

Duško CVETANOV

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THERMAL SPRINGS  
NEAR THE BANSKO VILLAGE (STRUMICA REGION)  
IN THE MEDIEVAL AND THE OTTOMAN PERIOD  
- THE FORTRESS TERMITSA (Θερμιτζα), THE EPISCOPATE  
HEADQUARTERS AND THE DOLJANI MARKET -**

UDK:904:553.78(497.7420"653/654"

NI Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments  
and Museum - Strumica  
duskocvetanov@live.com

**Abstract:** *This paper analyzes the significance of the thermal springs in the village of Bansko (Strumica) in the Middle Ages and the Ottoman period. With the long-term archeological excavation at the Great Roman bath, located in the eastern periphery of the village of Bansko, the accent was placed on the significance of the thermal springs only for one period. Absolutely, the springs were used also in the following periods and the naming of the village of Bansko (spa village), in the middle age, indicates the presence of a bath in the village itself.*

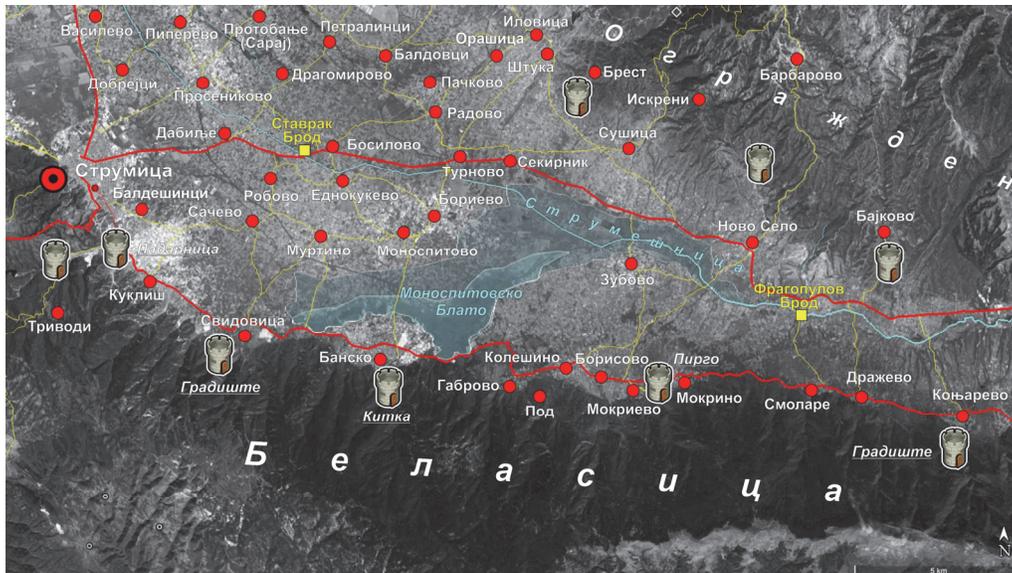
*The significance of the thermal spring in the village of Bansko in the Middle Ages and the Ottoman period in this paper is seen through: the fortress Termica (Θερμιτζα) - archeological site,, Kitka“, episcopal seat - locality 40 martyrs of Sebaste and one of the most famous bazaars that existed in the Ottoman Empire, Doljan bazaar.*

**Key words:** Strumica, village Bansko, thermal springs, the fortress Termica, Doljan bazaar and Episcopal seat

The Belasica Mountain lies in the south-eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia. It stretches from east to west for about 60km, with an average width of 7 – 9km. The southern face features rocky, steep and deforested slopes, while the northern section features dense vegetation, deep vales and rivers and streams with small waterfalls. The mountain ridge is narrow, sharp, rocky and occasionally covered with pastures. Belasica stands on the border between the Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Greece and the Republic of Bulgaria.

Because of the favourable conditions, i.e. the fertile soil, the water potential, the favourable climate, the thermal springs, people settled in the area bellow the Be-

lasica Mountain since the Early Antiquity period. The numerous archaeological localities in this area corroborate this. So far we have identified: “*Podarnica*” – Kukliš Village; “*Gradište*” – Svidovica Village; “*Kitka*” – Bansko Village and “*Kale*” – Staro Konjarevo Village.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the favourable living conditions, one should also have in mind the road communications passing along the base of the Belasica Mountain, connecting the cities of Serres and Strumica (Fig. 1).



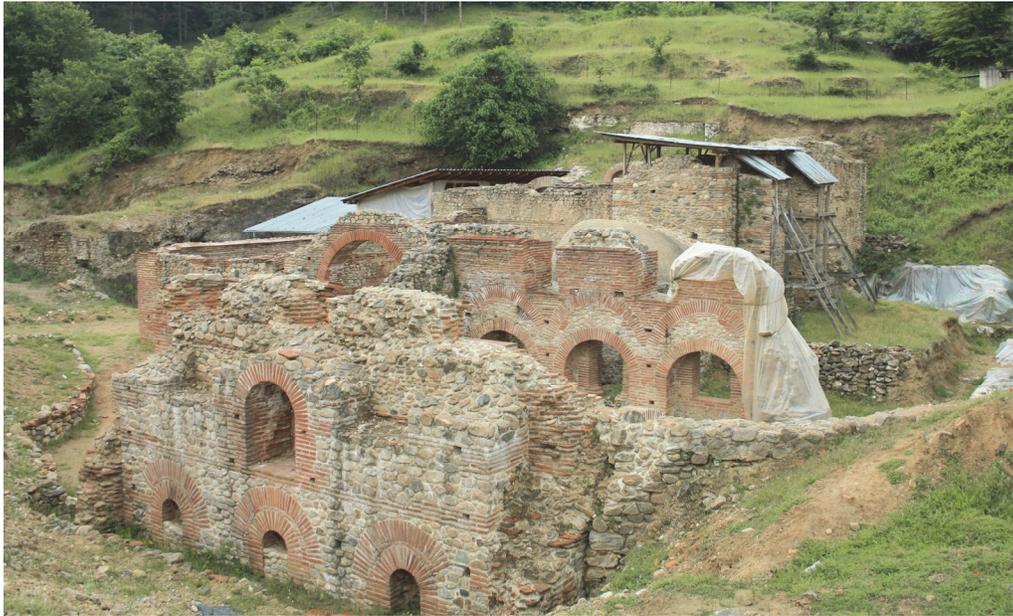
**Fig.1.** Strumica and the region in the Middle Ages, settlements and fortresses (according to: D. Cvetanov; illustration: T. Garvanliev)

The base of the Belasica Mountain, the eastern part of today’s Bansko Village, hosts the late roman thermal spa, located near the thermal water spring “Parilo”. The vast number of coins discovered when cleaning the main spring in order to capture it in 1970, suggest that the pilgrims went to the spring between the IV century BC and III century AD. The pilgrims threw the coins into the spring as a gift for healing. The Great bath sits about fifty meters to the northeast of the spring. Thus far, archaeologists have discovered 11 rooms in the spa with a total active surface area of 623m<sup>2</sup>. The great spa was built in three stages, beginning in the fourth decade of the III century and it existed until the middle of the V century (Fig. 2). High upon its ruins, the Ottomans built another similar spa.

People undoubtedly made use of the thermal waters in the future as well. The name of the village Bansko (spa village), during the middle ages, suggests the presence of an actively used spa in the area. Historical sources mention the village of Ban-

<sup>1</sup> This list includes only the archaeological localities below Belasica, located on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia and not those in the neighbouring Republic of Bulgaria.

ska for the first time in the Decree of the King Dušan at Hilandar monastery regarding the contribution of Lord Rudl in Strumica from the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1345 (Hill 23).<sup>2</sup> Scientists have not discovered a medieval spa in this area, but this does not mean that one did not exist near the Roman and the Turkish spas.



**Fig.2.** The Great bath of the late Roman thermal spa in village Bansko (*photography: D. Cvetanov*)

Ever since 1896 the Strumica archimandrite (or more precisely the Metropolitan bishop) Gerasim, after exhaustively studying the remnants in the Strumica region, stated, in the published “*Материали по географијата – струмишко*” (*Geographical Materials – Strumica region*) that the Bansko Village, located at the base of the Belasica Mountain, two and a half hours to the southeast from the city of Strumica, got its name after the thermal spa with waters that heal, especially rheumatism. Next to the village there are remnants of a fort, located on one of the peaks of the Belasica Mountain, called “*Kaleeri*”.<sup>3</sup>

The building of the Great Spa in Roman times, initiated the building of a fortification which, in addition to controlling the road, would provide protection for the thermal spa. This fortification sits about 0.7km southwest of the thermal springs, at the base of Mount Belasica. Ivan Mikulčić made the first detailed measurements of this fortification, and named the localities “*Kitka*”, “*Gradište*” and “*Malkaesi*” (Fig. 3). In 2016, Viktor Lilčić Adams documented this fortification with great details and

<sup>2</sup> *Српски грамоти од Душаново време* 1988, 137-138

<sup>3</sup> Б. Панов 1985, 427-430.

precision. The fortification lies on the southern part of the Bansko Village, on the slopes of Mount Belasica, at 485 meters above sea level, i.e. 250 meters above the Strumica field and has steep slopes that fall into two parallel, deep, torrential dales (Fig. 4). A very narrow saddle from the south divides it from the higher terrain with a narrow and flat peak. The fortification looks out to the most of the Strumica field.<sup>4</sup>



Fig.3. Archaeological site "Kitka" - Medieval fortress Termica (photography: Vane P. Sekulov)

The manner of construction of the fortification and the movable findings indicate the Late Antiquity period. Tsar Samuil used these late antiquity fortifications, partly repaired or reconstructed with small interventions, towards the end of the X and the XI centuries. The old walls were repaired using the technique of dry masonry, without mortar, reinforced with wooden beams, i.e. organic material which did not survive until today. Most likely, this fortification, named Termica (Θερμιτζα) existed during the middle ages and played a role in a very significant event for the world history.

One of the most significant battles in the first half of the XI century in Europe took place at the base of Mount Belasica (Ključ – Klaidon - Κλειδίου), near Strumica,

<sup>4</sup> According to the Ivan Mikulcijk, people in antiquity built a firm wall on the site. Two walled belts can be seen, the inner wall built with mortar, around an area of 240x50 meters (1 hectare). The construction method suggests that the wall originated in the IV century, and was renewed in VI century. Its surface features fragmented Hellenic and late antiquity ceramics: (И. Микулчиќ 1996, 313-315; Археолошка картица на Р. Македонија 1996, 401).

on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 1014. Here, the most powerful rulers in this part of Europe, Samuil (997-1014) and Basil II (976-1025) fought each other. This battle has an enormous significance for the rise and fall of the most powerful European empires.



**Fig.4.** Remains of the ramparts on the fortress "Kitka", village Bansko (*photography: D.Cvetanov*)

The Byzantine historian John Skylitzes provides data regarding these important events in the world history. His work "*Synopsis of Histories*" (covering the period from 811 AD to 1057 AD) represents the main source for the history of Tsar Samuil's state. The chronicles suggest that Dragomuž (Δραγομούζος) ruled Strumica, as well as several other fortifications in the same area, who gave them to Basil II in 1018, and he received the rank of a patrician. Skylitzes names some of the forts ruled by Dragomuž in the Strumica region. Namely, he states that the forts Macukion (Ματζούκιον) and Termica (Θερμιτζα) are located near Strumica.<sup>5</sup> These two fortifications, most likely lied along the main road from Serres to Strumica. The warlord – patrician David Arianites (Δαυίδ Αριανίτης) conquered the first in 1014 and the other in 1015-1016. Most likely the fortifications were demolished, i.e. they shared the same fate as numerous Balkan fortifications belonging to Tsar's Samuil's state.

Skylitzes mentioned that the Macukion fort was located near to Strumica, ...φρούριον το καλούμενον Ματζούκιον, τη Στρομπιτζη δέ προσεγγιζον...<sup>6</sup> In or-

<sup>5</sup> Б. Панов 1985, 427-430; В. Златарски 1927, 698-717.

<sup>6</sup> Б. Панов 1985, 433-434; *ГИБИ VI* 1965, 285.

der to attack Tsar Samuil, Emperor Basil traversed the route from Serres to Sidirokastro, the Rupel Gorge, in the valley of the river Strumica to Kleidion. After Basil II demolished the barrier near Kluč, he came down after the soldiers that fled to Strumica. Folklore suggests that both armies fought near the Mokrievio Village (Strumica region). Tsar Samuil and his son Gavriilo Radomir participated in this battle after they came out from Strumica and went to succor the fleeing soldiers. After shattering Samuil's army, Basil went to Strumica and along the way managed to conquer the Macukion Fortification, most likely located at the base of Mount Belasica very near to Strumica.<sup>7</sup> Hence, along the base of Mount Belasica, he went to Strumica.

We can almost certainly draw the route that Emperor Basil II took. After passing through the Kluč Gorge and entering into the Strumica Field, the road continued under the slopes of Mount Belasica, circumvented the Monospitovo Marsh, which represented a major natural barrier in the central part of the field. This route, passing near Mount Belasica is bound by the Monospitovo Marsh in the north and the high mountain massifs of Belasica to the south. The Byzantine soldiers led by Basil II took this route. Because of the narrow space, they came into direct contact and conflict with the fortresses along the road.<sup>8</sup> This section, from Kluč to Strumica, features archaeological remains of several fortresses. These include the localities: “*Kale*” – Staro Konjarevo Village; “*Pirgo*” – Mokrievio Village; “*St. Ilija*” – Mokrievio Village; “*Kitka*” – Bansko Village; “*Gradište*” – Svidovica Village and “*Padarnica*” – Kukliš Village. These fortresses are well known to the professional community.<sup>9</sup>

Basil wanted to destroy Samuil's state with one decisive blow, rather than waste time conquering roadside fortresses, unless they stood directly in his way. Basil knew that Samuil was not powerful enough for a direct conflict and that he was forced into guerrilla warfare. Samuil's tactics involved the placement of barriers along roads and narrow gorges and surprise attacks.<sup>10</sup> Samuil's defence system partly repaired and activated the well preserved fortresses and smaller fortifications.

The location of Macukion represented a big challenge for many researchers since the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century.<sup>11</sup> Some of them place this fortress at the base of Mount Belasica, near the village of Mokrievio, others think that Macukion should be sought for near the village Mačukovo.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> В. Злагарски 1927, 693-698. Sidirokastro (Greek: Σιδιρόκαστρο; Bulgarian and Macedonian: Валовица/Валовишта Valovishta; Turkish: Demir Hisar).

<sup>8</sup> Д. Цветанов 2014, 149-150, сл. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Археолошка карија 1996, 400-416; И. Микулчиќ 1996, 313-315, сл. 148.

<sup>10</sup> Д. Цветанов 2015, 209, сл. 5.

<sup>11</sup> В. Злагарски 1927, 698.; Б. Панов 1971, 152-153; И. Микулчиќ 1996, 44.

<sup>12</sup> Machukovo is a village in Greece, near the city of Gevgelija and the state border between Macedonia and Greece. The village is located 3km south of the border crossing and about 40km from Strumica. The Greeks today call this village: “Εύζωνοι” (Ezvoni), and until 1927 its name was Ματσικόβον.

The lack of archaeological investigations of the fortifications at the base of Mount Belasica was the missing link regarding the precise location of the Macukion fortress. Archaeologists in 2011 – 2012 conducted probing archaeological investigations on “*Pirgo*” locality, located south of the Mokrievo village, which lies at the base of Mount Belasica.<sup>13</sup> The archaeologist Zoran Rujak led these investigations and they discovered a tower of significant size. Most likely, there were no accompanying structures next to the tower itself.

The tower has a square base 10.65m by 10.65m. The walls are built using massive emplecton masonry, and are approximately 3 meters thick. Part of the tower base stood on the rock itself and the biggest preserved height is about 6 meters. The size of the tower base, suggests, almost certainly, that the height was at least twice the size of the base, i.e. at least 20 meters, and the entrance stood at 5 – 6 meters from the floor level. The reasons for this significant size of the tower, as mentioned before, included the accessible terrain. This tower had primarily an offensive role, i.e. enabled swift action according to the needs of the road beneath the mountain, located 400m from the tower and also the tower could withstand attacks, but not when Basil attacked with a huge army.<sup>14</sup>

The method of construction suggests that the builders built this tower in late antiquity as an observation post that observed the road. Samuil partly reconstructed and activated such late antiquity fortresses situated along important roads and passes. We do think Samuil used this tower in the Mokrievo Village and that, most likely, it is the fortress Macukion that Skylitzes mentions in reference to the march of Basil in 1014. The location of the locality “*Pirgo*” – Mokrievo Village fits with the available historical sources regarding the Macukion fortress. This area around the fortress, according to the views of the archaeologist Zoran Rujak, was also active in the later periods, which is corroborated by the presence of medieval movable findings.<sup>15</sup>

The historical source presented by Skylitzes suggests that only the Macukion fortress fell during Basil’s campaign in the Strumica region, while the Termica fortress and Strumica itself skilfully withstood the attacks of the Byzantines. The fact that the tower in Mokrievo, which we think represents the Macukion fortification, stood alone, without any accompanying defensive structures, on a rather mild terrain facilitated its conquering during this offensive. The other forts (Termica and Strumica), located on Basil’s road, withstood his attacks because they stood on a rather inaccessible terrain and also comprised complex fortifications.

---

<sup>13</sup> Etymologically speaking, the word “Pirgo” in Greek: Πύργος, is translated as tower.

<sup>14</sup> D. Cvetanov 2015, 486, fig. 3-5.

<sup>15</sup> 3. Pujak 2015, 167.

After Samuil's death in 1014, his son Gavriilo Radomir came to the throne. During his one year reign, the city of Strumica and many fortifications in the Strumica area were still within his state. By the end of 1015, when the rule of Ivan Vladislav began, Emperor Basil attempted to conquer this militarily and strategically important area. Then he sent his military leader – patrician David Ariantis, who managed to conquer only the Termica fortress near Strumica, ...τό φρούριον Θερμιτζα κατονομάζεται.<sup>16</sup> The location of this fort sparked the interest of the professional community for more than a century. Unlike the Macukion fortress, whose location divided the experts, almost all investigators locate the Termica fortress above the Bansko village (Strumica region). The etymology of the word termica (Θερμιτζα) suggests that this fortification stood near thermal springs.

Most likely, because of the thermal springs, the old fortification was repaired and used in the middle ages as well. Supporting the possible activity during the middle ages is the discovered depo of medieval counts in the base of the fortification. This depo includes more than 1000 coins from John I Komnenos, Manuel I Komnenos, Andronicus I Komnenos, and Isaak II Angel, Bulgarian and Latin imitations of Manuel I.<sup>17</sup>

Termica stands near one of the two road legs that run along the base of Mount Belasica, south of the river Strumica and connect the two important medieval centres Strumica and Ser. The builders deliberately chose this location to erect the fortifications. Its position, dominance and difficult access, as well as the direct visual communication with the “*Carevi Kuli*” fortress – Strumica, located at a distance of only 11.5km, suggest its importance (Fig. 5). The access to this fortress is restricted from the north and the south by the Monospitovo Marshlands and the Mount Belasica respectively. Only one relatively narrow corridor runs from east to west, i.e. the road that we mentioned earlier.

In 2017, Vane Sekulov carried out the first probing archaeological investigations in this locality. Then he discovered a small part of the ramparts, on the north-western side, the most extruded part of the fortress that looks towards the Strumica field. The ramparts are 2.2 to 2.4 meters thick build from massive stones and dry masonry. The high concentration of discovered arrowheads along the investigated part of the ramparts suggests that the fortress had been strongly besieged and the dry masonry suggests that the wall was quickly patched up and reactivated.<sup>18</sup> The

<sup>16</sup> The first author to write about the Termica Fort was the Bulgarian historian Vasil Zlatarski who, according to its significance, located it above the village of Bansko, to the southeast of Strumica, at the base of Mount Belasica, at the place he called “Kaleri” (B. Златарски 1927, 717; И. Микулчиќ 1996, 313-315, сл. 148).

<sup>17</sup> The depo of medieval coins was discovered in 1956: (И. Микулчиќ 1996, 313-314).

<sup>18</sup> The arrowheads represent movable assets not susceptible to dating, and such forms are encountered during the period from the late antiquity to the middle ages.

front of the fortress was most exposed to attacks and it required constant reconstructions in order to withstand upcoming attacks. Remains of the rampart can also be found on several other locations. The ramparts were made of stone bound with lime mortar using the emplecton masonry technique (Fig. 6).



**Fig.5.** View from the site of "Kitka" - village Bansko to "Carevi Kuli" fortress – Strumica.



**Fig.6.** Part of the ramparts with emplecton masonry technique, locality "Kitka" - village Bansko (photography: D.Cvetanov)

These archaeological investigations also discovered a small single-nave church, located about 70 meters south of the fortress. This sacral building, according to the initial findings, was built in the XII century and most likely survived until the Ottoman conquests of these parts (Fig.7). The frescoes discovered in situ with an accentuated fragmentation in the parapet northeaster parts of the apsis, according to the initial findings and analyses of Živko Velkovski, chronologically fit in the XII – XIII century (Fig. 8). A necropolis arose around the church. The investigations documented five interments which, according to the grave findings, belong to the period from the XII until the end of the XIV and the beginning of the XV century (Fig. 9). Most likely, this church was built to serve the spiritual needs of the crew residing in the fortress, which again confirms its activity in the middle ages.



**Fig.7.** Medieval church behind the fortress "Kitka", XII-XIII century (*photography: D.Cvetanov*)

We do not have any historical sources that mention this area during the period between XI and XIII centuries. The written sources of the Serbian and local independent rulers mention the Bansko village for the first time in the XIV century. However, some localities and accidental findings do indicate the existence of an active life in this area in the middle ages. Sacral architectural structures have been created and shaped in the Bansko village and only 0.5 km north of the village there are remains of a medieval church, considered to have been devoted to the 40 Holy Martyrs of Sebaste (Fig. 10).



**Fig.8.** Fragmented frescoes from the medieval church, archaeological site "Kitka" - village Bansko (*photography: D. Cvetanov*)



**Fig.9.** Medieval Serbian silver coin - dinar, Tzar Stefan Dušan, uncovered in one of the burials of the medieval church at the site "Kitka" (*photography: D. Cvetanov*)

The church takes the shape of a freestanding cross; it also possesses a vestry and a proskomedija. To the west, the naos continues into an entrance, while to the east there are remains of a synthronon which suggests that the church served as the headquarters of an episcopate. According to its architecture and the frescoes, the church dates back to the period between XII – XIII centuries. It possessed a white marble iconostasis, from which some decorative and constructive elements have been found and preserved.<sup>19</sup> It is unusual that two episcopate headquarters, one near the village of Vodoča and this one near the village of Bansko, exist only 15km from each other. Most likely, because of the thermal waters, the Strumica bishops decide to build the church of the Forty Martyrs in Bansko.



**Fig.10.** Medieval church of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, south of the village Bansko  
(photography: D. Cvetanov)

One of the charters of the Dragaš brothers, issued in reference to the estates gifted to the monastery of St. Panteleimon in Mount Athos, refers to several villages in the Belasica region and several local churches.<sup>20</sup> These charters also mention the church St. Holy Mother of God in the village of Bansko, which the Dragash brothers gave to the monastery St. Panteleimon in Mount Athos together with the metochion and the people.<sup>21</sup> The location of this church has not been specified yet. We cannot

<sup>19</sup> Археолошка карта на Р. Македонија 1996, 402; А. Цицимов 1989, 101-115; Д. Коцо, П. Миљковиќ 1989, 65-99.

<sup>20</sup> И. Стефоска 2011, 243.

<sup>21</sup> М. Живојиновић 2006, 45.

certainly state whether this is related to the locality of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste or the church that was discovered after the investigations in 2017 on the locality “Kitka”.

Still, the churches at the locality of “Kitka” and Holly 40 are located outside of the village of Bansko. The former is located 700 meters south and the latter at 400 meters. Most likely, the village had yet another church that served the spiritual needs of the people. The research of the Archimandrite Gerasim mentions that the village of Bansko had a monastery and two churches which, unequivocally confirms the aforementioned conclusion.



**Fig.11.** Turkish bath (hammam) in village Bansko (*photography: D. Cvetanov*)

The village of Bansko is referred to in the Turkish census records from the XVI century, as a settlement populated only with Christians.<sup>22</sup> The thermal waters in this settlement attract a Turkish population and they rename it into Ilidja (translated as: warm mineral bath). We classify the spas (hammams) built by the Turks between the XVI and XVIII century in the village, according to their construction and spatial organization, as public and family spas. The Turks built several spas, of which only three have been partially preserved today, in addition to a Roman spa and a spa near the western part of the village, south of the old church St. 40 (Fig. 11).<sup>23</sup> Because of the significance of the thermal springs and the healing properties

<sup>22</sup> In 1519, in the village of Bansko, there were 78 households, 12 bachelors and 5 widows. In 1570 there were 71 households, 17 bachelors and 5 widows: (Д. Гюргиев 2002, 121, 124.).

<sup>23</sup> Ж. Велковски 2014, 197-199, сл. стр. 9-15.

of the water, the spas near the Bansko village attracted many visitors during the Ottoman period. The concentration of people in this area instigated the development of a market.

Most of the investigators of the Ottoman period locate the Doljani fair in the area of the village Bansko. The works of the Turkish authors Kâtip Chelebi (Haji Khalifa) from about 1650 and Evliya Chelebi from 1670 state that the Doljan fair is located near Strumica, in the same administrative unit. Kâtip Chelebi says that *a field stretches near Strumica, across which a river flows with many windmills. During the month of August, the people here hold a famous fair called “Tuljan” attended by many people from all around. The warm spa “Tuljan” is also located in the Strumica area, near Strumica and the town. Once a year the inhabitants of the surrounding areas gather here and during a period of a fortnight they engage in the trading business. Many warm springs flow from beneath the slope, as well as some cold ones. Water, from three faucets, flows in the spa under the stone dome.*<sup>24</sup>

Evliya Chelebi in his description states: *The Doljan fair is a lively and well organized fair, spread in the midst of a broad clearing, surrounded by trees, with huge meadows and pastures, in the midst of a flat and fertile broad land, filled with birds.*<sup>25</sup> A significant piece of information in corroborating the location of the Doljani market relates to Chelebi's mention that the area had been filled with birds. The Monospitovo marshland, lies at the base of the village Bansko, and it always represented a natural habitat for many birds. So researchers locate this market near the today's village of Dolane (municipality of Petrič, R. Bulgaria), which is wrong as it refers only to the etymological similarity between the names. Chelebi categorically claims that the Doljani market lies in the Strumica kaza, while the village of Dolane formed a part of the Petrič kaza at that time. Unlike the hilly and mountainous terrain near the village Doleni, the village Bansko lies at the base of Mount Belasica and has a huge field approximately 3km long and 1km wide. The field mildly descends south of the village and the difference between the highest and the lowest point is less than 50m at a distance of 1km. This area undoubtedly offers ideal conditions for the development of a broad market such as the one in Doljan (Fig. 12).

The available written sources mention the Doljan market for the first time in letters – orders from 1595 – 1615 sent to the Strumica kadi (judge).<sup>26</sup> Having in mind that the comprehensive Turkish censuses of 1570 make no reference to the market, we can conclude that it appeared in the last decades of the XVI century, when the builders started intensively to build the spas (hammams).

<sup>24</sup> А. Матковски 1991, 393-394.

<sup>25</sup> Е. Челеби 1972, 277.

<sup>26</sup> Д. Шопова 1955, 80-89, док. 60 и 67.

According to the Chelebi's descriptions, *once a year, hundreds of thousands of people from Rumelia, the Arab countries, Persia, India, Samarkand, Balkh, Bukhara, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and all parts of Europe, in short all merchants from the seven climates by land and sea, flocked, with their various goods to this fair. The entire valley abounded with a sea of people. Traders sold hundreds of thousands of loads of goods and one can even find bird's milk, lion's milk and human milk. Bird's milk refers to eggs, human milk means woman's milk and lion's milk refers to the shameless wine.*<sup>27</sup>

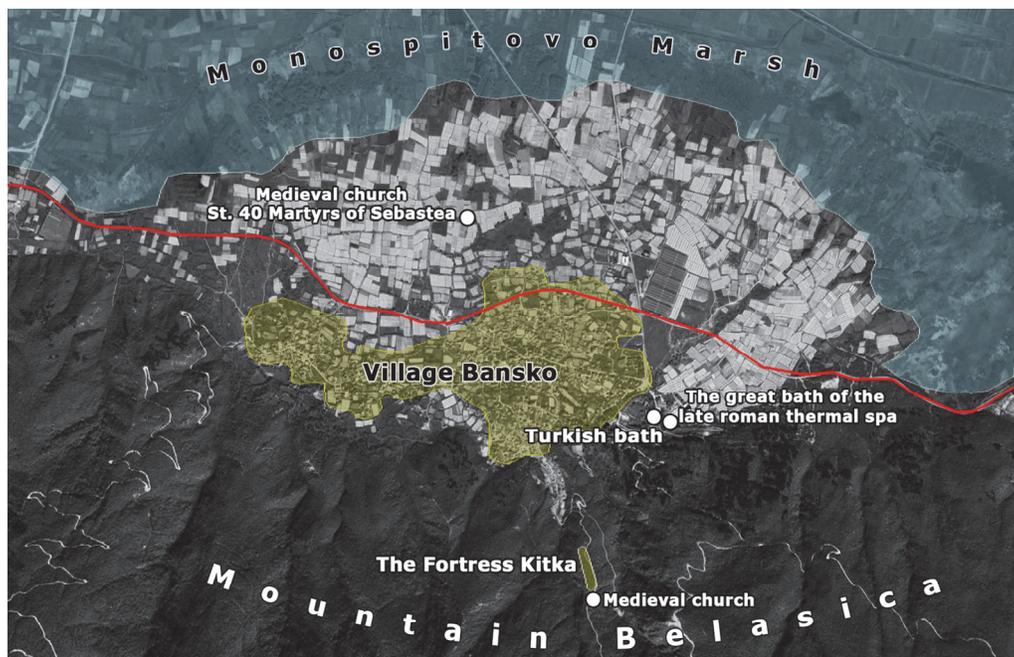


Fig.12. Map with archaeological sites in the village Bansko

During the days of this market, craftsmen, food and beverage makers came from all of the villages, small towns and cities. The market lasted for forty days and forty nights until everyone sold their goods and stock. The market had a section where people sold livestock: goats, horses, mules, water buffalos and oxen. Also some traders sold people at this market: especially the dark skinned Arabs. Precious materials and gems offered here to the buyers attracted the attention of the people, these include: brocade, poplin, gold-laced fabric, taffeta, flannelette, satin, velvet, opal, ruby, emerald, diamonds, topaz, pearls, agate, amethyst, amber, nacre and many more precious gems and jewellery.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the sale of goods and merchandize, this market hosted various events that attracted the attention of the visitors. *The sort of magicians and dancers*

<sup>27</sup> A. Матковски 1991, 463.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 464.

*that exist on this globe and perform on the squares or in the tents, all come here: sorcerers, jugglers, gamblers, mimes, glass jugglers, dwarves, owners of gambling houses, athletes, fire performers, puppeteers and mannequins, people that summon spirits, sabre swallows, flirts, bear handlers, monkey trainers, goat trainers, donkey trainers, lasso juggling fighters, snake tamers, bird trainers, jugglers on belts, card players, magicians with mirrors, with plates, people that make faces etc. Travelling bağlama players, dancers, singers, entertainers, comedians, singers arrive from all sides, as well as reciters of lyric and epic poetry, muscular wrestlers, archers, brave people, ravishing beauties, singers of love songs, everything can be found on this market in various tents and street shops.<sup>29</sup>*

In his description Chelebi states that after they left the market they continued travelling to Mecca and in five hours they arrived in the village Machka (not precisely located). Then they continued onwards to Mecca and in six hours they came to the city of Petrič.<sup>30</sup> This description unequivocally suggests that the market was located in the Strumica area, the time required to travel from Bansko to Petrich coincides with the time travelled by Chelebi.

The active life in the micro region below Mount Belasica can be attributed to the favourable living conditions. The numerous medieval churches, in turn, suggest a developed spiritual tradition. The important road Serres – Strumica – Štip – Skopje suggests the interconnectivity of the medieval centres in the Balkan. The dense population of a relatively small area and the above facts suggest the need for protection. The appearance of the first fortifications in antiquity, which, with some interruptions, survived until the middle ages, facilitated the development of many settlements in this area. The plethora of archaeological localities in the area of the village Bansko confirms ever more strongly the active life. The area around the today's village of Bansko was especially important because of the thermal springs, one of the reasons for the appearance of the first fortification. The Strumica bishops also used the warm water and it sparked the development of one of the biggest markets in the Ottoman Empire.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 465.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Душко ЦВЕТАНОВ

## **ЗНАЧЕЊЕТО НА ТЕРМАЛНИТЕ ИЗВОРИ КАЈ СЕЛОТО БАНСКО (СТРУМИЧКО) ВО СРЕДНОВЕКОВИЕТО И ВО ОСМАНСКИОТ ПЕРИОД**

- ТВРДИНАТА ТЕРМИЦА (Θερμιτζα),  
ЕПИСКОПСКОТО СЕДИШТЕ И ДОЛЈАНСКИОТ ПАЗАР -

### *Резиме*

Во подножјето на планината Беласица, во источниот дел на денешното село Банско (струмичко) се наоѓа извор со термална вода. Изградбата на монументалното доцноримско термално лекувалиште е само потврда за користењето на термалните води уште во најстарите времиња. Со долгогодишните археолошки истражувања на Големата римска бања, акцентот беше ставен на значењето што го имаат термалните извори за овој крај само за еден временски период. Несомнено, тие биле користени и во наредните периоди, впрочем, именувањето на селото Банско, во средниот век, укажува на присуство на бања во самото населено место.

Градењето на Големата бања во римскиот период, било повод за подигнување на утврдување кое покрај контролата на патниот правец Струмица - Сер, ќе се грижи и за безбедноста на термалното лекувалиште. Ова утврдување, односно локалитетот „*Кийка*“ кој се наоѓа над термата, егзистирало во средниот век и одиграло своја улога во Беласичката битка (1014 година), а се споменува и од страна на Скилица, како Термица (Θερμιτζα). Најверојатно поради близината на термалните води, струмичките епископи во средниот век овде ја подигнуваат црквата Св. 40 Севастиски маченици која поседува синтронос, што упатува дека била епископско седиште.

Во турскиот период, поради значењето на термалните извори и лековитите особености на водата, бањите (амамите) кај селото Банско привлекувале голем број на посетители. Концентрацијата на луѓе на овој простор била повод овде да се појави и пазар. Во атарот на денешното село Банско го убдицираме и еден од најголемите пазари во Османлиската Империја, Долјанскиот пазар. Според описите на Евлија Челеби, еданаш годишно, стотици илјади луѓе од Румелија, арапските земји, Персија, Индија, Самарканд, Балх, Бухара, Египет, Сирија, Ирак и сите делови од Европа доаѓаат со своите разновидни стоки на овој пазар. Покрај стоката што се продавала, овде се одржувале и различни настани кои го привлекувале вниманието на посетителите.



- ЦИЦИМОВ, А., „Мермерната олтарна преграда во црквата Св.Четириесет севастиски маченици во Банско“, *Зборник на трудови*, Струмица: НУ Завод за заштита на спомениците на културата и Музеј Струмица 1989.
- ЧЕЛЕБИ, Е., *Пџиџејис, превод од османотурски, съставителство и редакция на Сирашимир Димитров*, София: Институт за балканистика при БАН, 1972.
- ШОПОВА, Д., *Македонија во XVI и XVII век - документи од Цариградски архиви (1557-1645)*, превод, редакция и коментар, Скопје 1955.