

Several graffiti and only two stone inscriptions were discovered in the course of five seasons of fieldwork carried out from 2008 to 2012 by the Polish Archaeological Mission "Tyritake" from the National Museum in Warsaw. Most of the graffiti comprised simple signs on potsherds or other objects. One of them is however of special interest. It is a graffito on a pithos found in a late Roman kitchen. The paper constitutes the first publication of this graffito and one Greek inscriptions on stone found during excavations.

**Graffito, BOAE/11/Tyritake/XXVII/248**

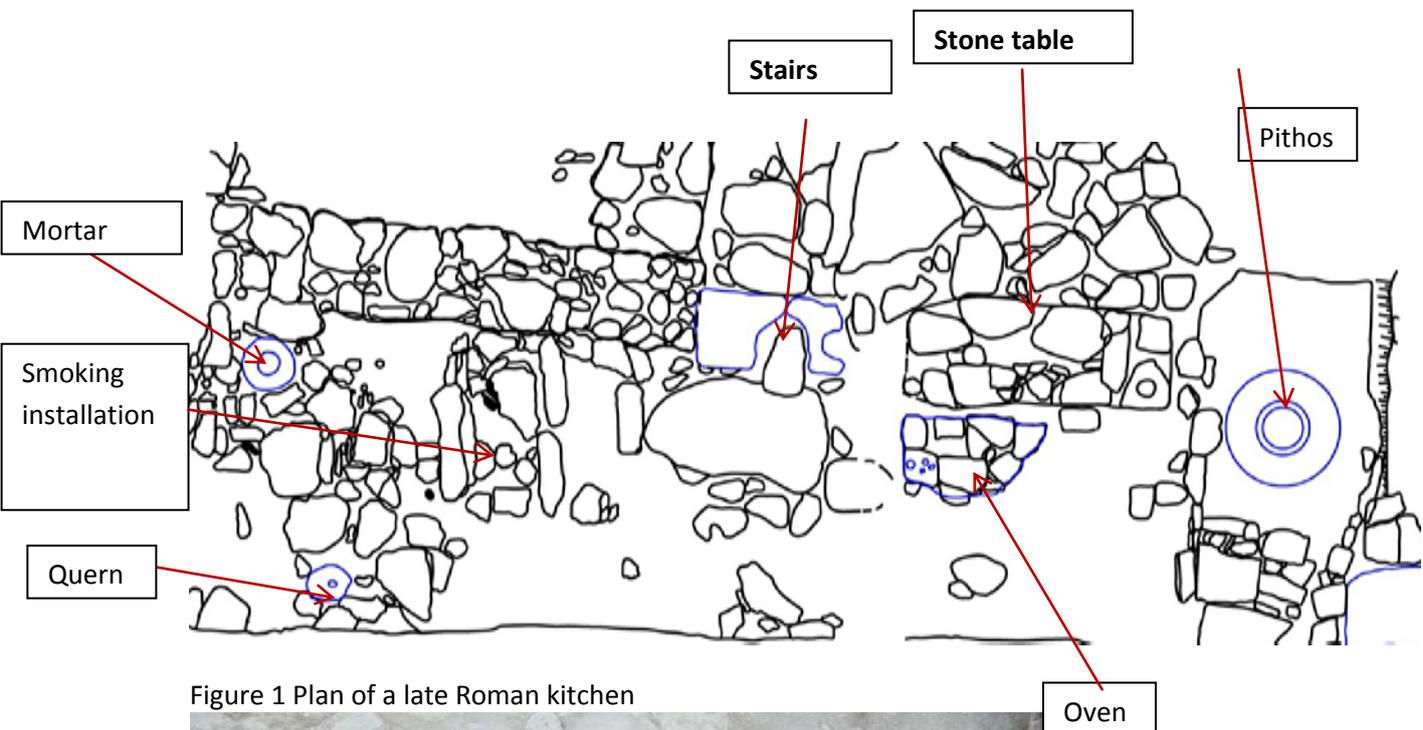


Figure 1 Plan of a late Roman kitchen



Figure 2 Pithos *in situ*

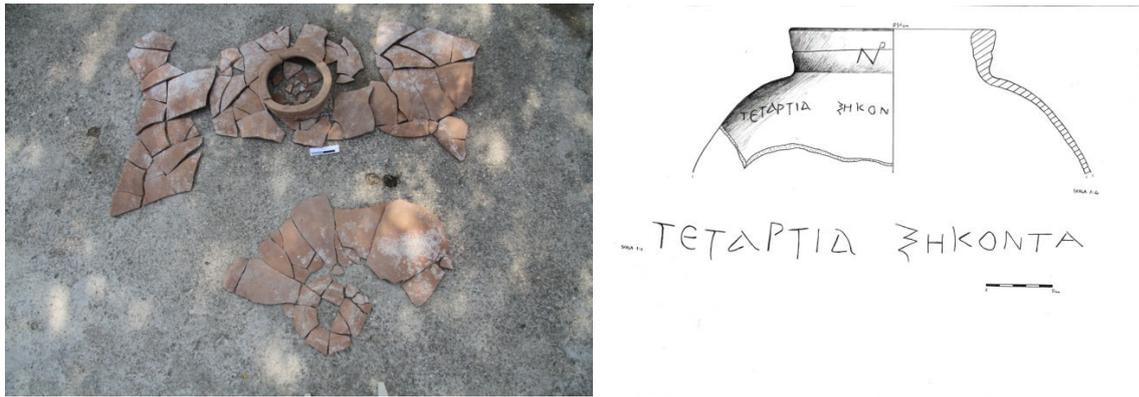


Figure 3 Pithos BOAE/11/Tyritake/XXVII/248

The pithos was one of the vessels making up the kitchen equipment, which was dated by the archaeological context to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. A handmade pot found on the stone table (BOAE/11/Tyritake/XXVII/199 and 200) has parallels from the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD among pottery from the Druzhnoe necropolis<sup>1</sup> and from the Asian Sarmatia,<sup>2</sup> which could point to Sarmatian influences in the period. The pithos should be dated thus, although the Greek graffito indicates a Greek influence. The pithos is doubtless of a Bosphoran type, but the lack of regular finds of this type makes it impossible to date by the form.<sup>3</sup> In consequence, the vessel can be dated generally to the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD although, in our archaeological context, I would like shift *post quem* date back to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Examination of the samples from the inside walls of the pithos have not confirmed wine as the presumed contents of the vessel, but it did not answer the question about what kind of liquid was kept in it.

The graffito is written in neat letters at the top of the shoulders and on the neck of the pithos. The ligature on the neck consists of the letters Nu and Rho and is probably the owner's mark.<sup>4</sup> On palaeographic grounds it can be dated to after the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>5</sup> If we accept the supposition, we could have any name starting with the letter Nu and including the letter Rho, e.g.: Νυμφαγώρας.

The graffito on the upper part of the shoulder reads:

Τετάρτια [ἐ]ξήκοντα

Sixty tetartia

*Tetartion* (or *Pinakion*, or *Karta* – from Latin *Quarta*) is a measure used for water and wine in the Byzantine period. *Tetartion* was the fourth part of θαλάσσιον μέτρον, which equaled 2,563 liters.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, sixty *tetartia* is equal to 153,78 liters and probably means the total capacity of the pithos. The fact that we are dealing here with a Byzantine measure can be explained, if we assume that the

<sup>1</sup> (Aibabin, 1994), p. 97, ill. 8,65.

<sup>2</sup> (Skripkin, 1990), figs 9,3,4,8,34; 10,7,8,11

<sup>3</sup> (Yakobson, 1966), p. 189-190, who also mentions pithoi from Tyritake, some with graffiti, excavated by V.I. Gaidukevich; these finds disappeared during World War II.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. (Saprykin and Maslennikov, 2007), no. 326, p. 76 with short commentary on AP as a short form of the name Ἀραθός with parallels from Tanais.

<sup>5</sup> (Saprykin and Maslennikov, 2007), no. 864, dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, is the closest analogy, although the letter Xi is written in a slightly different way.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. (Schilbach, 1970, p. 114) and (Morrisson and Cheynet, 2002)

early Byzantine pithos (which was of 5th century date at the earliest) was placed in the kitchen (dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century at the latest) already when the kitchen had gone out of use. Another possibility is for the occupation of the kitchen to be shifted from the 4th to the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century AD, which is not altogether impossible. In any case, the graffito confirms use of the Byzantine metric system with the *tetartion* in the Bosphorus of the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### Fragment of a marble Greek inscription

Inv. no.: BOAE/12/Tyritake/XXVII/221

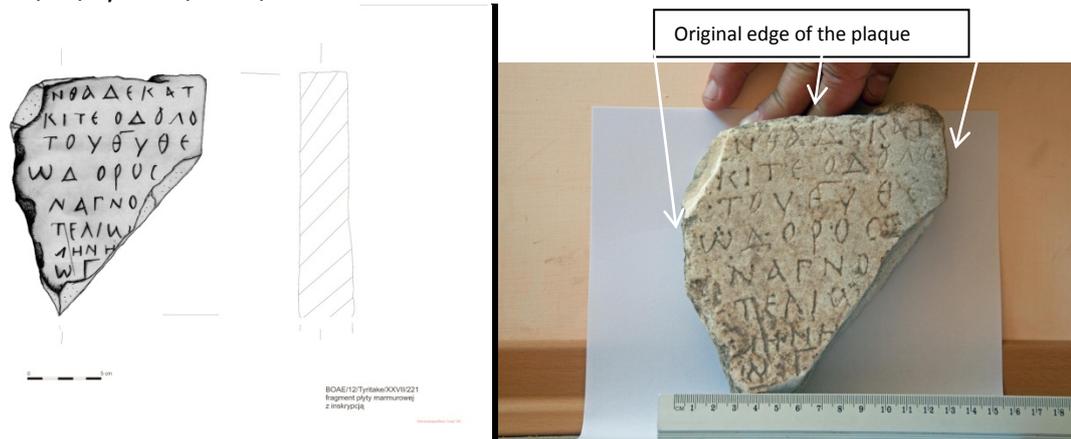


Figure 4 BOAE/12/Tyritake/XXVII/221

**Material:** Marble

**Dimensions:** 13.1 x 15.6 x 3.2 cm

**History:** Found in 2012, outside an archaeological context, among stone material collected years also before the start of work by the Polish Mission by the side of trenches 27 and 26. The only certain thing is that it must have been excavated from one of these two trenches, but since it is a fragment of a funerary stela, it must have been brought from the nearby necropolis at an unknown date in the past, to be reused in the ancient or medieval city.

**Description:** Fragment of a marble plaque with Greek inscription in eight lines. Preserved upper edge and parts of the left and right edges, which permits a hypothetical reconstruction of the original text field (W 15.6 cm) and this is crucial for a reconstruction of the text. The original bottom edge of the plaque is missing, but very little is missing to judge by the preserved text.

**Palaeography:** Lunar letters without gridlines, the writing slightly careless. In the second line the stonecutter omitted the *upsilon* in the word *δοῦλος* and then wrote a small letter above the *omicron* (or else we are dealing here with an unprecedented ligature). Some of the letters (*alpha*, *epsilon*, *delta*, *upsilon*) find parallels in other Byzantine inscriptions, which are seldom dated more specifically than that.<sup>7</sup> *Alpha* and *epsilon* letters of similar form appear in inscriptions from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>8</sup>

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century AD. See commentary.

#### Text:

ἐ]νθάδε κατ-  
 ἀ]κιτε ὁ δοῦλο-  
 ς τοῦ θ(εο)ῦ Θε-  
 ωδορος Ε[.  
 ἀναγνοσ[του

<sup>7</sup> (Latyshev V. , 1902), no. 12, p.9 (Chersonnesus, Byzantine Period)

<sup>8</sup> (CIRB) no. 66 (Pantikapaion, AD 308-322)

έτελιώ[θη  
...]μηνή[...  
...]μ' γ' [...]

#### Apparatus:

2-3 Θεωδορος read Θεόδωρος | 4. The final letter E seems to be intentional scratched | | 5. ἀναγνοσ[του, read ἀναγνώσ[του

#### Translation:

Hither lies a slave of God Theodoros e[...] a lect[or], di[ed] (in) month [...] [age?] 43

#### Commentary:

1-3. ἐνθάδε κατάκιτε ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ - Christian formula attested in the Bosphorus and Crimea in the Byzantine Period<sup>9</sup> and very common in e.g. Asia Minor. The earliest occurrence of this formula in the Bosphorus cannot be dated, because relevant inscriptions are dated very broadly to the Byzantine period. The earliest known Christian inscription from the area with a fixed date is CIRB, p. 937, no 3 Addenda (Pantikapaion, AD 304).<sup>10</sup> The earliest parallel for the full formula with a fixed date from the region is an inscription from Theodosia dated to AD 980.<sup>11</sup>

2-3 Θεόδωρος is a very popular Greek name. *Omega* exchanged for *omicron* is also attested in the Bosphorus in the Roman period<sup>12</sup> and seems to be almost routine in the Byzantine period. The form Θεωδορος (with *Omicron* replaced with *Omega*) is attested in Korasion (Asia Minor, MAMA 3, 136, end of the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century AD).

5. ἀναγνώστης – well attested function of lector or reader in a church or synagogue. In the Church – and our inscription indicates a Christian context because of the formula – were even tonsured,<sup>13</sup> which was a mark of the lower ecclesiastical orders.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Egypt, which is known relatively well thanks to papyri, it was said that lectors were appointed generally to the episcopal churches and cases of lecturer appointed to the “ordinary” church are in Egypt very few.<sup>15</sup> If we accept this point of view, we can assume that Theodoros was a lector appointed to the episcopal church and in consequence that Tyritake was the seat of a bishop in the Byzantine period. For the exchange of *omicron* and *omega*, see above.

6. ἐτελιώ[θη – the death formula appears among Christians in the late 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>16</sup>

#### Date:

Without an archaeological context and with the paleography and textual context not decisive, I am inclined toward a broader date for the site in general. Tyritake was the seat of a bishop in the Byzantine period and Christianity stayed an important and offensive religion also under Khazar rule as indicated by the foundation of the St. John Baptist Church in Pantikapaion, which is dated to AD 717. The religious factor does not seem to be decisive as well. Thus, we have only the archaeological context from Tyritake as “circumstantial evidence” for the dating of the stelae. Tyritake was

<sup>9</sup> (CIRB), 1051a: ἐνθάδε κατάκιτε ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ Κωνσταντῖνος ἱερεὺς καὶ Νι[.]ΜΑ[.] (Hermonassa, Byzantine period).

<sup>10</sup> It is a short funerary inscription with a similar formula: ἐνθάδε κατάκιτε Εὐτρόπις χα'. Its Christian character is proved by a large cross incised in the stone below the text.

<sup>11</sup> (Latyshev V. V., 1896), 75: ἐνθάδε κατάκιτε ἡ δούλη τ<ο>ῦ θεοῦ Ἑλένη μοναχὴ· ἐτελιώθη μηνὴ Μαΐου ἰα', ἡμέρᾳ δ', ὥρᾳ α'. ἐτελειώθη ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ θεοῦ Ταμγάν μηνὴ Μαΐου ἰγ', ἡμέρᾳ Παρασκευῆ, ὥρᾳ ζ', ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ ἔτους ,ςτκζ' (=980 AD)

<sup>12</sup> (CIRB), pp. 801-802, §4, 8

<sup>13</sup> (Ioannidou, 1997), p. 162

<sup>14</sup> (Sophocles, 1914) s.v.

<sup>15</sup> (Wipszycka, 1983) pp. 117-118, especially footnote 2.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. IGLSyrie 4, 1506 (AD 378)

inhabited in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, too, but in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, under Khazar rule, the locality declined. Therefore, the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD should be assumed as an *ante quem* date for this inscription.

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