

# Kowarska, Zofia / Lenarczyk, Szymon / Misiewicz, Krzysztof i in.

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## Ptolemais, Libya, 2010

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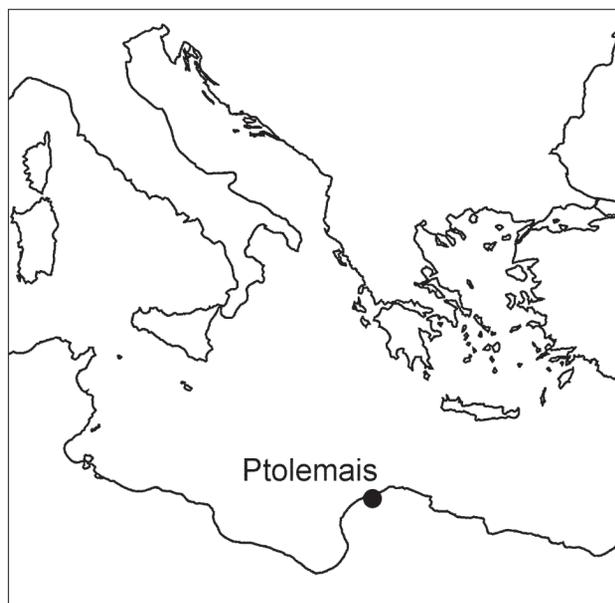
**PTOLEMAIS, LIBYA, 2010**

(PLS. 202–203)

Project: Polish Archaeological Mission to Ptolemais,  
Institute of Archaeology University of Warsaw  
Project leaders: Kazimierz Lewartowski, George Yacoub  
Archaeological excavation: 3 September – 16 October 2010  
Field leaders: Zofia Kowarska, Szymon Lenarczyk;  
other field research participants: Monika Rekowska-  
-Ruszkowska, Jerzy Żelazowski  
Financing: Ministry of Science and Higher Education  
grants, The Foundation for Polish Science grants, SPUB,  
sponsors

Geophysical survey and topography studies:  
02.05–02.06.2010, 03.09–23.10.2010  
Krzysztof Misiewicz, Wiesław Małkowski, University  
students – Michał Pisz, Piotr Wroniecki

Investigation of basilicas: 02.05–02.06.2010  
Ewa Wipszycka and Miron Bogacki, Jakub Kaniszewski  
(see this volume, pp. 41–67)



Ptolemais is a Greek-Roman city, one of five cities of Cyrenaica known as *Pentapolis*. Established probably as a port settlement of the Greek colony of Barca in the late 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, it flourished under the Ptolemaic Dynasty in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC. In 74 BC Cyrenaica with the city of Ptolemais became a Roman province. Ptolemais enjoyed a period of greatest prosperity in the reign of Trajan until the reign of the Severan Dynasty. Starting from the mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. AD, as a result of heavy earthquakes and invasions of nomad tribes, the city gradually fell into decline. In 643 Ptolemais was occupied by Arab tribes. It was abandoned for good around the 11<sup>th</sup> c., with only a small fragment of its area being occupied by the modern town of Tolmeita.

The season 2010 covered the following projects: excavations, non-destructive investigation based on geophysical survey; documentation of Early Christian churches, a three weeks' training in archaeological fieldwork offered to staff members of the Libyan Department of Antiquities.

**Archaeological excavations**

The excavations were a continuation of an earlier investigation of insula E XXI, in progress since 2001. Research focused on relics of Hellenistic structures, ruins of houses from the 2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> c. AD and traces of production activity from the 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> c. AD.

The main aim of the excavation research of this year's campaign was to expose the south-eastern portion

of insula E XXI, part of a dwelling complex known as Craftsman's House or House with Atrium.

The focus of exploration was an area bounded by two walls situated along probable boundaries (southern and eastern) of insula E XXI. Excavation was made in two trenches separated by a baulk. A several centimetres thick layer of a compacted "concrete floor" was discovered about 0.3 m below the surface. Parallel 0.15–0.2 m wide irregular depressions were visible in this layer. These were tentatively interpreted as relics of a road which ran through this area in the past (presumably, during the Islamic period).

The aim of exploration in the northern trench was to expose a courtyard paved with slabs situated in this area. Its western part was unearthened and documented during the spring campaign of 2007. At the centre of this paved area was a shallow pool – impluvium, decorated with a mosaic in a geometric design (Fig. 1). In the north-eastern corner of the impluvium an inlet to a channel was identified. The channel led under the pavement to a cistern found by the northern boundary of the courtyard.

Exploration of the southern trench was a continuation of an excavation made in 2008. In this area remains of workshop fittings were identified. These show that this part of the investigated house was put to a new use during a later period. On the eastern side of the trench, right next to the trench section, walls of two more rooms were

discovered. The floor of one of these turned out to be laid with a mosaic. Works carried out in the south-western corner of the trench led to the discovery of a large rectangular kiln. This structure was built into a corner between two walls from an earlier phase of the building (Fig. 2).

In the north-western part of the trench, right next to the baulk, further structures associated with crafts production were discovered. Fragments of walls and of a stone floor, and also a floor-platform laid in hydraulic mortar were documented. By the southern boundary of this surface an inlet to a cistern was discovered.

In September 2010 a series of additional exploration works aimed at investigating in closer detail features and structures identified during earlier excavation campaigns. It was intended to complete exploration of a small kiln built into the impluvium of the courtyard R 69 (Fig. 3) and to continue exploration of the fill of a reservoir (or cistern) identified in room R 73. The latter was found to contain another deposit of unfired ceramic mass. Investigation of a fragment of a wall W 21 (Fig. 4) between two small rooms adjacent to the peristyle in the central part of the House of Leukaktios seems to be highly interesting for the chronology of the investigated buildings.

### Geophysical survey

(Krzysztof Misiewicz)

Over 70 hectares were investigated with Geometrics G858 cesium magnetometers and Bartington G-602 dual flux-gate gradiometers in the southern part of the city in 2010. The survey was carried out using a detailed grid (profiles 0.5 meters apart and measurement in each 10 cm of the profile). One of the cesium magnetometers was extended and commanded with GPS system helping to locate all measured points with very high precision (3–10 cm). Changes of intensity of the total magnetic field were recorded with an accuracy of 0.001nT. The results of measurements in all surveyed areas (presented as gray scale and color maps of disposition of values of vertical and horizontal pseudo-gradient of the magnetic field) allow to reconstruct the complete city grid and to prepare input for detailed analysis. Street limits, water pipes, remains of building

foundations, are visible on the maps as narrow linear anomalies in disposition of the intensity of magnetic field. In some cases even exact plans of many buried features could be reconstructed using the input from the magnetic survey.

An existence of the original topographical city grid with insulae and streets intersecting at 90 degrees was confirmed in all of the measured fields. Detailed plans of preserved features could be reconstructed in the case of shallow buried structures measured with flux gate gradiometers.

The survey is to be continued with the aim of preparing a complete map of all the archaeological features preserved inside the city walls.

### Other activities

For the first time the Polish Mission organised workshops for Libyan archaeologists – staff members of the Antiquities Department in Benghazi. The duration of the training was three weeks, with ten participants who gained skills in small finds documentation and description, site exploration and recording, using the total station, and in mosaics conservation.

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**Further reading on Polish excavations and ancient town of Ptolemais:**

T. MIKOCCI, *Polskie wykopaliska archeologiczne w Libii. Wykopiska Instytutu Archeologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Ptolemais (Tolmeita). Sondáže 2001 r.*, "Światowit" III (XLIV)/A (2001), 2002, 101–120.

T. MIKOCCI, P. JAWORSKI, M. MUSZYŃSKA, *Excavations conducted by the Mission of Institute of Archaeology, Warsaw University in 2002 and 2003. Report of two seasons of excavations*, "Światowit" V (XLVI)/A (2003), 2004, 107–118.

T. MIKOCCI, K. CHMIELEWSKI, P. JAWORSKI, W. MAŁKOWSKI, K. MISIEWICZ, M. MUSZYŃSKA-MIKOCKA, P. SOBZYŃSKI, J. ŻELAZOWSKI, *Ptolemais in Libya. Excavations conducted by the Mission Institute of Archaeology, Warsaw University in 2004 and 2005. Report on two seasons of excavations*, "Światowit" VI (XLVII)/A (2004–2005), 2006, 97–104.

T. MIKOCCI, *Ptolemais. Archaeological Tourist Guide*, Warsaw 2006.

E. JASTRZĘBOWSKA, M. NIEWÓJT (eds.), *Archeologia a Tolemaide. Giornate di studio in occasione del primo anniversario della morte di Tomasz Mikocki, 27–28 maggio 2008*, Roma 2009.

T. MIKOCCI, K. LEWARTOWSKI, G. YACOB ET AL., *Polish archaeological research in Ptolemais (Cyrenaica) in years 2001–2007*, "Libya Antiqua: Annual of the Department of Archaeology of Libya" NS V (2010), 99–108.

Preliminary excavation reports are available at [www.ptolemais.pl](http://www.ptolemais.pl)

ZOFIA KOWARSKA, SZYMON LENARCZYK, KAZIMIERZ LEWARTOWSKI, KRZYSZTOF MISIEWICZ

**PTOLEMAIS, LIBIA, 2010**

Działalność Polskiej Misji Archeologicznej w Ptolemais w 2010 roku obejmowała kontynuację prac wykopaliskowych, kontynuację badań geofizycznych i topograficznych miasta antycznego oraz studium bazylik chrześcijańskich (p. str. ), a została uzupełniona zajęciami praktycznymi dla młodych libijskich archeologów, wytypowanych przez Departament Starożytności w Bengazi.

Prace wykopaliskowe skupione były na odsłonięciu ostatniego, nie badanego jeszcze fragmentu tzw. Domu Rzemieślnika. Przyniosły one odkrycie kolejnego pieca z fazy użytkowania terenu po zniszczeniu domu oraz płytowane i cementowe posadzki, a także pokryte mozaiką

impluvium na znajdującym się tu dziedzińcu. Przy okazji prowadzono też prace weryfikacyjne przy wcześniej już odkrytych fragmentach domu oraz cysterny lub zbiornika, zawierającego oczyszczoną glinę, przygotowaną dla produkcji naczyń lub lamp.

Badania geofizyczne, dzięki nowemu sprzętowi, znacznie nabrały tempa i objęły już swym zasięgiem większą część miasta antycznego. Ujawniły one wiele budowli skrytych pod ziemią, potwierdziły elementy rozplanowania miasta, znane z wcześniejszych badań, np. wielkość *insulae* czy szerokość ulic.

PLATE 202



Fig. 1. Fragment of the courtyard paved with slabs (R 68/R 69); at the centre: impluvium laid with a mosaic (Photo Polish Archaeological Mission to Ptolemais).

Ryc. 1. Fragment dziedzińca z kamiennym płytowaniem (R68/69), w centrum: impluvium z mozaiką.



Fig. 2. General view of the southern trench, with a kiln built directly over a rock in the foreground (Photo Polish Archaeological Mission to Ptolemais).

Ryc. 2. Widok ogólny wykopu południowego, z widocznym na pierwszym planie piecem zbudowanym bezpośrednio na podłożu skalnym.

Fig. 3. The kiln in the room R 69 (Photo Polish Archaeological Mission to Ptolemais).  
Ryc. 3. Piec w pomieszczeniu R69.



Fig. 4. Fragment of the wall W 21 (Photo Polish Archaeological Mission to Ptolemais).  
Ryc. 4. Fragment muru W 21.

