

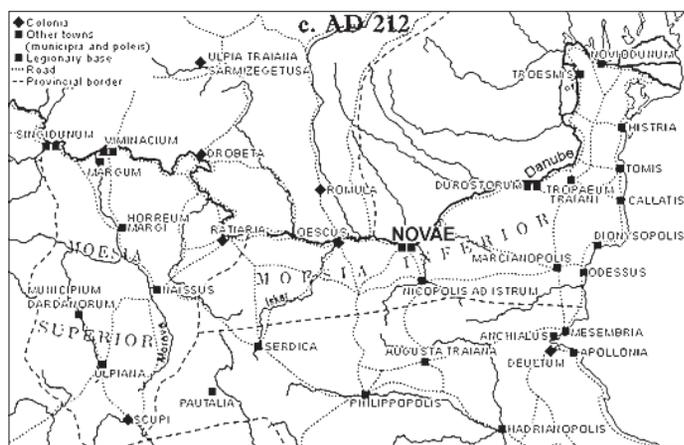
TADEUSZ SARNOWSKI, AGNIESZKA TOMAS

NOVAE. THE ROMAN LEGIONARY DEFENCES. EXCAVATIONS OF 2009 AND 2010 (PL. 195–196)

Site: Svištov, District of Veliko Târnovo, Bulgaria
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 Financial assistance: Ministry of Science and Institute
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 Fieldwork: 29 July – 27 August 2009
 and 30 July – 29 August 2010

The Roman military and Early Byzantine town defences of Novae, the easternmost Roman legionary base on the Danube before Trajan, today in northern Bulgaria, from about AD 46 until 86 in undivided Moesia, later in Lower Moesia, and from Diocletian until the late 6th c. in Moesia II, were excavated from 1960 until the early 1990s by Polish and Bulgarian teams. Archaeological recording of the excavations carried out in the late 1980s and the early 1990s by the local museum (Historical Museum, Svištov) could not have been completed. This was the main reason why we started in 2005 a post-excitation project aiming to clean up old trenches and to record still visible architectural remains and stratigraphy. The first results have already been published.¹ The fieldwork of 2009 and 2010 was concentrated along the defences on the eastern and northern fronts of the fortress (Towers Nos. 4 and 27, the northern curtain wall and Northern Gate) (Fig. 1).

During the last excavation campaigns we cleaned up the remains of the interval Tower No. 4 and the east-west section situated 2.8 m to the south. The tower occupies an area of c. 30 m² and is situated about 38 m to the south of the eastern gate (*porta principalis dextra*). The



section recorded to the south of the stone tower shows distinct traces of a timber tower (two post pits), a loess rampart and a ramp (*ascensus*) (Fig. 2). In the first phase to be connected with the *legio VIII Augusta* (the Neronian period) the *ascensus* was running parallel to the rampart and after the construction of the stone defences, the ramp was positioned next to the new tower, perpendicularly to the curtain wall.

In 2010 we started excavating the eastern half of the northern gate (*porta praetoria*) on the south-north axis of the site occupied by the legionary fortress. The gate, the western part of which was excavated in the early 1970s by the colleagues from the University of Poznań, is situated on the edge of a high escarpment sloping down to the Danube. The area of c. 60 m² excavated in 2010 contained a poorly preserved masonry wall of a tower-like structure

¹ T. SARNOWSKI, L. KOVALEVSKAJA, J. KANISZEWSKI, *Novae – Castra legionis, 2003–2005*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) LVI (2005), 2006, 141–152; T. SARNOWSKI, L. KOVALEVSKAJA, A. TOMAS, *Novae – Castra legionis, 2006–2009*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) LIX (2008), 2010, 153–172. For earlier work see: T. SARNOWSKI, *The Legionary Defences of Novae. Report on Latest Sections*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) XXXII, 1981, 29–45; idem, *Wschodni bok twierdzy legionowej (HAXXVII). Sondaże*, (in:) L. Press (ed.), *Novae. Sektor Zachodni 1981*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) XXXIV, 1983, 153–160; P. DONEWSKI, *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; S. PARNICKI-PUDELKO, (in:) K. Majewski (ed.), *Sprawozdanie tymczasowe z wykopalisk w Novae w 1960 roku*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) XII, 1961, 128–133; idem, (in:) K. Majewski (ed.), *Novae – Sektor Zachodni, 1963. Tymczasowe sprawozdanie z wykopalisk Ekspedycji Archeologicznej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) XV, 1964, 227; idem, *The Fortifications in the Western Sector of Novae*, Poznań 1990, 40–42.

set on a larger surface covered with large and medium sized stones, mostly in mortar bonding. The whole area still needs further investigation.

About 100 m to the west from the northern gate a section of the northern curtain wall was excavated (Fig. 3). The investigated area of c. 160 m² was divided into three main trenches: beyond the defensive wall of the fortress, across the *intervallum* and by the interval Tower No. 27. In the first trench a very well-preserved V-shaped ditch, 4.2 m wide and 2 m deep was excavated. At a distance of about 4.6 m to the south of the ditch, the excavation revealed the rear slope of the rampart, which still stands to a height of 2.65 m. During the construction of the curtain wall under Trajan, the front of the rampart was cut back in the same way as on the eastern side of the fortress. A sloping ramp (*ascensus*) leading to the rampart walk was positioned parallel to the rampart. Near the rear side of the rampart a trace of a squared post hole (30×30 cm) of a timber tower was found.

The Trajanic masonry curtain was c. 1.30 m wide and its foundations were 1.40 m deep. A rectangular interval tower (Tower No. 27) measuring 4.5×6 m was investigated in the western part of the excavated area. The type of masonry work, as well as the white and greyish mortar used in the tower walls, suggest the same Trajanic dating as in the case of the curtain wall. The area behind the defensive wall and the earthen rampart was occupied in the northern part of the *intervallum* by a rectangular, free standing structure and further to the south by the *via sagularis*. The structure with at least two walls made of mud-bricks set on stone foundations in mortar and loess bonding seems to have formed a sort of platform where heavy machines designed to catapult stone projectiles were to be set. The 3.6 m wide street was covered with a paving made of medium to small sized stones. On the southern side of the street, there was a crudely fashioned sewer, made of

stones and tiles. The *via sagularis* was resurfaced at least once with a layer of sand and mortar. Three provincial bronze coins of Severus Alexander, Gordian III and Valerian I were found spread over the hard street overlay. In the zone of the street some dramatic episodes connected with a destruction in the 3rd quarter of the 3rd c. left traces of fire in the layer of yellowish dirty loess with patches of ash and charcoal. The destruction was followed by a levelling action. A new building of c. 40 m² of the inner space, abutting the south face of the curtain wall, had only three walls; being made of medium sized stones in loess bonding they probably supported mud brick work in the superstructure. Next to the foundation footing of the southern wall a votive foundation deposit in a small cylindric leaden box was found. The box contained five antoniniani, three of Aurelian and two of Probus.

The most important change in the 5th c. along the northern line of the defences was the construction of a 1.1 m thick retaining wall which abutted against the outer face of the original Trajanic curtain. The latest occupation phase traceable in the investigated area on the line of the northern defences is represented by a pottery kiln. A terminus post quem of AD 557–558 for dating the last kiln load with grey coarse wares (cooking pots and jugs) is provided by a follis of Justinian.

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NOVAE. FORTYFIKACJE OBOZU. WYKOPALISKA 2009 I 2010 R.

W ramach działań weryfikacyjnych w starych wykopach badaczy bułgarskich i poznańskich wzdłuż murów obronnych obozu zakończyliśmy prace koło kolejnej wieży wschodniego boku. Rozpoczęliśmy rozpoznawanie bramy północnej i odsłoniliśmy kilkunastometrowy odcinek północnego muru. W chronologicznej sekwencji wydarzeń budowlanych z okresu od I do V w. zadokumentowaliśmy

łącznie, w części lub całości, dwie wieże drewniane i tyleż kamiennych (nr 4 i 27), dwa odcinki wału ziemnego i obronnego rowu, trzy rampy, mur obronny z II w. i mur oporowy z V w. Kontynuowaliśmy pomiary niezbędne do wykonania trójwymiarowego modelu rzeźby terenu zajętego przez obóz i miasto wczesnobizantyjskie.

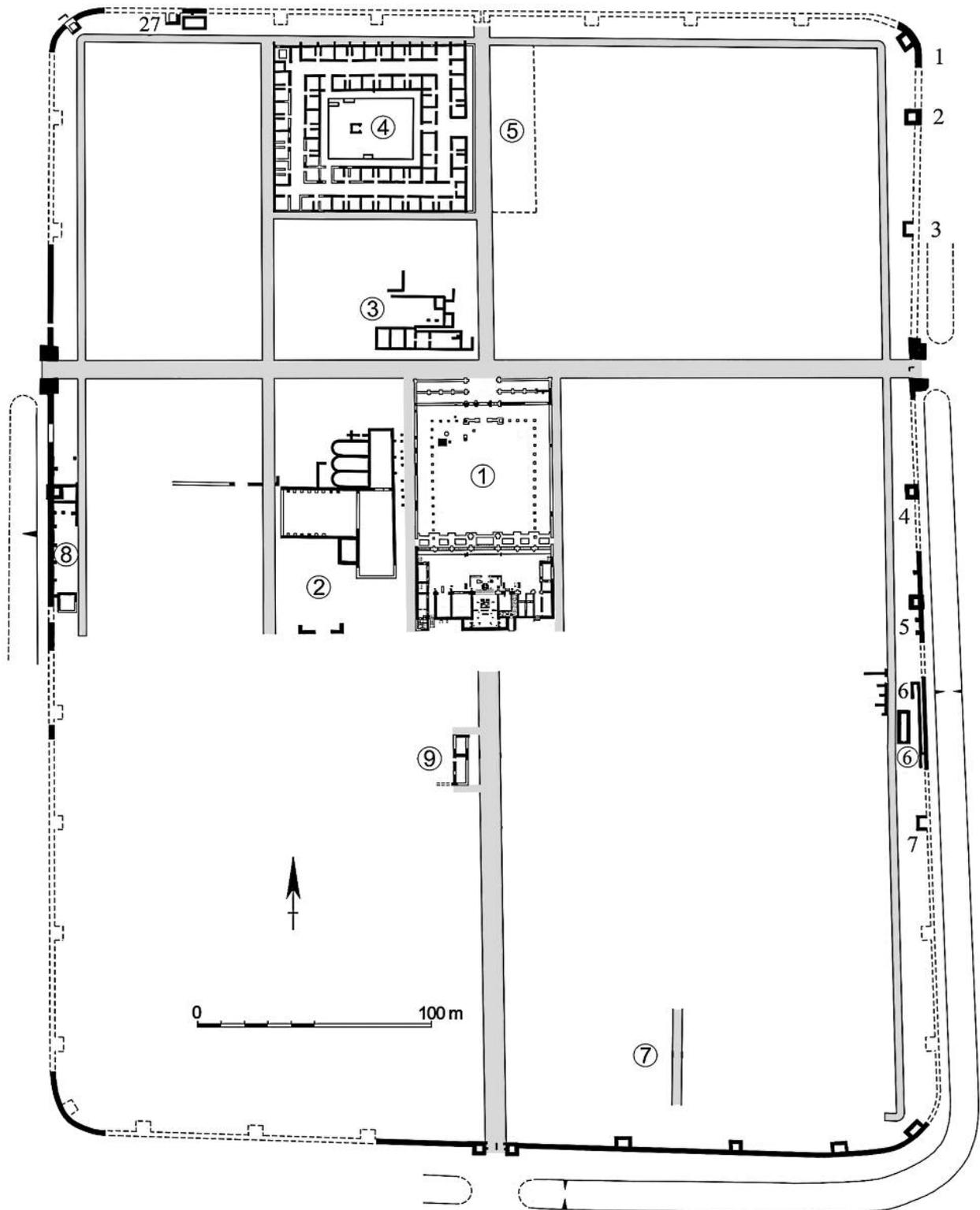


Fig. 1. Novae. Legionary fortress in the 2nd and the 3rd c. AD. An outline plan. 1: Headquarters building (*principia*); 2: Bath house (*thermae*); 3: Officer's house; 4: Hospital (*valetudinarium*); 5: Granaries (*horrea*); 6: Water-tank; 7: Cavalry barrack; 8: *Fabrica* (?); 9: *Praetorium* (?). Figures along the curtain wall refer to the numbers of towers (by J. Kaniszewski, T. Sarnowski).

Ryc. 1. Novae. Twierdza legionowa w II i III w. n.e. Plan ogólny. 1: Komendantura (*principia*); 2: Łaźnie (*thermae*); 3: Dom oficera; 4: Szpital (*valetudinarium*); 5: Spichlerze (*horrea*); 6: Zbiornik retencyjny; 7: Barak konnicy; 8: *Fabrica* (?); 9: *Praetorium* (?). Cyfry wzdłuż muru obronnego odnoszą się do numerów wież.

PLATE 196

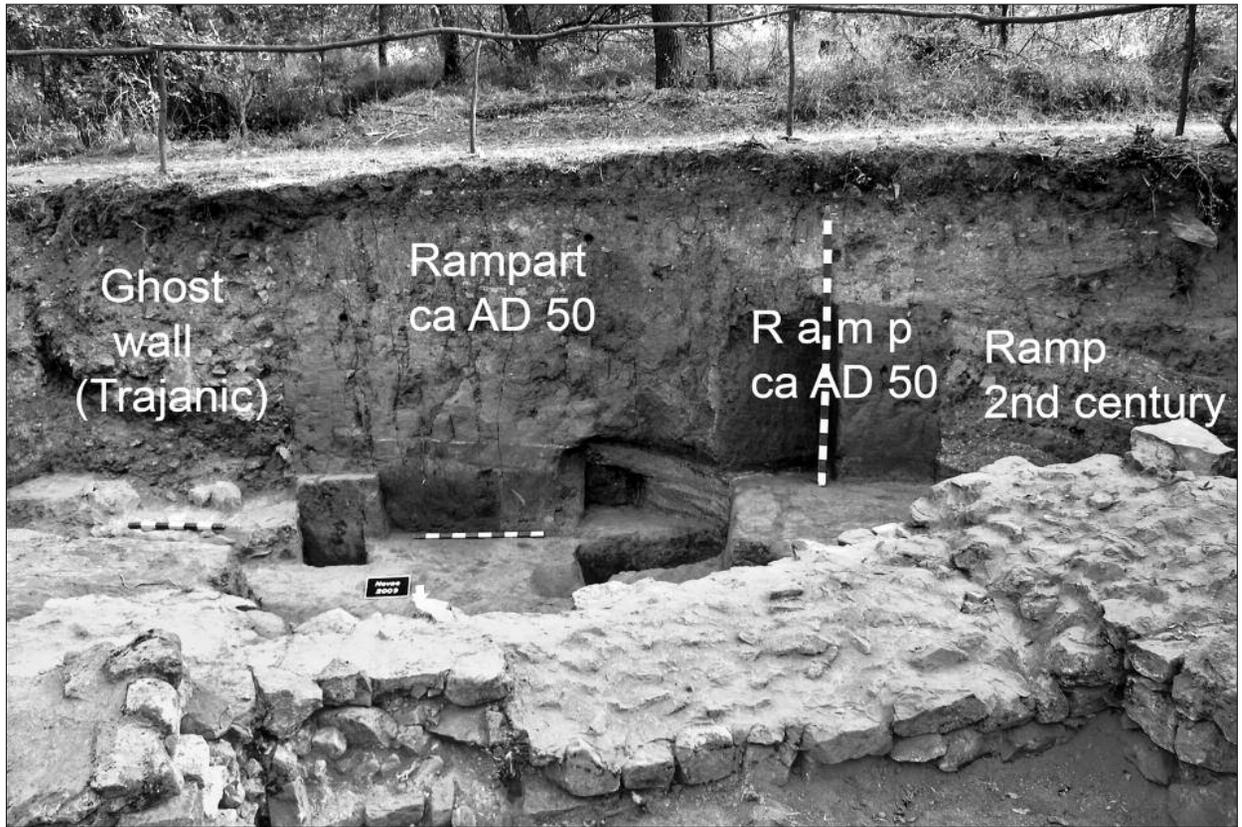


Fig. 2. Novae. Section across the eastern defences to the south of Tower 4. (Photo T. Sarnowski).

Ryc. 2. Novae. Przekrój przez umocnienia wschodniego muru obronnego na południe od wieży 4.

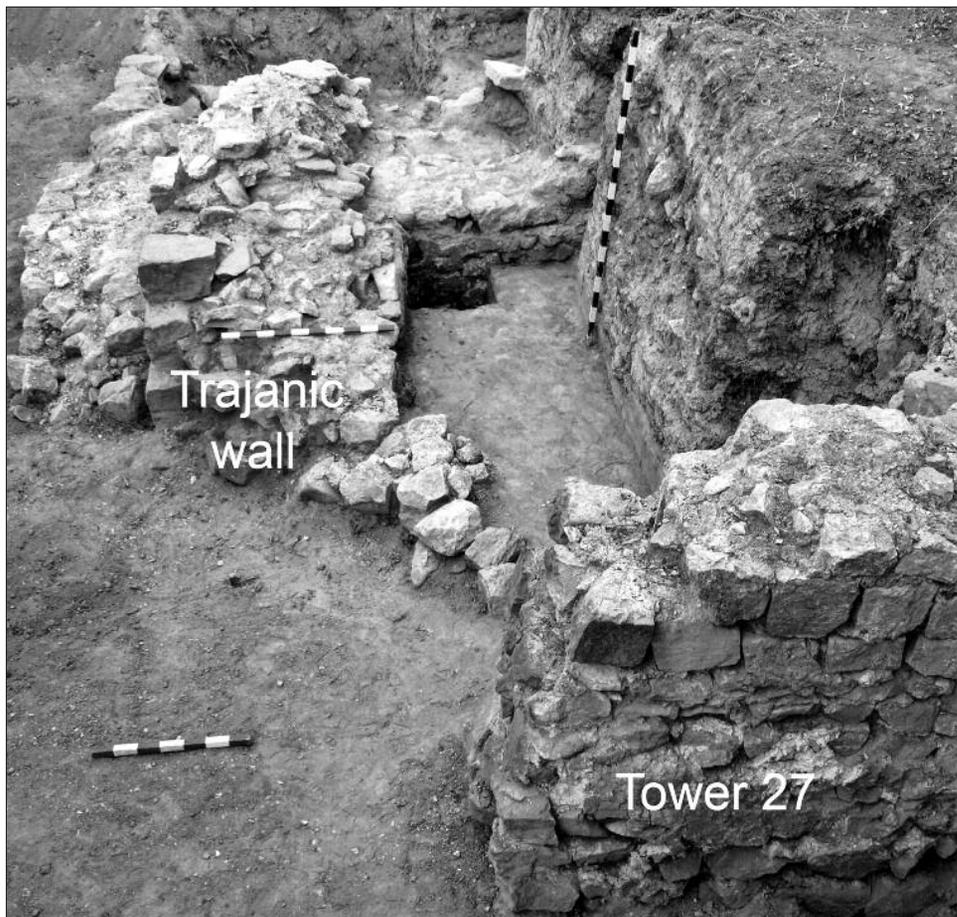


Fig. 3. Novae. Northern curtain wall looking E. (Photo T. Sarnowski).

Ryc. 3. Novae. Północny mur obronny. Widok z zachodu.