Yu.G. Vinogradov in his ingenious paper described the general circumstances of the unique sgraffito of the Ptolemaic battleship "Isis" (see supra). Let me add some comments as to its details, from a nautical point of view, and to the numerous other graffiti that once decorated the same very room of the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Nymphaion.

"Isis" (Catalogue no. N 1; Fig. 1; Pl. 1)** and her nameless opponent (N 3; Fig. 3), also dealt with by Vinogradov, only form the most conspicuous among a "fleet" of 83 graffiti of ships (or fragments of such; it cannot be excluded that some rudimentary drawings not numbered, also were meant to represent ships) of several types, in different grades of pictorial quality, and size (Catalogue nos. N 1-83; Fig. 5-9). Moreover, there exist 49 graffiti of terrestrial motives (T 1-49; Fig. 10-11), intermingled with those of the former group. Inscriptions sometimes connected with pictorial graffiti, have been treated by Vinogradov.

Both warships presented by Vinogradov (N 1.3 = Fig. 1.3; Pl. 1) decorate the upper, yellow tier (no. 4 in Grač’s counting) of two richly ornamented walls together measuring 5.2 m in length and 2.5-3 m in height. Much of this width (2.2 m) goes to the Back wall, but a Left wall also contributed dozens of graffiti. For reasons not known yet, graffiti on the right part of the Back, and the right wall cannot be reconstructed. As is clear for the Yellow tier of the Back wall, there prevails an impression that adorning both walls started at their left sides. In my opinion, it is to be thought that the right side of the Back, and the Right wall once also were adorned with graffiti. Some loose red fragments eventually might come from these areas but there also are lacunae within the reconstructed fields, where these fragments may have been located. The room formed the upper storey of a building that concealed the step between the uppermost terrace of the sanctuary complex and the next lower one¹. When the building collapsed,

¹ See Olga Sokolova’s paper, supra.- My interpretation bases itself upon discussions with Grač, and my impressions in view of the finds at the Russian Hermitage Museum at St. Petersburg

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Ancient Civilizations 5,4
apparently by an earthquake, the stuccoed walls precipitated into the "basement" room, erected on the lower terrace, where their fragments were painstakingly recovered by the excavator, the regretted Nonna L. Grač.

The upper yellow tier of the Back wall seems so to speak to have been reserved for both opposing warships, of which "Isis" is placed right in the left corner and N 3 to her right (Fig. 1; Pl. 1). Five other ones (N 4-6.8.9 = Fig. 3) are smaller, and drawn in a more summary way. To the right of them, the heraldic group of animals (T 4-7 = Fig. 4) which Vinogradov suggests to interpret as a diagram of the political constellations in the Pontos Euxeinos at the time of "Isis" 's visit to Nymphaion, and the male head T 8 are placed. The left side wall in the yellow tier is devoid of graffiti, as is the back wall to the right of the deer T 7.

Below the yellow tier there follows at eye level a painted a warm dark red. This is where the bulk of the graffiti (i.e. N 10-79 = Fig. 5-9; T 9-49 = Fig. 10-11) are placed. Be it mentioned that they include some warships of what appear to be Greek types (N 9.11.24.44-45[?].71), and many of different stock (N 10.12.13.15.22.24.36[?].39.44[?].51.52.60.67.69.71.72.83[?], leaving aside mere pictograms). Most are small, and none are shown fighting each other. Some fragments of red stucco which could not be integrated into the field of connecting fragments (N 75-80 = Fig. 5,2-4), however, demonstrate that there once existed in the red zone some highly detailed, large images of warships which perhaps were of similar quality as the "Isis" sgraffito, however, executed in a different technique, and style. The warship group is impressive indeed.

A group of cargo ships under sail (N 19-21 = Fig. 10, 1) and some single ones (N 7.18.49.55 [with a forefoot not to be mistaken for a ram].57: Fig. 5,1.5; 9,2-5) though mostly small in size, forms the richest pictorial source on Hellenistic freighters, and thus is as unique a highlight of the Nymphaion "catalogue of ships" as "Isis" is. Whereas these vessels may be likened to an Attic votive relief of the 4th century, some other Red Tier vessels represent types not shown elsewhere. Two graffito fragments (N 82-83 = Fig. 8,1) which the Hermitage specialists headed by L.G. Gagen, identified on fragments of the lowermost white tier, show sailing vessels of a type which cannot reliably be identified.

The drawing ground in all tiers is formed by two layers of stucco, namely a coarse-grained white one c. 25-30 mm thick, applied to the mudbrick walls of the building, and a covering one of extremely fine-grained coloured stucco with a perfectly smooth surface likely to have been carefully burnished. Most graffiti in 1987, and 1993. This particularly bears on my interpretation of the stucco surfaces as being mechanically polished, as opposed to Grač's definition as encaustic painting.