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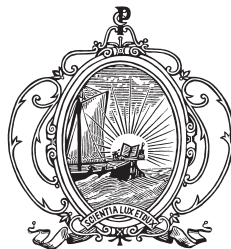
COLLOQUIA ANTIQUA

— 18 —

ESSAYS ON THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND  
ANCIENT HISTORY OF  
THE BLACK SEA LITTORAL

Edited by

MANOLIS MANOLEDAKIS, GOCHA R. TSETSKHLADZE  
and IOANNIS XYDOPOULOS



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## THE TAURIANS

Igor KHRAPUNOV

### *Abstract*

The Taurians begin and end as a people in the Crimea, and they never ventured beyond it. Using Herodotus as his main source, this paper presents the geography and customs of this group, and adds some brief description of their perception as barbarians or exotics in later Graeco-Roman authors. Epigraphy provides little help: only a few references to the land and people of the Taurians are to be found, despite their ranging from the 5th century BC to the 1st century AD. No traces of the Taurian language survive, thus leading to all manner of hypotheses about their origins. The paper gives an overview of archaeological research in the Taurians' lands prior to focusing on the most important settlements (Shpil, Kizil-Koba). It concludes that the Taurians were an people shaped by the consolidation of tribes living in the Crimean foothill area in the Late Bronze Age, and divides the Taurians in the 6th and 5th centuries BC into two sub-ethnic groups. In the 4th century BC, there was a back flow of the population and a new consolidation of the Taurian people(s) against the background of a settled farming and cattle-breeding economy, until they were gradually assimilated by the Scythians.

The Taurians were a people whose history started and finished in the Crimean Peninsula, and they never stepped beyond its limits. Herodotus was the one who described the Taurians earlier and in more detail than any other ancient author.

When the Persian king Darius came to the border of Scythia, the Scythians asked for help from the rulers of neighbouring peoples. They successfully reached an understanding with some of these, but others, including the Taurians, refused to support them. This episode, although it may seem not very important, gave Herodotus the opportunity to tell everything he knew about the Taurians. In particular, he provided a short description of the territory where they lived:

At the Ister begins the ancient Scythian land, which lies facing the south and the south wind, as far as the city called Carcinitis. Beyond this place, the country fronting the same sea is hilly and projects into the Pontus; it is inhabited by the Tauric nation as far as what is called the Rough Peninsula; and this ends in the eastern sea (Herodotus 4. 99).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Transl. A.D. Godley.

Geographical names require explanation. The Ister refers to the Danube, Karkinitis (here in Doric dialect, though other ancient writers usually call it Kerinitis in Ionic dialect) was the city located, according to most scholars, at the site of modern Yevpatoria/Eupatoria, and the Rough Peninsula is today's Kerch Peninsula. Therefore, according to Herodotus, the Taurians lived south of a tentative line which could be drawn between Yevpatoria and the Kerch Peninsula. Almost all later writers agree with him on this point. Ancient historical and literary tradition localises the Taurians in the Crimean Mountains. Strabo is the only one who once mentioned that the Taurians, 'a Scythian tribe', once held most of the Crimean territory (Strabo 7. 4. 5).

Herodotus informs us of unusual Taurian customs:

... the Tauri have the following customs: all ship-wrecked men, and any Greeks whom they take in their sea-raiding, they sacrifice to the Virgin goddess as I will show: after the first rites of sacrifice, they smite the victim on the head with a club; according to some, they then throw down the body from the cliff whereon their temple stands and place the head on a pole; others agree with this as to the head, but say that the body is buried, not thrown down from the cliff. This deity to whom they sacrifice is said by the Taurians themselves to be Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia. As for enemies whom they overcome, each man cuts off his enemy's head and carries it away to his house, where he places it on a tall pole and sets it standing high above the dwelling, above the smoke-vent for the most part. These heads, they say, are set up to guard the whole house. The Tauri live by plundering and war (Herodotus 4. 103).

Later on, many ancient authors described the Taurians as plunderers and pirates who sacrificed foreign captives to their blood-thirsty virgin goddess. In most cases, they simply re-told Herodotus in more or less detail, rarely adding anything to his descriptions, sometimes even inventing their own 'pseudo-Taurian' topics. Among the latter are Euripides' *Iphigenia among the Taurians*<sup>2</sup> and some episodes of Ovid's *Letters from the Pontus*.<sup>3</sup> However, there were writers independent from Herodotus who especially described Taurian piracy and their blood-thirstiness. For example, Strabo mentions 'a narrow-mouthed harbour, where, generally speaking, the Taurians, a Scythian tribe, used to assemble their bands of pirates in order to attack all who fled thither for refuge. It is called Symbolum Portus' (Strabo 7. 4. 2).<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus records that the Bosporan king Eumelus (310/9–304/3 BC) successfully struggled against Pontic pirates including the Taurians (Diodorus 20. 25). According to Tacitus, in AD 49 several Roman ships on their way back from Bosphorus were wrecked on the Taurian coast. The locals

<sup>2</sup> Skrzhyńska 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Podossinov 1985, 127, 218.

<sup>4</sup> Transl. H.L. Jones.

killed almost all the shipwrecked Romans (*Annals* 12. 17). A Late Antique writer, Ammianus Marcellinus, who lived in the 4th century AD, writes: '[The Taurians] divided into various kingdoms, among whom the Arichi, the Sinchi and the Napaei are terrible for their ruthless cruelty, and since long continued license has increased their savageness, they have given the sea the name of Inhospitable' (Ammian 22. 8. 33).<sup>5</sup>

From the above, in accordance with narrative sources, Taurian is the common name of the peoples living in the Crimean Mountains (and possibly, if we remember Strabo, a larger area within the Crimea). Their main occupation was piracy and captured foreigners were offered in sacrifice to their virgin goddess.

The Taurians appear in a few epigraphic monuments. There is the 5th-century BC gravestone discovered in Panticapaeum with an epitaph in verse to Tichonus 'of Taurian origin' (*CIRB* 114). The decree honouring the Pontic commander Diophantus speaks of the Taurians who lived in the vicinity of Chersonesos and were subdued by him in the late 2nd century BC (*IOSPE* I<sup>2</sup> 352). Two inscriptions dedicated to the Bosporan king Aspurgus state that he conquered the Scythians and Taurians (*CIRB* 39, 40). One of these inscriptions bears an exact date, AD 23 (translated from Bosporan chronology); Aspurgus' reign started in AD 10/11, so the Taurians were conquered in between of AD 10 and 23. According to an *encomium* discovered in Panticapaeum, some Bosporan commander whose name did not survive had to conquer the Taurians again in the early 2nd century AD.<sup>6</sup> There is a tombstone from Chersonesos for two freedmen, at least one of whom was killed by the Taurians, possibly in the 1st century AD.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, almost nothing is known about the language spoken by the Taurians. No Taurian word survived but probably their self-name passed into Greek, acoustically. There have been many attempts to relate the Taurians with the Indo-Aryans who settled in the Crimea, grounded on analysis of linguistic material,<sup>8</sup> but they were not successful.<sup>9</sup> If we accept that the Taurians descended from the peoples of the Timber-Grave (Srubnaya) culture, then the following speculation may be developed. These peoples played an important role in the ethnogenesis of the Scythians and Cimmerians. Almost all research agrees with this conclusion, especially regarding the Scythians. The Cimmerians and Scythians spoke Iranian; consequently it is quite probable that the people of the Srubnaya culture spoke one or several languages of the Iranian group in the Indo-European

<sup>5</sup> Transl. J.C. Rolfe.

<sup>6</sup> Saprykin 2005.

<sup>7</sup> Solomonik 1983, no. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Trubachyov 1999a–b.

<sup>9</sup> Grantovskii and Raevskii 1984; Otkupshchikov 1988.

language family.<sup>10</sup> This conclusion is supported by the coincidence of the area of the Srubnaya culture and Iranian hydronyms.<sup>11</sup> Hence, the Taurians, similarly to the descendants of the Srubnaya culture, would have spoken some Iranian language.

An anonymous *Periplus* of the Pontus Euxinus keeps the place name of Ardabda, meaning ‘of seven gods’ in Iranian. This was the name of Theodosia in the ‘Alanic’ or ‘Taurian’ language.<sup>12</sup> Alanic undoubtedly belonged to the Iranian group. Taurian could also be attributed to this group, if there were a real similarity between the two languages. However, other interpretations are also possible. For example, this language could be called ‘Taurian’ in the sense that it was used by the Alans who lived in Taurica (foothills and mountainous part of the Crimea). Although E.H. Minns supposed that the Taurians were Iranian-speaking because of the name of Ardabda,<sup>13</sup> elsewhere he suggested it was more probable that this place name derived from the Alanic.<sup>14</sup>

There are few hypotheses concerning the origin of the ethnonym of the Taurians and toponym of Taurica but none of them could be considered proven. For a long time, the most popular interpretation was the one given by M.I. Rostovtsev, stating that the word Taurians was a Graecised form of some indigenous word with similar pronunciation.<sup>15</sup> In other words, the Greeks heard how the Taurians pronounced their name. This word reminded them of the pronunciation of Greek word *tauroi* (‘bull’) and hence the population of the Crimean Peninsula got their name.

In E.I. Solomonik’s opinion, the Greek name ‘Tauros’ referred to the Crimean Mountains. This toponym gave birth to the toponym of Taurica. Therefore, the Taurians meant mountaineers, the residents of Tauros (Crimean Mountains).<sup>16</sup> However, this idea was criticised by some scholars.<sup>17</sup>

No clear answer seems to be forthcoming to the problem of the origin of this people as well. First attempts to consider this problem led scholars to the idea that the Taurians descended from the Cimmerians, pushed up into the mountains by the Scythians.<sup>18</sup> This hypothesis was further developed by C.F.F. Lehmann-Haupt and L.A. Zhebelev.<sup>19</sup> We can probably call it intuitively based on general

<sup>10</sup> Otroshchenko 2002, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Chlenova 1984.

<sup>12</sup> Diller 1952, 133.

<sup>13</sup> Minns 1913, 101.

<sup>14</sup> Minns 1913, 555.

<sup>15</sup> Rostovtsev 1918, 195.

<sup>16</sup> Solomonik 1976, 48–49.

<sup>17</sup> Tokhtasev 1984, 139.

<sup>18</sup> Brun 1868, 249; Karaulov 1872, 107; Podberyozskii 1872, 431.

<sup>19</sup> Lehmann-Haupt 1922; Zhebelev 1953a, 256; 1953b, 336.



knowledge of the history of the northern Black Sea area in the Graeco-Roman period. Written and archaeological sources contain no evidence confirming the genetic succession of the Taurians from the Cimmerians.

A.M. Leskov has reconstructed the migration of a part of the inhabitants from the North Caucasus mountainous area, i.e. people of the Koban culture, to the Crimea in the early 1st millennium BC. This migration was a gradual infiltration, complicated by contacts with the people of the Kuban and Srubnaya cultures. In the Crimea, the migrants encountered small numbers of the local population, which was also descended from Caucasian migrants, who had once brought the Kemi-Oba culture to the Crimea. These rather complicated processes resulted in the shaping of the Taurian culture.<sup>20</sup>

Many scholars connected the ethnic origins of the Taurians with local Crimean substrate. This is elaborated in especially abundant detail by V.A. Kolotukhin, who identified the Taurians with the people of the Kizil-Koba culture. In his opinion, in the late Bronze Age, part of the population of the steppes turned to a nomadic way of life, while the rest consolidated in the Crimean foothill area, thus shaping a new people, which later became known to Greek and Roman writers under the name of Taurians.<sup>21</sup>

Archaeological sites of the Taurians have been investigated in the main ridge of the Crimean Mountains and in the southern coast of the Peninsula (Fig. 1). Only a few settlements have been discovered. One of them, located atop Koshka Mountain in Simeiz, has been excavated. This uncovered stone constructions within a 1.5 ha area; in P.N. Shults's opinion, they were related to the layer containing Kizil-Koba pottery. Some houses with lean-to roofs were attached to projections of bedrock and had only three walls, others had covering supported by wooden pillars. Floors were of earth in all the cases, with fireplaces lined with stones. There is a cemetery of cists located in the immediate vicinity of the settlement.<sup>22</sup> Shults probably associated the fortification wall on Koshka Mountain with the Early Iron Age settlement most likely by mistake; it was in fact constructed in the Middle Ages. L.V. Firsov has used stratigraphic data to raise doubts about the Taurian attribution of the dwellings. He has drawn profiles of handmade vessels from Koshka which bear absolutely no similarity to typical Kizil-Koba ware.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the archaeological designation of the Koshka remains unclear until new excavations are carried out (Fig. 2). The only undoubted fact is the location of a Taurian cemetery near the settlement, which

<sup>20</sup> Leskov 1965, 146–58.

<sup>21</sup> Kolotukhin 1996, 67–70.

<sup>22</sup> Shults 1957a, 63–64.

<sup>23</sup> Firsov 1990, 297–331.

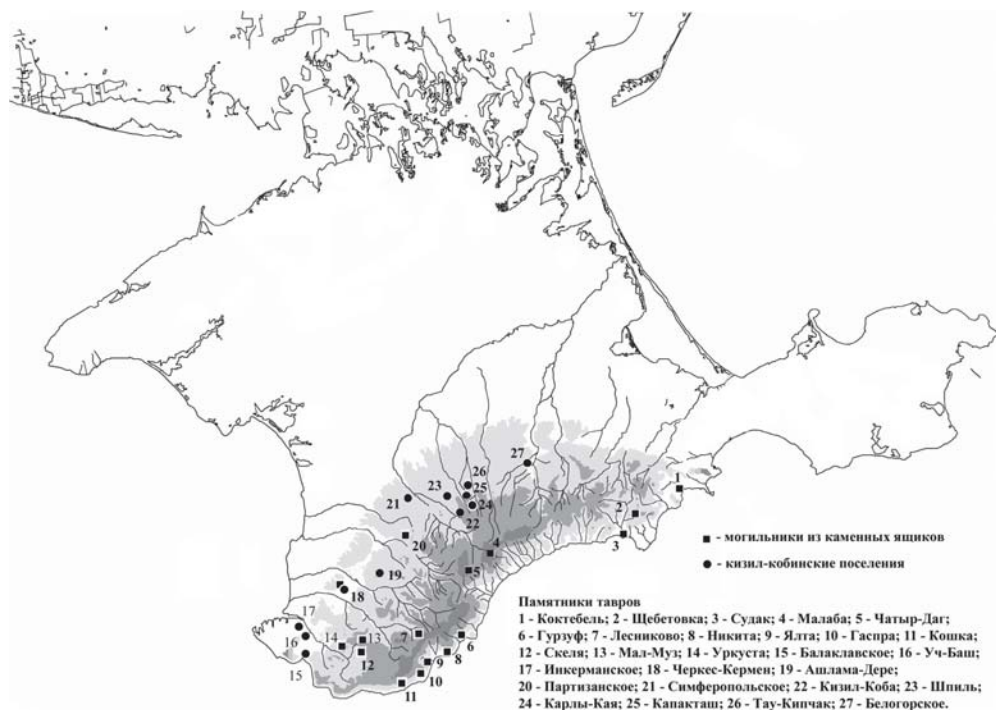


Fig. 1. Taurian sites: а – cist cemeteries, б – Kizil-Koba settlements. 1 – Planerskoye, 2 – Shchebetovka, 3 – Sudak, 4 – Malaba, 5 – Chatyr-Dag, 6 – Gurzuf, 7 – Lesnikovo, 8 – Nikita, 9 – Yalta, 10 – Gaspra, 11 – Koshka, 12 – Skelya, 13 – Mal-Muz, 14 – Urkusta, 15 – Balaklavskoye, 16 – Uch-Bash, 17 – Inkermanskoye, 18 – Cherkes-Kermen, 19 – Ashlama-Dere, 20 – Partizanskoye, 21 – Simferopol'skoye, 22 – Kizil-Koba, 23 – Shpil, 24 – Karly-Kaya, 25 – Kapak-Tash, 26 – Tau-Kipchak, 27 – Belogorskoye (compiled by author).

leads to some hope that Shults correctly attributed the ceramic vessels discovered by him to the Kizil-Koba culture. Although Kizil-Koba ceramics have also been found in several places on the south coast,<sup>24</sup> only surveys have been carried out so far, thus nothing definitive can be said about the aspects of these settlements.

In contrast to settlements, cemeteries are rather numerous. K.I. Kris's corpus cites more than 40 such.<sup>25</sup> Taurian cemeteries consisted of cists. The grave was constructed as four slabs sunken into the ground to form walls and covered

<sup>24</sup> Zhuk 1994; 1997.

<sup>25</sup> Kris 1981, 57–58.



Fig. 2. Koshka Mountain (photograph: Stanislav Shabanov).

with a fifth slab on top. Cists rarely exceed 1.5 m in length and 1 m in height and width (Fig. 3). However, a few larger constructions are also known. Almost all Taurian cemeteries were plundered (the only exception being Mal-Muz necropolis in the valley of Baydarskaya), but judging by the remains that survived each cist was intended for repeated burials. The burials were crouched, and continued until the cist was filled. After that, all bones except the skulls were removed and interment continued. Excavation of one of Mal-Mux cists uncovered 68 skulls. As a rule, cists were encircled with rectangular walls constructed of fine stones, one or two cists within each. We know of cemeteries of a few tombs, though others consist of dozens of cists located in parallel lines (Fig. 4).

As for the grave-goods, they used short swords (*akinakes*), bronze arrowheads and iron horse-bits that are absolutely indistinguishable from Scythian artefacts. Especially abundant and varied are bronze ornaments: finger-rings, bracelets, temple pendants, neck-rings and badges sewn onto cloths. They also decorated garments with glass beads of Greek origin and cowrie shells imported from far distant southern seas (Figs. 5–6).

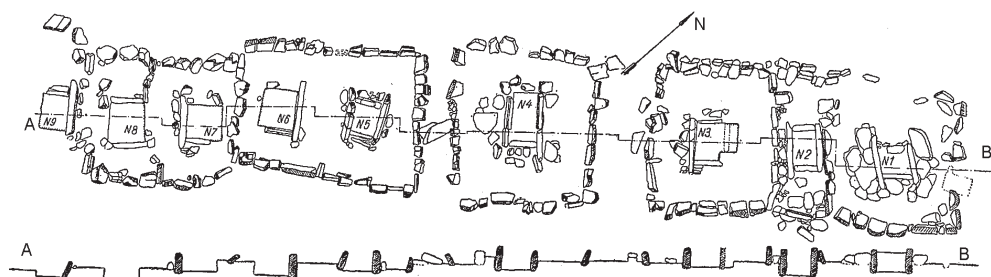


Fig. 3. Cists in the cemetery of Urkusta: plans and cross-sections (after Leskov 1965, fig. 31).



Fig. 4. Cist (photograph: author).

All the cemeteries date back to the 6th and 5th centuries BC. Given that this was the time and area where, according to Graeco-Roman written sources, the Taurians lived, we have no reason to doubt the ethnic attribution of the persons buried in the cists.

Less is known about the economy of the population of the main ridge of the Crimean Mountains. The small number of their settlements (though there are dozens of cemeteries) is striking. Taking this into account, as well as Ps.-Scymnus' notes that the 'Taurians... love nomadic life in mountains',<sup>26</sup> and environmental

<sup>26</sup> Müller 1861, 231.

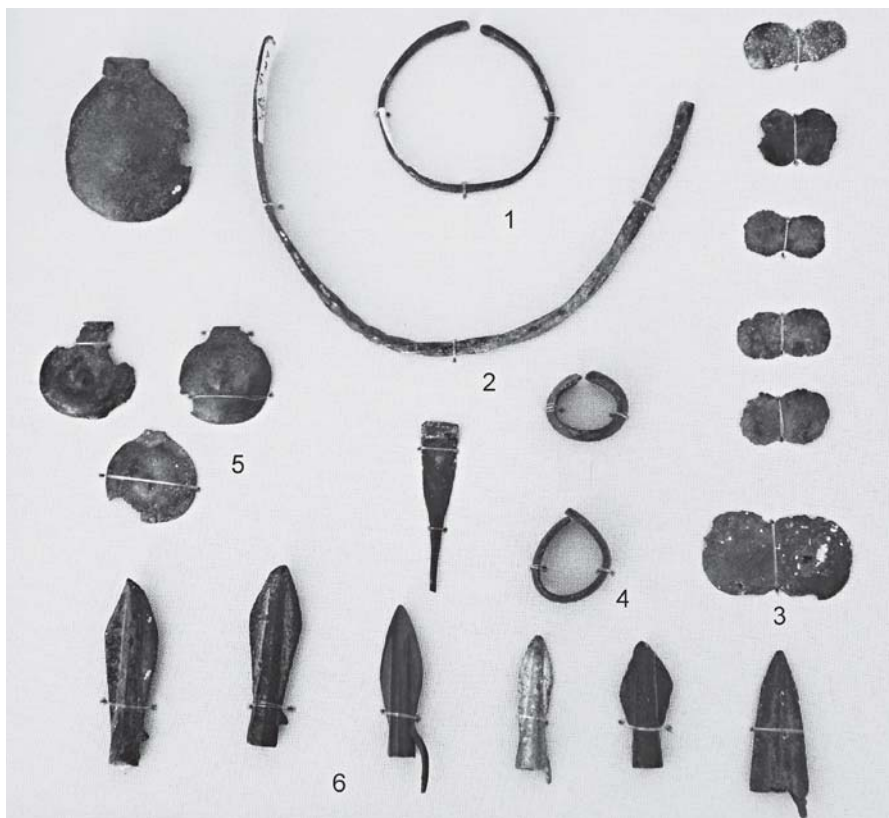


Fig. 5. Bronze ornaments and arrow-heads from Taurian cemeteries (displayed in the Central Museum of Taurida) (photograph: author).

conditions that make farming extremely difficult, scholars usually hypothesise that the Taurians practised transhumance.<sup>27</sup> Their contacts with Greeks are archaeologically recognisable only after glass beads are discovered in the cemeteries. As a Scythian penetration deep into the mountains has not been recorded, we may suppose that horse-harnesses and weaponry of Scythian types, analogous to those discovered in Kizil-Koba cemeteries, came from the foothill area.

The first settlements of the archaeological Kizil-Koba culture appeared in the Crimean foothills area in the 8th century BC. Later on, they spread throughout the foothills from Sevastopol to Feodosia (Fig. 1).

<sup>27</sup> Leskov 1965, 167–68; Shults 1959, 265.

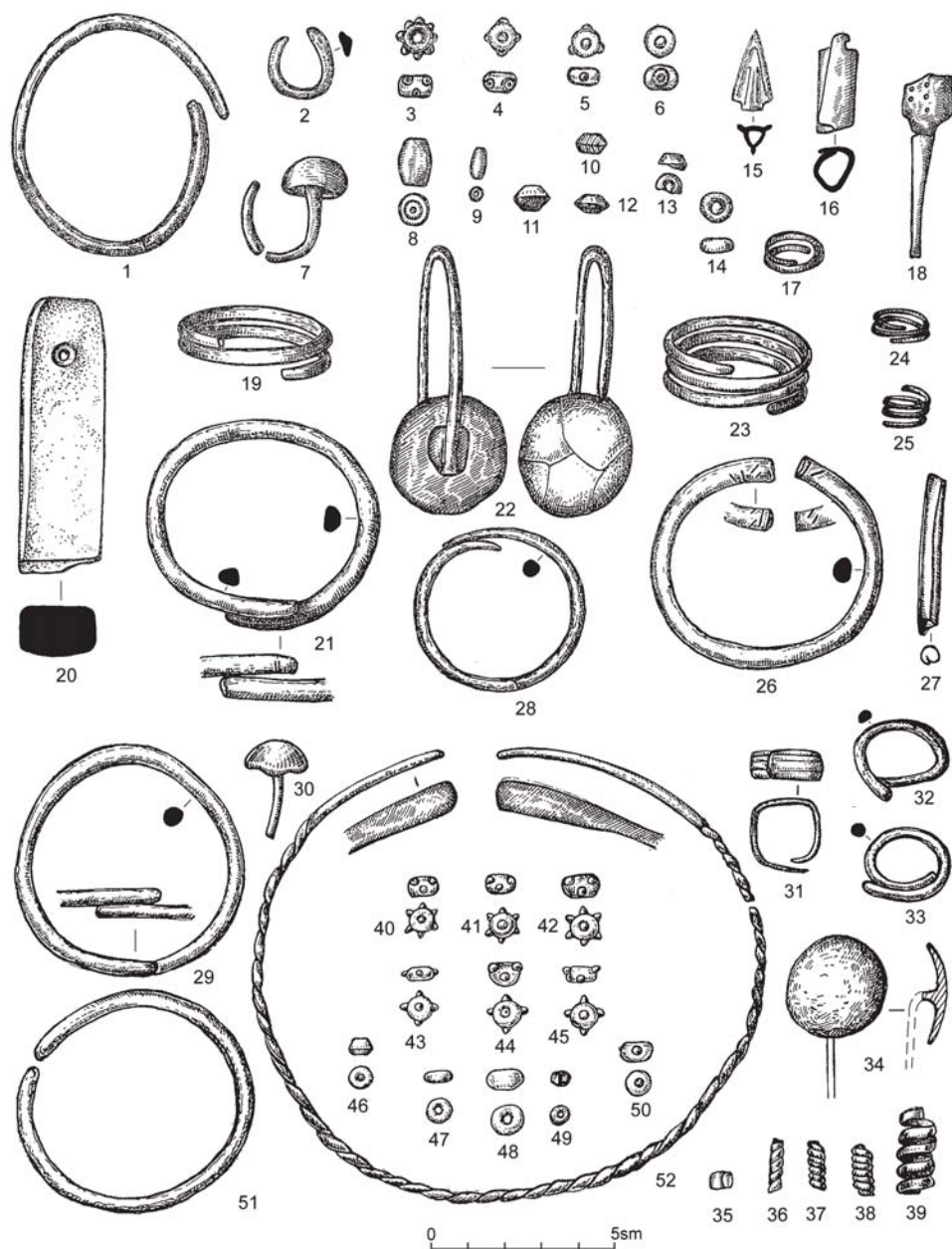


Fig. 6. Grave-goods from the cemetery of Mal-Muz. 1-2, 16-19, 21-39, 51-52 – bronze ornaments; 3-6, 8-14, 40-50 – glass beads; 15 – bronze arrow-head; 20 – whetstone (after Kris 1981, pl. 36).

Recent excavations in the area later occupied by the Kizil-Koba culture uncovered the cemeteries of Suuchkhan, Donskoye, Novoklyonovskii and Tashly-Bair with grave constructions and funeral rites resembling those of the Kizil-Koba.<sup>28</sup> Investigations have demonstrated the genetic continuity of the Kizil-Koba complex of handmade vessels from the Late Belozyorskaya one.<sup>29</sup> Such are the most important facts supporting the descent of the Kizil-Koba peoples from those who lived in the Crimean foothill area at the very beginning of the 1st millennium BC.

In contrast to the steppe zone, where the turn from the Bronze to Early Iron Age is marked by innovations in material culture and drastic change in the lifestyle of the population (a large part of it became nomadic), nothing similar happened in the Crimean foothills. Unfortified and mostly single-layer settlements of the Late Bronze Age bear no principle differences from Kizil-Koba sites. Changes in material culture, primarily in the shapes and correlation of shapes of handmade vessels, look like a continual evolution. The tradition of stone tools remained. Flint implements, stone axes and other artefacts from the excavations of Kizil-Koba settlements have no important difference from the artefacts discovered in the Bronze Age sites. Horse furnishings and weaponry were completely borrowed from the steppe and reflected the evolution of steppe types.

It is rather hard to draw conclusions about the chronology of the settling of the people of Kizil-Koba culture in the foothill zone and about the appearance of most settlements: the chronology of the Kizil-Koba culture has been investigated only incompletely, and narrowly dateable categories of goods characteristic only of this culture are almost entirely absent; single-layer settlements do not allow the application of a stratigraphic method; and almost all the cemeteries have been plundered, depriving most of the burials of the status of closed archaeological assemblages. The generally accepted opinion that handmade vessels with incised ornamentation appeared in Kizil-Koba settlements in the Scythian period<sup>30</sup> turned out to be a mistake.<sup>31</sup> Actually, ware decorated with such ornamentation became well known from the excavations of Crimean Bronze Age settlements of Druzhnoye 2, Fontany, Petrovskaya Ravine, Chuyuncha, Kirovskoye, etc. It has also been discovered in Kizil-Koba sites where the earliest imported ware in this culture has been unearthed, for example in settlements of Uch-Bash and Kizil-Koba. In some cases, ceramic vessels with cordon decorations, considered an early type, appeared in the same household pit with ware with incised ornamentation,

<sup>28</sup> Kolotukhin 2003, 22–26; Khrapunov and Vlasov 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Kolotukhin 1996, 40, 68–69.

<sup>30</sup> Kris 1981, 11; Kolotukhin 1990a, 110.

<sup>31</sup> Vlasov 1997a, 20.

as well as some vessels decorated with cordons and incised lines together.<sup>32</sup> The Scythians outside the Crimea did not know such pottery. Taking the abovementioned continuity of the Kizil-Koba culture from the Late Bronze Age cultures into account, we may logically conclude that the tradition to decorate polished vessels with incised ornamentation filled with white colour was uninterrupted in the Crimea at the turn of the Bronze and Early Iron Age. The Scythians did not transport handmade vessels from the Ukrainian forest-steppe area to the Crimean foothills: they were the customers of pottery made by the peoples of the Kizil-Koba culture.

So far, fine-toothed stamp ornamentation is the only definite chronological feature of Kizil-Koba pottery.<sup>33</sup> Based on finds of vessels thus decorated together with Greek amphorae, this decorative practice originated no earlier than the 4th century BC and existed to the end of the Kizil-Koba culture. However, there are only a few Kizil-Koba settlements and no cemeteries with finds of such pottery.<sup>34</sup> It has been discovered by excavations of Late Scythian<sup>35</sup> and Greek<sup>36</sup> sites.

The entire chronology of the Kizil-Koba culture is actually based on finds of pre-Scythian or Scythian – depending on the period of a settlement or a cemetery – weapons and horse furnishings. Such finds are very rare in settlements, though cemeteries, with only one exception, contained no artefacts from the pre-Scythian period. The situation changed slightly in the 4th century BC, when Greek pottery including stamped amphorae appeared in Kizil-Koba settlements (but never in cemeteries).

Using the fragmented and rather wide dating of individual sites, we can reconstruct the dynamics of the migration of the Kizil-Koba peoples to the foothill area. The earliest finds of the Kizil-Koba culture, from the 8th century BC, are bone cheek-pieces and arrowheads and one bronze arrowhead concentrated in three sites: Uch-Bash, Kizil-Koba, Druzhnoye 1 (settlement and cemetery).<sup>37</sup> The first is located in the south-western Crimea near Sevastopol, the others in the central foothill area, in the Salgir river valley. The rarity of finds from the pre-Scythian period can be explained probably in the small size of the population of the steppe zone of the Peninsula, making contacts between steppe and foothills rare. Therefore, some or even many sites without distinctive chronological indicators could be from the pre-Scythian period. Kolotukhin enlarged

<sup>32</sup> Khrapunov and Vlasov 1995, 14.

<sup>33</sup> Dashevskaya 1963.

<sup>34</sup> Kolotukhin 1996, 44, 59–60.

<sup>35</sup> Khrapunov 1991, fig. 14; Khrapunov and Muld 1993, fig. 9.8.

<sup>36</sup> Kunitsov 1987, fig. 6.2, 9; Stolba 2002, 185, pl. 129.D104.

<sup>37</sup> Vlasov 1997b, 16–19.



this list with cemeteries of Chuyuncha, Otar-Alan, and on the ridge east of Cherkes-Kermen. He did not attribute the settlements of Karagach and the Kholodnaya Ravine to the pre-Scythian period, probably because of the presence of ceramics with incised decoration, which he traditionally connected with the Scythians. He thought that all other features of the ceramic complex, as well as a bone tool from the Kholodnaya Ravine, corresponded to the pre-Scythian period.<sup>38</sup> The finds from two cists in the cemetery of Druzhnoye 2 are obviously early, approximately synchronous to the Kelermes *kurgans* in Ciscaucasia: there were bronze horse-bits with stirrup-shaped ends, a two-plate arrowhead with pin and laurel-leaf head, and a cast bronze badge with loop on its back.<sup>39</sup> The data are insufficient to allow one to state that in the 8th and 7th centuries BC, the central and south-west foothills of the Crimea were populated by peoples of the Kizil-Koba culture.

E.A. Kravchenko has investigated material obtained by S. Strzheletskii's excavations of the Uch-Bash settlement. She also carried out a small excavation of this settlement. As far as can be gathered from her brief explanation, she thinks that the Kizil-Koba culture dates from the Late Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age; it was not created by the Taurians.<sup>40</sup> Her only paper with a detailed publication of pottery discovered on the floor of a house in Uch-Bash leaves doubts concerning the correctness of the chronology.<sup>41</sup> According to Kravchenko, this pottery dates from the Late Bronze Age. However, she has not supplied any convincing argument for this chronology. These vessels have analogies both in the sites from the Late Bronze Age and the Kizil-Koba culture. As Kolotukhin wrote several times, some forms of Kizil-Koba ware originated genetically from the Bronze Age vessels. There is no other datable artefact among the pottery fragments published by Kravchenko. Nevertheless, she has made another but important point when she found analogies of many Uch-Bash vessels in the regions populated by the Thracians.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the foundation date of the Uch-Bash settlement remains obscure. It is generally accepted, however, that this was one of the earliest settlements of the Kizil-Koba culture. It would not be a surprise if it were found to have vessels of both the Bronze and Early Iron Age.

<sup>38</sup> Kolotukhin 1996, 57.

<sup>39</sup> Kolotukhin 1996, 58–59.

<sup>40</sup> Kravchenko 2005; 2009a.

<sup>41</sup> She had no doubt that she is dealing with a closed excavational context. In other words, all the vessels published were in the house in the moment when it collapsed. This statement contradicts the fact that, apart from few scoops and cups of a small size on the floor of the house, there was multitude of fine sherds of vessels, which were not assembled into complete forms. Another interpretation of this situation is more probable: the house was abandoned for some time, so its walls fell on a layer of rubbish collected in the room.

<sup>42</sup> Kravchenko 2004.

The overwhelming majority of settlements and cemeteries date from the 6th and 5th centuries BC. They are located as a continuous strip from Sevastopol in the west to Starii Krym and Koktebel on the east. Kris's corpus listed about 50 sites in the foothill area.<sup>43</sup> Since then, accounts of many newly discovered settlements and cemeteries have been published. The existing data mainly concern excavated objects and to a lesser extent reflect the saturation of foothill Crimea with Kizil-Koba sites. Pottery with incised decoration is spread actually everywhere in this area. Several prolonged archaeological investigations of sites from different periods have been conducted in the upper stream of the Maliy Salgir river, near the village of Druzhnoye, in an area of about 1 km<sup>2</sup>, as well as regular observations of earthworks. The general conclusion is that in this territory there were two cemeteries and three settlements, i.e. hundreds of household pits and so many other sites that it is not possible to remove soil from a few square metres without finding fragments of Kizil-Koba vessels. Moreover, when studying sites of different periods and cultures in the Crimean foothill area, archaeologists almost always mention finds of Kizil-Koba vessels.<sup>44</sup> It is possible that in the 6th and 5th centuries BC there were several hundred settlements spread across an area of about 6500 km<sup>2</sup>. No doubt, they did not exist simultaneously. Moreover, cultural layers are not deep, so life was very brief in the same place. However, the population density was still high even under such conditions. Obviously, foothill Crimea could be considered the area where the core of the Kizil-Koba people was shaped. Thence the people of this culture migrated to other regions.

The 4th-century BC settlements are dated mainly by finds of Greek pottery. Several sites of the type are discovered in the south-west Crimea, on the frontier of the Chersonesian *chora*; side by side with amphorae, there were fragments of black-slip and other wheel-made wares.<sup>45</sup> One of the settlements in the Bel'bek river valley possibly dates from the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC because of sherds of Rhodian amphorae.<sup>46</sup> There are household pits in the Heracleian Peninsula with sherds of both Kizil-Koba and Greek pottery the preliminary chronology of which is within the 5th century BC.<sup>47</sup> The excavations in the eastern border of the area of the Kizil-Koba culture, near the modern town of Staryy Krym, uncovered a marginal area of the Ayvazovskoye settlement. Its household pits

<sup>43</sup> Kris 1981, 58–60.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Shults 1957b, 64–66; Vysotskaya 1972, 36; Bogdanova *et al.* 1976, 124; Khrapunov *et al.* 1994, 89; Khrapunov 1991, 45.

<sup>45</sup> Senatorov 1998, with bibliography.

<sup>46</sup> Savelya 1974.

<sup>47</sup> Savelya 1997, 88–89.

contained a set of Kizil-Koba vessels and sherds of amphorae from various centres.<sup>48</sup> Although in the central Crimean foothills Greek ceramics have sometimes been found around cist cemeteries,<sup>49</sup> pictures have rarely been published. The exceptions are two stamped fragments of Heracleian amphorae.<sup>50</sup> One of them was discovered on the Dzhapalakh plateau, though the illustration captions say nothing about the place of origin of the other.

The excavation of the Shpil settlement in the upper reaches of the Maliy Salgir river uncovered fragments of several dozen amphorae from Heraclea, Chios, Thasos and Chersonesos (Fig. 7). Four Heracleian pieces have complete stamps. The total number of these amphorae exceeds those discovered in all other Kizil-Koba sites, though their date is within the 4th century BC.<sup>51</sup> Finds from two household pits supply more precise chronology: in the first case, the 390s BC, and in the second, about mid-4th century AD.<sup>52</sup>

From this it is clear that the 4th-century BC settlements were scattered throughout the whole area of the Kizil-Koba culture. Although their number is small, it is probably a mistake to date some sites without amphora fragments to an earlier period. It is significant in this sense that the finds in the Shpil settlement include some types of artefacts, such as vessels decorated with cordons and flint tools, which are traditionally dated to the most early stages of the Kizil-Koba culture, found together with 4th-century BC amphorae. Pottery vessels decorated with impressions of fine-toothed stamp from several places in the foothill area also date from an earlier period.<sup>53</sup> Anyway, the Crimean foothill area in the 4th century BC was probably less densely populated than in previous periods. The end of the tradition of cist cemeteries supports that idea. However, it might be the case that no burial from the 4th century BC has so far been discovered in these cemeteries.

The Kizil-Koba culture is a special phenomenon. It differs sharply from the cultures of its neighbours, the Greeks and the Scythians. If one finds it conceivable that, theoretically, territory populated by a people can coincide with the area covered by an archaeological culture, the Kizil-Koba culture would be an impressive example of such a coincidence. Its typical features display themselves as follows:

<sup>48</sup> Kruglikova 1975, 72–75.

<sup>49</sup> Leskov 1965, 82–85, 90, 168–69, 183.

<sup>50</sup> Leskov 1965, figs. 30–32.

<sup>51</sup> Khrapunov and Vlasov 1995, 19–21; 1996–97, 181–83.

<sup>52</sup> Monakhov 1999, 208, 331, 333–34.

<sup>53</sup> Kolotukhin 1996, figs. 46, 47.

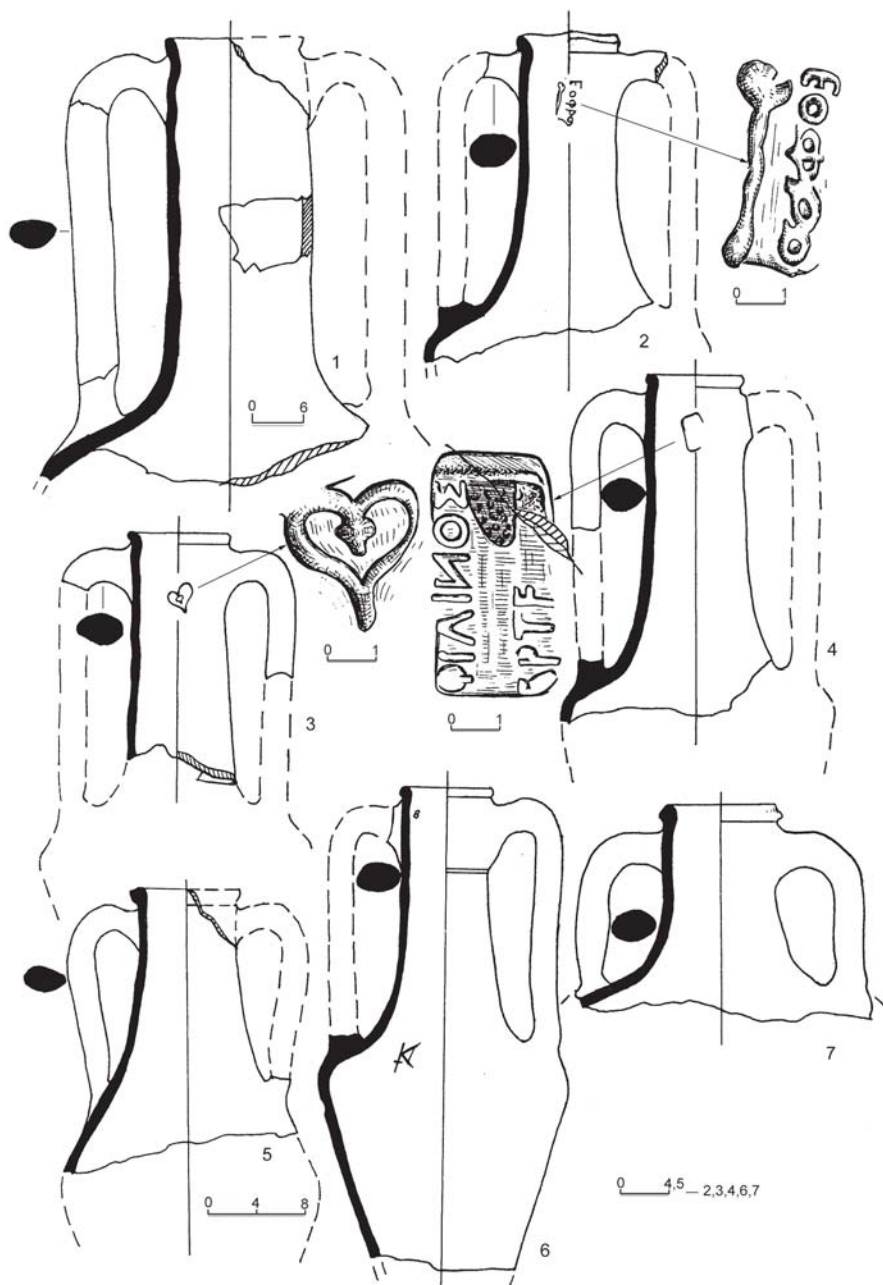


Fig. 7. Amphora fragments from Shpil settlement. 1 – Late Chios; 2–4, 6 – Heraclea Pontica; 5 – Thasos; 7 – Tauric Chersonesos.

1. Settlements were unfortified and existed for short periods. Residential and household buildings have been discovered on a few of them. In the Uch-Bash site, there were wattle-and-daub houses with earth floors and fireplaces.<sup>54</sup> In the Ashlama-Dere site,<sup>55</sup> and also in the Karan'-2 settlement not far from Balaklava,<sup>56</sup> there were the remains of buildings sunk 0.2-0.3 m below today's surface level.<sup>57</sup> Both types of building are absolutely non-specific, so analogies are easily found in the Early Iron Age sites over huge territories and in different cultures. Another circumstance is more striking: in most cases, excavations do not uncover traces of buildings. The investigation of the Shpil settlement uncovered 110 household pits in the area of about 5000 m<sup>2</sup>, though not all the settlement area was excavated. There was no cultural layer or trace of building in between the household pits. Although no other Kizil-Koba settlement has been investigated across such a wide area as that on the side of Shpil hill, the general image is typical: excavations uncover household pits in every settlement, but remains of dwellings in only a few cases. It is probable that the people who created this type of site led a relatively mobile way of life: they travelled from one place to another taking with them light dwellings, the remains of which could not be traced archaeologically.
2. The main contents of the cultural layers in Kizil-Koba settlements are sherds of handmade vessels. They are of different shapes and are ornamented in different ways (Figs. 8-10). Scholars are probably correct to conclude a gradual replacement of cordon ornamentation with incised, but this is only a trend: vessels decorated with cordons sometimes appeared in the same complexes with vessels ornamented with incised lines. Almost all the settlements from the 6th century BC onwards contain pottery of Scythian shapes together with Kizil-Koba vessels. Generally, the ceramic complex is a specific phenomenon: it cannot be related to a single known tradition and can be used as the most distinctive ethnological characteristic of the Kizil-Koba culture.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Leskov 1965, 29.

<sup>55</sup> Kris 1981, 13.

<sup>56</sup> Senatorov 1998, 9.

<sup>57</sup> New studies have not supported the attribution of the subterranean houses above the tuff platform near Kizil-Koba cave to the Kizil-Koba culture (Kolotukhin 1996, 26). Although a number of subterranean houses were uncovered by excavations of Tau-Kipchak settlement located in the Zuya river valley, publication of them offers a chronology that is fantastic for the Kizil-Koba culture and lacks pictures of artefacts, so it cannot be used for any interpretation (Makhnyova 1988, 129-34). This was probably the reason why Kolotukhin did not include the material from Tau-Kipchak in his generalising study (Kolotukhin 1996).

<sup>58</sup> For a review of Kizil-Koba ceramics, see Kris 1981, 20-33; Kolotukhin 1990a.



Fig. 8. Kizil-Koba ceramic vessels (displayed in the Central Museum of Taurida) (photograph: author).

3. The finds of tools of flint and other kinds of stone lend the Kizil-Koba culture a certain degree of archaism. Flint insets for sickles, knife-shaped pieces, nuclei, various flakes with retouched edges and stone axes sometimes remain intact from the Neolithic or even Mesolithic period. In spite of that, they are discovered in excavations of almost all the settlements from every stage of the Kizil-Koba culture. Such a set of tools is not typical to any other Early Iron Age culture in the south of Eastern Europe.<sup>59</sup> Further to this, excavations of Kizil-Koba settlements uncover spindle whorls, fine bronze ornaments, arrowheads, clasps for *goryti* and other artefacts (Fig. 11).
4. Kizil-Koba cemeteries are stone cists, often encircled with rectangular fences. The space within the fences was filled with fine stones. Almost all cists were plundered, thus the position of the deceased was recorded only in rare cases; in all such, burials were crouched. Single burials within a cist are extremely rare; Chuyuncha cemetery has double burials; multiple burials are the usual type. The orientation of the dead is not fixed: all directions but western have been found. If there was no more space for new burials in a funeral construction, they removed bones leaving only skulls.

<sup>59</sup> Kris 1981, pls. 6, 7.

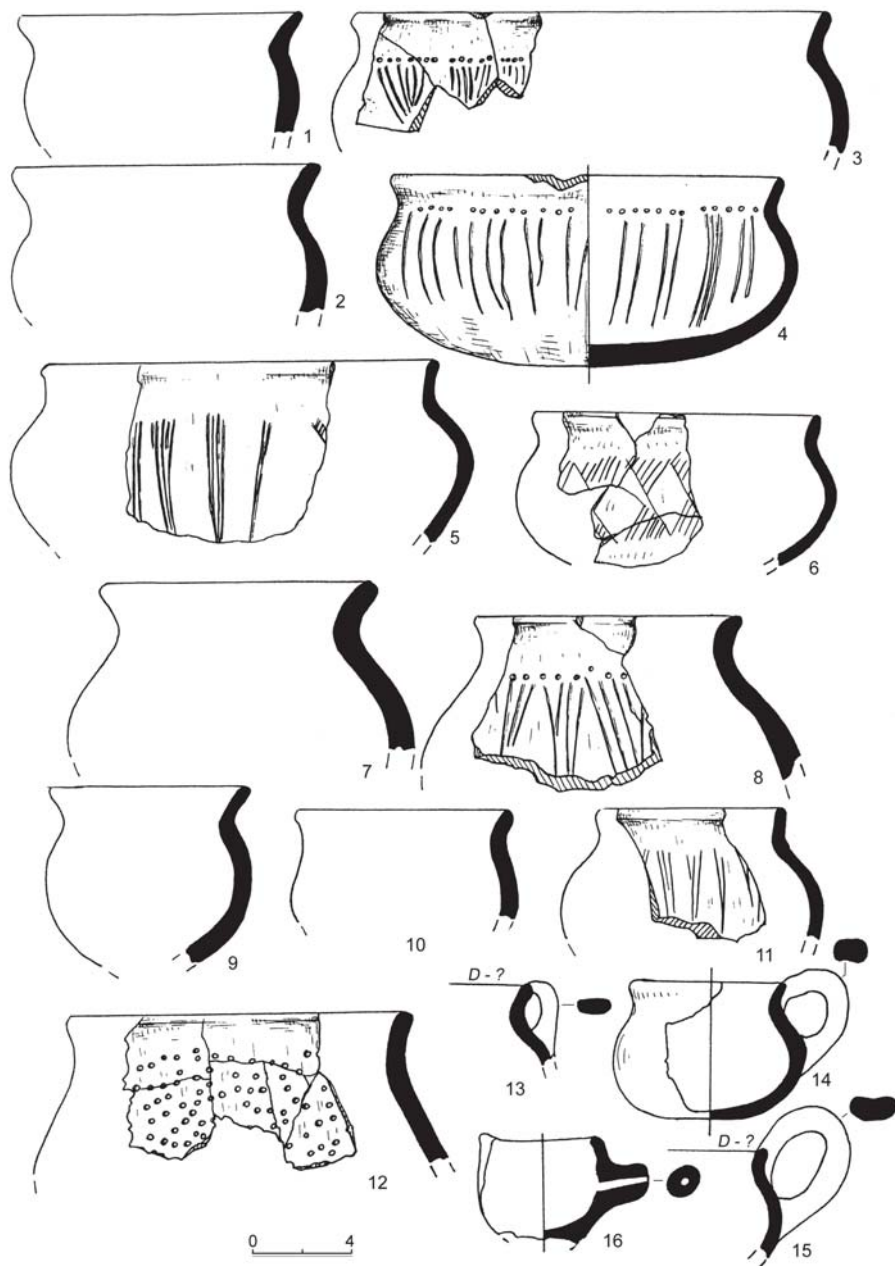


Fig. 9. Ceramic vessels from Shpil settlement  
(after Khrapunov and Vlasov 1995, fig. 6).

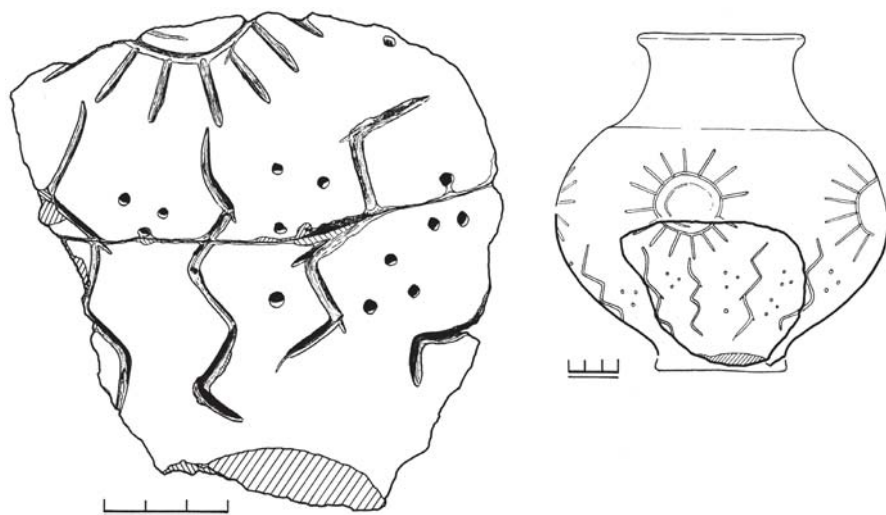


Fig. 10. Vessel from Kizil-Koba settlement. 1 – fragment; 2 – reconstruction (after Kris 1981, pl. 18).

Among the grave-goods, it is worth paying attention to numerous groups of bronze ornaments which are inherent to this culture only. They include neck-rings, different types of temple pendants, earrings, rings, finger-rings, bracelets and badges. Besides that, there are bronze pins, beads, shells, arrowheads, swords, knives, horse-bits, snakestones, pottery and other artefacts. Grave constructions, funeral rites and grave-goods actually make a set of very original features to distinguish the Kizil-Koba culture among all others.<sup>60</sup>

5. All scholars agree that the Kizil-Koba peoples are most likely to have practised mattock farming and pastoralism, based on the topography of settlements, the presence of pit graves and insets for sickles in every settlement, as well as osteological and palaeobotanical finds. They cultivated wheat, barley, kidney beans and peas. Sheep and goats predominated in herds; they also bred cows and a small numbers of pigs. The finds of Kizil-Koba ceramic vessels in many grottoes among the rocks have been interpreted as traces of sites where shepherds stayed when driving the cattle to mountain pastures. In the coastal area, they fished sea molluscs.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> For the general characteristics of Kizil-Koba cemeteries, see Leskov 1965, 50–85; Kris 1981, 38–43; Kolotukhin 1996, 30–34.

<sup>61</sup> Shults 1959, 264; Leskov 1965, 169–70.



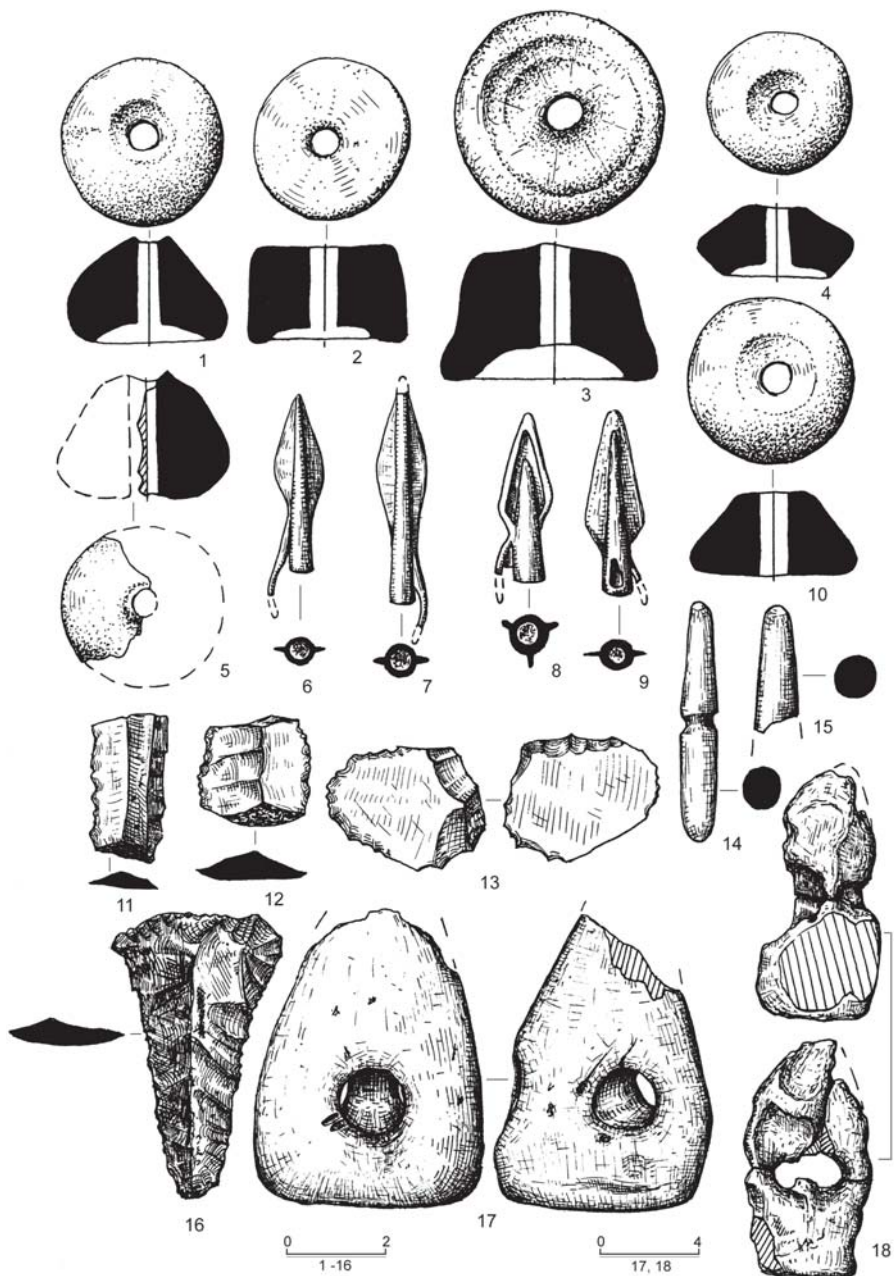


Fig. 11. Finds from Shpil settlement. 1-5, 10 – ceramic spindle whorls; 6-9 – bronze arrow-heads; 11-13, 16 – worked flints; 14-15 – bone clasps for bow-and-arrows cases; 17-18 – clay artefacts (after Khrapunov and Vlasov 1995, fig. 10).

Scholars' attention has always been attracted by the self-sufficient, closed nature of the economy of the local peoples in the foothill area towards Graeco-Roman cities. We have almost no account of trade or other contacts between the population of the Crimean foothills and the Greeks before the 4th century BC. The only category of artefacts of clearly Greek origin is beads, discovered in many cists. In this regard, the Kizil-Koba culture holds a very singular position. Almost all local cultures in the North Pontic area were under noticeable Greek influence. Such a state of affairs changed a little in the 4th century BC. The settlements in the vicinity of the Chersonesian *chora* received goods in amphorae and ceramic tableware rather regularly. A similar situation has been recorded close to Bosporan borders according to the results of the excavations of the Ayvazovskoye settlement. Greek products, and only those transported in amphorae, were still a rarity inland in the 4th century BC.

The excavation of the Shpil settlement stands out from this background: here, 4th-century BC sherds were mass material. The amphora finds from the Shpil settlement actually look like a homogenous assemblage. It is possible, therefore, that the residents of the foothill area received some Greek cargo in amphorae all at once (possibly plunder – though results of excavations of other settlements suggest that such operations were rarely successful).

The Kizil-Koba people possibly maintained constant contact with the Scythians, rather than the Greeks. These contacts are evidenced by the presence of pottery of Scythian shapes in almost every settlement. Horse-bits, cheek-pieces, swords, arrowheads and even clasps for *goryti* from Kizil-Koba sites are absolutely the same as Scythian finds, so they were probably made by the Scythians. However, the funeral rite used such artefacts differently from in the steppe: arrowheads are found in graves as isolated specimens and, with one exception,<sup>62</sup> they do not compose quiver sets (as in Scythian graves). In return it is clear that the Scythians received black-burnished vessels with incised ornamentation from the foothill area.

The finds of Kizil-Koba vessels in steppe *kurgan* burials have often been interpreted as an indicator of a Taurian presence in the Scythian environment.<sup>63</sup> The publications of ceramics with incised ornament from steppe burials<sup>64</sup> can be summarised as follows: Kizil-Koba ceramics appear a) everywhere in the steppe area of the Crimea; b) in all types of burial structures except catacombs; c) throughout the existence of nomadic Scythian culture (they are absent only in the most late burials); d) in graves with other elements of typically Scythian

<sup>62</sup> Kolotukhin 1996, 34.

<sup>63</sup> Olkhovskii 1982, 72–73; 1990, 34–36.

<sup>64</sup> Olkhovskii 1991, 86, 90–93, 141; Kolotukhin 2000, 59–62.

funeral rites; and e) both in poor graves, where it is the only type of burial offering, and in relatively rich burials.

The number of Kizil-Koba vessels in Scythian graves is greater than for any other handmade ware. Far north of the Crimean Peninsula, a small amount has been discovered in the 6th-century BC layers in Berezan and other settlements in the vicinity of Olbia.<sup>65</sup> Kizil-Koba vessels did not penetrate beyond the Crimea from the 5th century BC and onwards.

The distribution of finds shows that the Scythians of the Crimea exchanged ceramics or received them from the Taurians in some other way. Taurian workshops were the main source of handmade pottery for the Scythians. Those peoples able to establish direct contacts with the Taurians were probably the only ones who could obtain incised pottery from the 5th century BC onwards. It did not become a product of inter-tribal exchange among the Scythians, so it did not come out of the Peninsula.

As a rule, Scythian burials with polished ceramics do not possess other features of the Kizil-Koba culture. Consequently, these graves contained burials of the Scythians who received pottery from the Taurians. The study of those burials does not give us an opportunity to draw the conclusion that there was a 'Scythian-Kizil-Koba' people. One can only state that there were connections, probably reflected in trade-exchange between the Scythians and the Taurians.

In this connection, there is a distinctive micro-region consisting of a small part of the Salgir river valley, less than 10 km long, in the foothills, between the south edge of Simferopol and Pionerskoye village.<sup>66</sup> Investigations have uncovered a specific, homogeneous cluster of graves leading scholars to suppose that a small Scythian group penetrated into the foothill area via the Salgir valley in the 6th century BC. These Scythians soon lost some features of their traditional spiritual and material culture under new ecological conditions and in the environment of the Kizil-Koba people who had lived in this area for a long time. It is quite probable that there were inter-ethnic contacts south of present-day Simferopol, with the result that new marginal groups appeared combining the Scythian and the Kizil-Koba elements in their culture.<sup>67</sup>

Some scholars believe that the penetration of Kizil-Koba people into the Scythian environment is recorded by the 6th century BC double burial in Kurgan 5 near Koloski village north of Yevpatoria. One burial was a male in supine position accompanied by arrows; the other, a female on her left side, crouched,

<sup>65</sup> Gavriilyuk and Otreshko 1982, 84–86; Solovyov 1995.

<sup>66</sup> Koltukhov 1999.

<sup>67</sup> Khrapunov 2001, 516.

contained several ornaments and a vessel of Kizil-Koba type.<sup>68</sup> It is possible that a burial with a similar ritual was made in a *kurgan* near Beloglinka village north of Simferopol, but this not clear due to the burial site's having been destroyed.<sup>69</sup>

From the other one can see that the penetration of the Kizil-Koba culture into the steppe is ill-represented in archaeological material. At any rate, it is obvious that the presence of a single Kizil-Koba feature (pottery, for instance) does not permit us to conclude that the people of the Kizil-Koba culture penetrated into the Scythian environment. Likewise, the presence of the Scythian weapons in every Kizil-Koba cemetery does not mean that some Scythians became mountain dwellers. Such finds indicate that there was exchange of necessary goods and that the nomads had not developed ceramic production, while the foothill population had not developed weapon production.

A few words may be said about the spiritual culture of the Kizil-Koba people. Some Crimean caves contained pottery sherds typical of their culture, as well as human and animal bones. There was a stalactite headed by a skull of an animal in Yeni-Sala II cave and images of a human face and a cross on the wall of the main cave. Scholars surmise that the caves housed sanctuaries of a cattle-breeding cult.<sup>70</sup> Actually, it is hard to imagine that cold and wet caves were used in some other way. However, the presence of sherds of vessels from other periods in the same caves leaves open the problem of the chronology of bones and rock images.

Household pits in the Shpil settlement contained a few dozen artefacts of ill-baked clay including anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines (Figs. 12–13). To discover their purpose requires comparison with analogous items uncovered in the Eastern European forest-steppe area and in Thrace.<sup>71</sup> There is no doubt that they were used in the cultic sphere. The archaeological context of the finds in the forest-steppe area suggests that they were related to a hearth cult. All these artefacts were discovered in settlements of people whose economy was based on farming, so it is also possible that clay articles were related to a cult regarding the fertility of land. It is hard to make a more precise interpretation of their purpose, because images of people, animals, balls and sticks allow different interpretations.

Scholars have long discussed the ethnic attribution of the Kizil-Koba culture. First reflections on recently discovered sites led G.A. Bonch-Osmolovskii

<sup>68</sup> Olkhovskii 1982, 72–73, figs. 2b, 5b.

<sup>69</sup> Troitskaya 1957.

<sup>70</sup> Shchepinskii 1963; 1966, 141–46; Lysenko 2003.

<sup>71</sup> Khrapunov and Vlasov 1995, 21–26; 1996–97, 183–84.

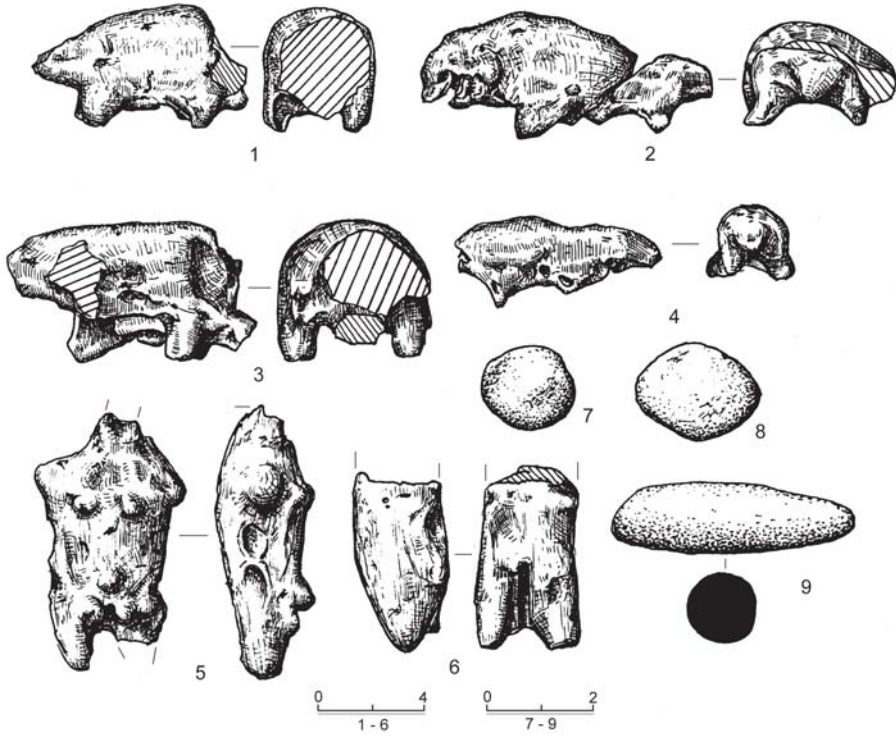


Fig. 12. Clay artefacts from Shpil settlement (after Khrapunov and Vlasov 1995, fig. 11).

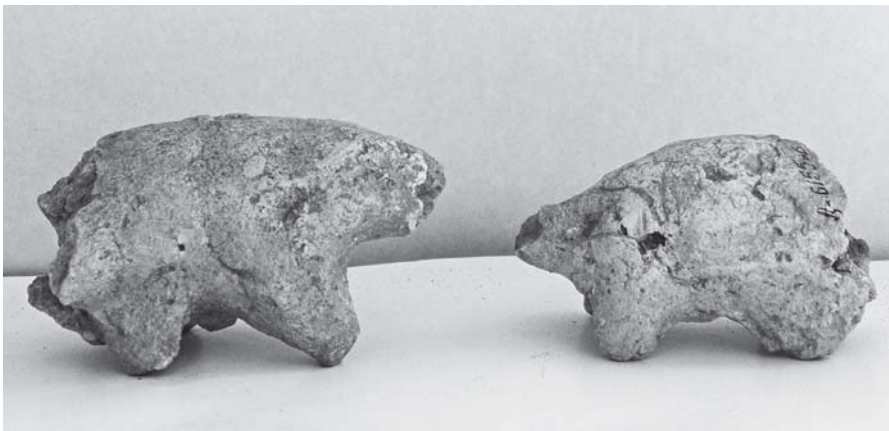


Fig. 13. Zoomorphic clay figurines from Shpil settlement (photograph: author).

to the idea that the Kizil-Koba culture was created by the Taurians.<sup>72</sup> Later on, this concept gained support from many working with the abundant archaeological material. In the 1930s, however, V.N. Dyakov noted that archaeology contradicted written sources and hypothesised that the Kizil-Koba culture had never belonged to the Taurians.<sup>73</sup> This point of view also found its champions, who added more arguments. The discussion of the ethnic attribution of the Kizil-Koba culture has been examined in detail,<sup>74</sup> so here restrict myself to a synopsis of the arguments on both sides.

Scholars who attest a Taurian attribution to it usually base their argument on the following facts:

1. Narrative and epigraphic sources earlier than the 2nd century BC do not mention any people living in the Crimean Mountains and foothills other than the Taurians.
2. Cist cemeteries in the mountains and foothill area have very similar burial constructions and funeral rites.
3. Almost all the types of artefacts discovered by excavations of cist cemeteries on the south coast are also found in the Kizil-Koba settlements and cemeteries.

Champions of the hypothesis that the Kizil-Koba culture was created by some people whose ethnonym did not survive in written sources usually rely on the following arguments:

1. Archaeological hypotheses of the Kizil-Koba people as farmers and cattle-breeders do not correspond to written sources, which call them pirates and plunderers.
2. There are differences between grave constructions and funeral rites in the foothill area, on the one hand, and on the main ridge of the Crimean Mountains and the south coast, on the other.
3. Taurian cemeteries do not contain polished ceramic vessels with incised ornamentation, the most distinctive feature of the Kizil-Koba culture. It is hard to make a comparative analysis of the material from the excavations of Kizil-Koba settlements because there is only one generally accepted Taurian settlement located in Koshka Mountain.

<sup>72</sup> Bonch-Osmolovskii 1926, 93.

<sup>73</sup> Dyakov 1939, 80.

<sup>74</sup> Leskov 1965, 10, 12; Kris 1981, 6–7; Kolotukhin 1985, 34–35; 1987, 6–7; 1990b, 93–94.

There is a 'compromise' suggestion reconciling these positions: that the genesis of the Kizil-Koba culture was connected to the Taurians and another, unidentifiable ethnic component.<sup>75</sup>

Arguments on both sides of this discussion are grounded in hard facts. At first sight, the facts contradict each other and allow for opposite conclusions to be drawn. Although scholarship is now leaning more towards considering the Kizil-Koba culture to be Taurian, supporters of this hypothesis cannot ignore the differences between the sites in the mountains and foothill area, as well as the contradiction between the written tradition and archaeology.

To harmonise all facts in our possession within a single hypothesis, we can apply an 'economic-cultural type', a concept widely used by Russian-speaking ethnologists. This refers to an historically established type of economy and culture not connected to the ethnic features of the people who created this amalgam of features.

The formation of various economic-cultural types depends mainly on the natural-geographical conditions of life and the level of social-economic development. There are many examples whereby the habitat of a people developed certain economic-cultural types and consequently specific features of material culture.<sup>76</sup> From this, social and family ties, pre-state organisation and a common identity expressed in an ethnonym ensue.

Archaeology usually seeks features of material culture; other factors equally important for the life of a people are not recorded as a rule. That is why many scholars consider that the identification of the concept of a people with an economic-cultural type is, in principle impossible. At least, such a coincidence is a relatively rare exception.<sup>77</sup> Even the entire cultural composition rarely corresponds to the limits of a people, let alone individual elements of archaeological culture such as funeral rites or pottery traditions.<sup>78</sup> By contrast, economic-cultural type is by definition inseparable from the culture of this or that area. Thus, archaeological sites, as a composition of remains of ancient culture, often allow one to reconstruct the economic-cultural type of their population.

If one applies these theoretical speculations to the concrete archaeological material under discussion, it leads to the following conclusion. The Taurians were a people shaped by the consolidation of part of the tribes living in the Crimean foothill area in the Late Bronze Age. Initially, they concentrated in the foothill area of the Crimea and practised farming and pastoralism. In the 6th century BC,

<sup>75</sup> Olkhovskii 1982, 76.

<sup>76</sup> Arutyunov 1989, 42–43.

<sup>77</sup> Arutyunov and Khazanov 1979a, 85.

<sup>78</sup> Arutyunov and Khazanov 1979b, 142.

some Taurian groups migrated to the mountains and south coast of the Crimea, and in this environment shaped an economic-cultural type related to transhumance and, clearly, piracy. Differences in their economies and a degree of territorial autonomy resulted in the development of specific features in their material and spiritual culture. Consequently, the 6th- and 5th-century BC Taurians were divided into two sub-ethnic groups corresponding to two economic-cultural types. In the 4th century BC, there was a back flow of the population and a new consolidation of Taurian peoples against the background of settled farming and a cattle-breeding economy.

Taurian migration to the mountains in the south is reliably identified by written and archaeological sources; and archaeology allows one to surmise their migration northwards, to the steppe. Investigations on the Crimean coast of the Sea of Azov and close to Donuzlav Lake discovered cist cemeteries similar in various respects to Taurian monuments.<sup>79</sup>

The Taurians probably lived in Bosporan cities. Their presence is indicated by polished ceramic vessels with incised decoration. Excavations in every Bosporan city uncovers a small number of these in the 6th- and 5th-century BC layers; the largest number was unearthed in Nymphaeum.<sup>80</sup> Excavations here revealed two subterranean houses and related pits from the 6th century BC. The quantity of the Kizil-Koba pottery from them is a slightly smaller than of amphora sherds and much greater than that of sherds of other vessels. There were also flint tools.<sup>81</sup> The composition of finds indicates that the Nymphaeum pit-houses were populated by Taurians, the people of the Kizil-Koba culture. The Taurians' status in Bosporan cities remains obscure. The discovery in Panticapaeum (*CIRB* 114) of a gravestone with an epitaph in verse for a Taurian with a Greek name, Tichonus, is evidence that at least some of them became members of the civic community. In the circumstances of a Greek city, the Taurians were obviously assimilated by the Greeks and lost their ethnic specificity.

The problem posed by the presence of Taurian settlements in places where Greek cities were erected later remains unsolved. There is no case where the Kizil-Koba cultural layer was reliably discovered below the earliest Greek layer. Therefore, although future discoveries cannot be ruled out, for now we have to acknowledge that the Taurians came to Greek cities that already existed.

In the north-western Crimea developments were probably similar to those in the Cimmerian Bosphorus. There are no Kizil-Koba settlements, though polished ceramics with incised ornamentation have been excavated in almost all Greek

<sup>79</sup> Khrapunov 2004, 59–60; 2012, 81–82.

<sup>80</sup> Kastanayan 1981, 12–28; Senatorov 2005; 2006; 2007.

<sup>81</sup> Butjagin 1997, 64, 66–67.



settlements.<sup>82</sup> They are relatively numerous in Kerkititis, where there were 219 sherds from 63-65 vessels. Ceramics of interest have been excavated from all layers of the ancient city, but mainly from early deposits dated from the 5th to the mid-4th century BC.<sup>83</sup> In layers of the late 4th to the first half of the 2nd century BC in the Tarpanchi settlement, handmade ceramics (of Scythian and Kizil-Koba types) constitutes 3-4% of the total number of pottery sherds. A.N. Shcheglov made an interesting observation that the Kizil-Koba people used crushed sea shells to bind vessels. Hence, these vessels were produced on site and were not transported from, for example, the foothill area.<sup>84</sup> Kizil-Koba ceramics were also found in the excavation of a farmhouse from the late 4th and early 3rd centuries BC in the Panskoye I settlement. It differs from the more common Scythian vessels both morphologically and technologically.<sup>85</sup> No other feature of the Kizil-Koba culture was discovered in excavations of Greek settlements in the north-western Crimea. Consequently, we can only state that a small number of Taurians lived in the Greek settlements of this region.

The Taurians' relations with Chersonesos developed in a special way. The excavations of the city uncovered an insignificant/small number of Kizil-Koba ceramics; according to Y.Y. Rogov's data, it concentrated mainly in the earliest layers accumulated before the Dorian colonisation of the south-western Crimea.<sup>86</sup> S.N. Senatorov originally counted only 14 Kizil-Koba sherds uncovered by the excavations of Chersonesos.<sup>87</sup> Later, he enlarged his database with 103 fragments from layers of the late 6th to the first half of the 5th century BC and from the second half of the 5th to the first half of the 4th century BC.<sup>88</sup> Chersonesian ceramics already published include both typical Kizil-Koba and Scythian shapes. Many fragments cannot be interpreted other than that they are handmade because they are so small. Therefore, one would characterise Senatorov's ceramic collection in general as handmade or local rather than the Kizil-Koba. However, joint finds of Scythian and Kizil-Koba vessels are normal for the settlements in the area of the Kizil-Koba culture. In general, the small amount of material in our possession gives the impression that there was a Kizil-Koba

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Latysheva 1997; Belovintseva and Popova 2007.

<sup>83</sup> Kutaysov 2007; Kravchenko 2009b.

<sup>84</sup> Shcheglov 1973, 10–11.

<sup>85</sup> Stolba 2002, 188. The results of the excavations in Panskoye are also interesting because there was a layer from the Hellenistic period containing fragments of vessels decorated with separated cordons and ceramics with incised ornamentation (Stolba 2002, 184, pl. 123.D.68, 124.D.69–70). As already mentioned, the latter ornamentation technique was until recently considered a chronological characteristic feature of Kizil-Koba ceramics from the pre-Scythian period.

<sup>86</sup> Rogov 1999, 123.

<sup>87</sup> Senatorov 2000.

<sup>88</sup> Senatorov 2003.

settlement on the site of Chersonesos (Senatorov also supposed that). When the city was founded, the people of the Kizil-Koba culture continued to live in it, probably for a very short time. There is no other account concerning the Taurian presence in Chersonesos.<sup>89</sup>

Outside the city, the Chersonesians pushed the Taurians off the Heracleean Peninsula, partly subordinating and enslaving them, according to the Dorian colonisation model.<sup>90</sup> However, the latter hypothesis is built on still-unpublished material from the investigation of Taurian settlements in the vicinity of Chersonesos: it is just a logical speculation, with no archaeological data behind it.

The Taurians continued to live, and even used Greek vessels, in the immediate vicinity of the Heracleean Peninsula, which was divided into land plots by the Chersonesians. However, the nature of their relations with Chersonesos still remains unknown. This is underlined by the following fact: one of the few excavated settlements on the border of the Chersonesian *chora* contained many sherds of amphorae but none of them was manufactured in Chersonesos.<sup>91</sup>

The coincidence of names of their major goddesses hints at some relations between Chersonesos and the Taurians. Scholars have rightly underlined the absence of any local features in Chersonesos' patroness Parthenos, who was a hypostasis of Artemis.<sup>92</sup> However, the unique coincidence of names of female deities of two neighbouring peoples could hardly be an accident. A Taurian deity appeared well before Dorian Chersonesos was established, so we can suppose that the honouring of Parthenus among the Greeks, supplanting the name of Artemis by this *epiclesis*, happened because of Taurian influence. Given that the Taurian virgin was definitely alien to the Greeks, even receiving Greeks in sacrifice, while the cult of Chersonesos' virgin was absolutely Hellenic, I proffer the following speculation. Fate had driven the Greeks to be the neighbours of local peoples who killed their fellows in honour of the blood-thirsty goddess, so the Greeks intentionally called their protector-deity the same as the Taurian one. One of the most important functions of their Parthenos was to protect the

<sup>89</sup> Excavations in the north area of ancient Chersonesos uncovered a cemetery with graves without offerings or with very poor burials. Almost half of the dead were placed in graves in crouched position, hence many scholars supposed that this cemetery was created by Taurians who lived in Chersonesos. V.I. Kadeev has made careful analysis of every part of the funeral rite and has convincingly proved that the cemetery belonged to the Greeks (Kadeev 1973). A small number of crouched burials have been uncovered in many Graeco-Roman cities. Almost none of them contains grave-goods, so there is no background to determine the chronology and ethnicity of the deceased. The crouched position may signify low social status (see for example Grach 1981, 265). There is a hypothesis that crouched burials belong to the Carians who migrated to the northern Black Sea area with the Greeks (Otkupshchikov 2001).

<sup>90</sup> Shcheglov 1981, 212–15; Danilenko 1993, 235–38.

<sup>91</sup> Senatorov 1998, 10.

<sup>92</sup> Rusyaeva and Rusyaeva 1999, with bibliography.

Chersonesians from the local threat, so she had to demonstrate her power and dominance over the alien Taurian virgin of the same name. According to some inscriptions from the Hellenistic period (*CIRB* 343, 352) and works by the historian Syriacus that have not survived (*IOSPE* I<sup>2</sup> 344), Parthenos regularly saved the Chersonesians, so it seems they were not disappointed in their forefathers' choice. The foregoing implies that, in contrast to other northern Black Sea *poleis*, Chersonesos was closed to the Taurians, as well as to other locals.

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The Kizil-Koba culture ceased to exist no later than the 3rd century BC. Logically, its disappearance is related to the general Black Sea crises of the early third century BC.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, we have virtually lost all archaeological sources for the history of the Taurians. However, it does not mean that they ceased to exist as a people. It has already been noted that the Taurians are mentioned in absolutely reliable inscriptions from Bosphorus and Chersonesos from the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD, as well as by Tacitus in relation to the events of AD 49. The Bosphorans and Chersonesians must have known their enemies and neighbours well; from inscriptions it can be seen that they still distinguished the Taurians and Scythians in the 2nd century AD.

From the 1st century AD onwards, however, narrative and epigraphic sources (Pliny the Elder was the first) used a new ethnonym of 'Tauro-Scythians' or 'Scytho-Taurians' for the Crimean population.<sup>94</sup> Its appearance most likely reflected a process of integration of the two peoples. In the last centuries BC and the first centuries AD, the Crimean foothill area housed numerous Late Scythian settlements, though no contemporary site in the mountains has been identified; thus, the Taurians must have been among those settlements' residents. The assimilation that gave birth to the artificial Tauro-Scythian ethnonym developed gradually. The Bosphorans and even the Romans in Chersonesos, who conducted wars with their neighbours, still distinguished them from each other. For writers who lived far from the Crimea in the first centuries AD, the Taurians existed no more, only Tauro-Scythians survived. This process could have started in the 2nd century BC, when the sources began to call the Taurians a 'Scythian tribe'.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Shcheglov 1998, 69–70.

<sup>94</sup> Solomonik 1962a.

<sup>95</sup> Stolba 1993, 57.

One might expect that the reconstruction of the ethnic history of the Crimea in the first centuries AD according to written sources would be confirmed by material excavated from the Late Scythian sites. However, this has been fulfilled only to a small extent. Traces of a Taurian presence as isolated finds of ceramics, worked stones and ornaments are recorded in excavations of many Late Scythian sites. No Kizil-Koba layer was found, so it is unclear whether the Taurians remained in their settlements when the Scythians came or if the Scythians populated areas already left by the Taurians.<sup>96</sup>

V.P. Vlasov has analysed handmade vessels from Late Scythian settlements and cemeteries and concluded that in early layers and graves dating from the second half of the 3rd to the first half of the 1st century BC, a considerable percentage of finds consists of ceramics inheriting the Taurian tradition. Their number declined considerably after the middle of the 1st century BC and they completely disappeared in the 1st century AD,<sup>97</sup> thus providing further support for the conclusion made in contradiction to written sources: that the Taurians were gradually assimilated by the Scythians.

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<sup>96</sup> Khrapunov 1991, 4–5.

<sup>97</sup> Vlasov 1999, 9–12.

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