

CHAPTER 7

The broader Tarchankut and Western Crimean context

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The DSP study zone is an artificial entity. Therefore, in order to understand the historical development in our area we need to contextualize our study zone within a wider geographical and historical context. The DSP area is located on the N coast of the Tarchankut Peninsula and it makes up a fraction only of the peninsula. Through the centre of the Tarchankut Peninsula runs a low ridge (height up to 178 m a.s.l.), which stretches E-W from Karadža almost to the end of the Donuzlav Balka. The peninsula is divided in two by the deep and much ramified Kelšeič Ravine running NS from Černomorskoe to the E-W ridge. Though not insurpassable, this ravine, nevertheless, seems to have bisected the peninsula in two distinct micro regions. In historic times, these two micro regions may have been oriented towards each a larger fortified settlement: the settlements of Karadža and Černomorskoe respectively. In turn, in the Late Classical, Hellenistic and perhaps the Roman period the entire region was part of Chersonesos' distant chora, whereas in the Medieval period until the early 18th century the Tarchankut was ruled by the Crimean Khanate. In the Early Modern period the region was foremost settled by the Nogaj Tatars. After Catharine the Great's annexation of Crimea from the Ottoman Empire in 1783, Russians and other Europeans were encouraged to settle in the region. Nevertheless, as late as 1944, when the Tatars were collectively exiled, the Tarchankut was dominated by Tatar villages. Today, the area is thinly settled. The local district town is Čornomorske/Černomorskoe (2001, population 11,709).

7.1 PREHISTORY | S. HANDBERG

There is very little evidence for occupation on the Tarchankut Peninsula and the western Crimea in the Middle Bronze Age period and with the exception of Baj Kijat and possibly Skalistoe 2, settlements of this period are lacking altogether on the Tarchankut. A few burials from Dalekoe and Mežvodnoe have been associated with the 'Mehrwulstkeramik' 'cultural' group of the post-Catacomb period, i.e. the Late Middle Bronze Age period, but corresponding settlements have not been located. In view of the scarcity of permanent settlements on the peninsula prior to the Late Bronze Age period, the sporadic finds of Middle Bronze Age pottery from Skalistoe 2 and DSP08-F06-01, which can be interpreted as settlement sites, appear to be a significant new contribution to the historical reconstruction of the settlement pattern in the area.

Although 10 Late Bronze Age settlement sites had previously been identified on the Tarchankut Peninsula, excavations have only been undertaken at the three settlements of Burun Eli, Baj Kijat and Skalistoe 2. These previously recognised Late Bronze Age sites on the Tarchankut are clustered around the Džarylgač and Jarylgač lakes in the immediate vicinity of the DSP survey area and the geographical location on hills near ravines and watersheds of the Late Bronze Age sites identified during the survey are similar to the position of the known settlements in the area as well as the Late Bronze Age settlements known from the foothills of the Crimean mountains to the S.⁸⁵

The pre-existing observations concerning the pattern of Bronze Age kurgans, which are isolated from the settlements, was confirmed by the DSP survey, where no kurgans were found associated with the major Bronze Age settlements such as Skalistoe 2 and DSP08-F06-01 with the possible exception of the kurgan group with a robbed Late Bronze Age kurgan DSP08-F04-04 (Feature 3). This kurgan belongs to the secondmost common type of Late Bronze Age burial type with a stone lined cist grave.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Kolotuchin 1996, 24.

⁸⁶ Tošhev 2007, 180.

For the largest settlements, Baj Kijat and Burun Eli, V.A. Kolotuchin has proposed several short occupational phases (four in the case of Baj Kijat and several at Burun Eli).⁸⁷ Given the nature of survey material, short term occupational differences cannot be recognised. Even so, the monumental double pen on DSP07-H08 combined with Middle and Late Bronze Age pottery suggest a continued occupation. The find of a fragment of a stone axe adds additional importance to the settlement on Hill DSP07-H08. Such stone axes are more often found in burials as for instance in Kurgan no. 2/1982 at Krulovka in the Pervomajev region 70-80 km to the E of the DSP survey area.⁸⁸ This kurgan has a circular stone foundation over 30 m in diameter and we may consider the possibility that the inner circle of the double pen was originally a kurgan which was later re-used as part of a milking pen. Out of approximately one thousand analysed bones from the two years of excavations at Baj Kijat 52% of the osteological material could be identified as belonging to cattle.⁸⁹ The four double pens identified on the hills during the DSP survey provide new additional evidence for the rearing of dairy cattle. Here it might also be mentioned that remains of pigs appear to be absent in the Late Bronze Age in and around the DSP survey area, whereas they are represented on other Late Bronze Age settlements in Crimea and the Kherson region.⁹⁰

The emergence of the last phase of the Bronze Age, the so-called Belozerka 'culture', has been recognised at Baj Kijat 1 and possibly at Skalistoe 2, but following the Sabatinovka 'culture' there is a remarkable decline in the settlements in the northern part of Crimea. Already at this time, in the last centuries of the second millennium BC, most settlements of the Belozerka 'culture' are found in the mountainous region in southern Crimea between Sevastopol and Belogorsk.⁹¹ The migration has traditionally been connected with climatic changes when the whole Eurasian steppe became progressively more arid.⁹² This migration is also reflected in the material culture retrieved during the DSP survey since no material could be ascribed to the Belozerka 'culture'.

7.2 IRON AGE | S. HANDBERG

The Early Iron Age in Crimea is associated with the transition from the Belozerka 'culture' to the Kimmerian, Taurian and Kizil-koba 'cultural' groups. The distinction in the material culture of the various groups, or tribes, has been widely discussed but clear differences in the ceramic repertoire in the transitional period are lacking.⁹³ Following the Belozerka period, the Tarchankut Peninsula became completely abandoned and the Early Iron Age settlements were moved to the mountainous southern area. There the continuity from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age has been observed at several settlement sites.⁹⁴ The most characteristic pottery of the Early Iron Age, the so-called Kizil-Koba pottery with incised combed decoration, does not appear to pre-date the 8th century BC.⁹⁵ Kizil-Koba pottery of the 6th century BC is known from both Chersonesos and its home chora, but similar material is not known from the Tarchankut.⁹⁶

In past research, it was believed that before the settling of the Greeks, the region was not at all settled (e.g. Ščeglov 2002a, 15), but alone frequented by an occasional nomad, as witnessed by a few kurgans dated to the 5th century BC left behind in the landscape (e.g. Ščeglov 1978, fig. 8.I). In the 1970s and 1990s the North-Crimean Expedition excavated a number of kurgans in the DSP study zone: five kurgans near Vodopojnoe; four kurgans over Snežnoe, four kurgans near Mežvodnoe, and two kurgans near Dalekoe. Unfortunately they have never been published. According to the opinion of S.G. Koltuchov, who participated in the excavation, they all date to the second half of the 5th-beginning of the 4th century BC.⁹⁷ If this date can be upheld all of them may predate the Greek settling of the region. The few finds of Greek

⁸⁷ Kolotuchin 2003, 28-29

⁸⁸ Kolotuchin 2003, 69 fig. 2.4.

⁸⁹ Kolotuchin 2003, 41.

⁹⁰ Osteological remains of pigs are known from e.g. Družnoe 2 (18.5%) and Dremailovka (6.5%), see Kolotuchin 1996, 28 and Sekerskja 2000.

⁹¹ Kolotuchin 1996, 68, 87.

⁹² For short overviews, see Bokovenko 2004 and Makhortykh 2004.

⁹³ See Chrapunov 1995; For the ceramics also e.g. Kolotuchin 1996, 69.

⁹⁴ See Kolotuchin 1996, 19-24.

⁹⁵ Vlasov 1997.

⁹⁶ For Chersonesos, see Senatorov 2003. For Kizil-koba occupation on the Herakleian Peninsula see Kravčenko 2005.

⁹⁷ See also Kolotuchin 1996, 65-66 for a short discussion of the Snežnoe as well as another kurgan group at Donuslav.

Late Archaic and Classical transport amphorai found in the DSP survey area might be related to the presence of a limited indigenous population in the area before the arrival of the Greeks (see Chapter 5.3.3.6).

7.3 GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITY | P. GULDAGER BILDE

Whereas the landscape of the nomads and the agro-pastoralists predominantly was one of 'path' and accordingly of 'space' (Chapter 6.6), the landscape of the Greeks was one of 'place', in which the settlement or the individual farmhouse marked a zone of permanence and stability. In the Late Classical and Hellenistic period, the DSP study zone became a sub-region of the Chersonesean chora. The period of the maximum expansion of the Chersonesean state was the brief interval from the mid- to second half of the 4th century BC to ca. 270 BC, thus not much more than half a century. During this period, a considerable number of fortified and unfortified settlements and farms were constructed between Chersonesos and at least as far as Masliny, ca. 220 km by the sea following the coast.

Tradition has it that Chersonesos was founded by Dorian Greeks from the S Pontic city Herakleia Pontike in 422/1 BC, but archaeological finds prove Greek presence around 100 years earlier, and a batch of *ostraka* from the late 6th and early 5th century BC points to a joint colonization by Pontic settlers from Ionian Sinope and Doric Herakleia (Zolotarev 1996). One further polis, 'Old Chersonesos ... razed to the ground' was mentioned by Strabon (7.4.2). This city is by most scholars placed on the fortified Majačnyj (Lighthouse) Peninsula at the Kazač'ja Bay. On this site, the earliest Greek material is contemporary with that found in the city at Karantinnaja (Quarantine) Bay (Ščeglov 1997). However, Strabon's words about the location of this city between Cape Parthenion (Cape Fiolent) and Symbolon Limen (Balaklava) cannot be mistaken, because Cape Fiolent is exactly 12.5 km S of the city at Karantinnaja Bay corresponding to the 100 stadia mentioned by Strabon. Accordingly, there were at least two *poleis* as well as the settlement of the Majačnyj Peninsula in the area. Old Chersonesos has not been convincingly located and it may have been eroded away completely. Therefore, we also ignore the date of its foundation. The settlement of the Majačnyj Peninsula is at our present knowledge contemporary with that of Chersonesos. However, from a topographical point of view, its location in the landscape corresponds better to the one preferred by the earliest Greek settlers, namely on a narrow peninsula, which was fortified across its narrowest point as for example in Orgame, the Sinoe-"Insula Lupilor" Settlement, and the Berezan' Settlement, so by analogy, this may have constituted the earliest of the Chersonesean settlements having the same relation to Chersonesos as did the Berezan' Settlement to Olbia.

Old and New Chersonesos were not the only *poleis* of Western Crimea: also Karkinitis/Kerkinitis was mentioned as a polis (FGrHist 1 fr. 184 = Steph. Byz. 360.1). As pointed out above (Chapter 4.3.1.1), it was located 600 stadia from Chersonesos, wherefore it is commonly identified as the settlement W of modern Evpatorija. Here dugouts and pottery of late 6th and early 5th century BC have been found as well as a fortification wall of the 5th century BC (Vnukov 2001, 152-153). This city minted its own coins. The earliest ones were cast coins in the shape of arrow heads and fish/dolphins of the 5th century BC some with the city name KA inscribed (Kutajsov 1996). This type of monetary practice finds its closest parallels in contemporary Olbia. During the second half of the 5th century BC, also more ordinary cast coins were issued, these too with city name K or KA (Kutajsov 1996, fig. 6). For a short period in the mid-4th century BC Kerkinitis minted further coins inscribed KARK/KARKI (Stolba 1996). It is likely that Kerkinitis was an independent Ionian polis until this period. Thereafter, it was seemingly incorporated into the territory of the Chersonesean state, as we can gather from the Chersonesean civic oath of ca. 300 BC (*IosPE* I² 401) probably as a dependent polis (Avram, Hind & Tsetskhladze 2004, 946).

The influence of Olbia in Western Crimea has been much debated. Several scholars are of the opinion that the coast of northwestern Crimea was outright part of Olbian territory in the 5th until mid-4th century BC (Rusjaeva 1986, 57 note 145; Ščeglov 1986, 166 [not seen]; Zolotarev 1986; Chtcheglov 1992, 244-245; Vinogradov 1989; Ščeglov 2002a, 16-17). However, this historical reconstruction has not been unanimously accepted. On the contrary, some scholars suggest that Kerkinitis before being subjected to Chersonesos may have settled the Tarchankut (e.g. Lantsov & Uzhentzev 2006, 701).

7.3.1 The Chersonesean chora in the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period

If the character of the settling of the region in the Archaic and Classical periods is up to debate, there is unanimous agreement that during the brief interval between ca. 350 and 325 BC the entire western and northwestern Crimea was

incorporated into the Chersonesean state as its distant chora. Whether this was the result of a regular war between the two Greek poleis or whether it was a peaceful takeover is a matter of scholarly dispute (overview in Lantsov & Uzhentzev 2006, 701). The material remains witnessing this process attest to the spread of a unitary culture in terms of building style and design as well as a common spiritual culture centred on the Dorian founder hero, Herakles (Ščeglov 1978, 125; see also Chapter 6.4).

It is debated, how far N the Greek-controlled territory extended. Common agreement has it that it extended no further than Masliny (Lancov 2004, 59 with references). However, it is well known that three or four (Scythian?) settlements are found further 40 km N of Bakal' (Portovoe: *razvedki* of A.A. Ščepinskij, cf. Ščepinskij & Čerepanova 1974, 62-63; Borisovka and Kumovka: *razvedki* of M.K. Zinov'ev, cf. Zinov'ev 1957, 325; Lancov 2004, fig. 2.83-86). Since Greek as well as Scythian material is found on the mentioned sites, Lancov is of the opinion that the Chersonesean distant chora continued thus far (Lancov 2004, 62; Lantsov & Uzhentzev 2007, 681-682). The largest site in the region by far seems to be the one at Bakal', which is located ca. 15 km NE of Masliny. This site extends over an area of more than 1,000 x 500 m. Certainly, much more investigation is needed in order to obtain a firm understanding of the settlement structure E of Masliny. In any case, the DSP survey area was part of the distant chora of the administrative polis, be that Olbia or Chersonesos.

We are well informed of the settlement hierarchy not just from archaeological fieldwork but also from ancient literary and epigraphic sources. In this period, Chersonesos was the polis, which controlled the dependent polis of Kerkititis and the town of Kalos Limen. The presence of forts (τείχη) is mentioned in three Chersonesean inscriptions (*IosPE I² 352, 353, 401*). The land is called the chora (χώρας) (*IosPE I² 401*) as well as the productive plain (πεδίο) (*IosPE I² 401, 418*).

The settling of the chora had two main effects: the introduction of a number of new species such as grapevine (*vitis*), almond (*amygdalus*), and perhaps walnut (*juglans*), and a variety of fruit trees. But at the same time, a considerable deforestation of the region took place. Both can be read in the pollen diagrams, which have been produced by Cordova and Lehman (2003; 2006).

It is well known that the Chersonesean territory was divided into regular plots in several different phases. We have already discussed the evidence for cadasters on the Tarchankut Peninsula in Chapter 6.3.1. Until recently, the Chersonesean cadaster system was well preserved, especially on the Herakleian Peninsula in the near or home chora of Chersonesos (Ščeglov 1980; Carter 2006; Nikolaenko 2006; Smekalova & Smekalov 2006). Clear traces of property divisions over large tracts of land in the Tarchankut Peninsula testify to the substantial scale of cultivation of the steppe also in Chersonesos' distant chora. This was first discovered by A.N. Ščeglov through the study of aerial photographs in the 1970s (Ščeglov 1980). Recently T.N. Smekalova has returned to the issue (Smekalova & Smekalov 2006, 235-240). The mentioned studies have made it clear that significant contiguous stretches of land foremost on the flat inland Plateau W of the Kelš Eich Ravine and also small patches of land on the S coast around Ojrat and Džan Baba were thus divided (Ščeglov 2002a, pl. 4; Smekalova & Smekalov 2006, fig. 14).

7.3.2 The crisis of the 270s BC

The first third of the 3rd century BC was a watershed in the life of the entire northern Black Sea region. A series of interlinked crises resulted in a near collapse of the local cultures:

- a) A climate crisis (Alexeev 2003, 416; Stolba 2005b and c; Užencev 2006, 115-116)
- b) Abandonment of the chorai in the entire northern Black Sea area; cessation of Chersonesean wine production (or at least of stamping the amphorai)
- c) An economic crisis resulting in the change of weight standards, adding of base metals to alloys, overstriking and countermarking, and cessation of striking of gold (Stolba 2005b and c). The economic crisis may be reflected in the stop of import of Attic Black Gloss pottery and the presence of many repairs on pottery

Because the North Pontic landscape is a marginal zone for Greeks as well as for the nomadic tribes, production was hit hard by changing climate. Thus grain became a scarce commodity, as we may gather from the Chersonesean civic oath from ca. 300 BC (*IosPE I² 401*). In the oath, the citizens are obliged to swear that "neither shall I sell grain suitable for exportation which comes from the plain, nor export grain from the plain to another place, except to Chersonesos". The pressure on the resources also led to intensified diplomatic contacts between the Bosporan Kingdom and Egypt during the first half of the 3rd century BC perhaps in order to secure import of grain from Egypt.

Ecological crises are well-known push factors for migration and in all likelihood, the 3rd century crisis led to movement of nomadic tribes. Thus, already around 300 BC, the Classical culture of Scythia Magna collapsed (Alexeev 2003, 416) probably pushed by the arrival of a new group of nomads, the Sarmatians in the area. It is believed that many Greek sites were destroyed by nomadic attacks during this period, e.g. Panskoe I, as witnessed by burnt layers in most of the Greek sites.

Even though the worsened climatic conditions may have prevailed for more than a century, the chorai of many Greek cities, especially of the Bosporan Kingdom were resettled already around 230 BC, many with fortifications that illustrate that the threat from outsiders was real.

7.3.3 Late Hellenistic period

In the DSP study zone, after the collapse of the agricultural system in the 270s BC, it is only in the Late Hellenistic period the region was populated again. However, settling was significantly limited and the evidence exclusively comes from coastal sites (Černomorskoe Settlement, Masliny; a few pieces of Mouldmade bowls from Panskoe I also attest to some activity in the second half of the 2nd century BC; possibly the Skalistoe sites 5, 8 and 10; possibly Baj Kijat 2). It is generally believed that Scythians took over the Greek settlement sites in the Late Hellenistic period turning them into coastal strongholds. This goes for Masliny and the Černomorskoe Settlement as well as Kulčuk, Tarpanči, Ojrat, and Beljaus, and even Greek farms, such as Bol'šoj Kastel' are assumed to have been taken over by the Scythians.

7.3.4 Roman period

The Roman period is scarcely known in the Tarchankut Peninsula. In the DSP study zone, it is only in Černomorskoe that activity in the Roman period is recorded (see above, Chapter 4.3.1.1).

7.4 MEDIEVAL PERIOD | P. GULDAGER BILDE & K. WINTHER-JACOBSEN

At Černomorskoe, 8th-10th centuries phases associated with the Saltovo-Majak culture linked to the Khazars as well as later Medieval phases have been reported, but scarce evidence has been published (Nalivkina 1957; Ščeglov 1978, 36-37; Guldager Bilde et al. 2008, 134). None of the pottery collected by the DSP can be securely dated to this period (see Chapter 5.3.5.1). Kurgan burials persist, even though the presence of moundless catacomb graves indicates that the burial rites have not been restricted to this practice only. One such burial has been unearthed around 1990 at the settlement of Panskoe I (unpublished).

The ancestors of (most of) the Crimean Tatars were the Medieval tribes of the Kuman/Kipčak (in Rus annals called Polovtsets). These were nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes living in the 10th to the 13th century occupying a significant territory in the Eurasian steppe, stretching from N of the Aral Sea westward to the region N of the Black Sea as far as Central Europe. According to H. Jankowski, the bulk of Crimean toponyms and oikonyms are Kipčak (2006, 31). They are the witnesses of sedentarisation of the area in the Medieval period. In the DSP study zone, the presence of the Kipčak is alluded to in the toponym Kipčak-Učkuju, which is the name of one of the deserted Tatar villages S of the Džarylgač Lake.⁹⁸ Currently, the finds from Černomorskoe and the surviving toponyms are the only evidence for the Medieval occupation of the DSP study zone. As was the case with the material of the 8th-10th centuries, none of the pottery collected by the DSP can be dated securely to the 11th-13th centuries (see Chapter 5.3.5.1). However, none of the Tatarian villages identified on the maps such as Kipčak-Učkuju were the object of intensive studies mainly due to current occupation and the short duration of the project. The tendency to occupation continuity witnessed on the slopes suggests that the Medieval villages may be located on the sites of the Early Modern Tatarian ones. These tend to be located like a string of pearls along the geographical line where access to the highest quality water was the easiest, and high quality water for watering the animals would have been a vital resource to the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of the Medieval period.

⁹⁸ There is one further settlement at the N coast of the Tarchankut Peninsula with the name of Kipčak (also Hellenistic settlement at this site: Lancov 2004, fig. 1.64). The highest hill N of Krasnosel'skoe is equally called Kipčak Hill.

The Kipčak buried their dead under kurgans. At Dalekoe a Medieval kurgan has been excavated by S.G. Koltuchov and others (Koltuchov et al. 1994, 114-115 [not seen]). Stone statues (*baba's*) were used to mark graves. In Černomorskoe Museum two fragmentary *baba's* from the region are exhibited (Kutajsov 2005). According to V.I. Pavlenkov fragments of two similar statues were recorded from Mežvodnoe (Pavlenkov 1986, 294 [not seen]).

7.5 EARLY MODERN PERIOD | P. GULDAGER BILDE

In 1783, Catharine the Great annexed the Crimea from the Ottoman Empire, whereby Russia gained access to the Black Sea. At that time, the region was becoming gradually depopulated (Lyll 1825, 340). Catherine therefore consolidated her new acquisition with the settling of Russian, Ukrainian, German, Bulgarian and other colonists. Already by 1863, the immigrants outnumbered the Tatar population.

The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire signified a fundamental change of the Crimean landscape: new cities and towns were constructed, new roads were made and a shift to more intensive horticulture with focus on vine and tobacco was carried out (Williams 2001, 64). P.S. Pallas claimed that extensive deforestation took place, which led to an exposure to cold winds from the N (Pallas 1801, 382). Some deforestation also took place between 1812 and 1913, when the area of forests was reduced from 361,000 ha to 335,000 ha (Cordova, Rybak & Lehman 2001, 372). The Tatars were by the government incited to cultivate the land, but they are “of all the colonists, far the worst cultivators; and are still much addicted to grazing large flocks and herds and numerous studs of mares. Under the encouragement of government, agriculture has, nevertheless, much increased amongst them; arising in a great degree from the high price of wheat...” (Holderness 1823, 141). In the DSP area, a colony was planted W of the mouth of the Kelšeich Ravine with regular house plan (see Betev’s map of 1837). The preceding but still existing Tatar villages Ak Metčet (the ‘white mosque’) and Šeichlar extended along the E side of the ravine from the small village of Takil’ to immediately S of the ancient settlement. By the end of the century it was completely taken over by Russians.

After the deportation of the Tatars in 1944, the Turkish names of their villages were supplanted by Russian names (Jankowski 2006, 1). The Crimean Tatars were officially rehabilitated in 1967, and from 1988, they began returning to Crimea. In the Ukrainian census of 2001, 12.7% of the population in the Tarchankut Peninsula is Tatar.⁹⁹ Today, most of the Tatar villages in the DSP area remain deserted. However, especially in Vodopojnoe and Mežvodnoe a significant number of Tatars are living today (Fig. 4.38).

⁹⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Etnics.svg> accessed 9 May 2009.