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## **THE ONE-AISLE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES FROM SOUTHWESTERN BULGARIA**

*Abstract:* In the article are gathered together for the first time the one-aisle churches from the territory of Southwestern Bulgaria, discovered in the area of the Upper and Middle streams of the rivers Struma/Strimon and Mesta/Nestos. One-aisle churches have been discovered in the area of the Upper Struma near Ivanyane village, Serdica region, at the fortress Krakra at Pernik and in the vicinity of Radomir, near the village of Dragoychintsi, region of Pautalia. At the same time, in the middle stream of Struma there is only one church in the fortress Gorno Gradishte at the village of Mikrevo. But about 60 km east of Mikrevo, at the boundary of the Upper and Middle stream of Mesta several such churches have been unearthed in Bansko and Razlog. The known ones so far have been erected on hills. We associate their construction not only with the local population, but also with the arrival of a new Christianized ethnics groups – the Goths and the people from Asia Minor and Syria.

*Key words:* one-aisle church, Struma and Mesta rivers, Eastern settlers, and the church plans, the settlements of the Goths federates; early monasteries.

### *Introduction*

Numerous Early Christian churches have been registered and studied on the territory of contemporary Southwestern Bulgaria. The attention of the researchers has been concentrated to the three-aisled basilicas in the bigger cities alongside Strymon and Nestos rivers so far. Less is known about the development of the one-aisle churches which dominate in the small towns and sites of the Middle and Upper areas of these rivers. The churches are established in smaller Late Antique and Early Byzantine sites, and published, with few exceptions, only preliminary and insufficiently. The area of its spread is almost reaching Serdica to the west (the churches at Ivanyane); then an important group of monuments has been excavated at the Krakra hill at Pernik; at the slopes of the mountain Golo burdo at Radomir; at the Milevska Mountain (the village of Dragoychintsi); on the upland of Gorno Gradishte at the village of Mikrevo. Alongside the Upper and Middle Mesta the one-aisle churches have been

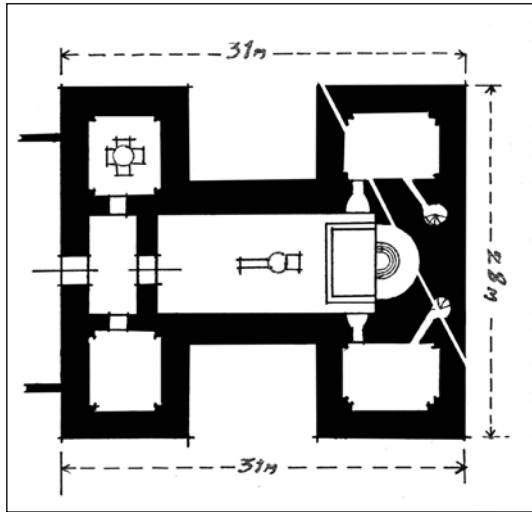


Fig. 1. The church at Djanavar tepe at Odessus/Varna. Plan according to architect Al. Rashenov.

Сл. 1. Црква у Ђанавар тепу у Одесу/Варни. План према архитекти Ал. Рашенов.

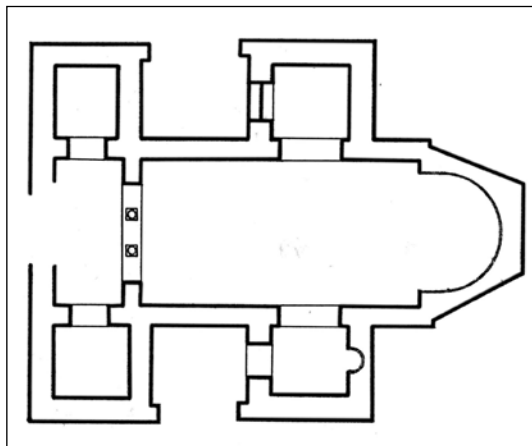


Fig. 2. The church at the locality Pobien kamik at Ivanyane, near Serdica/Sofia. Plan according to V. Ivanova.

Сл. 2. Црква на локалитету Побијен камик у Ивањану, код Сердикe/Софије. План према В. Ивановa.

erected on the heights of the Mountains Pirin and Rila in the towns Bansko and Razlog.

The one-aisle churches have its own place in the development of the Early Christian architecture. This type of building has existed almost without changes from Late Antiquity, to the Early Byzantine period, the middle Ages, the Turkish (Ottoman) period, the modern period and have reached almost to our days. It is considered that they have been preferred and more often spread buildings with a lengthened plan and without cupola during the first official centuries of Christianity as places for praying and rituals, developed alongside its horizontal axis<sup>1</sup>. They do not possess always narthex and court from the west, but always have a semicircular apse to the east. The roof is half-cylindrical or a ridge one, covered with *tegulae*. There were found also one-aisle churches with a complicated plan, built under the eastern influence under the presence of foreign ethnical representatives.

Rare can be found essential differences in the plan of such churches. Generally, in them two kinds of plan can be distinguished: with a simple or a complex one. The first type has rectangular one-aisle nave, without or with possible narthex and exonarthex, and semicircular apse. The second type is rare and has in the plan rooms constructively added to the north and south façades. To the west are also erected rooms: the narthex is following after the nave, or narthex with exonarthex. As the most telling example should be pointed the complex plan of the church at Djanavar tepe near Varna<sup>2</sup>, serving to the settled there Syrian enclave, part of

<sup>1</sup> Н. Чанева-Дечевска, *Раннохристиянската архитектура в България IV-VI в.* София, Университетско издателство „Климент Охридски“ 1999, 33.

<sup>2</sup> According to the author, the plan is close to some Syrian and Asia Minor martyriums. See Н. Чанева-Дечевска 1999, 35.

the developed in 6<sup>th</sup> century monastery complex (fig. 1); presumably belonged to the Monophysite Syrian community, close to Empress Theodora, wife of Justinian the Great<sup>3</sup>. The liturgy celebrated in the church is believed to be close to that of Constantinople, therefore a non-Middle Eastern origin of the church plan is possible<sup>4</sup>. Another church similar in plan to Djanavar tepe is the one-aisle church at Ivanyane<sup>5</sup>, in the locality Pobien kamik, western of Sofia and near to the Upper stream of Strymon (fig. 2). It is erected in 5<sup>th</sup> – beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> century and connected with the influence of the Eastern Church architecture<sup>6</sup> and the presence of foreign ethnical groups. Often the one-aisle churches are connected too with the *martyriums*, similarly to the one-aisle church devoted to apostle Paulus under the Octagon in Philippi<sup>7</sup>. In this area of the Upper stream of Struma, this is also the one-aisle church under the basilica of Saint Sophia in Serdica, with a found at the altar mensa cista tomb<sup>8</sup> and the church at Ivanyane with two crypts under the rooms aside the two long walls, near to the apse<sup>9</sup>.

According to its function, the one-aisle early Christian churches were serving as *martyriums*, as cemetery ones, fortresses, town and city's churches, at last as monasteries. Differently to the basilicas, they were serving a limited number of Christians. The reason they have been chosen is that they could be built quickly because of its modest constructive type, not expensive cost of building and the possibility of creating of equality among the members of the church.

The aim of our paper is to create the picture of the appearing and development of this kind of churches in Southwestern Bulgaria, the stages of development, the basic elements of the plan and function of the rooms in the liturgy and the other rituals. Another task is to reveal the influences and its reasons, to compare to analogous churches from the Balkans and in the Late Antique world, and finally, to try to find if there are any peculiarities in the Bulgarian monuments.

<sup>3</sup> P. Georgiev. Odessos-Theodoriada. A Centre of Monophysitism during the 6<sup>th</sup> Century (the Djanavara Church and its Syro-Mesopotamian Features). – *Early Christian Martyrs and Relics and their Veneration in East and West. International Conference, Varna, November 20<sup>th</sup>- 23<sup>th</sup>, 2003* (Acta Musei Varnaensis, IV), Varna 2006, 291-308.

<sup>4</sup> V. Tenekedjiev. Liturgical Fittings and Fixtures in the Early Byzantine Church on Djanavara Hill near Varna. – *Studia academica Šumenensia*, 8, 2021 (in print).

<sup>5</sup> В. Иванова. Стари църкви и манастири в българските земи (IV-XII в.). – *Годишник на Народния музей*, 4, 1922/1925, 429-582.

<sup>6</sup> N. Tschanewa-Detschewska, Die frühchristliche Architektur in Bulgarien. – *Actes du Xe congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne*. Vol. 2. Thessalonique, 1984, 621.

<sup>7</sup> With a Hellenistic tomb; becoming part of the Christian cult. See: E. Πελεκανίδου, Α. Μέντζος. Οκτάγωνο Φιλίππων: πρώτα συμπεράσματα μετά τις νεότερες έρευνες. – *Πρακτικά Αρχαιολογικού Συνεδρίου, Πόλις και Χώρα στην Αρχαία Μακεδονία και Θράκη, Μνήμη Δ. Λαζαρίδη, Καβάλα 9-11 Μαΐου 1986*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1990, 597-600; X. Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη, X. Μπακιρτζής. – *Φίλιπποι*, Αθήνα 1997, 49-52.

<sup>8</sup> St. Boyadjiev. The Early Christian Church of St. Sofia in Sofia. – Boyadjiev St. et al. *The Early Christian Church of St. Sofia – God's Wisdom*, Sofia, 2009, 17-18 figs. 1, 3-4, 16-17.

<sup>9</sup> H. Чанева-Дечевска 1999, 300-301, fig. 97a; R. F. Hoddinott. – *Bulgaria in Antiquity, An Archaeological Introduction*, London and Tonbridge 1975, 279, 278 fig. 75.

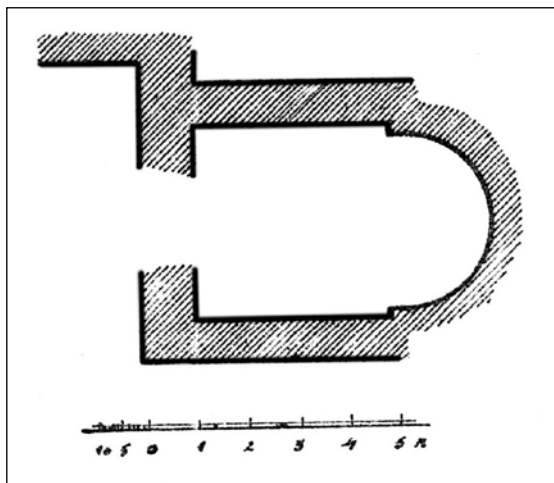


Fig. 3. Plan of the church at locality Tsurkvishte at Ivanyane, near Serdica/Sofia. Plan according to V. Ivanova

Сл. 3. План цркве на локалитету Црквиште у Ивањане, код Сердице/Софије. План према В. Иванову

churches with complex plan (fig. 2). Its dating is the end of 4<sup>th</sup> – beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>11</sup>. The general length is 17 m, with width (at the western façade) 14.47 m. The foundations are thick 1.20 m, the walls from 0.80 up to 1.05 m, made of boulders with white mortar in *opus mixtum*, with different size of the bricks in five leveling rows. The roof is covered by *tegulae*. The one-aisle church has narthex and one apse, half-rounded from inside, and three-walled from outside. The entrance is tribelon similar to basilica No 3 in Sandanski (ancient Parthicopols) in the Middle Strymon valley. The floor is made of mortar over a layer of gravel.

The church has a rich architectonic decoration. Here have been discovered parts of the windows' columns; decorated capitals, fragments of the small decorated pillars from the chancel, as well as two-faced chancel plates decorated from one side with the Latin cross with flaring ends, and on the other side with Chrismon<sup>12</sup>. At the western wall, alongside both sides of the narthex width is erected a pair of towers, similar to some basilicas from the Middle stream of Struma and Mesta: the one at the village of Strumsko in Blagoevgrad region and in the village of Debren in the environs of Nicopolis ad Nestum. They are flanking the narthex, in one surface with the western façade. One can reach the towers from the interior of the narthex.

<sup>10</sup> В. Иванова, Двете старинни църкви при с. Ивањане. – *Известия на българския археологически институт*, 8, 1934, 446.

<sup>11</sup> В. Иванова 1934, 443.

<sup>12</sup> В. Иванова 1934, 444.

#### Analytic Part

##### I. Alongside Strymon river

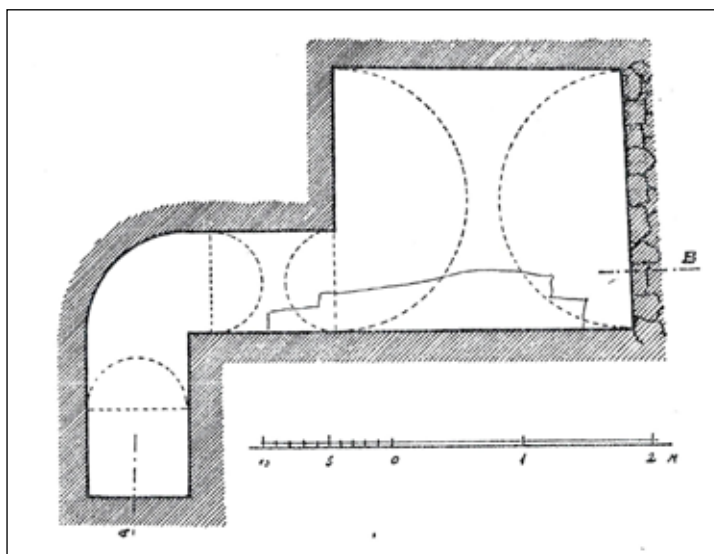
*Ivanyane.* Today it is a quarter of Bankya, and here have been found two one-aisle churches. Similar to the other churches of this kind in the Upper and Middle stream of Strymon, they are discovered in mountain areas and build predominantly on heights.

1. *The church from the locality Tsurkvishte.* It has a simple plan belonging to the first type – with one aisle, narthex and semicircular apse (fig. 3)<sup>10</sup>. It is built in 4<sup>th</sup> century of boulders, which are welded by mortar in *opus mixtum*. The nave is square, with side of 3.83 m, and width of the apse 3.50 m. The width of the narthex is bigger than the width of the nave. A necropolis is excavated around the church showing its cemetery function.

2. *The church from the locality Pobien kamik.* It belongs to the

Fig. 4. The northeastern crypt of the church at locality Pobien kamik at Ivanyane, near Serdica/Sofia. Plan according to architect Al. Rashenov.

Сл. 4. Североисточна крипта цркве на локалитету Побијен камик у Ивањане, код Сердије/Софије. План према арх. Ал. Рашенов.



Four back rooms are built at the end of the long north and south walls forming the complex plan of the church. They have different size and plan, and the eastern ones possess underground parts, namely crypts (**fig. 4**). The northern room has a more complex plan, being opened in its fore-apse part of the floor. Two building periods are established here, with a supposed initial tomb, over which the crypt and the church have been built later<sup>13</sup>. On its turn, this allows to suppose the functioning of the church also as a *martyrium*, similar to the churches in the eastern provinces. That's why it is considered that the church in its complex plan is very similar to some Syrian and Asia Minor *martyriums*, having also cemetery function, and without transept, although some researchers determine as such the eastern rooms. The latter have different dimensions and disposition and are not opened with the whole width to the nave. This place of the eastern rooms does not answer to the architectural disposition of the elements in the churches with transept. N. Chaneva-Dechevska supposes that it is possible that the back wings from the north and the south have been connected together on the façade by big arcs stepping on massive pilasters, and forming three deep portals from three sides (northern, western and southern). Close parallels for church No 2 in Ivanyane, except the one of Djanavar tepe, can be found also in Asia Minor, namely church No 32 in Bin bir Kilise; in the prefecture Illyricum the basilica on the island Golem grad at the Prespa lake (**fig. 5**), at the village of Kamenitsa (today the town Makedonska Kamenitsa), and in the village of Orman at Skopje<sup>14</sup>. One more discovery supports this thesis, the church found in the locality Kale at the village of Krupishte in North Macedonia (the so-called Red church) (**fig. 6**). On the base of its plan it is determined as

<sup>13</sup> Иванова 1934, 444. The inside dimensions of the nave plus the narthex are: 17 m long, width of 5.20 m.

<sup>14</sup> Чанева-Дечевска 1999, 301; V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova, Golem grad de Prespa. – *Spartacus II*, 2006, 18, fig. 5b, 19, fig. 8.

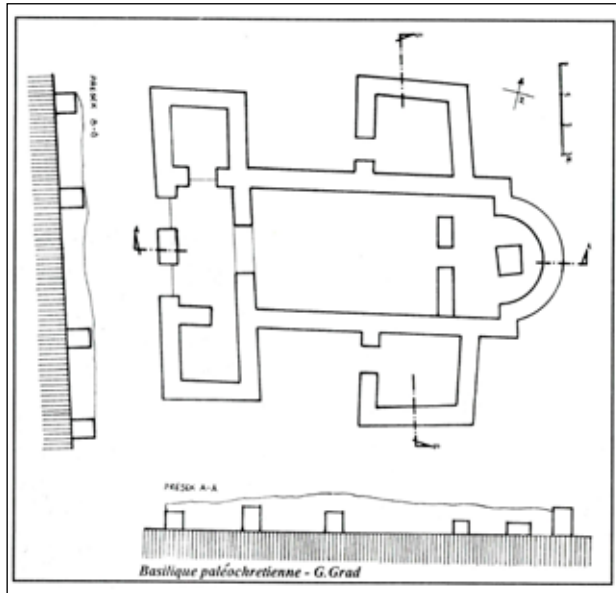


Fig. 5. The church on the island of Golem Grad at the Prespa lake in North Macedonia. Plan according to V. Bitrakova.

Сл. 5. Црква на острву Голем град на Преспанском језеру у Северној Македонији. План према В. Битракова.

inscribed cross, but in our case this is not a square, but rectangle<sup>15</sup>. Its apse is of the same type as in Ivanyane, and similar too are the four rooms situated at the eastern and the western ends of the church. The access to the eastern one is from the nave and the short cross wings, while to the western ones – from the narthex. Another analogue of the church in Ivanyane and Krupishte – a single-nave early Christian church with a complex plan, but with a semicircular outside and inside apse is the church in Klise köy, today the village of Tsurkvishte (fig. 7); with tribelon, narthex and atrium to the west<sup>16</sup>. The building of church No 2 at Tsurkvishte is related to 5<sup>th</sup> – beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> century. Here also has been formed necropolis to the church. The latter is also determined as

*martyrium* on the base of the particular plan and the crypt.

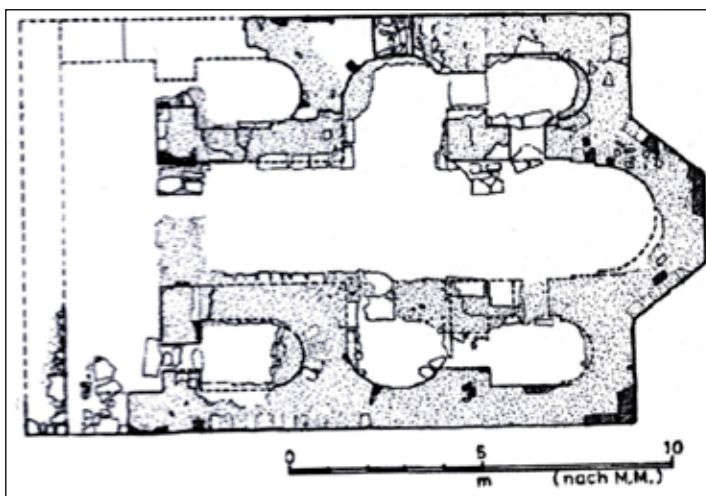
The found to the moment churches with such plans and identical functions (martyrial, sepulchral and monasterial) raise the question of the Syrian settlers in the Balkan Peninsula. Except the architectural evidences, there are also sure epigraphic data for their presence in Odessus and Serdica. Namely they have built in the Balkans the richly indented one-aisled churches following the eastern samples. Only concerning Krupishte we have no data in the literature on their presence in the Roman and Late Antique. Is it possible that other ethnic groups, coming to the Balkans generally from the Eastern provinces, also to have built similar churches, established to the moment only for Palestine and Egypt? In our opinion, we may certainly determine the ethnos standing behind such churches, built for its needs, as Eastern, belonging to Asia Minor and the Near East, having in mind the discovered *martyriums* with similar plan

<sup>15</sup> It is established that under this church there existed an earlier one-aisle church or three-aisle basilica. See: Б. Алексова. *Епископијата на Брегалница: прв словенски црковен и културно-просветен центар во Македонија*, Прилеп 1989, 81-84. Т. Нацев. Конзерватоско-реставраторски работи на археолошкиот локалитет Кале-Црвена црква. *Зборник VIII*, 1998, 135-142; Т. Нацев. *Антиката во Бегалничкиот басен*. Штип 2013, 280, Пл.21.

<sup>16</sup> В. Иванова 1922/1925, 447, обр. 293. To the town of Zlatitsa, east and not far from Serdika (Sofia).

Fig. 6. The Red church at Krupishte in North Macedonia. Plan according to T. Natsev.

Сл. 6. Црвена црква у Крупишту у Северној Македонији. План према Т. Нацев.



in Egypt, Anatolia, Palestine, Syria and Armenia<sup>17</sup>. They are *martyriums* at the beginning, proved by the annexes in the Eastern Church part in the Ivanyane church No 2, and possibly in the Red church of Kale and in Golem grad in Prespa. The annexes in the western part were towers and, judging on the ground of Djanavar tepe – as *baptisteriums*, which may be also the case with some other churches of the type. It is quite possible that namely by the sea routes (the Aegean Sea, the Marmara one and the Black Sea) and some important harbours and artistic centers as Odessus and Thessaloniki, this unusual complex plan have been introduced in Moesia II, Dacia Mediterranea and Macedonia I. In the interior, concretely and Dacia Mediterranea, it has reaches obviously alongside the Strymon road from Thessaloniki to Serdica.

The next churches alongside the Upper stream of Struma have been found in the fortress Krakra next to Pernik and in the locality Koloto.

*The fortress Krakra at Pernik.* It is situated on a not so high rock plateau, on the hill Krakra, the name of Pernik in Antiquity and in the middle Ages on the right bank of Struma.

3. *Church No 1.* It was built on the highest part of the hill and was dominating over the other buildings in the fortress (**fig. 8 a, b**).<sup>18</sup> It was built of crushed stone, plastered with white mortar, and also used were blocks from earlier buildings (*spolia*). The length of the church together with the apse is 16 m, and the width – 9.50 m, with a semicircular apse, without a narthex. The apse is 5.25 m wide and depth 3.40 m. This church has the most interesting plan among the one-aisled ones. It is simple, with a nave and semicircular apse, without narthex. The latter had windows with flat glass. The *baptisterium* is built from the

<sup>17</sup> R. Hoddinott. *Early Byzantine churches in Macedonia and southern Serbia. A Study of the Origins and the Initial Development of East Christian Art*, New York 1963, 174; R. Krautheimer. *Early Christian and Byzantine architecture*, N.Y., U.S.A.: Penguin, 1986, 122-123.

<sup>18</sup> Според проучванията на това място се е намирал култовият център на тракийското селище през 4 в.пр.Хр. Виж: В. Любенова, *Перник*, I, 1981, 112.

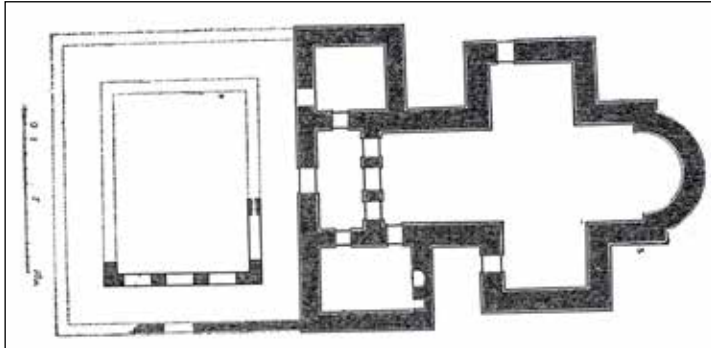


Fig. 7. The church in Klise köy (today the village of Tsurkvishte in Bulgaria). Plan according to V. Ivanova.

7. Црква у Клисе кои (данас село Турквисhte у Бугарској). План према В. Ивановој.

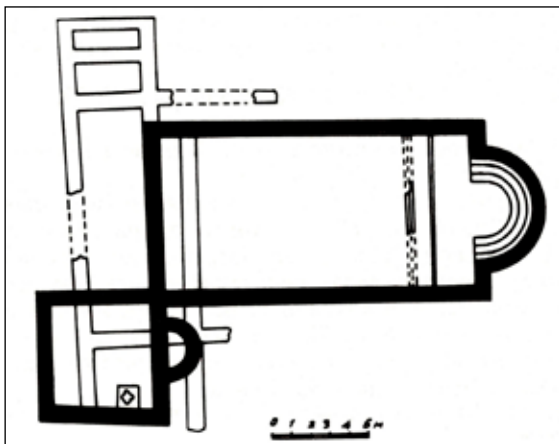


Fig. 8 a. Church N1 at the fortress Krakra in Pernik. Plan according to V. Lyubenova.

Сл. 8 а. Црква Н1 на тврђави Кракра у Пернику. План према В. Љубеновој.

outside, at the southwestern corner of the church. The eastern wall of the *baptisterium* is a prolongation of the western one of the nave to the south direction. The *baptisterium* is almost a square with irregular form, with a shallow apse attached to the eastern wall. The northern wall of the *baptisterium* is in fact a prolongation of the south wall of the nave. The piscine in the form of four leaves (conchs) attached to the south wall of the *baptisterium*. Inside there is revetment of bricks with dimensions 33x33x4.5 cm, plastered with hydrophobic mortar. A drain sewer is on the bottom with diameter 5 cm. The form of the piscine is repeating the one in the *baptisterium* of basilica No 1 in Mikrevo from the Middle Struma.

The altar is raised circa 30 cm over the nave's level, similar to the *bemas* in some Greek basilica<sup>19</sup>. One-step *solea* was leading to the entrance of the altar, plastered with mortar made of mixture of crushed bricks and *tegulae*<sup>20</sup>. The floor and the walls of the church are plastered in the same way.

The discovered fragments of small columns and chancel screen plates are made of white fine-grained marble belonging to the second building period, and

<sup>19</sup> J.-P. Sodini. Note sur deux variantes régionales dans la basilique Grèce et des Balkans. Le tribèton et l'emplacement de l'ambon. – *BCH* 99 (1975), 582-587; И. Досева. Ранновизантийските амбони от територията на съвременна България: образци и адаптации. – Ст. Станев, В. Григоров, Вл. Димитров (ред. и състав.). *Изследвания в чест на Стефан Бояджиев / Studia in honorem Stephani Boiadzhiev*. София: НАИМ-БАН, 2011, 139-160.

<sup>20</sup> A coin from 5<sup>th</sup> century was discovered in the debris of the altar. One more coin from the same time was found also outside in front of the apse (Љубенова 1981, 115).





Fig. 8 b. Church No 1 at the fortress of Krakra in Pernik, after restoration. Photo S. Petrova.

Сл. 8 б. Црква бр. 1 на тврђави Кракра у Пернику, након рестаурације. Фото С. Петрова.

after reworking have been used again in the iconostasis of the Early Medieval church<sup>21</sup>. It is quite possible that during the first building period the church to have a wooden chancel screen as in the basilica of Strumsko.

Two building periods can be traced in this church. During the first period from the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century<sup>22</sup>, it is one-aisle church with wooden chancel screen, one-step *synthronon* in the apse, without a narthex. A reconstruction has been done in 5<sup>th</sup> century in the second period, when it has received a baptistery; a three-step *synthronon* and stone chancel altar plates. On the ruined church No 1, a new three-aisle church has been built in 12<sup>th</sup> century.

4. *Church No 2 at Krakra hill*. The second one-aisle church, dated in 4<sup>th</sup>-6 century, was found north of the fortress wall, on the saddle (**fig. 9**). It is related to the one-aisle churches with simple plan<sup>23</sup>. Its apse is semicircular, with one-step *synthronon*, attached by gap to the wall. A narthex is from the west

<sup>21</sup> Любенова 1981, 116. The author supposes that the marble chancel screen has been made in the ateliers of Northern Greece.

<sup>22</sup> The church has been erected on the ruined building from the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century, whose remains have been overlapped by its foundation, being *terminus post quem* for the building of the church.

<sup>23</sup> The church is long 15.40 m, and wide 6 m. The narthex is 3 m long.

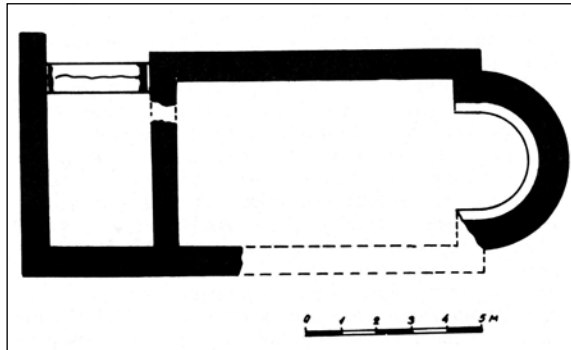


Fig. 9. Church No 2 at the fortress of Krakra in Pernik. Plan according to V. Lyubenova.

Сл. 9. Црква бр. 2 на тврђави Кракра у Пернику. План према В.Љубеновој.

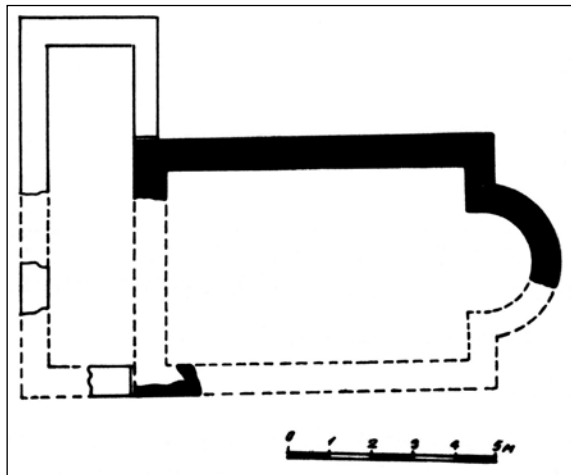


Fig. 10. Church No 3 at the locality Koloto at Pernik. Plan according to V. Lyubenova.

Сл. 10. Црква бр. 3 на локалитету Колото у Пернику. План према В. Либееновој.

with width less than that of the nave. Probably a subsidiary room, a *pastophoria/sacristia*, has been built in the northern part, made of ashlar plastered with white mortar.

5. *Church No 3 from the locality Koloto outside the fortress Krakra.* It is from 4<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 10). It is erected on a steep slope<sup>24</sup>. At the beginning, it is the usual church with one aisle and one apse, but later a narthex is added<sup>25</sup>, whose width is bigger than the nave, like in church No 2 in the fortress Krakra. The church is made of ashlar plastered with white mortar. The floor of the altar space is plastered with hydrophobic mortar. The enlargement to the north direction of the narthex is done possibly in order to differentiate the *sacristia* room serving the liturgy, or for the possibility of gathering more believers.

The finds from the Krakra fortress, dated in the period 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century, reveal in its basic part a foreign ethnical presence, different from the Thracian-Roman population in the fortress at that time. The researcher of the settlement from the Roman and Early Byzantine period offers two hypotheses explaining such materials. According to the first one the Barbarians have settled as masters here, while according to the second one there were trade connections between the Roman Empire

and the Goths. In both cases is concerned the period 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is established that most of the monuments (combs, fibulae, especially the ones with bent leg, buckles, earrings – concern the East German culture and ‘spread in the circle of federates’.<sup>26</sup> After its foundation, the settlement on the Krakra

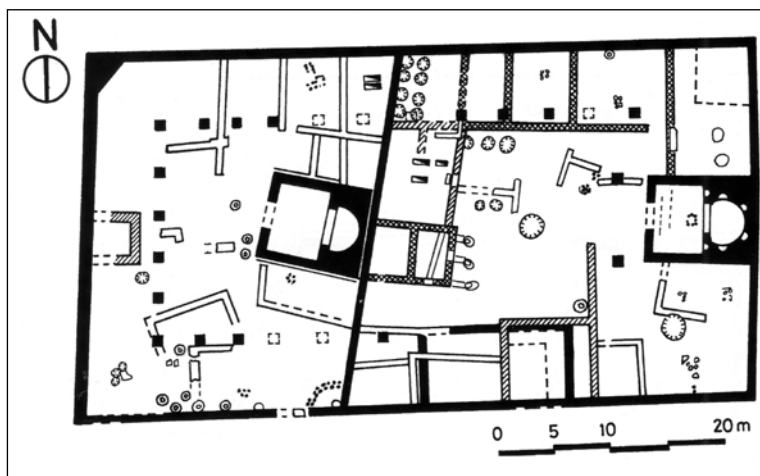
<sup>24</sup> It is separated from the hill Krakra by the steep slopes of the river. The dimensions of the church are: long 12.75 m and wide 4.65 m, width of the apse 2.50 m and depth 1.55 m. See: Любенова 1981, 120.

<sup>25</sup> The narthex is built of cut stone bound with mud. V. Lyubenova supposes its later erecting in the Medieval Ages. See: Любенова 1981, 120.

<sup>26</sup> Ал. Станев. Варварите край късноантичното селища при хълма Кракра – земе-

Fig. 11. The monastery at hamlet Arbanas near Radomir. General plan with the Western and the Eastern church. According to Pillinger et al. 1999, fig. 122.

Сл. 11. Манастир у засеоку Арбанас код Радомира. Генерални план са западном и источном црквом. Према Пилингер 1999, сл. 122.



hill grows into a town from 3<sup>rd</sup> c. onward, with many settlers from the close settlements<sup>27</sup>. The main occupation was ore-mining and metallurgy, supposing the settlement of Goths– federates, connected with the latter in the region, and generally alongside Strymon, as the settlement at the village of Dren and east of it – at the village of Popovyane<sup>28</sup>.

The one-aisle churches are spread mainly in the mountain areas. It is proved that they served predominantly to the population of not local origin. Concerning the churches with complex plans, these were the Eastern settlers, while when the plan was simple – the Goths-federates. The latter had left numerous examples of one-aisle churches on the hills of today's Slovenia and Austria. The most telling examples are the churches in the Alpine region of Austria<sup>29</sup> (in Globasnitz, ancient Hemmaberg and in Teurnia<sup>30</sup> etc.; in Emona, today Lyublyana and Tonowtsov grad at Kobarid in Slovenia. Some of the churches have annexes either alongside the whole northern or southern wall (in Vranje, Veliki Korinj in Slovenia etc.)<sup>31</sup>. The Gothic population was mainly guarding the roads and the strategical situated settlements with ore-mining, with trade of metal items like the ones found at the Krakra hill of Pernik etc.

делци, федерати, рудари? – *Известия на Исторически музей Кюстендил*, XV, 2010, 137.

<sup>27</sup> Любенова 1981, 195.

<sup>28</sup> Such settlement of ore-mining metallurgists was found in the mountain massive of Verila over the village of Dren, only several km southeastern of Pernik; also in Popovyane, from the northeastern side of the hill with the settlement in Dren. For more detail see: Д. Митова-Джонова. *Археологически паметници в Пернишки окръг*, София 1984, 74-76; Д. Митова-Джонова. *Късноантична керамика в с. Поповяне, Самоковско*. София 1977.

<sup>29</sup> F. Glaser. *Frühes Christentum im Alpenraum. Eine Archäologische Entdeckungsgeschichte*. Graz-Wien-Köln 1997

<sup>30</sup> Teurnia, the ancient Tiburnia, municipium, Early Christian episcopal center existing up to 610. Teurnia is the present-day region Karintia of Austria. See: F. Glaser *Teurnia: Römerstadt und Bischofssitz*, Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereins 1992 Ch. Gugl. *Archäologische Forschungen in Teurnia*, Wien 2000.

<sup>31</sup> F. Glaser 1997, 81-87.

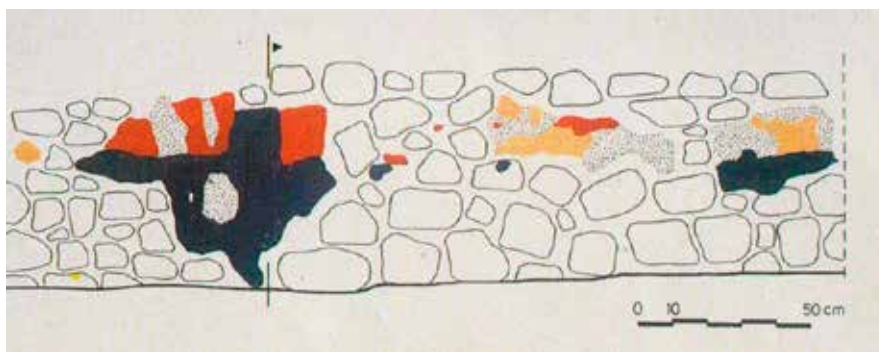


Fig. 12. Wall paintings from the Western church of the monastery at hamlet Arbanas near Radomir. According to Pillinger et al. 1999, fig. 213.

Сл. 12. Зидно сликарство западне цркве манастира у засеоку Арбанас код Радомира. Према Пилингер 1999, сл. 213.

#### The region of Radomir

##### 6-7. *Two churches in the center of crafts production at hamlet Arbanas*

The churches are found in the abandoned hamlet Arbanas north of the town of Radomir (fig. 11). They have been erected on the western slope of the mountain Golo burdo, close to the left bank of Strymon River. The researcher of the monument describes it as initial craft-trade settlement (*emporion*)<sup>32</sup>, but later has offered a new thesis representing it as a center for metallurgical production (1<sup>st</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century AD) and a pagan sanctuary from 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century, with organized production of votives and objects of everyday life. In the middle of 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the center has been destroyed, and on its place at the beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> century a fortified Early Christian complex has been built<sup>33</sup>. The coins found on the terrain reveal that the place was actively functioning in the time between 2<sup>nd</sup> and the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>34</sup>.

Two one-aisle Early Christian churches have been found, but unfortunately they are only preliminary published. In the preliminary report and the Corpus of Wall Paintings in Bulgaria it is announced that they have been discovered in a Roman and Late antique production complex for different crafts<sup>35</sup>. The churches are included in mutual space divided in two parts by a wall with direction northeast-southwest, forming two independent courts of different size. In each part a small one-aisle church has been erected, with slight non-coincidence

<sup>32</sup> В. Любенова. Античен търговски и производствен център край Радомир (предварително съобщение). – *Археология*, 1985, 3, 26-37.

<sup>33</sup> В. Любенова. Антични и ранновизантийски селищни структури от района на Горна Струма (по разкопки от втората половина на 20 век в Пернишка област). – *Римски и ранновизантийски селища в България*, т. II, София 2003, 198-199.

<sup>34</sup> С. Филипова. Провинциални бронзови монети от разкопките в махала „Арбанас“, Радомир (област Перник). – *ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΘΑΣΙΩΝ – Изследвания в чест на Иля Прокопов*. Фабер 2012, 513-537.

<sup>35</sup> R. Pillinger, V. Popova, B. Zimmermann. *Corpus der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Wandmalereien Bulgariens*. Wien, 1999, 94-95, Tafeln 50, 79-Abb. 213 und 214.

of its axis west-east. The northwestern corner of the western court has been consolidated additionally as triangle because of a slide or a serious damage of the wall namely there. Doubtless, this is the space of a monastery with two small churches.

The churches have been built in the third period of existence of the center. Each church is attached to the middle of the eastern wall leaving a big space – court to the west, surrounded on three sides by a colonnade equidistant from the walls of the fortified courtyards. In this way, the churchyard was shaped, which compensated for the small size of the churches. The existence of such a colonnade is evidenced by the numerous bases for the columns along the entire perimeter of each courtyard, better preserved in the western church. On both sides of the churches, immediately next to the northern and southern walls of each courtyard, chained rooms were built – the possible monastery cells.

The eastern church is better preserved. The churches are small, one-aisle, inscribed in almost square closed nave without narthex. The western façade is wall with a narrow door. The *presbyterium* is divided by a wide passage leading to the apse, the latter inscribed in the depth of a thick wall, like the apse of the Syrian type in the church of Djanavar tepe. The apse of the eastern church is in the form 3/4 of the circle (hors-shoe shaped), and separated by four half-round niches; two more niches are placed at both sides of the passage to the apse. There is a small altar in the nave in front of the apse. The apse of the western church is different from the one in the eastern church and is ideal half of the circle. Both churches have been decorated with wall paintings imitating incrustation on some places, with ornaments in others, and horizontal row with inscribed geometric forms (**fig. 12**). Better are preserved the wall paintings of the Western church, with a black plinth over which there are painted panels in white. The Eastern Church possesses partly preserved plinth belonging to two of the niches (among the first and the second one).

The dimensions and the plan of the churches suppose the presence of a wooden chancel screen. The niches in the space of the apse and on the eastern wall show that they may have been used as *proscomidian* ones. The niches alongside the apse catenary probably were instead of the sacristy having in mind the small dimensions of the churches and the lack of annexes.

In the Eastern provinces the dismembering of the apse is predominantly in three conchs, but by niches, and can be met from the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century mainly in the monastery churches of Egypt, later brought too to the monastery churches in Palestine<sup>36</sup>. It is considered that the apses in the form of triconch, has been preferred after the Chalcedon Council in 451 on Cyprus, in Palestine and Arabia<sup>37</sup>. The segmentation into six niches with half-round bottoms in the apse

<sup>36</sup> P. Grossman. Dayr Anba Shinudah, Aziz S. Atiya (ed) *The Coptic Encyclopaedia* Vol. 3, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1991, 726-769; P. Grossmann. Dandarah, Dayr Abbu Matta, Dayr Anbar Dakhum, Dayr Anbar Bishoi (Suhaj), Aziz S. Atiya (ed) *The Coptic Encyclopaedia* Vol. 3, New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 691, 706, 731, 740; B. Fr. Bagatti. *The Church from the Gentiles in Palestine*, English translation by Fr. Eugene Hoade, Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press. 1971, 314-316.

<sup>37</sup> S. Balderstone. *Early Church Architectural Forms: A Theologically Contextual Typology for the Eastern Churches of the 4th-6th Centuries*, 2007. Buried History Mono-



Fig. 13 a and b. The interior of the church at Gorno Gradishte in Mikrevo in Middle Strymon Valley. Photo S. Petrova.

Сл. 13 а и б. Унутрашњост цркве у Горњем Градишту у Микреву у долини Средњег Стримона. Фото С. Петрова.



of the church in hamlet Arbanas at Radomir probably is due to the influence of the local liturgical practice, as well as to the relatively small dimensions of the nave of the churches, with no possibility of forming the necessary spaces for the liturgy and the rituals according to the liturgical canon. It cannot be excluded the possibility that the niches have been formed in dependence of the monastery serving.

The apse of the eastern church has a horse-shoe form (as  $\frac{3}{4}$  circle), typical for Cappadocia. It can be met also in other church buildings from the period in the upper Strymon: the apse of basilica in Pautalia (Hisarluka) and the basilica

in Strumsko<sup>38</sup>. The nave of both churches is much shortened, and they are wider rather than longer. The churches are related to the end of 4th century and have parallels in Syria and Asia Minor. All these data prove that the churches belong to a small monastery, founded probably by monks from Egypt or some Asia Minor province at 4th century.

*The region of Pautalia*

*8. The church at the village of Dragoychintsi.*

It is found northwestern of Pautalia, today Kyustendil, on a height at the right bank of Dragoychinska river. The church is one-aisle, with one apse with dimensions 20x10 m. It is built of rude ashlar with rows of bricks<sup>39</sup>, plastered by mortar. It is connected with an ore-mining settlement, found at the opposite river's bank. The church is not published and nothing is known about the artifacts found in it<sup>40</sup>.

*The region of Middle Strymon*

*9. The church at Mikrevo.*

Only one church of the studied type is found alongside the Middle stream of Struma, namely at the village of Mikrevo (**fig. 13 a, b**). It is partly excavated, after treasure-hunter's digging<sup>41</sup>. It has been built again on the highest part of a fortified hill, called Gorno Gradishte, immediately to the western fortress wall. Its plan is one-aisle and with semicircular apse, without narthex. Its walls have been plastered with mortar from the inside, and the floor paved with bricks, with dimensions 50x50x5 cm. The inner dimensions of the church are: long 8.20 m and wide 3.20 m. It was built in 4th century of boulders, together with the fortress wall, and plastered with white mortar. It has been destroyed together with the fortress during the Barbarian invasions of the Avars and the Slavs at the end of 6th c.

*II. Alongside Nestos river*

Several one-aisled churches have been excavated in the area of the Middle Mesta. These are: two churches in the vicinity of Razlog, namely the so-called Painted church; the church of Saint Elias and the church in the fortress St. Nikolas at Bansko.

*The region of Razlog*

*10. The Painted church in Razlog*

<sup>38</sup> Н. Чанева-Дечевска 1999, 69 and cit.lit.

<sup>39</sup> These artifacts are found scattered on the terrain.

<sup>40</sup> В. Иванова 1922/1925, 429-582; Цв. Дремсизова-Нелчинова, Л. Слокоска, *Археологически паметници от Кюстендилски окръг*, София 1978.

<sup>41</sup> В. Петков, С. Петрова. Археологическо проучване на обект „Раннохристиянска епископска базилика“, с. Микрево. – *Археологически обекти и разкопки през 2005*. София 2006.

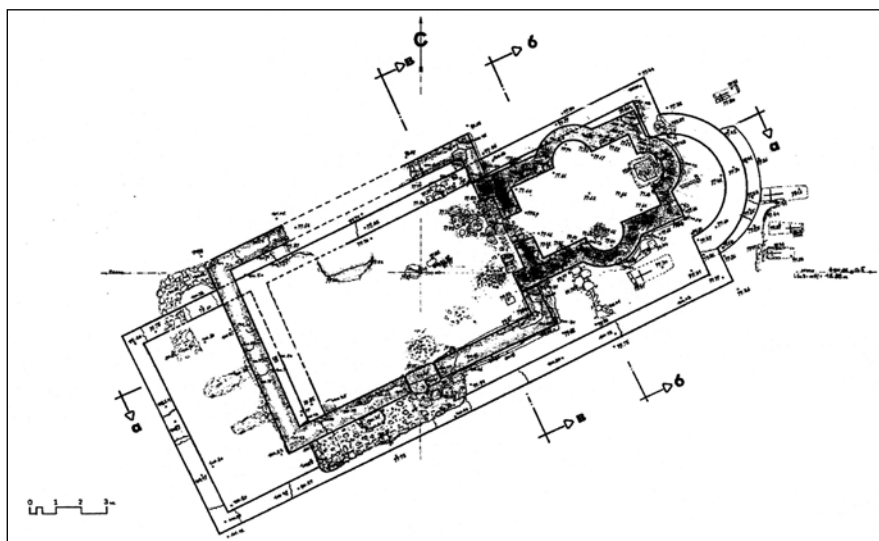


Fig. 14 a. The Painted church in the locality Betolovoto at Razlog. Plan according to Ts. Komitova.

Сл. 14 а. Живописана црква на локалитету Бетоловото код Разлога. План према Тс. Комитова.

The Painted church has been erected on a hill in the locality Betolovoto, in the skirts of the mountain Pirin in 5<sup>th</sup> century and destroyed around the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century. Its plan and type is the usual, one-aisle with narthex, and with a semicircular apse (**fig. 14 a**). The found details from the interior of the temple reveal that its altar belonged to the high type (**fig. 14 b**). The slab of the altar barrier is made of gray, coarse-grained marble. A Latin cross with flaring ends is represented on its entire face. The construction is simple, the profiled frame is missing. The capital is made of white, medium-grained marble, with carving typical of the fifth century. He completed the colonnade of the high chancel. A coin was also found among the ruins. A coin of Emperor Justin I (518-527) was also found among the ruins<sup>42</sup>. Here have been found also fragments of wall paintings with geometric and stylized ornaments. In the 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> century a small tri-conch church with a large court from the west, which was part of a medieval monastery, has been built within the Early Christian church.

#### 11. The church of St. Elias in Razlog

To 11 km northwest of the city are the ruins of an early Christian church known as 'Saint Elijah'. The church was built on the hill and belongs to the simple plan of early Christian churches – with a semicircular apse, without a narthex. Only the foundations have been preserved, which show that the church

<sup>42</sup> Determined by V. Mutafov: Forty Numia - Follis of Justin I, Constantinople, 2<sup>nd</sup> Officina - β. Obv: Diademed and draped bust of emperor on right, holding circular fibula on left shoulder. Ring inscription: [DNIVS]TI/NVSPAVG. Image enclosed in solid circle. Reverse: Large M, above cross, below β, on either side a large six-pointed star. In the section CON. Image enclosed in solid circle. According to: Sear 62.



was a solid building of impressive dimensions. Near it have the remains of a pagan sanctuary. The church is a part of an ancient and late ancient settlement in the Rila Mountain. It has not been studied or photographed; built near to the pagan rock sanctuary, and dated in 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century.

*The region of Bansko*

*12. The church in the fortress*

*St. Nikolas*

The one-aisle with one apse church in the locality of Saint Nicholas at Bansko has been erected at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> – beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is situated on the highest part of a fortified hill. The Early Christian church is built on the highest part of the hill St. Nicolas, where now is excavated the nameless town-fortress (**fig. 15**). The fortress is circa 4 km east of the town of Bansko. The foundations of the church were discovered occasionally in 2003 during building a new church.

The plan of the church is one-aisle, without narthex and one-apse, built of ashlars plastered by mortar, but now restored incorrectly<sup>43</sup>. In the medieval period, the nave of the church was extended in a western direction. A big necropolis has been unearthed around it with skeletons between 1.90 and 2 m in length<sup>44</sup>. The finds in the necropolis reveal the presence of a foreign ethnos to the local Thracian population: pottery typical for the Goths, settled in the valley of Nestos in the Razlog kettle at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> century; fibulae with parallels in Pannonia, weaponry, bronze buckles for belts with Christian inscriptions on them<sup>45</sup>, glass float lights, imported red slipped pottery etc. Here also Goths were guarding the frontier between the provinces Macedonia I and Rhodope, and the frontier between the prefectures Illyricum and Orient.

The same foreign population has built the close situated fortress Sitan kale. The settlement is placed on a mountain height and fortified by two for-



Fig. 14 b. A slab from the altar barrier, a capital from the high chancel of the altar barrier and a coin of Emperor Justin I found in the ruins of the Painted church at Razlog. Archive of the Razlog History Museum

Сл. 14 б. Плоча са олтарне преграде, капител са олтарне преграде и новчић цара Јустина I пронађени у рушевинама осликане цркве у Разлогу. Архив Историјског музеја Разлог

<sup>43</sup> The Church is built of ashlars plastered with mortar. Today it is additional re-built ('restored') on foundations made of boulders.

<sup>44</sup> В. Баряков. Археологическо проучване на обект Свети Никола в землището на гр. Банско. – Археологически открития и разкопки през 2007 г. София 2008, 452-454; Established are cultural layers from the Bronze age up to XVII<sup>th</sup> century. The researchers call the still unknown site 'the Nameless town'.

<sup>45</sup> Н. Шаранков.



Fig. 15. The church of the Nameless town on the hill of St. Nicolas in Bansko. Photo S. Petrova.

Сл. 15. Црква Безименог града на брду Св. Николе у Банском. Фото Петрова.

truss walls. The first row was defending the settlement in the lower part of the hill. The second row of the fortified system is a triangle fortress, with small gate (poterna) high inserted in the wall and with three towers. One of them has hollows in the wall for draining the rain water outside the fortified part. This was the headquarter of a small military unit guarding the road from the province Rhodope to the south to the province Macedonia I and the cities alongside Strymon (Parthicopolis and Heraclea Sintica, possibly also and the custom-house. In Sitan kale the population similarly to the necropolis around St. Nicolas in Bansko reveals its different ethnic belonging from the Thracian one. All these data and finds prove the presence of Goths-federates.

### *13. Church No 2 east of the fortress of Bansko*

A second Early Christian church was found east of the fortress. Only its eastern part has been excavated, and only the south catenary of the half-round apse is preserved, propped up against the rock. The southeast corner of the church has also been preserved. Like the first church, it was built of broken stones joined with mortar. The walls of the church have for the most part been destroyed and fallen into the ravine, sliding down the cliff to the west.

### *Conclusions*

The area occupied by Southwestern Bulgaria, was very specific in Late Antiquity from the aspect of geography, culture and religion. The two navigable at that time to its middle stream rivers Strymon and Nestos, accompanied by narrow fertile valleys and a little bit more widely opened fields are encircled by the highest and majestic mountains on the Balkans, also by a lower mountain massifs and usual hills. That's why the big city centers with a high culture have been founded at its skirts and in the plains, while at the heights were situated the small settlements, villages and fortresses, guarding the roads and passes to the rich South and Thessaloniki, the most important city of North Greece and Macedonia. In this city was the headquarter of the papal *vicarius* who has influ-

enced decisively the development of the official imperial Christianity in greater part of Late Antiquity. To the south at the boundary of Macedonia and Thrace is situated also the other important for the early spread of Christianity city of Philippi. Parallel to both rivers are passing the two main roads through which the tradesmen are moving with their goods, the soldiers sent on special cases, travelers and palmers to Jerusalem. Used actively are also the roads and realized too the cultural exchange in direction east–west to Macedonia II, the provinces in the Western Balkans and Italy. From northeast the next important contact is with the rich lands of Thrace and its cities with developed city culture. From east-southeast is situated the still less civilized, authentic and weakly inhabited mountain of Rhodope. The influence of the majestic ancient heritage is coming from Greece and the other Macedonian cities situated south of the studied area. At last, to the north is Serdica, the beloved city of Constantine the Great and place of residences of several more emperors.

Because of its geographic disposition and its natural data, also because of the intensive and constant cultural contacts, in the lands of today's Southwestern Bulgaria can be discovered examples of high city culture and architecture, and isolated and conservative rural ones. That's why the first official Early Christian monuments appear namely in Serdica (now Sofia), also situated in Southwestern Bulgaria. These concerns the *martyrium* under the basilica of St. Sophia<sup>46</sup> built in the first two decades after the Edict of Tolerance to Christianity of Galerius in 311 and the Edict of Milan of 313 issued by Constantin the Great and Licinius I. But although Ivanyane is now a quarter of Sofia, in Antiquity it was a rural settlement in its environs, in whose church No 2 the next *martyrium* appears after more than a century later from the first *martyrium* in Serdica. In the previously pagan rural areas the Christianity penetrates slowly and usually quite later in comparison to the cities. Nevertheless, it is logical to suppose on the base of the known churches with *martyriums*, that some of them, similarly to the church No 2 in Ivanyane, have sprung up from initial *martyriums*. Principally, namely in this is hidden one of the differences between the city and the rural churches–*martyriums*. They are rare in the rural areas, and in them we don't see the richness of relics in the cities connected with numerous worshipped saints and martyrs, whose churches were visited constantly by the crowds of citizen and pilgrims from elsewhere. The access to the small and modest churches in the high mountains is difficult they do not offer representative relics, impressive churches, and good net of roads, that's why they are not so popular for visiting in comparison. But the case with Ivanyane is different, and the only one so far in the studied area, since it is near Serdica, situated in the plain, and it was easy to reach its church–*martyrium*. This *martyrium* should be the only one not as modest as the churches in the mountains not only because of the closeness and influence of the capital of Dacia Mediterranea, but also of the whole rich plan of the type Djanavar-Ivanyane and the eastern settlers who supposedly have initiated its building and decoration. The Eastern Mediterranean is giving the most lavish architectural and mosaic samples of the martyr's plans and decoration.

<sup>46</sup> В. Попова. Хронология и стил на мозайките под Св. София в София. – Сердика Средец София, 2010, 161-169; V. Popova. The Martyrium under the basilica of St. Sofia in Serdica and its pavements. – Niš and Byzantium XIII, 2015, 131-150.

The second big difference is in the scale of the Early Christian architecture applied in the remote mountain sites. Here are dominating the small forms and the modest scale, and rare can be found a church with middle-scaled dimensions. Although the same techniques of *opus incertum* and *opus mixtum* are used as in the cities, the rural churches are modest and usually can accommodate a dozen of persons. These churches were serving a sparse population, for which the scale and the modest dimensions are quite suitable. A very simple plan has been chosen which usually is not changing, of one-aisle church, often without court or narthex, with a ridge roof or much rarely half-cylindrical ceiling, but always with a semicircular apse. This type is the most typical for Southwestern Bulgaria in the small sites and the earliest one to appear, serving the local Thraco-Roman population and the Goths-federates, guarding the two important road arteria, the strategical passes and the access to the big cities, mines etc.

The third peculiarity is that because of the lack of a court or a narthex, as well as of a second floor, the believers, men and women, are standing together in the naos, the only room for both of them, like in the secret period of the Early Christianity, when men and women were together in the domestic churches.

Having in mind that the only *baptisterium* so far is known only in the type Djanavara and from the bigger church in the fortress Krakra, we should put the question if we have enough data on the ritual of baptism, and how it has been performed, or to incline that the ritual has been changed. For instance, because of the severe cold climate with the northern people, the baptism was realized only by pouring water on the head, and not by sinking the body in piscine. If the *baptisterium* in the future will continue not to be present among the elements of the excavated churches, but instead cups and vessels will be found, the supposition of pouring water will be acceptable for the mountain small sites. For the moments we do not have any data on performing the other Sacraments and rituals. Ambo seems not to be possible to install in the interior because of the lack of enough space. In few only cases there is a synthronon, namely in the richer in architectonic elements churches as in the main one in the Krakra fortress, made either in the first or the second building period. Still in the publications is not described too any mensa sacra or altar playing this role.

What impresses is the fact that the small church has chancel screen of the high type, decorated from both sides. It is possible that at the beginning in the forest areas, it may be done of wood, and only later replaced by a marble one or made of another stone. The fact of its constant presence prove that the Eucharistic Liturgy and the other rituals have been performed by the guesting bishop, visiting very rarely such remoted sites, or by the chorebishop, the local priest and deacon separated from the believers in the nave, and go out in front of the entrance to the chancel only in the most important moments of the serving as the moment of Eucharist. Other architectonic elements also appear demonstrating that even in the simple type of one-aisle church changes were possible in the plan, the form, the furniture and the decoration. These were the raising of the bema over the level of the nave, the presence of the *tribelon*, *synthronon*, the chancel structure, the various decoration of the plates, and the two-faces of the apse (from inside as semicircular, and as three-sided one in the outside). More

of them are reflecting the decisions in the Greek Early Christian architecture, the cities of Macedonia, the leading example of Constantinople and the Syrian and Egypt churches and monasteries.

To the latter may be related the second type of a small one-aisle church of the type Djanavar-Ivanyane. It has one central nave ending to the east with apse, and two pairs of rooms at both ends. Each room is specialized in a separate function, including the baptism, and in the underground there are crypts connected with a *martyrium*. Two rooms at the front façades, facing the road to the church and the access to it, have towers for watching and for defense in dangerous times. This architectural type is multifunctional in spite of the small dimensions, very broken up as a plan, and sequence of the rooms on different levels. Its rarer distribution mainly in the Eastern Mediterranean from Palestine through Syria up to Armenia. It has penetrated into the Balkans by the sea routes with the Eastern settlers and their enclaves in some harbour cities as Odessus, Perinthos/Heracleia and Thessaloniki and further to Serdica and Ivanyane by the Via Diagonalis through Perinthos/Heracleia. The number of such churches is insignificant, since the foreign enclaves are also representing very small in their numbers societies.

For the first time is registered a very early for our lands monastery in the hamlet of Arbanas, on a not high plateau over the field of Radomir. The two monastery churches are unique for these lands, and again are due to the presence of Eastern monks who moved here. The small compact almost square naves of both churches reveal two different kinds of apse, the eastern of them with arcosolium and several niches used as proscomidian ones. But both apses are similar in reminding the Syrian type, formed and inscribed in the thick wall in such a way as if carved in a mighty rock. This is architectural tradition, connected with the black clergy, in dominating stone milieu, like in some regions of Egypt and Syria. It may be that some elements from the previous architecture of the pagan Roman sanctuary, such as the court, the colonnade at the perimeter of each part high walled, have been preserved in the plan of the monastery. But entirely new are the churches and the chain-like cells, while the walls strengthened and repaired. Unfortunately, nothing has been left from the liturgical furniture. It is unique that a metallurgical center of production has been transformed to a monastery existing for a short time, probably less than 100 years. It has perished during some of the Barbarian invasions in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The analyzed 13 one-aisle churches, of which two are monasteries, reveal its many functions. They may serve villages, small towns, military fortresses and small camps in the remoted and weakly inhabited sites in the high mountains of Dacia Mediterranea, Macedonia I and Rhodope. The only exclusion is Ivanyane, situated very near to Serdica in the field almost. The one-aisle churches are small almost domestic ones. Small is also the monastery. Only the main church on the Krakra hill of Pernik is a little bit bigger, dismembered and more decorated, as well as the type of Ivanyane of church No 2. The eastern settlers have appeared in the environs of Serdica (and Odessus) bringing with them a new architectural type, more complex, and multifunctional, including the baptism, also present in Krakra main church, but missing in all the other monuments so far. Adequate, the other usual functions are of cemetery church,

proved by the formed in this case necropolis around the church. The function of a martyrrium is revealed by the crypts and the practice with the second complex type Djanavar-Ivanyane to be erected over a tomb of a martyr. The last function is to use adequate plan to the adequate liturgy, which in the case of the Goths-federates may be determined as Arianic. But still the difference between a church of the Orthodox population and the Arians is not revealed because of the almost total lack of the liturgical furniture, except some chancel plates and elements. Still no mensa is known, no liturgical vessels published by the researchers and no relics. The decoration with wall paintings as in the monastery of Arbanas and in the Painted church of Razlog is too fragmentary and not telling.

All these different types of Early Christian architecture with small dimensions and small scale add to the picture of the development of the Early Christianity in the Late Antique period showing the dominating variants and decoration among the lower layers of society, among the local population, the foreigners-settlers or foreigners-soldiers in Macedonia I, Dacia Mediterranea and southwestern parts of Rhodope.

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#### ЈЕДНОБРОДНЕ РАНОХРИШЋАНСКЕ ЦРКВЕ ИЗ ЈУГОЗАПАДНЕ БУГАРСКЕ

У чланку је анализирано 13 једнобродних цркава. Налазе се поред река Стимон и Нестос у југозападној Бугарској. Ово је посебан простор у касној антици, који открива високу урбану културу у равницама и ниским ободима највиших планина на Балкану, и сеоску и војну културу у малим градовима, селима и тврђавама. Сама област је окружена са свих страна, осим покрајине Родопе, значајним за развој ранохришћанства у градовима Дакије, Медитерана, Македоније I и Тракије, са којима област има веома добру мрежу путева, трговачких и културних веза.

Највећи број једнобродних цркава налази се поред Стримона. Они припадају двама врстама: једноставним и сложеним. Само једна је из другог типа Ђанавар-Ивањане, са анексима одређеним као крипте-мртиријуми, две осматрачнице и четири просторије различите функције, са још једном - наосом у центру. Од осталих цркава две имају припрату и само једна крстионица. На основу плана и посебних архитектонских и литургијских елемената, који долазе из Грчке, Мале Азије, Блиског истока и Египта, успостављају се различити утицаји (директни и индиректни). Цркве су подигнуте да би служиле различитом по статусу и етничкој припадности становништву: појединим трако-римским земљорадницима, сиромашним грађанима малих места и страним насељеницима као Готи, сиријски трговци и занатлије, сиријски, египатски и локални монаси.

Неке од цркава подигнуте су за грађане у долини Стримона, као црква број 1 у тврђави Кракра у Пернику, када је мало место прерасло у град и већ добило епископа. Једини познати манастир са две мале цркве. Две цркве и њене апсиде се веома разликују од црквене архитектуре на Балкану и налазе своје блиске паралеле у манастирима Египта и Сирије.