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THE EPISCOPAL BASILICA, THE VIA SACRA, AND THE SEMICIRCULAR COURT AT STOBI, R. MACEDONIA

Stobi was the largest and best known city in northern Macedonia in Late Antiquity. Located at the confluence of the Erigon (modern Crna) and Axios (modern Vardar) rivers, now in the Republic of Macedonia, the city became the capital of the province of Macedonia Secunda in the second half of the 5th century. Bishop Budios from Stobi participated in the Council of Nicaea in 325, and several later bishops of the city are known. According to an inscription, Bishop Philip was responsible for the construction of his episcopal church.

The Episcopal Basilica at Stobi is the outstanding Early Byzantine church known in the province of Macedonia Secunda, in terms of size, associated buildings, complexity of plan, unusual features, architectural sculpture, and mosaic and painted decoration.¹ Four successive phases of the basilica functioned from the late 4th century or ca. 400 AD until the late 6th century when the city was abandoned. More specifically, the first phase of the Early Church, constructed probably ca. 400 AD,² was renovated and enlarged into its second phase, most likely between 425 and 450, although no definite date can be assigned.³ During

¹ I express my thanks, to Miša Rakocija for the opportunity to participate in the Niš & Byzantium conference in 2010; to Gettysburg College for its support of my research through sabbaticals and Research & Professional Development grants; to James R. Wiseman, Djordje Mano-Zissi, and Blaga Aleksova, co-directors of the Yugoslav-American Stobi Project, for the opportunity to excavate at Stobi and to publish parts of the Episcopal Basilica complex; to Jovan Ristov, Živojin Vinčić, Vojislav Sanev, and others who facilitated my research at Stobi in 2003-2004; and to Virginia Anderson-Stojanović and Ruth Kolarik for companionship and scholarly discussions through the years.

² See, most recently, J. R. Wiseman, *The early churches and the Christian community in Stobi, Macedonia*, *Acta Congressus Internationalis XIV Archaeologiae Christianae*, Vienna, 1999, Vienna and Vatican City 2006, 795-803, who provides references to earlier bibliography on the Episcopal Basilica on pp. 796-801, and specific references for the date of the Early Church on pp. 796-797; also R. E. Kolarik, *The Episcopal Basilica at Stobi: The Baptistry and Related Structures*, *Acta Congressus Internationalis XV Archaeologiae Christianae*, Toledo 2008, Vatican City and Toledo, forthcoming, for the Baptistry.

³ Most of the evidence for the date of Phase II of the Early Church was excavated

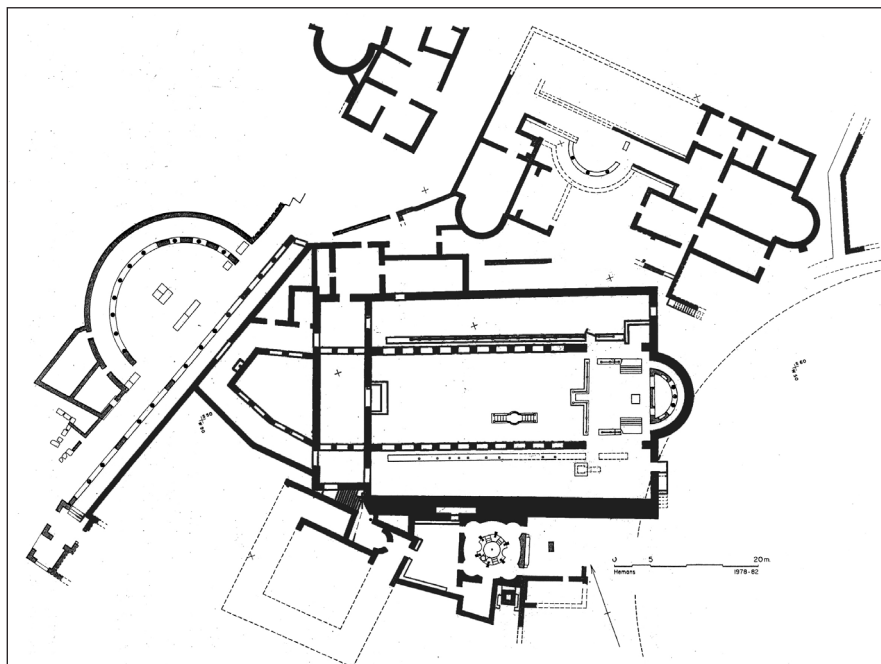


Fig. 1. Restored plan of the Episcopal Basilica complex in the 3rd or 4th decade of the 6th century. Drawing by F. P. Hemans.

Сл. 1. Обновљен план комплекса Епископске базилике у трећој или четвртој декади VI века. Цртеж Ф.П. Хеманс (F. P. Hemans).

the third quarter of the 5th century the Early Church was deliberately and carefully dismantled. The original construction of the Basilica on the Terrace, so-called because it stood on an artificial terrace ca. 4 m above the floor level of the Early Church, is dated on the basis of ceramic evidence to the last quarter of the 5th century;⁴ a major rebuilding is less precisely dated to the first half of the 6th century, most probably to the 520s or 530s.

The plan of the church and its relationship with annexes and surrounding structures are clear in the last major phase of the building, i.e., in the 6th century phase, despite the questions they raise. (Fig. 1) The east-south-east orientation of the basilica is anomalous within the city plan, although the arrangement of city blocks at Stobi does not follow a strict grid, and the orientation changes across the site. (Fig. 2) Phase I of the Basilica on the Terrace originally ended at the west wall of the narthex and of Room 6; given the interconnections among the atrium of the basilica, the street, and the courtyard, they are being treated as a unit, the Episcopal Basilica West.

The Porta Heraklea, the Via Sacra, the Semicircular Court, and the atrium of the church had been excavated to their latest use levels during the investigation during the 1980s, under the direction of Blaga Aleksova, and was not published.

⁴ V. Anderson-Stojanović, *Stobi I, The Hellenistic and Roman Pottery*, Princeton 1992, 63, 172, 173-175.

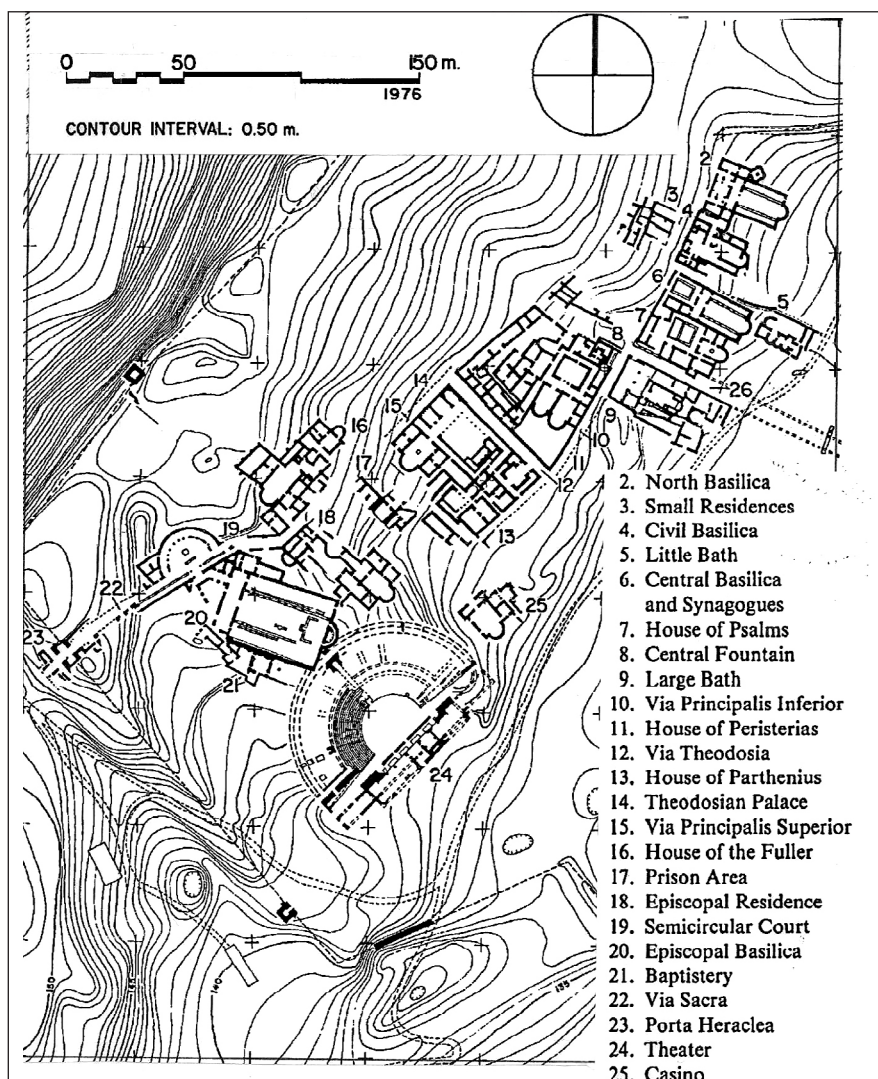


Fig. 2. Plan of the central, excavated part of the city of Stobi. Adapted from the site plan compiled by F. P. Hemans.

Сл. 2. План централног, ископаног дела града Стоби. Прерађено према плану локације који је саставио Ф.П. Хеманс.

gations sponsored by the National Museum in Beograd in the 1930s. (Fig. 3) Test trenches were placed in and around the atrium during the 1950s. During the Yugoslav-American Stobi Project (1970-1981), one large trench was dug to bedrock in the atrium, and the stratigraphy of street and court was explored by means of tests. Conservation and some excavation were carried out along the street and in the Semicircular Court under the auspices of the Institute for Preservation of Cultural Monuments in 2003. The purpose of this article is

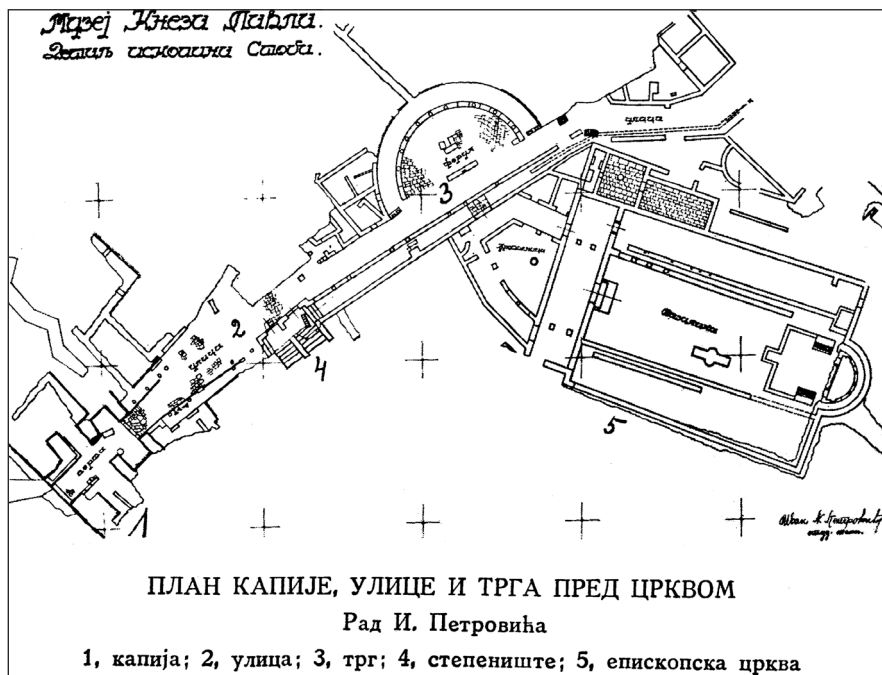


Fig. 3. Plan of the Porta Heraklea, Via Sacra, Semicircular Court, and Episcopal Basilica as excavated during the 1930s. From Mano-Zissi 1939, 264.

Сл. 3. План Порта Хераклеа, Виа Сакра, Полукружног трга и Епископске базилике као што су ископавања 1930-их. Од Мана Зисија 1939. год., 264.

threefold: 1) to describe the arrangement of the atrium and associated structures in the 6th century phase of the basilica, 2) to explain some of the anomalies of these arrangements in the Episcopal Basilica West, and 3) as far as possible to reconstruct the arrangement in the preceding, late 5th century phase.

Description of the 6th century phase, as discovered in the 1930s excavations

The main approach to the Episcopal Basilica lay along the Via Sacra, which extended from the Porta Heraklea to the northwest corner of the basilica. Beginning ca. 35 m inside the city gate, a portico supported by piers and columns lined the east⁵ side of the street and formed a monumental facade for the church. Across the street from the basilica and on axis with the entrance to

⁵ A glance at the plan of the city or of the Episcopal Basilica complex will show that the Via Sacra runs northeast-southwest. I hope that the retention of the directions used in the basilica proper for this part of the complex will prevent rather than create confusion. The northwest side of the Via Sacra will be described as west, the southeast side as east, the northeast end as north, etc. This applies also to the Semicircular Court which will be described as located west of the basilica and on the west side of the Via Sacra. The corridors of the atrium will be referred to as the north, west, and south corridors.

its triangular atrium stood a semicircular courtyard. Just beyond the northwest corner of the basilica, the Via Sacra turned sharply to the east and after ca. 20 m turned to the north and became the Via Principalis Superior, an important northeast-southwest street running across the upper part of the city. The orientation of the ca. 85 m long stretch of the Via Sacra stands out as an anomaly even in the somewhat irregular urban grid plan.

The Via Sacra does not lie on axis with the Porta Heraklea. The short stretch of preserved colonnade along the west side of the Via Sacra lines up with the gate but is not parallel to the east side of the street. Beyond the line of columns on the west side, Mano-Zissi noted an empty space.⁶ Excavations in 2003 and 2009-2010 have now confirmed the hypothesis that a second street led off at an angle and ran behind the Semicircular Court.

While the line of columns along the west side of the street continues the line of the gate, the east side of the street turns slightly to the right or east. Approximately halfway between the Porta Heraklea and the main entrance to the Episcopal Basilica, a sunken, double lobby interrupted the east sidewalk. Not only does the orientation of the east side of the Via Sacra shift again to the east but also the lobby juts out into the street and narrows it by ca. 0.90 m. At each end of the lobby, steps led down from the sidewalk into a rectangular area accessible also from the street itself. Mano-Zissi emphasized the discovery of a threshold - not now visible - and door jambs at the top of a flight of steps at the east side.⁷ His plan shows the upper five steps of a double staircase that provided communication between the double lobby and, presumably, the lower town.⁸

Immediately beyond the sunken lobby begins the arrangement of alternating columns and piers that formed the facade for the last major phase of the Episcopal Basilica. They supported a tiled roof that sheltered the sidewalk from the elements. Beginning from the corner pier of the lobby, the arrangement displayed two columns, a second pier, two columns, a third pier, four columns flanking the main entrance to the atrium, a fourth pier, two columns, and a final fifth pier. A stone block served as threshold and marked the end of the portico at the northwest corner of the church. The sidewalk was slightly elevated above the street and separated from it by thin sandstone slabs placed between

⁶ Đ. Mano-Zissi, *Iskopavanja u Stobima 1933 i 1934 godine*, Starinar 9-10, Beograd 1935-36, 152. Behind the space were structures with so much material, e.g., the skeletons of cattle and sheep, pottery, lamps, glassware, weights, and scales, that he suggested that a market had once been located there.

⁷ Đ. Mano-Zissi, *op. cit.*, 155. See Mano-Zissi's plan reprinted in Figure 3 of the present article.

⁸ A street beginning at the foot of the stairs and running roughly parallel to the Via Theodosia and the southwest city wall would pass by the side of reconstructed Peristyle Building D. The fact that the colonnaded portico forming the facade for the church begins here strongly suggests that in its final phase—and perhaps earlier, as well—the Episcopal Complex included the roughly square space bounded by Building D, the south wall of the atrium, the Via Sacra, and the hypothetical street. Nevertheless, present evidence allows only speculation that this lobby formed an integral part of the church complex or provided access to it from the south.



Fig. 4. The Semicircular Court, the Via Sacra, and in the background the Porta Heraklea.
From the north, March 2003.

Сл. 4. Полуокружни трг, Виа Сакра и у позадини Порта Хераклеа. Са северне стране,
март 2003.год.

the columns and piers and resting on a continuous stylobate wall (Wall 1). The sidewalk was not paved except where sandstone slabs marked the main entrance to the atrium and the church.

Only the large stone blocks that formed the bases of the piers are still *in situ*. Mano-Zissi described the collapse of the final northern pier across the Via Sacra and published photographs. From these it is clear that cut stones, presumably in lime mortar, rested on the block and formed the lower section of the pier; the upper part consisted of bricks and mortar as did the remains of arches also noted by the excavator.⁹ Apparently the imposts rested directly on top of the piers and the arches sprang from them without intervening capitals.¹⁰ Nine of the ten heterogeneous column bases of the colonnade are still *in situ*; the seventh one from the south end, on the north side of the church entrance, is missing.

Directly across the Via Sacra from the entrance to the church, the straight east side of a Semicircular Court ran parallel to the colonnaded facade of the basilica. The court consisted of a broad annular corridor or portico separated by a colonnade from a semicircular courtyard. A number of short walls formed the

⁹ D. Mano-Zissi, *op. cit.*, 145-169, 155.

¹⁰ Observation by F. P. Hemans on the basis of Mano-Zissi's photographs.

outer edge of the portico, from which several rooms were accessible through doorways. Columns and piers stood on a stylobate made of re-used marble Theater seat blocks that rested on a foundation wall. In the middle of the courtyard, three marble blocks may once have supported the base for a statue.¹¹ At the front of the courtyard, along the Via Sacra and directly opposite the entrance to the Episcopal Basilica, two additional marble blocks (re-used Theater seats) demarcated the east edge of the courtyard; other marble blocks marked the north and south ends of the portico. The courtyard had been paved with square and rectangular sandstone slabs, of which a large number remained *in situ*. (Fig. 4)

The colonnade of the Semicircular Court displayed an irregular arrangement of piers and columns: from the south end, a pier partly covering a column base, six column bases, and then four piers with three column bases between them. Whereas the arrangement of columns and piers in the colonnade across the street was carefully planned to emphasize the main entrance to the church, the piers and columns around the courtyard appear much more haphazard.

If the column bases on the south side of the portico still occupy their original positions, an earlier colonnade of 14 columns could be reconstructed. Of the ten column bases remaining *in situ*, nine are similar but not identical in size, profile, and material - rose marble. The odd base is the sixth one from the south end, located in the center of the colonnade. The south end of the colonnade did not extend all the way to the edge of the Via Sacra but stopped ca. 1.8 m west of the street; no evidence indicates that the stylobate and its foundation wall continued to the east beyond the first pier at the south. The Semicircular Court apparently had a slightly different orientation originally, following the line of a wall that marked the edge of an earlier phase of the Via Sacra.

The five piers of the colonnade rest directly on the marble stylobate without intervening blocks for bases. Several large bricks still preserved *in situ* in 2003 at the top of the fifth pier suggested that the preserved rubble masonry had once supported brick construction like that in the piers across the street.¹²

The atrium complex occupied a roughly triangular space between the west wall of the narthex and the Via Sacra; the south side of the triangle was bent rather than straight. Three rooms filled the north end of the triangle. The northernmost room, itself triangular, was entered only through a doorway from the portico beside the Via Sacra. One could enter the two southern rooms from the north corridor of the atrium, and the southwest room was also accessible from the portico beside the Via Sacra.

An irregularly shaped courtyard, whose curved south side was longer than the straight north side, together with flanking porticos or corridors filled the southern part of the triangle. A solid wall¹³ formed the west side of the

¹¹ The three blocks in the middle of the courtyard showed no traces of cuttings or other evidence for a statue. Perhaps other blocks—long vanished—resting on those *in situ* carried cuttings and actually supported a statue. There is no evidence for a statue of Theodosius the Great, who would have been long dead by the time the Semicircular Court was laid out.

¹² Đ. Mano-Zissi, *op. cit.*, 156, mentioned a pier at the west end (equals our south end) of the colonnade with stones below but mostly brick-built above.

¹³ Pierced by a pipe for a fountain in the west corridor; see J. Wiseman, Stobi in Yugoslav Macedonia: Archaeological Excavations and Research, 1977-78, *Journal of Field*

courtyard, while the north and south sides were marked by columns and piers. In the final phase, doorways at the east ends of the north and south corridors provided entrance to the narthex. Two blocked doorways in the central part of the west wall of the narthex point to other arrangements in an earlier phase. The courtyard had been paved with large rectangular stone slabs.

The lack of bonding between the walls of the atrium and those of the narthex indicate that the Basilica on the Terrace in Phase I originally terminated at the west side of the narthex and the west wall of Room 6.¹⁴ The results of excavation in the atrium suggest that the construction of the atrium followed shortly thereafter. Two phases of construction are visible in the atrium; they generally correspond with the late 5th and 6th century phases of the basilica proper.

In summary, during the second major phase of the church, in the 6th century, the atrium, Semicircular Court, and Via Sacra demonstrated a unified plan. The arrangement of columns and piers supporting the eastern portico along the Via Sacra framed the entrance to the atrium. That entrance lay on the axis of the Semicircular Court; if the line of that axis was continued through the atrium, it ran roughly parallel to the western part of the south wall and colonnade (Wall 7) of the courtyard and to the west part of the south wall (Wall 5) of the atrium.

Observations, and more recent excavations

The generally accepted view since the original excavations in the 1930s was that the pre-existing Via Sacra limited the space available for the atrium and thus accounted for its irregular shape.¹⁵ But the observation, published in 1968, that the north wall of the north portico of the atrium (Wall 10a) had been dismantled even with the west face of the west facade wall of the atrium (Wall 4) led Djurdje Bošković to conclude that the creation of the Via Sacra had truncated an previously existing, square or rectangular atrium of the church. (Figs. 5, 6, 7) He therefore assumed that the church had been constructed before the street.¹⁶ The question of which came first, the street or the atrium, had implications for the urban development of the city as well as for the plan of the basilica.

The discovery, made in 1976 by members of the Yugoslav-American Stobi Excavation Project, that the dismantled wall (10a) had bonded with a north-south wall (Wall 2) contiguous to the exterior face of the west facade

Archaeology 5, Boston 1978, 391-429, 413. This feature was incorrectly conserved.

¹⁴ J. Wiseman, *op.cit.*, 415. It seems unlikely that the Early Church included an atrium to the west, because of the steep slope between the Via Sacra and the west side of the Early Church and because a line of wall (C3) parallel to the Via Sacra probably ran across the area where such an atrium would have been located. In fact, even the existence of a narthex in the Early Church remains uncertain.

¹⁵ E.g., E. Kitzinger, *A Survey of the Early Christian Town of Stobi*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers 3, Washington DC 1946, 88, 116-117.

¹⁶ Đ. Bošković, *Quelques remarques sur la Grande Basilique de Stobi et son rapport envers la structure urbaine de cette ville*, *Charisterion eis Anastasion K. Orlandon* 4, Athens 1967/68, 184-189; he notes that in fact one of his students and collaborators, Svetislav Vučenović, had made this observation in 1955.

Fig. 5. The west, truncated end of Wall 10a, between parts of Wall 4. From the west, March 2003.

Сл. 5. Западни, скраћени завршетак зида 10, међу деловима зида 4. Са западне стране, март 2003. год.



Fig. 6. The Semicircular Court from the west, looking across the Via Sacra to the west façade of the Episcopal Basilica and its entrance. X marks truncated Wall 10a. From west, March 2003.

Сл. 6. Полукружни трг са западне стране, који гледа преко Виа Сакре на западну фасаду епископске базилике и њен улаз. Скраћени зид 10а са ознаком X. Са западне стране, март 2003. год.



Fig. 7. The north half of the Semicircular Court, the Via Sacra, and the north part of the atrium complex. From west, March 2003.

Сл. 7. Северна половина полукружног трга, Виа Сакра и северни део атријум комплекса. Са западне стране, март 2003. год.



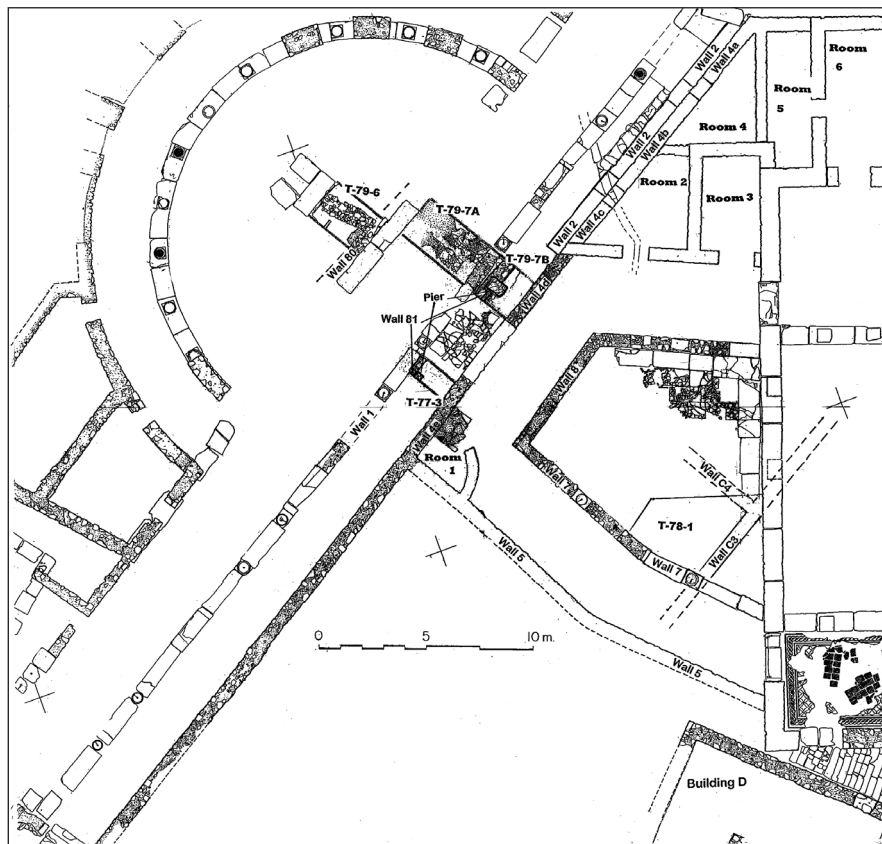


Fig. 8. Plan of Episcopal Basilica West showing trenches and earlier features. Based on the 1976 plan of the Episcopal Basilica by F. P. Hemans, with additions by the author.

Сл. 8. План епископске базилике запад који приказује ровове и раније карактеристике. На основу плана Епископске базилике из 1976. год. Ф.П. Хеманса, са додацима аутора.

wall (4) supported the long-standing hypothesis that the oddly shaped atrium had reconciled or bridged the differing orientations of church and pre-existing street. In fact, the truncated wall (10a) had formed an acute-angled corner with the dismantled north-south wall (2).¹⁷ (Fig. 8)

As a result of this discovery, test trenches were excavated in the Via Sacra (T-79-7a) just north of the 6th century entrance to the Episcopal Basilica, in the portico north (T-79-7b) and south (T-77-3) of the entrance to the basilica, and in the Semicircular Court (T-79-6). In the following paragraphs, the results of those investigations will be summarized and their implications considered briefly. An attempt will then be made to correlate the discoveries in the three areas with the existing architecture and to reconstruct a possible late 5th century lay-

¹⁷ J. Wiseman, *op. cit.*, 413.

out of the Episcopal Basilica West area. Because of the limited size of the tests, and because of walls separating the areas, correlation of deposits and features among the Court, street, and portico was sometimes difficult to achieve.¹⁸

The test trench dug across the Via Sacra just north of the basilica entrance revealed a series of street pavements and indicated that the street had been located in this same location, despite minor shifts of direction and changes in width, for at least a century before the construction of the late 4th century church and very probably from the original layout of the Roman city. The unusual orientation of the Via Sacra, which may follow the approximate line of a road leading southwest from the Hellenistic settlement, can be easily explained. It runs along the lower edge of the higher part of the city. The terrain falls away steeply to the east beside the Via Sacra and also beside the first blocks of the Via Principalis Superior. From the Porta Heraklea, which was also located on higher ground, to the basilica, the level dropped beside the street, probably to the floor level of the Early Church and of Building D; the staircase excavated by Mano-Zissi led down from the sunken lobby beside the Via Sacra into an area still unexplored. North of the Episcopal Basilica, the floors of the Episcopal Residence and the Theodosian Palace are found at much lower levels than the pavement of the Via Principalis Superior beside them. The final pavement of the Via Sacra near the entrance to the church lay at ca. 148.40 masl, and bedrock appeared below the west part of the nave of the Early Church at ca. 142.70, while the level of the orchestra in the Theater was found at 137.9.

Excavation to a depth of ca. 1 m in T-79-7a revealed eight possible or definite street levels; investigation did not continue to bedrock. A stone feature, perhaps the remnant of a wall, apparently marked the east edge of the first four levels ca. 1.5 m west of the foundation wall (Wall 1) for the colonnade that supported the later portico. The eastern edge of Street 5 was shifted ca. 2.5 m to the east and was bounded by Wall 81, a north-south wall located mostly below the portico area. Wall 80 (T-79-6), near the west edge of the later Via Sacra, cut through earlier street levels and marked the west edge of Street 5. Walls 80 and 81 were parallel with each other and with Wall C1 under the north aisle and Wall C3 below the courtyard of the atrium.¹⁹ The 4th-5th century or later²⁰ pottery date for Street 5 suggests that it was connected with a period of urban renewal noted elsewhere in the city.

In the Semicircular Court, T-79-6 was excavated between the monument base and the marble blocks along the east edge of the court. At the east end of the trench, the construction of Wall 80 cut through a patch of pebbled street surface, perhaps part of street level 3, thus confirming that the early street levels had extended to the west. The wall showed a clearly defined west face but the

¹⁸ A number of problems raised by excavation in Episcopal Basilica West are not considered here because of lack of space. They appear not to affect the conclusions reached in this article.

¹⁹ J. Wiseman, *ibidem*, 407. Wall C3 was found in T-78-1, in the southeast corner of the atrium courtyard.

²⁰ All the pottery dates were provided by Virginia Anderson Stojanović, either during analysis on site or in her book, V. Anderson-Stojanović, *Stobi I*. The dates provide a *terminus post quem*, i.e., the date cannot be earlier but could be later.



Fig. 9. T-79-7b, the trench in the portico north of the entrance to the atrium. The meter stick rests on Wall 1 in the background; the pier rests on Wall 81, and the broken screen slab is visible running into the scarp at the left. From east.

Сл. 9. T-79-7б, ров у портику северно од улаза у атријум. Штап за мерење наслана се на зид 1 у позадини; стуб се ослања на зид 81, и види се разбијена покривна плоча како улази у коси потпорни зид лево. Са источне стране.

eastern one was concealed under the marble blocks dividing the court from the street. What function the area of the later court may have served is unknown, but the construction of an east-west Wall 79 abutting Wall 80 indicates that it was not open space. Wall 79 was then destroyed and at least the west part of Wall 80 damaged, perhaps contemporary with the construction of Street 6. Fill was brought in to raise the level, the blocks of the monument base were laid, and a stone packing was covered by a layer of mortar.

The south end of the colonnade of the Semicircular Court does not extend to the edge of the 6th century Via Sacra but stops ca. 1.8 m to the west. The line of Wall 80, if extended to north and south, would touch the north and south ends of the colonnade; this observation suggests that the Court was originally constructed while the line of Wall 80 still marked the west edge of the street, parallel with Wall 81 at the east side, probably contemporary with Street 6.

On the east side of the street, the partial removal of Wall 81 initiated the Street 6 phase. The street was paved with stone slabs, which extended to a line of piers and screen slabs that marked its eastern limit; the piers rested in part on the preserved top of Wall 81 and apparently followed its orientation. (Fig. 9) The line of Wall 80 still marked the west edge of the street, although - as noted above - the wall itself had been at least partly dismantled. Very probably at this time Wall 2 was constructed as the west façade wall for the north part of an atrium complex similar in arrangement to that of the 6th century phase.

Some of the paving slabs of Street 6 had disappeared before the stone and mortar packing was laid for Street 7, a pebbled surface. While Street 7 was in use, subsidence occurred in the eastern part of T-79-7a. Both Streets 6 and 7 buckled and dipped ca. 0.30 m; they raise the possibility that an earthquake caused damage before the construction of the final Street 8. The bedding for Street 8 filled the depression in the previous streets and provided a level foundation for paving slabs.

Whether or not one accepts the earthquake hypothesis, a series of events associated with Street 8 may be traced. In the portico area, the piers associated with Street 6 were dismantled and the screen slabs removed. Wall 4 was built as the west wall of the atrium complex, and Wall 1, the foundation wall of the stylobate supporting the portico along the Via Sacra, followed shortly afterward. Care was taken to remove earlier walls and features from the trench dug through the street level 6 pavement for the construction of Wall 1, e.g., part of Wall 81 was removed in T-77-3. The final event visible in the two trenches in the portico area was the placement of the threshold block of the main basilica entrance into Wall 4. In T-79-6, in the Semicircular Court, the earlier project for which the stone packing and mortar layer had been prepared may not have been completed. Some disturbance was noted around the monument base; eventually more fill was brought in to raise the court to a higher level. Stone paving was then laid.

Thus, in summary, Street 8 or the final level of the Via Sacra and the constructions to east and west associated with it represent the final major building phase in the Episcopal Basilica West; this was the unified 6th century arrangement, with repairs and minor modifications, that was excavated in the 1930s.

If the attempt is made to reconstruct earlier arrangements in the area, Street 5 is the earliest one with which other features can be associated, i.e., Walls 80 and 81. It marked a shift in location of the street to the east. One might speculate that Wall 81 and Wall C3, found below the atrium courtyard, formed the east and west walls of a building located between Street 5 and the Early Church during the first half of the 5th century, but the evidence is insufficient for more than speculation.

Street 6 appears to be associated with the original construction of the Semicircular Court, i.e., with the erection of the colonnade and the establishment of the monument base, even if the planned paving of the courtyard was never carried out. The replacement of Wall 81 along the east side of the street by the line of piers and screen slabs in front of the later entrance to the atrium of the basilica is also associated with Street 6. Despite a number of uncertainties, these constructions appear to represent the first major building phase in the Episcopal Basilica West, slightly later than Phase I of the Basilica on the Terrace, a conclusion supported by the late 5th century pottery date for Street 6.

The greatest problem in the reconstruction of this phase is how to reconcile Wall 2 and the line of piers and screen slabs along the west façade of the atrium and of the church. Wall 2 did not extend to the south much beyond the corner it formed with Wall 10a. No corresponding wall was found in T-77-3 south of the later main entrance to the atrium.

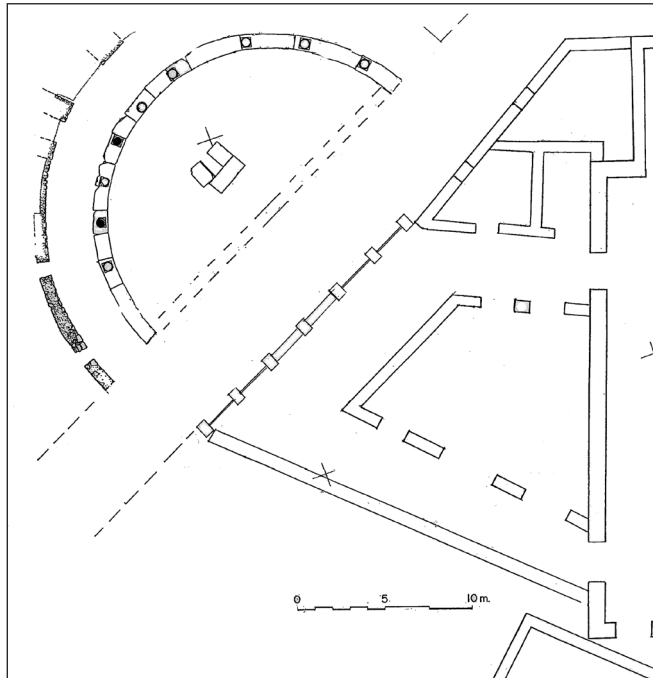


Fig. 10. Proposed reconstruction of Phase I of Episcopal Basilica West.

Сл. 10. Предложена реконструкција фазе I Епископске базилике запад .

Three piers were discovered in a row in front of the later entrance to the church, and the existence of others has been hypothesized. The first pier was found in T-79-7b, just north of the entrance to the atrium. The bottom of a broken screen slab ran south from the pier into the scarp; a very soft narrow deposit to the north of the pier suggested that another slab and therefore another supporting pier had stood to the north. Part of a pier was found in T-77-3, just south of the entrance to the atrium. A third pier came to light in 2003 during conservation of the stone paving at the entrance to the basilica;²¹ a rather battered foundation extended south from this middle one, possibly for a threshold block.

The 6th century entrance to the church was centered in the west wall of the atrium proper (or in the wall of the west corridor of the atrium) and lay on axis with the Semicircular Court, an arrangement made possible only by the south wall (5) of the atrium bending to the north. Wall 5 was poorly preserved when found, probably because it served as the terrace wall supporting the south side of the atrium. The wall could have been constructed in a straight line between its two ends. The fact that the east half of Wall 5 runs parallel with the north wall of Building D to the south but its west half changes orientation to align with the axis of the Semicircular Court and the basilica entrance strongly suggests that the west half of Wall 5 and the southwest corner of the atrium courtyard belong only to the final, 6th century phase.

²¹ I was able to examine this pier only very briefly, before it was covered up again by the conserved paving.

The foundation running to the south from the pier found under the paving in front of the entrance to the atrium suggests that access to the late 5th century atrium was located south of the later entrance. The arrangement of the south side of the atrium in its first phase remains unknown, but open to speculation.

If in the late 5th century, in the first phase of Episcopal Basilica West, the south wall (5) of the atrium had continued to run straight rather than bending, i.e., if it had continued in a line parallel to the wall of Building D, it would have lined up roughly with the south end of the outer wall of the Semicircular Court. An arrangement of seven piers with a double central entrance would extend from the corner of Walls 2 and 10a to this hypothetical straight south wall (5) of the atrium. (Fig. 10)

In this reconstruction, a slightly larger and somewhat more regular atrium would have extended further to the southwest, the entrance to the church would have been more open but still centered in the longer west corridor of the atrium, and in front of the church the Via Sacra would have been somewhat wider, with its paving extending from the original east edge of the Semicircular Court to the line of piers at the west entrance to the basilica.

What remains unclear in such a reconstruction is the orientation of the west facade of the church and thus of the Via Sacra to the south of the church. At the north end of the atrium complex, Wall 2 of the late 5th century phase has already taken on the orientation to be used in the west wall (4) of the 6th century phase of the atrium, but the line of piers had retained the older orientation of the Semicircular Court. Perhaps, just as the oddly shaped, triangular atrium bridged the gap between the pre-existing street and the basilica, the line of piers provided a visual solution for the varying orientations of the Via Sacra, Semicircular Court, and basilica.

Каролин С. Снајвли
ЕПИСКОПСКА БАЗИЛИКА, ВИА САКРА И ПОЛУКРУЖНИ ТРГ
У СТОБИЈУ, Р. МАКЕДОНИЈА

Епископска базилика у Стобију представља изузетну рановизантијску цркву познату у провинцији Македонија Секунда. Четири узастопне фазе базилике биле су у функцији од касног IV в. или око 400. год. нове ере до VI в. када је град био напуштен. Рана црква реновирана је у другој фази, вероватно између 425. и 450. год. Оригинална конструкција монументалне базилике на такозваној тераси тако названој јер је стајала на вештачкој тераси на око 4м изнад нивоа пода Ране цркве, датира из последње четвртине V в.; највећа реконструкција мање прецизно је датирана у прву половину VI в., највероватније 520-их или 530-их година.

Оријентација базилике је неправилна на урбанистичком плану града, и необично обликован, троугласти атријум одваја је од улице познате као Вија Сакра, такође неправилне на урбанистичком плану. Зидови атријума наслањају се на зидове портика, и ископавања су показала да је атријум саграђен убрзо после прве фазе Базилике на тераси. Атријум, Вија Сакра са покривеним портиком на својој источној страни, и полукружним тргом преко улице, преко пута базилике, показују јединствен план, барем

у другој великој фази изградње, и као резултат тога третирају се као целина, позната као Епископска базилика запад. Две фазе изградње у овој области углавном одговарају двома главним фазама Базилике на тераси, односно, фаза касног V века и фаза VI века. Друга фаза, као и неке поправке и мање промене, била је она коју је ископавао Ђорђе Мано-Зиси и други током 1930-их.

Опште прихваћено гледиште тридесетих година било је да је претходна Виа Сакра ограничавала расположив простор за атријум и тиме оправдавала свој неправилан изглед. Али откриће, најпре да је северни зид северног портика атријума (зид 10a) био расформиран чак и са западног лица западног фасадног зида (зид 4) и друго, да је зид 10a који је повезан са северним и јужним зидом (зид 2) гранични са спољним лицем западног фасадног зида (4) покренуо је питања о претходном распореду Епископске базилике запад. Известан број пробних ровова ископан је у периоду између 1977. и 1981. год., током последњих година југословенско-америчког пројекта Стоби, да би се истражиле раније фазе објекта у атријуму, Виа Сакра и полукружни трг.

Пробни ров ископан преко Виа Сакра открио је низ уличних тротоара и показао да је улица већ постојала на истој локацији упркос малим променама смера, најмање један век пре изградње цркве у позном IV веку. Оријентација Виа Сакре је необична јер прати дуж ниже ивице горњи део града. Терен се стрмо спушта на исток поред Виа Сакре и такође поред Виа Принципалис Супериор, улице у коју је Виа Сакра скретала изнад северозападног угла базилике.

Ископавањем је откривено осам могућих нивоа улица, од којих су прва четири лежало западно од потоњих. Паралелни зидови 81 и 80 обележили су источну и западну страну улице 5, која је померена око 2,5 м источно; они су се такође пружали паралелно са зидом испод дворишта атријума. Грнчарија из IV - V века или касније за улицу 5 сугерише да је била у вези са са периодом обнове града приметном у другим деловима града, вероватно укључујући Рану цркву.

Улица 6 представља прву велику фазу изградње у епископској цркви запад. Оба зида 80 и 81 делимично су била уништена. Линија зида 80 делила је западну страну улице од источне ивице полукружног трга који је обухватао закривљен портик и неколико блокова у средини као темељ споменика; међутим, чини се да припреме за поплочавање дворишта нису биле завршене. На источној страни улице, низ камених стубова и покривних плоча лежао је на растуреном врху зида 81; заједно са зидом 2, сачињавали су западну фасаду базилике и уоквиривали улаз у атријум, чији је распоред генерално био сличан оном из фазе VI века сем на југозападном углу.

Након што је могуће била оштећена земљотресом, улица 8, чији је источни портик подржавала колонада камених стубова, представља финалну фазу Виа Сакре. Ова улица, заједно са нешто мањим атријумом и реорјентисаним полукружним тргом, сачињавала је сједињени VI вековни план Епископске базилике запад.