



ISTRIAN OIL FOR EXPORT: NEW RESEARCH ON THE OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION FACILITY AT BARBARIGA

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and Robert Matijašić



R3NUrb MSCA Project



► **Economic Landscapes of Roman Istria (ELRI)**

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Juraj Dobrila University of Pula

► **Roman Landscape and settlement dynamics of the Istrian colonial territories project (RoLand)**

Davor Bulić, Croatian Science Foundation

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(Emeritus) - Project Advisor

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- Landscape and Environment

Fabian Welc - Cardinal Stefan Wyzinski University in Warsaw,
Institute of Archaeology (Poland) - Geophysical Survey

Ana Konestra - Institute of Archaeology, Zagreb (Croatia) -
Ceramics

Dolores Matika - Archaeobotany



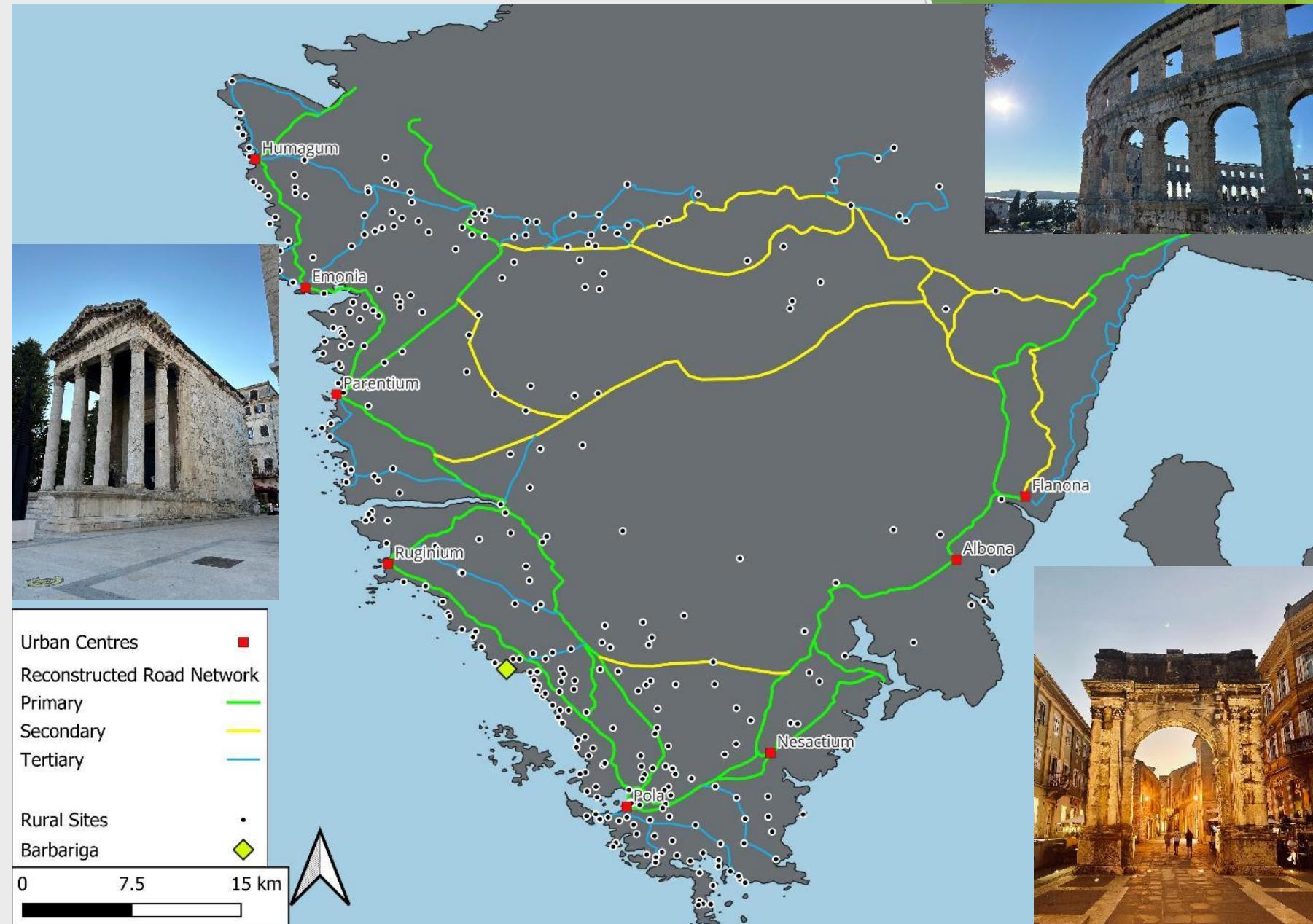
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- *Colonia Iulia Pola* and *Colonia Iulia Parentium* were founded around 45 BC

- The Western coast relatively densely settled

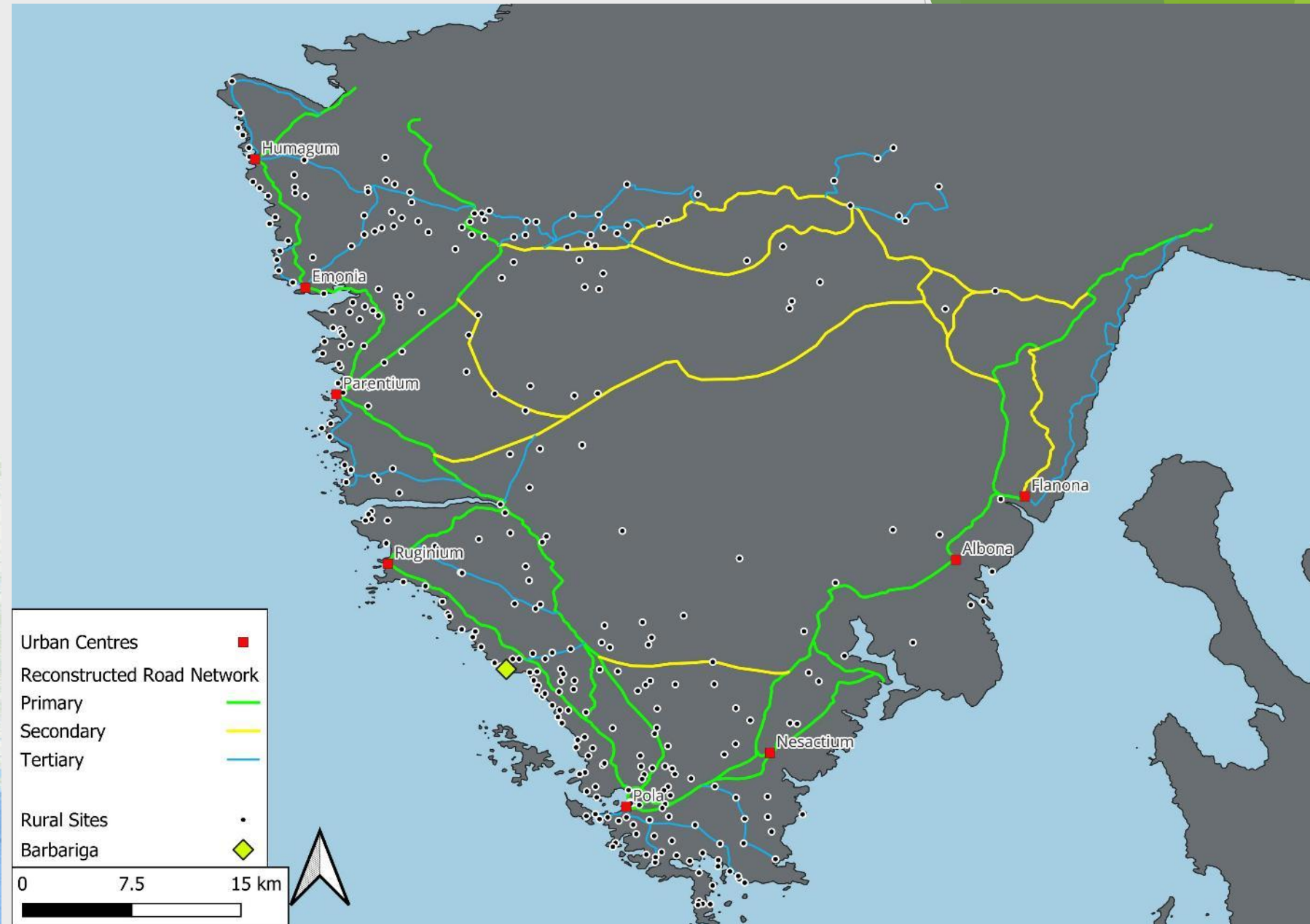
- Harbours and smaller ports along the entire Western coast

McLean and Šprem (2025), Modelling Mobility, the Road Network and Urban-Rural Divide of Roman Istria: A Comparison of Least Cost Paths, Cost Corridors and Circuit Theory



Istrian Olive Oil Exports

- *Histria* becomes part of the Italian *Regio X* by the end of the 1st century BC
- From then we see a greater expansion of agricultural exploitation



► Known in antiquity and today for its olive oil

“Italy leads the world in this gift of nature, especially in the region of Venafrum... The remaining contest is between the soil of Istria and that of Baetica, ending in a draw.”

(Plin. N. H. 15, 8)

“Corduba, more fruitful than the oil-rich Venafrum, yet as perfect as the oil in an amphora from Istria.”

(Mart. Epigr., 12, 63, 1-3)

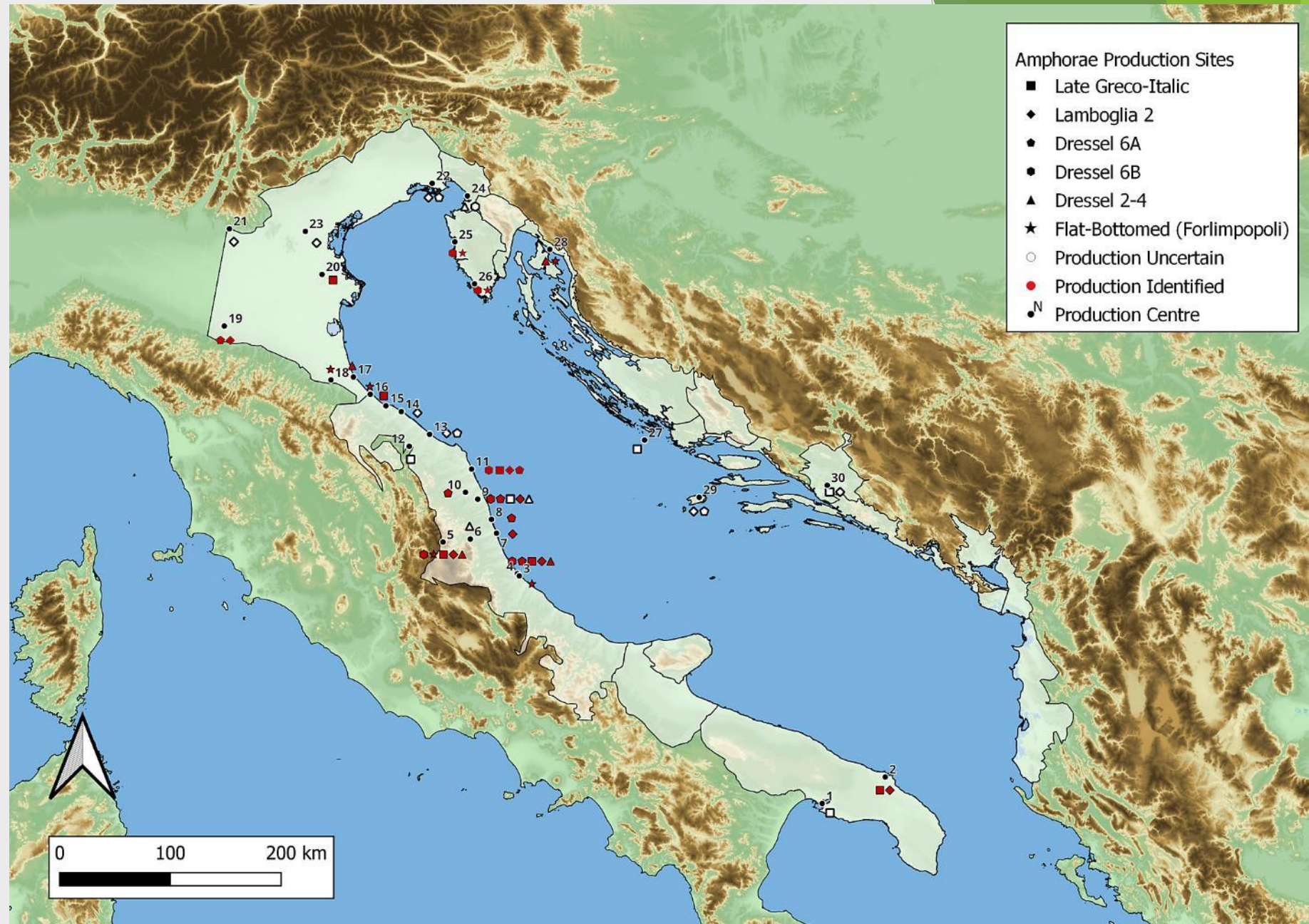


Istrian Olive Oil Exports

Istria was part of a wider Adriatic network of exchange

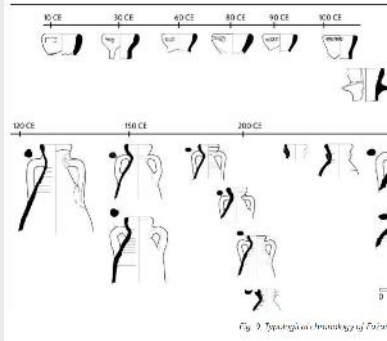
Oil export in Istria is first evidenced with Dressel 6B found in the Cisalpine regions during the Augustan period

By the reign of by the Flavian period, Dressel 6B become the dominant oil amphorae in the Cisalpine regions.



Istrian Olive Oil Exports

- Two major Amphorae workshops at Fažana and Loron



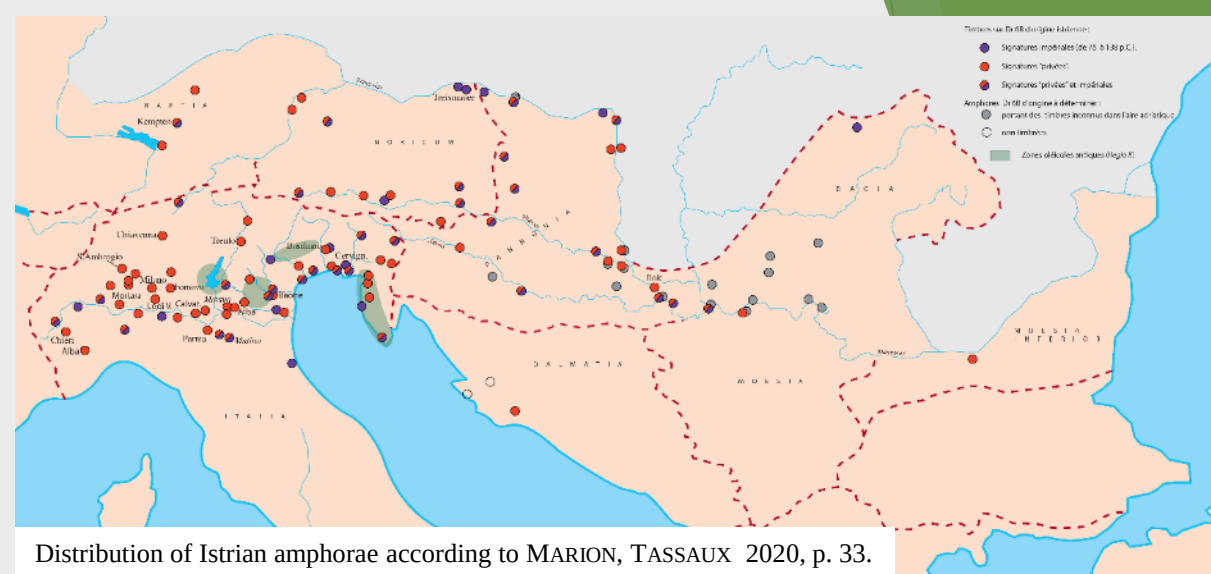
Istrian Olive Oil Exports

► Amphorae from Fažana and Loron are found across Central European provinces and Northern Italy

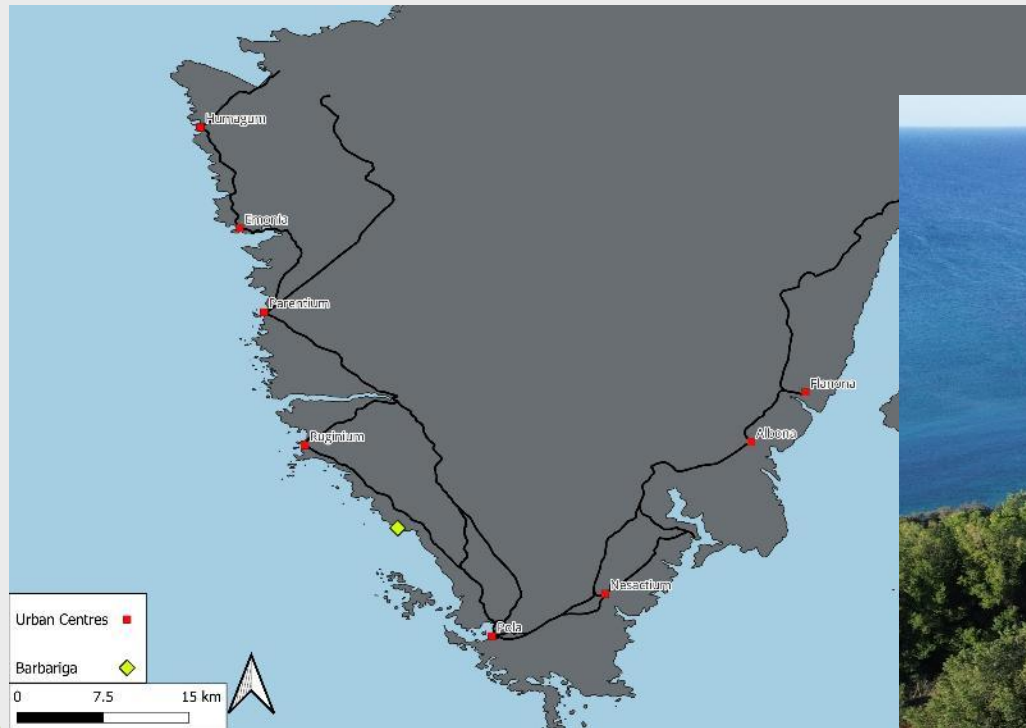
► After Hadrian's reign, the distribution is less well evidenced, and production seems to have declined

► Baetican Dressel 20's seem to replace 6B's in their traditional markets

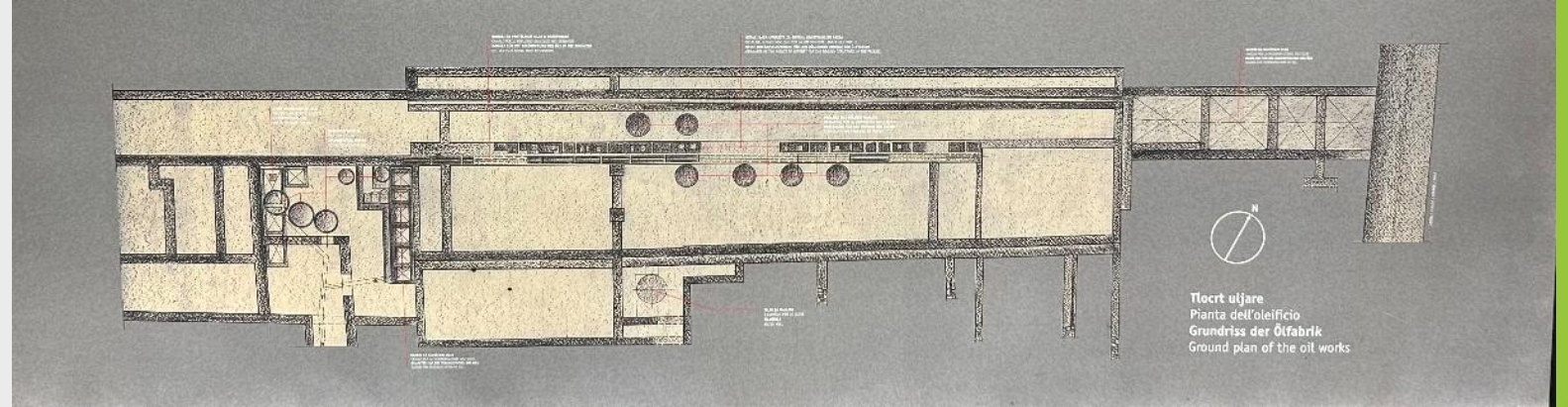
► A climatic shift has been suggested as part of this declining Istrian olive oil production



- The Roman Oil production centre at Barbariga



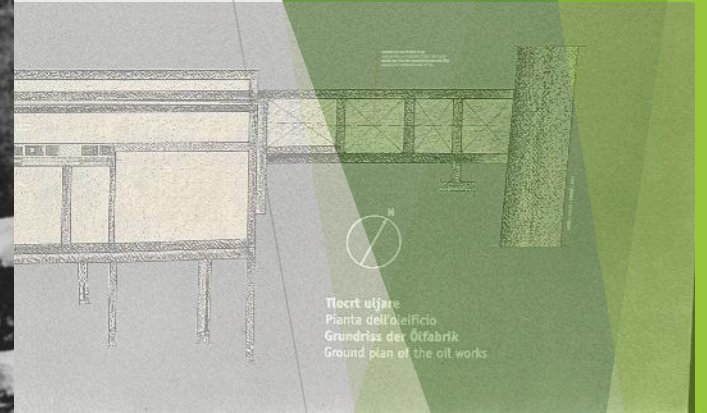
► Štefan Mlakar, 1953-1956



Barbariga

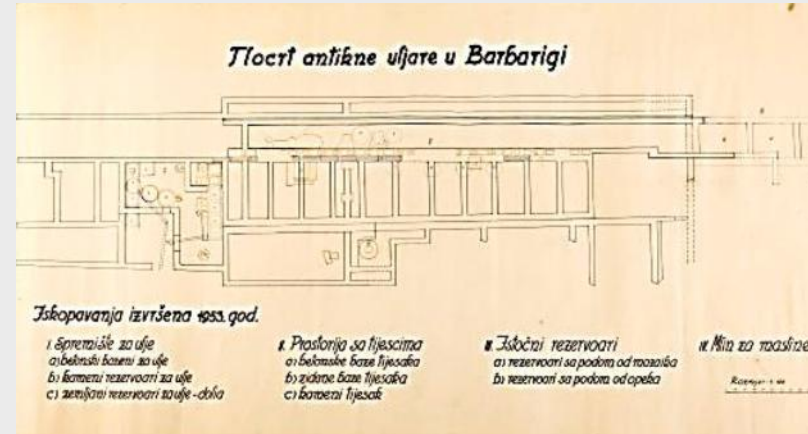
1950's Excavations

► Štefan Mlakar, 1953-1956

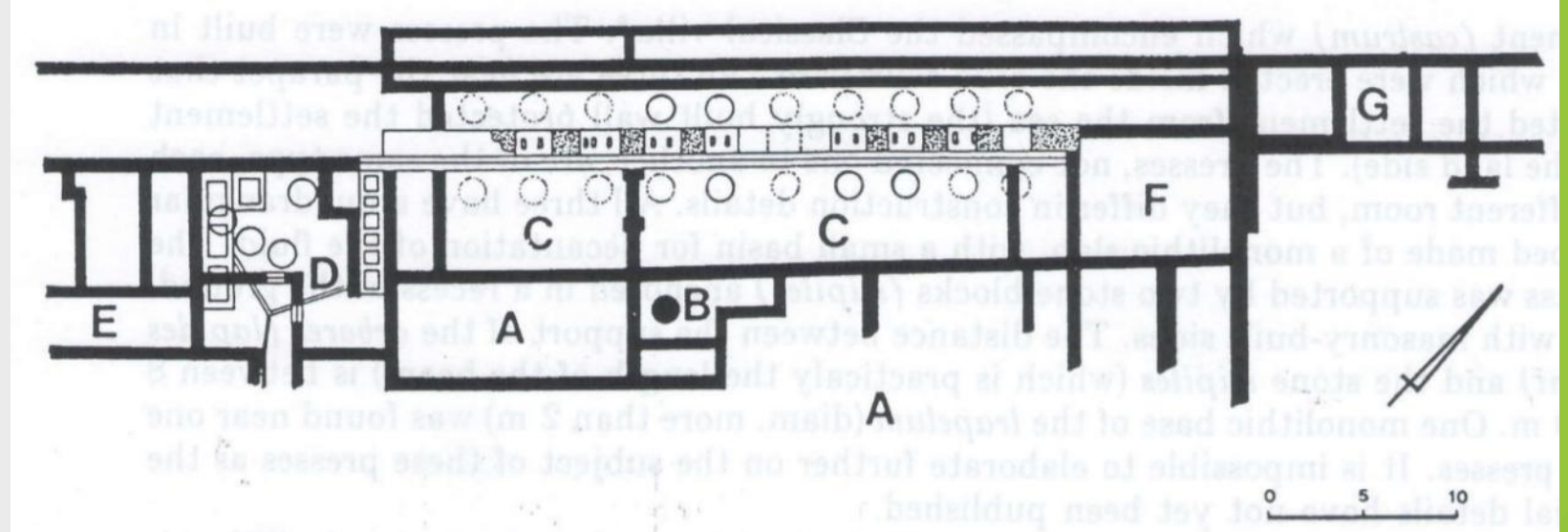


Barbariga 1950's Excavations

- ▶ Štefan Mlakar, 1953-1956
- ▶ 15 site photos
- ▶ 5 brief reports from 1953 (August to September)
- ▶ Additional paragraphs in reports from 1954-1956
- ▶ 2 photos of original museum display

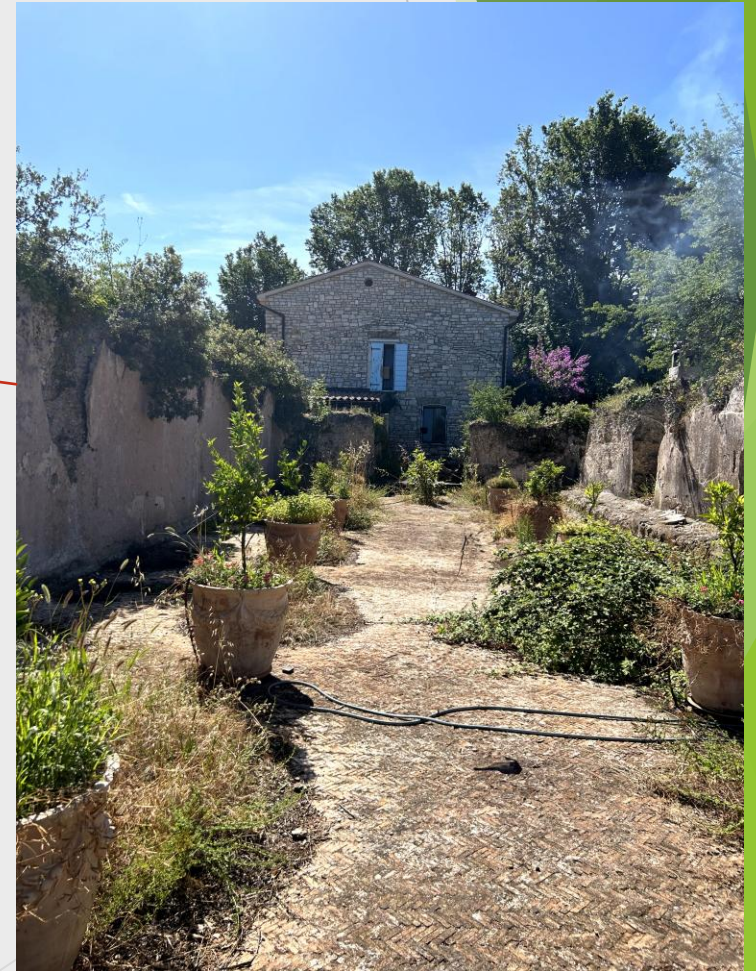


- ▶ The exact nature of the site was nuclear after excavations ended
- ▶ Even the number of presses was nuclear, up to 20 presses in two parallel batteries had been suggested



Matijašić, R. (1982). 'Roman Rural Architecture in the Territory of Colonia Iulia Pola', American Journal of Archaeology 86/1: 53-64.

- There are several aspects to the site beyond what was excavated



- There are several aspects to the site beyond what was excavated



Barbariga
Pre 2024 Season

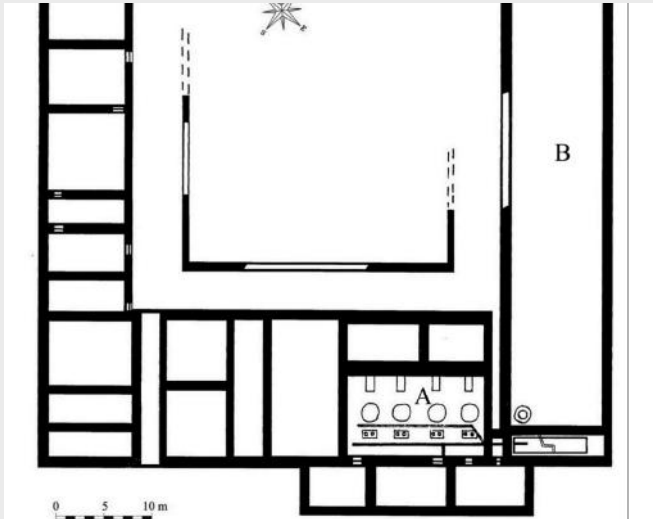


Fig. 3. La villa di Monte Collisi sull'isola di Brioni Maggiore (© D. Bulić, R. Matijašić; rielaborazione di MATIJAŠIĆ 1998).

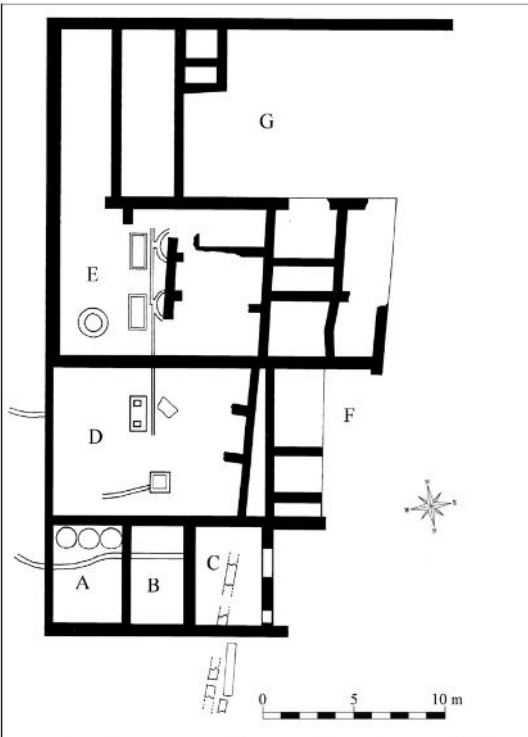


Fig. 4. La villa di Cervera Porto (© D. Bulić, R. Matijašić; rielaborazione di MATIJAŠIĆ 1998).



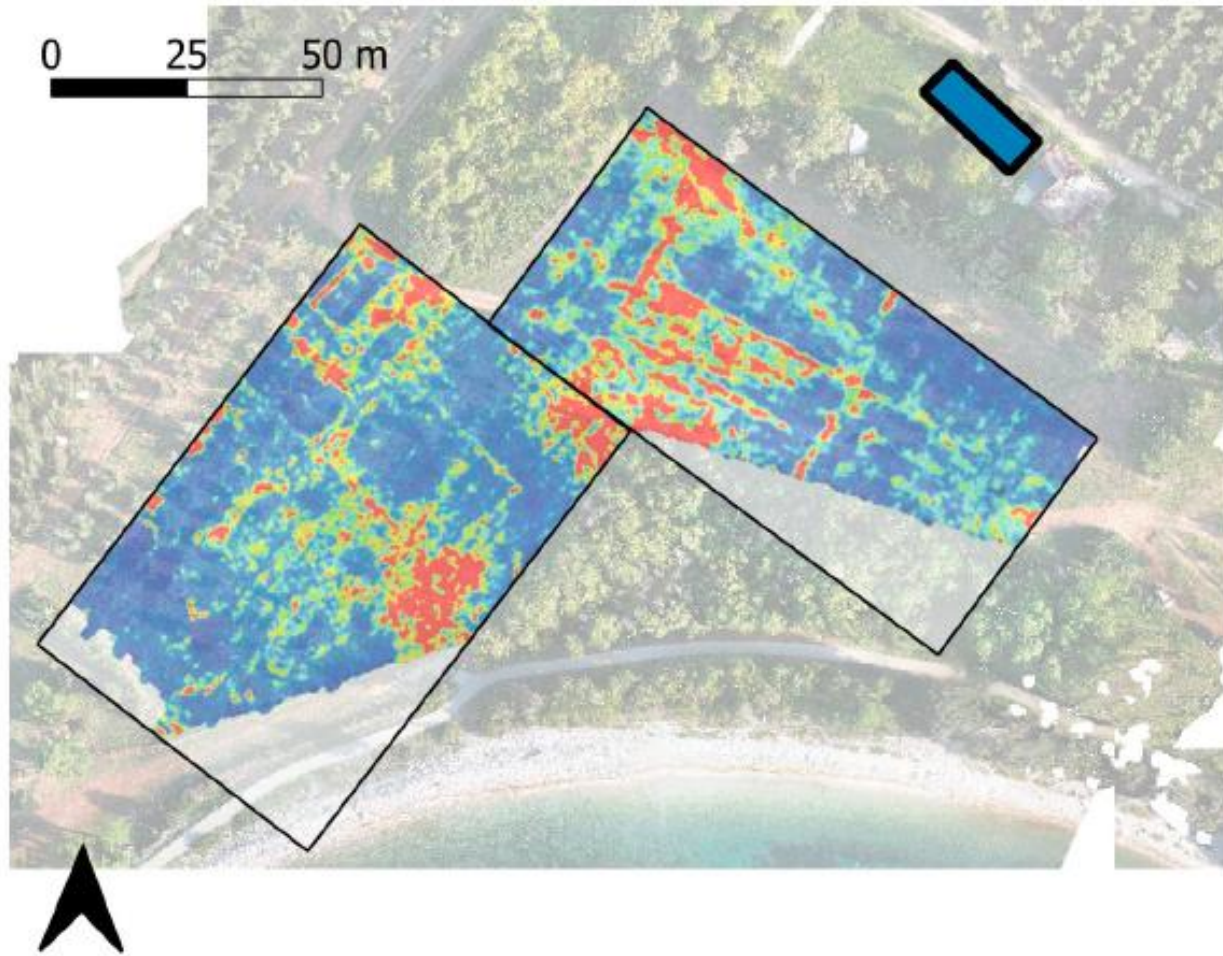
- Initial Non-Invasive Survey at Barbariga
Prof. Fabian Welc, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University,
Warsaw

0 25 50 m

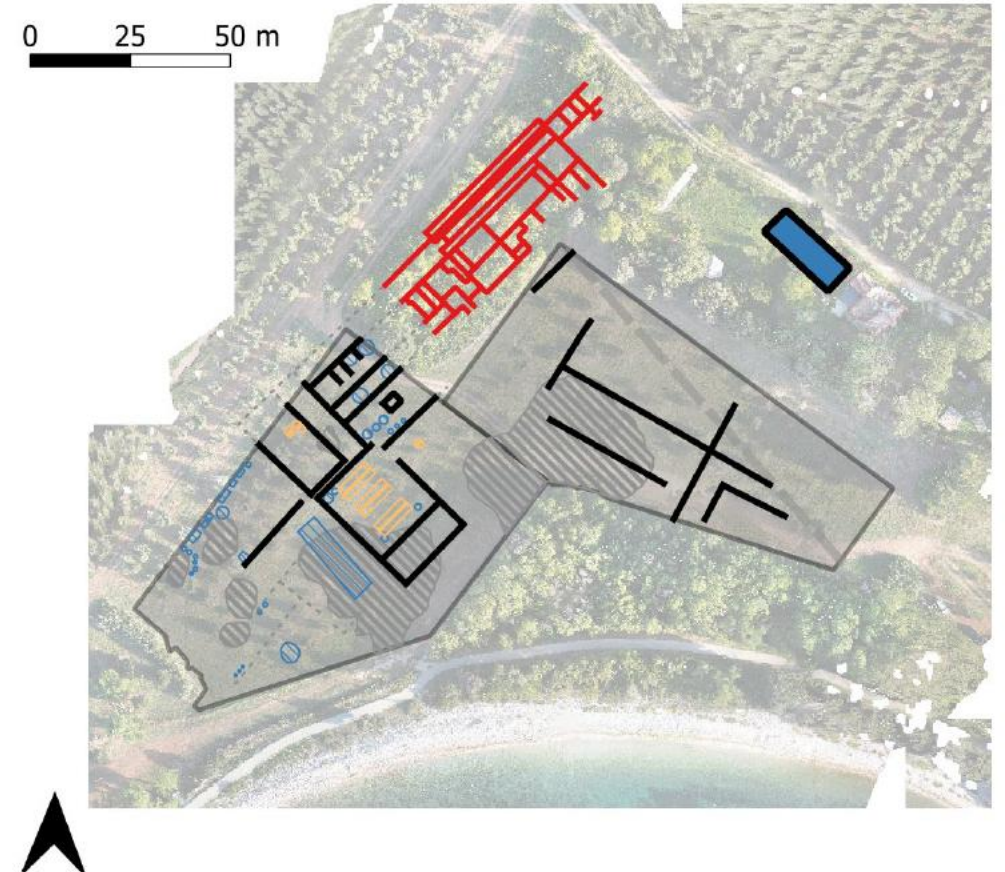


- GPR profiling.
- Select magnetometry profiling
- Photogrammetric documentation of the site by drone.
- Creation of a DEM model of the site based on the photogrammetry.
- Geodetic measurements with RTK/GPS station.

► Initial Non-Invasive Survey at Barbariga
Prof. Fabian Welc, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński
University, Warsaw



- CISTERN
- OLD EXCAVATIONS
- ▨ INTERPRETATION - FEATURES DETECTED BY MAGNETOMETRY
- ▨ INTERPRETATION - AREAS OF DESTRUCTION
- INTERPRETATION - DETECTED WALLS
- INTERPRETATION - OLD ROAD
- INTERPRETATION - DETECTED POSSIBLE WALLS
- ▨ INTERPRETATION - DETECTED ARCHEO STRUCTURES



► Initial investigation focused on the previously excavated areas

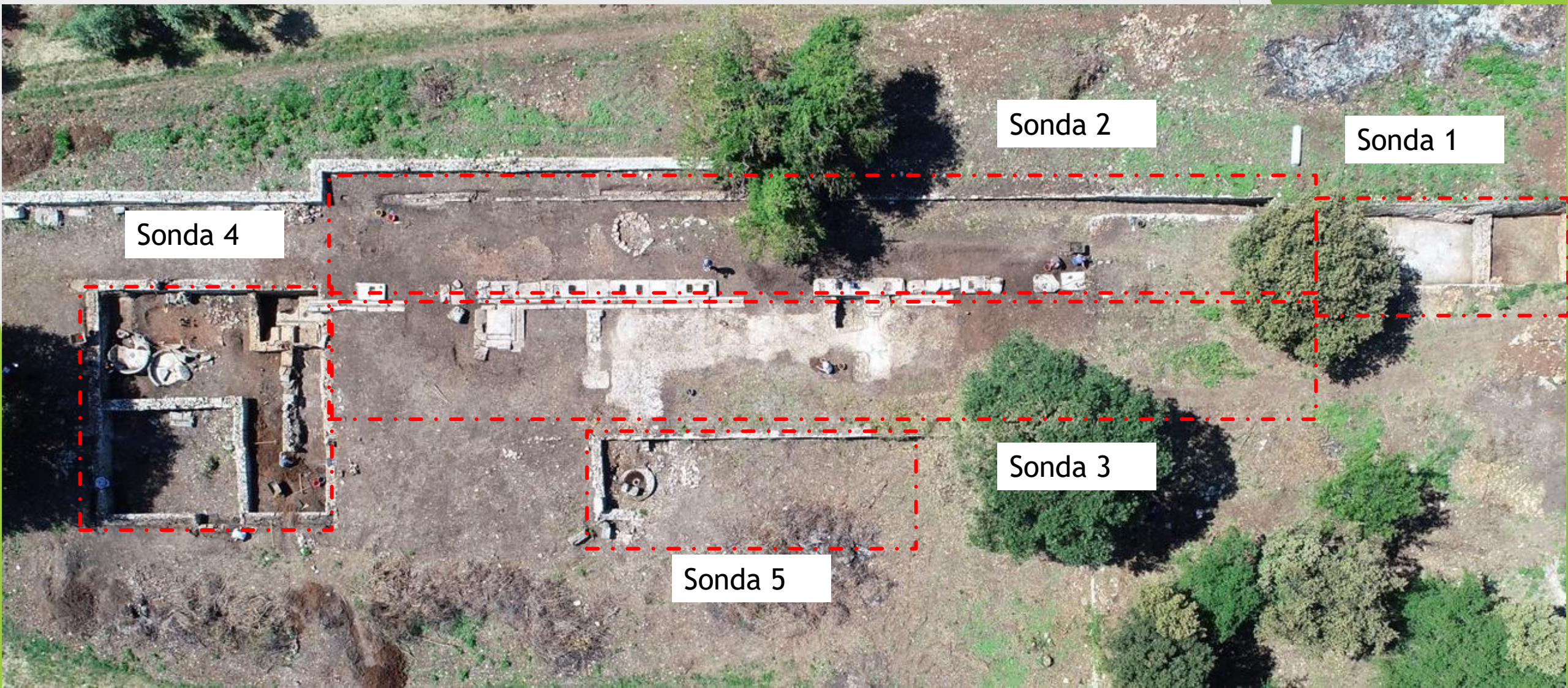


Barbariga

2024 Season

- ▶ A significant area was cleared during the 3 week season





Sonda 2

Sonda 1

Sonda 4

Sonda 3

Sonda 5

► Sonda 1



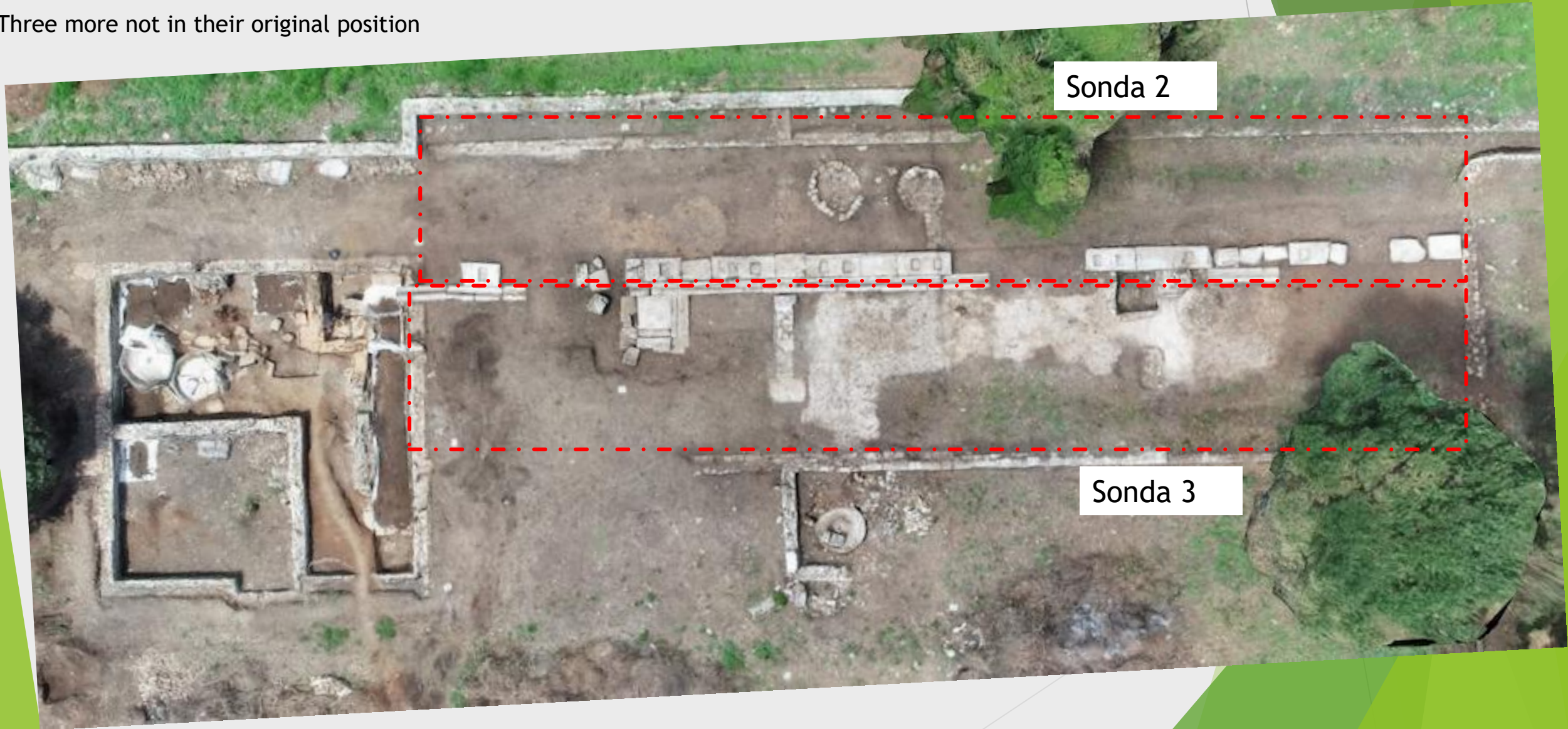
Barbariga

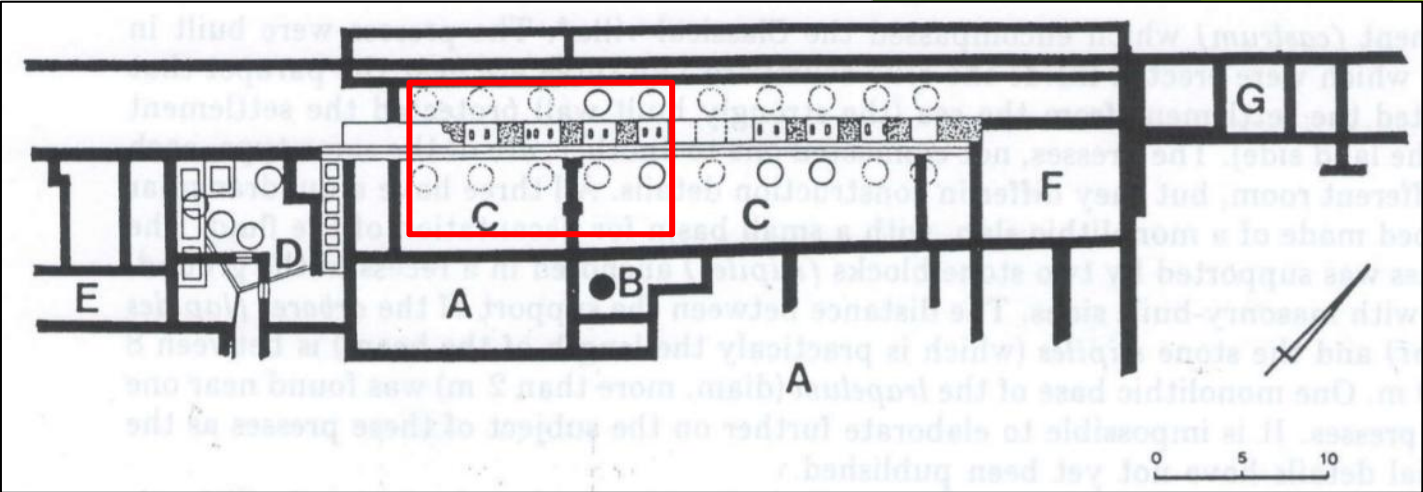
2024 Season

► Sondas 2 and 3

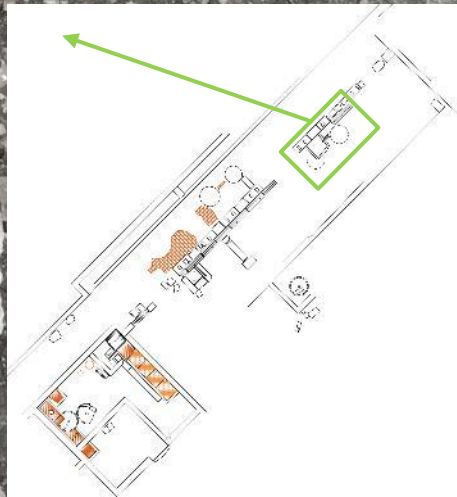
Nine *in situ* lapides pedicini

Three more not in their original position









► Sonda 4



► Sonda 4



► Sonda 4



► Sonda 4



► Sonda 4



► Sonda 5



Acknowledgements

► Team

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