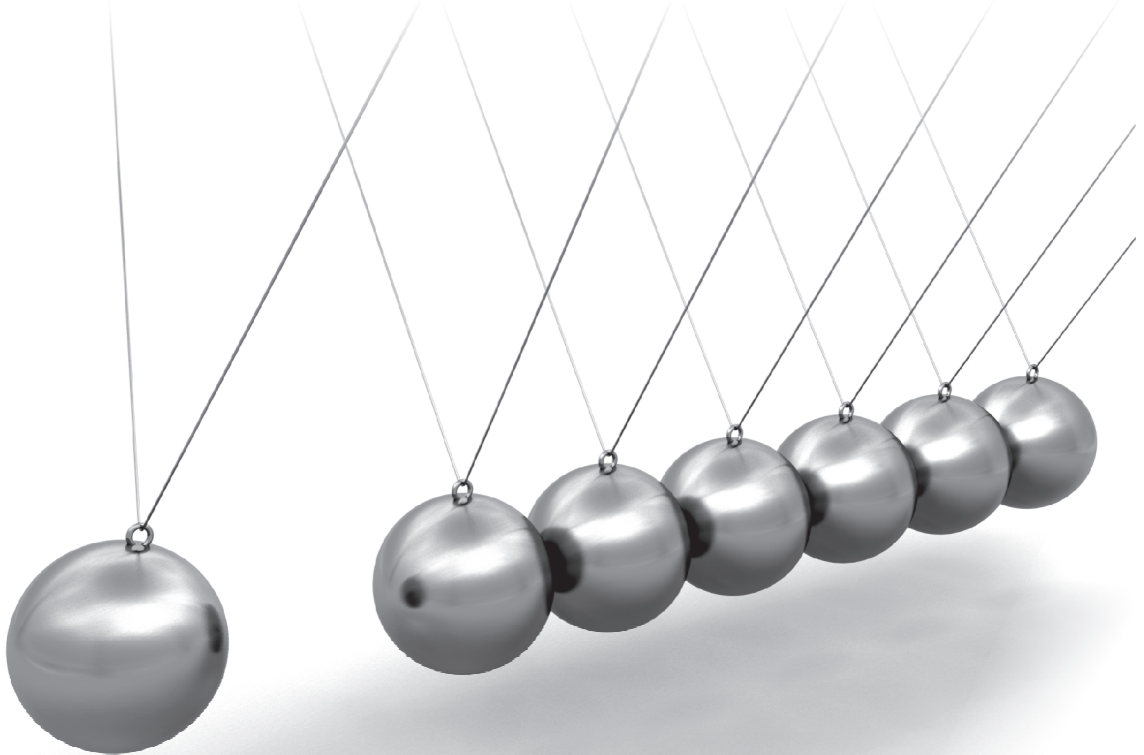


HUMANS AND SOCIETY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

# Archaeology of Crisis

Edited by Staša Babić



1838

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE  
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY



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**A**rchaeology  
of Crisis

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

In December 2019, a previously unknown coronavirus was registered and the severe and potentially fatal illness it causes swiftly spread around the world. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organisation declared a state of Public Health Emergency, followed by the declaration of a pandemic on March 11 of the same year.<sup>1</sup> More than a year later, while this volume is submitted for publication, the world is still struggling with a plethora of severe problems initiated by, but by no means reduced to, the medical aspects of the current crisis. The disturbances in the economic and social activities further induce profound distress in everyday lives around the globe. Depending on the current state of the epidemic curve, we are advised to observe more or less rigorous measures of caution, most of them limiting our movements and contacts. While maintaining distance in the real world, we are connected virtually, various technologies enabling us to compare experiences of restricted interactions. One can thus get a glimpse of the diverse ways in which people around the world make sense of their changed worlds. Many express their thoughts in words, but some use other means. Like, a photo series that invites us to choose and arrange objects that are essential to us under the current predicament.<sup>2</sup> The similarities in created assemblages (an assortment of face masks, hand sanitizers, laptop computers, comfort food, books...), as well as idiosyncratic objects reflecting particular lifestyles (dog leash, musical instruments...), illustrate eloquently what archaeologists know so well: our lives are framed in materialities that shape and are being shaped by our practices. Under the drastically changed circumstances, such as the ones we are currently enduring, our relationship with our material surroundings also changes, creating new possibilities and constraints to our practices. Our present experiences are not unique and throughout the history of our species, human groups have faced various crises, caused by a wide range of factors. From massive changes in their environment, population movements and violent conflicts, to profound shifts in attitudes, beliefs and value systems, these events have caused disruptions in everyday practices of communities and have invariably been reflected in some material form.

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1 <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

2 <https://www.collater.al/en/paula-zuccotti-lockdown-essentials-photography/>

Bearing this in mind, the purpose of this collection is to investigate some of the instances of crises that afflicted past populations of the Central Balkans and adjacent regions, via the material traces accessible through archaeological investigation. The knowledge of the causes of disruptions and of the responses devised for overcoming them in the past may bring us closer to solutions applicable in our present. At the same time, the aim of the volume is to offer an insight into the vast range of approaches currently practiced by archaeologists, their possibilities and limitations, as well as synergies created in the domains of theoretical concepts and methodological procedures. The authors share the same working environment – the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, and specifically its Department of Archaeology – but follow diverse research paths, illustrating the current state of the discipline in general, its many theoretical and methodological ramifications. It is our hope that our specific disciplinary knowledge of the past may contribute to more efficient responses to crises in the present and future.

Belgrade, May/June 2021

Staša Babić

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Perica N. Špehar\*

## NORTHERN ILLYRICUM IN LATE ANTIQUITY: ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTIMONIES OF ECONOMY IN CRISIS

**Abstract:** Hunic raids in the Northern Illyricum during the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century resulted in destructions that led to the temporary collapse of the administrative and military government, and to the crisis of the economy. It was primarily caused by the cease of organized mining and the abandonment of *villae rusticae*. The reestablishing of the centralized rule was aggravated by depopulation, as well as by the consequences of various natural disasters. Because of that, cities were ruralized, the defense of limes weakened, and vertical migrations occurred. This paper is aimed at the study of economic changes based on the research of archaeological evidences. Those changes implied the new way of cultivating land and the increased role of cattle husbandry. Crafting activities were aimed at satisfying the needs of the local community, primarily by processing leather, wool, bones, and horns, while metal processing is mostly testified in urban centres.

**Keywords:** Late Antiquity, Northern Illyricum, early Byzantine period, economy, vertical migrations, tool hoards

### Introduction

The arrival of the Huns in Europe resulted in the Great Migrations, due to which the northern borders of the Roman Empire in the Balkans were under almost constant pressure, while newly arrived peoples and tribes inhabited some of its liminal territories. Their settling took place whether without or with the permission of the emperor, who in that case turned recent enemies into allies – *foederati*. The attempt of pacification did not give the expected result. In 378, during the Battle of Hadrianapolis, the emperor Valens (364–378) died in the war with the Goths (*Amm. Marc. XXXI/XIII/12–17*). This event forced the Roman administration to change its attitude towards the *foederati*. During the reign of Theodosius I

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(379–395) their role in the defense of the northern borders gained exceptional importance. The presence of *foederati* in the border fortifications of the Northern Illyricum,<sup>1</sup> the territory of which mostly coincides with the present-day Central Balkans, is testified by the corresponding archaeological material (Ivanišević & Kazanski, 2002; Ivanišević, Kazanski, & Mastikova, 2006; Ivanišević & Kazanski, 2009; Špehar, P., 2012). The measures that were taken enabled the eastern part of the Roman Empire to have a short break, although during the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century it experienced very grave destruction. In the series of Hunic raids, numerous urban centres and fortifications on the Balkans were ruined, among them Sirmium, Margum, Viminacium, and Naissus in the Northern Illyricum (*Prisci Fragmenta* 1, 1b, 2, 7–8; Lemerle, 1954, pp. 279–280). Mentioned raids led to the temporary break of administrative, military, and Church organization, as well as to the economic crisis. *Renovatio imperii* began in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of Anastasius I (491–518). The overall situation during the following little more than a century, defined as the early Byzantine period, and primarily during the reign of Justinian I (527–565), differed drastically in every aspect. Although seemingly peaceful, this is the period marked by numerous natural disasters and pestilence that influenced economy. This work aims at the study of economic changes during that time, their comparison to what preceded, as well as to their consequences, based on archaeological evidences and written accounts.

## Economy in Northern Illyricum Before the Hunic Raids

The Central Balkans was the region wherefrom primarily soldiers were recruited and ores exploited, although agriculture also played an important role in the local economy. The predominantly mountainous character of this part of the Balkan Peninsula was the precondition for the development of mining and cattle breeding, while plains in the Danubian region and along the river valleys that intersected mountain massifs, enabled agriculture (Breyer, 2002; Geyer, 2002, p. 32; Laiou, 2002, p. 47; Bavant, 2004, p. 329). Natural resources provide conditions for the development of the economy which, according to a 4<sup>th</sup>-century historical source, was at such a high level that provinces of Moesia and Dacia were able to provide, on their own, all the necessary products for the existence of the local population as well as for the troops deployed in those provinces. Yet, it is interesting to emphasize that the same source named Naissus the only city worth mentioning (*Exposito*, 57).

1 About the borders of the Northern Illyricum cf. Максимовић, 1980, p. 19.

Shortly after the establishment of Roman rule over this territory, ore exploitation was organized in several mining areas, some of which even minted their own coins. Ore mining took place in large mines that, with rare exceptions, were the property of the emperor. Rich deposits, primarily of iron and silver, were the reason why Romans called the province of Upper Moesia by the name of *terra metalica* (Dušanić, 1977). Along with the establishment of the Roman administration, the founding of urban centres took place. They flourished during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> century, especially Sirmium, Viminacium, and Naissus (Mirković, 1968). The most illustrative example is Sirmium, which was *sedes imperii* during the tetrarchic period, and later the seat of the prefecture of Illyricum and a very important bishopric seat (Mirković, 2008; Jeremić, M. 2016; IIIexap, O. 2019, pp. 67–73 with older literature). To provide necessary food, primarily for the local population and the army, large agricultural properties (*villae rusticae*) were established. Such properties can also be found in Mačva and Kosovo, namely in all the areas with fertile soil. It is interesting to mention that the archaeological remains of *villa rusticae* were discovered in mining areas (Vasić, 1970; Mirković, 1996, pp. 58–63; Mulvin, 2002; Jovičić, 2011).

A more precise insight into the structure of Roman agriculture in Northern Illyricum before the Hunic raids, is enabled by a small number of paleo-botanical analyses. The available data suggest that intensive agriculture on large estates was based on the production of several types of grain, various vegetables, several types of fruits (apple, pear, cherry), as well as on viticulture (Henning, 1987, pp. 99–107). Valuable data about cattle breeding were gained by the analysis of animal remains. It can be noticed that Romans brought new, larger sorts of domestic animals to the conquered territories. These new species had more meat, produced more milk, wool, leather, eggs, etc. On agricultural properties, large cattle were primarily bred, which made up for about 30% of all the domestic animals, although in some cases it made up to 65%. Horses constituted up to 25% of the analyzed sample, while the remaining percentage constituted sheep, goats, pigs, and various kinds of poultry. Although among analyzed samples from different sites there are no larger deviations, it can be observed that large cattle was predominant in plains, while in mountainous regions small cattle was bred more often. Some deviations can be observed when comparing urban and rural areas. Namely, in the cities, the meat of the large cattle and pigs was consumed more often, while in the villages it was the meat of small cattle (Henning, 1987, pp. 102–105, Abb. 49; Vuković, 2020, pp. 132–134).

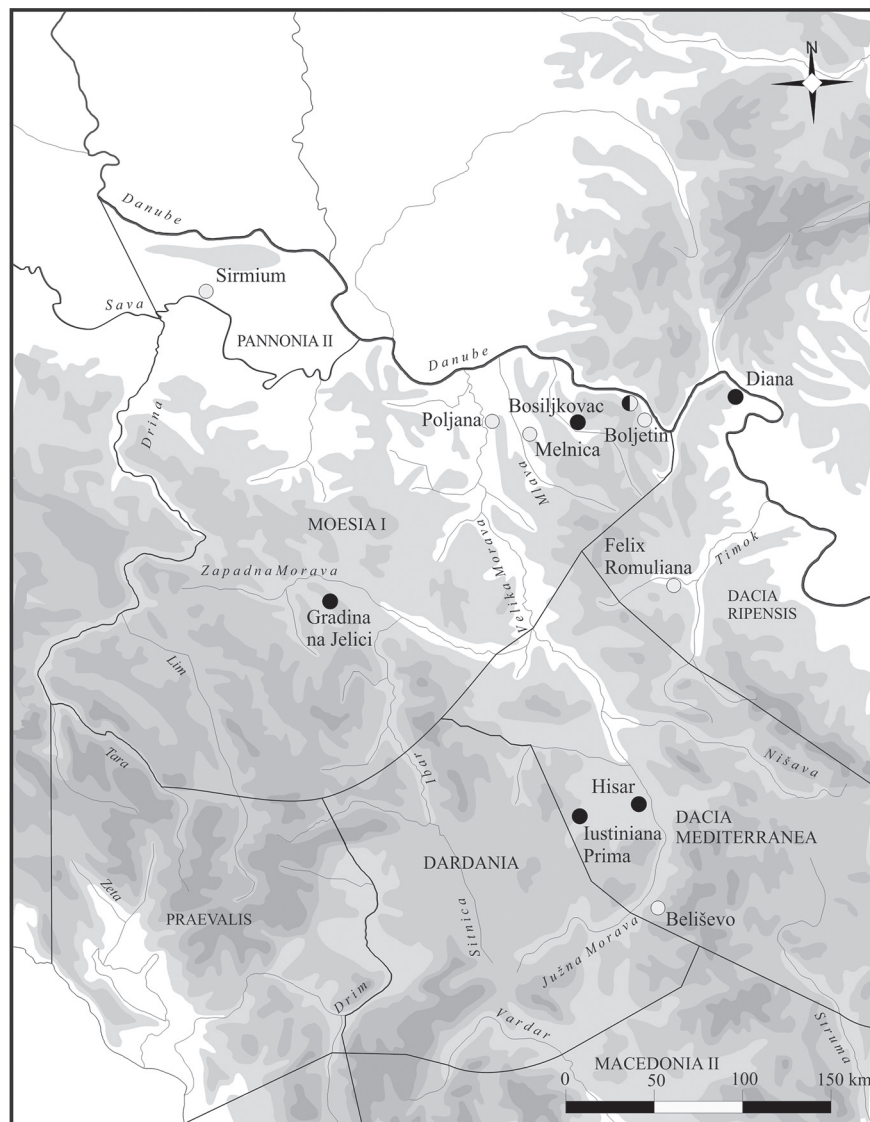
Although the Roman provinces on the Central Balkans flourished in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, the breakthrough of enemy tribes caused a temporary crisis that forced the local population to seek salvation by moving from the plains to higher zones more difficult to access. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup>

and the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century this process can be observed on several forts in present-day southwestern Serbia (Špehar, P. 2008a, p. 590 with said literature). Frequent attacks caused several cities to be depopulated, ruralized, and disintegrated (Поповић, В. 2003, pp. 239, 245). It is best illustrated by the fact that, by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the great hippodrome in Sirmium lost its original purpose. Namely, one part of this formerly representative building was turned into a landfill, while in the remaining part the settlement was formed with simple houses. Someone of the inhabitants buried the tool hoard within the hippodrome. It consisted of five iron hoes dated to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries (Eadie, 1971, p. 70). According to the epigraphic sources, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century the ore exploiting ceased (Dušanić, 1977; Dušanić, 2000, p. 346; Dušanić, 2010, pp. 536, 551–552, 557). Similar is suggested by archaeological excavations. For example, it is ascertained that the mining complex on the site Kraku Lu` Yordan, on the territory of the mining area of *Aeliana Pincensia*, was burned down at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, after which it was never restored (Bartel, Kondić & Werner, 1979). The same happened to the large agricultural estates that were never restored after the demolition and abandonment.

## Hunic Raids and the Consequences

The already mentioned Hunic raids in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century led to the temporary collapse of administrative, military, and Church organizations. To the intensity of the catastrophe that befell the North Illyricum best testifies one description of Naissus, written several years after the Hunic attack on the city by the historian and diplomat Priscus. He was a member of a Byzantine diplomatic mission that traveled to the Hunic capital in the Pannonian Plain. During their trip, they spend the night in the destroyed, burned down, and desolated city of Naissus. On that occasion, they saw sick people in the ruined churches, who stayed there because of their illness. On the river banks still lied the bodies of killed warriors, because there was no one to bury them for years (*Prisci Fragmenta* 8, 291, 9–15; Špehar, O., 2015, p. 8 with older literature). The success of Hunic raids was enormous, so their commander Attila (434–453) dared to demand from the Roman Empire to move its border from the Danube toward the south, all the way to Naissus (*Prisci Fragmenta* 7, 286, 31–287, 7).

Except for historical sources and archaeologically detected traces of demolition on numerous sites, to the degree of the destructions testify the discovered hoards (Fig. 1). Namely, in those turbulent times, from the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, these tool hoards were buried as the most valuable possession of the inhabitants of the Northern Il-



○ Hoards from the end of the 4th/middle of the 5th century

● Hoards from the 6th century

**Figure 1.** Sites with tool hoards (map drawn by P. Špehar)

lyricum. Besides the already mentioned hoard from Sirmium, the hoard from Felix Romuliana belongs to the same horizon (Лаловић, 1987). Yet the most numerous are the hoards from Danubian fortifications, for ex-

ample, five of them from *Smorna/Boljetin* (Зотовић, 1984; Поповић, И. 1988, p. 252) and two from *Saldum* (Поповић, И. 1988, p. 253; Jeremić, G. 2009, pp. 9–16, 164–168). In the hinterland of the Central Balkans, tool hoards were discovered in the wider area around Požarevac, in villages Poljane (Шпехар & Јаџановић, 2015) and Melnica (Живковић & Арсенијевић, 2007), as well as in the vicinity of Vranje in the Nastavce village (Булатовић & Митровић, 1997, p. 35). Judging by their structure, the mentioned hoards testify that the most frequent type of production before the Hunic raids was agriculture, while the discovered plows suggest intensive tillage. Other types of buried tools testify to wood and metal processing.

Although the consequences of the Hunic raids were grave, monetary circulation restored soon afterward (Ivanišević, 2010, pp. 441–442; Ivanišević & Stamenković, 2011), which suggests the reestablishment of some form of centralized rule in the area in question. Still, that process was slow, since we have only a small amount of archaeological finds that testify to the Byzantine presence in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, although finds typical for the Germanic population are more numerous. The presence of the Ostrogoths in the Balkans aggravated to a significant extent the reestablishment of the northern border on the Danube. In 488, at the persuasion of the emperor Zeno (474–475, 476–491), the Ostrogoths went to Italy and founded their kingdom there. It was only after this event that the conditions for a more intense restoration of Roman rule were enabled.

## Economy of Northern Illyricum during the Early Byzantine Period

Anastasius I conducted economical reforms that enabled the filling of the imperial treasury. During his reign the *renovatio imperii* began (Велков, 1984), which had its culmination during the reign of Justinian I. As we are informed by Procopius (*De aedificiis*), the successful military actions were followed by intensive building activities, primarily aimed at the restoration of the old and the erection of new cities, forts, and settlements. *Renovatio imperii* was also aggravated by natural disasters since numerous earthquakes of various intensities occurred in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Some of them, like the one of 518, had catastrophic consequences. Ancient Scupi was completely ruined in this disaster (Guidoboni, 1994, pp. 309–349), never to be restored, since its inhabitants abandoned it. Two more large-scale catastrophes made a mark on the



30s and 40s of the same century. Namely, it was established that a large eruption, most probably of one of the volcanoes on Iceland, happened in 536. This conclusion was conducted by the comparative analysis of the ice deposits and data in written historical sources. The amount of ashes ejected on that occasion inhibited the usual amount of sunlight and warmth, which led to considerable cooling during the following ten years. It appears that five years later another eruption happened. Written sources state that agricultural yields in Thrace and Illyricum in 536 significantly decreased, but this information was up to now tied only to the incapable administration, and never to the mentioned weather changes. On the other hand, on the territory of Egypt this catastrophe seems to have had no larger influence, since there are no mentions of any problems in harvesting. Since the study of this phenomenon is still going on, the latitude to which the consequences of the eruptions are felt is not definitely established (Arjava, 2005). Along with the mentioned cooling, there was a plague outbreak in 541, which, according to some sources, resulted in the deaths of 40% of Constantinopolitan inhabitants during the following two years (Geyer, 2002, pp. 40–41; Laiou, 2002, p. 49).

Such were the conditions during the period when the restoration of imperial control over the North Illyricum took place. Because of numerous wars during the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, the fertile land was desolated while *villae rusticae* ceased to function. This was the reason why people sought refuge within city walls. The cities therefore turned into ruralized, well-defended settlements, in literature often referred to as the “secondary urban centres” (Поповић, В. 2003, p. 239; Morrisson & Sodini 2002, pp. 177–179). The most eloquent testimonies to the mentioned process of ruralization are the written data about the Avar captivation of Singidunum in 584 (*Theoph. Sim. hist.*, I/3–4). Theophylact Simocatta informs us that, during the Avar attack, the inhabitants of the city were engaged in agricultural activities on the fields in the vicinity of the fortification. Along with the disintegration of the cities, the so called vertical migration intensively occurred, which implied that people moved from plains to higher positions difficult to access and founded numerous small fortified villages there. This was the completion of the process of relocation of people from the plains to a higher altitude, which began sporadically during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century (Bavant, 2004, p. 327; Špehar, 2008a, p. 590; Милинковић, 2015, pp. 258–263).

According to available archaeological testimonies, the functioning of a city during the 6<sup>th</sup> century can be observed on one example in the Northern Illyricum, that of Justinian I's foundation of Justiniana Prima erected in the vicinity of the place of the emperor's birth (Кондић & Поповић,

1977; Ivanišević, 2011; Иванишевић, 2012a). Within the fortified city, that had the role of archbishopric with the jurisdiction over the Northern Illyricum, churches, profane buildings, an aqueduct, and a dam were discovered as well as numerous small finds, including tools and utensils. Earlier researchers stated that several tool hoards were discovered within the buildings around the circular forum (Поповић, И. 1988, p. 253), although according to B. Bavant and V. Ivanišević there is no sufficient proof that those were indeed hoards.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding, the mentioned tools most certainly are important finds discovered in an unlikely place, in the very heart of the city. Based on recently published small finds from the earlier excavations of Justiniana Prima, a significant amount of tools and utensils was discovered within the city walls (Bavant & Ivanišević, 2019). They suggest that agriculture had an important role in the economy of the city. The most specific find are probably the plows, which indicate intensive crop farming. The inhabitants of this city were also engaged in cattle farming, as well as fishing in the artificial lake in the vicinity of the city walls. Since Justiniana Prima was above all an urban centre, the discovered tools also testify to diverse crafts, including food, wool, leather, wood, bone, stone, and metal processing.

Similar agricultural activities can be observed at the site Gradina, likewise an *ex novo* 6<sup>th</sup>-century settlement, which was a regional, administrative, and church centre founded on the slopes of the Jelica mountain near Čačak (Миљинковић, 2010). The analysis of finds collected until 2014 shows that the predominating tools are those for wool and wood processing, followed by agricultural tools and those intended for leather processing, while metal processing and fishings tools are significantly less frequent (Миљинковић, 2015, pp. 270–276, Tab. 1, Graphics 1–8). On Gradina, which ceased existing at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, two tool hoards discovered in the horizon of destruction in Basilica C testify about turbulent times (Миљинковић 2010, pp. 152–157). Although numerous, fortified villages with some form of government (Шпехар, П. 2019, p. 335) were much less excavated, but one still observes that agricultural tools predominate (Шпехар, П. 2014, p. 73), which is also testified by a tool hoard from the Hisar site, on the territory of the modern city of Leskovac.<sup>3</sup>

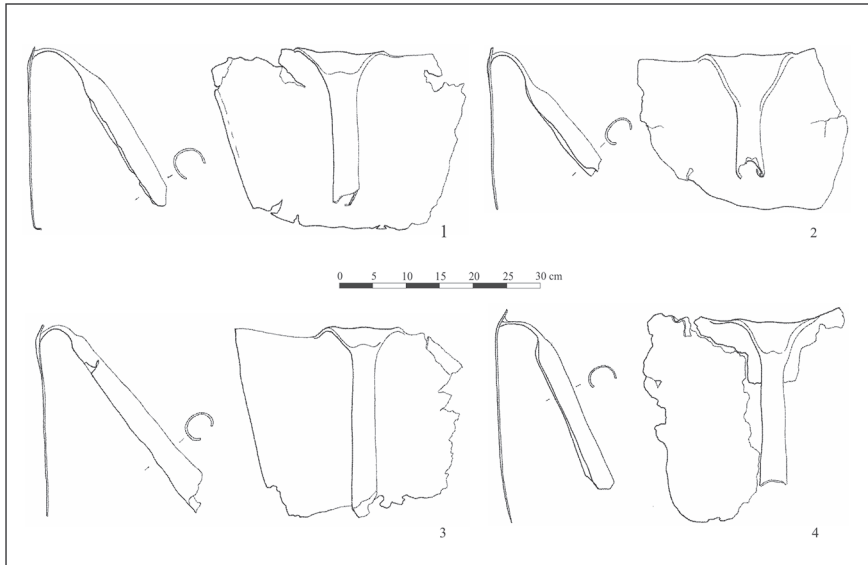
In the fortresses on the *limes* significant changes can be detected, primarily in military organization and the manner of defending the limes, which was the consequence of depopulation (Špehar, P. 2010, p.

2 Information was acquired in conversation.

3 Information was acquired in conversation, by the courtesy of J. Pešić, the museum counselor at the National Museum in Leskovac.

147), as well the fact that during the 6<sup>th</sup> century *foederati* were not situated in every fortress on the limes, but primarily in the vicinity of large urban centres, such as Singidunum and Viminacium (Ivanišević, 2016, pp. 91–93). Supplying garrisons with the necessary provision caused grave problems for the Roman Empire, since the inhabitants of the territory where they were stationed could no longer provide for them. This prompted Justinian I in 536, the year of the mentioned eruption and the decreased yield in Thrace and Illyricum, to hand over the responsibility for providing Danubian troops to Aegean provinces (Karagiorgou, 2001, pp. 149–154; Curta, 2016, pp. 307–334). Food delivery along the Danube was also aggravated. Garrisons stationed in the forts together with their families had to provide for themselves. It is suggested by the tools discovered in early Byzantine fortifications on the limes, which can primarily be tied to agriculture, as well as to wool and leather processing. Therefore, it seems that the garrisons in forts along this part of the Danube seemed more like a militia during that time. According to available data, other activities were significantly less represented on the limes. Among the agricultural tools, crop farming is represented by 77.78%, cattle farming by 16.67%, and viticulture by 5.56% of collected finds. The numerous various tools for wool and leather processing suggest that cattle farming was, most probably, the primary agricultural activity (Špehar, P. 2010, pp. 149–150, 154, Graphicon 1). At the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, forts on the limes came under Avarian attacks (Pohl, 2018, pp. 163–197), which is suggested by visible traces of destruction on numerous sites (Špehar, P. 2010, p. 154), as well as by the hoard of blacksmiths tools from *Saldum* (Петровић, 1984, p. 13) and two hoards of various tools from *Diana* (Поповић, И. 1988, p. 253).

Archaeological testimonies of the 6<sup>th</sup>-century economy originate almost exclusively from settlements, so we have very little information about other activities, such as mining. Although in the Central Balkans there were numerous mines rich in ores, that were also used during the Middle Ages, we are unable to comprehend the degree of their exploitation during the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries (Matschke, 2002, p. 116; Laiou & Morrisson 2007, p. 29, Map 4). Only one solidus of Leo I (457–474) from the mining gallery in Janjevo near Ulpiana (Dušanić, 1995 with older literature) could suggest the reestablishing of mining activities at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Ivanišević & Špehar 2006, p. 152). Recent research, conducted in the Lece mine in the vicinity of Justiniana Prima, indicates that this mine was also used (Ivanišević, 2016, p. 96). To the possibility that mining was not completely extinct testifies also the tool hoard from Bosiljkovac near Kučevo, dated to the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, within which mining tools were detected

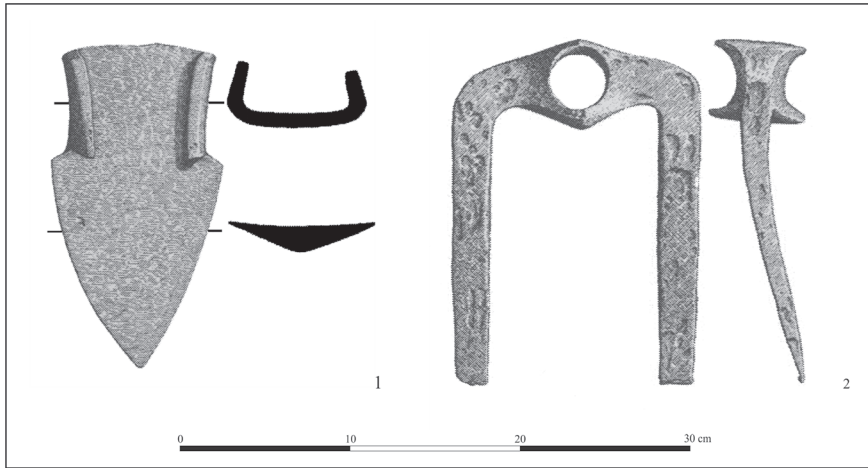


**Figure 2.** Bosiljkovac – hoes for unfold of the ore  
(after: Шпехар & Јацановић, 2011, сл. 4–5)

(Fig. 2), namely 16 hoes intended for ore deployment (Шпехар & Јацановић, 2011). This hoard suggests the survival of ore exploitation within the former mining area of *Aeliana Pincensia* during the Late Antiquity period.

## Concluding Remarks

Numerous wars in the territory of the Central Balkans, accompanied by natural catastrophes and pestilence, led to radical changes in the way that people lived during the Late Antiquity. One of the consequences was depopulation. The lack of people directly influenced the economy, since the production was primarily based on the strength of human muscles (Bryer, 2002). Judging by the finds of tools and utensils, the most dominant branch of the economy was agriculture, primarily crop farming. The appearance of crop farming tools clearly suggests that after the Hunic raids, and as a consequence of the devastation of *villae rusticae*, intensive crop farming on large properties ceased to be practiced since plows almost entirely went out of use. The exceptions are plows from Justiniana Prima (Fig. 3/1), which is certainly tied to the number of inhabitants that should be fed in this imperial endowment. Therefore, it can be assumed that large arable lands were situated in the vicinity of the city.



**Figure 3.** Tools from Justiniana Prima:

1. Plow (after: Bavant & Ivanišević, 2019, Pl. XLI/1539);
2. Two-pronged hoe (after: Bavant & Ivanišević, 2019, Pl. XLII/1558)

The intensive crop farming, storing, and distribution of grain in Justiniana Prima is also suggested by the horreum, discovered in the Upper Town of the city (Baron & Marković, 2020, Fig. 2.). Among the tools intended for crop farming at other sites, hoes, mattocks, and picks predominate, while the number of sickles, which directly signify grain farming, is a lot smaller. The increased use of mattocks and picks in crop farming suggests that the treated land was not fertile enough, mostly mixed with stone, and often needed to be cleaned of vegetation and chunks, which is suggested by pick-axes and pruning hooks. Although discovered sporadically, special attention was paid to two-pronged hoes (Fig. 3/2) used in viticulture (Špehar, P. 2010, pp. 96, 149). This agricultural activity, which also implies the production of wine, was testified in larger centres such as Justiniana Prima and Gradina on Jelica, but also in the wider area of Đerdap. The change in the structure of the tools used for crop farming is tied to the vertical migration process and to the founding of fortified villages on higher altitudes (Милинковић, 2015, pp. 258–263), which implied working on less fertile land. Because of the change of zones where agricultural activities were performed, cattle farming became more popular than crop farming, which had better results in plains. The finds of tools that testify to cattle farming, such as bells and scyths, are relatively scarce, which is tied to the fact that in the process of cattle breeding a small number of tools was used. Highly developed cattle farming is testified by other types of tools, used for wood and leather processing, i.e. for processing raw

materials gained as the product of cattle breeding, as well as by the mass processing of bones and horns (Špehar, P. 2010, p. 149). Despite the fact that the archaeozoological studies of osteological material were until now conducted on a small number of sites, some regularities can be noticed. Based on a processed sample from Justiniana Prima one clearly notices that mammals predominated in nutrition, mostly sheep, goats, pigs, and bovine. One also notices that the size of the large cattle was somewhat smaller than during the period before Hunic raids, but that the pigs were larger. It was the consequence of changes in cattle breeding. It is also noticeable that in the time of the flourishing of the city, which is chronologically tied to the reign of Justinian I, younger specimens were used in nutrition because their meat was tastier, while later they used older specimens, i.e. those that achieved full maturity and that already gave offspring. Chicken meat was also used in nutrition, as well as local fish, primarily carp and catfish. The venison was more common in the second phase, comprising up to 5.5 % of the inhabitants' nutrition (Марковић, 2018, pp. 247–265; Baron & Marković, 2020, pp. 157–157, Tab. 1). Fish was likewise used in the nutrition of people in other parts of Illyricum. Archeological testimonies show that fishing hooks and nets were used for fishing in large rivers, such as the Danube. To the existence of fishing nets testify the discovered needles for netting, as well as ceramic weights used to stop the net from floating (Špehar, P. 2010, pp. 114–115). The fish was caught in similar way in Justiniana Prima, although a trident for fishing was also discovered (Bavant & Ivanišević, 2019, p. 196, Pl. XLV/1649). The finds of fishing equipment are rare in highland settlements, except for Gradina on Jelica as a regional centre, where three fishing hooks for large fish were discovered. Since there are no large rivers in the vicinity, the inhabitants had to go fishing on the Western Morava, which was about 20 km away from the settlement (Милинковић, 2015, p. 275).

The inhabitants of the Northern Illyricum were engaged in various crafts, although less commonly. The most dominant was wood processing, necessary for acquiring building material and for the preparation of firewood. The most common were the tools for the rough processing of wood, i.e. cutting down the tree and removing its bark, while the finds of tools intended for the final processing, such as drills, punches, and chisels, were much rarer. Very important aspects of the economy were wool and leather processing. Wool processing prevailed, which is in accordance to the sorts of farmed animals. A special type of activity was the production of bone and horn items, such as combs, knife handles, pouch shutters, spinwhorles, etc., which had an important role in the everyday life of the inhabitants of the Northern Illyricum during the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Although stone was used in the architecture of the time, it seems that in the final phase of the early

Byzantine government on this territory, quarries ceased to function. This is testified by the recycling, i.e. the secondary usage of existing architectural elements, as can be noticed in Justiniana Prima (Špehar, P., 2008b, Fig. 1).

Although we possess a significant amount of metal finds dated to this period, the workshops and moulds are relatively rarely archaeologically confirmed. The exceptions are Justiniana Prima, where moulds are discovered, as well as the workshops for metal processing within the city itself (Ivanišević, 2018), and also Gradina on Jelica where a workshop was detected (Милинковић, 2010, pp. 73–75). The decrease in the production of metal objects was tied to the difficulties in the provision of raw material, wherefore broken iron and bronze objects were melted and reused (Ivanišević, 2012b, p. 768, Fig. 17). Rare archaeological testimonies of the metal processing suggest that the market for selling the metal objects was local, except for Justiniana Prima, which was the main craft center in this part of the Balkans. It is testified by the discovery of the workshop for secondary glass production (Ivanišević & Stamenković, 2010), wherefrom glass objects were distributed throughout Northern Illyricum. However, historical circumstances which led to the depopulation of the entire Central Balkans did not spare the imperial endowment. At the very end of the functioning of Justiniana Prima, a drop in quality is noticed in pottery production. Namely, Byzantine types of pots, made without a pottery wheel, were discovered (Ivanišević, 2012b, Fig. 4), which can be the consequence of the fact that there were no master potters in the city anymore.

The Late Antiquity was a very turbulent period. People that moved away because of wars, pestilence, or natural disasters, buried their treasure in hope that they would return to their homes. The wealthier buried their jewelry or money, at least before the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, when monetary circulation almost completely ceased to exist in this area (Špehar, P., 2010, p. 152, Graphicon 2). Still, for the poorer, the tools were their most valuable treasure. Although today we no longer consider iron to be a precious metal, one should bear in mind that its value in Late Antiquity was far higher than it is today. Therefore, it is not surprising that the inhabitants of Northern Illyricum hid iron tools during the peril as their most precious and, often, their only treasure. The overall crisis that hit the epoch led to depopulation and thus to the impoverishment of these once rich mining areas. Archaeological finds clearly testify about the degree of the crisis of the economy, about the challenges people faced, as well as the ways they bridged them. Despite the efforts, at the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century the Roman army withdrew from the limes, leaving the Danubian border undefended.

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## СЕВЕРНИ ИЛИРИК У КАСНОЈ АНТИЦИ: АРХЕОЛОШКА СВЕДОЧАНСТВА ЕКОНОМИЈЕ У КРИЗИ

**Апстракт:** Низ продора Хуна у северни Илирик средином 5. века резултирао је пустошењима која су довела до привременог престанка функционисања царске административне и војне управе, као и кризе у економији. Она је пре свега била проузрокована престанком организоване експлоатације руда, као и одумирањем великих пољопривредних добара. Поновно успостављање централизоване управе било је отежано депопулацијом услед ратова и болести, као и последицама различитих природних катастрофа. Услед тога долази до рурализација градова, слабљења одбране лимеса, као и вертикалне миграције, која је подразумевала напуштање плодних равница и оснивање утврђених села у вишим и теже приступачним зонама. На основу археолошких сведочанстава објашњене су промене у начину привређивања, које су пре свега подразумевале нови начин обраде земље и јачање улоге сточарства. Престанак функционисања *villa rustica* условио је прелазак на екстензивну пољопривреду на мањим обрадивим површинама, уз изузетак Јустинијане. Приме у чијој околини су се највероватније налазиле веће обрадиве површине, док хореум откривен у Горњем граду указује на организовано чување и расподелу жита. Већа употреба крампова и будака сведочи да се услед оснивања утврђених села на већој надморској висини обрађивала не баш плодна

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земља помешана са каменом. Иако само спорадично констатоване двозубе мотике указују и на постојање виноградарства. На изразито развијено сточарство осим клепетуша и коса указује и алат коришћен за обраду вуне и коже, као и масовна обрада костију и рога. Најчешће гајене врсте домаћих животиња су биле овце, козе, свиње и говече, као и кокошке, док су као храна коришћене и риба и дивљач, али у мањој мери.

Занатске активности биле су усмерене на обраду дрвета коже, вуне, костију и рога, док је обрада метала знатно мање заступљена и то првенствено у урбаним центрима. Опадање производње предмета од метала било је скопчано са потешкоћама у обезбеђивању сировина, због чега су поломљени гвоздених и бронзаних предмета претани, као што је констатовано у Јустинијани Прими, која је по свему судећи била главни занатски центар овог дела Царства. О овоме сведочи и радионица за секундарну производњу стакла, из које се највероватније стакленим предметима снабдевао читав простор северног Илирика.

Будући да је Царство током касноантичког периода прошло веома тешке тренутке, становништво које се исељавало похрањивало своје драгоцености у нади да ће се вратити на своја огњишта. За сиромашније алат је представљао највеће благо, будући да је његова вредност у касноантичком периоду била далеко већа него данас. Стога не чуди да су становници северног Илирика гвоздене алатке сакривали услед непосредне опасности, као своје највеће, често и једино богатство.

**Кључне речи:** касна антика, северни Илирик, рановизантијски период, економија, вертикална миграција, оставе алата

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While writing the texts collected in this volume, the authors have been living through an extraordinary experience, coping with everyday tasks made more complex by the crisis we have been facing, and creating new habits necessary to navigate the new environment. Although exceptional from our point of view, our present experience is far from unique, and the human history is replete with turbulent periods of crisis, profoundly disrupting the habitual order.

The aim of this collection is therefore to investigate some of the situations of crisis in the past from the archaeological perspective, in a search for insights that may help us to better understand and cope with the present one. At the same time, the papers demonstrate some of the vast possibilities of archaeological investigation to contribute to our understanding of the world we live in, as well as of the past societies whose material traces we study.

