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**THE NEW BASILICA AT GOLEMO GRADIŠTE, KONJUH:
A SIXTH CENTURY CHURCH IN THE PROVINCE OF
DARDANIA¹**

The archaeological site of Golemo Gradište at the village of Konjuh is located ca. 40 km east of Skopje in the Republic of Macedonia, within the administrative district of Kratovo. In Late Antiquity this heavily fortified but anonymous city stood near the southeast corner of the province of Dardania,² whose capital was at Scupi, modern Skopje.

The site consists of a long, east-west ridge or acropolis, rising 100 meters above the level of the Kriva river to a height of ca. 440 m above sea level; a broad, gently sloping terrace between the northern foot of the acropolis and the Kriva River; and a narrow and as yet unexplored area below the south side of the acropolis. The Rotunda, a unique Early Byzantine church, is located outside the fortified city, ca. 250 m to the south, and a small cemetery basilica once stood in an area of scattered burials across the river to the north.

The Macedonian-American project for archaeological investigation at Konjuh is sponsored by Gettysburg College and the National Museum of Macedonia in Skopje.³ Systematic excavation began in 2000 and has continued annually. The project is now co-directed by Carolyn S. Snively, Gettysburg College, and Goran Sanev, National Museum of Macedonia.

After several seasons of excavation on the acropolis, in 2005 investigations began on the northern terrace, where the lower city apparently was con-

¹ I express my gratitude to the organizers of the 2010 Niš & Byzantium symposium for their hospitality and for the opportunity to present our recent work at Konjuh.

² I am following the provincial divisions given by I. Mikulčić, *Spätantike und frühbyzantinische Befestigungen in Nordmakedonien: Städte, Vici, Refugien, Kastelle*, Munich 2002, 20-30.

³ Funding in recent seasons has been provided by Gettysburg College (through Research and Professional Development grants), the Loeb Classical Library Foundation, Dumbarton Oaks, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia, and an anonymous donor.

structed during the second half of the 5th century and substantially rebuilt in the 6th century; perhaps this urban renewal coincided with the construction of the fortress on the acropolis in the second quarter of the 6th century.⁴

Earlier investigators at the site had mentioned a large basilica on the northern terrace. Svetozar Radojčić visited the site at Konjuh in July 1938, having been informed about the Rotunda by Nikola Vulić. Although his article focused primarily on the Rotunda (and fortunately provides much information now lost), the investigator discussed the urban site of Golemo Gradište briefly, with mentions of the fortification wall, the “hermitage” on the acropolis, a bridge, the medieval church, and a basilica.⁵ His comments on the last object are worth quoting.

Od ostalih većih objekata koji neotkopani samo delimično strše iznad zemlje najvažnija je velika bazilika. Njene konture se dosta jasno naziru; po gomilama izlomljenog materiala u oltarskom delu vidi se da je unutrašnja arhitektonska dekoracija bila od belog mramora.

Of the remaining large structures that, still unexcavated, only partly protrude from the ground, the most important is the large basilica. Its contours are clearly visible; the heaps of broken material in the area of the altar show that the interior architectural decoration was of white marble.

In the early 1970s, Ivan Mikulčić visited and studied the topography of the site at Konjuh. His first description of the city and of the basilica appeared in 1973.⁶

U središnjem delu velike severne terase još se raspoznaju ostaci velike bazilike. Od vremena kada je lokalitet posetio S. Radojčić (1938 g.), pa do danas, meštani su iskopali i odvuikli najveći deo kamene plastike. Iz ruševina štrče još delovi par mermernih kolona i stubića. Po opisu meštana, izvadeno je i više oltarskih parapetnih ploča, ukrašenih stavro-dekoracijom. Prema konfiguraciji terena, naokolo leže temelji više drugih velikih građevina; tu je bio svakako centar grada.

In the middle part of the large northern terrace, the remains of the large basilica may still be recognized. From the time when S. Radojčić visited the site (1938),

⁴ For the excavations on the acropolis, see C. Snively, *Golemo Gradište at Konjuh: Report on the Excavations in 2000*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 56 (Washington, DC 2002) 297-306; *eadem*, *Golemo Gradište at Konjuh, Republic of Macedonia: Prolegomena to the Study of a Late Antique Fortification*, *Niš and Byzantium IV* (2006) 229-244; *eadem*, *Archaeological Excavations on the Acropolis of Golemo Gradište, Konjuh, Kratovo, Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 18 (Skopje 2002-2004) [2008] 335-351.

⁵ S. Radojčić, *Црква у Коњуху*, *Зборник Радова Византолошког Института* 1, (Београд 1952), 148-167; the quote is from p. 149.

⁶ I. Mikulčić, *Antički gradovi kod Drenova i Konjuha u Makedoniji—topografsko snimanje*, *Arheološki Pregled* 15 (Београд 1973) 179-182; the quote is from p. 180. Mikulčić published several versions of a site plan, which was also used in *Археолошка Карта на Република Македонија II*, Скопје 1996, in the entry for Konjuh, 184-185

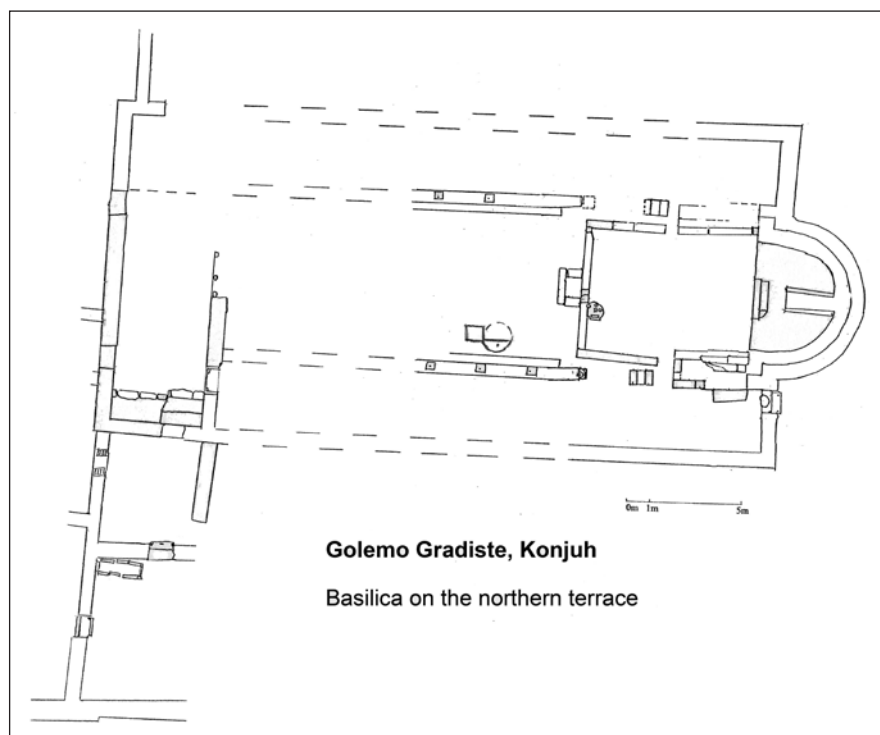


Fig. 1. Plan of the basilica on the northern terrace, 2010.

Сл. 1. Основа базилике на северној падини, 2010.

till today, the local residents have dug out and removed the the greater part of the architectural blocks. Pieces of a couple of columns and posts still protrude from the debris. The local villagers describe the removal of several slabs from the chancel screen, decorated with crosses. According to the configuration of the terrain, the foundations of several large buildings were located nearby. Certainly the center of the city lay here.

Naturally one of the goals of our excavations in the lower town was to find that church. Since it was no longer visible on the surface, however, and did not appear where it was shown on a sketch plan, we ceased to worry about it, having enough other questions about the city to occupy our time and attention.⁷

In 2008 a segment of curved wall appeared in the western edge of a trench; it was part of the apse of the elusive basilica. Limited excavation was carried out in the church during that season; the apse and the space east of the apse, the east end of the north aisle, and a section across the south aisle were revealed. Our plans for 2009 were to investigate the presbyterium and as much

⁷ For a preliminary report of the first two seasons on the northern terrace, see C. Snively, *Golemo Gradište at Konjuh, 2005 and 2006 Seasons: The Northern Terrace*, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 19, (Skopje 2004-2006) [2010] 375-389.



Fig. 2. Burial in Room 2; from north and above, 2009.

Сл. 2. Сахрањивање у просторији бр. 2, са севера и даље, 2009.

of the nave and south aisle as possible as well as to look for the west end of the church and thus to get an idea of its size and overall plan. The results of continuing excavation in the basilica in 2010 are described briefly in order to provide a complete description of the present situation. (Fig. 1)

The church located in the middle of the northern terrace is a three aisle basilica with a protruding semicircular apse at the east and a narthex at the west. Several walls extending to the west from the west wall of the narthex point to the existence of an atrium, not an unexpected feature of an intramural basilica, or other compartment. The length of the basilica from eastern apse through the narthex is ca. 33 m, the width of nave and aisles ca. 15 m.

The narthex, 4 m wide east-west, displayed two asymmetrically placed doorways in the west wall. An unidentified feature was marked off in the southwest corner of the narthex, while three steps in the northeast corner led up to a doorway in the south wall. Some evidence suggests that the floor in the northern end of the narthex lay at a lower level. A large patch of mortar and pebble pavement in the middle of the narthex, west of the central doorway into the nave, was the only floor preserved in this area.

Annex rooms were located north and south of the narthex. A doorway opened from the north end of the narthex into a room, of which only a 3 m long stretch of the west wall with a bench has been excavated.

A massive terrace wall running east-west ca. 12 m south of the narthex marks the southern extent of the ecclesiastical complex. Parts of three rooms

have been investigated so far in the space between the basilica and the terrace wall. The depth of deposits, up to 2 m, and the lack of disturbance by robbers' trenches offers good preservation of walls and features in this area.

The doorway at the south end of the narthex gave access to Room 1, ca. 4 m east-west x ca. 4,5 m north-south. A door at the south end of the east wall of Room 1 leads into unexcavated space to the east. In the southwest corner a patch of white mortar floor is preserved, and an opening or niche, once with an arch built of brick, appears in the west wall. A doorway in the south wall led into a second room.

Room 2 had larger dimensions, ca. 6 m north-south x at least 5 m east-west; the eastern end of the compartment has not yet been located. A cist grave occupied the northwest corner. (Fig. 2) The deceased was an adult male, probably crippled, and with a small bronze cross the only artifact found with the burial. This grave probably dates to a time when the basilica had ceased to function; other features in Room 2 also suggest post-ecclesial re-use of the space.

A doorway in the middle of the west wall of Room 2 led into Room 3, of which only a narrow strip along the east side has been investigated. A solidly built bench ran along the east wall, and an unidentified but substantial feature occupied the southeast corner. The dimensions of the compartment, ca. 7,5 m north-south, together with the features built into it and its location west of the line of the narthex wall, raise the possibility of a large room or even a complex of rooms located along the south side of an atrium or exonarthex.⁸

The eastern end of the south aisle of the basilica was completely excavated for a length of 9 m, and the northern side of the aisle near the stylobate is now visible for another 6 m. At the east end, debris from the walls, i.e., stones and occasional large blocks in mortary earth, filled the aisle down to a compact deposit of earth with patches of ash here and there, but no traces of a pavement were found. A doorway was located at the north end of the east wall of the aisle, immediately next to the anta. An unidentified feature, possibly a disturbed grave, appeared in the southeast corner, immediately to the south of the entrance. A small bench, 1,5 m in length, ran along the north side of the aisle, resting against the back of the south clergy bench in the presbyterium.

Between the anta at the corner of the apse and the bottom of a pier 4 m to the west, no trace of column bases or other supports was found. Beginning beside the pier and continuing to the west, a smooth gray-white mortar formed the floor of the aisle. Ca. 2 m west of the pier, a column base marked the beginning of a stylobate wall and a row of probably seven columns that divided the aisle from the nave.

The east end of the north aisle presented a strikingly different situation. The first 4 m of its length were filled with very heavy stone debris or, as we later speculated, with a deliberate stone packing, from the level of the preserved top

⁸ A row of rooms is found between the north wall of the atrium and a neighboring street in the Episcopal Basilica at Caričin Grad. Other examples of multiple rooms to the northwest or southwest of the narthex are seen in the province of Macedonia, e.g., in the Episcopal Basilica at Stobi, in the Museum Basilica at Philippi, in Churches A, B, D, and E at Amphipolis, and in the Episcopal Basilica and the Cemetery Basilica at Dion; and in Epirus at Sveti Erazmo, Arapaj, and Nikopolis B.



Fig. 3. Large ambo base (right, middle ground) and fragments of platform (lower left); from northwest, 2010.

Сл. 3. основа великог амвона (десно, централно) и фрагменти платформе (доле лево); са северозапада, 2010.

of the east and north walls down to the only floor level of beaten earth. Steps led down into the aisle from the doorway whose bottom was preserved in the east wall. The floor lay ca. 70 cm below the floor levels in the presbyterium and the south aisle. Excavation outside the north edge of the presbyterium revealed the base of a stone-built pier, similar to the one on the south side, and the imprint of a column base corresponding to the one preserved in the south stylobate. Further west, traces of a mortar floor, badly damaged by squatter occupation after the church ceased to function, have been found at a level similar to that of the floor in the nave. Complete excavation may resolve some of the unanswered questions about the east end of the north aisle.

In this basilica, whose total exterior width of nave and aisles is ca. 15 m, the nave occupies ca. 7 m between the north and south stylobates. After subtraction of the width of the north and south walls and of the stylobates, each lateral aisle has a breadth of only ca. 2,5 m. The present condition of the stylobate suggests that a low wall may have been constructed between the columns at some point; since screen slabs have also been found beside the stylobate, however, further study of the colonnade is needed. An unexpected feature was a row of nicely worked limestone blocks running along the inner side of each stylobate, beginning ca. 1 m west of the first column base near the west corner of the presbyterium. Ca. 0,25-0,30 m wide and probably no more than 0,15-0,20 m higher than the mortar floor of the nave, the blocks display no cuttings or other evidence of their purpose.



Fig. 4. Apse of the basilica, with partly excavated annular corridor and crypt in middle; from west, 2008.

Сл. 4. Апсида базилике, са делимично истраженим кружним ходником и криptom у средини; са запада, 2008.

The most significant discovery in the nave so far is the partly preserved base of a large ambo, beside the south stylobate, together with many pieces of the round stone slab that served as the floor of the platform, and fragments of the sculptural decoration of the ambo, whose closest parallels are from the ambo of the Rotunda.⁹ The evidence suggests that the large ambo in the basilica had only one staircase, on the west side. (Fig. 3)

In the apse of the basilica a narrow corridor, or *kyklion*, ran from one corner of the apse to the other. At its midpoint, it communicated with a crypt or tomb within the apse. Except for the crypt and the two or three steps providing access to the apse from the presbyterium, the inner part of the apse consisted of a solid stone and mortar built structure, which extended to the west 0,50 m beyond the ends of the apse wall. One or more stone slabs had once covered the top of the crypt, which was 0.90 m in depth. (Fig. 4)

In the presbyterium, lateral *synthrona* or clergy benches stood at north and south. The south one is better preserved; it would have blocked access to the apsidal corridor and thus appears to be an addition in a later phase to the presbyterium arrangement. The floor of the presbyterium, where preserved, was also of hard, gray-white mortar. Robbers' trenches, ancient and modern, had almost completely destroyed the base of the altar. The chancel screen base is completely preserved if rather battered in places; scattered pieces of screen

⁹ К. Петров, *Реконструкција на амбонот од ротондата во Коњуш*, Годишен Зборник на Филозофски Факултет, Скопје 22 (Скопје 1970) 271-302. See, however, L. Džidrova, *Art, Form, and Liturgy in the Rotunda at Konjuh*, Niš and Byzantium 5, (Niš 2007), 158-161.



Fig. 5. The presbyterium, with the base of the small ambo in right foreground; from west, 2009.

Сл. 5. Презвитеријум, са основом малог амвона у десном предњем плану; са запада, 2009.

slabs were recovered. The base for a small ambo is located at the west side of the presbyterium, just south of the entrance; some very fragmentary sculptured panels were found, and an nearly complete panel with a peacock in relief, almost certainly from the staircase of the small ambo. (Figs. 5, 6)

This situation, with a small ambo within the presbyterium and a larger one in the usual location at the south side of the nave, is extremely unusual. Only at Philippi were two ambos, one each in the presbyterium and the nave, found in both the Octagon church and the Museum Basilica. There is also a late literary reference to a similar arrangement in the church of Ayia Sophia at Thessaloniki.¹⁰

The presbyterium of the basilica at Konjuh is quite large. The length of the nave is ca. 23 m; the presbyterium (without the apse) measures ca. 7,5 m

¹⁰ For Philippi, see G. Gounaris, *Le problème de l'existence de deux ambons dans l'Octogone de Philippes*, Actes de Xe Congrès International d'Archéologie Chrétienne, Thessalonique 1980, Thessaloniki and Vatican City, 1984, vol. 2, 133-140, and E. Kourkitidou-Nikolaïdou, *Les ambons paléochrétiens à Thessalonique et à Philippes*, Corsi di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina 31 (Ravenna 1984) 255-275. For Ayia Sophia, see H. Bakirtzis, *The Urban Continuity and Size of Late Byzantine Thessalonike*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (Washington, DC 2003) 51-52. I thank Haralambos Bakirtzis for providing these comparanda.

Fig. 6. Stone slab showing peacock in relief, from the staircase of the small ambo, 2009.

Сл. 6. Камена плоча приказује пауна у рељефу, са степеништа малог амвона, 2009.



east-west or, with its entrance, ca. 8,5 m, and thus takes up approximately one third of the length of the nave. The lateral clergy benches extend north and south beyond the line of the chancel screen and across the line of the stylobate.

The corridor or *kyklion* in the apse is somewhat unusual although similar features are found elsewhere, primarily in the provinces of Macedonia, e.g., in Thessaloniki, and Epirus, e.g., in Basilica B at Nikopolis.¹¹ Its closest parallel, however, is nearby, in the Rotunda church at Konjuh itself.

The Rotunda stood outside the south wall of the city. Local villagers excavated the church in 1919. Although this central plan building differs in overall arrangement from the basilica, (Fig. 7) the very close similarities in sculptural decoration and in the features described below suggest that the two churches are at least roughly contemporary. As noted above, the Rotunda was visited, described, drawn, and photographed by Svetozar Radojčić, who documented the corridor and other features in the apse. As one of Radojčić's photographs shows (Fig. 8), a wall closed the west side of the apse; in the middle was a staircase, and the entrance to an annular corridor is visible at the south end. The corridor

¹¹ See C. Snively, *Apsidal Crypts in Macedonia: Possible Places of Pilgrimage?* *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 20, 2 (1995) [= Akten des 12. internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologie, Bonn, 1991] 1179-1184; *eadem*, *A Type of Underground Cult Place from Late Antiquity: How did it Function?* *Early Christian Martyrs and Relics and their Veneration in East and West*, International Conference, Varna, 2003, Varna, 2006, 163-172.

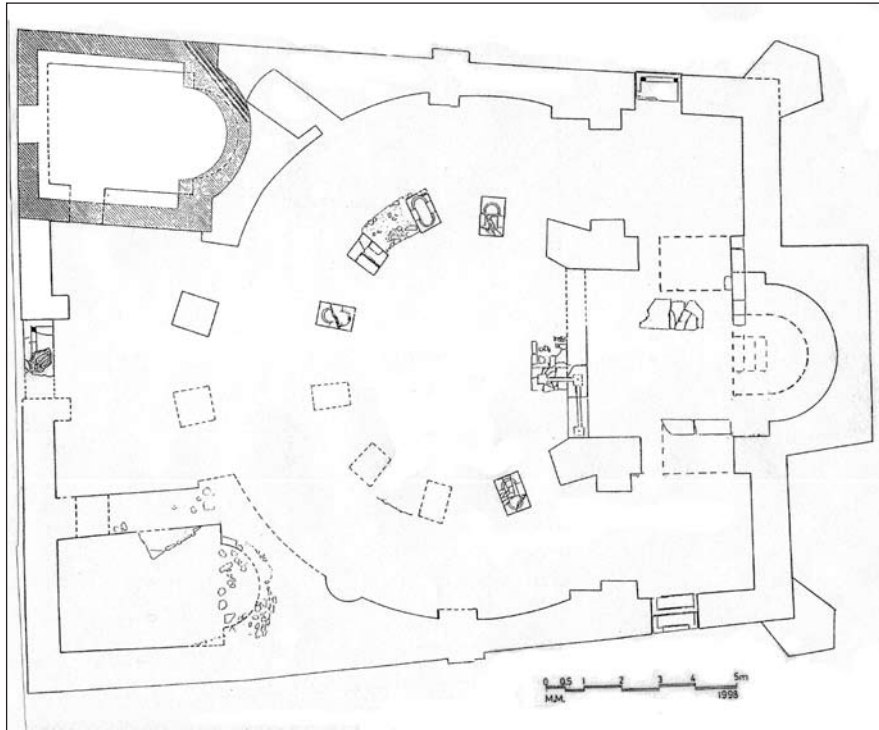


Fig. 7. Plan of the Rotunda church, by M. Milojević, 1998. The dotted lines in the apse and presbyterium indicate features that were preserved in 1938 but are no longer extant.

Сл. 7. План Ротонде, М. Милојевић, 1998. Тачкасте линије у апсиди и презбитеријуму указују на целине које су сачуване 1938.год., али више не постоје.

in the Rotunda was blind, i.e., closed at the north end. Similarities in the apsidal arrangements of the Rotunda and the basilica on the northern terrace include the small rectangular spaces at the ends of the corridor, the latter feature formed in both churches because the construction in the apse extends to the west beyond the ends of the apse wall. In both buildings, steps centered at the front of the construction in the apse led up into the apsidal space where, presumably, the throne of the bishop or presiding clergyman stood.

The situation at the east end of the colonnades in the basilica on the northern terrace is noteworthy. No evidence of a support between the anta beside the apse and the built pier 4 m to the west has been found. The first column base, at the east end of the stylobate wall, appears 2 m west of the pier, roughly in line with the western side of the chancel screen base; beginning from the center of that first column base, the intercolumniation between the columns is ca. 2.20 m. A number of churches, usually with transepts or pseudo-transepts, display a high and wide arch at the east end of the colonnade, but the pier that supports



Fig. 8. The apse of the Rotunda, from the west, 1938. From Radojčić 1952, Figure 12.

Сл. 8. Апсида Ротонде, са запада, 1938. По Радојчићу 1952, сл. 12.

the west end of that arch usually is placed near the west corner of the presbyterium rather than, as here, beside the presbyterium.¹² Probably the presbyterium of the basilica was too long east-west for a single arch to span its length.

The date of the church is 6th century, and probably mid 6th century, although the small number of coins and the extremely sparse ceramic material leave that date based primarily on architectural sculpture and the place of the basilica within the phases of building in the lower city. Evidence for more than one phase of construction has been observed. The central location on the terrace suggests that the basilica was the main church of the city, which we assume was the seat of a bishop.¹³

Ecclesiastical architecture in the province of Dardania is still rather obscure. It suffers from the usual problems of incomplete excavation and publication, so that a complete study of the churches of Dardania would be difficult at present.

The existence of two other churches in the southeastern part of the province should be noted. The apse and narthex of a three aisle basilica at Kostoperska Karpa, village of Mlado Nagoričane, were partly investigated in the 1980s.¹⁴ At

¹² See the examples of “pseudo-transepts” at Stobi and Philippi, discussed by C. Snively, *Transepts in the Ecclesiastical Architecture of Eastern Illyricum and the Episcopal Basilica at Stobi*, Niš and Byzantium VI (2008) 68-72.

¹³ Our hypothesis that the anonymous city at Golemo Gradište was the seat of a bishop and that the basilica on the northern terrace was the episcopal church has been challenged. Without engaging here in the debate about the possible ancient name of the city, I shall mention only that the existence of the Rotunda church and now of a fairly large basilica with complex liturgical installations points to the presence of a high-ranking and knowledgeable cleric in the city, presumably a bishop.

¹⁴ B. Georgievski, *Žegligovski Kamen/Kostoperska Karpa. Multistrata site*,

the site of Crkvište-Ramnište, village of Klečovce, where the customs station Vizianum may have been located, excavations carried out 2001-2004 revealed the contours of a basilica. A tribelon may have provided access to the nave, which appears to have been three times as wide as a lateral aisle.¹⁵

Several kilometers northwest of Skopje, near the villages of Orman and Čučer, three churches are known. At the site of Davina Kula, Basilica A had a single aisle, 21 m in length, with rounded eastern apse, a narthex at west, and a tribelon. The second phase has been dated to the 6th century. Basilica B, ca. 20 m, also had one aisle and rounded apse, but square annexes were attached to north and south sides of both the narthex and the east end of the nave. The eastern annexes communicated with the presbyterium and also had doorways to the exterior. At Konjušnica once stood another church similar in size (ca. 22.5 m long) and shape to Basilica B, with a tribelon between narthex and nave.¹⁶ A 6th century date for the final phase may be assumed.

The most obvious churches for comparison with those at Konjuh, however, are the two basilicas at Scupi, the capital of the province of Dardania.¹⁷ Basilica II, excavated in the 1970s, lay on sloping ground ca. 50 m below the Theater. This standard three aisle basilica is not well preserved, but remains of mortar floors were found in north aisle, nave, and presbyterium. The sloping terrain left numerous uncertainties about the south aisle and a possible baptistery near the east end of the aisle. The floor in the north wing of the tripartite narthex lay one step higher than in the central part. The size of the basilica, ca. 39 m in length from apse through narthex, its dominating position, and the possible baptistery led to speculation about it being the episcopal church of the city. Koračević believed that the church had functioned for a short time in the late 5th and early 6th century or perhaps had not been completed before its destruction by the earthquake of 518.¹⁸ (Fig. 9)

Further down the slope toward the center of the city, a second church was discovered in 2008. Basilica III is 53 m in total length, with an atrium and an unidentified space at the west; from apse through narthex the length is ca. 28 m. Many walls of this church were robbed out; the east end suffered most severely. The detailed plan published by the excavator makes it possible nevertheless to reconstruct many features.

The atrium included three brick-paved corridors around a courtyard as well as a staircase that probably gave access to galleries. Cross-shaped, built piers formed the four corners of the atrium courtyard. The two eastern piers

Arheološki Pregled (Ljubljana 1987) 56-58; V. Lilčić, *Македонскиот камен за боговите, христијаните, и за живот по живот. Античка камена архитектонска пластика во Република Македонија*, Том 2, *Доцна Антика*, Скопје 2002, 606-607.

¹⁵ Z. Nikolovski, *Crkvište-Ramnište, Village of Klečovce, Kumanovo: 2001-2004 Researches*, *Macedoniae Acta Archaeologica* 18 (Skopje 2008) 323-333.

¹⁶ Lilčić 2002, *op. cit.*, 640-645, 650-661.

¹⁷ For episcopal activity in Dardania, see M. Haxhimihali, *La hiérarchie religieuse des Provinces d'Épire et de la Dardanie face à la rivalité entre Rome et Constantinople en Illyricum*, in *L'Illyrie méridionale et l'Épire dans l'Antiquité*. 3, Actes du 3e colloque international de Chantilly (16-19 octobre 1996), Pierre Cabanes, ed., Paris, 1999, 305-312.

¹⁸ D. Koračević, *Scupi. Градска Територија*, Скопје 2002, 124-136.

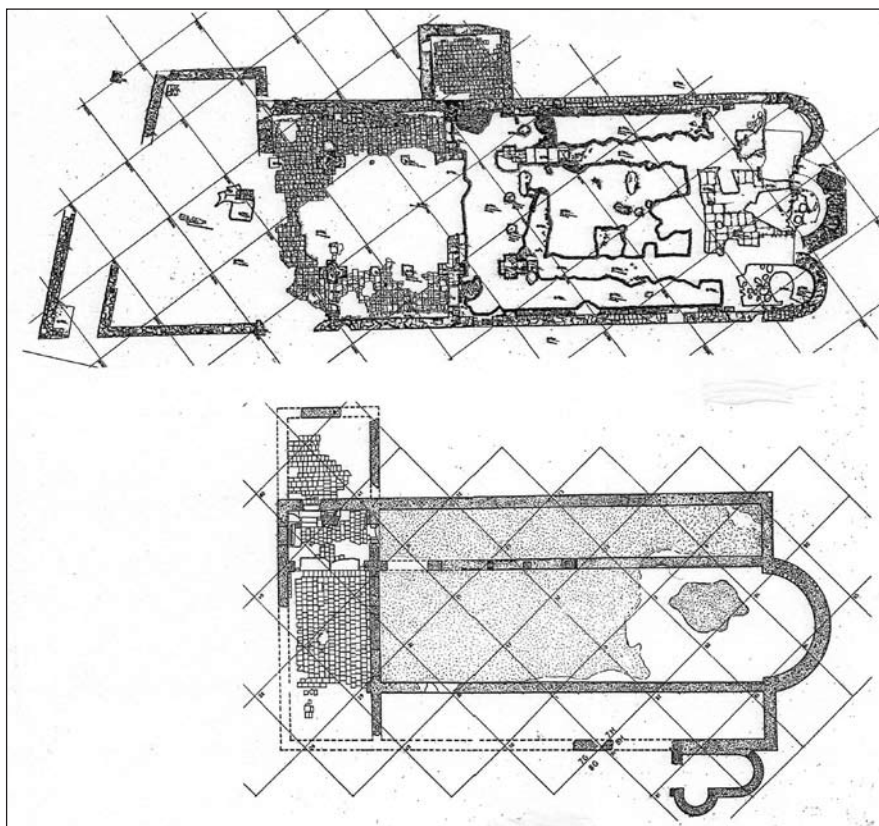


Fig. 9. Plans of Basilicas III (above) and II (below) at Scupi; from Koračević 2002, 125, and Ončevska-Todorovska 2009, 112, respectively. (The grid has 5 meter squares.)

Сл. 9. Планови базилика III (горе) и II (испод) на Скупи, по Корачевићу 2002, 125, и Ончевска-Тодоровска 2009, 112, у низу. (модул је 5 м².)

were incorporated into the atrium/narthex wall where, together with similar cruciform piers at the west end of the colonnades between nave and aisles, they marked the tripartite division of the narthex. Doors restricted communication between the corridors of the atrium and the narthex, from which one could enter a square northern annex or a southern annex stretching along the south wall of the church. This latter compartment, the narthex, and the nave displayed mortar floors.

A tribelon offered easy communication between narthex and nave. Two columns decorated with crosses in relief may have belonged to the tribelon or to the colonnades between nave and aisles. Stone slabs paved the presbyterium, which occupied nearly one third of the length of the nave. Lateral clergy benches were tucked into the eastern corners of the presbyterium, and traces of a semicircular synthronon were observed in the apse. Basilica III had three apses; the larger central one was three-sided on the exterior, but the two lateral ones

were both semi-circular. Ončevska Todorovska, although with reservations, has dated Basilica III also to the end of the 5th or beginning of the 6th century, with destruction in 518.¹⁹

The situation in Scupi after the earthquake is being actively investigated by Ončevska Todorovska and others. But dating Basilicas II and III to a time before the earthquake on the assumption that no churches survived the earthquake and no substantial ecclesiastical structures were built in the post-518 settlement leads to problems.

The discovery of plain mortar floors in Basilica III and in the new basilica at Konjuh suggests that Basilica II was not unfinished and waiting for mosaic decoration at the time of its destruction. As far as Basilica III is concerned, the three apses pose the major objection to a date before the earthquake. Even if the lateral apses were added to the basilica in a second phase, they would still strongly suggest that Basilica III continued to exist long after the earthquake of 518.²⁰ Indeed an argument could be made that if any significant population continued to occupy the site of Scupi after 518, one or more churches would have been the most important buildings in the settlement.

The re-discovery of the basilica on the northern terrace at Konjuh and the simultaneous discovery of Basilica III at Scupi have focused attention on the ecclesiastical architecture of southern Dardania, i.e., the part of the province located in R. Macedonia. Among very preliminary remarks about those churches is the observation that they were generally austere in decoration. Floor mosaics have not been reported. Relatively little architectural sculpture was preserved in the basilicas at Scupi; the two columns from the tribelon of Basilica III each displayed a large cross in relief, and fragments of a perforated screen were associated with Basilica II. Elsewhere, with a few exceptions, the repertoire consists of crosses, leaves, egg-and-dart mouldings, and overlapping circles.²¹ At both the Rotunda and the basilica at Konjuh, the decoration of screen slabs and posts was limited to crosses;²² in contrast, the ambos displayed rich figural and geometric panels.

The dating of some churches is uncertain or disputed, but the probably mid 6th century date of the Rotunda and of the final phase of the basilica at Konjuh²³ appears to reflect ecclesiastical building activity across this small region during the 6th century. Although the three aisle basilica predominates, the building types include one aisle churches, single aisle churches with symmetrical eastern and western annexes, and the unique Rotunda.

¹⁹ M. Ončevska-Todorovska, *The Great Early Christian Basilica in Scupi and Early Christianity*, *Macedonian Heritage* 34-35. Homage to Blaga Aleksova (Skopje 2009) 97-111. The description of the stratigraphy provided by the excavator suggests that Basilica III will be extremely important in the discussion of the continuation of occupation at Scupi after the earthquake.

²⁰ The addition of apses to the lateral aisles is quite rare in this region in Late Antiquity; the Episcopal Basilica at Caričin Grad may be dated to the 530s, while the large church at Kale Krupište, of uncertain but definitely late date, provides the best local example.

²¹ The material is conveniently collected in Lilčić 2002, *op. cit.*, 605-668.

²² K. Petrov, *Ставродеcoration од Коњух*, *Годишен Зборник на Филозофски Факултет, Скопје 2* (Скопје 1957-58) 31-45.

²³ Whose date we expect to refine with continued excavation and with analysis of the ceramic and other finds.

Before the re-discovery and investigation of the basilica on the terrace, when the Rotunda was the only large church known from the site of Golemo Gradište, it could be considered a solitary anomaly, with its unusual central plan, blind annular corridor in the apse, and tantalizing bits of figural sculpture. The excavation of the basilica, however, with a similar apsidal arrangement, more fragments of sculpture, and the extremely rare situation of two ambos, suggests that the anonymous city at Konjuh for reasons that may never be known experienced a sophisticated liturgical development unparalleled in the surrounding region.

Каролин С. Снајвли

НОВА БАЗИЛИКА НА ЛОКАЛИТЕТУ ГОЛЕМО ГРАДИШТЕ, КОЊУХ:
ЦРКВА ИЗ VI ВЕКА У ПОКРАЈИНИ ДАРДАНИЈИ

Током сезонских ископавања 2008. године на касноантичком налазишту Големо Градиште у селу Коњух, спроведених у организацији међународног пројекта под покровитељством Гетисбург Колеца и музеја Македоније, хришћанска базилика постаје видљива на северној падини терена. Црква, чије су постојање ранији истраживачи укратко споменули, била је истраживана током кампања 2008, 2009 и 2010. године и откривени су: нартекс, јужни анекси, апсида са источним делом наоса и бродови.

Тробродна базилика је 33м дужине од апсиде до нартекса; наос са бродовима су 15м ширине. Она нуди више необичних карактеристика, на пример, кружни ходник и крипту или гробницу у апсиди, малу основу амвона у презвитеријуму, и већу основу амвона на јужној страни наоса. Основа великог саграђеног зида је сачувана на линији стилобата северно и јужно од презвитеријума. Близу западних углова презвитеријума, стилобатни зидови са колоном база стубова на лицу места деле широки наос од уског дела брода. Основа олтарске преграде која је константована ван презвитеријума очувана је у траговима, заједно са остацима бочних клупа за свештенике на северној и јужној страни презвитеријума.

Нартекс (15x4м), приказује два асиметрично постављена улаза у западном зиду. Зидови који се протежу западно од тог зида наговештавају присуство атријума или других простора. Улаз на северном крају припрате води ка анексу, још увек неистраженом. Улаз на јужном крају даје приступ комплексу од три или више анекса, од којих је само један потпуно истражен. Гроб типа "циста" је пронађен у другом анексу. Масивни зид означава јужну ивицу црквеног комплекса.

Нова базилика показује сличности, како у уређењу апсидалног простора тако и на олакшаној рељефној декорацији за амвон, са црквом Ротондом лоцираном око 200м јужно од градског утврђења. Ископана 1919. године од стране локалних сељана, Ротонда је најпознатија грађевина на локалитету; нажалост, многе њене особености које су биле видљиве ранијих година више не постоје. Обе, и Ротунда и базилика, на терену се могу датовати у VI век, вероватно до средине века.

Остале цркве у овом делу касноантичке провинције Дарданије укључују делимично истражене базилике у селу Клечовце и у Костоперској Карпи (Младо Нагоричине) и једнобродне цркве у близини села Орман и Чучер. Најбоље поређење за грађевине на Коњуху су две тробродне базилике у Скупи, престоници Дарданије. Базилика II, ископана 1970. године, није добро очувана. Базилика III, откривена 2008. године, пружа обиље занимљивих детаља који укључују три источне апсиде. Очито да црквена архитектура Дарданије чека на детаљну студију.

