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EXCAVATIONS AT THE NECROPOLIS OF THE ARTYUSHCHENKO-2 SITE IN 2019–2023*

In 2019–2023, the Taman team of the Bosporan Expedition of IHMC RAS conducted excavations of the archaeological sites of the necropolis and settlement of Artyushchenko-2. As in the previous years, the main investigations were carried out at the necropolis.¹

During four seasons, an area of ca. 650 m² was investigated at the necropolis.² In the course of the excavations, 26 graves were discovered (nos. 188–210, Г18–Г20), three of which were finally investigated after modern illegal excavations (Fig. 1–4).

The following features are characteristic of graves in the necropolis of Artyushchenko-2: the depth from the modern surface to the bottoms of the graves varies from 1.0 to 2.0 m and as a rule is about 1.5 m. The state of preservation of the skeletons is mostly poor or very poor. In rare cases, they are in a fair condition. The most frequent position of the skeletons is lying outstretched the back, hands beside the body, with straight legs. Most often, the burials were made in simple fossa graves with or without a roofing. Approximately 10 % of the grave constructions are mudbrick vaults; earthen tombs are rather rare.

The skeletons in the oldest graves (5th to 4th centuries BC) are oriented with the head to the east or north-east. In the graves from the 3rd to 2nd centuries BC, the skeletons are more frequently oriented with the head toward the southern and eastern sectors, and in the graves from the 4th to 5th centuries AD, with the head oriented toward the north. The graves without grave goods and the disturbed ones cannot be exactly dated.

Below, a description of the discovered grave complexes is presented.

* The investigation was conducted as part of the programme of fundamental scientific investigations “The oldest heritage of the South of Russia: cities, rural settlements, necropoleis, economic transformations after natural scientific data” (FMZF-2022-0013).

¹ Kashaev 2019.

² In 2022, no works were conducted.



Fig. 1. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Finds, 5th century BC.
 1 – black gloss bowl; 2 – Lesbian amphora (Grave 188); 3 – small jug;
 4 – black gloss kylix; 5 – oinochoe (Grave 193).

Grave 188 is a vault whose walls are constructed of mudbricks. The outer dimensions of the installation are 2.95 to 3.0 × 2.0 m; the internal dimensions of the funerary chamber are 2.0 × 1.1 m. It was possible to trace the mudbrick masonry to a height of 0.55 to 0.6 m. The bottom of the vault is formed by the virgin loam; it is even, without grooves or pits. The skeleton lay extended on its back, with the skull oriented toward the east. It was poorly preserved and presumably belonged to a male 20–25 years old. The grave inventory of this grave included a Lesbian amphora of an archaic type from the second half of the 6th century BC (Fig. 1. 2),³ a black-gloss bowl dated to about 500 BC (Fig. 1. 1),⁴ and a silver signet ring. The weapons and elements of a horse bridle preserved in the grave are typical of military burials: a spearhead, a sword, the butt-weight of a spear, and a strap ornament. Generally, on the basis of the grave goods, this grave is datable to the turn from the 6th to the 5th centuries BC or the early 5th century BC.

Grave 191 had a grave pit measuring 0.85 × 2.15 m 0.95 m deep from the modern surface to the bottom. The skeleton lay extended on its back with the skull oriented toward the east, the legs were straight, and the hands extended along the body. The skeleton is poorly preserved; it belonged to a male (?) 20–30 years old. The grave goods included the body of a redware pitcher (or oinochoe) and a redware aryballic lekythos that was placed inside the pitcher, a situation recorded at our site for the first time. The grave is datable to the end of the 5th to the 4th century BC.

Grave 193 is an earthen fossa grave with a roof. The dimensions of the grave pit are 0.6 × 1.9 m, the depth from the modern surface to the bottom is 1.35 m. The skeleton lay extended on its back with its skull oriented toward the east; the legs were straight, the hands extended along the body. The skeleton was poorly preserved and belonged to a male 25–30 years old. The grave goods included a redware oinochoe (Fig. 1. 5), a black-gloss kylix dated to about 480–460 BC (Fig. 1. 4),⁵ a miniature pitcher (Fig. 1. 3), and a handmade spindle whorl. The grave is datable to the first quarter of the 5th century BC.

In Grave 195, the grave pit measured 0.55 × 1.65 m, and the depth from the modern surface to the bottom was 1.50 m. The skeleton lay extended on its back with its skull oriented toward the south; its legs were straight, and its hands extended along the body. The skeleton was poorly preserved.

³ Monakhov 2003 [С. Ю. Монахов, *Греческие амфоры в Причерноморье. Типология амфор ведущих центров-экспортеров в керамической таре. Каталог-определитель*], 48, 260, Tab. 30.

⁴ Sparkes–Talcott 1970, no. 964.

⁵ Sparkes–Talcott 1970, no. 443.

It belonged to a woman 50–55 years old. Found in the grave were a pitcher (Fig. 2. 3), a redware vessel with a spout (Fig. 2. 2), a small redware plate (Fig. 2. 1), and an unidentifiable copper alloy coin. On the basis of the grave inventory, the grave is datable to within the 3rd century BC.

Grave 200 belonged to a newborn baby, whose body was placed in an amphora (during investigation of the fill of the amphora, only small fragments of skeletal remains were recorded). Presumably we are dealing with a Chian straight-necked amphora of variant IV-B.⁶ The amphora lay with its neck oriented toward the north-west. Its neck and handles were broken off in antiquity, while the foot has survived (Fig. 2. 7). The grave may be dated to the second half (the turn from the third to the fourth quarter) of the 5th century BC.

Grave 209 was in a grave pit measuring 0.75×1.45 m; the depth from the modern surface to the bottom is 1.37 m. The skeleton lay extended on its back, with its skull oriented toward the west; the legs lay straight, and the hands were beside the body. The skeleton was in a very poor state of preservation; it belonged to a woman 20–30 years old. The grave offerings included a redware oinochoe (Fig. 2. 4), a black-glossed kylix dated to the late 6th century BC (Fig. 2. 5),⁷ a redware bowl (Fig. 2. 6), a fragment of a pitcher (or oinochoe), a bronze pendant, a ceramic spindle whorl, and an iron knife. Judging from the grave goods, the grave can be dated to the late 6th century BC.

Grave 209, found in 2023, was constructed as an earthen vault buried in the virgin loam. It is a new type of funerary structure in the necropolis under consideration.

The tomb is oriented along the line south-west to north-east. The dromos was from the south-west, while the chamber of the vault was from the north-east. The dromos was filled with dark brown loamy soil and measured 1.2×1.3 m in plan; its measured maximum depth was 0.46 m. From the south-western side of the dromos, the remains of two steps dug in the virgin loam were preserved. The height of the steps was 0.20 to 0.25 m, the width 0.3 to 0.65 m, the length 1.0 to 1.2 m. The depth from the modern surface to the bottom of the dromos was 2.50 m.

From the north-eastern side of the dromos there was a passage to the chamber of the vault; it measured 1.0×1.4 m in plan. The passage was filled with light brown loam formed by the collapsed virgin-ground arch of the tomb.

⁶ Monakhov 2003, Tab. 9. 3.

⁷ Bujskikh 2013 [А. В. Буйских, *Архаическая расписная керамика из Ольвии (восточногреческая, лаконская, коринфская, имитации)*], no. 11. 27.



Fig. 2. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Finds.

1 – plate, 3rd century BC; 2 – redware vessel, 3rd century BC; 3 – jug, 3rd century BC (Grave 195); 4 – oinochoe, 6th century BC; 5 – black gloss kylix, 6th century BC; 6 – bowl, 6th century BC (Grave 208); 7 – Chian amphora 5th century BC (Grave 200).



*Fig. 3. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Finds, 2nd century BC.
 1 – red gloss lekythos; 2 – jug; 3 – pelike; 4–7 – unguentaria; 8 – red
 gloss saltcellar; 9 – lid; 10 – lekane; 11 – plate (Grave 209).*

The chamber of the tomb is rectangular and measures 1.4 × 1.7 m. Along the entire length of the centre of the chamber, a passage 0.15 to 0.17 m deep and 0.3 m wide was dug into the virgin loam. To the left and right of the passage, two benches were arranged, onto which the bodies of the deceased were placed. The benches were 0.50 to 0.55 m wide. The fill of the chamber of the vault was the light brown virgin loam formed by the collapsed virgin soil of the tomb. The depth from the modern surface to the bottom of the chamber is 2.90 m. The measured height of the chamber is at least 0.6 m, the reconstructed height may have been up to 1.2 m. The general length of the vault and dromos is 4.1 m.

It seems there were repeated burials in the tomb, and the skeletal remains of the previously buried were moved towards the southern wall. As a result, on the right (southern) bench and near the southern wall, a chaotic accumulation of various bones (mostly legs and hands) formed. At the same time, of note is the absence of skeletal remains preserving anatomic order. The vault may have been robbed more than once in antiquity.

In total, the remains of at least 6 to 7 people were found in the tomb. It was impossible to determine the exact number of the buried. It can be stated only that the interred included adult (30- to 50-year-old) men and women, as well as children (5–6 years old). The state of preservation of all the skeletons was very poor.

In the burial chamber of the vault, on the benches, and in the passage, various items of the grave inventory were found, including a red-slip lekythos (Fig. 3. 1), a jug with a black coating (Fig. 3. 2), a redware pelike (Fig. 3. 3), unguentaria (Fig. 3. 4, 5, 6, 7), a red-slip saltcellar (Fig. 3. 8), a redware lekane with a lid (Fig. 3. 9, 10), and a plate with a black coating (Fig. 3. 11).

Also found here were a stone whetstone, a small fragment of a flat Bosphoran (?) ribbed tile, four iron knives, two iron buckles, bronze ornaments (bracelet, earrings, small finger rings), and a set of various beads.

In this vault, four poorly preserved Bosphoran bronze coins were also found:

1. Tetrachalkon (?), copper. D 11 mm. Weight 1.53 g.
Obv. – head of a bearded satyr right.
Rev. – bow and arrow right, below – ΦΑ.
2. Tetrachalkon (?), copper. D 12 mm. Weight 1.68 g.
Preservation: bad, worn and corroded.
Obv. – head of Apollo to the right.
Rev. – bow, below – ΠΑΝ.

3. Tetrachalkon (?), copper. D 12 mm. Weight 1.85 g.
 Preservation: bad, obverse obliterated by corrosion.
Obv. – head of Apollo to the right.
Rev. – gorytos left, below – ΠΑΝ.

4. Tetrachalkon (?), copper. D 11.5 mm. Weight 1.34 g.
 Preservation: bad, worn and corroded.
Obv. – head of a bearded satyr in an ivy wreath to the left.
Rev. – a cornucopia in the centre, at its sides the caps of the Dioscuri. ΠΑΝ-ΠΙ.

In the opinion of A. E. Tereshchenko who identified the coins, all the copper coins from Grave 209 are datable to the last decade of the 2nd century BC.

Judging from the found grave goods and the number of interred persons, the vault was used for a long time throughout the 2nd century BC. It was probably a family tomb where members of several generations of a single family were buried.

In addition, a number of graves disturbed in 2009 by robbers' trenches were investigated.

Grave Γ18, destroyed by robber's trench ΓIII no. 5, is an earthen pit with shoulders over which the boards of the roofing were laid and onto which a layer of mudbricks was placed. The robber's dig was in the central part of the grave. Found in the fill of the dig were fragments of human bones and items of the grave inventory that illicit excavators retrieved but did not collect. The external dimensions of the structure around the shoulders are 1.8 × 3.0 m, the size of the grave pit is 2.35 × 1.35 m, and the depth from the shoulders to the bottom of the pit is 0.25 m. The bottom of the grave is even, with no grooves or pits; it is formed from virgin loam. The skeleton probably lay extended on its back, with its skull oriented toward the east. The skeletal remains found in the fill of the robbers' trench belong to a male 25–30 years old. Among the preserved grave offerings are an iron spearhead, a spear butt, an iron sword, five iron and one bronze arrowhead, two lead spindle whorls, and the handle of a black gloss lekythos. The grave goods date the grave to the early 5th century BC.

Grave Γ19, destroyed by robbers' trench ΓIII no. 42, has a construction similar to Grave Γ18. The illegal dig was also in the central area of the grave. In its fill, fragments of human bones and items of the grave inventory were found. Judging by the distribution of the adobe spots, the structure's external dimensions were 1.4 × 2.0 m. The thickness of the adobe roofing was 0.5 to 0.6 m. The skeleton probably lay extended on its back with its

skull oriented toward the east. The skeletal remains found in the fill of the robber's dig belong to a male 25–30 years old. The surviving grave inventory comprised an iron spearhead, an iron sword, and an unidentified iron object resembling a spoon. The inventory dates the grave also to the early 5th century BC.

Grave Γ20 may be the grave of a baby in an amphora. The fragments of the amphora from an unidentified manufacturing centre were retrieved by the robbers and then thrown out into the fill of the trench. No human bones or items of the grave goods have been found. The upper body of the amphora with the neck and the rim and two handles are preserved. We found a similar amphora in Grave 120. The grave under consideration is datable to approximately the 2nd century BC.

Ritual deposit 29 was located at the eastern boundary of the necropolis and consisted of two vessels arranged along the west–east line. The depth from the modern surface to the level of the vessels was 0.93 m. On the west was a redware pitcher (Fig. 4. 1), on the east was a black-gloss kantharos (Fig. 4. 2). The kantharos on a small ring foot is of Attic manufacture. The slip is black and dense, glossy, and of good quality; in places, the slip has reddish spots caused by low-temperature firing. The vessel is strongly worn and chipped: the two handles are both lost, as is the ring foot; the place of the broken foot was carefully smoothed. The rim is almost entirely lost with only a small fragment preserved. On the internal surface of the bottom is a stamped pattern of five palmettes arranged around a circle and a ring of strokes. Similar kantharoi are dated to the first quarter of the 4th century.⁸

On the outer side, around a circle, a graffito Λάκαινα is scratched (the letters are 5 mm high) (Fig. 4. 3). This can be either a common noun (“Laconian woman”), an adjective (“Laconian”), or a personal name (see *LGPN* s. v.).⁹

On the opposite (internal) side of the bottom of the kantharos, remains of another graffito are preserved – a cross (?), into which a hole was intentionally punched. This fact very probably indicates the use of the vessel for a magic purpose. This supposition is indirectly confirmed by the fact that the kantharos was uncovered in the cultural layer of the necropolis where, according to some well-known papyri,¹⁰ it was prescribed to bury objects with magic inscriptions and signs on them; besides, the text prescribed that the traced symbols should be pierced.

⁸ Sparkes–Talcott 1970, no. 649–653.

⁹ The inscription was interpreted by A. S. Namoylik.

¹⁰ Preisendanz–Henrichs 1974, 304–369.

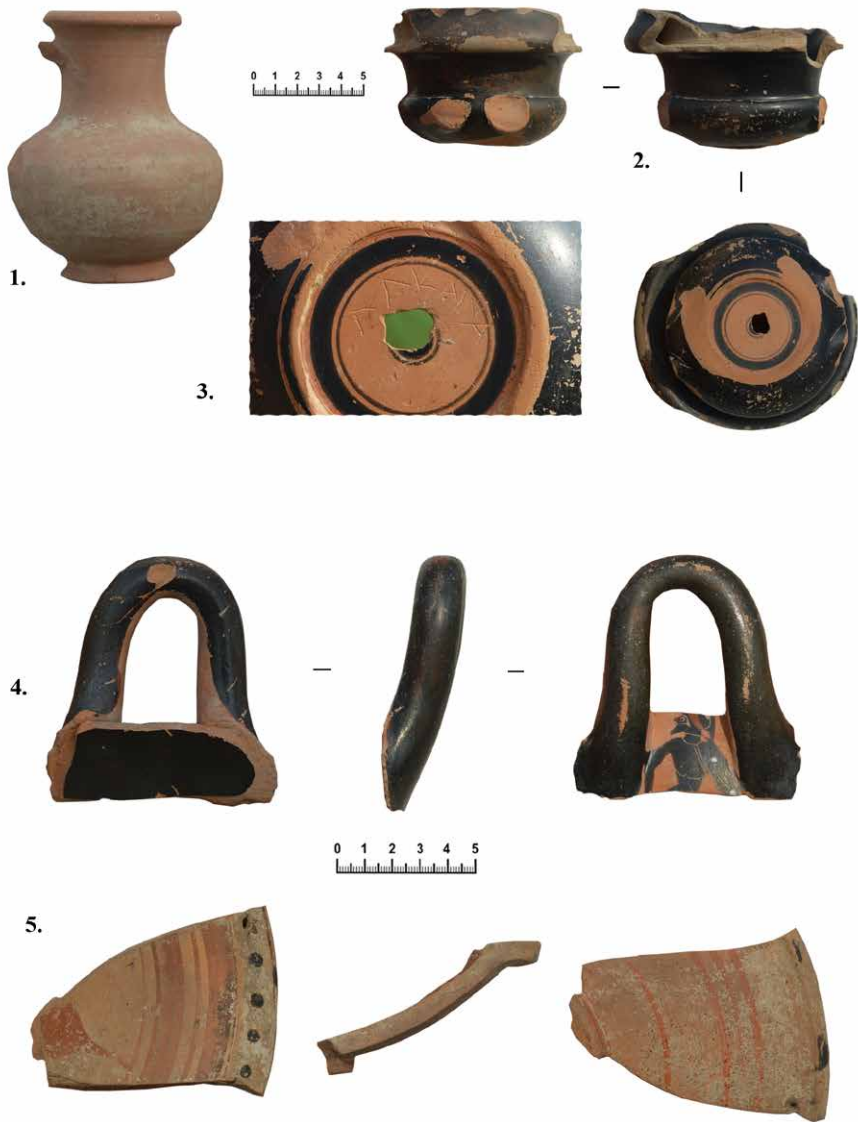


Fig. 4. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Finds, 2nd century BC.
 1 – jug, 4th century BC; 2 – black gloss kantharos, 4th century BC; 3 –
 inscription on the bottom of the kantharos, 4th century BC (Ritual deposit
 29); 4 – fragment of a kylix, 6th century BC; 5 – fragment of a bowl,
 6th century BC (Pit 1/2021).

The state of preservation of the kantharos at the moment when it was brought to the cemetery (strongly damaged but all the breaks smoothed) also suggests its presence among objects that served magical or ritual purposes. The hole in the bottom of the vessel could have functioned similarly to the holes that were made with a calamus in a papyrus or with a nail in a lead plate, i. e., to damage the object. However, the main inscription, $\Lambda\acute{\alpha}\kappa\alpha\upsilon\alpha$, remained undamaged. Possibly this circumstance is explained by the fact that the magical action had no negative intention. On the other hand, the graffito may have appeared earlier than the time when the kantharos entered the sphere of sacral use. Meanwhile, the presence of an accidental inscription on an object of that kind seems improbable.¹¹ The complex under consideration is datable to the first quarter of the 4th century BC.

In Ritual deposit 30, which was found between graves $\Gamma 19$ and $\Gamma 20$, there was a fragmentary body of a Chian plump-necked amphora of the advanced type III-B from the first quarter of the 5th century BC.¹² The amphora was crushed by the earth into numerous fragments.

At the settlement site of Artyushchenko-2, in recent years, the investigations comprised a monitoring of the condition of the shore taluses along the entire southern boundary of the site, as well as investigations of the complexes under erosion.

Thus, at the edge of the shore precipice, Excavation 8 was started measuring 2×12 m and with an area of about 25 m^2 . Within the area of the excavation, pit no. 1/2021 was investigated (Fig. 5). The southwestern part of the pit was destroyed by a shore slide. The pit was poorly traceable on the vertical earthen wall formed by the slide and facing the south-west, so that the place was discovered through the presence of ceramic fragments and animal bones in the fill, some of which were found already beneath the precipice. The pit had a pear-like cross section and a flattened bottom. The diameter of its mouth was about 1.2 m, the diameter of the bottom 2.2 m, and the measured depth 1.56 m. The fill of the pit was homogeneous with a grey-brown loam, without visible intercalations; no admixtures of ashes were observable; in the fill, also fragments of ceramic pottery, stones, burnt clay lumps, animal bones, and mollusc shells were encountered.

¹¹ Kashaev–Namoylik 2023 [С. В. Кашаев, А. С. Намойлик, “Тризна 29 из раскопок некрополя Артющенко-2”, in: *Боспорские исследования*].

¹² Monakhov 2003, Tab. 6.

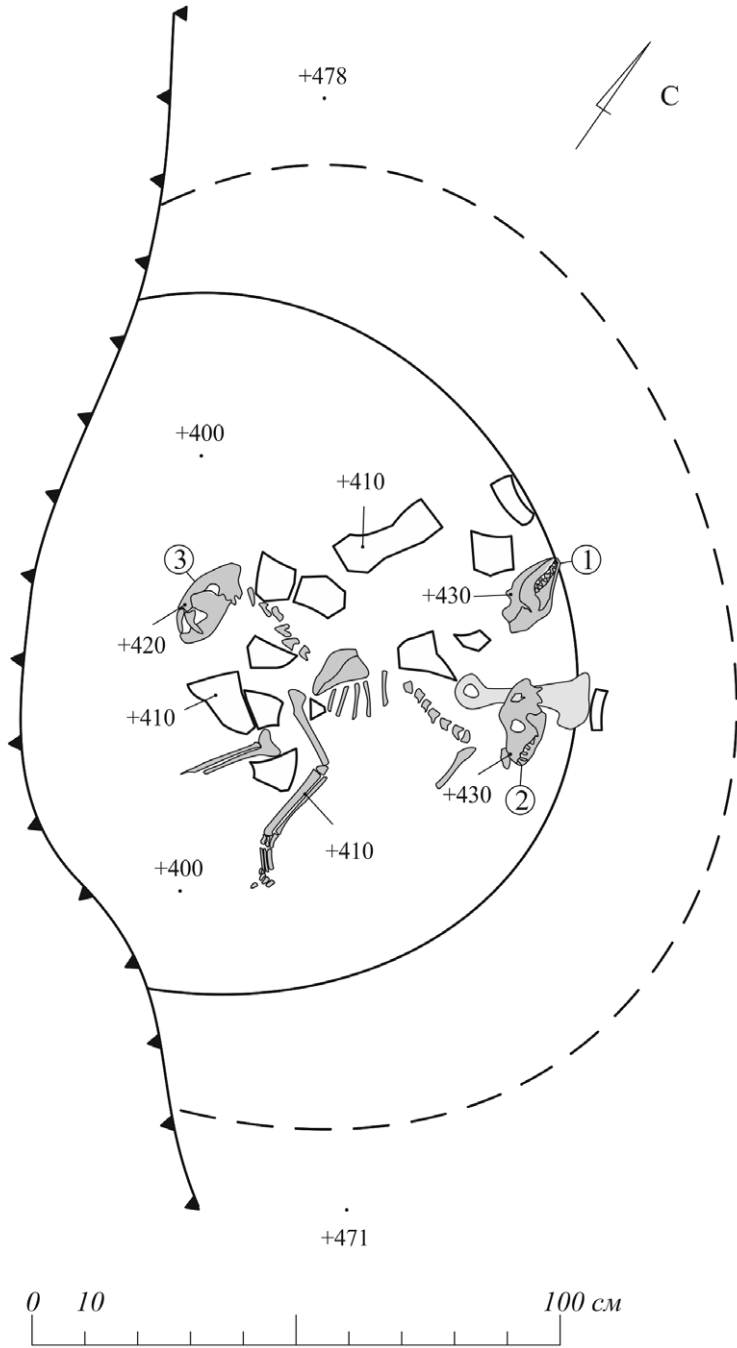


Fig. 5. Necropolis of Artyushchenko-2. Pit 1/2021, 6th century BC.
Plan of the first level, skeleton of a dog and two dog skulls.

In the course of clearing the pit, investigations were conducted at three levels:

Level 1 – found were dog skeleton no. 1, two skulls of other dogs in the area of the hind legs, and several pottery fragments beneath them. It is of note that the positions of the skulls we recorded may differ from the initial ones. This fact may be caused by very different processes.

Level 2 – found were dog skeleton no. 2 and bones of a piglet.

Level 3 – found in the near-bottom and bottom part of the pit was an accumulation of ceramic fragments, including a fragment of a black gloss kylix measuring 8.5×8.5 cm and a fragment of a painted bowl measuring 6.5×8.0 cm (Fig. 4, 4, 5).

The grave of the “three-headed” dog found at the first level is an untypical find (which still awaits interpretation), although graves of dogs in pits at the settlement site have been encountered before.

The ceramic materials discovered in the fill of the pit under consideration vary chronologically within the range of the second half of the 6th century BC. These are the earliest finds at the settlement of Artyushchenko-2. Judging by the latest pottery fragments, the pit can be dated to ca. the end of the 6th century BC.

Thus, in addition to other funerary complexes dated to the 5th to 3rd centuries BC, the investigations conducted in 2019–2023 have resulted in the discovery of a type of grave structure previously unknown at the site – an earthen tomb structure. The early material of the second half of the 6th century BC found both at the necropolis and at the settlement site possibly dates the time of the foundation of the settlement and the beginning of the functioning of the necropolis of Artyushchenko-2.

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In 2019–2023, systematic investigation of the necropolis and the settlement Artjuschenko-2 continued. During the four last campaigns, an area of about 600 m² was under examination. In the course of the excavations, 26 graves were discovered (nos. 188–210, Г18–Г20), three of which were examined after modern robbers excavated them.

The revealed graves belong to three periods. The earliest ones date to the 5th to 4th centuries BC, the next group to the 3rd to 2nd centuries BC, and the latest to the 4th to 5th centuries AD. It is impossible to precisely date graves that have no inventory or those that have been destroyed by erosion.

Various grave constructions have been examined, e. g. crypts built of mudbricks, ground graves with covering, ground vaults, undercut graves, and children's graves in amphorae.

At the settlement, a domestic pit was studied. The ceramic material found in its filling has chronological limits within the second half of the 6th century BC. Thus, the pit contained the earliest finds known for the settlement Artjuschenko-2.

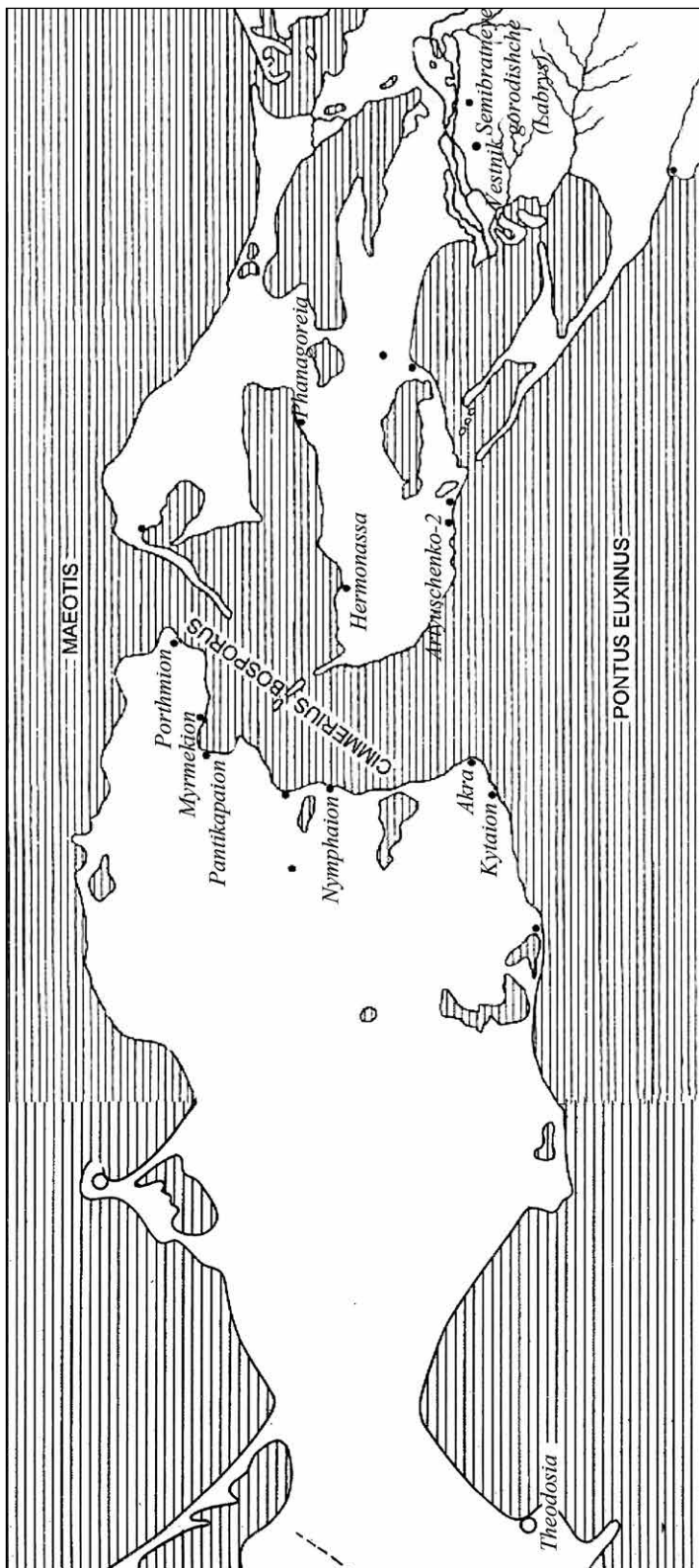
В 2019–2023 гг. продолжались систематические раскопки Некрополя и поселения Артющенко-2. За четыре сезона на некрополе исследована площадь около 650 кв. м. В ходе раскопок было обнаружено 26 погребений (№№ 188–210, Г18–Г20), 3 из которых доследованы за современными грабителями.

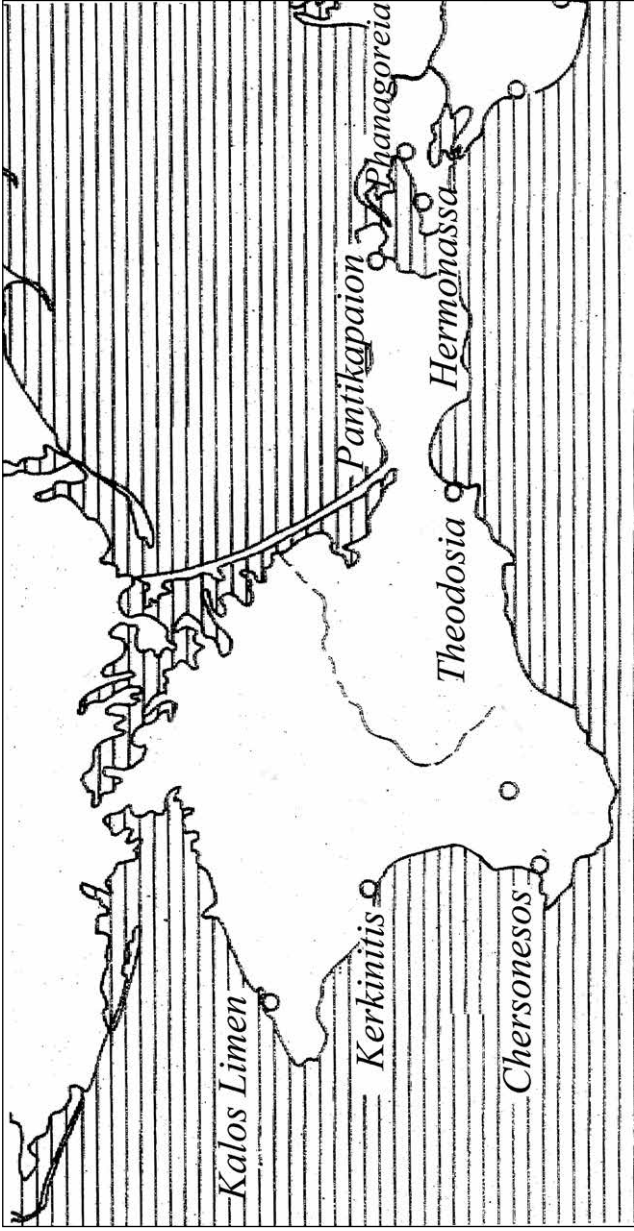
Обнаруженные погребения относятся к трем хронологическим периодам: ранние захоронения V–IV вв. до н. э., захоронения III–II вв. до н. э. и поздние погребения IV–V вв. н. э. Безынвентарные погребения, а также комплексы, разрушенные абразией, не поддаются точной датировке.

Исследованы различные погребальные сооружения, например, склепы из сырцовых кирпичей, грунтовые могилы с перекрытием, грунтовые склепы, подбойные могилы, захоронения младенцев в амфорах.

На поселении исследована хозяйственная яма. Керамический материал, обнаруженный в заполнении этой ямы, имеет хронологический разброс в пределах второй половины VI в. до н. э. Это самые ранние находки на поселении Артющенко-2.

ARCHAEOLOGICA





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