



The most significant values  
of the cultural and natural heritage

# BARGALA



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# FOREWORD

## MACEDONIAN CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

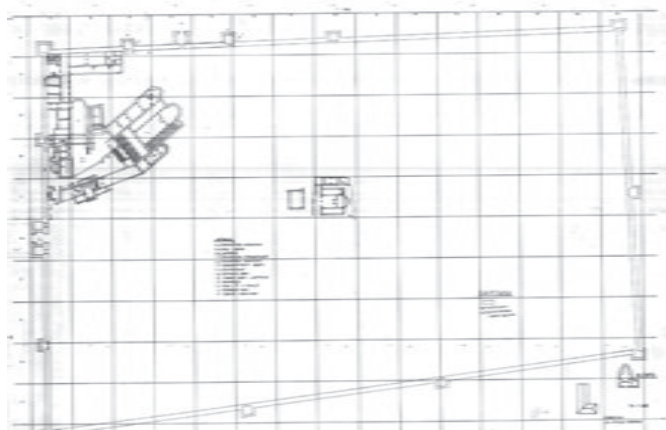
Prof. Viktor Lilchikj Adams, Ph.D.

# BARGALA

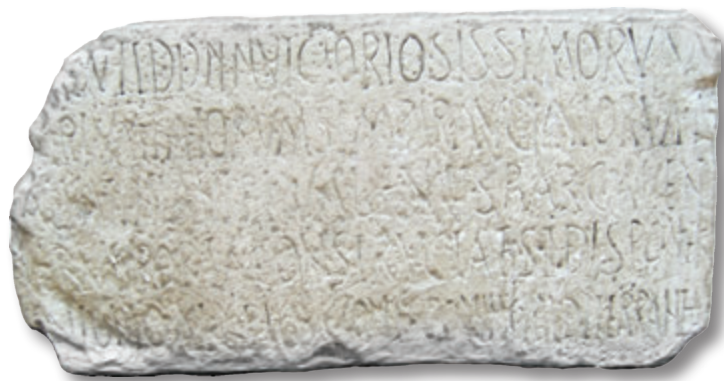
## Introduction

The city of Bargala. is located in the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia, at the foot of the mountain Plachkovica, on the right bank of the river Kozjachka, in an area suitable for establishing a fortification, near the former Goren Kozjak, in the area of Gradot, at a distance of 2.5 km south of the present-day village of Dolen Kozjak, 13 km northeast of the city of Shtip.

The name of the city of Bargala was initially observed on an inscription dating from the year 371, in the area of Hanche, in the village of Karbinci. It was an inscription illustrating a discussion for the establishing of the city gate. In the acts of the Council of Chalcedon from 451, Bargala emerged as an Episcopal centre. The name of the city was also recorded in Hierocles's *Synecdemus*, where Bargala belonged to Macedonia Secunda in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century. The name of Bregalnica refers to the episcopacy, and was recorded in the life of the Holy Fifteen Martyrs of Tiveriopolis. I. Ivanov links it to the city of Bargala and concludes that the river Bregalnica was named after the city of Bargala, which further implies that the episcopacy of Bregalnica emerged as a possible successor to the episcopacy of Bargala.



Plan of the city of Bargala



A plaque with an inscription

Information regarding the existence of archaeological remains in the city of Bargala was provided by R. Gruikj, in his archaeological and historical notes, S. Mihajlov, in his records of the study of the church Sv. Gjorgji (St. George) in Goren Kozjak and I. Venedikov, in his article *Bargala*. The Late Antique city and Early Christian episcopal centre of Bargala was registered and ubicated by the academic B. Aleksova in 1966.

Within the systematic archaeological research conducted by the academic Blaga Aleksova, as well as the archaeologists Zvonko Beldedovski and Trajche Nacev, in the period from 1966 until today, the following buildings have been fully researched: the Episcopium, the north-western and parts of the north-eastern defensive wall, as well as the basilica *Extra muros*, located outside the city walls. As a result of the unveiling of a new cultural content in the central part of the city, the Early Christian city basilica, which confirms Bargala as the first Episcopal seat in the Bregalnica Basin, was discovered.

## The fortification of the city of Bargala

The fortification is one of the main features of the ancient city, which aims to ensure the safety of the population, and as such, remain the main concern of the urban population and the community members on the territory the city occupies.

The city of Bargala is a city of the type *castrum* which turns into *civitas*, and is protected by three defensive lines: a ditch (*fosa*), *proteichisma* and an internal defensive wall.

The defensive fortification walls of the city of Bargala assume an irregular trapezoidal and rectangular shape, oriented in the direction northwest-southeast .

By means of archaeological excavations, the following fortification sections were discovered: the north-western defensive wall with the corner towers and the main gate - *Porta Principalis*), the north-eastern defensive wall with the north-eastern gate, which connects the city with the suburbium, as well as small parts of the south-eastern and south-western defensive walls. Based on the preserved stairs near the niches I and II, it is assumed that the height of the fortification ranged from 12 m to 12.50 m.



Northern defensive wall



# Gates

Previous research of Bargala has resulted in the discovery of two gates: *Porta Principalis*, located in the central part of the north-western defensive wall, and the *north-eastern gate*, built to connect the city with the suburbium. Characteristic of both gates is that in both of them was detected an external propugnaculum - an architectural solution intended to increase the city's defence. Architectural solutions of this type were very rare in the construction of gates in Late Antique cities. In Macedonia, a propugnaculum has not been discovered yet in the ancient cities of Stobi, Heraclea, Scupi or Styberra. They were also, generally, rarely found in the Balkans. So far, one has been discovered in northern Bulgaria.



Main gate – Principalis



North-eastern gate

# Towers

One of the most important fortification elements built for the purpose of defending the city were the towers which protected the Main gate and the curtain walls (the space between two towers) .



Tower 3 and part of a gate



Curtain wall C (the space between Tower 3 and Tower 4)

Eleven towers have been discovered in Bargala to date, which, along with the unexcavated fortification sections, amount to 21 towers. In addition, there remains the possibility that if any other gates are excavated, the number of towers should be increased from 2 to 4.

All previously discovered towers are rectangular and belong to the type of towers projected in front of the curtain walls, similar to towers discovered in Stobi, Pautalia, Diocleianopolis, Gamzigrad and others. Three types of towers can be distinguished in Bargala: corner towers, built-in towers and flanking towers. Corner towers were placed at positions where two defence walls connected at a right angle, projecting forward in front of the lines of the curtain walls, creating a possibility for the defence of both curtain walls. Built-in towers were placed in line with the curtain wall, with a third of the width drawn into the curtain wall, and two-thirds projecting forward in front of the curtain wall. The flanking towers were located at the entrance with their entire length projecting in front of the curtain walls.

The distance between the towers ranged from 36 to 42 m, and corresponded to the distance recommended by Vitruvius i.e. that it should be as long as the arrow's range.

The towers needed to be at least 2-2.50 m higher than the curtain walls. Provided that the height of the curtain wall ranged from 12-12.50 m, the height of the towers needed to be 14-15 m. The storeys were interconnected by means of wooden steps, and on the third floor, there was probably an entrance which was accessed from the platform of the curtain wall. Due to the small size, the towers in Bargala had no windows, whereas the light, as well as the defence from the inside of the upper floors, was administered by means of embrasures (firing holes). The second and third floor



Corner tower

typically had two to three embrasures in the front and side walls, thus increasing the efficiency of the defence, and receiving greater amounts of light into the storeys. Three-storey towers were observed in other Roman fortifications, such as: Gamzigrad, Dioclecianopolis, Abritus and others. The roof construction of the towers in Bargala was executed in two manners: by means of a wooden roof and a flat roof with breastworks. A wooden roof structure of tegulae and imbrices can be observed in towers 2, 3, 4 and 5. The discovered remains of a vault in the north-eastern corner tower and towers 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, without tegulae and imbrices, just as in the north-western and south-western corner towers, allow for a consideration that the corner towers 1 and 6, the south-eastern tower, as well as the towers along the entire length of the north-eastern defensive wall, were arched by a brick vault, with a flat floor with a parapet and a breastwork placed on top.

## Niches and stairs of stone

By means of previous research, a total of seven niches were discovered in Bargala, two of which were flanked beside the inner front of curtain wall C, whereas five were indented into the curtain walls A, B, C, D and E, and two single-arm stairs, of which, the larger one was beside the flanked niches and the smaller one was close to the indented niche.

The niches flanked by the inner facade of the fortification were primarily built for the stone stairs leading up to the platform of the curtain wall. The secondary function of the niches was their use as a shelter for the guard and for weapon storage. They also have a decorative element which



Niches and stone stairs leading up to the third floor of the towers of the gate Principalis

serves to revive the large and heavy mass of stone from the curtain wall. The niches indented in the curtain wall were originally posterns, which were covered during subsequent building phases and were used to serve as narrow stone stairs leading up to the platform of the curtain wall. The single-arm stone step was built over the arches of the flanked niches and led up to the platform of curtain wall C in the same manner as the single-arm step located on the indented niche 4, but in the opposite direction, i.e. from northwest to northeast. With the three defensive lines, the exterior propugnaculum beside the two discovered gates, as well as the projecting radially placed fortifications, the city of Bargala enters the category of Roman cities with a developed defence system.

## Infrastructure

With the proclamation of Christianity as a state religion in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, a new urban quarter established to accommodate the Christian buildings, accompanied by others facilities created to assist the new buildings, appeared in the cities.

The area intended for Christian worship, in almost all cities, was established in the vicinity of the main gates. Such was the case with the cities of Bargala, Stobi, Heraclea, Gamzigrad, Carichin Grad, Dioclecianopolis and others.

In the city of Bargala, the area for Christian worship (Episcopium) was established in a dominant position and was protected by a wall. One entered this area by means of a monumental entrance positioned near *Porta Principalis*.



Bargala belongs to the group of Roman and Early Byzantine cities (along with Stobi, Dioclecianopolis, Gamzigrad, Carichin City, Nikopolis ad Istrum and others) built according to an orthogonal system where the streets intersected at right angles. The main streets have not been discovered yet, but based on the orientation of the Main gate, they deviate from the north-south axis. By means of archaeological excavations, a small part of the street *Via Principalis*, near the Main gate and the Early Christian city basilica, was discovered, and, in addition to the interior surface of the northwest defensive wall in the Episcopium, the street *Via Sagularis* or *Intervalum* was also discovered, built as a connection with the complex of the Episcopal residence, as well as the Great and the Small thermae.

The street *Via Intrevalum*



The monumental entryway of the Episcopium



Clean water supply was provided by the springs on the slopes of the hill Cvilig, where, by means of ceramic tubes, the water reached the city. The excavated canals for the collection and discharge of dirty and storm water are an indication of a solid sewage system which met the requirements for the necessary technical hygiene of an ancient city. The entrance formed by two perimeter walls protected the Episcopium from the southwest, whereas the main entrance was located in the southern perimeter wall. The corridor of movement formed by the perimeter walls was divided into two parts: an eastern part, leading up to the entrance to the square, and a western part, next to the street *Via Intervalum*.

The corridor from the entrance of the Episcopium

The architectural solution of the entrance to the Episcopium in Bargala, for the time being, is unique on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, as well as on the territory of the Balkan Peninsula.

By means of archaeological research which began in 1966 and, with a few interruptions, continued until 2011, the entire complex of the Episcopium in Bargala was discovered and researched. This complex included: the square, the Episcopal basilica, the Episcopal residence with the residential and the commercial section, the Small church, the Great and the Small thermae, as well as the Water cistern. In 2008 the research of a new cultural complex in the central part of the city began, resulting in the discovery of the Early Christian city basilica.

## The square in front of the Episcopal basilica

The square has an irregular rectangular shape created by the buildings in the Episcopium and the northern perimeter wall of the entrance, covering an area of about 400 m<sup>2</sup>. It is connected to the Episcopal Basilica, the Episcopal residence and the Water cistern by means of stairs. It is also connected to the street *Via Intervalum* by means of the narrow street formed by the western wall of the Great thermae and the northern perimeter wall of the entrance.

The square is divided into two parts by a wall and is oriented in a west-east direction, with an entrance 1.30 m wide serving as a connection to the Episcopal residence and the Cistern.



The square of the Episcopium

## Episcopal basilica

It is situated on a dominant position superior in its size and significance compared to other buildings in Episcopium. The episcopal basilica is 40 m long and 20 m wide, and represents a standard type of an Early Christian church building, widespread throughout the Mediterranean countries and the Balkans.



The episcopal basilica



The episcopal basilica, central nave



It is a three-naval basilica with a semi-circular apse on the interior and exterior, with an indoor narthex and an open exonarthex, and a baptistery beside the northern perimeter wall.

The basilica was accessed by means of the paved square, through eight high stairs with a rest area in front of the open exonarthex. The western facade represents a three-part arcade - tribelon, separated by columns, whose bases were found *in situ*, along with the columns with impostes beside them. One of the two capitals has an inscription in ancient Greek, which translates: *Christ, help your slave, the Bishop Hermie*.

The open porch - exonarthex, was connected to the inner narthex by means of five doors, two of which, the northernmost and the central, were subsequently closed. There were three doors in the narthex, leading up to the naos and the side naves. Two rows, each consisting of seven columns, separated the naos from the south and the north nave.

The inter-columns were closed with pairs of parapet panels which were connected by means of a small square column. The believers were divided in the church - men went in the south nave, while women in the north.

A basis of a marble pulpit was discovered in the naos located south of the longitudinal axis of the church. The floors of the church were paved with great taste for composition and colouring technique. The floors of the exonarthex, the narthex and the southern nave were paved with large reddish tiles, whereas the tiles in the naos were of reddish and grey dacite, previously finely processed and smoothed. The north nave, reserved for the women, consisted of a mosaic with large pieces of polychrome marble. Along the entire length of the nave were created seven individual fields of geometric ornaments consisting of circles with rosettes, rhombuses and squares. In the middle section of the central area was formed a cross with elongated sides.

The western side of the presbytery consisted of massive stone blocks with grooves for parapet panels. The entrance was oriented to the west with indented bearings for small columns that carried the arch of the presbytery. Debris from the floor was found on the edges, and the floor itself represents a border of white and grey marble tiles. The entire arrangement is a luxurious creation on the floor in *opus sectile*, a technique that was implemented in the largest Christian temples.

The apse was a step higher compared to the presbytery. A large earthenware vessel used in the consecration of the church, containing the holy remains of the martyr, was discovered there.



The episcopal basilica, northern nave

## Baptistry

The baptistry has a cruciform shape with a narthex. According to the arrangement, the baptistry represents a basilica on the outside, and a cruciform building on the inside with a semi-circular apse on the inside and a polygonal apse on the outside. On the west side, as a connection to the vestibule, two entrances were formed and to connect with the basilica, an entrance was built in the northern perimeter wall of the basilica.

The vestibule of the baptistry is a rectangular room with a mosaic floor, consisting of floral and animal ornaments preserved in fragments. The frieze of this mosaic consists of circles and rosettes. In the middle of the baptistry was discovered a cruciform piscina that corresponds to the shape of the baptistry, with sides taking the shape of carved semi-circular niches on the exterior of the piscina. It belongs to the type of a cruciform shaped eight-sided piscina. Around the pool was built a brick fence with columns of capitals above it, bearing a baldachin (canopy). The entire pool was paved with tiles of white, red and grey marble, much like the piscina in the Episcopal and Northern Basilica in Stobi. As components of the luxurious arrangement designed above the piscina, many fragmented marble columns and some whole and fragmented capitals of the type *two-zone* and *basket* capitals placed on the straight sides of the baptizing pool that carried the baldachin, were discovered. In the western part of the baptistry, was discovered an older piscina with a cross-shaped pool, and niches on the east and west sides, placed on a circular mortar platform. During archaeological excavations were discovered bearings of eight bases carrying columns with capitals, with a baldachin placed over. A tiled fence was built between the columns. On the eastern side of the platform was created a niche for an easy access of the baptizing official during baptism, and on the west side, a passage of two stairs to enable the baptizing official to reach the water pool where the act of baptism took place.



Baptistry, 6<sup>th</sup> century

## Episcopal residence complex

The Episcopal residence complex included a main hall and a residential complex with a northwest and a northeast wing.

**The main hall** was rectangular, with a northeast-southwest orientation, and a length of 22 m and a width of 7.80 m. This space was composed of four sections placed on different height levels: an apse area, a rectangular reception room, a commercial area consisting of two rooms, and a porch. The floors in the hall and the rectangular apse area were paved by means of red rectangular processed stone tiles laid in parallel rows along the hall.



Episcopal residence, main hall

## The residential complex

The north-western wing of the residential complex is attached to the interior surface of the north-western rectangular defensive wall, oriented in a northeast-southwest direction, with a length of 24 m and a width of 11.15 m, including the porch. Five rooms were discovered in this section. The first three were interconnected by wide doorways with vaulted arches. The fourth and the fifth room were also connected by means of a wide entrance with a vaulted arch. All five rooms were connected to the porch. The researched section of the porch amounted to a length of 24 m, which followed the length of the entire wing, with a width of 3.30 m.

The porch has three entrances: north-western, with a width of 1.10 m, by means of which it is connected with the main hall and the street by the north-



Episcopal residence, north-western residential wing

western defensive wall; south-eastern, with a width of 1.60 m, which is connected to the atrium, and an entrance by means of which it is connected to the porch in front of the north-eastern residential wing. On the south-eastern side of the porch was the stylobate which held a colonnade whose columns and capitals were discovered *in situ*.

The floor of the porch was paved with processed reddish and grey rectangular stone tiles, placed in parallel rows along the entire length of the porch, in the same manner as in the main hall.

In the north-eastern section of the porch were discovered stone stairs leading up to the second floor of the residential complex of the Episcopal residence.

The north-eastern residential wing was attached to the north-eastern defensive wall. It is rectangular, oriented in a northeast-southeast direction, with a length of 25 m and a width of 10 m, including the open porch to the atrium. Three rooms were discovered in this section: the main hall and two smaller rooms, and an open porch connected to the porch of the north-western residential wing.

As a result of the frequent Avar-Slavic attacks in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, a need to repurpose part of the space of the residential section in the Episcopal residence complex arose. The fourth room of the north-western wing was converted into an area for food storage (horreum) , where 16 pithoi, arranged in rows, were discovered. The most significant repurpose of an area of the



Episcopal residence, horreum



Episcopal residence, north-eastern residential wing



Glass furnace

residential complex was made in the north-western wing, where the entire ground floor was converted into a winery, which, so far, is the only one from the Late Antique period on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. Three rooms were discovered in the winery, one of which was intended for reception and preparation of grapes for further processing, the second of which contained two wine presses and stone vessel sedimentation tanks, whereas the third room was used to store the wine.

Within the Episcopal residence, although it represents part of the fortification, was discovered a glass workshop located in tower 7. A furnace and a significant number of movable artefacts were discovered in the workshop.

## Water cistern

This building has a rectangular shape, it is oriented in a northeast-southwest direction, and has the following dimensions: 10.60 m length and 6.60-6.70 m width, and the following interior dimensions: 9.30 m length and 5.30-5.40 m width. The considerable difference between the external and internal dimensions is a result of the double walls of the building. The space between the bricks forming the inner and outer walls was filled with fine crushed stone connected with water-proof mortar.



Water cistern



Large thermae

Water reached the Cistern by means of an opening in the central part of the north-eastern wall. The opening is 0.75 high and 0.15 m wide. The considerable height of the opening was necessary due to the vertical ceramic tube, with three to five outlets, by means of which the water flowed into the cistern, depending on the amount of water coming from the spring on the hill Cvilig. In the central part of the western wall were registered two openings. The first opening was located on the floor with a height and a width of 0.20 m, and served for cleaning the pool. The second opening with a height of 0.10 and width of 0.20 m, where drinking water flowed, was located at a height of 0.55 m from the floor level.

Only one drainage canal, located above the normal water level, which served for the overflow of water, was recorded in the western corner of the Cistern at a height of 0.90 m from the floor level.

## Large thermae

This facility was situated between the square and the northwest defensive wall with a rectangular base and the following dimensions: length of 19 m and width of 13 m. It consisted of separate rooms, functionally connected, each with a specific purpose resulting from the different methods of bathing.

**Room no. 1**, *apoditerium* (dressing room) and *frigidarium* (cold pool). The dressing room occupied the western part of the bath and served as a gathering place where people spent some time before bathing, and then, after the bathing, adjusted their bodies to normal temperature. The cold pool was located in the north-western part of the dressing room, in a separate apse area, with a width of 3.80 to 4 m and depth of 3.70 m.



Large thermae, caldarium

**Room no. 2, tepidarium**, or a bath with lukewarm water – it was rectangular, with a northeast-southwest orientation, 5.40 m long and 2 m wide, with an expanded apse section, 1.80 m to the northwest.

In the extended hemispherical section of the tepidarium, at a level lower than the floor of the room, was discovered a well-preserved bath with a length of 1.80, width of 1m and depth of 1 m. The end of the northeast section of the room is also semi-circular, i.e. an apse, with yet another bath, but with smaller dimensions: length of 1.50 m, width of 0.65 m and depth of 0.30 m. This bath served for washing the body with lukewarm water after exiting the hot bath (tepidarium) and the sweating room (sudatorium).

**Room no. 3, sudatorium** – the sauna has a rectangular base with a length of 4.85 m and a width of 2.60 m. It ends with an apse to the southeast, 0.30 m higher than the floor. In the upper sections of the apse area there was a window (biphora). This type of an elevated floor construction, most likely, served for sitting down while warming up the body.

The floor was designed as a hypocaust i.e. an elevated floor with installations for floor heating and wall heating. It was paved with processed stone tiles of rectangular and square shapes inside the rectangle, and with brick in the apse area.

**Room no. 4, caldarium** or a hot water bath – it has a rectangular base with a length of 5.40 m and width of 2.30 m. The room consists of a semi-circular southeast bath and a rectangular northwest bath placed over the hypocaust – the elevated floor.



**The praefurnium** is situated in the central northeast section of the hot bath (caldarium) and is one of the best preserved praefurnia in the Republic of Macedonia.

Inside the praefurnium, under the floor level, was located a furnace. This structure consisted of bricks, with mortar as a binding element, built by means of narrowing down the rows. The ceiling of the fireplace, which was intentionally demolished, was built of a vault construction with brick and water-proof mortar. The upper sections of the praefurnium represent an area where the copper or ceramic vessel was located, which, when needed, was filled with water by means of a ceramic tube that continued in the lower sections of the main hall of the Episcopal residence and ended in the upper parts of the praefurnium. After warming the water by means of a lead and ceramic plumbing installation, it was delivered to the baths in the caldarium and the tepidarium.

## Heating room (propnigeum)

Auxiliary to the bath, there existed a room of a nearly square base, next to the north-eastern wall, measuring 7.40 x 7.60 m, in which the furnace of the praefurnium was situated. The room served as storage for lumber and an area where the heating of the praefurnium was conducted.

## Small thermae

The small thermae was built in the narrow space between the heating room – propnigeum and the north-western defensive wall. It has a rectangular base measuring 4.55 m x 3 m.



Small thermae

The small *thermae* consisted of two rooms. The smaller room, 2 m long and 0.90 m wide, was accessed from the main entrance. By means of an entrance 1.10 wide, this room was connected to a larger room of a nearly square base, measuring 1.75 m x 1.50 m, which included a small bathtub. In both areas was observed a hypocaust floor.

The construction of the west wall included a *praefurnium* - furnace, with an empty space above an almost cylindrical shape, assuming the form of a cauldron. In the empty space, there was a built-in, hot-water copper or ceramic container. In the upper section of the wall, next to the hot-water cauldron, there was a built-in stone basin with two embedded lead pipes. One of the pipes from the trough led to the cylindrical space for water heating through the wall, whereas the other pipe led to the tub embedded into interior space of the bathroom. From the space for water heating, through the wall in the bathtub, led another, third, lead pipe. These data enable a complete reconstruction of the network for circulation of cold and hot water in the bath.

## Early Christian city basilica

In 2008 and 2009, by means of systematic archaeological excavations, in the central part of the city of Bargala was discovered an Early Christian basilica located between the street *Via Principalis* and the side street connecting the insula with the main street.

The Early Christian city basilica, measuring 16.80 m in length and 13.45 m in width, diverts from the standard form of basilicas and represents a shortened type of an Early Christian basilica construction of a nearly square shape. Due to this shape, the ratio of the internal and external dimensions is approximately 1:1 (length and width). On the territory of Macedonia, basilicas of



Early Christian city basilica

this type have not been detected yet, whereas, in the Republic of Bulgaria, they can be observed at the following archaeological sites: Crkvina – Melnik (Sv. Nikola) and Sv. Vrach – Sandanski (Episcopal basilica).

It is a three-nave basilica with a semi-circular apse on the exterior, and a narthex on the interior. It exits the east-west axis with a deviation to the south. Four entrances were registered on the basilica. The main entrance is from the south, which exits directly onto the main street by means of three stairs.

**The narthex** has an irregular trapezoidal and rectangular shape with the following dimensions: 12.80 m width, and two different lengths - 3.20 m to the south and 2.20 m to the north. One can access it by means of the main entrance, and it is connected to the naos by means of a double entrance - dipylon with a width of 3.20 m. The floor was paved by means of grey polygonal tiles. Beside the west wall was located a shoulder area for sitting. From the narrowed part of the narthex one entered a small, square-shaped room with seating shoulders beside the walls.

**The naos** is square, with a length of 6.20 m and a width of 5.70 m, separated from the side naves by a mortar stylobate. The presbytery is separated from the naos by a chancel altar screen. The parapet boards were decorated with crosses and octagons. In front of the extended entrance of the altar screen was discovered a mosaic fragment of a circular shape with geometric figures and, most likely, a cross in the centre of the circle. The mosaic was built in the *opus sectile* technique with tiny tesserae of different colours and glass paste, where some of the tesserae were gold-plated. Based on the discovered mortar foundation and a number of tesserae, the remaining part of the floor in the naos was likely decorated by a mosaic.

**The presbytery** is rectangular, with a length of 5.70 m and width of 1.75 m. An altar table was discovered during research, whereas under the floor, where it was discovered, was built a niche (katathesis or katatheseon) containing relics. The presbytery floor was constructed of brick in lime mortar.

**The apse** was semi-circular on the interior and exterior, without a synthronos.

The north and south naves were accessed from the west (narthex) and from the east. In addition to the interior surface of the perimeter walls, seating shoulders with a height of 0.35 m from the floor were also discovered. The floors in both naves were executed by means of bricks in lime mortar.

## Facilities outside the city walls

By means of archaeological research, outside the city walls were discovered two building construction: *Extra muros* and the Tomb.

## The Basilica Extra muros

It is located approximately 100 m north of *Porta Principalis*. It is a three-nave basilica with a width of 15.60 and a length of 31 m, with a semi-circular apse from both the interior and exterior of the narthex. The main entrance to the basilica is from the west and it is constructed in the same manner as the entrance to the Episcopal basilica - with stairs due to the configuration of the terrain.



Basilica Extra Muros

The floor of the basilica was luxurious, executed in *opus sectile*, and during research, rich architectural stone plastic was also discovered.

The basilica is chronologically determined in the same period as the city of Bargala. It persisted simultaneously as the city from the 4<sup>th</sup>, until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century, when the city of Bargala was burned and destroyed during the Avar-Slavic attacks.

The second building is the **Tomb**, located east of the basilica *Extra muros*. It has a rectangular dome, measuring 2 m in length and 2.20 m in width. Chronologically, it belongs to the period between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It was looted shortly after the burial of the deceased, possibly during the Avar-Slavic attacks.

## Bargala from the Early to the Late Middle Ages

By means of archaeological research, as a representative of the sacral buildings from the early medieval period, only a small church located along the southern perimeter wall of the Episcopal basilica, within the fortification, has been discovered so far. The building was constructed near the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup> century, a period when the Slavs began to massively receive Christianity. It undoubtedly existed until the construction of the church Sv. Gjorgji (St. George) – one of the most representative buildings of the early medieval period, built outside the fortification, near the southwest tower of the fortification. Sv. Gjorgji was built in the late 9<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and managed to survive through the centuries until the present day.

Profane architecture from the Early to the Late Middle Ages was discovered on the entire area where archaeological research was conducted.



Small church



Church of Sv. Gjorgji (St. George)

# CONCLUSION

In the development of the city of Bargala, between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the first decade of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, three main construction phases can be identified. The first construction phase covers the period of the establishing of a military camp (*castrum*) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> century. The second construction phase belongs to the period when the *castrum* was transformed into a *civitas*, when it became the main episcopal seat in the area along the river Bregalnica, near the end of the 4<sup>th</sup>, and beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The final, or third, building phase in Bargala, is the period of great reconstruction, which probably occurred in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup>, or the first decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

All buildings in the Episcopium were destroyed after existing for three centuries, during the Avar-Slavic attacks at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century, when they were set on fire and demolished. Whether or not the great reconstruction at the end of 5<sup>th</sup>, or the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, was conducted as a result of the earlier demolition of the buildings in the city of Bargala, is an issue to be discovered by means of results from further archaeological research in other sections of the city.

Life in the city of Bargala and the surrounding territory, with few interruptions during the Avar-Slavic attacks at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, continued until the Late Middle Ages, i.e. the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the inhabitants of the village of Goren Kozjak settled on the area of present - day Dolen Kozjak.

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