

RaLATH IV Conference

**Conflicts and Catastrophes in
Roman and Late Antique Thrace**

Burgas, 12-16 October 2020

ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1

Conflicts, catastrophes, chronologies

An Archaeology of Catastrophe and Destruction in Aegean Thrace

Vasilis Evangelidis

Catastrophe - destruction, either natural or caused by human agency (conflict - raids) is a basic parameter of the development of human habitus. The increase in recent years of studies stressing on the impacts of natural disasters, pandemics or conflicts on ancient societies, indicate the significant effect on cultural histories. Thus, the ability of ancient societies to adapt successfully to catastrophic features of its natural and man-made environment in a sustainable fashion becomes elementary in any attempt to understand change and development.

Catastrophe and destruction play an important role in the archaeological literature and the attempt to correlate material evidence to events mentioned by the ancient sources is always omnipresent. The south part of ancient Thrace, the main passage towards the East, had its own shares of catastrophe, and these were either natural events or human-made destruction. Floods, pandemics, earthquakes, conflicts are beginning to be recognized as key factors within the process of cultural evolution and in the shaping of the environment.

How can this impact be measured in archaeological terms though? How is it reflected in the archaeology of the area? Can the different ways in which societies respond to disasters become the means to understand basic decision-making processes, for instance settlement strategies? The overall aim of this article is to critically examine the role (direct or indirect) of extreme catastrophic events in the area of Aegean Thrace in causing change, reaction, contraction in the settlement strategy of the area during the imperial period.

Roman Army and Conflicts in Thracia, 1st-2nd century AD

Florian Matei-Popescu

No legions were ever garrisoned in the province of Thracia, established in AD 46. Following a short note in Flavius Josephus' *Bellum Iudaicum* (2, 368) mentioning that only 2000 Roman soldiers were deployed in the province of Thracia, one can argue that, alongside the *classis Perinthia* (1000 sailors), a *cohors milliaria* or two *cohortes quingenariae* have had their garrisons there. The information was confirmed by a military diploma, copied after an imperial constitution issued by Domitian in AD 88 (AE 2014, 1654), which listed the soldiers (*equites et pedites*) of the *cohors I milliaria Ituraeorum* (also attested by a Greek inscription, presumably

discovered at Serdica, IGBulg IV 1952) and the *classici* of the *classis Perinthia* (see also the a *trierarchus classis* in a Greek inscription discovered at Perinthus and dated also to AD 88, IGR I 781).

During the second century AD, three *cohortes* were garrisoned in Thracia (AE 2004, 1907; AE 2013, 2188; AE 2014, 1655; RMD V 417, 435, 437, 440-441): *II Lucensium*, *II Mattiacorum* and *I Aelia Athoitarum*, alongside the *classis Perinthia*, which played an important role in the movement of units during the Eastern expeditions of Trajan, Lucius Verus or Caracalla (SHA, Ant. Car. 5, 8-9).

Whenever there were troubles or conflicts, especially with the warlike Thracian tribes, this small army needed reinforcement from the neighbour Moesia (starting with Domitian, Moesia inferior) province. The Moesian army crushed the rebellions of the Thracian tribes of AD 21 and 26, when Thrace was an allied kingdom. It also played an important role when the province was formally established in AD 45-46 (*vexillationes* under Q. Cornelius Valerianus' command, CIL II 3272; 2079 = ILS 2713; see also Tacitus, Ann. 12, 63).

Although it was a *provincia inermis*, in the context of the preparations for Trajan's Parthian expedition, a *legatus Augusti pro praetore* was sent to Thracia, which proved that the province played a key role in the logistics.

During the raids of the Costoboci in AD 170, a procurator, probably of Moesia inferior, L. Iulius Vehilius Gratus, commanded the detachments sent to Achaia and Macedonia against them (CIL VI 31856 = ILS 1327). The detachments crossed the Thracia province, while chasing the invaders.

In AD 175-177, M. Valerius Maximianus was: *adeptus procurationem Moesiae inferioris, eodem in tempore praeposito vexillationibus et at detrahendam Briseorum latronum manum in confinio Macedoniae et Thraciae ab imperatore misso* (AE 1956, 124).

During the civil wars at the beginning of Septimius Severus' reign, L. Fabius Cilo was *praepositus vexillationibus Perinthis peragentibus* (CIL VI 1408 = ILS 1141; SHA, Sev., 8, 6 and 12-13: *Ad orientis statum confirmandum profectus est nihil adhuc de Nigro palam dicens. ... miserat sane legionem, quae Graeciam Thraciamque praeciperet, ne eas Pescennius occuparet, sed iam Byzantium Niger tenebat. Perinthum etiam Niger volens occupare plurimos de exercitu interfecit*; see also SHA, Pesc. Nig. 5, 5-8; Cassius Dio 74, 6, 3 and Herodian 2, 14, 6). The mentioned legion was *I Italica* from Novae and a detachment of the *XI Claudia* legion from Durostorum, under the command of the legate of the first mentioned legion, L. Marius Perpetuus, (CIL VI 1450 = ILS 2935).

It will be the task of my paper to take a closer look at all these actions which underline the important role of the Moesian army, and the part played by the *procuratores* at the head of the detachments sent for specific task in Thrace or in Macedonia.

Archaeological Data on Enemy Attacks in the Roman Colony of Deultum

Lyudmil Vagalinski

Deultum is the oldest Roman city in Bulgaria founded in AD 70 and one of the two Roman colonies (together with Apri) in the province of Thrace.

The results of archaeological excavations carried out since 2003 are presented. The data for enemy attacks refer to the period 2nd-6th century AD. They are mapped with written sources.

The Late-6th and Early-7th-Centuries Slavic and Avar Incursions in the *Dioecesis Thraciarum* According to the Textual Sources

Dominic Moreau

The Slavic and Avar incursions in the Balkans during the late 6th and early 7th centuries are usually considered to be such disturbing events that they brought an end to the ancient Roman civilisation along the central and eastern parts of the Danube. Struck with various major problems both in the West (the Lombard invasion of Italy, which shortly follows the end of the long and difficult Justinian's reconquest) and East (an almost continuous state of war with the Sassanids between 502 and 628 AD), the Empire was unable to find solutions for its then-north-European provinces. Archaeological research seems to corroborate the traditional position, even if scholars are noting more and more, with the specialisation of excavation methods, that the supposed destructions by the Slavs and Avars, as well as the Roman evacuation in the Danubian world were perhaps not as systematic and organised as they have already been presented. Without searching to revolutionise the generally agreed chronology, it still seems interesting, for this conference on the theme of "Conflicts and Catastrophes in Roman and Late Antique Thrace", to reanalyse the whole dossier of textual sources on the above-mentioned incursions, in order to highlight what these documents are really telling us.

SESSION 2

Trouble at the Coast

Rome and Mithridates VI in Southeastern Thrace: Archaeological Evidence of a Conflict?

Ivaylo Lozanov

The present paper aims at discussing the archaeological evidence from a few recently excavated fortified sites of the 2nd - 1st century BC in South East Bulgaria along the Black Sea coast and the adjacent slopes of the Strandzha Mountain. The sites at Sinemorets,

Brodilovo and Pharmakida all follow a relatively modest type of military architecture, implemented as a result of centrally organized control over infrastructurally and economically important areas. One can reasonably connect their existence with the emergence of a regional political power, namely the kingdom of the Thracian Astai. The common pattern of synchronous developments and subsequent cataclysms that led to destruction or temporary disruption at these sites can be interpreted as reflecting relevant processes at central level.

Having reached their *floruit* in the last quarter of the 2nd century and the first decades of the 1st century BC, the fortified sites near Sinemorets, Brodilovo, and Pharmakida (and the list can be expanded with further examples from the region) are seen here in historical perspective as outposts of Rome's Astaeon allies, which suffered a severe blow in the times of greatest offensives of the Pontic fleet and armies in the Mithridatic Wars.

Crises and Natural Phenomena through the Excavation Data at the Western Section of Abdera

Maria Chrysaphi, Kyriaki Chatziprokopiou

The present study aims to link and correlate economic and political crises as well as certain natural phenomena, such as the floods of the Nestos River, with the material remains that have come to light during the excavations conducted at the city of Abdera. In particular, the approach is based mainly on the study of the numismatic material on the one hand, and on the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data on the other, as derived from the study of imported and local pottery and glassware, found in the houses of the western section of Abdera during the Imperial Times.

Deterioration before Transformation. The Southwestern Black Sea Region Under the Principate of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus

Hristo Preshlenov

The study focuses on "stormy" events along the Black Sea coast of Moesia Inferior and Thracia – complicated epidemic conditions, invasions of trans-Danubian tribes, and the depreciation of regional urban bronze emissions.

The plague was transmitted to the European Roman provinces by Roman military units which participated in the Parthian War (AD 161-164). The disease was spread in Odessos, Dionysopolis, Anchialos, Apollonia. In AD 164/165 or 165/166, the oracle in the sanctuary of Apollo Clarius, located in the territory of Colophon, was questioned (to restrict the spread of the plague?) by a gymnasiarch and by a citizen of an archpriest descent from Odessos, by the *archiereus* of the imperial cult of Dionysopolis, as well as by representatives of the *phylai* of Anchialos.

In Apollonia, a local benefactor dedicates (in the temple?) to Apollo Iatros construction and repair works after the suffered disaster (ἔκλιπσις) or damage, caused by the Costoboci in AD 170. A collective coin find, amassed in the vicinity of Odessos on the coastal road from/to Dionysopolis, can be associated with their attacks. Most probably, some of the coastal city fortifications, these of Mesambria, Anchialos, Deultum, Apollonia, have been (re)constructed after those attacks, till AD 184-185. The complication of the situation reflects also the regional coinage. During the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, in Odessos, the “first” nominal lose over half its weight, the “second” – about two-thirds, the “fourth” (corresponding to a Roman *dupondius*) – almost half, and in Anchialos the “fourth” – over half, which practically is a process of devaluation of local coin emissions.

The imperial coinage types of Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus and Commodus in Odessos, and of Commodus (ca. AD 186) in Anchialos, are conventional.

Aegean Thrace and Barbaric Invasions from the Middle-3rd to the End of the 4th C. AD: The Numismatic Data

Marina Tasaklaki

From the beginning of the 3rd century AD onward, the northern border of the empire along the Danube River was constantly violated by barbarian tribes destroying and looting rural areas and cities of the province, reaching as far as Philippopolis in AD 250. One of the major side-effects of those invasions was the change in the monetary image of the province of Thrace. On the one side, the local provincial mints ceased their production – for the cities of Aegean Thrace that pause took place at the beginning of the 3rd century AD and only Maroneia occasionally continued to strike coins under Trebonianus Gallus (AD 251-253). On the other side, the monetary production of the new local imperial mints of Heraclea (Perinthos) and Serdica was launched. Thus, the goal of this presentation is to examine the impact of the barbarian invasions in the southwestern part of the Roman province from the middle of the 3rd century AD until the end of the 4th century AD based on numismatic data.

The main geological feature of Aegean Thrace is the fact that the north is protected by the inaccessible mountain range of the Rhodope. The mountains overlook a separate zone that is safe from the various invaders on the one hand, and isolated from the rest of the province on the other. In particular, the numismatic data leads to stability and moderate but low growth during the 1st and the 2nd centuries AD, while at the same time the rest of the province is prosperous and thriving, due to the fact that the Via Diagonalis/Militaris was used as the principal military road by the Roman army to move from east to north. Thus, within this framework, the study of the numismatic material, whether they are isolated examples from excavations or coin hoards, needs to determine if the presence of the coins is linked, first, to specific historical events during the period between the looting of Philippopolis in 250 AD by the nomadic tribes of the north until the battle of Hadrianopolis in AD 380, and second, by changes in the topography (i.e. reoccupation of sites).

SESSION 3

The Dire Centuries

Roman Conflicts and Blood in AD 238: Presumptive Evidence on Maximinus Thrax

Dilyana Boteva

The four months between March 22nd and July 29th of AD 238 belong to one of the bloodiest periods in the history of the Roman Empire witnessing six *Augusti* (and one *Caesar*), five of them (together with the *Caesar*) met cruel deaths, either in battles or by the hands of the praetorians. Following this bloody turmoil, the sole *Augustus* (proclaimed on 29 July 238) who remained alive was the child emperor Gordian III. Despite being just a twelve or thirteen-years-old, he was supposed to rule without a father at his side the entire Empire.

The initial months of Gordian's rule mark the start of an intriguing phenomenon, attested solely in the provincial coinage of Marcianopolis, Odessos and Dionysopolis, and nowhere else within the vast Empire. I am referring to the coins depicting on the obverse two face-to-face busts, one of them being a God and the other one – Gordian III. All three mints belonged at that moment to Lower Moesia, the province entrusted very shortly after early May 238 to the legate Tullius Menophilus, a senator and former consul, prominent enemy of Gordian's predecessor Maximinus Thrax. Menophilus' participation in the events leading to the assassination of Maximinus is firstly attested during the siege of Aquileia, where he and Rutilius Pudens Crispinus were sent by the senate to organize the defense of this important city, and where the emperor, who took the power in AD 235, found his death.

In my research I am reasoning that Menophilus, while a governor of the province of Lower Moesia already in the turbulent AD 238, invented a way to contribute additional respect for the young *Augustus* by depicting a God as staying fatherly at the side of the child emperor Gordian III. The fact that these coins were minted in the very restricted region between Marcianopolis, Odessos and Dionysopolis is hugely significant. In my opinion, it could help us fix more or less precisely the vividly debated place of origin of Maximinus, referred to as Thrax by the Late antique tradition.

Archaeological Evidence of the Gothic Invasion in Philippopolis

Elena Bozhinova, Varbin Varbanov

The Gothic invasion in Philippopolis is well attested in the archaeological records. Thick burnt destruction layers have been registered in nearly all sites excavated within the fortified area of the ancient city. Two archaeological contexts studied in the course of rescue excavations in the last few years testify to the violent character of the event, namely at the sites at 16 Dr. Valkovich Str. and at 13 Leonardo da Vinci Str.

The site at 16 Dr. Valkovich Str. is situated in the very central part of Philippopolis, at one of its main streets which boasted an honorary arch. Three human skeletons, two of which belong to adult individuals and one to an 8-year-old child, were found on the floor of a building, probably a residential one. The bones were heavily damaged by fire. An iron spearhead was discovered in the child's chest. A bronze statuette with a golden torque was found clutched in the fist of one of the deceased, identified as a young woman. Fourteen silver and bronze coins were unearthed around the skeletons. Among the finds on the floor of the room was a marble votive tablet of the Thracian Horseman.

The site at 13 Leonardo da Vinci Str. is located in the southern part of the lower city. Here an incomplete skeleton of an adult individual was found among the roof debris of a building which probably had a peristyle plan. Close to the skeleton, 594 silver coins and a bronze adornment were found, most of which were placed in a leather bag. The bag's find spot among the roof tiles suggests that it had been hidden in the roof of the building.

Both buildings were never repaired and were left buried under layers of debris.

The paper will also discuss the coin finds dated before AD 250.

Roman Swords and Barbarian Axes: The Cultural Coding of Weapons at the Battle of Adrianople

Amia Davis

Perhaps the most significant turning point in Rome's military history and most quintessential "barbarian" victory over the Romans occurred in Thrace at Adrianople, when Fritigern's Gothic forces overwhelmed Valens' forces and massacred over two-thirds of the Eastern Roman Empire's army. Although there have been no archaeological surveys conducted at Adrianople, since the site is located near a military-restricted zone in Edirne near the Bulgarian-Greek-Turkish border, general studies on Gothic and Germanic weaponry by Michel Kazanski suggest that the Goths' victory was due to an amalgam of short swords, axes, daggers, round shields, and wedge formations used to dominate the Roman army, whose heavy armor and *spathae* were not suitable for the close combat that took place. However, the use of these weapons extends far beyond its military significance in Adrianople and is also a continuation of the narrative of ethnographic "othering" between Rome and the northern tribes. Literary evidence from writers including Ammianus Marcellinus, Zosimus, and Tacitus show that northern tribes were stereotyped and marked based not just on social and religious customs, but also on the weapons they wielded in comparison to the Romans, who believed their weapons to be technologically advanced and superior to others. This paper will explore accounts of the Battle of Adrianople from the perspective of the cultural, social, and ethnographic significance of the weapons and battle tactics of both the Roman and Gothic armies. It will argue that, while archaeological evidence shows that the Gothic forces did use different weapons and armor that may have had a critical impact on the outcome of the battle, literary accounts focused on these differences in order to portray the conflict between the Goths and Romans as not only a contest of power,

but also a contest of culture. Drawing analogies with the contemporary example of the culturally-coded comparison of the Kalashnikov AK assault rifles and the Colt AR assault rifles, the paper looks at the accounts of Battle of Adrianople from Book 31 of Ammianus Marcellinus' *Res Gestae* and Book 4 of Zosimus' *Nova Historia*, to show that their authors had objectives that extended far beyond narrating an episode of armed strife.

SESSION 4

Natural Disasters In and Around Thrace

A Historical-Engineering Insight on Impacts of Vrancea, Romania Earthquakes on Southern Roman Dacia, Danube Limes and Moesia Inferior Constructions

Emil-Sever Georgescu

This paper is an attempt of an archaeoseismologic study. The seismicity of Romania is dominated by the Vrancea source, at the Carpathian Mountains bent. Such earthquakes produce strong shaking in the Eastern and Southern half of Romania and cause transboundary damage at magnitudes over 7, in Northern Bulgaria and in the Republic of Moldova. The March 4, 1977 Vrancea earthquake (Mw 7.4) almost destroyed the Romanian town of Zimnicea and caused the collapse of three high-rise buildings in the Bulgarian town of Svishitov, both of which are located on the Danube's banks.

Scientists are in need of more data from the first millennium AD, as the Romanian Catalogue of earthquakes gives limited historical information, and only since AD 984.

The data sources on earthquake-damaged constructions that existed in Dacia between the Danube and the Carpathian Mountains are scarce, because the ancient local culture and architecture was based on wood-and-earth, while stone was available only near or in the Carpathian mountains. The Roman conquest of Dacia after the 2nd century AD covered mainly the western and central area of present-day Romania (Dacia Superior/Apulensis and Porolissensis) and only the southwestern area, to the north of the Danube (Dacia Inferior / Malvensis), was colonized. Stone was used in some Roman defense *castra*, while other military towers were made of wood-and-earth, along the Limes Alutanus and Limes Transalutanus. There are some data from Bulgarian and Polish archaeologists about traces of earthquake damage in Novae, Sexaginta Prista, Ulpia Oescus and Nicopolis ad Istrum.

Thus, the objectives of this contribution are:

- To evaluate archaeological data and correlate them with possible seismic damage on the Dacia Inferior, Danube Limes and Moesia Inferior/Thrace areas where Roman fortifications and settlements existed;
- To estimate a historical time of seismic event(s) that had consequences on life and resilience in the context of the Roman Empire;

- To trigger interdisciplinary studies.

The Effects of Earthquakes and Tsunamis in Troas Region on the Parion Coin Findings

Vedat Keleş, Kasım Oyarçın

Troas Region is located to the west of a line that stretches from the spring of Aeseos River to the Adramyttium located in the south of Mount Ida and in the region of Biga Peninsula. Troas Region which includes the ancient city of Parion was frequently exposed to earthquakes and tsunami created by them, as a natural result of being located in a seismic belt. Several devastating earthquakes took place in Troas during the Roman Period. Although earthquakes and tsunamis affected Parion in the Early Roman Period, the negative effects were eliminated with intense construction activities in the region, as Parion was a Roman colony. Additionally, as a result of the earthquakes mentioned by Marcellinus, Malalas, Cedrenus, and Theophanes, that took place towards the end of the 4th century and 5th century AD, several cities in the Troas Region were abandoned or transformed into episcopal centers. In the coin finds obtained from the Thermae, the Odeion, the Theater, the Slope Bath, the Northern Walls, and the Agora, where archaeological excavations have been carried out, there is an apparent intensity of earthquakes and tsunamis. In addition to the obvious increase of coin finds, the fact that the oldest coins obtained from the Theater, the Odeion, the Slope Bath, and the Northern Wall excavations belong to the period of earthquakes and tsunamis and most of the structures in the city lost their function towards the end of 5th century, testifies to the devastation that Parion was exposed to due to the earthquakes. Within the scope of this study, evaluations will be made about the destruction that earthquakes and tsunamis brought to the Troas Region at the end of the 4th century and 5th century AD with regard to the coin finds and other archaeological data obtained in the Parion excavations which have been ongoing since 2005.

Der Leuchtturm von Istros

Ulrike Peter, Vladimir F. Stolba

Bekanntermaßen ist ein beträchtlicher Teil der Küste der Dobrudscha und ihrer Meeresplatte seismisch instabil, und es konnte eine Reihe von Erdbeben nachgewiesen werden.

In dem Vortrag soll ein unter Elagabal und Severus Alexander in Istros geprägter Münztyp vorgestellt werden, der zusammen mit weiteren Zeugnissen, wie der Widmung eines Priesters des Poseidon Helikonios an den Gott und archäologischen Spuren, ein mögliches Echo auf die Folgen der Naturkatastrophen der Zeit darstellt.

Earthquakes and Epidemics in Southeastern Thrace in Roman and Late Antique Times

Mustafa H. Sayar

A number of earthquakes and tsunamis in Southeastern Thrace and on the Thracian Chersonesos during the Roman Period and Late Antiquity have been registered by ancient sources. Especially the northern shores of the Propontis and the Thracian Chersonesos were affected by the fault in the Propontis. The aim of this contribution is to present the earthquakes that took place between the 1st and the 6th century AD in Southeastern Thrace and the area of the Thracian Chersonesos. Furthermore, examples will be provided regarding the impact of these earthquakes on the demographic situation in the cities of the region, throughout the epidemics and migration caused by the conflicts between the indigenous population groups.

SESSION 5

The Aftermath

Rendezvous mit dem Tod. Auseinandersetzung mit dem Lebensende in den griechischen Grabinschriften aus Thrakien

Dobriela Kotova

Fokus der Untersuchung sind die aussagekräftigen Inschriften: die vergleichsweise sehr kleine Anzahl der oft formelhaften, selten auch persönlicher und origineller ausformulierten Äußerungen zum Gesicht des Todes, zu Lebenskurze und Vergänglichkeit.

Neben den verallgemeinernden, topischen Aussagen geht es auch darum, die einzelnen Stimmen, die eigenen kleinen Geschichten zu hören: diese könnten uns von den Vorstellungen vom Ende und der Wahrnehmung des Todes innerhalb einer Gesellschaft erzählen, die angesichts hoher Mortalität und Allgegenwart des plötzlichen Sterbens, ständiger Bedrohung durch Risiken, Krisen, Nahrungsmangel, Seuchen und Infektionen in enger Vertrautheit mit dem Tod lebte.

Wie wird der Tod eines Angehörigen aber auch der eigene angenommen? Wird er, besonders der frühe, als persönliche Krise / Katastrophe betrachtet? Was bedeutet das Erwähnen / Nichterwähnen der Todesursache? Was wird bedauert und wie wird es betrauert? Das alles sind Fragen, auf welche sich die Analyse weiterhin konzentriert.

Auch die in den Inschriften wahrzunehmende Sorge um die persönliche Unsterblichkeit in Form der Erinnerung durch die Lebenden, die Funktion der Gräber als ewige Träger dieser Erinnerung und wahrhaft religiöser Orte sind aufschlussreiche Indizien für den Umgang der antiken Menschen mit dem Tod. Des Weiteren spiegeln diese Aspekte der Inschriften gesellschaftliche Unterschiede wieder.

Severan Policies of Conflict Mitigation in Post-Civil War Thrace

Milena Raycheva

Amid a deepening political crisis, the civil war between Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger was especially destructive for the eastern part of the Empire. Fought in Thrace, Asia Minor and Syria, the conflict brought suffering to many cities, notably Byzantion, Nicaea, Antioch, and many others who took the “wrong” side.

Emerging victorious by 197, Septimius Severus had the urgent task to consolidate his newly acquired power. At the same time, he had to alleviate the consequences of the war and restore economic order as much as possible. This was achieved through a blend of penalties – from tearing down city walls to imposing financial fines – interlaced with acts of clemency, such as rebuilding programs, rehabilitation grants and special visits. Written sources tell us that, while Severus conducted some of these activities himself, his son Caracalla saw the completion of others, thus forging a new dynastic imperial ideology that sought stability and continuity.

Thrace, involved firsthand in the conflict, provides a good example of these complex policies, as it contains both Severus’ headquarters Perinthos and the territory of Byzantion, the humiliated supporter of Pescennius. The paper examines the rich evidence from the province in order to explore the ways father and son carried out acts of punishment and pardon, as well as the responses of the cities in the aftermath of the crisis.

Disaster and Aftermath: The Epigraphic Record from Thrace

Nicolay Sharankov

The paper examines inscriptions from the third and early fourth centuries AD – some of them unpublished – attesting the consequences of the barbarian invasions into the Balkans. Among them, most numerous are the dedications by individuals or groups of people saved from enemy attacks or rescued from captivity. For example, a recently found inscription from Philippopolis was dedicated in the beginning of Valerian’s and Gallienus’ reign by all the surviving members of a Dionysiac association (οἱ διασωθέντες μύσται); another one, from Serdica, was made by a woman saved from captivity in ‘Sarmatia’ (ἐκ Σαρμαθίας). On the contrary, funerary inscriptions explicitly referring to barbarian attacks are relatively scarce. The second large group comprises honorary inscriptions for Roman emperors, military commanders or civil officials who helped the local communities to repel the invaders or to cope with the damage inflicted by the enemy. Far less numerous are the building inscriptions connected with reconstruction or repair of particular buildings destroyed or plundered in military conflicts.

The Impact of the Gothic Wars (376-378 AD) on Thrace

Ivo Topalilov

After the battle near Hadrianopolis on August 9th, 378 CE, Thrace was left at the mercy of the Goths. The defeat of the Romans threw the Balkans into chaos, as the Roman state was likened to a bleeding man lying down near the road, neither alive nor dead. It was believed that the end of the world was coming. This impact on life in Thrace may also be detected in archaeological perspective. The main goal of this presentation is to discuss some examples that provide case-studies on the topic, such as, for example, the impact of the wars on urban topography, iconography, and extramural sanctuaries.

POSTER SESSION

Fire By the River Beyond the Mountains. Times of Prosperity and Times of Trouble in Roman Almus

Julij Emilov, Vladislav Jivkov, Valeri Stoichkov

The aim of the poster is to provide insight into the evidence on conflicts, catastrophes, and site transformation in a 2nd and 3rd century point of Roman control, in the northern neighboring province of Thrace.

Archaeological record in Almus is dominated by signs of destruction – both ancient and modern. Multiple activities left their marks on the hill, located by the river Almus (nowadays Lom) and by the Danube. Late Roman fortification campaigns (4th century AD), Late Antique and Mediaeval occupation, Late Ottoman urbanization, as well as construction of Late Socialist “panelki” correspond to major changes in the history of the settlement.

In spite of all these later “disturbances”, preserved areas and levels of Roman period reveal a story of a Roman fort, which ceased to exist sometime in the turmoil of the early 2nd century. Sand layer covering old debris indicates fresh restart of habitation activities during the next decades of the 2nd until the 3rd century AD debris indicates fresh restart of habitation activities during the next decades of the 2nd century AD.

The Antonine times of change and prosperity in the Eastern Balkans came to Almus too. An ample building with plaster wall decoration took the place of Flavian period *contubernia* barracks. Finds of fine pottery and lead *exagia* suggest a glimpse at the lifestyle, status and probable occupation of the inhabitants until the middle of the 3rd century AD.

The economic trajectory of the Antonine and Severan times came to an abrupt end when fire swept through the place. Burned tiles of the collapsed roofs covered the western slope of the hill. Several coin hoards in the area suggest security problems with incomers from the lands beyond the big river. This local catastrophe is followed by initiative of massive fortification in Constantine times. Resilience measures gain priority in the times of trouble and Almus

became again a strong point on the hill, guarding the access to the plains, to the mountain passes and to the rich of loot lands beyond.

Coins, Crisis and Prosperity: The Local Mints of Thrace During the Antonines

Bianca Vassileva

The poster examines the city mints of the Roman province of Thrace during the Antonine period (138-192 AD), and how various disasters, such as the epidemics, economic problems and armed conflicts were reflected in the province's coinage. In addition to the various new reverse types, associated with the more traumatic events of the period, and the responses to them, the focus will be mostly on the observed hiatus during the early reign of Marcus Aurelius. Many cities in different parts of the province, including its main city Perinthos, exhibit a temporary halt in their coin production, while other cities like Philippopolis seem to flourish based on their coin mints. An attempt will be made to systemize the available data and perhaps trace the relationship between the coin mints' activity and the events, befalling the province during the perceived hiatus.

Some Observations on the Last Architectural Layout of the Porticos of the Agora in Philippopolis

Plamena Georgieva

In AD 251 Philippopolis faced destruction after the Goths captured the city. In the following decades, the city's central square, the agora, underwent its final reconstruction before losing its public functions. Today the remains of the architectural decoration of the complex are still controversial, although the archaeological research of the site, which began almost 50 years ago, continues to this day.

The poster focuses on the architectural elements of the porticos surrounding the area, which belong to the last construction phase of the agora. The latter is characterized by the use of ornaments from different chronological periods, as well as the use of details in places that contradict their purpose. Although, there have been two attempts over the years to graphically restore the porticos, little is known about these elements. The aim of this study is to review the previous reconstructions of the portico's architectural order and to research to what extent can we attempt to reconstruct the built environment after centuries of construction, collapse and reuse of architectural elements.

The Fate of Thermae/Baths in Late Antique Thrace: Augusta Traiana and Serdica

Alexander Ivanov

Late Antiquity saw a gradual change of the way of life in the ancient cities. During this period, the cities experienced a number of upheavals related to plague epidemics, earthquakes, barbarian invasions, disrupted communication routes and the rise of a new religion – Christianity. Gradually, the large baths, which were part of the representative urban architecture, would disappear, and the landscape would be dominated by ecclesiastic architecture. The poster examines whether the baths were destroyed as a result of a religious conflict and if this led to a cultural decline.

Pagans perceived the Christians as an “infection” that had to be cleansed. For Christians, spiritual purity was more important than bodily purity. The Edict of Thessalonica, issued by Emperor Theodosius I in AD 380, imposed Christianity as the official religion, condemned the other cults and prohibited the visiting of pagan temples. John Chrysostom said that in AD 387 the public baths in Antioch, where water deities had been worshiped, were closed by order of Theodosius I. Was there a pattern of catastrophe then, since baths in Augusta Traiana and Serdica were turned into churches? Are there enough such cases to give grounds to claim that these came as a result of a conflict? Are these monuments properly published? Was there a deliberate eradication of the ancient way of life caused by a conflict, or was there a change in the funds flow? Is it possible to establish when the baths disappeared in Late Antiquity? Can parallels be found in other parts of the Empire, or are there any regional specifics?

Observations on the Early Byzantine East-Balkan Fortification Wall

Todor Marvakov, Konstantin Gospodinov, Martin Gyuzelev

The focus of this contribution is based on our knowledge of Early Byzantine fortification available so far: literary sources, modern historiographical analyses and field archaeological surveys. The present poster considers the questions of the role of this sector among the entire Balkan fortification system of the East Roman Empire and its strategical significance. The different building materials and techniques used will be considered too. Our conclusions present the latest achievements on this topic so far, while the work is still ongoing.

Cabyle and the Gothic Wars of Emperor Valens (Based on the Results of Sector V Archeological Studies)

Ivan Valchev, Philip Kolev

Recent archeological studies in sector V of the ancient town of Cabyle have provided new information about its history during the Late Roman period. In the central part of the site, two buildings and a street between them have been uncovered. The street runs in south-

north direction. Building A, whose longitudinal axis is oriented north-south, is situated west of the street, while Building B is located just east of it. Only the northwestern part of Building B has been excavated. Both buildings and the street were constructed in the second quarter of the 4th century. The significant quantity of bronze coins (over 700), as well as three collective coin finds, suggest possible commercial functions of the buildings. The end of their operation is associated with a fire dated to the reign of Emperor Valens. The proposed date is based on the latest coins, found under the collapsed roofs of the buildings. A spearhead and several arrowheads were found in the destruction layers. An interesting find is a bronze bow fibula, characteristic to the lands north of the Danube River. The destruction in question could be linked to the Goths of Fritigern, who, as Ammianus Marcellinus reports, retreated to Cabyle in the course of the war with Valens in AD 377-378.

Specificities of the Fortification System of Philippopolis During the Early Byzantine Era (5th-6th c. AD)

Maya Martinova-Kyutova, Galina Pirovska

The attacks of the Huns in Thrace of the mid-5th c. AD reached Philippopolis. This imposed the strengthening and reconstruction of the fortification system of the city. An inner fortification ring of Philippopolis was built in the 5-6th c. AD, which encompassed the three hills. The early Byzantine fortress wall consisted of a newly built sector along the eastern slopes of the three hills and of another one, which strengthened the sector dating from the 2nd-4th c. AD, running on the western slopes. The construction technique used was *opus mixtum*.

The authors present the results of the recent archaeological surveys and outline the topographical parameters of the fortified sites, the technical parameters of the fortress wall, and the shape of the towers.

A 3-D reconstruction of the complex "Round tower with a *proteichisma*" is offered.