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On the cover: the entrance room of the Evkaya rock tomb in the region of the southern Black Sea coast (Turkey); see the paper of Akın Temur in this issue; photo Akın Temur.

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Necropolis Areas and Grave Types Unearthed in the Surface Surveys Conducted in and Around the Ancient City of *Neoklaudiopolis*

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVIII, 1 (2024), 1-25

Akın TEMÜR

Abstract: The ancient city of *Neoklaudiopolis* is located within the borders of Vezirköprü district, 110 km southwest of Samsun (Black Sea/Turkey) province. The district is surrounded by Alacam and Durağan of Sinop to the north, Bafra to the northeast, Havza to the east, Osmancık of Çorum to the southwest and Saraydüzü of Sinop to the west. The city, positioned along a significant route because of its strategic location, has experienced an uninterrupted history of habitation stretching from Antiquity to the present day. One of these settlements is the ancient city of *Neoklaudiopolis*. Although no structure belonging to the city, localized to Vezirköprü, has been found so far, it is seen that many artifacts belonging to the ancient city are scattered throughout the district. In this context, a surface survey was planned to investigate the history of the district, to identify the archaeological cultural assets in the district and to reveal the localization of the ancient city of *Neoklaudiopolis* and its relations with its surroundings. During the surveys carried out so far, 72 villages were visited, and many necropolis areas and graves were identified and recorded. The documentation of these graves, many of which have been and are being destroyed by unauthorized diggings, is very important for understanding the grave typology of the ancient city of *Neoklaudiopolis* and its relations with its immediate surroundings. The graves identified in this study were divided into sub-groups such as tumulus, rock grave, stone cist grave and their typology and distribution within the city were tried to be determined.

Key words: Black Sea, Samsun, Vezirköprü, *Neoklaudiopolis*, Roman settlement, necropolis, graves.

Introduction

The ancient city of *Neoklaudiopolis* is located within the borders of Vezirköprü district, 110 km southwest of Samsun province. Located in the Central Black Sea Region, the district is surrounded by the districts of Alaçam and Durağan in the north, Bafra in the northeast, Havza in the east, Osmancık in the southwest and Saraydüzü in the west. The rugged topography of the region on the one hand, and the plains suitable for settlement and agriculture on the other, have created a different ecosystem, and as a result, the district has been home to different civilizations for hundreds of years (**fig. 1**).

When we look at the excavations carried out in the district; we see that the most comprehensive excavations were carried out at Oymaağaç Mound. The mound in the neighbourhood with the same name was first identified by Dengate in 1970 (Dengate 1978, 245-258), and subsequently surveyed by a team formed by Alkım in Samsun and its districts (Alkım 1972, 422-426; Alkım 1973, 435-438; Alkım 1974a, 5-16; Alkım 1974b, 553-556; Alkım 1975a, 23-28; Alkım 1975b, 5-12; Alkım 1976, 717-719; Alkım 1978, 542-547; Kızıltan 1992, 213-241) came to the fore again. Afterwards, Czichon started excavations in 2005 and concluded that the mound was Nerik, one of the sacred cities

Fig. 22. Küçükkale (photo: survey archive)

Fig. 23. Küçükkale, first rock tomb (photo: survey archive)

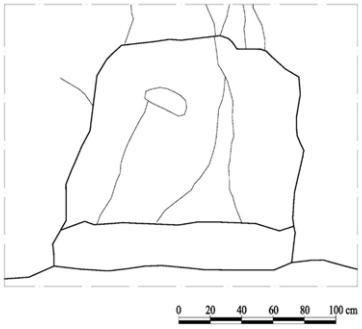

Fig. 24. Küçükkale, first rock tomb, facade (drawing: İ. Sarıgül)

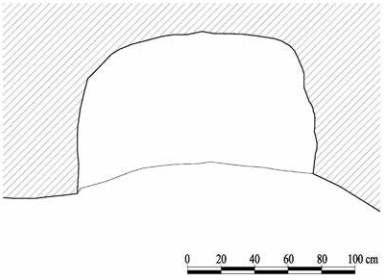

Fig. 25. Küçükkale, first rock tomb, plan (drawing: İ. Sarıgül)

Fig. 26. Küçükkale, second rock tomb (photo: survey archive)

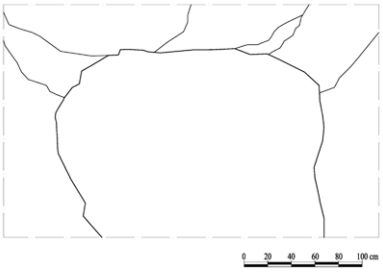

Fig. 27. Küçükkale, second rock tomb, facade (drawing: İ. Sarıgül)

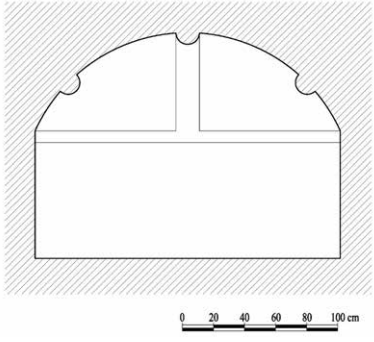

Fig. 28. Küçükkale, second rock tomb, section (drawing: İ. Sarıgül)

Fig. 29. The Evkaya rock tomb (photo: survey archive)

A Marble Sarcophagus Lid Fragment with Gorgoneion: *Viminacium* Spoil in Nimnik Monastery[1]

Sanja PILIPOVIĆ

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVIII, 1 (2024), 27-40

Abstract: A fragment of a Roman marble monument with a relief of the head of Medusa was incorporated as *spolia* into the church of St. Nicholas in the monastery of Nimnik. In paper indicates the possibility that the spoil was part of the lid of a sarcophagus. The characteristics of this presumed sarcophagus are reviewed, as well as analogies, the workshops in which it might have created, and its importance in relation to other marble sarcophagi from *Viminacium*, preserved today.

Key words: spoil, sarcophagus, marble, Nimnik, *Viminacium.*

Introduction

A marble *spolium* with a relief of the head of Medusa (*gorgoneion*) on a triangular field is built into the lower part of the south wall of the church of St. Nicholas in the monastery of Nimnik (**fig. 1**). The church in Nimnik monastery was renovated in 1825, during the reign of Prince Miloš Obrenović (Вујић 1901, 64-65; Спасић 1998, 316-317). It is not known whether the spoil had been built into the church before renovation or was incorporated for the first time during the renovation. It is presumed that the *spolium* was brought from a locality that belonged to *Viminacium*, located 10 km west of Nimnik (Спасић 1998, 318).

The spoil consists of a triangular field surrounded by a profiled frame, in the centre of which there is a relief of Medusa's head. Today the lower right corner of the triangular field and part of the relief of Medusa's head are missing. Medusa is depicted in the usual iconography, with long wavy hair, from which small wings and the heads of two snakes peek out, while beneath her chin two snakes are entwined.

This paper examines the possibility that the spoil was part of the lid of a sarcophagus. The characteristics of this presumed sarcophagus are studied, as well as analogies, the workshops in which it might have created, and its importance in relation to other marble sarcophagi from *Viminacium*, preserved today.

Nimnik Spoil – Sarcophagus Lid Fragment

In previous scientific literature it was considered that the spoil formed part of the tympanum of a funerary stele (Спасић 1998, 315-325, fig. 3; Milovanović 2009, 99-107; Спасић-Ђурић 2002, 35, fig. 17; Milovanović / Anđelković-Grašar 2017, 176-177, fig. 20; Pilipović / Milanović 2020, 300; 2021, 269-270, fig. 7).

This paper proposes a new interpretation of the type of funerary monument to which the fragment from Nimnik belonged. The triangular field is believed to have been situated on the lateral side of a sarcophagus lid (**fig. 2**). Such an interpretation is primarily indicated by the extremely large dimensions of the fragment, as well as the treatment of the stone and the relief itself.

[1] I am grateful to Prof. Emeritus Bojan Djurić, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, for valuable assistance in understanding the studied theme. Also, I am thankful to colleagues Dr. Mario Ivanov, National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Dr. Cristina Paraschiv-Talmaţchi, Constanţa History and Archaeology Museum, and Dr. Christina Ştirbulescu, National Museum of Romanian History, Bucharest, for their help in understanding the researched material from their area. Finally, I would like to thank colleague Dr. Teodora Branković, senior curator of the National Museum in Požarevac, and my colleague and friend Dr. Ljubomir Milanović from the Institute for Byzantine Studies of SASA for contributed photographs.

Fig. 6. Proconnesian sarcophagus of *P. Vettius Sabinus et Cornelia*. Modena (*Mutina*) (photo: Modena, Archivio Fotografico delle Gallerie Estensi – Foto Carlo Vannini)

workshops. We will only mention three Proconnesian examples: the *Titus Vettius* sarcophagus (**fig. 5**) from Concordia Sagittaria (*Iulia Concordia*) in the *Venetia et Histria* region (*Lupa* 29257); *P. Vettius Sabinus et Cornelia Maximina* sarcophagus (**fig. 6**) and *Flavius Vitalis et Bruttia Aurelia* sarcophagus (**fig. 7**) from the *Aemilia* region (Modena, Museo Lapidario Estense, inv. 7085 and 7164).

On the Dalmatian coast, the same intertwining of Eastern Mediterranean and local influences is found as on the Northern Adriatic coast of Italy. A Proconnesian sarcophagus from Solin (*Salona),* whose triangular field of characteristic mixed roof shape of lid is decorated with the head of Medusa, is well-known (Bizjak 2019, 11-15, fig. 6, fig. 8).

The Hoard of 4th Century Bronze Coins from the *Viminacium* Amphitheatre

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVIII, 1 (2024), 41-48

Mirjana VOJVODA / Ivan BOGDANOVIĆ / Goran STOJIĆ

Abstract: In 2008, a hoard of bronze coins (19 pieces) was discovered during archaeological excavations of the *Viminacium* amphitheatre. It consists of 11 pieces of Julian and 8 pieces of Jovian, dated into the period from the year 361 to February 364. It was discovered in the Late Roman layer that filled the amphitheatre. Along with other archaeological finds, this hoard also indicates that during the middle of the 4th century, the amphitheatre was no longer in use for performing spectacles.

Key words: Roman Empire, coin hoards, Julian, Jovian, amphitheatre, *Viminacium*.

Introduction

Archaeological research of the *Viminacium* amphitheatre took place between 2007 and 2017. This structure was built at the beginning of the 2nd century, some 60 m northwest of the legionary fortress (**fig. 1**). At the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century, ramparts and a gate were erected around the amphitheatre, incorporating this structure into the defence system of the city. In the final construction phase, its dimensions measured 84.05 x 73.00 m, while the arena measured 54.85 x 44.75 m (Bogdanović et al. 2018, 47; Bogdanović 2019, 76). The amphitheatre was in use until the first half of the 4th century and after that, clay was dug in the arena area. Approximately at the same time, along with the city walls, the largest part of the structure was demolished and the building material was transferred to another location. Soon enough, the area was abandoned and filled in with earth. At the end of the 4th century, above the amphitheatre remains, a necropolis was formed (Nikolić / Bogdanović 2015, 554; Bogdanović et al. 2018, 47; Bogdanović 2019, 73).

During a decade of amphitheatre research, a total of 2,234 coins were discovered and among them a hoard of bronze coins of Julian and Jovian stands out, discovered in 2008[1]. It was discovered just next to the arena wall, close to the passages that led towards the rooms in the southern part of the structure (**fig. 2**)[2]. The hoard comes from the layer of brown and brown-yellowish soil that belongs to the youngest cultural horizon defined in the area of the amphitheatre (Bogdanović 2019, 73-74). This layer filled in and also partly covered the amphitheatre remains after it had ceased to be used. According to the small finds discovered in it, it is dated into the second half of the 4th century. When the discovery was made, the coins were bonded to one another, indicating the possibility that they were originally deposited within a pouch.

Discussion

All pieces of Julian coinage (# 1-11) possess the same reverse legend and image: SECVRITAS REI PVB with a standing bull, head facing right; above, two stars, belonging to his period as Augustus and dated between the years 361 and 363. Six mints are represented: *Siscia* (# 1), *Sirmium* (# 2-6), *Thessalonica* (# 7-8), *Nicomedia* (# 9), *Cyzicus* (# 10) and *Heraclea* (# 11). The pieces of Jovian belong to his Augustus issues dated between June 27th, 363 and February 16th, 364 (RIC VIII, 424). They all come

[1] It was entered into the field inventory: Amfiteatar C-1025/2008; In the inventory of the Museum at the Institute of Archaeology and within the archaeological site of *Viminacium*, it was entered as inv. 04_117/1-19.

[2] The hoard was discovered just beneath the surface with lime mortar that had collapsed from the arena wall. The mortar layer is situated at a level of 71.55 m and it stretches along the arena wall, its width measuring between 0.80 and 1.25 m. Beneath this mortar layer, at a level of 71.52 m, remains of fresco wall decoration were unearthed. Based on the thresholds of the arena entrances and passages towards the rooms behind the arena wall, it is suspected that, during the final phase, the arena level was positioned between the levels of 71.40 and 71.60 m and that, due to drainage, it was slightly inclined from the south towards the north (cf. Bogdanović 2019, 144-145).

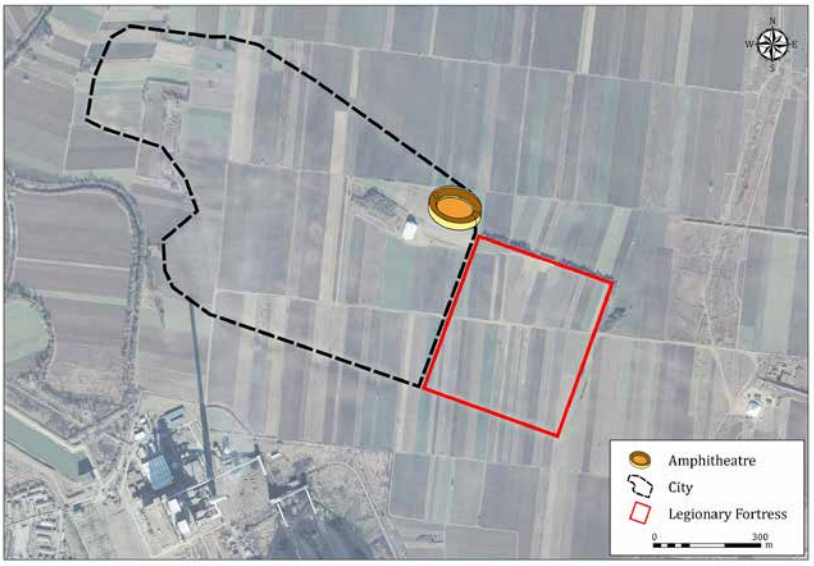

Fig. 1. Location of the *Viminacium* amphitheater

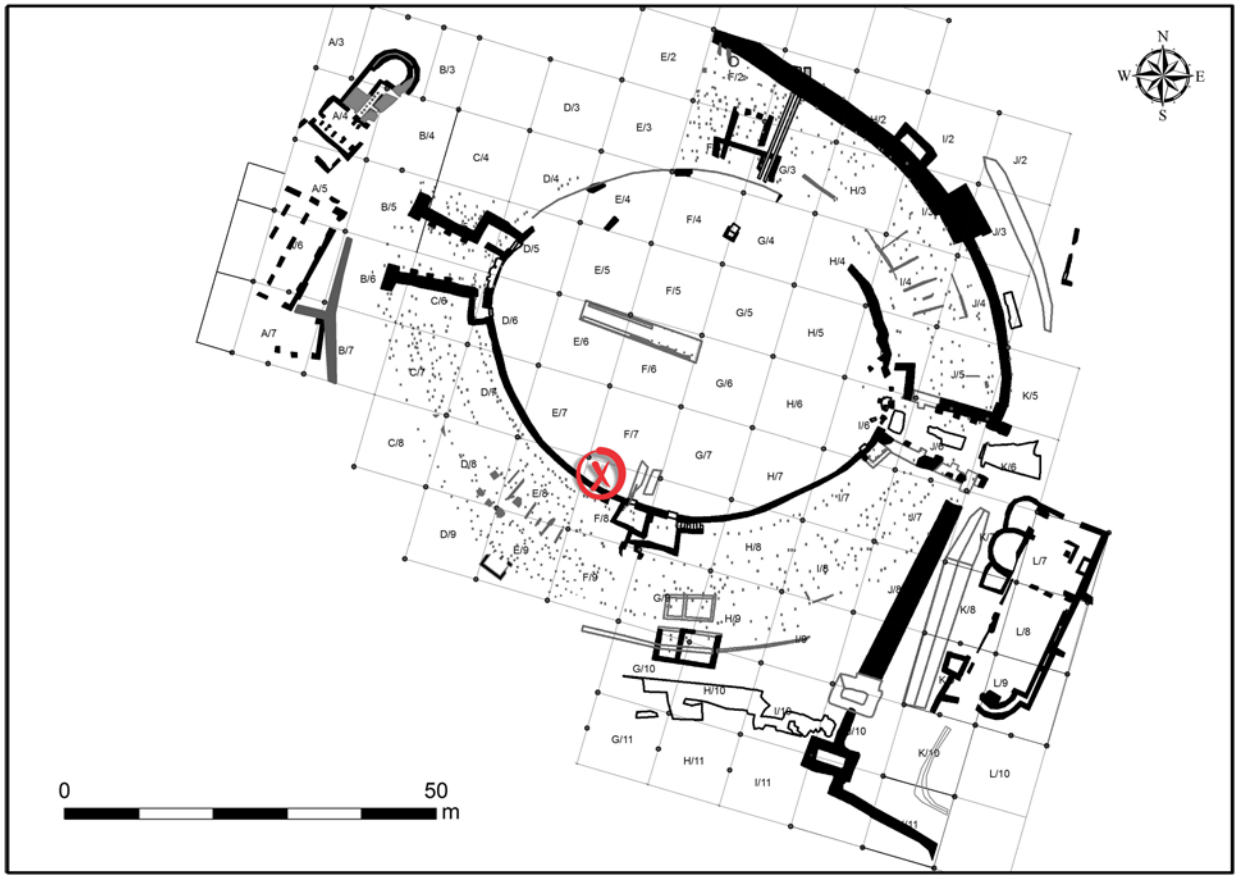

Fig. 2. Plan of the *Viminacium* Amphitheatre with coin hoard finding spot

from the Thessalonica mint and all belong to the same type, VICTORIA ROMANORVM, with the emperor in military dress standing and facing right, holding a standard and Victory on globe (# 12-19). If one considers the frequency of mints in the hoard as a whole, Thessalonica clearly stands out with 52.65%, followed by *Sirmium* with 26.31%, while the remaining four mints are each represented with 5.26%[3].

[3] In cases where the same types (the same RIC or LRBC #) of the same mint appear, the authors did not deal with the relationship between the obverse and reverse dies. The following abbreviations are used: Wt. = weight (g); Diam. = diameter (mm); Denom. = denomination; MV inv. = Museum of the Institute of Archaeology within the Archaeological Site *Viminacium*, inventory number.

Concerning the Location of the "St. Romanus" Church in Constantinople

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVIII, 1 (2024), 49-59

Alexander STANKOV

Abstract: The new data which continues to arrive after another archaeological discovery in Istanbul allows us to correct our ideas about the topography of Constantinople, and to seek answers to hitherto unsolved questions. Such is the case with the clarification and determination of the location of the "St. Romanus" Church in Constantinople. After the discovery and identification of the real "St. Romanus" gate within the city walls of Constantinople, new, useful information has emerged, which serves as a new starting point for determining the location of the church itself. Thus, the region of its search is shifted further south than the one in which it was believed to be located until now. On the other hand, the new location coincides with an existing Byzantine building of uncertain dating, as all sources and archaeological data point to the possibility that it was part of a monastery complex, in which the church of St. Romanus existed.

Key words: Constantinople, church, location, "St. Romanus", gate, new data.

Introduction

The city planning of Constantinople and the changes made there over the centuries are one of the important topics that excite modern scientists[1]. To many questions related to the architectural development and topography of a number of architectural monuments, exact answers have not yet been found, or there are none at all. The location of a number of churches and buildings that we know of from historical sources are unknown, some have been wrongly located, and, for others that have survived to this day, their exact names cannot be determined with certainty, nor which architectural ensemble they belong to.

The last decade has been very fruitful in terms of newly emerging information, following salvage excavations or simply accidental archaeological discoveries on the territory of today's Istanbul. The new data is linked and helps the identification and definition of buildings previously unknown to us; part of the urban planning of the imperial capital. In this way, there is an opportunity to correct the existing disseminated information, and from there to change the theories related to the topics that are controversial, or, until recently, to which there was simply no answer.

Discussion

One such unanswered question is the location of the "St. Romanus" Church, which is mentioned in more than one written source from the era under consideration. The construction of this church is attributed to Empress Helena (van Millingen 1899, 81). According to Byzantine sources, the remains of St. Prophet Daniel, St. Romanus and St. Nicetas were buried in the "St. Romanus" Church, at the gate of the same name when they were brought from Jerusalem (Preger 1907, 245). Emperor Basil I (867-886) renovated the church from the ground up (ἐκ βάθρων) (Ševčenko 2011, 268) during his building campaign in Constantinople (Becker 1839, 239).

[1] I would like to thank Associate Prof. Dr. Ferudun Özgümüş, Associate Prof. Sc.D. Dimcho Momchilov and Prof. Sc.D. Stella Doncheva for the irreplaceable support and assistance rendered.

Fig. 9. Capital in Rhodes museum as the closest parallel (after Dennert 1997, Kat. 73)

Fig. 10. A similar capital in Hagia Irene (https://www.thebyzantinelegacy.com/)

Fig. 11. Columns with similar capitals near Hagia Irene ("Samson Hospital") (https://www.thebyzantinelegacy.com/)

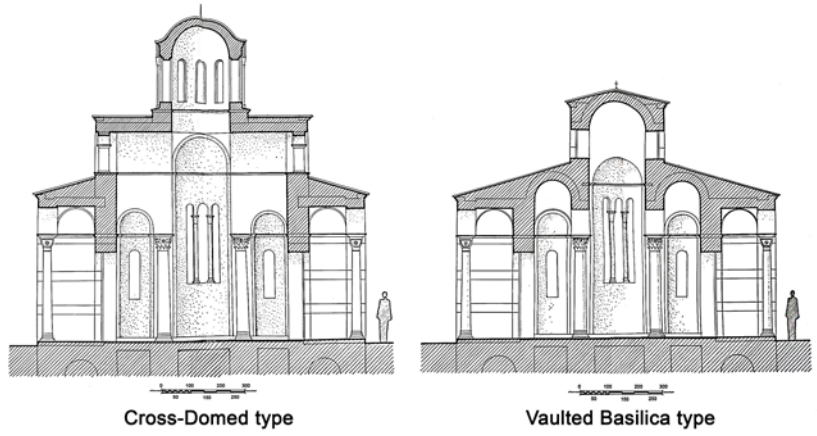

Fig. 12. A hypothetical reconstruction of the church (after Pasadaios 1965, ΠΠΝΑΞ: ΙCΤ'; ΚΒ')

were discovered: a piece of marble column with diameter of 35 cm and length 77 cm; another piece of column with diameter 34 cm and length 49 cm; a piece of terracotta column with diameter 37 cm and length 27 cm; a trapezoidal capital, bearing on one side a circular rim which has an erases inner part, used as mouth of a well; a fragment of an epigraphic plaque with engraved cross and inscription; various bones and human skeletons **(fig. 14)**. To the west of the building and a little distance from it an underground vault was also brought to light.

Churches in *Mesembria* on the West Black Sea Coast

Hristo PRESHLENOV

Archaeologia Bulgarica
XXVIII, 1 (2024), 61-84

Abstract: After the apostolic age, the church, apart from the community of believers, is also a building where laymen and clergy commune with God. The artistically composed sacred space of the (early) Christian churches in Nesebar and its hinterland at Panitsovo is an architectural environment in which forms, colors, symbols and speech engage believers. The three-nave basilicas have a wooden roof and a truncated to a predominantly shorten naos with side ratio of 1: 0.99 / 1.33 / 1.93. Their spatial organization, at a ratio of aisles to nave 1: 2 / 2.5, inherent in Roman civilian basilicas, relies on symmetry as a compositional principle. The planning of their space is in line with the "golden section" and their design module is close to the standards in Constantinople. The northwestern Mesembrian basilica assimilates pre-Christian sacred spaces of heroon and the Temple of Zeus Hyperdexios, crowning the victory of the new faith over death and polytheism. The laying of holy relics in an underground crypt (found and built in?) in the altar of the basilica is in accordance with the rules of the church councils. The specificity of the differentiated liturgical planning ("The Holy Mother of God Eleusa", "St. Sophia", the basilica at Panitsovo), the reconstructions and renewal after military conflicts (the northwestern Mesembrian basilica, "St. Sophia", "The Holy Mother of God Eleusa", "St. Apostles Petrus and Paulus" (in the holy space of which after AD 1453 a mosque is built), the basilica at Panitsovo) affect the plan composition and plastic volumes of the temples.

Key words: *Mesembria*, Nesebar, Panitsovo, christian archaeology, basilica.

For the first time, the symbolism of the liturgy is linked to and is interpreted together with the material environment, in which it is held, in AD 628-630 by Maximus the Confessor. In his interpretation, symbols are not so much a sign of a missing reality, but of the reality itself as is present in them. The stone-built church is an image of the world – its naos symbolizes the visible material world, and its altar – the invisible spiritual world. The concept is a starting point for establishing a tradition in Eastern Christianity for understanding and experiencing the liturgy as a means of exalting man to God (Уайбру 2002, 112-113, 119).

In its metaphorical language, architecture exemplifies convincingly this symbolism. Its geometrically abstract spatial forms, illuminated by the Christian tradition and canon, are perceived sensually by believers through their size, antinomic (co)dissolution of light and darkness, grading of elements, color range and texture of panels (Коева 2002, 12-13; Янакиев 2017).

The Christian liturgical architectural environment in *Mesembria* and its hinterland, following mainly the regularities in the development of the differentiating Constantinople rite, manifests itself clearly in the planning schemes and the volume-spatial construction of the naos (topography, composition, renovation) and the altar space of the (arch)bishop & metropolitan basilica "St. Sophia", the cathedral monastery basilica "The Holy Mother of God Eleusa", the northwestern (parish) basilica (on and west of the temple of Zeus), the basilica under the Middle Byzantine church "St. John the Precursor", the basilica "St. Apostles Petrus and Paulus", in the holy space of which after AD 1453 a mosque is built, and on the territory of the diocese – in the basilica in the suburban settlement of Dulino Pass in Emina Mountain[1].

[1] Plan and volume-spatial composition and (or) the historical topography of the basilica (slided into the sea) south to the medieval church "St. George the Old" **(fig. 1/7)**; of the church "Christ Acropolites" in the monastery with the same name (also destroyed by the sea abrasion) **(fig. 1/8)**; of the basilica under the "St. John Aliturgetos" **(fig. 1/3)** and of the necropolises "*ad Sanctos*" around/in the Mesembrian (early)christian churches are problematized in another research of the Mesembrian *loca Sanctorum*.

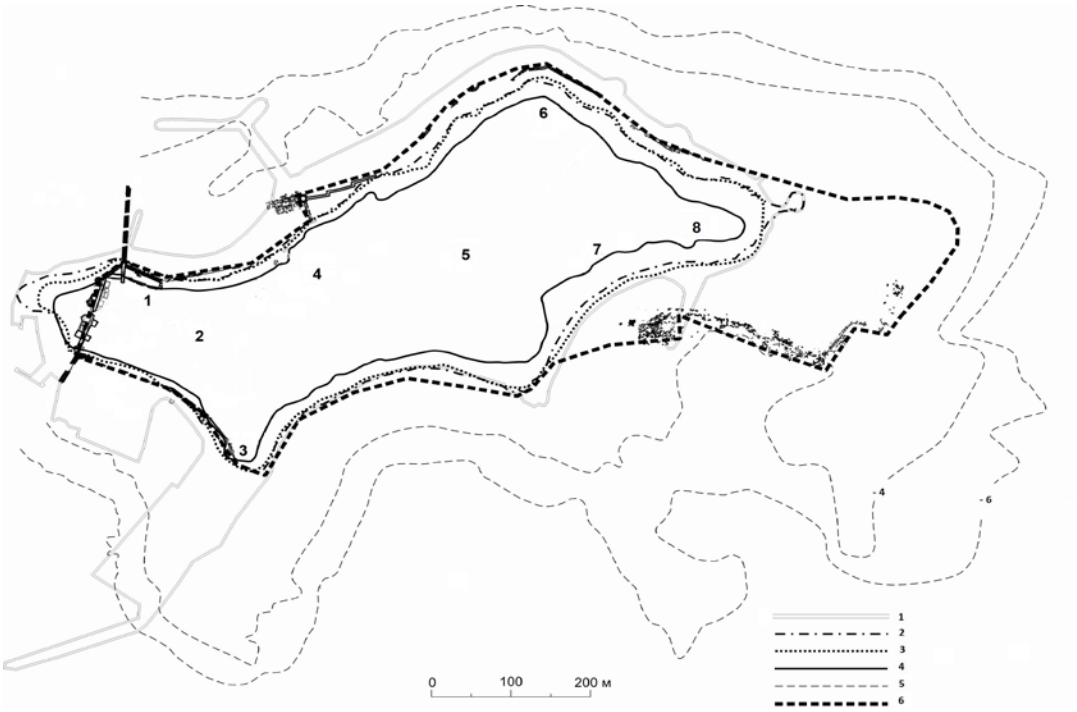

Fig. 1. Nesebar peninsula – plan-scheme. Topographic key: **1** Strengthening of the seashore, beginning of 21st c.; **2** Coastal line, 3rd quarter of 20th c.; **3** Coastal line, 1st quarter of 20th c.; **4** Sea terrace (8-12 m), mid-20th c.; **5** Sea bottom, 20th c.; **6** Fortifications, mid-1st miliennium BC – mid-1st millennium AD; Location of the churches: **1** The northwestern Mesembrian basilica; **2** St. Apostles; **3** St. John Aliturgetos; **4** St. John the Baptist; **5** St. Sophia; **6** The Holy Mother of God Eleusa; **7** St. George the Old; **8** The church Christ Acropolites (after Preshlenov 2023)

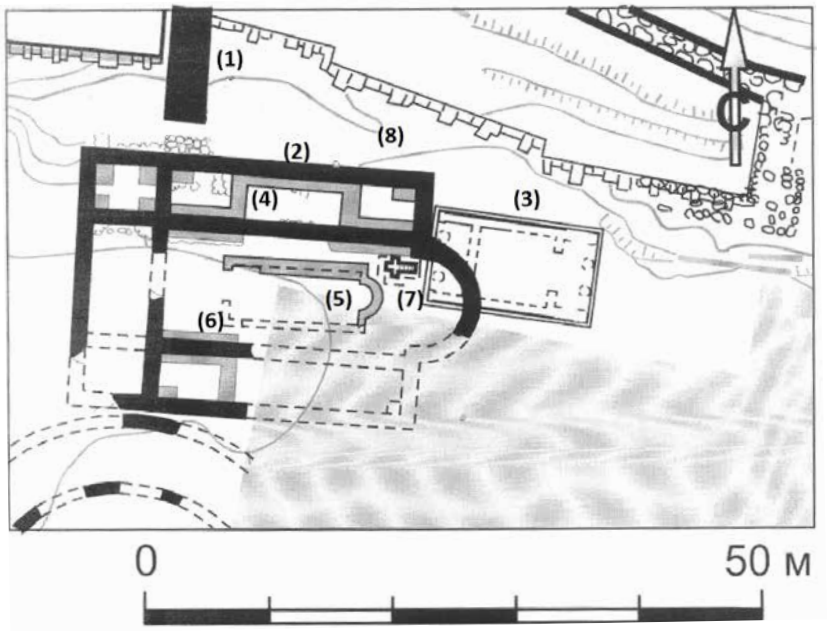

Fig. 2. The northwestern Mesembrian basilica (after Venedikov 1980, Кожухаров 2003; additions by L. Marinov & H. Preshlenov)

3) (at least) from the second half of the 12th c. a stone-paved street connects the church and the adjacent buildings also (with foundations) to an earth clay solution (dated to 10th-11th c. by D. Kozhuharov (unpublished studies from 1997)) with the formation of a medieval main street (topographically inheriting the late Roman and early Byzantine "vestibule" square space at the western gate) (Чимбулева 1990, 191; Божкова / Киящкина 2015, 295, 296; Preshlenov 2012, 517; about the genesis of the main medieval (commercial) streets, see Harbova 1991); 4) the Mesembrian churches, built in the Middle and especially in the Late Byzantine period are in the so called polychromatic 'gridding' (Bakalova 2008, 199, 202) 'picturesque' (Тулешков 2001, 109 sqq.) style, from which the one-nave church differs significantly;

5) hardly "after 13th c.", in the middle of 14th c. and later in Nesebar there is (possibilities for) new public construction: in AD 1366 the city is conquered (October 21) and plundered by the crusades of Amadeus VI of Savoy (churches have hardly been spared either: after the Great Schism of AD 1054, Catholic ordinances in the Eastern and Western Christian churches in Constantinople and diocese have

The Veiled Wreck: A 19th Century Wooden Sailing Merchantman on the Southern Bulgarian Continental Shelf

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Dragomir GARBOV

Abstract: This article reports on the archaeological assessment of a shipwreck discovered and recorded by the Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project (Black Sea MAP) in 2016. The archaeological site lies in 45 metres of water on the Bulgarian Black Sea continental shelf. It represents the remains of a 19th-century two-masted wooden sailing merchantman with over 90% of its hull preserved as coherent structure. The analysis is based on non-destructive recording of the underwater archaeological site (acoustic survey and visual inspection). Physical evidence is discussed against archaeological parallels and historical and iconographic sources with the aim to contextualise the shipwreck within Black Sea maritime globalisation of the "Long Nineteenth Century".

Key words: Black Sea MAP, shipwreck, underwater archaeology, Black Sea, wooden sailing ship.

Introduction

The Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project (Black Sea MAP; 2015-2017) was undertaken in waters under Bulgarian jurisdiction (Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone and Exclusive Economic Zone; see Vagalinski et al. 2016; 2017; 2018). The research program focused on investigating submerged prehistoric landscapes to assess the impacts of Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene environmental change on past human populations. Geophysical surveys covered over 2,500 km^2 of seabed and contributed to the recording of 65 wooden shipwrecks in depths of water between -30 and -2,200 m. The archaeological sites range in date from the late 5th c. BC to the early 20th c. AD representing an invaluable record of human navigation on the Western Black Sea.

Deepwater archaeology has been undertaken in Bulgarian waters on previous occasions (see e.g. Пеев 2004; 2018; Плетньов / Пеев 2012; 2015; Плетньов et al. 2013; Peev 2007; 2014), but never at a comparable scale. Black Sea MAP represents a major contribution to the discipline, particularly where quality of data and site inspection/recording techniques are concerned (see Ruiz et al. 2018; Ruiz et al. 2019;), allowing for a more systematic and detailed approach to the archaeological assessment of historic shipwrecks (see e. g. Batchvarov 2021; 2024; Garbov 2024). Furthermore, since Porozhanov's 1983-1986 testing (Porozhanov 2000) and Batchvarov's 2000-2003 total excavation and reconstruction of the Kitten ship (Batchvarov 2009; 2011; 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; Batchvarov / Todorov 2022), there has been renewed interest in the nautical archaeology of the Golden Age of Sail on the Western Black Sea (Garbov 2021; Garbov 2022; Garbov et al. 2021; 2023; Гърбов 2021; 2022; 2023; Гърбов et al. 2022), forming a basis for further studies on the archaeology of sailing ships of the "western tradition"[1] such as the wreck discussed in the current text.

This article confers the investigation of BSMAP2016_001, the first shipwreck to be inspected and recorded by Black Sea MAP. Following

[1] Vessels built under stronger Atlantic influence, as opposed to traditional Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean craft.

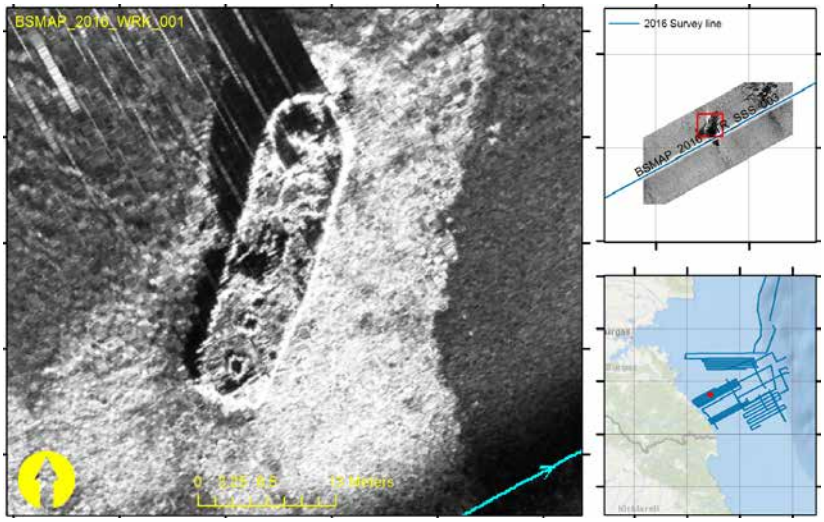

Fig. 2. Location and sonar imagery of BSMAP2016_001 (images: Black Sea MAP)

ations and approach to recording and interpreting the nearly intact shipwrecks in the Baltic Sea, prior to the wide introduction of underwater photogrammetry (see e. g. Eriksson / Rönnby 2012; Eriksson / Höglund 2012; Adams 2013; Eriksson 2018).

Description

Situation and condition

BSMAP2016_001 lies in 45 m of water c. 11 nm east of Varvara on the Southern Bulgarian Black Sea Coast (**fig. 2**). The archaeological site is situated on a flat featureless seabed defined by deep marine sediments. It consists of a wooden sailing ship's hull and its immediate environment, including an assumed debris scatter of unknown proportions likely buried in the surrounding sediments. The vessel is oriented NE-SW, bow pointing to NE with a bearing along the centre line of 20-200°. Over 90% of the hull is preserved as coherent structure with arguably more than 70% of that buried in the bottom sediments.

The bow is more exposed than the stern. It stands c. 4 m proud of the seabed with a scour pit observed around the stem and the starboard bow. The stern is mostly buried with the highest scour deposits concentrated around the port side stern quarter, where sediment has nearly reached the level of the main deck. This scouring pattern has been observed on other sites recorded by Black Sea MAP (see Garbov 2024) and coincides with the predominant currents in the Western Black Sea, characterised by a N-S direction.

The exposed portions of the hull appear to be populated by various marine biota, with the Mediterranean mussel (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*) seemingly dominant. Multiple fishing nets are draped over the bow and stern testifying to repetitive anthropogenic impact through the snagging of trawls, and inspiring the nickname of the site: "the Veiled Wreck".

Hull structure and rigging

BSMAP2016_001 is 32 m long and c. 8.5 m broad at the waist. Most of the ship's hull is buried in sediments, consequently none of the lower hull's features could be observed. Although populated by mussels and covered by fishing nets, the bow was found to be in a good state of preservation, with a portion of the beakhead still in place (**fig. 3/C**). As the outer hull planking is preserved *in situ*, the stem could not be sufficiently observed.

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Alix BARBET. Coupoles, voûtes et plafonds peints d'époque romaine. Ier-IVe siècle apr. J.-C. Hermann Editeurs, Paris, 2021. 365 p., 456 figs., 2 maps, 28.5 cm. ISBN 9-791037-006806

Alix Barbet, honorary director of the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), is a renowned specialist in the study of ancient wall painting. She has a huge archive of documents related to mural art – photographs, drawings, sketches, reconstructions and scientific texts, and her professional success is due, not least, to her expert systematization of this material. Already at the very beginning of A. Barbet's new book we come across a vignette that testifies to her working method – a photo showing a detail from the House of C. Iulius Polybius in Pompei, taken by the author in 1975. This is an early, but not at all the earliest photo in her impressively abundant corpus of documents on various ancient painted decorations – a collection she has been enriching throughout the years and discussing in her books and articles, particularly those related to the Roman period.

As A. Barbet explains at the beginning of her book, ceiling decorations have always presented challenges for the archaeologists because, usually found in fragments fallen on the floor, they regularly need reconstruction; hence, technical difficulties often delay the registration of this archaeological evidence. Fortunately, some ceiling decorations have been found in situ, more often in tombs (protected by their location underground), but also in domestic settings, as in the famous Pompei. The obstacles have never discouraged A. Barbet; quite to the contrary, the study of ceiling decorations has become a goal for her, one she has faced with enthusiasm. She explored this question extensively in her book dedicated to Pompei (1985/2009), and later proposed the topic of the decoration of vaults and ceilings for discussion at the eighth colloquium of the Association Internationale pour la Peinture Murale Antique, held in Budapest – Veszprém in 2001. Her recent book, entirely dedicated to this subject, presents the results of her decades-long work, and may be considered seminal for the study of the Roman painted decoration.

A. Barbet has particularly close ties with Bulgaria. In the 1990s she organized, as part of the Council of Europe's program "Funerary Art in the Oriental Provinces of the Later Empire", a number of expeditions aimed at documenting and partially restoring some of the funerary monuments in Bulgaria. Together with her team, she contributed to the documentation and conservation of tombs in the Kazanlak Region, as well as in the towns of Silistra, Stara Zagora and Hisarya. On her recommendation several Bulgarian art historians and restorers have received grants from the French government to train at prestigious French centers for the study of ancient painting.

The corpus of the painted ceiling and vault decorations presented in A. Barbet's new book comprises about 480 examples. They come from the vast territory of the Roman Empire, from Great Britain to the

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Pavlina VLADKOVA. *Novae*: Sector VIII A. Buildings *extra muros*. Vol. 1: A residential building, necropolis and basilica from the Early Byzantine period, Veliko Tárnovo, 2023, 232 pages, 178 figures, in Bulgarian, summary in English

The reviewed monograph begins with an introduction, after which the reader finds a brief account of earlier publications on Sector VIIIA and selected bibliography, an explanation of the research methods and the structure of the study, and an outline of the history of the archaeological research of Sector VIIIA. In the next chapters, the author discusses numismatic data and the chronology of the buildings *extra muros* west of *Novae* as well as the boundaries of their complexes during the Roman, late antique and early Byzantine periods. There follows a report on the *extra muros* complex during the early Byzantine period: a residential building from the second quarter of the 5th century, a necropolis from the last quarter of the 5th century (with a catalogue of finds) and a basilica from the early Byzantine period (with a catalogue of lamps). The book ends with a conclusion, bibliography and a summary.

Pavlina Vladkova is a highly experienced scholar. For many years she cooperated with Marija Čičikova, an eminent investigator of *Novae*, and has participated in and headed the Bulgarian archaeological expedition which explored Sector VIIIA of *Novae*, i.e. the buildings *extra muros* immediately west of the main gate of this Roman legionary camp and early Byzantine city in *Moesia Inferior/Moesia Secunda*. Accordingly, she offers a very detailed discussion of earlier publications on Sector VIIIA and the movable archaeological finds from this location, providing also a list of 39 books, chapters and articles related to varying degrees to the source material from Sector VIIIA of *Novae*.

The chapter "The Research Methods and the Structure of the Study" begins with the author's statement that the purpose of this definitive report on the exploration of Sector VIIIA is to provide a possibly complete account of the discovered and examined complexes of buildings based on on-site studies and on such movable archaeological sources as are relevant for their dating (p. 15). The author explains that because of the large volume of the material, the monograph is divided into three parts: 1. dealing with relics of the early Byzantine time; 2. discussing structures from the Roman and late Roman periods; and 3. concerned with the discovered movable relics, broken down according to their material. Apropos of the arrangement of chapters in Vol. 1, she also emphasizes that her accounts of the most significant results of the annual excavation seasons go beyond the data of the earlier annual reports published in the series AOR („Археологически открития и разкопки" = "Archaeological Discoveries and Excavations") of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia.

When discussing numismatic material, the author acknowledges that the basis of her approach are the conclusions of earlier publications

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