

EXCAVATIONS OF THE TAMAN DETACHMENT OF THE BOSPORAN EXPEDITION OF IHMC RAS IN 2014–2018*

In 2014–2018, the Taman Detachment of the Bosporan Expedition of the Institute for the History of Material Culture (IHMC) RAS conducted regular excavations of the archaeological site “The settlement and necropolis of Artyushchenko-2”.¹ This site is situated in the southern part of the Taman Peninsula, on the precipitous coast of the Black Sea, 17 km to the south-east from the Cossack village of Taman and 4 km to the south-east from the settlement of Artyushchenko.

Excavations of 2014–2018 were focused on Sector “N” (necropolis). During five years, an area of 1400 sq. m has been investigated. In the course of excavations, 63 burials were revealed (nos. 131–188, Г13–Г17) of which five had been ‘investigated’ by clandestine diggers before. The latter burials obtained a special numeration with the letter ‘Г’.

The skeletons in early graves (5th–4th cent. BC) are oriented with the head to the east or north-east. In burials of the 3rd–2nd cent. BC, the skeletons are most frequently oriented with the head towards the southern and eastern cardinal points, in burials of the 4th–5th cent. AD the dead are positioned with the head to the north. The combination of interments with the eastern orientation and rare graves with the western orientation is traditional at the Taman necropoleis of the 5th–4th cent. BC.²

In terms of sex and age, the following types of interments are distinguishable:³

- Individual interments of males (burials 156, 182, 187).
- Individual interments of females (burials 175, 185, Г13).
- Paired interments of a male and female (burials 136, Г17).

All these burials were made either in flat graves or in mud-brick cists.

- Interments of an adult and a child. So far, these were encountered only in flat graves. The age of the children varies from newborn

¹ Kashaev 2015, 140–156.

² Korovina 1987 [А. К. Коровина, “Раскопки некрополя Тирамбы”], 4.

³ Only some of the burials are adduced as examples.

to approximately up to 3–5 years old. The babies in this case were sometimes placed in amphorae (Burial 166) or simply laid beside the adult's body (Burial 183).

- Interments of children. Babies were interred in amphorae, the elder children laid in flat graves (Burials 142, 180).
- Cenotaphs. Burials of this kind were found only in flat graves (burials 165, 174).

Among the materials retrieved during excavations, the basic set of the grave inventory may be distinguished which was put to the graves both of males and females. It included a single vessel from each group of pottery:

- A vessel for wine – amphora, pitcher, oinochoe (wheelmade or handmade): for instance, in Burial 175, the grave offerings included a proto-Thasian amphora (Fifth series; here and below the types of amphorae are indicated after Sergey Yu. Monakhov)⁴ and a ring askos⁵ all dated to the beginning of the 5th cent. BC (Fig. 1. 1, 2).
- A vessel for food – bowl (wheelmade or handmade), black-glossed bowl on a pedestal, one-handled bowl: e.g. the inventory of Burial 165 consisted of a table amphora painted in white on the shoulder⁶ and a redware bowl of the late 6th – early 5th cent. BC (Fig. 1. 3, 4).
- A drinking vessel – black-glossed kylix, skyphos, kantharos. Here a black-glossed kylix⁷ found in Burial 148 can be suggested as an example. The vessel had a stamped pattern on the bottom and was dated to the middle or third quarter of the 5th cent. BC (Fig. 2. 2).
- A vessel for incense – lekythos, askos, amphoriskos, or alabastron. Thus a black-glossed fluted lekythos⁸ found in Burial 168 is dated to the late 5th cent. BC (Fig. 2. 1). From Burial 136, a large ring askos⁹ and a cylindrical lekythos of the early 5th century BC (Fig. 2. 3, 4) were recovered. In Burial 157 there was an alabastron from blue-yellow Phoenician glass¹⁰ of the first half of the 5th century BC (Fig. 3. 3).

⁴ Monakhov 2003 [С. Ю. Монахов, “Греческие амфоры в Причерноморье. Типология амфор ведущих центров-экспортеров в керамической таре”], 256, Pl. 26.

⁵ Вуйских 2013 [А. В. Буйских, “Архаическая расписная керамика из Ольвии (восточногреческая, лаконская, коринфская, имитации)”], 133.

⁶ Skudnova 1988 [В. М. Скуднова, “Архаический некрополь Ольвии”], 68, Cat. 87.

⁷ Sparkes–Talcott 1970, no. 459, 460.

⁸ Sparkes–Talcott 1970, no. 1129.

⁹ Вуйских 2013, 133.

¹⁰ Kunina 1997 [Н. З. Кунина, “Античное стекло”], 249, Cat.11.

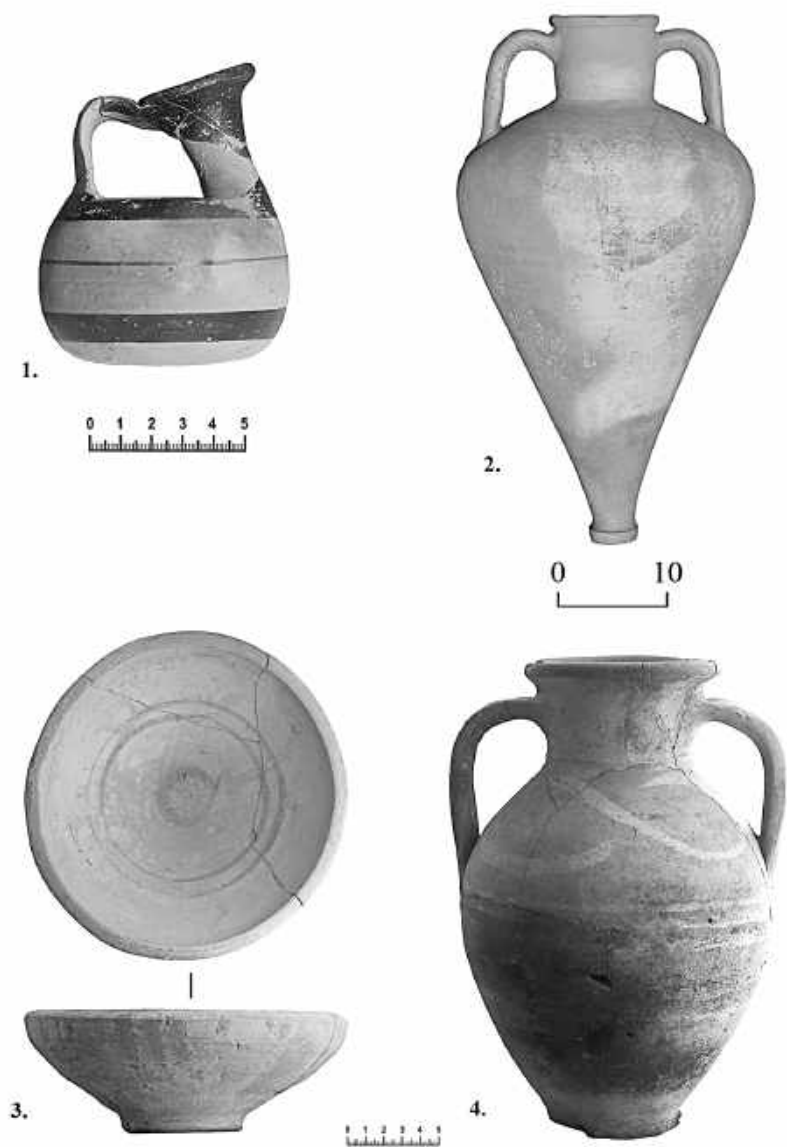


Fig. 1. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Finds of 2014–2018.

1 – ring askos; 2 – proto-Thasian amphora (Burial 175);

3 – redware bowl; 4 – table amphora (Burial 165)

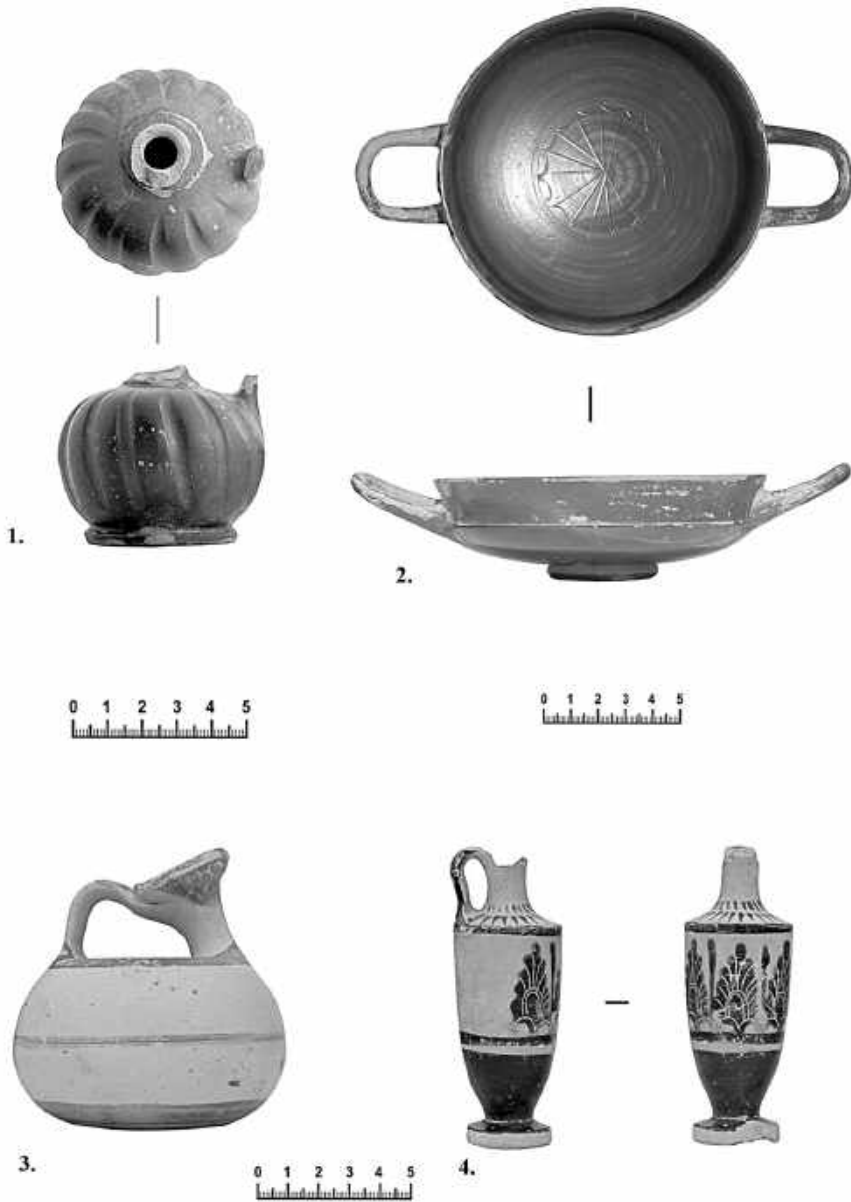


Fig. 2. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Finds of 2014–2018.
 1 – black-glossed lekythos (Burial 168); 2 – black-glossed kylix
 (Burial 148); 3 – ring askos; 4 – cylindrical lekythos (Burial 136)

In addition to the basic set of ceramic vessels, weaponry – swords, spears and arrows (Burials 183, Г17); bridle items – strap ornaments, buckles; tools – knives, awls, needles (Burial 182) were put into the male graves. To women, ornaments (pendants, beads) were additionally offered (Burial 144) as well as tools (knives, needles, spindles), mirrors, and small cosmetic bowls (Burial 174).

In Burial 144 there were found a bronze rhomboid pendant, beads from gold and jet dated, presumably, to the 2nd–3rd cent. AD (Fig. 3. 1). During the previous seasons, gold ornaments in the form of beads and pendants were not once recovered at the necropolis, but these finds were made in burials of an earlier date of the 5th century BC.

In Burial 146 disturbed by the shore abrasion, a gem (intaglio) of the late 5th– early 4th century BC was preserved. Carved from rock crystal, it bore a representation of a half-naked sitting woman (Fig. 3. 2).

Burials Г13–Г17 have been excavated to completion after modern illegal diggers. In 2009–2013, over 60 unscientific excavations were recorded at the necropolis. In these burials, a number of items of grave offerings were found overlooked or neglected by the robbers. Among these objects, of note is an amphoriskos from Phoenician glass¹¹ of the early 5th cent. BC (Fig. 3. 4) from burial Г13.

Besides the burials, in the course of excavations, still several other complexes were revealed which were interpreted as ritual deposits obviously unrelated to any particular burial. From these deposits, complete or fragmentary amphorae were recovered.

In Ritual Deposits 24 and 25, bodies of amphorae with richly profiled feet were found – proto-Thasian type (Third series)¹² (Fig. 4. 2, 3). In Ritual Deposit 28 there was an analogous amphora (Fourth series)¹³ (Fig. 4. 1). All these finds are dated to ca. 500–450 BC.

In Ritual Deposit 27, two amphorae were found – a bulbous-necked Chian (Variant III-A)¹⁴ and a redware Lesbian one (Variant I-C)¹⁵ (Fig. 4. 4, 5). These amphorae are dated to the end of the 6th – beginning of the 5th cent. BC.

¹¹ Kunina 1997, 251, Cat. 28.

¹² Monakhov 2003 [С. Ю. Монахов, “Греческие амфоры в Причерноморье. Типология амфор ведущих центров-экспортеров в керамической таре”], 255. Pl. 25.

¹³ Monakhov 2003, 255. Pl. 25.

¹⁴ Monakhov 2003, 234. Pl. 4.

¹⁵ Monakhov 2003, 261. Pl. 31.

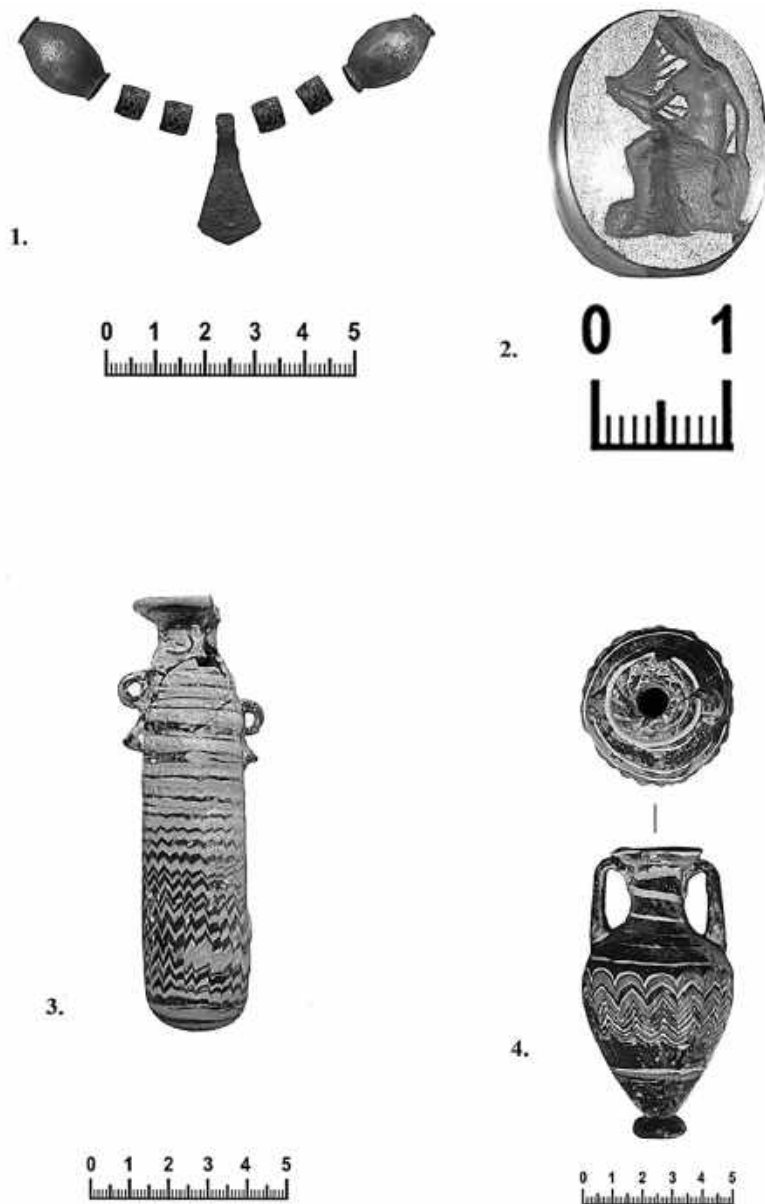


Fig. 3. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Finds of 2014–2018.
 1 – set of pendant ornaments (Burial 144); 2 – gem (intaglio) from
 rock crystal (Burial 146); 3 – glass alabastron (Burial 157);
 4 – glass amphoriskos (Burial Г13).

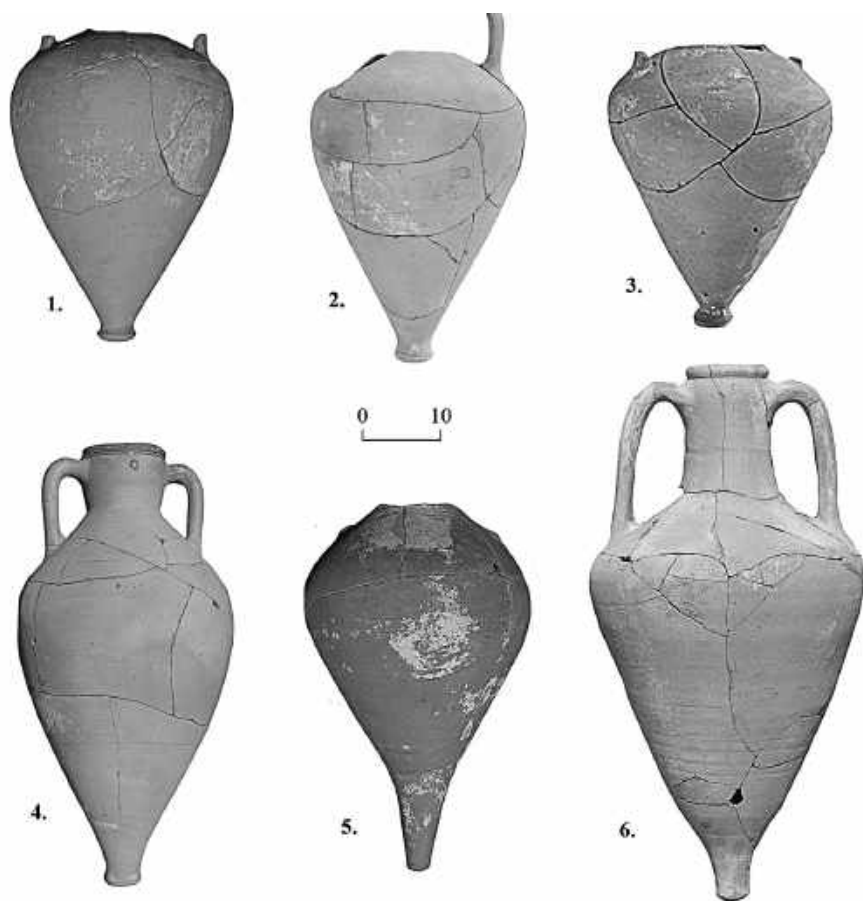


Fig. 4. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Finds of 2014–2018.

- 1 – proto-Thasian amphora (Ritual Deposit 28);
- 2 – proto-Thasian amphora (Ritual Deposit 24);
- 3 – proto-Thasian amphora (Ritual Deposit 25);
- 4 – Chian amphora; 5 – Lesbian amphora (Ritual Deposit 27);
- 6 – Sinopean amphora (Ritual Deposit 21)

A Sinopean amphora (Variant II-C)¹⁶ of the early 3rd cent. BC (Fig. 4. 6) comes from Ritual Deposit 21.

The finds recovered from the necropolis prove that the settlement of Artyushchenko-2, although it was situated at the periphery of the Classical world, had fairly prosperous inhabitants.

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¹⁶ Monakhov 2003, 332. Pl. 102.

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