

# RA

restauro archeologico

Conoscenza, conservazione e valorizzazione  
del patrimonio architettonico d'interesse archeologico  
è di quello allo stato di rudere  
**Rivista del Dipartimento di Architettura  
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The knowledge, conservation, and valorization  
of all endangered, neglected,  
or ruined architectural structures.  
**Journal of the Department of Architecture  
University of Florence**

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# Developing the pattern of ancient city of Tauric Chersonese valorisation: risks, values, identity

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Не рама и место воспоминаний, Херсонис есть для нас самая живая современность, здесь шевелится конец исторической цепи, которая кончается нашими днями, здесь она начинается и мистически прикреплена.

*Non è una cornice o un luogo di ricordi. Chersoneso è per noi l'attualità più viva, è qui che si manifesta l'estremità della catena storica che si conclude ai nostri giorni, qui comincia e vi è misticamente radicata.*

S. N. Bulgakov, 1989

## Abstract

The ancient city of Tauric Chersonese is a significant ensemble of monuments included into the UNESCO world heritage list. The complexity of the site is represented by the diversity of its cultural, social, historical and religious meanings. Those meanings give the three types of values: archaeological, religious and touristic.

These three relevancies present the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese as an important pattern of archaeological area that required a special attention, considering the three values in their specific character and, in the same time, in their concert.

It is very important to create a pattern for valorisation and appreciation for this important place. As professionals, we must insist on the preservation and moreover, on the development of all the above-mentioned values. If we underline only one of the values, if we conserve only one of them, the monument will not be complete anymore and will therefore lose its authenticity. In this article the authors attempt to investigate the issues related to Tauric Chersonese and the possible benefits that could be gained through a suitable valorisation pattern.

## Introducing the site. History and research on the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese

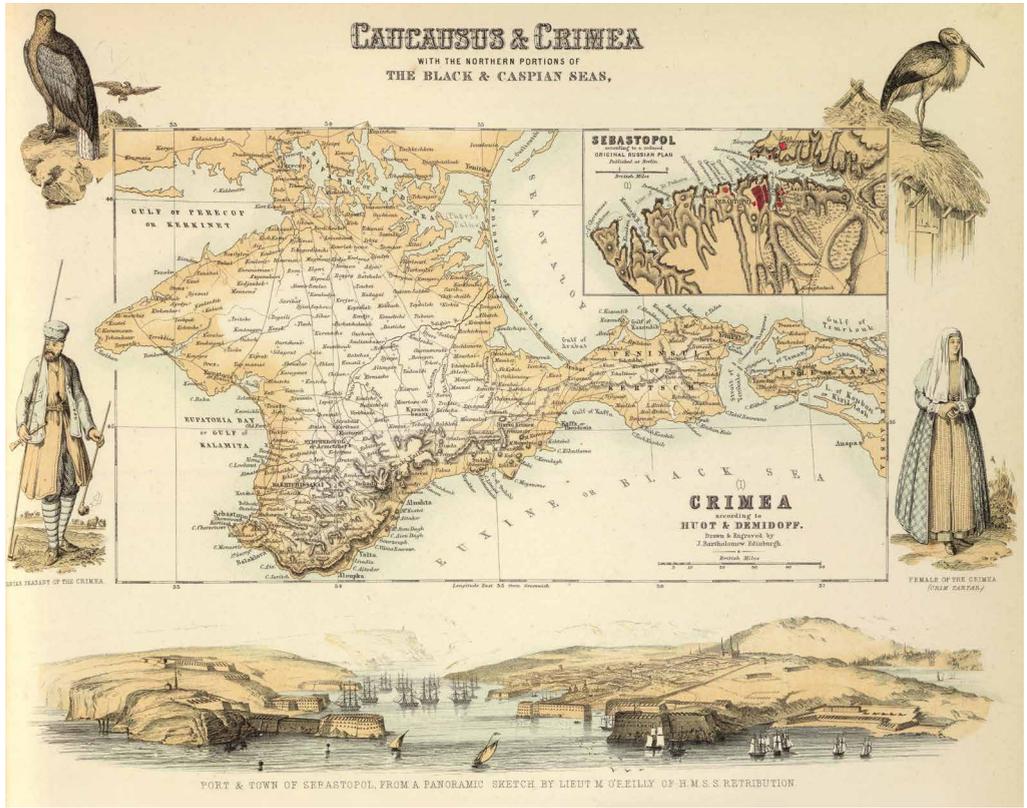
The ancient city of Tauric Chersonese (later Cherson or Korsun') was an ancient Greek colony established on the western part of the modern Crimean peninsula in 5th century b. C. (Saprykin, 1998). The colony was built in a rather comfortable place on a crossroad of trade routes with a perfect climate for farming and had a good natural landscape to organize a fortification of the city. These basic factors influenced the quick growth of the ancient city, as well as the interest of colonizers for these lands.

The golden years of the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese stretched from the antique period until the end of the Byzantine times. During this time Tauric Chersonese was a point of contact between Eastern and Western civilizations, a place where Christianity met paganism. What is extremely important about this city, is that in 988 the Knyaz' of Kievan Russ, Vladimir the Great, was baptised here. A year after, in 989, he forced the people of

*opposite page*

**Fig.11**  
Destruction of donjon in Cembalo fortress in Balaclava (a part of NR Tauric Chersonese). The view of the donjon in winter 2011 during the restoration (3 years after the collapse of the wall), photo by K. Veprytska



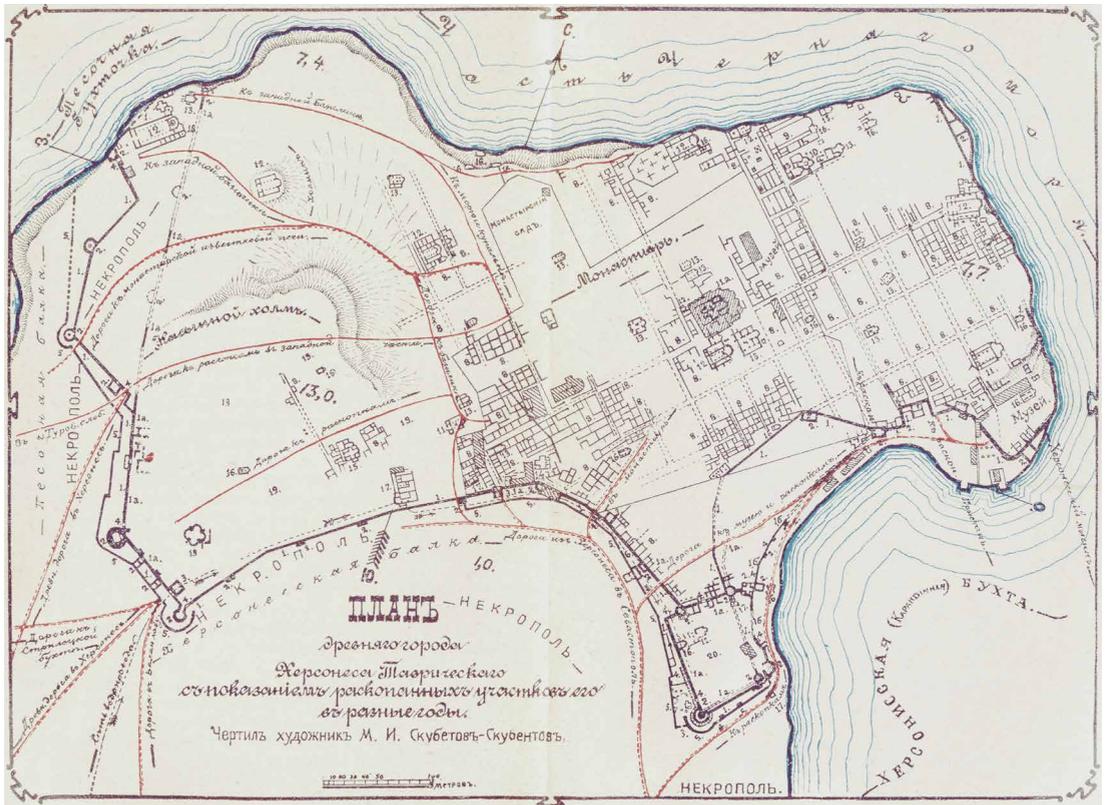


**Fig.1**  
A part of "Caucasus and Crimea" map published by A. Fullarton & Co., London and Edinburg, 1872, <<http://www.davidrumsey.com/maps3101.html>>

*opposite page*

**Fig.2**  
"A plan of Ancient city Tauric Chersonese with demarcation of its excavated parts in different years" by M. I. Skubetov-Skubetov. Published in "Krym. Putevoditel", under edition of K. Yu. Bumberg and others, Simferopol, 1914

Kievan Russ to adopt Orthodox Christianity. So actually the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese is a cradle of Orthodox Christianity for the Slavs. After the 13th century the role of the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese lost its importance. Starting from this time the control over the Crimean peninsula was mostly divided between Italian city-states and the Golden Horde. As the trade routes moved away from Tauric Chersonese, the city slowly fell into poverty and degradation. Actually the end of the life of Chersonese as a city came in the year 1399, when the Tatars destroyed it during one of their invasions. After this, the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese was never rebuilt and laid in ruins until the Russian occupation of Crimea in the late 18th century after the Russian-Turkish war. In 1783 the Russian Empire established the city of Sevastopol near the ruins of the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese. When the construction of Sevastopol began, the remains of the structures of the ancient city were used as material for new buildings. This fact caused the demolition of a large amount of monuments. The understanding of the value of ruins came only several decades later, when the first organized excavation and preservation attempts were started in 1827 (Grinevich, 1927, p.7). From that moment until now a huge amount of factual material, reflected in the work of various researchers, has been accumulated, consistently revealing remains of different epochs.



According to Ukrainian legislation, Chersonese, as a National reserve was subordinated directly to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Ukraine and the Ministry of Culture as its representative. The Minister of Culture appointed the director of the reserve. The actual structure of the reserve could be described as follow: the Ministry of Culture selects the director of NP “Tauric Chersonese”, and the director has the right to select his three deputies – the director’s deputy for scientific activities, a superintendent of the settlement and the director’s deputy for economic issues. This kind of structure is rather typical of the Ukrainian heritage protection management system.

The values of the site were recognized by the international community when in 2014 the Tauric Chersonese and its *chora* were included in the UNESCO world cultural heritage list. This new status gives great opportunities, but also great responsibilities, concerning heritage protection and valorisation (Cleere, 2011). Therefore, it is very important to develop a strategic guideline for the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese valorisation in order to preserve the site for future generations. In this article authors would like to explain both the typical approach and the typical problems of archaeological heritage preservation in the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> By Kateryna Veprytska, architect, PhD student in KNUCEA, Ukraine.

The reconstruction of Historical topography of Tauric Chersonese (I. Snitko, 2005)

**Fig. 3.1**  
Modern configuration of the landscape

**Fig. 3.2**  
Configuration of the landscape in antique times

*opposite page*

Sea oscillation and destruction of the cost line (I. Snitko, 2005)

**Fig.4a**  
Curve of Black sea oscillation (by K.K. Shylik, in I. Snitko, 2005)

**Fig.4b**  
Map-scheme of supposed landform of an ancient gulch in V century BC

**Fig.4c**  
Dynamics of a shoreline in the port region (by I.A. Antonova and K.K. Shylik in I. Snitko, 2005)

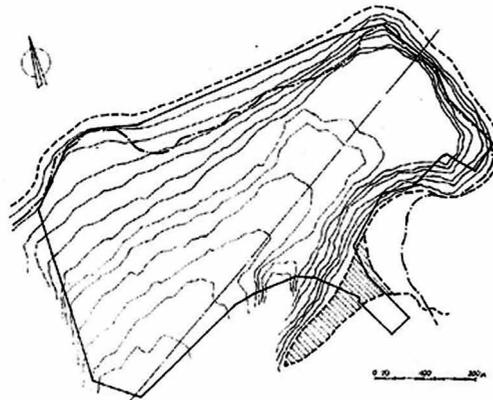
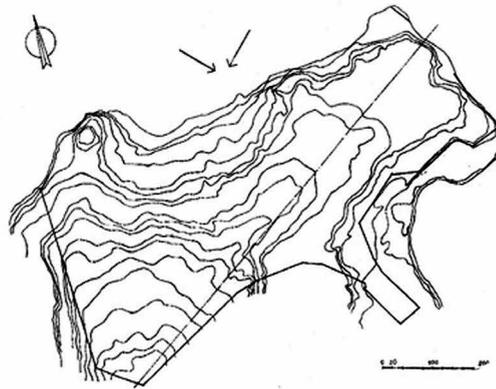
**Fig. 4d**  
Master plan of northeastern region after excavations of Emperor Archeological Commission in 1876-80 and 1888. The apse of Eastern basilica is safe

**Fig. 4e**  
Topographic survey in the northeastern part of Chersonese (1975-76). The apse of Eastern basilica is destroyed

### Investigating the site. Three types of degradation risks

Whether we talk about a single structure or about a complex of monuments, every uncovered archaeological object is constantly exposed to degradation risks. Since the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese occupies an area of 45 hectares, the safeguarding of archaeological remains is not easy. Big archaeological areas need large amounts of money and a high level of preservation management skills, and the bigger the area is, the more risks it faces.

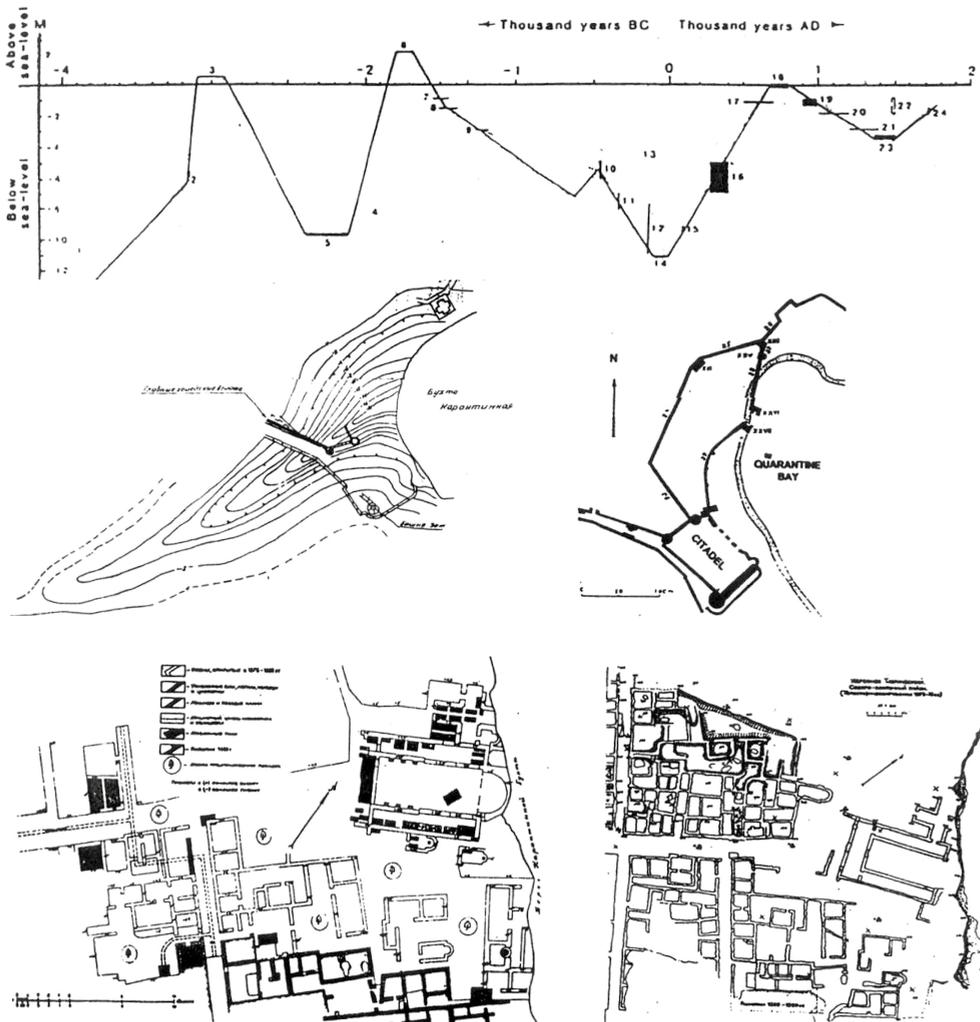
In the case of the ancient city we should mention three types of degradation risks: natural, anthropogenic and political. To understand the risks affecting the site we should begin with the natural reasons of possible damage. It is important to understand that ancient city of Tauric Chersonese is first of all a big complex of monuments. We should understand that the risks in different zones of the site are different, for example, the monuments that are close to the coastline suffer a lot from changes in the sea level: some remains



- modern configuration of a coastline;
- antique configuration of a coastline;
- borders of the city territory;
- configuration of the sea;
- direction of winds;
- a part of Karantimaya bay, poured with ground during the fortification wall construction

of an ancient port can be found under water in Karantinnaya bay (National Commission of Ukraine for UNESCO, 2011, p.14). Erosion due to storms is also common: according to some evidence in some part of the territory more than a hundred meters of coastline have been lost since the city's foundation (Snitko, 2005, pp. 125-127), see Fig.3.

The best evidence of this destruction can be seen in the eastern part of the reserve, especially on the Eastern Basilica, see Fig. 4. The apse of this structure is totally ruined because of the destruction of the coast due to the influence of water during last 140 years. It is also important to notice that the destruction of the apse was rather rapid, because according to Ainalov, who is one of the most significant researchers on ancient city of Tauric Chersonese of the early 20th century, the apse was semi-destroyed no later than in the 1890s (Ainalov, 1905, pp. 43-44). Not only has the eastern part of the reserve suffered from coastline destruction, the same situation can be seen in the



northern part as well, on Uvarov Basilica, see Fig.5. The Western Basilica, which is the biggest complex in the western part of ancient city, is also in danger: a part of the complex closer to the sea is already ruined and the left angle of the narthex is only a meter away from the edge of the cliff, see Fig. 6,7<sup>2</sup>.

The destruction of the coastline is probably the most dangerous risk, but it is not the only one shew by the monuments: the same illustrations of the Western Basilica describe another problem: vegetation, see Fig. 7e. The trees and bushes growing close to the walls of monuments are a big problem in the northern and south-eastern parts of ancient city, especially in the citadel region, see Fig. 8. Vegetation is one of the main reasons of monuments physical destruction since during the summer drought the risk of fire is very high as dry grass, bushes and trees a very flammable.

Tauric Chersonese is situated in a highly seismic zone. The city of Sevastopol is located on the edge of the 9th and 10th seismic activity zones on the MSK-64 scale, see Fig. 9. This means that highly destructive earthquakes are possible here. Serious earthquakes were recorded in Sevastopol and nearby towns in 1873, 1875, 1957 and 1972, see table 1.1, 1.2. However, even without the direct effects of the earthquakes, the monuments are destroyed due to the movement of rock formations. For example the Kruze's basilica, which was one of the first excavated monuments. In 1827 the excavations in the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese were started under the order of A.S. Graig, who was a commander of the Black Sea fleet and the governor of Sevastopol (Ainalov, 1905, pp. 69-71). Kruze's basilica, which was uncovered in that year, is situated on the cliff's fracture, and for this reason the right side of it, which is closer to the sea, is constantly at risk of destruction (Veprytska and Yankovska, 2013).

**Table 1**  
The most destructive earthquakes in Crimea, XIX century, (Hapaev, 2008)

**Table 2**  
The most destructive earthquakes in Crimea, XX century, (Hapaev, 2008)

Date	Place	Power (Scale MSK-64)
23/01/1838	Southern coast of Crimes	7
11/10/1869	Sudak	7
April 1872	Feodosia	6-7
1873	Bakhchisarai	7
25/07/1875	Sevastopol	7

Date	Place	Power (Scale MSK-64)
30/08/1949	Yalta	6
18/03/1957	Sevastopol	6
12/03/1966	Anapa, Novorossiysk, Eastern Crimea	6-7
6/08/1972	Sevastopol	6

<sup>2</sup>By Iryna Snitko, architect, PhD, professor in KNUCEA, Ukraine.

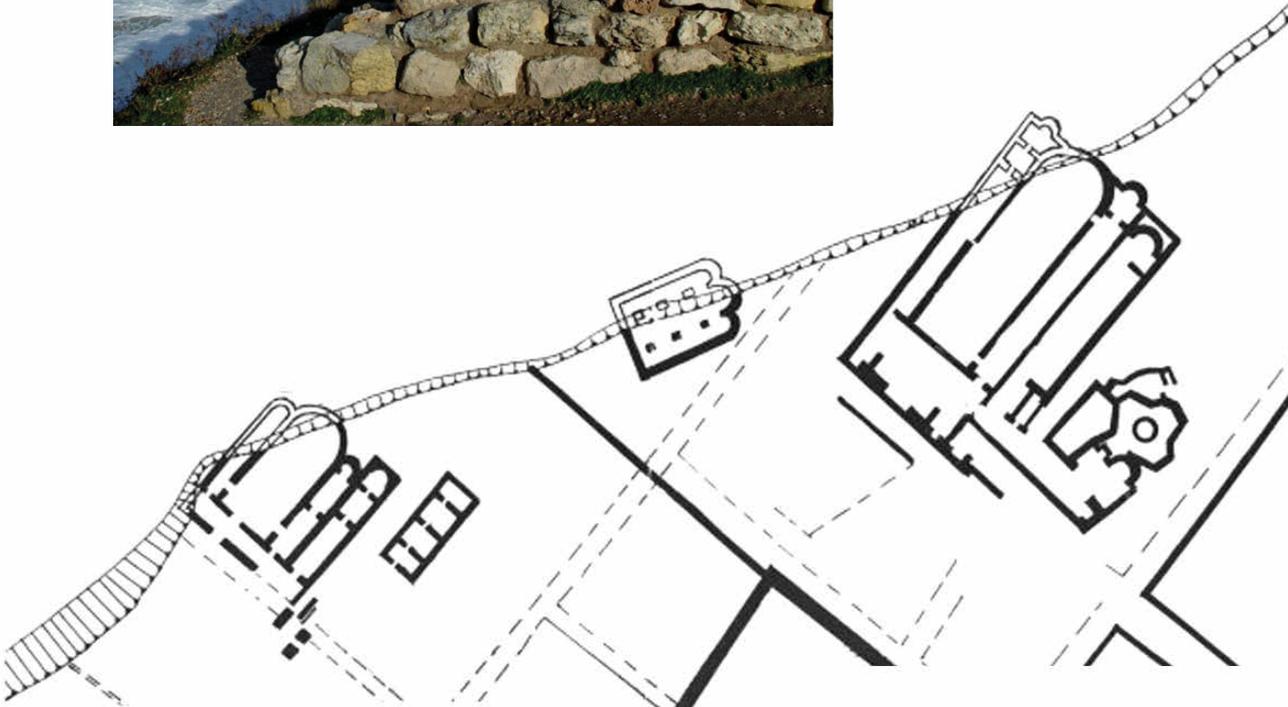
Not only nature is destructive, human activity also generates risks. Among anthropogenic risks we should name first of all tourists. According to the management plan presented to UNESCO during the procedure of inclusion, the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese annually hosts up to half a million visitors. Amongst them three hundred thousand are tourists coming to see the archaeological site, fifty thousand are religious pilgrims, and the final fifty thousand people coming for recreation and are archaeologists (National Commission of Ukraine for UNESCO, 2011, p.15). Of course, tourism provides financing for the reserve, but it also causes a lot of damage. The main tourism attractions are gathered in the citadel region, in the cen-

Destruction of the monuments by the sea in northern part of the reserve (by Arestov and Ryzhov for NP Tauric Chersonese) <<http://www.Chersonese.org/?nid=66>>

**Fig. 5a**  
The view of Uvarov basilica

**Fig. 5c**  
The destruction of a six pillars temple

**Fig. 5b**  
The destruction of Uvarov basilica complex (at the top) by the sea influence



The complex of Western basilica. Historical overview

Fig. 6b

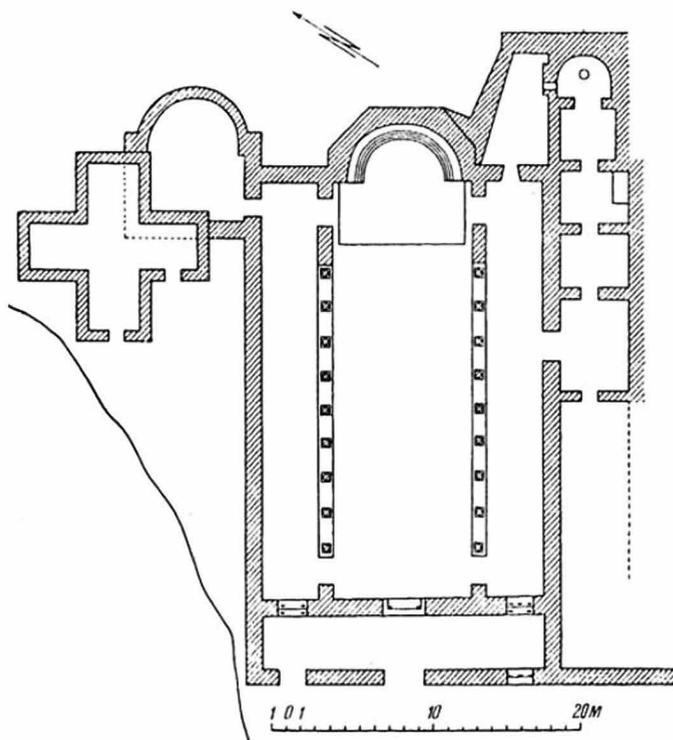
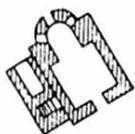
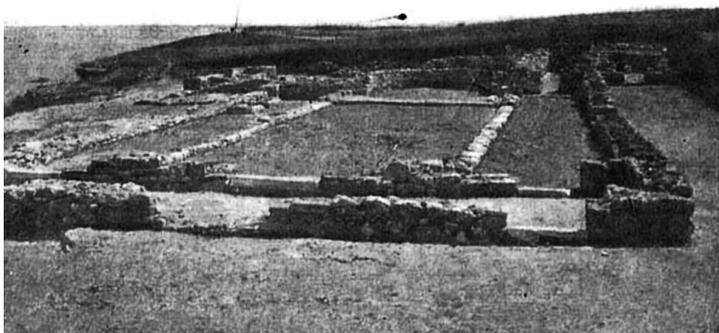
The baptistery of Western basilica in 1950s (Yacobson, 1959)

Fig. 6c

The Western basilica in 1950s (Yacobson, 1959)

Fig. 6a

The plan of Western basilica made by Emperor archaeological commission in 1902 (Yacobson, 1959)





The complex of Western basilica.  
Modern condition of the object

**Fig. 7a**

Aerial view of the site, photo of NP Tauric Chersonese, 2005  
<<http://www.Chersonese.org/management/gorod/files/objectio.html>>

**Fig. 7b**

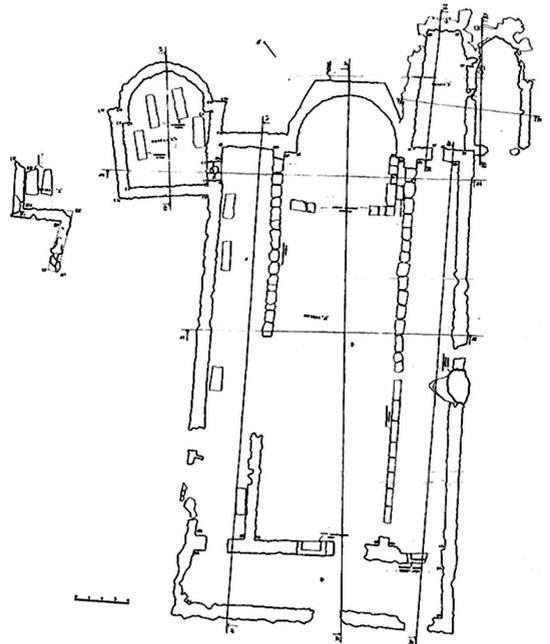
The plan of Western basilica made during Ukrainian-Italian collaboration in 2011 (tutors: Snitko, Moor, Lombardini)

**Fig. 7c, 7d**

The condition of the object in 2011. Photo by I Snitko

**Fig. 7e**

The condition of the object in 2011. Vegetation. Photo by I Snitko



opposite page

The vegetation in  
Chersonese

Fig. 8a  
Vegetation in central  
part, photo by I.  
Sniko, summer 2012

Fig. 8b  
Vegetation in citadel  
part, photo by I.  
Sniko, summer 2012

tral part and in the northern coast of Tauric Chersonese, so that the monuments, there situated, suffer from the constant intervention of people, see Fig.10.

There is a high risk of 'black archaeology' – the illegal excavations, as much as a risk of vandalism. The problem is that the security network cannot cover all the territory of the preserve: there are not enough guards and video cameras to organize the protection of excavations against intruders and thieves.

Another danger comes from archaeologists: in some cases the archaeological expeditions working *in situ* are rather unprofessional. Quite a big amount of people involved in the excavation process do not have the needed skills. This issue causes a great damage to the monuments during on-field research, but also unqualified personnel might distort the facts during the data processing phase<sup>1</sup>.

In the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese most of the studied monuments were later covered with earth in order to protect their physical form. This decision was dictated by the poor financial state of heritage preservation: there is no money for a good conservation of the monuments. Sometimes the conservation works are rather unprofessional. Due to the lack of financial resources there is no possibility for qualified study of the physical state of the object, the choice of materials for preservation is also a problem, because often modern materials chosen for conservation are incompatible with the old ones and only bring more destruction, see Fig. 11. There are several examples of controversial conservation projects which caused a lot of debates. A good example of those projects could be the conservation of a five-apsed temple in the southern part of the settlement. The notes were related to the interventions carried out on the baptismal font: this font is unique and one of the oldest medieval stationary baptisteries – in that time most temples had portable baptisteries in the narthex or side naves. In 2004 the conservation of the baptistery began: the existing walls of the baptistery were ruined and replaced with concrete ones. This intervention ruined an irreplaceable object (Krupa and Sorochan, 2005). The intervention on fortification curtain N°19 led to the degradation of this part of the wall: if ancient builders considered issues of construction on unstable soil such as special mortars and drainage systems, re-constructors used modern cement to reinforce the structure. As the result of it, the wall is now in an emergency state, see Fig. 12<sup>2</sup>.

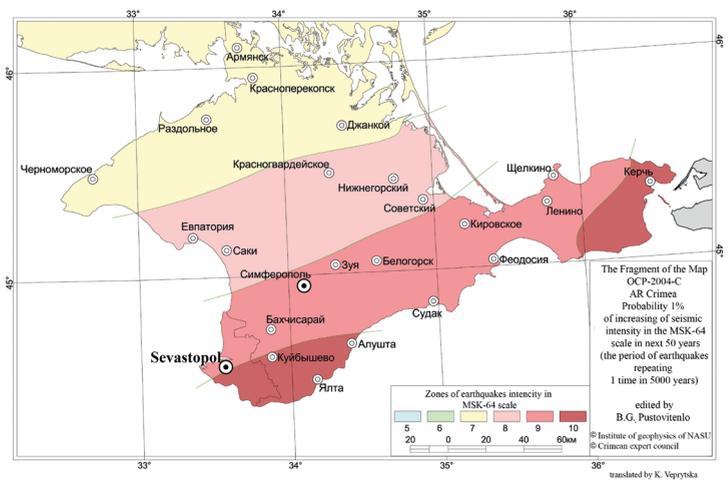
Apart from natural and anthropogenic risks, the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese has now to face another risk of a political nature. In March 2014 the whole Crimea was occupied by the Russian Federation. According to UN decision, Crimea is officially a part of Ukraine but, *de facto*, it is under the Russian rules. The Russian government has adopted a new scheme of reserve organization. According to the Ordinance of the Government N°14-III, Concerning the Creation of the State Budget Cultural Union, "The United Reserve-Museum of Sevastopol's History", which was signed on 21st of January 2015 by Sevastopol's Governor Sergei Meniaylo, all the ob-

<sup>1</sup>By Kateryna Veprytska, architect, PhD student in KNUCEA, Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup>By Iryna Snitko, architect, PhD, professor in KNUCEA, Ukraine.



**Fig. 9**  
The seismic risks in Crimea. The Fragment of the Map OCP-2004-C AR Crimea. edited by B.G. Pustovitenlo <<http://kerch.fm/2011/09/12/v-krymu-za-dve-nedeli-proizoshlo-tri-zemletryaseniya.html>>



*opposite page*

The touristic activities in Chersonese

**Fig. 10a**  
Performance on the ancient theater remains, 2008, photo of NP Tauric Chersonese <<http://www.Chersonese.org/?nid=68>>

**Fig. 10b**  
Epiphany celebrations in Chersonese. Year 2014, photo of NP Tauric Chersonese <<http://www.Chersonese.org/?nid=129>>

jects and infrastructure of NR “Tauric Chersonese” and several other museums of a military profile will be included in a newly created organization (Ordinance of the Government of Sevastopol N°14-III, 21/01/2015). At the same time, according to this Ordinance, Tauric Chersonese loses a Federal status (the higher level of monument significance in the Russian Federation) and actually becomes a part of a museum of local significance. The understanding of this problem caused a big resonance in Russian scientific circles. The speculations regarding the subordination of the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese could, actually, result in the total loss of the monument. Finally, after several months of debates, another Ordinance was issued to exclude Tauric Chersonese from this organization (Russian permanent representative to UNESCO, 2015).

The monument can be lost at any moment and will never be recreated again - all these issue require an immediate decision for the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese valorisation plan<sup>1</sup>.

**A valorisation project for the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese**

The process of valorisation of the cultural heritage is deeply rooted in the culture of the different geographical areas of their own.

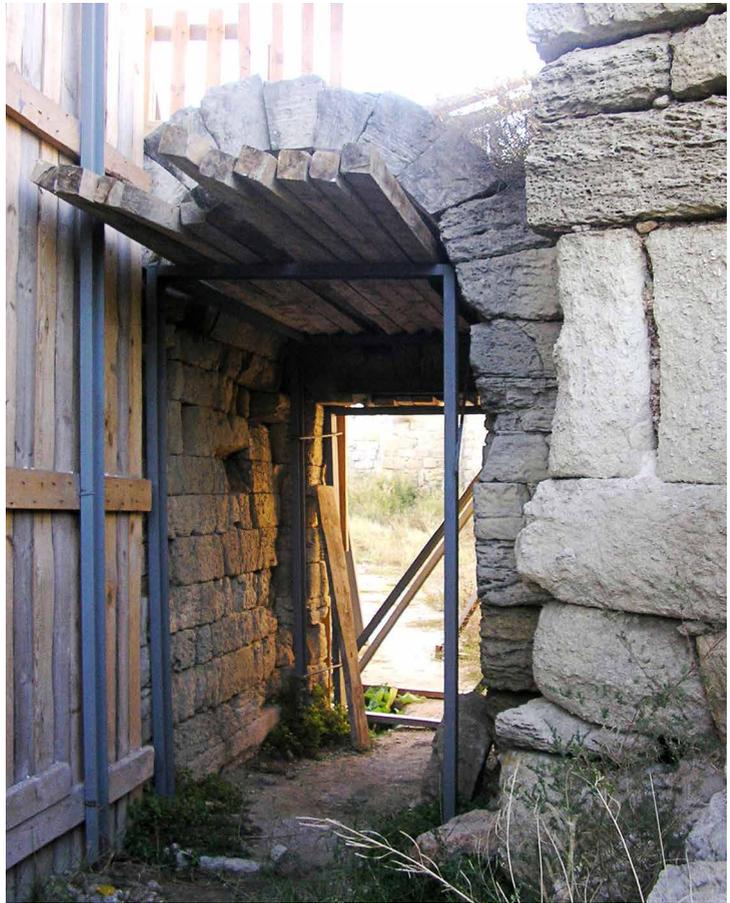
This assertion is true when we want to consider that the object of our interest is, on the one hand, ascribable into one cultural ‘landscape’, inhabited and transformed by the man and, on the other, it is able to awaken, as stated by Augé, two different types of memories: a collective one, “imprinted into the nature of the monuments” and the individual one, that is able to call to mind inside everyone a specific and own memory” (Augé, 2014, p. 35).

If the process of valorisation means increasing accessibility and, therefore, supporting knowledge of the places of culture, it becomes necessary to carefully define the culture in question.

The great and necessary effort is to ‘identify’ the point of view according

<sup>1</sup>By Kateryna Veprytska, architect, PhD student in KNUCEA, Ukraine.





The destruction of a curtain wall N° 19 in Chersonese, photo by I. Snitko, summer 2013

**Fig. 12a**  
Supportive structures on the arch of the gate

**Fig. 12b**  
Protective covering

to which it is possible to 'valorise' the place: it is necessary to understand if the point of view is only one. *De facto* the 'effort' is simple if it is possible to adopt the point of view of the "culture of one identity", (Aime, 2004, pp. 40-44) or, in general, that if the 'natives' are involved in the process of valorisation of the place, they will constrain 'outsiders' (even though normal beneficiaries and users such as tourists) to perceive and to utilize the cultural heritage according their ('natives') ideas.

If we start to think about of the articulated history of Crimea it appears not easy to define who are the 'natives': since from the recent occupation by Russian Federation, Crimea has been recognized as an Autonomous Republic.

The history of the Crimea goes through some phases that can put in evidence why it is not easy to circumscribe the 'identity question' of the Peninsula. From any point of view we want to observe the question of identity, the actual political (and cultural) situation implies that it is difficult to offer a more 'objective' vision which would be able to reflect the richness of the history, that lay into its complexity.

Very briefly, this complexity is represented by: the domination of the an-





ancient ruins, but also some more recent remains of the Russian military bases that it is possible to see in the archaeological area of ancient city.

In the same time, and in an opposite way, the process of valorisation of the Tauric Chersonese, could represent a 'model' due to the fact that the area expresses the three different types of values listed above: the archaeological/historic one, the religious one and the touristic one (especially connected to the summer tourism bonded to the beach along the coast).

It is impossible to consider the possibility to forbid the entrance to the faithful and the pilgrims directed to the main church dedicated to the memory of St. Vladimir so as it is impossible to deny the visibility of the archaeological sites.

Regarding tourists, they represent a risk for the ruins but they are the life of the place, also from the economical point of view.

So the three types of users, which necessarily require different types of facilities and structures, must coexist because they are strictly connected with the survival of the place.

Some analysis, carried out in collaboration between the Kharkiv National University of Construction, Engineering and Architecture and the Politecnico di Milano, began evaluating the possibility to consider and manage the contemporary presence of the three types of uses.

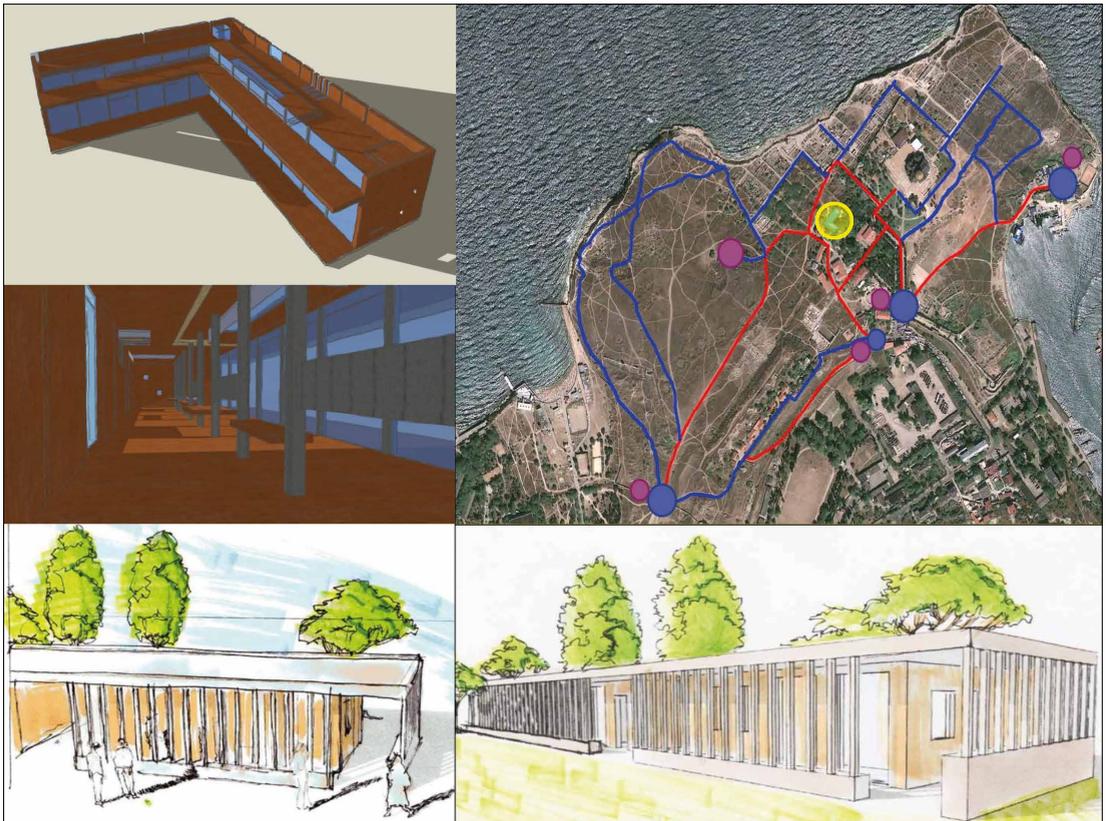
With the participation of students from Kharkiv and Milan, several projects were realised which take into consideration the distribution of faci-

**Fig.13**

The survey of some ruins of the Western Basilica made by the students of the both Universit  (KNUCEA and Polimi) (August, 2011, drawing made by KNUCEA's students)

**Fig. 14**

Analysis for the optimisation of the use of the archaeological area of the ancient Chersonese City. The organization of the touristic and religious paths; the preliminary studies for new entrances (in the bottom of the picture) and for a new museum added to the old one (on the left of the picture) (By A. Bellizzi, L. Chiodi, D. Dell'Aquila, M. Salib, A. Cattaneo, S. Colombo – Polimi)



ties supporting the three different uses of the areas as, for instance: paths along and into the archaeological area; new entrances to coordinate the different users according to their needs; a new museum building, that can support the activities of the old one; buildings for students and scholars involved in research and excavations inside the area: all elements supporting the knowledge and understanding of the place (Teutonico and Palumbo, 2002; Achille, et al., 2013).

The projects are based on a deeply historical study of the archaeology of the ancient city of Tauric Chersonese and of other main important places of Crimea such as Kaffa, Soldaia, Cembalo (settled by Geonese) (Belloni and Kukovalska, 2009).

The shape and the dimensions of the remains of the Western Basilica were measured. The drawings and the data concerning the Basilica were collected in the archives of the Direction of the National Preserve of the area in question.

Propaedeutic analysis in support of the projects are: the identification of the universal values of the archaeological site; the classification of the archaeological site; the identification of the macro-needs and of the reference environment; the identification of the stakeholders; the identification of the rules; the identification of the building plans; the identification of the offices involved in the management of the archaeological area; the analysis of the way in which it is possible to manage all the information.

Because of the instability of the present political situation, derived from the occupation by the Russian Federation, normal diplomatic relationships with the western part of Europe have been interrupted and it is therefore not easy to have access to the ancient city and its *chora*.

For the moment, the two Universities involved, Politecnico di Milano and the Kharkiv National University of Construction, Engineering and Architecture are continuing their activities through training programs with students, encouraging them to examine and to enhance, in depth, the 'responsibility' and the 'knowledge' necessary for managing this site, also by means of the mutual exchange of experiences regarding projects of valorisation, based on the value of identity that we recognize in common or different ways of defining and explaining the historic stratifications of the archaeological site<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>by Nora Lombardini, architect, PhD, associate professor in POLIMI, Italy

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