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*Robert Mihajlovski*

ANTE PACEM AT HERACLEA LYNCESTIS:  
FROM CONSTANTINE TO JUSTINIAN.

*“Where therefore you yourself are in charge of the churches, or know other bishops and presbyter or deacons to be locally in charge of them, remind them to attend the church buildings, whether by restoring or enlarging the existing ones, or where necessary building new...”*

(Constantinus Maximus Augustus to Eusebius in Vita Constantini)<sup>1</sup>

The Egnatian Road, that was an axis of the Roman Empire connecting Rome with its eastern provinces over the Balkan Peninsula, played a major role in the Evangelisation and Christianisation of the Peninsula. The Roman Consul Gnaeus Egnatius after 168 BC built the Via Egnatia over an ancient road communication. On this artery of the Roman Empire also travelled the most prominent figures and some of the Holy Fathers of the Early Christian Church.<sup>2</sup> Before the end of the first century Ignatius the Bishop of Antioch declared that bishops were settled everywhere to the utmost bounds of the earth. In 110 AD, Ignatius was condemned to death by the Emperor Traian and then he was brought to Rome and executed. On his last journey he was taken over the Via Egnatia to Rome, accompanied by two other Christian martyrs Zosimus and Rufus. In his letters referring to the Early Christians Church communities en route, he wrote: “The churches received me in the name of Jesus Christ and not as a mere passer-by, for even these churches which were not near me on the way, have gone before me, city by city, to meet me on the way.”<sup>3</sup> The early

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, (d. 339), *In Vita Constantini*, Book II, 45.2-46 (Church buildings). See: Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, (introduction, translation and comments by A. Cameron and S.G.Hall), Oxford 1999, 110-111.

<sup>2</sup> F. O’Sullivan, *The Egnatian Way*, Harrisburg 1972; C. Romiopoulou, “Un nouveau miliaire de la Via Egnatia”, *Bulletin de Corrépondence Héliénique*, XCVIII-1974, 813-816; M.A. Charlesworth, *Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire*, Cambridge 1924, 118; J.P. Adams, “Polybius, Pliny and the Via Egnatia”, *Phillip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, ed. by W.L. Adams and E.N. Borza, Washington D.C. 1982, 269-302; P.A.MacKay, “The route of the Via Egnatia around Lake Ostrovo”, *Ancient Macedonia*, vol. II, Thessaloniki 1977, 201-210.

<sup>3</sup> E.E. Jacques, *The Illyrians-an ethnic history from the Prehistoric times to the present*, Jefferson, North Carolina 1995, 141; *Ante-Nicaene Christian library* (ed. by Roberts

Roman Bishop, Clement I (91-101), had a similar destiny and he was sent from Rome over the Egnatian Road to the Black Sea Peninsula of the Crimea, where he ended his life at Chersones as a martyr.<sup>4</sup>

The new Christian message early penetrated the regions of the Balkans, in Macedonia, Achaia, Thrace, Dalmatia and Panonia, and produced a number of local Christian leaders and saints: Jerome of Dalmatia, Demetrius of Sirmium, Nicetas of Remesiana and others. During the reign of Diocletian (284-305) besides the persecutions of the Christians, the Church showed the beginnings of a regular hierarchy.<sup>5</sup> Some of the late Roman emperors who promoted the new religion were from the Balkan provinces, such as Constantine the Great, Jovian, Gratian and Justinian.<sup>6</sup> Besides that, until the third century the Roman official religion held sway, with its local pagan cults and rituals, which were still carefully performed. That was the case at Heraclea Lyncestis on the Via Egnatia, which became a prosperous Roman City in the reign of the Emperor Septimius Severus (193-212) and was granted the status of "civitas", and was known as "Septimia Aurelia Heraclea".<sup>7</sup> Archaeological excavations in 1938, 1951 and 1968 uncovered the Roman bath, a portico with statues dedicated to the Goddess Nemesis and to the local Archiereus and Everget (benefactor), Titus Flavius Orestes.<sup>8</sup>

After the proclamation of the Toleration of Christianity in 313, or the Edict of Milan, by the Emperor Constantine the Great (312-337), Heraclea Lyncestis was noted as an episcopal see in 343, and had probably existed before that. Bishop Evagrius attended the Synod of Sardica in 343, among the sixty

and Donaldson), Edinburgh 1867, 143; C. Bigg, *The Origins of Christianity*, Oxford 1909, 99-114; R. Grant, *The Apostolic fathers, Ignatius of Antioch*, vol. 4, London, Toronto 1966; W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch, a commentary on the letters of Ignatius of Antioch*, Philadelphia 1985.

<sup>4</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, *Dictionary of the Popes*, Oxford, New York 1986, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Already in this period the clergy was distinguished from the laity and in the same time "Distinctions arose among the bishops according to the position of their cities and with particular consideration for the apostolic foundations of certain congregations. The synods, which were convened for many various reasons, served to unite the bishops as a higher rank." J. Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, London 1949, 126.

<sup>6</sup> M. Spinka, *A History of Christianity in the Balkans*, Archon books 1968, 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Papazoglou, *op. cit.*, 260, 262; J. Wiseman, "Heracleia Lynkestis", *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical sites*, ed. by R. Stillwell, New Jersey 1976, 385. Heraclea Lyncestis was probably founded by Phillip II, after his campaigns against the Illyrians in 359/8 B.C. It was situated on the small river Siva Voda, and on the northern slopes of the hills (mountain of Baba) at an important junction of the Via Egnatia. It was a strategic point guarding the passes between Illyria and Upper Macedonia and connecting the town of Stobi with the Egnatian Way. During the military campaign of Julius Caesar in 48 B.C. it was a military supply point and a main station between the Adriatic and Thessalonica.

<sup>8</sup> Papazoglou, *op. cit.*, 260, 262; G. Tomasević, "Portik so počesni i votivni spomenici", *Herakleja II*, Bitola 1965, 9-35; Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, 202-204. According to the historian Ammianus Marcellinus during the reign of the Emperor Julian (361-363) the old cult of Nemesis was renewed, but is called daughter of Justitia. The shrine of Aeasculap was again in use.

bishops, and signed himself as “Evagrius a Macedonia De Heraclea Linco”.<sup>9</sup> Nearly a century later, another bishop, “Quintillius Heracleae”, assisted at the Councils of Ephesus in 449 and Chalcedon in 451 as a deputy of Athanasius, the Bishop of Thessalonica, and signed himself as “Quintillius episcopus Heracleae Macedoniae”.<sup>10</sup>

According to the German scholar Tafel, another bishop named Dionysius also attended the Council of Chalcedon from Heraclea or Nicaea (a station on Egnatian way, westward of Heraclea).<sup>11</sup> During the first half of the fifth century in the Macedonian diocese of Thessalonica, the leading bishoprics were Philippi and Heraclea Lyncestis. Therefore, the city of Heraclea was rebuilt and the fortifications were strengthened or reconstructed. (*Fig. 1.*) The small basilica, “Basilica A”, was erected before the middle of the fifth century.<sup>12</sup> It was a single apsed church with a nave and two side aisles. The episcopal basilica stood in a complex, which also contained a baptistery and narthex covered with floor mosaics. A fine decorative mosaic in Opus Tessellatum paved the central nave and in the east was the sanctuary with a marble bema. This basilical church was damaged in the events, which took place in 479 by the Ostrogoths of Theoderic Amal. The contemporary chronicle of Malchus described the events in 479, when the rebellious Ostrogothic army led by Theoderic Amal (454-526) sacked Stobi and then moved to Heraclea Lyncestis. The unknown bishop of Heraclea

<sup>9</sup> Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, 273; R.V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon, A Historical and Doctrinal survey*, London 1961, 325,327-n.5; E. Honigmann, “The Original list of the members of the Council of Nicaea, the Robber-Synod and the Council of Chalcedon”, *Byzantion, International journal of Byzantine studies*, XVI, fasc. 1-2, 1942-1943, repr.1966, 34, 50; F. Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IXe siècle*, Paris 1926, 91; J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Consiliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, vol. III, Venice 1778, 45, referring to Thessalonica, an Apostolic Vicariate, and Philippi, Berrhoea, Dios, Stobi, Parthicopolis, Doberus, Cassandria, Edessa, Heraclea, Amphipolis, Serra, Bargala, Theorium, Lemnos and Thassos; G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. I, Padova 1988, 441; T.D. Barnes, *The new Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, Cambridge (Mass.) and London 1982, 262.

<sup>10</sup> A.J. Festugière, (trad.), *Ephese et Chalcédoine*, Beauchesne, Paris 1982, 669; Dvornik, *op. cit.*, 91; Mansi VI, *op. cit.*, 609, 952; VII, 161, “At the Council of Ephesus and the Council of Chalcedon were the bishops from: Berrhoea, Philippi, Stobi, Doberus, Cassandrea, Heraclea, Thassos, Serra and Bargala; C. Lepelley, “The survival and fall of the classical city in Late Roman Africa”, *The City in Late Antiquity*, (ed. J. Rich), London and New York 1992, 123-131; A. Wallace-Hadrill, “Elites and trade in Roman towns”, *City and the country in the ancient world*, (ed. J. Rich and A. Wallace-Hadrill), London and New York 1991, 241-270.

<sup>11</sup> T. Tafel, *De via militarii Romanorum Egnatia qua Illyricum, Macedonia et Thracia iungebantur*, London 1972, 38, “Dionysius Heracleae Lyncestidum concilii Chalcedonensis pars a fuit”; see also: Papazoglou, *op. cit.*, 269 n. 83, Hierocles mentioned in Macedonia Prima a small town of Nicaea with its bishopric.

<sup>12</sup> R.F. Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia*, London, New York 1963, 159-161; M. Čanak-Medić, “Ansambl na bazilikata “A” od ranohristijanskiot period”, Heraclea II, Bitola 1965, 35-65; B. Aleksova, *Loca Sanctorum Macedoniae, the cult of martyrs in Macedonia from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries*, Skopje 1997, 235 – 242; R. Krautheimer, *Three Christian capitals, topography and politics*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1983, 7-69; J. Harries, “Christianity and the city in Late Roman Gaul”, *The City in Late Antiquity*, (ed. J. Rich), London and New York 1992, 123-131.

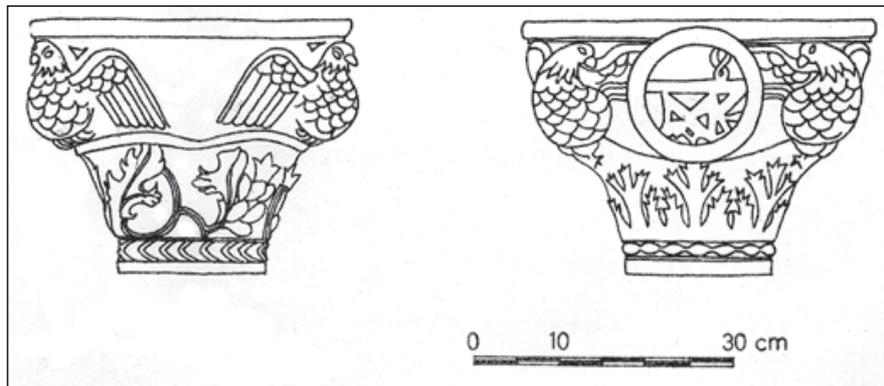


Fig. 1. The monogram of the Bishop John. (I. Nikolajević-Stojković)  
 Сл. 1. Монограм епископа Јована (И. Николајевић-Стојковић)

negotiated with them and then supplied the Gothic army with food, wine and gifts. But the horrified inhabitants took refuge at a distant “Refugium” near the monastery of Bukovo, when Theoderic’s Goths attacked the city, burned most of Heraclea and moved along the Via Egnatia, over Ohrid to Dyrrachion on the Adriatic coast.<sup>13</sup> Although Stobi and Heraclea were ravaged, they flowered anew in the era of Emperor Justinian (527-565).

Ecclesiastically, both Rome and Constantinople had ruled the territory of Macedonia. Towards the end of 379 Acholius, the Metropolitan of Thessalonica baptized the Emperor Flavius Theodosius I (378-395) In 380 Theodosius and his co-emperor Gratian issued the celebrated Edict of Thessalonica concerning the affirmation of the Nicene Creed over Arianism. The province of Eastern Illyricum, to which Macedonia belonged, was a region of contention between Rome and Constantinople. Pope Siricus (385-399) appointed the bishop of Thessalonica his vicar with a power to consecrate bishops in the dioceses of Macedonia and Dacia.<sup>14</sup> Thus on the Eparchial level, Heraclea and its Metropolitan of Thessalonica were part of the Roman Church as a Vicariate, a situation that lasted for centuries. The efforts of the Emperor Theodosius II in his Code of 439, to incorporate the Vicariate of Thessalonica into the Patriarchate of Constantinople were not successful. In 535 the Emperor Justinian with his Novella IX was more successful in reorganizing Eastern Illyricum between the newly founded Diocese of Justiniana Prima and Thessalonica. The Heracleian bishopric was

<sup>13</sup> P.J. Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332-489 A.D.*, Oxford 1991, 281; T.S. Burns, *A History of the Ostrogoths*, Bloomington 1984, 58-59; I. Mikulčić, “Some new factors in the history of Stobi”, *Studies in the Antiquities of Stobi*, vol. III, Titov Veles 1981, 205-223; Fedalto, *op. cit.*, 441; G. Nakratzas, *The close racial kinship between the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Turks; Macedonia and Thrace*, Thessaloniki 1999, 31-32.

<sup>14</sup> A.H.M. Jones, *The decline of the ancient world*, London 1966, 83-84, 259. “There was no canonical justification for his step, but the papal vicariate of Illyricum became a permanent institution and maintained the authority of Rome in this area, despite the fact that politically it came under Constantinople.”

incorporated in its former diocese of Thessalonica, which was under Papal authority until 732/33.<sup>15</sup> Some of the Roman Popes and their legates traveled to Constantinople over the Via Egnatia in the centuries when Constantinople and Rome were one Christendom. In 515 and 517 Pope Hormisdas (514-523) sent his embassy to Constantinople, and Pope Agapitus I (535-536) traveled to Constantinople, where he suddenly died on 22 April 536.<sup>16</sup>



Fig. 2. Fragment of the 6th century fresco painting from the Large Basilica. (R. Mihajlovski)

Сл. 2. Фрагмент фреско сликарства из Велике базилике, VI век (Р. Михајловски)

After the Ostrogothic invasions the city of Heraclea had an urban revival, including the erection of ecclesiastical complexes with luxurious basilicas decorated with mosaics. A large-scale urban development with fortifications was imposed. Already at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> and beginnings of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the "Large Basilica" was erected over the foundations of an older church building or a Mythraeum.<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 2.) Archaeological excavations have revealed several sections of the fortifications on the south and an Episcopal residence or monastery on the west side. The large basilica is a longitudinal building of impressive dimensions with a semicircular apse, supported by three buttresses similar to those of the Basilica "Extra muros" at Philippi. On the west side was added a large narthex flanked by side annexes. On the south side a Baptistry and a Catechumeneum paved with floor mosaics were built. Marble colonnades with stylobates divided the nave from the aisles paved with floor mosaics. Another three areas of fine mosaics covered the floors of the bishop's residence. The most valuable of the floor mosaics were executed in the narthex and in the northern aisle of the large basilica.<sup>18</sup> The narthex mosaic is rectangular, 21 m. wide and

<sup>15</sup> Spinka, *op.cit.*, 11-13; V. Grumel, "Les origines du Vicariat apostolique de Thessalonique d'après les premiers documents Pontificaux", *Actes du XII Congrès International Byzantine*, 1961, vol. II, Belgrade 1964, 451-461; D.I. Pallas, "Macedonia," *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, vol. I, Cambridge 1992; L. Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian church*, London 1924, III/125; Hoddinott, *op. cit.*, 73-76.

<sup>16</sup> G. Florovsky, *The Byzantine Fathers of the sixth to eighth century*, Vaduz 1978, 107, 134-135, 162; Kelly, *op.cit.*, 58-59, 52-54.

<sup>17</sup> G.C. Tomasević, "Mosaic pavement in the Narthex of the Large Basilica at Heraclea Lyncestis", *Heraclea III*, Bitola 1967, 5-73; Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, 179. The wide spread Mithraic cult had many underground shrines throughout the Roman Empire. The Mitraeum was in a cave at Rome, and in Alexandria the sanctuary was underground.

<sup>18</sup> G. C. Tomasević, "Heraclea", *Umetnickoto bogatstvo na Makedonija*, Skopje 1984, 72-85; G.C. Tomasevic, "Mosaiques figuratives d'époque Paléochrétienne decouvertes

4.7 m deep, and it is still well preserved. It has a broad rectangular border containing thirty-six octagonal sections, representing the aquatic world: fish and swamp birds from the marshlands in the area. In the longitudinal frieze ten different types of fruit trees represent terrestrial flora. Between the trees animal life is depicted in the form of a lion attacking a bull, a cheetah devouring a roe deer, and a dog (Cave canem) chained to a tree. But the central oval medallion has a symmetrical motif, symbolising the Celestial Eucharist (Heavenly kingdom) - a Cantharos with a grapevine, flanked by a doe and roebuck (the innocence of the Christian soul) and two peacocks (the bird of Paradise and a symbol of eternal life).<sup>19</sup> Part of the monastic building complex was the Bishop's residence with a well, triclinium and fountain, which are still preserved in Heraclea. Of that time a bishop named Benignus attended a Synod at the Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon in 553 AD. Benignus, who was a deputy of Euliyas, the Archbishop of Thessalonica, signed the list of bishops as follows:

Benignus ep. Heracleotanae civitatis quae est Primae Macedoniae,

Benignus ep. Heracleae Pelagoniae... or H. Pelagoniensis <sup>20</sup>

The title of Bishop Benignus - "Episcopus Heracleae Pelagoniae" is a result of merging both toponyms in one. But, already in Hierocles Synecdemus, Heraclea Linco was in the list of the cities in Macedonia Prima, and Pelagonia amongst the cities of Macedonia Secunda.<sup>21</sup>

The successor of Bishop Benignus was John or Pachomius whose monogram is preserved on a capital in the small Basilica "A", from the second half of the 6th century. (Fig. 3) The monogram contains the names: Pachomius-John,

a Heraclea Lyncestis dans la lumière de la cosmologie antique", *Actes du IIe Colloque International Vienne 1971*, Paris 1975, 385-398; Hoddinott, *op.cit.*, 160-161; Wiseman, *op.cit.*, 385. An inscription of Vinica Domesticus in the central nave mosaic was dated from the fifth century: *Vinica domesticus laboravit pro peccatis sui (s)*. V. Kalpakovska, A. Georgievska, *Zivotot vo Heraclea Lyncestis preku epigrafskite spomenici*, Bitola 2003, 92.

<sup>19</sup> G.C. Tomasević, "Mosaiques figuratives d'époque Paleochretienne découvertes à Heraclea Lyncestis dans la lumière de la cosmologie antique", *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des études Byzantines 1971*, vol. III, Bucarest 1976, 457-459; P. Srbnovski, "Podnite mozaici vo Pelagonija", *Les mosaïques Chretienne en Yougoslavie*, *Actes XVIII*, Bitola 1978, 47-65; H. Maguire, *Earth and Ocean; the terrestrial world in early Byzantine art*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987, 36-40. In my opinion, there is a possibility that the central large frieze, with the terrestrial world has a didactic message for the monastic brotherhood. The fruit trees represent human qualities and talents; the animals represent the human passions and temptations (chained dog and fighting). The representation of a chained dog has its pagan origins. It is a companion to man and indicates that all nonhuman forms of life are elevated and improved by the advance of human consciousness. The central medallion shows the Eucharistic and liturgical ideals of the Paleochristianity. The deer and cantharos could also refer to Baptism.

<sup>20</sup> Sellers, *op. cit.*, 325-327, The bishop Benignus was prominent at the council of Chalcedon and besides being one of the deputies he was invited by the pope in order to receive his constitutum. Then he was sent to the pope by the Emperor Justinian with a codex containing the cases of heretics and the instruments of their anathemisation; Mansi, *op. cit.*, IX 389; 190E; 173C; 194B; 197A-B; 262B.

<sup>21</sup> Papazoglou, *op. cit.*, 266.

and the title *episcopus*.<sup>22</sup> Recently, another inscription was discovered on the fountain/nymphaeum at the Main City Square of Heraclea, east of the Roman Theatre.<sup>23</sup> This inscription contains the name of Bishop John who had commemorated the thirty-five years of the Emperor Justinian I's reign. The fountain was built and inaugurated, celebrating the glorious reign of Justinian who reconstructed the damaged Heracleian city in 562 AD in the time of Bishop John. The whole monastic complex (the Small basilica, the Large basilica, and the Episcopal residence) was restored, preserving the spiritual importance of Heraclea or later Pelagonia, which was going to determine the name of the future settlement of Bitola or Manastir and the title of the Diocese: Metropolitan of Pelagonia.<sup>24</sup>

Another, smaller ecclesiastical centre was in the area of the village of Suvodol, nineteenth kilometres east of Heraclea. Its basilica was composed of a nave and two aisles, a single semicircular protruding apse with an altar-bema extending into the nave, galleries above the aisles and a narthex on the west. The longitudinal nave, measuring 15.60 m. x 6.20 m., was paved with stone slabs, but the bema possessed a mosaic floor in three zones. Fragments of pillars and a chancel screen decorated with Early Christian symbols survived destruction. This basilica has been dated to the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Sellers, *op. cit.*, 325-327, The bishop Benignus was prominent at the council of Chalcedon and besides being one of the deputies he was invited by the pope in order to receive his constitutum. Then he was sent to the pope by the Emperor Justinian with a codex containing the cases of heretics and the instruments of their anathemisation; Mansi, *op. cit.*, IX 389; 190E; 173C; 194B; 197A-B; 262B.

<sup>23</sup> T. Janakievski, *Docnoanticka mikrostanbena celina nad teatrot vo Heraclea Lyncestis*, Bitola, 2001, 19. I am grateful to my colleague Janakievski for his informative help.

<sup>24</sup> Tomasevic, *op. cit.*, 1984, 79-82; Papazoglou, *op. cit.*, 267; D.J. Geanakoplos, *Medieval Western Civilization and the Byzantine and Islamic Worlds, interaction of three cultures*, Lexington, Massachusetts, Toronto 1968, 28-33; A Poulter, "The use and abuse of urbanism in the Danubian provinces during the Later Roman Empire", *The City in Late Antiquity*, (ed. J. Rich), London and New York 1992, 123-131; E.J. Owens, *The City in the Greek and Roman world*, London and New York 1991, 146-147. In the sixth century Heraclea had a strong defensive position in a small area protected by primary fortifications. Of this a third was taken up by the episcopal basilica and bishop's residence, including some monastery buildings. It is possible that these buildings gave the name "Manastir" to the later settlements. As the population of Heraclea became increasingly Christian, so many of the buildings associated with pagan life became useless. Some were re-used as churches but in many cases the old public buildings were abandoned then ruined, or used as quarries for the new churches. Such was the Roman theatre, which was abandoned and its marble material was used for the large basilica. The churches were built in closer association to the local people whom they served and were scattered throughout the residential areas of the city, like the Basilica C "Extra muros".

<sup>25</sup> Hoddinott, *op.cit.*, 202-204,t. 56; F. Mesesnel, "Iskopavanja u mariovskom Suvodolu", *Glasnik Skopskog naucnog drustva*, Skoplje 1932, 912; Nikolajević-Stojković, *op.cit.*, 43-44, 90; Srbinovski, *op. cit.*, 58; S. Hill, "Byzantium and emergence of Albania", *Perspectives of Albania*, New York 1992, 43-48. Some basilicas and Early Byzantine churches in Albania show similarity to the Pelagonian Christian monuments. They are connected with the architecturally related churches constructed in the area of the Aegean Sea and southern Asia Minor. The basilica in Butrint, the marble capital from Dyrrachium, the church in Lin,

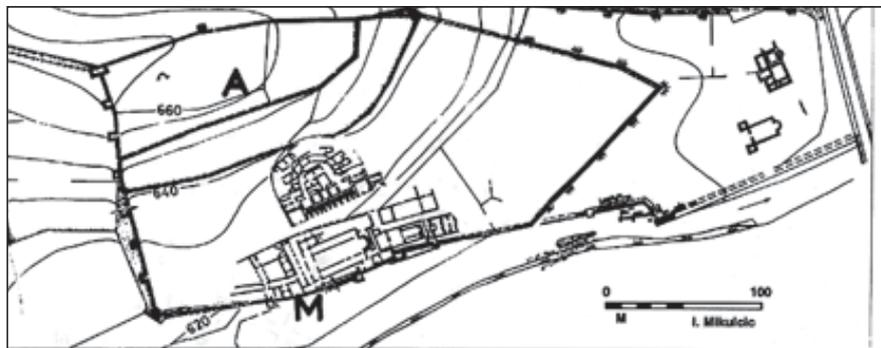


Fig. 88. Site Plan of Heraclea Lyncestis

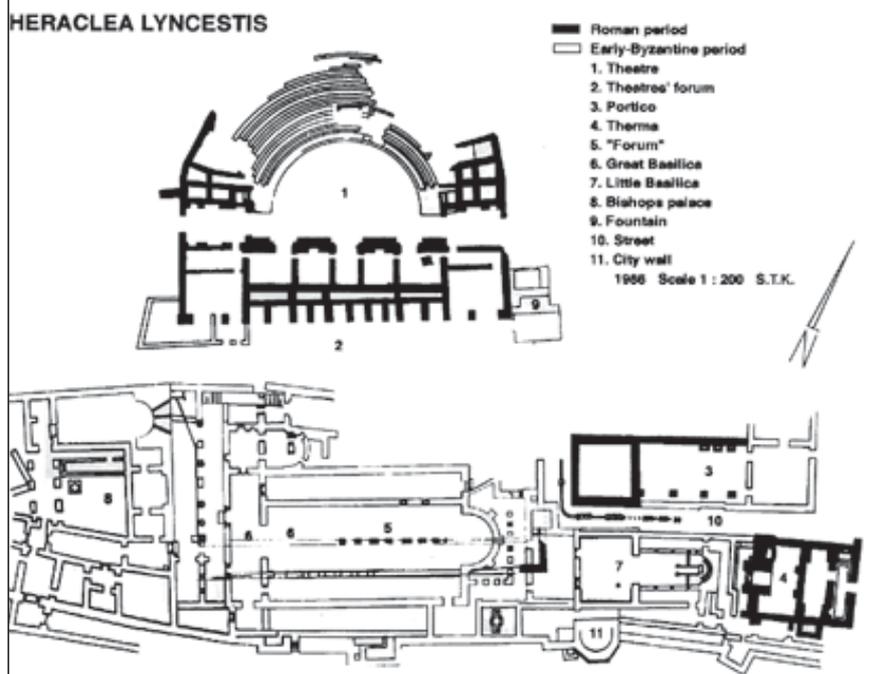


Fig. 3. Map of Heraclea Lyncestis (I. Mikulčić)

Сл. 3. Карта Хераклеје Линкестис (И. Микулчић)

After Suvodol, another small ecclesiastical centre was on the Egnatian way, sixteen kilometers westwards of Heraclea. It was a road station and military post, named Nicaea/Castra after Phillip II's victory over the Illyrians in 386 BC. This small settlement contained a Roman castrum, a square fortress with

and the triconch in Arapaj have numerous parallels in Albania and in Cilicia and Isauria (Asia Minor). There was a considerable diaspora of Armenian-Isaurian builders after the death of Byzantine emperor Zeno (479-491). All the above-mentioned sites in Albania are near the Adriatic coastline or on the Via Egnatia. Cilicia and Isauria in Asia Minor were the homeland of the group of itinerant architects and builders known as "Isaurian builders".

two rounded and semi-circular towers and some rooms that were paved with a mosaic floor. Stephen of Byzantium, Hierocles and Cedrenos mentioned the place as a minor episcopal see or monastery—a missionary post.<sup>26</sup> In the area another archaeological place was discovered with an Early Christian basilica, known as the “Basilica of Suvi Livadi”. Consisting of a nave flanked by colonnaded aisles, a semi-circular apse, and a narthex, it was decorated with floor mosaics. The central nave mosaic is outstanding for its combination of geometrical forms and an inscription of the donor Theodore who gave a contribution for the church in the hope of the salvation of the soul of his deceased wife, Artemia. In the eastern part of the nave a mosaic medallion with a cantharos and grapevine was located, measuring 2.85 x 1.80 m. In style it belongs to the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century.<sup>27</sup> In the same area, known as Caparsko pole, another Early Christian basilica was discovered in the archaeological locality, “Ramenska tumba”.<sup>28</sup> This basilica has a similar disposition to the one in “Suvi Livadi”, except for the additional narthex and annexes on the northern and southern side. Its floors were paved with brick.

Another church monument from the period was the basilica dedicated to the Dormition of the Holy Virgin at the village of Velusina. Today it survives in some parts as it was in the early beginnings. It stands on the south-eastern outskirts of the village, next to the ancient military station on the road of Via Egnatia, only eleven kilometres to the ancient bishopric of Heraclea Lyncestis. The medieval name of Velusina was a local Slavonic form derived from the cult name of Mother of God Velika Eloussa. (*Fig. 4*)

The oldest Christian basilica was built on the foundations of the shrine connected with the cult of the Great Mother Goddess, which during the centuries had a few different phases of building reconstruction and mural decoration. The earliest phase was “Constantine’s basilica” which was in use between the fourth and fifth century.<sup>29</sup> A fragment of marble relief with a representation of the Good Shepherd is well preserved, and can also be dated from the Justinian’s renovations. A figure of the Shepherd is entourage by his flock of sheep and goats. In the Early Christian times the Good Shepherd will indicate the joining of individuals to a Christian community. In the period between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the

<sup>26</sup> Papazoglou, *op. cit.*, 269; T.Janakievski, “Prilog kon prasanjeto za ubikacijata na antickata naselba Nicea – stanica na Via Egnatia”, *Macedonia acta arceologica*, vol. 2, Prilep 1976, 189-204; M. Fasolo, *La Via Egnatia, Da Apollonia e Dyrrachium ad Herakleia Lynkestidos*, vol 1, Rome 2003.

<sup>27</sup> T. Janakievski, “The floor mosaics of the central nave in the Early Christian basilica of Suvi livadi, near Bitola”, *Ranohristijanski mozaici u Jugoslaviji*, vol. XVIII, Bitola 1978; Srbinovski, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>28</sup> B. Aleksova, “Ranohristijanskiot period”, *Umetnickoto bogatstvo na Makedonija*, Skopje 1984, 110;

It may be possible that Nicaea, on the Via Egnatia had its local bishop in the period between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century. See: Papazoglou, *op. cit.*, 269, n.82, n.83, n.84.

<sup>29</sup> The ‘Constantine’s basilica’ was the model of the Christian imperial architecture,” The Christian basilica, which is the first great model of interiors solely from the viewpoint of perspective, carried arches and heavy, large clerestory walls upon its rows of columns.” Burckhardt, *op. cit.*, 227; M. Gough, *The Early Christians*, New York, Washington 1961, 137-141.

6<sup>th</sup> century the Shepherd' image altogether with Virgin Orans were the most popular Christian symbols. Justinian's basilica was composed of a single nave with side aisles. The communication from the central aisle to the subsidiary aisles and the narthex was entered through a triple passage--tribelon. It was a provincial replica of the basilicas of the Virgin Archeiropoitos and St Demetrius in Thessalonica,<sup>30</sup> including the examples of early basilicas that are in the nearby Episcopal sites of Heraclea Lyncestis and Stobi. It was a plain and simple building with a marble chancel screen in the interior. Its rectangular shape was carried well down into the central nave and topped by a marble ciborium of which a fragment was preserved. From the same period a marble capital was excavated in 1988 under the central nave pavement.<sup>31</sup> On the capitol two affronted birds and acanthus leaves were depicted in a bas-relief technique. It seems that the building suffered from the invasions of the peoples in the period between the fifth and sixth century.

The Early Christian world and the Eastern Roman Empire on the Balkan Peninsula began to crumble already in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, with the invasions and migrations of the barbarian peoples and tribes. Visigoths disrupted Balkan urban conditions in 378, the Huns in 447 and Theodoric's Ostrogoths in 479. After the year 500 the disturbing catastrophes included an earthquake in 518, which seriously damaged some of the urban centres. Then, came the Bubonic plague of 541-2, which was a terrible disaster of unprecedented magnitude, and other epidemics and catastrophes, which were recorded in 555, 558, 561, 573, 591 and 599.<sup>32</sup> The invasions, epidemics and economic recession badly affected the population and society of the Balkans and Byzantium. Life in Heraclea slowly declined. The Episcopal basilica was rebuilt in the early sixth century when the latest minted coins of Justin II are found. After that period monumental building activity come to an end.

<sup>30</sup> D. Pallas, "Le ciborium hexagonal de Saint-Demetrios de Thessalonique", *Zograf*, 10 (1979), 44-58. E. Kourkotidou-Nikolaidou, A. Tourta, *Wandering in Byzantine Thessaloniki*, Athens 1997, 153-173, 183-195.

<sup>31</sup> G. Filipovska-Lazarevska, "Arheoloskite naodi vo Bitola i bitolsko vo XII i XIII vek", *Bitola i vekovite*, 2 (1999) 9-20; B. Aleksova, *Loca sanctorum Macedoniae, the cult of martyrs in Macedonia from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries*, Skopje 1997, Fig 95a,

<sup>32</sup> C. Mango, *Byzantium, the Empire of the New Rome*, London 1980, 65-68,70; N. Cheetham, *Medieval Greece*, New Haven, London 1981, 15-16. In order to block the ways of access to Greece, Justinian's engineers constructed, according to Procopius, a chain of fortress across Macedonia and an impregnable bastion at Thessalonica; A. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity AD 395-600*, London and New York 1993, 159; A.H.M. Jones, *The decline of the ancient world*, London 1966, 261. Justinian built a city at his own birthplace Tauresium on the river Vardar named as Justiniana Prima and another one in Illyricum known as Justiniana Secunda. As a part of his reforms he detached the diocese of Dacia and the province of Macedonia Secunda from the Vicariate of Illyricum and placed it under the bishop of Justiniana Prima. On this matter Justinian ignored the bishop of Thessalonica and the Pope as well, but later he recognized the episcopate of Justiniana Prima as a papal vicariate.

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ANTE RASEM У ХЕРАКЛЕЈИ ЛИНКЕСТИС: ОД КОНСТАНТИНА ДО  
ЈУСТИНИЈАНА

Виа Егнација је била осовина Римске империје која је повезивала Рим са источним провинцијама, због чега је имала главну улогу у христјанизацији царства. На раскрсници овог пута налази се Хераклеја Линкестис, напредан римски град који је у време императора Септимија Севера (193-212) био познат и као "Septimia Aurelia Heraclea". После проглашења Миланског едикта 313. године од стране императора Константина Великог (312-337), Хераклеју већ 343. године извори спомињу као епископско седиште. Епископ Евагриус присуствовао је сабору у Сердици 343, где се потписао као: "Evagrius a Macedonia De Heraclea Linco". Један век касније, епископ Квинтилиус Хераклејски присуствује саборима у Ефесу, 449. године у Халкедону, 451. као заменик солунског епископа Атанасија где се потписао као: "Quintillius episcopus Heracleae Macedoniae".

Хераклејски епископ био је под јуриздикцијом солунске дијезе, која је била викаријат римског папе до 732/3. године. Малхусова хроника описује догађаје из 479. године, када су Остроготи Тедорика Амила (454-526) опљачкали Стоби, а затим се упутили према Хераклеји и Виа Егнацији. Непознати хераклејски епископ је покушао да преговара, снабдевајући их храном и даровима, да би на крају Остроготи опљачкали и запалили град, наставивши према Драчу.

У време Јустинијана (483-565), Хераклеја ће доживети урбани развој, када је саграђен и црквени комплекс. Крајем V и почетком VI века саграђена је „Велика базилика“ изнад старије грађевине, са прелепим мозаицима, посебно у нартексу. Из овог периода значајан је епископ Бенигнус који је био присутан на Екуменском сабору у Халкедону 553. године. Његов наследник био је Јован – Пахомиус, чији је монограм сачуван на капителу из мале базилике „А“ из друге половине VI века, као и на основу натписа на градској фонтани.

Још један црквени центар налазио се у Суводолу, 19км источно од Хераклеје, док је други био западно од града, на Виа Егнацији, познат као Кастра – Никеја. Трећи црквени центар налазио се јужно од Хераклеје, код села Велушина, где је била базилика посвећена Богородици.

Међутим, после 500. године, ова област је на удару разних племена, природних катастрофа, епидемија, као и економске рецесије која је тешко погодила византијско становништво и друштво. За Хераклеју и околину долазе тешка времена која подразумевају стагнацију. Епископска базилика је скромно обновљена, судећи према откривеном кованом новцу Јустина II. У годинама које следе замрло је монументално градитељство и замењено скромном урбаном структуром.

