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против официального православия. Крушение тоталитарного советского государства еще больше укрепило позиции ИПЦ, ИПХ, и примирение между ними и Православной Церковью в ближайшей перспективе не предвидится. Это будет усиливать существующий раскол, содействовать возникновению новых общин ИПЦ, ИПХ в Украине.

Мы считаем, что феномен православного сектантства способен трансформировать свои вероучительные основы и религиозную практику в зависимости от изменения социально-политических обстоятельств и исторических эпох.

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### **The Nif Mountain project: the Byzantine complex at Başınar**

At present, in Turkey, no proper excavations on Byzantine sites are being carried out by academic institutions such as universities, except in a very few cases. All the almost 200 excavations are carried out at prehistorical and classical sites, with Byzantine layers that are most of the time undervalued or are entrusted to non-specialists in the area.

But a special and important place with architectural and decorative meaning came out in these last years in the context of a project carried by the archaeology department of Istanbul University. A survey began in 2000, in the region of the Nif Mountain; the ancient Nimphaion/Olympos at east of Izmir Bay, which gave much important information about not only archaic and classical settlements of this part of ancient Ionia, but also about the medieval traces still unknown to scholars.

In the Nif mountain research project, excavations and investigations of the Middle Age constructions at the Başınar site are an important part of the research.

In our presentation we are going to give a short introduction about these excavations at the Başınar site, the discovered constructions and the material that was recovered.

As mentioned before, the Nif mountain and its surrounding, which is situated to the east of Izmir Bay, has allowed natural sheltered settlements because of rich soil and water sources. In such an environment, it can be possible to find also Roman period's settlements from late antiquity.

With the move of the capital of the Roman state to the east, to Constantinople, begins the long domination of the new Christian state on Anatolian territory.

Is well known that Izmir and its surroundings, the Aegean area, had an important position in Byzantine architecture and art production. The main reason is, firstly, the administrative and social relationship with the capital. The other reason is the ancient rich cultural heritage in this area. This ancient period culture

and art always composed the most important primary element in Byzantine cultural production.

In this culturally important area, the settlement and monuments of the Byzantine period became very important. The Nif mountain project and especially Başpınar site's research is important and predominant in the most recent Byzantine research in Turkey.

As part of the project and before the excavations, the first surveys in the area were made and some traces of low walls of mortared rubble rising from the ground were seen. The excavation has been started formally in 2007 in order to understand the medieval settlement and to prevent further destruction.

After four seasons of excavations came to light two buildings, part of a Byzantine complex. The two constructions that we called A and B were two churches.

In 2008, we substantially exposed the plan of church B which is presents a typical plan of a cross-in-square type church. A dome rises on four cruciform piers; three semicircular apses at the east and a narthex on the west. The central apse has a synthronon with 2 rows of steps and with a small pedestal for sacred inscriptions.

From the circle of the central apse, and for all the central nave until the western entrance of the narthex, there is an opus sectile floor decoration. The pavement presents a geometrical pattern: large rectangular panels contain designs of interlaced circles, chess-board, rhombuses with variants. The pavement with the symmetrical panel and design placement, of regular cuts of sectilia, shows careful technical work and decoration.

The geometrical patterns of Roman tradition and the persistence of material used and the technique sometime makes it difficult to distinguish the exact period of execution. But our opus sectile can be considered a good example of provincial production from amongst the rich and varied Middle Byzantine examples.

The northern building, church A, visible with its apse from 2009, has a rectangular (20x17m.) form of a basilica plan with 3 naves divided by cruciform piers. These piers seem to have a supporting function. In some points of the west of the narthex some irregular masonry shows some remakes stages. Moreover we understood that there were traces of living in the central area until recent times.

Building A still remains of uncertain function until the discovery of the apse, but the problems are still many, given that we did not excavate completely and did not reach the original pavement. Until then we will not know if these piers where present at the original stage or columns were dividing the naves as in classical earlier basilicas.

I believe that when we will reach the pavement of the church we will find answers to many questions: maybe it was built in earlier times and was rebuilt with the construction of the adjacent B church. In fact two layers of frescoes indicate different rebuilding stages. But on the other hand one does not notice even a small sign of early Byzantine reused material, while there is enormous use

of Roman period spolia.

In fact from the first season of excavation there was found numerous spolia material inside church B. Many Roman sarcophagus pieces were used in the pavement. But the pavement, especially in the northern nave, were made of regular and polished, probably Proconnesian marble slabs. This also shows accurate work of the floor.

Next to the spolia material used in the churches, many others came to light during the removal of the ground/soil? inside the buildings. Mostly they are carved pieces: mostly they present mouldings and probably they belonged to doors, windows. Again some architraves with plain soffits probably placed on this moulded ones –because we see the points of joints- belonged to the doors or other passages. In fact we already found the threshold between the two churches.

Next to these ones, others decorated are to be found. Numerous are the pieces with the design of crosses and stylized palmettes and other flowers.

Concerning the stone pieces, we have to state that most of them constitute a chronological unity. All the pieces belong to the middle Byzantine period with their pattern, form and their style. And it indicates quality working with their careful and regular dressing.

Between other finds, a few coins were found at the Başpınar complex. Few metal objects are to be found, like bronze spikes, small fragments of plaques, a handle of candle, piece of chain, may be of a polykandellion.

More numerous are glass pieces: goblets, oil lamps, bottles, bracelets and especially window glasses of crown-glass type are the main finds of this group. The oil lamps are made to be placed in polycandilions: similar are numerous ones in Constantinople and Asia Minor. There are also objects for table use like plates and glass for drinking. Mostly they are of light olive-green colour and indicate local production.

The ceramics found in Başpınar site are uniform in their dates and show typical designs of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. According to the scholars who are dealing with the material, all the ceramics are of the types of Zeuxippos ware I-II, found in Constantinople and in different places in western Asia Minor. The unique one is a plate decorated with an elegant peacock design which seems a specific production of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

It was understood that construction A was decorated with intensive wall-painting. In many points the frescoes are seen as two layers. Mostly, they are decorative bordures with geometrical, stylized floral designs. One fragment seems to represent the lower part of a dressed human figure of its skirt and feet, another a fragment a halo. These were similar to patterns that were seen in the Middle Byzantine period in their colour and decorative characteristics. Like the ones in Panagia Krina church in Chios, dated to the Lascarid period, the Başpınar decorations were probably not much different from these.

In conclusion, we could think of the the construction group as part of a monastery complex because :

- The location (The sheltered place because of the mountain behind of,

with beautiful water sources, caves in the mountains with painting remains—maybe they were small hermits' refuges (*skiti*), made us think of it as a monastery. Beside this, the tomb confused us especially (because of) the child.

- The construction group did not comprise only two churches, but it was found with wall remains around.

What kind of place was it? It is very difficult to determine this place given the few historical sources.

We still have not found any inscription or other similar type of information. Therefore it is still difficult to determine the original name of the place.

But the Başpinar Byzantine complex, with its well preserved architectural plans, the rich and colorful marble opus sectile floor, the careful sculptural decoration and many other findings, seems to indicate an important and wealthy foundation of the Middle Byzantine period, probably of the Lascarid Empire.

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### **The church atop a synagogue in Chersonesos Taurica?**

The 1935 basilica is one of the best-known of the eight late antique churches excavated in Chersonesos Taurica. It overlooks the seacoast on the northern end of the ancient city and today, thanks to partial anastylosis, it constitutes the main attraction of Chersonesos. It is a typical three-aisle basilica of the Christian East, with a narthex on the western end, an eastern apse, and aisles separated by two colonnades of six columns each. Researchers have distinguished two phases of its existence. The plan and stratigraphy show the clearest evidence of these phases in the overlap and simultaneous displacement of two consecutive apses: the older one – from the 5th century – is the smaller, polygonal apse oriented more towards the north, and the younger one – from the 6th century – is the larger, semicircular apse currently visible on the surface. The older basilica was abutted from the south by a rectangular room with a well-preserved mosaic pavement and walls painted with images of garlands and birds, preserved on plentiful fragments of multicoloured plaster. In Chersonesos it is generally claimed that at the moment of discovery some of these fragments bore Hebrew graffiti, although no trace of them remains. These finds, together with a stone block adorned with a carving of a seven branched candelabrum, induced the researchers to put forward a hypothesis on the existence of a Jewish synagogue underneath the church. However, the block with the menorah was incorporated into the semicircular apse dating from the 6th century, so as reused building material it cannot be an argument in favour of the prior existence of a synagogue on the same spot. The general lack of material proof in this matter is no surprise if one compares the case of Chersonesos to other, confirmed instances of transforming synagogues into churches in Late Antiquity.