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ANCIENT CITIES IN THE KINGDOM OF PELAGONIA

Abstract. – This paper examines the ancient cities of the Kingdom of Pelagonia through a combined analysis of literary evidence, historical geography, archaeological remains, plans of fortifications, and regional lines of communication. It reassesses the spatial extent of Pelagonia and the position of its urban centres in the northern and southern Pelagonian plain, with particular attention to the relationship between settlement, defence, and road networks. The main focus falls on the principal candidates for major Pelagonian urban centres: Staro Bonče–Visoka, Markovi Kuli–Potkuli near Varoš, and Dolište near Prilepec. These sites are discussed in relation to their acropoleis, lower cities, necropoleis, fortifications, and strategic setting. The paper also considers a wider group of fortified settlements and smaller urban or proto-urban centres that formed part of the ancient Pelagonian landscape. By bringing together older scholarship, recent field observations, and newly documented topographical data, the study argues that the urban structure of the Kingdom of Pelagonia was more developed and more extensive than has often been assumed. The evidence points to a dense network of fortified cities and settlements which played an important role in the political, military, and economic organisation of ancient Pelagonia.

Key words. – Pelagonia, ancient cities, fortifications, ancient Macedonia, urban topography, archaeological reconnaissance

In the second and early first millennium B.C., the autochthonous community of the ancient Pelagonians occupied the whole Pelagonian plain: its northern part, within the Republic of North Macedonia, comprising the municipalities of Prilep, Dolneni, Krivogaštani, Kruševo, Bitola, Novaci, and Mogila, and the southern region of Lerin (Florina). The penetration of the Upper Macedonian Lyncestae into the southern part of the

Pelagonian plain led to the establishment of the kingdom of Lyncestis.[1] We may assume that part of the autochthonous Pelagonian population remained in its ancestral settlements, while another part moved northwards, towards the central areas of the ancient kingdom of Pelagonia. The boundary between the two ancient kingdoms was formed by the course of the Crna River, the ancient Erigon.

The autochthony of Pelagonia and the Pelagonians, and their possible ethnic kinship with the Paeonians, are indirectly indicated in the Iliad, insofar as Pelegon was the father of the Paeonian hero Asteropaeus, who came from the broad-flowing Axios.[2] This early reference suggests that the Pelagonians took part in the Trojan War, which occurred around 1200 B.C. It may also point to very early contact between the Pelagonians and the civilisations of the Near East, and to the formation of a distinct Pelagonian entity already in the first half of the first millennium B.C.

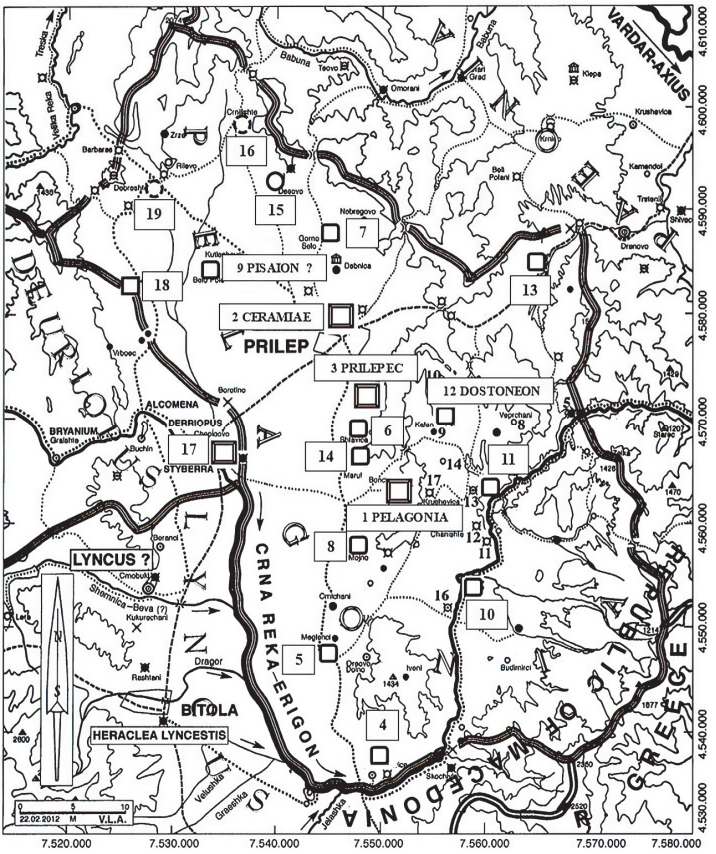
The ancient kingdom of Pelagonia extended north of the course of the Crna River, along the Egri–Brod–Skočivir line. Its western boundary is unclear, but the kingdom bordered on Deuriopus, whose easternmost city, according to Strabo,[3] was Styberra (Bedem, village of Čepigovo). For the present, we may assume that the territory of the ancient principality of Deuriopus did not extend farther north or south than the point at which the Crna River emerges from the gorge near the village of Bučin. The southern part of the western boundary was therefore delimited by the massif of Mount Drevenik, and the northern part by the Kruševo Mountains.

The northern boundary of Pelagonia was evidently formed by the southern parts of Mount Dautica, together with the Krasta–Kale Lenište–Kale Zemnik range. In the north-east, the natural boundary was formed by the mountains Babuna, Mukos, and Borula. The southern boundary, however, remains insufficiently known. It probably included the regions of the upper course of the Raec River[4] and Mariovo, extending southwards as far as the village territories of Grunište and Petalino, bearing in mind that the Lyncestae were not inclined towards mountainous areas.

In Early Antiquity, the polity that we refer to as 'the kingdom of Pelagonia' included several cities (Fig. 1). Two stand out for their size and importance: Markovi Kuli–Potkuli, near the village of Varoš, and Staro Bonče, the lower city, together with Visoka, the acropolis, in the territories of the villages of Bonče and Kruševica. These two cities are the

[1] Mikulčić 1966, 35, 68, with references cited there .
[2] Homer, *Iliad* 21.140; Petruševski 1982, 358.
[3] Strabo 7.327; cited after Papazoglu 1957, 212, fn. 2.
[4] Lilčić Adams et al. 2022, map, Fig. 1.

principal candidates for the location of the royal seat of Pelagonia. At least ten other cities also existed within the polity.


VARDAR-AXIUS
DEURIOPUS MTS.
PELAGONIA
CRNA REKA-ERIGON
PELAGONIA
PRILEP
2 CERAMIAE
3 PRILEPEC
9 PISAION ?
12 DOSTONEON
1 PELAGONIA
LYNCUS ?
BITOLA
HERACLEA LYNCESTIS
ALCOMENA
DERRIOPUS
BRYANIUM
STYBERRA
Babuna
Teovo
Omorani
Krushevica
Kamendol
Trnteni
Dranovo
Nobregovo
Dobrolishta
Rilevo
Barbaras
Dobrenishta
Debrica
Borotino
Buchin
Graishte
Cmobuki
Shtamnica
Bova (?)
Kukurechani
Dragor
Rashtani
Borancl
Ormchani
Meglenci
Iveni
Budimirci
Skochivir
Velusina
Grasnika
Jakimishte
Veprchani
Kalen
Marul
Bovo
Krushevica
Chanishte
Mogno
Kiepa
Kirna
Bela Polani
Tsrnovo
Selnec
Zrze
Trebos
Velika Reka
Gorno Bolo
Kuklen
Boy Polog
Vrboec
Kelen
Buchin
Graishte
Cmobuki
Shtamnica
Kukurechani
Rashtani
Borancl
Meglenci
Iveni
Budimirci
Skochivir
Velusina
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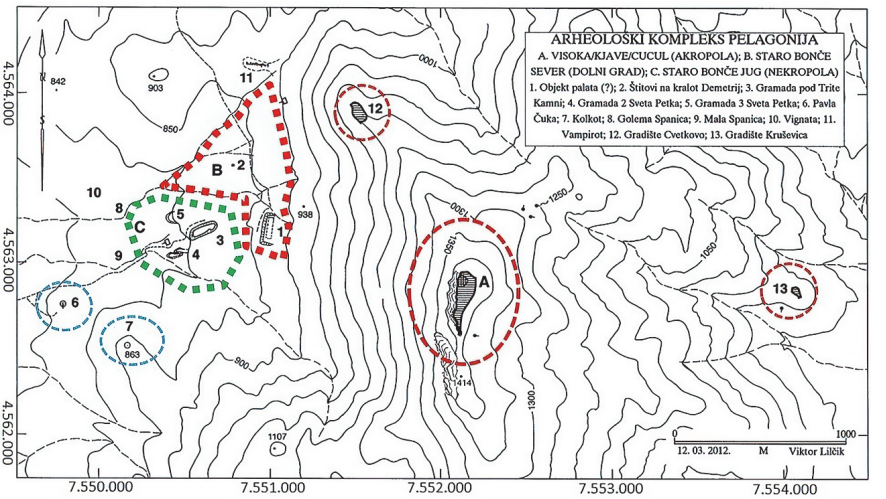


Fig. 2

This massive archaeological complex (Fig. 2) was recognised only in 2005 and 2006, with the discovery and documentation of the dominant fortress on Visoka, the highest peak of Selečka Mountain. The authors cited in fact connected the passage in Strabo – that the Erigon flows through the lands of the Illyrians, the Lyncestae, and Pelagonia, and, leaving the city on the left, enters the Axios[6] – with the exceptional geostrategic position of Visoka. The site lies at 1,472 metres, on the rocky peak of Cave-Cucul, from which the whole Pelagonian plain is visible to the north-west, west, and south-west, as is the valley of the Erigon as it passes through Mariovo. Visoka also maintained visual communication with the ancient Macedonian fortress at Gorni Krastavec, Demir Kapija, at a distance of 58 kilometres.[7] Significant, too, is the discovery of coins of the Macedonian kings at both fortresses. At Gorni Krastavec, coins of Philip II, Cassander, and Demetrius I Poliorcetes have been found. At Visoka, by contrast, coins of Philip II, Alexander III, Cassander, Demetrius Poliorcetes, Antigonus Gonatas, Philip V, and Perseus have been discovered; this led V. L. Adamsen to suggest that the acropolis of the early ancient city of Pelagonia was used as a Macedonian geostrategic base.[8] V. L. Adamsen, together with I. Širtovski and A. Petkovska, further established that the Macedonian Argeads had created fortified points, *castella*, for the

[6] Strabo 7.327; cited after Papazoglu 1957, 212, fn. 2.

[7] According to the analyses of Academician Johannes Koder of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, who studied signalling in Anatolia, fires were visible at night from distances of up to 200 kilometres.

[8] Lilčić Adamsen et al., forthcoming.

transmission of signals from Gorni Krastavec, Demir Kapija, through Kale Dab Karabali, Bogdanci, to Pella, the capital of the kingdom.[9] This finding permits the supposition that the Pelagonian polity maintained friendly relations with Macedon.

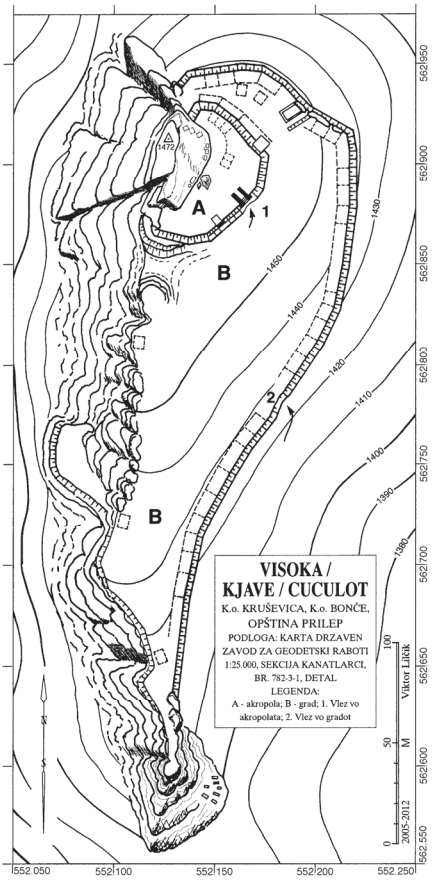


Fig. 3

The acropolis of Visoka (Fig. 3) is large, measuring 308 × 100 metres, with an *intra muros* area of 2.1 ha. It is elongated in form and is fortified by a late antique/early Byzantine defensive wall in *opus incertum*, visible in places and built with lean mortar. It also contains an inner fortification (Fig. 4), measuring 60 × 38.2 m and enclosing an *intra muros* area of c. 0.2 ha. The acropolis fortification was constructed in *opus pseudoisodomum*, with walls built of massive stone blocks extracted from the eastern side of the rocky peak. In effect, the builders used the rocky summit itself as the western line of defence, while constructing a wall on the northern, eastern, and southern sides. The entrance to the fortified plateau was placed in the middle of the eastern wall and was arranged with steps.

The lower city of Staro Bonče is large, measuring approximately 697.5×278 m (910×447 m), with an area of c. 14–24.8 ha.[10] It occupies a plain which slopes gently from east to west and is bounded by a northern and a southern ravine. South of the city, over an area measuring approximately 1,200 × 200/250 m, extends a large southern urban necropolis, from the monumental ruler's tomb at Pavla Čuka in the west to Sv. Petka and Gramada near Trite Kamni in the east.

To the north lies the northern necropolis at Vampirot.

[9] Lilčić Adamsen et al., forthcoming.

[10] The area is not definitively known, owing to the lack of financial resources to investigate and trial-trench the entire terrain.

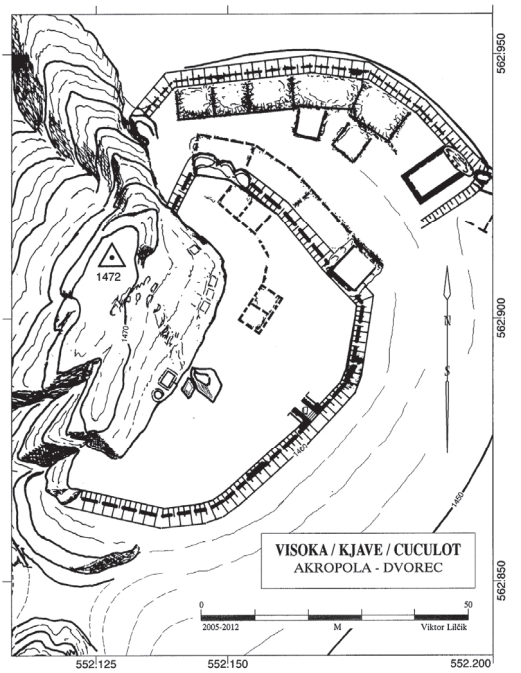


Fig. 4

2. Varoš, Markovi Kuli and Potkuli, Ceramiae

Research on the ancient and medieval city at Varoš has concentrated chiefly on its acropolis, Markovi Kuli. Boško Babić focused on the medieval cultural horizons.[11] In 1996, I. Mikulčić summarised the evidence for the medieval city of Prilep at Markovi Kuli, Varoš (Fig. 5).[12]

In September 2018, the Public Scientific Institution Institute of Old Slavic Culture in Prilep organised an international scholarly conference entitled *The Biogeographical Entity of Markovi Kuli: Natural Features and Cultural Values*, at which several papers on prehistory and Early Antiquity were also presented.[13] Summarising the evidence then available for the ancient city near Varoš in 1999, I. Mikulčić identified it as one of four possible locations for the centre of the ancient kingdom of Pelagonia.[14] On the evidence presented in the literature, research had clearly focused on the urban acropolis of Markovi Kuli, whereas the lower city remains

[11] Babić 1986, 1–362.

[12] Mikulčić 1996, 249–255.

[13] Naumov and Mitkoski 2018, 35–77; Risteski 2018, 69–90; especially Atanasoski 2018, 107–133, with references cited there ; Lilčić Adamsen 2018b, 91–105.

[14] Mikulčić 1999, 86–89.

very poorly known. What is known derives chiefly from surface finds and from ancient stone sculpture reused as spolia in the medieval churches at Varoš.[15] Field surveys carried out by I. Mikulčić and V. Lilčić Adamsen in the area of Markovi Kuli and Podkuli, Brevčinja, Krklari, Padarnica, and Tašačica produced numerous ancient movable finds and coins, which were deposited in the Archaeological Museum Collection of the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje.[16]

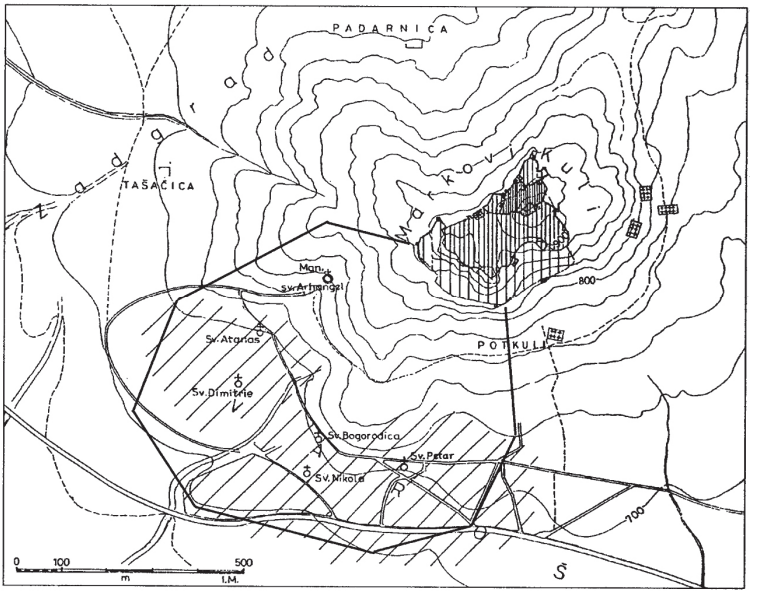


Fig. 5

The acropolis of Markovi Kuli is large, measuring 370 × 319 metres and enclosing an *intra muros* area of c. 7.8 ha. Its irregular form is dictated by the configuration of the terrain, which is filled with numerous granite rocks. The lower city extends across the north-western part of the village of Varoš. It measures approximately 440 × 920 m and covers an area of c. 26 ha.

The position of the city near the village of Varoš favoured its development in antiquity. It was a centre at which important routes intersected. One was the Diagonal Road, which ran from Heraclea through Styberra to

[15] Babić, Kitanoski and Kepeska 1996, 286–288, provide brief descriptions of these locations in and around Varoš; Lilčić Adamsen 2001, 382–391; Lilčić Adamsen 2002, 930–934.

[16] Unpublished. For a brief overview of Markovi Kuli and the lower city below the village of Varoš, see Lilčić Adams and Jakimovski 2025, 139–149, with references cited there.

Varoš and continued over the Pletvar Pass to the city near Venci, Rakle, and then to Audaristos and Stobi. Another was the mountain road over the Derven Prisad Pass, which led into the valley of the Babuna and onwards to the city of Bylazora at Veleško Kale, Veles. A further road led northwards, towards the Ostrec mountain pass, Barbaras, on the river Treska/Velika, and westwards to the city at Kitino Kale, Kičevo. From this road, near the village of Mažučiste, a northern branch led to the Kletovnik mountain pass, between the villages of Desovo and Gabrovnik–Oreov Dol, and then onwards along the course of the river Babuna towards the city of Bylazora (Veleško Kale, Veles). From the city at Varoš, moreover, the Eastern Pelagonian Road continued southwards through the ancient cities of Dolište, Prilepec, Staro Bonče, and Bonče, and through several settlements along the western foot of Selečka Mountain, then through Gradište and Živojno as far as the Klidi–Kilit Derven mountain pass, before continuing eastwards to Pella.

On the archaeological evidence so far known, the city within the Staro Bonče–Visoka complex appears to have been the capital of the kingdom of Pelagonia, owing to its exceptional geostrategic position and to the dominance of its acropolis, a Macedonian military base, over the Pelagonian plain and Mariovo, from which it controlled the Erigon Road towards the kingdom of Paeonia. After 148 B.C., however, the new Roman authority recognised the weaknesses of the vulnerable Erigon Road through the winding, narrow gorges of Mariovo, and promoted instead the Diagonal Road, Heraclea–Styberra–Ceramiae–Audaristos–Stobi, together with the sections from Ceramiae towards Bylazora. For this reason the city at Varoš rapidly gained primacy,[17] while archaeological research at Staro Bonče and its surroundings, by contrast, points to a westward shift in the centre of occupation, to the area around the village of Podmol.[18]

3. Prilepec, Dolište

A third Pelagonian city, on the evidence of finds discovered and published in the archaeological and numismatic literature, is the city at Dolište, village of Prilepec. The acropolis fortification of the city at Dolište is large, measuring 254 × 113/93/88 metres and enclosing an *intra muros* area of 2 ha. Its elongated and irregular form is determined by the plateau between the two deep ravines to the north and south (Fig. 6).

Already in 1966, I. Mikulčić placed it in the category of *poleis*, referring to M. Kokić and D. Vučković-Todorović,[19] and marked it on his

[17] See the stone architectural sculpture from the public temples and early Christian basilicas in Lilčić Adamsen 2001, 382–391; Lilčić Adamsen 2002, 930–934.

[18] Jakimovski, Lilčić Adamsen and Temelkoski 2026, electronic edition.

[19] Mikulčić 1966, 67, n. 198.

map in the study of Pelagonia as a proposed location for the city of Pelagonia,[20] though without any further, more specific description of the site itself. He returned to Dolište, Prilepec, in 1999, continuing to emphasise it as one of the most serious candidates for the capital of the kingdom of Pelagonia, but again without providing new evidence for the site itself.[21]

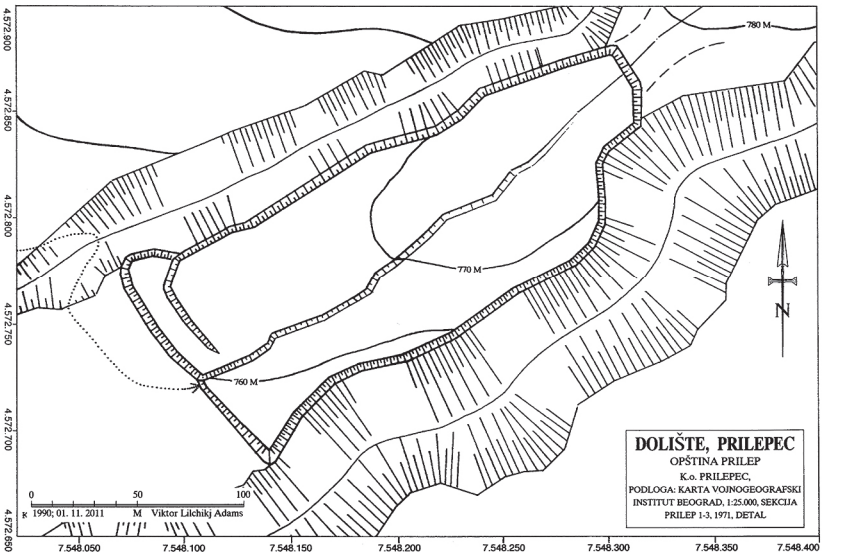


Fig. 6

In 1996, V. Lilčić Adamsen investigated the micro-region of Prilepec, visiting Dolište and the other sites in the surrounding area: Bezisten and Markov Dzid. In publishing the results, he concluded that there were still no secure data for the precise location of the city of Pelagonia.[22] In 2001 and 2002, the same researcher published several elements of stone architectural sculpture from the sites near Prilepec: Bezisten, within the village itself, the church site of Sv. Dimitrija, two fountains in the northern and north-eastern parts of the village, the monastery of Sv. Nikola, and Grobovite in the territory of the neighbouring village of Volkovo.[23] In 2011, V. Lilčić Adamsen published for the first time the planimetry of the acropolis of the ancient city at Dolište, Prilepec.[24]

[20] Mikulčić 1966, map at the end of the study: Dolište, Prilepec, no. 82. Under no. 83 he places Markov Dzid, Prilepec, as a castellum of the Classical–Hellenistic period, and under no. 84 he records Iron Age finds in the territory of the village of Prilepec.

[21] Mikulčić 1999, 85–86.

[22] Lilčić Adamsen 1996, 36–44.

[23] Lilčić Adamsen 2001, 408–417; Lilčić Adamsen 2002, 954–955.

[24] Lilčić Adamsen 2011, georeferenced plan, p. 38.

The finds from Dolište, Prilepec, also attracted the attention of H. Talevski, who argued for its identification with the city of Pelagonia.[25] A. Jakimovski, D. Temelkoski, V. Krsteski, and B. Angelovski began, in 2016, 2017, and 2018, what were almost systematic archaeological excavations at Dolište and in its surroundings, discovering part of an ancient necropolis and part of an extra muros settlement.[26]

The archaeological data presented by V. Lilčić Adamsen and A. Jakimovski in 2025, which summarise the archaeological evidence for the city at Dolište and its surroundings, as well as for the fortification of Markov Dzid, Prilepec, and the mountain *castellum* of Kale Konjarnik, Kokre-Prilepec,[27] clearly argue for explaining the emergence of the ancient city and its rapid development through Early Antiquity and the early Roman imperial period in terms of an important road junction. From the city at Dolište, Prilepec, which lay on the Eastern Pelagonian Road, a road section branched eastwards towards the Konjarnik mountain pass, controlled by the castellum of Kale Konjarnik, and led to the settlement in the area of the village of Kokre, continuing further through Kalen towards the bed of the Erigon/Crna River in Mariovo.

Within the ancient Pelagonian polity, a large number of fortified sites have been investigated and documented. Among them, several sites deserve attention because they possess the contextual features of early ancient urban centres.

4. Čepen, village of Brod

The acropolis fortification of the small town of Čepen is large, measuring 352 × 104 metres and enclosing an *intra muros* area of c. 3–3.5 ha. Its elongated and irregular form is dictated by the hilltop plateau.[28]

5. Gradište, village of Meglenci

The acropolis fortification of the small town of Gradište measures 150 × 55 metres, with an *intra muros* area of 0.47 ha. Its elongated and irregular form is determined by the plateau.[29]

6. Palatica, village of Štavica

The fortification of the small acropolis of the small town of Palatica measures 73 × 30 metres and encloses an *intra muros* area of 0.16 ha.

[25] Talevski 2014, 60–61.

[26] Jakimovski and Temelkoski 2018, 1–12; Temelkoski and Krsteski 2020, 15–24; Jakimovski, Temelkoski and Angelovski 2021, 187–208.

[27] Lilčić Adams and Jakimovski 2025, 139–149, with references cited there.

[28] Idem, 123-125, with references cited there.

[29] Idem, 114–116.

It has an elongated, rounded form: in effect, a residential area set against the dominant rocky mass on the southern side.[30]

7. Orlov Kamen, village of Gorno Selo[31]

The acropolis fortification of the ancient city of Orlov Kamen is large, measuring 201 × 85 metres and enclosing an intra muros area of 1.15 ha.[32] It has an elongated, approximately rectangular form. The residential part of the city extends over the western slope, measuring approximately 350 × 160 m and covering an area of c. 4.5 ha.

8. Elenik–Marin Grad, village of Mojno

The dominant acropolis of the city of Elenik–Marin Grad, village of Mojno, measures 177 × 96 metres and covers an area of 1 ha.[33] The lower city lay to the south, in the area of the village of Mojno.[34]

9. Markov Čardak (Belo Gradče–Manastirište), Belo Pole, Pisaion(?)

Within the acropolis of this small town, which measures 286 × 89.7 m and covers an area of c. 1.93 ha, a separately fortified western part can be distinguished.[35] The lower city extended over the residential terraces on the southern slope of the hill, as well as over the level ground at its southern foot, now cultivated fields belonging to the inhabitants of the village of Belo Pole.[36]

10. Grad Čebren, village of Zović (Mariovo), Antania(?)

The ancient city of Grad Čebren, Zović, on the bed of the Crna River in Mariovo, a candidate for identification with the city of Antania, comprises an inner fortification on the very summit within the acropolis, measuring 70 × 25 m; an acropolis measuring 270 × 120 m, with an area of 1.7 ha; and a lower city measuring 265/247 × 240/137 m. The total *intra muros* area of the city, including all three fortified parts, is 6.6 ha.[37]

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[30] Idem, 132–133.

[31] At the scholarly meeting of the Macedonian Archaeological Society in 2025, Duško Temelkoski presented the fairly plausible idea that the name of this city was Kolobaisa.

[32] V. Lilčić Adams investigated the acropolis and documented its plan through a survey carried out on 11 May 2005.

[33] Lilčić Adamsen and Jakimovski 2025, 108–110, with references cited there.

[34] Mikulčić 1970, 325–352.

[35] V. Lilčić Adamsen, who investigated and documented the site on 27 June 2004, recorded the dimensions of a small western fortification measuring 95 × 33 metres. It is regrettable that archaeology has not devoted greater attention to the site.

[36] Published information in Babić and Kitanoski 1996, 281.

[37] Lilčić Adams and Jakimovski 2022, 36–47; Lilčić Adamsen and Jakimovski 2025, 63–67.

11. Gradok–Lisičko Gradište, village of Manastir (Mariovo), Antania(?)

The acropolis of the ancient city of Gradok–Lisičko Gradište, Manastir, lies on the plateau of the hill at the confluence of the Lisička Dunjska River with the left bank of the Crna River. It measures 208 × 45 metres and covers an area of 1 ha. The lower city, adjoining the southern side of the acropolis, measures 248 × 162 metres, with an area of 3.2 ha. The total area is 4.5 ha.[38]

12. Monastery of St Elijah, village of Peštani (Mariovo), city of the Dostonei

The city of the Dostonei at Peštera–Monastery of St Elijah, Peštani, measures 300 × 185 metres and covers an area of 4 ha.[39]

13. Venci, village of Rakle (Gorni Raec)

The city at Venci, village of Rakle, is situated on a hill at the confluence of the Raklevska River with the Raečka River and contains a large number of residential terraces. It measures c. 530 × 150/99 m, with a residential area on the acropolis of c. 5.77 ha. The eastern lower residential terrace measures 432 × 129 m, with an area of 4 ha. Two western suburbs also occupied the terraces west of the dry ravine of the Mačkovec gully.[40]

14. Marul, Gradište

On the dominant hill east of the village of Marul are the remains of a small town of Early Antiquity, which most probably contained, within its fortified perimeter, a temple in the Doric style.[41] Its ellipsoidal acropolis measures 109 × 68 m; together with the lower settlement, the site measures 190 × 110 m and covers a total area of 1.55 ha.

15. Brailovo, within the village, settlement of Madehefra

The remains of the ancient settlement of Madehefra, in the area of the village of Brailovo, deserve attention, although there is no archaeological evidence that the settlement rose to the rank of an ancient city. V. Lilčić Adamsen previously documented stone architectural elements in the courtyard of the village church of St Nedela and at the Monastery of St Elijah, finds which point to the flourishing of the settlement in the Ro-

[38] Lilčić Adams and Jakimovski 2022, 36–47; Lilčić Adamsen and Jakimovski 2025, 44–48.

[39] Lilčić Adamsen 2005a, 2–19; Lilčić Adamsen 2005b, 2–19; Lilčić Adamsen and Jakimovski 2025, 39–43.

[40] Lilčić Adamsen and Jakimovski 2025.

[41] Idem, 133-135.

man imperial period.[42] Brailovo occupies a recessed position in the folds of the mountains and is surrounded by as many as four ancient fortifications. To the north are Sokolički Kamen and Gjupsko Kale; to the west are Markovo Bunište Medžit Desovo and Kale Brailovo. We consider that the two western fortifications served to protect and control the ancient road from Ceramiae over the Kletovnik Pass, descending to the Macedonian military camp at Gjonoec, Oreov Dol, and continuing further along the Babuna valley towards the city of Bylazora.

16. Crnilište, Kukulajca

In addition to Brailovo, attention is also drawn to the settlement with a small fortification at Kukulajca, village of Crnilište, where in June 2005 V. Lilčić measured an acropolis 108 × 43 metres in size, with an area of 0.33 ha, and discovered coins of Philip II, as well as five bronze specimens of autonomous Macedonia under Philip V and Perseus (Zeus–thunderbolt). It is not known whether this was the acropolis of a small ancient town or only an early ancient castellum controlling the Eastern Pelagonian Road from Ceramiae to the Zavoj mountain pass between the villages of Gostiražni–Strovija and Oreše–Bogomila.

17. Bedem, Čepigovo, city of Styberra, on the boundary between Deuriopus and Pelagonia

The ancient city of Styberra near the village of Čepigovo is mentioned by Strabo as a city of the region of Deuriopus, while Livy states that the Roman soldiers of the consul Publius Sulpicius Galba reached Styberra, where they collected grain from the fields of Pelagonia.[43]

18. Kale, Norovo, Podvis, Lokveni, early Macedonian military base

The powerful fortification at Kale, between the territories of Norovo, Podvis, and Lokveni, appears to have been an ancient Macedonian military base for controlling the Western Pelagonian Road and hostile incursions from the Barbaras Pass to the south.

19. Gradište, Debrešte, roadside settlement of Early Antiquity and late antique castellum

Finds of Early Antiquity have been recorded at Kale-Gradište, village of Debrešte, but it is difficult to believe that an early ancient city developed at this location, chiefly because of its direct exposure to possible

[42] Lilčić Adamsen 2001, 436–437; Lilčić Adamsen 2002, 925–929.

[43] Lilčić Adamsen 2009, 131, fn. 25 (Liv. 31.39: ‘Then he set out for Stibera and gathered from Pelagonia the grain that was in the fields’), 220, 224.

enemy attacks from the direction of the Treska valley through the Barbaras–Ostrec Pass.

Conclusion

At least fourteen cities of Early Antiquity developed within the territory of the ancient kingdom of Pelagonia. Among them, three dominate, occupying a central position within the kingdom: the city near Bonče–Kruševica–Podmol, the city of Pelagonia; the city near Varoš, Ceramiae on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*; and the city at Dolište, Prilepec.

South of them lie the still insufficiently investigated small towns at Čepen, Brod, and Gradište, Meglenci. The small town of Elenik–Marin Grad, Mojno, is also important.

North of the city of Pelagonia near Bonče, Kruševica, and Podmol lie the cities at Gradište–Marul and Palatica–Štavica. North of the city of Ceramiae is the city of Orlov Kamen–Gorno Selo, with a proposed identification as Kolobaisa. Attention is drawn also to the small town at Markov Čardak, Belo Pole, whose location and archaeological remains allow its possible identification with the small town of Pisaion mentioned by Polybius. Polybius states that the Illyrian king Scerdilaidas conquered the small city of Pisaion in Pelagonia, won over many Dassaretian cities, and devastated the frontier region of Macedonia. For this reason the Macedonian king Philip V undertook a military campaign in 217 B.C., recovering the lost lands and capturing cities and territories in Dassaretia and in the area around Lychnidos.[44] Papazoglou places Pisaion on the western edge of Pelagonia, in the direction of Dassaretia.[45] On the western edge of the ancient kingdom of Pelagonia, however, there are no cities apart from Styberra, whose location is very well known. The Crna River also flows through this zone, forming the boundary line with the neighbouring kingdom of Lyncestis. The information in Polybius requires broader analysis in the light of the latest archaeological findings, especially because of the statement that in the same year Philip captured the city of Bylazora on the Axios, which was conveniently positioned on the routes by which the Dardanians most easily invaded Macedonia.

East of the three central cities mentioned above lies the region of Mariovo, in which three cities are located: Grad Čebren–Zović, Gradok Lisičko Gradište–Manastir, and the impressive remains of the city of the Dostonei at the Monastery of St Elijah–Peštani, with the large necropolis on the hill of Gramagje.

[44] Papazoglu 1957, 201, n.7.
[45] Papazoglu 1957, 210.

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