

## *Miszellen/Short Articles*

### The Phrygian Archaeological Surface Survey Project of the University of Heidelberg and the Discovery of Pepouza and Tymion

A preliminary report

by Peter Lampe

After coming back from the field in Turkey in October 2001, we are able to give a short preliminary report. A book will be forthcoming entitled, "The Discovery of Pepouza: The Holy City of the Montanists in Phrygia," by William Tabbernee and Peter Lampe (2002).

#### *I.*

On September 13, 2001, the Turkish government granted me the permit for an archaeological surface survey of the ancient sites of "Pepouza and Tymion". In preparation for the application for the permit, a decisive trip in the summer of 2000 preceded the field work of 2001. In a paper delivered at Yalvac, Turkey, on July 2, 2000, at the Second International Symposium on Antioch-in-Pisidia, William Tabbernee proposed Külköy, Dumanlı, and Ücküyü as the most likely locations for Pepouza based on the ancient literary evidence. He thus ruled out the numerous other suggestions (Delihirdirli, Bugdayli, Sirikli, Bekilli, Ikizbaba, etc.), which had been made since the travels in the region of Sir William Ramsay and his student, W.M. Calder, between 1883 and 1931. Tabbernee's paper was titled, "In Pursuit of Pepouza: Searching for the Archaeological Remains of the Phrygian Center of Montanism". In this paper he summarized all the known clues about the location of Pepouza. Three of these clues related to a monastery at or very near Pepouza. Later in July 2000 William Tabbernee led a group comprising Ayse Calik Ross, Richard Engle, Robert Jewett, David Killen, Hüsam Suleymangil and myself to visit Külköy, Dumanlıören, Bekilli, Delihirdirli, and Ücküyü, as well as Hasköy, Kayal, Gürpnar, and Selcikler. We then still believed Külköy to be the most likely location of Pepouza. We therefore planned to ask the Turkish government for permission to undertake an intensive surface survey of the Külköy site. In Külköy the remains of a Byzantine church had recently been detected, and we discovered an unpublished Christian graffito in its quarry.

However, in conversations with the director of the Usak Archaeological Museum, Kazim Akbiyikoglu, we also learned about another ancient site completely unknown to the scholarly world up until now. He described a “church in a cave” that could be found there. On July 22, 2000, Kazim Akbiyikoglu led us to this site. Tramping through a secluded canyon, through river flats oozing with mud, and scrambling up a steep slope in the drenching rain of a thunderstorm, we climbed up to what turned out to be an impressively huge rock-carved monastery with Byzantine graffiti. Further east, we identified traces of an extensive settlement and necropolis. As there is no known evidence for a monastery at the other proposed sites, nor indeed in the whole general area where Pepouza must have been located, the existence of this monastery near the remains of a substantial city was a strong reason to identify this unknown site as the ancient Pepouza. According to the ceramic shards, this settlement already existed in Roman times. Moreover, the location of this site south of Usak corresponds perfectly to the geographic clues related to the location of Pepouza in the extant literary sources, especially Hierokles’ *Synecdemus* (667,6). In light of this literary evidence, each of the earlier proposed sites appear to be situated too far south.

We do not yet want to publish the exact geographic location of this dramatic site in order to avoid premature tourism. First, the extensive area has to be divided into a fine grid by our land surveyors so that the surface finds, including the ceramic shards, can be fully documented.

As it happened, in July 2000 we also discovered an unpublished inscription, which not long ago had been given to the Usak Museum by a local person. The director of the museum has the rights for its publication and will publish it in our above-mentioned volume. The extremely important inscription enables us also to identify the location of Tymion, 12 km north of Pepouza.

Thus equipped with two well-based hypotheses about the location of Pepouza and Tymion, we were able to apply for an archaeological surface survey permit, which was granted in September 2001. Starting in October 2001, I led a team including Assistant Prof. Dr. Ayse Calik Ross and two of her archaeology students from the Anadolu University in Eskisehir, Turkey, Richard Engle of Sioux City, USA, Ugur Hosgören, archaeologist of the Usak Museum, Henning Hupe of Heidelberg, Dr. Richard Petrovsky, archaeologist of the Speyer Museum near Heidelberg, Hüsam Suleymangil of Istanbul, and Prof. William Tabbernee of Tulsa, USA. Consulting members were the archaeologist Prof. Reinhard Stupperich of Heidelberg, the survey specialist Dr. Jens Kamlah of Kiel, and the engineers Jürgen Otto and Andreas Rieger of Karlsruhe. We will continue the survey next year with an enlarged and more interdisciplinary team.

## II.

Besides the rock-carved monastery, the extensive Pepouza area comprises a necropolis with – among others – rock-cut tombs, the remains of rock-cut donkey paths, of a Roman road and bridge, two ancient marble quarries and other evidence of a sizeable city. Of particular interest are the traces of a large public building resting on Byzantine substructure walls on a terrace right above the river. The site of this building, presumably a church, is extremely endangered by the ploughing of the farmers and needs a salvage excavation, for which we will apply. The same is true of a nearby catacomb, which is in danger of collapsing any moment and poses a life-threatening risk to anyone entering it. Here, a salvage excavation is necessary as well. If one looks for the most likely location of the venerated shrine of Montanus, Priscilla and Maximilla, destroyed in ca. 550 C.E. by the imperial soldiers of Bishop John of Ephesus, this catacomb certainly is the first candidate. Parts of this catacomb are filled with ancient trash (tiles, pottery, etc.). Only an excavation can help us understand and save this hypogeum.

## III.

Despite the exciting Christian material, our survey will not be a “thematic survey”. Thus, it will not only focus on the approximately seven centuries of Christian history of this settled environment, but also on older and younger periods of settlement. There is a good chance that Neolithic evidence will be discovered in a cave close to the river. Traces of the Cybele cult, for instance, seem to be present elsewhere in the area.

As a regional survey covering an entire cultural landscape (modernized “transect method”), our work will not only focus on “settlements” but also on the wider surroundings and on other “sites” (such as isolated cisterns, terraces, bridges, etc.) as well as on indications of ancient land use. Thus, the natural environment and human settlement will be brought into relation to one another. Therefore, also paleobotany (and phytogeography) will be important. Our survey hopefully will contribute to the understanding of the life circumstances of the ancient rural population of Phrygia, a contribution that will produce results related to social, economic and religious history. As far as the socio-economic context of our Pepouza site is concerned, unpublished epigraphic evidence reveals that the settlement was located close to an imperial estate. The inscription shows that here, in the time that Montanism was flourishing, *coloni* complained in vain about their oppressive economical situation. This might give us one explanation for why the ecstatic Montanist movement spread so rapidly in this rural hinterland of the Roman empire. Economically stressed groups apparently found a vent in ecstatic religious praxis.

More generally, the survey hopefully will lead to some understanding of rural polytheistic and monotheistic religiosity. We know much about ancient urban Christianity, but relatively little about its rural counterpart.

One of the challenges and opportunities of this survey is its international and interdisciplinary character, integrating four nations (Turkey, Australia, USA, Germany) and various scientific fields, such as land surveying, cartography, computer graphics, archaeology, epigraphy, early Christian history, anthropology, paleobotany, geology and geophysics. Students will be involved in all phases; thus, the survey will also be a teaching and learning experience, as it was already this year when students were trained in GPS and laser equipment.