

Late Antique cities and their environment in Northern Illyricum

The urbanisation of North Illyricum was determined primarily by large alluvial valleys and the features of the landscape: wide and deep mountain ranges that cover more than 75 % of the region and large rivers intersecting it. Urban centres were built along main natural communication routes – river courses and vast plains that enabled their unobstructed economic development from the 2nd to the 4th century and subsequent revival during the 6th century. The cities in North Illyricum lay on the main transversal along the rivers Sava, Danube and Morava – Sirmium, Singidunum, Viminacium, Horreum Margi and Naissus. This line of communication branched off towards the east, from Naissus through Serdica to Constantinople, south from Naissus by way of Scupi and Stobi to Thessalonica and further to the southwest, and from Naissus via Ulpiana to Lissus on the Adriatic coast. The road along the Danube – Viminacium, Ratiaria, Oescus – played an important role and, in the period from the 4th to 6th century, was particularly significant in terms of defence as it was then located on the northern border of the Empire. Secondary roadways followed the courses of rivers that cut through the huge mountain massifs. This natural border, which extends from the Dinaric Alps to the Pindus, represented a major obstacle for communication between the Adriatic Sea on the one side and the interior of the Balkan Peninsula on the other side. The few plains located here are limited to the areas along the major rivers Sava, Danube and Morava and their immediate tributaries. The most important plains are situated along the River Sava, where the cities of Sirmium and Singidunum were built, along the Danube with the urban centres of Margum and Viminacium, and along the River Morava with Horreum Margi and Naissus. Basins also played a significant role where the city of Ulpiana – important junctions on the Balkan roads – was erected. These agricultural areas are contrasted by hills and mountain regions, favourable for raising cattle and, in particular, for mining, an important industry in this area¹.

The urbanisation of North Illyricum began late, with the deployment of the Roman armies in the 1st century. During the 2nd and the 3rd century, urban centres and administrations developed around Roman fortresses, as was the case with Singidunum and Viminacium where the legions were

stationed, and close to the main lines of communication and major crossroads, for example Naissus and Ulpiana². In the interior, we found isolated cities, such as Municipium Dardanorum on the River Ibar, near the Dardania mines, and Municipium Malvesatium, Municipium Celegerorum and Municipium S[...] in the valley of the River Lim. The rest of the territory was divided into large imperial domains, while major landowners appeared late in the 3rd century, at the time of the military emperors. *Beneficarii* stations were erected in the interior and their role was to protect the mines and the road network and to collect customs duties³. The economy of this region was mainly based on supplying both the army on the limes, comprising permanent garrisons, and the local population. According to the description of the *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* from the mid-4th century, production in the provinces of Moesia and Dacia was sufficient, despite the severe winters. The only city in this area worth mentioning, according to the same manuscript, was Naissus⁴. This territory did not play a major role in supplying Italy and Rome and, subsequently, Constantinople. However, during the 3rd and especially the 4th century, the area of North Illyricum represented an important bridge between the western and eastern provinces of the Empire and the key territory for supplying the imperial troops that either passed through this territory or that were stationed there (fig. 1).

After the loss of links with the western provinces in the second half of the 4th century, the role of this axis began to decline, particularly during the 5th century, due to frequent raids by the barbarians and their settlement there. With the decline in the importance of the roads in the west-east direction, the north-south communication lines, towards the Aegean and Thessalonica, gained in significance. When observing the distribution of many fortresses from Late Antiquity erected in the region of North Illyricum, one gains the impression that there was a significant relocation of both the Romanised and indigenous population towards the south and the interior (fig. 9). Direct proof of this is the decline in importance of the cities of North Illyricum in the 5th century, which was a consequence of the barbarians raiding the region and settling there, especially after the great raids of the Huns in 441 and 443 AD.

1 Dušanić, Aspects 52-94.

2 Wilkes, The Roman Danube 149-152.

3 Dušanić, Economy 45-52.

4 *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 57.

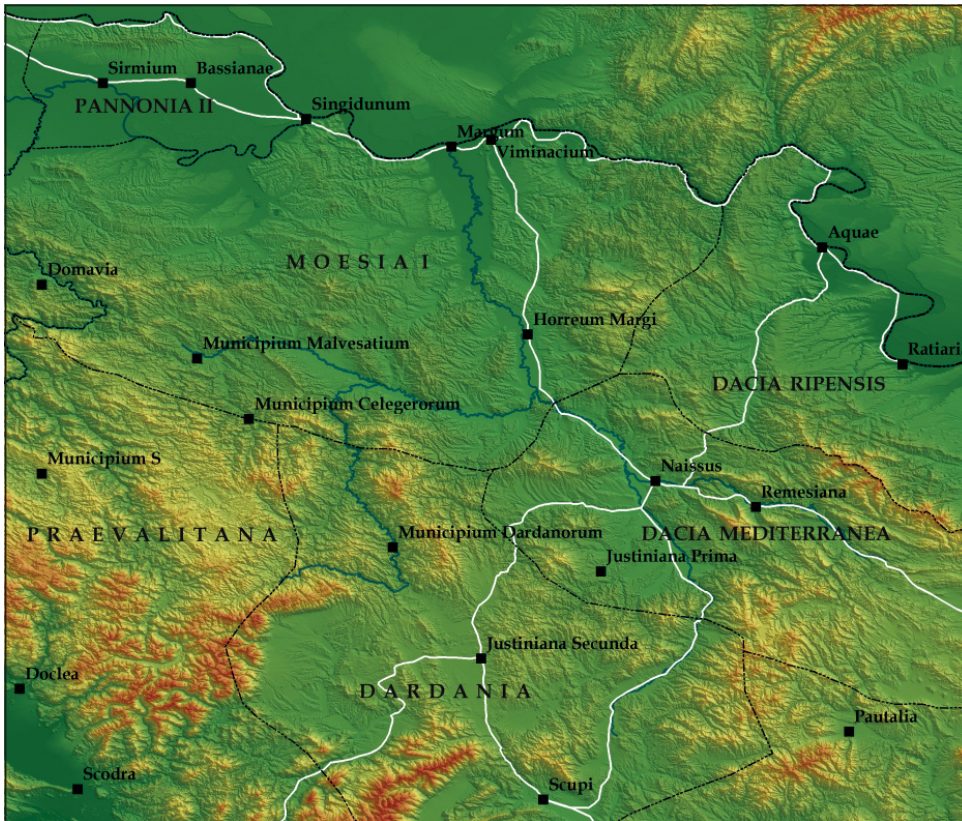


Fig. 1 Late Antique cities in Northern Illyricum. – (After Institute of Archaeology Belgrade).

Following Procopius from Caesarea, who provided most information about North Illyricum, we can assume that the large urban centres in this area were completely deserted. Procopius stated that Singidunum was the first city built (by the Romans) on the bank there. After a time, it was conquered by the barbarians who, having immediately razed it to the ground, left it completely deserted. They did the same with the vast majority of other fortresses. By rebuilding Singidunum and completely surrounding it with very solid walls they once again created a magnificent city⁵.

Archaeological explorations carried out in the Sava and Danube cities of Sirmium, Singidunum and Viminacium have shown that these municipalities continued to subsist as cemeteries were erected both in their environs and in the city centres, proving that the local population remained and were joined by newly arriving barbarians in the second half of the 5th and the early decades of the 6th century. The erection of the cemeteries in the area of the cities quite clearly indicates a reduction of the municipalities' areals – a phenomenon known in other regions of the Empire.

The renewal of the limes and of the cities in North Illyricum can be dated to the time of Anastasius I (491-518), after the signing of the treaty in 510 between Byzantium and the Ostrogoths. This agreement established the border on the Danube, while the province of Pannonia was divided

and a smaller eastern part, including the city of Bassianae, was returned to the Empire⁶. The inscription from Ratiaria – *Anastasiana Ratiaria semper floreat*⁷ – provides evidence that the revival of the limes began at the time of the energetic Anastasius I; this contradicts Procopius, who linked the reconstruction of the city with Justinian I (527-565). The revival of Byzantine rule in North Illyricum was to take place on two fronts: the restoration of the limes and the border cities, including certain municipalities and military strongholds in the interior, and the reconstruction and erection of a number of *refugia* for the protection of the local population; these were to be built practically throughout the territory of the large, unurbanised land in the hills and mountainous regions.

Special efforts were needed for the reconstruction of numerous fortifications on the Danube border from Singidunum towards Ad Aquas. A number of Roman forts were reconstructed along this route, and new ones were built in order to reinforce the border, especially in places where the flow of the Danube is slower, or where there are wide crossings or islands that could enable an easier crossing, especially when the water was low or frozen in winter. The minor river valleys, which enabled swift passage into the interior, were defended separately. For this purpose, Roman observer towers were transformed into fortifications defended by four corner towers – *tetrapirgia* – as was the case with the forts of Ljubičevac,

5 Prokopios, *De aedificiis* 4,4.

6 Mirković, *Sirmium* 50.

7 Velkov, *Nadpis* 92-94 fig. 1.

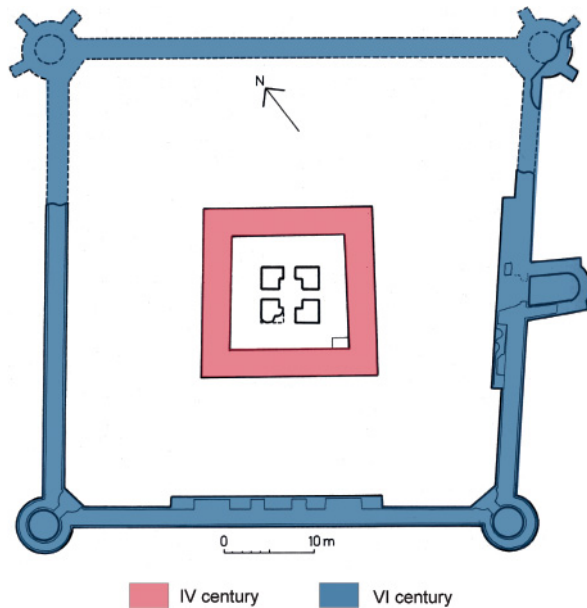


Fig. 2 Donje Butorke, fort. – (After Kondić, Les formes fig. 8).

Rtkovo-Glamija and Donje Butorke (fig. 2)⁸. Their interior areas consisted mostly of barracks made of light materials. The Danube fortifications were defended by regular garrisons similar to those at important roads or junctions. Numerous findings of *amphorae* within these fortifications indicate their important role as distribution centres. In some fortifications *amphorae* account for many of the findings, as was the case in Hajdučka Vodenica and Bosman, where they constituted more than 90% of all ceramic findings⁹. What is especially interesting is the fact that they accounted for 88% of all ceramic findings within the early Byzantine fortification on the Svetinja locality, which was defended by the *federati*¹⁰. At the same time, the Danube was also an important water way for supplying military garrisons in the 6th century¹¹.

Significant destruction and a reduction in the urban core were registered in the 6th century in Sirmium, a Pannonian metropolis. The barbarian raids were far-reaching and they had a particular impact on the immediate vicinity of the cities. Procopius informs us that the Gepides conquered Sirmium and its vicinity – areas that were quite deserted. Some of the population was eradicated by the war, others by disease and famine, the usual companions of war¹². Sirmium itself was significantly transformed and its urban core shifted southward, towards the bank of the River Sava (fig. 3). The city had lost its aqueduct, regular water supply and sewer. Numerous buildings within the municipality were reduced to debris and the population occupied small *insulae* within the city.

8 Kondić, Les formes 131-161.

9 Bjelajac, Amfore 113.

10 Popović, Svetinja 1-35.

11 Bikić/Ivanišević, Imported Pottery 41-49.

12 Prokopios, Historia arcana 18.

13 Jeremić, Graditeljstvo 43-58. – Popović, Desintegration 545-566.

14 Ivanišević/Kazanski, Heruls 147-157.

Archaeological findings have shown that the people settled in the demolished circus during the 5th and 6th centuries, as well as in parts of the »imperial palace«, where buildings were erected with light materials. These were semi-buried facilities: huts with walls made of brick fragments, structures made of wood and clay (fig. 4). Smaller cemeteries were erected in the area of the former Roman city, what clearly testifies to the narrowing down of the urban core and to a change in the population structure due to the arrival of barbarians¹³.

In the territory under the control of Byzantium, besides the Romanised population, numerous barbarians participated in the defence of the limes; these barbarians had either settled near the cities, like the Heruli between Sirmium and Singidunum, or were employed as *federati*, as was the case in Viminacium¹⁴.

The metropolis of Viminacium in Moesia Prima, like other cities in this area, experienced a reduction of its urban core. It is a common belief that the Early Byzantine Viminacium was reconstructed at the end of the beam that dominates



Fig. 3 Late Antique Sirmium. – (After Jeremić, Graditeljstvo fig. 1).



Fig. 4 Sirmium, hut – (Photo Institute of Archaeology Belgrade).

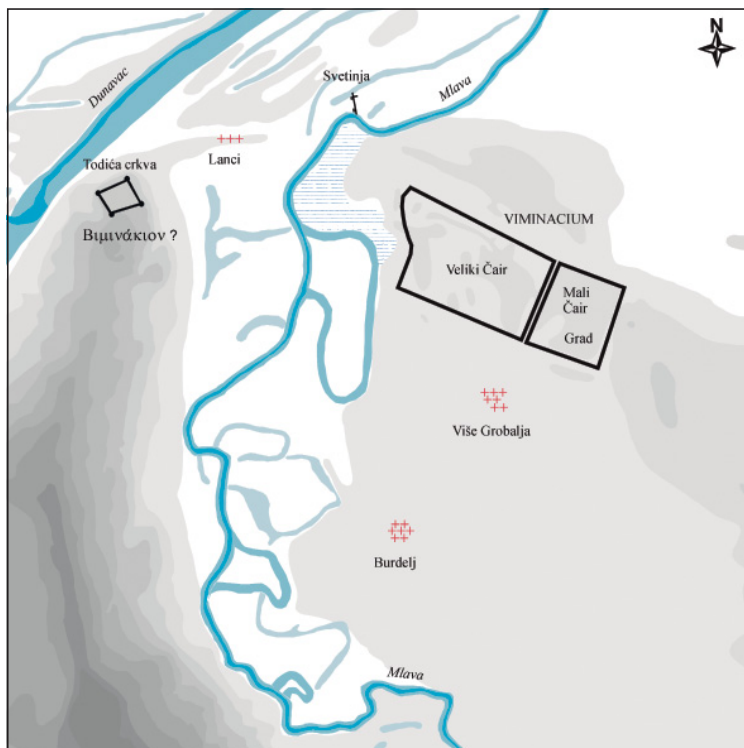


Fig. 5 Cemeteries of the Great Migration period from Viminacium. – (After Ivanišević/Kazanski/Mastykova, Les nécropoles fig. 1).

the Roman fortress and city and the plain of Stig. Guided by the results of M. M. Vasić from the beginning of the 20th century, all researchers to date, including the author of this text, have presumed that the Early Byzantine Viminacium preceded the medieval Braničevo, the well-known stronghold of the Komnenoi on the Danube border in the 12th century¹⁵. The latest archaeological researches have revealed the absence of layers of the 6th century in this area, which, in itself, sheds new light on the interpretation of the topography of Viminacium (fig. 5). Another fortification comes into the focus of our interest, erected in the place known as Svetinja, north of Viminacium, in its immediate vicinity. This newly built fortification was erected in the 6th century between the old backwaters of the Danube and Mlava rivers, which formed a natural obstacle¹⁶. By all accounts, it is here that the Early Byzantine Viminacium should be sought as a large island on the Danube – *insula magna Histri*¹⁷.

The cemeteries located in the wider city area provide other important information about this municipality. There are four cemeteries, and three of these are of interest to us; they are located to the south, northwest and east of the Roman camp and city (Viminacium IIb, III and IV), which are dated to the period of Early Byzantine rule. They are testimony to the important role of the *federati* in the defence of the Byzantine border. It is commonly known that Justinian I employed significant military forces, including the barbarians, whom he had recruited in the territory of North Illyri-

cum and the neighbouring Barbaricum, for his campaigns. However, it is less well known that they had also played an important role in the defence of the limes, proof of which is necropolis Viminacium IIb, which is dated exactly to the time of Justinian I. Barbarians were also employed to defend the border during the reign of emperor Maurice (582-602) and, probably, Phocas (602-610), as evidenced by two later necropolises dated to the last decades of the 6th and the start of the 7th century (Viminacium III and IV). Rich burials were discovered in all three cemeteries, and these testify to the significant social differentiation of the barbarians and to their important role during the times of Justinian I, Maurice and, probably, Phocas (fig. 6)¹⁸. Additional information about the presence of barbarians was found during the exploration of the above-mentioned fortification in Svetinja; a *federati* settlement, dated to the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century, was discovered within this. Numerous *amphorae* fragments discovered within this settlement, accounting for 88% of all ceramic material, point to the role of the *federati* both in the defence of the border and in the distribution of goods (fig. 7)¹⁹. Other findings linked with this horizon have also been discovered in the immediate vicinity of the city, in Kasidol near Viminacium, as well as a smaller necropolis in Kamenovo, to the south of Viminacium²⁰. We can assume that the barbarians could have had the same role in other cities on the Danube, Singidunum or Margum, where cemeteries and numerous other characteristic findings have also

15 Ivanišević/Kazanski/Mastykova, Les nécropoles 7-8.

16 Popović, Svetinja 1-35.

17 Landolfus Sagax, hist. 90.

18 Ivanišević/Kazanski/Mastykova, Les nécropoles 129-136.

19 Popović, Svetinja 1-35.

20 Ivanišević/Kazanski/Mastykova, Les nécropoles 15 fig. 8, 6; 38, 2. – Simoni, Dva priloga 209-214.



Fig. 6 Cemetery Viminacium II, grave 118. – (Photo Institute of Archaeology Belgrade).

been discovered. The area of these cities, judging by the scarce archaeological data, was also reduced to less heavily defended urban cores. The main occupation of the population of the city was the cultivation of land. One known event, recorded by Theophylact Simocatta, is the attack by the Avars on Singidunum in 584 AD: »He (Chagan) encountered the majority of the city's inhabitants encamped in the fields, since the harvest constrained them to do this; for it was the summer season and they were gathering in their subsistence«²¹.

Little is known of the area of other cities in North Illyricum. The plan of Horreum Margi is known only summarily, despite this municipality's significance in supplying the Roman army and as the seat of the important military equipment factory *Scutaria Horreomargensis* described in *Notitia Dignitatum*²². The city was also important in the 6th century, as it is mentioned in Hierocles' *Synecdemus*²³. We can only assume that it played a significant role in the collecting of subsistence as it was located in the centre of the fertile plains in the valley of the Morava River, in the interior, far away from the Danube border. A regular military outfit was probably stationed in the city.

We can assume that Naissus, located at the junction of important roads, had a similar role. In this case, too, archive material and archaeological exploration did not provide a clear picture of the city's topography in the 6th century. Only little is known about the city plan, and it roughly corresponds

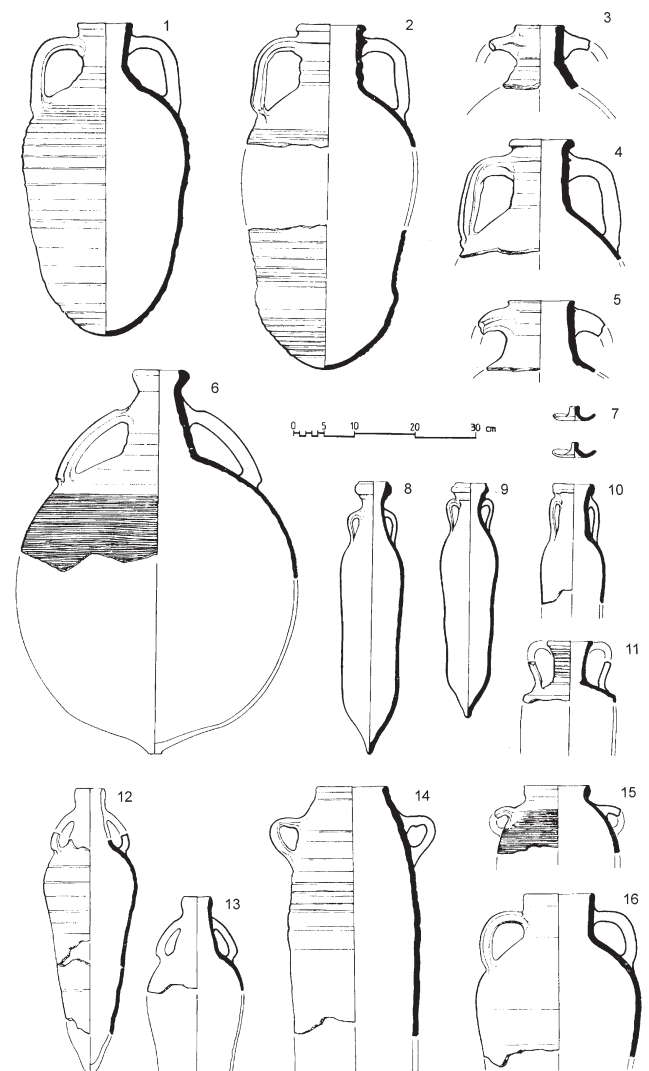


Fig. 7 Svetinja, amphorae. – (After Popović, Svetinja figs 13-14).

21 Theophylactus Simocatta, *hist.* 1,3-4.
 22 *Not. dign.* XI, 39.
 23 Hierocles, *Synecdemus* 657,6.



Fig. 8 Naissus, Late Antique buildings. – (Photo Institute of Archaeology Belgrade).

to the position of the Turkish fort and partially the Gradsko Polje quarter. It must be stressed that a large portion of the ancient city was destroyed during the construction of the Turkish fort. In spite of this, the remains of a massive Early Byzantine wall, 58 metres long, were discovered to the west of the Turkish fort in 1975. It was two metres wide and, in some places, as many as four metres high. Unfortunately, the wall was destroyed to enable the construction of a coach station. The remains of buildings have been found within the above-mentioned area: *thermae*, a street with porticos, running in a north-south direction, and with parts of buildings (fig. 8)²⁴. A deposit of goldsmith's tools was discovered within one of them²⁵. A building with a hypocaust was discovered in the southern part, near Belgrade Gate, as well as a smaller paleo-Christian necropolis, which testifies to depopulation and a reduction in the area of the city.

Our knowledge of Ulpiana/Iustiniana Secunda, with a large *castrum* covering 16 hectares and a defended urban core of 35 hectares, is superficial, despite the discovery of certain buildings such as the northern gate and basilica. A

new exploration, currently under way, will certainly shed light on this important urban centre. Municipium Dardanorum has only been explored partially and several buildings are known, one of which is the *horreum*. Municipium S[...] is known mostly on the basis of the Roman necropolis and epigraphic monuments. We have also registered the remains of a destroyed Early Christian basilica²⁶.

Large private domains and *villae publicae* erected in the area of the large plains and basins of North Illyricum were destroyed during the barbarian raids at the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century. This greatly undermined supplies to the armies on the limes. The large *villa publicae*, like the one in Mediana, although reconstructed, as Procopius informs us, did not regain its former role. A small group of barbarians lived on the site in the 5th century. According to archaeological explorations, the great *horreum* and storage facilities for agricultural products and the wine pools from the 4th century were not reconstructed in the 6th century. It is quite certain that the reconstruction was limited to smaller parts of this complex²⁷.

24 Vasić, Gradovi 91-93.

25 Ljubinković, Tvrđava 253-261.

26 Mirković, Municipium.

27 Milošević, Arhitektura 118-125.

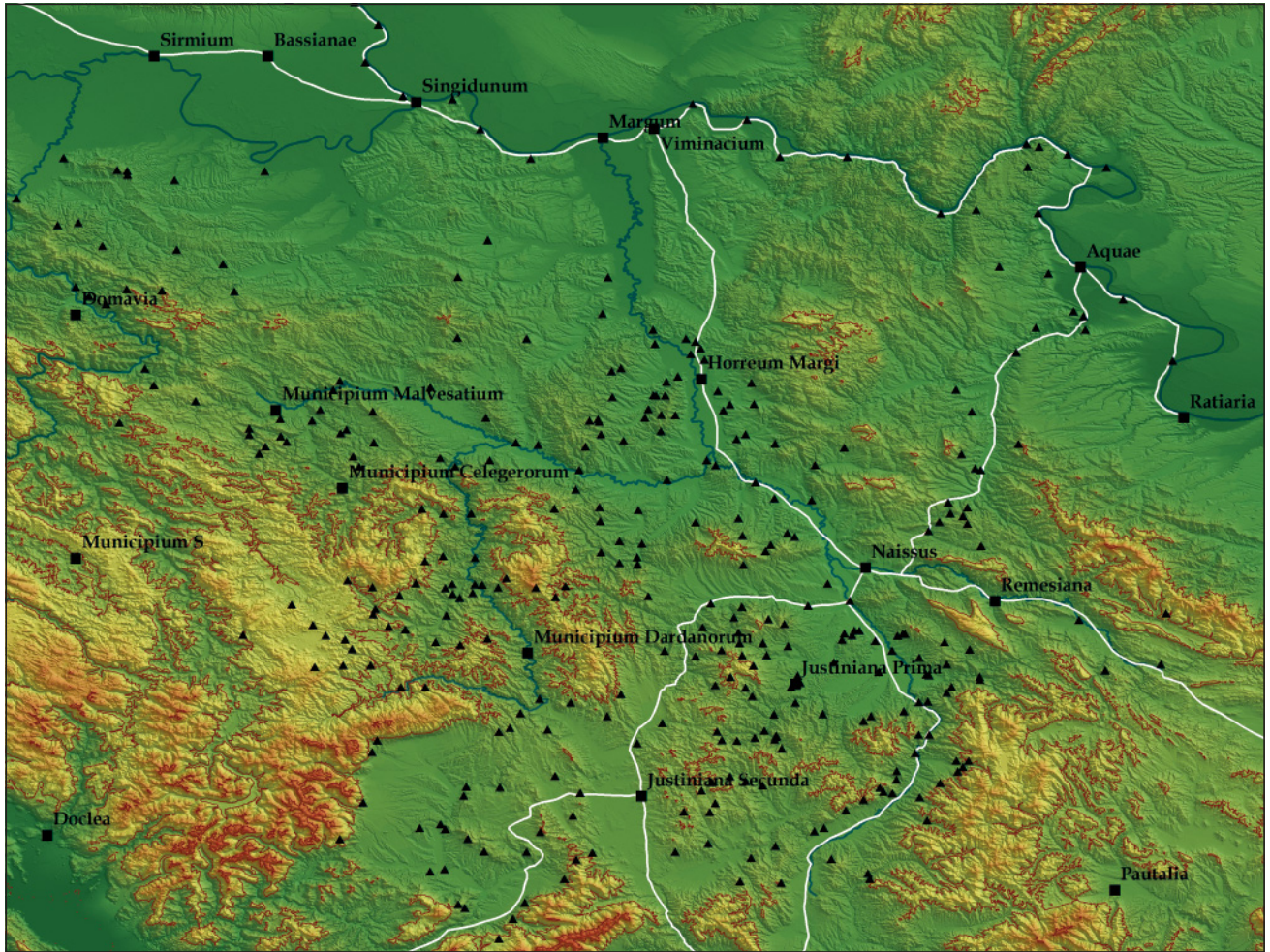


Fig. 9 Late Antique cities (■) and fortifications (▲) in Northern Illyricum – contour interval 1000m. – (After Milinković, Stadt fig. 6; Bulić, The fortifications map T.5; Stamenković, Rimsko nasleđe map 6).

Economic holdings, mostly built during the 3rd century at the time of the military emperors and positioned along smaller plains and gorges in the interior, shared the same fate. The population lingered in these areas during the 5th century, with one difference: a number of fortified *refugia* were built on the hills above the plains, as well as deeper in the interior in the mountainous regions (fig. 9)²⁸. The names of the newly erected fortifications around Naissus – ὑπὸ πόλιν, which corresponded to the former *civitas*, which bear, according to M. Mirković, the names of the former land owners: Τιμίανα/Timiana, Οὐρβρίανα/Urbriana, and Κασσία/Cassia – are proof of this process²⁹.

Numerous fortifications, mostly *refugia*, were built in the non-urbanised areas (*chorai*). Procopius cites χώρα Ἀκιενεσίων/*chora* Akienision, that was in the area of the Timok River Valley and the banks of the Danube, and χώρα Ρεμεσιανισία/*chora* Remesianisia, an area east of Niš in the valley of the River Nišava³⁰. Most of the non-urbanised territory belonged to the eastern part of the province of Dacia

Mediterranea and the province of Dardania, which was not divided into *chorae*. The entire area was covered by a network of defensive fortifications (φρούρια/*phrouria*), whose primary role was to protect the local population, i.e. inhabitants of villages positioned throughout the interior of Illyricum. These fortifications were primarily defended by village militias.

In the fourth decade of the 6th century, the only new city in North Illyricum – Caričin Grad (Iustiniana Prima) – was built in this area, away from the main roads, which makes it unique. We shall not dwell here on the Caričin Grad locality since its creation, city plan and main development stages are known³¹.

Instead, we shall focus on its surroundings. There are many fortifications in the immediate and wider vicinity of Caričin Grad; these were erected with the purpose of protecting the local population, as well as mines, which also seem to have been operational in the 6th century. The fortifications were located both on the hills above the local rivulets and small plains, and deeper in the mountainous zone that encir-

28 Milinković, Stadt 159-191. – Bulić, The fortifications 191-216.

29 Mirković, Villas 63.

30 Ibidem 64.

31 Kondić/Popović, Caričin Grad. – Bavant/Ivanišević, Iustiniana Prima.



Fig. 10 Lece, mining shaft. – (Photo Institute of Archaeology Belgrade).

cles Caričin Grad from the east. The city of Caričin Grad itself was built between two significant agglomerates: to the north Zlata, a fort of larger dimensions and significance, and Rujkovac, a Roman fort built in the 2nd or 3rd century, within which life carried on without interruption until the 6th century³². Numerous findings of coins also confirm the life of this fort in the second half of the 5th century³³. These two fortifications certainly played a significant role in the protection and control of roads leading to the mines on Mount Radan and on the slopes of neighbouring mountains. These mines were part of the *metalla Illyrici*, which were especially active during the 2nd and 3rd centuries but which became less important in the 4th century, judging by data from sources and epigraphic monuments³⁴. Legal texts from the 8th decade of the 4th century reveal a drop in their output and show attempts by emperors to stimulate interest in reviving them. Numerous findings of slag, especially that of iron, and of ingots, as well as many iron items discovered both in the cities (e. g. Caričin

Grad) and within these fortifications, indicate that iron production was revived in the 6th century, primarily for local use (fig. 10). Especially indicative is the finding of one solidus of Leo I (457-474) from the mining gallery at Janjevo, located near Ulpiana, which certainly indicates the revival of mining production in North Illyricum³⁵.

Certain fortifications located in the area of Caričin Grad indicate a higher social status, judging by the wealth of church property. A number of small basilicas, erected within the mentioned forts, are known from this period. These were mainly modest buildings without elements of internal stone or fresco decoration. One of the most indicative examples is Kale near Bregovina with a rich stone inventory in marble, a material that was seldom used in the creation of the otherwise numerous examples of stone reliefs in the nearby Caričin Grad³⁶. Local limestone and andesite were used to make the reliefs in Caričin Grad. We also found stone reliefs within the medieval church of St. Pantelei near Lece. These were liturgical stone items: a small capital and, probably, part of the parapet plate or the basamento of a column. Both these locations can be connected with the mining region.

A little to the west, within the Kopaonik mining complex, which belongs to the same mining district as Caričin Grad, we found another church at Mala Vrbnica/Dub with parts of liturgical equipment made from small-grain sandstone. The motifs on these fragments greatly resemble similar items found within the basilicas in Bosnia³⁷. The most remarkable example is the basilica with a series of buildings, discovered at an altitude of 1800 metres above sea level, below one of the highest mountain peaks of Serbia, the Pančić Peak on Mount Kopaonik. The entire complex, dated to between the 3rd and 6th centuries, can undoubtedly be linked to mining considering that the whole area is covered with numerous mines, slag fields and mining installations. The basilica itself indicates a certain degree of wealth since the floor was covered with a mosaic and the inner walls painted with frescoes. This basilica represents a unique example in the territory of North Illyricum. At the same time, the names of certain fortifications from Procopius' list indicate places connected with mining activities and ore processing Ἐραρία/Eraria in the vicinity of Naissus, Φερραρία/Ferraria and Δάλματας/Dalmatae in the area of Remesiana, and Ἀργένταρες/Argentares in the area of Ad Aquas³⁸.

The economic activities of the other forts in Dardania may be linked with agriculture, and this applies to those fortifications located next to the plains and valleys. This is indicated by the above-mentioned fortifications whose names Κεσίανα, Κελλιριανά, Εὐτυχιανά, etc. are derived from the old Roman proprietors, Cassius, Celerius, and Euthycus³⁹.

32 Stamenković, Rimsko nasleđe 44-53.

33 Ivanišević/Stamenković, New data 757-763.

34 Dušanić, Late Roman 215-226.

35 Čerškov, Rimljani 83 n. 75

36 Jeremić, Arhitektonska 111-137.

37 Basler, Arhitektura fig. 167 and figs 116-117: Dabrovina, Potoci.

38 Mirković, Villas 69.

39 Ibidem 69.

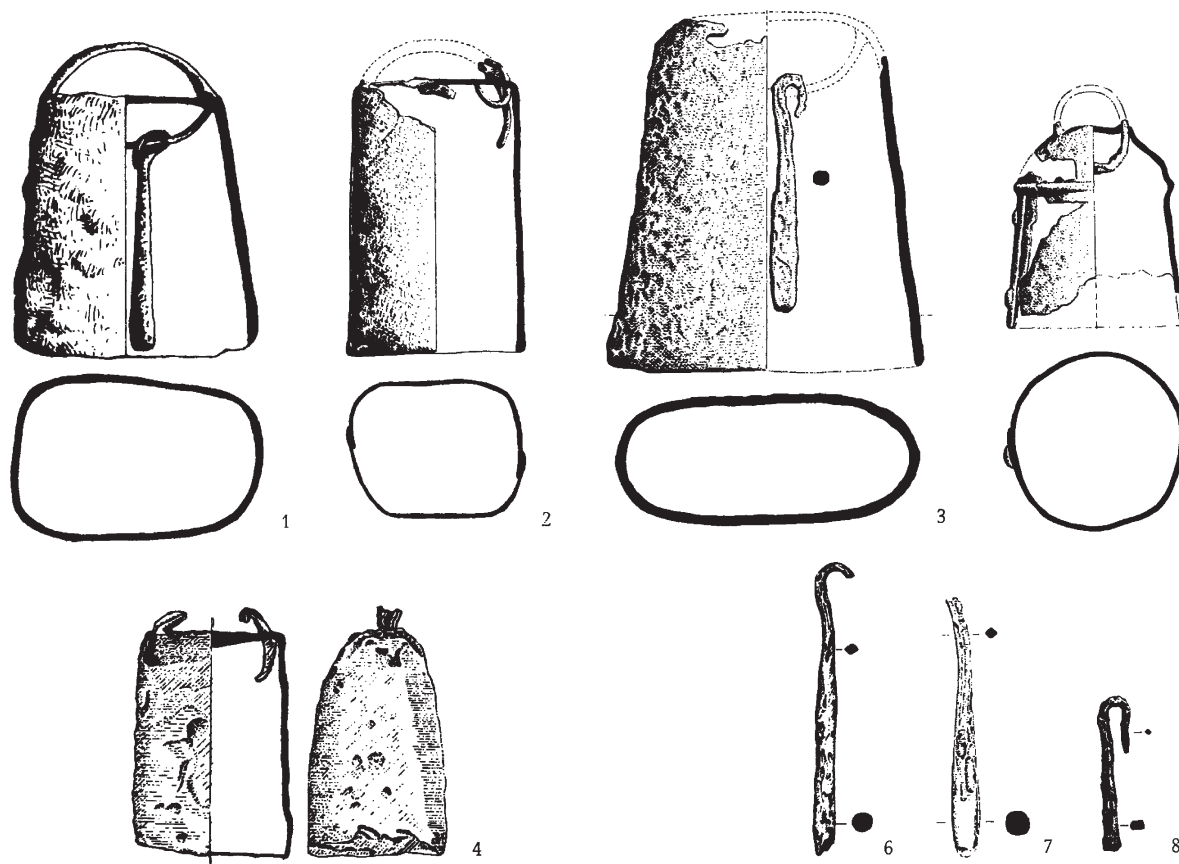


Fig. 11 Vrsenice, cowbells. – (After Popović/Bikić, Vrsenice fig. 62).

The numerous findings of agricultural tools, as is the case in Caričin Grad, as well as in other forts, are another indication of their economic activities. Let us mention as examples the fortifications of Čečan and Gornji Streoc in Kosovo⁴⁰. A large number of hoes, picks for working land, as well as sickles and pruning knives for reaping crops and pruning trees were discovered within these fortifications.

The economic picture within the forts positioned in mountainous areas is completely different. The best example is the fort of Vrsenice, built on a dominant hill at an elevation of 1300 metres, in the middle of the vast Sjenica Plateau; it is the only one to have been explored systematically. This was a *refugium* with a smaller basilica within which the majority of iron findings are cowbells, which testify to significant cattle raising activities (fig. 11). Five bells have been discovered and one sickle, the only agricultural tool, which was probably used for harvesting grass⁴¹. This area was most probably inhabited by an indigenous population, whose role was significant since some fortifications, such as Δουρβουλιανά, Τουττιανά, Βεσσαίνα and others listed by Procopius, bore native names⁴².

The economy of North Illyricum, whether it was agriculture, cattle raising or mining, was limited in scope. There was little trade with distant parts of the Empire. The best indicator

of this is the distribution of luxury ceramics – *terra sigillata* – and *amphorae*. *Terra sigillata* fragments are extremely rare within the forts in the interior and somewhat more frequent within city centres such as Caričin Grad. Findings of *amphorae* were a little more frequent, although they, too, appeared sporadically, with the exception of the Danube limes⁴³.

The geographical features of North Illyricum played a crucial role in the urbanisation and economic development of this region, from the start of Romanisation to the end of the 6th century. The chief urban centres grew in the northern areas, along the river communications and plains next to the border as well as on the road junctions in the interior, while most of the territory was rural and played an important role in the preservation of the population during numerous migrations from the end of the 4th to the start of the 6th century. Despite the *renovatio imperii* – a true renaissance in the first half of the 6th century and particularly during the reign of Justinian I – new waves of migration, with raids by the Kutigurs, Avars and Slavs in the second half of the 6th century, led to the fall of the limes and the breakdown of Byzantine rule, which resulted in the abandonment of the cities and communications of the key achievements of antique civilisation in the Central Balkans.

40 Ivanišević/Špehar, Early Byzantine 133-159.

41 Popović/Bikić, Vrsenice 86-88 fig. 62.

42 Mirković, Villas 69.

43 Bikić/Ivanišević, Imported Pottery 41-49.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary / Résumé

Spätantike Städte und ihre Umwelt im nördlichen Illyricum

Im Rahmen dieses Beitrags wird die Rolle der spätantiken Städte im nördlichen Illyricum und ihre Verbindung mit den zahlreichen Befestigungen im Landesinneren des Balkan diskutiert. Die Bedeutung der Reorganisation des Limes und der Städte im Nordillyricum nach der Unterzeichnung des Vertrags zwischen Byzanz und den Ostgoten im Jahr 510, also in der Regierungszeit des Kaisers Anastasios I., wird besonders hervorgehoben. Die Erneuerung byzantinischer Herrschaft im Nordillyricum fand an zwei Fronten statt: die Wiederherstellung des Limes, der Grenzstädte sowie militärischer Posten im Landesinneren sowie Wiederaufbau und Neuerrichtung von Refugien zum Schutz der lokalen Bevölkerung. Die wieder aufgebauten Städte erfuhren eine Reduktion des Stadtkerns aufgrund der Entvölkerung, verursacht durch die Einfälle und die Ansiedlung der Barbaren, was besonders die Städte am Donaulimes betraf. Besonderes Augenmerk wird auf die wirtschaftlichen Aktivitäten in den Städten und den nicht-urbanisierten Gebieten gelegt, wobei der Autor zu dem Schluss kommt, dass die Wirtschaft des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts im Nordillyricum – Landwirtschaft, Viehzucht oder auch Bergbau – in ihrem Umfang begrenzt war.

Übersetzung: J. Drauschke

Late Antique cities and their environment in Northern Illyricum

The author discusses the role of Late Antique cities in Northern Illyricum and their connection with numerous fortresses erected in the interior of the Balkan Peninsula. He demonstrates the importance of the renewal of the limes and of the cities in North Illyricum that can be dated to the time of Anastasius I, after the signing of the treaty in 510 AD between Byzantium and the Ostrogoths. The revival of Byzantine rule in North Illyricum took place on two fronts: the restoration of the limes and of the border city and military strongholds in the interior, and the reconstruction and erection of a number of *refugia* for the protection of the local population. Moreover, the renewed city experienced a reduction in their urban core due to the depopulation caused by the incursions and settlement of the barbarians, especially in cities on the Danubian limes. The author highlights the meaning of the economic activities in the cities and non-urbanised areas,

concluding that, in the 5th and 6th centuries, the economy of North Illyricum, whether agriculture, cattle raising or mining, was limited in scope.

Les villes antiques tardives et leur milieu dans le Nord de l'Illyricum

Cet article discute le rôle joué par les villes de l'Antiquité tardive dans le Nord de l'Illyricum et leurs liens avec les nombreuses fortifications établies à l'intérieur des Balkans. On y souligne particulièrement l'importance de la réorganisation du limes et des villes du Nord de l'Illyricum après la signature du traité entre Byzance et les Ostrogoths en 510, sous le règne de l'empereur Anastase 1^{er}. Le renouvellement de la domination byzantine dans le Nord de l'Illyricum se déroule sur deux fronts: la restauration du limes, des villes frontalières et, à l'intérieur, celle des postes militaires ainsi que la reconstruction et la création de refuges pour la protection civile. Les villes reconstruites connaissent un rétrécissement de leur centre suite à l'exode causé par les incursions et l'implantation des barbares, un phénomène qui touche particulièrement les villes le long du limes du Danube. Une attention toute spéciale est vouée aux activités économiques des villes et des régions extra-urbaines, l'auteur arrivant cependant à la conclusion que ces activités – agriculture, élevage ou exploitation minière – restèrent limitées aux 5^e et 6^e siècles dans le Nord de l'Illyricum.

Traduction: Y. Gautier