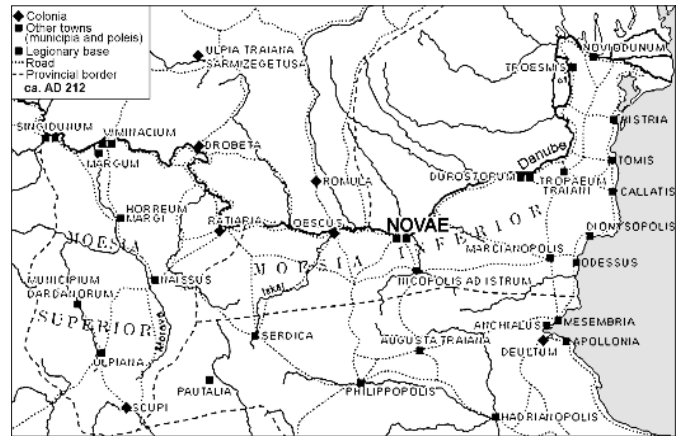


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**NOVAE 2011. PRINCIPIA ET MUNITIONES CASTRORUM.
HEADQUARTERS BUILDING AND LEGIONARY DEFENCES**

Site: Svištov, District of Veliko Tŕrnovo, Bulgaria
Excavation Director: Tadeusz Sarnowski
Excavation team: L.A. Kovalevskaja, A. Tomas,
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Financial assistance: Institute of Archaeology, University
of Warsaw
Fieldwork: 29 July – 30 August 2011



Excavations of 2011 were carried out in the central part of the site within the headquarters building (*principia*) and along the northern and eastern defensive walls of the fortress of the Roman legions *VIII Augusta* (ca. AD 45–69) and *I Italica* (early 70s AD – 2nd quarter of the 4th c. AD). Geodetic measurements allowed to complete a digital terrain model of the whole archaeological site of the legionary fortress and of its surroundings (Fig. 1). A team from “Wod.o.Lot,” a student research organisation in the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw, took a series of balloon aerial photographs of the large area, once

occupied not only by the Roman legionary base and a Late Roman annex to the east of the fortress but also in the first centuries AD by an extramural settlement (*canabae*). The same group of students¹ also made a photogrammetry of the western wall of the crosshall in the headquarters building.

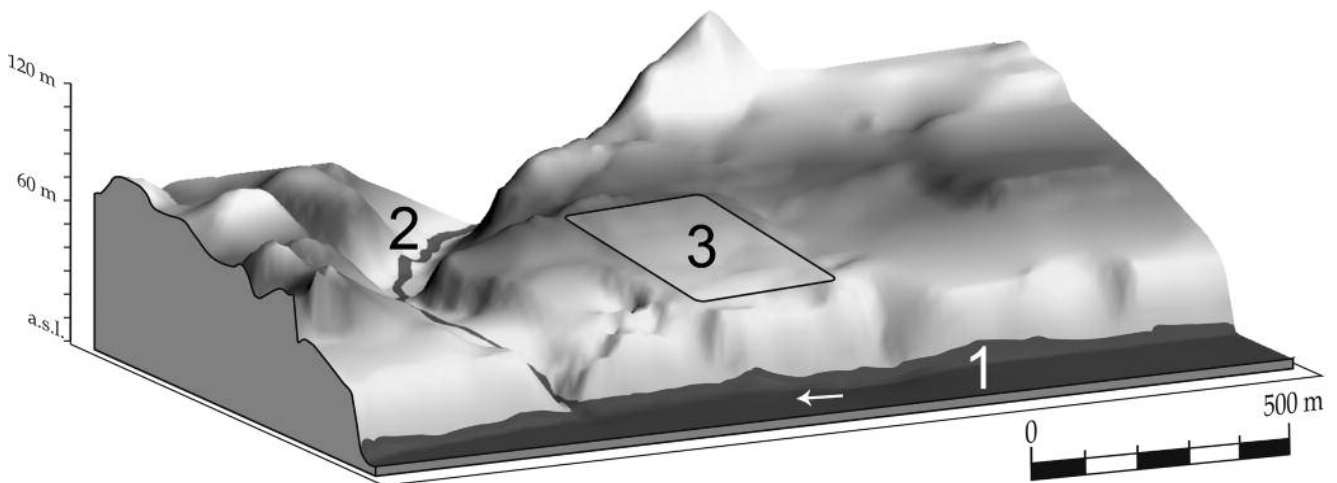


Fig. 1. Novae. Digital terrain model. 1 – Danube; 2 – Dermen Dere; 3 – legionary fortress (P. Zakrzewski).
Ryc. 1. Novae. Cyfrowy model terenu. 1 – Dunaj; 2 – Dermen Dere, 3 – obóz legionowy.

¹ M. Pisz, J. Balcerzak, M. Jaworski, and P. Wronecki MA. Our thanks go to all of them for their marvellous pictures.



Fig. 2. Novae. The area occupied by the headquarters building with the exposed rear block of administrative rooms (Photo J. Balcerzak, T. Pisz).

Ryc. 2. Novae. Teren zajęty przez budowlę komendantury z odsłoniętym skrzydłem pomieszczeń administracyjnych.

The only features excavated in the headquarters building (Fig. 2) were two large pits situated in the northern part of the eastern portico (Square XVII 60) of the courtyard (*forum militare*).² The pits were detected in a narrow trial trench opened in 2010 by the Bulgarian architects working on a conservation and restoration project in the exposed central part of the site. Originally dug out to quarry loess for building purposes, the pits were filled then with rubbish collected probably by the soldiers of the *Legio I Italica* in the early 70s AD while preparing the site for the construction of her base. The pits contained very rich material, the most numerous group of finds being substantial partial amphora sherds, with at least 30 fabric groups. This assemblage of amphora sherds includes more than 100 fragments of rims, handles or bases, representing as many individual amphorae. Much of this material cannot be joined but still we hope to be able to restore about 20 whole or nearly intact vessels. Given the results of preliminary analysis and current state of our knowledge, many recovered amphorae cannot be classified at the moment according to the existing typologies. The majority of transport vessels can be identified as so-called Pontic amphorae Zcest 90 = Dyczek 25. There are also some pseudo-Koan examples, amphorae similar to Peacock and Williams' Class 1 and merely

² For earlier works (2003–2010) within the headquarters building see: T. SARNOWSKI, L.A. KOVALEVSKAJA, J. KANISZEWSKI, *Novae – Castra legionis, 2003–2005. Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the Warsaw University Archaeological Expedition*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) LVI (2005), 2006, 144–145; T. SARNOWSKI, L.A. KOVALEVSKAJA, A. TOMAS, *Novae – Castra legionis, 2006–2009. Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the University of Warsaw Archaeological Expedition*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) LIX (2008), 2010, 155–160. See also: T. SARNOWSKI, *Intra fines Imperii. Centrum obozu w Novae. Wykopiska lat 1997–2002*, “Światowit” IV(XLV)/A (2002), 2003, 161–166; idem, *Novae. Headquarters Building and Rear Division of the Roman Legionary Fortress. Excavations of 2003*, “Światowit” V(XLVI)/A (2003), 2004,

119–121; T. SARNOWSKI, L.A. KOVALEVSKAJA, *Novae. Headquarters Building of the Roman Legionary Base. Excavations of 2010*, “Światowit” VIII (XLIX)/A (2009–2010), 2011, 187–189, pls. 197, 198; T. SARNOWSKI, *The Headquarters Building of the Legionary Fortress at Novae (Lower Moesia)*, (in:) V.A. Maxfield, M.J. Dobson (eds.), *Proceedings of the XVIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, Roman Frontier Studies 1989, Exeter 1991, 303–307; idem, *Die Principia von Novae im späten 4. und frühen 5. Jh.*, (in:) G. von Bülow, A. Milčeva (eds.), *Der Limes an der unteren Donau von Diokletian bis Heraklios. Vorträge der internationalen Konferenz Svištov, Bulgarien (1.–5. September 1998)*, Sofia 1999, 56–63.

Fig. 3. Novae. Central part of the eastern front of the fortress. 1 – defensive wall; 2 – Tower No. 5; 3 – inner buttress (Photo T. Sarnowski).

Ryc. 3. Novae. Centralna część wschodniego frontu twierdzy legionowej. 1 – mur obronny; 2 – wieża nr 5; 3 – wewnętrzna przypora.



a few body sherds of Late Heracleian Vnukov's Type CA2 vessels.³ Some amphorae seem not to have parallels among types from stratified contexts at other sites in the Mediterranean. The best part of finds is represented by wine amphorae and only a few smaller vessels were carrying oil. About 15 fragmentary amphorae deposited in the pits were labelled with short *tituli picti*, painted red.

In addition to amphorae, fragmentary examples of domestic course (a cooking casserole, a lid, a two handled

beaker, a salt shaker?, censers) and fine table pottery (bowls, dishes, cups with barbotine decoration) were recovered, the former being very few. The fine pottery is represented by fragments of Italian, South Gaulish and Eastern Sigillata B, Pompeian Red and South Pannonian thin walled wares. Other ceramics include oil lamps, fishing weights, an ink pot, and fragments of two mould-made, originally about 20–30 cm high terracotta figurines (the base with two naked feet of a male deity and the right naked leg).⁴

³ I.B. ZEEST, *Keramičeskaâ tara Bospora*, Materialy i issledovaniâ po arheologii SSSR 83, Moskva 1960; D.P.S. PEACOCK, D.F. WILLIAMS, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy. An Introductory Guide*, London 1986; P. DYCZEK, *Roman Amphorae of the 1st–3rd Centuries AD Found on the Lower Danube. Typology*, Warszawa

2001; S.J. VNUKOV, *Pričernomorskie amfory I v. do n.e. – II v. n.e. (morfoloġia)*, Moskva 2003.

⁴ The figurines were probably on display in a barrack or officer's household shrine but at the moment it is not possible to link the fragments with specific deities.

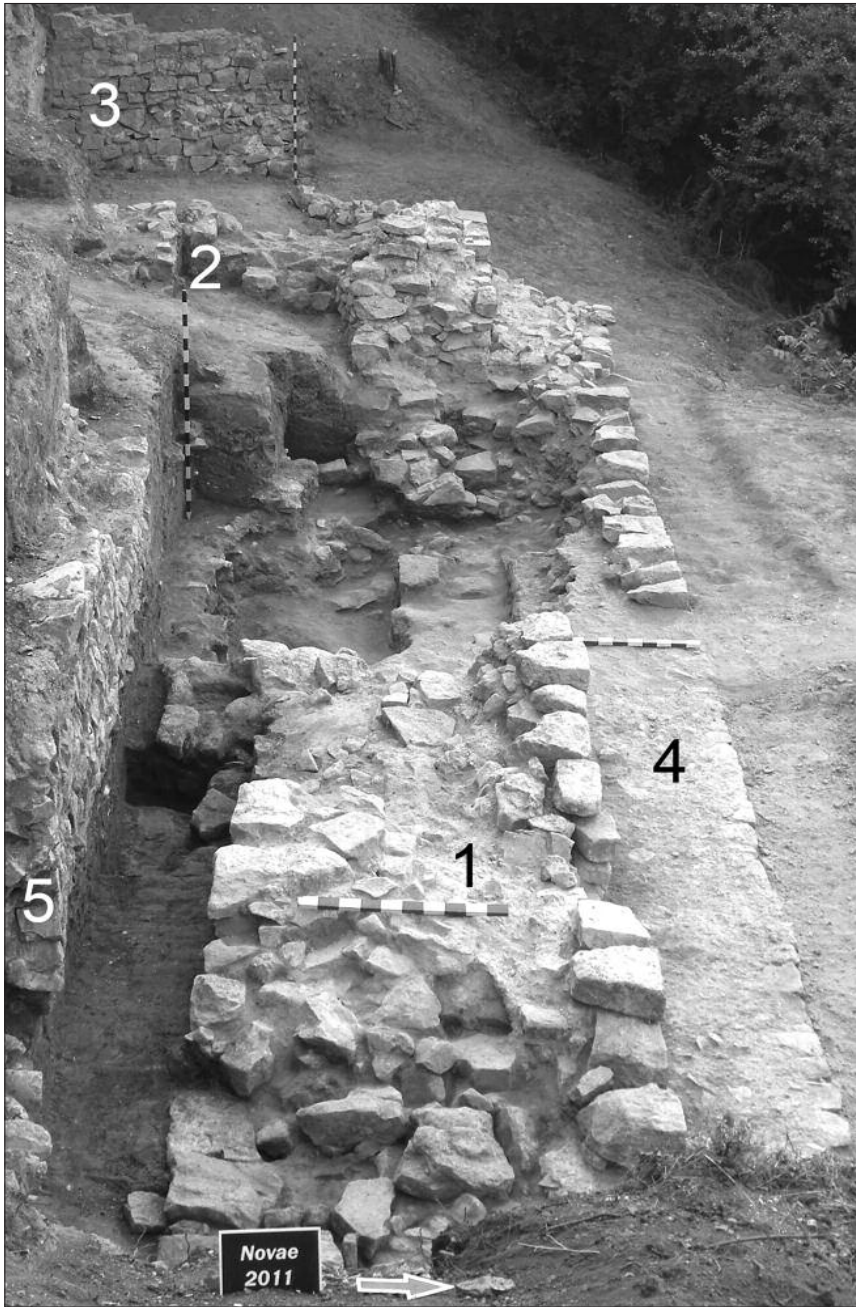


Fig. 4. Novae. Northern front of the fortress. 1 – Trajanic defensive wall; 2 – inner buttress; 3 – Tower No. 27. Eastern wall; 4 – retaining wall from the 5th c.; 5 – wall from the 6th c. (Photo T. Sarnowski).

Ryc. 4. Novae. Północny front twierdzy legionowej. 1 – mur obronny z czasów Trajana; 2 – wewnętrzna przypora; 3 – wschodni mur wieży nr 27; 4 – mur oporowy z V w.; 5 – mur z VI w.

The pits contained also scales, cattle and fish bones, daub lumps bearing wattle impressions, scrap bone-, bronze-, lead- and ironwork, an iron strigilla, a bone game counter, pieces of glass and bronze vessels, a set of 47 glass paste beads. In the earthen filling of the pits five coins were found: one dupondius of Tiberius of AD 19–21, an as of

Caligula of AD 37–41 for Agrippa, two dupondii of Nero of AD 64 and 64–68, and a denarius of Vespasian of AD 71–72 for Titus.⁵ Of great importance is especially a denarius of Vespasian found in mint condition. The coin helps to refine the earliest arrival date of the *Legio I Italica* to Novae which is to be situated not in AD 69 or 70 as it has

⁵ Inv. Nos. 24/11w/IAUW; 07/10w/IAUW; 16/11w/IAUW; 23/11w/IAUW; 15/11w/IAUW.

been usually assumed so far but only some years later.⁶ Another conclusion is that, while the best part of the finds from the pits in the eastern portico is to be related to the *Legio VIII Augusta*, digging pits, collecting the waste material and dumping it into the pits was done only by the legionaries who came to Novae in the early 70s. All this probably took place during the levelling of the ground before the construction work at the site of the Flavian *principia*.⁷

Our excavation and post excavation project per *lineam munitioinum* aiming mainly to clean up old trenches and to record still visible architectural remains and stratigraphy was concentrated on the eastern (Tower No. 5 and the eastern curtain wall) and northern (northern curtain wall) fronts of the fortress.⁸ During the last excavation campaign the remains of the interval Tower No. 5 and a 21 m long section of the 1.5–1.75 m wide eastern defensive wall with three internal counterfort walls were cleaned up and documented (Fig. 3). They were found protected with a thick coat of cement; this was done shortly after uncovering eastern defences by P. Donevski (Historical Museum Svištov) in the late 1980s and early 1990s.⁹ The tower occupies an area of ca. 15 m² (3.85×4 m outside; 3×3 m inside) and is situated about 38 m to the south of Tower No. 4 and ca. 82 m to the south of the eastern gate (*porta principalis dextra*). The investigated area contains also three 1–1.5 m long and 0.6–0.75 m wide buttresses built against the inner face of the defensive wall, which served to reinforce the curtain wall by leaning it back into the earlier earthen rampart. These inner counterforts were positioned at irregular intervals of 3.4 and 7 m.¹⁰ The remains of the rampart constructed about AD 50 were most probably overexcavated and are barely recognisable in the western profile and along the wall, as light-yellowish soil.

The aim of the 2011 campaign on the north side of the fortress (Fig. 4) was to expose the defensive wall along

the entire length of the excavated area¹¹ and to explain why the thickness of the Trajanic wall varies from 2.1 (east) to 1.2 m (west). It turns out that the Trajanic stone wall changes its width near the place where we localise one of the wooden towers belonging to the earliest mid-1st c. AD fortifications of the *Legio VIII Augusta*. It is possible to propose the following explanation for this unusual situation. While the stone wall, built against the earlier rampart, ran straight but only on the external side, the rampart occupied a slightly different location east of the tower, that is, further south than in the western section. It was observed that the Trajanic wall had undergone some important repairs before it was reinforced from outside in the 5th c. AD by a 1 m wide retaining wall. At a distance of about 50 cm to the south of the Trajanic curtain a wall made of loess bonded stones and pieces of broken bricks and tiles was found running parallel to the inner face of the fortification wall.

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⁶ See also: T. SARNOWSKI, *Wojsko rzymskie w Mezji Dolnej i na północnym wybrzeżu Morza Czarnego*, "Novensia" 3, 1988, 40–41.

⁷ With regard to the pits under Rooms Cw, Dw and Cz see also: T. SARNOWSKI, *Intra fines Imperii...*, 165; idem, *Novae – Western Sector (Principia), 2000–2002. Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the Warsaw University Archaeological Expedition*, "Archeologia" (Warsaw) LIV (2003), 2004, 74. Contra – S. MODZELEWSKI, *The Lorica Segmentata Finds from the Headquarters Building at Novae*, "Novensia" 20, 2009, 226–229, who refers not only the contents of the pits but also the pits themselves to the *Legio VIII Augusta*.

⁸ See the plan of the fortress in: T. SARNOWSKI, A. TOMAS, *Novae. The Roman Legionary Defences. Excavations of 2009 and 2010*, "Światowit" VIII (XLIX)/A (2009–2010), 2011, fig. 1.

⁹ P. DONEVSKI, *Razkopki v Nove*, (in:) *Arheologičeski otkritiâ*

i razkopki prez 1988 godina, Kârdžali 1989, 64–65; idem, *Otčet za arheologičeski razkopki v Nove prez 1993 g. Iztočna krepotna stena*, (in:) *Arheologičeski otkritiâ i razkopki prez 1992–1993 godina*, Veliko Târnovo 1994, 57–58; idem, *Some Aspects of Defensive System of the Roman Camp Novae (Moesia inferior) in 1st–IIIrd century*, (in:) P. Petrović (ed.), *Roman Limes on the Middle and Lower Danube*, Belgrade 1996, 201–203.

¹⁰ Cf. a similar buttress on the northern front of the fortress and on the eastern side to the south of Tower No. 6, two such inner counterforts, positioned at intervals of ca. 9 to 12 m; T. SARNOWSKI, L. KOVALEVSKAJA, A. TOMAS, *Novae – Castra legionis...*, 166–67; T. SARNOWSKI, *The Legionary Defences of Novae. Report on Latest Sections*, "Archeologia" (Warsaw) XXXII, 1981, 34.

¹¹ See the plan of the excavated area in: T. SARNOWSKI, L. KOVALEVSKAJA, A. TOMAS, *Novae – Castra legionis...*, fig. 10.

NOVAE 2011. *PRINCIPIA ET MUNITIONES CASTRORUM.*
KOMENDANTURA I UMOCNIEŃ

Wykopaliska i prace weryfikacyjne 2011 r. były prowadzone w centralnej części stanowiska, w obrębie komendantury legionowej oraz wzdłuż północnego i wschodniego boku umocnień obozu. Pomiary geodezyjne pozwoliły ukończyć cyfrowy model terenu całego obozu i jego najbliższego sąsiedztwa. Grupa studentów-wolontariuszy z koła naukowego "Wod.o.Lot" przy Instytucie Archeologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego wykonała serię balonowych zdjęć lotniczych z niskiej wysokości, obejmujących poza terenem obozu także obszar przyobozowego osiedla (*canabae*), oraz fotogrametrię zachodniego muru bazyliki w zespole komendantury (*principia*).

Jedynymi obiektami eksplorowanymi w obrębie *principia* były dwie duże jamy we wschodnim portyku dziedzińca (*forum militare*), w wykopie otwartym w 2010 r. przez architektów bułgarskich bez naszego udziału. Wyeksplorowane całkowicie w tym roku jamy zawierały bardzo bogaty materiał, m.in. fragmenty amfor, ceramikę stołową i kuchenną, lampy, ciężarki do sieci, kałamarz, fragmenty dwóch terakotowych statuetek, kości bydła, łuski i ości ryb, kawałki gliny z odciskami plecionki, drobne odłamki różnych przedmiotów z brązu, ołowiu, żelaza i kości, żelazną strigillę, kościany żeton do gry, odłamki naczyń ze szkła i brązu, 47 paciorków z pasty szklanej i pięć monet z lat 19–21 do 71–72 n.e. Szczególne znaczenie ma najmłodsza moneta Wespazjana. Pozwala ona uściślić datę przybycia do Novae legionu *I Italica*, co należy sytuować nie w 69 lub 70 r., jak to zazwyczaj się przyjmuje, lecz dopiero kilka lat później. Drugi wniosek jest taki, że o ile przeważająca część znalezisk wiąże się niewątpliwie z pobytom legionu *VIII Augusta* w Novae w latach około 45–69, to wykopanie jam, zebranie śmieci i zsypanie ich do jam zostało dokonane przez legionistów, którzy przybyli do Novae później, na początku lat 70. I w.

Projekt prac dokumentacyjnych i weryfikacyjnych *per lineam munitioinum* koncentrował się w tym roku na wschodnim (wieża nr 5 i wschodnia kurtyna muru obronnego) i północnym (północna kurtyna muru obronnego) boku obozu. Oczyszczona została wieża nr 5 i długi na 21 m odcinek muru wschodniego, szerokości 1,5–1,75 m. Na badanej powierzchni znajdują się też trzy wewnętrzne przypory, dobudowane do wewnętrznego lica muru obronnego, by wzmocnić powiązanie muru z wcześniejszym wałem ziemnym.

Celem tegorocznych badań po północnej stronie obozu było odsłonięcie muru obronnego na całej długości eksplorowanej powierzchni oraz wyjaśnienie, dlaczego grubość muru z czasów Trajana waha się od 2,1 m na wschodnim krańcu wykopu do 1,2 m po stronie zachodniej. Okazało się, że ten mur obronny zmienia swą szerokość blisko miejsca, gdzie lokalizujemy jedną z drewnianych wież, należących do najwcześniejszych drewniano-ziemnych umocnień legionu *VIII Augusta* z około połowy I w. Możliwe jest następujące wyjaśnienie tego dość niezwyklego stanu rzeczy. Podczas gdy kamienny mur, oparty o wcześniejszy wał, biegł prosto, ale tylko po stronie zewnętrznej, sam wał na wschód od wieży był wysunięty nieco dalej na południe, aniżeli na odcinku zachodnim. Zaobserwowaliśmy ponadto, że mur z czasów Trajana doznał co najmniej jednej poważnej reperacji, zanim w V w. został wzmocniony od strony zewnętrznej murem oporowym grubości około 1 m. W odległości około 50 cm na południe od kurtyny zbudowany został jeszcze późniejszy mur z kamieni oraz odłamków cegieł i dachówek, spojonych zaprawą ziemną. Mur ten biegł równoległe do wewnętrznego lica muru obronnego.