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## EXCAVATIONS OF KYTAION'S SOUTHWESTERN SUBURB IN 2019–2022

In 2019–2022, the Kytaiion archaeological expedition of the Institute of Archaeology RAS continued excavations in the southwestern suburb of the Bosporan city of Kytaiion, in the area of coastal erosion. Starting in 2010, the study of this section since 2016 has been conducted in two excavation areas – XLVI and XLVII (Fig. 1. 1).<sup>1</sup> To date, the area of the first one has exceeded 400 m<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1. 2) and the area of the second one has exceeded 200 m<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1. 3).

### The excavation area XLVI

In recent years, after the northward and eastward expansion of the excavation area XLVI, in addition to the previously studied unearthed ritual and memorial complexes, two more ritual pits nos. 389 and 393, the ritual complex no. 400, and the grave without inventory no. 398 have been excavated. In accordance with the formerly determined archaeological context, they are attributed to the same Late Antique period – the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

The relatively shallow depth of pits nos. 389 and 393 (0.7–0.8 m and 0.3 m respectively), as well as of the majority of the other pits in this excavation area, was evidence of their ritual (rather than domestic) purpose.<sup>2</sup> The variety of dates and the diversity of the finds, considering their scarcity, confirm this theory. There were asynchronous Hellenistic objects in almost every pit. According to the archaeological context and the latest material, their attribution to the same historical time and antique culture is beyond doubt. The composition of bones of sacrificial animals

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<sup>1</sup> Khrshanovskiy 2019, 133–139.

<sup>2</sup> Khrshanovskiy 2020a [В. А. Хршановский, “Позднеантичные ритуальные ямы на юго-западном участке некрополя Китея”, *Древности Боспора*], 424.

1.1.



1.2.



1.3.



*Fig. 1. 1.* The southwestern suburb of Kytaion. Excavation areas XLVI and XLVII. Aerial photograph.

*Fig. 1. 2.* Excavation area XLVI. 2022. Aerial photograph.

*Fig. 1. 3.* Excavation area XLVII. 2022. Aerial photograph.

was different from the bones found in the mound covering the whole excavation area. Its filling suggests the ritual character of the pits.<sup>3</sup>

Ritual complex no. 400 was also unearthed in the eastern excavation extension on the level of the ancient horizon under the thick rubble backfill. According to the fixed part, in ancient times it was a circle made of relatively large limestone fragments, plain limestone small slabs, and a mound composed of soil with rubble. Its diameter, calculated by the external contour, is about 8 m. On the north, the complex was fenced in by a wall made of large stones, roughly processed but stacked together with rubble and soil. Its length is 5.5 m, its width about 1 m.

During the deepening and clearing of the eastern excavation extension and the upper layer of burial complex no. 400 (the study has not been finished), a significant amount of asynchronous, mass ceramic material was also found: fragments of black-lacquered vessels and “Megarian” bowls, red-lacquered, black-glazed, wheel-thrown and handmade ware. In addition to fragments of late light-clay amphorae with narrow necks of the Shelov Types E and F and the red-clay amphora of the Type C SNP I (“Delakeu”), which date the complex to times no later than the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, much older Hellenistic amphorae, including some with stamps, were found here. The Rhodian amphora with two stamps on its handle (Fig. 2. 1) is dated to ca. 129 BC. The other stamp (Fig. 2. 2), found in the eastern excavation extension, was on the handle of a Sinopian amphora from the early 220s BC.

The bone remains found during the study of ritual complex no. 400 belonged mainly to the same animals that were unearthed in the other objects of this excavation area: a horse, cow, sheep, goat, pig, and dog.

In the northern excavation extension in the northwestern corner of the excavation area, the grave of a woman of 35 to 45 years old was unearthed. It was precisely meridionally oriented (the head towards the north). It is possible that the plain round stone that lies to the east of the body at a certain elevation was used as a small primitive altar. The animal bones and ceramic fragments found close to the grave could be the traces of a funeral feast. Among them was part of the bottom of a black-lacquered vessel with the graffito [- -]νικα(- -) or Νικα(- -) on its outer side. Apparently, this abbreviation of the theophoric name, derived from Νίκη, was the mark of the owner (Fig. 2. 3).

<sup>3</sup> Kasparov–Khrshanovskiy 2019 [А. К. Каспаров, В. А. Хршановский, “Фаунистические остатки на юго-западном участке Китейского некрополя (по итогам раскопок 2010–2018 гг.)”, *Боспорские чтения: Боспор Киммерийский и варварский мир в период античности и средневековья. Основные итоги и перспективы исследований*], 274, 277–278.



*Fig. 2. 1.* A fragment of the handle of the Rhodian amphora with two stamps: ἐπὶ Ἀρ[ιστογ]ένεως Π[άνα]μος in the circle around the “head of Helios” emblem and the additional stamp ΑΛΩ, c. 128 BC. These and the following stamps and graffiti were read and attributed by N. A. Pavlichenko.

*Fig. 2. 2.* A fragment of the handle of a Sinopian amphora with the stamp [ἀστυνομο]ῦντος / [Λεωμέδον]τος το[ῦ] / [Ἐπιδήμου] horseman → / [-]. From the early 220s BC.

*Fig. 2. 3.* A fragment of the bottom of a black-lacquered vessel with part of the graffito [-]νικα(-) or Νικα(-).

*Fig. 2. 4.* A fragment of the handle of a Sinopian amphora with the stamp Ἀπατουρ[ίου] / ἀστυνόμου cantharos↑/ Σιμία. From the middle of the 260s BC.

*Fig. 2. 5.* A fragment of the handle of a Sinopian amphora with the stamp ἀσ[τυνόμου] / Αισχίν[ου] / Κτή[σων] bunch. From the middle of the 250s BC.

Earlier, in the eastern part of the northern extension of the excavation area XLVI, two more Sinopian stamps, dated to the mid-260s and mid-250s BC, were found among a significant amount of remains of ceramic ware: black-lacquered, red-lacquered, wheel-thrown, and handmade vessels (Fig. 2. 4–5).

Despite the impressive size of excavation area XLVI, only five graves were found in it. This seems disproportionate to the number of traces of ritual activities performed in this area. Found here in addition to the βόθροι, ritual grounds with the remains of funeral feasts and sacrifices, were many primitive stone altar constructions built right on the ground, and approximately ten small monolithic stone altars.<sup>4</sup> All of this is the good indicator of the chthonic character of the unearthed complex. Its dimensions indicate the possibility of the special sacral status of the sanctuary, combined with the necropolis.

### Excavation area XLVII

During 7 field seasons starting in 2016, the study of the other high (up to 3 m) bank has been conducted in the southwestern suburb of Kytaiion. This bank is situated 60–80 m to the west of the fortified western wall of the city site. The excavation area there received the number XLVII. In contrast to excavation area XLVI, not a single grave complex has so far been discovered here. However, earlier, under the thin humus layer, sacrificial pit no. 394 and ash hill no. 395 were unearthed and partly studied. They are located in the southeastern part of the excavation area.<sup>5</sup> In 2019–2022, during the extension of the excavation area to the north and its deepening throughout, the other ash hill was discovered in the northwestern part. It received the number 396. The other pit, no. 397, was also found. The set diameter of the southern ash hill base is at least 10 m, the diameter of the northern ash hill is at least 8 m.

After this discovery, the finds from both the southern and the northern parts of the excavation area can be considered to be offerings linked to the rituals performed on the two ash hills and near the ritual pits. Among such offerings, apart from the bone remains of

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<sup>4</sup> Moleva–Khrshanovskiy 2024 [Н. В. Молева, В. А. Хршановский, “Алтари из юго-западного предместья Китея”, *Древности Боспора*], 336–350.

<sup>5</sup> Khrshanovskiy 2020b [В.А. Хршановский, “Новый ритуальный комплекс на позднеантичном участке некрополя Китея”, *Боспорский феномен: Боспорское царство М. И. Ростовцева (взгляд из XXI века)*], 130–136.

domestic and wild animals (a horse, cow, sheep, goat, pig, dog, red deer, boar, fox, badger, and European hare), were also birds, dolphin, fish, and crab claws<sup>6</sup> and many (more than 26 thousand) fragments of amphorae, wheel-thrown and handmade ceramics, copper coins,<sup>7</sup> and terracotta figurines,<sup>8</sup> dated to the same broad period between the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. There were far more recent “asynchronous” objects here compared with the other excavation areas of the southwestern part. However, such things were discovered in the mounds of the two ash hills. The fragments of painted red-figure and black-lacquered vessels and the remains of imported amphorae from the Classical and Hellenistic ages, including stamped amphorae from Thasos, Heraclea, and Sinope, were found there. In the last few years, the collection has been replenished with a few more objects. Three Herakleian stamps of the 370s–360s BC (Fig. 3. 1–3) were found in the mound of the northern ash hill (no. 396).

The most interesting epigraphic find of recent years is the graffito ΑΓΛ on the wall of the red-clay amphora (Fig. 3. 4) unearthed in the southern half of the excavation area (ash hill no. 395). Considering the location of this graffito on the amphora's shoulders, where indications of the variety of wine in the vessel were often placed, it could be the abbreviation of ἀγλ(ευκῆς οἶνος).

Besides the clay and stone spindle whorls,<sup>9</sup> sinkers, bone borers, and needles that were often found among the offerings in this ash hill, the golden ax-shaped pendant (Fig. 4. 1) from the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD,<sup>10</sup> the Hellenistic terracotta statuette from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Fig. 4. 2),<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Kasparov–Khrshanovskiy 2019, 273–274.

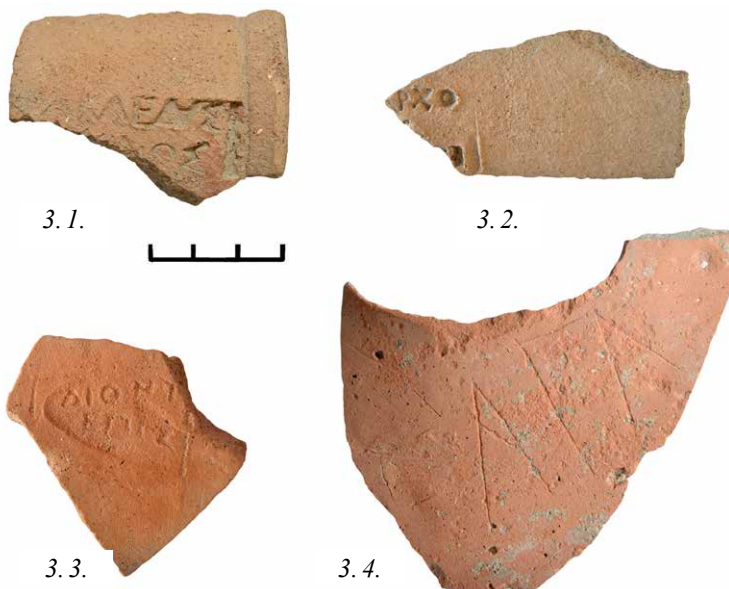
<sup>7</sup> Abramzon–Khrshanovskiy 2022 [М. Г. Абрамзон, В. А. Хршановский, “Монеты из раскопок юго-западного участка некрополя Китея (2011–2021 гг.)”, *Боспорский феномен: Большие и малые города Боспорского царства: Круглый стол, посвященный 75-летию Е. А. Молева (1937–2021)*], 236–238.

<sup>8</sup> Khanutina–Khrshanovskiy 2023 [З. В. Ханутина, В. А. Хршановский, “Терракоты из юго-западного участка некрополя Китея”], 53, рис. 4, 5–6; 56.

<sup>9</sup> Simonova 2018 [“М. А. Симонова, “Пряслица и грузила в погребально-поминальных комплексах IV в. н. э. юго-западного участка некрополя Китея”, *Боспорский феномен: Общее и особенное в историко-культурном пространстве античного мира*], 259–265.

<sup>10</sup> Kravchenko–Khrshanovskiy 2022 [А. В. Кравченко, В. А. Хршановский, “Золотая топовидная подвеска из позднеантичного ритуального комплекса некрополя Китея”, *Боспорский феномен: Большие и малые города Боспорского царства*], 241–247.

<sup>11</sup> Khanutina–Khrshanovskiy 2023, 53, Fig. 4. 5; 56.



*Fig. 3. 1.* A fragment of the neck of a Herakleian amphora with the stamp  
[Ἡρ]ακλέδας club↓ / [Κερκί]νος, H, P and Δ, A in ligature.

*Fig. 3. 2.* A fragment of the neck of the Herakleian amphora with the stamp  
[Εὐά]ρχο / [horned moon ↑] / [ἐπὶ Διονυ(σίου)] (alleged restoration).

*Fig. 3. 3.* Διονυ[σίου] / ἐπὶ Σ[- -]. From the 370s–360s BC.

*Fig. 3. 4.* A fragment of the wall of the red-clay amphora with the graffito ΑΓΛ.

the incense cup (Fig. 4. 3) and the dipinto with tamga on the light-clay amphora with a narrow neck (Fig. 4. 4) were unearthed there. In the future, deciphering this tamga will probably help answer the question of the ownership of these monumental ritual buildings of the Migration Period.

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*Fig. 4. 1.* The golden ax-shaped pendant. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

*Fig. 4. 2.* The terracotta statuette. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

*Fig. 4. 3.* The handmade incense cup.

*Fig. 4. 4.* A fragment of the neck of a light-clay amphora with the dipinto (the tamga?). From the first centuries AD.



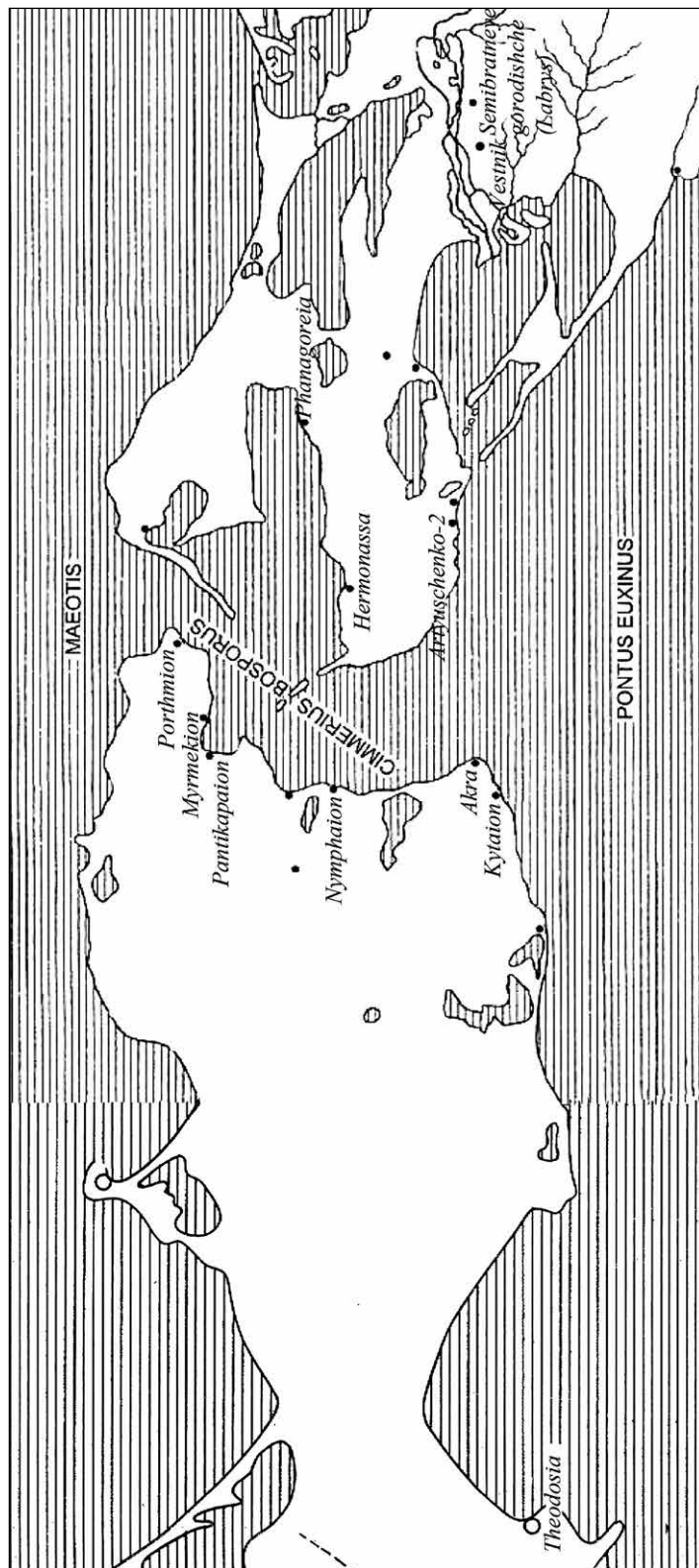
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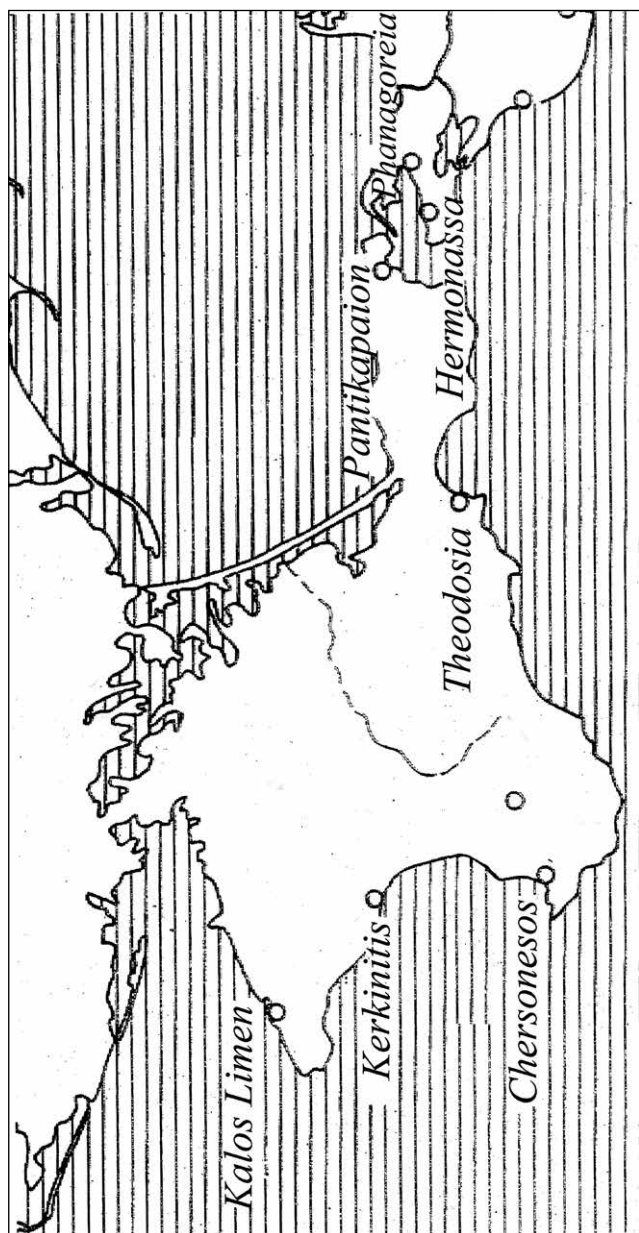
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The article summarizes the results of the security and rescue works of the Kytaiion archaeological expedition of the Institute of Archaeology RAS in the area of coastal erosion of the Bosphoran city of Kytaiion in 2019–2022. The study of this section has been conducted since 2016 in two excavation areas – XLVI and XLVII. In excavation area XLVI, in addition to the previously studied unearthed ritual and memorial complexes, two more ritual pits nos. 389 and 393, the ritual complex no. 400, and the grave without inventory no. 398 have been excavated. In accordance with the formerly determined archaeological context, they are attributed to the same Late Antique age – the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Besides 5 graves, more than 10 ritual pits and at least 2 ritual grounds with the remains of funeral feasts and sacrifices and many primitive stone altar constructions were found in this excavation area. The size of the unearthed complex allows us to presume that it was the sanctuary combined with the necropolis. In the same years in excavation area XLVII, the second ash hill no. 396 was found and one more pit no. 397 was unearthed. After this discovery, all finds from the excavation area can be considered to be offerings, linked to the rituals performed on the two ash hills and near the ritual pits. As before, asynchronous material from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD, along with many animal bones, was found in the excavation areas XLVI and XLVII.

В статье подводятся итоги охранно-спасательных работ Китайской археологической экспедиции Института археологии РАН в зоне береговой абразии юго-западного предместья боспорского города Китея в 2019–2022 годах. С 2016 г. исследование этого участка ведется на двух раскопах – XLVI и XLVII. На раскопе XLVI в дополнение к открытым и исследованным ранее погребальным и поминальным комплексам, были раскопаны еще две ритуальные ямы №№ 389 и 393, ритуальный комплекс № 400 и безынвентарное погребение № 398, относящиеся по установленному раннее археологическому контексту к тому же позднеантичному времени – IV–V вв. н. э. Помимо 5 могил, более 10 жертвенных ям и не менее 2 ритуальных площадок с остатками тризн и жертвоприношений в этом раскопе были найдены многочисленные примитивные алтарные конструкции из камней. Размеры открытого комплекса позволяют предположить, что он представляет собой святилище, совмещенное с некрополем. В XLVII раскопе в те же годы был обнаружен второй зольник, № 396 и зафиксирована еще одна яма – № 397. После этого открытия все находки в раскопе могут рассматриваться как приношения, связанные с совершавшимися на обоих зольных холмах и возле ритуальных ям обрядами. Как и ранее, в раскопах XLVI и XLVII наряду с многочисленными костями животных встречался асинхронный материал IV в. до н. э. – I–III вв. н. э.

# ARCHAEOLOGICA





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