

Kantharoi* of Vysochino Type – Chronology, Manufacture and Distribution of a Specific Type of 1st Century AD Northern Pontic Silverware

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Abstract

The *kantharoi* with biconical body, with the upper part decorated with friezes of *cyma* and *cyma reversa* and the lower strigil-shaped part, with wish-bone handles ending with balls in their upper part and with leaves as lower attachments are attributed to the type Vysochino after the find of a set of 4 such vessels in the cache of the second half of the 1st century AD Sarmatian burial in a barrow-mound 28 of the group Vysochino-VII in the Lower Don region. These *kantharoi* have a rather compact area of distribution, with the concentration in eastern Crimea and the Lower Don area, though their finds originate also from the Mountain Crimea and the Kuban area. Recent finds of such *kantharoi* in the destruction layer of the fortified site of Artezian in the Bosporan Kingdom with a Greek dotted donative inscription on the bottom of one of them allow to settle the terminus *ante quem* for their manufacture – 46/47 AD and to suggest the possibility of their production in the workshop of the Bosporan Kingdom. Therefore, I cannot accept the viewpoint of S. Künzl that the goblets of Vysochino type were manufactured in one of the workshops in the provinces Bithynia, Cappadocia or Pontus. It is noteworthy that the *kantharoi* discussed show more compact area of distribution than the related group of silver *karchesia* with a similar decoration of the body and execution of the handles, the finds of which originate from western Ukraine, in Olbia, southwestern Crimea and the Kuban basin.

These *kantharoi* are attributed to the type Vysochino¹ after the find of a set of 4 such vessels in the cache of the Sarmatian burial in a burial mound no. 28 of the group Vysochino-VII in the Lower Don region (fig. 2).² The *kantharoi* of the Vysochino type have biconical body on a low foot-ring. The upper part of the body is decorated with applied gilt strips with embossed friezes of *cyma* and *cyma reversa* and the lower part is strigil-shaped. The cast wish-bone handles ending with balls in their upper part and with leaves as lower attachments. In the center, the handle is decorated with a ball with two relief rims at the bottom and one – at the top.

Besides the finds from the Lower Don basin, one of which originates from burial mound no. 2 of Verblyuzhka necropolis near Tuzluki (fig. 1, 2),³ there is known one find in the Kuban basin (Burial-mound no. 15 near Tiflisskaya⁴), whereas three handles of the type typical for the *kantharoi* of this series were found in the excavations of the sanctuary at Gurzuf Pass in the Crimean Mountains⁵ (fig. 1(1)). Noteworthy are also the finds from the South-Eastern part of the Bosporan Kingdom. A fragmented cup origi-

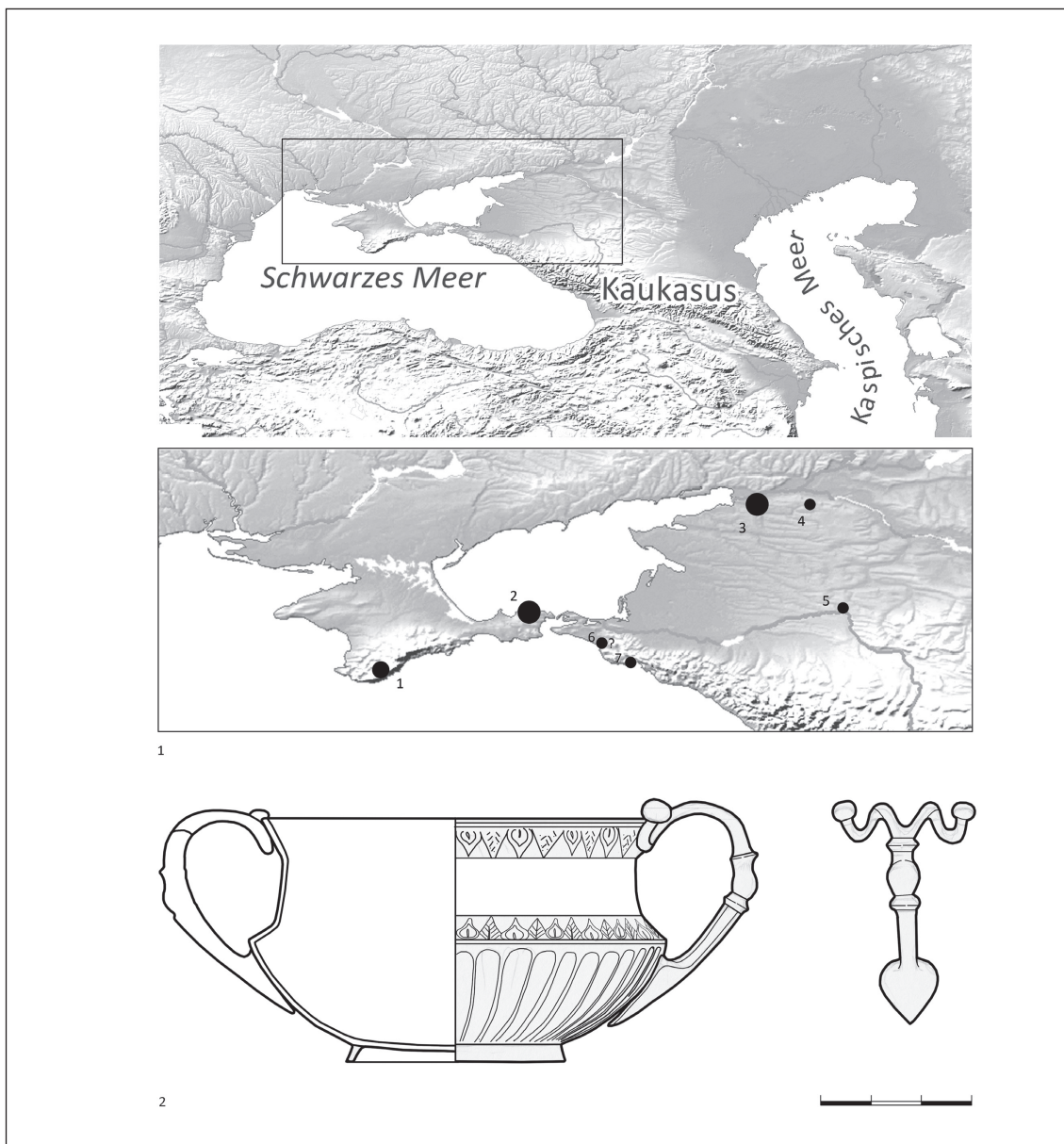


Fig. 1: 1(1): distribution map of the *kantharoi* of Vysochino type: 1 – Gurzuf Pass, 2 – Artezian, 3 – Vysochino-VII; 4 – Tuzluki (Verblyuzhka), 5 – Tiflisskaya, 6 – Gorgippia (?), 7 – Mykhako. 2 – cantharus from Tuzluki (Verblyuzhka). Burial-mound no. 2/1979. Burial no. 1. Rostov-on-Don, Regional local lore museum, inv.-no. 21048.



Fig. 2: Vysochino-VII. Burial-mound no. 28/1982. Cache no. 2. 1 – silver *kantharoi*; 2–7 – silver *kantharos* no. 19532/174a. General views and details. Azov, Historical-archaeological and paleontological museum-reserve, inv.-no. 19532/174a–d.

nates from the warrior's burial no. 12/1978 of the necropolis of Myskhako (fig. 3). Most probably to the same type belonged also the vessel from sarcophagus I of the tomb II/1975 of Gorgippia necropolis, which is known only after the description and the schematic drawing.⁶

A. Popa originally attributed to the *kantharoi* of this series also the handles of two fragmented silver vessels from Kolokolin in western Ukraine (Lviv region),⁷ although in the later publication he did not excluded that it could rather have been a *karchesia*, like the finds from the burial in Olbia looted in 1891⁸ and from the tomb no. 735/1999 of the Ust'-Alma necropolis,⁹ and his latter suggestion rather corresponds to the truth, to my mind, given the dimensions, proportions and details of decoration of the handles. In the burial mound "Ostryi" in the Kuban basin¹⁰ a pair of silver handles of the type, decorating the *karchesia*, was also found. The cup from from Ust'-Alma necropolis is plain, the vessels from Olbia, making a pair, varying both in size and details of ornamentation, are decorated with friezes of *cyma reversa* and beading, resembling the ornamentation of the *kantharoi* of the type Vysochino.

Fragments of at least two such *kantharoi*, including separate bodies and handles (figs. 4, 5)¹¹ were found in 2013 in the destruction layer of the fortified site of Artezian in eastern Crimea, which was destroyed during the Roman-Bosporan War of 45–49 AD, the numismatic material giving the exact date of fire – 46/47 AD.¹² On the bottom of one of them a Greek dotted inscription in two-line Greek around the circle was cleaned in



Fig. 3: Myskhako. Burial no. 12/1978. Fragmented silver *kantharos*. Novorossijsk, State Historical museum-reserve, inv.-no. 4317/108.



Fig. 4: Silver *kantharos* with the inscription on the bottom from the room no. 4 of the early citadel of Artezian fortified site. Kerch, Eastern Crimean historical-cultural museum-reserve, inv.-no. KP-185606, KM-8567.



Fig. 5: Handles of silver *kantharoi* from the room no. 4 of the early citadel of Artezian fortified site. Kerch, Eastern Crimean historical-cultural museum-reserve, inv.-nos. KP-185529, KM-8570; NVF-13358–13360.

the process of restoration (fig. 4(1–2)).¹³ A. V. Belousov suggested the following reconstruction and reading of the text

Δ[ι]ος Καλ[ο]καίρου τοῖς ἐνδ(ε)ία(ι)
ἐν τοῖς Ἀπολλωνίου

As for the personal names in the text, the name Δῖος (LGPN iv 106) occurs in the Bosphorus quite often, beginning from the 5th century BC (CIRB 911, 1056), in the 1st century BC (CIRB 394, 564, SEG 27: 436), as well as in the first centuries AD (CIRB 1259, 1262, 1277). The name Καλόκαιρος is not attested in the Northern Black Sea coast, but it occurs, for example, in Macedonia and Thrace (LGPN iv 185), but the name Ἀπολλώνιος is popular throughout the Greek oikumene, including northern Pontus (LGPN iv 37–39). The text of the inscription, from which it follows that a certain Dios, the son of Kalokairos, sacrifices this silver *kantharos* to people in need, from the house of an Apollonius, evidently testifies to the donative nature of the inscription.

The exact context of the finds of handles in the sanctuary at the Gurzuf Pass was published only recently: although the majority of finds belong to the period of the sanctuary's heyday, from the late 1st century BC to the mid-1st century AD, these handles are attributed by the publisher to the period of the second half of the 1st – mid-2nd century AD.¹⁴ The cache in the burial mound no. 28 of the group Vysochino-VII is dated to the third quarter of the 1 century AD.¹⁵ The finds from Artesian site testify that the vessels of the type discussed appeared before 46/47 AD. Important for the dating of the vessels is the find from the necropolis of Myskhako in a warrior's burial together with a bronze coin of the Bosporan queen Gepaypyris, dated to 37–38 AD.

The absence of the finds of *kantharoi* of this type discussed in other regions gives grounds for considering them as products of one of the northern Pontic centers,¹⁶ possibly located in the Bosporan Kingdom, which is indirectly confirmed by a series of finds of such vessels at the Artesian fortified site.¹⁷ Therefore, I cannot accept the viewpoint of S. Künzl that the goblets of Vysochino type were manufactured in one of the workshops in the provinces Bithynia, Cappadocia or Pontus.¹⁸ It is noteworthy that the *kantharoi* discussed show more compact area of distribution – in eastern Crimea, in the South-Eastern part of the Asian Bosphorus and in the Lower Don basin (fig. 1(1)), than the related group of silver *karchesia* with a similar decoration of the body and execution of the handles, the finds of which originate from western Ukraine, in Olbia, southwestern Crimea and the Kuban basin.

Notes

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¹ Treister 2007, 17–18 Karte 2. On the maps of the distribution of such vessels, published by A. Popa (2004, 498 fig. 4; 2014, 94, 107 fig. 9), not marked are the handles of vessels from the Gurzuf Pass and, for understandable reasons, the vessels from Artesian. At the same time, it is erroneously indicated as a place of find a burial in Kosika, in which such a handle was never found (on the basis of an erroneous comparison (Dvornichenko et al. 1993, 151). In reality this object has nothing to do with the *kantharoi* of the Vysochino series. My 2007 publication, which considers such *kantharoi* and the related *karchesia* (Treister 2007, 18–19, Map 2), also remained unknown to A. Popa.

² Treister 2007, 17–18; Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, 22 nos. A45.1–4 (with bibliography) pl. 25; Leoben – Seipel 2009, 247 no. 100a–d.

³ Treister 2007, 17–18; Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, 91 no. A280.1 (with bibliography).

⁴ Treister 2007, 17–18; Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, 90 no. A276.1 (with bibliography); Marčenko – Limberis 2008, 349 no. 48.1 pl. 76, 1.

⁵ Treister 2007, 17–18; Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, 27 no. A66.1 (with bibliography); Novichenkova 2015, 90 fig. 176, 1–3; 92.

⁶ Myskhako: Dmitriev et al. 2020, 42 fig. 37, 44 no. 12; Malyshev 2020, 154. – Gorgippia: Treister 2007, 17–18; Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, 23 no. A51.1 (with bibliography).

⁷ Śmiszko 1935, 156 no. 8; 162 no. 8, pl. XLIII, 1–5; Popa 2004, 493 fig. 2, 1–5; 496–498; cf. Popa 2014, 92–95 figs. 2; 5.

⁸ Treister 2007, 18; Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, 128 no. B28.1–2 (with bibliography) pl. 54.

⁹ Treister 2007, 18; Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, 96 no. A301.1 (with bibliography) pl. 43.

¹⁰ Treister 2007, 18; Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, 58 no. A166.1 (with bibliography) pl. 34.

¹¹ Belousov et al. 2017, 31–32 figs. 2–3.

¹² Abramzon et al. 2012, 207–278; Vinokurov 2014, 98–105; Belousov et al. 2017, 31–33 fig. 1(1).

¹³ Belousov et al. 2017, 33–34 fig. 2. Most recently the inscription attracted attention of other scholars, suggesting either the correctness of the general interpretation of the inscription, although with some changes (Yailenko 2020, 216–217 no. 36 fig. 4), or an absolutely different reading and interpretation (She-lov-Kovedyaev 2021, 411–414 no. 12, figs. 1–2).

¹⁴ Novichenkova 2015, 120–121 fig. 220, 5.

¹⁵ Mordvintseva – Treister 2007, vol. 2, 22 no. A45.

¹⁶ Treister 2007, 18.

¹⁷ Belousov et al. 2017, 31–38.

¹⁸ Künzl 2000, 71.

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Fig. 1(1): map, M. Treister (2017); 2 – drawing, N. E. Bespalaya (2015). – Fig. 2(2): photograph, V. I. Terebenin; 2–7 – photographs, M. Treister (2015). – Fig. 3: photographs and drawings, A. A. Malyshev – Fig. 4(1): photograph, Kerch, eastern Crimean historical-cultural museum-reserve (2014), 2 – drawing A. V. Belousov, 3–6 – photographs, N. I. Vinokurov (2013). – Fig. 5: Photographs, M. Treister (2014).

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Abbreviations

- CIRB Corpus inscriptionum Regni Bosporani/Корпус боспорских надписей (Moscow 1965)
 LGPN IV P. M. Fraser – E. Matthews, A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names. IV. Macedonia, Thrace, Northern Regions of the Black Sea (Oxford 2005)