

POTTERY PRODUCTION CENTER (6TH – EARLY 7TH C.) IN THE CITY OF SOFIA, LOZENETS RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT – YUZHEN (SOUTH) PARK. STUDIES IN 2000 – 2001

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ABSTRACT

The current paper aims at presenting the results from the 2000 – 2001 excavations at Lozenets residential district – Yuzhen (South) Park, Sofia. The remains of a church from the 340s – 350s were documented. This church functioned until the late 410s. Later on, the site used to be a significant architectural complex composed of a single-apse, three-nave basilica surrounded by walls with towers at the corners that also held massive buildings southwest of the basilica's narthex and atrium courtyard. The complex was built immediately after the first decade of the 5th c. and functioned in this initial form until nearly the end of the same century. Certain changes due to tumultuous circumstances occurred before the end of the century. Subsequent reconstructions of the complex were carried out around the middle of the 6th c. These changes probably indicate that the complex was losing its religious functions and that a lay population had settled in the enclosed space.

During the latest period of occupation of the site, the production of household pottery developed. Three two-chamber kilns for firing clay vessels and the related pits have also been discovered. Production activity took place in the space south of the main basilica building and within the enclosed area. The kilns belong to the widespread type with a round (oval) chamber in plan and a supporting pillar for the perforated floor. Based on stratigraphic observations, coins, and archaeomagnetic analysis, the kilns were dated in the late 6th c. They were used for the production of local coarse and glazed cooking and table wares.

The entire complex stopped functioning and was abandoned in the early 7th c.

Keywords: Early Byzantine church complex, 6th – early 7th c., glazed pottery production, pottery kilns

General data for the complex

During construction for a building of the so-called *Yuzhen Park Housing Group* in the Lozenets residential district (fig. 1 – 2, fig. 4) in late February 2000, a hitherto unknown archaeological site was partially destroyed. The site is located in a nearly straight line about 3.5 km from the Southern Gate of Serdica and southwest of the intersection of today's Kozyak and Bogatitsa Streets. Until recently, it was set within a park immediately northeast of the famous Turkish Tabia (fig. 1 – 2). The impressive late antique mausoleum is also very close, about 250 – 300 m away, along today's Dim-

itar Hadzhikotsev Street (fig. 1, fig. 3; Шалаганов, Иванов 2006, 314 ff.; Иванов 2008, 149 ff.).¹

¹ The monument was studied in the early 1950s by Dr. Ivan Velkov and arch. Sava Bobchev, becoming known as the so-called *Basilica in Gorni Lozenets* (Велков 1954, 117 – 118; Василева 1984, 79 – 86; Чанева-Дечевска 1999, 30, обр. 7).

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Fig. 2. The position of the complex in the modern environment

Обр. 2. Мястото на комплекса в съвременната среда

result of the two archaeological campaigns in 2000 – 2001,³ the surviving parts of the complex in the plot were studied, and the main periods of habitation and construction there were clarified (fig. 5).⁴

Periods of construction, use and habitation. General features, chronology and periodization

A few isolated finds are associated with the Late Roman period (3rd – early 4th c.). These consist of: coins from the second half of the 3rd – first decade of the 4th c., a fragment of a votive relief, and a part of a tablet with Greek letters, both of which can be dated to the 3rd c.⁵ No other artifacts or traces of construction that could be related to the same time were registered in the study area.

³ The excavations were carried out with funding from the investor and the participation of students of Archaeology and History from Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and New Bulgarian University. I am grateful and obliged for their positive attitude, understanding, and quality work, and I hope the work was beneficial to them as well. I can note with great pleasure that not a small number of them are already established professional scholars and lecturers (archaeologists and historians), with defended scientific and educational degrees and academic titles.

⁴ The site has been presented in the scholarly literature (Даскалов и др. 2001, 131 – 133; Даскалов и др. 2002, 123 – 126; Даскалов, Горянова 2009, 118 – 136); it also has been presented in reports at national and international scholarly forums dedicated to the secular and Christian history and archaeology of Serdica at home and abroad (Daskalov, Goryanova 2009, 151 – 162) as well as in exhibitions (Даскалов, Горянова 2019, 69 – 73). Significant numismatic material from the site has been released, too (Божкова 2000, 18 – 37; Божкова 2004, 73 – 86). Data from the archaeomagnetic study of samples from the kilns have also been published (Jordanova et al. 2003, 146 – 158; Kovacheva et al. 2004, 1463 – 1479).

⁵ Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bistra Bozhkova identified the coins, and † Prof. Vasilka Gerasimova was consulted for the other two artifacts.

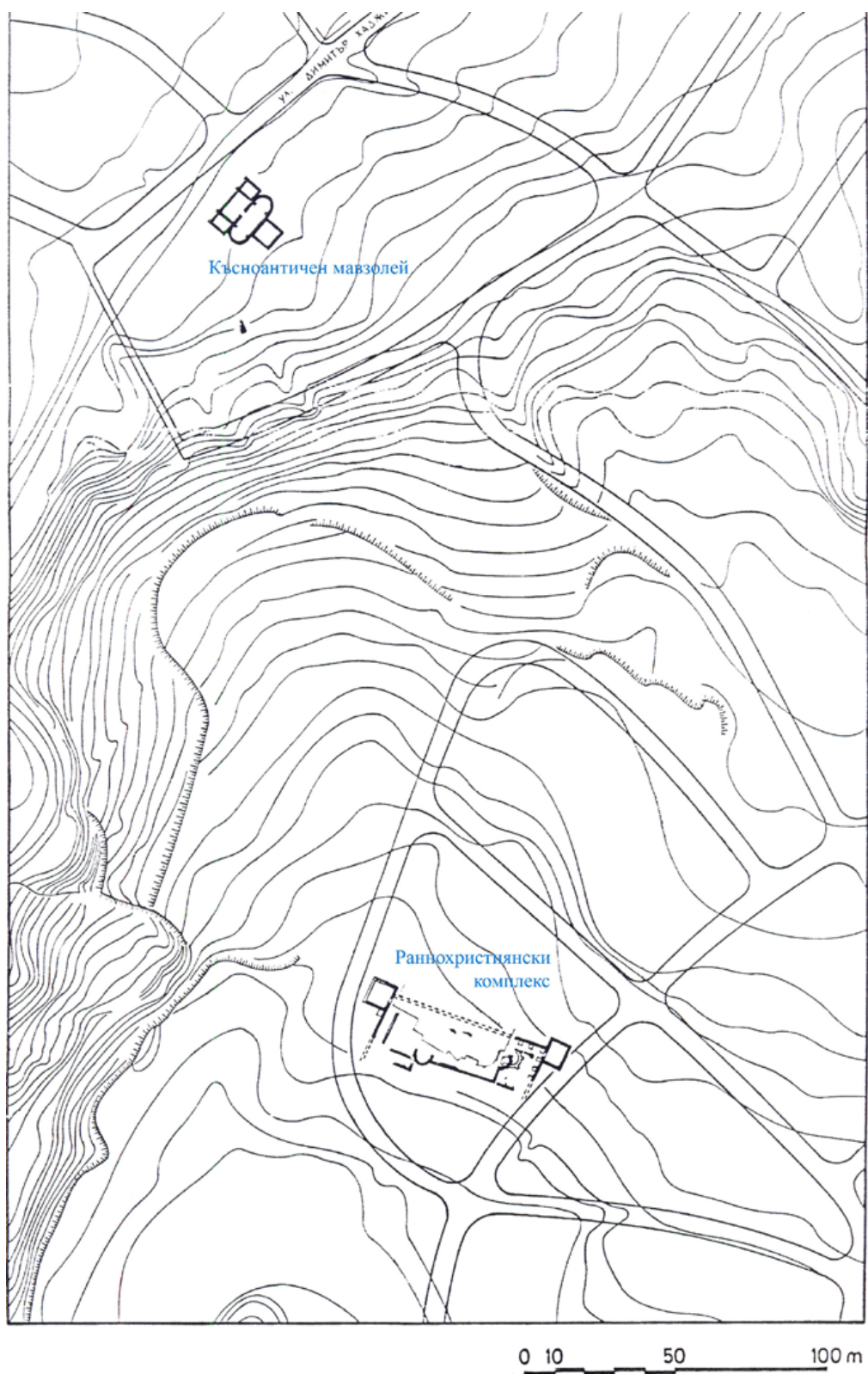
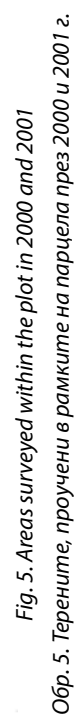


Fig. 3. Topographic situation on Lozenets hill: the late antique mausoleum on Dimitar Hadzhikotsev Street and the church complex

Обр. 3. Топографска ситуация на Лозенския хълм: късноантичен мавзолей на ул. „Димитър Хаджикоцев“ и църковния комплекс



The first stage of construction in the study area was connected with a church, of which only the apse with a massive floor screed and a step to the altar area was revealed. On the church's exterior were connected pilasters that decorated its façade. The building was likely a single-nave, single-apse church (fig. 5). The internal diameter of the apse is about 5.20 m, and its wall is 0.90 m thick. The apse's masonry was of crushed stone alternating with brick courses, judging from its preserved height. The church was destroyed during a subsequent construction phase and its materials reused. Construction waste consisting of fragments of bricks and tiles, crushed stone, and mortar rubble were left below the basilica's construction level or used as fill to level the terrain. According to coin finds from key stratigraphic locations, the early church's construction can be related to the 340s – 350s.⁶ According to the rich numismatic material from the church, it functioned (i.e. was actively visited and donated to) until the end of the 410s. Its destruction is marked by a coin hoard (No. 1, partially preserved) found next to the threshold of the altar area that was covered with mortar debris; the latest coin in the hoard is from 408 – 423). This data is also confirmed by a coin hoard (No. 3, from a pit filled during leveling), containing coins completely identical to those in No. 1 (Божкова 2004, табл. 3 – 4).⁷

The establishment of a basilica complex marks the next stage of construction and takes the form of a three-nave, single-apse basilica surrounded by a wall 1.05 – 1.10 m thick. Towers rose in the northwestern and northeastern corners of the enclosure. An atrium with porticoes to the east and west was located west of the main building; to the south were added buildings that remain unrevealed, and no arguments have been advanced for their interpretation. The northern wall is about 55 m long west – east while the external dimensions of the wall's towers are 7.50 x 9 m west – east (they have an internal area of 37 – 38 m²). The exterior dimensions of the basilica are: 31 m long from the end of the apse to the far side; 16.70 m wide from the east; and 17.20 m wide from the west. The basilica's interior is divided into three naves: the central aisle is 7.40 m wide, and the side ones are each 3.10 – 3.20 m wide. The narthex measures 15.40 (north – south) x 4.20 m (west – east); its conch ceiling is 3.40 m in diameter and 1.75 m deep (fig. 5).⁸ The apse's internal diameter is 5.40 – 5.50 m, and it is about 3 m deep.

The basilica's masonry is in *opus mixtum* with the first band of bricks (preserved in three courses) at a height of 0.64 – 0.65 m above the plinth, and the walls are 0.82 – 0.84 m thick. The floor is covered with a pink mortar screed set on a bed of fragmented bricks, tiles, and crushed stone. The atrium is trapezoidal in plan, and its wider side is oriented to the south. Along the western and eastern sides, stylobates of porticoes have been revealed that were structurally connected to the other buildings. Rectangular column bases are preserved on them *in situ*. The courtyard is 16 m (north – south), 14.5 m wide from the south, and about 13 m wide from the north. The porticoes are about 1.50 m wide. The column bases (steps) are placed every 2 m. The western portico floor

⁶ It is worth noting that among the extremely rich numismatic finds (about 2,400 specimens in total), small denominations from the 4th and 5th c. predominate. We could associate them with pilgrims' symbolic donations (mites). Another interesting finding is the absence of coins minted in the lifetime of Constantine I the Great; several specimens bearing his image and name are posthumous. In general, coin circulation increased sharply in 340s. "*Given the attested amount of coins from these years, it could be concluded that there was already a lively activity in the architectural complex*" (Божкова 2004, 75). A certain correction could be made to the opinion expressed by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bistra Bozhkova: this lively activity took place during visits to the Early Christian single-nave church since the complex as such did not yet exist.

⁷ The numerous latest coins from the layer below the building level of the basilica are from the period 395 – 408. Two of the hoards (referred to as Nos. 1 and 3 in the documentation, which is adopted in the cited works) also pertain to the same layer and the data from them do not contradict the mentioned period.

⁸ A massive threshold block 1.48 – 1.50 m long, 0.64 – 0.65 m wide, and 0.40 – 0.42 m tall was found among the debris thrown out by the construction equipment. There are holes 5 – 8 cm in diameter at both ends that mark axles for a double door, possibly at the basilica's entrance.

is covered with plain, standard square bricks; they are raised relative to others used nearby and so possibly mark a repair. The open space and portico in front of the basilica façade are paved with bipedal bricks laid on a stable base and using plentiful pink mortar (fig. 5).

After a geophysical survey, an irregular rectangular shape of the walled space measuring approximately 53 – 55 (west – east) x 48 – 50 m (north – south) is assumed. It is unclear whether there were corner towers to the southwest and southeast. Massive walls have been registered inside the walled enclosure that are rectangular in plan and likely connected rooms that may belong to a single complex. They are well-marked in the southwestern portion of the enclosure south of the atrium and the basilica's narthex (fig. 6).

From observations made during the excavations, two construction phases can be distinguished for the complex: the first and a subsequent one when repairs, additions, and alterations were made. The complex was built immediately after the first decade of the 5th c.⁹ and functioned in this initial form until nearly the end of the same century. Certain changes due to tumultuous circumstances occurred before the end of the century after the reign of Emperor Leo I (457 – 474). As a result, some of the complex's canals no longer functioned; accumulations of mortar rubble have been recorded as well as fragments of wall paintings, pieces of mortar joints, fragments of architectural details, and pieces of marble tiles of two thicknesses denoting their original placement in walls and floors. Regular coin circulation ceased for about two decades. The following coins belonged to Emperor Anastasius (491 – 518) from pre-reform issues. Contemporarily with them also appeared single post-reform denominations of the same emperor.

Subsequent reconstructions of the complex were carried out around the middle of the 6th c. Massive pillars made of crushed stone held together with white, highly sandy mortar were added to the inner face of the enclosure wall. Six of them were revealed in the northeastern corner, and they were probably intended to hold wooden platforms as on the top of a fortress wall. They measure 0.9 – 1.10 x 1.40 m and stand about 2.50 m apart. Their plinths are 0.45 to 0.60 m higher than the floor level (and thresholds) in the complex, which corresponds to the pavements of reused bricks located southeast of the apse,¹⁰ south of the basilica to the inner face of the eastern enclosure wall between the pilasters.

The layer below this level was abundantly saturated with whole and fragmented bricks and tiles, stones with mortar stuck to them, pieces of mortar from joints and plasters, household pottery, fragments of window glass and glassware (mainly lamps and glasses), whole nails and fragments of them, wedges and iron Π-shaped brackets, bronze and lead plates, and other metal objects probably belonging to wooden constructions. Apparently, all of this debris is remnants of repairs and reconstruction. The basilica's interior was also renovated: an entrance was opened in its southern wall near the conch arch of the narthex and benches were built inside the nave along its southern wall as well as in the narthex.¹¹

⁹ The latest coins from the strata for leveling and raising the terrain for large-scale construction come from the period up to 408. This date is also confirmed by a coin under the mortar pit south of the entrance to the northeastern tower, which dates from 402 – 408. The floor in the atrium was laid on a well-leveled and tamped ground and was made of bipedal bricks; the joints were carefully filled with hydrophobic mortar. A categorical *terminus post quem* for this floor's and the complex's construction as a whole are the coins found under the pavement dating from the late 4th – early 5th c., the latest one of which is a minima of Emperor Honorius of a type struck until 408. A coin of the same emperor but of a slightly later issue was found in the fill above the dismantled (?) apse of the single-nave church. The coin series found in mortar lumps are from the last two decades of the 4th c. (of Valentinian II and Theodosius I).

¹⁰ A coin of Emperor Justin II and Sophia (struck 573/574) was found in the layer above.

¹¹ A 16-nummi coin of Emperor Justinian I was found in the clay for fixing the stones of the benches in the narthex; at the level of the secondary entrance in the southern wall of the basilica was found a half follis of Emperor Justin II (struck 565/567).

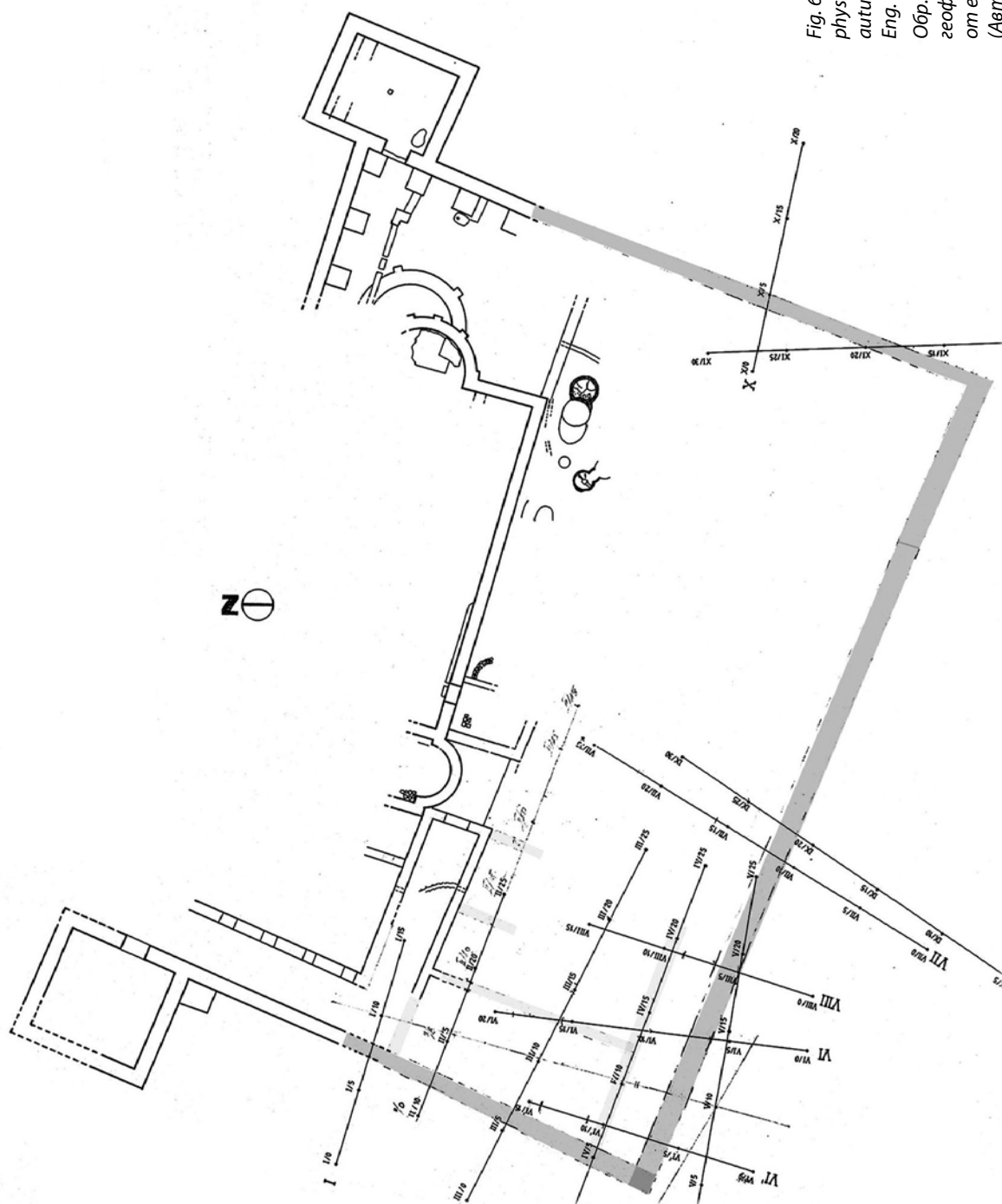


Fig. 6. Results of the geo-physical survey from the autumn of 2001 (Author: Eng. I. Katevski)

Обр. 6. Резултати от геофизичното проучване от есента на 2001 г. (Автор: инж. И. Катевски)

These changes probably indicate that the complex was losing its religious functions and that a lay population had settled in the enclosed space. The floor inside the northeastern tower was raised with a layer of yellow-brown clay soil, in which traces (holes) of vertical beams for roofing have been registered. The tower's interior was also divided into four parts (pl. 8). Secondary pavements of reused bricks have been traced in the rooms next to the basilica's southern wall (pl. 7). In all these cases coins from the days of Justin I, Justinian I, and Justin II and Sophia were found above the repairs. Mass pottery finds increased significantly, consisting of vessels of a domestic nature such as kitchen pots with lids, vessels for storing products (cruses and pithoi), and ceramic lamps. Tableware is also well-represented: jugs, flat-bottomed amphorae, cups, and bowls. Metal artifacts are also evidence of everyday life: well-known types of fibulae, knives, needles, tweezers, piercing instruments, etc. (fig. 10).

During the next latest¹² period of occupation of the site, the production of household pottery developed, with part of the output having a glazed surface. Kilns for firing clay vessels have also been discovered. Production activity took place in the space south of the main basilica building and within the enclosed area. A wall of crushed stones and reused fragments of bricks stuck together with clay was built next to the basilica's exterior southeastern corner. It continues in an easterly direction into unexplored terrain and probably encloses the "potters' sector" (fig. 7).

The quality clays in the area apparently had been exploited for centuries.¹³ The kiln for firing building ceramics needed for the complex's construction was associated with the exploitation of these clay deposits. It is located immediately north of the supposed route of the northern enclosure wall (about 3.5 – 4 m away from the basilica). Two houses that belong to the modern residential complex at the site were built over it (fig. 7: 1). The structure has been significantly affected by modern construction works; part of it was filled with concrete for the foundations of the new buildings. The base of an arch was also placed approximately in the middle of the kiln along its north – south axis (pl. 1: 1 – 3).

This prevented full study of the kiln, but the parts of it that were uncovered still provide valuable information. The opening to the combustion chamber was from the south. Along the length of the combustion chamber were support pillars for the grate, three from the east and two from the west. These pillars were arranged along the chamber's interior walls, made of standard bricks (approximately 0.30 x 0.30 m in size), and fixed with clay (preserved up to two courses tall); the

¹² This final phase can thus be called Early Byzantine. Data and artifacts from other periods before present were also found during excavations. This is the partially preserved oven marked No. 1: a dome of fragmented bricks joined with clay and a bottom with a fired screed. It was likely domestic and was revealed southeast of the basilica's apse at the level of its collapse. According to the pottery fragments found in and around it, it can be attributed to the Late Middle Ages. For more precise dating come the mangir (of Suleyman I or Bayezid II) and akçe (of Bayezid II, 1481 – 1512) found there. Other characteristic finds (vessel and pipe fragments) appeared in the northwestern tower sector. The archaeomagnetic sample suggests the same dating: a firing in the period of 1460 – 1620 (or more precisely: 1513 – 1583, see below). Apparently, this part of the Lozenets hill was inhabited during these centuries. An indirect indication is also the toponym of Korubaglar (*korubaglari*) which in translation means *vineyard in the grove* or *vineyard in the forest*, and a bit later *kurubaglar*, where "o" has changed to "u" and the meaning has already changed to the *dry vineyards*. The locality is mentioned in the records of Evliya Çelebi.

¹³ The deposits of quality clay, fit for producing various ceramic products, have been exploited even in modern times, from the last decade of the 19th c. to the late 1950s. The current South Park is famous for its brickworks and factories (the earliest one from 1890 belonged to Hristo Kalpakchiev, built precisely in the Korubaglar area). According to historical data, there were a total of 17 brickyards here. The most famous was the Golden Lion Factory (built in 1930) of Eng. Nikola Hr. Popov, which was quite modern for its time and was established precisely because of the volume and quality of the nearby clay resources. Apparently, they were known to the nearby population for centuries and were used for the production of various ceramics. During the construction in 1964 of the current Lozenets University Hospital Complex (former Government Hospital), the large diggings for clay extraction were clearly visible. In the 1950s and 1960s, the brickyards in Lozenets had a rather unenviable and sad reputation among the people of Sofia.

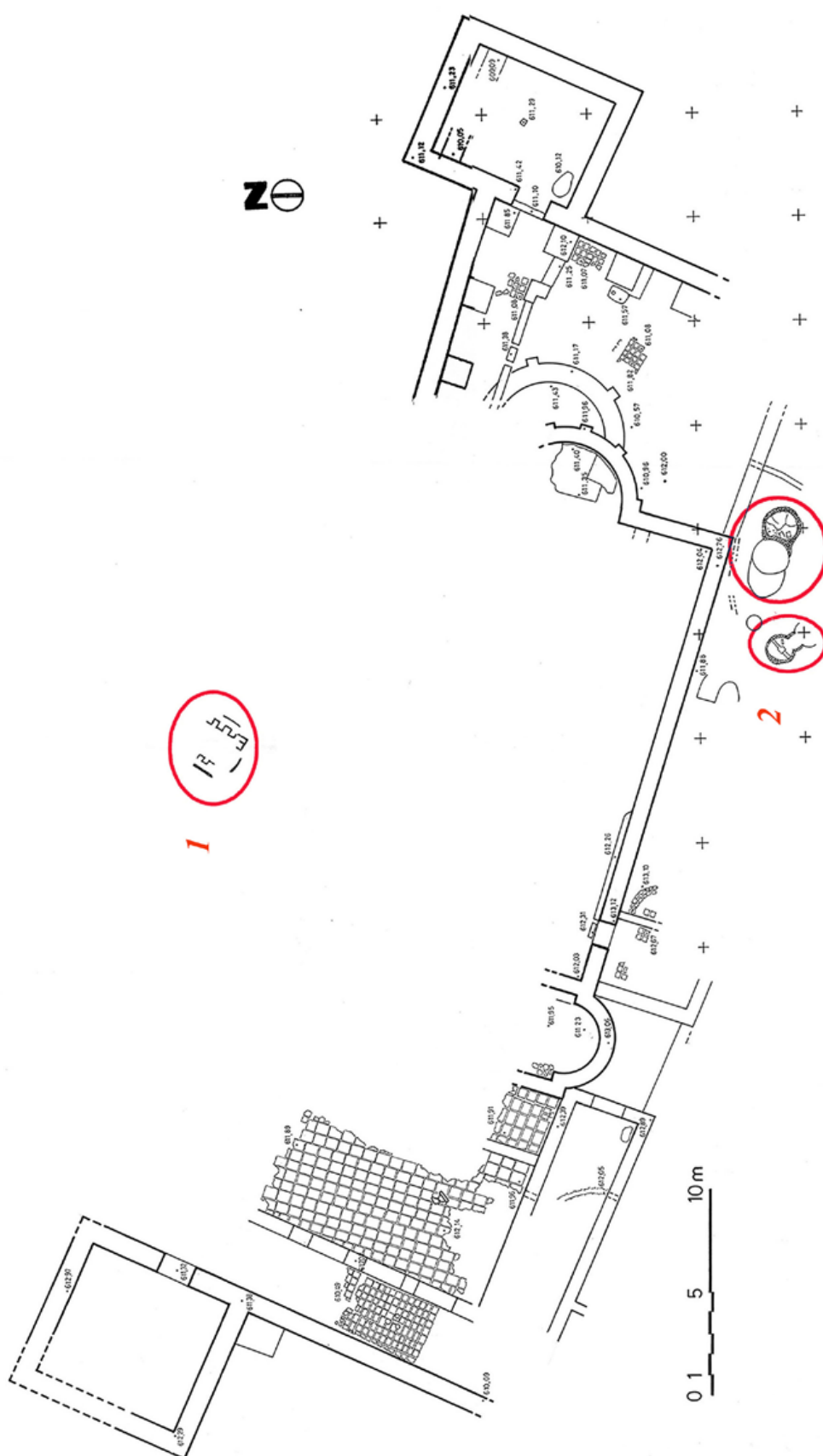


Fig. 7. Position of the production structures relative to the main building: 1. Kiln for ceramic building material; 2. Kilns for household pottery

Обр. 7. Разположение на производствените съоръжения спрямо основната сграда: 1. Пещ за строителна керамика; 2. Пещи за битова керамика

studied portion of the kiln is 2.20 m long (from the north it was also filled with reinforced concrete, the removal of which was not possible). The width has been established with certainty at 2.95 meters. The distance between the rows of pillars (west – east) is about 1.40 meters, and the rows are not arranged in axial symmetry. The kiln body consists of a massive wall of stones and building ceramics (up to 0.20 – 0.24 m thick) and a thick clay screed. Due to the current condition of the kiln, the presence, location, and dimensions of a partition wall intended to carry a perforated floor along the length of the chamber are not clear. The floor is not well leveled; it became deformed with use and bears traces of heavy burning and black-brown patches. The entire interior of the kiln is similarly colored, probably from repeated firing (pl. 1). The kiln's construction and operation can be associated with the building of the large church complex (there is no specific data on any chronological correlation). The possibility that it was used in the previous century and for construction of the earlier church cannot be completely ruled out.

During Late Antiquity, production of building ceramics (bricks) was also established in the immediate vicinity of the site, about 300 m northwest (as the crow flies) at the base of a hill (fig. 3). A kiln was discovered adjacent to the late antique mausoleum on what is now Dimitar Hadzhikotsev Street. It was researched simultaneously with the excavations of the complex in 2001 (Козаев 2004, 86 – 90; Шалаганов, Иванов 2006, 314 ff.; Иванов 2008, 149 – 160). Its construction is very well clarified, and the kiln's operation was undoubtedly related to the impressive building's construction (Козаев 2004, 86 – 90).

Kilns for manufacturing pottery were discovered at the site as well. They as well as other artifacts (vessel fragments and defective wares deformed and cracked during firing with burnt glaze found around them) are evidence of *in situ* production. These kilns are located to the south of the basilica in a walled space (fig. 7: 2). The wall is of spolia fixed with clay and has an uneven width of 0.70 – 0.80 m and a shallow foundation. It has a built-in channel for the drainage of ground water (possibly also water related to production). A collection pit was formed nearby to the south and was later filled in. The kiln is on a slope due to the unevenness of the terrain from south to north (pl. 2). The studied pottery kilns were numbered according to the order of their discovery in 2000 as Nos. 2 – 4.¹⁴ Kiln No. 4 has not been fully revealed: it is located right on the border of the property and continues to the south. The most complete data is available for kilns Nos. 2 and 3.

Kiln No. 2 (fig. 8) is situated about 1.60 m south of the southeastern outer corner of the basilica, inside the space enclosed by the stone-mud wall (fig. 7: 2). It is dome-shaped and has two chambers and a dividing grate with openings for the passage of hot air (pl. 3 – 4). The highest preserved diameter of the upper chamber is 1.27 m, and at the grate level the chamber is 1.45 m in diameter. The walls of the upper chamber (the dome) are 7 – 9 cm thick. The grate is partially preserved at its northwestern side (fig. 8, pl. 3), and it is about 8 – 10 cm thick; its holes are 5 – 8 cm in diameter. The maximum preserved depth of the upper chamber is 0.38 – 0.40 m from the top of its preserved walls to the grate. Supporting pillars or other weight-bearing structural elements were not registered *in situ*, but in the process of exposing the area under the preserved part of the grate, we came across large rounded fragments of clay, which are undoubtedly parts of a similar construction that was possibly disturbed at the end of the kiln's use. The depth of the combustion chamber from the floor to the grate underside is 0.28 m. The bottom of the chamber is formed with fragments of bricks and thickly plastered with clay; it is strongly burnt and covered with a thick layer of gray-black ash.

¹⁴ They are present in a specialized research. Some of the information on the numbering of the kilns, their mutual location, construction notes and some of the parameters specified by Alexander Harizanov (Харизанов 2019, 661 – 664) is not correct.



1



2



3

Pl. 1. Kiln for ceramic building material: 1, 2. Discovery of the eastern and western parts of the kiln for ceramic building material (view from the south); 3. The explored part of the kiln (view from the south)

Табло 1. Пещ за строителна керамика: 1, 2. Регистриране на източната и западната част на пещта за строителна керамика (поглед от юг); 3. Проучената част на пещта (поглед от юг)



1



2



3

Pl. 2. 1. The enclosing wall and kiln No. 2 at the moment of discovery (view from the north); 2. Kiln No. 2 and the wall (from the south); 3. The wall on the construction level of the basilica

Табло 2. 1. Ограждащата стена и пещ № 2 при разкриването (поглед от север); 2. Пещ № 2 и стената (от юг); 3. Стената върху строителното ниво на базиликата



1



2



3

Pl. 3. 1. The moment of discovery of kiln No. 2; 2. Exploration stage: cleaned chamber floor; 3. The kiln and stoking pit during the uncover (view from the east)

Табло 3. 1. Регистриране на пещ № 2; 2. Етап на проучване: почистен под на камерата; 3. Пещта и предпещната яма при проучването (поглед от изток)

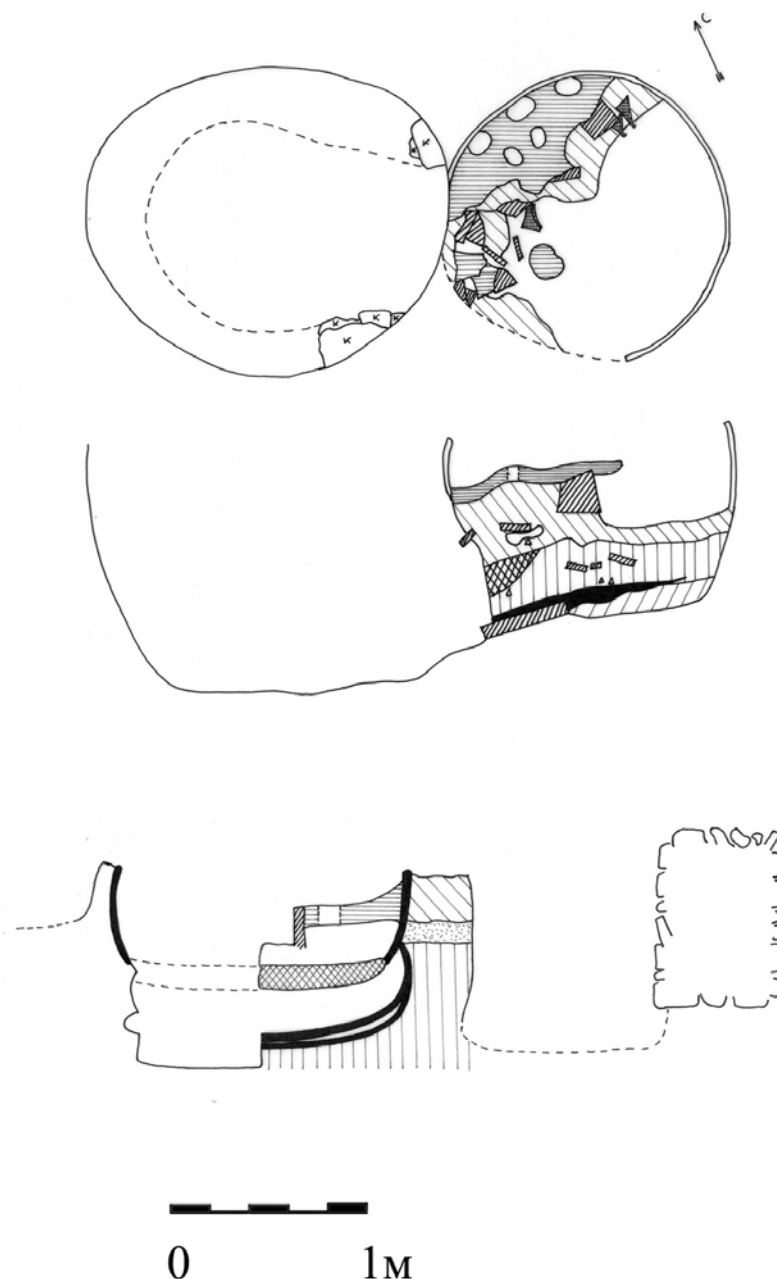


Fig. 8. Horizontal plan and section of kilns Nos. 2 and 4
 Обр. 8. Хоризонтален план и разрез на пещи № 2 и № 4

The diameter of the lower (combustion) chamber is equal to that above the grate (1.45 m). The service opening is to the west where the stoking pit (working designation No. 2) was laid out (pl. 3 – 4). Its sides are formed by rows of mud-fixed bricks that became black with repeated firing of the kiln. The lower portion of the opening is formed with horizontally arranged bricks that are also very badly burnt. The lower part of the stoking pit (at its bottom) on both sides of the opening is lined with crushed stones fixed with clay. It is 1.50 m deep (from the digging level where at discovery there was an oval outline with dimensions of 1.95 m west – east and 1.76 m north – south). Above the bottom it narrows in depth to about 1.20 m, and here there is a stratification of much ash

and coal mixed with earth as a result of the kiln's use. The pit was dug into sterile terrain.

During excavations in the southeastern portion of the bottom interior of the kiln, a sinkhole was found filled with small pieces of bricks, pottery fragments (including a whole bottom of a glazed vessel), and pieces of burnt clay. This fragmentary material was covered with a horizontally placed tegula with a layer of wood ash and coal over it. From the section over the most destroyed part of kiln No. 2, it became clear that it was built on top of an earlier kiln of similar construction (marked with No. 4; pl. 5). Its entrance is from the southeast, and its floor was covered with fragments of tegulae. The stoking pit is also located there, filled with pieces of burnt clay, coal, and ash; fragmented pottery; and waste products (working designation pit No. 7).

A part of the combustion chamber opening was revealed, for the floor of which an entire tegula was used (it was burnt to black, cracked, and covered with a thick layer of coal and ash). The floor of the opening slopes from west to east. In the studied part of the opening and the chamber, traces of very strong burning and cracks were detected, as a result of which the kiln went out of use. Repairs were probably carried out during the course of its operation, however; the floor level of the lower chamber was raised about 7 cm, for example.

Probable dimensions for the kiln, as established from finds within the section, are as follows: the chamber diameter was about 1.30 – 1.40 m and the combustion chamber opening was 0.55 – 0.62 m wide. After taking damage, the kiln was filled with pieces of bricks, lumps of burnt clay from the grate and walls, pieces of plaster, and pottery fragments, all to build the combustion chamber of the later kiln (No. 2). The diameters of the chambers of both kilns are identical, i.e., kiln No. 2 generally follows the form of the earlier kiln over which it was built (fig. 8, pl. 5). The difference in floor levels is about 0.40 m (fig. 8). Unlike kiln No. 2, the earlier one was accessed from the east, from pit No. 7, which is very well outlined as an irregularly circular spot. A large portion of this kiln is located in unexplored terrain (working designation Profile South-2). The two kilns have a similar construction and were built and used in a relatively short period of time. After the damage caused by kiln No. 4, the route of the drainage channel beginning from higher ground was also laid to the south, whereby the filled pit was carefully bypassed and proximity to the eastern periphery of kiln No. 2 was avoided. Gradually, this channel was filled with ash, coal, and waste products during the kiln's operation. Study of the sector containing kilns Nos. 2 and 4 could not be fully completed as it continues outside the site.

Kiln No. 3 (fig. 9, pl. 6) is located west of the above two kilns and about 3 m south of the exterior face of the basilica's southern wall. It is two-chambered, dome-shaped, and slightly oval in plan with external dimensions of 1.20 m (west – east) x 1.10 m (north – south). The dome wall is 8 – 10 cm thick. The grate is supported by a central pillar constructed of half-bricks set high and plastered with clay. It is horizontal and consists of radially arranged clay beams (probably eight in number) resting on the supporting pillar and attached to the inner part of the chamber by a thickened coating. Two of the beams are preserved *in situ*, forming an entire diameter along the approximate west – east axis 0.95 – 1 m long. A third beam is preserved entirely but has become detached and has sunk into the lower chamber. A fourth beam only partially survives.

The depth of the lower chamber at the supporting pillar is 0.21 m, and the preserved height of the dome above the level of the grate is 0.22 – 0.23 m. The floor of the lower chamber slopes from north to south, i.e. from the back to the opening, the difference in levels being about 0.25 m. The opening for the passage of hot air in the lower chamber is to the south. The actual combustion chamber is positioned to the south and is 0.48 – 0.52 m long and 0.58 m wide (fig. 9). Judging from the dimensions of the opening in the lower chamber, its depth was 0.70 m. Constructed of clay, it was structurally connected to the other part and was strongly fired in a high temperature until gain-

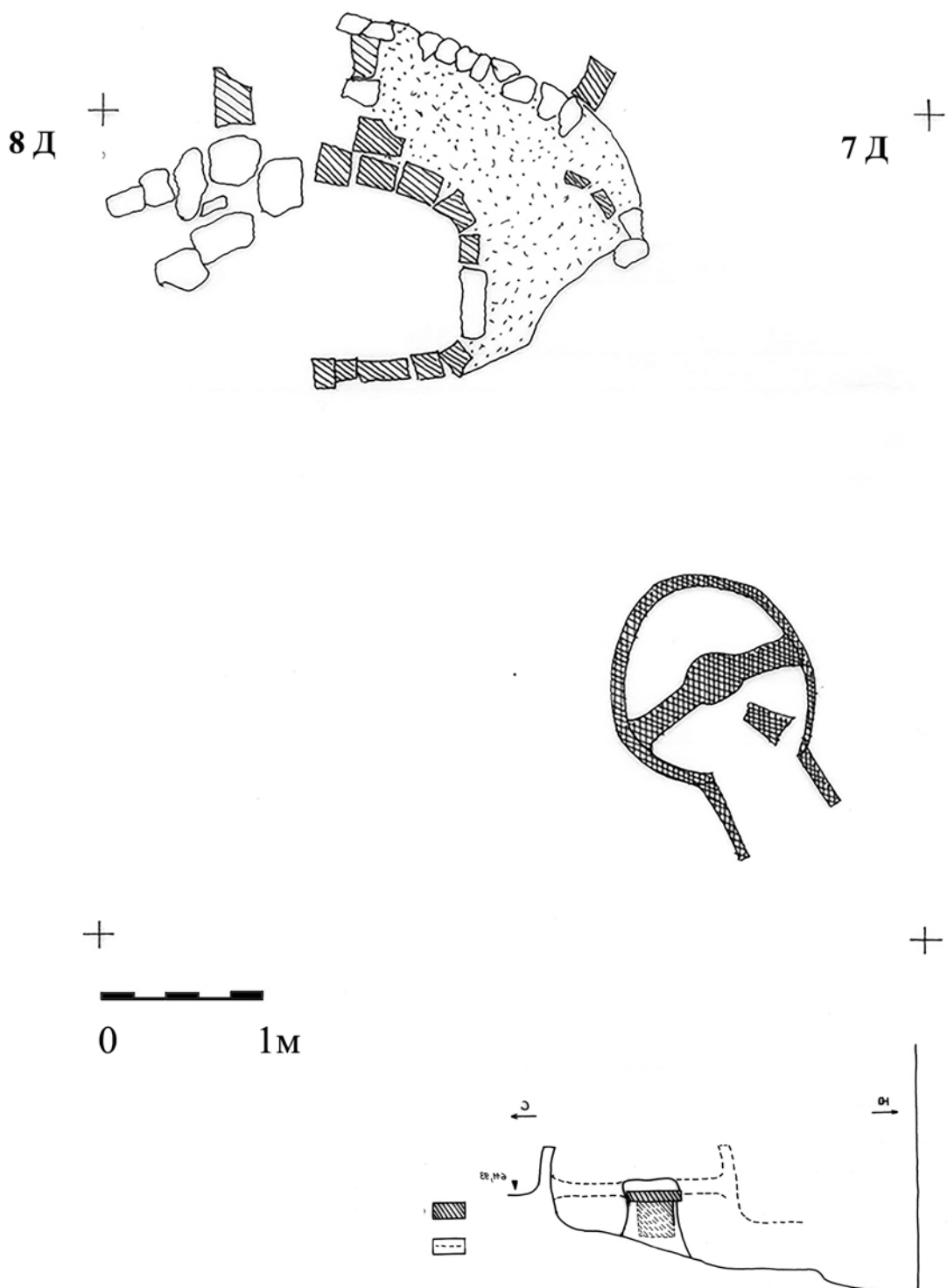


Fig. 9. Plan and section of kiln No. 3
Обр. 9. План и разрез на пещ № 3



1



2

Pl. 4. 1. Kiln No. 2 with the stoking pit (view from the south); 2. Kiln No. 2 with the pit and the opening to the lower chamber (view from the west)

Табло 4. 1. Пещ № 2 с предпещната яма (поглед от юг); 2. Пещ № 2 с ямата и отвора към долната камера (поглед от запад)



1



2

Pl. 5. Kilns Nos. 2 and 4 – overlapping of the combustion chambers
Табло 5. Пещи № 2 и № 4 – застъпване на горивни камери



1



2

Pl. 6. 1. The moment of discovery of kiln No. 3; 2. Kiln No. 3 and a part of its stoking pit after their exploration
Табло 6. 1. Регистриране на пещ № 3; 2. Пещ № 3 и част от предпещната ѝ яма в проучен вид

ing the density of a brick. The bottom of the chamber is thickly coated in a layer of ash and coal, the chamber's ceiling was vaulted. This form of construction and the methods of firing and removing hot air it enables is related to the prevention of direct contact between the fire and the vessels arranged for firing. The stoking pit (working designation No. 6) was registered and partially explored to the south of the combustion chamber. The diameter of the chamber at its widest revealed extent is 1.45 m (approximately along the chamber's west – east axis). The full shape of the kiln has not been determined since it partially lies in unexplored terrain.

The design of kilns Nos. 2 and 3 belongs to the widespread type with a round (oval) chamber in plan and a supporting pillar for the perforated floor. Kiln No. 4 probably belongs to the same type. Different variants are known and have been well-explored in today's Bulgarian lands, neighboring territories, and in general across the Late Roman Empire and its successor kingdoms. This type of kiln is quite conservative and appeared before Christ and existed into the following centuries (the Middle Ages).

The kilns presented at Lozenets have been arranged in a typology for the territories south of the Danube river for the 1st – 6th c. (see Харизанов 2019, 661 – 664, cat. No. 169 on the kiln for building ceramics; the other three kilns for household pottery have the original working numbering 2, 3, 4¹⁵ and are cat. Nos. 170 – 172). In the interest of correcting the data from the field survey of the structures, some clarifications can be made. The kiln for building ceramics has been assigned provisionally to type II/b/1. The construction of the combustion chamber is unclear; whether there was a retaining wall along its length is unknown. There is no data for the upper part of the kiln (Харизанов 2019, 104 – 108).

In general, all three kilns for household pottery can be assigned to type I/a of the proposed typology (Харизанов 2019, 82 – 83, 86 – 89). Kilns Nos. 2 and 4 (as represented here) are similar, with No. 2 showing a central support pillar (though parts of it were out of place in the lower chamber) that upholds the grate of the firing chamber. Nothing can be said for certain about No. 4; after its failure or irreparable damage done to it, it was buried, and No. 2 was built on top of it so that the two kilns' chambers cohered in form. The latter was left entirely intact, so this did not allow the full exposure of No. 4 (its lower combustion chamber in particular). In kiln No. 3, the two chambers were separated by eight clay beams connected with a support pillar.

The dating of the kilns is based on stratigraphic situations and field observations supported by many coins. The kilns have been dug into a layer containing coins from the last two decades of the 4th and almost the entire 5th c. (of Theodosius I, Arcadius, Honorius, Theodosius II, Marcian and Leo I) as well as Justin I's post-reform pentanummium. The half follis of Emperor Justin II (struck 570/571) is of particular importance for dating the use of kiln No. 2 (providing a *terminus post quem* for it) and was found at the bottom of the stoking pit. The earlier kiln No. 4 was also dug into a layer containing coins from the late 4th and 5th c., the latest of which was one coin from the first decade of the 5th c. The layer into which the structures were dug was deposited during the time when the early church building functioned, when the whole complex was constructed in the early 5th c. (probably soon after the end of the single-nave church), and the duration of complex's use in its original form.

These data are also supported by archaeomagnetic dating, samples for which were taken during the excavations by Prof. D.Sc. Mary Kovacheva and her team (National Institute of Geophysics, Geology and Geography – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences). She personally provided the processed and calibrated preliminary data from the study of materials from two of the kilns (Nos. 1 and 2) in

¹⁵ See Footnote 11 above.

2002.¹⁶ They fully confirm the observations and results of the field survey and traditional archaeological dating. The specific studies are presented later in papers in specialized publications together with the final results. Kiln No. 1 was fired in the period 1513 – 1583 while kiln No. 2 is thought to have been in operation between 566 and 583 and fired 580 – 590 (Jordanova et al. 2003, 146 – 158; Kovacheva et al. 2004, 1463 – 1479).

Based on ceramic wasters, it is possible to confirm that the three kilns were primarily used for firing of kitchen and table wares for everyday use: pots, various bowls, lids, jugs, two-handled pitchers, cups, storage vessels of various sizes like pithoi, and candlesticks.¹⁷ Production repertoire is relatively standard, and the noteworthy thing in this case is that the same types of vessels were found with and without glaze. The character and variety of these vessels indicate they were intended for households in nearby Serdica. Removing pottery production outside the fortress walls of an inhabited urban area is also completely in the spirit of Late Antiquity (places for processing raw materials, constructing kilns, and using fire were commonly located outside of urban areas). Despite extensive archaeological research in previous decades, no (known) comparison materials were available when the pottery center was discovered (2000 – 2001). During the archaeological excavations undertaken in 2015 – 2018 in Sofia's central square at Sveta Nedelya, materials typologically and chronologically close to those from Lozenets were found in a reliable environment and identified. Their dating in the second half of the 6th – early decades of the 7th c. cannot be doubted (Станев 2020, 179 – 181, opp. 6 – 7).

Synchronous structures in the complex related to the pottery production. Absolute dating data

The rooms attached to the southern wall of the basilica were associated with the time of the kilns' operation. They are designated as Rooms A – B.¹⁸ The first room is located immediately to the east of the narthex conch and rests on an earlier structure with a mortar floor that was later rebuilt with a stone and clay superstructure and a secondary brick floor at a higher elevation. Within it is a secondary entrance to the nave of the basilica that was rather carelessly opened (the reconstructions there and in the narthex are noted above). The next room westward, Room B, matches the width of the conch and is bounded to the south by a secondary wall of clay-jointed stones (it is on the boundary of the building trench and is only outlined in height). It is not clear whether this wall was built on top of an earlier one.

Room B follows Room A to the west and is situated to the south of the courtyard with the porticoes, west of the basilica's façade. It is 3.20 m wide, and half of its possible length (5.50 m out of a total of about 11 m) has been explored (pl. 7). It originally had an entrance from the east (1.63 m wide with a double-winged door, according to the revealed openings for its vertical axes) that was subsequently blocked with a rather sloppy single-faced wall of stones and clay that faces inwards toward the west (pl. 7: 1, 2). A mortar pit connected with the construction of the complex was revealed deep in Room B's southeastern corner. A drainage channel constructed of half-bricks relating to the complex's use was traced across the leveling embankment of brown clean soil. It was filled during ongoing repairs of the complex, and a coin of Leo I was found in its fill (pl. 7: 3). At a height above the level of the longitudinal wall plinth and the threshold of Room B's entrance, deposits were registered containing many pieces of bricks and tiles, lumps of crushed mortar, and fragments of household pottery and glass, among other finds. Above this stratum, a sloppy pave-

¹⁶ Twenty-five samples have been taken (7 from kiln No. 1 and 18 from kiln No. 2).

¹⁷ For more details on the variety of shapes, see Todorova 2024 in this volume.

¹⁸ The lettering of the rooms is kept in Cyrillic according to the original documentation.



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2



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Pl. 7. 1. Room B: cleaning of the 6th – 7th c. floor level and the walled-up entrance on the eastern wall (view from the west);
2. Walled-up entrance on the eastern wall (from the east); 3. Room B on the level of the original building

Табло 7. 1. Помещение В: почистване на подовото ниво от VI – VII в. и зазидания вход на източната стена
(поглед от запад); 2. Зазидане на входа на източната стена (от изток);
3. Помещение В на нивото на оригиналния градеж

ment of whole and fragmented bricks and tiles is preserved in places. Together with some rammed brown-yellow clay soil with spots of charcoal and ash, and concentrations of domestic pottery and glassware, these deposits probably mark the late “floor” level. In the fill below it was found a follis of Justinian I that was struck in Constantinople in 527 – 538 (pl. 7: 1). The amount of fragments of household vessels (pots, jugs, lids, lamps, storage jars, and glass fragments) and charcoal increases in the deposits above this fill and coin.

Numismatic data from the study of Room B (which has the working name “The Potter’s House”) comes from the coin hoard scattered in the fill under the layer of stones and bricks formed after the collapse of the Room’s walls after it was finally abandoned (working designation “Demolition Layer I”). The hoard consists of 43 coins: 42 bronze pieces of different denominations and one tremis (Божкова 2000, 18 – 37; Божкова 2004, 73 ff.). About half of the bronze coins are folles from the time of Emperors Phocas and Heraclius (some of them overstruck); the latest was issued in 614/615. The presence of smaller and very small denominations does not so much reflect the hoarding of full value coins (by weight) as current coin circulation at the time of the hoard’s deposition (Божкова 2004, 80 – 83). Coins of Emperors Phocas (struck 607/608) and Heraclius (struck 614/615) were found in deposits above the pavement of bipedal bricks in the courtyard with the porticoes in front of the western façade and under the destruction layer (the above-mentioned Demolition Layer I).

In a similar environment in the northeastern tower under the same uppermost layer of destruction, coins of Emperors Justinian I and Justin II and Sophia (from the 8th and 14th year of their reign) and a pentanummium of Phocas appeared in habitation deposits. There, too, habitation was identified by a level with spots of burnt clay, accumulations of un-burnt rammed clay, building ceramics including whole bricks and tiles lying horizontally (pl. 8), and a greater amount of household pottery, ash and charcoal. This then was a floor level for which coins of Anastasius and Justin I (found at the tower threshold level) establish a *terminus post quem*. During this last period of the tower’s habitation, its inner space was divided into smaller rooms with walls of perishable material.

The upper chronological limit of the production center’s use is largely based on the coin hoard found in Room B, which establishes a date after the fourth or fifth year of Emperor Heraclius’ reign (Божкова 2000, № 39, 30 ff.). This date is important for analyzing both production technology and output and problems related to everyday life in an urban center like Serdica. In a new study on coin circulation in Serdica during the period concerned here (according to data from old and recent excavations), it has been determined that there was a sharp collapse in economic activity after 614/615. Emperors Phocas¹⁹ and Heraclius (up to 615 – 616) are presented with 44 and 23 coins respectively, and after the year 616 there are only few coins of uncertain provenance. Folles again prevail over smaller denominations (51:18, with semi-follis in second place), i.e. there is an almost complete repeat of the picture of coin circulation at the Lozenets complex (Божкова 2000, 30 – 34; Владимирова-Аладжова 2022, табл. 10 – 11).

Analysis of numismatic materials from the early 7th c. is quite clear, then: there was obvious economic stagnation at and around Serdica at this time; among the coins in circulation for everyday needs, “modern” issues with larger denominations (primarily 40 nummi) predominated. After the fourth or fifth year of Emperor Heraclius’ reign, a sharp collapse occurred, apparently related to irreversible changes that limited contact between settlements in this part of the Balkan Peninsula and cause their abandonment (Владимирова-Аладжова 2022, 50). This was the consequence

¹⁹ Numismatic data (single specimens and a small hoard) from active archaeological excavations in the fortified area of the city show that the latest coins of this emperor’s reign are from 606/607 (Владимирова-Аладжова 2022, 46 – 47, табл. 10, диагр. 1).



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Pl. 8. 1. Northeastern tower: level of habitation in the 6th – early 7th c. (view from the south); 2. Stratigraphic situation in the northeastern tower (up to the level of habitation in the 6th – early 7th c.)

Табло 8. 1. Североизточна кула: ниво на обитаване през VI – началото на VII в. (поглед от юг); 2. Стратиграфска ситуация в североизточната кула (до нивото на обитаване през VI – началото на VII в.)

of another (the so-called third or fourth, perhaps) Avaro-Slavic campaign, the goal of which was taking the second largest city of the Empire, Thessaloniki. Based on textual sources, researchers propose different exact dates in the second or beginning of the third decade of the 7th c. (Бурмов 1968, 101 – 102; Цанкова-Петкова, Ангелов 1980, 18 – 19; Петров 1981, 68 – 69; Данчева-Василева 2017, 55, 88). Based on analysis of artifacts (jewelry, pottery, and coins) from the latest research in Sveta Nedelya Square in the Serdica – Sredets – Sofia Reserve and after comparison with data from written sources (*Miracula Sancti Demetrii* in particular), the conclusion has been reached that the territory of Serdica was still inhabited in the initial years of Emperor Heraclius' reign (Станев 2020, 183 – 184).

Comparative analysis shows that the events in question affected wider areas of the Balkan Peninsula. The collapse of coin circulation in the third to fifth year of Emperor Heraclius' reign is noted in the relatively nearby cities of Naissus and Justiniana Prima as well as even further away in the towns along the Adriatic coast (Popović 1975, 491 – 496). The situation is similar in other large towns in the southern Danube territories such as Odessos (Лазаренко 2003, 153 ff.). One can always pose the possibility of a full or partial restoration of control by the central authority, in this case Constantinople, when finding later coins and well-dated seals, but there is no data to support

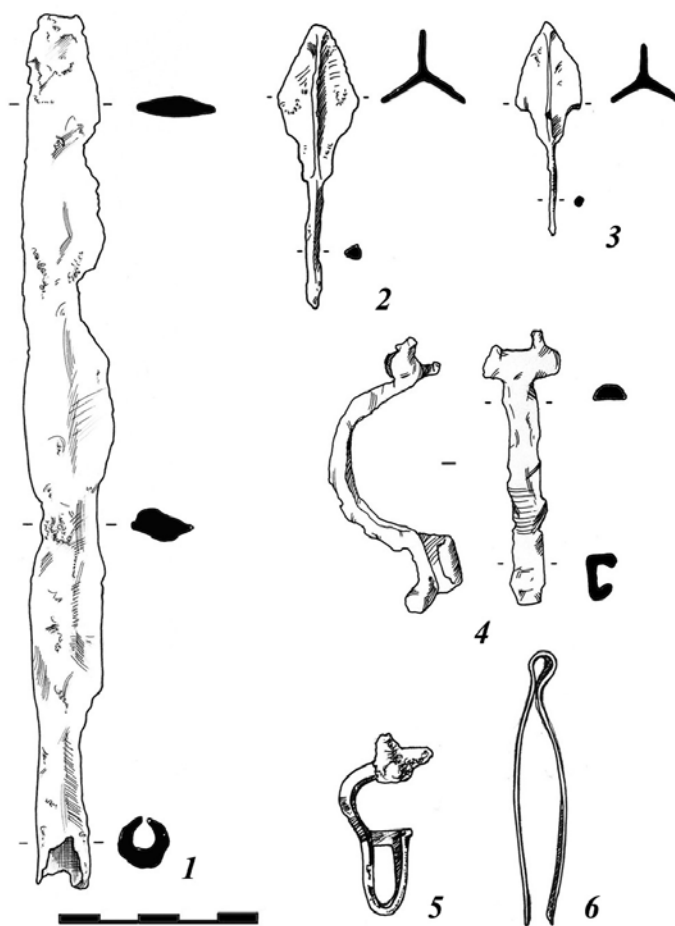


Fig. 10. Characteristic metal artifacts under Demolition Layer I
Обр. 10. Характерни метални находки под „Пласт разрушения I“

this in the case of the Lozenets complex. In fact, Demolition Layer I suggests a final destruction or point of abandonment for the site. Some metal artifacts from this mentioned layer can point to a particular historical interpretation: tri-blade arrowheads (the so-called Avar type) and a spearhead (fig. 10: 1 – 3). It is plausible, then, that the site discussed here was threatened and probably subsequently attacked and abandoned during the aforementioned Avaro-Slavic campaign, after which the population of Serdica retreated to Thessaloniki (Даскалов 2003, 287 ff.).

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ПРОИЗВОДСТВЕН КЕРАМИЧЕН ЦЕНТЪР (VI – НАЧАЛОТО НА VII В.) В ГР. СОФИЯ, КВ. ЛОЗЕНЕЦ – ЮЖЕН ПАРК. ПРОУЧВАНИЯ ПРЕЗ 2000 – 2001 Г.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

При изкопни работи за сграда от т. нар. „Жилишна група Южен парк“ в кв. Лозенец (обр. 1 – 2, обр. 4) е засегнат и частично разрушен неизвестен до този момент археологически паметник (обр. 1 – 2). Мястото е на около 3,5 км по права линия от южната порта на Сердика. В близост, на ул. „Димитър Хаджикоцев“, е проучен късноантичен мавзолей (обр. 1, обр. 3).²⁰

Напълно са унищожени около 580 – 600 кв. м, включително около 80 % от основната базиликална сграда (обр. 5). При спасителните разкопки бе проучена площ от около 900 кв. м. Геофизично изследване от 2001 г. показва, че става дума за внушителен архитектурен комплекс: едноапсидна трикорабна базилика, оградена със стена, с кули в ъглите; във вътрешността се развива комплекс от масивни сгради (южно от притвора и атриалния двор). Общата площ е около 2800 кв. м.

С периода III – началото на IV в. не се свързват строителни останки, има отделни находки.

Запазена е част от еднокорабна църква – апсидата (с вътрешен диаметър 5,20 м, стените са 0,90 м) с масивна подова замазка от розов хоросан. Според монетни находки изграждането е в 4-то – 5-то десетилетие на IV в.²¹ Била е активно посещавана и дарявана и в първото десетилетие на V в. Храмът е разрушен при следващо строителството, като материалите са били преизползвани.

Следва изграждане на комплекса – трикорабна едноапсидна базилика в оградено със стена пространство с кули в североизточния и северозападния ъгъл. От запад пред храма има атриален двор с портици от изток и запад, настлани с тухли. Към юг се развива комплекс от сгради. Базиликата е с дължина 31 м; наосът от изток е 16,70 м, от запад – 17,20 м. Централният кораб е с ширина 8,50 м, страничните са по 3,70 м. Притворът е с конха от юг (обр. 5). Строителството е след началото на V в.²²

Разграничават се два периода – първоначален и следващ, през който са направени добавки и преустройства. Направени са ремонти в края на века, след император Лъв I (457 – 474), вероятно по време на император Анастасий (491 – 518), когато се възобновява монетната циркулация.

През VI в. има преустройства: до вътрешното лице на стената са изградени масивни, долепени стълбове от ломени камъни с бял хоросан, намиращи се един от друг на около 2,50 м. Вероятно са за дървена платформа (?), лягаща върху тях. Цоклите им са с 0,45 – 0,60 м по-високо и са в ниво с настилките от вторично употребени тухли.²³ Пластът под тях е с останки от ремонт: цели и фрагменти от тухли, парчета от облицовки, късове мазилки и фугировки, пирони и скоби, прозоречно стъкло и т. н. Преустройства има и в базиликата: пробит е вторичен вход на южната ѝ стена до конхата на притвора, изградени са пейки в наоса покрай южната стена, както и в нартекса.²⁴ Комплексът губи

²⁰ Паметникът е известен преди проучването през 2001 г. (Шалаганов, Иванов 2006, 314 и сл.; Иванов 2008, 149 и сл.) и е интерпретиран като т. нар. „базилика в кв. Горни Лозенец“ (Велков 1954, 117 – 118; Василева 1984, 79 – 86; Чанева-Дечевска 1999, 30, обр. 7).

²¹ Сред нумизматичния материал (около 2 400 монети) преобладават малките номинали от IV и началото на V в. Те са дарения (лепта) от посетителите-богомолци. Отсъстват монети на Константин I отсечени приживе. Като цяло монетната циркулация се увеличава рязко през 40-те г. на IV в.

²² Най-късните монети от пласта под строителното ниво на базиликата са от периода 395 – 408 г.

²³ Над една е намерена монета на император Юстин II и София (отсечена 573/574 г.).

²⁴ В глината за спойка на пейка в нартекса е намерена монета от 16 нумии на император Юстиниан I; на нивото на вторичния вход в южната стена на базиликата – половин фолис на император Юстин II (отсечен 565/567 г.).

представителните религиозни функции, обитава се от обикновено население. Нивата са повдигнати и има вторични настилки. Значително се увеличава битовият керамичен материал: кухненски и съдове за съхранение, светилници, както и трапезните съдове – кани, плоскодънни амфорки, чаши и купи. Металните находки са свързани с ежедневието: добре познати типове фибули, ножчета, игли, пинсети, инструменти за пробиване и др. (обр. 10).

Това обитаване е свързано с производство на битова керамика, като част от продукцията е с глазирана повърхност. Разкрити са пещи за изпичане на съдове (означени с № 2, 3, 4) и съпътстващи ги ями. Намират се южно от базиликата и зида на кал, явно ограждащ „грънчарския сектор“ (обр. 7: 2).

Пещ № 2 (обр. 8) е двукамерна с купол, със скара с отвори за топлия въздух (табло 3 – 4). Диаметърът на горната камера в основата ѝ е 1,45 м. Скарата е запазена частично, дебела е 8 – 10 см (табло 3), отворите са с диаметър 5 – 8 см. Вероятно е носена от глинени стълбчета. Горивната камера е с диаметър на скарата и е дълбока 0,28 м. Дъното е обмазано с глина и е силно опалено. Отворът е към запад, постлан е с тухли, страниците са оформени от редове тухли, спосени с кал, опалени до черно. Оформена е предпещната яма с дълбочина 1,50 м и диаметър около 1,20 м (табло 3 – 4). При разрез в най-разрушената част се установи, че е изградена върху по-ранна пещ с подобна конструкция (пещ № 4; табло 5). Входът ѝ е от югоизток с наклон към запад, подът е тегула. Източно се развива предпещна яма. Горивната камера е със същия диаметър както тази на пещ № 2 и е застъпена (обр. 8, табло 5). Разликата в нивата на подовете е около 0,40 м (обр. 8). Пещта е дефектирала при прегряване. Диаметърът на камерата е около 1,30 м, отворът е с ширина 0,55 – 0,62 м. Пещ № 2 е била изградена след повреждането на пещ № 4.

Пещ № 3 (обр. 9, табло 6) е на около 3 м южно от южната стена на базиликата. Тя е двукамерна, куполовидна, леко овална в план, с външни размери 1,20 м (запад – изток) x 1,10 м (север – юг). Дебелината на стените на купола е 8 – 10 см. Скарата се носи от централен стълб от половинки тухли, обмазани с глина. Скарата е от осем радиално разположени глинени лъча. Подът е под наклон от север към юг, като разликата в нивата е 0,25 м. Същинската горивна камера е изнесена на юг и е с дължина 0,48 – 0,52 м и ширина 0,58 м (обр. 9). Във височина е била засводена. Изградена е от глина, отухлена от високата температура. Южно от нея частично бе разчистена предпещната яма с диаметър 1,45 м (запад – изток).

Пещите се отнасят към разпространения тип с кръгла (овална) в план камера. Те имат много варианти и са добре познати както от днешните български земи, съседните територии и като цяло – в рамките на късната Римска империя.

Датиране в контекста на обекта: пещите са вкопани в пласт с монети от края на IV и почти целия V в. (включително и Лъв I), както и следреформена пентанумия на Юстин I. Много важна за датиране на пещ № 2 (*terminus post quem*) е монета на император Юстин II (отсечена 570/571 г.), намерена на дъното на предпещната яма. По-ранната пещ № 4 също е вкопана в пласт с монети от края на IV и V в.

Пробите за археомагнитно датиране дават данни за периода 566 – 638 г., като пещ № 2 се предполага да е опалвана през 580 – 590 г. (Jordanova et al. 2003, 146 – 158; Kovacheva et al. 2004, 1463 – 1479).

Синхронни с периода на функциониране на пещите са помещенията (означени А – В) отвън до южната стена на базиликата. Първото се разполага непосредствено източно от конхата на притвора. Западно са Помещения Б и В, също с преустройства и повдигнати подови нива – настилки от цели и фрагментирани тухли, трамбована глинеста пръст с въглени и пепел. Под него е намерен фолис на Юстиниан I, (отсечен 527 – 538 г.; табло 7: 1). Изобилства от фрагменти от битови съдове. В Помещение В (т. нар. „жилище на грънчаря“) има колективна монетна находка. Тя е от запълването под най-късното обрушване на помещението („Пласт разрушения I“). Монетите са 43: 42 бронзови с различен номинал и един тремис (Божкова 2000, 18 – 37; Божкова 2004, 73 и сл.). Около 50 % са фолиси от времето на император Фока и Ираклий (някои с препечатки), като най-късните са от 614/615 г. Смесването с малки номинали отразява не толкова трезориране на пълноценни (като тегло) монети, а е отражение на актуална монетна циркулация към момента на формиране (Божкова

2004, 73 и сл.). Аналогични са и в отлаганията над настилната в атриума пред западната фасада, също под „Пласта разрушения I“.

В североизточната кула, пак под същия пласт деструкции, в отлаганията от обитаването са намерени монети на Юстиниан I, Юстин II и София, и на Фока. Обитаването се фиксира от ниво с горяла отухлена глина, струпвания от затыпкана глина, тухли и керемиди, лежащи хоризонтално (табло 8). Вътрешното пространство е разделено на четири.

За горна хронологична граница на производствения център може да се приеме четвъртата – петата година от управлението на император Ираклий, аналогично на града. Констатиран е рязък срив след 614/615 г.: монетите на Фока и Ираклий (до 616 г.) са съответно 44 и 23, а след това те са единични и с несигурен произход. Преобладават фолисите спрямо по малките номинали, т.е. има почти пълна повторимост на монетното обръщение в комплекса в Лозенец (Божкова 2000, 30 – 34; Владимирова-Аладжова 2022, табл. 10 – 11).

Това е следствие от поредния (трети или четвърти) аваро-славянски поход към втория по големина град Тесалоники. Изворите и отделните изследователи предлагат различни точни датировки в рамките на второто/началото на третото десетилетие на VII в. Явно градската територия е обитавана и в първите години на император Ираклий.

За конкретна историческа интерпретация могат да бъдат използвани някои метални находки от споменатия пласт: трипери върхове за стрели (т. нар. „аварски“ тип) и връх за копие (обр. 10: 1 – 3).

Ключови думи: ранновизантийски църковен комплекс, VI – началото на VII в., производство на глазирана керамика, керамични пещи