

Late Antique and Early Byzantine fortifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hinterland of the province of Dalmatia)

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The Western Balkans came under Roman rule during the reign of Augustus, when the region of Dalmatia was established, stretching from the Arsia (Raša) river in Istria in the north to the town of Lissus (Lješ) in the south, and including Kvarner (the bay of Rijeka). In the north, the province of Dalmatia bordered the province of Pannonia Superior along a line lying slightly to the south of the course of the river Sava. In the east it bordered the province of Moesia Superior along a line that goes from the confluence of the Kolubara river through Čačak and Mt. Šara to the Lissus. The borders established during the 1st century did not change significantly, apart from the separation of a part of the territory around the bay of Kotor and Skadar at the end of the 3rd or beginning of the 4th century to form the province of Prevalis, while in the east the province of Dalmatia bordered the province of Moesia I, most probably along the course of the river Drina.¹

Geographically, the province of Dalmatia can be divided into two zones: the coastal and the mountainous regions. The karst coastland is distinguished by its indented coastline and many islands and bays, but with a small number of fertile fields suitable for agricultural activity. North of the Adriatic coastal area, stretching to the Sava basin, numerous mountains rise to over 1800 meters, covered with deciduous and coniferous woodland. However, the pronounced mountain landscape of the hinterland of the province of Dalmatia also has many fields and meadows, situated at the feet of the mountains, which encircle them. These geographical characteristics created varying climatic differences, so that the coastal region has a Mediterranean climate, whereas the hinterland is dominated by a characteristic moderate continental climate.²

¹ Wilkes 1969, 78f.

² Wilkes 1969, xxiii–xxv.

The territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina today is situated on part of the area occupied by antique Dalmatia, bordered by the river Drina in the east, the Sava to the north, and the Una in the west, although it should be noted that a smaller part of the territory lies on the west side of the Una, and in the high mountains in the south. In other words, the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina today includes most of the hinterland of the former province of Dalmatia.

The high, impenetrable mountains lying right behind the coastal belt are distinguished by a small number of passable ridges, over which it was possible to reach the interior from the coast. Thus, on Velebit Mountain there were two crossings by which the territory of Japods in Lika and Sisak on the bank of the Sava were reached from north of the Sinjsko Polje lowland, while at the southern end of Velebit there was a road joining Lika to the Ravni Kotari region. Apart from that, a crossing led to the interior via Klis, from which the road continued on towards the Sinjsko Polje, a route that followed the course of the Neretva river.³

Although the geographical conditions greatly hindered the marking of road routes in the hinterland of the province of Dalmatia, numerous roads existed to secure the undisturbed transportation of valuable raw materials (such as wood, metal or salt). It is worth noting the road leading towards the Una and Sana valley, or the course of the route from Burnum towards Narona, which passed through Andertium (Muć) across the Čikola valley, and then through Sinjsko and Imotsko Polje towards the Trebižat valley, which lay near Ljubuška and Narona. Apart from that, there were three basic routes from Salona towards the interior. There one should note especially the Salona-Sinj (Aequum) road, running towards the north across the Dinaric Alps (that is, the Prolog crossing towards Livanj and Glamoč), then towards Servitium. The second route, leading towards the northwest, crossed through Cetina at Tilverium, and through the Aržano crossing towards Duvlansko Polje. From there the road ran further towards the northern slopes of Ljubuša (Mons Bulsinius), towards the Rama valley, then through the Neretva valley towards Konjic. Then it turned towards the northwest, through the Ivan crossing, to the Bosna valley. There was no road along the Neretva canyon, but from the region around Mostar the interior could be reached over the Prenj Mountain. Another road led from Salona through Duvlansko Polje towards Kupres, then towards the northern part of the Vrbas valley around Bugojno, and towards the Lašva valley, situated around Travnik. There was also a road from Narona towards Tre-

³ Wilkes 1969, xxi f.

binje through Popovo Polje, avoiding the mountains around Boka. This also led to Nikšić and the Zeta valley, from where it stretched further towards Skadar and Lješ.⁴

Road routes mainly followed the course of the valleys, which stretched in a north-south direction. An exception is part of the link between Salona and Sirmium, which ran through Cibalae like many of the routes from the town now known as Sarajevo towards the east, connecting it to mining centres. These roads led towards today's Zvornik, Goražde, Užice and Čačak.⁵

The Romanisation of the province of Dalmatia, whose territory was already inhabited by the Illyrians, began immediately on its creation. The geo-climatic characteristics and resources of the region played a decisive role during colonisation and formed the basis for the commercial activity of the defined area. Thus the coastal inhabitants focused on navigation (i.e. maritime trade), leading to the appearance of large, established ports, such as Salona, which also represented the administrative centre for the whole province. Then in the hinterland, forestry and mining (not only to extract metal ores but also for the exploitation of salt) were dominant,⁶ together with agricultural activity, including both crop cultivation and livestock-breeding, although these activities were rather limited to the narrow, fertile river valleys such as the Neretva, or inland plateaus, or „polja“, such as Glamočko and Livanjsko. The newly arrived inhabitants were mainly concentrated in lowland areas, where urban centres were formed, while only mines were situated at higher altitudes, together with smaller military posts controlling roads and communications. During the Late Antique period the situation changed to a large extent, due to Barbarian invasions causing the coastland inhabitants to seek refuge at higher altitudes and in less accessible, fortified positions.

The archaeological study of Bosnia and Herzegovina only began at the end of the 19th century, when a number of researchers, especially V. Radimsky and F. Fiala, carried out explorative surveys, while on individual occasions smaller sounding excavations were carried out. The further course of excavation was predominantly focused on prehistoric archaeology, so that only a small number of Late Antique fortifications were archaeologically excavated and publicised in an adequate way. Thanks to the great undertaking of the publication of the *Archaeological Lexicon of Bosnia and Herzegovina* in 1988, insight was made possible into many sites from the

⁴ Wilkes 1969, xxv f.

⁵ Wilkes 1969, xxvi f.

⁶ Pašalić 1975, 294–304 map I; Dušanić 1995, 219–226.

Late Antique period. However, this was to a great degree limited since much of the information was collected during general surveying. It should be stressed, however, that by the publication of this Lexicon there was at least increased interest in these problems, leading to the sounding excavation in the Gradac and Biograci locations, during which significant data were collected. Unfortunately, the cruel events of the 1990s halted or at least limited all further research.

During the archaeological research a significant number of fortifications were identified from the Late Antique or Early Byzantine period. Unfortunately, the degree of investigation of individual areas is not equal, so that in the Sava basin, along the course of the river Bosna, and around the antique town of Domavia empty zones appear, which were certainly not the results of non-habitation during late antiquity, since in these areas there are important natural resources, fertile valleys along the river Bosna and its tributaries, or mining sites in eastern Bosnia. Since most sites were evident during initial reconnaissance, and just in a few cases brought to light by archaeological sounding, for most of the established fortifications data about their size and appearance is not available.

The size and function of fortifications determines their division into large, medium-sized and small fortifications. Besides these, there are also the forts with the unknown area (map 1).⁷

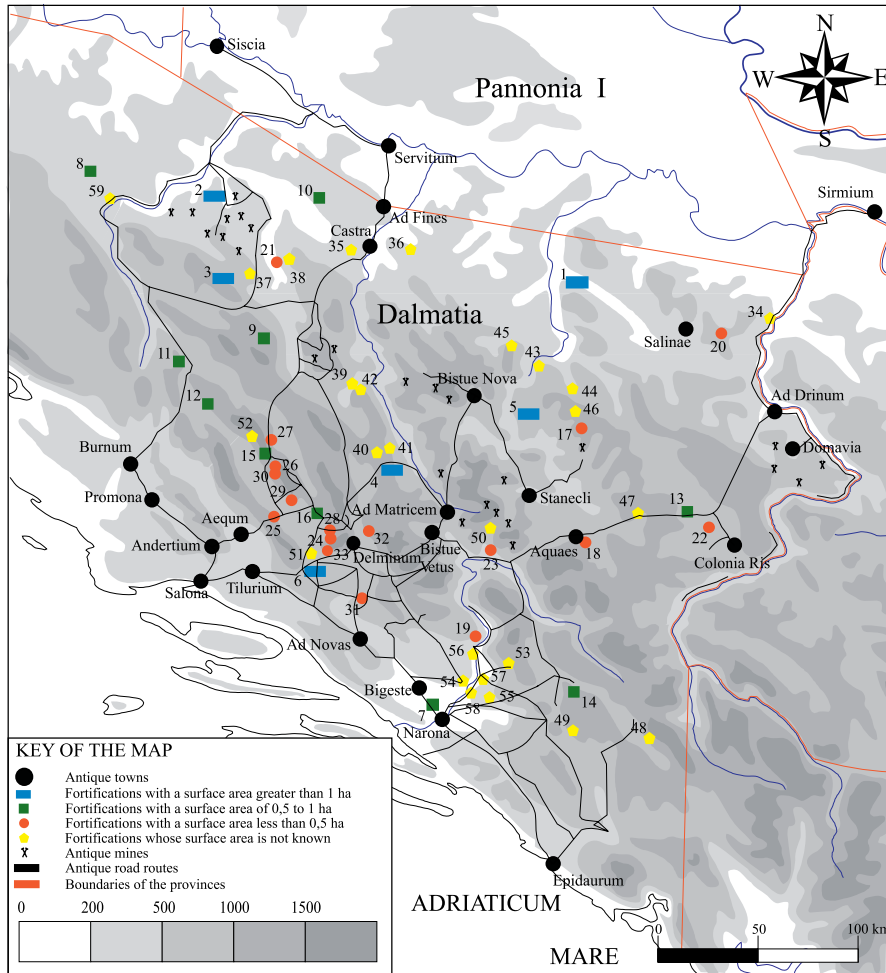
Fortresses covering an area of 1 hectare or more

Relatively large fortifications, with a surface area greater than 1 hectare, fall into the first group of fortresses. These are mainly situated above a river or fertile fields. Forts built above a small number of fertile plains primarily had the role of enabling undisturbed agricultural activity in addition to the withdrawal to higher altitudes. On the other hand, these forts also presented a kind of collection centre for the storage of produced and collected commodities.

In the hinterland of the province of Dalmatia, only a small number of such fortifications are noted. We know of six in total. Of these, the best-excavated location is at the site Crkvina-Makljenovac.

About 5 km northwest of Dobož, above the confluence of the Usora and Bosna rivers, on the left bank, lies elevated Crkvenica, 40 m high, on which was discovered the many-layered location of Crkvina-Makljenovac (map 1,

⁷ The geographical foundation of the map was given to us by the kindness of Dr. M. Milinković.



Map 1. Late Antique and Early Byzantine fortifications in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hinterland of the province of Dalmatia).

1. Crkvina-Makljenovac, Doboj
2. Ovan-Grad, Čele, Bosanski Novi
3. Kalaura-Jelašinovci, Sanski most
4. Gradina (Gradac)-Ravno, Kupres
5. Gradac-Mokronog-Gunjače, Visoko
6. Gradina-Renići, Duvno
7. Mogorjelo-Čapljina
8. Bugar Grad (Gradina)-Gornja Gata Bugar, Bihać
9. Grad-Gornji Vrbljani, Ključ
10. Zecovi-Čarakovo, Prijedor
11. Donje Vrtoče 1-Donje Vrtoče, Drvar
12. Gradina-Grkovci, Bosansko Grahovo
13. Pohovac (Puhovac)-Haltići, Sokolac
14. Koštur-Dabrica, Stolac
15. Gradac-Halapići, Glamoč
16. Velika gradina-Veliki Kablići, Livno
17. Gradac-Homolj, Kiseljak
18. Gradac (Ilinjača)-Gornji Kotorac, Ilidža
19. Biograci-Lištiće
20. Gradina-Gornja Petrovica, Kalesija
21. Vrščić-Gradina, Gornje Ratkovo-Ilići, Ključ
22. Hreljin Grad-Čitluci, Sokolac
23. Grad Biograd-Zabrđe, Konjic
24. Gradac, Potočani-Mihaljevići, Livno
25. Gradina-Donji Rujni, Livno
26. Gradina-Podgradina (Kamenska), Glamoč
27. Gradina-Rajičke, Glamoč
28. Gredine-Potočani, Livno
29. Kesiceva gradina-Čelebić, Livno
30. Mareljica gradina-Staro selo - Carevica, Glamoč
31. Gradina (Grad)-Gradac, Posušje
32. Gradina-Letka, Duvno
33. Gradina-Prisoje - Perkovići, Duvno
34. Gradina-Sapna, Zvornik
35. Zelen-grad-Han Kola - Čutkovići, Banjaluka
36. Zmajevac-Egići, Čelinac
37. Grad-Kijevo, Sanski most
38. Grčka Gradina-Gornje Ratkovo - Kočići, Ključ
39. Gradina-Šipova
40. Pogana Glavica-Kupes
41. Velika vrata-Kupes
42. Veliki kamen, Volari, Šipovo
43. Gradina-Alihodže, Travnik
44. Bobovac
45. Gradina-Dabravina, Vareš
46. Gradina-Gradac, Karaula, Kakanj
47. Debelo brdo, Sarajevo-centar
48. Gat, Novi Dulići-Galešine, Gacko
49. Vidoški Grad-Stolac
50. Gradac-Hudutsko, Prozor
51. Gradina-Podgradina, Livno
52. Soldatova (Velika) gradina-Šumnjaci, Glamoč
53. Blagaj (Stjepan Grad)-Blagaj, Mostar
54. Karlovac-Čitluk
55. Kosmaj-Biletići, Čitluk
56. Krstina-Hamzići, Čitluk
57. Gradina-Bivolje Brdo, Čapljina
58. Gradina-Počitelj, Čapljina
59. Brekovicova-Bihać
60. Teferić-Krupac, Ilidža

no. 1). This dominant hill, which controlled the Usora confluence, had been occupied since prehistoric times, during the Late Neolithic, the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Besides the prehistoric layers, traces from the Roman, late Antique and Medieval periods could be seen, to which a discovered church and necropolis dating from the 9th to the 13th century testify.⁸

Edward Por, a devotee of ancient times, while building his summer house on the mentioned elevation, came across some small archaeological finds and informed V. Radimsky, who started archaeological excavation of this area in 1890.⁹

According to V. Radimsky, an Early Byzantine fortification of uneven trapezoid shape was established during excavation, 200 × 100 m (NE-SW to NW-SE) in dimension. It comprised an acropolis and suburbs of approximately the same dimensions (fig. 1). The fortification is exceptionally well positioned, surrounded by steep slopes except on the northwestern side. The fortification ramparts, 2 m thick, have faces composed of slanting stones, placed alternatively and cemented together with mortar (*opus spicatum* technique), with rubble in between. During the construction of fortifications Roman spolia were used, probably originating from different locations, on which can be found the inscriptions dedicated to veterans of the cohorts I Belgianorum and the cohorts I Flavius Hispanorum, Septimius Severus. The thick walls of the fortification were strengthened by rectangular and trapezoid towers, formed by „breaking“ the rampart, so that the back sides of the tower did not have a wall. Besides the tower on the thick walls, an unevenly rectangular tower was found, situated on the highest point of the acropolis.¹⁰

The following sites also belong to this group of fortresses:

- Ovan Grad-Cele, Bosanski Novi (map 1, no. 2), 16.5 km southeast of Bosanski Novi. During reconnaissance a round tower with a diameter of 10 m was established, together with a *fossa* in front of the fortress (AL BiH 1988, 02.74, 38 [D. Basler]).
- Kalaura-Jelašinovci, Sanski Most (map 1, no. 3), 11.3 km southwest of Sanski Most (AL BiH 1988, 10.109, 147 [B. Čović]).
- Gradina (Gradac)-Ravno, Kupres (map 1, no. 4), 54 km southeast of Jajce. On this site there is a fortification, triangular in shape, surrounded by ramparts on two sides, while the steep slope protects the third. The

⁸ Radimsky 1891, 251 f., 258–260; Čremošnik 1951, 249; AL BiH 1988, 04.14, 62 f. Crkvina-Makljenovac, Doboj (D. Basler).

⁹ Radimsky 1891, 253–257.

¹⁰ Radimsky 1891, 253; AL BiH 1988, 04.14, 62 f. Crkvina-Makljenovac, Doboj (D. Basler); Basler 1972, 54.

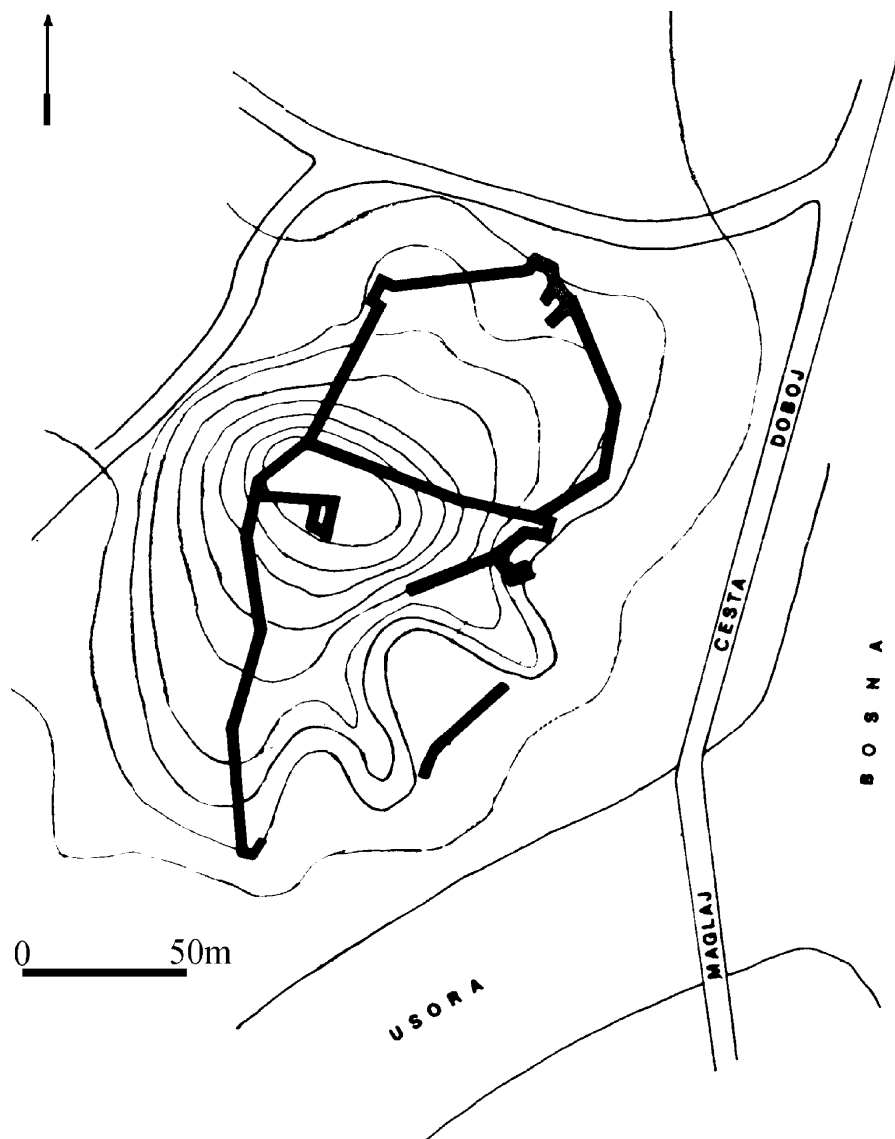


Fig. 1. Crkvina - Makljenovac (after Basler 1972, fig. 28).

- gate through which one entered the fortress is 2.15 m wide, and is situated on the eastern side (Basler 1953, 337; AL BiH 1988, 12.91, 178 [D. Basler]).
- Gradac-Mokronog, Gunjače, Visoko (map 1, no. 5), 10.2 km southwest of Kakanj (AL BiH 1988, 14.79, 19 [I. Bojanovski]).
 - Gradina-Renići, Duvno (map 1, no. 6), 21 km southwest of Duvanjski grad (AL BiH 1988, 23.115, 266 [B. Čović]).

Fortifications with a surface area of 0.5 to 1 hectare

Medium-sized fortifications were those having several purposes, generally found at higher altitudes. Situated in favourable positions, they could function not only as refuge but also as strategic points, controlling roads connecting mines with urban centres, along which they were built. An exception is the site of Mogorjelo, on which lies the only known fortification situated on a plain.

Since during past archaeological research, besides reconnaissance sounding excavation was also conducted, we can distinguish a few sites where the degree of investigation has enabled insights into life during the Late Antique period.

Near Čapljina, about 2 km to the southwest, lies the site of Mogorjelo (map 1, no. 7). Here, situated on a hillock, there is a fortress, 92 × 75 m (NE-SW by NW-SE) in dimension. K. Patch excavated it from 1899–1903 (fig. 2). During the 1st century a large commercial property was constructed on this site (destroyed in a fire during the 3rd century), with auxiliary buildings to meet the needs of the population of nearby Naron. On its reconstruction, which followed in the 4th century, a rampart was erected around the property, strengthened at the corners with external square towers, 7.5 × 7.5 m in dimension, to the north, west and south, while in the east there was an internal round tower with a diameter of 7.5 m. During construction, antique construction principles were respected, so that the whole interior was divided into four parts by two main streets, *cardo* and *decumanus*. The fortress could be entered from four directions. While three gates were flanked by two external square towers each, on the southeastern side there was a smaller entrance, strengthened by a single square tower. Inside the rampart there were incorporated parts of an earlier agricultural complex (spaces varying in character), which were still in use, along with the palace.¹¹

¹¹ AL BiH 1988, 25.224, 331. Mogorjelo, Čapljina (D. Basler/N. Miletić); Dyggve/Vetters 1966, 7–44; Basler 1972, 38–41.

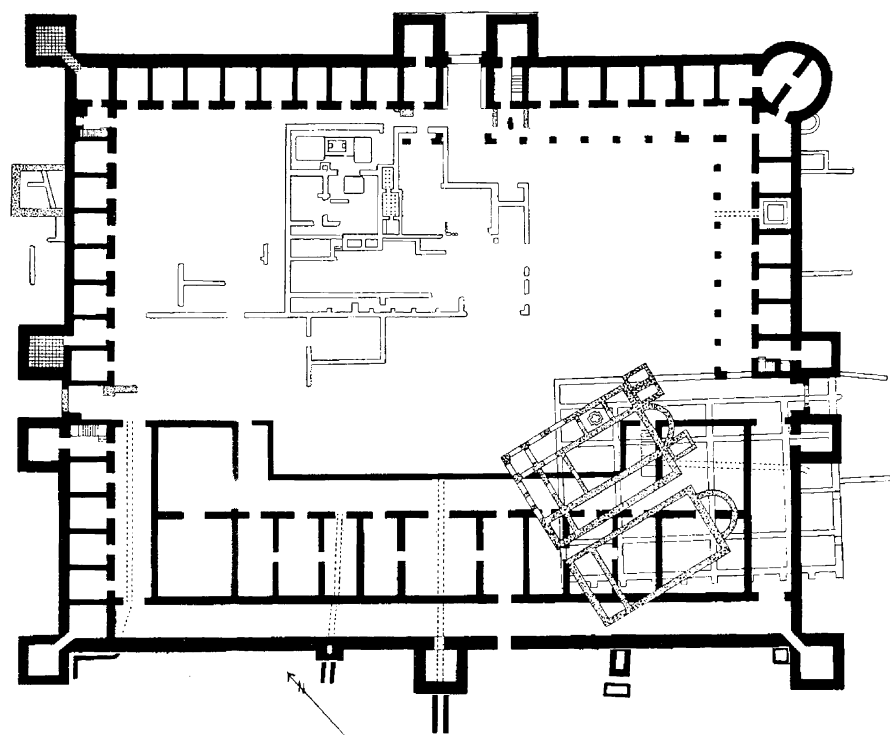
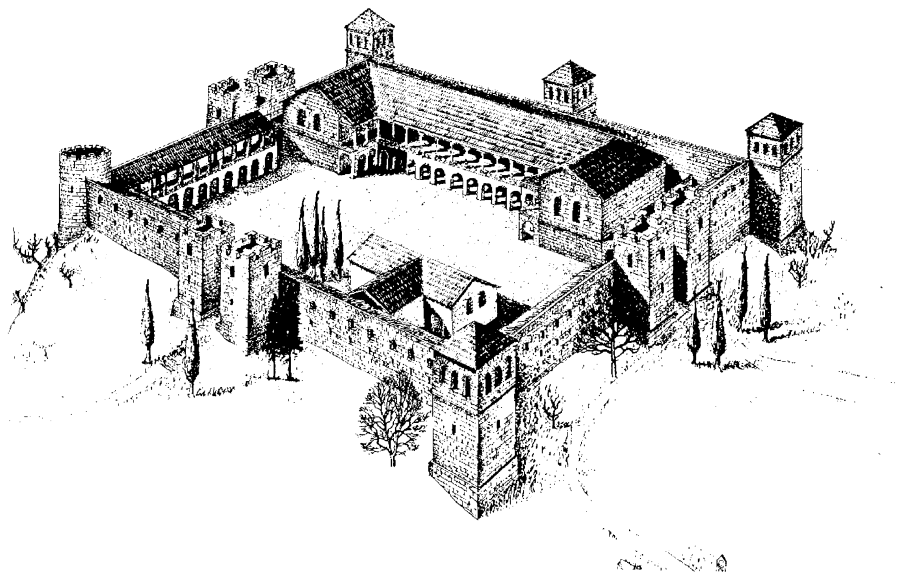


Fig. 2. Gornji Vrbljani (after Basler 1993, fig. 4-5).

Judging from finds of coins, discovered in a burnt layer, the fortress is thought to have been destroyed at the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century. Since it is established that the blocking of the western door and the narrowing of the eastern door were carried out subsequently, it can be concluded that after an irrepressible barbarian invasion, the fortification was temporarily renewed, and then abandoned once more.¹²

However, the space once occupied by the fortress was in use during the 6th century, since at that time two churches were erected, on the southern corner of the fortification, on the site of the former palace. The northern church is 21.4 × 14.05 m (E-W by N-S) in dimension, and represents a three-nave type with a narthex, while the northern nave is divided into three rooms, of which the central room has a cross-shaped font. Outside the apse three rectangular tombs were built, two on the north side, and one on the south. The southern church has a simple shape, with nave and narthex, while its dimensions are 18.5 × 10.4 m (E-W by N-S).¹³

Besides the architectural traces, on and near the site occupied by the fortification traces of a Late Antique and later Medieval necropolis have been found. However, since site documentation on excavations was not preserved, and discovered finds were not adequately publicised, it is impossible to complete with certainty an ethnic or chronological classification.¹⁴

It appears that these two churches were built during a relatively peaceful period in the Dalmatian area during the 6th century. As we do not know what had happened to the remaining part of the fortress at that moment, it is impossible to say whether this fortress had a significant defensive role during the 6th century.

Approximately 10 km northwest of Bihać lies the fortification of Bugar Grad (Gradina)-Gornja Gata-Bugar, Bihać (map 1, no. 8), situated on the right bank of the river Korana. The remains of fortifications dating to the 4th to 6th centuries were discovered here, with dimensions of 158 × 50 m (E-W by N-S). It was divided by a wall on the eastern (acropolis) and western (suburbs) sections (fig. 3). The fortification was entered from the west side, where there was a gate flanked by two round towers. Besides these, it is established that there were three more towers, identical in shape, one of which was situated on the junction where the transversal joined the southern rampart. The other two were at the eastern end of the southern rampart, which had clearly been most jeopardised. To construct the rampart (made using the *opus mixtum* technique) bricks with the inscription (H)ERACLI

¹² Basler 1972, 42.

¹³ Dyggve/Vetters 1966, 44–51; Basler 1972, 97–100.

¹⁴ Basler 1972, 47; Miletić 1984, 387.

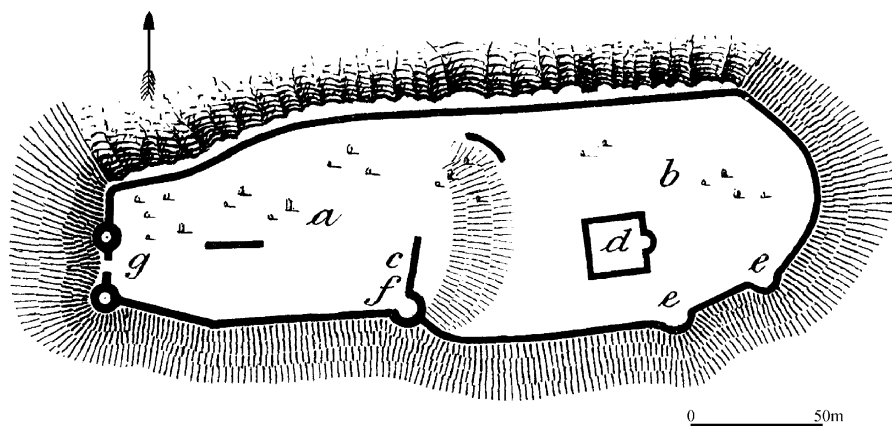


Fig. 3. Bugar Grad (after Radimsky 1893, fig. 26).

were used. Inside the acropolis a small church was uncovered, completely square in shape, 16 × 14 m (E-W by N-S) in dimension.¹⁵

Approximately 25 km from Ključ, above the source of the river Sana, lies the site of Grad-Gornji Vrbljani, Ključ (map 1, no. 9). This was situated above the deep ravine of the Lučica stream. Due to its position, this space had been used during prehistoric times. After many centuries, it was once again occupied during Late Antiquity. The fall of Byzantine rule in this region led to another short period of abandonment, but during the 8th and 9th centuries it was inhabited again.¹⁶

During agricultural activities in 1966, traces of a stone wall cemented with mortar were discovered on this line. As a result, sounding excavations were made in 1967/68, during which the Iron Age ruins were discovered, above which lies a Late Antique fortress (4th–6th century), 110 × 65 m (N-S by E-W) in dimension. Ramparts were uncovered only on the northern and western sides, while there are steep slopes to the east and south (fig. 4). During excavation, a rampart without a tower was discovered, made with the *opus incertum* technique. It had shallow entrenched foundations, 0.30 m deep. Apart from that, access to the fortress from the northern side was discovered, on which there was a *fossa*, and an entrance on the western rampart.¹⁷

¹⁵ Radimsky 1893, 51; Basler 1972, 54f.; AL BiH 1988, 01.10, 14. Bugar Grad (Gradina)-Gornja Gata-Bugar, Bihać (Đ. Basler).

¹⁶ Basler 1972, 52–54; AL BiH 1988, 10.63, 144. Grad-Gornji Vrbljani, Ključ (V. Paškvalin).

¹⁷ Bojanovski 1967, 119f.; Bojanovski 1968, 156f.; Basler 1972, 52–54; AL BiH 1988, 10.63, 144. Grad, Gornji Vrbljani, Ključ (V. Paškvalin).

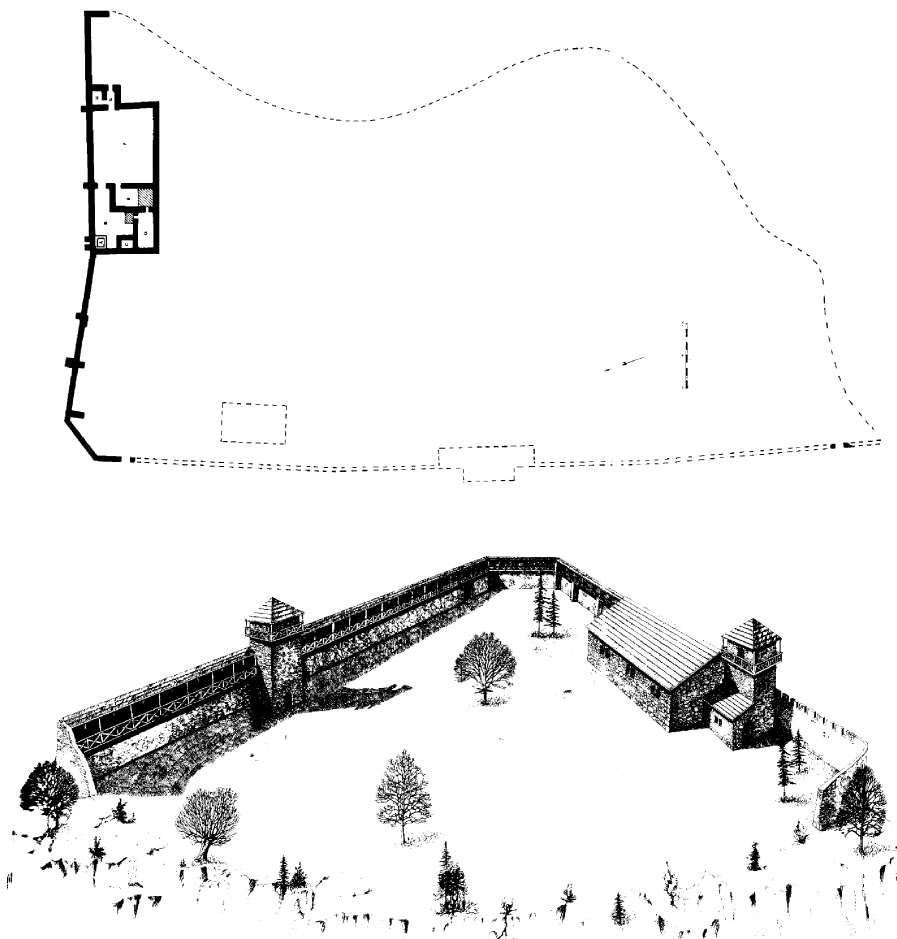


Fig. 4. Gornji Vrbljani (after Basler 1993, fig. 20–21).

Apart from the main walls, on the northern side of the fortifications a building leaning on the north rampart was discovered. According to the excavation leader, I. Bojanovski, this related to an inhabited complex 23.45×9.90 m in dimension, intended for a military company. It was formed of broken, compressed stone, cemented with mortar. The complex comprises a central chamber, unevenly trapezoid in shape, $10.10\text{--}11.10 \times 9\text{--}9.90$ m (E-W by N-S) in dimension, with access from the eastern side. The central room then led into a chamber with a heating stove, leading in turn to a smaller room, 5.30×2.28 m (N-S by E-W) in dimension. This may have

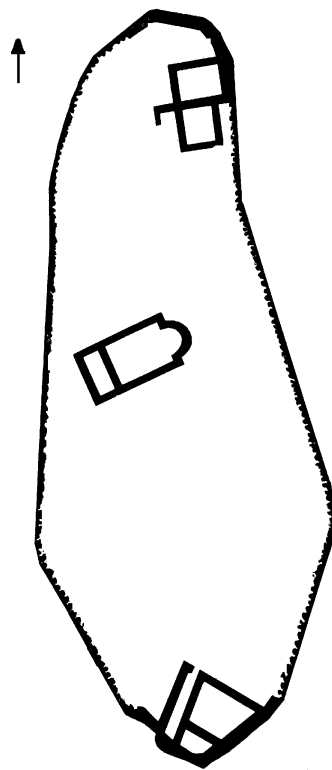


Fig. 5. Zecovi (after Basler 1972, fig. 25). 0 20m

served as a kitchen. Next to the residential quarters, a cistern made of hydraulic mortar with a brick floor was discovered.¹⁸

Some 35 km southwest of Banja Luka lies the site of Zecovi-Čarakovo, Prijedor (map 1, no. 10). During brief excavation works, the ruins of a prehistoric settlement, occupied during Neolithic times, were discovered. On these lay Late Antique fortifications, unevenly trapezoid in shape, 130 × 50 m (N-S by E-W) in dimension (fig. 5). With the aim of excavating the fortress interior, a control ditch oriented north-south was opened in the eastern section. This enabled the discovery of Roman layers in addition to the prehistoric strata. In addition to the inhabited layers, the interior of the fortress and traces of its architecture were discovered. It was thus established that in the southern section of this unevenly trapezoid structure, there were three chambers, 15 × 15 m in dimension, and a two-part building 15 × 10 m

¹⁸ Bojanovski 1967, 119f.; Bojanovski 1968, 156–158.

(N-S by E-W) in dimension in the northern part of the fortification. In the central part of the fortification there was also a rectangular church with narthex, 20 × 10 m (NE-SW by NW-SE) in dimension.¹⁹

Besides these hilltop settlements, fortifications with similar dimensions also fall into this group, including the following sites:

- Donje Vrtoče 1-Donje Vrtoče, Drvar (map 1, no. 11), 5.3 km northwest of Drvar (AL BiH 1988, 11.31, 147 [B. Čović]).
- Gradina, Grkovci, Bosansko Grahovo (map 1, no. 12), 33 km southeast of Drvar (AL BiH 1988, 11.61, 162 [B. Čović]).
- Pohovac (Puhovac)-Haltići, Sokolac (map 1, no. 13), 45 km northwest of Višegrad (AL BiH 1988, 17.277, 105 [B. Govedarica]).
- Koštur-Dabrica, Stolac (map 1, no. 14), 8 km northeast of Stolac. Inside the fortress two internal square-shaped towers and a church in the central part were discovered (Basler 1972, 90; AL BiH 1988, 20.311, 184 [D. Basler]).
- Gradac-Halapići, Glamoč (map 1, no. 15), 5.5 km northwest of Glamoč. Two buildings and a cistern were found inside the fortress (AL BiH 1988, 22.66, 238 [V. Paškvalin]).
- Velika gradina-Veliki Kablići, Livno (map 1, no. 16), 5 km northwest of Livno (AL BiH 1988, 22.275, 250 [B. Čović]).

Fortifications with a surface area smaller than 0.5 hectares

The group of small fortifications contains those smaller than 0.5 hectares, which may have had a double function like the previous group. They were arranged evenly along roads and communication routes, where they functioned as control points, while at higher altitudes they also served as refuge.

Although we are familiar with most of these fortifications, only a small number have been excavated by sounding. The results of study of the Late Antique period are therefore presented on the basis of three sites.

Approximately 30 km southeast of Kakanj, on a hill 40 m above the moor it controls, lies the Gradac, Lepenica-Homolj, Kiseljak site (map 1, no. 17). During excavation carried out by V. Skarić in 1931/32, it was established that the site had many strata, originally dating from Neolithic times. Besides prehistoric layers, a Late Antique refuge with church was discovered, as well as a Medieval graveyard.²⁰

¹⁹ Čremošnik 1956, 137f.; Basler 1972, 55.

²⁰ Skarić 1932, 1; 8–20; AL BiH 1988, 14.78, 19. Gradac, Homolj, Kiseljak (D. Basler/N. Miletić).

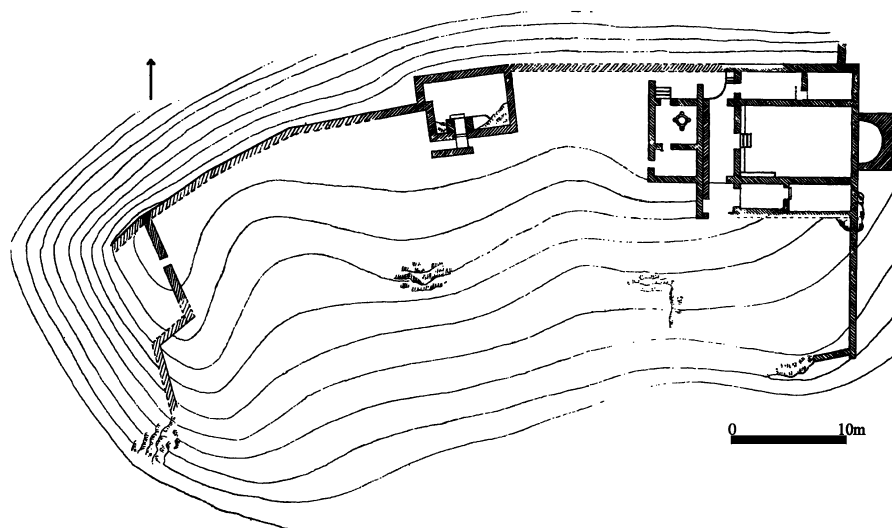


Fig. 6. Gradac – Lepenica (after Skarić 1932, fig. 4).

During archaeological excavation it was established that ramparts on each side encircled a plateau (fig. 6) whose dimensions were 70×50 m (E-W by N-S). A rectangular tower was found on the interior side of the northern rampart, in the inner section, connecting two of the rampart's divided walls. There was also a smaller undefended entrance on the western rampart, 1.2 m wide.²¹

In the northwestern corner of the fortification there is a church measuring 23.5×14.5 m (E-W by N-S), entrenched in the rampart. Its apse protrudes from the line of the extended rampart.²² This is a three-nave building with a narthex and font with two chambers. Access to the cross-shaped font was down three steps. Its lateral naves are divided into two sections. During the Late Antique period, it seems, four skeleton burials took place in the church, one in the southern and three in the northern nave (fig. 7).²³

Apart from traces of architecture, a significant number of movable finds were collected during excavation. These testify to the Byzantine population

²¹ Skarić 1932, 1; 8–20.

²² The same method is used also on the territory of the province of Moesia I. On this issue see Jeremić/Milinković 1995, 210f. Abb. 3.

²³ Skarić 1932, 8–20; AL BiH 1988, 14.78, 19. Gradac, Homolj, Kiseljak (Đ. Basler/N. Miletić).

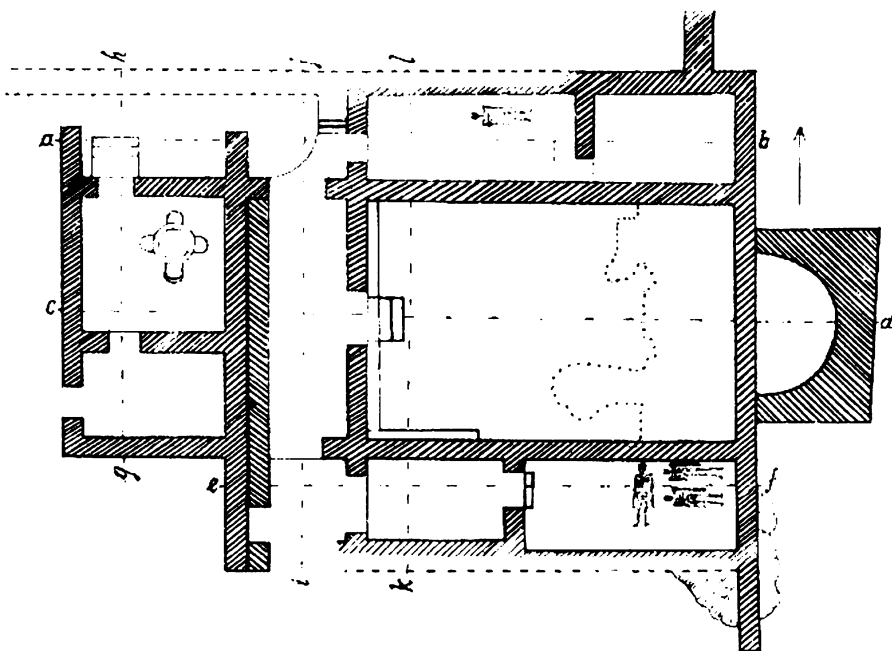


Fig. 7. Gradac – Lepenica (after Skarić 1932, fig. 5).

staying in this area. The objects discovered include parts of a lock (fig. 8), keys (fig. 9) and tools that are typical for the Early Byzantine period (fig. 8).

The Gradac (Ilinjača)-Gornji Kotorac, Ilidža site (map 1, no. 18) is situated 15 km south of Sarajevo, in the southeast section of the Sarajevo plain, on the hill which controls it. On top of this elevated site there is a plateau 115 × 40 m (NW-SE by NE-SW) in dimension, whose slopes descend steeply (fig. 10). Since the inclination is gentler on the southeastern and northwestern sides, the road giving access to the fortification was on this side. In the middle of the longitudinal axis of the plateau lies the highest point, in the form of a rock from which the terrain falls in all directions.²⁴

The site became a focus of archaeological interest very early on, since in 1926 V. Skarić carried out excavation there. Since the results of the excavation were not published at the time, J. Korošec accepted work on the preserved finds several decades later. It was not until the late 1980s that further

²⁴ AL BiH 1988, 15.105, 44. Gradac (Ilinjača) Gornji Kotorac, Ilidža (K. Basler/L. Fekeža); Fekeža 1990, 155–158.



Fig. 9. Gradac - Lepenica (after Skarić 1932, T. VIII).

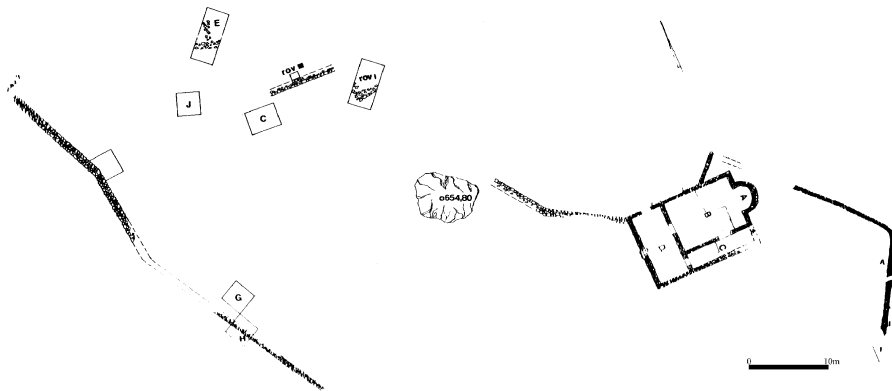


Fig. 10. Gradac – Gornji Kotorac (after Fekeža 1990, map. I).

moves were made to investigate this site, and new sounding excavations were carried out.²⁵

During excavation, a prehistoric, defensive covering was identified, on which lay a late Antique rampart, following the edge of the plateau. It was built of stone and mortar, and was 0,8–1 m in width. Inside the rampart a single-nave church of 14 × 9 m (E-W by N-S) was found, its northern side included in the rampart wall. The church was constructed using the *opus incertum* technique, and comprised a narthex, naos and southern chamber. As it seems, during the Late Antique period, a skeleton grave was dug in the southern chamber, while two more were dug in the northeast corner of the narthex.²⁶

Some 12.5 km southwest of Mostar lies the Biograci-Lištica, Mostar site (map 1, no.19), located on a hillock 90 × 40 m (NW-SE by NE-SW), from which it controlled the Mostar marsh. V. Radimsky first noted the exceptional position of the hillock when he found traces of the fortification here in 1894 (fig. 11).²⁷

During excavation carried out a century later, it was found that the fortress was built during the period of Roman rule, during the 3rd or 4th century. In building the rampart (0.6–0.7 m in width), the *opus spicatum* technique was used. This was applied in the construction of two towers flanking the entrance on the northern side. Inside the fortification many buildings situated along the rampart were discovered. They probably served as barracks for the military company. Besides military quarters, cellar spaces with

²⁵ Fekeža 1990, 155f.

²⁶ Fekeža 1990, 158–161.

²⁷ Radimsky 1894, 442f.

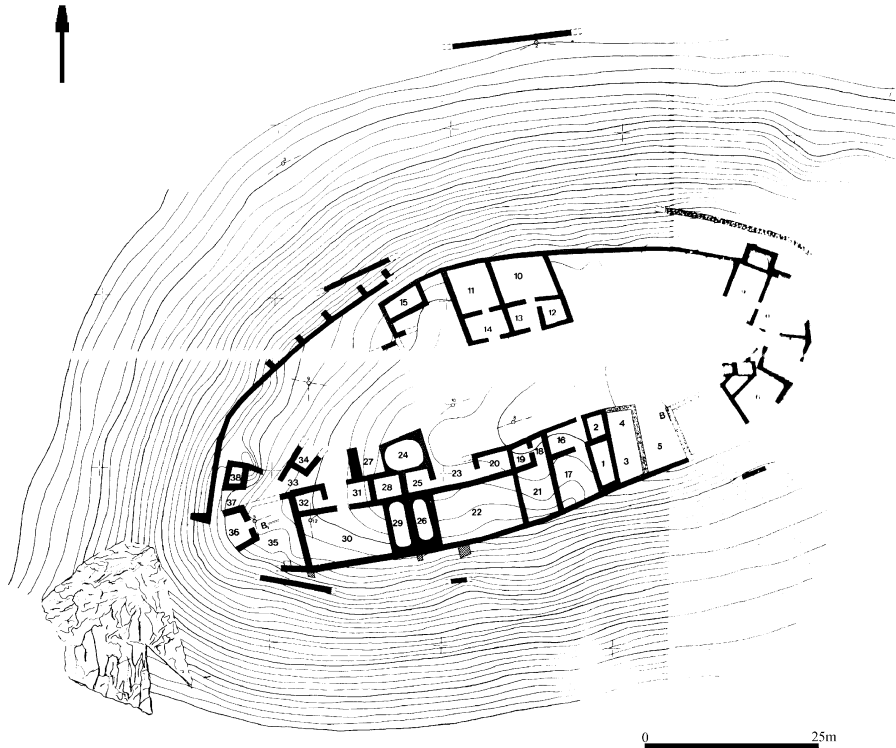


Fig. 11. Biogranci – Lištice (after Čremošnik 1989, 85).

hydraulic mortar were found. Rainwater was collected in these, and also in the main cistern, which was coated in the same way.²⁸

According to I. Čremošnik, who led the excavation, the fortress was constructed during the 3rd or 4th century. The fortification system had been modified by the erection of polygonal towers and double ramparts, faced with the danger of later barbarian attacks. A building whose eastern side is built into the rampart is an interesting phenomenon, since part of the building, shaped like an apse, extends beyond the line of the surrounding rampart wall. As I. Čremošnik referred to this building as a tower, the question remains as to whether this was in fact a church, as was the situation in the two sites described above (map 1, no. 17 and 18).²⁹

From collected material it could be concluded that the fortress was used during the 4th century. Finds of a cross-like fibula and a bronze necklace

²⁸ Čremošnik 1989, 83–89.

²⁹ Čremošnik 1989, 89–92.

testify to this (fig. 12,1.8). Facing danger, the fortress was renovated in the 6th century, this indicated by the find of a fibula (fig. 13,6), a tool typical for the Early Byzantine period (fig. 14,2) and amphorae (fig. 15). The fortress was used again during the 8th and 9th centuries by a population with Slavic characteristics, according to I. Čremošnik (fig. 16), although it was under Frankish influence, as evidenced by a spur discovered here (fig. 13,1).³⁰

Other fortifications with similar dimensions that also fall into this group include the following sites:

- Gradina-Gornja Petrovica, Kalesija (map 1, no. 20), 12.7 km southeast of Tuzla (AL BiH 1988, 07.27, 106 [D. Basler]).
- Vrščić-Gradina, Gornje Ratkovo-Ilići, Ključ (map 1, no. 21), 12.5 km northeast of Ključ (AL BiH 1988, 10.202, 151 [B. Čović]).
- Hreljin Grad-Čitluci, Sokolac (map 1, no. 22), 37.5 km northwest of Višegrad. During the reconnaissance the double ramparts were found (AL BiH 1988, 17.149, 99 [B. Govedarica]).
- Grad Biograd-Zabrđe, Konjic (map 1, no. 23), 2 km northwest of Konjic (AL BiH 1988, 21.97, 213 [P. Anđelić]).
- Gradac-Potočani-Mihaljevići, Livno (map 1, no. 24), 5.3 km southeast of Livno (AL BiH 1988, 22.68, 238 [I. Bojanovski]).
- Gradina-Donji Rujni, Livno (map 1, no. 25), 25 km northwest of Livno (AL BiH 1988, 22.71, 239 [B. Čović]).
- Gradina-Podgradina (Kamenska), Glamoč (map 1, no. 26), 4 km southeast of Glamoč. During the reconnaissance *fossa* was noted on the west side (AL BiH 1988, 22.81, 239 [V. Paškvalin]).
- Gradina-Rajičke, Glamoč (map 1, no. 27), 7.6 km northeast of Glamoč (AL BiH 1988, 22.89, 240 [B. Čović]).
- Gredine-Potočani, Livno (map 1, no. 28), 6.5 km southeast of Livno (AL BiH 1988, 22.118, 242 [B. Čović]).
- Kesićeva gradina-Čelebić, Livno (map 1, no. 29), 25.5 km northwest of Livno (AL BiH 1988, 22.159, 244 [B. Čović]).
- Mareljića gradina, Staro selo-Carevica, Glamoč (map 1, no. 30), 0.2 km southeast of Glamoč (AL BiH 1988, 22.186, 245f. [B. Čović/T. Glavaš]).
- Gradina (Grad)-Gradac, Posušje (map 1, no. 31), 36 km southeast of Duvno (AL BiH 1988, 23.93, 264 [D. Basler/M. Kraljević]).
- Gradina-Letka, Duvno (map 1, no. 32), 4.5 km northeast of Duvno (AL BiH 1988, 23.104, 265 [B. Čović]).
- Gradina, Prisoje-Perkovići, Duvno (map 1, no. 33), 13.5 km southwest of Duvno (AL BiH 1988, 23.114, 266 [B. Čović/I. Bojanovski]).

³⁰ Čremošnik 1989, 89–92.

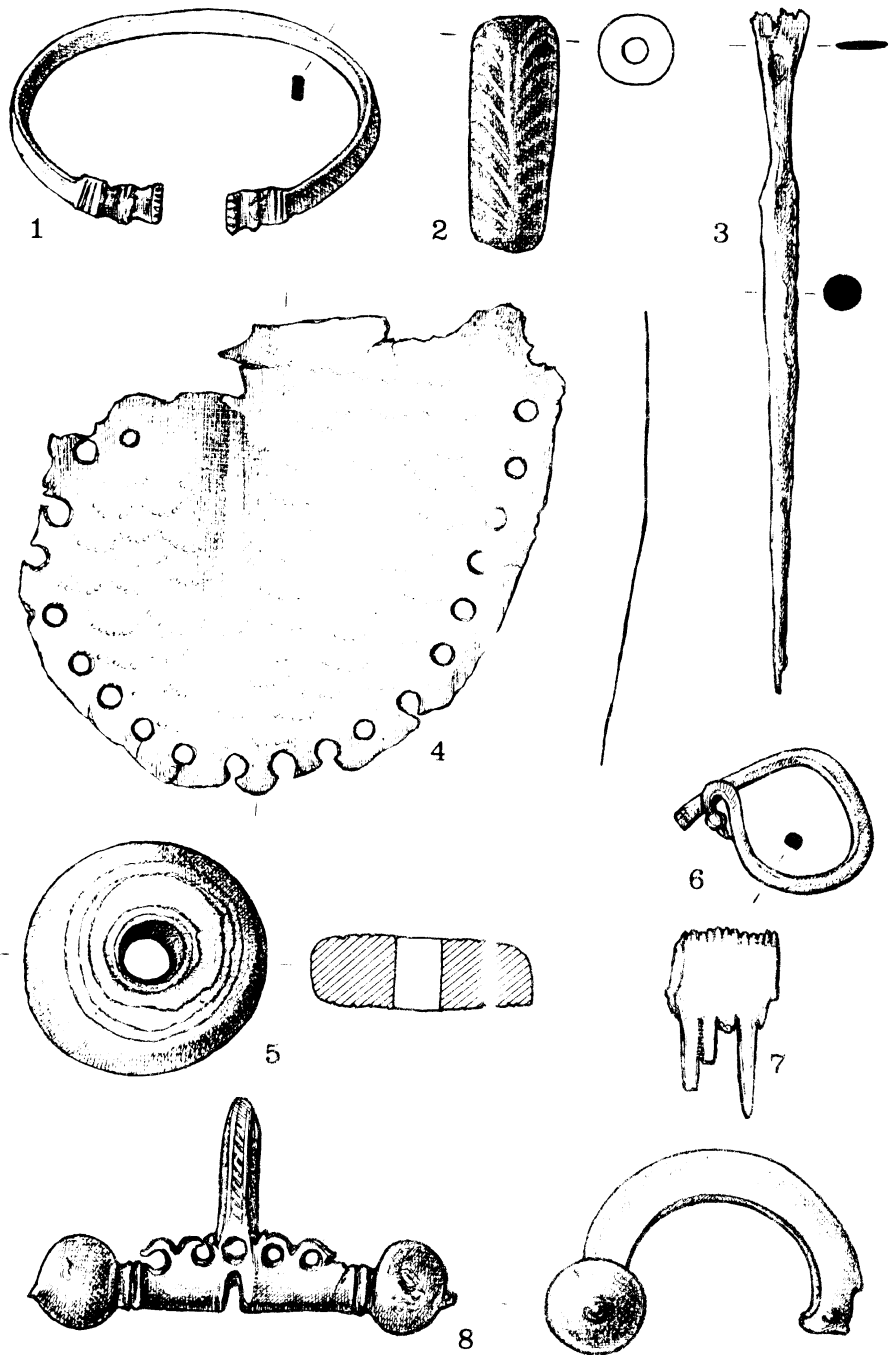


Fig. 12. Biogradi - Lištice (after Čremošnik 1989, T. III).

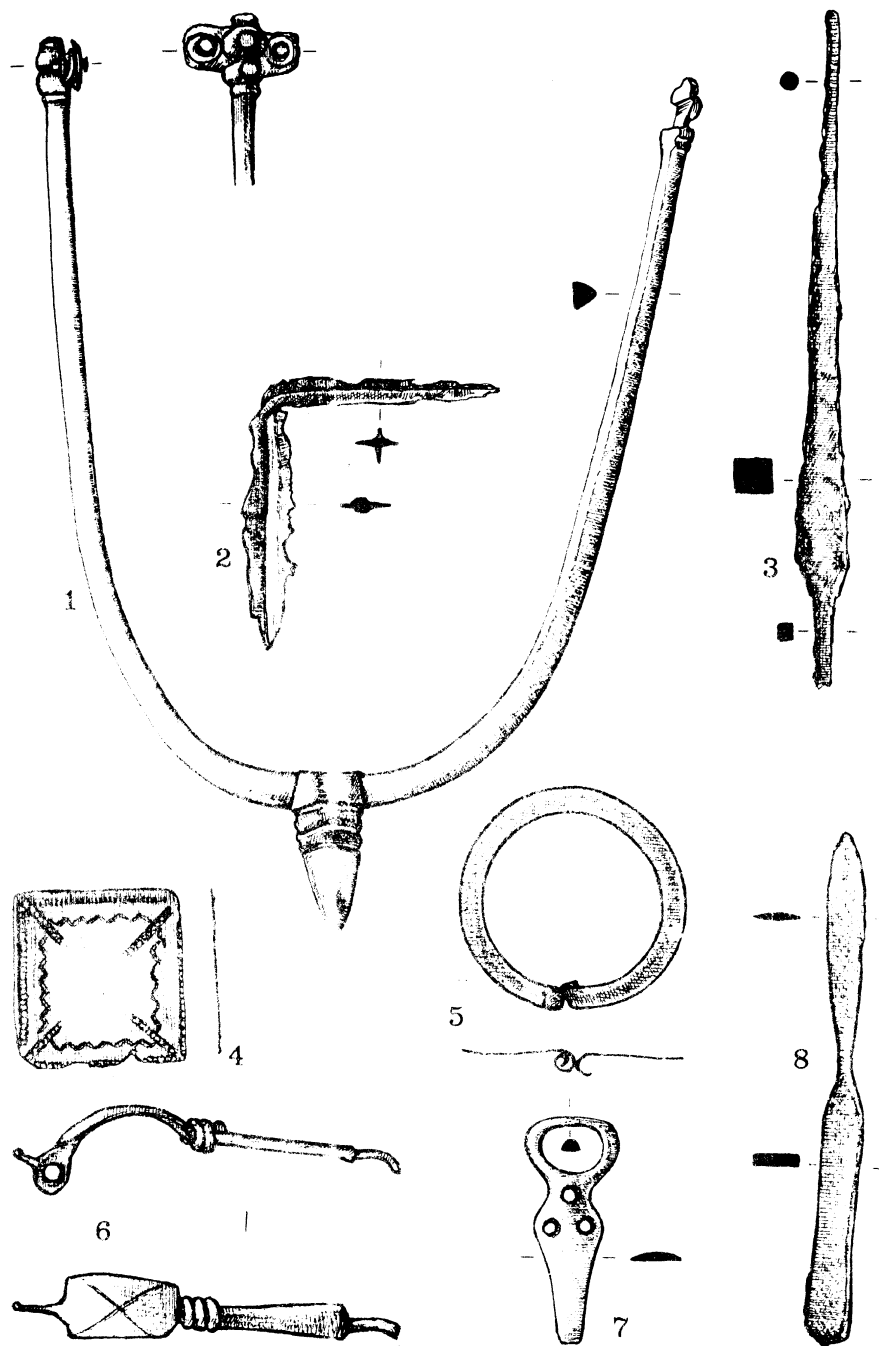


Fig. 13. Biogradi - Lištice (after Čremošnik 1989, T. IV).

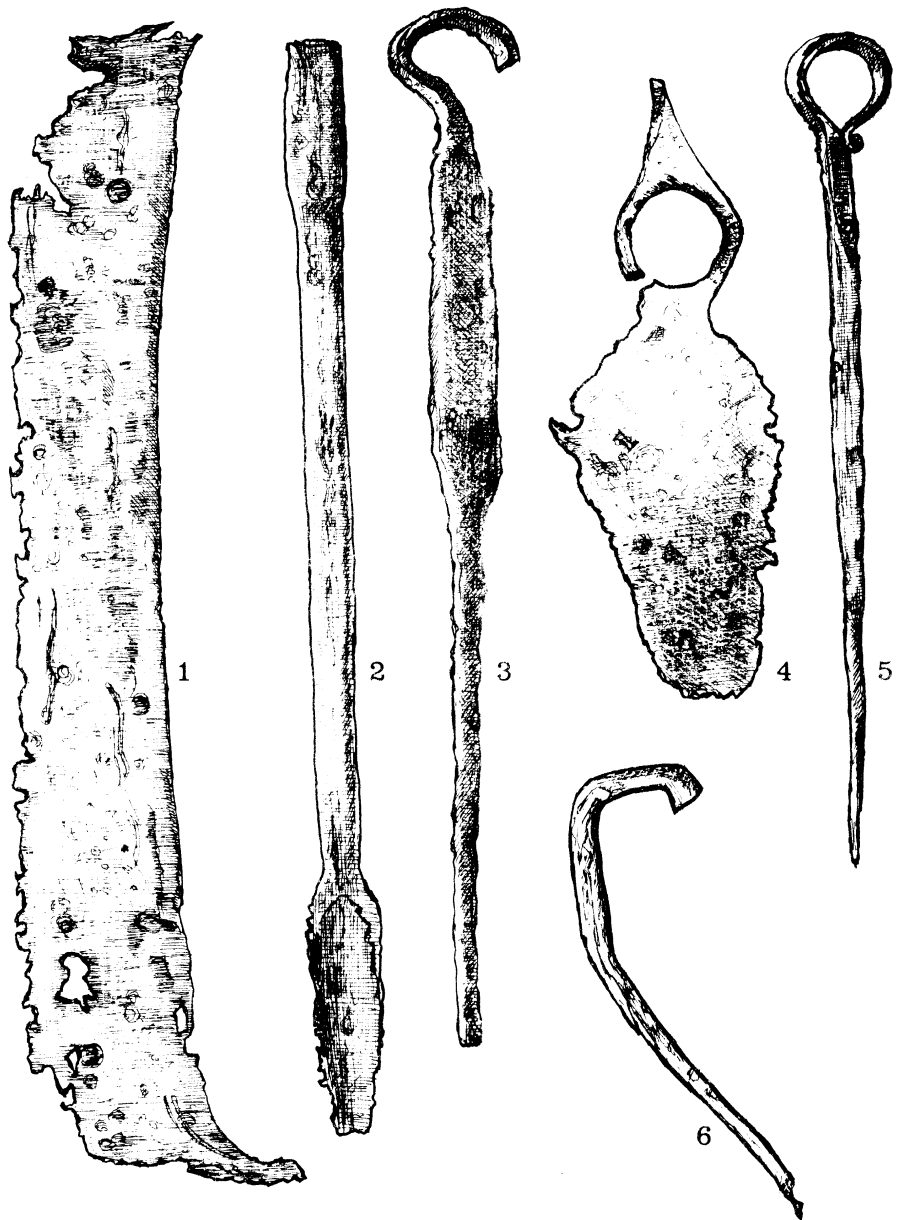


Fig. 14. Biograci – Lištice (after Čremošnik 1989, T. VIII).

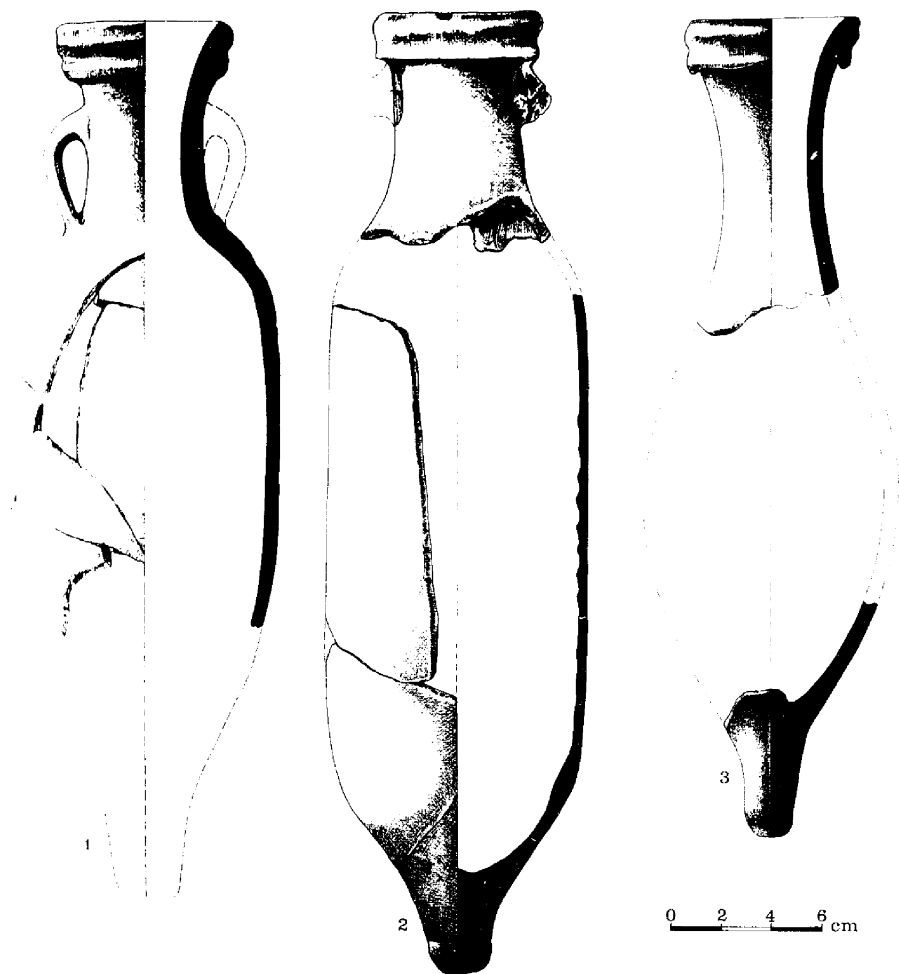


Fig. 15. Biograci – Lištice (after Čremošnik 1989, fig. 1–3).

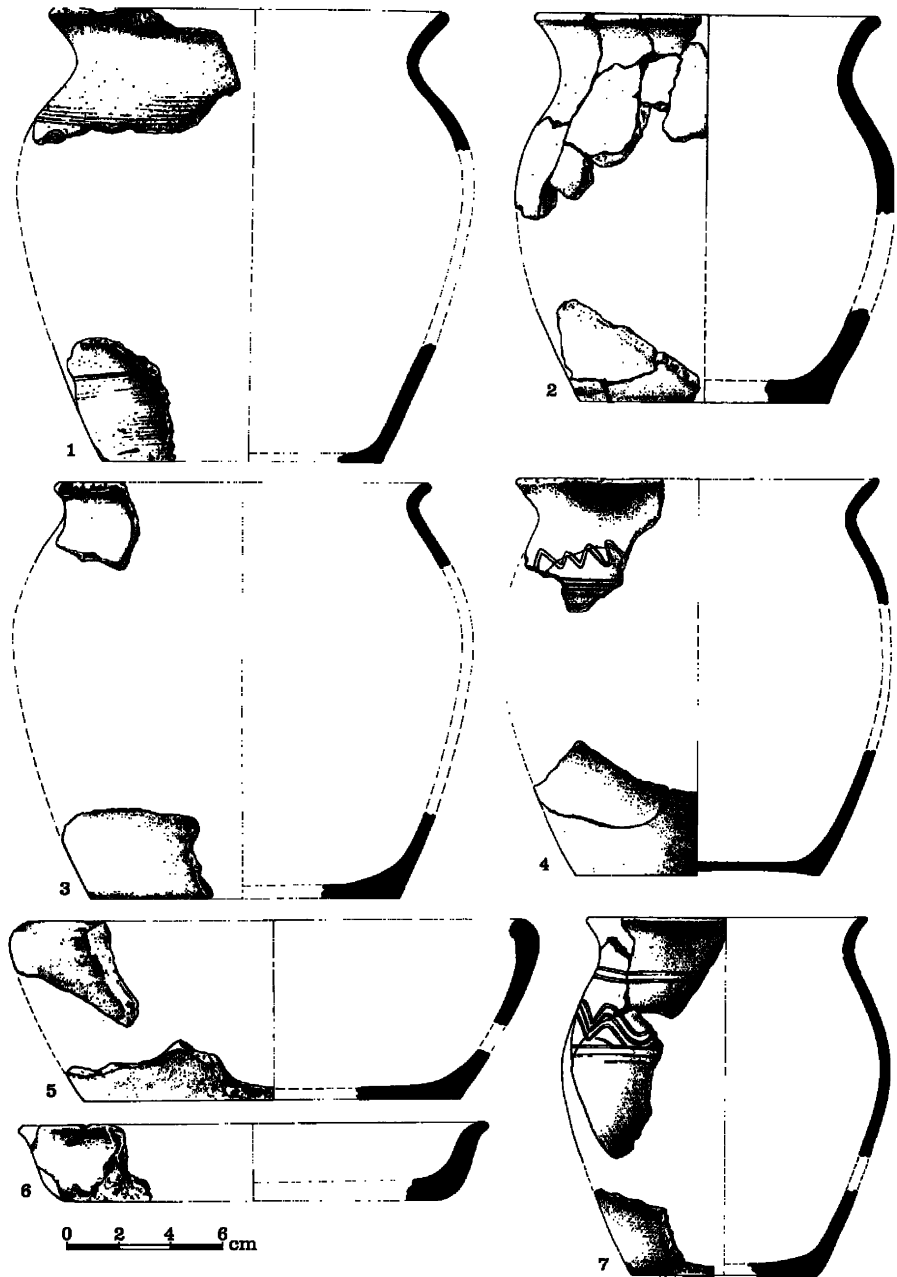


Fig. 16. Biogradi – Lištice (after Čremošnik 1989, T. XI).

Fortifications whose surface area is not known

Sites on which fortification elements and traces of the material culture were found that researchers have dated to the late Antique period, but without firm data on their appearance or size, form a special group. The position of these fortifications varies. They are found on elevations above valleys and fields, along roads and at isolated dominant points.

The following fortifications belong to this group:

- Gradina-Sapna, Zvornik (map 1, no. 34), 15.5 km northwest of Zvornik (AL BiH 1988, 06.72, 91 [D. Basler]).
- Zelengrad, Han Kola-Čutkovići, Banja Luka (map 1, no. 35), 9 km southwest of Banja Luka (AL BiH 1988, 09.110, 133 [O. Jamaković]).
- Zmajevac-Egići, Čelinac (map 1, no. 36), 9.8 km southeast of Banja Luka (AL BiH 1988, 09.113, 133 [B. Graljuk]).
- Grad-Kijevo, Sanski Most (map 1, no. 37), 7.3 km southeast of Sanski Most. On this site a round tower with a diameter of 10–15 m was discovered (AL BiH 1988, 10.65, 145 [V. Paškvalin]).
- Grčka Gradina, Gornje Ratkovo-Kočiči, Ključ (map 1, no. 38), 16.5 km northeast of Ključ. Inside the fortress an acropolis with cistern, several buildings and the suburbs were discovered (AL BiH 1988, 10.94, 146 [B. Marijanović]).
- Gradina, Šipovo (map 1, no. 39), 14 km northwest of Jajce (AL BiH 1988, 12.93, 22 [B. Marijanović]).
- Pogana Glavica, Kupres (map 1, no. 40), 44 km south of Jajce (AL BiH 1988, 12.195, 184 [D. Basler]).
- Velika vrata, Kupres (map 1, no. 41), 36.5 km southeast of Jajce (AL BiH 1988, 12.255, 187 [V. Paškvalin]).
- Veliki kamen-Volari, Šipovo (map 1, no. 42), 12 km south of Jajce (AL BiH 1988, 12.256, 186 [D. Basler]).
- Gradina-Alihodže, Travnik (map 1, no. 43), 12.5 km northwest of Zenica (AL BiH 1988, 13.64, 198 [A. Benac]).
- Bobovac (map 1, no. 44), 9.8 km northeast of Kakanj. Only one Late Antique wall is noted. The wall is now a part of the tower built in the Middle Ages (AL BiH 1988, 14.13, 15 [P. Anđelić]).
- Gradina-Dabravina, Vareš (map 1, no. 45), 17.5 km southeast of Kakanj. One church, 15.50 × 11.28 m, is found. The church was raised on top of an ancient tomb (AL BiH 1988, 14. 86, 19 [V. Paškvalin/N. Miletić]).
- Gradina (Gradac)-Karaula, Kakanj (map 1, no. 46), 13 km northwest of Kakanj (AL BiH 1988, 14.91, 20 [V. Paškvalin]).
- Debelo brdo, Sarajevo-centre (map 1, no.47) (AL BiH 1988, 15.68, 42 [B. Čović]).

- Gat, Novi Dulići-Galešine, Gacko (map 1, no. 48), 11.7 km southeast of Gacko (AL BiH 1988, 19.68, 144 [N. Mandić/N. Miletić]).
- Vidoški Grad, Stolac (map 1, no. 49), 1 km southeast of Stolac. On the site traces were detected of the ramparts built by *opus spicatum*, later destroyed during the Middle Ages (AL BiH 1988, 20.540, 195 [Đ. Basler]).
- Gradac-Hudutsko, Prozor (map 1, no. 50), 19.5 km northwest of Konjic (AL BiH 1988, 21.105, 213 [Đ. Basler]).
- Gradina-Podgradina, Livno (map 1, no. 51), 13.5 km southwest of Livno (AL BiH 1988, 22.82, 239 [V. Paškvalin]).
- Soldatova (Velika) Gradina-Šumnjaci, Glamoč (map 1, no. 52), 12 km northwest of Glamoč (AL BiH 1988, 22.249, 248 [B. Čović]).
- Blagaj (Stjepan Grad)-Blagaj, Mostar (map 1, no. 53), 12.5 km southeast of Mostar. Inside the fortification several archaeological strata were identified. Only three external, trapezoid-shaped towers from the Late Antique period survived the constant rebuilding at the site (Basler 1972, 47f.).
- Karlovac, Čitluk (map 1, no. 54), 15.5 km southwest of Mostar (AL BiH 1988, 24.208, 300 [Đ. Basler]).
- Kosmaj-Biletići, Čitluk (map 1, no. 55), 15.8 km southwest of Mostar (AL BiH 1988, 24.217, 300 [P. Anđelić]).
- Krstina-Hamzići, Čitluk (map 1, no. 56), 16.8 km southwest of Mostar (AL BiH 1988, 24.236, 301 [Đ. Basler]).
- Gradina-Bivolje Brdo, Čapljina (map 1, no. 57), 8.3 km northeast of Čapljina (AL BiH 1988, 25.110, 325 [P. Anđelić]).
- Gradina-Počitelj, Čapljina (map 1, no. 58), 4 km northeast of Čapljina (AL BiH 1988, 25.133, 326f. [B. Marijanović/I. Marijanović]).
- Brekovića-Bihać (map 1, no. 59), 1 km north of Bihać. At the site traces of the ramparts and the pentagonal tower (10 × 6 m) were detected (Radimsky 1893; Ciglencečki 1987, 105f.).
- Teferić, Krupac, Ilidža (map 1, no. 60), 11.5 km southwest of Sarajevo. Traces of the Late Antique/Early Byzantine period were not detected, but according to the shape of the fortification and its round towers, this site could belong to this period (Sergejevski 1947, 46–48; AL BiH 1988, 15.379, 57 [K. Topolovac]; Popović 2003, 103).

Conclusive observations

The province of Dalmatia did not escape the migration of large ethnic groups at the end of the 4th century, although for most of its existence it had enjoyed peace, and had not undergone direct attack from barbarian

tribes. After the division of the Roman Empire in 395, the province was incorporated into the Western Empire, as part of the Illyrian diocese, in an attempt to stabilise the situation. The sudden death of Theodosius I led to the first Goth uprising. They arrived at the wall of Salona, devastating much of the province *en route*. The beginning of the barbarian penetration led to further weakening of central rule. This stimulated the self-will of local rulers, who had acted more or less independently from 454. After the last of these, Nepos, the province was attached to the Eastern Empire (480).³¹

Although Dalmatia formally belonged to the Eastern Empire, Odoacer from Rome, nominally recognising the rule of Zeno, governed the province. Skilfully using the end of the dynastic struggles of the Ostrogoths, Zeno finally succeeded in persuading Theodoric in 488 to move towards Italy, where an Ostrogothic monarchy was formed. Since the Eastern Empire was not in a position to independently control its remote areas, it was agreed that the Ostrogoths should govern Dalmatia on behalf of the rulers on the throne in Constantinople. The agreement was quickly broken by Theodoric, who in 504 attached the provinces of Dalmatia, Pannonia II and Savia to his kingdom. The enlargement of Ostrogothic territory led to the formation of new administrative units, so that Dalmatia was governed by Osvin the Goth, with the title *comes Dalmatiae et Saviae*. Although dramatic, these changes did not endure. Thus, during 535, right at the beginning of the conflict between the Byzantines and the Goths, Dalmatia was returned to the Constantinople wing, although the Ostrogoths tried twice to have it returned, without success, in 537 during the reign of Vitiges and in 554 during the reign of Totila.³²

The submission of the Ostrogothic state on the part of Justinian I brought apparent peace, since on the northern border of the Empire new barbarian groups, the Avars and the Slavs, had arrived, penetrating later to Dyrrachium in 548, followed by the Byzantine military unit 15000 men strong. They did not dare to intervene. The above advance was only an introduction to the siege of Thessalonica, carried out in 550, but without success. During 550/551 the Slavs were penetrated in the east, and then the Kutrigurs in northeast Bosnia in 568. The same year, the Avars took over complete leadership in Pannonia, since their allies up to that point, the Lombards, headed off towards Italy. Free from competition the Avars very quickly took the initiative, conquering Sirmium in 582, and temporarily occupying Singidunum and Viminacium in 584. The further expansion of

³¹ Wilkes 1969, 418–421.

³² Wilkes 1969, 423–425.

the Avar-Slav attacks continued in 586, when Thessalonica was once again besieged, unsuccessfully. The Byzantine Empire did not begin with the repression of Avar dominance until they were able to resolve the situation on the eastern front in 591. Nevertheless, the Avars and the Slavs quickly agreed to besiege Thessalonica, which they unsuccessfully attempted in 597. After a great victory by the Byzantines over the Avars (601), when it seemed that the Avar danger would be averted forever, there was an armed uprising and the enthronement of Phocas in 602. Conflicts over the throne led to the fall of the limes, by which the way was left wide open for the barbarians' invasion. The abandonment of border fortifications led to a succession of Avar-Slav penetrations in the period between 612 and 641, during which the province of Dalmatia was finally made to submit. Several coastal towns, as a result of their position, were able to resist attacks by conquerors.³³

The chaotic times that had befallen the population of the province of Dalmatia compelled them to abandon the fertile plains with their pleasant climate, and to move to higher, harsher regions that offered them more safety. However, this process of movement did not happen at once – the change occurred gradually. From available data we can see that the process of adaptation to new surroundings unfolded in two directions. One method of adaptation is represented by fortification of existing bases in the plains, which was the case with Mogorjelo (map 1, no. 7). There, the approach was to fortify a large agricultural farm at the beginning of the 4th century. The other method was the movement of fortifications to higher altitudes, as was the situation with the Biograci-Lištica site (map 1, no. 19). Further developments show that bases situated in lower areas, even with strong ramparts and high towers, did not offer adequate protection, and that movement to higher zones (i.e. vertical migration) was a much more efficient approach.

The abandonment of earlier posts and the crossing to new positions caused a succession of changes, seen both in new fortification forms, and in conceptual changes regarding the function of settlement and fortification.

The gradual deterioration of central rule and the impossibility of maintaining control over territories belonging to the Empire, the decreased number of available troops and great depopulation demanded new ideas for the construction of fortifications. As a result, high, easily defended points were chosen in the main. From these it was possible to control communication routes as well as fertile fields and river valleys. When fortresses

³³ Ковачевић 1994, 118–123.

were erected, older rectangular models were abandoned, since shapes were now determined by the configuration of the terrain. Since in most cases the dominant points, encircled by steep slopes, deep-bottomed rivers, or even artificial *fossae*, were chosen, the inhabitants usually did not build ramparts on inaccessible sides, to save both money and time. Occasionally towers were formed simply by „breaking“ up the ramparts. Innovations are shown also by the phenomenon of pronounced polygonal or round towers, with the occasional appearance of double ramparts. Apart from this, cisterns are often seen inside fortresses. These were essential for securing sufficient water supply in the event of barbarian attacks.

The construction of fortifications brought with it changes in the materials used. Bricks were almost completely abandoned.³⁴ Half-treated stone cemented with mortar dominated in the treatment of ramparts, and only the outer face was arranged evenly, whereas the heart of the main wall was filled with rubble.

Besides fortification innovations, there are changes in the internal structure of fortresses, since they no longer functioned only as military posts, but were now inhabited. Normal, everyday life activities occurred in the interior, so that almost all fortified settlements had a church, while occasionally there is an acropolis or administrative centres and fortified suburbs, where everyday life was carried on.

The abandonment of fertile valleys and the departure to higher altitudes was not carried out totally, however. Fertile plains ideal for successful agricultural activity were too precious to be easily forsaken. Thus on dominant raised points overlooking great fertile river valleys or plains fortifications were erected that, besides their defensive role, were also collection centres for the storage of all commodities, produced and harvested through extensive cultivation and livestock breeding. For that reason, in such locations fortifications greater than 1 ha in size were built, with some up to 2 ha (Crkvina-Makljenovac, map 1, no. 1), or even 3 ha (Gradac-Mokronog, map 1, no. 5), to satisfy the needs of the residents. One should not rule out the possibility that these fortifications may also have served as warehouses for metal before its further transport, since the Ovan-Grad (map 1, no. 2), Kalaura-Jelašinovci (map 1, no. 3) and Gradac-Mokronog (map 1, no. 5) are all near mining areas.

The altitude at which large fortifications are situated varies according to the depth of river canyons, or the elevation at which fields and meadows lie. Thus the sites Crkvina-Makljenovac (map 1, no. 1), Ovan-Grad (map 1,

³⁴ Except on the Bugar-Grad site (map 1, no. 8), where construction using the *opus mixtum* technique can be seen.

no. 2), Kaluara-Jelašinovci (map 1, no. 3) and Gradina-Renići (map 1, no. 6) are situated approximately 500 m above sea level, to control shallow river basins, while the remaining two fortifications in this group (Gradina [Gradac]-Ravno, map 1, no. 4 and Gradac-Mokronog, map 1, no. 6) lie between 500 and 1500 m above sea level.

Vis-à-vis large fortifications, which seem to have clear reasons for their position, medium-sized and small fortifications do not appear in typical positions. Their presence is established both along roads and in isolated positions, at elevations varying from 200 to 1500 m above sea level. We can conclude that since fortresses of this kind could have served as refuge or even control points from which certain road routes were observed or protected, their size probably mostly depended on the number of inhabitants.

The process of gradually abandoning the plains and settling in more inaccessible positions was not just typical for the province of Dalmatia. The same principle is met in the mountain regions of the neighbouring province of Moesia I, where there are a number of fortifications in high locations. Their shape, method of construction and character is similar to the fortifications found in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During archaeological excavation of southwest Serbia³⁵ it was noted that here population movement to higher altitudes started to occur at the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th centuries. Archaeological excavation of the sites of Trojan³⁶ and Zlatni Kamen³⁷ testify to this. In the western part of Serbia, also a mountainous region, several fortifications with traces from the Late Antique stratum surrounding Gradina on Jelica were found.³⁸ We meet a similar situation in the territory of Albania, which includes the former provinces of Prevalis and Epir Novus as well as part of the province of Epir Vetus, where fortifications raised at higher levels can also be seen dating from the Late Antique and Early Byzantine period.³⁹ The vertical migration of the Byzantine population before the barbarian advances, as seen in the Dalmatian hinterland, was played out on the Imperial territory to its west. The same is seen in the Eastern Alpine region, which included part of

³⁵ During excavation to date of southwest Serbia, i.e. the southwestern part of the province of Moesia I, a large number of fortifications have been found in the Late Antique-Early Byzantine stratum. Since sounding excavation as well as reconnaissance was carried out, we quote part of the literature in which this issue is dealt with: Милинковић 1982, 131–140; Поповић 1983, 5–14; Поповић 1984, 11–18; Милинковић 1983, 29–37; Милинковић 1985, 49–57; Иванишевић 1987, 5–12; Иванишевић 1988, 5–12; Иванишевић 1989, 7–16; Иванишевић 1990, 7–18.

³⁶ Иванишевић 1989, 16.

³⁷ Иванишевић 1990, 17.

³⁸ Milinković 2001, 71–73 Abb. 2.

³⁹ Поповић 1988, 216–218.

the province of Raetia II and the provinces of Noricum Ripense, Noricum Mediterraneum, Venetia, Savia and Liburnia. There, the process of migration to higher parts is seen occurring between the 3rd and 6th centuries.⁴⁰

However, the situation is somewhat different in the coastal area of Dalmatia, where the principle applied is of horizontal migration. Coastal inhabitants moved to the islands, and succeeded in keeping themselves from barbarian attacks, thanks to their connection with their home over the sea.⁴¹ On the coast we therefore see large fortified towns, while on the islands safe havens are mixed with observation posts controlling maritime routes, which ensured survival. The maritime routes were threatened not only by pirates, but also by the Ostrogoths, who had in the meantime become sailors. They were destroyed in 551, after the Byzantine victory in a sea battle at Sinigaglia. Their retreat to the islands saw the erection of Late Antique havens on the foundations of Early Antique buildings. They were also constructed of pressed stone and mortar, as is the case with the traces of the rampart on the Glavina-Veli grad site on Krk,⁴² or the island of St. Mark, where a cistern was found inside the fortress⁴³.

As can be seen, on the territory of the whole Empire historical circumstances led to the migration of the resident population, who were seen in mountain areas after so-called „vertical migration“, i.e. moving to higher altitudes, before the barbarian advance. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of the province of Dalmatia stayed near lowland parts, where the largest fortifications are found, to provide themselves with essential food supplies. In addition, fortifications are also seen along communication routes, to ensure the safe passage of goods and enable mines to function. Newly erected fortresses were adapted to difficult times, strengthened by a new type of tower and rampart. The fortified elevated position thus became fortified posts and havens in which everyday life activities were carried on, as shown amongst other things by churches inside fortifications clearly playing an important role. The absence of necropolises near these fortresses, excepting Mogorjelo⁴⁴ and several graves at Gradac-Lepenica and Dabravina, may simply be due to the excavation level, but it can also indicate that settlement was not permanent on some of the fortifications.

⁴⁰ Ciglonečki 1987, 160–164.

⁴¹ Tomičić 1993, 92f.

⁴² Faber 1988, 118.

⁴³ Faber 1988, 119f.

⁴⁴ On this site, according to several researchers, as mentioned earlier, lies what seems to be a Late Antique necropolis in which it seems that the German and Ostrogoth populations were buried alongside the Byzantine. On this issue see Miletić 1970.

An attempt by the inhabitants of the Dalmatian hinterland to resist relentless destruction was not, however, successful. Since, in contrast to the coastal area, they were cut off from their homeland, without the influx of fresh strength and money, the inhabitants, separated by isolated posts, slowly disappeared, leaving behind them abandoned buildings. This was the final testimony of the fall of an empire.

Translated by Esther Polenezzer

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