



ANCIENT
CIVILIZATIONS
FROM SCYTHIA TO
SIBERIA

An International Journal
of Comparative Studies in History
and Archaeology

VOL. 9 NO. 1—2

ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE

www.brill.nl

BRILL

Pyckpe

Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia

Published under the aegis of
The Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente

The Center for Comparative Studies on Ancient Civilizations
(Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences)

«Ausonius»: Institut de recherches sur l'Antiquité et le Moyen-Age
(CNRS, Université de Bordeaux III)

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This journal is printed on acid-free paper

Printed in The Netherlands

THE TEMPLE OF ACHILLES ON THE ISLAND OF LEUKE IN THE BLACK SEA

ANNA S. RUSYAEVA

In 2003 it will be 180 years since N.D. Kritskii, captain-lieutenant of the Black Sea fleet, discovered the architectural remains of a temple of Achilles on the island of Leuke (present-day Zmeinï). Kritskii also drew the first and unique plan of the temple, which unfortunately did not receive the scholarly acclaim it deserved. The aim of this article is to examine all the material known about this temple in order not only to reconstruct it graphically but also to rehabilitate the plan drawn by Kritskii.

Worship of Achilles represents one of the most interesting phenomena of Greek religion in the North Pontic area, particularly in the Olbian state where his cult was most fully developed and where it reached its apogee in the first centuries AD when Achilles was venerated as Pontarchos, the Master of Pontus. From the beginning of the Milesian colonization of the Pontus, the cult of Achilles on Leuke had pan-Hellenic significance. Already by the end of the seventh – beginning of the sixth century BC, in a hymn intended for performance in the Achilleion on Cape Sigeus, Alcaeus called him the “Lord of the Scythian land” (Fr. 14 D), thus identifying him with the deities who bore the same epithets throughout the Greek world. However, the cult of Achilles was most popular among the Milesian colonists of the Lower Bug region.¹ The cult has been repeatedly examined by various scholars, especially in connection with new epigraphic and archaeological discoveries.² Scholarly debate has always focused on the origins of the Achilles cult and the period in which it first appeared in Leuke and Olbia. Achilles’ functions as Soter and as divinity in charge of earth and sea, as well as his connections with particular parts of the North Pontic area,

¹ For information on the places where Achilles was venerated in the North Pontic area, see: Rusyaeva 1975, 175-185; *ead.* 1979, 122-140 – with bibliography; Emets 2002, 64-69.

² See more detailed account with bibliography: Tolstoi 1918, 3-87; Leipunska 1970, 60-73; Rusyaeva 1975, 174-185; *ead.* 1979, 122-140; *ead.* 1990, 40-61; *ead.* 1992, 70-83; Hommel 1980 = Hommel 1981, 53-76; Ehrhardt 1983, 179-180; Kurbatov 1982, 81-96; Hooker 1988, 1-7; Hedreen 1991, 314-330; Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993; Okhotnikov 1998, 37-45; Bujskich 2001, 317-332; Buiskikh 2001, 34-43; Bravo 2001, 49-114; Diatropov 2001, 11-23.

including nomadic Scythia, were also important.³ Interestingly, the temple of Achilles on the island of Leuke (the most sacred place of the cult in the Euxine) rarely attracted attention of scholars.

An examination of literary testimonia compared with architectural remains discovered on Leuke could shed new light on the old debate about the appearance and plan of the temple of Achilles. This approach could also help to date the initial construction of the temple as well as its later reconstruction together with local peculiarities of its layout.

Let us first examine these few testimonia mentioning the temple on the island, found in the works of the ancient authors. Unfortunately, none of these give information on the temple's appearance and whether it might have resembled other Greek temples. In contrast to the vivid description of the majestic temple of Artemis on Cape Parthenos among the Taurians, which may not have existed at all (Eurip. *Iphig. Taur.* 70-134), Euripides only briefly mentions the temple of Achilles on Leuke. In his "Andromache," written in the late 420s BC, Thetis, the mother of the hero, addresses his father Peleus: "You will see our beloved son Achilles dwelling in the house on the White Island in the Euxine Sea" (Eur. *Androm.* 1260-1262). It seems to be the earliest direct mention of the temple on Leuke. It appears to have been known in Athens at that time that Achilles was venerated on Leuke and that there was also a temple there. Euripides does not use the common term ναός or νεώς, but δόμος, "house," which is often used in the poetic texts in particular, to designate a temple. Ancient Greeks believed a temple to be the house of a divinity, in which the god dwelled in the form of a cult statue.

The temple of Achilles is mentioned later by the paradoxographer Antigonos Carystian (III century BC), who reports that on the island of Leuke no bird can fly higher than the temple of Achilles – τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως ναόν (Antigon. Caryst. 122, 134). The majority of testimonia is preserved in the literary sources of the first centuries AD. Among those, information given by Dio Chrysostom is of utmost importance. He mentions two temples built by the citizens of Olbia on the so-called island of Achilles and in Olbia (Dion. Chrysost. *Orat.* XXXVI, 21-23).

Arrian reports that in the Achilles temple on the island there was a xoanon (usually understood as the earliest image of a deity) of Achilles: "On the island there is a temple (νεώς) with its xoanon (ξόανον) of ancient origin" (Arrian. *Peripl.* 32). However, he did not visit Leuke himself, when, in 132 AD he travelled along the southern and eastern shores of the Euxine, reaching

³ Cf. Boltenko 1962, 16-20; Raevskii 1980, 49-71; Rusyaeva 1990, 48-51.

Dioscurias. Arrian did not precisely know Olbia's location, but evidently he was very much interested in this temple of Achilles, since he collected a great deal of information on it from the travellers who visited the island and became very knowledgeable on the subject. Interestingly, Arrian points out that this information did not seem unbelievable to him (Arrian. *Peripl.* 34). He favoured "Achilles among other heroes because of his noble lineage, his beauty, mental strength, and because he left this world at such a young age, also because of glorifying verses of Homer, and because of constancy in love and friendship" (Arrian. *Peripl.* 34).

Arrian's data is very important for our examination: since his *Periplus* was composed especially for the Roman emperor Hadrian, the information given there has to be trustworthy. In all instances Arrian uses the term νεώς, which means that in his time there was indeed a temple on the island. The author also mentions that besides the xoanon "there were many other offerings – bowls, rings and jewels, as well as inscriptions in both Greek and Latin praising Achilles" (Arrian. *Peripl.* 32). Moreover, he reports that an oracle functioned at the temple. To judge from brief references of other authors about both the oracle and the healing powers of Achilles (cf. Paus. III, 19; Philostr. *Heroic.* XIX, 17; Amm. Marcel. XXII, 35; Tertull. *De anima.* 45), it probably was an "incubation facility" of a kind where certain healing rituals were performed, and was founded on the island according to the command of the Pythia of Delphi.⁴

Noting unusually numerous birds on the island, Arrian followed his sources in believing that they cleansed the temple of Achilles. The visitors to the island could indeed have been left with the impression that countless birds took part in a sacred cleansing of the temple, the more so, as it was the highest building and thus immediately drew the eye. It is not unlikely that there existed aetiological legends about the connections of Achilles and birds. Numerous snakes that populated the island could also have been linked with the hero, especially in his chthonic aspect. On the other hand, another explanation is possible. When Olbia lost control over the island of Leuke, it passed to the city of Tomis on the west shore of the Black Sea. In Tomis the cult of Achilles was not as popular as it was in Olbia, and the temple of the hero could have been neglected to such an extent that birds could freely occupy it. In this regard, a testimony of the Roman author Julius Solinus is very interesting. He states that the birds do not dare to enter the temple (*aedes sacra*) or even come close to it (Solin. *Coll. rer. memor.* XIX, 1). It is probable that around the middle of the first century BC after Olbia was destroyed by the Getae,

⁴ Tolstoi 1918, 36-38.

the sanctuary of Achilles on Leuke fell into decline. However, the Roman poet Ovid, who lived in exile in Tomis (8-17 AD), never mentions an island temple of Achilles, as opposed to, for example, the temple of Cape Parthenos among the Taurians (Ovid. *Ep.* III, 2), earlier mentioned by Euripides. Ovid refers to the land of Achilles, where an exile called Leneus found refuge (Ovid. *Ib.* 329-330), which may indirectly imply that the island was deserted at the time.⁵

It seems that this situation changed in the second half of the second century AD. Pausanias (II century AD) mentions the temple of Achilles in connection with the healing of Leonidas, a strategos from Kroton: "In the Euxine at the mouths of the Ister is an island sacred to Achilles. It is called White Island, and its circumference is twenty stades. It is wooded throughout and abounds in animals both wild and tame, while on it is a temple of Achilles (ναὸς Ἀχιλλέως) with an image (ἄγαλμα) of him" (Paus. III, 19, 11). Maximus of Tyre, writing in the second century AD, reports that Achilles lived on the island with a temple and altars sacred to Achilles (ναὸς καὶ βωμοὶ Ἀχιλλέως) (Max. Tyr. *Philosoph.* IX, 7). Somewhat later, Philostratos described sacrifice of animals on a stone altar (βωμόσ), and used a term τὸ ἱερόν to indicate a sanctuary (Philostr. *Heroic.* XIX, 16). He reports that Achilles lived together with Helen in his temple, which contained their sculpted image. The hero organized dinners, and possessed incredible divine strength demonstrated in his battle with the Amazons who attacked the temple (which stood surrounded by trees).

Thus, the examined literary sources allow us to conclude that during several centuries (from the fifth century BC to the third century AD) a temple of Achilles stood on the island of Leuke and an ancient xoanon of Achilles was kept there, as well as the later statues and reliefs. It is very possible that this temple existed already in the sixth century BC, because the xoanon is mentioned. Such images usually date from the Archaic period and precisely because of their antiquity were prized possessions of the sanctuaries. There was a treasury in the temple; an oracle also functioned and the sick were cured; next to the temple stood stone altars where animals (she-goats in particular) were sacrificed. Evidently, in the first centuries AD the temple's attendants used to offer sacred meals to the visitors, a feature characteristic of the sanctuaries of Apollo Delphinus and Dioscuroi, who gave protection at sea.⁶

⁵ For different interpretations of this passage in scholia and contemporary works, see: Podosinov 1985, 243-245.

⁶ See bibliography in Rusyaeva 1989, 26-35.

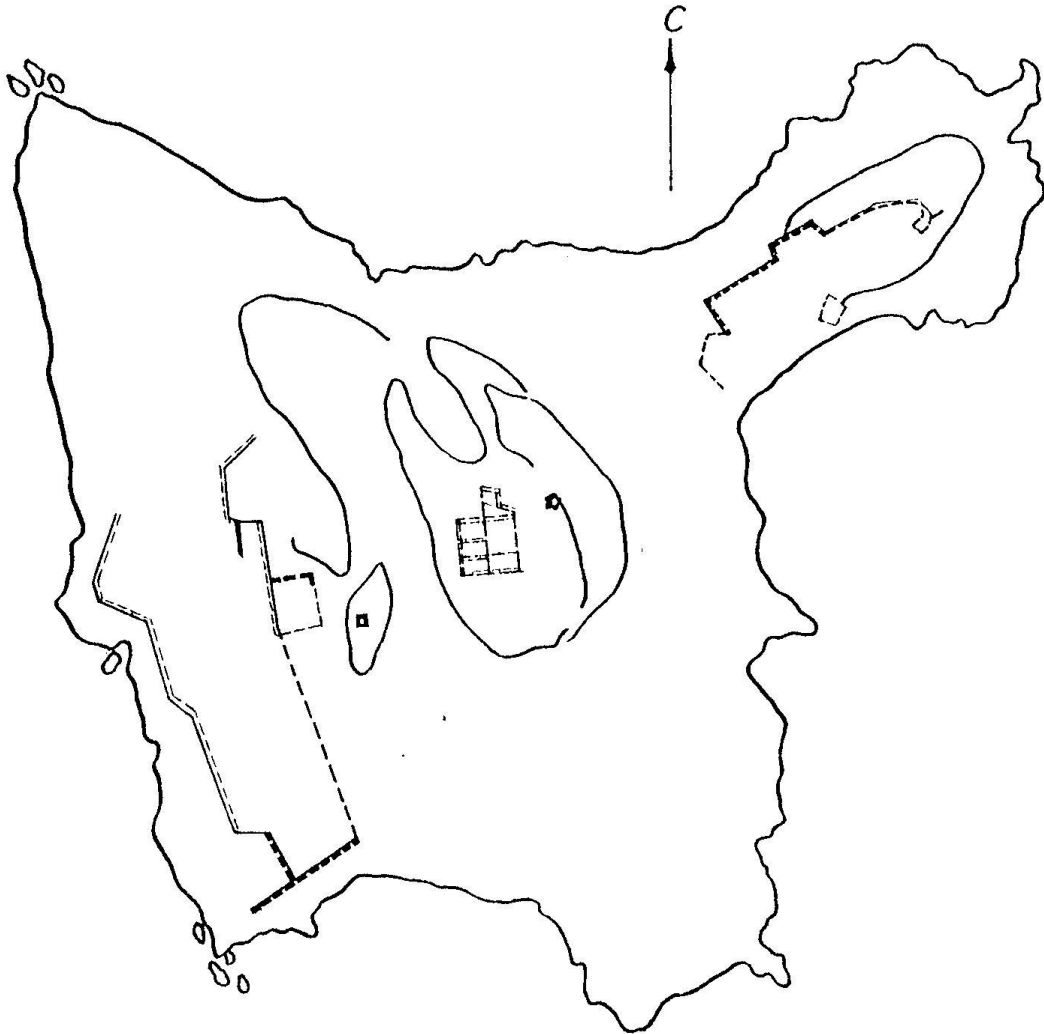


Fig. 1. Plan of the Island of Leuke with the temple of Achilles on the central plateau, drawn by Kritskii.

I will now address the archaeological materials gathered on the island in the course of excavations. The foundation for scholarly attribution and interpretation of the temple of Achilles was laid down by Köehler in 1826, on the basis of various materials collected in 1823 by Kritskii.⁷ These materials included the first topographic map of the island and a plan of the foundations of a large building on the central plateau accompanied by a short description. Also included was the account of artefacts found in the course of a small-scale excavation (Fig. 1).

⁷ Köehler 1826, 531-819; Tunkina 1991, 30-32.

Although Kritskii was convinced that he had found the temple of Achilles, Köehler expressed doubts about the identification of the temple.⁸ He admitted, however, that the island Fidonisi (Zmeinÿi) was indeed the island of Leuke sacred to Achilles. This sceptical attitude was the main reason why specialists were not immediately sent to Leuke to check the ground plan. As an unfortunate consequence, to this day there exist serious doubts regarding the identification of the structure described by Kritskii as the temple of Achilles.

Murzakevich, who visited the island in 1841, wrote that at the time only piles of stones formed into “cubic sages” remained from the temple, since the beacon builders completely dismantled the foundations. “Big rectangular stones and slabs removed from the ground are stacked, and cornices are broken into pieces. This vandalism has been done with such diligence that literally no stone has remained standing.”⁹ Judging from the large quantities of roof tiles scattered around, he concluded that the temple roof was tiled. He noticed fine workmanship of the “door cornices and lintels.” Besides this, Murzakevich reported that before his own arrival the island was visited by Soloviev and the merchant Sideri, who removed marble slabs, cornices, coins and other “minor articles” and subsequently donated them to the Archaeological Society of Odessa.¹⁰

Scholars have addressed this information on numerous occasions. Tolstoy, who briefly described the plan of Kritskii and the observations of Murzakevich, but leaned more towards the opinion of Köehler, wrote: “Were these really the remains of the ancient temple of Achilles, as Kritskii and Murzakevich firmly and perhaps correctly believed, or were they part of a different building erected afterwards on the site of the pagan sanctuary? It is impossible to guess now. It is indeed sad that the last remnants of the building that once stood on the sacred island of Leuke are lost forever for scholarship.”¹¹ Leipunskaya also mentioned the plan of Kritskii, pointing out that the layout of the building presented was not typical of Greek temples, casting doubt on this interpretation of its function, although she did not rule out that it was part of the temple complex.¹² Only the evidence from the ancient sources convinced her that there was indeed a temple of Achilles on Leuke with its cult statue and multiple offerings.

⁸ Köehler 1826, 603.

⁹ Murzakevich 1844, 554.

¹⁰ Murzakevich 1844, 549.

¹¹ Tolstoi 1918, 28-29.

¹² Leipunskaya 1970, 65.

Different opinions were also offered on the time of its construction: Këne, for example, believed that it was built during the rule of Alexander the Great;¹³ Jacob Weiss thought that it happened after the establishment of the cult of Achilles in the cities of North Pontus;¹⁴ while Bolotenko firmly dated the construction of the temple to the fourth century BC.¹⁵ Without considering the construction materials, Kurbatov did not doubt that the temple could have been built by the Milesians possibly with the assistance of the citizens of Olbia, “perhaps, according to a command from some respectable oracle, back in the sixth-fifth centuries BC.”¹⁶

Soviet archaeologists, who made only rare visits to the island, were unable to ascertain anything new about the remains of the temple. Only Pyatÿsheva, after a short survey trip to Leuke in 1964, noticed, besides finds of ceramics, a large number of fragments of tiles, including three polychrome fragmented antefixes, which she dated to the fifth century BC.¹⁷ She was utterly convinced that Kritskii had drawn the architectural remains of the ancient temple on the plateau, that part of the island in which the beacon, in whose construction every single stone slab found on the island was used, is now standing.¹⁸

Specialists in ancient architecture of the North Pontus also briefly mentioned the ancient sources on the temple of Achilles and the plan of Kritskii, as well as the main architectural details. For example, based on examination of the drum of an archaic fluted column in the collection of Odessa Archaeological Museum, Pichikyan tentatively suggested that the porticoes of the early temple were up to eight metres high, but not excluding the column’s votive function¹⁹ (Fig. 2, 5). However, he did not pay enough attention to the plan of Kritskii, giving preference to the ancient literary tradition and the observations of Murzakevich, even though he did not doubt the existence of the temple of Achilles on Leuke.

Krÿzhitskii believed that the square structure of 900 sq. metres shown in this plan was divided up into four rooms and a putative yard, equal in area to two rooms. He also pointed out its similarity to the known types of Greek temples and altars.²⁰ According to him, the foundation of the structure, made of large worked

¹³ Këne 1857, 8-9.

¹⁴ Weiss 1911, 14.

¹⁵ Boltenko 1962, 18.

¹⁶ Kurbatov 1982, 83, 85.

¹⁷ Pyatÿsheva 1966, 62, 64.

¹⁸ Pyatÿsheva 1966, 59, 62.

¹⁹ Pichikyan 1984, 153-154, fig. 55.

²⁰ Krÿzhitskii 1993, 47.

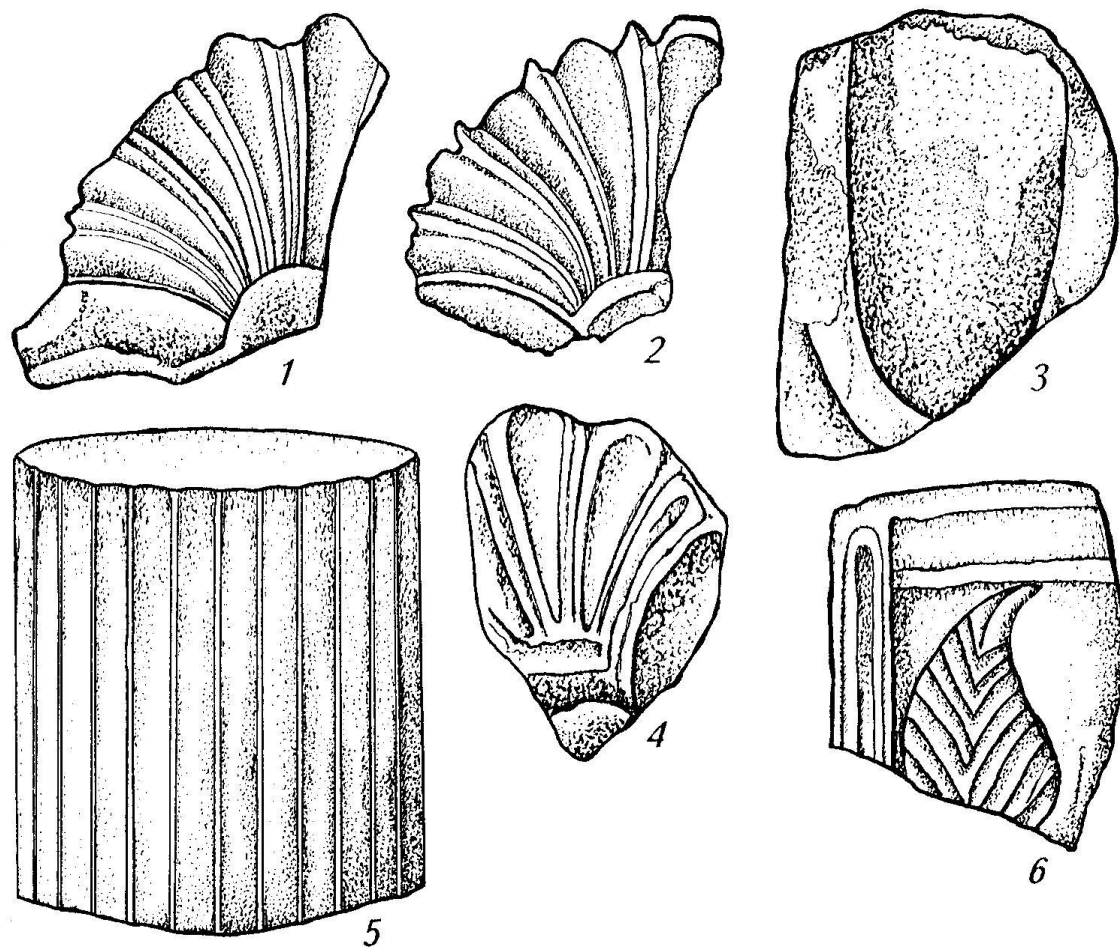


Fig. 2. Terracotta and stone architectural details from the Island of Leuke: 1, 2, 4 – fragments of polychrome terracotta antefices; 3 – fragment of polychrome terracotta syma; 5 – a drum of a column; 6 – fragment of a marble detail decorated with relief.

slabs of limestone with no mortar is evidence of a relatively late date, no sooner than the fourth century BC. In addition, he believed that the temple of Achilles on the island, like other such temples, could have had a sanctuary, an altar, and other auxiliary buildings. However, the identification of the remains discovered seemed problematic to him. At the same time, Krýzhitskii also suggested that the façade of the archaic temple of Achilles on Leuke had a five-column portico on a five-step stereobate, based on the depictions of a temple on Hellenistic ceramic moulds from Olbia and on Bosporan coins of the first century AD.²¹ Nevertheless, there is currently insufficient evidence to prove this statement. Of course, Olbia did produce primitive votive pendants which were decorated on top

²¹ Krýzhitskii 1993, 20-22.

with an image of a five- or seven-column temple and a more substantial building with a fronton in the background.²² However, whether they were depictions of some existing temples or porticoes is difficult to say.

Major progress in the studies of the temple on Leuke was made only in the last decade by Okhotnikov and Ostroverkhov, who for the first time managed to perform both ground and underwater surveys.²³ In the course of excavations by the Odessa archaeologists the number of finds increased dramatically. Among others, fragments of polychrome terracotta symes and antefixes of the late archaic period and separate marble details dating from the first century AD were discovered. The overview of all these materials allowed the scholars to propose their own interpretation of the temple of Achilles on Leuke, which amounts to the following hypotheses: the first temple was constructed in the Ionic order in the middle – second half of the sixth century BC and was similar to the temples of Athena in Miletos and Apollo Delphinios in Olbia. Judging from the plan of Kritskii, it was rebuilt many times; since, according to Kritskii, the eastern wall was on the level of the present-day surface and the sanctuary of the god-hero was realized in the form of a stoa. It remains a mystery however, when and by whom these alterations were made. According to ancient sources, the remains of the brick floor, roof tiles and marble details, as well as the temple and the altar were known on the island in Roman times.²⁴

Later Krýzhitskii and Buisikh pointed out that the plan of Kritskii does not give sufficient reason to identify the foundations of a monumental structure with a temple of typical layout. In their opinion, the temple of Achilles on Leuke was most likely constructed in the Ionic order, in accordance with the building tradition of Asia Minor that was characteristic of religious buildings of the region: this view is partly supported by the finds of polychrome architectural terracottas of Milesian origin.²⁵

Thus, at present there seems to be little doubt that there indeed existed a temple of Achilles on Leuke. However, current opinion does not associate it with the plan of Kritskii, which is in fact problematic if one only considers the square structure shown there. Nevertheless, there exists some evidence, especially from the late archaic period, that allows us to relate the structure shown on the plan with the temple of Achilles. First of all, the remains of the building shown on the plan

²² Cf. Pharmakovskii 1929, fig. 39; Leipunska 1984, 69.

²³ Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993, 7-119; Okhotnikov 1998, 37-45.

²⁴ Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993 20-28; Okhotnikov 1998, 38, fig. 1.

²⁵ Krýzhitskii, Buisikh 1998, 76.

were located at the only possible site for the placement of the temple, on a natural plateau which was artificially levelled: and there was simply no other place for such a grand structure on the island. The foundation consisted of large limestone monoliths laid without any mortar, a feature characteristic of Greek construction techniques. In this respect it is extremely important that on the western side they were 1.07 meters high, while on the eastern side the stones lay under a layer of dirt and were only slightly visible on the present-day level. This stratigraphic evidence may indicate different construction periods.

The uneven layout of the foundation was first noticed by Okhotnikov and Ostroverkhov, which allowed them to ask whether this could provide some corroboration, although indirect, that this part of the temple was more open, or that the walls as such were absent.²⁶ Thus they suggested that the temple should be reconstructed as stoa, similar to the sanctuary of Heracles on Thasos. However, this reconstruction contradicts the ancient sources.

According to Kritskii's plan, the entire structure was of a square shape measuring 14×14 sages = 29.8698×29.8698 m. These dimensions closely correspond to 100×100 small Ionian feet (1 foot = 0.296 m), and this strongly suggests that Kritskii carried out careful measurements of the foundation remains. One should also add that the diameter of the column drum, based on which Pichikyan calculated the approximate height of the late archaic portico of the Achilles temple, is equal to three Ionian feet.²⁷ Based on the reconstructions of various temples, studies of the architecture of eastern and continental Greece, Southern Italy, Sicily, and the North Pontic area suggest that the Ionian foot was often used in building in these areas.²⁸

When considering the plan of Kritskii, nearly all scholars divided the building shown there not into two equal parts separated by a wall going lengthwise from north to south, but rather into two unequal parts separated by a transverse wall.²⁹ I believe this led to the incorrect interpretation of not only its orientation, but also its internal structure, which has an important role in the identification of the

²⁶ Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993, 26.

²⁷ Cf. Pichikyan 1984, 154, fig. 55; Buisikh 1988, 63. Okhotnikov and Ostroverkhov are of the opinion that we can only presume this column belongs to the temple of Achilles, since there are no records concerning it in the catalogues of the Odessa Archaeological Museum (Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993, 23). This approach seems to me excessively cautious.

²⁸ Cf. Dinsmoor 1961, 335-368; Pichikyan 1984, 258; Krýzhitskii 1998, 172.

²⁹ Cf. Tolstoi 1918, 27.

initial layout, and seems to indicate that the entrance to the building was on its eastern side.³⁰

If, on the other hand, we accept that the building was divided into two equal parts – eastern and western – then it is possible to imagine two temples of equal size (50 × 100 small Ionian feet), oriented towards the south. This is indicated by the location of the first “room” in the eastern part of the area which was twice as small as that of the adjacent elongated “room”: these can be interpreted as pronaos and naos. If the plan had presented the remains only such a structure, no one would have doubted that it was the temple of Achilles.

A similar orientation is typical for the archaic and early classical temples of Miletos and its colonies. The most ancient of them all, the temple of Milesian Apollo, was constructed by the Milesians in 566 BC in Naukratis.³¹ The temple of Athena of the second half of the sixth century BC from Kalabak-Tepe also had a similar orientation, with a three degree deviation to the east.³² The Olbian temples of Apollo Ietros of the last quarter of the sixth century BC and of Apollo Delphinios dating from around mid-fifth century BC were also oriented towards the south with a minor deviation towards the east.³³ It is worth noting here that in reconstructing the later temple of Apollo Delphinios the archaic polychrome terracotta fragments, which were mistakenly interpreted as being from this temple, were in reality found at other sites in Olbia and most notably in the Western temenos. In fact, it does not correspond chronologically to the period of construction of the temple of Apollo Delphinios.³⁴ A completely similar set of two kinds of these terracotta fragments, namely the polychrome antefices with seven-leaf palmettes and Miletian symes with ovas, were found only in the Western temenos and on the island of Leuke³⁵ (Fig. 2, 1-4).

This similarity can serve as evidence that the temple of Achilles was constructed with the help of Milesians almost simultaneously with the temple of Apollo Ietros in Olbia, probably within the last quarter of the sixth century BC. In both temples, besides the common orientation and general architectural decorum, the same metric system of small Ionian feet and nearly the same dimensions

³⁰ Cf. Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993, 28.

³¹ Dinsmoor 1950, 125.

³² Gerkan 1925, 16, Abb. 7, 8.

³³ Pichikyan 1984, 182; Rusyaeva 1994, 82-85; Krýzhitsky 1998, 170; Krýzhitsky, Bujskikh 1998, 77.

³⁴ Cf. Pichikyan 1983, 180; Rusyaeva 1988, 34-36; Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993, 24-26.

³⁵ Cf. Pyatýsheva 1966, fig. 4, 3; Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993, fig. 5, 1-4; Rusyaeva 1988, fig. 3, 12.

of the external foundations were used: for Apollo Ietros, according to Krýzhitskii,³⁶ almost 24×49 small Ionian feet; almost 25×50 small Ionian feet, based on the measurements of the exterior of the trenches of the foundation walls immediately after its discovery,³⁷ and 50×100 small Ionian feet for the temple of Achilles.

It is evident that the latter was twice as big, since from the very beginning the cult of Achilles was not only all-Pontic, but also pan-Hellenic, as confirmed in multiple votive offerings from all over the Greek world. In addition, one should not exclude the possibility that not only Borysthene and Olbia, but also other North Pontic poleis founded by Miletos took part in the construction of the first temple of Achilles.

Thus, it is possible to argue securely that the first temple of Achilles was constructed in the same architectural style in antis in the Ionic order, traditional for the archaic period, as the temple of Apollo Ietros in Olbia and had similar polychrome terracotta decor.³⁸ The foundation of the late archaic temple of Apollo Ietros was almost completely destroyed, with the exception of the two blocks by the wall between the naos and pronaos, during the last quarter of the fifth century BC. In its place, a clay platform was constructed, on top of which a new slightly bigger temple was built.³⁹

A different situation took place on Leuke, where the structures were erected on the levelled natural rock. Considering that from the eastern side of the structure the foundation was deeper down, it makes sense to assume that in its place there was originally an earlier temple which was destroyed so that a new temple could be erected next to it, but on a more solid foundation. In contrast to the first one, it was divided into three equal "rooms," dictated not only by the need to have a treasury inside, but also by certain construction features, notably because of its open aspect, unprotected from the Pontic storms. It is possible that this temple was destroyed shortly after the temple of the same size, which stood for a longer period of time, was built adjacent to its western wall. The remains of the more ancient foundation could have served as a sacred fence in the immediate vicinity

³⁶ Krýzhitskii 1998, 172.

³⁷ Rusyaeva 1994, 125.

³⁸ Cf. Okhotnikov, Ostroverkhov 1993, 26; Krýzhitskii 1998, 183; Krýzhitskii, Buisikh 1998, 76.

³⁹ Rusyaeva 1994, 125. It was common practice in antiquity to almost always erect new religious buildings either directly on the site of the old ones, or immediately next to them. Whether insignificant fragments or complete foundations of temples and altars, the remains of the old buildings were often left intact. For more details, see: Pichikyan 1984, 29-93.

of the temple, or for some ritual purposes. There is no doubt that the new temple was repaired many times and its architectural decor and roof tiles were changed periodically. The presence of a cistern or well on the northern side is typical of many temenoi of Greek deities, and this too confirms this reconstruction of the temple complex. In addition, there were no natural sources of water on the island.

According to the studies of Krýzhitskii⁴⁰ on construction techniques, the monoliths of the foundation of the second temple, with no mortar used, serve as evidence that the second temple was constructed no sooner than the fourth century BC. If the citizens of Olbia did in fact take part in its construction, then such dating agrees with the state of the economy at the time in Olbia, which reached its peak during the early Hellenistic period.⁴¹

An inscription on the base of an equestrian bronze statue of an unknown citizen of Olbia erected on Leuke in 430-420 BC (a rare honour in the North Pontic cities) can also be linked with this period. The statue was erected by the people's assembly for services rendered, particularly for expelling the robbers from Achilles' island and for demonstrating to all Greeks that Olbia protected and cared for the island (IOSPE I², 325).⁴² It is quite possible that during the last quarter of the fourth century BC a wealthy citizen of Olbia erected a monumental statue dedicated to Achilles, the Master of Leuke in or near the temple; to judge from the marks on the upper surface of its partially surviving base, the hero was represented with a spear in his hand (IOSPE I², 326).

It is possible that this statue remained in the temple during the first centuries AD. Most probably it is the one mentioned by Pausanias (Paus. III, 19, 11), and it was this statue that was depicted on the coins of the western Pontic cities and Olbia at the end of the second century AD.⁴³ The island always played a significant role in Olbian politics as a sort of outpost, promoting its political, economic, and cultural relationships with other cities of the ancient world.

In conclusion, assuming the existence of two temples at different time periods on the island, and taking into account that all ancient authors defined the cult structure on Leuke by the same term as all other temples of the gods, one can conclude that Achilles was worshipped here as a god. This does not contradict his image of a mighty hero of the Trojan War glorified in the *Iliad*

⁴⁰ Krýzhitskii 1993, 47.

⁴¹ See: Levi 1985; Krýzhitskii, Rusyaeva, Krapivina, Leipunskaya, Skrzhinskaya, Anokhin 1999, 158-188 – with bibliography.

⁴² Vinogradov 1989, 164-165.

⁴³ Karyshkovskii 1986, 31-32, fig. 2, 10; Rusyaeva 1992, 79-80.

of Homer (cf. Arrian. *Peripl.* 32; Dion. Chrysost. *Or.* XXXVI).⁴⁴ Moreover, the hypothesis formulated here concerning the existence of two temples of identical size during different time periods may allow the scholars of ancient architecture to reconstruct more precisely the temple of Achilles that once stood on the island of Leuke.

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⁴⁴ As to the capacity (as hero, hero-god, or god) in which Achilles was venerated on the island of Leuke and other places, various opinions have been expressed, and this scholarly debate is far from being resolved. Cf. Tolstói 1918, 8-10; Leipunska 1970, 61-63; Hommel 1981, 55, 63-64; Rusyaeva 1992, 70-75; Hooker 1988, 1-7; Hedreen 1991, 322-324; Diatroptov 2001, 12-13. Hooker and Diatroptov maintain the extreme point of view which does not comply either with ancient authors or with epigraphic and archaeological sources. They claim that until the first centuries AD Achilles was venerated in the Northern Euxine only as a hero. However, it is most unlikely that a temple with all the elements characteristic of deity worship, including a xoanon and a monumental cult statue, would be used for venerating a hero.

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Abbreviations

- ACSS *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia. An International Journal of Comparative Studies in History and Archaeology* (Leiden, Boston, Köln).
- GIM *Gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii muzei* (Moscow).
- IOSPE *Inscriptiones antiquae orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini* (Petropoli, 1916).
- MAPP *Materyialy z arkheologii Pivnichnogo Prichornomor'ya* (Kiev).
- Rh. Mus. *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*.
- VDI *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* (Moscow).
- ZOOID *Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei* (Odessa).

CONTENTS

Black Sea Archaeology and History

- ANNA S. RUSYAEVA, The Temple of Achilles on the Island of Leuke in
the Black Sea 1
- LÂTIFE SUMMERER, Achämenidische Silberfunde aus der Umgebung von
Sinope 17
- MIKHAIL TREISTER, The Date and Significance of Tomb II at Gorgippia
(1975 excavations) 43
- DENIS V. ZHURAVLEV, New Data on Details of Roman Military Equip-
ment and Horse's Harness from Chersonesos and its Environs 87

Archaeology of Caucasus and Iran

- OSCAR WHITE MUSCARELLA, The Chronology and Culture of Sé Gir-
dan: Phase III 117

Archaeology and History of Central Asia

- JOHN BOARDMAN, Three Monsters at Tillya Tepe 133
- VLADIMIR A. LIVSHITS, Three Silver Bowls from the Isakovka Burial
Ground No. 1 with Khwarezmian and Parthian Inscriptions 147
- In Future Issues 173