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Some Issues Related to the Problem of Heritage Conservation of Archaeological Complexes in Czermno (Tomaszów Lubelski County) and Gródek (Hrubieszów County)

ABSTRACT

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This paper discusses some problems related to the conservation of two archaeological complexes in Czermno and Gródek in the Lublin Voivodeship. Their characteristics and research history are described in detail, along with their preservation state, ownership status, risks, and current heritage conservation activities. The conclusions presented in the paper are related to the need for further scientific, interdisciplinary research, conservation efforts, and changing their protection status as defined by law. Finally, a proposal is made to found a Czermno-Gródek open-air museum, which would make these tasks easier.

Keywords: Czermno, Gródek, heritage conservation, Cherven' Towns

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Introduction

The archaeological sites in Czermno (Tomaszów county) and Gródek (Hrubieszów county), in the Lublin Voivodeship are one of the most precious heritage sites on the border between Central and Eastern Europe, bearing witness to the thousands-year-long history of the region.

The Czermno complex consists of a hillfort (the so-called *Zamczysko* [close to the German term Burgstall]), two closed settlements (at least one of which was fortified), open settlements and graveyards from the 10–13th century, and prehistoric sites (Florek 2012; Dzieńkowski and Sadowski 2016; cf. Figs. 1–2). The Gródek / Gródek Nadbużny /

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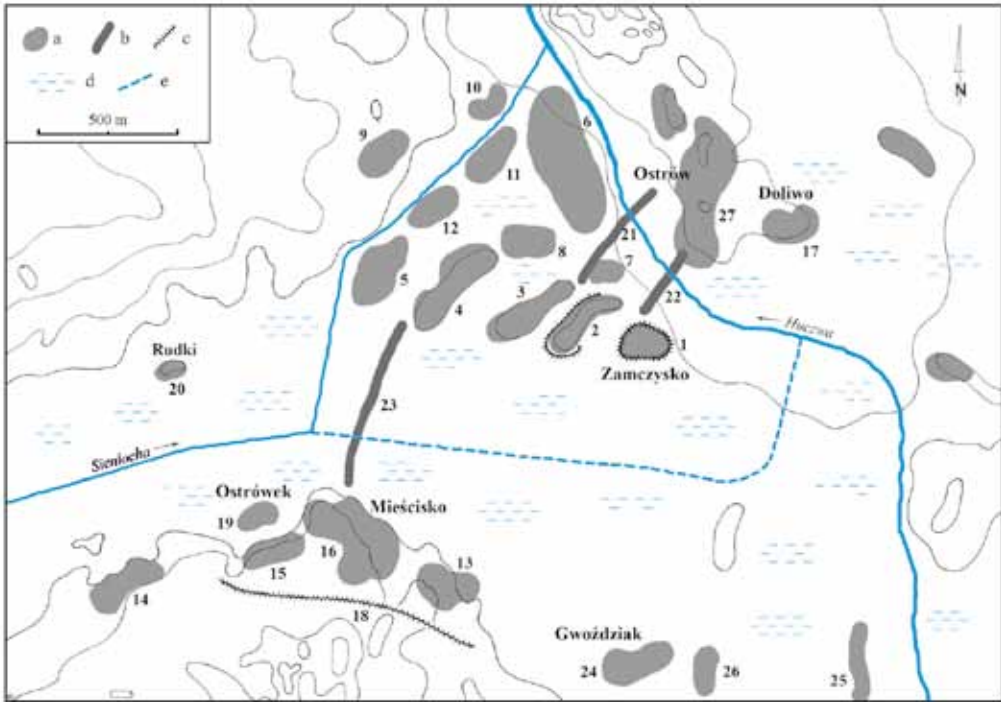


Fig. 1. Czermino archaeological complex. Legend: a – the most important archaeological sites; b – dikes and footbridges; c – segmented rampart; d – wetlands (peat lands); e – the old bed of the Sieniocha River (Prepared by M. Florek)

Gródek nad Bugiem¹ complex contains both prehistoric and mediaeval archaeological sites, among them: Site 1A – a hillfort; Site 1B – a multi-cultural site; Site 1C covering a wide temporal range, including a large Funnelbeaker Culture settlement and an early mediaeval village and cemetery; Site 1D with a Chernyakhov culture settlement (Kuśnierz 2003; Poppe 1977). The archaeological sites located north of the confluence of the Huczwa and Bug rivers, including early mediaeval settlements and a mound called “The Moon Grave” can also be linked to the Gródek complex (cf. Figs. 3–4). The heritage sites at Czermino and Gródek have been studied by historians and archaeologists for

¹ The proper administrative name of the village where the settlement complex is situated is Gródek. The name originates from a Slavic word for earthen fortifications or hillforts, and it is a quite commonplace name. Therefore, to distinguish the site in question from other “Gródek” locations, the name of the nearby river is commonly added to that of the village. As a result, in the archaeological literature it is referred to by names such as Gródek Nadbużny and Gródek nad Bugiem (both meaning Gródek upon the Bug River).

over 100 years (Bender *et al.* 1957; Dąbrowska 1974; Florek 2008; Florek 2016; Florkiewicz and Sikora 2016; Florkiewicz and Urbański 2016; Gądzikiewicz 1956; Gumiński 1989; Gurba 2004; Gurba and Urbański 1998; Jastrzębski and Maciejczuk 1988; Jażdżewski 1959; Kokowski 1993; Kokowski and Zakościelna 1988; Kowalczyk 1956; Kuśnierz 2006; Kutylowska 1998; Poklewski 1958; Rajewski 1956; Rauhut 1956a; 1956b; Wołoszyn 2016a; 2016b; Żurowski and Mikołajczyk 1955; for Gródek see now: Wołoszyn [ed.] 2018).

The current state of the Czermino and Gródek complexes

Administrative status

The archaeological sites belonging to the Czermino complex are located within the borders of the Czermino *sołectwo*², in the *gmina* of Tyszowce, and in Tyszowce itself (Tomaszów Lubelski county). Some sites, on the right bank of the Huczwa river, are located within the Wronowice and Turkowice *sołectwa*, in the *gmina* of Werbkowice (Hrubieszów county). The Gródek complex, on the other hand, lies within the boundaries of Gródek and Teptiuków *sołectwa*, and the town of Hrubieszów is in the Hrubieszów county.

Size

The hillfort in Czermino has an area of 1.6 ha, and 12.5 ha when both closed settlements are included. The total area of all the sites in the area of the Sieniocha and Huczwa rivers, including the dikes and bridges which connect them, is about 74 ha; if we include all the settlements and cemeteries within the 2 km radius, then the area of the Czermino complex can be estimated to be within the 150–200 ha range.

The Gródek hillfort (site 1A) has an area of approximately 75 ares. The size of the hillfort and the other sites south of the mouth of the Huczwa river exceeds 53 ha, and when we include the sites north of the Huczwa river, like “The Moon Grave (Księżycowa Mogiła)”, the area of the whole archaeological complex is well over 150 ha.

Ownership and current land use

In the case of the Czermino complex, both the hillfort (plot 49) and the part of land with an observation tower near the Huczwa river

² *Sołectwo* (plural: *sołectwa*) an auxiliary administrative unit of a rural *gmina* (commune, municipality) in Poland.



Fig. 2. Czermno – hillfort (Czermno site 1 – Burgstall). View from the side of the Huczwa (Photo by M. Florek)

(plot 47/2) belong to the *gmina* (Fig. 5). Other land belongs to private persons; most of the land in the Gródek complex is also private property, with the following exceptions: plot 55 with the hillfort (site 1A), plot 197 (partially site 1C), plot 210 (partially site 1D), which belong to the Hrubieszów *gmina*; and also plots 224, 225 and 226 (site 1D), owned by the Polish National Railways. Plot 372 in Teptiuków with “The Moon Grave” also belongs to a *gmina* (Fig. 6).

Most of the land in the Czermno complex is used for agricultural purposes, as meadows, grazing land, and ploughed fields. Some sites also contain houses and farm buildings, surrounded by gardens and orchards. The southern part of the complex is covered by a forest.

The area of the hillfort and plots 244, 245 and 246 of the Gródek 1D site, as well as “The Moon Grave” in Teptiuków are currently wastelands. The remaining archaeological sites of the Gródek complex are used almost exclusively as ploughed fields, accompanied by village buildings.

State of research

Most of the archaeological sites belonging to the Czermno and Gródek complexes have been studied through surface surveys; there have also been some accidental discoveries in the area. It was not until only a couple of years ago that some research was done using non-invasive methods, such as geophysical surveys, electronic prospection, aerial photography, LIDAR measurements, and numeric terrain modelling. Only small parts of both complexes have been excavated.

In Czermno, archaeological digs were conducted primarily in the hillfort area, and also on some other sites (Wołoszyn 2016a; Florkiewicz and Sikora 2016; Florek 2016). Only 5 ares of the hillfort area (Czermno site 1) have been excavated; 6 ares in the area containing both closed settlements; excavations on the other sites, including the Wronowice-Doliwo cemetery, covered 2 ares. In total, an area of 0.12–0.13 ha has been excavated in Czermno.

The situation is only slightly better in Gródek, where 11 ares of the hillfort area (Gródek site 1A) have been excavated – roughly 1/3 of its total area. Archaeological digs were also conducted on sites 1C (0.3 ha) and 1D, “The Moon Grave” in Teptiuków and some other places (e.g. Gródek sites 2 and 3).

Risks to the conservation efforts

There are two kinds of risks that could potentially affect archaeological sites: those caused by natural factors (sometimes influenced by human activities), and those directly anthropogenic. In the case of Gródek, the natural risks are caused mostly by erosion, including abrasion by the flowing water of the Bug and Huczwa rivers. Czermno is affected by the groundwater level changes, which is a result of 50 years of irrigation efforts in the Huczwa and Sieniocha valleys. Plant cover and animal activities are less of a concern.

Much more important risks are related to human activity, including:

- agricultural land use;
- forestry;
- housing development;
- irrigation activities and changes in the water level;
- uncontrolled peat and sand harvesting;
- burning of meadows;

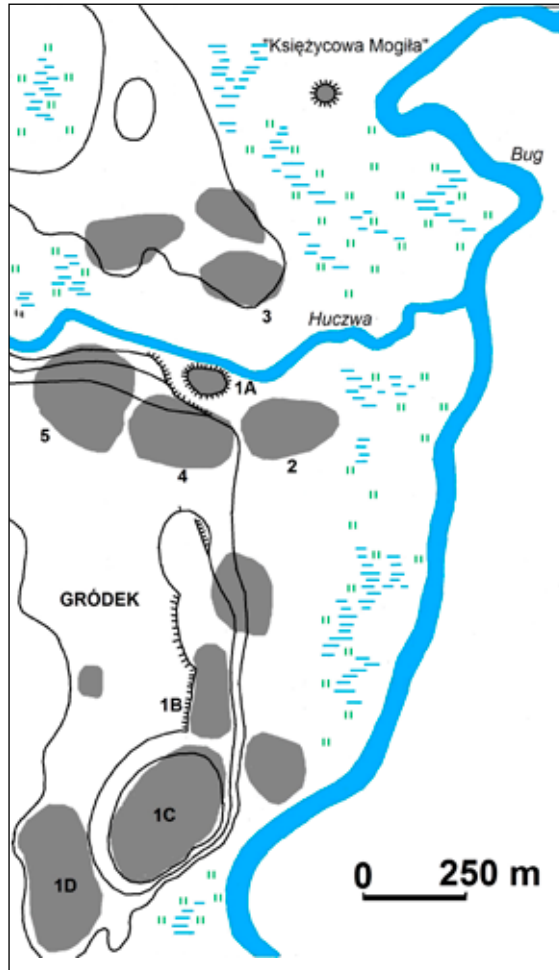


Fig. 3. Gródek archaeological complex. The most important archaeological sites (Prepared by M. Florek)

- illegal garbage dumps;
- illegal excavations by treasure hunters and amateur archaeologists;
- organisation of mass events at archaeological sites or in their direct neighbourhood (e.g. the “Mediaeval Midsummer Festival” in Czermno).

The current conservation efforts in the Czermno and Gródek complexes

The fundamental law regulating heritage conservation is the Protection and Heritage Conservation Bill of 23rd July 2003 (*Dziennik Ustaw* 2018, 2067). It describes the following ways of heritage protection:



Fig. 4. Gródek hillfort (Gródek site 1A – Burgstall). View from the south-east, as photographed in 1977 (Photo by K. Garbacz)

- adding an entry to the heritage register;
- adding an entry to the List of Heritage Treasures (movable heritage only);
- designating a site as a monument of history;
- creating a cultural park;
- modifying local area development plans, or – if no such plans exist – individual decisions made by the local government of a *gmina*, council or voivodeship, based on the local (*gmina's*) heritage register.

The conservation efforts in Czeremno

The first efforts to protect the archaeological sites in the Czeremno area were made in the 1920s. Ploughing and animal grazing in the hillfort area was forbidden, only mowing hay was allowed. The other archaeological sites in the complex were not protected in any way. The hillfort was entered in the heritage register on 20th October 1967, by a decision of the voivodeship conservation office in Lublin, although in the text of the entry the boundaries of the conserved area were



Fig. 5. Czermino archaeological complex. Areas owned by the commune (Prepared by M. Florek)

not defined, and the ownership was not stated correctly. In 1988, the voivodeship conservation office in Zamość made another decision about the hillfort entry in the heritage register, because of the administrative changes (after 1975 Czermino belonged to the Zamość voivodeship), and the need to correct the erroneous ownership data. This time, the decision was accompanied by a map defining the protected area. Another update to the heritage register was introduced in 2008, as a consequence of another administrative reform in Poland.

Currently, only the hillfort (Czermino site 1) on plot 49 and the closed settlements (Czermino site 2) on plots 42/2, 48/3, 48/4, 48/5 are entered in the heritage register (Fig. 7). The other sites are not, although they are on the voivodeship archaeological heritage list.

The *gmina* of Tyszowce (which contains most of the complex's archaeological sites) does not have a local heritage register, nor a heritage conservation programme. There is also no local development plan for the whole *gmina*, apart from the urbanised area of Tyszowce.

In the voivodeship development plan of 2015 there was a suggestion to create a Tyszowce Cultural Park, which would include Czermino. The

same document also contained a proposal to create a Tyszowce Protected Landscape Area, or a Sieniocha Valley Protected Landscape Area, which would cover the peat bogs in the Huczwa and Sieniocha valley, as well as the area containing the Czermno archaeological sites. No steps have been taken so far to implement these plans.

The conservation efforts in Gródek

In 1988 the Gródek hillfort (site 1A, plot 55) was entered in the heritage register, as were the multi-cultural settlement and the cemetery (site 1C, plots 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 203, 204, 206, 207, 613). In 1995, also the Chernyakhov culture settlement and the cemetery (site 1D, plots 208, 209, 210, 224, 225, 226) were added to the register. “The Moon Grave” mound in Teptiuków was entered in the heritage register in 1991, with the plot number 372 where it is located (Figs. 8–9).

The other archaeological sites in the complex are inventoried only in the local voivodeship’s and *gmina*’s heritage listings. Additionally, the *gmina* of Hrubieszów has a local development plan of 2004, which contains the known archaeological sites, including the Gródek complex.

In 1997 the Bug Protected Area was created, to help conserve non-forest ecosystems of the Bug valley, which contained parts of Horodło, Hrubieszów and Mircze *gminas*, including the archaeological sites of Gródek. Also, in the development plan for the Lublin Voivodeship of 2015 there was a suggestion to create a Hrubieszów Cultural Park, which would contain the Gródek archaeological sites.

Using archaeological complexes in Czermno and Gródek for the popularisation and promotion of archaeological heritage

Until very recently, the archaeological sites in Czermno and Gródek were virtually unknown among the general public. It was not until the discovery of two silver adornments in Czermno, which received the National Geographic “Travelers” award for the scientific discovery of the year in 2011, and a follow-up exhibition (see Bagińska *et al.* 2012), that more interest was sparked. The most tangible outcomes included the construction of a viewing tower near the hillfort, and the organisation of a cyclical archaeological festival, “Mediaeval Midsummer Eve”. The archaeological complex in Gródek remains unknown to the general public, although a few kilometres away there is a small open-



Fig. 6. Gródek archaeological complex. 1 – areas owned by the commune; 2 – areas owned by the state (Prepared by M. Florek)

air museum – the “Goths’ Village” in Masłomęcz, run by the local Masłomęcz Goths’ Village Society.

Conclusions and recommendations

Heritage protection of the archaeological complexes in Czerwno and Gródek

In the case of Czerwno it is recommended to exclude the most important parts of the archaeological complex (i.e. both closed settlements, sites 2 and 3, and those located between the Huczwa and Sieniocha rivers) from agricultural land use and other land modification projects. It is also necessary to make a new decision to enter these sites in the heritage register, rather than just update the old entries, in order

to protect the whole area between the Huczwa river, the Tyszowce-Czermno road, and the current and former Sieniocha riverbed. The segmented rampart needs a separate entry in the register.

Due to its size and ownership structure, it is unlikely that the whole complex of Czermno could be entered into the heritage register. To remedy that, it is recommended to create a local heritage inventory for the Tyszowce *gmina*, which would include all immovable heritage. The next step should be creating the Tyszowce Protected Landscape Area, as described in the development plan for the Lublin Voivodeship. These actions would serve to protect not only particular archaeological sites, but the whole cultural landscape of the Huczwa valley.

The actions described above cannot reduce the risks related to land use, and it is usually not possible to change land use practices without changing the ownership structure (see Florek 2015, 244–246). The next stage should therefore include changing the ownership – by means of buyouts or takeovers – of the most important archaeological sites, and making them a property of the *gmina* or the State Treasury. Both closed settlements should be prioritised, along with the meadow terrain between them, the hillfort and the Huczwa river.

In the case of the Gródek complex, its entry in the heritage register also needs to be updated, and the land use of the archaeological sites changed (although the latter might be difficult without changing the ownership). It is also recommended to create the Hrubieszów Cultural Park mentioned in the development plan of the Lublin Voivodeship.

Finally, the location of the “Mediaeval Midsummer Eve” festival ought to be moved away from the archaeological sites and the area should be monitored to protect the sites from treasure hunters.

Future research

The complexes in Czermno and Gródek are still largely unexplored, and because of the existing risks and their current degradation level, continuing archaeological research should be the top priority. In the first stage, rescue excavations should be conducted on the most endangered, and at the same time, most interesting sites, like the Czermno cemeteries (Czermno site 3, Wronowice site 1), and “The Moon Grave” in the Gródek complex. It is recommended that the scientific investigations should be completed by one institution, which would ensure consistent research and dissemination methods, lower costs, and would prevent the



Fig. 7. Czerwno archaeological complex. Areas entered in the heritage register (Prepared by M. Florek)

dispersion of archaeological materials. At the same time, the research conducted in the past should be published.

Popularisation of archaeological heritage

In view of the great cultural value of archaeological heritage such as the Czerwno and Gródek complexes, and considering the fact that Cherven' Towns are common heritage of both Poland and Ukraine, they deserve to be better recognised and popularised among the general public. Their accessibility and attractiveness could be increased by:

- including both complexes in the tourist route network;
- plotting walking paths within the archaeological sites;
- presenting results of archaeological research;
- reconstructing fragments of hillfort walls and buildings;
- including the sites in Czerwno and Gródek in archaeological festivals and other similar events;
- reconstructing elements of destroyed constructions (e.g. “The Moon Grave” mound in Teptiuków, the segmented rampart in Czerwno);

- creating a regional tourist route “Historical tour: Zamość–Komarów–Czermno–Gródek–Horodlo–Dubienka–Chełm–Stołpie–Busówno–Cyców–Lublin”, mentioned in the development plan for the Lublin Voivodeship.

Of course, the proposals listed above should not endanger the conservation efforts or disturb scientific research.

The Czermno–Gródek open-air museum project

The implementation of some of the above-mentioned recommendations belongs directly to the local government, both on the *gmina* and voivodeship level, and to the state administration, mainly the voivodeship conservation office (e.g. maintaining the heritage register, area development planning, creation of protected areas). However, they will not solve all issues related to heritage conservation, including problems related to the change of land use and land ownership.

Taking into consideration the potential and characteristics of the Czermno and Gródek complexes, it appears that the best solution could be to create a special administrative unit, which could cooperate with the local government and national administration, and participate in conservation activities, scientific research, and their publication and popularisation. The creation of such a unit – the Czermno–Gródek open-air museum – is consistent with the recommendations included in the 2015 local area development plan of the Lublin Voivodeship.

The goals of the proposed open-air museum would include:

- countering the existing risks by changing the land use of the Czermno and Gródek archaeological sites;
- administration of the land belonging to the *gmina* or the State Treasury, ensuring its conservation and proper development for scientific, popularisation, and commercial (promotional and tourist) purposes;
- organisation of buyouts of the private land which belongs to both archaeological complexes;
- the coordination of multidisciplinary research on Cherven’ Towns, and the other sites in the area; conducting its own research; storing, preserving, and disseminating movable heritage, osteological materials, as well as documentation from current and past research activities;
- popularisation of the subject of Cherven’ Towns and archaeological heritage conservation.

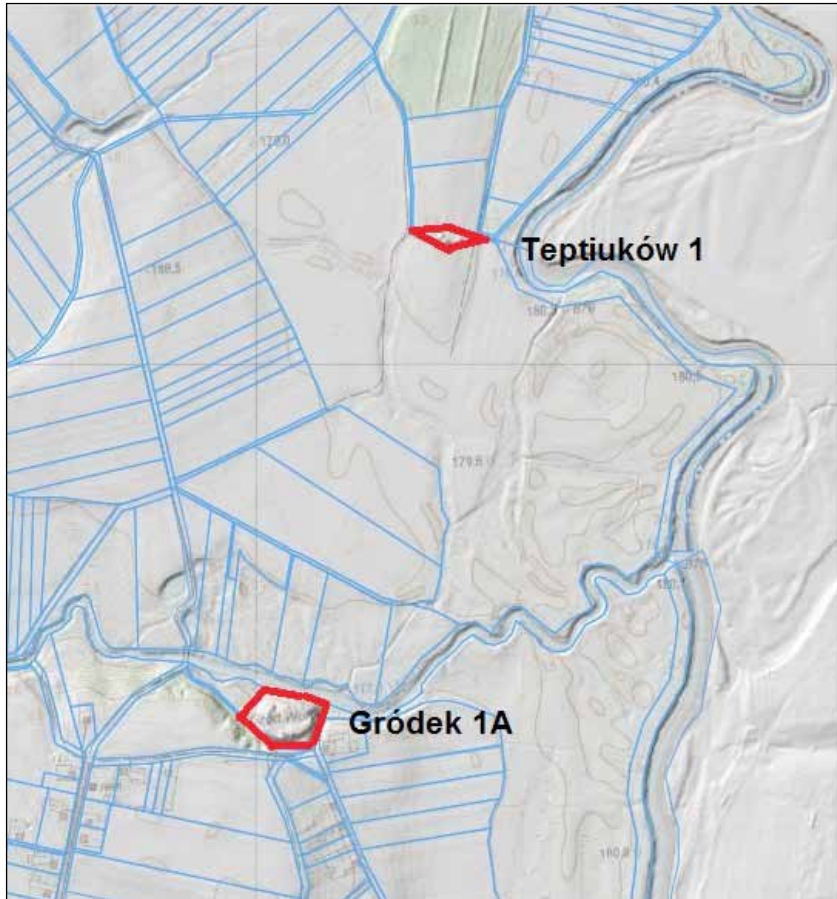


Fig. 8. Gródek archaeological complex. Areas of sites: Gródek 1A (“Burgstall”) and Teptiuków 1 (“Moon Grave”) listed in the heritage register (Prepared by M. Florek)

It is recommended that the open-air museum should include at least the hillfort in Gródek (plot 55), Czermno with both closed settlements (sites 1–3) and the neighbouring terrain (plots 5/5, 15/7, 16/8, 16/11, 16/12, 22/1, 22/2, 23/1, 23/2, 23/3, 24/1, 24/2, 25/1, 25/2, 25/3, 26/1, 26/2, 26/3, 26/4, 48/1, 48/2, 48/3, 48/4, 48/5, 49). The other sites could form a protective boundary area, e.g. as part of a cultural park, managed by the museum.

The open-air museum should consist of:

- exhibition pavilion(s), storage and administrative buildings, including a conference hall;

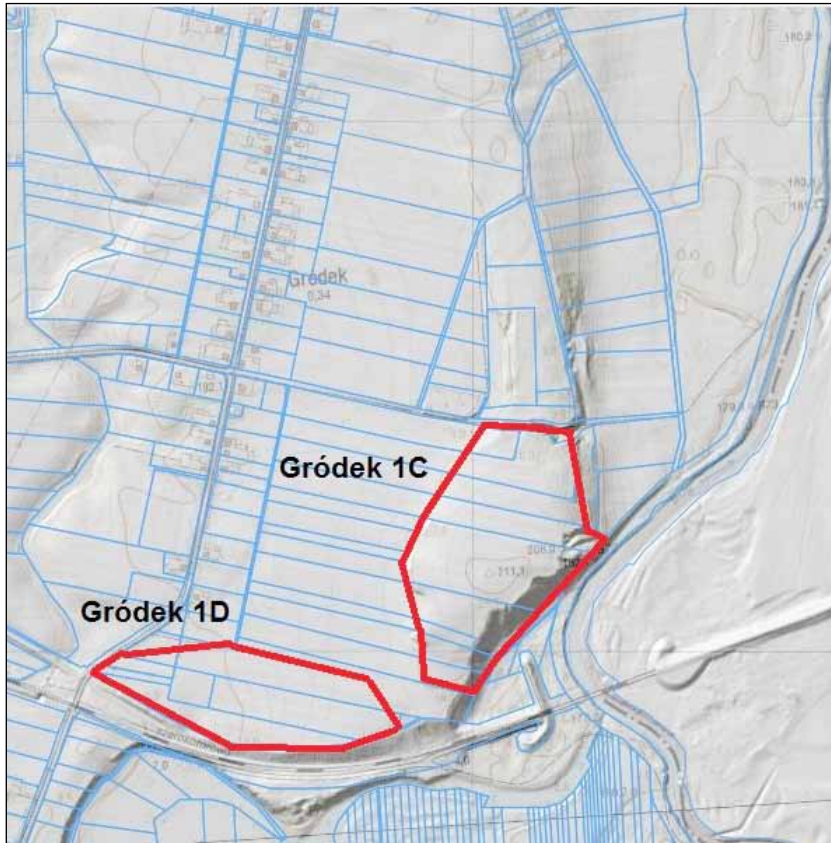


Fig. 9. Gródek archaeological complex. Areas of the sites Gródek 1C ("Castle", "Horodyszcz") and Gródek 1D (6) listed in the heritage register (Prepared by M. Florek)

- infrastructure enabling visitors to access archaeological sites, and the organisation of open-air events (car parks, walking paths, viewing sites, sanitary infrastructure);
- reconstructions of hillfort walls and buildings;
- restored elements discovered during archaeological excavations (bridges and other wooden constructions, a cross-section of the segmented rampart).

The most optimal arrangement would see the above-mentioned attractions in Czeremo, and restricting the infrastructure in Gródek only to improving the site's accessibility. It is also possible, although less desirable, to have administrative and exhibition buildings away from both Czeremo and Gródek.

The open-air museum could be created as a completely new museum institution (on the voivodeship level), which may appear to be the most costly and difficult way. Alternatively, it could be formed as a branch of one of the existing museums: the Regional Museum in Tomaszów, the Regional Museum in Hrubieszów, the Zamojski Museum in Zamość or the Museum of Lublin. Finally, it is also possible to create a consortium of the museums in Zamość, Hrubieszów and Tomaszów just to run the open-air museum.

The foundation and the running costs should be funded from the voivodeship budget, as managed by the voivodeship marshal, from operational programmes, and co-funded by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Regardless of the chosen variant, scientific supervision over the museum should be provided by the FILIOQUE National Research Centre³.

While founding the open-air museum would not be an easy task, it would certainly improve the heritage protection of the archaeological complexes in Czeremno and Gródek, make scientific investigations of these sites easier, popularise them among the general public, and help develop the whole region.

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³ For FILIOQUE see introduction to this volume: Florkiewicz and Wołoszyn 2018.

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