

**Shala Valley Project  
Final Report of the 2006 Field Season**

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With contributions by:

Robert Schon  
Charles Watkinson  
Antonia Young

**INTRODUCTION**

During the period June 15-July 15, 2006, and with the financial support of Millsaps College and a private donor, Bud Robinson, we led a team of 18 archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians (Table 1) to Theth, Albania, located in the Shala Valley in the remote north of the country. Our primary goals for the 2006 field season were 1) to conduct intensive archaeological survey in the lower half of the Shala Valley, 2) to answer various outstanding questions as regards the architectural and cultural history of Theth (surveyed in 2005, see Figure 1), and 3) to conduct limited test excavations at the archaeological site of Grunas (Site 006), discovered in 2005. Our project's key theoretical question addresses the issue of isolation versus interaction: to what degree through time have the people of Shala been isolated from and/or interacted with the "outside world," and what factors might dictate isolation and/or interaction?

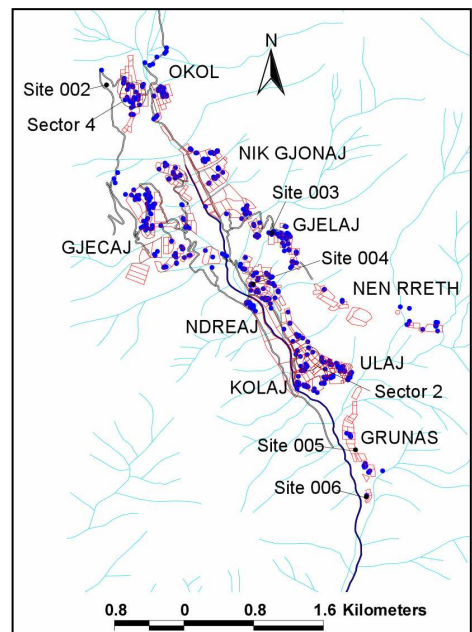


Figure 1: 2005 survey region. Tracts in red, structures blue dots, neighborhoods in capital letters.

Our focus in this report is the archaeological research. We review the results of historical and ethnographic fieldwork in less detail, and primarily as they relate to the archaeological record. Discussions of project methodology have been incorporated below where appropriate.

Table 1: 2006 Shala Valley Project Personnel<sup>1</sup>

Gwen Backwell, volunteer field technician, Liverpool, United Kingdom  
John Backwell, volunteer field technician, Liverpool, United Kingdom  
Michael Galaty, project co-director, Millsaps College, Jackson, MS, USA

<sup>1</sup> We also would like to extend thanks to the people of Shala, in particular Prek Harusha, mayor of Theth, and most especially Fran Frashnishta and his family.

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Jane Hargreaves, volunteer field technician, Yorkshire, United Kingdom  
Richard Hargreaves, volunteer field technician, Yorkshire, United Kingdom  
Ols Lafe, project co-director, Institute of Archaeology, Tirana, Albania  
Jesse Quinn, student field technician, Colgate University, Colgate, NY, USA  
Robert Schon, archaeological survey leader, Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA  
Agnes Sherman, volunteer field technician, Princeton, NJ, USA  
Roger Sherman, volunteer field technician, Washington, DC, USA  
Fran Shkafja, workman, Theth (Gjelaj), Shala, Albania  
Zamir Tafilica, project co-director, Shkodër Historical Museum, Shkodër, Albania  
Besmir Vukaj, interpreter, Shkodër, Albania  
Charles Watkinson, archaeological survey leader, ASCSA, Princeton, NJ, USA  
Chelsi West, student field technician, Millsaps College, Jackson, MS, USA  
Helen Winnifrith, volunteer field technician, Shipston-on-Stour, United Kingdom  
Tom Winnifrith, historical consultant, Shipston-on-Stour, United Kingdom  
Antonia Young, ethnographer, Bradford University, Bradford, United Kingdom

**REPORT OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC TEAM<sup>2</sup>**

During the first two weeks of the fieldwork season, Antonia Young continued (with the assistance of Besmir Vukaj as interpreter) interviewing inhabitants of some of the six mehallë of Thethi, returning to six families from last year, and including a further eight families. The questions asked were additional to those of last year, and a pattern of attempting to talk with the elderly heads of households, whose memories would bring us responses covering a longer time period, was repeated.

The questions asked in 2006 fall into two categories. First, a series of ten questions were asked in order to expand upon and clarify outstanding issues of interest from the 2005 field season. The initial list of questions was compiled by Wayne Lee and the data gathered are of particular importance to ongoing ethnohistorical studies of Shala, architectural studies in particular. Second, a series of questions was asked regarding economic development of the valley with a focus on tourism. This report focuses primarily on the first set of questions.

1. What can you tell me about the destruction of kullas? Was there a deliberate program of such destruction by the government? Did people destroy them on their own? Why? When?

Çmund të më tregoni për shkatërrimin e kullave? A kishte ndonjë program të psoaçëm shteti për shkatërrimin e kullave? Apo mos i shkatërruan njerëzit me dëshirën e tyre? Pse dhe Kur?

This question was denied definitively by the first five households to whom it was posed. They all stated, however, that although there was no intentional destruction, there was

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<sup>2</sup> This section is the work of Antonia Young. Interview questions were translated into Albanian by Mentor Mustafa. Questions 9 and 10 were added in the field by Zamir Tafilica and therefore are not translated into Albanian. The tourism data will be used by the Balkans Peace Park: <http://www.balkanspeacepark.org/>.

also no encouragement nor means to maintain them, and for that reason many had crumbled into states beyond reasonable repair. It may be noted that Gloyer states in her tourist guidebook that “King Zog had many of them [kullas] destroyed, as part of his campaign to modernize the country (and incidentally, to punish the Catholic clans who opposed him). During Communism, those kullas that remained were used as silos or barns until they fell apart from lack of maintenance, or were dismantled so that the stone could be used for other buildings.”<sup>3</sup> This is confirmed both by Pearson’s description of Zog’s eagerness to eradicate bloodfeuds,<sup>4</sup> and by a 90-year-old of Abat who recalled seeing a kulla set on fire when he was a child (he claimed this was the third and last time that that happened).

2. When and by whom were the irrigation canals around the village built? Have they “always” been there? What role did the communist govt. play in their construction, expansion, or maintenance?

Kur u ndërtuan kanalet vaditëse përrreth fshatin dhe nga kush? A kanë qënë kanalet e sotme vaditëse atje ku ishin “gjithmonë”? Ç’farë roli luajti shteti komunist për ndërtimin, zgjerimin, ose mirëmbajtjen e kanaleve vaditëse?

On the question of the maintenance of irrigation canals, there was again unanimous agreement: that prior to Communism, the canals were smaller, using natural sources, that a much greater use was made of the sources under Communism, with considerable construction, using concrete, but that these latter had been rather poorly maintained, though still used, following the fall of Communism.

3. The mëhalla each seem to have their own mill. Where is the one for Gjeçaj? If Gjeçaj does not have a mill, why? Were/are mills privately or communally owned and operated, both before, during, and after Communism?

Duket sikur çdo mëhallë kishte mullirin e vetë për përdorim. Ku është mulliri i Gjeçajve? Nëse Gjeçajt nuk kanë mullirin e tyre, pse? A ishin/janë dhe përdorëshin mullinjtë si pronë private ose e përbashkët para, gjatë, dhe mbas komunizmit?

On the question of the mills, there was slightly less unanimous agreement, though all could tell that the Gjeçaj mill, still in use (and we were able to observe maize being ground, several times), is the one on the land claimed as Gjeçaj (next to Ndue Blini’s wood workshop). This mill has crumbled at one corner since last year, so that it is now possible to observe its working from that damaged corner, without need to enter through the door. Most people claim that the mills are communally owned, and maintained, though there were a few who claimed that they are now privately owned. Whereas last year we understood that there were six mills in use, various reports seemed to indicate this year that, while there had at one time been eight, now only four are operational. We

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<sup>3</sup> Gillian Gloyer, *Albania* (Bradt Publications, UK, 2005), p. 170. It is not clear where Gloyer came by this information.

<sup>4</sup> Owen Pearson, *Albania and King Zog: Independence, Republic and Monarchy 1908-1939* (The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2004).

observed one man spend a good part of a day (10am-2pm) tending the Gjeçaj mill. This followed two days of co-operative (with a neighbor) hulling of last year's corn. The corn he ground that day, dropping a single corn kernel at a time, yielded a sackful of cornflour which he observed tasted much better than the flour one can buy.

4. During the Communist era, how much freedom of movement (not "travel" but permanent relocation) was there? Could sons go to Shkodër or elsewhere for work? Did they return after a few years, or did they stay there for long periods? If they did move out to work, what kinds of work did they do?

Gjatë periudhës së komunizmit, ishin të lire njerëzit të lëviznin dhe të banonin diku tjetër përgjithmonë? Mund të shkonin djemtë me punë në Shkodër apo diku tjetër me vite të tëra ose përgjithmonë? Ktheheshin ata mbas disa vitesh apo qëndronin atje me vite të tëra? Në qoftë se largoheshin me punë, me çfarë profesione punësoheshin?

Almost universally we were informed that it was impossible to leave Thethi for work in Shkodër or elsewhere under Communism, unless one knew someone influential. One man said, however, that he was re-located (not by choice) to work in Shkodër and that he worked there for 14 years, in a factory, managing to get home about once a month at his own cost and only with permission.

5. Have mehallas "migrated" (e.g. Gjeçaj)? That is, have some neighborhoods moved from one part of Theth to another within living memory?

Në bazë të kujtesës suaj, kanë lëvizur trojet e mëhallave nga një vend i fshatit në tjetrin? Si për shëmbull, Gjeçajt?

There seemed to be little memory of whole mehallas migrating. According to one or two respondents, Gjeçaj spans the river Theth because the Gjeçaj family became too numerous and expanded west (though none could date this, and Gjon Gjeçaj himself claims to have had 11 [he said, 150 years] generations, living in his present location).

6. Are newer houses often built *on* the foundations of older homes, or do people prefer to start fresh on a new site, even if nearby?

A ndërtohen shtëpitë e reja në themelet e atyre të vjetrave, apo njerëzit preferojnë të ndërtojnë shtëpi të reja në vend të ri afër shtëpive të vjetra?

All those questioned stated that the latter was certainly preferable, but that economically it was not always possible, and that this accounts for the fact that several present houses are built on older foundations.

7. Did the creation of the cooperative barns lead people to stop building their own barns? Therefore, were many of the barns we see today built after the cooperative was abandoned? (with some predating the cooperative)?



A i ndaloi njerëzit të ndërtonin kasollet (stallat) e tyre private, kur u ndërtuan stallat e kooperativës? Kasollet që shohim sot, janë ndërtuar mbas falimentimit të kooperativës?

With the advent of Communist collectivization, individual families no longer had reason to build large barns. There had been 13 communal barns built during the Communist period, and all animals were collectivized, except for one cow per family for its own use. Any barns built by individual families during this period were only large enough to house their single cow. We were unable to clarify further whether large barns still standing were of the pre- or post-Communist period. We were told however, that all the communal barns were now in ruins.

8. Were terraces built, fixed, or expanded under Communism? Is it possible to identify an “old” terrace versus a Communist one?

U ndërtuan, mirëmbajtën, dhe u shtuan taracat gjatë periudhës komuniste? Mund të dallohen taracat që u ndërtuan gjatë komunizmit nga ato që ishin ndërtuar më parë?

As we did not ourselves interview families living in houses with smaller (older) terraces, it was difficult to convey our query as to whether these terraces were fixed or expanded under Communism. Everyone we spoke to could only understand the term “terrace” as relating to the large ones which can be seen over much of the hillsides. Some commented that “actions” – cooperative efforts to build these terraces under Communism – was really just make-work, in an attempt to reassure villagers that they were usefully employed. One interviewee commented that the apple-tree plantations on some of these terraces were a total failure and that they only fruit once in five years (we observed that many had broken branches from the severe winter weather, and clearly the growing season is too short for this species of apple). Plum trees, however, all over Thethi produce enormously plentiful fruit (to be used later in the season for *raki* and jam making).

9. Transhumance.

All respondents confirmed that every family used to have a large contingent who went up to the summer pastures with their animals. There they would construct rough dwellings. Conflicting annual dates were given for this practice, ranging between March and November, with one interviewee stating that 13th August was the exact date always used for return to the village. It seemed that the practice was continued under Communism, but that since then few families have sufficient animals to merit the movement to summer pastures. In addition, most families are so depleted (by migration) that it would be hard to keep the Thethi homes running if many were to go up to the upper pastures. Concerning “agreements” over the use of these pastures, we were unable to find anyone who could tell us anything about it. They all claimed *either* that all the land was communal and they all shared it with no disagreement, *or* that all the land was owned (and still is), so everyone used their own land. Several claim to own some part of upper pastures, but feel it is of little value now that they have no use for it.

10. Tribal organization and land ownership.

Everyone interviewed claimed to know everyone in the village, saying there is no one living in Thethi who is not descended by a long ancestral lineage (besides, of course, the exogamous wives brought from nearby villages, or from Shkodër). One man commented that he and his mother (the only two of a large family who return to Thethi from Shkodër for the summer to work their land), feel somewhat ostracized for having deserted Thethi (although they should not feel alone, since there are now only 14 families who stayed through the winter of 2005-06, of the 249 families who lived year-round in Thethi in 1990). None now stay year-round in Okol.

During the period of 1948-57 one family was forced out of their house (to move in with nearby relatives) while their home was turned into the school, until the current one was completed (1957). It is general knowledge that no one should sell their land to outsiders (and we were told there have already been some keen investor/buyers trying to purchase). One family even feels they must not divide their own 10 dynyms, even though they now only use three of them.

**REPORT OF THE ETHNOHISTORIC TEAM<sup>5</sup>**

In 2006, a small ethnohistoric survey (EHS) team sought answers to several interesting questions about landscape and land use in Theth raised during the 2005 field season (Figure 1). During the first week of the field season we mapped and studied terraces, paths, and irrigation canals. The results of this work led us to a deeper understanding of the growth and organization of various Theth neighborhoods.

*Terraces*

Much of the landscape of Shala has been terraced. In 2005, field surveyors noted terraces, but little effort was made to map them systematically. Questions regarding terraces put to locals typically are met with ambivalence or confusion, and in Theth, terracing is usually attributed to Communism (see previous section). In 2006, we surveyed and mapped terraces in the neighborhood of Upper Gjelij in order to determine whether there might be differences in size, construction, and location of terraces, and whether these differences might be chronological in origin.



Figure 2: Extensive terraces, Theth.

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<sup>5</sup> This section is the work of Michael Galaty, Robert Schon, and Zamir Tafilica, with the additional assistance of Wayne Lee.

Generally speaking, there seem to be two types of terrace in Theth: very large, extensive terraces, long and wide, walled with small, poorly- or un-shaped stones, or no stones at all (Figure 2), and smaller, taller terraces, often walled with very large, shaped stones (Figure 3). The former type is typically found at the edges of neighborhoods in areas now reverting to pasture or forest. They probably were built under Communism, as their construction would have necessitated large amounts of communal labor, or earth-moving equipment. It is these terraces that locals fixate on when asked about terraces and terracing. Almost all such terraces are no longer being maintained and are beginning to disintegrate; for example, last year's earthquake did a large amount of damage to the extensive terrace system, none of which has been repaired. The latter type of terrace is built between and around houses in many neighborhoods in Shala. This is especially true of neighborhoods we believe to be relatively old, such as Ulaj and Kolaj in Theth. Often, very old houses are themselves built atop such terraces. Some newer neighborhoods, such as Gjeçaj, do not include this latter type of terrace and it is not surprising that individuals from these neighborhoods do not concern themselves much with maintaining terraces (see previous section). The smaller, neighborhood terraces rarely collapse and require very little maintenance; by and large, they were not damaged during the 2005 earthquake. They often incorporate other landscape features such as irrigation canals and sunken paths (i.e. *shtegu*).

Whereas our terrace study was limited to one neighborhood, Upper Gjelaj, we believe the results hold generally for all of Theth. Neighborhoods surveyed in 2006, such as Gak and Gimaj, which are located down valley to the south, may be as old or older than those in Theth, and many incorporate the same small terrace systems. The terraces in Gimaj Kodër, for example, are truly impressive (Figure 4). Unlike Theth, however, locals in Gimaj Kodër assert that their neighborhood is and always has been known for the size and quality of its terraces. In fact, Gimaj Kodër resident Pashku Ndue Biga (interviewed on 07/08/2006) is a self-described terrace specialist, as was his father before him. He is hired by local villagers to repair terraces and asserted that terrace walls in his village, at least, are “hundreds of years old.”



Figure 3: Neighborhood terrace, Ulaj, Theth

It is our working hypothesis that the small neighborhood terraces (and those at SVP Site S006 Grunas) are older than the extensive terraces and may have been constructed as original neighborhoods grew and prospered. The extensive terrace system indeed was probably built under Communism, as locals insist. We plan to test this proposition in the



future using various geophysical approaches, including but not limited to magnetic susceptibility studies and radiocarbon dating of terrace soil and soil humates.

### *Paths*

Paths (Albanian *shteg*) of various kinds wind throughout Theth, connecting households and neighborhoods, and providing access to various natural resources. As with terraces, different kinds of paths are found in different neighborhoods. A true *shteg* is usually sunk a meter, or more, into the ground and lined on either side with stones (Figure 5). Locals say that a good *shteg* allows a man to move from place to place on the landscape without exposing himself to hostile fire. Gjeçaj, which we assume to be one of the younger neighborhoods, has only one true *shteg*, which runs from one end of the neighborhood to the other. Rrogam, about a four-hour walk from Theth over the Valbona pass (visited by Michael Galaty and Charles Watkinson on 07/09/06), was built about 70 years ago by settlers from Theth. It has no true *shtegs* (and no type two terraces; see above) that we could find; perhaps they were unnecessary because blood feuds did not occur during Communism, or it may be that not enough time had passed for deeply incised paths to form or be built. Older neighborhoods, on the other hand, incorporate intricate networks of paths. We mapped the *shtegs* in two Theth neighborhoods, Upper Gjellaj and Kolaj-Ulaj.



Figure 4: Pashku Ndue Biga of Gimaj Kodër in front of large terrace wall beneath his house.

On first inspection, the paths in Gjellaj and Kolaj-Ulaj are superficially similar (compare Figures 6 and 7), but the system in Kolaj-Ulaj is somewhat more complex. In order to compare the path systems, we used a simple form of linear network analysis based on graph theory.<sup>6</sup> The path system in Upper Gjellaj is composed of 13 vertices and 12 edges. Its Beta index, or degree of connectivity, is .92.<sup>7</sup> The Gjellaj

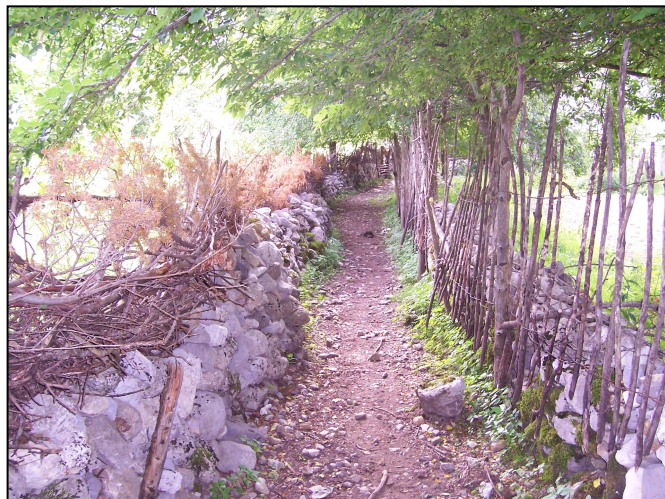


Figure 5: Shtëg, Kolaj, Theth

<sup>6</sup> Peter Haggett, *Locational Analysis in Human Geography* (St. Martin's, New York, 1966), pp. 236-240.

<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of the analysis, a 'vertex' was defined as any point where paths diverge or where a path intersects a house compound. An 'edge' was defined as the path connecting two vertices regardless of

path system can be described as a “tree” graph (i.e. branching, containing no circuits). Trees typically indicate low connectivity and minimal system complexity.<sup>8</sup> The total length of the Gjelij path system is 652 meters and its diameter is 456 meters. Its shape index is 1.42.<sup>9</sup> Shape indices of 1 indicate an underdeveloped network. Rail systems in Third World countries typically have shape indices of 1, while those in developed nations may be as high as 30.<sup>10</sup> Kolaj-Ulaj is composed of 17 vertices and 16 edges and its Beta index is .94, also a tree. The length of the system is 1388 meters, its diameter is 1046 meters, and its shape index is 1.32, also undeveloped. When Kolaj-Ulaj is split into its two constituent neighborhoods, Kolaj and Ulaj (which adds an additional boundary vertex and edge), the Beta index for Ulaj changes to 1.125 (Kolaj’s Beta is .9). This indicates the Ulaj system’s greater degree of connectivity and circular shape. A graph analysis of the Gjeçaj shteg, which runs in a straight line between the upper and lower portions of the neighborhood past several houses, produces a Beta index well below 1 and is the least complex graph of the four.

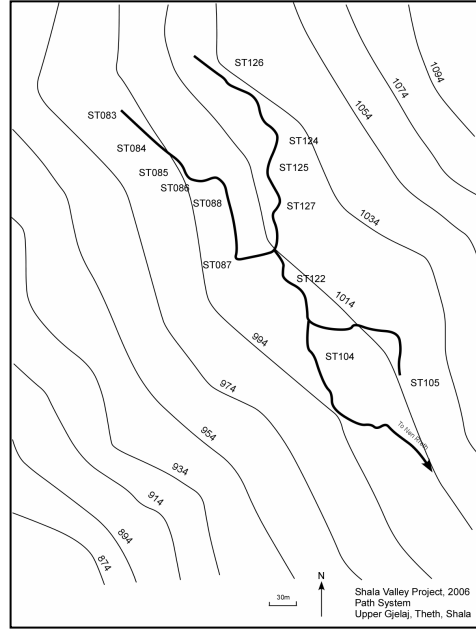


Figure 6: Path system, Upper Gjelij.

We attribute the differences in the four path systems analyzed to chronological variation. Ulaj may be the oldest of the neighborhoods, followed by Kolaj and Upper Gjelij, and lastly Gjeçaj. These results fit well the results of the 2005 architectural survey, which found the greatest degree of architectural complexity in Ulaj. Ulaj also possesses very complex terrace and irrigation systems.

*Irrigation Systems*

As with terraces in Theth, there are two types of irrigation canal: large canals

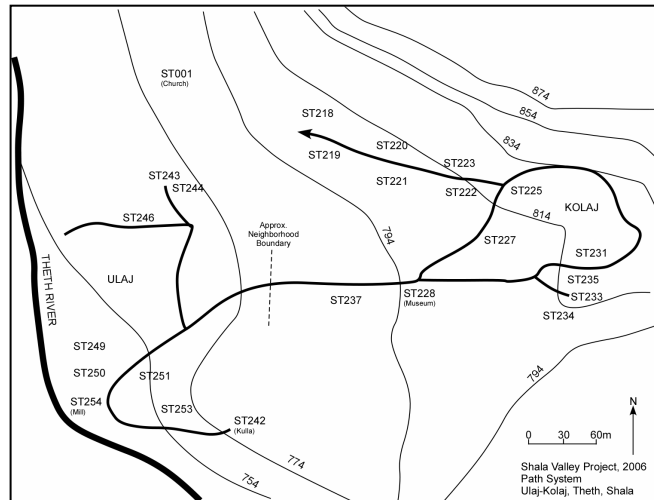


Figure 7: Path system, Kolaj-Ulaj, Theth

turns. Degree of connectivity is measured by the Beta index of the graph, which is the number of edges divided by number of vertices.

<sup>8</sup> Haggett, 1966, p. 238.

<sup>9</sup> The diameter of a graph is defined as the length of the edges in the shortest route between the two most distant vertices in the graph. A graph’s shape index is total edge length divided by diameter.

<sup>10</sup> Haggett, 1966, p. 240.

lined with concrete, built by the Communists, and small, stone-lined or dirt canals of indeterminate age (see previous section). Canals (*Albania vada*) deliver water to fields, but also serve to channel and remove excess runoff. Whereas many neighborhoods, such as Gjeçaj and Gjelij, have abundant water from streams and springs, most do not possess a system of canals to distribute efficiently the water. The most complex irrigation system in Theth is located in Ulaj and was mapped in its entirety (Figure 8). Many of the canals are stoned-lined and pass through house compounds on their way to fields. Some pass directly under walls and in rare instances, structures. Irrigation systems to the south, in Gak and Gimaj, are much like those in Ulaj (see next section re. irrigation systems in Lower Shala). As was the case with paths, we attribute in part the complexity of its irrigation system to Ulaj's greater age as compared to other Theth neighborhoods. Other, possibly old neighborhoods in Theth, such as Okol and Lower Gjelij, possess simple irrigation systems, none as complex as Ulaj's. It may also be therefore that Ulaj is in a better position geographically to practice intensive irrigation.

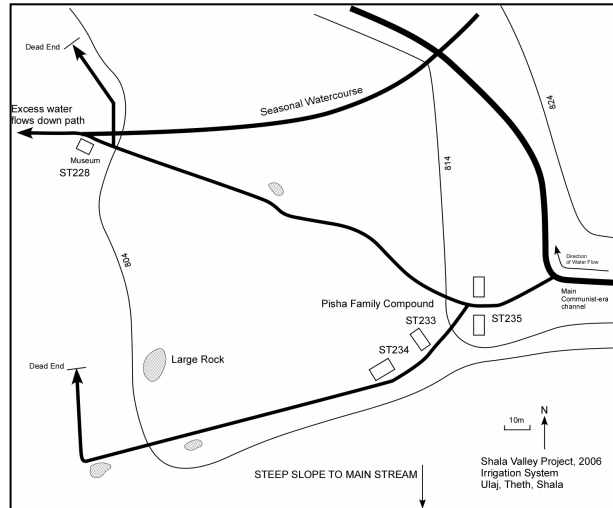


Figure 8: Irrigation system, Ulaj, Theth

## REPORT OF THE INTENSIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY TEAM

During 2006, two Intensive Archaeological Survey (IAS) teams were fielded (Figure 9). The first, led by Charles Watkinson and Ols Lafe, completed around 20 days of active fieldwork surveying the areas of Ndërlysj (Tracts 001–068), Gak (Tracts 069–130), Lekaj Musha (Tracts 131–187), Gimaj Kodër (Tracts 189–208, Tracts 237–247), and Gimaj Marvataj (Tracts 209–236, Tracts 248–265). The second, led by Michael Galaty and Zamir Tafilica, completed 5 days of survey in Gak (Tracts 500–509), Gimaj Pjeshullaj (Tracts 510–524), Gimaj Kodër (Tracts 543–550) and Nënnavriq Dakaj (Tracts 526–542, Tracts 551–580). Almost all members of the project participated in the intensive survey activities at some point, showing admirable dedication to the task, especially in the second half of the project where the walk before even starting tracts was a one-hour trek uphill.

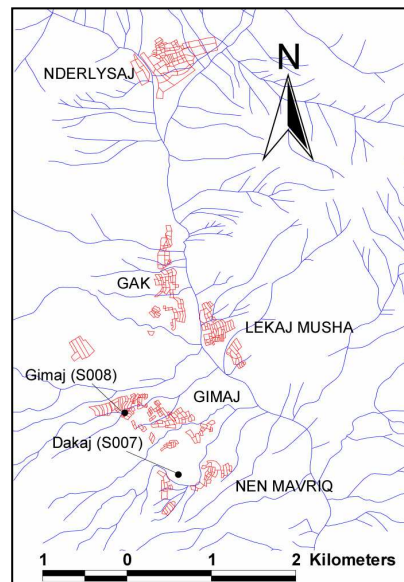


Figure 9: 2006 survey region. Tracts in red, neighborhoods in capital letters.

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The aim of the IAS teams in 2006 was to continue to survey the cultivated areas of the Shala valley to the south of Theth in order to assess the cultural resources of the area across all periods of history and prehistory. Ndërllysaj covers a bounded area of relatively flat land and is the point where the Theth river joins a stream from the steep Kaprej valley to form the Shala river (the name Ndërllysaj means literally “between rivers and oaks”). The rest of the areas surveyed are in the wider valley that ends at the Gates of Shala; Lekaj Musha covering a low-lying wedge of land on the east side of the valley, and Gak, Gimaj, and Nënnavriq on the western slopes.

While the communities surveyed are divided from each other, and internally, by natural features such as river channels, there is a great deal of interconnection; administratively, historically, and economically. Ndërllysaj, Gak, and Kaprej appear to be treated as a single administrative unit, with a *kryeplak* living in Gak. Although initially part of Theth and traditionally settled by families from Theth, a decision was taken to divide Ndërllysaj several hundred years ago (notebook, pp. 362–363). Lekaj Musha, Gak, Gimaj and Nënnavriq share an origin story tracing their first inhabitants to the Shiroka area near Lake Shkodra and ascribing their migration north to religious persecution under the Ottomans (notebook, p. 488). Gimaj has seven neighborhoods; Camaj, Xhaferaj, Marvataj, Kodër, Rrogam, Radojë, and Pjeshullaj (the list ordered proceeding upwards from the Shala River towards Mt. Biga). The *kryeplak* lives in Kodër (pp. 550–552). In a similar way to Theth, Gimaj is treated as a single *fis* with neighborhoods tracing their descent to three brothers, arriving in the area ten generations ago; Stanish, Zog, and Nik Gimaj (p. 584). Although individuals within neighborhoods tend to be related, social relations between neighborhoods are kept strong by a tradition of choosing godparents from other neighborhoods (notebook, p. 551), and by using common cemeteries (Kodër and Rrogam use one above the neighborhood shop (tract 247), the other neighborhoods traditionally used an overgrown cemetery behind the school, but now use the cemetery near the church behind Dakaj). Common agricultural interests, such as irrigation (discussed further below), also unite neighborhoods; a farmer in Marvataj explained how he needs to collaborate with neighbors in Kodër to decide the order in which irrigation channels are used.

The methodology used during the survey process was the same as that described in the 2005 report, although more systematic attention was paid to structures this year in the absence of systematic architectural survey. Very few ceramic, lithic, or other finds were recovered during the survey process, despite an expectation that more material evidence might be found in the more southern areas of the Shala valley where the historic sites of Dakaj and Abat are located and a tradition of earlier occupation than in Theth exists. The visibility of the earth surface was more than 50% in 42% of the 347 tracts surveyed and the lack of modern ceramic finds was as noticeable as that of any more ancient periods—although glazed white ceramics and modern tile were recorded as carefully as any other find. Although the whole Alpine region presents challenges for the intensive survey methodology developed mostly in the Mediterranean (increased deposition and erosion of soils by the plentiful water and more verdant vegetation cover, for example), the general picture that seems to emerge is either of very little human activity in most of the area surveyed and/or of a pattern of behavior involving the very limited discard of ceramic,

metal, or stone artifacts. While drinks cans, polythene bags, and the ubiquitous single rubber shoe are sadly found more and more in the landscape, even broken plastic buckets are carefully mended with twine, and the small number of ceramic cups and jugs used in houses often display signs of having been repaired multiple times.

Because without many diagnostically ancient finds, very little can be said about the pre-20th century history of the Shala valley, the remainder of this report will focus on recent material culture and social history gathered through interviews with local inhabitants and observation of their environment.

Around 100 houses were recorded during survey of which 51% were vacant (roofed and locked), 12% ruined, and 36% occupied. This reflects a pattern of depopulation similar to that identified by the Ethnohistoric Survey team in Theth in 2005 where 44% of houses were vacant, 15% ruined, and 41% occupied. By July most absentee owners planning to spend the summer in the valley would surely have arrived, and the majority of vacant houses were identified by interviewees as belonging to neighbors who had left the valley 5–10 years ago and were now as likely to be in the USA, Italy, Greece, or the UK as in other parts of Albania. Most houses were being kept in some state of repair by relatives (one man in Ndërlysj acted as caretaker for at least six houses), and the land around was often being rented by those who remained in the valley. 46% of the cultivable area surveyed was covered with grass and, although much of this was being mown, this figure may also be a good proxy for the degree of depopulation. Fewer and fewer of the summer inhabitants stay for the winter: in Ndërlysj only eight households (out of 35 in 1990) are present in the summer, and only two remain in the winter (notebook, p. 354); in Gak only seven households remain in the summer (out of 30 around 1990) and again only a couple remain in the winter (notebook, pp. 396 and 416); in Lekaj Musha out of 18 households still living in the area, only four stay the winter (notebook p. 474 and p. 520); in Gimaj Kodër out of 22 households, 13 stay the winter (notebook p. 532). Those who do not stay move down to Shkodër in mid-October, generally returning in April.

In 2005 the Ethnohistoric Survey team started to seriate key architectural features of houses in Theth and identify waves of building activity in the valley. Their initial conclusions appear to be strongly supported by the brief survey of structures conducted by the IAS team during fieldwork in 2006. In the case of older buildings (around 100 years old), blocked or still-open *frengji* remain a distinctive feature, while “offset foundations” characterize houses especially of the 1970s and 1980s. Interviewees who provided construction dates in the 1980s for such houses also suggested, as did the 2005 report of the Ethnohistoric Survey team, that the loosening of Communist control contributed to a surge in new construction, by opening the possibility of building houses in the center of productive agricultural land.

A new contribution of 2006 work was the identification of some interesting differences in architecture between neighborhoods. Firstly, the materials used for roofing tend to vary as one moves down the valley. Although some houses are roofed with wood as in Theth, the structures in the area from Ndërlysj to Gimaj tend to be covered either in tile or metal (perhaps reflecting the almost complete level of deforestation lower down the



valley), while stone slates are a notable characteristic of the houses of Nënnavriq (where a marked geological change to easily split beds of schist happens). Secondly, the houses of Gak and, to an even greater extent, Gimaj and Nënnavriq, often have symbols carved on cornerstones, on lintels, and around *frenji*, while these are much less common in Theth and Lekaj Musha. These symbols are often crosses (Figure 10), but also feature radiating suns, hand prints (Figure 11), stylized fish, breasts, criss-cross geometric shapes, and swords. Although more common on older houses, it is clear that the tradition has been (sometimes playfully) picked up by modern masons who will sometimes add a handprint, cross, or the house-owner's initials. When asked what the symbols mean, the universal response is that they are "just for fun" or the decorative signature of particular specialist masons. Especially on older houses, however, the deliberate placement and careful work suggests perhaps apotropaic significance and more analysis of the patterning would be interesting.



Figure 10: Symbol on Lulashi house, tract 2006-096



Figure 11: Symbol on ruined house in Gak

Some particularly interesting buildings identified in 2006, and worthy of further study, are located adjacent to, or inside, the following tracts:

Tract 070, Gak: Tom Gjesh Kola House. Access to the first story by ladder, animals below. Ruined but still preserves roof. Symbols on outside.

Tract 096, Gak: Mark Pepniku House. A large house complex with many generations of same family over-wintering. An interesting project for 2007 would be, with the consent of the family, to map the complex and indicate agricultural and domestic functions of different structures in detail.

Tract 103, Gak: Prek Ndue Delia House. Unusual symbols including a stylized fish.

Tract 109, Gak: Nik Zef Nika House: Ruined, large family house, Owner killed in electrical accident seven years ago. A grave of "Montenegrin bandit" on terrace above.

Tract 114, Gak: . A ruined *kulla* on a rock with good panoramic views (Figure 12).

Tract 140, Lekaj Musha: Sokol Pali House. 130 years old, according to 85-year-old owner who is a decorated veteran of several wars.

Tract 169, Lekaj Musha: Prele Lusha House. Reputed to be one of the oldest houses in Musha. Ruined with symbol on inside lintel.

Tract 182, Lekaj Musha: Nik Buzmi House. Large vacant house with symbols. Repaired in 1982.

Tract 183, Lekaj Musha: Pëllumb Molla house. Spectacular balcony. Currently vacant.

Tract 188, Gak: Agim Pashku House. Burnt in electrical fire 27 years ago and abandoned, although a neighbor claims that proximity to cemetery of Gak encouraged the superstitious owner to never rebuild.

Tract 234, Gimaj Marvataj: Lazër Kërçi House. A wealth of different symbols strategically placed all over this vacant building, now only housing animals. Deserves a proper architectural drawing and examination inside.

Tract 238, Gimaj Kodër: Nik Lekë Preleci House. Repaired in 1979 after major earthquake. An old house with symbols. The owner is 82 years old and plays traditional instruments.

Tract 242, Gimaj Kodër : Pashk Ndue Biga House. The house itself is a good example of more recent architecture but is surrounded by spectacularly large and well-built terraces built by the father of the present owner, who is a retired teacher and local historian.

Tract 246, Gimaj Kodër: Avdi and Sokol Kola House. Some associated pottery. Historically-attested family of *bajraktar*<sup>11</sup>. Relative of Pashk Ndue Biga.

Tract 543-547, Nënnavriq Dakaj: Ruined and overgrown walls associated with pottery.

Tract 562, Nënnavriq Dakaj: Kolë Vogli and Lulash Pjetri Houses. An interesting house complex with symbols and slate roofs.

Many ruined houses exhibit the marks of burning, and some owners of standing houses also mentioned multiple periods of destruction. Historically, interviewees tied these to the Serbian transgressions into this part of Albania in the period 1912-1913<sup>12</sup> and the suppression of the northern tribes by King Zog in the 1920s and 1930s. There were also a number of fires and deaths following the electrification of the valley in 1968 (Tract 188, Tract 109). A large ruined house in Tract 109 was apparently destroyed by both conflict and electricity, with an interesting grave above reputed to be that of a captured Montenegrin bandit woman.

As in Theth, the most common use of land is for the combined cultivation of maize, beans, and (in many cases) squash—the “three sisters” in American tradition—while potatoes are also a popular crop. The external origin of maize is acknowledged in the local name *kalamboq* (derived from Columbus), while the local name for potatoes, *kërtolla*, is similar to the German *kartoffel*. Most houses also own some livestock, including cows, goats, sheep, pigs, rabbits, and hens.

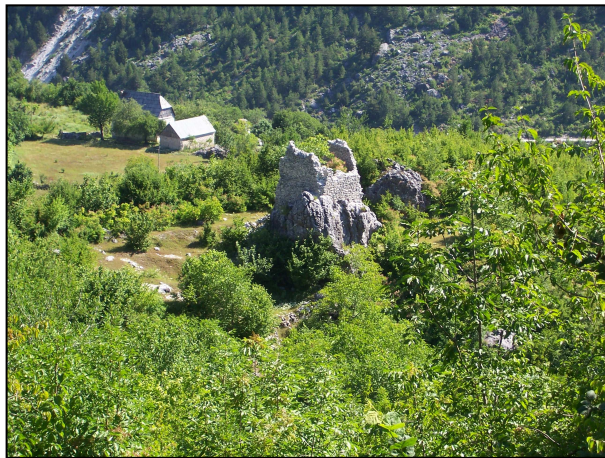


Figure 12: Kulla e Çun Hajdarit, Gak, Shala

<sup>11</sup> There is a portrait of Avdi Kola, a war hero, on p. 205 of Prelë Milani and Lazër Kodra, 2004, *Dukagjini Ynë*, Shkodra: Helena Kadare Publishing. See also a family history of the Kola family in Ndoc Plani, 2003, *Gjurmë te pashlyeshme te Fisi*, Shkodra: privately published.

<sup>12</sup> For a particularly vivid contemporary account of the destruction, see p. 79 of Miranda Vickers, 1995, *The Albanians: A Modern History*, London: I.B. Tauris.

These are familiar agricultural patterns explored in the 2005 report. Further information, however, was gathered during 2006 fieldwork on the organization of four particular agricultural activities: irrigation, transhumance, medicinal plants, and beekeeping.

After planting in April, the main agricultural tasks underway during the months of June and July appeared to be the weeding and irrigation of the beans (due to be harvested in August) and the maize (due to be harvested in September). To prevent overuse of water, two farmers described how an irrigation rota is set up between houses (sometimes across neighborhoods) who draw from the same water source (notebook, p. 582). In one case, fourteen houses draw lots for the order in which each will receive 24-hour allocations of water and the irrigation channels are diverted appropriately on the particular day in question (notebook, p. 593). This leads not only to a complex web of channels, but intermittent days of sustained activity where burst channels are repaired and clogged ones cleared. The phenomenon of suddenly finding a previously dry path flooded with water became a familiar one for team members.

In 2005 we visited the *stans* just below Qafa e Thores; an area known as Poti i Nuseve (literally, “where the brides meet”). In early July, families were just building up the stone foundations with wood and fern. This year, we met the owners of the *stans* again in Lekaj Musha and were able to discover more about transhumant patterns in this area both by interview and observation. Several families in Lekaj Musha cooperated to buy land in the 1920s from families on the other side of the pass. They now move up to the *stans* together, herding animals on foot, on a date as near as possible to July 1 and keep their herds up in the mountains until around September 15, when the weather starts to become unpredictable. Since harvesting also needs to be done, there is a continual movement of family members between uplands and lowlands. When in the upland pastures men from the community cement relations while women gather herbs, and produce butter and cheese. Although the pastures are common to the community, the individual *stans* are privately owned. *Stans* owned by each community surveyed exist in different parts of the valley and, for families with enough head of livestock to make it worthwhile, the transhumant pattern is still popular, despite the effort and constant threat of wolves (notebook, p. 488 and p. 577).

The collection of medicinal herbs and other useful plants is not confined to uplands, and we saw a number of women (mostly older) engaged in this activity. Although formalized in the Communist period, the demand for wild plants seems to have declined and the economic return is low. We encountered one interesting initiative by the German aid organization, GTZ, through which a local manager was coordinating around 30 local growers and harvesters in the production of common herbs such as sage, mint, and oregano (notebook, p. 438). Evidence of the past industry in not only native but also invasive species was noted in the large bushes of *shqemja* (*Rhus coriaria*) found throughout the valley (although not in Theth) and apparently deliberately cultivated at one time in Tract 062.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The uses and characteristics of Shqemja, a rich source of tannin for curing hides among other things, are described on p. 75 of Mustafa Demiri, 1979, *Bimë të Egra të Dobishme e te demshme të Vendit Tonë*, Tirana: Botim i Shtëpisë së Propagandës Bujqësore. See also P. Kokalari, Z. Sima, and P. Xinxo, 1980,

The June 2006 bulletin of the British aid agency Oxfam describes a program of donating beehives to impoverished families in northern Albania. Although we saw no evidence of this particular program during our survey work many families have beehives and there was some evidence of growth in this activity. Thirty-five hives in front of the ruined school in Gak produce around 300 kg of honey per year, sold for around 1,000 Lek per kg (notebook, p. 577). The owner plans to expand his production next year. Although specialized equipment and skill is required, the income from honey-making seems to compare well with the sale of livestock (12,000 Lek for a mid-sized pig, 10-12,000 Lek for a sheep, 500 Lek for a large rabbit, according to people we interviewed).

Although the activities of the intensive archaeological survey team in 2006 yielded much less of traditional archaeological interest than the excavations at Grunasi or the investigations at Dakaj (see below), the discoveries we made, both through interview and observation, have been invaluable in enlarging, deepening, and complexifying our understanding of the architecture, economy, and social history of the Shala Valley in the recent past. The dangers of ethnographic analogy for understanding archaeological evidence are well-known, yet the detailed picture of human interactions with a mountain environment which we are composing should be useful for archaeological work as well as presenting fascinating insights in its own right. Thanks to the hospitality and openness of the people of the Shala Valley, as many new questions have been raised as answers given, and we look forward to even greater understanding of this region in 2007.

### **SITE CATALOGUE (2005-2006)**

During the first week of the project, the sites and areas of interest identified in 2005 were re-visited and assessed (Figure 1). In most cases the occupational chronology was determined more precisely. Two additional sites (007 and 008) were added to the site catalogue in 2006.

#### **Site 001: Middle Paleolithic**

Not revisited. No new Paleolithic material was found in the course of the 2006 field season.

#### **Site 002: Okol rockshelters**

In 2005 two small pieces of possibly prehistoric pottery were found in association with the rockshelters above Okol. The possibility that these sherds are indeed prehistoric is strengthened by evidence that Grunas (Site 006) is prehistoric. Prehistoric pottery at Okol may indicate extensive use of the valley in prehistoric times.

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*Bimët Mjeksore në Familje*, Tirana: Botim i Drejtorisë së Arsimit Shëndetësor. Thanks to Maria Musa (notebook, pp. 438–441) for these references.

**Site 003: Upper Gjelij, tracts 2005-142 and -144**

Pottery from this site was thought to be Late Medieval to Early Modern in date. Collection of additional pottery in 2006 points more firmly to an Early Modern date and the site may be associated with nearby house compounds.

**Site 004: Lower Gjelij, tracts 2005-094, -097, -098, and -100**

In 2005 we collected many, small sherds of what we thought might be Late Antique (i.e. Late Roman) pottery. The fabric of these sherds is orange or light red in color and dusty and they are similar to sherds collected at other Late Antique sites in other parts of northern Albania. Site collection (micro-tracting) in 2006 leads us to believe, however, that at least some of this material is highly eroded tile from the old Theth school (which had been re-roofed at some point in the past), which sits next to the tracts in question. Furthermore, at least some of the material appears to be Early Modern sherds from which the diagnostic glaze has eroded. We therefore now consider Site 004 to be Early Modern in date and associated with the nearby house compounds.

**Site 005: Stone circle at Grunas**

In 2005 we identified a circle of five large stones that had been sunk into the earth. Given the possible prehistoric date of S006, it may be that the stone circle dates to the same period. We plan to conduct shovel-testing at the site in 2007.

**Site 006: Grunas**

See below.

**Site 007: Dakaj**

In 2006 we carefully surveyed and mapped the fortified site of Dakaj (Figures 9, 13-14), located in lower Shala in the neighborhood of Nen Mavriq. Dakaj is the only archaeological site in Shala that had been previously noted in the literature, primarily by Jubani.<sup>14</sup> The site is sometimes referred to as a “medieval fortress,” but until our work in 2006, no evidence had been collected to confirm the site’s date or function.



Figure 13: Site 007 (Dakaj) to left, modern church to right. View looking south from Gimaj.

<sup>14</sup> Bep Jubani, “Plotësime për Hartën Arkeologjike të Shqipërisë së Veriut [A Complete Archaeological Map of North Albania]” (*Monumentet* 31.1: 125-155).



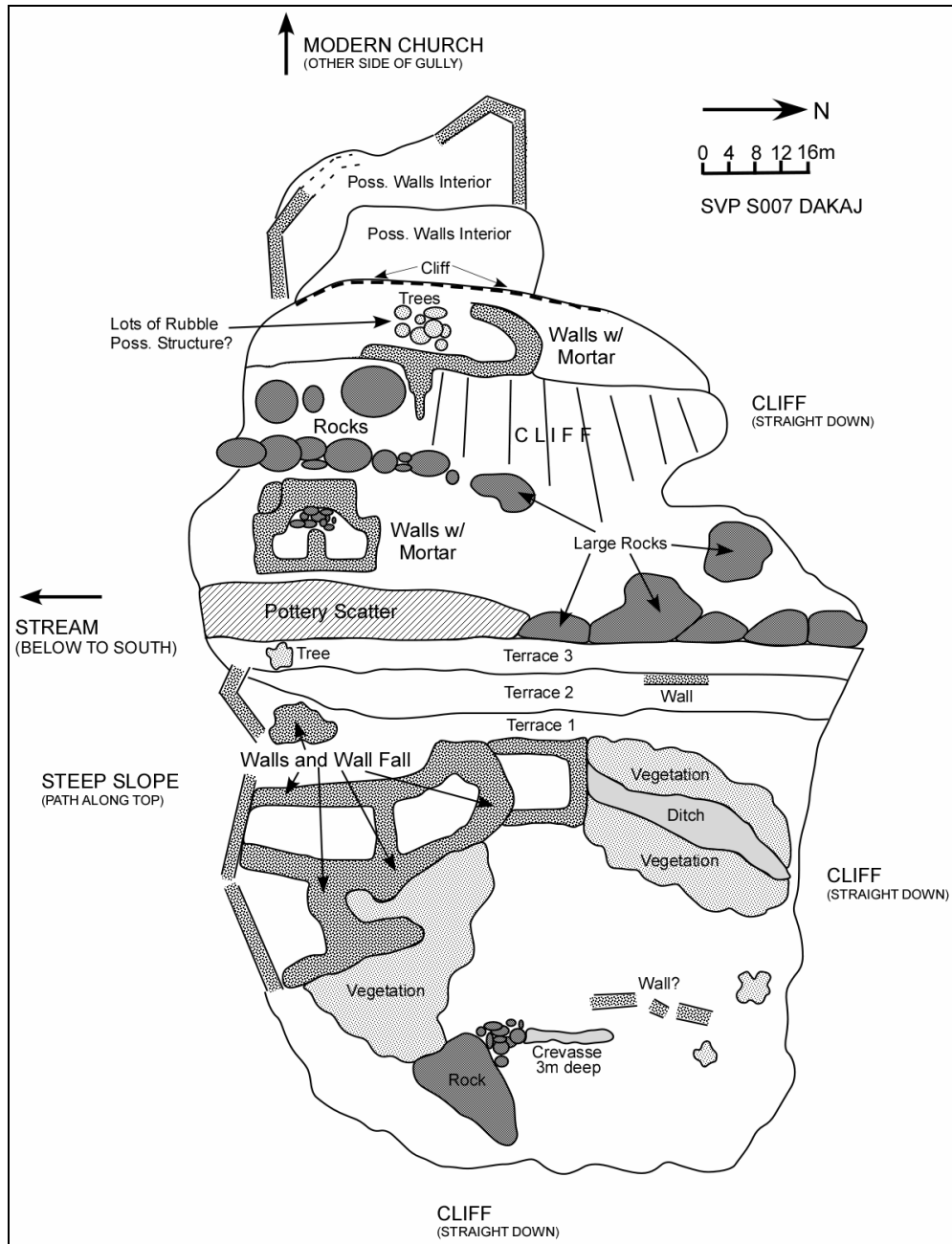


Figure 14: Map of Dakaj, SVP Site S007

Our survey of the site produced a large collection of pottery, all of which seems to date to the Late Medieval period (AD 1200-1500). Much of the pottery was glazed and decorated, some with incised lines and/or combing, while some was heavily-tempered (with what appears to be calcite), coarse cooking ware (Figures 15-17). We also found ceramic wasters and pieces of iron slag, which may indicate on-site production of pottery and iron. Dakaj was not simply a fortress or refuge site; it had an industrial function, as well.



Figure 15: Fine, glazed and incised pottery from S007    Figure 16: Fine, glazed, decorated pottery from S007



Figure 17: Coarse cooking ware from S007

The site retains some of its circuit walls (Figure 14), but local landowners indicate that some of the walls had been dismantled and the stone carted away. There are also the remains of at least two, perhaps more, large building complexes. These were likely residential (given the presence of cooking wares and industry), but according to local tradition, a church once existed at Dakaj. A new church and cemetery, built last year, have been situated one hill to the west of the site.

Careful surveys of the fields that ring Dakaj (Figure 9) produced no artifacts, so it is not clear whether Medieval houses or a village existed somewhere in the vicinity of the site. Certainly the site is well situated for defense and monitoring of the valley. There are excellent views in all directions. It is unclear, however, who controlled Dakaj: local elite, representatives of Venetian interests, church officials? Continued work at Dakaj, as well as archival research, may help answer this question.

### **Site 008: Gimaj**

In the village of Gimaj, in tract 2006-546, we found a complex of very large walls, possibly the remains of some kind of structure. The walls are reminiscent of those at Grunas (Site 006). Unfortunately, they are very overgrown and the site will need to be cleared before a plan can be drawn. In a modern irrigation ditch that cuts across one edge of the site, we found one small piece of possibly prehistoric pottery. Site 008 will be investigated more fully in 2007 through shovel testing.

## **Sectors 2 and 4**

In 2005 the IAS identified four sectors of special interest where pottery had been found together with – according to the EHS – old houses (Figure 1). Two of these (Sectors 1 and 3) include sites 004 and 003 respectively (see above). In 2006, sectors 2 and 4 were re-visited and additional collections of pottery were made from associated tracts. Sector 4, located in Okol and associated with the house of Gjon Deda (ST175; tracts 2005-240 and -242), produced much additional pottery, all of which dates to the Early Modern period. Sector 2, located in Kolaj-Ulaj and associated with the church (ST001) produced no new pottery. That which was found in 2005 was thought to be Middle-Late Medieval, and for the time being, this identification stands.

## **TEST EXCAVATIONS AT GRUNAS, SVP SITE 006<sup>15</sup>**

At the tail end of the 2005 field season, we identified a small structure at the southernmost tip of the neighborhood of Grunas in Theth (Figures 1, 18-19). The EHS team noted that the house was unlike any other known structure in Shala. A preliminary assessment of the site and structure was written by Tafilica and included in the 2005 field report. Tafilica recommended that test excavations take place at the site and these were conducted during the second week of the 2006 field season.



Figure 18: View of Grunas (S006) from above and to the east.



Figure 19: Panoramic view of structures 1-3 (r-l) at Grunas (S006) from southeast.

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<sup>15</sup> This section is the work of Michael Galaty, Robert Schon, and Zamir Tafilica. We would like to thank the owner of the land, Leze Gerla, who graciously allowed us to excavate at Site 006. Fran Shkafja cleared the site of brambles and moved wall fall, for which we are very thankful.



Before digging, we completed an intensive survey of the site and its hinterland and mapped all architecture and landscape features (Figures 20-21). This process produced several important discoveries. First of all, there are five structures associated with the site, not one as we had originally assumed. These have been labeled structures 001-005. Structures 001 (the original house discovered in 2005) and 002 sit at right angles to one another and appear to be similar in size and function (Figures 22-24). Structure 001 was, however, restored and reused in modern times as a stanë, according to local informants. Structure 002 (Figure 25) was not reused, though a large rubble wall was built over the top of it, presumably in modern times, so its exact size and function remain unclear. Structure 003 (Figure 26) sits to the south of and below structure 002. It is perfectly square and filled with wall fall. It may have been used for storage, or given the width of its walls, it may have been a tower. Structure 004 (Figures 27-28) is positioned two terraces to the east of structures 001-003, is also roughly square and massive, and may have also been a tower. Finally, structure 005 (Figure 29) is a relatively long, narrow building, poorly preserved, located at the northeast corner of the site. In 2006 we decided to locate our test units in the direct vicinity of structures 001-002, with a focus on 001.

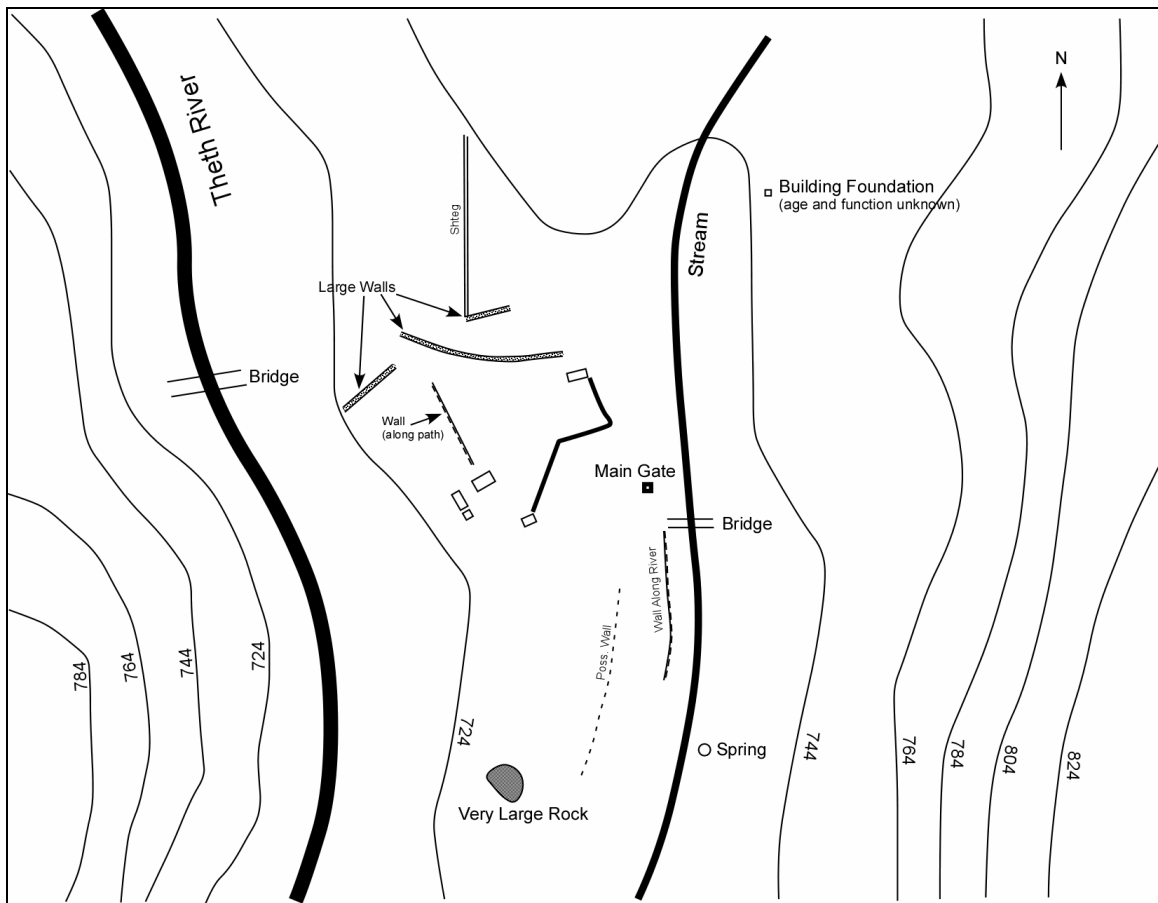


Figure 20: Grunas (S006) in its regional context.

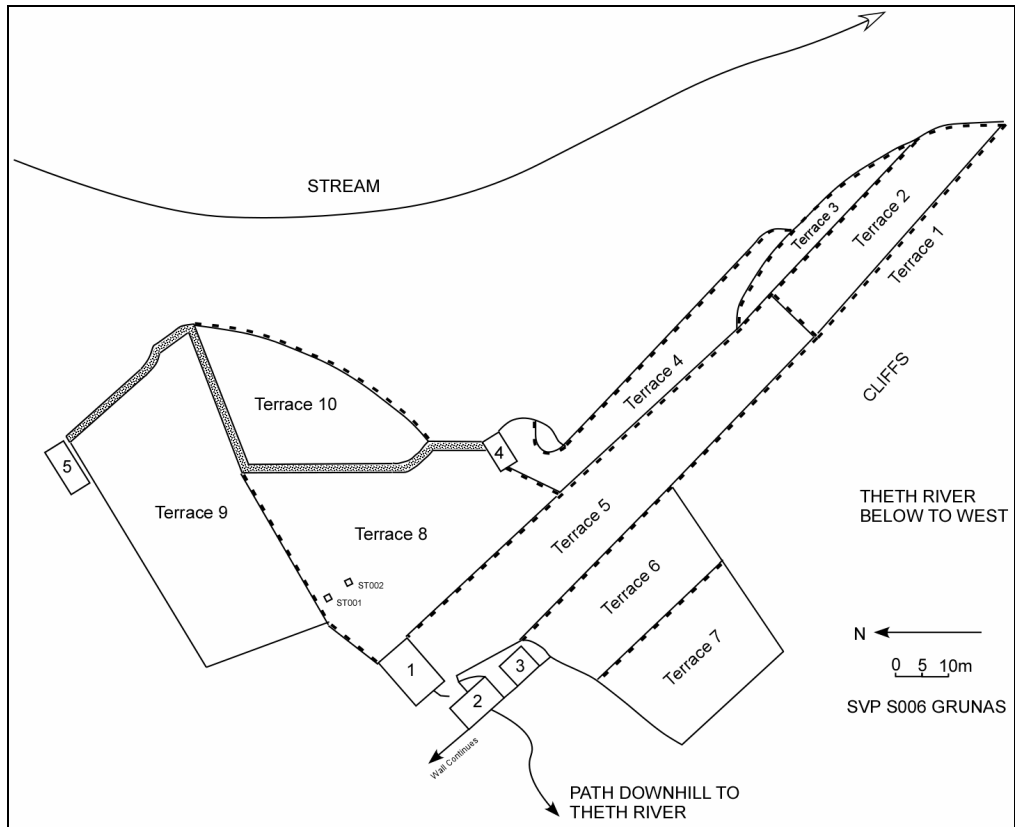


Figure 21: Grunas (S006). Site and landscape features.

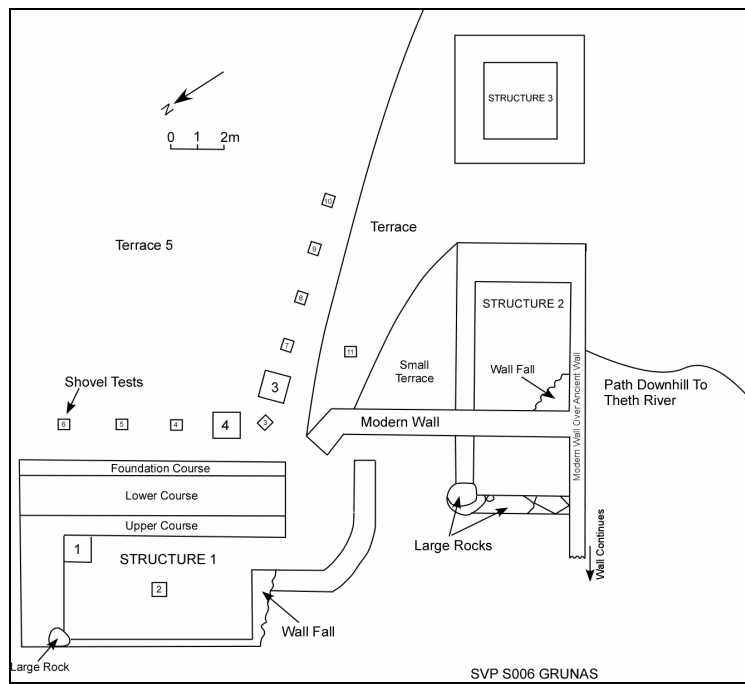


Figure 22: Structures 001-003 at Grunas (S006).



Figure 23: S006, structure 001, east towards niche and feature 001. Unit 001 located to right in corner.



Figure 24: S006, structure 001, west towards entry



Figure 25: S006, structure 002, from northwest.



Figure 26: S006, structure 003, from north



Figure 27: S006, structure 004, from south

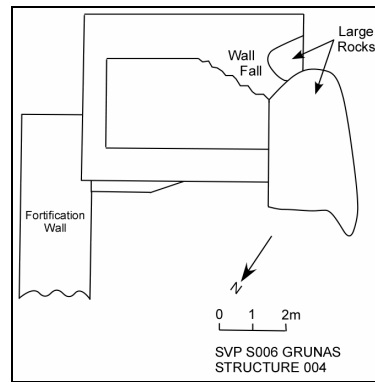


Figure 28: S006, structure 004

Second of all, mapping of terraces and walls (Figures 20-21) at Site 006 convinced us that the terraces are probably original to the site and that the site was fortified along its eastern, least-protected edge, where a large (over two meters wide and two meters tall) wall connects structures 004 and 005 (Figures 30-31). This side of the site is bordered by a spring-fed stream that would have provided drinking water. The site is protected on the





Figure 29: S006, structure 005 (not mapped)



Figure 30: S006, top of fortification wall, looking south towards structure 004



Figure 31: S006, exterior of fortification wall from east.

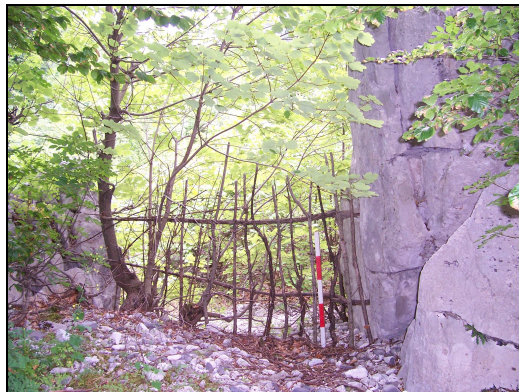


Figure 32: S006, entrance gate to site.

west by the Theth River, which passes through a deep gorge at this point, and steep cliffs. To the north of the site is a hill which is spanned by the remains of large, rubble walls. The spur of land upon which the site is situated comes to a point at its southern end, which looks out over the lower part of the valley. Site 006 is located therefore in a defensible position at a natural choke point in the valley. Its occupants could have easily controlled access to the northern reaches of Shala. The site survey also revealed the natural, defensible entrance “gate” to the site (still used as such today) (Figure 32).

Once the site and its hinterland had been completely mapped, we began test excavations. Four test units and 11 shovel tests were excavated (Figure 22). Unit 001 (1x1 meter) was dug in the SE corner of structure 001, below a wall niche and feature 001 (Figures 22-23). We began digging in what we assumed was wall fall; however, having dug through nearly .5 meter of rock and encountered more and more gravel and clay, we concluded that we were in fact digging through the leveled, original surface of the hill into which the structure had been built. This assumption was confirmed by digging a .5x.5 meter test unit (Unit 002) in the center of the structure. Feature 001 – which looked something like a large fireplace that had been filled with rock in modern times – was cleared. There was no ash, so it was probably not a fireplace. Instead, it may be that the building included a wood super-structure and that the basement housed animals. Feature 001 may

have provided a separate, secondary entry to the basement for animals coming from and going to pasture. Primary access to the structure is provided by an interesting, curved entryway (Figures 22 and 24). Test excavations therefore indicate, unfortunately, that the original floor of structure 001, if there was one, is not intact and that the building is void of artifacts.

Two shovel tests (ST) were dug above structure 001 on terrace 008 (Figure 21). ST002 produced modern glass and two possible lithics. The other nine shovel tests were dug immediately in front of the entryway to structures 001 and 002, with ST011 placed on the small terrace to the east of structure 002 (Figure 22). ST011 was filled with rocks, possibly wall fall, and contained one unidentifiable fragment of bone. ST003-010 (with the exception of ST006, which was sterile) all produced artifacts of various sorts, including pottery fragments, lithics, bone, and a round grinding stone. These artifacts all derived from approximately the same stratum c. 40 cm below ground surface. Two 1x1 meter units (units 003 and 004) were opened between ST003 and 007 and ST003 and 004 (Figure 22). These units confirmed the site's very simple stratigraphy (Figure 33): a 20-cm thick A-horizon, never plowed, followed by a cultural horizon between 20 and 50 cm (arbitrary levels 002-004), beneath which is sterile subsoil (confirmed by a deep sondage in the middle of unit 003). The cultural stratum is composed of a dark brown, clay silt loam, which becomes more yellow and contains more clay towards the very bottom. The soil also contains gravel and small rocks and these increase in number at bottom. In addition to artifacts, levels 002-004 included large amounts of charcoal, which was carefully sampled in all levels. The sudden appearance of charcoal at the interface between levels 001 and 002 is striking.



Figure 33: S006, unit 003, north profile.



Units 003 and 004 produced similar numbers of artifacts. At the very top of the cultural stratum in both units we collected several small chunks of iron, including what may be part of a small, plain finger ring (from unit 003, level 002 top). Unit 003 produced four possible lithics, including an imported flake of tan chert (Figure 34). The other lithics were produced from poor-quality, local black chert. Both units produced chunks of bone, some of it burned, none of it, with the exception of a single cow's tooth from unit 004, identifiable. Both units produced many fragments of plain, friable pottery (Figures 35-37 P195 2006, P219 2006, P198-206 2006), some of it lightly burnished. The majority of this pottery derived from level 004, between 40 and 50 cm. We have compared this pottery to examples from the Bronze Age site of Zagorës, located in Shkrell to the west of Shala, and it is identical in fabric and color.<sup>16</sup> Our working hypothesis is that the pottery is prehistoric, possibly Late Bronze Age. Soil samples were taken from each level in unit 003 and will be analyzed at Millsaps College.



Figure 34: S006, unit 003, level 002, small flake of tan, presumably imported chert.



Figure 35: S006, shovel test 007, rim sherd of plain, burnished, presumably prehistoric pottery.



Figure 36: S006, unit 004, level 002, large, plain body sherd of prehistoric pottery.



Figure 37: S006, prehistoric pottery displaying limited range of colors and fabrics.

But for its much later, modern component, Site 006 appears to be a purely prehistoric site. We believe occupation began in the Late Bronze Age and ended in the Early Iron

<sup>16</sup> Zhaneta Andrea, "Vendbanimi i Zagorës [The Village of Zagorës]" (Iliria 26.1-2: 21-55).

Age. Alternatively, the iron at the very top of the cultural sequence might mark a later, short-term historic occupation, but we found no obviously historic pottery. We hope to undertake radiocarbon analysis of charcoal from the site, which may confirm the proposed chronology.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on our work in 2005 and 2006, we have set several clear goals for the 2007 field season. We plan to field one, possibly two, IAS teams, which will work in lower Shala on the east side of the river. We are eager in particular to survey in the vicinity of the church and monastery at Abat. We hope to conduct very limited test excavations at sites 005 and 008, in order to determine whether they are indeed prehistoric. We do not plan to excavate at S006, but rather plan to conduct geophysical surveys using magnetometry, ground penetrating radar, and soil chemistry. We also plan to investigate the terraces at the site as well as the possible fortification wall in order to determine whether they were constructed at the same time as the structures. If all goes well, an EHS team will operate in lower Shala, providing data to compare to that from 2005's EHS survey in Theth. Ethnographic interviews likewise will be undertaken in lower Shala. Finally, we hope to conduct limited extensive surveys to the south of Shala in Plan and Pult in order to place our results within a wider, regional context.