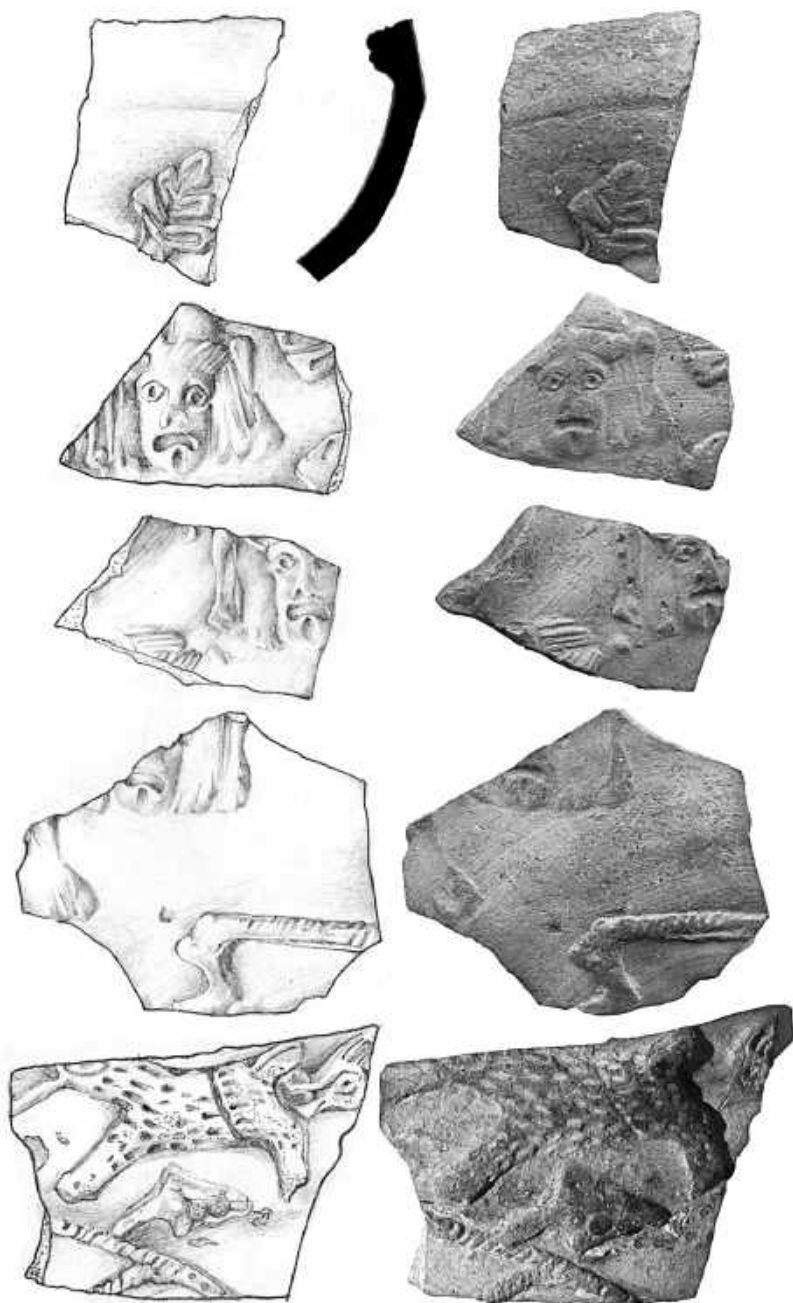


Fig. 4. Fragments of a vessel with a relief decoration (Dionysian motif?)

The kurgan necropolis of Chatr-Tav

In 2015, topographic surveys were conducted at the kurgan necropolis situated on the Chatr-Tav Ridge bounding the Plain of Kytaion from north-west. These efforts resulted in obtaining a plan comprising six tumuli ranged along the ridge. At all of the mounds there were fresh robbers' trenches and heaps of spoil.

The largest mound (no. 5) was located at the eastern extremity of the ridge in its highest point – Mt Chatr-Tav. In the same field season, investigation of kurgan no. 5 was started and continued in 2018 along the robbers' trench.

The investigations established that under the mound disturbed by illicit excavations there was a monumental tomb intruded into the rock. It was constructed of limestone blocks and slabs up to 0.4 m thick (Fig. 5) on a levelled rock surface. In plan, the tomb was a regular rectangle extended in the latitudinal direction. The length of the tomb (along the external contour) was 2.95–3 m, width (across the external contour) 1.8 m, and height 1.23–1.25 m. The walls of the tomb were built from carefully worked limestone slabs and blocks (ashlars). The upper blocks of the walls supported the roofing slabs displaced and partly broken by the robbers.

The irregular size of the roofing slabs of the tomb and, particularly, of the blocks and slabs of the walls suggested a possible reuse of 'parts' of some other earlier structure.

To some extent, this supposition is confirmed by the fairly sparse finds. Presumably, the materials dating the time of construction and initial use of kurgan no. 5 (Scythian period) include fragments (the rim and walls with traces of bands rendered in red paint) of a Chian amphora with a straight neck of *Nymphaion* variant IV A dated to the 430–440 BC,¹⁰ and also rim and bottom fragments of black-glossed vessels. The possible secondary use of this funerary complex (perhaps after a reconstruction of the tomb) in the Roman period is suggested by a glass handle and fragments of a late redware pitcher (with a ribbed neck) retrieved from the robbers' spoil. The other fragments of redware and handmade pottery and indistinct iron objects are useless for establishing a more precise chronology of kurgan no. 5 on the Chatr-Tav Ridge.

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¹⁰ Monakhov 2003, 19–20 Pl. 8. 6.



Fig. 5. Chatr-Tav Ridge. Slab tomb in kurgan no. 5

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Further reading

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