

The most significant values
of the cultural and natural heritage

TETOVO FORTRESS – BALTEPE



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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.

TETOVO FORTRESS – BALTEPE

The archaeological site Kale - Baltepe¹ is located two kilometres northwest of Tetovo. On the north side it is bordered by the mountain ranges Dojran, Ploca, Brza Voda and Bela Voda, to the south by the villages of Lisec and Gayre, while to the southwest by the village of Sipkovica, with the peak Kara Nichola, and the peak of the Shar Planina (Shar Mountain). To the west it is bordered by Malo and Golemo Sileze, Kobilica and Sedlarica as well as the villages Selce and Lavce. There is not much written information regarding Kale - Baltepe. The archaeological data is very modest, based on a short - term research intervention by the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments (present - day National Conservation Centre - Skopje) in the fourth quarter of 1967 under the leadership of archaeologists G. Vincikj and C. Sarzovski. However, they failed to specify the stratigraphy of the site in detail.

The Tetovo Fortress - Kale is a fortification unit (hill fort) composed of nine towers, two monumental gates – the Tetovo gate (which was demolished) and the Lavcanska gate, a double vaulted rectangular area accompanied by another vaulted room where remains of a hearth were encountered. At the main gate, as well as the guard - towers are visible openings for closing of the doors. All entrances and windows were arched with the exception of the smaller rectangular windows made of limestone.

It is interesting to note that this fortress was built in the time of the weakening of the sultan's government, and the strengthening of the power of the local pashas. Rejep Pasha began to build the fortress in 1796 and was succeeded by his son Abdurrahman Rasim Pasha after his death. From 1831 to 1843 the Pasha lived in the saray (palace) located on the fortress of Baltepe. After the departure of the pasha the fortress was destroyed and looted. Certain valuables, such as various wood carvings from the furnishings, as well as carved ceilings and other valuables are considered to have been were looted, transferred and built into some of the residential houses in Tetovo.

The stones and marble of the Fortress served as a building material for the church Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Tetovo. The material was also utilized for the needs of many private houses (cottages) near the Fortress.

It seems that the very establishing of this extraordinarily powerful fortress upset the Turkish sultan, who decided to revoke Abdurrahman Pasha, along with his brothers (Havzi Pasha from Skopje and Hassan Pasha from Kyustendil). After the departure of the Pasha in Constantinople the fortress was destroyed and looted.

¹ Meden rid (hill)

The fortress was mentioned in the works (epics) of the travel writer Kbrsli Ashk Kenzi from Cyprus, who describes the lavish mansions of Baltepe and speaks of the hospitality of Abdurrahman Pasha.

Written sources that mention Tetovsko Kale - Baltepe

The Kosovo salname (Chronological yearbook of 1894) provided extensive information regarding the towns and villages under the Kosovo vilayet (administrative division). The population of Tetovo, along with 152 villages, equalled 100,000 inhabitants. Other information includes the mention of Tetovo's apples and grapes from the vineyard at Baltepe.

The Kosovo salname of 1895 includes a sketch of the Kale created by the travel writer Grisebach from 1839.

Another piece of information which mentions the buildings from the Tetovo Fortress are the epics by the travel writer Ashk Kenzi from Cyprus, who visited Tetovo twice - in 1825/26 and in 1860. He also wrote several epics dedicated to Abdurrahman Rasim Pasha and the city of Tetovo, but we are only interested in the epics that describe Tetovsko Kale and its buildings. He also describes the aristocratic manner of being welcomed by the Pasha:

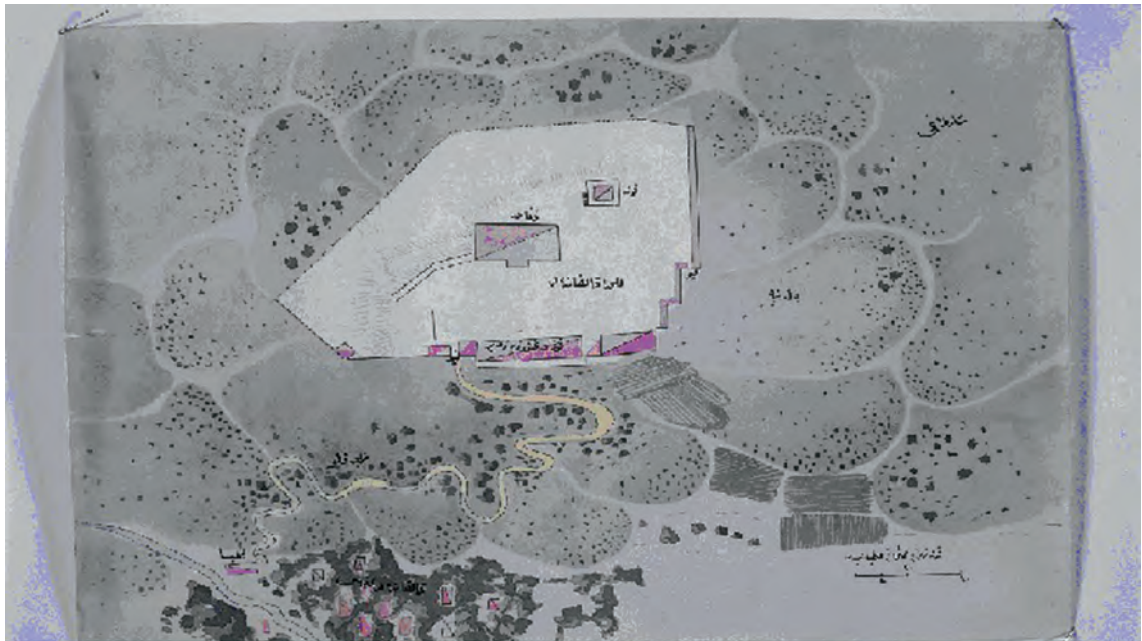
"... From the fountains to the bathrooms- everything is executed in a superior manner - the pools, the saray and Abdurrahman Pasha's house, the graves of the evliyas ... Though I travelled far, I saw no building more magnificent than that of Abdurrahman Pasha ... The grand gate ... The building surrounded by two rows of stones ... There is a well with a pool of water in the centre ... ".

Seliscev also notes that somewhere before the end of the 19th century were preserved the following sections of the fortress: the underground prison by the northern gate and underground tunnels under the fortress, while in the middle part were located the fountain, baths and the palace of the Pasha.

According to the ethnologist J. Trifunoski, the fortress built by Abdurrahman Pasha was located on top of the hill Baltepe. In accordance with tradition, the fortress was built by 400 masons over a period of 20 years. Upon establishing of the fortress, Abdurrahman Pasha settled the people Tsintsars in Tetovo. The Tsintsars carried stone by means of mules from a place called Rupi in the village of Gayre.

The supply of water presented a problem in many fortresses, including the Tetovo Fortress. The pasha managed to bring water to the fortress at the end of his reign. The water was brought to the Fortress from the hill Bela Voda by means of ceramic pipes. Just before his departure for Constantinople, where he was summoned by the Sultan, having a presentiment that he will not return, upon seeing the water he uttered: „ Saint cheshme gjeldin, Ben gjitim (Water, you came and I went).

Recently, a team of *Eco L Sensors* conducted an examination for the detection of underground water and confirmed the presence of water, though in very small quantities, and at a depth of 80 m.



A sketch of the Fortress created by the travel writer Grisebach in 1839.

The dimensions are the following: the north wall has a length of 147 m, the south wall with 4 interrupted lengths - 271 m, the west wall with three interrupted lengths - 156.5 m, the northeast wall - 238 meters, amounting to a total of 812.5 m.

The premises Dining room and Kitchen are located immediately beside the entrance to the Fortress, the Main Tetovo gate, north of the building Saray. The length of the chamber is 28.16 m, the height is 8.85 m (east), 8.53 m (west), while the width of the chamber is 11.5 m. The entrance is located on the east side of the Dining room, and from there one enters into another room – the Kitchen. In the entrances of the chamber are observed large demolished sections of the vault and the wall. The south front side has 6 rectangular vaulted openings. The vault was probably covered with tiles, which was confirmed during the clearing of the roof surface, as well as the debris piled beside the building. The roof has



Measured sections of the rampart and defence towers in 2008.

a central opening for a chimney and 4 oval side openings which served for ventilation. Inside the walls is recorded mortar decoration i.e. imitation of stone blocks painted with red lines. In the west wall of the Dining room there is a large hearth.



South facade of the Dining room



Interior section during cleaning

The interior of the chamber is vaulted, and on the vault, the walls and inside on the window openings is recorded mortar decoration with painted red imitations of stone blocks.

During the clearing of the demolished wall of the chamber a nicely profiled niche opened on the east side. The floor of the semi- circular chamber, which has a sharp incline to the north, continues into a tunnel whose opening is vaulted and beautifully shaped.

In the lower sections of the north and south walls are visible nicely processed travertine blocks. By means of clearing the roof surface were uncovered fragments of tiles, which proves that the vaulted roof was covered with tiles. The entrances to the chamber are arched. In the chamber named *kitchen*, there are two pilasters each on the north and the south wall. On the south wall there are 2 vaulted rectangular openings serving as windows and one opening on the west side. On the south wall of the Dining room there are 4 vaulted rectangular openings for windows and 4 ventilation openings on the vault. On the south wall is located the main entrance to the building. The wall continues to the south and goes under the asphalt road and is probably connected to the building Saray. Other premises have also been recorded by means of a more extensive research toward the east side.

The main gate of the Fortress, the Tetovo gate was, unfortunately, destroyed. It is located within the buildings of Section 1. On the south wall there are remnants of a chimney, and on the north wall there is a vertical crevice along the entire wall.

The chamber marked as Building 1, is located in Section 1. It covers Building 1 on the west and the premises marked 2 and 3. On the interior, in the collapsed section, there are many roof tegulae as evidence for the roof structure over this opening, mortar and stone on the exterior of the blocks with openings for the pillars which probably supported the wooden construction over this opening. During the cleaning of this area were discovered finely processed stone blocks of rectangular and circular shape of secondary use. Chamber 3 is located near the inner wall. The movable material mainly consisted of glazed green pottery and a few pieces of porcelain, possibly a belonging from the most recent layer of the Tetovo Fortress.

Chamber1 - Chamber 1 and the entrance sections belong in this section. On its perimeter wall, in the middle, there is an imposing entrance. There is another entrance on the southeast side, which was covered in a subse-



Main Tetovo Gate



Hearth of finely carved stone blocks

quent phase. The internal connection with the adjacent room is executed by three entrances of which the central is open, and in the southeaster part of the room is preserved the older pavement on the floor. Along the entire length of the building extends a pavement and cobblestone. But between the pavement and the cobblestone there is a rainwater canal, which is only preserved on the north-western part. It is a quality built canal paved with travertine stones. Toward the other rooms was discovered a tubular canal with a collector of two stone slabs. Its purpose was to collect storm water in a tank or redirect it out of the building.



Entrance to the Summer Saray (palace)

On the perimeter wall in the centre there is an impressive main entrance. On the southeast side there is another entrance, which was closed during a subsequent phase. The area is paved and illustrates two phases. The older pavement is preserved in the south eastern-section, beside the closed entrance. A smaller section of the floor built of large smooth stones and reinforced by pebbles and mud has been preserved. The second phase of paving consists of smaller stones of irregular form. In the middle are long and smooth stones, reinforced by pebbles and mud.

Along the entire length of the building ex-



Cobblestone from the eastern section

tends a pavement - cobblestone from the outside. In - between the pavement and cobblestone was located a quality built canal for collecting rainwater. The movable material in this area mostly consists of glazed pottery fragments.

On the outside of the western part of the building, in the demolished sections, during the removal of debris in the direction of the northwest, appeared layers of the soil and debris, and in the lower horizons in the direction of the demolished rampart was found a slightly damaged silver enamelled cigarette case, with tobacco still preserved in it, which clearly shows that it was used until recently.

The building Saray is located on the right of the Main Tetovo gate (the southeast part of the fortress). The main chamber of the Saray has a sizable opening, which served as an entry gate, with dimensions 3.5 m x 3 m, as well as four other large openings that served for lighting of the space, with dimensions 4 x 4 m. This building was preserved considerably, since in 1967 it underwent conservation by the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments - Skopje and was intended to be used as a restaurant, but during the war conflict of 2001 it sustained new damage since it was used as soldier barracks.

The Saray was coated with mortar on the interior. There are two layers of mortar, the second of which is painted with imitation rectangular fields.

The floor surface consists of broken stone, cast with lime mortar and a high percentage of brick dust.



Tubular canal



The building Saray - view from the north

Research operations included all additional chambers of the palace, whereby new premises were discovered. One is a chamber with a semi-circular arch with a sizable opening and a small niche on the west. On the south side was recorded a smaller opening. During the removal of rock and soil emerged two floor levels. When clearing in front of the wall of the Saray and the auxiliary room a staircase was discovered.



Eastern facade with a staircase



The area in front of the Saray

North rampart – The north rampart is located east of the Lavcanska gate. This section is operationally divided into 3 sections for easier monitoring of works and more precise documentation. The first section is 6 meters west of the Lavcanski tunnel. This section was opened to observe the construction phases of the rampart and reach its base. The first two layers were construction waste, but 3 new areas were opened, as well as pilasters of rectangular base built in a dry-stone technique,



Substructure on the floor in front of the Saray



The great lavcanska gate

i.e. without the use of mortar. The dimensions of the pilasters are approximately equal. Immediately beside the North rampart was registered a greater concentration of tegulae, likely a remnant of the roof construction of the rampart.



Clay workshop



Vault and a tunnel opening

Double facility - this building is located on one of the artificial hills. The main objective of the archaeological research is unveiling the still unidentified wall constructions at the upper section of the hill. The initial work was reduced to cleaning vegetation, cutting trees, cleaning the roots and soil. After several days of work it was established that there were two separate, probably individual, rectangular chambers², because in the 2,5 meter distance between them, i.e. interspace, there are separate portals, partially damaged, for entry in each.

These premises demonstrate a layer of mortar on the facades, painted in dark grey and adorned with linear decorations and geometric motifs. Both of them differ in dimensions and shape. Chamber 1, whose interior is still not fully researched, has a sizable opening on the south side. On the east wall of the south corner was discovered a ceramic tube, possibly associated with the drainage system of the buildings. Regarding movable findings a very small number of fragments of vessel pottery was discovered, mostly adorned with green colour and high gloss, as well as a fragment of a pipe.

Archaeological research was conducted mostly on the east and west of the building. In the interspace were discovered remains of carved stones. While digging through the thicker layer of earth and reaching a certain depth, were encountered larger, probably window openings, of the attic or the upper storey of the double building. The items were concentrated on the interior (where traces of mortar and a drain pipe were uncovered) and the outer walls of the Chamber 2, whereby the southern facade of the building continued to be uncovered in depth.



Entrance to Chamber 1 and the surrounding space that covers the section with the decorated facade.



Setting a probe on the southern wall of the Fortress.



View of Chamber 1



View of the interspace

In the interspace were discovered only 4 iron nails and a few fragments of vessel ceramics. By means of archaeological excavations the floor surfaces of the buildings were reached and it was concluded that the eastern wall was built of carved travertine stone blocks, while the other part of the wall has a plain broken stone bound by means of lime mortar. The walls have geometric decorations.

Lavcanska gate – it is located outside the northern ramparts, next to the Main lavcanska gate. Trial excavations were conducted to examine the outside of the fortress. Excavations were conducted on a space with dimensions 6 x 4 m and a maximum depth of 2.43 m to confirm the possible layers outside the walls. The need to explore another section located 500 m west of Lavcanska gate was acknowledged. According to the villagers from the village Lafce and the nearby villages, these estates had walls and ceramic fragments. This was an impetus to continue with research in this part of the village on a private property.

It was archaeologically confirmed that the quadrants provided no findings. There was no apparent difference in the layers of the earth and the excavations continued all the way to the subsoil. After being documented they were closed and the terrain was returned to its original state. The work continued on the hill near the village Lavce and the church, located on the road from Kale to the village. A tomb construction emerged during recognition and initial archaeological excavations of this section. Archaeological research continues in this area in order to verify that it is a necropolis.

The work continues on the northern part of the Fortress, near the old church and the cemetery at a distance of 80 meters from the church.

The discovered tomb 1 is oriented in the direction east-west. The construction has the following dimensions: 1.92 m length and 0.55 m width. Research continues in the north section, 0.70 m in depth. Four rectangle stones surround the grave, and a finely carved stone covers the upper surface of the tomb construction. During the research and cleaning of the grave were discovered only a few fragments of pottery and bones, without grave gifts.

During the excavations were registered 3 stratigraphic horizons, in ochre, grey and red-dish colour. Further excavation revealed three additional stone burial constructions.

Grave 2 – The burial construction is oriented east-west with dimensions 1.90 m. x 0.70 m. On the south side of the tomb there is a stone slab, and on the north side two stone slabs.



Grave with two skeletons



Construction with stone cists



Documentation and measurement

On the western and eastern side the tomb is closed with one stone on each side and covered with 5 stones. The skulls of the deceased are male. The first skull is of a middle aged man, while the second skull belongs to a person between 44-45 years of age. There are no findings.

Grave 3 - the grave construction is oriented in the direction east - west east - west with dimensions 2.30 m. x 0.73 m. The skeleton was placed in a supine position on his back, head turned to the northeast, his right hand placed over the left (crossed). The legs are in an outstretched position. The skeleton is placed over a rocky section and has a length of 1.70 m, enclosed by two stones from the south. On the north side it can be noticed that one section of the grave is completely placed on a rocky base, while on the east side it is reinforced only by soil. On the western side, it is entirely placed on a rocky base, and is covered with stone slabs. The skeleton is male and is fully preserved. Judging by the bones, it can be noted that the person was suffering from arthritis; there is also a possibility that he suffered from spondylosis. There are remains of fabric in the lumbar section of the spine. In the lower part of the jaw there is tooth tartar, while on the upper jaw there are 4 teeth damaged to the root; a fracture in the left humerus is also observed. There are no findings.

Grave 4 - the grave has an east-west orientation with dimensions 1.70 m x 0.65 m. On the south side it is enclosed by one stone, while on the north side by two, and is covered with several stone slabs. From the head to pelvis there is one stone, and two stone slabs from the pelvis to the end of the leg. The skeleton is 44-45 years of age; the jaw shows a tooth cyst and the teeth of the upper jaw are decayed, while a few are missing in the bottom jaw. A fracture is observed in the rib cage. There are no findings.

The osteological material is in good condition. The skeletal group of the Tetovo Fortress - Baltepe contains four individual skeletons, one female and three males, all adults. The cranial indices show that the population was heterogeneous, mesocranic and brachyranic, with a strong physique in men and a graceful one in women. The body height is considerable in both sexes.

Adjacent to this group of tombs were discovered two more, identified with number 5 and 6.

Grave 5 - initially thought to be a *cenotaph*, but detail cleaning revealed several bones which confirmed that the tomb was looted.

Grave 6 - located in the southeast section of quadrant 7, with construction of stone slabs placed vertically in all sides of the tomb. It is intact with completely preserved skeleton of a child 3 years of age, but without grave gifts.

Research is also conducted in the space between the building Saray and the building Dungeon, which have been cleaned of vegetation and debris. In the flat space were placed test probes to confirm the existence of earlier layers. This space is located on the left side of the Main Tetovo gate and extends to the eastern parts of the building Saray. The building is identified as Prison or Dungeon. On the surface can be noted visible parts of the walls of the building overgrown by forest and vegetation. The building is of solid construction with beautifully carved stone blocks with arched vaulting.



View of the eastern facade of the building Dungeon



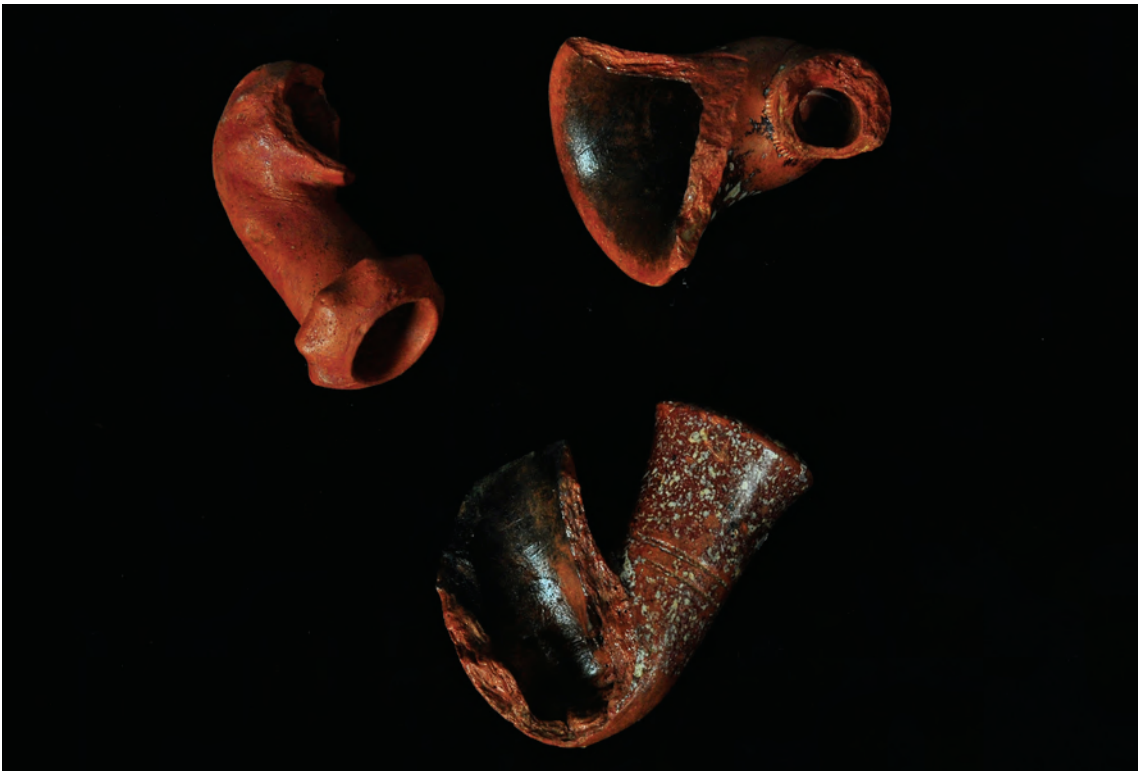
Discovering grave 6



Placing a skeleton in a box



Silver - plated cigarette case



Ceramic pipes

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