

Post-Roman Towns,  
Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium  
Vol. 2



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# Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium

Vol. 2

Byzantium, Pliska, and the Balkans

Edited by  
Joachim Henning

Walter de Gruyter · Berlin · New York

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## Preface

The second volume of the collection “Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement” is devoted to the early medieval world of Byzantium, and to the territories of southeastern Europe and the Near East, which were either Byzantine provinces or were conquered by the steppe-nomadic Turco-Bulgars or the Arabs. Byzantine influence, if not direct political control, was always present in these areas, even after the Balkans were “paganized” by cults that originated in the Middle East or Islam established itself along the new eastern borders of the empire. This volume therefore contains all the contributions from the international Bad Homburg conference (October 30 - November 3, 2004) relating to these areas. Contributions covering regions that were formerly parts of the Western Roman Empire are to be found in the first volume. At the conference a separate section also was organized to present the results of a German-Bulgarian research program that ran from 1997 to 2003 and focused on Europe’s largest early medieval fortified settlement, Aboba-Pliska, an agglomeration that more often than not is called a city, or even a metropolis. Without doubt the work at this unique site of European importance deserved to be discussed by the scholarly community that met in Bad Homburg, and the papers from this section dominate the second part of the volume. During the course of the work of the project on the early medieval Pliska basin in Northeastern Bulgaria, with its important power centers, a smaller working conference entitled “Zwischen Byzanz und Abendland: Pliska, der östliche Balkanraum und Europa im Spiegel der Frühmittelalterarchäologie” was held at the medieval castle of Ebernburg near Bad Münster am Stein in the Palatinate from November 15-18, 1999 (Figs 1-2). Since some of the contributions to this conference represented valuable overviews of the archaeological situation in or around these centers in the Pliska basin, or dealt with questions related to them, they were also included in this volume. Résumés of the papers presented at Ebernburg were published ahead of the conference.<sup>1</sup> Finally, individual articles are to be found in this collection that were produced by our Bulgarian partners so that they could be published in a suitable framework, and this volume seemed to be ideal.

In order to further knowledge of the early medieval antiquities of the Old Bulgarian power centers on the part of an interested German and Bulgarian public, the joint German-Bulgarian research program promoted two impressive exhibitions, prepared with

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1 Henning 1999.



Fig. 1 Participants of the Ebernburg meeting at the evening lecture

the support of both Frankfurt University and the Archaeological Institute and Museum in Sofia. These were staged at the Kulturhistorisches Museum of Magdeburg (August - December 2001) and the Archaeological Museum in Sofia (November 1999 - March 2000). The archaeological items displayed on these occasions are reproduced in the exhibition catalogues edited by the Magdeburg Museum and Frankfurt University with the kind support of many Bulgarian museums and institutions.<sup>2</sup> Since the catalogue of the Sofia exhibition appeared in Bulgarian and in a limited black-and-white edition, it was translated and appended to this volume in a revised, technically improved form.

At the Ebernburg conference we had the great pleasure of enjoying a presentation of the immense scholarly work which Vladimir I. Kozlov from the St Petersburg branch of the Archaeological Institute of the Russian Academy of Science had realized over several decades in the territories of modern Moldavia and Ukraine, areas which in early medieval times were part of the Bulgarian realm. Nobody could foresee then that this would be one of his last appearances in a remarkable scholarly career. He passed away not long after returning home from the conference, and soon after having submitted his manuscript to us. This now appears here as testimony to his scholarly work.

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2 For the exhibits from Bulgaria see: Puhle 2001, "Bulgarien" pp. 482-496; Henning/ Dončeva-Petkova 1999.



Fig. 2 Participants of the Ebernburg meeting at the evening lecture

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The international Bad Homburg conference would not have been possible without the support of the many institutions, private persons and enterprises who sponsored the event. They were mentioned in the foreword to the first volume. As regards the section of the meeting devoted to the German-Bulgarian research program in the Pliska basin, we are especially grateful to the Volkswagen foundation, which covered the traveling costs of the Bulgarian participants within the framework of a separate cooperation program. Frankfurt University offered invaluable support in many ways in order to make the Ebernburg conference possible.

Furthermore we wish to express our gratitude to the University's sponsoring organization, "Vereinigung von Freunden und Förderern der J. W. Goethe Universität e.V.", which offered substantial funding for the development of the German-Bulgarian cooperation. A number of younger scholars participating in this program received stipends and travel awards to realize PhD theses directly or indirectly related to the German-Bulgarian research program. We are indebted the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (1997-2001) and the Volkswagen Foundation (2002-2005) for their generous support to Vassilena Petrova, Tchavdar Kirilov, Peter Milo, Norbert Schleifer, Marco Hartlaub, Thorsten Westphal, Eyub F. Eyub and Jürgen Bigalke.

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It would be going too far to mention all the people who were involved in the practical archaeological fieldwork that was carried out by the German-Bulgarian expedition over seven years of campaigns. The staff consisted of up to 45 persons. I wish to thank them all individually for their contributions, regardless of their nature, whether support in the direction of the program or in employing a trowel during the excavations. All these contributions were equally important for the realisation of the project, the success of which is documented in this volume.



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## CHAPTER IV

### BYZANTIUM



## The reduction of the fortified city area in late antiquity: some reflections on the end of the ‘antique city’ in the lands of the Eastern Roman Empire

CHAVDAR KIRILOV

The controversy about the character of the transition between late antiquity and the early Middle Ages goes back quite a long time. Most of the scholars still accept the old idea that the period of late antiquity to the early Middle Ages represents an epoch of decline in the history of European civilisation – an opinion, which has to be attributed to Gibbon’s well known work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. One of the essential points in this debate is the one about the fate of the so-called ‘antique city’. A starting point of the discussion was the publication of the famous work of A. Kazhdan concerning the fate of the Byzantine towns and cities in the so-called ‘Dark Ages’<sup>1</sup>, followed by critical remarks of various Russian<sup>2</sup> and European scholars and, first of all, of G. Ostrogorsky<sup>3</sup>. The excellent papers of E. Kirsten<sup>4</sup> and F. Dölger<sup>5</sup> present clear evidence for the growing attention in regarding the problems of late antique and early medieval towns of the Eastern Roman Empire in the decade after the Second World War. Since that time, thousands of articles and dozens of books and anthologies have been published. A recent article contained a detailed list of the most important contributions to the subject.<sup>6</sup>

It is believed that one of the symptoms of the decline of the cities and towns of the later Roman Empire during the transition period and later in the Dark Ages is the reduction of their wall circuits. The adepts on this subject point to various reasons for the decline. According to most of them, the main reason was the irreversible weakening process of the city councils after the fourth century and the crisis of the municipal finances.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the cities suffered from barbar-

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1 Kazhdan 1954.

2 For example Siuziumov 1956.

3 Ostrogorsky 1959.

4 Kirsten 1958.

5 Dölger 1961.

6 Lavan 2001a.

7 Vittinghoff 1958; Kurbatov 1971; *idem* 1973; Liebeschuetz 1959; *idem* 1987; *idem* 1996; *idem* 2001a.

ian invasions,<sup>8</sup> famines and pest epidemics,<sup>9</sup> together with natural disasters such as earthquakes etc.<sup>10</sup> The effect of all these misfortunes was, according to this point of view, a disastrous financial, cultural and demographic collapse which led to the definitive decline and even to the disappearance of the institution ‘city’ in the territories of the former Roman Empire for more than two or even three hundred years. This ‘catastrophe theory’ was developed in the last decades mostly by scholars such as Wolfgang Müller-Wiener<sup>11</sup>, Clive Foss<sup>12</sup> and Wolfram Brandes<sup>13</sup> and was described as ‘a transition from polis to kastron’.<sup>14</sup> Some scholars believe that the new, much shorter walls even represented the actual border of the settlement.<sup>15</sup> In these small fortresses, according to this point of view, a small number of representatives of the civilian, ecclesiastical and military administration took refuge.

In this paper I am not attempting to argue to what extent it is justifiable to use the term *decline* concerning the development of the cities and towns in this period.<sup>16</sup> Recently this old problem was discussed once more in the *Journal of Roman Archaeology*<sup>17</sup> and in several volumes of the series ‘*The Transformation of the Roman World*’.<sup>18</sup> I am simply aiming at getting the answer to one main question: To what extent should the reduction of the fortified area be interpreted as a sign of decline of the Roman cities? To find a solution to this main problem, the following questions have to be answered: Was the entire city area densely populated in classical antiquity? Were the living spaces in Classical and late antiquity one and the same? Did the city walls in late antiquity represent the real settlement borders?

### Question No. 1: Was the entire town area densely populated in classical antiquity?

Situated in the bizarre mountains of South Lycia, the earliest settlement of *Arykanda* (Fig. 1) was the residence of a local ruler, demonstrated by the keep on the rocks above the small town dated to between the sixth and fourth century BC. The town grew considerably during the last pre-Christian centuries, but remained unfortified. An intensive

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8 Foss 1975.

9 Allen 1979; Leven 1987; Durlat 1989; see also the remarks in Brandes 1999.

10 Mango 1980, 60-87.

11 Müller-Wiener 1961; *idem* 1967; *idem* 1986.

12 Foss 1975; 1977.

13 Brandes 1989.

14 See Poulter 1996 and Dunn 1994 for the situation on the Balkans.

15 Russel 1958, 7-8, 71-88.

16 I for myself prefer the expression *transformation*.

17 Liebeschuetz 2001b; Cameron 2001; Ward-Perkins 2001; Whittow 2001.

18 Brogiolo/Ward-Perkins 1999; *idem* 2000.



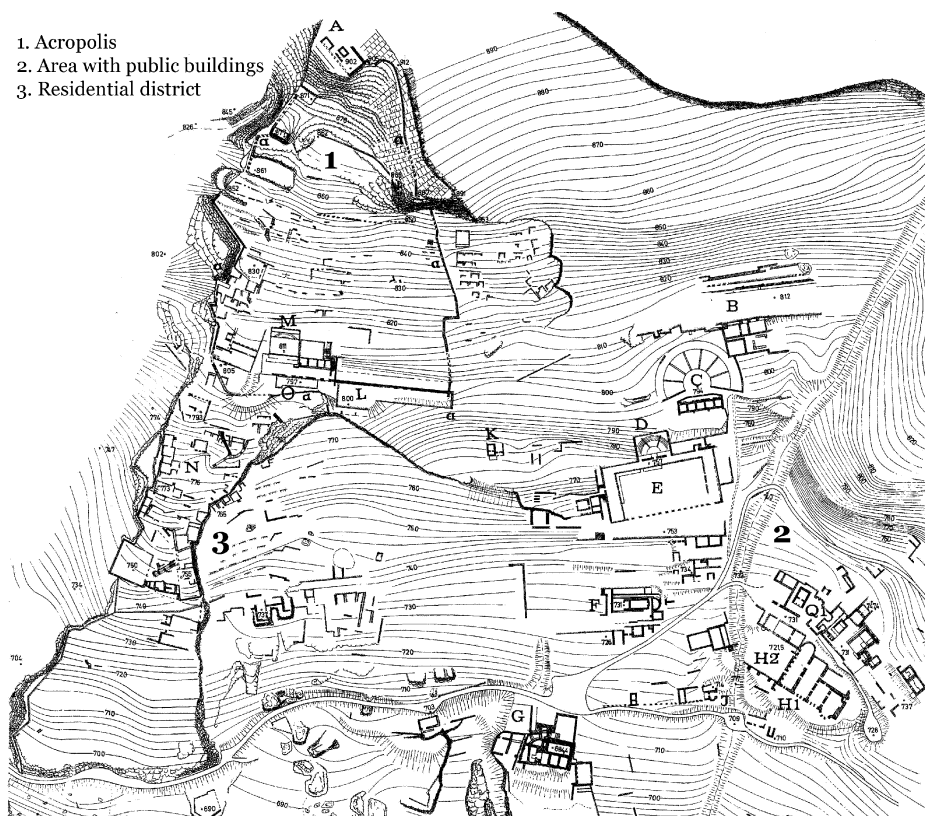


Fig. 1. Map of *Arykanda*: the town in the Hellenistic and Roman ages

building programme was realised in the Roman age (second century AD). As a result, the significantly greater part of the built-up town area was occupied by public buildings.<sup>19</sup> Residencies were discovered only in the western part, on the steep slopes below the old *acropolis*.

Similar to *Arykanda*, the town of *Pinara* was founded in the sixth century BC. The populated area was extended considerably during the Roman age. A clear subdivision of the town area into private and public areas can be recognised: the palace district, the *agora* with the adjacent public buildings, the temples north to the palace, a residential district west towards the temples and a *necropolis* in the south-western parts of the town. In late antiquity, the built-up area was restricted to the borders of the old Lycian town and the fortification of the town was strengthened.<sup>20</sup>

19 Knoblauch/Witschel 1993.

20 Wurster/Wörrle 1978.

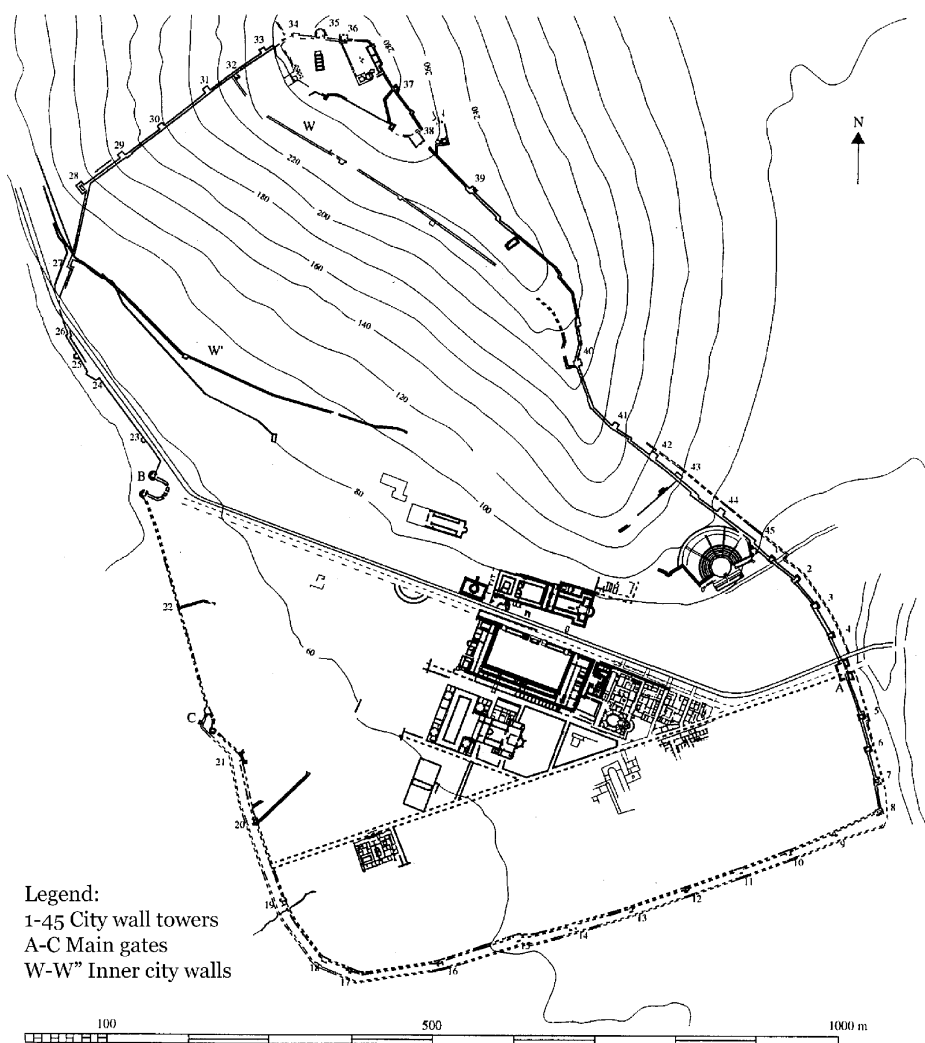


Fig. 2. Map of *Philippi* in the Hellenistic and Roman ages

The length of the Hellenistic and Roman age walls of *Philippi* (Fig. 2) amounted to 3,500 m; the fortified area covering nearly 70 ha. Only the low, flat parts of the town were built-up and populated; the steep slopes of the hill, crowned by the *acropolis* remained unsettled.<sup>21</sup> In *Taracco*, about one third of the fortified town area was occupied by a quarter with exclusively public functions, including the so-called 'cult district', a representative square and a circus. Numerous buildings with public

<sup>21</sup> Provost 2001.

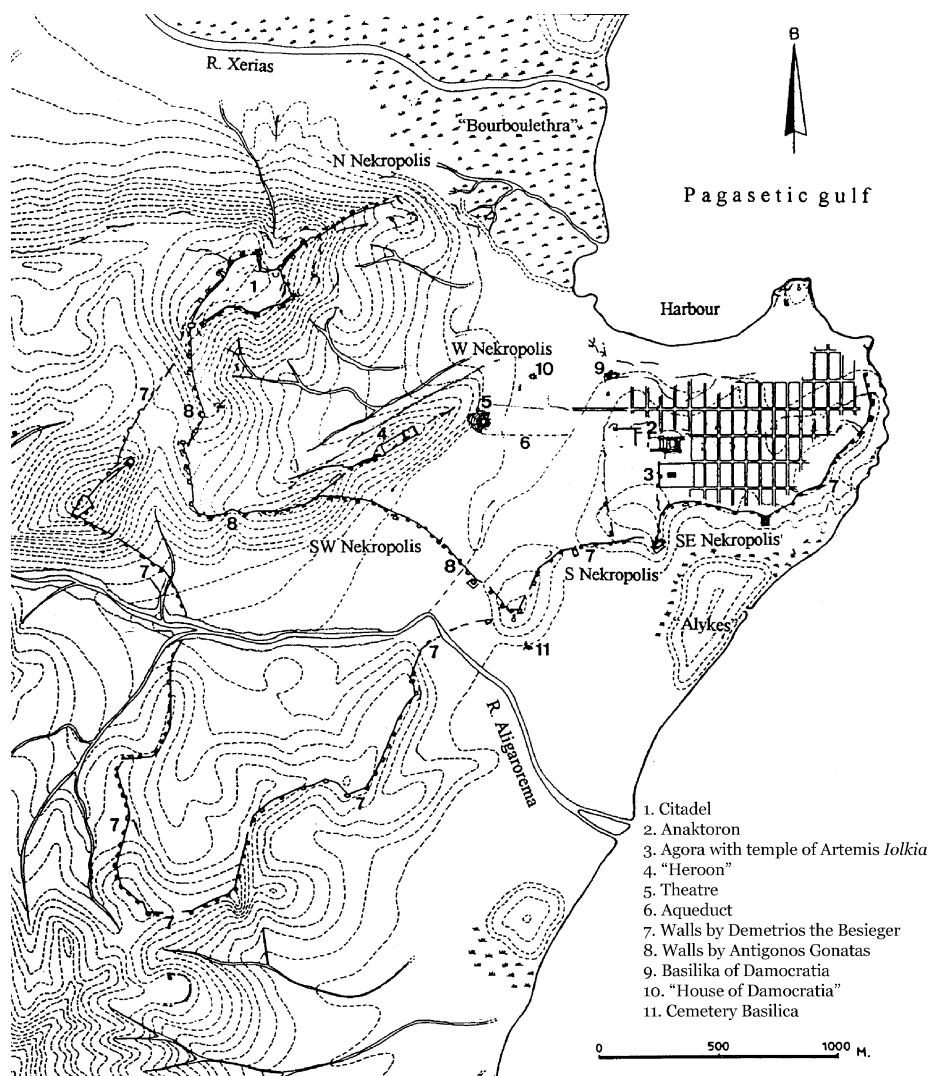


Fig. 3. Map of *Demetrias* in the Hellenistic and Roman ages

character were situated within the residential district, which occupied the lower parts of the town area.<sup>22</sup>

The town *Demetrias* (Fig. 3) was founded in 294 BC by Demetrios Poliorketes (the Besieger), who brought together all the neighbouring settlements behind mighty walls; with the area surrounded by the walls originally covering about 440 ha. During

<sup>22</sup> Panzram 2002, 28-92.

the reign of Antigonos Gonatas, an inner wall was built dividing the fortified area into two sectors. The town itself was situated in the district around the harbour and was surrounded by a wall, whose length amounted to more than 8,000 m. The zones outside the walls of *Gonatas* (the fertile valley of the river Aligarorema) served as the first line of defence and probably also for agricultural purposes.<sup>23</sup>

The wall circuit of the ancient town *Priene* measured about 2,500 m. Inside the wall, several non built-up areas are apparent: the rocky plateau of the *acropolis*, the terraces below the *acropolis* and a wide strip along the southern wall.<sup>24</sup>

It is obvious that the entire town area was not identical with the actually populated area. This assertion can be made by means of some additional cases. For example, the fortification of the city of Antioch illustrates the aspiration of the Hellenistic architects and builders with the erection of majestic walls, surrounding even rocky and uninhabited peaks regardless of the factual requirements for the defence of the city and the extent of the populated area.<sup>25</sup> The walls of the city of Athens in classical times were quite impressive as well,<sup>26</sup> and the fortified area in Corinth in the pre-Roman age surrounded more than 700 ha. The case of Teltepe (Diana Veteranorum) in North Africa is very instructive. In the beginning, the scholars expected that the populated town area would cover more than 400 or even 500 ha, but later, owing to the weight of the evidence, it had to be reduced to only 50-100 ha.<sup>27</sup>

## Question No. 2: the size of the dwellings space

Roman Volubilis was a successor of an old Phoenician settlement, probably a colony of Carthage. In the so-called 'north-eastern district' of the Roman town, altogether 25 dwelling units were excavated. Apart from private rooms, open (i.e. unroofed) and representative rooms, storerooms, workshops, accommodations for guests etc. were found.<sup>28</sup> The floorage in *Priene* (Fig. 4) amounted to an average of 210 sqm; about 75 sqm of which were roofed. The size of the private rooms amounted only to between 25-30 sqm, with the storerooms often being larger.<sup>29</sup>

The archaeological-ethnographical approach to the analysis of private houses in *Pompeii*<sup>30</sup> illustrates how complicated it is to specify which of the numerous rooms

23 Karagiorgou 2001.

24 Dontas 2000, 174-177.

25 Kondoleon 2000, 17.

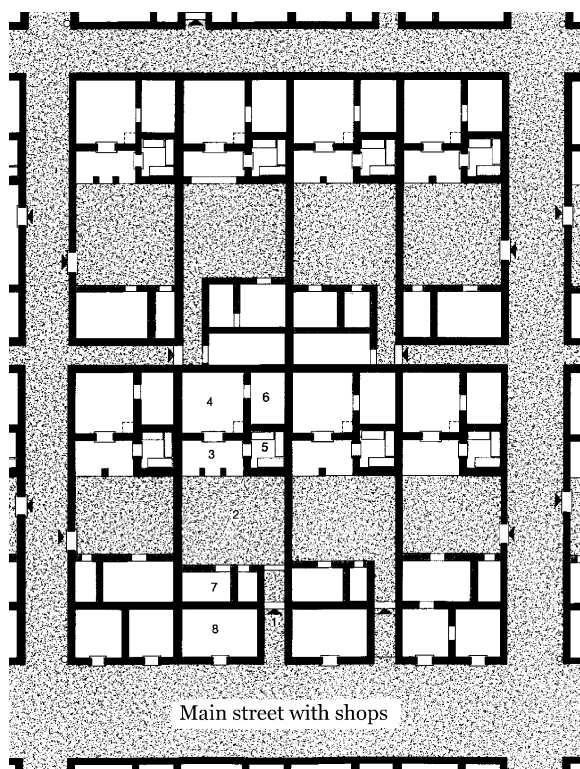
26 Thompson et al. 1943.

27 Duncan-Jones 1974, 265, n. 2.

28 Risse 2001.

29 Dontas 2000, 178.

30 Allison 1997.

Fig. 4. Houses in *Priene*

within the wealthy Roman residence had explicit dwelling functions. The problem is connected with the specific role of large Roman houses as a places of public life.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, it was shown that large areas within the Roman town were covered with public structures such as temples, baths, theatres, market squares, *palestrae* and *stadia*. A good model in this respect is Xanthos, where public buildings dominate most of the excavated areas.<sup>32</sup>

This situation will not seem all that strange to us, if we take into account how Roman towns were planned. In his well-known book, the famous Roman architect Vitruvius enacted exact norms for urban planning. First of all, he wrote, the course of the future town wall must be chosen, and in this case the special features of the topography and the surrounding landscape have to be taken into consideration, not the size of the (potentially) populated area.<sup>33</sup> Then, the road network has to be laid out,<sup>34</sup> followed by the choice of the position for the public buildings – *forum*, temples,

31 Lavan 2001b.

32 Precht/Rüger 1978.

33 *Vitruvius, De Architectura*, Liber I.V.

34 *Vitruvius, De Architectura*, Liber I.VI.

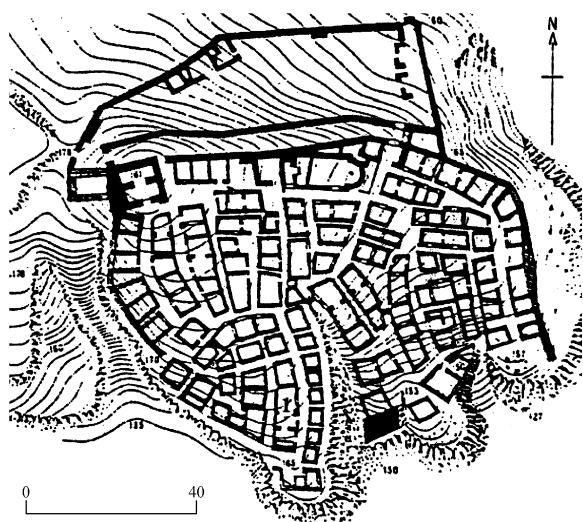


Fig. 5. Map of Golemanovo Kale

baths etc.<sup>35</sup> Not until these decisions had been made were the dwelling areas plotted out. On the other side, the public areas were jealously guarded by imperial legislation and were not liable to building activities.<sup>36</sup> Attempts at using public spaces for private purposes were to be opportunely neutralised. Although there is evidence that the central government and the local officers tried to enforce these laws as late as in the age of Justinian, the scholars rightfully are in doubt about the use of the efforts undertaken.<sup>37</sup> The archaeological evidence has also shown that a significant change occurred in late antiquity.

### The change in late antiquity

In *Heraclea Lyncestis*<sup>38</sup> in the Republic of Macedonia, numerous small-room-houses above and near the ancient theatre were excavated and dated to the sixth century AD.<sup>39</sup> Such small and narrow houses, closely situated to each other were also found in late antique fortified settlements in North Bulgaria, such as Shumen and Golemanovo Kale (Fig. 5).<sup>40</sup>

35 *Vitruvius, De Architectura*, Liber I.VII.

36 Kennedy 1985, 21.

37 Claude 1969, 54-55.

38 Confer Milinković in this volume fig. 2.

39 Janakiewski 1977.

40 Dintchev 1997a.

At the turn of the fifth to the sixth century, the former public buildings adjacent to the round square in Caričin Grad were divided into numerous small rooms and served as private houses of “newcomers”.<sup>41</sup> All these examples demonstrate that the late antique citizen required considerably less living space than his ancestors in the period of the classical antiquity. In other words, in this period much more people could live within a much smaller area compared to earlier times.

A similar situation was given in *Arykanda* after 500 AD (Fig. 6). Although the town did not suffer from barbarian invasions, the population of the Roman age-settlement for some reason withdrew to the old Lycian *acropolis*. However, the so-called Byzantine Lower Town was founded approximately one mile away from the old settlement. There were virtually no public areas and squares in this Lower Town. It was surrounded by mighty walls and obviously densely populated. About thirteen percent of the built-up area was occupied by the bishop’s residence, in addition, some parts of the old populated areas below the *acropolis* were still occupied – for example some of the baths.<sup>42</sup>

### Question No. 3: Did the walls represent the real settlement borders in late antiquity?

A small fortress was erected on the hill *Jolkos* close to the town *Demetrias* in the sixth century AD, the areas surrounding the harbour were nevertheless further on populated.<sup>43</sup> Obviously the new fortress only served the inhabitants of *Demetrias* as a refuge in dangerous times.

Athens (Fig. 7) was originally surrounded by long walls, erected in the fifth century BC, the so-called Themistoclean Walls. During the Roman age, they had considerably fallen into decay. In the middle of the third century AD – during the reign of the Emperor Valerian – the fortified area extended eastward.<sup>44</sup> In 267 AD, Athens became victim of the Herules and their disastrous attack,<sup>45</sup> the citizens were not able to defend their city effectively because of the enormous length of the walls, which did not correspond to the number of the inhabitants. They learnt a lesson and in the last third of the third century AD, the shorter late Roman wall was built.<sup>46</sup> In 395 AD, the Goths under Alaric could not capture the city because of the strength of this new fortification<sup>47</sup> and

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41 Popovič 1982.

42 Knoblauch/Witschel 1993.

43 Karagiorgou 2001.

44 Thompson/Scranton 1943, 372.

45 Thompson 1959, 61.

46 Frantz 1988, 5-6.

47 *Zosimos V*, 6.1-2.



Fig. 6. *Arykanda* after 500 AD

were only able to burn parts of the city outside the late Roman walls.<sup>48</sup> Excavations of many years' duration in the area of the ancient ('Greek') *agora*, which lay to the west of the newly fortified area, and in other districts to the east of the late Roman wall had shown traces of active settlement life during the period between the fourth and sixth centuries AD.<sup>49</sup>

48 Frantz 1988, pp. 52-56

49 *Idem* 1979; *idem* 1988; Thompson 1988.



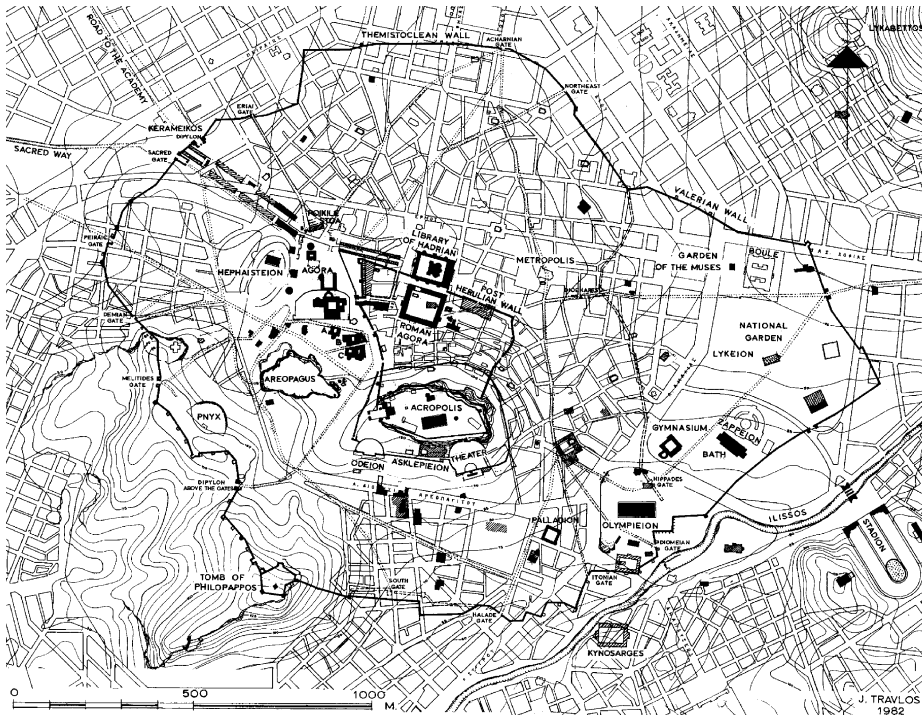


Fig. 7. Map of Athens in classical, Roman and late Roman ages

The giant ancient walls of Corinth (the area surrounded by walls covered about 700 ha) were destroyed after the conquest of the city by Romans in 146 BC. In 396 AD, the city was destroyed by the Goths. According to the contemporary sources, the city was taken easily because of the absence of walls,<sup>50</sup> but even if they had been present, it is questionable to what extent they should have been able to protect the people, as the case of Athens has shown. Immediately after this disaster had occurred, a new, shorter wall was built.<sup>51</sup> The inhabitants overcame the barbarian invasion and its effects relatively quickly and within the newly fortified area new building programmes were realised. In addition, traces of intensive life were detected outside the walls.<sup>52</sup>

The area surrounded by walls in the town *Pautalia* amounted to about 30 ha. The walls were built during the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Towards the end of the fourth century AD, a hill-fort immediately to the south of the town was built. There is evidence of intensive life within the old town areas in the period between the fourth and the sixth century AD, confirmed by findings and coins. The most recent coin dates

50 Zosimos V, 6.4.

51 Gregory 1979, 269.

52 Rothaus 2000, 21-31.

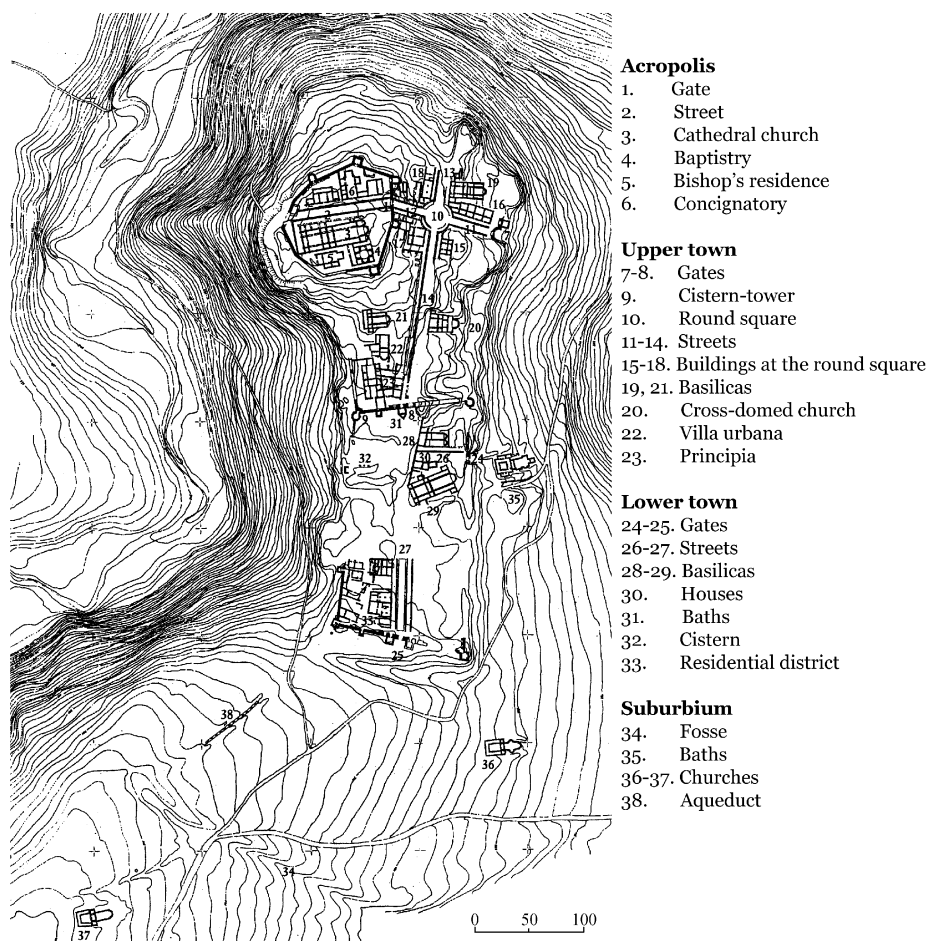


Fig. 8. Map of Caričin grad/*Justiniana Prima*

to 585 AD.<sup>53</sup> Also, a partitioning wall was discovered in the lower town, which unfortunately could not be dated precisely. All that is known is that it was erected between the fifth and ninth centuries AD.<sup>54</sup> According to the latest investigations, in late antiquity the populated areas were located only to its west. In that case, we have to wait for the final evaluation.

The total built-up area of Caričin grad (Fig. 8), identified as Justinian's foundation *Justiniana Prima*, amounted to almost 8 ha (according to other scholars to more than 10 ha). The town was founded around or after 535 AD, near the birth-place of

53 Slokoska/Stajkova-Alexandrova/Spasov 2002.

54 Spasov/Färkov/Stajkova-Alexandrova 1991.

Emperor Justinian, far from the main routes of the region. On the *acropolis*, the bishop's residence and the cathedral church were situated, below lay the so-called upper town where various public buildings and squares, churches, a *principia* and a *villa urbana* were discovered. The excavations in the areas of the so-called lower town brought to light several public buildings, churches, a reservoir and a small residential district in the south-west corner of the fortress. The suburb was unfortified with the exception of a single fosse. Here numerous houses, workshops and churches were excavated.<sup>55</sup>

The ancient ruins near the modern village Viranşehir in Turkey (Fig. 9) were identified as the late antique *Mokisos* which was also founded by Justinian. Its entire populated area amounted to about 50 ha, with a number of more than 1,000 buildings being identified. The town was unfortified with the exception of the small *acropolis* (120 x 30/50 m) and of the small fort in the central parts of the town (18 x 26 m). The bishop's residence lay outside these areas, surrounded by walls.<sup>56</sup>

The late antique town on the hill of Tsarevets (Fig. 10), identified as the late antique bishop's see *Zikideva*, could be interpreted as a successor of the Roman town *Nicopolis ad Istrum*. It flourished in the decades after the end of the late antique settlement next to Roman *Nicopolis* (dated to around 500 AD). The inhabited area was a densely populated rocky plateau in an outstanding, naturally defensible position. Like as *Justiniana Prima*, the town at Tsarevets just represents an emblematic example of the late antique town-planning concept on the Balkans. Traces of settlement life were also found on the slopes below the plateau, as well as on the hills in the vicinity of Tsarevets – Trapesitza and Momina krepost/Devin Grad. The settlement at Momina krepost was also fortified. The entire populated area of the agglomeration amounted to almost 30 ha.<sup>57</sup>

It is obvious that the populated and the fortified areas in the late antique period are not one and the same. A great number of inhabitants lived outside the new, much shorter town walls. Therefore, the reduction of the fortified area was not (in most cases at least) caused by a demographic catastrophe or by an imaginary 'general decline' of the institution 'city'. Despite their shorter walls, the towns and the cities remained in many cases significant centres of their territories and also within the imperial economic and administrative structure. In addition, these new walls were in several cases an insuperable obstacle for the invading barbarians and could guarantee the safety of the citizens.

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55 Bavant/Ivanišević 2003.

56 Berger 1998.

57 Dintchev 1997b.

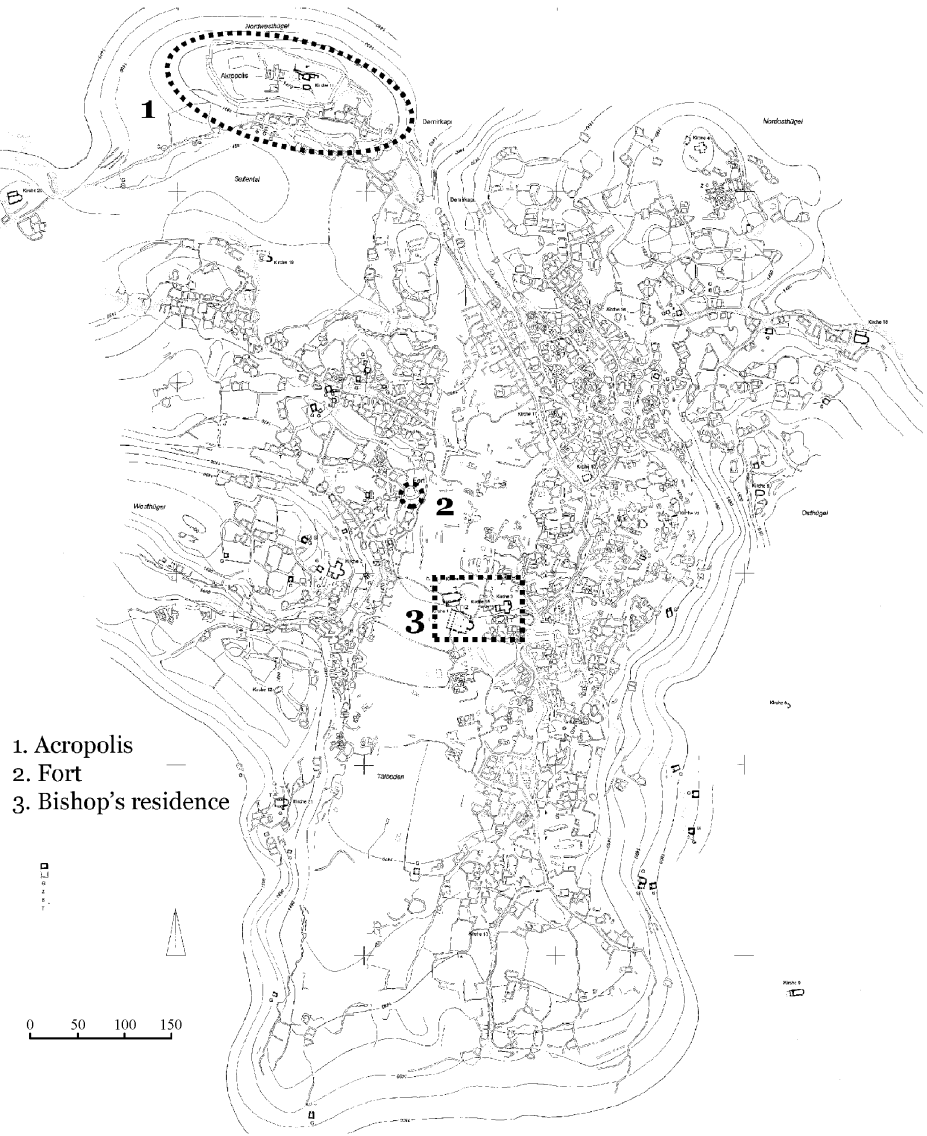


Fig. 9. Map of Viranşehir/Mokisos

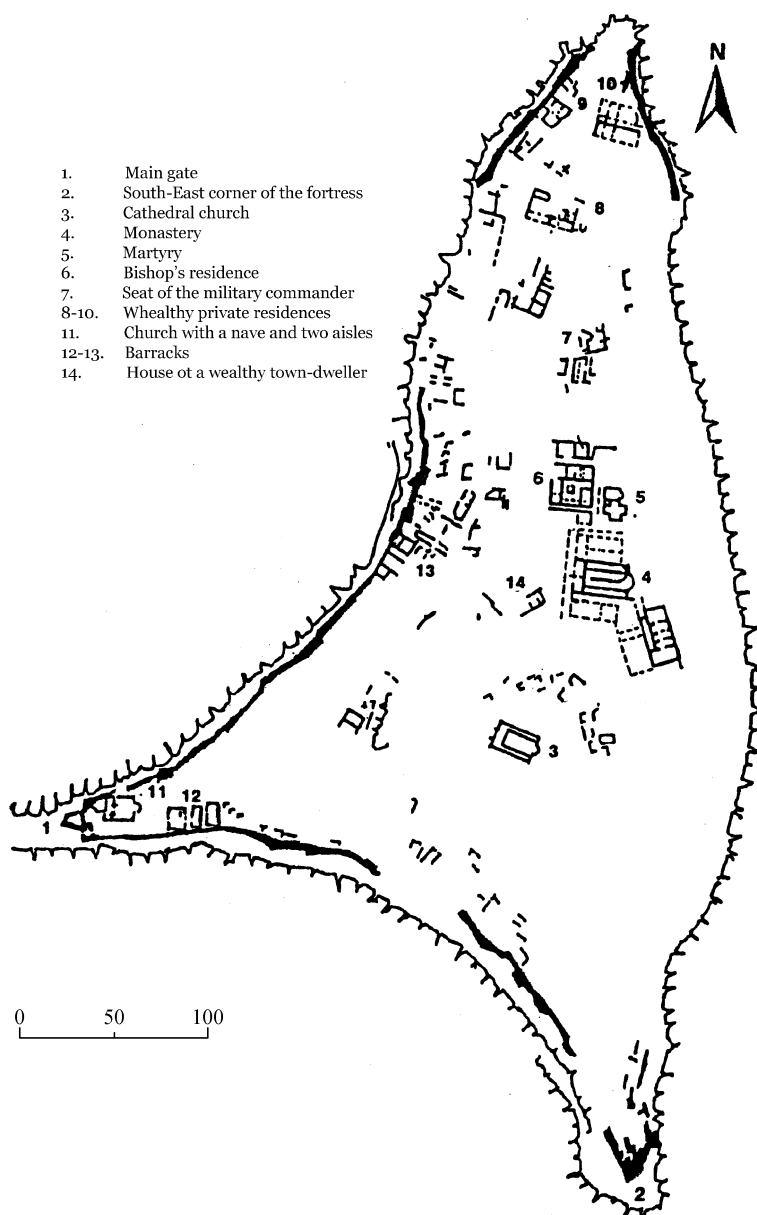


Fig. 10: Map of Tsarevets/Zikideva

## What made the people in late antiquity reduce the city walls?

In the first three centuries AD, a new religion – Christianity – quickly conquered the hearts and souls of a considerable number of the Roman people. In most towns and cities of the Roman Empire, Christian communities were founded. The Christians could participate relatively easy in the town's public and economic life (with some exceptions concerning pagan cult practice and especially the cult of the Emperor). In other words, the early Christian was not a revolutionary. He wanted to save his soul and not to change the existing world order.

In the time after the Edict of Milan, things changed drastically. The discontent of the church and its representatives with a number of municipal institutions grew. The devil and his actions could be recognised practically everywhere. One of the most important deeds of the devil were the theatrical performances which were considered 'immoral' and a 'waste of time'. The theatre absorbed large sums of money and the flock was still more attracted to it than to the church. According to the church fathers, gladiatorial contests were cruel, brutal and represented a superfluous pagan tradition; the fathers also condemning fights with wild animals. The public baths were denounced as anti-spiritual – Christians should rather take care of their souls. The agora was also regarded as a pagan place and a place of intercourse with young women.<sup>58</sup> In short, the Christian church denounced most of the old city symbols which were the sites of public life; in this way denouncing public life itself. Christians were rather to live within their own family, not in the streets of the city. That is why the physical change of the city during the period of Christianisation is not only connected with the destruction of pagan temples<sup>59</sup> and the erection of churches, but with a total transformation of the urban pattern. The victory of Christianity is therefore the main reason for the disappearance of the public aspects in the life of the city and its inhabitants.<sup>60</sup>

However, the Church cannot take responsibility for the reduction of the town walls. The merit of the Christian religion was to make the people accept the idea of living without public spaces; the immediate reasons being the barbarian invasions and their consequences.

In the course of the period of migration, the inability of the central government to guarantee the security of the frontiers of the empire became more and more evident. The *limes* was no longer an obstacle for the invading barbarians. 420 AD, the Emperors Honorius and Theodosius permitted the fortification of private estates.<sup>61</sup> As a result of this edict, not only a great number of *villae* were surrounded by walls, but in rural regions numerous fortresses and fortified settlements were erected which had to

58 Saradi-Mendelovici 1988, 365-401.

59 Spieser 1976; *idem* 1986; Saradi-Mendelovici 1990.

60 See an obverse opinion in Brands 2003.

61 *Codex Iustinianus* VIII, 10.10.

protect the life of the people in the countryside.<sup>62</sup> The town inhabitants also had to act on their own account. The central government was unable to station troops in every city and town of the Empire, for which reason only a small number of places had garrisons within their walls. Even in important cities such as Antioch, military units were either not present or inadequately small. In the town *Chalkis* in Syria, the citizens were forced to hide the soldiers in their houses to protect them from the Persian conquerors.<sup>63</sup> In many cases it has been reported that for this reason town militias were founded.<sup>64</sup> The participation of civilian citizens in war efforts and the defence of their own towns or cities were a common phenomenon already in the sixth century, wherefore it was recommended by the highest military command.<sup>65</sup>

However, neither the citizens nor the insufficient military garrisons could successfully defend extremely long wall circuits, leading to the central government's decision to drastically reduce the size of the enormous walls. Although Procopius tried to convince us of the crucial role played by the Emperor Justinian in this development, his ancestors and successors doubtlessly had a share in these processes. Of course, most of the evidence belongs to Justinian's age.

Thus, Justinian for example ordered his commander Belisarius to curtail the walls of the towns and fortresses at the North African frontier in case he should find that the hitherto existing walls were too long and could not be defended successfully by their inhabitants. The emperor's orders were obviously executed immediately: *Lepcis Magna* is a demonstrative case.<sup>66</sup> The length of the ramparts of Antioch<sup>67</sup> and *Caesarea* in Kappadokia<sup>68</sup> were reduced as well and for the same reasons – too long walls rather represented a risk for the citizens than an obstacle for their enemies. In other words, the reduction of the area surrounded by walls was a preventive measure and did not represent a sign of decline of the cities, but, on the contrary, of their vitality. In many cases, 'reduction' was a synonym for 'survival'. If we must describe the motivation for the reduction with only one word, it would have to be 'prudence'.

### The instructive case of *Androna*

Not only legislation and other contemporary written sources allow us to understand the motivation of the citizens in late antiquity to reduce the walls of their towns and cities –

62 See for example Popov 1982, and the contribution of M. Milinković in this volume.

63 Procopius, *De bello persico* II, 12.2.

64 Claude 1969, 130-131.

65 Mauricii *Strategicon* X.3.

66 Procopius, *De aedificiis* VI, 4.2-3; Goodchild/Ward-Perkins 1953.

67 Procopius, *De aedificiis* II, 10.2-5, 9-14.

68 Procopius, *De aedificiis* V, 4.7-14.

there is archaeological evidence as well. I would like to outline the results of the recent investigations of the ancient town *Androna* in Syria, known today as al-Andarin. The town was surrounded by two (inner and outer) wall circuits. The excavations revealed many superior buildings: public buildings, altogether eleven churches, public baths etc. The prime of the town is dated by ceramic finds to the fifth and sixth centuries. The most significant building within the wall circuits of the town is the so-called *castrum*, a fortress situated almost in the town centre. This is a nearly square building with about 80 m side length, with a small church in the centre of the inner yard. On the gate in the middle of the west side of the *castrum*, an inscription in Greek was found. It reports that a wealthy inhabitant of *Androna*, a certain Thomas, donated this fortress. Construction work began May 558. Inscriptions on the doors of the church in the inner yard mention another person, a certain John, likewise an inhabitant of the town, as donator of the *castrum*. Thus, the town castle was donated by one or more private persons. The most important fact is that they financed the erection of the castle being private persons and citizens, and not by order of the central civil or military government. This was a luxurious refuge in cases of emergency. The case of *Androna* demonstrates once more that every town and every city able to afford it had to take care of its own safety.

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## *Amorium* in the Byzantine Dark Ages (seventh to ninth centuries)

ERIC A. IVISON

In a pioneering article published in 1959, the great Byzantinist George Ostrogorsky remarked that, “[a]mong the fundamental problems of Byzantine history it would be hard to name one that has been studied less than has that of the cities”<sup>1</sup>. Scholarship since 1959 has not neglected the subject of the Byzantine city and has access to considerably more sources. Nonetheless, the nature of urban life in medieval Byzantium remains a topic of controversy in Byzantine studies. This is especially true when considering the Byzantine cities of *Asia Minor* during the so-called ‘Dark Ages’ of the seventh to ninth centuries. The pioneering works of Clive Foss were the first to document much new evidence and combined the study of texts, historical geography and archaeology to produce histories of individual cities.<sup>2</sup> Other historians such as Cyril Mango, Michael Angold, Wolfram Brandes, and John F. Haldon have created broader historical syntheses, seeking to use archaeological data with a more nuanced study of Byzantine texts. Key questions raised by these studies include the functions of cities, the causes of growth and decline, the urban economy and the nature of daily life, and even whether some settlements can be regarded as ‘urban’ or ‘cities’ at all.<sup>3</sup> Given the continuing paucity of written sources it is to archaeological fieldwork, and specifically excavation, that future scholars must turn to expand the base of Byzantine urban history.

This paper is a contribution to this debate and will discuss aspects of the development and economy of the Anatolian city of *Amorium* during the period of the so-called Byzantine Dark Ages (seventh to ninth centuries). The Byzantine site of *Amorium* is located in the ancient region of Phrygia in Central Western Turkey, some 168 km south west of the modern capital of Ankara (Fig. 1). Historical sources attest that medieval *Amorium* was a major military and administrative center during this period, becoming

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1 Ostrogorsky 1959, 47.

2 Foss 1976; *idem* 1977a, 27-87; *idem* 1989. For Foss’ thesis concerning the role of the Persians in the collapse of the cities in the early seventh century, see Foss 1975, 721-47; *idem* 1977b, 469-86. For a critique of Foss’ thesis, see Russell 2001, 41-71; see also Whittow 1996, 89-95 and notes.

3 Mango 1980, 60-87; Angold 1985, 1-37; Brandes 1989; *idem* 1999, 25-57; Haldon 1997, 93-124, 459-61; *idem* 1999, 1-23. See also: Dunn 1994, 60-80; Trombley 1997, 429-449.



Fig. 1. Map of *Asia Minor* showing the location of *Amorium*

the headquarters of the military district or theme of *Anatolikon* in the mid seventh century. *Amorium* thus played an important role in the events of the Dark Ages and was fortunate in its associations with a number of emperors. Two *strategoi* launched their successful bids for the throne from *Amorium* – Leo III in 717 and Leo V the Armenian in 813. A native of *Amorium* was emperor Michael II (820-829) who founded the Amorian dynasty (820-867). Constantine V sought refuge at *Amorium* from the usurpation of Artavasdus (742-743) where he drew upon the dynastic loyalty of troops based there to recapture the imperial throne. *Anatolikon* was also the flash point for a number of army revolts in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries. Due to its importance the city was the object of repeated Arab invasions and raids, notably for the years 644, 646, 666/667, 669/670, 707, 715/716, 779, and 796. The history of Dark Age *Amorium* came to an end with the sack and destruction of the city on August 12, 838 by the armies of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tasim after a siege of twelve days.<sup>4</sup> This was not

4 Brandes 1989, 133-135 with notes. Historical data on *Amorium* has been summarized by Belke/Restle 1984, 122-125, and by Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 1-3.

the end of Byzantine *Amorium*, however, since a new city was to rise upon the ruins of its predecessor during the middle Byzantine period.

The first European traveler to visit and identify *Amorium* was William J. Hamilton in 1836, who later described the site as a ruin-field strewn with “fallen buildings” and substantial ruins, one of which he identified as a church.<sup>5</sup> The founding of the village of Hisarköy in 1892 considerably speeded the robbing of these remains for construction, and consequently few significant ruins stand above ground today. But despite these modern deprivations, the outlines of buildings and streets are visible on the surface, and the medieval archaeology beneath remains well preserved to a depth of several meters. Unlike other important Byzantine sites, most of *Amorium* is not buried beneath modern occupation. The modern village of Hisarköy occupies only a small portion at the center of the site, which now has legally protected status as an archaeological reserve. *Amorium* therefore is one of the few places in Turkey where systematic excavations can be conducted to explore a thematic capital, thus making it a key site for the study of Byzantine urbanism. It was with these specific goals that excavations and survey began in 1987, 2004 being the seventeenth season at *Amorium*.<sup>6</sup>

Before discussing the archaeological evidence from *Amorium* one must acknowledge that the excavations are ongoing and therefore new discoveries can and no doubt will change our current understanding. Indeed, part of the discussion below is based upon the most recent discoveries of the 2001-2004 seasons, the publication of which is still forthcoming. One must echo the cautious words of Wolfram Brandes that “... experience shows that data are often received and accepted too hastily, and without critical appraisal of what superficially looks like clear evidence”<sup>7</sup>. This is especially true of the use of preliminary reports, which by their very nature trace the evolving knowledge of a site season by season. Historians can be all too eager to mine provisional data from such publications, despite the fact that later reports may offer radically revised interpretations. As this essay will show, scholarly understanding of Dark Age *Amorium* itself is a case in point. One must also appreciate that *Amorium* is a large site – the so-called Lower City alone comprises some 75 hectares. Under such circumstances a sampling strategy was adopted to target promising and representative areas considered critical for the history of the site. Thus although the excavations constitute only portions of the entire urban area, these strategic interventions, combined with intensive field survey, do

5 Hamilton 1842, 448-455.

6 I am grateful to my colleague, Dr. Christopher S. Lightfoot, the Director of the Amorium Excavations Project, for the opportunity to publish this paper and for the many fascinating years we have spent contemplating the ruins of *Amorium*. We would also like to thank the Turkish authorities for supporting the Amorium Project and in particular, to acknowledge an enormous debt of gratitude to the Directorate of Antiquities in Ankara and the staff of the Afyon Museum.

7 Brandes 1999, 37-38.

permit interesting observations on patterns of urban development between the seventh and ninth centuries.<sup>8</sup> The *Amorium* Excavations Project has been publishing preliminary reports and scholarly articles since 1988, and two volumes of the final publication have recently appeared (2002 and 2003).<sup>9</sup> Such publications will make more materials available to the scholarly community and will inevitably continue to shape our understanding of medieval *Amorium*. Thus although this paper cannot represent the final word on Dark Age *Amorium*, it can at least serve as a *prolegomenon* for discussion. This essay therefore presents an overview of relevant findings to date (2004) and proposes a conceptual framework through which to view Dark Age *Amorium*, so that its development can be related to the other cities of the Byzantine world. To these ends, I will focus on three aspects that I propose characterize the development of *Amorium* during the Dark Ages. First, I will examine continuity in the form of the late antique/early Byzantine fabric of the city; I will then turn to processes of change, adaptation, and urban evolution; finally I will discuss evidence of discontinuity. Throughout my paper I will emphasize the importance of the imperial government in preserving and stimulating urban life. Let us now consider the historical and social context of Dark Age *Amorium* before turning to the archaeological evidence.

### State and society at Dark Age *Amorium*

The contraction of the imperial frontiers to the Taurus and Anti-Taurus ranges and the exposure of Anatolia to Arab invasion had a profound impact upon the life and development of Dark Age *Amorium*. The most important consequence was the withdrawal of the field army of the *magister militum per Orientem* from northern Syria and Mesopotamia and its settlement in Southern Central Anatolia. In Greek speaking *Asia Minor* this army of *Oriens* was translated into that of *Anatolikon*, and the Greek term *thema* (army) was soon applied to the entire region where it was based. The exact year when *Amorium* became the headquarters of the Anatolic *thema* remains unknown, but it must have occurred in the mid seventh century, following the withdrawal of the armies to Anatolia in the late 630s and the 640s.<sup>10</sup> *Amorium*'s new role as a significant base of operations appears to be implied by the importance attached to its capture by Arab

8 Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, v, 5-6 (the history of the Project, sampling strategies, and methods of excavation and recording).

9 Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, with pages v-vi, 29-31 for *Amorium* publications. Preliminary reports have appeared in the journals *Anatolian Studies* (vols 38-46, 1988-1996), *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (vol. 51, 1997- ) and in the archaeology symposium series published by the Turkish Ministry of Culture, *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* (vol. 11, 1990- ). The second volume in the *Amorium Monograph Series* was published in 2003 (Lightfoot 2003). Further final reports are in preparation.

10 Haldon 1999b, 73-77; *idem* 1997, 113, 216.



armies, who began targeting the city in 644.<sup>11</sup> The first clear reference to a formalized command structure of *Anatolikon* dates to 669/670.<sup>12</sup>

Recent scholarship has emphasized the crucial role of the state in the survival and development of cities during the upheavals of the Dark Ages, and *Amorium* was no exception.<sup>13</sup> In the late sixth and early seventh centuries *Amorium* appears to have been a civilian settlement with a social profile typical of many cities in Western *Asia Minor*. When St Theodore of Sykeon visited *Amorium* around 600 the most important persons were the *illustri* or landed ‘notables’ (local aristocrats who dominated the city’s public affairs) and the bishop. Theodore stayed at the suburban residence of the *illustris* Anastasius outside the city, where the saint healed the son of the *illustris* John in a private chapel of the Theotokos. Theodore was escorted into *Amorium* by a religious procession of the clergy and people and was invited to celebrate the liturgy in the cathedral by the bishop.<sup>14</sup> The arrival of imperial administrators and the military commander or *strategos* and his staff in the mid. seventh century must have transformed the existing social hierarchy of the city, a process that was accelerated by the events of the Dark Ages. The repeated invasions and instability of the seventh and eighth centuries favored the militarization of provincial governance and by the later eighth century the civilian administration was being absorbed into the military command structure. By the mid ninth century, the *strategos* had assumed the powers of a military governor in charge of civil defense and administration and overseeing tax collecting and juridical matters, who was responsible only to the emperor himself. The *strategos* was assisted in this work by three senior officers or *tourmarchai* (sing. *tourmaches*) who commanded the three *tourmai* (sing. *tourma*) or army divisions of the *thema*. A lower tier of junior officers called *drouggarioi* led smaller subdivisions within each *tourma* termed *drouggoi*.<sup>15</sup> It was 42 of these senior officers, the *patrikioi*, who were taken for ransom and later martyred following the fall of *Amorium* to the Arabs in 838. Accounts of the fall of the city and the *Acta of the 42 Martyrs* name some of the most notable, namely the *strategos* Aëtius, Theodore Krateros, Bassoes, Theophilos the *patrikios* and Constantine the *drouggarios*.<sup>16</sup>

By reason of their positions and powers these *patrikioi* must have dominated the life of *Amorium*. One should expect that buildings were constructed or adapted for the use of the thematic administration in *Amorium*, although no such structures have yet been

11 Brandes 1989, 53-54, 133-34.

12 Haldon 1999b, 86.

13 For example Haldon/Kennedy 1980, 92-94; Ivison 2000, 1-46.

14 *Vie de Théodore de Sykeon*, §107 and No. 16. On the roles of the ‘notables’ in the cities of the sixth and early seventh centuries, see Liebeschuetz 2001, 110-120.

15 Haldon 1999b, 112-114. On the debate over the origins, organization and development of the themes, see also Haldon 1997, 208-253; *idem* 1993 1-67, esp. 2-11, and Whittow 1996, 96-133.

16 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 126; *Acta martyr. Amor.* 202-219; see also the discussion in Bury 1912, 267, No. 3, and 271, No. 3.

identified. Building inscriptions from other Byzantine sites make it clear that the construction and maintenance of city fortifications were one of the chief responsibilities of a thematic *strategos* and his senior staff. These building works would be carried out by troops or by imposing a *corvée* on the local population.<sup>17</sup> Neglect of these responsibilities by the *patrikios* and *strategos* Aëtius in the summer of 838 was a major factor in the fall of *Amorium* to the Arabs.<sup>18</sup> An inscription from nearby Sivrihisar, located some 50 km to the north of *Amorium*, shows that thematic *patrikioi* also acted as private patrons in the region. The inscription records the embellishment of a church of the Theotokos by one “Aëtius, the *protospatharios* and *strategos* of the Anatolics and his wife Ampelia ...”, who has been identified with the *strategos* who conducted the unsuccessful defense of *Amorium* in 838.<sup>19</sup> In this regard, Aëtius was following the pious example of the imperial family and other members of the ruling élite throughout the Empire.<sup>20</sup> The actions of military officers and other thematic officials towards private patronage and the acquisition of landed property at *Amorium* should therefore not be excluded.<sup>21</sup>

Members of the clergy, led by the bishop, would have constituted the other influential group in Dark Age *Amorium*. *Amorium* was a bishopric, rising in status from a suffragan see of Pessinus at the start of the seventh century to an *autokephalos* archbishopric by the early ninth century.<sup>22</sup> Although never rivaling imperial officials in terms of power, Byzantine bishops were notable figures in urban society, promoting the imperial establishment and serving as local representatives.<sup>23</sup> During the 838 siege, for example, the chronicler Michael the Syrian (twelfth century) records that the *strategos* Aëtius sent the bishop with three military officers on an embassy to Caliph al-Mu’tasim to negotiate for the safety of the inhabitants of *Amorium* if the city surrendered.<sup>24</sup> In addition to pastoral work and politics one should expect that the bishopric also played a role in the local economy through its properties.<sup>25</sup>

To date, at least four major churches have been identified at *Amorium*: the so-called Lower City Church, which is discussed below, and three unexcavated churches: two in the Lower City, and another church on the Upper City. It is yet uncertain whether any of these buildings can be conclusively identified as the cathedral, and further churches and chapels may yet await discovery. The pedestal of a monumental column discovered at the site of the Lower City Church bears an inscription dated to the sixth century that sheds

17 Ivison 2000, 8-14.

18 Ivison 2000, 13-14; *al-Tabari* 108-109 [1245-46]; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 130.

19 *CIG IV, xl: Inscriptiones christianae*, No. 8682.

20 Ivison 2000, 22-23.

21 Haldon 1999a, 19-22.

22 For the history of the bishopric of *Amorium* and known bishops from seals and documentary sources, see Belke/Restle 1984, 123-124.

23 Whittow 1996, 129-133; Ivison 2000, 19; Liebeschuetz 2001, 145-55.

24 *Michael the Syrian*, 98-99.

25 Dagron 1977, 10, 21-23.

further light upon ecclesiastical arrangements at *Amorium*. The monument was dedicated to the martyr saint Konon and mentions a bishop Markos (presumably of *Amorium*) and one Christophoros, the *hegoumenos* or abbot of a monastery. This monastery was presumably located at or near *Amorium* although we have no indication of its location or dedication.<sup>26</sup>

Soldiers would have been a familiar sight in the streets of *Amorium*, and must have made up a significant portion of the population. Although originally these soldiers had come from Northern Syria and Mesopotamia, in the course of the eighth century thematic troops became increasingly localized as soldiers put down roots and came to be recruited locally. By the ninth century thematic forces had evolved into two major categories. The best trained thematic forces were salaried, standing troops that probably served as garrisons in forts and cities throughout the theme. The larger category consisted of part-time militia recruited locally that would muster for campaigns and were supplied largely in kind.<sup>27</sup> The number of soldiers that formed the permanent garrison at *Amorium* itself must remain speculative, but according to Theophanes Confessor the future emperor Leo III defended the city against an Arab attack in 715/716 with only 800 troops. It remains open to question whether such purported numbers could adequately defend the 3 km of the Lower City Walls.<sup>28</sup> Seasonal fluctuations of troop numbers should also be expected in response to the campaigning season and Arab attacks. From the mid eighth century elite tagmatic forces would accompany the emperor on campaign, and during the crisis of 838 three tagmatic regiments helped to defend the city.<sup>29</sup> The presence of large numbers of troops would have served as a strong stimulus to the local economy in terms of goods and services requisitioned locally and by soldiers spending their pay.<sup>30</sup> The billeting of troops may also have prompted the construction of military facilities such as barracks, stables, armories, and storehouses.

Less is known about the civilian population of *Amorium* during the Dark Ages, and numerical estimates in medieval sources must be treated with extreme caution. The Byzantine source Theophanes Continuatus, writing in the tenth century, reported that 70,000 were killed in the sack of *Amorium* in 838, whereas the Arab chronicler Mas'udi (c 896-956) reported that 30,000 perished. The Arab historian al-Tabari (838-923) informs us that 6,000 male captives were killed on the return march to Samarra.<sup>31</sup> Although these figures give some idea of the magnitude of the event in the minds of

26 *Anatolian Studies* 42, 1992, 211, pl. XLVIII (a). To date, two other *hegoumenoi* of *Amorium* are known, suggesting that the monastery continued to function through the Dark Ages. See *Prosopography of the Byzantine Empire I*: entries for *Elias* 29 (seventh century) and *Theodoros* 96 (dated 787).

27 Haldon 1999b, 122-123; *idem* 1993.

28 Brandes 1989, 66-67; Lightfoot 1998b, 61.

29 Haldon 1999b, 77-78; Lightfoot 1998b, 61-62.

30 Haldon 1993, 66; Ivison 2000, 25.

31 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 130; *al-Mas'udi*, 119 [1255]. Treadgold 1988, 444-45, No. 415, proposed a population for *Amorium* of 30,000 based upon these figures.

these authors, such numbers are inevitably prone to exaggeration and no great reliance should be placed upon them. One should also consider that the city's population could fluctuate during Arab raids, either because the inhabitants of the locality sought refuge at *Amorium*, or due to the evacuation of non-combatants, as during the siege of 715/716.<sup>32</sup> Whatever its true size, the civilian population of *Amorium* was certainly diverse enough to support a significant Jewish community and Christian heretical groups. Jews were apparently well established in the city, but we know little of the life of the community and no archaeological traces have yet come to light.<sup>33</sup> Orthodox Christian writers closely associated the *Amorium* Jews with the heretical movement of the Athinganoi, the latter being regarded as the most notorious inhabitants of the region. The actual practices of the Athinganoi are difficult to reconstruct due to the deliberate conflation of their practices with other heresies by Orthodox authors. They were portrayed as a Judaizing group who adopted levitical codes of purity, kept a dual Sabbath and practiced astral magic. Emperor Nicephorus I (802-811) who came from Phrygia, and the Amorian emperor Michael II (820-829), were accused by hostile historians of being pro-Jewish or even crypto-Athinganoi by reason of their origins.<sup>34</sup> Due to his provincial roots, Michael II was also depicted as an illiterate peasant unfit for the imperial office. According to Theophanes Continuatus:

However, Michael [II] was well versed in his own pursuits: that is to say, he could tell of a litter of pigs which would grow up healthy and strong, and *vice versa*. He knew how to stand up close to a kicking horse, and to get out of the way of the heels of a kicking donkey. He was an excellent judge of a mule, and could tell you which was the better for a baggage-animal and which for a rider. He could distinguish between speed and stamina in a war-horse, and say which of your cows and sheep would be best for breeding or supplying milk .... Such were the tastes of his youth and age, and on these he prided himself in no small degree.<sup>35</sup>

Such *ad hominem* attacks should be treated with skepticism, but they do suggest that *Amorium* enjoyed the popular reputation at Constantinople of a city that produced either spiritual deviants or country bumpkins. In fact, as the quotation of Theophanes Continuatus suggests, it seems likely that many of the inhabitants of *Amorium* were employed in supplying the thematic forces with livestock and agricultural produce, although archaeological evidence discussed below also indicates the presence of small-scale manufacturing.

32 *Theophanes Confessor*, 538-540, No. 386-391

33 Sharf 1971, 72-76, 86; Starr 1970, 30, 46, 48, 98, 109.

34 Starr 1936, 93-106; Gouillard 1965, 307-312; Sharf 1971, 72-74.

35 *Theophanes Continuatus*, 43-44; English translation in Jenkins 1966, 140.

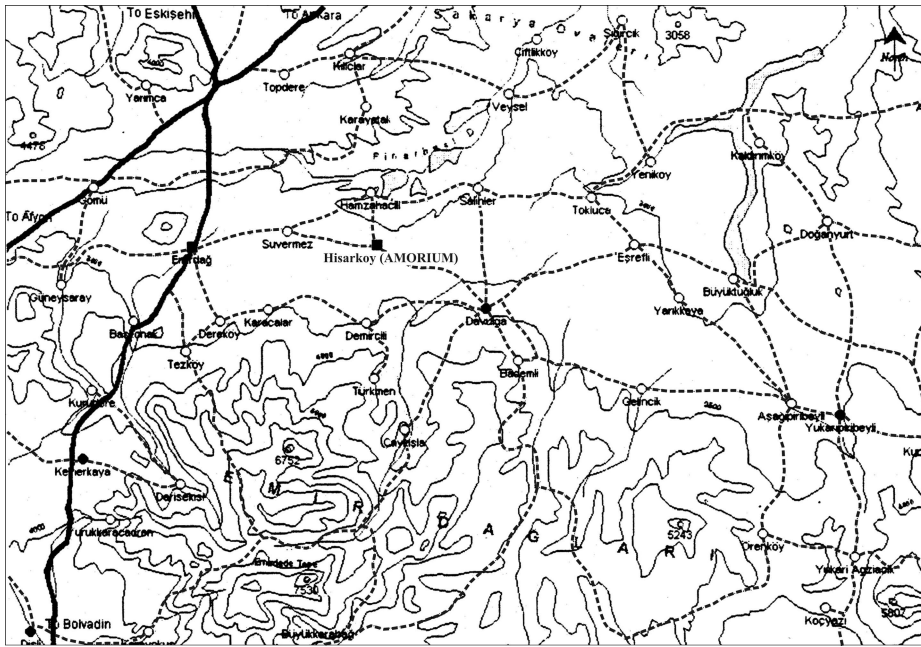


Fig. 2. Contour map of the region around *Amorium*

### Rise to thematic capital: *Amorium*'s advantages

The historical record does not document the reasons for *Amorium*'s selection as a thematic headquarters, but like other sites, the answers must derive in part from the advantages offered by the city's location and facilities. In terms of communications, *Amorium* was located at a strategic nexus of highways; the road to the northwest leads to *Dorylaeum* (modern Eskişehir), *Nicaea* (İznik), and so on to Constantinople; it continued in a south-easterly direction to *Iconium* (Konya) and thence to the Cilician Gates. Another road connected *Amorium* with *Pessinus* (Ballıhisar) and *Ancyra* (Ankara), and so on to Cappadocia and the east, while other routes led to *Akroinon* (Afyon) and thence to the Aegean coastal cities (Fig. 1).<sup>36</sup> The location of *Amorium* astride these roads, especially those connecting the imperial capital with the new frontiers of the Caliphate along the Taurus mountains, can hardly have escaped the attention of military planners, and this fact is reflected in the documented movements of Arab armies and imperial forces. The landscape around *Amorium* also offered strategic advantages for its defenders (Fig. 2). The vicinity is characterized by low, rolling hills, cut by streams feeding the ancient *Sangarius* (modern Sakarya). As any modern visitor can attest, this

36 Belke/Restle 1984, 122-125; Lightfoot/Iverson 2002, 1; *Anatolian Studies* 38, 1988, 175.

topography serves to conceal *Amorium*, the site of which only becomes visible within the last few kilometers. Conversely, the site of *Amorium* affords excellent views of the surrounding countryside in all directions, and on clear days up to a distance of 50 km away. The mountain range of the Emirdağları to the south also served to shield the city. Field surveys have discovered the ruins of small Byzantine towers in the mountains that could have served as advance warning stations for the city in the plain below. The Emirdağları mountains also served as a occasional refuge for the city's inhabitants: Theophanes Confessor records that in 715/716 the *strategos* Leo (later emperor Leo III) sent non-combatants (largely women and children) together with the bishop to the mountains for safety during an Arab siege.<sup>37</sup> A good water-supply and stockpiles of food and other materials were essential for a successful defense during such Arab attacks, and for the needs of the thematic troops. Byzantine *Amorium* was blessed with plentiful supplies of fresh water drawn from a water table some 8.50 m beneath the modern ground surface. Excavation shows that wells supplied the city's needs during the medieval period.<sup>38</sup> The inhabitants also had easy access to good food supplies from the fertile fields of the surrounding countryside. *Amorium* is situated at an elevation of c 925-945 m above sea level, and so shares the same climate and temperature as the rest of the Anatolian plateau, with cold, snowy winters and hot, arid summers. Floral and faunal remains excavated at the site reveal the presence of cereal crops such as barley, together with vegetables and fruits, as well as livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, and other animals.<sup>39</sup> Archaeological data and contemporary practice at modern Hisarköy suggest that conditions at Byzantine *Amorium* must have resembled those described by bishop Leo, metropolitan of *Synnada*, writing in the late tenth century:

You see, we do not produce olive oil; this is something we have in common with all the residents of the *Anatolikon* theme. Our land does not yield wine because of the high altitude and the short growing season. Instead of wood, we use *zarzakon*, which is really dung that has been processed, a thoroughly disgusting and smelly business. All the other requisites for the healthy or infirm we solicit from the *Thrakesion* theme, from *Attaleia*, and from the capital itself.<sup>40</sup>

Beyond the advantages endowed by nature, another major factor in the rise of *Amorium* must have been the impressive legacy of constructions that had expanded the city in Late Antiquity. Until the upheavals of the seventh century, *Amorium* does not appear to have been an imperial administrative center of much consequence. Ancient *Amorium* probably

37 *Theophanes Confessor*, 538-540, No. 386-391; on Byzantine towers discovered during survey in the Emirdağları, see *17 Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, II (Ankara 1996), 367 and Res. 8.

38 Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 1, 9.

39 *Anatolian Studies* 43, 1993, 152-153; *Anatolian Studies* 45, 1995, 124-127; Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 1.

40 *Leo Correspondence*, 68-71, No. 43.

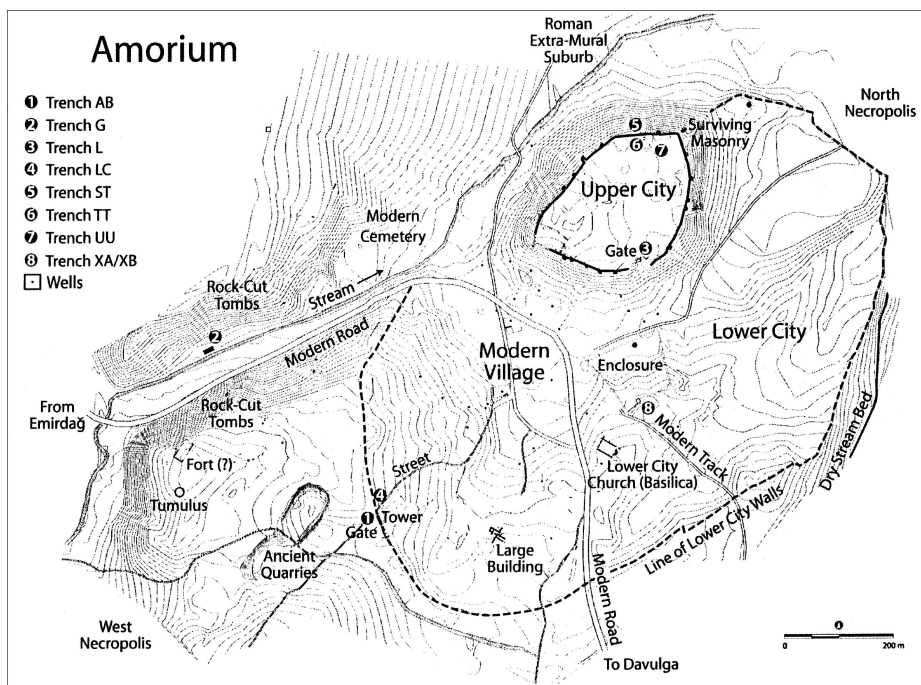


Fig. 3. Topographical site plan of *Amorium* (2001)

lies beneath the mound or *hüyük* now designated the Upper City, which stands testimony to centuries of human occupation (Fig. 3). Recent survey suggests that the civic center of the Roman city may have stood at the foot of the southern slope of the mound in the area termed the Lower City, on the saddle where the modern village of Hisarköy now stands. Fragments of architecture indicate the existence of classical public buildings and civic shrines under the early Empire, as well as the growth of an extensive extramural necropolis. A major change in *Amorium's* fortunes occurred in the later fifth and sixth centuries however, when the city was greatly extended and endowed with new public buildings. Excavations at the so-called Lower City Walls, the Lower City Church, the Large Building, a bathhouse and its surrounding district beneath the middle Byzantine structure termed the Enclosure have revealed evidence for this expansion (Fig. 3). These discoveries lend weight to the word of the later Byzantine historian Kedrenos, who states that *Amorium* was 'built' (ἐκτίσθη) by the emperor Zeno (474-491). Interestingly, an Arab tradition ascribes its construction to his successor the emperor Anastasius I (491-518).<sup>41</sup> Archaeological evidence discussed below further demonstrates that all of these structures were maintained through the Dark Ages into the early ninth century.

41 Kedrenos I, 615. For the Arab sources, see Belke/Restle 1984, 123, and No. 9-11.

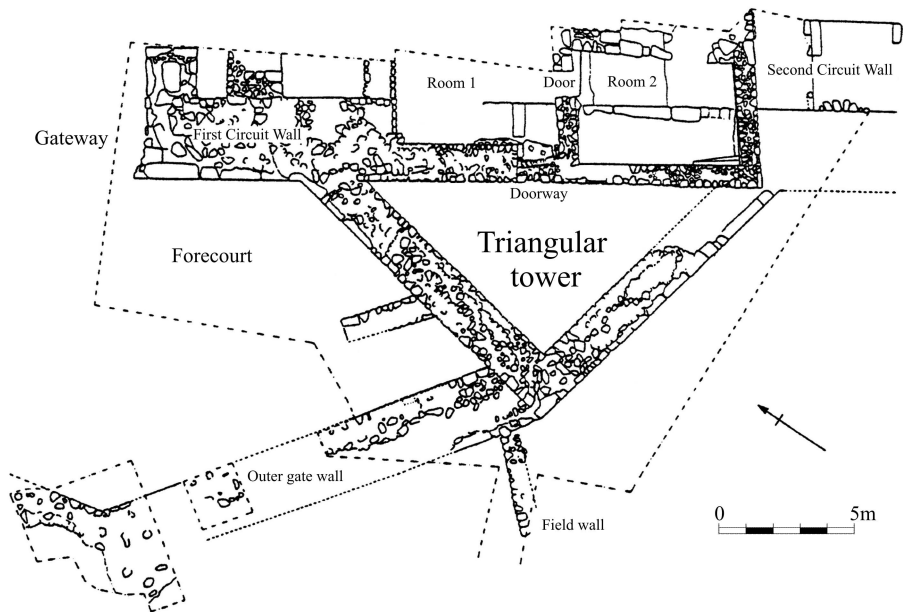


Fig. 4. Plan of the Lower City Walls, Trench AB, 1990

A new set of defensive walls, the Lower City Walls, were constructed to the south and east of the Upper City and the old Roman city, thus increasing the size of the so-called Lower City to 75 hectares (Fig. 3). Within this circuit a new street system must also have been laid out or extended, along with entire new quarters of the city. The construction of these new fortifications was a massive undertaking, running for some 3 km and built *de novo*. The builders shrewdly took advantage of the topography, siting the defensive wall itself in the more defensible position on the crests of the low hills surrounding the Lower City, and utilizing seasonal *wadis* and earth dug ditches as a fosse below the walls. The wall was strengthened by circular and polygonal towers (remains of over 20 have been located by survey so far), and was pierced by at least four major gates flanked by towers. Excavations in Trench AB on the southern stretch of the circuit have revealed one of the city gates flanked by triangular towers (Figs. 3.1 and 4). At its footings, the mortared rubble core of the Wall was faced with courses of massive limestone blocks. Smaller courses of brick and stone blocks alternated above (Fig. 5). Dendrochronological evidence from Trench AB on the Lower City Walls provides a *terminus post quem* for construction of 487 CE, while comparable fortifications in the Roman East suggest a date in the later fifth to early sixth centuries.<sup>42</sup> These rela-

<sup>42</sup> Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 8-9, 11-12; Lightfoot 1998b, 60-62; *Anatolian Studies* 38, 1988, 176-179, fig. 2. For the dendrochronology, see Kuniholm 1995, 35 and *Anatolian Studies* 44, 1994, 127-128.





Fig. 5. View from the north of Trench AB on the Lower City Walls showing the gateway and flanking triangular tower to the south

tively new and state-of-the-art defenses must have been a decisive factor in the choice of *Amorium* as a thematic headquarters.

A similar date can also be proposed for the construction of the Christian basilica designated the Lower City Church (Figs. 3 and 6). The basilica was built in the same manner as the Lower City Walls, utilizing large ashlar for the lower courses, above which were courses of smaller stone blocks probably alternating with bands of brick. Recent study shows that the basilica and a connected ecclesiastical complex were initially built in one phase ('Phase I'). Pottery from the foundations, the plan, and the interior decorations of the basilica indicate a construction date in the later fifth and early sixth centuries.<sup>43</sup> A similar construction technique and dating has also been proposed for the so-called Large Building in the south sector of the Lower City. Only a small part of this structure has been excavated, and although its function remains unclear, it seems likely that it formed part of a more extensive complex, possibly of a public or official nature.<sup>44</sup>

Since 2000 excavations beneath the middle Byzantine fortification termed the Enclosure has revealed a bathhouse and its surrounding district (Fig. 3). The bathhouse was built in one phase, consisting of a polygonal entrance hall or *apodyterium* (designated Structure 3, Fig. 7A) that led to a rectangular block (Structure 1) containing the bathing chambers (Fig. 7). The architecture and pottery from the foundation levels indicate a date in the sixth century for its construction, and attest to the splendor of its original form. The *apodyterium* was vaulted, with half domes over the recessed niches flanking a barrel-vaulted ambulatory. Six marble columns with basket capitals probably supported a shallow dome at center. The interior walls were sheathed with marble revetment, some of which was imported from Greece, including Thessalian

43 Lightfoot/Iverson 2002, 14; *Anatolian Studies* 43, 1993, 155, 156-159.

44 Lightfoot/Iverson 2002, 11, figs D-E; *Anatolian Studies* 39, 1989, 171-172 and pls XLVI (a-b) and XLVIII (a) showing a sixth century Ionic impost capital.

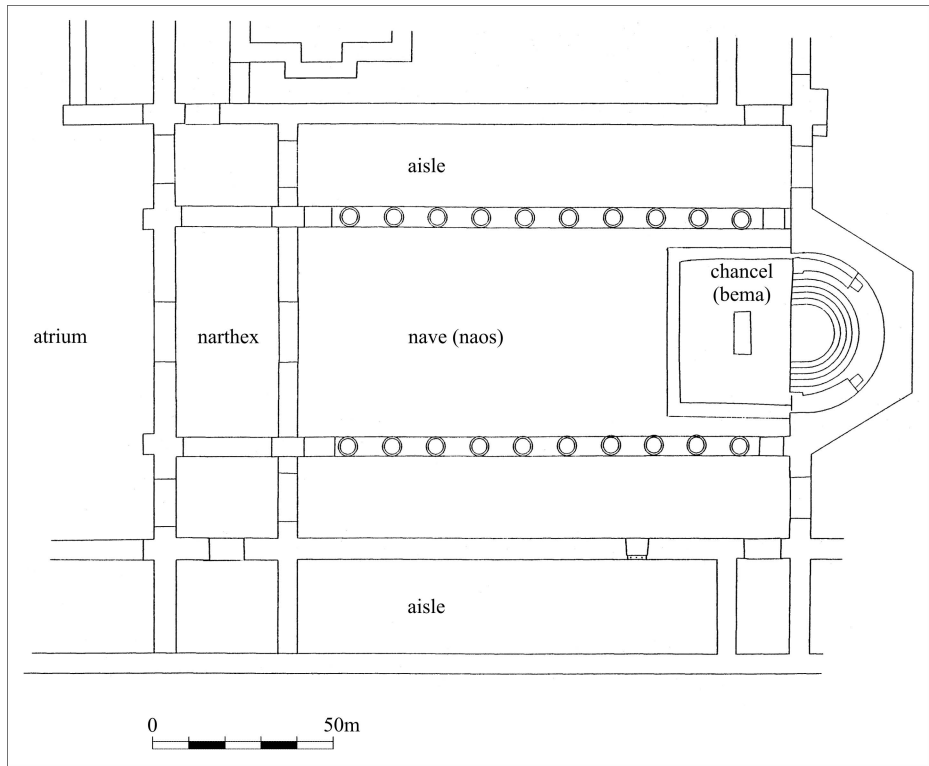


Fig. 6. Reconstructed plan of the Christian basilica (phase 1) at the Lower City Church site

*verde antico* and *marmor lacedaemonium* from *Laconia*. The rooms of the bathhouse proper were similarly decorated, although as we shall see, these decorations were subject to extensive renovation during the eighth century. Given the urban context of the *Amorium* bathhouse there seems little reason to doubt that it was a public establishment. Although of small size compared with the great public *thermae* of earlier centuries, the *Amorium* bathhouse compares well with our knowledge of the smaller public baths of the sixth century.<sup>45</sup>

The late antique framework of public buildings, streets, and public and private spaces formed the grid within which the Dark Age city developed. In this respect *Amorium* follows a pattern observed at other cities of comparable rank and size

45 On the bathhouse excavations (Trench XC), see: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55, 2001, 381-394; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58, 2004, 356-363 (forthcoming); *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59, 2005, forthcoming for the 2002 season. See also the brief summaries in *24 Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 1 (Ankara 2003), 521-523, Res. 1-5, and *25 Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 1 (Ankara 2004), 1-3, Çizim 1, Res. 1-5. For a small bathhouse of similar date, see Sanders 1999.

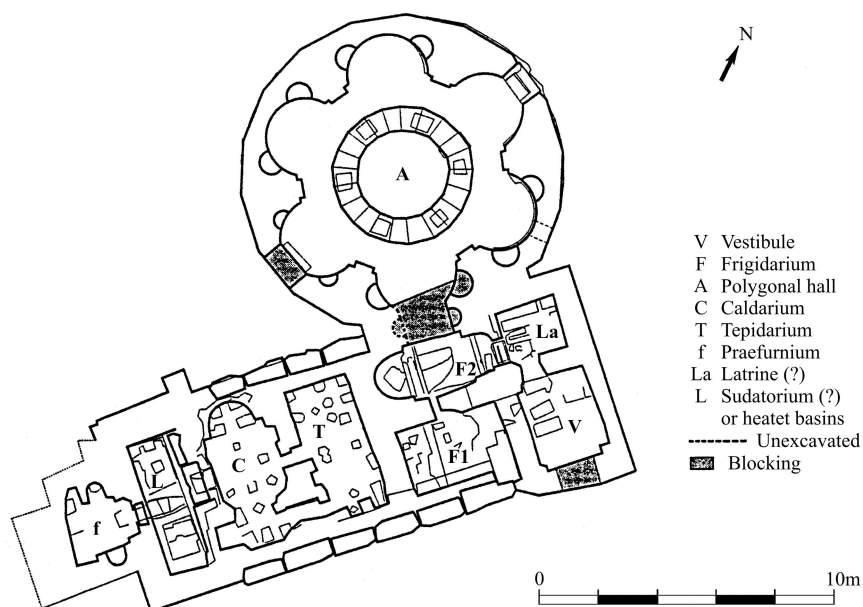


Fig. 7. Plan of the early Byzantine and Dark Age bath complex

during the Dark Ages. For example, the late antique city walls of Thessaloniki, its Roman grid and public spaces, and the city's great Christian basilicas, such as those of Saint Demetrius and the Mother of God (modern Acheiropoitos), remained a dominating presence, shaping the development of the medieval city.<sup>46</sup> *Nicaea* became the thematic capital of *Opsikion*, no doubt in part because of its inheritance of mighty city walls.<sup>47</sup> And like *Nicaea* and Constantinople, the city walls of *Amorium* were clearly not deemed too extensive to be defended. In this light, perhaps we should consider that the large spaces such cities enclosed offered positive advantages for the imperial authorities and the inhabitants. Only portions of the Lower City at *Amorium* have been excavated so far, and so one cannot yet say whether all the area was intensively occupied. The model of Constantinople may offer a working hypothesis, however, by suggesting that unoccupied areas in *Amorium*, especially near the city walls, could have been utilized for market gardens, water storage, and cemeteries.<sup>48</sup>

46 On medieval Thessaloniki, see the essay by Charalambos Bakirtzis in this volume; for the city walls, see Gounaris 1982, 13-15; for the basilica of Saint Demetrius, see Bakirtzis 1988.

47 Foss/Winfield 1986, 80, 100-102, 113.

48 Mango 1980, 76, and Mango 1990, 56-60.

## The urban fabric in the Dark Ages: repairs, recycling and adaptation

The maintenance of older structures such as city walls and churches was of vital concern to the imperial authorities during the Dark Ages. These buildings were crucial bulwarks, defending against the enemy, be it the Arabs or demonic forces. These structures helped to preserve the state and its inhabitants, but also served ideological purposes, reminding the emperor's subjects and his enemies of the power and majesty of the Empire.<sup>49</sup> Excavations at *Amorium* have found evidence for the maintenance of such critical structures in the forms of the Lower City Walls, and the basilica of the Lower City Church.

The excavations at Trench AB prove that the Lower City Walls were in use and maintained through the Dark Ages up into the ninth century. This evidence lends new credibility to the Arab accounts of *Amorium* which emphasize the strength of the fortifications.<sup>50</sup> The ninth century Arab geographer Ibn-Khordādhbeh specifically mentions the height of the circuit wall, 44 towers and the presence of a moat, features that approximate to the Lower City Walls.<sup>51</sup> Trench AB on the western stretch of the Lower City Walls exposed a gateway and associated street, with flanking triangular towers, as well as Dark Age occupation adjacent to the curtain wall later buried beneath domestic structures of the late tenth and eleventh centuries (Figs. 4 and 5). Excavation revealed that the massive curtain wall at Trench AB had been strengthened sometime between the sixth and ninth centuries with the addition of an inner skin and the construction of an forecourt to shield the gateway from attack. Occupation layers excavated within the basement of the south triangular tower also offer insights on the uses of such towers during the Dark Ages. The lowest occupation layers show that the basement was used as a refuse dump and latrine by the defenders. Large numbers of rodent skeletons were found in this organic layer, together with pottery of the sixth and first half of the seventh centuries. After this date, the basement was made serviceable by laying a fresh earth floor which was then strewn with straw.<sup>52</sup> Despite such efforts to keep the walls in repair, the Arab historian al-Tabari records that erosion of the elements and poor maintenance were to blame for the weakness of a stretch of the walls targeted during the 838 siege. The wall failed and *Amorium* fell, suggesting that decrepitude and neglect were also characteristics of even vital structures of the Dark Age city.<sup>53</sup>

The Lower City Basilica was a major monument of the city, forming part of a larger complex of rooms and buildings that extend to the north and south (Fig. 6). The western part of the complex appears to be supported by an artificial terrace, while the

49 Ivison 2000.

50 *Contra* the comments by Brandes 1999, 38-40.

51 *Ibn-Khordādhbeh*, vi, 77-80.

52 Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 12-13; *Anatolian Studies* 44, 1994, 110-111.

53 Ivison 2000, 13-14; *al-Tabari*, 108-109 [1245-46]; *Theophanes Continuatus*, 130.

site commands an elevated position in the Lower City. This basilica was in use for over 300 years through the Dark Ages until its complete destruction by fire. During the Dark Age period efforts were made to keep the structure in repair. At both western and eastern ends of the nave arcades buttresses were constructed, artfully inserted between the pilasters and the adjacent column. Unlike the original walls, these buttresses were built of *spolia*, bonded with brick courses and timber lacing. As a result, painted wall plaster was sandwiched behind these constructions. These buttresses must have served to strengthen the arcades at their weakest points, a fact that is suggestive of ravages of old age. The persistence of such older church buildings through the Byzantine centuries, which were often subject to alteration and addition, links *Amorium* with Hagia Sophia at *Nicaea*, the basilicas of Thessaloniki, and the Cuman'ın Camii at *Attaleia* (Antalya), and the many churches of Constantinople.<sup>54</sup>

It would appear that the events of the seventh century did lead to some reorganization of urban space at *Amorium* however. Two of the most profound transformations were the fortification of the ancient mound, creating an inner citadel or Upper City, and the destruction and abandonment of the Roman extramural cemeteries. At present one can only speculate on the nature of occupation on the ancient mound of the Upper City before the seventh century (Fig. 3). Perhaps pagan shrines were located on this high place, but in any case, such cults must have been suppressed in the Christian *Amorium* of the fifth and sixth centuries. The surface remains of a late antique basilica on the Upper City would appear to confirm this supposition.<sup>55</sup> At the southern foot of the mound the walls and massive vaults of a major early Roman structure are visible, most probably of a civic complex.<sup>56</sup> The function and appearance of the Upper City was drastically altered by the construction of a new fortification encircling the top of the mound. Excavations in Trenches L and ST revealed remnants of this defensive wall containing large quantities of Roman *spolia*, particularly pagan funerary *stelai*. The *spolia* foundations of this wall can also be traced around the edges of the mound where erosion has exposed the blocks. Only the lowest courses of this first fortification have survived since the rest had been robbed away and backfilled before the construction of a later, middle Byzantine *enceinte* of quite different character.<sup>57</sup> Excavations in Trench L also revealed some structures ('Phase 2') associated with these *spolia* fortifications. A paved street east of the *spolia* wall has been assigned to the same general period, together with two rooms flanking a passage leading to a courtyard (Fig. 8). These structures also made extensive use of *spolia* gravestones. The fortification of the mound thus divided

54 Ivison 2000, 8, 19, 22-23 and No. 42-46; on Constantinople, see the *Vita Basilii*, 192-194 (*Theophanes Continuatus*, V, 321ff.).

55 Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 7-8. Roman cults attested from civic coins at *Amorium* include those of Zeus and Tyche (*Anatolian Studies* 40, 1990, 216 and No. 11).

56 *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 53, 1999, 347, fig. 9.

57 Lightfoot 1998b, 63-66; Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 15-17.

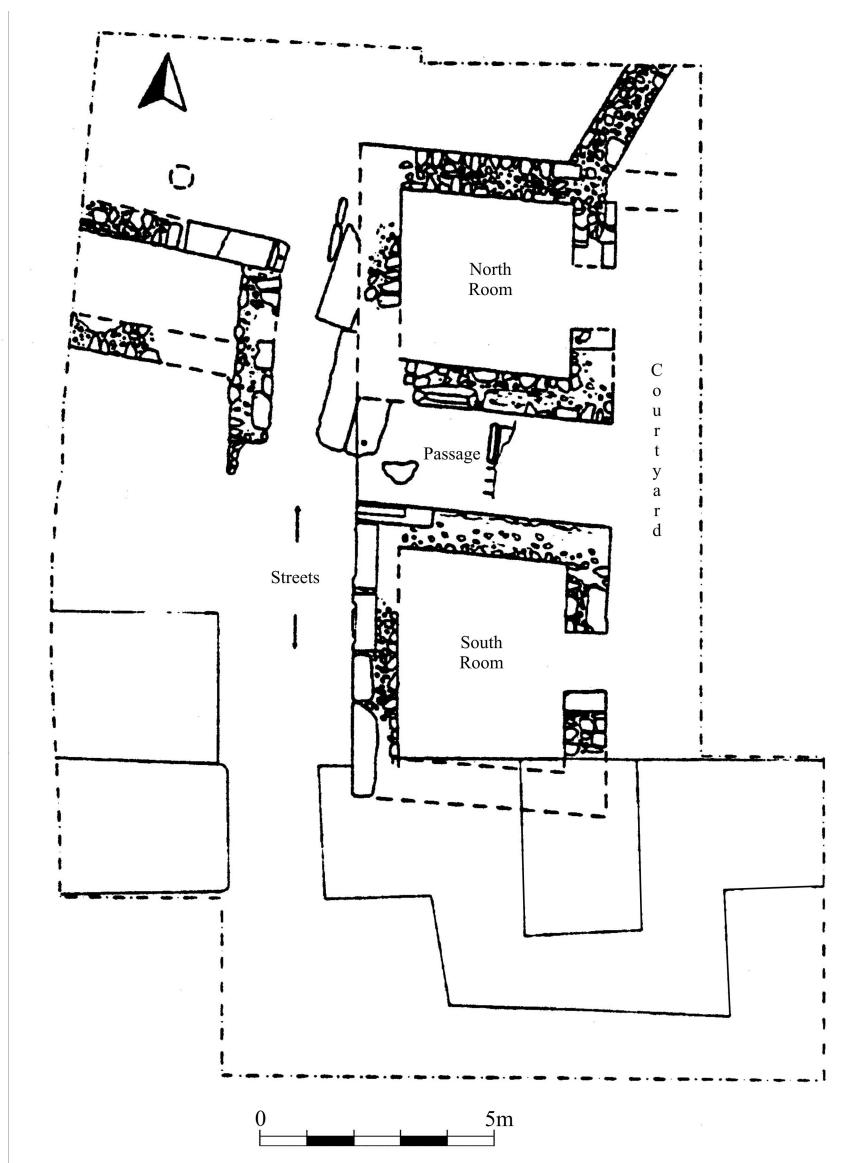


Fig. 8. Plan of Upper City Trench L, 1990, 'Phase 2'

*Amorium* into two zones – an Upper City or inner citadel, and a Lower or residential City. The stratigraphic level of the *spolia* fortification and the buildings in Trench L places these features well below the middle Byzantine strata of the tenth and eleventh centuries that sealed its remains. Given this *terminus ante quem*, it seems reasonable to assign these structures to the Dark Ages of the seventh to ninth centuries.<sup>58</sup> The extensive use of *spolia* in the Upper City fortification (which are not found in constructions of the fifth and sixth centuries at *Amorium*) may also be directly compared with those at *Ancyra*, *Sardis*, and *Ayasoluk* at *Ephesus*, all of which have been assigned to the seventh or eighth century.<sup>59</sup> On this basis, C.S. Lightfoot plausibly proposed a Dark Age date and function for the new wall:

The use of *spolia*, however, is common to many Byzantine fortifications, and a date in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century would not seem inappropriate for the construction of the first-phase all around the Upper City. Indeed, it may have been prompted not so much by the Persian raids in the 610-20s as by the new role that *Amorium* assumed as the headquarters of the *magister militum per Orientem* in the 640s. So, while the civilian inhabitants, perhaps, continued to look to the Lower City walls for protection, the military may have established a secure base in the most suitable position, the Upper City.<sup>60</sup>

The division of a number of Byzantine thematic cities into an upper and lower city would certainly suggest the application of some kind of zoning, perhaps in response to the needs of government. Further excavation is needed to clarify the nature of the Dark Age occupation on the Upper City, and to determine whether this citadel had a special function within the city, such as sheltering the offices of the thematic administration.

To judge from the very broken state of the small number of Roman sculptures and inscriptions found in medieval levels at *Amorium* it would appear that little sentiment was attached to visible remnants of the pagan past.<sup>61</sup> Pagan temples, defunct civic structures, and abandoned pagan cemeteries were demolished at many sites in the Byzantine world in order to furnish stone for churches and fortifications during the seventh to ninth centuries. At *Nicaea*, for example, the Roman theater was amongst the structures stripped of its stones to restore the walls after the damaging Arab attack of 727. The same is true of the citadel walls of *Ancyra*.<sup>62</sup> *Amorium* would seem to fit this pattern of recycling the older, redundant structures of the city to repair and change the urban fabric. The reuse of pagan tomb *stelai* in the fortifications of the Upper City clearly indicates the abandonment of the extramural cemeteries and the retreat of activity within the Lower City Walls (Fig. 3). This deduction is confirmed by survey: the

<sup>58</sup> Lightfoot/Iverson 2002, 15-16, fig. J.

<sup>59</sup> Foss/Winfield 1986, 131-142, 288-290, figs 10-17.

<sup>60</sup> Lightfoot 1998b, 64-65.

<sup>61</sup> *Anatolian Studies* 44, 1994, 117-118.

<sup>62</sup> Foss/Winfield 1986, 100, 133-37, 272, figs 28-29, 288-289, figs 11-12; Foss 2003, 252.



Fig. 9. The bath complex at Trench XC: View of the partially excavated *apodyterium* (room A) from north

latest material from extramural suburbs dates to the early seventh century. Even the Christian extramural cemeteries were abandoned: the latest object from a tomb outside the west gate was a ‘Syracuse type’ belt buckle dating to the early seventh century.<sup>63</sup> No cemeteries of the Dark Age have yet been discovered at *Amorium*, but it seems likely that burial had become associated with intramural churches, as has been documented at many other sites.

A short distance from the Lower City Basilica complex is the excavation area here termed the bathhouse district, which has provided important evidence of continuity and change in Dark Age *Amorium* (Fig. 3).<sup>64</sup> On the southern side of the bathhouse there appears to have been a large courtyard, flanked by large buildings of the fifth to sixth centuries to the west and south. A street may be postulated to the east, facing the main entrance on that side. The bathhouse itself (Trench XC) apparently functioned through the seventh and first half of the eighth century, but underwent major changes in the later eighth century (see Fig. 7 for plan showing designated rooms). Upon excavation, the *apodyterium* (room A) was found to have been stripped to the bare masonry of all its marble fittings, even to the removal of pavements and water basins (Fig. 9). The shell of the *apodyterium* was then made inaccessible by walling up the doorways from the outside, and the connecting doorway into the bathhouse proper (Fig. 7). The interior was then apparently abandoned to decay and eventual collapse; the columns were found fallen over the stripped floors, surrounded by accumulations of rubbish and rubble (Fig. 10).<sup>65</sup> Below these deposits and at the very bottom of a robbed water basin

63 Lightfoot 1998a, 303-304; *idem* 1998b, 60; Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 7, 18; *Anatolian Studies* 46, 1996, 97-102, figs 3-6.

64 On the bathhouse excavations (Trench XC), see: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55, 2001, 381-94; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58, 2004, 356-363 (forthcoming); *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59, 2005, Trench XC, forthcoming for the 2002 season.

65 *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58, 2004, 357-58, figs 1-4, forthcoming; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59, 2005 forthcoming; 25 *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 1 (Ankara 2004), 2, 10, Res. 3.



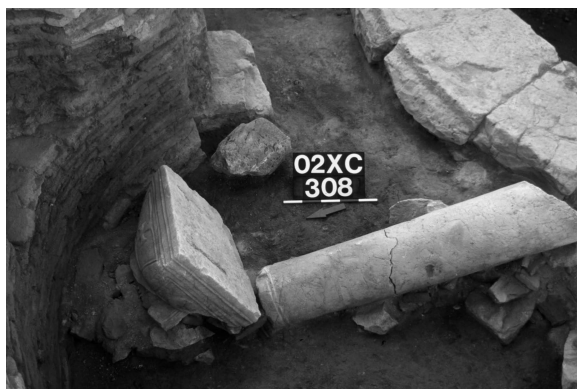


Fig. 10. The bath complex at Trench XC: fallen column and basket capital *in situ* in the *apodyterium*



Fig. 11. The bath complex at Trench XC: interior of the *caldarium* (room C) looking north showing the *pilae*

in the west niche were found a small group of coins, one of which could be identified as a class 2 *folles* of Leo IV, dated 778-780.<sup>66</sup> This coin suggests a date for the robbing and abandonment of the *apodyterium* in the second half of the eighth century. The interior arrangement of the adjacent bathhouse rooms does not appear to have been altered during the seventh and eighth centuries. Instead, the rooms show careful repairs and adaptations. Some of the brick *pilae* of the hypocausts in the *caldarium* and *tepidarium* were supplemented and replaced by *spolia* blocks and reused terracotta waterpipes (Fig. 11). A replacement arch in the hot air flue between room L and the *praefurnium* was constructed of sixth century *spolia*, while further *spolia* were used to buttress the north-west corner of the building (Fig. 12).<sup>67</sup> These repairs could have been piecemeal, implemented when necessary. Coins in the ash heaps of the *praefur-*

66 SF4500 identified by C.S. Lightfoot: AE *folles*, class 2 of Leo IV, dated 778-780; 24-22 mm; 4.40 g, 6h.

67 *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59, 2005, Trench XC and figs 3-6 of *pilae* and *spolia* (forthcoming); 25 *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 1 (Ankara 2004), 2, 9, Res. 1-2, and 10-11, Res. 4-5.



Fig. 12. The bath complex at Trench XC: Early Byzantine *spolium* reused in Dark Age alterations to bathhouse

nium (Constans II, dated c 651/2), and the interior rooms (Michael II, dated 821-29) indicate that the bathhouse operated from the seventh through early ninth centuries.<sup>68</sup> A major renovation of the bathhouse appears to have taken place at the same time as the *apodyterium* was being stripped and abandoned in the late eighth century. This was proven by evidence that marble revetment slabs lining the interior of the bathhouse had originally decorated the *apodyterium* next door. A number of these revetment and floor slabs fitted settings preserved in the *apodyterium* and had clearly been carefully removed whilst still intact. Others had been cut down and sometimes reversed for use in the suspended pavements.<sup>69</sup> The installations found in Room La suggest that it served as a latrine (Fig. 7). Like elsewhere in the Byzantine world, however, the *Amorium* bath was not supplied by piped water in this period. A well was found in the V(estibule) room and so water must have been dispensed in buckets (Fig. 7). It therefore appears that the Dark Age inhabitants of *Amorium* continued to bathe like their ancestors, a fact corroborated for other cities by written sources.<sup>70</sup>

The environs of the bathhouse were also the scene of considerable activity between the seventh to early ninth centuries.<sup>71</sup> These contexts have been associated with a surprising number of coins from the period, including occupation layers excavated during the 2004 season containing copper alloy issues of Constans II (641-668) and Leo III (717-741). Excavation has shown that the open area to the south and west of the bathhouse was gradually filled in by smaller structures, constructed from *spolia*, cobble

68 Constans II, dated c. 651/2, SF4462 identified by C.S. Lightfoot: AE *folles*, type 5; 25-18.5mm; 41.3 g; Michael II, dated 821-29, SF4182. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58, 2004, 360 and No. 27, forthcoming.

69 *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58, 2004, 359-361; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59, 2005 forthcoming.

70 Bouras 2002, 525-526 with references.

71 *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52, 1998, 328, and fig. 14; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55, 2001, 381-86, 398-99, strata VII-IV, and figs 15-18; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57, 2003, 288-292, fig. B, and figs 13-19.



Fig. 13. The bathhouse district: view of Structure 2 (foreground) looking north to the bath complex beyond (Structures 1 and 3)

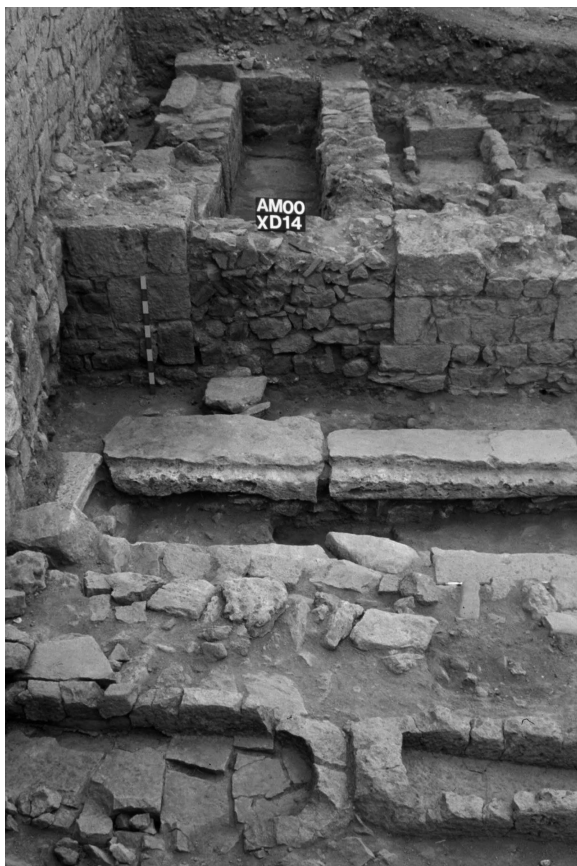


Fig. 14. The bathhouse district: view looking southwest of stone troughs standing against ruined wall (foreground) with drain and Structure 2 beyond. Note the Enclosure Wall (left) crossing the Dark Age remains



Fig. 15. The bathhouse district: stone trough



Fig. 16. The bathhouse district: glass working waste

stones, and mud brick, in marked contrast to the surrounding monumental architecture of Late Antiquity. Structure 2, the most substantial building to the south west of the bathhouse, was gradually subdivided with partition walls and floors and thresholds were raised over time (Fig. 13). More flimsy structures of cobble stones and mud brick were probably domestic housing and produced good quantities of plain and glazed tableware. The excellent stratigraphy of this area will make a notable contribution to the study of Byzantine pottery, currently being prepared by Prof. Dr. Beate Böhlendorf-Arslan (Onsekiz Mart University, Çanakkale, Turkey). A notable feature of the neighborhood is the presence of large numbers of shallow stone troughs, placed in lines beside walls, presumably fronting onto small courtyards and narrow alleys (Figs 14 and 15). These must have been supplied with water from wells discovered in the vicinity. Some units may have operated as small scale workshops. Fragments of glass cullet and waste indicate the presence nearby of a glass maker (Fig. 16). Overall then, the findings in the bathhouse district indicate a built-up urban environment supporting a range of public and private activities. It also suggests that occupation became denser over time, with the gradual filling in of older, monumental spaces, in favor of smaller subdivisions. Such activity raises questions of urban and demographic growth during the Dark Ages.

## The end of Dark Age *Amorium*

The uncovering of dramatic evidence for the end of Dark Age *Amorium* is one of the most significant discoveries, since it links the different excavation areas and offers a datable horizon for the study of material culture. The use of the Lower City Walls came to an end with a catastrophic destruction and collapse caused by fire. This was evident from the massive jumble of masonry and charred beams found inside the interior of the triangular tower at Trench AB (Fig. 17). Mixed with this debris were coins, pottery of the eighth and ninth centuries (including brown glazed fragments) charred textile fragments, and ironwork, including several iron points of arrows and spears (Figs 18 and 19). Samples of ash produced a  $^{14}\text{C}$  date of c 800, while the latest coin (AE follis, SF1612) from the destruction dated to the years 829-830/831 of the emperor Theophilus. Excavation within the city immediately behind the curtain wall and tower in Trenches LC5-6 revealed similar fire-related destruction associated with coins of Nicephorus I (802-811) and Theophilus (dated 829/830).<sup>72</sup> The same destruction contained an important assemblage of pottery, still largely intact. These included globular cooking vessels and peculiar multi-handled jars. The interiors of these jars were made up of an inner and outer skin, much like a thermos flask, and were pierced at base and mouth with narrow holes (Figs 20 and 21). Despite many ingenious suggestions the function of these jars remains a mystery at present.<sup>73</sup>

Destruction layers like those encountered at AB and LC have also been excavated in the bathhouse district and again in association with coins of Theophilus and his immediate predecessors.<sup>74</sup> An extensive destruction by fire was found in structures excavated in 2003-2004 to the south and west of the bathhouse. The severity of these fires could be gauged by the thickness of the ash layers and the charred remains of earth floors and stonework (Fig. 22). Evidence for the latest use of the bathhouse also dates to the early ninth century (coin of Michael II, dated 821-829, see above). However, substantial deposits of ash found in the hypocaust basements are accumulations resulting from heating the bath rather than evidence of a destruction. These layers were buried beneath debris resulting from the collapse of the suspended floors and upper walls of the bath after its abandonment.

72 See the discussion in Lightfoot/Iverson 2002, 12-13; Lightfoot 1998b, 62; *Anatolian Studies* 44, 1994, 110-111, pl. XVIII (a).

73 *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55, 2001, 379-81, and figs 11-12.

74 *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59, 2005, "The Coins," by C.S. Lightfoot, forthcoming. Sixteen copper alloy coins of Theophilus (829-842) had been found during the excavations up to the 2004 season. Coins from Trench XC include: SF4427, a *decanummium* of Constantine IV (668-685); SF4382, a *follis* of Justinian II (dated 705/6); SF4394, a *follis* of Constantine V (dated 751-769); SF4441, a *follis* of Nicephorus I (802-811); SF4421 and SF4386, two *folles* of Leo V (813-20); SF4361, a *follis* of Michael II (dated 821).



Fig. 17. Trench AB: destruction inside the triangular tower



Fig. 18. Trench AB: charred textiles recovered from the destruction in the triangular tower



Fig. 19. Trench AB: iron arrow head recovered from the destruction in the triangular tower

Associated with the destruction layers excavated during the 2003 and 2004 seasons were considerable quantities of pottery, glassware, metalwork, and even human remains. The significance of these finds is considerable, given that little material culture of the early ninth century has been identified to date. Of exceptional interest was a copper alloy basin found in installations to the south of the bathhouse (Fig. 23). Also associated with the basin was a set of bone gaming pieces (Fig. 24). Another unusual find was a copper alloy weight inscribed with the words “Grace of God” (Χάρις Θεου). On the burned floor of one room were found fragments of a dichroic glass vessel, partially melted by fire. Several fragments of dichroic glass have already been found at *Amorium*, and it can now be identified as a previously unattested type of Byzantine glass. This glass appears as a dull, opaque red fabric, but when viewed against the light it turns blue and purple.<sup>75</sup> The pottery from these destructions is still being studied, but a jug from the bathhouse bears an inscription from Psalm 29:3: “... the voice of God upon the waters” (+ φωνή Κ(υρίου) ἐπὶ τῶν ... [ύδάτων]).<sup>76</sup> Most of the pottery is made up of local plain wares, but there are also local glazed wares and fragments of Constantinopolitan White Wares. Some scattered human remains were also found in these destruction layers, offering a gruesome insight on the magnitude of the disaster.

The Lower City Basilica was also destroyed by fire. Badly charred sections of the walls were later hidden behind new walls and painted plaster when the church was reconstructed. Many fragments of the original marble furnishings, such as marble revetment and closure slabs, show signs of burning. The same is true of the fragments of Corinthian capitals from the nave arcades. These pieces were incorporated into the walls and floor beds of the new church that arose within the shell of the old basilica.<sup>77</sup> Due to the clearance of debris in the process of reconstruction, no destruction layer has been excavated at the church. A *terminus ante quem* in the late ninth to early tenth century is provided by the proposed date for the reconstruction of the basilica as a domed, vaulted church. A date for the destruction of the basilica earlier in the ninth century is therefore likely.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Gill/Lightfoot 2002, 253-258.

<sup>76</sup> *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58, 2004, 360, forthcoming.

<sup>77</sup> *Anatolian Studies* 45, 1995, 119; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51, 1997, 293-294, fig. 3; Lightfoot 1998a, 308; *idem.* 1998b, 67-68.

<sup>78</sup> *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55, 2001, 372-379, 398; Ivison forthcoming.



Fig. 20. Trench LC, Lower City Walls: pottery recovered from the destruction contexts

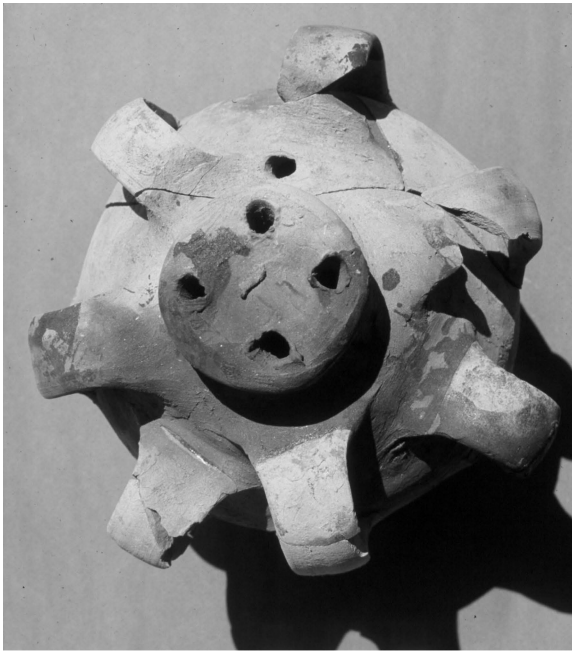


Fig. 21. Trench LC, Lower City Walls: top of a typical vessel recovered from the destruction contexts

All the areas I have discussed above experienced a definite dislocation following the end of the Dark Age period. The inhabitants of the tenth and eleventh centuries either had to undertake major reconstruction, as at the Lower City Basilica, or built their structures over the buried remains, often following a plan utterly contrary to that of the earlier urban layout. This is particularly evident in Trenches ST and L, where the later Middle Byzantine city wall buried Dark Age structures,<sup>79</sup> and in the bathhouse district, where some of the earliest reoccupation can be associated with the reign of Nicephorus II Phokas (963-969). Here the huge trapezoidal fortification termed the Enclosure ran over

79 Ivison 2000, 13-18, 27; Lightfoot/Ivison 2002, 16-17.





Fig. 22. The bathhouse District: view looking southwest of domestic structures showing destruction horizon. Note Enclosure Wall (left) crossing the Dark Age remains

the buried Dark Age remains (Figs. 14, 22). Coin evidence dates the construction of the Enclosure to c 1000.<sup>80</sup> At Trench AB the Lower City Wall was left a burned out ruin. Limited occupation here resumed in the eleventh century, with the quarrying of the circuit wall and the construction of a residence over its leveled remains.<sup>81</sup>

One must always be careful in linking archaeological and historical events, especially evidence of destruction.<sup>82</sup> But given the preponderance of dating evidence it does seem likely that some of these destructions represent the legacy of the sack of *Amorium* by the Arabs on August 12, 838, in the reign of the emperor Theophilus (829-842). The sack of *Amorium* is well recorded in Christian and Arab sources. Al-Tabari, writing some decades after the event, records the sack and burning of the city, including the burning of a church together with its defenders.<sup>83</sup> Medieval Arab historians even record the tradition that doors from one of the city gates of *Amorium* were removed as spoils of war to Raqqa.<sup>84</sup> The general population suffered massacre, the survivors being enslaved and deported to a miserable death. A select number of the most important captives were taken back to *Samarra* where they were executed in 845, becoming the 42 Martyrs of *Amorium*.<sup>85</sup>

80 Lightfoot/Iverson 2002, 15; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55, 2001, 382-392, 398-399. For the dating of the Enclosure Wall, see *24 Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı*, 1 (Ankara 2003), 525, Res. 9.

81 Lightfoot/Iverson 2002, 13; *Anatolian Studies* 41, 1991, 221-222; *Anatolian Studies* 43, 1993, 150-151; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51, 1997, 297-298; *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55, 2001, 379-381.

82 Russell 2001, 41-71 offers a case in point.

83 *al-Tabari*, 115-117 [1252-1255]; see also the account of *Michael the Syrian*, 99-101.

84 Bosworth/van Donzel/Heinrichs/Lecomte 1995, VIII, 411. Dr. Christopher S. Lightfoot and I are grateful to Dr. Marilyn Jenkins-Madina for bringing this reference to our attention.

85 *al-Tabari*, 115-119 [1252-1256]; *Michael the Syrian*, 99-101. On the 42 Martyrs of *Amorium*, see Kazhdan 1991, 800-801, and *Acta marty. Amor.*, 202-219.



Fig. 23. The bathhouse District: copper alloy bowl from the destruction horizon

### Conclusions: Dark Age *Amorium* – continuity and change

The Arab attacks on *Amorium* recorded for the years 644, 646, 666 and 707 appear to have left little if no trace in the archaeological record found to date.<sup>86</sup> The same is true of a brief Arab occupation of the city that apparently lasted for a few months in the year 666/67.<sup>87</sup> *Amorium* resisted successfully the Arab siege of 715/16 thanks to the leadership of the future emperor Leo III, then the *strategos* of the Anatolic theme.<sup>88</sup> Two further brief sieges by the Arabs in 779 and 796 were also successfully repulsed.<sup>89</sup> It would therefore appear that the disruptions caused by these attacks were short-lived and that the development of *Amorium* continued largely unbroken through the Dark Age. The archaeological evidence gathered so far suggests an evolutionary process characterized by a mix of trends: the maintenance of important structures, the dismantling of those no longer needed; the adaptation and renovation of others; the recycling of building materials; the continuing importance of the late antique urban framework; the redevelopment of formerly public space. This picture suggests evolution and transformation rather than discontinuity. Rather, it was the sack of 838 that marked the end of an era, bringing about large scale destruction and abandonment. No coins have yet been found at *Amorium* from the reign of Michael III, and there is historical evidence to suggest that the site was left in ruins for at least a generation.<sup>90</sup> Large scale reconstruction took

86 Brandes 1989, 53-54, 58-59, 75-76 (table); Kaegi 1977, 19-22; Brooks 1899, 19-33; *al-Balādhuri* 175 (trans. Hitti, 254).

87 Brandes 1989, 59-60 (assigned to the years 669/670); *Theophanes Confessor* 490, No. 351, 353 (assigned to AD 666/667).

88 Brandes, 1989, 66-67; *Theophanes Confessor* 538-540, No. 386-391.

89 Belke/Restle 1984, 123.

90 Lightfoot 1998b, 66. The thematic headquarters was temporarily transferred to Marj al-Shahm ("Meadow of Fatness"). This site has been identified either as Germia, located to the north of *Amorium* (Brooks 1899, 31 and note; Brooks 1901, 70; Haldon/Kennedy 1980, 95), or more convincingly, as nearby *Polybotus*, the modern Bolvadin (Treadgold 1988, 304 and 445, No. 418).



Fig. 24. The bathhouse District: bone gaming pieces

place only later. Apart from the reconstruction of ruined churches like the Lower City Church, the middle Byzantine reoccupation did not seek a total restoration. The new fortified city that rose above the buried ruins was confined only to the former citadel (Fig. 3). The return of the Byzantines to *Amorium* marked a break with the Dark Age past, the ruins of which were quarried, built over, and forgotten.<sup>91</sup>

Perhaps the most important discovery at *Amorium* is the fact that the Lower City remained an integral part of the walled city until the Walls were breached in 838 (Fig. 3). In 1980 Cyril Mango, referring to the Upper City, wrote that the site of the Byzantine city of *Amorium* “was quite a small place”<sup>92</sup>. The evidence discussed in this essay corrects past assumptions about the extent of the fortified city of the Dark Ages.<sup>93</sup> Dark Age *Amorium* was not confined solely to a *kastron* on the Upper City mound, but rather “[a]t little over 1 kilometer across, *Amorium* was a big city by medieval Byzantine standards”<sup>94</sup>. Another important realization is that Dark Age *Amorium* does share common trends of development with other cities of comparable rank, size and function. On this basis, I would contend that Dark Age *Amorium* should now be added to Wolfram Brandes’ list of “Städte mit relativer Kontinuität”, and be compared with cities such as *Nicomedeia*, *Nicaea*, *Smyrna*, *Attaleia*, *Selge*, and *Trebizond*.<sup>95</sup> Future excavations at such sites should target not only civilian occupation, but also seek to identify structures with military and administrative uses. The adoption of a comparative method may permit us to discern better the local and national forces that were shaping the Byzantine city during the Dark Ages. By doing so, a better conceptualization of urbanism might emerge that would permit Byzantine cities to be more usefully compared with their Western European and Islamic counterparts.

91 Ivison 2000, 13-18, 27.

92 Mango 1980, 72.

93 Haldon 1999a, 14-15; Brandes 1999, 38-41.

94 Mango 2002, 200; Crow/Hill 1995, 263, fig. 3, showing the plan of *Amorium* compared at the same scale with those of *Ancyra*, *Amaseia*, and other thematic centers, although the shaded zone of occupation only encompasses the Upper City.

95 Brandes 1989, 124-131.

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