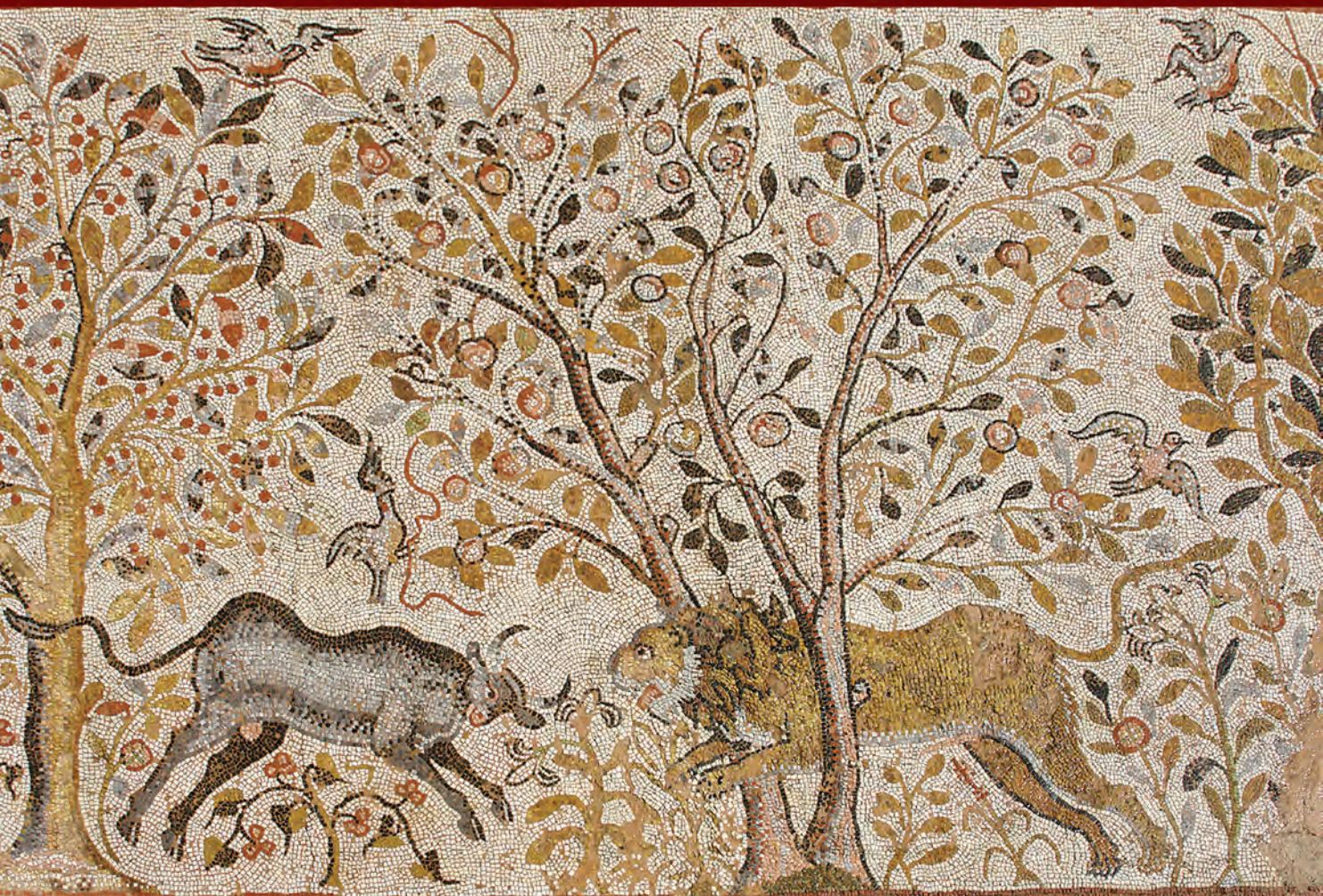




The most significant values
of the cultural and natural heritage

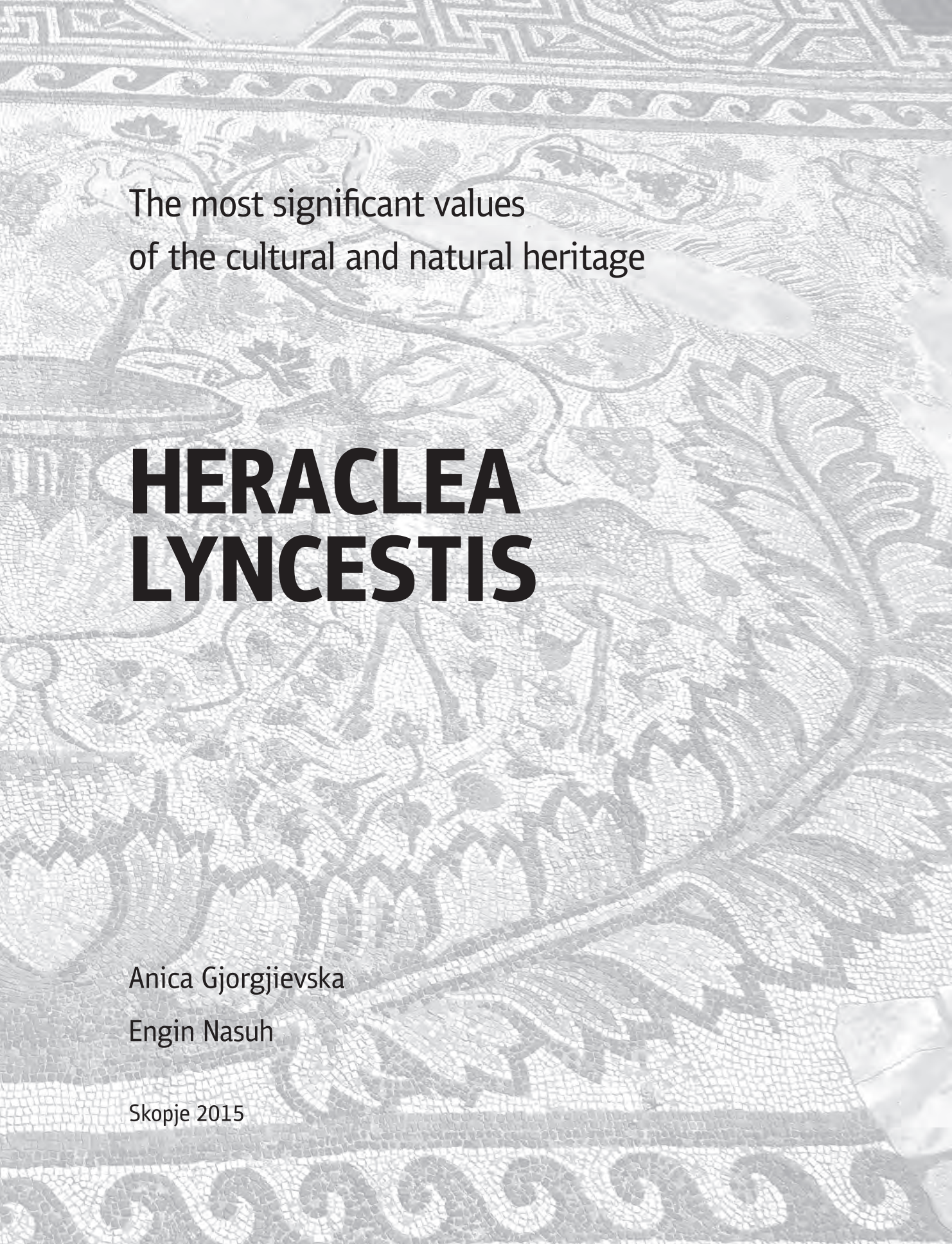
HERACLEA LYNCESTIS



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Skopje 2015

FOREWORD

MACEDONIAN CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Over the past 4.5 million years since the creation of Earth, the ancestor of the modern man, “the wise man - Homo sapiens”, appearing on the African continent 150,000 years before this day, quickly settled throughout the territories of the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

His cultural evolution is recorded in the Republic of Macedonia, as well.

While travelling through the prehistoric era of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, as well as the historical epochs of the Antiquity and the Middle Ages, man created civilizations on the soil of the Republic of Macedonia by introducing and using the natural resources. He established the magnificent kingdoms of the Agrianians, Paeonia, Pelagonia, Lyncestis, Macedonia, and the principalities of Deuriopus, Dessaretia and the Penestae.

The Roman Empire, Byzantine, the medieval states - all left a powerful civilizational imprint.

The belief in the natural phenomena, followed by the belief in the many gods, to finally worship our only God - all left indelible cultural traces.

All this enormous cultural and natural heritage of the Republic of Macedonia was subject of the capital project of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, “Publications of the most significant values of the cultural and natural heritage,” carried out by the Cultural Heritage Protection Office.

130 monographs featuring the Archaeological Heritage, Sacral heritage, the Treasures of the churches and monasteries in Macedonia and the Natural heritage were created.

Macedonia - the high forest land in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula, as the name suggests, furrowed by the deep valleys of the Vardar tributaries and the river Drim, adorned with the blue - green waters of Lake Ohrid, Prespa and Dojran, with the proud giants Kozuv, Shar Mountain, Korab and Jablanica, Selecka Mountain and other mountain ranges, today lights 130 torches of its own, as well as the world's, cultural and natural heritage; a legacy to preserve, use wisely and pass on to future generations of the Macedonian road to eternity.

Prof. Viktor Lilchikj Adams, Ph.D.

HERACLEA LYNCESTIS

The southern part of the Pelagonian plain, in ancient times known as Lyncestis, represented a civilization center with deep historical roots that appealed to many conquerors who shaped history of this part of the world through battle. In this strategically attractive piece of land, the ancient city of Heraclea holds a significant place.



Map of the Republic of Macedonia

Research on Heraclea continued for many decades. In the 19th century diplomatic representatives conducted excavations at the sites across the region and with the permission of the Sultan brought the excavated material to their home countries. This evil fate befell Heraclea, as well. Many masterpieces of this city became the pride of world-famous museums at that time. The challenge and the interest did not diminish even in the following century when archaeologists from the Museum of Knez Pavle (Prince Pavle) from Belgrade conducted the first more significant archaeological research of several sectors. However, the first systematic archaeological research of Heraclea took place in 1959 and has persisted till today. It narrates the history of the city which holds the memory of the existence of the Upper Macedonian tribe Lyncestae/Lyncestians in its name. Many historiographers recorded the existence of the city and its location was displayed on all important maps of the time, indicating its inevitability and significance.

One of the sources that shows an indication of when the city of Heraclea was created is Demosthenes (first speech against Philip 351/2 BC), the man who zealously defended the independence of Athens, the Athenian democracy and the freedom of Greece from the Macedonian imperialism.

By interpreting the words of Demosthenes and considering the combative and vigorous actions of Philip II, it is believed that he founded the city of Heraclea as a strategic center of the northwestern border of the Macedonian area Lyncestida. The fact that this town was named Heraclea is not the least bit strange since the Macedonian kings endowed with great power by fate claimed to have originated from Heracles.

The archaeological finds show that life on Heraclea began at the top of the hill, as a strategic center of Philip II. The birth of the city was marked by the founding of the fortress which covers an area of 1.5 to 2 hectares. The location of the settlement was primarily chosen due to the dominant position and the view over the surrounding terrain which was important in the turbulent times and frequent battles with the Illyrians. Apart from layers of residential finds, pottery and coins from the northern and north-eastern slope of the Acropolis, several graves have also been unearthed containing finds from the Late Macedonian Hellenistic period.



Findings from the Macedonian Hellenistic period

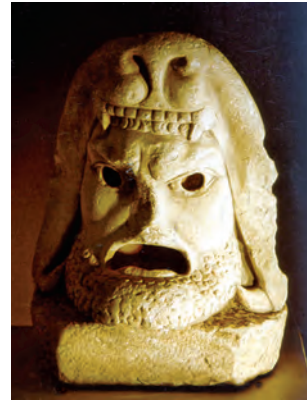


Coins of Macedonian kings

In the Roman period, the city gradually began to take shape toward the southern and eastern slope of the hill to the riverbank of the river Siva Voda, with an established area of 7.5 ha, whereas in the Early Byzantine period the eastern part of the city was abandoned, and the area surrounded by the inner wall at that time was reduced to 5 ha.



Findings from the Roman period



Tragic mask



Statue of Emperor Commodus



Portraits from the Roman period



Roman coins

The prosperity of the city was enabled by the two Balkan highways: Via Egnatia that connected Rome to Anatolia and the Diagonal Road, as the shortest connection between Rome and the Danube and Dacia.

The geographer Strabo mentions the city for the first time in his notes as an important station on the Via Egnatia. From the numerous road maps of the time, Heraclea is mentioned in: Itinerarium Antonini Augusti, Itinerarium Burdigalense, and the famous Tabula Peutingeriana. In later times, the name of the city was listed on the compiled cosmography, known as Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia.



Tabula Peutingeriana, detail

Near Heraclea, in the Lyncestis area, in 358 BC, one of the most significant battles in Macedonian history took place. In fact, Philip II, after resolving the relations with the Paeonians, began to pressure the Illyrians to surrender the conquered territories in the upper region of Macedonia. In the triumphant conquest of the Macedonian phalanx, 7000 Illyrian soldiers died along with King Bardilis. The victory over the Illyrians meant complete annex of Lyncestis to the Macedonian kingdom.

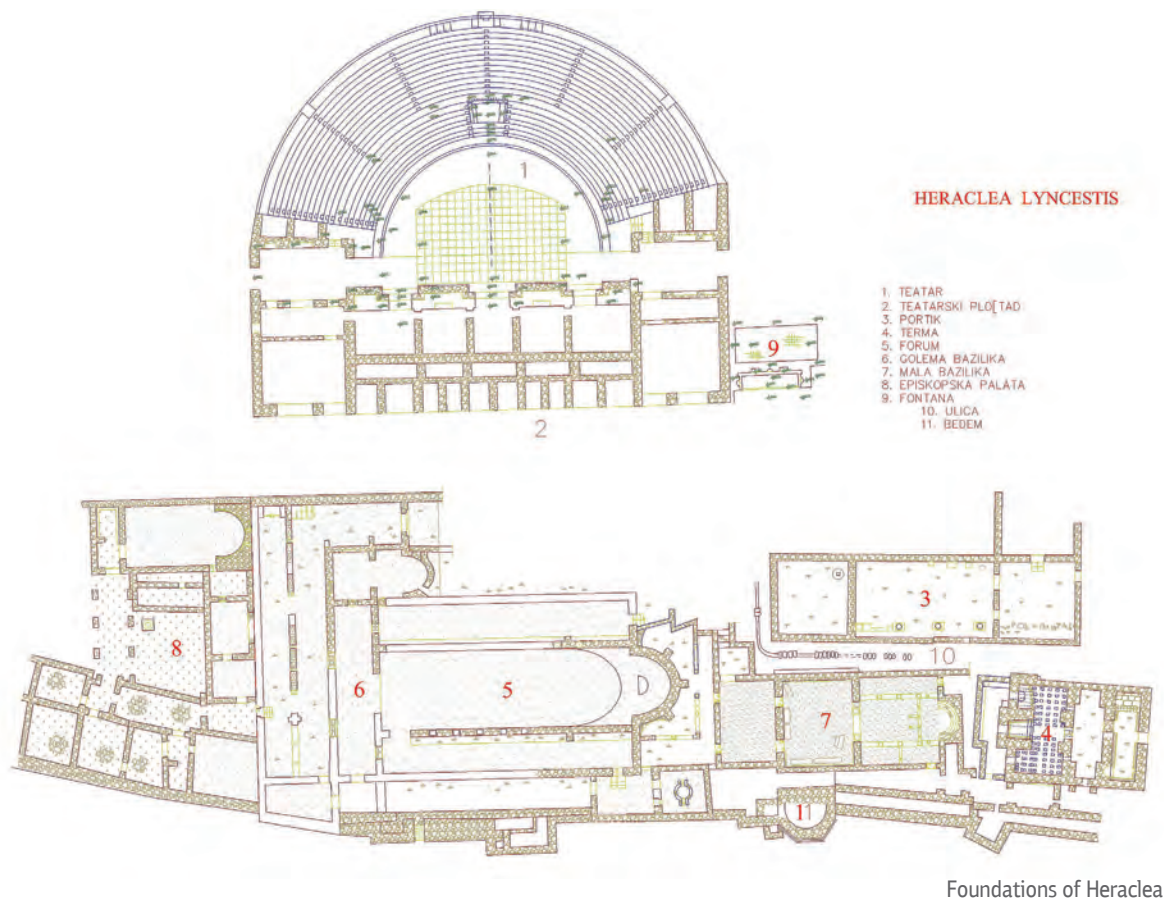
More information on Lyncestis can be found in historical sources (Polybius) for the three Macedonian - Roman wars when it endured major destruction. After the long-term warfare the defense wall of the region fell under the attack of the strong Roman legions and became part of the empire that conquered. Towards the middle of the 2nd century BC after the Romans conquered Macedonia, they turned it into a province and divided it into four parts with a ban on mutual trade and marriage. This division aimed to achieve complete disintegration of Macedonia. Heraclea entered the fourth section as the central city and received the status of a Roman colony that led to the economic prosperity of the city.



Panoramic view of Heraclea

After Macedonia became a Roman province, Romans started to build roads, established towns and other buildings, mainly for their own needs, whereby Heraclea received Roman features. Numerous Romans start to inhabit the area for the purpose of administering the province as well as for the use of its resources. The epigraphic monuments confirm the coexistence of settlers from the South Italic and oriental provinces with the citizens of Heraclea. This is the period when Heraclea will be remembered as the true jewel of Roman architecture due to its architectural heritage. Still, regardless of the extent to which it was built according to the strict canons of construction of the great empire, traditional influences left deep and indelible traces.

The appearance and the spirit of the city of Heraclea in the Roman period was captured and celebrated through several buildings: the Portico (porch with statues), the Theatre, the Therma, the Forum and the South Wall.



Portico – A porch with statues; rectangular base (25.40 x 7.00 m). It dates from the 2nd century and based on a pedestal inscription dedicated to the God of Justice it is presumed to be a courtroom.

The porch was encircled by walls from three sides, open only at the south side where it was encircled by a colonnade. On the stylobate of the colonnade were placed four pillars lying on pedestals, and at both ends to the walls were leaning pilasters. The floor of the porch was paved with large stone slabs and then on top of it along the north wall were placed a row of honorary and votive monuments- three pedestals for statues and two headless statues in military parade armor that were most likely representations of emperors. The armor of one of them is richly adorned with symbolic details, while the shoulder buttons are embossed with the head of Heracles motif. Here were placed the statues of the goddess Nemesis and of the high priest Titus Flavius Orestes, benefactor of the city. The stylistic features of hair, beard and moustache chronologically determine the life of the high priest in the early 2nd century. It is written on the pedestal: "The city (raises a monument to) Titus Flavius Orestes- twice a high priest and a benefactor for the love of this city upon the proposal of Gaius Marius Blossian Trason while Marius Claudius Pulcher was a polytarch". The statue of Nemesis shows a young and well-proportioned female body with harmonious proportions and the usual attributes (a scale and a bow) that suggest the greatness of the goddess of justice and fate. The inscription reveals that the statue is a gift from the Heracleian citizen Julia Tertilla.



The portico of a courtroom

Especially important for determining the role of this facility is the pedestal without a statue where a two-line text is carved into the frame - two lines of Hesiod's didactic poem "Works and Days": "Nor does famine attend straight-judging men, nor calamity, but they share out in festivities the fruits of the labors they care for to the God Justice."

It is likely that the statues were made in Heraclea in domestic workshops that existed in the period 1st to 3rd century AD. Several excellent works found in Heraclea were probably created by renowned sculptors who worked here upon the invitation of the city government or wealthy clients. They are:

The statue of Athena Parthenos - which is an exceptionally beautiful copy of the famous work of Phidias of Athens (5th century BC).

She is dressed in a long lavishly pleated peplos cinched at the waist with a belt adorned with serpent endings, while her



Athena Parthenos

chest and shoulders are draped with an aegis bearing the head of Gorgon, which is also portrayed on the large round shield. Under the shield a large serpent stands erect. With no lesser artistic impression are the busts of the Greek scholar Aeschines which is a remarkable portrait created in the spirit of Hadrian's Classicism and the unknown poet which are currently in the British museum of London.



Research 1959-1963

Several pedestals, as well as statues broken into pieces were used as ordinary building material in the construction of latter buildings.

The building was altered in the late 3rd century, probably following the devastating raid of the Goths and Heruli (year 267/69) and once again probably in the 5th century when the original appearance and luster were completely shattered.

The Theatre - is the most impressive building in the city, located on the slope of the hill, directly above the downtown city center. It was built according to the propositions set for Roman theaters by Vitruvius. Its construction started at the beginning of the 2nd century during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, who travelled through our region on his way from Thrace to the Adriatic coast in the year 124/5. This was a time when the city authorities of the cities he visited erected theaters in his honor, in honor of the emperor - lover of Hellenic art and philosophy. The building began to be used at the time of Antoninus Pius (year 138 -161).



Theater

The front of the Theater is composed of a long arcade as an external facade and support for the scene due to the terrain and also to reduce the height difference with the street. The arcade was built of bricks and through the high arches one could enter into seven rooms arranged in a single row. The end premises had a storeyed structure connected by internal stairs. The arch, as well as the theater, is 58 meters wide and the center axis of the theater with the arch is 47.60 m long.

The setting of the skene (scenae fons) is divided with three inverted stairways which represented three broad passages through which the actors took to the orchestra. In the orchestra one could enter through two passages (parodoi) from the eastern and western side. The orchestra has a diameter of 26.4 meters.

The facade was adorned with eight marble pillars and six wall pilasters all mounted on massive rectangular pedestals. Above them stood capitols with an extended wreath- frieze.

The auditorium (cavea) lies upon a rocky soil where only the two ends were superstructured due to the height of the building. The cross wall is built of large bricks bound with lime mortar.



Theater

To achieve a higher aesthetic, the front of the analemmas is divided with two high arches as blind niches. At the top section the auditorium is divided into six segments, and at the bottom into two by means of built-in stairs for moving. In the middle of the lower segment is situated an honorary loge (tribunalia). The perimetral fence was built of marble blocks and in its middle part was built a deep semicircular niche as a shrine of the goddess Nemesis, where her statue stood. Judging by the scope of the seating area the theater could hold between 2500 and 3000 spectators.

The auditorium above the orchestra stands against a semicircular wall, a parapet, built of complex large vertical marble blocks. The height is 2.10 m. A net was placed over it to protect spectators from the wild beasts. At the western and the eastern end of the parapet are passages leading to the cages under the seats where the animals were kept before being released into the arena.

The names engraved on the front row of the seats reveal that the city was organized by a source model, divided into phyles - territorial municipalities: Asclepias, Dionysia, Artemisia, Heracleis. The mention of the phyles indicates that there were phylarchs who acted as leaders of each phyle.

The phylarchs' length of duty was predetermined and their duties included administration and religious life, as well as the recruiting of soldiers in the Roman army.

The theater was intended for musical and theatrical performances, and later adapted for venator battles. During the 4th century it was abandoned along with other arenas due to the ban on shedding of human blood in public places adopted at the time of Constantine the Great (325/6) and again during Theodosius I (edict from year 386). After these events, the theater was demolished and its interior was filled with litter. In the late 5th and 6th century over the area were erected modest living facilities.

The theater played a crucial role in creating the cult of the martyr. Namely, the cruelest manner of torture, which also created delight in the tormentor, was the throwing of Christians into the arena to be torn apart by starving beasts. The Christians, however, strengthened by the deep faith of saving the soul, received their death through prayer and without fear. Therefore, it is no accident that the space around the theater was chosen as a place for erecting cult buildings which served as a reminder of a brutal time, and hope for a better tomorrow.

Therma - it is located south of the Portico, from the south it is bordered by the city wall and on the north by a street of Late Antiquity. It was built in the late 3rd and early 4th century, a period when almost all baths were built. The building has a rectangular base (19 x 44 m) with two symmetrical halves with an entrance through the center of the east side.

The east room probably served as a changing room (apoditerium), but also as a room with cold water (frigidarium). The second room was designed for massage and from this room through a wide passage on the west one could enter the thermal section divided into three rooms that were heated by a hypocaust. The north room represents a pool (caldarium) on whose walls were built pipes of hot air streaming to the vault. In the middle part is located a small tiered pool (3.10 x 1.30 m). The south section had a hypocaust and probably served as a place for sweating (tepidarium). Outside of the west wall were furnaces (praefurnia), and in front of them was a small courtyard with an entrance to the north and the south end. The bath could accommodate up to 15 visitors at a time.



Therma



Therma

City market - Forum – The archaeological finds indicate that on the area of the Great Basilica in Roman times there was an open facility with a central yard with a rectangular base framed by seventeen massive arches in length and six arches in width, which created an open space of 150 x 50 Roman feet. The arches divided the small shops, and the remains of their partition walls can be observed on the cubic pedestals of the arcade. Behind the row of shops, on the outside of the building there was another row of premises in the form of long halls without internal walls. The massiveness of the discovered walls and building foundations indicates that perhaps was storeyed. The time of building of this facility coincides with the construction activities of the Portico and the Theater at the beginning of 2nd century AD.

Roman wall - a construction which due to the demands imposed by the way of living endured various additions, partitions and upgrades in different time periods.



South wall

When analyzing the movable finds and based on the masonry (quality stone bound with solid mortar) of the wall we assume that it was built at the end of the 3rd century. A solid proof for this is the circular tower on the East (only preserved in the lower parts). This type of circular towers are typical of the Middle Ages and in Antiquity were only built during the reign of Diocletian. In fact, this wall was probably built as a result of the first serious attacks on the city. On the north side are visible objects of a latter period which are incorporated in the construction of the wall. According to the discovered movable finds they resemble commercial buildings.

The 3rd century AD in this region was marked by a series of events. An important historical event for the city occurred in the year 202 when Septimius Severus reached Heraclea following the Egnatia road and on that occasion the city acquired the right “to place the royal name before its own - SEPTIMIA AURELIA HERACLEA”. This is confirmed by the inscription on a marble pedestal which states the dynasty name of the city.

In the late 3rd century followed substantial demolition caused by the Goths and Heruli. The attacks on the city became more common and more severe but this did not discourage the city to rise like a phoenix from its ashes and experience its last lavish stage in the middle of the 5th and during the 6th century. Heraclea became an episcopal seat at that time – a spiritual source for its bishops to spread the word of faith among the first in this region as participants in most ecumenical councils from the 4th to the 6th century. In the year 343 at the council held in Serdica, among the bishops from Macedonia the name of Bishop Evagrius of Heraclea is mentioned.

The Macedonian bishops, especially the Heracleian, gain a greater role as allies of the pope at the 3rd Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in year 431. The name of Bishop Quintilius is mentioned at the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in year 449. The episcopacy of Heraclea must have had a great importance as its bishop represented the Thessalonian Bishop Anastasius. Even greater was the role of the Heracleian bishop at the 4th Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in the year 451 where among the eight participants from Macedonia, Quintilius is mentioned once again as the most esteemed. Benignus, the bishop of Heraclea, is mentioned several times at the church council in Constantinople in the year 553 as the mediator between the council and the pope. This bishop represented the absent Thessalonian Bishop Elias in his work in the council. These mentions of the Heracleian bishops clearly indicate the importance of the episcopal center of Heraclea.

Names of bishops from Heraclea can be found in documents of secular nature, as well. We learn from these that the Heracleian bishop organized the people of the city to survive the attacks of Theodoric during the invasion of the Ostrogoths in the 5th century (according to the description of Malchus) and, in fact, played a key role in the difficult times of the city.

Carried by their faith in Christ the citizens of Heraclea perceived their Early Christian basilicas as caryatids upon which they relied in turbulent times and from which they drew their devoutness in martyrdom inflicted by a fate of crucifixion to those who sought peace and prayer of the city.

Minor Basilica – Basilica A is located south of the building Portico beside the southern city wall. The building was erected over the old martyrium and consists of three premises connected to one another in the direction east - west.



Minor Basilica

The first chamber has a rectangular shape with two entrances- from the east and west. The floor of the chamber was covered with a mosaic in opus tessallatum which dates from the end of 5th - 6th century. With regard to style it is divided into three zones: east half and west half with a narrow strip in-between. On the narrow strip are presented two peacocks, water birds with a kantharos between them and a confrontation of a bull and a leaping lioness with a kantharos between them. On both areas are represented birds and animals amid a braided net and star- like geometric motifs. This mosaic covers an area of 84 m².



Minor Basilica, exonarthex, mosaic

The second chamber is square (part of the former Forum). The old Roman fountain was remodeled as a Christian baptistery. The room was paved with large marble slabs.

On the east lies a small church as a three- nave basilica. The naves are separated by stylobates which served as foundations of three pairs of pillars. The central section ends in an apse which is semicircular on the inner side and has three rows of seats (synthronon). On the outside it is rectangular. The central nave and the presbytery have a white marble tiled floor executed in opus sectile. The side naves are laid with bricks. Especially fascinating is the capital with a monogram of Bishop John that dates back to the second half of the 6th century. According to current observations this building was used in the period 4th - 6th century.



Minor Basilica, naos, mosaic

Great basilica - Basilica C is a three nave basilica with impressive dimensions of 55 x 38 m. It consists of: an exonarthex, narthex, a naos ending in a deep semicircular apse (5.50m), catechumenon and baptistery on the southeastern side. On the northwest corner there is a diaconicon (chapel) with a courtyard and a wide apse. All the architectural elements are subordinate to the space of the naos which actually bears the basic compositional element.



Great basilica

The apse is externally enhanced by contrafortes indicating that they carried a massive two-story structure. The baptistery is of rectangular base with a semicircular piscina in the middle where one could enter through stairs from both sides. Under the central nave of the church and in the eastern courtyard were discovered remains of a facility considered to be an urban agora as part of the urban center of the city. By probing beneath the floors and around the walls of the two churches it was discovered that underneath lies a monumental Early Roman construction- the former Forum.

The building is almost completely covered with floor mosaics, such as: the three naves, the narthex, the diaconicon, the catechumenon and the baptistery. Chronologically they belong to the period from the end of the 5th to the middle of the 6th century and are executed in opus tessellatum with geometric, floral and zoomorphic motifs. According to the artistic and technical execution they can be perceived as the highest achievement from that period in Macedonia and abroad.

In the central nave the mosaic consists of several rectangular areas filled with geometric motifs. Near the middle in a circular area within a square is inscribed the message of the donor of the mosaic "Vinika domestic built this for his sins". The creation of this mosaic with an area of 184 m² dates from the middle of the 5th century, but unfortunately much of it was not preserved.

The side naves are embellished in the same manner. They contain an array of 13 square fields with images of a deer, a bull, a doe, a bird, a bird tree and marine fauna framed with two wreaths of braids. The mosaic of the south nave has been preserved to a lesser extent. The surface covered with mosaic in the northern nave is 150 m² and 35 m² in the southern nave, and is considered to have been created at the end of 5th century.



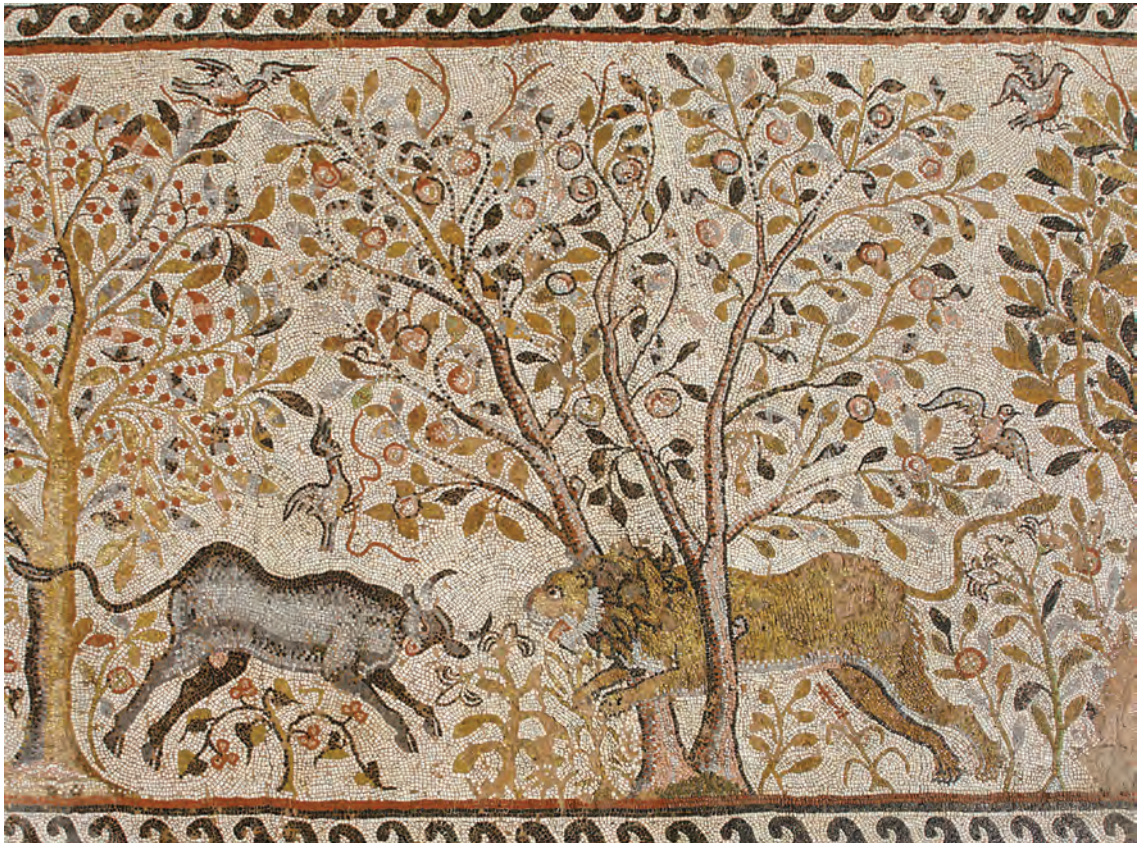
Great basilica, north nave, mosaic-detail

Narthex - here is situated the most beautiful of all the mosaics, a masterpiece of Early Christian art. It represents a large composition with an area of over 100 m² identified as a representation of the universe. The cosmogony is portrayed symbolically, heaven with Eucharist in the middle (the floral kantharos with a vine - Christ wherefrom a deer and a doe drink). Over him stand confronted peacocks and pigeons, left and right are displayed Paradise trees (fig, olive, cedar, cherry, apple and two cypress trees), and below animals: a lion and a bull in a collision, the dog Cerberus, a he-goat, a cheetah taking apart an antelope.



Great basilica, narthex, mosaic-detail

Above the trees are displayed birds in flight. The frame around this scene is divided into a series of hexagonal fields framed by two braided wreaths. In the fields are presented: fish, octopuses, cuttlefish, water birds. This is the symbolic strip of seas and oceans surrounding the Earth. This mosaic was created in the second half of the 5th century.



Great basilica, narthex, mosaic-detail



Great basilica, narthex, mosaic-detail

The mosaic in the diaconicon is a square composition framed in a two-strip braid. The motif is a geometric display of mutually intersected circles, and the composition is completely framed in an ivy vine of superb color. In the north annex the mosaic surface is 48 m², and was created at the end of the 6th century, while in the south annex the mosaic surface stretches over an area of 31 m², and is presumed to have been made in the middle of the 5th century.

The mosaic floor of the room which belongs to those who hear the word of the Lord eager to convince themselves in the Orthodox faith – the catechumenon in Heraclea is represented by a circular shield in a rectangular box filled with a net motif (rhombuses, squares, crosses). It was created in the beginning of the 6th century and covers an area of 37 m².

The baptistery - the gate through which one entered the kingdom of God by anointing can be accessed through the piscina which was covered on both sides with a mosaic resembling two rectangular zones. The eastern zone which represents a net of circles with a bird between each of them has been preserved. In the frame which surrounds the mosaic are presented medallions of curved acanthus vines. In the medallions are birds, apples, pomegranate, container or basket with fruit, octopus, and fish. The mosaic surface which is believed to have been created at the beginning of the 6th century has been preserved on an area of 27 m².



Great basilica, baptistery

North chapel - the chapel floor is covered with geometric motifs while the entryway is decorated with a figural scene: the Holy kantharos with a grape vine flanked by two peacocks, deer and doe, and a representation of small birds eating grapes. One half of the mosaic has been destroyed.

The basilica was built around the middle of the 5th century and some alterations and upgrades were executed at the end of the 5th and during the 6th century.

The episcopal residence lies west of the Great Basilica, enclosed on the north by the north street and on the south by the city wall. The discovered section contains fifteen rooms arranged around a central courtyard. The courtyard, which has a well in the middle, is the central area. On its northern side there is a large apse dining room (triclinium), on the east there is a martyrium with a narthex, on the south there is a porch with arcades, and on the west a porch encircled by arcades from both sides. In the southeast are several rooms of administrative or residential function.



Episcopal residence

The floor of the more extravagant chambers (dining room, martyrium with a narthex and chamber no. 4 (perhaps a library)) is covered with mosaic in opus tessallatum dating from the end of the 6th century. This building was altered and re-purposed several times and was used between the 4th and the 6th century.



Episcopal residence, dining room, mosaic-detail

In the lavish dining room the mosaic is divided into 9 fields framed by strips of braids and an array of hexagonal fields. They portray fish, birds and animals. The apsidal space is furnished with an embellishment in the form of scales. The fields represent sections of a general composition of the microcosmos, water, earth and sky. The composition is symbolically represented through the marine fauna, deer, wild boars and rabbits chased by lions and hounds, and the sky – the Eucharist is defined by the holy kantharos wrapped with grape vines flanked by two deer, two peacocks and birds. The total preserved area of the mosaic which was created in the middle of the 6th century amounts to 130 m².

Chamber 1 (martyrium) is an area which portrays a eucharistic scene of a kantharos flanked by two deer, and in the lower zone a fence with geometric motifs of scales and rhombuses. The field is framed by a braid. The total preserved area of the mosaic which was created at the beginning of the 6th century amounts to 1.33 m².

Chamber 2 is, in fact, a central part of the mosaic divided into 9 fields of which today are preserved only six. They depict the usual animals and the scene of the Eucharist. Today this mosaic covers an area of 2.19 m² and according to its characteristics it is considered to have been created in the third quarter of the 6th century.

The third chamber has a framed double- braided depiction of picturesque trees and animals in one of its fields. The second field of the mosaic is embellished with scales. The total preserved area of the mosaic is 3.68m² and was created in the composition with others in early 6th century.

Extra muros - Basilica D is located in the eastern part of the city, built as a cemetery church over the remains of the Late Antique lower city towards the end of the 5th century. The basilica (dimensions 29.40 x 13.50 m) has three naves, with a semicircular apse to the east and a narthex to the west flanked sideways with an annex.

In the east end, in the area of the presbytery at the altar section, is preserved a mosaic presented in a square encircled by a frame. The frame is decorated with a motif of split circles and the space is divided into three zones framed with braids. It depicts water birds feeding. In the apse area is presented a scene of the Eucharist: the Holy kantharos with grape vines complemented by a deer on each side. The south nave and the narthex were laid with bricks. The original version of the basilica dates from the early 6th century. Later on, the east half of the central nave along with the apse were probably superstructured and shaped like a small single-nave church used during the 10th – 12th century. Today are preserved only 20 m² of the original area of this building.

The spiritual aspect accompanied by the residential are a reflection of the time when the inhabitants of Heraclea enjoyed their golden age, leaving us only to sense the level of civilizational development of this city that has left a deep trace on the contemporary existence in the area.

Street with a water system - Heraclea was supplied with water by the springs of Baba Planina (Baba Mountain). The specific data that speak clearly of the water supply of the street in Heraclea come from the Early Byzantine period. West of the entrance, in the western parados of the theater, was discovered a canal in the direction west - east built of stone pebbles bound by waterproof mortar. The canal is covered with stone slabs of irregular shape. It is visible in the area of the so-called Street between the buildings Bath and Portico, as well as in front of the theater building. This water system was built in the first half of the 6th century.



Street with a water system

The city fountain is attached to the east wing of the theater building. It was built of stone and mortar and rows of brick. The basin of the fountain is enclosed by walls from three sides, and its front features a parapet of 1.10 m height. The parapet consists of three marble panels with four pillars in-between. The pillars are profiled, and the panels are relief decorated. The central panel is decorated with a wreath with a Christogram



City fountain

wrapped in ivy vine. The side panels depict two dolphins opposite each other. On the front wall of the basin lies a profiled marble wreath with an inscription stating that the fountain was built "in the 35th year of the reign of the most devout emperor Flavius Justinian I (562) in the time of the holy and blessed Bishop John in September, the tenth day, the tenth indiction." Above the wreath with the inscription stood three vaulted niches, one of which stood in the central part and the others on either side. The water in the basin of this fountain flowed through three fountains.

City villa – Villa Urbana is a residential facility of the type city villa. Five rooms arranged in two rows have been discovered. The floors of some of them were covered in mosaic while some are paved with bricks. On the west is located a triclinium with an apse wall to the west and a brick floor. On the south there is a room with a hypocaust.

In the early 5th century the villa went through a restoration with new mosaic floors of Early Christian motifs. In rooms 1 and 2 were created mosaics using different techniques ranging from large tesserae on the bordures (opus segmentatum) to fine miniature multicolored cubes and (opus tessellatum) in the framed fields. Among the motifs prevail geometric adornments, but there is also a representation of two chalices and a dolphin. According to the scarce information, remains of an older mosaic probably created in the 3rd century were also discovered.

The discovered floor mosaics in Heraclea represent the most beautiful and most valuable art works from the ancient period in the Republic of Macedonia. They are a part of the cultural heritage that is unique in its content and unparalleled in the artistic achievements of that time.

With the attacks of the Avar - Slavic hordes during the 6th century the city sank into poverty, and urban life was destroyed to a great extent. In fact, the year 550/551 marks the first significant period when the Slavs remained in the Balkans. According to Procopius a great number of Slavs did unspeakable crimes. Afterward, the great Slavic invasion in the eighties of the 6th century shook the Byzantine reign in the Balkans to the core, especially the southern regions. The Slavs plundered and ravaged Macedonia and Thrace for more than three years and in the year 584 they organized the first attack of Thessaloniki. The siege of 5000 Slavs was a failure. In the autumn of 586 they undertook a new attack, this time in alliance with the Avars. All this turmoil did not bypass Heraclea. Numerous archaeological findings stand as evidence for all these events.



Avar- Slavic finds

During the latest research in 2008 and 2011 the movable finds confirmed that the city existed in the upcoming years as well (7th to 9th century), while the evidence for life in the city from the 9th to the 12th century can be found in the mentions of names pertaining to church life.



Gymnasium



Research 2008-2011

Entering the period of the Middle Ages the city of Heraclea and its surroundings already had a long history. We receive information regarding this period mainly from church history. In the 9th century in a list of dioceses who were subordinate to the Constantinople Patriarchate the name Heracleian is mentioned, possibly as a title held by all the bishops from Heraclea. In our case it refers to Bishop John of the year 879.

The fact is that this area, probably due to its great military and strategic significance in the Middle Ages was harrowed by many occupiers. Our sources confirm that the Byzantine emperors stayed here personally when preparing their expeditions. There is an important tangible proof of that period, a seal with a dedication to Michael Saronites, magistros and dux of the West, with the year 1072/73 written, which was found in the vineyards west of Heraclea near Siva Voda.



Theatre square



Theatre square



Early Byzantine coins

In the 12th century the name of the humble Bishop Gerasim of Heraclea is mentioned.

With the exception of the above entries, for the medieval life in Heraclea there is material evidence, as well- the medieval necropolis in the Basilica D. It refers to graves, so-called types of rows, and especially interesting is that between the rows one can perceive several smaller formations that probably belonged to family units.

All who passed through the Pelagonian region left traces of their material culture before departing. Only the Slavs (Brsjaci) managed to permanently colonize this region, impose on the natives and establish their settlement on the slope of the area Bora Kale, around the upper flow of the river Dragor which grew into a medieval town owing to the natural conditions.



Mediaeval finds

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