

**PREHISTORIC FORTIFICATION IN
LOPARI AND GRAVEYARD IN
DINOSHA VILLAGE (MONTENEGRO)**



Archaeology

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Abstract

Dinoshia and Lopari are small villages in region of Malësia, 5 km. east from capital Podgorica. There are found traces of prehistoric fortification on the top hill called Gjyteza and nearby in the low land of village Dinoshia are located 7 earth tumulus alongside river Cem (Cijevna mne.). By technique of the walls we can assume that this fortification belongs to Bronze Age. Something with tumulus in Dinoshia. They vary from Bronze Age to Hellenistic period. This two location communicate visually with each other and they are part Adriatic Bronze Age culture.

Malësia, is region consisted mostly terrain with mountains above the Scutari See. Eastern from today's capital of Montenegrin, and the northern part of the before known as "Malesia e Madhe". Characterized by Mountains and low lands. East from Podgorica lies village of Dinoshia and Fundina where are found traces of prehistoric fortification and graveyard.

Area of village Lopari is mostly mountainous and lies on the northwest slopes of the Massif of Mountain Suka. It has an altitude of 400 to 700 meters above sea level. The fortification "Gjyteza" at village Lopari is located on the top of a conical hill, in the middle of the road from the village of Rabraj and Lopari. GPS data, recorded from one point in centre of this fortification are the following: N = 41o 57,602 'E = 019o 16,530' h = 590 m.

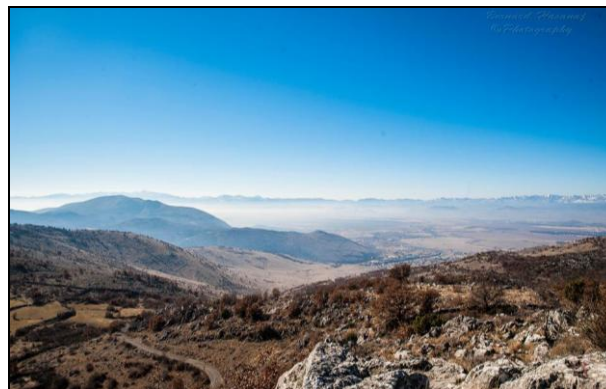


Figure 1

From the top of the hill of a rocky terrain it has a wide panorama view across the Zeta Lowlands. Area around is also surrounded by suitable pastures as well some small karst pits rich with water springs.

Besides the favorable natural conditions offered by this area, the fortifications also have a strategic role as it protects the natural pathway from the Zeta Lowland and passes through the mountain's neck towards the remote mountainous areas of the province of Triesh and Kuçi. These

livestock migrations trails on seasonal pastures have played a very important role in the development of livestock and society in prehistory (Govedarica, 1989, pp. 231-241).

From the three sides of the fortified site there is a large slope, especially from the south side there is a rough rock vertical. The climb to the top is easier on the north side. Fortification is surrounded by walls on its three sides, except on the south side where it is protected from the deep rocky abyss. The walls are semi-elliptical and surround a small space, which in the longitudinal section is 25 m long and 15 m wide. There are no traces of corners or other fortification elements. Entry cannot be found, as its position is covered by collapsed stones.



Figure 2

Thickness of the wall is from 2 to 2.20 m. In places where the stones have fallen from the facades of the wall, we see that they are scattered at a distance of up to 10 m on the outer sides of the fortification, whereas in the interior space the spit of the stones goes up to 3 m in length (fig.2). Walls are visible only on the north side. Precisely in this wall fragment we can conclude that the construction technique is that of dry, large and medium-sized unfinished stones, placed without any care (fig.3).



Figure 3

Wall is maintained at maximum height of 0.50-0.60 m. The interior of the wall is filled with small and medium rocks.

Looking at the imposition of this fortification in relation to other nearby localities, it can be noticed that he visually communicates with the Bronze Age graveyard at Dinoshë plain and Planica hill. In the territory of Malësia we found similarity with the fortification of Gjyteza in the village Ploçe, while in the province of Kraja, with the fortification in the village Ljare. In the vicinity of Shkodra there are similarities with the first phase of fortification in Ganjolla (Lahi, 1993, pp. 201-218). In territory of Montenegro, we see similarities with fortifications in Medjedja Glava (Marković, 2006, p.172) and Trijebaç near Podgorica (Mlakar, 1960, p.216). Going to the north, in territory of Hercegovina, with Gradina Varvari (Čović, 1978, p.135). In terms of cultural inclusion, all of these above mentioned settlements are relate to the culture of the Eastern Adriatic, created during the Bronze Age (Govedarica, 1989, p.173).

The terrain within the fortification is rough and rocky especially in the central and southern parts. Only a close belt near the wall has some soft soil. There are not found traces of dwellings and no archeological material on the surface. Less than 2 km. from fortification lies the village of Dinoshë. It is situated in the fields near the river Cem, spreading over the entire surface of the field. The Field of Cem, as we refer it in Albanian (or Cemovsko field – in Slavic languages) is a wide plain spreading to the north-east of the lowlands of Zeta, surrounded by characteristic mountains on its north and east sides. It is situated 6 km on the north-east of the town of Tuzi and it is almost at the same distance on the east from the capital city of Podgorica.

Today there is a wide tumular cemetery consisting of 7 tumuli made of earth soil: on the right bank of the river Cem, especially in the zone between villages of Mileshe, Dinoshë and Omerbozhaj (fig.4). Along the right bank there are localized 5 of them, while 2 remaining tumuli are more isolated and can be found on the fields of Dinoshë in the neighborhood called Toeç. Similar tumuli made of soil which are placed on the fields continue in the direction of south and in the villages: Rakiq, Mileshe, Vuksanlekaj, Dushiq, up to Scutari Lake. On the other side of politically made border, i.e. in Northern Albania, they are similar in typology with tumuli of Shkreli and Shtoji (Jubani, 1995, pp. 53-90).



Figure 4

Most of the tumuli from the Fields of Cem have got small up to medium diameter which approximately varies from 10 to 22 m, while their average height is from 1.5 m to 3 m.

They are aligned in a long linear line and they all communicate with one another. They communicate as well with other surrounding tumuli which are mainly placed on the hill tops around, like for example the tumuli on the hill of Pllanica (Bugaj, 2013, pp.121-140), on the south of the village of Dinoshā.

The tumuli were made of the mixture of red soil and pebbles and gravels of small or medium size. As it seems from the perspective from the very location, it was used the material found in the surrounding environment. In comparison with other tumuli, only at the tumulus n.4 can be noticed a tomb of cist type. A large part of those tumuli were ruined by human factor during military works or intentional pillage.

In the scientific literature, the first mention of the existence of tumuli was made by the researcher Jovićević (Jovićević, 1923, p. 13). He claims that between the village of Vuksanlekaj up to the village Dinoshā there are about of 20 tumults. Not far from this locality, in the village of Rakić (Marković, 2006, p.175.; Velimirović-Žižić, 1995, pp.21-45.), around 3 km in the direction of west, were excavated some tumuli made of soil which provided the material from the Early Bronze Age. Regarding material discoveries, from this region we have accidental discoveries of the cruciform Axe, from the surrounding of Tuzi and Albanian-Dalmatian axe type which was found in the region of Scutari Lake, the area linked with the phase of Late Bronze Age - the year 1300 B.C.. In 2014, a Polish team who also studied one of the tumuli made of stone on the hill of Pllanica above the village of Dinoshā found bronze furnishings so-called “Brillenspirale”, which date from the Late Bronze Age (Bugaj, 2013, pp. 427–433). It is difficult to ascertain the age of the tumuli of the Field of Cem without a thorough study. We can rely on the data gained from the research of tumuli which are in the vicinity and which testify about the period from the Early up to the Late Bronze Age because they could have belonged to that period, too. The most recent excavations of the tumulus n. 7 in 2017, from the Museum of Podgorica, gave some preliminary results. Except for some prehistoric ceramics, there were also found fragments of Hellenistic amphora and one fragment of the black varnished pottery. The results about this tumulus have not been published until now.

Conclusions

Fortification of Gjyteza in Lopari and tumulus of Dinoshā are linked to one other in Bronze Age. Fortification made good protection for the farmers who travels in southern areas at winter and in high mountains at summer. The graveyard in Dinoshā valley and other graveyards nearby are the evidence of their intensive life in this area. Unfortunately most of the tumulus are looted from robbers during last century so we cannot give their precise construction time period.

Catalogue

Tumulus no.1

N= 42° 24.122' E= 019° 19.327' h= 65 m

Dimensions: height = 1.50 m; diameter = 16 m.

Tumulus is located on the right bank of the river, 50 m away in the north from the "Ura e Romsit", near the village of Mileshe. It is quite destroyed in center by military works or by treasury robbers. There is no trace of the grave or of the archaeological material. Has clear visibility with tumulus no .2, 3, 4 and 5 (fig.5)



Figure 5

Tumulus no.2

N= 42° 24.365' E= 019° 19.653' h= 76 m

Dimensions: high= 2.5 m; diameter = 22 m.

Tumulus is located near the riverbank of Cem, opposite, on the opposite side of the river, has the old mill of the village. It is the largest and dominant tumulus of the group. Much damaged in its central part. There is no trace of the grave or of the archaeological material. It has a clear visibility with Tumulus no. 1, 3, 4 and 5. (fig.6)



Figure 6

Tumulus no.3

N= 42° 24.451' E= 019° 19.746' h= 79 m

Dimensions: high = 2 m; diameter=12 m.

Tumulus is located near the riverbank of Cem, about 150 m north from Tumulus 2. In the center is damaged, so it has a large crater shape. There is no trace of the grave or of the archaeological material. It has a clear visibility with Tumulus no. 1, 2, 4 and 5. (fig.7)



Figure 7

Tuma no.4

N= 42° 24.483' E= 019° 19.759' h= 77 m

Dimensions: high = 3 m.; diameter = 22 m.

Tumulus is located near riverbank of Cem (fig.8), 100 m northern from Tumulus nr.3. In the center, the tumulus is severely damaged by military tranches, and only one of the cyst-type gravestones can be observed, easily visible on the surface (fig.9). According to this fragment, the tomb is oriented southeast-northwest. The stone has the following dimensions: 1 m x 0.50 m and a width of 0.15 m. There is no trace of archaeological material. Has clear visibility with Tumulus no. 1, 2, 3 and 5.



Figure 8



Figure 9

Tuma no.5

N= 42° 24.520' E= 019° 19.750' h= 79 m

Dimension: high= 2 m; diameter= 20 m.

It is located on the bank of the Cem River, about 300 m. to the north by the tumulus 4. It is damaged from all sides by the taking of the soil out from it. It is the last tumulus in the Cem that lies at the right bank of the River Cem (fig.10). There is no trace of the grave or of the archaeological material. It has a clear visibility with Tumults no. 1, 2, 3 and 4.



Figure 10

Tuma no.6

N= 42° 25.053' E= 019° 19.635' h= 77 m

Dimension: high = 2 m.; diameter= 14 m.

Tumulus is located in the Toeq neighborhood, about 300 miles north of the roadway leading from the Dinoshia village to Podgorica. It is maintained in good conditions and it has not suffered damages. It has clear visibility with Tumus nr.7 (fig.11)



Figure 11

Tuma no.7

N= 42° 25.155' E= 019° 19.789' h= 77 m

Dimensions: high = 1.20 m.; diameter = 17 m.

Tumulus is located about 300 m northeast from Tumulus 6, in the near the village road. It is partially damaged by the extension of the village road and in the center is ruined by the treasury robbers, leaving a large shaped pit crater. (fig.12)

In 2017, archaeological excavations began at this tumulus. From the preliminary results during the excavations, after the first layer of soil was removed, it is found the outer ring that surrounds the tomb. It was built with large stones and has a width of 1.5-2.2 m.

At the center was discovered a cyst-type gravestone, 0.93 x 0.53 m, made up of 4 unfinished plaques that defines the tomb. There is no cover stone and its interior has been looted from before. In the vicinity of the grave, outside the context has been found some Hellenistic pottery with black varnish and one amphorae fragment. (fig.12)



Figure 12



Figure 13

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