

# ARCHAIC EAST GREEK POTTERY FROM NEMIROV FORTIFIED SETTLEMENT AND SOME QUESTIONS OF DISTRIBUTION OF EARLY GREEK POTTERY IN THE NORTHERN BLACK SEA REGION

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**Keywords:** *Black Sea Coastal Region, Nemirovo fortified settlement, Archaic period, East Greek Pottery, Greeks, barbarians, contacts, interactions.*

**Abstract:** *Nemirovo fortified settlement on the South Bug river belongs to one of gigantic sites of forest-steppe zone of the Northern Black Sea Coastal Region. The archeological study of this settlement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have brought numerous and various archaeological finds. By modern investigations three basic components in material culture of the population of Nemirovo have been determined: local forest-steppe Early Scythian component, cultural impulse from the Eastern Hallstatt area and the evidences of the early contacts with the Greeks. The excavations at Nemirovo acropolis gave a representative collection of the Archaic East Greek pottery, the large part of the examples were of South Ionian production dated to ca. 650/640-630 BC. The article deals with several fragments of Greek painted pottery from Nemirovo decorated in Middle Wild Goat Style I in the light of the problem of distribution of early Greek pottery over the barbarian hinterland (the evidences of the connections with the first Greek colonies of Lower Bug or pre-colonization contacts?).*

## **Introduction.**

The Nemirovo fortified settlement is situated in Eastern Podolia, on the left bank of South Bug river (**Fig. 1**) near the village Sazhki in 4 km to the regional center Nemirov. In former times the territory was a part of Podolian province of Russian Empire, then from the 1920s till the present time it belongs to Vinnickaya region of the Ukraine. Among the early Scythian giant city-sites of the forest-steppe zone of the Northern Black Sea Coastal Region Nemirovo takes a special place not only due to its westernmost location and enormous extent (more than

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100 ha, modern high of the ramparts is more than 11 m) (**Fig. 2**). Its material culture, which reflects the contacts between its Early Iron Age population and Greek colonists on one hand and western neighbors (different groups of inhabitants of Carpathian basin and the Middle Europe) on the other hand, is of special interest for scholars. But because of different reasons and circumstances the excavations at the site were carried out only in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. S.S. Gamchenko was the first who examined the site in 1909, in 1910 A.A. Spitzyn continued the excavations. After a rather long break the investigations were carried out in 1946-1948 by the South-Podolian expedition of State Hermitage Museum under the leadership of M.I. Artamonov<sup>1</sup>. The materials are kept now in scientific archives and museum funds, remaining practically unknown for a large majority of specialists. The most part of the finds are kept in the funds of the Archaeology of Eastern Europe and Siberia Department of the State Hermitage museum (Saint-Petersburg). Among them – the examples of East-Greek painted pottery found at the site, as well as the artifacts of the Early Scythian types, including various categories of the qualitative polished pottery<sup>2</sup>.

### **The finds and their context.**

Greek Archaic pottery from the excavations of the site is rather interesting taking in consideration as a segregated collection. The materials are rather numerous, significant and important in many aspects: stylistic, chronological, for the decision of problems, connected with the early period of contacts between the Greeks and the barbarians of the Northern Black Sea coast and so on. The collection of Archaic East Greek Pottery from Nemirovo consists of more than 100 pieces, the great part of them belongs to painted pottery. In this article we shall look through the several remarkable fragments.

It includes a whole number of rare, sometimes unique examples, which are notable for their high artistic merit. Unfortunately in very many cases the places of finding of pottery fragments are unidentified because they were discovered during the „old“ excavations when the fixation has been carry out on the rather low level. But we can be firmly convinced that the major part of the materials has been found during the investigations of so-called „ash-hill“ at the „acropolis“ in the central part of the fortified settlement (**Fig. 3**). There the fragments of transport amphorae and painted fine ware produced in the East Greece have been found<sup>3</sup>. Almost all fragments of painted pottery can be dated in the frames of the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. These finds serve as reliable chronological indicators allowing to assume rather early contacts between Nemirovo inhabitants and Greek colonists of the region.

The main part of the painted fragments belongs to the close vessels – amphorae and oinochoe (round- and trefoil-mouthed) produced in South Ionia and decorated in Wild Goat Style. The clay of most examples shows different nuances of brown and yellow, the overlay is cream-colored. The repertoire of

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<sup>1</sup> GAMCHENKO 1909; ARTAMONOV 1998; SMIRNOVA 1998, p. 77-87.

<sup>2</sup> SMIRNOVA 1998, fig. 11-14; KASHUBA & VAKHTINA 2015, p. 39-41.

<sup>3</sup> Publications see in FARMAKOVSKY 1914, pl. II, 3; ONAIKO 1966, tab. III, 1-3, 5-8, 10-11; V, 1; VAKHTINA 1998; VAKHTINA 2007.

painting on the fragments from Nemirovo is usual for the East Greek pottery of Orientalizing style – wild goats, deer, lions, dogs, birds. On many items bands of loop pattern divide friezes. Purple and white subsidiary colors, as well as engravings haven't been used. According to the manner of painting we can conclude that the majority of the vessels were produced in Southern Ionia. They can be dated to MWG I<sup>4</sup> or SiA Ib (ca 650/640–630/620)<sup>5</sup>. The important feature is the complete absence at the site the pottery manufactured in Attica, which begins to penetrate in the barbarian sites of Northern Black Sea Coast approximately from the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and are rather widespread there in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> – early 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC.

All the collection in whole is still unpublished, but rather soon we hope to publish these important finds in the special part of the monograph, devoted to the Scythian material culture at Nemirovo fortified settlement. In this article we'll characterize briefly only several remarkable examples of the East Greek painted pottery from Nemirovo collection.

Among the fragments which could be the parts of a round-mouthed oinochoe the large piece with the remains of friezes with running goats should be mentioned (**Fig. 4. 1**). The fragment consists of two joined sections<sup>6</sup>. Its decoration demonstrates a very clear and delicate manner of painting. L.V. Kopeikina pointed that the closest stylistic parallel to the fragment from Nemirovo is the decoration on the famous oinochoe from the Temir-Gora mound in the Eastern Crimea<sup>7</sup>. She has even suggested that the Nemirovo vessel and Temir-Gora oinochoe were produced at the same workshop. The oinochoe from Temir-Gora which usually reckon among masterpieces of Greek vase-painting can be dated ca. 640-630<sup>8</sup> or, according the chronological scheme by M. Kerschner and U. Schlotzhauer, can be put in the frames of South Ionian Archaic Ib period – ca. 650-630<sup>9</sup>, which corresponds with MWG I<sup>10</sup>. The study of the collection of East-Greek pottery from Nemirovo allowed to reveal several fragments<sup>11</sup> belong to the same stylistic and chronological group (**Fig. 4. 2-5; 5. 7, 12**), which also demonstrate stylistic closeness to Temir-Gora oinochoe. They are small fragments of shoulder and body friezes with parts of goats' figures and filling ornaments. There is a reasonable assumption that Temir-Gora oinochoe was produced in Miletos<sup>12</sup>. This obviously allows to conclude Milesian origin of Nemirovo fragments. The biggest one (**Fig. 4. 1**) is glued from two pieces. One is from the old excavations, so we know nothing about the concrete place where it had been found. The smaller one was found during the research of 1948 in the context of the remains of barbarian dwelling complex – dugout no. 1. The fragment in

<sup>4</sup> COOK & DUPONT 1998, p. 36-39.

<sup>5</sup> KERSCHNER & SCHLOTZHAUER 2005, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Both have inv. Dn 1933 1/206.

<sup>7</sup> KOPEIKINA 1972, p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> KOPEIKINA 1972; COOK & DUPONT 1998, p. 36, 38, fig. 8.5.

<sup>9</sup> KERSCHNER & SCHLOTZHAUER 2005, p. 8, 20, fig. 12.

<sup>10</sup> The main difference is that SiA Ib terminates earlier than MWG I. KERSCHNER & SCHLOTZHAUER 2005, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Inv. Dn 1933 1/210; 251/52; 278/280; 251/45.

<sup>12</sup> COOK & DUPONT 1998, p. 38.

question was fixed in the level close to the bottom of the pit, with other examples of Greek (**Fig. 5. 6-11**) and local barbarian pottery (**Fig. 5. 1-5**)<sup>13</sup>. Several other Greek fragments from dugout no. 1 (**Fig. 5. 8-11**) also show the stylistic similarity and evidently belonged to the vessels produced at the same centre, perhaps even in the same workshop, presumably Milesian. Probably in ancient time the oinochoe from Temir-Gora and the vessels from Nemirovo belonged to a single batch of goods, which had been on the market as a single whole. This assumption raises the question – how did this pottery penetrate the barbarian hinterland? The most likely assumption is that the imported pottery reached Nemirovo in the result of the contacts with the Greeks which took place in the Lower Bug area, at the territory where the first Greek settlements have been founded. One of the vessels could be taken by the nomads to the east part of the steppe corridor along the route used for warfare and seasonal migrations, reconstructed on the base of written sources and archaeological evidences<sup>14</sup>. This route, hypothetically existed in the Archaic period, ran from the steppe region along the Dnieper river through Eastern Crimea across the Kerch Straits to the Kuban area. The Temir-Gora oinochoe eventually fell within burial equipment in the mound, which has been erected close to the important boundary of this route. The other part of the goods could reach Nemirovo by the system of water and land routs and used by the settled inhabitants of the fortified settlement.

A number of pieces of Archaic East-Greek pottery, found at the site, belong to types, which are quite rare or unique for the Northern Black Sea Coastal Region. Among them are the fragments of the upper part of a big wide-mouthed amphora, collected during different periods of excavations<sup>15</sup>. Though most of the fragments of the vessel have been published before<sup>16</sup>, it became possible to reconstruct its shape only now (**Fig. 6**). The biggest and the finest piece were found in the result of the first campaign in 1909<sup>17</sup>. Several fragments were collected during the excavations in 1947-1948<sup>18</sup>. Among them are two fragments of the amphora's rim<sup>19</sup> originated from the filling of the ditch of dugout no. 2 (**Fig. 7. 5-6**) which contained also the pottery fragments of local types (**Fig. 7. 1-4**)<sup>20</sup>.

The fragments obviously belonged to a big amphora with a protruding rim and an unusually wide mouth reminding of a krater. The ledge of the rim is decorated with the row of simple chain, the side face of the rim had a „herring-bone“ ornament; the inner part of the rim is covered with dark paint. The outside part of the neck is painted with a chain of pendant, alternating lotus buds and flowers put downwards. The part of the shoulder animal frieze survived; on the right is a sitting lion showed in profile, with two swallows sitting on its upward bent tail. On the left side one can see the tail of another animal, possible of the

<sup>13</sup> VAKHTINA & KASHUBA 2014, fig. 1.

<sup>14</sup> VAKHTINA, VINOGRADOV & ROGOV 1980; VAKHTINA 1991, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Inv. Dn 1909 3/1; 251/20; 251/25; 251/48; 278/284.

<sup>16</sup> ONAIKO 1966, pl. III, 5; VAKHTINA 1998, p. 128, fig. 3, 8; KERSCHNER & SLOTZHAUER 2005, p. 21, fig. 15; KERSCHNER 2006, p. 236-237, fig. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Dn 1909 3/1. See GAMCHENKO 1909, p. 34, pl. 224, 1.

<sup>18</sup> No. 251/25.

<sup>19</sup> No. 278/284 for both of the fragments.

<sup>20</sup> VAKHTINA & KASHUBA 2014, fig. 2.

second lion. May be the central part of the composition of the main, shoulder frieze presented two lions sitting with the mussels turned towards different directions. The filling ornaments are presented by rosettes of different types, dots and crosses. Motives and style of the decoration are characteristic of the Middle Wild Goat Style. M. Kerschner and U. Schlotzhauer dated the vessel to 650-630 BC.<sup>21</sup> It seems that the most probable date of the manufacturing – ca. 640-630 BC. The style of decoration of Nemirovo amphora is close to Milesian. But the shape of the vessel – a big amphora with wide mouth – is exceptional within the finds from Miletos and South Ionia in whole. This shape is better known to the north, in North Ionia and Aiolis<sup>22</sup>. The dimensions of Nemirovo vessel are also remarkable. It was a large-size amphora: the approximate diameter of the rim was 30-31 cm, so the height could be around 50-60 cm. Ornamentation occupied at least 4 friezes. Such a large, brightly and rich painted vase with no doubt was a valuable, expensive object in the opinion of the barbarians. It was an excellent prestige item, which could be both an objects of trade and used as a gift during establishing the first connections between the Greeks and the locals of the region.

Among the East-Greek Archaic painted pottery from the Northern Black Sea Coastal Region discovered in sites and complexes of local population we know one more specimen which is notable for its size. It is so-called „big oinochoe“ from the Scythian mound near the modern village Krasny in Krasnodar area, belonged to the same period as Nemirovo and Temir-Gora vessels<sup>23</sup>. Its height is 42 cm, which is bigger than the height of typical round-mouthed oinochoia known for this period. For example the height of the other oinochoe from the same mound is 23,2 cm<sup>24</sup>, the height of Temir-Gora oinochoe mentioned above is 27 cm<sup>25</sup>. With no doubt, large, literally gigantic sizes of the vessels from Nemirovo and Krasny were important characteristics, added additional value to the objects. May be both of the vessels were produces specially for the barbarian market.

For a rather long period Nemorovo fortified settlement was considered a „leader“ among Scythian sites in the field of the early contacts between the Greeks and the local population. That impression produced the finds of the Archaic East Greek pottery, which outnumbered the finds of Greek imports discovered at the other synchronous barbarian settlements of the region. But during the last decades the numerous fragments of Greek imported pottery were discovered in the archaic contexts of Belskoe fortified settlement on the river Vorskla, one of the left tributaries of Dnieper<sup>26</sup>. Among the pottery finds from Belskoe the examples demonstrate close stylistic similarity to the fragments from

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<sup>21</sup> KERSCHNER & SCHLOTZHAUER 2005, p. 17–25, fig. 15.

<sup>22</sup> The type was named „Myrina amphorae“ after the finding site of the first published example: RAYET 1884, pl. 7; AKURGAL 1897, pl. 21b. For analogies see COOK & DUPONT 1998, p. 58-59, fig. 8.21, 8.22; IREN 2003, fig. 25, 31, 35, 38, 42, pl. 18-21, 37; DUPONT 2018, p. 51, fig. 5.

<sup>23</sup> SHEVCHENKO 2013, p. 112-114, fig. 9, 10. N.F. Shevchenko points at Temir-Gora oinochoe as at the closest stylistic and chronological analogies and dates the vessels from Krasny in the frames of MWG I: *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> SHEVCHENKO 2013, p. 110-111, fig. 8.

<sup>25</sup> KOPEIKINA 1971, p. 148, n. 5.

<sup>26</sup> ZADNIKOV 2007; 2009; ZADNIKOV & SHRAMKO 2009.

Nemirovo can be identified. In the Dnieper-Bug area the Archaic East Greek pottery are also known from Trakhtemirov fortified settlement - a fragmented North Ionian cup (bird-bowl) has been found there during the excavation of the ritual dwelling<sup>27</sup>. It can be dated in the frames of the second – third quarters of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>28</sup> From the site another piece of Greek Archaic pottery is known – the fragment of South Ionian vessel, probably oinochoe, on with the part of decorative in frieze with the griffin's head survived<sup>29</sup>. The fragment can be dated to ca. 650-620 BC.

Basing on these materials we can conclude that the settled inhabitants of the large forest-steppe hill-forts were involved into the contacts with the Greeks during the same chronological period – around the mid-third quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. May be the ties with the Greeks and the local population of the right bank of Dnieper began about a decade earlier. In the Early Iron Age the barbarians from Nemirovo as well as the inhabitants of Belsk and Trakhtemirov obviously established the first contacts with the Greeks centers. Greek pottery finds from Nemirovo allow suggesting that the earliest connections with the Greeks took place around the middle - beginning of the last third of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, with the „peak“ fell on the second part of the century<sup>30</sup>. For the later period beginning from the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC we can fix the „extinction“ of the contacts with the Greeks for the site or their transformation, which hasn't been reflected in archaeological evidences.

#### **About the „sources“ and ways of distribution of Classical imports.**

There is a traditional opinion that the Greek pottery could reach Nemirovo fortified settlement in the Middle Bug area by the waterway along Dnieper and South Bug<sup>31</sup>. Evidently, the ways of distribution of Greek Archaic pottery in the barbarian hinterland could be rather various. In some cases, as for the oinochoe from Temir-Cora, it's possible to correlate the imported items with the routes of nomadic migrations<sup>32</sup>. There may also have been numerous other roots, including traditional waterways using the great rivers and their tributaries, land routs and both combined<sup>33</sup>.

One of the most important questions, connected with the rich collection of East Greek Archaic pottery, mostly consisting of the examples of high quality, gathered during the several excavation campaigns at Nemirovo fortified settlement stays the problem of the „sources“ of the contacts. Of course one of the main „sources“ could be the settlement on Berezan; but it is also quite possible that it was not the only place from which the barbarians could acquire Greek products. It's quite clear now that Nemirovo inhabitants in archaic time had

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<sup>27</sup> ONAIKO 1966, pl. III, 12 a-g; XXV, 3; DARAGAN 2011, p. 518, fig. IV.59.

<sup>28</sup> KERSCHNER 2006, p. 237-238, fig. 14; BUISKIKH 2016, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> KOVPANENKO 1968, p. 109, fig. 9.

<sup>30</sup> KASHIUBA & VAKHITINA 2017, p. 219-220, fig. 8.

<sup>31</sup> ONAIKO 1966, p. 41-45.

<sup>32</sup> See also VINOGRADOV 2009, p. 63.

<sup>33</sup> SHRAMKO 1987, p. 18-24, fig. 1; BOLTRIK 1990; GAVRILJUK 1999, p. 264; VAKHTINA 2004b, p. 56.

intensive ties with the West; their culture had many Western, Hallstatt features<sup>34</sup>. Recently the detailed survey of the local pottery complex of the site allowed to trace several components in its material culture: the early nomadic, the Hallstatt Central-European, Eastern-Hallstatt circle; at the same time, Nemirovo have a general local basis<sup>35</sup>. So it is possible that the Greek Archaic pottery produced in Ionia penetrated this area on a wave of other western impulses. A series of fragments of South-Ionian vessels dated to ca. 640-630 BC have been found during the excavations of Orgame in Romania<sup>36</sup> seems to strengthen this assumption<sup>37</sup>.

It's very difficult to determine precise foundation date for many of the Greek colonies, and Berezan/Borysthenes is not an exception. The generally used date reconstructed on the basis of Eusebius is 647/646 BC (Euseb., *Chron.*, Can. p. 95 b. Helm). If we accept this date, we can explain the distribution of early Greek pottery from the point of view of interactions between the Greek colonists and barbarian natives in the Dnieper-Bug area. But at the present time scholars dealing with the problem of early contacts (and early Greek imports and their dating) at the Northern Black Sea Coast, take notice of the fact that the date of the written source is at variance with the archaeological evidences. According the „archaeological“ periodization elaborated by D.E. Chistov for Berezan settlement, the earliest phase of its existence corresponds to late 7<sup>th</sup> – early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>38</sup> For this time the first dwelling complexes have been fixed, though the individual finds of earlier period are known<sup>39</sup>. It's clear to notice that the „archaeological“ date of existence of the permanent settlement contradict the dates of the „first wave“ of Greek import in barbarian hinterland. This caused on the modern level the concept of „pre-colonial“ contacts<sup>40</sup>, which of course, promotes to resolve this contradiction.

The well-composed hypotheses, taking into account the wide range of modern data, including the examples of early Greek painted pottery from the first colonies and barbarian sites of the region and their up-to date chronology, was recently proposed by A.V. Buiskikh. She believes that „... these vessels could easy have been imported by those very same trail-blazing pioneers, whose visits – possibly initially on a seasonal basis – laid the foundation for the settlement on the north-western part of the Pontic coast and the inner territories adjacent to the coast“<sup>41</sup>.

Of course, there is nothing surprising in the assumptions about the first sailing and reconnoitering expeditions of the Greeks to the remote regions which later were included in colonial movement. The other range of questions is – how long such a period of pre-colonial ties might be? Did the trade with the barbarians

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<sup>34</sup> SMIRNOVA 2001.

<sup>35</sup> KASHUBA & VAKHTINA 2012, p. 410-412; 2017, p. 224, 228.

<sup>36</sup> MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2000, p. 195-204, fig. 1; 2003, pl. 2.

<sup>37</sup> VAKHTINA 2004a, p. 208; 2007, p. 516; KERSCHNER 2006, s. 232-234.

<sup>38</sup> CHISTOV 2012, p. 6-8.

<sup>39</sup> COOK & DUPONT 1998, p. 197, note 16; BUISKIKH 2015, p. 241; BUISKIKH 2016, p. 2-5, fig. 1.

<sup>40</sup> See bibliography in BUISKIKH 2016; TSETSKHLADZE 2016.

<sup>41</sup> BUISKIKH 2016, p. 14. See also BUISKIKH 2013, p. 229; 2015. Critical notes see in TSETSKHLADZE 2016, p. 280-285.

during this period play a special role in establishing of regular connections? Or all the items fixed in the hinterland can be considered as diplomatic gifts? Did these connections promote the foundation of the first permanent Greek settlements?

What can be said in the conclusion? It seems to be quite clear that the future lies with the further archaeological researches of Berezan settlement, as well as the chronology of archaic pottery finds and the early stage of colonization process in whole. It will obviously help in the future to give an explanation how, what way(s) and from what center(s) Greek Archaic pottery penetrated Nemirovo fortified settlement and the other remote barbarian sites of the Northern Black Sea Coast. As we tried to show the materials discovered in Nemirovo, being the unique outpost in the system of ties „between East and West” in the Early Iron Age, are very important in discussing and solving the whole complex of these interrelated problems.

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BI - Bosporskije issledovaniya, Kerch/Simpheropol.

IHMC – Institute for History of Material Culture, Saint-Petersburg.

MAIET – Materialy po Arkheologii, Istorii i Etnografii Tauridy (Materials of Archaeology, History and Ethnography of Tauria), Simpheropol.

MAR – Materialy po Arkheologii Rossii, Moscow.

SA – Sovetskaya Arkheologiya (Soviet Archaeology), Moscow.

SAI – Svod Arkheologicheskikh Istochnikou, Moscow.

RA – Rossiyskaya Arkheologiya (Russian Archaeology), Moscow.

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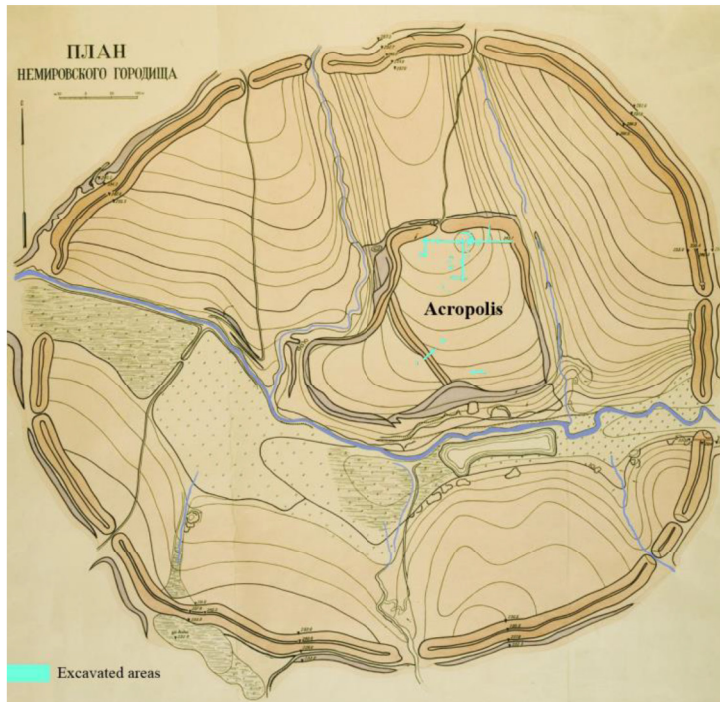
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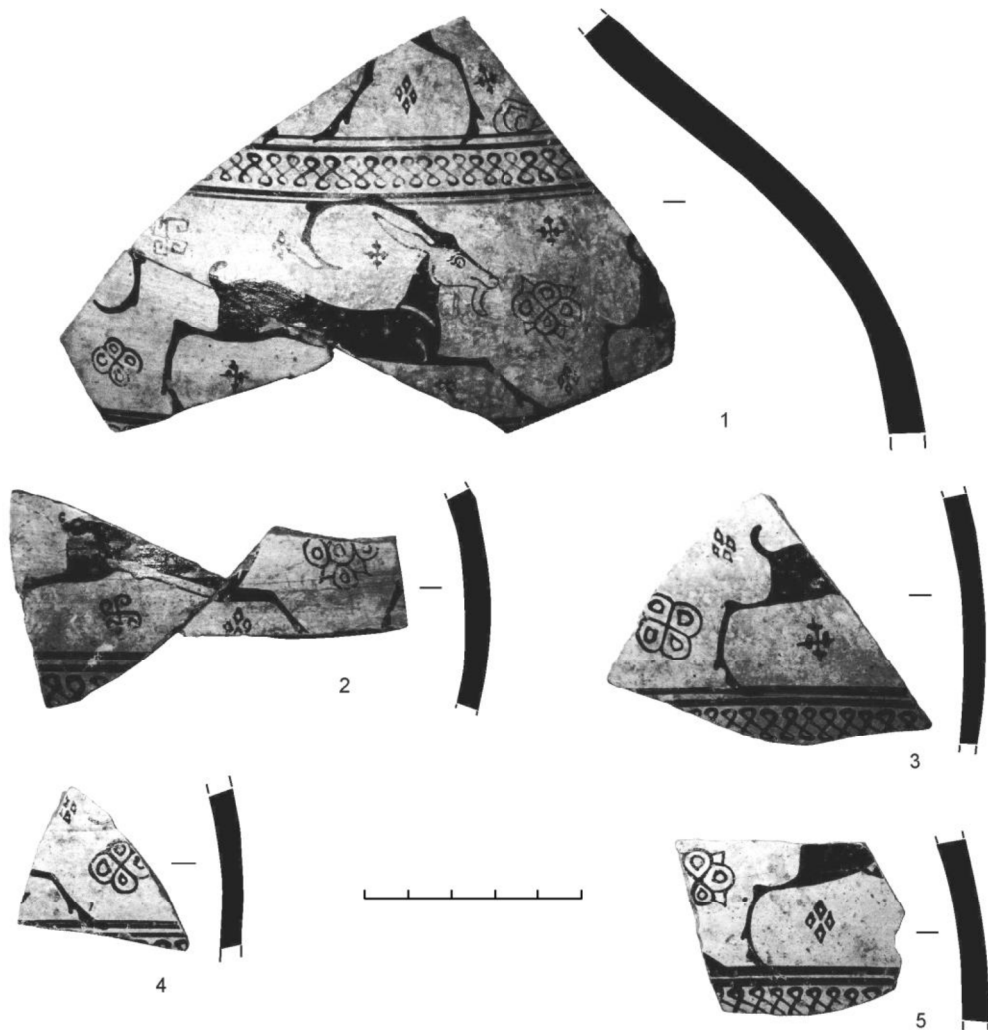
Fig. 1. Schematic map of the Lower and Middle Bug-Dnieper area.  
1 - Nemirovo fortified settlement; 2 - Berezan; 3 - Temir-Gora;  
--- approximate border between steppe and forest-steppe zones.



**Fig. 2. Nemirovo fortified settlement. Eastern section of the rampart (1946-1948) (photo from the personal fund of M.I. Artamonov in State Hermitage Museum; after KASUBA & VAKHTINA 2017, fig. 1).**



**Fig. 3. Nemirovo fortified settlement. Plan by M.I. Artamonov (after ARTAMONOV 1998, fig. 1).**



**Fig. 4. Fragments of oinochoai friezes**  
 (inv. Dn 1933 1/206; Dn 1933 1/210; 251/52; 278\280; 251/45).

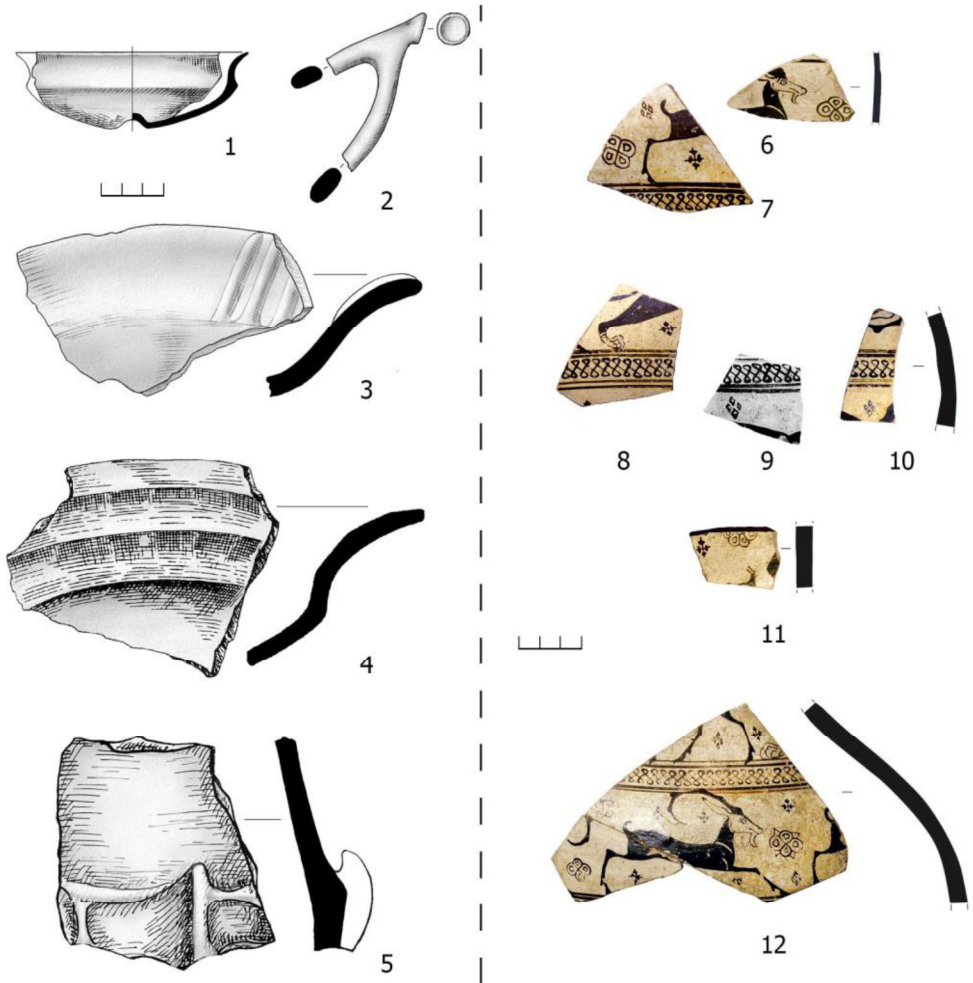


Fig. 5. Dugout no. 1, materials from the filing (selected).  
 1–5 – qualified glossed pottery; 6–12 – East-Greek pottery  
 (after VAKHTINA & KASHUBA 2014, fig. 1).

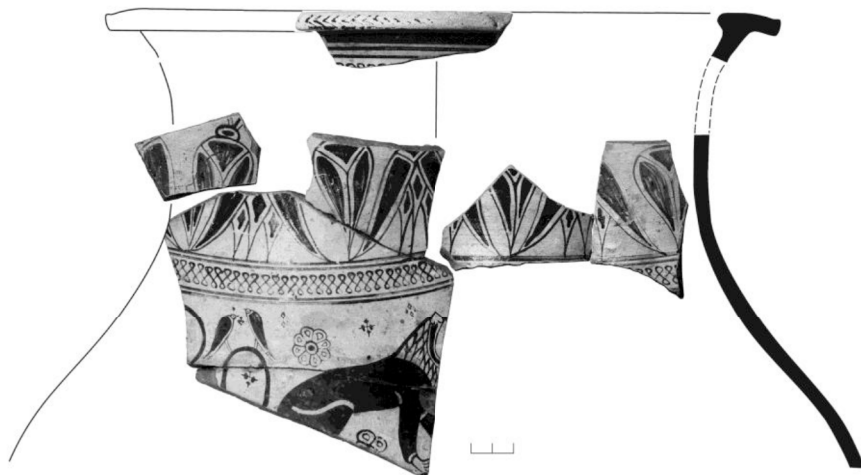


Fig. 6. Fragmented upper part of South Ionian (Milesian?) amphora (inv. 251/20; 251/25; Dn 1909 3/1)

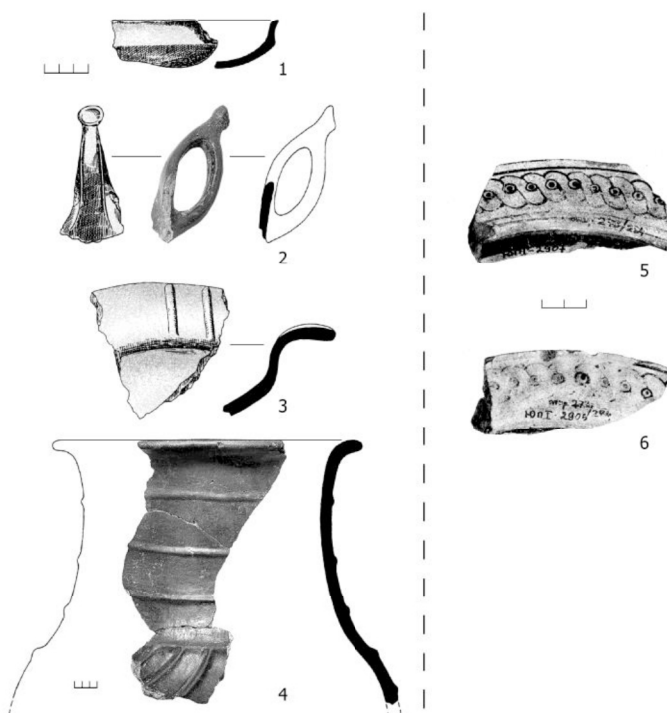


Fig. 7. Dugout no. 2, materials from the filling (selected). 1-4 – qualified glossed pottery; 5, 6 – fragments of the rim of South Ionian (Milesian) amphora (after VAKHTINA & KASHUBA 2014, fig. 2).