

## Aleksandr I. Saksa, Stanislav V. Bel'skiy & Vyacheslav G. Mizin NEW FINDS OF CUP-MARKED STONES NEAR THE VILLAGE OF OL'KHOVKA (SAKKOLA LAPINLAHTI) ON THE KARELIAN ISTHMUS IN 2016

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### INTRODUCTION

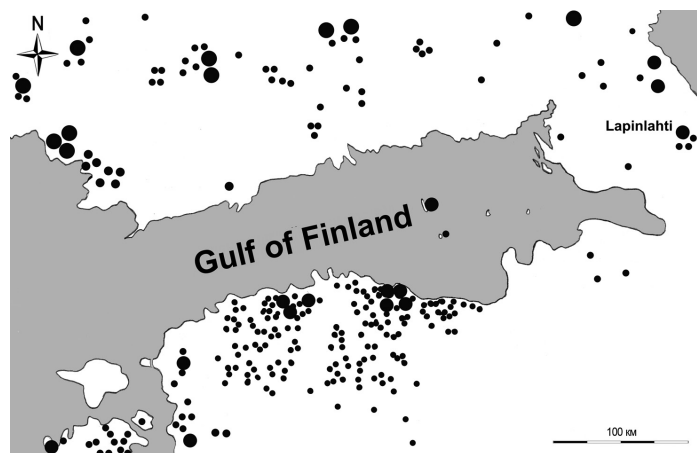
Among the objects of worship encountered on the Karelian Isthmus, there is a class of monuments which has parallels practically all over the world. These are the so-called cup-stones, i.e. boulders with small artificial hollows 5–10 cm in diameter and 1–6 cm in depth. In the scientific literature of different countries, they are called *cup-marked stones*, *pitted stones* or *nutting stones* in English, *uhri-* or *kuppikivet* in Finnish, *ohvri-* or *kultusekivid* in Estonian. In Russia, objects of this type have been called *chashechniki* or *chashechnye* stones (from Ru. chashka – a cup) since the publication of an article by Pavel A. Putyatin (1887: 19–30). The present authors use below the English term *cup-marked stone* (or *cup-stones*). This paper aims in summarizing the information about cup-marked stones known

if the surroundings of the village Ol'khovka (former Sakkola Lapinlahti), Priozersk (Fi. Käkisalmi) District of the Leningrad Oblast', and in publishing the new finds made in the area in 2016.

### RESEARCH HISTORY

In the territory of present-day Leningrad Oblast', cup-marked stones have been found in different districts, but the majority of them is concentrated on the Karelian Isthmus (Figs. 1&2). Near the village of Krotovo (Fi. Räisälä Hovinsaari), four such objects are known (Uino 1997: 309) and likewise four sites have been found near the village of Yarkoye (Fi. Käkisalme Suotniemi) (Uino 1997: 261) – finally,

Fig. 1. Distribution of cup-marked stones in southern Finland, Leningrad Oblast' (Russia) and Estonia. Cup-stones and their accumulations are marked with black dots. Map compiled after: Uino 1997; Tvauri 1999: 113–69; Matinolli 2012; and field research of the authors. Illustration: S. Bel'skiy & V. Mizin.



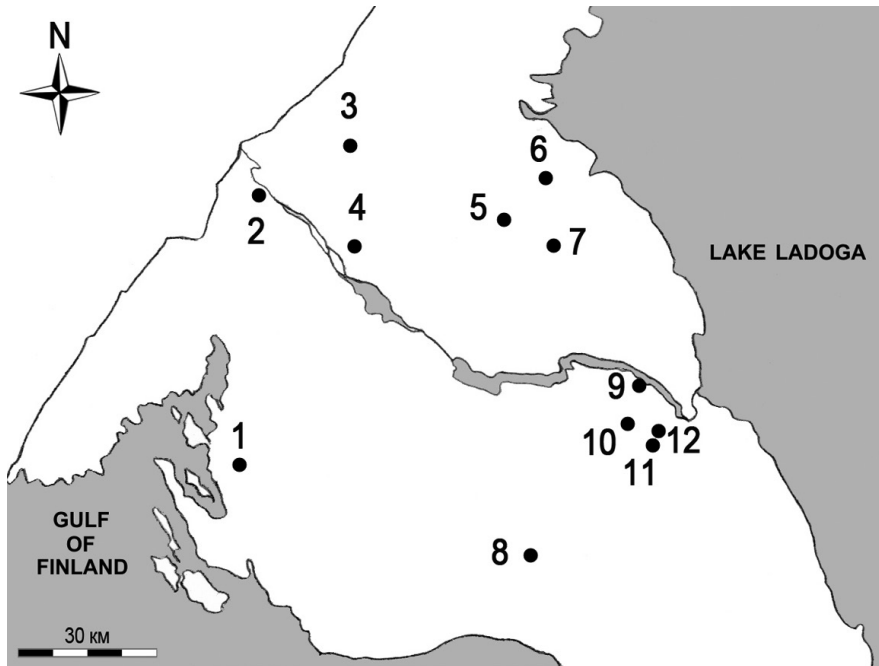


Fig. 2. Distribution of cup-stones on the Karelian Isthmus. Both Finnish and Russian names are given for the locations, the number of cup-marked stones at each location is given in parentheses; 1) Johannes Rokkala/Tokarevo (1), 2) Jääski/Lesogorskiy (1), 3) Kirvu Kirkonkylä/Svobodnoye (1), 4) Koljola/Borovinka (1), 5) Räisälä Kökkölä/Studenoye (1), 6) Käkisalmi Suotniemi/Yarkoye (4); 7) Räisälä Hovinsaari/Krotovo (5), 8) Kivennapa/Pervomayskoye (1), 9) Sakkola Lapinlahti/Ol'khovka (17), 10) Rautu Vehmainen/Krivko (1), 11) Rautu Savikkola/Snegirevka-1 (1), 12) Rautu Savikkola/Snegirevka-2 (1). Map compiled after: Lapshin 1995; Uino 1997; Saksa 2010; and field research of the authors. Illustration: S. Bel'skiy & V. Mizin.

14 cup-marked stones had been found near the village of Ol'khovka by 2012 (Uino 1997: 321; Saksa 1998: 72–3; Mizin 2014: 71–83). The finds mentioned here form the south-eastern part of the main distribution area of cup-marked stones in Finland (Fig. 1)

The topic of worshiped or cup-marked stones is a traditional one in Finnish archaeology and begins with the studies of Hjalmar Appelgren (1895: 1–3) and Aarne Ayräpää (1942: 179–208). Currently, about 560 cup-marked stones are known in Finland (Poutiainen & Siljander 2009: 102–18). On the Karelian Isthmus, A.I. Saksa discovered and recorded 13 new cup-stones in the 1970s, nine of which were found near the village of Ol'khovka (Saksa 1984: 112–7).

The functions of the artificial hollows or depressions in stones still stimulate discussions. While dealing with the material known in the

Baltic States, A. Tvauri concluded that the distribution of cup-marked stones is closely connected with cultivation (Tvauri 1999: 149). In her summary of the cup-marked stone studies on the Karelian Isthmus, P. Uino noted that the stones are found in places where also traces of habitation dating to the Merovingian (the 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries) and the early Viking Period (the 9<sup>th</sup> century) have been recorded by archaeologists. Moreover, the author supposed that cup-marked stones can be connected with the tradition of migrants from western Finland, even if the duration of that tradition is very difficult to evaluate (Uino 1997: 100). In the present article, we will not discuss further the general issues related to the function or dating of cup-marked stones – we believe that only an increase in the number of sources will bring us closer to solving these questions.

**THE ASSEMBLAGE OF CUP-MARKED STONES FROM THE SURROUNDINGS OF OL'KHOVKA VILLAGE (SAKKOLA LAPINLAHTI)**

The complex of archaeological remains including cup-marked stones in the surroundings of Ol'khovka village is unique (Fig. 3). As noted by A.I. Saksa, objects covering the whole time span from the Late Iron Age to the Middle Ages have been discovered and studied in this area. This fact makes the region exceptionally interesting, and to some extent, a reference area in the research on the history of old Karelia and its culture. One of the present

authors (AS) was the first one to discover and describe the assemblage of cup-marked stones to the west of the village in 1979–80 (Saksa 1998: 69–76).

The assemblage under study has no parallels in the entire territory of North-West Russia due to several reasons:

1. It is the densest concentration of cup-marked stones; by the spring of 2016, 17 objects had been discovered in the area, i.e. c 40% of the total number of cup-stones known in the Leningrad Oblast' (17 out of 45);
2. It includes a stone (no. 10) with 42 artificial holes, which is the largest number

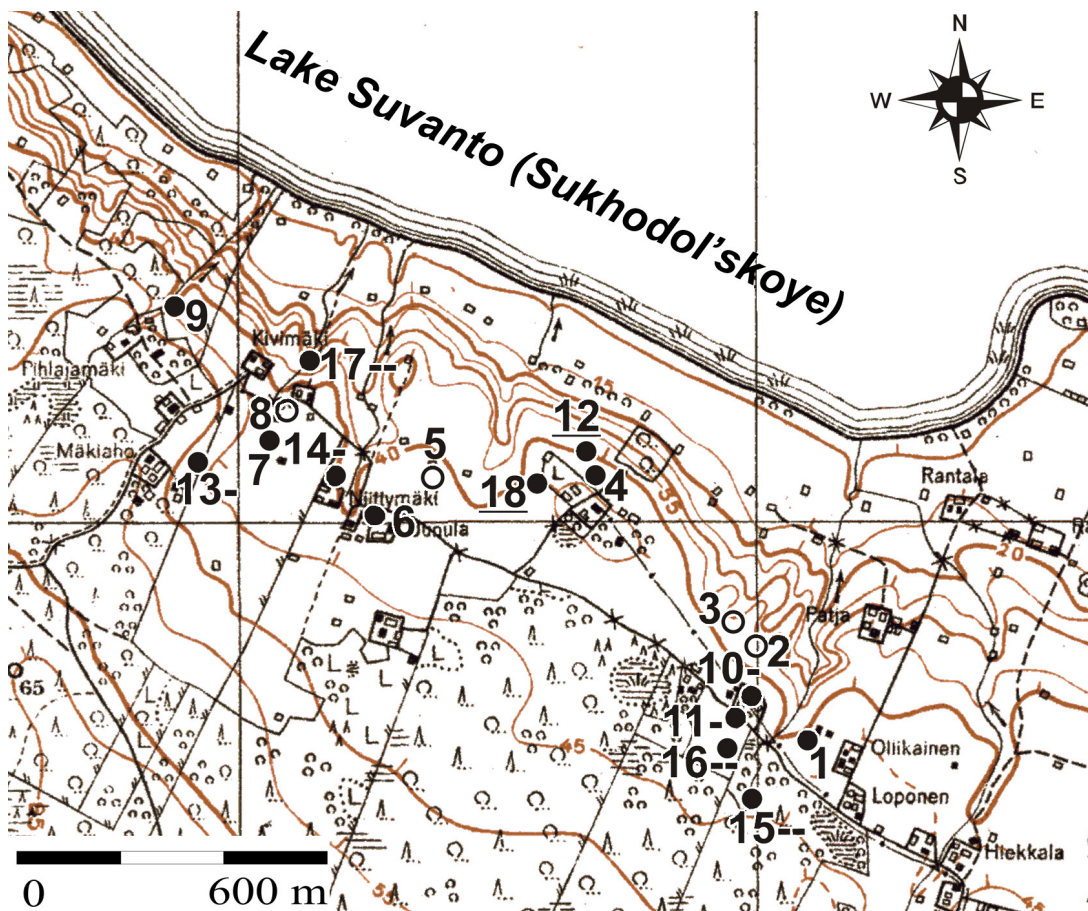


Fig. 3. Map of the cup-stone concentration near the Ol'khovka village; 1–17) cup-stones, 18) stone mound including the boulder with a petroglyph. Objects found in 2001 are underlined, and the ones found in 2012 and in 2016 marked with single and double hyphens, respectively. Black dots indicate objects preserved in 2016, open dots objects already lost by that time. Base map: Topografinen kartta 4042 05 Haparainen, Maanmittaushallitus 1937, 1:20000. Illustration: S. Bel'skiy & V. Mizin.

or hollows known in all of the Leningrad Oblast’;

3. In addition to cup-marked stones, this assemblage includes three accumulations of different stone structures;
4. The area includes also a concentration of 78 stone-and-earth mounds of varying size, which occupy the summit of a high hill on the original shore of Lake Sukhodol’skoye (Fi. Suvanto). A large cup-stone (‘cult stone’, no. 16) with six distinctly discernible pits is located in its centre (Saksa 1985: 46–7, Fig. 6; 2010: 169–70). A water source is situated on the north-eastern slope of the hill and opening to the north, on the bottom of a small ravine. In 1978 and 1980, eight mounds were excavated in different parts of this concentration. Traces of keeping fire were recorded in all of them, and animal bones and teeth, pottery and isolated artefacts of the 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries were found. Similar pottery was found also in stone heaps made, as a rule, to the north from the cup-marked stones of this group. The fact that similar pottery is also typical to the mediaeval settlements and burial grounds investigated in different parts of the village suggests that several small cemeteries and villages were functioning simultaneously and had a common cult centre on the hill top at the lake shore. Unfortunately, the mounds of the cult centre facing the lake, as well as the spring on the hill slope, were demolished in 2016 during large-scale earthworks for building terraces on the hill. In addition to archaeological monuments, the hill is part of a magnificent natural landscape.
5. On one of the boulders, surrounded by a mound of stones, a ‘net petroglyph’ has been discovered (Mizin 2014: 74).

In 2012, this group of monuments was endangered by planned construction works, and therefore additional investigations were organized in the territory. The surveys resulted in the discovery of four new archaeological objects, and suggested that the true scale of the complex was not yet known (Mizin 2014: 71–83).

In 2013, an expedition of the Department of Rescue Archaeology of the Institute for the His-

tory of Material Culture (Russian Academy of Sciences) carried out archaeological investigations at the newly-revealed objects of cultural heritage. Nonetheless, the earthworks continue in the area even at present. They threaten directly the entire complex of monuments and destroy the unique historical landscape. These activities are opposed not only by professional archaeologists, but also by numerous representatives of enthusiastic amateurs. Owing to the efforts of these people, new discoveries became possible in the area.

In 2016, the history of discoveries of cup-marked stones near the Ol’khovka village reads as follows:

In 1978, an expedition headed by A.I. Saksa revealed nine cup-marked stones (no. 1–9). Excavations were conducted at the foot of boulders no. 1, 4, 5, 7, and 9. Apart from the last-mentioned stone, mediaeval pottery was found by all of them. Near boulders no. 7 and 8, and about 100 m west of them, remains of cultural layer of a settlement were revealed. The discovered fragments of clay pipes date this settlement to the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Saksa 1984: 112–7).

In 1992, four stones (no. 2, 3, 5, 8) were removed by peasants from the field. Since no information on the demolition of these stones exist, it would even be possible to search for them and return them to their original places.

In 2001, examination of the complex by one of the present authors (VM) revealed one new cup-marked stone (no. 12).

In 2012, four previously unmentioned stones (no. 10, 11, 13, 14) were found (Mizin 2014: 76).

In 2016, three other stones were revealed (no. 15, 16, 17) – this article is devoted to the publication of these stones.

## INVESTIGATIONS IN 2016

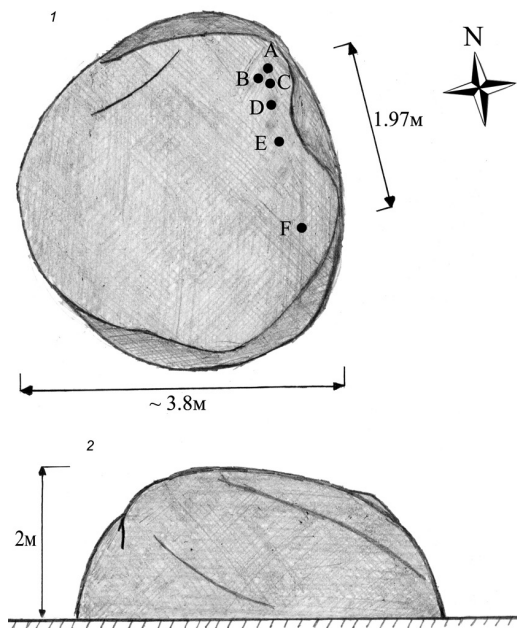
In the autumn of 2015, road construction works were started in the area of Ol’khovka archaeological complex. The direct danger of destruction and the high probability of new finds became stimuli for carrying out new investigations in April and May 2016. The studies aimed in identification of new archaeological objects as well as more precise evaluation of the general structure of the complex and its presumable limits. Altogether ten researchers took part in this

work.<sup>1</sup> The investigations were focused mainly on the peripheral areas of the archaeological complex.

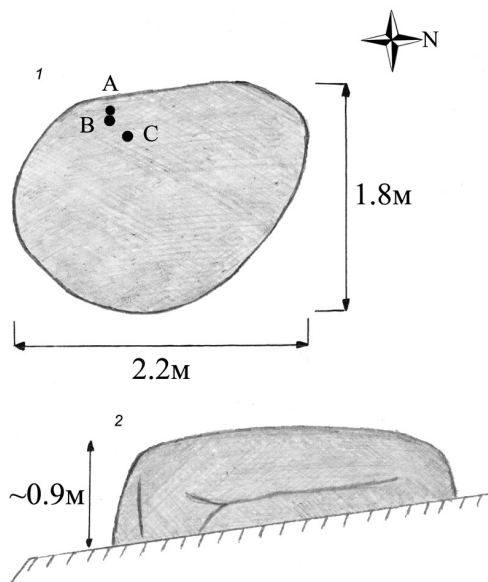
Field investigations were carried out on the slope of shore terrace and in areas adjoining it; the forest adjacent to the accumulation of stone heaps at the Ol'khovka-15 site; the forest stretching to the south from the assemblage of cup-marked stones (from the village of Ol'khovka to the stone heaps of Ol'khovka-15). A plan was made to survey the whole territory and clear vegetation from all boulders which could have been so far unknown cup-marked stones. The criteria for these included: size not less than of the smallest stone identified before; relatively smooth upper surface (or the lateral one, in case the boulder had been rolled out from the field); homogeneous rock. In total, three new cup-marked stones were discovered.

*Stone no. 15* (Ol'khovka-29 according to the previously used numeration; Fig. 4).

GPS coordinates: N 60.38352; E 30.17364. Dimensions: 3.8 x 3.8 x 2.0 m.



*Fig. 4. Cup-stone no. 15, view from 1) the above and 2) the west. Sizes of the 'cups' (diameter/depth, cm): A) 6/2, B) 5/1.5, C) 6/2, D) 5/1, E) 6/3, F) 7/2. Illustration: S. Bel'skiy & V. Mizin.*



*Fig. 5. Cup-stone no. 16, view from 1) the above and 2) the west. Sizes of the 'cups' (diameter/depth, cm): A) 4/1, B) 7/2, C) 6/1. Illustration: S. Bel'skiy & V. Mizin.*

Number of 'cups' and their size: 6, diameter 5–7 cm, depth 1–3 cm.

Special features: the 'cups' are arranged on the crest of the stone in a stretched, almost linear manner oriented to the north (Fig. 4:1). The boulder was found in the forest near the village of Ol'khovka. However, as evidenced by a pre-World War II map (Topografinen kartta 4042 05 Haparainen, Maanmittaushallitus 1937, 1:20000), a field used to locate near it. At the moment, this is the tallest cup-marked stone known within the area with the height of c 2 m (Fig. 4:2).

*Stone no. 16* (Ol'khovka-30; Fig. 5).

GPS coordinates: N 60.38412; E 30.17336. Dimensions: 1.8 x 2.2 x 0.9 m.

Number of 'cups' and their size: 3, diameter 4–7 cm, depth 1–2 cm.

Special features: the hollows are arranged in a compact group in the western part of the boulder (Fig. 5:1). The 'cups' are poorly discernible. Two of them are positioned closely to one another, whereas the third one is placed separately.

Stone no. 17 (Ol'khovka-31; Fig. 6).

GPS coordinates: N 60.38810; E 30.16416.

Dimensions: 2.4 x 3.2 x 0.75–1.7 m.

Number of 'cups' and their size: 3, diameter 5–7 cm, depth 1–2 cm.

Special features: it should be noted that this stone is situated near the stone no. 8, lost in 1992. However, a detailed examination showed that the newly-found object differs from the previously-known one essentially in its dimensions and shape, as well as in the number and arrangement of the 'cups'.

In the course of studies, also the boulder with a 'net petroglyph' was further investigated (Fig. 7). This object was discovered in 2001. Its GPS coordinates are N 60.38407; E 30.17064. The boulder, up to 0.7 m high and measuring 2.8 x 3.0 m in other dimensions, is surrounded by a stone mound measuring 9 x 12 m; the boulder is displaced to the north-east from the centre of the mound (Fig. 7:2). The mound constitutes of small cobblestones.

The 'petroglyph' comprises of a 'net' design measuring approximately 15 x 20 cm. The

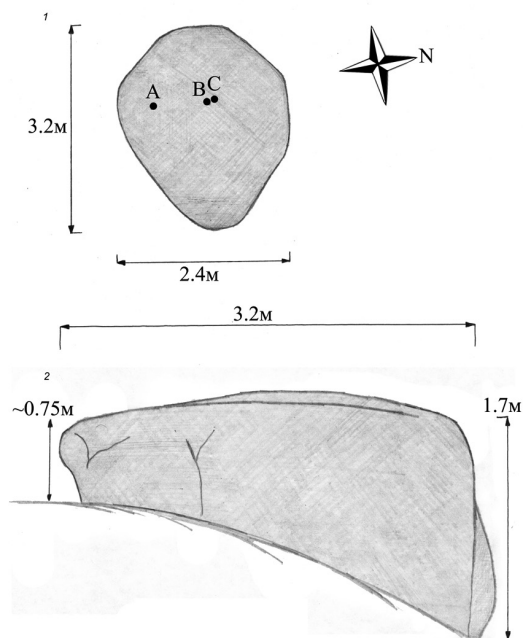


Fig. 6. Cup-stone no. 17, view from 1) the above and 2) the west. Sizes of the 'cups' (diameter/depth, cm): A) 7/1.5, B) 7/2, C) 5/1. Illustration: S. Bel'skiy & V. Mizin.

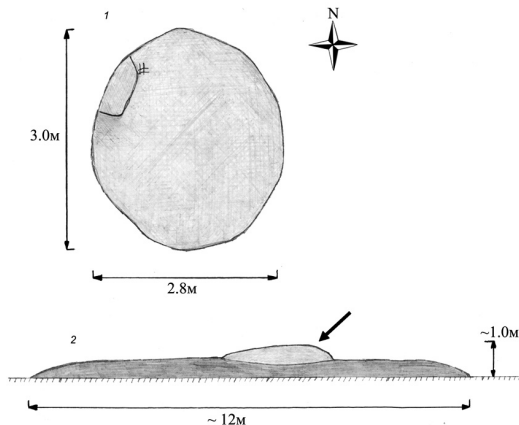


Fig. 7. Stone with a 'petroglyph' positioned on a stone mound, 1) view from the above and 2) general view of the stone and mound from the east, location of the 'petroglyph' marked with an arrow. Illustration: S. Bel'skiy & V. Mizin.

carving is located on the tallest and lake-facing (northern) surface of the boulder, near an approximately rectangular natural depression (90 x 50 cm) on the lateral surface. Similar sign is known on a stone in north-eastern Estonia (Pärna village, Viru-Nigula Parish) (Tvauri 1999: 138, Fig. 16). It is important to note that not only are the patterns alike, but also the placement of carvings near the edge of the stones is similar.

## CONCLUSIONS

The group of archaeological monuments in the village of Ol'khovka is situated in an area where intensive agricultural activities have been going on for several centuries. The finds made during the recent years demonstrate the connection between the cup-marked stones and the fields. Moreover in the area under consideration, cup-marked stones constitute three spatially relatively limited clusters of two (no. 4 and 12, linked with the hill and concentration of stone heaps at Ol'khovka-14), four (no. 7, 8, 13, and 17, grouped near the slope and the brook), and seven objects (no. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 15, and 16) (Fig. 3).

The new finds of cup-marked stones suggest that the area of the Ol'khovka archaeological complex is still incompletely investigated. There are solemn grounds to continue the search for monuments of this type. This elevates the scien-

tific status of this territory. The actual problem of dating the objects cannot be solved through limited excavations, but only by conducting large-scale studies around the stones themselves and in the areas adjoining them, and by retrieving enough archaeological materials and samples for dating.

It is necessary to recognize the whole area of this archaeological complex as a single protected zone. The area should be preserved as a single whole constituting of the archaeological monuments and the surrounding landscape. All the recorded archaeological objects recorded should be protected.

## NOTES

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