

# DARDANIA IN LATE ANTIQUITY: AN OVERVIEW OF 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> CENTURY FORTIFICATIONS IN THE TERRITORY OF KOSOVO

## DARDANIJA U KASNOJ ANTICI: PREGLED UTVRDA OD 4. DO 6. STOLJEĆA NA PODRUČJU KOSOVA

ZANA RAMA

Archaeological Institute of Kosovo  
Str. Nazim Gafuri n. n.  
XK-10000 Prishtina  
zanarama07@gmail.com

---

UDK: 904:711.459.6(497.115)“03/05“

DOI: 10.15291/archo.3392

REVIEW PAPER / PREGLEDNI ČLANAK

Received / Primljeno: 2020-04-14

---

**KEY WORDS:**

*Dardania, Late  
Antiquity, Fortifications,  
Christianity*

*Late Antiquity, known as a transitory phase between Antiquity and the Middle Ages that encompasses the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, was characterized by major historical events that led not only to political and administrative changes, but also social, cultural and religious changes. This paper will elaborate the impact of these changes in the province of Dardania, of which the central territory corresponds to today's Kosovo, with a specific focus on the spread of Christianity and Christian architecture and changes in settlement patterns, as people moved from field settlements to hillforts. Moreover, it will present architectural features and the role of fortifications in Late Antiquity.*

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI:**

*Dardanija, kasna  
antika, utvrde,  
kršćanstvo*

*Kasna antika, prijelazno razdoblje iz antike u srednji vijek, odnosno period od 4. do 6. stoljeća, obilježena je važnim povijesnim događanjima koja su rezultirala promjenama ne samo u političkom i administrativnom smislu, već i u društvenim, kulturnim i religijskim aspektima. Ovaj rad bavi se utjecajem tih promjena u provinciji Dardaniji, čije je središnje područje smješteno na današnjem Kosovu. Posebna pažnja bit će posvećena širenju kršćanstva i kršćanske arhitekture, promjenama u naseljima, te premještanjima stanovništva iz nizinskih naselja na gradine. U radu se donose i karakteristike arhitekture i uloga fortifikacija u kasnoj antici.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Kosovo lies in the territory known in ancient times as Dardania. It is located in south-eastern Europe, in the central Balkan Peninsula, bordered by Albania in the south-west, North Macedonia in the south-east, Montenegro in the northwest and Serbia in northeast (Fig. 1).

## UVOD

Republika Kosovo smještena je na području u antici znanom kao Dardanija. Nalazi se u jugoistočnoj Europi, u središnjem dijelu Balkanskog poluotoka, okružena današnjom Albanijom na jugozapadu, Sjevernom Makedonijom na jugoistoku, Crnom Gorom na sjeverozapadu i Srbijom na sjeveroistoku (Sl. 1).



FIGURE 1 *Map of Europe* (from: <https://mapchart.net>)  
 SLIKA 1. *Karta Europe* (izvor: <https://mapchart.net>)

Geographically, Kosovo has a diverse relief, combining plains and valleys with hills and mountains. It is divided into two main regional units: the Kosovo Field in the northeast and the Dukagjini Plain in the southwest, and it is surrounded by several mountain ranges, such as the Kopaonik Mountains (elevation exceeding 2.000 m) in the north, the Sharr Mountains (over 2.500 m) in the south and southwest at the border North Macedonia, the

Što se tiče geografskih karakteristika, reljef Kosova je raznolik, pa se polja i doline smjenjuju s brdima i planinama. Dijeli se u dvije regionalne cjeline: Kosovsko polje (sjeveroistočni dio) i Dukadžinska ravnica (jugozapadni dio). Kosovo je okruženo sljedećim planinskim masivima: Kopaonik (preko 2000 mnv) na sjevernom djelu, Šar planina (preko 2500 mnv) s južne i jugozapadne strane na granici sa Sjevernom Makedonijom, Albanske Alpe (Bjeshkët e Ne-

Albanian Alps (Bjeshkët e Nemuna) in west at the border with Albania and the Mokra Mountains at the border with Montenegro.<sup>1</sup> The border between the two plains defines the division between the Adriatic Sea basin on the one side, and on the other, the basin of the Black and Aegean Seas, which are divided by mountain ranges in the areas of Drenica and Llapusha.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of Kosovo's geographical position is enhanced by the wider regional links via the White Drin River, which flows to the Adriatic Sea, the Lepenci River, which flows to the Vardar River in the direction of the Aegean Sea, the Ibri River tributary of the Danube, and the Binça tributary of the South Morava to the Black Sea.

Its advantageous geographic position, climatic conditions and natural resources created suitable conditions for the development of life from prehistory to the present. Archaeological excavations and research have ascertained human activity since Neolithic, although this does not exclude the possibility of human habitation even earlier, in the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic, based on indications in Radavc Cave in Peja, which still requires further research for definitive verification.<sup>3</sup>

## KOSOVO IN ANTIQUITY

The history of Kosovo in Antiquity begins with the establishment of the Dardanian Kingdom, which grew during the 4<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. The preceding proto-urban Dardanian development (6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) played a key role in the history of ancient Dardania.<sup>4</sup> The Dardanian Kingdom had a compact and defined territory, a population known as Dardanians, organized armies, the institution

munna) na zapadnom dijelu Kosova na granici s Albanijom i Mokra Gora na granici s Crnom Gorom.<sup>1</sup> Granica između dviju ravnica označava i razdjelnicu između slijeva Jadranskog mora s jedne strane, i slijeva Crnog i Egejskog mora s druge, koji su razdijeljeni planinskim masivima u području Drenice i Llapushe.<sup>2</sup>

Važnost geografskog položaja Kosova dodatno je naglašena zbog povezanosti ove regije s Jadranskim morem preko doline Bijelog Drima; rijekom Lepenac preko Vardara ostvaruje se povezanost u pravcu Egejskog mora; Ibar je pritoka Dunava, a Binačka Morava utječe u Južnu Moravu prema Crnom moru.

Povoljan geografski položaj, klimatski uvjeti i prirodni resursi osiguravali su povoljne uvjete za razvoj života od prapovijesnih razdoblja do danas. Prema dosadašnjim arheološkim iskopavanjima i istraživanjima, potvrđena je naseljenost od neolitka, ali nije isključena mogućnost ljudske prisutnosti već u paleolitiku i mezolitiku, sudeći prema pokazateljima iz pećine Radavc u Peći, što treba potvrditi budućim istraživanjima.<sup>3</sup>

## KOSOVO U ANTICI

Antička povijest Kosova počinje uspostavljanjem Dardanskog kraljevstva koje se razvilo u periodu od 4. do 1. st. pr. Kr. Prijašnji protourbani razvoj Dardanije (6. – 4. st. pr. Kr.) imao je ključnu ulogu u povijesnom razvoju antičke Dardanije.<sup>4</sup> Dardansko kraljevstvo se prostiralo na kompaktnom i definiranom području. Stanovništvo, znano kao Dardanci, organiziralo je vojske, poznavalo instituciju kralja i razvijenu privredu utemeljenu na poljoprivredi, stočarstvu, rudarstvu i metalurgiji.<sup>5</sup>

Antički pisci npr. Herodot u šestoj knjizi *Po-*

<sup>1</sup> Independent Commission on Mines and Minerals (<https://www.kosovo-mining.org/kosova/gjeografia/>).

<sup>2</sup> M. KRASNIQI, 1963, 4.

<sup>3</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2018, 38.

<sup>4</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2008, 11.

<sup>1</sup> The Independent commission for mines and minerals (<https://www.kosovo-mining.org/kosova/gjeografia/>).

<sup>2</sup> M. KRASNIQI, 1963, 4.

<sup>3</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2018, 38.

<sup>4</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2008, 11.

<sup>5</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2008, 18.

of a king, and a developed economy based in agriculture, farming, mining and metallurgy.<sup>5</sup>

Classical authors such as Herodotus, in Book IV of *The Histories*<sup>6</sup> and Strabo<sup>7</sup> describe the expansion of Dardania and the Dardanian population. The Dardanians were an Illyrian tribe, and the majority of Dardania's territory lay in what is today Kosovo, a part in southern Serbia up to Niš (*Naissus*) and Novi Pazar, a part in North Macedonia including Skopje (*Scupi*, which was the central hub of Dardania) and the region of Kukës in the north-eastern Albania.<sup>8</sup>

Major administrative and legal changes occurred after the fall of Dardania under the Roman Empire. Dardania became part of the province of Moesia between 2 and 6 AD,<sup>9</sup> and 86 AD it became part of Moesia Superior.<sup>10</sup> Following administrative reforms that were implemented by Emperor Diocletian, in 297 AD Dardania was separated from Moesia Superior and became an independent administrative and political province in the Roman Empire (Fig. 2).<sup>11</sup>

Changes occurred not only in administration and politics, but also in urban planning, in the growth of the economy and trade, and in everyday life. The Roman era saw the development of vital urbanized centres with all of the features of Roman cities and a dense road network. Urban centres were built in flat areas close to natural resources and major roads.

The Romans were particularly focused on the exploitation of ores, this is also one of the reasons why the main centres in Dardania, *Municipium Ulpiana*, was built close to the mining areas of Janjeva and Novobërda, and *Municipium Dardanorum* was close to the ore complex of Ibri.<sup>12</sup>

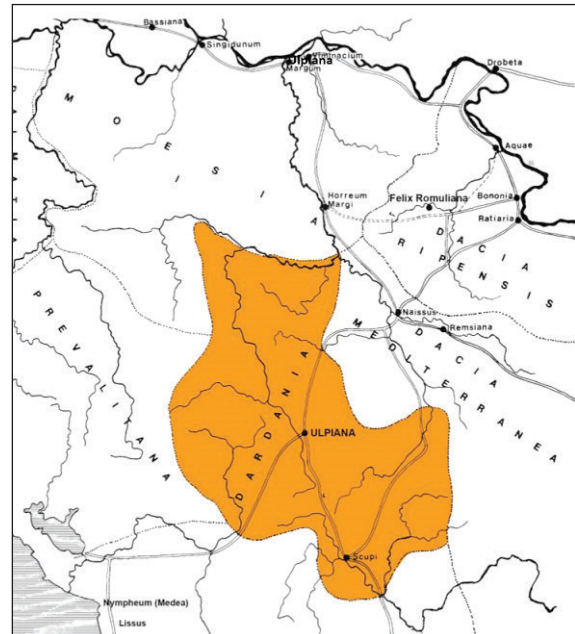


FIGURE 2 Province of Dardania in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Ulpiana Archaeological Park, 2016, MCYS/ Archaeological Institute of Kosovo)

SLIKA 2. Provincija Dardanija u 3. i 4. stoljeću (Arheološki park Ulpiana, 2016, MCYS/ Arheološki institut Kosova)

*vijesti*<sup>6</sup> i Strabon<sup>7</sup> opisuju širenje Dardanije i dardanskog stanovništva. Dardanci su bili ilirsko pleme i većina teritorija Dardanije nalazi se na Kosovu. Preostali dijelovi obuhvaćaju područje juga Srbije do Niša (*Naissus*) i Novog Pazara, zatim prostor Sjeverne Makedonije uključujući Skoplje (*Scupi*, kao glavni grad Dardanije) i područje Kukësa u sjeveroistočnom dijelu Albanije.<sup>8</sup>

Glavne administrativne i pravne promjene dogodile su se nakon rimskog osvajanja. Dardanija je ušla u sastav provincije Mezije između 2. i 6. godine,<sup>9</sup> a 86. je inkorporirana u Gornju Meziju (*Moesia Superior*).<sup>10</sup> Nakon administrativnih reformi koje je poduzeo car Dioklecijan godine 297. Dardanija je preustrojena u samostalnu provinciju Rimskog Carstva u administrativnom i političkom smi-

<sup>5</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2008, 18.

<sup>6</sup> N. CEKA, 2014, 263.

<sup>7</sup> STRABONIS, 1979, 155.

<sup>8</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2018, 70-71.

<sup>9</sup> E. ČERŠKOV, 1969, 24.

<sup>10</sup> N. FERRI, 2001, 55.

<sup>11</sup> Z. MIRDITA, 1987, 221; M. BERISHA, 2012, 57.

<sup>12</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2008, 18.

<sup>6</sup> N. CEKA, 2014, 263.

<sup>7</sup> STRABONIS, 1979, 155.

<sup>8</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2018, 70-71.

<sup>9</sup> E. ČERŠKOV, 1969, 24.

<sup>10</sup> N. FERRI, 2001, 55.

The main road that traversed today's territory of Kosovo, *Via Lissus-Naissus*, is the most important road that linked the central Balkans and the Adriatic coast. It started in *Lissus* (Lezhë), ran through the valley of the White Drin to *Naissus* (Niš). At the *Vicianum* station, located very close to *Municipium Ulpiana*, the *Lissus-Naissus* road was intersected by the road that led to *Scupi* (Skopje) and Thessaloniki.<sup>13</sup>

## LATE ANTIQUITY

The time frame of the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries brought new changes not only to the Empire's administration and politics, such as centralization of power into the emperors' hands and the division of military from civil governance,<sup>14</sup> but also to the population's beliefs and lifestyles; the state was also rocked by economic crises and external attacks. All these changes were consequently reflected in the province of Dardania, which with the Empire's division into two halves, remained in the Eastern Empire.

The decisions made by emperors such as Constantine the Great (Edict of Milan, 313) and then Theodosius I, who in 391 prohibited pagan temples and rites in the Empire,<sup>15</sup> eventually established Christianity as the only legal belief system in the entire Empire, including Dardania. These changes also led to the massive apostasy of polytheism in Dardania, which was an intertwining of indigenous Dardanian beliefs with those of the Romans, resulting in the embrace and acceptance of monotheism.

Changes in religious belief were also reflected in architecture and administration. Christian architecture began to spread throughout the Roman Empire, and the church became a public institution under the imperial patronage.<sup>16</sup> During Late Antiquity, Ulpiana became a very important episcopal centre, a part of

slu (Sl. 2).<sup>11</sup>

Promjene su se dogodile ne samo na administrativnom i političkom planu, nego i u urbanizmu, razvoju privrede i trgovine, ali i u svakodnevnom životu. U rimskom razdoblju razvijaju se važni urbani centri sa svim značajkama rimskog grada, kao i gusta cestovna mreža. Urbani centri su nastajali u nizinama u blizini važnih cesta i prirodnih resursa.

Rimljani su prepoznali važnost eksploatacije ruda ovog područja, što je jedan od razloga da su glavna središta Dardanije nastajala u blizini rudonosnih područja: *Municipium Ulpiana* u blizini Janjeva i Novobërda, a *Municipium Dardanorum* blizu Ibra.<sup>12</sup>

Glavna cesta koja je prolazila područjem današnjeg Kosova potezom *Lissus – Naissus* najvažnija je komunikacija koja je povezivala središnji Balkan s jadranskom obalom. Počinjala je od Lješa (*Lissus*, Lezhë), vodila je kroz dolinu Bijelog Drima sve do Niša (*Naissus*). Na postaji *Vicinium*, u neposrednoj blizini municipija Ulpiana, cesta *Lissus – Naissus* križala se s cestom koja je vodila prema Skoplju (*Scupi*) i Solunu.<sup>13</sup>

## KASNA ANTIKA

Nove promjene u administraciji i politici Carstva događaju se u vremenu od 4. do 6. stoljeća, što se očituje centralizacijom vlasti u osobi vladara i razdiobi vojne i civilne administracije,<sup>14</sup> ali i u vjerovanjima i životnom stilu stanovništva, kao i u ekonomskim krizama i napadima izvana. Sve su se te promjene osjetile i u provinciji Dardaniji koja je nakon podjele Carstva pripala njegovom istočnom dijelu.

I u provinciji Dardaniji su poštovane odluke careva Konstantina Velikog (Milanski edikt iz 313.) i Teodozija I. iz 391. koji su zabrani-

<sup>13</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2018, 101.

<sup>14</sup> M. BERISHA, 2012, 77.

<sup>15</sup> CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY 13, 2008, 108.

<sup>16</sup> CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY 13, 2008, XV.

<sup>11</sup> Z. MIRDITA, 1987, 221; M. BERISHA, 2012, 57.

<sup>12</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2008, 18.

<sup>13</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2018, 101.

<sup>14</sup> M. BERISHA, 2012, 77.

the metropolis of Scupi until the establishment of the archdiocese of Justiniana Prima. Based on historical and theological data and also archaeological and epigraphic finds, *Ulpiana-Justiniana Secunda* became the primary administrative, political, religious and cultural centre of the Province of Dardania (Fig. 3).<sup>17</sup>

However, evidence of Christianity in Dardania dates back even further, as indicated by the case of the two martyrs, *Florus* and *Laurus*, who were the first known Christian martyrs in Dardania. They allegedly lived in the latter half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. The *Roman Martyrology*<sup>18</sup> provides information on the two brothers *Florus* and *Laurus*. Stonemasons by trade, they were students of *Maximus* and *Proculus*, who were persecuted in the time of Emperor Hadrian (117-138)<sup>19</sup> and who probably converted *Florus* and *Laurus* to Christianity. According to hagiographic records, *Florus* and *Laurus* travelled from Byzantium to Ulpiana to build a temple. After accomplishing that task, together with the impoverished local inhabitants, they destroyed pagan symbols inside the temple and replaced them with Christian symbols.<sup>20</sup> Due to their inappropriate behaviour, all perpetrators of this act were put to death, while the authorities sent the two brothers to Licinius. After being interrogated, they were also executed: they were thrown into a well somewhere in the vicinity of Ulpiana.<sup>21</sup> This is also illustrated on an icon in the Patriarchate of Peja (Fig. 4).

With regard to the story of the two martyrs and archaeological data, there are some hypotheses. An empty tomb was discovered (Fig. 5) in the apse of an Early Christian basilica



FIGURE 3 Episcopal basilica and baptistery, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, Ulpiana (Ulpiana Archaeological Park, 2016, MCYS/ Archaeological Institute of Kosovo)

SLIKA 3. Episkopalna bazilika i baptisterij, 5. i 6. stoljeće, Ulpiana (Arheološki park Ulpiana, 2016, MCYS/ Arheološki institut Kosova)

li poganske hramove i običaje u Carstvu,<sup>15</sup> te ozakonili kršćanstvo kao jedinu vjeru u cijelom Carstvu. Te promjene dovele su do masovnog odbacivanja politeizma u Dardaniji očitovanog kroz preplitanje autohtonih dardanskih i rimskih vjerovanja, te do prihvaćanja monoteizma.

Promjene u religijskim vjerovanjima očitovale su se u upravljanju Carstvom, kao i u arhitekturi. Kršćanska arhitektura počela se širiti Rimskim Carstvom, a crkva je postala javna ustanova pod carskom zaštitom.<sup>16</sup> U kasnoj antici Ulpiana postaje važan episkopalni centar pod metropolijom *Scupi*, do osnivanja nadbiskupije *Justiniana Prima*. Prema povijesnim i teološkim podacima, Ulpiana / Justiniana Secunda postala je glavni administrativni, politički, religiozni i kulturni centar provincije Dardanije, što je potvrđeno arheološkim i epigrafičkim nalazima (Sl. 3).<sup>17</sup>

Prvi spomen kršćanstva u Dardaniji je čak i

<sup>17</sup> M. BERISHA, 2015, 80.

<sup>18</sup> MARTYROLOGIUM ROMANUM, 1940, 345.

<sup>19</sup> G. GJINI, 1986, 25.

<sup>20</sup> E. HOXHAI, 2006, 104.

<sup>21</sup> G. GJINI, 1986, 59-60.

<sup>15</sup> CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY 13, 2008, 108.

<sup>16</sup> CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY 13, 2008, XV.

<sup>17</sup> M. BERISHA, 2015, 80.

dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century during archaeological excavations conducted in 1954-1956. Fine and clear sand was found in the lowest layer. According to one hypothesis, the relics of Flori and Lauri were interred in this tomb after their removal from the well. However, due to the threat of barbarian attacks, the relics were later taken and sent elsewhere for safekeeping, probably to Constantinople or some other place close to Ulpiana.<sup>22</sup>

The story of Florus and Laurus is not only linked to Municipium Ulpiana, but also to one of the most significant castles of Late Antiquity, Harilaq, which can be defined as more than just a settlement, but rather a pilgrimage site.<sup>23</sup> It reflects specific construction traits and architecturally unique structures, not only in Kosovo, but in the Central Balkans in general.<sup>24</sup> Built on the remains of successive Eneolithic, Bronze and Iron Age settlements, it reached its peak as a settlement during Late Antiquity, primarily during the reign of Justinian I. During systematic archaeological excavations, the entire perimeter wall with four gates and four towers, sacral and secular structures, built using the *opus incertum* and *opus mixtum* techniques, were discovered (Fig. 6).<sup>25</sup> But what makes this site unique are the two symmetrical “ring-shaped” buildings, linked to the apses of the triple-nave church. According to one hypothesis, these two structures, built in alignment with the church, are supposed to be martyria built in the honour of Sts. Florus and Laurus.<sup>26</sup> The decision to construct the two martyria in the castle of Harilaq was a consequence of events in the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries that were weakening Ulpiana,<sup>27</sup> such as the Ostrogothic attacks led by Theodoric in 471, which marked the first ravaging of the Municipium.<sup>28</sup> These events



FIGURE 4 Icon of Flori and Lauri in the Patriarchate of Peja (E. HOXHAI, 2006, 114)

SLIKA 4. Ikona s prikazom Flora i Laura u Pečkoj patrijaršiji (E. HOXHAI, 2006, 114)

raniji, a odnosi se na dvojicu mučenika Flora i Laura (*Florus* i *Laurus*) koji su prvi poznati kršćanski mučenici u Dardaniji, a za koje se pretpostavlja da su živjeli u drugoj polovini 2. stoljeća. *Martyrologium Romanum*<sup>18</sup> sadrži podatke o dvojici braće Floru i Lauru. Zidari po struci, učenici Maksima i Prokula koji su ih vjerojatno obratili na kršćanstvo, progonjeni su u doba Hadrijana (117. – 138.).<sup>19</sup> Prema hagiografskim zapisima, Flor i Laur došli su iz Bizanta u Ulpianu kako bi izgradili hram. Nakon što su izgradili hram zajedno sa siromašnim stanovništvom, uništili su poganske simbole u hramu i zamijenili ih kršćanskima.<sup>20</sup> Zbog neprihvatljivog ponašanja, svi sudionici su kažnjeni smrću, a braću su vlasti poslale Liciniju. Nakon ispitivanja, kažnjeni su smrću bacanjem u bunar, negdje blizu Ulpijane.<sup>21</sup> Ovaj događaj je ilustriran na ikoni u Pečkoj patrijaršiji (Sl. 4).

Postavlja se pitanje nalazi li priča o dvojici mučenika arheološko utemeljenje? U arheološkim iskopavanjima od 1954. do 1956., u

<sup>22</sup> P. MIJOVIĆ, 1964, 343-344.

<sup>23</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 691.

<sup>24</sup> F. PEJA, B. RRACI, A. HAJDARI, 2012, 17.

<sup>25</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 685-686.

<sup>26</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 688-689.

<sup>27</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 689.

<sup>28</sup> P. PETROVIĆ, 1975, 42; M. BERISHA, 2015, 78.

<sup>18</sup> MARTYROLOGIUM ROMANUM, 1940, 345.

<sup>19</sup> G. GJINI, 1986, 25.

<sup>20</sup> E. HOXHAI, 2006, 104.

<sup>21</sup> G. GJINI, 1986, 59-60.



FIGURE 5 Early Christian Basilica with a crypt, Ulpiana (photo by: A. Llapashtica, available at: <https://www.facebook.com/Justinianasecunda7/>)

SLIKA 5. Starokršćanska bazilika s grobom u kripti, Ulpiana (foto: A. Llapashtica, preuzeto s <https://www.facebook.com/Justinianasecunda7/>)

led to turbulence in Ulpiana which may have forced its residents to remove and preserve the relics of Sts. Florus and Laurus in a highland settlement.<sup>29</sup>

Late Antiquity was marked by the incursions of different tribes, such as the Goths, Huns, Avars and Slavs, which deepened the crisis in the Empire. They destroyed and looted everything they found in the new territories they invaded. This brought about a new situation in the Empire, which brought an end to what was known in the Roman Empire as the *Pax Romana*.

Classical writers such as Eusebius Hieronymus, in his work *Epistolae*, provided informa-

apsidi starokršćanske bazilike iz 6. stoljeća, otkriven je prazan grob (Sl. 5). Fini, čisti pijesak nađen je u najnižem sloju. Pretpostavlja se da su posmrtni ostaci Flora i Laura položeni u ovaj grob nakon što su izvađeni iz bunara. Ipak, kasnije su ti ostaci premješteni iz groba i poslani na sigurnije mjesto, vjerojatno u Konstantinopol ili neko mjesto blizu Ulpiane, zbog prijetnje upada barbarskih plemena.<sup>22</sup>

Priča o Floru i Lauru nije povezana samo s municipijem Ulpiana, već i s jednom od najvažnijih kasnoantičkih utvrda – utvrdom Harilaq, koja je bila više od naselja, tj. bila

<sup>29</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 690-691.

<sup>22</sup> P. MIJOVIĆ, 1964, 343-344.

tion on the invasions of Goths, Huns, Vandals, Sarmatians etc., in the Balkans, including Dardania, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>30</sup> Procopius of Caesarea, in his work *De Aedificiis*, described the necessity and maximum dedication of Justinian in reinforcing and fortifying the defences system on vital roads, as well as the construction of fortresses inside the Empire.<sup>31</sup> Such a construction system was present in Dardania as well. Procopius noted that while Byzantine troops were preoccupied fighting the Ostrogoths in Italy, a Slav incursion had crossed the Danube River in 548 and penetrated through Illyricum, reaching *Dyrrachium*.<sup>32</sup>

In 559, there were more barbarian invasions on the Illyrian peninsula, amongst which the hordes of the Kutigurs, led by their khan, Zabergan, crossed the Danube and swept through the Balkans.<sup>33</sup> The invasions created new circumstances in Dardania. Following the Avar and Slav incursions and devastation, centres like Ulpiana/Justiniana Secunda were entirely abandoned by the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup>

The new situation had an impact on the construction of a new system of fortifications for the needs of immediate safety. This began with the construction of *castra* in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, and reached its peak in the 6<sup>th</sup> century with the completion of a dense fortification network during the reign of the Emperor Justinian I.<sup>35</sup>

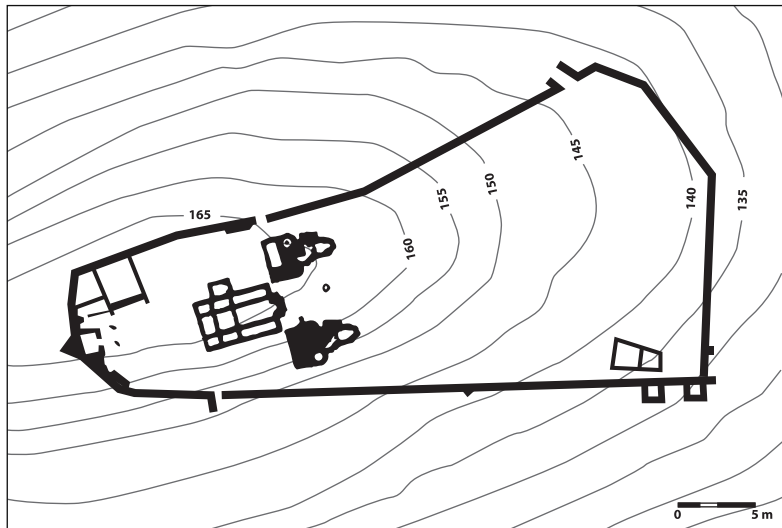


FIGURE 6 General layout of the fortress of Harilaq (A. HAJDARI, 2017, 690)  
SLIKA 6. Tlocrt utvrde Harilaq, (A. HAJDARI, 2017, 690)

je i mjesto hodočašća.<sup>23</sup> Na ovom lokalitetu nalazimo posebna građevinska rješenja i jedinstvene arhitektonske sklopove ne samo na Kosovu, nego i na cijelom srednjem Balkanu.<sup>24</sup> S tragovima života iz eneolitika, brončanog i željeznog doba, dostiže vrhunac kao naselje u doba vladavine Justinijana I., slijedom razvoja iz starokršćanskog razdoblja. Tijekom sustavnih arheoloških iskopavanja, otkriven je cijeli bedem utvrde s četiri ulaza i četiri tornja, sakralnim i profanim objektima, izgrađenima u tehnikama *opus incertum* i *opus mixtum* (Sl. 6).<sup>25</sup> Posebnost ovog lokaliteta su dvije simetrične „prstenaste“ građevine povezane s apsidadama trobrodne crkve. Pretpostavlja se da su ta dva objekta, koja skladno nadopunjuju crkvu, trebala biti martiriji u čast Sv. Flora i Sv. Laura.<sup>26</sup> Odluka o podizanju dva martirija u utvrdi Harilaq bila je rezultat događanja u periodu kada je Ulpiana slabila (4. do 6. stoljeće),<sup>27</sup> kao što su bili napadi Ostrogota pod vodstvom Teodorika 471. godine što je dovelo do prvog razaranja municipija.<sup>28</sup> Ovi događaji su uzrokovali nemire u Ulpijani što je moglo natjerati

<sup>30</sup> EUSEBIUS HIERONYMUS, 1979, 354.

<sup>31</sup> PROCOPI CAESARIENSIS, 1979, 438-439.

<sup>32</sup> A. MEKSI, 1989, 112.

<sup>33</sup> J. A. EVANS, 2005, xxxv.

<sup>34</sup> M. BERISHA, 2015, 80.

<sup>35</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 197.

<sup>23</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 691.

<sup>24</sup> F. PEJA et al. 2012, 17.

<sup>25</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 685-686.

<sup>26</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 688-689.

<sup>27</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 689.

<sup>28</sup> P. PETROVIĆ, 1975, 42; M. BERISHA, 2015, 78.

## THE ROLE OF FORTRESSES IN DARDANIA IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Accounts by travellers, writers, and researchers such as A. Boue, A. Gilfierding, G. Hahn, A. J. Evens, A. von Domashevski and Á. Buday who conducted digs in the Peja region in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, indicated the discovery of many archaeological sites in Kosovo. Nevertheless, descriptions of fortifications dated to Late Antiquity are very rare.<sup>36</sup> With the establishment of the Museum of Kosovo in 1949, archaeological research was institutionalized.<sup>37</sup> The period between 1950 and 1999, when Kosovo was part of the former Yugoslavia, is characterized by the exclusion of archaeological excavations at archaeological sites from Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, which are of a significant importance to prove the continuity of human habitation from prehistory and Antiquity.<sup>38</sup> Between 1974 and 1977, a few field surveys were conducted by the Museum of Kosovo, several papers were published in the subsequent years, mainly containing descriptions of the walls of a hill-fort (*gradina*), but proper documentation is lacking.<sup>39</sup> At the end of the 1980s, a few archaeological excavations were conducted at the fortresses of Veletin and Kastërc. After the war in Kosovo in 1999, and with the establishment of the Archaeological Institute of Kosovo in 2003, archaeological excavations have increased at a higher intensity. Systematic archaeological excavations and conservation works are being conducted at different fortresses, as is the case of Harilaq, Korisha, Kastërc, Dardana, Keqekolla, Marec, Prizren, etc (Fig. 9).

Also noteworthy are the archaeological surveys. So far three-quarters of the territory has been surveyed and three archaeological maps

<sup>36</sup> G. HOXHA, 2014, 207.

<sup>37</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2014, 18.

<sup>38</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2014, 19.

<sup>39</sup> L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2003, 67-68.

stanovnike da ostatke mučenika prenesu u naselje na uzvisini.<sup>29</sup>

Kasna antika obilježena je upadima raznih naroda kao što su Goti, Huni, Avari i Slaveni koji su produbili krizu Carstva. Uništali su i opljačkali sve čega su se domogli u područjima gdje su se širili što je rezultiralo novom situacijom u Carstvu koja je označila kraj onoga što je bilo poznato kao *Pax Romana*.

Antički pisci, poput Euzebija Hijeronima (Sveti Jeronim) u djelu *Pisma (Epistolae)*, pišu o invazijama na Balkan Gota, Huna, Vandala, Sarmata i drugih krajem 4. stoljeća, uključujući Dardaniju.<sup>30</sup> Prokopije iz Cezareje u djelu *O građevinama (De Aedificiis)* opisuje nužnost osnaživanja i izgradnje obrambenog sustava uz važne ceste, gradnju utvrda unutar Carstva, kao i maksimalno zalaganje Justinijana u tom smislu.<sup>31</sup> Takav sustav gradnje bio je zastupljen i u Dardaniji. Prokopije piše da dok su se bizantske jedinice borile s Gotima u Italiji, grupa Slavena prešla je Dunav godine 548., probila se kroz Ilirik, i stigla sve do Drača (*Dyrrachium*).<sup>32</sup> Godine 559. druga su barbarska plemena nadirala preko ilirskog poluotoka, uključujući horde Kutrigura pod vodstvom kana Zabergana, prelazila su Dunav i pomela Balkan.<sup>33</sup> Sve je to utjecalo na prilike u Dardaniji. Zbog avarskih i slavenskih provala i uništavanja, središta poput Ulpijane / Justinijane Secunde bila su napuštena sredinom 6. stoljeća.<sup>34</sup>

Novonastala situacija rezultirala je izgradnjom novog sustava utvrda radi potrebe neposredne zaštite što je započelo gradnjom *castra* u 3. i 4. stoljeću, a doseglo vrhunac u 6. stoljeću dovršenjem guste fortifikacijske mreže u doba cara Justinijana I.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 690-691.

<sup>30</sup> EUSEBIUS HIERONYMUS, 1979, 354.

<sup>31</sup> PROCOPI CAESARIENSIS, 1979, 438-439.

<sup>32</sup> A. MEKSI, 1989, 112.

<sup>33</sup> J. A. EVANS, 2005, xxxv.

<sup>34</sup> M. BERISHA, 2015, 80.

<sup>35</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 197.

with marked archaeological sites have been published. So far, only the northern and north-eastern part of Kosovo has not been surveyed, but in the coming years, research will be conducted in that area too, thus completing the archaeological map (Fig. 7).

The remains of more than one hundred fortresses from Late Antiquity are known in Kosovo thus far, and most have traces dating to prehistory (Fig. 8). The toponyms are known by the local inhabitants as *gjytet*, *gradinë*, *gradishtë*, *kalaja e Lekës*, *kala*, etc.<sup>40</sup>

The survey expedition in 2000-2005 by archaeologists from the Museum of Kosovo, in collaboration with the Archaeological Institute of Albania, during 2000-2005 to identify archaeological sites in the south-western part of the territory was particularly important.<sup>41</sup> Considerable focus was placed on the identification and documentation of fortifications from Late Antiquity. They classified the fortifications into three categories:

1. Fortresses of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries, castra with oval, trapezoidal or rectangular planimetry and round, square or U-shaped towers. Such fortifications are present in Peja and Gegja. Their size is roughly 0.7-1.3 hectares;
2. Fortresses of the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, which have the characteristics of small towns, with two or more outer walls and an Early Christian church in the citadel;
3. Fortresses of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, mountain type, which were built quickly as a form of defense against immediate threats.<sup>42</sup>

However, this is more of a general classification and includes only one part of the country, so we cannot speak of a clear typology of fortifications all over Kosovo. Further study in this field is required.

<sup>40</sup> L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2003, 67.

<sup>41</sup> L. PËRZHITA et al., 2006.

<sup>42</sup> L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2003, 122-123.

## ULOGA UTVRDA U KASNOJ ANTICI DARDANIJE

Opisi putnika, pisaca i istraživača kao što su A. Boue, A. Gilfirding, G. Hahn, A. J. Evans, A. von Domashevski te Á. Buday koji je vršio iskopavanja u području Peći sredinom 19. i početkom 20. stoljeća, sadrže spomen otkrića mnogih arheoloških nalazišta na Kosovu, ali usprkos tomu opisi kasnoantičkih utvrda vrlo su rijetki.<sup>36</sup> Arheološka istraživanja su usustavljena 1949. godine osnivanjem Muzeja Kosova.<sup>37</sup> U razdoblju između 1950. i 1999. dok je Kosovo bilo dio bivše Jugoslavije, nisu se istraživali kasnoantički i srednjovjekovni lokaliteti koji su iznimno važni za dokazivanje kontinuiteta prapovijesnog i antičkog stanovništva.<sup>38</sup> Između 1974. i 1977. Muzej Kosova proveo je nekoliko rekognosciranja, objavljeno je i nekoliko članaka u narednim godinama, uglavnom s opisima zidina poneke gradine, ali nedostaje valjana dokumentacija.<sup>39</sup> Krajem osamdesetih godina prošlog stoljeća poduzeto je nekoliko kampanji iskopavanja na utverdama Veletin i Kastërc. Nakon rata na Kosovu 1999., te nakon uspostave Arheološkog instituta Kosova 2003. godine, arheološka istraživanja su se nastavila pojačanim intenzitetom. Sustavna arheološka istraživanja, uz konzervatorske radove, poduzimaju se na raznim utverdama kao što su Harilaq, Korisha, Kastërc, Dardana, Keqekolla, Marec, Prizren i dr. (Sl. 9).

Arheološka rekognosciranja su također vrijedna spomena. Dosad je pregledano tri četvrtine terena Kosova te su objavljene tri arheološke karte na kojima su prikazana uočena arheološka nalazišta. Zasad jedino sjever i sjeveroistok Kosova nisu rekognoscirani, ali u budućnosti će i taj dio biti pregledan da bi se upotpunila arheološka karta (Sl. 7).

Za sada je poznato više od 100 kasnoantičkih utvrda na Kosovu, većina i s prapovijesnim

<sup>36</sup> G. HOXHA, 2014, 207.

<sup>37</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2014, 18.

<sup>38</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 2014, 19.

<sup>39</sup> L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2003, 67-68.

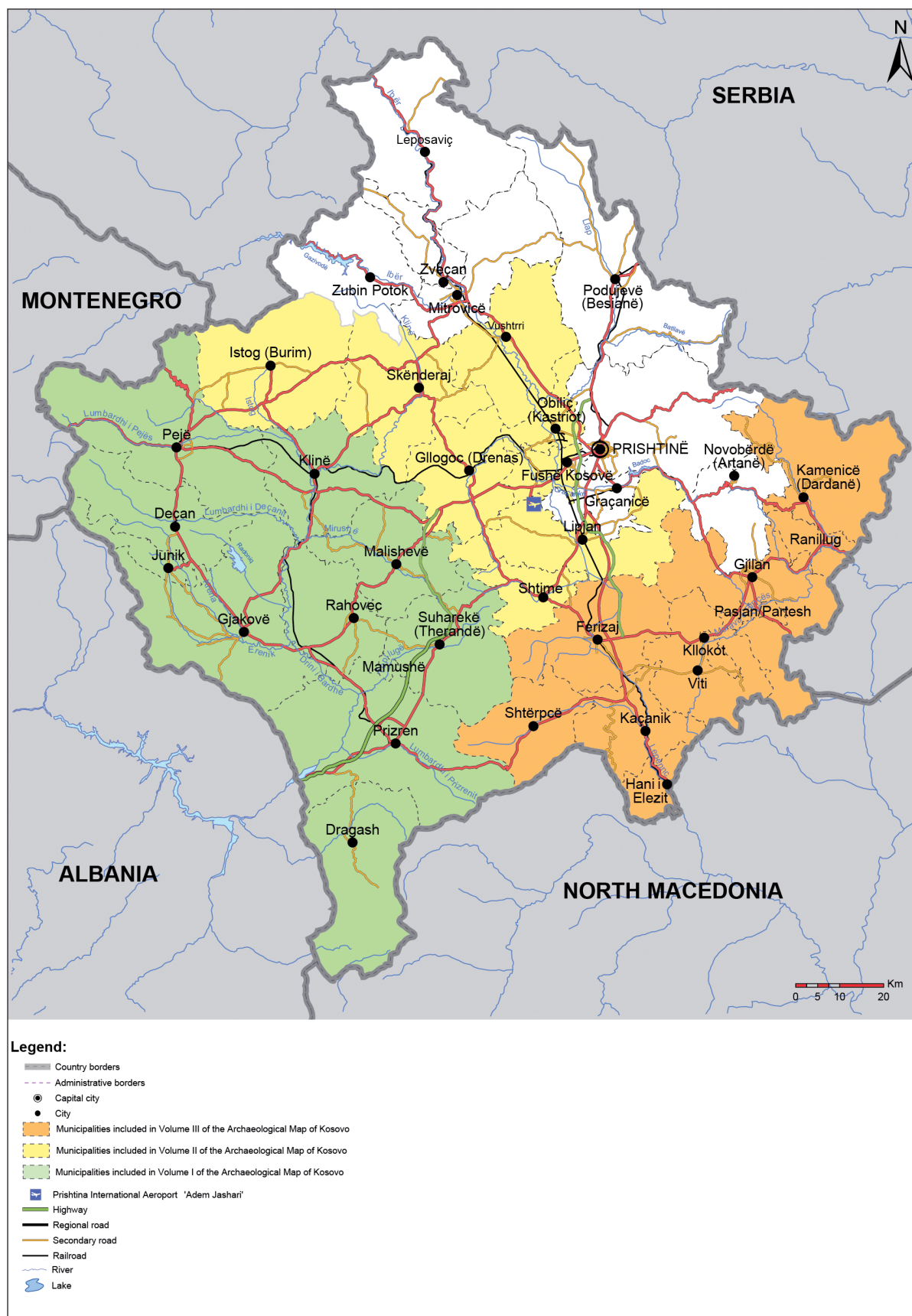


FIGURE 7 Map of the surveys conducted in Kosovo (Harta Arkeologjike e Kosovës, III, 2017, 23)

SLIKA 7. Karta područja rekognosciranja na Kosovu (Harta Arkeologjike e Kosovës, III, 2017, 23)

The research conducted so far in the territory of Dardania proves that fortresses played a key role in safeguarding the population, controlling territory, communicating with different areas and conveying early warnings of threats. Fortresses were constructed in strategic locations, along vital roads as like the *Lissus-Naissus* route, close to important towns and mining zones, as in the case of the fortresses of Veletin and Harilaq near Ulpiana.

In Late Antiquity, the *Lissus-Naissus* road had approximately 36 fortified centres, roadside stations and checkpoints. The construction of these fortifications followed the strategic points of fortifications built in prehistory and Antiquity. Moreover, their number increased with the construction of new fortifications, which were mainly built during the reigns of Constantine the Great, Valentinian I and Justinian I.<sup>43</sup>

A protection and surveillance system was also built on secondary roads. The fortifications had a dominant position and sound communications with one other. As to their architecture, these forts had a simpler structure, with a simple perimeter wall and a smaller size. These types of forts were identified during the documentation of fortifications in the White Drin region.<sup>44</sup>

The highest number of fortifications in Dardania was built during the rule of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527-565), who was Dardanian by origin. Procopius stated that his birth place was very close to the city built by the emperor, Justiniana Pri-

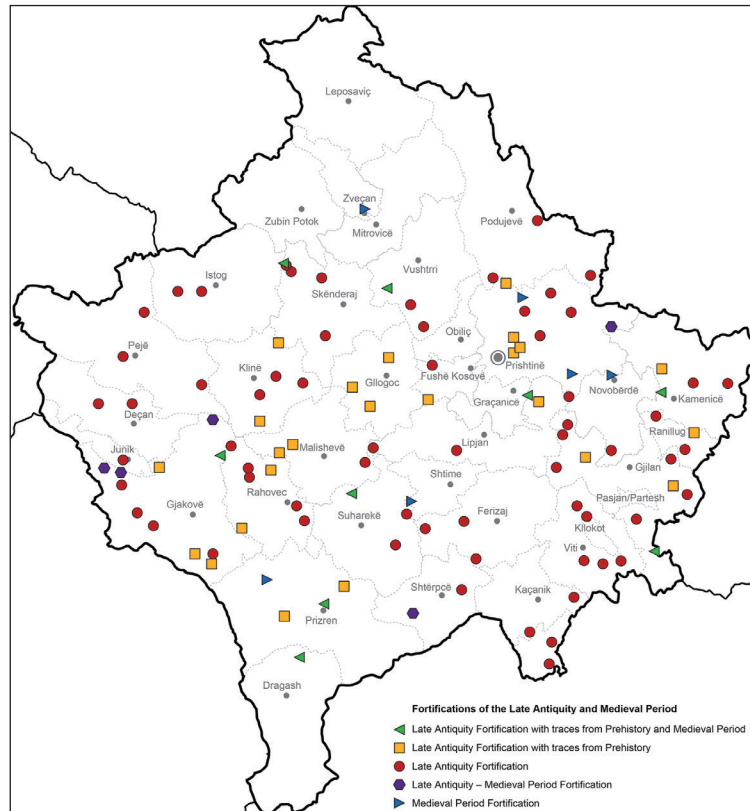


FIGURE 8 Map of fortifications from Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (made by: Z. Rama and M. Godanca, 2020)

SLIKA 8. Karta kasnoantičkih i srednjovjekovnih utvrda (izradili: Z. Rama i M. Godanca, 2020)

slojevima (Sl. 8). U narodu su ovakvi lokaliteti poznati pod nazivima *gijtet*, *gradinë*, *gradishte*, *kalaja e Lekës*, *kala* itd.<sup>40</sup>

Osobito je važno rekognosciranje koje su poduzeli arheolozi Muzeja Kosova u suradnji s Arheološkim institutom Albanije od 2000. do 2005. radi prepoznavanja arheoloških nalazišta u jugozapadnom dijelu teritorija Kosova.<sup>41</sup> Naglasak je bio na prepoznavanju i dokumentiranju kasnoantičkih utvrda koje su podijeljene u tri kategorije:

1. utvrde 3. i 4. stoljeća, *castra*, ovalne, trapezoidne ili kvadratne planimetrije s kulama koje mogu biti zaobljene, četvrtaste ili u obliku slova U. Primjer za ovaj tip su utvrde u Peçi i Geđe (Gegja). Veličine su približno 0,7 – 1,3 hektara;

<sup>43</sup> L. PËRZHITA, 2008, 286.

<sup>44</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 197-198.

<sup>40</sup> L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2003, 67.

<sup>41</sup> L. PËRZHITA et al., 2006.

ma.<sup>45</sup>

These construction works were conducted after a powerful earthquake that hit the region in 518 and destroyed twenty-four fortifications in Dardania alone.<sup>46</sup> Based on the descriptions by the scholar Procopius of Caesarea, who provided the best information on the time in his *De Aedificiis* (On Buildings), Justinian the Great built eight fortifications and rebuilt sixty-one more.<sup>47</sup> One of these was the Municipium of Ulpiana, which after reconstruction was renamed Justiniana Secunda.<sup>48</sup> The fortress *Aria*, mentioned by Procopius, may be identified as the Hariliaq Fortress,<sup>49</sup> while Kekola may be identified as Keqekolla (Fig. 11).<sup>50</sup>

The fortress of Kekola (Fig. 10), located in the village Keqekolla, Prishtina Municipality, was built on the highest crest of a hill in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It has a surface area of 0.6 hectares. It is surrounded on four sides with 1.8-2 meter thick walls, built in the *opus incertum* technique.

In its southern section, the fortress has a rectangular tower, built in two phases. The first tower is connected to the surrounding wall, and in the second phase, for a better protection, it was reinforced from the inside with another stone layer in rectangular form and on the outside with two walls which are connected to the tower's front wall, creating a triangulated structure. Something like that had not been seen thus far in the fortresses of Dardania. Inside the walls, besides hous-

<sup>45</sup> L. PËRZHITA, 2014, 191.

<sup>46</sup> MARCELLINUS COMES, 1979, 451.

<sup>47</sup> PROCOPII CAESARIENSIS, 1979, 441.

<sup>48</sup> PROCOPII CAESARIENSIS, 1979, 438-439.

<sup>49</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 686.

<sup>50</sup> H. MEHMETAJ, 2020 at: <https://www.botasot.info/historia-lajme/1342458/keshtjella-e-antikitetit-kekola/>

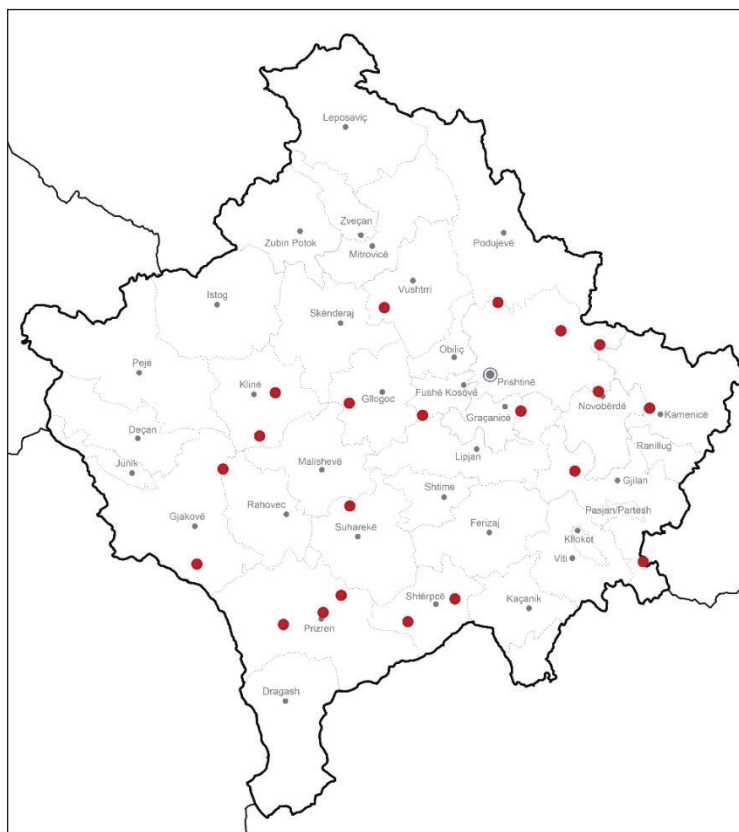


FIGURE 9 Map of archaeological excavations at fortifications from Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages in Kosovo (made by: Z. Rama and M. Godanca, 2020)

SLIKA 9. Karta arheoloških iskopavanja kasnoantičkih i srednjovjekovnih utvrda na Kosovu (izradili: Z. Rama i M. Godanca, 2020)

2. utvrde od 4. do 6. stoljeća, s karakteristikama gradića, zaštićene s dva ili više redova zidina, sa starokršćanskom crkvom u citadeli;
3. utvrde iz 6. stoljeća, planinskog tipa, koje su izgrađene brzo zbog obrane od neposredne opasnosti.<sup>42</sup>

Ovo je nešto uopćenija klasifikacija koja uključuje samo jedan dio države, pa se ne može govoriti o jasnoj tipologiji utvrda na cijelom Kosovu za što su potrebna daljnja istraživanja.

Dosadašnja istraživanja na području Dardanije potvrđuju da su utvrde imale ključnu ulogu u zaštiti stanovništva, kontroli teritorija, komunikaciji s različitim područjima i upozoravanju u slučaju nadolazećih opasnosti. Utvrde su podizane na strateškim položajima, uz važne ceste kao što je ona *Lissus – Naissus*, u

<sup>42</sup> L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2003, 122–123.



FIGURE 10 *Fortress of Kekola* (<https://www.facebook.com/haxhi.mehmetaj>, photo by: M. Godanca)

SLIKA 10. *Utvrda Kekola* (<https://www.facebook.com/haxhi.mehmetaj>, foto: M. Godanca)

es, a single-nave basilica was also discovered. The main entrance was found in the western section, consisting of one portal for carriages and one for pedestrians.<sup>51</sup>

The remains of the fortress of Marec stand on a hill 915 meters above the sea level, rather close to the fortress of Keqekolla, 45 km east of the capital city of Prishtina. It covers a surface of roughly 1 hectare, with natural protection on the three sides. It is built on top of the natural stone base, adhering to the terrain configuration by following the isohyet of the hill on four sides. The first archaeological excavations undertaken in 2017 brought to light a part of the remains of the surrounding wall. The walls have a maximum width of 1.8 meters, which based on the construction technique, was built in two phases. In the first phase, the wall was built using differently sized stones, combined with lime mortar, whereas in the second phase, there was no use of mortar; the stones are

blizini važnih gradova i rudarskih područja, kao u slučaju izgradnje utvrda Veletin i Hari-laq kod Ulpijane.

U kasnoj antici na cesti *Lissus – Naissus* bilo je oko 36 utvrđenih centara, putnih stanica i kontrolnih točaka. Ove utvrde su građene na istim strateškim točkama kao i prapovijesne i antičke utvrde. Štoviše, njihov broj se povećao zbog izgradnje novih utvrda koje su uglavnom podizane u doba Konstantina Velikog, Valentinijana I. i Justinijana I.<sup>43</sup>

Sustav zaštite i promatranja podignut je i na sporednim cestama. Utvrde su bile na dominantnim položajima i imale su dobar sustav međusobne komunikacije. Što se tiče arhitekture, ove utvrde odlikovale su se skromnom veličinom i dosta jednostavnom strukturom, s jednostavnim fortifikacijskim zidom. Ovaj tip utvrda je potvrđen tijekom dokumentacije utvrda u području Bijelog Drima.<sup>44</sup>

Većina utvrda u Dardaniji je izgrađena za vrijeme vladavine bizantskog cara Justinijana

<sup>51</sup> H. MEHMETAJ, 2020 at: <https://www.botasot.info/historia-lajme/1342458/keshtjella-e-antikitetit-kekola/>

<sup>43</sup> L. PËRZHITA, 2008, 286.

<sup>44</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 197–198.



FIGURE 11 Map of fortifications in the eastern part of Kosovo (made by: Z. Rama, 2019)

SLIKA 11. Karta utvrda u istočnom dijelu Kosova (izradila: Z. Rama, 2019)

bound by soil. Nonetheless, archaeological excavations and analysis of the finds are still ongoing, but so far based on the wall structure, archaeological material, and a bronze coin of Justinian I (Fig. 12-17), we presume that the fortress was built during the 6<sup>th</sup> century, without excluding its use during the mediaeval period.<sup>52</sup>

The fortifications of the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, built mainly on the remains of earlier settlements, have the features of towns divided mainly into the upper and lower sections, with two or more perimeter walls. They are generally situated on the highest local points, with steep grades on three sides which provided natural protection and they were accessible only from one side. A type of citadel may be distinguished at the core of such fortifications. They were built close to rivers, arable land, and mines. The fortresses have no regular floor plan because construction of their walls followed the configuration of the terrain.

<sup>52</sup> Z. RAMA, 2018.

I. (527. – 565.), koji je prema Prokopiju porijeklom bio iz Dardanije. On njegovo rodno mjesto smješta blizu Justiniane Prime, grada kojega je podigao.<sup>45</sup>

Te su građevine podignute nakon jakog potresa koji je pogodio ovo područje 518. godine uništivši pritom 24 utvrde samo u Dardaniji.<sup>46</sup> Prema Prokopiju iz Cezareje, koji nam je ostavio najpouzdanije opise tog vremena u djelu *O građevinama*, car Justinijan I. izradio je osam utvrda i obnovio njih još 61,<sup>47</sup> od kojih je jedna bila Municipium Ulpiana koja je nakon rekonstrukcije nazvana Justiniana Secunda.<sup>48</sup> Utvrda *Aria* koju spominje Prokopije mogla bi biti utvrda Harilaq,<sup>49</sup> a utvrda *Kekola* je vjerojatno Keqekolla (Sl. 11).<sup>50</sup>

Utvrda Kekola (Sl. 10), smještena u selu Keqekolla, u općini Priština, izgrađena je u 6. stoljeću, na najvišem vrhu brda. Pruža se na

<sup>45</sup> L. PËRZHITA, 2014, 191.

<sup>46</sup> MARCELLINUS COMES, 1979, 451.

<sup>47</sup> PROCOPII CAESARIENSIS, 1979, 441.

<sup>48</sup> PROCOPII CAESARIENSIS, 1979, 438–439.

<sup>49</sup> A. HAJDARI, 2017, 686.

<sup>50</sup> H. MEHMETAJ, 2020, <https://www.botasot.info/historia-lajme/1342458/keshtjella-e-antikitetit-kekola/>

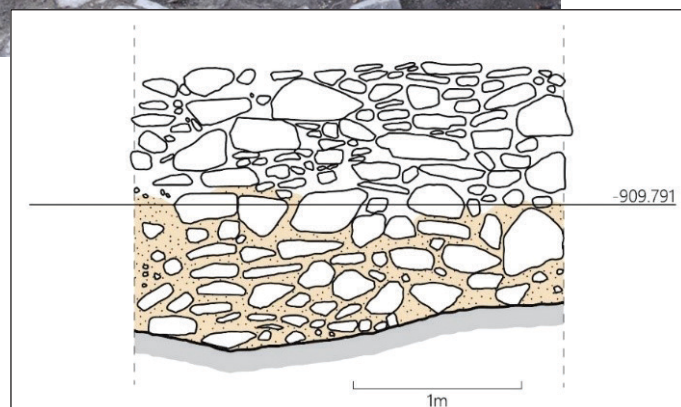


FIGURES 12 AND 13 Northern perimeter wall of the fortress of Marec (Z. RAMA, 2018)  
 SLIKE 12. I 13. Sjeverni zid utvrde Marec (Z. RAMA, 2018.)



**FIGURES 14, 15 AND 16** Trench 5. Perimeter wall on the south-eastern side of the fortress of Marec. Two construction phases (Z. RAMA, 2018; drawing by: L. Rexhepi)

**SLIKE 14., 15. I 16.** Sonda 5. Ogradni zid na jugoistočnoj strani utvrde Marec. Dvije faze gradnje (Z. RAMA, 2018; crtež: L. Rexhepi)



The fortress of Veletin is a typical example (Fig. 18-20). Built atop Veletin Hill, close to mining zones in use during Antiquity, its geostrategic location was outstanding, as it commanded a wide view of the Kosovo Plain, with Municipium Ulpiana to the west and mining zone to the east, facilitating control of the surrounding territory and important roads. During the archaeological excavations carried out in the 1980s,

it was concluded that the settlement was inhabited in the Eneolithic period and remain so into the Iron Age, when more dynamic growth occurred. This growth peaked during Late Antiquity when the fortress was built. It was made using stones combined with mortar (*opus incertum*), which was the primary technique used to construct fortifications in Late Antiquity. The settlement was divided into three terraces, fortified with outer walls. An external semi-circular tower was also discovered at the northern part of the third wall. Besides perimeter walls, architectural material was found, and a structure was discovered in a flat section, where there may have also been a fourth perimeter wall. Based on the archaeological finds, the settlement was also used during the medieval period.<sup>53</sup>

The presence of Early Christian churches was typical for that time, reflecting for the first time the organization of a type of proto-Byzantine town in this territory.<sup>54</sup> This is the case of the fortress of Kastërc, where, besides a residential structure, a sacral building, apparently a triconch basilica, was discovered inside the fortified walls.<sup>55</sup> Another example is the fortress of Korisha, where an Early Christian church as well as the remains of a house, were similarly discovered inside the castle's defensive walls<sup>56</sup> (Fig. 21-23).

The third type of fortification that has



FIGURE 17 Justinian I, AE Follis, 527-565 (Z. RAMA, 2018)

SLIKA 17. Justinijan I., AE Follis, 527. – 565. (Z. RAMA, 2018)

površini od 0,6 hektara. S četiri strane je okružena zidinama širine od 1,80 do 2 metra, u tehnicu *opus incertum*.

S južne strane utvrda ima pravokutnu kulu izgrađenu u dvije faze. Prvotna kula povezana je sa zidom utvrde, a u drugoj fazi, zbog bolje zaštite, ojačana je s unutarnje strane još jednim slojem kamenja pravokutne forme, a s vanjske strane s dva zida koja su povezana s frontalnim zidom kule pomoću trokutaste konstrukcije. Ništa slično nije pronađeno u ostalim utvrđama u Dardaniji. Unutar bedema, osim kuća otkrivena je i jednobrodna bazilika. U zapadnom dijelu otkriven je glavni ulaz koji se sastojao od dva zasebna prolaza: za kola i za pješake.<sup>51</sup>

Ostaci utvrde Marec nalaze se u neposrednoj blizini glavnog grada Kosova Prištine, na brdu nadmorske visine 915 metara. Pruža se na površini od otprilike jednog hektara, prirodno zaštićena s tri strane. Izgrađena je na kamenu, prateći konfiguraciju terena i izohipse brda na četiri strane. Prva arheološka iskopavanja poduzeta 2017. otkrila su ostatke ogradnog zida čija je maksimalna širina 1,80 m, a prema tehnicu gradnje, izgrađen je u dvije faze. U prvoj fazi koristilo se kamenje nejednake veličine u kombinaciji s vapnenom žbukom, dok u drugoj fazi nema žbuke, već se kamenje povezuje zemljom. Arheološka iskopavanja i analiza nalaza još traju, ali na osnovi strukture zidova, arheološkog materijala, i brončanog novčića Justinijana I. (Sl. 12-17), može se pretpostaviti

<sup>53</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 1990, 104-106.

<sup>54</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 197.

<sup>55</sup> F. PEJA, A. HAJDARI, 2014, 343.

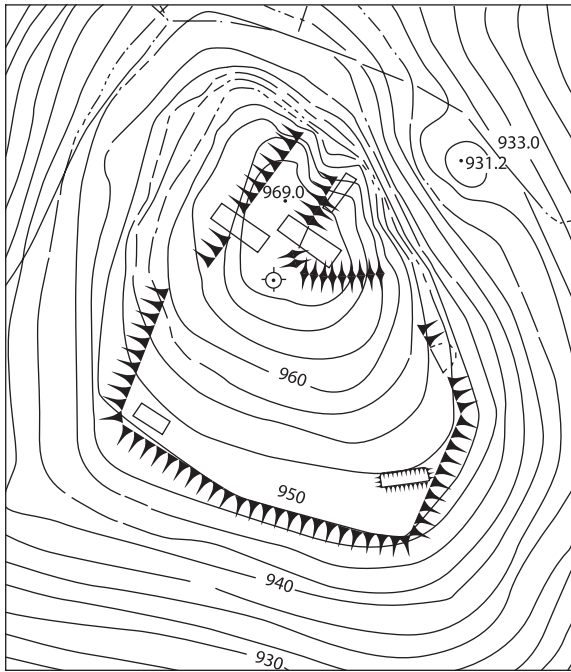
<sup>56</sup> L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2006, 233.

<sup>51</sup> H. MEHMETAJ, 2020, <https://www.botasot.info/historialajme/1342458/keshtjella-e-antikitetit-kekola/>



FIGURES 18 AND 19 *The fortress of Veletin* (MCYS/Database of Cultural Heritage of Kosovo, at: [https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti\\_en.aspx?id=8786](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti_en.aspx?id=8786))

SLIKE 18. I 19. *Utvrdra Veletin* (MCYS/ Database of Cultural Heritage of Kosovo: [https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti\\_en.aspx?id=8786](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti_en.aspx?id=8786))



**FIGURE 20** Foundations of the fortress of Veletin (E. SHUKRIU, 1988; V. JOVANOVIĆ, 2003-2004, 150)  
**SLIKA 20.** Temelji utvrde Veletin (E. SHUKRIU, 1988; V. JOVANOVIĆ, 2003-2004, 150)

been identified during the survey in western Dardania consists of late 6<sup>th</sup>-century fortifications which are mainly found on mountains, built rapidly for the protection of the population in cases of danger due to unexpected attacks.<sup>57</sup> Construction and reconstruction at strategic points not exceeding 0.6 hectares were typical of this period. Based on an analysis at the western part of Dardania, some fortresses have the same floor plan, such as Ujemiri, Jabllanica, Pogradja (Fig. 24 and 25), etc. This phenomenon is known from the Danube Limes, which indicates that the construction of the fortresses was based on the Empire-oriented program.<sup>58</sup> In some particular areas, administrative-economic and religious units were formed in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, which belonged to the new administrative organization between these territories and the provincial capitals.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 198.

<sup>58</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 200.

<sup>59</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 200.

da je utvrda izgrađena u 6. stoljeću, a moguće da je korištena i u srednjem vijeku.<sup>52</sup>

Utvrdne od 4. do 6. stoljeća, građene uglavnom na ostacima ranijih naselja, imaju karakteristike gradova, podijeljene obično na gornji i donji dio, s dva ili više ogradnih zidova, smještene na najvišim vrhovima, strminama s tri strane koje su osiguravale prirodnu zaštitu, pristupačne samo s jedne strane, a u središtu utvrde se izdvaja jedna vrsta citadele. Građe se blizu rijeka, obradivih zemljišta i ruda. Tlocrti gradina nisu pravilni jer konstrukcija zidova prati konfiguraciju terena.

Utvrda Veletin je tipičan primjer (Sl. 18-20). Izgrađena na vrhu brda Veletin, blizu antičkih rudarskih područja, na iznimnom geostrateškom položaju koji osigurava nesmetan pogled na Kosovsko polje te na zapad, iznad municipija Ulpiane, kontrolira teritorij i važne ceste, a prema istoku ima pogled ka rudarskim područjima. Tijekom arheoloških iskopavanja provedenih osamdesetih godina prošlog stoljeća, zaključeno je da je lokalitet najranije naseljen u eneolitiku, s kontinuitetom u željezno doba, kada je razvoj bio nešto dinamičniji. Vrhunac razvoja dosegnut je u kasnoj antici kada je podignuta i utvrda. Izgrađena je od kamena u kombinaciji sa žbukom (*opus incertum*) što je glavna tehnika primjenjivana u gradnji fortifikacija u kasnoj antici. Naselje je bilo podijeljeno u tri terase, utvrđeno zidinama. Sa sjeverne strane trećeg zida nalazi se vanjska polukružna kula. Osim ogradnih zidova, nađeni su i ostaci arhitekture, kao i objekt u ravnom dijelu gdje je mogao biti i četvrti ogradni zid. Arheološki nalazi ukazuju da je naselje korišteno i u srednjovjekovnom razdoblju.<sup>53</sup>

Pojava starokršćanskih crkava karakteristična je za to vrijeme, što po prvi put ukazuje na organizaciju grada protobizantskog tipa na ovom području.<sup>54</sup> Primjer za to je utvrda Kastërc, gdje su unutar zidina, osim ostataka stambenih objekata, otkriveni ostatci sakralne građevine, vjero-

<sup>52</sup> Z. RAMA, 2018.

<sup>53</sup> E. SHUKRIU, 1990, 104-106.

<sup>54</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 197.



**FIGURES 21 AND 22** *The fortress of Korisha and the Early Christian basilica* (MCYS/Database of Cultural Heritage of Kosovo, at: [https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti\\_en.aspx?id=8802](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti_en.aspx?id=8802))

**SLIKE 21. I 22.** *Utvrdra Korisha i starokršćanska bazilika* (MCYS/ Database of Cultural Heritage of Kosovo, at: [https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti\\_en.aspx?id=8802](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti_en.aspx?id=8802))

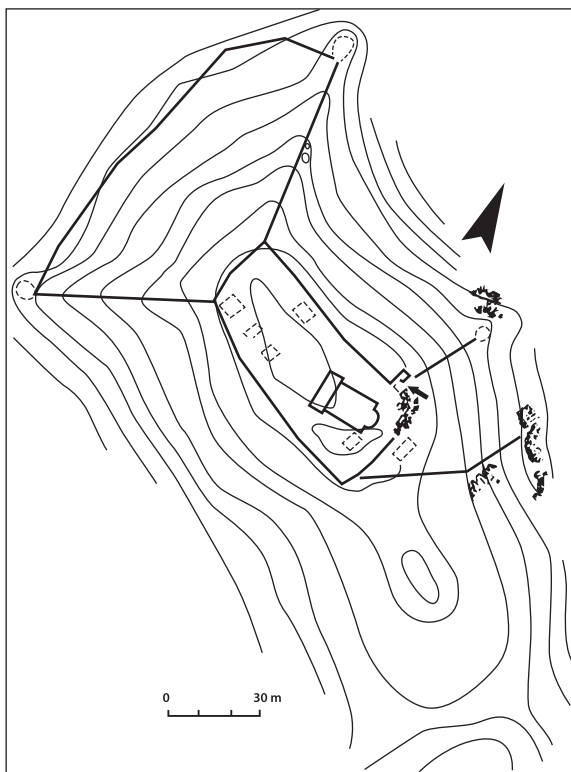


FIGURE 23 Ground plan of the fortress of Korisha (L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2006, 233)

SLIKA 23. Tlocrt utvrde Korisha, (L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2006, 233)

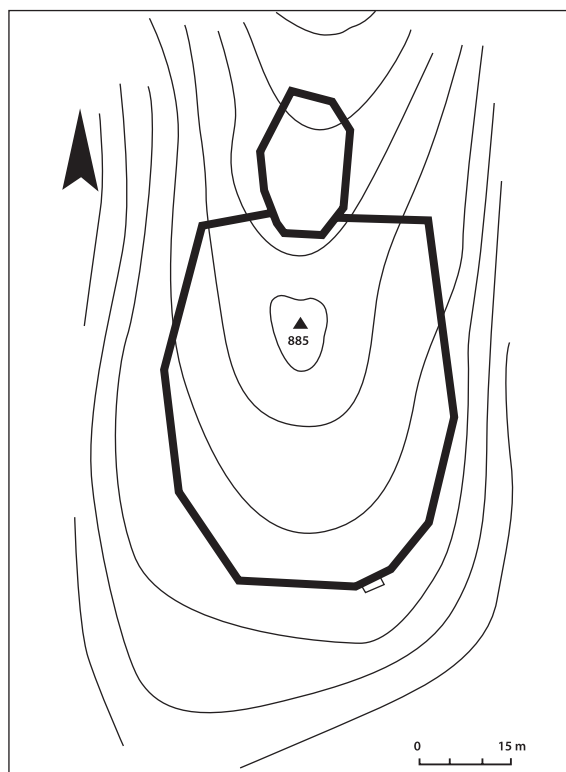


FIGURE 24 Sketch of the foundations of the Jabllanica Fortress (L. PËRZHITA et al., 2006, 241)

SLIKA 24. Crtež temelja utvrde Jabllanica (L. PËRZHITA et al., 2006, 241)

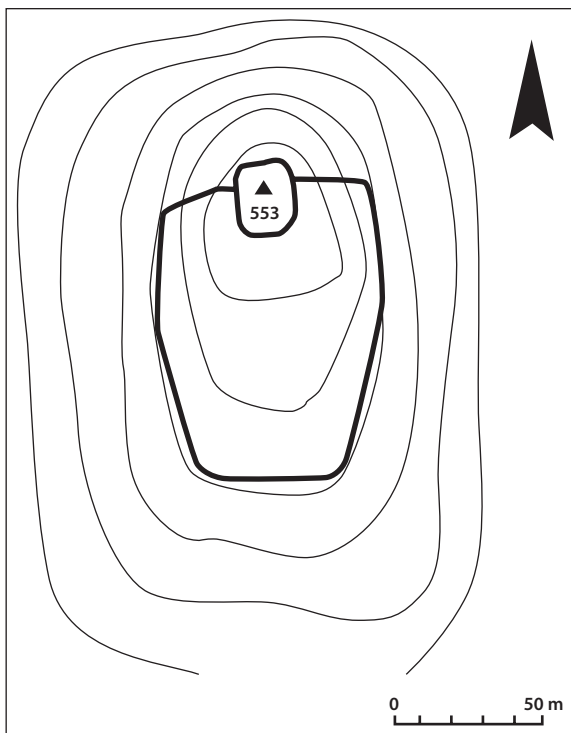


FIGURE 25 Sketch of the foundation of Pogragje Fortress (PËRZHITA, L. et al., 2006, 242)

SLIKA 25. Crtež temelja utvrde Pogragje (PËRZHITA, L. et al., 2006, 242)

jatno trikonhalne bazilike.<sup>55</sup> Utvrda Korisha još je jedan primjer gdje je uz ostatke kuća nađena i starokršćanska crkva unutar obrambenih zidina utvrde<sup>56</sup> (Sl. 21-23).

Treći tip utvrda koji je prepoznat u terenskom pregledu zapadnog dijela Dardanije odnosi se na utvrde s kraja 6. stoljeća koje se uglavnom nalaze u planinama, izgrađene žurno za zaštitu stanovništva u slučaju neočekivanih napada.<sup>57</sup> Za ovo je razdoblje karakteristična gradnja i rekonstrukcija na strateškim položajima koji površinom ne prelaze 0,6 hektara. Na osnovi analize zapadnog dijela Dardanije, neke utvrde imaju isti tlocrt, kao Ujemiri, Jabllanica, Pogragja (Sl. 24 i 25) i dr. Ovaj fenomen poznat je i na dunavskom limesu, što ukazuje da su se utvrde gradile prema planu koji se primjenjivao u cijelom Carstvu.<sup>58</sup> U određenim

<sup>55</sup> F. PEJA, A. HAJDARI, 2014, 343.

<sup>56</sup> L. PËRZHITA, G. HOXHA, 2006, 233.

<sup>57</sup> G. HOXHA 2006, 198.

<sup>58</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 200.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted thus far in Kosovo shows that Late Antiquity may be identified by two primary characteristics: the spread of Christianity and Christian architecture in the province of Dardania, and the return of the population from lowland settlements to hilly settlements, which came as a result of the various barbarian invasions that occurred during this period. The fortresses of the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries had the features of towns, mainly built on the remains of prehistoric settlements from the Bronze and Iron Ages, while some of them were *ex novo*. Situated atop hills, they provided better geostrategic and dominant positions, natural protection, control of territory and better communication with the other fortresses.

The reign of Justinian I alone saw the reconstruction of 61 and construction of 8 fortifications. These fortifications have been consistently linked to a system aimed at safeguarding settlements and the adjacent roads. The fortification network was intended to protect the primary and secondary roads that linked it.<sup>60</sup> The Justinian restoration was aimed more at achieving military sustainability rather than securing renewed economic prosperity. Construction and reconstruction works in the province were a component Justinian's revitalization program for the Byzantine Empire's fortifications.<sup>61</sup> Archaeological and architectural analyses conducted thus far have proven that the fortifications and other centres of the 6<sup>th</sup> century in the province of Dardania reflected a unified culture. The administrative centres and the fortifications that reached deep into rural areas were also an indicator of the Byzantine Empire's penetration and presence in this region.<sup>62</sup>

*Proof-reading: Mark Davies  
(for Etnotrend. d. o. o.)*

<sup>60</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 197.

<sup>61</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 198.

<sup>62</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 200.

područjima, u 6. stoljeću nastaju administrativno-ekonomske i religijske cjeline koje su pripadale novoj administrativnoj organizaciji ovih teritorija i glavnih gradova provincija.<sup>59</sup>

## ZAKLJUČAK

Dosadašnja istraživanja na Kosovu pokazuju da kasnu antiku obilježavaju dvije osnovne značajke: širenje kršćanstva i kršćanske arhitekture u provinciji Dardaniji, te vraćanje stanovništva iz nizinskih naselja u naselja u brdovitim krajevima zbog upada raznih plemena u ovom periodu. Utvrde koje datiraju od 4. do 6. stoljeća imaju obilježja grada, a uglavnom su izgrađene na prapovijesnim osnovama iz brončanog i željeznog doba, a neke i sasvim iznova. Građene na vrhovima brda, osiguravale se dominantni, bolji geostrateški položaj, prirodnu zaštitu, kontrolu teritorija i bolju komunikaciju s drugim utverdama.

Samo u razdoblju Justinijana I. gradi se osam utvrda i obnavlja 61 postojeća. Ove utvrde su bile dosljedno povezivane u sustav koji je štitio naselja i ceste u tom području. Mreža utvrda je štitila glavne i sporedne ceste koje su se na njih spajale.<sup>60</sup> Justinijanova rekonkvista težila je održivijoj vojnoj situaciji više nego vraćanju ekonomskog prosperiteta. Gradnje i obnove u provinciji bile su dio bizantskog programa gradnje Justinijana I.<sup>61</sup> Na osnovi dosadašnje arheološke i arhitektonske analize, dokazano je da usprkos činjenici što se utvrde i drugi centri 6. stoljeća nalaze u provinciji Dardaniji, oni odražavaju jedinstvenu kulturu. Administrativni centri i utvrde nalaze se i u zabačenim ruralnim područjima kao pokazatelj prodiranja i prisutnosti Bizantskog Carstva na ovom području.<sup>62</sup>

*Prijevod: Marija Kostić*

<sup>59</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 200.

<sup>60</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 197.

<sup>61</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 198.

<sup>62</sup> G. HOXHA, 2006, 200.

## REFERENCES / LITERATURA

- BERISHA, M., 2012. – Milot Berisha, *Archeological Guide of Kosovo*, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport – Archaeological Institute of Kosovo, Prishtina.
- BERISHA, M., 2015. – Milot Berisha, *Nje vështrim historik i Dardanisë gjatë antikitetit të vonë (An historical overview of Dardania during the Late Antiquity)*, Kosova Archaeologica II, Prishtinë, 67–98.
- CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY 13, 2008. – *Cambridge Ancient History 13: The Late Empire 337-425* (ur./eds.: A. Cameron, P. Garnsey), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- CEKA, N., 2014. – Neritan Ceka, *Ilirët deri te Shqiptarët*, Migjeni, Tiranë.
- ČERŠKOV, E., 1969. – Emil Čerškov, *Rimljani na Kosovu i Metohiji*, Arheološko društvo Jugoslavije, Beograd.
- EUSEBIUS HIERONYMUS, 1979. – Eusebius Hieronymus, *Epistolae*, Iliret dhe Iliria tek Autoret Antikë, Prishtinë, 354–355.
- EVENS, J. A., 2005. – James Allen Evens, *The Emperor Justinian and the Byzantine Empire*, Greenwood, London.
- FERRI, N., 2001. – Naser Ferri, *Monumentet ushtarake të perudhës romake në Mezi të Epërme, Dukagjini*, Pejë.
- GJINI, G., 1986. – Gasper Gjini, *Ipeshkvia Shkup-Prizren nëpër Shekuj*, Drita, Prizren.
- HAJDARI, A., 2017. – Arben Hajdari, The Fortified Religious Compound in Harilaq during the period between the late antiquity and early middle ages, *New Archaeological discoveries in the Albanian Regions*, vol. I, Academy for Albanian Studies, Institute of Archaeology, Tirana, 685–693.
- HOXHA, G., 2006. – Gëzim Hoxha, Vështrim mbi fortifikimet e shek. IV-VI në territorin e Dardanisë Perëndimore / Overview of IV-VI century fortifications in the territory of Western Dardania, *Harta Arkeologjike e Kosovës I / The Archaeological Map of Kosova I* (ur./ed.: H. Islami), Muzeu i Kosovës – Instituti i Arkeologjisë, Prishtinë – Tiranë, 195–206.
- HOXHA, G., 2014. – Gëzim Hoxha, Të dhëna të reja arkeologjike nga Kalaja e Prizrenit / New Archaeological Data from the Castle of Prizren, *Gërmime dhe studime arkeologjike në Kosovë: 2000-2012* (ur./ed.: M. Krasniqi), Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, Prishtinë, 207–244.
- HOXHAI, E., 2006. – Enver Hoxhaj, Qyteti Dardan i krishterimit të hershëm dhe marrëdhënjet me Romën, *Kosova Archaeologica*, 1, Prishtinë, 101–116.
- JOVANOVIĆ, V., 2003-2004. – Vojislav Jovanović, Utvrđeno naselje Veletin, *Starinar*, n. s., LIII-LIV, Beograd, 139–162.
- KRASNIQI, M., 1963. – Mark Krasniqi, *Savremeno društveno geografske promene na Kosovu i Metohiji*, Muzej Kosova i Metohije, Priština.
- MARCELLINUS COMES, 1979. – Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, Iliret dhe Iliria tek Autoret Antikë, Prishtinë, 450–452.
- MARTYROLOGIUM ROMANUM, 1940. – Martyrologium Romanum, ad formam editionis typicae, scholiis historicis instructum, *Propylaeum ad Acta Aanctorum Decembris*, Bruxelles.
- MEKSI, A., 1989. – Aleksandër Meksi, Të dhëna për historinë e herëshme mesjetare të Shqipërisë (fundi I shek. VI– fillimi I shek. XI), *Iliria*, 19, Tiranë, 109–136.
- MIJOVIĆ, P. 1964. – Pavle Mijović, Flor i Lavr, neimari i kamenoresci iz Ulpijane, *Glasnik Muzeja Kosova i Metohije*, VII–VIII, Priština, 339–353.

- MIRDITA, Z., 1987. – Zef Mirdita, *Neke specifičnosti onomastike Dardanije u rimsko doba*, Beograd.
- PEJA, F. et al., 2012. – Fatmir Peja, Bedia Rraci, Arben Hajdari, *The Castle of Harilaq*, Museum of Kosova – Municipality of Fushë Kosova, Prishtinë.
- PEJA, F., HAJDARI, A., 2014. – Fatmir Peja, Arben Hajdari, Kalaja e Kastërcit - Rezultatet e gërmimeve arkeologjike (2010-2012), *Gërmime dhe studime arkeologjike në Kosovë: 2000-2012* (ur./ed.: M. Krasniqi), Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, Prishtinë, 329–352.
- PËRZHITA, L., 2009. – Luan Përzhita, Fortifikime të shek. IV-VI në luginën e Drinit (via Lissus-Naissus), *Iliria*, 33, Tiranë, 285–305.
- PËRZHITA, L., 2014. – Luan Përzhita, Vlerat kronologjike e të dhënave të Prokopit mbi ndërtimet e Justinianit në Provincën e Dardanisë / Archaeological value of Procopius's data on Justinian Constructions in the Province of Dardania, *Gërmime dhe studime arkeologjike në Kosovë: 2000-2012* (ur./ed.: M. Krasniqi), Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, Prishtinë, 189–206.
- PËRZHITA, L., HOXHA, G., 2003 – Luan Përzhita, Gëzim Hoxha, *Fortifike të shekujve IV-VI në Dardanië Perëndimore / Late Antiquity Castles in Western Dardania*, Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Tiranë.
- PËRZHITA, L., HOXHA, G., 2006. – Luan Përzhita, Gëzim Hoxha, Fortifikime të periudhës së vonë antike dhe mesjetare/Late Antique and Medieval period fortifications, *Harta Arkeologjike e Kosovës I / The Archaeological Map of Kosova I* (ur./ed.: H. Islami), Muzeu i Kosovës – Instituti i Arkeologjisë, Prishtinë – Tiranë, 207–260.
- PËRZHITA, L. et al., 2006. – Luan Përzhita, Kemajl Luci, Gëzim Hoxha, Adem Bunguri, Fatmir Peja, Tomor Kastrati, *Harta Arkeologjike e Kosovës I / The Archaeological Map of Kosova I*, Muzeu i Kosovës – Instituti i Arkeologjisë, Prishtinë – Tiranë.
- PETROVIĆ, P., 1975. – Petar Petrović, *Paleografija rimskih natpisa u Gornjoj Meziji*, Arheološki institut, Beograd.
- PROCOPII CAESARIENSIS, 1979. – Procopi Caesariensis, *De Aedificiis, IV*, Ilirët dhe Iliria tek autorët antikë, Prishtinë, 437–445.
- RAMA, Z., 2018. – Zana Rama, *Preliminary report of the archaeological excavations at the Fortress of Marec*, Archaeological Institute of Kosovo, Prishtinë.
- SHUKRIU, E., 1990. – Edi Shukriu, Veletin vendbanim shumështrësorë – multistrata, *Arheološki pregled*, 29 (1988), Ljubljana, 104–106.
- SHUKRIU, E., 2008. – Edi Shukriu, Parahistoria dhe historia antike e Kosovës, *Thesis Kosova*, 1, Universitati AAB, Prishtina, 5–28.
- SHUKRIU, E., 2018. – Edi Shukriu, *Kosova antike*, Muzeu i Kosovës – Instituti Arkeologjik i Kosovës, Prishtinë.
- SHUKRIU, E., 2014. – Edi Shukriu, Fazat zhvillimore të arkeologjisë dhe gërmimet e pas luftës në Kosovë / The Developmental phases of archaeology and postwar excavations in Kosova, *Gërmime dhe studime arkeologjike në Kosovë: 2000-2012* (ur./ed.: M. Krasniqi), Akademia e Shkencave dhe e Arteve e Kosovës, Prishtinë, 17–33.
- STRABONIS, 1979. – Strobonis, *Libri VII, Geographica*, Ilirët dhe Iliria tek Autorët Antikë, Prishtinë, 150–164.

**INTERNET SOURCES / INTERNETSKI IZVORI**

[https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti\\_en.aspx?id=8786](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti_en.aspx?id=8786)

[https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti\\_en.aspx?id=8802](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti_en.aspx?id=8802)

<https://mapchart.net>

<https://www.botasot.info/historia-lajme/1342458/keshtjella-e-antikitetit-kekola/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Justinianasecunda7/>

<https://www.facebook.com/haxhi.mehmetaj>

<https://www.kosovo-mining.org/kosova/gjeografia/>

