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INVESTIGATIONS OF THE SITE OF
THE ANCIENT TOWN OF KALOS LIMEN.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF
2019 AND EXCAVATIONS OF 2021–2022

Kalos Limen (“Beautiful Harbor”) was the name of the small ancient town founded by Greek colonists on the shores of northwestern Crimea in the first quarter of the 4th century BC.¹ The ancient town is located on the rocky shore of Uzkaja Bay, protruding westward into Karkinitzky Bay of the Black Sea. The necropolis of Kalos Limen is traditionally divided into three groups of mounds, the largest of which is located to the east and southeast of the town. The second group, lost to science as a result of the residential development of the 1970s, was located on a cape south of Beautiful Harbor. The third mound group follows the watershed to the north of the town and ends with a rocky outcrop facing Uzkaya Bay.²

Starting at the end of the third quarter of the 4th century BC, Kalos Limen was part of a powerful state centered in the ancient city of Chersonesos. Its territory covered the lands along the western and northwestern Crimean coast of the Black Sea.³ As a result of the intensification of the Scythian military onslaught in the middle of the 2nd century BC, Beautiful Harbor, despite its strategic importance, was surrendered to enemies, along with many other settlements in the Chersonesos chora. From that moment on, with the exception of a short period (from the last decade of the 2nd century BC to the first half of the 1st century AD) of the town’s recapture by the Chersonesians with the military support of Pontic king Mithridates VI Eupator, a late Scythian settlement arose here that existed until the end of the first half of the 2nd century AD.⁴

¹ Smekalova–Kutajsov 2017 [Т. Н. Смекалова, В. А. Кутайсов, “Материалы к археологической карте Крыма”, in: *Археологические атласы Северного Причерноморья*, Вып. XVIII, т. 2], 248–249; Uzhentsev 2006 [В. Б. Уженцев, *Эллины и варвары Прекрасной Гавани (Калос Лимен в IV в. до н. э. – II в. н. э.)*], 4.

² Smekalova–Kutajsov 2017, 248–256.

³ Shcheglov 1976a [А. Н. Щеглов, *Полис и хора*], 14–26.

⁴ Uzhentsev 2006, 19–35.

The history of the investigations of the site of the ancient town of Kalos Limen, its necropolis, and the surrounding area spans more than a century and a half,⁵ albeit with interruptions. Despite the undeniable merits of many researchers in the study of these archaeological sites,⁶ the scope for further research remains enormous.

In the 2019 season, the State Hermitage expedition began archaeological research on the territory of the ancient town of Kalos Limen, as well as in the adjacent territory where the nearby chora and necropolis of Beautiful Harbor are located. Extensive surveys were carried out: an aerial photographic survey by means of a drone (Fig. 1), a 3D model, and an orthophotomap (Fig. 2) were compiled, on the basis of which a new topographic plan of the area was constructed. Together with visual surveys involving the collection of surface finds and a description

⁵ Shmakov 1844 [А. И. Шмаков, “Пирамидки из глины, найденные при Акмечетской бухте”, in: *Заметки Одесского общества Истории и Древности*], 633–635; Shul'ts 1941 [П. Н. Шульц, “Евпаторийский район”, in: *Археологические исследования в РСФСР. 1934–1936 гг.*], 265–277; Grinevich 1949 [К. Э. Гриневич, “Городище Прекрасная Гавань в свете новейших данных”, *ВДИ*], 156–162; Nalivkina 1957 [М. А. Наливкина, “Раскопки Керкинитиды и Калос Лимена 1948–1952”, in: *История и археология древнего Крыма*], 264–281; Bernhard 1961, 3–10; Shcheglov 1967 [А. Н. Щеглов, “Исследование сельской округи Калос Лимена”, *Советская археология*], 234–256; Shcheglov 1976b [А. Н. Щеглов, “Жилой дом эллинистического Калос-Лимена”, in: *Художественная культура и археология античного мира*], 232–238; Uzhentsev 2006; Kutajsov 2011 [В. А. Кутайсов, *Курганный некрополь Калос Лимена*]; Smekalova 2015 [Т. Н. Смекалова, “Усадьба в бухте Ветреной”, in: *Античные памятники Тарханкута: Альбом-каталог музейных экспонатов из фондов ГБУРК ИАМЗ “Калос Лимен”*], 141–142; Denisenko–Lantsov 2017 [Ю. А. Денисенко, С. Б. Ланцов, “Краткий обзор полевого археологического изучения территории Тарханкутского полуострова в границах современного Черноморского района Республики Крым”, in: *Археология Северо-Западного Крыма. Материалы III Международной научно-практической конференции, посвященной 20-летию создания заповедника “Калос Лимен” и 30-летию открытий Черноморского историко-краеведческого музея*], 66–79; Kutajsov–Smekalova 2017 [В. А. Кутайсов, Т. Н. Смекалова, “Античная усадьба у стен Калос Лимена”, in: *Археология Северо-Западного Крыма. Материалы III Международной научно-практической конференции, посвященной 20-летию создания заповедника “Калос Лимен” и 30-летию открытий Черноморского историко-краеведческого музея*], 92–101, and others.

⁶ I would especially like to note the contribution of the prematurely deceased, well-known Crimean archaeologist V. A. Kutaisov and his student and colleague V. B. Uzhentsev.



Fig. 1. Aerial photographic survey by means of a drone. Kalos Limen, 2019.



Fig. 2. Fragment of the orthophoto map of Kalos Limen.

of the current state of the town, necropolis, and chora, this formed the basis for planning measures to ensure the preservation of archaeological sites. Determining the boundaries of the cultural layers of the ancient town of Kalos Limen as a result of comprehensive research, clarifying the boundaries of old excavations for drawing up a general plan, and mapping the mounds in the necropolis are important results of the season that contribute to solving a number of scientific and rescue tasks. In addition, a number of remarkable finds were made dating back to the 4th century BC – 2nd century AD (Fig. 3), as well as to the period of the Great Patriotic War.

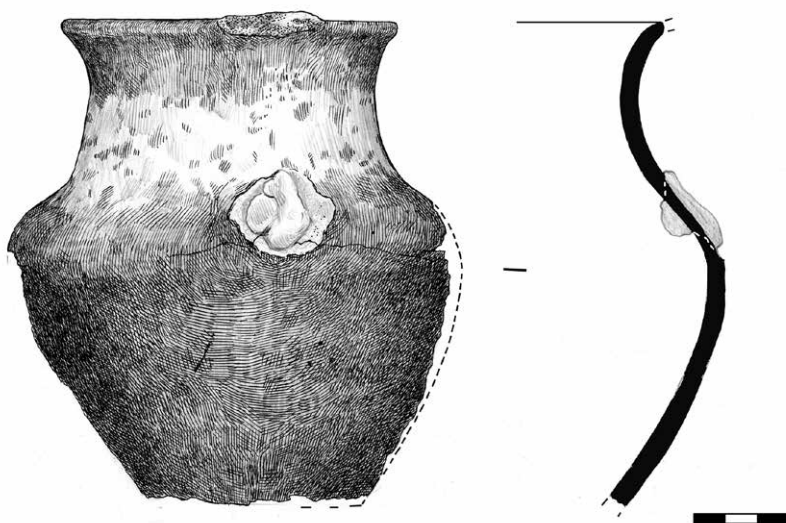


Fig. 3. Fragmented pot with a repair in the form of a lead bracket in place of the broken handle, from the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD (no. KL-2019.34-1).

Based on the results of the surveys described above, which showed the scientific promise of the site, a new excavation with a total area of 100 square meters was laid out in 2021 in the south of Kalos Limen. The main aim of the work was to conduct excavations in a barely studied part of the ancient town – directly in its residential sector, near the defensive line. Undoubtedly, the discovery of a large multi-component residential complex that existed with traceable alterations from the first quarter of the 4th century BC to the first third of the 3rd century BC can be considered a great success (Fig. 4). In 2022, the excavation of the complex was continued from the west, on an extension of 50 square meters.

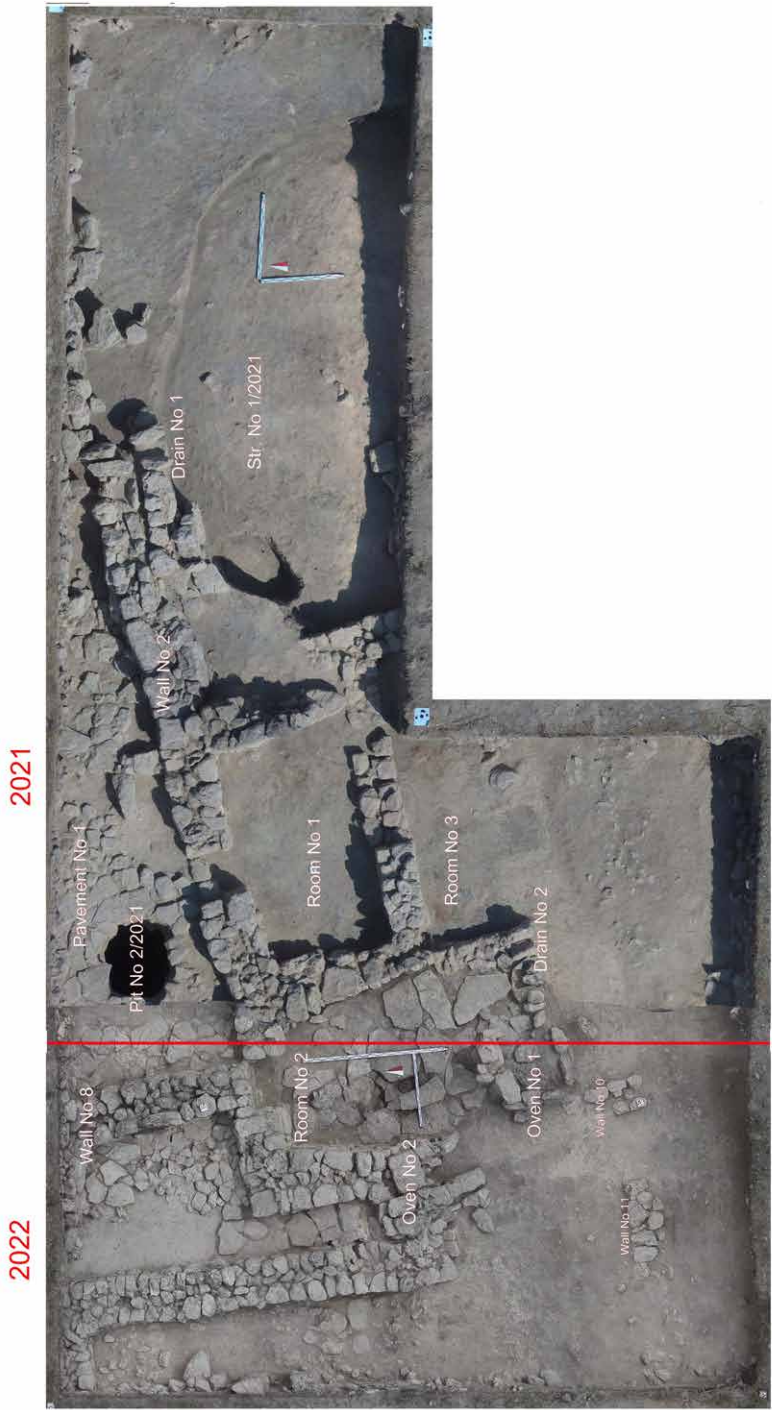


Fig. 4. The orthophoto plan of the excavations of 2021–2022.

1. Structures of the First to Early Third Quarter of the 4th Century BC (Stratigraphic Horizon A⁷)

The earliest period in which the residential complex functioned was discovered in the southwest of square no. 2 (Fig. 4). Here, we traced masonry no. 4 and the first construction horizon of masonry no. 6 form the southeastern corner of room no. 1 and the northeastern corner of room no. 3 at the first stage that we traced of their construction. Also, it is quite possible that the fragmented masonry no. 10 and no. 11 in the southeast of square no. 6 can be attributed to this period. None of the listed walls have been fully explored; in part, they lie deeper than the level opened in the 2021–2022 seasons.

It is worth noting some finds from the upper layers of the ash dump (in the east of the excavation), which was probably formed as a result of the destruction of the complex after the first stage of its existence. Discovered there were some remarkable finds from the 4th century BC: three fragments of vessels with stamped ornament and graffiti (Fig. 5. 1–3).

2. Structures of the End of the Third Quarter of the 4th Century BC to the First Third of the 3rd Century BC (Stratigraphic Horizons B1–3⁸)

Room no. 1 (Fig. 4) within the large residential complex was rebuilt at the end of the third quarter of the 4th century BC and existed with alterations until the first third of the 3rd century BC. The southeastern corner of the room under consideration has not been preserved. The room's area is 5.2 square meters. The room is bounded on the north by masonry no. 2, separating it from the courtyard. The threshold of the doorway leading to the courtyard has been preserved. Masonry no. 2 continues beyond the borders of room no. 1 to the west and east. The section of masonry no. 2 from the northeastern corner of room no. 1 to drain no. 1, which ends the wall from the east, can be considered as belonging to the next construction period.

Only the northern part remains of room no. 3 to the south of room no. 1. To the west of room no. 1 was room no. 2 (Fig. 4). On the north, the room was separated from the courtyard by wall no. 2 with a revealed threshold. In the northwestern part of the room, two ovens were discovered. The ovens are oriented at right angles to each other. Unfortunately, the

⁷ Uzhentsev 2006, 21–23.

⁸ Uzhentsev 2006, 23–27.

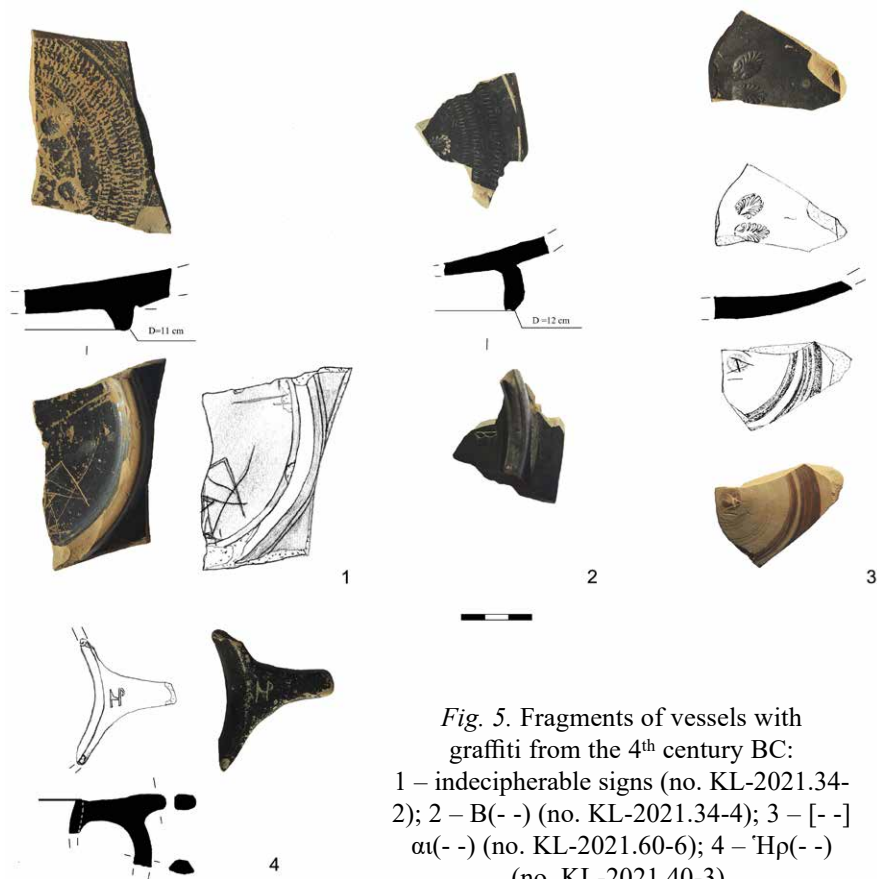


Fig. 5. Fragments of vessels with graffiti from the 4th century BC:

1 – indecipherable signs (no. KL-2021.34-2); 2 – B(- -) (no. KL-2021.34-4); 3 – [- -] α(- -) (no. KL-2021.60-6); 4 – Ηρ(- -) (no. KL-2021.40-3).

southwestern corner of the room has not been preserved due to a modern trench on square no. 6. There is also an assumption that the southwestern corner of the room did not exist and that the ovens could be approached from the outside. The total open area of the room is 7.8 square meters.

There the Chersonesos fabricant stamp ΣΕ (Fig. 6. 1) was found in the destruction layer inside room no. 2 above pavement no. 3, which covered the floor. A similar stamp was found in combination with the names of the astynomos Aeschines⁹ and Choreios,¹⁰ belonging to group I-B according

⁹ Brashinsky1980 [И. Б. Брашинский, *Греческий керамический импорт на Нижнем Дону в 5–3 вв. до н. э.*], no. 760.

¹⁰ Monakhov 1999 [С. Ю. Монахов, *Греческие амфоры в Причерноморье: комплексы керамической тары VII–II вв. до н. э.*], 489.

to the classification of V. I. Katz, and dates back to 304–295 BC.¹¹ As we shall see, the date coincides with the period of use of the latest stamp from the backfill of pit no. 2/2021.

The residential complex with pavement no. 1 (Fig. 4) had a courtyard, north of wall no. 2. The courtyard area was discovered to have an area of about 16.5 square meters. The pavement is covered with masonry no. 8 of the late Scythian period and is damaged in its western part. Pit no. 2/2021 is lower than the level of pavement no. 1, reaches a depth of 1.93 m, and is pear-shaped in cross-section. Numerous finds were discovered in the context, including the bones of a young wild boar. Of particular note are the finds of stamped material: a fragment of a handle of an amphora with an unclear stamp (Fig. 6. 3), a fragment of a handle of a Chersonesos amphora (Fig. 6. 2) with a broken stamp, presumably of the astynomos Philippos,¹² which belongs to group I-B according to the classification of V. I. Katz – 304–295 BC,¹³ and a fragment of the neck and handle of a Chersonesos amphora (Fig. 6. 4) with the stamp of the astynomos Telamon,¹⁴ belonging to group I-B according to V. I. Katz – 316–305 BC.¹⁵

In the northwestern part of square no. 1, pavement no. 2 was identified. It has been partially preserved over an area of 2.8 square meters. Probably its construction belongs to the same period as pavement no. 1. Pavement no. 2 was dismantled due to its fragmentary preservation and to enable the subsequent study of the underlying ash layers. When removing the pavement, a Chersonesos coin was found. On its obverse on the right is a quadriga; a woman with a torch stands in the chariot. On the reverse: a naked kneeling warrior with a shield and a spear to the left. This numismatic find dates back to 350–330 BC.¹⁶

Structure no. 1/2021 is a dugout, or, more likely, a utility reservoir (Fig. 4). The presence of drain no. 1 above this reservoir and emptying directly into it, testifies in favor of the latter version. The complex was

¹¹ Katz 2007 [В. И. Кац, “Греческие керамические клейма эпохи классики и эллинизма (опыт комплексного изучения)”, in: *Боспорские исследования*], 442. Appendix X.

¹² Monakhov 1999, Tab. 216. 2.

¹³ Katz 2007, 442. Appendix X.

¹⁴ Katz 1994 [В. И. Кац, *Керамические клейма Херсонеса Таврического. Каталог-определитель*], Tab. XCVII no. 1–118.1–3.

¹⁵ Katz 2007, 442. Appendix X.

¹⁶ Anokhin 1977 [В. А. Анохин, *Монетное дело Херсонеса, IV в. до н. э. – XII н. э.*], 136 no. 35, 36.

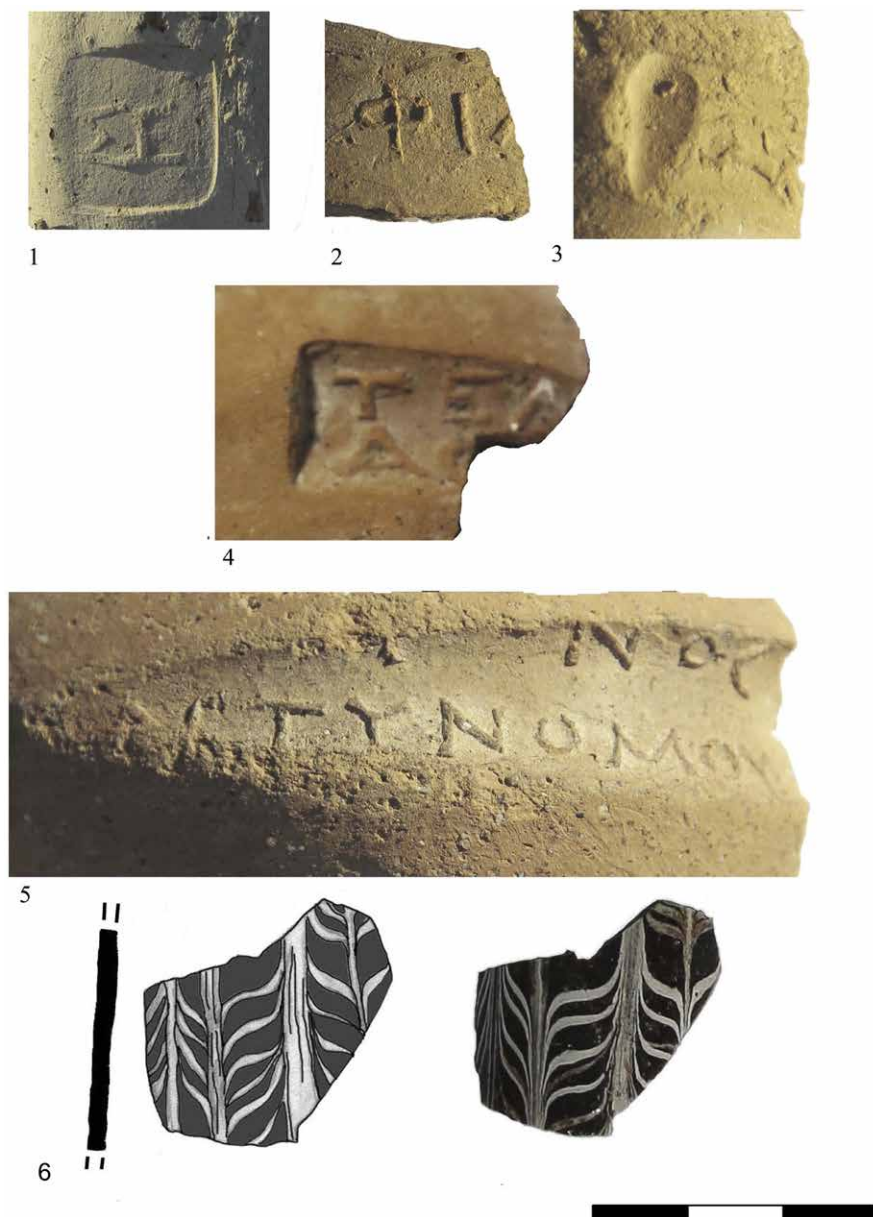


Fig. 6. Finds from the excavations of the Hellenistic complex. Stamps: 1 – Στε(-) retrograde, 304–295 BC (no. KL-2021.75-16); 2 – Φι[-], 304–295 BC (no. KL-2021.56-14); 3 – indecipherable stamp (no. KL-2021.56-13); 4 – Τελ[αμῶνος] | ἀσ[τυνόμου], 316–305 BC (no. KL-2021.56-141); 5 – [-]νος | ἀστυνόμου (no. KL-2021.23-9). 6 – fragment of glass vessel, from the turn of the 4th to the 3rd century BC (no. KL-2021.65-1).

explored in the south of squares 1 and 2 and goes into the southern side of the excavation. The diameter of the round pit is 7.11 m, and the depth reaches 0.85 m. The difference in altitude in the relief before the start of work in this place reached 1.08 m. The extensive depression was actively used as a garbage dump, starting from the late Scythian period of the existence of Kalos Limen and ending in the present day. One of the most memorable finds of the season, originating from the mixed layers of this complex, can be called a fragment of a glass vessel (Fig. 6. 6) from the turn of the 4th–3rd centuries BC,¹⁷ a rare import from the Eastern Mediterranean or Italy in this region.

The bottom of the complex was covered with brown loam with the inclusion of ceramic material from the 4th century BC. Apparently, this layer was the only one formed as a result of the direct use of the reservoir. Among other finds, a handle of a Chersonesos amphora was found here with a broken stamp (Fig. 6. 5), presumably belonging to the astynomos Pasion¹⁸ of group I-B, according to the classification of V. I. Katz – 316–305 BC.¹⁹ In addition, worth noting is the find of a fragment of a kantharos²⁰ from the second half of the 4th century BC with graffito HP at the upper attachment of the handle (Fig. 5. 4).

In conclusion, three seasons of work by the State Hermitage expedition at Kalos Limen have achieved significant scientific results. Extensive archaeological surveys and excavations were carried out, uncovering a Hellenistic residential complex. The discovered constructions from the residential structure are as follows: three living rooms, two ovens, a courtyard with stone pavement and a pit, a stone pavement, two building masonries that separated the courtyard from the other constructions, and half of a dugout, or most probably, a reservoir for household needs.

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¹⁷ Zhizhina–Khodza 2010 [Н. К. Жижина, Е. Н. Ходза (ред.), *Стеклянная феерия. Античное стекло в Эрмитаже. Каталог выставки*], 42 no. 7.

¹⁸ Katz 1994. Table XXXIX. no. 1–93.5–8.

¹⁹ Katz 2007, 442. Appendix X.

²⁰ Sparkes–Talcott 1970, 287 Pl. 29 Cat. 712.

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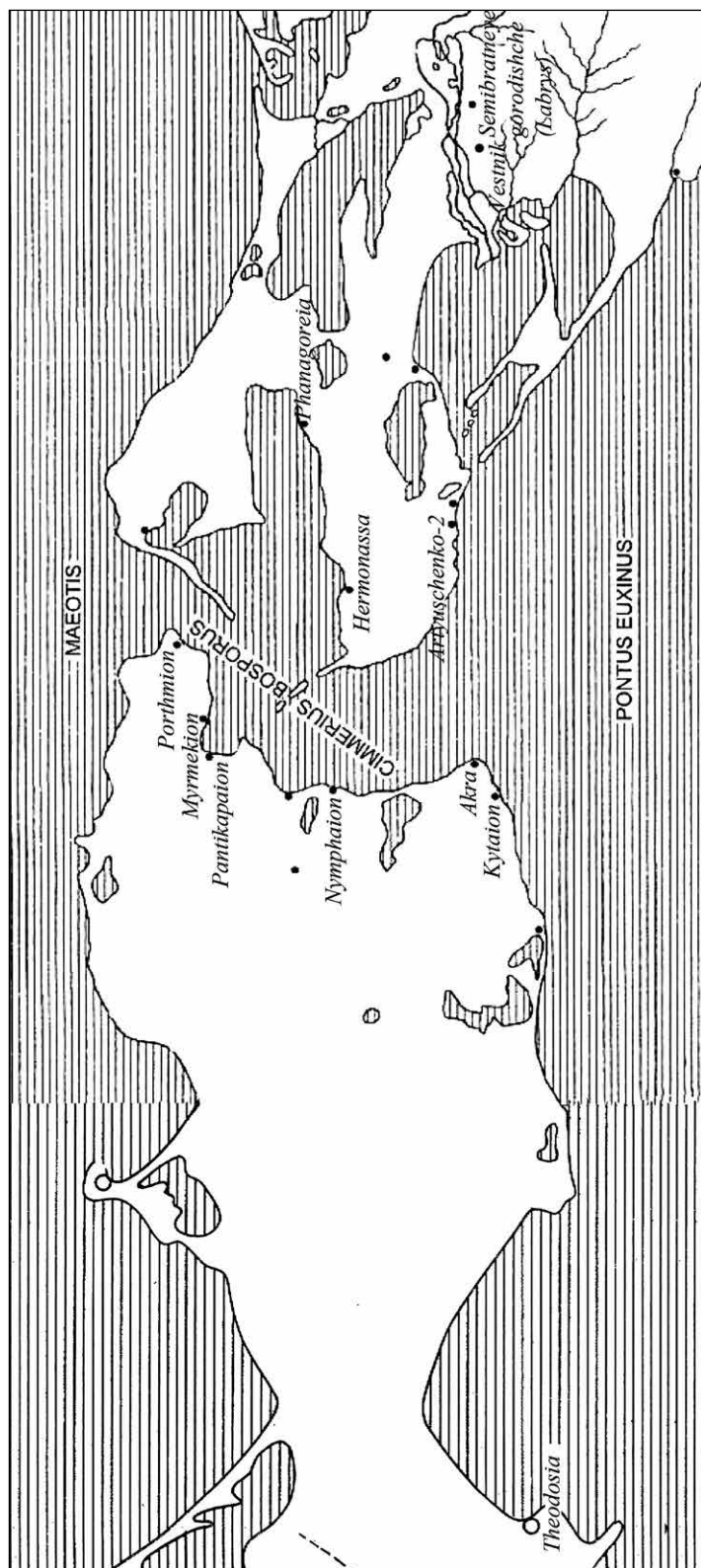
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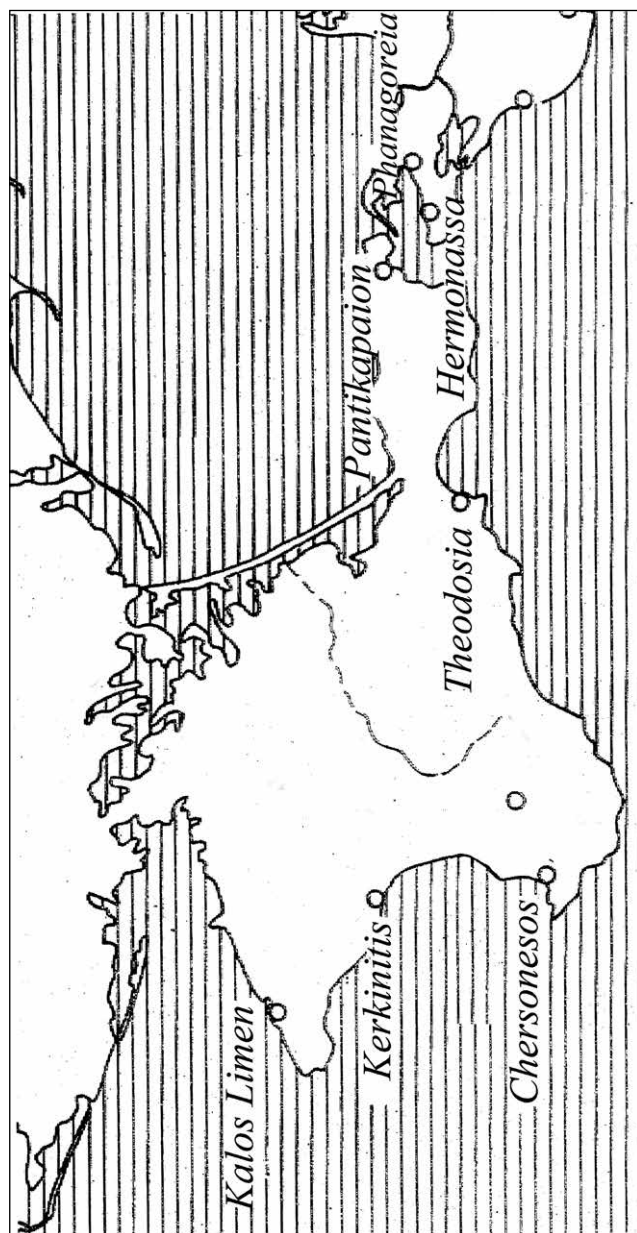
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In 2019, the archaeological mission of the State Hermitage Museum carried out an extensive archaeological survey on the site of the ancient town of Kalos Limen and on its necropolis and chora. As a result of the survey, excavations were conducted at Kalos Limen during the seasons of 2021–2022. These excavations led to the discovery of a large residential complex, which existed with some modifications from the early 4th century BC to the first third of the 3rd century BC. The residential structure was destroyed in the first third of the 3rd century BC, which should be associated with the nomads' attack at the chora of Chersonesos. The ruins of the residential structure apparently have never been restored. Partly it was turned into a dump in antiquity.

В 2019 году силами экспедиции Государственного Эрмитажа были проведены масштабные археологические разведки на городище Калос Лимен, а также его некрополе и близлежащей хоре. По результатам разведок, в сезонах 2021–2022 гг. на городище Калос Лимен произведены раскопки, результатом которых стало обнаружение крупного жилого комплекса, просуществовавшего с некоторыми перестройками с первой четверти IV в. до н. э. до первой трети III в. до н. э. Эллинистический жилой комплекс, судя по клейменому амфорному материалу, погибает в первой трети III в. до н. э., что связано с нападением номадов на хору Херсонеса Таврического. Руины жилого комплекса, по-видимому, не были восстановлены, часть его превратилась в свалку еще в древности.

ARCHAEOLOGICA





CONSPECTUS

ARCHAEOLOGICA

ANNA EREMEEVA

- Investigations of the Site of the Ancient Town of Kalos Limen.
Archaeological Survey of 2019 and Excavations of 2021–2022 8

NATALIA SOLOVYOVA, SERGEY SOLOVYEV, VIKTOR VAKHONEEV,
ANNA POKROVSKAYA, YAN NIZOV

- The Southern Suburb of Tauric Chersonesos 20

MARIA AKHMADEEVA

- Archaeological Research on the Closest Suburban Area of Ancient
Theodosia. Investigations of the Theodosian Archaeological Expedition
of the State Hermitage Museum in 2019–2022 45

VLADIMIR KHRSHANOVSKIY

- Excavations of Kytaiion's Southwestern Suburb in 2019–2022 52

SERGEY SOLOVYEV, VIKTOR VAKHONEEV

- Archaeological Research on the Ancient City Site of Akra
in Eastern Crimea 62

NADEZHDA NOVOSELOVA, OLGA SOKOLOVA

- Archaeological Investigations of the State Hermitage Museum at the Site
of Nymphaion in 2019 and 2021 73

ALEXANDER BUTYAGIN, VLADIMIR KOLOSOV, ANASTASIYA GIBLOVA,
NADEZHDA MILIKHINA

- Excavations at Myrmekion in 2019–2023 81

MARINA VAKHTINA, SERGEY SOLOVYEV, VIKTOR VAKHONEEV,
EKATERINA CHETVERKINA

Rescue Excavations at the Parthenion City Site in 2020 90

SERGEY KASHAEV

Excavations at the Necropolis of the Artyushchenko-2 Site
in 2019–2023 105

DMITRY CHISTOV

Investigations of Vestnik-1 Site in 2021–2023 119

EPIGRAPHICA

YURI BELIK, NINA KUCHEREVSKAYA, NATALIA PAVLICHENKO

Dedication to Pan from the Pantikapaion Suburbs 133

NINA ALMAZOVA, DENIS KEYER, NATALIA PAVLICHENKO,
ALEXANDER VERLINSKY

Metrical Epitaphs from the Southern Suburb of Tauric Chersonesos 149

Keywords 166