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ЖИВОТ В ПРЕХОД НА РИМСКАТА ГРАНИЦА:

ДОЛНИЯТ ДУНАВ ПРЕЗ IV-VII ВЕК



LIFE IN TRANSITION ON THE ROMAN BORDER:

THE LOWER DANUBE, 4TH-7TH CENTURIES

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ТОЗИ СБОРНИК Е РЕЗУЛТАТ ОТ ДЕЙНОСТИТЕ, ОСЪЩЕСТВЕНИ В РАМКИТЕ НА ВТОРИЯ ЕТАН НА НАУЧНО-ИЗСЛЕДОВАТЕЛСКИ ПРОЕКТ НА ТЕМА: „ГРАНИЦИ И КУЛТУРНИ МОДЕЛИ: ЕЗИЧЕСТВО VS ХРИСТИЯНСТВО В КОНТАКТНАТА ЗОНА НА ДУНАВСКИЯ ЛИМЕС (МАЛКА СКИТИЯ И ВТОРА МИЗИЯ ПРЕЗ IV–VII В.)“, ФИНАНСИРАН ЧРЕЗ „КОНКУРС ЗА ФИНАНСИРАНЕ НА ФУНДАМЕНТАЛНИ НАУЧНИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ – 2021“ ОТ ФОНД „НАУЧНИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ“ НА МОН ПО ДОГОВОР № КП-06-Н60/10 ОТ 17.11.2021 Г. ФОНДЪТ НЕ НОСИ ОТГОВОРНОСТ ЗА СЪДЪРЖАНИЕТО НА ДОКЛАДИТЕ, ПРЕДСТАВЕНИ НА НАУЧНИЯ ФОРУМ, КАКТО И ЗА СЪДЪРЖАНИЕТО НА РЕКЛАМНИТЕ И ДРУГИ МАТЕРИАЛИ ЗА НЕГО.



В ТОЗИ ТОМ ОТ ГОДИШНИКА НА СОФИЙСКИЯ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ „СВЕТИ КЛИМЕНТ ОХРИДСКИ“, ЦЕНТЪР ЗА СЛАВЯНО-ВИЗАНТИЙСКИ ПРОУЧВАНИЯ „ПРОФ. ИВАН ДУЙЧЕВ“, СА СЪБРАНИ ПРИНОСНИ ТЕКСТОВЕ НА ЧЛЕНОВЕТЕ НА НАУЧНИЯ КОЛЕКТИВ НА ПРОЕКТА, КАКТО И НА ДРУГИ УЧЕНИ ОТ СТРАНАТА И ОТ ЧУЖБИНА, КОИТО БЯХА ПРЕДСТАВЕНИ В РАМКИТЕ НА ОРГАНИЗИРАНА МЕЖДУНАРОДНА КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ НА ТЕМА: „ЖИВОТ В ПРЕХОД НА РИМСКАТА ГРАНИЦА: ДОЛНИЯТ ДУНАВ ПРЕЗ IV–VII ВЕК“, ПРОВЕДЕНА В СУ „СВ. КЛИМЕНТ ОХРИДСКИ“ НА 10–12 АПРИЛ 2025 Г.

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ON THE TRACES OF EARLY BYZANTINE BASILICAS IN BALCHIK¹

ALBENA MILANOVA

Abstract: Статията разглежда непубликувани ранновизантийски каменно-пластични детайли от архитектурната и литургична украса на църквони сгради от територията на дн. гр. Балчик. Те съставляват малък като обем корпус от силно фрагментиран материал, представен в съпътстващ каталог. Всички са изработени от мрамор. Някои са недовършени, което предполага (до)изработването им на място. Повечето са открити при археологически разкопки през 70-те и 80-те години на XX в. на укрепения хълм Хоризонт, но има и единични находки от Джени баир и Акропола на гръко-римския град. Въз основа на архивна информация (Архивът на К. Шкорпил в БАН и археологическата документация от разкопките в Балчик до 1990 г., съхранявана в Научния архив на НАИМ-БАН), съотнесена към безлите сведения от проучвания на румънски археолози от 30-те години на XX в. е направен първи опит за частично очертаване на раннохристиянската топография на един от големите градове в провинция Скутия в края на Античността. Закljučенията относно украсата и разположението на тези базилики надхвърлят частния проблем за ранновизантийската църковна архитектура в града. Те дават нови посоки за размисъл върху спорни въпроси, каквито са името и функциите на обширната късноантична крепост в кв. Хоризонт. Предполагаме, че в нея резидира не само военна, но и църковна администрация (епископът на Дионисопол), както и цивилно население.

Keywords: Early Byzantine sculpture, Dionysopolis, liturgical furnishing, openwork

In 2016, when I made a brief research trip to the Northern Black Sea coast of Bulgaria, I came across interesting openwork marble fragments kept in the Historical Museum of Balchik; they were, however, not an object of my direct interest at that time. My memory of them was revived after I have joined the team excavat-

¹ This text is a result of the author's research lead as a member of the project „Borders and cultural patterns: Paganism vs Christianity in the contact zone of the Danube *limes* (Scythia Minor and Moesia Secunda in the 4th-7th century)“, funded by the National Research Fund of the Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Bulgaria under contract № КП-06-Н60/10 / 17.11.2021.

ing the nearby Late antique city of Zaldapa, where identical openwork details are found in the basilicas 1, 2 and 3 (Аманасов, Йомов, Валеруев 2015: 423). A few years later, in 2022, as part of the activities of the Project entitled *Borders and cultural patterns: Paganism vs Christianity in the contact zone of the Danube limes (Scythia Minor and Moesia Secunda in the 4th–7th century)* funded by the Bulgarian National Research Fund (contract № КП-06/10-60/17.11.2021), I had the opportunity to work again with Balchik Museum's collection. This time I purposefully searched for and documented all architectural pieces that can be attributed to the early Byzantine period and a descriptive catalogue of them is added in an appendix here below². The catalogue is completed by the information that I have found in K. Škorpil's archives and the archaeological documentation from the excavations conducted between 1972 and 1989 and kept in the Scientific archives of the National Institute with Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. According to these sources, the most of the architectural fragments were found during the archaeological research conducted in the 1970s and the 1980s on the Late antique fortification of the hill now named Horizont. Few of them were found in the Acropolis of the ancient city and in the settlement on another, lower hill, named Dzheni bair. All are produced of marble and come mostly from Early Christian liturgical furnishing.

Thus, a series of subjective circumstances directed my interest to this modest in quantity and highly fragmented material, which however raises a key problem, namely that of the early Christian landscape of Dionysopolis. There exists an abundant literature dedicated to this significant urban center on the western Black Sea coast whose origins go back to the time of the Greek colonization in the 6th century BC³. Scholars deal mainly with the fortification facilities and their circuit, the ancient tomb-mausoleum, the temples, the religious life, the epigraphic and numismatic material from the Graeco-Roman classical antiquity. Nowadays its Christianized cityscape remained totally unstudied, despite the fact that Dionysopolis was a major center which probably, in the 6th century, became a seat of a bishop, listed at the first place as a suffragant of the metropolite of Tomis in the Third *Notitia Episcopatum* (according to the numeration of J. Darrouzès)⁴. The question of its

² It is my pleasure to express my deep gratitude to our colleagues from the Museum of History in Balchik, and personally to its director Mrs. Radostina Encheva, for the full cooperation to work with the museum documentation and materials.

³ The main bibliography can be found in Думумпов 2001, with some updates in Илханков 2024: 18-29.

⁴ This is a very problematic mediaeval source from the late 8th – mid-9th century, whose archetype was a Late antique source, attesting the creation of 14 bishoprics in Scythia after a long period of the so-called "Scythian exception" with the bishop of Tomis alone (Darrouzès 1981: 230-245, 653; Holubeanu 2021: 165-166). There is no consensus among the scholars on the character of the paragraph on the province of Scythia in this *Notitia* – civil or ecclesiastical, neither about the Church organization of the province. Some authors consider that the episcopal network with 14 suffragants and a metropolite in Tomis was established ca. 519-520 (Торбамов 2004: 24 and the studies cited there). Other propose this event to be dated in the period between 534 and the middle of

early Christian topography has not been addressed, probably because of the lack of sufficient data. Here I will argue, that the unpublished marble architectural details coming from different zones of today Balchik's territory, most of them stored in the town's Historical Museum, as well as the cursory information in publications, mainly by Romanian authors during the time of the Romanian rule over Dobrudja (1913-1940), allow us to make some assumptions in this regard.

When it comes to Christian topography of Dionysopolis, the first question is where the early Byzantine city with this name was located, a problem that is still debatable. The Graeco-Roman city was founded on the second coastal terrace, where is the modern city center (Шкопчул 1912: 47-52; Тафрали 1927: 29, 31, pl. IV; Думумпош 1986: 90-94; Думумпош 1990: 26-29). At the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century it expanded to the north, and in the 4th century to the south (*Fig. 1*) (Думумпош 2001: 61, 63-64, 69-73, 81-82). Its fortified territory in Late Antiquity is not securely established. According to M. Dimitrov (Думумпош 1986: 95-97; Думумпош 2001: 88-133), who directed the most intensive archaeological excavations in the 20th century, after the great deluge during the reign of the Emperor Justinian I (527-565) caused by an underwater earthquake in A.D. 544/45, which was reported by Theophan the Confessor (ГИБИ IV: 239) and later Byzantine authors (ГИБИ XI: 205), the coastal site was abandoned and the population shifted to the high plateau north of the old town (today's Horizont neighborhood). In this new location, the construction of a huge fortress had already begun around the end of the 5th – the beginning of the 6th century under the Emperor Anastasius I (491-518) (according to the earliest discovered coins and to the similarity of its masonry to that of the Long Wall in front of Constantinople)⁵. It seems that this was the largest known fortification for the whole territory of today's Bulgaria. Its dimensions vary between 36 ha (Думумпош 1990: 31) and no more than 15 ha (Торбамов 2002: 265). Its construction was accelerated and finalized during the reign of Justinian I (527-565) in relation to the tsunami of A.D. 544-545, which pushed the urban population to move on the highest plateau nearby. Thus, a kind of twin city was created – Dionysopolis-2 (*Fig. 1*). So, according to M. Dimitrov and other researchers, after the sea disaster, the early Byzantine city of Dionysopolis was relocated on Horizont district (Думумпош 2001: 88-133; Енчева 2021: 51), where, previously, one of the ancient city's necropolis developed⁶.

the 6th century (Holubeanu 2021: 178), or the middle of the 6th century (Atanasov, Valeriev 2020:47). Recently D. Moreau strongly insists on a provincial Christian administration based only on one bishop in the provincial capital Tomis (Moreau, in print).

⁵ The discovery of non-funeral materials dating from the 4th century AD during the latest archaeological campaigns raises the question of the existence of earlier settlement there or of an earlier construction phase of the fortification – see Купулов 2021: 39.

⁶ Tumuli and graves with cremation or inhumation dating back from 4th–3rd c. B.C. and 2nd–4th c. A.D. have been discovered beneath the Early Byzantine layer (Думумпош 2001: 66-67, 79-80, 120; Обчаров, Меламед, Думумпош и др. 1986: 150; Колева, Купулов, Енчева 2010: 530) testifying for the location of a necropolis of the Hellenistic and Roman city.

Nowadays, this thesis does not enjoy popularity anymore. Firstly, because there is no reliable archaeological data for a sudden cessation of life on the seaside terraces (ТопѠамов 2002: 261-263). Thus, in the last decade, during rescue excavations on the area of Temelkov Inn/Han in 2014, which is on the Acropolis⁷, a vaulted early Byzantine building of careless construction, but housing a marble cladding and destroyed by a fire, was discovered. It dates back to the 6th–early 7th centuries according to household ceramics and amphorae (Томев, Добрев, Енчева 2015: 269) and testifies for the continuity of life there posteriorly of the sinisterous event. In addition, the sea storm and the rising of the sea level was of temporary effect as it is explicitly mentioned in the texts telling us that the sea soon receded. It can be expected that the population has returned to the vicinity of the sea and the harbour, which were fundamental for its economic activities.

The prevailing opinion among the scholars today seems to be that of the existence of two parallel and not consecutive early Byzantine settlements with different characteristics, and also, most probably, with different names and functions: the one on Horizont plateau being initially planned as a strict military garrison fortress, while Dionysopolis on the sea line continued to be inhabited by civilians (ТопѠамов 2002: 261-270; Купулов 2021: 37-38; Шпанков 2024: 23, бел. 12). Probably soon after the construction of the new fortified site on Horizont, especially after the flood in 540s, its initial functions and aspect changed and, during the second half of the 6th and the early 7th century, its urban transformation was achieved (ТопѠамов 2002: 268-269, 449-450; ТопѠамов 2004: 24-25)⁸. The coins from Horizont and the vicinity of Balchik, published by Prof. Ivan Yordanov, confirm the economic expansion of the city from the mid-6th century on, showing the greatest monetary inflow and circulation precisely in the period 550-580, that is after the large-scale flood (Йорданов 1990: 52). The most numerous ceramics findings also date back to the second half of the 6th and the 7th centuries (Меламег 1990: 91-93).

Accepting this thesis of coexistence of two sites from at least the beginning of the 6th century on, we face a new problem: how were they named? This tricky question is quite important for our study because if we know which one was named at that time Dionysopolis, we will be able to localize at that place the cathedral church of the cited bishop of Dionysopolis. The proposed transfer of the toponym Dionysopolis around the middle of the 6th century from the ancient coastal city to the early

⁷ A century ago, at this place, Škorpil brothers discovered the tomb of an antique physician (Шкорпила 1912: 52-62), re-excavated by O. Tafrali in 1920. Later, other built structures were found and identified as a precinct's sector with U-shaped and round towers (Думанов 1986: 95-96), with critical precision of their dating after the 4th century (ТопѠамов 2002: 263).

⁸ Chavdar Kirilov does not accept this urban transformation of Hoziont site, which, he believes, doesn't accommodate civilian population but only a huge Byzantine military garrison until as late as the 9th century (Купулов 2021: 37). Such a thesis is not enough convincing for me. Horizont, whose construction started by Emperor Anasthasius, would be the only exception in this emperor's fortification program which targeted only civilian settlements contrary to the military ones from the time of Justinian I (ТопѠамов 2002: 448).

Byzantine fortified settlement in Horizont (Dimitrov 2001, 84) is presumed, but it is logical and cannot be entirely rejected for now (Topóamoß 2002: 270, 450). An opinion has been expressed that after the flood of A.D. 544/545 Dionysopolis was renamed Matiopol/Ματιόπολις – an unique toponym mentioned in the anonymous „*Periplus Ponti Euxini*“ compiled in the second half of the 6th century⁹. This tentative hypothesis was recently rejected by the epigraphist Nikolay Sharankov, who pointed out the chronological sequence of toponyms in the source: first Crouni, then Matiopolis and finally Dionysopolis (see below, note 9). Consequently, the name Matiopolis is earlier than Dionysopolis and cannot be attributed to city of the later period. In his reading Sharankov follows the old opinions (Tafrali 1927: 11). In addition, the same author adds that the adjective *μάταιος* as „empty“ has a strongly negative meaning and is used only in a figurative sense, never for space or surface qualifications. There is still no conclusive assumption, but he suggests that Matiopolis should be thought of as ματ(ρ)πολις, i.e. a misunderstood by the compiler of a common name for a metropolis or for a city named after the (Pontic) Mother of the Gods (Шаранков 2024: 287-289), whose temple is situated in the coastal city (Лазаренко и др. 2013). Whatever the meaning of the toponym of Ματιόπολις, both authors recently concerned by its interpretation, connect it with the ancient settlement near the port. Thus, the old and well-established in the administrative and everyday vocabulary toponym of Dionysopolis remains “vacant” and could be “applied” to the new center on Horizont. The latter became the dominant urban nucleus even if the zone of the earlier harbour city was partially revived after the tsumani. Thus, it is not excluded that this new urban center began to be identified from the second half of the 6th century onwards with Dionysopolis (Topóamoß 2002: 450). However, we cannot neglect two facts contesting this assumption. Firstly, in the time of established Christianity, it was hardly appropriate to name a newly created settlement after a pagan deity. Secondly, the archaeology suggests a huge building activity on Horizont during the reign of Justinian I, but Procopius doesn't cite Dionysopolis among Emperor's fortification works that means the place had another name. In my opinion, the fragments of liturgical sculpture that I will present help to clarify the apparent contradiction. They testify to the existence of a probable cathedral church in Horizont which could accommodate the bishop of Dionysopolis cited in the *Third Notitia* and the lack of the toponym in Procopius' book might be an author's omission.

⁹ This assumption rejects the largely accepted before opinion about Ματιόπολις as an author's mistake. The new idea of flooded Dionysopolis becoming Ματιόπολις is based on two arguments: first, the information in this text precisng that: „This Dionysopolis was first called Crouni because of the waters pouring out nearby, and then it was renamed Matiopolis. Later, after a statue of Dionysus was thrown out of the sea at this place, they say that it was renamed Dionysopolis...“; and secondly, the meaning of the adjective *μάταιος* in Greek as ‚desolate, abandoned city‘, as the ancient harbor city must have been looking after the flood of A.D. 544-45 (Topóamoß 2004).

Let's turn now to the scarce data on early Christian architecture from the territory of modern Balchik that give some new directions of reflexion in terms of both the connection between the Graeco-Roman Dionysopolis and the early Byzantine fortification of the Horizont plateau, as well as the name and the functions of the latter. What do we know about the early Byzantine churches in Balchik?

In his recent book on early Christian architecture in the province of Scythia, Ioan Iațu repeats in an abbreviated version the information available in Romanian literature about two basilicas in Balchik, without, however, any photos and plans, which makes it insufficiently useful (Iațu 2021: 56-57). In the 1930s, Balchik's municipality planned and funded archaeological excavations in the city centre where many ruins appeared or were supposed to exist¹⁰. The Romanian archaeologist Vladimir Dimistrescu, deputy-director of the National Museum of the Antiquities, found monumental remains on the Acropolis, near the church of "St. George" (then renamed the Romanian church „St. Trinity“) and the eastern Hellenistic prescint (Думумпоß 1986: 94). He discovered parallel walls with an orientation E-W, 1.20 m thick, preserved at a height of 3.00 m, carefully built with stones and mortar. This gave grounds to Prof. Paul Nicorescu to identify it as a Christian basilica. Easternmost, its walls continue to the end of the plateau of the Acropolis. A Byzantine Corinthian capital was also found there (Vulpe 1935: 188-190; Vulpe 1938: 47-51). Although there is no mention of an apse, the location on the Acropolis, in close proximity to previous (Dionysos' temple?) and later (a Christian church and an Ottoman mosque) religious buildings, and the widespread phenomenon of inheriting the sacred places, give additional arguments to the existence of an early Christian basilica in this place.

From this or another basilica in the city originates another early Byzantine Corinthian capital, which K. Shkorpil has transferred from Balchik to the Varna Museum (*Cat. 1, Fig. 2*). It belongs to the category of rather simple, small and widely produced Proconnesean capitals between the end of the 5th and the middle of the 6th century¹¹. They have a single row of four acanthus leaves at the edges, and a widely open "V-shaped" volutes. These capitals fit in the type V, according to Kautzsch (1938: 59-61), whose classification was further refined (Betsch 1977: 217 f.; Pralong 2000: 83-89)¹². The cylindric shape calathus, the highly stylized acanthus leaves reproduced in decidedly graphic taste with a deeply undercut geometric spaces between the touching lobes of contiguous leaves illusory creating the

¹⁰ A few years earlier, O. Tafrali outlined the area of expected important archaeological discoveries namely around the St. Trinity/St. George church, Sulak Mosque, the Queen Mary square and the Temelkov Inn (Tafrali 1927: 31).

¹¹ The earliest dated capitals of this type are those of San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, erected as palatine church by King Theoderic, most probably at the beginning of his reign ca. 495-500 (Betsch 1977: 219).

¹² Both authors do not accept the separation between V-shaped and lyra-shaped capitals (types V and VI of Kautzsch) and use other criteria for types subdivisions as the inner helices and their relation to the acanthus raw and the abacus.

effect of the so-called “mask of acanthus” are all elements pointing to the 6th, rather the 5th, century date. The four “teeth” of the mask instead of the characteristic two of the 5th century confirms its attribution to the next century (Betsch 1977: 219). Because of its visually deduced small dimensions, it belongs to the ciborium or an altar screen of a basilica.

A small fragment of a transenna from the same area (*Cat. 14, Fig. 4*) may be associated also with the religious building. Its almost twice the thickness of all similar details indicates that it may be a part of a church window. An identical example could be found in Zaldapa (*Fig. 5*).

An early Christian temple on the territory of the ancient Dionysopolis¹³ is evidenced also by the marble reliquary in the shape of a sarcophagus, discovered in 2003 (*Fig. 6*), which is one of the only four known boxes for holy relics from the whole province¹⁴. It is also dated to the 6th century and belongs to a widespread type in the Black Sea region and Syria. Although it has the most common form for reliquaries throughout the East (type I, according to Comte 2012: 64-65, 71), the specimen shows several peculiarities. Firstly, the molding of the face sides is clumsy and its scheme is poorly understood (*Cat. 25*). If we compare it with similar reliquaries (Minchev 2003: 27), the compromise quality in the execution is even more visible and points to local imitative production. Secondly, in sarcophagus-like reliquaries, the usual form of veneration of the relics stored in them is by contact through a small opening or by circulating liquid, for which two openings are carved (Comte 2012: 64, 71, 73). In the specimen from Balchik, such openings are missing. There is not even a pseudo-opening, as in the example from Varna. The absence of openings seems to be a characteristic of the reliquaries of this form from Bulgaria. This shows that they were not accessible for veneration through contact, but were placed in reliquary niches (*loculi*), crypts or altars. Such would have been the function of the specimen from Balchik. Although this type of object is movable and could be transferred from anywhere, the commented features indicate that it was made and used in a local environment.

Therefore, all these marble pieces and architectural ruins strongly suggest the existence of at least one basilica in the Acropolis of Dionysopolis. This conclusion could be further supported by the historical memory of the local population for the existence of an old monastery (Иречек 1974: 900). According to the architectural sculpture, the church might be dated before the middle of the 6th century and consequently before the flood of 544/5.

I suppose that a second basilica was built in the 6th century, on the territory of the fortress on the surmounting plateau, although Ch. Kirilov, who in the last 15

¹³ This provenance is registered in the Inventory book of Historical museum in Balchik, but in the publication of Al. Minchev it appears as finding on Horizont (Minchev 2003: 27).

¹⁴ The others are the glass reliquary from Tomis' basilica on the Street of the Revolution in Constanța, a fragment of marble one from the same town found out of context, and a silver one from Sucidava (Iatcu 2012: 117-118; Achim 2025: 69, note 45).

years has resumed the research in Horizont, claims that there is no evidence of the presence of a church and only sparse traces of civilian life are detectable thus underling the strong military character of the occupation (Kirilov 2021: 37). Contrary to this assumption, M. Dimitrov mentioned, although quite vaguely and without any context or images, a “church or a basilica building” inside the fortress. His interpretation is based upon the “mortars, marble and stone (limestone?, *A.M.*) columns, a column decorated with an „ovoid“ ornament, used as a cornice on the window of a religious building” (ДумумпоѢ 2001:118). The latter piece in fact underwent an opposite transformation – a Roman window (?) cornich from the 2nd century was recut to become a biforian window column with integrated base and capital for an early Christian basilica (*Cat. 3, Fig. 7*) (ДоцеѢа 2026: 97-98, 103 f.).

The existence of a church is further supported by the unpublished architectural pieces collected in the present catalogue. Quite a few of them are elements of a sanctuary screen. Among them there is a part of a marble pillar with a base for a small column carrying a high altar screen (*Cat. 4, Fig. 8*), a chancel type developed after the mid-5th century. A fragment of a double side ornamented plaque (*Cat. 7, Fig. 11*) and nine fragments of floral (*Cat. 8-13, Figs. 12-17*) and geometric motifs (*Cat. 15-17, Figs. 18-20*) belong to openwork marble slabs set between these pillar-columns. Their state of conservation doesn’t allow any reconstruction of the exact decorative composition. But the four- or five-leaf palmettes combined with crosses inscribed in circular or polygonal moulded strips is quite a common pattern for this type of furniture during the 5th–6th centuries. The back side of the plaques, which was turned to the sanctuary, is quite rude, in some pieces almost unarticulated hardy worked mass (*Figs. 12-16*). In one palmette (*Fig. 14*), the material between two contingent leaves is not even completely removed, demonstrating some carelessness or business. At the same time, this, and the non-finished pillar (*Cat. 5, Fig. 9*) evince locally finishing of the decoration made by imported Proconnesean marble.

Probably fragments of door and window lintels (*Cat. 18-19; Figs. 25-26*), as well as elements of marble wall cladding (*Cat. 20-24; Fig. 27*) belong to the same building¹⁵. Most of these pieces seem to have been found in the southwestern edge of the fortress and within the big enclosed complex along the main street easternward of the western gate toward the city-center. They are not in their original context, as one could conclude from the excavations’ diaries. A bottom of a polycandilon glass among the findings of this area witnesses also the existence of a Christian temple¹⁶.

Although the archaeological research of the last 53 years doesn’t present any evident architectural remains that could be identified as a church, the location of a nicely decorated basilica in Horizont hill is further suggested by the scare information concerning the Romanian excavations done shortly before 1940, whose

¹⁵ There are much more fragments of marble wall veneer (inv. # 3132, 3138, 3139, 3266-3269, 3286) some of them with traces of mortar on one side (M. Dimitrov, Report on the archaeological excavations in the early Bulgarian fortress in Balckik, 1978 – Scientific Archives – NAIM-BAS).

¹⁶ Field diary for the excavations in 1980, small finding number 14.

results were not really published. At that time, Paul Nicorescu and D. V. Rosetti discovered, almost entirely, a basilica situated 4 km north of Balchik (Barnea 1948: 230, note 5). It is described as one of the rare single-nave churches in Scythia (Barnea 1977: 122-123, 179-180; Achim 2025: 55-56, figs. 5.4a-4b). Its polygonal apse was first three-sided and then was reconstructed as pentagonal. Of particular importance to us is that the Romanian archaeologists unearthed openwork chancel plaques, as we did in the Museum stockage room. A plan of the building was prepared by the architect Ștefan Balș, but it is not published, neither are any images of the *transennae*. However, it is unusual for small single-nave churches to receive expensive openwork decorations and to have polygonal apses. There are two possible explanations for this paradox. First possibility: the single-nave plan is the result of medieval reconstruction, mentioned by I. Barnea, of an originally usual three-nave basilica. Second one: the single-nave basilica is an earlier church (see Атанасов in this volume) enlarged and embellished in the 6th century. Latter explanation seems more acceptable since Barnea's argument for the mediaeval rework lays on the existence of buttresses outside to the apse. But similar efforts for reinforcing the apse vault and the galleries have analogies in other early Byzantine churches, as a.e. basilica 3 in Zaldapa. The lack of published material and the inaccessibility to the Romanian archival documents don't allow any founded conclusion¹⁷, if not that with its polygonal apse and openwork decoration the church follows prototypes from the capital Constantinople. It might be erected on an important site and not within a small fortification or a rural settlement. The only one in the immediate northern vicinity of Dionysopolis is the large, fortified settlement in Horizont (the 4 km mentioned by the Romanian archeologists must be given by road distance because directly it is only 1-1,2 km away). I suppose it is the same basilica from which the marble decorative elements found during the excavations on Horizont in the 1970s and 1980s were originated, or, less logical, an *extramuros* basilica.

The openwork plaques give us important information for this church. They are among the most luxurious and relatively rare objects, typical for the decoration of the liturgical installations mainly in the 5th and especially in the first half of the 6th century. The zenith of their distribution is the second quarter of the 6th century and the decline of their production comes with the plague pandemy of 542 (Russo 2023: 53 f.). They found exact parallels in the church decoration known from other sites in Scythia, such as Tomis (Radulescu 1966: 69-70, figs. 45-46), Histria (Bounegru, Iațcu 2007: 58-63, pl. XXXI-XLII) and Zaldapa (Топѡамос 2000: 55-56, оѡр. 30,₅; Atanasov, Valeriev 2021: 61, fig. 25a-c) (*Figs 21-24*). The materials from Balchik show greater similarities with those from Tomi and especially from Zaldapa than with those from Istria. In the latter, only 3-leaf palmettes are found, and the crosses have a different form. In Scythia, similar slabs are known only from episcopal

¹⁷ We were not given access to the documentation in the Archives of the Archaeological Institut "Vasile Pârvan" in Bucarest, despite our two official demands.

basilicas. Zaldapa is a kind of exception because *transennae* have been found also in the non-episcopal basilica 1. The reasons for this is the simultaneous erection of both churches – the bishopric basilica 3 and the smaller basilica 1 situated near the south-western gate of the town¹⁸. Consequently, one could assume that in Balchik too, the *transennae* were used in the decoration of the episcopal basilica of the Late antique city, and the bishop's residence must therefore be in Horizont.

Since the bishop mentioned in the third *Notitia* as the bishop of Dionysopolis seated in the newly built fortress on the plateau, the latter seems to use the old city name, even if the life continue in some neighborhoods on the sea terraces. If my hypothesis is correct, it gives more arguments to Marin Dimitrov's thesis concerning the name of the new settlement.

Furthermore, the presence of an episcopal seat with a basilica displaying luxury furnished interior and the scale of the huge early Byzantine fortress in Horizont makes unacceptable the identification of the site as a strict military fortification without a civilian population. By the middle of the 6th century, the site concentrated and attracted the attention, the construction activities and the material efforts of the provincial and perhaps central government (Думумпоф 2001: 88-120; Топѣамов 2002: 24, 263-270). The quarters not only of the military but also the eccleasical administration were settled there.

In general, in the early Byzantine world, openwork slabs are of extremely variety. As Claudia Barsanti points out, there are no two identical ones, contrary to the relief slabs, which often display a highly standardized pattern (Barsanti 2004). In this respect, the situation in Scythia is an exception. The materials from the four centers in which they were found demonstrate a striking similarity between them. This coherent architectural and decorative program seems to confirm that the main liturgical sculptures for the interior furnishing of the episcopal basilicas were commissioned to a special workshop from the imperial marble quarries at Proconnesus and were executed during a huge and common building campaign. When did this enterprise take place?

Romanian colleagues traditionally refer the openwork elements to the time of Justinian and offer such a dating for the ensembles in Tomi, Istria and Balchik. For Zaldapa it has been suggested that they were built on the initiative of Emperor Anastasius I (Popova, Atanasov 2017: 187). Similar is the opinion of Al. Minchev, as regards the basilicas in the nearby Odessos and its region, which are generally dated to the end of the 5th–6th century (Минчев 1986: 41-42). A large part of their architectural sculpture is imported from the Proconnesos workshops, and some of them were finished on the sites. The openwork elements were undoubtedly worked at constructions sites under the supervision of traveling teams of Constantinopolitan carvers. Similar metropolitan influences can be seen in the polygonal apses, which

¹⁸ The publication of these two churches in Zaldapa and their decoration is expected soon as a part of the same research project of the National Research Fund, Republic of Bulgaria.

are rare for Scythia, but which we find in the entire group of the monuments with openwork decoration, with the exception of the episcopal basilica of Tomi. Conditions for such close ties with the capital, guaranteeing active artistic exchange, were created mostly within the established by Justinian I in 536 *quaestura Iustiniana exercitus*. Within this new institution, sustainable financial and transport mechanisms are being established and operated between the capital and the individual fortified posts along the coast (Torbatov 1997, esp. 85). The relations between Scythia and Constantinople, which were then placed on a regular basis, are also evidenced by the fact that of the thirteen seals from the office of *quaestor Iustinianus exercitus*, nine, i.e. 2/3, are from the time of Emperor Justinian. These developed channels facilitated the supply of artistic products, even more so when they are related to the affirmation of the prestige of imperial power, projected in marble details – symbols of power and wealth. It has been pointed out that the standardized church architecture and the shipment by sea of close in style partially finished architectural members were the testimony of Justinian's attempt to promote religious unity within the Empire (van Doorninck 2002: 899).

We can thus conclude on the existence of at least two basilicas – one, probably earlier, 5th – beginning of the 6th century, on the ancient Acropolis, and a second one in the early Byzantine fortified center in Horizont. The latter was build as cathedral church in relation with the establishment of an episcopal seat in Dionysopolis between 536 and 542.

Catalogue of the sculptures

Cat. 1. Corinthian capital with soft acanthus from ciborium or altar screen – marble (*Fig. 2*)

Storage: AM-Varna, inv. No III 689¹⁹

Origin: the ancient Dionysopolis, discovered and brought to Varna by K. Škorpil

Dimensions: unknown²⁰

A small one-crowned capital, cylindrical body and broken upper corners. The four acanthus leaves are placed in the corners of the basket. They have 5 lobes with three points each. Their tips are touching each other at the center of the sides of the capital, where they form an „acanthus mask“ of rhombus, below it – a trapezoid flanked by two ellipses, and at the bottom – a filled rhombus. The inner helices are missing. The outer helices take the form of relief continuous band, contiguous to the point of contact of the middle leaves of the two adjacent acanthus. A small triangular protruding zone is formed under the abacus flower, decorated with stretches. Concave abacus. The capital belongs to the so-called „lyre type“ (type V) by R. Kautzsch or IVB by A. Pralong.

Cat. 2. Corinthian capital – fragment, white marble with bluish veins (*Fig. 3*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3220

Origin: Dzheni Bair, sector VIII, sq. 8, discovered during archaeological excavations on 27.09.1978 at a depth of 2.00 m.

A small fragment of acanthus leaves with maximum preserved dimensions: H – 4,8 cm; 13 x 19,5 cm. Traces of drill.

¹⁹ K. Škorpil's Archive in NA-BAS, F.165K, op. 1, a.e. 509, l.1

²⁰ Colleagues from Varna Museum could not find information about this monument.

Cat. 3. Double column with base and capital (biforium) – white marble, spolia (*Fig. 7*)

Storage: HM - Balchik – exposition hall, where it was transferred on 10.11.2022 from a private home, inv. No 4219.

Origin: The fortress in Horizont district, sector VII-97, discovered during archaeological excavations on 17.06.1982.

Dimensions: H – 110 cm; h abacus 24 cm ; length 28 cm; diam. 20 cm;

Reworked and reused antique cornice (from a window?) from the middle – second half of the 2nd century. Frieze with Ionic cymation executed in high relief and excellent volumetric modeling of the motifs. At one edge an acanthized leaf and at the other a scroll with an ivy leaf. The form and the function of the block changed in the early Byzantine period, when it was reworked as a window's biforium column. To do this, the two long sides of the cornice were rounded like semi-columns, and part of the width of the block is shaped as a smooth central vertical strip to attach the glasses. In the low part, a base with a plinth is dressed, and in the upper – a capital with acanthus leaves and an abacus slab. In the initially unornamented part (the left of the drawing), the elements (base, shaft and capital) are cut without difficulty, when in the right part, where the Ionic cymation is preserved, they are rather marked: the base moldings are only incised without sculpturing them, and the acanthus leaf of the capital is inserted into the narrow free space. Traces of recutting are visible all over the surface.

The information about the find is provided by the Field Diary and graphic documentation from the excavations in the district Horizont in 1982, as well as from the archive of St. Boyadzhiev, kept at the Institute for Arts Studies²¹.

Bibliography:

Доцеба 2026: 97-98, 103 f., figs. 5 and 6.

Cat. 4. Pillar with a column base from a high altar screen – fragment, marble (*Fig. 8*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3138

Origin: the fortress in district Horizont, sector VII, sq. 79, discovered during archaeological excavations on 26.06.1984.

Dimension: preserved total H – 15,2 cm; pillar: h 7,8 cm and section max. preserved 7,4 x 8 cm; preserved H of the base – 6 cm, preserved diam. 13 cm which could be reconstructed ca. 16 cm

Broken off at the top, bottom and side with a partially preserved upper corner of the pillar; cut from the same block as the base for the small column. The state of preservation does not make clear if the column was cut from the same block or was a separate piece fixed on the base. The detail is incorrectly defined as a capital in the museum's Inventory Book.

Cat. 5. Pillar (?) – fragment, marble (*Fig. 9*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3139

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, sector VII, sq. 79, discovered during archaeological excavations on 26.06.1984.

Preserved dimensions: H – 6.7 cm; sides 7.8 x 11 cm

A polished side is preserved, on which two parallel irregular lines are traced and small parts of the two adjacent sides are also polished. A portion of the base (?), which is perpendicular to them, is roughly worked. Probably an unfinished pillar.

²¹ A IIIzk.III.3-5, a.e. 20,1.41, 42 and 43, where its origin is incorrectly indicated as Kaliakra. The three photographs of this detail, made by Prof. St. Boyadzhiev, are digitized on the site *Europeana – Kaliakra fortress, Balgarevo village* | Europeana (19.04.2026), where it is erroneously dated as a late Byzantine cornice from 1300-1399.

Cat. 6. Pillar (?) – fragment, marble (*Fig. 10*)

Storage: HM-Balchik, inv. No 3310

Origin: Dzheni Bair, Sector III, discovered during archaeological excavations in 1978.

Dimensions: preserved H – 6.6 cm; sides 7.3 x 7.3 cm

Broken horizontally at the upper and low side, the square pillar has three smoothly polished sides and the fourth presents a 4.5 cm wide protruding strip. The marble has been eroded by a strong fire, traces of which can be seen on the surface. The small size and the lack of mounting grooves exclude the possibility of it being part of the sanctuary screen supports. It may be a support of some furniture/table.

Cat. 7. Two-sides ornamented plaque – fragment, marble (*Fig. 11*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3222

Origin: the fortress in Horizont, sector XXII, sq. 2, found in the surface layer at 0.25 m a deep during archaeological excavations on 02.10.1978.

Dimensions: max. preserved H – 10 cm; length 11,1; thickness from 2.8 to 5 cm

Part of the frame and the adjacent decor on a double-sided decorated plate, broken off on all sides. On the front side, the frame is molded, while on the back it is in the form of a wide flat strip in low relief. A flat embossed disc inscribed in a thin relief circular frame usually marks the center of the sides of plaques with compositions of rhombuses or squares inscribed in each other.

Cat. 8. Openwork plaque – fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig.12*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3129.

Origin: The fortress in Horizont district, sector IX, sq 126, discovered during archaeological excavations on 05.07.1980.

Dimensions: preserved H – 9 cm; thickness 1.8 cm

Partially preserved 5-leaf slightly curved palmette with broken tops (defined as an oak leaf in the museum Inventory Book). On the obverse side, the central vein of each leaf is outlined with a shallow groove, and on the back it is barely hinted.

Cat. 9. Openwork plaque – fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig. 13*)

Storage: HM – Balchik, inv. No 3130

Origin: The fortress in Horizont district, sector IX, sq. 142, found during archaeological excavations in 1980 at a depth. from 0.80-1.00 m in a large residential complex.

Dimensions: prereserved H – 9.5 cm; max. width 8.1 cm; thickness 2.3 cm

Partially preserved 5-leaves upright palmette. The small embossed disc preserved at the base of the leaves and the breakaway in the lower right part suggest that this is a fragment of a kind of rosette, formed by four palmettes cross-arranged, as those found in basilicas 1 (*Fig. 21*) and 3 in Zaldapa (*Fig. 22*). On the front side, the central lobe of each leaf is outlined with a shallow groove, and on the back it is barely suggested; compared to that of the previous fragment, it is even more roughly made.

Cat. 10. Openwork plaque – fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig. 14*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3312

Origin: missing data in the Inventory book

Dimensions: H – 7 cm; max. width 5.8 cm; thickness 1.4 cm

Five-leaf palmette with broken tops. The front side of the leaves is modeled with a triangular groove, the material between the individual leaves has not been entirely taken away and the openwork shaping between the lower and middle leaves is unfinished. This shows that the production of the openwork slabs took place on site in Balchik. The reverse side is roughly carved and eroded by fire.

Cat. 11. Openwork plaque – leaf fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig. 15*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3215

Origin: Dzheni Bair, sq. 1, discovered during archaeological excavations in 1978.

Dimensions: maximum preserved H - 7.2, width 5 cm, thickness 1.9 cm

Partially preserved two leaves of a palmette motif, whose face and back are shaped similarly to the other more complete preserved examples.

Cat. 12. Openwork plaque – palmette fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig. 16*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3217

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, sq. 67, discovered during archaeological excavations on 16.08.1976, at a depth of 0.80 cm.

Dimensions: max. reserved H – 12.5 cm; width 8 cm; thickness 1.9 cm

Palmette, the five leaves of which on the obverse are polished and modeled with a shallow triangular groove, while their back is barely shaped, unpolished and without details. At the lower right end, one can notice the starting point of a profiled strip framing the leaf element.

Cat. 13. Openwork plaque – fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig. 17*)

Storage: HM - Balchik (?), Field inv. No 1191

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, sq. 67, discovered during archaeological excavations on 16.08.1976 at a depth of 0,80 m.

Dimensions: unknown. The information about the finding is from the Field Inventory Book – Archives of the NAIM-BAS, not known *de viso*.

Cross-shaped floral motif.

Cat. 14. Transenna – fragment, white-grayish marble²² (*Fig. 4*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 92

Origin: accidental finding in 1964 in front of the N. Boev enterprise, i.e. from the Acropolis area, near the Temelkov Inn and not far from the modern church „St. George“; found together with two fragments of thin marble slabs (3 cm) with acanthus decoration.

Dimensions: preserved H – 8.5 cm; width 10 cm and thickness 4 cm

Traces of fire on the surface. The greater thickness and different processing of the back indicate that this detail is part of a slab different from those previously described, perhaps from a window transenna.

Cat. 15. Openwork plaque – fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig. 18*)

Storage: HM-Balchik, inv. No 3216

Origin: the fortress in Horizont, sq. 102, discovered during archaeological excavations on 25.07.1972 at a depth of 0.74 m. At the time of the discovery there were 2 fragments as can be seen at the drawing²³.

Dimensions: max. preserved 8 x 8.1 cm, thickness 1.9 cm.

A cross-shaped motif, probably from a profiled ribbon forming a geometric (square?) frame, in which plant motifs were inscribed, as suggested by the broken tip of a sheet. On the obverse side, the ribbon is profiled with a flat groove, and on the back side – roughly cut.

²² Erroneously identified as limestone in the Inventory Book.

²³ Field inventory book (No 32) of the archaeological research carried out in Balchik during the 1972 – NAIM-BAS.

Cat. 16. Openwork plaque – fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig. 19*)

Storage: NM - Balchik, inv. No 3135

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, discovered on 28.09.1982 in a layer at a depth of 1.40 to 1.60 m, in a dwelling in the area of the western fortress wall.

Dimensions: thickness 1.9 cm

Profiled with a thin shallow groove curved ribbon, forming circular frame in which plant motifs were inscribed, the tops of which touched the belt encircling them, as evidenced by the fractures.

Cat. 17. Openwork plaque – fragment, white-grayish marble (*Fig. 20*)

Storage: HM - Balchik (?)²⁴, Field inv. No 93

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, sq. 207, discovered during archaeological excavations on 03.08.1979 at depth 0.60-0.80 m.

Dimensions: H – 8.1 cm; width 6.4 cm; thickness 1.3 cm

Part of a frame – a „knot“ of two intertwined double-profiled strips. Another similar fragment is described as a field inv. No 3292. Not seen by the author.

Cat. 18. Door lintel (or cornice) – fragment, white marble (*Fig. 25*)

Storage: HM-Balchik, inv. No 3136

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, sector VII, sq. 97, found during archaeological excavations on 17.06.1982 near the surface (layer from 0.20 to 0.40 cm).

Dimensions: H – 10 cm; cons. length 13.7 and width 8.4 cm.

Broken off on both sides and back. Polished molded face by two fascia flanking a S-shaped lysis (scotia, *throat*). The upper side and lower surfaces, which were inserted into the masonry, are roughly carved with a pointed chisel. The profile is characteristic of a door frame rather than of that of a cornice.

Cat. 19. Door frame – fragment, white marble (*Fig. 26*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, no inv. No

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district (?)

Dimensions: H – 8.5 cm; cons. length 21 and width 25 cm.

Broken off on both sides and back. Complex modeling and polished face with roughly chopped base.

Cat. 20. Veneer slab – fragment, white-bluish marble (*Fig. 27a*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3131

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, southern section of the western fortress wall, sector I, sq. 62, found on 26.07.1982 at a depth of 1.50 m.

Dimensions: 8,9 x 5,2 cm; thickness 1,9 cm

One vertical side is preserved, which is slightly obliquely cut; one face is polished and the other is smoothly cut. Traces of rose mortar on the reverse side.

Cat. 21. Veneer slab – fragment, white marble with thick blue stripes (*Fig. 27b*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3133

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, southern section of the western fortress wall, sector I, sq. 63, found on 28.07.1982 at a depth of 1.25 m, in a dwelling.

Cons. dimensions: 13.2 x 9.8 cm; thickness 3 cm

Preserved one side, which is slightly obliquely cut; one face is polished and the other is smoothly cut.

²⁴ I have not worked with the fragment *de viso* in the Storage rooms of HM-Balchik. The information is taken from the Field Diary kept in the Archives of NAIM-BAS.

Cat. 22. Veneer slab – 2 fragments, white- bluish medium-grained marble (*Fig. 27c*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3134

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, southern section of the western fortress wall, sector I, sq. 68, found on 16.08.1982 at depth. 1.95 m.

Dimensions: 16.4 x 10.6 cm; thickness 2.6 cm

One side preserved, slightly obliquely cut; one face is polished and the other only smoothed.

Cat. 23. Veneer slab – fragment, white-bluish medium-grained marble (*Fig. 27d*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3134 bis

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, southern section of the western fortress wall, sector I, sq. 68, found on 16.08.1982 at depth 1.95 m.

Cons. dimensions: 5,6 x 6,2 cm; thickness 1,9 cm

One face is polished, and the other is only smoothed.

Cat. 24. Veneer slab – fragment, white-bluish medium-grained marble (*Fig. 27e*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3124

Origin: the fortress in Horizont district, southern section of the western fortress wall, sector I, sq. 62, found on 26.07.1982 at depth 1,70 m.

Cons. dimensions: 9,9 x 9,9 cm; thickness 2 cm

One face is polished and the other is smoothly cut.

Cat. 25. Reliquary – marble (*Fig. 6*)

Storage: HM - Balchik, inv. No 3572

Origin: Ancient city of Dionysopolis (according to the Museum's Inventory book) or Horizont fortress (according to Minchev's publication).

Dimensions: H – 15,5 cm; h body: 7,3 cm; length 19,5 cm; width 9,9 cm; depth 3 cm

Perfectly preserved sarcophagus-shaped reliquary (type I, according to Comte 2012: 64-65, 71). Two-side slopping roof with four triangular acroteria at the corners. Like most examples of this type, the inside of the lid is carved (Comte 2012: 68). The base and the interior are roughly processed, and the moldings of the body's faces with a cornice and a plinth are poorly rendered as two parallel grooves and a too narrowed central zone between them.

Bibliography: Minchev 2003: 27, cat. 15, fig. 15a, b.

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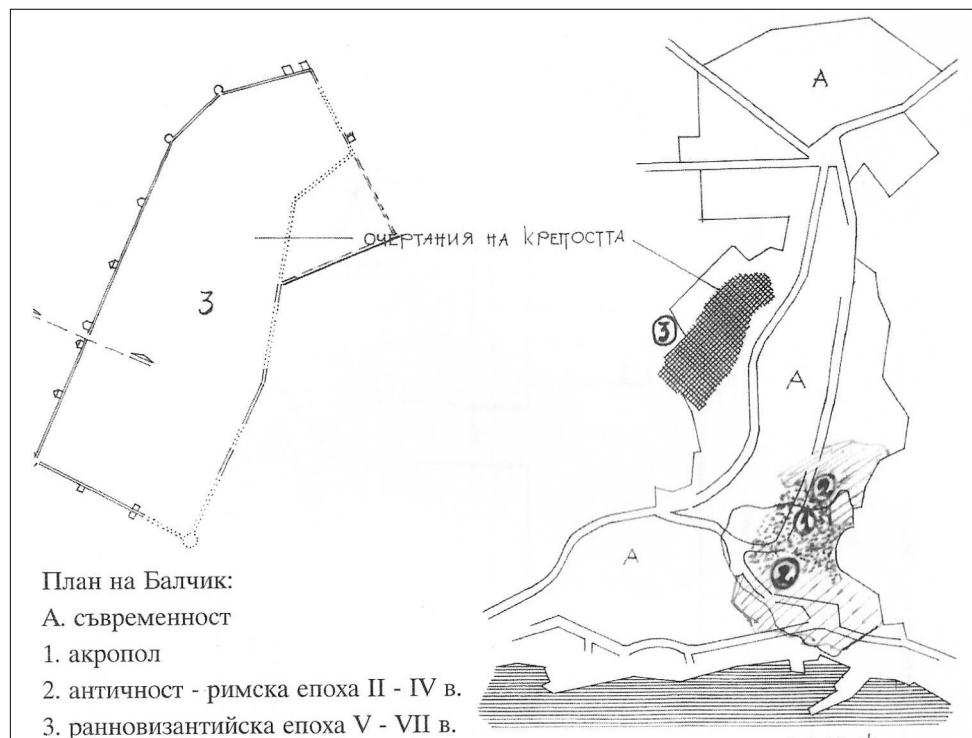


Fig. 1. Plan of Balchik (Dimitrov 2001)

Fig. 2. Small Corinthian capital, cat. 1
(Archives BAS – 165K, a. e. 509, f. 1)Fig. 3. Corinthian capital, fragment, cat. 2
(photo: the author)

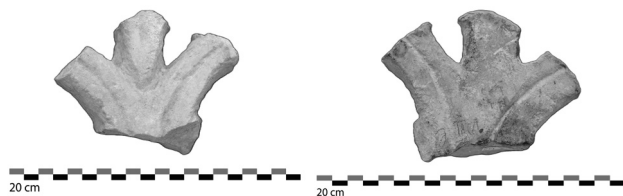


Fig. 4 Fragment of window transenna: face and reverse, cat. 14 (photo: the author)



Fig. 5. Fragment of transenna, Zaldapa (photo: M. Vaklinov)



Fig. 6. Sarcophagus-shaped reliquary, cat. 25 (photo: A. Ivanov)



Fig. 7. Double window column, cat. 3 (drawing M. Dimitrov; photo: S. Boyadzhiev)



Fig. 8. Pillar with column base, cat. 4
(photo: the author)



Fig. 9. Pillar (?), fragment, cat. 5
(photo: the author)



Fig. 10. Small pilar (?),
fragment, cat. 6 (photo: the author)



Fig. 11. Two-side ornamented relief plaque, cat. 7 (photo: the author)



Fig. 12. Palmette, fragment of an openwork slab, cat. 8 (photo: the author)



Fig. 13. Palmette, fragment of an openwork slab, cat. 9 (photo: the author)



Fig. 14. Palmette, fragment of an openwork slab, cat. 10 (photo: the author)



Fig. 15. Palmette, fragment of an openwork slab, cat. 11 (photo: the author)



Fig. 16. Palmette of an openwork slab, cat. 12 (photo: the author)

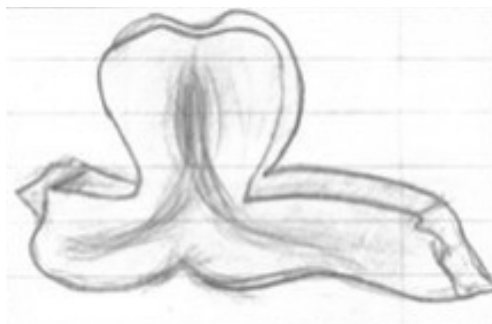


Fig. 17. Floral cross-shape motif of an openwork slab, cat. 13 (drawing: M. Dimitrov)

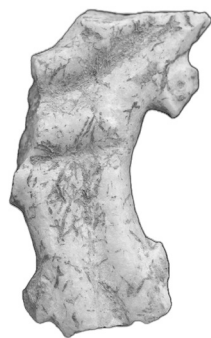
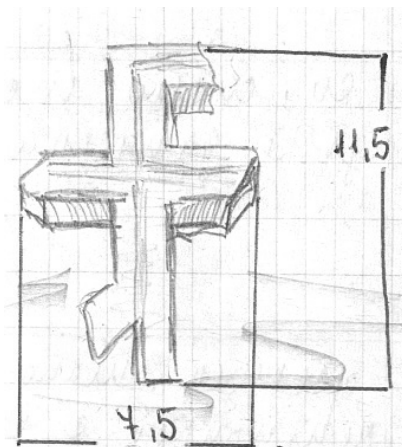


Fig. 19. Strip framing motif of an openwork slab, cat. 16 (photo: the author)

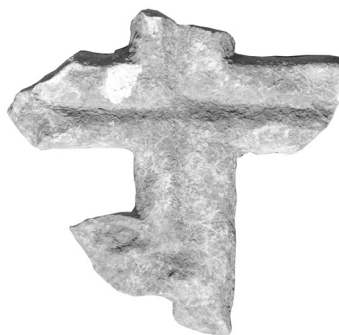


Fig. 18. Cross-shape motif (framing?) of an openwork slab, cat. 15 (drawing: M. Dimitrov photo: the author)



Fig. 20. Strip motif (frame?) of an openwork slab, cat. 17 (drawing: M. Dimitrov)

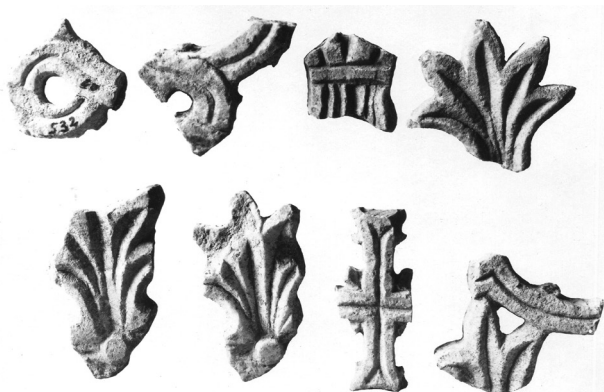


Fig. 21. Fragments of a marble open work cancel plaque, basilica 1, Zaldapa (K. Škorpil's Archives)



Fig. 22. Fragments of a marble open work cancel plaques, basilica 3, Zaldapa (photo: M. Vaklinov)

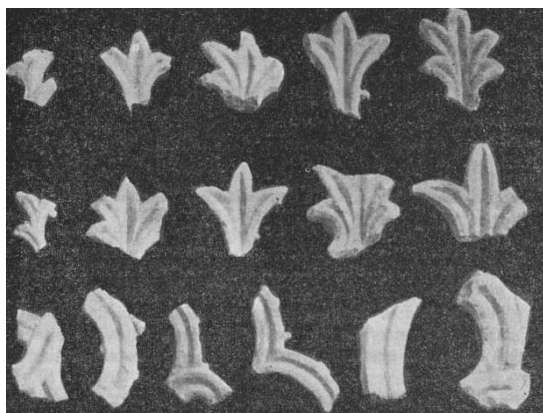
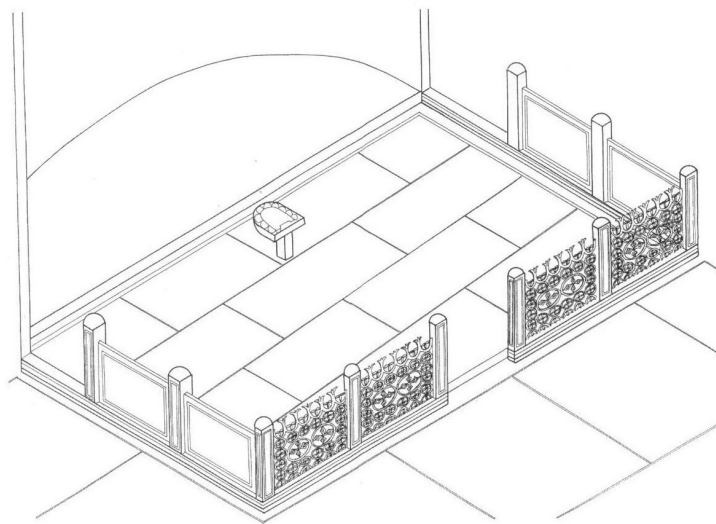


Fig. 23. Marble fragments from the chancel screen, episcopal basilica in Tomis/Constanța (Radulescu 1966)



Pl. XLI

Fig. 24. Openwork cancel screen of the episcopal basilica in Histria
(reconstruction Bounegru, Iațcu 2007)



10 cm

Fig. 25. Door lintel (or cornice?),
cat. 18 (photo: the author)



10 cm



20 cm

Fig. 26. Door lintel,
cat. 19 (photo: the author)

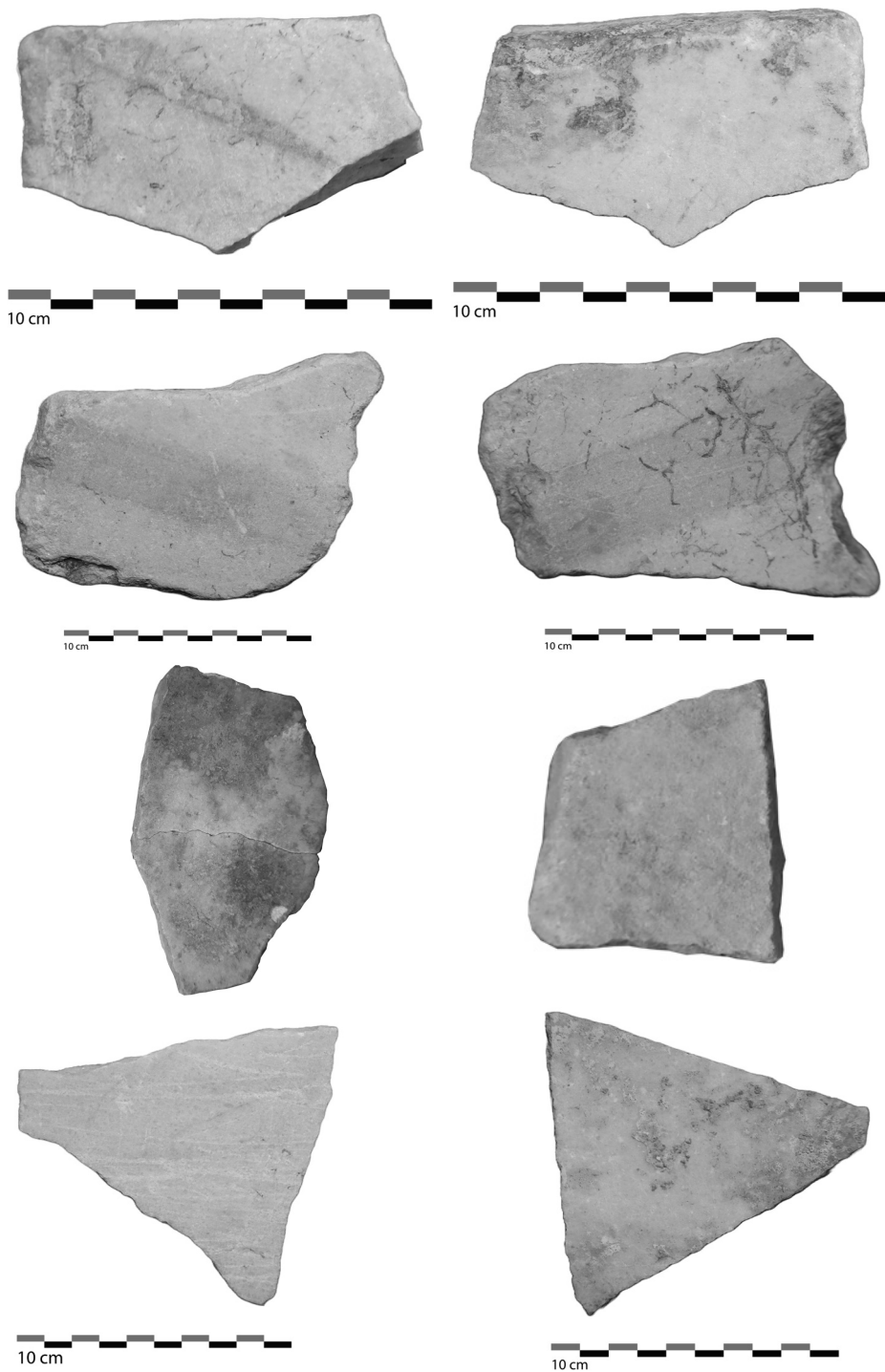


Fig. 27. Fragments of marble veneer: a. cat. 20; b. cat. 21; c. cat. 22; d. cat. 23; e. cat. 24