

The Fortress of Gumnishte

Territory:
KOSOVO/UNMIK

Name of organisation
compiling the information:
Institute for the Protection of Cultural
Monuments and the Prishtinë/Pristina
Regional Museum

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Artana, qytet mesjetar

Name and address of building(s) or site: THE FORTRESS OF GUMNISHTE, Artana,
Novobrdo

Inventory reference number(s): 226\ 48

Building type(s): Archaeological remains of an antique and
mediaeval city

Main date(s): 4th –3rd century BC, 14th-17th century AD

Current use(s): The mediaeval fortress is abandoned. It is
visited by tourists even though it is not
advertised. The site is also being used for
pasture.

Significance:

Novobërda/Novobrdo is located approximately 35 km southeast of Pristina, on a highland territory 860 -1124 metres above the sea level. Novobrdo, an antique settlement and a medieval city, was established close to silver and gold mines.

The antique settlement is called Gumnishte. Rescue archeological research and surveys, carried out in 1990, documented a fortified dwelling or settlement constructed with dry stone. The fortified part covers a surface of 5.10 Ha. It includes a pre-quarter area of 2 Ha. The excavations included parts of the surrounding wall and a water well (dimensions 2.40 x 2.40 x 3.80 m). Metal objects, dishes and ceramic fragments of luxurious vases decorated with black figures on red background were found. Judging by the size of the residence, the importance of vases and very large stones used for building construction, the possibility that we are dealing with Ilir city Damastion, where silver coins were produced in the 4th century BC, is not excluded.

The mediaeval city bears the name "Fortress". It is mentioned for the first time in historical sources in 1326 as Nuovomonte. In 1349, silver coins bear the name of grossi di Novabarda. The fortress was known as one of the most important mining cities in south-eastern Europe. Mining was developed by Saxons; trade grew thanks to Dubrovnik's merchants. The population consisted of Albanians, Slavs, Saxons and other nationalities. The city fell under

Turkish rule in 1445. After the Austro-Turkish wars in 1689, the city lost its importance and its old-time fame. As the Christian coalition lost the war, the population migrated.

The fortified city consisted of three parts: the upper city (citadela), lower city and pre-quarters. The entire area covers a surface of 50 Ha. The upper city was protected with walls and six tall cylindrical towers. The lower city, apart from surrounding walls, was protected with two towers, on the east and south sides, and a moat on the west side. Pre-quarters, villages, cemeteries and religious buildings extended throughout the entire area.

During the archaeological excavations carried out since 1951 until 2003, important monuments, such as the Good Friday cathedral, Saxon monumental church and two smaller churches, were found.

The site of Novobrdó, in particular the mediaeval town which preserved its integrity and impressive monumental features, such as defence walls up to 15 m high, the natural environment rich with fauna and flora specimens, presents wide possibilities for tourism development.

Because of its importance, the site is listed as a "cultural monument of the first category" protected by law, experts of the Institute of Monuments and the Pristina regional Museum drafted a project for the preservation of archeological remains as part of the 2003 programme of activity .

Categories of significance:

Of outstanding national importance

The antique settlement demonstrates the interlacing of the Hellenic culture with local Ilir culture. The mediaeval city shows the symbiosis of European architectural styles and Ottoman building traditions.

If the idea of drafting a project for cultural tourism development was supported by the local and national authorities, and international institutions, all archeological locations might become of extraordinary national and wider interest.

Categories of ownership or interest:

Bearing in mind the natural and cultural significance of the site, the possibility of tourism development is obvious.

Documentation and bibliographic references:

Documentation

Technical and written documentation, as well as photographs are prepared by the experts of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments & Prishtinë/Pristina Regional Museum in 2003, in the framework of preservation activities and archaeological excavations.

Bibliography

1. V. Jovanovic, *Novobrdó really silver and golden city*. Belgrade, (Serbian, Latin).
2. H. Mehmetaj, *In Novobërdë/Novobrdó is discovered relics of the Ilir city inhabitation*, Word, Prishtinë/Pristina, September 1990 (Albanian Latin).

Condition:

Very bad condition – the antique city, the mediaeval upper city and lower city, where the walls have almost collapsed, the foundations of the Saxon church, structural problems (foundations), stones have slipped so it is hard to notice the church plan. The small church, discovered in 1951: structural foundation problems.

Good condition - the foundation of the Good Friday cathedral and of the church with surrounding walls, discovered and preserved in 2003.

Risk:

Risk is related to lack of maintenance and conservation.

Condition risk:

Immediate risk of further deterioration, solution found but not implemented.

Management:

The management of this archaeological site is the responsibility of the Municipal Assembly in Novobërdë/Novobrdo and the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments & Prishtinë/Pristina Regional Museum. If a project and common objectives for the preservation, restoration, archaeological research, the construction of a visitors' centre and a museum were implemented, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments & Prishtinë/Pristina Regional Museum, besides other national and international institutions would participate in this project and would offer expertise and supervise the project

Summary:

The impressive architectural features, such as defence walls of the mediaeval city, the archaeological remains, rich flora and fauna, as well as future plans for the establishment of a visitors' centre, provide preconditions for cultural and natural tourism development. The first step would consist in the consolidation of the city walls.

Sign. and date:

Haxhi Mehemtaj
Prishtinë/Pristina
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