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# Gradishte Taor

## Late Antique Settlement and Fortress

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**Abstract:** *The settlement near the village of Taor belongs to the Late Antique settlements whose existence is linked to the burst of barbarian peoples, who, starting from the second half of the IV century and during the next two centuries, several times would occupy the space of the Balkans. Since then, these small settlements began locating on high dominant positions for their more effective protection and defense. In such a situation their life was inevitably organized adjusting to the small and limited living space. At the same time, on the important strategic points, such as our settlement, they based their military for their protection and the protection of nearby strategic goals.*

*Such closed archaeological units illustrate a very real life of the population during their entire existence and over a long time period, revealing the way of organizing daily activities through organized individual residential houses and the excavations of ceramic pots, tools and work with them. Also, the numerous finds of weapons and military equipment very clearly illustrates the military character of the settlement, especially in the concept of building a defensive wall. This entire organized system of living in very difficult conditions with frequent military attacks is also documented through the excavations of coins, which adequately define the beginning of the creation, the existence and the end of this settlement as a military strategic point.*

**Key words:** *settlement, house, room, wall, findings.*

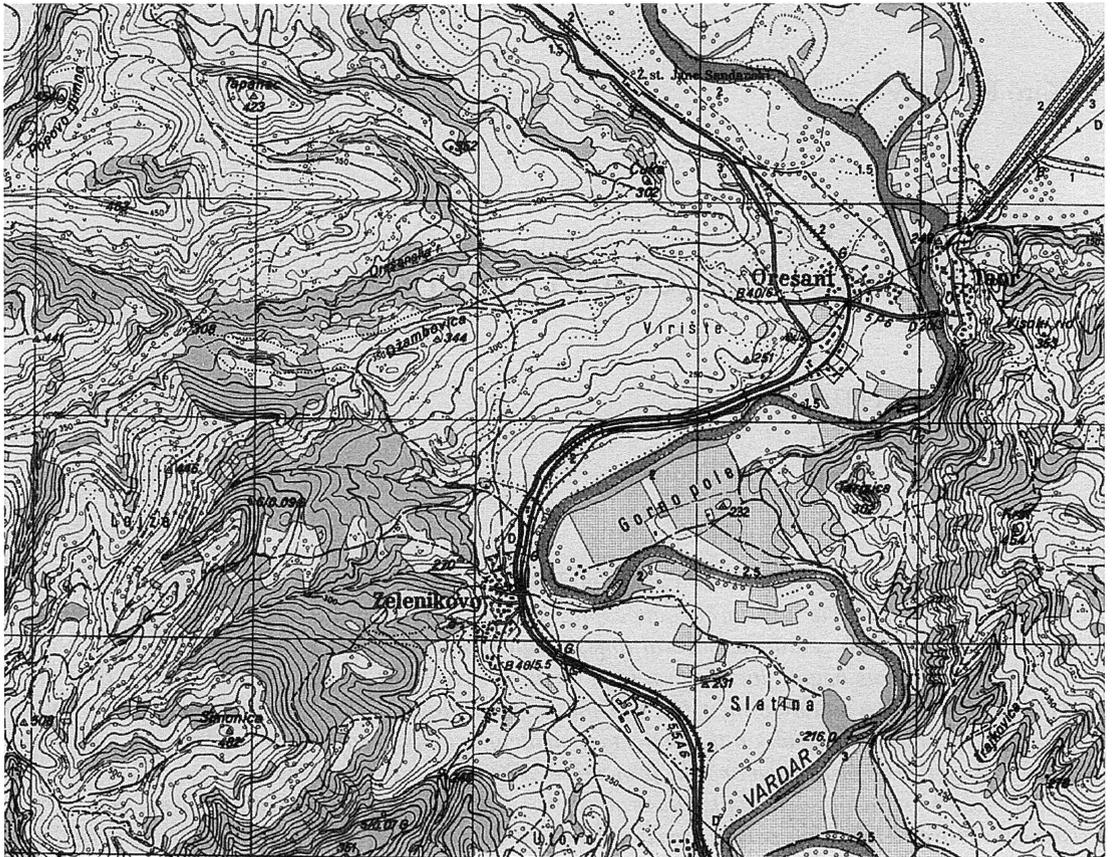
### 1. Location

The archaeological site of Gradishte was first recorded by the English explorer, writer and archaeologist Arthur Evans one hundred years ago.<sup>1</sup> On that occasion, and besides Skupi, he visited our site noting initial information about debris and its location as a position that should be called Tauresium, the birthplace of Emperor Justinian I (525-565). Thus, we come to the first written information about the settlement, the village Taor, identifying it with the ancient settlement of Tauresium described by Procopius as the birthplace of the great emperor Justinian I.<sup>2</sup> After that the settlement is not mentioned in written sources until the second half of the 13th century. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Evans A. 1885, pp. 235-248.

<sup>2</sup> Procopii, pp. 266, 267.



**Fig. 1** - Geographical location of the village Taor (Географска положба на село Таор)

entries of the Tsar Constantine Asen (1257-1277), the current name of the village Taor (Tavor) is mentioned for the first time, connected to the monastery of St. George from Skopje. The village is also mentioned in one charter of King Milutin from year 1300.<sup>3</sup>

After the arrival of the Ottomans and the implementation of the first census, Taor was mentioned twice. During the first half of the 15th century it was mentioned in the census that in Taor there lived 13 families and from 1467 to 1468 in the village there lived 9 families.<sup>4</sup>

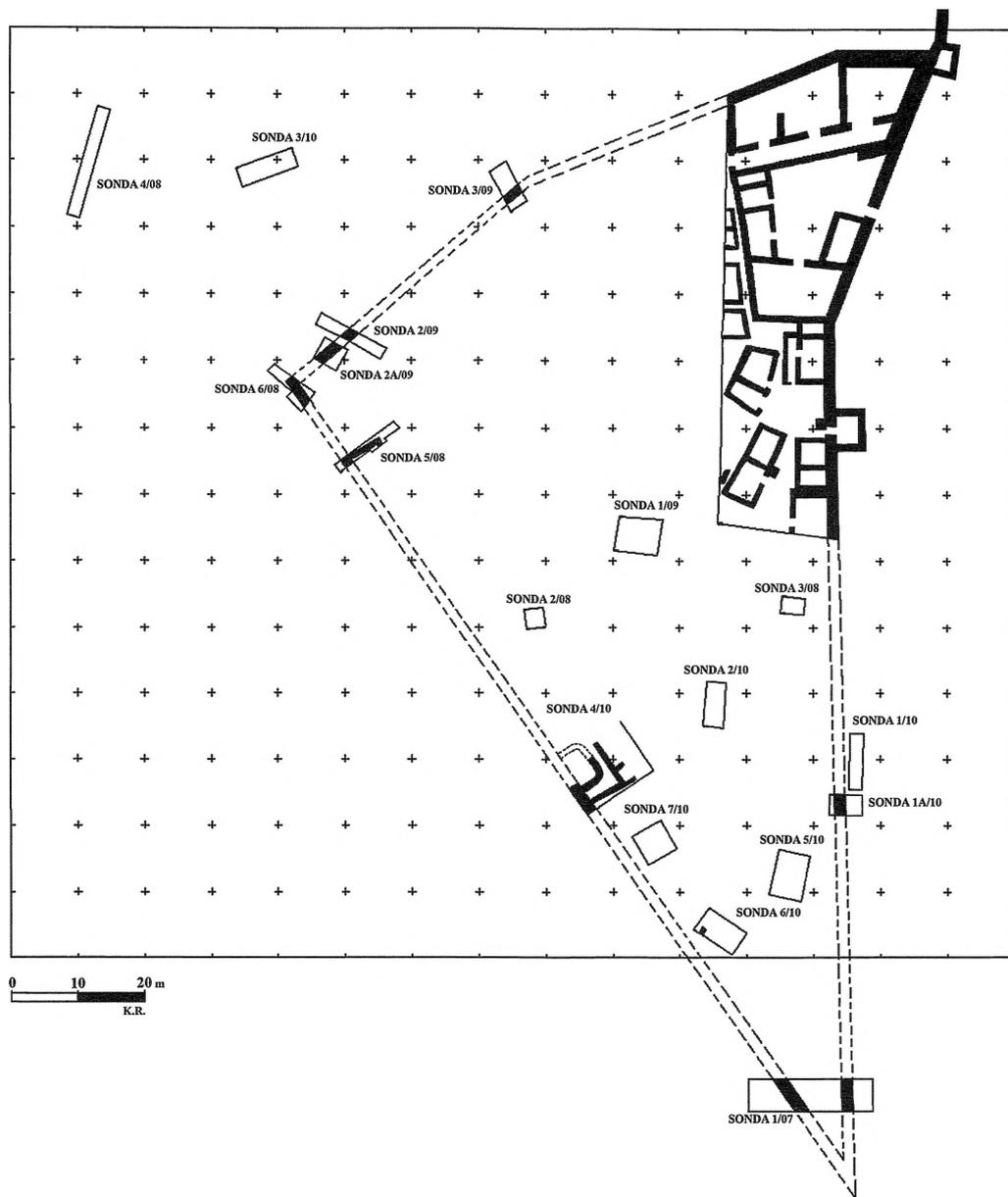
Archaeological explorations of the settlement were not done until the year 2000. Before that, only surface field observations were performed by T. Tomovski and I. Mikulchic and they noticed the basic data for the settlement.<sup>5</sup> To determine the character, extent and stratigraphy of the settlement, in 2000, the Museum of the City of Skopje made the first probe studies. From 2001 until today the settlement has been systematically investigated.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Пурковић А. М. 1940, pp. 96.

<sup>4</sup> Турски документи ... 1976, pp. 173-174; Турски документи ... 1971, pp. 163.

<sup>5</sup> Томоски Т. 1967, pp. 233-239; Микулчиќ И. 1982, pp. 103-106.

<sup>6</sup> Ристов К., 2006, pp. 215-230.; Ристов К., 2013, pp. 78-87.



**Map 1** - Plan of the explored part of the settlement (План на истражениот дел од населбата)

The ancient settlement is located near the village of Taor which is positioned about 20 km southeast of the center of Skopje, on the left bank of the Vardar River, the site where we find the Wetland reeds before getting into Taor gorge (Fig. 1). The only communication between Skopje and this village can be made through the village of Oreshani or through the bridge over the Vardar River. Through a new local road to the village R'zhanichino, the village Taor achieves the shortest connection by the highway Skopje - Gevgelija. In Roman times the northern foot of the settlement passed by the Povardarje main road (Via Axia), which went from Skupi and Stobi through to Thessalonica.

The ancient settlement is located on the northeastern outskirts of the village, extended on a high hill that consists of the Acropolis and two terraces (Map 1). The acropolis is located on the south side, the highest and most dominant position of the settlement, with a visual view of the wider environment. At its southern end merges the eastern and western defensive wall in a tower bastion. South of the tower is dug a deep defensive ditch, which is still recognized on the ground. On the north side of the Acropolis is the first terrace, while the second terrace is north of it and represents the lower town of the neighborhood. On the west and east side of the settlement there is a small terrace. The western side is linked with the lower town and there lies a contemporary necropolis of the village, while the east side is a steep slope, and probably had a defensive function. Remains of earlier building interventions, as well as archaeological finds, were not found on the terraces.

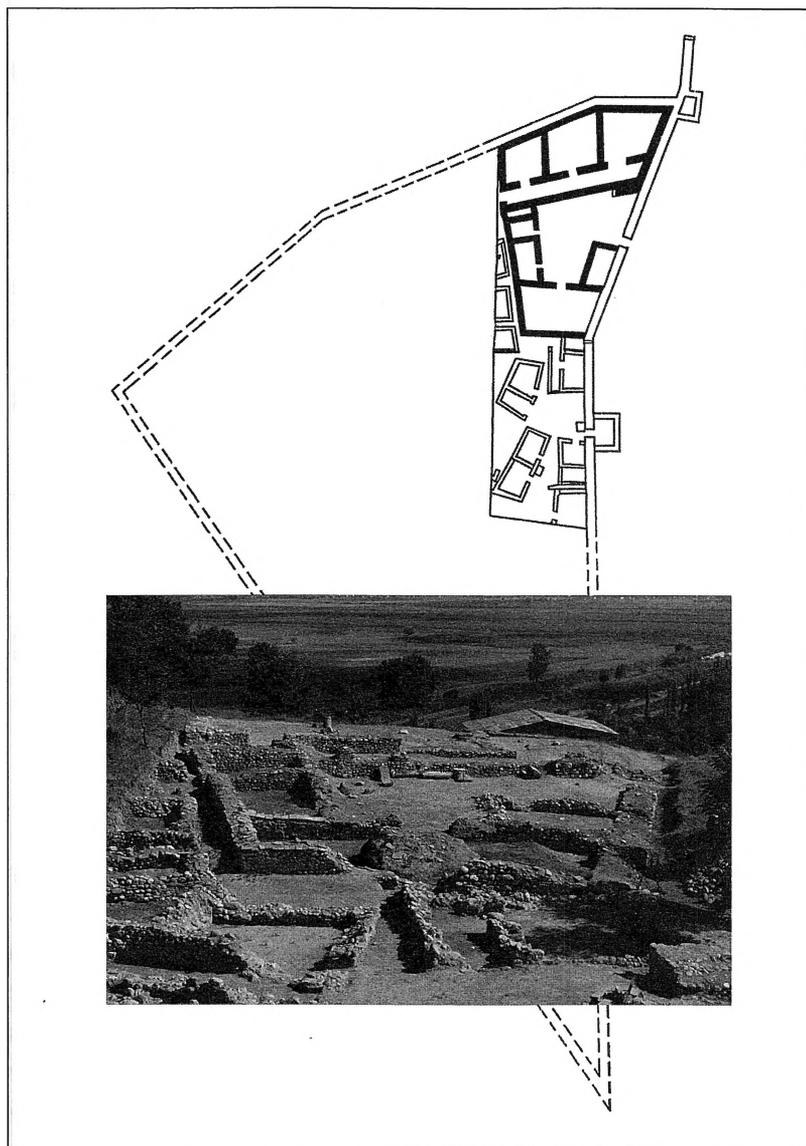
## 2. Facilities

### Public buildings

The first part of the building is on the northeast side of the settlement. The defensive wall was used for its north and east wall. It is oriented east-west, adjusted to the mild leveling on the field and the position of the route of the defensive wall, and it is assumed that they were built simultaneously. The building has three rooms with different sizes and with an open colonnade corridor to the south atrium of the building. Entrances to all three rooms are from the south side. The building has dimensions which cover the greatest length of 27,70 m and a maximum width of about 13 m (Fig. 2). From the floor level the walls are saved about 1m in height, with a width which also was 1m, built with stone bound with lime mortar. From the saved level in height the outside walls of the building were built with building bricks tied with lime mortar, jointing the same thickness as the tile and 0,80 m wide . Internal walls were built only of stone with a width of 1m, and both the inner and outer were plastered.

The corridor connecting the rooms is set on their front side and it is an integral part of the atrium. On its east side it is closed with defensive walls and from the west side, through an entrance about 2 m wide, it communicates with the central western part of the settlement. The colonnade which closes the corridor consists of six pillars made of brick construction with lime mortar jointing the same thickness as the tile. Two of them are found to a height of 0,70 m. All are with a rectangular base measuring 1x1 cm, with a distance from one another of 1,90 m. According to the pieces of the columns in the destruction of the building, it is concluded that the upper zones were connected with arches, while the angles of all the pillars of the four sides are rounded. Archaeological research in this area has shown that they are part of the colonnade floor building construction.

The second part of the building is located south of the previous building, but integrally related to a conceptual whole, although basically there are two separate and specially built facilities. The second part consists of an atrium space and three rooms



**Fig. 2** - Public buildings (Јавна градба)

with different dimensions. The walls were built of dressed stone tied with quality lime plaster on the inside and plastered outside. They have an irregular trapezoidal shape, oriented north - south, with all sides with different dimensions. The northern side is 24,30 m long, the eastern side 27,50 m, the southern side 10,30 m, and the western side 20,70 m. The north side is closed with the colonnade of the north building and east with the defensive wall. The south and west walls are closed in a single unit adapted to the place it occupies. To overcome mild leveling on the ground, the builder laid a foundation deeper than the other buildings, with a height difference of about 0,30 to 0,60 m east to west. The full length of the south and west walls at their base are 1 m wide to the outside, and keeping the relative height of 1 m, built of stone bonded with lime mortar, and hence the tall walls were built of brick construction bound with lime mortar, and jointing of the same thickness as the brick and 0,80 m wide.



Fig. 3 - North part of the atrium (Северен дел од атриумот)

The atrium is located in the central part of the building (Fig. 3). It has a rectangular and irregular basis, with three walls closing the eastern entrance in the defensive wall. All three walls have atrium openings, functionally arranged according to the position they occupy, and customized to the leveling of the ground. They were carved of stone and river bound with lime mortar, 1 m wide, the inner and outer plastered. The north wall is east - west and connects the western defense wall. This wall is part of the previous northern building. The west wall of the atrium in many places is completely preserved to the height of the atrium openings. It extends north to south and connects the north and south walls. It is built of carved stone and river bound with lime mortar. On it are placed two entrances for the second and third room with equal distance to one another. The thresholds are paved and painted with lime mortar. The sides of the entrances are built with brick tied with lime mortar and the ends are rectangle columns and the above parties are bound by arches. The dimensions of the columns are the same on both sides and are 1x0,70 m. The masonry construction is brick with lime mortar jointing the same thickness as the bricks. The southern wall of the atrium extends east-west connecting the defense wall with the west wall of the atrium. It is built and carved with a boulder and tied with lime mortar. There is a paved entrance to the southern room, covered with lime mortar, 1,85 m wide. It is flanked between two pillars with dimensions of 1x0,60 m and built of brick with lime mortar jointing, in which the above parties are encapsulated in arches. The sides of the entrance are built with brick masonry bound with lime mortar.



**Fig. 4** - Stone bases for wooden columns in the atrium (Камени бази за дрвени столбови во атриум)



**Fig. 5** - Marble sculpture found in the atrium (Мермерна пластика откриена во атриумот)

The floor of the entire atrium area was paved with construction brick, but because of subsequent interventions minimal traces remain. According to the numerous remains of roof tiles found near its walls, it is concluded that the building had a roof construction. Inside the atrium to the west and south walls were discovered stone bases for wooden columns. The west wall revealed amorphous six stones and on the south wall are two stones, processed from the top and smoothly apart from one another approximately 1,90 m ( Fig. 4). They are buried in level the floor and have identical height values. Their position and height value indicates that they served as bases for wooden columns that held the roof construction. Inside the atrium was revealed a marble sculpture, which consists of three pillars with a height of 1,60 m, two bases and three impost capitals, all without decorations ( Fig. 5).

The premises of the second part of the first building are the largest. It is located south of the atrium and has a trapezoidal shape and bears the entire width of the building at

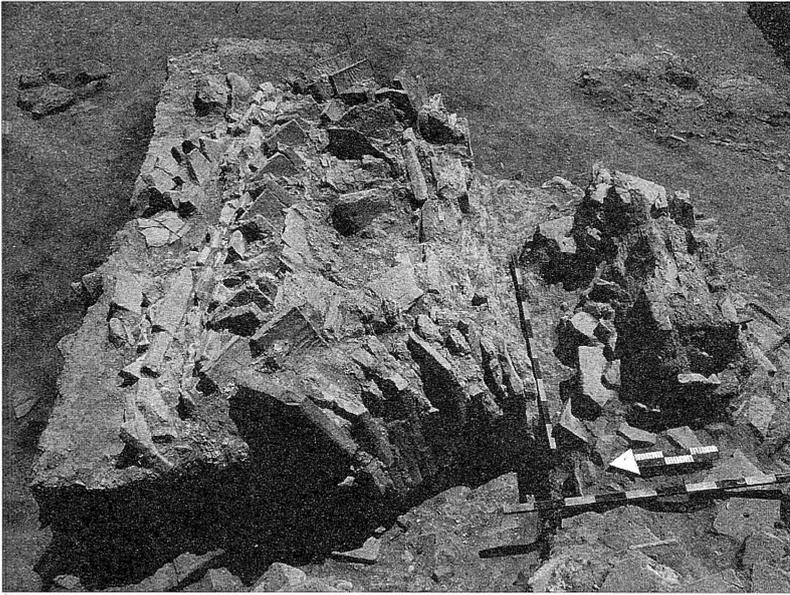


**Fig. 6** - Room 1 of the Atrium Building (Просторија 1 од градба со атриум)

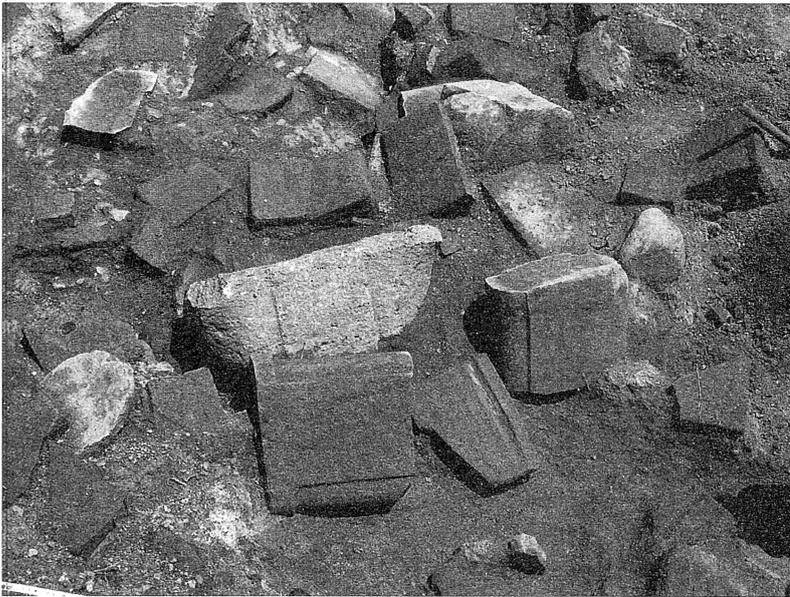
this location. It is oriented east-west and its dimensions are a width of 7,60 m, with a greater length of the north wall at 14,20 m, while the smaller length of the south wall amounts to 10,30 m (Fig. 6).

In this room in its original position was detected a massive fragment of the southern wall, surrounded by marble columns (menno), marble bases and capitals. It is part of a wall or pillar which combines two windows (biphora) built with a brick building connected with quality lime mortar, jointing the same thickness as the tile (Fig. 7). The column is 2 m high and 0,80 m wide. Along its length biphora are stored on the left and right, while the middle part is a very clearly preserved work of masonry. From the upper ceiling to the lower floor and between the arches in the triangular area of the column there are two friezes, which was part of the relief facade decoration. The first frieze is set in the upper zone and the second in the lower zone. The frieze in the upper zone is composed of seven smaller straight triangles and between them six triangles made of crushed brick building and inside filled with lime mortar. The frieze in the lower zone is composed of three large triangles that are filled inside with lime mortar. The pillar was a part of the south wall of the building. In the vicinity were discovered two smaller marble pillars (Menno) as well elements of two pillars, three bases and three capitals ( Fig. 8).

The other two rooms are located on the west side of the building. Admission to both is from the east side with entrance from the atrium. The second room occupies



**Fig. 7** - Fragment of wall between two biphora (room 1)  
(Фрагмент од ѕид помеѓу две бифори (просторија 1))

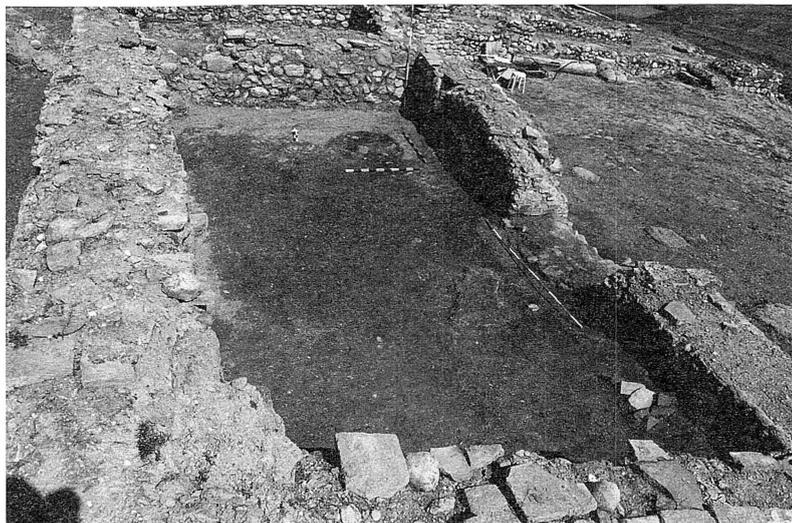


**Fig. 8** - Bases and poles (Menno) for biphora (Бази и столбови (меноа) за бифори)

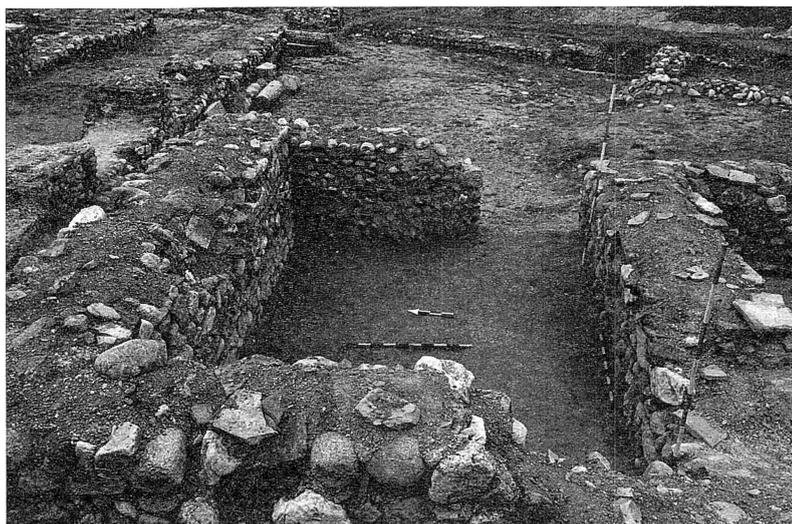
an area of 7,20x3,80 m and has a rectangular base (Fig. 9), while the third room has dimensions of 3,80x4 m and is almost with a rectangle base (Fig. 10). They are built in a specific way with the atrium openings on the east side to atrium. Only the entrances are made with poles on the sides ending with roof construction and masonry with brick bonded with lime mortar.

Inside the premises there was discovered a large concentration of construction debris, consisting of roof tiles, building stone and construction brick, including numerous remains of roof construction. Under the rubble on the same level of the floor on the northern half of the second room there was revealed a sewage pit.

**Fig. 9** - Room 2 of the building with an atrium (Просторија 2 од градба со атриум)



**Fig. 10** - Room 3 of the building with an atrium (Просторија 3 од градба со атриум)



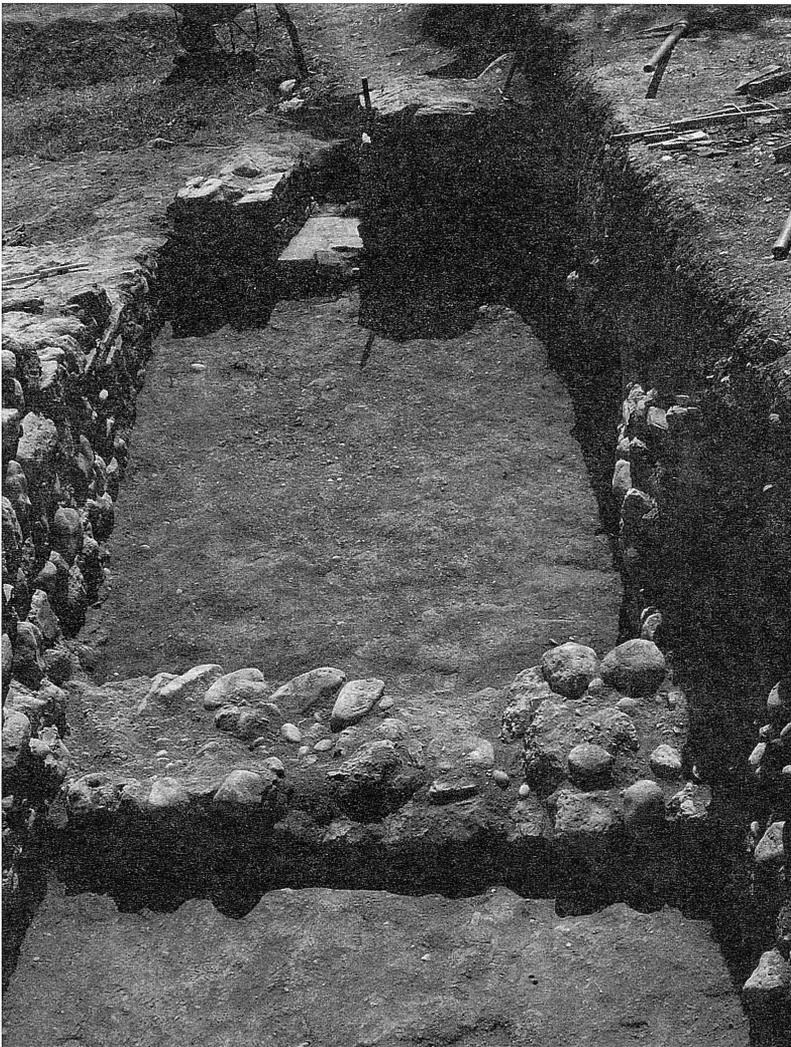
The space between the two buildings on the west side served to drain the rain and moisture through the western wall (Fig. 11). It was designed in the wall that had a small hole in the upper part and vaulted with dimensions of 0,30 x 0,50 m. The atmospheric water flowed through it from the west of the neighborhood, through the atrium and was directed to the eastern entrance to the defense wall. South of the building there was discovered an identical hole for the draining of the atmospheric water, built in the defense wall and with space for the separation of wastewater before it (Fig. 12).

### **Houses for living**

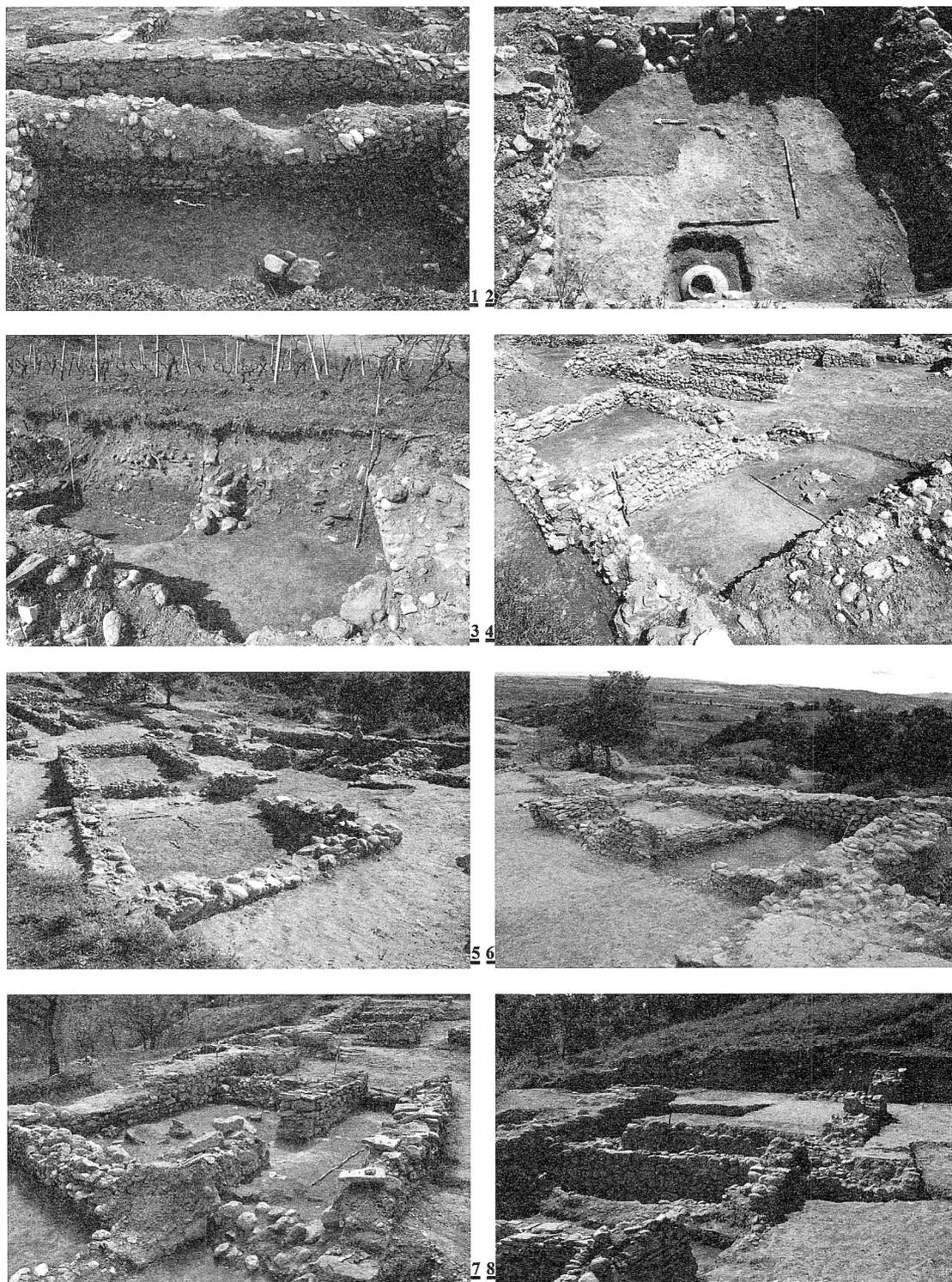
In the research of the settlements and beside the public buildings, there were found 12 houses or parts of houses for living each with different dimensions and orientation, and placed in the space of the settlement according to the position that occupied other facilities around them (Fig. 13). The houses are mostly made up of two rooms that



**Fig. 11** - Space for drainage (between the buildings) (Простор за одвод на вода (пomeѓу двете градби))



**Fig. 12** - Space separation and hole in the wall for drainage of atmospheric water (Простор за сепарација и отвор во бедемот за одвод на атмосферските води)



**Fig. 13** - Houses for living: 1-House 1; 2-House 2; 3-House 3; 4-House 4.5; 5-House 6;  
 6-House 7; 7-House 8; 8-House 9 (Куќи за живеење: 1-Куќа 1; 2-Куќа 2; 3-Куќа 3; 4-Куќа  
 4,5; 5-Куќа 6; 6-Куќа 7; 7-Куќа 8; 8-Куќа 9)



**Fig. 14** - Baked in oven for baking bread (Фурна со печка за печење леб)

are not connected with a door between them but communicate independently of each other, and the openings for the doors are opened on exterior walls. In the space, each are separated by narrow corridor streets with a width of 1,20 to 1,50 m, which emphasized the density of their placement in the community. In the interior of the defensive wall there were discovered twelve individual residential houses, but only three of them are complete, while others are only in parts.

All individual residential houses were built of crushed stone and tied with mud, with walls about 0,80 m wide, while the internal dimensions of the walls are various, ranging from 8x4 m to 10x5 m. The height of the houses was built of stone to some extent, while the roof with brick. According to the discovered concentrations of roof tiles in the inner part of the houses, we conclude that every house had a roof construction consisting of wooden beams.

In all of the houses and without exception to the floor level, a large concentration of rubble composed of building stone, roofing tegula and fragmented construction brick was found. Inside were found very few fragments of pottery and metal objects. Outside of the overall dimensions of the house, the construction debris was very much reduced, suggesting that the walls and roof structure collapsed into the inner part during its destruction.

The floor is covered with white and yellow purified clay, set on and pressed firmly in gravelly ground, which served as a base. In most of the houses were found storage vessels (pithoi) dug in to the floor. Beside the pythoses in the houses are found fragments

of pottery, coins, elements of building construction and other finds that suggest the final destruction was in the period from the IV-VI century.

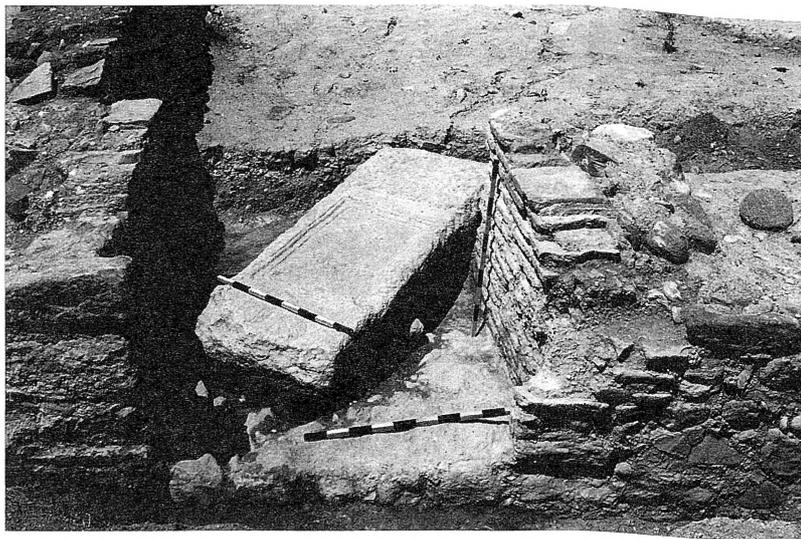
The great destruction that occurred during the second half of the VI century visibly changed the economic status of the population. Life in the village was not interrupted, but was now enveloped with reduced intensity. The population was reduced and residents were forced to fight for their survival. Archaeological studies have confirmed that subsequent interventions in this area occurred shortly after the devastation at the end of the VI or early VII century and significantly disrupted their function. It is known only that this space was turned into a function for other needs. So in this s/e part was built an oven for baking bread (Fig. 14), atrium openings to the west and south walls were closed by a wall of stone bound with mud 0,45 m wide and on the north side of the atrium was built a massive wall with a ladder to access the defensive wall. To these interventions belong secondary grave stele set to the threshold at the eastern entrance of the settlement in order to scale.

### **Defensive wall**

The defense wall was detected with a length of about 70 m east and about 5 m from the north side. Its width equals 1,60 m. It was built of large stone and massive stone adapted to the facade appearance, while the middle part is filled with petty stone bound with lime mortar. It covers the entire perimeter around the central part of the district and lower town on the north side.

In the north-east angle is found a defensive tower with a rectangular shape whose dimensions are 4,30x2,70 m, while the walls are 1 m wide. Hence the defensive wall continues south and climbs the north terrace of the acropolis and finishes on the highest and most dominant point, uniting the western defensive wall in a strong tower bastion. About 22 m south of the angular tower in the defensive wall is detected an entrance of the settlement, whose width equals 1,70 m. On the side of the entrance are set small trenches in the form of tines, which follow the entire height of the angle and served to set the wooden door. The threshold is paved with stone and mortar. At the entrance is discovered a marble tombstone stele with dimensions of 2,10x0,80x0,25 m in a secondary position (Fig. 15). It is associated with later interventions of the settlement to serve as an additional entry threshold.

The second tower of the eastern section of the defensive wall was discovered 32 m from the entrance and about 56 m south of the first angular tower (Fig. 16). It is an external defense tower with dimensions of 4,45x3,35 m. The width of all three walls is 1 m. The entrance to the tower is mounted on the inside of the central part. On the left of the entrance is detected residue from the wall with a rectangular base of 1,35x1,65 m, built of brick construction bound with lime mortar jointing the same thickness as the tile. At 2,5 m north of the first residue is discovered another residue of wall with a rectangular base with almost identical dimensions of 1,35x2,00 m, but built of crushed stone bound with lime mortar. Their position suggests that these are remains of a ladder that served as access to the upper parts of the defensive wall.



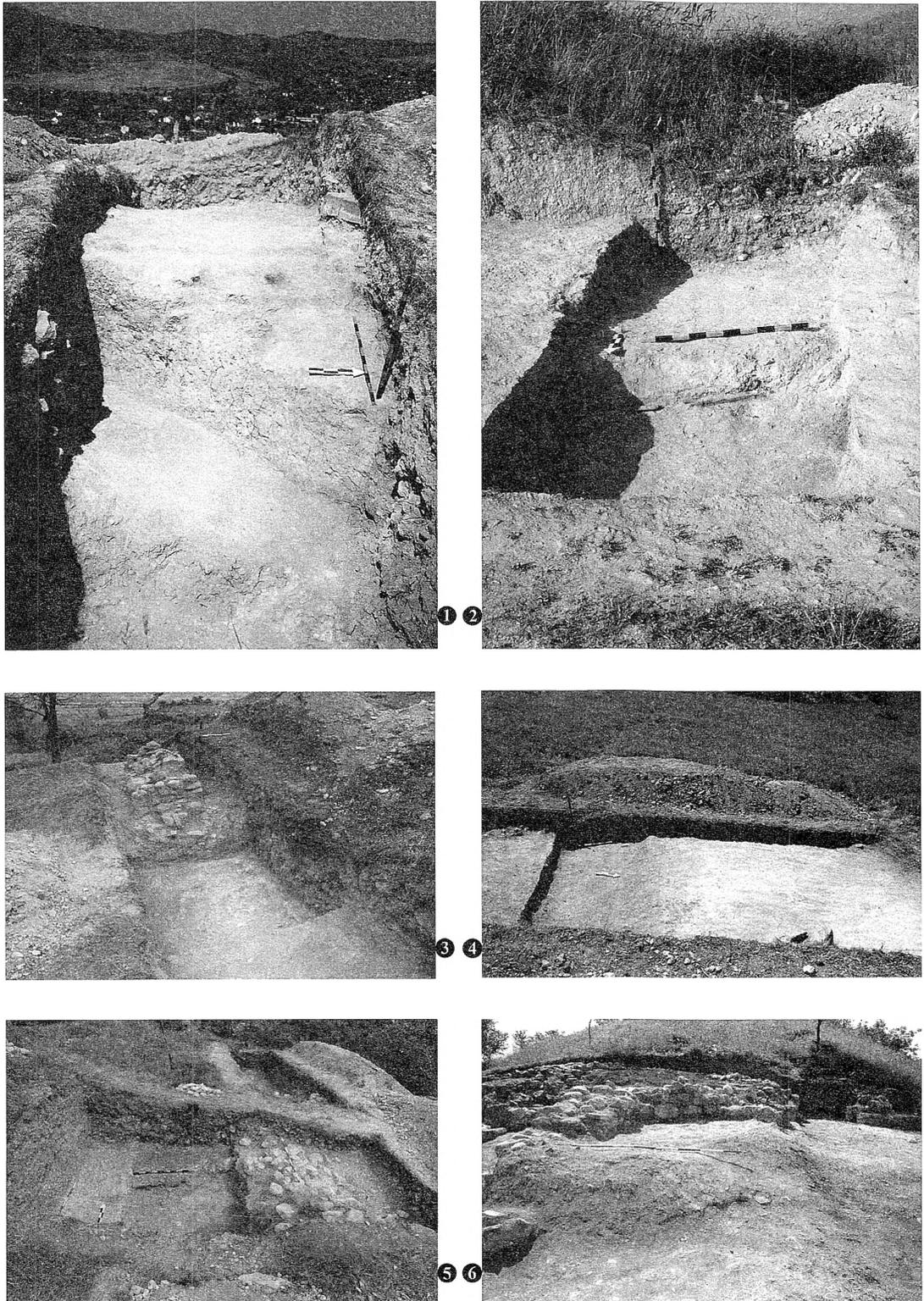
**Fig. 15** - Eastern entrance to the settlement (Источен влез во населбата)



**Fig. 16** - East Tower 2 turret (Кула 2 на источен бедем)

The third tower was discovered on the west wall of the turret, almost in the middle of the length that occupies the central core area of the north-south direction. It is a semicircular inner tower with walls 1 m wide, not as regular external towers, but placed in the inner part of the settlement. Its positioning on this site, the builder is probably justified because of the extremely steep slope of this place and the inability to project a tough enough base on the outside, but probably more due to construction or a functional need that imposed the setting of this accessory to the defense wall to ensure its stability and strength, positioned from inside. From the tower it was discovered the south half, while the other half is destroyed along with the defensive wall.

On the south side of the settlement merges the eastern and western defensive walls fortified with a polygonal tower. The tower was discovered by research in 2007. At this



**Fig. 17** - Detected by sections of the wall surveys (1-Probe 1/07, 2-Probe 2a/09, three-probe 6/08, 4-Probe 3/09, 5-Probe 1a/10, 6-Probe 4/10) (Открити делови на бедемот преку сондирања (1-Сонда 1/07; 2-Сонда 2a/09; 3-Сонда 6/08; 4-Сонда 3/09; 5-Сонда 1a/10; 6-Сонда 4/10)

stage of the research we are not able to predict how long their sides are and what are the dimensions that they occupy. Probably it is a tower - a bastion that is larger than the other three. The probing of this place discovered parts of the east and west walls which are 1 m wide at the base. In the research into the inner part of the tower there was found a large quantity of building rubble, but no roof tiles, so basically we can conclude that there was no roof construction.

Parts of the defensive wall were discovered through surveys in different places of the settlement (Map 1). Almost the entire route of the defensive wall that encloses the central core of the settlement is discovered or identified in parts (Fig. 17). With the probe 1a/10 was discovered a part of the eastern section of the defensive wall. The width of the base is the same as its parts at 1,60m. With the probe 5/08 there was noticed an imprint of the defensive wall. The same thing happened with the probes 8/08, 2/09, 2a/09 and 3/09, and there was discovered an imprint or the negative of the defensive wall. It turned out that this part of the route of the defensive wall is established in very shallow depth, from 0,10 to 0,30 m, which is basically a very small depth of the foundation turret taking into consideration its width, length and the space that closes it. Given the usual structure and quality of the mortar and almost identical stories of masonry, remains of defensive walls confirmed that its planning and construction were made simultaneously in one stroke. On all the places where it is found or identified defensive walls have the same width of 1,60 m.

The maximum length is found on the east side of about 70 m, while the rest of the length is from 2 m to 6 m, depending on the size of the probes. It features a very shallow depth that ranges from 0,20 m to 0,50 m, which at first glance does not provide stability and strength but because of the simultaneous strengthening of masonry and defensive towers at the same time represents the leverage of the pilasters and provides complete stability and strength.

### 3. Archaeological findings

The systematic archaeological research carried out in the neighborhood for more than ten years, and despite the archaeological contents that reflect the state of objects during their existence, there were discovered numerous artifacts on almost the entire space occupied by the settlement. From these finds the most numerous are fragments of pottery, among which the most significant are the local production of ceramics intended for everyday use, while a small number of fragments are detected as luxury imported ceramics. Almost all ceramic production discovered in Taor is found in analogous examples in pottery discovered in Skupi and processed by Marina Onchevska Todorovska.<sup>7</sup>

Local pottery was made mostly of clay often consisting of stained quartz and mica, with gray to dark-gray color because of baking, and mostly dating from the period of

<sup>7</sup> Ончевска Тодоровска М. 2004, pp. 45-83.



**Fig. 18** - Ceramic Red grilling (Керамика со црвена боја на печење)

late antiquity in the second half of the V and VI century . Fragments of purified clay that have red or dark red color from baking with a red coat, can be found in small numbers. They usually tie in with the earlier horizon of existence of the settlement during the IV and the first half of the V century (Fig. 18). Among the forms of local ceramic, pots are most prevalent, followed by deep and shallow bowls, pots, lids for covering the pots and as accompanying elements in almost every house there are storage pots i.e. pithoi for the storage of grains.<sup>8</sup> Most fragments are found in the southern half of the public construction and according to their position when they were discovered they were on the placed on the floor during construction of the facility. As an accompanying inventory in one of the rooms of the houses 2, 6 and 7, described objects were found buried in the floor. Among the imported ceramics are found fragments of amphorae, a shallow serving plate, a bowl, cups and a fully preserved as well as several fragmented parts of oil lamps. It was made of purified clay with dark red to gray color from baking. Among the fragments the most prevalent are glazed pottery prevailing with green enamel, then a few fragments with printed ornaments that are commonly linked to the period of the IV-VI century.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ончевска Тодоровска М. 2004, pp. 58-71.

<sup>9</sup> Ончевска Тодоровска М. 2004, pp. 45-48.



Fig. 19 - Fibula (Фибули)

Besides fragments of pottery, there are discovered numerous fragments of glass vessels and window glass. Almost all of the fragments are with a light to olive-green color, made from free blowing and the window glass is a translucent light color worked with molding. From the fragments, glass containers can be distinguished in several forms. Among them the most common are glass lamps and those with a circular chair in the shape of a cup which is also used as lamps for lighting. Their use is mostly tied to sacred places accurately dated in the V and more often in the VI century.<sup>10</sup> Most glass vessels and window glass were found in the public building with an atrium, but also in individual residential houses.

Besides jewelry rings, several earrings, and bracelets, the most prevalent are fibulas. From the fibulas the most significant is a bow fibula with a curled leg and spiral threaded at the head that continues in the pin, usually made of iron and rarely of bronze. It's about the spectrum of fibula that exist in the VI and the first half of the VII century, so called "Byzantine type" presented on the entire Balkan area (Fig. 19).<sup>11</sup> In Macedonia these types of fibula are discovered in many sites.<sup>12</sup>

The various tools, both agricultural and craft tools, and designed for everyday use, consist of many kinds. Among them are included shovels, hoes, scythes, sickles, knives, augers, chisels, scissors, saws, axes, scales and other tools, all made of iron (Fig. 20). Depending on the size and the purpose for which they were used, they have four types of brackets for the wooden handles: in the form of a thorn, in the form

<sup>10</sup> Popović M. 1999, pp. 108-109.; Ivanišević V. 1990, pp. 7-17.

<sup>11</sup> Măguranu A. 2008, pp. 1-29.; Curta F., Găndilă A. 2013, pp. 101-176.; Curta F. 2013, pp. 49-70.

<sup>12</sup> Микулчиќ И., Лилчиќ В. 1995, pp. 257-262.; Манева Е. 1992, pp. 23-26.; Николовски З. 2013, pp. 68.

of a handle, in the form of the Latin U, and in opening of the tool. Their form had reached no higher transformations over a long period of time, so no major changes are done and can be tracked from the I until the beginning of VII century. And during the medieval period they underwent some noticeable changes so in these multilayer and complex settlements there can hardly be determined the chronological affiliation without a more specific archaeological context of discovery. This especially refers to tools for woodworking (sawing, auger, chisels) whose shape, without any visible changes, can still be seen today.

Although one of the most common finds in ancient and medieval settlements, tools are the most neglected and studied as inventory items which are used in the daily activities of residents of a neighborhood. This is probably due to the constant form that they carry as these items didn't experience any major developmental stages over a long period of time. The tools that are found

in villages of the district of Taor belong to the repertoire of known samples found in other sites in the Balkans and the wider space.<sup>13</sup> Their dating in the period from the IV to the beginning of the VII century basically represents the chronological affiliation of the settlement established through numerous other artifacts.

In the survey of the settlement there were found diverse weapons (spears, arrows, knives, swords and axes), military equipment (helmet, umbo, armor plates) all made of iron, and elements of military equipment (buckle and belt applications), made of bronze and rarely from iron. These finds suggest that in the settlement there was stationed a military checkpoint, less likely to control the road that crossed at the foot of the settlement, but as well as for the defense of the settlement. Besides the several fragmented parts of battle axes, swords and spears, the largest numbers of weapon findings are arrowheads. Following the form of the wooden part of the thorn there occur two basic types such as a thistle and a handle, while in the shape of the arrow there



Fig. 20 - Tools (Алати)

<sup>13</sup> Поповић И. 1988, pp. 5-166.; Чолаков И. Д. 2010, pp. 5-176.; Поповић М. 1999, pp. 113-117.

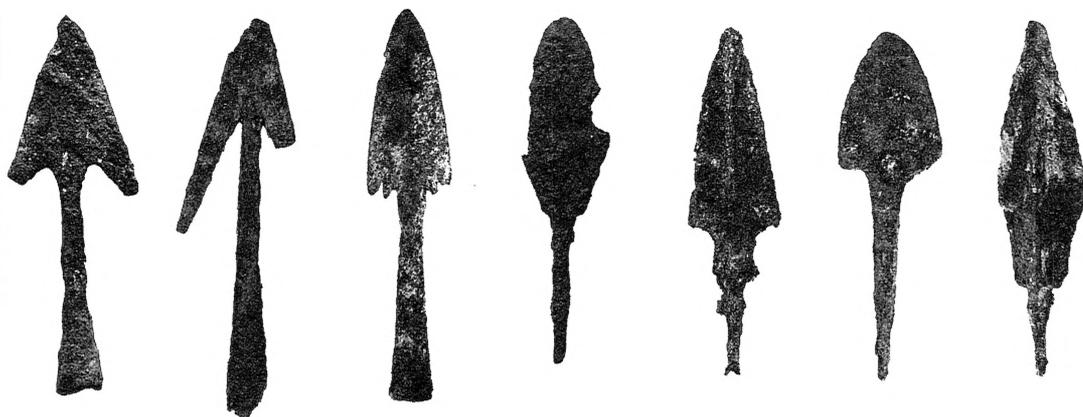


Fig. 21 - Arrowheads (Стрелки)

are several varieties, such as a trefoil section avaric type, which is punched and flat (with wings, rhomboid, leaf, and triangular etc.) (Fig. 21). Their exact chronological determination is rather difficult to determine without an accurate detection of their context so these finds typically are less subject to scientific typology. Their form through different variations can be tracked almost from the Iron Age, and numerous analogies are also found in samples from the Middle Ages. Finds from Taor belong to the famous repertoire of finds discovered in Macedonia, the Balkans and elsewhere in Eastern Europe and Russia,<sup>14</sup> mostly dating from the period of the second half of the IV to the beginning of the VII century, a time when the settlement intensively existed.

From military equipment in Taor were discovered a helmet, umbo, body armor tiles, and more items of equipment such as buckles, applications and ends for belts. One complete and fragments of two other helmets (one fragment from a clasp type) belong to the Late Antique type known as Spangenhelm (Fig. 22). It is a barbaric helmet that exists in the VI century. In Macedonia and until now there was found only one fragmented helmet in Heraclea in Bitola, from the clasp type and part of the helmet (paragnatida) in Mark Towers near Skopje,<sup>15</sup> while in the Balkans and elsewhere they are discovered in slightly greater numbers.<sup>16</sup> More tiles are discovered in Taor that belong to lamellar armor (Fig. 23) that were in use during the VI-VII century.<sup>17</sup> Among them are plates of another armor from the type known as Lorica Squamata (Fig. 24) which was in use during the I-IV century, of which later would develop lamellar armor. Unlike plates in lamellar armor which are made of iron and are elongated with a narrow rectangular shape, in Lorica Squamata they are wider and shorter, have a rounded bottom and are made of bronze or a combination of bronze and iron plates.

<sup>14</sup> Манева Е. 1985, pp. 49-59.; Микулчиќ И. 1995, pp. 248, Fig. 5-6.; Livaja I. R. 2001, pp. 123-152.; Witner-Wryblewska A., Kontny B., 2006, pp. 104-122.; Медведев А.Ф., 1966.

<sup>15</sup> Манева Е., 1986, pp. 71-88.; Манева Е., 1987, pp. 101-111.; Микулчиќ И., 1982, pp. 51, Fig. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Manojlović-Marjanski M., 1964.; Dautova-Ruševljan V., Vujović M., 2011; Vinski Z., 1982, pp. 7-34.; James S., 1986, pp. 107-134.; Grancsay S. V., 1949, pp. 272—281.

<sup>17</sup> Bugarski I., 2005, pp. 161-179.; Sanchez J.V., (2008), pp. 195-210.

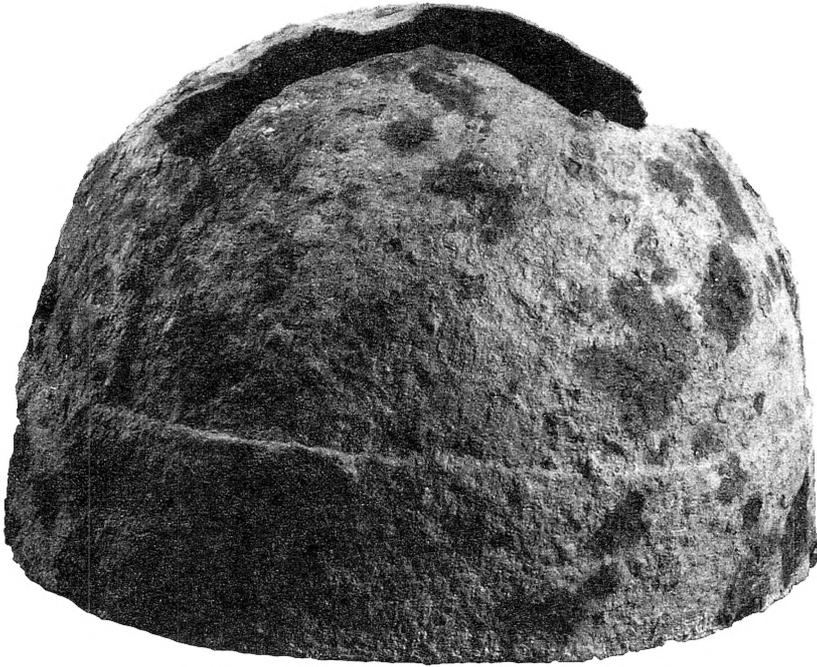


Fig. 22 - Helmet (Шлем)

In Taor as parts of military equipment there are found more buckle types, applications and belt ends. As a special type apart from Suchidava buckles, but among them are found elliptical frame buckles with an accented carrier tongue, buckles with a small frame and massive tongue, heart frame buckles, buckles for bags, double frame buckles and buckles with a four angle base frame made of bronze or iron. Suchidava buckles (Fig. 25) are mostly tied to Avars and in the Balkans are characteristic in the period of the VI century.<sup>18</sup> Molded in bronze and less of silver. The frame is rectangular with a concave saddle for a tongue in the middle. The lower part of the shackles is perforated with several openings with a characteristic motif of a cross in the middle and crescent motif at the bottom. Given the composition this basically mimics the human face. Buckles like these before and after the VI century are not known.

Applications and belt ends occurred during the VI century. They exist in various forms, but usually the body is in a heart shape and exclusively decorated on the front side, while on the back there is usually placed two buttons for a sewing belt (Fig. 26). The decoration is different and mostly with floral motifs less geometric and more often angular ends are decorated with one grain in the shape of a tear that apart from a decorative motif serves to strengthen the application. They are prevalent over the entire Balkan area and wider and almost unchanged in their form which persisted until the XI century.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Манева Е., 1988, pp 47.; Микулчиќ И., Лилчиќ В., 1995, pp 266-273.; Madgearu A. 1998, pp. 217-222.; Werner J. 1955, 39-46, Tf. VIII/6-11.

<sup>19</sup> Ончевска-Тодоровска М. 2005, pp. 21-32.; Рашев Р., 1984, pp. 128-135.; Станилов С., 1991, pp. 5-70.



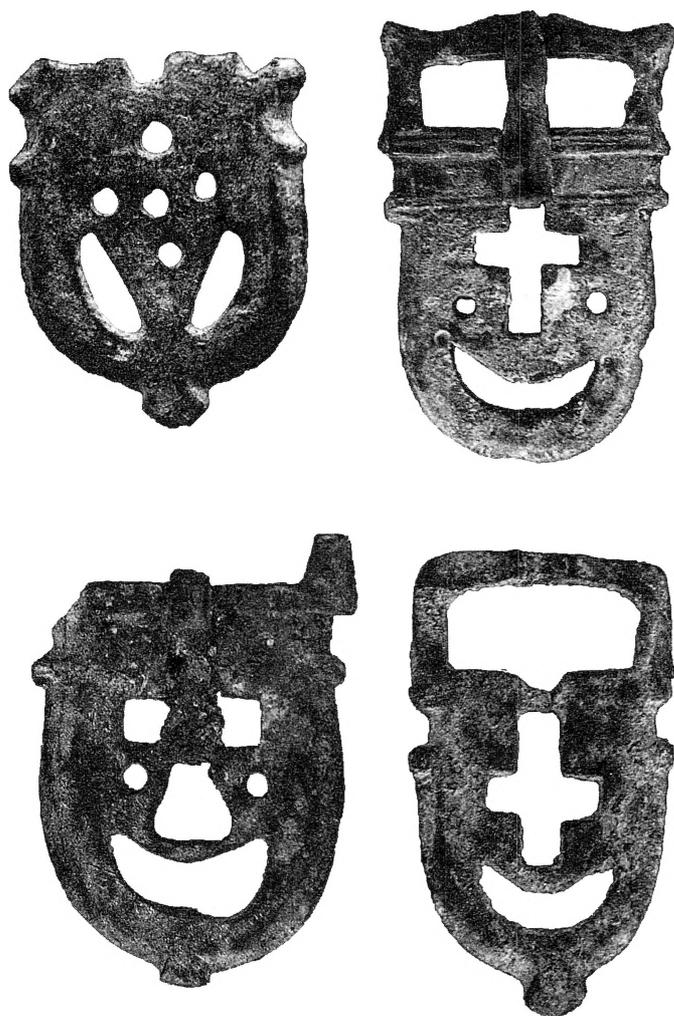
**Fig. 23** - Tiles type of armor Lamellar (Плочки од ламеларен тип оклоп)



**Fig. 24** - Tiles type of armor Lorica Squamata (Плочки од оклоп тип Lorica Squamata)

Besides these objects in Taor there have been discovered 528 coins (Fig. 27, 28) minted from bronze, one of which is a gold solidus of Theodosius II (402-450).<sup>20</sup> Of these, two belong to emissions minted from Macedonian cities (Pella: II century BC) and other areas (Epirus: III-II century BC). By the beginning of the III century in Taor coins had not yet been introduced. Since Caracalla (198-217), Roman coins were present until the reigns of Valentinian III (425-455). Unlike the III century which included individual samples from several emperors such as Claudius Gothic (268-

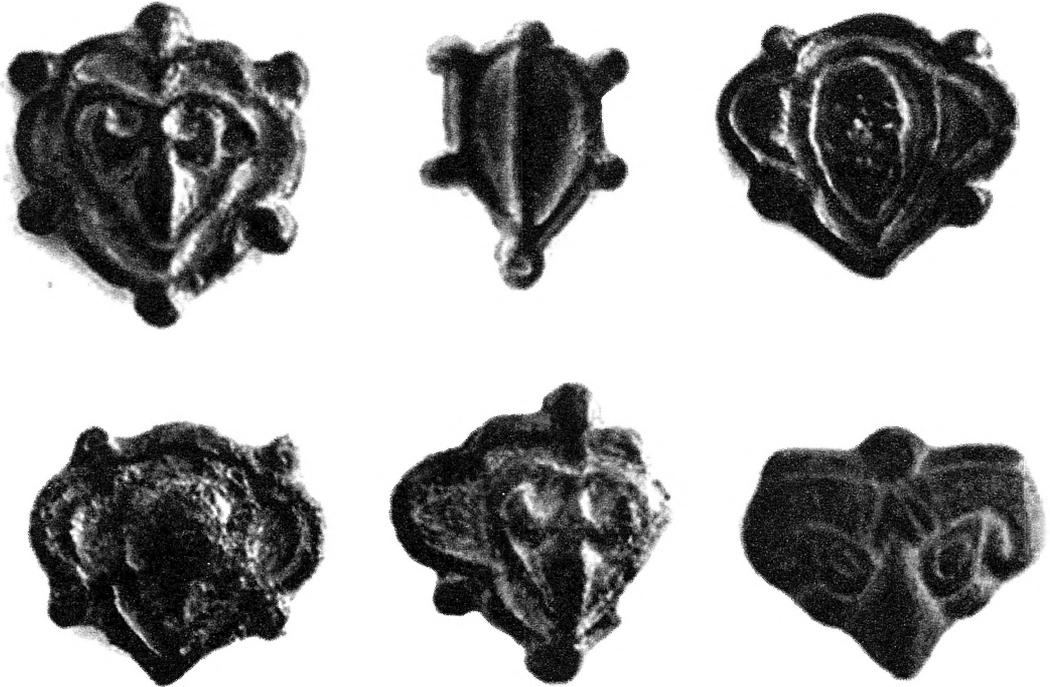
<sup>20</sup> Ristov K., 2012, pp. 14-21.; Милошевски В., 2012.



**Fig. 25** - Buckle type Suchidava  
(Токи тип Сучидава)

270), Prob (276-282) and Diocletian (284-305), during the IV century the circulation of coins in Taor dramatically increased. From this time emissions of coins are present from almost all Roman emperors. Of these, 22 samples were detected from Constantius II (324-361), Constantius (337-350), Valentinian I (364-375), Valens (364-378), and Gratian (367-383) is represented with 5 or 6 samples. Valentinian II (375-392) is represented with 14, Theodosius I (379-395) with 25, and Arcadius (383-408) with 35 samples. From the V century forward in Taor very few coins have been discovered. By Valentinian III there are represented individual samples of emissions from several emperors, and then after Valentinian III until Anastasius (491-518) no emperor is represented.

From the VI century in Taor there are discovered most coins. About 300 samples belong to this period which is almost 60% of the total number of coins discovered. Of these only Justinian I (527-565) is represented with 140 samples, Anastasius with 17, Justin I (518-527) with 30, Justin II (565-578) with 83, Tiberius II Constantine (578-582) with 9 and Maurice (582-602) with 2 samples. With the research in Taor coins were discovered between the VII-IX centuries.



**Fig. 26** - Applications for belt (Апликации за каиш)

From the period of the Middle Ages there were discovered a few coins. From the X century were discovered only 3 samples from Roman I Lakapen (920-944), while from the XI century there was not discovered any other samples. Other samples belong to the period of the XII century and with 3 samples each are included Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180) and Isaac II Angel (1185-1195), while 2 samples are represented by Alexius III Comnenus (1195-1203). After this period there was no circulation of coins in the settlement which has been discovered.



**Fig. 27** - Coins: 1-Caracalla (198-217); 2-Diocletian (284-305); 3-Macsimian Herculus (286-310); 4-Valentinian I (364-375); 5-Valens (364-378); 6-Gratian (367-383); 7-Theodosius I (379-395); 8-Arcadius (383-408); 9-Theodosius II (402-450); 10-Anastasius (491-518); 11-Justin I (518-527); 12-Justinian I (527-565);



**Fig. 28** - Coins: 1-Justin II (565-578); 2-Mauricius (582-602); 3-Roman I Lacapenus (920-944); 4-Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180); 5-Isaac II Angelus (1185-1195); 6-Alexius III Comnenus (1195-1203).

## Градиште Таор Доцноантичка населба и утврдување

### *Резимé*

Селото Таор се наоѓа на левиот брег на реката Вардар, на местото каде што се извлекува од мочуришниот шамак и навлегува во Таорската Клисура. Оддалечен е околу 20 км југоисточно од центарот на Скопје. Локалитетот Градиште каде што е лоцирана античката населба, се наоѓа на североисточната периферија на селото, сместен на висок рид кој го сочинуваат акропола и две тераси.

За првпат локалитетот е евидентиран од англискиот истражувач, археолог и патеписец Артур Еванс, уште пред стотина години, а посведочен од античкиот автор Прокопиј. Краткиот престој во Скопје, Еванс го искористил да посети неколку локалитети. Покрај Скупи го посетил и нашиот локалитет, забележувајќи првични информации за остатоците и неговата местоположба како позиција на која треба да се бара Тауресиум, родното место на императорот Јустинијан I (525-565).

Првите археолошки истражувања на локалитетот се изведени во 2000 година, а се истражува до денес. Во текот на истражувањата откриени се повеќе градби и движен археолошки материјал. Посебно за одбележување се градбите, меѓу кои една јавна градба и дванаесет индивидуални куќи за живеење.

Градбата се наоѓа на североисточната страна од централниот дел на населбата. Ориентирана е во правец север-југ, прилагодена на благата коса нивелација на теренот. Во основа, се работи за два дела - северен и јужен, интегрално врзани во една концептуална целина. Северниот дел е составен од три простории со различни димензии и коридор со отворена колонада кон атриумот. Јужниот дел се состои од атриумски простор и три простории со различни големини. Атриумот се наоѓа во централниот дел на градбата. Има неправилна четвртаста основа, која со три зида го затвора источниот влез во одбранбениот ѕид. Сите три зида се со атриумски отвори, функционално распоредени според позицијата што ја заземаат прилагодени на косата нивелација на теренот. Градени се од делкан и речен камен, врзан со варов малтер, широки се 1 м, а од внатрешната и надворешната страна малтерисани.

Големите разурнувања што, веројатно, се случиле во текот на втората половина на VI век, видно ја промениле економската положба на населението. Животот во

населбата не бил прекинат, но сега се одвивал со намален интензитет. Населението било редуцирано, а жителите биле принудени да се борат за својот опстанок. Археолошките истражувања потврдија дека, подоцнежните интервенции на овој простор се случиле непосредно по разурнувањата, при крајот на VI или почетокот на VII век, и значително ја нарушиле нивната функција. Извесно е само дека овој простор бил пренаменет да функционира за други потреби. По првичните разурнувања, во населбата била стационирана војска за да го обезбедува патниот правец кој од Скупи преку Стоби одел за Тесалоника. Присуството на војската придонело некои делови од населбата да бидат реорганизирани и прилагодени да функционираат според нивните потреби. Така, во југоисточниот дел од атриумот била изградена фурна со печка за печење на леб, атриумските отвори на западниот и јужниот ѕид биле затворени со ѕид од камен врзан со кал, додека на северната страна од атриумот бил изграден масивен ѕид со скалила за пристап на одбранбениот ѕид. Кон овие интервенции припаѓа и секундарно поставената надгробна стела врз прагот на источниот влез во населбата, со функција на скалило.

Со истражувањата на населбата покрај јавните градби, откриени се куќи, или делови од куќи за живеење со различни димензии и ориентација, поставени во просторот на населбата според позицијата што ја заземаат останатите објекти до нив. Куќите, претежно, се составени од по две простории кои не се врзани со врата помеѓу себе, туку независно комуницираат една од друга, односно отворите на вратите им се изведени на надворешните ѕидови. Во просторот, една од друга се одвоени со тесни коридорни улици широки од 1,20 – 1,50 м, кои ја нагласуваат густината на нивната поставеност во населбата. Во внатрешниот дел на одбранбениот ѕид досега се откриени дванаесет индивидуални куќи за живеење, но само три од нив во целост, додека од останатите само делови.

Одбранбениот ѕид е откриен во должина од околу 70 м од северната, источната и западната страна. Неговата широчина изнесува 1,60 м. Граден е од крупен делкан камен и масивен облукот, пролагоден на фасадниот изглед, додека средишниот дел е полнетица од поситен камен врзан со варов малтер. Го зафаќа целиот периметар околу централниот дел на населбата и подградието на северната страна. На него засега се откриени четири кули со различни димензии, од кои две на источниот бедем, една на западниот и една на јужното чело каде што се соединуваат источниот и западниот бедем.

Покрај многубројните археолошки содржини кои ја отсликуваат состојбата на објектите во текот на егзистирањето (од градењето до нивното рунирање), откриен е и многуброен движен археолошки материјал, речиси, на целиот простор што го зафаќа населбата. Покрај многубројните фрагменти од керамички садови, откриени се фрагменти од стаклени садови, прозорско стакло, накит (обетки, фибули, прстени), предмети од коска, орудија, предмети од градежни конструкции, делови од брави и клучеви, кантари и тегови за кантар и др. Тоа се, претежно, предмети кои се употребувале за секојдневна употреба во домаќинството,

земјоделските и занаетчиските активности на жителите од населбата. Покрај овие предмети, откриени се значителен број ковани пари (монети), претежно, од бронза кои ја отсликуваат економската состојба, речиси, на секое семејство. Со истражувањето на населбата откриено е разновидно оружје (копја, стрелки, ножеви, мечеви и секири), воена опрема (шлем, оклоп) и елементи од воена опрема (токи и апликации за каиш).

Според досегашните истражувања во стратиграфијата на локалитетот, се издвојуваат три хоризонти на живеење и тоа: праисториски, доцноантички и средновековен. Праисторискиот хоризонт припаѓа на раното бронзено време. Потврден е преку камени секирки, кремни ножиња и повеќе фрагментирани делови од керамички садови, откриени во античките слоеви. Доцноантичкиот хоризонт припаѓа на периодот од IV-VII век, иако одредени наоди на монети укажуваат на тоа дека населбата како крајпатен пункт егзистирала уште во III век. Овој хоризонт е потврден преку многубројните движни археолошки наоди и откриените градби. Во стратиграфијата на овој хоризонт јасно се издвојуваат две фази на егзистирање. Првата егзистирала во периодот од IV век, до катастрофалниот земјотрес во 518 година, а втората по земјотресот до почетокот на VII век. По прекин од околу два века населбата повторно е активна во периодот од IX-XIII век. Биле обновени делови од веќе постоечките градби, но прилагодени на условите што владееле во тој период. Потврден е преку наоди на фрагментирани делови од керамички садови, често украсувани со брановидни линии и плитки канелури, накит (белегзии, обетки, прстени), оружје, воена опрема и монети.

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