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WRITTEN SOURCES ON BYZANTINE PORTS IN THE CRIMEA FROM THE FOURTH TO SEVENTH CENTURY

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Laconic accounts of written sources document that the fourth–seventh century Crimea had two large ports in the cities of Bosphoros and Cherson and a harbour in the Bay of Symbols (Balaklava). Cherson was a large port of transit located at the shortest sea route from Byzantium, which started in the port of Sinope.

Written sources supply ambiguous evidences on the Byzantine annexation of Bosphoros in the first decades of the sixth century. The city became an important Byzantine port on the side of the Strait of Bosphoros, where the roads to North Caucasus, Caspian steppes, Western Turkish khanate, and China passed.

The port town of Sudak was first mentioned in the «Cosmography» by an anonymous author of Ravenna from the late seventh century under the name of «Sugdabon» (from Greek Sougdaia). In the first half of the eighth century, dynamically growing economy of the eastern Crimea made Sougdaia an important Khazar port in the area.

Key words: Cherson, Bosphoros, port.

Laconic accounts of written sources document that the fourth–seventh century Crimea had two large ports in the cities of Bosphoros (Fig. 1) and Cherson and a harbour in the Bay of Symbols (Balaklava). Anonymous author of the *Periplus of Pontos Euxeinos* lists Theodosia among the Pontic cities, though ancient Theodosia was ruined in the fourth century. Archaeological excavations have uncovered there only the finds from Classical, Genoese, and Ottoman periods. The layers of the fourth-century destruction were overlaid by thick sterile layer; above, there was a layer containing fragments of glazed pottery, amphorae, and coins from the 1340s–1380s or the fourteenth century. In M. V. Agbunov's opinion, the book known as «Anonymous Periplus» and usually dated to the fifth century is an enlarged version of the *Periplus* compiled by Arrian, so its main contents originates from the second century [1, c 13–14]. M. V. Skrzhinskaya has provided well-reasoned arguments to date the *Periplus* to the early sixth century [15, c. 115, 120, 124.]. We might explain the appearance of Theodosia in the *periplus* by an anonymous author of Ravenna from the late seventh century in result of he made an uncritical compilation of early *periploi* [53, c. 111–114].

The port of Pantikapaion was established by Greek colonists from Miletos in the sixth century BC on the side of the strait connecting the Pontos and the Maiotis. The port of Chersonesos was constructed in the fifth century BC by the Greeks from Herakleia Pontika on the side of the Karantinnaya Bay, which was sheltered from all the sea winds. It provided a very convenient station for ancient Greek and Byzantine ships. The harbour on the side of deep and twisting Bay of Symbols was first mentioned by Strabo (ca. 64/63 BC – ca. 23/24 AD), Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD), and the second-century *Periplus* by Arrian [14, c. 29].

Written sources and archaeological surveys materials supply enough evidences that the city of Chersonesos and the Harbour of Symbols were annexed by the Eastern Roman

empire in the second half of the fourth century [9; 48; 58]. In the fourth and fifth century, the name of Chersonesos remained the same as in ancient period, though historians from the sixth century and later called the city Cherson. This city port was the ending of maritime trade routes from Constantinople and other Byzantine ports in the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea. Although Cherson was close to Constantinople by sea, Procopius localizes Cherson «at the extremity of the Roman Empire» [34, 50].

The ports of Chersonesos and Bosporos developed economical contacts with the new imperial capital. In rhetorician Themistios' words, Bosporos and Chersonesos belonged to the most important suppliers of grain to Constantinople in the early 360s. [32, c. 531–532]. Zosimos informs us that Julian's nephew Procopius hid in Chersonesos after the failed plot against Valens and escaped from its port to Constantinople in 365 by taking a passing ship [58, c. 266]. In 366, Phronemios, guilty of Procopius' treason, was banished to the city.

The Theodosian Code contains a novel informing about shipbuilding in Chersonesos. In September 419, emperors Honorios and Theodosios II published a decree freeing the Chersonesites from punishment for the betraying of the secrets of shipbuilding to the barbarians, because of the petition of the bishop of their city, Asklepiades [31].

There is an inscription from Chersonesos from 488 AD, [11, c. 10–15] indicating that emperor Zeno (474–491) transferred the government of this city to Byzantine officials. The garrison of Cherson was subordinated to the vicar, ad hoc officer at the commander of the army (magister militum) stationed in the province of Thrace [20, c. 559–560]. Apart from other duties, this vicariate governed the *πρακτει~ον*, or customs, which collected taxes and duties particularly from merchant ships. These means were used to support ballistarii and to repair fortress walls. The mentioned inscription states that the vicariate and *prakteion* were headed by komes Diogenes, who represented the imperial administration. He obviously was supreme military and civil commander in the city [26, c. 397]. From the fact that the customs existed in this city, we might infer that the latter was included into the Byzantine trade network. Zacharias the Rhetorician informs that Monophysite patriarch Timothy Ailouros, who was banished to Cherson in the early 460s, still kept contacts with his supporters in Tomis and in the cities of Syria and Egypt [39, c. 79–80]. Most likely, these contacts were performed by passing merchant ships.

The fifth-century inscriptions from Kerch and the Taman peninsula allow us to suppose that the Bosporan kingdom kept its independence to the late fifth century [2; 6; 27]. There is an inscription about building discovered in Kerch and dated to 483 AD by Yu. G. Vinogradov; it mentions king Douptounos, a representative of local dynasty of Tiberii Julii, as well as komes Sauagos and other supreme officials at the royal court. Yu. G. Vinogradov has provided well-reasoned arguments that the name of the same official, komes Sauagos, occurs in other inscriptions from Kerch and the Taman peninsula [6, c. 234–240]. The latest of them is the inscription on a wall of a catacomb constructed in 491/2 AD [7, c. 4].

Written sources supply ambiguous evidences on the Byzantine annexation of Bosporos in the first decades of the sixth century.

The chronicle of Zachariah the Rhetorician of Mitylene, finished in 569, tells that emperor Justin I (517–527) sent Probos on an embassy to the Huns «in order to hires some

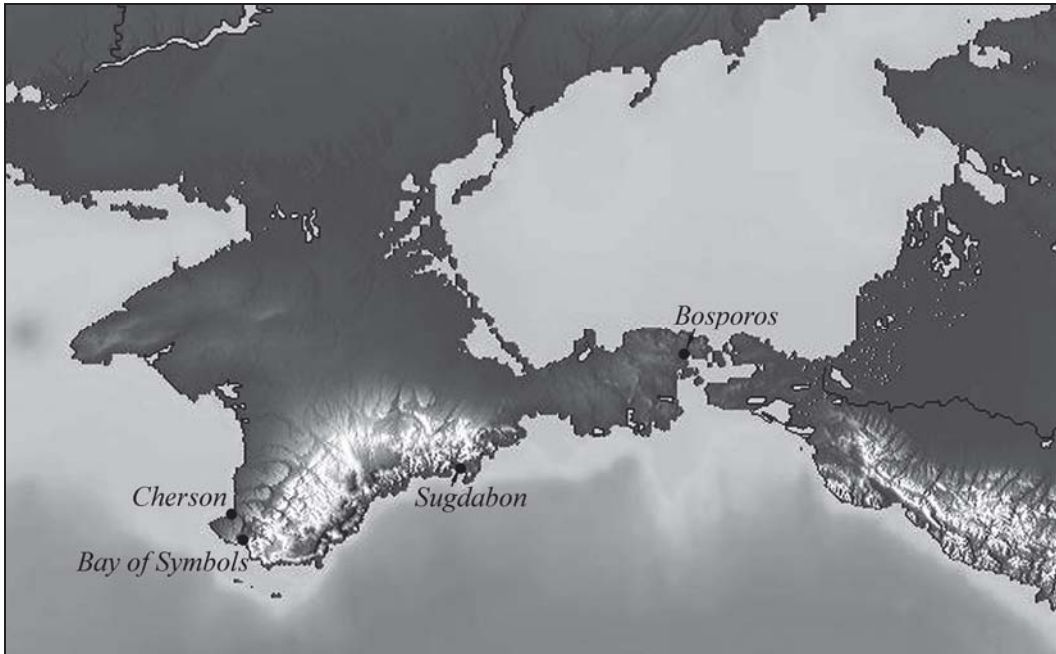
of them to meet the nations in war» [13, c. 398, 596] According to Procopius, Justin I in 522 sent patrikios Probos to Bosporos with a great sum of money in order to establish *symmachia* (alliance) with neighbouring Huns and to send them to wage war against the Persians in Iberia. This mission failed [51–52].

Procopius suggests several versions of the Byzantine annexation of Bosporos in different books of his history of the wars. In the first volume of his «Persian War,» he mentions the Bosporians, who had been autonomous since ancient time, but lately decided to become subject to the emperor Justin I, [51] though the second volume of the «Persian War» discusses how Justinian I (527–565) annexed Bosporos that was subject of the Huns [51–52]. Moreover, the account of the reign of Justinian I in the book of the «Gothic War» states that the city of Bosporos was subordinated by Romans not so long ago [52]. In the book of the «Buildings,» Procopius characterized the achievements of Justinian I: «He strengthened the defences of Bosporus particularly, which in ancient times had been a barbarous city lying under the power of the Huns, but which he himself had brought under Roman sway» [50, c. 10–12]. Therefore, we can see that the mentioned works by Procopius call Bosporos both an independent city and a subject to the Huns, who roamed in steppes between Chersonesos and Bosporos, near the Pontos and the Maiotis.

Contemporaries of Procopius, John Malalas (ca. 491–578) and John of Ephesus (507–586) have described how the leader of the Huns, who lived near Bosporos, Gordas arrived to Constantinople, was baptised there, and returned to Bosporos [13; 44]. The account of that event by John Malalas was reproduced in later chronicles of John of Nikiu [29, c. 161, 66] and Theophanes, [22, c. 51, 79, 80] as well as in the «Sagas» by Landulfus [43, c. 369] and in «Synopsis Historion» by George Kedrenos [30, c. 644–665]. The second part of John of Ephesus' «History» is included into works of Pseudo-Dionysios of Tell Machre and Michael the Syrian [13, c. 310–111]. Gordas arrived to Constantinople in the first year of Justinian I's reign according to Malalas, though according to John of Ephesus in 534. In Malalas' words, the emperor himself stood sponsor for the Hun and after bestowing many gifts upon him sent him away to his home country, to guard the roman territory and Bosporos. The emperor stationed in the city a troop of Roman soldiers, who were Italians called Spaniards, under a tribune. The city of Bosporos was a place of transactions between Romans and Huns. After Gordas returned to his country, he melted down Hunnic idols of silver and electrum and exchanged them for *miliaresia* in Bosporos. The Hunnic priests were furious, so they incited the Huns to kill Gordas. His brother Mougel came to power. The Huns seized Bosporos and destroyed its Byzantine garrison. The emperor dispatched to Bosporos a squadron with a troop of Goths under the command of apohypatos John, the komes of the Straits of the Pontos Euxeinos, by sea, and, simultaneously, sent Godilas and stratelates Badorias, the strategos of Thrace, against the Huns by land from Odysopolis. On hearing that the Byzantines are coming, the Huns fled from the city, which was taken by the Roman army. Theophanes and Malalas date these events to 527/528 [22; 29; 44].

In result of the mentioned events, the ports that formerly belonged to the Bosporan kingdom were annexed by the Byzantine empire. The text of a building inscription from the Taman peninsula, dated by V. V. Latyshev to 533, [10, c. 567–569] informs about the establishment of the self-government in the city of Bosporos. According to D. Feissel, this inscription mentions tribune Angoulates and a *pater civitatis* (πατρικίου τριβουνου πλεωζ).

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Byzantine Ports in the Crimea from the Fourth to Seventh Century. Cherson, Bosporos, Bay of Symbols (Balaklava) – ports IV – VII centuries; Sugdabon (Sudak) – port the end of the VII century.



Port of Bosporus (Kerch)



Port in a bay of Symbols (Balaklava)



House of the fisherman of the sixth century

D. Feissel has supposed that tribune Angoulates was Isaurian by origin. From the fourth century on, *pater civitatis* in Byzantine self-government supervised over public works and was responsible for military depots [27; 36; 37]. The city became an important Byzantine port on the side of the Strait of Bosphoros, where the roads to North Caucasus, Caspian steppes, Western Turkish khanate, and China passed. Justinian I ordered destroyed walls of the city of Bosphoros to be reinforced [50, c. 12–13].

The materials uncovered by archaeological excavations supply evidences that former urban planning and limits of Bosphoros survived. T. I. Makarova has discovered in the sea-side part of the city remains of a basilica church (baptismal font and water well), which was probably built under Justinian I [12, c. 140]. Bosphoros imported various types of amphorae, red-slip and glass vessels from many Mediterranean and Black Sea centres [2; 16; 17]. Apart from trade, metal-working, and ship-building, Bosphoros kept traditional branch of its economy, industrial fishing and fish-processing. Fishers probably lived in the sea-side area of the city, not far from the port. In that very area, at the foot of Mitridat hill, close to the house of the Kerch Historical and Archaeological Preserve, in 2007–2008, the team of the Crimean Branch of the Institute of Oriental studies uncovered sites of residential and industrial buildings in three houses of fishmongers, dated to the sixth century. Excavation of one of these houses unearthed a fish-salting cistern, plastered with dark-pink *opus signinum*.

Cherson was a large port of transit located at the shortest sea route from Byzantium, which started in the port of Sinope. Menander describes how the Byzantines sailed along that route. In 576, Tiberios, in order to get assistance from the Turks in the war with Persia that resumed in 573, sent them an embassy with Valentine at the head. This embassy sailed on ships through Sinope to Chersonesos and thence by sea along the southern coast of the Crimea to Bosphoros [2; 28]. In Jordanes' words, Cherson received goods delivered by Asian merchants [41, c. 37].

In 576, the Turks and their allies Utigurs [8, c. 12–14] seized Bosphoros, [28] burning and destroying urban quarters on Mitridat hill and in the coastal area; in 581, they menaced Cherson. A fragment of inscription discovered at the southern defensive wall: «This wall [or tower] was built... under [our most pious masters Justin] and Sophia... and under [works]... of the doux [of Cherson]... his serene highness Theagenes» [19, c. 213–214] documents the appearance of the doux in this city [21, c. 560]. In frontier areas, doux commanded local army and headed civil administration [42, c. 282–283]. Obviously, the mentioned events forced the administration of Justin II (565–578) to rearrange the government of the Byzantine possessions in the Crimea and to strengthen the defences of Cherson. An inscription from Taman peninsula informs that stratelates and doux of Cherson Eupaterios by name restored a «kaiser's house» in Bosphoros [10, c. 671–672]. This document informs that the imperial power was restored in Bosphoros and the imperial possessions in the Crimean peninsula were governed by single administration of the doux of Cherson [27, c. 89–90].

However, the quarters in the city of Bosphoros remained not restored throughout the seventh century. My excavations in the city centre discovered that only one of the three burnt down houses was restored. A Christian cemetery was arranged on the side of Mitri-

dat hill and above the ruins of the fishermen's quarter mentioned above. They continued to salt fish in cisterns located in the maritime area of the city [12, c. 140–141].

According to scant accounts of written sources, the seventh-century Chersonesos remained the main Byzantine port city in the Crimea keeping wide trade connections. These connections are also documented by the seventh-century seals of Byzantine kommerkiarioi discovered in Cherson, including the seal of the general kommerkiarios of the apotheke of Constantinople from 688/689 [18, c. 305–206]. A letter written by Roman pope Martin I informs us that the empire imported salt from the city [4, c. 179, 187].

Cherson was a place where delinquents were sent to exile by sea. According to the scholia on the Life of Euprepios (died in 655) and Theodoros (died in 667) in the *Collectanea* by Anastasios the Librarian from the ninth century, [24; 45; 57] they were banish to Cherson. In 655, pope Martin was exiled to Cherson [4, c. 179].

Theophanes, Nikephoros, and Ananias of Širak inform of the Khazar expansion into the Pontic steppe between 660 and 665 [21, c. 330–332]. Nikephoros wrote that the Khazars «invaded with complete impunity» all the settlements at the Pontos [47, c. 88–89]. There is a thick layer of conflagration with a coin from 654–659 discovered in the seaside part of the Bosphoran own, informing about the terminus post quem for the Khazar invasion to the northern Black Sea area. The date of this fire corresponds to the «Armenian Geography» account that the Khazars occupied the northern Black Sea area before 665 [3, 25, 40].

From the information of Theophanes [56, c. 519–523] and Nikephoros [47, c. 106–109] on the events related to Justinian II's exile to Cherson in 695, we might reasonably suppose that the Khazars conquered almost all the Crimea. Theophanes mentions Papatzys, the governor of Phanagoreia, and Baltizis, the archon of Bosphoros [22]. Nikephoros refers to the governor of Phanagoreia as the «archon of his [khagan's] tribesmen.» [22, 47]. A. A. Vasiliev has considered that the terms κ προσπου ανδ ρχων are Greek interpretations of Turkish term tudun [22, 57]. The word Βαλγτζις ισ Turkish, with its etymology derived from Turkish Bulgi (Bolgi)tsi, Balgichi, «governor.» [36, 46, 49, 59]. The tenth-century Khazar-Hebrew document from Cambridge calls the khagan's governor of the Asiatic Bosphoros BWLSSY (baliqci). He also was HMQR (hapaqid), and this Hebrew word signifies the «commander of a troop or a garrison» [38, c. 116–117]. The cited sources are unequivocal about the Khazar occupation of the port cities of Bosphoros and Phanagoreia, so they established control over the Strait of Bosphoros, the most important section of the way from Byzantium to the Azov Sea and thence to Asia.

The port town of Sudak was first mentioned in the «Cosmography» by an anonymous author of Ravenna from the late seventh century under the name of «Sugdabon» (from Greek Sougdaia) [5, 54]. The Sougdoi probably migrated to the south-eastern Crimea in the last quarter of the seventh century, being pressed by the Khazars. It was the Byzantine name of the Adygians who lived at the lower reaches of the Kuban river. They established trading and industrial settlement of Sougaia on the sea coast. The earliest in Sudak is a seal from 696/697, of Kyriakos, apohypatos and general kommerkiarios and general logothetes of Constantinople [23, c. 120–121]. In the first half of the eighth century, dynamically growing economy of the eastern Crimea made Sougdaia an important Khazar port in the area. They probably created their customs in the city in the early eighth century. There

are more than 400 Byzantine seals from the eighth to twelfth century discovered in the water area of the port. V. S. Shandrovskaia has published the mentioned seal of Kyriakos and those of general kommerkiarioi of the apothekai of Honorias, Paphlagonia, and Pontic coast imperial balnitor Anastases and hypatos John from the period of joint reign of Leo III and Constantine V in 720–741, as well as of the «imperial kommerkia of the eparchies in Opsikion, protected by God» from 745/746, [23, 55] supplying information that Sougdaia conducted direct trading with Constantinople and Byzantine ports in the Asia Minor.

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Айбабин А. И. Письменные источники о византийских портах в Крыму в четвертом – седьмом веках / А. И. Айбабин // Ученые записки Таврического национального университета имени В. И. Вернадского. Серия «Исторические науки». – 2013. – Т. 26 (65), № 2 – С. 156–166.

В немногословных сообщениях письменных источниках зафиксировано функционирование в IV – VII вв. в Крыму двух крупных портов в городах Боспор и Херсон и гавани в бухте Символов (Балаклава). Херсон являлся крупным транзитным портом на самом коротком морском пути из Византии, начинавшемся в порту Синопа.

В письменных источниках содержатся неоднозначные свидетельства о присоединении Боспора к Византии в первые десятилетия VI в. Город стал важным византийским портом, на берегу Боспорского пролива, через которые проходил пути на Северный Кавказ, в Прикаспийские степи, в Западный Тюркский каганат и в Китай. Юстиниан I, повелел укрепить разрушенные стены города Боспора.

Портовый город Судак впервые упомянут в Космографии Равеннского анонима конца VII в., где он назван Сугдеей «Sugdabon». Вероятно, под давлением хазар в Юго-Восточный Крым в последней четверти VII в. переселились сугды. В первой половине VIII в. благодаря динамичному росту экономики Восточного Крыма Сугдея стала важным хазарским торговым портом региона.

Ключевые слова: Херсон, Боспор, порт.

Айбабін О. І. Письмові джерела про візантійські порти у Криму в IV–VII століттях / О. І. Айбабін // Вчені записки Таврійського національного університету імені В. І. Вернадського. Серія «Історичні науки». – 2013. – Т. 26 (65), № 2 – С. 156–166.

У небагатьох згадках письмових джерел зафіксовано функціонування у IV–VII ст. у Криму двох великих портів у містах Боспор та Херсон та гавані у бухті Символів (Балаклава). Херсон був великим транзитним портом на самому курортному морському шляху з Візантії, який розпочинався у порту Сінопу.

У письмових джерелах містяться неоднозначні свідчення о приєднанні Боспору до Візантії у перші десятиліття VI ст. Місто стало важливим візантійським портом, на березі Боспорської протоки, через яку проходив шлях на Північний Кавказ, у Прикаспійські степи, у Західний Тюркський каганат та до Китаю. Юстиніан I звелів укріпити зруйновані стіни Боспору.

Портове місто Судак вперше згадується у Космографії Равенського аноніма кінця VII ст., де від названий Суднеєю «Sugdabon». Скоріш за все, під натиском хазар до Південно-Східного Криму в останній чверті VII ст. переселилися сугди. У першій половині VIII ст. завдяки динамічному росту економіки Східного Криму Сугдея стала важливим хазарським торговельним портом регіону.

Ключові слова: Херсон, Боспор, порт.

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