

ГОДИШНИК

НА СОФИЙСКИЯ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ „СВ. КЛИМЕНТ ОХРИДСКИ“

ЦЕНТЪР ЗА СЛАВЯНО-ВИЗАНТИЙСКИ ПРОУЧВАНИЯ

„ПРОФ. ИВАН ДУЙЧЕВ“

ТОМ 104 (23)

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

**СОФИЯ
2025**

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Том 104 (23)

ANNUAIRE
DE
L'UNIVERSITE DE SOFIA "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"
CENTRE DE RECHERCHES SLAVO-BYZANTINES "IVAN DUJČEV"
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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.

АВТОРИТЕ НОСЯТ ОТГОВОРНОСТ ЗА ИЗКАЗАНИТЕ ОТ ТЯХ НАУЧНИ ХИПОТЕЗИ.

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ISSN – 1311-784X

ISBN 978-954-07-6382-8 (мека подвързия)

ISBN 978-954-07-6383-5 (pdf)

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ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN URBAN LANDSCAPES IN LATE ANTIQUITY THRACE: UNANSWERED QUESTIONS¹

ALEXANDER IVANOV

Abstract: Статията представява своеобразен синтез на различни проблеми, засягащи християнизацията на диоцез Тракия, на чиято територия попада частично и съвременна България. Към момента са открити повече от 230 раннохристиянски църкви, но при едва 21% от тях има данни за наличието на по-ранна антична сграда като част от представителния градски пейзаж. Един от основните проблеми, които се дискутират тук е датирането на късноантичните църкви предвид това, че изцяло публикуваните примери са единични.

Keywords: diocese of Thrace, Late Antique cityscape, (Re)Used / Christianized buildings

Theoretical aspects

Ancient cities and sanctuaries were known to host religious festivals, which often included athletic competitions. Religion and sport occupied central place in both athletic festivals and in everyday life, and this way the venues, organizers and spectators were exposed to the influence of ancient culture. These properties shape the characteristic appearance of the antique “center”, which changes after the adoption of Christianity as an equal-to-others religion in AD 313. The center/city/“Christianopolis”, or Christian topography, proposes a cosmology in which the physical and temporal structure of the world is determined by the function of the cosmos as a means of the divine plan of salvation. This peculiar “universe”

¹ This article is a result of author's research lead for 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)* (Scientific Research fund, Bulgaria, № КП-06-Н60/10, from 17.11.2021). The author was supported by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science under the National Research Program “*Young scientists and postdoctoral students – 2*”, approved by DCM 206 / 04 / 07 / 2022, as well as by the National Archaeological Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

corresponds to two conditions of human existence – the earthly present and the heavenly future (Brown 1997³: 7-8; Kominko 2013: 1-2; Romano 2014: 176). From the conversion of Constantine (306-337) in AD 312 to the end of the reign of Theodosius II (408-450), contemporary Christian authors as St. Augustine, eyewitnesses to what was happening, testify to the clash between paganism and Christianity. In modern historiography this collision is often viewed in a similar way to what Eusebius wrote: “destruction of idol and temples and images everywhere” (*Vita Constantini* III, 54), which is connected with the end of paganism, the triumph of monotheism, as well as the decline of ancient civilization and culture (see among others Torbatov 2013: 531-547). This way, the narrative, understanding and feeling of Late Antiquity (which will be distinguished as “something different” from Antiquity and the Middle Ages), is reduced to the eyewitnesses accounts of what was happening then. The understanding of the process of Christianization requires to choose the way of interpreting something that happened hundreds of years ago, but refracted through the prism of modern perceptions, on one hand, and of the physical and mental environment of the ancient people, on the other. The main questions raised by this topic that need to be addressed are: What is the scale of the urban transformation of the ancient city in Late Antiquity and especially in Thrace? What exactly is Christianization? The focus of this study is on the scale of the transformation of public architecture and urban landscape in Late Antique Thrace.

For clarity of these issues, I will use the following definition proposed by O. Nicholson:

“Conversion and Christianization – The rejection of one religion and the embrace of a new one was accompanied by the broader process by which individuals and communities were evangelized and made Christian. Christianization, although far from uniform or inexorable, gradually transformed the social, political, and physical landscape of the later Roman Empire. (...) Christianization can refer both to the evangelical mission to convert individuals and groups, and to the transformation of society, politics, and landscape effected by such conversion. The Christianization of the Empire was achieved by varied means, including legislation, persuasion and education, and coercion. From Constantine onwards, Christian emperors used Roman law to ban pagan rituals and close temples; the reiteration of such measures suggests that their effectiveness was not total. Christian bishops, intellectuals, and holy men preached the message of Christianity within churches, in public forums, and through the circulation of written treatises. The use of force or the threat of force to convert is attested by regular pagan complaints about the violence directed against the apparatus of pagan cult: temples, altars, and statues. However, the demise of paganism can be ascribed to decline and abandonment as much as to vicious persecution. The Christianization of politics and society was visible in subtle shifts of power in relationships between emperors and secular aristocracies on

the one hand, and bishops and monks, on the other. The rise of asceticism changed patterns of social and sexual life within the city, and the growth of monasticism colonized previously marginal areas beyond cities. The landscape of the Empire was itself Christianized with the construction of church buildings, martyr-shrines, and monasteries, and the sacred geography of the landscape was transformed by the practice of pilgrimage to the holy dead, the Holy Land, and living saints.” (Nicholson 2018: 410-411).

Late Antique Thrace² – available data

Towards the end of the 3rd century AD, the administrative organization of the Empire is subject to a reform that would lead to the transformation of the former provinces of Thrace into the Diocese of Thrace (Белкоб 1959: 55-57; Velkov 1977: 61-64; Николов 1994: 195; Иванов 1999: 27-28; Иванов 2000: 132-133). It contains six new provinces. The new territorial division is evidenced by the *Notitia Dignitatum*³, which was compiled from *Laterculus Veronensis*⁴ and *Laterculus Polemii Silvii*⁵. Other important sources for the period are *Ιεροκλέους’s Συνέκδημος*⁶ and

² For different aspects of the history and archaeology of Late Antique Thrace in the recent research, see Dumanov 2015: 91-101; Дунчев 2021a: 273-281; Dintchev 2021: 17-27.

³ It was a list of official ranks in the Late Roman Empire and was compiled in the period AD 390-427/437. Changes had been made to the list in due time, and in some cases the information had been supplemented or completely replaced, while in others these had not been included. Because of this the source is not reliable, but is important because it reports on the administrative and military positions, as well as the settlements: *Thraciae – Europa, Thracia, Haemimontus, Rhodopa, Moesia Secunda, Scythia* – see ЛИБИ I: 224-239.

⁴ A 7th-century manuscript in the library of the cathedral of Verona (ЛИБИ I: 225, 254-255; Barnes 1982: 201-208). It contains a list of the dioceses and provinces in Roman empire, the part for Eastern Roman empire being compiled in AD 314/315-324. In the diocese of *tracoe* (*Thracia*, note A. I.) the provinces are listed: *europa (Europa), rodo (Rhodope), petracia (Thracia), emossanus (Haemimontus), scitia (Scythia), misia inferior[i] (Moesia Inferior)*.

⁵ The catalogue is believed to have been compiled around AD 385 (ЛИБИ I: 225), where the names of the provinces in *Thracia* are included: *Prima: Thracia (prima); Secunda: item Thracia (secunda); Quinta: Misia (inferior) superior; Sexta: Scythia (inferior) superior; Tertia: Europa, in qua est Constantinopolis prius Licus dicta sive Bizantium; Quarta: Rodopa*. It is important to note that *Haemimontus* and *Scythia* are incorrectly included in *Illyrico*, as *Haemimontus* does not appear in *Thracia* at all, but is replaced by another (second) *Thracia*. It is also important to clarify that Constantinople is placed in the province of *Europa*, but such a claim has not been confirmed by any other source (ЛИБИ I: 255-256).

⁶ The text of the „companion“ was composed at the beginning of Justinian’s reign, between 1st of August AD 527 and the autumn of AD 528. The author probably used a similar text from the time of Theodosius II (408-450) or Marcianus (450-457). In *Συνέκδημος*, along with the names of the cities, the provincial capitals of Eastern Roman empire appear, which were the seats of provincial power and administration, and they bear the title of „metropolis“: Εὐρώπης – Εὐδοξίουπολις, Ἡράκλεια, Ἀρκαδιούπολις, Βιζύη, Πανόνιον, Ὀρνοι, Γάνος, Καλλίπολις, Μόριζος, Σιλτικὴ, Σαναδία, Ἀφροδισία, Ἄπρος, Κοιλία; Ῥοδόπης – Αἶνος, Μαξιμιανούπολις, Τραϊανούπολις, Μαρώνεια, Τόπιρος, Νικόπολις, Κερεοπύργος; Θράκης – Φιλιπούπολις,

*Notitiae episcopatum*⁷. Some of the last reliable documents is related to the establishment of *Quaestura Iustiniana exercitus* (AD 536) that was created to help the border provinces of *Moesia Secunda* and *Scythia* to fulfill their most important role: to pay their taxes and to control/protect the most direct route from the steppe to Constantinople (Torbatov 1997: 78-85; Gkoutzioukostas 2008: 109-118; Curta 2016a: 51-104; Curta 2016b: 307-321; Destephen 2019: 9-17; Sarantis 2019: 329-365).

Apart from the written sources, we have at our disposal several epigraphic sources which are of major importance for our understanding of the implementation of Christianity in Thrace. It is known that in the middle of the 2nd century, *Apollonia* and *Deultum* shared the same bishop (a situation that lasted at least until the middle of the 5th century) (Fedalto 1988: 316, 319-320, 323; Балабанов, Пемрова 2002: 247; Дракева 2006: 79; TIR K-35/2: 94). During the last year's excavations of the southern necropolis of *Deultum*, in which I had the opportunity to participate, an amulet was discovered⁸. It may be the earliest Christian inscription from Thrace discovered so far with a similar combination of names. Thus, there are two independent testimonies about early Christians in the city of *Deultum*, although no church building has been discovered so far.

Another inscription, this time from *Philippopolis*, speaks of one Tatian, without explicitly stating that he was of Christian faith⁹. However, it should be emphasized that some of the phrases, as well as the combination of numbers and letters, testify to his religious preferences.

Βερόη, Διοκλητιανούπλις, Σεβαστούπολις, Διόσπολις; Ήμιμόντον – Άδριανούπολις, Άχιάλος, Δερβέτιος, Πλουτινούπολις, Τζοΐδης; Μυσίας – Μαρκιανούπολις, Όδυσσός, Δωρόστολος, Νικόπολις, Νόβαι, Άλπιάρια, Έβραιτός Σκυθίας – Τόμης, Διονυσσόπολις, Άκραι, Καλατίς, Ίστρος, Κωνσταντιαναί, Άελδέπα, Τρόπεος, Άξιούπολις, Καπίδαβα, Κάρσος, Τρόσιμς, Νοβιοδούνος, Αΐγισσος, Άλμυρις (ΓΙΒΙ II: 87-94; Δρακούλης 2009: 41-42).

⁷ The *Notitiae episcopatum* is a collection of eparchial lists that present the hierarchy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It is assumed that such a list already existed at the time of Theodosius I (379-395). The Pseudo-Epiphanian list and the one of the Isaurian dynasty list named the metropolitan sees, subordinate bishoprics and autocephalous archbishoprics and probably reflect the situation during the Late Antiquity (ΓΙΒΙ III: 184-196) as these from the 9th – mid-10th century, which repeat earlier lists (ΓΙΒΙ IV: 146-165).

⁸ The amulet dates from the late 2nd–early 3rd century. See <https://www.archaeologia-bulgarica.com/%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%BE-%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B9-%D0%B4%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE-%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%85%D0%B5%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BA/?fbclid=IwAR3G1PIpDFN0H> (accessed 08.07.2025).

⁹ The second earliest Christian inscription from Bulgaria, placed on a marble stele discovered on the territory of the southern necropolis of *Philippopolis* and dated to the first quarter of the 3rd century – see Laurent 1938: 1-16; SIBulg. 207; https://telamon.uni-sofia.bg/epi/view_ins/SIBulg_207 (accessed 08.07.2025). I thank the Assoc. Prof. Nikolai Sharankov, PhD, who pointed this text out to me, as well as for sharing with me the published literature on the issue. Regarding the first bishop of *Philippopolis*, see Тоналилов, Чобанов 2025: 219-220.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence of *domus ecclesiae* in Thrace so far nor its evolution into another type of building could be traced. One possibility that could explain the inability to recognize it is that such a private *domus*, used for Christian worship, may have been donated later, for a church to be built in its place. It is certainly possible. However, without the presence of explicit written data, it remains pure speculation.

Regarding the available archaeological evidences, more than 230 Late Antique churches have been discovered so far on the territory of the diocese of Thrace, both in the cities and the countryside (Иванов 2019: 235). It is interesting to note that there are quite a few examples that date back to the 4th century. For comparison, in the rest of the Empire the certain examples of churches built in the 4th century are few; their dating is mainly based on the written sources and it is not clear how and why they appeared at these particular locations. Similar sources are missing for Thrace. This fact is also accompanied by the disproportion in the publication of the sites.

Different types of functional conversion of Roman public buildings

The analysis of the presented data allows the identification of three types of public buildings that underwent functional transformation in order to be used for Christian religious practices.

The first group concerns buildings for spectacles. A well known example of a building of entertainment turned into a church from the diocese of Thrace is from *Marcianopolis*. What is actually known about early Christianity in *Marcianopolis* is that the city was the seat of a bishop in the period AD 325-431, and the legends about several martyrs, namely Maximus, Asclepiodota and Theodotus¹⁰ who were tortured in the local theater (amphitheater) (Велков 1964: 383 = Velkov 1980: 140; ГИБИ VI: V.4-5, 21; Ангелов 1999: 45; Вагалински 2000: 56; Ангелов 2002: 113; Vagalinski 2002: 279; Шаранков 2014: 281-283, 291; Martinova-Kyutova, Sharankov 2018: 73; Иванов 2022a; Иванов 2022b). The building discovered above the amphitheater was interpreted as a “church”, but in fact it does not bear the characteristics of one. Therefore, it can hardly be considered as a certain example of spectacle building conversion into a church. In general, the examples from across the Empire of such turnings are not numerous, but this probably reflects the current state of research (Иванов 2022b). It is important to stress that there are examples of conversion after the Late Antiquity too. Last but not least, the buildings for entertainment have been reused for many different purposes, among which turning them into churches is not predominant (Underwood 2019: 164-165).

The second group concerns the baths and the situation is similar. There are very few cases of conversion into churches during the Late Antiquity as in *Augusta Traiana*. At the same time there are numerous examples of baths that are still func-

¹⁰ Regarding the hypothetical place where the martyrs were buried – Atanasov 2024: 76-80.

tional or even newly constructed, as for example in *Sozopolis, Acre, Odessos, Novae* etc. (Ivanov 2024: 209-216).

The third group concerns temples and sanctuaries. Firstly, the structures/locations suspected of having been used for religious purposes must meet several criteria¹¹. Often due to the lack of a complete set of necessary components, recognition is primarily based on single findings. In practice, the discovered findings define and date the structure. In some cases there is no convincing arguments proving the existence of any pagan architecture at all. In this context, the earlier materials discovered in Christian context often lead to the speculative assumption that there must have been a destroyed pagan building (Иванов 2019: 235-237; Иванов 2020: 449). Consequently, not all of the places identified as “temples” and “shrines” are such; some of them need to be reconsidered and revised (Иванов, *пог печам*).

Votive reliefs are the most common objects found in Thracian sanctuaries. However, is it possible to recognize which of them were deliberately damaged by Christians? Usually, most of them are found with significant damage. However, it is not clear if these were done intentionally. Another question is weather there are concrete parts of the pagan images that were specifically targeted? If the answer to these questions is unsure, then could it be stated that there was ever a triumphant Christianity over paganism? Another question is whether the votive reliefs were still produced after AD 313?

The results show that 79% (*Chart 1*) of all known urban and extra-urban early Christian churches from the diocese of Thrace were built on unused places, or there is no reliable information on reuse so far¹² (*Fig. 1*). As for the narrower chronology of the sites (*Chart 2*), it is impossible to clarify it not only for the territory of Thrace, but the examples from the whole Empire suffer from similar problems, e.g. lack of publications, leading role of historical information over the archaeological situation¹³. It is important to emphasize that in the study of the sites themselves, the attitude towards Christianization of the urban landscape is reduced only to when the church was built and when it was destroyed. Many other additional questions that could shed more light on this issue are disregarded¹⁴. In addition, the degree of

¹¹ Written sources, location, monumental architecture, overall layout, structure (Вълчев 2015: 10-16).

¹² On the reuse of materials and buildings from the territory of the Western Roman Empire during Late Antiquity, see Underwood 2019.

¹³ The presented “chronology” of the sites is not correct, because it does not show reliable published information, but preliminary unconfirmed results, which rather reflect attitudes and preferences in dating and, accordingly, interpreting the reason why the building has such a date.

¹⁴ Does the place of its construction matter; who needed it built; who commissioned it and how was the construction financed; who was the builder; who was the architect; under which provincial governor was it started, under which was it completed; where were the materials for its construction supplied from; what were the materials for its construction; what construction techniques were used; were there any reconstructions; was it continuously functioning; what other objects have been found in it and do they help to understand its history; are there burials in it and if so – why; what is its subsequent history?

research of the cities is not the same, which further complicates the possibility of answering more questions.

Chronology

The chronology of destruction of temples shows that they ceased to function for different reasons and in different historic moments (Иванов 2020: 449-450). More specifically, the end of use of these buildings is often being associated with certain historical events, namely the first Gothic invasions from the middle of the 3rd century; the Edict of Mediolanum and the imposition of Christianity as an equal religion during the rule of Constantine the Great and [his?] successors; the Council of Philippopolis; the second Gothic invasions of AD 378; the Edict of Thessalonica from AD 380 issued by Theodosius I, which established Christianity as the official religion, stigmatizing other cults and imposing a prohibition on visiting pagan temples. The presented chronological landmarks are usually considered relevant to the upper limit of existence of the various cults. In fact, we do not have enough stratigraphy observations for the temporal coincidence between the end of the pagan and the beginning of the Christian cult on the same place.

The Edict of Mediolanum did not prohibit paganism. In fact, it was not an edict but a rescript, which was a written response given by the emperor to officials' inquiry (Иванов, *ног нечам с цум. мам лум.*). This is the Emperor's opinion or decision on a given legal issue. Nowhere in the text is the word "edict" mentioned, which is a general legal norm that applies to both officials and ordinary citizens. It is issued for specific provinces and cities. Also, if the edict had gone into effect immediately, since it was the "word" of the emperor, then a whole constellation of laws introducing clarifications and additions would not have followed. Between AD 437 and 439, the *Codex Theodosianus* (Pharr 1952: xvii) was issued, aiming at the collection of all laws from Constantine onwards. Thus, we understand that there are only 25 laws against paganism compared to the 66 laws persecuting heresies. In these 25 laws the main thing that is prohibited is the performance of sacrifices (in 19 of them), not so much the use of temples. In this situation, the view that the legislation represents a widespread "anti-pagan" campaign needs to be revised. The legislation could be seen as a framework that was not necessarily implemented uniformly throughout the Empire due to regional differences. In this sense, what is happening in Thrace is not necessarily the same as the situation in Egypt, Syria or Palestine. It is not necessary to have the same picture for the entire territory of a given province. However, this does not mean that there were no destroyed temples. An important source for Thrace tells us about St. Emilianus of *Durostorum* who was burned at the stake for destroying idols with a hammer in a city's pagan temple (Boschius 1725: 370-377; Halkin 1972: 27-35; Аманасов 2011: 18). Another source concerning destruction of the sanctuaries is the '*Life*' of Hypatius, telling about the soldier Jonas, who became a monastic leader. He "liberated" Bithynia

from the idols and did the same in Thrace; also, he made the people there Christians (Bartelink 1971: 200-201 = *Vita Hypatii* 30.1; Caseau 2004: 133; Lavan 2011: xli; Mulryan 2011: 57, 59; Sharankov 2019: 62-63, n. 107). The record refers to AD 383 onwards. The archaeological picture shows that the sanctuaries continued their existence even beyond the 4th century – the last coins found in them belong to the emperors Theodosius I, Arcadius and Honorius. In fact, the “decline” of the sanctuaries may often have begun earlier, and their actual disappearance must be sought as a consequence of a lack of financial support.

In addition, the upper limits of the existence of the Late Antique city (respectively the various public buildings of the ancient world, including the ancient churches) from the territory of the diocese of Thrace (but also those in the rest of the Empire), are often connected with the presence or absence of coins¹⁵. The upper limit of existence of the cities and public buildings of Thrace, in almost all cases, is the end of the 6th – the first decades of the 7th century, and more specifically the end of the reign of Phocas (602-610) and the first years of the reign of Heraclius (610-641), as the analysis of the known coins from this time shows that they did not disappear, but their production was greatly reduced (Gandila 2024: 169-171). An identical decrease in coin circulation was observed not only in Thrace, but also in Syria and Palestine, the Greek islands, Asia Minor, but also in Constantinople itself. Coins are also found outside the territory of the Empire. A relevant question that could be asked is whether the disappearance / reduced production of coins and their absence in some particular locations, but their presence in others, mark decline and depopulation?

Despite the widespread burned layers dating from around AD 610-615, historical information about attacks in Thrace is missing. If there is no information about catastrophes in Thrace during the time of Heraclius, then there were probably none. Over the years, various tribes settled in the territory of the Lower Danube and some of them became federates and probably many were Christianized. The discovery of even single coins shows that the Empire remained active in the territory, even after AD 610, like *Tomis*, *Mesambria*, *Agatopolis* and *Durostorum* (Gandila 2024: 140-141)¹⁶. This is inextricably linked, as already indicated, with the functioning of various representative buildings in the urban landscape.

Conclusion

It can be emphasized that after the missions of the holy apostles, apart from written sources and single material evidence, early Christianity in Thrace remains difficult to recognize. After the adoption of Christianity as an equal religion, church construction began, including in Thrace, but this activity also remains unclear due

¹⁵ More on the topic of the reuse of Late Antique coins, their discovery and hoarding outside the borders of the Empire, as well as the use of the metal for making jewelry in a „barbarian“ environment, see in Fagerlie 1967; Hammarberg et al. 1989; Gandila 2018: 282-286.

¹⁶ For another opinion, see the article of Talmatchi in this volume.

to the lack of enough sources, as well as of published sites. On the other hand, the effect of Christianity on earlier ancient architecture, as shown by examples from the Empire, and particularly by those from Thrace, is also not clear: the conversion of characteristic buildings from the cityscape into churches did not happen in a specific historical moment. There are examples of Late Antique conversion, but there are also examples of conversion in much later periods. Finally, yet importantly, the end of Late Antiquity in Thrace / end of Christianization in Thrace is marked by the lack of coins, which is interpreted as the decline and eventual fall of possession of the Eastern Roman Empire on the Lower Danube. Later, new, but this time Medieval Christianization, will happen two and a half centuries later on the very same territory, for which is known from *Anastasius Bibliothecarius* about *Sancta synodus octava generalis* that there are still operational churches in which is preached in Greek (Шувачев 1926: 89, бел. 4; ЛИБИ 1960/II, 189-190; Чанева-Дечеvsка 1999: 19; Николова 2002: 22).

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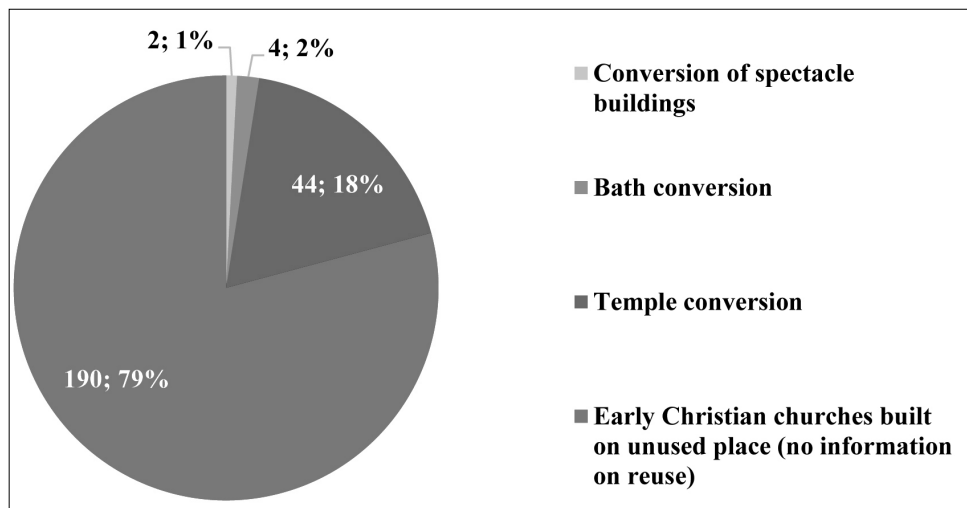


Chart 1. Distribution of (Re)Used / Christianized buildings from Diocese of Thrace

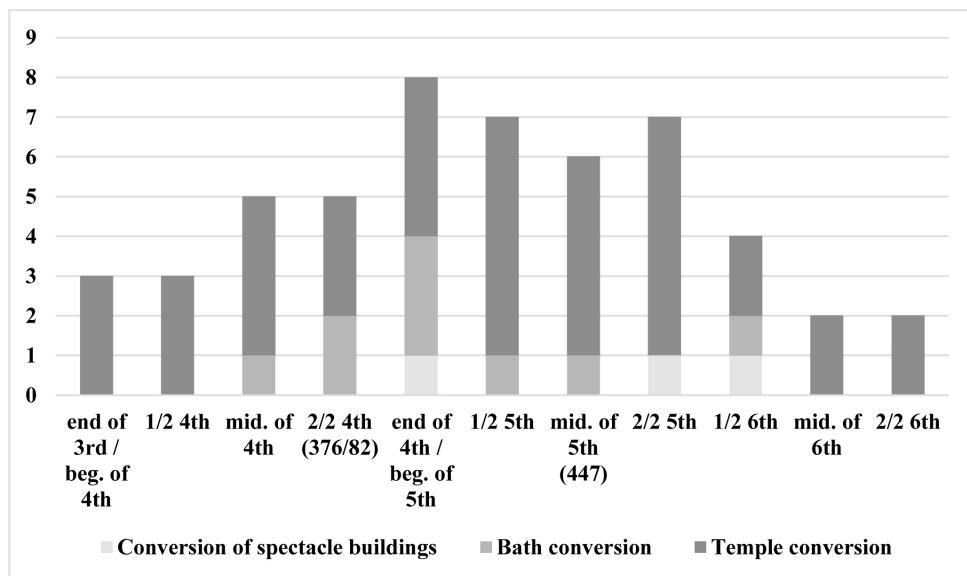


Chart 2. Chronology of (Re)Used / Christianized buildings from Diocese of Thrace

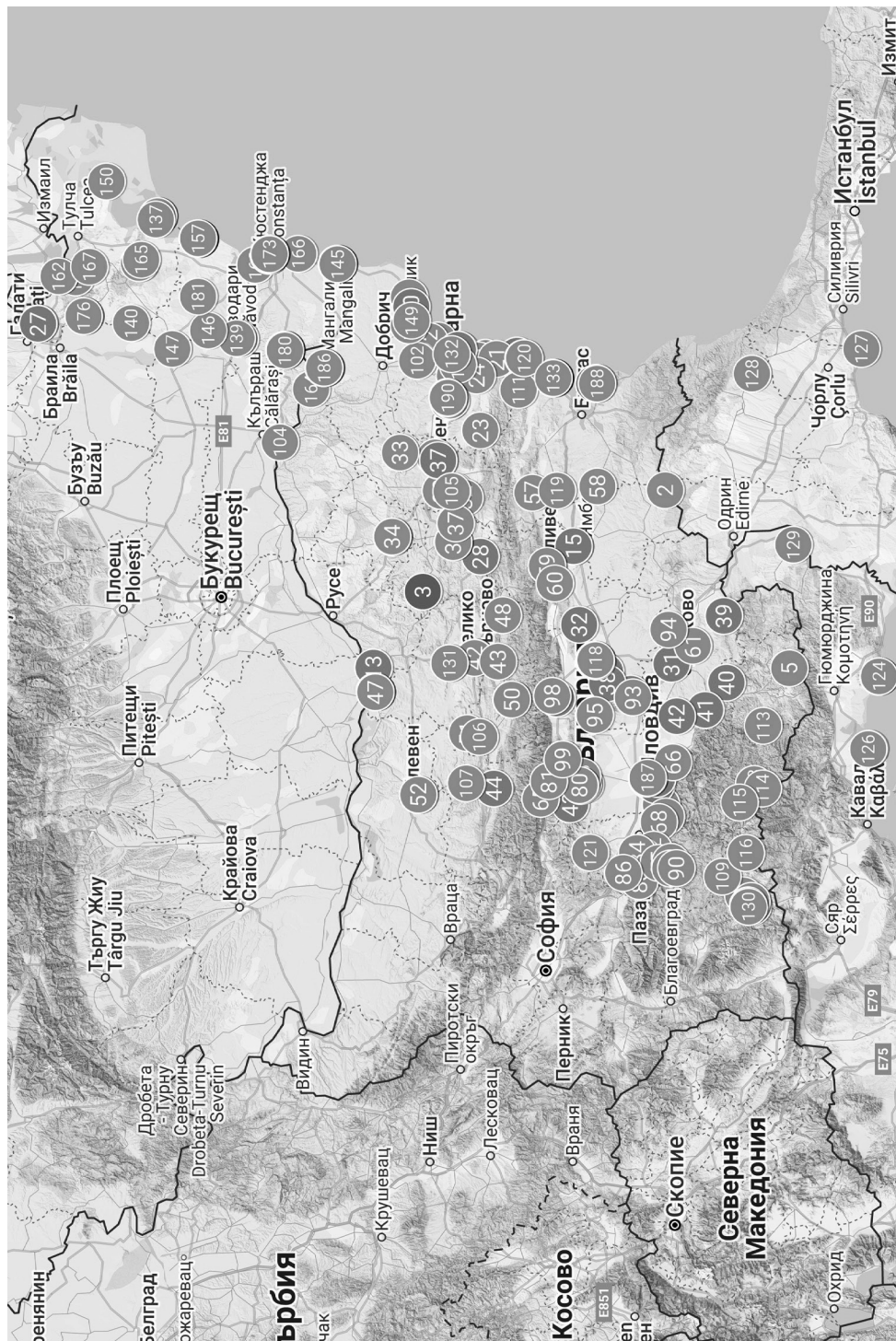


Fig. 1. (Re)Used / Christianized buildings from Diocese of Thrace.

● Conversion of spectacle buildings (yellow) – 1. *Marcianopolis* (in the amphitheater); 2. *Tomis* (above the amphitheater / theatre).

● Bath conversion (green) – 1. *Augusta Traiana's thermae*; 2. *Novae* (below the episcopal complex); 3. *Kovachevsko kale*; 4. *Dinogetia*.

● Temple conversion (blue) – 1. Episcopal basilica in *Philippopolis*; 2. *Augusta Traiana*; 3. *Diocletianopolis* basilica 4a; 4. *Messambria Pontica* (temple of Zeus?); 5. *Apollonia Pontica*, St. Cyricus Island; 6. *Apollonia Pontica*, Skamny cape; 7. *Apollonia Pontica*, St. John Island; 8. *Odessos*, temple of Apollo; 9. *Byala*, St. Athanasius cape; 10. *Histria Pontica*; 11. *Tropeum Traiani*, basilica Forensis; 12. *Cabyle* 2; 13. *Iatrus*; 14. *Tropeum Traiani*, basilica C; 15. *Cabyle* 1; 16. *Philippopolis*, Dzhendem tepe; 17. *Abritus*; 18. *Tomis*; 19. *Nicopolis ad Nestum* 1; 20. *Karassura*; 21. *Toyda*; 22. *Messambria Pontica* (temple of Demeter?); 23. *Messambria Pontica* (temple of Apollo 1?); 24. *Messambria Pontica* (temple of Apollo 2?); 25. *Messambria Pontica* (temple of Zeus and Hera?); 26. *Strogosia*; 27. *Dinogetia*; 28. *Draganovets*; 29. *Galata*; 30. *Topola*; 31. *Krepost*; 32. *Karanovo*; 33. *Kran* (Antemov orex); 34. *Trite chuchura*; 35. *Komatevo*; 36. *Branipole*; 37. *Madara*; 38. *Yavorovo*; 39. *Malko Gradishte*; 40. *Gorna krepost*; 41. *Angel voyvoda*; 42. *Dragoynovo*; 43. *Kozi gramadi peak*; 44. *Gyrgeva cherkva*.

● Early Christian churches built on unused place (no information on reuse) (red) – 1. *Diocletianopolis*, basilica 4b; 2. *Voden*; 3. *Perushtitsa*; 4. *Abritus* 1; 5. *Ruchey*; 6. *Odessos*, San Stefano str. and Chernorizets str.; 7. *Bizone*; 8. *Odessos*, Khan Krum str.; 9. *Odessos*, 18 St. Kliment str.; 10. *Odessos*, Tzaribord str. and Tzar Simeon str.; 11. *Odessos*, Pop Bogomil str.; 12. *Odessos*, Tzar Simeon str. and Kozloduy; 13. *Odessos*, Trar Kaloyan str. and Knyaz Dondukov str.; 14. *Pirinch tepe*; 15. *Dzhanavar tepe*; 16. *Galata*, St. Elija monastery; 17. 14 km Southwest of Varna; 18. *Aladzha monastery*; 19. Next to *Kamchia river mouth*; 20. *Bliznatsi*; 21. *Shkorpilovtsi*; 22. *Osenovo*; 23. *Dalgopol*; 24. Two churches around *Dobri dol*; 25. *Marcianopolis*, on the right river bank; 26. *Marcianopolis*, outside the fortress in the *Egreka locality*; 27. *Shumen fortress A*; 28. *Shumen fortress G*; 29. Two churches next to *Khan Krum*; 30. *Madara*; 31. *Kalugeritsa*, *Kirika locality*; 32. *Veliki Preslav*, *Delidushka locality*; 33. *Tsarkvitsa*; 34. *Abritus* 2; 35. *Krumovo kale* 1; 36. *Krumovo kale* 2; 37. *Ovcharovo*; 38. *Veliko Tarnovo*, Early Byzantine buildings on *Tsarevets*; 39. *Veliko Tarnovo*, single-apse church on *Tsarevets*; 40. *Veliko Tarnovo*, Episcopal Church on *Tsarevets*; 41. *Veliko Tarnovo*, under the medieval patriarchy on *Tsarevets*; 42. *Veliko Tarnovo*, next to the main Western gate on *Tsarevets*; 43. Two churches in *Kiliferski monastery*; 44. *Nicopolis ad Istrum* 1; 45. *Novae*, next to Eastern gate (sector XII); 46. *Novae*, sector VIIIa; 47. *Novae*, one on top of the other; 48. *Mariyan*; 49. *Gabrovo*, *Gradishte* 1; 50. *Gabrovo*, *Gradishte* 2; 51. *Kramolin*; 52. *Strogosia*, at the foot of the hill; 53. *Messambria Pontica*, the old metropolis; 54. *Messambria Pontica*, St. Virgin Eleusa; 55. *Messambria Pontica*, St., st. apostles Peter and Paul; 56. *Messambria Pontica*, next to St. George; 57. Two churches in *Lozarevo*; 58. *Pravdino*; 59. *Toyda*, *Novo selo district*; 60. *Malko Chochovene*; 61. *Lyubenovo*; 62. *Philippopolis*, next to the *αγορά*; 63. *Philippopolis*, *Saborna str.*; 64. *Philippopolis*, next to the church St. Parasceva; 65. *Hristo Danovo*; 66. *Dolni Voden*; 67. *Krichim*, *Gergevets locality*; 68. *Isparihovo*; 69. *Diocletianopolis* 1; 70. *Diocletianopolis* 2; 71. *Diocletianopolis*, 3; 72. *Diocletianopolis* 5; 73. *Diocletianopolis* 6; 74. *Diocletianopolis* 7; 75. *Diocletianopolis* 8; 76. *Diocletianopolis* 9; 77. *Diocletianopolis*, chapel next to the Eastern city wall; 78. *Diocletianopolis*, *Yurta locality*; 79. *Verigovo*; 80. *Verigovo*, *Manastirishte locality*; 81. *Anevsko kale*; 82. *Tsrancha*; 83. *Golyamo Belovo*; 84. *Kovachevo*; 85. *Tsepina*; 86. *Vetren*; 87. *Kostandovo*, *Grobishten locality*; 88. *Kostandovo*, *Cherkovishte locality*; 89. *Kostandovo*, *Rangela locality*; 90. *Rakitovo*; 91. *Oreshe*; 92. *Debren*; 93. *Karassura*; 94. *Simeonograd*; 95. *Gorno novo selo*; 96. In to a *villa suburban* outside of *Augusta Traiana* 1; 97. In to a *villa suburban* outside of *Augusta Traiana* 2; 98. *Kran*; 99. *Vasil*

Levski; **100.** Varna Lake, Peynerjik; **101.** Obzor 1; **102.** Debrene; **103.** *Marcianopolis*, Tabiya locality; **104.** *Durostorum*; **105.** Khan Krum; **106.** Sevlievo; **107.** Lovech; **108.** Smolyan, Mogilata locality; **109.** Sarnitsa; **110.** Dabnitsa; **111.** Panitsevo; **112.** *Augusta Traiana*, courthouse?; **113.** Garnati, Alada peak; **114.** Kishnitsa; **115.** Gela; **116.** Barutin; **117.** *Nicopolis ad Nestum* 2; **118.** *Augusta Traiana*, tetraconch church; **119.** *Markeli*; **120.** Obzor 2; **121.** Krasen fortress 2; **122.** *Maroneia*, on the port; **123.** *Maroneia*, Paliochora; **124.** *Maroneia*, North of Paliochora; **125.** *Abdera*, in the fortress; **126.** *Abdera*, in the necropolis; **127.** *Perint / Herakleia*; **128.** *Byzie*; **129.** *Plotinopolis*; **130.** *Nicopolis ad Nestum* 3; **131.** *Nicopolis ad Istrum* 2; **132.** *Odessos*, Sheynovo str. and Dragoman str.; **133.** *Messambria Pontica*, St. John the Baptist; **134.** *Argamum* 1; **135.** *Argamum* 2; **136.** *Argamum* 3; **137.** *Argamum* 4; **138.** *Axiopolis*, funeral church; **139.** *Axiopolis*, inside the town; **140.** *Beroe*; **141.** *Callatis*, the protochristian church?; **142.** *Callatis*, church into the cliffs; **143.** *Callatis*, Mihai Eminescu str.; **144.** *Callatis*, hotel President; **145.** *Callatis*, cemetery church; **146.** *Capidava*; **147.** *Carsium*; **148.** *Dionisopolis*, 4 km North of the city; **149.** *Dionisopolis*; **150.** *Halmyris*; **151.** *Histria Pontica*, extra muros church; **152.** *Histria Pontica*, church with crypt on the central square; **153.** *Histria Pontica*, church in Southwestern corner of the fortress; **154.** *Histria Pontica*, basilical building on the central square (*horreum* ?); **155.** *Histria Pontica*, basilica C; **156.** *Histria Pontica*, Episcopal basilica; **157.** *Histria Pontica*, sector *domus*; **158.** (*L*)*Ibida*, into the city; **159.** (*L*)*Ibida*, extra muros; **160.** Niculițel; **161.** *Noviodunum*, basilica 1; **162.** *Noviodunum*, basilica 2; **163.** Ovidiu; **164.** Golesh; **165.** Slava Rusă; **166.** Tuzla; **167.** Telitsa; **168.** *Tomis*, the small basilica; **169.** *Tomis*, in the high school Mihai Eminescu' yard; **170.** *Tomis*, at the port gate; **171.** *Tomis*, church on Revolution of December 1989 str. and 9 May str.; **172.** *Tomis*, located 25 m southwest of the Palace hotel; **173.** *Tomis*, with a Christian character; **174.** *Troesmis*, the big basilica; **175.** *Troesmis* 2; **176.** *Troesmis*, the small basilica; **177.** *Tropeum Traiani* A; **178.** *Tropeum Traiani* D; **179.** *Tropeum Traiani*, funeral church; **180.** *Tropeum Traiani*, extra muros; **181.** *Ulmetum*; **182.** *Zaldapa* 1; **183.** *Zaldapa* 2; **184.** *Zaldapa* 3-4; **185.** *Zaldapa* 5; **186.** *Zaldapa*, tetraconch church; **187.** *Philippopolis*, the small basilica; **188.** *Apollonia Pontica*, in front of the fortress wall; **189.** *Marcianopolis*, Episcopal basilica; **190.** *Marcianopolis*, the small church.