

Specific features of ceramic materials from the earliest level of Panticapaeum[☆]

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1. Introduction

Excavations have been going on at Panticapaeum (mod. Kerch, Autonomous Republic of the Crimea) since the first half of the 19th century. For the last 70 years the Bosporan (Panticapaeum) Expedition of the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts has been working there on a regular basis, led since 1977 by Professor V.P. Tolstikov, Head of the museum's Department of the Art and Archaeology of the Classical World.

During the field seasons of 2009–2015 researchers were able for the first time to uncover a well-preserved section of the city's earliest level dating from the end of the 7th to the first half of the 6th century BC. This discovery was made in the New Upper Mithradates Trench at the northern edge of the upper plateau on Mount Mithradates (Pl. I, II). It was established that when the settlement was first founded on the highest and naturally fortified part of the hill, it was surrounded by a defensive wall between 2.2 and 2.4 m thick (Pl. II, III). The settlement was founded at the end of the 7th century BC. Around the middle of the 6th century a catastrophe befell the settlement and a serious fire followed. Arrow-heads of Scythian types, found in the charred level 1.4 m thick, make it possible to assume that the catastrophe was of a military nature.

2. Materials and methods

The main groups of ceramic material obtained from the charred level and useful for dating purposes consist of fragments from storage

vessels, amphorae and painted tableware. A significant proportion of the materials dates from between the last quarter of the 7th century BC and the first quarter of the 6th century BC. Important preliminary results were obtained with regard to the sorting of the ceramic material from the various production centres. Now all the ceramic material is in the collection of the Eastern Crimean Historical and Cultural Museum-Preserve (Kerch).

The common comparative visual analyse of shape and style of painting was made for the classification and Anatolian ware was judged microscopically.

3. Results

One of the characteristic features of the complex of the earliest level is the paucity of pottery imported from the mainland. Only two Athenian fragments are known from the earliest level. The shoulder of an amphora by the Gorgon Painter with a lion head and *rosettes* (Pl. IV, 2; 600–575 BCE; parallels in: Beazley, 1956, p. 9, № 13, CVA Musée du Louvre 11, III He, 120, 1–3), is the earliest Attic painted sherd from Panticapaeum. Another one is a rim of the Athenian trade amphora of the SOS type (Pl. IV, 1; dates from between the end of the 7th and the first quarter of the 6th century BC; parallels in: Rizzo, 1990, Figs. 11–12).

The upper part of an early Laconian vessel, a so-called *lakaina*, has been found for the first time in Panticapaeum, in the level dating from the third quarter of the 6th century BC (Pl. IV, 3). Similar fragments have been found in Olympia and in the early assemblages from the

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Mithridat Mount.
The city-site of Panticapaeum.
The upper plateau of the First Chair
(Pervoe Kreslo).

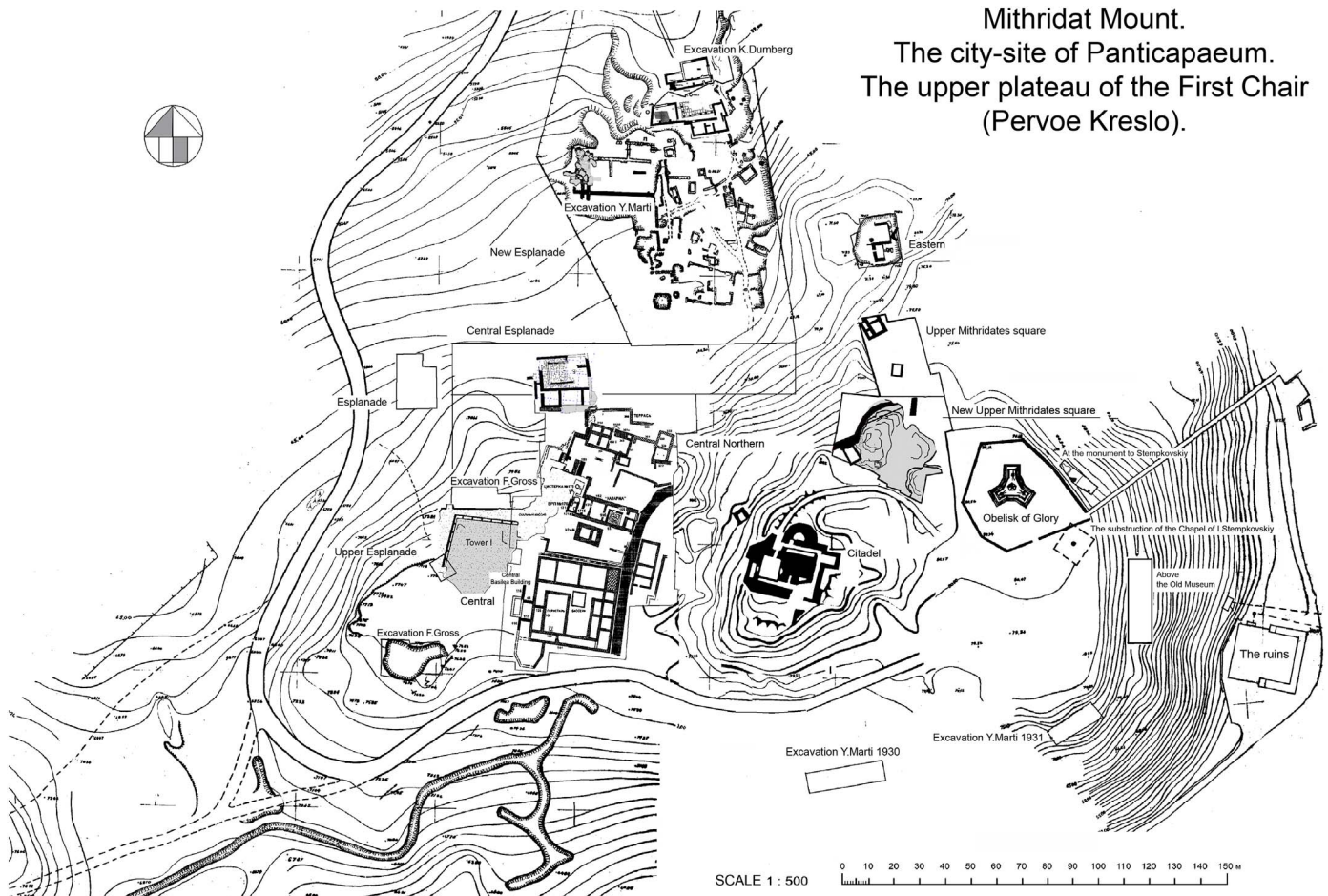


Plate I.

temple of Artemis Orthia in Sparta (650–575 BCE; parallels in: Dawkins et al., 1909, p. 23, Fig. 1; Kunze-Götte, 2000, Taf. 1, 2–4). In addition, some fragments of Laconian column kraters from the middle of the 6th century BC were also previously known in Panticapaeum.

Corinthian painted pottery is a rare group in Panticapaeum (accounting for just under 2%), and two miniature *kotylai* with “running dog” decoration appear to be the earliest Corinthian vessels found at the settlement (Pl. IV, 5; 620–590 BCE; Савар and Астахова, 2015).

Most of the sherds are from painted and storage vessels of North-Ionian origin. The shapes and decoration of the storage vessels have a good deal in common with standard Clazomenian *amphorae* (44%): Groups IV–V (Sezgin, 2004). The numerous painted fragments (93%) include various shapes with exquisite decoration, such as a *skyphos*-shaped *krater* with sphinxes (Pl. IV, 4), a trefoil *oinochoe* with eyes in white on the black ground of the rim (Pl. IV, 6), jugs with painted goats (Pl. IV, 9). Another feature of the assemblage is the appearance of a large quantity of cups with band decoration (Pl. IV, 7) and fragments of plates and “fruit stands” (Pl. IV, 8, 11). It is noteworthy that a small sherd of a so-called “bird bowl” has been found for the first time in Panticapaeum and in the Crimea in general (Pl. IV, 10; dating from the last quarter of the 7th century BC). There are close parallels for these fragments among the finds from the destruction level of Old Smyrna (600–575 BCE; Akurgal, 1983).

We can single out a small group of Chian pottery, with an equal percentage of both trade *amphorae* (Kolomaksky type; Монохов, 2003, c. 12–13) and painted vessels (2%). Chian painted pottery from the earliest level is represented by a few fragments of *chalices* of the Grand Style type and the Group with dotted concentric circles (Pl. IV, 13, 15; from the end of the 7th to the first quarter of the 6th century BC;

parallels in: Lemos, 1991, No 163, 243, 624).

The South-Ionian group is represented mostly by storage *amphorae* (nearly 14%). They are of the Milesian I-A type (7th and first half of the 6th centuries BC; Монохов, 2003, c. 30–31), Samian vessels of the Krasnogorovskii I-A type and the I-B Cerveteri type as classified by Monachov (dating from between the end of the 7th century and the third quarter of the 6th BC; Монохов, 2003, c. 26–27). We can definitely recognize only one most likely Milesian painted plate with *metope* and *rosette* decoration (Pl. IV, 14).

The next group of Aeolian pottery contains mostly fragments of transport *amphorae* (16%) and only a few rare pieces of painted pottery (0,1%), such as sherds of a *dinos*, attributed to the London *Dinos* Group (Pl. V, 1; dating from the end of the 7th century BC; two of them have already been published in: CVA Moscow 8, pl. 2.2; Tugusheva and Tolstikov, 2014, pl. IV, 2; VI, 2; parallels see: Iren, 2002, Abb. 1, 2). There are also some fragments of so-called Aeolian *Bucchero* black-burnished pottery, but only one of them – a handle is originated from the earliest level (Pl. V, 2; parallels see: Vinogradov, 1997, Lamb 1931/1932, pl. 21, 5).

Among the numerous important discoveries, the real breakthrough in research was the chance to define an entirely new group of archaeological material. It had never previously been identified because of the lack of any opportunity to carry out comparative analysis of the relevant archaeological evidence. It is widely known that smoothing and burnishing, together with bichrome colour schemes, are techniques not typical for Greek ceramic production but frequently found in Near-Eastern pottery. The discovery of large pieces with distinctive decoration gave us an opportunity to detect parallels with Anatolian ceramic traditions. The most significant, both impressive and well-preserved, are large fragments of a vessel, similar to a *dinos* or *lebes* (Pl. V, 3).

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