

EXCAVATIONS AT THE CLASSICAL-PERIOD SETTLEMENT OF ARTYUSHCHENKO I (BUGAZSKOYE) ON THE TAMAN PENINSULA

Excavations at the Greek-period settlement of Artyushchenko I (Bugazskoye) on the Taman Peninsula, approximately 15 km south of the Cossack village of Taman, were started by the Bosporan Expedition of the Institute of the History of Material Culture (IIMK), RAS, in 1998 and are on-going. The most important results in terms of the studies of classical antiquities have been yielded by area II. Here it was possible to distinguish reliably three periods of occupation at the site.

1. During the Archaic period (last third of the 6th – first third of the 5th century BC) there was a seasonal settlement at the site. The latter was probably part of the rural surroundings of Hermonassa. It seems that the agriculturalists – mostly natives of the barbarian tribes from the region of the Kuban River – visited the site only during the seasons of field works. Finds of charred grains of cereals suggest that they sowed here mainly naked wheat (*Triticum aestivum* s. l.) and six-rowed barley (*Hordeum vulgare*).

2. After a prolonged interruption, occupation of Artyushchenko I was resumed about the mid-4th century BC and continued probably for a fairly short period. There are grounds for supposing that at that phase the settlement was also of a seasonable character and possibly barbarian in terms of its population.

3. A stationary settlement existed at the site only in the second half of the 3rd – first half of the 2nd century BC. Some peculiarities of the material culture of the site (small amounts of handmade pottery, the presence of Bosporan coins, terracotta figurines etc.) suggest that it were mostly the Greeks who lived here during that period. This phase was connected with the functioning of a workshop for dressing iron ore and producing iron. Found during the excavations were an area for storing iron ore, the foundations of stone “tables” on which the ore was ground and washed out, drains for disposing of used water, pits for keeping charcoal, hundreds of iron blooms, etc.

The workshop described was related to a series of cult installations in which, or near which, finds of terracotta figurines were concentrated. One such deposit contained three female protomes (Fig. 1.1) and a fragment of a black-glazed relief vessel with a representation of a “musician” (Fig. 1.2).

The musical instrument he is holding in his hand is not clearly identifiable, but at any rate it is clear that it does not resemble “Pan’s flute”.

Another set composed of six statuettes was uncovered in one of the larger pits. Here were found a female protome (Fig. 1.3) and a female figurine, standing, with the head severed (Fig. 1.4). Fairly interesting are statuettes of a rider (Fig. 2.1) and of a woman sitting with a lyre in her hands (Fig. 2.2). Still of more interest is a figurine of an actor holding a comic mask in his left hand (Fig. 2.3), as well as a draped figurine of a woman pressing some object (probably a spindle) to her throat (Fig. 2.4).

In 2005, the excavations of area II were continued. The northern edge of the settlement was investigated. Among the results was the discovery of the remains of two semi-dugout houses of the Archaic period. In one of these, again, charred cereal grains were recovered close to an adobe hearth. Furthermore, a pit synchronous to the semi-dugouts was excavated nearby where a fairly interesting assemblage of handmade pottery was found. The pottery was manufactured without the use of a potter’s wheel – according to the traditions of the local population of the Kuban region. The finds confirm the conclusion cited above that during the period from the last third of the 6th to the first third of the 5th century BC the site was occupied by a temporary (seasonal) settlement populated mainly by natives of agricultural tribes from the Kuban River.

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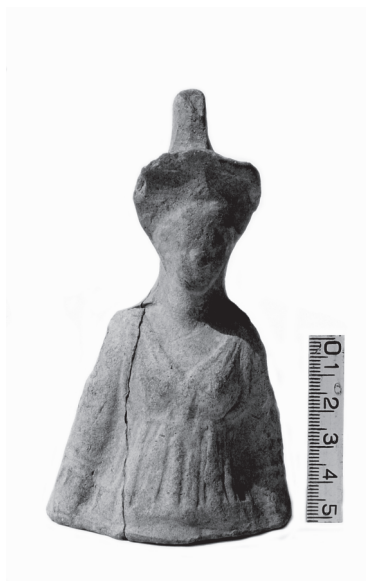


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 1, 3, 4. Terracotta statuettes

Fig. 2. Fragment of a vessel with a relief decoration



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

Fig. 5-8. Terracotta statuettes

