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The Archaeological Map of Nymphaion

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The Archaeological Map of Nymphaion (Pl. 72)

One of the main tasks fulfilled within the boundaries of the international project „Nymphaion – The History and Structure of a Greek polis”, carried out under the scientific guidance of professor Aleksandra Wąsowicz (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw), was to study the rural hinterland of Nymphaion¹.

The introductory works were begun in 1993: Polish party was represented by the author of the present paper (Institute of Archaeology, Warsaw University), Russian party by Sergej Solov'ev, Ph.D. (the Hermitage Museum, Petersburg), and Ukrainian party by Viktor Zin'ko, Ph.D. (State Committee for Protection of Monuments of the History and Culture of Crimea, Simferopol – Kerč). Unfortunately, from 1995, that is, from the beginning of systematic field survey, the work was conducted only by two teams: Polish and Ukrainian².

The first two years were devoted to the theoretical preparation for the field work: detailed study of the field and weather conditions, new, particularly, to the Polish group. Early autumn was selected due to the fact that usually at that time the crops are already harvested and the steppe vegetation, dried out by the sun. This is also a period of university summer break. The duration of the survey was one month, due to the financial and organizational capabilities of the parties. The survey was conducted on the basis of experiences gathered during the long-term application of the project called the Polish Archaeological Record³.

This method consists of three stages: the first one embraces a systematic field survey preceded by a study of the archival material possible, in the case of the Nymphaion, only thanks to the help of our colleagues. The studied area of ca 70 square kilometres was divided into squares of the area of 1 km², each of which was systematically investigated. The groups of up to 7 people walked in an extended line at the distance (depending on the conditions) between 5 and 15 m. At the second stage the documentation based mainly on the Archaeological

Site Recording Forms was prepared (similar to the one used for the Polish Archaeological Record with the changes necessary due to the specific character of the studied area resulting i.a., from the experiences of the Russian and Ukrainian teams). The third stage consisted in the analysis and presentation of the results in a publication. The full documentation of the research is stored in the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, PAS (Warsaw) and Bosporskij Archeologičeskij Centr Goskomiteta po ochrane i ispol'zovaniju pamjatnikov istorii i kul'tury (Kerč).

The original intention was also to conduct a large-scale geophysical, geological and geographical, antropological and osteological, paleobotanical, and underwater research. Cooperation was established with a specialist in interpreting aerial and satellite photography, Loic Menanteau, Ph.D., from the CNRS in Nantes. Besides Mr Menanteau, the cooperation was also established with the geophysicists from the IAE, PAS: Tomasz Herbich, M.A. and Krzysztof Misiewicz, Ph.D.; a geologist, Tomasz Nowicki, M.A., from the Institute of Geophysical Sciences, PAS (Warsaw); a geographer, Małgorzata Mycke-Dominko Ph.D. from the Department of Geography, Warsaw University, and an archaeologist, Radosław Karasiewicz-Szczypiorski, M.A., from the Institute of Archaeology, Warsaw University. The Ukrainian team included i.a., Igor' Ačkinazi, Ph.D., from Nacional'naja Akademija Nauk Ukrainy (Simferopol) and Leonid Ponomarev, M.A., from Bosporskij Archeologičeskij Centr (Kerč) – both archaeologists with excellent knowledge of the local archaeological realities. Unfortunately, despite so eminent collaborators, for several reasons, our original plans had to be limited.

At the outset of the field survey in 1995, the area to be studied was already determined (70 square km, limited from the north by Lake Čurubaš, from the south by Lake Tobečik, and from the east by the Kerč Strait: the fourth limit was to be established by the survey). The field work was to be conducted with the use of a map, scale

¹ This text was delivered during the International Congress „Nymphaion IV. The History and Structure of a Greek Polis”, Warsaw, 22-23 Nov. 1998. About the Project see: A. WĄSOWICZ, *Nymphaion Project*, *Archeologia*Warsz 45, 1994 (1995), p. 69-72.

² T. SCHOLL, V. ZIN'KO, *Archeologiczna mapa Nymphaion*,

KwHKM 46, 1997, 1, p. 6-65. Also see T. SCHOLL, V. ZIN'KO, *The archaeological map Nymphaion*, Warsaw 1999 /in print/.

³ R. MAZUROWSKI, *Metodyka archeologicznych badań powierzchniowych*, Warszawa 1980; Polish Archaeological Record – method and experiences an attempted assessment. Ed. by DANUTA JASKANIS, Warsaw 1996.

1:25 000, which we obtained thanks to S. Solov'ev. Fortunately, at the very introductory stage (and not later) it appeared that this map did not reflect the reality accurately, and therefore we used maps, scale 1:10 000, which were made on the basis of the original map. This allowed us to make detailed records of the observed changes in the landscape and of the kinds of existing vegetation – the information useful in the interpretation of satellite pictures. Sites from various periods of human activity (from the 2nd millennium B.C. till modern times) were numbered within respective squares. The form of the Recording Form was established jointly; the Ukrainian team carried out trial excavations and studied the archival materials and V. Zin'ko determined the functions and dating of the discovered artefacts, who also dealt with the formalities, i.a., obtained the licence to carry out our joint investigations. The Polish team ensured the participation of the students from the Institute of Archaeology, Warsaw University, who conducted the field work, provided the equipment, and prepared the documentation.

Unfortunately, contrary to our expectations, the weather conditions proved to be untypical and unfavourable: frequent rains resulted in a lush growth of the vegetation and changed the loess soils into mud.

Our base was located in the village of Geroevka (Čl'tigen), one of the three villages situated in the studied area; the other ones being Ogon'ki (Ortel') and Čeljadino (Tobečik). The first-mentioned names are Russian, and the second, Tatar ones. The full exchange of population from 1944 resulted in the change of names of villages. Today, some of these names are used interchangeably, e.g., Geroevka-Čl'tigen. Part of the shore of the Kerč Strait is occupied by farmhouses, part by the holiday centres and the few in this area allotments. From the north-western side the investigated area is adjoined by the village of Priozernoe (Čurubaš). Considerable problems were caused by the fact that some of the fields were not harvested, thus the prospection had to be repeated. The greatest obstacle were sunflower fields, on which field survey is impossible.

Several days were spent on studying the interior and limits of the modern open iron ore drift (middle-east part). It has been established with certainty that this area can not be investigated as it was worked opencast, roads were made there and cap-rock deposited. The whole area can be excluded from the later verification works, which should be repeated if possible. The necessity to carry out verification works is well illustrated by the example of the settlement of Čurubaš-Nižne – 2 (square 04 – 04) where,

in 1995, only one fragment of ancient pottery was found, and in 1997, after deep ploughing, an excellent site, probably connected with the fragment of water pipe found above, was discovered.

The archaeological sites which we aimed to discover were, mainly, new, so-far unknown, settlements (41), necropolises (15), pathways (6), plots (5 areas) and water pipe from the Antiquity. As it has been already said, the goal was also to discover the western limit of the hinterland of Nymphaion. We also attempted at locating the earlier excavations, which was considerably difficult due to the lack of precise information in literature about their situation, the passage of time, and the soil and weather conditions (loess soils, strong wind, seasonal heavy rain- or snowfalls, ploughing to the depth of 65cm). The extend of cemeteries was tentatively established by locating the, unfortunately successful, plunderers' pits. The basic record of barrows was also made. The barrows in this area can be usually found in groups or along the hypothetical pathways, often in a flat area (and then their interpretation is clear) or on tops of limestone hills. In the latter case, due to the strong erosion and numerous pits (which are the result of wartime activities or traces of the painstaking efforts of treasure hunters), excavations are necessary to provide their proper interpretation.

During prospection we recorded not only the Antique remains but also the earlier (from the 2nd millennium B.C.) and later ones which include i.a., the remains of Mediaeval settlement located along the shore of the Kerč Strait. It was possible to delimit this settlement known in literature as Geroevskoe selišče⁴. The still later sites include, i.a., the remains of Tatars' settlements and two Russian cemeteries from the late 19th – early 20th century.

The geophysical prospection confirmed the applicability of this method in the investigated area, but also revealed its complexity, which sometimes made the method impossible to implement. The detailed records of even single, characteristic pottery fragments (especially amphorae) with exact descriptions of the relief and vegetation of the area proved very useful for the interpretation of satellite pictures, e.g., to establish the hypothetical network of pathways.

To conclude, I would like to discuss one of the aims of our joint investigations: establishing of the western limit of the *chora* of the Antique town of Nymphaion. The historical sources indicate, that in the second half of the 5th century B.C. Nymphaion might have been an independent state⁵. It is also known that in the area of the

⁴ A. V. GADLO, *Rannesrednevekovoe selišče na beregu Kerčenskogo proliva (po materialam raskopok 1963 g.)*, KSIÄ 113, 1968, p. 78-84.

⁵ W. OLSZANIEC, *Źródła pisane do dziejów Nymfajonu (Literary sources to the history of Nymphaion)*, ArcheologiaWarsz 46, 1995 (1996), p. 81-88.

Bosporan Kingdom, earthen walls, which were either defensive walls or borderlines, were popular (e.g. Asandros wall)⁶. Moreover, there is a 19th century description of the lands to the west of Nymphaion, which contains information about an earthen, north-south oriented wall, but without its detailed location⁷. This inspired us to try to find this wall, using the information available due to the field survey, satellite pictures, and geophysical prospection.

The introductory analysis of topographical maps and the knowledge of the area provided indications as to the possible course of the wall (I – III). The size of Nymphaion and its organizational potential were also taken into consideration. A detailed analysis of the artefacts scattering on the area revealed a clear borderline between the material dated to the 6th-5th century B.C. and that dated to the 4th-3rd century B.C. The only fragment of pottery dated to the 5th century B.C. found in the western part (square 08 – 10), should rather be linked with the site of Ogon'ki (or perhaps it was moved here in modern times). This allowed to reject one of the proposed locations of the wall: the extremely western one (I). It seems that it also has been explained why this and not any other hypothetical course of the wall in its central part was assumed. Namely, to the west there is an unsettled area connected with the configuration of the land: in this place there is a limestone outcrop directed with its more elevated side towards the east (i.e., towards Nymphaion). As the soils there were poor and thus unsuitable for agriculture, the useless area was left unprotected and perhaps used only for grazing. Moreover, it would have been very expensive and difficult to build a wall in this area and it

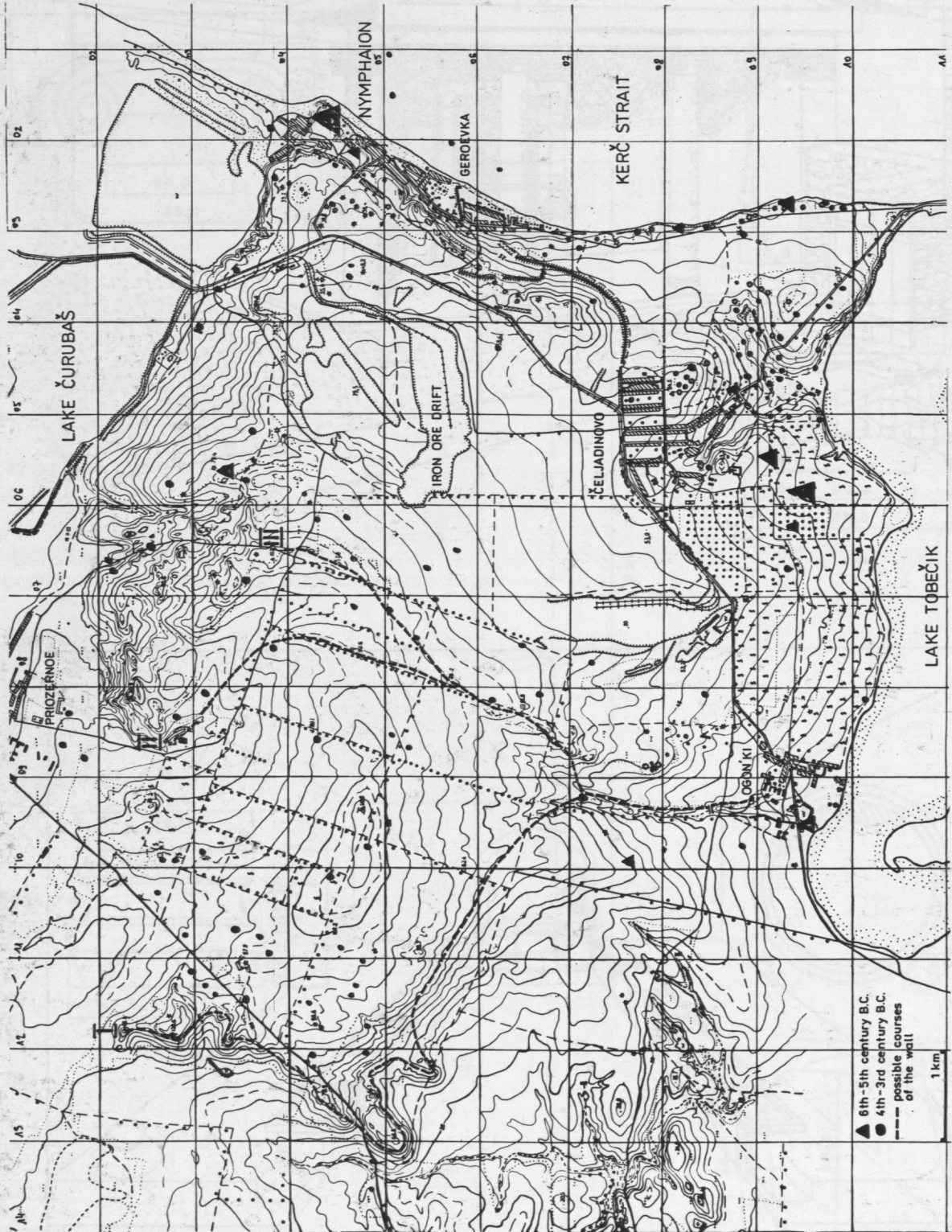
might have exceeded the financial resources of Nymphaion.

The hypothetical course of the wall (III) is as follows: to the south it began near the settlement of Ogon'ki (square 10 – 10), then it ran on the eastern part of the ravine directly to the north. Then, near the settlement of Ogon'ki – 3 (square 08 – 10), it turned slightly to the east, making a bend. The northern end of the wall probably reached the rocky hills of the Čurubaš – Skal'ki Range. During the 1995 season, a ca 200 m long, 0.5 m high, and 2 m wide at the base elevation fragment was recorded near the above-mentioned settlement (square 07 – 09). In 1997, eight geoelectrical soundings were made in that place. Unfortunately, it proved that rock outcrops are located close to the surface and this method can not yield any results. The interpretation of the satellite pictures allowed to determine better visible parts of the hypothetical course of the wall. In the most promising place, close to the settlement of Čurubaš – Južno (square 04 – 06), a similar geological configuration as that in the case of the settlement of Ogon'ki – 3, made the geophysical survey pointless. One more place (square 04 – 08), located more to the west, near a natural depression, probably a former watercourse (permanent or periodical), was also selected (II). At the area of 10 x 30 m, a number of geoelectrical soundings was carried out, and in the most promising location, a trial pit was made. The results were univocally negative – in this place there are no perceptible remains of a wall.

Thus no positive answer to the question: was there a wall or not, has been obtained.

⁶ N. I. SOKOLSKIJ, *Valy v sisteme oborony evropejskogo Bospora*, SA 27, 1957, p. 91-106; T. SCHOLL, *Fortyfikacje państwa bosforskiego od IV w. p. n. e. do połowy I w. p. n. e.*, in: St. Arch. 1, 1981, p. 344 sq.

⁷ R. V. ŠMIDT, *K issledovaniju bosporskich oboronitel'nych valov*, SA 7, 1941, p. 274; M. M. KUBLANOV, *Archeologičeskie razvedki v rajone Kop – Takilja*, KSIA 83, 1961, p. 92.



The Archaeological Map of Nymphaion (redrawn by Małgorzata Mycke-Dominko on the basis of a Russian original 1:25 000, corrected by the author).