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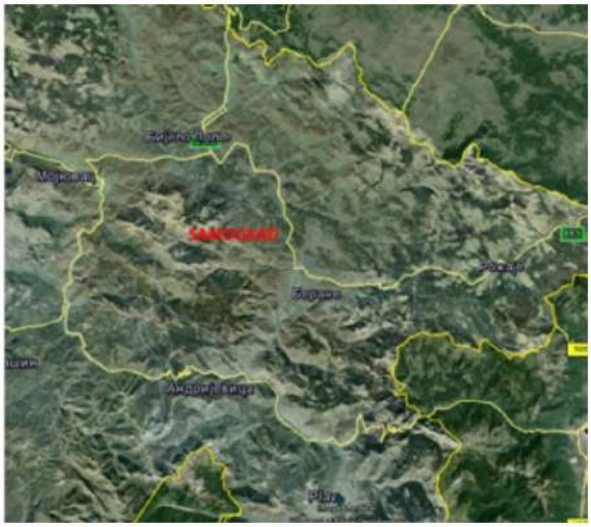
Abstract: Berane's Museum of Polimlje has, for a long period of time, been implementing the process of archaeological field surveying and research of Samograd Fortress, located in the village of Prijelozi, in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje. This rather unique and almost naturally shaped fortress was inhabited by the local population from the Bronze Age to the Middle Ages. Right up until the present day, certain elements have been identified and recognised, including the line of the fortress's ramparts, the main gate location and the wall that separated the acropolis from the fortress's *suburbium*. The *basilica extra muros*, located south of the fortress gate, was also subject to field surveying and research, as were the *basilica intra muros*, located in the fortress's *suburbium*, including the entrance gate, facilities attached from the inner side of western rampart wall and the rampart that separated the acropolis from the area below the fortress. Conservation measures were taken for almost all the architectural excavations, including, partially or fully, protective capping of the excavation locations.

Keywords: basilica, early Christianity, mortarium, holy water ampoule, golden cross

Samograd, or Kamengrad, as it was earlier referred to by the local population (Lutovac, 1973: 125), is located on the River Brezava some 4.5 km upstream from the confluence with the River Lim, almost right up against the Mount Bjelasica massif. This extraordinary fortress rises out of a dome-shaped glade, partially covered in thick forest. This area is approximately half a hectare, contained within with seven large and high rocky outcrops whose heights range between 30 m and 80 m (Fig. 1). The space between the rocky outcrops contains ramparts whose traces are still visible today. The older generation of the local population remember the well-preserved parts of the rampart including the fortress's inner walls. The latter is naturally divided into upper (50 m × 20 m) and lower plateaux (50 m × 70 m), which are separated by some sort of subwall which has been completely destroyed (Mrkobrad and Jovanovic, 1989: 31).



HISTORY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SURVEYING AND RESEARCH

The first field survey and research sondage at Samograd was conducted in 1988 (Mrkobrad and Jovanovic, 1989: 31–46) and by the Centre for Archaeological Excavations of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade (Mrkobrad and Lutovac, 1990: 135–139), in cooperation with Berane's Museum of Polimlje and the Museum of Local History in Bijelo Polje. During this period, four test sondages and one test trench were opened. Sondage 1 was located within the inner side of the south-western rampart in the fortress's *suburbium* on the lower

plateau and sondage 2 was located within the inner side of the northern rampart of the upper plateau. Sondage 3 was located some 70 m in front of Samograd (at the side of the western entrance); sondage 4 was located on the eastern rampart on the lower plateau; and trench A was located within the area of the sacral building located outside the fortress *(basilica extra muros)*.

During another campaign, conducted in 1989, the nave of the *basilica intra muros* was discovered and the nave of the *basilica extra muros* was partially researched (Lutovac, 2009: 245–256).

Berane's Museum of Polimlje began its sondage archaeological field survey and research in 2010, in the area of the western side where the town gate was located almost right next to the highest cliff on the northern side of the fortress's *suburbium*. After the field survey and research was completed, the ruins of the gate were conserved and rebuilt up to a height of 3.50 m.

Berane's Museum of Polimlje commenced with a systematic thorough and complete archaeological field survey and research of the *basilica extra muros*. This area was designated as Sector I and the field survey and research were conducted through a network of 4 m × 4 m squares. This took place when all the ruins of the basilica's walls had been discovered, and the nave was excavated all the way down to the floor level. During 2017, a systematic archaeological field survey and research of the *basilica intra muros* took place in the area designated as Sector III and the field survey and research continued in the *basilica extra muros* with the purpose of removing the medieval necropolis from the nave of the basilica. A sondage of area of the early Christian necropolis in the south was conducted during this particular campaign, including three probes. The necropolis space was designated and separated within Sector II.

During the campaign organised in 2018, conservation measures were taken with the discovered walls of the *basilica intra muros* and a systematic archaeological field survey and research of the ruins and remaining facilities attached to the inner side of the south-western rampart in the fortress's *suburbium* (Sector IV) were carried out. During 2019, two 4 m × 4 m squares were opened in front of the entrance to the *basilica intra muros* for the purpose of further analysis of the stratigraphic layers of Samograd. At the same time, with this field survey and research, the remains of the ramparts separating the acropolis from the area below were discovered and conservation measures were conducted on the remains of the living quarters discovered in the fortress's *suburbium* from the inner side of the south-western side.

DEFENSIVE ARCHITECTURE

An Antiquity-era fortress, and later an early Byzantine fortress, was built within the conical rocky mounds which rise over the fertile and gentle slopes of the left bank of the River Ruiska (Fig. 2). This space is roughly half a hectare in size, edged with seven large rocky outcrops 30 m to 80 m high. The space between the rocky outcrops is linked by mighty ramparts that are visible even today. The inner space is naturally separated into two parts: the upper and lower plateaux on the northern side; and some larger, lower plateaux on the southern and south-western sides. The height difference between these two plateaux is approximately 10 m. Based on conducted archaeological field surveys and research, the two construction stages were clearly separated into the ramparts and discovered facilities.

During the initial construction stage, the fortress was built by constructing ramparts with a width of 1.40 m between groups of narrow rocks on the upper and lower plateaux. The remains of these ramparts were discovered in sondages I and II, opened in 1987, as well as in Sector II during the field survey and research conducted in 2018. The ramparts in this particular period were made of unshaped square blocks layered into straight horizontal lines and bound with lime mortar. The walls extended out alongside the edges of the slope from one vertical rockface to another, thereby closing up the inner fortress space. No information regarding the possible gate has been provided, but according to the configuration of the terrain, we can assume that it was integrated into the ramparts during certain reconstructions that took place later on (Fig. 2).

During the second construction stage, new ramparts were built (1.70 m wide on the lower plateau and 1.40 m wide on the upper plateau). These were built using the same technique as on the previous rampart walls and the only difference was that the stone blocks were less carefully shaped, with many discrepancies, and with only one side

being carefully shaped. The rampart wall separating the acropolis from the fortress's *suburbium* was built during this specific period. This rampart had a width of 1.60 m and was built on a slope directly under the upper plateau plain. Once again, the same technique was used as in the west-oriented rampart wall and its height (1.50 m) has managed to remain intact. The rampart that separated the acropolis from the area below the fortress began from a sheer cliff on the eastern side (directly above the *basilica intra muros*) and extended towards the western side with a length of 27.90 m (Fig. 2). A narrow passage towards the acropolis, one metre wide, remains directly alongside the cliff on the western side. This passage was located high in the rampart wall and it is inevitable that there must have been some kind of platform or staircase for easy access. Since it was built on sheer cliffs facing the lower plateau, this rampart was reinforced by a counter-buttress 18 m in length and 0.40 m in width.

The fortress's gate was discovered on the western side of the fortress's *suburbium* in the south-western rampart, almost directly alongside rocky cliffs located on the northern side (Fig. 2). It consisted of a 2.95-metre-wide passage and protecting wall built in front of the entrance. There would have been a wooden, two-winged gate located at the entrance, and the large nails with wide square heads that were used to shackle it perhaps best support this. The entrance was hidden and protected with standalone walls built in front of the gate with some 7 m in between. This partition wall was attached to the cliffs located on the northern side and extended a length of 6 m towards the south. The outer layer of the south-western wall, from the entrance gate towards the south, was discovered with a length of 65 m and it has been preserved up to a height of 2.10 m on the northern side and 1.50 m on the southern side.

SACRAL FACILITIES

Basilica extra muros

The architectural remains of this basilica are located some 50 m away from the fortress gate, directly underneath the south-western rampart (Fig. 3/1). Two construction stages are clearly distinct in Fig. 4.

First of all, an early Christian single-nave basilica was built, with a deep semi-circular apse on the north-eastern side and a 1.40-metre-wide gate on the south-western side. It is 21 m long and 8 m wide. There were two more entrances to the basilica; one on the north-western side, which is 0.80 m wide, and the other, 0.95 m wide, located on the south-eastern side. The side entrances were located close to the inner shoulders of the apse. Along the north-western wall of the basilica, in line with the west-orientated façade, a square-shape baptistry (*piscina*) was built. Its dimensions were 3.55 m × 3.45 m.

The walls of the basilica and *piscina*, 0.65–0.70 m wide, were made of unshaped and post-carved stone blocks, layered in very straight horizontal lines, bound with lime mortar. The basilica's floor was made of broken stones in a lime mortar mould, with a thickness of 0.10 m and was painted in red water-resistant lime mortar. The floor and the lime mortar on the *piscina* walls were finished in identical red water-resistant lime mortar. According to information provided on the field, we can claim with much certainty that the door jambs of the north-western and south-eastern entrance gates leading to the basilica's nave were finished in red water-resistant lime mortar.

During the second construction stage, the basilica was shortened by 4 m on the western side, and on the south-eastern side an annexe for funerary purposes was additionally attached to the wall (Fig. 4/2, 3a). This annexe was 4 m wide and 15.60 m long. The inner space of the annexe was divided by two transverse walls into three buildings connected by passageways left open along the southern basilica wall. The two areas furthest from each other (in the northeast and southwest) had almost identical lengths – 3.65 m and 3.50 m, respectively – while the central area was the biggest of all, at 6.40 m in length. In this central area, along with the southern wall of the basilica (after rebuilding the side entrance to the nave), there was an above-ground tomb (2.80 m × 1.65 m). At a height of 0.70 m above the lime mortar floor, a burial catafalque was built, while a drainage channel for organic leftovers extended along the south-eastern side (Fig. 5). The area where the deceased was laid, the formed channel and the inner walls were plastered in red, water-resistant line mortar. The entrance to the tomb was

located on the north-eastern side and of this the eastern door jamb has been preserved. It was made of stone blocks with a groove for placing the stone slab used to close up the tomb.

The osteological remains of three buried persons were discovered on the catafalque inside the tomb (Fig. 5). A cross-shaped golden chain was found on the deceased, who was placed in the middle of the tomb and partially dislocated during the posthumous burial (T. I/6), and there was also a golden pendant shaped into what appears to be a stylised stick or sceptre (T.I/7).

During the second stage, a *synthronon* with a raised central area was built in the apse, which functioned as the bishop's throne. Certain corrections were made at the time, including to the floor in the areas around the inner shoulders of the nave and apse. The area around the buildings built during the second construction stage, was filled with yellow clay soil mixed with fine stone fragments. This layer, with an average thickness of 7–10 cm, also represents the chronological boundary between the two construction stages. After the field survey and research was carried out, based on the archaeological remains of the *basilica extra muros*, conservation measures were also carried out by the building up of certain walls and of protective caps (Fig. 6).

Basilica intra muros

The remains of this basilica were located in fortress's *suburbium* in the easternmost side and were located between two rocky mounds that represented natural defensive towers. Two construction stages were clearly distinguishable in this building as well.

With dimensions of 15 m × 8.50 m, the basilica was initially built with an apse on the eastern side and with three entrances on the western side (Fig. 7). The central entrance was 1.40 m wide, while the side entrances were narrow and almost the same width, at around 1.00 m. According to this triple entrance, we can only assume that the basilica may have had three naves, but during the exploratory period we found no material evidence to support this particular thesis.

There was another passage in the basilica, on the southern wall and closer to the apse, that used to lead to a smaller area between the basilica's walls, the eastern rampart wall and the vertical rocks on the southern side. The basilica was built from larger, post-carved stone blocks arranged into fairly straight horizontal rows, bound with lime mortar. At certain spots there are levelling rows made of thick stone slabs that served to straighten the unshaped rows of stone blocks. The basilica walls were 0.7 m wide and preserved to a height of 0.50 m on their eastern side and 1.50 m on their western side. Due to tectonic movements and sliding of the eastern rampart, the apse walls, including the southern shoulder of the church, were partially destroyed and have "slid" downhill. Transverse cracks that confirm the tectonic movement of eastern parts of the building can be seen in the lime-mortar floor in the basilica. The floor of the church was made of red, water-resistant lime mortar, while the inner walls were smoothed with white lime mortar. The outer layers of the walls were grouted with white lime mortar.

During the second construction stage, on the western side of the basilica, a narthex (10 m wide by 5 m long) was additionally built. The southern wall of the narthex was in line with the southern wall of the basilica, while on the northern side the narthex widened from the nave and took up all the usable space towards the vertical rocks to the north. The entrance to the narthex was roughly aligned with the axis of the central entrance into the basilica's nave and had the same width (1.40 m). An above-ground tomb was built along the southern wall of the narthex and it resembles the one that was discovered in the annexe of the *basilica extra muros*. The main difference is that the burial catafalque in the *basilica intra muros* was at the level of the narthex floor, while the burial catafalque in the *basilica extra muros* was above the floor level. This tomb was destroyed and the dislocated osteological remains of two bodies – one of an elderly person and one of someone younger – were discovered inside.

In the tomb itself and the southern part of the narthex, the floor was coated with red, water-resistant lime mortar. This floor surface stretched towards the north and terminated in line with the northern doorposts of the narthex and the nave. The remaining northern part of narthex had a floor that was made of red clay and soil. We can definitely presume that in the northern part of the narthex there was a *prothesis*, which, from the passageway towards the nave was separated by a light wooden barrier. The archaeological finds, particu-

larly the analysis of the mortarium, point towards the purpose of this space (T. III/3).

During the second construction stage, certain corrections in the basilica's nave were conducted. The northern entrance was closed, so that the nave was accessible through the central aisle, while the southern passageway allowed functional access to the tomb. A bench was built inside the long walls of the nave and on the western side. Its width was 0.27 m and its height 0.60 m, while in the apse a *synthronon* was built. All the floors and benches were painted in red, water-resistant lime mortar, while the inner walls were smoothed with regular lime mortar. The difference in the levels between the nave and the narthex (and those in the central aisle) was resolved by the construction of two steps, covered with brick. We might assume that this space, which for a certain period of time was accessed via the southern door, was a *pastophorion*, and in it were found, among the construction debris, the locking mechanism of a small chest (T.I/11, 11a), a little glass bowl (T.III/2) and a lead ampoule for holy water or myrrh (T.I/11, 11a).

Conservation measures were implemented in this building as well. The area of the apse was statically secured and additionally built up to the level of the remaining basilica walls.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

The discovered buildings were located at the same level as the apse of the *basilica extra muros*, about 45 m south of the fortress gate. They extended inside the rampart wall over an area of 85 m^2. The ruins and remains of an old rampart wall and a building attached to it were also discovered. The dimensions of this facility were 12 m × 7 m. It was built using the same techniques as the rampart itself – it was made out of post-carved blocks laid in fairly straight horizontal rows bound with lime mortar. The width of the walls was 0.65 m and they have been preserved to a height of 0.50–0.70 m. We can presume that, during the second construction stage and during the building of the new ramparts, this particular building was reconstructed with the original rampart attached to it and a rampart from the second construction stage was also attached to it. A slightly smaller building was constructed over this building during the subsequent period. This building's dimensions were 5.50 m × 6.20 m with walls 0.70 m in width. Along this building's southern wall and some 7 m northwards from it, two self-supporting parallel walls were built in the same direction in which the rampart extended. These walls were somewhat thicker and they extended some 7.50 m into the area of the fortress's *suburbium*. As opposed to the older constructions, which were built with a lime mortar binding material, during this stage the buildings were made of post-carved stone bound with a reddish and dark-clay-based soil, mixed with finely crushed stones. A more recently built construction, inside the area flanked by the two walls, belongs to the late-medieval period and was most probably used as an animal pen with a barn or cowshed.

STRATIGRAPHY

According to the research carried out so far, by analysing the movable archaeological material and combining the conclusions based on the elements of fortification and sacral architecture, four horizons of life at this fortress can be distinguished, including the following:

Belonging to the prehistoric period (Bronze and Iron Ages)

The period from the beginning of the fortress (mid-2nd century AD), until its destruction (mid- or second half of the 3rd century AD)

The period of the fortress's reconstruction in the 4th century AD until the fortress was abandoned in the 5th century AD.

The period of the fortress's reuse in the 6th century AD until its final destruction at the beginning of the 7th century AD.

The subject of this work is the late-Antiquity and early Christian fortress at Samograd, but it should be mentioned that the strategic significance of this natural refuge had already been noted in the prehistoric period. In the mid-2nd and at the beginning of the 3rd century AD, Samograd witnessed the building of its first walled fortress. The ramparts, 1.40 m wide, built between steep rock faces on the lower and upper plateaux, belong to this particular period (Мркобрад and Јовановић, 1989: 43, T. II /1–3). The fortress was destroyed in the second half of the 3rd century AD and the immediate cause of the fortress's destruction remains unknown. However, looking from a general perspective regarding the events in neighbouring countries, this presumption can be made, based on registered stores of coins at the time of the

plundering of Dalmatia and neighbouring Dardania between 230 and 260 AD (Mrkobrad and Jovanović, 1989: 43; Mirnik, 1981: cat. Nos. 149, 157, 195, 231). Certain barbarian invasions, probably launched by the Goths, may be traced from Ponišavlje, through Kosovo to Nikšić. We can assume that Polimlje lay on their route and that all the fortresses within Polimlje were plundered and subsequently destroyed.

According to the ceramic material and bronze coins discovered, we can almost certainly claim that the fortress was reconstructed in the 4th century AD as part of an organised fortress reconstruction during the reign of Diocletian or Constantine I (Mrkobrad and Jovanović, 1989: 43, T. III and IV).

Five out of the 10 discovered bronze coins were well preserved and identifiable. Two coins bore the head of Constantine I (306–337 AD), one of Constantius II (324–361 AD), one of Valens (364–378 AD) and one of Valentinian I (364–375 AD). During this period, ramparts 1.70 m wide on the lower plateau and 1.40 m wide on the upper plateau were built. At that time, the acropolis was separated from the fortress's *suburbium* by a rampart 1.60 m wide. A new gate was built on the south-western side and we can assume that it integrated the gate from the previous construction stage. During this period of life at Samograd, we can connect the construction of a *basilica extra muros* (single-nave basilica with a *piscina* on the northern side) and the construction of a *basilica intra muros* (three-entrance basilica). Based on the available material, we can say that the fortress was used until the mid-5th century AD. The reason for abandoning this fortress still remains unknown.

The fortress was again used and reconstructed in the 6th century AD as part of Justinian I's restoration of the Empire (Мирковић, 1978: 1–8; Николајевић, 1976: 202 et seq.). We can claim with some certainty that the additional construction on both basilicas belongs to this period. The *basilica extra muros* was shortened by 4 m on the south-western side; the baptistery was demolished and an annexe for funerary purposes was rebuilt on the south-eastern side. A bishop's throne was built inside the basilica, that is, in front of the *synthronon* in the axis of the apse. On the other side, in the *basilica intra muros*, a narthex with a memorial tomb and stone benches (*subseliae*) was added within the nave and a *synthronon* was built inside the apse. Many of the metal objects discovered in Samograd belong to this particular period, as well as some of the ceramic material that was separated and chronologically designated during the initial archaeological field surveys and research (Мркобрад and Јовановић, 1989: 42, T. V/1–7). The fortress was destroyed at the beginning of the 7th century AD.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

So far over 500 objects that belong to different periods of life in this natural *refugium* (that was later adapted as a fortification, turning it into an unusual fortress) were found. From the archaeological finds during the period of late Antiquity and early Christianity, the following items have been separated relating to the economical and spiritual status of the fortress built at Samograd.

Bowl fragment

Clay, kick-wheel technique, calcinations; dimensions: 8.4 cm × 5.3 cm × 0.5 cm;

Basilica extra muros; Sector I – square C5 / 1. O.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: Second half of 4th–5th century AD.

Bowl fragment with rotund recipient and a debase, almost flat rim vertically cut from the outside, made of clay with a sand admixture, and rough fractures of light ochre calcinations (T. I/1). The closest analogies of this type of bowl can be found at the sites of Ras-Pazarište near Novi Pazar and the Vrsenice Hillfort near Sjenica.

Analogies: Popović, 1999: 95, T. 46/11; Popović and Bikić, 2009: 60, Fig. 40/2).

Buckle

Iron, forged, bent; dimensions: 2.2 cm × 0.3 cm;

Square: B1 /Pov.o. s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 4th century AD .

A small "omega belt buckle" (Sagadin, 1979: 306–307) of circular shape, with terminations bent into a volute in the same direction as the body (T. III/12). The body of the buckle had a square cross-section with the bracing pin missing. Similar buckles have been found in Tumbarica, Šarski Krš

near Duga Poljana and the Ras Fortress near Novi Pazar and can be found at almost all locations of late Antiquity and early Christianity.

Analogies: Popović, 1983: 10–11; Popović, 1999: 111, cat. No. 81, Fig. 58/21.

Bowl fragment

Clay, kick-wheel technique, calcinations; dimensions: 7.4 cm × 4.3 cm × 0.5 cm;

Found near the *basilica extra muros,* Sector I – square BIII/3.o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

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

Deep, slightly biconical bowl with a rotund bevelled rim, made of clay with a sand admixture and umber calcinations. The rim consists of a sequence of short incisions (T. I/2). Similar samples were found at the Vrsenice Hillfort near Sjenica and at the Ras Fortress locality near Novi Pazar.

Analogies: Popović and Bikić, 2009: 72, Fig. 49/2; Popović, 1999: 95, Fig. 46/8.

Bowl fragment

Clay, kick-wheel technique, calcinations; dimensions: 7.4 cm × 6.9 cm × 1.0 cm;

Basilica extra muros, Sector I – square E6/6.o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: Second half of 4th–first half of 5th century AD.

A bowl fragment of hemispherical shape with a slightly deployed horizontal rim, made of sandy clay and grey calcinations with a glazed surface of an olive-green shade (T. I/3). Almost identical samples have been found in Ćuprija and in the Ras Fortress near Novi Pazar.

Analogies: Popović, 1999: 310, T. I /12, Fig. 52/3, 4.

Jar fragment

Clay, kick-wheel technique, calcinations, glazing; length: 6 cm, width: 2.6 cm: thickness: 1.7 cm;

Basilica extra muros, Sector I – profile E1–F4;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 5th–6th century AD.

A fragment of a jar handle with a greenish-yellow glazed surface (T. I/4). The handle was embellished with imprinted square ornaments in three vertical rows. The square ornaments are bevelled at a 45° angle so that they form vertical zigzagged ribs. An identical sample has been found at the Diana Fortress in the Đerdap Gorge.

Analogies: Cvjetičanin, 2006: 98.

Lamp fragments

Clay, kick-wheel technique, calcinations, glazed; preserved height: 10 cm;

From the outer side of the southern wall of the burial annexe; Sector I – square F2/3. O.s;

Berane Museum of Polimlje;

Dating: 4th–6th century AD.

Three fragments of a lamp stand on a cylindrical and profiled base, made of clay with a sand admixture, with red calcinations. The surface has a greenish-yellow glaze (T. I/5). This type of lamp on a stand is a relatively common find at early Byzantine locations. Similar samples have been found in locations along the Danubian Limes including the following; Diana Fortress, Mihajlovac and Mora Vagei, as well as at Gamzigrad near Negotin.

Analogies: Špehar, 2010: 94; Tomović, 1986, 40, Fig. 24; Cermanović-Kuzmanović and Stanković, 1986: Fig. 8/3; Cvjetičanin, 2006: 105, Fig. 9, KAGS 10a.

Cross

Gold, cast, embossed, granulation; height: 3 cm, width: 1.6 cm, thickness: 0.4 cm;

It was located on the middle skeleton in the tomb in the southern annexe of the *basilica extra muros;* Sector I – square E3–E4/2. O.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 5th–7th century AD.

A cruciform pendant made of gold plate with Latin-style extended ends (T. I/6). A gallery with an inserted red semiprecious gemstone (most probably almandine) was positioned in the middle. The base of the gallery was decorated with a line of tiny granules of gold and the back side of the cross is smooth. A wide, circular loop in the upper part is used for the chain to go through, emphasised with three parallel ribs.

Analogies: A similar sample can be found in the catalogue of the Munich Museum Expo (Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung, 2004/2005: 311, pub. 526).

Pendant

Gold, cast, embossed, granulation; height: 2.2 cm;

It was positioned on the middle skeleton in the south annexe of the *basilica extra muros*; Sector I / square E3-E4/2. O.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 5th–7th century AD.

A pendant made of gold wire with a rounded cross-section; stick-shaped with a bent end part for hanging from a chain or clothing (T. I /7). It was found along with the above-described cross.

Decorated plate brooch/buckle

Bronze, cast, engraved, bored; height 4 cm, width 3 cm;

Basilica extra muros; Sector I / square B5/extension;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 6th century AD.

A decorated bronze plate brooch of rectangular shape with visible, projected circular holes used for strengthening. Small bronze pins were preserved in the small holes. The brooch was decorated in zones with carved and bored geometrical motifs

(T. I/8). It may have been a type of belt buckle.

Candelabrum chain

Bronze, cast, forged; length 7.5 cm;

Basilica extra muros; Sector I / square B3/3 o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

According to the analysis, the estimated date is the end of the 6th or first half of the 7th century AD.

A bronze chain, 7.5 cm long, with bent figure-of-eight rings, which terminates in a larger hook (T. I /9). It is assumed that this might have been a chain that was used to carry an oil lamp or candelabrum.

Small lock

Bronze and iron, forged, embossed; height: 5.1 cm, width: 4.2 cm, thickness with lock: 1.2 cm;

Outer side of southern wall of *basilica extra muros*; Sector III/ square G1/3 o.s.

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

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

A small iron lock with a decorated, square-shaped bronze plate on the front side (T. I /10). Embossed holes with dots were used as decorations around the keyhole on the lock. A keyhole cover was placed on the bottom side of the lock.

Ampoule

Lead/tin alloy, cast; height: 8.4 cm, recipient width: 6.2 cm, recipient thickness: 2.2 cm;

From the outer side of the *basilica extra muros*; Sector III / square GI/3 o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: According to analysis of the location, the end of the 6th and first half of the 7th century AD.

An ampoule for holy myrrh or holy water made out of an alloy of lead and tin with a rounded cylindrical neck and circular and flat recipient (T. I/11). On the ampoule's neck there were two crosses opposite each other that served as decorations, while on both sides of the ampoule's body, in the central part, there is a rosette or Christogram, around which geometrical and leaf-shaped motifs are dispersed into separated radial lines.

It appears that both sides of the ampoule were cast in the same mould and subsequently joined.

Arrowhead

Iron, forged, length: 5.2 cm;

Eastern side of the southern gate of the *basilica intra muros*; Sector III / square FII/2, o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 6th–first half of 7th century (Popović, 1999: 113, Fig. 59/4).

An iron three-bladed arrowhead with a short pin for insertion (T. II/1). This type of arrowhead was of Asian background and it began arriving in this particular region with the numerous waves of migrations.

They were extensively used by the Avars and they could have been found at Gepid archaeological locations in Pannonia. Without any doubt they were used by Romaic squads and were found in locations alongside the Danubian Limes and there were also some found in Justiniana Prima.

Analogies: Kovačević, 1977: 119; Mrkobrad, 1980: T. LXXXI /11-13; Špehar, 2010:134, cat. No. 696-708, T. XXXIX /696,698,703,704,708; Kondić and Popović, 1977: 212, T. XXVIII/102.

Arrowhead

Iron, forged; length: 5.7 cm, plate width: 1.5 cm;

Basilica intra muros; Sector III / square C1-2/2, o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

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

A short, wide iron arrowhead of trapezoidal shape with a tang. (T. II/2). Similarly to the previous example, leaf-shaped arrowheads, in a typological and chronological sense, were long-lasting phenomena and can specifically be dated according to the stratigraphic context they belonged to.

Analogies: Popović and Bikić, 2009: 81, Fig. 57/5.

Coin

Bronze, forged; dimensions: 1.8 cm × 0.1 cm,

Basilica intra muros; Sector II – square: BI/1 o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Constantine I (306–337 AD), (T.II/3,3a).

Coin

Bronze, forged; dimensions: 1.5 cm × 0.1 cm;

Found in front of the *basilica intra muros*, Sector BI/1 o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Constantine I (306–337 AD), (T.II/6,6a)

Coin

Bronze, forged; dimensions 1.7 cm × 0.2 cm;

Found in front of the *basilica intra muros*, Sector BI/1 o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Constantius II (324–361 AD) (T. II/4,4a), (Popović, 1991: 60, 117)

Coin

Bronze, forged, dimensions 1.8 cm × 0.2 cm;

Found in front of the *basilica intra muros*, Sector BI/3 o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Valens (364–378 AD) (T. II/5,5a)

Knife

Iron, forged; length: 9.8 cm, largest width of blade: 1.3 cm, thickness: 0.4 cm;

Found on the outer side of the southern gate of the *basilica intra muros*; Sector III / square C1/2. O.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 6th–7th century AD.

A slightly bent, iron knife with a single blade and tang for attaching (T. II /7). A common find in late Antiquity and early Byzantine fortresses. The closest analogies are knives found at the locations Ras-Pazarište near Novi Pazar and Vrsenica near Sjenica.

Analogies: Popović, 1999:113,114, Fig. 60/1, 8; Popović and Bikić, 2009: 83, Fig. 58/1, 3.

Arrowhead

Iron, forged; length: 6.8 cm; sleeve width: 0.9 cm;

Basilica extra muros; Sector III / square GII/2. o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

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

It is a three-bladed arrow with a sleeve (T. II /8). A similar sample was found at the Jelica Hill-fort.

Analogies: Milinković, 2010: 85-86, Fig. 75; Milinković and Špehar, 2014: 154, cat. No. 180.

Lamp

Glass, free-blown, preserved; length: 5.2 cm; preserved height: 1.1 cm;

Found in front of the *basilica extra muros*; Sector I / square E IV/2.o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 5th or perhaps 7th century AD.

A fragment of a tubular-profiled lamp rim made using a free-blowing technique with an olive-green colour (T. II /9). Similar lamps were found in the late-Antiquity-era Vrsenica Fortress near Sjenica, and also in the Ras-Pazarište Fortress near Novi Pazar. Apart from that, fragments of a similar lamp have been found in the Zlatni Kamen area south of Novi Pazar. These were mostly found in areas near sacral buildings (Popović, 1999: 108).

Analogies: Popović and Bikić, 2009: 146, Fig. 52/18; Popović, 1999: 108, Fig. 57/13; Ivanišević, 1990: 14–15, Fig. 4.

Lamp

Glass, free-blown, cast; preserved rim length: 8.5 cm; preserved height: 1.5 cm; tubular rim cross-section: 0.4 cm;

Found in front of southern side of the *basilica extra muros*; Sector I / square FII/3.o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: From the 5th century AD, however these were more common throughout the 6th century AD.

A glass lamp rim identical to the above-listed lamp. Small glass handles or hooks for hanging the lamp came out of the thickened rim (T. II /10). It was made with light-green glass using a free-blowing technique.

Lamp

Glass, cast; height: 2.5 cm; thickness: 0.6 cm;

Basilica extra muros; Sector I / square FIII – Podnica;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: From the 5th century, although these were more common in the 6th century AD.

A fragmented lamp handle made using a free-blowing technique from olive-green glass (T. III /1). Similar lamps have been found in the Ras-Pazarište Fortress near Novi Pazar (Popović, 1999: 108).

Analogies: Popović and Bikić, 2009: 146, Fig. 52/18; Popović, 1999: 108, Fig. 57/13; Ivanišević, 1990: 14–15, Fig.4.

Glass bowl

Glass; free-blown; height: 4 cm; rim cross-section: 6.6 cm; recipient cross-section 5 cm;

Found by the southern outer gate of the *basilica intra muros*; Sector III / square GI/3 o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

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

A glass bowl with small rounded recipient and wide extended and thickened rim (T. III/6). It was made using a free-blowing technique with light-green glass.

Analogies: Stamenković, 2015: 29.

Mortarium

Large-grain stone, carved, polished; height: 13 cm; hole cross-section: 19 cm;

Found in the *prothesis* of the *basilica intra muros*; Sector III / square CII/2.o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

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

The mortarium was made of grey sandstone of larger granulation (T. III/3). The recipient has a conical shape, polished on the inside and roughly sanded on the outside. Four semi-circular handles were set opposite each other in line with the rim on the outer side. Closest analogies were found in Tumbarica and at the Jelica Hillfort.

Analogies: Milinković, 1986: 53, T. VII; Milinković, 2010: 190, Fig. 259; Milinković, 2017: 151 cat. No. 218.

Bracelet

Bronze, forged; cross-section: 6.4cm;

Southern necropolis; Sector II / grave No. 2;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 4th–5th century AD.

A bronze bracelet with open and thickened ends, cut and processed in the shape of stylised snake's heads. The bracelet body was hollow with a semi-circular cross-section (T. III/4). Similar samples were found in the Antiquity-period necropolis of Doclea (Duklja).

Analogies: Церамановић-Кузмановић, Велимировић-Жижић, Срејовић, 1975:233, Fig. 131a).

Ring

Bronze, forged; cross-section: 2 cm;

Southern necropolis; Sector II / grave No. 2;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 4th–5th century AD (Špehar, 2010: 68, with older literature).

A bronze ring made out of strips of bronze plate with an additionally stiffened square-shaped head decorated with two eccentric circles and a dot in the middle (T.III/5). A similar ring with a flat head of square cross-section was found at Ras-Pazarište near Novi Pazar and the Diana Fortress on the Danubian Limes.

Analogies: Popović, 1999: 110, Fig. 58/13; Špehar, 2010: 68, cat. No. 139

Whorl

Stone; height: 1.3 cm; cross-section: 3.1 cm;

Southern necropolis, Sector II / grave No. 2;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

This analysis dates it back to the 4th century AD.

A whorl with a hemispherical shape made of dark stone (T. III/6,6a). The lower surface was decorated with five parallel, broad carved lines, while the calotte was decorated with four parallel, carved lines, two in each of the lower and upper parts. An almost identical sample was found at Tupi Krš near Tutin and similar samples were found in the nearby area of Zlostup close to Ostrovica, at Gamzigrad and at the Diana Fortress.

Analogies: Milinković, 1985: 52, T. II /2; Milinković, 1982: 132; Srejivić, Lalović and Janković, 1983: Cat. No. 221; Špehar, 2010:111, T. XXX /525.

Earring

Silver, forged, bent; cross-section dimension: 1.6 cm;

Southern necropolis, Sector II / grave No. 1;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 4th century AD.

An earring made of thin silver wire with a loop for closing it (T. III /7). On the lower part is a pendant formed from coiled wire and a strawberry shape or some other smaller pearl at the end of the pendant, which is missing. Dating was conducted based on other analysis.

Analogies: Cermanović-Kuzmanović et al.: 234, grave 51.

Ring

Bronze, forged, carved and punctured; dimensions – cross-section: 2 cm; thickness: 0.1 cm;

Found in building next to western rampart; Probe V/1.o.s.;

Date: 6th century AD.

A ring made of a strip of bronze plate, broadening to a plate which is missing (T. III/8). The ring's body was decorated with carved lines and punctions and with a line of engraved circles with dots along the middle of the strip.

Ring

Bronze, cast; dimensions – cross-section: 2.1 cm; thickness: 0.1 cm;

Found at the entrance gate to the acropolis;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 5th–7th century AD.

The bronze ring had a circular chain that was thickened on the upper side and extended so that it formed an ellipse-shaped head. This type of cast ring is similar to one found at the Jelica Hillfort.

Dating from Милинковић, 2014, 100, cat. No. 33.

Weight

Bronze, forged, carved; dimensions: 2 cm × 1.9 cm × 0.5 cm;

Found in front of the *basilica intra muros*, chance find;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 4th–6th century AD.

A bronze weight of square shape with tapering edges and a deeply carved Roman number XIIII on the upper side.

Scale pan

Bronze, forged, cut, bored; dimensions: 4.9 cm × 0.1 cm;

Found in front of the *basilica intra muros*, Sector III/ square BI /Pov.o.s;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 4th–6th century AD.

The bronze scale pan had a circular shape with bored holes for attaching a chain.

Beam balance

Bronze, forged, bent, bored; dimensions: 15.7 cm × 0.3 cm;

Found in front of the *basilica intra muros*, Sector II/ square AI /3.o.s.;

Museum of Polimlje, Berane;

Date: 4th–6th century AD.

This flat equilateral beam balance was used for measuring and weighing small objects, including precious metals. Similar beam balance scales have been found at Ras-Pazarište near Novi Pazar. This type of scales can often be found in late-Antiquity locations.

Analogies: Popović, 1999: 116, cat No. 160, Fig. 67; Bavant, 1990: 244–245, pl.XLIV/300; Ljubenova, 1981:190–191, Fig. 143).

CONCLUSION

According to the results of the survey and research, we can assume that Samograd was an important administrative spiritual centre in the Brezava Valley and particularly in the Lim Valley. Important communication lines went through this specific valley during the period of Antiquity (Бојановски, 1987: 138–141) and, during the Middle Ages, the Zeta Road (*Via de Zenta)*, commonly referred to as the "Latin Road" (Јиричек, 1951:108-109), went through this area. Later on, this road was used for medieval caravans going to Bihor, Ras and further on to the Pomoravlje regions (Гарашанин, 1967: 236–237; Динић, 1937: 121–123).

These roads had direct links with the exploitation of mineral resources in Polimlje, particularly in the area of Mount Bjelasica. We can assume that mining, during this specific period of Antiquity, served as a basic economy category in this region (Душанић, 1980: 23–24) and that the position of urban agglomerations, fortification and communications was to some extent conditioned by the exploitation and distribution and perhaps even the processing of ore. In the area of Mount Bjelasica, around Samograd and in the Brezava Canyon there are a significant number of indicative toponyms that highlight old mining activities: Vignjište (*viganj* = furnace), Olovište (*olovo* = lead), Rupe (= holes), Rudine (*ruda* = mineral), Rudni potok (= mineral stream), Ognjišta (= fireplaces), Crljevine (), Srebrenica (*srebro* = silver) and others (Губеринић, 1985). There were barely visible but still recognisable and identifiable traces of ore quarries and mine shafts, collapsed corridors and slag piles. Analyses of small balances used to weigh precious metals particularly indicate the possibility of mineral exploitation.

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