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THE SEMICIRCULAR PIAZZA OF PARTHICOPOLIS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LATE ANTIQUE CITY PLANNING

The idea of a round or half-round plan, which influenced later the appearing of a round or half-round piazza, unroofed or roofed, is seen for the first time in the Roman urban planning and buildings from the Late Republican and Early Imperial period. This idea opposes to the dominant in that time orthogonal planning of the Greek Hippodam's system. The earliest example of such centric spaces can be found in the *macellum* of Pompeii, built in 179 BC and renewed at the time of Nero¹; in the *macellum* from Leptis Magna, also belonging to the Late Republican time and the first years of the Roman empire of Augustus, namely in 9-8 BC.² The line of development of the round spaces continues further in the *macellum* from Puteoli, built between the late first and the early second century AD and restored during the third century AD under the Severan dynasty³.

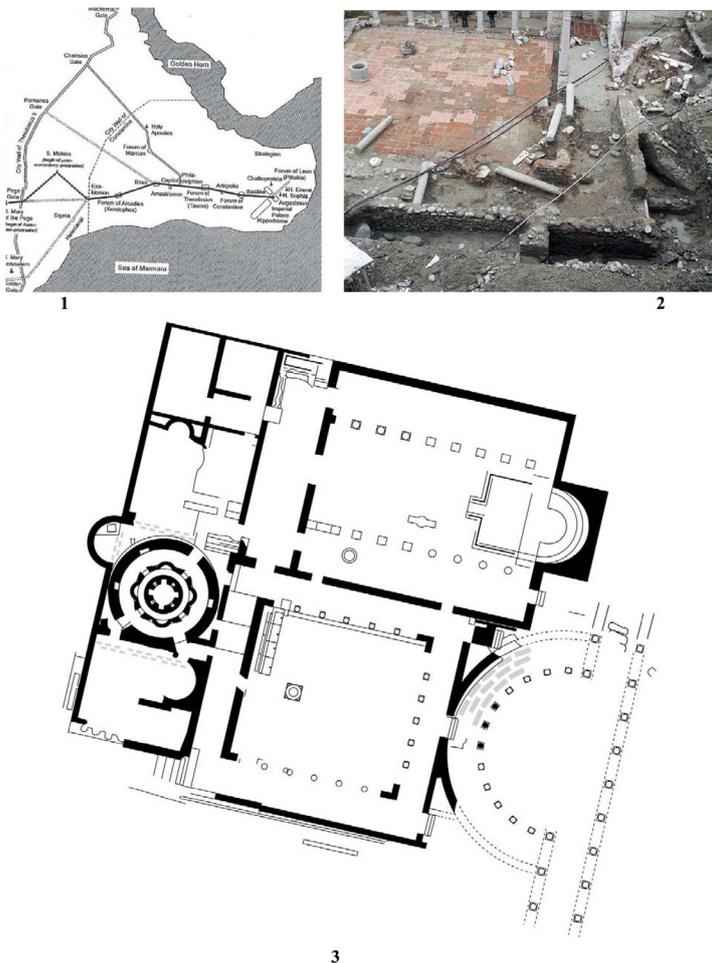
Already in the forum of Augustus in Rome the rectangular space of the forum is broken up, with two semicircular spaces from both sides, with niches for statues and with colonnades, tangential to the curves at their diameter⁴. The emperor Trajan similarly to Augustus also includes elements of half-circle in the forum by the half-round *macellum* and the half-round short sides of the basilica.

¹ A. Cristilli, *Macellum and Imperium*. The relationship between the Roman State and the market-building construction. – *Analysis Archaeologica*, vol. I, 2015, 69-86; P. Horrocks. *The Architecture of the Forum of Pompeii*. University of Adelaide, 2000, 91-97.

² At Septimius Severus the *macellum* was reconstructed and received a new architectural decoration, see N. Degradi, *Il mercato di Leptis Magna*. Quaderni Archeologica della Libia, 2 (1951), 27-70; C. de Ruyt, *Macellum: Marché alimentaire des romains*. Publications d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie de l'université catholique de Louvain, 35, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1983, 97-106, fig. 72; M. Lyttelton, *Baroque Architecture in Antiquity. Studies in Ancient Art and Archaeology*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1974, 212, fig. 68; J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Severan Art and Architecture at Lepcis Magna*. – *Journal of Roman Studies*, 38 (1948), 61, fig. 73.

³ A. Cristilli, *Op.cit.*, 73, fig. 3, built at the time of the Flavii according to Cristilli (p. 82).

⁴ G. Wightman, *The Imperial Fora of Rome: Some Design Considerations*. – *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Mar., 1997), 64-69, figs. 1-3.



Pl. I - 1- Plan of Constantinople (after S. Čurčić 2010). 2- Parthicopolis, The atrium with the curve of the semicircular piazza (photo of A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski). 3- Plan of the Episcopal complex in Parthicopolis, the semicircular piazza and Via Sacra (by V. Petkov, H. Tsoneva 2015, 506, fig. 1; supplemented and corrected by S. Petrova).

Пл. I - 1- План Константинопоља (after S. Čurčić 2010). 2- Партикополис, Атријум са кривом полукружног трга. 3- План Епископског комплекса у Партикополису, полукружни трг и улицу 'Via Sacra' (према В. Петков, Х. Цонева, 2015, 506, fig. 1; допуњен и коригован од С. Петрова)

His famous architect Apollodorus from Damascus has contributed essentially to this novelty in the urban planning in Rome itself and in the Eastern and the Balkan Roman provinces. Hadrian continues with the half-round Nymphaeum and Thermae in Leptis Magna⁵. In Palmyra the oval piazzas are also with colonades, enclosing the Via Sacra together with the tetrapylon of the eastern piazza and the four basilicas, placed north of the main street. In such a way the main street, appointed with the function of processions, has been restricted within narrow limits⁶. Another important line of development of the Roman architec-

⁵ M. F. Squarciapino, *Leptis Magna*. Basel, 1966, 89-93, fig. 12.

⁶ J. S. Crawford, *The Byzantine Shops at Sardis*. Archaeological Exploration of Sardis. 9. Harvard University Press, 1990, 123; R. Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire: Zenobia's Revolt Against Rome*. University of Michigan Press, 1994, 189; S. Ricca, Palmyra. – *Cities of the Middle East and North Africa: A Historical Encyclopedia* (M. Dumpel & B. E. Stonley eds.), 2007, 295; G. Majcherek, Excavating the Basilicas. – *Studia Palmyrenskie*. Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, 12 (Fifty Years of Polish

ture contributed also to the technique, technology and the appearance of several masterpieces with centric plans, such as the mausoleums, pagan and Early Christian temples: the mausoleum of Augustus, that of Hadrian, the Pantheon and the later mausoleums Tor de Schiavi and Santa Constanza; as well as the church of San Stefano Rotondo and the Sepulchre in Jerusalem⁷. Gerasa and Palmyra illustrate in the best way the new Roman planning with the main colonnaded streets and round or oval piazzas. In Gerasa the colonnades of such a round plaza encircle the tetrapylon, similarly to Palmyra and other Asia Minor cities⁸. There is even a second round piazza, built around 300 AD, which is encircled by the colonnade of the long and representative processional street.

In Late Antiquity the central city piazza with its two main streets (decumanus maximus and cardo maximus) still remained the main element of the planning. But during the period of Constantine I a new form and a new plan of this piazza has been imposed. From the historian Zosimos (2.30.4) we know that Constantine I has erected in Constantinople a round forum. It was encircled by a two-story colonnade on arches, made of Proconnesian marble⁹. This piazza became part of the Mese, the main street of the capital, used for imperial and church processions. Unfortunately the exact diameter of this forum is unknown. It is only established that the distance from the triumphal arch to the east, closing the forum up to the porphyry column with the statue of Constantine in the center of the piazza, was 70m and because of this the diameter should be 140 m¹⁰. The requirements of Constantine were basic in the creation of the initial plan of Constantinople. It had many votive and honorable monuments concentrated in the most important urban part, that of the round forum with the main street Mese in direction East-West. The emperor and the members of his family and the numerous officials and private donators have built many churches inside and outside the city (**Pl. I, 1**). The next emperors also have erected oval or round

Excavations in Palmyra 1959-2009: International Conference Warsaw, 6-8 December 2010), 2013, 254.

⁷ R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Penguin Books 1965, 62-70, figs. 27 (B), 28.

⁸ The Nymphaeums in Gerasa and Palmyra, similarly to the numerous Asia Minor cities, also occupies the central place of the city plan in the form of a half-circle with colonnade, in some cases roofed, with different in width porticoes. See: J-P. Braun, The town plan of Gerasa in A.D. 2000. A revised edition. – *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 45, Amman 2001, 433-436; A. Walmsley, 1. Area JNT-C: The Portico and the North Theatre. 2. Area D: The North Decumanus, - Zayadine, Fawzi (ed.), *Jerash Archaeological Project 1981-1983*, vol. 1, Amman: Department of Antiquities. (JAP I), 1986, 351-358.

⁹ A. Kaldellis. The Forum of Constantine in Constantinople: What do we know about its original architecture and adornment? - *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 56 (2016), 714–739; C. Mango, The Development of Constantinople as an Urban Centre. – *The 17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers* (New York: Caratzas, 1986), 117-136; S. Basset. *The urban image of the Antique Constantinople*. Cambridge University Press, 2005, 188-206; M. Mundelli Mango. The commercial Map of Constantinople. – *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* No 54, 2000, 189-207.

¹⁰ F. A. Bauer, *Stadt, Platz und Denkmal in der Spätantike. Untersuchungen zur Ausstattung des öffentlichen Raums in den spätantiken Städten Rom, Konstantinopel und Ephesos*. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern 1996, 168.



forums, used for ritual processions and every emperor following Constantine has tried for to transform his forum, in order it to become the fulcrum for the processions.

Similar architectural novelties in the Early Christian city planning and particularly in the form and composition of the main city piazza can be observed also in the partly excavated main piazza of Parthicopolis in the province of Macedonia (Pl. I, 2, 3). The archaeological research revealed that the atrium of the Episcopal basilica of Parthicopolis (basilica No 4) and the partly excavated piazza with a colonnade east of the atrium are synchronous¹¹. Therefore, the construction of the half-round piazza with a roofed colonnade and divided by the main urban street Via sacra/Messe to two equal halves, should be connected chronological-

Pl. II - 1-The displacement between the atrium and the semicircular piazza, surmounted by two steps (photo of A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski). 2- Remnants of wall paintings on the inner curve of the wall of the semicircular piazza (photo of A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski). 3- The architectural elements of the both colonnades: the colonnade with pyramidal impost capitals with short neck at the inner curve of the wall; the colonnade in Corinthian order from the side to the piazza (photo of A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski). 4- The disposition of the fallen architectural details. On the first plan the elements of the Corinthian colonnade with the fallen under them arches (photo of A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski). 5- Fragments of the arches fallen immediately to the inner side of the wall (photo of A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski).

Пл. II - 1- Простор између атријума и полукружног трга премошћен двама степеницама. 2- Остаци слика на зиду са унутрашње стране лука зида полукружног трга. 3- Архитектонски елементи обе колонаде: колонаде са пирамидалним импостом капитета са кратким вратом на унутрашњој кривој зиду; колонаде у Коринтском стилу са друге стране до трга. 4- Распоред срушених/отпалих архитектонских детаља. У првој равни елемената Коринтске колонаде са срушеним луковима испод. 5- Фрагменти срушених лукова непосредно уз унутрашњу страну зида

¹¹ В. Петков, Спасителни археологически проучвания на Епископския комплекс в гр. Сандански. – *Археологически открития и разкопки през 2014*, София 2015, 475-476, обр. 2 и 3.

ly with the second building period of Episcopal basilica, more so to its atrium, in the last quarter of the 4th century¹². The piazza is paved with brick tiles and is lower than the level of the atrium by 0.40 m. The displacement between both buildings is overcome by the two steps of the central entrance¹³ (**PI. II, 1**). The diameter of the piazza is 22 m, equal to the longitude of the atrium in direction north-south.

In spite of the already existing two articles on the excavations of the piazza, it is necessary once more to describe very carefully the situation *in situ*. The ruins of the Early Christian city (the Episcopal complex, the atrium, the half – round piazza, Messe and the other basilicas) are very well preserved because of a fire and a tremendous earthquake, followed by the abandoning of the ancient city at the end of the 6th century. A semicircular wall made of boulders welded together by white mortar and bricks¹⁴, wide 0.85-0.90 m and with preserved height about of 1.50 m, adheres to the middle of the eastern wall of the atrium. The inner side of the wall was covered with wall paintings (**PI. II, 2**). Two colonnades repeat the half-round curve of this wall. But the excavator has not noticed the different situation of both colonnades. In his first publication the half-round piazza is described just as ‘peristyle courtyard,’ possessing only one Corinthian colonnade instead of two in different orders¹⁵. In the second publication of already two authors the colonnades are represented as one two-story colonnade¹⁶ on the piazza, the lower colonnade is Corinthian and the upper one is with impost capitals.

The inner row in Corinthian style is situated 3m east of the semicircular wall. The columns supporting the arches are found *in situ*, with *intercolumnium* of 2 m. The bases-postaments are low or they are reused and sunken in a different depth in order to level up the general height of the columns and the capitals. The columns, also reused, are of different height (2.50-2.70 m), with profiled apothesis, crowned again with reused canonical and four-leaf capitals in Roman Corinthian order (**PI. II, 3**). The imposts over them are rectangular with pyra-

¹² S. Petrova, The Early Christian Basilicas in the urban planning of Parthicopolis. – *Niš and Byzantium* (ed. M. Ракоција), XIII, Niš 2015, 174, fig. 16; S. Petrova, The roman Theatre in Paroicopolis/Parthicopolis and its historical Fortune. – *Niš and Byzantium*, (ed. M. Ракоција), XIV, Niš 2016, 189, fig. 1. For the chronology of the building periods of the Episcopal complex see S. Petrova, The Baptistery of the Episcopal Basilica in Parthicopolis. – *Niš and Byzantium*, (ed. M. Ракоција), XV, 2017, 133-152.

¹³ This is a natural denivulation to the east of the terrain of the Roman and Late antique city, built on a hill towards the river Sandanska Bistritsa. The forum of Constantine was also built on a terrain with displacement. See: P.Y. Arslan, Towards a new honorific column: the column of Constantine on Early Byzantine urban landscape (1). - *Middle East Technical University - Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, Ankara 2016, 1, 123.

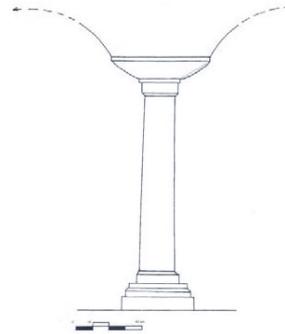
¹⁴ The sides of the entrances between the atrium and the plaza are formed entirely with bricks.

¹⁵ B. Петков, *Op.cit.*, 476.

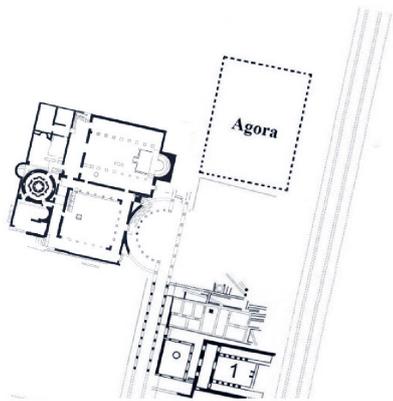
¹⁶ Z. Dimitrov, V. Petkov. Analysis of the Architectural Details and Decoration in the “Peristyle Courtyard” Complex near the Bishop’s Basilica in the Town of Sandanski. – E. Nankov (ed.). *Papers of the American Research Center in Sofia*, 3. Sandanski and its Territory during Prehistory, Antiquity and Middle Ages (Proceedings of an International Conference at Sandanski; September 17–20, 2015). Sofia, 2017, 242–254



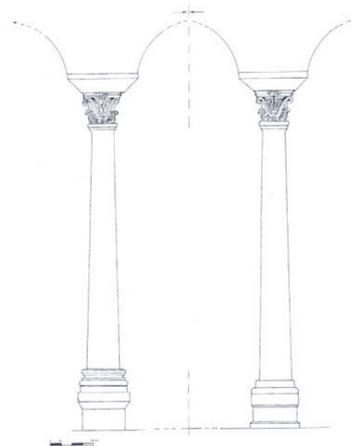
1



2-b



3



2-a

Pl. III - Elements of the colonnade installed over the wall of the piazza: bases, columns and pyramidal capitals with short neck (photo of A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski). 2-a. The graphic reconstruction of Z. Dimitrov and V. Petkov of the 'lower colonnade' (2017, fig. 9). 2-b. The graphic reconstruction of Z. Dimitrov and V. Petkov of the 'upper colonnade' (2017, fig. 13). 3. Plan-situation of Parthicopolis in the last quarter of the 4th century: basilica No 1 with episcopal residence, the Episcopal complex, the semicircular piazza and Via sacra (by S. Petrova).

Пл. III - Елементи колонаде уграђених изнад зида на тргу: основе, стубови и пирамидални капители са кратким вратом. 2-а. Графичка реконструкција 'доње колонаде' З. Димитрова и В. Петкова. 2-б. Графичка реконструкција 'горње колонаде' З. Димитрова и В. Петкова. 3. План-ситуација Партикополиса у задњој четврти IV века: базилика бр. 1 са Епископском резиденцијом, Епископски комплекс, полукружни трг и Via Sacra, (према С. Петрова).

midal form and plain soffit. The arcade is developing over the impost. The last element is the roof. Fragments of fallen arches are found next to the other elements of the colonnade (Pl. II, 4). The arcades are made of bricks and boulders, linked with mortar, similarly to the arches of the colonnades in the atrium.

The outer row of the second colonnade is found also in situ, almost at the half-rounded wall, with canonic Attic Ionian bases on *plinthus*, columns of smaller height with *apophysis* and *apothesis*, formed like listels and crowned by pyramidal impost capitals with short neck (**Pl. II, 3; Pl. III, 1**). Fragments of arches are also unearthed around or over the architectonic elements of this colonnade (**Pl. II, 5**). The pyramidal imposts of this type are used as well in basilica No 1 of the city, dated in the second quarter of the fourth century; in the arcade construction dividing the space of the basilica into three parts (naos and two aisles)¹⁷. It is obvious that the same type of pyramidal impost capitals with short neck, are used in the area between Strymon and Nestos from the middle – second half of the fourth century, judging by basilica No 2 in Nicopolis ad Nestum (village of Garmen)¹⁸.

The archaeological research shows, that the roof construction was wooden and covered with *tegulae* and *imbrices*, some of them unearthed during the excavations. Three entrances connect the piazza with the atrium and the Episcopal basilica (**Pl. I, 3**)¹⁹: one central entrance in the middle of the eastern wall of the atrium and in the middle of the curve of the semicircular wall. There is a bench on the northern side of the entrance which continues to the north towards the second entrance. This northern entrance is placed on the northern part of the curve of the colonnade and is leading to the steps coming from the northern part of the atrium. The third entrance is situated in the southern part of the eastern wall of the atrium and is connecting with stairs the atrium with the southern curve of the piazza.

The piazza has perished in the big fire in 580 with the whole late antique city of Parthicopolis during the Avaric-Slavs' invasions and additionally ruined by a devastating earthquake at the end of the sixth - the beginning of the seventh century²⁰.

The *in situ* situation with all preserved elements from the two architectural styles and of the construction, allow a proper analysis and a reliable reconstruction of the semicircular plaza with colonnades, of the whole architectural structure and its place in the life of the Early Christian Church and in the urban planning of Parthicopolis. In the reconstruction by Z. Dimitrov and V. Petkov proposed that in the piazza there was a two-story colonnade with possible windows²¹. But, in our opinion, it seems impossible from all points of view: architectural, constructive, urbanistic, archaeological, seismic, historical and logical.

¹⁷ S. Petrova, On Early Christianity and Early Christian basilicas in Parthicopolis. – *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano*, 16, 1. Accademia Angelica-Costantiniana di Lettere e Scienze, Roma 2012, 105 ff.

¹⁸ В. Попова, 2011, Две раннохристиянски базилики в околностите на Никополис ад Нестум. – *Studia in honorem Stephani Boiadjiev*. София 2011, 263-294; С. Петрова, Архитектурната украса на раннохристиянските базилики в околностите на Никопол на Места. – *Добруджа*, 32, 2017, 233-252.

¹⁹ В. Петков, Х. Цонева, Спасителни археологически проучвания в Епископската базилика в град Сандански. – *Археологически открития и разкопки през 2015 година*, София 2016, 506, обр. 1.

²⁰ В. Петков, *Op. cit.*, 476.

²¹ Z. Dimitrov, V. Petkov. Analysis, 242–254.



1



3-a



2



3-b

Both authors published a graphic reconstruction of the supposed first and second floor of the colonnades separately, without the exact measures of each element (Pl. III, 2-a, b). In the shown scale the first (the lower one) reconstructed Corinthian colonnade should be about 9.50m high²². Following again the data on their drawing, the second (the upper) colonnade (with Attic Ionian bases etc.) is high circa 5.50 m²³. Z. Dimitrov and V. Petkov suppose too that the second floor, also with column-vault construction, could possess windows as to enlighten 'the peristyle courtyard'²⁴.

Let us draw the attention to the thesis for the two-story colonnade. The reconstruction of both authors suggests 15 m in height half-cylinder with diameter 22 m, not to mention the height of the roof construction which is over 1.50 m. In such a case the general height of the

Pl. IV- 1- The architectural elements of the inner colonnade fallen immediately to the wall: a column, a pyramidal impost capital with short neck, a fragment of arch (photo A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski). 2- Constantinople, the Forum of Constantine I, Digital reconstruction (after Byzantium 1200).

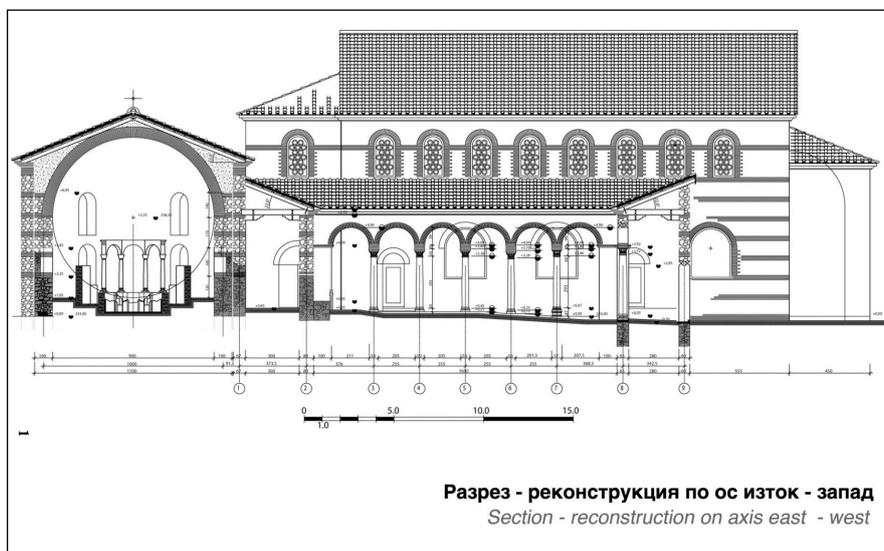
3- Stratigraphic profiles.– a, b. The fallen roof with *tegulae* and *imbrices*. Over it parts of the fallen after the earthquake arches. (photo A. Kocheva, Archaeological museum of Sandanski).

Пл. IV- 1- Архитектонски елементи унутрашње колоне који су отпали непосредно уз зид: стуб, пирамидални импост капитета са кратким вратом, фрагмент лука. 2- Константинопол, Форум Константина I, дигитална реконструкција (према Byzantium 1200). 3- Стратиграфски профили.– а, б. Срушени кров са кровним тегулама и имбрексима. Преко њега су лукови срушени у земљотресу.

²² Z. Dimitrov, V. Petkov, *Op. cit.*, fig. 9.

²³ Z. Dimitrov, V. Petkov, *Op. cit.*, fig. 13.

²⁴ Z. Dimitrov, V. Petkov, *Op. cit.*, 242.



Pl. V - 1- The Episcopal complex: basilica No 4, the baptistery and the atrium. Section – reconstruction on the axis east-west (by architect Yu. Farkov).

Пл. V -2- Епископски комплекс: базилика бр. 4, баптистеријум и атријум.
Реконструкција дела на оси исток – запад, архитекте Фаркова. (према архитекту
Јулију Фаркову)

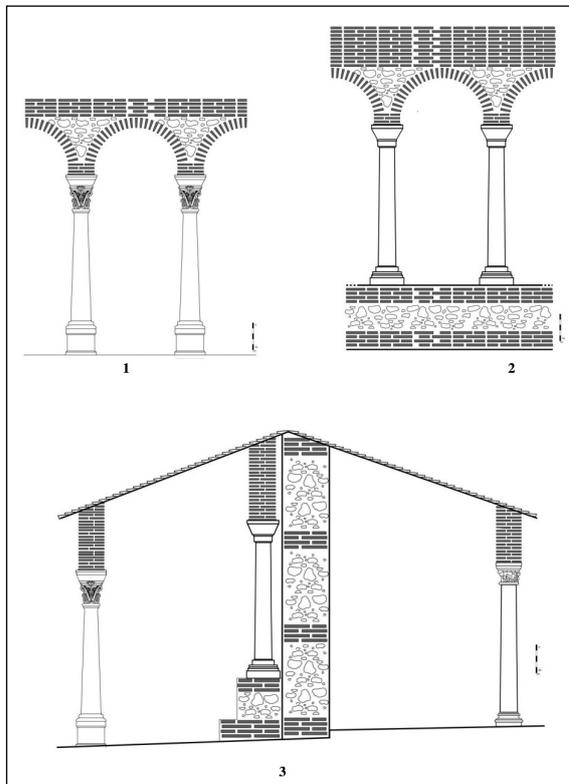
colonnade will be about 17 m, which is almost a building with six stories, sticking out 10 m over the height of the atrium. The height of the inner circle of the colonnade should be 6 m less than the diameter of the piazza. Thus the proposed and reconstructed two-story colonnade would hide the whole Episcopal complex, the most precious and lavish one in the city, built by the ktetor Anthim (Pl. III, 3). The existence of such a high half-cylinder on the piazza is an absurd or a general mistake in the measurements and in the proposed reconstruction of both authors.

There are many arguments against this reconstruction and the idea of the windows with glass. First, in both articles are not mentioned any finds of window glass on the excavated terrain²⁵, therefore we cannot accept the thesis of the existence of such windows. If there were windows they would have illuminated the space with a diameter of 16m²⁶ and with a floor width of 3 m. And also what should be seen and kept on the second floor, what was its function? We know the example of the enormous Forum of Constantine in Constantinople with diameter of 140m and its two-story colonnade (Pl. IV, 2).

Second, the way by which the elements of both colonnades have fallen is very indicative. If this was a two-story colonnade, the upper one should fall either on the lower one, or in a significant distance from it, more than 3m,

²⁵ В. ПЕТРОВ, *Op. cit.*, 475.

²⁶ The whole diameter of the plaza is 22 m. On 3 m from the wall is formed the Corinthian colonnade, which forms the inner diameter of the piazza, which leaves an unroofed space with a diameter of around 15 m, considering the awning of the roof.



Pl. VI-1-The colonnade in Corinthian order. Graphic reconstruction of S. Petrova (the reconstruction of the arcades after S. Petrova 2012, fig. 24). 2- The colonnade with impost capitals with short neck. Graphic reconstruction of S. Petrova (the reconstruction of the arcades after S. Petrova 2012, fig. 24). 3- The semicircular piazza with the eastern colonnade of the atrium. Section reconstruction on the axis east-west (author S. Petrova).

Пл. VI 1- Колоната у коринтском стилу. Графичка реконструкција С. Петрове (реконструкција аркаде је према S. Petrova 2012, fig. 24). 2- Колоната са импостом капитела са кратким вратом. Графичка реконструкција С. Петрове (реконструкција аркаде је према S. Petrova 2012, fig. 24). 3- Полукружни трг са источном колонадом у атријуму. Реконструкција дела на оси исток-запад (аутор С. Петрова).

having in mind the significant height of each colonnade plus the height of the arcade. In the second case the upper colonnade should be found either on the *Mese/decumanus maximus*, passing at the eastern end of the piazza, or on the opposite side – inside the atrium, to the west. Nevertheless the arches are found 3m from each other, in close proximity or over the other elements of the order. All of the elements are discovered *in situ*, beginning with the bases-postaments and followed by all the necessary elements in their sequence in the construction up to the impost capital, the steps of the arches and the roof tiles (Pl. II, 3-4; Pl. III, 1, Pl. IV, 1).

Third, from seismic aspect all architectural and constructive elements of the semicircular piazza and the east wall of the atrium have the same direction of falling caused by the earthquake which happened at the end of the sixth or in the beginning of the seventh century. This refers mainly to the colonnades of the piazza and of the atrium (Pl. I, 2). This fact reveals that both colonnades were parallel on the same floor of the piazza and have been destroyed at the same time. Four, the analysis of these two different in style colonnades and their construction reveals the time in which they have been created and the way they were installed. The colonnade in the Corinthian style possesses elements typical for the Principate: Corinthian capitals, columns with complexly profiled *apophysis* and *apothesis* and bases-postaments. All of them are reused and taken from the Roman buildings of Parthiopolis. In comparison, the second colon-

nade consists of synchronous elements, typical for the Early Christian-Early Byzantine period and made particularly for the piazza. The bases with *plinthus* have a reduced and simple profiled base detail. The columns possess a relatively wide listel for *apothesis* and *apophisis*. The lower columns with listels and the capitals with its pyramidal impost with short neck are entirely typical for the Dominate and the Early Christian buildings of Late Antiquity.

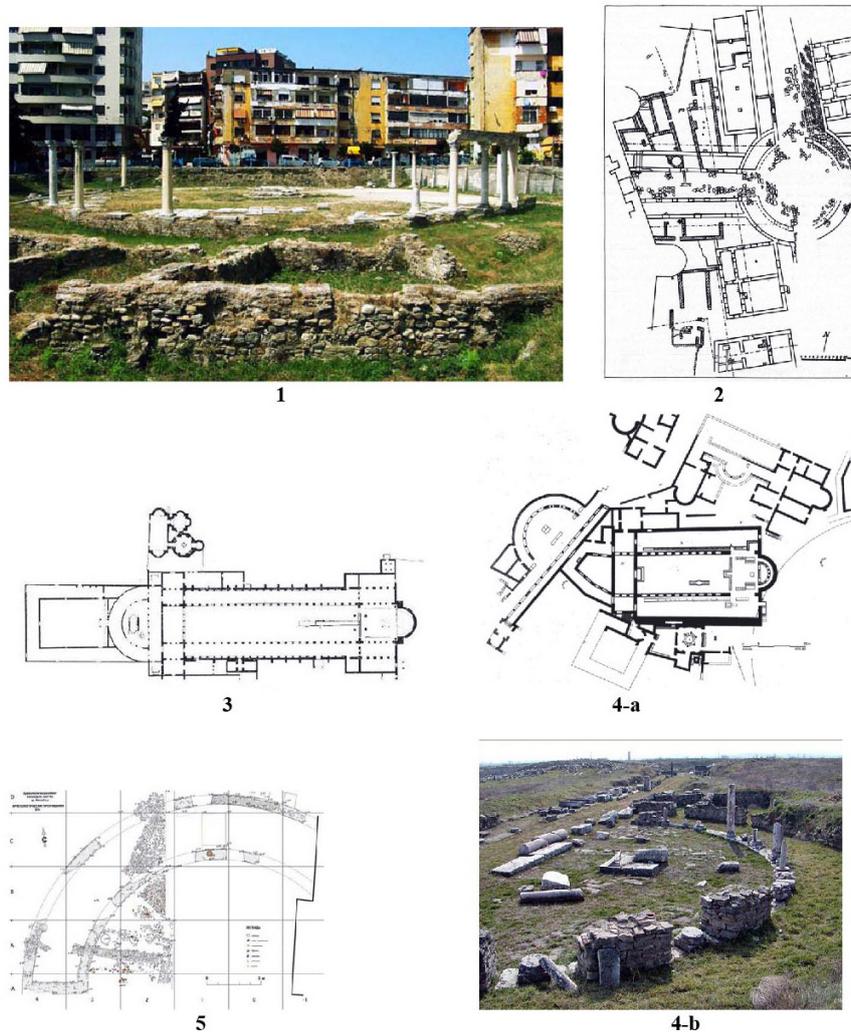
The location of the elements from the Corinthian colonnade, reveal that it was erected in the inner space, 3m to the east from the semicircular wall. The second colonnade with pyramidal impost capitals with short neck was installed in a very unusual way on the same semicircular wall, established by one of its bases *in situ* (Pl. III, 1). The probable height of this dense and covered with wall paintings wall was about 1.5-2m., quite enough to protect the sitting on the bench people from the strong sun and rain, and also low enough to allow the enlightening of the piazza. In the graphic reconstructions of Z. Dimitrov and V. Petkov can be found some discrepancies with the stated dimensions in this and the previous publication of piazza, measured during the excavations²⁷. Except that, the four-leaf Corinthian capitals are incorrectly defined as “lyre-shaped volutes”, while in fact they belong to the type with ‘double S’ with mirror turn, being coupled at its base²⁸.

A particular problem is the roofing over the eastern wall of the atrium and the curve of the half-round piazza with the two colonnades. The archaeological research established that they are synchronous and covered with wooden roof and tegulae. The stratigraphic profile of the piazza confirms this: *in situ* over the brick floor there is a layer of debris from the wooden roof construction and the fallen *tegulae* and *imbrices* from the fire. The fallen arcades of the colonnade along with the columns and capitals are over the debris from the fire and are identical with the situation in the atrium (Pl. IV, 3-a,b). Therefore, as built at the same time, the ridge of the roof should be at the same level. With the proposed reconstruction, the atrium, which roof ridge has a height of 8m, should be half the height of the half-round plaza, which ridge, according to the “graphic reconstruction”, has a height of 16 m.

The eastern wall of the atrium of the basilica was built at the central entrance along with the western wall of the round piazza. The height of the wall, reaching the roof ridge is 8.07 m and from the inner side – 5.70 m, following the reconstruction made by architect Yu. Farkov (Pl. V, 1). The slope of the roof, for the rainwater to flow towards the plaza, according to architect Yu. Farkov, should be 22°, or after arcade there should be around 2 m in height. Thus is formed a height of around 8m of the outer wall with its solid part along with the displacement of around 0.40 m (formed 2 steps as we said above) and over it a colonnade, cover with an arcade and a roof (Pl. VI, 1). If we accept that the columns of the Corinthian colonnade are no more than 5m tall, as shown in the

²⁷ The colonnade in Corinthian order according to the reconstruction is more than 9m and the colonnade with the Early Christian capitals – circa 5.50 m. The general height in this case would be 0.40 m for the sunken base-postament plus 2.70 m for the column, plus 0.50 m for the Corinthian capitals, plus 0.30 m for the impost capital and 1.80 m for the height of the arcade.

²⁸ Z. Dimitrov, V. Petkov, *Op.cit.*, 244, figs. 3-6.



Pl. VII - 1- Dyrrachium. The round piazza. 2- Justiniana Prima. Plan with the round piazza. 3- Lechaion, the basilica of Leonidas. 4- -a. Stobi. Plan with the semicircular piazzas west and north of the Episcopal basilica (after C. Snively 2012, 186, fig. 1). 4-b. Stobi. The semicircular piazza with Via Sacra (after C. Snively 2012, 190, fig. 4). 5- Mesambria. The semicircular piazza at the Western Gate (after A. Bozhkova and P. Kiyashkina 2015, 294, fig. 1)

Пл. VII - 1- Дурахијон, трг кружног облика. 2- Јустинијана Прима. План са тргом кружног облика. 3- Лехајон, Леонидина базилика. 4- -а. Стоби. План са полукружним трговима на западној и северној страни Епископске базилике. (према С. Snively 2012, 186, fig. 1). 4-b. Стоби. Полукружни трг са улицом Via Sacra (према С. Snively 2012, 190, fig. 4). 5- Месамбрија. Полукружни трг на Западној Капији.

reconstruction of Z. Dimitrov and V. Petkov, but 2.70 m (0.20 m higher than the once from the outer colonnade), the height of the colonnade should be 5.70 m, the same as the one in the atrium of the basilica. The colonnades formed like this, with heights as in the atrium, should have had a common double sloped roof construction at the central entrance, continuing in a single sloped roof – for the atrium and the round piazza. The entrances to the north and south from the central entrance should be covered with a double sloped roof construction, forming short corridors with solid walls, found during the excavations.

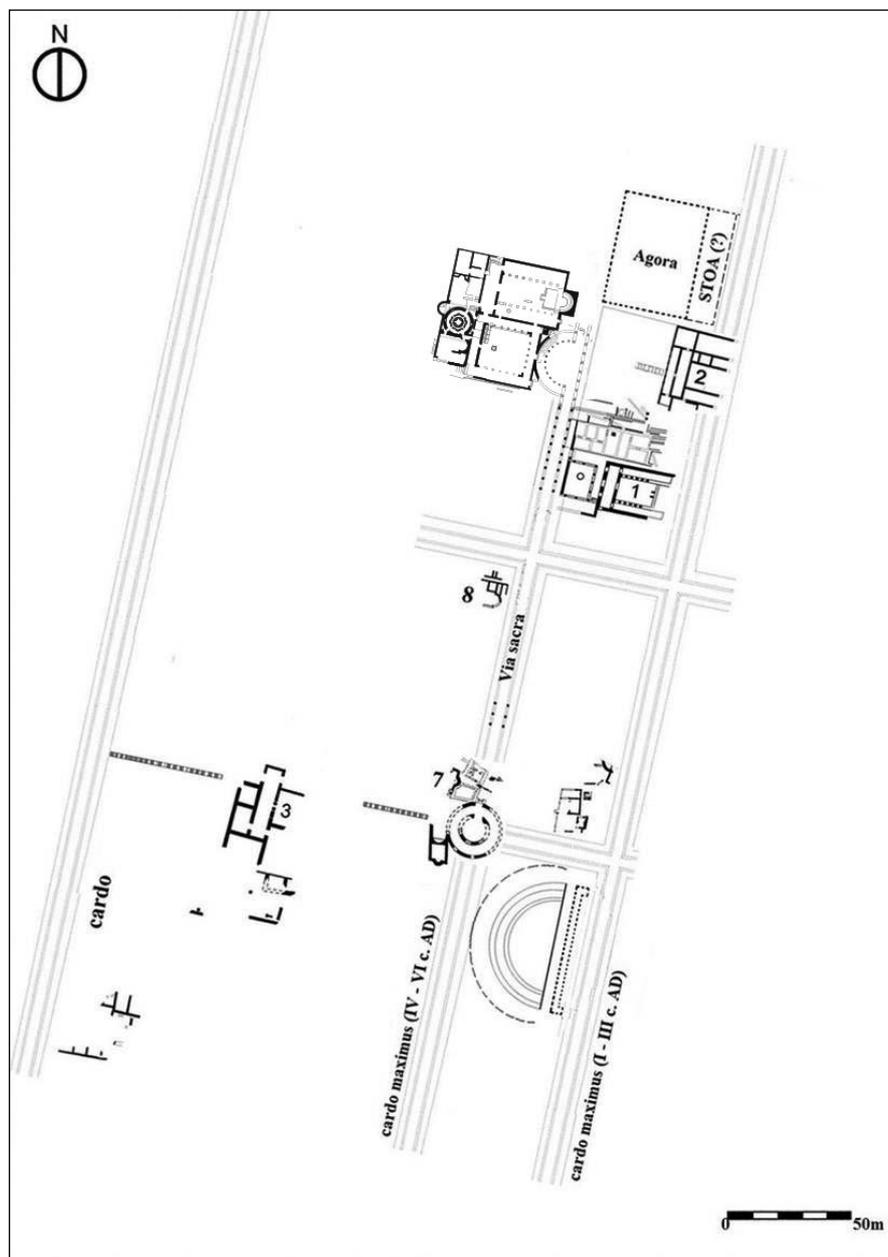
The semicircular wall played the role of a stylobate, no more than 1.50 - 2 m high. In its lower part it was a real wall and the upper part – a colonnade, permitting the light to penetrate and to enlighten the piazza from the west and at the same time protecting the people on the benches from the sun and the rain (Pl. VI, 2, 3). The result was that the atrium and especially the most beautiful and important Episcopal basilica in the city could be observed in all its magnificence. An additional argument for such a general height of the half-circle wall with the colonnade and the roof above it is the fact that the columns here are shorter than the usual dimensions and the capitals are impost with shorter neck. The order here, from the bases to the impost capitals along with the arcades and the roof reach the height of the wall of the atrium²⁹.

The double colonnade of the piazza attributes to the monumentality of the piazza and provides an excellent panorama to all buildings around. Even after the construction of basilica No 2 by bishop Ioannes in the middle of the 5th century to the east of the piazza, the new building was also included in this general panorama³⁰. The Early Christian view of the half-round piazza is strengthened by the outer colonnade, built in the style of the Early Christian architectural decoration. The usage of a relatively low wall as a stylobate for the colonnade with arcades, parallel to the second colonnade, is met in the architecture of the Severan *macellum* in Leptis Magna, in the oval piazza with tetrapylon in Palmira and in the round piazza of Dyrrachium. Several round and half-round plazas, built in the period from the last quarter of the fourth century up to the first half of the sixth century are known from the eparchies of Illyricum and Thrace. In Dyrrachium the forum is round with diameter around 40 m, also encircled by a colonnade, from the end of the 5th century (Pl. VII, 1). It is considered that the emperor Anastasius (491-518), born in Dyrrachium, has built this forum made of Proconnesian marble and local limestone blocks, taken from the amphitheatre which was used at this time as a quarry for building materials³¹. This is a century later than the piazza in Parthicopolis. Around the

²⁹ The strict measures of the different elements are not given in both publications. Here we have offered them approximately on the base of the published with dimensions analogies found earlier in the Episcopal basilica and on the base of the photos.

³⁰ For basilica No 2 (bishop Ioannes basilica) see Т. Иванов, Д. Серафимова, Н. Николов. Разкопки в центъра на Сандански през 1960 г. - *Известия на археологическия институт*, 31, 1969, 105-209.

³¹ G. Muka, Rotonda e Durrësit/Rotonda of Durrës. Munumentet, 2003, 7-26; A. Hoti, J. Wilkes, E. Metalla, B. Shkodra, The Early Byzantine Circular Forum in Dyrrachium (Durrës, Albania) in 2002 and 2004-2005: Recent, Recording and Excavation. *Annual of the British School of Athens*, No 103, 2008, 367-397, Pl. 40-48.



Pl. VIII - 11- Parthicopolis. General plan of the city in the middle of the 5th century (after S. Petrova).

Пл. VIII -12- Партикополис. Генерални план града средином V века. Parthicopolis. (према С. Петрова).

piazza of Dyrrahion many shops were placed in the northern part³², supposedly the shops and the colonnade had a common roof. The colonnade is erected on a stylobate about 1m high and wide 0.76-0.80m³³. The *intercolumnium* is between 1.76-2.06m. The Proconnesian bases are not well polished and look like semi-manufacture. The columns are 3.45m high, crowned with Proconnesian Corinthian capitals high 0.57m. The colonnade ends with architrave, but there lacks data about entablature. In the center of the piazza there is a higher place, probably a postament for a statue similarly to the statue of Constantine I in Constantinople³⁴.

Another round piazza built at a cross road is that one in Justiniana Prima (Caričin grad in Serbia), seat of the archbishop of Northern Illyricum³⁵. It shows the development of the Early Byzantine city, existed from the 30s of the sixth century, continuing the line from the Roman imperial period in Gerassa and Palmira and reaching its apogee in the period of Justinian I. The piazza is placed at the central cross road with covered colonnade in the streets and the round piazza itself (PI. VII, 2).

In the period from the last quarter of the 4th century up to middle of the sixth century we can find round and half-round piazzas existing synchronously. The half-round piazzas have been erected in Stobi in the province of Macedonia, in the basilica of Leonidas in Lechaion, in the province of Achaea and in Mesambria (Nesebar) in the province of Thrace. The building of the basilica in Lechaion³⁶, the west port of Corinth, has probably begun in the middle of the 5th century according to the coin of Marcian (450-457) found in the foundations. A coin of Anastasius I (491-518) shows the time of its completion at the end of the fifth – the beginning of the 6th century. The basilica has gigantic length of 180 m, from the atrium to the end of the apse, and can be compared to the basilica of St. Peter in Rome. In Lechaion the plan and the long solea with the ambo immediately in front of it demonstrate the type of liturgy. The court from the west includes also a half-round piazza, latter serving as an atrium of the basilica (PI. VII, 3).

In Stobi the semicircular piazza, dated in the middle fifth century, is a part of the complex, consisting of the Episcopal basilica from the last building period situated almost at the same level as the main street (Via Sacra)³⁷. The piazza is tangential to this street to the west. According to the researchers, in Stobi the processions have been performed on Via Sacra/cardo maximus, closed among this street, the half-round piazza, the Episcopal residence and the Southern Gate (Porta Heraclea) with general longitude about 85 m. During the

³² Hoti et alli, 369, Pl. 40.

³³ In our opinion the stylobate of the piazza in Dyrrahion is very similar to the semi-circular wall-stylobate of the piazza in Parthopolis.

³⁴ Hoti et alli, 371-374, 379, Pl. 48-b.

³⁵ Č. Vasić, Le plan d'urbanisme de la ville haute: Essai de reconstitution. – *Caričin grad*, II, B. Bavnd, V. Kondić, J.-M. Spiesser (ed.). Collection de l'École française de Rome, 75, 1990, 307-315, figs. 209 and 210.

³⁶ R. Krautheimer, Op.cit., 138-140, fig. 88.

³⁷ J. Wisman, Dj. Mano-Zissi, Excavations at Stobi, 1971. – *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (Oct., 1972), 407-424, Ill. 1.

processions over the paved Via Sacra, the Christians gathered together at the half-round piazza before entering the main entrance of the Episcopal basilica³⁸. In this way the new Early Byzantine center of Stobi is formed, playing the role of the previous Roman forum (**Pl. VII, 4-a, b**). A second smaller plaza with a half-round form, also a part of an Early Christian complex was found the north not far from the basilica of Bishop Philip.

Similar piazza, like in Stobi, from the second half of the 5th century, although with two half-concentric walls (with porticoes), is discovered in Mesambria³⁹, immediately before the main Western Gate (**Pl. VII, 5**). The south façade of the built later basilica from the 6th century is tangential to the piazza.

The described plazas of Mesambria, Justiniana Prima and Stobi have parallels in another building, situated south of basilica No 7 of Parthicopolis⁴⁰. It was erected similarly to Justiniana at the crossing of Via Sacra with one of the secondary decumanus. It also can be connected with the processions on the Parthicopolitan Mese, limiting them from the south. From the north this part of the street is closed by the excavated recently half-round piazza⁴¹. It is not excavated completely because of the huge building and the modern street over the eastern part of the piazza. In this way the street for processions is formed with longitude about 120 m, or 40 m longer than the processional street in Stobi. So far we have at disposal the following parts of the piazza at the north end of the street: the western catenary, tangent to the eastern atrium wall of the Episcopal basilica and connected with it by three entrances. The southern part of the catenary is touching the north side of a small decumanus. We should not exclude the possibility of an existing eastern part of the piazza which should be connected with the atrium of the basilica of bishop Ioannes (basilica No 2).

The problem of identifying and reconstructing of the piazza of Parthicopolis may have two decisions: as a round one as in Constantinople and Justiniana Prima or as a semicircular one like in Stobi and Lechaion. The first possibility still cannot be rejected because this space is not excavated entirely, but now modern houses are occupying this area. Nevertheless there are several arguments against such a reconstruction: the first one is the displacement to the east; second, there is no place for a full circle with diameter of 22 m, because of possible existing ancient building from the Principate; finally having in mind that the previous Roman *cardo maximus* is repeated and rebuilt once more in

³⁸ C. Snively. The Episcopal basilica, the Via sacra, and the semicircular court at Stobi, R. Macedonia. – *Niš and Byzantium* (ed. M. Ракоција), X, Niš 2012, 185-200, fig. 1, and cil.lit.

³⁹ А. Божкова, П. Киашкина. Археологическо проучване на обект „Археологически комплекс при Западна порта – северозападен сектор“ в резерват „Старинен Несебър“. – *Археологически открития и разкопки през 2014*, София 2015, 294-296, обр. 1 and 3.

⁴⁰ S. Petrova. The Early Christian Basilicas in the urban planning of Parthicopolis. – *Niš and Byzantium* (ed. M. Ракоција), XIII, Niš 2015, 161-184, fig. 16.

⁴¹ The excavated to the present moment space reveals a semicircular piazza with covered colonnade.

Late Antiquity, passing east of the piazza and west of the atrium of basilica No 1. That's why in our opinion more convenient is the reconstruction of the piazza of Parthicopolis as half-round colonnaded structure than as a round piazza.

The newly created piazza of Parthicopolis is the nucleus of the Late Antique and Early Byzantine city. Most probably it has replaced the abandoned already pagan agora. The semicircular piazza was inspired by the round piazza of Constantine I in Constantinople, built several decades earlier. The round plan and the colonnaded space distinguish it from the pagan Roman rectangular forum and the square Greek agora, being the city central piazza for centuries. Also different is the connection of the piazza with the main streets: in Roman times they usually do not cross the forum/the agora, only stopping at or tangential to them; now they form the main crossing of the round piazza, dividing it in two or four parts as in Gerassa and Justiniana Prima, or in the case of a half-round plaza and the main street touching the diameter of the piazza as in Parthicopolis (dated in the last quarter of the fourth century) and in Stobi built half a century later.

The appearance of the round or half-round central city piazza gives a new appearance to the city planning and was the initial and final point for the religious and other city processions, similarly to the role of Mese in Constantinople for the ceremonials and Christian processions⁴². Even more, in the middle of the 5th c., here in the northern part of the Parthicopolitan Mese, the half-round piazza and the Mese unite three basilicas, having in mind the earliest basilica No 1 from the second quarter of the fourth century, basilica No 2 (the basilica of bishop Ioannes) and the Episcopal basilica (No 4) (**Pl. VIII, 1**). The situation in the southern end of the processional street of Parthicopolis is similar – the Rotunda there also unites several basilicas, namely No 7 and 8 and basilica No 3, erected on the close slope over both basilicas. This street, limited and united by the semicircular piazza and the Rotunda at both its ends, is intended for processions with crosses and icons, stopping in front of every basilica in the central part of Parthicopolis⁴³. The Early Christian urban planning has taken into consideration the street, the existing to that moment insula net, the already built basilica No 1, the Episcopal basilica (No 4). The piazza occupies a whole insula similarly to the atrium.

In the Early Byzantine period the Episcopal basilica with the Episcopal residence has become the center of the city life in all aspects in the same way as the bishop is the main figure of the city. The half-round piazza was the uniting central space in the same way as the forum of Constantine I in Constantinople, replacing the earlier pagan agora/forum. Up to the discovery of this piazza in Parthicopolis it was clear that this main street was used for open-air ceremonies and religious processions⁴⁴. The newly discovered semicircular piazza revealed the initial and the final point of gathering and performing these solemn proces-

⁴² D. Potter, *Constantine the Emperor*, Oxford University Press, 1957, 262.

⁴³ About processions and liturgy see: Th. Mathews. *The Early Churches of Constantinople. Architecture and Liturgy*. University Park, PA, 1971.

⁴⁴ В. Попова, Един паметник с редка мозаична техника от ранновизантијскиј Партикополис. – *Изкуствоведски четенија 2007*. Институт за изкуствоведство 2007, 408-421; S. Petrova, *The Early Christian...*, 174 ff., fig. 16.

sions from the piazza at the Episcopal basilica as well as the form and the function of such kind of piazza at the beginning of any Early Christian open-air procession in Byzantium. Although, beyond comparison, smaller and modest than the Constantinian piazza in the capital, the example from Parthicopolis adheres quite obviously to the metropolitan model, showing the new piazza as the centre of the urban everyday life and of the official ceremonies and processions. It is quite interesting, that the first provincial example appears in Parthicopolis in the end of the fourth century and is the earliest one so far for Macedonia and Thrace in copying the metropolitan plan. This fact can be explained by the strong influence of Constantinople from the period of Constantinian and Theodosian dynasty, as well as the created by Rome the vicariate in Thessaloniki, for the brilliant development of the region and particularly of Parthicopolis in that period⁴⁵.

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ПОЛУКРУЖНИ ТРГ ПАРТИКОПОЛИСА У РАЗВОЈУ КАСНОГ АНТИЧКОГ
УРБАНИСТИЧКОГ ПЛАНИРАЊА ГРАДОВА

Скорашње откриће дела полукружног трга у Партикополису указује на директну повезаност у урбанистичком планирању са оним у Константинопољу. Нови градски план који се везује за период признавања Хришћанства које је Теодосије I прогласио за званичну религију доводи до промена у центру града. Он се јавља у облику кружног трга у Константинопољу у Малој Азији и Илирији или у облику полукруга у Тракији, Ахеји и Македонији. У Партикополису га налазимо у облику полукруга на простору трга. Полукружни трг је изграђен у задњој четврти IV века заједно са атријумом епископске базилике. У досадашњим публикацијама, овај полукружни простор се дефинише као двориште перистила са двоспратним колонадама и постоји претпоставка да је у другом реду колонада било прозора. Док не буду пронађени остаци стакла који би указивало на то да је било прозора у другом реду као и која је била висина колонаде, сматраћемо да је њихова висина износила више од 16м. На тај начин би колонада сакривала најрепрезентативнију грађевину у античком граду – Епископски комплекс. Због тога верујемо да се ради о двострукој колонади која се налази на спољашњој оградни - посебно израђеном архитектонском детаљу – античко-јонској основи, стубовима са ранохришћанским дорским импостом капителом са кратким вратом; и на 3м према центру трга у коринтском стилу са поново употребљеним архитектонским детаљима као што су основе постамената, стубова, капитела у коринтском стилу импоста. За сада је утврђен као полукруг на месту где се трг граничио у дужини свог пречника са главном градском улицом - *Via Sacra* / Mese. Не искључујемо могућност да је имала кружни облик, али модерне зграде не дозвољавају наставак истраживања у источном делу. У току V века, трг постаје место са кога је кретала процесција. На траси којом се кретала процесција, на путу *Via Sacra*/Mese, као и у Константинопољу је до сада пронађено шест базилика које се групишу око два кружна простора – ка северу и југу што је трасу процесције усмерило у два правца.

⁴⁵ S. Petrova, On Early Christianity ..., 2012, 98.