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Bu dergideki makalelerde kullanılacak olan kısaltmalar Alman Arkeoloji Enstitüsü yayın kuralları, Bulletin de l'Association internationale pour l'Etude de la Mosaïque antique, AIEMA - AOROC 24.2016, La Mosaïque Gréco Romaine IX ve Der Kleine Pauly dikkate alınarak yapılmıştır.

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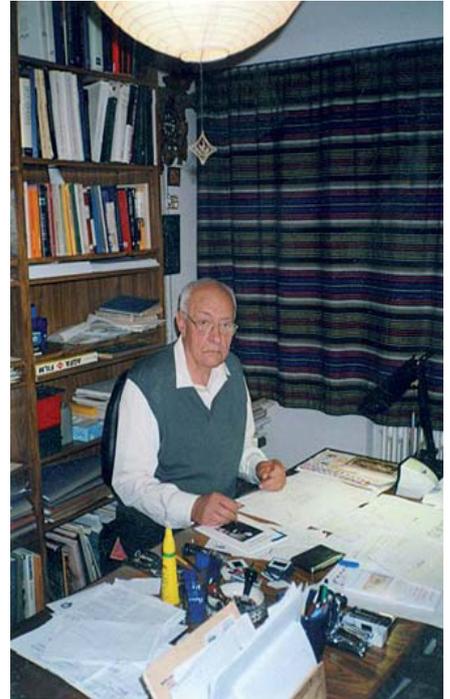
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José María Blázquez Martínez in memoriam (1926-2016)

José María Blázquez Martínez (Professor of Ancient History and Fellow of the Spanish Royal Academy of History) passed away on March 26, 2016, in the city of Madrid (Spain) after a full life devoted to teaching, scientific research and the spread of antiquity; and leaving all of us -who have had the immense fortune to enjoy his mastership and overwhelming personality-, with an immense sadness.

Prof. Blázquez graduated in Philosophy and Letters from the University of Salamanca in 1951 and defended his PhD in the Complutense University of Madrid in 1956. During the next decade, Prof. Blázquez continued his training under the supervision of Prof. Pallottino at the University of La Sapienza in Rome and, granted by the DAAD, at the University of Marburg, under the supervision of Prof. Matz and Prof. Drerup. Subsequently he made other successful research stays at the University of Tel Aviv, the British Academy of Rome, the University of Catania, and in the German Archaeological Institute branches at Istanbul, Damascus and Riyadh. In this regard, Prof. Blázquez always defended the importance of international networks that, through academic contact with other schools and colleagues, conceived as essential for personal development and the progress of scientific research.



After this intense formative period, José María Blázquez obtained a position as Professor of Ancient History at the University of Salamanca (1966-) and shortly after at the Complutense de Madrid (1969-), where he was designated as Professor Emeritus. At the same time, he was an active member of the former Institute of Archaeology "Rodrigo Caro" (CSIC), that he directed during more than ten years (1973-1985). Finally, in recognition to his academic trajectory, Professor Blázquez was elected as a Fellow of the Spanish Royal Academy of History. In all these institutions Prof. Blázquez developed a brilliant contribution to the promotion of Ancient History in Spain, especially important was his capacity for mentoring (he supervised more than 40 PhDs during his academic life) large teams of teachers and researchers, that obtained several tenured positions in different universities and academic institutions. He was also a prolific author publishing many handbooks and monographs that are authentic milestones in history the Spanish scholarship (i. e. *La Romanización, Historia social y económica. La España Romana. Economía de la Hispania romana*, Bilbao, 1978, *Historia de España Antigua, I. Protohistoria*, Madrid, 1980; *Historia de España Antigua II. Hispania romana*, Madrid, 1978). Largely influential was also his leadership in the direction of the scientific journals as *Archivo Español de Arqueología* (1973-1987) and *Gerión* (1983-2010). In addition, Prof. Blázquez directed numerous archaeological excavations at Caparra (Cáceres), Cástulo (Jaén), La Loba (Fuenteovejuna, Córdoba), and in the Monte Testaccio (Rome).

By virtue of its training and its wide perspective, Prof. Blázquez's research trajectory was the reflection of the scientist dedicated to the study of antiquity, with a masterful management of

diverse written and archaeological sources, always connected with current intellectual debates of all social and human sciences. During his career published more than 37 books, acting of editor in other 9 monographs. He also published 234 articles in the most prestigious, both Spanish and International, scientific journals and several chapters in collective volumes. His research interests covered multiples areas on the study of antiquity: the Phoenician and Greek colonization of the Western Mediterranean, the Late Iron Age communities of the Iberian Peninsula, the study of Pre-Roman religions, the Impact of primitive Christianity in the Late Roman Empire, and, of course, the ancient economy of Roman Spain, with an special focus on the exports of *Baetican* olive oil.

Finally, we would like to highlight his research on Roman mosaics, whose first publication dates from 1975 - "Arte y Sociedad en los mosaicos del Bajo Imperio" [Art and Society in the mosaics of the Late Roman Empire] *Bellas Artes* 75, 1975, pp. 18-25 -soon followed by- "Mosaicos romanos del Bajo Imperio" [Roman mosaics of the Late Empire], *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 50-51, 1977, pp. 269-293., In this regard, Prof. Blázquez continued the a research line previously initiated by his teacher Prof. Antonio García y Bellido. Since 1976 to 1996, Prof. Blázquez promoted and directed the Corpus of Mosaics of Spain, within the framework of the international project sponsored by the AIEMA. Through this monumental labor, Prof. Blázquez contributed to establish the study of Roman mosaics as an authentic sub-discipline in the field of the Spanish Classical archaeology.

The obtention of several I+D Research projects, funded in competitive calls by the Spanish Ministry of Science (acting as Principal Investigator from 1976 to 1997) and an International Project of the Joint Hispanic-American Committee, with the University of West-Lafayette, Purdue (Indiana-USA), allowed Prof. Blázquez to create a permanent research team on the study of Roman mosaics. This team, which I (Prof. Neira Jiménez) am honored of have been part, managed the realization of the above mentioned *Corpus de Mosaicos de España* (CME), a work continued afterwards by its dear colleague, Dr. Guadalupe López Monteagudo (CSIC). In addition to the publication of 12 volumes of the CME, he presented numerous papers on the Hispanic, African and Near Eastern Roman mosaics in the most prestigious conferences on these topics, such as the International Congresses organized by the AIEMA or *L'Africa romana* conference, organized by the Centro di Studi sull'Africa Romana of the Università degli studi di Sassari, as well as in countless courses and seminars in other institutions and universities, such as the Roman Mosaic Seminar of the UC3M, to which he attended every year, without missing any of the 9 editions celebrated.

Prof. Blázquez was a firm believer in the work developed by AIEMA, having been named member of Honor of this scientific association. He also formed part of the editorial board of the Journal of Mosaic Research, where he published various articles, and presented papers in both the 11th International Colloquium on Ancient Mosaics, held in Bursa on 2009, and in the 5th Colloquium of AIEMA Turkey, held in Kahramanmaraş on 2011. Prof. Blázquez was a true lover of Turkey.

Prof. Blázquez was an unavoidable reference in the international scholarship on ancient mosaics, many colleagues who share our pain remember his vitality even in the XIII. AIEMA Congress held in Madrid on September 2015, where he gave the inaugural conference. As a testimony of his enthusiasm for the study of ancient mosaics, he was already thinking of traveling to the next AIEMA Congress scheduled for 2018 in Cyprus. Proof of his infinite generosity, he prepared

tirelessly until the end of his days a text on Diana in the mosaics of Roman Spain for X SMR, held in September 2016 at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

His decisive contribution to the study of antiquity has earned him numerous recognitions from many international academic institutions and associations: Fellow of German Archaeological Institute (1968), Board member of the L'Association Internationale d'Epigraphie grecque et latine (AIEGL), Member of the Hispanic Society (1974); Fellow of the Academy of Arts and Archaeology of Bologna (1980), Fellow of the Spanish Royal Academy of History (1990), Fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences (1993), Fellow of the Academia Nazionale dei Lincei (1994), Fellow of the Fine Arts Academy of Santa Isabel de Hungría (Seville) (1995), Fellow of the Real Academia de Bones Letres de Barcelona (1997), or Fellow of the Académie de Aix-en-Provence (1999), among others. He also received many prizes as the Franz Cumont prize from the Académie Royale de Belgique (1985), the Great Silver medal of Archaeology from l'Académie d'Architecture de Paris (1987), or the Cavalli d'Oro prize from Venice (2003). Prof. Blázquez was named *doctor honoris causa* by the universities of Valladolid (1999), Salamanca (2000), Bologna (2001), León (2005), and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (2015), and received the *Orden del Mérito Civil*, one of the highest recognitions granted by the Spanish govern.

He was a genius as scholar, but also a genial person. For both reasons, colleagues, students, and friends of many countries, that have the fortune of meet Prof. Blázquez during his life, feel a great emptiness for the loss of our dear teacher.

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Şahin
Bursa Uludağ University

Prof. Maria Luz Neira Jiménez
Universidad Carlos III de Madrid



Archaeology / Arkeoloji

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On the Eirene Mosaic from Philippopolis, Thrace

Trakya, Philippopolis Eirene Mozaiği Üzerine

Ivo TOPALILOV*

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Abstract

The present article deals with the mosaic pavements of one of most significant residential complexes in Late Antique Philippopolis – the Domus Eirene. The name of the complex refers to the personification that is the main element in the decoration not only of the reception hall, but the entire building. An analysis of two main aspects is made: one concerning the transformation of the image of the personification into a Christian saint, and another which concerns the transformation of the complex itself into a domus episcopalis and how that is reflected in the mosaic pavements. In the case of Eirene the image may have well been connected with historical events, contemporary or nearly contemporary with the time when the mosaic was produced, and also with political and religious propaganda.

Keywords: Mosaic pavement, Late Antiquity, Philippopolis, personification, Christianity, Eirene.

Öz

Bu makalede, Geç Antik Philippopolis'in en önemli konut komplekslerinden birinin, Domus Eirene'nin mozaik döşemeleri ele alınmıştır. Kompleksin adı, sadece resepsiyon salonunun değil, tüm binanın dekorasyonunda ana unsur olan Eirene kişileştirmesinden gelmektedir. İlk olarak kişileştirme imgesinin bir Hristiyan azizine dönüşümü ve ikinci olarak da kompleksin bir Domus Episcopalis'e dönüşmesi ve bunun mozaik döşemelere nasıl yansıtıldığı ile ilgili olarak iki temel noktanın analizi yapılmıştır. Eirene örneğinde, bu tasvir, mozaığın üretildiği tarihle çağdaş veya neredeyse çağdaş olan tarihsel olaylarla, aynı zamanda politik ve dini propagandayla da bağlantılı olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mozaik döşeme, Geç Antik, Philippopolis, kişileştirme, Hristiyanlık, Eirene.

The so-called 'domus Eirene' is one of the most distinguished residential complexes in Late Antique Philippopolis, Thrace, located in the town center (Fig. 1). Although discovered several decades ago (an extensive report of the results of the archaeological excavation has been published in Karov - Bospachieva 1989: 129-164), the domus continues to attract the attention of scholars from different fields such as Late Antique urbanism (Dinchev 2002: 210; Topalilov 2012: 419-420; Topalilov 2014: 228-229), Late Antique art in the case of mosaic pavements (Kolarova - Bospachieva 2014: 210-226; Pillinger et al. 2016: 174-198) and even Early Christianity, as some of the images may imply a possible *interpretatio christiana* (Pillinger et al. 2016: 182-184). The mosaic pavements are also of interest as they reveal the clear process of transformation of the residential complex itself which eventually became a *domus episcopalis*. In fact, the *domus Eirene* is the only complex among all those known from Late Antique Philippopolis where such transformation can be detected and studied. Thus in the following paragraphs some features of these mosaics will be discussed in detail as well as their possible link with an *interpretatio christiana*.

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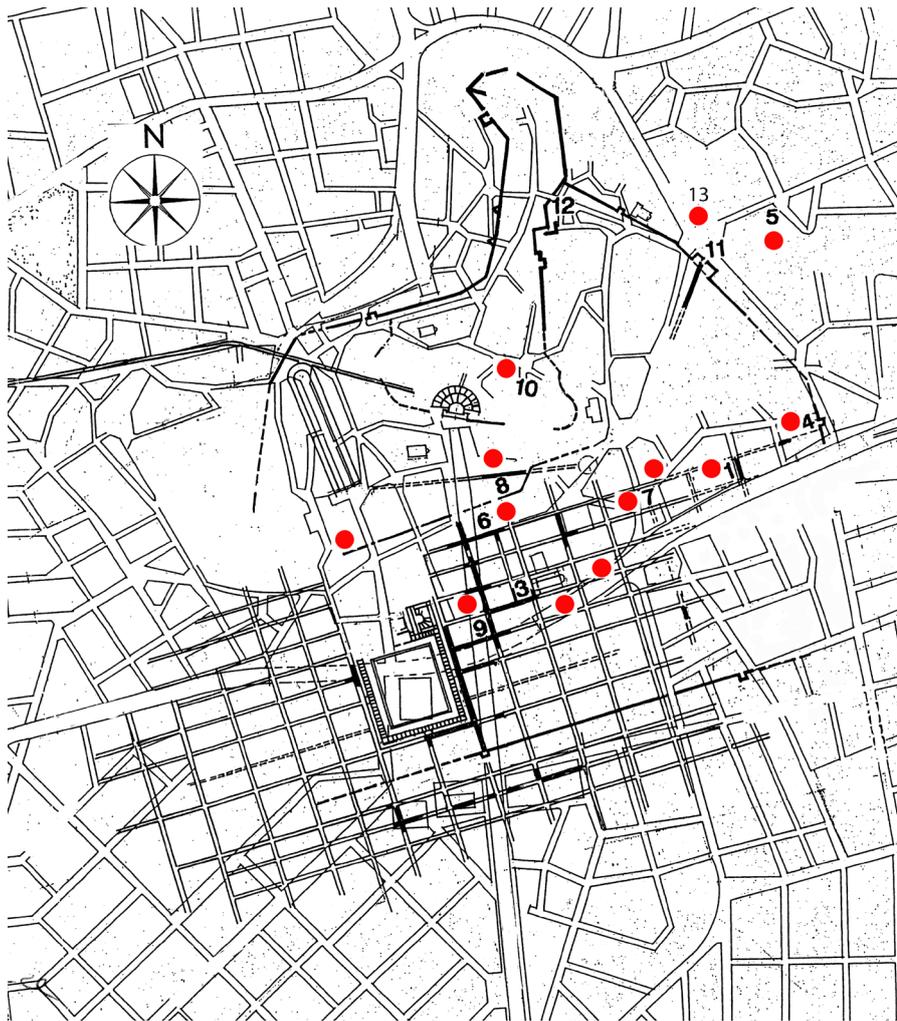


Figure 1
The location of the most representative residential and Christian complexes in Late Antique Philippopolis (Domus Eirene is located under No.6).
Map by Ivo Topalilov.

It is not my intention here to discuss all aspects of the mosaic pavements of the *domus Eirene*, as this has already been done. A brief description, however, is needed for our study.

The mosaic pavements covered almost the whole representative part of the complex (Fig. 2). They decorate the vestibule (room 1), the south and east porticos of the inner courtyard, and rooms 3, 9, 10 and 11. They were not, however, installed simultaneously, as a recent study reveals, detecting at least four phases. The earliest of them dates to the second half of the 3rd c. CE to the beginning 4th c. CE; the second phase, which consists of the mosaic pavement only in room 3, is dated to the last quarter of the 4th c. CE. The third phase, which includes a portion of the greeting inscription from the mosaic in room 3 and also the mosaic pavement in both porticos, the vestibule (room 1), and room 10, is dated to the first quarter of the 5th c. CE with a *terminus ante quem* of 441/442 CE; and the final fourth phase, which is detected only in room 9, is dated to 471-476 CE (Pillinger et al. 2016: 197). The proposed chronology is acceptable in general, although some details are not yet entirely clear. They will be discussed below in the course of studying the dynamics of the transformation of functions of the rooms and how that is reflected in the mosaic decoration.

The centerpiece of the whole building is certainly room 3. It is the biggest room (8,8/6 m), and the most richly decorated with not only a mosaic floor, but also an octagonal-shaped fountain in the center (Fig. 3). The mosaic itself consists of two major parts presented by two *emblemata* – the eastern one with the image of

Figure 2
The mosaic pavements of Domus Eirene
(after Bospachieva 2003: 87 fig. 3).

Figure 3
The mosaic pavements of Domus Eirene,
closer view (after Pillinger et al. 2016: taf.
120 abb. 319).

a female personification (Fig. 4), and the western one with the image of a crater (Fig. 5). The image of the personification is rendered in *opus vermiculatum*, with a light-blue nimbus and a diadem. An inscription on both sides of the head identifies the personification – EIPHNH. The image itself is the first to be seen when entering the room from the south portico.

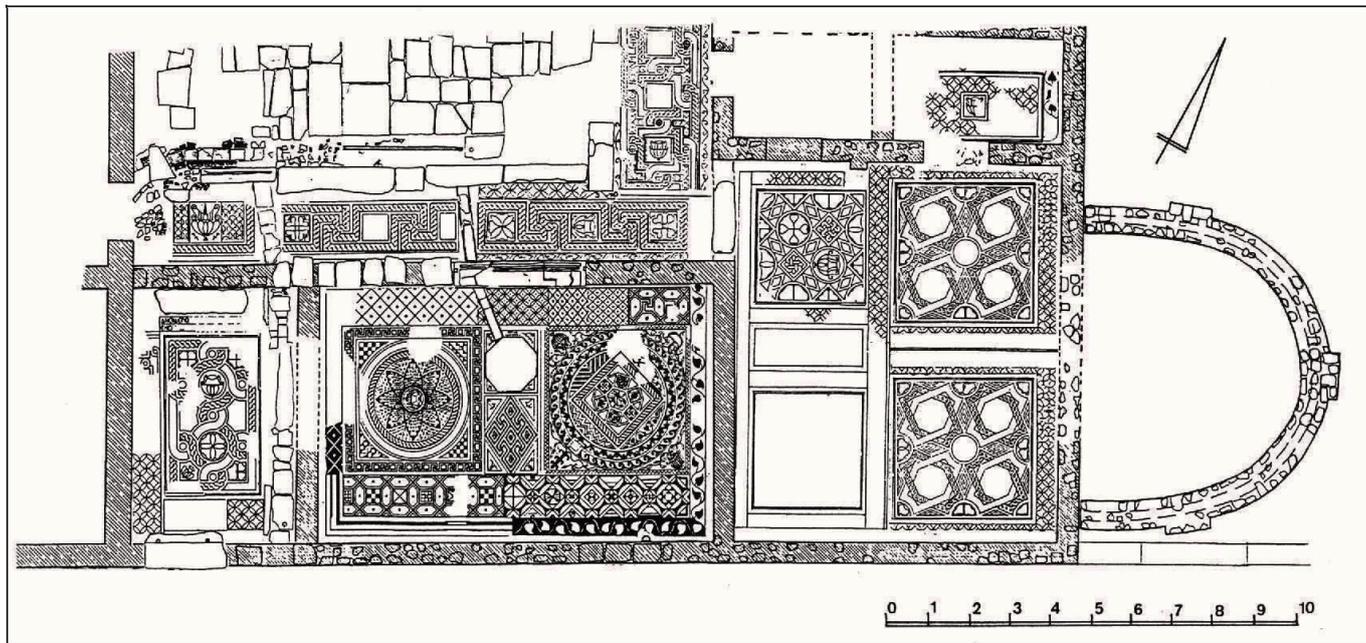




Figure 4
Domus Eirene, the
medallion with the image
of Eirene.
Photo: Ivo Topalilov.



Figure 5
Domus Eirene, the
emblem with cantharos.
Photo: Ivo Topalilov.

The crater, by contrast, is orientated toward the west where an earlier entrance, later blocked, might have existed. The different character of the mosaic in the middle of the west border may be an argument for such an entrance (Fig. 6) (Pillinger et al. 2016: 176, 185). This emblem, however, divides the room into two parts, a division that is also observed in the borders of the mosaic pavement. The southern border is a good example of this, and the northern one, despite having been repaired several times, has similar indications (Fig. 3). Here the question arises of whether these images indicate two parts of the room with different functions, considering that we are not dealing with *pseudo-emblemata*. Up to now we have no clear example of any *pseudo-emblemata* and the rest of the known *aulae* from this time in Philippopolis also contain an *emblemata*, as for instance in the Nilotic scene found in the *aula* of a residential complex located close to the *domus Eirene* (Tankova 1980: 27-35; on this mosaic, see also Pillinger et al. 2016: 220-227). It is not surprising therefore that the excavator of the *domus Eirene* proposed that room 3 was a *triclinium* based on the image of the crater (Kolarova - Bospachieva 2014: 206). Conversely, V. Popova believes that it was the *tablinum* (Pillinger et al. 2016: 179-180). The answer to this question is found in the transformations that occurred not only in the decoration of the rooms, but also the interior reconstructions.

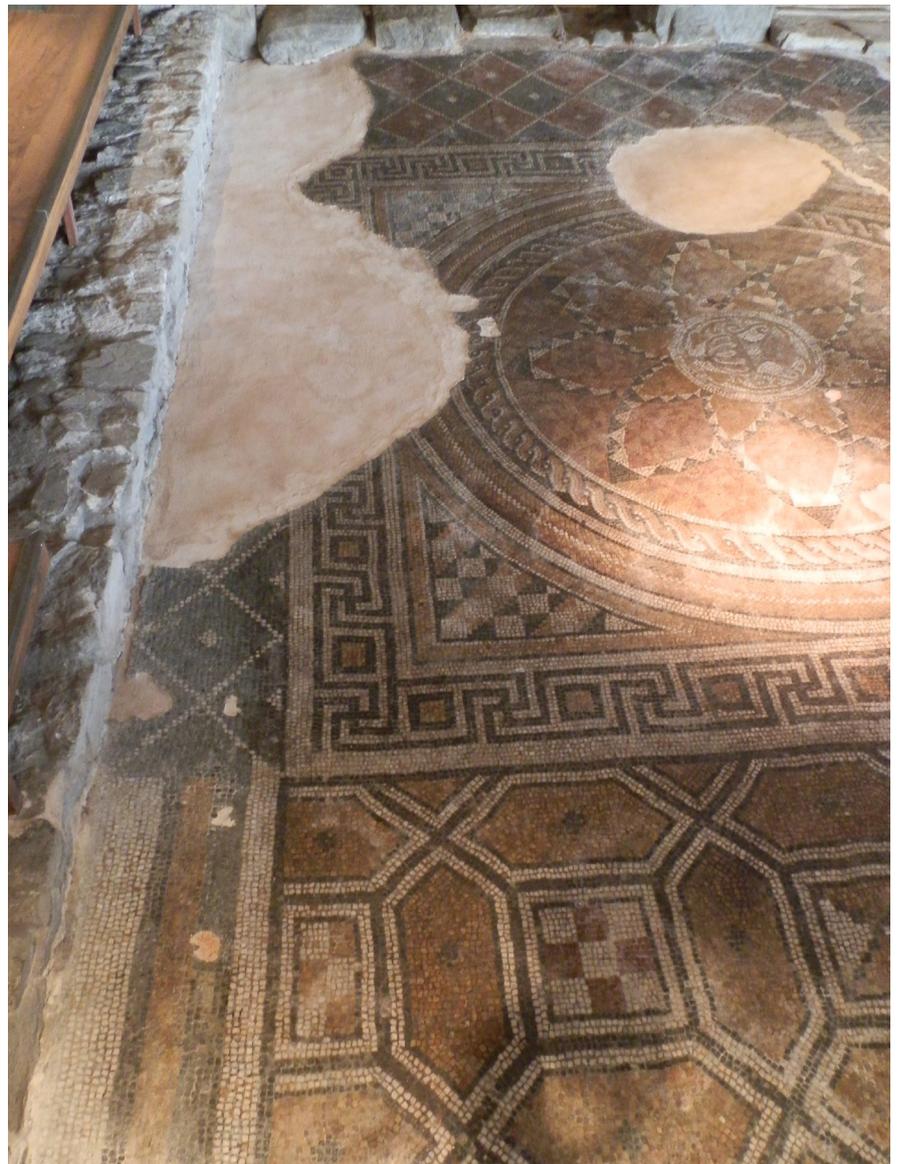
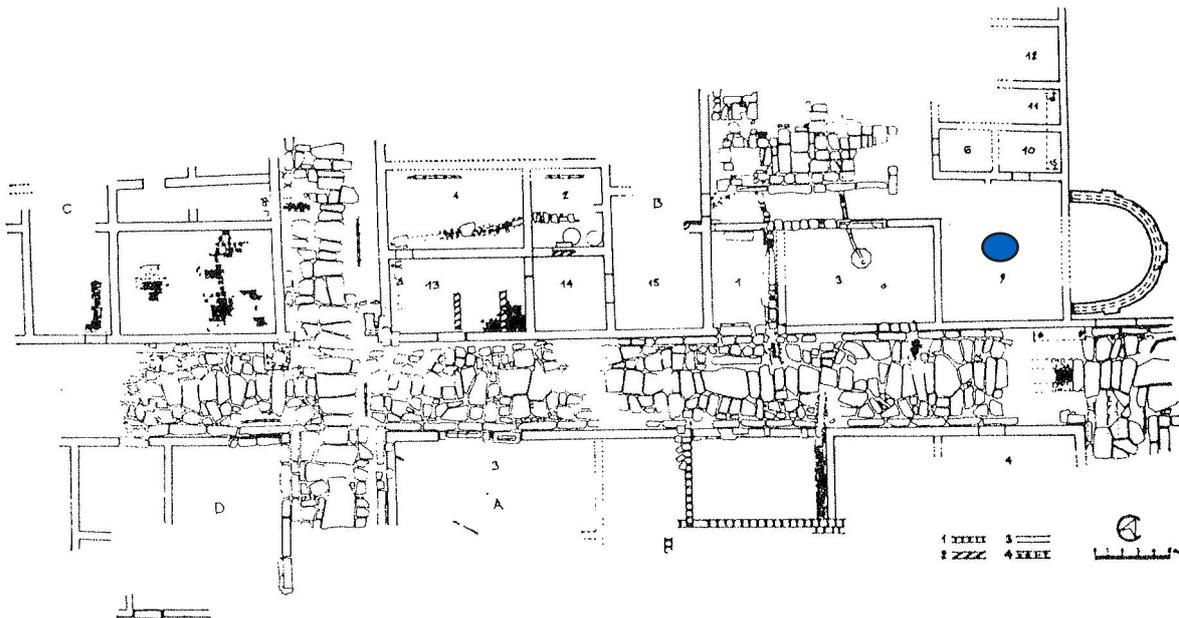


Figure 6
Domus Eirene, the western
border in room 3.
Photo: Ivo Topalilov.

An excellent example of a *triclinium* in the *domus Eirene* can be found in room 9 (Fig. 7). It seems to have been transformed on a large scale, as not only was a *stibadium* added to the initial room, as may be inferred from the apsidal addition (Dinchev 2002: 207), but the room itself was almost doubled in size by incorporating the adjacent one (Fig. 8). The iconography of the mosaic floor as well as the pilaster which, along with the mosaic, divides the room into two parts are arguments for this. Unfortunately, the mosaic in the apse is not preserved but the elements in the decoration such as the crater (Fig. 9), are indicators of the purpose of this room. The date of the enlargement of the room and its new functions are still under discussion, and V. Dinchev is inclined to date it to the late 4th – beginning of the 5th c. CE (Dinchev 2002: 210), while the excavators place it in the second half of the 5th c. CE (Karov - Bospachieva 1989: 136, 149). It seems that initially the room as a *triclinium* was not decorated with a mosaic floor, in accordance with V. Dinchev's date of the construction of the *stibadium*. It acquired that feature later, after the 440s, as the burnt layer found beneath the mosaic floor in room 9 and 10¹ gives that *terminus post quem* and links the destruction of the *domus* with the Hunnish invasions (Topalilov 2014: 229, 232). In both cases there was an undisputed change of function for the room in a period later than the decoration of room 3. It is most probably for this purpose that the vestibule and the south porticos were also paved, indicating the new axis of entry leading to the new *triclinium*. The mosaic pavement in neighboring room 10 also reflects the new function of room 9.

Figure 7
Domus Eirene. The second and third construction periods.
(Karov - Bospachieva 1989: fig. 3).



It seems that during that time the western entrance of room 3 was closed and the room changed its functions. If initially it was partly used as a *triclinium*, as the mosaic decoration suggests, it seems that near the end of the 4th – beginning of the 5th c. CE at the earliest, it lost this function which was transferred to room 9. It is not surprising to find that this change also affected the decoration of the room. It was at this time that the octagonal fountain was installed in the middle of

1 On this layer – see Bospachieva 2003: 102.

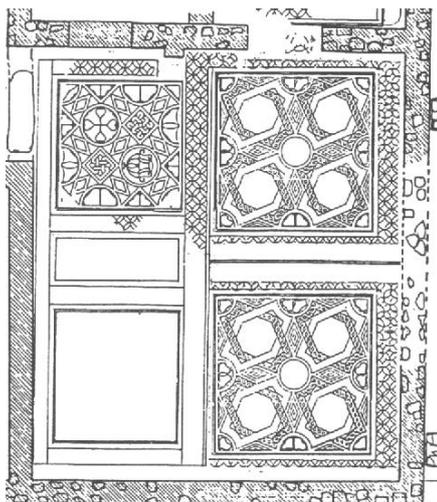


Figure 8
Domus Eirene, room 9.
(after Kolarova - Bospachieva 2014: 207).

the room with the greeting inscription: ΚΑΛΩC ΗΛΘΕC/ΕΥΤΥΧΩC. Room 3 remained, as previously, strictly an *aula*, an official audience room for the owner of the complex, rather than a *tablinum* or *triclinium* as proposed in the existing scholarship. Another supporting argument may be found in the construction of the fountain itself.

The appearance of the octagonal fountain in a room is not unusual for Thrace, as there are similar examples from neighboring Augusta Traiana. For instance, in a *domus* decorated with mosaic floors dated to the beginning of 4th c. CE, in a room interpreted as a *triclinium* situated around an inner courtyard, an octagonal structure was discovered along with the mosaic floor and an inscription:

ΚΑΛΩ[C ΗΛΘΕ] and ΕΝ ΥΓΙ[Α] [---]Ν vacat Π [---] (Pillinger et al. 2016: 125-131 taf. 72 abb. 202-203; taf. 73 abb. 204-205). This tradition seems to have continued and another example was found in a *domus* dated to the third quarter of the 4th c. CE (Pillinger et al. 2016: 152-159 taf. 105 abb. 289-290). In a *villa suburbana* of 4th-5th c. CE it is not entirely clear (Pillinger et al. 2016: 160-163 taf. 108-110 abb. 296-298).



Figure 9
Domus Eirene, room 9,
fragment of mosaic pavement.
(after Kolarova - Bospachieva 2014: 223).

These examples clearly reveal that an octagonal fountain may be regarded as an essential part of the decoration of *aulae* and *triclinia* in the residential complexes of Late Antique Thrace. They also reveal that no *interpretatio christiana* should be seen in every such case, despite the fact that octagonal fountains gained a major role in Early Christianity and baptism (see most recently in Jensen 2011: 225-229). In the case of Philippopolis, such an idea has been proposed (Bospachieva 2003: 103), but it is under strong scrutiny, as no proof for this has yet been

found. It is very likely that in the case of the *domus Eirene* we are dealing with an *aula* decorated with a fountain with a dolphin, as reconstructed by V. Popova (Popova 2016: 159), rather than a room linked with baptism or other Christian rituals. In fact, an earlier example from Augusta Traiana reveals that a fountain of this type was constructed with a mosaic floor which contains pagan as well as Jewish/Early Christian elements (Popova - Moroz 1987: 266).

These transformations within the *domus Eirene* were not the only ones carried out at that time. According to archaeological excavations, a new *cardo* south of the building was paved without reference to the existing street grid-system and therefore passed through one of the *insulae* located to the south (Karov - Bospachieva 1989: 141-142). As a result, a direct link between the *domus Eirene* and the Episcopal basilica was established². Although the bishop's basilica was constructed as early as the time of Theodosius I from an imperial initiative (Topalilov 2016: 108-109), it seems that the establishment of a direct link with the *domus Eirene* happened after 442-447 CE. At that time it seems that the city drastically altered its urban design (Dinchev 2002: 223 n. 15), contemporary with the mosaic floor in the *triclinium* and when the *aula* was redecorated as discussed above. These transformations and the construction of the *cardo* indicate the new importance of the *domus Eirene*, an importance clearly linked with Christianity. By this period, at the latest, we are dealing with the *domus Eirene* as a *domus episcopalis*, since the establishment of such a direct link with the Episcopal basilica is among the most common features of the Late Antique *domus episcopalis*³. This new status may have emerged earlier, as has been suggested (Pillinger et al. 2016: 193-195), but the full transformation was completed during the time when the episcopal basilica was restored and redecorated.

The interpretation of the *domus Eirene* as a *domus episcopalis* may find further support from the presentation of the personification Eirene in the mosaic pavement of the *aula* (Fig. 10). Thus the upper edge of the diadem of Eirene, which is interpreted as a cross (Bospachieva 2003: 94, 99), as well as the nimbus which seemingly surrounds her head, have led to an *interpretatio christiana* (Pillinger et al. 2016: 182-184). For instance, according to M. Bospachieva, this personification is the symbol of the Resurrection, and as such she finds an association with the idea of Jesus Christ presented with 'divine names' such as Tenderness, Wisdom and Peace (Bospachieva 2003: 98-99, 105).

Another interpretation is suggested by V. Popova, who believes that a significant link can be established between this image and the Second Ecumenical Council held in the Constantinopolitan Church of 'St. Irene' in 381 CE. According to her, by this gesture the owner of the *domus Eirene* declared his desire for Peace in the Christian Church, in response to the intense dispute between Arians and Orthodox Nicenes. The presence of 'St. Irene' in the *domus Eirene* in Philippopolis symbolizes the Peace that had come to the Church by the time the mosaic was laid (Pillinger et al. 2016: 193-195).

It is certain that the diadem belongs to the initial image of Eirene, notwithstanding objections that have been raised (Valeva 2011: 41), but the diadem itself is depicted in an unusual way. It is important to establish whether it is a 'cross' and whether the nimbus had a clear Christian meaning at that time.

2 On the bishop's basilica – see Kesjakova 1989: 113-127; Chaneva-Dechevska 1999: 253-254; Kesjakova 2006: 148-149; Topalilov 2016: 108-109. On the mosaic pavements – see Kessiakova 1989: 2539-2559; Kessiakova 1994: 165-170; Bospachieva 2005: 41-43; Kesjakova 2011: 173-210; Pillinger et al. 2016: 198-220; Topalilov 2016a: 591-600.

3 On them see Müller-Wiener 1988: 103-145.

Figure 10
Domus Eirene, the image of Eirene.
<http://romanplovdiv.org/en/building-eirene>



The depiction of various personifications on mosaic pavements was a widespread practice within the Eastern part of the Roman Empire in the 4th c. CE. The mosaic pavements found in Halicarnassus and Syria are good examples of this (Balty 1995: pl. XV). Unlike the Syrian mosaics, however, whose influence over the Philippopolitan mosaics was indirect (Topalilov 2016b: 118-129), those found in Halicarnassus are of greater importance for our study, since a proper link may be established between them and those in the *domus Eirene*. The link between them is the master craftsmen coming from the mosaic workshop on the island of Cos, one of major mosaic centers on the Asiatic coast (on them – see most recently in De Matteis 2004) who produced the mosaics in Halicarnassus, as well as those in the *aula* of the *domus Eirene*⁴. It is not surprising to learn that the mosaic pavements in Cos also contain image of personifications, such as for instance Tyche (Brouscari 1997: 69 fig. 3; on other personifications from Halicarnassos – see also Poulsen 1997: 9-23), and others which allows a comparison to be made between them and the Philippopolitan examples. Close examination reveals that the modeling of the face and the type of diadem the personifications wear are

4 This idea is advanced by Vanja Popova in personal communication.

identical to that of Eirene in Philippopolis, which is contemporary. Unlike other similar images in Syria, the diadem from the mosaics of Cos ‘appeared’ only on the top of the head like the one at Philippopolis and did not cover the whole head (De Matteis 2004: 168, 212, 217, 222, 344). The only difference that can be observed between them is that the diadem in Philippopolis is presented more schematically, and the upper end is not elaborated. So far no nimbus, however, is attested in the images of personifications in Cos. Neither are nimbuses attested on similar and contemporary images of Gaea and the Seasons in the mosaics found in Apamea, which are cited in the bibliography as parallels to the Philippopolitan Eirene (Balty 1995: pl. XIV-XVI).

Nimbuses, however, appear in many other mosaic pavements and wall paintings from the 2nd c. CE onward. I will not refer to all of them, only those found in mosaic pavements in the regions that concern our study and which are closest in time. The nimbus, which was used generally for Greco-Roman deities in the regions under consideration, was quite often used in images of Ariadne and Dionysus, as we can see in mosaics found in Syria dated to the second half of the 3rd – beginning of the 4th c. CE (Canivet - Darmon 1989: 1-28), and also in Philippopolis, Syria, from 325-350 (Balty 1995: pl. XV, 2), and others (Balty 1995: pl. XIII), including the island of Cos (De Matteis 2004: tav. 5). This iconography gained acceptance and spread to Naxos, Pamphylia and Cyrene (Venturini 2005: 119-124 fig. 6; Venturini 2006: 508-511 figs. 51-52; Olszewski 2010: 315-322). It seems that the presentation of the nimbus was typical for figures other than personifications, especially in the 4th-5th c. CE⁵. In the 4th c. CE the nimbus already adorned Christian images, but not personifications.

The representation of Eirene with a nimbus in Philippopolis, which is in sharp contrast to similar personifications found in Cos itself as well as in other places where the masters of the mosaic workshops of this island worked, raises the question of whether or not the original image was adorned with a nimbus. In looking at the image placed in the hexagon, we can observe that initially no space was intended to be left for the nimbus, and as a consequence its circular form is irregular. The shade of the light-blue color of the tesserae that fill the nimbus distinguishes them from the blue-colored tesserae used in the original image. Besides, Eirene’s halo also differs from other known mosaics in its odd shape. In mosaics of the 4th and 5th c. CE the shape of the nimbus is quite correctly presented, unlike those from the later period. It should be noted that some other examples, albeit few, of personifications adorned with a nimbus are attested in mosaic pavements, but not Eirene herself.

With these observations in mind, I suggest that in the composition of the personification Eirene in Philippopolis a symbiosis of two different traditions is presented –one, characteristic of the presentation of personifications in the 4th – 5th c. CE generally and the other regarding the use of a nimbus. As the nimbus was already considered in the 4th c. CE to be a Christian symbol, its addition to the image of Eirene gave her a clear *interpretatio christiana*. It seems that this new meaning was quite clear for the owner of the house and his guests so no other Christian symbols were required, even at the time when the *domus* was in fact the *domus episcopalis* itself.

So, the question becomes when the addition of the nimbus happened and why the initial image of Eirene was produced. The latter question seems easier to answer.

⁵ An example of this could be the feminine personification found in the House of the Boat of Psyches in Daphne, Antioch from the 3rd c. CE, but it is not clear since the ‘nimbus’ does not have a correct form.

It is well known that on August, 9th, 378 CE, the Roman army was defeated near Hadrianopolis, Thrace, and the Emperor Valens was murdered. After this, Thrace was left in the hands and at the mercy of the Goths⁶, who destroyed almost 2/3 of the whole army of the Eastern Empire. The defeat of the Romans threw the Balkans and some of the Asiatic provinces into chaos, as we may judge from the letters of Gregory of Nyssa⁷. The Roman state was likened to a bloody man lying down near the road, neither alive nor dead (Zos. 4.21.1-3). It was believed that this was a sign of the decline of Roman power (Jerome Ep. 60.16; Jerome Ep. 123; Chron. Marcell. s.a. 327, of the state (Rufinus, Eus.hist. eccl. 11.13), and even of the end of the world (Ambr. in Lc. 10.10 . Cf. 10.14; *De excessu fratris* 1.30, *totius orbis excidia, mundi finem*). The battle itself was compared to the Romans' defeat near Cannae more than six centuries before (Amm. Marc. 31.13.18 f.) and comparisons with the Iliad gave it epic gravitas (Themistius, *Or.* 1 6.206d-207a).

The decline of imperial power and the Roman state increased after the failure of Theodosius I, the new Eastern emperor, to cope with the problem of the Goths (Lenski 1997: 129-168). Apocalyptic beliefs prevailed even after 382 CE when a humiliating treaty was signed between the Roman state and the Goths, which legitimized their exceptional status within the empire (Heather 1991: 158-165). By this act, the Roman state in fact recognized a barbarian protectorate within the limits of the empire (Lenski 1997: 143).

Although Philippopolis seems not to have suffered during the Gothic Wars as the barbarians were '*inexperienced in conducting a siege*', and their leader Fritigern '*kept peace with walls*' (Amm. 31.6.3-6), it is beyond doubt that the surrounding area and the nearby countryside in Thrace were heavily affected (Topalilov 2014: 222-229). This led to the decline of Roman estates in Thrace, where the villas were destroyed, abandoned, and never restored (Dinchev 1997: 125-126). It was at this time that residential houses with a richly decorated *aula* suddenly appeared in Philippopolis, demonstrating not only the wealth of the owners, but also their significant place in provincial and municipal society. One of them was undoubtedly the owner of the *domus Eirene* (Topalilov 2012: 419-420). I would not therefore hesitate to suggest that the presentation of Eirene in the decoration of the *triclinium* of *domus Eirene* is in fact an echo of the recent events that had happened in Thrace itself, and shows the desire of owner of the *domus* for peace to be established in the province and empire. Belonging to the elite of Philippopolis, which was the capital, the owner of the *domus Eirene* would have been personally affected by the uncertainty caused by the Gothic Wars. We can speculate further by saying that the decoration with Eirene in the *triclinium* may have referred to the treaty between the empire and the Goths in 382 CE, by which at least the Gothic plundering in rural Thrace ceased. From this perspective, the subsequent defeat of some Gothic troops and the triumph of Theodosius I and his son Arcadius on October, 12, 386 CE⁸ may be regarded as a *terminus ante quem* of the mosaic decoration with Eirene. As a provincial capital located in the hinterland of Constantinople, Philippopolis seems to have been directly impacted, which may be observed not only in the imperial initiatives mentioned above, but also in local initiatives copying metropolitan prototypes, such as for instance the famous *Porta aurea* etc. (Topalilov 2016c: 3-19).

6 See for instance the description in Libanius *Or.* 24.15: Ambr. exc. Sat. 1.30 (CSEL 73).

7 Greg. Nyss. Theod., Gregorii Nysseni Opera (GNO) X. 1, *Sermones* 2.70. Cf. GNO X. 1 *Sermones* 2.61. See also Greg. Nyss. *De iis qui baptismum differunt* (PG 46.424).

8 Chron. Marcell. 386, 1. See also Zos., 4.35.1, 38; Cons. Const., s.a. 386.1 [IX, 244].

The date of the transformation of the personification Eirene into the Christian St. Eirene by adding the nimbus can be determined when considering the transformation of the room itself. The middle of the 5th c. CE, when the new *triclinium* is clearly attested and room 3 was turned into the *aula* of a *domus episcopalis* provides a *terminus ante quem* for this transformation. There is, however, a possibility that this may have happened earlier. For instance, if we accept the date of the mosaic pavement in the vestibule and the south portico which, according to V. Popova, are simultaneous with the new decoration in room 3 as shown above, we should date the transformation of Eirene to the first half of 5th c. CE.

The questions posed by the *domus Eirene* residential complex in Philippopolis, Thrace, are many. They concern the work of various mosaic workshops over a few centuries, starting with that of the island of Cos, and the later work of the metropolitan and local workshops. They provide examples of the iconographic and stylistic features of mosaic decoration, which are often connected with the importance and functions of the room they decorated. They also demonstrate how the *domus Eirene* was transformed into a *domus episcopalis*, and how the new features were established, reflecting the increased political, social and religious standing of the owner of this *domus*. Of special interest is the image of the personification Eirene which, if the interpretation above is correct, may well have been connected with historical events contemporary or nearly contemporary with the time when this mosaic was produced. The mosaic with Eirene is thus among very few examples, if not the only one, of this kind among the mosaics found in Thrace, but it also provides useful information about how this kind of art may have been used for political and religious propaganda.

The transformation of the *domus Eirene* into a *domus episcopalis* allows the observer to understand how the decoration of the audience hall was also transformed accordingly. Thus the mosaic of Eirene provides a good example of how a particular image was given an *interpretatio christiana* at a time when typical Christian symbols were not yet entirely incorporated into art and pagan ones were still in use. If so, this example may be useful when studying similar cases contemporary with that in Philippopolis and found in similar contexts.

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