

NEW MATERIAL FROM THE EXCAVATION OF NYMPHAEUM

O.Y. Sokolova

The Bosphoran city of Nymphaeum is situated 17 km south of Kerch, not far from the modern village of Eltigen (Geroevskoe). The ancient city-site is located on a plateau on the coast of the Kerch Strait; to its west lie barrows and a burial ground. It was established in the first half of the 6th century BC by Miletus, and had a good harbour. The surrounding land was fertile. The first archaeological investigation of the city and necropolis was carried out in the second half of the 19th century AD. Regular, large-scale excavations did not start until 1939 and have continued until the present day, being conducted throughout by the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Silanteva 1959; Khudyak 1962; Grach 1989; 1999)¹.

For the last several years the main focus of the investigation has been the architectural complex, unique for Nymphaeum, situated on the southern slope of the plateau so that it could be seen clearly from both the sea and the harbour (Sokolova 1998; Sokolova/Chistov 1998; Fig. 1). On one of the terraces the remains of monumental stone building have been excavated, exhibiting all the features of the Ionic order: Ionic capital, base and parts of fluted columns, plinth, details of cornice, simai in the form of lion masks, etc. (Sokolova 1997a; 1997b; 1998). The Ionic capital from Nymphaeum is one of the best examples of its kind to have been found in the northern Black Sea (*Drevnii Gorod* 1999, 20, no. 1; Figs. 2-3). It has close parallels with capitals from Panticapaeum (Pichikyan 1974) and Hermonassa (Arzamanov 1989, 54), is intermediate between Late Archaic East Greek and Classical Attic capitals (Charbonneau/Martin/Villard 1985, fig. 208), and, with its archaising features, can be dated to the 4th century BC. Next to the capital is a plinth and torus of Samian type, known also from Panticapaeum (Blavatskii 1957, 30; Fig. 4). Among architectural details, fragments of the cornice (Fig. 5) and sima (Fig. 6) have been discovered. These details were made from local limestone and covered by lime mortar

¹ In 1993 Russian and Ukrainian archaeologists were joined by Polish colleagues. For the results of this joint project, see *Archeologia* (Warsaw) XLV-L (1994-9); Scholl/Zin'ko 1999. On the spectacular find of a fresco of the warship 'Isis' from Nymphaeum, now see *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 1999, vol. 5, no. 4,



Fig. 1. Area "M". General view of the excavation.



Fig. 2. Ionic capital.

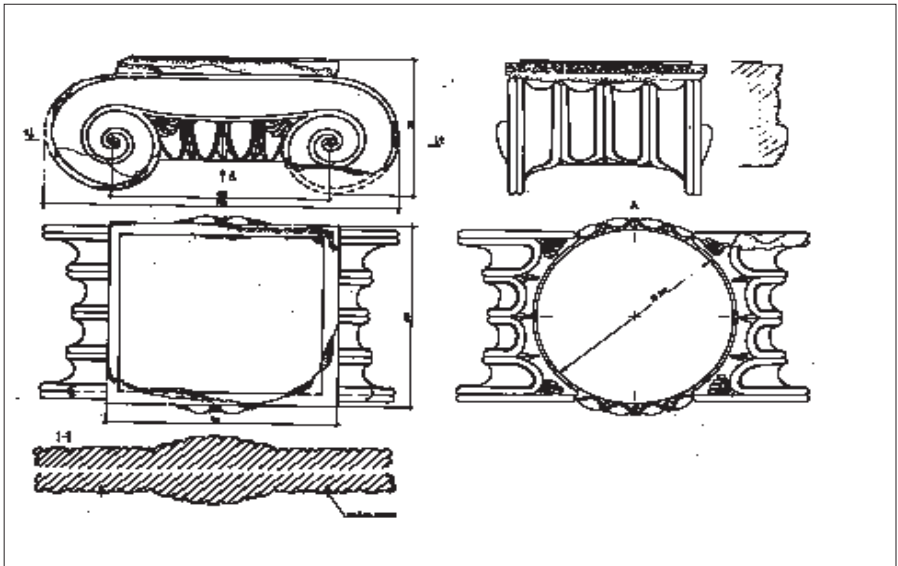


Fig. 3. Drawing of Ionic capital (see Fig. 2).

with inclusions of tiny pieces of marble. The surface was very finely polished. Some of these details were painted, such as the cornice in red, blue, and yellow, the reliefs of the capital picked out in red and blue, and the mane of the sima in yellow and the mouth in red, against a blue background. This architectural complex demonstrates clearly the influence of Ionian



Fig. 4. Base of column.

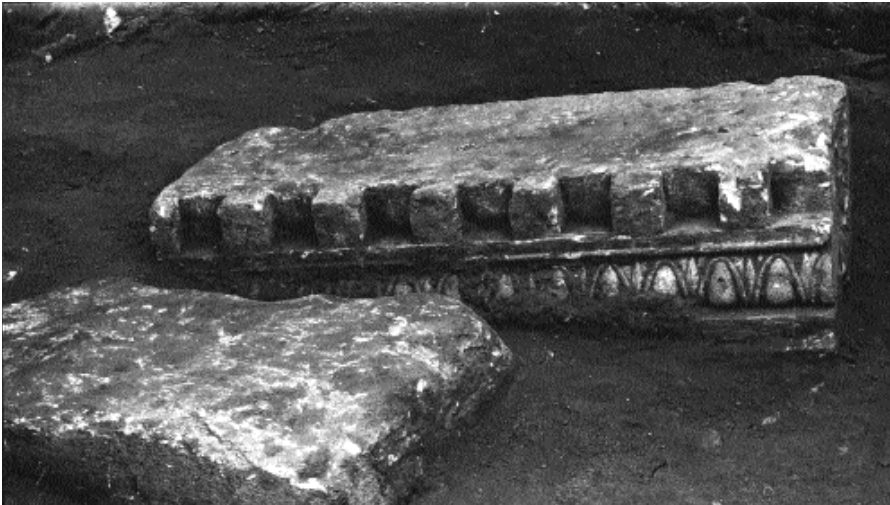


Fig. 5. Details of cornice.



Fig. 6. Sima in the form of a lion mask.

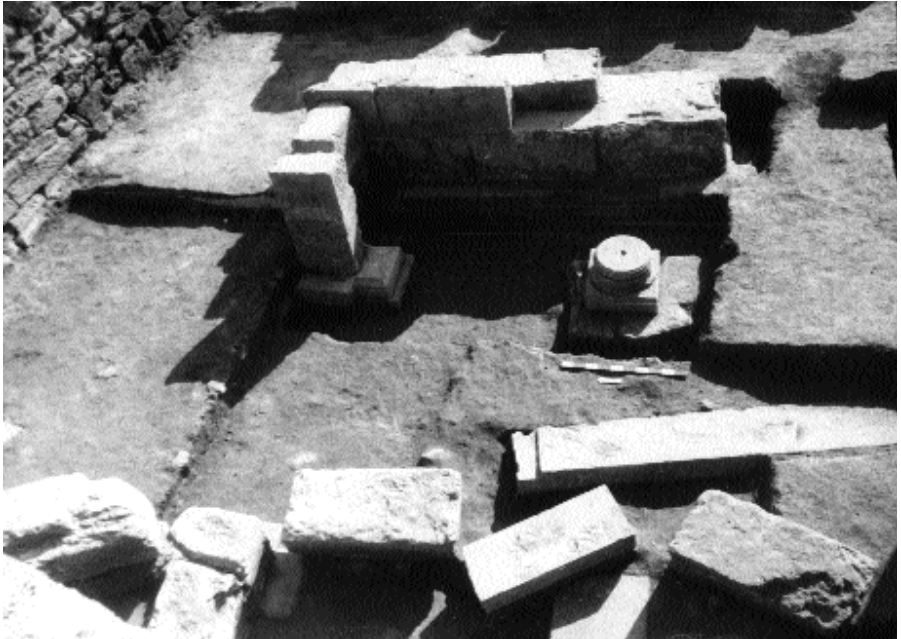


Fig. 7. Detail of propylon during excavation.



Fig. 8. Fragment of architrave with inscription.

architecture on Bosphoran practice in the 4th century BC. These details and other features found *in situ* suggest the complex to have been a propylon (Fig. 7). The strongest indication of this was found during the 2000 field season — a block of the architrave with a very well preserved inscription (Fig. 8). The inscription dates to the reign of Leucon I (389/8-349/8 BC) and attests that **ΘΕΟΠΡΟΠΙΔΗΣ ΜΕΓΑΚΛΕΟΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΙΣΟΔΟΝ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕΝ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΩ²**.

This complex was destroyed by an earthquake, as is demonstrated by cracks in the walls, displacement of stones, and the way the building elements have fallen down.

In addition to the study of the city-site, the expedition has carried out a rescue excavation of the necropolis. In 1999, in the north-eastern part of the necropolis, an interesting burial complex consisting of two graves was investigated (Sokolova 2000; Sokolova/Pavlichenko/Kasparov 1999; Fig. 9). The main one (Burial B-14) was nearly rectangular, 2.0 x 0.75 x 0.4 m, oriented north-east to south-west. The northern end of the grave was covered by slabs (Fig. 10), which were rectangular stelai tapering to a point. On two stelai inscriptions survive dating from the first half of the 5th century BC:

1. Ποσειδε²νίο το Θε²ομήστο
2. Μολπο²θέμιος ²το Ἀλεξάνδρο.

All names mentioned are quite common in Bosphoran onomastic, except for

² Preparation of the inscription for publication is under way.

one, Μολπόθεμος, which has not been encountered before in the Cimmerian Bosphorus (Pavlichenko 1999) but one case is known from a stele found in Attica and dating to 420-400 BC (*IG* 1, fasc. 2, no. 1364).

The grave has been plundered. It can be dated by fragments of amphorae with swollen necks found in the fill of the burial and in the layer above the stelai. This type of amphora is dated by I.B. Zeest (1960, 90, tabl. XIII.27) to the 5th century BC, by A.P. Abramov (1993, 33, fig. 22 [type 2.78-2.80]) to the second quarter-end of the 5th century, and by S.Y. Monakhov (1999, 116, 154) to the third quarter of the 5th century.

The second burial was 0.9 m north-west of the first and belonged to a horse, whose skeleton is poorly preserved. It was buried with iron and bronze Scythian-type horse furnishings whose styles help to date the burial to the third quarter of the 5th century BC (Mozolevskii 1980, 98, fig. 28.8; Alekseev 1991, 51-52; 1995, 55; Silanteva 1959, figs. 37, 40, 47-9; Figs. 11-3).



Fig. 9. North-east area of the necropolis. View from the north-west.



^ Fig. 10.
Stelai covering Burial B-14.



Fig. 11. Collection of bronze bridle pieces.



Fig. 12. Head of panther.



Fig. 13. Belt buckle in the form of an animal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abramov, A.P. 1993: Antichnye amfory. Periodizatsiya i khronologiya, in: *Bosporskii sbornik* 3, 4-135.
- Alekseev, A.Y. 1991: Khronologiya i khronografiya Prichernomorskoï Skifii V v. do n. e., *ASGE* 31, 43-56.
- Alekseev, A.Y. 1995: Skifskoe pogrebenie V v. do n. e. v kurgane Malaya Tsimbalka (raskopki I.E. Zabelina v 1868 godu), *ASGE* 32, 53-9.
- Arzamonov, G.F. 1989: Ioniiskaya kapitel' iz Germonassy, *VDI* 4, 49-54.
- Blavatskii, V.D. 1957: Stroitel'noe delo Pantikapeya po dannym raskopok 1945-1949 i 1952-1953 gg., *MIA* 56, 5-95.
- Charbonneau, J./R. Martin/F. Villard 1985: *Das archaische Griechenland 620-480 v. Chr.*, München.
- Drevnii gorod* 1999: *Drevnii gorod Nimfei. Katalog vystavki*, St Petersburg.
- Grach, N.L. 1989: Nimfeiskaya arkheologicheskaya ekspeditsiya (osnovnye itogi issledovaniï za 1973-1987 gg.), in: *Itogi rabot arkheologicheskikh ekspeditsii Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha*, Leningrad, 61-79.
- Grach, N.L. 1999: *Nekropol' Nimfeya*, St Petersburg.
- Khudyak, M.M. 1962: *Iz istorii Nimfeya VI-III vv. do n. e.*, Leningrad.
- Lawrence A.W. 1957: *Greek Architecture*, London.
- Monakhov, S.Y. 1999: *Grecheskie amfory v Prichernomor'e. Kompleksy keramicheskoi tary VII-II vekov do n. e.*, Saratov.
- Mozolevskii, B.N. 1980: Skifskie kurgany v okrestnostyakh g. Ordzhonikidze na Dnepropetrovshchine (raskopki 1972-1975 gg.), in: *Skifya i Kavkaz*, Kiev, 70-154.
- Pichikyan, I.R. 1974: Ioniiskaya kapitel' iz Kerchi, *VDI* 2, 105-10.
- Pavlichenko, N.A. 1999: Dve novye nadpisi iz Nimfeya, in: *Bosporskii fenomen: grecheskaya kul'tura na periferii antichnogo mira*, St Petersburg, 186-7.
- Scholl, T./V. Zin'ko 1999: *Archaeological Map of Nymphaion (Crimea)*, Warsaw.
- Silanteva, L.F. 1959: Nekropol' Nimfeya, *MIA* 69, 3-107.
- Sokolova, O.Y. 1997a: Issledovaniya Nimfeya v 1996 gody, in: *Otchetnaya arkheologicheskaya sessiya za 1996 god. Tezisy dokladov*, St Petersburg, 22-7.
- Sokolova, O.Y. 1997b: Novye nakhodki iz Nimfeya, in: *Bospori antichnyi mir*, Niznii Novgorod, 143-7.
- Sokolova, O.Y. 1998: K voprosu o pamyatnikakh ionijskogo ordena iz Nimfeya, in: *Ermitazhnye chteniya pamyati B.B. Piotrovskogo. Tezisy dokladov*, St Petersburg, 85-8.
- Sokolova, O.Y. 2000: Issledovaniya Nimfeya v 1999 gody, in: *Otchetnaya arkheologicheskaya sessiya za 1999 god. Tezisy dokladov*, St Petersburg, 19-20.
- Sokolova, O.Y./D.E. Chistov 1998: Issledovaniya Nimfeya v 1997 gody, in: *Otchetnaya arkheologicheskaya sessiya za 1997 god. Tezisy dokladov*, St Petersburg, 16-9.
- Sokolova, O.Y./N.A. Pavlichenko/A.K. Kasparov 1999: Novye nakhodki na territorii Nimfeiskogo nekropolya, *Hyperboreus* (St Petersburg) 5.2, 326-40.
- Zeest, I.B. 1960: *Keramicheskaya tara Bospora*, Moscow.

O.Y. Sokolova, Classical Department, The State Hermitage Museum,
Dvortsovaya Nab. 34, 190000 St. Petersburg, Russia.