UDK 202/904

ISNN 0350-1639

MACEDONIAE ACTA ARCHAEOLOGICA

Број 18

2002-2004

МАКЕДОНСКО АРХЕОЛОШКО НАУЧНО ДРУШТВО

2008

УДК 904:711.423 (497.723)

CAROLYN S. SNIVELY
Gettysburg College

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS ON THE ACROPOLIS OF GOLEMO GRADIŠTE, KONJUH, KRATOVO[1]

I. The site: location, description, history of investigation

The archaeological site of Golemo Gradište is located ca. 40 km east of Skopje, near the village of Konjuh, at the western edge of the administrative district of Kratovo. The name of the site in antiquity is not known.[2] Situated within a mining region, the city stood near a Roman or Late Antique road that led from Scupi to Pautalia and Serdica; it was probably located near the eastern edge of the province of Dardania.

The fortified acropolis of Golemo Gradište rises ca. 100 m above the Kriva River to a height of ca. 440 masl. It divided the ancient city into two parts: 1) a gently sloping terrace between the northern foot of the acropolis and the river, and 2) a long east-west space on the south side of the acropolis. The 6th century Rotunda church stood ca. 200 m to the south of the city, while a small church of similar date, located ca. 300 m northwest of the site in a cemetery area, sheltered a large vaulted tomb. Other necropoleis have been identified around the site. The roofless, one-aisle, medieval church known as Sveti Djordje still stands, located nearly 300 m southeast of the ancient city.

In so far as the history of investigation is concerned, the first major publication was that of Svetozar Radojčić in 1952; his survey of the site and detailed study of the Rotunda church provide information about many features of the church no longer in existence.[3] In the early 1970's Ivan Mikulčić surveyed the site and discussed a number of its archaeological features,[4] as did Viktor Lilčić two decades later.[5] Borka Dragojević-Josifovska collected the inscriptions from the vicinity and published them together in 1983.[6]

[1] I wish to thank the Macedonian Archaeological Scientific Society (MAND) not only for inviting me to present a paper at its meeting in Gevgelija in 2004 but also for electing me an honorary foreign member of the Society at that meeting. Thanks are expressed as well to Gettysburg College for its support of the project at Konjuh through a series of Research and Professional Development grants and to Dumbarton Oaks for funding for the 2000 season.

[2] Lilčić V., 1990-91, 33-47, concluded that it was probably Tranupara. Only epigraphical evidence - of which relatively little has been recorded at the site - will answer definitively the question of the identification of the city.

[3] Radojčić S., 1952, 148-167; his article is based on examination of the site in 1938. As the church and its architectural sculpture in particular became a topic of scholarly interest, other publications appeared: Nikolajević Stojković I., 1957, 49-50, 91; Petrov K., 1957-58, 31-45; Hoddinott R. F., 1963, 220-226; Petrov K., 1970, 271-302; Aleksova B., 1996, 184-185; Džidrova Lj., 2007, 149-178.

[4] Mikulčić I., 1973, 179-182; Mikulčić I., 1974, 207-208; Mikulčić I., 1975, 122-130; Mikulčić I., 1996, 223-226; Mikulčić I., 1999, 211, 229, 232, 320-322, 358-361.

[5] Lilčić V., 1990-91, 33-47.

[6] Dragojević Josifovska B., 1983, 177-180.

In 1988 Živojin Vinčić from the Republic Institute for Conservation (RZZSK) directed a project focused on the eventual conservation of the Rotunda.[7] The planned construction of the Skopje-Sofia railroad line led in 1995 to emergency salvage excavations directed by Milan Ivanovski of the Republic Institute for Conservation (RZZSK) in the cemetery area of K'šla across the river from Golemo Gradište and the discovery of a number of prehistoric and Early Roman burials as well as a small Early Byzantine church associated with a large vaulted tomb.[8]

The project entitled "Archaeological Investigation at Konjuh" is an international project sponsored by Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, USA, and the Museum of Macedonia in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia. After a brief pilot survey project in 1998,[9] excavations began on the acropolis of Golemo Gradište in 2000[10] and continued each summer through 2004.[11] In 2005 systematic excavation began in the lower city, on the northern terrace of the site, and is continuing.[12] This report provides a brief description of the Justinianic fortress on the acropolis[13] and a summary of the project excavations on the eastern plateau of the acropolis.

II. The acropolis and its fortifications

The lines of the defensive walls that protected the lower city are visible on the surface. (Fig. 1) A substantial wall marks the northern edge of the northern terrace beside the Kriva River; that wall continues around the east and west sides of the terrace and climbs toward the acropolis. On the south side of the city, a fortification wall ran along the top of the low ridge, sometimes known as Malo Gradište, that marks the southern edge of the city; other walls can be traced along the east and west ends of the southern section of the site. In other words, the city as a whole was heavily fortified.

Fig. 1. Golemo Gradište, from the north. 2005

[7] See the report by Vinčić et alii in the archives of the Institute for Conservation.

[8] See the brief note about the burials: Ivanovski M., 1996, 185. The church and tomb have not been conserved or published, but a publication is scheduled to appear in a book on Konjuh now in preparation.

[9] The project was co-directed by Kiril Trajkovski and Carolyn S. Snively; staff members included Virginia Anderson Stojanović, Miša Milojević, Pasko Kuzman, Danče Golubovska, Anica Georgievska, and Margarita Atanasovska.

[10] Snively C., 2002, 293-302.

[11] The project was co-directed on the American side by Carolyn S. Snively and on the Macedonian side by Dragi Mitrevski, Dragiša Zdravkovski, and Goran Sanev in different seasons. In addition to the directors, staff members between 2000 and 2004 included Miroslav Dimovski (2000-2004), Danče Golubovska (2000-2002), Virginia Anderson Stojanović (2000, 2003, 2004), Voislav Sanev (2001-2003), Mihail Stojanoski (2002-2004), Charlotte Maxwell Jones (2002-2004), James Preston (2002), Elena Kanzurova (2003-2004), Biljana Kufojanakis (2000, 2003), Nikos Čausidis (2001), Stanka Petkovska (2004), Derick Hahn (2001), John McMullin Bailey (2002), Meredith Wiggins (2004), Aleksandar Trajkovski (2004), Mima Božinovska (2004).

[12] The excavations on the northern terrace will be discussed in a future report.

[13] For a more detailed description of the fortified acropolis, see Snively C., 2006, 229-244.

Virginia Anderson-Stojanović's analysis of the ceramic material excavated on the acropolis between 2000 and 2004 and comparison with material excavated on the northern terrace in 2005 and 2006 led to conclusions about chronology as well as function of the two areas of the site. Although earlier pottery has been found on the acropolis, the bulk of the material points to the second, third, and last quarters of the 6th century as the period of intensive Late Antique occupation. Thus it appears likely that the fortress was established in the second quarter of the 6th century and was part of the Justinianic fortification or refortification of the empire. Occupation on the acropolis, punctuated by destructions and rebuildings, continued until the end of the 6th century or the early 7th century.

Excavation on the northern terrace has not yet answered definitively the question whether or not an earlier Roman settlement once stood somewhere on the terrace. But the Late Antique settlement had been established already during the 5th century; in the area now under excavation near the northern foot of the acropolis, buildings began to appear during the second half of that century. Therefore we may conclude that the Justinianic fortress on the acropolis was constructed within an already existing city.

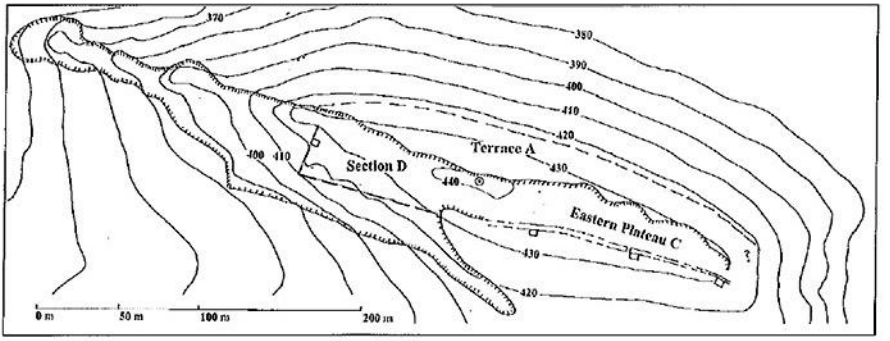

Fig. 2. Plan of the fortress on the acropolis of Golemo Gradište. Plan by C. Snively

The acropolis of Golemo Gradište consists of a long, narrow ridge, whose highest point at ca. 440 masl is ca. 100 m above the level of the Kriva River. Access to the summit of the hill is impossible in some places, e.g., the sheer eastern face and the cliffs above the river at the west, and difficult elsewhere. In antiquity as well as today, the visitor could reach the top of the hill on foot, possibly on a donkey or a horse, but not in a wheeled vehicle.

The terrain of the acropolis probably taxed the ingenuity even of Roman military engineers accustomed to creating fortifications on inhospitable sites. The product of their work was a tripartite fortress. (Fig. 2) The eastern part of the acropolis ridge consists of a plateau (C on Fig. 2), ca. 150 m long east-west, that slopes down to east and south; our investigations on this plateau will be described below. West of the plateau, the terrain rises to the high point of the acropolis and to an area (D on Fig. 2), ca. 110 m long east-west; the sloping southern face of the hill displays a labyrinth of rooms, streets, water channels, staircases, and other features quarried from or carved into the bedrock.[14] (Fig. 3) Along the northern face of the acropolis ridge, beside but several meters below the level of plateau C and the upper part of section D, a long, narrow terrace (A on Fig. 2) runs for ca. 250 m, from the eastern end of the acropolis to a point ap-

[14] In 1998 a test trench toward the southwest corner of Section D had brought to light the rock-cut foundation of a room. The debris from the roof and the built walls that once rested above the foundations covered the leveled bedrock floor; smashed ceramic vessels on the floor could be dated to end of 6th or early 7th century.

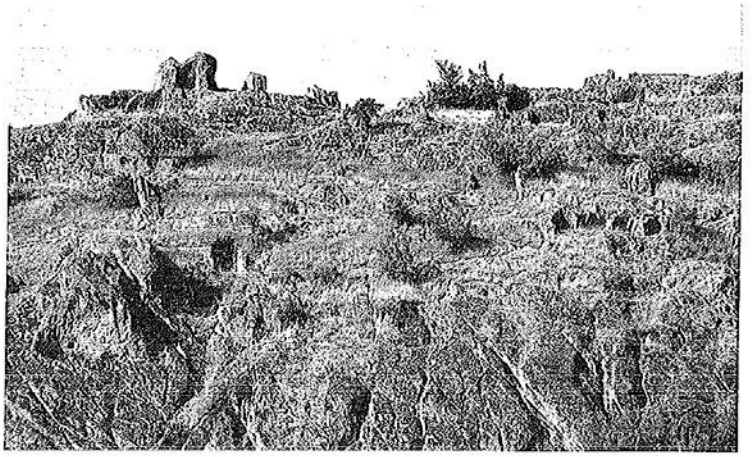

Fig. 3. Part of the southern face of the central section D of the acropolis; from the south. 2005

proximately even with the west side of section D. Test trenches on this terrace revealed closely packed, small buildings.

A gate, perhaps a postern gate, is visible in the bedrock wall that forms the western edge of section D and of the fortress as a whole. Excavation on plateau C revealed a gate on the south side of the plateau and a paved street leading north into the fortified area. Traces of a staircase cut into the bedrock of the acropolis at its southeast corner, together with a rock-cut path running high across the east face of the ridge, point to access at the east end of the acropolis, although an actual gate has not yet been found.

III. Excavations on the acropolis, 2000-2004

Investigations during these five seasons were concentrated on the eastern plateau C of the acropolis. (Fig. 4) Four test trenches dug on the northern terrace during these years will be discussed in a future report on the continuing, systematic excavations in the lower city on the terrace. In 2000 a rock-cut room at the east end of section D was investigated briefly,[15] and in 2001 two tests were dug on Terrace A. In 2002 a test trench was excavated on the slope below section D; no architectural remains came to light.

Perhaps the most significant discovery concerning the eastern plateau is that it was an artificial creation. Before the establishment of the fortress in the 6th century, the eastern part of the acropolis ridge would have appeared as a gentler version of section D, i.e., bedrock cliffs along the north edge and shallow fill over bedrock south of the cliffs. In order to create a relatively level space, the upper portion of the cliffs was quarried away, and the resulting bedrock platform was configured to make foundations and rooms. Construction of a retaining and fortification wall determined the south edge of the plateau. This wall runs in a straight line for much of its ca. 150 m length but curves at its east and west ends, no doubt in order to follow the sloping terrain. The plateau slopes gently down to the east and south; its width varies between ca. 15 and 28 m.

[15] Of the areas investigated so far, this was the only one with stratified material later than Late Antique.

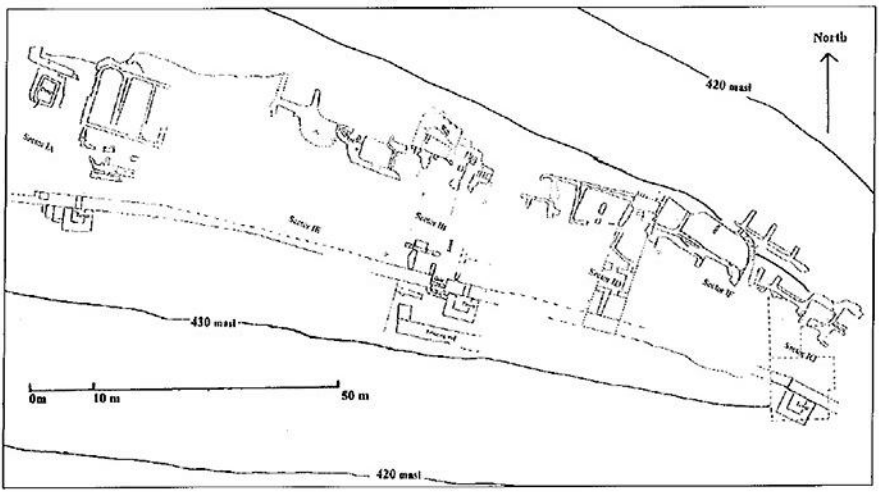

Fig. 4. Plan of the eastern plateau C of the acropolis of Golemo Gradište, showing rock-cut rooms and features at the north and the fortification wall along the south side. (Plan by C. Snively, based on a plan of the acropolis by J. Preston, 2002, with contributions by D. Golubovska, C. Maxwell-Jones, and B. Kufojanakis) The plan is incomplete, and some details may be inaccurate

Because the eastern plateau was formed as described above, its northern side shows either rock-cut foundations, visible on the surface or concealed by shallow fill, or scanty remains of walls resting on bedrock. Toward the south side the earth is deeper; in places the fortification/terrace wall retains as much as 2 m of stratified deposits against its inner face, and rubble walls are preserved within those deposits. Toward the east and more steeply sloping end of the plateau, erosion has left relatively shallow fill over the bedrock.

Sector IA was located at the west end of the plateau.[16] On the slope bridging the plateau and section D to the west, the rock-cut foundations of a structure, perhaps a house, came to light.[17] The fill within the building had washed in from above and therefore provided no evidence of function or date. Two separate phases may be discerned in the rock cuttings; it seems likely that in the first phase walls built of rubble and mortar rested on the bedrock foundations and the roof would have been of tile. A series of round cuttings in the floor has been interpreted as evidence for a second phase of construction and probably points to a flimsier structure supported by wooden posts.

East of the foundations described above, two important structures were excavated. The first one was a large building that had stretched across most of the width of the plateau.[18] The northern and better preserved portion consisted of three rooms, ca. 9 m in north-south length. (Fig. 5) The western room was 3.6 m wide and ended in an apse at the north end. Its floor was preserved; a packing of small stones served as a bedding for two circles of small limestone slabs, white and gray, around which the back-

[16] Excavation was conducted in Sektor IA by D. Golubovska (2000, 2001), M. Stojanoski (2002, 2003), and E. Kanzurova (2003, 2004). C. Maxwell Jones dug a test trench in 2005. Information and conclusions presented here are based in part on the season reports written by the trench supervisors.

[17] This structure does not appear on Figure 4.

[18] D. Golubovska will publish a more detailed report on this building in the book now in preparation.

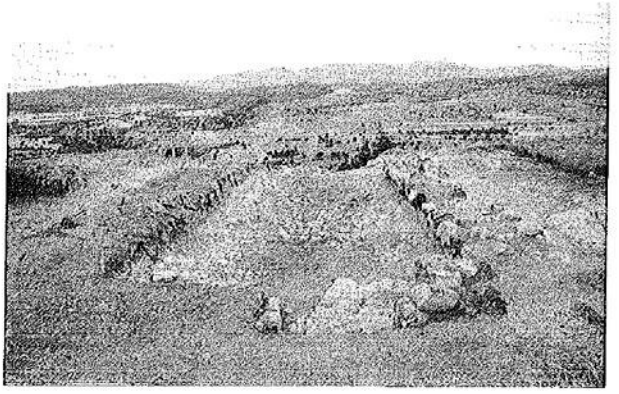

Fig. 5. Sector IA, the northern part of the administrative or residential building; from the south. 2000. The partially excavated, middle room appears to the right of the western room

ground was filled in with fragments of roof tiles. The middle room was 4.0 m wide and displayed a floor of leveled bedrock; mortar and fragments of brick filled in the spots where the bedrock appeared at a lower level. A hearth ca. 1.2 m in diameter had been cut into the floor near the south end of the room. The east wall of the building is known only from a test trench; the width of the eastern room was ca. 2.5 m and thus the overall width of the building was nearly 13 m. Two phases of construction were visible. A narrow alley apparently separated this building from another structure ca. 1.3 m to the east.

The walls in the southern part of the building had been robbed out and were very poorly preserved despite the greater depth of earth.[19] The scanty remains have been interpreted as a vestibule for the northern rooms and a courtyard with a water basin. A street apparently ran between the south side of the building and the fortification wall at the south edge of the plateau. The structure has been identified as residential or administrative on the basis of its plan; none of the artifacts found within the shallow fill provided any indication of function.

The second significant construction was the rock-cut cistern[20] located at the foot of the slope near the north side of the plateau. (Fig. 6) Following its discovery in 2001, the cistern was completely excavated during the following two seasons. At the top, the dimensions of the cistern are ca. 2.5 m east-west by ca. 3.5 m north-south. It increases in size toward the bottom and thus shows in profile the shape of an irregular truncated pyramid. The cistern is approximately 5 m in depth. Two depressions in the floor have been interpreted as settling basins.

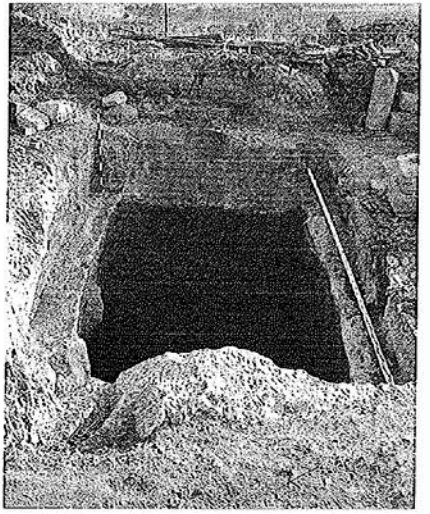

Fig. 6. Sector IA, the rock-cut cistern; from the south. 2003

[19] In 2003 a test trench located to the east of the southern part of the building revealed a similar situation of very poor preservation of remains within shallow fill above bedrock.

[20] A detailed description of this cistern is provided in this volume by Mihail Stojanoski, who is studying the issues of water supply at the site.

The upper half of the cistern held a very mixed fill that included fragments of brick and tile along with stones in earth; this deposit has been interpreted as a deliberate filling in order to level the terrain. Beneath the mixed fill, worked stone blocks began to appear and filled the lower half of the cistern except for a deposit of silt at the very bottom. Roof tiles and bricks were found along with the stone blocks, which included fragments of a perforated screen slab or slabs, pieces of a basin, two broken well heads, and pieces of a column. The most plausible explanation for the presence of the blocks in the lower half of the cistern is that they belonged to a covered fountain house built above the opening of the cistern. One can imagine a well head, a parapet, and a porch supported by a column or two, all within the fountain house. When the building was destroyed, most probably by an earthquake, its walls and roof fell into the cistern. The 6th century inhabitants of the acropolis decided (perhaps wisely, in view of the effort it took our project to remove the earth and blocks in 2002 and 2003) not to clean out the cistern for re-use but instead filled it to the top with debris and thus leveled the terrain.

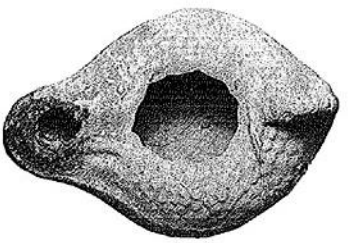

Fig. 7. Lamp found at the bottom of the cistern in Sector IA. 2003

The deposit of silt found at the very bottom of the cistern and in the two settling basins included a large amount of material: several broken but complete or nearly complete ceramic vessels; several bronze and iron vessels, all unfortunately in a very bad state of preservation; three lead lumps; three stone vessels of varying size; several fragments of marble; and a complete lamp (Fig. 7).

How the acropolis of Golemo Gradište was supplied with water has been a question under consideration since the beginning of our project. No natural source of water exists on the acropolis at present, and there is no evidence to suggest that the situation was different in antiquity.[21] Evidence suggests that the lower city was well supplied with water.[22] But, although in theory the Romans had the technology to lift water to the top of the acropolis of the site, we have no evidence that they in fact did so. The issue of water supply remains to be resolved.

A stretch of fortification wall 16.5 m long was uncovered at the south side of Sector IA in 2003 and 2004. The average width of the wall was 2.10 m; its inner face was preserved as high as 1.60 m. A tower, 4.75 m x 3.60 m in exterior dimensions, abutted the outer face of the fortification wall. A layer of tiles and tile fragments in mortar paved the floor of the tower, and mortar covered the faces of the walls; they suggest that it was modified for some other purpose in a late phase. A small room occupied the corner west of the tower and beside the fortification wall. The outer face of the wall, where it forms the north side of this room, shows evidence of damage and repair or possibly evidence of the east side of a gate or other opening once located here and later filled in. A piece of north-south wall, found in a 2003 test trench, abuts the inner face of the fortification wall and may represent a new arrangement after the closing of the hypothetical gate.

Sector IB was located roughly midway between the west and east ends of the plateau.[23] It originally stretched across the north-south width of the plateau, with a drop in surface elevation of ca.

[21] Local rumors about a tunnel that leads from the acropolis down to the Kriva River should perhaps not be dismissed out of hand, given the amount of landforming that was carried out to create the fortress on the acropolis and the relative ease of quarrying the soft bedrock. But if it exists, one would expect the villagers, who know every nook and cranny of the site, to have found the entrance by now.

[22] An aqueduct apparently entered the lower city at the east gate (personal communication from Zvonimir Nikolovski) and a second aqueduct was discovered and destroyed during plowing some distance to the south of the site (personal communication from Boško Tasevski, a native of Konjuh).

[23] C. Snively supervised excavations in Sektor IB during the 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003 seasons. In 2004 C. Maxwell Jones supervised a trench at the east side of the sector.

1.5 m from north to south. Excavations here in 2000 revealed for the first time the terrace and fortification wall that protected the south side of the plateau; a gate within that wall came to light the following season.

At the north side of the sector, bedrock foundations outlined a space with a shallow northern apse. Within the room, under 0.10-0.15 m of fill, a floor of small stones in packed earth covered the uneven surface of the bedrock. To the east of this room, two bedrock walls form a north-south corridor ca. 1.5 m in width that connects with two staircases cut into the cliff at the northern edge of the plateau.

Approximately 5.5 m south of the midpoint of the apse, the bedrock dropped abruptly. Excavations in the central part of the plateau were inconclusive. A rough sloping surface, consisting of small stones and tile fragments in beaten earth, a type of kaldrma, appeared over much of the area not far below the modern surface. At the west side of Sector IB, the kaldrma covered a deposit of debris with large stones, under which a segment of an east-west wall, ca. 0.5 m high, rested on bedrock. Further east, along a line between the gate at the south and the rock-cut corridor at the north, also under a rough surface or kaldrma, several walls were preserved only a course or two in height. Along the east edge of the sector, the kaldrma covered a possible earlier pavement of stone slabs and smaller stones.

More substantial architecture appeared along the south side of the plateau. The fortification wall, 2 m wide and built of roughly worked stones in lime mortar, was uncovered for a length of ca. 17 m. A gate in the fortification provided access to the plateau and to a paved street that led north into the fortress. Rooms had been constructed against the interior face of the fortification wall on both east and west sides of the street. Outside the wall, a tower guarded the east side of the gate. On the west side, a retaining wall and a wall running parallel to the fortification formed a small courtyard outside the gate.

On the inside of the wall and west of the gate, a layer of large and small stones appeared just under the modern surface; they did not extend to the line of the fortification wall, which was not visible at that level. Ca. 6 m west of the gate, against the inner face of the fortification wall, a patch of the characteristic surface of small stones in packed earth appeared, onto which stones from the wall had fallen. With the exception of the features just described, in the area above the street and the room west of it, the deposits above the street and the floor level within the room consisted of destruction debris. They included 1) a number of large, roughly cut stones, most of which were found close to the fortification wall; 2) numerous stones of all shapes and sizes; 3) mortar lumps and mortar dust, mostly near the fortification wall; 4) earth of various colors, including concentrations of yellow, orange, and red clay, which was interpreted as mud brick or terre pisé fallen from the upper part of a wall; 5) many fragments of roof tile and an occasional fragment of brick; and 6) traces of burned wood.

A doorway led from the paved street into the western room. A second doorway had been broken through the north wall of the room at some time after its original construction. The western wall of the room did not bond with the northern wall and was wider in the middle than at the ends, apparently to accommodate a circular depression of unknown function found within the thickness of the wall. The space north of the room was paved with the usual small stones in beaten earth; it may be a street or alley running to the west or even an open area. Above this surface, against the north face of the north wall of the room, a foundation for a staircase had been constructed, which may have provided access above the room to the parapet walk of the fortification wall. Two or three stone slabs for steps were still preserved at the west end of the foundation.

A smashed pithos came to light in the southeast corner of the western room. In addition to a significant amount of pottery found on the packed earthen floor, bone objects and metal tools suggest that the room might have functioned as a workshop. A test dug below the floor along the west side of the room revealed bedrock at the north side but a deposit of debris in the southern two thirds. A deposit of similar debris 0.90 m deep had appeared at approximately the same level outside the

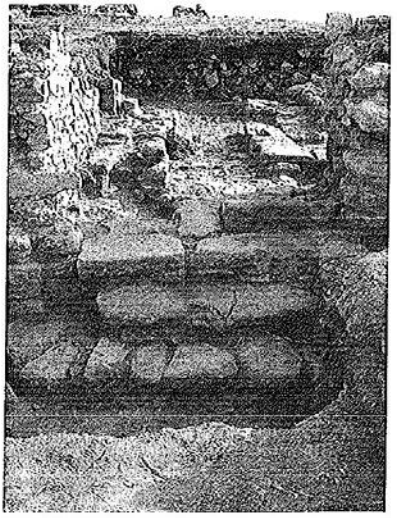

Fig. 8. Sector IB, the steps outside the gate, the gate, and the paved street; from the south. 2002

room to the west.

In this space west of the western room, the lower part of the inner face of the fortification wall was investigated, and a test was dug to a depth of ca. 0.60 m below the bottom of the wall. Although bedrock had appeared under the north side of the room ca. 2.5 m distant, it was not found in this test beside the fortification wall. A few Neolithic sherds appeared in the earth around and just below the bottom of the wall, but the last 0.30 m of the test was dug through sterile soil.

Outside the fortification wall, three steps, each constructed of several stone blocks, led up to the gate. (Fig. 8) In fact, the highest step was located between the built doorjambs that narrowed the west side of the gate from 2.5 to 2 m in width. Immediately to the north, two of the three stone slabs that once formed the threshold were still in situ; the eastern slab displayed a ledge and several cuttings, but the equivalent western block was missing from its mortar bedding. A number of small stone slabs partially filled in the space between the threshold and the inner edge of the gateway.

Beyond the gate, lines of larger stone slabs paved the east and west sides of a street that sloped up gently to the north. (Fig. 9) Along the west side a strip of paving 0.90 m in width continued to the end of the north wall of the western room, where a column base stood. On the east side, the situation was less clear, in part because the street was wider than the gateway and a later wall had been built on top of the pavement. A single line of slabs ca. 0.70 m wide continued the line of the east side of the gate to the north, but paving stones had covered an additional space east of that line as far as a threshold leading into the eastern room. In addition to slabs missing here and there, especially in the northeast part of the street, a strip ca. 1 m in width down the center of the street held no paving blocks. An earlier street level, of the usual stones in beaten earth, was visible where slabs were missing. It is unclear whether for some reason, perhaps drainage, the central strip of the street had not been paved with slabs or, for some equally obscure reason, that strip of paving had been thoroughly robbed out.

A deposit of debris, which included stones, a large quantity of charcoal, black and yellow clay from mud brick or terre pisé walls, and roof tile fragments, covered the pa-

Fig. 9. Sector IB, the paved street and gate; from the north. 2002.

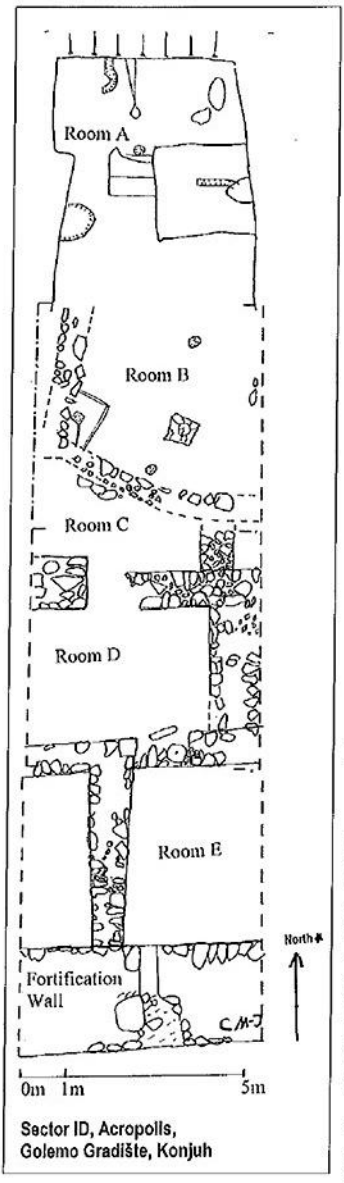

Fig. 10. Plan of Sector ID. Plan by C. Maxwell-Jones

ving slabs of the street and was found in the unpaved central strip. Within this deposit appeared fragments of a pithos. A second and distinct layer of debris, consisting of large, worked stones in mortary and sandy earth, overlay the first deposit. This sequence of deposits indicates that robbing of the paving slabs had occurred before the collapse of the surrounding structures and that the fortification wall was destroyed even later.

The discovery of a carefully carved threshold block at the east side of the paved street and immediately beside the inner face of the fortification wall suggested that a guardroom might have been located here, especially since this room once provided access to the tower outside the gate. A relatively shallow deposit of large stones in a gray earth with mortar was found north of the fortification wall in this area east of the gate, and roof tiles were noted below and to the north of that deposit. Unfortunately the wall built over the east side of the paved street and the east-west wall that bonded with it and marked the north side of the eastern room were late constructions. They formed a room almost entirely filled with a dense packing of large stones. The packing supported and protected two pithoi, fragments of which were found in the spaces where they had stood. The reconstruction of this area east of the street for storage destroyed the earlier arrangement of the eastern room to below its original floor level.

A tower abutted the outer face of the fortification wall ca. 1 m east of the east side of the gate. Its exterior dimensions were 5 m east-west x 3.6 m north-south. A passage ca. 0.90 m wide, running through the wall, provided access to the room within the tower; the entrance was off center toward the east. No floor level was preserved within the tower.

Outside the gate on the west side, a sloping deposit of gray earth was mixed with roughly worked blocks from the fortification wall. It covered a layer of soft black earth with evidence of burning and a significant amount of pottery that included fragments of bread pans; a finger ring with a glass setting also came from this layer. The next deposit consisted of large and small debris with mortar; the irregularly-shaped mortar lumps were remnants of masonry, from which stones or bricks had been removed. The fortification wall was clearly the source of this deposit of debris; it covered the preserved tops of several walls, which had once formed a courtyard outside the gate.

A retaining wall located 5-6 m south of the fortification wall marked and supported the south side of a small courtyard outside the gate. Access to this courtyard might have been possible from the east, beside the south face of the tower, but the primary access was from the west. On the west

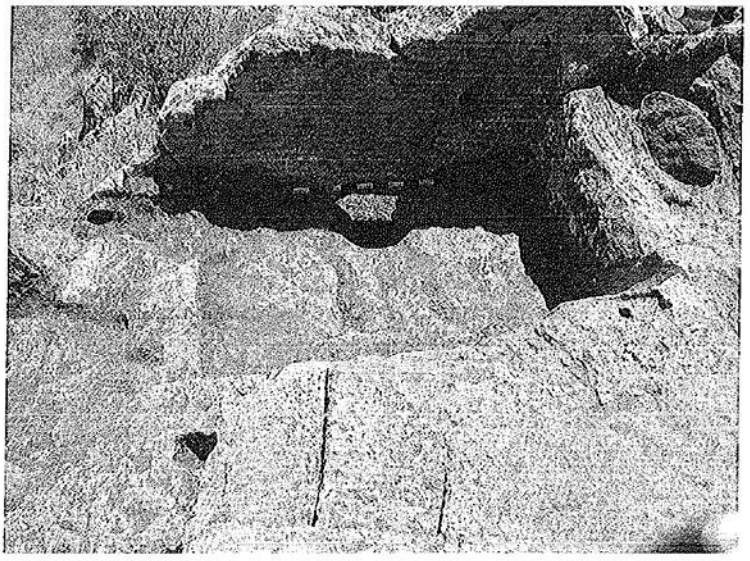

Fig. 11. Sector ID, the small rock-cut room at the east side of the north end of the sector; from the west. 2002

side of the gate, an east-west wall was located ca. 1 m south of the fortification wall; the reason for a separate wall is unclear, although slumping of the south face of the fortification may provide an explanation. A substantial wall resting against the north face of the retaining wall at its west end formed a gateway into the courtyard. A visitor would have come up the south side of the acropolis, probably along a ramp or a path with switchbacks, until he arrived at the west side of this exterior courtyard. There he could be examined from the tower and from the fortification wall itself. A bench along the west face of the tower provided seating where the visitor could wait until he was admitted to the fortress.

Excavation in Sector IB clearly demonstrated multiple phases of construction, all of which must have taken place within a period of less than a century, between the creation of the fortress in the second quarter of the 6th century and its abandonment shortly before or after the end of that century. The courtyard outside the gate was rearranged, the paved street and the gate show at least two phases, the western room inside the gate was built above a deposit of debris, and a storage area completely obliterated the original arrangement of the eastern room. Outside the gate, the black ashy deposit provides evidence for habitation on a narrow sloping terrace, which rested on the debris covering the exterior courtyard. Inside the fortress, the rough surface of stones and tile fragments in beaten earth that appeared in several trenches in the central part of the sector points to a large open area, perhaps a public gathering place, in use during a late phase of occupation of the acropolis.

Sector ID, 5 m wide and ca. 22 m in length, was located ca. 20 m east of Sector IB.[24] (Fig. 10)

[24] C. Maxwell Jones supervised excavation here in 2002, 2003, and 2004. I have made use of her book chapter in the preparation of this report.

It ran across the plateau from a rock-cut room (A) at the north to the fortification wall at the south and was dug in a series of four trenches. At the north, two bedrock walls defined a space ca. 4 m wide, which sloped down to the north. The floor preserved a variety of cuttings. At the south side a smaller rectangular space had been cut more deeply into the rock; a hole cut through the bottom of the south wall led into another room at a lower level to the south. (Fig. 11)

In the next trench, two poorly preserved rubble walls rested on bedrock. Beneath a deposit of debris, they defined the west and south sides of a space (B) whose floor consisted of bedrock leveled here and there with stone packing and tile fragments. To the south of Room B, two-east walls defined the south side of Room C. The entire excavated area of Room C was filled with an ashy deposit of debris that included many fragments of ceramic storage vessels and cooking ware along with pieces of glass, animal bones, and a badly corroded iron bowl. The top of the black deposit had been tramped down as though it served as a walkway.

An apparent threshold led south and down into Room D, where a well preserved floor of small stones in beaten earth appeared. From Room D a doorway led south into Room E at a lower level. The fortification wall formed the south side of the room, and a north-south wall divided the room from a space on the west side of the trench that had probably been an exterior area. The finds in Room E included three smashed pithoi and a stone vessel along with two earrings and a small bronze cup.

The fortification wall occupied the south end of Sector ID. It was ca. 2.4 m in width and had been constructed of roughly worked stones and lime mortar. On the north, inner side of the wall, appeared the lower part of an opening, 0.40 wide and smoothly mortared at the bottom. Only the northern part of the feature is preserved, because the southern part of the wall was destroyed to a lower level. One tentative explanation is an arrow slit; archers used such openings for shooting arrows from behind the protection of the wall.

In Sector ID bedrock appeared just below the bottom of the inner face of the fortification wall, but the bedrock sloped steeply to the south, so that the outer face rested on earth. Neolithic pottery and many pieces of daub, i.e., the baked mud from wattle-and-daub construction, appeared in deposits just above bedrock on the inner side of the wall.

Sector IE was located between IA and IB, along the south side of the plateau,[25] where well-preserved architectural remains were expected just inside the line of the fortification wall. Under a heavy deposit of debris, two walls defined the north and east sides of a room with a floor of hard beaten earth. A large number of miscellaneous small objects found on the floor, along with the remains of ceramic vessels of all sizes including amphorae and pithoi, left little doubt that the room had served in its final phase as a storeroom or pantry. A small trench below the floor in the southeast corner of the room revealed earlier strata, probably habitation levels.

Sector IE offered two surprises. The first was damage to the east wall of the room and digging around it that must have taken place after partial destruction or abandonment of the building but before the deposition of the heavy layers of debris that completely covered the remains.

The second surprise was the missing south fortification wall of the acropolis. No trace of the wall was found. What did appear was a bank of large loose stones and mortar in earth but without an identifiable inner or outer face. A very hypothetical explanation is that the bank of stones, mortar, and earth represents the middle part of the fortification wall, between the north and south faces built of stone blocks and mortar; the faces of the wall were destroyed, perhaps deliberately robbed out for the worked stones or even bricks with which they had been constructed, while the central fill of the wall survived to puzzle archaeologists. Additional investigation in this area might provide information about events during the final Late Antique phases of occupation on the acropolis.

[25] Excavation took place in Sektor IE only in the 2004 season; M. Stojanoski supervised the work.

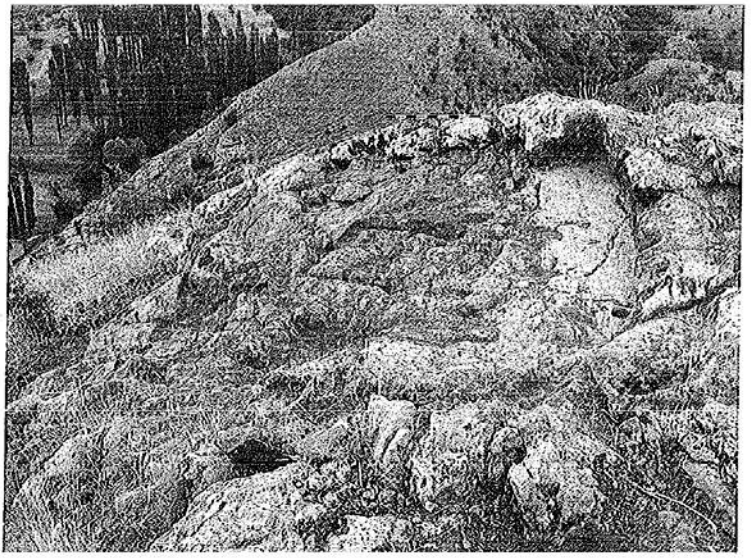

Fig. 12. Sector IG, rock-cut room at northeast corner of the sector; from the west. 2004.

Sector IF was located between Sector ID and the east end of the acropolis, near the north side of the plateau.[26] A rock-cut room faces south, and a path and staircase east of the room give access to a small plateau behind the room and to Plateau A below. The area of excavation sloped down from northwest to southeast, and the fill was relatively shallow. In the southeast part of the sector, a large pithos had been set into a cutting in the bedrock. A semicircular wall and a semicircular shelf cut into the bedrock enclosed the pithos on the east, north, and west sides; the south side lay outside the excavated area.

In the northwest part of the sector, the east end of a massive wall, 1.50 m in thickness, came to light. Beside its east end stood a small semicircular niche with a tile floor. Cleaning of the path at the northeast corner of the sector revealed a step, cut into the bedrock just beside the south end of the east wall of the rock-cut room, that marked the upper end of the path. From there one had the choice of continuing south toward the area of the pithos or turning sharply right and going between the semicircular niche and massive wall on the south side and the rock-cut room to the north.

Sector IG was located at the east end of the acropolis plateau.[27] The rock-cut foundations of what appeared to be a tower mark the northeast corner of the plateau, and we assumed that a gate would be located between that hypothetical tower and probably a second tower at the southeast corner. A rock-cut staircase came to light a few meters south of the hypothetical tower. The fill over bedrock was very shallow, and only very fragmentary remains were found over much of this sector.

The walls of a rectangular rock-cut room, ca. 4.5 m long and located west of the hypothetical northeast tower, were visible in outline before excavation began. (Fig. 12) A rock-cut staircase led

[26] Excavation took place in Sektor IF only in the 2004 season; M. Wiggins supervised the work.

[27] As was the case with Sektors IE and IF, Sektor IG was excavated only during the 2004 season; C. Snively supervised the investigation.

Fig. 13. Sector IG, the lower terrace; from south. Note fortification wall in foreground, upper terrace wall at left and in background. 2004

down from the plateau into the southwest corner of the room. A deposit of debris within the room consisted of stones that had fallen from a built wall that had once rested on top of the south bedrock foundation of the room. Beneath the debris and a thin layer of earth, a large square cutting occupied the center of the floor.

In the southern part of the sector, fortification walls appeared. The east end of a wall, 1.65 m wide, ran into the sector for a length of ca. 3 m. This wall ended abruptly, but a second wall, of similar width but running east at a slightly different angle, picked up and continued for a distance of at least 7.30 m. Apparently it continued down the slope to the east and beyond Sector IG.

At the junction of the two fortification walls, stood the west wall of a tower, i.e., the tower abutted the south face at the west end of the eastern fortification wall. Its exterior dimensions were 5.25 x 3.90 m, and it was founded on bedrock. A layer of mortar, ca. 0.9 m wide and running across the top of the fortification wall, marked the entrance to the tower. Lime mortar was used in the construction of the two fortification walls and the tower.

After the destruction of the upper parts of the fortification walls, a retaining wall of stones and earth was constructed along the south edge of the western one and across its east end; the retaining wall continued north and then curved gently to the east as far as the edge of the rock-cut staircase at the east edge of the plateau. Thus a terrace was created in the southeast corner of the plateau, at some time after the destruction of the fortification walls. East of and below the retaining wall was a level space (Fig. 13), whose floor was partly of smoothed bedrock and partly a surface supported by a second terrace wall to the east. A large amount of heavy debris of large stones and earth had fallen from the upper terrace onto the lower one; either the retaining wall itself or substantial structures on the upper terrace collapsed and fell onto the lower terrace.

Some heavy debris had fallen down the slope to the east of the lower terrace. The slope resembled a terrace in that short irregular lines of large blocks held the earth in place. At the bottom of the slope and at the east edge of the excavated area, two small rooms had been partly dug into bed-

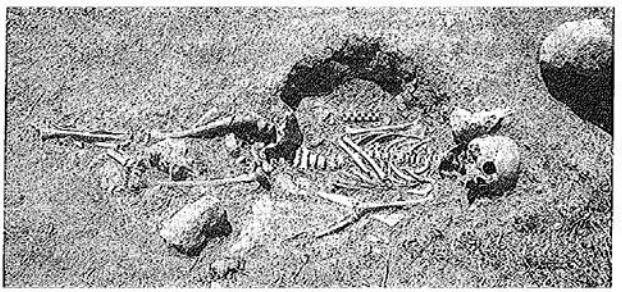

Fig. 14. Sector IG, skeleton of child buried above steps; from north. Note edge of step visible in foreground. 2005

rock, partly formed by built walls. The purpose of the rooms is not clear; they had been deliberately filled with large stones and earth.

Along the north side of the slope, a staircase had been carved somewhat haphazardly into the bedrock of the east end of the acropolis. Discovery of the burials of two children at the south edge of the staircase complicated its excavation. Although the skeletons showed some disturbance and were found under the debris on the slope below the lower terrace, they had not been killed during the collapse of a building but had been deliberately buried.[28]

To summarize briefly, our investigations on the acropolis of Golemo Gradište have shown that a fortress was constructed there in the second quarter of the 6th century within an already existing Late Antique city. The eastern plateau was created in order to provide a relatively level space as part of the fortified area.

The plateau housed a variety of structures and activities. The largest building investigated was the administrative or residential one in Sector IA at the west. The significant amounts of slag found in Sectors ID, IF, and IG, along with the pithos in IF, suggest that industrial activities as well as domestic one took place in the smaller rooms of buildings on the eastern half of the plateau. Evidence of storage of food, however, although most obvious in Sector IE, appeared in almost all the investigated sectors, in late phases.

The fortification wall running along the south edge of the plateau unified the space it protected. The gate found in Sector IB served as the main entrance to the fortress and to the paved street that not only divided the plateau into eastern and western halves but may also have given access to a central assembly area.

This report has provided a summary of the architectural discoveries on the eastern plateau of the acropolis. Analysis of the pottery, by Virginia Anderson-Stojanovic, and of the small finds, as well as interpretations, will appear in future publications.

Carolyn Snively
Department of Classics
Gettysburg College,
Gettysburg PA 17325 USA
csnively@gettysburg.edu

[28] One burial was excavated during the 2004 season. The second one, found on the last day of excavation in 2004, was excavated in 2005. C. Maxwell Jones supervised the removal of the skeletons and examined the bones in the field. Her conclusions generally agree with those of Fanica Veljanoska, who will publish a report on these and other skeletons excavated at the site in the book now under preparation.

КАРОЛИН С. СНИВЕЛИ
Гетисбург Колеџ

АРХЕОЛОШКИ ИСКОПУВАЊА НА АКРОПОЛАТА ВО ГОЛЕМО ГРАДИШТЕ, КОЊУХ, КРАТОВО

р е з и м е

Археолошкиот локалитет Големо Градиште е лоциран на околу 40 км источно од Скопје, во близина на селото Коњух, на западниот крај од општина Кратово. Името на доцноантичкиот град кој некогаш бил лоциран тука не е познато. Утврдената акропола на локалитетот се издига на околу 100 м над Крива Река и е на 400 метри надморска височина.

Проектот насловен *Археолошки истражувања на Коњух* е меѓународен проект спонзориран од Гетисбург колеџот во Гетисбург, Пенсилванија, САД и Музејот на Македонија во Скопје. По краткото сондирање во 1998, ископувањата на акрополата во Големо Градиште започнаа во 2000 година и продолжуваа секое лето сè до 2004 година. Во 2005 година започнаа систематски ископувања на долниот град и се во тек.

Додека прашањето за раноромаската населба лоцирана на северната тераса од градот останува отворено, доцноантичкиот град веќе постоел за време на втората половина од V век, според доказите од керамика. За време на втората четвртина од VI век, била изградена тврдина на акрополата, чиј нерамен терен диктирал троделно уредување на зидините. Ископувањата помеѓу 2000 и 2004 година биле фокусирани на закосеното плато на источната страна од акрополата.

Можеби најзначајното откритие што се однесува на источното плато е тоа дека е вештачка градба. Со цел да се направи релативно рамна површина, горниот дел од карпите беа ископани и добиената камена субструкција осмислена да служи како темели и соби. Носечкиот и одбрамбениот ѕид го формираат крајниот раб на платото. Со ископувањата на платото откриена е длабока петметарска цистерна издлабена во карпа; голем административен и стамбен комплекс мали соби и градби со индустриски, магацински и стамбени функции; главна улица и можен централен плоштад; и неколку делови од одбрамбениот ѕид со кули и јужна порта.

Ископаните структури во акрополата докажуваат на повеќекратни фази на градење и на рушење и реновирање. Можно е дека живеењето во акрополата продолжило на одредено ниво дури и по делумното рушење на одбрамбениот ѕид. Последните разрушувања на градбите на акрополата се случиле на крајот на 6-от век или во раниот 7 век.

Превод:
Зоран Рунчев

Bibliography

Aleksova B., 1996, *Коњух: Големо Градиште,* Археолошка Карта II, Скопје, 184-185.

Dragojević Josifovska B., 1983, *Inscriptions de la Mésie supérieure*, VI: Scupi et la région de Kumanovo, Beograd.

Džidrova Lj., 2007, *Art, Form, and Liturgy in the Rotunda at Konjuh*, Niš and Byzantium V, 2007, Niš, 149-178.

Hoddinott R. F., 1963, *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia*, London.

Ivanovski M., 1996, *Коњух: К'шла,* Археолошка Карта II, Скопје.

Lilčić V., 1990-1991, *Размислувања околу убикацијата на Трапупара*, Културно Наследство 17-18, Скопје, 33-47.

Mikulčić I., 1973, *Antički gradovi kod Drenova i Konjuha u Makedoniji*, Arheološki Pregled 15, Beograd, 179-182.

Mikulčić I., 1974, *Über die Grosse der spätantiken Städte in Makedonien*, Živa Antika 24, Skopje, 191-212.

Mikulčić I., 1975, *Два безимени доцноантички града во Источна Македонија*, Зборник на Археолошкиот Музеј Скопје 6-7, Скопје, 122-130.

Mikulčić I., 1996, *Средновековни Градови и Тврдини во Македонија*, Скопје.

Mikulčić I., 1999, *Антички градови во Македонија*, Скопје.

Nikolajević Stojković I., 1957, *Ranovizantijska dekorativna plastika u Makedoniji*, Srbiji i Crnoj Gori, Beograd.

Petrov K., 1957-58, *Стародекорација од Коњух,* Зборник на Археолошкиот Музеј Скопје 2 (1957-58), Скопје, 31-45.

Petrov K., 1970, *Реконструкција на амбонот од ротондата во Коњух*, ГЗФФ 22, Скопје, 271-302.

Radojčić S., 1952, *Crkva u Konjuhu*, Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta 1, Beograd, 148-167.

Snively C., 2002, *Golemo Gradište at Konjuh: Report on the Excavations in 2000*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 56, Washington DC, 293-302.

Snively C., 2006, *Golemo Gradište at Konjuh, Republic of Macedonia: Prolegomena to the Study of a Late Antique Fortification*, Niš and Byzantium 4, Niš, 229-244.