

## NB – UNEDITED CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

### **Ceramic Complex of the Scythian Fortress Ak-Kaya (from the end of the 4th to the 1st century BC.)**

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#### 1. Disposition and topography of the settlement.

The monument is situated in the centre of the Crimea, on the boundary of the pre-mountain zone and the steppe, near south-eastern outskirts of the village Vishennoe, 6 km to the north-north-east from the city of Belogorsk. The fortress occupies the north most branch of the rock massif Ak-Kaya on the right bank of the river Biyuk-Karasu. The south and west edges of this rock are shaped by limestone steeps, and the north and eastern edges – by flat slopes.

The Fortress of the Scythian period has an area ca. 10 ha. Its fortification can be seen as a broken line on the northern and eastern slopes, and joins the rocky steeps. In the central part of the fortress there are three ash-hills, which are placed in the line from the north to the south. There is also a medieval fortress by the area ca. 1,1 ha, which is located in the southern part of the rocky cape.

#### 2. History of investigation.

The site was discovered in 1924 by the Crimean student of local history A.P. Bulavenko (Markevich 1928, 185). In 1947 during works of the Belogorsk detachment of the Tauro-Scythian Expedition it was examined by P.N. Shults. In 1968 the rock was visited by I.A. Baranov, who has found there sherds of medieval ceramics. In 1974-1976 the northern and north-eastern parts of the fortress were heavily damaged during building works. In this time A. V. Belyi has collected here several amphora stamps and other finds. In the Corpus of the Monuments of the Late Scythian Culture written by O.D. Dashevskaya (Dashevskaya 1991, 46) this site is mentioned as Ak-Kaya settlement.

In 1984 the site was examined by S.G. Koltukhov, who has found a cultural layer of the Late Scythian Culture from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, which was covered by medieval depositions. In his book he mentioned this settlement under the name of Vishennoe. After reconstruction of S. G. Koltukhov the southern part of the cape was occupied by a small fortified shelter by the area of 1,1 ha, to which was jointed a big medieval fortress with strong fortification with rampart and ditch. After his idea the walls of the Scythian fortified shelter were used in medieval period as a citadel (Koltukhov 1999, 21, 110-111).

In 2001 on the settlement near the village of Vishennoe has been done a small-scale excavation by the Mountain-Crimean Expedition of the Crimean Branch of the Institute of Archaeology under direction of V.L. Myts. On the damaged areas were excavated three prospecting pits and has been made a topographical survey of the site. During these works besides other things was found a layer of fire with impressive material of the Hellenistic period.

Since 2005 the site is yearly investigated by the Crimean Pre-Mountain Expedition of the Crimean Branch of the Institute of Archaeology under direction of Yu. P. Zaytsev. Until now there are 5 sections and 6 prospecting pits dug out, which are situated in different parts inside and outside the fortress. The total investigated area is now ca. 900 sq. m.

#### 3. Stratigraphy, Chronology and Periodization.

The cultural layer on the settlement is represented by loamy-humus depositions with admixture of ash, which lay on the rock. The depth of this layer is different. Near defensive walls it reaches 2 m.

On the settlement in general it differs from 1 to 1,5 m. In ash-hills it increases up to 3 m, and near the rocky edge it decreases to several sm.

Lower layers of depositions, which are connected with the first periods of the life in the fortress, are made by loamy soil. Upper layers are characterized by the heightened content of humus. The medieval layer is very damaged by ploughing filled with number of stones.

Time of the fortress' building could be defined as the very end of the 4<sup>th</sup> or a boundary between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC. At its beginning the Fire 1 has happened, layer of which was later covered with dusty depositions of small thickness. On the surface of these depositions lays a building horizon with earthen-wattle ("turluchnyi") constructions, which has been perished in two successive Fires 2 and 3 about the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Presumably at the same time has happened a completion of defensive walls and building of a tower discovered in the section 6D. The next period is characterized by accumulation of a layer of ash-loamy soil and construction of a stone building with semi-underground near the defensive wall (section 4C). On the floor of this building was found a layer of Fire 4, which is dated to the last quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> or to the boundary between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. Supposedly the same horizon is represented by the building with a hearth-table in the section 6D. The next layer of ash-humus soil, which covers layers of the Fire 4, gives place to dwelling constructions and to the layer of Fire 5 dated from the middle to the third quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. With the same horizon there are synchronized layers of ash-loamy soil of dust and several household-pits in the section 4C.

The most upper horizon of the ancient fortress is dated as a whole to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. It could be subdivided into several sub-horizons and is represented by a layer of ash-humus and fallen stones. With this horizon are connected some local parts of the Fire 6, which could be dated to the Augustian time.

#### 4. Amphorae.

Among the amphora material dated from the boundary of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC utterly prevails production of Sinopa and Chersonesos with a small number of Herakleia, braun-clay amphorae, and Mediterranean types.

Chersonesean amphorae are represented by the types 1Б, 1В, 1Г, VA, VB (after Monakhov 1989), Sinopa amphorae – by the type 3 (after Monakhov 2003).

About the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC in the cultural layers of the fortress appear fragments of Rhodian amphorae, which in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC become prevailing. Other centers in this period are: Chersonesos, Sinopa, Kos, and brawn-clay amphorae. The 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC is represented mainly by the output of the South Pontic centers – light-clay amphorae with double-barreled handles, brawn-clay amphorae, and presumably Herakleian.

#### 5. Collection of amphora stamps.

To the present time from the settlement Ak-Kaya occur up to 70 ceramic stamps on amphora handles, 8 of which are found accidentally (picked up finds) and the rest – during regular excavations.

#### ***Chersonesos***

This centre is represented by 18 stamps, which shoe the following distribution after chronological groups.

After Kats (Kats 2007) it looks so:

Group 1Б (316-305 BC.) – 1ex.

Group 1В(304-295 BC.) – 6 ex.

Group 1Г (294-285 BC.) – 0

Group 2A (284-271 BC.) – 1 ex.

Group 2Б (270-264 BC.) – 0

Group 2B (263-240 BC.) – 4 ex.

Group 2Г (239-226 BC.) – 0

Group 3A (225-210 BC.) – 4 ex.

Group 3Б (209-198 BC.) – 0

Group 3B (197-180 BC.) – 1 ex.

It looks differently after Stolba 2005<sup>1</sup>

Group 1Б (321-304 BC.) – 6 ex.

Group 1B(303-290 BC.) – 0

Group 2A (289-275 BC.) – 1 ex.

Group 2Б (274-270 BC.) – 1 ex.

Group 2B (230-206 BC.) – 1 ex.

Group 3A (195-180 BC.) – 4 ex.

Group 3Б (209-198 BC.) – 0

Group 3B (165-150 BC.) – 1 ex.

At any rate one can see a predominance of stamps belonging to the chronological period between the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC.

### ***Sinopa***

There are 17 stamps, correlation of which with different chronological schemes provides different pictures. According to classification of Garlan (Garlan 2004) it looks as following:

Group 5C – 1 ex. (Leōn Leontiskou)

Group 6A – 3 ex. (Pōsis 2 Daiskou and Kallisthenēs 2 Hestiaiou)

Group 6B – 3 ex. (Iobakhos Molpagorou, Zēnis Apollodorou, Zēnis Apollodorou)

Group 6C1 – 2 ex. (Eucharistos 3 Kallisthenou, Ekataios Posideiou).

Group 6C2 – 3 ex. (Phēmios 3 Theopeithou, Theriklēs Apolloniou, Athēnippos Metrodōrou)

Group 6D – 1 ex. (Hyllos Thiliskou)

The suggested by V.I. Kats chronology of these groups shows a picture, in accordance with which nearly all attributed Sinopa stamps from Ak-Kaya belong to the short period from the middle to the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.:

**Group 5 MГ** (280-s – beginning of the 250-s BC.)

*Subgroup 5C* (265 – beginning of the 250-s BC.) – 1 ex.

**Group 6 MГ** (250-s – 215 BC.)

*Subgroup 6A* (255 – beginning of the 240-s BC.) – 2 ex.

*Subgroup 6B* (end of the 240-s – beginning of the 230-s BC.) – 3 ex.

*Subgroup 6C* (230-s – 220-s BC.) – 5 ex.

**Group 7 MГ** (215 – 190 BC.)

*Subgroup 7A* (215 – beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> BC.) – 1 ex.

However, such a situation contradicts with the chronology of Chersonesean stamps by the same Kats (Kats 2004; Kats 2007). In other words it turns out that Chersonesean stamps, which are found with the Sinopean ones in the same cultural layers, should be dated as earlier as 50 years before the Sinopean stamps. Moreover, in this case a stratigraphical column with clay floors and fires in the section 4C would demonstrate a paradoxical situation, when under a layer with 3 earlier Chersonesean stamps would lay a layer with a later Sinopean one.

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<sup>1</sup> Stamps of Epiphanos Telamōnos are not included in this scheme.

Much better in case of Ak-Kaya is the chronological scheme of Sinopean stamps after N.F. Fedoseev (Fedoseev 1999):

283 BC. – 1 ex.

277 BC. – 1 ex.

275 BC.– 1 ex.

272 BC.– 1 ex.

259 BC.– 1 ex.

257 BC.– 1 ex.

248 BC.– 1 ex.

247 BC.– 1 ex.

244 BC.– 1 ex.

237 BC.– 1 ex.

233 BC.– 1 ex.

217 BC.– 1 ex.

Evidently such contradictions are caused by absence of a reliable data-base, which situation promises many discoveries in future.

### ***Rhodes***

Rhodian stamps are represented by 30 stamps on amphora handles:

Among stamps of Eponymoi there are 10 ex. defined (Chronology after Finkielsztejn 2001):

182 BC. – Kleonymos 2

160-153 BC. – Timourrodos

150 – 147 BC. – Pythogenes

147 BC. – Aleximachos

142/141 – 137/136 BC. – Alexiadas, 2 ex.

142/141 – 137/136 BC. – Lapheides

110 BC. – Daemon

107 – 88/86 BC. – Nikomachos

Among stamps of fabricants there are 11 ex. defined:

2 Group (234 – 199 BC.)- 1 экз. (Menon 1)

2-3 Groups – 1 ex. (Imas)

3 Group (198 – 161 BC.) – 2 экз. (both – Aristokles 1)

4-5 Group – 1 ex. (Eukleitos)

5 Group (145 – 108 BC.) – 5 ex. (Kallonos, Midas, Glaukia, Pythogenes, Thesmokrites)

There is interesting to have a Rhodian stamp of rectangular shape with a name of Stratippos, to which was not possible to find analogies.

Thus, the main number of the eponymic and of the synchronous to them fabricants' stamps belong to the period between 150-s and 130-s BC.

Amphoras handle of the Dressel 1 Type with a Latin stamp “SCOPA” (1<sup>st</sup> century BC) is a very rare find for the North Pontic region. The main territory of the distribution of such amphorae is the area of Western Mediterranean.

### 6. Pottery.

Common pottery is mainly represented by fragments of jugs of different shapes, also with painting by red ink. There are fragments of painted canteens and other rare forms (luterii, bowls) known as well.

There are singular finds of kitchenware (saucepans and lids) and unguentarii (fusiform) without red-slip covering, which are connected with layers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

Ceramic altars and their fragments, which are analogous to those from the Southern Palace of the Scythian Neapolis (Zaytsev 2004, Fig. 86), are found only in the section 6D and connected with the Fire 4.

#### 7. Glazed pottery.

Vessels of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC are represented by fragments of cantharoi, bowls of different profiles and closed vessels. Among those it is interesting to note a cantharus of prolonged proportions, which is usually dated in the Russian speaking academic literature to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

Vessels dated from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. Are also represented by fragments of open forms, fluted pelikoi, cups with relief ornamentation, cantharoi, unguentarii (also with engraving, ornamented with white ink and liquid clay).

Unique finds for the North Pontic region are two fragmented vessels from the layer of Fire 4 in the section 6D. These are: a goblet of prolonged proportions with a complicated ornamentation with white ink and a black-glazed canteen with the stamp ΦΙΑ[...], analogy to which are found only among materials of the Athenian Agora with dates 225–200 BC. and 200–150 BC. (Rotroff 1997, 1201, 1212).

Glazed vessels from the layer of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. are not impressive and are represented by several types of dishes, cups and goblets belonging to the so-called Bosporan Sigillata.

8. Hand-made pottery. Hand-made pottery from Ak-Kaya is represented mainly by pots of various forms; edges of many examples are ornamented with finger-prints, tucks, and cutting. A minority of fragments belongs to cups and bowls, among them there are stuck on decorative elements. A particular group are various globular incense-burner on a foot, some of them are ornamented, and incense-burner of open types.

#### 9. Conclusions.

1. A preliminary analysis of the ceramic complex of the Ak-Kaya Fortress shows that its main part belongs to the chronological period from the boundary of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries to the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC with predominance of the materials of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Already this conclusion makes the site one of the most important settlements of the North Black Sea region, because namely materials of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century are particularly rare in the barbarian monuments of this area.

2. The main category of objects are amphorae, which is rather surprising for a barbarian settlement located far from the sea coast. A big quantity of well stratified stamps of Chersonesos, Sinopa, and Rhodes demonstrates a future great potential in definition of chronology of the settlement itself, and in constructing more general chronologies, making a concordance of different chronological schemes of amphora production.

3. Size of the fortress, its powerful fortification, its location near the group of royal Scythian barrows, representative types of goods, allows one to suggest a royal and capital character of the Ak-Kaya site from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. A correlation between the chronological schemes of Ak-Kaya and Scythian Neapolis makes it possible to suggest an existence of two royal capitals in the Crimea, which replaced one other approximately in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

***Appendix. Combination of stamped handles of Sinopa and Chersonesos amphorae in cultural layers of Ak-Kaya.***

1. Section 4B. Quadr. 237, 238. Fire 1 in the peribol. – Theriklēs Apolloniou (Sinopa)
2. Section 4C. Quadr. 305, 306, 325, 326. A layer of ash-loamy soil covering the Fire 1 on the rock: Damosion – 2 ex., Matris, CI – monogramm (Chersonesos); Zēnis Apollodorou, Ekataios Posideiou (Sinopa).
3. Section 6D. Quadr. 229, 230. A layer of ash-loamy soil covering the Fire 1 on near the defensive wall: Siriskou (Chersonesos); Posis 2 Daiskou, Leōn Leontiskou (Sinopa).
4. Section 6D. Quadr. 170 (outside the defensive wall). A lens of ash-loamy soil on the rock with a broken black-glazed cantharos: Eucharistos 3 Kallisthenou, Iobakhos Molpagorou (Sinopa).
5. Section 4C. Quadr. 305. A column of floors with Fires 2 and 3. From below: Epiphaneos Telamonou (under the floor 1), Nikeas Herakleiou (between floors 1 and 2), Sopolis Pasionos (on the floor 2, a broken amphora in the Fire 3) (all – Chersonesos).
6. Section 4B. Quadr. 208, 209. A layer of ash-loamy soil inside the drain outside the defensive wall – Damokles (Chersonesos) on the rock and one unidentified stamp of the 1<sup>st</sup> Group of Chersonesos, ca. 30 cm above – Phēmios 3 Theopeithou (Sinopa).