



# TUMA E KAMENICËS

Qendër Arkeologjike dhe Muzeale

## Annual Bulletin 2007

With this bulletin we would like to present to the donors and to the public the achievements of the first six months of activity of the new Archaeological site and museum of the Tumulus of Kamenica (Fig. 1).



The opening of this centre has a particular importance in the general picture of the Albanian Cultural Heritage. This monument is the first new site in decades to enrich the list of archaeological and historical sites which can be visited by local visitors and foreign tourists. However, it plays an even more important role in the Korça area, because it is a unique prehistoric site of its kind within the southeastern Albanian region – and not only – which is an area of outstanding prehistoric traces.

Its location – only 8 km far from Korça – and 180 m on the left side of the national road (Korçë – Ersekë), creates favorable conditions to make it a lively reality in every season.

Also the new Archaeological site and museum of the Tumulus of Kamenica, built according to contemporary criteria, owns all the means to become a visited open-air monument for those travelers interested in creating an itinerary among prehistoric sites in neighboring countries.

We would like to emphasize also our willing to make this new site a point of reference in the cultural and intellectual life of the town of Korça. Everyone who will visit this monument will expand the knowledge about their past and their ancestors. For this purpose we have initiated a series of seminars on various topics, which put in a wider context the events of today and underline the fact that knowing the past allows us to comprehend better the present.



Another aim of our continuous work is to transform the site with its green courtyard, and the pleasant sheds build in the yard area, into comfortable places for visitors of different ages, who may enjoy spending some of their free time in a wonderful scenery (Fig. 2).

The readers can see, in the appropriate website section, activities undertaken in the museum complex. Impressively was the response given by the public to the classic music concert.

Perhaps our major challenge, however, is the decision of creating a program of experimental archaeology for students of various ages. We strongly believe that it is of fundamental importance the involvement and getting closer to the young generation. By means of this project we offer them a unique opportunity to experience the past. This would be an important base on which to build a sense of responsibility, respect for the cultural heritage, citizenship, and cultural identity.

We hope the calendar of activities will offer to everyone something interesting to share with us, and we will appreciate and take in consideration suggestions that will be presented to us.

## ❖ **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

There are many people who have given their contribution in different ways in order to achieve this success: first of all Dr. David Packard and the Packard Humanities Institute, for trusting that in Albania good things can be



done, and for generously funding the whole project from the beginning of the excavations to the creation of the Cultural Heritage site (Fig. 3). Then Professor Richard Hodges, who has always believed in us and has been vehicle and inspirational for the realization of this task. The Albanian Rescue Archaeology Unit of the International Centre for Albanian Archaeology, represented by Lorenc Bejko and Maria Grazia Amore, who with determination and passion have been key- persons in bringing to a successful conclusion the whole project from the setting up in 2000, to operating with up to date methodologies, to creating an international team of professionals, to training many students and young archaeologists, to foreseeing the new Cultural Heritage site, to still contributing in the cultural activities of the museum (Fig. 4). Their friendship and dedication to work have made them unparalleled collaborators, and their bond to Kamenica goes beyond work duties. Dr. Todd Fenton and his team of physical anthropologists from the Michigan State University, who has helped in “bringing to life” the individuals buried in the tumulus, with all the information he has been able to extrapolate on their appearance, diet, illnesses, and family relationships (Fig. 5). Pippa Pearce, who has been willing to take long periods off the British Museum and with infinite patience, during the first years by herself, and later joined by the young and skillful Alma Bardho, has conserved and preserved thousands of objects, bringing them to the original beauty (Fig. 6). A very long list of Albanian and foreign students and young archaeologists; it would take too long to mention them all,





we will name only Surja Lela and Esmeralda Agolli, who have been the two longest presences in the project. Arben Dhimitri, Julian Elezi, and in the second half of the project Florenc Cenolli, who have drawn all the field plans and the representations of the objects (Fig. 7). A very long list also of workers: some of them, especially women, have become real “field-experts”, and have not been unwilling to work overtime to end particularly delicate jobs (Fig. 8). Without the work of all these people the tumulus of Kamenica would not have come to light and would not have been possible to create the Cultural Heritage site.

Still more people we have to thank, who have contributed with their qualified work in the various labors for the completion of the museum building and the improvement of the courtyard, such as: the architect Kliti Kallamata, who has designed the panels and the lighting of the museum, and together with his team has worked for many days till the late hours to end the work on due time; the carpenter Jani Zonja and his team, the architectural engineer Kiço Prifti, the electrical engineers Gëzim Malushi and Fatmir Kostreci, the agronomist Paskal Vogli, the economist Murat Pinderi, and the painters Dhimitraq Koti and Petraq Kolevica. All of them, full of passion, successfully made possible the completion of the works in order to transform this tumulus in an open-air museum.

Men and women from Kamenica worked with dedication, often longer than the official hours, without giving up, even on the hot summer days.

And last but not least, I would like to thank Nertila Gegollari who, even if very young, is showing to be very rigorous in the administration of the site, very thoughtful and motivated in creating new initiatives, and with her endless enthusiasm makes so enjoyable and fruitful the visits of tourists and students.



**Skënder Aliu**  
**The Director**

## ❖ *THE TUMULUS EXCAVATION*

The Tumulus of Kamenica, known as “the Ruin”, is located at the foot of the Kamenica hills, in the southern side of the Korça valley. Its surface was covered with trees and dense bushes, therefore it is the only tumulus among others not destroyed by agricultural activity of the 1950s-1960s.

However, because of the looters, the tumulus was badly damaged in the period between 1997 and 1999. The Albanian Rescue Archaeology Unit, in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology in Tirana, the Archaeological Museum of Korça, and several international research institutions, with the financial support of the Packard Humanities Institute, felt the urgency to undertake interdisciplinary works, which started in the summer of 2000 and finished in the fall of 2002.

During those long-term excavation campaigns participated many students and young archaeologists, experienced archaeologists, anthropologists from the Department of Anthropology at Michigan University (USA), conservation experts, and draftsmen, either local or foreigner.

All the scientific research activity, which was performed according to up-to-date standards and modern technologies, was organized and directed by



Lorenc Bejko, Maria Grazia Amore and Skënder Aliu.

The end of the excavations showed that the Tumulus of Kamenica represents the largest burial monument of its kind in relation to 200 tumuli excavated in Albania, and the neighboring countries.

The central grave, where the cemetery began, is dated to the late Bronze Age, around the 13<sup>th</sup> century B.C; it belonged to a young adult male, circa 40 years old. It had no grave goods, but below it there was a simple pit, inside which were found burnt animal bones (sheep or goat), signs of a funeral ceremony.

Unlike other similar tumuli excavated in Albania, which had a central grave, such as: Barçë (Korçë), Rehovë (Kolonjë), Piskovë (Përmet), Vodhinë (Gjirokastrë), Vajzë (Vlorë), Pazhok (Elbasan), Cinamakë (Kukës), and Shtoj (Shkodër), the central grave of the tumulus of Kamenica was surrounded by two concentric circles with a diameter of about 13 m, built with rocks of average dimension. During the Late Bronze Age (1200-1050 B.C.), within this big circle were added other 40 graves.

During the second phase of the cemetery, that of the Early Iron Age (1050-750 B.C.), the tumulus grew due to other 200 graves covered by soil, till it took its final semispherical shape, reaching a diameter of 50 m and approximately 3 m high.



In the third phase, which coincides with the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., monumental circular or semi-circular structures were built in the southern and northeastern periphery, inside which were found single inhumations of individuals with family relationships. During a short period (625-540 B.C.) the tumulus grew gradually towards the east, by means of rock-filled graves, till it took the elliptical shape with axes 70x50 m (Fig. 9).

At the end of the three-year excavation campaign were uncovered 400 graves, containing 440 skeletal remains, and more than 3500 archaeological objects: ceramic vessels, metal weapons, and jewellery made of bronze, iron, silver, gold, amber, and bone.

All the monumental structures of the tumulus were preserved with the aim to create an open-air museum in a near future.

## ❖ CONSERVATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE TUMULUS

During the first six months of 2007 intensive activities were undertaken for the conservation and presentation of the tumulus and its surrounding territory.



At the beginning a stone bridge was built (Fig. 10), which enables the entrance to the site, and the irrigation and draining canals slopes were shaped (Fig. 11). Hundreds cubic meters of stones and soil, which came out during the excavation, were removed (Fig. 12). It was then dug a canal about 60 m long and 3 m deep, and other draining canals to collect surface and underground waters inside the tumulus elliptical perimeter. Another extensive task was required in the creation of inclined surfaces to lower the embankments accompanied with draining canals and low stone walls.

Other works consist on a concrete wall, 45 m long and 3 m high in the southern part of the tumulus, to guarantee the proper consolidation of the edges of the excavated area, combined with

an irrigation canal (Fig. 13). Also, there was a huge work to create green courtyards (Fig. 14), and paths lined with stone to guide the visitors to the museum and to the monument (Fig. 15).

The monumental structures and the central grave' circle were uncovered by students and local workers, who cleaned also the unexcavated part of the tumulus, and build supporting stone walls without mortar.

At the same time a surface of about 7000 sqm was fenced, which includes the whole tumulus, the courtyard, the museum building, and the parking lot.

In the northwestern part of the fenced area, a wooden building hosting the museum was raised (Fig. 16). Inside the museum there are 30 panels with photos, and archaeological and anthropological data gained from the excavation of the tumulus.

Near the museum is set up a wooden shed, equipped with a wooden table and benches, used as consulting places among archaeologists or students, and as resting-place for the visitors (Fig. 17).

The role of Professor Skënder Aliu in this phase of the creation of the Cultural Heritage Site has been absolutely unreplaceable. Thanks to his authentic passion, optimism, and perseverance he went through all the obstacles and never gave up, making real the ambitious project envisioned through years. The experience he has gained during his long career, his special talent in solving every kind of problem in a practical way, his willing to work himself side by side with the workers, have been the key to achieve this success (Fig. 18).



## ❖ THE MUSEUM



The Museum is a portico-style building built entirely in wood (Fig. 19). The museum consists in a big room with the entrance on one front and the exit on the opposite side. In the room are hanged 30 panels representing a brief account on the tumuli culture in Albania, and the whole history of the excavation at Kamenica, enriched by many pictures.

By means of these panels the visitors get acquainted with the meaning of the central grave and the monumental structures, the different grave types, the burial customs, etc. In the centre of the room is placed the plastic model of the tumulus to help the visitors in creating a general idea of the monument. Very interesting is the section of panels where is shown in details the anthropological data on the population buried at Kamenica. The information gathered by the physical anthropological study is impressive: of much interest is the illustration of surgery on a male cranium dated to the 6 century B.C., which shed light on the medical knowledge of the community that occupied that area of the Korça valley in ancient times. Remarkable is also the picture of the skeletons of a pregnant woman and her fetus, which are well-preserved and will be exposed in the near future.

Inside the museum are also reconstructed two graves of two different types: one stone-lined grave and the other built entirely with stones. In both graves are placed the original skeletons, and the replicas of the grave goods found during the excavation.

For the people who are interested in gaining more information the museum offers also a “multimedia” corner where they can enjoy the view of a documentary on the excavation of the tumulus (Fig. 20). The visitors can find also a guide of the museum, and a good selection of archaeological publications, especially focused on the Korça and Kolonjë regions, but not only. Those who like to have a tangible memory of the visit they have experienced can choose a souvenir among a wide variety of copies of ceramic vessels and bronze jewellery found as grave goods in the tumulus, reproduced according to the original models in size and decoration, and t-shirts or hats with the symbols of the Kamenica tumulus (Fig. 21). It is also possible to make a donation in the proper box for fundraising, in order to help the museum in the daily maintenance and in being able to organize the activities.



## ❖ **INAUGURATION**



On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007 the opening ceremony of the new Cultural Heritage Centre of the Tumulus of Kamenica took place, with a very large participation of public (Fig. 22).

The ceremony was opened by Dr. Lorenc Bejko, Dr. Ilir Gjipali – deputy director of the Institute of Archaeology, and by Mr. Rupert Smith, director of the Butrint Foundation. It was attended by representatives of local authorities such as the head of the Mollaj Commune Mr. Fredi Xhemo, and was greeted by the Prefect of Korça Mrs. Elfrida Zefi. Many local residents from Kamenica and Dvorani, guests from Korça, Erseka, archaeologists from the Albanian archaeological community, students of Tirana University, as well as representatives of the Archaeological Parks of Butrint and Apollonia shared the enthusiasm for the celebration. Very appreciated was also the involvement of foreign scholars from the

Universities of Los Angeles, Florida, and Sheffield, who are partners in archaeological projects in various sites of the country.

Many of the participants, who had been in the tumulus before or during the works of conservation and preservation, expressed their surprise and consideration about the immense work done and the quality of the result.

## ❖ **WELCOME TO THE KAMENICA MUSEUM**

Starting from June 27<sup>th</sup> 2007, the Kamenica Museum, together with the uncovered monumental structures, the central grave, and the unexcavated southeastern part of the tumulus, are available to visitors from Tuesday to Sunday (Monday is closed).

During the first six months of activity (July - December 2007) this monument has been visited by Korça residents, and many school groups – among which are the following:

- “Themistokli Gërmenji” High School,
- Preca College,
- “Ymer Dishnica” High School,
- The Vocational High School “Isuf Gjata”,
- “F. S. Noli” High School (Maliq),
- Voskop High School,
- “Mësonjtore e Parë Shqipe” Primary School,
- Agro business High School,
- The New School

The program of experimental Archaeology, in the period from September to December, has welcomed more than 500 students, transforming the museum in an educational centre (Fig. 23).

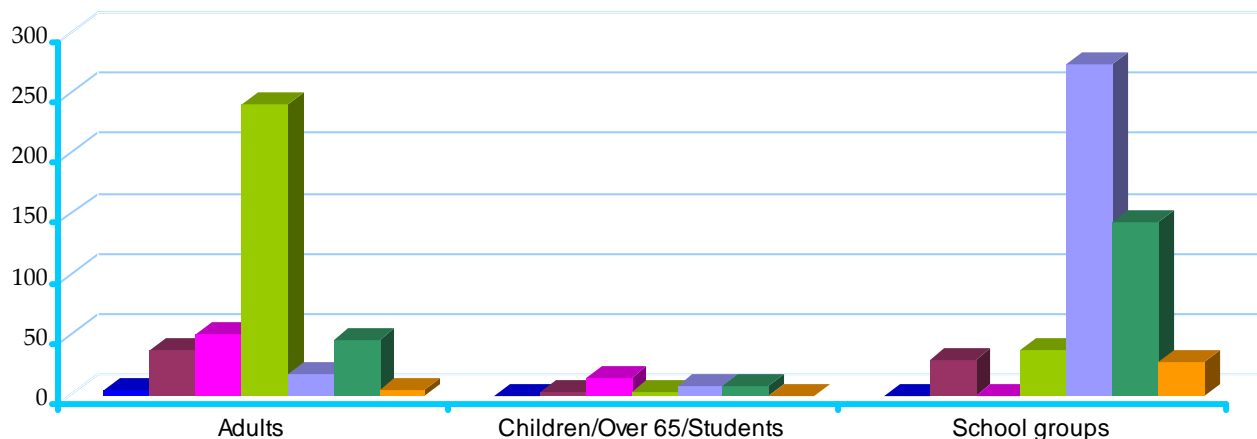




Numerous are visitors native of Korça or Kamenica now residents in Greece, Italy, France, USA, Australia, etc. They are usually particularly eager to learn about their ancestors and generous, they feel a strong link with their origins, and are very grateful for making known their land to the world.

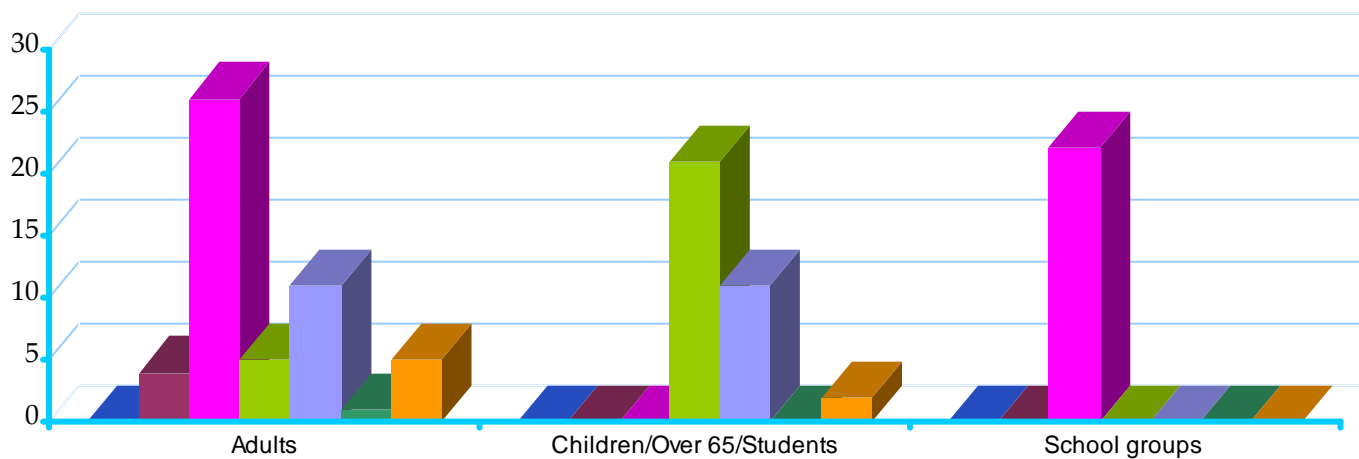
The last category of visitors consists of foreigner tourists, the majority from Greece - among them young archaeologists from the University of Thessalonica - as well as visitors from USA, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Japan, Austria, Netherlands, Canada, Philippines, Bulgaria, Poland, etc. (Fig. 24)

### Local Visitors

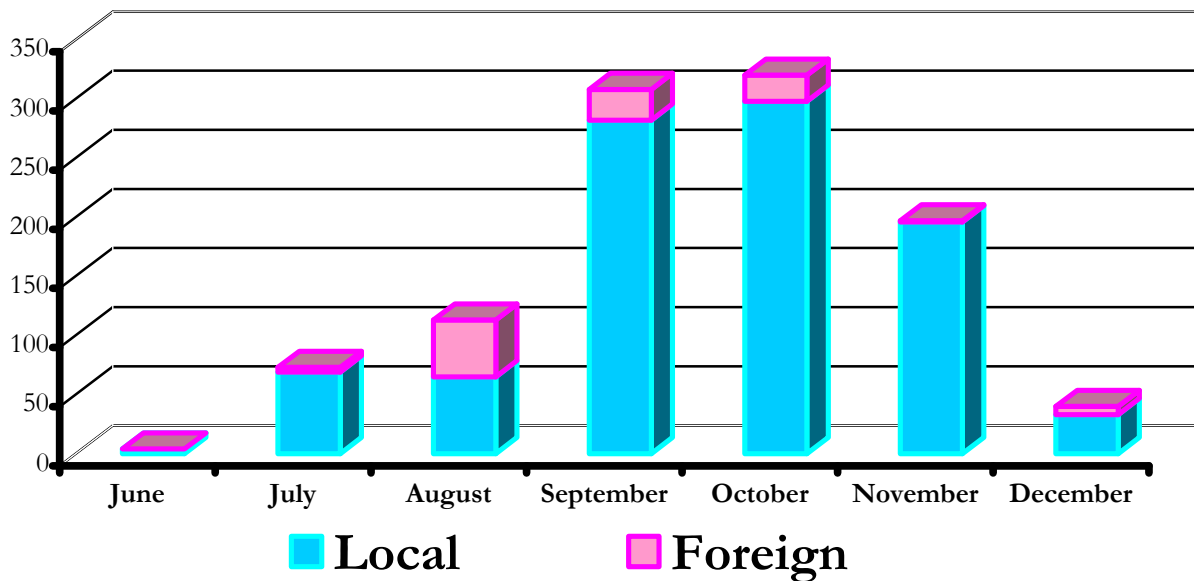


■ June ■ July ■ August ■ September ■ October ■ November ■ December

### Foreign Visitors



## Data on local and foreign visitors, year 2007



## ❖ EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Last October, a group of students from the high school “Themistokli Gërmenji” had the chance to be the first group participating in the experience of experimental archaeology, the most innovative initiative of the new Cultural Heritage site of Kamenica.



An interesting and special place within the fenced area is reserved to two artificial graves, reproduction of the two most frequent type of graves found in the tumulus of Kamenica. The two artificial graves are furnished with a plastic skeleton, and reproduction of ceramic vessels and bronze ornaments really found in the tumulus. The students are equipped with real tools used in archaeological excavations, such as trowels, brushes, and wooden little tools, and they going trough the complete process of discovering a grave, excavating it, and documenting it (Fig. 25). The documentation is

based on the real field forms created by ARAU since 1999 and adopted nationwide. In this area is set up a wooden shed, equipped with a wooden table and stools made of cut tree trunks useful also for learning about the principles of tree-ring dating (dendrochronology). Here the students have the possibility to restore broken pottery vessels, to fill the recording sheet of the graves and the artifacts, and to photograph them.

This area will be expanded and enriched in the near future, with a wheel where to produce vessels and a primitive kiln where to fire them, following the ancient technology.

It is planned also to have a grinding stone where to obtain flour, and experimenting primitive food cooking.

The museum staff, according to the scholastic calendar, is planning to realize such kind of educative activities not only with High School students and University ones, but also with pupils of primary schools.

A special gratitude goes to the director of the “Themistokli Gërmenji” High School, Mr. Thoma Lice , and Mr. Nesti Qirio, director of the Dvorani high school, for providing the plastic skeletons .

Mr. Lice till now has been the most active among the directors of the schools of Korça.


It has been prepared a detailed plan of common activities, giving to the students of “Themistokli Gërmenji” the possibility to get acquainted with the past of their native land. In order to fulfill this project, Professor Skënder Aliu has organized lectures illustrating the most important archaeological sites excavated in southeastern Albania. The participants in these activities were senior students and the teaching staff.

In the future will be organized other activities of this kind, discussing about various topics related to archaeology.


Motivated by the Tumulus of Kamenica, in the “Themistokli Gërmenji” library is being created a special stock of bibliography, especially on archaeological, anthropological, cultural, and social organization topics. A special place is reserved to the information about the Tumulus of Kamenica, which helped the students in their history research works. A contest has been organized among the classes of the upper two grades , where a report on the Kamenica tumulus has been written by students, enriched by pictures taken by themselves. This is a very significant activity which shows the echo and feedback that proper training can have on the young generations (Fig. 26).

**PUNE KURSI**

**TUMA  
E  
KAMENICES**

**PUNOI** 

**JORIDA AGOLLI  
&  
BORALDA LALOLLARI**



**TUMA E KAMENICES**

**PUNOI PER KETE PROJEKT**

1-KRISTINA NICKA  
2-JETMIRA RUSI  
3-ERJONA SELAJ  
4-ADMIR MALE  
5-DENISA KAPEDANAS  
6-TAULANT SKENDERAS



# Pune Kursi

## Tuma e Kamenices



Punoi:  
Anjeza Buzo  
Aurora Bujari  
Eriona Shpata

Lorena Male  
Vjola Jalli  
Klasa IV F

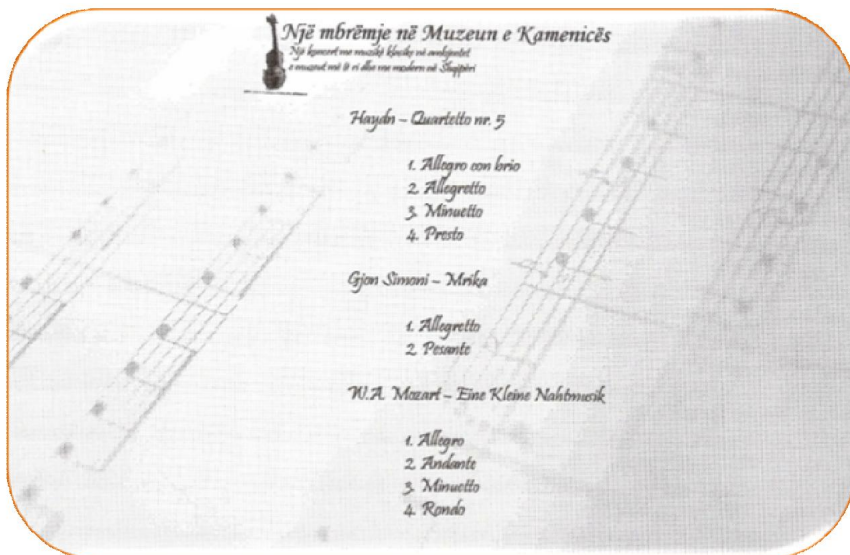
## ❖ THE CLASSIC MUSIC CONCERT

One of the activities the Tumulus of Kamenica staff organized was a classic music concert on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007, in collaboration with the Municipality of Korça.

Pieces of the majestic international classical musicians such as Mozart and Haydin, or even of the Albanian composer Gjon Simoni, were performed by the Fine Arts Academy quartet: Lirza Zaloshnja, Sueda Shaba,

Ornela Agolli, Iliard Shaba, directed by the pedagogue Mira Cara (Figs. 27-28).

In this cultural activity participated guests from Korça, art and culture personalities, among them the celebrated artist Zhani Ciko. The local administrative representatives could not miss this activity also: the Korça Prefect, Mrs. Elfrida Zefi with Mrs. Donika Ristani; the head of the Korça Regional Council, Mr. Ilia Milo; the Korça Mayor, Mr. Niko Peleshi; the head of the Mollaj Commune, Mr. Fredi Xhemo and his vice Mrs. Ivana Shtylla; the director of the “Themistokli Gërmenji” High School, Mr. Thoma Lice; the director of the “Faik Konica” High School, Mr. Spiro Popllo; the Kesh Director, Mr. Gëzim Hoxhalli, etc.



The classical sounds charm, intertwined with the magic of the Illyrian antiquities, seemed as if they evoked a 3000 years old history.



*Violina e pare - Lirza Zalosnjaja*

*Violina e dyte - Sueda Shaba*

*Viola - Ornela Agolli*

*Violincel - Ilirid Shaba*

*Nen kujdesin e pedagoges Mira Cara*

The successful realization of this activity is owned to the collaboration of the museum staff with the local administration and Korça executive schools boards. In this case it is a pleasure to thank the vice-mayor, Mr. Arjan Bejko; Mrs. Teuta Lavdari, head of the Cultural Department in Korça; the Kesh Director, Mr. Gëzim Hoxhalli; Mr. Nesti Qirio, director of the Dvorani high school, and the deputy director, Mr. Bujar Ago; Mr. Vladimir Caca of the “First Mesejmtoria of Albanian language” school; Mrs. Viollca Gjolli, of the primary and middle school “Nuçi Naçi”: all these schools lent us chairs for the auditory; archaeologists and students participating in the KOBAS Project, who welcomed the public and contributed in other tasks of this activity. Genti Përzhita deserves special thanks for designing and realizing the poster, the invitation, the program and the TV spot, and Besmira Gjoni for offering his voice in the TV spot.



## ❖ CULTURAL HERITAGE DAY

September 29<sup>th</sup> is celebrated every year as the National Cultural Heritage Day, and the Cultural Heritage Centre of Kamenica had the pleasure to take part to this initiative. This due to the importance that the museum represents already in terms of the Albanian Cultural Heritage.

The staff commitment during the whole day had the specifics to welcome the visitors and to transmit not only the unique values of the Kamenica Tumulus, but also the spirit of Cultural Heritage it carries.



The Centre was visited by native and foreign tourists, among them even 2 people from the Philippines and 1 from the United States, transmitting to each one the symbolic representation of a past which optimistically guide us toward the future (Fig. 29).

The evening of the same day, in the surroundings of Villa 1821 in Korça, the Korça Municipality, in collaboration with the Cultural Monuments Regional Directory, the National Medieval Art Museum, and the Archaeological Museum, organized a cultural evening (symposium) on the topic: “Korça Cultural Heritage”.

The opening speech was delivered by Mr. Sotiraq Filo, vice-mayor, who emphasized the fact that

tourism is a key to the development of this region.

In this activity, open to the general public, participated intellectuals of various fields, representatives of local organizations and institutions, and executive high schools boards. In this Cultural Heritage event were displayed videos with the most outstanding cultural monument in Korça (protected typical buildings or religious buildings in Korça, Voskopoja, Vithkuq, etc.) elaborated by the director of this institution Mr. Dhori Theodhori.

The activity went on with the presentation prepared by the National Medieval Art Museum director, Mr. Lorenc Glozheni, presenting the invaluable icons of this museum.

In addition, Dr. Lorenc Bejko, current director of the Cultural Monuments Institute, who had given his professional contribution in this region, made a presentation of the archaeological values of the Korça valley.

This activity, supported by Mr. Jani Stratobërda, the owner of Vila 1821, arouses an intellectual debate, where the cultural values and some interesting arguments came to evidence, on how the city of Korça was created and the origin of its name, according to written documents.

Great estimations were expressed by Prof. Muzafer Korkuti, director of the Institute of Archaeology, who had participated in some excavations in the Korça region. Among other things he very positively evaluated the initiative, wishing that it would be an example for Tirana and other Albanian towns.

At the end the participants were greeted by Mrs. Elfrida Zefi, the Korça Prefect, who thanked the Municipality of Korça and the institutions for organizing such a qualitative activity, confident that in the future the intellectual community of Korça will transmit to the young generation the values and the wonderful traditions, which will encourage cultural tourism.

## ❖ *SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY, 28 NOVEMBER 2007*

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007, in the surroundings of the Tumulus of Kamenica, on the occasion of the celebration of the 95th anniversary of the Albanian declaration of independence, was organized a seminar titled: “Culture, ancient times, and effort for independence”.



In this activity attended by guests from Kamenica, Dvorani, and representatives of cultural, educational and business institutions of Korça (Fig. 30).

After the greeting speech, Dr. Lorenc Bejko presented his paper: “Research and scientific activity in the Tumulus of Kamenica”; Professor Skënder Aliu “Characteristics of the Illyrian culture in the proto-urban and urban periods in southeast Albania”; Mrs. Sonila Bitincka “Elements of the iliro-arbërore culture in the archaeological and ethnographic material”; Mr. Dhimitër Bello “Toponyms in the upper Devoll valley”; Mr. Nuredin Nazarko “Contribution of the population of the Korça region in the battle for independence”.

**Nertila Gegollari**  
**Administrator**