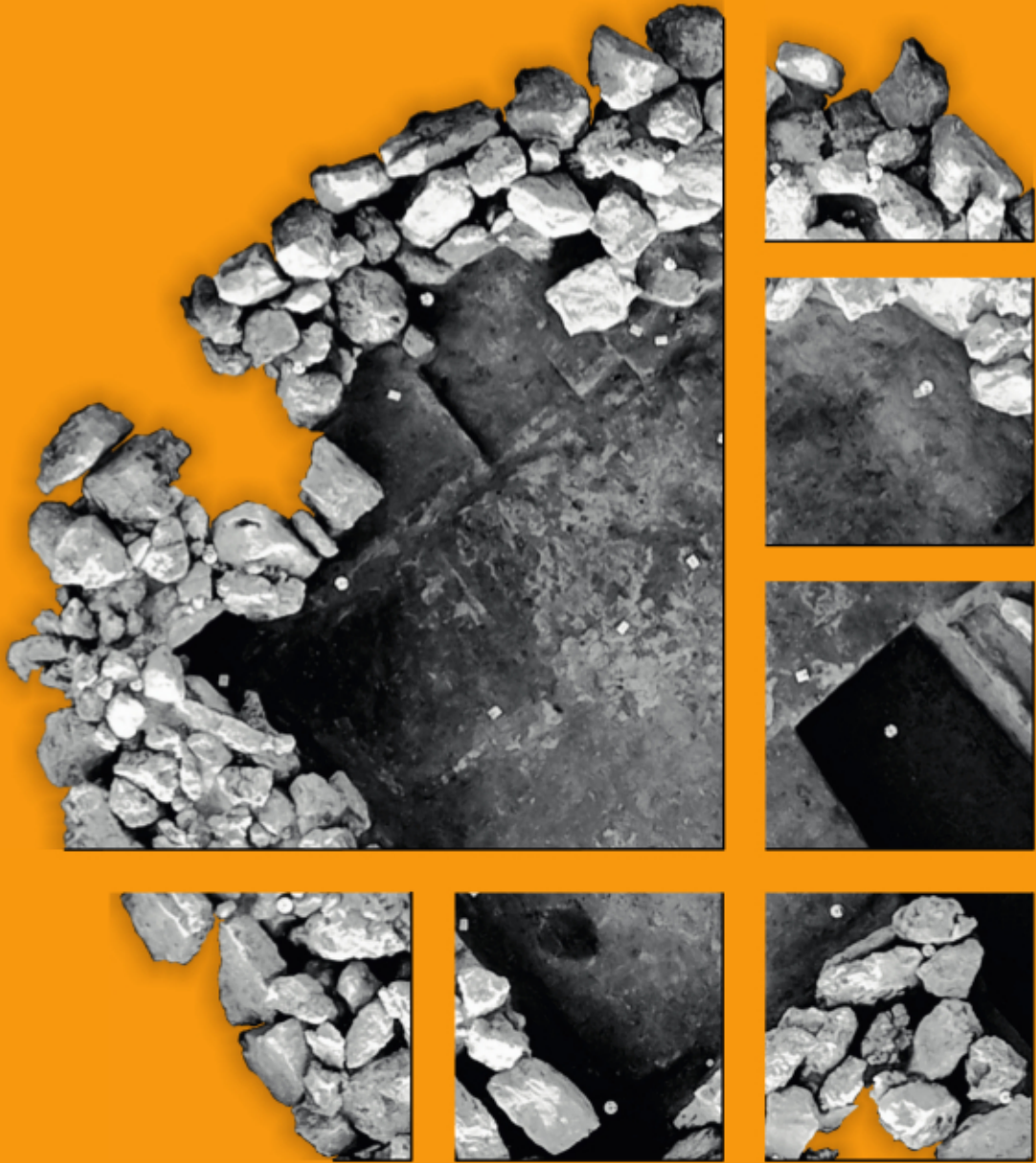


DISSERTATIONES ARCHAEOLOGICAE

ex Instituto Archaeologico Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae



Ser. 3. No. 4. | 2016

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Short report on the excavations in the Castle of Sátoraljaújhely in 2016

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Abstract

The planned archaeological research of the Castle of Újhely continued for six weeks in 2016. In this season we reopened two trenches to expand our knowledge about the buildings we have found last year. The main results were that we finished the excavation of the northern tower, which turned out to be triangular shape; as well as we cleared the original floor surface of the western building, which had two rooms. The third trench's purpose was to examine the northern courtyard's stratigraphy, and to get dating evidence.

In 2016, between the 8th of August and 16th of September, the archaeological research of the Castle of Újhely continued under the control of István Ringer, director of Kazinczy Ferenc Museum in Sátoraljaújhely. Just like the previous year, the students of Department of Hungarian Medieval and Early Modern Archaeology of Eötvös Loránd University¹ had the chance to participate in the work. The students were led by Dóra Hegyi and Zsófia Nádoi, archaeologists.

In the last season, north from the dry moat, on the so far undiscovered part of the Castle Hill's plateau, we have found the edge points of the encircling wall, so the aim of this year's research was to get forward with the exploring of the thus limited courtyard. Here we opened three trenches at the same time, which we will present in the same order. The first one was placed in the northern peak of the Castle Hill, where we supposed to find the other walls of the building so called 'tower'. The second was located through the northern courtyard in north-south direction. The third trench was opened along the western wall of the castle, to which another stone building's remains were connected (*Fig. 1*).

During the season of 2015 the tower's south wall with intact carved stone doorframe, and a small part of eastern wall, joining to the south in an acute-angle, were discovered. This year we could verify the ground plan of the tower: under the thick layers of ruins we found the hard-packed clay floor, surrounded by walls of 2 metres thick. As we suspected, the walls were closed in triangle-shape, which we could confirm, moreover it shows an isosceles triangle-shape

1 Participants were: Anna Anderko, Krisztián Balogh, Zsófia Básti, Luca Búr, Renáta Daróczi, Réka Dudás, Ágnes Font, Orsolya Gálvölgyi, Olivér Gillich, Viktória Harcz, Fruzsina Hege, Márk Kékesi, Virág Kristóf, Anna Kulcsár, Eszter Magyar, Zsófia Majer, Borbála Maros, Máté Mészáros, Veronika Németh, Maja Oszolik, Zsolt Papp, Orsolya Popovics, Rita Rakonczay, Csaba Sághegyi, Borbála Schliszka, Ákos Szabados, Renáta Szabó, Gergely Szoboszlai, and Kitty Soltészová (Constantine the Philosophher Univhersity, Nitra), Gellért Hegyi, Gábor Rácz. In addition, we would like to give special thanks to András Ignác for his hospitality, to László Homonna and Attila Ádám metal detectorists, and to Zsolt Csintalan, volunteer.

with the size of 5.6×7.1×7.1 meters. The triangle's tip points exactly to north direction, and its east and south walls were preserved in good condition, standing high under the ruins and soil, however, almost all of the western wall was badly eroded, slithered down on the hill's slip. We could determine the exact location of this wall, because the clay floor, which could be tracked all over the inner surface of the building, disappeared only in the line between the north and southwest tips of the triangle. It was harder to define the outer line of this wall, because we investigated it only in a short section, due to its bad condition. The surroundings and the inside of the tower were covered with big sized rocks, shreds of bricks, mortar and charcoal. Only over the floor level could we recognise another layer, which was very similar to the one on the top, but contained more clay and whole bricks. Also in this layer were the remains of burnt wooden structures: we could survey timbers and decks with spikes in good state, which could have belonged to the tower's contemporaneous upper slab. The thick layer of ruins in the tower, especially the lower part, consisted of rich material: several coins; one remarkable bronze ring, decorated with increased lily on it, dated from the 15th–16th century; but mostly pottery fragments from the 16th century. This period coincides the time of the castle's destruction known from written sources (*Fig. 2–5*).

Many of the season's important observation was taken in the trench we had opened in the axis of the previously discussed north tower. The sixth trench stretches in north-south direction across the northern courtyard. It was 1.5 meters wide and 27 meters long divided into two parts. Our aim was to define the context of the tower, its connection with other structures and the mortar covered rock surface of the courtyard.

As a result of the excavation of this surface we know the different periods, when the courtyards sloping floor was filled up on purpose or when the nearby buildings' destroyed parts covered the area. These layers had a different structure, contained much more mould comparing to the ones inside the tower, of which main component were the tower's own building materials. Just before the tower's entry, under the topsoil we found a thick layer of rocks and mortar consisting of huge carved stones. Under this, in a depth of 1.3 metres, we had found a dark grey, burned, firm layer. Maybe it was a floor, though it had been marked only in one part of the trench, and hadn't got any relation to the tower's entrance (*Fig. 6–7*).

In the middle of the northern part of the trench, only 0.5 meters under the modern surface we came across with a grave, which had no dating evidence: grave-goods such as jewellery and personal items buried, but according to its position was neither medieval, neither modern. The human remains laid in the direction of north-south, but the legs were disturbed by a south ditch, containing Second World War spent cartridge; also the head was moved out from its original position. From these circumstances we think that the body had been buried before the Second World War, and perhaps once it was found in the mid' 20th century (*Fig. 8*).

Considering the original surface of the courtyard excavated by the above mentioned trench the former users of the castle did not carve flat the rock's surface, but filled the gaps with mortar. In the southern part of this trench we uncovered the medieval floor level, which was exactly on the bedrock.

The excavation of the building connected to the western wall of the castle was the third excavation site in 2016 and was as significant as the other ones. In this year the main goal

was to clean the inside of the building with unknown function and find the southern wall of it. During the excavation of the building we found a relatively narrow, 50 cm thick, east-west lined partition wall which divides the lowest storey of the building to a smaller northern and a bigger southern room. On the eastern end of the wall opens a doorway, which was preserved in excellent condition. Based on the imprints and the narrow reveal a timber frame used to stand in the doorway. On both sides of the doorstone places of timber boards were observed (*Fig. 9–10*). Because there were no doorway or any traces of it on the outer walls of the building we assumed that the excavated lower storey was reached from upstairs. The excavation of the bigger, southern room proved that it was a multi-storied building because in the upper part of the layer of ruins were the smaller and larger pieces of the crashed room's floor upstairs. We also found here a large amount of mortared vaulting bricks and carved stone elements made of rhyolite: a large arched door frame element, a small bench and two stone elements matching in L shape. We interpreted them as a corner of a stove. Our definition was verified by the marks of burn and the imprints of brick on the surfaces of the stones and the large amount of simple, bowl-shaped stove tiles with a lot of matching pieces and fragments of other stove elements, which were found there too. These were definitely the ruins of a stove that stood in the upstairs room (*Fig. 11–12*).

Based on the observations we found a multi-storied, tower-like building with more than two meters thick walls, of which perhaps the first and second floor covered with brick vaults. On upstairs the floor were covered with so-called terrazzo and a stove that stood in the corner of the room. The lower storey was separated definitely and these two rooms due to their small size could have functioned as a storage. They were reached from the second floor, probably on an interior stairs. To the eastern wall of the above-described building on the courtyard joined a splayed, slightly curved wall. One part of this wall was teared down before to the bottom of the foundation trench. It is possible that a doorway stood here, of which stone frame had taken away (*Fig. 13–14*).

The excavation in 2016 gave a lot of new data and find to get to know better the castle of Újhely but still needs much more time to get the groundplan of the castle clear. We hope to have the opportunity to continue the excavation in the future (*Fig. 15*).

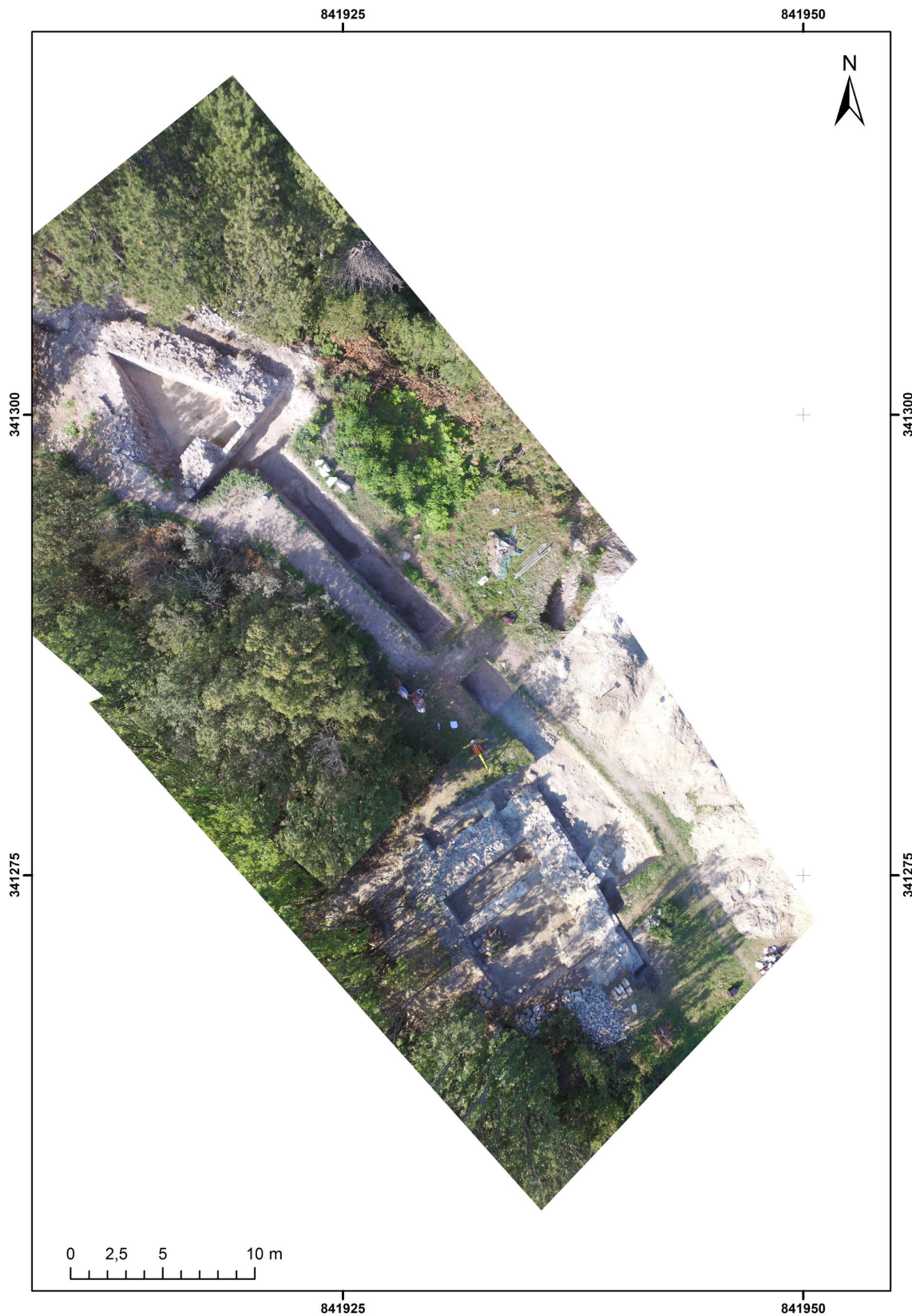


Fig. 1. The territory of the excavation in 2016 (Photo:Szabolcs Honti).



Fig. 2. The triangle-shaped, northern tower (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 3. The southern wall and the entrance of the tower (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 4. The cleaning of the tower and the demolished western wall of it.



Fig. 5. The exterior side of the eastern wall of the tower (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 6. Trench 6, opened on the northern courtyard of the castle, from the north (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 7. Trench 6 from the south
(Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 8. The grave on the courtyard of the castle
(Photo: Zsófia Nádai).



Fig. 9. The southern room of the building connected to the western wall of the castle (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 10. The doorway in the partition wall (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 11. The stone elements which were found during the excavation of the building (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 12. Two stone elements matching in L shape and interpreted as the corner of a stove (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 13. The eastern wall of the building connected to the western wall of the castle (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).



Fig. 14. The slightly curved wall joined the eastern wall of the building on the courtyard (Photo: Dóra Hegyi).

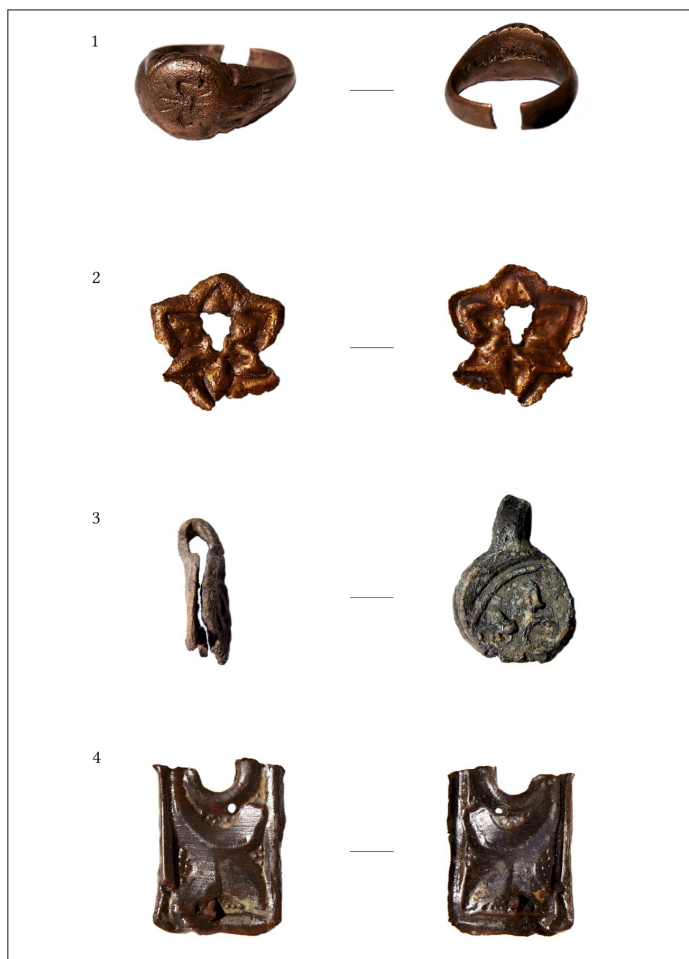


Fig. 15. Metal finds from the excavation - bronze seal-ring decorated with lily, star-shaped moulding, cloth seal, decorated moulding (Photo: Marcell Szoboszlai).