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St. Theodore's Cult Centers in Constantinople's Hinterland. Old Conceptions and New Discoveries

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Старі уявлення та нові відкриття

According to R. Janin, among all St. Theodore's cult centres in Constantinople we can place outside the City walls only three of them. First would be the St. Theodore cult centre in Cosmidion. The second was the St. Theodore's hill located in today's *Tepebaşı*. The third place, in which we put our interest, was his sanctuary in Rëasion/Bathys Ryax. Like many authors before and after him Janin said, that it is hard not to equate St. Theodore cult centre in Rëasion and Bathys Ryax [Janin 1969: 148–155]. In 2008 A. Külzer finally divided these two places [Külzer 2008: 282–283, 618–619]. In this paper I would like to consider that the written sources, seemingly describing St. Theodore cult centres in Rëasion and Bathys Ryax, could describe not two, but three or maybe even four different places in Constantinople's Hinterland. Also connecting these considerations with excavations in *Firuzköy* Peninsula I would like to discuss if all hypothesis connecting St. Theodore cult centre in Bathys Ryax with area around *Küçükçekmece* lake, have enough argumentation to function in our research.

According to my study, corpus of sources about St. Theodore cult centre in Rëasion and Bathys Ryax contains 12 written testimonies. It seems that the most important task is putting all of these sources in line according to the place they are referring to. Although in most cases this job was performed successively, the connection of three testimonies with St. Theodore cult centre in Rëasion established by scholars like Janin and Külzer, could be put in doubt.

First two sources come from the second part of 7th century and they are concentrating on one episode from the life of Maximus Confessor and his conflict with Constans II. After Maximus' arrest and trial, he was eventually transferred to St. Theodore monastery in Rëasion. On the next day bishop Theodosius send by the emperor from Constantinople, arrived at this monastery. After yet another unsatisfactory dispute, the emperor's envoys returned to the capital (*Disputatio inter Maximum et Theodosium*, 8–9, 15); (*Vita s. Maximii Confessoris*, rec. 2, 32; rec. 3, 40).

For incomprehensible reasons both Janin and Külzer are equating St. Theodore monastery, mentioned here, with St. Theodore cult centre in Rëasion [Janin 1969: 150; Külzer 2008: 615, 619]. According to Janin it was a simple mistake of the text published in *Patro-*

logia graeca, and the name of this place should be read Rēsion not Rēgion. Moreover, this author stated that it is impossible for this monastery to be in Rēgion, because this place was located more than 20 km from Constantinople. Therefore, it could not be reached in a day by emperor's envoys [Janin 1969: 151]. Although the incorrect manuscript reading of the word Rēgion instead of word Rēsion is possible, we have to say that in two testimonies describing this story the term Rēgion appears four times. In every case P. Allen and B. Neil, modern editors of these works, are maintaining the word Rēgion as it is. Referring to concerns about too long distance between Constantinople and Rēgion, it is really not hard to imagine to cross 40 km in 48 hours, riding on horse or in horse cart. Considering these remarks, I truly don't see any reason to equate St. Theodore monastery mentioned here, with St. Theodore cult centre in Rēsion, mentioned in other passages.

The third testimony is *Life of Euthymius*, from 10th century. Passages from this work, in which we put our interest, are describing contacts between Leo VI and future patriarch Euthymius. The emperor often felt the need of Euthymius' presence, whom he considered as his spiritual father. However, it was quite difficult, due to the fact that Euthymius lived outside the City walls in monastery of St. Theodore. In this situation, Leo proposed that he will build a new monastery for Euthymius in the City. Before inauguration of the new monastery, Eutymius and monks from the nearby congregations in Pēgē and Triton held prayers at St. Theodore's monastery. After that, Euthymius with other monks went in procession from St. Theodore's to his new convent (*Vita Euthymii*, 3–5).

St. Theodore's cult centre mentioned in this testimony is generally identified with that located in Rēsion [Janin 1969: 150]. Yet, in five direct, and few other less direct mentions of this place there is no reference connecting this area with the name Rēsion, what could be considered as strange knowing that cult centre in Rēsion was mentioned in the same century maybe on even two different occasions.

In written sources, we have two indications where the place called Rēsion was located. Procopius and *Suda* tells us that it was *before the City* (Procop., *Aed.*, I.4.28); (*Suda*, rho 165) John of Antioch stated that it was *in Byzantium* (Ioan. Antioch., f. 24.6). Therefore, it seems that this cult centre was located very close to the Theodosian walls. Clear indication of that fact could be the original name of today's gate *Yeni Mevlevihane Kapısı* called in Byzantine times *the Gate of Rēsion* or *the Gate of Rēsos*. It is worth considering then, that this St. Theodore cult centre could be located simply near that City gate.

In the case of St. Theodore's monastery in Rēgion we don't have much data on its localisation. In three passages place of the meeting between Maximus and the emperor's envoys is described simply as *in Rēgion*. Yet, in only direct mention of this monastery its localisation is described not as *in Rēgion*, but *near Rēgion*. Thus, maybe we can say that although the general localisation of this place was connected with Rēgion, the monastery itself wasn't exactly in Rēgion but in a place near it. Therefore, indicating the localisation of this cult centre we should broad the possible area to terrains around Rēgion, maybe even to *Firuzköy* Peninsula.

In the case of St. Theodore's monastery connected with patriarch Euthymius, we have indication that this cult centre was located in the neighbourhood of convents in Pēgē and

Triton. Therefore, this monastery similarly to cult centre in RëSION was located close to the City walls. Janin and Külzer after him located this place in the neighbourhood of hagi-asma of St. Paraskevi. However, this hypothesis is based not on the analysis of written sources? but on the indications of M. Gedeon from 19th century [Γεδεών 1899: 75]. Therefore, I can't see any reason not to locate this monastery in any other place in the neighbourhood of convents in Pëgë and Triton. From this perspective, it is quite tempting to equate this monastery with cult centre in RëSION, but although it is possible it cannot be validated in any way.

Finally let's see what can we say about the localisation of St. Theodore's sanctuary in Bathys Ryax. Knowing that people from the capital were going there in processions we have to say that it was at maximum a day away from Constantinople. Anna Komnene also said, that *the pious [...] spent all night and day there* (Ann. Komn., Alex., VIII. 3. 1–2). This indication, might suggest that this journey was so long it was necessary for them to spend the night in Bathys Ryax. Also, we have to remember that Bathys Ryax means *Deep stream*, therefore this place should be located near some river or deep valley.

In 17th century Ch. Du Cange suggested that Bathys Ryax could be the same place as Bathykolpos [Du Cange 1729: 75]. Recently Külzer brought back this idea [Külzer 2008: 282–283]. Bathykolpos means *Deep bay* and indeed it would not be strange if the river flowing there was named Bathys Ryax – *Deep stream*. Yet, we have to remember that last information about Bathykolpos comes from 2nd century (Dion. Byz., Anapl., 71), and first testimony about Bathys Ryax from 12th century (Ann. Komn., Alex., VIII. 3. 1–2). On the other hand, in some publications we can see that Bathys Ryax is also equated with the river Bathynias (Yılmaz 2017: 301). Although, it would not be impossible for the name Bathynias to change in Bathys Ryax, Bathynias was last attested in 2nd century (App., Mith., I. 1), so again in that case we would talk about realities of 12th century on the basis of data from over a thousand years.

Seeking arguments for locating Bathys Ryax near *Firuzköy* Peninsula, we could say that indication about pilgrims who spend there night and day, could be connected with the ritual of incubation. It would remind us of function of *nosokomeion* which was unearthed at our excavations. On this site we also found two rings, possibly connected with St. Theodore. These two clues joined with generally plausible location of *Firuzköy* Peninsula are not yet enough to construct a solid hypothesis of locating Bathys Ryax near *Küçükçekmece* lake, but it is a good starting point for analysing all gathered material in this context.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that through analysis of all sources seemingly describing only St. Theodore's cult centres in RëSION and Bathys Ryax we can distinguish at least three different places. As for St. Theodore's monastery near RëSION I think that we should look for more information in Byzantine sources about sites placed near RëSION and Athyra, which could lead us to know more about area around *Firuzköy* Peninsula. For now, localisation of Bathys Ryax cannot be determined. Placing it near ancient Bathykolpos or *Firuzköy* Peninsula is possible, but in both cases, it would need much more supporting data.

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