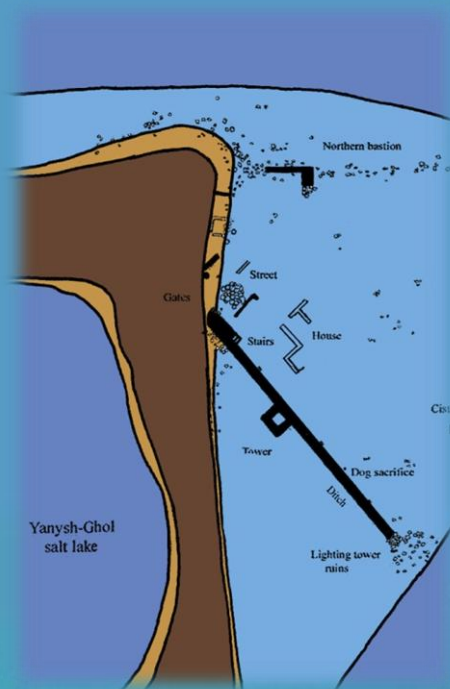


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Underwater Archaeological Expedition on Ancient Town Akra in 2012 (Eastern Crimea)



**Kyiv - St. Petersburg
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Localization and History of Investigations of Akra

Ancient town Akra located near Naberezhne village (Leninsky district of AR Crimea). It was founded in late VI cent. BC and was the part of Kingdom of Bosphorus until the beginning of the IV cent. AD. Nowadays, almost all of its territory is hidden by the Black Sea.

The first attempt to localize Akra was made by academician Peter Pallas,



Map of Cimmerian Bosphorus

who visited Northern Black Sea Coast in the late XVIII cent. He placed ancient town in Takil' Cape - in the extreme south-eastern point of the Crimean peninsula at the confluence of the Kerch Strait to the Black Sea. Later, Paul Du Brux identified as Akra ancient settlement, which lies south of the cape. This localization was adopted by other researchers, meanwhile did not meet the guidelines of the ancient sailing directions - Periplus Pontus Euxine - on the distances between Akra and other coastal settlements of the Bosphorus.

The researchers returned to the issues of Akra's localization in the early 1980s, when there were found more than hundred ancient coins and the remains of ancient wall near siltings separating the Yanysh lake from the sea. Therefore, V. Kholodkov, worker of Kerch Museum, made the first archaeological excavations in the summer of 1982, on sandy spit and on the hill south of the lake. During this work were found powerful cultural layers of ancient times. Underwater research of Bosphorus expedition of LBIA of the AS of USSR led by the supervision of K.



View of the Cape of Akra northward

Shilik, found that the ancient city almost under water to a depth of 4.5 m, the plan had a rectangular shape with the area of 3.5 ha. The harbor was located to the east, seaward to a depth of 7.5 m. There were discovered defensive walls, two towers and well during the underwater 1983-1985 survey. One of the walls are well preserved for 110 m. The tower (7 x 7 m) was attached to the wall from the floor side. Another defensive wall, which had also a tower, was fixed at 150 m to the north. The well propped up by stones was found in the 170 m from the shore at the depth of 3 m. Seven Heracleian stamped amphorae of IV cent. BC, fragments of black-lacquer dishes, piece anchor rod from lead, wooden parts, machined on the lathe, were found in its coverage.

Archaeological researches of Akra were continued in 1994-1997 by joint expedition of Kerch Museum and Odessa Club "Navareks" led by A. Kulikov. Excavations on the coast combined with underwater survey of flooded part.

Akra's Historical Topography



Yanysh Lake (600x500 m) has a depth of 1 m. It is fenced off from the Strait by sandy spit with width not exceeding 40 m. The coastal slope of the hill lying to the

south of sandy spit was at 200-250 m from shoreline in ancient times when water level was lower at 4-5 m below the present, forming a low promontory. ancient town situated on the north-eastern part of this promontory on the area of 3.5 ha. It was fenced off from the floor unprotected side by defensive wall that stretches from the sea to the river at the place of modern Yanysh Lake. Flooding of low-lying land areas, erosion of beaches and sandy spit formation occurred as a result of sea level rise on 4-5 m and the area of the town was covered by the Black Sea.

The harbor was on the site of area, partitioned in the east and north-east ridge of natural rock. This stone ridge located an angle to the shore and covered the harbor from the south and



south-east winds, carrying out the role of mall in ancient times. A large number of ancient anchors have been found during harbor surveys.

Renewal of Underwater Archaeological Researches

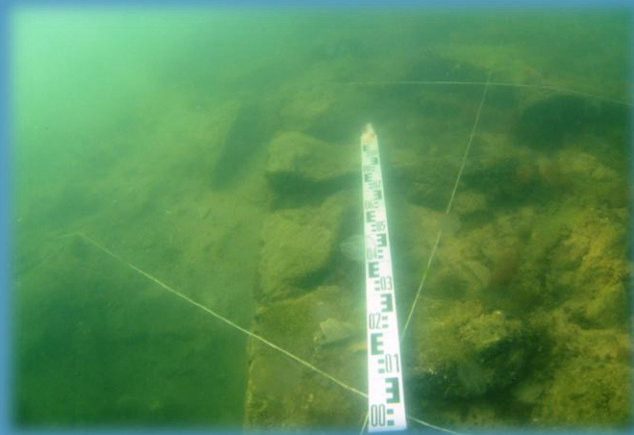


Study of Akra was resumed by underwater archaeological expedition of the Department of Underwater Heritage of NUAS, Department of Ancient and Medieval History of Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University and the State

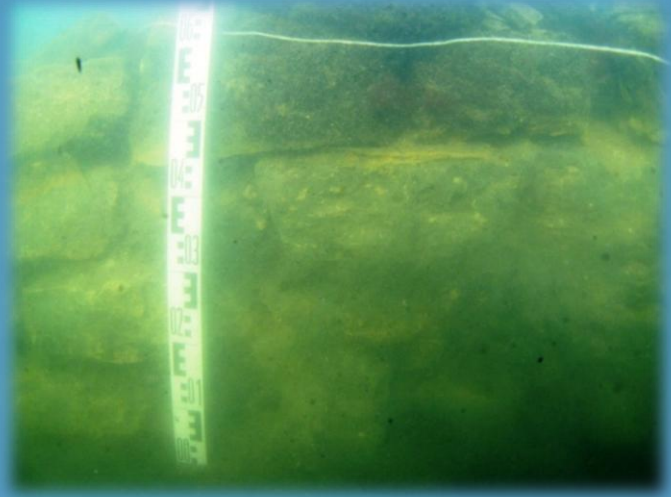
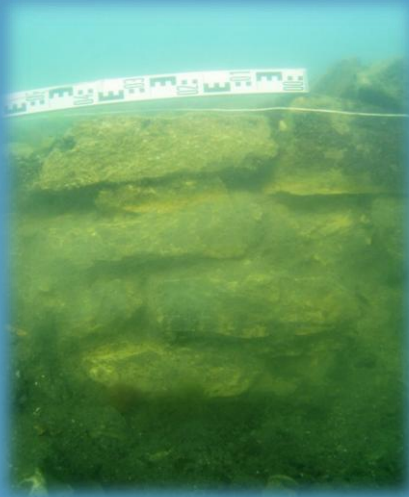
Hermitage Museum in July 2011. Its task was to conduct survey of the flooded part of town, carrying out small excavations of the cultural layer, accurate boundaries of the cultural layer, the definition of sites suitable for carrying out systematic excavations of full underwater survey and the previously discovered archaeological sites and search for new. The last measures are necessary due to the gradual destruction of the flooded and coastal parts of the monument, which occurs as a result of the factors of natural origin (wind, water, chemicals, erosion), and for reasons of anthropogenic nature.



During the underwater archaeological investigations of submerged ancient settlement we used the technique, spent the last few years in Olbia and Chersonesus. All dives are conducted in accordance with the standards of the leading diving organizations. Triangulation method was used for mapping the bottom, the grid of squares (1 x 1 m) was made under water. All the drawings were made on special plastic plates.



Ejector for shallow water was used for excavation. Motor pump was on the shore and the ejector output was sent to the fine-mesh basket, which allowed wash all soil from the excavation. Photo and video fixing of all phases of work also performed.



Instrumental survey of Akra with total station was carried out to produce topographic plan. All findings were put into the Kerch Historical and Cultural Reserve after completion of works.

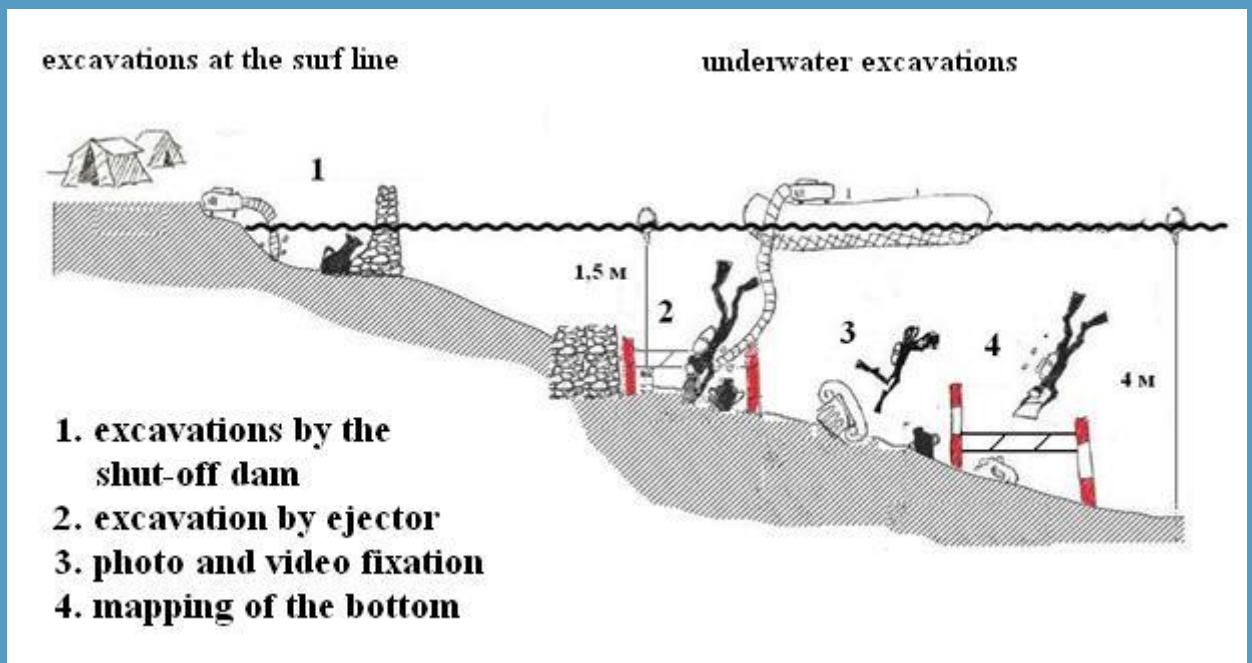


2011 works confirmed the prospects of underwater archaeological investigations of Akra, which is distinguished by excellent preservation of the cultural layer and the building remains, is a unique monument of Underwater Archaeology in the Black Sea basin.

Program of Underwater Researches in 2012

Comprehensive researches of the underwater part of Akra in the 2012 season are expected to continue in the following tasks:

- archaeological excavations in the surf zone by using the cut-off dam;
- mapping the route of defensive walls and construction of identified residues, their photos and videos fixation;
- underwater archaeological excavations by the ejector;
- creation of a detailed topographic plan of the town;
- Developing the concept of the museum's exhibition of objects of cultural heritage found during underwater archaeological investigations of Akra.



Expedition base will locate in the field camp in the immediate vicinity of the place of work, as well as in pension "Brigantine"

Contacts



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