

Golemo Gradište

Golemo Gredište at Konjuh lies 6 km south of the Kumanovo-Kriva Palanka highway, on the Kriva River. The hill known as Golemo Gradište is 400m high and 500m in length. The hill top of Golemo Gradište was extensively adapted to an acropolis by cutting of rooms in the rock and making a large plateau for intended use. The terrain of the acropolis falls precipitously to the northern part of the fortified ancient city, beside the Kriva River. The road through the valley of Kriva River ran near by the ancient city Garescus, occupying the site of Golemo Gradište.

Garescus was in antiquity the largest city in the Parorbelia/Orbelia (Osogovija) region, built by the Paeonian tribe Garesci. Garescus has been repeatedly attacked and damaged by their neighbors the Illyrians and other invaders, before it at some period renamed to Zappara/Zaparenae/Zapparenae when it was used as an episcopal town long before and during the regency of the emperor Justinian I. Zaparenae like Justiniana Prima (Caričin grad) and Bargala as well many other cities in the region was targeted by the Huns under the leading of Attila during their invasion of the Byzantine Empire in 441-443, when much of what is now the Balkan region was devastated. Finally, Zaparena was raised to the ground during the second half of the 6-th and the first half of the 7-nth century by the invading Slavs and Avars.

The hill of Golemo Gradište at Konjuh



of Golemo Gredište at Konjuh.



Republic of Macedonia

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Garescus & Zappara

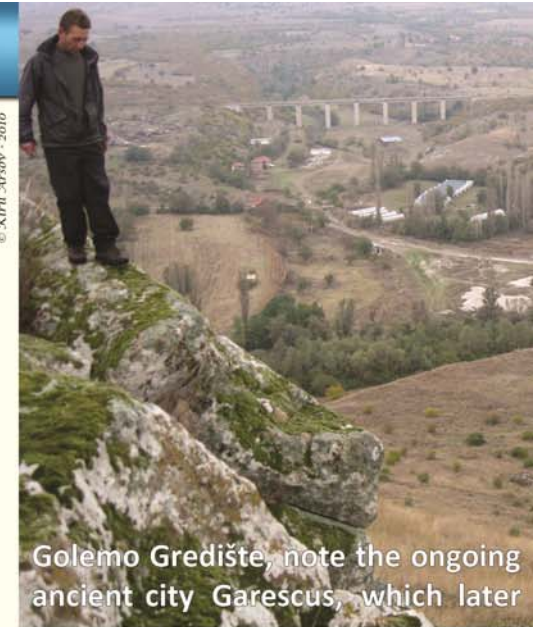
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Konjuh

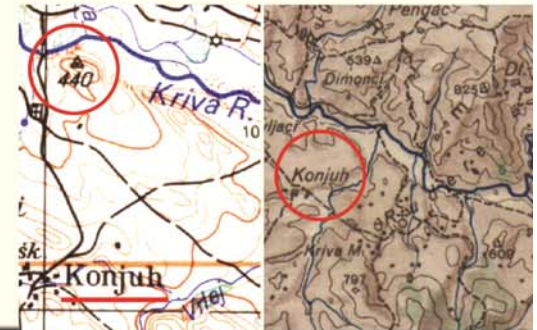
ГАРЕСК & ЗАПАРА



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Golemo Gredište, note the ongoing ancient city Garescus, which later



Maps shows the exact location



Garescus



Zappara

The city of Garescus in Orbelia/Parorbelia (Osogovija) in Macedonia was listed by Ptolemy as the sole, most important or the largest town in the region, that coincides with the location occupied by Golemo Gradište at Konjuh. Golemo Gradište with the meaning of "a large city" is an acropolis, a fortified city that was built by the Paeonian tribe Garesci on a hill, a plain area by the Kriva River. Garescus was strategically raised on a place to guard the Paeonian kingdom eastwards against the Illyrians and to control the important road, through the valley of Kriva Reka, with bearing from Scupi to Serdica. Paeonia was ruled by Patraos until his death in 315 BC as an independent kingdom, subjected to Macedonia. Shortly after the new king Audoleon came to the throne, Paeonia must have been attacked by the Autariatae, Illyrian people, forcing inhabitants of Garescus to flee from their city. Diodorus informs us that Cassander assisted Audoleon against Autariate, and that having conquered them, he settled 20,000 men, women and children in the Mount Orbelus. According to Strabo, the Macedonian king Cassander founded Thessalonica in 315 after he had rased to the ground the towns in Crusis and those on the Thermaic Gulf, about 26 in number, by settling all inhabitants together in one city. Obviously, the refugees from Garescus must have also been moved to settle in the newly built city of

Thessalonica, like those people moved from the demolished cities. A quite precised description of Parorbelia's location as district was given by Strabo telling that Parorbelia in Macedonia is situated near Agrianes. The Agrianes were a Paeonian tribe not included in the Paeonian kingdom, occupying the district around Pautalia and the source of the Strymon River. In 279-278 BC the Celts/Gauls invaded the Paeonian kingdom with a huge army and carried out immense atrocities destroying everything on their path. Paeonia was repeatedly ruined by many invaders, and during the Roman rule the country was divided into two parts, forming the second and the third region of Macedonia.



Zappara as an episcopal city was first built on the ground of the rased city of Garescus, due to its ideal geographical location, controlling the valley of the Kriva River. A large episcopal Basilica was built among many living houses on the plain of the abandoned fortified city of Garescus late in the 4th or early in the 5th century. However, Zappara was entirely destroyed by the Hunns during their invasion of the Balkans in 448-449 AC and therefore a new episcopal Basilica had been built nearby, outside the fortified city. Zappara was first mentioned as an Episcopal city in the Acta of the 5th Ecumenical church council in 553 AD, when Bishop Sabianus of the Zappara city refused to attend the council because his archbishop, Benenatus of Justiniana Prima, was not present. Hierocles, in the early 6th century, lists eight cities in the province of Macedonia Secunda: Stobi, Argos, Aistraion (Strumica), Pelagonia (Bitola), Bargala, Harmonia, Kelenidin, and Zappara. Even the newbuilt Episcopal Basilica, known as Rotunda church at Konjuh, was rased to the ground by the Slavs and Avars when they settled to the Balkans in the first half of the 7th century AD.



Basilica artefact found at Bargala, 5th century AD



Basilica artefact found at Zappara, 5th century AD