

SUMMARY

THE HILLFORT IN OŠANIĆI: THE TRANSFORMATION OF A PREHISTORIC HILLFORT SETTLEMENT INTO A PROTO-URBAN/URBAN SETTLEMENT

Boško MARIJAN

The "Proto-Historic" period of the Iron Age culture in East Herzegovina (and South Dalmatia) covers mostly the 5th and 4th centuries BC, when the Greek and Italic influences grew stronger while traits of independence faded, cultural expression became unified and new production procedures and materials were introduced. This was only an introduction to a more complete Hellenisation which occurred in the last three centuries BC, centuries we can no longer associate with an Iron Age culture but which we should rather call the times of "Illyrian Hellenism." The end of the Iron Age in the area and an almost complete abandonment of the centuries-long history towards the end of the 4th century BC and the beginning of the 3rd century BC is illustrated in a particular way by the construction of a proto-urban and urban settlement with all the characteristics of a Hellenistic centre at the hillfort site of Gradina in Ošanići near Stolac in East Herzegovina.

The prehistoric hillfort settlement at the location of Gradina in Ošanići, typical of the Bronze Age and the Iron Age (model: prominent hillfort area with a limit tumulus + terraced slopes below the hillfort), was transformed during "Illyrian Hellenism" following an almost standard pattern of proto-urban/urban settlements typical of Greek-Hellenistic cities (model: prominent citadel area - acropolis protected by fortification walls + a residential and crafts area on terraced slopes + a residential and crafts area with an agora in front of the citadel). With this, the adoption and application of the building and city planning standards of the Greek Hellenistic world (alongside other elements of the material and spiritual cultures) observed at Gradina in Ošanići, or, in other words, on the territory of the Daorsi in East Herzegovina, is the more surprising since the place was not a Greek emporium or colony. We are talking about an indigenous Illyrian community completely oriented towards the Mediterranean and towards the heritage of the Greek Hellenistic culture in early antiquity.

The process of transformation of a prehistoric settlement into a proto-urban/urban settlement spared some of the older elements (such as the limit tumulus or terraced slopes below the hillfort, the traditional way of building or spatial organisation). However, considering everything, the ground plan of the settlement at the location of Gradina in Ošanići near Stolac, as it was in the last three centuries BC, represents a novelty on the East Adriatic coast and its hinterland. Actually, it represents a new model of settlement which was undoubtedly based on Greek construction methods and city planning. This means that on this site we encounter new types of houses and, of course, a dwelling organisation in new circumstances.