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## Fieldwork at "Scodra" 2014

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Światowit : rocznik poświęcony archeologii przeddziejowej i badaniom pierwotnej kultury polskiej i słowiańskiej 12 (53)/A, 223-230

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2014

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

MARTIN LEMKE

## FIELDWORK AT SCODRA 2014

**Keywords:** Castle Rozafa, Illyricum, Lake Shkodër, Ottoman Empire, Venetian Republic

*Scodra* (Alb. Shkodër<sup>1</sup>) is located in northern Albania on the eastern shore of Lake Shkodër. The Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Centre, University of Warsaw, has carried out fieldwork there since 2011 with Albanian colleagues, while several earlier archaeological investigations also took place there in the 20<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>2</sup> *Scodra* was the capital of Illyria in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC until its annexation by the Roman Republic. In imperial times, *Scodra* became a *colonia*. During the Middle Ages, the town and especially its impenetrable fortress Rozafa were fought over by the Slavs (Serbs), the Venetians and the Ottomans, who named the town *İşkodra*, referring to Iskenderun (Alexandria).<sup>3</sup>

Like in the previous seasons, the 2014 campaign (12 May – 6 June), was focused on various areas atop the local castle hill. The fortress (“Rozafa”) was built around 1360 by George II Balšić (Balsha) and later modified under Venetian and Ottoman rule. The castle had a very intense history throughout the ages.<sup>4</sup> Even though the archaeological remains on the hilltop are almost exclusively Medieval or later, every now and then traces of the arguably important history of *Scodra* in Antiquity can also be found, like a magnificent inscription documented in a cistern in 2011.<sup>5</sup>



All probing trenches within our five-year research contract are numbered in succession. Trenches 1–17 were set up during the campaigns in 2011–2013, while Trenches 18–22 were added in 2014 (Fig. 1). Rozafa hill has slopes of considerable steepness also within the castle. Hence the levels can be quite diverse, ranging in between 130 m a.s.l. in the citadel and around 95 m a.s.l. outside the curtain wall, where fieldwork was carried out in 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Also known as Scutari or Skutari, the Polish form is Szkodra.

<sup>2</sup> For earlier research and literature see: M. LEMKE, *Fieldwork at Scodra 2011*, “Światowit” IX (L)/A (2011), 2012, 209–214; idem, *Fieldwork at Scodra 2012*, “Światowit” X (LI)/A (2012), 2013, 177–183; idem, *Fieldwork at Scodra 2013*, “Światowit” XI (LII)/A (2013), 2014, 217–225.

Our work is kindly supported by the National Science Centre (Narodowe Centrum Nauki), within the project “Albanian-Polish archaeological research in the Illyrian capital Scodra” (Albańsko-polskie badania archeologiczne w stolicy Ilirii – Szkodrze), DEC-2014/13/B/HS3/04836.

<sup>3</sup> As noted by the Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi: *There are three Iskenderuns or Alexandrias in the Ottoman Empire. One is this Albanian Iskenderiyye (Shkodra). The second, called Iskenderun, is on the shore of the Mediterranean, one caravan stage from Aleppo, and serves as the port for that city. The third is Alexandria in Egypt,*

*which in Greek is called Alexandria Pyrgos, or Alexander’s Castle, quoted after: R. DANKOFF, R. ELSIE (eds.), *Evliya Çelebi in Albania and Adjacent Regions (Kosovo, Montenegro, Ohrid)*, Leiden 2000, 29–30.*

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the history of Rozafa: M. LEMKE, *Szkodra – legenda wielu epok*, “Archeologia Żywa” 58, 2011, 14–19; idem, *Fieldwork at Scodra 2013...*; G. KARAIŠKAJ, *Die spätantiken und mittelalterlichen Wehranlagen in Albanien*, Hamburg 2010, 240–244. Specifically on the famous siege in 1478: M. BARLETI, *The Siege of Shkodra. Albania’s Courageous Stand against Ottoman Conquest*. Translated and edited by David Hosaflook, Tirana 2012.

<sup>5</sup> M. LEMKE, *Fieldwork at Scodra 2011...*, 211–212; A. ŁAJTAR, J. ŻELAZOWSKI, *Le nuove iscrizioni provenienti da Scodra (Albania) e il nuovo v(ir) e(gregius) ducenarius*, “Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik” 192, 2014, 273–283.

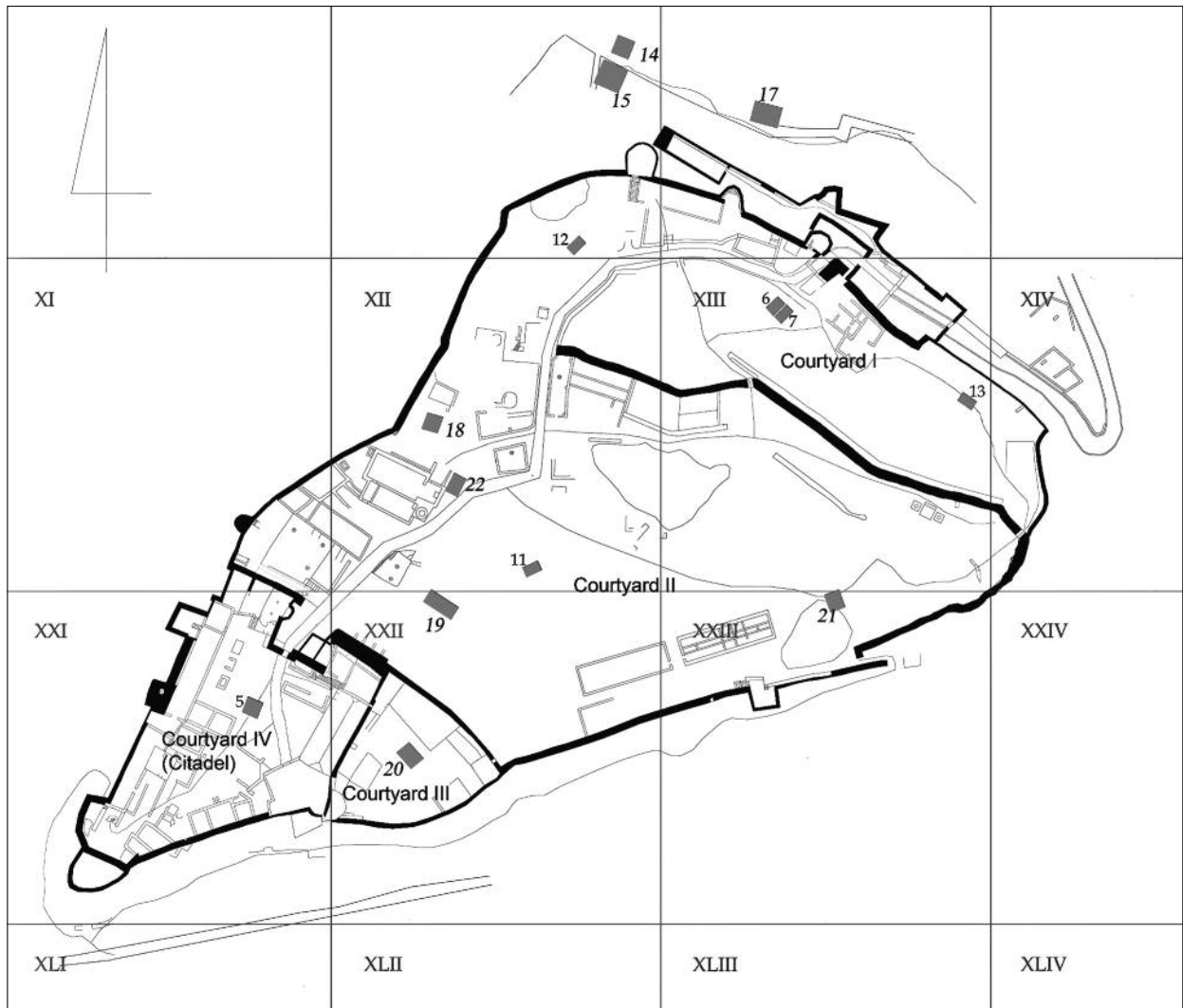


Fig. 1. Trenches on the castle hill of Rozafa (Drawing M. Lemke, M. Bura).

Ryc. 1. Wykopy na wzgórzu Rozafa.

The first trench explored in 2014, No. 18 (5×4 m, **Fig. 2**), was located close to the north-western wall of the castle, on Courtyard II, about 12.5 m from the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Mosque (built by the Venetians in the late 14<sup>th</sup> c. as St Stephen's Church and turned into a mosque after 1479). Here, a large pillar made of stones was found (65×65 cm, preserved height ca. 1 m). This feature might have been part of a formerly extended sanctuary complex around the Venetian church. Stretching around this pillar, but not linked with it construction-wise, was an ovoid shaped low wall made of medium sized stones, probably the remains of an earlier lime pit. Small finds from this trench included numerous fragments of Ottoman pottery and pieces of cannonballs.

Trench 19 (7.5×3.5 m, **Fig. 3**) was also located on the spacious Courtyard II, but on the opposite side of the church, on the south-eastern slope of the hill and not far

from a Venetian cistern and the entrance to the citadel (i.e., Courtyard IV). As it turned out, the slope has been artificially elevated here by steadily heaping up layers of rubble. The context requires further investigation, but both the uniform contents as well as the level of these layers suggest that they were created when another part of the castle – likely the citadel – was cleaned up and the rubble discarded elsewhere. Below the rubble layers, a single stone wall with white mortar was uncovered, running northeast-southwest, but it is hard to tell whether it belonged to a Venetian or an Ottoman structure. The find material in this trench is rather mixed up chronologically, but at least one interesting item, an unadorned thin bronze bowl (**Fig. 4**), was unearthed. The vessel, probably of Ottoman origin, has an outer diameter of 24 cm and an inner diameter of 20 cm, it measures 3 cm in height and the thickness of the bronze sheet ranges between 2 mm at the rim and 5 mm at the bottom.



Fig. 2. Trench 18. Pillar foundations and a lime pit (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 2. Wykop 18. Fundament filaru i dół na wapno.



Fig. 3. Trench 19. Rubble layers created during clearing operations in the castle in early modern times (?) and a Medieval wall below them (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 3. Wykop 19. Nawarstwienia hałdy powstałej przy remoncie zamku we wczesnych czasach nowożytnych(?) oraz średniowieczny mur pod nimi.

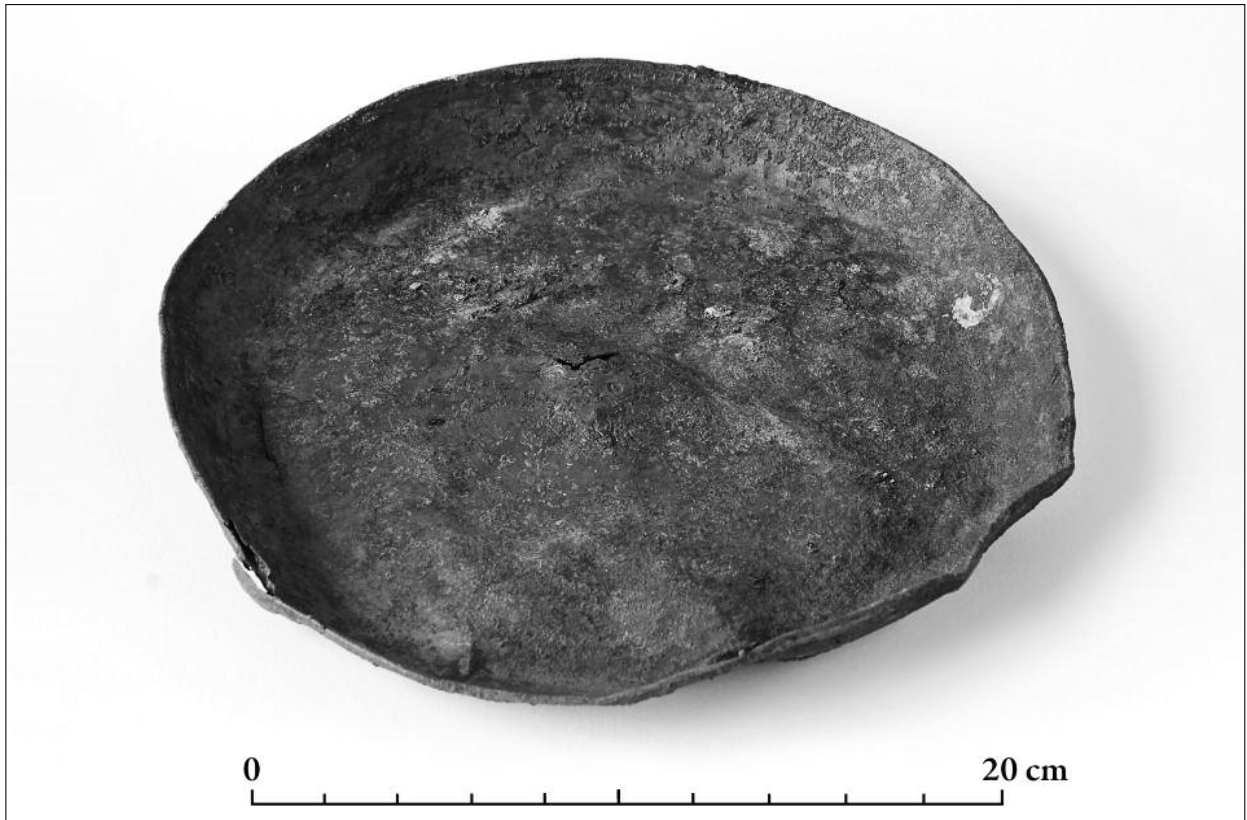


Fig. 4. Ottoman (?) bronze bowl from Trench 19 (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 4. Osmańska (?) czarka z brązu, z wykopu 19.

Trench 20 (5×4 m, **Fig. 5**) was located on the small Courtyard III, directly east of the citadel. This area was used for garrisoning Albanian soldiers after World War II, thus displaying numerous examples of contamination in the archaeological context. But some interesting historical features occurred as well. Underneath a surface layer and a thin layer of gray earth with pieces of cement and cement powder, a sequence of Late Modern rubble layers of brown soil with fragments of bone, pottery, mortar, large pieces of bricks and stones, as well as cement was unearthed. Soon, most of the trench surface was uncovered to a level of Early Modern/Late Ottoman architecture, revealing a pillared entrance and a paved road with a concave water runnel in the middle, running southwest-northeast. Since these structures were not to be dismantled, fieldwork proceeded in the north-eastern corner of the trench, where a late Ottoman level was reached, with gray soil with medium

sized stones, few fragments of pottery and later dark gray/black soil with stones, pieces of mortar and roofing tiles, charcoal and pottery. At a level of 2 m below the surface, a thick layer (50 cm) of fine charcoal was detected. The layer contained some pieces of mortar, and a cannonball, as well as stucco fragments in the southern section. Below the charcoal, there was a layer of brown soil with large amounts of mortar, pottery and bones, as well as roofing tiles, lying on a floor of medium sized cobblestones (**Fig. 6**). The foundations of the pillared entrance mentioned earlier extend as low as this pavement.

Trench 21 (5×4 m, **Fig. 7**) was the third one located on Courtyard II, near the eastern fortress wall. Excavation revealed a small cistern (2.3×1.7 m) in one corner of the trench, probably a private water reservoir from a civil house<sup>6</sup> built in Venetian times and likely used during the Ottoman

<sup>6</sup> This is a common feature both in Scutari and elsewhere. In spite of its defensiveness, lack of water could be a problem for the castle of Rozafa during a siege. The Venetians built four large public cisterns within the castle (G. KARAISKAJ, *Furnizimi me ujë i kalasë së Shkodrës ne mesjetë*, "Monumentet" 11, 1985, 55–77), but there were also private ones within houses (G. KARAISKAJ, *Die*

*spätantiken...*, 138–139). A comparable feature, possibly another private cistern, was found in Trench 13 in 2013 (M. LEMKE, *Fieldwork at Scodra 2013...*, 218–219). Many private cisterns within houses were uncovered at Stari Bar, dated from the late 14<sup>th</sup> c. onwards (S. GELICHI, *Analizzare lo Spazio, Analizzare il Tempo. La storia di un isolato di Stari Bar*, Firenze 2011, 14–18).



Fig. 5. Trench 20. Remains of a pillared entrance and an Early Modern paved road with a central sewage runnel (Photo M. Lemke).  
Ryc. 5. Wykop 20. Pozostałości wejścia z filarami oraz wczesnonowożytna brukowana droga z rynną ściekową pośrodku.



Fig. 6. Trench 20. Layer of charcoal above the pavement (Photo M. Lemke).  
Ryc. 6. Wykop 20, warstwa węgla drzewnych nad brukowaniem.



Fig. 7. Trench 21. Medieval domestic cistern and Ottoman walls above it (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 7. Wykop 21. Średniowieczna cysterna domowa oraz mury osmańskie powyżej.



Fig. 8. Silver Grossettos from the Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), from Trench 21 (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 8. Grossetto – srebrne monety republiki Raguzy (Dubrownik), z wykopu 21.



Fig. 9. Trench 22. Ceramic pipes forming a water conduit linking the church with a nearby cistern (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 9. Wykop 22. Wodociąg ceramiczny łączący kościół z pobliską cysterną.

Period as well. Interestingly, in the layers directly above the cistern, a small assemblage of four Ragusan silver Grossettos dating from 1628 (**Fig. 8**) was found scattered in a small area.

Probing Trench 22 (6×3 m, **Fig. 9**) was dug directly in front of the church. Bed rock was hit almost immediately, but the shallow trench rendered an important feature: a water conduit made of terracotta pipes, collecting rainwater from the roof of the church and nurturing the nearby Cistern II. Like Trench 21, this discovery adds to the knowledge at our disposal regarding the important topic of water supply at Rozafa in general and this cistern in particular.<sup>7</sup>

Small finds from the *Scodra* 2014 season are traditionally modest. These are a number of Venetian and Ottoman glazed pottery shards, small bits of antique pottery, some Turkish clay pipes and bits and pieces of iron and stone cannonballs.

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<sup>7</sup> G. KARAIKAJ, *Furnizimi...*, 61–62. Karaiskaj does not mention the most interesting feature of this cistern, a Roman inscription used as a *spolium*. Cf. M. LEMKE, *Fieldwork at Scodra 2011...*,

211–212; A. ŁAJTAR, J. ŻELAZOWSKI, *Le nuove iscrizioni...*, 273–283.



**BADANIA TERENOWE W SCODRA W 2014 R.**

**P**odczas czwartej kampanii w *Scodra* (12.05–06.06.2014), prace Ośrodka Badań nad Antykiem Europy Południowo-Wschodniej UW skupiały się na wierzchołku wzgórza Rozafa.

Eksplorowano pięć wykopów sondażowych na wzgórzu. Zachowując ciągłość numeracji w ramach całego pięcioletniego projektu, otrzymały one numery 18–22 (**Ryc. 1**).

W wykopach kolejno odkryto: murowany filar należący prawdopodobnie do konstrukcji związanej z kościołem (**Ryc. 2**), nasyp związany prawdopodobnie z remontem cytadeli (**Ryc. 3**), czarkę z brązu (**Ryc. 4**), obramowane filarami wejście do dużego budynku (**Ryc. 5**) nad warstwą węgla drzewnych i spalenizny o miąższości 50 cm (**Ryc. 6**), prywatną cysterne (**Ryc. 7**), cztery monety republiki Raguzy (**Ryc. 8**) oraz terakotowy wodociąg (**Ryc. 9**).