

Team J Report

Field Season:

17 May – 12 June, 2013

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Team Members and Roles

Name	#	Affiliation	Status/Occupation	Team Role
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Klodiana Kurbneshi	36	University of Tirana	MA student, Archaeology	Field walker
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Brunilda Sinani	29	University of Tirana	MA student, Archaeology	Visiting field walker
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Elvira Hoxha	45	University of Tirana <i>As of 2017: Colombo Center Albania</i>	MA student, Archaeology	Visiting field walker
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Methodological Notes:

All tracts were surveyed using standard Mediterranean survey methods. For each tract, surveyors walked at 15-meter intervals and counted all tile/brick, ceramics, and small finds. The last category – small finds – included, but was not limited to, lithics, iron tools, mill stones, beads, and glass. Field walkers were instructed to collect all small finds as well as a sample of the different ceramic fabrics counted that were larger than a thumb nail. Additionally, any diagnostic sherds, or those with notable markings, indentations, glaze, color, or shape, were also collected.

All land, including fields, hills, and terraces in the survey zone described below, was surveyed unless the landowner objected, the landowner was not present, or the vegetation was so dense as to render survey impractical

Team Objectives:

The team had 2 main objectives:

- To identify potential sites from all periods for site collection and/or test pits within the survey zone
 - o To count material from all periods – Bronze Age, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Medieval, Post-Medieval, Modern, etc. – within the survey zone
 - o To collect small finds, diagnostic sherds, and a sample of the different ceramic fabrics from all periods within the survey zone
- To survey the Prehistoric site of Gajtan (**S-011**) and its surrounding area in order to understand its reach and use during different periods.
 - o To understand the connections between Gajtan and other sites located within the larger Shkodra region

Survey Zone:

Team J surveyed the Prehistoric site of Gajtan (**S-011**) and its surrounding areas within the former Guri i Zi municipality (today, Shkodër municipality). In addition to the hilly landscape of Gajtan, the zone also included the fields and hills between the neighboring settlements of Guri i Zi, Rragam, and Renc. Guri i Zi Church and the road between Shkodër and Mjedë marks the southern boundary of the survey zone. The zone is bounded to the east by “The Dry Stream” (Përroi i thatë) and to the west by the road to Rragam (Rruga e Rragamit). The northern boundary is the Gajtan hilltop, extending between Rragam and Renc. Finally, the Fashina Hill near Renc village bounds the zone to the west/northwest. (*See the 2017 Map for Shkrel area*)

The area surveyed by Team J was flat and hilly, containing terraced fields and hill-landscapes. While most of the fields were lined with hay and tall grass, a few were planted with cash crops such as tobacco. Those located within villages were often fenced by their owners. Hill tracts were moderately to lightly covered with macchia (maquis – French), a shrub typical to the Mediterranean region¹. Taking

¹ Macchia are noted in the CU databases as bushes or Maki.

both the terrain and vegetation into account, the tracts in this survey zone had an average visibility of **60.9%**

Tracts, Sites, and Mounds:

Team J surveyed a total of **280** tracts, covering a total of **1.38** square kilometers. The size of each tract varied depending on the natural characteristics and features of the landscape. Their average tract size was **0.5** hectares, with their largest tract recorded at 7.08 hectares and the smallest at 0.02.

Team J tract-walked the known site, Gajtan, or **S-011**. For the purposes of this report, the area is encompassed by tracts **G-230 – 253**. Regarding ceramic finds, **S-011** is associated with the Prehistoric, Early Bronze Age, Bronze Age, Late Bronze Age, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. The Prehistoric to Bronze Age and Classical to Hellenistic periods were particularly represented in the ceramic finds. Please see the 'Summary of Findings' below for more details.

Team J identified the neighboring hilltop of Fashina as a new site – **S-013**, or tracts **G-259 – 263**. It had concentrations of Prehistoric, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman period ceramics. The site was especially associated with the Hellenistic period, according to ceramic evidence. Furthermore, Fashina hill is strategically located near Gajtan and there was evidence of an entrance, tower, and wall (all partly destroyed) with huge quadratic stones. Notably, these stones were bound with mortar and the middle portion of the wall was composed mainly of smaller stones.

No tumuli were documented in the survey zone.

Summary of Findings:²

Regarding museum counts, Team J collected a total of **92** fine-textured; **260** coarse-textured; and **869** medium-textured ceramics, of which **48** were tile. The texture of **1** ceramics was labeled as "**Plain**." Team J also collected **151** lithics; and **37** other small finds, falling under the categories of "**metal**," "**glass**," "**stone**," "**ceramic**," and "**other**."

Ceramics:

Team J collected **1,222** ceramics from almost all periods. **32%** were associated with the Prehistoric to Iron Age periods, **34.8%** with Classical to Roman periods, **2.2%** with Medieval Byzantine to Late Medieval periods, **30.2%** with the Post-Medieval to Modern periods. Finally, **9** ceramics, or **0.7%**, were not identified and marked as "**Unkn**."

The team's Prehistoric (**74** ceramics), Early Bronze Age (**37** ceramics), Bronze Age (**268** ceramics) and Late Bronze Age (**5** ceramics) finds were largely concentrated in the north/northeast corner of Gajtan

² The number of collected material (such as ceramics or small finds) listed in this report corresponds with the number of entries in the ceramic and small finds databases. While entries are typically associated with **1** artifact, some entries are associated with 2 or more artifacts. For example, small ceramic pieces associated with the same period and/or located in the same tract might be labeled in the pottery database under **1** entry.

Additionally, all periods listed in the report represent the "start period" and do not reflect the "end period."

(centralized around **S-011**'s location in *the 2017 Map for Shkrel area*). Tract **J-232** had high densities of each of the four periods, while **J-250 to J-252** had small to medium densities. Tracts **J-249** had a high density of Early Bronze Age and Bronze Age ceramics. As Gajtan is a known Prehistoric site, this ceramic density and pattern was expected.

The team's Classical (**133** ceramics), Hellenistic (**248** ceramics), Late Hellenistic (**1** ceramic), and Roman (**43** ceramics) finds were largely concentrated in **S-011**, Gajtan, and the neighboring hilltop, Fashina, near the Renc settlement. While these periods were well-represented in both hilltop areas, Tracts **J-232** at **S-011** and **J-260** on Fashina hilltop had high concentrations of all three periods. Tracts **J-261 to 263** on Fashina hilltop had small to high concentrations of all three periods. Finally, tracts **J-249 to J-251**, associated with **S-011**, had high densities of Classical, Hellenistic, and Late Hellenistic period ceramics. The high density of particularly Bronze Age and Hellenistic ceramic finds at Gajtan parallels other hilltop forts collected during the PASH survey. Additionally, regarding the density of ceramic finds at Fashina hilltop, Team J has identified a new site – **S-013**.

The team's Post Medieval (**50** ceramics), Early Modern (**245** ceramics), and Modern (**74** ceramics) periods were largely concentrated in the valley fields. This was most likely due to the close proximity of modern settlements and homesteads.

The Iron Age (**7** ceramics), Early Roman (**1** ceramic), Medieval Byzantine (**26** ceramics), and Early Medieval (**1** ceramic) periods were poorly represented in the ceramic finds. Notably, **2** of the Iron Age ceramics were located on Fashina hilltop in tracts **J-260** and **262**; **3** other Iron Age ceramics were located in a field at the western base of Gajtan hill in tract **J-181**.

Small Finds:

Team J collected a total of **188** small finds from the Middle Paleolithic to Upper Paleolithic periods. **83.5%** of the material (**n=157**) was not identified with a period and labeled as "**UNKN**," "**unknown**," or left unlabeled. **1%** was associated with the Middle Paleolithic period (**n=2**); **3.2%** with the Upper Paleolithic periods (**n=6**); **0.5%** with the Prehistoric period (**n=1**); **1%** with the Roman period (**n=2**); **0.5%** with the Medieval period (**n=1**); and **10.1%** with the Modern period (**n=19**).

Regarding lithics, of the **151** identified, **14** were recorded as "**unidentifiable**," **13** as "**natural**," and **57** were not labeled. The remainder were typed as flake, cores, blades, end scrapers, etc. The bulk of the lithic material was located in close proximity to Gajtan (**S-011**) and Fashina (**S-013**); **93** were directly associated with survey tracts located in **S-011** and **2** with **S-012**. Of note, none of the material associated with either the Middle or Upper Paleolithic periods were among the **95**-total located at **S-011** or **S-013**.

Regarding all other types of small finds that had been dated, the Prehistoric period was represented by a "**ceramic**" loom weight found in tract **J-226**. Both of the Roman period small finds – **2** grinding stones – were associated with either **S-011** or **S-013** in tracts **J-250** and **J-260**, respectively. **3** additional grinding stones (undated) were associated with **S-011**. The Medieval period was represented in tract **J-267** by a stone mortar piece. Finally, the Modern period was fairly distributed throughout the zone and associated with small finds categorized as "**metal**," "**other**," or "**glass**," including objects like bullets,

porcelain dishware, or glass bottles. Notably, the **3** Modern period objects associated with **S-011** (tract **J-247**) and **S-013** (tract **J-260** and **J-263**) were metal bullets and projectile fragments.