

## Team A Report

### Field Season:

17 May – 05 June, 2010

### Filed by:

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### Last edited on 3/8/2018 by:

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### Team Members and Roles

Name	#	Affiliation	Status/Occupation	Team Role
Sylvia Deskaj	5	Michigan State University	PhD student, Anthropology	Team leader
Zamir Tafilica	1	Shkodra Historical Museum <i>As of 2017: Retired</i>	Director, Archaeologist, Ethnographer	Field walker, Ethnographer
Era Xhaferaj	9	University of Tirana	MA student, Archaeology <i>PhD, Archaeology</i>	Field walker
Besa Shkurti	8	University of Tirana	MA student, Archaeology	Field walker
Everest Laçi	10	University of Tirana	MA student, Archaeology	Field walker
Ersida Manushi	7	University of Tirana	MA student, Archaeology	Field walker
Brandy Buckler	6	Millsaps College University of Texas, Austin, <i>As of 2017: Berkeley2 Academy</i>	BA, Classics MA, Classics <i>Tutor</i>	Field walker
Michael Galaty	3	Millsaps College <i>As of 2017: University of Michigan; Museum of Anthropological Archaeology</i>	Professor, chair; <i>Professor, Director and Curator</i>	Visiting field walker

### 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 or the vegetation was so dense as to render survey impractical

### **Team Objectives:**

The team had 3 main objectives:

- To identify potential sites from all periods for site collection and/or test pits with 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 visit the open-air site of Bleran, mentioned by Anton Fistani (1993)
- To locate, map, and document all extant tumuli within the survey zone, as well as those previously destroyed by landowners and/or excavated by Aristotle Koka in the 1980s (see Koka 1990)
  - o To revisit all mapped tumuli in order to assess their current state of preservation and suitability for future excavation
  - o To input all collected data from this exercise in the Tumuli database

### **Survey Zone:**

Team A surveyed the Shtoj plains, south of Team B's zone (just south of the hillfort site **Kratul i Madh, S-001**) and east of Team C's zone, with the villages of Boks and Dragoç at the northeastern and northwestern corners, respectively. To the west, the zone was bounded by the road running south from Dragoç and, to the east/southeast, by the main road to Mes and the Kir River. A large complex of abandoned cooperative buildings west of the main road to Mes served as the southern boundary. Additionally, the zone included the fields north of the Boks/Dracoç road. Finally, the small hill Kratul i Vogel was located near the center of the survey zone. (*See the 2017 Map of Dragoç with all survey zones*)

The area surveyed by Team A contained primarily fields, many of which were flat, with the exception of some hillier ones in Boks village. Many of these fields were planted with cash crops such as tobacco, onions, maize, wheat, and beans and, as such, were fenced by their owners who had recently migrated from the surrounding hillside. Some of the fields were fallowed and planted with alfalfa. The tracts in this survey zone had an average visibility of **65%**.

### **Tracts, Sites, and Mounds:**

Team A surveyed a total of **241** tracts, covering a total of **1.42** square kilometers. The size of each tract varied depending on the natural characteristics and features of the landscape. Their average tract size was 0.59 hectares, with their largest tract recorded at 5.4 hectares and the smallest at 0.05.

Members from Team A, Deskaj and Galaty, visited the nearby village **Bleran** to determine its potential for future survey and/or site collection. Bleran, located just southwest of Team A's survey zone and on

the eastern side of the Kir River near Bardhaj (Team G's survey zone), had previously been identified by Anton Fistani (1993) in the 1980s as an open-air site associated with the Middle and Upper Paleolithic periods. Team A found and collected **1 piece of black flint** (the left margin cortical of a flake) from Bleran.<sup>1</sup>

Almost all of Team A's material from the Late Bronze Age to Late Roman periods were concentrated in the fields near Kratul i Vogël and **S-001**, Kratul i Madh, following similar density patterns. (See the Summary of Findings below for more detailed information.) Neighboring tracts **A-004** and **A-007**, located near a tumuli cluster in the fields with Kratul i Vogël, each had the team's highest concentration of sherds from the Classical to Hellenistic as well as Roman to Late Roman periods. Additional material from the Roman, Late Roman, and Late Iron Age were also found in or near those tracts. Due to the density of finds and their proximity to **S-001**, Team A hypothesizes that these ceramic fragments might mark the location of tile graves sites.

Team A identified, and later documented, **75 prehistoric tumuli** within the survey zone, most of which were visible in Google Earth. At the time of Koka's survey and excavations in the 1980s, he recorded 160 tumuli in Shtoj (Koka 1990) – a suspiciously round number. However, Team A agreed that the area had, at one point, likely contained more than **75** tumuli as some were destroyed in Koka's excavations and others, more recently, by the landowners themselves.

Each of the **75** tumuli were mapped, photographed, and described in detail over the course of two-days at the end of the 2010 field season. **48%** were labeled with a **"good"** state of preservation (**n=36**); **2.7%** with a **"fair"** state (**n=2**); **6.7%** with a **"medium"** state (**n=5**); and **6.7%** with a **"low"** state (**n=5**); **17.3%** with a **"poor"** state; and **9.3%** with **"gone"** or **"no longer visible"** due to removal (**n=7**). **9.3%** were not given a state of conservation; they were either left blank (**n=4**) or marked with **"n/a"** (**n=3**). While some were in good shape, most have been damaged by building activities or removed by farmers to open up their fields or mined and sold by owners as soil. Of the **75** tumuli, Team A recommends **4** for rescue excavation during later field seasons: **T-052**, **T-054**, **T-062**, and **T-065**.

### **Summary of Findings:** <sup>2</sup>

Regarding museum counts, Team A collected a total of **60** fine-textured; **112** coarse-textured; and **156** medium-textured ceramics, of which **87** were tile. The texture of **1** ceramic was labeled as **"thin."** Team A also collected **483** lithics;<sup>3</sup> and **17** other small finds, falling under the categories of **"weapon," "architectural block," "waste," "game," "ceramic," "metal,"** and **"bone."**

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<sup>1</sup> The SRCU for this piece is labeled "Bleran" in the Small finds database.

<sup>2</sup> 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."

<sup>3</sup> This count includes the lithic from Bleran. Additionally, **170** of the lithic entries were classified as "natural."

### *Ceramics:*

Team A collected **329** ceramics from almost all periods. **1.2%** were associated with the Late Bronze Age to Late Iron Age periods; **5.5%** with the Classical to Late Hellenistic periods; **12.8%** with the Early Roman to Late Roman periods; **12.2%** with the Medieval Byzantine to Late Medieval periods; and **68.1%** with the Post Medieval to Modern periods. Only **1** ceramic, or **0.3%**, was not identified with a period and labeled as “**Unkn.**” Ceramic artifacts were found in relatively small numbers throughout the region, concentrated in an arc running east to west, between Dragoç and Boks, paralleling the hills.

The Team’s Late Bronze Age (**1** ceramic), Early Iron Age (**1** ceramic), Iron Age (**1** ceramic), and Late Iron Age (**1** ceramic) finds were few, but each were found in the fields near Kratul i Vogël or in those near the northwestern base of **S-001**, Kratul i Madh. The Late Bronze Age ceramic was located in Tract **A-144** near the northwestern base of **S-001**. The remainder were located in the fields, west/southwest of Kratul i Madh, near Kratul i Vogël. Notably, the Early Iron Age ceramic was located at the base of Kratul i Vogël in Tract **A-094**. The Iron Age and Late Iron Age ceramics were located nearby and near tumuli clusters in Tracts **A-028** and **A-004**, respectively.

The Team’s Classical (**8** ceramics), Late Classical (**3** ceramics), Hellenistic (**5** ceramics), and Late Hellenistic (**2** ceramics) finds were few; however, many of them were located in tract **A-004** (near a large cluster of tumuli) with the **1** Late Iron Age ceramic. From these periods, Tract **A-004** contained **5** Classical period ceramics, all **3** of the Late Classical period ceramics, and **3** of the Hellenistic ceramics. Also, of note, **1** Classical ceramic and **1** Hellenistic ceramic were recovered from Tracts **A-144** and **A-140**, located in the fields near the northwestern base of **S-001**.

The Early Roman (**1** ceramic), Roman (**35** ceramics), and Late Roman (**6** ceramics) finds were concentrated in the fields near **S-001** and Kratul i Vogël, in a pattern similar to the Late Bronze to Late Iron Age periods and Classical to Late Hellenistic periods. A large cluster of Roman to Late Roman material (**13** ceramics total) was recovered from Tracts **A-004, 007, 008, 010, and 022**. A smaller cluster (of **2** ceramics total) was found nearby in tracts **A-015 and 016**. Around and near Kratul i Vogël, Team A found another large cluster of Roman and Late Roman material (**11** ceramics total) in tracts **A-093, 090, 044, 051, 056, 028, and 033**. To the northwest of Kratul i Vogël, the team found a small cluster with **1** Early Roman and **1** Roman ceramic in tract **A-067**. Finally, the team found a small to medium cluster of Roman material (**5** ceramics total) in Tracts **A-144, 141, 146, and 140** – at the northwestern base of **S-001**.

The team’s Medieval (**39** ceramics) and Late Medieval (**6** ceramics) finds as well as Post Medieval (**179** ceramics), Early Modern (**1** ceramic), and Modern (**42** ceramics) finds composed the bulk of Team A’s ceramic finds and followed the overall ceramic density pattern<sup>4</sup>. This ceramic distribution is most likely due to the proximity of modern villages.

### *Small Finds:*

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<sup>4</sup> Medieval, Late Medieval, Post Medieval, and Early Modern ceramics were found in relatively small numbers throughout the region, concentrated in an arc running east to west, between Dragoç and Boks, paralleling the hills.

Team A collected a total of **500** small finds from the Lower Paleolithic to Modern periods. **88.8%** of the material (**n=444**) was not identified with a period and left unlabeled. **7.4%** was associated with the Lower to Upper Paleolithic periods (including Gravettian and Epigravettian) (**n=37**); **0.8%** with the Mesolithic period (**n=4**); **0.2%** with the Prehistoric period (**n=1**); **1.6%** with the Hellenistic to Late Roman periods (**n=8**); and **1.2%** with the Medieval to Modern periods (**n=6**).

Regarding lithics, the bulk of the team's identified material was associated with the Middle Paleolithic (**19** lithics) and Upper Paleolithic (**17** lithics) periods. They also collected **1** lithic from the Lower Paleolithic in **Tract A-008**; **4** lithics from the Mesolithic period, 2 of which were in tract **A-193**; and **1** modern-era gun flint – French imported ca. 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century – in tract **A-136**. The density of Middle and Upper Paleolithic material was expected as Team A's zone was within proximity of Gajtan Cave, a site previously excavated by Anton Fistani (1989) in the 1980s.

Regarding all other categories of small finds that were dated, the Prehistoric object was a mudbrick identified as "**waste**." The small finds associated with the Hellenistic period (**n=2**) was a "**ceramic**" spindle-whorl and a disc-like "**game**." The Antiquity to Roman period material included **3** nails ("**metal**"), **2** whetstones ("**stone**"), and **1** grinding stone ("**stone**"). The Medieval period was represented by **1** nail ("**metal**") and the remainder of the Modern materials included "**metal**" objects: **2** lead ingots/bullets, an iron barrel ring, and a part of a mechanism.

Finally, of note, **2** human bone fragments were identified in tract **A-174**; neither were associated with a period.

#### *Tumuli:*

The map of tumuli provides some identifiable location patterns. They were not located in the area around Kratul i Vogel, located at the center of Team A's survey zone. Team A speculates that the hill, which resembles a large burial mound, might have been significant (possibly sacred) to former residents to the area. Additionally, tumuli appear to be clustered. These clusters may indicate family or lineage groups.

#### **Works Cited:**

Fistani, Anton. 1989. "Gjetje të paleolitit në afërsi të shpellës së Gajtanit (Shkodër)." *Iliria* 19 (1): 5-23.

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Koka, Aristotle. 1990. "Tuma 6 e Shtojit." *Iliria* 20 (1): 27-73.