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THE BAPTISTERY OF THE EPISCOPAL BASILICA IN PARTHICOPOLIS

History of Research

In 1917 remains of a massive round building in *opus mixtum* have been found. Several years later, after the archaeological research prof. Vera Ivanova identified the partly opened structure as *baptisterium*¹ and dated it to the 4th-5th century (fig. 1 a). It had a round piscine with diameter 2.30 m and eight trapezium-shaped niches. Three steps were leading to the piscine bottom, made of bricks and welded by mortar mixed with broken bricks. The niches were covered with marble revetment. The floor has been equalized through four layers, the top one covered with *opus sectile* pavement with hexagon plates, arranged star-like. It is established that a corridor wide 1.35m has been formed between the piscine and the outer baptistery wall supplied with four semi-circle niches with an entrance among them, coinciding with that of the outer entrance. Many architectural elements from the decoration of the baptistery, fragments of polychrome wall mosaics have been found in the embankment. The plan and the decorative elements of the baptistery were the good reasons for Vera Ivanova to connect it to an unknown basilica from the same period². After the research the remains were filled up and the baptistery forgotten.

New excavations begun in 1989 during the new building activities on the place and there were found the remains of the basilica whose existence has been suggested 70 years earlier by V. Ivanova. In 1996 the general excavations of the *baptisterium* has begun parallel to the basilica³ (fig. 1 b). Two building periods are established in the existence of the baptistery.

¹ В. Иванова, Стари църкви и манастири. – In: *Годишник на Народния Музей*, 1922-1925:549 и сл.; A. Khatchatrian. *Les baptistères paléochrétiens. Plans, notices et bibliographie*. Paris: École pratique des hautes études, 1962, 23, fig. 187, 131; S. Ristow. Frühchristliche Baptisterien.- In: *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Bd. 27, 1998, 130, № 139.

² В. Иванова. *Op. cit.*, 550-551, обр. 352.

³ In the period between 1989 and 2014 the complex of the Episcopal basilica was revealed with narthex, atrium, Episcopal residence and baptistery. The plans of the basilica and

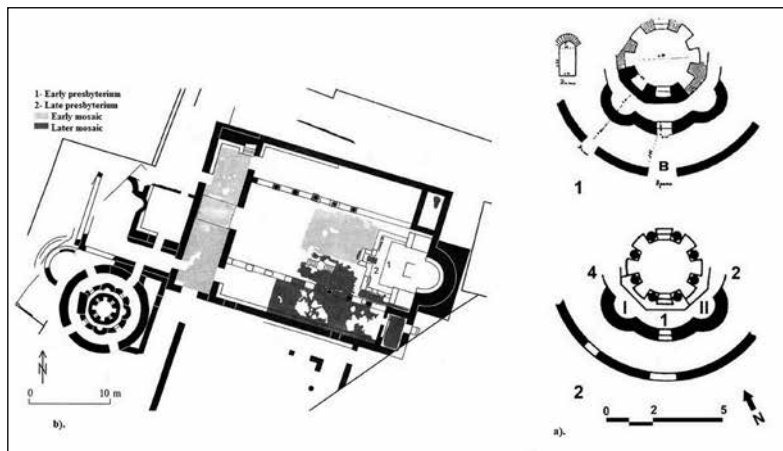


Fig. 1a. The Episcopal complex (plan by Pillinger, Hofbauer, with additions of Petrova).

Сл. 1а Епископски комплекс (plan by Pillinger, Hofbauer, Petrova)

Fig. 1b. The Architectural capture of the Baptistery: 1) By V. Ivanova-Mavrodinova; 2) By A. Khatchatrian.

The first building period of the basilica and the baptisterium.

The Basilica has been built and has existed in the period 4th – 6th century. The archaeological research has shown that the beginning of this extremely representative temple is in the 4th century, with different opinions for the time of the first building period⁴. We consider that the first building period should be looked for after 325, when the building of Early Christian temples is already allowed. These circumstances have led to the building by the bishopric of Parthicopolis of its first basilica (basilica No 1) with t.p.q. 317 and t.a.q. 343. At the time of the council at Serdica in 343 this was the first Episcopal basilica of Parthicopolis, playing the role of Episcopoeion with the Episcopal residence and special hall for visitors, e.i. the administrative headquarters of the bishop. The construction of the new Episcopal basilica No 4 should have begun not long after the Council of Serdica (343-344), during the third quarter of the 4th century.

We consider that the erection of the new Episcopal basilica was caused by several reasons, connected with the development of the city, respectively of the bishopric. The first among them was that the number of the Christians has been

the baptistery were studied between 1989 and 2010 with their building periods, also together with the adjoining rooms west of the narthex and south of the basilica and the baptistery. In the winter of 2013-2014 the praefurnium was found west of the baptistery, in the catenary of the inscribed in a square rotunda, where the water for the piscine of the baptisterium has been heated up. At the head of the first excavations was Prof. Dr. A. Dimitrova-Milcheva and deputy V. Petkov. From 2001 up to 2014 the head of the research was V. Petkov with Deputy Dr. S. Petrova. During the work of the second team the plan of the baptisterium was clarified, also of the chapel discovered south of the baptistery, of the basilica itself and its atrium, of the so-called martyrium, of the receiving hall and the other rooms, excavated to the west of the narthex and to the south of the baptistery.

⁴ According to the first one it has been built at the end of the 4th – the beginning of the 5th century (А. Димитрова-Милчева. Сандански (СветиВрач). – In: *Римски и рановизантийски градове в България*, София 2002, 281 и сл.), but according to others researchers – in the second half of the 4th century (Ю. Фърков. Епископска базилика в Сандански. – In: *Арх и Арт. Форум*, год. XX, бр. 19 (99), 2011, 13).

increased similarly to Philippi⁵. The second reason could be bound with the fact that the Church in Thessaloniki was raised to the rank of Exarchate at the beginning of the 4th century⁶. The proximity of Parthicopolis to Thessaloniki and the big number of Christians have turned the bishopric of Parthicopolis into one of the important for the Thessalonian Church and the rule of the vicariate, respectively for Rome. This probably brought to the raising of Parthicopolis among the bishoprics around and especially in front of Heracleia Sintica, opponent of it for centuries⁷. The next reason, due to which the building of a new episcopal basilica and *baptisterium* was necessary, according to us was influenced by the geographic location of the city – the most Eastern part of Macedonia, on the border between two provinces and two dioceses, where the architecture and liturgy are influenced by the Constantinople Church (to the east of Parthicopolis, in the province of Thrace) and the one of the Thessalonian vicariate, under the influence of the Roman Pope. That's why we consider this as another reason for the special attention given to the bishopric of Parthicopolis by the Thessalonian Church. As it has been already underlined, the increased number of Christians and the impossibility of basilica No1 with its relatively small *baptisterium* and Episcopoeion to function well enough lead to the building of a bigger and



Fig. 2. The plate with the Antim donor's inscription, fragments (photo by Vl. Petkov).

Фиг. 2. Плочаса Анти, донаторски натпис, фрагменат (фото Вл. Петков).

⁵ Five churches have been studied in Philippi so far. According to E. Verhoef, at the beginning of the 4th century there lived more than 900 Christians visiting the churches. Every decade their number had increased with 15 % and for 50 years their number has doubled. That's the reason for this author to suggest that in the middle of the 4th century there already have lived circa 1900 Christians. It is also thought that at the end of the century the predominant number of inhabitants in Philippi were Christians because of the new edicts issued by Theodosius I. See in E. Verhoef. The church of Philippi in the first six centuries of our era. – In: *HTS* 61(1&2) 2005, 584 ff.

⁶ The power of the Exarchate over Eastern Illyricum expanded in the third quarter of the 4th century, when the Thessalonian Exarch became not only the autocephalous hierarch, but also the vicarius of the Roman throne. The high administrative position of Thessaloniki, in which the exarch resided first and then the vicarius of the Roman throne, the spectabilis vicarius of the diocese Macedonia, allowed the principle of correspondence to be established so that the rank of the cathedra to be equal to the civil rank of the city. In such a way Thessaloniki became the church and administrative center of the diocese and of the province. See: S. Petrova. On Early Christianity and Early Christian Basilicas of Parthicopolis. – In: *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano. Academia Angelica'Constantiniana di lettere arti e scienze. Roma* 16/1, 2012, 98; V. Popova. Fons Vitae in Late Antique monuments from Bulgaria. – In: *STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA. Transition from late paganism into early Christianity in the architecture and in the Balkans. Vol. 3, Shumen University Press 2016, 180; Д. Цухлев. История на българската църква, т. I, София 1910, 84. At the time of the Council at Nicea in 325 the Thessalonian exarch is autocephalous hierarch only of the diocese of Macedonia.*

⁷ N. Sharankov. Heraclea Sintica in the Second Century AD: New Evidence from Old Inscriptions. – In: *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, 2016, XX, No 2, 57-74.

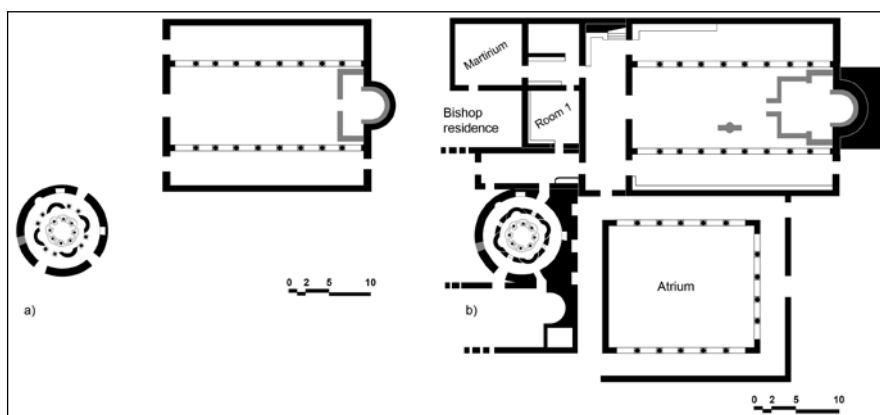


Fig. 3 a, b. The first and the second construction period of the Basilica and the Baptistery (by S. Petrova).

Фиг. 3 а, б. Први и други период изградње базилике и крстионице (С. Петрова).

more richly decorated episcopal basilica No 4 with a new and a bigger baptistery. The erecting of the baptistery should have begun almost at the end of building the basilica itself, in the third quarter of the 4th century. Our hypothesis is supported by the impost capitals and *biphor-columns* from the decoration of the baptistery windows, with parallels after the middle and in the third quarter of the 4th century in the neighbor city centers of Philippi and Tiberiopolis⁸.

The situation is identical with the building of the *baptisterium* after or at the end of erecting the Lateran basilica in Rome. From *Liber Pontificalis* it is known that the Lateran basilica has been built after 312 and before 324 with the generous donation of Constantine I during the pontificate of Pope Silvester (314-335). The baptistery of this basilica⁹, again based on the information from *Liber Pontificalis*, was built later, after 324¹⁰. According to some of the researchers of the Lateran *baptisterium* the phase of the construction at Constantine has been preceded by a smaller baptistery, also with a round form, built in 313/315, before the baptistery of Constantine¹¹.

⁸ С. Петрова. Архитектонична скулптура от Епископската базилика, гр. Сандански. – In: *Spartacus II. 2075 години от въстанието на Спартак. Тракоримско наследство. 2000 години християнство*. София 2006, 251-257 и цит. лит.

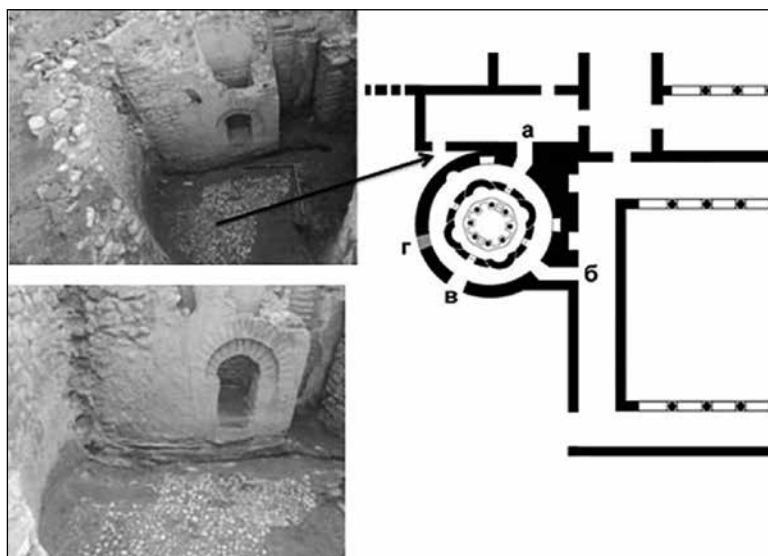
⁹ We make this parallel because of the fact that the baptistery of Parthicopolis is similar in its form and construction to the Lateran one, as well as to other buildings with round plan in Rome and in the East, all of them erected at the time of Constantine the Great and his successors. For the concrete parallels see further in the text.

¹⁰ Ascribed to Constantine, the baptistery at the beginning probably had a round form, later changed to octagonal, and supplied with inner colonnade by Sixth III (432-440). In the 6th century the baptistery is mentioned in the same *Liber Pontificalis as baptisterium basilicae Constantinianae* (See: O. Brandt. *Battisteri oltre la piana. Gli alzati di nove battisteri paleocristiani in Italia*. Città del Vaticano 2012, 35ff.). We suppose that the building of the baptistery could be initiated in 326, the year when Constantine visits for the last time Rome.

¹¹ E. Hertling, E. Kirschbaum. *Le catacombe romane e i loro martiri*. Roma 1996, 182.

Fig. 4. The Baptistry of Parthicopolis, 2nd phase. The Praefurnium (above – top view) (photo – Vl. Petkov).

Сл. 4 Крстионица у Партикополису, 2. фаза. Префурниум (горе) (фото Вл. Петков).



Unfortunately there is lacking detailed written data about the building of the *baptisterium* of Parthicopolis. The only information is the fragmented Early Christian text in Greek of the ktetor Anthim¹², in our opinion written in the third quarter of the 4th century at the end of the construction period of the basilica¹³. The unique ktetor inscription is covering the back side of an earlier Roman invitation for gladiatorial and bestiarium combats¹⁴. The fields with the inscription

¹² These fragments were excavated during several archaeological excavations since 2005. They were found scattered in the embankment around the northeastern entrance of the baptisterium, in front of it and inside it. The inscription has been installed already during the first period of building the basilica and the baptistry. Although some fragments were found almost inside the rotunda and in front of the entrance, we believe that it was not installed on the baptistry's walls. Most probably the plate with rich silver decoration was on one of the two walls of the southwestern corner of the basilica, near to the baptistry. After it the plate with the inscription has been stripped down during some of the numerous barbarian invasions in the second half of the 6th, the silver decoration (the nails) was plundered and the plate thrown down on the floor in the corridor between the narthex of the basilica and the baptistry. At the moment the plate fell down it was broken into many pieces and they have been dispersed.

¹³ S. Petrova. The Roman Theatre in Parthicopolis/Parthicopolis and its historical Fortune. – In: *Niš and Byzantium* (ed. M. Rakocija), XIV. šš 2016, 187-212. In our opinion according to the representations of members in the bestiarium and the animals (bears) preserved partly and badly, we can date the initial time of the Roman invitation to the period of the Severi (193-235). In the cited article the date of the donation inscription on the back is too general (in the second half – end of the 4th century -p. 201). In our article we are correcting it according to our archaeological observations, the study of the building periods and the architecture of the baptistry.

¹⁴ В. Герасимова. Оп. cit., 191-206. According to V. Gerassimova (p. 204) the basilica is built in the second decade of the 4th century. This hypothesis cannot be accepted in our opinion, because basilica No 1 was built at that time. At the time the second Episcopal basilica No 4 was built, the first Episcopium of basilica 1 has been turned to an administrative building. The new Episcopium at the beginning of the 5th century was placed already in

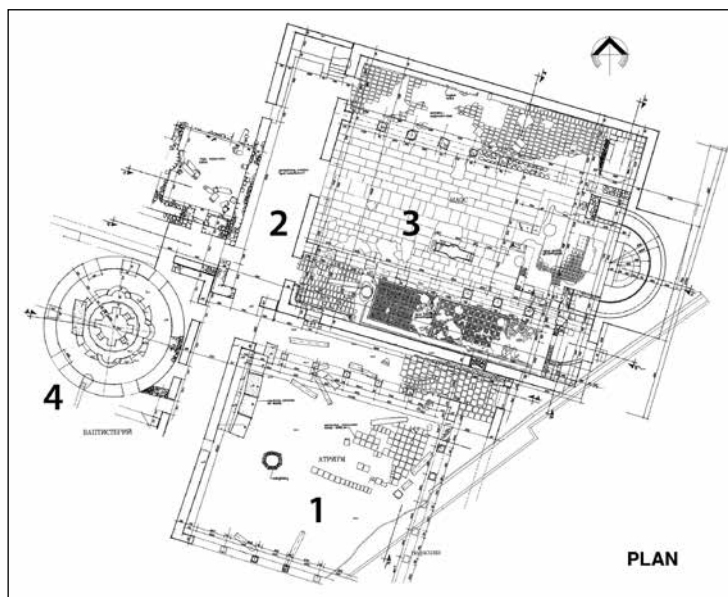


Fig. 5. Plan of the complex (by architect Yu. Farkov)

Сл. 5 План комплекса (арх. Ю. Фарков)

are formed as two opened pages of a book under the finely made Chi-Ro (**fig. 2**). In this very important text the acts of the ktetor Antimin benefit of the city are described also the splendid qualities of the built by him basilica. He had made a lot of good deeds to the city, but it is not mentioned neither his title nor his position. That's the reason to consider him as the bishop who has built this basilica similarly to the act of bishop Ioannes who has built and decorated basilica No 2 of the city in the middle of the 5th century¹⁵. It looks like that the donorship in the 4th century was closely connected with the construction of the basilicas, at the expense of the builders or the donators (*Liber Pontificalis*)¹⁶.

Similarly to the Lateran baptistery, the one in Parthicopolis has been built either simultaneously with the basilica or a little bit later¹⁷. The basilica during the first building period had a half-circle apse, but without *nartex* and atrium. The initial plan of the baptistery was as an independently standing building near to the southwestern corner of the basilica (**fig. 3 a**). The idea of such baptisteries as independent buildings and not included inside the basilicas is due to the consideration that the proselytes are still not a part of the church and it happens only after the sacrament of baptism and the first communion.

the complex of basilica 4.

¹⁵ Т. Иванов, Д. Серафимова, Н. Николов. Разкопки в центъра на Сандански през 1960 г. – In: Известия на археологическия институт, 31, 1969, 105-209; V. Popova. The Pavement Mosaics of Bishop Ioannes' Basilica in Sandanski. In: Spartacus. Symposium rebus Spartaci gestis dedicatum 2050 a. Sofia 1981, 173-181.

¹⁶ O. Brandt. Constantine, the Lateran, and Early Church Building Policy. – In: *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia*. Vol. XV (N.S. 1), ed. J. R. Brandt, O. Steen. Bardi ed. 2001, 111.

¹⁷ S. Petrova, V. Petkov. Пароикополис/Парθикополис. – In: *Thracian, Greek, Roman and Medieval Cities, Residences and Fortresses*. Sofia 2015, 425ff.

The architecture of the baptistery is a massive, not very high domed building. Its plan belongs to the buildings with a centric plan and with a round form (rotunda). The four-conch volume is inscribed in the rotunda, with eight columns in four pairs arranged in a circle, forming a *deambulatorium* with the outer wall of the baptistery and a second *deambulatorium* with the piscine placed in the middle. The columns and the conchs not only divided the space into two corridors but probably also possessed architectonically formed architrave, going around the ciborium of the fonts and the pairs of columns formed the main entrance with a vaulting among them. The outside of the piscine is octagon with rounded corners and the inside has eight trapezium-shaped niches. Eight not very high columns supporting the *tegurium fontis* of the piscine are placed between the niches on the wall of the piscine. To enter it was possible by stepping on two opposite stairs developed in the axis southwest-northeast. The two corridors, one around the piscine and the other one around the outer wall are paved with bricks from red clay. Four entrances facilitate in the maximum way the access placed symmetrically in the direction southeast-northwest and southwest-northeast. A rectangular niche was built on the innerside of the eastern wall and one more niche in the form of exedra was added on the northern outer wall.

The second building period of the basilica and the baptistery.

It has been paid an extreme attention to the building of the Episcopal complex (Episcopeion) because of its strong importance for the vicariate in Thessaloniki. The second building period of the baptistery coincides with the second period of renewal and additional building of the complex of basilica No 4 in the end of the 4th – the beginning of the 5th century. In this second period the plan of the basilica is enriched (**fig. 3 b**). The apse has been walled up in a compact quadrangle, receiving the form of a hidden apse of Syrian type. Numerous new rooms have been built to the west¹⁸, the most important from them is room No 1 west of the narthex.

The numerous finds of flat window glass to the southern wall of the waiting room/vestibule (north of room No 1) suggest the presence of windows, lightening the dark room and raising its roof over the roof of room 1, or the room itself initially had no roof. The dividing function of both rooms and their different purpose is pointed out by the presence of the windows (between room 1 and the vestibule/waiting room), of the room 1 and its construction before building the corridors (seen from the adjoining of the gap between both rooms) and the decreased width of the initial entrance of room No 1. The vestibule is connected with the everyday life of the bishop and the basilica, but the second room (room No 1) in our opinion is connected with the sacrament of baptism and the baptismal rites, judging by the entrances/exits and the location of room No 1. We consider that this room belongs to the complex of the baptistery consisting of the rotunda-baptismal building, the corridor with a big bath-tub for cold water

¹⁸ See: S. Petrova. On Early Christianity..., 2012, 108 ff.; S. Petrova, V. Petkov. Παροικιοπολις/Παρθικοπολις ..., 2015, 425 ff.



Fig. 6. The Baptistery (photo by VI. Petkov).

Сл. 6
Баптистериум
(фото Вл. Петков)

and the *praefurnium* to the southwest. Room No 1, intended for proto- and post-baptismal rites was used for the quick movement of the bishop from the rooms in the western part of the Episcopion complex to the baptistery, without leaving it or walking through the *nartex* of the basilica.

In the second building period a rectangular corridor has been formed north of the baptistery, leading from the *nartex* of the basilica to the west to the baptistery, along the axis east-west. Its entrance is connected with the northern entrance of the baptistery. To the west almost at the end of the corridor, another entrance is leading to the south and west of the baptistery rotunda. Namely here the *praefurnium* has been built, the only one found in an Early Christian baptistery in Bulgaria (fig. 4). It is a small room with irregular form, whose eastern wall is the catenary of the rotunda wall. A stove was built there with a big metal vessel on it for heating water and most probably of the room of the baptistery as well (?). The warm water for the piscine has been passing through ceramic pipes. The floor of the *praefurnium* is covered with a mosaic from big irregular marble pieces and by this the technique is identical to the mosaic in room No 2 of the first Episcopal residence¹⁹.

Thus in the second building period three complexes have been built and articulated in the new Episcopion of basilica No 4: 1) the complex of the basilica with *nartex* and atrium; 2) the complex of the Episcopal residence; 3) the complex of the *baptisterium* (fig. 5). The rotunda of the baptistery has been inscribed in a square building in order to incorporate it to the basilica and to the Episcopion. The square of the baptistery was stuck to the gap to the south wall of the corridor, in this way it has been united the body of the baptistery complex. It is also possible that the inscribing in the square was forced by constructive aims in order to enforce the building and having in mind the beginning of the

¹⁹ В. Попова. Един паметник с рядка мозаична техника от ранновизантийския Партикополис. – In: *Изкуствоведски четения 2007*. Институт за изкуствознание 2007, 408–421.

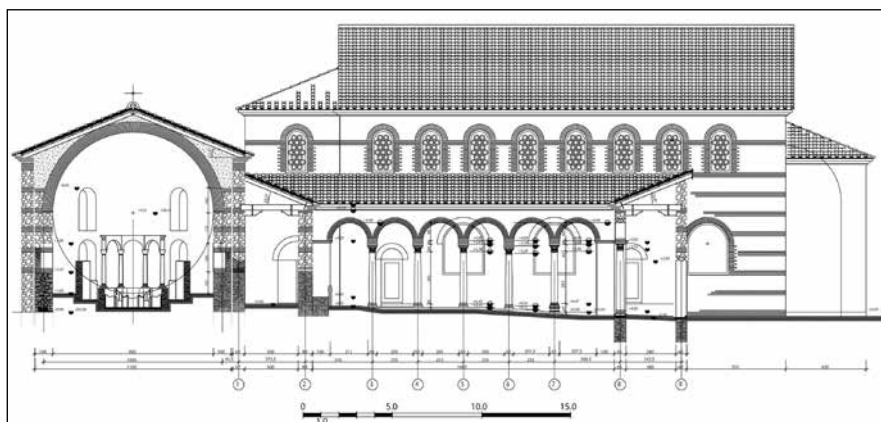


Fig. 7. Section – reconstruction on axis east-west (by architect Yu. Farkov).

Сл. 7 Пресек – реконструкције, исток-запад (арх. Ју. Фарков)

atrium construction, as the south wall of the square played the role of the west wall of the atrium. The including of the baptistery in the general plan of basilica No 4 through this square building could be connected with the new liturgy introduced in the baptismal rites in the end of the 4th – the beginning of the 5th century, when the influence of the Thessalonian exarchate raised to vicariate, was obviously strengthened. The total spread of Christianity as the only religion and the position of Thessaloniki after 395 lead to the exclusive importance of the bishopric of Parthicopolis for the eparchy of Macedonia and respectively for the Thessalonian church rule.

New changes have been also made in the plan of the baptistery together with the newly built rooms and the creation of the Episcopal complex and residence to the basilica. The forming of the *deambulatoriumis* changed between the piscine and the outside bapstistry wall by creating corridors/galleries on two levels, separated by the four semi-circular niches around the piscine with a floor covered with bricks (fig. 3 a, b; fig. 6). The outer colonnade of the corridor is replaced by a thin wall forming a low parapet. The walking path around the piscine is placed on a lower level. But the form of the piscine and the places of the columns supporting the *tegurium fontis* are preserved. In this plan the baptistery remained until it was abandoned in Late Antiquity and before it was destroyed. The final plan of the baptistery from the end of the 4th – the beginning of the 5th century is a rotunda with outer diameter of 11 m and inner diameter of 9 m (fig.7). It is 9 m high from the bottom of the piscine up to the dome. In architectural aspect it was a massive not very high domed building with outer walls thick 1.10 m. The piscine itself has four three-step passages and four niches (fig. 8 a). It was covered with ciborium, consisting of marble colonnade in Ionian order (fig. 8 b).

The decoration of the baptistery was very rich, including architectonic sculpture, mosaics and wall paintings. The found architectonic details belonged to the decoration of the piscine and of the *tegurium fontis/ciborium*, supported by the arcades of 8 columns, stepping on Attic-Ionian bases and crowned with

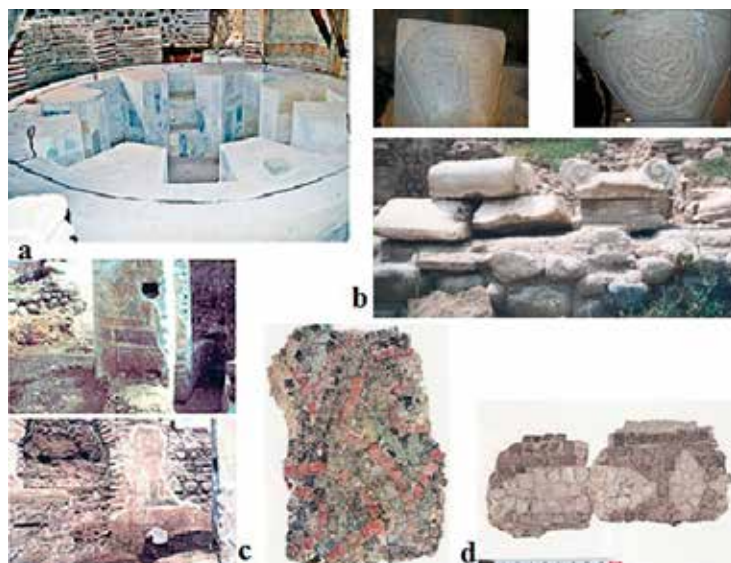


Fig. 8. a - The Baptizing pool (photo by S. Petrova), b - The Architectural details from the Baptistery (photo by S. Petrova); c - The Wall paintings in the Baptistery (photo by Vl. Petkov); d - The Mosaics from the baptistery – fragments (photo by A. Lirsh).

Сл. 8. а – базен за крштење (фото С. Петрова); б - архитектонских детаља из крстионице (фото С. Петрова); ц - зидног сликарства у крстионица (фото Вл.Петков); д - Мозаици из крстионице - фрагменти (фото А. Лирш).

Ionian capitals with plain echinus decorated with a cross. Biphor- window columns and impost capitals for them were found, being part of the decoration of the windows of the *baptisterium*²⁰. All the bases, columns and capitals have been specially carved for the baptistery decoration and reveal identical marble material and way of work. The architectural sculpture is made of glittering white quartzite marble, from the ancient quarries at the village of Petrovo, very similar in its colour and qualities with the one from Thasos. It is established that some capitals have been covered with gilding. The marble colonettes of the ciborium have dark red and golden strips on their necks, immediately under the capitals. All this is showing the lux, the splendor and the significance of the *baptisterium* in Parthicopolis and the Episcopate.

The walls of the *baptisterium* and the outer walls of the piscine in Parthicopolis were covered with wall paintings in different colours (red, blue, orange, yellow, green, white etc.) in the incrustation style²¹(**fig.8 c**). The parallels for the wall paintings come from the decoration of basilicas NoNo 1, 3 and 4 in Parthicopolis. The wall paintings fragments are preserved in situ only in

²⁰ С. Петрова. Архитектонична скулптура от Епископската базилика, гр. Сандански. – In: *Spartacus II. 2075 години от въстанието на Спартак. Тракоримско наследство*. 2000 години християнство. София 2006, 251-257.

²¹ R. Pillinger, V. Popova, B. Zimmermann. *Corpus des spätantiken und frühchristlichen Wandmalereien Bulgariens*. Wien 1999, 88-92.

the lower plinth part, but they give to a certain extent the idea for the colour and the decorative scheme. The surface of the walls is divided into panels with borders, floral motives (branches with flowers as a symbol of life). This painting appears in Late Antiquity in civil and especially church buildings with preference for the Pompeian red, green, black, ochre, blue and white. The second layer of wall paintings is also polychromic.

The dome and the walls of the baptistery were covered with mosaic in *opus tessellatum* и *opus vermiculatum* with different geometric, plant and floral motives. Among them can be found rosettes, ellipses; peacock tails (**fig. 8 d**). The dimensions of the tesserae are between 5 and 7 mm²², predominantly smalti in a rich polychromic palette, but also white marble can be seen. Some of the smalti, probably descending from the upper walls and the dome of the ciborium, are covered with gilding of a very thin layer of 0.55 mm, similarly to the dome mosaics in Rome, Ravenna, Constantinople, etc. That points to the notion that in the upper part the Heavens with stars and the Cross have been represented and that the lower parts have contained the symbolic figurative scenes and representations of the Early Christianity, most of all baptismal. The mosaic art was very popular in the Late Roman/ Early Byzantine Parthopolis and tied very closely with the compositional schemes, motives and style of Thessaloniki (Macedonia Prima), also generally with the workshops of the South of Macedonia (Macedonia Secunda) and Thessalia by the work of itinerant and local masters²³. The outer parts of the piscine walls form octagon²⁴, typical and preferred for the *piscines* of the 4th century to the West, while in the East they are tetragons or squares²⁵. The octagonal form is the symbol of the Eighth Day, the Day of Resurrection, the Day of Creation, the Day of God²⁶. The inner parts of the piscine wall have a revetment of different by their colour marble plates, from light grey-bluish to white marble plates. The floor has a pavement with geometric elements in *opus sectile*, where the white is marble and the blue is argillite. The ceramic pipes for the running water and the drains from the piscine are well evident²⁷. The *presbyterium* of the Episcopal basilica is covered too with a similar mosaic and this parallel is not the only one in this part of the province of Macedonia. The closest monuments with the same kind

²² R. J. Pillinger, A. Lirsch, V. Popova. *Corpus der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Mosaiken Bulgariens*. Wien 2016, 354 ff.

²³ Ibidem, NoNo 76-83.

²⁴ The number 8 was considered sacred by the Early Christians. See also А. Б. Головкин. Эволюция архитектуры крещальной купели. – In: Архитектон: Известия вузов № 38 / Июнь 2012, 59-68.

²⁵ J. M. Timoteo, S. J. Ofrasio. The baptistery and the Baptismal Font: Symbolism and Pastoral Relevance. – In: Landas, 6, 1992, 23 ff.

²⁶ Ibidem, 27 ff.

²⁷ The flowing out water was passing in the channel to the east under the northern porticus of the atrium and then flowing in the channel under the pavement of *Via Sacra*.

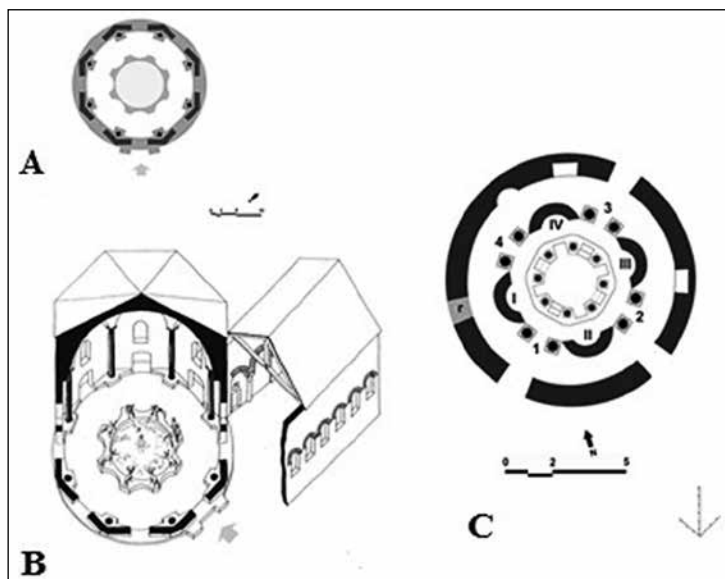


Fig. 9. Rome, the Lateran Baptistery of Constantine around 315 years (= Laterano I): A- restored plan by O. Brandt; B - an axonometric reconstruction by O. Brandt; C - the Baptistery of Parthicopolis, 1st building period.

Сл. 9. Рим, Латерански крстионица Константина око 315. (= Латерано I): А-обновљена основа по О. Брандт; Б - Аксонометријска реконструкција по О. Брандт; Ц - Баптистериј Партикополиса, 1. период.

of mosaic are the church-octagon²⁸ and basilica “Г” in Philippi²⁹, where two opposite borders of the square mosaic carpet are absolutely identical with that of the piscine in Parthicopolis – hexagons from white marble and argillite plates in blue. The same is the technique of the mosaic pavement of the hexagon in Amphipolis³⁰; of the apse of the basilica in Arethousa, southwest and not far from Amphipolis³¹. The mosaic of the *presbyterium* of basilica No 2 in Pautalia (the province of Dacia Mediterranean) with hexagon plates is also identical to the one of the *baptisterium* of Parthicopolis.

²⁸ S. Pelekanides. Kultprobleme in Apostel Paulus-Oktogon von Philippi in Zusammenhang mit einem selteren Heroenkult. – In: *Atti del IX Congr. Arch. Chr.*, 393-400; Σ. Πελεκανίδης, Ανασκαφή Φιλίππων. – In: *ΠΑΕ 1973*, 55-69, fig. 72-77; Σ. Πελεκανίδης, Συμπεράσματα από την ανασκαφή του Οκταγώνου των Φιλίππων σχετικά με τα μνημεία και την τοπογραφία της πύλης. – In: *Η Καβάλα και η περιοχή της*, 149-158; Στ. Πελεκανίδης Συνεργάτες. Ανασκαφή Οκταγώνου Φιλίππων. – In: *ΠΑΕ 1982*, 31-42, fig. 17-18; Στ. Πελεκανίδης Συνεργάτες. Ανασκαφή Οκταγώνου Φιλίππων. – In: *ΠΑΕ 1983*, 30-34, fig. 35-38.

²⁹ Ch. Koukoulu-Chrysanthaki, Ch. Bakirtzis. *Philippi*. Athens 2006, 58, fig. 50 and cit.lit.P. Lemerle. *Philippe et la Macédoine orientale à l'époque chrétienne et Byzantine. Recherches d'histoire et d'archéologie*. Paris Ed. de Boccard, 1945.

³⁰ E. Stikas. Les Basiliques paléochrétienne d'Amphipolis de Macédoine récemment découvertes. – In: *Corsi di cultura sull' arte ravennate e Bizantina*. Ravenna 1972.

³¹ Arja Karivieri. Floor Mosaics in the early Christian Basilica in Arethousa: conservation, maintenance, presentation.– In: *Proceedings of the VIIIth Conference of the International Committee for the Conservation of Mosaics (ICCM). Wall and Floor Mosaics: conservation, maintenance, presentation. Thessaloniki, 29 October - 3 November 2002*, Thessaloniki 2005, 191-202.

The liturgical planning. The liturgy during the first and the second building periods

The liturgical planning of the baptistery should be identified as unity of spaces and volumes, entrances and exits necessary for the performance of a certain liturgical service, a totality generalized in its functional organization³². The two building periods of the baptistery reflect the needs of the different type of liturgy in a concrete time³³. In the third quarter of the 4th century during the first building period, the liturgy was complied with the degree of completion of the basilica. That's the reason for performing of the proto-baptismal, the baptismal and then the post-baptismal rites in the rotunda of the baptistery and the south aisle of the basilica.

The next changes in the plan during the second building period of the baptistery (building the *nartex*, of the additional rooms, and the conversion of the basilica with the baptistery, the atrium and the other rooms into Episcopoeion) have been imposed in the architectural plan of the moment also by reasons, connected with a definite time and definite liturgy, as well as with the place of the bishopric of Parthicopolis in the organization of the Thessalonian church. One of the reasons for building and creating the new Episcopoeion, together with the also mentioned ones, are the already made changes in the liturgy³⁴. Because of the symbiosis in the service of the Constantinopolitan and of the Roman church, bred by the geographic position of Parthicopolis in the most eastern part of the province of Macedonia, on the border with the province of Thrace, diocese Eastern, as well as the temporary unification of the bishopric to the rule of the Eastern empire at the end of the 4th century. The change in the liturgical planning of the baptistery was probably imposed namely then. New rooms have been built then from all sides of the baptistery, connected with the new liturgy and

³² See Th. F. Mathews. *Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy*. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press 1971, 3-6; O. Brandt. *The Archaeology of Roman Ecclesial Architecture and the Study of Early Christian Liturgy*. – In: *Studia Patristica*. Vol. LXXI. Including papers presented at the conferences on *Early Roman Liturgy to 600* (14.11.2009 and 27.02.2010) at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford, UK (ed. by J. Day and M. Vincent), Peeters. Leuven – Paris – Valpole, MA 2014, 21-52; W. Mayer. *The Changing Shape of Liturgy: From Earliest Christianity to the End of Late Antiquity*. – In: *Liturgy's Imagined Past/s: Methodologies and Materials in the Writing of Liturgical History Today* (ed. by T. Berger and B. D. Spinks). Liturgical Press 2016, 275-302; R. M. Jensen. *Living Water: Images, Symbols, and Settings of Early Christian Baptism*. BRILL, Leiden-Boston, 2011.

³³ For the liturgical planning of the baptisteries see С. Станев. *Проблеми на изобразителното изкуство и архитектурата през късната античност и ранното средновековие: литургично планиране на баптистериите*. Автореферат на дисертация за присъждане на образователна и научна степен „доктор“. София 2011.

³⁴ Р. Тафт. Византийското богослужение. – In: Р. Тафт, Е. Фаруджа. *Теология на литургията, теология на символа*. София, 1992, 21-23. For the discussion of the last studies in the field of comparative liturgy see R. Taft. *The Great Entrance. A History of the Transfer of Gifts and other Preanaphoral Rites of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*. Roma: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1975, 186 and 189; Th. F. Mathews. *An Early Roman Chancel Arrangement and its Liturgical Functions*. – In: *Rivista*, XXXVIII, 1962, 73-95; Mathews, *Op.cit.*, 1971, 158-59, 160 ff., 178.

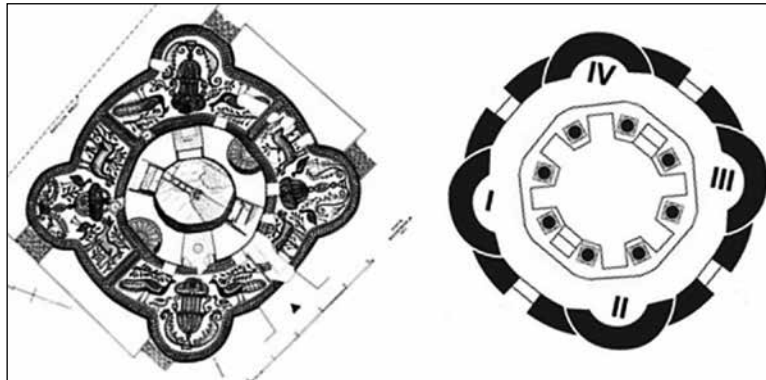


Fig. 10.a- Stobi, the Baptistery; B – Parthicopolis, the Baptistery, 1st deambulatorium.

Сл. 10 а – Стоби, крстионица; б – Партикополис, крстионица, први деамбулаториум.

the new position of the city among the rest of the Early Christian bishoprics in the Eastern part of Macedonia and concretely in the valley of Middle Strymon. In our opinion, namely then the new liturgy led to the new liturgical planning of the basilica with building the *nartex* and the galleries on the second level. A separated room was made for the gathering of the proselytes for the forthcoming sacramental baptism. This is room No 1, which after the narrowing of the entrance and the building of benches along the south and west walls, it turned into catechumen³⁵, where the instructive admonitions were done for people who turned to Christ. Here also people could wait during the sacrament of baptism.

The atrium of the Episcopal basilica No 4 in Parthicopolis as an element of the Constantinopolitan liturgical planning has been probably built at the beginning – the first decades of the 5th century. During the construction of the atrium, in connection with the new liturgy was built a chapel south of the baptistery. The chapel had a direct tie – entrance with the south entrance of the baptistery. Its apse, similarly to the apse of the basilica, is built in a dense rectangular. In this way the east wall with apse of the chapel plays the role of a part of the west wall of the atrium. It is considered that the chapel was devoted to St. John the Baptist³⁶. Having in mind its later construction of the chapel in the

³⁵ The researchers are of the opinion that the catechumenaeum was spread everywhere. It was part of the universal practice and is accepted as a normative element in the plan scheme of a church. For the Catechumenate see M. Dujarier. *A History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries*. New York 1979, 68 ff.; W. Harmless. *Augustine and the Catechumenate*. The Liturgical Press, Minnesota 1995; E. Dyggve. *Le baptistère de la Basilica Urbana à Salomé après les fouilles de 1949*. – In: *Acta V CIAC*, 1957, 189-198; B. Aleksova. *Loca Sanctorum Macedoniae. The Cult of Martyrs in Macedonia from the 4th to the 9th Centuries*. Editio Monumenta Macedonia, II. Skopje: Macedonian Civilization; Prilep: Institute of Old Slav Culture, 1997, pl. XIX, fig. 2. For the identification of the catechumen in the churches in Bulgarian lands see П. Мутафчиев. *Кръстовидната църква в с. Клисекъй*. – In: *Известия на българското археологическо дружество*, V, 85-111; И. Велков. *Една старинна църква и други археологически паметници при с. Каменица*. – In: *Известия на археологически институт*, XVIII, 1952, 384-386; I. Štereva. *Baptistère paléochrétien à Sliven*. – In: *Известия на археологически институт*, XXXVIII, 1994, 7-13 и др.

³⁶ Ю. Фърков. *Епископска базилика в Сандански. Арх и Арт. Форум*, год. XX, бр. 19 (99), 2011, 15.



Fig. 11. The Atrium, the Basilica and the Baptistry, after conservation and restoration (2015).

Сл. 11 Атриум, базилика и крстионица после конзервације и рестаурације (2015).

first half - middle of the 5th century, we think that the chapel should serve for the post-baptismal rite – first communion or of the first liturgy, when the neophytes have been introduced to the Christians.

We need to study the chronological data for both building periods of the *baptisterium* in order to trace the genesis of its plan and its tie with the basilica and bishopric complex. Both building periods of the baptistry should be accepted as mutually dependent with the liturgy during the sacrament of baptism, therefore the plan of the baptistry is dependent of its liturgical planning. The baptistry with Eucharistic mass³⁷ is an element of the liturgical environment of the basilica/the church. That's why the baptistry as a place where after baptism and unction, representing the Christian devotion, and the celebration of the sacral Eucharist should be included in the Eucharistic planning. In the case the liturgical planning³⁸ both of the basilica and the *baptisterium* should be differentiated because of the practice of performing of baptismal liturgy³⁹ (for which there must be a Eucharistic planning) which is not bound with the liturgy in the basilica. This liturgical planning of the *baptisterium* represents its functional organization as a performance in pre-baptismal, baptismal and post-baptismal practices. Following the witnesses of the ancient authors⁴⁰ for the liturgy at the

³⁷ Th. F. Mathews, *Op. cit.*, 1971, 3-5.

³⁸ With the term liturgical planning we mark the environment in which certain rites were conducted, in this case baptismal rites. To be able to clarify their nature and performance we should refer to the historical data from that period (if there are any) or on the testimony of the liturgical practice in the researched time (4th-6th century) for the province of Macedonia. For the moment there is missing data in the sources, except the left to us by Nicetas of Remesiana, partially and unsurely restored. Because of that we should follow the Roman Eucharistic liturgy and planning, having in mind the belonging of the province of Macedonia to the throne in Rome.

³⁹ M. E. Johnson. *The Rites of Christian Initiation. Their Evolution and Interpretation*. Liturgical Press Minnesota, 2007, 1-456.

⁴⁰ Tertulian. On Baptism. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, III, 669-81; Eusebius Pamphilus. The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 2nd Series*, I, 481-560; Ambrose. Selected Works and Letters. The Book Concerning the Mysteries. *Nicene*

sacrament baptism, also the studies of contemporary authors, we can reconstruct these three kinds of rites in the baptistery of Parthicopolis in the first and the second building periods.

The liturgical planning of the baptistery reveals that the outer corridor is bound to the pre-baptismal and post-baptismal rites: 1 is the entrance; 2 – the denial; 3 – the undressing; 4; the pre-baptismal unction; 10 – the lighting of the candles; 11 – the moving to the church for the Liturgy of the Faithful. The inner *deambulatorium* is connected with the baptismal rites: 5.the triple submersion with religious denomination; 6 –the post-baptismal unction; 7 –the washing of the legs; 8 – the dressing in white robes; 9 –the secondary unction (*confirmation*)⁴¹.

The entrance and the exit at the time of the first and the second building period are different because initially the baptisterium was a free-standing/ independent building in the end of the 4th century, but in the second period it is already part of the whole episcopal complex. In that period there are established different entrances and exits with t.a.q. and t.p.q.the construction of the chapel, probably after the middle of the 5th century. In the first half of the 5th century the entrance and the exit for the person to be baptized were changed, entering through the corridor after the narthex. In the second half of the 5th century after the chape lwas built south of the baptistery, the baptized person should start from room No 1 - the catechumen, after being dressed in white robe, and then to go out from the south entrance of the baptistery, towards the chapel south of the basilica for the first unction. We named the chapel after St. John the Baptist similarly to the chapel at the Lateran *baptisterium*, built by Pope Hillarius(461-468)⁴². In Parthicopolis in both building periods, or during the entire existence and functioning of the baptistery, the baptism was performed by triple submersion in the piscine according to the liturgy⁴³.

The place of the baptisterium in Parthicopolis among the monuments with similar plan.

The genesis⁴⁴ of the free-standing *baptisterium* in Parthicopolis and of its plan and decoration in literature is looked for in the influence of the big centers

and Post-Nicene Fathers 2nd Series, X, 315-26; N. Temple. Conversion and Political Expedience: Imperial Themes in the Early Christian Baptistry. – In: *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*. Vol. XXIV, № 80, Mexico 2002, 5-45.

⁴¹ The term accepted for the church in the Eastern part of the empire is unction, while in the Western part it is confirmation, see J. G. Davies. *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1962, 31.

⁴² O. Brandt. *Op.cit.*, 2012, 36.

⁴³ The letters of St. Leo the Great, who sends them as the Roman Pope (440-461) to the bishops in Sicily, explaining the triple submersion as the three-day staying of Christ in the Tomb and the coming out of the water as His Resurrection from the Tomb. See И. Цоневски. *Патрология. Живот, съчинения и учение на църковните отци, учители и писатели*. Синодално издателство, София 1986, 429-430; *The Letters and Sermons of Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome*. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 2nd Series, XII, 26-30.

⁴⁴ See for the development of the baptisteria, piscines and their symbolic: J. M. Timo-

of Early Christianity in the middle of the 4th century. On the first place this is Rome with its Lateran *baptisterium*, the first known independent one in the Roman world⁴⁵, repeated in Parthicopolis (**fig. 9**). As the Lateran monument, the one from Parthicopolis is also re-worked in the end of the 4th – the beginning of the 5th century. A little bit before and during the construction of the Lateran *baptisterium* and to the very end of the reign of Constantine, several more baptisteries, predominantly octagonal, have been built in the Western part of the Roman Empire⁴⁶. It is established that the first phase of the Lateran baptistery belongs to the end of the rule of Constantine, and has a round base and also central spatial construction, attributed to the other baptisteries in Rome and to the mosaics and wall paintings from the same period, for example the mosaic and fresco in the Bardo National Museum in Tunis.

In the Roman architecture the idea of the circle is an image of perfection. Usually the mausoleums are round buildings, as the mausoleum of Emperor Hadrian (117-138); the mausoleum of Santa Constanza from 350, probably *baptisterium* before that with similar plan and two *deambulatoriums*⁴⁷. This plan obviously was popular then in Rome. *Liber Pontificalis* announces for Santa Constanza, that the complex had a round baptistery like the one in Lateran, but its place is still not established. According to R. Krautheimer, Santa Constanza has been remodeled by Pope Sixtus III⁴⁸ in a baptistery. The tradition of the double *deambulatorium* is preserved later as well and we see it in the Rotunda of St. Stephan from 430-460 in Rome⁴⁹ and in the baptistery of Nocera Superiore in

teo, S. J. Ofrasio. The baptistery and the Baptismal Font: Symbolism and Pastoral Relevance. – In: *Landas*, 6, 1992, 18-36.

⁴⁵ The excavations in Rome discovered a round fundament with diameter about 19-20 m, with 8 rectangular ledges, supposed to be intent for the 8 porphyry columns at the corners, illustrated in the reconstruction of O. Brandt. During the phase of Constantine the Great, this round base wide 1.70 m is reused from the complex of the Roman *thermae*, on which the *baptisterium* has been built. In the center of this foundation there is a second foundation with a round form which corresponds to the *frigidarium* of the *thermae* with a diameter approximately 8.50 m, serving for the baptismal piscine. In 2008 after laser scanning of the Lateran *baptisterium* its construction phases have been differentiated (See: O. Brandt. *Op. cit.* 2012, 42 ff.; O. Brandt, F. Guidobaldi. Il battistero Lateranense: Nuove interpretazioni delle fasti strutturali. – In: *Rivista di archeologia Cristiana*, 84, 2008, 189-282; H. Menander, O. Brandt, A. Appetechia and H. Thorén. The Lateran Baptistery in Three Dimensions. Swedish National Heritage Board. 2010, 9 ff.; O. Brandt. *Op. cit.* 2012, 35 ff.; D. T. Thayer. The Lateran Baptistery: Memory, Space, and Baptism. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2012, 3 ff.).

⁴⁶ O. Brandt. Constantinian Baptistries. – In: *STUDI DI ANTICITÀ CRISTIANA. Acta XVI Congressus Internationalis Archaeologiae Christianae, Romae (22-28.9.2013). Costantino e i Costantinidi. L'innovazione Costantiniana, le sue radici e I suoi sviluppi*. Pars I (ed. F. Brandt, G. Castiglia), Città del Vaticano 2016, 583 ff., 590-591, 594.

⁴⁷ R. Krautheimer. *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. Third Edition, Penguin Books, 68.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 94.

⁴⁹ R. Krautheimer. *Op. cit.*, 95 ff. According to the author the construction was in 468-483.

the 6th century⁵⁰. In the Balkans it can be seen in Butrint in Albania⁵¹. There exist also other baptisteries outside Rome with round plan, similar to the Lateran and the one from Parthicopolis built in the period of Constantine and his successors. This is the baptistery of Santa Severina in Calabria, whose first plan with two *deambulatoriums* articulated by eight columns and is considered to be raised under the influence of the Lateran baptistery⁵². Another monument with round plan is the Early Christian Baptistery, found in the city of Amfissa⁵³, in Fokida region of Central Greece, which has rich mosaic pavement and round piscine (two-parted into two semi-circle piscines) and marble revetment.

Generally few are the known round baptisteries in Rome and in the Balkans. The dominating part of them, are the octagons or the articulated ones with 3 or more niches, similarly to the western part of the Balkans⁵⁴. The round and the polygonal form of the baptisteries are typical for the churches in the West, while in the East the rectangular baptisteries are preferred. As concerning the baptisteries in North Africa, here can be met all forms of them – round, polygonal and tetragonal⁵⁵. In the plan of the baptistery in Parthicopolis it is established the influence of the Italian church architecture and plans, following the creation of vicariate in Thessaloniki in the last quarter of the 4th century. This historical circumstance is shown in numerous Christian buildings in Thessaloniki, Parthicopolis and other cities in Macedonia following the plans, the decoration and the capital style⁵⁶.

The closest parallel to the baptistery of Parthicopolis is the one in Stobi from the first phase of the Episcopal basilica from the end of the 4th century and the second phase in the 5th century⁵⁷. This monument also has a ciborium,

⁵⁰ O. Brandt. 2012, *Op.cit.*, 133 ff.

⁵¹ S. Ristow. *Op. cit.*, 114-115, № 66 and the cit. lit., dated in the 5th/6th century; W. Bowden and L. Përzhita. The Baptistery. – In: *Byzantine Butrint. Exavations and suveys 1994-99*. Oxbow Books, Oxford 2004, 176-201, and cit. lit.

⁵² Although later in its second building period in the 7th century and with the preserved wall paintings from the 10th-12th century it has become a typical monument of the Byzantine architecture. See: P. Loiacono. Sul restauro compiuto al battistero di Santa Severina. – In: *Bollettino d'Arte*, XXVIII (1934-35), 174-185; P. Lopetrone. Il battistero bizantino di Santa Severina: rapporti e proporzioni architettoniche. – In: Santa Severina incontra. Storia Archeologia Arte Architettura. Atti del ciclo di conferenze su nuovi studi e ricerche per la città e il territorio. Santa Severina, febbraio 2014-aprile 2015 (ed. M. Morrone). Edizioni Corab 2015, 19-38.

⁵³ Dated in the end of the 4th century. See: S. Ristow. *Op. cit.*, 152, № 233 and cit. lit.

⁵⁴ O. Ilić. Early Christian baptisteries in Northern Illyricum. *CTAPHAP*, LVI, 2006, 223-244.

⁵⁵ Timoteo, S. J. Ofrasio. *Op.cit.*, 25 ff.

⁵⁶ V. Popova. Fons Vitae in Late Antique monuments from Bulgaria. – In: *STUDIA ACADEMICA ŠUMENENSIA*. Transition from late paganism early Christianity in the architecture and in the Balkans. Vol. 3, Shumen University Press 2016, 181.

⁵⁷ According to some authors the baptisterium was built during the construction of the basilica by bishop Budius, participant in the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325). According to other scientists it was built in the late 4th - even in the early 5th century (R. E. Kolarik. The Episcopal Basilica at Stobi: The Baptistery and Related Structures. – In: *Acta Congressus Internationalis XV Archaeologiae Christianae*, Toledo, Città del Vaticano 2008, 941).

splendid mosaic decoration, but the piscine is not so richly articulated⁵⁸. The plan in Stobi is a circle, broken by the four niches coming out of the circle (**fig. 10**). The whole construction is inscribed in a square building⁵⁹, similarly and almost equal by size of the square to the baptistery in Parthicopolis⁶⁰. Also four entrances/exits are formed at the curves of the conchs in Stobi. The plan of the first *deambulatorium* of the baptistery in Parthicopolis is similar to the plan of the baptistery in Stobi. The difference between both plans is in the existence of a second *deambulatorium* in Parthicopolis, missing in Stobi. We assume that the absence of the second *deambulatorium* is due to the later construction of the baptistery in Stobi, when the liturgy of the sacramental baptism has become already more simplified. We assume that the second corridor- *deambulatorium* in Parthicopolis was necessary due to the different liturgy after the middle – the third quarter of the 4th century, different than the time in which the baptistery in Stobi was built - at least 40-50 years later⁶¹.

Conclusion.

The unique by its architecture, construction and decoration *baptisterium* in Parthicopolis is a phenomenon in the architecture and the city planning of bishopric Parthicopolis. At the present moment the baptistery with a double *deambulatorium* is the only one from the third quarter of the 4th century in the Balkans and can be compared by its complex plan, richness and decoration with the best monuments of Ravenna, Neapolis and Thessaloniki. As an achievement of the mosaic art, decoration and architectural sculpture the baptistery finds analogies with the monuments from the province of Macedonia: Philippi, Amphipolis, Heracleia Lynkestis, Stobi etc. The plan of the baptistery is closely connected with the rule of the western Church, the Roman Pope and his vicarious in Thessaloniki, The Eastern Illyricum. The result was the spread and involving in the liturgy and liturgical planning of the double *deambulatorium*, different from the churches in the East, which are submitted to the Church of

⁵⁸ The piscine is a hexagon, also connected with the Early Christian symbolism, as an allusion of the Death of Christ on the Sixth Day, while the octagon piscine in Parthicopolis – of the Resurrection on the Eight Day. It is believed that in Stobi initially the rite of baptism was conducted by submergence, but in the last phase of existing of the baptistery in the 6th century the rite was changed to pouring water on the heads of the adults or the children with the help of a kantharos, installed on the wall of the piscine (J. G. Davies. *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*. London 1962, 17, 19, 21; Timoteo, S. J. Ofrasio. *Op. cit.*, 27; R. E. Kolarik. 2008, *Op. cit.*, 946; M. Raykovska, M. Tutkovski, M. Filova, G. Bevan. The physical reconstruction and photogrammetric documentation of a 6thCe Baptismal font (Kantharos) from Stobi. – In: *Nova antička Duklja*, VII, Podgorica 2016, 119-134). Pouring the water from the kantharos reminds of the silver deer placed around the piscine in the Lateran baptistery, from whose mouths the water was flowing for the sacrament baptism.

⁵⁹ The length of the baptistery is 9.40m – J. Wiseman, D. Mano-Zissi. *Excavation at Stobi*. – In: *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 76, No. 4, 1972, 422; see also the plan and the scale by W. Dinsmoor in R. E. Kolarik. *Op. cit.*, 2008, 952, fig. 10.

⁶⁰ The size of the baptistery in Parthicopolis is 9 m in diameter.

⁶¹ According to S. Ristow. *Op. cit.*, 213, № 514; 4th/5th c. (end of the 4th c.) and the second phase 5th/6th c. (end of the 5th century?).

Constantinople. The building of the whole Episcopoion was due to a donation, a traditional practice during the period of the Constantine dynasty and later in the 4th century, in funding and constructing the Early Christian basilicas and their complexes. The good state of preservation of the *baptisterium* and its rooms connected with the baptismal rites allow the reconstruction (**fig. 11**), conservation and restoration of the ritual of baptism and its connection with the whole Episcopoion. It becomes also possible to study it with the other two basilicas (No 1 and No 2) forming the center of the administration, church and spiritual life in Parthicopolis in the 4th-6th century. Generally the ten basilicas found in the city and especially the Episcopal basilica No 4 with its free-standing *baptisterium* demonstrate that Parthicopolis was the most important and flourishing city in Northeastern Macedonia, especially in the end of the 4th – the beginning of the 5th century, with direct architectural connections with Rome and the other big western and southern Early Christian centers of art and architecture in the Balkans, first of all with Thessaloniki.

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КРСТИОНИЦА ЕПИСКОПСКЕ БАЗИЛИКЕ У ПАРТИКОПОЛИСУ

Јединствен по својој архитектури, конструкцији и декорацији, крстионица је феномен у урбанистичком плану и архитектури епископије Партикополиса. Са двојним деамбулаторијумом за сада је једини крстионица из 4-5 века на Балкану. Констатоване су две градитељске фазе. Прва је из средине треће четвртине 4 века, друга припада крају 4 и првој половини 5 века чије најближе паралеле налазимо западу – Латеран, Санта Северина и други. У провинцији Македонији то је крстионица из Епископске базилике у Стоби, и поред тога што је млађа. По комплексности и богатству, по плану и декорацији, крстионица се може сврстати међу најбоље споменике из Равенне, Солуна и Напуља. По квалитету мозаичне декорације и сачуване архитектонске скулптуре, налазимо аналогije код споменика провинције Македоније - Филипима, Амфиполису, Хераклеји Линкестис, Стобима и други. План крстионице је уско повезан са управљањем западне цркве – римски Папа и његов викар у Источном Илирику - Солунски викаријат. Као резултат овог утицаја ствара литургију која захтева литургијско планирање, различито од цркава на Истоку, потчињена Константинопољу и потреби за двоструким деамбулаторијумом. Изградња комплекса је резултат донације, уобичајене пракса у 4 веку, и то од Константина и његових наследника при финансирању и изградњи базилика и њихових комплекса.