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THE SAINT MARTYRS OF CHERSONESOS ACCORDING TO WRITTEN AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES*

Chersonesos in Taurica, situated in the southwest part of Crimea, existed from the late 5th cent. BC to the early 15th cent. AD (Fig. 1). One of the most interesting periods is the time of Christianity acceptance in the 4th cent. AD (Цукерман 1994: 549; Золотарев, Коробков 2002: 69-70). The events are reflected in written sources of the 7th cent. AD (Латышев 1907). The descriptions of the events connected with martyrs and its dating have provoked a great interest for the explorers. However information from the sources is extremely discordant, that handicaps searching of monuments, connected with the Chersonesos martyrs. The archaeological monuments, bound with activity of the martyrs can be divided into two categories: occurring during martyrs lifetime building or then tombs and memorial buildings constructed in the period of immortalizing of the martyrs in the 6th-7th centuries.

Written source narrates about the sermons and martyrdom of the maiden bishops - missionaries. According to the source the bishop Basil was killed and buried for defensive walls on the western necropolis (Кекелидзе 1913: 84). There are no mentions about the form and situation of the graves. Two cruciform early Byzantine mausoleums were discovered on the both necropolises. Western mausoleum dated to the late 4th - early 5th cent. AD was appeared during the process of Christianity acceptance (Fig. 2/A; 3/A). It seems to be a family mausoleum. This construction was erected above the crypt to have been cut down in a rock (Кленина 2004: 51-57; Бернацки, Кленина, Рыжов 2004: 39-43). The cruciform building was directly connected through a doorway with crypt down. Probably there was a Saint Basil tomb.

Often maiden martyrs had been buried in family crypts or mausoleums of the rich townspeople. The analogical samples of burial of martyrs in family mausoleums are widely known. For example, the martyr Anastasias from Aquileia, respected by one of nobility family from Salona, was buried in the mausoleum in 304 year. One of the three religious center of the town had been appeared on this place later (Deich-

mann 1994: 57; Беляев 2000: 94). Other presumable place of burying of Saint Basil is the crypt at western necropolis, discovered in 1912. It was a family crypt as well. There is a fresco on the one of the wall to be represented the man and the woman. The man indicates by the hand the ship and outline profile of city (Fig. 4/C). The fresco is dated to the 4th-5th cent. AD. Later crypt was rebuilt in a chapel (Fig. 4/A-B). In opinion of M. Rostovtzev, the crypt was revamped in a chapel after relics of sacred martyr were carried to other place (Ростовцев 1914: 478). It seems to me the cruciform mausoleum at the western necropolis is more probable place of Saint Basil burying. On this place the basilica was erected later.

According to the written source of the 7th cent. AD three bishops being the followers of Saint Basil were buried at the east necropolis in the second half of the 4th century (Кекелидзе 1913: 84). The small mausoleum was discovered on the place dated to the end-4th - early-5th cent. AD above the memorial grave or graves. Two pieces of sigma-shaped *mensa sacra* of the end-4th cent. AD with the relief human face, heads of the ram and griffin was found during the excavation of the chapel (Косцюшко-Валюжинич 1904: 52) (Fig. 5/B). The *mensa sacra* was used during funeral repasts on the memorial tombs (Biernacki 1999: 75-86; Беляев 2000: 96). This mausoleum was rebuilt to the cruciform building (Fig. 2/C; 5/A). The cruciform martyrrium on the east necropolis erected in the 5th – first half-6th centuries. The four entrances on the faces of the cross branches led into the church. It could be a mausoleum at the first period when the four doors existed (Бернацки, Кленина, Рыжов 2004: 93-96). The tomb of the saint could be put in the center of the mausoleum.

Cruciform buildings were intended for martyrriums dedicated to a Sacred Cross and memory of the martyrs from the 4th cent. AD. One of the most well known analogies of the early Christian architecture is martyrrium *Galla Placidie* in Ravenna (425-450) (Якобсон 1959: 61; 1983: 35; Koch 1996: 83) (Fig.

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6/A). There are a few simples in Balkan region. Cruciform church of the 5th-6th centuries was discovered at the hill Tsarevets in Veliko Tynovo (Northern Bulgaria) (Чанева-Дечевска 1999: 220-221) (Fig. 6/B). Martyrium of the 4th cent. AD with a crypt was investigated nearby the village Voden (Southern Bulgaria). Basilica was erected at the end-5th-early-6th cent. AD on the place of the mausoleum to be included in the memorial complex (Чанева-Дечевска 1999: 240-241) (Fig. 6/C).

Bishop-missionary Capiton had approved Christianity in Chersonesos by rigid measures. He has destroyed Greek sanctuary and on its place erected a Christian church. Uvarov basilica dated of the late-4th - early-5th century was identified with the early Christian church to be built by Capiton (Fig. 2/D; 7). It was the large basilica with atrium and baptistery. The memorial crypt (3.55 x 2.85 x 1.78 m) was discovered in the south gallery erected later than basilica (Бернацки, Кленина, Рыжов 2004: 71-74). Here bishop Capiton could be buried.

The active process of martyr' relics carrying in churches began at the turn of the 6th-7th centuries AD. The believers become to show special interest in study of Christian relics, history of martyr' s life and death. In this period the guidebooks have appeared. They had to help the believers finding the graves of the martyrs (Беляев 2000: 72). Lives of the Saints were created in this period in all part of Empire. The places for erection of basilicas were carefully selected. It should be connected to life or death of the martyrs (Deichmann 1994: 58). According to the archaeological data the Holy place in Chersonesos were incorporated into the churches made accessible to believers at the second half of the 6th-7th century. The immortalizing of memory of the seven maiden bishops has found reflection not only in written sources, but also in the sacral architecture. "Western" basilica is not incidentally constructed in place of cruciform mausoleum, where perhaps the bishop Basil could be buried (Fig. 2; 3/A). The basilica allowed visiting persons interested in an anniversary liturgy dedicated to the dead martyr. The reliquary was put into cruciform deepening under the floor of the central part of *presbyterium* (Fig. 3/B, D). Reliquary dated of the 4th-5th cent. AD was made from the white marble in a shape of sarcophagi (Koch 1996: 129-130; Minchev 2003: 24-25) (Fig. 3/C). The hole for oil of reliquary could be in a cover. The oil was instilled to the inner space of small reliquary, then oil was placed in *ampoules* and distributed to the parishioners and pilgrims (Koch 1996: 129). The crypts with reliquary are known in a basilica № 6 of the second half of the 6th cent. in Diocletianopolis and basilica on the island Kos (Fig. 6/D-E).

Another interested feature is the ambo of the 6th century with two marches of the stairways placed in the center part of basilica. The balcony and fragment of balustrade of ambo were discovered during the excavations (Кленина 2004: 51-57; Бернацки, Кленина, Рыжов 2004: 39-43) (Fig. 8-9). Such arrangement of an ambo is characteristic for the early Christian churches of Northern and Western Black Sea coasts, Asia Minor, Palestine, Northwest Africa and Spain (Donceel-Voûte 1998: 139; Biernacki 2002: 73). The ambo was used during the procession of a Grate Entrance with the participation of high rank priests and emperor (Taft 1978). The festive processions could be timed to the anniversary of Saint Basil death. The pilgrims visited the basilica. The water source was arranged in a southeast corner of the basilica (Косцюшко-Валюжинич 1902: 65). The threshold between southern nave and narthex of the basilica is deleted more strongly than others. That is the evidence of a special popularity of the source. The similar source is found in a bishop basilica of the 6th-9th centuries in Barcelona (Spain) (Godoy, 1998: 167) (Fig. 10). The water filled up a font in baptisteries and than followed in an equipped source for the pilgrims in atrium. This complex was connected to a cult of the martyrs and was a place of pilgrimage.

In a western part of Chersonesos the memorial church erected above the kiln was found. Bishop Capiton had come in which one according to the written source. The church is an exact tetraconch with four large apses oriented parts of the world (Куртайсов 1980: 156-169) (Fig. 2/B). Two doors had situated in each apse, except for a western apse. Inside the building there were mosaic floors. During the excavation the fragments of the mosaic were discovered. One of pieces arranged in a western apse, represents the peacock with a lowered tail, legs on west placed among vegetative ornaments with black trefoils and red-yellow bunches of a grapes. The representation of two birds were placed above from the right, below on the right there was a fragment of the representation of eagle with the dismissed wings and legs on the south (Лепер 1911: 92-96). The mosaic was made of small-sized polychromatic rock cubes and smalt. The memorial kiln was under the mosaic floor. According to the archaeological data the tetraconch church was erected under the kiln for the lime not earlier than the second half of the 6th century (Голофаст 2002: 109; Бернацки, Кленина, Рыжов 2004: 49-52). The building was destroyed in the 8th-9th centuries and later was not used as a church.

The tetraconch churches appeared in Georgia in the 6th century. The church Dzhvari at the monastery Mtsheta (587-605 years) is the most close analogy to Chersonese



sos tetraconch (Макрова, Плетнева 2003: 293).

The cruciform mausoleum on eastern necropolis was rebuilt in the second half of the 6th century (Fig. 2/C, 5/A). All doors were blocked except for western. The synthronon was built at the eastern branch of a cross. The reliquary was put under the altar. The *prothesis* was erected from the northeast part of the cruciform church; *diakonikon* was situated in the southeast part in this period (Fig. 5/A).

The wall of altar was decorated with smalt mosaic. The walls of the church were covered with polychromatic fresco. The frescos and wall mosaics were not kept up to present days. The floors of the church were richly decorated with the mosaics. Fine safety of the mosaic floors were in three branches of a cross and central part of a temple. The central part of mosaic is figured high *kantharos* and two peacocks. Thirteen series medallions with different animal and bird figures cover all area of a western wing of a church.

The rebuilding of the martyrium in a church should

be dated not earlier than 574 years. The cruciform church out-of-the town transforms from independent mausoleum in pilgrimage center arranged on a Christian cemetery. The walls surrounded the complex of buildings connected to the church. This complex was widely known in all Christendom as a place of burial of the Roman Pope St. Martin I, died in 656 in the exile in Chersonesos (Кондаков 1887: 17).

Thus, reflected in a written source of the 7th century events, narrated about tragic destiny of the seven bishops, have been confirmed by archaeological data. The persecution and subsequent canonization of the maiden missionaries were characteristic for Roman Empire in the early Byzantine period. Chersonesos sacral architecture of the 4th-7th centuries was similar to the churches in Balkan, Asia Minor, Palestinian regions. It's the evidence of a commonality of historical and religious processes in these locales.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Е.Ю. Кленина

СВЯТЫЕ МУЧЕНИКИ ХЕРСОНСКИЕ СОГЛАСНО ПИСЬМЕННЫМ И АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИМ ИСТОЧНИКАМ

Одним из наиболее интересных периодов существования Херсонеса является время христианизации населения в IV в. Эти события отражены в письменном источнике VII в.

Сохранились археологические памятники, которые можно разделить на две группы: сооружения, существовавшие при жизни епископов-му-

чеников, а также их могилы и мемориальные постройки, появившиеся в период увековечивания их памяти в VI-VII вв.

Канонизация первых христианских святых мучеников получила распространение по всей империи в ранневизантийский период.

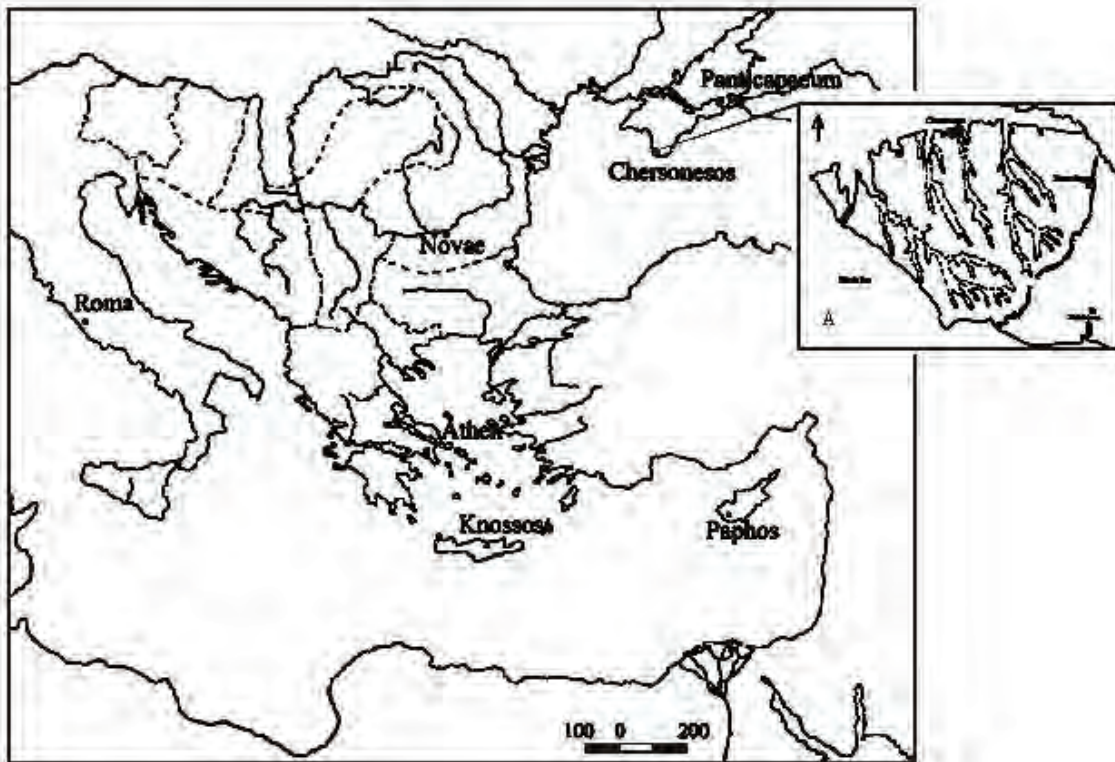


Fig. 1. The eastern part of the Roman Empire: A - the Herakleia peninsula (Crimea)



Fig. 2. The map of the Chersonesos site:
A - Western basilica; B - tetraconch church; C - cruciform church; D - Uvarov basilica

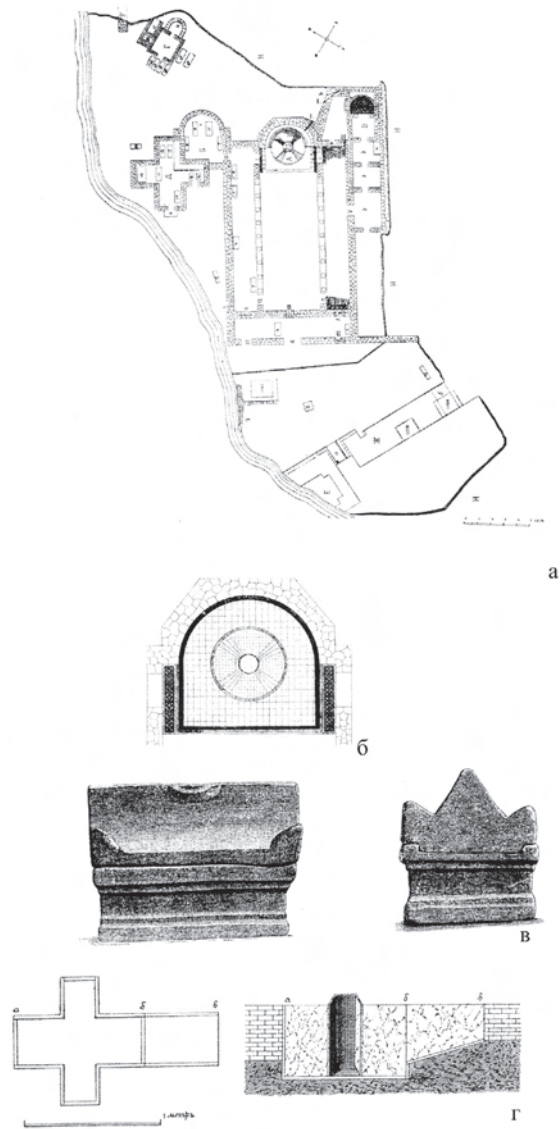


Fig. 3. The Western basilica: A - plan of the basilica; B - plan of the apse; C - reliquary; D - deepening for the reliquary (according to K.K. Kostzyushko-Valyuzynich)

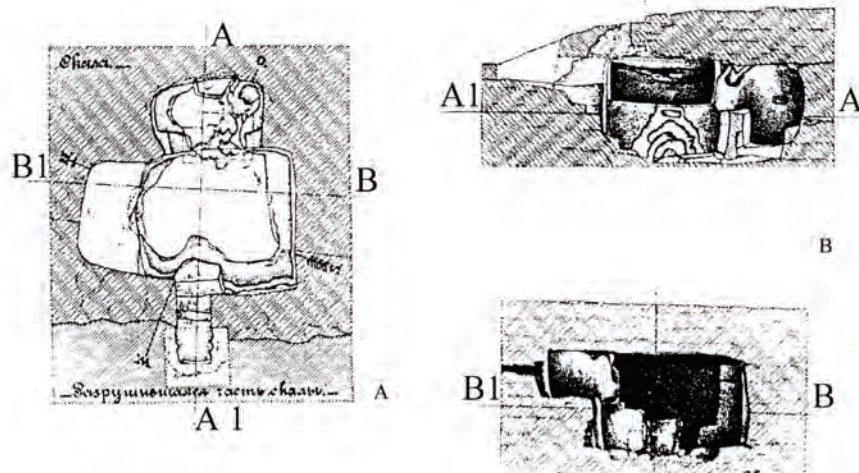
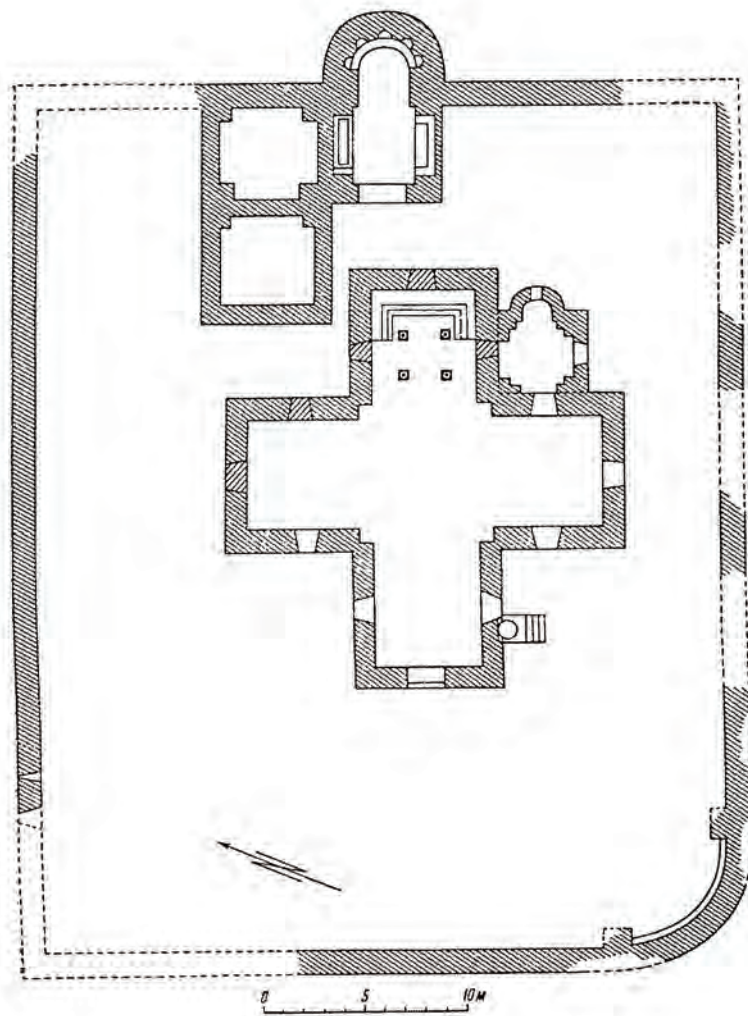
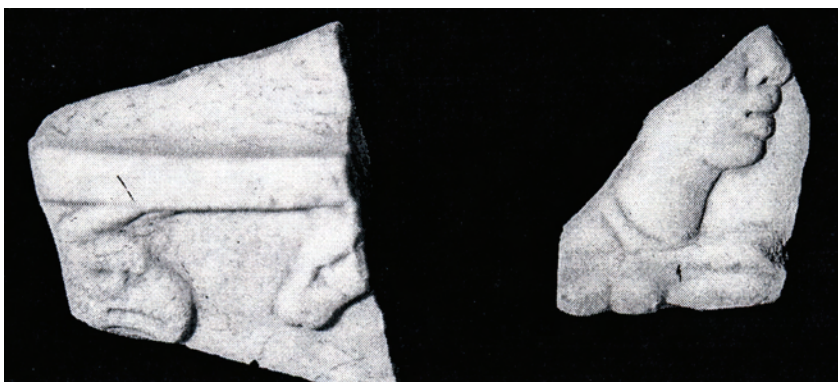


Fig. 4. The crypt on the western necropolis: A - plan of the crypt; B - sections of the crypt



A



B

Fig. 5. The cruciform church on the eastern necropolis: A - plan of the church; B - two fragments of the sigma-shaped *mensa sacra* (by K.K. Kostzyushko-Valyuzynich)

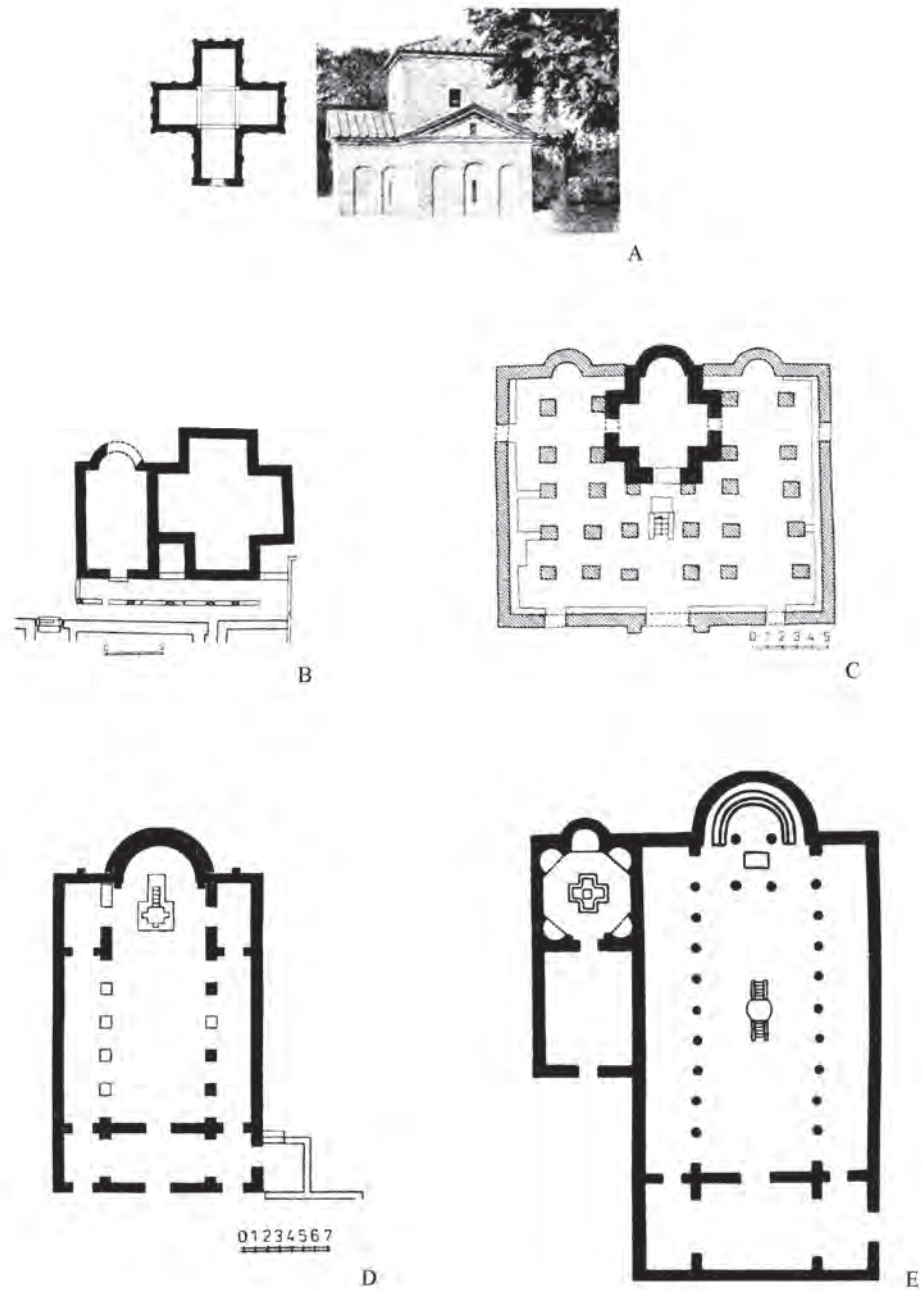


Fig. 6. The cruciform martyriums and early Christian basilica: A - martyrium *Galla Placidie* (by A.L. Yakobson); B - martyrium on the hill Tsarevets in V. Tyrnovo (by N. Angelov); C - martyrium nearby Voden (Southern Bulgaria) (by N. Tancheva); D - basilica # 6 in Diocletianopolis (by D. Tsaanev); E - basilica on the inland Kos (by A.L. Yakobson)

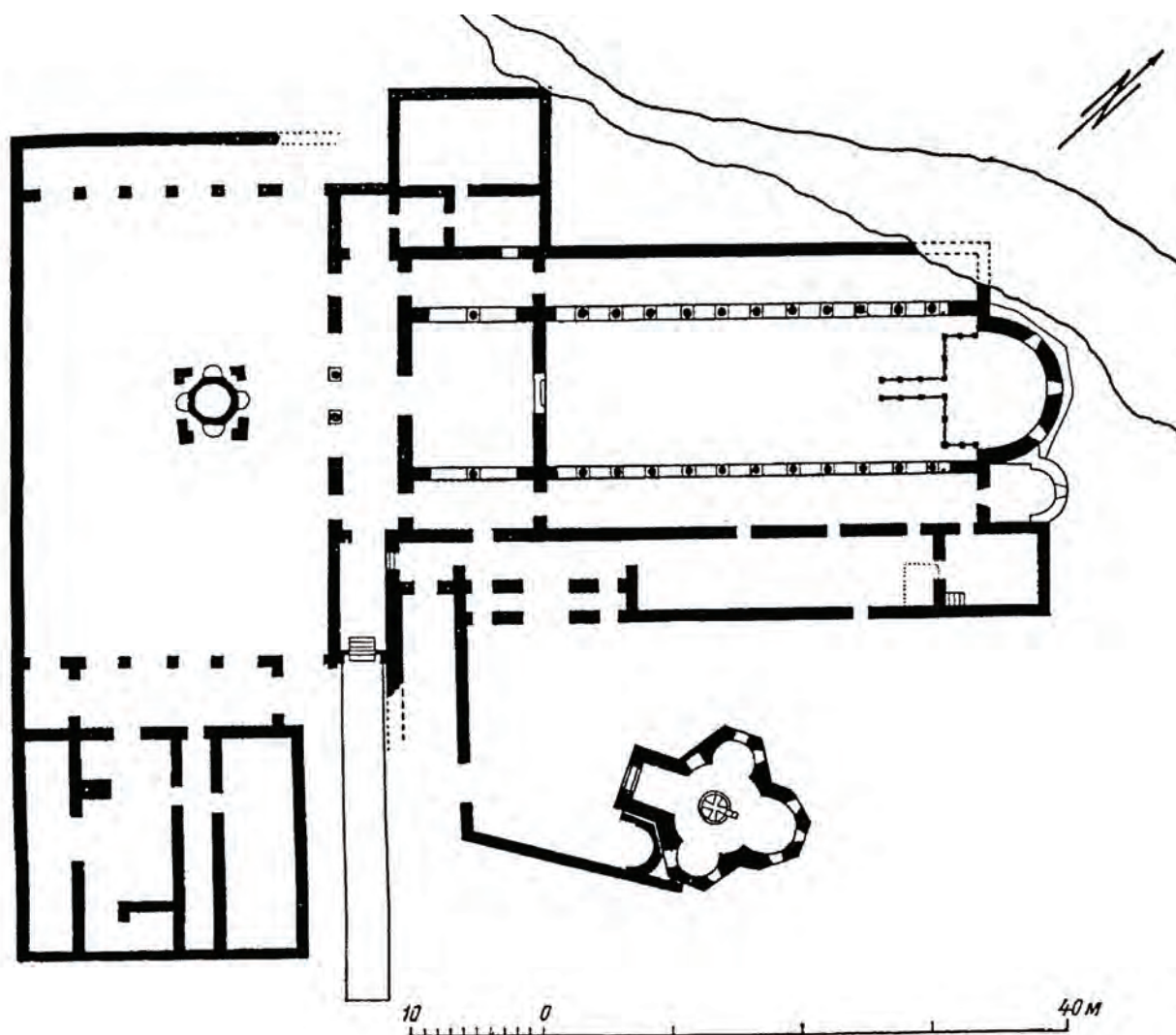


Fig. 7. The plan of "Uvarov" basilica (according to K.K. Kostzyushko-Valyuzynich)

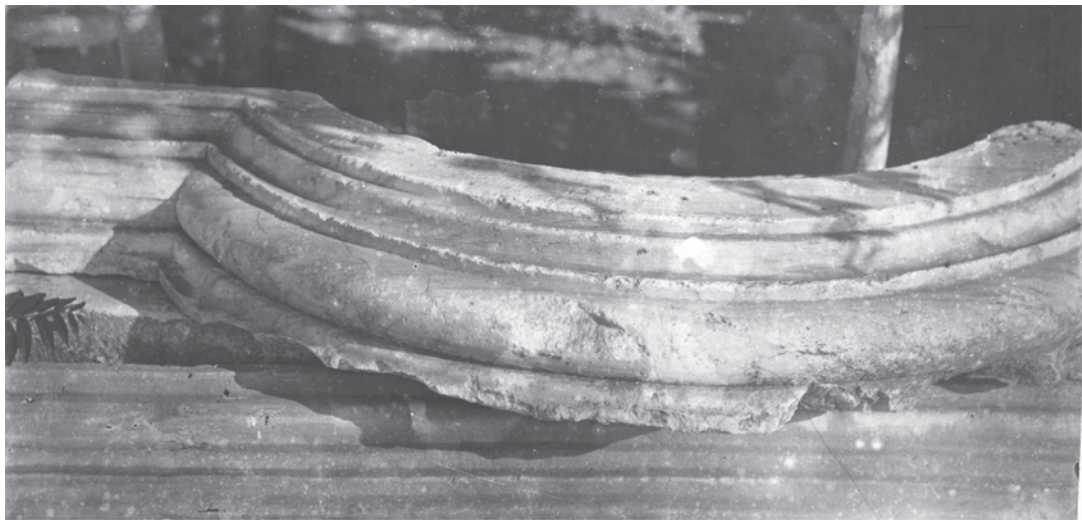


Fig. 8. The balcony of the ambo from the Western basilica (by K.K. Kostzyushko-Valyuzynich)

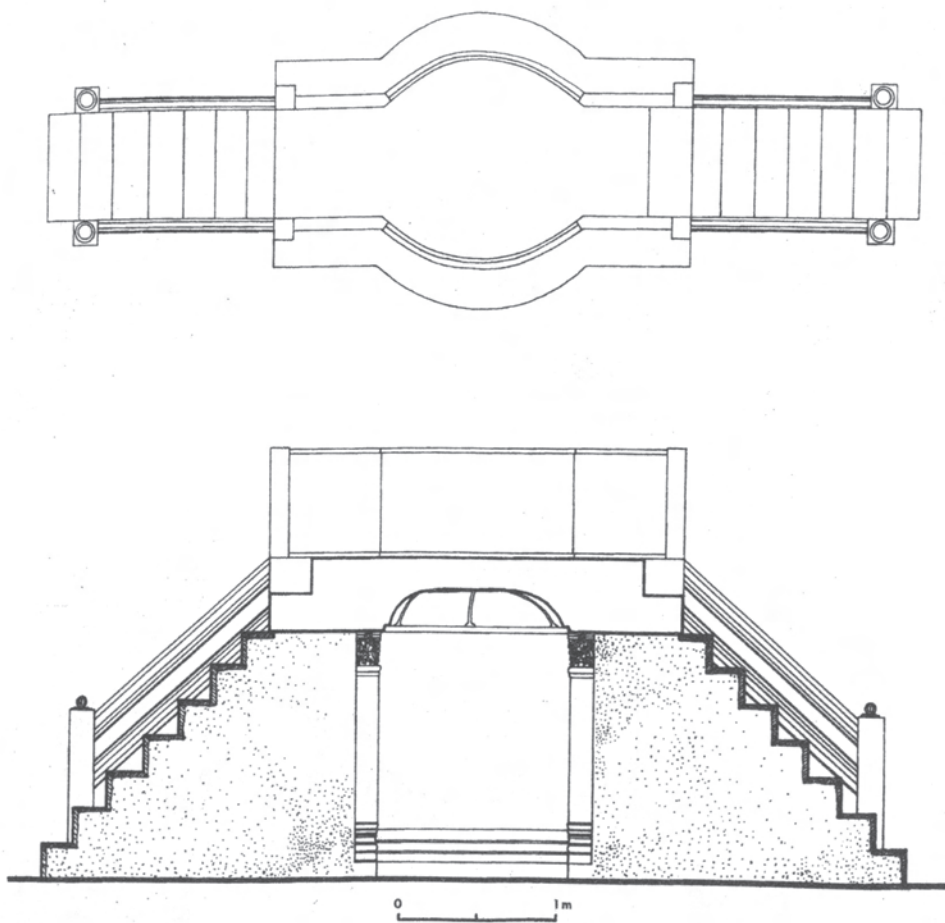


Fig. 9. The reconstruction of the ambo of the 6th century from Novae (drawing A.B. Biernacki)

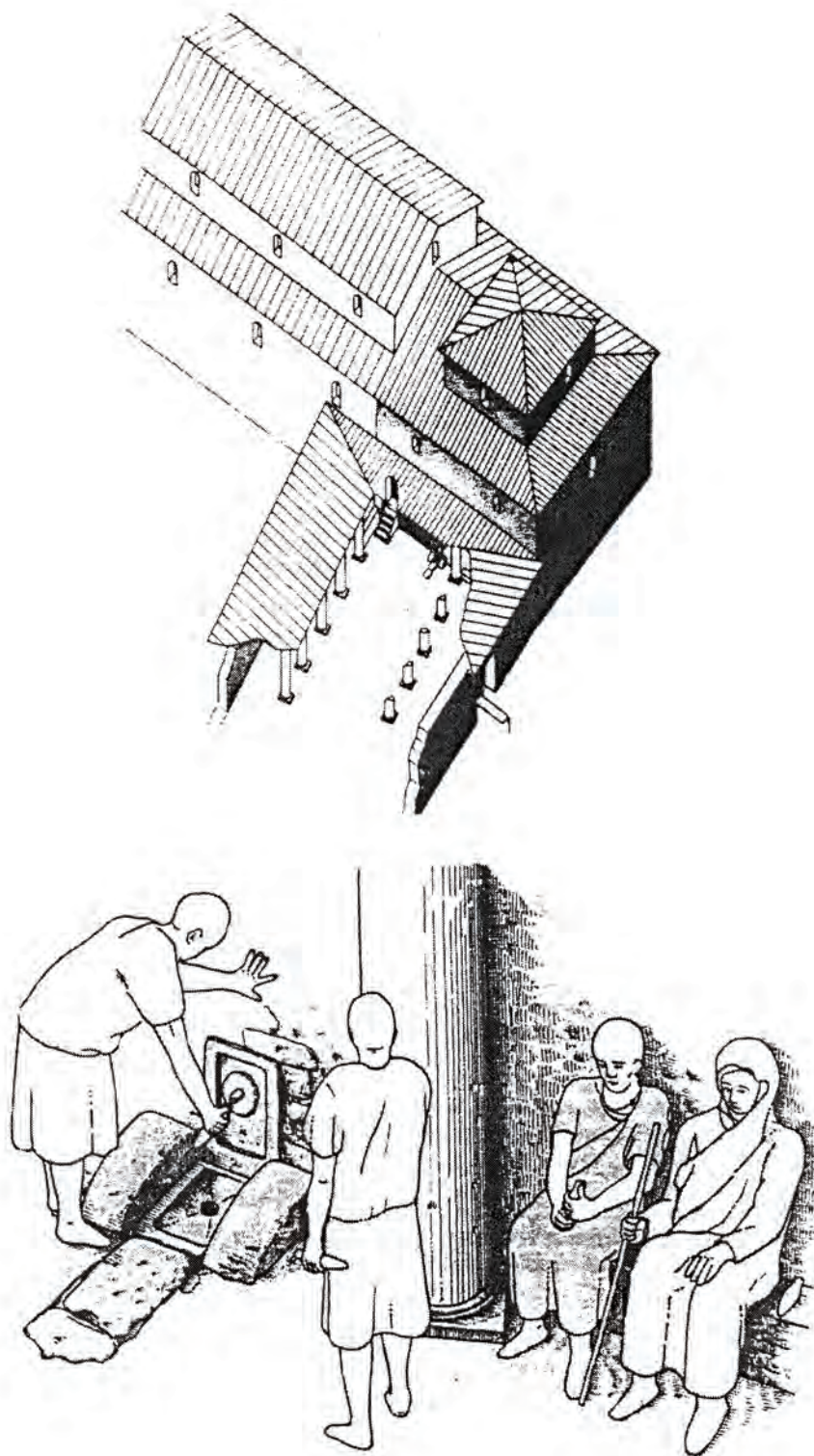


Fig. 10. The Episcopal complex in Barcelona (Spain) with water source (according to C. Godoy)