

Early Byzantine Fortresses in Bulgaria and its Neighbouring Territories (In the Dioceses of *Thracia* and *Dacia*)

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(Summary)

Introduction

In the Early Byzantine Period (EBP; 395-610) there is a large number of sites in the dioceses of *Thracia* and *Dacia* that in contemporary sources are referred to as *castella*, φρούρια, ὄχυράματα, or with other terms similar in meaning, i.e. fortresses, fortified areas. Today local inhabitants call their remains “cetăți”, “gradishta”, “gradini” (sometimes also “gradove”), “kaleta”, “hisari” – terms of Romanian, Slavic or Turkish origin with the same meaning as the above mentioned. These fortresses are the subject of the current research. The study does not cover the city and the city-type centres that in the sources are referred to as *civitates*, πόλεις, etc.

The criteria that can determine and differentiate the types of fortresses of the EBP are based on their structural characteristics. A characteristic feature of the structure of a settlement is the complex of households of its inhabitants. A major building element in the structure of a military garrison is the barracks. The presence of a limited military garrison in a fortified settlement, or of a limited in number non-military population in a military fortress, will certainly not change the definition of the site. A refuge shelter is not used constantly and thus it does not have a very developed structure. Isolated Christian sites as well as estate centres have specific structures.

Precise identification and a structural characteristic can only be based on a thorough archaeological research. For this reason, the current work focuses primarily on excavated fortresses or such with at least several trenches.

I. The Fortified Settlements

I.1. Distribution, classification, location

Fortified settlements are the major part of the *castella* and φρούρια in *Thracia* and *Dacia* areas during the 5th – 6th c. They can be classified in two basic groups: fortified semi-urban settlements (with protected area of minimum 1 ha); and fortified villages (with protected area of up to 1 ha). Both types are widely represented. However, while the number of the first type of settlements increases gradually from the end of the 4th c. and the beginning of the 5th c. onwards, the second type of settlements are still limited in number in the beginning of the EBP, but they increase dramatically by the end of the 5th c. and the first half of the 6th c.

Fortified settlements emerged in two ways: by structural transformations of sites of initially different functions, and by intentional construction of fortified settlements. During the 5th - 6th c. the number of the original fortified settlements prevails. Most of them are located in areas that were not so convenient for dwelling, but were easy to defend. It is the easy access to some of the fortified settlements that emerged before the end of the 4th c., i.e. № 16 (*Castra Martis* ?), № 54 (*Discoduraterae*) and № 43¹ – that lead to their abandonment about the middle of the 5th c. or even earlier.

I.2. Public buildings of the fortified settlements

The characteristics of the fortification systems are related to the size and the significance of the respective settlements. Fortifications built with dry walling or with mud solution filling are more frequent in the smaller EBP settlements. Similar fortifications also protect larger settlements, i.e. № 33 (fig. 31), № 57 and № 110. Both mortar filling as well as dry walling were used in the construction of the fortifications of № 67 where a graphite inscription with the name of Anastasius I was found. However, most of the semi-urban, as well as part of the smaller fortified settlements, have solid fortification installations. Some settlements, which have developed over earlier military camps, inherited their strong fortification systems. Those functioned, with no major modifications but periodic maintenance, by the end of the 6th c. – the beginning of the 7th c. This is the case with № 2 (*Castrum Novae*), № 14 (*Timacum Minus*), № 55 (*Iatrus*) (fig. 6 and 7), № 79 (*Dinogetia*) (fig. 11). Other earlier fortresses show more innovations. For example, new corner towers were erected in № 4 (*Smorna*) and in № 6 (*Taliata*) (fig. 12), and outer defence walls were added to № 53 (fig. 19) and to № 107 (fig. 22). The new fortress wall from the 6th c. at the accessible southern side of № 71 impresses with the fact that for its length of 220 m it is supplied with about ten towers with a U-form or a pentagonal plan (fig. 20). The fortification of the most fortified settlements originating from the EBP follow the new tendencies. For example, the major innovation of the early EBP - the outer defence walls (*proteichismata*) - are found in № 18 (fig. 25) and № 56, which originate in this period. Pentagonal towers with a projected fringe that are characteristic for the fortification construction at the end of the 5th – 6th c., are discovered at № 10 (fig. 40), № 25 (fig. 29), № 48 (fig. 34), № 61 (fig. 52), № 91 (fig. 35) dated to that period.

Additional defences are often built adjacent to the major settlement fortresses at the time of their construction or later. In some cases these are later fortified extensions required by the increase of the population as is in № 95 (*Mezideva*) (fig. 24). In other cases, the additional defences have specific functions and are usually contemporary to the main fortress as in № 18 (fig. 25), № 24 (fig. 27), № 25 (fig. 29). Some settlements have outside defences that protect considerable areas. In its more sophisticated form the outside defence is a solid fortress which includes the main one – as is № 91, or is adjacent to it as is № 73 (*Adina* ?). The specific topography often requires specific solutions for the fortification of a settlement. For example, № 97 (*Carassura*) has two synchronous and commensurable neighbouring fortresses (fig. 23).

Generally, the overview of the planning of EBP fortified settlements looks quite chaotic. Streets are narrow and relatively short passages, limited on the sides just by the buildings and have no additional design. However, there are also longer and wider main streets that lead to the gates of the fortress naturally continuing the outside roads (fig. 6, 7, 11, 19, 20, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33). Specific facilities are often discovered, such with communication functions, combined sometimes with water-supply, and/or defence functions. Examples are the passages and stairs cut in the rocks at № 30, № 49, № 74 and № 76, the “passage cave” at № 112, the vertical shafts at № 73 and № 84, which provide access to the local source of water as well as to the surrounding areas (fig. 13 and 14), the brickwork tunnel leading to the near by river at № 108 and a similar one, that was cut in the rocks, at № 31.

Part of the larger fortified settlements were supplied with water by outside water catchments and water-mains as at № 20 (*Almus*), № 94, № 96, № 105 (*Cabyle*), № 107

¹ Here and in the following text “№...” shows the number of the site in Appendix I, where data about its location and characteristics is presented in a table. The site is referred to with the same number on the map at fig.1 and eventually on the maps at fig.2 – fig.5 in Appendix II.

(fig. 21 and 22). Among the smaller settlements that have outside water catchments and water-mains are № 36 and № 70. Those water-supply facilities are dated before the end of the 4th c., at the end of the 4th c. and the first half of the 5th c., or are still to be dated. During the EBP, especially at the end of the 5th – 6th c., reservoirs for the collection of atmospheric water, as well as portable containers, were introduced. This development was adequate to the terrain of the new fortified settlements. Reservoirs cut in the rocks or masonry built ones are found in № 18, № 26, № 28, № 30, № 64, № 66, № 74, № 76, № 91, № 92, № 93. Some of these facilities are situated within the fortress towers – at № 26 and № 64. Similarly, the outside water-main at № 96 is connected to a water reservoir in the fortress tower. In some cases the reservoirs are connected to wells, as at № 66. In the 6th c. water was supplied to № 22 (*Sucidava*) by a connection to a “secret” well, located outside of the protected area, that was accessed through a tunnel running under the fortress wall. Here I have to note the water supply functions of the tunnels at № 31 and № 108, and of the shafts at № 73 and № 84 (fig. 14).

During the EBP the administration centres in the settlements’ structures were the residences of the imperial officials, military commanders and/or high-ranking clergymen. Such residences (*praetoria*) were established mainly in the semi-urban fortified settlements. In some cases they had been constructed earlier, but continued to function during the 5th c. Examples are the *praetorium* at № 55 (*Iatrus*) (fig. 6 and 41), the solid “*domus*” at № 79 (*Dinogetia*) (fig. 11 and 42), the building with the single-apse hall at № 82 (*Ulmetum*), the large representative complex at № 47 (*Storgosia*), the building with a decorated pool and a colonnade at № 107 (fig. 22). Residences of secular and/or clergy “officials”, built about or after the beginning of the 5th c., are studied at № 7 (fig. 26 and fig. 45), № 18 (fig. 25), № 22 (*Sucidava*), № 88 (fig. 16 and 44), № 89 (*Bizone*), № 91 (fig. 35 and 43), № 106. It is noticeable, that while the *praetoria* built in the 4th c. still carry the traditions of the classical peristyle building, in the above mentioned administration and residential buildings dated to 5th – 6th c., these traditions have already disappeared.

In the beginning of the 5th c. some of the earlier centres i.e. № 14 (*Timacum Minus*), № 55 (*Iatrus*) (fig. 6) and № 79 (*Dinogetia*), receive, as a part of their Late Roman heritage, public baths, but they operated no later than the middle of the 5th c.

Intensive construction of cult centres of Christianity begins early in the 5th c. in *Thracia* and *Dacia* following a tendency to establish these centres’ dominant position in the structure of the settlements. This is best illustrated in the earlier fortified semi-urban settlements. So, at the cult centres of № 55 (*Iatrus*), № 71 and № 102, each next basilica is larger and more representative. At 5th – 6th c. the Christian buildings are obligatory and dominant in the structure of every larger settlement (fig. 6, 11-13, 15, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25-28, 30-34, 40). A second building of Christian cult is discovered in many semi-urban fortified settlements – for example at № 18 (fig. 25), № 29, № 34, № 47 (*Storgosia*), № 57, № 62 (fig. 33), № 71 (fig. 20), № 81 (*Argamum*) (fig. 32), № 97 (*Carassura*) (fig. 23), № 105 (*Cabyle*), № 107 (fig. 21 and 22). In some cases this is a necropolis church like in № 15 and № 53 (fig. 19). Site № 7 is exceptional with its construction of cult buildings, as a total of five churches from the 6th c. (fig. 26) are discovered in its area, in the suburbs and the necropolis. The buildings of Christian cult are dominant in the smaller fortified settlements as well. In some cases, even when the fortress is of dry walling or with mud solution filling, the cult buildings are the only ones in the settlement constructed with mortar – for example at № 101 and № 104. Some of the smaller fortified settlements also have two cult buildings – for example № 24 (fig. 27 and 28) and № 101.

The buildings of Christian cult demonstrate the active role of the Church in the life of most of the fortified settlements during the EBP. We can assume that the social

role of the Church in the fortified settlements was quite similar despite the differences in the legal status of their inhabitants. The intensive construction of representative cult buildings also reveals the desire of the local population to establish their settlement, as during the EBP it was the Church that ensured the administrative privileges of the settlement.

The presence of buildings for the guards situated near the gates or near other important parts of the fortresses is very natural and expected for the fortified settlements (fig. 12, 15, 18, 20, 24, 32, 36, 37, 38, 93). Buildings with “military purposes” with considerable size and/or solid construction are discovered in some fortified settlements of a larger scale – for example № 18 (fig. 25), № 60 (fig. 51), № 88 (fig. 18), № 35 (*Kratiskara*) (fig. 36 and 50), at № 107 (fig. 22). These barracks suggest the presence of limited military garrisons. It is only in some semi-urban fortified settlements – № 16 (*Castra Martis* ?) (fig. 77), № 20 (*Almus*), № 44 (*Germania*), № 55 (*Iatrus*) (fig. 6 and 49) that architecture suggests considerable presence of regular military. These are centres with identical development – they are military camps of earlier origin, which transformation to settlement structures begins before the end of the 4th c. The using of the barracks situated there no pass the middle of the 5th c.

Large storages for grain are discovered in semi-urban fortified settlements as № 6 (*Taliata*) (fig. 12 and 58), № 44 (*Germania*), № 47 (*Storgosia*), № 55 (*Iatrus*) (fig. 6, 54, 55), № 56 (fig. 56), № 71 (fig. 20 and 59). Most of these *horrea* are dated early within the EBP, and the largest among them - in *Storgosia* and *Iatrus* (Sector “I”), were constructed as early as the 4th c. Still some of them have been abandoned well before the end of the 6th c. Storage buildings of a smaller size and different construction are found in other settlements – for example № 32, № 35 (*Kratiskara*) (fig. 36 and 57), № 89 (*Bizone*), № 100 (fig. 37). About the end of the 5th c. grain was stored also in fortress towers – for example at № 24, № 97 (*Carassura*), № 107. An interesting method for storing grain in a large number of *dolia* buried in an open area outside the fortress walls is registered at the end of 5th – 6th c. in some fortified settlements in the province of *Scythia* – № 85 (*Carea* ?) (fig. 38), № 86, № 88 (fig. 17). It is possible that the positioning of the *dolia* had also some defence functions.

Data about the crafts in the fortified settlements provides evidence for the development of self-sufficient economy. Production of pottery is registered at № 12 (*Transdrobeta/Pontes*), № 55 (*Iatrus*), № 68 (*Cynton* ?), at № 91, in № 105 (*Cabyle*). Inventory of a workshop for pottery lamps and lids was found in a tower at № 77 (*Cranea*). A production centre for building ceramics is localized at № 48 (fig. 34). Glass was produced in some of the more significant fortified settlements – for example at № 53 (fig. 19 and 60) and № 107 (fig. 22). There is plenty of evidence for iron works. Equipment and material, dated primarily to the end of the 5th – 6th c., are found at № 1 (fig. 10), № 4 (*Smorna*), № 6 (*Taliata*) (fig. 12), № 7 (fig. 26 and 63), № 9, № 14 (*Timacum Minus*), № 24, № 25 (fig. 29), № 49, № 53 (fig. 19 and 61), № 71 (fig. 20 and 62), № 69 (*Candidiana*), № 79 (*Dinogetia*), № 104. During the EBP there are fortified settlements in *Thracia* and *Dacia* which population was entirely occupied with ore output and metallurgy – for example № 17 and № 110.

I.3. The household buildings of the fortified settlements

The known households of the fortified settlements in *Thracia* and *Dacia* are mainly buildings of one or two rooms (fig. 6-12, 18-20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29-31, 35, 38, 68, 70, 73, 75, 76) that often have a second storey. Some of the households have limited yard areas – for example at № 53 (fig. 19 and 71). In some cases a household consists of two one- or two-room buildings situated close to each other – for example № 25 (fig. 27) and № 33

(fig. 31). However, it is more common that household constructions are compact complexes of rooms arranged in chains. Such households are discovered at № 25 (fig. 29), № 26, № 35 (*Kratiskara*) (fig. 36), № 71 (fig. 20), № 94, № 95 (*Mezideva*) (fig. 24), № 97 (*Carassura*) (fig. 23), № 102, № 105 (*Cabyle*), № 107 (fig. 22). Two or more households are also found in a compact position within the framework of earlier and more significant buildings – as at № 22 (*Sucidava*), № 44 (*Germania*), № 55 (*Iatrus*) (fig. 67), № 88 (fig. 18 and 72), № 105 (*Cabyle*). The compact position of the households is increasingly used in the course of the 5th – 6th c.

The household buildings of the fortified settlements are mainly with stone-mudbricks constructions (the foundations and the lower parts of the walls are built of stone congested with clay or mud, and the higher parts of the walls with mudbricks) or were frame-built (with walls of wooden beams, wattle and clay daub). The good quality of the stone-mudbricks construction allows to erect larger buildings with an upper storey. In areas where easy-to-cut stone was available the walls of the buildings are made entirely of stone. Roofs were covered with ceramic or stone tiles, or with reed and thatch. The rooms for dwelling were heated by open or oven-like (rarely) hearths.

A decline in the quality of household buildings construction is characteristic for the development of the fortified settlements in the bordering provinces of *Thracia* and *Dacia* at the end of 5th - 6th c. This conclusion is grounded on the research of № 1 (fig. 10 and 75), № 2 (*Castrum Novae*), № 3 (*Ad Scorfulas* ?), № 4 (*Smorna*), № 6 (*Taliata*), № 10, № 12 (*Transdrobeta/Pontes*), № 20 (*Almus*), № 22 (*Sucidava*), № 23, № 24 (fig. 27 and 69), № 25 (fig. 29), № 27 (fig. 91), № 51 (fig. 30), № 53 (fig. 71 and 73), № 55 (*Iatrus*) (fig. 7), № 56 (fig. 76), № 58, № 68 (*Cynton* ?), № 69 (*Candidiana*), № 71 (fig. 20 and 70), № 78, № 79 (*Dinogetia*), № 88 (fig. 18 and 72). However, until the end of the 6th c. there are no major changes in the household construction in the inner provinces, as is confirmed by the study of № 35 (*Kratiskara*) (fig. 36), № 39, № 44 (*Germania*), № 97 (*Carassura*) (fig. 23), № 91 (fig. 35), № 94, № 95 (*Mezideva*) (fig. 24), № 102, № 107 (fig. 22). These regional characteristics are related to the stronger “barbarization” of the border provinces at the end of 5th - 6th c.

In the fortified settlements there are household buildings that stand out from the rest and have a different construction, planning, size and/or number of rooms – for example, the individual “residential-farm” complexes from the end of the 4th c. and the beginning of the 5th c. at № 55 (*Iatrus*) (fig. 6 and 66), the household buildings from the end of the 5th – 6th c. near the church at № 51 (fig. 30), or the so called house of Nestor from 6th c. at № 24 (fig. 27 and 74). Obviously, these houses belonged to families with a higher economic standing. However, archaeological data does not confirm considerable social stratification of the population of these settlements.

I.4. Conclusion

The middle of the 6th c. marks the culmination of the development of fortified settlements in *Thracia* and *Dacia* – in terms of number of settlement units, and the processes and tendencies determining their structure. Such settlements are well known in other parts of the Empire as well (for example fig. 96). However, their number in *Thracia* and *Dacia* prevails because of the geopolitical realities during the EBP.

II. The Military fortresses

II.1. Known military fortresses

In *Thracia* and *Dacia* the transformation of the majority of the Roman and Late Roman military fortresses into settlements is completed in the first half of the 5th c.

Some of them have even been abandoned at the time – as was the quadriburg at № 16 (*Castra Martis* ?) (fig. 77). One of the few exceptions is № 99 that still keeps its military character during the 6th c. (fig. 78). It is not clear yet for how long after the end of the 4th c. the military buildings at № 19 (*Montana*) (fig. 79) had functioned.

There are no grounds to question the military functions for the fortresses along the so called East-Balkan Defence Line (fig. 4), initiated in the period 4th -5th c. One can hardly doubt the military character of № 75 (Πυλαί του Αίμου ?) (fig. 82). However, these fortresses have not been archaeologically researched. There is no precise dating in the EBP yet for the partially studied quadriburg № 65, neither for the completely researched fortress № 40 (fig. 84). Fortress № 41 near *Pautalia* (fig. 80) may be with an initial date during the 5th c. This is the largest military fortress in this study (fig. 81).

There is no doubt that the construction of new fortresses during the 6th c. in the area of Zhelezni vrata (Iron Gates) (fig. 2), including № 3 (*Ad Scorfulas* ?) (fig. 39) and № 10 (fig. 40), as well as other fortresses on the Danube river, including № 68 (*Cynton* ?) was initiated by the imperial administration. However, no regular army was stationed in these fortresses. The military functions claimed to some of the Black Sea fortresses during the 6th c. – as № 83 and № 85 (*Carea* ?) (№ 85), are not confirmed yet either.

The strictly military character of the small fortresses along the Long Walls (fig. 5) is beyond any doubt – for example № 113, № 114, № 115 and № 116 (fig. 83), although their structure is yet unknown.

Site № 103 was established about the end of the 5th c. – beginning of the 6th c. This fortress had a permanent, however limited military garrison (fig. 85). The chronology and characteristics of № 72 are similar. A staircase, cut in the steep rocky hill, connects this fortress to a cave spring, as well as to other structures at the bottom of the hill (fig. 86 and 87). Fortress № 111 had also a small garrison or a limited number of militarized population. One of the undoubtedly military fortresses in *Thracia* – № 63, was built about or after the end of the 5th c. and had protected a pass in the Eastern Stara Planina mountain (fig. 88).

The small fortress № 45 (*Stenes* ?) was probably built during the first half of the 6th c. It protected the *Succi* pass on the border between *Dacia* and *Thracia*. It is supplied with impressive fortification equipment. What is now left within its area is an arcade, copying the configuration of the curtains (fig. 89). This fortress is a real masterpiece of fortification construction.

II.2. Generalization

The military fortresses in *Thracia* and *Dacia* during the EBP are not many. Most of them are small – with an area of up to 1 ha. Their fortification equipment is solid and possesses the tactical and technical qualities to ensure effective defence. In most cases water was supplied from reservoirs without water pipe. Christian cult architecture is not available or is represented by very modest buildings. Military barracks dominate the area and are usually situated near the gates. Barracks in the military fortresses do not differ from those in the contemporary settlements. The barracks were two-storey buildings, situated immediately next to the fortification walls. The second floors were inhabited and the ground floors were used for storage space, workshops or stables. The architectural design, by an arcade, of the habitation-and-ancillary facilities complex of the garrison at № 45 (*Stenes* ?) has precedents in the local Late Roman military construction – at № 11 (*Drobeta*), in the quadriburg of № 16 (*Castra Martis* ?) (fig. 77), at № 22 (*Sucidava*). Military fortresses of the EBP are also characterized by areas free of any construction. In fortresses with an area of up to 0.2 ha this design has tactical grounds. In larger fortresses we can assume strategic

reasons – for example using this free area for a temporary base of military forces usually stationed elsewhere, or for a refuge shelter for the population in case of danger. So far it can not be evaluated to what extent the military fortresses with predominant clear areas are a specific local phenomenon (fig. 97 shows a parallel outside the Balkan region).

Presently, it is only the incomplete data from № 41 that reveals a denser and planned building construction. Other characteristics of the fortress, along with its larger area (2.17 ha) and its proximity to a big urban settlement (fig. 80), are the situation of the barracks, the presence of a larger Christian basilica, of a public bath and an outside water-main (fig. 81). Well planned and densely built areas are found, for example, in some North African military fortresses from the 6th c. (fig. 98 and 99).

II.3. The military doctrine of the Empire for the defence of the Balkans during the Early Byzantine Period

The key to understanding the change in the imperial military doctrine is the differentiation between the militarized population (*foederati*, successors of the *limitanei*, participants in various local militia forces) on the one hand, and the regular army (*comitatenses*) on the other, as well as between the fortified settlements and the military fortresses. The transition of the militarized population and its fortified settlements into a major factor, and respectively – the decreasing importance of the regular armed forces in the defence of the borders of the Balkan provinces is the essential change in the imperial military doctrine during the EBP.

However, the sources about the political situation in the Lower Danube area during the 6th c. reveal a process of disintegration between the local militarized population and the imperial administration.

During the 5th - 6th c. regular armed forces in *Thracia* and *Dacia* are smaller in numbers compared to the previous centuries. The known military fortresses are mainly on the important roads and passes, and are away from the Danube border. There is a concentration of the military fortresses in Eastern Stara Planina mountain close to the shortest roads leading from the Lower Danube to *Constantinopolis*. An uninterrupted defence line (fig. 4) runs in the most Eastern segment of Stara Planina mountain (*Hae-mus*). A second defence line, the so called Long Walls or Anastasian Wall runs 60 km before *Constantinopolis* (fig. 5). There was good defence at the *Succi* pass – the most important point along the inner border between the two dioceses, as well as at the Galipol Peninsula.

The reason for the relatively small number and the small size of the military fortresses during the EBP is also the fact that the most considerable military parts of the time were stationed in the most significant settlements centres – the urban ones. With the exception of *Pautalia* where a large part of the garrison was stationed in a separate fortress – № 41 (fig. 80 and 81), the rest of the urban garrisons are located in the main fortresses.

III. Other types of fortresses

III.1. Fortified shelters

Separate fortified shelters were used in *Thracia* and *Dacia* during the EBP in addition to the shelters at the fortified settlements or the military fortifications with shelter functions. They provided temporary shelter for population that permanently lived elsewhere. As these sites were not used regularly the resources and effort for their maintenance was limited to the minimum. Their fortifications have weak constructions and lack additional installations (towers, stairs, etc.) or have just a few. Some of these shelters are fortresses preceding the Roman coming, that were reused for shelters about

and after the end of the 4th c. – for example № 50 and № 109. Site № 8 is a similar case, where a new defence wall (fig. 90) was erected during the 6th c. Yet another similar case is № 27, however, after it has been reused for shelter during 4th – 5th c., in the 6th c. it was permanently inhabited (fig. 91). Other shelters, like № 52 and № 87 (fig. 92) originated in the Late Antiquity. In the 6th c. № 87 undergoes considerable changes (fig. 93) that provide evidence for its development into a permanently inhabited settlement.

III.2. Fortified Christian sites

Although during the EBP monks in *Thracia* and *Dacia* relied for their security primarily on the fortified settlements, independent fortified monasteries are also known. For example, the quadriburg № 37 protected one of the earliest monasteries on the Balkans (fig. 94) – a suburban *coenobium* near *Serdica*, established about the middle or the second half of the 4th c. and abandoned in the middle of the 5th c. The research of another fortified monastery near *Serdica* recently began. It emerged during the first half of the 5th c. and functioned by the beginning of the 7th c. (№ 38). It is possible that the Black sea fortress № 78 had also protected a monastery. Fortified monasteries were common during the EBP in other parts of the Empire as well (see for example fig. 100).

Fortress № 46 is a peculiar case. This fortress, erected at the end of the 5th c. – the beginning of the 6th c., defended a monumental vault basilica (fig. 95), that served as a cult centre of a nearby contemporary unfortified settlement. Fortifications surrounding single churches were not common during the EBP, but still there are some examples (fig. 101).

III.3. Fortified estate centres

These are a small number of Late Roman fortified villas, which functioned by the middle of the 5th c. – for example № 39, and which after their abandonment, were inhabited by peasants during the second half of the 5th c. The large fortress № 13 (*Romuliana*) functioned by the end of the 6th c. However, this is yet another case where about the middle of the 5th c. representative residence complexes were replaced by a settlement structure similar to those described in part I. above.

Presently there is no reliable data for the construction of new fortified estates during the 5th – 6th c. It is only site № 90 that may allow for such an interpretation but the results of its research are not publicly available yet. Obviously the independent estates and the respective model of economic organization were not common during the EBP.

Epilogue

Fortification during the EBP is not simply the emergence of new fortification constructions. It is a symbol of a new way of life which aspects are reflected in the rest of the architecture. This was the basic assumption for the current research, which, to the best on my knowledge, has no analogies yet in terms of the research methodology and scope of study.

No other period in the history of the areas of the dioceses of *Thracia* and *Dacia* is comparable to the EBP by the number of fortresses. On the other hand, the geopolitical significance of the two dioceses during the EBP determines the largest number of fortresses that is incomparable to those in any other similar territories of the Empire. The study of the local Early Byzantine fortresses is essential for the solution of many issues related to the final period of the development of the state organization that laid the foundations of the modern European and world civilization.