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Ruka, Rudenc; Desideri, Jocelyne; Krapf, Tobias; Alqadi, Amjad

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Luan PËRZHITA (*Kryeredaktor*)

Gëzim HOXHA (*Sekretar i redaksisë*)

Piotr DYCZEK (*Universiteti i Varshavës*)

Stéphane VERGER (*EPHE Paris*)

Ilir GJIPALI

Belisa MUKA

Saimir SHPUZA

Paraqitja grafike

Gjergji ISLAMI

Ana PEKMEZI

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Rudenc RUKA^a, Jocelyne DESIDERI^b,
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EUGÈNE PITTARD: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS IN SOUTHEAST ALBANIA

Introduction

During recent decades, prehistoric research in Albania has witnessed a revival of archival studies as well as fieldwork, regarding foreign archaeological activity prior to the Second World War. Some of this research has proved very successful, providing a wealth of new information, such as in the case of the work of the Italian prehistorian Luigi Cardini (Francis 2005), while in other cases, such as with Carlo Petrocchi (Sestieri 1943, 43) or Bolko von Richthofen (Richthofen 1939), it has been unfruitful. In the same context, research was initiated by the first author of this paper, on the not fully published archaeological work of Eugène Pittard, a noted Swiss scholar and physical anthropologist. His fieldwork in 1921 represents an important contribution to the early research history of Albania with regards to prehistory. He is mostly recognised for the discovery of the first confirmed evidence of a prehistoric site in the vicinity of Little Prespa Lake, during his work in the region of southeast Albania. However, his work in Albania has been only briefly referenced

^a Institute of Archaeology, Prehistory Department, Tirana

^b University of Geneva, Department F.-A. Forel for environmental and aquatic sciences, Laboratory of prehistoric archaeology and anthropology, Geneva

^c Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece, Athens

in the archaeological literature (Gervasio 1939, 245; Peppo 1942, 7; Milaj 2005, 49–50; Ceka and Adam 1949, 95; Coon 1950, XXIII: 39; Mustilli 1963, 111, 1965a, 55, 1965b, 457; Valentini 2005, 971; Ruka 2006, 28). His single article on this work relates only to the preliminary results of the test excavations conducted in a cave in the area. As this article provides a rather limited sense of his work, our article aims to shed new light on the explorations of Pittard in the region (Pittard 1921). Despite several unsuccessful efforts to relocate his field notebooks, some of the finds, such as the ceramics and lithics, were rediscovered at the Laboratory of prehistoric archaeology and anthropology of the University of Geneva, in Switzerland. Few observations are presented in this article; rather we aim to present a first evaluation of the cultural aspects of the material collected. In addition, the reanalysis aims to provide a more complete picture of Pittard's work in the country, as well as to assess the possibility for further future research work.

Eugène Pittard: the anthropologist, prehistorian, ethnographer and philanthropist

Eugène Pittard was born on the 5th of June 1867 in Geneva, and died on the 12th of May 1962 at the Castle of Morigny, near Estampes, France (fig. 1). Since childhood, he was fascinated by nature, and collected many things. This passion led him to study natural sciences at the University of Geneva, zoology in particular, which he then taught for many years before turning to anthropology (Sauter 1962a).

His enthusiasm for anthropology brought him to Paris to follow a course at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, while in 1898 he presented the first doctorate thesis in anthropology, at the University of Geneva. Being set on introducing this new discipline to western Switzerland, he created a private laboratory in the space given to him as a teacher in natural sciences at the secondary school of Geneva (Sauter 1963).

In 1908, Pittard started his university career as a private-docent. He was named full professor in 1919, a promotion that allowed him to create an Institute of Anthropology and Prehistory within the university. He was successful in institutionalising anthropology through his charismatic teaching, his continuous publications in general media, and his interventions in many international congresses (Comas 1957). The University of Geneva then bestowed him with the charge of deanery of the Science Faculty (1929–1933), vice chancellor (1938–1940), and finally chancellor (1940–1942). The university was in no hurry to separate itself from this gifted professor and authorised him to teach, exceptionally, until the age of 81 (Sauter 1962a).

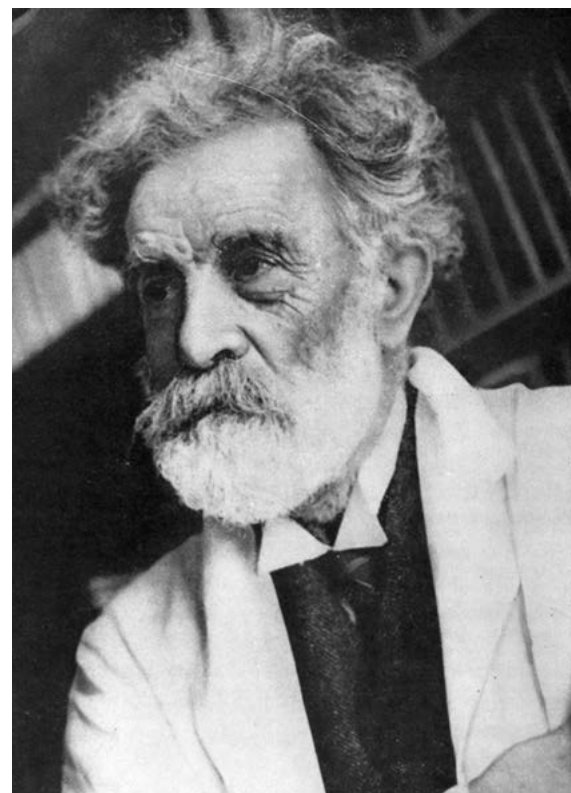


Fig. 1 Portrait of Eugene Pittard (Saint-Périer 1962, 434)

As an anthropologist, he pursued very diverse research projects, both in the field and in the laboratory. At the onset of the 20th century, accompanied by his wife Noëlle Roger¹, he conducted his first fieldwork (in the Balkans, Greece, Romania, and Turkey). His anthropometric investigations led to many publications (Pittard 1920, 1932). In addition to anthropometric research with living people, he expanded his PhD thesis on craniometry (Pittard 1909) and studied important skeletal collections (Vouga 1923; Pittard 1927). His work mainly concerned human diversity (Pittard 1934). He then concerned himself with applying his anthropological knowledge to medical studies. Most noteworthy was his work on the distribution of spleen cancer among ethnicities (Pittard 1926), and his investigations into somatic proportions in schoolchildren (Pittard and Dellenbach 1930).

“Skeletal anthropology would have been enough to fill the time of the young Geneva researcher. But he was too interested in problems where man is implicated, to let himself be limited” (Sauter 1963, 153). Pittard turned to prehistory. He undertook fieldwork, in Dordogne (France) in the valley of Rebières, at several Palaeolithic sites (Pittard 1907c, 1907a, 1907b, 1908, 1912c, 1912a, 1912b; Pittard and Montandon 1912a, 1912b; Pittard 1913a, 1913c, 1913b; Pittard and Montandon 1914). In contrast, he conducted relatively few investigations within Switzerland, except for a few lake dwelling sites (Sauter and Lobsiger-Dellenbach 1957). In parallel, he created the Ethnographic Museum of Geneva by uniting diverse collections. Finally, he created the journal “*Archives suisses d’anthropologie générale*” (Swiss general anthropology

¹ Her real name is Hélène Pittard, while Noëlle Roger is her pen name.

archives), a periodical allowing the publication of results from research groups concerned with his various interests: anthropology, prehistory, and ethnology.

Pittard was a researcher, but also a creator of working media (laboratories, a museum, periodicals...) (Sauter 1963). He played an important role in scientific life, both in Geneva and internationally. It is impossible to name here all his nominations as *doctor honoris causa*, as member and president of European scientific societies, or as the recipient of medals, prizes, and foreign titles that were given to him for his scientific achievements.

“Eugène Pittard’s mark in Geneva, in Switzerland, and abroad remains and will remain for a long time, through his achievements and his personality (...) but also and especially through the kindness, the admiration and the respect of numerous generations of students and collaborators to which, through a life of research and dedication, he gave a taste for research as well as a profound sense of humankind (...)” (Sauter 1962b, 4).

He also put all these qualities to the service of humanitarian causes, through his participation in international politics. He was named commissioner for the League of Nations, Legion of Honour Commander, as well as delegate for the federal Council at various international congresses. He also played a crucial role in the founding of the Worker’s University of Geneva (Monnet 2011).

Pittard undertook a number of journeys in the Balkan Peninsula with a primary interest in physical anthropology. His first scientific expedition to the area dates to 1899 and he was attracted by the diversity of the Balkan people and their ethnology (Lobsiger-Dellenbach and Lobsiger-Dellenbach 1962, 22). It is due to these journeys that he was initially able to visit Albania for the first time during 1910-1912. His work resulted in a number of publications such as “Les peuples des Balkan” in 1920 (Pittard 1920), “Les races et l’histoire” in 1924 (Pittard 1934), and “Histoire des premiers hommes” in 1944 (Pittard 1944) etc. His visits to Albania gave him an intimate knowledge of the country’s social and economic situation, which eventually led to a direct involvement into the fields of diplomacy, humanitarian efforts, and philanthropy. In 1921, Pittard was appointed Honorary Consul of Albania in Geneva and was an important contributor in the foundation of the Albanian Red Cross. In addition, in 1924 he was appointed as a special envoy to the League of Nations in Albania in order to manage the international aid provided to the country during the food crises of 1924. Above all, Pittard became a very much devoted friend and supporter of Albania (Curdy 1991; Roger 2008, 16).

Relocating Pittard’s work in Albania

During an extensive visit to the country in 1921, Pittard made a number of journeys from mid August to early October. In his travels, he was able to explore and conduct a number of test excavations in various caves from different regions of the country. As he would comment later, the most “fruitful” results came from the excavation undertaken in a cave near the village of Treni, in the Korça basin, a very short distance from the southern extremity of Minor Prespa Lake. Accordingly, the cave was situated in a limestone massif that overlooked the marshy plain of Ventroku. The stratigraphy and the finds were described in a preliminary article published in 1921 concerning mainly “*l’Âge de la Pierre polie*” (Pittard 1921; Roger 2008). The sediments were comprised of two major layers, an upper one near the surface that contained pottery, bones and other artefacts of later prehistoric date, and a lower one, only briefly mentioned, at about two metres depth that contained “*silex*” (Pittard 1921, 271). As he stated, he would publish the rest of the finds in a different article, which sadly, as far as we are aware, was never finished.

Unfortunately, no further work has been conducted to relocate the sites of Pittard’s explorations in Albania. An effort to relocate the above-mentioned Pittard’s cave based on his descriptions might be useful for future research on the early prehistory of the region. It should be mentioned here, that during the early 1940s, the Albanian scholar and historian Petraq Peppo² noted the presence of a number of caves of scientific interest in the area where Pittard worked and discovered Neolithic finds. He indicated the possibility that the caves might also have been inhabited during the Palaeolithic period (Peppo 1942, 7).

In the very same area, during 1966-1967, the Albanian prehistorian Muzafer Korkuti undertook systematic excavations at Treni Cave³, which is situated near the shore of the south-western extremity of Minor Prespa Lake. In a similar way to Pittard’s cave, Korkuti’s cave overlooks the lake, and the limestone massif into which it is set similarly overlooks the plain of Ventroku. The cave provided an assemblage of archaeological finds ranging from the Middle Neolithic to the Early Middle Ages (Korkuti 1971, 1995, 166–67, 2010, 182–83). Based on the coincidental location of the two caves one gets the impression that Korkuti excavated the same cave as that of Pittard, without being aware of the earlier work. However, Korkuti gives no indication of a layer that contained only flints, even though he reached a similar depth (Korkuti and Anamali 1967, 142–45; Korkuti 1968, 1969, 1971). Furthermore, neither do

² Peppo was aware of Pittard’s work and discoveries.

³ Known locally as Shpella tek Gryka e Ujkut (Korkuti 1968, 8, 1969, 271, 1971, 31)

recent excavations at Tren cave seem to indicate similarities with the stratigraphy of the cave excavated by Pittard (Agolli 2016).

However, further evidence for identifying Pittard's cave comes from descriptions written by Pittard's wife, who accompanied him during the trip to Albania and published her travel diary periodically in Switzerland (Roger 2008). As she indicated, during their trip they walked down from the "citadel" of the prehistoric fortification of Trajani⁴ to Gryka e Ujkut (the Wolf's gorge) and noted the presence of a cave which relates to the presently known Treni Cave. Further on, they walked "on the other side of the massif that dominates the lake" and along the side of a rocky ridge they found another cave that overlooked the Devolli river valley (Roger 1921, 2008, 98–101, 96–98), which is the cave where Pittard conducted the test excavation. From the low hill where Treni Cave is set, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to see the Devolli River, making it consequently an unlikely location for Pittard's cave. As a result, the most suitable location for Pittard's cave would be the adjacent hill to the north of Ventroku's hilltop prehistoric fortification (Karaïskaj 1976, 198–99, 206), which is the highest hill that dominates both the lake and the river valley "on the other side" (Ruka 2018, 41–43) (fig. 2).

In addition to the above published descriptions, some more information is provided by the labels attached to a number of the finds that were recently relocated at the University of Geneva. The finds are grouped into three boxes, of which one contains lithics and the other two pottery finds. The lithic box is labelled "Échelles de Ventrok", which would fit well with the aforementioned identification. Therefore, considering the lack of a local toponym for the cave as well as the label provided by Pittard, we propose to preliminarily name the site as the Ventroku Cave.

In addition, only one of the two pottery boxes has been labelled as "Doux souvenir d'Albanie", within which, a fragmentary roof tile was labelled "Près Moskopol, Albanie 1921, Pitt. (tombeau) ! B148". This label indicates that a handful of other fragments might also come from the wider Korça region, from Moskopoli, the present-day Voskopoja. The fact that Pittard visited the Trajani fortification, Treni Cave, Gryka e Ujkut, Ventroku Cave and Voskopoja is not surprising as all these sites in the vicinity of Korça constitute, even today, major regional attractions.

⁴ Despite the fact that Roger misdates the fortification to the Roman period, her description seems to be the first literary reference to the existence of this prehistoric fortification (Karaïskaj 1976, 201–2, 207).

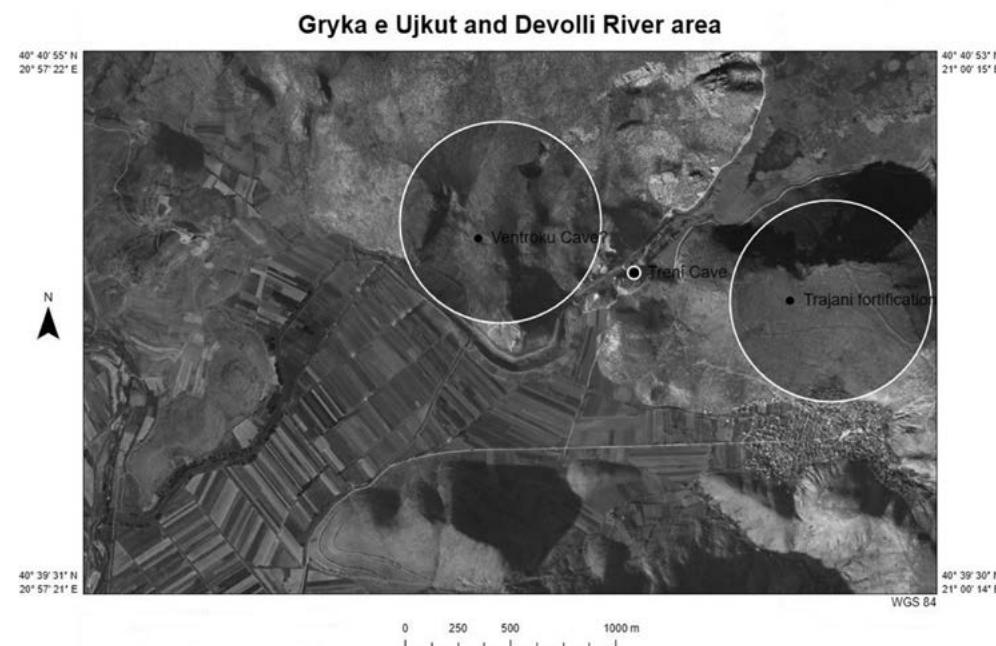


Fig. 2 The possible location of Ventroku Cave

The pottery finds

During his excavations in Ventroku Cave, Pittard notes that he found "*un certain nombre de tessons de poterie*" (Pittard 1921, 271), but he described only one vase in detail, for which he also provided a photograph. This is the sole vessel from this excavation that has been identified in Geneva; while there are several fragments collected from other locations (see below). The vase exhibits a globular, slightly squat shape, an S-shaped profile and a round but flattened base and has been reconstructed from 13 joining sherds, constituting a complete profile from the bottom to the rim⁵. A detailed description of the fabric and the surface treatment was written by Pittard and Louis Franchet, a major specialist in ancient ceramic technology, to whom Pittard had shown the vase, but it is worth presenting it here anew, following an autopsy in Geneva that was also the occasion for finally drawing the vase (fig. 3).

The outer surface and the uppermost ten centimetres of the inner side are slipped and polished and show only few short horizontal traces of the surface treatment. The exterior colour varies from yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) and dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) to dark reddish brown (5YR 2.5/20) or "brun chocolat"

⁵ Rim diameter 11 cm, height a bit less than 15 cm, max. diameter ca. 18 cm.

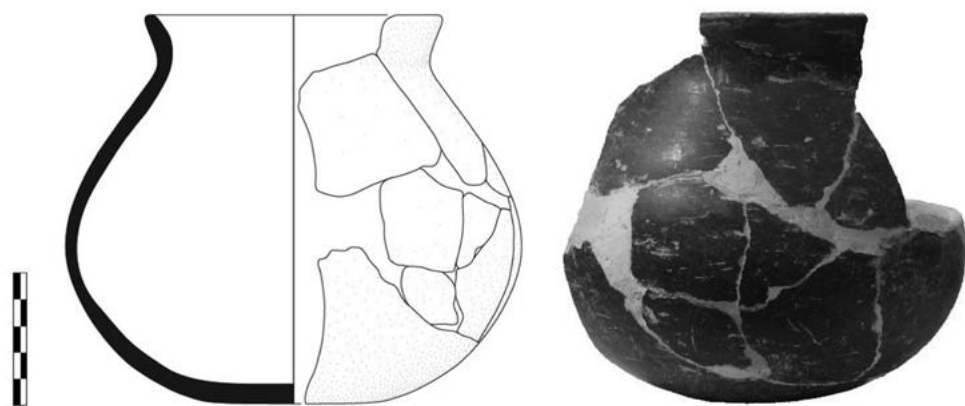


Fig. 3 Restored vase from Ventroku cave

(Pittard 1921, 272) and the base is almost black, while the lower unpolished part of the interior is light brown (7.5YR 6/3). Even though it is handmade, only few irregularities are visible. The fabric is well fired and is generally fine with some small stone inclusions that are no longer visible due to the plaster added for restorative purposes. The walls are very thin at the point of the max. diameter (0.4 cm) and their thickness increases towards the top and the bottom (over 0.7 cm at the flattened bottom). The absence (or accidental non-preservation) of handles and handle attachments on the fragments proves particularly problematic for the identification of the vase, but it must be noted that the reconstruction of two opposite placed vertical handles is possible.

In a time when Albanian prehistory was still almost completely unknown, Pittard assigned the vessel to the Neolithic period, based on his knowledge of the finds from the Swiss lake dwellings and the expertise of L. Franchet. Today, a date within the long time span between the Early Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age can be postulated⁶, probably either at the beginning or end of this timeframe but not in Middle or Late Neolithic. An even later date seems improbable, as the surface treatment does not find any parallels in the Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age material from Sovjani (Gori and Krapf 2015). Both periods – Early Neolithic and Early Bronze Age – are attested in the area. The first by surface finds 2.2 km W

of the cave of Treni⁷, the second at the site of the cave itself⁸. An attribution to a known site would be very helpful for the interpretation of the vase, because it is not diagnostic or in a state of preservation that would allow more secure dating. Its surface treatment corresponds perfectly to Early Neolithic pottery, even to vases with white painted decoration, and there are some parallels for the shape, although in general the rims are less everted⁹. This could be viewed as a good argument for an attribution to the Early Neolithic period. However, the Early Bronze Age offers more numerous parallels regarding the shape, especially if reconstructed with one or two vertical handles¹⁰, and this period is generally better attested in the region.

Further finds from his collection in Geneva, such as the fragmentary roof tile labelled “Près Moskopol, Albanie 1921, Pitt. (tombeau) ! B148” (fig. 4), alongside one more fragment of a tile and 27 pottery sherds, can be attributed with all probability to this region (fig. 5). The majority of the fragments are red, or varying from reddish brown to yellowish red, and only a few are grey or brown. They are all badly weathered and there is lichen on them, implying that they were surface finds, including the tile from the tomb near Voskopoja. The heterogeneity of the fragments excludes their attribution to a single funerary context (tombs covered with tiles are a widespread phenomenon in Albanian history), yet even their association to the site of Voskopoja is dubious, as the site reached its apogee from the 16th to 18th c. but so far there are no attestations of occupation prior to the medieval period.

The poor state of conservation of the material renders most of the fragments undiagnostic, but it seems nonetheless that they belong to several periods, covering the time span from prehistory (Bronze Age?) to the 17th/18th c.¹¹. The most recent

⁷ Korça Basin Archaeological Survey Project, site S001 (http://www.icaa.org.al/Anglisht/kobas_2005.html, visited 06.12.2014)

⁸ The first occupation layer of the cave (Treni I) was first published by its excavator M. Korkuti as belonging to the Final Neolithic (Korkuti 1971, 33) who later revised this attribution and dated the first layer to the Middle Neolithic period (Korkuti 1995, 166). Interestingly enough, the site also appears in lists of Early Neolithic sites (Prendi 1990, 400; Lera 2009, 10).

⁹ Cf. several fragments in the Korça Archaeological Museum. The same characteristics of surface treatment and colour are also attested at Podgoria I (Early Neolithic), where there has also been found a pot of similar shape but bearing impressed decoration (Prendi 1990, 411, fig. 5).

¹⁰ E.g. Maliq IIIa. (Prendi and Bunguri 2008, Pl. XIII, 3). However, at Treni, there are no good Early Bronze Age parallels.

¹¹ We would like to thank S. Muçaj, S. Bushi and E. Metalla for their comments on the sherds.

⁶ We would like to thank M. Gori, I. Gjipali, E. Andoni, G. Elezi, A. Bunguri and P. Lera for their – insightful but differing – opinions about this vase.



Fig. 4 Tile from a grave at Voskopoja with original label

finds might well originate from Voskopoja, but the rest were most probably collected elsewhere. A good candidate – if we might posit a nearby location – is Gjonomadhi, a hilltop fortification, a bit less than 6 km east of Voskopoja, overlooking the route to Korça. Gjerak Karaiskaj and Petrika Lera have reported mainly late antique finds from the site (pithoi, tiles and several pottery shapes), but also some prehistoric pottery fragments (Karaiskaj and Lera 1974, 98). Pittard might well have noticed this strategic and defensive site. However, some fragments could also come from Trajani near Treni, as his wife mentioned the presence of a good quantity of sherds there (Roger 2008, 97; Karaiskaj and Lera 1974, 93–94)¹². In general, the surface finds could have been collected from many locations around Korça or further afield, as demonstrated by both the Albanian – French survey project in the Korça basin, which identified abundant surface material and discovered numerous new sites in the northern part of the Korça plain (Lera, Touchais, and Oberweiler 2011, 680–91)¹³, and the Korça Basin Archaeological Survey Project (KOBAS) in the plain near Treni.

Among the ceramic fragments illustrated here, two pithos rim fragments should be highlighted (fig. 5.1-2). The undecorated fragment no. 2 with a quite restricted rim diameter finds a good parallel in the Hellenistic material from the castle of Pogradeci (Anamali 1979, 253 pl. XIV, 8). For pithos no. 1 on the other hand, several dates have been proposed, generally in later periods. The decoration is unusual, especially the impressed motifs on the upper surface of the rim. It is perhaps reminiscent of two fragments of late antique date from Symiza (Karaiskaj 1979, 198 pl. V, 1–2), as is the fragment of a bowl (no. 11) (Karaiskaj 1979, 198 pl. V, 12). The

¹² In this case, the prehistoric fragments could eventually be attributed to nearby Treni. But it is questionable as to why simple body sherds were collected and transferred to Switzerland when there must have been more diagnostic fragments available.

¹³ See also the reports in the following volumes of the BCH.

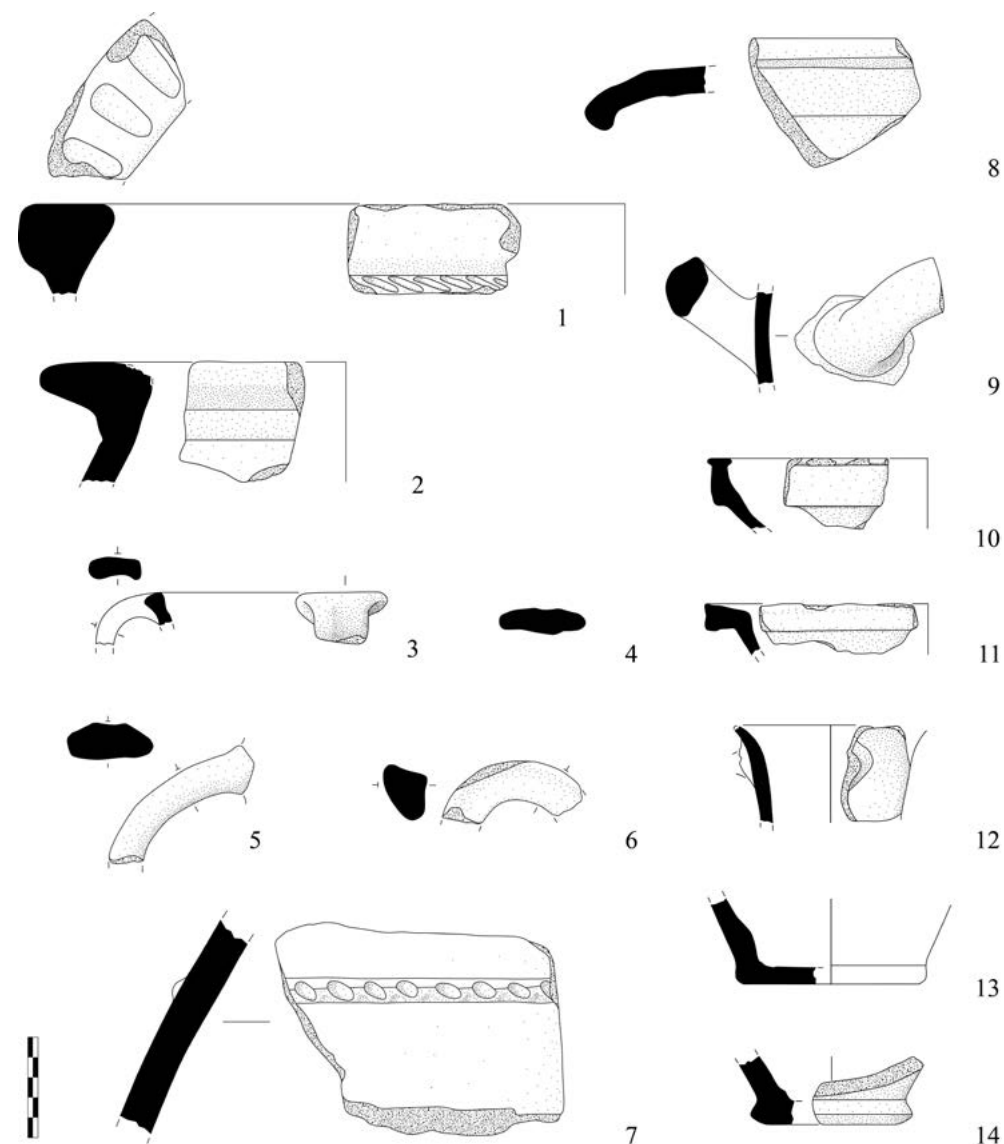


Fig. 5 Selection of prehistoric to Ottoman sherds and tiles possibly from the Korça region today at Geneva

profile of pithos no. 1, however, also finds earlier parallels, in a series of stamped pithoi from the Korça basin, published by Lera (1983). Typically Medieval, but again also attested in other periods, are, finally, the ribbed strap handles, cf. no. 4.

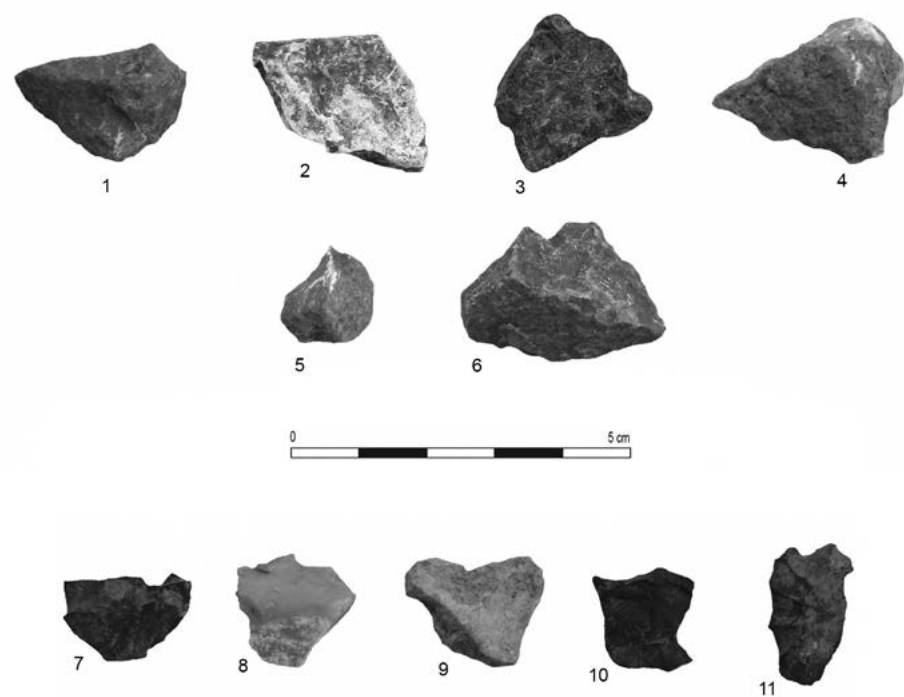


Fig. 6. 1-6. Natural limestone fragments, 7-11. Flakes and shards resulting from knapping operations.

The lithic finds

The collection of lithic material constitutes a small assemblage mainly from Ventroku Cave. This is non-published material, for which the recovery of the aforementioned original fieldwork documentation was unsuccessful, except for one reference in Pittard's article (1921). As such, the only data available concerning these lithics comes from the analysis of the material itself.

The total number of pieces amounts to 54 and only a few are identifiable. They are characterized by their generally fragmentary state, and the majority present a deep patina, with altered surfaces. Limestone and flint are the most frequent raw material used, and a black patina can be observed on several pieces.

The material was divided into several groups:

- 1- 26 fragments of flint and limestone. Those are natural debris from the site (fig. 6.1-6).

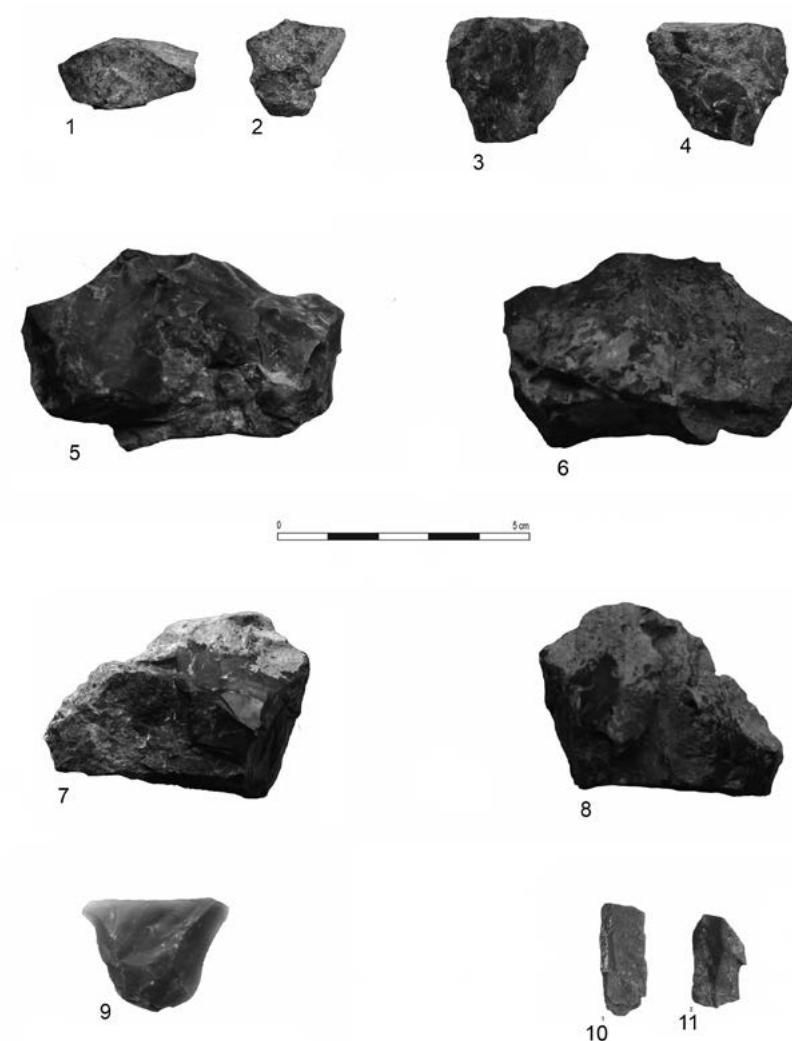


Figure 7: 1-4. Burned flakes, 5-8. Flake cores, 9. Flake (probably heated), 10. Proximal bladelet fragment, 11. Distal bladelet fragment.

- 2- An 18-piece ensemble of flints with various surface states (different patinas). These are small fragments and shards resulting from knapping operations (fig. 6.7-11). The different surface states and varying colours could indicate that these fragments, including two bladelets, belong to several stratigraphic units or archaeological periods. Several pieces among these assemblages were probably burned (fig. 7.1-2) and one piece was intentionally heated (fig. 7.9).

- 3- One ensemble made up of three nucleus fragments (fig. 7.5-8), with seven flakes from the same raw material bearing a similar patina, of which a few were probably burned (fig. 7.3-4). Those cores are flake cores, whose characteristics are hard to determine. They can be associated with laminar production, as is often the case during the Neolithic, but could just as well belong to another period.

Among these are two pieces that are easily identifiable and of particular interest: two bladelet fragments, one distal and one proximal (fig. 7.10-11). These seem to belong to the Neolithic, though they cannot be tied to a specific culture within this period.

Conclusion

This short contribution is aimed at shedding some new light on the work of Eugène Pittard in Albania. Given the data at our disposal, we were able to present a first evaluation of the available archaeological materials collected at Ventroku Cave by Pittard in 1921 as well as from a number of other locations in southeast Albania.

The lithic assemblage is characterised by a mix of manmade and natural pieces. Limestone and flint were the raw materials used for tool fabrication. The various patinas attest to either a chronological discrepancy between the pieces, or of burial in sediments that evolved differently over time. The identifiable pieces (cores, core fragments and shards) could belong to the Neolithic. Nevertheless, the low number of pieces available for study - especially identifiable pieces - means it is not possible to tie this assemblage to a specific culture. It seems likely, though, from Pittard's article that the lower layer did not contain any finds other than flints and raises the possibility that some of the analysed lithics could be related to an early prehistoric period (Ruka 2018, 43).

With regard to the pottery finds, in the absence of the documentation regarding the exact provenance of all the above sherds, many uncertainties remain. Due to the varied nature of the archaeological sites that were visited by Pittard, the pottery may range from the Early Neolithic/Bronze Age to the Ottoman period.

However, it is of particular importance to note this early interest, on behalf of Pittard, in surface material, long before systematic surveys started being carried out in Albania. Despite the incomplete nature of the documentation, Pittard's efforts represent a pioneering milestone in Albanian prehistoric research and in particular for the Korça region. He certainly seems to be the first modern scholar to have visited the late prehistoric fortification complex at Gryka e Ujkut as well as to have conducted archaeological test excavation in a nearby cave. Based on the analysis of

the literary sources available, we believe that the excavated cave could be situated in the proximity of the Ventroku hilltop fortification. Nevertheless, further future archival research and fieldwork is necessary in order to locate and clarify the nature of Pittard's discoveries, which would provide valuable information in this respect.

PËRMBLEDHJE NË SHQIP

EUGÈNE PITTARD: EKSPLORIMET ARKEOLOGJIKE NË SHQIPËRINË JUGLINDORE

Gjatë dekadave të fundit, kërkimet parahistorike në Shqipëri kanë dëshmuar një rigjallërim të studimeve arkivore dhe punës në terren në lidhje me aktivitetin arkeologjik të autorëve të huaj para Luftës së Dytë Botërore. Disa nga këto kërkime kanë rezultuar shumë të suksesshme, duke siguruar një pasurim të informacioneve të panjohura, si në rastin e punës së parahistorianit italian Luigi Cardini (Francis 2005), ndërsa në raste të tjera, siç është për shembull aktiviteti i Carlo Petrocchi (Sestieri 1943, 43) ose Bolko von Richthofen (Richthofen 1939), kërkimi ka qenë i pafrytshëm. Në të njëjtin kontekst, me nismën e autorit të parë të këtij artikulli, filluan kërkimet në lidhje me punën e studiuesit dhe antropologut të shquar zviceran Eugene Pittard. Puna e tij në terren gjatë vitit 1921 përbën një kontribut të rëndësishëm në lidhje me fillimet e kërkimeve parahistorike në Shqipëri. Ai është më së shumti i njohur për zbulimin e të dhënave të para të konfirmuara të një vendgjetje parahistorike në afërsi të Liqenit të Prespës së Vogël. Sidoqoftë, puna e tij në Shqipëri është përmendur fare shkurtimisht në literaturën arkeologjike (Gervasio 1939, 245; Peppo 1942, 7; Milaj 2005, 49-50; Ceka dhe Adam 1949, 95; Coon 1950, XXIII: 39; Mustilli 1963, 111; 1965a, 55, 1965b, 457; Valentini 2005, 971; Ruka 2006, 28). Botimi i tij i vetëm në lidhje me këtë aktivitet në terren përshkruan në mënyrë paraprake gërmimet testuese të kryera në një shpellë në këtë zonë. Ky artikull jep një paraqitje të kufizuar të punës së tij në terren dhe ka si qëllim zgjerimin e njohurive në lidhje me këto eksplorime në rajonin juglindor (Pittard 1921). Edhe pse përpjekjet për lokalizimin e materialeve arkivore rezultuan të pasuksesshme, disa nga gjetjet prej qeramike dhe gurësh të ashkëlzueshëm u zbuluan në Laboratorin e Arkeologjisë Parahistorike

dhe Antropologjisë të Universitetit të Gjenevës, Zvicër. Me anë të disa vëzhgimeve të paraqitura në këtë artikull, jemi përpjekur të paraqesim një vlerësim të parë të aspekteve kulturore të materialit të mbledhur nga Pittard. Për më tepër, ky rishikim paraqet një vlerësim të parë të materialeve arkeologjike të mbledhura në Shpellën e Ventrokut nga Pittard në 1921, por edhe më gjerë.

Koleksioni litik karakterizohet nga një përzierje e gjetjeve të prodhuara në mënyrë të qëllimshme dhe natyrore. Mund të vihet re se për prodhim e tyre janë përdorur gurë gëlqerorë dhe strall. Patinat e ndryshme dëshmojnë për një mospërputhje kronologjike midis copave ose të evoluimit të ndryshëm të sedimenteve në të cilat janë zbuluar këto gjetje. Pjesët e identifikueshme (bërthamat, fragmentet bërthamash, ashklat dhe tehet) mund t'i përkasin Neolitit. Numri i vogël i gjetjeve nuk lejon lidhjen e këtij koleksioni me një kulturë specifike. Sidoqoftë, bazuar në artikullin e Pittard, duket se ka të ngjarë që shtresa e poshtme mund të lidhet me një periudhë të hershme parahistorike (Ruka 2018, 43).

Në lidhje me gjetjet e qeramikës, në mungesë të dokumentacionit si dhe në mosnjohje të origjinës së saktë të të gjitha gjetjeve të përmendura në artikull, mbeten shumë paqartësi. Gjetjet prej qeramike të vendgjetjeve që u vizituan nga Pittard, mund të datohen nga periudha e hershme e neolitit-bronzit deri në periudhën otomane.

Sidoqoftë, është me rëndësi të vëmë në dukje kontributin pioner të Pittardit në kërkimet arkeologjike, shumë kohë para se vëzhgimet sistematike të fillonin në Shqipëri. Përkundër natyrës jo të plotë të dokumentacionit, përpjekjet e Pittardit paraqesin një moment historik në kërkimet parahistorike shqiptare dhe në veçanti për rajonin e Korçës. Ai me siguri ka vizituar fortifikimet komplekse në Grykën e Ujikut dhe ka kryer gërmime arkeologjike në një shpellë aty pranë. Bazuar në analizën e burimeve të shkruara, besojmë se shpella e gërmuar mund të vendoset në afërsi të fortifikimit të kodrës së Ventrokut. Sidoqoftë, kërkime të mëtejshme arkivore dhe punë në terren, janë të nevojshme për të lokalizuar dhe sqaruar në mënyrë më të plotë natyrën e zbulimeve të Pittardit.

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