

## (Heracleon Peninsula and Western Crimea )

Chersonesus Taurica, a single Dorian colony in the North Black Sea Littoral, was founded by Heraclea Pontica around 422 BC, as was considered for a long time. But now there are some archaeological data to date its appearance already in the late 6<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> c BC, although this new chronological scale and the origin of the colonists are in debate. We can only say with sure that the Heracleots were in the South – West Crimea in the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> c BC. The archaic site on the place of Tauric Chersonesus was organized on the promontory, situated in the north – eastern sector of the later city, where excavations in 1980s -1990s brought to light some material of the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c BC as well as the middle – third quarter of this century, which is lying close to a traditional date of its founding. From the very beginning the citizens of a new city were surrounded by savage and wild Tauri, having taken the goddess Maiden to be their patron and saviour in the world of the barbarians. Her temple according to the Greek tradition, stood on the acropolis of a new city and another one was situated somewhere outside the city walls on the Heracleon peninsula ( probably where later the Georgievskij Monastery was situated ). But all search of its remains failed. Another popular god among the Chersonits was Heracles, a patron and mythical founder of Heraclea Pontica, the mother city of Tauric Chersonesus. He surely also had a temple and a lot of local shrines outside the city in country estates throughout the rural periphery, because this god was worshipped also as a defender and keeper of chora. A lot of votive reliefs, terracotta figurines, pieces of sculpture, representing him as staying or lying but always with club and lion's skin, were discovered in many places.

Chersonesus was founded chiefly as an agricultural state, the more so that Tauri could hardly give something to the Greek in terms of commerce. The city started to develop economy and agriculture already in the very beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC: first coins are dated to the 390s BC and by 370/360s BC the nearby vicinities in around the Karantinnaya Ravine have been probably parcelled. We are aware of that from the excavations of Strzheletskij before the Second World War, who found here some remains of agricultural buildings and called it as ” a site of wine-makers”, though, as now is evident, it seems to be rural estates of early Chersonits. At approximately the same time the isthmus between the Kazak Bay and the Blue Bay was chosen as a place of creating new land – plots, as the area of the Heracleon peninsula was still occupied by the Tauri. It made it necessary to organize a system of kleroi initially throughout the Mayak peninsula where they appeared around 370/360 BC firstly on the isthmus itself. The Chersonits started erecting a defensive wall which protected them from the barbarians on the Heracleon peninsula still unsubjected to their polis ( I mean a wall which goes along the hill of the isthmus and is known as the south wall, facing the Heracleon peninsula ). From it they began to divide up the whole area of the Lighthouse Point. We are aware of that from the regular excavations by Zedgenidze and surveys of Galina Nikolaenko.

Excavations on the Sapun Hill, in Inkerman and in the environs of Balaklava, held by Savelja, perfectly showed that approximately in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC the vicinity of modern Sevastopol were densely inhabited by the Taurians and their settlements appeared not later than this particular time. Simultaneously their former sites on the Heracleon peninsula where they are known since the 7<sup>th</sup> c BC ( Uch Basch etc ) completely disappeared and on the place of some of them Greek farms of the Chersonits appeared. It shows than widst starting the land division on the Heracleon peninsula, the Hellenes first of all tried to expell the local barbarians from the place of future city's country estates and settled them down on lands which were either stil unconquered or were going to be included into the polis state as a kind of distant chora ( unlike the adjacent chora just parcelled into kleroi ). This fact is difficult not to underestimate as it confirms, first, that the Heracleon colonists or their second generation conquered the rural area, as it was usually done by

the Dorians in different lands, and second, that the Taurian land – tillers could have been regarded as the Mariandini in Heraclea Pontica, i.e. as semi – dependent agricultural population who lived in the villages.

So the Greeks started to develop the Heracleean peninsula around the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC or in the third quarter of the century. At the same time farms, built earlier on the Mayak peninsula, stood unfortified as being defended by the wall, said above. Careful study of the rural area of the Lighthouse Point by Nikolay Pechonkin in 1911, by the Heracleean expedition in 1988/1990 and by the State Museum of Chersonesus in 1990s showed that all farms there were without towers and appeared in 360s BC or around the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC just one or two decades before the first farms on the Heracleean peninsula. Zedgenidze's research in the Old Chersonesus of Strabo confirmed that the first allotments there appeared even a bit earlier around the 370s BC, so we can make a chronological scale of developing the adjacent chora by Chersonesus: first stage – creation of wall on the isthmus and beginning of land division there and probably in the upper reaches of the Karantinnaya Ravine; second stage – spread of the system of kleroi over the whole of the Lighthouse Point and the expell of the Tauri from the Heracleean peninsula to the foothills of the Southwest Crimea; third stage – start of organizing land division system on the Heracleean peninsula around mid – third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC. At the same time with the second and third stages of reclamation of the Heracleean peninsula Chersonesus began to colonize the Northwest Taurica and did it in alliance with Cercinitis and Olbia by waging war against the Scythians.

After the excavations on the Mayak peninsula it seems clear that a popular idea to see the Old Chersonesus of Strabo as a first fort on the city's chora ( TEIXOS ) to help in conquering the whole rural area is incorrect: there was no fort there it all, instead there was a system of kleroi which spread over the plain directly from the southern more ancient wall on the isthmus; the second or the so-called northwestern wall appeared much later when the land division there had been already over. Some towers of the inner wall were linked by two entrances with the area of the Mayak peninsula and with houses which were erected between the walls of the isthmus ( as Pechonkin's and Leper's excavations show the living surface inside the walls covered only 18 ha and the houses were built not within the whole area but only in two parts of it – one in the southwest and another in the northeast part ). It became clear when the survey around the wall proved that while erecting it the architects cut off a part of earlier subdivided land in order to create something like a fort or a hiding place for the rural inhabitants of the formerly unfortified farms. As far as the excavation of the farm no 49 showed that closer to the second quarter or middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC there was made an attempt to fortify it by anti-ramming belt ( a kind of additional fortification which appeared around towers on farms of the Heracleean peninsula and the Northwest Crimea in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC ), the erection of a certain space for hiding behind parallel walls on the isthmus was due to a serious threat from the Scythians or the Sarmatians around the 380/ 330 BC ( known from epigraphical and narrative evidence ). So we consider that houses behind the walls were constructed when the unfortified farms on the Mayak peninsula were temporary left by their inhabitants who tried to hide themselves beyond the newly erected wall.

Early date of Mayak peninsula farms is following from pottery fragments, coins of Chersonesus with types "quadriga / warrior", " Gryphon / Maiden," "Maiden / gryphon" and " Maiden, killing a stag / butting bull", all dated to the 360/350 – 310/290 BC ( in accordance with different scales of chronology ). Particularly all farms of the Mayak peninsula were left by inhabitants in the second quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC when we can also trace a lacuna in functioning of farms within the whole Heracleean peninsula and after a destructions of sites and farms in the Northwestern Crimea ( Panskoe I, Tchaika etc ).

Simultaneously with fortifying the isthmus of the Mayak peninsula by the first wall Chersonesus erected some fortresses in central and south parts of the Heracleian peninsula especially for expelling the Tauri and to begin with land division. They were discovered in 1928 by Grinevich in the region of Berman Ravine and later in our days by Nikolaenko in the vicinity of Yukharina Ravine, called by her as "Fortified complexes 1 - 4" ( their early date is confirmed by coins of 390/380 BC and early pottery like that of the Mayak ). But the regular land division, as said above, started in the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC at the same time with developing the rural areas in the Northwest Crimea. Land plots there consisted of six parcels and one farm, which was serving for all these parcels thus being not in individual villa, but a kind of Dema house like in Attica etc. Standard size of the plot is 420 x 630 m or 19 / 26 ha, practically all farms had towers and three or even four living phases. The plot or kleros was divided up into fields for gardening and planting grapes, that is why wine – making was a main economic business of the farmers. Each farm had a vineyard, their remains one can see on farms 25, 26, 39, 39a etc.

The agricultural uprise of Chersonesus is dated to the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC, and both parts of its chora were very productive. The city was exporting wine in amphoras, stamped since the last decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC with the names of polis officials – agoranomoi and astynomoi ( the latter like in Sinope ). Amphora stamping lasted until the first quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c BC when Chersonesus lost the most part of its rural territories. As for the grain trade, it was chiefly concentrated in the Northwest Crimea, not on the Heracleian peninsula. Judging by the famous oath of the Chersonites, some parts of grain was exported just through Cercinitis and the greatest sites of the northwest Crimea, leaving the harbour of Chersonesus aside and depriving this city of income from grain trade. To improve the situation the city ordered all traders to do this commerce through the city and under its control, which was one of main reasons why Cercinitis stopped autonomous minting of coins just on the threshold of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC. The prosperity of chora stopped in the beginning of the second quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC, when some sites in Western Taurica perished and many part of the country estates on the Heracleian peninsula were left by inhabitants.

Archaeological investigations by the Heracleian expedition of Academy of Sciences of Russia (USSR at that time ) on country estates of land plots no.9, 10, 86 showed a number of living phases connected with reconstructions which took place on all farms since the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC until complete stop of their functioning due to the final loss of chora by Chersonesus in the third quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c BC. Numismatics and archaeology confirms that the city had to withdraw from the northwest Crimea a decade earlier – in late second quarter and middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c BC because of the Scythian invasions which became regular since the late 3<sup>rd</sup> –early 2<sup>nd</sup> c BC and are well documented by epigraphy, i.e. by a treaty with the Pontic king Pharnaces I ( IPE, 355 ). Some of the farms, as for instance, on plot no. 25, were living in only until the second quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> c BC, some were revived to function until the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> c BC ( farm 9,10, 86 etc ) and later on. Now we are sure about a break in the functioning of the nearest chora since 280 until 230 BC when it practically was not in operation. That was a period of burying coin hoards because of a crisis both political, military and economic, a time when a lot of people lost their plots of land as being exiled and when back – had to get them anew but on conditions of renting land from the new administration. This is reflected in a well - known land cadastre of Chersonesus. To this period we incline to refer the distinguished basement of a statue to Agasicles, a famous citizen who made a new land division in the Heracleian peninsula and in the Northwestern Crimea and fortified the farms all over there. As the Heracleian peninsula with Tauric sites in its environs completely in full size still belonged to Chersonesus until the Scythian wars of the late 2<sup>nd</sup> c BC, a part of the distant chora which included such former Chersonesian farms like Panskoe I, Bolshoj Kastel and others, mostly on Tarchankut peninsula, was lost and became a part of the Scythian Crimean possessions.

This painfully struck the city's economy and its grain trade which started to incline to a lane of crisis to be evident on coins, overstruck and reduced in size. If in the late 4<sup>th</sup> c BC there were an active spread of Chersonesian coins throughout the whole agrarian territory, by the late 3<sup>rd</sup> c BC a number of coins in circulation on chora greatly diminished a foreign coins, particularly in the NW Crimea, again began to win over leading positions.

By the late 2<sup>nd</sup> c BC all Taurian sites around Chersonesus in the foothills of Sapun Gora and Balaklava practically disappeared, and it is informed in the Diophantus decree that the Mithridatic general had to submit the paroikountes Tauroi.

During the reign of Mithridates Eupator the chora of Chersonesus was partly revived again, but being far from its former dimensions. We can be sure only about a section south of Tchaika ( Kara Tobe, Saksakja peresyp ) and Calos Limen, as far as the Heracleean peninsula is concerned, we are able to say that only few of the farms were revived, and among them one can point at the farm 9, where a coin of a Cappadocian king of the 68 BC had been discovered, and a few others, which give single bronze coins of Mithridatic mint.

Active revival of agrarian possessions is going down to a period of Bosporan domination under kings Pharnaces, Asander, Dynamis and Aspurgus with a certain break in the first decades of the AD I, when the Scythians and the Taurians again made an attempt to install their power over the vicinities of Chersonesus. After a raid of Aspurgus from Bosphorus to the NW Crimea and making the Scythian kingdom a client state of the Bosporan kings, Chersonesus again started to enlarge his former agricultural base and it is traced by coins, mostly of the Bosporan mint. It is also evident in archaeological layers of the AD I on such sites as no 9, 86, 227 ( old no 150 north ). So we are sure that the develop of Heracleean peninsula in the 1 c AD was due to Pontic and chiefly to the Bosporan protectorate or symmachia with Chersonesus, as their kings preferred to support the Greek cities in keeping their chorai and some political rights as well. The active development of agriculture on the Heracleean peninsula was continueing until the late 1 c AD when the invasion of the Scythians and Taurians along with the Sarmates again broke down the reconstruction of farms. At that time there number seriously reduced, they became much larger in size and more fortified, as the main function for them was not to produce wine, as before, but to deal with cattle-breeding and planting of grain. The latter happened because of the lost of grain producing lands in the NW Crimea.

After king Sauromates I of Bosphorus once more conquered the ScythoTaurians in the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c AD and soon after the first Roman garrisons appeared in the region in the first half of the 1 c AD ( we date this to the period of Traian, but Vitalij Zubar to the period of the Antonins to the 130s AD ) the country estates were living in successfully under Roman control and in the interests of the Roman empire. Stability was ruined closer to the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> c AD when Rome had to withdraw troops from the Crimea and the region suffered a terrible invasion of the Goths and the Alans. Since the late 3<sup>rd</sup> c AD and up to the early Byzantine period the Chersonesus' chora was functioning and we know large fortified complexes of that time in the vicinity of the Bermiana Ravine, Yukharina Ravine, large complex on the land plot 150 north, which give a number of Roman coins, like barrows and necropoleis of Chersonesus and local sites in Central and South Taurica. So far as we support the idea that the Roman coins were used by local tribes as payment for service and guarding of the region now under Roman rule alike the federates in the Balcan provinces, we can attribute these fortified complexes on the Heracleean peninsula not to the individual proprietors, but to the community of Chersonesus, and people who lived there and were dealing with agriculture, as equal in position to those who were keeping the interests of Rome in the whole area of the Southwest Crimea in course of the late 3<sup>rd</sup> –early 6<sup>th</sup> c AD. This is proved by the same Roman coins which spread over the vast area of the region and the so called villas of the Heracleean peninsula.

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