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LATE ROMAN FORTIFICATIONS IN THE LESKOVAC BASIN IN RELATION TO URBAN CENTRES

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Abstract. – Due to a general insecurity and the need to protect the population and communications, towards the end of the 4th century a large number of Late Roman fortifications were built in the region of the Leskovac basin, mainly towards the edges. Their distribution was determined by the level of the region's population density, its resources and by the need to control the roads. These were predominantly smaller fortifications whose primary role was the protection of the local population, who lived off the land and bred cattle. However, the largest number of these is in the western part of the basin, in the mountainous regions of Goljak, Majdan, Radan and Pasjača, whilst the highest density of fortifications is in the Banjska Reka valley, around the village of Sijarina. The whole region was known for its mining activity in previous centuries. A particular group comprises the fortifications around Caričin Grad – Justiniana Prima, whose main role was the defence of the access to the city.

Key words. – Leskovac basin, Late Antiquity, fortifications, economy, Caričin Grad, Justiniana Prima.

The central part of the Leskovac basin comprises the South Morava river valley and the valleys of its tributaries, the Pusta Reka, Jablanica, Veternica and the Vlasina, and is bordered by mountains which surround the entire area from the western, southern, eastern and, to a degree, the northern side. The mountain ranges of Radan and Pasjača stretch to the west, Goljak and Kukavica to the south, Bukovik, Kruševica, Babička Gora and Seličevica to the east and Dobrič to the north, the peaks of which do not exceed a height of 1,500 m. The basin covers an area of 2,250 km².

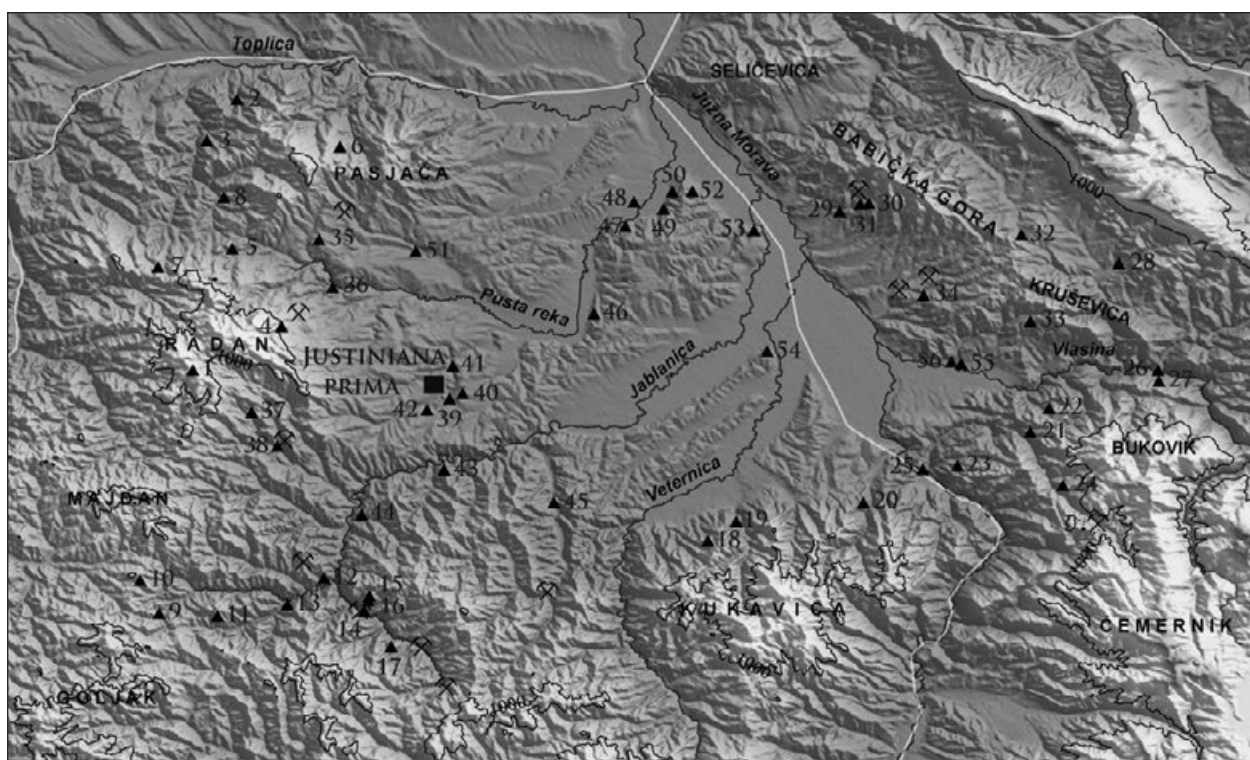
The region of the Leskovac basin was only Romanised in the 1st century AD. Its settlement followed two basic routes – the occupation of the river terraces in the valleys of the South Morava, Veternica, Jablanica and

the Pusta Reka and the settlement of the mountainous regions surrounding the mining areas. The contact zones between these regions were less densely populated, judging by the distribution of the sites in the area of the basin. The highest intensity of settlement was noted around the river valleys, with the highest concentration around the South Morava.¹ In this area, at the entrance to the Grdelička Klisura (Grdelica Gorge) in Mala Kopašnica, was the largest Roman settlement in this area, covering approximately 20 ha. The only *vicus* with an unknown name was noted on a votive relief dedicated to Liber from the village of Pusto Šilovo.²

¹ Stamenković 2013, 36.

² Stamenković 2013, 54–55, sl. 40.

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1. Gornji Gajtan, Sokolov Vis; 2. Miljkovica; 3. Pestiš–Bukoloram; 4. Mali Kamen; 5. Gornji Statovac, Mlinarov Krš; 6. Bućince; 7. Arbašaška; 8. Rgaje, Grad; 9. Velika Braina, Brainski vis; 10. Gubavce, Gradina; 11. Mrkonje, Mrkonjski Vis; 12. Mačedonce, Crkvište; 13. Vrapce, on the bank of the Tularska Reke; 14. Sijarinska Banja; 15. Sijarina, Gradina I; 16. Sijarina, Gradina II; 17. Svirce; 18. Zbežište, Kopriva; 19. Zbežište, Skobaljic Grad; 20. Padež; 21. Gradište, Gradac; 22. Samarnica, Visoki Morič; 23. Dedina Bara; 24. Novo Selo, Leskova Padina; 25. Grdelica, Kale; 26. Svode, confluence of the Lužnica and the Vlasina; 27. Zlatičevo, Prokop–Rimski Grad; 28. Gornji Prisjan; 29. Gornja Lokošnica, Gradište; 30. Golema Njiva, Gradište; 31. Golema Njiva, Lešje; 32. Stupnica, Čukar; 33. Crna Bara, Gradac or Rsa; 34. Gradašnica, Gradac or Gradište; 35. Bregovina, Kale; 36. Marino Kale; 37. Brajšorski Vis; 38. Lece, Kuline; 39. Štulac, St. Elias; 40. Prekopčelica, Jezero; 41. Sekicol, Gradište; 42. Svinjarica, Gornje Gradište; 43. Rujkovac, Kaljaja; 44. confluence of the Zabrđski Potok and the Lapaštica; 45. Popovac, Gradište; 46. Lapotince, south-east of the village; 47. Gornje Brijanje, Kale; 48. Međa, Gradište; 49. Međa, Kuliste; 50. Kutleš, Šiljegarnik; 51. Zlata, Kale; 52. Lipovica, Kuliste; 53. Priboj, Gradište; 54. Leskovac, Hisar; 55. Konopnica, Gradac; 56. Konopnica, Latinsko (Cigansko) Groblje or Ciganski Čukar.

Map 1. The Late Roman fortifications in the Leskovac basin

Карта 1. Касноантичка утврђења у Лесковачкој котлини

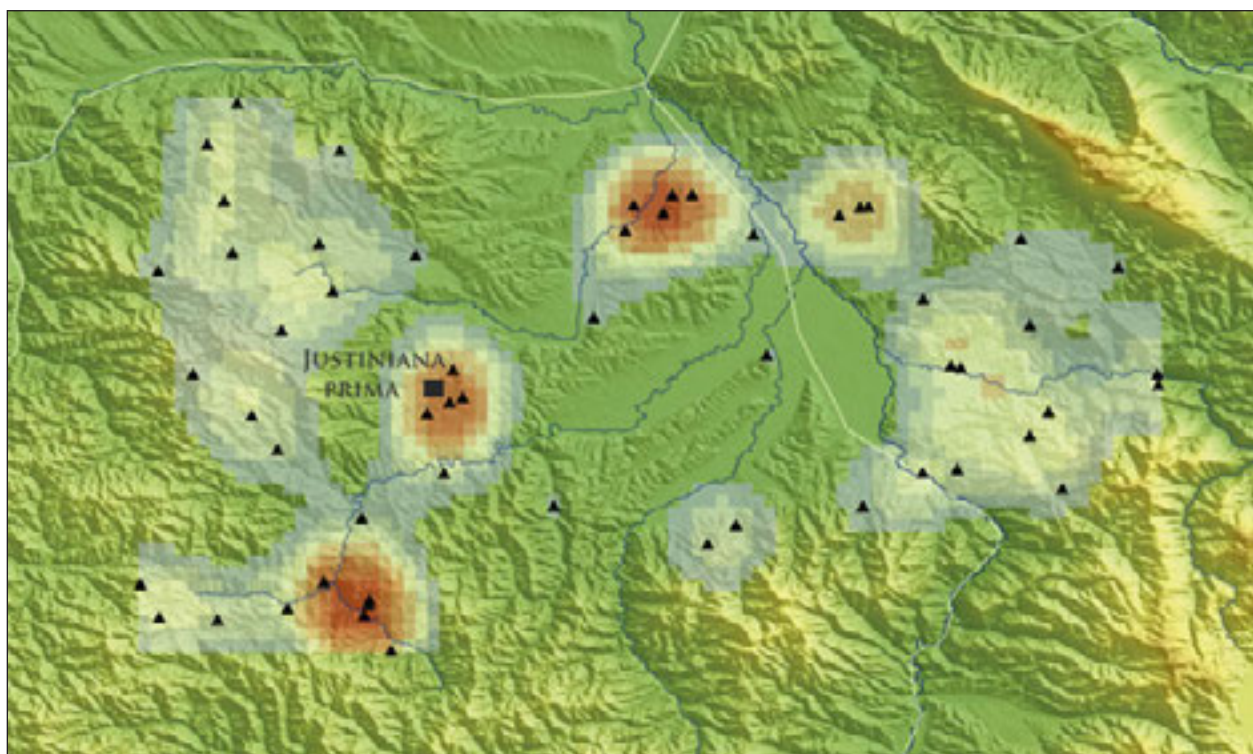
The whole area gravitated towards the distant Naissus, the closest key city, with most of this area officially belonging to the territory of Naissus.³

Towards the end of the 4th century, as a result of the barbarian invasions and their subsequent settling of the region of northern Illyricum, significant socio-economic turmoil started to occur, which was particularly reflected in the changing roles of the settlements. Roman lowland settlements gave way to new fortified settlements on the dominant and well-guarded higher grounds above the river valleys or in the mountainous regions.

Due to a general insecurity and the need to protect the population and communications in the area of the Leskovac basin, a large number of Late Roman fortifi-

cations were built, mainly on the edges of the basin. Fortifications were erected on Radan along the river basins of the Lepaštica, Lecka and Gazdarska Reka, on Goljak in the area around the rivers Tularska and Banjska Reka, around Caričin Grad, in the area around Rujkovac and Radinovac, and in the valleys of the Šumanska Reka, Pusta Reka, Jablanica and Veternica. The slopes of Kukavica, the South Morava river valley, the complex around the Kozaračka Reka, that is the Rupska Reka, the lower course of the Vlasina, the

³ Petrović 1976, 89.



Map 2. The analysis of the spatial distribution of the Late Roman fortifications in the Leskovac basin

Карта 2. Анализа просторног распореда касноантичких утврђења у Лесковачкој котлини

slopes of Babička Gora and Kruševica, and the confluence of the Lužnica and the Vlasina, were also fortified.⁴ Most of these fortifications were built on the higher grounds that dominate the wider surroundings (Map 1).

Chronological determination of the fortifications, based on the archaeological and numismatic material, was possible to a certain degree. Coins from the 4th century were discovered within a large number of fortifications such as those in Lece, Rujkovac, on Hisar in Leskovac, Stupnica, Grdelica and Skobaljić Grad near Vučje. The circulation of coins in the 5th century was testified to in Rujkovac, which represents important proof of its survival during these turbulent times.⁵ The dating of the fortifications into the 6th century is not only supported by the coin finds but also by other archaeological material, primarily ceramic vessels.⁶ Into this period were also classified most of the fortifications located in Sijarina, Mrkonje, on Mali Kamen, in Rujkovac, Gornje Brijanje, Gornja Lokošnica, Gradašnica, Konopnica, Gradište, on Hisar in Leskovac and Grdelica. In a small number of fortifications, mainly those where archaeological excavations have been carried out, such as in Lece, Sijarinska Banja, Rujkovac, on

Hisar in Leskovac, Konopnica and Grdelica, horizons from the 4th and 6th centuries have been confirmed.

The anthropogeographic features of the area, the economic resources in particular, played a significant role in the settlement of the Leskovac basin. Most of all, the river valleys stand out, the South Morava in particular, as well as the Veternica, Jablanica, Pusta Reka and Toplica, as being suitable for agricultural production and wheat cultivation. It is worth remembering that *annona* represented the foundation of the economy for urban and rural populations.⁷ On the other hand, the foot hills on the margins of the Leskovac basin were suited to cattle breeding. Viticulture was also present as one of the most important cultures of that time, judging by the finds of stone winepresses from Vrbovac,⁸ in the vicinity of Caričin Grad and grape seeds at Caričin

⁴ Stamenković 2013, 23, map 6.

⁵ Ivanišević, Stamenković 2010, 59–84.

⁶ Stamenković 2013, 119–122.

⁷ Morrisson, Sodini, 2002, 196.

⁸ Stamenković 2013, 58–59, sl. 42.

Grad. It is quite certain that in this area, as indicated by the numerous remains of different kinds of grain and fruit at Caričin Grad, other agricultural produce was also grown. In Roman times this territory was distinctive for its mining, the traces of which were confirmed in the western and north-western parts of the basin, on Goljak, Radan, Majdan, Pasjača, in the wider area of Lece, in the region around the Banjska Reka, in Ravna Banja and Marovac, as well as in the eastern and north-eastern parts of the basin, in the region of Ruplje and on the slopes of Babička Gora and Kruševica.⁹

As evidence of mining, mine shafts, smelting complexes and slag heaps are singled out. Roman mine shafts were recorded on Rasovača, which is well-known for deposits of gold, sulphides of lead, copper and silver, and semi-precious stones (amethyst, opal and agate).¹⁰ (Fig. 1) They are also testified to in Ravna Banja and Marovac, where remnants of a smelting complex and a slag heap have been confirmed. In Roman times, mines in the far east of the basin were also in use, in the area of Ruplje, where silver, lead and gold were mined, as well as in the region of Crna Trava, well known for iron ore. Not far from here, important material proof of ore processing was found,¹¹ in the form of an iron ingot from the Visoki Morič site in Samarnica.¹² In addition to the obvious traces of Roman mining, a significant contribution to the evidence of this activity are the epigraphic monuments found in the area of the Leskovac basin, given that the most frequently occurring deities on them are Hercules and Liber who have been attributed with, among other things, the role of protecting mines and mining activity.¹³

The distribution of the Late Roman fortifications, as is the case with the Roman settlements, was determined by the level of the region's population density, its resources and the need to control the roadways. Analysis of the position of the fortifications indicates a concentration of forts on the higher grounds which surround the river valleys of the South Morava and its tributaries. Their highest density is found on the slopes of Dobra Gora, situated between the valleys of the Pusta Reka, Jablanica and the South Morava. These are mainly smaller fortifications whose primary role was to protect the local population, which was most certainly engaged in agriculture. However, the largest number of these forts is located in the western part of the basin, in the mountainous regions of Goljak, Majdan, Radan and Pasjača. The highest density of the fortifications is in the valley of the Banjska Reka, around Sijarina.¹⁴ (Map 2)

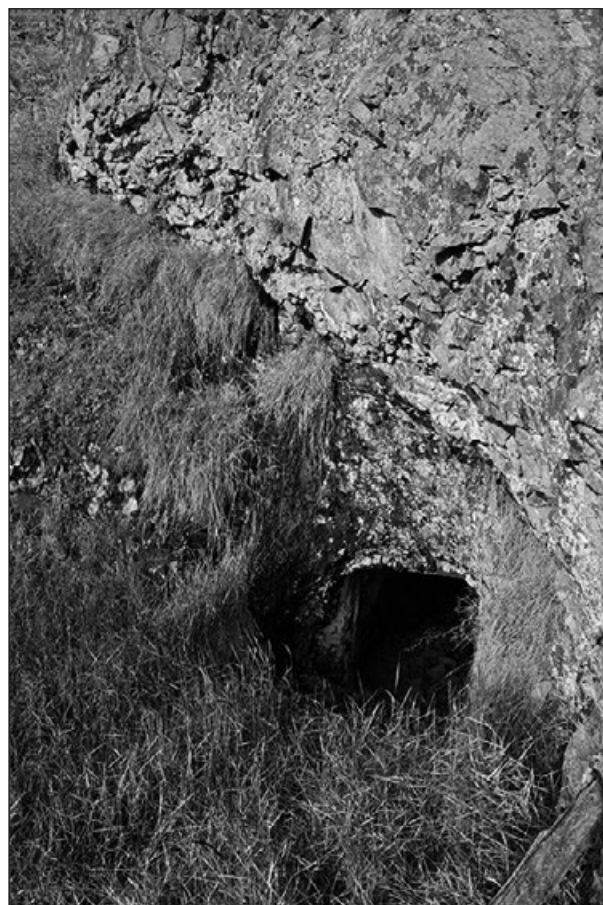


Fig. 1. Rasovača – Roman mine shaft

Сл. 1. Расовача – Римско окно

The entire area was well known for mining in previous centuries. The re-establishment of mining activity during the 6th century should not be excluded as a possibility. A separate group is comprised of a smaller cluster of fortifications located around Caričin Grad – Justiniana Prima, whose predominant role was to guard the access to the city.¹⁵

Justiniana Prima represents the only city – πόλις erected in around 535 in the centre of this region, as the seat of the archbishop (Ἰλλυριῶν ἀρχιερέυς) with

⁹ Stamenković 2013, 86–96.

¹⁰ Pešut 1976, 33.

¹¹ Stamenković 2013, 66–67, 86–89.

¹² Stamenković 2013, 88, sl. 75.

¹³ Dušanić 1999, 130–135; Stamenković 2013, 95–98.

¹⁴ Stamenković 2013, map 5.

¹⁵ Kondić, Popović 1977; Bavant, Ivanišević 2003.

jurisdiction over provinces of both the Dacias, Moesia I, Dardania, Praevalitana, Macedonia II and the region of Bassiana in Pannonia II. In addition, it was anticipated that the city was to become the seat of the Illyrian prefecture.¹⁶ This most likely did not happen since, in a later novella, only the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the diocese of Dacia was confirmed.¹⁷ Procopius of Caesarea, who gave us the most complete data about our region, also mentions Justiniana Prima as a city – πόλις.

The lower category of a settlement, according to this Byzantine chronicler, is πολίχνιον – town. Aquae – Ἀκυές πολίχνιον had this status. Next in rank is φρουρίον – castellum (fortress). Most of the fortifications in our region belong exactly to this category – a castellum guarded by ramparts and other defensive mechanisms. By this term Procopius implies two types of castella, those with a military garrison (στρατιωτῶν φρουράι), and those functioning as refugia – shelters for the population (ἐρύματα).¹⁸ In them, the bishop could have resided, as is the case with Meridio which had the status of phourion.¹⁹ At the bottom of the scale was χωρίον – village. In describing the construction of Justiniana Prima, Procopius gives an example of the transformation of the village of Taurisium, where Emperor Justinian was born, into a castellum: “Having hastily encircled this village with a wall of a quadrangular shape and placing a tower at each corner, he made a castellum with four towers (Τετραπυργίων), and thus he named it.”²⁰

The distinction between the meanings of these terms is important for understanding the relationship between a fortification and a city. Procopius, in *De aedificiis*, outlines the administrative and territorial organisation. This chronicler grouped most of the restored and newly built castella according to provinces. On the other hand, he grouped the castella of two Illyrian provinces, both Dacias, according to urban centres or regions. Novella XI, in which it is stated: *Aquensis autem episcopus habeat praefatam civitatem et omnia eius castella et territoria et ecclesias*,²¹ also indicates that the city is at the centre of the territorial organisation. Castella, village territories and churches, that is church estates, were governed by the city. This provision, according to Gilbert Dagron, portrays a society grounded in the military, peasantry and the church, with a city at its core.²²

The fortifications in the Leskovac basin belong to the category of castella – phouria, whose main role was to protect the local population.²³ The population in its most part consisted of peasants who, in the event

of enemy incursions, assumed the role of defenders – soldiers. From a previous soldier – peasant category, from the time of Constantine, a new peasant – soldier category appeared in the 6th century.²⁴ Procopius himself states that peasants from around the forts, at the first sign of approaching enemies, switched to their role of soldiers as required. Due to their inexperience, as Procopius says, they were easy prey for their enemies.²⁵

The economic activities of some castella were connected to agriculture, which particularly applies to those fortifications situated along the plains and valleys. This is indicated by the names of castella in some areas which, according to M. Mirković, bear the names of former landowners: Τιμίαννα – Timiana, Οὐρβρίαννα – Urbriana, Κάσσια – Cassia.²⁶ Likewise, the names of some fortifications from Procopius’ listing point to the places connected with mining activities and ore processing Ἐραρία – Eraria in the vicinity of Naissus, Φερραρία – Ferraria and Δάλματας – Dalmatae in the area of Remesiana, and Ἀργένταρες – Argentares in the area of Ad Aquas.²⁷

The castella certainly had a military character, particularly those situated on roadways, as in the fortification in Rujkovac. This fortification, built as far back as the 4th century BC, also had a significant role in Roman times judging by the numerous finds of Roman coins from the 2nd all the way to the 6th century. The fortification itself was occupied again in the 9th century, indicated by the find of a follis of Leo VI.²⁸

The second fortification at Zlata, based on its size and imposing dam, represented an important centre.²⁹ It is possible that it was a town – polihion. This fortification, like the one at Bregovina, could have been

¹⁶ Nov. 11 (14th April 535).

¹⁷ Nov. 131, 3 (545).

¹⁸ Proc. *De aedif.* IV, 1, 6; 1, 33; 2, 13–14; 2, 28.

¹⁹ Proc. *De aedif.* IV, 4.

²⁰ Proc. *De aedif.* IV, 1.17–27.

²¹ Nov. 11 (14th April 535).

²² Dagron 1984, 9–10; Ducellier 1985, 123–126.

²³ Decker 2006, 508.

²⁴ Mac Mullen 1963, 14–22.

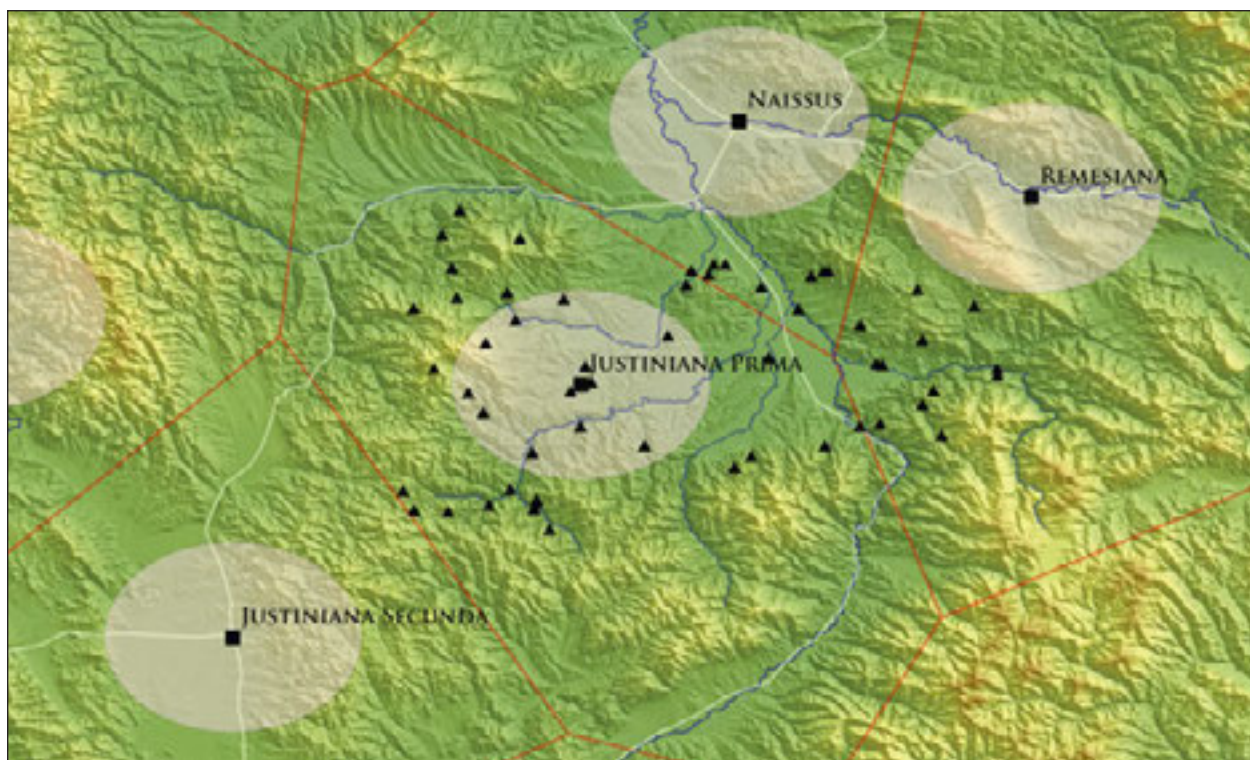
²⁵ Proc. *De aedif.* IV, 2.11–16.

²⁶ Mirković 1996, 63.

²⁷ Mirković 1996, 63, 68–71.

²⁸ Ivanišević, Stamenković 2010, 59–84; Stamenković 2013, 90–92, sl. 78.

²⁹ Evans 1883, 157–160; Kanic 1985, 327–330; Milinković 2007, 193–199.



Map 3. Late Roman towns: 1) Theoretical delineation according to Thiessen's polygons;
2) Relation to the Late Roman fortifications based on a 15 km radius of movement

Карта 3. Касноантички градови: 1) Теоретско разграничење према Тисеновом моделу;
2) Однос према касноантичким утврђењима на основу радијуса крепања од 15 km

linked to mining, since evidence of mining is located on the slopes of Rasovača. Large amounts of slag at Glasovik stand out in particular. The castellum at Bregovina stands out with its basilica with rich architectural plastic which, up until now, has not been seen in other fortifications.³⁰ (Fig. 2) Undoubtedly, it is the work of a wealthy benefactor, who could have acquired his wealth from ore extraction and processing. There are numerous examples of castella built by private individuals. Let us mention the case of the fortification at Androna in Syria, built between 558 and 559, under the patronage of Thomas, a rich individual of note.³¹

The aforementioned fortifications were situated along the local roads or in their vicinity. These together with the other forts, arranged along the river valleys cut deep into the wide mountain ranges, protected the main local communications. These valleys are those of the Jablanica and Tularska Reka, through which the road connecting the provinces of Inner Dacia and Dardania passed. The valley of the Pusta Reka represented an important communication link, not only connecting

Naissus and Justiniana Prima, but also the central part of the Leskovac basin with Hammeum, and further to the north. A section of the local network also passed through the valley of Vlasina further to the east, towards Remesiana. The main roadway passed through the South Morava river valley. (Map 1)

In the region of the Leskovac basin there were also villages in the river valleys, evident by the rare finds of Early Byzantine coins in Rečica, Turjane, Rafuna (Crkvena Livada site), Lipovica, Orašac (Padina site) and Rujkovac (Vaskina Porta). These are coin finds which can be dated to the period of the reigns of Justin I and Justinian I. What is particularly indicative are the finds of a solidus of Justin I in Rečica and a tremissis of Justinian I in Turjane.³² The cessation of coin circu-

³⁰ Jeremić, Milinković 1995, 209–225; Jeremić 2004, 111–137.

³¹ Decker 2006, 511.

³² Stamenković 2013, kat. br. 24, 29, 45, 107, 131, 207.

lation in the second half of the 6th century in lowland parts of the basin points to the fact that the population, by and large, abandoned the valleys and retreated to hilltop fortifications. This corresponds with the intensified building of structures within the empty areas of the city and porticos at Caričin Grad.

The incessant incursions of the Kutrigurs, Slavs and Avars most certainly contributed to the reduction of the population and degradation of the economy in the region of central Illyricum. Undoubtedly, along with the barbarian raids, some other factors influenced large changes in the Late Roman society, such as a large scale plague epidemic³³ and climate changes, prolonged spells of cold in particular.

Marcellinus Comes noted the plague epidemic in 543, which spread across Italy and Illyricum.³⁴ It was a large scale epidemic which originated in Egypt in 541 and spread throughout the Mediterranean until 544. Evidence of this epidemic was not only recorded by chroniclers, but also by numerous epigraphic monuments, especially in Rome.³⁵ The gravestone of Petrus, son of Thomas the vicar, buried in Naissus, provides direct testimony to the plague epidemic in the region of central Illyricum. In the epitaph it is stated that the sisters and two sons of Thomas the vicar died within a short time of each other – *in uno Mensa simul vita(m) finirunt*.³⁶ It is important to note that in this inscription, along with the Christian names of *Petrus* and *Thomas*, an Illyrian name of *Gentio* (variant of *Gentius*) is also mentioned.³⁷ The plague most definitely left its mark on the population of this region. Contributing factors to its cyclical occurrence in the second half of the century were the prolonged spells of cold weather and subsequent hunger, which additionally reduced the population.³⁸

The territory of Naissus, which Procopius singles out as a separate area – ὑπὸ πόλιν βῆ [Ναῖσῶ]³⁹ – undoubtedly included the northern parts of the Leskovac basin, and the possibility exists that the jurisdiction of this city also extended further to the south, especially along the South Morava valley and to the west, towards the mining areas. Likewise, the region of Remesiana – ἐν χώρῃ Ῥεμεσιανισίᾳ⁴⁰ – could have included the eastern parts of the Leskovac basin, particularly those linked to mining production. A more precise determination of the territory of the cities is not possible, since a large number of fortifications have not been identified. An idea of the theoretical delineation between cities is provided by the spatial analysis according to Thiessen's polygons. (Map 3.1)

Which parts of this region were under the jurisdiction of this newly founded metropolis of Justiniana Prima is not known. The city could have had an important administrative role judging by the large number of lead seals found in recent years. The new reorganisation was undoubtedly important for the functioning of the economy and, as will be seen later, could have been determined by the great distances between the castella and villages situated in the central part of the Leskovac basin, and the old urban centres. On the other hand, this new city, the endowment of the Emperor, required resources.

One of the significant elements of the economic life of an ancient society were market days/village fairs (*nundinae*), which had a significant role in supplying both the urban and rural population.⁴¹ In urban areas, periodical market days were held where the townspeople could buy produce. The residents of nearby villages sold their goods there and thus obtained much needed money for rent or taxes, as well as for buying required goods or services.⁴² The Theodosian Codex points to the importance of selling produce by stating that peasants were freed from paying lustral tax if they sold produce from their own farms.⁴³ Products bought for farming were exempt from the same taxes.⁴⁴ These regulations clearly demonstrate the importance of sustaining agricultural production on both, large and small estates. The decrees of Emperor Justinian I also stated this view. In Novella XXXII, addressed to *Dominicius*, the praetorian prefect of Illyricum, a series of decrees were passed to guard against the greed of creditors who took pawned land from peasants who were unable to repay, due to poor harvests, the loan of crop seeds.⁴⁵ In certain areas itinerant traders also had a significant role.⁴⁶

³³ Grmek 1998, 787–794.

³⁴ Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicle*, 107.

³⁵ Stathakopoulos 2006, 102.

³⁶ Vulić 1934, 47–48, br. 38; PLRE 3, 1320 – Thomas 22.

³⁷ IMS IV, 92, no. 51.

³⁸ Stathakopoulos 2006, 102–103.

³⁹ Proc. *De aedif.* IV.4.

⁴⁰ Proc. *De aedif.* IV.4.

⁴¹ Shaw 1981, 43.

⁴² Choi 2005, 7–25; Papaconstantinou 2012, 412.

⁴³ *Cod. theod.* 13.1.3, 10, 12.

⁴⁴ *Cod. theod.* 4.13.2–3.

⁴⁵ *Nov.* 32–34.

⁴⁶ Choi 2005, 18.



Fig. 2. Bregovina – Basilica

Сл. 2. Брејовина – Базилика

At Caričin Grad, a large number of artisans, such as potters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, glaziers and others were testified to, clearly indicating that it was a regional centre which supplied both the local area and those further afield. The very concept of a newly built centre with wide streets and porticos points to the fact that the city was planned as an administrative and trade centre.⁴⁷ (Fig.3) An indication of the lively local and regional trade is the presence of camels and mules at Caričin Grad,⁴⁸ which were particularly used in the 6th century for transporting goods.⁴⁹

Castella, in the wide area of the Leskovac basin, as well as in other parts of the central Illyricum, were mostly built in non-urban areas. Spatial analysis indicates that most of the castella were situated outside a 10 mile – 15 km radius from the city, which represents a journey that could have been taken to the city and back within a day. (Map 3.2) In the urbanised regions of the Empire, in central Italy, the distance between cities was from 11 to 13 km, which enabled strong economic ties. In Lower Galilee, on the other hand, peasants

could reach the city within a day.⁵⁰ These parameters were also valid in the case of the castella in the area of the Leskovac basin. The largest number of forts, based on these parameters, gravitated towards Caričin Grad – Justiniana Prima, except for those in the far eastern part of the basin, which were orientated towards Remesiana. The most favourably positioned were the castella in the Morava river valley, which gravitated towards Caričin Grad – Justiniana Prima, as well as Naissus and Remesiana. The connection with Remesiana was certainly impeded by the wide mountain ranges between these regions. It should also be mentioned that the castella situated in the south-western part of the basin were closest to Justiniana Secunda.

⁴⁷ Saliou 2005, 207–224.

⁴⁸ Marković 2013.

⁴⁹ Morisson, Sodini 2002, 200.

⁵⁰ Choi 2005, 11–12: with quoted literature.



Fig. 3. Caričin Grad – Porticos of the Upper Town's eastern street

Сл. 3. Царичин град – Портик источне улице Горњег града

The study of the Late Roman fortifications in relation to the urban centres is important when considering their role and significance. In spite of the fact that new cities were built in this region, the degree of urbanisation remained relatively low. Barbarian incursions, epidemics and climate change resulted in the weakening of the villages and, subsequently, the castella, which together led to the decline of the city's importance and the disappearance of the administrative system based

on the polis, which represented the pillar of the administrative system of Byzantine power in the area of central Illyricum. The former importance of this region is testified to by the prefecture having been situated in Thessalonica which, as late as 604, consisted of Dacian and Macedonian offices. The prefect of Illyricum was soon to disappear, ceding his place to the eparch of Thessalonica, by which the end of the administration over Illyricum was confirmed.⁵¹

⁵¹ Lemerle 1979; 126 § 106; Lemerle 1981, 69–70 and 176.

SOURCES:

<i>Cod. theod.</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i> , (ed.) Th. Mommsen, P. Meyer, Berlin 1905.
Marcellinus Comes, Chronicle	<i>The Chronicle of Marcellinus</i> , (ed.) B. Croke. Sydney 1995.
<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Corpus Iuris Civilis III. Novellae</i> , (eds.) R. Schoell, G. Kroll, Berlin 1912.
Proc. De aedif.	Procopii Caesarensis <i>De Aedificiis</i> , (ed.) J. Haury. Leipzig 1913.

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Резиме:

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КАСНОАНТИЧКА УТВРЂЕЊА У ЛЕСКОВАЧКОЈ КОТЛИНИ И ЊИХОВ ОДНОС ПРЕМА УРБАНИМ ЦЕНТРИМА

Кључне речи. – Лесковачка котлина, касна антика, фортификације, привреда, Царичин град, *Justiniana Prima*.

Крајем 4. века, услед упада и насељавања Варвара на подручје северног Илирика, долази до великих друштвено-економских потреса, који ће се посебно одразити на промену улоге насеља. Римска равничарска насеља уступају место новим утврђеним стаништима подигнутим на доминантним и добро брањеним висовима изнад речних долина или унутар планинских области.

Услед опште несигурности и потребе заштите становништва и комуникација на подручју Лесковачке котлине, подиже се велики број касноантичких фортификација, махом на рубовима котлине. Фортификације су подигнуте на Радану, уз сливове Лепаштице, Лецке и Газдарске реке, Гољаку, са подручјем око Туларске и Бањске реке, око Царичиног града, области око Рујковца и Радиновца, затим у долини Шуманске реке, Пусте реке, Јабланице и Ветернице. Фортифицирани су и побрђа Кукавице, долина Јужне Мораве, комплекс око Козарачке, односно Рупске реке, доњи ток Власине, побрђа Бабичке горе и Крушевице и ушће Лужнице у Власину. Највећи део ових утврда подигнут је на висовима који доминирају над широм околином.

Хронолошко опредељење утврђења на основу археолошког материјала и нумизматичке грађе омогућено је у извесним случајевима. На великом броју утврђења нађен је новац из 4. века, и то унутар фортификација у Лецу, Рујковцу, на Хисару у Лесковцу, Ступници, Грделици и Скобаљић граду код Вучја. Циркулација новца у 5. веку посведочена је у Рујковцу, што представља важан доказ њеног опстајања у немирним временима. Датовање утврђења у 6. век, поред новца, употпуњује и други археолошки материјал, а пре свега керамичке посуде. У то време опредељен је и највећи број фортификација, које су убициране у Сијарини, Мркоњу, на Малом камену, у Рујковцу, Горњем Бријању, Горњој Локошници, Градашници, Конопници, Градишту, на Хисару у Лесковцу и Грделици. На мањем броју утврђења, углавном на онима на којима су спроведена археолошка ископавања, потврђени су хоризонти из 4. и 6. века. Реч је о фортификацијама у Лецу, Сијаринској Бањи, Рујковцу, Хисару у Лесковцу, Конопници и Грделици.

Распоред касноантичких фортификација, као што је случај са римским насеобинама, био је условљен степеном насељености области, ресурсима и потребом контроле пут-

них праваца. Анализа положаја утврђења указује на концентрацију утврда по висовима који уоквирују речне долине Јужне Мораве и њених притока. Највећу густину тих утврђења бележимо управо на побрђу Добре горе, смештеном између долина Пусте реке, Јабланице и Јужне Мораве. Ради се преваходно о мањим фортификацијама чија је примарна улога била заштита локалног становништва, које се, сасвим извесно, бавило пољопривредом. Ипак, највећи број тих утврда налази се у западном делу котлине, у планинским областима Гољака, Мајдана, Радана и Пасјаче. Највећа густина утврђења је у долини Бањске реке, око Сијарине.

Цела област је била позната по рударењу у претходним столећима. Не би требало искључити могућност да је током 6. века рударска активност била обновљена. Посебну групацију чини мања група утврђења смештена око Царичиног града – Јустинијане Приме, чија је преваходна улога била одбрана прилаза граду.

Јустинијана Прима представља једини град – полис – подигнут око 535. године у средишту ове области као седиште архиепископа. Утврђења на подручју Лесковачке котлине припадају категорији кастела – фрурија, чији је основни циљ био заштита локалног становништва.

Највећи део утврда гравитирао је према Царичином граду – Јустинијани Прими, изузев оних на крајњем источном делу котлине који су били окренути ка Ремесијани. Најбоље позиционирани су били кастели у долини Мораве, који су гравитирали ка Царичином граду – Јустинијани Прими, али су то били и Наису и Ремесијани. Веза са Ремесијаном је била свакако отежана, будући да се између тих области налазе широки планински венци. Додајмо да су кастели смештени у југозападном делу котлине били најближи Јустинијани Секунди.

Сматрамо да је посматрање касноантичких утврђења у односу на градска средишта важно за разматрање њихове улоге и значаја. И поред подизања нових градова, у овој области је степен урбанизације остао слабо развијен. Упади Варвара, епидемије и климатске промене одразили су се на слабљење села, а потом и кастела, што је све заједно условило опадање значаја града и нестанак управног система заснованог на полису као стубу управног система византијске власти на простору централног Илирика.