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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON
THE CLOSEST SUBURBAN AREA OF
ANCIENT THEODOSIA. INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE THEODOSIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EXPEDITION OF THE STATE HERMITAGE
MUSEUM IN 2019–2022

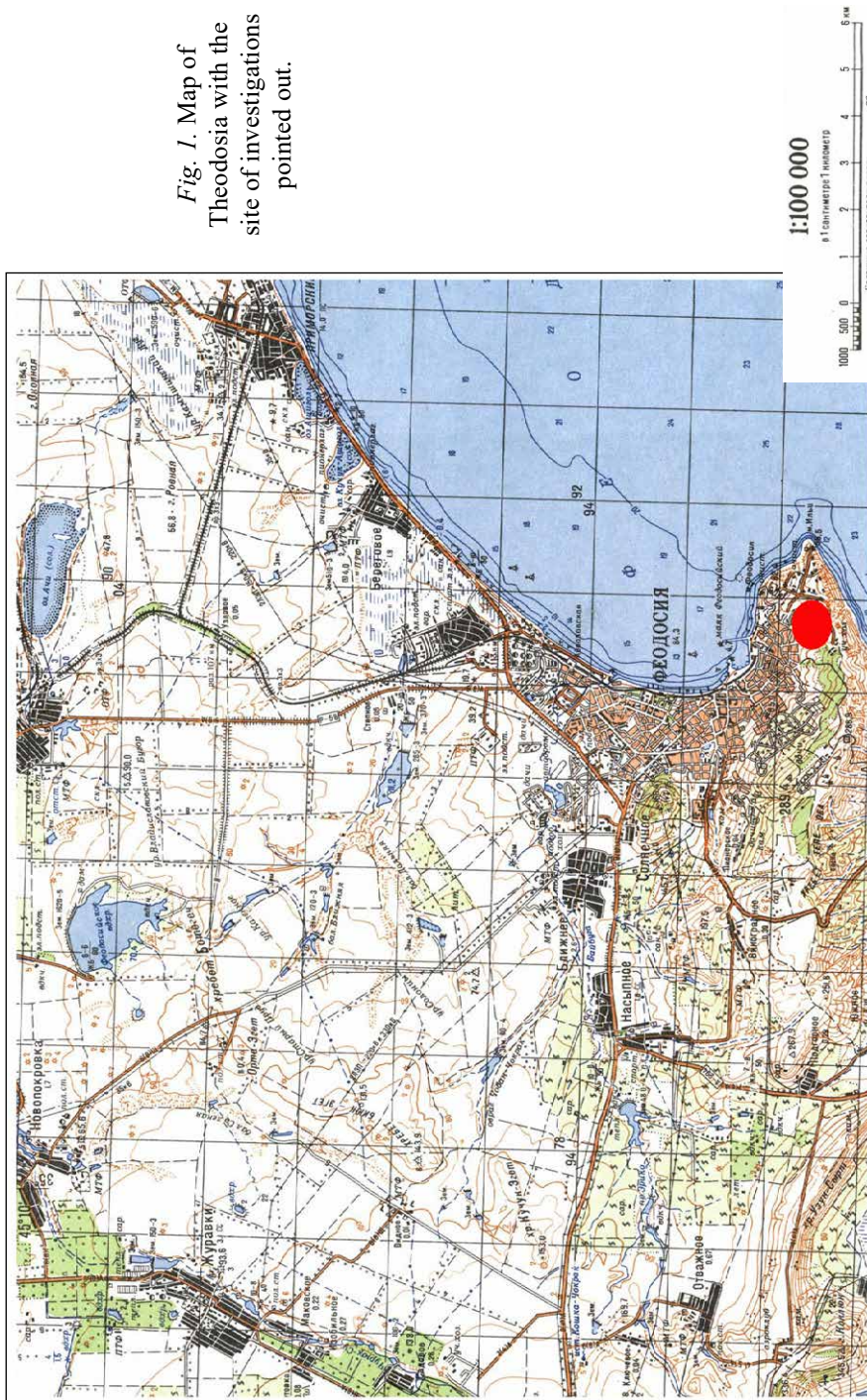
Ancient Theodosia was located near the western border of the Bosporan Kingdom, 90 km west of the capital site of Pantikapaion. It was an important, wealthy polis possessing extensive chora and considerable economical weight. Obviously, it occupied an exceptional place in the Bosporan state structure. Despite its significance, Theodosia is almost unknown archaeologically up to this day. The site attracted scholars' attention only a hundred and fifty years ago, when Theodosian burial mounds were excavated and famous jewelries were found.¹ Some limited investigations of a nearby necropolis and the vicinity were conducted by the Theodosian Museum expedition, led by Yevgeniy Katyushin in the 1970s–1990s.²

The State Hermitage Museum launched the Theodosian Archaeological project in 2017 with a complex survey generally focusing on the closest suburban area and on a vast burial mound necropolis located on the slopes of Tepe-Oba and surrounding the city. Particular attention was devoted to the area near Trench A; research was started by Katyushin in 1982. The site is located 1.5 km south of the citadel of medieval Kaffa, the place where the acropolis of ancient Theodosia is supposed to have been, and 200 m south of Zelenaya Street (Fig. 1). The site occupies a rather flat plateau on the very edge of a deep lowland called Genoese. Trench A, with an estimated 36 m², has been explored only during one season of 1982. A small part of a building was uncovered here, consisting of 4 walls

¹ Tunkina 2011 [И. В. Тункина, *Открытие Феодосии. Страницы археологического изучения Юго-Восточного Крыма и начальные этапы истории Феодосийского музея древностей*].

² Veysens et al. 1997 [Д. Бейсанс, А. Жиода, Ж.-П. Морель, Е. А. Катюшин, А. А. Евсеев, “Раскопки на окраине Феодосии”, *Археологические исследования в Крыму 1994*].

Fig. 1. Map of Theodosia with the site of investigations pointed out.



and a kind of paved platform between them. Katyushin dated this structure to the 3rd century BC, but noted the presence of earlier finds. The function of the building has not been defined, but it was supposed that it could be connected to the city's necropolis, since the nearest burial mounds are located only 400 m to the west.

In 2017–2019, the area in focus was explored using various methods: archaeological surveys, trial trenches, and geophysical investigations using several techniques. As a result, we can definitely see the traces of quite dense city-like building structures dating back to the 4th century BC on an area of 6100 sq. m.

Starting in 2019, the Theodosian Archaeological project of the State Hermitage revived the investigations of this mysterious structure. During several excavation campaigns, a part of a large Building A was uncovered.³ The dimensions of the building are 10.5 × 16.5 m, and its square amounts to 150 sq. m. Still, only the northern part of the complex has been unearthed (Fig. 2). Parts of two winepress platforms were uncovered in the southern part of the building. This definitely indicates that Building A and the whole site were not part of any burial or ritual

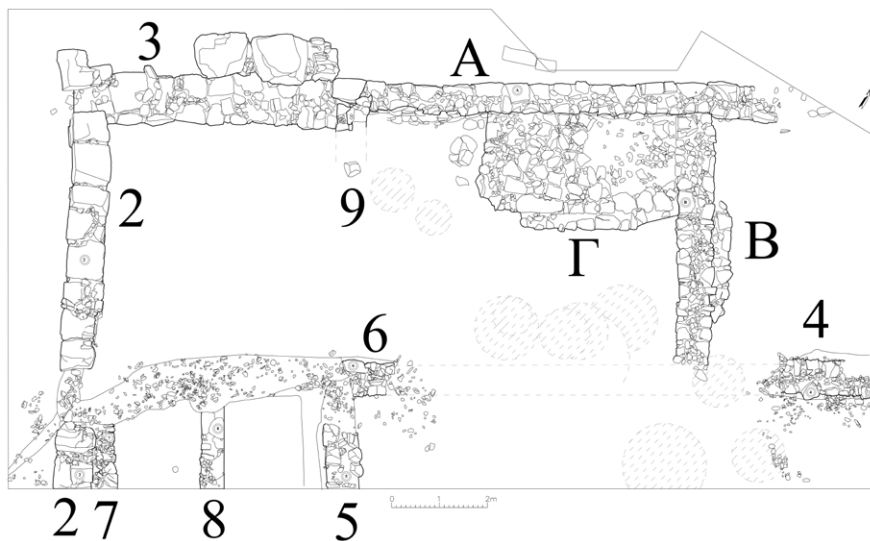


Fig. 2. Manor A plan. 2019–2023.

³ Akhmadeeva 2020 [М. М. Ахмадеева, “Новые исследования в ближнем предместье Феодосии”, *Археологические вести*]; Akhmadeeva 2023 [“Усадьба А в ближнем предместье Феодосии: предварительные итоги исследования”, *Древности Боспора*].

funeral complex, but constituted a part of a suburban manor with a winery function. Preliminary analysis of the uncovered building remains allows us to state that the structure was evidently rearranged several times and to define three main stages of Building A's life.

Phase 1

The initial base of Building A consists of walls 2 and 3, as well as two winepress platforms built up to the inner facade of wall 2 (Fig. 3). The total dimensions of the two winepress platforms are 3.9×1.9 m, each having a slight incline of about 0.09 m or 3° . The surface of the platforms is covered with a smooth clay layer with numerous inclusions of tiny sea pebbles, chamotte, and limestone grit. The platforms and wall 8, which divides the structure into two parts, have only partially been unearthed so far. Near the winepress platforms, to the north and west, a group of at least 10 traces of pithoi pits was found. Evidently, a kind of storage room for wine was located here. A row of finds indicates that Building A was erected as a winery at the end of the 5th century or at the very beginning of the 4th century BC. First, a fragment of a Heracleian amphora with a stamp $\text{Αρισ[τοκλής]} / \text{Κόας}$ can be mentioned (Fig. 4. 1). It can be dated within the 390s BC.⁴

Phase 2

After a while, the complex was enlarged to almost double its former size: the corner of walls A and 9 was built up to the western side of wall 3. It seems that the western part of wall 3 was dismantled during these works. Wall B and a mysterious paved platform were constructed during this period, too. Based on ceramic finds, such as amphorae and black-glazed pottery fragments, we can generally date the beginning of this phase to 375–325 BC. One of the latest finds from this stage is a fragment of a Heraclea Pontica amphora with Democrates' stamp $[\acute{\epsilon}]πὶ \text{Δημο[κρά]} \text{τεος Σι(- -)}$ (Fig. 4. 2), which is usually dated to the last quarter of the 4th century BC.⁵

⁴ Kats 2007 [В. И. Кац, *Греческие керамические клейма эпохи классики и эллинизма (опыт комплексного изучения)*, Боспорские исследования], 428, Suppl. V.

⁵ Kats 2007, 243, Suppl. V-6.

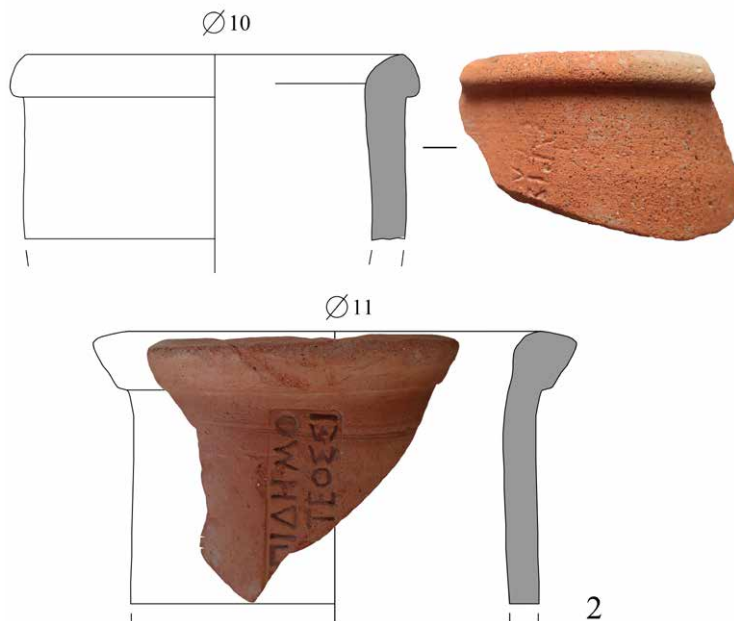


Fig. 4. Heraclea Pontica amphorae fragments with stamps.

back to the late 5th century BC. The latest finds can be placed in the first quarter of the 3rd century BC. E.g. it can be presumed that the winery complex Building A, being a part of a large suburban mansion located in close proximity to the city of classical Theodosia, was built at the very beginning of the 4th century BC and functioned for more than one hundred years, surviving at least two general reconstructions.

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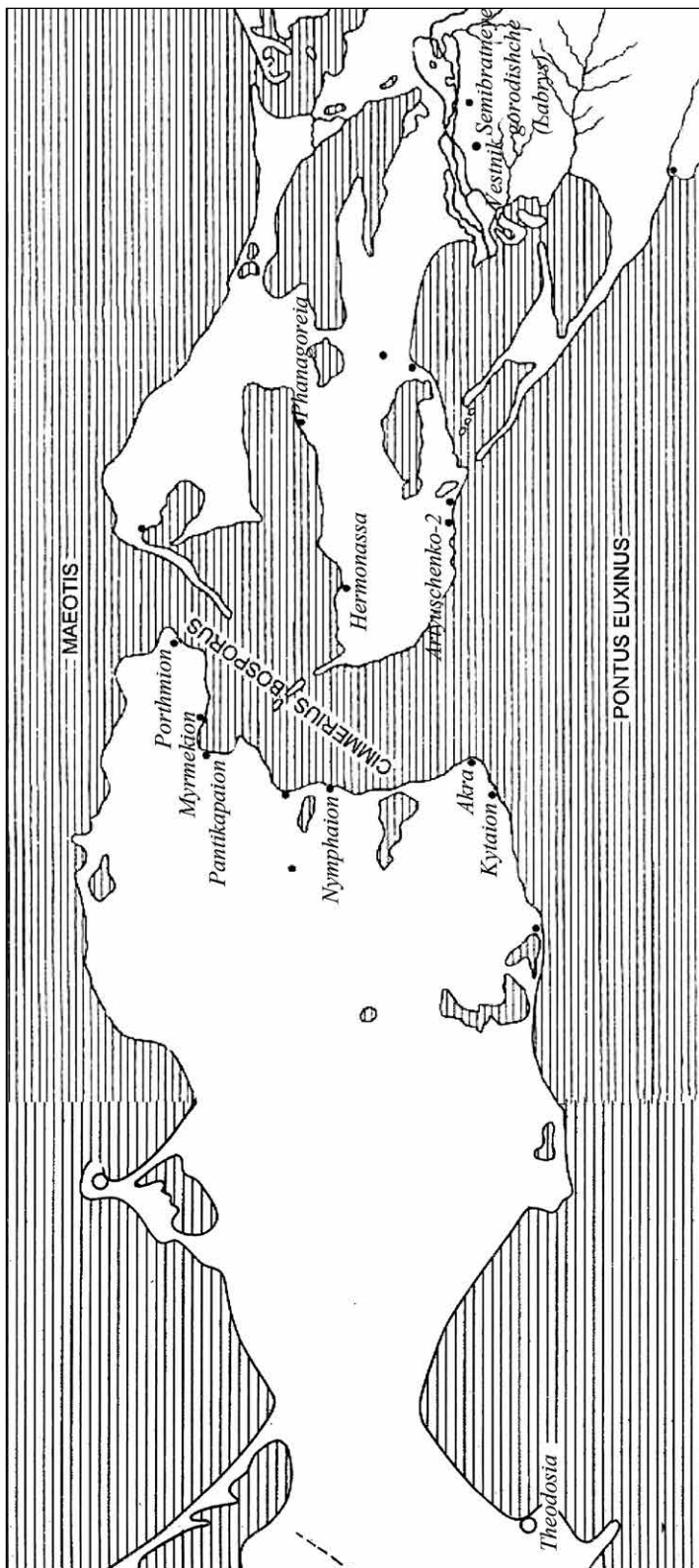
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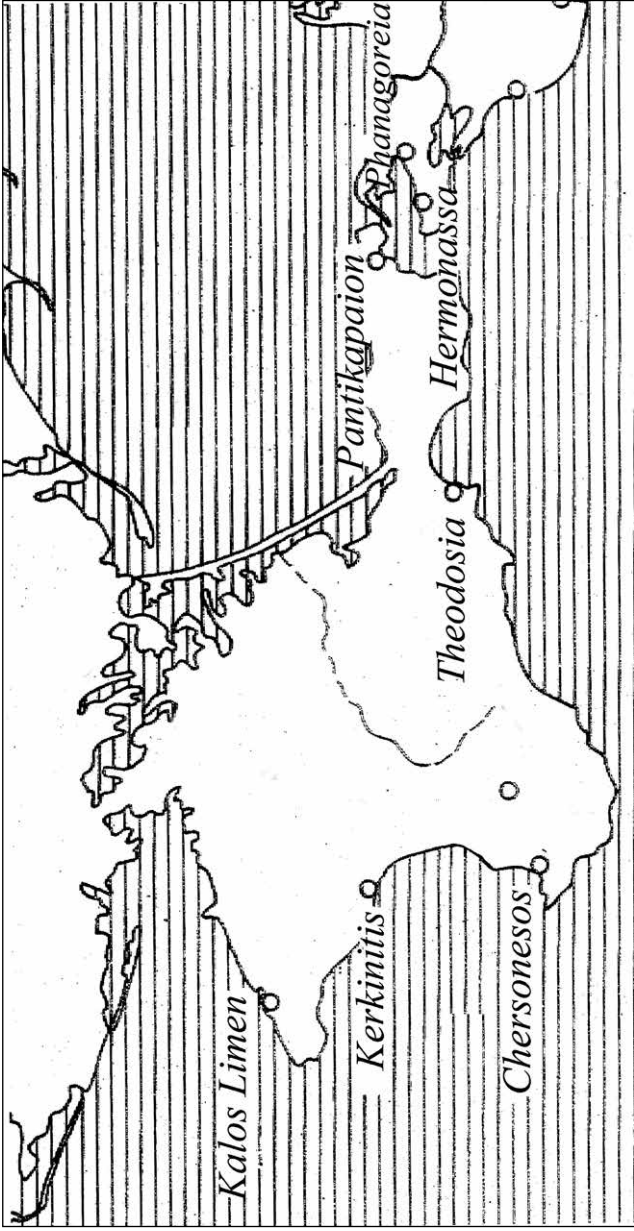
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The paper offers preliminary results of the archaeological investigations of the Theodosian Archaeological Expedition of The State Hermitage Museum. The expedition has been exploring the closest suburban area of the ancient city of Theodosia since 2017. The point of particular interest is located 1.5 km to the south of the ancient city’s supposed acropolis. Survey studies using geophysical methods revealed the traces of quite dense building structures on a significantly sized territory. One of these building complexes, named Building A, was found in 1982 and has been explored since 2019 by the Hermitage expedition. Part of a large building currently containing about 150 m² was unearthed. Finds discovered during the excavations enable us to date Building A to the period from the turn of the fifth to the fourth century BC up to the end of the fourth or the very beginning of the third century BC. Building A was reconstructed at least twice during its lifetime. During the first stage, the structure functioned as a vinery: parts of two pressing platforms and a space for placing pithoi indicate it clearly.

В статье приводятся предварительные результаты исследования памятника усадебного типа, расположенного в ближнем южном предместье античной Феодосии, в 1,5 км к югу от городища. Памятник был обнаружен в 1982 г.: в небольшом раскопе А на краю Генуэзской балки были открыты остатки постройки. С 2017 г. исследование ведет Феодосийская археологическая экспедиция Государственного Эрмитажа. В результате комплексных геофизических изысканий были зафиксированы следы относительно плотной застройки, занимающей значительную площадь. Одно из этих сооружений, Постройка А, было обнаружено в 1982 г. Е. А. Катюшиным и стало объектом исследования начиная с 2019 г. К настоящему моменту открыта часть крупной Постройки А, входящей в структуру Усадьбы А, площадь которой сейчас составляет не менее 150 м². Датировка сооружения: рубеж V–IV вв. до н. э. – начало III в. до н. э. Зафиксировано, как минимум, три основных строительных этапа. Постройка первоначально была сооружена как винодельческий комплекс: об этом свидетельствует находка двух давящих площадок, а также участка для установки пифосов. Исследование строительного комплекса не завершено.

ARCHAEOLOGICA





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