

# DISSERTATIONES ARCHAEOLOGICAE

ex Instituto Archaeologico

Universitatis de Rolando Eötvös nominatae



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## Twenty-five Years of Excavations in Brigetio at the Site Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér

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**Abstract:** Brigetio, along the Danube *limes*, was one of the four legionary bases of Pannonia and, thus, one of the most important settlements of the province. The excavations conducted by the Eötvös Loránd University and the Klapka György Museum of Komárom lasted 25 years (1992–2016) and yielded unparalleled information about the spatial structure and the temporal setting of the Roman *municipium*. Numerous high-standard domestic buildings with hypocaust heating systems and figurative wall paintings were brought to light by the excavations. Besides, traces of several workshops were discovered, including a metal workshop, a secondary glass workshop and a bakery. Based on the countless small finds collected during the excavations, the civil town seems to have existed from the turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD to after the mid-3rd century AD when the inhabitants abandoned the *municipium*. The heyday of the settlement can be dated to the first half of the 3rd century AD; most findings and building remains came from this period. This paper summarizes the results of each excavation season with drawings and references to the most important small finds.

**Keywords:** Pannonia, Brigetio, civil town, excavation, a quarter century

## Introduction

Excavations at the Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér site were initiated by the local government of the town of Komárom in the hope of finding Roman archaeological remains worthy of being presented in an archaeological park. Besides, a widespread belief also needed verification, namely, that the ruins of the *forum* of the Roman civil town of Brigetio lie under the present-day Vásártér.<sup>1</sup>

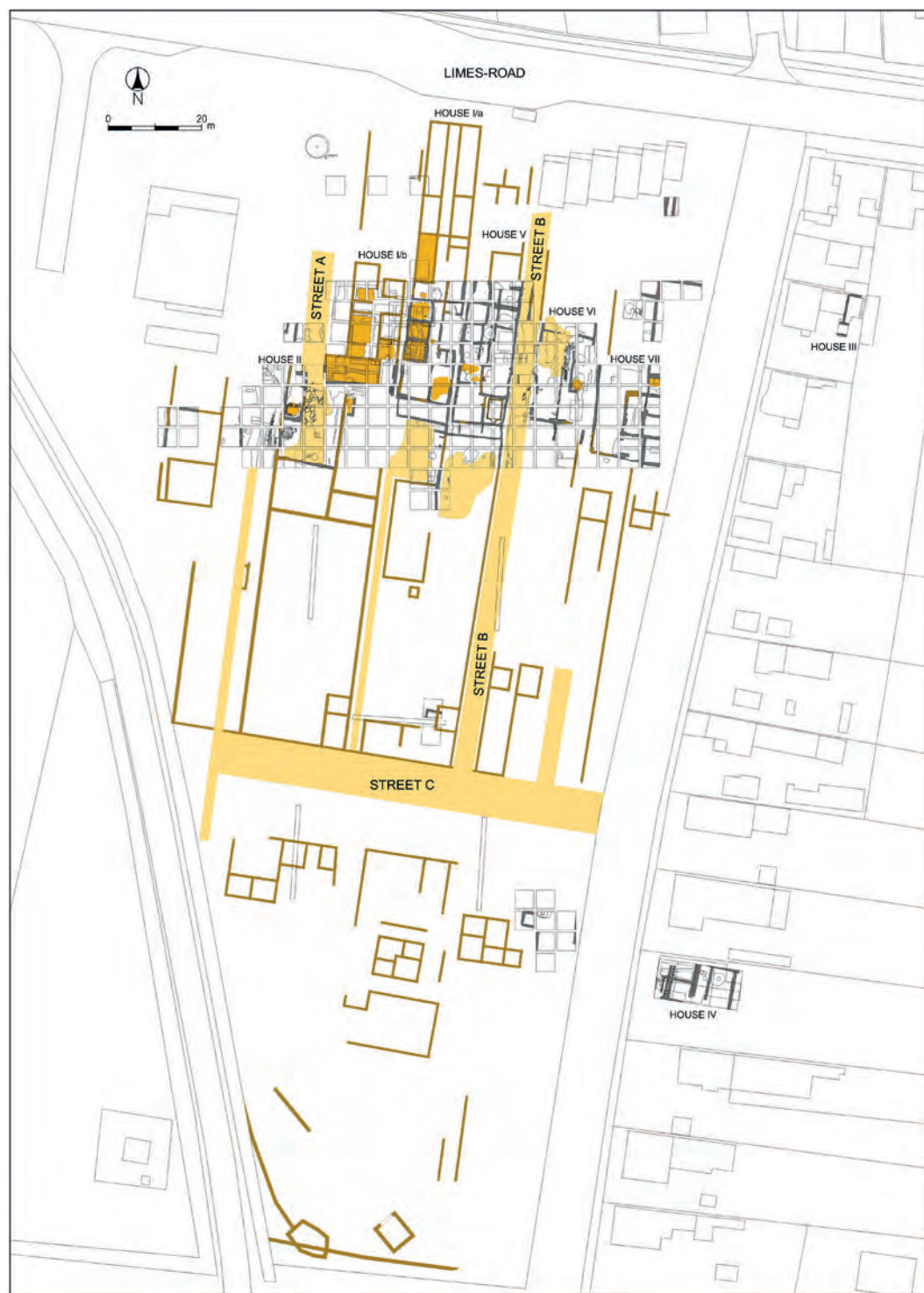


Fig. 1. Geophysical survey map of the Vásártér (drawing by L. Dobosi)

1 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 1994.



Fig. 2. Northern part of the Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér site (drawing by L. Dobosi)

### Research and results in 1992 (Figs 2–3)

The results of former fieldwalk sessions indicated that the northern part of the Vásártér was richer in archaeological remains than the southern one. Thus, fifteen 4.0 m square trenches were opened in the northern part of the Vásártér, while its central and southern zones were investigated with five 20×0.9 m trenches (see Fig. 1). Three of the long trenches were largely devoid of finds, but Trench 2 contained alternating layers of sand and clay, which were identified in 2009–2010 as the foundation layers of Street “B”. The walls found in Trench 3 were further investigated with two additional trenches. The fifteen square trenches in the northern part of the Vásártér turned out to be gold mines of information: the remains of the Roman residential buildings discovered there were lavishly decorated with figurative wall paintings (Fig. 4) and stuccos and supplied with hypocaust heating systems under the *terrazzo* floors. Although the Roman ruins discovered at the Vásártér were not the remains of the *forum* of the civil town, the information gained about life in the Roman *municipium* was well worth the cost of the excavations.

Two Roman residential buildings, Houses I/a and I/b, from the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, were partially unearthed in the western trenches. Both houses were built of mud bricks with stone foundations and had tile roofs made of *tegulae* and *imbrices*. Hypocaust heating channels were found beneath their *terrazzo* floors. Further *terrazzo* floors and a well (House VII on Fig. 3) were discovered in the eastern trenches.

The recovered find material included some noteworthy specimens; for example, an intact pottery jug with *graffiti*, an unscathed grey pot, an oil lamp with three wick holes and a leaf-shaped handle (Fig. 5) as well as three factory lamps (*Firmalampen*) (CRESCES/F).<sup>2</sup>

2 FÉNYES 2002, 85–86; BORHY 2004, 239–241.



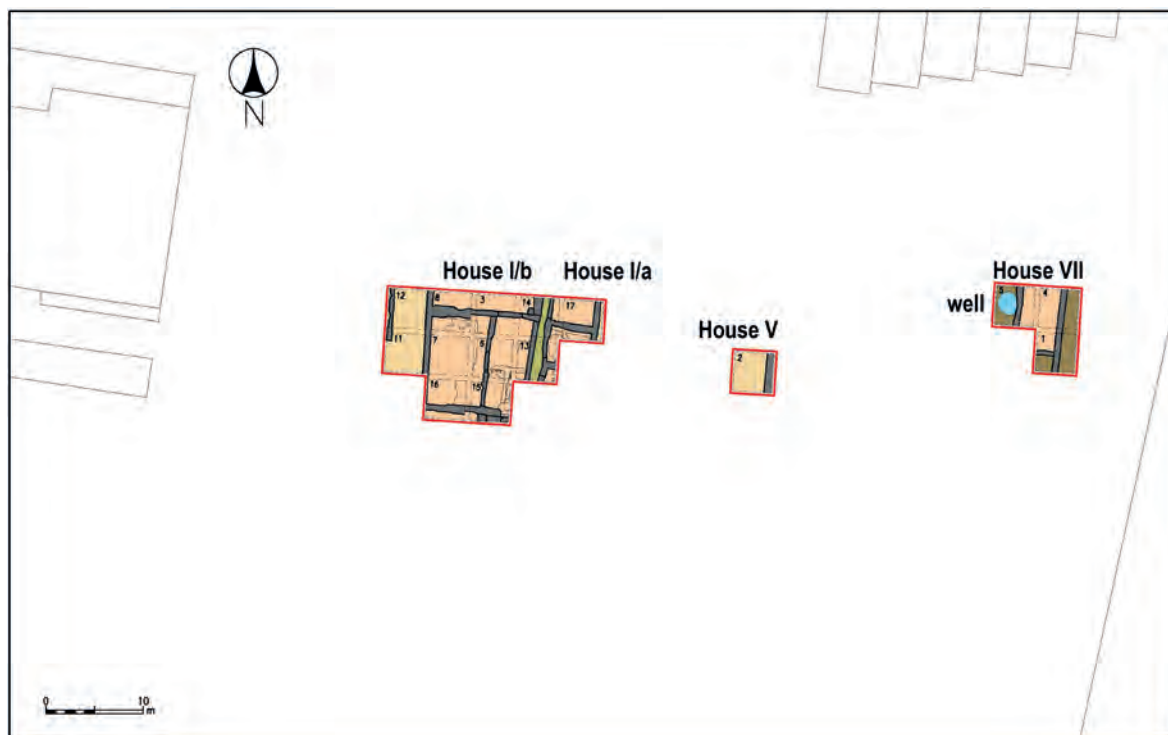


Fig. 3. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 1992 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 4. Wall painting fragments in Trench 13/1992 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 5. Pottery lamp from Trench 1/1992  
Komáromi Klapka György Museum,  
Inv. no. 92.11.163.1 (photo by L. Borhy)

## Research and results in 1993 (Fig. 2; Fig. 6)

Based on the experience gained in 1992, a new survey grid fitting the Hungarian projection system, EOVS, was projected over the area, with the grid points marked with pegs. Although the size of the square trenches remained 4×4 m, with 0.5-m-wide baulks between them, their orientation became slightly different. Altogether fourteen new square trenches were opened in 1993; eleven around those excavated in 1992 and three more 20 metres away to the north.<sup>3</sup> In the northern trenches, the present-day walking surface turned out to be below the Roman Period street level, resulting in a lack of finds. Consequently, work concentrated on other parts of the Vásártér.

The most important find of the year was a massive layer consisting of wall painting fragments in square E13, found in the last days of the excavation. It was reburied until next year when a group of professional conservators could remove the fragments.

The highly distorted *terrazzo* floor in square B15 (Figs 7–8) was another interesting find of the season. The oval depression in the floor had a diameter of roughly 3 m and a depth of ca. 0.5 m. The floor was cut through with a probing trench, discovering the wooden boards of a rectangular well underneath. Luckily, the layers of the *terrazzo* floor incorporated several *terra sigillata* sherds, which allowed it to be dated to the second quarter of the 3rd century AD.<sup>4</sup>

The foundation layers of Street “A” and a single stone slab of the street’s original limestone pavement were unearthed in square -A13. However, in squares A11–E11, modern interventions disturbed archaeological phenomena to such an extent that their interpretation was nearly impossible.



Fig. 6. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 1993 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

3 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 1996.

4 DOBOSI 2014, 16; DOBOSI 2022, 152.





Fig. 7. The distorted *terrazzo* floor in square B15 with wall painting fragments (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 8. The distorted *terrazzo* floor in square B15 with the well under the *terrazzo* floor (photo by L. Borhy)



## Research and results in 1994 (Fig. 2; Fig. 9)

The 1994 campaign was spent opening additional square trenches around the ones excavated in 1992–1993 and continuing the work in three more that had been opened in a previous year.<sup>5</sup>

István Bóna jr. and students from the Department of Restoration and Conservation of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts removed the wall painting fragments from square E13 (Fig. 10) and started their on-site conservation. The findings were very promising from the beginning; the fragments featured a nude female figure with a horse in a *medaillon*, at least three panthers, floral motifs, curtains, etc. (Fig. 11). The wall painting originally decorated the barrel vault of a room with hypocaust heating: the *terrazzo* floor of the room and the diagonal channel of the hypocaust system were discovered under the painted plaster debris.<sup>6</sup>

An L-shaped hypocaust channel<sup>7</sup> with *suspensura pilae* was discovered in square A15 (Fig. 12). The *terrazzo* floor under the hypocaust heating system was highly distorted, similarly to the *terrazzo* floor in square B15, raising the possibility that the damage was induced by an earthquake.<sup>8</sup>

Squares A16–D16 covered the southern end of the house and the foundation layers of Street “A” (A16), while squares B16–D16 included the gravelly surface of the backyard.



Fig. 9. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 1994 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

5 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 1997a, 41–42.

6 The wall paintings were restored by István Bóna jr., Eszter Harsányi, and Zsófia Kurovszky. Some of the most important papers about the painting with further literature: BORHY 1996; BORHY 2001a; HARSÁNYI – KUROVSZKY 2002a; BORHY 2007a; BORHY et al. 2010, 29–51. For the reconstruction of the structure of the barrel vault, see DOBOSI 2021, 320.

7 The heating channel was originally T-shaped with parts in square A14 (excavated in 1993).

8 For more on the damages at Vásártér caused by a possible Late Roman earthquake in Brigetio see DOBOSI – KÁZMÉR 2022.



Fig. 10. Wall painting fragments in square E13 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 11. Central scene of the ceiling with a personified representation of *Andromeda* and *Pegasus* (photo by Cs. Török)



Fig. 12. Hypocaust heating system in square A15 from the west (photo by L. Borhy)

The most interesting finds of the season were an onyx gem with the depiction of *Mars Ultor*<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 13) and 224 glass beads of various shapes and colours and pierced red corals (Fig. 14) found in square D16. The glass beads lay scattered on top of a rammed clay layer (floor?) in the corner of a room, which might indicate that they have been part of a necklace that was torn apart and lost.<sup>10</sup>

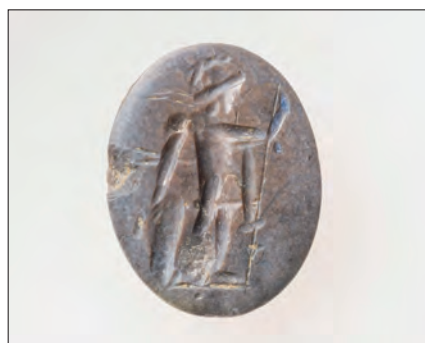


Fig. 13. Onyx gem with the depiction of *Mars Ultor*. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 994.D15.315.3 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 14. A necklace of 224 glass beads. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 994.D16.252.1-213 (photo by L. Borhy)

9 BORHY 1999, 211–212; BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2003, 28.

10 MIKLÓSITY-SZŐKE 1997.

## Research and results in 1995 (Fig. 2; Fig. 15)

The seven square trenches opened in 1995 enhanced our knowledge of the most elaborate building parts uncovered to that date. Besides, Sándor Pusztai, with a contribution by Zoltán Czajlik, carried out a magnetic survey of the whole area of the Vásártér.<sup>11</sup> The survey revealed archaeological remains under most of the Vásártér and delineated two streets of the town's orthogonal street grid; these became known as Streets "B" and "C". Square trenches E14–F13–F14 (Fig. 16) were opened to investigate the wider area of square E13 where the vault paintings had been found. Further wall painting fragments, including one displaying a *Bacchus* figure, and another pillared hypocaust heating system were uncovered in square E14.

Squares A15 and B15 (Fig. 17) were excavated simultaneously, which allowed us to identify the underfloor heating system discovered in both—a channel hypocaust in B15 and a pillared hypocaust in A15—as parts of the same system that heated a large reception room, of 11×4.75 m, decorated with colourful wall paintings.<sup>12</sup> The plank-framed well under the distorted *terrazzo* floor in square B15 was also further investigated, including the removal and on-site conservation of one of its planks. West of these features, the layers of Street "A" came to light in squares -A15 and -A16 (Fig. 17). Most of the original slabs of the limestone pavement of Street "A" were still *in situ* in square -A16, covered by the up-facing fragments of a white and red wall painting of another house. The pieces of this wall painting were also removed with the help of István Bóna jr.<sup>13</sup>

The most exciting find of the season was a 10 mm long and 1 mm thick engraved glass gem featuring the bust of a lady with a profile to the left and a hairdo similar to *Faustina Minor* (Fig. 18).<sup>14</sup>



Fig. 15. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 1995 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

11 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 1997b.

12 The wall paintings were evaluated by Myrtil Magyar (BORHY et al. 2010, 52–68).

13 The wall paintings were collected, cleaned, and refitted by István Bóna jr., Eszter Harsányi, and Zsófia Kurovszky. For more details about the wall paintings, see HARSÁNYI – KUROVSZKY 2021.

14 BORHY 1997; BORHY 1999, 212–213; BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2003, 38–39.





Fig. 16. Squares F13, F14, and E14 from the west, with remains of a pillared hypocaust in E14 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 17. Squares B15, A15, -A15 and -A16 from the west, with the hypocaust in squares A15–B15, the distorted *terrazzo* floor in B15, and the limestone slabs of Street "A" in -A16 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 18. Engraved glass gem with the portrait of a lady with a profile to the left, *Faustina Minor*. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 995.F14.089.1 (photo by L. Borhy)

## Research and results in 1996 (Fig. 2; Fig. 19)

The work in 1996 focused on finding all fragments of the wall and vault paintings in squares E12–E13–E14 (Fig. 20). The three squares roughly covered three rooms (Rooms I/3, I/1, and I/2, respectively) of a house, all with *terrazzo* floors and painted walls. The wall paintings fell off the ceilings and walls of the rooms and became covered with mud brick debris when the house collapsed. This massive layer of mud protected the wall paintings for seventeen hundred years until their discovery.

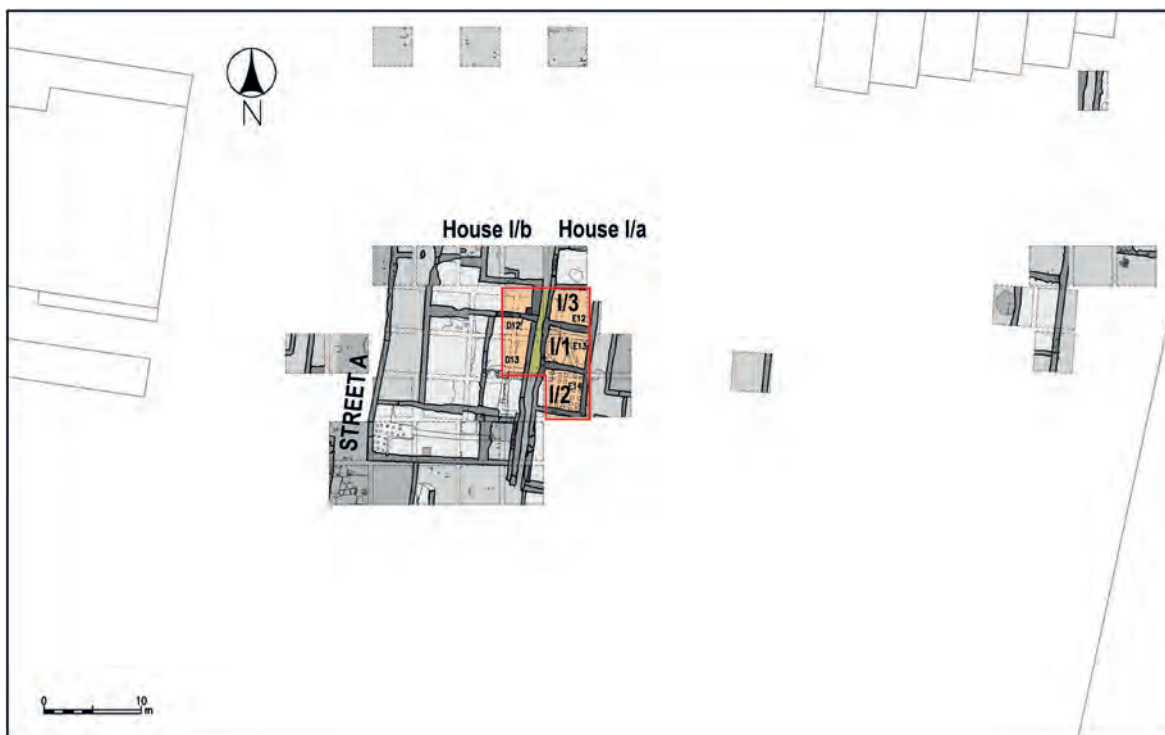


Fig. 19. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 1996 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 20. Squares E14, E13, and E12 from the east. The wall paintings of the barrel vault were found in square E13 (in the middle) (photo by L. Borhy)



Room I/1 in square E13 was the most elaborate of the three; not only its walls but also the barrel-vaulted ceiling was decorated with figurative wall paintings. The room was heated with a channel hypocaust. Room I/2 in square E14 had a pillar hypocaust with stone pillars under the whole floor (Fig. 21). Room I/3 also had a *terrazzo* floor but was unheated and only had simple red and white wall decoration.



Fig. 21. The pillared hypocaust in square E14 (photo by L. Borhy)

## Research and results in 1997

No fieldwork was carried out this year.

## Research and results in 1998 (Fig. 2; Fig. 22)

The goal of the 1998 season was to investigate the area west of Street “A” and to uncover more of its original limestone pavement. The building on the west side of Street “A” turned out to be a bakery (Fig. 23). Almost the whole of square -B17 was occupied by the remains of a huge baking oven (Fig. 24), while the fragments of a mortar stone and a pottery cake mould<sup>15</sup> were found in square -B16. The room north of the baking oven had a rammed earth floor with pottery sherds scattered all over its surface.

*Terra sigillata* sherds from the wall construction of the building and the oven floor dated the bakery to the second quarter of the 3rd century AD.<sup>16</sup>

Four square trenches (-G17, -G18, -H17, -H18) were opened further to the west, yielding huge amounts of potsherds and animal bones (mostly cattle and pig) in burnt destruction layers.

15 BORHY 2001b; DELBÓ 2015, 99.

16 FÉNYES 1999; DOBOSI 2022, 159–162.



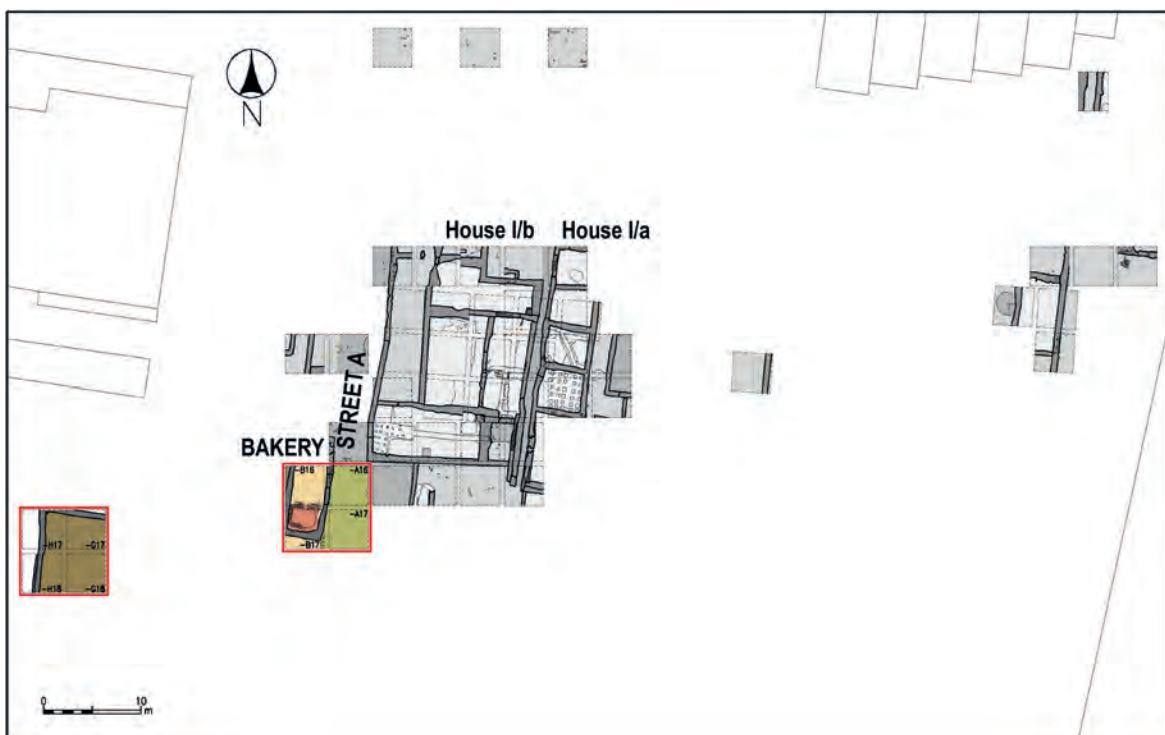


Fig. 22. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 1998 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 23. Squares -A16 and -A17 with the limestone slabs of Street "A" and squares -B16 and -B17 with the bakery from the south (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 24. Oven 1 of the bakery from the north (photo by L. Borhy)

### Research and results in 1999 (Figs 1–2; Fig. 25)

We continued exploring the area of the bakery (Fig. 26).<sup>17</sup> Only a few centimetres below the grass, another large baking oven was discovered south of the baking oven found in the previous year. In front of the bakery, Street “A” continued to the south; however, the stone slabs of its pavement only remained *in situ* in squares -A16 and -A17, while only its foundation, consisting of alternating sand and clay layers, could be recorded elsewhere. The area behind the bakery was probably part of a house’s backyard; it included an 8 m-long section of a north-south directed drainage channel lined with stones and *tegulae* fragments.<sup>18</sup>

A development-led excavation project also began at no. 2 Vásártér this year.<sup>19</sup> Vast amounts of large wall painting fragments were discovered under the foundations of a modern house there, and again, conservators were called to collect them. The wall painting fragments, featuring colourful human figures, lay in several layers with their painted side up. The fragments were meticulously removed, cleaned, and refitted by Eszter Harsányi and Zsófia Kurovszky (Fig. 27).<sup>20</sup>

17 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 1999.

18 DOBOSI 2014, 22–24.

19 SZÁMADÓ 2002.

20 HARSÁNYI – KUROVSZKY 2002b; HARSÁNYI et al. 2007; BORHY 2007b; BORHY et al. 2010, 83–117.



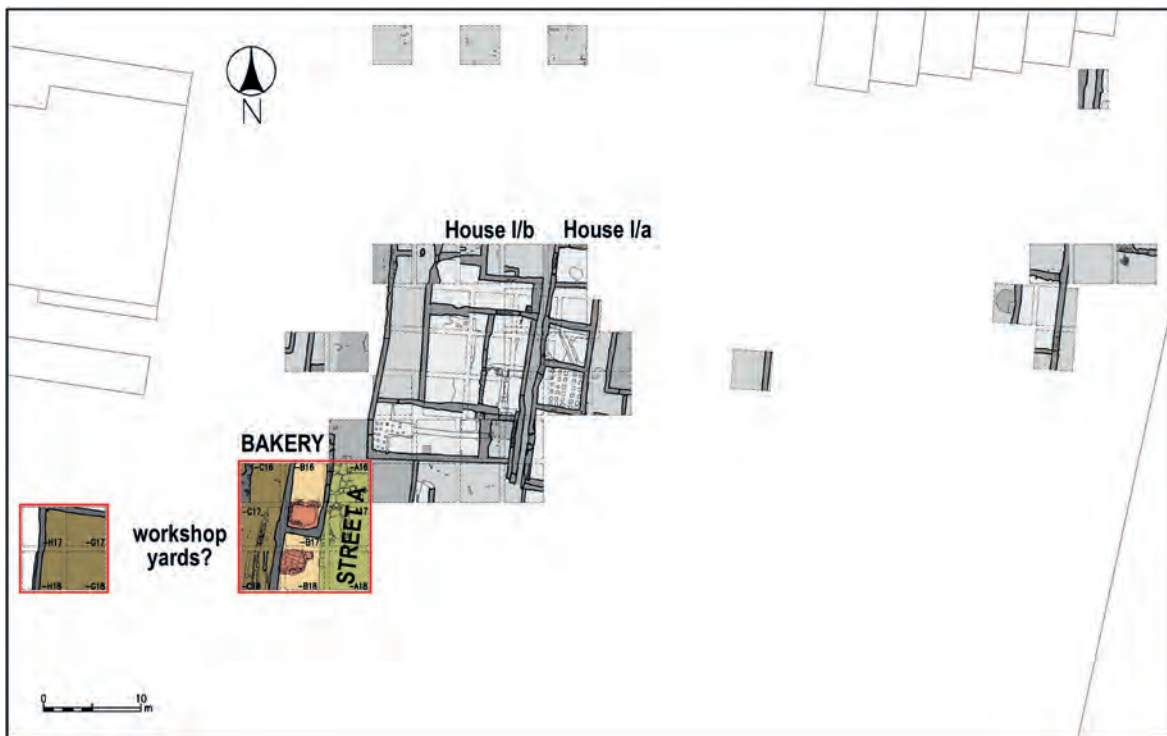


Fig. 25. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 1999 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 26. Aerial photo of the bakery with the two baking ovens, Street "A", and the drainage channel behind the bakery from the west (photo by L. Borhy)

## Research and results in 2000

(Figs 1–2; Fig. 28)

Work continued in three main locations in 2000.<sup>21</sup> Countless carved bone hairpins and large amounts of animal bones were recovered from the area behind the bakery, while the findings in squares -D17, -D18, -C18, and -B18 included a gemstone with a bust of *Apollo* from the time of the Antonine dynasty (Fig. 29),<sup>22</sup> a pottery oil lamp with OCTAVI stamp,<sup>23</sup> and a knee brooch with an intact pin and catchplate.<sup>24</sup>

New square trenches, G13 and G14, were opened in the area of the wall paintings.<sup>25</sup> G14 included the stone foundation of a 3rd-century AD wall and a circular cistern with rich find material, while G13 comprised a waste pit. Both features were examined thoroughly in 2001 (see below). Work at no. 2 Vásártér also continued, yielding additional fragments of the wall paintings discovered in the previous year (Fig. 30).<sup>26</sup>



Fig. 27. Fragments of wall paintings from under no. 2 Vásártér (photo by L. Borhy)

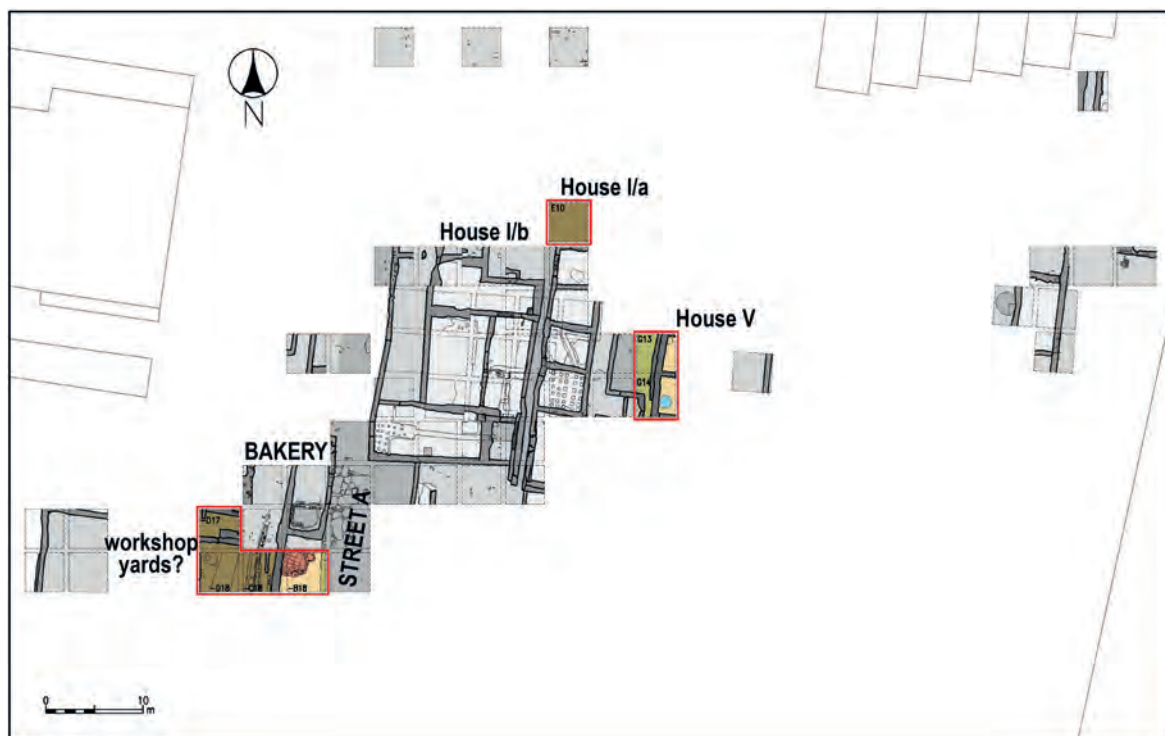


Fig. 28. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2000 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

21 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2001.

22 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2003, 34–35.

23 FÉNYES 2002, 86.

24 SEY 2006, 59, 115, Kat. 32.

25 DOBOSI 2014, 18–19.

26 SZÁMADÓ 2003.





Fig. 29. Gemstone depicting the bust of *Apollo*. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2000. C18.031.1 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 30. Cleaned wall paintings at no. 2 Vásártér before removal (photo by E. Számadó)

### Research and results in 2001 (Figs 1–2; Fig. 31)

Besides resuming work in the area of the bakery (Fig. 32; squares -B18, -C18, and -D18) and the cistern (Fig. 33; squares G13, G14), three new squares were opened south of House I/b. The gravel surface of the backyard continued in squares B17 and C17, and the southern end of House I/a was found in square D17.

The lowermost, early Roman layers were reached in squares -C18 and -D18 behind the bakery. These layers included postholes and the impressions of ground beams indicating that earth-fast post constructions and timber-framed structures once stood there in the early 2nd century AD.<sup>27</sup>

The cistern in square G14 had a diameter of 1.3 m (Fig. 34). It contained potsherds (Fig. 35), glass vessels (Fig. 36), coins, an intact iron helmet (Fig. 37),<sup>28</sup> and a *nicolo* gem (Fig. 38).<sup>29</sup> The latest of the fifteen coins could be dated to the rule of emperors Aurelianus (AD 270–275) and Probus (AD 276–282). Some wooden staves, bearing the imprint of an iron hoop, were removed from the wall of the cistern.

The three-year-long development-led excavation at no. 2 Vásártér ended with the 2001 season.<sup>30</sup> The small-scale but intensive research focused on an area of little more than 20 m<sup>2</sup> that comprised the remains of a residential building. The walls were built of mud bricks on stone foundations, and the doors had wooden thresholds; the excavated room was lavishly decorated with figurative wall paintings (Fig. 39).<sup>31</sup> The paintings on the room's western wall covered an approximately 5.5 m long and 3.7 m high surface. Another interesting object was found under the wall paintings in the roof debris: a *tegula* with VIVAS / QM graffiti on its surface.<sup>32</sup>

27 DOBOSI 2014, 23; DOBOSI – BORHY 2015, 186; DOBOSI 2022, 314.

28 BORHY 2005a, 78–80.

29 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2003, 45. Another *nicolo* gem in a gilded bronze ring was found in a waste pit in square G13 (BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2003, 46).

30 SZÁMADÓ – BORHY 2001; SZÁMADÓ – BORHY 2003.

31 BORHY et al. 2010, 83–117; BORHY 2007b.

32 BORHY 2005b.

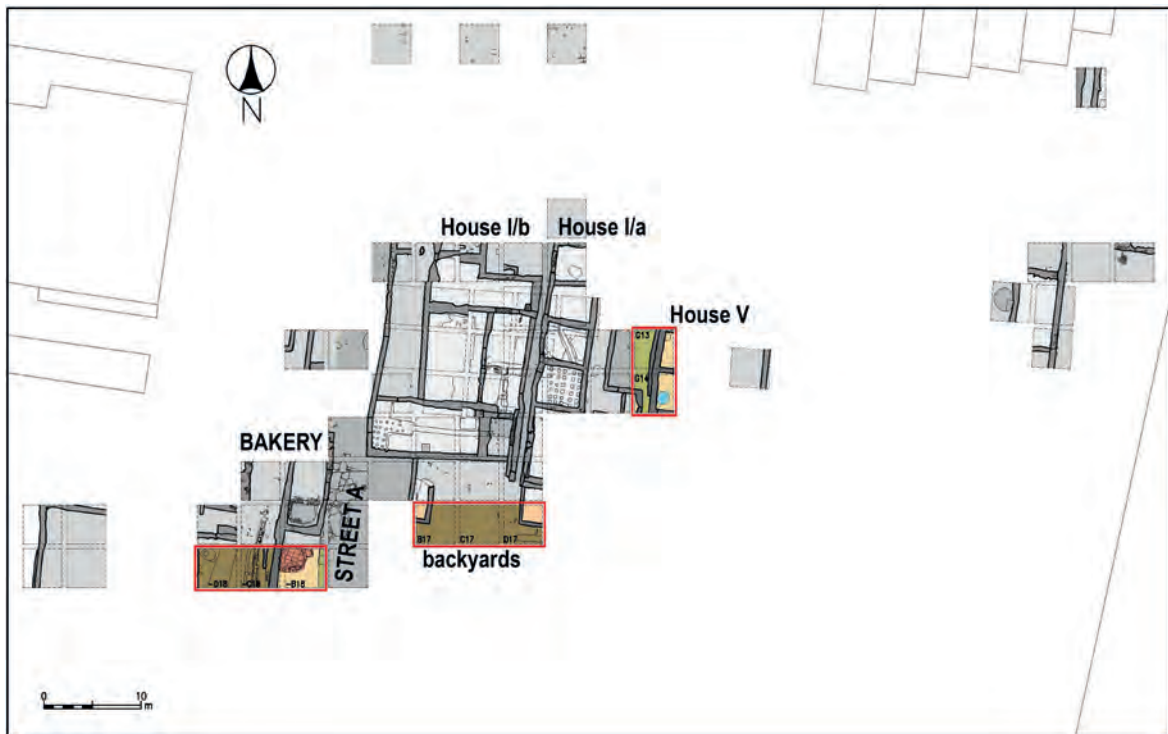


Fig. 31. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szöny-Vásártér, season 2001 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 32. Squares -B18, -C18, and -D18 from the south with the southern baking oven of the bakery, the drainage channel behind the bakery, and the early postholes and ground beam impressions (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 33. Squares G13 (right) and G14 (left) from the east (photo by L. Borhy)





Fig. 34. The cistern in square G14 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 35. Trier-style black-slipped cup. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2001.G14.084.100 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 36. Facet-cut colourless hemispherical glass cup. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2001.G14.084.110 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 37. Iron helmet from the cistern. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2001.G14.084.1 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 38. Gemstone with a left-profile bust of *Sol/Helios*. It was encased in a lump of clay that preserved its impression. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2001.G14.033.1-2 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 39. Wall painting depicting a male figure with a silver plate in his left hand and tasting the food with his right. The dish can be interpreted as grilled spring onion (*porrus capitatus*) (photo by L. Borhy)

## Research and results in 2002 (Fig. 2; Fig. 40)

During the 2002 season, work continued in eight new square trenches, four in the westernmost and another four in the easternmost zone of the excavation area.<sup>33</sup>

The western squares yielded abundant quantities of animal bones, needles, and hairpins, often with signs of carving and repair, indicating a bone carving workshop where bone objects were produced and/or repaired.<sup>34</sup>



Fig. 40. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2002 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 41. Square H14 (photo by L. Borhy)

33 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2004a.

34 For more about the presumed bone workshop at the Vásártér and the localisation of other bone workshops in Brigetio, see BARTUS 2001, 28–71; BARTUS 2003; SEY 2018.



The eastern squares covered parts of House V, a building with mud brick walls and rammed earth floors but no decoration worth mentioning (Fig. 41). Besides, the soil stain of a large circular well outlined in square H13. The most captivating finds of the season included an enamelled brooch decorated with tiny glass beads,<sup>35</sup> a small, hand-formed pottery vessel imitating a walnut shell and a ceramic vine leaf with light blue paint marks (possibly a clay stamp).

### Research and results in 2003 (Fig. 2; Fig. 42)

This season, work continued mainly in the area of House V (Figs 43–44) and House I/a (Fig. 45) in the eastern zone of the excavation area.<sup>36</sup>

A mud brick wall with the lowermost row of bricks still *in situ* was unearthed in squares H12, H13, H14, and H15, containing the remains of House V. The size of the sun-dried bricks was 300×450 mm (thickness unknown); the wall featured two plaster layers at points. The plaster at the wall's foot was nicely smoothed on the surface of the earth floor.

Square E15, with the remains of House I/a, contained a thick roof debris layer: *tegulae*, *imbrices*, and lumps of mortar. A room with a *terrazzo* floor started unfolding in the neighbouring square, F15. Squares F12 and G12 included the eastern boundary wall of House I/a and the western boundary wall of House V, along with a narrow alley between them.

Two of the most interesting finds, both from square H12, were a 200 mm-long intact *cochlear*<sup>37</sup> and a lead votive figurine, possibly depicting *Hercules* or *Mercurius*.



Fig. 42. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2003 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

35 SEY 2006, 59, 115, Kat. 30.

36 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2004b.

37 SEY 2006, 54–55, 111, Kat. 11. Unfortunately, by the time N. Sey could catalogue the artefact, only the head persisted.



Fig. 43. Squares H13, H14, and H15 from the west (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 44. The well in square H13 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 45. Squares F12 (left) and G12 (right) from the south (photo by L. Borhy)



## Research and results in 2004 (Fig. 2; Fig. 46)

Research in 2004 partly continued in the same area as the previous year. Most importantly, we started the excavation of the circular well in squares H13 and I13 (Figs 47–48).<sup>38</sup>

The well, with an external diameter of about 2.60 m, was probably dug around the mid-3rd century AD because the latest finds from its wall construction could be dated to the 250–270s. It seems to have been used only for a short period as it must have been filled soon afterwards, during, or after the AD 280s. That the well cut through the clayey destruction layers of the mud brick walls of House V suggests that this part of the house no longer existed in the mid-3rd century AD.<sup>39</sup> High groundwater levels and the lack of scaffolding prevented us from reaching the well's bottom this year.



Fig. 46. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2004 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 47. Squares F12 (right) and G12 (left) from the north (photo by L. Borhy)

38 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2005.

39 More details about the well in DOBOSI 2014, 19–20; BENES 2017.



Fig. 48. Squares F12, G12, H12, and H13–I13, with the well, from the east. Squares F12 (left) and G12 (right) from the south (photo by L. Borhy)

Three rooms with *terrazzo* floors were unearthed in Houses I/a (squares E16 and F16) and V (squares G16 and H16) in the southern zone of the excavation area. An enamelled star-shaped plate brooch from square I13<sup>40</sup> (Fig. 49) was one of the most significant finds of the year.



Fig. 49. Star-shaped enamelled plate brooch. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2004. I13.119.6 (photo by D. Bartus)



Fig. 50. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2005 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

40 SEY 2015, 228, Fig. 5,2.



## Research and results in 2005 (Fig. 2; Fig. 50)

The goal of the excavations in 2005 was to find the southern and northern ends of Houses I/a and V and to reach the deeper parts of the well in squares H13–I13 (Fig. 51).<sup>41</sup> While the research in the squares opened on the northern side of the buildings turned out to be mostly fruitless due to modern disturbance, it revealed that both houses definitely spread further north, and we managed to find their rear ends in the south.

The southernmost room of House I/a was long, reaching across the whole width of the house. It had a rammed earth floor and opened into the backyard. The imprint of the 1.3 m-long stone threshold was visible in the mortar on top of the foundation wall (Fig. 52). A similar backyard with a gravel surface was found south of the rear wall of House V.



Fig. 51. The well in squares H13–I13 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 52. The imprint of a stone threshold in square E17 (photo by L. Borhy)

41 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2006.

## Research and results in 2006 (Figs 1–2; Fig. 53)

The square trenches of 2006 were set out in an L-pattern around the southern ends of Houses I/a and V; they provided interesting results (Fig. 54).<sup>42</sup>

The backyards of Houses I/a and V continued to the south and were separated by a stone wall. We also reached the eastern boundary wall of House V and discovered a north-south road that was named Street “B”. The distance between Streets “A” and “B” was about 35–40 m, equal to the width of *Insula 1*. The northern and southern boundaries of the *insula* have yet remained to be discovered.<sup>43</sup>

This year, planned research became complemented again by two development-led excavations under nos. 1/a and 13 Vásártér.<sup>44</sup> At no. 13, parts of another Roman residential building were found with several construction phases from between the early 2nd and late 3rd centuries AD. Its *terrazzo*-floored rooms were heated with a hypocaust heating system (Fig. 55) and decorated with figurative wall paintings (Fig. 56). At one point in its lifetime, a secondary glass workshop operated in the backyard of the house, where a well and two furnaces (Fig. 57) were found along with workshop residue including glass raw material (Fig. 58), colouring agents, and faulty pieces.<sup>45</sup>

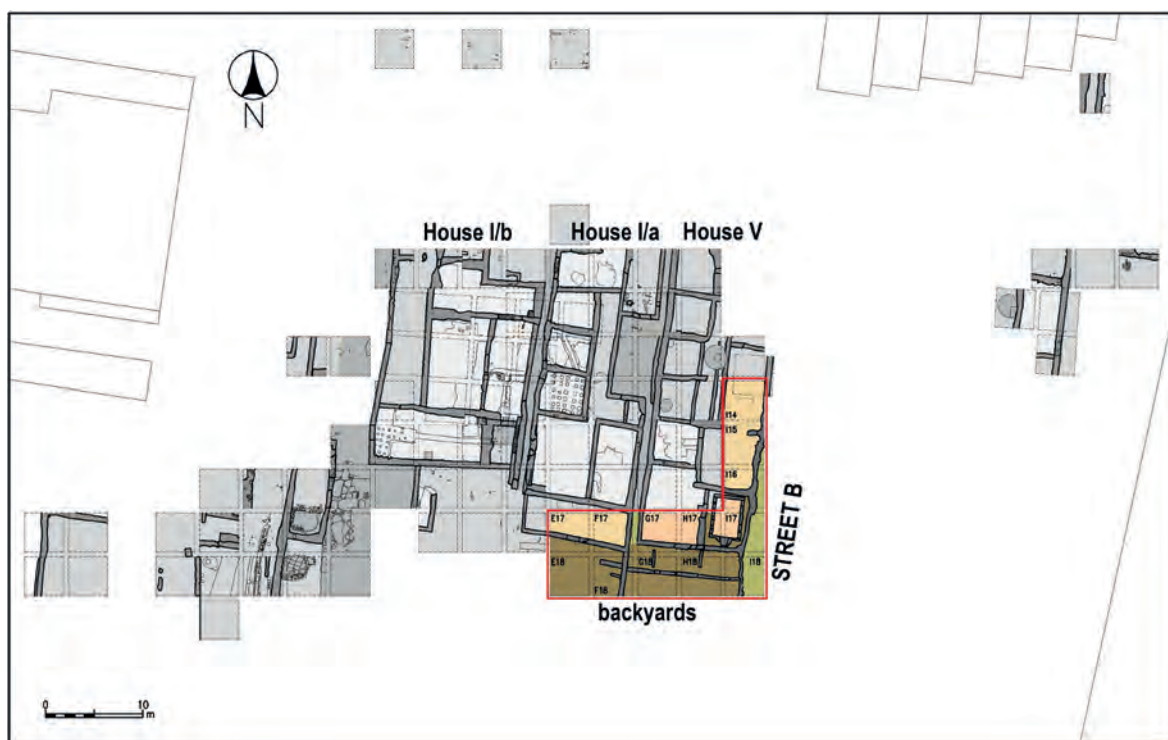


Fig. 53. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2006 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

<sup>42</sup> BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2007.

<sup>43</sup> For the possible size and boundaries of the *insula*, see DOBOSI 2022, 145–149.

<sup>44</sup> SZÁMADÓ 2007.

<sup>45</sup> More about the house under no. 13 Vásártér and the secondary glass workshop in DÉVAI – GELENCSEY 2012a; DÉVAI – GELENCSEY 2012b; DÉVAI 2015a; DÉVAI 2015b; DÉVAI 2021, 56–61.





Fig. 54. The backyards of House V and House I/a from the north with the walls of Cellar 1 (excavated in 2009) on the left (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 55. The hypocaust heating system at no. 13 Vásártér (photo by Á. Gelencsér)



Fig. 56. Wall painting from no. 13 Vásártér depicting a woman with a *nimbus*, a personification of a season (?) (photo by Zs. Kurovsky)





Fig. 57. Glass furnaces of the secondary glass workshop at no. 13 Vásártér (photo by Á. Gelencsér)



Fig. 58. Chunks of raw glass from the secondary glass workshop at no. 13 Vásártér (photo by K. Dévai)

### Research and results in 2007 (Figs 1–2; Fig. 59)

In 2007, work continued in four square trench clusters: in the north-eastern part of House V, in the southern backyards of House I/b, in the well in squares H13–I13, and near no. 13. in the southern part of the Vásártér.<sup>46</sup>

The excavation of the well was completed using scaffolding (Fig. 60). The feature proved to be about 4.0 m deep; we could observe the remains of a wooden barrel lining at its bottom. The most significant find from the well was a large Fellhelm-type iron helmet fragment (Fig. 61).<sup>47</sup>

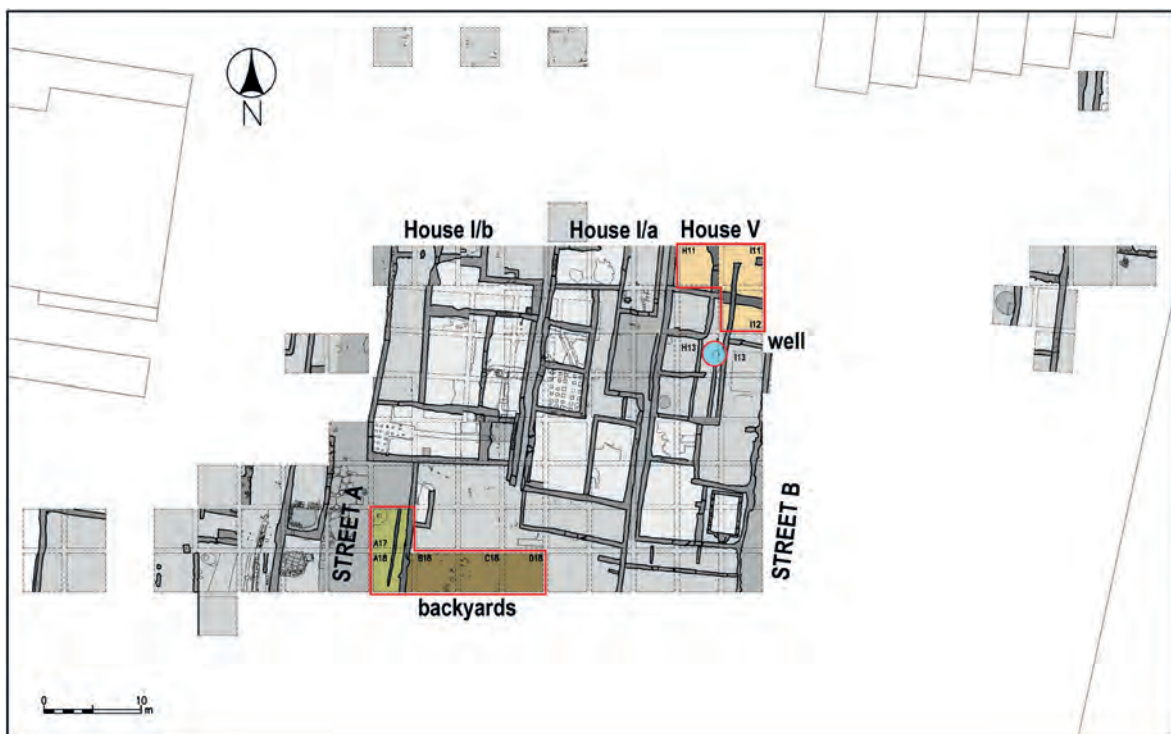


Fig. 59. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2007 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

<sup>46</sup> BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2008.

<sup>47</sup> BORHY 2016, 28.



Fig. 60. The bottom of the well in squares H13-I13 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 61. Fragment of a Fellhelm-type iron helmet. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2007.H13-I13.069.20 (photo by D. Bartus)



Fig. 62. Square A17 from the north with the foundation of the western boundary wall of House I/b on the left and the remains of an early mud-and-stud wall in the middle (photo by L. Borhy)

The three squares opened north of the well in House V contained heavily burnt layers and the remains of a possible oven or kiln.

The square trench cluster in the southern zone of the excavation area allowed for exploring more of the gravelly yard of House I/a and the area of Street “A”. The backyard of the house was separated from Street “A” by a stone wall; however, no separating walls were found between the backyards of Houses I/a and I/b (Fig. 62).

The area neighbouring no. 13 Vásártér was explored with additional square trenches—but no other parts of the Roman house were discovered. A bronze *phalera* with the depiction of the head of *Jupiter Ammon* is worth mentioning amongst the findings of the season.



## Research and results in 2008 (Figs 1–2; Fig. 63)

In 2008, work was carried out in two square trench clusters (Figs 64–65).<sup>48</sup> The north-eastern cluster was designed to investigate the burnt area in the northern part of House V. The burnt surfaces turned out to be the earth floors of rooms, with no conclusive evidence of a workshop in the area. Squares J11 and J12 were unusually rich in small finds, including a small stone figurine sitting on a throne.

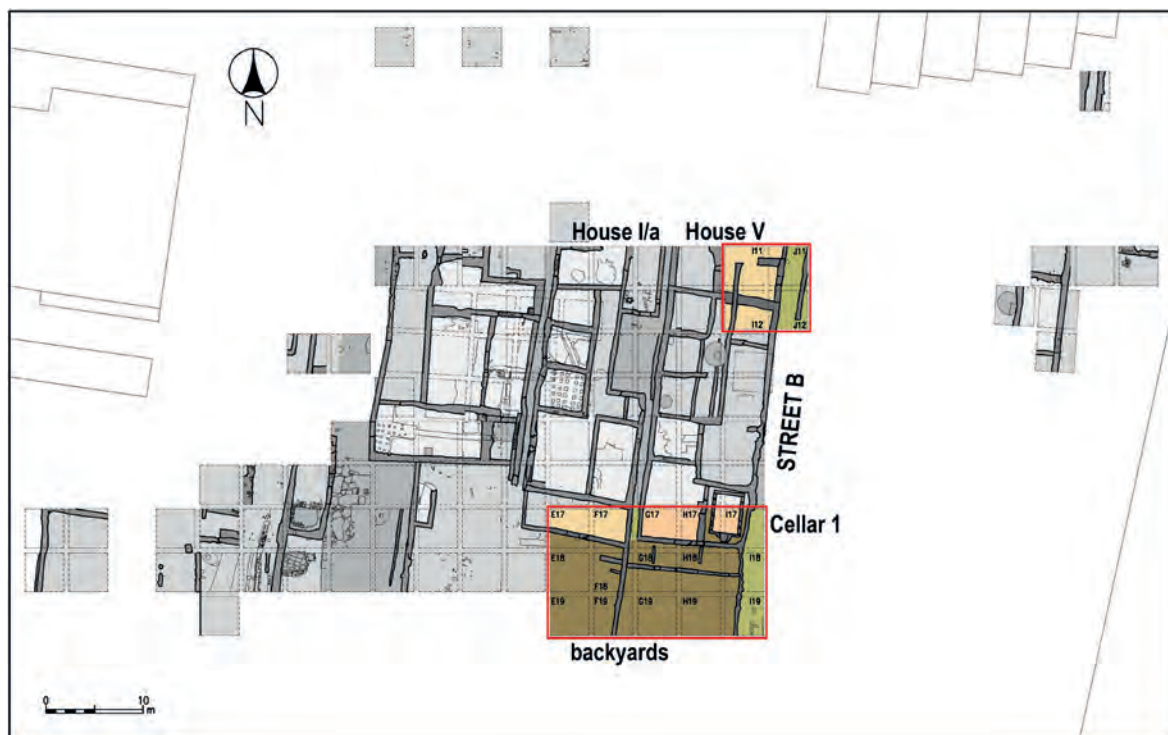


Fig. 63. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2008 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 64. The backyards of House V and House I/a from the north, with the southern half of Cellar 1 on the left (photo by L. Borhy)

48 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2009.





Fig. 66. Animal-shaped (*hippocampus*) enamelled plate brooch. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2008.J40.015.11 (photo by D. Bartus)

Fig. 65. Squares J41, K41, and K42 from the south (photo by L. Borhy)

The southern square trench cluster covered a large area of the rear ends of Houses I/a and V and the adjoining backyards. A momentous discovery was made at the end of the season: a cellar was found in the southeastern corner of House V. However, the complete excavation of the cellar had to wait until the following year.

Research also continued in the southern zone of the Vásártér near the Roman house under no. 13. Although the find material contained some interesting pieces (Fig. 66), the discovered building remains were not remarkable.

### Research and results in 2009 (Fig. 2; Fig. 67)

Unlike previously, all excavated square trenches were in one location in 2009. The goal of the season was to unearth the cellar found in 2008 (Cellar 1) and investigate its eastern surroundings (Fig. 68).<sup>49</sup>

The cellar in squares H16–H17–I16–I17 was 3.95 m long, 2.55 m wide, and 1.8 m deep. It had plastered stone walls and a *terrazzo* floor. A splayed window in the southern wall provided light and air, and the imprint of a wooden staircase was preserved in the plaster of the northern wall (Figs 69–70). Three shelf joist sockets in the eastern and western walls attested to the one-time existence of two long shelves along the walls.<sup>50</sup> Based on the find material, the cellar had probably been put out of use and filled up around the second half of the 2nd century AD,<sup>51</sup> just before House V was built. Most finds from the cellar were potsherds; besides, the bronze bust of a man with Suebian *nodus* must be mentioned (Fig. 71).<sup>52</sup>

The foundation layers of Street “B” were discovered on the eastern side of the cellar. Further to the east, we unearthed the gravelly surface of a yard, surrounded by a stone wall and a drainage channel lined with *tegulae*. We also found a purse with four coins on the southern side of an east–west wall in the yard.<sup>53</sup>

49 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2010.

50 For more information about Cellar 1, see BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2010, 250–251; DOBOSI 2014, 20–21; DOBOSI – BORHY 2015, 192–193, 195–197; BARTUS – BORHY 2016, 101–102, 104.

51 SZÓRÁDI 2010.

52 JUHÁSZ 2014, 333, Figs 1–2; BARTUS – BORHY 2016, 104.

53 JUHÁSZ 2019, 121–122.



Fig. 67. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2009 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 68. Aerial photo of Cellar 1 (right) and Street “B” (left) from the north (photo by L. Borhy)





Fig. 69. The imprint of the wooden staircase in Cellar 1 (photo by D. Bartus)



Fig. 70. The southern wall of Cellar 1 with a window (photo by L. Borhy)

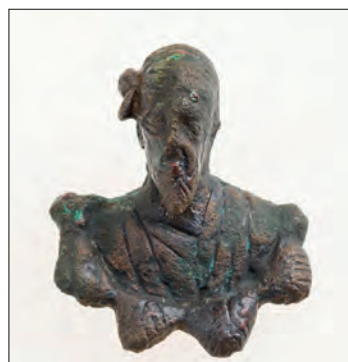


Fig. 71. Bronze bust of a man with Suebian *nodus*. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2009.H16-17-116-17.058 (photo by D. Bartus)

## Research and results in 2010 (Fig. 2; Fig. 72)

The excavation of Street “B” and the gravelly yard on its eastern side continued in 2010 (Fig. 74).<sup>54</sup>

Based on the finds, the surface of Street “B” was renewed several times, and the potholes were filled with potsherds, including *amphora* fragments, and gravel. A pair of deep cart ruts were observed in square J14. The distance between the ruts measured 1.15 m (centre-to-centre); they indicate that Street “B” had been used as a dirt road for a long time before it was eventually paved with flagstones, probably sometime during the Severan dynasty.



Fig. 72. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szöny-Vásártér, season 2010 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

We also continued exploring the drainage channel in the gravelly backyard on the eastern side of Street “B”. Short, secondary channels joined the main north-south channel both from east and west on the northern side of an east-west wall, the southern boundary wall of the yard. There was an outlet on the wall where the main channel left the yard and led the rainwater away to the south. The most interesting find of the season was a bronze *phalera* depicting the head of *Medusa* (Fig. 73).<sup>55</sup>

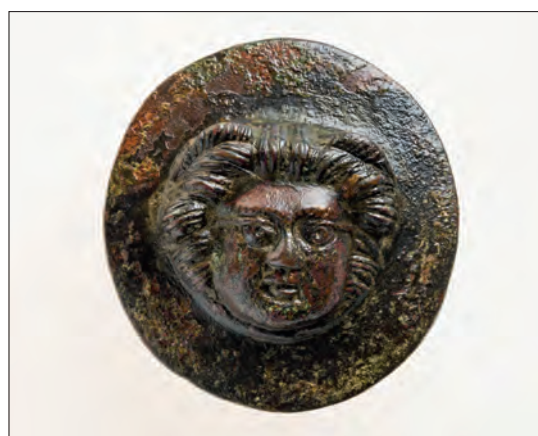


Fig. 73. Bronze *phalera* depicting the head of *Medusa*. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2010.L18.019.25 (photo by D. Bartus)

54 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2012; BARTUS et al. 2012.

55 BARTUS et al. 2012, 32.





Fig. 74. Aerial photo of all squares opened in 2010. On the left, the drainage channel lined with *tegulae*, while the layers of Street “B” are visible in the upper right corner (photo by L. Borhy)

### Research and results in 2011 (Fig. 2; Fig. 75)

Research in 2011 focused on two areas: the backyard of House I/a, and the yard on the eastern side of Street “B” (Fig. 76).<sup>56</sup>

The eight squares opened in the backyard of House I/a contained the southern boundary wall of the yard. The yard continued southwards but with a simple soil surface instead of a compacted gravelly one, suggesting that this part may have been a vegetable garden or an orchard.

We have unearthed the northern section of the yard and the *tegula*-lined drainage channel on the eastern side of Street “B”. The approximately 15 m long channel section started with a limestone grate on its northern end and sloped southwards. A collapsed mud brick wall was discovered near its northern end. The wall’s yellow and dark brown bricks were easy to recognise in an area of about 0.5×2 m. The bricks were 450 mm long and 100 mm high; their original width must have been about 300 mm.

The season was unusually rich in finds, including more than 700 *terra sigillata* sherds, numerous *amphora* fragments (Fig. 77), stamped *tegulae* and *imbrices*, stone weights, a bird-shaped lead object, and the bronze fittings of a helmet.<sup>57</sup>

56 BORHY – SZÁMADÓ 2018; BARTUS et al. 2014b.

57 BARTUS et al. 2014b, 11–12.

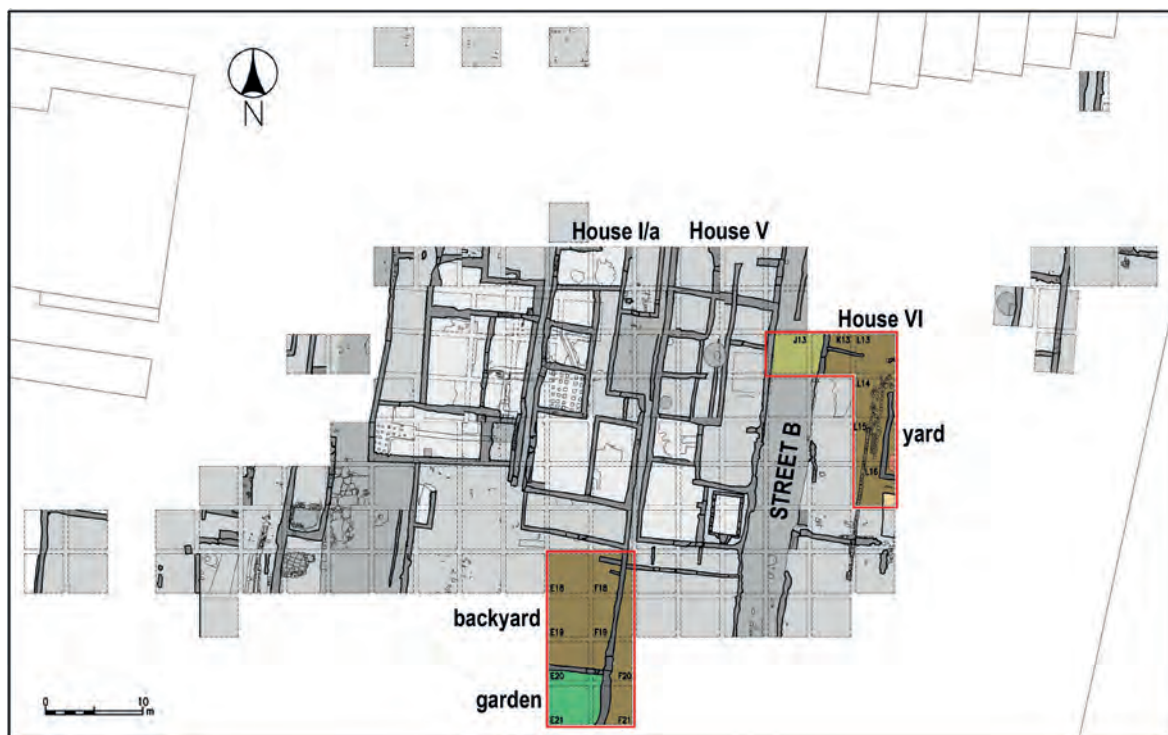


Fig. 75. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2011 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 76. Aerial photo of the Vásártér with the squares excavated in 2011 (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 77. Dressel 20-type *amphora* fragments (photo by J. Burucs)



## Research and results in 2012 (Fig. 2; Fig. 78)

Most square trenches in 2012 were set out on the eastern side of Street “B”, while some were opened in the backyard of House I/b.<sup>58</sup>

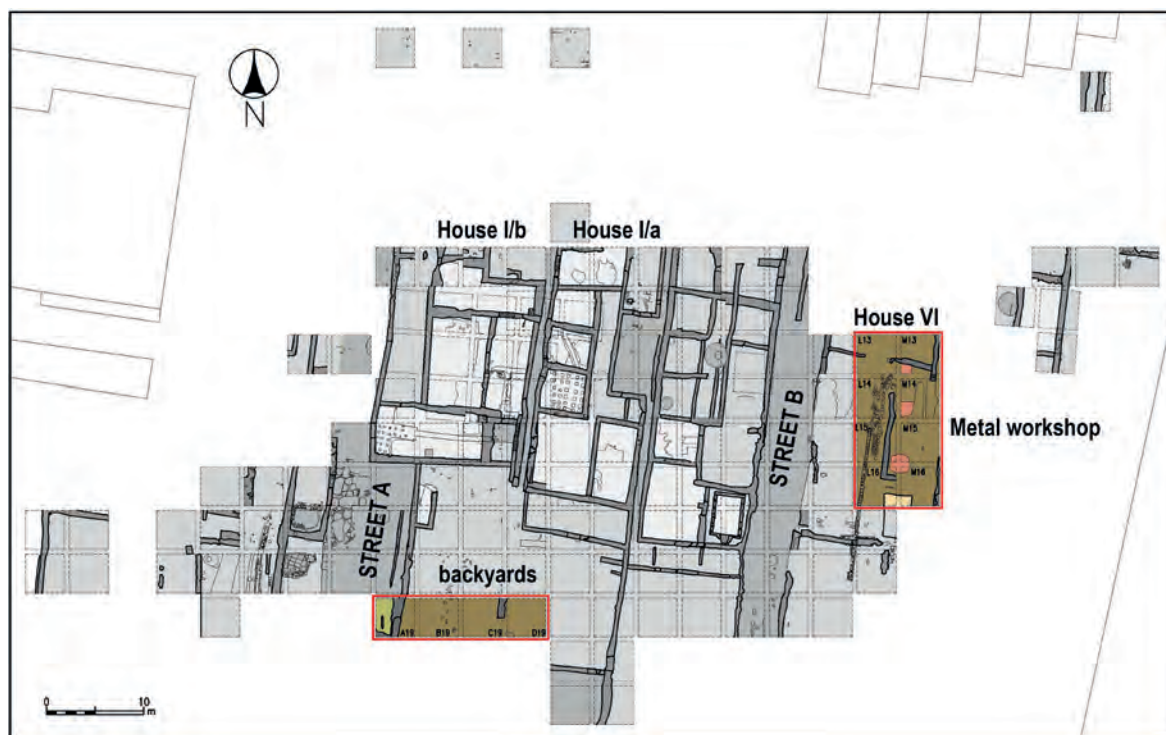


Fig. 78. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2012 (drawing by L. Dobosi)



Fig. 79. Squares L15–L16 with the *tegula*-lined drainage channel and the collapsed mud brick wall (photo by L. Borhy)

58 BARTUS et al. 2014c.



Fig. 80. Squares excavated in 2012 with the furnaces of the metal workshop (photo by L. Borhy)



The eastern squares contained a large part of the yard with the drainage channel and three furnaces of a possible metal workshop (Figs 79–80).<sup>59</sup> The furnaces were accompanied by abundant workshop residue, including semi-finished objects, bronze ingots, bronze nuggets and metal slags, sherds of crucibles, and a clay mould for making lead votive figurines of *Mercurius* (Fig. 81).<sup>60</sup> Besides the clay mould, a lead *Venus* figurine fragment and a large raw bronze block were also found.<sup>61</sup>

The outline of another cellar (Cellar 2) started to unfold on the southern edge of the metal workshop and became the main research target in the following years.

Fig. 81. Clay mould for making lead votive figurines of *Mercurius*. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2012.L15-16.050.1 (photo by D. Bartus)

59 More details about the bronze workshop in SEY 2013, 46–58; SEY 2015; BARTUS et al. 2018, 66. The brooch production of Brigetio, including the activity of the *municipium*, was recently discussed by Cs. Sáró; see SÁRÓ 2020; SÁRÓ 2021.

60 BARTUS 2014a; BARTUS 2014b.

61 SEY 2013, 52, 8. kép; BARTUS et al. 2014c, 69.



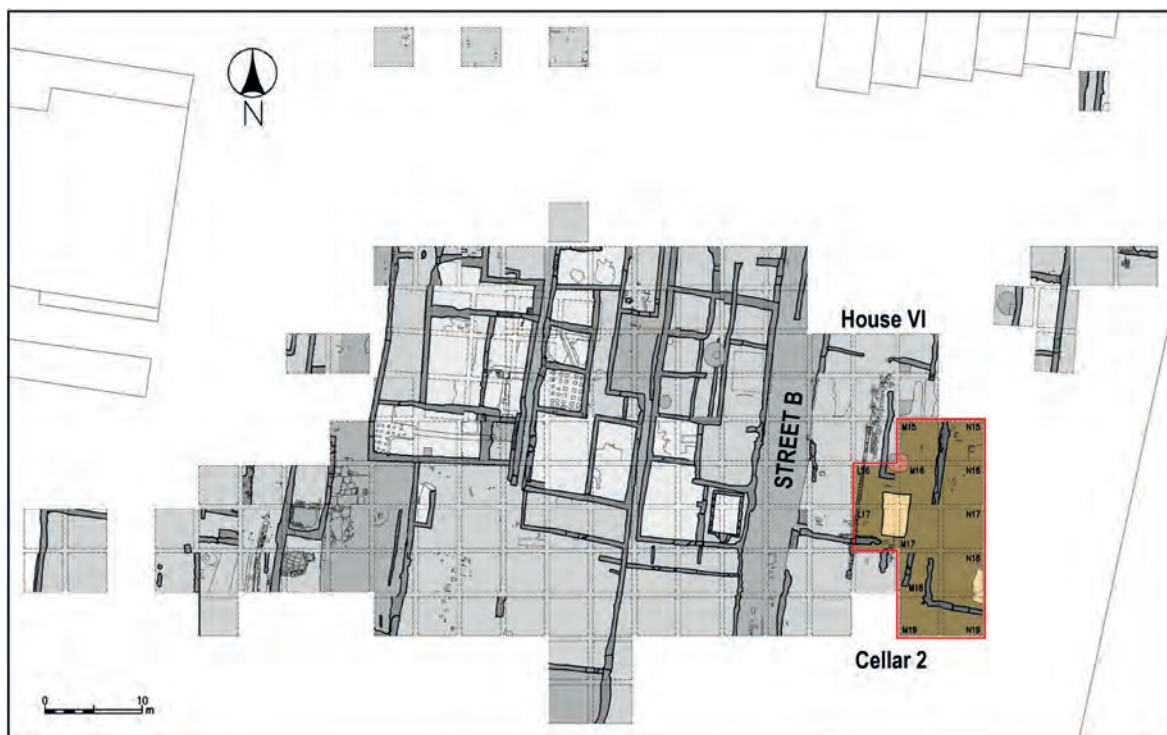


Fig. 82. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szöny-Vásártér, season 2013 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

### Research and results in 2013

(Fig. 2; Fig. 82)

Work in 2013 was aimed at unearthing Cellar 2 and its surroundings (Figs 83–84).<sup>62</sup> Cellar 2 was a 4.4×2.7 m structure with bare stone walls. The most sensational discovery of the season was its mostly intact wooden ceiling, consisting of wooden joists and a layer of wooden planks on both the upper and lower side of the joists. As the ceiling covered the northern two-thirds of the cellar, the wooden ladder or staircase leading down to the cellar must have been in the south. The infill of the cellar was extremely exciting, containing, in addition to countless broken pottery vessels and an *amphora*, grains of wheat and millet, petrified olives and dates, and grape-, apple-, pear, and cherry seeds (Fig. 85).<sup>63</sup>

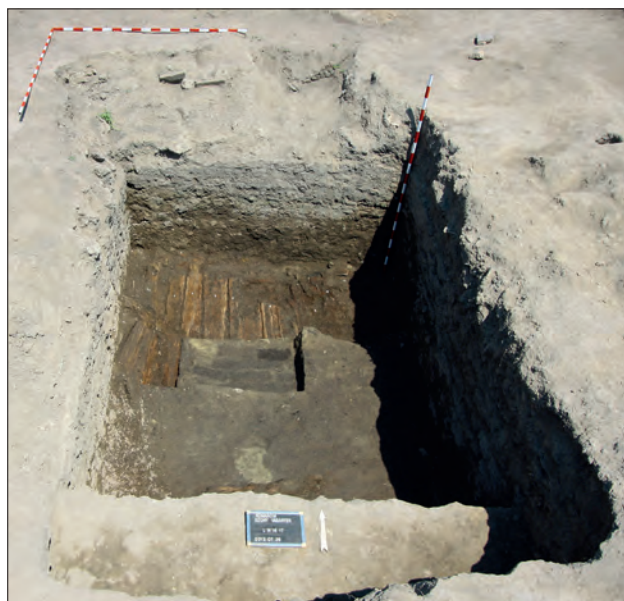


Fig. 83. Cellar 2 from the south with a collapsed mud brick wall and the wooden ceiling of the cellar (photo by D. Bartus)

62 BARTUS et al. 2015b.

63 More detail about Cellar 2 in BARTUS et al. 2015b, 8; BARTUS et al. 2016a, 113–114; BARTUS – BORHY 2016, 102–103, 105–106; BARTUS et al. 2017, 84–86; BARTUS et al. 2018, 63–66. For the reconstruction of the ceiling, see DOBOSI 2021, 319–320.



Fig. 84. Aerial photo of all squares excavated in 2013 from the west, with Cellar 2 in the centre (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 86. Chalcedony gemstone with a depiction of *Dea Roma*. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2013.N18-19.044.1 (photo by D. Bartus)

Fig. 85. Date and olive seeds from Cellar 2 (photo by D. Bartus)



More iron slags were recovered from the squares near the cellar, indicating that this zone might also have belonged to the metal workshop. One of the most interesting finds of the year was a chalcedony gemstone with the depiction of *Dea Roma* (Fig. 86).<sup>64</sup>

### Research and results in 2014 (Fig. 2; Fig. 87)

The 2014 season was spent investigating the area east of the already excavated zone; we also reached the modern road on the eastern side of the Vásártér, representing the limit of the researchable zone (Fig. 88).<sup>65</sup> Meticulous drawings were made of the wooden ceiling in Cellar 2, and the feature was documented in detail (Fig. 89). In the southeastern corner of the excavated zone, we have discovered a large, about 5 m long, 4 m wide, and 2 m deep pit: Cellar 3. Its east-west orientation differed from the north-south orientation of the two previous cellars, and its stone walls have remained unfinished. The infill of the pit was rich in find material, including potsherds, raw iron lumps, iron slags, bone hairpins, needles, and bronze brooches<sup>66</sup> along with a rare disc brooch decorated with applied metal foil and black glass applications.<sup>67</sup> The most excellent findings of the season were the base of a square bottle with the inscription “L PVBLIC” (Fig. 90),<sup>68</sup> a bronze head of a man with Suebian *nodus* (Fig. 91),<sup>69</sup> a bronze mount depicting a satyr’s head,<sup>70</sup> and some coins.<sup>71</sup>



Fig. 87. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2014 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

64 BARTUS et al. 2015b, 9, 2. kép.

65 BARTUS et al. 2014a; BARTUS et al. 2016a.

66 More details about Cellar 3 in BARTUS – BORHY 2016, 103; BARTUS et al. 2018, 63–66.

67 BARTUS et al. 2016a, 160, Kat. 5, 18. tábla 5.

68 DÉVAI 2019, 251–252; BARTUS et al. 2017, 90.

69 JUHÁSZ 2014, 334, Fig. 3; BARTUS et al. 2016a, 3. kép, Kat. 1.

70 BARTUS et al. 2016a, 155–157, 4. kép, Kat. 2.

71 JUHÁSZ 2017, 251–253.



Fig. 88. Aerial photo of the squares excavated in 2014 from the north. With the covered Cellar 2 in the lower-right side and Cellar 3 in the middle (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 89. The wooden ceiling in Cellar 2 from the south (photo by D. Bartus)



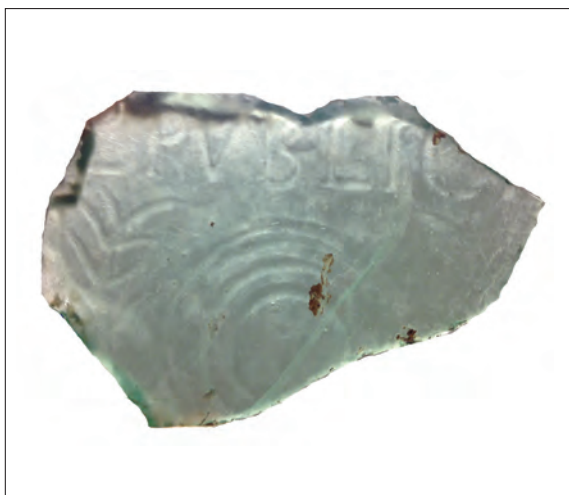


Fig. 90. Base of a square bottle with the inscription "L PVBLIC". Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2014.LM16–LM17.015.129 (Photo D. Bartus)

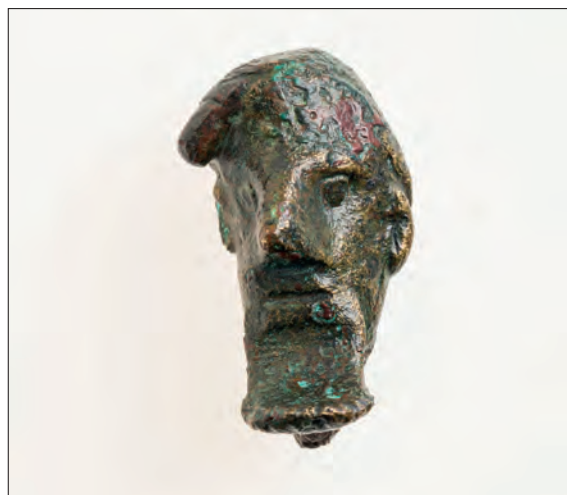


Fig. 91. Bronze head of a man with Suebian *nodus*. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2013. P18-19.013.21 (photo by D. Bartus)

### Research and results in 2015 (Fig. 2; Fig. 92)

Coming near to the end of the excavations of the Vásártér, the season's main goal was to complete the excavation and documentation of Cellars 2 and 3 (Figs 93–95). In addition, three new square trenches were opened.<sup>72</sup>

The pieces of the wooden ceiling of Cellar 2 were finally collected and conserved by András Morgós, Eszter Harsányi, and Zsófia Kurovszky.

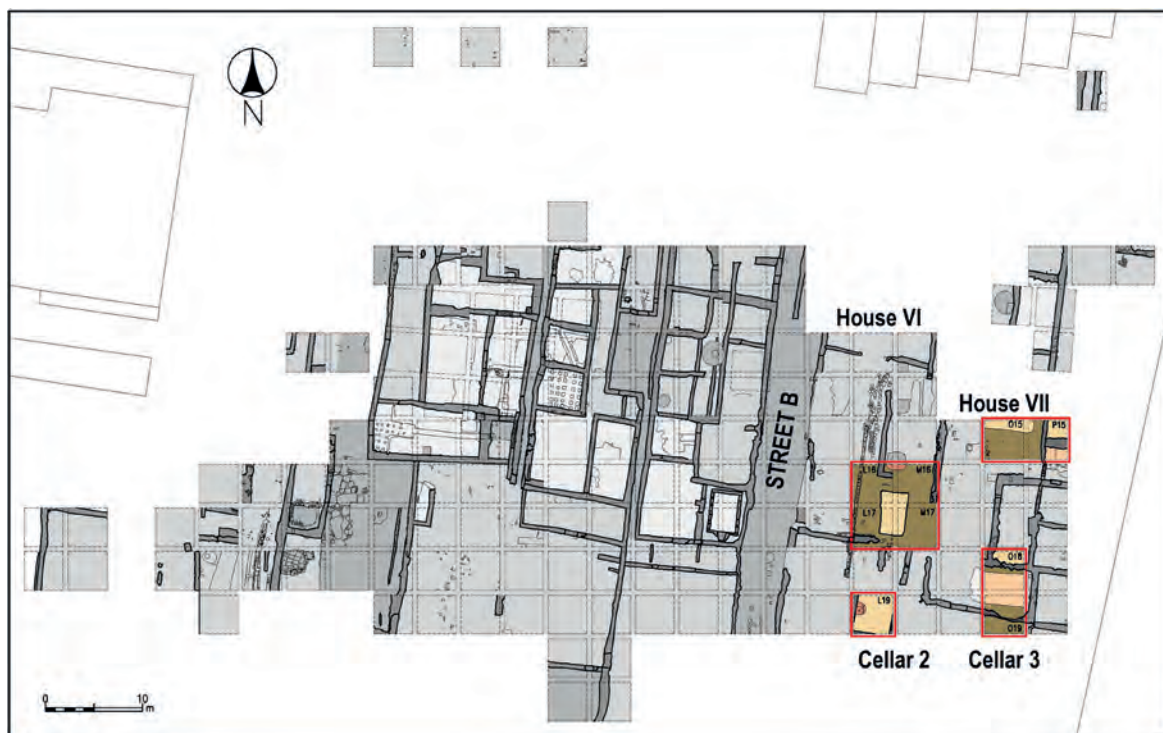


Fig. 92. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2015 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

72 BARTUS et al. 2015a, 245–246; BARTUS et al. 2017.



Fig. 93. Cellar 3 from the east (photo by L. Borhy)



Fig. 94. The cleaned wooden ceiling in Cellar 2 before removal (photo by D. Bartus)





Fig. 95. The bottom of Cellar 2 after removing the wooden ceiling (photo by D. Bartus)



Fig. 96. The *titulus pictus*  $\beta$  on the Dressel 20 amphora (photo by D. Bartus)



Fig. 97. Bronze cavalry parade helmet from Cellar 2. Komáromi Klapka György Museum, Inv. no. 2015.LM16-LM17.079.1 (photo by D. Bartus)

An additional furnace (probably of the metal workshop) was discovered in square L19. This furnace, however, lay much deeper than the other three, which might indicate that it was in use earlier.

Some of the most exciting finds of the season were a Dressel 20 *amphora*, once used for transporting olive oil from Hispania Baetica, with *tituli picti* inscriptions on its side (Fig. 96),<sup>73</sup> a bronze *Amor* figurine,<sup>74</sup> a bronze wagon fitting, a pseudo-Attic bronze cavalry parade helmet with cheekpieces (Fig. 97),<sup>75</sup> and the base of another square bottle with the inscription “P/CL/A/CP”.<sup>76</sup>

### Research and results in 2016 (Fig. 2; Fig. 98)

This season, research was again focused on the area of the bakery in an attempt to find the northern and southern boundary walls of the building<sup>77</sup>—a goal achieved as both ends were determined. Besides, it could be clarified that the drainage channel behind the bakery did not continue further to the south.

73 BARTUS – BORHY 2016, 105; BARTUS et al. 2017, 85; BARTUS et al. 2018, 66. The *titulus pictus* β was interpreted initially as *M(arcus) POMP(eius) CALLI(istus)* by L. Borhy and D. Bartus but, according to J. Remesal Rodríguez, an interpretation as *II (duorum) POMPEIORUM* seems more probable; see REMESAL RODRÍGUEZ – BLÁZQUEZ MARTÍNEZ 2014, 22–23. This shifts the dating of the *amphora* (and that of Cellar 2) from around AD 147 to the AD 170s.

74 BARTUS 2015, 67–68, no. 44; BARTUS et al. 2017, 86.

75 BORHY 2016, 17–27.

76 DÉVAI 2019, 252; BARTUS et al. 2017, 90.

77 BARTUS et al. 2016b, 337–338; BARTUS et al. 2018, 66–68.





Fig. 98. Excavation plan of Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér, season 2016 (drawing by L. Dobosi)

The season's biggest surprise was discovering a west-east wall across Street "A" that turned it into a dead-end street (Figs 99–100). The most interesting finding of the year was a small, elongated lead object, flat in the middle with a small hole, with letters on both sides: O M on one and M O on the other.



Fig. 99. Square -A19 from the south. Wall negative under Street "A" and stone slabs of Street "A" (photo by N. Sey)





Fig. 100. Square -C19 from the south (photo by N. Sey)



Fig. 101. Virtual reconstruction of the bakery from the southeast with Street “A” in the foreground (drawing by L. Dobosi)



## Research and results in 2019

In 2019, research at the Komárom/Szőny-Vásártér site was concluded with a geophysical survey conducted by Zsombor Klembala, László Rupnik, and András Bödőcs. The whole surface of the Vásártér was scanned, yielding additional data about the structure of the civil town. The survey not only revealed several unknown structures, including houses and a street, in the unexcavated part of the Vásártér but also helped to interpret the excavated remains and put them in a broader context (Fig. 1).<sup>78</sup> The results also inspired a digital reconstruction of the unearthed houses (Figs 101–102). Simultaneously, we started localising the trenches of early excavations in the area, beginning with identifying the place of the 1970 excavation by Endre Bíró in the north-western corner of the Vásártér.<sup>79</sup>



**Fig. 102.** Virtual reconstruction of House I/a. On the left: three possible versions of the small courtyard from the northeast. On the right: two possible versions of the southern end of House I/a with the backyard. Lower right corner: Reconstruction of Insula 1 with Street “A” and the bakery in the background (drawings by L. Dobosi)

78 DOBOSI 2022, 144–145.

79 SIMON 2018.

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