

The Chersonesean Farmhouse on Land-plot no. 49 on the Lighthouse Point

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In 1990, the archaeological mission of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR together with the Museum and National Preserve of Tauric Chersonesos conducted excavations of a farmhouse on land-plot no. 49, which belonged to the adjacent *chora* of Tauric Chersonesos on the Majak peninsula. This land-plot, adjoining land-plots nos. 50 and 57, has an area of around 19 ha. It is situated on a cape between Kazak Bay and Solenaja Bay, occupying the western slope of a ravine going down to Kazak Bay (Fig. 1.1-2).¹ The southern part of the plot functioned during the Hellenistic period as a vineyard with cultivation belts 2.3 m wide and plantation walls 1.2 m wide. On the southern slope of the cape, plantation walls form terraces up to 0.3 m high. Here the small farm is situated close to the sea-shore (Fig. 2). The adjacent terrace wall served as the farm's western outer wall.² Excavations have uncovered a courtyard and several rooms, which were rebuilt in the course of the farm's existence. Unfortunately, it remains incompletely excavated in the northern sector, so we cannot exclude the possibility that further rooms may have been situated beyond a trench which cuts off this part of the farmhouse (Fig. 3). Still, we can say with confidence that we are dealing with three building phases of the farm belonging to the late Classical and Hellenistic periods. Isolated finds of Roman pottery – for example the rim of a red-glazed cup from the 1st century AD (Fig. 4.4) – do not suffice to demonstrate that the farm continued in operation. The lack of Roman building activity seems conclusive in showing that during the first centuries AD, the land-plot probably only contained temporary buildings, as is usual for the *kleroi* of Tauric Chersonesos, including those on Lighthouse (or Majak) Point.

The first building phase

The dating of the first building phase is still provisional. During this phase the farmhouse only occupied the northern part of the later complex and consisted only of rooms 1, 2, 4 and 6. Unit 2 must have functioned as a courtyard enclosed by the other rooms (Figs. 3, 5). The farmhouse covered an area of 10.5 x 9 m, and it seems highly probable that wall 12, supporting the terrace, was at that time smaller or perhaps did not exist at all. Thus the farm-

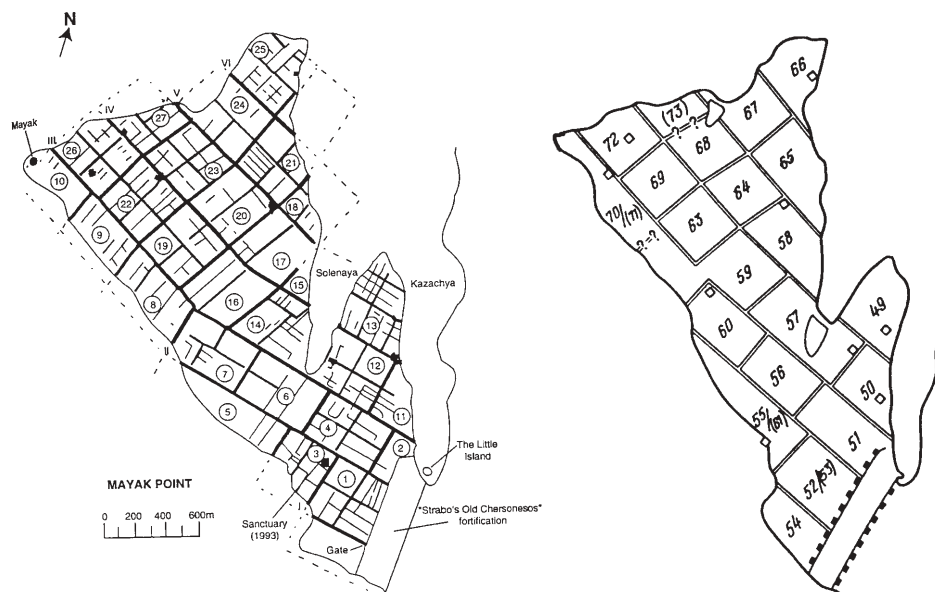


Fig. 1. Two maps of the Lighthouse Point by G.M. Nikolaenko and E.N. Žerebcov.

house of the first building phase was nearly square in plan and was without any fortifications. All rooms had exits to the courtyard and the main entrance leading directly to the courtyard was initially on its western side. Here part of the pavement of a road (Fig. 3, marked A), was discovered which was dismantled when the supporting wall 12 was enlarged and turned into a plantation wall.

The chronological framework of the first building phase is still uncertain, as we only managed to reach the floor level of the last phase of the farm's existence. Material providing an absolute date of its construction and its abandonment is absent. The architecture of the building seems to be of the usual type without a tower as fortification. The configuration of the buildings around the courtyard recalls the farm on land-plot no. 9 in the *chora* of Chersonesos on the Herakleian peninsula during its first construction phase,³ and also the plans of unfortified rural houses in Attica, such as the Dema House or the Vari House.⁴ Features have also been found which it shares with a rural house known as Baklan'ja Skala on the *chora* of the European side of the Kimmerian Bosporos dated to the first half of the 3rd century BC⁵ and with urban houses of the 4th-3rd century BC in Kalos Limen and to a lesser extent with the farm by Vetrenaja Bay in its *chora*.⁶ However, there are no direct parallels. The closest analogy seems to be the rural estates nos. 3-4 on the Lighthouse Point, excavated by N.M. Pečenkin. He argues that they appeared at the same time as the farmhouse on land-

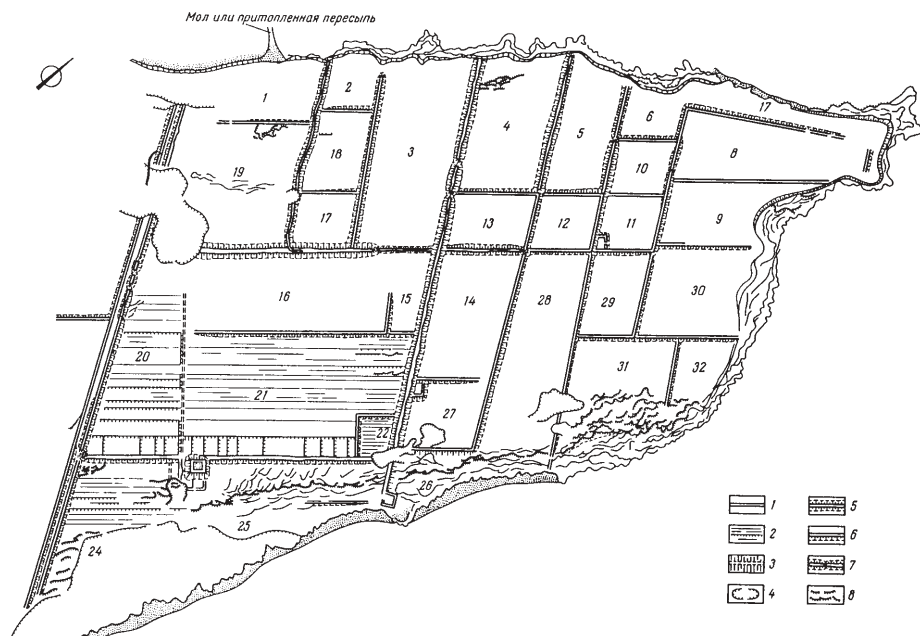


Fig. 2. Plan of land-plot no. 49 by E.N. Žerebcov.

plot no. 49.⁷ In as far as the farms on the Lighthouse Point appeared between the second quarter and the middle of the 4th century BC,⁸ it is quite possible that the farmhouse on land-plot no. 49 may also have been built at that time.

The second building phase

During the second building phase the farmhouse was greatly enlarged. Area 2 completely changed its functions and stopped being a courtyard, as the transverse wall 11 between the walls 7 and 14 created a narrow corridor about 1 m wide, probably intended as a storeroom (Fig. 6, no. 5). The entrance to this room was made between walls 7 and 12, where the masonry was removed (Figs. 3, 6, 7). Wall 12, a supporting terrace and the outer western extent of the farmhouse, was enlarged and reached 2.30-2.35 m in width, having been built as two parallel masonry faces with an inner core filled with small stones. A section of its masonry is placed so that it is in direct contact with the ground, testifying to its later erection. Room 2 was divided by wall 13 into two parts and now had two entrances, one of which (0.85-0.90 m wide) led into room 1. This was blocked during the last building phase. The other was used as an exit to the courtyard. The main entrance to the farmhouse during the first building phase had been blocked while wall 12 was enlarged and a new one was made several metres to the south,

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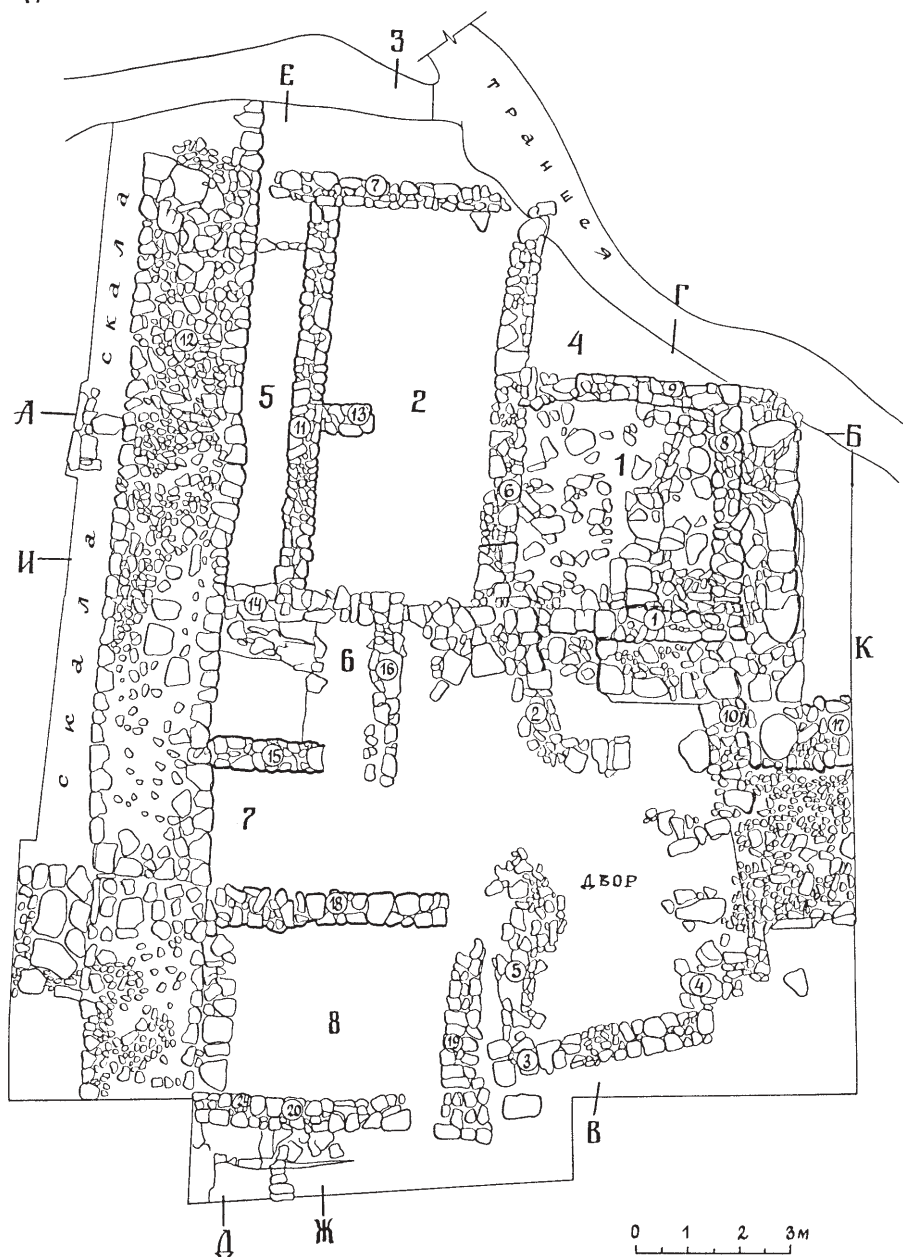


Fig. 3. Overview plan of the farmhouse on land-plot no. 49.

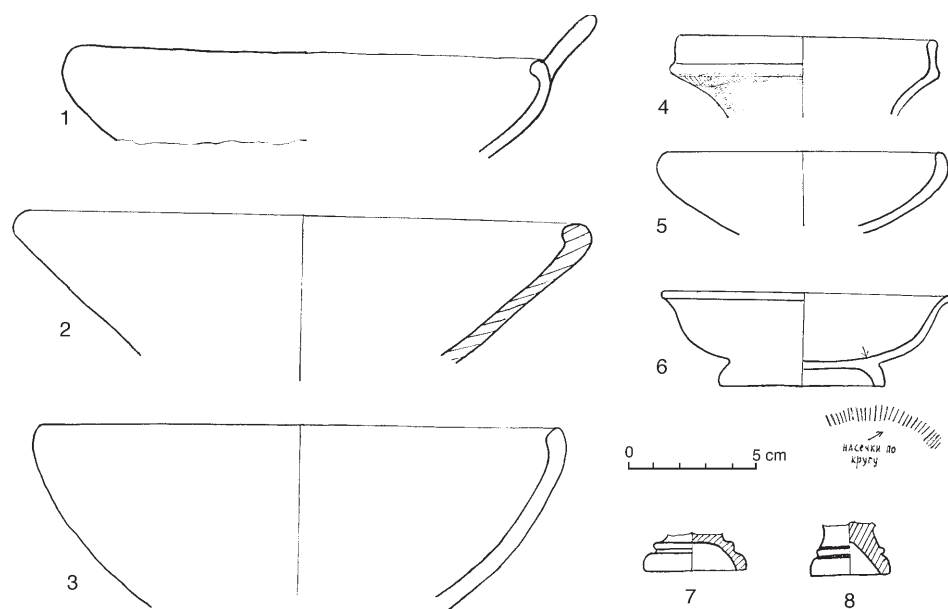


Fig. 4. Common ware fragments from Farmhouse no. 49.

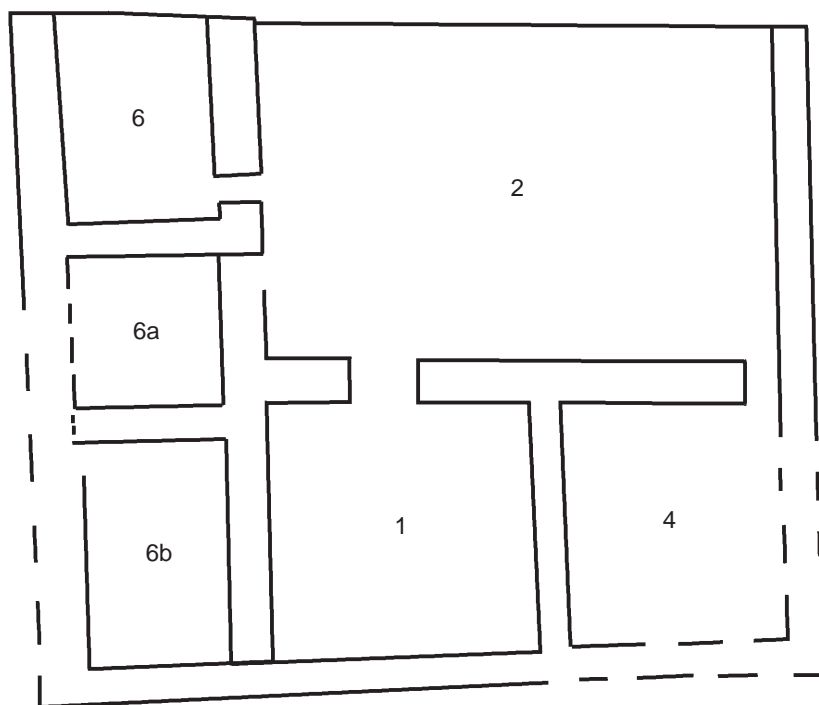


Fig. 5. Farmhouse no. 49. Plan of the first building phase.

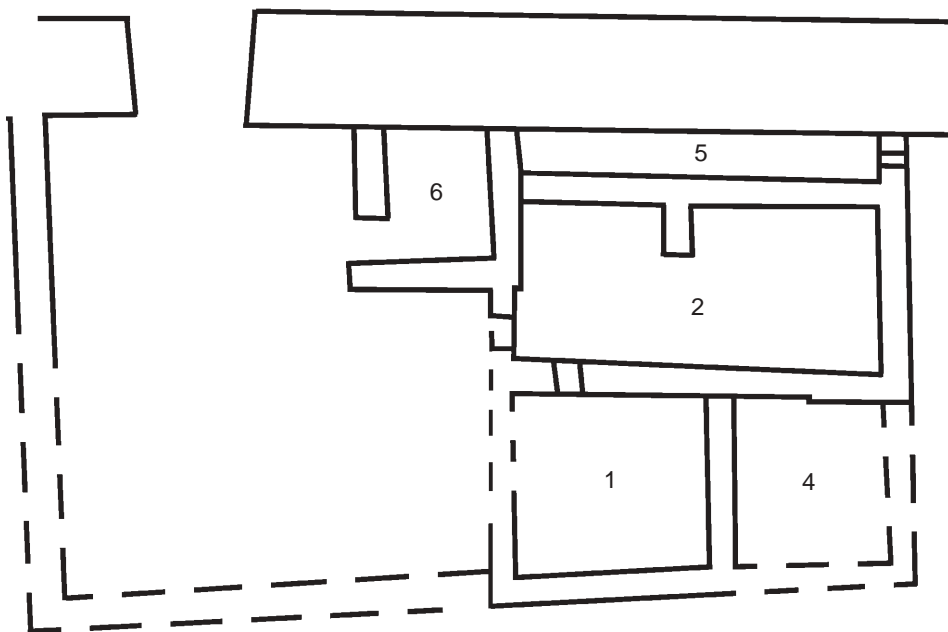


Fig. 6. Farmhouse no. 49. Plan of the second building phase.



Fig. 7. Room 5 in Farmhouse no. 49.

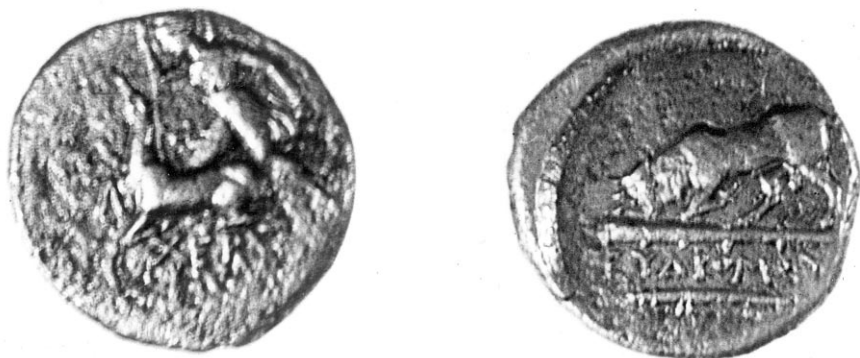


Fig. 8. Bronze coin of Tauric Chersonesos from Farmhouse no. 49.

where a road came up to wall 12 from the west. It was constructed of large and middle-sized stones and led directly to the courtyard through a 2.30-2.35 m wide opening in wall 12. The rooms around the previous courtyard, adjacent to the south to walls 1-14 and initially the farmhouse's outer wall, were dismantled and the entrance in wall 14 was filled in. The entrance to room 6 was now from the courtyard. Only the rooms nos. 1, 4, 6 were retained, while wall 20 was turned into the southern outer border of the whole farm. The new enlarged farmhouse, 17 x 9.30 m in size, remained unfortified, although its productive functions increased, as confirmed by the large size of its courtyard and of unit 2 (Fig. 6, no. 2).

The date of the second building phase is fixed by amphorae stamps and a coin – a *dichalkon* of Chersonesos with, on the obverse, Parthenos striking down a hind with a spear l. and on the reverse, a butting bull l. standing on club, below bow and quiver, ΕΥΔΡΟΜΟΥ (Fig. 8)⁹ – dated to 300-290 BC or 305-300 BC, the latter date being more likely.¹⁰ In the courtyard an amphora handle was found with a stamp of Chersonesos, dated by the name of MAT[PIO]Σ Α[ΣΤΥΝΟΜΟΥ] to 315-300 BC according to V.I. Kac's classification (group IB).¹¹

From a trench, dug by soldiers in recent times, comes another Chersonesean amphora stamp (Fig. 9), put on the handle during the magistracy of [HPO]NIKΟΥ [ΑΣΤΥ]ΝΟ[ΜΟΥ] between 325-315 BC according to Kac's classification (group IA)¹². The amphora bases from Sinope, Herakleia Pontike, and Chersonesos are dated to the last quarter of the 4th to the first third of the 3rd century BC (Fig. 10.1-7) and are synchronous to pottery assemblages from sites from the second half of the 4th to the early 3rd century BC such as Panskoe I/U7 in north-western Taurica,¹³ Western General'skoje, Pustynnyj Bereg, Košara in east Taurica on the Azov coast,¹⁴ Elizavetovskoe on the Lower Don¹⁵ and others. The base of a black-glazed



Fig. 9. Amphora handle with a Chersonesean stamp and the rim of a basin.

kantharos with extended shaft (Fig. 4.7) corresponds completely to those of the second half of the 4th to the first half of the 3rd century BC from the farm Pustynnyj Bereg I.¹⁶ Another (Fig. 4.8) corresponds to *kantharoi* with ribbed body and dark glaze with metallic sheen from a cistern in the Central Temenos from the 3rd century BC¹⁷ in Olbia as well as Olbia's Hellenistic layers.¹⁸ Consequently, the second building phase can be dated to the last quarter of the 4th to the first third of the 3rd century BC, coinciding with the rebuilding of the neighboring farmhouse on land-plot no. 57 and building activity at other farmhouses of the Herakleian peninsula. This was the period when the Chersonesean *chora* was flourishing.

The third building phase

The third building phase is characterized by re-building, although the size of the farmhouse did not change (Figs. 3, 11). The entrance to the courtyard in wall 2 was filled in and a new one with gates led in from the side of the bay. In the place where the gates of the second building phase had been situated, there now appeared a new room, 8, which was surrounded by walls 18, 19, 20-24 and 12a – the latter serving as an additional supporting terrace wall for wall 12, where the previous gateway had been walled up. As a result a new additional room 7 was created 2 x 2 m in size, which was surrounded by walls 15 and 18 and linked by a passage to room 6, which was still in use. In the corner of room 7, an ash layer with a large quantity of Chersonesean and Herakleian amphorae fragments along with sherds of Chersonesean common ware were discovered. Underneath on the bedrock were found fragments of black-glazed *kantharoi* and plates. By wall 12 in room 6 remains of a hearth were preserved. It was constructed of roof-tile fragments, placed

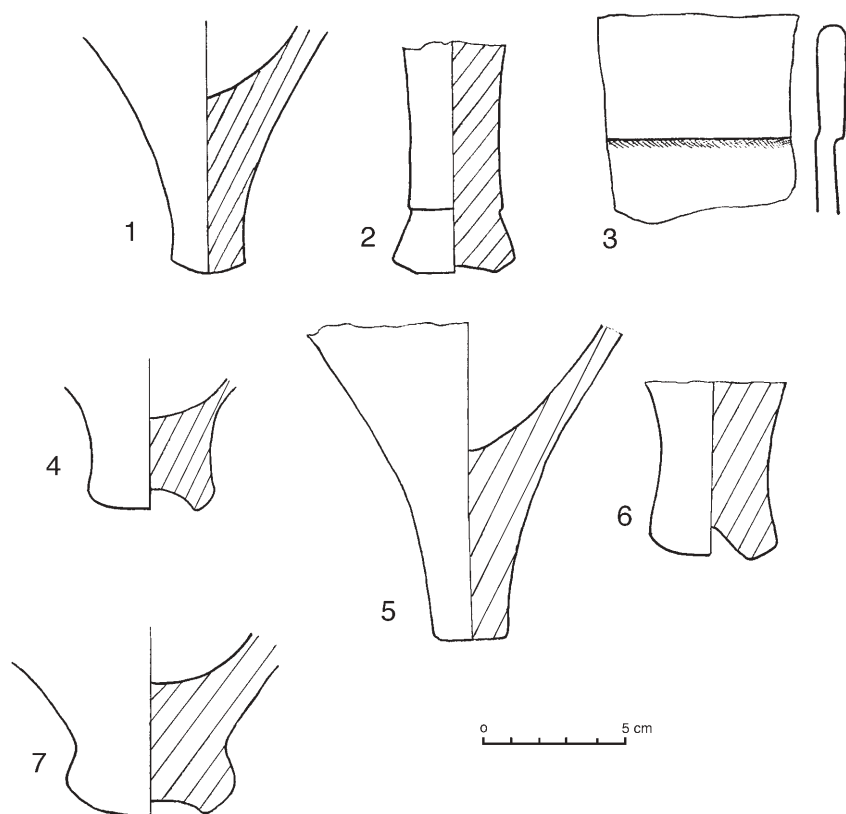


Fig. 10. Amphorae bases from Farmhouse no. 49.

vertically on the edge and laid horizontally in the bottom. On top and on the outside it was covered with clay. The base of the hearth was assembled from roof-tiles and the lower part of stone press (*tarapan*). The preserved height is 0.20 m and it is 0.50 m in width (Fig. 12). Some ash and coal still remained inside, and an ash layer can be traced over the entire floor showing the room's domestic character.

Room 8, formed by walls 18, 19, 20 and 4.15 x 3 m in size, initially had its entrance cut through wall 19 at the point of its junction with wall 3. This was later filled in and a new entrance was made in wall 20 to allow passage directly to the plot. Wall 3, now the outer edge of the farmhouse, is in direct contact with the blocked entrance in wall 19. Along with the remains of wall 4, it stopped at the farm's gates. The parallel walls 4 and 17 enclosed the driveway to the courtyard and small crushed limestone fragments were used to pave both the courtyard and the road.

Room 1, whose function had remained unchanged from the early period of the farm's existence, was now fortified with an anti-ramming belt triangular in section around walls 1 and 8. Its construction can be dated by a

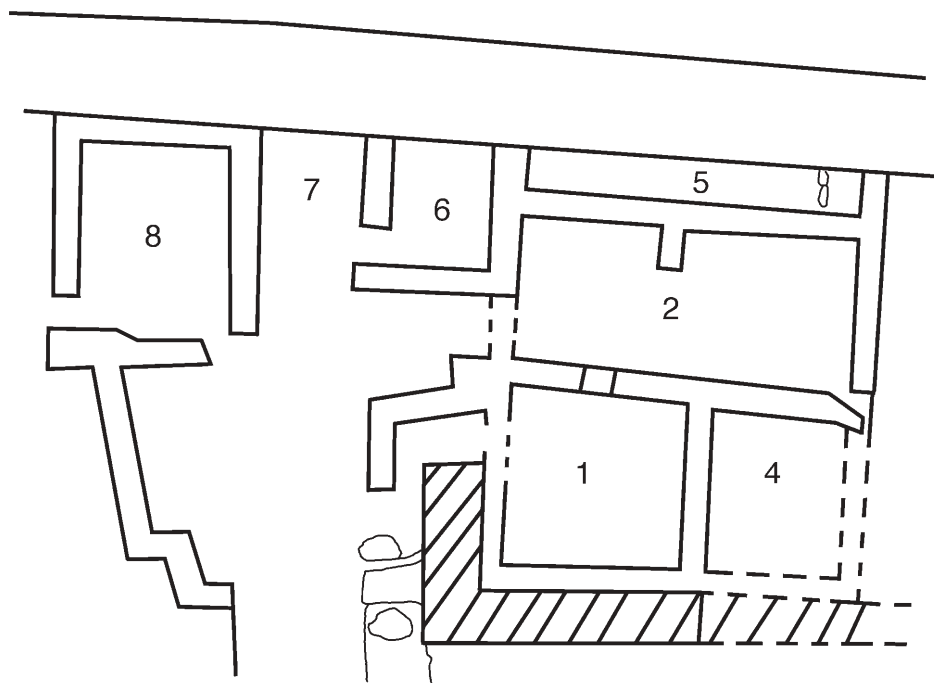


Fig. 11. Farmhouse no. 49. Plan of the third building phase.

Sinopean amphora stamp with the name of the *astynomos* Posis, son of Astios (Fig. 13). According to N.F. Fedoseev's latest classification, it belongs to the period 240-220 BC, although he previously dated it to 263-251 BC.¹⁹ As the stamp was discovered on the outer side of wall 8 by its base, it gives an accurate date of the construction of the belt. The entrance to this room from the courtyard side was in wall 1 and was approached through a passage formed by wall 2 and an anti-ramming belt built against the wall.

Room 2 still consisted of two parts 3.15 x 3.72 m and 3.25 x 3.15 m in size. It had two passages – one in wall 6, 0.85-0.90 m wide leading to the neighboring room 1 (later filled in), and another – 1.35 m wide leading out to the courtyard. The room is oriented precisely along the line of the walls from north-east to south-west. As the excavations only reached the floor level of the third building phase, the function of the room cannot be determined with certainty. It was presumably a storeroom, although the possibility cannot be excluded that from the beginning until the end of the second building phase it was used as a vinery. Room 5 remained in use. It looks like a corridor divided by a barrier in the northern sector. The use of the room is rather difficult to establish. It was probably also a kind of storeroom for amphorae, various goods and agricultural equipment (Fig. 7).



Fig. 12. Hearth in room 6 of Farmhouse no. 49.

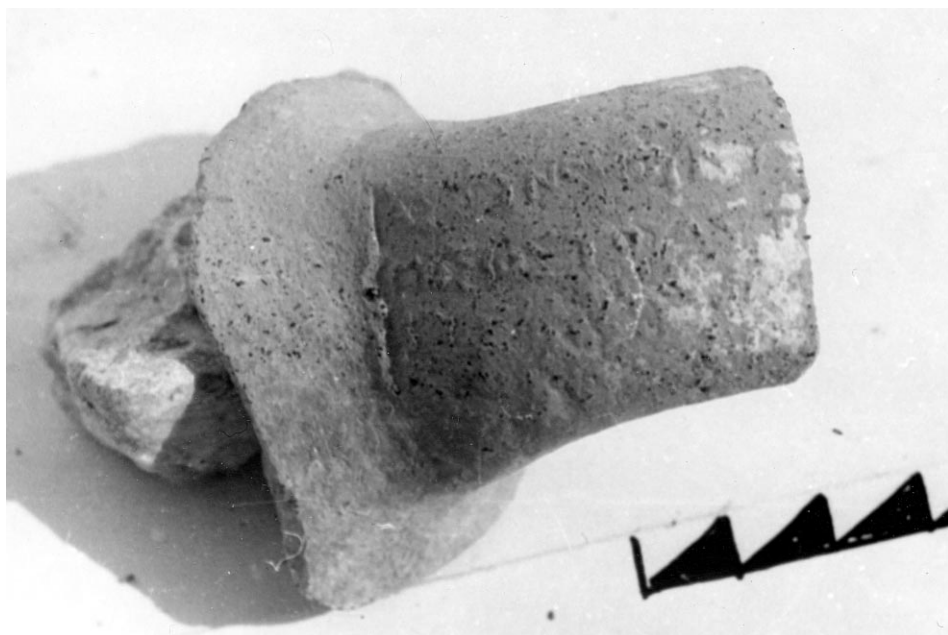


Fig. 13. Sinopean amphora handle with stamp.

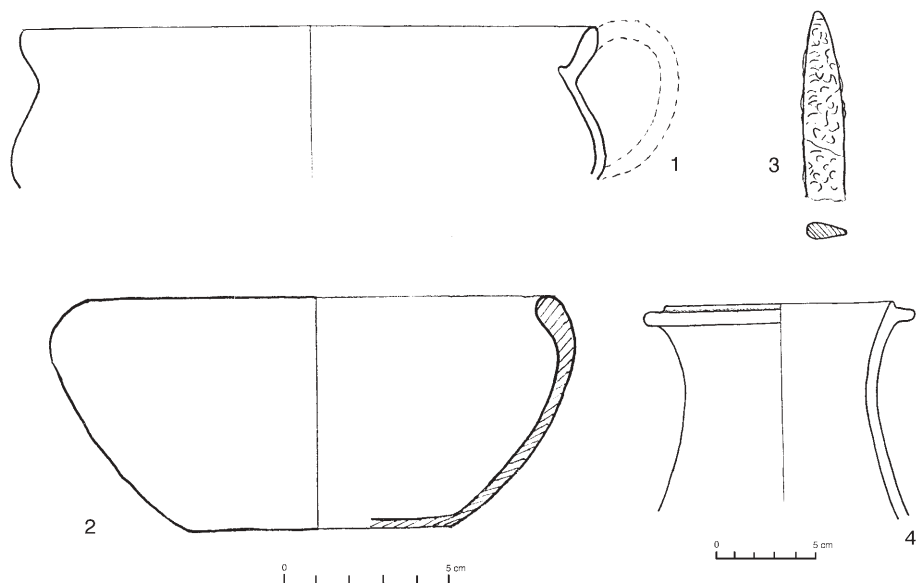


Fig. 14. Fragments of common ware from Farmhouse no. 49.

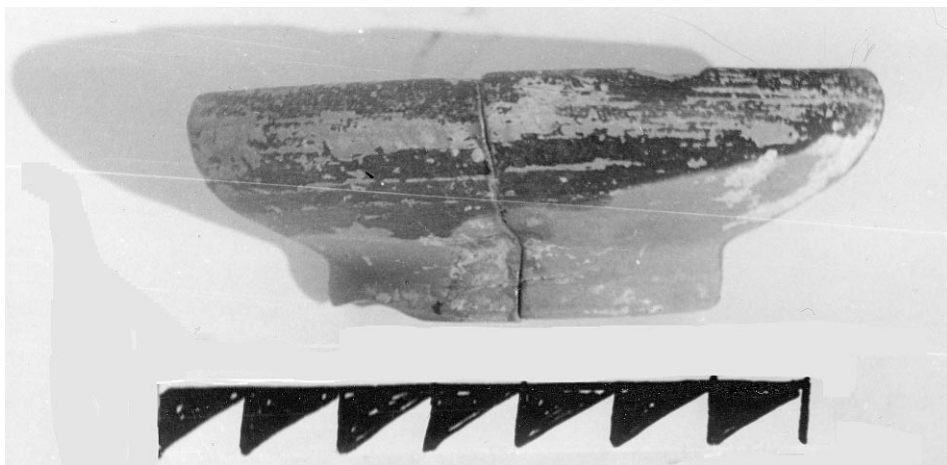


Fig. 15. Black-glazed bowl from Farmhouse no. 49.

The third building phase is dated by the Sinopean amphora stamp mentioned above and is confirmed by the anti-ramming belt. The lack of Rhodian and Hellenistic relief ceramics, i.e. Megarian bowls from Asia Minor, common to layers of the 2nd century BC, suggests that the farm was abandoned by its inhabitants in the late 3rd or early 2nd century BC. Traces of fire or evidence of serious destruction through military action are absent.



Fig. 16. Anti-ramming belt on Farmhouse no. 49.

Most of the finds are fragments of black-glazed and common ware – plates, basins, cups, fish-plates, and salt-cellars (Figs. 4.1-6, 14.1-2, 15). The assemblage is rather similar to that found on the land-plot no. 57, which differs the farms of the Majak peninsula from the other land-plots of the Herakleian peninsula. The same is true for establishing the chronological division between the second and the third building phases. The results of the excavations on the *chora* of Chersonesos have revealed that for nearly half a century around the middle of the third century BC, the rural estates of the Herakleian peninsula practically stopped functioning, only to be revived in the last quarter of the century.²⁰ Changes in the architecture and in the planning of the farmhouse in the third building phase, particularly the rebuilding in the south-eastern corner of its courtyard, the removal of the gates on the opposite side and the curvature of the main line of the farm's outer fence indicate a short, temporary break in the inhabitants' activity. Its revival in the third building phase began in the third quarter of the 3rd century BC at which time the farmhouse was strengthened by anti-ramming belt (Fig. 16).

The latter allows us to agree with those scholars, who date the appearance of anti-ramming belts to the mid-second half of the 3rd century BC in the wake of the growing danger of barbarian attacks. The belts around towers on various sites in north-western Crimea may have been built slightly earlier than those serving as protection for the towers or around entire farm-



Fig. 17. Small limestone slab for casting and a lead ring, cast on this slab.

houses on the Herakleian peninsula, as the distant *chora* of Tauric Chersonesos in the western Taurica was the first to suffer from the attacks of the Scythians and probably also of the Sarmatians.²¹

The construction of anti-ramming belts took place throughout the whole *chora* of Chersonesos. That is why they appeared in some places at the turn of the 3rd-2nd century BC.²² The proposed date of the beginning of the third building phase is also supported by the fact that the neighboring farmhouse on land-plot no. 57 had no additional fortifications when it was abandoned by its inhabitants around the middle to the third quarter of the 3rd century BC owing to the Scythian or Sarmatian threat.²³ This implies that the third building phase can be limited to the second half of the 3rd to the early 2nd century BC. At the same time we would agree with E.Ja. Turovskij's and V.I. Kac's idea that the decline of activity on the farms of the Herakleian peninsula set in not later than 190s-180s BC.²⁴ However, at this time it only happened on the Majak peninsula, while on the Herakleian peninsula the farms continued to exist until the second half or even until the last quarter of the 2nd century BC.²⁵ The anti-ramming belt constructed in the third quarter of



Fig. 18. Ceramic weights and a whetstone from Farmhouse no. 49.

the 3rd century BC on a farm, which was only functioning for 50 to 70 years, compels us to revise the view that anti-ramming belts appear only in the 2nd century BC because they are absent on farms which ceased to exist in the first quarter of the 2nd century BC, as they have been found on farms, which were active until the middle of the century.²⁶ The third building phase of the farmhouse on land-plot no. 49 testifies that some of the unfortified farmhouses on the Lighthouse Point, for example those on land-plots nos. 55²⁷ and 57,²⁸ ceased to exist as early as the first half to the middle of the 3rd century BC and were not revived at all, while others were reconstructed after a short break and continued to exist until the beginning of the following century.



Fig. 19. Stone shots from Farmhouse no. 49.

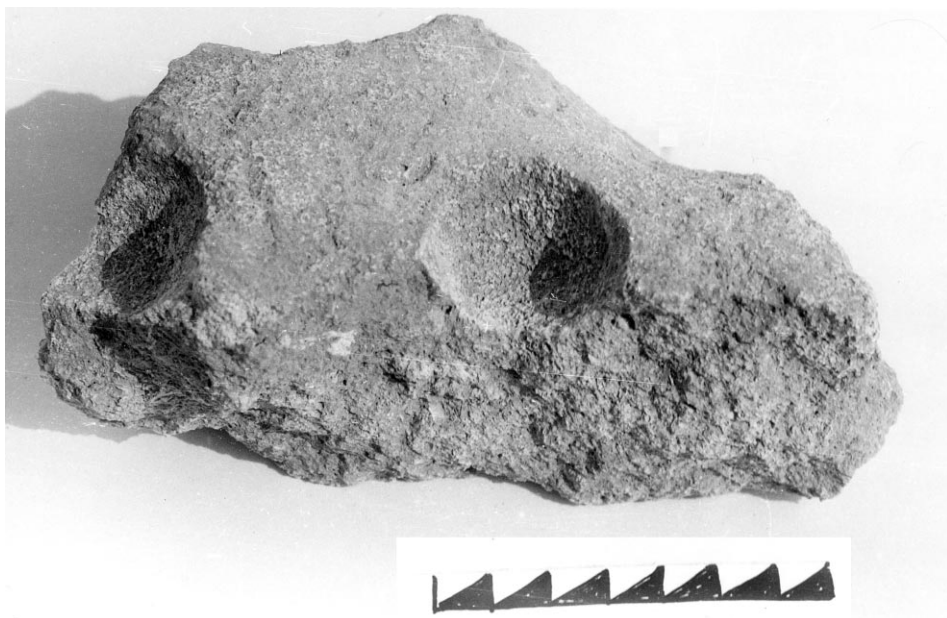


Fig. 20. Limestone slab for casting small-size shots from Farmhouse no. 49.

The economy and mode of life on Farm no. 49 are known only from the archaeological material. Gardening and wine-making certainly took place, and its residents also practiced domestic crafts. This is confirmed by the find of a bilateral casting mould, which looks like a limestone slab with cut off oval recesses for casting rings and a special hollow for making spear- or arrow-heads. The rings cut into the slab were intended for casting lead rings, two of which have been found in room 6 (Fig. 17), as well as flag plaques with three semi-circular projections. Lead rings and plaques cast in lateral or bilateral forms, were used as sinkers for fishing nets.²⁹ Similar weights in terracotta were also found (Fig. 18). This is strong evidence that the inhabitants fished. If this was the case, they may have sent fish to the city, as they did with their agricultural produce. The archaeological material also included bronze and iron nails, a whetstone (Fig. 18), a flint arrow-head, three small stone round-shots (Fig. 19) and a piece of limestone slab with curved holes for making small lead half-balls or shots (Fig. 20) along with a sharp-pointed knife of iron with a single cutting edge (Fig. 14.3). Among the finds one should also mention two fragments of a grey-ware lamp with closed *discus*.

The material from the farm shows that the activities of its residents included gardening, wine-making, crafts and possibly military service necessitated by the increased threat of barbarian attacks in the second half of the 3rd century BC. At the same time nothing testifies to any kind of sacred or temple lands on the Majak peninsula, as the rural complexes studied there correspond directly to the well-known farms and land-division system on

the *polis* land, known on the Herakleian peninsula and in other parts of the Greek world. The inventory of finds is rather poor, which is characteristic of the farms in the *chora* of Chersonesos.

Notes

1. Saprykin 1994a, 9; Nikolaenko 2001, 179; Nikolaenko 2001a, 34.
2. Žerebcov 1985, 39-40.
3. Saprykin 1994a, 16, fig. 5.
4. Pečirka 1973, 129, figs. 2.1, 3.1; Nowicka 1975, 110, fig. 10.
5. Maslennikov 1998, 62, fig. 29.
6. Ščeglov 1978, 79, fig. 38.
7. Strželeckij 1961, fig. 10; Pečirka 1973, fig. 2.2-3.
8. Nikolaenko 2001, 189.
9. Anochin 1977, no. 17.
10. On the dating of this coin-type based on the stratigraphical observations at the site of Panskoe I/U6, see now Stolba 1989, 63, 67; Gilevič 2002, 248, 249. Cf. Turovskij 1997, 56, nos. 77-81.
11. Kac 1994, 51, 103, no. 74.
12. Kac 1994, 50, 98, no. 57.
13. Monachov 1999, figs. 217.1, 218.5, 218, 8. See also Hannestad, Stolba & Ščeglov 2002, pl. 45, 7-8.
14. Maslennikov 1998, figs. 41-43, 51-52.
15. Monachov 1999, pl. 209, 1.
16. Maslennikov 1998, 75, fig. 43.6.
17. Levi 1985, 82, fig. 72.
18. Levi 1964, 246, fig. 7.1-2.
19. Fedoseev 1994, 188-190. For the most recent chronology of the Sinopean amphora-stamps, see Fedoseev 1999, 34.
20. Zolotarev & Turovskij 1990, 81.
21. Golencov 1995, 51; Turovskij 1995, 54, 55; Saprykin 1997, 206.
22. Ščeglov 1978, 74 ff.; Daševskaja 1969, 89; Zolotarev & Turovskij 1990, 84.
23. Saprykin 1994a, 60; 1994b, 134.
24. Kac 1994, 73; Turovskij 1998, 226.
25. Zolotarev & Turovskij 1990, 81; Saprykin 1994a, 20.
26. Kruglikova 1986, 170-173.
27. Nikolaenko 1997, 76, 77.
28. Saprykin 1994b, 134-136.
29. Kulikov 1998, 188, figs. 9-10.

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