

## **SOME NEW DATA ON THE CONSTRUCTION DATE OF DYRRACHIUM'S BYZANTINE WALLS**

Dyrrachium was a major port of Illyria for Italy, whence a branch of the Via Egnatia runs past (technically bypasses) Salonica to Constantinople subsequently to link New with Old Rome.<sup>1</sup> This city on the Eastern Shore of the Adriatic Sea was very important in Balkans and Mediterranean basin. It was the most strategic city in Adriatic coast<sup>2</sup> one of two principles gates of Christian diffusion on Balkans (the other was Salona).<sup>3</sup> As part of East Illyricum and Macedonian Diocese, Dyrrachium was the capital of the Province of Epirus Nova, when Theodos divided Roman Empire in two parts.<sup>4</sup> The Eastern Empire where this city took part, was constituted within its territorial limits at the death of Theodos, in January 395. This 'definitive'<sup>5</sup> division of Roman Empire between Arcad and Honor was by no means irreversible; that the two halves of the Roman world had almost always existed separately since the time of Diocletian and Constantine; and that the establishment of Germanic peoples in the west-an entirely unpredicted event-made permanent a division intended to remain transitory.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> F.L. F. Tafel, *De via militari romanorum Egnatia qua Illyricum, Macedonia et Thracia iungebantur*, (Tübingen 1842, repr. London 1972), 16-20.

<sup>2</sup> G. Ostrogorsky, *Storia dell'Impero Bizantino*, Torino 1972, 262, 269-270.

<sup>3</sup> M. Sufflay, *Kirchenzerstande in vorturkischen Albanien. Die orthodoxe Durchbruchzone im katholischen Damne*, Illyrische-Albanische Forschungen 1, Munchen und Leipzig 1916, 195.

<sup>4</sup> J.B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene, 395 A.D. to 800 A.D.*, (In two volumes), Amsterdam 1966, 267; P.G. Valentini, *Contributi alla cronologia Albanese*, Roma 1942, 2<sup>nd</sup> edit. 1957), 104-107; Hieroclis, *Synecdemus*, Lipsiae 1863, 652-654, 656.

<sup>5</sup> J.M. Spieser, *L'Empire byzantin de Constantin à la veille de l'Iconoclasme IVe-VIIe siècle*, Byzance, L'art byzantin dans les collection publiques Francaises, Musée de Louvre, 3 nov. 1992-1er fe'vrier 1993, (Paris 1992), 24.

<sup>6</sup> L. Bréhier, *The life and death of Byzantium* (Amsterdam, New-York (Oxford 1977), (Translated in English by M. Vaughan), 9.

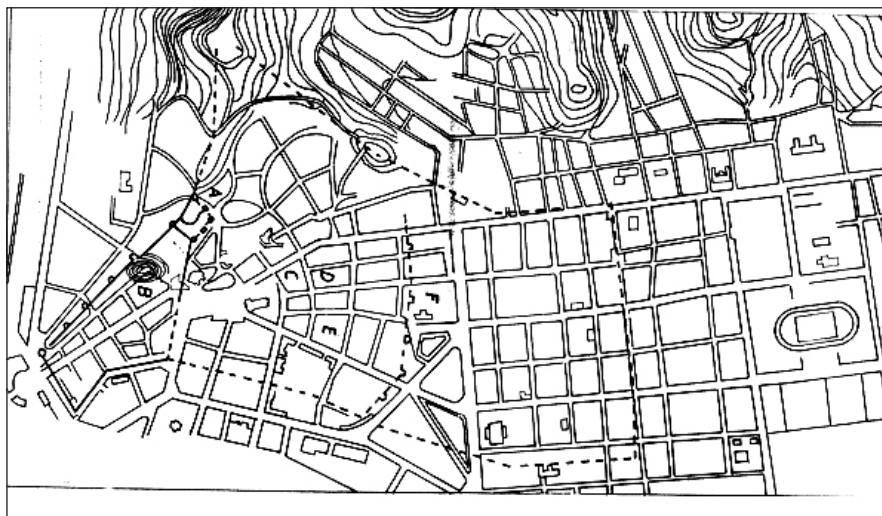


Fig. 1 The Schematic Plan of Durrës City. A. Byzantine Walls, B. Amphitheatre, C. Public Roman Bath, D. Byzantine Round Forum, E. Hellenistic Mosaic, F. The zone outside the first circuit of Byzantine Walls.

Сл. 1 Шематски план града Дурреса (Durrës). А. Византијске зидине, Б. Амфитеатар, В. Римско јавно купатило, Г. Византијски округли форум, Д. Хеленски мозаик, Ђ. Област изван првог круга византијских зидина

Being between the Latin-speaking West<sup>7</sup> and the Greek-speaking East<sup>8</sup>, between Rome and Constantinople and as the head-line of Via Egnatia; Dyrrachium had both east and west influences, although as part of Macedonian Province and south Illyria it remained part of Eastern or Byzantine Empire. The Eastern or Byzantine Empire was with new characteristics, which lend originality to its history. Its civilization is an effective synthesis of all the political religious and intellectual elements of the ancient world in its decline: the Latin tradition, Hellenism, Christianity, and the rejuvenated eastern culture of Sassanid Persia. At the time when the west, was undergoing a political, social, intellectual and artistic regression, Byzantium-and this is the cause of its greatness-safeguarded by every possible means the two-fold legacy of ancient civilization, which it bequeathed to modern times.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Spiritually and to some degree politically the domain of the papacy, this area extended from Italy east to the Adriatic coastland including Dalmatia, west to southern France and Spain, south to North Africa, from western Algeria to Tripolitania. See R. Crautheimer, *Early Christian Architecture*, (Fourth ed. Revised by R. Krautheimer and S. Ćurčić), London 1989, 96.

<sup>8</sup> The coastlands of the Aegean sea where Constantinople was the leading center, Thrace and Macedonia, the southern Balkan, the mainland of Greece, the coasts of Asia Minor and the Greek islands comprise the core of this region. But it also includes the shores of the Black Sea, the big trade centers, mainly on the coasts of Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Cyrenaica, and Greek towns far in mountain or desert regions of the East, where the architecture of the coastland cities penetrated because of the prevailing urban character of hellenistic culture. See *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> L. Bréhier, *op. cit.*, 1.

Fig. 2 The  
Amphitheater  
(IInd century AD)

Сл. 2  
Амфитеатар (II  
в. н.е.)



There are not direct data about the precise date of Epirus Nova's separation from the Macedonian Province. It is noted that perhaps under Diocletian<sup>10</sup> the Province of Epirus was separated from Achaia and by the time of the Verona List (produced between 328-337 A.D), it was divided into two provinces both administratively part of the diocese of Moesia, later transformed to that of Macedonia.<sup>11</sup> According to Laterculus Veronensis it may happened during the first quarter of fourth century, when for the first time is mentioned Epirus Nova and Epirus Veteris.<sup>12</sup> The discovery of an inscription in Paleocastres's fortress where mentioned the Province of Epirus Veteris in the period of Licinius, dated from the excavator in 311-313, mentioned that the division existed in this period.<sup>13</sup> According to Hierocles, New Epirus with capital Dyrrachium had nine cities.<sup>14</sup> The church administration of Dyrrachium was from Roman papacy through vicarious of Salonica.<sup>15</sup> That happened in the period of papa Siric, around c. 385, ordered from Theodosius emperor.<sup>16</sup>

These historical sources are few in report with the activities and the real role Dyrrachium played in this important period of its history. Archaeological material gathered from different excavations is a good base for reconstruction of the image that city had in early stages of Early Christian and Byzantine Empire. Byzantine walls, the sewer system, the chapels of the amphitheater, basilicas at Arapaj and Gjuricaj, basilica under the Fatih mosque, etc. are the monuments

<sup>10</sup> Hertzberg, *Griechenland unter der Herrschaft der Römer*, III (1875), 207.

<sup>11</sup> ODB, *The Oxford Dictionary of Bizantium* (1991), V. I, 715.

<sup>12</sup> E. K. Hryson, *Symboli stin Istoria tis 'peiron*, Ipeiotika Hronika 23, (1981), 12.

<sup>13</sup> A. Baçe, *Keshtjella e Paleokastres*, *Iliria*, (1981/1), 207-208; A. Meksi, *Arkitektura Paleokristiane ne Shqiperi*, Monumentet (1985/2) 39-60 (In Albanian with a resume in French), 13, note 5, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Hierocl, *op. cit.*, 651,3-654.1.

<sup>15</sup> L. Duchesne, *L'Illyricum ecclesiastique*, BZ, (1892/1), 53, 543, 550.

<sup>16</sup> A. Meksi, *op. cit.*, 13, note 7.



Fig. 3 The Round Forum or Macellum (Diameter = 40 m) (Beginning of VI cen AD).

Сл. 3 Округли форум или Мацелум (Macellum) (пречник = 40м) (почетак VI в. н.е.)

have an indication to the town planning of this period. Interesting mosaics and many imported Proconnessian capitals are also part of architectural development, artistic and economical power that this city had. Some inscription from Early Christian also are a good archaeological testimony. All these data are important for Dyrrachium and its geographical position in between two parts of Byzantine Empire.

The Byzantine walls of Dyrrachium, partly visible, are one of the important preserved constructions introducing the flourishing ancient city and these walls are dated in the first period of Byzantine Empire.<sup>17</sup> This is a time of growth and development during which the various elements, which contributed to the formation of a new art, were blended into an organic whole. Decentralization is the keynote of this period, which culminates during Justinian's reign in what has been described as the 'First Golden Age of Byzantine Art'. The Empire, politically one, was artistically a group of almost independent units.

These walls always have been attributed to Anastasius I, based mainly on the fact that he was born in the city.<sup>18</sup> Other sources have also associated Justinian with the construction of them.<sup>19</sup> In fact, as yet there are no historical

<sup>17</sup> According to O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (Oxford 1911), 4-5, there are four periods into which the history of Byzantine art may be divided and the first one is from the foundation of Constantinople to the outbreak of iconoclasm.

<sup>18</sup> J. B. Bury, *op. cit.*, 301. The people of Dyrrachium had the reputation of being avacious and even favourable sources record that Anastasius was no exception; P.G. Valentini, *op. cit.*, 105 (Durrresi, metropoli della provincia, restaurata e abbellita da Anastasio che ivi o nei dintorni era nato..)

<sup>19</sup> ODB, I, 668. This dictionary uses *Dyrrachion* for the name of the city, but the archaeological materials and documents beginning from Roman period testify towards the usage of *Dyrrachium*, which I personally favour. See also P.G. Valentini, *op. cit.*, 105, who mentions the castle constructed by Justinian, based on the evidence of Procopius. See also S. Anamali, *Architettura tardoantica in Albania*, Corso di Cultura 40 (L'Albania dal Tardoantico al Medioevo), Ravenna 1993, 447-474, 451, who attributed to Anastasius the beginning of the late antique walls and he mentioned that they were completed or modified by Justinian.

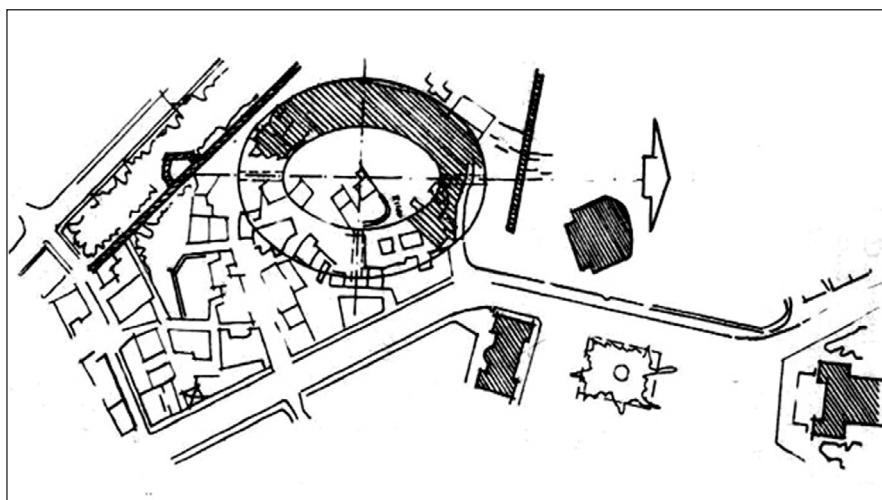


Fig 4 The Amphitheatre and Tower 'D' with a part of the Byzantine wall

Сл. 4 Амфитеатар и кула „Д“ са делом византијског зида

and archaeological data which provide a date of the commencement or completion of construction. Were the walls constructed above an earlier one, which dated from the Roman period? The only evidence of a possible earlier fortification, which remains in situ, is a fragment of wall underlying the later one and made of Roman bricks, and which differs from other parts of the wall. This and other documented fragments underlying the early Byzantine wall is the only evidence that the later wall may have been partially based on an earlier Roman fortification.<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to consider the date when the Roman walls may have been damaged. This may have occurred in the earthquake of c. 346 AD,<sup>21</sup> but the extent of any damage to an earlier wall is unclear in the absence of any documentary or archaeological evidence.

In his *Chronicon*, Jerome records an earthquake at Dyrrachium in Dalmatia, along with others in Italy: "Dyrrachium was reduced to ruins in an earthquake, and for three days and nights Rome swayed and many towns in Campania were shaken".

Dyrrachium terrae motu et tribus diebus ac noctibus Roma nutavit plurimaeque Campaniae urbes vexatae.<sup>22</sup>

The *Exposito totius mundi et gentium*, which was drawn up around 350-360 A.D. says that the city was destroyed as a divine punishment, perhaps by a seismic sea-wave: "Dyrrachium was destroyed by God because of the evil ways of its people, or rather, so it is said, it was swallowed up and did not reappear".

<sup>20</sup> L. Miraj, *Mbi muret mbrojtese parabizantine te Dyrrahut*, MSAD, (Durrës 1983), 100-106 (In Albanian), 100-108.

<sup>21</sup> E. Guidoboni, *With the collaboration of Comastri, A. and Traina, G. Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes in the Mediterranean Area up to the 10<sup>th</sup> century*, (Rome 1994), 251-252; Id. 1989, 675.

<sup>22</sup> Eus. *Hieron. Chron.* 236, 14-16.

Dyrrachium propter habitantium malitiam a deo destructa, magis vero, ut dicunt, descendit et non apparuit.

The reading *destructa* does not appear in the manuscripts of the *Expositio*, but derives from the *Descriptio orbis terrarum*, which reads: “it was destroyed, and because of the wrath of God it was swallowed up by the deep and did not reappear”.

*Destructa est in profundum deo irascente submersa*<sup>23</sup> non comparuit.

Taking Jerome as his source, Theophanes dates the earthquake to the year of the world 5837 (345 AD).<sup>24</sup> Cedrenus places it in the ninth year of the reign of Constantius II.<sup>25</sup> Since he became emperor on 9 September 337, that means 345 or 346. Grumel is inclined to accept 345. Mazzarino dates it to 346 on the bases of Jerome, and reminds us of the religious significance attributed to it.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps amphitheater was closed after this earthquake that ‘destroyed the city’, although there are no data, neither for the reparations after the damages created, nor for the interruption of its activities.<sup>27</sup> This coincides more or less in time with the edict of 391, with whom Theodosius urged the closing of all centers of pagans, had as consequence three years later the interruption of games. Because of the earthquake or interruption in general of its functional aim the amphitheater was abandoned at the end of fourth century or more precisely at last quarter half of this century. In this period a lot of transformations happened in Dyrrachium. Roman public bath changed the function after the earthquake destruction. There are a lot of adaptation walls, closed and opened doors for other function of the ruined construction. Caldarium is devised in two rooms and the devising wall continued under the level of pavement, destroying the function of hypocaust.<sup>28</sup> The monumental grave constructed on the surface of latrina is another testimony for the discontinuity of this building as a bath after the earthquake.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of fourth century Dyrrachium had already a confirmed town-planning coming from Roman period,<sup>30</sup> when the city as the *Coloniae Juliae*

<sup>23</sup> Other editors have preferred *mari mersa* to *submersa*. See Eus. *Hieron. Chron.* 236, 14-16.

<sup>24</sup> Theoph. 37, 32.

<sup>25</sup> Cedren. 522-523.

<sup>26</sup> V. Grumel, *Traité d'études byzantines. I La Chronologia*, (Paris 1958), 477.

<sup>27</sup> L. Miraj, *Amphitheater de Durres*, Iliria (1986/2) 151-171 (In Albanian with a resume in French), 168.

<sup>28</sup> L. Miraj, *Dyrrah in the first centuries AD. A general view in urbanistic and architecture*, Acts of XIV Congreso Internacional de Arqueologia Classica (Tarragona 1994) 285-287, 212.

<sup>29</sup> L. Miraj, *Archaeological report from the excavations in the amphitheater of Durres*, Iliria, (1989/2) 286-288. (In Albanian) but the page nr I have write wrongly 690, and has to be 286-288. (The walls of the monumental grave are constructed with stones, reused bricks and a lot of lime mortar. There were two skeletons oriented east west. The bronze buckle dated this grave at seventh century. The grave is a testimony that in seventh century the bath was not only out of its function, but it was completely covered as an abandoned place.)

<sup>30</sup> In the vast majority of cases a Byzantine city was merely the continuation of a Roman city, which, in turn, may have been founded in the Hellenistic period or even earlier.

Augustae Dyrrachinorum,<sup>31</sup> was a main center of a province, part of a large region, often named Dysrrahia<sup>32</sup> always within the limits of the Macedoine province. Studying the town-planning of Roman period is noted the rigorous north-south and east-west orientation of walls and streets that obliged us to have a clear vision that town-planning was based on the orthogonal system, which had perhaps the earlier origin, and is influenced by the geographical position, which to a certain extent, is preserved even today.<sup>33</sup>

Thus at the second half of the fourth century, the appearance of Dyrrachium began to change, both as a result of a new way of life and through the repairs of the destruction wrought by the earthquake.

There was another later earthquake, which occurred during the third decade of the sixth century.<sup>34</sup> Malalas, Theophanes and Cedrenus all recorded the earthquake, which shook both Corinth and Dyrrachium during the reign of Justin. Malalas writes: In that year (521/522) it happened that the place known as Dyrrachium, a city in the province of Epirus Nova, the birthplace of the emperor Anastasius, suffered from the wrath of God. Anastasius had built many buildings there and had supplied it with a hippodrome. For his part, the emperor Justin had even provided the city of Dyrrachium with much money for reconstruction; it had formerly been called Epidamnos. He also gave generously to the survivors. In that year Corinth in Hellas also suffered, and the emperor graciously gave much there too”.

In his account, Malalas conflates the Corinth and Dyrrachium earthquakes, both of which occurred in the same year during the reign of Justin (518-527).<sup>35</sup> The two places are so far apart that there must in fact have been two separate earthquakes, though the sources record them together, and provide a single description of both of them. Theophanes records the same information, and places the earthquake in the year of the world 6014 (521/522).<sup>36</sup> Cedrenus dates the earthquakes to the fourth year of the reign of Justin, i.e. 521/522.<sup>37</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius of Tellmahre gives the date as 529/530,<sup>38</sup> but in her book for the earthquakes Guidoboni disagree this data and according to her opinion

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C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, Milano 1978, 20.

<sup>31</sup> F. Miraj, H. Myrto, *Ujesjellesi i Dyrrahut*, Iliria (1982/1) 131-156; *Durresi* (1983/1) 27-34 (In Albanian with a resume in French), 131-156

<sup>32</sup> S. Byzantini, *De urbibus et populis*, Iliret dhe Iliria, Tirane 1965, 41.

<sup>33</sup> F. Miraj, H. Myrto, *op. cit.*, 285-287.

<sup>34</sup> E. Guidoboni, *I terremoti prima del Mille in Italia e nell'area mediterranea*, Bologna 1989, 690.

<sup>35</sup> Mal. 417-418

<sup>36</sup> Theoph. 168, 8-11.

<sup>37</sup> Cedren. 638. See also Meyer 1979, who dated the destruction of the temple of Zeus at Olympia to this earthquake.

<sup>38</sup> Dion. Tellmahr. 52.



Fig. 5 The  
Byzantine Wall

Сл. 5  
Византијске  
зидине

Pseudo-Dionysius wrongly gives this date.<sup>39</sup> James of Edessa seems to make reference to this earthquake, though the context is unclear, and he dates it to before the fifth year of Justin's reign.<sup>40</sup>

The Emperor himself donated a considerable sum of money for the reconstruction of Dyrrachium.<sup>41</sup> And if we take in consideration the Malala's information, this grant is given from Justin emperor (518-527), but according to the Pseudo-Dionysius of Tellmahre the earthquake of Dyrrachium happened in the second or third year of Justinian reign (527-565).

When, sometime between 553 and 555, the historian Procopius wrote a laudatory work on the buildings of the emperor Justinian, a work generally known as *De aedificiis*, he included in his account the reign of Justin I on the grounds that, already at that time, Justinian was the power behind the throne. The "Age of Justinian" covers, therefore, about half a century (518-565), even longer if we add to it the reign of Justin II (565-578), and it certainly represents the high point of Early Byzantine architecture.<sup>42</sup> In the confusion of sources for the date of earthquake and confronting with other historical data for the activities of Justin emperor and his nephew or adoptive son, Justinian, is more possible to connect Justinian name with the gifted funds for the reconstruction of the city than Justin I.

Building was the means by which the autocracy of Justinian attempted to both impress the peoples within the Empire and unify its territory. Where

<sup>39</sup> E. Guidoboni, *I terremoti prima del Mille in Italia e nell'area mediterranea*, 315; Id. 1989, 690.

<sup>40</sup> Jac. Edess. 318. James of Edessa speaks of the fifth year of the reign of Justin, which was 570, perhaps confounding with the violent earthquake in Anazarbus, Antioch, Edessa, Samosata?, Seleucia Pieria, Cilicia, Syri; recorded in many Syriac and Greek sources. See E. Guidoboni, *op. cit.*, 346.

<sup>41</sup> Theoph. 168, 8-11.

<sup>42</sup> C. Mango, *Byzantium*, London 1980, 57.

Constantine had promoted church building by both moral and financial support, Justinian was the sole driving force behind the gigantic architectural undertakings within the capital and possibly throughout the Empire, thereby creating an Imperial architecture in the truest sense. Only the Emperor could provide the funds required for his building programme, and he was well aware of its significance, as he must have been the one to insist that his court historian dedicate an entire volume to the programme (The Buildings). Procopius leaves little doubt that in the Emperors mind, his architectural enterprises ranked with the restitution of religious orthodoxy, the revival of jurisprudence, the reconquest of the West, the re-establishment of prosperity, and the security of the frontiers. Within this framework of propaganda, it was only natural that Justinian's architects



Fig. 6 The Byzantine Wall

Сл. 6 Византијске зидине

should strive towards a new style of building, rooted within an earlier tradition yet bolder than any structure created earlier, and the reign of Justinian consequently marks a turning point in architectural history rivalled by few other periods.<sup>43</sup> The work of Procopius ends on this very note: "There can be no doubt to anyone, that the emperor Justinian has strengthened the state not only with fortifications, but also with garrisons of soldiers, from the bounds of the East to the very setting of the sun, these being the limits of the Roman dominion."<sup>44</sup>

Despite these earthquakes of the fourth and sixth centuries and an Ostrogothic sack in the 480s,<sup>45</sup> Dyrrachium remained a major port of Illyricum lying at one end of the Via Egnatia, providing the link between the Old and the New Rome.<sup>46</sup> As capital of Epirus Nova,<sup>47</sup> it remained very important in the Balkans and the Mediterranean basin, as well as the most strategic city on the Adriatic coast.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (Fourth Edition/Revised by R. Krautheimer and S. Čurčić), (Great Britain 1989), 202

<sup>44</sup> Procopius, *De aedificiis*, VI, vii. 17.

<sup>45</sup> J.B. Bury, *op. cit.*, 267-71.

<sup>46</sup> F.L.F. Tafel, *op. cit.*, 16-20.

<sup>47</sup> Hierocles, *op. cit.*, 652-654, 656.

<sup>48</sup> G. Ostrogorsky, *op. cit.*, 262, 269-70.



Fig. 7 Byzantine Wall and Tower 'D'.

Сл. 7 Византијске зидине и кула „Д“

Returning to the Byzantine walls of Dyrrachium, which is the subject of this study, it should be mentioned that the first person to publish this system of fortifications was Leon Heuzey,<sup>49</sup> who recorded many traces, which have since disappeared. Half a century later, Leon Rey carried out a careful study of the walls, which were preserved at that time,<sup>50</sup> although he did not locate the great bastion, which had collapsed prior to his visit. The head of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania (1924-1936), Luigi M. Ugolini, published these walls without comments.<sup>51</sup> Other scholars also touched on the different aspects of this fortress, describing the walls, towers and gates, as well as interpreting the monograms and speculating on the date of construction etc.<sup>52</sup> At present, there remains preserved a section of the south-west part of the wall with four towers, a section of the wall in the south-east which runs parallel to the sea shore, and a few traces which survive at ground level to the north and north-west.

I briefly touched on the subject of the date of these walls, years ago, in a preliminary study of the pre-Byzantine fortifications of Dyrrachium<sup>53</sup> and on

<sup>49</sup> L. Heuzey, H. Daumet, *Mision Archéologique de Macedoine*, Paris 1876, 309-314.

<sup>50</sup> L. Rey, *Les Remparts de Durazzo, Albanie*, Paris 1925, 33-48.

<sup>51</sup> L. M. Ugolini, *Albania Antica*, Roma 1927, 9, fig 4-7.

<sup>52</sup> C. Praschniker, A. Schober, *Archaeologische Forschungen i Albanien und Montenegro*, Wien 1919, 32; A. Schober, *Zur Topographie von Dyrrachium*, Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes, Band XXIII, Wien 1926, 231-240; V. Toçi, *Te dhena mbi topografin dhe sistemin ilir te Dyrrahit, ne driten e zbulimeve te reja arkeologjike*, Konferenca e I-re Albanologjike, Tirane 1965; K. Zheku, *Zbulime epigrafike ne muret rrethuese te kalase se Durrësit*, Monumentet (1972), 35-47; Gj. Karaiskaj, A. Baçe, *Kalaja e Durrësit dhe fortifikimet perreth ne Antikitetin e vone*, Monumentet 9 (1975) 5-35, 5-35; A. Hoti, *Germime Arkeologjike: Durrës, Kala, Iliria* (1986/2), 268-269; F. Miraj, *Per nje interpretim te ri te monogrameve ne tullat e murit rrethues te Durrësit*, Monumentet (1986/2), 141-151; L. Miraj, *Mbi muret mbrojtese parabizantine te Dyrrahut*, 100-108.

<sup>53</sup> L. Miraj, *Ibidem*, 100-108.

Fig. 8 Tower  
'D'.  
Сл. 8 Кула „Д“



several occasions subsequently attempted to analyse the details of the monograms on the bricks attributing them to the Emperors Anastasius (c. 491-518) or Justinian (c. 518-527). In 1997, with a post-doctoral fellowship at Dumbarton Oaks, I had the opportunity to examine these details further. In this short article, which forms part of a book on Dyrrachium in the early Byzantine period, I do not intend to describe this interesting system of fortifications, but rather examine some data pertaining to their date of construction.

While a number of scholars have concluded that the monograms on the bricks of the Byzantine walls are associated with the Emperors Anastasius or Justinian,<sup>54</sup> during my discussions in Dumbarton Oaks with Prof. John Nesbitt he suggested that although the monograms appear to be sixth century they are not connected with the Anastasius or Justinian.<sup>55</sup> Previously, the naming of a certain Anastasius as the employer in the inscription on one brick of the wall was used to date the construction to the reign of the Emperor Anastasius, indicating that he was the employer.<sup>56</sup> The inscription appears more likely to be connected with the owner of the workshop producing the brick rather than the Emperor himself, and it is therefore merely a coincidence that both the owner of the workshop and the Emperor possessed the name of Anastasia. This suggests that neither the monograms nor the inscriptions be connected with the Emperors Anastasius or Justinian.

As well as the monograms, I wish to introduce and examine another image, which appears on the walls, specifically on one of the towers, usually re-

<sup>54</sup> K. See Zheku, *Zbulime epigrafike ne muret rrethuese te kalase se Durrësit*, Monumentet (1972) 35-46, 41-42; Gj. Karauskaj, A. Baçe, *op. cit.*, 20.

<sup>55</sup> I am extremely grateful to Professor J. Nesbitt at Dumbarton Oaks, for his detailed treatment of the monograms and inscriptions on the bricks of the Byzantine fortress of Dyrrachium and for his suggestions regarding their date and meaning.

<sup>56</sup> K. Zheku, *op. cit.*, 35-47.

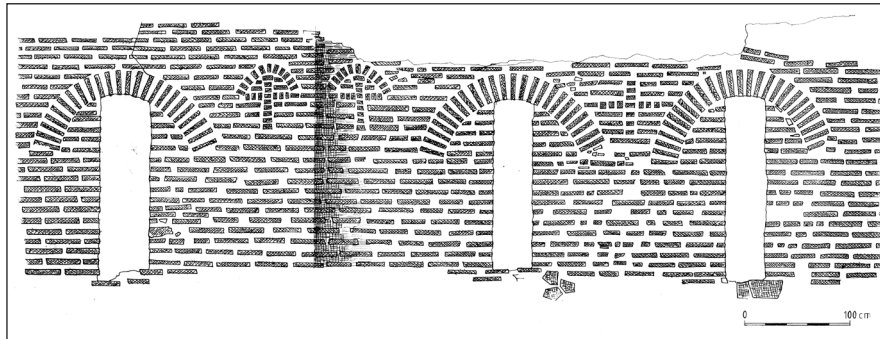


Fig. 9 The three crosses

Сл. 9 Три крста

ferred to as tower “D”. On the northern side of this tower, L. Rey observed a Latin cross executed in bricks, underneath an arch motif, also in bricks.<sup>57</sup> Two further crosses, identical to the first, are situated on the west side of the tower, between two arrow-slits, while on the southern side of the tower, between the arches of two arrow-slits, appears a schematic representation of an olive branch or tree concealed within the brickwork. Therefore, in total there are representations of three crosses and a tree within the exterior of tower “D”. Like the rest of the wall they are executed in red brick and are thus incorporated into the fabric of the wall in such a way that they appear to be integrated within it. Single brick crosses are known from the walls of both churches and public buildings elsewhere.<sup>58</sup> However, the configuration and location of the three crosses and the tree from the Byzantine walls of Dyrrachium have also appeared in other locations, suggesting that this arrangement have a particular significance. Similarly shaped crosses have also been found on individual bricks of the fortress,<sup>59</sup> while the tree motif has been observed on one brick of the sixth-century walls of the fortress of Kanina.<sup>60</sup> Crosses, single or three together, are present in the towers of city wall in Salonica as well. The same pattern of three crosses and a tree can be seen hidden within the brickwork of the apse wall of Hagia Sophia, placed among the five windows of the apse. These have been considered as a unique and special design.<sup>61</sup> It is interesting, however, to note the conceptual similarities between the symbols used in the walls of Dyrrachium and those, which appear at Hagia Sophia. At Dyrrachium they are placed among five windows at the

<sup>57</sup> L. Rey, *op. cit.*, 39.

<sup>58</sup> S. Ćurčić, *Design and structural innovation in Byzantine Architecture before Hagia Sophia*, Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the present, (ed. By R. Mark & A. Çakmak) (Cambridge University Press 1992) 16-38, 16-21, fig. 11-15. Crosses made in brick are present within the walls of towers of the fortifications of Thessalonica, positioned on the front face either singularly or in threes, and covered by brick arch motifs.

<sup>59</sup> K. Zheku, *op. cit.*, 39.

<sup>60</sup> A. Baçe, *Qyteti i fortifikuar i Kanines*, Monumentet (1974), 25-54, 36.

<sup>61</sup> N. Teteriatnikov, *The Hidden Cross-and-Tree Program in the Brickwork of Hagia Sophia*, Stefanos, *Byzantino-Slavica* LVI (1995), 689-699, 689-699.

Fig 10 The three crosses

Сл. 10 Три крста



Fig. 11 The tree

Сл. 11 Дрво



upper part of the tower while at Hagia Sophia, they are placed among the five apse windows. In both cases crosses and tree are surmounted by an arch motif. The use of the crosses and the tree in two different locations suggests that it have some meaning and significance.<sup>62</sup> What is this meaning and why does it appear in these two locations: one religious and one secular?

The root of the three-cross motif is the familiar theme of the three crosses at Golgotha on which Christ and the two thieves were crucified. Although they vary in size, type, and compositional arrangement, the three crosses frequently appear in Early Christian art.<sup>63</sup> A variation on this theme combining two cross-

<sup>62</sup> The use of the motif of three crosses and a tree within the original design has previously been viewed as unique to Hagia Sophia. See N. Teteriatnikov, *ibidem*, 699.

<sup>63</sup> For the iconography of the three crosses see, for example, the commentaries to *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius*, see ed. Friedlander, P. (ed.) *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius* (Berlin 1912), 167-168. For a discussion of the three crosses on

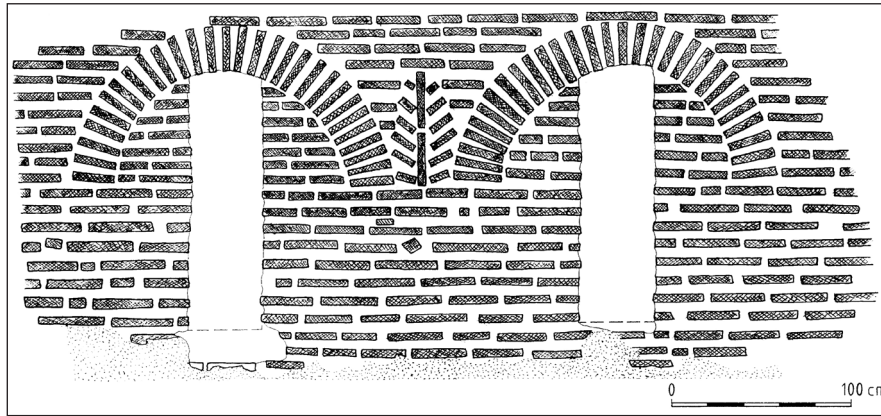


Fig. 12 The Tree

Сл. 12 Дрво

es and a monogram can also be found, for instance on the ambo in the Iznik Museum,<sup>64</sup> while three “latine” or commissa crosses found in the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome, dated to the second century, have been interpreted as a symbol of trinity.<sup>65</sup> In the case of Hagia Sophia, the three-cross motif has been interpreted as a specific reference to the three crosses of Golgotha.<sup>66</sup> The tree motif meanwhile, was widely used in early Christian art as a symbol of Christ’s life, passion, death and Resurrection and as a reference to the tree of Paradise.<sup>67</sup> In the art of this period, trees were depicted both as fertile (with leaves), and barren (without leaves). In the programme depicted on the apse of Hagia Sophia, the combination of the three crosses and the tree can be seen as a reference to the cross discovered by Helena and the tree of life, a reminder of the salvation which occurred on Golgotha.<sup>68</sup>

The most vivid illustration of the three crosses and a sterile tree appears in the kontakia of Romanos the Melodist, a court poet, whose hymns were chanted during the liturgy in Hagia Sophia during the reign of Justinian. His kontakion, “On the Victory of the Cross”, which was used with the liturgy of Hagia Sophia on the Wednesday of the fourth week of Lent and on Good Friday,<sup>69</sup> demon-

Golgotha in art see: A. Grabar, *Ampoules de terre Sainte* (Monza-Bobbio), Paris 1958, 55-58 and pls. V, XI-XIV, XVI, XVIII, XXII, XXXIV and XXXVI-XLIX; Ihm 1992, 82-84, with bibliography and figs. 18-20.

<sup>64</sup> A photograph of this ambo can be found in the Dumbarton Oaks (Byzantine) Photograph and Fieldwork Archives. The Iznik Museum example shows the monogram in a medallion at the centre, flanked by two Latin crosses.

<sup>65</sup> F. Tristan, *Les premières images chrétiennes*, Paris 1996, 72.

<sup>66</sup> N. Teteriatnikov, *op. cit.*, 689-699.

<sup>67</sup> H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie* (Paris 1907), *Arbres*, colls. 2691-2709.

<sup>68</sup> N. Teteriatnikov, *op. cit.*, 691.

<sup>69</sup> M. Carpenter, (tr. and ed.) *On the Person of Christ* (University of Missouri Press, Columbia 1970), 227-228.

strates the link between the cross and the “wood of life”.<sup>70</sup> In describing the cross and the tree in the kontakion, Romanos applies the word *xylon* to both the tree and to the cross, thus establishing them in a similar context,<sup>71</sup> an idea based on Genesis 3; 22. Scholars have noticed that the expression *xylon zoes* (wood of life) combines the meaning of both.<sup>72</sup> Other Byzantine writers also used the same expression.<sup>73</sup>

The Romanos kontakion invokes the story of the three crosses discovered by Helena on Golgotha, linking the cross of Christ with the tree of life, together with their significance in the mystery of salvation and their presence in Paradise. Like our scheme (at Dyrrachium?), Romanos evokes the legendary story of the three crosses by distinguishing the crosses of the two thieves from that of Christ:

Pilate fixed three crosses on Golgotha  
two for the robbers and one for the Giver of Life.<sup>74</sup>

Later in the same strophe, he elaborates on the tree, associating it with Adam and his descendants:

Adam and those descended from Adam, given to me a tree  
The tree leads them back  
again into Paradise.<sup>75</sup>

The appearance of the three crosses and the tree in the walls of Byzantine churches has been interpreted as a phenomenon, which reflects liturgical practice. Theologians such as John Chrysostom who were concerned about the continuation of this tradition encouraged the placing of crosses on the walls of churches. They are always seen as apotropaic symbols, which provide protection for the structure, particularly against earthquakes.<sup>76</sup> In the case of Hagia Sophia there is some sense in this, as the structure was erected immediately after a fire, but it cannot be seen as serving solely an apotropaic function. The idea comes from the already established early Christian tradition of hidden crosses wrought in the brickwork of churches, public buildings, land walls, towers and gates, for which the principle reasons were both the sanctification of the building and to provide apotropaic protection.<sup>77</sup>

When, however, were the Byzantine walls of Dyrrachium constructed? If the historical sources are precise, it coincides with the reign of Anastasius. This has a certain logic in that not only was the Emperor born in Dyrrachium and desired to enhance the honour of his city, but also that the period follows both the

<sup>70</sup> P. Maas, C.A. Trypanis (ed.), *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica*, (Oxford 1963), 164-180, 227-229, and 230-250.

<sup>71</sup> *Idem.*, 165, 166, 169.

<sup>72</sup> K. Schmaltz, *Mater Ecclesiarum. Die Grabbeskirche in Jerusalem* (Strasburg 1918), 228; Ihm 1992, 83.

<sup>73</sup> W. Wolska-Conus, (ed.), *Cismas Indicopleustès, Topographie Chrétienne* (Paris 1968), vol. 3, 249, X, 10.

<sup>74</sup> P. Maas, C.A. Trypanis, (ed.), *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica* (Oxford 1963), 165, 230.

<sup>75</sup> *Idem.*, 165, 231.

<sup>76</sup> S. Ćurčić, *op. cit.*, 16-21, and figs. 11-15.

<sup>77</sup> N. Teteriatnikov, *op. cit.*, 689-699.

earthquake of the mid-fourth century (346) and the Ostrogothic occupation of 379, both of which may have caused considerable damage. It is not clear, however, whether construction was completed during the reign of Anastasius. It has always been considered that Justinian finished the work although the reasons have never been fully examined.<sup>78</sup> If the Byzantine walls were probably constructed mostly during the reign of Anastasius, it may have been subsequently necessary to reconstruct these walls and other buildings of the city, following the earthquake dated in 521/522 or 529/530.<sup>79</sup>

Among the other late-Antique centres of Epirus, Nicopolis was fortified at this time.<sup>80</sup> The walls of Saranda (Onhesm) were built in late antiquity, perhaps during the reign of Anastasius.<sup>81</sup> The city wall of Butrint was reconstructed at this time as well, with the defended area being expanded to include the entire lower city to the edge of the Vivari channel.<sup>82</sup> Both Dyrrachium and Butrint are notably absent from Procopius' Buildings, in which Justinian's chronicler (4.4) records the construction of 43 new forts and the refurbishment of another 50 in Old and New Epirus.

The three crosses and the tree depicted on tower "D" at Dyrrachium is testimony that this tower, at least, although with the same technique with the rest of walls, was constructed at the same period or earlier than Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. This church was built between 532 and 537, during the reign of Justinian, and therefore the construction of part of the fortress at Dyrrachium also might dates to the same period. The motif of three crosses and a tree was used not only in religious buildings, but also in public or military construction. It is not only an apotropaic symbol following the earthquake of 521/522 or 529/530 in Dyrrachium or the fire of 532 which burnt down the original Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, but also serves to sanctify both the walls or tower "D" and those of Hagia Sophia. There are some years difference between the earthquake in Dyrrachium (521/522 or 529/530) and the construction of Hagia Sophia (532-537), and although it is recorded that the Emperor "provided the city of Dyrrachium with much money for reconstruction", the year when these funds were donated and the name of emperor is not clear. The discordance of sources for the date of earthquake is connected with two names of emperors: Justin I and Justinian. If the earthquake's date is in 521/522 it would make little sense for these funds to be donated a decade or more after the earthquake destruction. But if the earthquake happened during the Justinian reign and Pseudo-Dionysius is not wrong, the Byzantine walls of Dyrrachium are constructed or reconstructed more or less in the same period as Hagia Sophia, and not Justin I but Justinian donated the funds.

<sup>78</sup> S. Anamali, *op. cit.*, 451; K. Zheku, *op. cit.*, 35-47.

<sup>79</sup> Guidoboni, with the collaboration of Comastri, A. and Traina, 313; Id. 1989, 690.

<sup>80</sup> T. E. Gregory, *The Early Byzantine Fortifications of Nicopolis in comparative perspective*, Chrysos (1987) 253-261, 257, 261.

<sup>81</sup> Y. Cerova, *Kontribut i ri mbi amforat e Keshtjelles se Onhezmit*, Iliria (1992), 254; K. Lako, *Keshtjella e Onhezmit*, Iliria (1984) 153-205.

<sup>82</sup> R. Hodges, and others 'Late-Antique and Byzantine Butrint: interim report on the port and its hinterland (1994-1995)', *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, Vol. 10 (1997) 207-234, 217.

All this data cannot provide an exact date for the Byzantine walls of Dyrrachium in general, or of tower “D” in particular, as an integral part of it. It is also unclear whether the programme of three crosses and a tree was applied first in Constantinople or Dyrrachium. It is interesting that this programme appears at two very distant points in the Eastern Empire; in the capital at Constantinople and in Dyrrachium, the provincial capital of Epirus Nova, and in two constructions with a very different function. Although we cannot specify the precise year of construction of the fortifications of Dyrrachium, construction or reconstruction occurred during the reign of Justin I or more probably, Justinian. The evidence for this can be concisely summarised thus:

1. The necessity for repair following the earthquake of 521/522 or 529/530, when the Emperor (Justin I or, more probably, Justinian) “provided the city of Dyrrachium with much money for reconstruction”.

2. The use of the motif of three crosses and a tree at both Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine walls of Dyrrachium.

3. Historical sources and monograms on the bricks.

Leaving the discussion open for other new interpretations which may illuminate the date of construction of the Byzantine walls of Dyrrachium, in this article I have tried to analyse some data connected with the period of construction or more precisely reconstruction of the fortress, which coincides with the reign of Justin I or Justinian. The symbol of three crosses and a tree in tower “D” of these walls is also examined for the first time in this article, in terms of both its composition and its symbolism,<sup>83</sup> and it is hoped that it will aid the interpretation of this programme at Hagia Sophia also.

Лида Фабијан Мирај  
НЕКИ НОВИ ПОДАЦИ О ДАТУМУ ИЗГРАДЊЕ  
ВИЗАНТИЈСКИХ БЕДЕМА ДИРАХИЈУМА

Дирахијум (Dyrrachium) је био главна лука Илирије за Италију, одакле огранак Виа Егнације пролази поред Солуна за Цариград да би затим повезао Нови са Старим Римом. Био је највећи стратешки град на јадранској обали, једна од две главне капије хришћанске дифузије на Балкану. Историјски извори су малобројни и извештавају о активностима и правој улози коју је Дирахијум играо у овом важном периоду своје историје.

Крајем IV века Дирахијум је већ имао потврђен урбанистички план заснован на октагоналном систему, који је пристигао из римског период, када је град као *Coloniae Juliae Augustae Dyrrachinorum*, био главни центар провинције, део велике области често називане *Dyrrachia* увек у оквиру граница македонске провинције. Због земљотреса или уопште престанка његове функционалне сврхе, амфитеатар је напуштен крајем IV века. Византијске зидине Дирахијума, делимично видљиве, једна су од важних сачуваних грађевина представљајући нам тако антички град у процвату и ове зидине су датиране у првом периоду Византијског царства. У данашње време остао је сачуван

<sup>83</sup> As mentioned above, this image in Hagia Sophia has previously been seen as unique.

део зида са неколико кула као и мало трагова који су остали сачувани на нивоу тла. Касније се десио још један земљотрес, у току треће декаде VI века. Сам Цар донирао је значајну суму новца за обнову Дирахијума. И ако узмемо у обзир Малалаове податке, ова бесповратна средства дао је цар Јустин (518.-527.), али према Псеудо-Дионисију од Теламаре, земљотрес у Дирахијуму десио се у другој или трећој години Јустинијанове владавине (527.-565.).

У конфузији извора у вези датума земљотреса и суочавање са другим историјским подацима о активностима цара Јустина и његов синовца или усвојеног сина, Јустинијана, више је могуће повезати Јустинијаново име са дарованим средствима за обнову града него име Јустина I. На северној страни торња на „Д“ је латински крст изведен у опеци, испод мотива лука, такође у опеци. Друга два крста, идентична као први, налазе се на западној страни куле, између два прореза за стреле, док се на јужној страни куле, између лукова два прореза за стреле, појављује шематски приказ маслинове гране или дрвета прикривен начином зидања опеке. Дакле, укупно постоје представе три крста и дрвета у екстеријеру куле „Д“. Као и остатак зида и они су изведени у црвеној опеци и на тај начин уграђени у ткиво зида тако да изгледа као да су интегрисани у њега. Исти мотив са три крста и дрветом може се видети скривен начином на који су опеке озидане на зиду апсиде Аја Софије, постављен између пет прозора апсиде. Занимљиво је, међутим, напоменути концептуалне сличности између симбола коришћених на зидовима Дирахијума и оних, који се појављују у Светој Софији. У случају Дирахијума, они су постављени између пет прозора у горњем делу куле док се у Светој Софији налазе између пет прозора апсиде. У оба случаја изнад крстова и дрвета налази се мотив лука. Употреба крстова и дрвета на две различите локације указује на то да имају неки смисао и значај. Корен мотива три крста је позната тема о три крста на Голготи на којима су распети Христ и два лопова. Најживописнија илустрација три крста и неродног дрвета појављује се у кондацима *kontakia* од Романа Мелода, дворског песника, чије су химне певане током литургије у Светој Софији за време владавине Јустинијана. Његов кондак *kontakion*, „На победу крста“, који је коришћен са литургијом Свете Софије у среду четврте недеље Великог поста и на Велики петак, показује везу између крста и „Дрвета живота“.

Романов кондак позива се на причу о три крста које је открила Јелена на Голготи, повезујући Христов крст са дрветом живота, заједно са њиховим значајем у тајни спасења и њиховим присуством у рају. Попут наше шеме у Дирахијуму, Романос евоцира легендарну причу о три крста, тиме што разликује крстове два лопова од Христовог крста: Пилат је направио три крста на Голготи. Два за лопове а један за Животодавца.

Три крста и дрво приказани на кули „Д“ на Дирахијуму сведоче да је ова кула, мада са истом техником као на осталим зидовима, изграђена у истом периоду или раније од Аја Софије у Цариграду (532.-537.). То није само апотропејски симбол који је уследио након земљотреса 521/522. или 529/530. године у Дирахијуму или пожара 532. године када је изгорела првобитна Св. Софија у Цариграду, већ такође служи да се њиме освете зидови и куле „Д“ и они од Аја Софије. Занимљиво је да се овај програм појављује на две врло удаљене тачке Источног царства, у престоници Цариграду и у Дирахијуму, престоници провинције Нови Епир и то код две грађевине са врло различитом функцијом. Остављајући дискусију отвореном за друга нова тумачења која могу да расветле датум изградње византијских зидина Дирахијума, у овом раду покушала сам да анализирам неке податке везане за период изградње или тачније реконструкцију тврђаве, који се поклапају са Владавином Јустина I или Јустинијана.