

Kasnoantička utvrda Kaštio u Polačama na otoku Mljetu

Kasnoantička utvrda Kaštio u Polačama na otoku Mljetu nalazi se na uzvisini Brakovoj glavici. Kontrolirala je cijeli prostor uvale Polače i dio Mljetskoga kanala. Zadnja arheološka istraživanja otkrila su bedeme koji se od uglova kule, smještene na vrhu uzvisine, spuštaju niz padinu; pravac njihova pružanja određivala je konfiguracija terena. Utvrda je štiti-tila prostor od 380 m², imala je ulaz okrenut prema sjeveroistoku. Kraćim putom bila je povezana s kasnoantićkom palaćom udaljenom stotinjak metara zraćne linije na obali mora. U kuli je iskopana jedna arheološka sonda. Na dnu sonde nalazio se sloj paljevine nastao gorenjem objekta. U njemu je naćen vrh trokrilne željezne strelice što ukazuje na agresivno rušenje kule. Rezultat radiokarbonske analize ugljena iz toga sloja datira destrukciju utvrde u 7. stoljeće.

Ključne rijeći: *Mljet, Polaće, kasnoantićka utvrda, kasnoantićka palaća, trokrilna strelica.*

The late ancient fortress Kaštio in Polaće on the island of Mljet

The Kaštio fortress, dating back to the late ancient period, is situated on the hill of Brakova glavica in Polaće on the island of Mljet, from where it controlled the entire area of the Polaće bay and a part of the channel of Mljet. Recent archaeological excavations have unveiled ramparts descending from the corners of the tower, located at the top of the hill, down the slope and in alignment with the terrain's configuration. The fortress protected an area of 380 m² and had an entrance facing northeast. A shorter path connected it to the late ancient palace that was located about a hundred meters away on the sea shore. An archaeological trench was excavated inside the tower, where a layer of ash, resulting from the burning of the structure, was discovered at its bottom, as well as an iron trilobate arrowhead within it, indicating a violent destruction of the tower. The fortress was destroyed in the 7th century, as determined by the radiocarbon analysis of the coal from this layer.

Key words: *Mljet, Polaće, late ancient fortress, late ancient palace, trilobate arrowhead.*

Otok Mljet prvi je veći otok na koji su moreplovci nailazili ploveći duž istočne jadranske obale od juga prema sjeveru. Vjetrovi i morske struje vodile su prema njemu. Mljet (Melita) spominje se u najstarijim geografskim djelima, poput *Peripla Pseudoskilaka* iz 4. stoljeća prije Krista, u kojem se navodi: „I ima otok nedaleko obale, kome je ime Melita i opet blizu nje drugi otok, koji se zove Crna Korkira (Korčula).“¹ Grci su rano kolonizirali susjednu Korkiru, a u plovidbi prema njoj zasigurno su dobro upoznali i Melitu. Otok je dug 37 kilometara, širok oko 3 kilometra. Kroz Mljetski kanal najkraća je morska veza između južnoga i srednjega dijela hrvatskoga primorja.² Bio je važan za brodove koji su plovili prema donjem toku rijeke Neretve, odnosno prema antičkoj Naroni,³ također i onima koji su plovili u suprotnom pravcu, prema Otrantu. Pruža se u smjeru sjeverozapad-jugoistok prateći pravac pružanja Dinarskoga lanca. Ima tri paralelna niza brda: dva rubna i središnji na kojem su najviši vrhovi otoka Veliki (514 m) i Mali grad (488 m). Između lanaca i pošumljenih kosa i strana nalazi se „baština“ otočana, polja, prodoli, dolovi ili dočine, kako ih zovu.⁴

Na otoku nije bilo prirodnih uvjeta za razvoj urbanih cjelina, međutim jasno je da se Mljet nalazio u rukama vladara, vjerojatno još od Augustova doba. Naime, nakon njegovih osvajanja u Iliriku, kada je autohtono stanovništvo nastradalo, a otok očito stavljen pod carsko vlasništvo, određena je njegova stoljetna uloga i ruralni karakter. Rimsko doba obilježile su *villae rusticae* iz kojih se upravljalo manjim otočnim poljima i ostalim zemljištem privedenim poljoprivrednoj obradi.⁵

Imenom Melita nazivani su i Mljet i otok Malta, što do danas izaziva nedoumice oko brodoloma sv. Pavla koji se dogodio na Meliti. Još uvijek traju rasprave radi li se o Malti ili Mljetu.⁶ Iako je Malta bila uobičajena postaja na pomorskim putovima iz istočnoga Mediterana prema Rimu, brod na kojem je bio sv. Pavao nije plovio uobičajenom rutom jer ga je zahvatilo nevrijeme. U Djelima apostolskim jasno se navodi: *Bijaše već četrnaesta noć što smo bili tamo-amo gonjani po Jadranu kad oko pono-*

The island of Mljet was the first larger island encountered by sailors sailing along the eastern Adriatic coast from south to north, with winds and sea currents flowing towards it. Mljet (Melita) has been mentioned in the oldest geographical works such as the *Periplus of Pseudo-Scylax* from the 4th century BC. The *Periplus* describes the island as follows: “And there is an island not far from the coast, named Melita, and again another island near it, called Black Korkyra (Korčula).”¹ The Greeks colonised the neighbouring island of Korkyra early on, and during their voyages towards it, they certainly became well acquainted with Melita. The island is 37 kilometres long and about 3 kilometres wide. The channel of Mljet provides the shortest maritime route between the southern and central parts of the Croatian coast.² In the past, it was particularly important for maritime traffic towards the lower course of the Neretva River, or towards ancient Naronia respectively,³ as well as for those ships sailing in the opposite direction towards Otranto. The island extends in a northwest-southeast direction, following the direction of the Dinarides. It features three parallel rows of hills: two marginal and a central hill with the highest peaks of the island, Veliki Grad (514 m) and Mali Grad (488 m). Between the ranges and the forested slopes and sides lies the “heritage” of the islanders, who call them fields (*polja, prodoli, dolovi* or *dočine*).⁴

The natural conditions on the island were not particularly favourable for the development of urban settlements. However, it is clear that Mljet has been ruled by various leaders since the time of Augustus. Namely, after his conquests in Illyricum, when the indigenous population perished and the island was evidently placed under imperial ownership, its role and rural character were determined for the centuries to come. The Roman period is characterised by *villae rusticae*, from where smaller island fields and other land brought under agricultural cultivation were managed.⁵

The name ‘Melita’ has been attributed to both the island of Mljet and the island of Malta, still causing a dilemma around the shipwreck of St. Paul that occurred on Melita. The debate on whether

¹ Suić 1955, str. 128.

² Dabelić 1987, str. 5.

³ Begović-Dvoržak, 2003, str. 289.

⁴ Gušić 1931, str. 162-166.

⁵ Gušić i Fisković 1958, str. 8-9.

⁶ Buzov 2012, str. 491-505. U radu je citirana sva literatura koja se tiče ove teme.

¹ Suić 1955, p. 128.

² Dabelić 1987, p. 5

³ Begović-Dvoržak, 2003, p. 289.

⁴ Gušić 1931, pp. 162-166.

⁵ Gušić i Fisković 1958, pp. 8-9.

ći naslutiše mornari da im se primiče neka zemlja (Dj 27,27). Dakle, jasno se navodi da je riječ o Jadranskom moru, te su se mogli iskrcati samo na otok Mljet. Ne navodim ovo da bih se uključio u raspravu o brodolomu sv. Pavla, nego ukazujem na to kako se podatak iz Djela apostolskih gdje se spominje neki „glavar otoka po imenu Publije“ (Dj 28,7) lijepo uklapa u funkciju upravitelja, najvjerojatnije nekog oslobođenika koji je u carevo ime upravljao otokom. Da je bila riječ o Malti, sigurno bi se spomenulo neko značajnije rimsko središte na otoku.

U rimsko je doba počelo mijenjanje otočnoga kulturnog krajolika. Nedostatak obradive površine stanovnike Mljeta rano je tjerao u krčenje padina brda, formiranje *podvora* i *lazina*, odnosno terasa za uzgoj maslina i vinove loze. Tijekom stoljeća carski posjed mogao je biti darovan ili prijeći u ruke nekog od rimskih velikodostojnika.⁷

U 3. stoljeću otok je bio u posjedu imućnijih Rimljana. U ranokršćanskoj crkvi sjeveroistočno od palače nađen je sekundarno upotrijebljen natpis koji otkriva postojanje hrama posvećenog Liberu. Natpis je dao napraviti upravitelj imanja Magnus koji je na hram posvećen Liberu nadogrudio trijem za zdravlje Balbinijana - vlasnika posjeda na otoku.⁸ Balbinijan je zasigurno bio ugledna roda, najvjerojatnije Kornelija, što se sa sigurnošću ne može iščitati iz natpisa.⁹ Kult staroitalskoga božanstva Libera na Mljetu bio je razvijen zbog uzgoja vinove loze. On je bio i božanstvo plodnosti. Redovito je prizivan prilikom žrtvovanja za plodnost zemlje i stoke.

Otok doživljava vrhunac razvoja u kasnoj antici. U to se vrijeme zbog nesigurnosti na kopnenim putovima, koji su preko Balkana povezivali Istočno i Zapadno Carstvo, promet i trgovina prebacuju na morske putove. Tada je Mljet još uvijek vladarski posjed. Indikativan je povijesni podatak iz jednoga kasnoantičkog kodicila gdje neka osoba (nije sačuvano ime) ostavlja novac za rasvjetu crkava na Mljetu i za pomoć utvrdama u zaleđu Salone.¹⁰ Oporučitelj je morao imati nekakve veze s Melitom, moguće je da je imao velik posjed na otoku. On ostavlja sto solida za rasvjetu crkava i za siromahe svih crkava na Mljetu i onih koji pripadaju istoj dijecezi. Sto solida ostavlja i za utvrde u za-

the shipwreck happened on the island of Malta or Mljet is still ongoing.⁶ Although Malta was a common stopover on maritime routes from the eastern Mediterranean to Rome, it is known that the vessel carrying St. Paul deviated from the usual course due to encountering a storm. Acts of the Apostles explicitly states: *On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land* (Acts 27:27). It is clear that the reference is to the Adriatic Sea, which means that they could only have landed on the island of Mljet. I mention this here not to join the debate on St. Paul's shipwreck, but rather to point out that the mention of a *Publius, the chief official of the island* (Acts 28:7) in the Acts of the Apostles fits well into the image of a governor, most likely a freedman, who administered the island on behalf of the emperor. If it had been Malta, there would surely have been mention of some significant Roman centre on the island.

During Roman times, a transformation of the island's cultural landscape began. Namely, the scarcity of arable land prompted inhabitants of Mljet early on to clear the hill slopes, creating terraced fields for olive and grape cultivation called *podvora* and *lazina*. Over the centuries, the imperial estate could have been gifted or transferred into the hands of some Roman dignitary.⁷

During the 3rd century, the island was owned by wealthy Romans. An inscription in secondary use, indicating the existence of a temple dedicated to Liber, was discovered in an early Christian church located northeast of the palace. The inscription was commissioned by Magnus, the estate's manager, who added a portico to the temple of Liber for the health of Balbinian, the owner of the island estate.⁸ It is likely that Balbinian came from a distinguished family, possibly Cornelius, although this cannot be conclusively determined from the inscription.⁹ The worship of the ancient Italic deity Liber, god of male fertility, thrived on island Mljet due to vineyard cultivation and was linked to fertility rites, which were regularly invoked during sacrificial offerings for the fertility of the land and livestock.

⁷ Hebib 2018, str. 45.

⁸ Zaninović 1990, str. 725-726.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Marini 1805, str. 121, T. LXXVIII; Katić 2018, str. 250.

⁶ Buzov 2012, pp. 491-505. All literature relevant to this topic has been cited in the work.

⁷ Hebib 2018, p. 45.

⁸ Zaninović 1990, pp. 725-726.

⁹ Ibid.



Sl. 1. Ostaci kasnoantičke palače u Polačama na otoku Mljetu

Fig. 1 Remains of the late ancient palace in Polače on the island of Mljet

leđu Salone i rasvjetu njihovih crkava. Ako sredstava pretekne, treba ih potrošiti na otkup zarobljenika.¹¹ Posjedi na Mljetu spominju se i u darovnici ostrogotskoga vladara Odoakara iz 489. godine. On svome *comes domesticorum* Pieriusu daruje Mljet s kojega su prihodi iznosili 200 solida godišnje.¹² Pierius će već sljedeće godine, 490., poginuti u bitci na rijeci Addi u sjevernoj Italiji pa nije mogao dugo uživati posjede koje je dobio od svoga vladara.¹³ Iz navedenih pisanih izvora proizlazi da je Mljet u kasnoj antici bio posjed (*fundus*) s velikim godišnjim prihodom.

U kasnoj antici gradi se palača - rezidencijalno središte u Polači na sjeverozapadnome dijelu otoka (sl. 1). Uz palaču nalazile su se i dvije ranokršćanske crkve koje se kolokvijalno nazivaju istočna i zapadna crkva. Sjeverozapadno od palače nalazio se i termalni sklop, koji je istraživani sedamdesetih godina prošloga stoljeća, ali rezultati još uvijek nisu objavljeni. Utvrda Kaštio, o kojoj ćemo ovdje pisati, nalazila se na brdu Brakovoj glavici iznad same palače u Polačama. Nadzirala je cijelu uvalu i ulaz

The island reached its peak in terms of its development in the late antiquity. As overland routes between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires via the Balkans became insecure, trade and traffic shifted to maritime routes. At that time, Mljet was still a royal estate. An indicative historical record from a late ancient codicil mentions an individual (the name has not been preserved) who left funds for illuminating churches on Mljet and aiding fortresses in Salona's hinterland.¹⁰ The unnamed deceased likely had ties to Melita, possibly owning extensive property on the island. He bequeathed one hundred solidi for the illumination of the churches and as a donation for the poor of all churches on Mljet and for those within the same diocese. Additionally, he left another one hundred solidi for the fortresses located in the hinterland of Salona and the illumination of their churches there. Any surplus funds were to be used for ransoming captives.¹¹ The estates on Mljet are also mentioned in a donation by the Ostrogothic ruler Odoacer in 489 AD, who gave the island of Mljet, which yielded 200 solidi annually, to

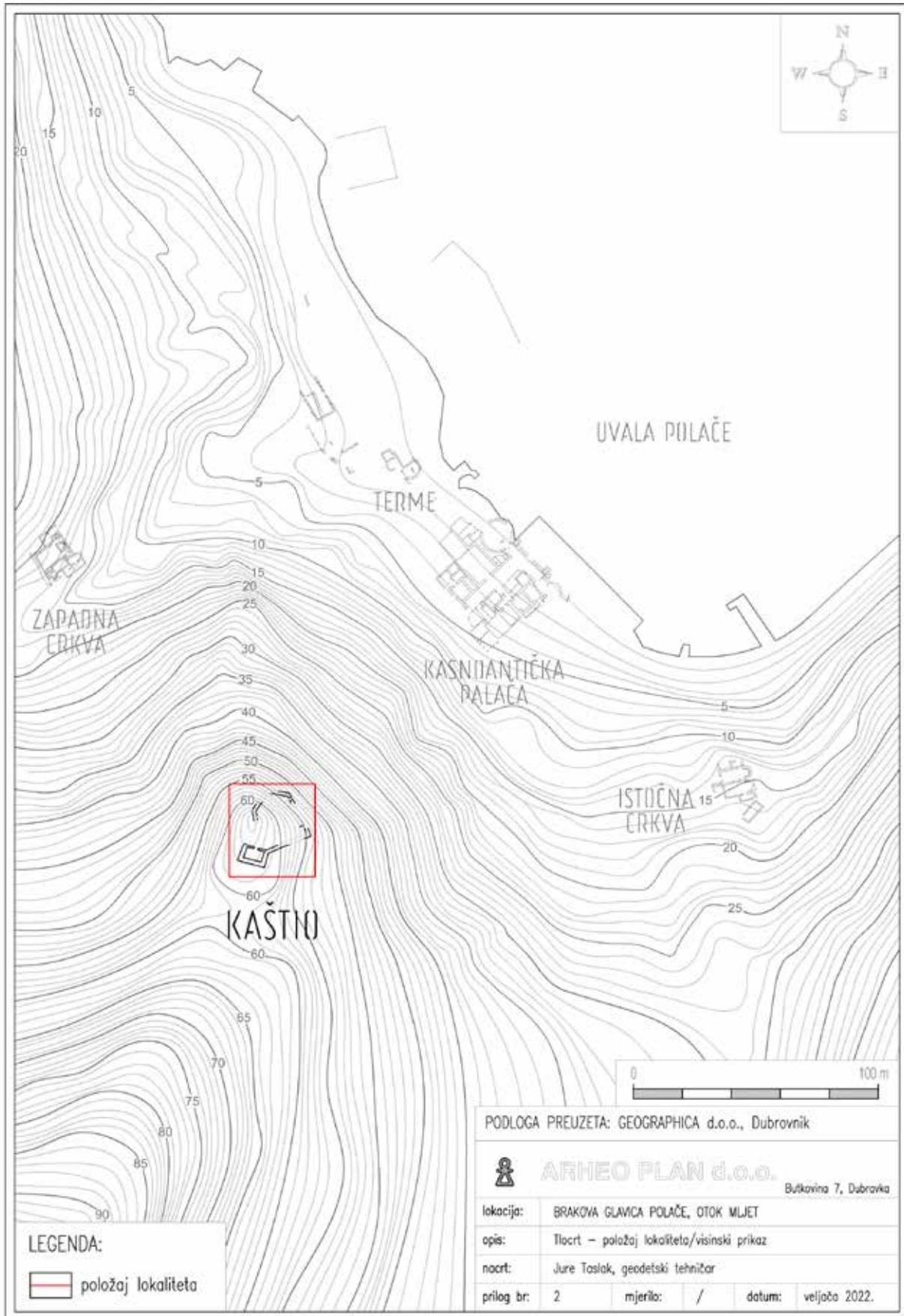
¹¹ Nikolajević 1971, str. 283-288.

¹² Gušić 1931, str. 170, bilj. 32.

¹³ Volfram 2016, str. 385.

¹⁰ Marini 1805, p. 121, T. LXXVIII; Katić 2018, p. 250.

¹¹ Nikolajević 1971, pp. 283-288.



Pl. 1. Polače s arheološkim lokalitetima
 Pl. 1 Polače with archaeological sites

u nju. Sjeverozapadno od palače, uz današnju cestu, stoji objekt koji nije istraživani. Zidovi su visoko očuvani, osim sjevernoga, koji je srušen. Otvori u obliku puškarnica nalazili su se u prizemlju i na katu. Na zidovima se vide tragovi dogradnji i popravaka. Bez arheoloških istraživanja teško je odrediti vrijeme nastanka objekta. Sedamdesetih godina prošloga stoljeća izvedena su arheološka istraživanja istočne i zapadne crkve te termalnog sklopa, a napravljena je i snimka postojećeg stanja utvrde.

U Konzervatorskom odjelu u Dubrovniku čuva se Dnevnik rada arheoloških istraživanja u Polači koje je vodila Dubravka Beritić 1975. godine.¹⁴ U njemu je vidljivo da su se od 2. rujna do 5. rujna 1975. vodila iskopavanja u kuli. Iz Dnevnika doznajemo da se od 5. rujna počelo s čišćenjem „gradine“ (utvrda Kaštio), očito se teren pripremao za geodetsko snimanje (sl. 2). Dubravka Beritić radila je u isto vrijeme na istočnoj i zapadnoj bazilici. Kaštio joj nije bio u žarištu zanimanja pa se zadržala uglavnom na njegovoj prostornoj dokumentaciji. Iz opisa doznajemo da je u šutu pronađena manja količina keramike, u nekoliko dana iskopavanja nisu došli do dna kamenog šuta, odnosno do kamena živca. Od svega je ostala prostorna snimka arheoloških ostataka u Polačama koju je, prema Dnevniku, izradio ing. geodezije Marko Majčica. Igor Fisković u svom je članku o ranokršćanskim spomenicima naronitanskoga područja objavio dokumentaciju na kojoj je ucrtan „kasnoantički kaštel“.¹⁵ Spominje se nepravilan nacrt utvrde, odnosno polukružna kula, baš onako kako je Majčica nacrtao. Fisković navodi da se zbog gustoga raslinja nije uspjelo napraviti bolji pregled lokaliteta. Stoga nije otišao dalje od konstatacije da se radi o „nezabilježenoj“ utvrdi na brijegu.¹⁶

U svom drugom tekstu o Polačama Fisković jasnije spominje utvrdu i zid koji povezuje dvije kule, ali samome objektu ne posvećuje više pozornosti.¹⁷ Međutim, jasno navodi da je riječ o utvrdi. U novije vrijeme napisan je rad u kojemu se kula na vrhu brijega promatra kao dio velikoga kastruma iz tetrarhijskog razdoblja, izgrađenog na prijelazu iz 3. u 4. stoljeće.¹⁸ To nije moguće prihvatiti jer se na

his *comes domesticorum* called Pierius.¹² However, as Pierius was killed the following year, in 490 AD, in the battle of the Adda River in northern Italy, he surely did not enjoy the estates bestowed upon him for a long time.¹³ These written sources indicate that Mljet was a significant estate (*fundus*) with substantial annual income in the late ancient period.

In late antiquity, the palace, i.e. residential centre, was built in Polače in the north-western part of the island (Fig. 1). Next to the palace, there were two early Christian churches commonly known as the eastern and western church. To the northwest of the palace, there was a thermal complex that was researched in the 1970s, but the results have not yet been published. The fortress of Kaštio, which is the topic of this paper, was situated on the hill of Brakova glavica above the palace in Polače. The structure overlooked the entire bay and its entrance. To the northwest of the palace, along the present-day road, stands a building that has not yet been excavated. Its walls are well-preserved, except for the northern one which has collapsed. Openings in form of arrowslits were found on both the ground floor and the upper floor. Traces of reconstructions and repairs are visible on the walls. Without further archaeological research, it is rather difficult to determine the exact time of construction of the structure. In the 1970s, archaeological excavations were carried out on the eastern and western churches, as well as on the thermal complex. Additionally, a survey of the existing state of the fortress was also made at that time.

The logbook of the archaeological excavations in Polače, which were led by Dubravka Beritić in 1975, is kept in the Conservation Department in Dubrovnik.¹⁴ It shows that excavations were conducted in the tower from September 2nd to September 5th, 1975. The logbook also reveals that the clearing works of the “hillfort” (Kaštio fortress) started on September 5th, apparently as preparation of the site for geodetic surveying (Fig. 2). Dubravka Beritić worked simultaneously on the eastern and western basilicas. Since the Kaštio fortress was not the focus of her attention, she mostly concentrated on its spatial documentation. From the description,

¹⁴ Dnevnik sam dobio na uvid od Marte Perkić iz Konzervatorskog odjela u Dubrovniku, na čemu zahvaljujem.

¹⁵ Fisković 1980, str. 238, sl. 31.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Fisković 1999, str. 70.

¹⁸ Peković 2020, str. 116-119, fig. 17. Tetrarhijske kori-

¹² Gušić 1931, p. 170, fn. 32.;

¹³ Volfram 2016, p. 385.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Marta Perkić of the Conservation Department in Dubrovnik for providing me with the diary for review.



Sl. 2. Očišćeni vrh Kaštio na kojemu se nalaze temelji kule na fotografiji iz 1975. godine; u drugome je planu uvala Polače (arhiv KO Dubrovnik)

Fig. 2 Cleared top of the Kaštio fortress with the foundations of the tower on a photograph from 1975; in the background is the bay of Polače (archive of the Conservation Department in Dubrovnik)

brdu iznad palače nalazila samostalna kasnoantička utvrda, kojom se bavimo u ovom radu.

Arheološkim istraživanjem 2022. godine¹⁹ utvrdio sam da je u kuli tijekom Drugoga svjetskog rata bilo napravljeno mitraljesko gnijezdo. Polukružni dio na sjeverozapadnoj strani kule, koji je nacrtan u starijoj dokumentaciji, zapravo je bio grudobran izgrađen tijekom talijanske okupacije otoka. U kuli su nađene čahure pušanih metaka s godištima 1940. i 1943. Vrh uzvisine okupatorska je talijanska vojska utvrdila radi kontrole luke Polače.

Nakon uklanjanja grudobrana na sjeverozapadnoj strani pojavio se originalni zid kule s vratima širine 1,9 m. U odnosu na ostala tri zida kule širine 1,8 m, ovaj je zid bio za cijeli metar uži, širine tek

jene palače prije njega šire je spominjao Tin Turković (Turković 2011, str. 211-233).

¹⁹ Posebnu zahvalu dugujemo Jozi Dabeliću pok. Vlatka iz Polače koji nam je kao suvlasnik zemljišta na lokalitetu omogućio izvođenje arheoloških i konzervatorskih radova. Realizaciju istraživanja i arheološku dokumentaciju napravila je tvrtka *Arheo plan* iz Dubravke.

we learn that a small amount of pottery was found in the rubble. The diary also states that the team did not reach the bottom of the stone rubble or the bedrock respectively after several days of excavation. Furthermore, all was captured in a spatial survey of the archaeological remains in Polače, which was made, according to the diary, by geodetic engineer Marko Majčica. Igor Fisković, in his article on early Christian monuments in the Naron region, published documentation on which a “late ancient castle” was marked.¹⁵ He mentions there an irregular layout of the fortress, namely a semicircular tower, just as Majčica had drawn. Fisković notes that due to dense vegetation, a better overview of the site could not be achieved. Therefore, he did not go further than stating that it was an “unrecorded” fortress on a hill.¹⁶

In his second text about Polače, Fisković more clearly mentions the fortress and the wall connecting the two towers, but does not pay much attention to the structure itself.¹⁷ However, he explicitly states that it is a fortress. Recently, a paper was written in which the tower on top of the hill is identified as part of a large castrum from the Tetrarchic period, that was built at the turn from the 3rd to the 4th century.¹⁸ This standpoint is not acceptable due to the fact that there was an independent late ancient fortress on the hill above the palace, which is the topic of this paper.

Within the scope of archaeological research in 2022,¹⁹ I was able to determine a machine-gun nest, set up in the tower during World War II. The semi-circular part on the northwest side of the tower, depicted in the older documentation, was actually a breastwork built during the Italian occupation of the island. Bullet casings from rifles with the years 1940 and 1943 were discovered in the tower. The Italian army occupying the area fortified the peak of the hill to control the port of Polače.

¹⁵ Fisković 1980, p. 238, fig. 31.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Fisković 1999, p. 70.

¹⁸ Peković 2020, pp. 116-119, fig. 17. The palace’s Tetrarchic origin was previously discussed thoroughly by Tin Turković (Turković 2011, pp. 211-233).

¹⁹ We would like to express our special thanks to Jozo Dabelić, son of the late Vlatko from Polače, who, as a co-owner of the plot at the site, enabled us to carry out archaeological and conservation works. The realization of this research as well as the archaeological documentation were done by the company *Arheo plan* from Dubravka.

0,8 m. Postalo je jasno da su vrata i tanja stranica kule Kaštio bili okrenuti prema zaštićenoj unutrašnjosti utvrde (vidi pl. 2). Zato je ta strana zida kule mogla biti tanja jer nije bila izložena izravnom napadu neprijatelja. Pregledom terena utvrđen je perimetar utvrde koji se ipak 2022. godine nije mogao u cijelosti sagledati. Gusto raslinje skrivalo je mnoge važne detalje. Tek sljedeće godine, 2023., nakon što su djelatnici Nacionalnoga parka Mljet uklonili gustu makiju i borove,²⁰ mogli smo pristupiti iskopavanju i čišćenju sjeverozapadnoga poteza bedema izgrađenog na visokom kamenom kuku. Time je zaokružen oblik utvrde Kaštio (pl. 2, sl. 3).

Od sjeveroistočnoga i jugozapadnoga ugla kule odvajali su se obrambeni zidovi niz padinu brda. Kula je stajala na vrhu, bila je dimenzija 11,4 m u smjeru sjeverozapad-jugoistok, 7 m u smjeru sjeveroistok-jugozapad, mjereno iznutra bila je dimenzija 7,5 m x 4,6 m. Zauzimala je cijeli vrh uzvisine i imala je kat. Nisu nađeni ulomci tegula koji bi upućivali na postojanje krovišta. Međutim, nađeni su ulomci cigle slične onoj koja je bila ugrađivana u zidove palače u Polačama. Ulomci cigle imali su samo s jedne strane otisak vapnenog morta pa je jasno da su bili ugrađivani u pod. Tijekom uklanjanja gornjega sloja kamenoga štuta i grudobrana mitraljeskoga gnijezda iz Drugoga svjetskog rata u sjeveroistočnom kutu kule nađena je jedna cjelovito sačuvana cigla dimenzija 44 cm x 30 cm, debljine 7 cm (sl. 3). Prema dosadašnjim rezultatima istraživanja usudio bih se napisati da je kula imala drveni pod na koji su bile postavljene cigle. Na njoj je morala postojati nekakva konstrukcija za loženje lomače, odnosno svjetionika koji je moreplovcima noću signalizirao položaj luke Polače. Pod od debelih četvrtastih cigli sprječavao je nastanak požara. Ovo je tek pretpostavka koju će trebati provjeriti tijekom budućih arheoloških istraživanja u utvrdi Polače. Postojanje kata u kuli potvrđuju loše obrađene kamene konzole. Na njih su bile naslonjene grede koje su nosile pod (sl. 4).

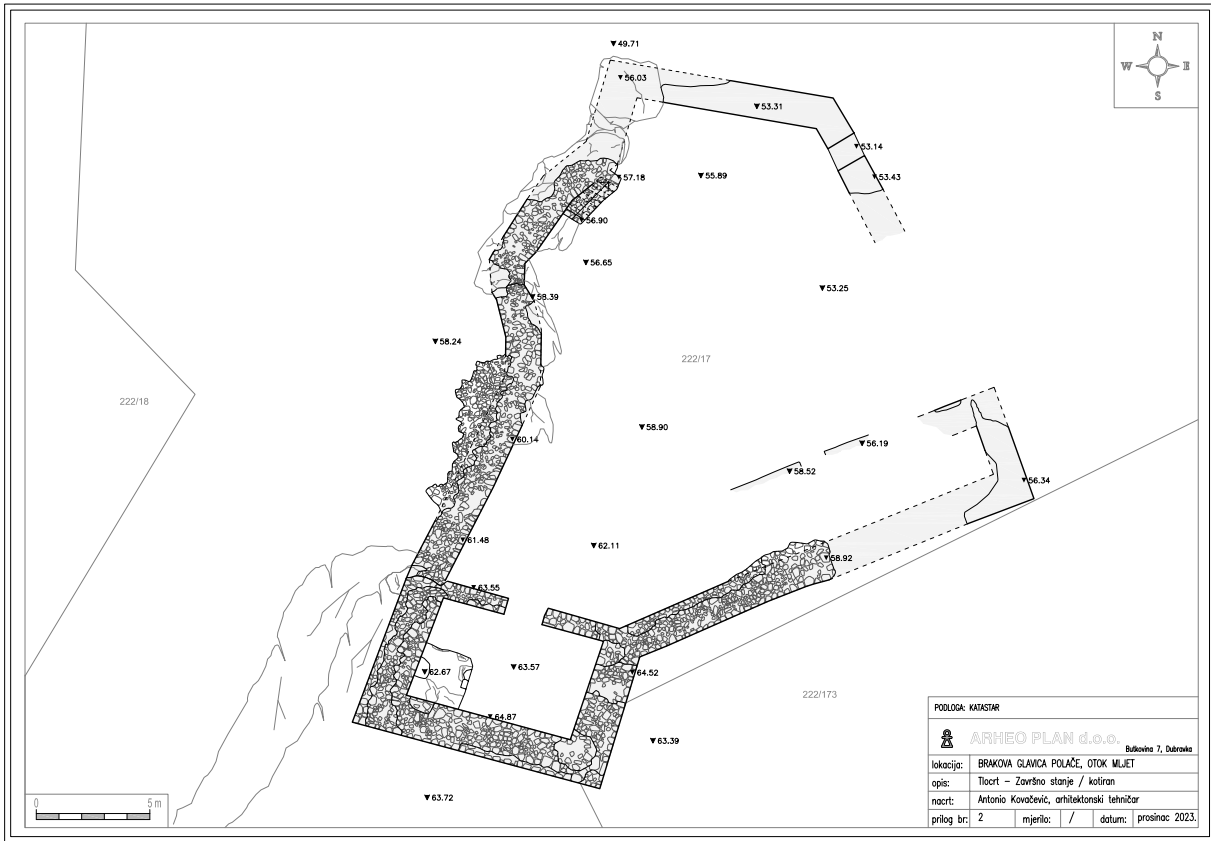
Kula je zauzimala cijeli vrh Brakove glavice (sl. 5). U kasnoantičko doba, kada je stajala u punoj visini, doimala se kao da niče iz samoga brda. Njezin

Upon the removal of the breastwork on the northwest side, the original tower wall was uncovered, revealing a 1.9-meter-wide door. In contrast to the other three walls of the tower, which were 1.8 meters wide, this wall was a whole meter narrower, measuring only 0.8 meters in width. It became evident that the door and the thinner side of the Kaštio tower faced the protected interior of the fortress (see pl. 2). It is for this reason that this side of the tower wall could be thinner as it was not exposed to direct enemy attack. The perimeter of the fortress was determined upon a detailed examination of the surrounding terrain, which could not be fully surveyed in 2022 due to dense vegetation. Only after the employees of the Mljet National Park cleared the dense macchia and pine trees the following year, i.e. in 2023,²⁰ we could start the excavations and cleaning of the northwest section of the rampart, built on a high rocky outcrop, which eventually revealed the shape of the Kaštio fortress (pl. 2, Fig. 3).

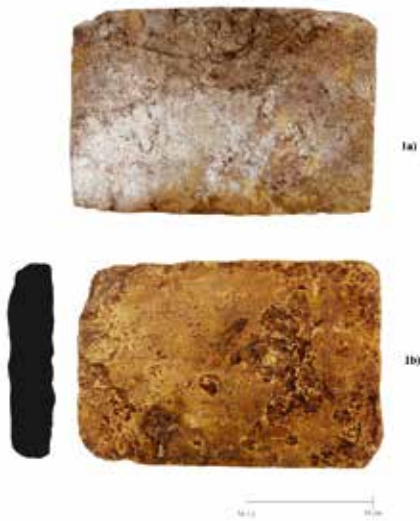
The defensive walls extended down the hillside from the northeast and southwest corners of the tower. The tower, which measured 11.4 m in the northwest-southeast direction and 7 m in the northeast-southwest direction, occupied the entire hilltop and had an upper floor. Its internal dimension was 7.5 m by 4.6 m. Fragments of tegulae, indicating the presence of a roof, were not found. However, fragments of bricks similar to those used in the walls of the palace in Polače were discovered. The brick fragments found had imprints of lime mortar on one side, suggesting that they were built into the floor. An intact brick measuring 44 cm x 30 cm x 7 cm (Fig. 3) was discovered during the removal of the top layer of stone rubble and the breastwork of the machine-gun nest from World War II in the northeast corner of the tower. Based on the research conducted so far, I dare to conclude that the tower had a wooden floor, on top of which the bricks were laid. It is likely that there was some kind of structure for burning a beacon or signal fire to guide sailors to the port of Polače at night. The floor of thick square-shaped bricks thus prevented the spread of fire. This is just a hypothesis that will need to be

²⁰ Zahvaljujemo ravnatelju Nacionalnog parka Mljet Ivi Sršenu na razumijevanju i pomoći oko uklanjanja raslinja. Radove uklanjanja obavili su Mato Nodilo, Petar Milić i Ivan Stražičić. U arheološkom istraživanju 2023. godine sudjelovali su kustosica pripravnica MHAS-a Antonia Kovač te studenti arheologije Miroslav Klarić i Josip Sučić.

²⁰ We would like to express our gratitude to Ivo Sršen, the director of the Mljet National Park, for his understanding and assistance in clearing the vegetation. The clearing works were carried out by Mato Nodilo, Petar Milić and Ivan Stražičić. Antonia Kovač, a curatorial intern from MHAS, participated in the archaeological research in 2023 alongside archaeology students Miroslav Klarić and Josip Sučić.



Pl. 2. Arhitektonska snimka arheoloških ostataka utvrde Kaštio
 Pl. 2 Architectural survey of the archaeological remains of the Kaštio fortress



Sl. 3. Sačuvana kasnoantička cigla s tragovima vapnenog morta na donjoj strani
 Fig. 3 Preserved late ancient brick with traces of lime mortar on the bottom side

smještaj odmah iznad kasnoantičke palače u Polači, na čijem su pročelju stajale dvije goleme poligonalne kule, stvarao je snažnu defenzivnu sliku prostora (sl. 1). Moreplovci koji su uplovljavali u luku malo

verified during future archaeological research in the fortress of Polače. The existence of an upper floor in the tower is confirmed by poorly processed stone consoles, upon which beams supporting the floor were placed (Fig. 4).

The tower occupied the entire summit of Brakova Glavica (Fig. 5). In the late ancient period, when it stood at its full height, it appeared to emerge from the hill. Its location just above the late ancient palace in Polače, with two large polygonal towers on its facade, created a strong defensive image of the area (Fig. 1). Sailors entering the harbour could hardly see such a sight anywhere else in the Adriatic. If we also take into consideration the two early Christian churches located east and west of the palace, along with the well-organized harbour, a thermal complex, large cisterns and other auxiliary buildings, one can state that the main harbour of Melita was evidently a significant and special place on the eastern Adriatic maritime route.

The fortress faced the palace and the harbour, with gates on that side, which indicate the existence of a path connecting the fortress and palace. Both were only about a hundred meters apart in a straight line.

su gdje na Jadranu mogli vidjeti takav prizor. Kada se tome dodaju i dvije ranokršćanske crkve istočno i zapadno od palače, uređena luka, termalni kompleks i velike cisterne te druge pomoćne zgrade, glavna luka Melite očito je bila posebno mjesto na istočnojadranskom pomorskom putu.

Utvrda je bila okrenuta prema palači i luci. Na toj strani nalazila su se vrata pa je nedvojbeno postojala nekakva staza koja je povezivala utvrdu i palaču. Udaljene su jedna od druge svega stotinjak metara zračne linije.

Nepravilnu morfologiju utvrde odredila je konfiguracija terena. Od dominantne kule na vrhu odvajao se drugi bedem ravno prema sjeveru u dužini oko 10 m (sl. 6). Na tom potezu vanjsko mu je lice ostalo zatrpano gomilom kamena pa nismo tijekom zadnjih iskopavanja uspjeli ustanoviti je li bar minimalno sačuvano. U središnjem dijelu zapadnog poteza bedema unutarne i vanjsko lice bolje je očuvano. Tu je bedem bio širine oko 1,5 m, jasnije se nadovezuje na spomenuti kameni kuk na kojemu čini dva loma (vidi plan utvrde, pl. 2) te se nastavlja prema sjeveru, odnosno rubu kamenoga kuka. Tu je, priljubljen uz unutarnje lice zapadnoga bedema, otkriven temelj stubišta i na njemu jedna stuba. Bio je dužine 2,75 m, a širine 1 m. Stuba je bila široka 25 cm, a visoka 30 cm (sl. 7). Sudeći po tim dimenzijama, visina stubišta iznosila je oko 2 m. Grudo-



Sl. 4. Kamena konzola koja je nosila gredu drvenog poda pokrivenog ciglama

Fig. 4 Stone console, supporting the beam of the wooden floor that was covered with bricks

The fortress's irregular morphology was determined by the configuration of the terrain. Another rampart extended straight north for about 10 meters from the dominant tower at the top (Fig. 6). The external face of this stretch remained buried under a pile of stones, so we were unable to determine during the last excavations if even a minimal part of it was preserved. In the central part of the rampart's western stretch, the internal and external faces were better preserved. In this part, the rampart was approximately 1.5 m wide and more clearly fol-



Sl. 5. Zračna snimka utvrde Kaštio
Fig. 5 Aerial view of the fortress Kaštio



Sl. 6. Pogled s kule na iskopani sjeverozapadni potez bedema
Fig. 6 View from the tower onto the north-western stretch of the rampart

bran s krunom morao je štiti vojnike pa je njegova visina mogla biti nešto manja, oko 1,8 m. Dakle, potez bedema na sjeverozapadnoj strani utvrde bio je visok oko 3,8 do 4 m, a zajedno s kamenim kulkom na kojem je bio sagrađen uzdizao se 8 do 10 m iznad okolnog terena. Možemo pretpostaviti da je na ovoj strani obrambeni zid bio niži jer su maksimalno iskorištene defenzivne značajke terena pa ga nije bilo potrebno podizati visoko kao na ostalim dijelovima utvrde.

Od istočnog ruba kamenog kuka obrambeni zid nastavlja prema istoku da bi nakon devet metara skrenuo prema sjeveroistoku. Malo iza ovoga loma nalazila su se vrata utvrde široka oko 1 m, okrenuta prema luci, odnosno palači u Polačama. Dalje je bedem nastavlja prema pretpostavljenoj manjoj kuli.

Utvrda s kulom zauzimala je oko 380 m² površine. Uz jugoistočni potez bedema naziru se ostatci vanjskoga zida nastambi koje su bile prislonjene uz unutarnje lice bedema, poput onih na utvrđi Galešnik iznad Jelse na otoku Hvaru i na drugim kasnoantičkim utvrđama.²¹ Ispod gomile kamena naziru se vrata širine oko 1,3 m. Sačuvana su do 1,4 m visine, vjerojatno idu još u dubinu pa se može očekivati dobra sačuvanost prostorija uz bedem. Lice stambenih prostorija udaljeno je oko 3,5 m od bedema. Nastambe su izgrađene na strmom terenu i

lowed the mentioned rocky outcrop where it made two turns (see the fortress plan, pl. 2) to continue north, towards the edge of the rocky outcrop. Here, pressed against the internal face of the western rampart, the foundation of a staircase was discovered with a single step measuring 25 cm wide and 30 cm high (Fig. 7). The staircase was 2.75 m long and 1 m wide, indicating a height of approximately 2 m. The height of the breastwork with the crown could have been slightly lower, around 1.8 m, as it would still have provided sufficient protection for the soldiers. Therefore, the stretch of the rampart on the northwest side of the fortress was about 3.8 to 4 m high, and together with the rocky outcrop on which it was built, it rose 8 to 10 m above the surrounding terrain. We can assume that the defensive wall on this side was lower because the defensive characteristics of the terrain were maximally utilized, making it unnecessary to build it as high as in other parts of the fortress.

From the eastern edge of the rocky outcrop, the defensive wall extends towards the east for nine meters before turning northeast. Right after this turn were the 1m wide gates of the fortress, which faced the harbour or the palace in Polače respectively. The rampart then continued towards the presumed smaller tower.

The fortress, along with the tower, occupied an area of approximately 380 square meters. Remains

²¹ Katić 2021, str. 133-134, sl. 6.



Sl. 7. Temelj stubišta koje je vodilo na bedem
 Fig. 7 Foundation of the staircase that led onto the rampart



Sl. 8. Ulomak dna kamene posude
 Fig. 8 Fragment of the bottom of a stone vessel

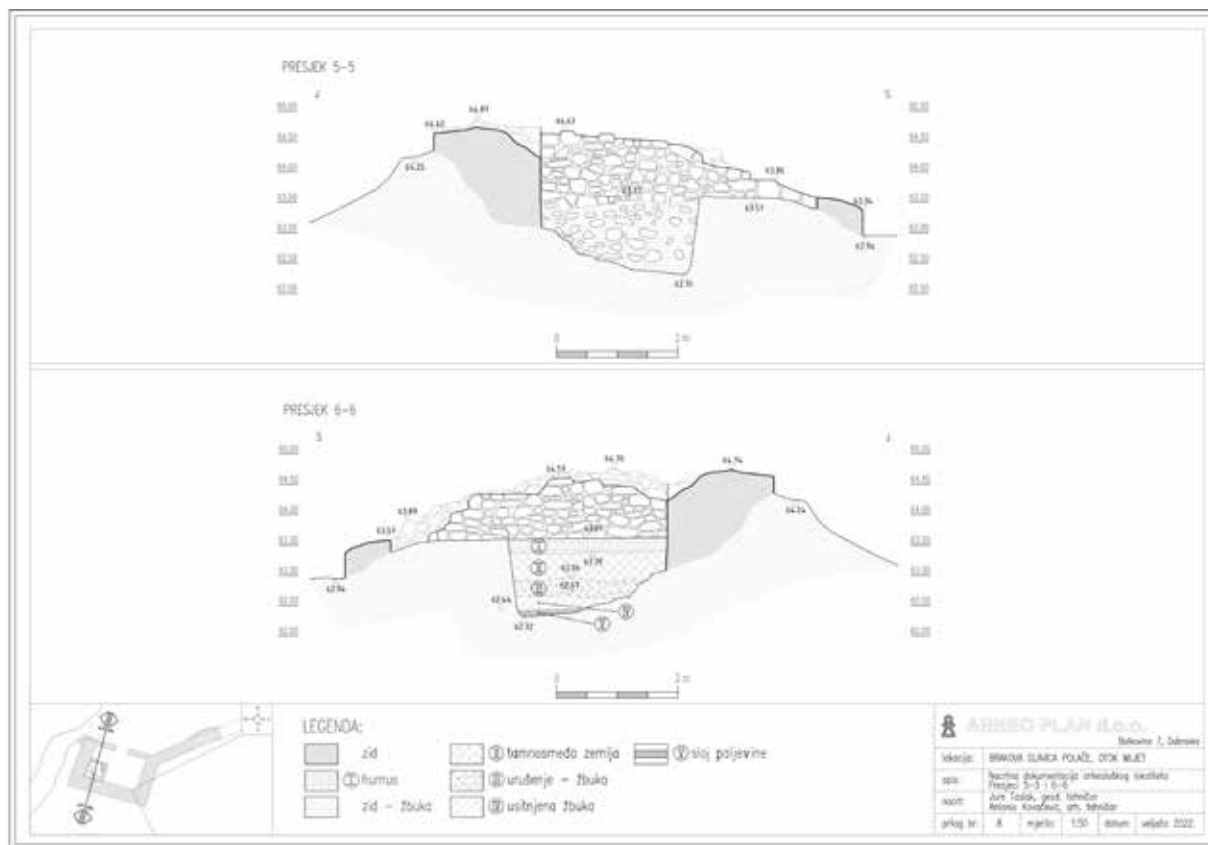
morale su se kaskadno penjati prema vrhu uzvisine. U njima bi se trebalo naći više pokretnoga arheološkog materijala nego u dosadašnjim istraživanjima. Moguće da je u novom vijeku prostor utvrde pretvoren u poljoprivredno zemljište, veći dio prostora ipak je bio pokriven gomilom kamena. Na površini

of the external walls of dwellings can be discerned along the south-eastern stretch of the rampart. These were leaning against the internal face of the rampart, similar to those at the Galešnik fortress above Jelsa on the island of Hvar and other late ancient fortresses.²¹ Gates about 1.3 m wide can be discerned beneath the pile of stones. They were preserved up to a height of 1.4 m, likely going even deeper, so a good state of preservation can be expected of the rooms next to the rampart. The façade of the dwellings was approximately 3.5 m from the rampart. Due to the steep terrain they were built on, the dwellings had to rise in cascades towards the top of the elevation. Compared to previous excavations, a greater amount of movable archaeological material is expected to be found within them. It is possible that the fortress area was converted into agricultural land in modern times, as a significant portion of the area was covered by a pile of stones. A fragment of the bottom of a so-called *pietra ollare*, a stone vessel, was found on the surface. These vessels were imported to the eastern Adriatic shores from northern Italy during the 6th -7th centuries and (Fig. 8).²²

An archaeological trench was opened in the southwest corner of the tower, which yielded signif-

²¹ Katić 2021, pp. 133-134, fig. 6.

²² Brusić 1991, pp. 225-240; Alberti 1997, pp. 335-339.



Pl. 3. Presjeci kroz sondu A u kuli sa stratigrafskim profilom (pogled 6-6)
 Pl. 3 Cross-sections through trench A inside the tower with stratigraphic profile (view 6-6)

je nađen jedan ulomak dna kamene posude, tzv. *pietra ollare*, koje su na našu obalu stizale iz sjeverne Italije tijekom 6. - 7. stoljeća (sl. 8).²²

Arheološka sonda otvorena u jugozapadnom kutu kule dala je značajne arheološke rezultate. Kula je ispunjena većom količinom kamena urušenog iz zidova i vapnenog morta.

Sonda A

U sjeverozapadnom kutu kule iskopana je arheološka sonda dimenzija 2,5 x 2,5 m. Današnja hodna površina u kuli je na 63,57 m nadmorske visine, a dno sonde, odnosno kamen živac je na oko 62,31 m n/v. Prvih dvadesetak centimetara u sondi je humus pomiješan s kamenom (**sloj I**). Nastao je truljenjem lišća raslinja čije je korijenje gusto isprepletano. U ovom sloju nalažene su čahure pušanih metaka s godinama proizvodnje 1934. i 1940. Na sjevernom stratigrafskom profilu sonde A (pl. 3, presjek 6-6) ovaj je sloj označen rimskim brojem I, a pruža se od dubine 63,61 m n/v do 63,39 m n/v.

icant archaeological results. The tower contained a large amount of collapsed stone from the walls and limestone mortar.

Trench A

An archaeological trench measuring 2.5 x 2.5 m was excavated in the northwest corner of the tower. The tower's current floor level is at 63.57 m a.s.l., while the bedrock at the bottom of the trench is approximately at 62.31 m a.s.l. The first 20 cm inside the trench consisted of humus mixed with stone (**layer I**). It was formed by the decomposition of leaves and vegetation, with densely intertwined roots. This layer contained the afore-mentioned bullet casings of rifles dated to 1934 and 1940. On the north stratigraphic profile of trench A (pl. 3, section 6-6), this layer is marked with Roman numeral I and extends from a depth of 63.61 m a.s.l. to 63.39 m a.s.l.

Below it is **layer II**, dominated by rubble mixed with soil and crushed plaster, up to 62.96 m a.s.l. Layer II represents the layer of the collapsed part of the tower. Fragments of bricks, which were used

²² Brusić 1991, str. 225-240; Alberti 1997, str. 335-339.



Sl. 9. Sloj paljevine (V) na dnu sonde A u jugoistočnom kutu kule

Fig. 9 Layer of ash and debris (V) at the bottom of trench A in the south-eastern corner of the tower

Ispod njega je **sloj II**, u kojem dominira kameni šut pomiješan sa zemljom i usitnjenom žbukom do 62,96 m n/v. Radi se o sloju urušenja kule. U njemu su nađeni ulomci cigli, koje su se također koristile u građevinske svrhe, vjerojatno za podno popločenje kata. Uz južni zid kule u ovom sloju nađen je ulomak lonca grublje fature s horizontalno izvedenim linijama. Teško je utvrditi kojem vremenu ulomak pripada.

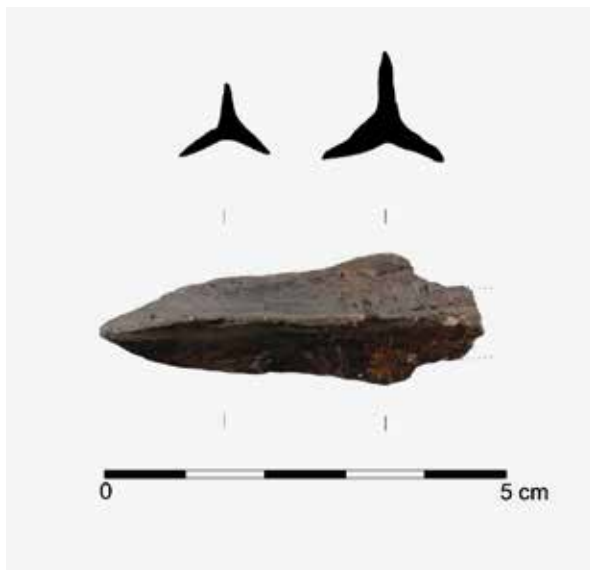
Od 62,96 do 62,67 m n/v počinje **sloj III**, u kojem također ima kamena i zemlje, ali dominira vapnena žbuka. I ovo je urušenje nastalo osipanjem žbuke s unutarnjih lica zidova kule. Naime, u to vrijeme kula je ruševina, a atmosferilije su počele utjecati na otpadanje žbuke sa zidova. Od 62,67 m n/v do oko 62,44 m n/v još je izražajniji ovaj sloj otpale žbuke, označen kao **sloj IV**. U njemu ima usitnjenoga vapnenog morta, ali i krupnijih komada žbuke. Padajući s jugozapadnoga i sjeverozapadnoga zida kule, uspio se nataložiti sloj u kojem dominira žbuka, a on je legao na **sloj paljevine V**. Sloj V je intaktan i pruža se od dubine 62,44 m n/v do 62,32 m n/v (sl. 9).

Slojevi III i IV, sa znatnijom količinom većih

for construction purposes, probably for the flooring of the upper floor, were found within it. Next to the southern wall of the tower, a fragment of a pot of rough texture with horizontally executed lines was found within this layer. However, it is difficult to determine the period to which the fragment belongs.

Layer III begins at 62.96 to 62.67 m.a.s.l. It contains stone and soil but mainly consists of lime plaster. This collapsed layer also resulted from the crumbling of plaster from the internal walls of the tower. At that time, the tower was in ruins, and weathering had begun to cause the plaster to fall off the walls. From 62.67 m.a.s.l. to about 62.44 m.a.s.l., marked as **layer IV**, is where the layer of fallen plaster is even more pronounced. It contains crushed lime mortar as well as larger pieces of plaster. This layer, dominated by plaster, accumulated as it fell from the southwest and northwest walls of the tower, and onto a layer of ash and debris, **layer V**. This layer is intact and extends from a depth of 62.44 m.a.s.l. to 62.32 m.a.s.l. (Fig. 9).

Layers III and IV consist of larger pieces of plaster and crushed lime mortar. These layers formed after the plaster began to peel off from the inner walls of the tower, due to their exposure to weath-



Sl.10. Željezni vrh trokrilne strelice iz sloja paljevine V

Fig.10 Iron tip of the trilobate arrowhead from the ash and debris of layer V

komada žbuke i smrvljenog vapnenog morta, nastali su nakon što je s unutarnjih lica zidova kule počela otpadati žbuka. Ona je bila izložena atmosferijama jer više nije bilo pokrova. U sloju V nađen je željezni vrh trokrilne strijele dimenzija 4,4 cm x 1,5 cm (sl. 10). Nije sačuvan trn za nasad. Krila u donjem dijelu završavaju pod oštrijim kutom sužavajući se prema trnu. Sloj V je radiokarbonskom analizom datiran u 7. stoljeće (sl. 11), tako da bi slojevi III i IV mogli nastati do kraja 7. stoljeća. Slojevi iznad su slojevi intenzivnijega urušavanja i razgradnje zidova kule sve do Drugoga svjetskog rata.

U sloju paljevine bilo je malo ulomaka keramičkih posuda. U sloju IV nađen je manji komad donjega dijela neke kasnoantičke rebraste amfore, koju je teško tipološki odrediti. Tragovi vapnenog morta na većini nađenih ulomaka potvrđuju da se radi o građevinskom materijalu, a ne o posudama koje su koristili stanovnici utvrde u svakodnevnom životu. Najvjerojatnije je riječ o ulomcima koji su bili ugrađivani u arhitekturu kao građevinski materijal za popunjavanje većih rupa prilikom žbukanja ili zidanja.

Trokrilna strelica iz sloja V nameće niz pitanja; ova vrsta oružja nalažena je i na drugim kasnoantičkim lokalitetima. Nedavno je objavljen opsežan rad o trokrilnim strelicama u Dalmaciji. U njemu se obrađuje tip trokrilnih strelica s djelomično trokutastim presjekom. Riječ je o trokrilnim strelicama

ering because of the missing roof. Layer V yielded the find of an iron tip of a trilobate arrowhead measuring 4.4 cm x 1.5 cm. However, the shaft for its mounting has not been preserved. The wings at the lower end taper to a sharper angle towards the shaft. Radiocarbon analysis dated layer V to the 7th century (Fig. 11), indicating that layers III and IV could have formed until the end of the 7th century. The layers above are those of the more intensive collapse and degradation of the tower walls until the Second World War.

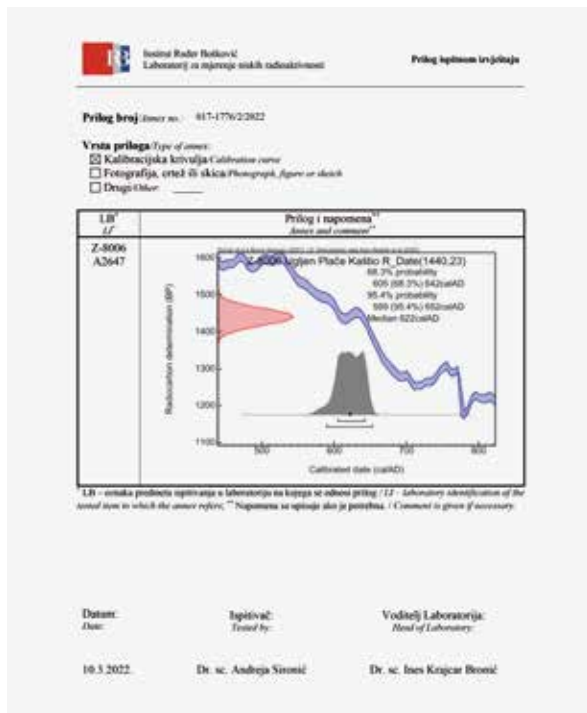
The debris layer contained only a few fragments of ceramic vessels. Layer IV yielded a small piece of the bottom part of a late ancient ribbed amphora that is difficult to typologically identify. Most of the found fragments had traces of lime mortar, indicating that they were building materials rather than vessels used by the fortress inhabitants in their daily lives. These fragments were most likely incorporated into structures as building material to fill larger gaps during plastering or construction.

The discovery of the trilobate arrowhead in layer V raises several questions, as this type of weapon has been found also at other late ancient sites. A recently published comprehensive study on trilobate arrowheads in Dalmatia focused on a type with a partially triangular cross-section, including those with a full triangular tip. A larger amount of trilobate arrowheads were discovered in the vicinity of Salona and other regions affected by the prolonged conflict between Byzantium and the Ostrogoths.²³ These trilobate arrowheads were widespread, and in Dalmatia, they were usually associated with the Avaro-Slavic incursions. According to historical sources, the Slavs used bows and arrows alongside spears. During the defence of Thessaloniki against Saracen attacks in 904 AD, the emperor's envoy Nikita ordered Slavs from the surrounding areas to be brought into the city, because, as the source states, no one was more skilled at hitting the target, and nothing could withstand the fierceness of their arrows.²⁴

The discovery of the trilobate arrowhead in the tower of the Kaštio fortress is the only specimen of an iron trilobate arrowhead in Dalmatia that has been dated with certainty to date. Additionally, it was found in a layer of destruction (burning). This

²³ Tojčić 2022, p. 43.

²⁴ Vizantijski izvori (Byzantine sources) 2007, p. 271; Škrivanić 1957, p. 101.



Sl. 11. Kalibracijska krivulja radiokarbonske analize uzorka ugljena iz sloja V u sondi A

Fig. 11 Calibration curve of the radiocarbon analysis of the coal sample from layer V in trench A

koje imaju puni trokutni vrh. Veći broj ih je nađen na prostoru oko Salone i drugim područjima gdje se odigravao višegodišnji sukob između Bizanta i Ostrogota.²³ Trokrilne strelice bile su raširene, a u Dalmaciji ih se najčešće povezivalo s avaroslaven-skim prodorima. Slaveni su uz koplje koristili luk i strelice. O tome izvještavaju pisani povijesni izvori. Prilikom obrane Soluna od napada Saracena 904. godine carev izaslanik Nikita naredio je da se u grad dovedu Slaveni iz okoline jer, kako izvor navodi, nitko nije vještiji u gađanju cilja, a žestini njihovih strelica ništa ne može odoljeti.²⁴

Nalaz trokrilne strelice u kuli utvrde Kaštio jedini je do sada sigurno datirani primjerak željezne trokrilne strelice u Dalmaciji, k tome nađen u sloju destrukcije (paljevine). Ovo se oružje upotrebljavalo tijekom bizantsko-ostrogotskog rata, ali i u vrijeme slavenskih prodora prema jadranskoj obali.

Zaključna razmatranja

Kasnoantička utvrda Kaštio u Polačama na otoku Mljetu nadzirala je luku u Polačama i dio Mljet-

type of weapon was used during the Byzantine-Ostrogothic war, as well as during Slavic incursions towards the Adriatic coast.

Concluding remarks

The late ancient fortress of Kaštio in Polače on the island of Mljet controlled the harbour in Polače and part of the Mljet channel. The fortress was built on the first elevation above the late ancient palace in Polače. If we were to look for morphological similarities, then the fortress on Mljet can be compared to the hillfort called Bošnjakova gradina in Lovreć near Imotski that has not been published yet. The latter is a late ancient/early medieval fortress that also features a tower at the top, from which ramparts descend down the slope of the elevation. Late ancient fortresses were frequently built on sites of prehistoric fortifications, which made their construction easier due to the abundance of available stone as building material.²⁵ Unlike other fortresses, the fortress of Kaštio was not built on the site of an Illyrian fortress, which meant that a quarry had to be opened for its construction, and a larger quantity of lime had to be produced.²⁶ This required greater construction efforts by the builders, who additionally faced a particular challenge when constructing the ramparts on the northeast slope of the elevation due to the steep terrain. The northwest stretch of the rampart was constructed on a high rocky outcrop, thereby taking advantage of the natural defensive feature of the terrain to create a defensive wall as high as possible. The number of dwellings cannot be determined with certainty, but their remains are visible on the northeast side along the internal face of the rampart, cascading from northeast to southwest in line with the rampart. The fortress had a military purpose and can hardly be imagined as a refuge due to its small size of less than 400 square meters, which would not be able to accommodate a large number of people. In case of danger, the island's population could have successfully taken refuge in the mountainous areas of the island.

²⁵ Basler 1972, p. 47.

²⁶ Fisković believes that stone was extracted on Mljet even in ancient times. He provides specific information about the efforts of the people of Dubrovnik to reduce the import of stone from the Venetian island of Korčula by opening quarries on Mljet in the 16th century, see: Gušić and Fisković 1958, pp. 94-95.

²³ Tojčić 2022, str. 43.

²⁴ Vizantijski izvori 2007, str. 271; Škrivanić 1957, str. 101.

skoga kanala. Utvrda je podignuta na prvoj uzvisini iznad kasnoantičke palače u Polačama. Ako bismo tražili morfološke sličnosti, mljetska utvrda može se usporediti s još neobjavljenom Bošnjakovom gradinom u Lovreću kod Imotskoga. Riječ je o kasnoantičkoj/ranosrednjovjekovnoj utvrdi koja također na vrhu ima kulu od koje se odvajaju bedemi niz padinu uzvisine. Kasnoantičke utvrde često su se gradile na mjestu starih prapovijesnih gradina, što je olakšavalo njihovu izgradnju zbog obilja kamene građe.²⁵ Kaštio nije podignut na mjestu ilirske gradine pa je za njegovu gradnju trebalo otvoriti kamenolom, a također se morala proizvesti veća količina vapna.²⁶ To je zahtijevalo veći građevinski napor graditelja. Gradnja bedema na sjeveroistočnoj padini uzvisine predstavljala je poseban problem zbog strmoga terena. Sjeverozapadni potez bedema izgrađen je na visokom kamenom kuku, pri čemu su iskorištene prirodne defenzivne značajke terena kako bi se dobio što viši obrambeni zid. Sa sigurnošću se ne može utvrditi koliko je bilo nastambi. Njihovi tragovi naziru se na sjeveroistočnoj strani uz unutarnje lice bedema; kaskadno su se pružale od sjeveroistoka prema jugozapadu prateći pravac pružanja bedema. Utvrda je bila vojnoga karaktera. Teško ju je smatrati refugijem jer površinom manjom od oko četrinsto metara četvornih nije mogla primiti veći broj ljudi. Otočno stanovništvo se u slučaju opasnosti uspješno moglo skloniti u brdska području otoka.

Utvrda Kaštio kratkim je putem morala biti povezana s kasnoantičkom palačom i lukom u Polačama kao i s ranokršćanskim crkvama koje su se nalazile u njezinoj blizini. Prostorna povezanost utvrde i palače važna je jer je osim kontrole same uvale imala ulogu zaštite vlasnika i korisnika palače. Naime, iako je palača imala visoke kule i utvrđeno pročelje prema luci, na velikoj bočnoj prostoriji sa sjeverozapadne strane postojali su široki gljivasti prozori. Oni su bitno umanjivali defenzivni karakter palače. Očito da je ona zapravo imala „pseudo-vojni“ karakter. Utvrđenim pročeljem s dvije velike poligonale kule okrenute prema uvali palača je „glumila“ moćniji obrambeni objekt nego što je

The Kaštio fortress needed a short path to connect it to the late ancient palace and harbour in Polače, as well as the nearby early Christian churches. This spatial connection was crucial because, in addition to controlling the bay, it also provided protection for the owners and users of the palace. Despite the palace's high towers and fortified facade facing the harbour, its defensive character was significantly diminished by the wide mushroom-shaped windows on the large side room on the northwest side. The palace had a 'pseudo-military' character. With its fortified facade featuring two large polygonal towers facing the bay, it only pretended to be a more powerful defensive structure that it truly was. The fortress was vulnerable to enemy attacks through the afore-mentioned openings. It had a residential character, while the true military protection of the palace's resident was provided by the Kaštio fortress above it. However, we cannot entirely negate its defensive role, especially due to the powerful towers.

The discovery of the debris and ash layer inside the tower and the find of the trilobate arrowhead suggest that the fortress was destroyed during the 7th century. Similar arrowheads with tangs for the attachment to the shaft, which could also be attributed to the 7th century, were discovered in the northern rampart of the late ancient fortress in Vrbljani on the Sana River near Ključ in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These were likely the weapons of the attackers. Ivo Bojanovski attributes them to Avaro-Slavic incursions.²⁷ The Vrbljani fortress was located far from Salona, Scardona and Burnum, where the Ostrogothic-Byzantine war took place in the 6th century.²⁸ Therefore, Ivo Bojanovski's dating, who places the arrowheads at the end of the 6th or beginning of the 7th century, is acceptable. Additionally, the find of a trilobate arrowhead in the early Christian church in Klobuk near Ljubuški could belong to the same period.²⁹

No matter how exaggerated it might seem to attribute every trilobate arrowhead to the Avars or Avaro-Slavic incursions, the specimens of arrowheads from Vrbljani and the trilobate arrowhead from the Kaštio fortress on the island of Mljet indicate their use during the 7th century. Therefore, it cannot

²⁵ Basler 1972, str. 47.

²⁶ Fisković smatra da se još u antičko doba vadio kamen na Mljetu. Donosi konkretne podatke o nastojanju Dubrovčana da smanje uvoz kamena s mletačke Korčule otvarajući u 16. stoljeću kamenolome na Mljetu, vidi: Gušić i Fisković 1958, str. 94-95.

²⁷ Bojanovski 1976, pp. 246-248.

²⁸ J. Medini 1980, pp. 400-409.

²⁹ Sergejevski 1954, pp. 198-199, p. 207, fig. 2b.; Bojanovski 1976, p. 248.

to uistinu bila. Neprijatelj je kroz navedene otvore mogao lako prodrijeti u nju. Imala je rezidencijalni karakter, a pravu vojnu zaštitu njezini korisnici nalazili su u utvrđi Kaštio. Ipak, u cijelosti ne možemo negirati njezinu defenzivnu ulogu, posebno zbog moćnih kula.

Sloj paljevine u kuli i trokrilna strelica nađena u njemu upućuju na destrukciju utvrde tijekom 7. stoljeća. Slične strelice s trnom za nasad koje bismo mogli također pripisati 7. stoljeću nađene su u sjevernom bedemu kasnoantičke utvrde u Vrbljanima na rijeci Sani u blizini Ključa u BiH. Očito su bile oružje napadača. Ivo Bojanovski pripisuje ih avaroslavenskim upadima.²⁷ Utvrda Vrbljani bila je daleko od Salone, Skardone i Burnuma, oko kojih se u 6. stoljeću odvijao ostrogotsko-bizantski rat.²⁸ Stoga možemo prihvatiti dataciju Ive Bojanovskog koji strelice smješta u kraj 6. ili početak 7. stoljeća. Također, nalaz trokrilne strelice u ranokršćanskoj crkvi u Klobuku kod Ljubuškoga može pripadati istom razdoblju.²⁹

Koliko god se pretjerivalo u pripisivanju svake trokrilne strelice Avarima, odnosno avaroslavenskim prodorima, primjerci vrhova strelica iz Vrbljana i trokrilna strelica iz utvrde Kaštio na otoku Mljetu upućuju na njihovo korištenje tijekom 7. stoljeća. Zato se ne može reći da je Bojanovski donio pogrešan zaključak o nalazima koje je obrađivao.

Arheološki kontekst nalaza u bedemu utvrde (Vrbljani) i sloju destrukcije (Kaštio) ne može se zanemariti. Široka prostorna i vremenska pojava ovoga ubojitog oružja upućuje na oprez pri njegovu datiranju i interpretaciji, što pokazuje i Tojčićeva spomenuta analiza. U slučaju utvrde Kaštio na Mljetu sloj paljevine ujedno je značio i kraj egzistencije objekta, strelica pak upućuje na zaključak da je kraju prethodio nekakav napad. O čemu se radilo?

Nedavno sam upozorio na sloj destrukcije iz 8. stoljeća koji se manifestira na više lokaliteta otoka Hvara. Zadnja istraživanja na kasnoantičkoj utvrđi Galešniku potvrdila su gorenje stambenoga objekta. I tu su radiokarbonski datumi pomogli pri određivanju kraja egzistencije utvrde. U Farosu (Stari Grad na otoku Hvaru) uništena je dvojna ranokršćanska crkva. Destrukcija iz 8. stoljeća konstatirana

be said that Bojanovski drew a wrong conclusion about the findings he analysed.

The archaeological context of the finds in the rampart of the fortress at Vrbljani and the destruction layer at Kaštio cannot be ignored. The broad spatial and temporal occurrence of this lethal weapon calls for caution in its dating and interpretation, as Tojčić's mentioned analysis also shows. In the case of the Kaštio fortress on Mljet, the layer of debris signified the end of the structure's existence, while the arrowhead suggests that some kind of attack preceded this end. The question remains: what was it?

I recently pointed out that there are several sites on the island of Hvar that exhibit a destruction layer from the 8th century. The latest research on the late ancient fortress Galešnik confirmed the burning of the residential building. Carbon dating helped determine the end of the fortress's existence. In Pharos (Stari Grad on the island of Hvar), a twin early Christian church was destroyed. Similarly, destruction from the 8th century was also recorded in the 1990s in the town of Hvar.³⁰ I must again refer to the information from the work *De administrando imperio* by the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who had written about the islands of Mljet, Korčula, Brač and Hvar in the 10th century, where he also mentioned deserted towns on these islands.³¹ Hvar, which had two urban centres: Pharos (Stari Grad), Lisina (the town of Hvar), and the late ancient fortress (Galešnik above Jelsa with Gradina on the coast), truly fit the description. The Kaštio fortress on Mljet, along with the palace and churches, also resembled the "ruins of a town". The data from *De administrando imperio* is relevant and corresponds to historical events on the mentioned islands in the Early Middle Ages. In late antiquity, the island of Hvar experienced a flourishing. With its urban centres Pharos and Lisina, as well as with the fortresses, one of which had to be on the eastern part of the island in Sućuraj, then Galešnik and Gradina on the peninsula in Jelsa, it could defend itself more efficiently against attacks. However, the island's downfall eventually occurred somewhere in the 8th century.

The palace's luxurious and residential character may have contributed to an earlier attack on Mljet, already in the 7th century, as it promised good loot.

²⁷ Bojanovski 1976, str. 246-248.

²⁸ J. Medini 1980, str. 400-409.

²⁹ Sergejevski 1954, str. 198-199, str. 207, sl. 2b; Bojanovski 1976, str. 248.

³⁰ Katić 2021, pp. 148-150.

³¹ Vizantijski izvori (Byzantine sources) 2007, p. 35.

rana je devedesetih godina prošloga stoljeća i u gradu Hvaru.³⁰ Ponovno se moram pozvati na podatak iz djela *De administrando imperio* bizantskog cara Konstantina Porfirogeneta. On u 10. stoljeću piše o otocima Mljetu, Korčuli, Braču i Hvaru na kojima se nalaze opustjeli gradovi.³¹ Hvar, koji je imao dvije urbane cjeline: Faros (Stari Grad), Lisinu (grad Hvar) i kasnoantičku utvrdu (Galešnik iznad Jelse s Gradinom na obali), uistinu je odavao opisanu sliku. Utvrda Kaštio na Mljetu s palačom i crkvama također je izgledala poput „ruševine grada“. Podatak iz DAI relevantan je i odgovora povijesnim događajima na navedenim otocima u ranom srednjem vijeku. Otok Hvar u kasnoj antici doživio je procvat. Sa svojim urbanim središtima Farosom i Lisinom, utverdama od kojih je jedna morala biti na istočnom dijelu otoka u Sućurju, zatim Galešnikom i Gradinom na poluotoku u Jelsi, mogao se efikasnije obraniti od napada. Zato je kasnije, negdje u 8. stoljeću, došlo do propasti otoka.

Ranijem napadu na Mljet, već u 7. stoljeću, pridonio je luksuzni i rezidencijalni karakter palače koji je obećavao dobar plijen. Mljet je postao pljačkaškim ciljem nove slavenske populacije koja se potrudila nekako doprijeti preko Mljetskoga kanala na otok i opljačkati ga.³² Preko puta otoka, u Stonu (*Stagnum*), na mjestu kasnoantičke utvrde na uzvisini Gradac - Sv. Mihailo, formirat će se rano-srednjovjekovno središte. Ston je primjer kontinuiteta upotrebe kasnoantičke utvrde koja postaje novo srednjovjekovno središte. Utvrda Kaštio na otoku Mljetu nije nastavila živjeti jer je njezina uloga bila određena kasnoantičkom palačom i pomorskim vezama koje su postale ugrožene tijekom 7. - 8. stoljeća.

Mljet became a plundering target for the new Slavic population that somehow managed to reach the island via the Mljet channel and plunder it.³² Across the island, precisely in Ston (*Stagnum*), on the site of the late ancient fortress on the elevation Gradac - St. Michael, an early medieval centre was established. Ston exemplifies the continuity of use of a late ancient fortress that evolved into a new medieval centre. Conversely, the fortress of Kaštio on the island of Mljet did not continue to exist because its role was determined by the late ancient palace and maritime connections that became endangered during the 7th -8th centuries.

³⁰ Katić 2021, str. 148-150.

³¹ Vizantijski izvori 2007, str. 35.

³² Branimir Gušić bilježi mljetsku legendu o sukobu kralja Dešina i duke Remina. Kralj Dešin stolovao je na Gracu nad Ivanjim poljem, a duka Remin držao je Bijed. Stalno su ratovali. Gušić s velikim oprezom ovu legendu vezuje uz bitku Slavena i Romana (Gušić i Fisković 1958, str. 10-11). Valja napomenuti da slična legenda o zaraćenim vladarima postoji na otoku Hvaru; jedan je vladao Galešnikom, a drugi Gradinom u Jelsi (Boglić 1873, str. 126). Čini se da je blizina prastarih utvrda poticala nastanak sličnih legendi o zaraćenim gradovima i vladarima.

³² Branimir Gušić tells us about the legend from Mljet about the conflict between King Dešin and Duke Remin. King Dešin resided on Grac above Ivanje Polje, and Duke Remin held Bijed. They were constantly at war. Gušić cautiously connects this legend with the battle between the Slavs and the Romans (Gušić and Fisković 1958, pp. 10-11). It is worth noting that a similar legend about warring rulers exists on the island of Hvar; one ruled Galešnik, and the other ruled Gradina in Jelsa (Boglić 1873, p. 126). The proximity of ancient forts seems to have inspired the emergence of similar legends about warring cities and rulers.

Literatura / Bibliography

Alberti 1997

A. Alberti, Produzione e commercializzazione della pietra ollare in Italia settentrionale tra tardoantico e altomedioevo, u/in: S. Gelichi (ur./ed.) *I Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Medievale* (Pisa 29-31 maggio 1997), Firenze 1997, 335-339.

Basler 1972

Đ. Basler, *Arhitektura kasnoantičkog doba u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevo 1972.

Begović – Dvoržak 2003

V. Begović – Dvoržak, Plovni put prema Neretvi i Naroni – kasnoantički lokaliteti na otoku Mljetu, u/ in: E. Marin (ur./ed.) *Izdanja Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, vol. 22, Zagreb 2003, 289-303.

Boglić 1873

G. Boglić, *Studi storici sull' isola di Lesina*, Zara, 1873.

Bojanovski 1976

I. Bojanovski, Ranosrednjovjekovno utvrđenje u Vrbljanima na Sani, *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu*, N. S., sv. XXIX, (1974), Sarajevo 1976, 246-258.

Brusić 1991

Z. Brusić, Nalaz posuda od niskometamorfne stijene na otočiću Frmić kod Biograda i značenje ovog otočića u režimu plovidbe Pašmanskim kanalom, *Diadora*, sv. 13, Zadar 1991, 225-240.

Buzov 2012

M. Buzov, Is Mljet – Melita in Dalmatia the island of St.Pauls shipwreck?, *Histria Antiqua*, 21, Pula 2012, 491-505.

Dabelić 1987

I. Dabelić, *Mljet, povijest otoka od najstarijeg vremena do XV stoljeća*, Dubrovnik 1987.

Fisković 1980

C. Fisković, O ranokršćanskim spomenicima narodninskog područja, Dolina rijeke Neretve od prethistorije do ranog srednjeg vijeka, u/in: Ž. Rapanić (ur./ed.) *Izdanja Hrvatskog arheološkog društva*, sv. 5, Split 1980, 213-256.

Fisković 1999

I. Fisković, Jesu li Polače na Mljetu bile sijelo vladara Dalmacije?, *Prilozi Instituta za arheologiju u Zagrebu*, sv. 13.-14. (1996 -1997.), Zagreb 1999, str. 61-82.

Gušić 1931

B. Gušić, Mljet, *Narodna starina*, sv. 26, Zagreb 1931, 155-230.

Gušić, Fisković 1958

B. Gušić, C. Fisković, *Otok Mljet - naš novi nacionalni park*, Zagreb 1958.

Hebib 2018

M. Hebib, Položaj i značaj otoka Mljeta u razdoblju rimske uprave, *Acta Illyrica*, Godišnjak udruženja Bathinus, godina II, br. 2, Sarajevo 2018, 41-60.

Katić 2018

M. Katić, Castella qui sunt super civitatem Salonitanam, *Vjesnik za arheologiju i historiju dalmatinsku*, 111, Split 2018, 245-279.

Katić 2021

M. Katić, Kasnoantička utvrda Galešnik iznad Jel-se, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, s. III, 48, Split 2021, 125-159.

Marini 1806

G. Marini, *I papiri diplomatici*, Roma 1806.

Medini 1980

J. Medini, Provincia Liburnia, *Diadora*, sv. 9, Zadar 1980,363-444.

Nikolajević 1971

I. Nikolajević, Veliki posed u Dalmaciji u V i VI veku u svetlosti arheoloških nalaza, *Zbornik radova vizantološkog instituta*, knj. XIII, Beograd 1971, 277-292.

Peković 2020

Ž. Peković, The Late Antique Imperial Palace in Polače on the Island of Mljet, u / in: I. Josipović, M. Jurković, *Aspice hunc opus mirum, Zbornik povodom sedamdesetog rođendana Nikole Jakšića*, Zadar-Zagreb-Motovun 2020, 103-120.

Suić 1955

M. Suić, Istočna jadranska obala u Pseudo Skilakovu Periplu, *Rad jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, knj. 306, Zagreb 1955, 121-186.

Škrivanić 1957

G. A. Škrivanić, *Oružje u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji, Bosni i Dubrovniku*, Srpska akademija nauka, Beograd 1957.

Tojčić 2022

D. Tojčić, O posebnom tipu trokrilne strelice, s posebnim osvrtom na rimsku provinciju Dalmaciju, *Starohrvatska prosvjeta*, s. III, 49, Split 2022, 7-65.

Turković 2011

T. Turković, The Late Antique „Palace“ in Polače Bay (Mljet) – Tetrarhic „Palace“? *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, vol. 17, Zagreb – Motovun 2011, 211-233.

Vizantijski izvori 2007

Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije, Tom II, Beograd 2007.

Volfram 2016

H. Volfram, *Istorija Gota*, Podgorica 2016.

Zaninović 1990

M. Zaninović, Liberov hram u Polačama na otoku Mljetu, *Arheološki vestnik*, 41, Ljubljana 1990, 725-732.

