

THE CENTURY OF THE BRAVE & STOLJEĆE HRABRIH

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ROMAN CONQUEST AND
INDIGENOUS RESISTANCE
IN ILLYRICUM DURING
THE TIME OF AUGUSTUS
AND HIS HEIRS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE
HELD IN ZAGREB
22-26.9.2014.



RIMSKO OSVAJANJE I
OTPOR STAROSJEDILACA
U ILIRIKU ZA VRIJEME
AUGUSTA I NJGOVIH
NASLJEDNIKA

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Kip cara Augusta iz Nina (*Aenona*), Arheološki muzej u Zadru, fotografirao Ivo Pervan
Statue of the emperor Augustus from Nin (*Aenona*), Archaeological museum in Zadar, photo by Ivo Pervan

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Edited by

Marina Milićević Bradač

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SADRŽAJ

CONTENTS

PREDGOVOR / FOREWORD	7
Marina Milićević Bradač <i>AB EXCESSU DIVI AUGUSTI</i> – THE FORTUNES OF AUGUSTUS ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2000 TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH	11
Marjeta Šašel Kos OCTAVIAN'S ILLYRIAN WAR: AMBITION AND STRATEGY	41
Marin Zaninović ARBA OD LIBURNA DO RIMLJANA	59
Robert Matijašić <i>RES GESTAE</i> (28, 1) AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ROMAN COLONIES ON THE EASTERN ADRIATIC	69
Danijel Džino, Alka Domić Kunić A VIEW FROM THE FRONTIER ZONE: ROMAN CONQUEST OF ILLYRICUM	77
Davide Faoro LA MACROPROVINCIA DELL'ILLIRICO, IL <i>BELLUM BATONIANUM</i> E L' <i>IMMUNITAS</i> DEI LIBURNI	89
Phyllis Culham THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN SEAS IN ROMAN CIVIL WAR FROM 49 TO 31 BCE	101
Dino Demicheli A SOLDIER OF THE LEGION XI <i>CLAUDIA PIA FIDELIS</i> FROM FORUM IULII ON THE INSCRIPTION FROM KAPITUL NEAR KNIN	117
Nikola Cesarik, Miroslav Glavičić CENTURIONI XI. LEGIJE U RIMSKOJ PROVINCIJI DALMACIJI	125
Silvia Bekavac, Željko Miletić <i>EQUES MARCELLUS</i> ' CAREER IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF DALMATIA	137
Snežana Ferjančić RECRUITMENT OF AUXILIA IN ILLYRICUM FROM AUGUSTUS TO NERO	147
Olga Pelcer – Vujačić FROM EAST TO WEST RECRUITMENT OF SOLDIERS FROM ASIA MINOR IN <i>LEGIO VII CLAUDIA</i> AND <i>LEGIO XI CLAUDIA</i>	157
Péter Kovács NORTHERN PANNONIA AND THE ROMAN CONQUEST	163
Naser Ferri LA CONQUISTA ROMANA E LA MILITARIZZAZIONE DELLA DARDANIA	175
Dražen Maršić AUGUSTOVO DOBA I POČETCI PROVINCIJALNE NADGROBNE UMJETNOSTI U DALMACIJI	183
Emilio Marin A VIEW ON THE AUGUSTEUM IN NARONA TWO DECADES AFTER THE DISCOVERY	211
Marko Sinobad A CONTRIBUTION TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF A CUIRASSED STATUE OF AN EMPEROR FROM NARONA	233

Ivana Jadrić-Kučan	
IMPERIAL CULT IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF DALMATIA DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR TIBERIUS	243
Mirjana Sanader	
DIE INSCRIFT DES GAIUS IULIUS MARTIALIS AUS NARONA. NEUE ÜBERLEGUNGEN ZU ZWEI ALTEN FRAGEN	257
Antonia Holden	
THE ABDUCTION OF THE SABINE WOMEN: SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS AND THE <i>PAX ROMANA</i>	269
Iva Kaić	
ENGRAVED GEMS AS PART OF THE AUGUSTAN PROPAGANDA. SOME EXAMPLES FROM CROATIA	279
Rubén Garcia Rubio	
WHEN THE AUGUSTUS' ARCHITECTURE WOKE UP. THE CASE OF LOUIS I. KAHN AND THE AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE	291
Marina Milićević Bradač, Daniel Rafaelić	
ARA PACIS BETWEEN AUGUSTUS AND JOSEF VON STERNBERG	297
Bruno Bijadžija	
CONTRIBUTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EPIDAUROM BASED ON TWO OF THE INSCRIPTIONS OF DOLABELLA FROM CAVTAT	307
Mattia Vitelli Casella	
NOTE SUI MUNICIPI DI CITTADINI ROMANI IN ILLIRICO SULLA BASE DELLA TESTIMONIANZA DI PLINIO IL VECCHIO (<i>NAT.</i> 3. 144)	319
Ivan Milotić	
PEREGRINE COMMUNITIES IN DALMATIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1 ST CENTURY FROM PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR DISPUTES	331
Šime Vrkić	
ROMAN BOUNDARY WALLS ON THE LIBURNIAN TERRITORY	343
Nikola Cesarik, Ivo Glavaš	
NOVOOTKRIVENA TRASA RIMSKE KOMUNIKACIJE OD BURNA DO KAPITULA I PROBLEM CESTE <i>AD IMUM MONTEM DITIONUM ULCIRUM</i>	353
Kristina Jelinčić Vučković, Asja Tonc	
CERAMIC FINDS FROM GRAVE 5 IN ILOK	361
Igor Borzić	
ALL ROADS LEAD TO LEGIONS - THE PROVENANCE OF POTTERY FINDS FROM EARLY IMPERIAL LEGION CAMP IN BURNUM (CROATIA)	373
Inga Vilogorac Brčić	
<i>VENUS ET CYBELE – MATRES ROMANORUM</i>	385
Mladen Tomorad	
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN COLLECTION OF THE FRANCISCAN MONASTERY AT THE ISLAND OF KOŠLJUN: A CASE STUDY OF THE POSSIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE EARLIER PENETRATION OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ARTEFACTS IN ILLYRICUM	397
Ivan Radman-Livaja, Vlatka Vukelić	
THE WHEREABOUTS OF TIBERIUS' DITCH IN SISCIA	407

THE WHEREABOUTS OF TIBERIUS' DITCH IN SISCIA

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The idea behind this paper is to use local archival data in order to solve some topographical issues raised by ancient sources. This potentially useful archival data consists chiefly of maps, plans and cadastral records which could offer reasonably accurate information about the topography of protohistoric Segestica and Roman Siscia. Since modern Sisak's topography happens to be deeply rooted in the town's history, as witnessed by local toponyms of which many can be followed for centuries, we assume that plans and maps of Siscia from the 18th, 19th and early 20th century, while certainly not giving unambiguous answers, may provide at least some clues to the better understanding of Octavian's siege of Segestica and the subsequently built Roman fortifications.

Keywords: *Siscia, Segestica, Octavian, Tiberius, ditch*

Octavian's siege of Segestica was discussed several times in scholarly publications and the matter has been studied more or less extensively (rather less, as a matter of fact) both by historians and archaeologists.¹ Nonetheless, the overall picture of the siege is still missing while archaeological excavations - which might provide answers to many yet unanswered questions - have been sorely lacking until recently. This paper, unfortunately, will not contribute much to the narrative of Octavian's siege, since its topic is the defensive ditch allegedly built by Tiberius a generation later (Reinhold 1988: 71). Nevertheless, the camps used by Tiberius' legions must have depended on local terrain configuration just as much as the camps accommodating Octa-

vian's besieging troops and thus the siege laid in 35 BC will be given a due share in our discussion.

The first idea behind this paper was how to use local archival data in order to solve some topographical issues raised by ancient sources. This potentially useful archival data consists chiefly of maps, plans and cadastral records but in what way and how profitably could data not older than a couple of centuries offer reasonably accurate information about the topography of protohistoric Segestica and Roman Siscia? This is, indeed, a commonsense question. Since modern Sisak's topography happens to be quite "conservative", i.e. deeply rooted in the town's history, as witnessed by local toponyms of which many can be followed for centuries, we assume that

¹ *Appian. Ill. XXII-XXIV; Cassius Dio 49, 36-37; Zippel 1877: 228-232; Veith 1914: 49-58; Rice Holmes 1928: 132-133; Swoboda 1932: 17-19; Josifović 1956: 139-140; Mócsy 1962: 538-539; Wilkes 1969: 51-53; Mócsy 1974: 22; Šašel 1974: 732; Barkóczy 1980: 87-88; Šašel Kos 1986: 138-141; Zaninović 1986: 62-63; Nenadić 1987: 73; Nagy 1991: 61-64; Radman-Livaja 2001: 125-126; Hoti 1992: 137-138; Wilkes 1992: 206; Radman-Livaja 2004: 17; Wilkes 1996: 549-550; Gruen 1996: 173; Šašel Kos 1997: 190-196; Šašel Kos 1999: 262-263; Šašel Kos 2005: 437-442; Domić-Kunić 2006: 91-95; Eck 2007: 35; Radman-Livaja 2007: 161-162; Dzino 2010: 102; 109-111; Radman-Livaja 2010: 182-183; Šašel-Kos 2012: 99-100; Džino, Domić Kunić 2013: 155; Šašel-Kos 2013: 187-192; Kovács 2014: 24-26; Radman-Livaja 2015: 28-30; Zaninović 2015: 419-421*

plans and maps of Siscia from the 18th, 19th and early 20th century², while certainly not giving unambiguous answers, may provide at least some clues to the better understanding of Octavian's siege of Segestica and the subsequently built Roman fortifications. As a matter of fact, most old maps of Sisak show the toponym "Roman ditch", situated south of what is now called New Sisak, on the Pogorelac peninsula. All the plans and maps show it at the same place. This toponym can be seen on maps till 1925, and the ditch itself was still visible till the 1950-ties, although its old name seems to have fallen out of use by then.

In our opinion, this toponym could be related to the ditch which separated the town of Segestica from the mainland, later (perhaps) called Tiberius' ditch in the written sources, a matter of discussion as we shall see in the following paragraphs.

But why would this issue be important at all? Determining the precise position of the „Roman“ or allegedly "Tiberius" ditch might enable us to locate more precisely the main Roman legionary camp, at least during the period from 12 BC to the Pannonian insurrection of 6-9 AD, and provide significant clues about the first period of Roman occupation. For the time being, there are no undisputable archaeological traces of a Roman military camp in Sisak and it is at present impossible to ascertain the exact position of a permanent legionary fort. Nonetheless, thanks to recent archaeological research, as far as the early phase of Roman occupation is concerned, we are slightly more knowledgeable than a decade ago.³

It has been an accepted fact that prehistoric Segestica was situated on the Pogorelac peninsula, on the right bank of the

Kupa, opposite to modern day Sisak, which is situated just where Roman Siscia used to be, on a peninsula between the Kupa and the Sava. The existence of an Iron Age settlement on Pogorelac is clearly shown by archaeological evidence and there is almost no doubt that Segestica should definitely be situated on Pogorelac (Faber 1973: 152; Šašel 1974: 726; Nenadić 1987: 73; Buzov 1993: 48-49; Šašel Kos 1997: 192; Burkowsky 1999: 18-19; Buzov 2003: 178; Drnić 2015: 11-15). This does not contradict the fact that a late Iron Age settlement existed on the left bank of the Kupa as well, as revealed by prehistoric structures and dwellings found during recent excavations (Drnić & Miletić Čakširan 2014:147-199; Drnić 2015: 12-13). Presumably, this settlement of an unknown but certainly not insignificant size was somehow related to the settlement on Pogorelac.

Considering the events from 35 BC until 9 AD and the presence of numerous Roman troops over that period, placing firm belief in the existence of just one Roman camp in the area of Segestica or Siscia would most likely be erroneous. Indeed, everything indicates that during four decades or so the garrison consisted of a large number of soldiers, and it is definitely to be expected that at certain periods of time more than one camp was designated for their accommodation. In any case, the concentration of a great number of troops, starting with the siege of Segestica, followed by Tiberius' Pannonian war and eventually by Bato's rebellion must have required a build-up of accommodation infrastructure wherever there was available space. As a matter of fact, the circumvallation during the siege of Segestica certainly implied field fortifications on the left bank of the Kupa as well and we may reasonably assume that the first infrastruc-

² Plan aus welchen die Lage des Dorfes Neu-Sziszek, der dortigen Aerial-Magazine, Pontonier und sonstigen Aerial Gebäude, wie auch die nächst der Culpa gelegenen Grundstücke zu ersehen.-1:5 040. - [S.I.: ca 1790].- Rukopisni plan: u boji; 70x50 cm, Kartografska zbirka Ratnog arhiva, Beč, sign. G.I.h.638; Situations=Plan über die zwischen Militär Szizek und Bandino Szello projektierte Eisenbahn, und über den – von dem letztgenannten Orte bis St.Archangel bei Josephtal entworfen chaussemaesigen Straszeng/Josip Kajetan Knežić. – 1:43 200. - [S.I.] : 1838. – Rukopisna karta u 3 lista: u boji; 75x46 cm svaki, Kartografska zbirka Hrvatskog državnog arhiva, Zagreb, sign. D.XI.1; Compagnie Station Sissek in Banal Grenz Regiments Bezirke 1860/ izmjerio geometar Nikola Milojević, poručnik. -1: 2 880. - [Siseck]: 1860.- Rukopisni plan u 14 listova: u boji; 67x57 cm, Fond Državne geodetske uprave, Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb.; [Sisak]/K.u.k. Militargeographisches Institut.- 1:25 000.- Wien: K.u.k. Militargeographisches Institut, [ca 1885.]. Litografija; 83x60 cm, Kartografska zbirka Hrvatskog državnog arhiva, Zagreb, sign. E.II.309.; Nacrt grada Siska . – 1: 12 500.- Zagreb: litografički zavod V. Rožankowski, [1901].- Litografija: u boji; 33x45 cm, Kartografska zbirka Hrvatskog državnog arhiva, Zagreb, sign. E.V. 138.; Nacrt grada Siska . – 1: 12 500.- Sisak: S. Jünker, 1925.- Litografija: u boji; 33x45 cm, Fond Savske banovine, kut. 136, Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb. + veduta s prikazom Bitke kod Siska 1593. : W. P. Zimmermann, *Eikonographia aller deren ungarischer Statt Vostunge Castellen und Hauser welche von Anfang der Regierung Rudolphi des anderen Romischen Keyser biss auffdas 1603... , 1603.*, Augsburg.

³ Lacking archaeological data, I surmised that one location must have been chosen for a permanent legionary camp at the latest after the quelling of Bato's rebellion, conjecturing that Pogorelac would be the most adequate site although I did not exclude the possibility that military facilities could have existed on the left bank between 35 BC and 9 AD, cf. Radman-Livaja 2007: 166-168.

ture built there by the Roman army – which might include a camp as well - dates already from 35 BC. On account of all that one should neither discard the hypothesis about the camp on Pogorelac, nor the hypothesis about the camp on the left bank of the Kupa, that is on the spot of the future Roman Siscia. In addition to the possibility of the existence of parallel camps on Pogorelac and on the left bank of the Kupa, it also cannot be excluded that the position of the permanent camp was shifted depending on the circumstances and requirements of the moment as well as on the changing of the units that made up the garrison (Radman-Livaja 2007: 161-163).

Strabo's mention of a fort called Σισκία in the vicinity of Segestica (VII. 5, 2.) may also hint to the possibility of a legionary camp situated on the left bank of the Kupa during Augustus' reign, unless Strabo's words refer to a pre-Roman stronghold and not to a contemporary legionary fortress (Radman-Livaja 2007: 159; Drnić & Miletić Čakširan 2014: 148-150, 198-199). If we assume that the protohistoric city basically ended its existence as an urban entity after 34 BC, when the uprising of the natives was suppressed (Radman-Livaja 2007: 161), the Romans could have straightforwardly placed a permanent military camp there, while a civilian settlement, i.e. *canabae*, could have thrived on the opposite left bank. Though this may not be an unsound conjecture, it is not corroborated by archaeological finds yet. As a matter of fact, wherever a military camp may have existed, even for a shorter period of time, civilians could have used the same location shortly after the army had abandoned it.

Already excavations performed decades ago in Sisak have shown – and this has been confirmed in recent excavations as well - that layers beneath Roman stone and brick walls contain remains of wooden buildings as well as wooden stakes and piles which served as soil reinforcements because of the marshy ground between the Kupa and the Sava (Vrbanović 1981: 196; Nenadić 1987: 76; Buzov 1993: 55; Burkowsky 2000: 42-44; Lolić 2003: 141; Lolić 2014: 110-111, 265-266; Škrkulja & Tomaš Barišić 2015: 55). These remains are certainly traces of the first Roman infrastructure built in what would become the Roman colony Siscia. Several authors assumed that those could be remains of a military camp (Faber 1973: 153-154; Lolić 2003: 142-

143). Recent excavations of early Roman layers benefited of a thorough analysis of small finds, especially pottery, which dates more precisely those layers with wooden architecture to the Augustan and Tiberian periods. Large scale soil levelling was also observed, an activity which, when one takes into account the historical context, could likely have been undertaken only by the army (Lolić 2014: 265-266, 289; Škrkulja & Tomaš Barišić 2015: 56-57). Finds of Italic ware from the Augustan and early Tiberian period, such as *terra sigillata* or thin wall pottery are particularly significant since they cannot be related to the native population but only to soldiers and Italian immigrants (Mócsy 1962: 682; Drnić & Miletić Čakširan 2014: 153; Miletić Čakširan 2014: 126-131; Škrkulja & Tomaš Barišić 2015: 59). It must be emphasised though that none of those early layers may be unquestionably linked to military activities, just as not one of those wooden buildings may be categorically interpreted as typical for Roman camps. Nonetheless, altogether these are rather indicative finds and one may point out that such large scale building activities at the beginning of the 1st century AD could hardly have been executed without army involvement. Be it as it may, the most recent archaeological research point to the likely presence of Roman soldiers on the left bank of the Kupa during the Augustan and Tiberian period but it is still impossible to ascertain the presence – and even less the layout - of a military camp there. It is nonetheless a reasonable assumption which clearly does not imply that the development of a civilian settlement on the left bank had to wait until 43 AD, when the IX legion left Siscia, since *cannabae* could have existed - and most certainly did - for decades next to the legionary camp. As far as the opposite bank is concerned, i.e. the Pogorelac peninsula, there are no archaeological remains yet which would conclusively prove that the Roman army placed a camp on the spot where the prehistoric Segestica used to be (or in its close vicinity).⁴ We are nevertheless not convinced that no Roman military facilities ever existed at Pogorelac, particularly in the light of historically recorded huge concentrations of troops on several occasions, but one must admit that the currently limited archaeological evidence points rather to the existence of a late Augustan and Tiberian camp on the left bank.

⁴ For the current state of research at Pogorelac see: *Geophysical prospection and excavations at the site Sisak-Pogorelac (2012-2015)*, *Vjesnik Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu* 51, 2018, by I. Drnić and S. Groh (forthcoming).

Coming back to the topic of our paper, we must comment that no archaeological traces of a large ditch, as described in the sources, have been identified yet, either on Pogorelac or in Sisak. As a matter of fact, what ancient data do we have about the topography of Segestica and Siscia, i.e. a ditch there? There are actually quite a few more or less relevant sources.⁵

While Appian depicts the siege of Segestica in a fairly detailed manner, his narrative remains nevertheless rather vague. However, he clearly states that the city is situated next to the Sava river and is completely encircled by the river and a large ditch. This description is matched by his subsequent account of Octavian's siege (*Ill. XXII* and *XXIII*).

Strabo refers to the city, which he calls Σεγεςτική, on three occasions in his work completed during Tiberius' reign, likely between 18 and 24 AD (Dueck 2000: 145-151; Radman-Livaja 2007: 159). After briefly describing the land of the Iapodes, he mentions Segestica for the first time as a town close to their country, located in a plain adjacent to the Sava river, near which the Kupa joins the Sava. He emphasises the fact that it is an ideal place for starting a campaign against the Dacians, on a trade route connecting Aquileia through Nauportus with Pannonia (*IV. 6, 10*). Later (*VII, 5, 2*), when commenting the ethnic background of Pannonia, he adds that Segestica is a town on several navigable rivers, again pointing out its appropriate strategic position as a starting point for waging war against the Dacians, as well as stressing the role of Segestica as a trade centre. It is precisely at the end of this chapter that Strabo explicitly mentions the existence of a fort called Σισκία next to the town of Σεγεςτική. His last mention of Segestica is when he describes the territory of the Scordisci and mentions again the otherwise unknown river Noarus, which allegedly "flows past Segestica" (*VII. 5, 12*) (Šašel-Kos 2002: 151-152; Šašel Kos 2005: 426; Radman-Livaja 2007: 159-160). What sources did Strabo use? Scholars mostly agree that he likely made use of a slightly earlier source when he described Segestica in the chapter *IV. 6, 10.*, in all probability Posidonius (first half of the 1st century BC). As far as the chapter *VII. 5, 2.* is concerned, besides Posidonius even older sources may be presumed as well, possibly from the mid-2nd century BC on-

wards but probably not later than the first decades of the 1st century BC (Šašel 1974: 705-706; Šašel Kos 2002: 147-148, 150-151; Tassaux 2004: 172; Radman-Livaja 2007: 160).

Velleius Paterculus, not only Strabo's contemporary but also a soldier who took part in Tiberius' campaigns, makes no mention of Segestica whatsoever, whereas he describes Siscia as a place where Roman troops concentrated under Tiberius' command (*2.113*). However, his account provides absolutely no detail about the deployment of Roman troops within the territory of present-day Sisak (Radman-Livaja 2007: 163-164).

Pliny the Elder, while writing about the borders of Pannonia, refers to Siscia and Emona as Roman colonies (*N. H. III 147*). The following sentence is particularly interesting because he mentions both Siscia and Segestica (*N.H. III 148*): *Colapis in Saum influens iuxta Sisciam gemino alveo insulam ibi efficit quae Segestica appellatur*. His fairly accurate description does not leave much to imagination: the Kupa flows past an island called *Segestica* (*insula* in Pliny's words), before flowing into the Sava next to Siscia. Pliny was most likely using the word *insula* because the peninsula of Pogorelac must have been separated from the mainland by a ditch, becoming thus an artificial island (Radman-Livaja 2007: 160). Is this the ditch that Tiberius ordered to be dug (*Cassius Dio, 49, 37, 3*) or the large defensive ditch which was protecting Segestica (*Appianus, Ill., XXII, 62*)? As a matter of fact, this could have been the very same ditch. Tiberius could simply have restored the old ditch in order to secure the position of his camp. It would certainly have been less time consuming and easier for his men to do but it would be a valid assumption only if we believe that Tiberius positioned the bulk of his troops where Segestica used to be, i.e. on Pogorelac.

Cassius Dio provides more detail (translation by Earnest Cary, The Loeb Classical Library, Dio's Roman History in 9 volumes, London - Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1917; Reinhold 1988: 71-72):

49.37, 1. It was against this people, then, that Caesar at that time conducted a campaign. At first he did not devastate or plunder at all, although they abandoned their villages in the plain; for he hoped to make them his subjects of their own free

⁵ Appian, *Ill. X, 30*; *XVII, 49*; *XXII, 62*; *XXII, 65*; *XXIII, 67*; *XXIII, 68*; *XXIV, 69*; *XXIV, 70*; Strab, *IV. 6, 10*; *VII, 5, 2*; *VII, 5, 12*; Vell. Pat., *2.113*; Plin., *N.h. III 147, 148*; Cass. Dio, *49, 37, 3*; *55, 30, 4*.

will. But when they harassed him as he advanced to Siscia, he became angry, burned their country, and took all the booty he could. 2. When he drew near the city, the natives for the moment listened to their leaders and made terms with him and gave hostages, but afterwards they shut their gates and underwent a siege. For while they possessed strong walls, yet they placed their whole confidence in two navigable rivers. 3. The one called the Colops flows past the very circuit of the wall and empties into the Savus not far distant; it has now encircled the entire city, for Tiberius gave it this shape by constructing a great canal through which it comes back to its original channel. 4. But at that time between the Colops on the one hand, which flowed past the very walls, and the Savus on the other, which flowed at a little distance, a gap had been left which had been fortified with palisades and ditches. 5. Caesar secured boats made by the allies in that vicinity, and after towing them through the Ister into the Savus, and through that stream into the Colops, he assailed the enemy with his infantry and ships together, and had some naval battles on the river. 6. For the barbarians prepared in turn some boats made of single logs, with which they risked a conflict; and thus on the river they killed Menas, the freedman of Sextus, besides many others, while on the land they vigorously repulsed the invader, until they ascertained that some of their allies had been ambushed and destroyed. Then they lost heart and yielded; and when they had been captured in this manner, the remainder of Pannonia was induced to capitulate.

In his description of Octavian's siege of Segestica, Cassius Dio explicitly says that Tiberius had a ditch dug (obviously few decades after the siege, during the Pannonian war when Tiberius' operational headquarters was stationed in Siscia, as noted by Cassius Dio himself, 55, 30, 4), with which he additionally secured the town (49, 37, 3). Dio's assertion is certainly based on the sources he used. Tiberius must have had the ditch dug in order to reinforce the defences of his camp, most probably already in 12 BC when he took over the command of Roman forces in Pannonia, or at the latest in 6 AD, when the insurrection began (Wilkes 1969: 52). As already pointed out, determining the exact position of Tiberius' ditch could provide a piece of information which would be a major hint to the precise location of the main legionary camp in Siscia, at least during the period from 12 BC to the Pannonian uprising.

Following Dio's words, it is because of that ditch that the Kupa encloses Siscia in his time too, i.e. in the 3rd century. Accordingly, the legionary fortress where Tiberius stayed

must have been positioned on the left bank of the Kupa, i.e. on the spot where the Roman town was eventually built. Is Dio's text providing the answer to the question where the legionary camp could have been? Indeed, what do all these sources tell us, as far as the ditch and the emplacement of Segestica and Siscia are concerned? To put it briefly, sources are confusing...

Appian states that the prehistoric settlement was on the river Sava, encircled by a river and a large ditch. Was he talking about the Pogorelac peninsula or the area of nowadays Sisak, which actually happens to be on a peninsula between the Kupa and the Sava?

Strabo does not mention a ditch at all, but he states that Segestica lies in a plain adjacent to the Sava river and near which the Kupa joins the Sava. He does also mention that the town is situated on several navigable rivers. What area did he have in mind: Pogorelac or Sisak?

Velleius is unfortunately too vague in his account when he describes Tiberius' main military base as he only mentions Siscia. Nonetheless, does his explicit mention of Siscia imply the positioning of Tiberius' camp on the left bank of the Kupa, i.e. in nowadays Sisak?

Pliny the Elder is rather clear: there is a town named Siscia between the Kupa and Sava, while the island past which the Kupa flows before joining the Sava near Siscia is named Segestica. We are indisputably dealing here with the present-day Pogorelac but for Pliny this toponym does not seem to denote the name of a settlement. Does the term island imply that there was still a ditch transforming the peninsula into a *de facto* island? This sounds quite likely. Was Pliny describing the appearance of that area after Tiberius had ordered the ditch dug? If this is so, it appears that Tiberius was fortifying the space where Segestica, not Siscia, originally lay, so accordingly, in the moment when he was in command there the camp should have been located in the zone of Pogorelac.

Cassius Dio complicates the matter: according to his account, Siscia appears to be situated at the same spot where the prehistoric settlement used to be, i.e. Segestica. He also mentions a ditch, dug by Tiberius, and he assumes that this ditch encircles Siscia in his time as well, i.e. in the early 3rd century AD. How reliable is Cassius Dio as far as this matter is concerned? When we compare Dio's words to Pliny's description, one easily notices the discrepancy. Segestica is commonly considered to have been situated on Pogorelac and it could have been transformed from a peninsula into

an island only by artificial means, i.e. by digging a ditch and separating it from the mainland. Pliny's account also conforms to Appian's description of Segestica being completely encircled by the river and a large ditch.

Dio nonetheless explicitly says that the Colapis river, i.e. the Kupa, encircles Siscia in his time thanks to the ditch built by Tiberius, but at the time of Octavian's attack there was a gap between the city walls and the Sava river which was fortified by the Romans with palisades and ditches during the siege. In this passage Dio presumably refers to the circumvallation, i.e. the usual Roman siege practice, confirmed also by Appian, who observes that Octavian had the town surrounded with palisades and ditches from all directions (*Ill. XXIII, 67*). Since we are quite certain that the siege was laid to the settlement situated at Pogorelac, Dio conceivably misinterpreted what he read in his sources. There is no doubt that Roman positions were fortified all around Segestica, which obviously includes the peninsula laying between the Kupa and the Sava, i.e. the area of the future Roman colony. In any case, Dio's description matches the position of the Roman Siscia, positioned on a peninsula between the Kupa and the Sava, although Segestica was in all likelihood on Pogorelac. Since Dio claimed quite unambiguously that the prehistoric native settlement was at the same place where Roman Siscia would later be, some historians, most notably G. Veith, understandably assumed this to be the case (Veith 1914: 51-58; Wilkes 1969: 52). This issue was discussed in

some length in a paper published in 2007 and will thus be only briefly summarised here (Radman-Livaja 2007: 162-166).

J. Šašel rejected Veith's hypothesis on the strength of arguments, and the position of Segestica at Pogorelac is at any rate indisputably corroborated by numerous prehistoric finds (Šašel 1974: 726). How is one then to interpret Dio's text when even Veith, a professional soldier and expert on topography and military tactics, concluded on the basis of Dio's account that the Roman town developed on the spot of the prehistoric settlement? Presumably, Dio, trying to be as concise as possible, combined information from various sources and inadvertently wrote a confusing description of the siege of Segestica, from which we cannot ascertain clearly either the precise arrangement of Octavian's siege fortifications or the exact position of the subsequently constructed Tiberius' large ditch. As a matter of fact, it seems that Dio described the city of Siscia of his time when recounting the siege of Segestica.⁶ Pliny the Elder devotes far less attention to Siscia than Dio but he makes a clear distinction between the island of Segestica and the town of Siscia.⁷ Despite mentioning just a couple of pieces of information, Pliny's text carries a certain weight precisely due to the small chronological distance separating it from the events we are interested in. Due to its position on a peninsula, Segestica was surrounded by the Kupa from all sides except from the southeast, and by digging a ditch on that side it would ef-

⁶ While quoting the sources, he undoubtedly expressed his personal knowledge as well. Having been the legate of Pannonia Superior, he certainly knew Pannonia well and we may reasonably surmise that he visited Siscia in person (Millar 1964: 23: 25-26: 209; Reinhold 1988: 4). We may thus assume that he had a rather clear idea about the local topography (Šašel Kos 1986: 34). It is likewise unarguable that he must have been aware that Segestica from his sources was the settlement that existed at that place before the construction of the Roman town but, in order not to mislead his readers, he exclusively used the widely known name of Siscia instead of Segestica, which was likely unknown to the wider public (Šašel Kos 1997: 191-192). Nonetheless, we may doubt that he was aware of the fact that the prehistoric settlement did not lie on the same spot as Siscia, but on the opposite bank of the Kupa. It would appear that, while relating the siege of Segestica, he simply described the city of Siscia of his time, arguably because he believed that the Roman town he knew had been built on the very same spot where the settlement conquered by Octavian used to be. Could Dio have situated Tiberius' ditch inaccurately? After all, he says that the ditch was present in his time as well, so we may assume that Dio saw it himself. It is quite likely that Siscia could have been surrounded by a ditch in the early 3rd century AD but was this ditch really the work of Tiberius? Having read in his sources that Tiberius had a ditch dug, Dio conceivably concluded that Siscia's defensive ditch dates from that time. A ditch surrounding Siscia would definitely receive water from the Kupa, so Dio's claim that the Kupa flows around the entire town makes perfectly sense. Dio finished his work by 229 at the latest (Šašel Kos 1986: 44) and although he must have been quite knowledgeable about Pannonia - and presumably Siscia as well - it has to be pointed out that he became acquainted with that region more than two centuries after Octavian's siege and Bato's revolt. For information about these historical events he could obviously rely only on written sources. All his commentaries and interpolations based on his personal experience cannot be indiscriminately applied to the Augustan period.

⁷ While Dio was separated by centuries from the events he describes, Pliny was born in 23 or 24 A.D., i.e. mere 15 years after the end of the great Pannonian insurrection. It would be a farfetched claim that Pliny may have known elderly people who besieged Segestica under Octavian's command but, as a young man, he almost certainly had the opportunity to meet people who fought under Tiberius in Pannonia. For Pliny the conquest of Pannonia and Bato's revolt were not ancient history but events witnessed by people his grandparents and parents may have known personally.

fectively be transformed into an island on the Kupa. This interpretation would explain Pliny's assertion that Segestica was an island. If Pogorelac was artificially transformed into an island by the digging of a ditch of sorts, could that be the same ditch that Tiberius ordered dug and that Dio mentions several centuries later? Or was Segestica *de facto* an island already at the time of Octavian's siege, considering that Appian mentions the existence of a defensive ditch of sorts? Indeed, Tiberius's soldiers could have dug deeper the old defensive ditch on the south-eastern access to Pogorelac, transforming it into a more formidable obstacle for attackers. If Tiberius really dug a ditch across Pogorelac, it would not be unlikely that the ditch was still in existence in Pliny's time but with the passage of time, it gradually became filled up, having lost all military significance. By the 3rd century AD no visible traces were left of it, so Dio could have reached the erroneous conclusion that the ditch surrounding Siscia dated from Tiberius' time, which would at any rate be consistent with his opinion that the Roman town grew on the foundations of the prehistoric settlement. Naturally, we cannot wholly reject the possibility that Tiberius had the ditch dug on the left bank of the Kupa, i.e. north of Siscia. Nonetheless, no traces of such a large ditch have been identified there (Veith 1914: 55). Actually, had by chance Tiberius' ditch been dug

across the peninsula between the Kupa and the Sava, would not Pliny point out the fact that Siscia lays on a river island? The analysis of written sources surpasses the limits of this paper, but even these few questions without certain answers clearly demonstrate how many ambiguities are still left regarding the earliest period of Roman occupation.

If we are to follow ancient writers, Segestica could have been either on Pogorelac, the peninsula surrounded by the Kupa river, or at the place where the Roman town developed subsequently, i.e. on the peninsula between the Kupa and Sava rivers.

The ditch could however be a clue to solve this matter, the ditch which transformed Segestica into an island. Presumably, Tiberius used the very same ditch to reinforce the defences of his main military base. Depending on the position of the ditch, we may identify both the location of the prehistoric settlement as well as Tiberius' military camp.

And here comes archaeology: although there was not much fieldwork, past research and ongoing excavations at Pogorelac show undoubtedly that an Iron Age settlement must have been situated there. Nowadays, due to the undisputed existence of prehistoric layers, it is an accepted fact that the prehistoric Segestica lays at the position of the present-day Pogorelac, the peninsula surrounded by the Kupa

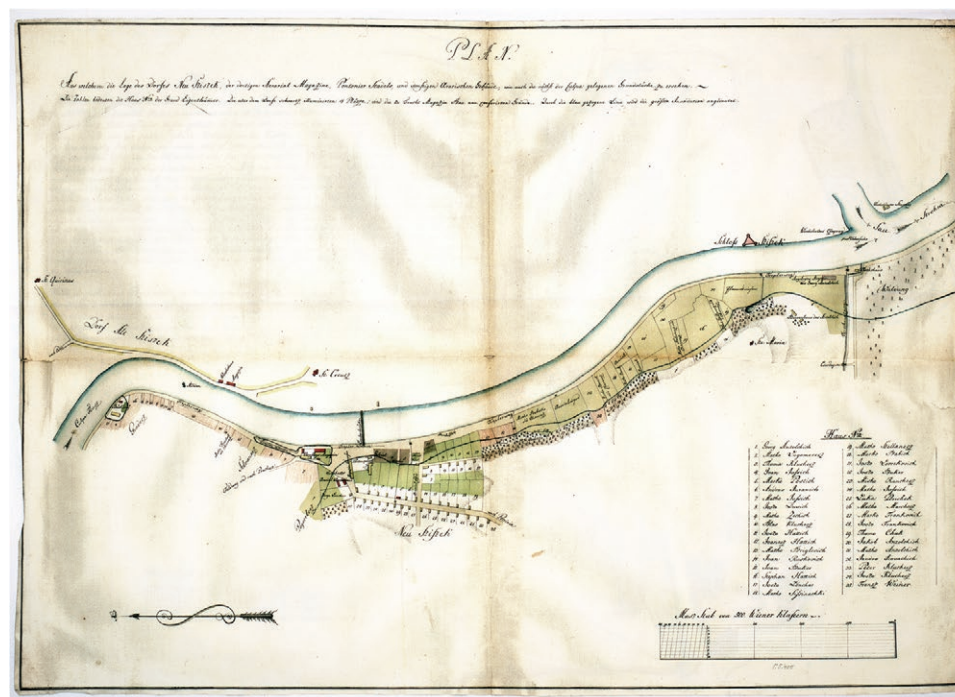


Fig. 1. Plan aus welchen die Lage des Dorfes Neu-Sziszek, der dortigen Aerarial-Magazine, Pontonier und sonstigen Aerarial Gebäude, wie auch die nächst der Culpa gelegenen Grundstücke zu erschen.-1:5 040. - [S.l.: ca 1790].- Rukopisni plan: u boji; 70x50 cm, Kartografska zbirka Ratnog arhiva, Beč, sign. G.Lh.638.



Fig. 2. Situations-Plan über die zwischen Militäre Sziszek und Bandino Szello projekteirte Eisenbahn, und über den – von dem letztgenannten Orte bis St. Archangel bei Josephtal entworfene chaussemaeszig Straszeng/josip Kajetan Knežić. - 1:43 200. -[S.I.] : 1838. - Rukopisna karta u 3 lista: u boji; 75x46 cm svaki, Kartografska zbirka Hrvatskog državnog arhiva, Zagreb, sign. D.XI.1.

in the last meander before the confluence with the Sava, on the right bank of the Kupa, i.e. on the bank opposite the Roman Siscia. However, recent research has also confirmed the existence of late Iron Age habitations on the opposite, i.e. left bank of the Kupa river. It appears that this area could have been related to the settlement on the right bank. Archaeological excavations thus confirm that both banks were inhabited before the Roman conquest. But, where was the ditch mentioned by several ancient authors? By comparing records gathered from old maps and surveys, we may obtain more conclusive data about the whereabouts of the ditch and accordingly of the prehistoric settlement and Tiberius' camp. On a plan of Military Sisak from 1790 a ditch is to be seen to the south (Fig. 1), described only as such (Verschanzung), with no particular name. Nevertheless, the topographic situation is far from being clear on this map, at least as far as the toponym „Rimski šanac” (“Roman ditch”) is concerned.

The map from 1838 shows a larger and more complete topographical picture of Military Sisak (Novi Sisak in present times). The existence of a ditch is confirmed, but again without stating a particular name (Fig. 2). So far maps indicate the presence of some kind of ditch but a question remains unanswered: what period is this ditch from? Other

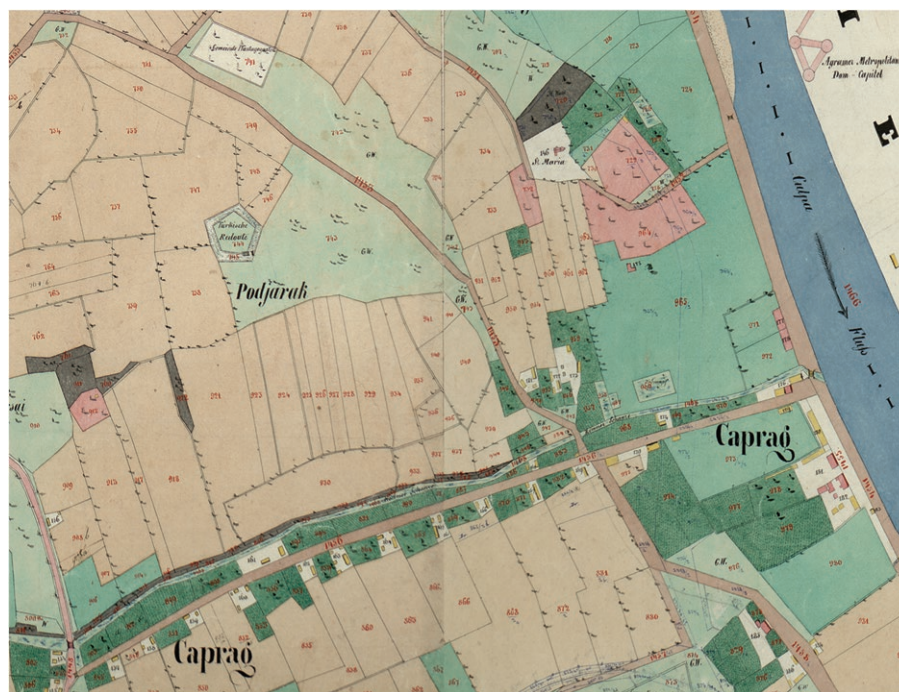


Fig. 3. Compagnie Station Sissek in Banal Grenz Regiments Bezirke 1860/ izmjerio geometar Nikola Milojević, poručnik. -1: 2 880.- [Siseck]: 1860.- Rukopisni plan u 14 listova: u boji; 67x57 cm, Fond Državne geodetske uprave, Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb.

maps might offer some clues. For instance, a map from 1860 clearly states the toponym for one ditch: Römer Schanze (Fig. 3). This map is very accurate and full of topographic details for Military Sisak, of which „Pogorelac” is an integral part. This map mentions also the toponym „Türkische Redoute”; such details could imply that cartographers had access to detailed information about toponyms they drew, since they do not use generic terms such as “old ditch” or “old redoubt”.

Another drawing might confirm the toponym „Turkish Redoubt” and imply that maps are pretty reliable (Fig. 4).

On a map from 1880 the ditch and the so called Turkish redoubt are still to be seen (Fig. 5), while a map from 1893 again shows an unnamed ditch on the same spot (Fig. 6).

On a map from 1901 the toponym „Rimski šanac” is clearly stated, but the ditch is not visible anymore (Fig. 7).

Finally, a map from 1925 shows the same situation as the map from 1901 (Fig. 8).

According to maps and topographic surveys from modern times, i.e. from the 18th century onwards, the only traces of a ditch which would correspond to the description given

by the sources are to be found on Pogorelac. This could presumably be the very same ditch which was part of Segestica’s fortifications before Octavian’s siege.

No similar structures are to be seen on the left bank of the Kupa, on the peninsula between the Kupa and Sava rivers, i.e. north of Roman Siscia and the modern town of Sisak. By similar we mean a ditch which would completely cut off the peninsula from the mainland and transform it into an artificial island. Nonetheless, the traces of a ditch which could likely correspond to the defensive ditch of Siscia, presumably the one observed by Cassius Dio, may clearly be seen on a 1783 map kept in the Szechenyi library in Budapest (Vuković 2010: 121-139).

In any case, the presence of a large ditch separating the Pogorelac peninsula from the mainland corresponds to Pliny the Elder’s description of Segestica.

Archaeological evidence also points to the existence of an Iron Age settlement on Pogorelac.

In our opinion, Segestica should definitely be situated on Pogorelac and there is little doubt that a ditch was reinforcing the settlement’s southern defences, transforming it into



Turci osvajaju Sisak u kolovozu 1593., W. P. Zimmermann, Augsburg, 1603.

Fig. 4. veduta s prikazom Bitke kod Siska 1593. : W.P.Zimmermann, Eikonographia aller deren ungarisher Statt Vostunge Castellen und Hauser welche von Anfang der Regierung Rudolphi des anderen Romischen Keyser biss auffdas 1603..., 1603., Augsburg



Fig. 5. [Sisak]/K.u.k. Militargeographisches Institut.- 1:25 000.- Wien: K.u.k. Militargeographisches Institut, [ca 1885.]. Litografija; 83x60 cm, Kartografska zbirka Hrvatskog državnog arhiva, Zagreb, sign. E.II.309.

a virtual island. This does not contradict the fact that a late Iron Age settlement existed on the left bank of the Kupa as well, as shown by some prehistoric structures and dwellings. Presumably, this settlement of an unknown size was somehow related to the settlement on Pogorelac.

We may assume that Tiberius used what was left of the prehistoric ditch on Pogorelac as a means to improve the defences of his camp (or one of his camps). Considering the large concentration of troops between 13 BC and 9 AD, it is actually quite likely that units could have been quartered on both banks of the Kupa, i.e. on Pogorelac and in what would become Roman Siscia. Nonetheless, reliable archaeological evidence of Roman presence during the Augustan period



Fig. 6. Karta Siska Andrije Colussija, 1893. godina. Vlasništvo Vlatke Vukelić, donacija Gradskom muzeju Sisak.

exists so far only for the left bank, i.e. for Siscia. On the other hand, no traces of a ditch separating the Siscia/Sisak peninsula from the mainland have been discovered yet. Such traces are not recorded on old maps either and we are inclined to believe that Cassius Dio was confused by his sources, mistakenly believing that defensive ditches surrounding Siscia in his time had been dug by Tiberius' troops. Traces of a large ditch which corresponds far better to the so called Tiberius' ditch - i.e. a ditch transforming the peninsula into an island - are only to be seen on maps depicting Pogorelac.

Hopefully, future research, geophysical surveying and excavations will provide definite answers to our dilemma.

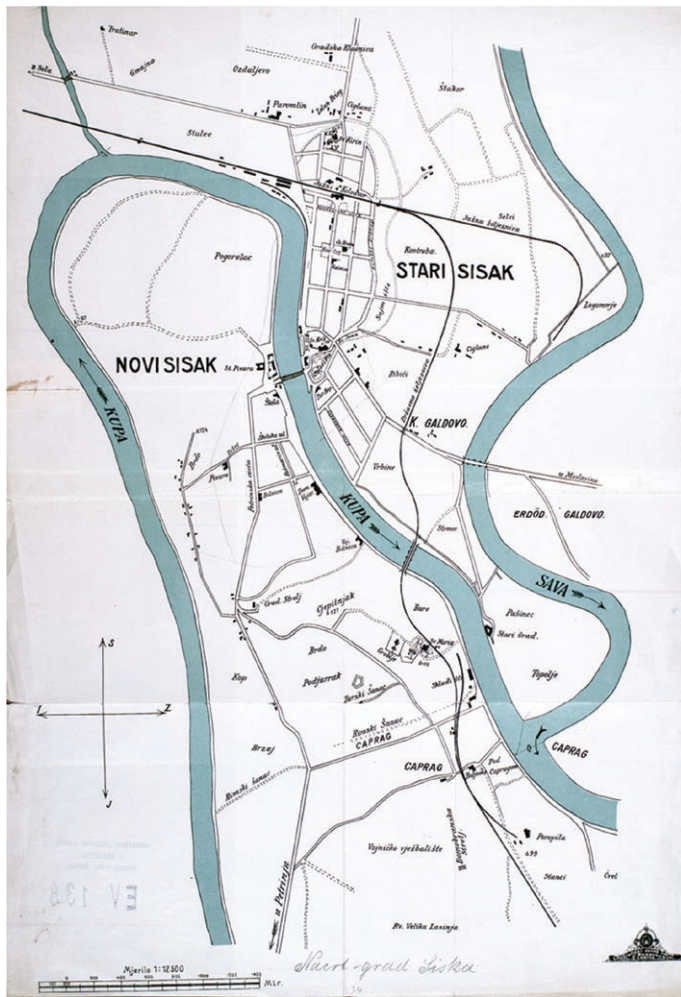


Fig 7. Nacrt grada Siska . - 1: 12 500.- Zagreb: litografički zavod V. Rožankowski, [1901].- Litografija: u boji; 33x45 cm, Kartografska zbirka Hrvatskog državnog arhiva, Zagreb, sign. E.V. 138.

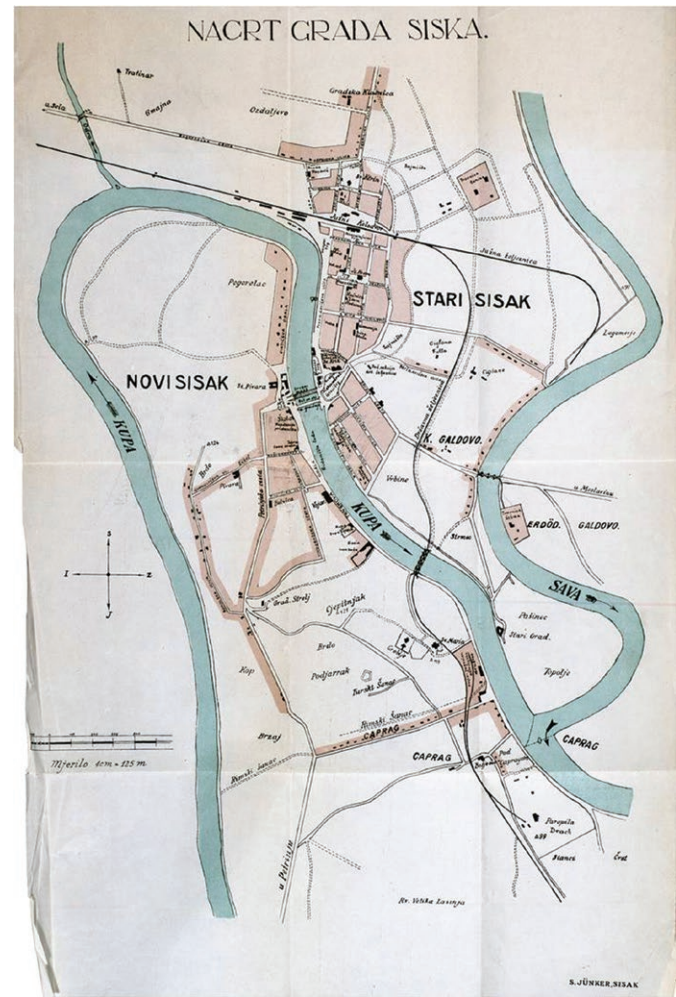


Fig 8. Nacrt grada Siska . - 1: 12 500.- Sisak: S. Jünker, 1925.- Litografija: u boji; 33x45 cm, Fond Savske banovine, kut. 136, Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb.

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O UBIKACIJI TIBERIJEVOG ŠANCA U SISIJI

Antički izvori o opsadi Segestike i razvoju Siscije u prvim desetljećima rimske vlasti su poprilično manjkavi, a nerijetko i konfuzni, pa njihova interpretacija ostaje podložna brojnim nedoumicama. Arheološka istraživanja još uvijek ne omogućavaju pružanje nedvosmislenih odgovora na brojna otvorena pitanja o topografiji Segestike i Siscije, no nije isključeno da se pomoću karata i katastarskih arhivskih podataka iz 18., 19. i ranog 20. stoljeća, barem donekle može bolje razumjeti lokalna topografija, barem u onoj mjeri u kojoj se ta topografija opisuje u djelima antičkih pisaca. Uspoređujući podatke koje nam o geografskom položaju Segestike i rimskog naselja koje se naknadno razvilo na tom prostoru pružaju Apijan, Dion Kasije, Strabon, Plinije Stariji te Velej Paterkul, lako je uočiti diskrepancije, a posebno se ističe podatak o postojanju velikog šanca kojeg je dao izgraditi Tiberije kako bi zaštitio Sisciju. Kako se kod nekih pisaca spominje i da je Segestika bila zaštićena velikim šancem, postavlja se pitanje je li riječ o istoj fortifikaciji. Izvori su po tom pitanju poprilično zbunjujući, a ni sam položaj tog šanca nije prepoznat sa sigurnošću. Ukoliko je riječ o šancu koji je štitio Segestiku, nema dvojbe da se morao nalaziti na Pogorelcu, no, ako je suditi po Dionu Kasiju, nije isključeno ni da se nalazio na suprotnoj, siscijanskoj strani. Skloni smo vjerovati da je Tiberije iskoristio pretpovijesnu fortifikaciju, odnosno da je taj šanac sjekao Pogorelac, tim više što sve stare karte ukazuju na postojanje takvog šanca upravo na tom mjestu. Taj se podatak ujedno sasvim poklapa s riječima Plinija Starijeg. Tragova velikog šanca koji bi odvajao Sisciju od kopna na sjevernoj strani nema, što ne ide u prilog tvrdnji Diona Kasija. Čini nam se da je Dion Kasije krivo interpretirao svoje izvore i zaključio da je opkop oko Siscije iz njegovog vremena šanac kojeg je dao izgraditi Tiberije. Ukoliko šanac na južnoj strani Pogorelca ima veze s Tiberijem, zaključak bi trebao biti da je rimski vojni logor morao biti na tom poluotoku. Međutim, arheološka istraživanja zasad ne dokazuju postojanje rimskog vojnog logora na Pogorelcu, dok na drugoj obali Kupe istraživanja ukazuju na slojeve koji se nedvojbeno mogu datirati u augustejsko i tiberijejsko razdoblje. S obzirom na velike koncentracije trupa između 13. pr. Kr. i 9. pos. Kr., možemo pretpostaviti da je vojnih logora bilo više, odnosno da su rimske trupe bile smještene na obje obale Kupe, i na Pogorelcu (tvrdnja kojoj bi u prilog išlo postojanje šanca) i na mjestu gdje će se razviti Siscija (čemu u prilog idu arheološki tragovi). Preostaje nam nadati se da će buduća istraživanja napokon pružiti jasne odgovore na ova pitanja.

Ključne riječi: Siscija, Segestika, Oktavijan, Tiberije, šanac