



SLOVAK
NATIONAL
MUSEUM

Ancient windows from Stupava

The oldest evidence
of an earthquake in Slovakia

Focused
on Object

Vladimír Turčan

Focused
on Object

Ancient windows from Stupava

The oldest evidence
of an earthquake in Slovakia

Vladimír Turčan

Slovak National Museum
Bratislava 2024

Table of Contents

7	Foreword	38	Transfer and restoration of the wall
9	The origins of settlement	43	Windows to Antiquity
11	The Romans in Stupava	47	Ancient “graffiti” from Stupava
14	Uncovering the ancient history of Stupava	50	Behind the walls of the ancient manor
14	The first reports about the stay of the Romans in Stupava	58	The four primacies of Stupava
16	Contribution of Hungarian scholars	58	The oldest “construction log”
18	The reports by amateur researchers aroused the interest of scientists	60	The first known windows from the Slovak territory
23	Continuation of excavations after a twenty-year break	61	The engraving of a headfooter from the windowsill
24	Research in 1987–2004, redating the beginnings of the building complex	62	The oldest documented earthquake in Slovakia
25	A discovery from 1994, revealing the mystery of the collapsed wall	63	The site today
30	An earthquake in the Middle Danube region in the 4th century	66	Conclusion
		68	Literature

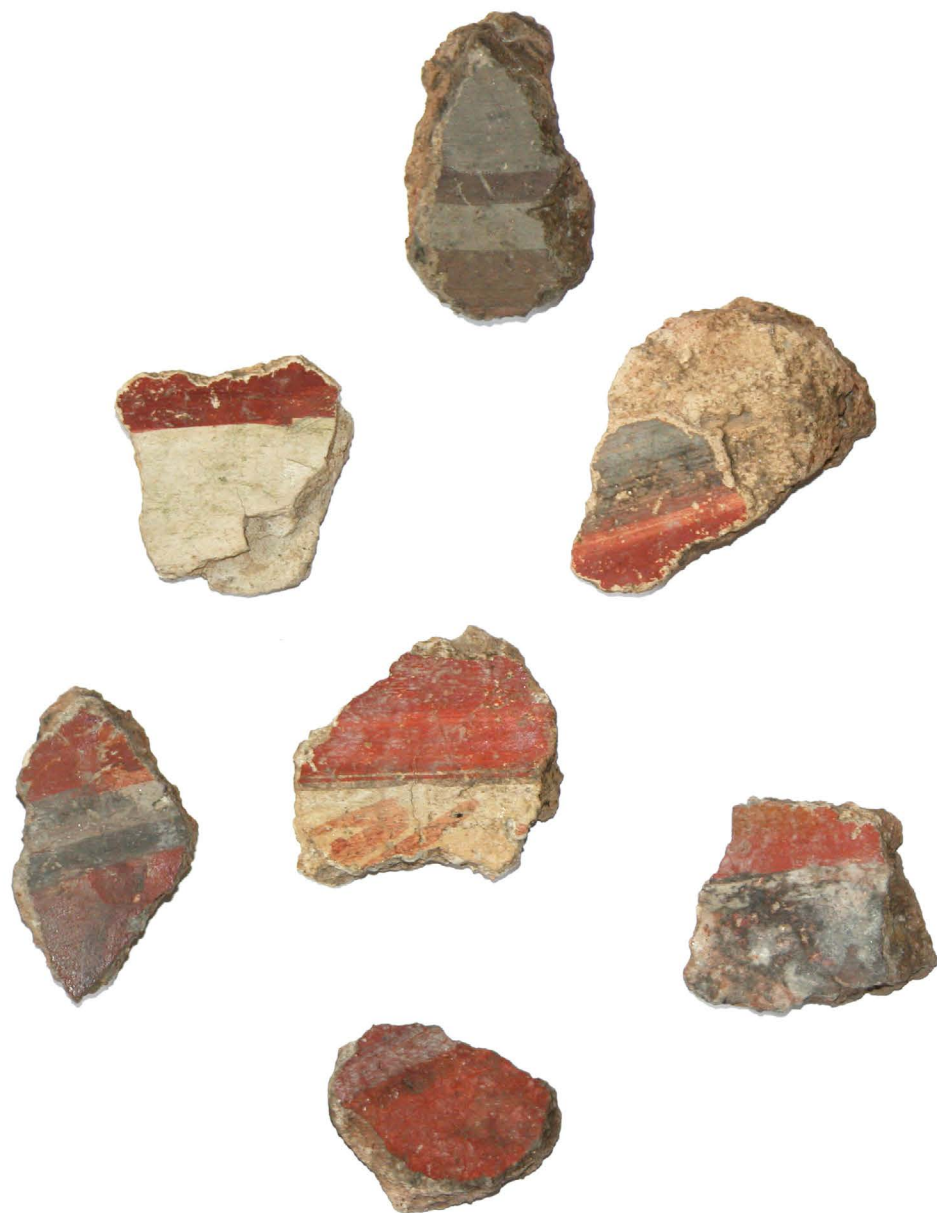


Fig. 1. Fragments of painted plaster from the interior of the main building
(V. Turčan)

Foreword

Every archaeological find, regardless of the time and method of its discovery, experiences two stories that follow each other. The first was taking place in the past, when the artefact was made, worked and served the purpose for which it was intended. The second, reverse story begins to unfold from the moment of the artefact's discovery during archaeological research. After laboratory treatment, or real or virtual restoration, the find becomes a collection item.

An interesting second story is related to a wall with two window openings, which dates back to the Roman Period and was discovered during excavations in Stupava. The uniqueness of the discovery lies in the fact that the only evidence of demolished buildings found so far were ruins covered with earth, mostly scattered about by ploughing. This time, it was possible to uncover a collapsed wall block with two window openings, preserved in a relatively compact state.

In the first phase, the wall has been uncovered by student volunteers who literally dissected the find from the ground in difficult field conditions. The excavation was also successfully accomplished from a professional point of view thanks to Ivan Staník from the Bratislava Regional Centre of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic, a leading expert on the history of architecture and construction technologies. The find was saved thanks to a financial subsidy from the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and the support of the then director of the Slovak National Museum – Archaeological Museum (SNM – AM),

Štefan Holčík. Its final form was created by the restorers Jozef Hrvol', Vojtech Pohánka and Peter Jáchym from the Restoration Studios of the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic in Bratislava. The plates with plasters were restored by the company Obnova, s. r. o. of Michal Hrčka.

The identification and interpretation of the discovery were greatly helped by the Austrian archaeologist Manfred Kandler, who for many years uncovered the ancient site of Carnuntum and placed the Stupava find into wider historical and geographical contexts.

Consultations with Margaréta Musilová from the City Institute for the Preservation of Monuments in Bratislava and Vladimír Varsik from the University of Trnava also contributed to specifying particular details. Peter Horanský, in cooperation with the author, participated in the creation of visualizations of individual construction phases of the site and contributed to the terminological precision of the text through consultations. My gratitude for consultations also goes to the historian and regionalist Milan Greguš, as well as to seismologists Róbert Kysel and Peter Moczo. I thank Erika Makarová, Daniel Gahér and Ján Šipöcz for digitizing the slides.