

Prehistory and Antique History of Kosova

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Abstract

The territory of Kosova has offered considerable archeological material, which, combined with the facts of written ancient sources, makes it possible to conclude that its first known inhabitants were the Illyrians. (Herod Historiae IV 49), consequently the Dardanians, created by the interlacement of Indo-European Neolithic substrate and Eneolithic adstrate. The complete formation of Dardanians took place during the Iron Age (1200-400), when the Dardanians created their compact territory and named their country Dardania. Kosova constituted the central territory of Dardania, which stretched out on the area between the rivers Vardar, Drini, Morava and Timok.¹ Preurban Dardanian development of the VI-IV centuries gave rise to the creation of the Dardanian state and along with it also to the Dardanian identity, which was maintained until the Byzantine period.

Key Words: territory of Kosova, archeological material, neolithic substrate, eneolithic adstrate, Dardanians, Iron Age, the rivers Vardar, Drini, Morava, Timok, Dardanian identity, Roman period, Dardanian labyrinth, Early Christianity, Indo-European migrations, Dardanian state, tumular necropolises of Kosova.

Prehistory of Kosova

The favorable natural conditions and the geographic position enabled the development of life in Kosova since the early prehistory. Although cave stations have not yet been studied, it seems that the numerous caves of Kosova have been dwelling

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¹ Fanula Papazoglu, *Srednjbalkanska plemena u predrimsko doba* (Sarajevo, 1969), 143-161; Edi Shukriju, *Dardania paraurbane* (Pejë, 1996), 19, and bibliography.

stations during the Paleolithic and Mesolithic Ages, as the case of the cave station of Radavc near Pejë and the findings in the neighbouring regions prove.

The hot and wet Atlantic climate enabled the development of agriculture (6000-3500) and the arising of sedentary settlements near the rivers or on the hillsides of lower hills from the sun since the early Neolithic (Runik/Ilirion, Zhitkoc, Glladnicë, Vlashnjë, Tupec, Reshtan). At this time the Starçevian culture was developed, which in some parts coexisted with the Impress-Adriatic culture and with elements of Thessalian culture, expressing therewith the early regional contacts. During the late Neolithic the culture of Vinça was created, respectively its Vinça-Tordosh stage, which was replaced by the Vinça-Plloçnik Eneolithic stage. The processes during the Eneolithic Age caused great changes, which are characterized by two key development elements: (1) The use of copper and (2) The migration of Indo-European tribes. In the life course from late Neolithic the local population started using copper, stepping thus from the Stone Age into the Metal Age (the Vinça-Plloçnik stage). The abundance of the worship objects of Starçeva culture and in special of Vinça culture (antropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines and baked earth altars) speak of a rich spiritual world, apart from the material one, whilst the idols of Vinça culture reached the summits of artistic expression in Kosovo region (Kosovo-South Morava variant).² The intrusion of Indo-European tribes during the development of Vinça-Plloçnik culture disarranged the old forms of agricultural life, introducing a new spirit, based mainly on the farming economy (Bubanj – Hum culture).

The insecurity of the time created by the migration of Indo-European tribes caused the displacement of the local inhabitants from the flat settlements to the lower hilly ones (Vlashnjë, Vallaç), whilst the life went on only in some flat settlements (Glladnicë, Tjerrtore in Prishtina, Fafos in Mitrovica). The Indo-European tribes constructed settlements on defended hills

² On the development in the Neolithic see: Milutin Garašanin, *Centralnobalkanska zona* (Sarajevo, 1979), 82, 185-193.

(Upper Gadime, Hisar, Veletin) bringing a different material and spiritual culture as well. Their idols of baked clay had a form of an extended and curved slab, different from and under the artistic level of the local Neolithic and Eneolithic tradition. Within the migration processes also semi-nomad groups from the upper Danubian area interfered (Baden culture).³

The integration processes went on during the Bronze Age (2100 - 1200), relying on mine and trade economy, along with the agricultural and farming ones. The small number of dug localities of Bronze Age enables only general conclusions on the existence of settlements on lower hills (Vlashnjë, Teneshdoll) and on the plain (Ljushhtë, Qëndresan/Gllarevë, Glladnicë, Nasalë/Nosalë, Berrnicë); of tumular necropolises of the mid Bronze Age (Rugovë, Ujz, Përçetë/Përçevë) and of field necropolises with urns (Berrnicë, Grashticë) in the transition from Bronze Age to the Iron Age. The findings in Kosova proved commercial links with the developed Mycenaean culture, during the mid Bronze Age (XVI-XV centuries) and this heralds the possibility of earlier contacts and influences with Mediterranean civilizations.

The correlation between the European Dardanians and Asia Minor Dardanians has not been disputed, but the time and direction of branching of Dardanians is still a matter of discussion.⁴ Regardless of the facts that further researches will offer, the branching of Dardanians should be seen within the Indo-European migration waves (from III millennium B.C.) and of Dorian migrations (XIII-XII centuries). There were migrations of Dardanian tribes also to Italy in the early Iron Age (XII century B.C.). In Apulia settled the Dauni and Dardas, whilst the Galabri occupied the South-East of Italy, giving also the name Calabria to the region.⁵ The Iron Age was researched more, whilst the results

³ On developments in Eneolithic see Nikola Tasic, *The Eneolithic Cultures of Central and West Balkans* (Belgrade, 1995).

⁴ Dardanian migrations are supported also by ancient authors: Diod. *Bibliotheca historica* V 48; Solin II, 51 D 2. E. Thrämer thinks that a part of Dardanians went to Asia Minor along with the Moesians and Phrygians: Eduard Thrämer, *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* - 2177: Dardanianos (Stuttgart, 1901). European Dardanians are seen as a delayed branch of Trojan Dardanians: John Wilkes, *The Illyrians* (Oxford, 1992), 145.

⁵ Fanula Papazoglu (Beograd, 1969), 103.

that came out of researches prove the complete formation of Dardanian culture in the VIII-IV centuries B.C., and the beginning of the ancient Dardanian history from IV century B.C.. Within this, the development of Dardanian culture can be seen through the following three stages:

- I. Pre-Dardanian culture ← IX century B.C..
- II. Dardanian culture a VIII – beginning of VI century B.C.
 b VI - mid V century B.C.
 c mid V - mid IV centuries B.C.
- III. Urban Dardanian culture IV – I century B.C. ⁶

The settlements of Proto-Dardanian stage are located on elevated terraces near rivers (Kllokot, Nasalë, Fafos II), whilst in the Dardanian stage they were located on higher hills. The Dardanian stage settlements are multilayered, which is an expression of empowerment of Dardanians and of their sustainable economic resources (Upper Gadime, Hisar and Kasterc of Suharekë, Veletin, Big Bardh, Cernicë, Dubofc, Vlashnjë, Cermnjan, Zatriq, Pidiq, Teneshdoll, Artanë/Novobërdë etc.). In the Iron Age surrounding earth ramparts mixed with stones were constructed (Kulinë/Teneshdoll) or only stone ramparts (Veletin). Hilly settlements are mainly known by the name *gradina* and *g(r)adisha* (Indo-European.: gard, Albanian: gardh=fence).⁷ In the Pre-Dardanian stage the burying was done also in flat graves with urns – Berrnica culture (Berrnicë, Grashticë), whilst during the Dardanian stage in tumular necropolises, practicing both rituals, the one of cremation and that of coffin-burials (Romajë, Rogovë, Ujz, Shirokë, Dibiçak, Porodime, Përçetë/Përçevë, Bajë of Pejë, Llashtishtë, Gurëz/ Gërlicë, Biti, Moklikë). Tumular necropolises of Kosova belong to the Glasinac complex and are related to tombs of Kukës, Mat and Gllasinac.⁸

⁶ Edi Shukriu (Pejë, 1996) 23-36, 43-47.

⁷ Edi Shukriu, *Toponimia g r a d i n ë në suazat e zhvillimit të vendbanimeve kodrinore në Kosovë*, Buletin i Fakultetit Filozofik XXII, (Prishtinë: 1994), 127-133.

⁸ Bep Jubani, *Të dhëna për kulturën tumulare në Shqipërinë verilindore* (Prishtinë 1978), 152; Idem, *Tumat ilire të Kënetës* (Tiranë 1983), 111; Borivoje Čović, *Pogrebni običaji preistorijskih stanovnika glasinackog područja* (Sarajevo, 1963), 52.

The VI-IV centuries B.C. are characterized by the dawning of tribal aristocracy and by the Dardanian preurban development. In this period luxurious graves emerge (Baja of Pejë), hilly settlements, acropolises, mass organized works (creation of terrace II at Gradinë of Upper Gadime) or pottery craft with autochthonous forms and the borrowed Hellenic ones skyphoi, kylixes, antharoi, cantaroses, hydrias, lekanes, olpas, kraters, pythoi, amphoras.⁹ Dardanian craftsmen produced jewelry, weapons and work tools, whose tradition was brought centuries later into evidence by Plinius, writing: *Even men carry on their upper wrist (golden rings), which came from Dardania and were, therefore, called Dardanian* (Plin. Naturalis Historiae XXIII 3, 12). To this tradition belong silver jewelry (bracelets and rings from Bajë of Pejë), known weapons, such as arch-like sword – machaira, whose origin is in the Illyrian-Dardanian area, Illyrian helmets manufactured in Dardania (helmets from Baja of Pejë, Korishë and Dejë),¹⁰ as well as double-edged axes– labrys from Romajë (graves 1, 5, 9, 17) and Shirokë.

The Dardanian contacts with the developed Mediterranean world were early (Mycenaean imports of Bronze Age in Qëndresan/Gllarevë), but during the Iron Age they were intensified. From VII century B.C. intensive trade connections with the Hellenic world were created also through Chalcidice (Hios amphoras, dishes with archaic Greek inscription, Thassos monets), imports of VI century B.C., such as Menada of Prizren, oinochoes and cups with black figures from Bajë of Pejë, porcelain of Wave-Line style or inscription in archaic Greek alphabet from Gadime.¹¹ The Saint Valentine type pottery from Gadime and Cernicë¹² belongs to the V – IV centuries B.C., and the Greek inscription AITOYGAN on the dish from Kulina.¹³ The presence of letter E (epsilon) on the pithos from Cernica, of the letter “psi” from Bardh i Madh, of the letter M from Gadime or of letter B on the pithos from Hisar of Suharekë/Theranda prove on the spread of Greek writing in Kosova area.¹⁴

⁹ Edi Shukriu (Pejë, 1996), 87-97.

¹⁰ Maja Parović, *Grčka machaira i problem grčkih mačeva* (Sarajevo, 1982), 18, 42.

¹¹ Edi Shukriu (Pejë, 1996), 57, T. XVII, 1.

¹² Ibidem, 56-58, 87-95, T. XXVI 1-4, T. XXXII 1.

¹³ Haxhi Mehmetaj, *Kulina-Teneshdol* (Ljubljana, 1990), Arheološki pregled, 1988, 96-99.

¹⁴ Edi Shukriu (Pejë, 1996), T. XXX 6, T. XIV 7, T. XLIX 8.

The discovered imports in Kosova prove that the Dardanians in this period and after were not known to the Hellenic world. Therefore, the Dardanian instrument player appearing in the Aristophanes' comedy *The Wasps*,¹⁵ can belong both to European Dardanians and to those of Asia, too. There are also chances that the European Dardanians might have been a treatment topic in the comedies *Dardanos* of the Greek writer Menander and *Dardanus* of the Roman writer Cecillius Stati.¹⁶ The European Dardanians may be the individuals, whose names have been written on epigraphic monuments of Athics in Greece, such as Mate(.)a Oadayou Thygater Dardanianis (. II century B.C.), Thespis Niketou Dardaneys (II-I centuries B. C.), Dardanos Erakleonos Dardaneys (I century B.C.), Dorotheos Afrodisiou Dardaneys (I century B.C.), Biote Dardanissa and Epafrodita Dardanis (I century).¹⁷

The preurban Dardanian stage faith is characterized by the prevalence of sun cult, spread in north Illyrians, and snake cult, prevalent in south Illyrians.¹⁸ The heliolatry faith used to take a special place (solar artifacts in tombs of Shirokë, the fowl in Llashtica tomb, double-edged axes from Romajë tomb), as well as in Roman period Dardanians (the monument of Dardanian Goddess from Smira),¹⁹ whose vision has been expressed in monuments of Roman period from Romula Malva (Romania)²⁰ and in the statue from Mediana.²¹ The long iron bars, which were discovered in tomb of Romaja Fighters (Centuries VI-V) prove that Dardanians had created their concept on the nether world

¹⁵ David Barrett, *Aristophanes, The Wasps* (London 1964).

¹⁶Edi Shukriu, *Dardanët në veprat e Aristofanit, Menandrit e Cecil Statit* (Prishtinë, 2001), 87-95.

¹⁷ F. Papazoglu sees them as Little Asia Dardanians: Fanula Papazoglu, (Beograd, 1969), 170, p.n. 285. See: IG II/III(2), 8417-8476.

¹⁸Aleksandar Stipčević, *Kulturni simboli kod ilira* (Sarajevo, 1981), 56.

¹⁹ Edi Shukriu, *Perëndesha Dardane - Ikonografia e monumenteve, simbolet dhe funksionet* (Prishtinë, 2004b).

²⁰ Dumitru Tudor - Cristian Vladescu, *Dardanianii la Romula-Malva* (Alba Julia, 1972), 183-190; Dumitru Tudor, *Oltenia romana* (Bukarest, 1978), 369, fot. 102, 103.

²¹ The statue was seen with hesitations by different scholars, such as Demetra or Kibela, whereas later as personification of Dardania: Aleksandar Jovanović, *Prilog proučavanju skulptura sa Medijane Niš*, 1980), 51 and as Dardanian Goddess: Edi Shukriu (Prishtinë, 2004b), 11-13.

life,²² manifested later in the round labyrinth of a closed circle from the votive monument of Smirë.

Antique History of Kosova

The ancient history of Kosova begins with the establishment of the state of Dardania, which was developed during the IV-I centuries. The beginning of ancient Dardanian history is a result of many factors, but the key role lies in the preliminary Dardanian protourban development (VI-IV centuries), the development of craftsmen and creation of urban centers, which caused the tribal order collapse, and the social differentiation, which included also the slaves (*dulloi*) and prisoners of war.

The Dardanian state had a compact and defined territory, a population known by the name Dardanians, an organized army, the institution of the king (Longar, Bato, Monun); the hereditary throne (Bato succeeded his father Longar to the throne),²³ as well as diplomatic activities and dynastic weddings. Therefore, it is not incidental that the ancient writers called only these inhabitants of central Balkans by the determining geographic and political term: Dardanians and Dardania (Strab. VII c. 313, c. 316).

During its development, the Dardanian state stretched out in the north and north-west, appropriating the territories of Tribals and Autariates (the territory around the present-day Novi Pazar)²⁴ and in the direction of South-West, taking control over the territory of Taulanti²⁵ and the area up to the present-day Gostivar.²⁶ The western frontier seems to have included also the region of the

²² The bars as a payment means were recorded also in the graves discovered in Slovenia, in Germany, in France and in Etrurian graves of VIII-VII centuries: Joseph Dechelette, *Manuel d'archeologie prehistorique, celtique et gallo-romaine* (Paris, 1927), 287-292.

²³ Fanula Papazoglu, *Ilirska i Dardanijska Kraljevina* (Beograd, 1988), 162, f.n. 69.

²⁴ This was supported by the weakening of Autariats and the migration of a large part of Autariats in 310 B.C. due to invasion of frogs coming down from the sky: Diodor XX 19, 1; Athen. Historia 21.

²⁵ John Wilkes, *The Illyrians* (Oxford, 1992), 146.

²⁶ Alfred Moscy, *Gesellschaft und Romanisation der romischen Provinz Moesia Superior*, (Budapest, 1970), 9-17. The negation of inclusion of this territory into Dardania because there have been found there many inscriptions in Greek does not stand, because also in Shkup (Skopje) such ones were found and it is not denied the inclusion of Shkup (Skopje) into Dadania.

present-day Kukës (the territory of Pirustae). Meanwhile, the inclusion of almost the whole Paeonia²⁷ made the Dardanians direct neighbours of Macedonia, which had as consequence continuous conflicts between them and the appearance of Dardanians. Therefore, it is not an accident that the written facts on the political history of Dardania appeared from the year 345 B.C.,²⁸ when Dardania entered in the sphere of interest of Macedonia and of ancient writers about it. The continuous fighting and the efforts of the kings of Macedonia to defend northern frontiers from Dardanians and their allies are emphasized also by the scholar F.W. Walbank, who writes: *To every Macedonian king the prior and most essential issue was that of northern frontiers.*²⁹

In the early III century B.C. the power of Dardanian state was so big that the Dardanian king offered to the Macedonian king Ptolomey Keraunos support of 20.000 soldiers for the war against the Gallic invasion (Justin. *Historiarum Philippicarum* XXIV 4 9-11. 279 B.C.). Although the number of offered soldiers may be exaggerated, this does not minimize the importance and the power of Dardania. Disproportion of interests and the wars against Macedonia caused the Dardanians to enter into alliance with the Romans (200 B.C.) and become participants of anti-Macedonian coalition, taking part even in the Second Roman-Macedonian War (Liv. XXXI 28, 1). After the year 197 B.C., the Dardanians unsatisfied with the Roman allies, continued their attacks against Macedonia, while giving mercenaries to the Etholians in the war against the Romans (Liv. XXXVII 48, 4). Despite the beginning of a new hostility, now with Romans, the Dardanians sent a delegation to the Roman Senate in 177 B.C., where they accused Perseus, the son of Philip V, for the plans Macedonia was making to exterminate the Dardanians (Polyb. *Historiae* XXV 6, 2).

The Dardanians stepped out completely of the anti-Macedonian coalition after the Roman invasion of Macedonia and creation of the Province of Macedonia (168 B.C.), unsatisfied by the alliance with the Romans of whom they benefited only the

²⁷ Western part of FYR of Macedonia.

²⁸ Inscription by Oleveni: Pierre Cabane, *Illyriens des Bardylis à Genthios IVe-IIe siècles avants J.C.*, (Paris, 1988), 50, f.n. 80, 81.

²⁹ Frank W. Walbank, *Philip V of Macedon* (Cambridge, 1940), 270.

right of trade in salt (Liv., XLV 29 13: *salis commercium*). Since this time the Dardanians conducted an independent policy and strengthened their relations with the allies (Appianus, *Illyrica*, 187). In the fightings against the Romans, their new neighbours, Dardanians joined other Illyrians, and it was even accomplished the dynastic wedding of Etuta, the daughter of Dardanian king, to the Illyrian king Genthios (Polyb. XXIX 13, 12; Liv. XIV 30, 4). Notwithstanding, the main cooperation of Dardanians was with Meds, through common actions against the Roman province of Macedonia and stopping the Roman legions to get through Dardania and more northwards.

The Dardanians resisted Roman attacks of the years 97 B.C., 85 B.C. and 77/6 B.C., whereas during the years 75-73 B.C. terrible fightings were conducted, known in the ancient history by the name *Bellum Dardanica* (Front. *Strategematon* IV 1, 43). On the importance of the victory over the Dardanian state speaks the fact that a triumphant welcome was organized to the victor Curion in Rome, in 72 B.C. (Rufus Festus, *Breviarum gestarum populi romani*, III, VIII). The Roman punishment against the Dardanians did not stop the Dardanian resistance against the Roman invaders, although the Dardanians fell into a semi-dependent legal position: *foedus iniquum* (D. Cass. XXXVIII 10, 1-2). More than one century the Dardanians opposed the complete Roman domination, destroying in the meantime also the army of pro-consul Hibrida (Cai Antonius Hibrida). In 48 B.C. the Dardanians knights took part in the battle of triumvirs, taking the side of Pompeus against Caesar (Caesar, *Bellum civile* III 4, 6), in 38 B.C. the triumvir Marc Antonius sent the army to fight again in Dardania, whilst in 29 B.C. after fighting against the Dacians and Bastarns, Marcus Crasius set off also against the Dardanians. Only the Moesia war (28 B. C.) linked the fate of Dardania with the Roman province of Moesia and afterwards of Upper Moesia.

The Dardanian army was organized in phalanges (units), according to Hellenic model. A phalang had 8.000 soldiers (Veget. *Epit. R. II mil.* 1, 2) and it comprised *principes*, *hastate* and *triarki*.³⁰ The infantry armed with heavy weapons constituted the largest

³⁰ On the influences of Hellenistic tradition on the Dardanian army: John Wilkes, *op.cit.*, 150.

part of the army (Liv. XXXI 43 3), and the peasantry took part in it, too. The king had the command over the army, and, in most cases, led the battle (Liv. XXV 28, 2). There were also professional paid soldiers or mercenaries in the army composition. The Dardanian mercenary knights were taken also from Etholians, in the war against the Romans, in 190 B.C., after taking part in Roman civil wars, such as the one of triumvirs of the year 48 B.C. (Caes. *Bellum civile* III 4, 6) or at Farsala battle.

The basis of Dardanian economy constituted agricultural, dairy, and artisan products, precious metals processing and trade. The Dardanian products became well-known in the ancient world, such as weapons (swords of machaira type), golden bracelets Plin. *Naturalis Historiae* XXXIII 3 12), Sharr cheese or Dardanian cheese (*caseus dardanianicus*), along with the pork fat, iron and lead (Descriptio totius mundi et gentium A 51). It was well-known the Sharr dog, and it was recorded also the existence of a number of oxen (M. T. Varronis, *De re rustica* II 1). The vine was also cultivated and the production of wine became rooted, which is known in the both earliest peoples of the Balkans, Illyrians and Greeks.³¹ It seems that the products of carpenter craftsmen were to the same extent preferred, whilst the wood was the most preferred material for plastic and artistic shaping, also in other Illyrians.³² This is proved by the analysis of Illyrian stone monuments, created before and after the Roman invasions, since the technical action on stone monuments was conveyed from the wood processing technique.³³ Such a technique was conveyed (transmitted) also on the mortuary monument from Dardana/Kamenica, the only stone monument of this period.³⁴

The coin circulation in Dardania was recorded from V century B.C.,³⁵ in order to get intensified in IV century B.C.. The city of

³¹ Marin Zaninović, *Iliri i vinova loza* (Sarajevo, 1976), 261.

³² Dimitri Sergejevski, *Iz problematike ilirske umjetnosti* (Sarajevo 1965), 120-121; Aleksandar Stipčević, *Illyrians* (Zagreb, 1974), 217.

³³ Branko Gabričević, *Solarni koncept duše u religiji ilira* (Split, 1987), Studije i članci o religijama i kultovima antičkog svijeta 24; Duje Rendić-Miočević, *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split, 1989), 437.

³⁴ It seems the monument could be dated even earlier than IV B.C..

³⁵ Edi Shukriu (Pejë, 1996), 99-100; Gojko Kraljević, *Antički novci nabaavljeni u Janjevu za Zbirku Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu*, (Priština, 1984), Glasnik Muzeja Kosova XIII-XIV, 85.

Damastion, located in Dardania or in its vicinity, minted coins until 320 B.C.³⁶ From III century B.C. coins in circulation from different territories: Staters of Theba (400-390), of Histria and of Apollonia of Thrace (350 B. C.), of Alexander the Great, of Philip III, of Athens (177-176), of Dyrrachium and of Apollonia of Illyria (III-I), of Pellagonia, silver Tetradrachmas of Peonia, were found, whereas since II century B.C. Denars of Roman Republic were introduced into circulation.

The differentiated Dardanian society of IV-I centuries consisted of slave owning aristocracy with the king in the lead, in which also the priests and the higher military class; miners, craftsmen and merchants, free peasantry and slaves, consisted of *douloi* (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophiste* VI 103, 277d) and prisoners of war (Iust. XXIX 4, 5) were included.

Pre-Roman Dardania knew also cities, as the Roman author Titus Livius proves, who marks them with the common noun *urbs* (Liv. *Ab urbe condita* XXV 25 3; XL 4 7-10; XLI 19 7), whilst on an occasion he mentions the city that used to exist in the year 176 B.C. (Liv. XLI 19 7-10). These facts lead to the conclusion that in Dardania: 1) cities were built before the Roman invasions, 2) there were cities in II century B.C. and 3) the cities were built earlier than II century B.C. Despite the written facts, archeological facts on urban centres and settlements, in general, on graveyards, as well as on the material culture still lack. It seems that the urban centres of IV-I centuries were developed on the plain, not far from the earlier preurban hilly centres, in which life extinguished gradually around the mid IV century B.C.,³⁷ as it happened with other Dardanian settlements of Shkup basin (Shkup castle, Nerez, Varvara, Studenčan).³⁸ Placing the settlements in flatter areas and, as such, more difficult to be discovered, seems to be a result of the Dardanian political empowerment and of the feeling of security in the central Dardanian territory, as well as of new economic relationships and of the internal development of Dardanian society.

³⁶ John M.F. May, *The coinage of Damastion and the lesser coinages of the Illyro-Paenonian region* (London, 1939), 120.

³⁷ Edi Shukriu (Pejë, 1996), 150.

³⁸ Ivan Mikulčić, *Skopje so okolnrite tvrdini* (Skopje 1982), 32.

The lack of archeological discoveries in Kosova of the period of Dardanian state existence, has as consequence the finding of an extremely small number of artifacts of this period, whilst some were discovered in the surroundings of Shkup (Skopje) and in Macedonia in general, as well as in territories in the north and north-east of Kosova (Baja of Kurshumlia, Kërshevica at Vranje). To this period belong only the graves of III-II centuries, discovered in the Romaja tomb (they contained Hellenic imports: metal dishes and dishes of Megara type); graves discovered incidentally at Artana/Novobërdë, which contained Hellenistic pottery, metal dishes and terracota; Bronze capricorn from Prizren (Vranje Museum); the Figure of the herald from Piranë of Prizren; lacrimarium from Zotaj and some fibulas of the II-I centuries from Vërmicë of Prizren.

The Dardanian spiritual and religious world developed alongside the urban and state development, syncretizing the earlier cults and giving to the gods antropomorphic shapes. Thus, according to the kingdom model, the celestial Dardanian kingdom was created, where it seems the Dardanian Goddess and Andin have had a more important place. The religious rituals created a basis also for the development of scenic-musical and visual art, which is proved from the Dardana/Kamenicë mortuary dance. The round labyrinth on the Dardanian Goddess monument, as well as other labyrinths which represent an architecture of the imagined space and time,³⁹ heralds the Dardanian cosmogony and cosmology knowledge.⁴⁰

Roman period of Kosova

Roman invasions of Dardania brought great administrative-legal changes, and in the life of the inhabitants in general. In the year 44 Dardania was placed in the Province of Moesia, whilst in the year 86, after the partition of Moesia, Dardania became a part of the

³⁹ Penelope R. Doob, *The idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca-London, 1990), 1.

⁴⁰ Edi Shukriu (Prishtinë, 2004b). In this frame the mortal relieve monument from Dardana/Kamenica should be seen: Idem. (Prishtinë, 2004a), 23, fot. 10.

Upper Moesia province (Moesia Superior).⁴¹ Setting Dardania into administrative-legal framework with the territories in the north put it into an artificial conglomeration, breaking up to a great extent also its traditional relations with the south and the Mediterranean territories.

Dardanians did not reconcile to the Roman invasion for a long time and with their settlement on the imposed borders either, which was expressed in relentless actions of Dardanian rebels (*latrones Dardanianicii*). As a consequence, and after the reforms of the emperor Diocletian (279), the Province of Dardania was created, as an integral part of Illyricum prefecture, (*praefectura praetorio per Illyricum*), respectively of Diocese of Macedonia, together with the one of Preval, Ancient Epirus and New Epirus provinces. The frontiers of the province were the same as the ones of the ancient Dardanian state, apart from the northeastern part, which was granted to the earlier established province of Dacia Ripensis.⁴²

The Roman Empire and afterwards the Byzantine one had to make great efforts to maintain the power in Dardania. This was achieved through deploying large military Roman troops in the Dardanian area, initially the IV Scythic Legion (*Legio IV Scythica*, until the year 57) and the V Macedonian Legion (*Legio V Macedonica*, until the year 62). In the time of Flavius dynasty the VII Claudia Legion was deployed (*Legio VII Claudia*) and, later on, the IV Flavia Legion (*Legio IV Flavia*). In the I-II centuries the *ala Vespaziana Dardanianorum*, with 500 Dardanian knights was established, which protected the mine districts of the mine region of Artanë/Novobërdë - Kopaonik. In the year 169 two cohorts, with 600 soldiers each, were created out of latrons: I Dardanian Cohort (*Cohors I Aurelia Dardanianorum*) and II Dardanian Cohort (*Cohors II Aurelia Dardanianorum*). Aurelian distributed cohorts on the border, at Timacus Maius (Knazhevc) and Timacus Minus (Ravna), weakening thus the danger from latrons.

The Dardanians took part also in ethnic and territorial units of Roman army, which served outside Dardania. Such were *Ala*

⁴¹ Naser Ferri, *Monumentet ushtarake të periudhës romake në Mezi të Epërme* (Pejë, 2001), 55; Ronald Syme, *Legates of Moesia*, (Bucarest, 1968), Dacia 12/1968, 331.

⁴² Fanula Papazoglu (Beograd, 1969), 151.

Vespaziana Dardanianorum, Ala Moesica, Felix Torquata, Ala I Illyricum and *Legio I Illyricum*.⁴³ From 373 the formations *pseudocomitatens* were established, whilst until VI century the security in Dardania was maintained by *pseudocomitatenses Scupiensis, Ulpianenses et Merenses*, which were under the command of military magister for the Illyricum (*magister millitum per Illyricum*).

The dense network of built roads in the Roman period enabled a quick movement of legions, an easier administration of Roman rulers, use of Dardania treasure and a quick transport of precious metals. The construction of roads started at the time of the emperor Augustus and they were repaired from time to time. The repair activity in Kosova is proved by milestones of Antonius Pius and Aurelianus, found in the vicinity of Kačanik, Hani i Elezit and at Lupç i Poshtëm.⁴⁴

The main road Lissus – Naissus was the most important road that traversed Kosova. The main road intersected at Viciano station with the main road that led to the East, in the direction of Shkup (Scupi) and the main road Viminacium-Scupi-Thessalonike, and in the West in the direction of the province of Dalmatia and the Adriatic Coast. In Kosova there were also vicinal roads that linked smaller centres with the two main roads. Parts of the road trackway Viciano–Scupi have been found at Hani i Elezit, along with two milestones of the period of Hadrian and Antonius Pius, whereas in Vendenis (Gllamnik) a road structure of large broken stones, having as substruction a thick layer of sand, placed upon and pressed, has been discovered (4.60 m).⁴⁵

The Romans found an ancient formed economy in Dardania, which had a sustainable support in agriculture and animal breeding, in mining and metallurgy, in different handicrafts and in trade. The Romans focused especially in exploitation of mines, same as in other provinces, and in road construction.⁴⁶ As

⁴³ Naser Ferri (Pejë, 2001), 323.

⁴⁴ Emil Čerškov, *Rimljani na Kosovu i Metohiji* (Beograd 1969), 9.

⁴⁵ Idem, *Oko problema komunikacija i položaja naselja na Kosovu i Metohiji* (Priština, 1957), 68; Slobodan Fidanovski, *Poljanica, Glavnik, Podujevo – rimska nekropola* (Ljubljana, 1985), 100, 102.

⁴⁶ Michael Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1957), 242-243.

consequence the exploitation of mines in both largest mine compounds, in Ibër compound (Trepçë-Kopaonik-Rogoznë), and in Kosova – South Morava (Ajvali-Janjevë-Artanë) compound continued.

The Roman rule disarranged the earlier ownership relationships by the declaration of the agricultural property as public property: *ager publicus* and as provincial property: *ager provincialis*.⁴⁷ The transformation of settlements into forms of Roman power resulted in appropriation of a good part of the land by the Romans and by the ones that served the Romans. Although in delay, in Kosova, large properties were created, like those of the Roman patrician family of Furri, of filia Papinia or of members of Roman tribe of Quirinia, known by the monument dedicated to Jupiter from Smira.

Animal breeding, as a more conservative part of economy, continued to be an important branch, whilst trade gained a new quality and became the main bearer of Roman behaviour, culture and way of life. The customs stations used to serve to the needs of economy, in special *stationes vectigalis Illyrici*, which were under the emperor's control. In Kosova there were such stations in Ulpiana, in Gushtericë e Poshtme and in Runevë of Kaçanik. These stations had two kinds of custom officers: *procuratores vilici* and *tabularii*.⁴⁸ The stations of consular beneficiaries, partly of military character, were a new institution, which the Romans brought (end of II century). These stations belonged in Kosova to two legions of Moesia: *Legio VII Claudia* and *Legio IV Flavia* and the traces of these stations have been identified in Dobruzhde of Prizren, in Ulpiana, in Mitrovicë and in Kaçanik.

Roman invasions brought also the new monetary circulation, and in Kosova, during the I-V centuries, all the minted coins of emperors and their family members, representing also other different minting centres (of Rome, London, Lyon, Aquilae, Arl, Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Antiochia, Sisak, Mitrovica of Srem, Heraclea), have been found. A special value have the Dardanian mines coins of the first half of the II century. A kind of them was

⁴⁷ Ibidem, 52.

⁴⁸ Emil Čerškov (Beograd 1969), 56; CIL III, 8178, CIL III 8173.

minted in the mines of Prishtina surroundings and they held the inscription *METALLA ULPIANA*, whereas the other kind was minted in the mines of Kopaonik and held the inscription *DARDANIANICI*. The latter had a figure of a goddess,⁴⁹ which seems to represent the Dardanian Goddess. In Dobratin of Lypjan also one of the largest depots with the centennials of Constantin the Great and his family members, as well as the rare medallion of the emperor Probus, made of electron, have been found.⁵⁰

The Romans came across complex and complicated social relationships, whilst during their rule, like in other provinces, the society consisted of classes of free citizens, in which Latins and peregrins (foreign citizens to Romans), and slaves, took part. The locals had mainly a status of a peregrins and this lasted until the year 212, when the Caracalla's Edictus was promulgated, by which the whole population gained the right of Roman citizenship.

The numerous Roman settlements prove about a life dynamics, and about the increase of inhabitants in it, with the settlement of Roman administrators and soldiers. The municipiums like Ulpiana near Prishtina, Municipium DD near Soçanica, Vendenis near Gllamnik, Viciano and Theranda became administrative centres. Near other roads axes larger centres were developed, such as Gradina in the southeast of Pejë and the municipiums at Dersnik of Klinë, Çiflak of Gjakovë and Gushica of Viti. The development of these settlements was more similar to the development of the cities in Roman province of Macedonia rather than with those of Upper Moesia, which is a result of Pre-Roman tradition connected to the southern parts of Balkans. There were also regional centres: *oppidum*, as well as villages: *vicus*. From epigraphic monuments, it is known that in Kosova there were vicus Tito, Zatidis, Perdica, Cavadinus dhe Dassa.⁵¹ A small number of settlements has been identified with exactness, such as

⁴⁹ Henry Cohen, *Description Historique des Monnaies Frappées sous l'Empire Romain II* (Paris 1882), 32-33; Harold M.A. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum III* (London 1996), 234, 534.

⁵⁰ Efrem Pegan, *Ein bronzemedaillon des Probus auf den Triumph über Götten im Jahr 278 in Pannonien* (Beograd, 1980), *Numizmatičar* 3, 47-56.

⁵¹ Epigraphy monument from Viminacium (shekulli V-VI): *...vico Dassa in provincia Dardania regione Ulpiana*.

Ulpiana/Iustiniana Secunda near Gračanica, Vendenis at Gllamnik and Municipium DD at Soçanica.⁵² In the list of Byzantine writer Procopius of VI century (Procopius, De aedificiis IV 4 3) the names of many fortified settlements (Veletin of Janjevë, Prizren, Gurabardh/Strezovc, Llapushnik, Vuçak, Shpat/Godanc, Vlashnjë, Korishë, Cermnjan, Batushë, Zatriq, Kastriot/Kosterc), Kasterc, Marec, Syrigan/ Suhogërlle, Pogradjë, Binçë, Tërpezë, Gërçar, Lumkuq/Samadrezhë, Duboc etc.) are hidden.

Ulpiana was the most important city of ancient Kosova. As an administrative and mine management centre, it occupied an area of over 100 ha, whilst the town within the surrounding walls had 28 ha, where there was the military campsite (400 x 400 m). Ulpiana, with a municipium rank since II century, had the features of a Roman town: the sustainable urban scheme with orthogonal streets, the water supply, sewage system and the compounds of buildings with special functions. In the III and IV centuries it was mentioned as a splendid town (*urb splendissima*) and as a marble town, until it was ruined by Goths in 471 (Jordanes, Getica 258 sqq) and when it experienced large damage also by the earthquake of 518. The Emperor Justinian reconstructed it and renamed it Iustiniana Secunda, whereas, in its vicinity, he constructed also the town of Iustinopolis (Procop., De aedificiis IV 1 30; 19 30). In Ulpiana the two martyrs of the early Christianity: Flor and Laur, acted and were killed. The archbishop Gergentius, known as a missionary of Christianity alongside the Red Sea coast (VI century) lived in it. Ulpiana is mentioned also in 1020, in the Chart of the Byzantine emperor Basilus II.

An important centre was also the town of Municipium DD at Soçanica (I-IV centuries), which had an uncommon dualistic administrative-legal position: it had the rank of a colony and the rank of a municipium, and *procuratores metallorum Augusti* edhe *procuratores metallorum municipii* were located in it. The temple of Antoninius, the favourite of the emperor Hadrian,⁵³ the second as such in Europe and the only one in the Balkans, was discovered.

⁵² Emil Čerškov, *Municipium DD* (Priština-Beograd: 1970), Muzej Kosova & Arheološko Društvo Jugoslavije, 44, 45.

⁵³ Ibidem, 82-83.

The range of burial is stretched out from a luxurious sarcophagus of marble (Ulpianë, Gllamnik) or lead (Municipium DD), through constructions of bricks, covered in the form of a roof from the IV century (Tupec) until the burial in tombs (Ulpianë),⁵⁴ as a revival of Illyrian traditions.

The valuable artisan objects with artistic values from necropolises and the settlements of the Roman and early Byzantine periods depict an economic wellbeing of a class of population, and of an admirable level of cultural development. A flourishing cultural life prove also many discovered objects, in special the polychrome mosaic of Orpheus surrounded by animals,⁵⁵ the mosaics in Nerodime with seven Greek thinkers,⁵⁶ the monument of Dardanian Goddess with two labyrinths or the rich necropolises of Ulpiana, of Municipium DD and of Vendenis. These objects contain the interweaving of the new spirit that the Roman rule brought and of the autochthonous tradition of a once powerful Dardanian state.

The polytheist tradition allowed along the respect of local gods, in special of Dardanian Goddess, god Andindus or of gods related to the cult of horses and the cavalry tradition, also other gods to be appropriated and respected, who came along with the Roman rule. Such were the Roman gods Jupiter, Minerva, Fortune, Mercury, Diane or the others as Mithra, Isida, Serapis and Jupiter Dolihen, Nemezis, Orpheus, Hecate, Asclepius, Hygia or Telesphont. It seems that it belongs to the earlier tradition also the respecting of the Thracian Knight and Danubian Knight, as interpretations of local gods, and of Thracian goddess Zbeltiurdus. In many cases, behind the names of foreign gods, appearing in the votive monuments there are locals gods, mainly in their Roman interpretation (*interpretatio romana*).

⁵⁴ Tomb on Livadhi i Çerkezit (Çerkez Meadow): Dragoslav Srejović, *Grob ugledne traćanke iz Ulpiane* (Beograd, 1986), *Starinar* XXXVII, 179-187; Čerčić Tomb diggings: of E. Shukriu with students od Department of History of Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina (1988).

⁵⁵ Edi Shukriu (Prishtinë, 2004b), 47.

⁵⁶ Georgie Kovaljev, *Kasnoantička palata u Nerodimlju* (Priština, 1989), *Starine Kosova* IX, 87-91; Idem, Donje Nerodimje, *Kasnoantička palata* (Ljubljana, 1990), *Arheološki Pregled*, 168-170.

The round labyrinth of the monument dedicated to the Dardanian Goddess from Smira, heralds Dardanian cosmogonic and cosmologic knowledges, which makes inconstant the opinion that the Illyrians, including the Dardanians, did not develop a uniform cosmology upon which their religious practice was focused.⁵⁷ The labyrinth was created upon the trinity concept and through a holographic multidimensional field it brings a geometric and numerological approach, presenting thus the Dardanian imagination of the cosmic order and the interconnection between the material world and the kingdom of a higher conscience. From this labyrinth it can also be understood that the Dardanian polytheistic belief, preserved until the III century, headed by the Dardanian Goddess, created bases for the embracing of a monotheist, almighty and invisible god.⁵⁸ Such a level of religion development in Dardanians, with powerful autochthonous elements, made it possible the full embrace of Christianity, and the creation of powerful centres of Christianity.

The mortuary and cult monuments, mainly with a two dimensional schematic presentation, preserved quite a lot of autochthonous elements. Their architectural and stylistic features, combined with the grapevine and the leaves of ivy, made them since early times to be known by the name of *Dardanian monuments*.⁵⁹ There are autochthonous elements also in three dimensional monuments, in the Dardanian Goddess statue from Klokot, in the monuments of Dardanian Goddess from Romania or on the Goddess statue from Theranda. Local elements bear also the vulgar Latin language and the onomastic, mainly Illyrian, such as the names: Longarus, Bato, Monunius, Etuta, Andia, Andio/Andinus, Annus, Anna, Catulla(?), Cinna, Cito, Dasius/Dassius, Dicco, Epicadus, Epicaris, Mesius/Messa, Nanea, Plannius, Scervidaeus, Sita, Tata/Tatta, Times, Turanis, Turelius, Vanno, Varanus, Vananilla, Varadius).⁶⁰ Within the onomastic also Thracian names and names present only for the

⁵⁷ John Wilkes, op. cit., 165.

⁵⁸ On simiar developments see: Branko Gabričević, *Studije i članci o religijama i kultovima antičkog svijeta* (Split 1987), 103.

⁵⁹ Fanula Papazoglu (Beograd, 1969), 156.

⁶⁰ Duje Rendić-Miočević, *Iliri i antički svijet* (Split, 1989), 754-755; John Wilkes, op. cit, 85.

Dardanian territory have been proved, such as Ambia, Blicites, Bubita, Cocaius, Ettela, Maema, Mescena, Mesta, Momonia, Ninis, Passades, Pitta, Romma, Sausa, Utinadus. The created Dardanian entity, the subjectivity of pre-Roman Dardania and the long resistance against the Romans, made the Dardanians to evade the complete Romanisation and at the same time to appropriate plenty of elements of Roman provincial culture, and, afterwards, of the early Byzantine one.

After the division of the Roman Empire (395), the Dardania region entered into the content of the Eastern Roman Empire, known as the Byzantine Empire. The following centuries are characterized by: 1) the attacks of Barbarian tribes and 2) the spread of Christianity. The attacks of the tribes coming from the north started by the attacks of Huns, of Goths and the others and, later, of Avarians and Slavs (Procop. *Historiae quae dicitur arcane* 18 20). The Emperor Justinian, in order to defend the northern frontiers of the empire, built a system of fortifications in several zones, from the boundary line of Danube in the north, in order to have a system of fortifications that went down in the direction of south. In this period Dardania was hit also by a terrible earthquake of the year 518 (Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, Viti 518 1). During VI century the emperor Justinian made constructions and reconstructions, same as in other territories of the empire, however, he made his birthplace, Dardania, also a centre of spiritual power for a large part of the Balkans.

The crises that overwhelmed the empire and the attacks of "barbarian" tribes created a space for the complete acceptance of Christianity. Hieronymus describes the created situation by the following words: *Everywhere mourning, everywhere sighs and the great shadow of death* (Eusebius Hieronymus, *Epistolae* 16). The Christianity in Dardania/Illyria started being spread since the time of apostles, side by side with the polytheistic belief. The belief in the Dardanian Goddess, who during the centuries sublimated many functions and that personified the sun itself, created preconditions for the embracing of Christianity, personified through Christ and seen as *Sol Invictus*.⁶¹ In the first

⁶¹ On the role of labyrinth and transformations into Christian labyrinths: P.R. Doob 1990.

half of II century the first martyrs of Dardania: Flor and Laur, stonecutters, fell as well.⁶² In the IV century, Christianity in Dardania was organized and its Archbishopric was in Shkup (Skopje). In the VI century Justinian made the town of Justiniana Prima an ecclesiastic centre (vicariate) for the provinces of Dardania, Dacia Mediterranea, Dacia Ripensis, Moesia Prima, Praevalitana, Macedonia Secunda and Panonia Secunda (XI Novel of Justinian, year 535). The vicariate ceased existing only in the year 733, when it completely became subject to the Constantinople patriarch.⁶³ The numerous of archeological traces of Early Christian churches are proof of an organized ecclesiastic life and of an early Dardanian incarnation with Christianity (Basilicas under the Church of Saint Prendë in Prizren, in Ulpiana in Vërmicë, in Bellacërkë, in Bajicë of Pejë, The Saint Flor Church in Lipjan, as well as those within and without the fortresses in Veletin, Brainë, Harilaç, Bajicë, Strezoc, Samadrezhë, Balloc etc.).

Conclusion

Prehistoric and ancient studies of Kosova prove that in this territory life was developed since the early Iron Age and that in it the Dardanians, one of the largest Illyrian tribes, were formed, who created their state in the IV century B.C., making it a key power of the Balkans during the Hellenistic period. The Dardanian entity and ethnic identity came to expression also under the Roman rule, whereas the name of Dardanians and of Dardania was preserved also during the Byzantine period. In the territories where the ancient Illyrian states were earlier developed, such as the Dardanian state was, the Illyrian autochthonous population continued its life, which in the Middle Ages and later on took the name Arbër and Albanian.

Translated by Fatos Shala.

⁶² Gasper Gjini, *Skopsko-prizrenska biskupija kroz stoljeća* (Zagreb, 1986), 53.

⁶³ Idem, 40.

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Appianus	Illyrica
Athenaeus	Deipnosophiste
Caesar	Bellum civilae
Eusebius Hieronymus	Epistolae
Iustinus	Historiarum Philippicarum
Jordanes	Getica
Polybius	Historiae
Procopius	De aedeficiis
	Historiae quae dictur arcane
Rufus Festus	Breviarum gestarum populi romani
Titus Livius	Ab urbe condita
Varronis	De re rustica