Mrs Predrag M. Lutovac

TUMBARICA
FORTIFICATION FROM LATE ANTIQUITY AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Museum of Polimlje, Berane, polimskimuzej@t-com.me

Abstract: In the framework of cross-border cooperation between Montenegro and Albania (IPA project), the Polimlje Museum in Berane conducted systematic archaeological research on the Tumbarica fortification, located in the village of Donja Ržanica near Berane. Undoubtedly, this is one of the largest fortifications recorded and partially explored in the Montenegrin Polimlje area. It was built at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century AD, conquered, demolished and then rebuilt and extended, lasting until the 7th or the beginning of the 8th century AD. The area of the acropolis and the south-eastern defensive walls with towers and remaining passageways were explored in Tumbarica. The architectural remains of a church and northern chapel (*parakklesion*) were discovered on the acropolis, made in two construction phases, as well as the architectural remains of a courtyard for priests. Based on stratigraphic layers and a multitude of movable archaeological materials, all the phases of the centuries-long life of this fortification have been clearly distinguished. The research was conducted by setting up a grid of squares each 4 m × 4 m, which enabled the clear recording of stratigraphic layers along the discovered architectural remains, and the separation of movable material according to the determined stratigraphic layers. The method of building the fortification and the multitude of found items for everyday use, jewellery, parts of clothing and weapons are a good basis for a clear chronological determination of the remaining fortifications in Polimlje.

Keywords: Early Christian fortification, church, coins, jewellery and weapons.

Tumbarica is located in the Municipality of Berane, more precisely on the southern edge of the wide Berane Valley, in the area of the village of Donja Ržanica (Fig. 1). There is almost no written information about this fortification. It was first mentioned by R. J. Vešović in a description of the village in Donji Vasojevići (Vešović, 1935: 167). The Polimlje Museum in Berane conducted probe archaeological excavations in 2008, when the semi-circular tower on the southern corner of the fortification and the remains of a large building located east of the gate were explored. At that time, the lines of the ramparts on the south-eastern side, a large rectangular tower and the layout of the ramparts on the south-western side were discovered. All the discovered walls of the fortification and detected objects were technically recorded. Systematic archaeological research in the south-eastern part of the fortification was carried out within the cross-border cooperation between Montenegro and Albania (IPA projects).[1]

The fortification was built on a rocky and almost inaccessible outcrop located below Zaruđa Hill at the entrance to the Kaludra Canyon, at an altitude of 796 m. The elevation is ellipsoidal in shape and extends in a southeast–northwest direction. Its lateral sides are vertical and inaccessible, and it can only be approached from the south-east, where all the roads from the neighbouring villages – Donja Ržanica, Rovca and Aluge – meet. An old medieval road passed by Tumbarica, going from Polimlje over Mount Mokra and Rugova Gorge, to Metohija. During the construction of the fortifications, special attention was paid to determining the easily accessible southern side, where the side entrance – a small gate – was located.

On this side, below the hill with the ramparts, rocks were removed and a defensive *fossa* (ditch) was formed, which extends to the southeast, 15 m wide and about 50 m long. The ditch could be ap-

1 The research was carried out by archaeologist: Predrag Lutovac, MA; expert team: Milija Pantović – conservator, Slobodan Obadović – documentary filmmaker, and Vlado Lutovac – student of archaeology.

proached on the south-easternmost side, with an extended passage between the rocky cliffs. In the southwest, the ditch is protected by a rocky ridge, while its northeast side slopes steeply towards the Kaludra Canyon. The rocky ridge on the southeast side could have been the first line of defence for the fort. At the north-western end of this defensive ditch rises a hill on which two, almost parallel, defensive ramparts with a small entrance to the fortification were built. We can only assume that the main gate was located low, on the south-western side, right next to Mara's Cave, above which the remains of another semi-circular tower were discovered.

DEFENSIVE ARCHITECTURE

Based on the visible joints of the ramparts on the south-eastern side, we can distinguish two construction phases:

In the first construction phase, following the configuration of the terrain, ramparts were erected on the south-eastern and south-western sides and probably on the north-western side (Fig. 3/1). The layout of the ramparts on the north-western side was partially confirmed, while on the north-eastern side there were no ramparts because this side was inaccessible and there is a vertical drop into the Kaludra Canyon. The ramparts are 1.40 m wide, made using the *opus incertum* technique (Basler, 1972: 30–31) from rough and carved stone blocks, stacked in fairly regular horizontal rows and joined with lime mortar with a coarser river aggregate.

A semi-circular tower (Fig. 3/2), 6.00 m in diameter, was erected at the junction of the south-eastern and south-western ramparts. From the inner side, at the eastern end, there is an opening in the wall, 1.70 m long, which flanks what was once a passageway to the acropolis. From this tower, to the northwest, there are crumbling remains of a wall that follows the line of the vertical cliffs, closing up the cracks and passages between the rocky cliffs. The rampart was discovered with a length of about 65 m, which ends in another semi-circular tower located on a rock, just above Mara's Cave (Fig. 3/3). Below the tower, in line with Mara's Cave, there is a flat extension, so it can be assumed that the main gate of the fortification was located there.

From the southern tower eastwards, the rampart stretches for about 48 m and ends at the edge of the steep and vertical cliffs of the Kaludra Canyon. Remains of a large rectangular tower (Fig. 3/4) with external dimensions of 9.45 m × 4.15 m were discovered on this rampart, at a distance of about 18 m from the semi-circular tower. The entrance to the tower, 1.70 m wide, is located at the western corner, closer to the small entrance to the fortification. The tower protrudes into the outer space, in relation to the direction of the ramparts, by about 1.35 m. The south-eastern rampart wall has been preserved near the semi-circular tower to a height of 0.70 m, while on the rectangular tower the rampart was discovered to a height of 1.60 m. Along the western wall of the rectangular tower, high in the rampart wall, there is a small gate, 1.30 m wide (Fig. 3/5). Access to the gate was made possible by the construction of a staircase (consisting of three steps with an average height of 0.30 m), made using the drywall technique.

The outer rampart wall (Fig. 3/6), about 35 m long, was erected during the second construction phase. It is the same width as the previous one and was made using the same construction technique. It leans against the southern semi-circular tower, widening slightly to the east, and then bending sharply to the southeast, following the configuration of the terrain. The rampart leans against the semi-circular tower at a sharp angle to ensure its static safety. Immediately below the eastern side of the rectangular tower, the line of the outer rampart wall is interrupted and these two ends overlap, thus forming a 1.60-metre-wide gate between them (Fig. 3/7). In the line with the eastern corner of the rectangular tower, a transverse wall of the same width extends from the new rampart wall, which forms the entrance to the space between the ramparts and the corner of the tower. The width of this entrance is not defined because we found its northern door jamb damaged, but it can be assumed that it is no larger than 1.5 m. (Fig. 3/8). In this way, three passageways were formed, making access to the fortification difficult and thus enabling easier defence and control. At the junction with the semi-circular tower, the rampart wall has been preserved in the foundation zone, and in some places on the western side only its inner core has been discovered. Further eastwards, the ram-

part is better preserved, whereby its height at the rectangular tower is about 1.50 m.

RELIGIOUS COMPLEX

In the area between the discovered towers on the south-eastern side and the south-western rampart wall, an almost flat triangular plateau was formed on which a church with a northern annexe was built (Fig. 3/I) and a rectangular building for the priests' court (Fig. 3/II). The plateau with buildings on the northern and north-eastern sides is bounded by stone blocks and rocks that descend steeply to the lower plateau, which is about 8 m lower. In this way, the acropolis with religious buildings was separated from the rest of the fortifications.

A church, with external dimensions of 11.70 m × 6.00 m. (Fig. 3/I), was built on the highest and north-westernmost part of the triangular plateau of the acropolis. It is oriented east–west with a slight deviation towards the north. On the eastern side, there is a deep semi-circular apse, while on the west there is an entrance, 1.25 m wide. There are two more entrances to the church, northern and southern ones, almost of the same width (0.95–1.00 m), closer to the inner shoulders of the apse. The walls of the church are 0.70 m wide, and they are made of carved and rough stone stacked in fairly regular horizontal rows joined with lime mortar. Based on the limestone blocks found, it can be assumed that the church was illuminated with windows opening onto the central part of the nave on the northern and southern sides. We have no material evidence of the existence of a window above the central entrance and in the axis of the apse. All openings in the church (doors and windows) had a formwork of finely worked travertine blocks. The floor of the church is made of plaster with a coating of waterproof red plaster. In the area of the apse, the southern door and the inner southern shoulder of the church, the rocky base was removed while digging down to the level of the former floor. The apse of the church was built on steep rocks, so its foundation foot was formed about one metre lower than the floor level. The walls of the church were discovered in a very bad condition and they have been preserved at a height of 0.50 m on the west, up to 1.20 m on the eastern side. The greatest damage was found on the inner surface of the apse wall, which is preserved to a height of two rows of stone blocks (0.30 m).

In the second construction phase, on the northern side of the church, an annexe (chapel) was added with a shallow apse leaning against the northern shoulder of the church and with its entrance facing south. The annexe is 12.40 m long and of unequal width, which is 2.90 m on the western side and 3.53 m on the east. Such an irregular shape is conditioned by the configuration of the terrain and the line of the steep rocks on the edge of the acropolis. The annexe is longer than the church by the width of the door (1.10 m), and opens to the south. The position of the entrance to the chapel is conditioned by the position of the south-western rampart. The southern wall of the chapel, from the north-western corner of the church, is extended to the rampart wall, closing the entrance to the church and the acropolis on the northern side. The walls of the annexe are 0.60 m wide, and they were made using the same technique as the walls of the church, from rough and carved stone blocks joined with lime mortar with a coarser river aggregate. The walls are poorly preserved to a height of two to three rows of stone blocks. The floors of the annexe were destroyed. Based on the remains discovered along the southern wall, it can be said that they were made using the same technique as the floor of the church.

On the south-eastern side of the acropolis, in the area between the small entrance to the fortification and the apse of the church, a building was erected, measuring 6.25 m × 5.13 m. (Fig. 3/III). The building extends parallel to the direction of the ramparts, thus forming a kind of passage to the church, 1.70 m wide. This passage, from the small entrance to the fort, extends all the way to the semi-circular tower on the western side. The walls of the building, 0.60 m wide, are made of larger, rough or carved, stone blocks arranged in regular horizontal rows connected with lime mortar with a coarser river aggregate. They are preserved to a height of 0.55 m in the north to 1.20 m on the southern side. On the western side, along the south-western corner of the building, there is an entrance, 1.60 m wide. This building also includes the remains of the wall on the western side, which curves towards the opening in the semi-circular tower, thus forming a passage, 1.90 m wide. It can be assumed that this wall extended all the way to

the western wall of the courtyard, thus forming a kind of covered porch. There is a justified possibility that this wall is a remnant of a building from the first phase of construction of the fortification.

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

During archaeological excavations conducted in 2008, the remains of a building located on a plateau just below the acropolis, on the eastern side of the fortification, were discovered (Fig. 3/III). More precisely, it is located below the rectangular tower and with its south-western side partially buried in the slope of the hill. It is a larger rectangular building, measuring 23 m × 7.20 m, which, with its longer side, extends to the northwest. One transverse wall divides the base of the building into two almost identical areas. Between the rooms, in the partition wall, a passage 1.20 m wide was left open. The walls, 0.65 m wide, are made of rough-hewn and of carved stone using the same technique as the walls of other discovered buildings. Having in mind the thickness of the walls and the fact that the building was partially buried in the slope of the hill, we can assume that it also had a floor that was at the height of the small entrance to the fortification.

STRATIGRAPHY

The research at Tumbarica was conducted using a method that is applied in almost all research on the architectural remains of buildings and urban units. A grid of squares was set up over the site, in a coordinate system, with each square measuring 4 m × 4 m. The zero point of the coordinate system is located on the south-western outer corner of the church (Fig. 5). On the apse, from the zero point to the east, the squares are marked with capital Roman letters and to the west with lower-case ones. On the ordinate, from the zero point to the south, the squares are marked with Roman numerals and to the north with Arabic numerals. By excavating the squares alternately (chessboard system), profiles were formed that extend transversely through the rectangular tower and are perpendicular to the direction of the ramparts on the south-eastern side. The stratigraphical layers are clearly separated on the profiles, which are chronologically determined on the basis of movable archaeological material and testify to the historical events and life in this almost naturally defended position. These residential horizons are marked and processed from the deepest and oldest to the youngest, concluding with the time of the final demolition of the fortification. Based on layers that differ in colour, texture and content of movable archaeological material, five horizons of living at this site can be distinguished:

Prehistoric hillfort settlement

Illyrian-Hellenistic period

The period from the construction of the fortification, in the middle of the 2nd century AD to the time of its demolition, in the second half of the 3rd century AD

The period of reconstruction of the fortification in the 4th century AD until its abandonment at the end of the 5th century AD

The period of reconstruction of the fortification in the 6th century AD until the final destruction at the beginning of the 7th century AD

Prehistoric hillfort settlement

Tumbarica has a well-defended natural position with stepped plateaux suitable for settlement. Traces of prehistoric layers were discovered in this area during systematic archaeological research. Unfortunately, due to their poor preservation, conditioned by intensive construction in the later epochs and the effect of centuries of erosion, our knowledge of the most ancient forms of life in this hillfort is, at this point, only fragmentary. It should be borne in mind that a relatively small area has been researched so far, so this layer has been recorded in a very limited area. Traces of prehistoric layers have been found in Building III (Fig. 3/III), in the area of the western part of the acropolis and at the entrance to the large rectangular tower (squares AI, AII, AIII, BII, BIII and FIII). Despite the fact that the prehistoric material belongs to a wide chronological range, for now it belongs to one residential horizon.

Among the archaeological finds, which determine the oldest horizon at Tumbarica at the end of the Neolithic or the beginning of the Eneolithic, the most numerous are fragments of larger vessels – pots made of clay with sand admixtures with

well-levelled and smoothed outer surfaces, and dark-red and brown calcinations. In addition to the pots, fragments of amphorae with a cylindrical neck and a flat, slightly sloping rim inside (cat. Nos. 1, 2) stand out. As a rule, the amphorae have horizontally drilled, tunnel-shaped handles, one of which is beak-shaped (cat. No. 5). Among the smaller dishes with polished outer surfaces, brown in colour, two fragments of bowls stand out: one is a fragment of the rim of a bowl with a short cylindrical neck and an inwardly sloping rim (cat. No. 7) and the other is a fragment of the shoulder of a deeper bowl, with a rounded profile and decorated with oblique, wide and shallow grooves (cat. No. 8).

A miniature biconical vessel with oppositely placed, vertically drilled, nipple-shaped or horned handles was found (cat. No. 4). The find of a fragmented, ball-shaped ceramic weight for a fishing net (cat. No. 6) also belongs to the category of ceramic production. In addition to the ceramic material, there are three fragmented, finely polished, moulded axes made of fine-grained grey stone (cat. No. 9). From the objects obtained by the painting technique, one scraper stands out, made on a short lamella, of trapezoidal cross-section, (cat. No. 10) and a fragment of a retouched knife, of trapezoidal cross-section, with a preserved part of the cortex (cat. No. 11). The find of a fragmented broad awl made from an animal rib segment (cat. No. 12) can also be attributed to this period. For this period, analogies of the material can be found in the immediate vicinity, at the Neolithic site Beran Krš located on the north-western edge of the Berane Valley and at the site Trnje in the village of Bijediće near Bijelo Polje (Marković, 1985: 53–70, T. LIV/4,7; T. LVIII/7; T. LIX/1).

The ceramic fragments of vessels made of earth with admixtures of finer sand and, in some cases with coarser grains, belong to the early Bronze Age. In the case of the fragments of larger vessels, the surfaces are finely processed and one gets the impression that they have been coated with liquid clay, so that there are thin and mostly matte calcinations, in red, grey and brown shades of ochre. The largest number of fragments are from pots with a longer conical neck and a rim thickened on the outside (cat. No. 13). Most of the vessels were not decorated, except for a moulded strip with fingernail impressions on the rim, and for medium-sized vessels the decoration was done by deliberate roughening the outer surfaces, using the barbotine technique (cat. No. 15), and with broom-shaped ornamentations (cat. No. 17). One fragment is from the belly of a vessel decorated with parallel incised strips filled with web-shaped ornamentation (cat. No. 16) and one fragment of a vessel decorated with cannelures in combination with incisions (cat. No. 14) stand out. Among the stone finds, a fragment of a work table/grinding stone stands out, made of coarse-grained slab pebbles, as well as one fragmented drilled stone axe made of fine-grained greenish stone (cat. No. 18).

Early Bronze Age material was also found in other hillforts in Polimlje, which were partially excavated or only probed, namely in Gradac (in Budimlja), Samograd, Gradac (in Crnča) and at the multi-layered site of Torine in the Radmanska Klisura ravine (Lutovac, 2008: 263–275). Analogies for this material can also be found in the immediate vicinity, at the Ras Fortress near Novi Pazar (Popović, 1999: 54, Fig. 17). It should be noted that there are no closer parallels to the otherwise little explored sites from the early Bronze Age in Serbia and Montenegro. However, closer chronological and cultural variants of it should be noted in remote areas such as the cultural horizons from the Varvara A1 site in Bosnia (Čović, 1978: 46–54) and Maliq IIIa in Albania (Prendi and Bunguri, 200: 46–81).

Fragments of an amphora with a high conical neck and a slightly curved rim, out of which originates a high handle of polygonal cross-section (cat. No. 19), come from the developed or older Iron Age. The amphora, below the rim, is decorated with a horizontally incised narrow groove under which bunches of oblique and deep grooves appear. Such forms of amphorae and decorations with cannelures have reliable analogies, on the one hand in Bessarabian ceramics and on the other hand in fluted (post-Bessarabian) ceramics (Stoić, 1977: 315–322; Kapuran, 2014). The early Iron Age could also be the origin of the find of a handle with a conical thickening on the highest part, possibly belonging to the Brnjica culture (Tasić, 1977: 284–299). A large number of fragments of larger and smaller bowls with larger horizontal handles, the rims of which are decorated with short, bevelled facets, belong to the transition period and the Iron Age.

Fragments of a larger bowl with larger horizontal handles stand out, the rim of which is decorated with short, sloping facets and nipple-shaped protrusions (cat. No. 23). Fragments of vessels decorated with engravings (cat. No. 21) and fluted motifs (cat. No. 22) belong to the Iron Age.

The destroyed foundation of a house discovered in square BIII, which was destroyed by the construction of the ramparts in the first construction phase, could belong to this period. It is a rectangular building from which the raised and ribbed foundation made of reddish clay mixed with stone has been preserved. Based on the preserved foundation, it is clear that during the construction of this residential unit, log walls were formed by a horizontal arrangement of timbers. A part of the baked flooring of the house has also been preserved.

Illyrian-Hellenistic period

Rare fragments of pottery, finds of a silver coin and a bronze fibula belong to the end of the Iron Age, more precisely in the time of the Illyrian state, marked by strong influences from the Hellenistic world. With the construction of the first Roman fortification at Tumbarica, the layers of this residential period, the strata of this period were completely destroyed. We have no material evidence of construction activities that would belong to this chronological period, because the possible architectural remains of the Illyrian period were almost completely destroyed by the construction of fortifications and buildings in later periods. In the layer of levelling the terrain, on the inside of the ramparts from the first phase (layer of crushed stone and many smaller and larger pebbles), one fragmented handle of a *skyphos* (cat. No. 24) and a thicker bottom with traces of a black coating/varnish (cat. No. 25) were found. The fragments belong to Gnathia pottery – a type well known from sites in Dalmatia all the way to Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bešlić, Garašanin, Garašanin, Kovačević, 1967: 122–123). It is represented in almost all fortifications and fortified cities in Montenegro which belong to the period of 3rd–2nd century BC, primarily in Rhizon (Risan), Butua (Budva) and Olcinium (Ulcinj), Medeon (Medun) and Samobor (Bešlić et al., 1977: 118 et seq.). Fragments of a goblet with vertical arched handles were also found. These fragments were found in square BIII in which research was conducted all the way to the rocky base of the terrain. During the clearing of the rock base, in square BII, a bronze fibula was found with a body in the shape of a willow leaf and a horizontally extended square footing whose edges are vertically raised. From the thickened and ribbed body of the fibula, a smooth arch curves out, on which is preserved a hole for stiffening the shaft that carries the windings of wire and the fastening pin. Based on the type of widened base, we can assume that the fibula had two pins. On the western slope, in a ravine outside the fort, a silver coin with the head of King Maxata was found, minted in Dyrrhachium (Durrës, Drač) sometime after 229 BC.

Period of Roman domination

The third horizon of life is the time of construction of the first fortification at the end of the 2nd and at the beginning of the 3rd century AD at the latest, up until its destruction in the second half of the 3rd century AD. Then a fortification with a rectangle and two semi-circular towers was built. We can only assume that Building III, which is located on the plateau below the rectangular tower, was built then. We have no material evidence of the existence of buildings on the acropolis that could be attributed to this horizon.

The entire movable archaeological material of this period was found along the inner rampart and some things were found in the rectangular tower. In addition to rare fragments of ceramic vessels, grey in colour and with polished surfaces reminiscent of the La Tène form, a fragment of a smaller vessel (goblet or pot) with a flat, thickened rim on the outside stands out (cat. No. 28). It is made of finely refined clay, with light-red calcination and a red coating. The quality of the treated surfaces and the colour of the coating on the vessel are similar to the Roman pottery of Ulpiana, which dates it to the second half of the 2nd and the first half of the 3rd century AD (Fidanovski, 1990: 26). A silver coin of Empress Julia Domna (cat. No. 31), a larger bronze coin of Emperor Marcus Julius Philippus (cat. No. 30) and a silver coin of Emperor Licinius Valerianus (cat. No. 29) were also found. Based on the layer of scorching and ash, we can say with certainty that this fortification was destroyed at the end of the 3rd century AD, as was the fortification of Samograd, and probably all the other fortifications in Polimlje.

Late Roman period–early Christianity

Based on ceramic material identical to that found in Samograd (Mrkobrad and Jovanović, 1989: 43, T.III and T.IV) we can say with certainty that the fortress at Tumbarica was renovated in the 4th century AD as part of an organised renovation of the fortress in the time of Diocletian or Constantine I. In addition to a multitude of ceramic fragments, mostly pots and lids, we can attribute to this period fragments of a double-row comb composed of three parts. The comb is rectangular in shape, with flat sides. The middle part between the teeth is reinforced with elongated rectangular plates on both sides, which are fastened with iron rivets. The formwork shows rows of incisions made during the carving of the teeth, which are wider on one side and narrower on the other. There are numerous analogies for this type of find, of which we single out the find from Singidunum (Petković, 1995: 57, cat. No. 5, TI/2), then from the hillfort on Mount Jelica (Milinković, 1975: Abb, 18/e), finds from the early Byzantine layer of the Ras-Pazarište Fortress near Novi Pazar (Popović, 1999: 110–120, 321, cat. Nos. 151–162, Fig. 1, 2) and Trajan's Bridge in the Đerdap *Limes* (defensive fortification) (Špehar, 2010: 120, T. XXXV/626, Fig.66). A fragment of a square bronze button with slightly accentuated corners that is similar to a specimen found in the Đerdap *Limes* in the Dijana Fortress (Špehar, 2010: 55, cat. No. 52) and to one from Felix Romuliana near Zaječar (Živić, 2003: 147, cat. No. 396), belong to the same period, although this should be taken with some reserve.

As far as construction activity is concerned, the renovation of the old and the construction of a new rampart on the south-eastern side of the fortification can be attributed to this horizon. An early Christian church was built on the acropolis, and probably also a priests' court. Based on the interlayers of the station, we can only assume that the fortification was used until the middle of the 5th century AD. This interruption in the use of the fortification was also noted in the Samograd fortification, and the reason for its abandonment is not known.

Early Byzantine period

The fortification was reused and partially rebuilt in the 6th century as part of Justinian's restoration of the inner *limes* (Mirković, 1978: 1–8; Nikolajević, 1976: 202 et seq.). During this period, the ramparts were restored and a northern chapel was added to the church. Based on the multitude of movable archaeological finds, we can say that this fortification lasted until the arrival of the Avars and Slavs at the beginning of the 7th century AD, when it was completely destroyed. Out of the 510 movable archaeological finds, the largest number belong to this residential horizon. The youngest residential horizon (a layer of brown earth with charcoal and ash) was completely explored on the entire surface that was the subject of our research, up to the level of the mortar base created in the last phase of the renovation of this fortification. The largest number of finds was discovered in the inter-basal space. There were almost no movable finds in the church with the annexe, which is quite understandable, because their floors are higher in relation to the ground of the acropolis. The most significant finds were discovered in front of the entrance to the court area (porch) and towards the entrance to the semi-circular tower.

Wheat and some types of lentils charred during the burning of buildings in the fortification were found during this part of the dig. In the level with the charred cereals, parts of belt sets were found, which clearly determine the time of the demolition of this fortification. From the multitude of movable archaeological material, we have singled out those objects that testify to the economic beginnings of the fortification at Tumbarica. First of all, these objects speak about construction, and stone and wood processing. Tools for wood and stone processing and a large number of different iron nails and staples have been found at almost all sites in Polimlje. All the ramparts and buildings within the fortification were made of both carved and rough stone joined with lime mortar, using the *opus incertum* technique (Basler, 1972: 30–31). The roof constructions are made of wood, and tied with nails and staples. The presence of glass on the windows was discerned in the residential building. Shutters on the windows are evidenced by simple strap hinges, or ones a little more luxurious and exquisitely decorated, found on the eastern side of building II. As for the lighting inside the buildings, we do not have many finds. The context in which parts of lighting devices were discovered in northern Illyricum, as well as appropriate analo-

gies from other parts of the Roman Empire, indicates that the type of lighting devices used did not depend on the character of the building (Špehar, 2019: 331). Fragments of a bronze chandelier were found in Tumbarica, which was used to illuminate the church or Building II, in front of whose entrance fragments of it were found.

The largest number of finds found at Tumbarica are pieces of clothing and jewellery. These finds testify to the way the residents dressed and their aesthetic needs and preferences. These are iron and bronze belt buckles and parts of belt sets. The types of belt buckles analysed in this paper are found in a wide area, from the Đerdap Gorge (Špehar, 2010) to Justiniana Prima (Kondić and Popović, 1977), Jelica Hillfort (Milinković, 2010; Milinković and Špehar, 2014), all the way to those which are located in the immediate vicinity: Ras-Pazarište near Novi Pazar (Popović, 1999) and Vrsenica near Sjenica (Popović and Bikić, 1979). Worthy of note are parts of a golden belt set with a belt end that is the most recognisable object of the Avar culture (Bugajski, 2009: 188–189, Fig. 81), but this belt end is of Romaic origin, judging by a casting mould found in Justiniana Prima (Kondić and Popović, 1977: 191, T.VIII, Fig.1).

In addition to this set, other belt buckles belonging to the second half of the 6th and the first half of the 7th century AD were found (Špehar, 2010: 151). In second place, according to the number of finds, are fibulae with an elongated and shortened foot and a pseudo-wrap, in which the bow widens in a square shape and, as a rule, is decorated with the insertion of gold and silver leaf. The elongated ribbed foot is decorated in the same way. In appearance, these fibulae are quite similar to one found on Jelica Hillfort (Milinković, 2017: 104, cat. No. 46) and a fibula found on Pčelinje Krš near Žagubica (Milovanović and Filipović, 2018: cat. No. 6). While all the analogies are quite similar in shape, those found at Tumbarica are unique and are probably the work of local master craftsmen. This claim is supported by the findings of tools for fine metalworking (goldsmiths' tools) as well as small ingots of gold and silver. This claim is supported by the finds of parts of small weighing scales (balances) and bronze weights. The bird-shaped fibulae found belong to the 5th and 6th centuries AD.

Several pieces of iron rings with an ellipsoidal, more often round or square, head have been found at Tumbarica. As a rule, the bezel is decorated with engraved motifs on the upper side, but these representations are not noticed and mostly disappeared due to high corrosion of the metal. A large number of iron arrowheads were found, most often those with a three-edged tip and a mandrel for fastening. This type of arrowhead is of Asian origin and arrived in the area of the Balkans with the waves of migration. They were widely used by the Avars (Kovačević, 1977: 119; Mrkobrad, 1980: T. LXXXI/11–13), and are relatively common in Gepid sites in Pannonia. No doubt they were also used by Romaic squads. They were found at sites along the Danubian *Limes* (Špehar, 2010: 134, cat. Nos. 696–708), and there are also some at Justiniana Prima (Kondić and Popović, 1977: 212, T. XXVIII/102). In addition to the large number of iron arrowheads, a fragmented iron sword blade and a cane scabbard were found at Tumbarica. The large number of silver and bronze coins testifies to a developed economy and strong trade relations with the wider environment.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The River Lim is characterised by fertile valleys, river widenings and canyons that are easily passable and did not pose a problem to free movement all the way from its source, below the Prokletije Mountains, to the mouth of the River Drina. Rich in water and fertile valleys, this area provides sufficient conditions for human life and the formation of the first settlements and habitats, starting from the Mesolithic to the present day. The direction of the river, which flows from south to north, enabled the creation of a natural communication that connected the Adriatic zone with the central Balkans. These natural communications enabled the settlement of the first human communities towards the end of the Mesolithic (Đurić, 1996: 75–102). At the time of the first agricultural communities, during the Neolithic, a large number of settlements were established, from the source of the River Lim to its mouth (Marković, 2006, 46 et seq.; Derikonjić, 1996). For now, we can only assume that at the end of the Neolithic a settlement was founded at Tumbarica, similar to those in the immediate vicinity, at Beran Krš, Torine and Trnje near Bijelo Polje (Marković, 2006: 53–70; Lutovac,

2008, 263–275). Unfortunately, due to the small volume of research and the influence of later interventions, it is very difficult to say in which part of Tumbarica the settlement was located.

Beginning with the early Bronze Age, Tumbarica was inhabited as a natural refuge and, based on the found archaeological material, we can assume that the settlement, with certain chronological interruptions, lasted until the end of the Iron Age. As a special residential horizon, we single out the period of the Illyrian state, which probably included the Berane Valley. This claim is supported by findings from other sites in the Berane Valley, such as Gradac-Budimlja and Gradac-Jugovina. At Gradac-Budimlja, fragments of so-called "Megar cups" were found, decorated with a motif of leaves that appear around 250 BC. (Popović, 1986: 105–112). A silver coin bearing the head of Philip V of Macedon (221–179 BC) was found in the town of Jugovine.

During this period, the influence of the Hellenistic world on the way of fortification of already existing settlements was felt, with the construction of large "Cyclopean" ramparts. Such is the case with Dyrrhachium, Medeon, Rhizon, Olcinium and Samobor (Mijović and Kovačević, 1975: 11 et seq.), and other cities formed and fortified during the Illyrian state. Unfortunately, due to later construction activities and the small degree of research, no remains of ramparts and buildings belonging to this chronological period have been discovered at Tumbarica. However, the discovered finds of silver coins and fragments of Gnathia pottery confirm the importance of the Illyrian fortress at Tumbarica.

The Roman conquests of the Balkans did not significantly change the current situation in the Lim Valley in terms of the population. This area was located within the Roman province of Dalmatia. It can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that the border towards neighbouring Dardania and Upper Moesia went along the eastern edge of the Lim Valley and the western edge of the Pešter Plateau. This border line included fortifications along the Black Drim River, then its right tributary the Valbona (Bace, 1976: 45–46, Map 1) and descended to Polimlje via the source of the River Ibar, where the border line consisted of fortifications on the northern edge of the Lim Valley (Mirković, 1978: 1–8 Nikolajević, 1976: 202 et seq.).

This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why fortifications were built along the Polimlje region, at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century AD, in places where these already existed in the Illyrian period. Another reason for the creation of this and other fortifications in Polimlje could be the significant activities of bandits in this part of the province of Dalmatia and neighbouring Dardania (Mócsy, 1970: 194–198). These were appeased only by the action of Marcus Aurelius, who recruited some of them and included them in the wars in the Danube region and Pannonia (Mrkobrad and Jovanović, 1989: 43). Based on the ceramic material and bronze coins belonging to this horizon, we can say with certainty that it was destroyed in the second half of the 3rd century AD. In the neighbouring areas, an assumption can be made, based on the registered hoards of coins during the Gothic ravage of the then province of Dalmatia and neighbouring Dardania. One hoard has been recorded also from 260 AD. It seems that a barbarian (probably Gothic) incursion can be traced from the Nišava region (hoard from Niš), Topolice (hoard from Stari Momčilov), Kosovo (hoard from Pećka banja/Banja e Pejës) to Nikšić (hoard from Bročanac), (Mrkobrad and Jovanović, 1989: 43; Mirnik, 1981: cat. Nos. 195, 231, 149, 157). Polimlje was also located on this route, so all the fortifications in it were destroyed. The fortress at Tumbarica could also have been destroyed at that time.

The fortification was rebuilt at the beginning of the 4th century AD within the organised fortification system created during the time of Diocletian or Constantine I. At Tumbarica, the old fortification was rebuilt and a new defensive wall was built on the south-eastern side. It can be assumed that during this time period, on the highest plateau of the fortification (acropolis), a small single-nave church was built, as well as a square residential building located south of the church. Our assumption is that a covered porch was formed in front of this residential building by integrating a part of the wall from the previous construction phase located on the western side of the residential building. This wall has no logical connection with the residential building, and its south-western side curves towards the opening on the circular tower

and forms a kind of passage 2.30 m wide. It should be understood that before the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century AD, the province of Praevalitana was separated from the province of Dalmatia (Kovaćević, 1976: 241), which retains the direction of the former border line of the province of Dalmatia.

Based on the stratigraphy found at Tumbarica, there is a lack of material belonging to the second half of the 5th century AD. It is obvious that the fortifications were abandoned or destroyed during that period. The logical reason for leaving the fortification is the appearance of the Ostrogoths on the borders of Praevalitana around 459 AD (Kovačević, 1960: 23–24).

More precisely, the Ostrogoths probably invaded the province of Praevalitana at New Epirus and may have settled near Scodra (Shkodra, Skadar). A richly decorated double button with the head of a bird corresponding in shape to Ostrogothic jewellery originates from there (Kovačević, 1960: 23–24). Under Theodoric (488–489), after the victory over the Germanic leader Odoacer, the Ostrogoths conquered Dalmatia and included into their state the western parts of the province of Praevalitana, the area around Nikšić where they had built the fortress of Anagastum (Mijović and Kovačević, 1975: 51).

After the situation with the Ostrogoths calmed down, the fortifications of Polimlje were restored at the end of the 5th and in the first half of the 6th century AD. We support this assumption with the multitude of metal objects, especially bronze coins found at Tumbarica. The youngest bronze coin of this period bears the head of Anastasia I (491–518 AD), then a bronze coin bearing the head of Justin I (518–521 AD) and one *nummus* and one *follis* with the head of Justinian I (527–565 AD) were found.

With the accession to the throne of Anastasia I (491–518 AD), the state treasury was strengthened by numerous reforms. Along with economic reform, military reforms were carried out, within which the defensive lines on the border were re-established by restoring the old fortifications and also building new ones (Špehar, 2010: 145). We have no doubt that the reconstruction of the fortifications, which were also located on the internal borders between the existing provinces, began at that time. These measures were successfully continued by Anastasia's successors, so the Empire was restored during the reign of Justinian I. During this period, the existing ramparts at Tumbarica were renovated and the northern chapel was added to the church. The richness of the finds from this period testifies to there being an important administrative and spiritual seat in Polimlje. Within this fortification, perhaps in a smaller fortified city, there were blacksmiths' workshops for making various tools, as well as goldsmiths' workshops for making certain items of jewellery and clothing, in addition to the spiritual centre.

Of course, further research is needed to clearly confirm all the assumptions made.

The probe research carried out so far on the fortifications in Polimlje, as well as the systematic ones at Tumbarica and Samograd, indicate the richness of immovable and movable finds that belong to late Antiquity and early Christianity. There is no doubt that there is a need to form a themed project lasting several years, the implementation of which would make it easier to see this chronological period during the existence of the province of Praevalitana, for which we have very little written data.

CATALOGUE OF FINDS

1. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 5.5 cm × 7.4 cm × 1.0 cm; square: FIII -Rov / 4.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Eneolithic.

Fragment of the rim of an amphora with a cylindrical neck and a flat rim, made of clay with sand admixtures, flat surfaces, red-ochre calcination.

2. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 7.1 cm × 6 cm × 0.8 cm; square: FIII -Rov / 4.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Eneolithic.

A fragment of the rim of an amphora with a high conical neck, a flat rim thickened on the outside. It is made of clay with admixtures of sand, polished surfaces, dark-red calcination.

3. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions 5.8 cm × 5.5 cm × 0.8 cm; square: EIV / 3.o.s; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Neolithic-Eneolithic.

Tunnel handle of a dish made of earth with admixtures of sand, finely worked surfaces, grey and brown calcination.

4. Miniature vessel

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: height 3.9 cm, hole diameter 3.6 cm, bottom diameter 2.8 cm; Building III, research in 2008; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Neolithic–Eneolithic.

Miniature biconical vessel with oppositely placed, vertically drilled handles. Made of clay with admixtures of fine sand, smooth surfaces, ochre and brown calcination.

5. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions 4.5 cm × 4.6 cm × 0.8 cm; square: EIV / 3.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Neolithic–Eneolithic.

A fragment of the belly of a vessel, with a "beak type" tunnel handle, made of clay with admixtures of sand, smooth surfaces, ochre, grey and brown calcination. The handle was in secondary use.

6. Ceramic weight

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: diameter 6.1 cm; square: AIII /3.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Neolithic–Eneolithic.

Fragmented fishing net weight, circular shape, made of clay with coarse sand admixtures, rough texture, dark-red calcination.

7. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 4.3 cm × 5.1 cm × 0.7 cm; diameter 6.1 cm; square: FIV /1.o.s; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Neolithic–Eneolithic.

A fragment of a bowl with a short cylindrical neck and a rim cut inwards, made of finely refined clay, finely polished and porous surfaces, brown calcination.

8. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 6.1 cm × 6.4 cm × 0.6 cm; diameter 6.1 cm; square: FIV /1.o.s; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Neolithic–Eneolithic.

A fragment of a bowl, made of clay with admixtures of sand, finely polished surfaces of brown calcination. The upper part of the bowl is decorated with oblique parallel grooves.

9. Axe

Stone, polished; dimensions: 6.4 cm × 3.9 cm × 1.8 cm; square: EIV / 3 o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Dated: Neolithic–Eneolithic

A fragment of a finely polished axe, "mould type" with a preserved semi-circular blade, made of fine-grained greenish-grey stone.

10. Scraper

Stone, carved; dimensions: 4.8 cm × 2.0 cm × 0.7 cm; square FII / 2.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: Late Neolithic–Eneolithic.

Scraper on a short lamella of triangular cross-section, made of milky-white flint.

11. Knife

Stone, carved; dimensions: 6 cm × 1.6 cm × 0.6 cm; excavations in 2008; church apse; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: Late Neolithic-Eneolithic.

Flint knife with one, finely retouched, cut and part of the cortex, made on a lamella of trapezoidal cross-section, made of honey-coloured flint.

12. Bone tool

Bone, broken, polished; dimensions: 6.3 cm × 1.6 cm × 0.3 cm; square GII / 3.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Neolithic–Eneolithic.

Fragmented tool – awl, made of animal rib chips.

13. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 6.1 cm × 6.4 cm × 0.6 cm; square: FIV / 1.o.s; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Eneolithic–early Bronze Age.

A fragment of a pot with a conical neck and a thickened rim on the outside, made of cabbage with admixtures of finer sand, finely polished surfaces, ochre calcination.

14. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 3.6 cm × 3.1 cm × 0.8 cm; square: BII / 2.o.s; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Eneolithic–early Bronze Age

Fragment of the belly of the vessel decorated with grooves and incised lines, made of clay with admixtures of finer sand, ochre and brown calcination.

15. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 3.6 cm × 3.1 cm × 0.8 cm; square: BII / 2.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Early Bronze Age

A fragment of the belly of a vessel, decorated using the barbotine technique, made of clay with admixtures of sand, dark-red in colour.

16. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 2.7 cm × 3 cm × 0.5 cm; square: BII / 2.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Dated: Early Bronze Age

A fragment of a smaller vessel, decorated on the shoulder with parallel strips of mesh, made of well-refined clay, finely polished surfaces, grey calcination.

17. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 2.7 cm × 3 cm × 0.5 cm; square: BII / 2.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Early Bronze Age

Fragment of the bottom of the vessel, decorated with broom ornament, made of clay with admixtures of finer sand, flattened surface, dark red calcination.

18. Axe

Stone, polished; dimensions: 7 cm × 3.8 cm × 3.2 cm; Square GII / 3. O. S., Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Bronze Age

Finely worked, drilled stone axe/hammer, made of greenish-grey stone.

19. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 3 cm × 2.1 cm × 0.6 cm; square: FIV / Pov.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Bronze Age – Brnjica culture

20. Vessel fragment

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 9.2 cm × 9.4 cm × 0.6 cm; square: AII / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Early Iron Age

A fragment of an amphora with a conical neck and a slightly curved rim from which a high handle of almost hexagonal cross-section. Made of clay with a small concentration of fine sand, finely polished surfaces, ochre calcination.

21. A fragment of a vessel

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 3 cm × 2.1 cm × 0.6 cm; square: FIV / Pov.o.s; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Early Iron Age

A fragment of a dish decorated with incised lines, made of clay with admixtures of finer sand, finely polished surfaces, dark ochre and brown calcination.

22. A fragment of a vessel

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 3 cm × 2.1 cm × 0.6 cm; square: FIV / Pov.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Early Iron Age

A fragment of the belly of a smaller vessel decorated with bunches of oblique grooves, made of clay with admixtures of sand, finely polished surfaces, red and brown ochre calcination.

23. A fragment of a vessel

Pottery, handmade; dimensions: 10.6 cm × 7.6 cm × 1 cm; research in 2008; semi-circular tower; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late/early Iron Age

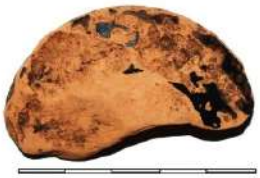
Fragments of a larger conical bowl with a recessed rim decorated with oblique grooves (turban bowl) and oppositely placed horn-shaped moulded protrusions. The bowl is made of clay with admixtures of sand, smooth surfaces, ochre and brown calcination.

24. Vessel fragment

Ceramics, made on a kick-wheel; dimensions: 4 cm × 1.6 cm; square: CII / Rov; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Iron Age–Hellenism

A fragmented handle of a *skyphos* made of well-refined clay, with traces of varnish coating, red calcination.



25. Vessel fragment

Ceramics, made on a kick-wheel; dimensions: diameter 4.7 cm, thickness 2.7 cm; square: BII / Profile; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Iron Age–Hellenism

A fragment of the massive bottom of a vessel (a *skyphos* or *kantharos*), with traces of a black coating/varnish, made of finely refined ochre-coloured baking clay.

26. Silver coin

Silver, forged; diameter 1.8 cm; From the ramparts; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: 3rd century BC

An Illyrian silver coin of King Maxata, minted after 229 BC in Dyrrhachium.

27. Fibula

Bronze, forged, engraved; square: BII / 6.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Late Iron Age

A fibula with a bow in the shape of a willow leaf, with a horizontally extended square foot and vertically raised edges. The bow is smooth and there is an opening on the head for fixing the shaft that carries the coils of wire and the clasp pins. Judging by the appearance of the extended foot, it had two clasp pins.

28. Vessel fragment

Ceramics, made on a kick-wheel; dimensions: 2.1 cm × 4.3 cm × 0.3 cm; square: BIII / 4.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Dated: Second half of 2nd–first half of 3rd century AD.

A fragment of a pot with a flat and protruding rim, with a red coating, made of finely refined clay, light ochre calcination.

29. Silver coin

Silver, forged; dimensions: 2.2 cm × 0.2 cm; square: BIII / 5.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Licinius Valerianus (254–260 AD).

30. Bronze coin

Bronze, forged; dimensions: 2.9 cm × 0.3 cm; square: BIII / 4.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Marcus Julius Philippus (244–249 AD).

31. Julia Domna

Silver, forged; square: GIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Julia Domna (211–217 AD).

32. Comb

Bone, cut, carved; Square: CIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Dated: 4th–6th century AD

Fragments of a two-row comb of rectangular shape, with flat sides. The middle part between the teeth is reinforced with elongated rectangular plates, on both sides, which are fastened with iron rivets. The formwork shows rows of incisions made during the carving of the teeth, which are wider on one side and narrower on the other.

33. Buckle

Bronze, cast, refraction; square: BIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: 4th or first half of 5th century AD?

The front part of a square buckle frame with slightly accentuated ends and an extended middle part to attach the prong to.

34. Buckle

Iron, forged, bent; Beneath the rectangular tower in between the ramparts; square: FIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: 3rd–4th century AD

Omega belt buckle, circular in shape, rhombic cross-section, with the ends bent into a volute that is in line with the frame. The prong, of rectangular cross-section at the root, tapers slightly into a pointed tip.

35. Belt end

Gold, cast, engraved, stamped; dimensions: height 6 cm, width 2.4 cm, thickness 0.4 cm; square BII / 2.o.s – In front of the entrance to the semi-circular tower; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: End of 6th–first half of 7th century AD

A belt end of elongated rectangular shape, the lower end of which is rounded and the upper flat. There are two horizontally incised lines on one side and one on the other. Closer to the flat edge there is a hole with a rivet for fastening onto the belt. On the front and back, the tab is decorated differently, imprinting different motifs.

36. Part of a belt set

Gold, cast, engraved, stamped; dimensions: height 1.8 cm, width 1.6 cm, thickness 0.2 cm; square AII / 1.o.s.; in front of the entrance to the semi-circular tower; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: End of 6th–first half of 7th century AD

Gold shield-shaped belt plate, part of the previously described belt set. Printed and engraved motifs on the front side and two pillars on the back, vertically arranged, ending in perforated holes for fastening to the belt.

37. Belt end

Silver, cast, engraved, bored; dimensions: height 2.6 cm, width 1.8 cm, thickness 0.3 cm; square CIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: End of 6th–first half of 7th century AD

Silver belt end, rectangular in shape, the lower end of which is rounded, and the upper end is emphasised by a horizontally incised line. In the middle of the formwork, below the incised line there is one perforated hole and in the central part there are two, for fastening to the belt.

38. Belt end

Silver, cast, stamped, bored; dimensions: height 3.3, width 2.2, sheet thickness 0.1 cm; square: inside the rectangular tower, GIII / 3.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: 5th–6th century AD

Belt end, square in shape, made of thin, finely decorated, silver sheet with preserved rivets for fastening to the belt.

39. Fibula

Iron, forged, bent, engraved, daubed; dimensions: 5.5 cm × 1.8 cm; area between the ramparts; square: FIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

Iron fibula of the "Western Balkan type" with a twisted foot and a pseudo-wrap. The square-extended arch is decorated with the insertion of longitudinal leaves of the same width, two gold ones on the side and one silver one in the middle. The central, silver field is decorated with two parallel, zigzagged incisions. The foot of the fibula is ribbed and decorated by inserting a silver leaf in the middle and two gold ones, the same width, at the ends. The head carries a shaft with a spring, at the ends of which one ball extension is fixed. Another ball of the same size and shape is located on the front of the head.

40. Fibula

Iron, forged, bent, engraved, daubed; square: FIV / 2.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

An iron fibula identical to the one previously described. It lacks a twisted foot with a wrap and a needle. A gold leaf decorated with linearly printed volutes is inserted on the extended square head. One gold thread is placed transversely on the front and back side of the extended foot.

41. Fibula

Iron, forged, engraved; dimensions: 2.8 cm × 0.5 cm; square: AIII / Pov.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

A small iron fibula in the shape of a bird, probably a pigeon, with a partially damaged tail. The pin and the system for fastening the pin are missing.

42. Fibula

Iron, forged, engraved, stamped, perforated; dimensions: 2.9 cm × 1.1 cm × 0.3 cm; square: E3/chance find; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

A small iron fibula in the shape of a bird with a protruding head, a circularly extended body and a trapezoidal tail. The tail is accentuated by incised lines and on the head there are eyes in the form of circular protrusions. Between the body and the tail is a smaller perforated mounting hole.

43. Buckle

Iron, forged, engraved; square: CIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

An iron buckle with a trapezoidal frame and chape in the form of a stylised full-cast bird. It is a bird with a cylindrical body that spreads slightly towards the extended head, which is bent towards the back side, and served to fasten to the belt. Wings set apart and accentuated by deep incisions. From the perforated tail, wrapped around the rear bar, starts a thin, slightly bent prong that rests on the front of the buckle frame.

44. Belt buckle

Iron, forged; dimensions: 3.5 cm × 2.2 cm; square: CIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

An iron buckle with a triangular chape with a rounded top and a frame in the shape of the Roman letter D. An iron rivet is preserved on the chape and a prong with a bent top that rests on the front of the buckle frame.

45. Belt buckle

Bronze, cast; dimensions: 3.5 cm × 2.5 cm; square: D3/ surface find; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

Bronze buckle with an oval chape and heart-shaped frame. The rim is preserved on the oval chape, while the interior is damaged. The prong that connects the oval chape to the bar with a thickened root tapers into a bent top that rests on the front, thickened part of the buckle frame.

46. Bracelet

Bronze, forged, engraved, punctured; square: CIV / 1.o.s; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

Two fragments of a wider ribbon bracelet with open and widened ends in the shape of a snake's head. On the head is a representation of its eyes in the form of circles with a dot in the middle. Between the eyes is a narrow strip, bordered by two parallel lines between which are oblique parallel incisions. Two parallel lines are incised along the edge of the banded part of the bracelet. Within the area defined in this way, two short, zigzagging lines are incised, and the entire remaining surface is decorated with embossed dots and ornaments.

47. Bracelet

Iron, forged; dimensions: diameter 4.4 cm; band thickness 0.2 cm; square: BIII / 2.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: End of 6th–first third of 7th century AD

A small iron bracelet, made of a narrow strip of sheet metal, with open ends that are widened in the shape of snake heads. The head is emphasised with two parallel incised lines and the eyes are presented in the form of circles with a dotted point.

48. Ring

Iron, forged; dimensions: diameter 2.1 cm; wire thickness 0.1 cm; square: CIV1 / 1.o.s; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: 6th–first third of 7th century AD

Iron ring with oval-shaped bezel, damaged by corrosion, decoration on the crown unrecognisable.

49. Ring

Iron, forged; dimensions: diameter 2 cm; wire thickness 0.2 cm; square: DIV1 / 1.o.s.

Date: 6th–first half of 7th century AD

An iron ring made of a strip of iron sheet that extends into an elliptical-shaped bezel.

50. Cross

Iron, forged, cut; dimensions: 7.3 cm × 5.5 cm × 0.1 cm; area between the ramparts, west of the inner entrance; square: EIV / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: 6th century AD

Iron cross with widened ends, made of two strips of thinner sheet metal, connected with a rivet in the middle. On the underside is a flattened pin for fastening.

51. Cross

Bronze, forged, cut; dimensions: 2.3 cm × 1.9 cm × 0.2 cm; square: CIII / 1. o.s. in the corridor between the residential building and the inner rampart wall; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: Second half of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

Fragmented small bronze cross with widened ends. It was probably used as a pendant.

52. Strainer

Silver, cast, forged, engraved, perforated; dimensions: 16.5 cm × 3.2 cm × 0.4 cm; along the east wall of the residential building, square EII / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane.

Date: 4th–6th century AD

A silver strainer with a hemispherical recipient, radially perforated, from the widened rim to the deepest part. On the rim there is a square widening from which the handle of rounded cross-section starts and ends with a square plate from which the eye for hanging it is formed by embossing. There is a polygonal widening in the central part of the handle. The square widenings at the beginning and end of the handle are decorated with two parallel incised lines.

53. Mortarium

Stone, carved, polished; dimensions: height 14.4 cm, width 20 cm, thickness 3.5 cm; square: BII / Pov.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: End of 6th–beginning of 7th century AD

A *mortarium* made of light ochre sandstone of coarser granulation. The recipient is conical in shape, polished on the inside, rough surfaces on the outside. At the level of the rim, on the outside, there is a bulge of semi-circular cross-section.

54. Bronze coin

Bronze, forged; dimensions: 2.9 cm × 0.3 cm; area between the ramparts, west of the inner entrance (square: EIV / 2.o.s.); Polimlje Museum, Berane

Anastasia I (491–589 AD)

55. Bronze coin

Bronze, forged; dimensions: 2.9 cm × 0.3 cm; area between the ramparts, west of the inner entrance (square: EIV / 2.o.s.); Polimlje Museum, Berane

A *nummus* of Justinian I (527–565 AD)

56. Bronze coin

Bronze, forged; dimensions: 2.9 cm × 0.4 cm; area between the ramparts, west of the inner entrance (square: CIV / 1.o.s.); Polimlje Museum, Berane.

A *follis* of Justinian I (527–565 AD)

57. Bronze coin

Bronze, forged; dimensions: 3 cm × 0.3 cm; area between the ramparts, square: CIV / 1.o.s.

A *follis* of Justinian I (527–565 AD)

58. Arrowhead

Iron, forged; dimensions: 8.8 cm, feather width: 1.6 cm; area between the ramparts; square: CII / 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane

Date: 6th–first half of 7th century AD

Longer iron three-bladed arrow with fastening tang

	**59. Weight** Bronze, engraved, cast; dimensions: 3.8 cm × 0.8 cm; square: GIII7 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane Date: 6th–first half of 7th century AD A larger circular plate with a circular weight, on the upper surface of which a cross is incised and below the weight mark it is marked with two Cyrillic letter Гs (G). The letters are on the right and left sides below the side arms of the cross.
	**60. Weight** Bronze, engraved, cast; dimensions: 1.7 cm × 1.7 cm × 0.5 cm; square GIII7 1.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane Date: 6th–first half of 7th century AD Small, square, tile-shaped bronze weight. On the upper side, in a circular wreath, are two Cyrillic letters: Н and Г (N and G), above which is an Х (H). There are elongated deep incisions on the letters, possibly to calibrate the weight by pouring lead or tin.
	**61. Balance pan** Bronze, forged, perforated; dimensions 3.8 cm × 0.1 cm; Square EIII / Pov.o.s.; Polimlje Museum, Berane. Date: 6th–first half of 7th century AD Bronze circular balance pan with perforated holes for hanging with a chain.

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