

Roman legionary camps were not only a place for soldiers to be stationed in barracks. The legions, as large units of about 5,000 soldiers, needed accommodation in an area of about 20 hectares, but a large part of it was occupied by extensive buildings with a specific function. Among them, the legionary headquarters building (principia), which had mainly a religious and propaganda function, with a central square decorated with statues of deities and emperors. In the immediate vicinity of this building there was the residence of the legion commander (called the legate of the legion), who, according to Roman tradition, came from the senatorial class and therefore belonged to the highest social elites. As an aristocrat, the commander had a richly equipped residence and servants at his disposal, and could also live in the camp with his family.

Polish excavations in the Roman legionary fortress in Novae have been ongoing since 1960 and are today the longest-explored site outside Poland. So far, archaeologists have discovered, among others: the principia building, the military hospital and the baths - all these buildings are monumental and occupy a large area of the site. However, we still do not know where the unit commander lived. By using the most modern methods of detecting structures using specialized non-destructive research equipment to detect remains underground, archaeologists working in Novae will try to locate the place where the legate's residence could have been located. Selected places within the building will be subject to excavations in order to obtain artefacts and samples for laboratory tests, thanks to which it will be possible to determine the quality of the furnishing, the products consumed, as well as the fate of the building in the late antique period, when the structure of the army changed and the residence could be transformed into a house or buildings serving other purposes.



*Golden earring found during reconnaissance made in the place potentially being the residence of the legionary legate in Novae (phot. A. Tomas)*