

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SO-CALLED 'EASTERN GATE' COMPLEX FOR THE CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANITY IN LA PHILIPPOPOLIS

The complex, known in the literature as 'Eastern Gate' of Philippopolis,<sup>1</sup> is the only complex of Late Antique Philippopolis known to us also by written sources (fig. 1, 1). Thus, in *Passio SS. Severi, Memnonis et aliorum* it was exactly near the Eastern Gate where the Christian Severus met the future Christian Memnon, at that time the pagan centurion in the Roman army.<sup>2</sup> The text here is clear, the meeting happened: ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνατολικὴν πύλην τῆς πόλεως (2, 5). And it seems to me that this is not by chance. With its main characteristics which we will discuss below, the complex under consideration appeared to be among the most important not only in Late Antique, but also in Roman Philippopolis. Even, we may note that its authority was used to stress on the persuasion of the Roman centurion Memnon becoming Christian; the place is of importance for the Christians, but also the pagans, personified in the Roman centurion. The success of this persuasion symbolically shows that Christianity prevailed over paganism; even in their sacred place as the 'Eastern Gate' complex was, the pagans were not protected and 'safe'.

The construction of the complex in order to achieve its complete form in Late Antiquity started as early as the Roman period, and lasted until the reign of Theodosius I. It should be mentioned that it was not built with an interruptive construction program, but with gradual accumulation of various buildings which formed the Late Antique complex. For instance, on an occasion of imperial visit of Hadrian not only Ἀντινύεια ἐν Φιλίπποπόλει were organized,<sup>3</sup> but also an honorary arc was built located in the northeastern part of the city, *extra muros*, on the *via diagonalis*.<sup>4</sup> The complex is no doubt closely linked with the imperial cult. It is also

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, the complex identified as 'Eastern Gate' is not located on the eastern curtain wall and limits of the city, but in its north-eastern corner. Since, however, it was built on the road coming from Constantinople which is in east direction, it seems that in the Antiquity this name become common.

<sup>2</sup> See Delehayé, H. Saints de Thrace et de Mésie. *Analecta Bollandiana* 31, 192-194.

<sup>3</sup> See Н. Шаранков. Паметник на култа към Антиной от Филиппопол, ГД-СИИ-НБУ, I, 2002, 164-168.

<sup>4</sup> On the arc – see L. Botušarova, E. Kesjakova. *Sur la topographie de la ville de Philippopolis à l'époque de la basse antiquité*, *Pulpudeva*, 3, Sofia, 1983, 267, fig. 3; Здр. Ди-

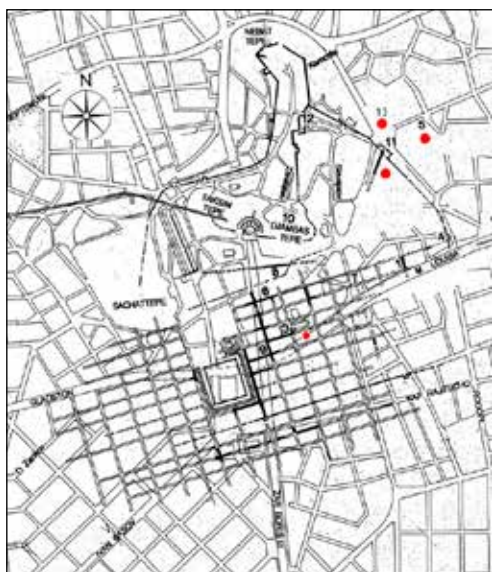


Fig. 1. The location of major archaeological sites of LA Philippopolis (after Topalilov 2001)

Сл. 1. Положај главних археолошких налазишта у оквиру позноантичког Филипоља

without doubt that every imperial *adventus* passed through the honorary arc such as that of Hadrian, but also of Caracalla and Elagabalus in 214/215 and 219 respectively.<sup>5</sup> A few more emperors, who had visited Philippopolis, may be added to this group such as Septimius Severus for example. The importance of the place is underlined also by the official inscription on the gate which commemorated the financial aid made by Marcus Aurelius for fortifying the city.<sup>6</sup>

Radical change occurred in 4<sup>th</sup> c. It comprises of turning the arc into one of the gates of the city where a vast street, 25 m wide, with colonnades on both sides started (fig. 2). The date of this change is still under discussion in the bibliography, and it is assigned to the time of Constantine I,<sup>7</sup> the first half of 4<sup>th</sup> c. or generally in 4<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>8</sup> Some of the dates, however, are based in presumptions and have no concrete dating material. In another study I suggested a new date of the complex – the time of Theodosius I based on some archaeological finds such as the latest coins found in the layer

beneath the sidewalk pavement or in the trenches linked with the destruction and leveling the remains of the old Roman curtain wall over which the new complex was built. The latest coins which provide terminus post quem for the construction of the complex are of Valens.<sup>9</sup> The street run down to another sacred place of the Christians in Philippopolis – the Episcopal basilica (fig. 3).<sup>10</sup>

митров. *Развитие на коринтския ордер във Филипопол през римската епоха*, Годишник на Археологическия музей - Пловдив 11, 91-93, 104; М. Мартинова-Кютова, Г. Пировска. *Източната порта на Филипопол* – In: Изследвания в чест на Стефан Бояджиев (съст. и ред. Ст. Станев, В. Григоров, В. Димитров), София, 2011, 211-234; Топалилов, И. *Римският Филипопол, т. I. Урбанизация, градоустройство и архитектура*, В. Търново, 2012, 137-143; Мартинова-Кютова, М., Н. Шаранков, Нови данни за комплекса „Източна порта на Филипопол”, Годишник на Археологическия музей - Пловдив 12, 2014, 159-184.

<sup>5</sup> On these imperial visits and the neocorates see Burrell, B. *Neokoroi* Greek cities and Roman emperors, Cincinnati Classical Studies, New series, IX. Brill, Leiden, Boston 2004, 243-245.

<sup>6</sup> See the inscription in IGBulg III, 1, 878.

<sup>7</sup> L. Botušarova, E. Kesjakova. Sur la topographie de la ville de Philippopolis, 266; М. Мартинова-Кютова, Г. Пировска. *Източната порта на Филипопол*, 211, 217, 218.

<sup>8</sup> Е. Кесякова. *Градоустройственото развитие на Филипопол*-In: Поселищен живот в древна Тракия, III, Ямбол. 1994, 193; Kesjakova, E. *Zur Topographie von Philippopolis in der Spätantike*, in M. Wendel (ed.), *Karasura* Vol. 1. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Thrakien, Weissbach 2001, pp. 165-171.

<sup>9</sup> Topalilov, I. The impact of the religious policy of Theodosius the Great on the urbanization of Philippopolis, Thrace (in print)

<sup>10</sup> These and other examples are discussed in Topalilov, I. The impact of the religious

On the base of archaeological excavations, the street with the colonnades as a straight line is clearly established. Following the course proposed it reached the so-called 'Eastern Thermae' of Philippopolis, which had been partly discovered (fig. 1, 7). According to D. Tsonchev, the main archaeologist of the complex, they covered an area of approximately 2, 5 acres which is more than an ordinary insula in the city.<sup>11</sup> Near the end of 4<sup>th</sup> c., the complex seems to have been demolished to a great extent and its ruins were later reused partly for dwellings and workshops.<sup>12</sup> Since we have no clue for any barbarian invasion that affected the city at that time, it seems to me that in this case we are dealing with intentional reconstruction of the complex and especially its western part where the street under consideration should have been traced in order to get to the *cardo* which was tangent to the eastern side of the Episcopal basilica.<sup>13</sup>

The completion of the 'Eastern Gate' complex would not be made without the specific Christian buildings which were built near the gate and which seemed to had been an essential part of the complex.<sup>14</sup> One of them about 70 m away from the gate is the so-called 'conch' martyrium which was dedicated either to 38 martyrs who found their martyrdom in Philippopolis (*ἐν Φιλιππουπόλει*),<sup>15</sup> or to Severus, mentioned in *Passio SS. Severi, Memnonis et aliorum* (fig. 1, 5; fig. 4).<sup>16</sup> The former

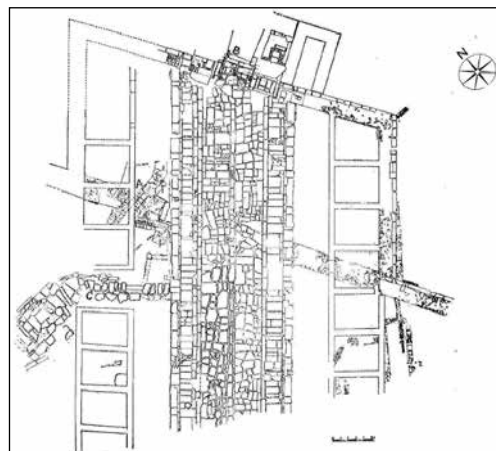


Fig. 2. The 'Eastern gate' complex

Сл. 2. Комплекс „Источна капија“

policy of Theodosius the Great

<sup>11</sup> On the thermae – see Д. Цончев. Римска баня в източната част на Пловдив, Годишник на Археологическия музей – Пловдив 2, 1950, 137 сл.; М. Bospatchieva. New facts about the eastern thermae of Philippopolis - In: (Slokoska, L. eds.), *The Roman and Late Roman city*, Sofia, 2002, 301-305; И. Топалилов, Римският Филипопол, 125-128.

<sup>12</sup> Bospatchieva New facts about the eastern thermae of Philippopolis, 304.

<sup>13</sup> On the Episcopal basilica – see Кесякова, Е. *Раннохристиянска базилика от Филипопол*, Годишник на музеите в южна България 15, 113-126; Е. Kessiakova, *Une nouvelle basilique à Philippopolis*, in *Actes du XI<sup>e</sup> congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne* (Lyon, Vienne, Grenoble, Genève et Aoste, 21-28 Septembre 1986), Roma 1989, pp. 2539-2559. Е. Кесякова. *За раннохристиянската архитектура на Филипопол* - In: Spartacus П. 2075 години от въстанието на Спартак, Трако-римско наследство, 2000 години християнство (съст. А. Димитрова-Милчева, В. Кацарова), В. Търново, 2006, 148-149; Е. Kesyakova, *Mosaics from the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis*, in S. Stanev, V. Grigorov, V. Dimitrov (eds.), *Studies in honour of Stefan Biyadzhiyev*, Sofia 2011, pp. 173-210.

<sup>14</sup> On this – see Топалилов, И. *Источната порта на Филипопол*, In: Вярa и знание. Юбилеен сборник в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. Ангел Кръстев и 20-годишнината от създаването на специалност 'Теология' в Шуменския университет, Шумен, 2013, 117-123.

<sup>15</sup> See Delehaie, H. *Saints de Thrace et de Mésie*, 192; Атанасов, Г. 345 раннохристиянски светци-мъченици от българските земи (I-IV в.), София, 2011, 73.

<sup>16</sup> See Мартинова-Кютова, М., Н. Шаранков, Нови данни за комплекса „Источ-

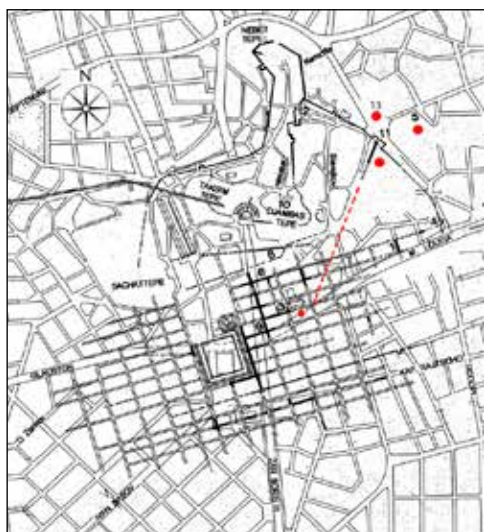


Fig. 3. The possible route of the cardo

Сл. 3. Претпостављени правац cardo

assumption is plausible and logical, but having in mind the impressive dimensions of the building which made it the biggest in Thrace, and also the fact that Severus and Memnon found their martyrdom near another town in Thrace, viz. Bizye, I am inclined to accept that it was dedicated to 38 martyrs which gained their martyrdom in Philippopolis rather than the first two who are obviously linked to Bizye.<sup>17</sup> The widely spread practice in Thrace is for these buildings to be built within some necropolis, *extra muros*, but in close vicinity to one of the city-gates, important and could be regarded as a result of unavailability of constructing the new huge building on the actual place of martyrdom, *intra muros*. Identical is the case with the martyrdom located near the most important gate of Augusta Traiana which stood on the way coming from Philippopolis,<sup>18</sup> but also in Serdica with the small martyrdom located near the eastern gate of the city on the way, coming from

Constantinople,<sup>19</sup> Parthicopolis (modern Sandanski)<sup>20</sup> etc. In fact, a similar case is found near Philippopolis itself, southward of the city where the martyrdom was built within the so-called 'south necropolis'.<sup>21</sup>

The grounds for such decision may be various, including financial connected with the unavailability of local Christian community to buy the place of martyrdom in the city, but also the execution of the practice '*deposito ad sanctos*' which characterized these buildings. On the contrary, the place in the necropolis fits these requirements. With its impressive dimensions, however, the conch – martyrdom in

на порта на Филипопол", 165.

<sup>17</sup> In fact, despite the intention of Passio to commemorate Memnon and Severus, it also mentioned the 38 martyrs who had nothing to do with Passio, but obviously their authority was used

<sup>18</sup> See Д. Николов, Кр. Калчев. Раннохристиянски комплекс в Августа Траяна – Берое, *ИМЮИБ* 15, 1992, 31 ff.; Кр. Калчев, *Археологическият резерват "Августа Траяна-Берое". Проблеми и проувания* - in: Сборник материали, посветени на 85-годишнината на Историческия музей в Стара Загора, Стара Загора 1992, 53; Кр. Калчев, *Проникване и разпространение на ранното християнство в Августа Траяна-Берое (дн. Стара Загора) през IV-V в.* - in: Криптохристиянство и религиозен синкретизъм на Балканите (съст. Н. Дамянов), София 2002, 31 ff. The Martyrium is assigned to the cult of Diacon Ammon and 40 virgins – see Г. Илиев, *Култът към мъчениците в провинциите Тракия и Хемимонт (IV-VI в.)*. Проблеми на идентификацията - in: Тракия и Хемимонт (IV-XIV век), том 1, Карнобат, 2007, 39.

<sup>19</sup> See the discussion in Ророва, V. *The Martyrium under the basilica of Saint Sofia in Serdica and its pavements*, in: Ниш и Византија 13 (ed. M. Rakocija), Nish, 2015, 131 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Petrova, S. *The Early Christian basilicas in the urban planning of Parthicopolis*, in: Ниш и Византија 13 (ed. M. Rakocija), Nish, 2015, 161 ff.; see also Petrova, S. *On Early Christianity and Early Christian basilicas in Parthicopolis*, *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano* 16, 1, Roma, 2012, 93 ff.

<sup>21</sup> On this – see Хр. Джамбов, *Базилката при Коматеве, Пловдивско*, Годишник на Народния археологически музей-Пловдив 3, 1959, 155-164.

Philippopolis may belong to the buildings whose construction was in fact an imperial initiative. The location in the eastern necropolis, but very close to 'Eastern Gate' complex provides also the protection of the main gate of the city by the martyrs, but also the first impression of each visitor to the city coming from the capital Constantinople.

In the bibliography, the construction of the martyrion is dated 'at the time of Constantine I or after',<sup>22</sup> but it is more likely that it was built in the last decade of 4<sup>th</sup> c.,<sup>23</sup> where the earliest 'deposito ad sanctos' seems to have appeared.

It seems that the construction of the martyrion and the great popularity of the cult among the Christians and citizens in Philippopolis provoked the construction of a basilica which satisfied the liturgical needs. The same happened in the south martyrion of the city (fig. 5).<sup>24</sup> Unlike this case, however, a new martyrion was built in the new basilica near the 'Eastern Gate' which caused gradual expansion of the complex probably into a suburban monastery. The new martyrion is dated back to the second quarter of 5<sup>th</sup> c. (fig. 1, 13; fig. 6)<sup>25</sup>

So, we can conclude that till the end of 4<sup>th</sup> c., and most probably under the reign of Theodosius I, in Philippopolis the complex of the *porta triumphalis* of the city was completed and it consisted of not only the honorary arc of Hadrian turned into a city-gate, but also of the major for the local Christian community buildings as well as of the *cardo* with the colonnades which connected the martiria under question with the Episcopal basilica of Philippopolis.

This type of complex with the aforementioned features has a striking resemblance with another complex in Constantinople from that time.

It is well established that under the time of Theodosius I Constantinople changed its urban appearance in many aspect (fig. 7). This was due to the intention of the emperor to settle finally in the city and to its Christianization. The latter was closely connected with the presence of the Arianic community which was the major group of Christians in the city. These two aims are the ground of all the imperial initiatives. I am not going to discuss them fully, since they are beyond the scope of this study, but I would like to draw your attention to some cases which relate closely to Philippopolis.

One such case is the one of *Porta triumphalis*. We are aware of the construction of the triumphal arc by the time of Theodosius I and more precisely in 386

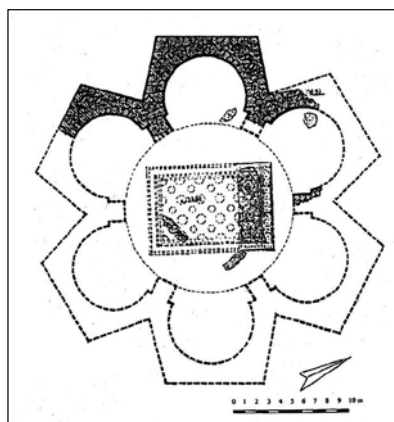


Fig. 4. Plan of the 'conch' martyrion (after Bospatchieva 2001)

Сл. 4. План конхалног мартријума (по Боспачиева 2001)

<sup>22</sup> M. Bospatchieva, *An early Christian Martyrium from Philippopolis*, in *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, 2 (2001), 66.

<sup>23</sup> I. Topalilov, A. Ljubenova, *Neue Überlegungen zum hexakonchalen Martyrium von Philippopolis (Plovdiv, Bulgarien)*, *Mitteilungen zur Christlichen Archäologie* 16, 2010, 59-70.

<sup>24</sup> See Хр. Джембов, *Базиликата при Коматевото*, Пловдивско, 160-161.

<sup>25</sup> See on this suburban monastery – I. Topalilov, *Neue archäologische Forschungen in Philippopolis (Plovdiv, Bulgarien): Ein spätantikes (frühchristliches) Gebäude in der Alexander Puschkin-Straße*, *Mitteilungen zur Christlichen Archäologie* 13 (2007), 37-62.

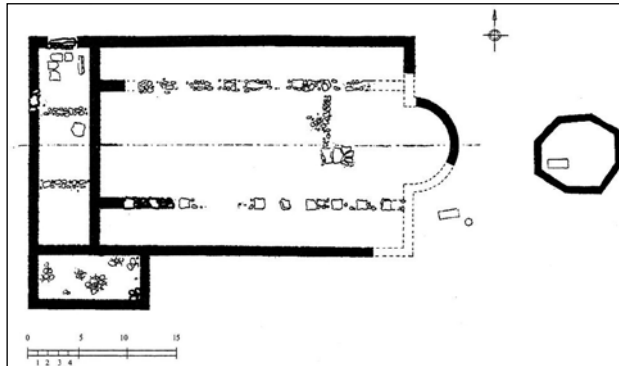


Fig. 5. The basilica and martyrium near Komatevo (after Джамбов 1959)

Сл. 5. Базилика и мартријум близу Коматјева (по Джамбов 1959)

on the occasion of his victory over the Visigoths, and since that time, with rare exceptions<sup>26</sup> the emperor made his advents through this arc at least till 6<sup>th</sup> c. With the construction of Theodosian wall, the arc was incorporated and turned as one of the major gates of the city named *Porta Aurea*.<sup>27</sup> In fact, the gate has never been named as *Porta triumphalis*, but bearing in mind its character, functions and close resemblance with *Porta Triumphalis* in Rome,<sup>28</sup> it seems very likely that it was exactly the case.<sup>29</sup> Probably not by chance, since the time of Theodosius I

onward alongside the road which passed through the arc the ceremonial *fora* of Theodosius and Arcadius were built. Since no evidence attested the existing of this *Via Triumphalis* in pre-Theodosian time,<sup>30</sup> we may assume that it was in the time of Theodosius I when it was well established and gained its main features. The functions and importance of this new feature of the city may be revealed also in its religious aspects.

It is well established that the stationary liturgy<sup>31</sup> was celebrated in the main imperial and provincial centers such as Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Mediolanum etc. which were divided in two main groups: the *old* Christian centers with various places of worship linked to the life of Jesus Christ or pre-Constantinian centers such as catacombs, martyrs' graves etc. and *new* Christian centers where such sacred for the Christian places were not known until the reign of Constantine I and should have been established. Among the cities in the first group are Rome and especially Jerusalem, while in the second – Mediolanum and particularly Constantinople. This undoubtedly affected the type of station liturgy which was celebrated in the city. It is not by chance, having in mind the existence of numerous sacred places in Rome that the liturgy was more or less concentrated between them trying to unite the Christian communities. On the other end is Constantinople where by this procession the sacred for the Christian places were established.

<sup>26</sup> See for this S. Mango, *The Triumphal Way of Constantinople and the Golden Gate*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, No. 54, 2000, 174, n. 8

<sup>27</sup> *Notitia dignitatum* 239.8; 243.56; On the Gate – see also Jonathan Bardill. *The Golden Gate in Constantinople: A Triumphal Arch of Theodosius I*, *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 103, No. 4 (Oct., 1999), pp. 671-696

<sup>28</sup> In this case it is about the type of *quadrifrons*

<sup>29</sup> S. Mango doubted if *porta triumphalis* ever existed in Constantinople, despite the existence of triumphs - see S. Mango, *The Triumphal Way of Constantinople*, 173.

<sup>30</sup> S. Mango, *The Triumphal Way of Constantinople*, 177-179

<sup>31</sup> On the stationary liturgy – see J. Baldovin, *The Urban character of Christian worship. The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stationary Liturgy*, Roma 1987.

The earliest data on the stationary liturgy in Constantinople dates as early as the time of Theodosius I as revealed by the sermons of Gregory of Nazianus who was a bishop from 379-381. Due to topographic and especially the prevailing of anti-Nicene community in the city, initially he was able to hold service of worship in a small church only.<sup>32</sup>

More data are available for these processions under the episcopacy of John Chrysostom (398-402) where the matters changed considerably. They were entirely open not only to the Christians, but also to pagans and heretics and mostly arians.

In fact, this was one of the major ways of trying to Christianize the city and control the arians' places. This defined the matter of his processions which used the main streets in the new capital, but also the main not only religious, viz. churches and martiria, but also administrative centers. For example, one of the processions started at the gate of Constantinian palace and by the main street called Mese reached the forum of Constantine, one of the main stations of most of the processions. From here the procession continued till the Forum Tauri where the street split in two ways.<sup>33</sup> These processions were spectacular and crowded. Initially, the emperor and his family did not remonstrate, on the contrary – in some of them the imperial court adopted the cortège and the emperor or empress took part in them. And this is most logical since the processions led by John Chrysostom were in unison with the imperial intention to Christianize Constantinople and smashed the anti-Nicaeans – the Arians; one of the ways was the implication of the population into common processions, practices, feasts. We may assume that initially these processions were realized not only at the benevolent glance of the emperor, but also by his initiative. For one such initiative one may recall the imperial *adventus* of 391 through which the translation of the head of John the Baptist took also place.<sup>34</sup> In 404 this aggressive policy which in fact raised the popularity and authority of the bishop was accepted as threatening for the emperor himself and John Chrysostom was sent to exile.

One of the main features of the processions led by John Chrysostom was the translation of martyrs' relics. We are aware of two such processions by which the main road arteries of Constantinople were used. The colonnaded streets allowed more participants and spectators to gather the processions. The preferred way started from the palace of Constantine and headed through the forum of Constantine and

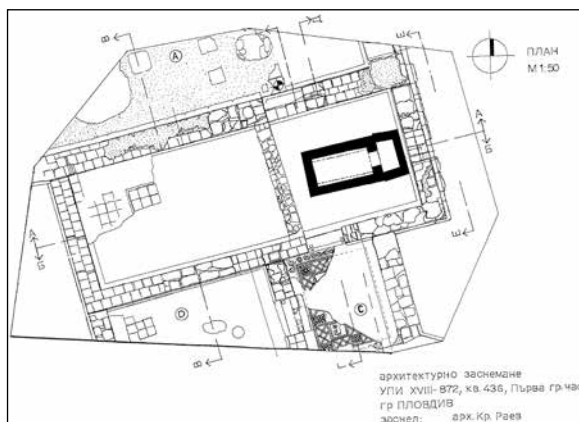


Fig. 6. The suburban monastery (after Topalilov 2007)

Сл. 6. Подграђе манастира (по Топалилов 2007)

<sup>32</sup> See for example J. Baldovin, *The Urban character of Christian worship*, 181.

<sup>33</sup> Зл. Герджикова. *Създаване на християнското градско пространство. Топосната литургия в Константинопол IV- V в.*, In: Югоизточноевропейският град и съвременността на миналото. Научни изследвания в чест на проф. Л. Кирова (А. Балчева състав.), София, 2012, 60.

<sup>34</sup> Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 7.21.

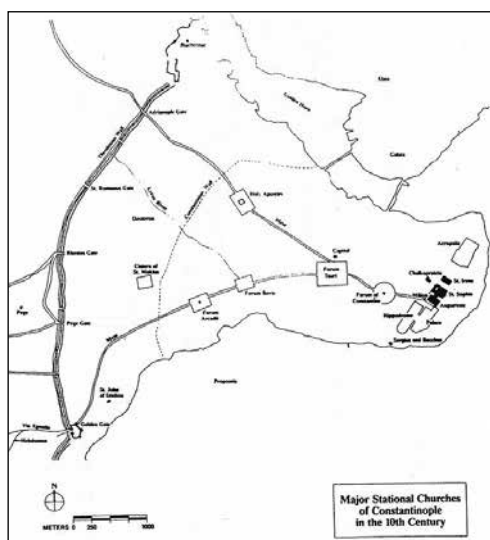


Fig. 7. Map of major stational churches of Constantinople (after Baldwin 1987, 276)

Сл. 7. План главних цркава у Цариграду (по Балдовин 1987, 276)

Forum Tauri and the northern branch of Mese to the church 'Holy Apostles' and Hadrianopolis' Gate or heading through the southern branch of Mese to Porta Aurea and Via Egnatia. And while in the former case the procession was in fact between places in the city sacred for the Christians, i. e. *intra muros*, in the latter the procession passed through the Golden Gate to a sacred place, *extra muros*. This is the procession from the last months of 398 which started at the Great Church and reached the suburb of Drypia which is 13, 5 km to the west of the city on Via Egnatia and the relics of an unknown martyr were carried out by the empress and deposited in the Martyrium of St. Thomas.<sup>35</sup> According to the bishop, while the procession was taking place 'the city emptied'.<sup>36</sup>

Another procession of this type concerns the arrival of the relics of the martyr Phocas from Pontus which lasted for two days and the emperor and empress took part in it.<sup>37</sup>

As may be observed, the imperial involvement in these processions which were

part of stational liturgy, were mainly linked to those who had something to do with the translation of martyrs' relics. We can even assume that while with the other type of processions the imperial presence was sporadic, the translation of martyrs' relics occupied fully the imperial attention.

After this short summary, let us turn back again to Philippopolis and its 'Eastern Gate' complex.

As we may observe some great similarities between the 'Eastern Gate' complex in Philippopolis and the complex of *Porta Aurea* in Constantinople such as common features, functions, simultaneous development appeared. Thus, both gates may be interpreted as *Porta Triumphalis* despite of the different names we are aware of. Nonetheless, the model in both places is the same; the construction of a triumphal arc which was located *extra muros*, but close to the limits of the city, on a road important for the city. In the case of Constantinople it was Via Egnatia, while in Philippopolis it was Via Diagonalis, on the side coming from Constantinople. As for the triumphal arc, in Philippopolis the role played the honorary arc of Hadrian while in Constantinople a new one was constructed by Theodosius I. Subsequently, both of them were incorporated into the city's curtain walls and became *porta triumphalis*, i. e. the gate through which the imperial *adventus* took place in both cities.

<sup>35</sup> John. Chrys. PG 63: 469

<sup>36</sup> John. Chrys. PG 63: 470

<sup>37</sup> On this procession – see J. Baldwin, *The Urban character of Christian worship*, 182 – 183.



What is striking also is the simultaneous development of both complexes. As already noted above, the full completion of the 'Eastern Gate' complex was achieved as early as the time of Theodosius I. I would not be surprised, having in mind the location of Philippopolis in the hinterland of Constantinople as well as its status as provincial capital (metropolis), if the *Porta Aurea* of Constantinople was in fact the prototype of the 'Eastern Gate' in Philippopolis; the model is the same, the time is synchronous. And here comes the question if this was an imperial initiative in Philippopolis as it was in Constantinople?

The answer of this question seems to me positive, but in order to make this clear some more comments are needed on the other functions which seem to have been attached to the 'Eastern Gate' complex and *Porta Aurea*.

As mentioned above, the triumphal arc of Theodosius I as early as the time of John Chrysostom started to play an important role in liturgical processions, including those which had to do with the translation of martyrs' relics. The similar role played by the 'Eastern Gate' in Philippopolis may be proved by the existence of Martyrium, located in close vicinity, just off *Via Diagonalis*. And this martyrium with the suburban monastery clearly define the place as 'sacred' for the Christians. It is true that it was not as away as Dripia was, but the initial conception is the same – translation of martyrs' relics through the gate to Martyrium, *extra muros*, using the main road. The colonnaded street (*cardo*) which started from the Eastern gate connected this sacred place with another one in the city – center – the Episcopal basilica. The *cardo* itself impresses with its width: 25 m which is almost double than the previous most important streets in Philippopolis – *cardo maxumus* and *decumanus maximus*. In fact, the construction of this street changed drastically the city topographically and the street itself became the most important in the city. Accordingly, it is also lavishly decorated with probable double-stored colonnade in which the finest examples of architectural decoration derived from old architectural complexes in Philippopolis were used. At some points it reminds of the Mese Street in Constantinople, but also in Justiniana Prima.<sup>38</sup> And while the example in Justiniana Prima is dated to 6<sup>th</sup> c., this in Constantinople is at the same time. It is obvious, that in this case we are not dealing with some local activity pursued by the local elite, as it is in the case with the *cardo* connecting the Episcopal basilica with *domus Eirene* which was set regardless the existing street network. The pavement of the colonnade *cardo* is a work of great scale for which not only great complexes such as the Eastern Thermae were partly or entirely demolished, but which in fact shifted the center of the city from the older Agora to the axis Episcopal basilica – 'Eastern gate' complex with Martyrium. Logically, the Agora subsequently lost its importance and was abandoned in the middle of 5<sup>th</sup> c. This radical change in the topography of the provincial capital is undoubtedly an imperial initiative; as noted above the alternation of the honorary arc into *porta triumphalis*, but also the construction of the most imposing basilica in Thrace such as the Episcopal basilica was, were of a scale available only to the emperor.

This analysis I believe clearly shows that a close reassemble between Philippopolis and Constantinople may be found in the topic discussed and in fact, the

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<sup>38</sup> see Kondić V. and Popović V. (1977) *Caričin Grad. Site fortifié dans l'Illyricum byzantin* (Belgrade 1977) especially 54-67, 98-99, 322-25, 338-39

case in Philippopolis is a clear *par excellence* copy of the practice in Constantinople in the time of Theodosius I. It is not only that, however, but the intentional imperial initiative who copied the practice from Constantinople in Philippopolis in order to make these important urban changes; the city-core was shifted and the old, pagan places were abandoned while the new, Christian ones prevailed. It should be reminded here that probably in Philippopolis as it was in Constantinople the Arian community was strong enough as revealed by Sozomenos.<sup>39</sup> The imperial initiative with the construction of the ‘Eastern gate’ complex, the Episcopal basilica and the colonnaded *cardo* which connected them is a huge step into the transformation of the city into a Christian one. And logically, the success of the practice in Constantinople was a starting point for spreading this practice in the cities in the provinces.

The practice with a huge street which started from the most important gate of the city and contrasted with its impressive dimension when comparing it with the other streets, is to be found also in other cities in Thrace. Among them is the case in Diocletianopolis where the *cardo maximus* started from the main gate, i. e. this one which was on the road going to Philippopolis and had width of almost 11 m. In contrast, the *decumanus maximus* has barely 5 m wide.<sup>40</sup>

The case with the other important city in Thrace – Augusta Trajana is unclear, but it is known that near the gate on the road coming from Philippopolis and probably Constantinople, a martyrium was built, and later a church was added.<sup>41</sup>

Иво Топалилов

ЗНАЧАЈ ТЗВ. КОМПЛЕКСА „ИСТОЧНЕ КАПИЈЕ“ ЗА ХРИШЋАНЕ И  
ХРИШЋАНСТВО У ПОЗНОАНТИЧКОМ ФИЛИПОЉУ

Рад има за циљ указивање на један од најзначајнијих комплекса у оквиру позноантичког Филипоља – тзв. „Источна капија“ у хагиографији. Фокус студије је на значају хришћанске заједнице у провинцијској престоници и како је од тријумфалног лука посвећеног цару Хадријану наостало једно од два „сакрална“ места Филипоља. Будући да је Филипољ припадао градовима који нису поседовали хришћанску традицију, као уосталом и Цариград, интересантно је пронаћи механизам како је настало ово сакрално место. Анализа свих расположивих података, на пример археолошког и епиграфског материјала, наводи на помисао да су ширење хришћанства у граду који је насељен претежно паганским становништвом, као и јачање хришћанске заједнице углавном подељене јересима попут Аријанства, инициране од стране цара Теодосија I. Модел који је у Филипољу коришћен, најпре је примењен у Цариграду, а потом се раширио и у другим провинцијама. „Источна капија“ представља адекватан пример овог процеса.

<sup>39</sup> Soz. Hist. Eccl., 9: Ἐν γὰρ τῷ πλείονι τῆς ὑπὸ Οὐάλεντος ἀρχομένης, καὶ μάλιστα ἀνὰ τε Θράκην καὶ Βιθυνίαν καὶ Ἑλλάσποντον, καὶ ἔτι τούτων προσωτέρω, οὐτε ἐκκλησίας, οὐτε ἱερέας εἶχον

<sup>40</sup> М. Маджаров, *Диоклецианопол* – In: Римски и ранновизантијски градове в България (под ред. на Р. Иванов), том 1, София, 2001, 207-208.

<sup>41</sup> See Кр. Калчев, Археологическият резерват “Августа Траяна-Берое”. Проблеми и проувания, 50, 53-54 and cited there bibliography.