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PALAZZOLO ACREIDE, SICILY, ITALY. EXCAVATIONS IN 2012

The ancient town of *Akraï* (Greek *Ἀκραι*, Latin *Acrae*, *Agris*, *Acrenses*) is located to the west of the modern town of Palazzolo Acreide, in south-eastern Sicily, the province of Syracuse. A cooperation agreement between the University of Warsaw and Parco Archeologico di Eloro e della Villa del Tellaro e delle Aree Archeologiche di Noto e dei Comuni Limitrofi served as a basis for non-destructive research, carried out in 2009 and 2010, within the territory of the ancient town, including geodetic survey, kite photography and geophysical surveying (CHOWANIEC, MAŁKOWSKI, MISIEWICZ 2010). Later on, two excavation seasons were carried out. The fieldwork in 2012 was a continuation of previous fieldworks (CHOWANIEC, GUZZARDI 2012).

The following participants took part in that excavation season, which lasted from 15 September to 17 October: Dr Monika Rekowski, Dr Urszula Wicenciak, Marcin Matera MA, Tomasz Więcek MA, Marta Fituła MA, Piotr Zakrzewski MA, Renata Kucharczyk MA, and twelve students of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw.¹ The excavations in 2012 were possible thanks to the grant of the Polish National Science Centre (N N109 104940), the grant of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (SPUB 4815/E-343/SPU/2012/3), as well as private sponsors.

The fieldwork in two trenches (I and II), opened in 2011, was continued. Due to research reasons, these two trenches were extended (Fig. 1). All in all, eight architectural features were uncovered in Trench I during the first two seasons. They all formed part of a single dwelling. Some of the walls are fairly irregular and not symmetrical, losing their two-faced character in places (e.g., Wall No. 2) or bearing evidence of rebuilding (e.g., Wall No. 6 of stone blocks, most of which were regularly dressed; some of the blocks from the upper parts of the wall were removed, perhaps for reuse; a gap attests to an entrance, which was blocked at some point in time using small-sized stones and



ceramic tiles) or secondary adaptation (e.g., Wall No. 4, partly dismantled in the upper part, its line is marked by five rectangular blocks of stone that are more regular than others; a fragmented threshold stone can be observed among them). A unit was distinguished to the western side, closed by Walls No. 4 (south), No. 5 (west), and No. 7 (north) (Fig. 2).

Certain categories of finds, like ceramic vessels, were distinguished as groups in the course of clearing of successive stratigraphic layers. For example, a concentration of burnt animal bones and plain table wares and fine wares was discovered in Layer No. 8, identified to the east of Wall No. 2 and north of Wall No. 7. Kitchen pottery included lids (4.05%), cooking pots (8.1%) and a louterion (4.05%); tableware was composed of jugs (31.1%), bowls (4.05%) and African Red Slip Ware (ARSW; 24.3%), South Gaulish *terra sigillata* (1.35%), and *terra sigillata* imitations (1.35%). The selection of amphorae types was more uniform: Keay VI, XI (?), XIII B, LIIIA (?), LIIIC, LXIIA, LXIIQ (1.35% each). No black-glazed vessels were recorded in the layer. The same stratigraphic level, but south of Wall No. 7 yielded primarily ARSW (24.6%), Italian *terra sigillata*

¹ We would like to warmly thank all colleagues for their contribution in excavation and for the cooperation in the study of artefacts.



Fig. 1. Fieldwork in Trench I in 2012 (Photo R. Chowaniec).
Ryc. 1. Prace na wykopie nr I w 2012 roku.

(8.8%), South Gaulish *terra sigillata* (7.0%), black-glazed pottery (approx. 5.3%), jugs (24.6%), bowls (7.0%), lids (3.5%), louterion (1.75%), and amphorae of the Africana II Grande (1.75%) and of Late Antique (1.75%) types.²

The assemblage, which is dated for the most part to the 3rd–4th c. AD, is indicative of the period's ubiquitous North African influences (FENTRESS ET AL. 2004; MALFITANA ET AL. 2008; DE MIRO, POLITO 2012) seen evidently in the range of recorded amphorae types, African Red Slip Ware and terracotta oil lamps (Fig. 3). Moreover, the presence of these categories is a proof that from the 3rd c. AD through late Byzantine times *Acrae* was a dynamic town, which was part of the international trade circuit.

A large group of artefacts were fragments of glass vessels. Almost 370 diagnostic vessels fragments have been registered.³ Most of the fragments could be dated to the 4th–6th c. AD. The collection also contains a small number

of apparently residual glass fragments, dated to the 1st c. BC – 3rd c. AD (much of it was made up of free blown vessels, and there were only two exceptions: a cast bowl and mould-blown storage containers). Decorative techniques are very poorly represented. All recorded fragments have either trailed, cut or indented elements. Luxury items are scarce. Most of the specimens are small and medium-sized. The presence of window glass (approximately a dozen or so fragments) manufactured in three different techniques, based on casting and blowing, should also be mentioned. Although the vessels were found in a fragmentary condition, it is possible to identify many of types.

The continuation of work in the eastern part of Trench I along with evidence of a wall with preserved wall plaster and fragment of fresco seem promising.⁴ The ceramic material from this context consisted primarily of ARSW (28.6%), jugs (approx. 7.1%), and bowls (14.3%), as well as kitchen ware, mainly lids (7.1%), and pots (7.1%).

² The pottery, discovered in 2011, was processed and identified by Urszula Wicenciak and Marcin Matera from the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw.

³ The glass vessels, registered in 2011 and 2012, were identified by

Renata Kucharczyk from the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw.

⁴ Work will be continued in the next field season 2013 for conservation reasons.

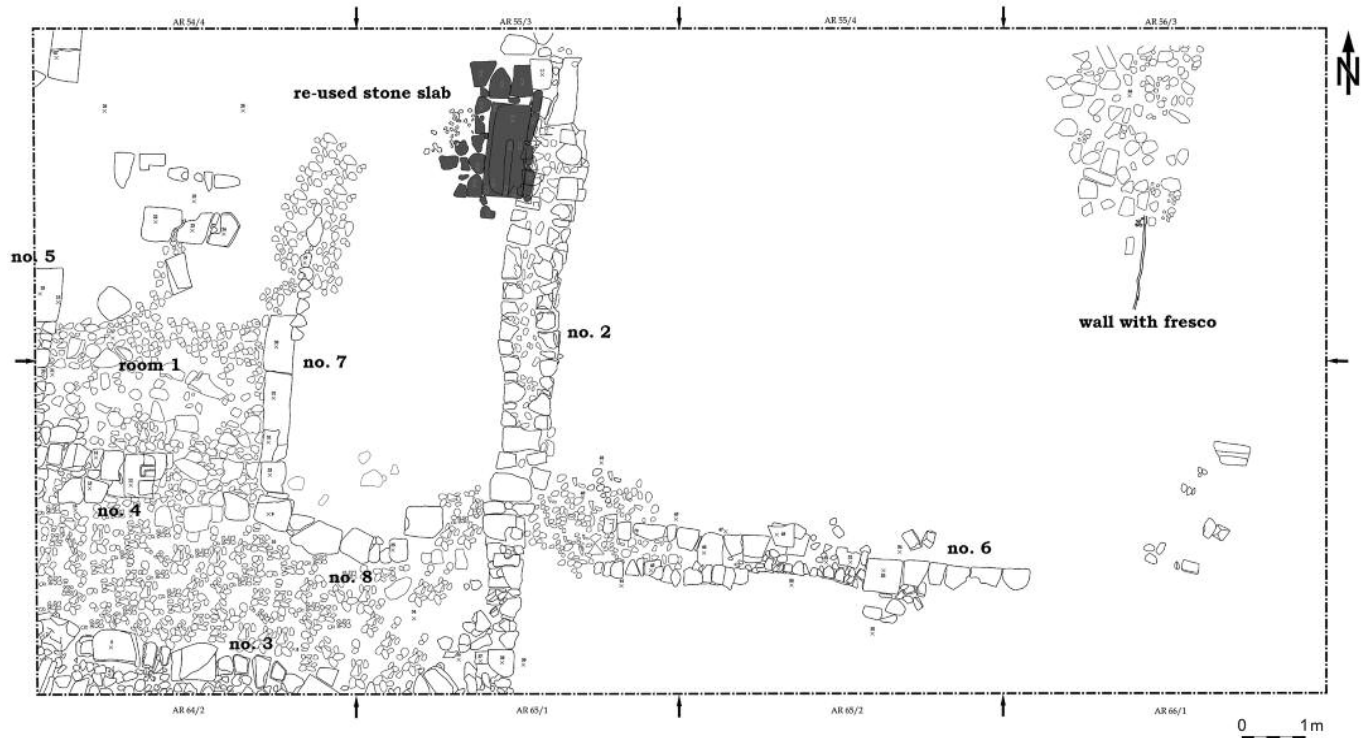


Fig. 2. Late Roman architectural structures inside the Insula I in Trench I – plan (Drawing R. Chowanic).

Ryc. 2. Późnorzymskie konstrukcje w obrębie insuli I, wykop I – plan.



Fig. 3. Example of a typical Late Roman oil lamp imported from Roman North Africa. AK12/I/3-102 (Photo M. Miętek).

Ryc. 3. Przykład typowej późnorzymskiej lampki importowanej z Północnej Afryki. AK12/I/3-102.

The most important and the most numerous artefacts were coins.⁵ In total 90 coins were found during the season 2012, and except one silver Republican sesterce, all of them were made of bronze. Besides one 20th c. coin (2 centesimi of Victor Emmanuel III from 1914) from the site surface, others were ancient: 87 from Trench I and 3 from Trench II. The coins could be divided into the following groups: Greek coins (4th–3rd c. BC), excluding Syracusan issues from 214–212 BC and later, which were assigned to the next group; Republican and Syracusan coins from the time of Roman administration; Early Imperial coins (1st–2nd c. AD); coins from the second half of the 3rd c. AD; Antoninians and imitations; coins issued

by Diocletian, under the Tetrarchs and through the death of Constantine in AD 337; 4th c. coins, excluding the previous group; Byzantine coins (WIĘCEK, CHOWANIEC, GUZZARDI 2013).

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⁵ Identification and study of coins is done by Tomasz Więcek.

ROKSANA CHOWANIEC, LORENZO GUZZARDI

PALAZZOLO ACREIDE, SYCYLIA, WŁOCHY. WYKOPALISKA W 2012 R.

Prace w sezonie 2012 na stanowisku archeologicznym w *Akraï* (obecnie Palazzolo Acreide, prov. Siracusa) na Sycylii stanowiły kontynuację wykopalisk na obszarze wykopów I i II, rozpoczętych w sezonie 2011, a poprzedzonych prospekcją nieinwazyjną w sezonach 2009–2011. Wykopaliska prowadzone są na podstawie umowy o współpracy między Uniwersytetem Warszawskim a Parco Archeologico di Eloro e della Villa del Tellaro e delle Aree Archeologiche di Noto e dei Comuni Limitrofi.

Podczas dwóch kampanii wykopaliskowych w wykopie I odsłonięto w sumie osiem struktur architektonicznych, składających się na część założenia mieszkalnego (Ryc. 2). Niektóre z odkrytych murów są nieregularne i niesymetryczne, na pewnych odcinkach tracą zwartą dwulicową strukturę (np. mur nr 2) lub noszą ślady przebudowy czy wtórnego użytkowania. Np. mur nr 6, utworzony z dużych, w większości regularnie opracowanych bloków kamiennych, został częściowo rozebrany – niektóre z tych bloków, w górnej części konstrukcji, zostały usunięte (być może do wtórnego użytku). W wątku muru zarejestrowana została przerwa – wejście, wtórnie zablokowane; blokaż, trzymający linię muru, wykonano z drobnych kamieni i płyt ceglanych. Z kolei mur nr 4 wykazuje ślady wtórnej adaptacji – konstrukcja w górnej części jest czę-

ściowo rozebrana, jego linię wyznacza pięć bardziej regularnych, prostopadłościennych bloków kamiennych, a pomiędzy nimi znajduje się jeden blok, na którym widać ślady obróbki – pęknięty fragment progu. W zachodniej części wyraźnie wyodrębniło się jedno pomieszczenie, zamknięte murami nr 4 (od południa), nr 5 (od zachodu) i nr 7 (od północy).

Odkryte dotychczas zabytki, w przeważającej części datowane na III–V w., wskazują na typowe w tym okresie wpływy północnoafrykańskie, co widoczne jest zarówno w przypadku zarejestrowanych typów amfor, czerwono-polewanych naczyń afrykańskich (ARSW), jak również lampek (Ryc. 3). Ponadto, obecność tych kategorii zabytków jest świadectwem tego, że w III w., aż po okres Bizancjum, *Acrae* nie tylko rozwijało się dynamicznie, ale także utrzymywało bardzo rozległe kontakty handlowe.

Jednym z ważniejszych źródeł do poznania dziejów miasta są oczywiście znaleziska numizmatyczne. Podczas badań w 2012 roku odkryto 90 monet i wszystkie, za wyjątkiem jednej – srebrnego sesterca republikańskiego, wykonane zostały ze stopów brązu.

Interesująco zapowiada się także kontynuacja prac we wschodniej części wykopu I, gdzie uchwycono zagrużowanie oraz zarys ściany jednego z pomieszczeń, z zachowanym na niej tynkiem i freskiem.