

**Sarnowski, Tadeusz / Kovalevskaja,
Ludmiła A.**

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Roman Legionary Base : Excavations of
2010**

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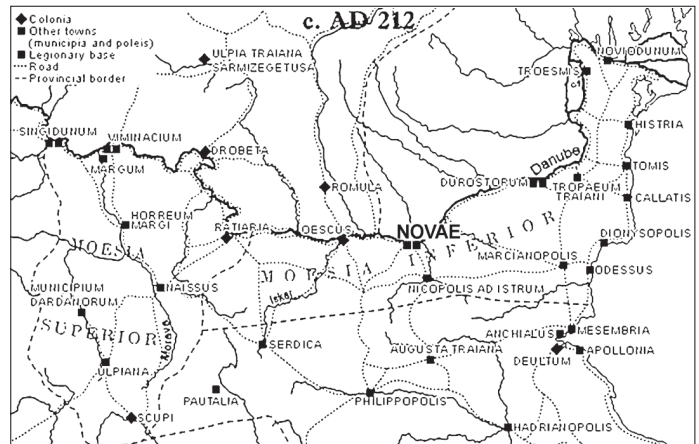
TADEUSZ SARNOWSKI, LUDMIŁA A. KOVALEVSKAJA

**NOVAE. HEADQUARTERS BUILDING OF THE ROMAN LEGIONARY BASE.
EXCAVATIONS OF 2010
(PLS. 197–198)**

Site: Svištov, District of Veliko Târnovo, Bulgaria
Excavation Director: Tadeusz Sarnowski
Excavation team: L.A. Kovalevskaia, P. Zakrzewski
Financial assistance: Institute of Archaeology
of the University of Warsaw
Fieldwork: 30 July – 26 August 2010

The excavation campaigns of 2006–2008 carried out in the central part of the site revealed small sections of the outer walls of two successive headquarters buildings,¹ that of the *legio VIII Augusta* dated to the Neronian period and that of the *I Italica*. They functioned as a boundary wall of the Flavian principia until the mid-5th c. AD (Figs. 1, 2). Other details of the ground plan were also detected. In 2009 and 2010 further work was done on the project aiming to take precise measurements of the visible architectural remains excavated by Polish and Bulgarian teams since 1960 and to create a digital elevation model of the whole archaeological site of the legionary fortress.

In 2009 the excavations carried out within the rear (southern) part of the headquarters building with some interruptions for more than 30 years came to an end. With a financial support from the European Commission the Bulgarian architects and restorers are supposed to start in 2010 or 2011 a conservation and restoration project in the exposed, rear part of the *principia*, necessary for the protection of the site. The professionals involved in heritage conservation want the whole complex to get the care and attention it deserves as one of the best preserved monuments of the Roman military architecture in the frontier provinces of the European part of the Roman



Empire. The central and the front (northern) parts of the area (c. 4500 m²) occupied once by the building were recognised mostly by a system of restricted trenching and only at the main gate hall (*groma*) and in the north-western corner by open area excavations.² All these trenches and areas were backfilled with earth. The *via principalis* frontage is overlaid by the modern road Svištov-Vardim and thus not available for excavation.

In order to trace some new elements of the north-eastern part of the headquarters building the Bulgarian architects opened two trial trenches in July 2010, using a heavy excavator machine. The one was located in the eastern (Fig. 3) and the other in the northern portico of the courtyard (*forum militare*). In August 2010 both trenches were cleaned and recorded by our team. The northern trench revealed a 15 m long section of the

¹ For earlier work (2003–2008) within the headquarters building see: 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. See also: T. SARNOWSKI, *Intra fines Imperii*, “Światowit” IV (XLV)/A (2002), 2003, 161–166; idem, *Novae. Headquarters Building and Rear Division of the Roman Legionary Fortress. Excavations of 2003*, “Światowit” V (XLVI)/A, (2003), 2004, 119–121; idem, *The Headquarters Building of the Legionary Fortress at Novae (Lower Moesia)*, (in:) V.A. Maxfield,

M.J. Dobson (eds.), *Proceedings of the XVth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, Roman Frontier Studies 1989, Exeter 1991, 303–307; idem, *Die Principia von Novae im späten 4. und frühen 5. Jh.*, (in:) G. von Bülow, A. Milčeva (eds.), *Der Limes an der unteren Donau von Diokletian bis Heraklios. Vorträge der internationalen Konferenz Svištov, Bulgarien (1.–5. September 1998)*, Sofia 1999, 56–63.

² For the excavation in the northern half of the headquarters building see: “Archeologia” (Warsaw) XL, 1989, 144–150; XLII, 1991, 133–134; XLIV, 1993, 85–87; XLIX, 1998, 83; LI (2000), 2001, 87.

portico rear wall and the easternmost pillar (No. 63) of the gate hall (Fig. 3).³ To the north of the pillar a large statue base with two inscriptions was found: a Tetrarchic dedication to *Liber Pater* and a consular date of AD 241 with an otherwise unknown expression *accepta parietoria*. The area excavated in the eastern portico (Square XVII 60) has produced two large loess pits which are probably to be connected with an action of preparing the site for the construction of the Flavian building. Dirty rubbish fillings of the pits (Fig. 4) which could not have been entirely investigated contained a bronze coin struck in AD 37–41,⁴ daub lumps bearing wattle impressions, many amphora sherds, fragments of clay lamps, fishing weights, scrap bone-, bronze-, lead- and ironwork, an iron strigilla, fragments of Italian, South Gaulish and Eastern Sigillata B, Pompeian Red Ware and South Pannonian thin walled pottery, pieces of glass and bronze vessels, and a set of 43 beads. The contents of the pits correspond to those of the early pits in the cross hall, the western portico of the courtyard and under Rooms Cw, Dw and Cz. Most of the finds from all these pits should probably be related to the *legio VIII Augusta* which left Novae in AD 69.

The last excavation campaigns brought a precious complement to our knowledge about the earliest phase (c. AD 50 – c. 90) of the headquarters building. Later phases of this building which cover the period from the late Flavian times to about the mid-5th c. were investigated in the previous years. The site of the principia of the *legio VIII Augusta* which stationed at Novae in the Neronian period

corresponds approximately to that of its successor (*legio I Italica*). The sections within the courtyard and porticoes show no distinct traces of a humic turf-line on light yellow or brown loess beneath the earliest flooring which means that we have to do with the removal of topsoil and extensive preliminary levelling of the ground. The primary subsoil was found not to be interrupted by tree- or shrub-holes, and so is indicative of grassland before the initial occupation of the site. The remains of the first headquarters building consisting merely of shallow foundations made of loess bonded stones came to light only within the courtyard and porticoes of the stone *principia* of the *legio I Italica*. A warn as of Nero⁵ found among the stones in the western external wall of the earliest *principia* (*legio VIII Augusta*) suggests that they were erected before the late 50s of the 1st c. AD. We still do not know what the walls and roofs looked like and what technique was applied to make them. Nowhere have yet been found any tiles bearing stamps of the 8th Legion. It is possible that the walls were made of mud bricks or of timber and wattle and daub in a technique resembling the *Fachwerk* which left no traces in the stratigraphy of the site.

The first *principia* were much smaller than their Flavian/Trajanic successor and probably occupied an area and site comparable to those of the temporary headquarters building at Pinnata (Inchtuthil) in Scotland.⁶ The measurements of the two successive headquarters buildings at Novae are as follows:

Legion	Length	Width	Rear range of rooms. Width	Courtyard	Portico. Inner width
VIII Augusta	> 55 m	c. 54 m	> 7 m	43,5*×? m	3,9 m**
I Italica	106 m	58,75 m	10 m	42,5×47,50 m	6,4 m

* Or less, if the foundation trench (Square XVII 220) was made not for the sleeper wall (stylobate) but for the front wall of the row of lateral rooms (*armamentaria* ?).

** It is possible however, that this size is to be connected with a row of lateral rooms.

Prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Sarnowski
Institute of Archaeology
University of Warsaw
prowinc@hotmail.com

Ludmiła A. Kovalevska MA
Institute of Archaeology
National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
kovalevska@tlen.pl

³ T. SARNOWSKI, *Another Legionary Groma Gate Hall? The Case of Novae in Lower Moesia*, Novae. Studies and Materials I, Poznań 1995, 37–40.

⁴ Inv. No 7/10wIA.

⁵ Inv. No 122/87w.

⁶ See: L.F. PITTS, J.K.ST. JOSEPH, *Inchtuthil. The Roman Legionary Fortress*, London 1985, 124 f.

TADEUSZ SARNOWSKI, LUDMIŁA A. KOVALEVSKAJA

NOVAE. BUDOWLA KOMENDANTURY W OBOZIE RZYMSKIEGO LEGIONU. WYKOPALISKA 2010 R.

W 2008 i 2009 r. dobiegły końca prace wykopaliskowe w obrębie komendantury (*principia*) obozu w Novae, które z kilku przerwami prowadzone były przez ponad 30 lat, przede wszystkim w tylnym, południowym skrzydle obiektu, mieszczącym kaplicę sztandarów, archiwum, skarbcę i pomieszczenia biurowe. Środkowa i północna część budowli została rozpoznana systemem sondaży a szerokokąszczytne badania miały miejsce tylko w pobliżu głównej bramy (*groma*).

Cały teren, zajęty niegdyś przez komendanturę, wraz z odsłoniętymi ruinami został zgodnie z umową przekazany stronie bułgarskiej do konserwacji. Gospodarze terenu zamierzają podjąć wkrótce prace restauratorskie w całej centralnej części stanowiska, w tym także w obrębie łaźni legionowych, wczesnochrześcijańskiej bazyliki i rezydencji biskupiej, badanych w pobliżu *principia* przez ekspedycję poznańską. Celem lokalizacji nowych elementów zabudowy w północno-wschodniej części komendantury bułgarscy architekci otworzyli z użyciem koparki, w lipcu 2010 r., dwa sondaże, które niewiele później zostały poddane pracom do-

kumentacyjnym przez naszą ekspedycję. Zadokumentowaliśmy tylny mur portyku dziedzińca wraz z jednym filarem bramy oraz przebadaliśmy częściowo duże jamy w portyku wschodnim, o śmietniskowych wypełniakach, obfitujących w zabytki (amfory, lampy, ceramika cienkościenna i terra sigillata, ciężarki rybackie, fragmenty przedmiotów z brązu, żelaza, kości i szkła, przęśliki, paciorki itp.).

Stratygrafia i moneta emitowana w latach 37–41 n.e. datują materiał zabytkowy na połowę I w. i pozwalają łączyć go ze stacjonującym w Novae do 69 r. legionem *VIII Augusta*. Materiał ten trafił do jam najprawdopodobniej w okresie flawijskim, kiedy teren obozu był przygotowywany do podjęcia prac budowlanych przez świeżo przybyłą *legio I Italica*. Bardzo ważnym, wyjątkowym wręcz znaleziskiem, jest odkryta koło filaru bramy baza posągu. Nosi ona dwa napisy, jeden z dedykacją z okresu tetrarchii dla *Liber Pater*, drugi – z konsularną datą (241 r.) i nie poświadczonym dotąd nigdzie w epigrafice wyrażeniem *accepta pariatoria*.

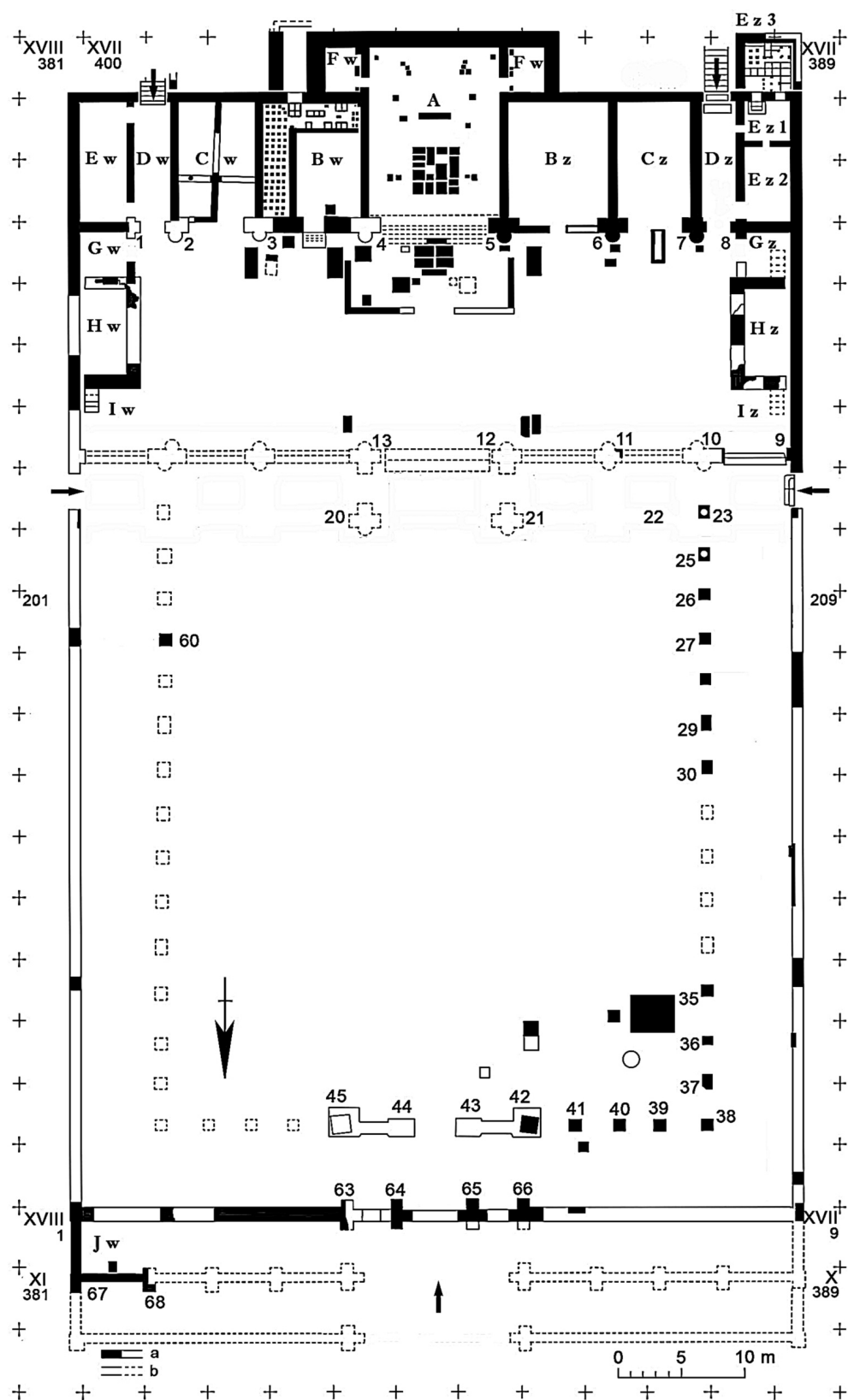


Fig. 1. Novae. Headquarters building of the *legio I Italica* in the early 3rd c. An outline plan: a – detail known; b – detail presumed (by T. Sarnowski, L. Kovalevskaia).

Ryc. 1. Novae. Komendantura legionu *I Italica* w początkach III w. Plan ogólny: a – elementy uchwycone; b – elementy uzupełnione.

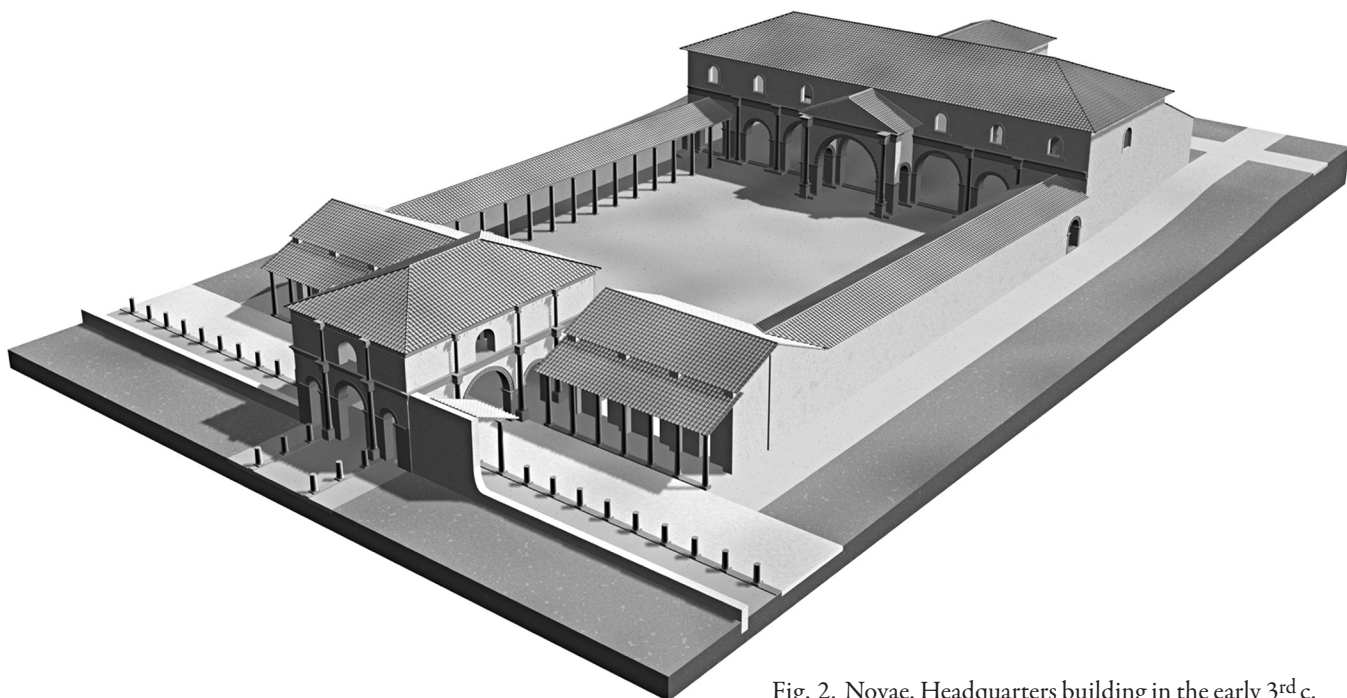


Fig. 2. Novae. Headquarters building in the early 3rd c. Reconstruction (by J. Kaniszewski).

Ryc. 2. Novae. Budynek komendantury w początkach III w. – rekonstrukcja.



Fig. 3. Novae. Headquarters building. The rear wall of the portico in the northern part of the courtyard (Photo T. Sarnowski).

Ryc. 3. Novae. Budynek komendantury. Tyłny mur portyku w północnej części dziedzińca.



Fig. 4. Novae. Headquarters building. One of the pits in the eastern portico of the courtyard (Photo T. Sarnowski).

Ryc. 4. Novae. Budynek komendantury. Jedna z jam we wschodnim portyku dziedzińca.