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VORWORT DES HERAUSGEBERS

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POST-167 BC ROMANS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN RURAL EPIRUS

ANALYSING A SPECIFIC SETTLEMENT PATTERN

Vyron Antoniadis

Abstract: Rural sites in Roman Epirus date from the mid-second century BC to the early sixth century AD. The earliest date is established by the aftermath of the battle of Pydna in 168 BC. Sites in Kokytos Valley mark the *terminus ante quem* for the latest date. This paper offers an overview of the Roman rural sites in central and southern Epirus by focusing mainly on the Late Hellenistic and Early Imperial periods and pays particular attention to the Hellenistic rural sites occupied by the Romans. The author argues that Romans after Pydna had a political agenda in settling in rural Epirus and that this process facilitated their rule in this region.

The earliest Roman rural sites, dating from 167 to mid-first century BC, followed a pre-established agricultural and pastoral model. Some of them were easily defensible protected by walls or by natural defences on high and low hills and mountains. This pattern gradually changed from the mid-first century BC to 31 BC with the establishment of wealthy landowners in Epirus. After the foundation of Nicopolis around 29 BC, Augustus transformed the landscape with the centuriation of the Nicopolitan territory. The Romans established all new rural sites south of Nicopolis on a defenceless area without making use of previous structures. This may suggest the beginning of a prosperous era for southern Epirus.

Keywords: Roman Epirus, rural sites, Thesprotia, Molossis, Nicopolis.



Map 1. Main Regions and Urban Centres in Central and Southern Epirus in 168 BC.
Vyron Antoniadis, QGIS, Basemap ASTER.

1. Epirus after Pydna¹

After their victory at the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC, the Romans controlled the entire region of Epirus, from Chaonia in the north to Cassopaia in the south.² The term ‘Epirus’ refers to the territories where the main ancient Epirote tribes traditionally dwelt long before the Roman conquest. These are Chaonia, Molossis, Thesprotia, Cassopaia and Ambracia, a former Corinthian colony and capital of the

1 I am grateful to Charikleia Papageorgiadou, Sophia Zoumbaki and Anna Kouremenos for their insightful comments and suggestions. I truly appreciate the feedback and corrections offered by the anonymous reviewers.

2 Livy 45.34; Polyb. 30.15.

Aeacid monarchs. The successive Roman provinces of Epirus, Epirus Vetus and Nova extended beyond the ancient boundaries of the region. Polybius notes that Romans destroyed 70 walled settlements and enslaved 150.000 Epirotes in 167 BC.³ Other ancient authors point out the Thracian raids and the Roman Civil Wars as responsible for the devastation of the land in the first century BC.⁴ Further, in the late first century BC, Strabo mentions the desolation caused by the rebellious nature of the Epirotes and by the Roman Civil Wars.⁵

Whether he is referring to the period of Augustus or to the previous era is uncertain.⁶ It is, however, a much different description from the then vanished Hellenistic fortified cities. Not everything was lost, however. There are testimonies referring to the region as a land of opportunity for pastoral and commercial activities for the Italians.⁷ Varro, who died shortly after the foundation of Nicopolis, praises the Epirote slaves, cattle and hounds.⁸

Over the last thirty years, major strides have been made in the archaeological investigation of ancient Epirus. Surveys, rescue excavations and new museums have added a great deal of information about the region. Surveys conducted in the Kokytos and Acheron Valleys, Nicopolis, Bouthrotos (Boutrint), Mursi, Phoinike and Hadrianopolis are important for a large-scale synthesis.⁹ No surveys have been carried out so far at Molossis (Central Ancient Epirus), nor in Ambracia. Comparing surveyed and non-surveyed areas could lead to biased data and false assumptions. For this reason, both ALCOCK¹⁰ and BOWDEN¹¹ have been very cautious on overusing survey data. Rescue excavations conducted more often than systematic excavations can be a solution to this problem. In fact, it is the quantity and quality of these small-scale fieldworks that permit the evaluation of survey results. Rescue

3 Strab. 7.7.3, 7.7.9; Plut. *Aem.* 29.

4 Livy 74, 76; Cass. Dio 30–35.101.2; Cic. *Pis.* 96.

5 Strab. 7.7.9.

6 J. ISAGER, *Eremia in Epirus and the foundation of Nicopolis: Models of civilization in Strabo*, In J. ISAGER (ed.), *Foundation and Destruction, Nikopolis and Northwestern Greece: the Archaeological Evidence for the City Destructions, the Foundation of Nikopolis and the Synoecism*, Athens 2001, p. 17–24.

7 Cic. *Att.* 5.16.1; S. ZOUMBAKI, *Ποιος σαλπάρει από ένα Ιταλικό λιμάνι για να μιλήσει για χοίρους; Διασχίζοντας την Αδριατική προς αναζήτηση ευκαιριών στη Θεσπρωτία*; In G. PLIAKOU / I. CHOULIARAS (eds.), *Thesprotia I, 1st International conference on the archaeology and history of Thesprotia*, Ioannina 2019, p. 375.

8 Varro *Rust.* 1.17.5; 2.1.2; 2.6.16; 2.9.3.

9 J. WISEMAN / K. ZACHOS, *Landscape archaeology in southern Epirus, Greece I, Hesperia, Suppl. 32*, Princeton 2003; B. FORSÉN / E. TIKKALA, *Thesprotia Expedition II. Environment and Settlement Patterns*, Helsinki 2011; E. GIORGI / J. BOGDANI, *Il territorio di Phoinike in Caonia. Archeologia del paesaggio in Albania meridionale*, Bologna 2012; R. PERNA / D. ÇONDI, *Adrianopolis II. Risultati delle indagini archeologiche 2000 – 2010*, Bari 2012; R. HODGES / E. CARR / A. SEBASTIANI / E. VACCARO, *Beyond Butrint: 'The Mursi Survey, 2008'*, In *BSA* 111 (2016) p. 269–97.

10 S. ALCOCK, *Graecia Capta: The landscapes of Roman Greece*, Cambridge 1993, p. 56.

11 W. BOWDEN / L. PÉRZHITA / S. MOORHEAD / P. REYNOLDS, *Archaeology in the landscape of Roman Epirus: preliminary report on the Diaporit excavations, 2002–3*, In *JRA* 17 (2004) p. 415.

excavations occur due to major construction projects, such as the Egnatia Motorway in Northern and Western Greece. An isolated find from a well-excavated context, for example, a Roman farmstead, can trigger a wider investigation in the area. For example, at Kokytos Valley, the local Archaeological Service conducted many rescue excavations. Later, the Finnish Institute of Archaeology re-examined these rural sites with a large-scale survey.¹²

In this paper the term ‘rural site’ refers to structures located in the countryside reserved for agricultural and pastoral activities, or structures of prior different function converted into rural sites. Normally these sites also constituted the residence for at least some of those involved in these activities. Identifying rural sites in Epirus is not a straight-forward process. Excavators have unearthed structures that have been labelled as farmsteads and *villae rusticae*. Yet, there are buildings partly excavated or destroyed in the countryside that could also belong to one of these two categories. The most common category of such unidentified buildings are structures found next to tombs (normally cist graves). These partly excavated structures lack the architectural features of funerary monuments and it is logical to assume that they should be rural domestic sites. In the archaeological record of Epirus, as in other areas of the Roman Empire, this was common, especially in sites dating to the first century AD and later periods. The villa at Zavali, Ladochori at Thesprotia, with its associated graves is such an example.¹³ Bath structures found beneath or by Early Christian basilicas might also hint at the location of a villa.¹⁴ Furthermore, there are also villas in the countryside and in the coast that lack any agricultural facility, for example at Diaporit, Chaonia.¹⁵

Regarding the Late Hellenistic and Early Imperial periods, a major point for the present discussion is the function of the walled Hellenistic farmsteads, watchtowers and perhaps of a few former urban centres as rural residences for the first post-167 BC Romans. I attempt to formulate a hypothesis supporting that from 167 BC to around the mid-first century BC, Romans transformed a few of these former urban centres and isolated forts into residential and/or rural sites. The defensive character of these establishments could have facilitated Roman rule in this transitional period before the establishment of the *Pax Romana*. The main tool employed to test this hypothesis is a geographic and archaeological analysis of rural Epirote sites in conjunction with the ancient testimonies referring to Late Hellenistic and Augustan Epirus. This paper focuses on central and southern Epirus, namely the areas of Molossis, Cassopaia, Thesprotia and the territory of Ambracia (Map 1). From Chaonia in Northern Epirus only selected examples will be used in this paper since this area is a part of an ongoing research by the author and also because the Chaonian historical and political context in the period prior to and after 167 BC differs from those in the other Epirote areas. One can see an overview of these rural sites in the

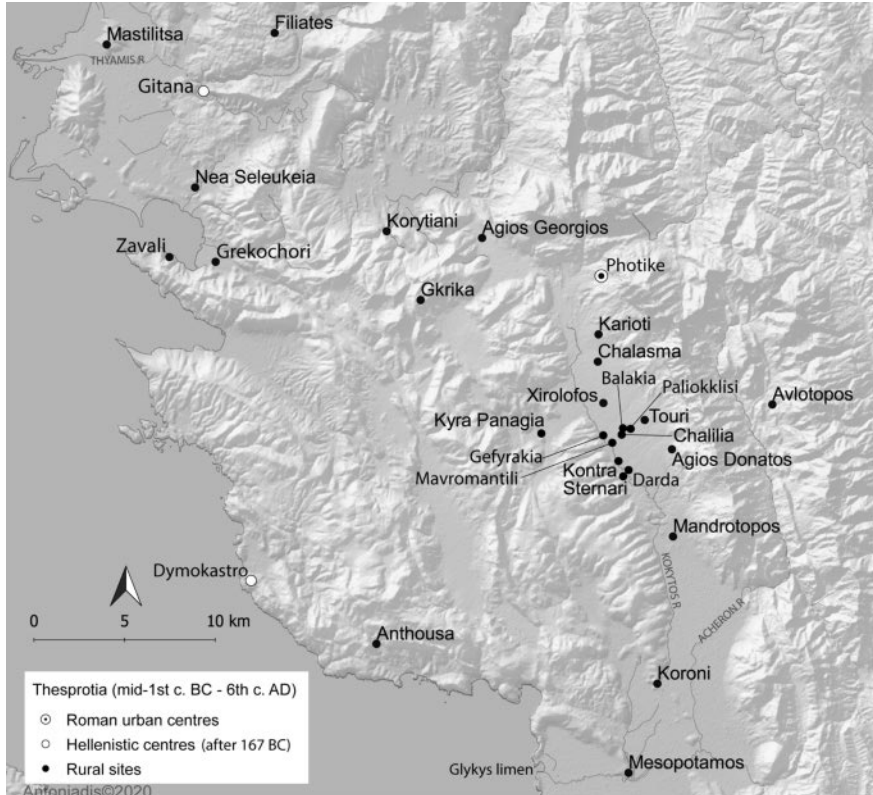
12 See below in the section of Thesprotia.

13 See the presentation of sites in the following sections.

14 W. BOWDEN, *Epirus Vetus: The Archaeology of a Late Antique Province*, London 2003.

15 W. BOWDEN, *Thesprotia in the Context of Roman and Late Antique Epirus*, In B. FORSÉN (ed.), *Thesprotia expedition I: Towards a Regional History*, Helsinki 2009, p. 171.

following three sections that represent these areas, with the addition of Ambracia. In this overview I also include rural sites dating up to the Late Roman period, since some of these are also associated with earlier structures.



Map 2. Roman rural Thesprotia. Vyron Antoniadis, QGIS, Basemap ASTER.

2. Survey of rural sites in Central and Southern Epirus

Thesprotia (Map 2)

Thesprotia extended from Thyamis River to the north, to Acheron River to the south. Most of the rural sites are located in the fertile valleys of Korkytos and Acheron Rivers and their tributaries. The recovered inscriptions indicate that the Roman colony of Photike¹⁶ was situated near Paramythia. This is the northernmost point of

16 S. DAKARIS, *Cassopaia and the Elean colonies* (Αρχαίες Ελληνικές Πόλεις 4), Athens 1971, p. 201–2; P. SOUSTAL, *Nicopolis und Kephallonia, Tabula Imperii Byzantini* III, Vienna 1981,

Kokytyos Valley sites. From Photike to the mouth of Acheron River at Glykys Limen (Ammoudia) there is a distance of 30 Km through the routes of the valleys.

From Photike to Glykys Limen, is the highest concentration of rural sites.¹⁷ A small unfortified settlement during the Roman Period stood at Karioti.¹⁸ A small village of the Middle to Late Roman Period is reportedly located in Chalasma next to a sixth-century-AD basilica.¹⁹ East of this basilica, another Roman site was found.²⁰ A small village dating from the fifth to the sixth century AD stood north-east of Xirolofos village.²¹ Two contemporary farmsteads were found nearby.²² There is a small village dating to the Middle and Late Roman periods south-east of Xirolofos, at Balakia.²³ Another farmstead dating to the Middle to Late Roman period and graves with associated coins (fourth-sixth century AD) were also found there.²⁴ A small village dating to the Hellenistic and Early Roman period was discovered at Chalilia. A Late Roman farmstead stood south-west of the site.²⁵ Another farmstead dating from the Middle to the Late Roman period lies further south.²⁶ West of Balakia and Chalilia, a workshop of the Late Hellenistic period stood at Gefyrakia.²⁷ North of Kyra Panagia, there is a small settlement dating from the Archaic to the Early Roman period. A farmstead dating from the fourth century BC to the fourth century AD was found at Nerotopos. In the same area, Roman potsherds and coins were also found next to a Late Classical/Early Hellenistic village.²⁸ To the east of Gefyrakia site, a Late Roman/Early Christian village was discovered at

p. 237; D. TRIANTAPHYLLOPOULOS, *Η μεσαιωνική Φωτική και η θέση της στην παλαιά Ήπειρο*, Thessaloniki 1984, p. 587.

- 17 For a presentation of the evidence of Epirus, apart from Chaonia, see V. ANTONIADIS, *Tabula Imperii Romani: J 34 – Athens: Epirus*, Athens 2016.
- 18 I. VOKOTOPOULOU, In *ADelt* 23, Chron. B'2 (1968) p. 286–7; *IBID.*, In *ADelt* 24, Chron. B'2, (1969) p. 249; S. DAKARIS, *Θεσπρωτία*, p. 201; G. RIGINOS, *ADelt* 47, Chron. B'1 (1992) p. 349.
- 19 D. EVANGELIDIS, *Η τρίκογχος βασιλική τῆς Παραμυθιάς*, In *Prakt* (1930) p. 62–5; N. HAMMOND, *Epirus*, p. 738; Dakaris *Θεσπρωτία*, p. 201; B. FORSÉN / J. FORSÉN / K. LAZARI / E. TIKKALA, *Catalogue of sites in Central Kokytyos Valley*, In B. FORSÉN / E. TIKKALA (eds.), *Thesprotia Expedition II. Environment and Settlement Patterns*, Helsinki 2011, p. 76–7, E 18.
- 20 A. CHOREMIS, In *ADelt* 33, Chron. B'1 (1978) p. 223.
- 21 FORSEN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 88, PS 10.
- 22 *IBID.*, p. 86–7, PS 14; *IBID.*, p. 87–8, E 7; G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 60, Chron. B'1 (2005) p. 579.
- 23 FORSEN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 91, PS 32.
- 24 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 60, Chron. B'1 (2005) p. 578; FORSÉN ET AL. *Catalogue of sites*, p. 93, PS 16. G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 60, Chron. B'1 (2005) p. 579.
- 25 FORSEN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 95–6, PS 38, PS 39.
- 26 *IBID.*, p. 104, PS 40.
- 27 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 56–9, Chron. B'5 (2001–2004) p. 227–8; G. METALLINOU / A. KANTAKITSOU / G. RIGINOS, *ΑΒ' Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων*, In M. ANDREADAKI-VLAZAKI (ed.), *2000-2010: Από το ανασκαφικό έργο των Εφορειών Αρχαιοτήτων*, Athens 2012, p. 353.
- 28 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 55, Chron. B'1 (2000) p. 660–1; *IBID.*, In *ADelt* 56–59, Chron. B'5 (2001–2004) p. 264; G. RIGINOS / K. LAZARI, *Ελέα Θεσπρωτίας: Αρχαιολογικός οδηγός του χώρου και της ευρύτερης περιοχής*, Athens 2007, p. 92.

Paliokklisi, south-west of Zervochori. A Late Roman farmstead²⁹ with associated burials³⁰ was discovered at Touri.

Further south, a Roman or Late Roman farmstead lies on the site of Mantili or Mavromantili.³¹ Another farmstead of Middle to Late Roman date was discovered at Kontra.³² A farmstead dating from the middle to the beginning of the Late Roman period stood further south at Darda.³³ At Sternari there was a farmstead dating to the Middle/Late Roman period. Graves were found inside and near the building. Domestic pottery, clay loom-weights and coins of the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods were recovered from the area.³⁴

An early third century BC fortress stood next to a chapel of Agios Donatos on a spur of the Korylas mountain range between Asfaka and Zervochori.³⁵ A Roman villa with walls in *opus incertum* dating to the late second/mid-first century BC was constructed above the destroyed Hellenistic wall of this tower. This may be one of the earliest Roman settlements in Epirus.³⁶ A Roman farmstead was found about 140 m north of the chapel of Agios Donatos.³⁷ The archaeological finds (terra sigillata ware, fibulae) reveal the reuse of the tower from the first to the third century AD.³⁸ East of Agios Donatos, at Avlotopos, there is a rectangular building which was used from the fourth century BC to the second century AD.³⁹

Further south, at Mandrotopos, there are remains of a building dating from the first to the third century AD. Its final phase dates from the fourth century AD to the sixth century AD.⁴⁰ Following the course of Kokytos River to the south, there is another Roman building on Tsoubari hill at Koroni. Its earliest phase dates to the Hellenistic period.⁴¹

29 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 56-59, Chron. B'5 (2001-2004) p. 289, 307; FORSEN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 94, E 4.

30 FORSEN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 94, E 4.

31 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 47, Chron. B'1 (1992) p. 361, MAVROMANTILI A; FORSÉN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 94-5, E 22.

32 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 56-59, Chron. B'5 (2001-2004) p. 229-30; V. LAMPROU, *Οικιστική οργάνωση του θεσπρωτικού χώρου κατά τη ρωμαϊοκρατία*, In *Epirotika Chronika* 40 (2006) p. 267; D. DROSOY, *Η κατοίκηση στο Θεσπρωτικό χώρο κατά τους βυζαντινούς χρόνους*, In *Epirotika Chronika* 40 (2006) p. 281; FORSÉN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 114-5, E 6.

33 G. Riginos, In *ADelt* 56-59, Chron. B'5 (2001-2004) p. 228-9; FORSEN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 119, E12; *IBID.*, p. 319-31.

34 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 60, Chron. B'1 (2005) p. 578; *id.*, In *ADelt* 53, Chron. B'2 (1998) p. 545; *IBID.*, In *ADelt* 47, Chron. B'1 (1992) p. 348-9; FORSEN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 119-20, E 13.

35 M. SUHA, *The fortification walls of Agios Donatos*, In *Thesprotia Expedition I*, p. 119-32.

36 B. FORSÉN / P. REYNOLDS, *An early closed deposit at the Roman villa of Agios Donatos*, In *Thesprotia Expedition II*, p. 248-64.

37 FORSEN ET AL., *Catalogue of sites*, p. 109, PS 19.

38 *IBID.*, p. 109, PS 25.

39 K. PREKA-ALEXANDRI, *ADelt* 49, Chron. B'1 (1994) p. 427-9.

40 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 60, Chron. B'1 (2005) p. 581.

41 G. RIGINOS, *ΑΓ' Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων*, In *Από το ανασκαφικό έργο*, p. 355.

In the confluence of Kokytos and Acheron Rivers stands one of the most famous buildings of all archaeological sites of Epirus. It lies by, and partly below, the church of Agios Ioannis at Mesopotamos village. DAKARIS who excavated the site claimed it was a Nekyomanteion (sanctuary/Oracle of the dead).⁴² Others interpreted it as a large fortified Hellenistic farmstead.⁴³ The building was destroyed by fire in the second century BC.⁴⁴ Two rooms were constructed in the first century BC over the abandoned building. Amphorae, loom-weights, stamped tiles and clay discs of the same date have been found on the site.⁴⁵ It seems that both in the Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods this site had a rural and defensive function. The catapult remains found there reflect the function of the building and the Late Hellenistic/Republican troublesome period.

In the centre of Thesprotia, west and north-west of Photike, stood three buildings: There was a Roman bath at Koritiani. An inscribed silver strigil (first century AD) was found there.⁴⁶ A workshop with a kiln, potsherds and a glass vessel, was found in the area of Stenes at Gkrika. The site, according to the excavator, was in use from the Late Hellenistic to the Early Byzantine period.⁴⁷ At Agios Georgios (formerly Riziani), Roman baths were discovered above a Hellenistic building.⁴⁸

In the coast of Thesprotia, an early *villa rustica* stood at Mastilitza (or Masklinitza) hill at Filiates, near Kalamas River (Thyamis). It dates, according to recovered coins, from the second half of the second century BC, to the first half of the third century AD. Pottery finds, suggest a later *terminus post quem* (around the first century BC).⁴⁹ This villa has been associated with Pomponius Atticus and the *villa rustica* excavated by DHIMITËR ÇONDI at Malathrea.⁵⁰ The architectural remains of a farmstead were traced northeast of the town of Filiates. A jar burial of a child was discovered in the courtyard with coins of the early fourth century AD.⁵¹ At Zavali, Ladochori, remains of a Roman *villa rustica* and of a mausoleum (second century AD) were discovered.⁵² East of Zavali at Egnatia Motorway Junction, there is

42 S. DAKARIS, *Ανασκαφή εις το Νεκρομαντείον του Αχέρωντος*, In *Prakt* (1963), p. 90–2.

43 J. WISEMAN, *Rethinking the 'Halls of Hades'*, In *Archaeology* 51:3 (1998) p. 12–6, 18; D. BAATZ, *Wehrhaftes Wohnen. Ein befestigter hellenistischer Adelsitz bei Ephyra* (Nordgriechenland), In *AW* 30:2 (1999) p. 151–5; *IBID.*, *Hellenistische Katapulte aus Ephyra (Epirus)*, In *AM* 97 (1982) p. 211–33.

44 S. DAKARIS, *Ανασκαφή εις το Νεκρομαντείον*, p. 90–2.

45 S. DAKARIS, *Θεσπρωτία*, p. 199; V. KARATZENI, *Epirus in the Roman Period*, In *Foundation and Destruction*, p. 169. For further discussion see B. FORSÉN, *Disruption and Development: Tracing Imperial Vestiges in Epirus*, In B. FORSÉN (ed.) *Thesprotia expedition IV: region transformed by empire*, 2019, p. 15–7, A. DOMINGUEZ, *Organisation of the Territory and Economy in Hellenistic Epirus*, In CH. PAPAGEORGIADOU / S. ZOUMBAKI / V. ANTONIADIS, *Rural Economy in Western Greece in the Late Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Meletemata, forthcoming.

46 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 55, Chron. B'1 (2000) p. 660–1.

47 K. PREKA-ALEXANDRI, In *ADelt* 51, 1996, Chron. B'1 (1996) p. 419–20.

48 G. METALLINOU ET AL., *AB' Εφορεία*, p. 352.

49 K. PREKA-ALEXANDRI, *ADelt* 49, Chron. B'1 (1994) p. 427–9.

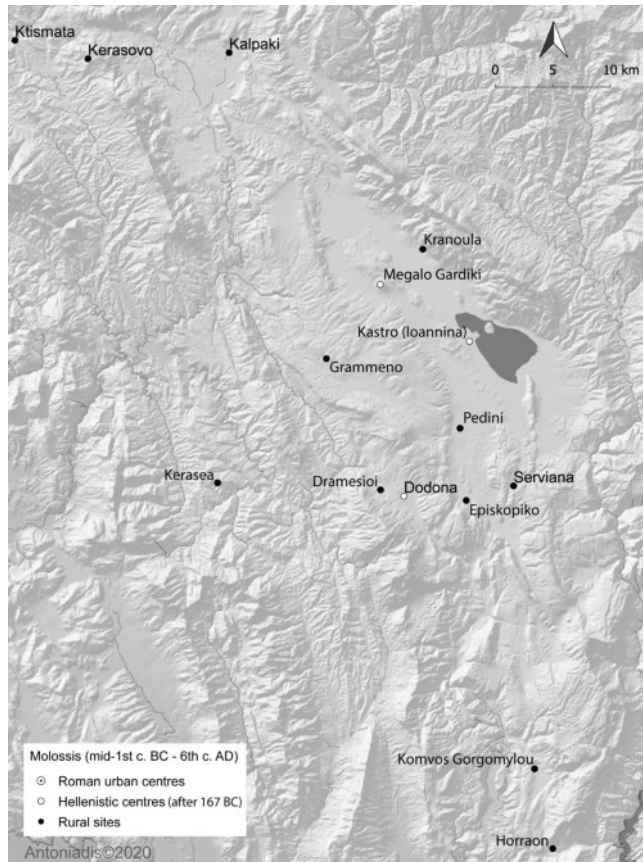
50 D. ÇONDI, *Fortesa - vilë e Malathresë*, In *Iliria* 2 (1984) p. 131–52.

51 G. RIGINOS, *ADelt* 60, Chron. B'1 (2005) p. 572–3, no 13.

52 I. VOKOTOPOULOU, In *ADelt* 30, Chron. B'2 (1975) p. 211–3.

another Roman farmstead, with two tile graves, two cist graves and a jar burial of a child.⁵³ West of Mastilita, at Filiates architectural remains of a farmstead were found. Coins of the early fourth century AD were collected from the site.⁵⁴ South of Mastilita, the remains of an Early Roman villa were traced near the sea on a low hill at Troube, Nea Seleukia. A tile grave of an infant was found below a room's pavement. A bronze coin of the third/first century BC from Dyrrachium should be considered as the *terminus post quem* for this site.⁵⁵

Molossis (Map 3)



Map 3. Roman rural Molossis. Vyron Antoniadis, QGIS, Basemap ASTER.

53 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 54, Chron. B'1 (1999) p. 508–9.

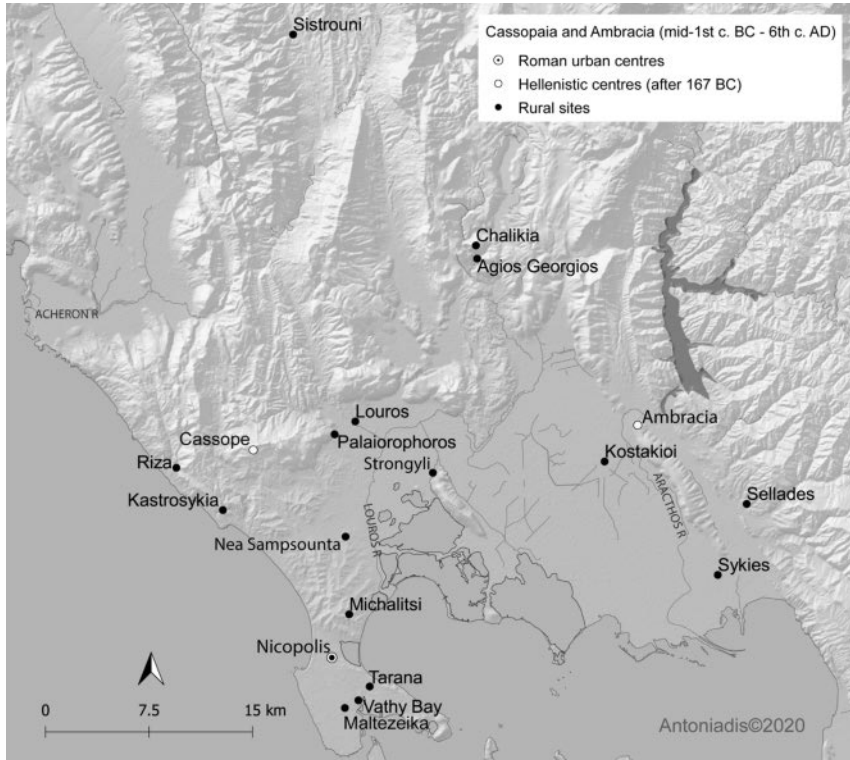
54 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 60, Chron. B'1 (2005) p. 572–73.

55 G. RIGINOS, In *ADelt* 47, Chron. B'1 (1992) p. 347–8; S. VASEILIADIS / K. LAZARI / V. LAMPROU / O. PALLI, *Η ρωμαϊκή παρουσία στη Θεσπρωτία μέσα από τα αρχαιολογικά ευρήματα της τελευταίας δεκαετίας*, In V. THEOPHILOPOULOU, *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη βορειοδυτική Ελλάδα και τα νησιά του Ιονίου, Πρακτικά Συνεδρίου*, Athens 2018, p. 333.

In Molossis, an area extending from Aaos River to the north to the walled city of Horraon to the south, most of these installations predate the Roman conquest and continue their function as small agriculture and pastoral units until the end of the first century AD.⁵⁶ In the Ioannina Basin, at Serviana, there is a farmstead dating to the Hellenistic/Early Roman period located on the east slope of the hill in Episkopi.⁵⁷ Another farmstead with associated cist graves was discovered at Episkopiko.⁵⁸ It dates to the first/second century AD. Archaeologists unearthed three Late Hellenistic farmsteads, forming a village south of Pedini in the area of Agioi Apostoloi.⁵⁹ Bronze coins of the Epirote League (after 148 BC) and associated pottery indicate that habitation in this site continued after 167 BC.⁶⁰ Roof tiles and pithoi of Hellenistic and Roman date were found at the village of Kerasea. In Palibela at Grammeno, the second construction phase of a Hellenistic house dates to the Early Roman Period. A bath complex of the fourth century AD was found beside the chapel of Agia Triada near the village of Dramesioi. In the North of Molossis, a *villa rustica* dating to the first century AD was partly excavated in the centre of the Ktismata village.⁶¹ Another *villa rustica* is located at Kranoula (late second century AD).⁶² A hypocaust segment from a Roman bath complex was discovered next to the church of Agia Paraskevi at Kerasovo.⁶³ There are remains of a Roman building in a site at Agios Georgios Dolianon, near the bridge over the Kalamas River, west of Kalpaki.⁶⁴ In the south of Molossis near Horraon, there is evidence for a Late Hellenistic/Early Roman farmstead at Komvos Gorgomylou. Finally, I place in the category of rural sites the Hellenistic fortified settlement at Kastri Hill,

- 56 For a thorough diachronic analysis of the urban centers and rural sites at Molossis see G. ΠΛΙΑΚΟΥ, *The basin of Ioannina in central Epirus, northwestern Greece, from the Early Iron Age to the Roman period*, In *ARepLond* 64 (2018) p. 133–51.
- 57 K. ΖΑΧΟΣ, *IB' Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων*, In *Από το ανασκαφικό έργο*, p. 346; G. ΠΛΙΑΚΟΥ, In *ADelt* 62, Chron. Β'1 (2007) p. 777–9; *IBID.*, In *ADelt* 63, Chron. Β'1 (2008) p. 763–5; *IBID.*, *Το λεκανοπέδιο των Ιωαννίνων μετά τη ρωμαϊκή κατάκτηση. Οι μαρτυρίες των ανασκαφικών νομισματικών συνόλων*, In K. ΛΙΑΜΠΙ / C. ΠΑΠΑΕΒΑΝΓΕΛΟΥ-ΓΕΝΑΚΟΣ / K. ΖΑΧΟΣ / A. ΔΟΥΖΟΥΓΛΙ / A. ΙΑΚΟΒΙΔΟΥ (eds.), *Numismatic History and Economy in Epirus during Antiquity. Proceedings of the 1st International Conference Numismatic History and Economy in Epirus during Antiquity*, Athens 2013, p. 455–6.
- 58 N. ΧΟΙΝΑΣ / V. ΓΙΑΝΝΑΚΙ / Y. ΦΑΚΛΑΡΙ / A. ΓΙΟΒΑΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Αγροτικές εγκαταστάσεις, ρωμαϊκών και παλαιοχριστιανικών χρόνων στην πορεία της Ιόνιας οδού στο λεκανοπέδιο Ιωαννίνων*, In *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Βορειοδυτική Ελλάδα και τα νησιά του Ιονίου 2*, 2017 (conference abstract).
- 59 G. ΠΛΙΑΚΟΥ, *Το λεκανοπέδιο των Ιωαννίνων*, p. 455.
- 60 *IBID.*
- 61 K. ΖΑΧΟΣ, *IB' Εφορεία*, p. 345; CH. ΚΛΕΙΤΣΑΣ, In *ADelt* 62, Chron. Β'1 (2007) p. 780–1; *IBID.*, *Κτίσματα Πογωνίου. Μια αρχαία θέση στα ελληνοαλβανικά σύνορα*, In *Epirotika Chronika* 44 (2010) p. 220–46.
- 62 V. ΓΙΑΝΝΑΚΙ / A. ΓΙΟΒΑΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ / L. ΛΕΟΝΤΑΡΙΣ / I. ΣΤΑΜΟΥ, *Restoration proposal for the roman villa at Kranoula, Ioannina*, In *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Βορειοδυτική Ελλάδα και τα νησιά του Ιονίου 2*, 2017 (conference abstract).
- 63 A. ΒΛΑΧΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ-ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΟΥ, *Επισκόπηση της τοπογραφίας της Αρχαίας Ηπείρου: Νομοί Ιωαννίνων-Θεσπρωτίας και Νότια Αλβανία*. Ioannina 2003, p. 157.
- 64 I. ΒΟΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, In *ADelt* 23, Chron. Β'2 (1968) p. 286–7.

Ammotopos which has been identified as the Molossian Horraon. The walls of the city were probably destroyed by the Romans and in the best-preserved building (house A, room e) there is evidence for habitation in the second half of the second century BC or the first century AD.⁶⁵ A room interpreted as a horse stable and twenty-eight clay loom-weights recovered from the excavation of this house⁶⁶ suggest that at least some pastoral activities must have taken place there.



Map 4. Roman rural Cassopaia and Ambracia. Vyrion Antoniadis, QGIS, Basemap ASTER.

Cassopaia (Map 4)

Cassopaia extended from Acheron River to the North, to the Ambracian Gulf to the South. The ancient course of Louros River, flowing into the Ambracia Gulf north of Stongyli village, was the border between Cassopaia and Ambracia. At Cassopaia most of the rural sites found south of Nicopolis and at the Agios Thomas peninsula are related to the city of Nicopolis. They all postdate the foundation of the city by Augustus. South-West of the walls of Nicopolis, a Late Roman/Early Christian villa

65 S. DAKARIS, *To Ōrraon: to spiti stin arxaiá Hpeiro*, In *AEphem* 1986, p. 127–8.

66 *Ibid.*

was discovered at Ftelia.⁶⁷ From the site of Tarana to Vathy bay many rural sites have been traced: two farmsteads northeast of Vathy and north-west of Neochori village. West of Tarana, at Analipsi, there are architectural remains and rectangular cisterns associated with a *villa rustica*. The finds date from the end of the first century BC to the third century AD.⁶⁸ A farmstead and a pottery workshop (first to second century AD) were discovered at Maltezeika.⁶⁹ A building of Roman date with a bath complex was found south of Nicopolis along the National Road from Preveza to Ioannina.⁷⁰

North of Nicopolis, there is a *villa rustica* at Chalikia near the banks of the Louros River, between the villages of Agios Georgios and Kerasona. The building was destroyed by fire in the fourth century AD.⁷¹ A small Roman cistern was found at Oropos (Palaiorophoros) village, north-west of the church of Agios Iosif.⁷²

A monumental building complex, dated to the third and fourth centuries AD, stood at Frankgoklisia, south-east of Riza.⁷³ It belonged to a *villa rustica*.⁷⁴ A second-century AD building, a burial enclosure and a reservoir were found adjacent and below the church of Agia Pelagia at Kastrosikia. This was another *villa rustica*.⁷⁵ At the site of Tzoumsa, Louros village, there are architectural remains of a building of a Roman farmstead or a *villa rustica*.⁷⁶ A Roman inscribed funerary stele and architectural remains of a building dating from the Roman to the Early Christian period were found at Nea Sampsounta.⁷⁷ Remains of a Roman bath with a mosaic floor were discovered at Sistrouni near Acheron River.⁷⁸ East of Nicopolis, a *villa rustica* (first to third century AD) stood on Podarouri hill at Strongyli

- 67 A. ORLANDOS / D. PALLAS, *Δοκιμαστική ανασκαφή επαύλεως εν Νικοπόλει*, In *PRAKT* (1959) p. 98–113.
- 68 G. RIGINOS / P. SAKKAS, Ο Μείζων της Νικοπόλεως λιμένας στο Βαθύ. Οικιστική οργάνωση, ιστορική διαδρομή και χρήσεις του χώρου, In *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη βορειοδυτική Ελλάδα*, p. 441–54; G. RIGINOS, *ΛΓ' Εφορεία*, p. 355.
- 69 CH. MERKOURI, In *ADelt* 66, Chron. (2011) p. 663.
- 70 I. ANDREOU, In *ADelt* 39, Chron. Β' (1984) p. 178; *IBID.*, In *ADelt* 42, Chron. Β'1 (1987) p. 318–9.
- 71 K. ZACHOS, *ΙΒ' Εφορεία*, p. 344.
- 72 E. ANDREOU, In *ADelt* 30, Chron. Β'2 (1975) p. 219–20.
- 73 P. CHRYSOSTOMOU, In *ADelt* 35, Chron. Β'1 (1980) p. 320–3; *IBID.*, *Το Νυμφαίο των Ριζών Πρεβέζης*, In *AAA* 15 (1982) p. 10–21.
- 74 K. ZACHOS, In *ADelt* 48, Chron. Β'1 (1993) p. 303; A. ANGELI / I. KATSADIMA, *Riza and Agia Pelagia: Two architectural assemblages of the Roman Era along the Coast of Southern Epirus*, In *Foundation and Destruction*, p. 91–107.
- 75 DAKARIS, *Cassopaia*, p. 95; P. CHRYSOSTOMOU, In *ADelt* 35, Chron. Β'1 (1980) p. 320–1; ANGELI / KATSADIMA, *Two architectural assemblages*, p. 94–100.
- 76 G. RIGINOS, *ΑΓ' Εφορεία*, p. 356.
- 77 E. CHALKIA, In *ADelt* 42, Chron. Β'1 (1987) p. 334.
- 78 I. VOKOTOPOULOU, In *ADelt* 23, Chron. Β'2 (1968) p. 292; DAKARIS, *Cassopaia*, p. 96.

village next to a Hellenistic fortified farmstead.⁷⁹ Nearby, Late Roman potsherds, large amphorae and imported tableware, were found on the Agia Aikaterini hill.⁸⁰

Ambracia (Map 4)

The history of Ambracia and its territory differs somewhat from the other Epirote regions. Ambracia, a Corinthian colony, was conquered by the Molossians and became the new capital of Pyrrhus in 295 BC.⁸¹ After the abolition of the Molossian monarchy in 232 BC and the restoration of democracy, Ambracia faced a long period of hostility and alliances with Epirotes, Macedonians, and Aetolians. In 189 BC, the city surrendered to the Romans and was garrisoned by them. Since Ambracia was essentially controlled by the Romans it escaped destruction in 167 BC.⁸² Only three rural sites at Ambracia are associated with its chora. At Kostakioi, part of a Roman mosaic floor was found in the area near the architectural remains of an Early Christian basilica⁸³[89]. Architectural remains of a farmstead (second half of the fourth century BC to the fourth century AD) were discovered in a field at Sel-lades.⁸⁴ Coins found in the site date to the Roman period.⁸⁵ At Sykies a Late Roman mosaic floor was found in the church of Agia Theodora.⁸⁶

3. Political divisions in Rural Roman Epirus

As illustrated in Maps 2, 3 and 4, rural sites in central and southern Epirus dated from the Late Hellenistic to the Late Roman period are mostly located in the valleys of the Epirote rivers and their tributaries, in the fertile zones of Thesprotia, in the territory of Nicopolis at Cassopaia and in certain zones of Molossis. The same stands for the sites dating to the period in which this paper focuses (mid-second century BC to mid-first century AD). It is evident that the distribution of rural sites follows an obvious pattern related to the fertility of the land. However, this does not occur simultaneously all over Epirus. I argue that this occurs because of different

79 PH. PETSAS, *Ειδήσεις εκ της 10ης αρχαιολογικής περιφέρειας (Ηπείρου)*, In *AEphem*, Chron. (1950–51) p. 39–49; N. HAMMOND, *Epirus*, p. 61; DAKARIS, *Cassopaia*, p. 59, 75; J. WISEMAN / K. ZACHOS / PH. ΚΕΡΦΑΛΛΟΝΙΤΟΥ, *Συνεργατική Ελληνοαμερικάνικη Επιφανειακή Έρευνα στο Νομό Πρέβεζας*, In *ADelt* 47, Chron. B'1 (1992) p. 294–5.

80 V. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, In *ADelt* 44, Chron. B'2 (1989), p. 285; K. ZACHOS, In *ADelt* 48, Chron. B'1 (1993), p. 303; WISEMAN ET AL., *Συνεργατική Ελληνοαμερικάνικη Επιφανειακή Έρευνα*, p. 293–8.

81 Strab. 7.7.6.

82 ANTONIADIS, *Tabula Imperii Romani*, 23.

83 V. KARATZENI, *Ambracia during the Roman Period*, in P. CABANES (ed.), *L'Illyrie méridionale et l'Épire dans l'Antiquité-III: actes du IIIe colloque international de Chantilly*, Paris 1999, p. 245, n. 36.

84 K. ZACHOS, *IB' Εφορεία*, p. 343.

85 Y. FAKLARI / M. NIAROU, *Νομίσματα από ρωμαϊκή αγροικία στον νομό Άρτας*, In *Numismatic History*, p. 483–93.

86 N. HAMMOND, *Epirus*, p. 140; V. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, In *ADelt* 45, Chron. B'1 (1990), p. 265–6.

policies imposed by the Romans in each area. This view is suggested by the archaeological evidence and ancient testimonies which reveal three different phases for the Roman settlement pattern in these areas.

3.1 167 BC – mid-first century BC

The Romans by annihilating Molossis in 167 BC, exercised absolute control in this area. Even if the number of 150.000 Epirote slaves/captives is exaggerated, one should not overrule that this occurred due to the possibility of local uprisings. Romans could not have been certain that Epirotes would not revolt against them. Many Greeks did it more than once before Actium, like the Athenians in 87 BC. In fact, ancient and modern authors tend to see the Thracian allies of Mithridates who raided Macedonia (88–87 BC) as devastators of Epirus.⁸⁷ It is true that Thracians were probably attacking both the Romans and the locals. However, for many Greeks in the East, Mithridates was a liberator and may have attempted to find some allies in Epirus as well.

Regarding the settlement pattern for this period, the Roman soldiers reached Epirus after the battle at Pydna in 168 BC. They spent few months, according to Polybius, living in the local cities. After this short period, Aemilius Paulus and his troops, following the Senate's order, demolished many fortified cities in 167 BC.⁸⁸ This however does not mean that all the Epirote urban centres were utterly destroyed. In the area of Molossis, at Megalo Gardiki (Passaron?), an important Molossian Hellenistic centre, there is evidence of habitation after 167 BC.⁸⁹ Cassope, at Cassopaia, seems to function as a limited political and religious centre for the locals. Gitana and Dymokastro at Thesprotia are the only main urban centres where there is some activity after 167 BC. North of Kalamas River however, there is no evidence of extended destruction apart from the abandonment of Antigoneia, a city founded by Pyrrhus. This occurred because the Chaonians remained loyal to the Romans in the third Macedonian War. Phoinike, the Chaonian capital, continued its function as an important political centre of a reformed Epirote League.⁹⁰

87 Cass. Dio 31.101.2; DELEV 2015, p. 70. P. DELEV, *From Koroupedion to the Beginning of the Third Mithridatic War (281–73 BCE)*, In J. VALEVA / E. NANKOV / D. GRANINGER (eds.), *A Companion to Ancient Thrace*, Oxford 2015, p. 59–4.

88 A. ZIOLKOWSKI, *The Plundering of Epirus*, p. 69.

89 G. PLIAKOU, *To λεκανοπέδιο των Ιωαννίνων*, p. 451–3.

90 Th. SARIKAKIS, *Συμβολή εις την ιστορίαν της Ηπείρου κατά τους χρόνους της ρωμαϊκής κυριαρχίας (167–31 π.Χ.)*, In *AEphem* (1964) p. 105; E. GIORGI, *Landscape and Citizens during the early Roman era in Northern Epirus: Phoinike and the Chaonia region (2nd BC–2nd AD)*, In *GROMA 2* (2017) p. 12–3. For an analysis on pottery evidence related to the Epirote urban centers which survived the 167 BC-events see V. ANTONIADIS / G. PLIAKOU, *The Archaeology of “Dead Cities”: Ceramic Evidence from the Late Hellenistic and Roman Epirus*, In *International Conference: 4th IARPotHP Manufacturers and Markets: The Contributions of Hellenistic Pottery to Economies Large and Small. Athens, November 2019, 11–14, Proceedings*, (Forthcoming).

Therefore, the first Romans who lived in central and southern Epirus after the 167 BC-destruction probably had to choose another kind of settlement pattern apart from living in declined or semi-abandoned cities. I argue that they occupied the small Hellenistic fortified sites, or/and sites located on hills with a natural defensive protection. In the area of Thesprotia, it is beyond doubt that they occupied a Hellenistic tower at Agios Donatos by building a villa in the mid-second century BC. It is not certain that the Hellenistic structure discovered beneath the late second century BC Roman villa at Mastilitsa had any defensive function apart from the fact that it was located on a hill. The contemporary Roman villa at Nea Seleukia also stood on a low hill, but it is not clear whether there was a prior Hellenistic phase. This could also have occurred with the Hellenistic fortified farmstead at Strongyli at Cassopaia. Nekomanteion probably continued its dual function, now under Roman administration, as a stronghold and as a rural site of agricultural production. The discovery of these early Roman villas at Thesprotia leads to the hypothesis that the new occupants took advantage of the defensive character of these sites. It is interesting to point out that at Chaonia most of the fortified sites were abandoned after 167 BC⁹¹, but the Early Roman villa at Malathrea, was also constructed on top of a Hellenistic fortified farmstead.⁹²

This settlement pattern was sufficient for a period (late second-century BC-early first century BC) which was not peaceful. Even in these 'friendlier' areas for the Romans, a minimum of security was necessary. The Hellenistic fortified farmsteads and watchtowers could satisfy this need. Furthermore, the land owned by the locals before 167 BC continued to be used for the same function afterwards. Clearly, there were also small farmsteads, now under Roman occupation, which were not fortified in the Hellenistic period. This can be seen by the many unfortified rural sites at Kokytos Valley. These small farmsteads show evidence of continuity from the Hellenistic to the Late Roman period. Additionally, there is only a handful of farmsteads in Molossis: at Ioannina Basin, at Kerasea and Grammeno, and near Horraon. They date to the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman period. None of them is in a defensive location. This signifies that Romans did not eliminate the agricultural and pastoral activity of the area. However, as already mentioned, in Molossis there is very limited occupation in comparison to the other areas. Sellades at Ambracia was also an unfortified farmstead. A major task for these unfortified farmsteads was to provide supplies to the legions stationed in Epirus or crossing it during the Roman Civil Wars.⁹³ Romans could control the unfortified farmsteads located in the valleys, from the strategic strongholds of Agios Donatos, Nekomanteion, Strongyli and perhaps Passaron.

91 E. GIORGI, *Landscape and Citizens*, p. 13.

92 D. ÇONDI, *Fortesa*, p. 131–52.

93 D.R. SHACKLETON BAILEY, *Cicero's letters to Atticus*, Cambridge 1965, p. 53.

3.2 Mid-first century BC – 31/29 BC

By the generation of Julius Caesar, almost a century after 167 BC, a new order had been established in Epirus. The formerly Hellenistic farmsteads had acquired a more lavish appearance. One may assume that since Romans conquered all these rural sites in 167 BC, and by the mid-first century BC they had converted them to *villae rusticae* and *maritimae*, then they probably lived in these sites for over a century. In terms of material culture this can be seen in the Agios Donatos villa and probably at the villas at Malathrea and Mastilita. HERNANDEZ claims that Romans had more interest living and negotiating from the coastal cities of Illyria and Epirus than the interior cities.⁹⁴ They used a pre-existing network of settlements and the fertile Thesprotian and Chaonian valleys. This Roman-Chaonian-Thesprotian network was formed at an earlier stage by certain members of the local Epirote elite, such as Charops Machata, and the Romans.⁹⁵

After all, the Ionian Coast was an operation field for Italian entrepreneurs since the 3rd century BC.⁹⁶ The fact, however, that both in the Acheron and Kokytos Valleys, there is a significant number of rural sites, indicates the Roman interest for the Epirote inland and economy in this period.⁹⁷ Only Molossis remained unexplored during this phase.

3.3 31/29BC – first century AD

For the period after the battle of Actium and the beginning of the Roman Empire, many changes are noted in the archaeological context. These changes are not rapid and are shown mostly in the first century AD. Nicopolis is probably founded in 29 BC. It is not certain whether Romans used the entire population of the Ambracian Gulf sites for the synoecism of Nicopolis. Those Greeks and Italians, however who lived within the walls of the city, had a great need for food supply. The centuriation of the land south of Nicopolis should be understood as a direct result of this process.⁹⁸ South of Nicopolis, the small farmsteads in the localities of Tarana, Vathy and Maltezeika date to the first century AD.⁹⁹ This implies that the exploration of the land and the agricultural production in this area postdate the foundation of the

94 D. HERNANDEZ, *Acculturation (“Romanization”) in Illyria*, p. 878.

95 V. ANTONIADIS, *Tabula Imperii Romani Thesprotia: Mapping the Roman Presence and Activities*, In *Thesprotia*. I, p. 389–402; O. PALLI / G. RIGINOS / V. LAMPROU, *Local elites in West Roman Greece: The evidence from Thesprotia and Preveza*, In R. VARGA / V. RUSU-BOLINDET (eds.), *Official Power and Local Elites in the Roman Provinces*, London 2017, p. 1–21.

96 S. ZOUMBAKI, *Ποιος σαρπάρει από ένα ιταλικό λιμάνι*, p. 373.

97 E. LE QUÉRÉ / L. P. EBERLE, *Landed Traders, Trading Agriculturalists? Land in the Economy of the Italian Diaspora in the Greek East*, In *JRS* 107 (2017) p. 12–6.

98 P. DOUKELLIS / É. FOUACHE, *La centuriation romaine de la plaine d'Arta replacée dans le contexte de l'évolution morphologique récente des deltas de l'Arachthos et du Louros*, In *BCH* 116 (1992) p. 375.

99 G. RIGINOS / D. SAKKAS, *Ο Μείζων της Νικοπόλεως λιμένας στο Βαθύ*, p. 441–54.

city. It may also mean that the synoecism and the construction of Nicopolis took much longer than expected. Additionally, the farmland south of Nicopolis had immediate access to four ports (Comarus, Vathy, and probably Mazoma and Pogonitsa). This access gave the Nicopolitans an opportunity for extensive fishing and perhaps aquaculture. What is more important, is that the Romans, who founded Nicopolis, created an entire new territory for cultivation. Bouthrotos and the Vrina Plain went through the same process. There, both the centuriation of the land and the aqueduct date to the Augustan Period.¹⁰⁰

In the first century AD, Romans had converted most of the old Hellenistic fortified farmsteads into *villae rusticae* or large farmsteads. Nekyomanteion was now a farmstead. The peace that Augustus brought to the area with the end of the Civil Wars bore fruit about a generation later. Even in Molossis new activity begun in this period and few *villae rusticae* appear in hitherto abandoned areas. The city of Ambracia, pillaged by the soldiers of proconsul Piso, (between 57–55 BC) shows few signs of activity. There are few workshops discovered in the northern part of the city and the cemeteries continue to receive burials.¹⁰¹ Its territory though looks empty of rural sites apart from those three already mentioned. The reasons for the scarcity of the evidence in Ambracia can be the success of Nicopolis in the Imperial Period or the absence of extended surveys. At any rate, part of the former Ambracian territory now belonged to Nicopolis.¹⁰² It has been suggested that Ambracia and its position in the Ambracian Gulf, could have been one of the models that Octavian followed for the foundation of Nicopolis.¹⁰³

4. Conclusion

Almost thirty years ago, central and southern Epirus were relatively absent from modern investigation and major synthesis works on Roman Greece. This has changed, and investigators now have a vast amount of information from surveys and excavations. This was unthinkable when a handful of experts such as HAMMOND and DAKARIS begun their research in the area in the early and mid-20th century. Strabo used the Aristotelian depopulation (*oliganthropia*) concept¹⁰⁴ to describe the once glorious cities of Ancient Greece. This model exists no more for those conducting research in the area. The increasing amount of information has permitted scholars to understand better the Republican and Early Imperial Period in Epirus.

Romans until the end of the Civil Wars and the establishment of *Pax Romana* had a specific policy for the rural sites in Central and Southern Epirus. They used mainly those located in Thespotia. From these fortified and unfortified farmsteads,

100 R. HODGES ET AL., *Beyond Butrint*, p. 274.

101 A. ANGELI, *Νομίσματα από ελαιοτριβείο της Αμβρακίας*, In *Numismatic History*, p. 346–57.

102 P. DOUKELLIS / E. FOUACHE, *La centuriation romaine*, p. 375.

103 I. ANDREOU, *Τοπογραφικά και πολεοδομικά Νικόπολης*, in *Νικόπολις Β'*, p. 234.

104 Arist. *Pol.* 2.1270a–1270b; ALCOCK, *Graecia Capta*, p. 26.

they could control the agricultural production and the local population since some or many Epirotes, as other Greeks before 31 BC, might have been hostile towards the Romans. However, after the defeat of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra at Actium, they had lost interest in revolting against Rome. In this new era, some regions flourished, especially those once known as Casssopaia and Thesprotia. Romans founded new cities and colonies in these areas, such as Nicopolis and Photike. Some others, like Molossis, remained half-deserted. In Molossis, the events of 167 BC and the destruction of its urban centres continued to have long-lasting negative effects in the succeeding periods. Further investigation in the area might reveal a different picture of Roman Epirus and the regionality of Roman Greece in general.

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WATER SUPPLY AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN NEOKLAUDIOPOLIS (VEZIRKÖPRÜ)

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Abstract: The city of Neapolis, later renamed Neoklaudiopolis, was founded in 63 BC by Pompeius as part of his reorganisation of northern Anatolia. Since it is overlain by the modern town of Vezirköprü, there have been few opportunities for archaeological investigations into the structure and evolution of its urban landscape. Starting from the distribution of graves and the vestiges of the city's two aqueducts, this study attempts to reconstruct in broad outlines the process of urban growth and the gradual expansion of Neoklaudiopolis from its nucleus on a hilltop towards the lower land along the east-west highway, the 'Pontic road'.¹

Keywords: Anatolia, Aqueduct, City planning, Neoklaudiopolis, Pontos.

1. Introduction

After his decisive victory over the forces of Mithradates VI in 64 BC, Pompeius created five cities along an east-west route (known to modern researchers as the 'Pontic road'²) from Nikopolis on the borders of Armenia to Pompeiopolis in central Paphlagonia.³ In his *Geography*, Strabo describes the foundation of one of these

- 1 The present study is mainly based on two archaeological surveys, carried out in April 2010 under the auspices of the Nerik project (www.nerik.de) directed by RAINER CZICHON with MÜGE KÜÇÜK as government representative and in October 2013 as part of the project 'Where East Meets West' (www.sdu.dk/halys) directed by TØNNES BEKKER-NIELSEN with MUSTAFA KOLAĞASIOĞLU as government representative. It furthermore draws on the observations of BÜNYAMIN KIVRAK, whose detailed knowledge of Vezirköprü and its history has been an invaluable resource for both projects. Thanks are also due to CHRISTIAN HÖGEL, MARIT JENSEN, THEO JOHANNESSEN, JESPER MAJBOM MADSEN, HARALD VON DER OSTEN-WOLDENBURG, VERA SAUER, SØREN LUND SØRENSEN, AKIN TEMÜR and KRISTINA WINTHER-JACOBSEN and the other participants in the 'Where East meets West' project, and to DAVUT YİĞİTPAŞA for figures 3 and 4.
- 2 MITCHELL 1993, 21; BEKKER-NIELSEN 2016, 35–7.
- 3 For the genesis and history of the Pompeian cities in northern Anatolia, see BEKKER-NIELSEN 2018; MADSEN 2020; BEKKER-NIELSEN 2020.

cities: ‘Pompeius ... awarded the settlement near the village Phazemon the status (of a city) and named it Neapolis’.⁴

A generation later, Mark Antony dismantled the structure of administration created by Pompey and turned most of northeastern Anatolia over to client rulers. Neapolis and its territory were assigned to Castor, king of Paphlagonia; on his death, they passed to his son, Deiotaros Philadelphos, who held them until his death in 6 BC.⁵ The city was reabsorbed into the Roman empire and at some time between AD 41 and 68, it was renamed Neoklaudiopolis.⁶ By the fourth century, the citizens had reverted to using its indigenous name, Andrappa. Under Turkish rule, it became known as *Köprü*, ‘bridge’, later expanded to *Vezirköprü* in memory of the Köprülü family of grand viziers.⁷

The site of Neapolis has been continuously inhabited since antiquity and is almost entirely overlaid by modern Vezirköprü, a prosperous county town of some 35,000 inhabitants.⁸ The city stands on a plateau bounded by the valleys of the Eşenli Çay to the south and the Ulu Çay (also known as the Ak Çay) to the north (see map, fig. 1).

Save for the survey of a late Roman *martyrion* in a field to the north of the modern city,⁹ almost all archaeological work in Vezirköprü has taken the form of rescue excavations.¹⁰ Finds of ancient inscriptions¹¹ and architectural fragments are, however, frequent and many fragments of the ancient urban fabric can be observed in walls and gardens throughout the modern city. In recent years, a number of these have been collected in an open-air exhibit in the municipal park (Belediye parkı) adjoining the city’s main north-south thoroughfare, the Köprülüler Caddesi.¹² Glimpses of the ancient city are also offered by a few coin types of the late second century depicting a tetrastyle temple.¹³

2. The early Roman city (map, fig. 2)

Apart from Strabo’s brief remarks and an inscription giving the text of an oath to the emperor Augustus taken by the citizens in 3 BC, we have no written sources for the history of Neapolis before the second century AD. From the wording of the

4 Strabo 12.3.38 (RADT): Πομπήϊος ... κατὰ Φαζημῶνα κόμην <... πόλιν> ἀποδείξας τὴν κατοικίαν καὶ προσαγορεύσας Νεάπολιν.

5 BEKKER-NIELSEN 2018, 34.

6 SØRENSEN 2016, 144–8; BEKKER-NIELSEN 2018, 37–8.

7 On the rise and rule of the Köprülü family, FINKEL 2014, 253–88.

8 For the history of Vezirköprü, see IĞCI / KIVRAK 2008, 83–108.

9 BEKKER-NIELSEN / WINTHER-JACOBSEN / SAUER 2017.

10 For the research history of the city, see BEKKER-NIELSEN 2013; TEMÜR / YİĞİTPAŞA 2020a; TEMÜR / YİĞİTPAŞA 2020b.

11 A corpus of all preserved inscriptions from Vezirköprü and its region is in preparation by ECKART OLSHAUSEN and VERA SAUER for publication in the series *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*.

12 BEKKER-NIELSEN / CZICHON et al. 2015, 53.

13 DALAISON / DELRIEUX 2014, 190; SAUER 2015.

oath, it is evident that even if the city at this point in time no longer formed part of the *imperium Romanum*, it retained some form of civic organisation; it also possessed a sacred precinct or temple dedicated to Augustus (*sebasteion*) and presumably other temples as well.¹⁴

Rescue excavations conducted by Samsun Archaeological Museum in the Cumhuriyet mahallesi in the years 2012 to 2017 and published by YIĞITPAŞA / ŞİRİN in 2020 revealed numerous inhumation burials dating from the second to the fourth centuries AD. Under Roman law, burials were not permitted within the city's *pomerium* and they typically cluster around and along a city's access roads. We may assume that the burials discovered in the Cumhuriyet mahallesi (517., 520., 524., 539. and 544. Sokak) were located adjacent to, but not inside, the area of the ancient city (map, fig. 1).

Special interest attaches to site M2 in 517. Sokak, block 217, lot 24, excavated in 2012 by Samsun Museum.¹⁵ In the northern sector of the excavation area, which measured 10.5 by 12.5 metres, graves were found; in the southeastern sector, the excavators cut through a water channel lined with characteristic pink Roman waterproof mortar (*opus signinum*)(figs. 3-4).¹⁶ The dimensions of the channel (20 x 30 centimeters) indicate that it was intended to accommodate a significant flow of water. The chronological relationship between the finds on the site is not discussed in the published report, but it is difficult to see why or how a water conduit would be laid down through an already existing burial site. The water channel is more likely to antedate the burials, which in that case provide a *terminus ante quem* for the conduit in the second century AD.

In 2010, workers on a construction site c. 75 metres SW of the great mosque (Köprülü camii), in the block delimited by the 708. Sokak, 712. Sokak, 713. Sokak and the Köprülüler caddesi, accidentally cut through two terracotta pipes c. 8 centimetres in diameter and encased in mortar at a depth of c. 0.8 metres below the present ground surface. Several flat Roman bricks were also visible in the profile (fig. 5). Terracotta pipes were widely used for water distribution in the Hellenistic and Roman period and for higher strength, a line of terracotta pipes could be encased in a jacket of Roman concrete (*opus caementicium*). Similar pipelines have been reported elsewhere in the Roman Empire.¹⁷

Further evidence for a piped water supply is provided by two roughly carved, box-like stone basins with cylindrical apertures at each end. In 2010, one of these could be seen standing outside a house in 539. Sokak with its lower end buried in the pavement (fig. 6). A similar, but longer stone box was observed in 2013 lying in a garden in 539. Sokak (fig. 7). Their original find-spots are not known. Both are now on exhibit in the municipal park (fig. 8). The longer box is c. 180 cm long and c. 40 cm wide, roughly finished on the outside; the cavity is c. 155 cm long and 16

14 SØRENSEN 2016, 19–21; *Studia Pontica* 3, 66.

15 YIĞITPAŞA / ŞİRİN 2020, 182.

16 YIĞITPAŞA / ŞİRİN 2020, 186–7.

17 GREWE 1988, 179 fig. 2 (Almuñécar, Spain); LARGUINAT TURBATTE 2011, 122 with pl. 1.1 (Pompeiiopolis).

centimetres wide. The box was evidently closed with two lids of wood or stone which rested on the recessed upper edge with an overlap of c. 5 cm. The second box is of comparable dimensions but slightly shorter, c. 160 cm, and probably closed by means of a single lid.

The purpose of these stone boxes is not immediately clear. Since in both cases the floor of the cavity is flush with the apertures at either end, they cannot have functioned as sand traps. They were presumably inspection chambers (*Revisionskasten*) providing access to the conduit and enabling maintenance workers to insert a long, stiff-handled brush for removing sand, dirt and other residue from the pipeline.¹⁸ Inspection chambers of similar design are known from the Middle Ages onward in northern Europe.¹⁹

A section of the Roman north-south highway through Neoklaudiopolis is preserved in Doyran village to the south-east of Vezirköprü at UTM 707244 E 4555178 N.²⁰ The existence of a Hittite cult site at Oymaağaç höyük²¹ and an Old Hittite hilltop fortification²² at Tepeören, where the north-south road reached the bank of the İstavroz Çay, suggest that this is a pre-Roman route that was later re-engineered to Roman standards.²³ South of the İstavroz Çay, a route led through the Tavsan Dağları and into the plain of Merzifon.²⁴ A straight line drawn from Doyran and following the line of the Köprülülere caddesi through present-day Vezirköprü will reach the bank of the Ulu Çay near the point where a bridge now carries the 1513. Sokak across the river. It seems a reasonable assumption that this north-south road formed the central axis or *cardo* in the street plan of Neoklaudiopolis (fig. 2). After crossing the river, the road will have ascended the scarp at an oblique angle, running more or less parallel to the 1513. Sokak. When it reached the plateau above the river, it struck north towards Oymaağaç Höyük, with a short detour to circumvent the western flank of the hill known as Adatepe.²⁵

On the basis of the available archaeological evidence, and taking the terrain into account, it appears that the nucleus of Andrapa/Neapolis was located on the hilltop in the area of the present-day Köprülü camii, and that the ‘Pontic road’ passed around, but not through, the settlement. The situation is closely similar to that in Pompeiopolis, the westernmost of the five cities on the ‘Pontic road’, whose

18 For a similar stone trough, but with three openings, from Pompeiopolis, see LARGUINAT TURBATTE 2011, 128 and pl. 3.2–3.3.

19 DÖRING 2005, 96–9.

20 BEKKER-NIELSEN / CZICHON 2015, 296–7; BEKKER-NIELSEN / CZICHON ET AL. 2015, 68–9. Inscriptions and numerous spoils from the Roman period have also been found in Doyran.

21 See www.nerik.de (04.05.2021).

22 BEKKER-NIELSEN / WINTHER-JACOBSEN 2013, 7. The ceramic material from the site is currently being processed for publication by MARGHERITA ANDREA VALSECCHI GILLMEISTER (Free University of Berlin).

23 BEKKER-NIELSEN 2021b.

24 BEKKER-NIELSEN / WINTHER-JACOBSEN 2013, 9–10; BEKKER-NIELSEN / CZICHON 2015, 298; 303. EVLIYA ÇELEBI passed along this route when he visited Vezirköprü in February 1648: *Seyahatname* book 2, fol. 348a = HAMMER 1850, 219 = IĞCI / KIVRAK 2008, 99; BEKKER-NIELSEN 2021a.

25 Some inscriptions and other spoils dating from the Roman period can be seen in Adatepeköy.

nucleus is also located on a hilltop with the highway passing around the foot of the hill. Since it is not overlain by modern construction, Pompeiopolis has been studied in far more detail than Neoklaudiopolis, and among the insights that have emerged is that Pompeiopolis did not have an overall street grid, such as one would expect in a Roman city; rather, the different sectors of the city were oriented on different axes.²⁶

In the Republican and early Imperial period, the built-up core of Pompeiopolis covered an estimated 16 hectares,²⁷ an extent that was fairly typical of northern Anatolia, where few cities extended over more than 20 hectares.²⁸ By the late Roman period, Pompeiopolis had grown to cover c. 28 hectares²⁹ and the late Roman walls of Nikopolis enclose an area of c. 31 hectares.³⁰ As reconstructed on fig. 2, the *pomerium* of early Roman Neapolis/Neoklaudiopolis extended over an area of c. 30 hectares. The scarcity of spoil finds in the southern part of the city (cf. below and fig. 11) may suggest that the entire area within the *pomerium* was never built over.

Neapolis/Neoklaudiopolis was connected to the 'Pontic' road in two directions: towards the east and towards the north. The cluster of graves around the eastern exit from the city (fig. 1) implies that in the early Roman period, this was the main point of entry to the city.

3. The first aqueduct

Both the terracotta pipeline and the water channel were found *in situ* at an elevation of c. 352 meters above sea level. Consequently the water source must have been situated at a still higher elevation. Given that the terrain slopes downwards from the Köprülü Camii on all sides save to the southwest, the aqueduct would need to approach the city from this direction. A likely point of origin is the source at Karapınar on the right bank of the Ulu Çay, at an elevation of 418 metres a.s.l. and a distance of c. 5 kilometers west-southwest of the city (map, fig. 1). Today, this source still supplies Vezirköprü with water. Immediately to the east of the present pumping station, an overgrown, vault-like structure can be seen stretching for some distance towards Vezirköprü and in the same area, remains of a masonry structure with a facing of pink waterproof mortar (*opus signinum*) were observed by Bünyamin Kıvrak (fig. 9). Two kilometers closer to Vezirköprü, below the village of Oruç, a section of Roman masonry, unassociated with any other structures, is exposed in the hillside and may well represent the side wall of the water channel (fig. 10).

Assuming that the water conduit originated at Karapınar, passed below Oruçköy and reached the city at an elevation above 352 metres, and taking account

26 KIENLIN 2011 with pl. 2.

27 FASSBINDER 2011, 22.

28 WILLET 2020, 496 with table 13.

29 KIENLIN 2011, 216.

30 *Studia Pontica* 2, 309–311.

of the terrain, a likely course for the Roman aqueduct can be traced on the map (fig. 1). At its point of entry into the city, there will have been a water distribution tank, *castellum aquae*, located at the highest point on the western or southwestern edge of the city. From the *castellum*, water was distributed by means of terracotta pipes or stone-built channels. Lead pipes, used in other parts of the Roman Empire, may also have been employed in Neoklaudiopolis, but according to the Roman writer Vitruvius (last century BC), lead pipes were more expensive than terracotta.³¹

In order to reach the city, the aqueduct would need to traverse the Gödeş Dere. The crossing could have been effected either on a low bridge, of which nothing now remains, or by following the contour line upstream for a short distance before turning back. Today, a concrete bridge carries the Orgeneral Faruk Cömert Caddesi across the stream, lying parallel to an older stone bridge with a single arch. Remains of a brick-lined water channel encased in concrete can be observed further up the hillside to the east of the crossing and behind the Petrol Ofisi filling station, but the bricks appear to be machine-made, indicating a date no earlier than the twentieth century.

4. The late Roman city and the second aqueduct

Some north Anatolian cities were pillaged during the Gothic invasions of the 250's AD,³² others were hastily fortified to meet the Gothic threat,³³ but there is no evidence for either in Neoklaudiopolis. Despite the economic and political crises of the later third century, the community appears to have enjoyed a period of continued prosperity, and no traces of a city wall have been reported. As late as AD 288, the *boule kai demos*, 'council and people' of Neoklaudiopolis, set up an inscription honouring the emperor Carinus³⁴ and the inhabitants of the region continued to commemorate their dead in funerary inscriptions dated by the civic era (in AD 259, 268 and 288³⁵); another, undated inscription records the gratitude of the citizen body (*demos*) towards an unnamed benefactor for a 'work constructed for the benefit of wayfarers and strangers' (*xenois*).³⁶ Evidently, some form of civic organisation was still functioning. In the fifth century, the construction of a large *martyrion* on a scarp overlooking the city from the north, adjacent to the road leading towards Adatepe and Oymaağaç,³⁷ attest to the prosperity of the city's Christian community. In the seventh and eighth century, the bishopric of Andrapa could

31 Vitr. 9.6.8. Stray finds of lead pipes, which are easily recast and reused, would be unlikely to find their way into the archaeological record.

32 E.g., Neokaisareia (Niksar): BEKKER-NIELSEN 2017, 51.

33 E.g., Prusias ad Hypium (Konuralp): BEKKER-NIELSEN 2008, 40; 157.

34 *Studia Pontica* 3, no. 67.

35 *Studia Pontica* 3, nos. 50; 45; 68; SAUER / OLSHAUSEN 2018, 137.

36 *Studia Pontica* 3, no. 68a: προστέθηκε τοῦργον ὁδίταις τε καὶ ξένοις. The inscription was last seen built into a *dolmuş* parking area off the 1117. Sokak: BEKKER-NIELSEN / CZICHON ET AL. 2015, 45.

37 BEKKER-NIELSEN / WINTHER-JACOBSEN / SAUER 2017.

afford to send delegates to the church councils of Constantinople (680–681; 691–692) and Nikaia (787).³⁸

In preparation for the 2013 survey, JESPER MAJBOM MADSEN and the present author undertook a tally of visible ancient remains (architectural fragments, inscriptions etc.) in the cityscape of modern Vezirköprü. The city area was divided into squares measuring 250 by 250 metres and the visible ancient remains within each square were counted. Obviously, the results need to be taken with a number of reservations. First, only remains visible from the public thoroughfare were counted; more may have been hidden in yards, gardens or houses. Secondly, many remains may have been transported; this accounts for the high density of ancient spoils in the main cemetery. Nevertheless, when held against the reconstruction of the street network of Neoklaudiopolis, the distribution fits reasonably well (map, fig. 11).

Among those architectural elements that can be dated – primarily column capitals – the larger part derive from the late Roman or Byzantine period. Evidently, the city and its population continued to grow through the late Roman period, and at some point in time, the original aqueduct was no longer able to supply the inhabitants' needs. A second aqueduct was constructed, drawing its waters from springs on the left bank of the Ulu Çay, opposite and slightly downstream from the source at Karapınar. This aqueduct is well preserved and its vaulted channel can be traced along the left bank of the Ulu Çay from a point about 1 kilometer upstream of Oruç, where it was first identified by BÜNYAMIN KIVRAK in 2014. (It is possible that the conduit originally extended still further up the valley, but landslides on the hillside have obliterated any possible traces.) The construction technique is uniform throughout, with a stone-built barrel vault covering the channel (fig. 12), and very similar to the lower of the two aqueducts at Caesarea Maritima (fig. 13). The construction date of the Caesarea aqueduct is uncertain, but no earlier than the fourth century.³⁹

The vaulted channel follows the left bank of the river downstream until about one kilometer west of Vezirköprü. Here, all traces of the aqueduct are lost, but it soon reappears on the opposite bank. Evidently, the aqueduct once crossed the Ulu Çay on a bridge of which nothing now remains. It runs for some distance across open fields (fig. 14), then on the last section into Vezirköprü hugs the scarp to the right of the modern dirt road. As it enters the built-up area of the modern city, its course can no longer be traced on the surface. Since the elevation of the lower aqueduct at its point of entry into the city is only c. 330 meters above sea level, it can never have supplied the upper town with water. Like its Judaeian counterpart, the lower aqueduct at Neoklaudiopolis was evidently intended as a supplement to an already existing, and still functioning, aqueduct at a higher level. In the lower part of the city, in the district known as the Tabakhane mahallesi, a stone water duct could be seen lying upside down outside a modern building in the 1403. Sokak in 2015 (fig. 15). A part had been broken off, but the original length can be estimated as c. 2.1 meters, the width as c. 0.5 meters and the channel c. 30 centimeters wide

38 BEKKER-NIELSEN 2017, 55.

39 PORATH 2002, 126–7; 2006, 257.

and c. 15 centimeters deep. Its original find-spot is not known. Of the city's water supply in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period, we know little. The Ottoman traveller EVLIYA ÇELEBI visited 1648 Köprü, as the city was then known, in the spring of 1648.⁴⁰ He reports that there were several baths (*hammâm*) and among the sights in the city, he mentions the ablution basin (*havuz*) and fountain (*şâzrevânli*) at the mosque of Hacı Yusuf Ağa.⁴¹

5. Conclusions

Based on the evidence presented above, the urban development of Neapolis-Neoklaudiopolis can be reconstructed as follows. The original nucleus of the settlement was at the point where the south-north route, probably going back to Hittite times and connecting Tepeören with Oymaağaç, crested the hill on which the Köprülü camii now stands. The city extended no further eastwards than the present-day 517. Sokak. Assuming that Neapolis were laid out on a more or less symmetrical plan, the street grid will have extended an equal distance to the west of the *cardo*, while its extent in the north-south direction is unknown. A rough estimate for the area within the original *pomerium* would be around 30 hectares. The intersection of the two highways was not located in the center of the city, as is often the case in Roman foundations in Italy and the Western provinces.⁴² It is, however, a characteristic feature of the Pompeian cities along the 'Pontic road' that none of them straddle the road-line. In the case of Neapolis and Pompeiopolis the road passes close by the city, at Magnopolis, Neokaisareia, Nikopolis at a distance.⁴³

The distribution of visible spoils in the cityscape suggests that the southern part of the area within the original *pomerium* of Neapolis-Neoklaudiopolis was never built over. Instead, the city apparently expanded towards the north and downhill, spreading along the 'Pontic road' and the road leading towards Adatepe and Oymaağaç. To serve the lower town, a second aqueduct was constructed. The banks of the river were apparently used neither for buildings nor for graves.⁴⁴ The find of a late Roman *martyrion* on the high ground to the north of the Ulu Çay suggests that by the fifth century, a necropolis had been established here.

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40 BEKKER-NIELSEN 2021a.

41 EVLIYA ÇELEBI, *Seyahatname*, book 2, fol. 348b = HAMMER 1850, 218 = İĞCI / KIVRAK 2008, 100.

42 BEKKER-NIELSEN 2021c, 91–4.

43 BEKKER-NIELSEN, forthcoming.

44 EVLIYA ÇELEBI (*Seyahatname*, book 2, fol. 348a = HAMMER 1850, 217 = İĞCI / KIVRAK 2008, 99) notes that the low-lying land around Vezirköprü was not unfrequently inundated by the river waters.