

# The Ploutonion of Hierapolis in the 5th-7th c. A.D.

Francesco D'Andria

The investigations of the Ploutonion carried out in the years 2013-17 by the Italian Archaeological Mission were the object of an article in *JRA* 31 (2018)<sup>1</sup> in which I presented the complex transformations affecting the sanctuary of Hades from the Archaic through the Late Roman periods. The excavations also brought to light Byzantine structures that had been built over the pagan sanctuary, gradually erasing all trace of it.

Overall, in the course of the work it was possible to identify 7 main phases of occupation:

**Ia:** Archaic period (Phrygian).

First layout of the sanctuary, with a stepped altar carved into the rock above the cave.

**Ib:** Hellenistic period.

Construction of the temenos and the Doric portico along the N side of the sacred complex.

**Ia:** Augustan and Julio-Claudian period.

A façade with Ionic semi-columns built framing the cave, with a Theatron along the E side.

**Ib:** Neronian and subsequent.

Major reconstruction and monumentalisation of the entire complex after the earthquake of A.D. 60. Construction of the following: Ionic Portico and *sacellum* that housed the colossal marble statue of Hades; the Tholos; the Theatron is extended along the N and S sides; buildings placed along the N side and *abaton*.

**IIa:** Imperial era.

Construction of Stoa of the Springs to the south of the Ploutonion; restoration and refurbishment of some structures of the complex; monumental entrance to the sacred area built directly north of the Temenos.

**Ib:** Late Roman era.

Repair work following the earthquake of the 4th c.; votive deposits.

**IV:** Early Byzantine period (5th-7th c.).

Obliteration of the sanctuary and construction of a residential district over the ruins.

**V:** Middle Byzantine period (9th-10th c.).

Houses built on a rectangular plan face onto open areas characterised by circular platforms. A developed facility with *molae oleariae* for processing olives, closely connected to the residential district, overlapped the NE corner of the sanctuary and incorporated part of the temenos.

**VI:** Mid-Byzantine period (10th to early 11th c.).

Collapse of Wall A due to an extremely powerful seismic event whose effects are recognised in other parts of the city.

**VII:** Seljuq era (12th-14th c.) and post-Mediaeval period.

Area frequented by nomadic herders.

In *JRA* 2018, I presented Phases I-III of the occupation of the sanctuary (Archaic to Late Roman), during which the place of worship around the cave gradually developed, eventually taking on a monumental character. Here I will present data concerning Phase IV (5th-7th c.), which saw the gradual deactivation of the functions connected to the pagan sanctuary. This entailed the demolition of the structures that had been built in successive

---

1 F. D'Andria, "The Ploutonion of Hierapolis in light of recent research (2013-17)," *JRA* 31 (2018) 90-130.