



The most significant values
of the cultural and natural heritage

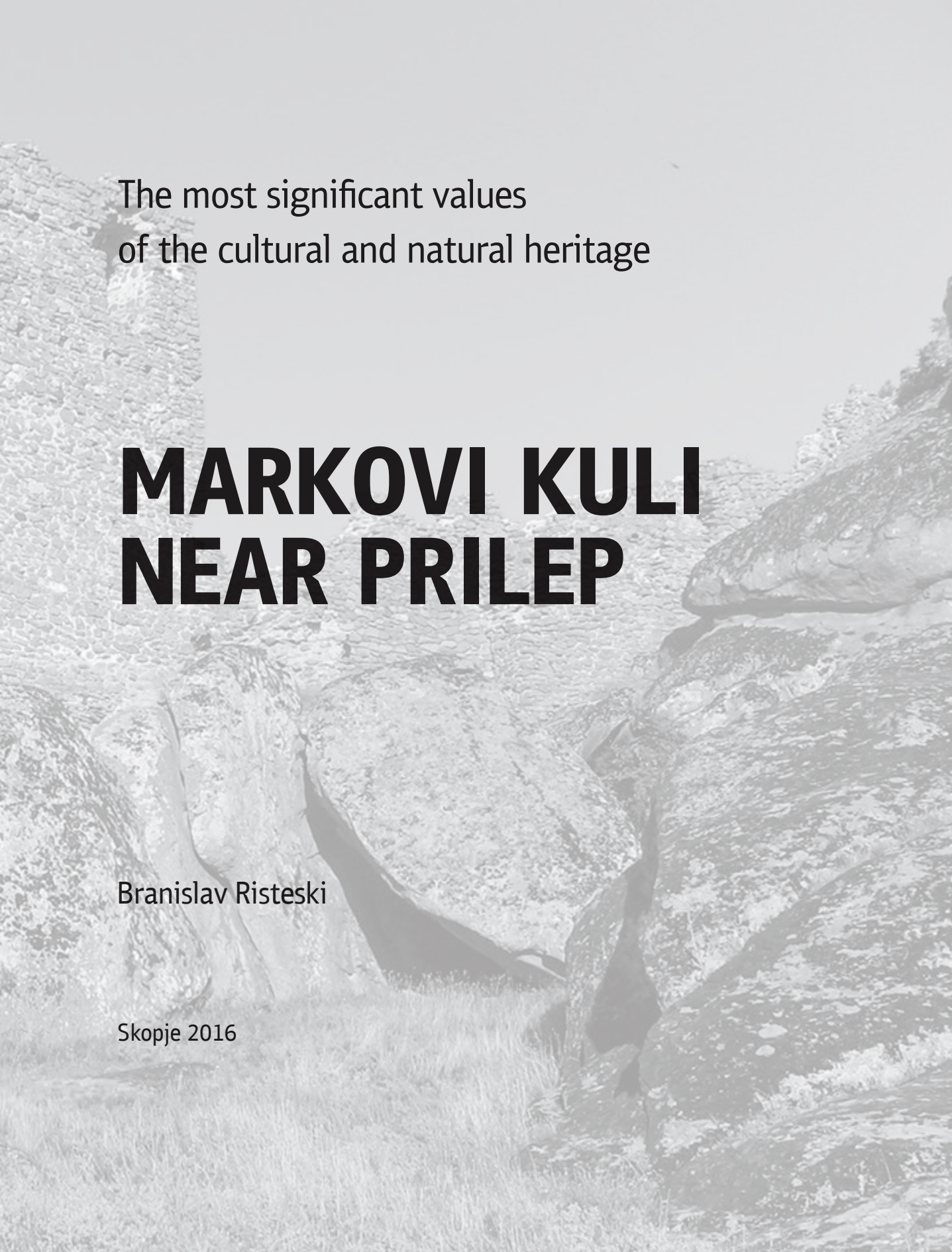
MARKOVI KULI NEAR PRILEP



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Skopje 2016

FOREWORD

MACEDONIAN CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Over the past 4.5 million years since the creation of Earth, the ancestor of the modern man, “the wise man - Homo sapiens”, appearing on the African continent 150,000 years before this day, quickly settled throughout the territories of the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

His cultural evolution is recorded in the Republic of Macedonia, as well.

While travelling through the prehistoric era of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, as well as the historical epochs of the Antiquity and the Middle Ages, man created civilizations on the soil of the Republic of Macedonia by introducing and using the natural resources. He established the magnificent kingdoms of the Agrianians, Paeonia, Pelagonia, Lyncestis, Macedonia, and the principalities of Deuriopus, Dessaretia and the Penestae.

The Roman Empire, Byzantine, the medieval states - all left a powerful civilizational imprint.

The belief in the natural phenomena, followed by the belief in the many gods, to finally worship our only God - all left indelible cultural traces.

All this enormous cultural and natural heritage of the Republic of Macedonia was subject of the capital project of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, “Publications of the most significant values of the cultural and natural heritage,” carried out by the Cultural Heritage Protection Office.

130 monographs featuring the Archaeological Heritage, Sacral heritage, the Treasures of the churches and monasteries in Macedonia and the Natural heritage were created.

Macedonia - the high forest land in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula, as the name suggests, furrowed by the deep valleys of the Vardar tributaries and the river Drim, adorned with the blue - green waters of Lake Ohrid, Prespa and Dojran, with the proud giants Kozuv, Shar Mountain, Korab and Jablanica, Selecka Mountain and other mountain ranges, today lights 130 torches of its own, as well as the world's, cultural and natural heritage; a legacy to preserve, use wisely and pass on to future generations of the Macedonian road to eternity.

Prof. Viktor Lilchikj Adams, Ph.D.

MARKOVI KULI (MARCO'S TOWERS) NEAR PRILEP

Spatial determinants - The cultural complex of Markovi Kuli - Varos, Prilep is located in the northern part of the Pelagonian Plain. It extends over the rocky hill of Markovi Kuli as well as over the area at the base of the hill, from the east side, generally referred to as Potkuli. The base of the hill is outlined by a micro-regional unit called Zagrad from the west and the area of the village of Varos, the present-day suburb of Prilep, from the south side.

Position - The rocky hill of Markovi Kuli represents the southernmost segment in the series of three hills, spread in a direction northwest-southeast: Treskavec in the north, Zelenik in the middle and Markovi Kuli in the south. Basically, these three hills are part of the northern mountain range of the Pelagonian Valley.



Morphological features - In addition to the area at the base of the hill, the geographic unit of Markovi Kuli is also constituted of separate spatial units, which, due to their biogeographical features, had a crucial role in outlining the patterns of use of individual segments of this cultural complex in the past. The top segment consists of four hills: Cardak in the northwest, Krupnik in the northeast, Grebnik in the southwest and Tapance in the southeast. At the highest point

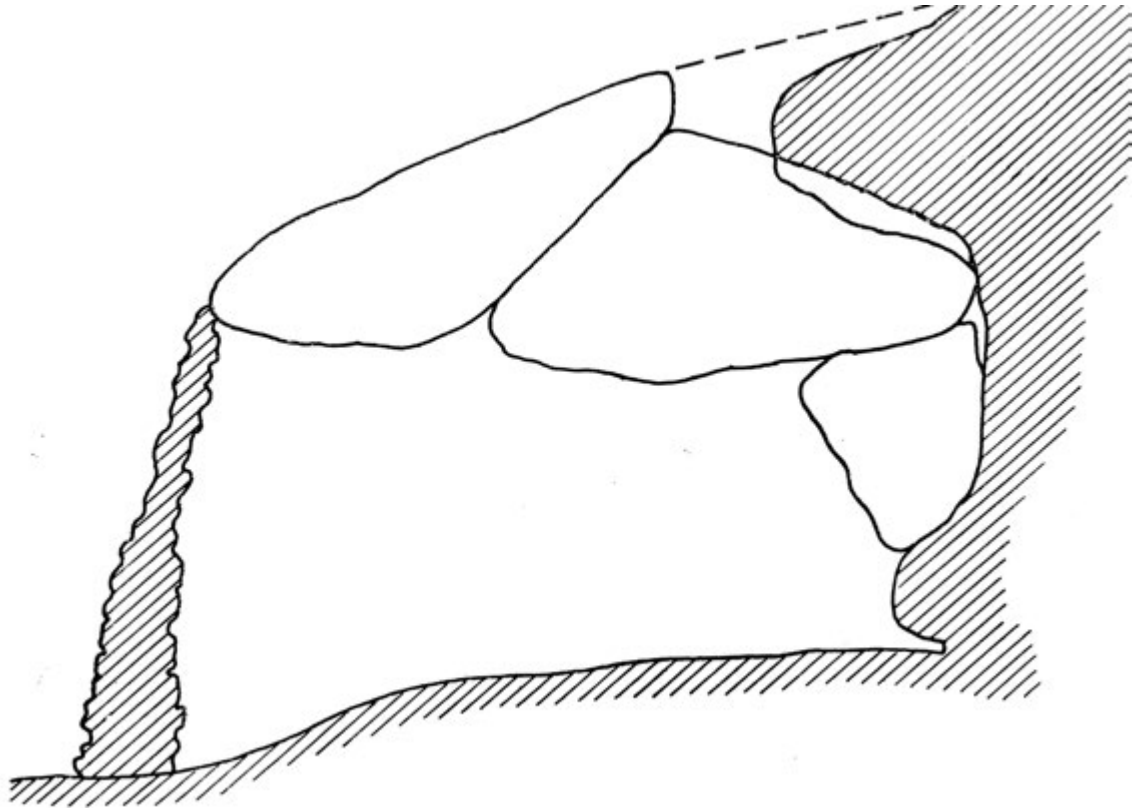
and covering the largest area is the hill of Cardak, which, as the most dominant and extremely inaccessible part of the mountain, was by definition predetermined to be the location for the last defensive position of the fortification section of the cultural complex. Among these four hills spreads the vast plateau of Sred Kuli, which serves as a natural link between the hillsides on the one hand, and the other segments of the hill with the upper plateau on the other, resulting in the position of the primary access to the upper sections of Markovi Kuli on the south side of this plateau. On the south and east side of the upper segment of the hill is a spacious plateau with a slight decline from the north to the east and south (Ramniste), which, due to its physical isolation and climatic position, by definition, had a separate i.e. specific function in the past. The remaining sections extending over the steep sides of the hill are segmented plateaus with a proportionally small perimeter, interconnected with narrow and, as a rule, hardly accessible trails.

Communication routes - Positioned in the northern part of Pelagonia, Markovi Kuli is linked to the adjacent areas in the following manner: to the east with Azot, via Derven over the village of Prisad, with Raec via Preslap over the village of Pletvar, with the southeast toward Mariovo via the overpass of Sliva, above the village of Bonce, to the south with Demir Hisar along the valley of the river Crna above the village of Bucin, and to the west with Porece via Barbaras near the village of Debreste. By means of the basic connection with the central and southern part of Pelagonia, the cultural complex of Markovi Kuli is connected to one of the main links on the Balkan Peninsula on the east-west route - the ancient Via Egnatia.

The easy access to the lower slopes and the base of the hill allowed for the forming of an entire series of internal communications within the cultural complex of Markovi Kuli, directly influenced by the morphological features of the terrain. In contrast, the only convenient access to the upper sections of the hill is located on the north side causing the joining of the two main internal communication routes of the cultural complex of Markovi Kuli (the west via Tasacica and Zagrad and the east via the overpass to Zelenik) under the northern base of Sred Kuli, specifically, on the area under the section of Glavna Porta.

Strategic features - Positioned south of the northern mountain range of Pelagonia, on a prominent section of the northern segment of the valley, Markovi Kuli has both a specific offensive and defensive strategic position, which allows for direct control of the main communication routes in this area: Derven-Prisad, Derven-Gostirazni and Preslap-Pletvar, and for indirect control of the communication routes to Porece and Mariovo on the one hand, as well as the evident safety of the upper, barely accessible segments of the hill, reinforced by an adequate fortification defence system, on the other.

Economic potential - Around the hill of Markovi Kuli expands fertile agricultural areas, the most notable being the eastern and southern segment, and the area of Zagrad on the west features a particularly suitable soil and climate in this part of Pelagonia. The surrounding mountains and hills, being abundant in natural resources, allow for the development of stockbreeding, while the forests serve as sources for an abundance of various trees. All this, along with the relative proximity of bearings of metals and non-metals, enabled the past inhabitants of this land a relatively strong economic potential for providing a basic means for survival.



Cardak, Eneolithic house

KEY STAGES

After years of research on the cultural complex of Markovi Kuli, whose beginnings go back to the travel writings from the end of the 18th century until the contemporary studies within the scientific research project *Late Antique and Medieval settlements in northern Pelagonia and Mariovo* (2003-2005) and *Late Antique and Medieval settlements in northern Pelagonia, Mariovo and Porece* (2009-2011), where the head researcher on both projects is the author of this work, led to the recognition of a whole series of relevant data providing basic reconstruction of the manner in which this space was used in separate stages in the past.

ENEOLITHIC PERIOD

The earliest evidence that points to the utilization of this area is associated with the Late Eneolithic period when a small unspecified settlement existed on the upper sections of the hill of Markovi Kuli. On the northern slopes of the hill of Cardak were discovered remains of a residential building located inside a small cave. The length of the discovered object was 7.5 m, and the width 2.5 m - 3 m, constituting a total surface of about 22 m². Given the fact that part of the upper surface of the building collapsed, parts of the interior of the building were preserved in their original form, such as the floor of grey and black pressed earth. Based on the analysis of the material that

corresponds to the period when the building was used, E. Cnotlivi dates the building in a time frame from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age.

The building is linked to movable finds that occurred in the same period, discovered in partially preserved cultural layers positioned on the upper sections of Markovi Kuli, which leads to the assumption that from the Late Neolithic period to the Early Bronze Age on the area of Cardak and Sred Kuli there existed a small unspecified settlement whose residents were primarily stockbreeders.

BRONZE AGE

The utilization of the area on Markovi Kuli is confirmed in the Bronze Age, with the findings from the early stages chronologically determined, while the middle and late stages are indirectly culturally and chronologically implied.

The Early Bronze Age (2500 - 1700 years BC) is confirmed by the remains of the necropolis discovered on the southern slopes and at the base of the hill, more precisely, in the northern part of the settlement of Varos. Six tombs of the type *cists* have been discovered, fenced and covered with stones or stone slabs. The orientation of the graves was north-south, and in one case east-west. The deceased were placed in a contracted position, placed to the side with their knees bent. The tomb artefacts are constituted of typical early Bronze Age pottery vessels with a



Cardak, images on a rock, halstat



Cardak, images on a rock, detail, halstat

stripper handle that supersedes the crown. Identical findings were discovered on the exterior of the tombs. The settlement that corresponds to this necropolis extends to the north-eastern part of the settlement of Varos, more specifically, to the southern base of the hill.

The next stage of the Bronze Age (15th - 13th century BC) is featured by the unique finding of the cave tomb at the site Svetec. In the crevice of this cave was discovered a tomb where the deceased had been cremated, and whose remains were placed in a ceramic urn, dug into the ground, leaning sideways and supported by stones. According to certain formal and typological features, the urn is linked to the Bronze Age, and the cultural context indicates that the burial occurred sometime in the period of the Middle to end of the Late Bronze Age.

IRON AGE

The Iron Age at Markovi Kuli is confirmed by the fragmented remains discovered on the southern and western segment of the base of the hill, and on the highest sections of the hill.

In the central section of the settlement of Varos were discovered fragments of vessel pottery collected into three piles (pots, jars, hydriai, etc.) which, according to B. Kitanoski, represent traces of partitions of a residential facility. According to the typological features of the containers, the settlement dates from the Early Iron Age (13th – 12th century BC).

The artefacts discovered in the tombs (fibulae with stellar expansions of the arc and a flat triangular foot, etc.) discovered at the site of Zagrad chronologically correspond most to the mentioned settlement, serving as a testimony that the necropolis of the Iron Age settlement expanded west of the residential segment.

In the eastern segment of the hill of Cardak were discovered unique drawings on a rock, which, according to the style, iconographic features and archaeological context originate from the Iron Age. Separate Iron Age settlement findings, mainly fragments of vessel ceramics, were also discovered south of the rock drawings, as well in the section of Sred Kuli.

CLASSICAL PERIOD

The Classical period (4th century BC) is featured by the remains of the necropolis discovered in the western part of the complex of Markovi Kuli, i.e. in the area of Zagrad.

Thirty six graves of round-oval and rectangular shape, different in orientation, have been unearthed in this area. The deceased were cremated. The tomb findings consist of: jewellery findings (fibulae, bracelets, double pins, earrings, pendants, rings, etc.), weapons and tools (knives, points of spears, nails, etc.), ceramic pots (olpe, kylix, lekythos etc.), a coin, etc. Based on the typological characteristics, the burials in the researched section of the necropolis date from the end of 5th to the end of the 4th century BC.



Cardak, remains of the Hellenistic and Middle Age rampart



HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Unlike the fragmentation of the previous stages, the excavated material remains from the Hellenic period (3rd until the end of the 1st century BC) from the area of Markovi Kuli and provides basic reconstruction of the layout of the settlement, and the discovered necropolises suggest the existence of two main stages.

Fortified acropolis - The initial building of the fortification in the upper sections of the hill corresponds to this period. The analysis of the preserved ramparts and the stratigraphic observations made as a result of the archaeological research in this area indicate that the original Hellenistic fortification encompassed the hill of Cardak, including the Area A, Area B and Area C. The most obvious confirmation of this statement are the preserved segments of the Hellenistic walls of the northern sections of the rampart in Area C, where it is evident that the walls of this period were built of coarse stones joined with lime mortar, executed in free style without much insistence on the horizontal levelling of the masonry.

Open settlement - suburbium - There is a large number of settlement remains associated with the Hellenistic period (parts of residential and commercial buildings, vessel ceramics and construction ceramics, tools, etc.), discovered in the lower parts and at the base of the hill. Findings of this kind are found in the western, southern and eastern parts of the archaeological complex, evidently suggesting the existence of a proportionally spacious settlement of an open type in this area in the period from the 3rd to the 1st century BC. Unfortunately, due to the destruction of the buildings caused by subsequent construction works in this area, as well as the intense erosion of the land, a more detailed understanding of the distribution of the structural elements of this segment in the settlement in the individual stages of the Hellenic period has been prevented.

Necropoli - The lack of this type of data is partially complemented by the research findings of the Hellenistic necropoli discovered in the area of Markovi Kuli and its immediate surroundings. Hence, the necropolis of the inhumed deceased located on the south side of the hill, more precisely, the site of Potkuli, is linked to the Early Hellenistic period. A total of 11 graves of proportionally large size have been discovered. Most of the graves are of oval-circular shape, executed of several layers of stones or single half-chiselled stones placed around the head of the deceased. There are also graves executed in *free style*. The tomb cists of massive stone slabs are the least present. The orientation of the tombs is varied. The findings in the graves include jewellery (fibulae, pendants, etc.), weapons and tools (tops and sheaths of spears, knives, etc.), vessel ceramics (pateri, olpe, etc.) and coins. The typological features of the findings indicate the date of this necropolis from the end of the 4th to the end of the 3rd century BC.

The next phase of the Hellenic period is represented by the rock tombs discovered at the sites of Krklari-Prilep and Meckina Dupka-Zagrad. The graves generally have a rectangular chamber and antechamber, often with a vaulted and rarely flat ceiling. An integral part of the burial construction is the access corridor (dromos), whose length was determined by the slope of the wall where the graves were dug. The deceased were cremated and the ashes, calcined bones and grave articles were placed in rectangular stone troughs carved into the bottom of the main chamber. A characteristic of these troughs is the indented edge – bearing for the cover. Thus far, five rock graves have been found on the site of Krklari and one on the site of Meckina Dupka.



Cardak, Area C, remains of the Hellenistic, Late Antique and Middle Age wall

This phase of the Hellenistic period is also linked to the graves with the cremated deceased buried in a geological substrate, most frequently a rock. Typologically, these graves can be linked directly to the graves of the type *cists* from the previous Hellenistic phase. They bear a rectangular shape with an intended edge for the cover. Generally, they were dug shallowly in the ground, most frequently in a rock. These types of graves could be found on almost the entire area of Markovi Kuli, but due to their secondary and tertiary utilization, and the very frequently looting as of late, their precise chronological determination is lacking.

EARLY ROMAN PERIOD

The settlement on the southern parts of the archaeological complex of Markovi Kuli continued to exist in the Early Roman period (1st-3rd century), observed by the preserved fragmented remains of the settlement layers where fragments of vessel and construction ceramics, as well as tools and coins, had been found. The most indicative confirmation of the utilization of this space in the first centuries AD is the large number of fragments of stone plastics which were, sadly, often found farther away from their architectural context.

With the exception of single vessel and construction ceramics and tools, as well as similar, mainly settlement, findings, there is no other more significant evidence for the utilization of the fortification in this period.

LATE ROMAN PERIOD

The Late Roman period (end of 3rd - late 5th century) is linked to the existence of a large settlement of urban type whose remains, an acropolis, established suburbium and an open settlement, were discovered in the upper sections of the hill, as well as in the western, southwestern and southern segments of the archaeological complex.

Acropolis and an established suburbium - The analysis of the fortification structure remains on the hill of Cardak, especially on the northern rampart in Area C, and undoubtedly speaks of the existence of a Late Antique phase on the fortification, stratigraphically positioned between the structure of the Hellenistic fortification and the partition defence walls in the Middle Ages. The building technique is characteristic by the use of unprocessed and half-chiselled stones joined by means of lime mortar executed in free style. This phase of the fortification is observed by the implementation of the construction technique in the southern circular tower in Area B, executed in a characteristic Late Antique construction technique - *emplecton*.

The most evident confirmation of the simultaneous existence of an established suburbium and a the Late Antique acropolis comes from the findings of the archaeological research in the period between 2003 and 2005 in the northern segment of the section of Sred Kuli, where intact cultural layers linked to the oldest fortification of this segment of Markovi Kuli were discovered. Within these cultural layers were discovered fragments of vessel and construction ceramics which typologically belong to the period from the second half of the 4th until the last decades of the 5th century.

Based on these stratigraphic observations, this construction phase can undoubtedly be linked to the construction of the main entrance of the established suburbium which belongs to the characteristic Late Antique type - retracted gates flanked by rectangular towers.

Open settlement - The excavations at the site of Tasacica have, thus far, yielded remains of a soundly built Roman bath, as well as fragments of a larger necropolis. According to the typological features of the findings, this segment of the settlement existed in the late 3rd and during the 4th century. The existence of a larger settlement in this period is confirmed by many fragments of stone plastics which were, unfortunately, discovered outside of their original architectural context.



Cardak, Area D, Late Antique bastion remodelled in the Middle Ages

Based on these material data, but also taking into account the written sources, this Roman settlement can rightfully be identified with the station of Ceramiae, known from the Tabula Peutingeriana. This identification is indirectly confirmed by the large number of simultaneously existing villas of the type *rustica* discovered in the valley - westward, southward and eastward of the complex of Markovi Kuli.

LATE ANTIQUE PERIOD

In the Late Antique Period (late 5th - end of 6th century), or at least in most of this period, the existence of the two main segments of the above mentioned settlement can further be traced: the acropolis with the established suburbium and the open segment of the settlement.

Acropolis and an enclosed suburbium - In the intact cultural layers in the section of Sred Kuli were discovered fragments of vessels and construction ceramics stratigraphically related to the fortification facilities in this area, which, according to the typological features, can unquestionably be dated no later than the middle of the 6th century, suggesting the further existence of this section of the settlement in an essentially unaltered form.

Open settlement - It is worth noting that identical samples of construction and vessel ceramics had been found in intact cultural layers in the section of Ramniste, where the analysis of the defence walls undoubtedly indicates that this segment of Markovi Kuli was not fortified in Late Antiquity. The further existence of the open settlement in the lower parts of the southern, eastern and western sections of the complex of Markovi Kuli is confirmed by the findings of stone plastics, vessel and construction ceramics, coins and more.

An undisputable confirmation of the spatial arrangement of this section of the settlement is the discovered necropoli in the western, northern and eastern part of the hill, as well as its base.

EARLY MIDDLE AGES

The findings acquired as a result of the analysis of the cultural layers, especially of the intact archaeological strata in the section of Sred Kuli, undoubtedly indicate that in the early Middle Ages (late 6th century / beginning of 7th - mid 9th century) the area around Markovi Kuli was mostly abandoned.

Above the Late Antique buildings were established cultural layers created as a result of the erosion of the ground in the upper parts of the hill generating the discovery of fragments of prehistoric and early ancient findings such as vessel and construction ceramics, coins and more.

Although these stratigraphic observations, as well as the lack of typical Early Middle Age findings in the upper parts of Markovi Kuli, irrefutably indicate that this area was uninhabited in the period between the late 6th / beginning of 7th century and the middle of the 9th century, the indications for the utilization of the surrounding terrain in the initial stage of the Middle Ages leaves room for further re-examination of this observation, especially in the lower segments of the archaeological complex.



Markovi Kuli, western slope, Hellenistic and Late Antique graves dug into a rock

Based on these findings two main phases in the development of the High Middle Age of Prilep can be distinguished, different in the arrangement of the main structural segments of the settlement and the construction elements of the buildings.



First phase (late 9th / beginning of the 10th until the beginning of the 13th century)

This phase is associated with a proto-urban settlement with an undifferentiated fortification segment in the upper parts of the hill.

Cultural and chronological characteristics - The large quantity of discovered material remains (buildings, necropoli, vessel ceramics, jewellery, tools, etc.), which can certainly be linked to this stage in the utilization of the space at Markovi Kuli, can undoubtedly be determined as a distinctive Slavic-Byzantine archaeological culture in the period between the late 9th / first decades of the 10th and the first decades of the 13th century. Moreover, during this period the name of the medieval village of Prilep is mentioned in written sources for the first time.

Fortification - The fruruion of medieval Prilep mentioned in written sources has not been discovered yet, but, most likely, it is located in the upper sections of the hill of Markovi Kuli. Despite the assumption that it was a minor fortification constructed of wood and earthen dikes, the possible utilization of the remains of this Late Antique fortification which, according to stratigraphic observations were certainly preserved in a considerable amount during the 10th-11th century, should not be dismissed.

Residential and work segment - The residential and work sections of the settlement are stationed in the upper parts (Sred Kuli, Ramniste), as well as on the western, southern and eastern slopes of the hill. As of the mid-11th century, we can follow the process of spatial expansion of the settlement to the south and east of the base of the hill.



Sred Kuli, main entryway

Residential segment - The residential segment in its most fundamental traits can directly be associated with the concurrent and earlier buildings of the Slavic cultural circle, given that due to the specifics of the terrain, in the houses of Markovi Kuli there can be observed customized building solutions.

Layout - The houses at the base and the lower segments of the hill, as well as on the vast plateau of the upper sections of Markovi Kuli (Sred Kili, Ramniste), as a rule, have a four- side layout in accordance with the susceptibility of the terrain for the required manner of building. In the buildings on the small plateaus, located on the sides of the hill, the tendency towards four- side solutions of the layout is subordinated to the rocks and the surface of the earth.

Foundation - The foundation of the buildings in the base and the lower segments of the hill, as well as the larger plateaus on the upper segments of Markovi Kuli (Sred Kuli, Ramniste) consists of earth, while the constructions located on the steep parts of the mountain consist of granite rocks and earth, most commonly rocks in a state of disintegration - plazika.

In the susceptible earthen substrates the procedure for preparing the ground for construction consisted of flattening the ground. The preparation of the ground for the construction on the steep parts of the hill was much more complex and had to be customized in accordance with the peculiarities of the terrain planned for construction. Accordingly, on the areas protected from torrential waters, the rocky and earthen surfaces were simply flattened, and in event of danger



Cardak, fortification



Grebnik fortification

from rising waters of the surrounding terrain or lack of a flat building surface there was used a full or partial wooden beam foundation. This design consisted of low wooden poles placed vertically, partially buried in the foundation, over which were placed horizontally lined wooden beams.

In the case of a lack of necessary construction area, this type of foundation was placed higher than the surface of the rocks as a type of a porch. During field research there were observed wooden beam floors bridging the space between two or more rocks thus enabling the lower section between the rocks to be used as an auxiliary segment of the house. The remains of this construction on the foundations were preserved as grooves for the wooden poles – carriers, arranged in various ways.

Floors - In cases where the foundation was built on wooden pillars, the horizontally arranged beams were also suitable for the residential segment of the building. In other events, the floor consisted of carefully flattened rock or earth.

Walls - The wall construction of the residential buildings consisted of vertical wooden poles - carriers with a woven filler in-between.

Hence, on the corners of the building construction there were placed vertical massive carriers - wooden beams with a circular cross section, whose lower parts were dug into the ground. Very often, these massive wooden beams were placed in the space between the corner poles as well. Depending on the size of the construction, the depth of digging amounted to 0.10 to



Grebnik, Middle Age tower

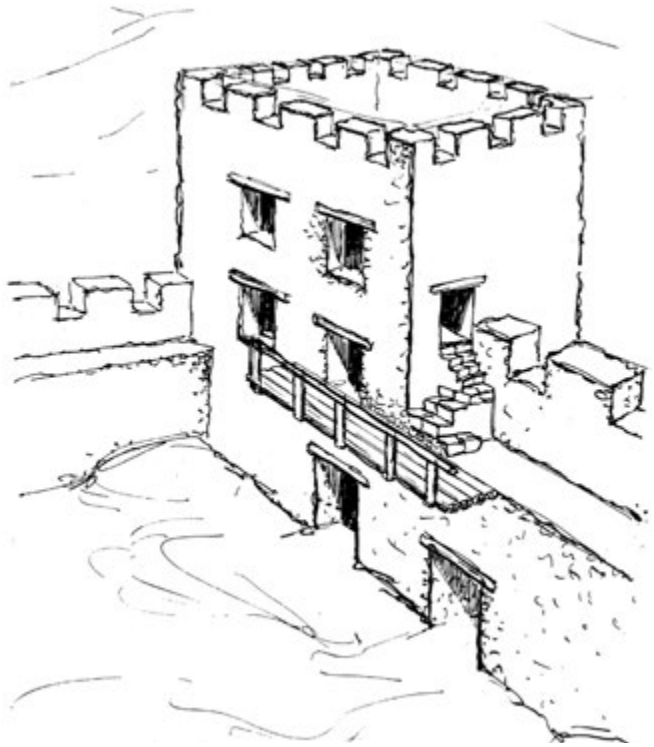


Cardak, Middle Age tower

0.50 m, as reflected in the large number of discovered pits with a circular cross section dug into a rock or plazika. In order to strengthen the construction of the walls, wooden support beams dug into the ground were commonly used on the interior and exterior of the walls.

In- between the pillars - carriers were placed a woven wall built from woven wooden sticks covered with mud. The woven filling between the carriers was also dug into the ground, as observed in the smaller pits which served as bearings for the weaving sticks.

In many events, if possible due to the terrain configuration, the vertical sections of the rock were used as walls of building construction, as observed by the traces of additional processing of the vertical sections of the granite rocks.



Cardak, Middle Age tower, reconstruction



Sred Kuli, Late Antique and Middle Age palace

Roofs - The roofs of houses were built of massive wooden beams with an oval or four-sided cross section. The diameter of the beams amounted to 0.10 to 0.15 m. Roofs were built on one or two leads, often confirmed by the grooves in the vertical sides of the granite rocks - walls of the residential buildings. By analogy with the concurrent buildings and ethnological objects, the houses were covered with straw, hay, etc.

Entryways - The doors to the houses were most commonly of simple construction, without much emphasis on thresholds, doorposts and lintels. They were built of interwoven sticks coated with dirt. The narrow grooves found near the doorposts indicate that the doors were placed on a vertical axis.

Indoor elements of the buildings

Hearths - In the majority of discovered houses on Markovi Kuli were observed open hearths, usually positioned beside the walls. They were shaped like pits of circular or rectangular shape, shallowly dug into the surface.

Furnaces - The residential buildings of this phase of the settlement on Markovi Kuli are characteristic for the lack of furnaces with the exception of two complex constructions of hearths. In the first case, one part of the fireplace was dug in the vertical side of the surrounding rock, and in the second, the fireplace was separated from the surrounding space by means of weaving of twigs covered with soil. Both constructions lack a smoke ventilation system.



Grebnik, Middle Age tower, entryway

Beds - In addition to the fireside, the second essential element of the residential buildings were the beds. Two basic types of beds were observed on Markovi Kuli. The first type is beds dug into the rock which was generally higher compared to the surrounding space. The length of the beds extended from 3 to 5 m, and the width from 0.70 m to 1 m. The second type of beds is constructed of processed wood placed on vertical wooden poles, as featured by the discovered circular grooves on the interior of the buildings.

Work segment - The second section of these multipurpose buildings consisted of facilities intended for food preparation, domestic animal breeding, crafting and more, labelled as a work segment.

As a rule, these activities were performed outdoors or under covered proportional constructions - eaves.

Layout - The foundation of these buildings is usually four-sided but samples arranged according to the shape of the available space can also be found.

Foundation - Unlike residential buildings, the foundation of the work premises was only roughly flattened, regardless of whether it was a stone or clay base.

Construction - The construction of these buildings consisted of massive wooden pillars placed at the corners of the buildings and very often the surrounding granite rocks were used for constructive purposes.

Walls - These constructions were rarely encircled by walls, but there were individual cases when woven partitions were used for the entire height or to a certain height of the construction. It should be noted that as with residential facilities, the vertical sides of the granite rocks were often used as perimeter or partition walls.

Roof - In the same manner as the houses the roof of the operating premises was built of wooden beams with an oval or four-sided cross section, arranged on one or two leads. On top of the roof was placed straw, hay and so on.

Entryways - In the constructions with woven walls the entryways were made of intertwined branches covered with mud. There are no traces of complex construction entryways (thresholds, doorposts, lintels).



Cardak, Area C, northern entrance



Markovi Kuli, eastern hillside, remains of the three zones of the Middle Age fortification

Work furnishings - According to the function, in a number of buildings were discovered objects associated with the storage and preparation of food: pits, troughs, mortars, mills and systems for grape juice extraction.

Pits - Within the residential complexes a very common element were the pits dug into the rock or earth. The bottom of the pits is either of circular or oval shape with a diameter of the opening from 0.50 to 1 m. The depth varies from 0.75 to 1.20 m. For the most part, these pits were used for storing grains, and are often found near mortars or troughs.

Troughs - Along the entire area of Markovi Kuli were discovered a great number of troughs carved into the rock and most commonly they were of rectangular, oval or square base. Troughs of different sizes can be observed (from 0.30 x 0.35 to 1.20 x 0.50m). Ethnological findings indicate that these troughs were used for kneading dough, washing, and supplying water to domestic animals.

Mortars - The mortars were most commonly of circular shape, and judging by their vertical cross section they have the shape of a truncated cone. The diameter of the opening ranges from 0.30 to 0.40m, and the depth is 0.15 to 0.25. There is evident disfigurement on the part of the opening where the pestle pressed during work.

Hand mills - A very common element of the house furnishings were the manual mills with their bottom section indented. Their diameters range from 0.45 to 0.75m. Parts used for separating the milled grain were also discovered, and very common findings were the upper stone parts of the hand mills.

Grape juice extraction systems - Within the residential complexes were found single samples of juice extraction systems usually comprised of three troughs of different sizes adjoined by channels.

Necropoli - With previous field research on the area of Markovi Kuli were discovered three necropoli where undeniably were performed burials in the High Middle Ages (the necropoli Markovi Kuli, Potkuli and Grobista), but there is also the possibility that in this period were used some of the single graves dispersed on the rocks on the hill of Markovi Kuli, as well as sections of the ancient necropoli whose tombs were also carved into the rock. In addition to the fact that these burial structures were repeatedly used in the period of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, this possibility is also supported by the large number of findings from this area dating from the period between the mid- 9th - end of 12th century.

Necropolis Markovi Kuli - It extends over the southeast slopes of the hill of Markovi Kuli. Exactly 18 graves have been researched thus far generally of a trapezoidal base. The deceased were buried with Christian rites. The typological findings unquestionably confirm the burials on this area in the High Middle Ages.

Potkuli - It is located at the eastern base of the hill, southeast of the of Markovi Kuli. One hundred graves have been researched thus far, mainly of a trapezoidal base. The deceased were buried with Christian rites. The findings undoubtedly confirm the burials in this area during the High Middle Ages.

Grobista - The necropolis is located at the eastern base of the hill, west of the necropolis of Potkuli. Until now, 57 graves have been explored. Graves of a trapezoidal base can be identified in addition to anthropomorphic graves dug into the subsoil. The burial was performed according to Christian customs. The findings document the graves and the burial during the High Middle Ages.



Cardak, Middle Age fortification



Cardak, Area A, Middle Age cistern



Cardak, Area A, watchtower



Grebnik, Middle Age wall

Churches - Prior research has not found remains of church buildings that can be associated with this phase of the High Middle Ages with certainty. Indirect information regarding church life during the late 9th /beginning of 10th century until the first decades of the 12th century is provided by the Armenian inscription from 1002, which mentions the arrival of the priest Athanasia in the monastery of St. Apostle.

Second stage (first decades of the 12th century until the beginning of the 13th century)

The second phase of the Middle Ages is linked to the intense Byzantine influence on the cultural life on the area of the Balkan Peninsula, whereby the medieval settlement of Markovi Kuli acquires special urban features.

This process is manifested in the differentiation of a central, public section of the settlement, located at the southern base of the hill, featured by the establishing of a marketplace nucleus, building of churches with typical Byzantine techniques of construction, initial separation of the housing and working segment of the settlement, etc. The spatial outline of the settlement of this phase of the High Middle Ages shows no significant differences compared to the older proto-urban settlement.

Fortification - With regard to the fact that in this period Prilep was a primarily urban settlement in the interior of Byzantium without a pronounced military function, the fortification of this phase of the High Middle Ages is reduced to the hill of Cardak and Sred Kuli.

Residential and work section - In addition to the continuous presence of wood constructions located on the upper sections and on the slopes of the hill, in this stage the existence of houses made of stone and mud located at the foot and the upper segments of the hill can be stratigraphically confirmed.

It should be noted that this phase is linked to the commencement of spatial and functional differentiation of the housing from the production segment of the residential-working constructions observed during recent research in the section of Ramniste and Sred Kuli.

Residential segment, layout - Similar to the wood buildings, the residential buildings made of stone and mud have a four- sided base. The surface of the known objects ranges from 4 to 8 m².

Foundation - The building constructions were placed on the surface of flattened earth or rock, and in some cases, the same as in the buildings of wood, the surface was partially rock, and partially earth resulting in significant difficulties in the reconstruction of the original shape of the base.

Floors - Floors consisted of flattened clay or compacted earth, and in particular events the rocky substrate was used as the floor of the residential buildings.

Walls - The walls were constructed of unprocessed and half-chiselled stones bound by mud and were placed on proportional shallow foundations processed by means of the same equipment and materials, and in particular events directly over the rock surface. Depending on statics, the width of the walls ranged from 0.40 to 0.60 m.



Grebnik, Middle Age rampart



Cardak, Area A, Middle Age tower

Entryways - They are simple and in one piece without particularly pronounced thresholds and doorposts. They are of narrow width ranging from 0.60 m to 1 m.

Interior parts - The preserved fragmented remains indicate that the interior of the residential buildings consisted of open hearths and beds with rectangular or oval base.

Hearths - In the majority of houses on Markovi Kuli were recorded open hearths, usually positioned beside the walls. They represent pits of circular or rectangular shape, shallowly dug into the ground.

Beds - In addition to the hearths, the second essential element of the residential buildings were the beds. The preserved fragmented remains indicate similar formal solutions of beds constructed of wood, thus indicating two basic types. The first type is represented by beds dug into the ground, generally higher compared to the surrounding terrain. The second type of beds is made of processed wood placed on vertical wooden poles, as observed in the circular indents on the interior of the buildings.

Work section - The other section of these multipurpose buildings is constituted of facilities intended for food preparation, domestic animal breeding, crafting, etc. labelled as work section. As a rule, these activities were performed outdoors or under spacious covered constructions - eaves.

Layout - The base of these building constructions is usually four-cornered, but samples arranged according to the shape of the available space can also be found.

Foundation - Unlike residential buildings, the substrate of the work premises was roughly flattened, regardless of whether it was a stone or clay base.

Construction - the construction of these facilities consisted of foundations and walls made of stones and mud, as well as massive wooden pillars used for the carrying parts and covered construction of buildings. Very often in constructive function there were used surrounding granite rocks.

Walls - These facilities were rarely enclosed by walls, but there were individual cases when stone or mud walls were used in the entire height or to a certain height of the facility. It should be noted that as with residential facilities, very often the vertical sides of the granite rocks served as perimeter or partition walls.

Work furnishings - As in the work units built of wood, the working section of these structures contained a considerable number of objects related to the storage and preparation of food: pits, troughs, mortars, mills and grape juice extraction systems.

Feudal palaces - In addition to the building of public buildings by means of lime mortar, stone and construction ceramics, this phase of the settlement can be linked to the beginnings of building more prominent residential facilities by means of construction ceramics, processed stone and lime mortar, discovered during surveying of the base of the hill and in more recent archaeological research in the section of Ramniste as well.

Public segment - The complete differentiation of the central, public part of the settlement in the second half of the 12th century is confirmed by the churches Sv. Nikola (St. Nicholas) and



Grebnik, Middle Age rampart

Sv. Dimitrija (St. Demetrius), as well as the emergence of the foundations of a commercial exchange segment i.e. market segment of the proto-urban settlement.

Marketplace - Current reports based on the material and written sources do not indicate clearly the existence of a High Middle Age marketplace in the second phase of the settlement. But the data regarding the intensive production activity, partially intended for the marketplace, as well as the data on the import, especially from the developed centres of Byzantium, allow for the assumption of the existence of a marketplace or at least a space intended for the exchange of goods within the city of Prilep in the second half of the 12th century.

Churches - The spatial differentiation of certain segments of the settlement is most obviously manifested by the



Varos, church Sv. Nikola (St. Nicholas)



Varos, church Sv. Dimitrija (St. Dimitrius)

construction of the single-nave churches of Sv. Nikola (St. Nicholas), Sv. Arhangel Mihail (St. Michael the Archangel) and Sv. Dimitrija (St. Demetrius), reliably dated in the second half of the 12th century based on the stylistic features of the painting and architecture, as well as the stratigraphic observations within the archaeological research.

Necropoli - Based on the stratigraphic observations and analysis of typological and chronological features of the burial findings (rings, bracelets, ear decorations, etc.), the burials from the period of beginning of the 12th century to the beginning of the 13th century at the three previously mentioned necropoli (Markovi Kuli, Potkuli and Grobista) can be confirmed with certainty. There is also the possibility that in this period were used some of the single graves dispersed on the rocks of the hill of Markovi Kuli, as well as parts of older antique necropoli whose tombs were w also dug into a rock.

LATE MIDDLE AGES

During the 13th and 14th centuries Prilep displays typical characteristics of a Late Middle Age city of considerable military, political, cultural and economic significance for the central parts of the Balkan Peninsula. Furthermore, based on political developments three stages of development can be distinguished, each different in the distribution, content and layout of the structural elements of the settlement.



Varos, church Sv. Arhangel Mihail (St. Archangel Michael)



Markovi Kuli, southern slope, Middle Age workshop, reconstruction

First phase (1204 - 1259)

This phase of the Middle Ages in the wider Balkan area is marked by the fall of Constantinople under the rule of the Crusaders (1204 - 1261), while the area of northern Pelagonia is characterized by intense military activities which caused the frequent and brief conquests of the city by Bulgaria, the conquest by Byzantine throne contenders and others. These military and political events, accompanied by appropriate social and economic processes, were manifested by a covert continuation of the economic development of the settlement, which acquires clear urban characteristics in the second half of the 12th century. Hence, at this stage, in addition to the evident concentration of the regional economic and religious functions in Prilep, we follow the process of fortifying the settlement, mainly by reconstruction of the existing defence facilities and construction of new fortification segments of the uppermost parts of the hill of Markovi Kuli.

Acropolis - Alongside the intensive military and political developments in the first half of the 13th century we can follow a process of rebuilding the defence segment of the settlement, which, in addition to the fortification elements in the broadest sense, is characterized by the clear differentiation of necropoli connected to the acropolis.

Fortification - Previous archaeological and architectural surveys of the acropolis remains inevitably confirmed by many building interventions in the first half of the 13th century, primarily in the area of the hill of Cardak, but to a lesser extent in the enclosed suburbium (Sred Kuli), as well. Thus, at the segment of the fortification of Cardak that is easiest to defend, we can follow traces of interventions near the walls, towers and entrances. At the area of Sred Kuli, in addition to the interventions at the defensive walls, there is also organized production activity related to the military (metal processing activities). These activities, determined by military and political events, undoubtedly point to the creating of possibilities for the settling of a significant military contingent.

Necropoli - With this phase of the development of the acropolis are linked some of the burials in the rocks of Markovi Kuli, and in Area C as well, in a period when this segment of the fortress was away from the defence zone.

Suburbium - The inconsistent social and economic situation in this period undoubtedly prevented a more intensive development of the civil segment of the settlement, which led to a further extensive development of the suburbium (lower town).

Churches - The further existence of the formerly built churches of Sv. Nikola, Sv. Dimitrija and Sv. Arhangel Mihail can be observed in this period, but without significant architectural and artistic interventions.

Marketplace - In keeping with the socio-economic processes in the first half of the 13th century, on the area of the suburbium there undoubtedly existed a space intended for carrying out economic exchange activities, very likely on the area of the subsequent spacious bazaar.

Necropoli - In addition to the discovered necropoli at the upper parts of the hill, at this stage there were still performed burials on the formerly-known locations: Potkuli, Grobista, Markovi Kuli etc., as witnessed by the typological and chronological features of the great number of burial findings: rings, bracelets, ear decorations, earrings and more.

Residential and work segment - This segment of the settlement continues to operate in a mainly unaltered spatial layout and structural elements, with special attention given to constructions built of stone and mud, as well as constructions of stone, clay brick and lime mortar.

The second phase (1259 - 1334)

The second Late Middle Age stage is marked by the rebuilding and attempt to restore the old splendour of Byzantium, in which the region of northern Pelagonia has an exceptional role; initially as a place of resolution of internal conflicts, and at the end of this stage as the last point of defence of Byzantium from the destructive power of the expanding Serbian state.

In accordance with the role that the city of Prilep plays in the history of the European part of Byzantium, in this period we can observe the maximum development of the two main segments of the Late Middle Age city – the acropolis and the suburbium (lower town).

Acropolis - This period is linked to the essential changes in the organization of the space of the upper town, as well as the maximum expansion of the fortification segment of the settlement. On the area of the hill of Cardak, in addition to the full reconstruction of the ramparts, towers and entrances, a system of four segments is created (marked as Area A, Area B, Area C and Area D) with a donjon located in the north-eastern segment of the hill. In the north-western part (Area



C) were built two spacious two-story buildings, unquestionably designed to accommodate parts of the military garrison.

At the plateau between the four hills (Sred Kuli) were reconstructed the defensive walls, towers and particularly the main entrance to the fort. Simultaneously, on the eastern and western sides of the main entrance were built multi-story buildings (palaces) for accommodating the crew of the garrison. On the peripheral parts of this area were established smaller military buildings, while the middle section was empty for the purpose of greater internal mobility of the crew in the defence of a fortress of this size.

In this period is formed the third defensive zone of the fortress (Ramniste) located in the southern segment of the hill. In accordance with the configuration of the terrain, this defensive belt included defensive walls, two smaller entrances and a significant number of towers. On the interior of this area were built spacious representative buildings - palaces.

Suburbium - As with the fortification, in this period we can observe the utmost spatial development of the suburbium (lower town) and a substantial internal reorganization of the civil segment. Parallel to the functional differentiation of the space of the civil segment, we can observe a process of spatial expansion of the suburban area, which is particularly evident on the east and north side of Markovi Kuli. This is especially evident in the area of Potkuli, where over the remains of the older necropolis is located a productive warehouse complex.

Churches - This period is associated with essential activities on the churches Sv. Arhangeli, Sv. Nikola, Sv. Dimitrija, etc. marked by the building of architectural units, fresco decorations and more.

Necropoli - In addition to the burials at previously known locations, in this period we can observe a process of building necropoli around the churches. Simultaneously, on the area of the Upper Town were recorded single burials in graves dug into the rock.

Bazaar - The layout of the buildings in this period clearly suggests that in the middle section of the suburbium there was a fully formed segment for economic exchange – a bazaar, suggesting the attempt for the complete development of a productive segment of the complex.

Residential and production sections - In the central part, as well as in the wider area of the suburbium, were prevalent numerous residential production units with a distinctly separated residential and production segment.

Production units - Around the bazaar, as well as on the slopes of the hill, and at the perimeter of the settlement were recorded remains of various production units - workshops for the processing of metals, glass, vessel ceramics, etc.

Feudal palaces - in the northern part of the suburbium, and the upper sections of the southern slopes (Ramniste) were recorded remains of representative residential buildings - palaces, often accompanied by family churches. In order to comprehend the nature of these representative buildings we consider it necessary to mention the famous founders of the churches in Prilep from this period: The great hartouliarios of the West, Jovan, Dimitrija Misinopolit, Vekos, son of Kapza, and Mary and others.

Third phase (1334 - 1392)

This phase is characterized by the intense economic and cultural development of the urban settlement within the Serbian state and accordingly, the greatest development of the economic segment in the civil part of the settlement: the bazaar and the production units. In accordance with the intensive military and political developments related to Serbia's expansion, and later the defence against the Ottoman conquests, the fortification segment developed at a Late Middle Age level.

Acropolis - At this stage, there are no significant activities on the fortification segment of the settlement, except minor construction activities, which, in most cases, were aimed at reducing the fortification space in accordance with the notably modified military-strategic position of Prilep within the Serbian state. The most obvious example of this process can be observed in the third defensive belt (Ramniste) which, in this period, acquires a substantial civil character.

Suburbium - Concurrently, on the area of the suburbium (lower town) we can follow a process of intensive development of the production and exchange segment, as well as increased activities in the restoration and construction of church buildings.

Churches - In addition to the churches of Sv. Nikola, Sv. Dimitrija, and Sv. Arhangel Mihail, at this stage is also confirmed the existence of the churches St. Virgin-Holy Mother of God (Sv. Bogorodica Precista), St. Peter and Paul (Sv. Petar and Pavle), St. Atanas, and the remains of another twenty churches, which provides a more accurate picture of church life in the last stages of medieval Prilep.

Necropoli - Based on the knowledge and analysis of the typological and chronological features of the burial findings (rings, ear decorations, earrings, bracelets, etc.), supplemented by the spatial stratigraphic considerations, it is safe to conclude that in this period were used all previously

utilized burial sites: Potkuli, Necropolis Markovi Kuli, Grobista, Zelenik, the rocks of the upper segments of the hill and more.

Feudal palaces - At this stage of the Middle Ages is also recorded the existence of feudal palaces located in the southern segment of the hill Ramniste, as well as the northern part of the suburbium, as observed in the architectural and stratigraphic information obtained during the surveying of these facilities.

Bazaar - Undoubtedly, the most prominent segment of the final phase of the Late Middle Age Prilep is the bazaar, whose appearance was reconstructed based on a clever comparison of written and material sources. It is positioned on a proportional spacious plateau in the central part of the suburbium (lower town), close to the church of Sv. Dimitrija.

On almost all sides of the space intended for the display of sale goods were arranged a number of workshops for the manufacturing of iron, glass, ceramics, etc., as evidenced by the discovered remains of furnaces, raw material, tools, etc.

Manufacturing units - In addition to the production units, in close proximity to the bazaar and other parts of the lower town were discovered remains of workshops, especially at the peripheral parts of the settlement. Hence, in the south-eastern segment of the suburbium (Potkuli) were discovered the remains of a glass workshop (furnace, semi-products, tools, etc.), and in southwestern parts of the civil segment of the settlement were discovered the remains of a workshop for the manufacturing of iron: a furnace, raw material, tools, slag, etc.

The numerous workshops explain the discovery of a remarkably large number of the same- type, quality craft products found during the research of the cultural layers associated with the final phase of Late Antique Prilep: jewellery, tools, vessel ceramics and more.

OTTOMAN PERIOD

After the definite occupation of northern Pelagonia in 1392, the settlement extending on the area of the cultural complex of Markovi Kuli loses its urban features, and on the upper parts of the hill is stationed a small military crew, as noted in the travel records on Evliya Celebi from the 18th century.

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