

DISSERTATIONES ARCHAEOLOGICAE

ex Instituto Archaeologico Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae



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Short report on the excavations in the civil town of Brigetio (Szöny-Vásártér) in 2014

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Abstract

Excavations in the 2014 season at the site Brigetio/Szöny-Vásártér were concentrated on unearthing the cellar which had been found in 2012 as well as taking observations in the vicinity of the previously excavated metal-workshop nearby. Most important results of the excavations are the complete cleaning and documentation of the cellar with collapsed wooden ceiling, as well as unearthing a large pit in the territory of the metal workshop containing a great amount of metal slags, bronze objects (including the head of a Germanic warrior) and even blue pigment raw material.

Introduction

Systematic excavations in the civil town of Brigetio (Fig. 1) have started in 1992, carried out by the Department of Classical and Roman Archaeology of Eötvös Loránd University and the Klapka György Museum of Komárom.¹ Main aims of the excavation campaign of 2014² were to finish the excavation and cleaning of the collapsed wooden ceiling of the cellar

1 Reports on the last seasons: BARTUS ET AL. 2012; BORHY – BARTUS – SZÁMADÓ 2013; BARTUS ET AL. 2014a; BARTUS ET AL. 2014b. See the complete bibliography of the research in Brigetio since 1992 in the present volume: BORHY 2014.

2 The excavation was conducted by the Department of Classical and Roman Archaeology, Eötvös Loránd University and Klapka György Museum, Komárom under the overall direction of László Borhy (Eötvös Loránd University) and Emese Számadó (Klapka György Museum) with the sub-direction of Dávid Bartus (Eötvös Loránd University). Participants were Nikoletta Sey, Bence Simon (Eötvös Loránd University), Lajos Juhász (MTA–ELTE Research Group for Interdisciplinary Archaeology), Gabriella Delbó, Zita Kis, Anna Nagy, Csilla Sáró (PhD-students, Eötvös Loránd University); Eszter Harsányi and Zsófia Kurovszky painter-restorer artists; Krisztián Balogh, Anita Benes, Adrienn Borsos, Julianna Burucs, Márk Domonkos, Mónika Gácsi, Tamás Gál, Olivér Gillich, Barbara Hajdu, Fruzsina Hege, Dóra Hományi, Szilvia Johácz, Bence Jörös, Judit Kátai, László Kolonits, Polett Kósa, Titanilla Kósa, Sára Lantos, Adrienn Leibinger, Hella Mag, Dóra Máté, Borbála Mohácsi, Zsófia Nádai, Mercedesz Papp, Zolt Papp, Krisztina Péro, Dániel Polyák, Orsolya Popovics, Mónika Rikk, Eszter Süvegh, Tamás Szabadváry, Melinda Szabó, Gergely Szoboszlay, Kornélia Takács, Dóra Telekesi, Réka Tóth (undergraduate students, Eötvös Loránd University), Gertrúd Fekete (undergraduate student, University of Pécs), Panna Darázs high school student and Johanna Simon-Bajnóczi. The excavation was funded by the Municipality of Komárom and the Directorate of the National Cultural Fund of Hungary, Work on the present paper was supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA K 108 667) and the MTA–ELTE Research Group for Interdisciplinary Archaeology.

found in 2012–2013,³ and to investigate further the area of the metal workshop.⁴ The total excavated area in 2014 was approximately 200 m² (Fig. 2).

Cellar

During the four weeks of excavation in July 2014, the complete wooden ceiling was unearthed in the cellar (Fig. 3). During the removal of the upper layers above the wooden structures very rich material was found: a lot of pottery shreds, terra sigillata, bronze brooches and numerous iron objects and metal slags. The most interesting find is the base of a mould-blown glass vessel with the stamp „L PVBLIC”, which could be the name of the craftsman, the owner of the workshop or even the merchant who transported the vessel, which contained oil or some oily substance. Similar vessels were found in Calvatone, Straubing and Pfaffenhofen.⁵

The collapsed ceiling itself was cleaned and all traces of earth were removed from the wooden planks. The complete size of the ceiling was 4,4 × 2,4 metres. The cleaning of the wooden structures was extremely time-consuming, due to the fragile surface of the wooden planks and the necessity of keeping the moisture level as high as possible. Another problem was the unusually abundant rainfall and stormy weather which slowed down the work and finally balked the plans for a salvage of the wooden ceiling, however, some survey of the structure could be made by restorers Eszter Harsányi and Zsófia Kurovszky under the supervision of András Morgós (National University of Cultural Heritage, South Korea). The thickness of wooden planks was originally 3 cm, while the transverse beams at least 7 cm (their actual thickness is only 3 mm and 3–4 cm, respectively). This solid structure could even hold the weight of a presumed masonry floor on top of the wooden structure, which was described by Vitruvius (*De arch.*, 7.1) and served as an effective method of fire prevention.⁶ As another result of the survey, it could be observed that the wooden parts of the ceiling had been infected with beetles before it collapsed down to the cellar.

After the complete documentation of the cellar, small samples were taken from the wood for further analysis, the whole structure was prepared with Kemobicide DP3 antifungal agent, then the cellar was covered back again. The main aim of the excavation campaign of 2015 at the site Szőny-Vásártér is to finish the excavation of the wooden ceiling.

Metal workshop

In 2012 and 2013, some metres to the northeast in the vicinity of the cellar, a presumed metalworking area was unearthed in a courtyard,⁷ with three furnaces and great amount of bronze slags, as well as some half-finished products, fragments of crucibles and terracotta moulds including one representing Mercurius (used for casting votive lead figurines).⁸ In 2014, we continued the excavation in the same courtyard where huge amount of iron slags were found in a large pit, measuring 5 × 4 m. The more than two metres deep pit contained

3 BARTUS – BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2013, 129–130, Fig. 5–10.

4 BARTUS – BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2013, 130; BARTUS ET AL. 2014b, 35–36.

5 SEITTER 2002, 475, 525–526. We would like to thank to Kata Dévai for providing the information and analogies of the glass vessel.

6 ULRICH 2007, 112–113.

7 BARTUS ET AL. 2014b, 35–36.

8 BARTUS 2014.

a huge amount of metal finds, mostly iron slags weighing hundreds of kilograms. Bronze brooches, bone hairpins and a lot of pottery were also found in the same pit, which could be served as a waste pit related to nearby ironworking activities. A small gray coarse ware bowl contained blue pigment raw materials (Fig. 4), which can supposedly be identified as lapis lazuli and “Egyptian blue”, according to the first analyses.⁹ One of the most important finds of the excavation is a small bronze head with the depiction of a Germanic warrior, which was found some metres east of the pit (Fig. 5), and fits well in the series of similar representations on bronze objects from Brigetio.¹⁰

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⁹ The preliminary analyses were made by Sz. Döbröntey-David and N. Sey to whom we are grateful.

¹⁰ See the article on Germanic representations in the present volume: JUHÁSZ 2014, 334.

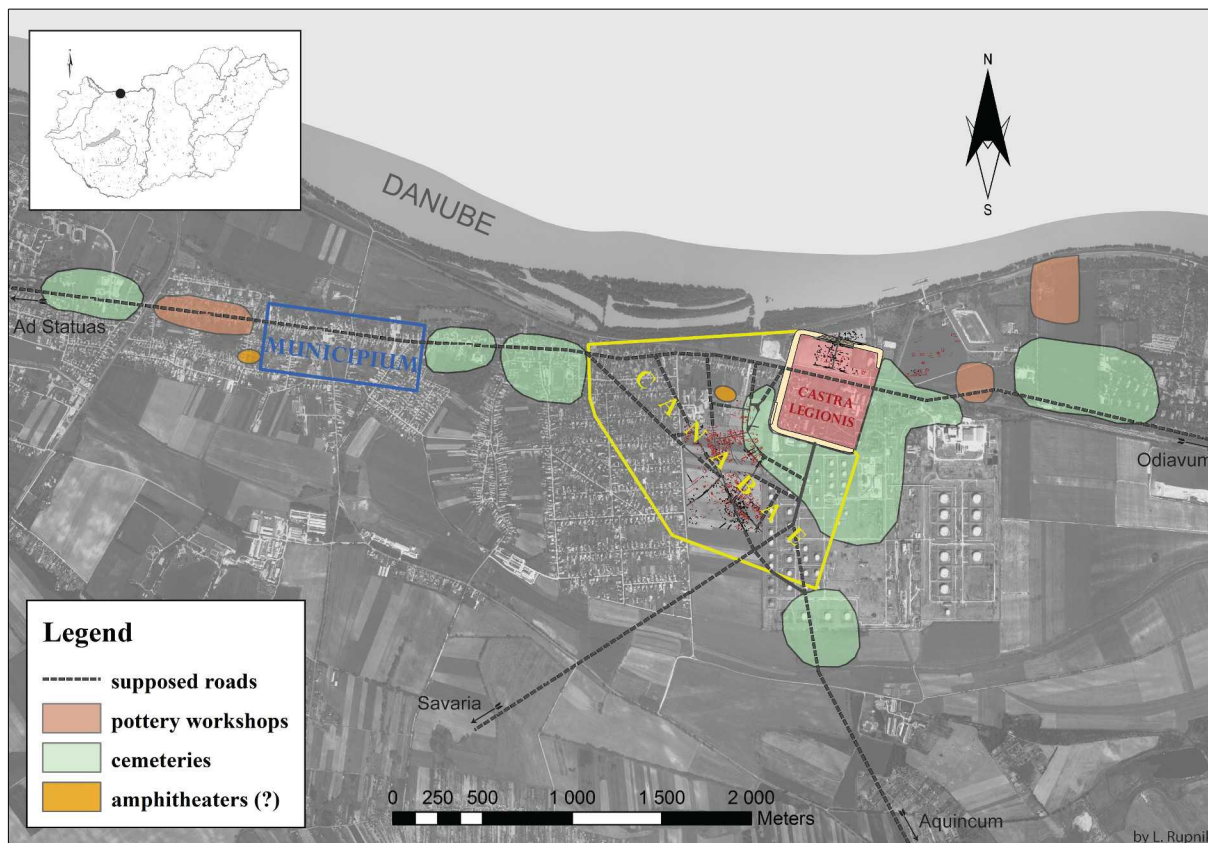


Fig. 1. The topography of Brigetio (Drawing: L. Rupnik).



Fig. 2. The excavated area at the site Szőny-Vásártér in 2014 (Photo: L. Borhy).



Fig. 3. The wooden ceiling in the cellar (Photo: D. Bartus).



Fig. 4. Blue pigment raw material in a pottery (Photo: D. Bartus).



Fig. 5. Bronze head of a Germanic warrior (Photo: D. Bartus).