

# Scholl, Tomasz

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## Tanais - excavations in 2010

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TOMASZ SCHOLL

## TANAIS – EXCAVATIONS IN 2010

(PLS. 208–209)

The ancient city of Tanais is located in the modern village of Nedvigovka, in the Mâsnikovski rayon, the province of Rostov-on-Don (Russia), on the right bank of the Don River delta. In the antiquity it was possibly situated by the shore; now it is distant 9 km from the Azov Sea.

Archaeological works are carried out by the University of Warsaw (Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Centre in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology). We are part of the Archaeological Expedition of the Lower Don River, Institute of Archaeology, Russian Academy of Sciences, from Moscow, headed by T.M. Arsen'eva.

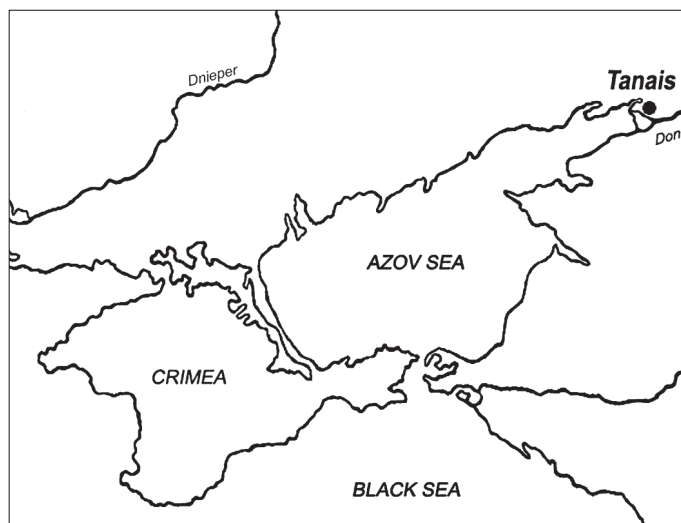
Forty-eight persons participated in excavations held in the 2010 season (17.06–31.07), including researchers and students from Poland, Russia and France. The leading staff was: T.M. Arsen'eva, M. Bogacki, E. Âcenko, M. Marciniak, M. Matera, S.A. Naumenko, A. Rowińska, T. Scholl, and B. Wojciechowski.

Financial support for the research was granted by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education and donations from the Research Centre and the Institute of Archaeology. Tanais was founded in the first quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, and destroyed in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD. Gothic settlers came there in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> c., and stayed until the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. Some traces of transhumance in the Migration Period and during the Khazar Khaganate epoch are also notable.

Since 1999 the excavations have been carried out in Sector XXV (Fig. 1). The aim of these works is to explore the fortifications and the residential quarter of so-called Western Tanais. This part of the city is somewhat later than the Eastern one. By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC the Bosporan king Polemon destroyed Western Tanais. Thereby, the architectural remains can be dated with a great certainty to the 2<sup>nd</sup> – the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC. The layers lying above them are dated to the period from the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC to the modern times. Particularly rich in artefacts are layers dated to the 1<sup>st</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> c. AD.

The works of the 2010 campaign were conducted in two places: the defensive trench was cleaned; the residential buildings and defensive structures along the western limit of the city were unearthed. The cleaning of the excavated area began in preparation for the aerial photography.

The section of the defensive trench covering three squares was fully explored, reaching the virgin soil. As in previously investigated sectors, bottom layers produced finds dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC until the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD. Some interesting



artefacts have been found. One of them is a Sarmatian tamga engraved on a bone plate (Fig. 2).

We were trying to locate the remains of the fortifications from the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC on the city limit. The foundation trenches of the inner and outer facing of the defensive wall were unveiled. Some parts of this wall were buried during the reconstruction at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, while others were reused to reinforce the new defences. The excavations were carried out as well at the place where there must have been a gate. It appeared that the northern curtain was very much destroyed, with only one stone left by the entrance, in addition not *in situ*.

The partly unearthed in 2007 Locus B was entirely cleaned. This place had an exceptionally well-preserved clay floor in its northern part, whereas the southern part excavated in 2010 was much destroyed. It was established that the length of the room was 8.5 m.

Trial trenches were also opened to investigate the foundation of Curtain Wall I and Locus B. The trench situated in Street „b” revealed the construction technique of that street. Only few finds were discovered there; one of them was a small clay censer (lantern?), not used in antiquity (Fig. 3).

After the excavations, the area of investigation was covered with stones, for protection (Fig. 4).

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**For further information on Tanais, see (i.a.):**

T. ARSEN'EVA, S. BEZUGLOV, I. TOŁOČKO, *Nekropol' Tanaisa. Raskopki 1981–1995 gg.*, Moskva 2001.

B. BÖTTGER, D.B. ŠELOV, *Amphorendipinti aus Tanais*, Moskau 1998.

T. SCHOLL, *The fortifications of Tanais in the Light of Warsaw University excavations*, "Etudes et Travaux" XX, 2005, 247–259.

D.B. ŠELOV, *Tanais i Nižnij Don v III–I vv. do n. ě.*, Moskva 1970.

D.B. ŠELOV, *Tanais i Nižnij Don v pervye veka n. ě.*, Moskva 1972.

Preliminary reports on current researches are published in "Światowit" (from vol. XLI/A, 1998, on). See also this volume: 69–106, Pls. 60–164.

TOMASZ SCHOLL

**TANAIS – WYKOPALISKA SEZONU 2010**

Prace archeologiczne w antycznym mieście Tanais, położonym na prawym brzegu delty Donu, prowadzone są przez Uniwersytet Warszawski od 1995 roku. Jesteśmy częścią rosyjskiej Ekspedycji Archeologicznej Dolnego Donu IA RAN z Moskwy. Od 1999 roku prace prowadzone są w wykopie XXV, znajdującym się na zachodniej granicy Tanais Zachodniego.

Teren ten został zasiedlony w II wieku p.n.e. i zniszczony w końcu I wieku p.n.e. W okresie późniejszym był miejscem wyrzucania odpadków z Tanais Wschodniego,

ale także nekropolą. Chowano tu dzieci, z których część składano do amfor, jak kaže grecka tradycja. W trakcie kampanii 2010 roku doczyszczano rów obronny chroniący miasto od zachodu oraz pozostałości architektury kamiennej: mur obronny, bramę wjazdową, uliczki miejskie (w tym ulicę strategiczną), pozostałości po zabudowaniach mieszkalnych (**Ryc. 1**). Z zabytków ruchomych znalezionych podczas tej kampanii należy przede wszystkim wymienić fragment okładziny kościanej z wyrytą tamgą sarmacką (**Ryc. 2**) oraz niewielką kadzielnicę (**Ryc. 3**).



Fig. 1. Sector XXV (Kite photo M. Bogacki).  
Ryc. 1. Wykop XXV, fotografia latawcowa.



Fig. 2. Sarmatian tamga (Photo T. Scholl)  
Ryc. 2. Sarmacka tamga.

Fig. 3. Clay censer (Photo T. Scholl).  
Ryc. 3. Gliniana kadzielnica.

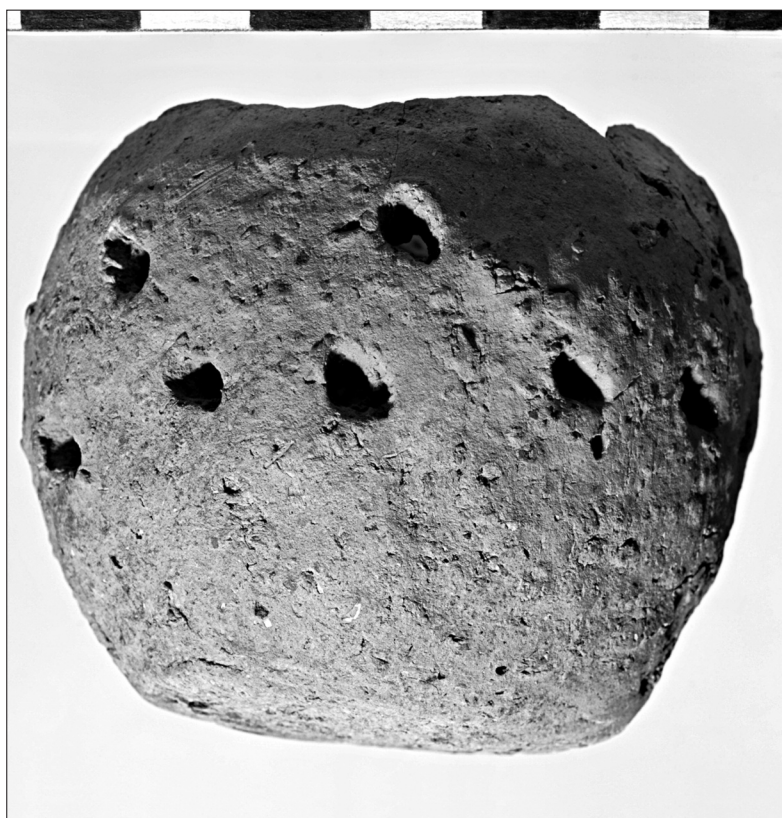


Fig. 4. Sector XXV, conservation (Photo T. Scholl).  
Ryc. 4. Wykop XXV, konserwacja.