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## FIELDWORK AT NOVAE 2012

The Roman legionary fortress of Novae, once the headquarters for the 1<sup>st</sup> Italic legion (*Legio I Italica*) in the province of Moesia inferior, lies in northern Bulgaria, not far from modern Svištov, on the right bank of the Danube. Excavations have been in progress for more than 50 years now.<sup>1</sup>

The year 2012 (1 August – 9 November) marks the second campaign of fieldwork at the new Sector 12, in the right *latus praetorii*, east of the *principia*, south of the *via principalis* (Fig. 1) on the premises of the fortress.<sup>2</sup> The most important task here is to establish what sort of structure was located at Novae close to the headquarters building. According to a standard Roman fortress layout, either the *praetorium*, the houses of the immunes<sup>3</sup> or legionary barracks should be located here, possibly those housing the first cohort.<sup>4</sup>

The excavated area (Fig. 1) reaches westwards up to the east wall of the *principia*, which was excavated earlier not far from here,<sup>5</sup> and the adjoining street dividing the *scammum* from north to south. During the 2012 campaign, a surface of around 350 m<sup>2</sup> was uncovered, resulting in a total of 700 m<sup>2</sup> of excavated terrain at Sector 12. Virgin soil occurs at a depth of about 3 m here, which is far less than in the northern part of the camp, where the earliest building phases lie well more than 6 m below the surface. In effect,



the density of the various phases is higher and so is unfortunately the level of destruction. Therefore, the layout of the architecture is more difficult to read. Still, a number of features can already be distinguished with fair certainty.

The way running along the eastern outer wall of the *principia* was uncovered in its entire width of 4 m.<sup>6</sup> Through its middle runs a water pipeline. The earliest remains discovered date back to the presence of the 8<sup>th</sup> Augustan legion in Novae (ca. AD 45–69). Numerous post holes from wooden structures were found all over the trench. From this period, several amphorae with *dipinti* were found,

<sup>1</sup> T. DERDA, P. DYCZEK, J. KOLENDO (eds.), *Novae. Legionary Fortress and Late Antique Town*, vol. I: *A Companion to the Study of Novae*, Warsaw 2008 – includes a complete bibliography for the years 1726–2008. Annual reports are published in “Archeologia” (Warsaw). See also: T. SARNOWSKI, *The Name of Novae in Lower Moesia*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) LVIII (2007), 2009, 15–23; A. BIERNACKI (ed.), *Novae. Studies and Materials*, vols. I–III, Poznań 1995–2008. There are altogether three Polish teams excavating at Novae, one of which is from the Antiquity of South-eastern Europe Research Centre from the University of Warsaw. Our research is kindly supported by the University of Warsaw and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

<sup>2</sup> For the first campaign see: M. LEMKE, *Fieldwork at Novae 2011*, “Światowit” IX (L)/A (2011), 2012, 195–200.

<sup>3</sup> H. V. PETRIKOVITS, *Die Innenbauten römischer Legionslager während der Prinzipatszeit*, Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen

schen Akademie der Wissenschaften 56, Opladen 1975, 43–49.

<sup>4</sup> “Hyginus”, *De munitione castrorum*, 21; VEGETIUS, *Epitoma rei militaris*, II 6,8; D. BREEZE, *The Organization of the Legion: The First Cohort and the Equites Legionis*, “Journal of Roman Studies” 59, 1969, 50–55; S. FRERE, *Hyginus and the First Cohort*, “Britannia” 11, 1980, 51–60; H. V. PETRIKOVITS, *Die Innenbauten...*, 38–42; D. DAVISON, *The Barracks of the Roman Army from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries A.D.*, Oxford 1989, 52.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. T. SARNOWSKI, *Novae – Western Sector 1989*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) XLII, 1991, 133; T. SARNOWSKI, L. KOVALEVSKAJA, J. KANISZEWSKI, *Novae – Castra Legionis, 2003–2005*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) LVI (2005), 2006, 141–162.

<sup>6</sup> The street has been researched further to the south by T. SARNOWSKI: cf. *Novae – Sektor Zachodni, 1981*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) XXXIV, 1983, 150–153, fig. 15:1.



Fig. 1. Novae. Sector 12, view from the south (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 1. Novae. Odcinek 12, widok z południa.

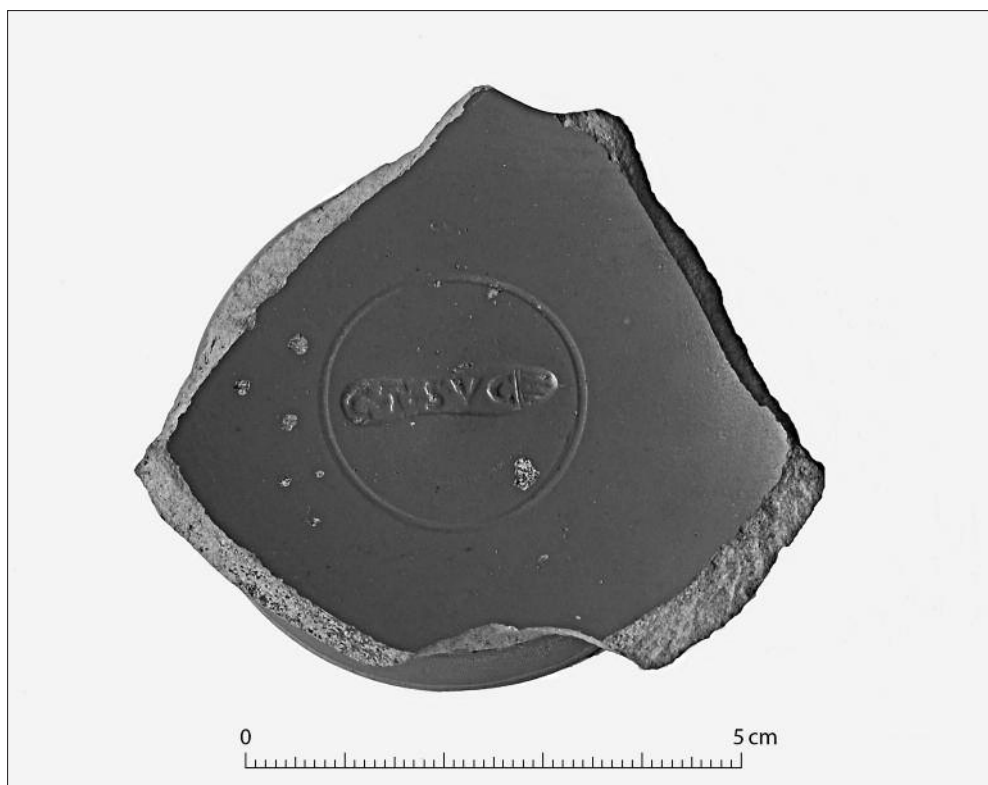


Fig. 2. Amphora with a *dipinto* stating the contents as raisins (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 2. Amfóra z *dipinto* określającym zawartość jako rodzynki.

Fig. 3. *Terra sigillata* with producer's stamp, C.T. SVC[ESSUS] (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 3. *Terra sigillata* ze stemplem producenta, C.T. SVC[ESSUS].



mostly in garbage pits, a regular occurrence linked with army logistics.<sup>7</sup> A particularly interesting one (Fig. 2) contained raisins (*uvae passae*). Interestingly, the *dipinto* was written in Latin on an amphora of Eastern provenience.<sup>8</sup> A considerable number of *terra sigillata* sherds was also found. Among these is a number of Italic *sigillata* from the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. (Fig. 3), including an ink pot with remains from the actual ink.

After this “earth and timber” phase, the terrain was prepared anew and stone buildings were erected. The walls were made of limestone, sandstone and lime mortar. Two sewage channels constructed during this time and first excavated in 2011 were further explored. Both run along a N-S axis and towards the River Danube.

An interesting third water channel (Fig. 4) runs along the eastern side of the trench, passing under several walls. It was laid out with ceramic tiles, mostly with stamps

of the 1<sup>st</sup> legion, but interestingly also with a number of stamps from the *legio XI Claudia*. Apparently, the channel was initially built after the arrival of the *legio I Italica* during the Flavian reign and later repaired, when possibly a detachment of the 11<sup>th</sup> legion stayed at Novae, quite likely soon after arriving in the province during Trajan's Dacian wars.<sup>9</sup>

The function of the principal building from the “stone phase” has yet to be established with certainty. Out of the three options mentioned above – *praetorium*, houses of the immunes and legionary barracks, none can be given clear preference yet. Given the somewhat elaborate waterworks traces of a small latrine and several adjoining small rooms in the northern part it is clear however, that if these should be barracks, then the structure currently excavated would be the centurion's house,<sup>10</sup> which in turn would be proof that the barracks were oriented along the N-S axis, parallel to the *principia*. The discovery of a number of medical tools also suggests another possibility: the *scammum* in

<sup>7</sup> T. BEZECZKY, *Amphora Inscriptions – Legionary Supply?*, “*Britannia*” 27, 1996, 329–336.

<sup>8</sup> The author expresses his gratitude to Prof. A. Łajtar (Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw) for his comments on the *dipinti*.

<sup>9</sup> T. SARNOWSKI, *Zur Truppengeschichte der Dakerkriege Trajans*.

*Die Bonner legio I Minervia und das Legionslager Novae*, “*Germania*” 65/1, 1987, 107–122, esp. 112–118. A similar *vexillatio* is attested for the *legio I Minervia pia Fidelis*.

<sup>10</sup> B. HOFFMANN, *The Quarters of Legionary Centurions of the Principate*, “*Britannia*” 26, 1995, 107–151.



Fig. 4. Channel laid out with tiles (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 4. Kanał wyłożony dachówkami.

question may have housed the *immunes*, soldiers of various assignments exempt from the duties of a common soldier.<sup>11</sup> The medics were also ranked among the *immunes* and accordingly may have lived in those quarters. An identification on the sole basis of the assemblage of medical tools is obviously extremely tentative, but at least the fact that the *immunes'* quarters were usually located in the *scammum* east of the *principia*<sup>12</sup> supports this thesis. Either way,

the set of rooms running along the *via principalis* appears to have been *tabernae*, a usual occurrence in legionary forts.<sup>13</sup>

Towards the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c., we see traces of civilian life at Sector 12, just like at most other parts of the fortress. In this case, a glass kiln (Fig. 5) and numerous finds of slag are proof that a glass workshop existed here. A small

<sup>11</sup> H. VON PETRIKOVITS, *Die Innenbauten...*, 43–50; A. v. DOMASZEWSKI, *Die Rangordnung des Römischen Heeres*, Bonn 1908, 3–5, 45. These soldiers, however, would also fight in battles, see: J. ROTH, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War*

(264 B.C. – A.D. 235), Leiden 1999, 91.

<sup>12</sup> H. VON PETRIKOVITS, *Die Innenbauten...*, 60.

<sup>13</sup> H. VON PETRIKOVITS, *Die Innenbauten...*, 96.



Fig. 5. Late antique glass kiln (Photo J. Reclaw).  
Ryc. 5. Późnoantyczny piec szklarski.



Fig. 6. Late antique portico (Photo M. Lemke).  
Ryc. 6. Portyk późnoantyczny.

water basin can also be connected to this civilian phase. The water from the basin was drained into the aforementioned channel built by the 1<sup>st</sup> and repaired by the 11<sup>th</sup> legion.

Near the current southern edge of the fieldwork area, also lies a late antique portico (**Fig. 6**). Five bases for columns have been unearthed so far. Capitals and bases were used and set on square slabs of stone. This late antique portico was obviously built from material gathered in the ruins of the *principia*, but the exact date of construction is not known yet. The bases are quite monumental, but since

both solid substructures for them as well as traces of an equally large building are lacking, one should assume that there were no columns standing on top, much less a roof, and the portico either was never finished or had a rather “flat ornamental” character.

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### WYKOPALISKA W NOVAE W 2012 R.

W 2012 r. przeprowadzono drugą kampanię wykopaliskową na odcinku 12, w prawym *latus praetorii* po wschodniej stronie *principia*, na południe od *via principalis* (**Ryc. 1**). W tym miejscu, zgodnie ze standardowym planem rzymskiego obozu wojskowego, powinno się znajdować *praetorium*, koszary dla *immunes* lub też baraki I kohorty. Dotychczasowe badania nie pozwalają jednak na wskazanie, jaką funkcję pełniły odsłonięte konstrukcje. Odkryto obiekty należące do pozostałości architektonicznych po legionie *VIII Augusta* (stacjonującym tu od ok. 45 do 69 roku n.e.), jak i późniejsze, wybudowane już przez legion I Italski, oraz w III w. przez cywili. Spośród tych ostatnich warto wymienić piec szklarski (**Ryc. 5**), który –

wraz z licznymi fragmentami szlaki – świadczy o lokalnej produkcji szkła. Uchwycono także wschodni mur *principia* oraz wykonano przekrój przez ulicę rozdzielającą od wschodu komendanturę od struktur na odcinku 12. W jego południowej części kontynuowano eksplorację pięciokolumnowego portyku późnantyckiego (**Ryc. 6**) – odkryto tu m.in. bazy i kapitele kolumn, z pewnością zebrane z ruin *principia*; charakter i dokładne datowanie tej konstrukcji nie są jeszcze ustalone.

Do interesujących znalezisk sezonu 2012 należą natomiast: amfora z *dipinto* (**Ryc. 2**) oraz *terra sigillata* ze stemplem producenta (**Ryc. 3**).